



## STYLISTIC DEVICES OF SOCIAL CRITICISM IN THE POETRY OF GUS MUS AND HASAN AL-ZAKY

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### Abstract

This study analyses stylistic forms of social criticism in poems by Gus Mus and Hasan al-Zaky addressing the indifference of Indonesian and Arab societies toward Middle Eastern conflicts, particularly Palestine. It responds to the scarcity of comparative studies on social criticism across Indonesian and Arab literary traditions within the framework of global humanitarian solidarity. The study's novelty lies in its comparative stylistic approach, revealing rhetorical strategies of social criticism in two culturally distinct yet thematically aligned contexts. The analysis focuses on *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?* by Gus Mus and *أين أنتم يا عرب؟* by Hasan al-Zaky. Employing a comparative stylistic method, this research analyses the form, meaning, and function of language use. The results show that both poets utilise language style as the main rhetorical strategy in conveying social criticism. Gus Mus utilises rhetorical question repetition, simile, irony, satire, antithesis, sarcasm, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole to criticise Indonesian societal passivity, while Hasan al-Zaky emphasises rhetorical question repetition, irony, antithesis, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and allusion to challenge the silence of the Arab world. Theoretically, this study contributes to cross-cultural comparative stylistics, and practically affirms poetry's role as a medium of social criticism and global humanitarian solidarity.

#### Keywords:

Stylistic Devices  
Social Criticism  
Comparative Literature  
Gus Mus  
Hasan al-Zaky

### تجريد

تحلل هذه الدراسة الأشكال الأسلوبية للنقد الاجتماعي في قصائد غوس موس وحسن الزكي التي تتناول لامبالاة المجتمعات الإندونيسية والعربية تجاه الصراعات في الشرق الأوسط، ولا سيما فلسطين. وتستجيب الدراسة لندرة الدراسات المقارنة حول النقد الاجتماعي عبر التقاليد الأدبية الإندونيسية والعربية في إطار التضامن الإنساني العالمي. وتكمن جدة الدراسة في نهجها الأسلوبي المقارن، الذي يكشف عن الاستراتيجيات البلاغية للنقد الاجتماعي في سياقين مختلفين ثقافياً ولكن متقاربين من حيث الموضوع. يركز التحليل على قصيدتي *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?* لغوس موس و *أين أنتم يا عرب؟* لحسن الزكي. باستخدام طريقة أسلوبية مقارنة، تحلل هذه الدراسة شكل ومغزى ووظيفة استخدام اللغة. تظهر النتائج أن كلا الشاعرين يستخدمان أسلوب اللغة كاستراتيجية بلاغية رئيسية في نقل النقد الاجتماعي. يستخدم غوس موس تكرار الأسئلة البلاغية، والتشبيه، والسخرية، والتهكم، والتناقض، والاستعارة، والتجسيد، والمبالغة لانتقاد سلبية المجتمع الإندونيسي، بينما يركز حسن الزكي على تكرار الأسئلة البلاغية، والسخرية، والتناقض، والاستعارة، والتجسيد، والمبالغة، والإشارة إلى تحدي صمت العالم العربي. من الناحية النظرية، تساهم هذه الدراسة في علم الأسلوب المقارن بين الثقافات، وتؤكد عملياً دور الشعر كوسيلة للنقد الاجتماعي والتضامن الإنساني العالمي.

## الكلمات المفتاحية :

أسلوب اللغة  
النقد الاجتماعي  
الأدب المقارن  
غوس موس  
حسن الزكي

## Kata kunci:

Gaya bahasa  
Kritik sosial  
Sastra Banding  
Gus Mus  
Hasan al-Zaky

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis gaya bahasa kritik sosial dalam puisi karya Gus Mus dan Hasan al-Zaky yang menyoroti sikap acuh masyarakat Indonesia dan negara-negara Arab terhadap konflik di Timur Tengah, khususnya Palestina. Kajian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh keterbatasan studi komparatif tentang kritik sosial dalam puisi lintas tradisi sastra Indonesia-Arab yang menyoroti solidaritas kemanusiaan global. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada analisis stilistika komparatif yang mengungkap strategi retorik kritik sosial dalam dua konteks budaya berbeda dengan orientasi tematik yang sama. Objek penelitian berupa puisi *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?* karya Gus Mus dan *أين أنتم يا عرب؟* karya Hasan al-Zaky.

