

# Gerungisme, “Kitab Suci Fiksi”: Logical and Epistemological Analysis

**Zainal Pikri**

*UIN Antasari Banjarmasin*  
*zainalpikri@uin-antasari.ac.id*

## ABSTRACT

The statement of Rocky Gerung (RG), a popular thinker in Indonesia, that "If I use the definition that fiction activates imagination, the holy book is fiction" at the Indonesia Lawyers Club (ILC), Tuesday (04/10/2018) has caused controversy both in lay circles and philosophy lecturers in Indonesia. Even reported to the Police of the Republic of Indonesia as a statement that blasphemed religion. To be fair in this matter, this paper uses Husserl's phenomenological approach by putting in epoché all beliefs about the scriptures, especially those adopted by the author, to understand the "Holy Book is Fiction" in the conception of Rocky Gerung (RG). This approach allows the author to understand the concept of RG without being disturbed by initial perceptions, religious beliefs and the author's point of view. Then, the author moves to put the concept of RG in the discussion of contemporary logic that develops in analytic philosophy, namely modal logic, to analyze the possibility of the truth that "Holy Book is Fiction." Furthermore, the author identifies an epistemological position that enables one to view eschatological knowledge in the scriptures as something fictional not real and factual. It is hoped that this paper will unravel the confusion surrounding this controversy.

**Keywords:** *Holy Book, fiction, epoche, imagination, epistemology, ontology*

---

**AIUA: Jurnal of Islamic Education**

**Volume I, Number 1, June 2019; ISSN (Online): 2721-687X**



Creative Commons Non Commercial CC BY-NC: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial 4.0 License (<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits noncommercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified on the AIUA: Jurnal of Islamic Education and Open Access pages

## **INTRODUCTION**

On the Indonesia Lawyers Club (ILC), Selasa (10/4/2018) Rocky Gerung (RG) said: “*Kalau saya pakai definisi, bahwa fiksi itu mengaktifkan imajinasi, kitab suci itu adalah fiksi, karena belum selesai, belum tiba itu.*” (If I use the definition, that fiction activates imagination, the holy book is fiction, because it hasn't finished, it hasn't arrived yet).

RG's statement then called “*Kitab Suci Fiksi*” controversy sparked the public debate, particularly on the meaning of “fiction” and the semantic of “*Kitab Suci Fiksi.*” In this article I argue what he meant by “fiction” is “incompleteness”, and I clarify the confusion surrounding the debate by applying phenomenological epoche and Lewisian modal logica reading.

### **What is Fiction?**

We usually classify linguistic products such as novels and fairy tales as 'fiction'. They have contents such as things, events, facts, and situations which are not real.<sup>1</sup> The term "fiction" derives from the Latin  *fingere*  meaning "to form," and this linguistic root is still evident in our practices in treating fictional characters as entities formed by the work of an author or authors in composing a work of fiction. The fictional characters are not discovered by their authors but invented, made up and created by human.<sup>2</sup> In literature, fiction is defined as "the type of book or story that is written about imaginary characters and events and does not describe real people or deal with facts, or a false report or statement that you pretend is true."<sup>3</sup>

In the metaphysical (ontological) perspective, philosophers contrast reality and fiction, or real being and fictional being. The ontological status of fictional being, according to Ibn Sina (980-1037), “that is, of forms which can be entertained by the mind yet have no counterpart in extramental reality.”<sup>4</sup> The fictional beings are unreal and impossible in the sense “the fact that they

---

<sup>1</sup> Ynhui Park, “The Function of Fiction,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 42, no. 3 (March 1982): 416–424.

<sup>2</sup> Amie L. Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*, Cambridge studies in philosophy (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

<sup>3</sup> “FICTION | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary,” accessed February 9, 2019, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fiction>.

<sup>4</sup> Deborah L. Black, “Avicenna on the Ontological and Epistemic Status of Fictional Beings,” *Documenti E Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 8 (1997): 425–453.

always lack actual existence in the concrete."<sup>5</sup> In terms of Ibn Sina's existence and essence distinction, fictional beings have essences in the mind but do not exist in the extramental world, since no actual subject possesses these attributes. "Although both "existents" and "essences" are beings, not all beings have existence".<sup>6</sup> Mulla Sadra (1571/2 - 1640) views fictional beings, like unicorn, as things that have quiddity we can give a definition in the mind but no existence in the extra-mental world.<sup>7</sup> The fictional beings and similar beings in Islamic philosophy are produced by imagination. The imagination and the idea of a world of image (imaginal world/*alam mitsal*) and its ontological status is one of the most controversial issues that divided Islamic philosophers and theologians.<sup>8</sup>

Epistemically, the essence is whatness of being we try to make sense of the things around us and to identify what a thing is. The questions can be about all kinds of entities: individuals; properties; universals; material and immaterial, concrete and abstract mental entities; and so on. the concept of existence is not a whatish concept. Ontologically, however, "whatness" is that which is about some genuine aspects of entities themselves, not their concepts..The whatness of an entity, therefore, comprises all of its properties and represents all of its aspects (its nature, essence, substance, properties, relations, or the combination of all these) except its existence.<sup>9</sup>

To draw the line between whatness and existence is no more than to notice the difference between what a thing is and that it is. For example, one can define what a number or an angle is independent of knowing whether

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Parviz Morewedge, "Philosophical Analysis and Ibn Sina's 'Essence-Existence' Distinction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92, no. 3 (July 1972): 425-435.

<sup>7</sup> Ibrahim Kalin, "Mulla Sadra's Realist Ontology of the Intelligibles and Theory of Knowledge," *The Muslim World* 94, no. 1 (January 2004): 84.

<sup>8</sup> Lambertus Willem Cornelis van Lit, *The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, Shahrzuri, and Beyond*, Edinburgh studies in Islamic apocalypticism and eschatology (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2017); Eiyad S. Al-Kutubi, *Mulla Sadra and Eschatology: Evolution of Being*, Routledge sufi series (London; New York, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015); Oliver Leaman, "The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, Shahrzuri, and Beyond," *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 9, no. 4 (2016): 504-506; Oliver Leaman, *Islamic Philosophy* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), accessed March 10, 2019, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:101:1-201412306685>.

<sup>9</sup> Mirsaeid Mousavi Karimi, "Ibn Sina's Solution to Kant's Challenging View of Existence," *Philosophy East and West* 68, no. 1 (2018): 112-139.

there are any numbers or angles in the world. The reason for this conceptual whatness/existence distinction, as was first argued by Ibn Sīnā and was later repeated by Kant, is simple and yet convincing: the concept of a whatness qua whatness never contains the concept of existence, so that by breaking up the concept of a whatness into those constituent concepts that have all along been thought in it, we never get the concept of existence. Ibn Sīnā uses the example of a triangle to illustrate this: we can talk about the properties of a triangle without even knowing whether there are in fact any triangles.<sup>10</sup>

Ibn Sina's conception of being entered to ontology in Western philosophy through Francisco Suárez (1548-1617), a Spanish scholastics philosopher after Thomas Aquinas. His *Disputationes Metaphysicae* have been considered the most important channel of Greek and medieval philosophy to modernity. That work was regarded as the compendium of knowledge about ancient and medieval metaphysics.<sup>11</sup> In line with Ibn Sina, Francisco Suárez points out that a fiction is not real being, because fictional being is not capable of existence and does not actually exist in extramental realm.<sup>12</sup>

In phenomenology of Husserl, the difference between a fictitious object and a real object was blurred. This is because Husserl rejected the quality of representation; we apprehend the same type of object regardless whether it has a real counterpart. We know only one object, and that is the immanent object, which we do not apprehend as the representation of some other object, and which would be a real object. The existence is not treated as an act and is neutralized in favor of essence. Husserl in his *Logical Investigations* used the word "object" not "being". His focus shifted from real existence to essence in consciousness, an intentional object which is independent of real existence. According to Husserl, the difference between an intentional and a real object is purely logical. If it is an object, then it exists, but that is an intentional existence.<sup>13</sup>

For metaphysics, such an approach is hard to accept precisely because the philosophers who reactivated intentionality did not push to the back the ontological burden of being that really exists, and which is not merely a known content. We should then emphasize that the renaissance of many

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Piotr Jaroszyński, *Metaphysics or Ontology?* (Brill, 2018), 222–223, accessed March 5, 2019, <https://brill.com/abstract/title/36001>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 223–224.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 353–355.

currents of contemporary philosophy built on the reactivated concept of intentionality presupposed certain ontological and epistemological solutions that are in conflict with metaphysical knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

The ontological view that fictional beings don't exist stretched from Greek, Muslim, Medieval and Modern philosopher ended in Alexius Meinong (1853-1920), an Austrian philosopher, the originator of the theory of the object, and that theory proceeds exactly along the lines set by ontology."When Meinong criticizes psychologism, he also emphasizes the content of cognitive acts, but in such a way as to go beyond those acts and refer to objects. However, those objects, as they are not in a concrete way the content of our acts, are independent of any external objects, that is, they are independent of existing reality.<sup>15</sup> (Jaros 124) According to Meinong, fictional objects are nonexistent. They are merely intended object, since they do not exist.<sup>16</sup>