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode komparatif dengan pendekatan stilistika untuk menganalisis bentuk, makna, dan fungsi gaya bahasa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua penyair memanfaatkan gaya bahasa sebagai strategi retorik utama dalam menyampaikan kritik sosial. Gus Mus menggunakan repetisi pertanyaan retorik, simile, ironi, satire, antitesis, sarkasme, metafora, personifikasi, dan hiperbola untuk menyindir sikap pasif masyarakat Indonesia. Sementara itu, Hasan al-Zaky menonjolkan repetisi pertanyaan retorik, ironi, antitesis, metafora, personifikasi, hiperbola, dan alusi untuk mengkritik sikap diam dunia Arab. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini berkontribusi memperkaya kajian stilistika komparatif lintas budaya, sementara secara praktis menegaskan peran puisi sebagai medium kritik sosial dan solidaritas kemanusiaan global.

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## A. Introduction

The conflict in the Middle East is one of the prolonged humanitarian crises that has yet to be resolved. Various regions in this area, such as Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Libya, have experienced armed conflict for years (Pradana & Yulianti, 2017, p. 100). These conflicts are not only physical warfare, but are also accompanied by serious human rights violations, such as mass killings, forced displacement, torture, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure (Brata et al., 2023, p. 1048). Although this humanitarian tragedy has attracted global concern, the international community's response to the conflict is often considered limited and ineffective.

The weak concrete response to the conflict in the Middle East shows an imbalance in the enforcement of humanitarian principles. The role of the United Nations (UN) as an international institution that is expected to be able to reduce conflict is also considered ineffective in stopping the ongoing violence (Cahya, 2022, p. 46). This situation has sparked criticism from various circles, including writers, who view literature as an alternative medium for voicing concerns, moral resistance, and criticism of the silence of society and the world's nations.

In this context, poetry becomes a powerful form of literary expression for conveying social criticism. Gus Mus and Hasan al-Zaky are two writers who respond to humanitarian conflicts in the Middle East through poetry. In his poem *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?*, Gus Mus criticises the Indonesian people's indifference to the humanitarian tragedies in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Gaza. Meanwhile, Hasan al-Zaky, through his poem *أين أنتم يا عرب؟*, voices his criticism of Arab societies and countries that choose to remain silent about the suffering of the Palestinian people. Both poems show how literature functions as a medium for cross-cultural social criticism of apathy towards humanitarian suffering.

To convey this criticism effectively, the poets utilise language in a particular style. The choice of language and the manner of expression play an important role in constructing meaning and influencing the reader's attitude. Pradopo (1997) refers to the use of distinctive language to achieve a particular effect in literary works as stylistics. In literary studies, the analysis of linguistic style is known as stylistics, which is the study of linguistic forms in literary texts as a means of creating meaning and aesthetic effects (Verdonk, 2002, p. 4; Ratna, 2009, p. 4). Through stylistics, language style is not only understood as an aesthetic element, but also as an ideological and rhetorical strategy in conveying social criticism (Purnamawati, 2021).

The use of critical language style in stylistic studies is an important approach to revealing the meaning and purpose of social criticism in literary works. A number of studies show that certain stylistic and rhetorical techniques are effective in conveying social criticism, both directly and indirectly. Nurhayati et al. (2024) assert that stylistics can convey social criticism sharply, while Afrodita et al. (2023) show that satire is used to soften criticism. Dilla and Ramadhan (2021) found that satire in the form of cynicism is often used as direct social criticism, while Rahmat (Hidayat, 2022) shows that metonymy can be a medium for social criticism through symbolic meaning. In addition, comparative stylistic studies have been conducted by comparing two poems to reveal the use of language style and its function, such as the research by Sulista and Latif (2020), Palupi and Nugroho (2022), and Siregar (2023).

However, upon further investigation, research comparing the use of social criticism in poetry across Indonesian and Arabic literary traditions remains very limited. This study is important for understanding how cross-cultural poetry can function as a medium for social criticism of humanitarian conflicts, particularly in the Middle East. This research aims to fill this gap, focusing on the poetry of Gus Mus and Hasan al-Zaky as case studies.

Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) What social criticism styles are used in the poems of Gus Mus and Hasan al-Zaky? (2) What are the similarities and differences in the use of social criticism styles in the two poems? and (3) What social criticism meanings are constructed through the use of these styles? Based on these issues, this study aims to identify and analyse the use of social criticism language styles in the

poems *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?* and *أين أنتم يا عرب؟*, as well as to reveal the similarities, differences, and meanings of social criticism contained therein. The results of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the study of stylistics and comparative literature, while enriching the understanding of the role of poetry as a medium for cross-cultural social criticism on global humanitarian issues.

## B. Research Methods

This study employs a comparative method with a qualitative-interpretative approach to examine and interpret the meaning of social criticism in two poems. The comparative method is used to analyze literary works from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to identify similarities and differences in meaning (Siqal, 2018). In comparative literary studies, the main focus of analysis includes the similarities, connections, and differences between texts (Santosa, 2015). The formal object of this study is language style within stylistic analysis, while the material objects are Gus Mus's poem *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?* and Hasan al-Zaky's poem *أين أنتم يا عرب؟*. The research data consist of linguistic units reflecting social criticism, including words, phrases, clauses, and lines of poetry, with a focus on analyzing language style at the lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical levels (Faruk, 2012).

The study adopts Verdonk's (2002) stylistic framework, which positions stylistics as a bridge between linguistic forms and literary interpretation. This framework allows for a systematic analysis of how language forms construct narrative and ideological messages, and how stylistic choices function as a means of social criticism. For clarity, stylistic devices are categorized following Keraf (2009) as follows.

Table 1. Categorization of Stylistic Devices

Styles	Types of Style
<b>Comparison</b>	allegory, allusion, simile, metaphor, synaesthesia, anthropomorphism, antonomasia, aptronym, metonymy, hypocorism, litotes, hyperbole, personification, pars prototo, totum pro parte, euphemism, depersonalisation, dysphemism, fable, parable, periphrasis, eponym, symbolism.
<b>Emphasis</b>	apophasis, pleonasm, repetition, parerima, alliteration, parallelism, tautology, sigmatism, antanaclasis, climax, anticlimax, inversion, rhetoric, ellipsis, correction, syndeton, interruption, exclamation, enumeration, preterite, alonym, collocation, syllepsis, zeugma.
<b>Contrast</b>	Paradox, antithesis, oxymoron, contradiction interminus, anachronism.
<b>Satire</b>	irony, sarcasm, cynicism, satire, innuendo.

Data were collected using the observe-and-record method, with the following steps, 1) reading both poems carefully and repeatedly; 2) identifying and coding language styles that express social criticism; 3) classifying the data according to the predetermined stylistic categories. The analysis was conducted in three stages, 1) identification and coding of stylistic devices at lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical levels; 2) interpretative analysis based on stylistic theory to uncover meaning and function in social criticism; 3) comparative analysis to reveal similarities and differences in how social criticism is constructed in the two poems. To ensure validity, triangulation was employed, 1) theory triangulation; 2) source triangulation; and 3) time triangulation. This systematic procedure ensures that the research is not merely descriptive but theoretically grounded.

### **C. Result and Discussion**

Gus Mus's poem and Hasan Al-Zaky's poem generally highlight the indifference of countries towards the conflict in the Middle East. In both poems, criticism is directed at Indonesia through Gus Mus's poem and at Arab countries through Hasan Al-Zaky's poem as a strategy to raise awareness about the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

Criticism can be understood as a form of communication carried out by an individual or group to convey their response to a policy or action that is considered detrimental to others (Arfanda & Muzakka, 2020). In this case, criticism is used as an alternative to improve the situation so that it can run as it should. This criticism is expressed by Gus Mus and Hasan Al-Zaky in the form of literary style as a characteristic of a literary work through their poetry. Gus Mus expresses his criticism of the indifference of Indonesian society through the use of literary style in the form of rhetorical questions, similes, irony, satire, antithesis, sarcasm, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole. In Hasan al-Zaky's poetry, the literary devices used to criticise Arab countries include rhetorical questions, irony, antithesis, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and allusion. The following is an explanation of the use of these literary devices in the two poems that are the subject of this study.

#### **1. Identification of Gus Mus's Style**

In his poem, Gus Mus uses various styles of language as a means of expressing social criticism of the tensions surrounding the Middle East conflict. The following are the various critical styles found in the poem.

### a. Repetition of Rhetorical Questions

*Apakah kau terlalu bebal atau aku yang terlalu peka?*

Gus Mus's poem begins with a rhetorical question, *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?* which also serves as the title of the poem. This question is not only used once, but is repeated throughout the poem. The repetition of words, phrases, or sentences in a poem is called repetition. Repetition is done by repeating parts of a sentence that are deliberately emphasised to highlight meaning in a specific context (Murtafi et al., 2017). The use of repetition in poetry is not merely a technical repetition, but a means of emphasising something the poet wants to convey. In this case, rhetorical questions or erotesis are used to achieve a deeper effect and emphasis that is natural and does not require an answer (Keraf, 2009). The use of rhetorical questions in the poem signifies an internal conflict between "I" and "you" through the attitudes represented by the words "insensitive" and "sensitive", which are diametrically opposed. Additionally, the use of repetition also strengthens the emotional tone of the poem. Readers are expected to be able to feel each stanza of Gus Mus's poem so that the meaning intended can be understood by the reader.

### b. Simile

*Seperti politisi-politisi musiman berebut kursi  
 Seperti pakar-pakar kambuhan berebut benar  
 Seperti kena kutuk, kematian dan pembantaian terus berlangsung di  
 berbagai belahan dunia  
 Seperti para pengamat yang menjejalkan potongan-potongan  
 pernyataan ke telinga media yang terbuka  
 Seperti kelompok Muslim kota yang baru menghirup sedap aroma  
 Islam  
 Seperti para elit politik yang merasa lega  
 Seperti para koruptor tak terusik oleh berita-berita pengusutan  
 korupsi  
 Seperti para cerdas pandai dan jurkam partai yang orgasme  
 mendengar suara mereka sendiri  
 Seperti para pemimpin yang tak terganggu oleh keluh kesah keresahan  
 rakyat mereka*

In Gus Mus's poetry, the use of similes is prevalent. This is evident when Gus Mus criticises the indifference towards the conflict in the Middle East by comparing it to the reality in Indonesia. Similes are figures of speech that explicitly describe a situation or condition using comparative words, either with connecting words such as “like” or “as”. (Rahayu, et al., 2024) This aims to convey meaning more imaginatively and sharply through comparisons between two different things that show similarities in certain aspects (A'yun, 2018). In the poem, the dominant use of similes is marked by the use of the word ‘like.’ The simile style used by Gus Mus is employed to convey sharp social-political criticism and contains sarcasm. This is evident in the lines that state “Seperti para elit politik yang merasa lega” and “Seperti para koruptor tak terusik oleh berita-berita pengusutan korupsi”, indicating irony towards the political rulers' lack of involvement in the suffering caused by the conflict in the Middle East and the weak enforcement of the law. The use of this literary style is intended to raise readers' awareness of the inequalities present in Indonesia's political and social landscape.

### c. Metaphor

*Ketika mobilmu melanda seekor anjing di jalan*

In this poem, it can be seen that Gus Mus uses a metaphor in the form of the expression “Anjing”. The metaphorical style of language serves to clarify a meaning by comparing two things that share similarities in their nature or characteristics. This figure of speech is implicit because it does not use a direct comparison, and is known as a concise, compact, and well-structured form of expression (A'yun, 2018). Denotatively, the word dog refers to the animal commonly kept as a pet by humans. However, when used in the context of poetry, the word dog can be connotative or symbolic in meaning. In this case, it can be interpreted that the dog is likened to someone who is considered despicable or being abused, with the continuation of the poem in the form of the word “najis” attached to the dog, which means something that is not holy (Purnamawati, 2021). On the other hand, a dog can also signify an innocent victim who is powerless, such as civilians or the oppressed masses.

### d. Personification

*Keganasan dengan bangga melalap segala*

*Kekerasan mencabik-cabik persaudaraan*

*Dendam membakar sisa-sisa kemanusiaan*

*Kengerian mencekam di seantero kota dan desa*

*Ibu pertiwi pun bersimbah darah*

*Air mata tak putus-putus pula mengalir di tanah air*

In the above verse, Gus Mus uses a stylistic device known as personification. Personification can be defined as attributing human characteristics to inanimate objects or ideas (Ramadhan & Fatinova, 2024). Simply put, personification is a literary device that equates objects with humans, both in terms of characteristics, abilities, thoughts, and feelings that are possessed and experienced by humans (Nursalim & Pratiwi, 2022). The use of personification can be seen in the lines “Ibu pertiwi pun bersimbah darah” and “Air mata tak putus-putus pula mengalir di tanah air” This suggests that the homeland is not in a good state. It is filled with conflict, turmoil, and even war, which is likened to being drenched in blood. Thus, it can be seen that through the two lines above, Gus Mus's poem demonstrates the use of personification, which portrays inanimate objects or lifeless things as though they possess human characteristics.

#### e. Irony

*Kau pun telah merasa ikut berjasa dalam mencari solusi*

*Seolah-olah kalian berada di luar masalah manusia*

The above verse is a critical style of language in the form of irony or satire. Irony can be understood as a style of language that is an expression contrary to reality (Hariyati, et al., 2024). Irony is present as a form of satire by presenting the opposite of reality or with the intention of subtle sarcasm. The poem conveys “Kau pun telah merasa ikut berjasa dalam mencari solusi” as a form of satire or criticism of the indifference towards the conflict in the Middle East. In this context, the verse is not a compliment, but rather a form of satire directed at parties who claim a role or state that they have contributed when in fact they have not been concretely involved. In line with this, irony is an effective rhetorical strategy for conveying criticism indirectly, often through statements that appear positive, but are actually negative or sarcastic (Hariyati, et al., 2024).

In addition, the use of sarcastic language can be seen in the following excerpt.

*Kau dan keluargamu menyaksikan gelombang gelap melanda*

*beberapa kawasan di dunia*

*Bahkan di negerimu sendiri sambil melahap pizza dan ayam*

*goreng Amerika*

The above passage is full of sarcasm and irony. The phrase “gelombang gelap melanda beberapa kawasan di dunia” shows the suffering caused by conflicts like those in the



Middle East and even in our own country. However, watching disasters or humanitarian tragedies happen doesn't make us feel caring and empathetic; it just makes us spectators. In this context, Gus Mus satirises the behaviour of people who comfortably enjoy their lives while remaining indifferent to wars, disasters, or conflicts occurring in various parts of the world, particularly the Middle East.

#### f. Satire

*Oh, virus apa gerakan yang telah menyerang nurani kalian?*

The above verse contains satire, a literary device that openly criticises social issues. Satire is often used to criticise weaknesses, hypocrisy, or social insensitivity, with the hope that such criticism will bring about change for the better (Ramadhan & Achmad, 2024). Satire is a literary device that employs sarcasm, irony, or dark humour to condemn deviant realities with the aim of fostering moral improvement or social awareness (Azhari, Hermandra, & Septyanti, 2023). In the poem, satire is used through the word “virus”, which refers to social or moral diseases that cause moral deviation, making people insensitive to the suffering of others. Gus Mus sharply criticises those who are indifferent to the conflicts in the Middle East and condemns those who lack social awareness and care about the conflicts.

#### g. Sarkasme

*Aku ingin muntah dan kau ngakak sambil mengumpat “mampus kau, najis!”*

The verse above uses sarcasm, which is the harshest form of irony, conveyed through sharp, harsh, and even vulgar words (Putri, et al., 2023). Sarcasm is a style of language that contains criticism or mockery delivered directly and harshly (Keraf, 2009). Sarcasm is often used not only to criticise but also to verbally attack, expressing explicit hatred or anger. In the poem, the use of the words “ngakak”, “mampus kau”, and especially “najis” are expressions that are crude and full of mockery. The use of sarcasm as a literary device is chosen as a means to mock people who are not only indifferent but also enjoy the suffering felt by others.

#### h. Antithesis

*Pemandangan memilukan pun tak mampu mengusik seleramu*

*Pemandangan yang mengerikan pun tak mampu mengganggu nafsumu*

*Ibu pertiwi pun bersimbah darah*

*Air mata tak putus-putus pula mengalir di tanah air*

*Dan kau sekeluarga bersendawa*

*Setelah mengeroyok makanan Amerika*

The above verse shows the use of antithesis, a figure of speech that describes the contrast between two ideas or realities in a series of verses. Antithesis can be defined as a figure of speech that deliberately contains conflicting ideas (Keraf, 2009). The purpose of using this figure of speech is to emphasise the contrast between two opposing realities, which is used to raise awareness or convey sharp criticism. In the poem, it can be understood that the condition of “tanah air” being covered in blood indicates that things are not going well. However, the next verse describes the joy shown after fighting over food labelled “American”. Additionally, the use of “the heart-wrenching and terrifying sight cannot disturb your appetite and desires” demonstrates the use of antithesis by showing the ongoing conflict, yet it fails to stir social awareness to actively participate in demonstrating a concrete stance.

#### **i. Hyperbole**

*Layar kaca terus menayangkan gambar hidup orang-orang mati dan*

*orang-orang yang berangkat mati*

The above verse shows the use of hyperbole in the phrase “orang-orang yang berangkat mati”. Hyperbole is known as a figure of speech that expresses something excessively, whether it be an event or a situation, thereby creating an unusual impression (Aprila, 2022). The use of hyperbole aims to emphasise, intensify, and enhance the impact and influence of a poem (Wahyuni & Alam, 2023). Hyperbole is an expression that deliberately exaggerates a reality to the point of appearing excessive and unrealistic. The verse above reflects the reality in the Middle East, where numerous lives have been lost due to ongoing conflicts. The use of this figure of speech is intended to convey that, in addition to the many deaths, the turmoil of the conflict indirectly leads those who are struggling towards death.

Gus Mus’s poem uses a variety of literary styles to convey social criticism of the apathetic attitude of Indonesian society towards the conflict in the Middle East, with a predominance of rhetorical repetition, simile, metaphor, personification, irony, satire, sarcasm, antithesis, and hyperbole. The repetition of the rhetorical question *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?* functions as a structural parallelism that emphasises the moral conflict between sensitivity and indifference, while also creating a foregrounding effect through linguistic deviation (Leech & Short, 2007). At the lexical and

rhetorical levels, the use of similes comparing the suffering in the Middle East with Indonesia's socio-political reality, such as political elites, corruption, and consumerism, creates cognitive proximity for readers (Verdonk, 2002). Metaphors and personifications, such as "Ibu pertiwi pun bersimbah darah", reinforce the emotional impact by humanising abstract concepts, while irony, satire, and sarcasm serve as evaluative tools to expose hypocrisy and social apathy.

## 2. Identification of Hasan al-Zaky's Style

In his poem, Hasan al-Zaky uses various styles of language as a means of expressing social criticism of the tensions of the Middle East conflict. The following are the various critical styles found in the poem.

### a. Repetition of Rhetorical Questions

أين أنتم يا عرب؟

In Hasan al-Zaki's poem, the first stanza opens with a rhetorical question in the form of an exclamation: Where are you, O Arabs? This question is repeated throughout the poem, as in Gus Mus's poem, which also serves as the title of the poem. Questions used to seek information from the audience are known as rhetorical questions (Yulinda, et al., 2018, p. 209). Meanwhile, Larson (1998, p. 257) states that rhetorical questions are not questions that are actually meant to be asked, but rather a form of question used for purposes other than seeking information. The use of this literary device is not intended to seek an answer to a question, but rather to emphasise something or evoke emotions and awareness among readers about the conflict in Gaza, Palestine. In this context, the use of such questions highlights the absence or lack of involvement of Arab countries in resolving the conflict in Palestine.

### b. Irony

وأنتم في  
صمت السكوت  
تحصون أعداد الموتى  
في التابوت  
لا تنتظروا العرب  
فقد يطول الانتظار

The verse above uses a style of language with irony or sarcasm as a form of criticism (Cahyani, et al., 2022). The purpose of using this style of language is to satirise the

behaviour of people in Arab countries who remain silent and do not take concrete action to defend Palestine, which is currently embroiled in a prolonged conflict. This indifference is demonstrated by the satirical implication that they are merely silent and counting the number of war victims, but are not participating in providing real help and contributing. Additionally, Hasan al-Zaky conveys his criticism by stating not to wait for Arab people, as such waiting would be extremely lengthy. This statement is not merely a warning but a bitter criticism of the inability or even unwillingness of Arab countries to act. This reflects Hasan al-Zaky's deep despair and disappointment with the stance of Arab countries.

### c. Metaphor

أرفعوا رؤسكم  
ولا تدفنوها في الرمال  
بأيديكم حرروا الأرض

The above verse contains a figurative language style in the form of a metaphor. Metaphorical language is used to represent differences or similarities between two things that represent a meaning with different expressions (Ramadhan & Fatinova, 2024). The meaning of “lift your head” is to encourage the awareness and moral courage of the Palestinian people to dare to face the indifference of Arab countries towards the suffering they are experiencing. In the poem, the use of the word “land” is not merely a geographical place where they live, but also a symbol of identity, self-respect, and the spirit of striving for independence. This call is made as an invitation to take concrete action, not merely to hope or dream.

### d. Personification

دماء تنزف  
وأرض تغتصب

The verse uses a stylistic device known as personification, which involves attributing human characteristics to inanimate objects, nature, or abstract concepts (Maryatin, 2018). The use of the word “land” as an inanimate object is treated as if it could be a victim of plunder, just like humans. The purpose of this literary device is to depict the forced seizure and plunder of Palestinian land by Zionists. The consequences of the war are not only loss of life but also territorial control, the destruction of dignity, honour, and the right to life of the Palestinian people.

### e. Hyperbole

النصر قادم لا محال

The above verse uses hyperbole, which is a figure of speech that exaggerates reality (Aprila, 2022). The use of sentences in the verse describes an expression of certain victory, as if victory is already certain and there is no doubt whatsoever. However, this statement goes beyond reality because, in the conflict in Palestine, victory is something that is still being fought for and cannot be assured when it will come. The poet uses this sentence as a form of strengthening belief and burning hope that victory will certainly come in reality.

### f. Antithesis

أن الشهادة شرف  
والجبن عار

The above verse contains a stylistic device known as antithesis, which compares two contrasting ideas directly to emphasise the difference in meaning (Nurhasanah, et al., 2013). In this verse, martyrdom is positioned as something noble, while cowardice is placed in opposition to it, with the meaning of something despicable. In this context, martyrdom is not merely death, but an honour and sacrifice made to defend the homeland, dignity, and the right to life of the Palestinian people. Conversely, the verse indirectly criticises the silence and passivity of Arab countries that have not taken a real role in helping the Palestinian people's struggle. The cowardice in the verse can be understood as the Arab nations' lack of courage to unite and take concrete action in the face of occupation and oppression in Palestine, choosing to remain silent or avoid taking real action.

### g. Allusion

ما عاد المعتصم  
ولا صلاح الدين

The verse uses a figure of speech called allusion, which is a style of language that indirectly refers to well-known figures, places, historical events, myths, or cultures (Keraf, 2009). Allusion is not a proverb or a general expression, but rather an implicit reference to something well-known, such as a figure, place, or event. In the poem, the name al-Mu'tasim is used, referring to the Abbasid Caliph known in Islamic history for his swift and decisive defence of Muslim women who were mistreated by the Romans (Nofita, 2024). Additionally, the use of the word Salahuddin refers to Shalahuddin al-Ayyubi (Saladin), the legendary leader who successfully reclaimed Jerusalem from the Crusader

forces during the Crusades (Sulistiani, 2023). This verse expresses disappointment and longing for great leadership within the Muslim community. The poet states that figures such as Al-Mu'tasim and Saladin are no longer with us, so there are no longer any great leaders willing to intervene to defend Palestine, which is currently suffering.

Hasan al-Zaky's poem highlights the repetition of rhetorical questions as a means of parallelistic emphasis that reinforces moral accusations against Arab society for their silence. Figuratively, this poem is dominated by metaphors, personification, hyperbole, antithesis, and allusion, such as the metaphor 'burying one's head in the sand' which symbolises denial and cowardice, and the personification 'raped land' which signifies occupation as a violation of dignity. Al-Zaky's distinctive feature lies in his use of historical-religious allusions to figures such as al-Mu'tasim and Shalahuddin al-Ayyubi, which serve as intertextual foregrounding to evoke collective memory and shared identity. Unlike Gus Mus, who is satirical in nature, al-Zaky emphasises a moral-exhortative approach by contrasting martyrdom as honour and silence as humiliation through a clear antithesis.

### 3. Differences and Similarities between Gus Mus and Hasan al-Zaky's Poetry

The poems by Gus Mus and Hasan al-Zaky share a common theme of social criticism towards society's indifference to the conflict in the Middle East, particularly in Gaza. Both poets use language as a means to convey their message, emphasising rhetorical questions at the beginning of their poems, such as *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?* and *أين أنتم يا عرب؟*. In addition, both contain visual depictions of horrific conflicts and use literary devices such as irony, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and antithesis to reinforce their criticism. These similarities indicate the poets' emotional closeness to the issues raised, despite coming from different social and cultural backgrounds.

On the other hand, there are striking differences in the focus of criticism and choice of language style. Gus Mus, as an Indonesian poet, highlights the passive attitude of Indonesian society and uses similes, satire, and sarcasm to sharply criticise socio-political conditions. In contrast, Hasan al-Zaky, who comes from the Arab world, focuses more on the conflict in Gaza and uses literary devices such as allusions to historical figures, metaphors, and personification to inspire a spirit of struggle and moral condemnation without harsh criticism. This difference demonstrates that the language style in poetry is greatly influenced by cultural and geographical contexts, as well as each poet's emotional

connection to the issues they criticise. To facilitate understanding, the following table compares the use of language styles by Gus Mus and Hasan al-Zaky.

Aspect	Gus Mus	Hasan al-Zaky	Similarities
Main theme	Social criticism of Indonesian society's indifference to the Middle East conflict	Social criticism of Arab societies and states indifference to the Gaza-Palestine conflict	Highlight social apathy toward humanitarian conflicts
Conflict Focus	The Middle East	Gaza, Palestine	Emphasizes human suffering and conflict tension
Dominant language style	Simile, satire, sarcasm, irony, repetition of rhetorical questions, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole	Historical-Islamic allusions, metaphor, personification, antithesis, repetition of rhetorical questions, irony, and hyperbole	Use Repetition of rhetorical questions, metaphor, irony, personification, and hyperbole
Cultural context	Indonesian socio-political context, expressed through sharp satire	Arab socio-political and religious context, expressed through moral seriousness	Language style adapts to cultural background
Language tone	Sharp, ironic, and satirical	Moralistic and persuasive	Invites readers to reflect critically
Emotional Focus	Social and emotional expression through satire and sarcasm	Religious and moral emotions	Raises awareness of socio-political and humanitarian issues

#### 4. Implications of Meaning

The poems by Gus Mus and Hasan al-Zaky both raise social criticism of the world's indifference to the conflict in the Middle East. Gus Mus highlights the dullness of the Indonesian people's conscience, as demonstrated through consumerism, social hypocrisy, and comfortable living amidst the suffering of the Palestinian people. Through his poem *Apakah Kau Terlalu Bebal atau Aku yang Terlalu Peka?*, Gus Mus describes a society that enjoys luxury while viewing suffering as entertainment, while also inviting readers to engage in introspection and take real action, rather than just feeling pity (Kumara, 2024).

Meanwhile, the poem *أين أنتم يا عرب؟* by Hasan al-Zaky strongly criticises the silence and indifference of Arab countries towards the conflict in Gaza, Palestine (Derajat & Kurniawan, T.T). His poem contains a moral indictment of the betrayal of the Palestinian

struggle and Western support that prolongs the suffering of the people of Gaza, while calling for a spirit of resistance and independence by referring to the struggles of earlier Islamic figures. A comparison of the two poems shows that style plays an important role in shaping the meaning of social criticism. Gus Mus uses similes and sarcasm to reveal moral contradictions, while Hasan al-Zaky relies on metaphors, antithesis, and historical allusions to build solidarity. Although their styles differ, both affirm poetry as a medium for cross-cultural social criticism influenced by cultural context, audience, and the poet's political position.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that poetry functions not only as an aesthetic expression but also as an effective medium of social criticism, highlighting global indifference toward Middle Eastern conflicts. The findings reveal that language style plays a central role in constructing critical meaning. Gus Mus tends to employ simile and satire rooted in Indonesian social behavior to critique passivity, making the message accessible to local readers. In contrast, Hasan al-Zaky utilizes metaphorical and allusive language, often referencing historical Islamic figures, to represent the suffering of the Palestinian people and to evoke moral awareness among Arab audiences. These differences indicate that social criticism in poetry is strongly influenced by the poet's social, cultural, and political context.

Theoretically, the study contributes to comparative stylistics by showing how similar humanitarian issues are expressed through different stylistic strategies across cultural and linguistic contexts. Practically, it highlights the potential of poetry as a medium for fostering ethical reflection and humanitarian awareness, with applications beyond literature, including education and social discourse on justice and human rights.

The research is limited by its focus on only two poems and two cultural contexts, which may constrain the generalizability of its conclusions. Future studies could broaden the corpus to include works from additional regions or explore other literary genres, such as prose or digital literature, to assess patterns in the use of social criticism. Furthermore, combining stylistic analysis with reader-response approaches or discourse analysis could reveal how audiences from diverse backgrounds interpret and engage with social criticism in literature.



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