What is an ontological distinction between real objects and fictional objects represented in literary works? Roman Ingarden (1893 - 1970), Polish philosopher, lays down the tenets of what could be considered a phenomenology of reading experience, that is, a description of the fundamental constraints to which reading of fictional works is submitted.<sup>17</sup>

Epistemically when we perceive real objects in the world, we have all possible accesses to physical properties, perceptual and qualitative attributes of the perceived objects. Even though our access to real objects is limited by our attentional finitude and a point of view, partial, and so forth, the ontology of the object remains determined in all respects. Our perception and apprehension of real objects might be incomplete and indeterminate. However, the real objects themselves are already complete and determined, so ready to be found and discovered. On the contrary, ontological status of fictional objects is indeterminate or incomplete. Our apprehension of fictional objects and their properties is restricted by those explicitly mentioned in or directly derivable from the text. Whatever property of the fictional object

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 354-355.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>16</sup> Dale Jacquette, *Alexius Meinong, the Shepherd of Non-Being*, Synthese library 360 (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Peer F. Bundgaard, "Roman Ingarden's Theory of Reader Experience: A Critical Assessment," *Semiotica* 2013, no. 194 (January 5, 2013), accessed March 10, 2019, <https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/semi.2013.2013.issue-194/sem-2013-0027/sem-2013-0027.xml>.

which is not mentioned by the author remains undetermined and undeterminable. Therefore, intentional objects represented in literary artworks contain, for essential reasons, “spots of indeterminacy.” Literary fiction activates the imagination of its readers when the readers expect fictional objects behaving like real objects, displaying the usual properties of real objects, and so on.<sup>18</sup>

The incompleteness of properties of fictional objects created by the authors invites readers to fill out, concretize and recreate what the authors have started. The spots of indeterminacy and incompleteness of the literary text activates our own faculties, enabling us to recreate the world it present. If the author of the text puts the whole picture before his reader's eyes, he will very quickly lose his reader, “for it is only by *activating the reader's imagination* that the author can hope to involve him and so realize the intentions of his text.”<sup>19</sup> The indeterminacy of literary fiction activates the imagination of its readers because the readers expect fictional objects to be complete like real concrete objects in the world .

## **FICTIONALISM**

Those who believe there are no fictional entities in actual reality, like Meinong, are “anti-realists”. The opposite is “realists”. The realist camp believe that there are fictional entities, for we are referring to them and thinking of them when we tell stories. At the end of the twentieth century, the position called “artifactualist” or creationist emerge at the realist camp. They believe that fictional entities like other mind-dependent entities come into being as result of being thought and conceived of by their author or creator. Their author or creator conceived fictional entities and write them into books, therefore they remain in being in a physical or a memory trace like copies of novels.<sup>20</sup> For example, Amie Thomasson views “fictional characters are

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Wolfgang Iser, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” *New Literary History* 3, no. 2 (1972): 287.

<sup>20</sup> Carola Barbero, Maurizio Ferraris, and Alberto Voltolini, “Introduction: From Fictionalism to Realism – Fictional and Other Social Entities,” in *From Fictionalism to Realism*, ed. Carola Barbero, Maurizio Ferraris, and Alberto Voltolini (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 1-2. The artefactualism position originally set forth by Ingarden (1931) and defended first of all by Thomasson (1999).

abstract artifacts".<sup>21</sup> The books contain talks or stories about fictional beings and characters made by their authors and remained in being when their authors are dead.

On the other hand, in the antirealist camp, another conception came about. It is the fictionalist or pretence-theoretical approach. According to such a conception, thoughts or sayings about fiction (fictional entities) are false because they are at any rate cannot be known to be true. They do not *believe* in such thoughts, but they *accept* them.<sup>22</sup> Fictionalists are anti-realists or non-realist, either because they think (i) that their target claims are not true, or because they think (ii) that we are not in any position to assert (perhaps because we are in no position to know) that our target claims are true.<sup>23</sup>

Such fictionalist attitude extended to other talkings about unknown entities. They have been applied to talks in the philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of science, metaethics and metaphysics. Recently there are discussions about moral fictionalism, fictionalism about things like negative existentials, identity statements, propositional attitude reports, and fictional characters, fictionalism about ordinary object discourse, fictionalism about truth, and modal fictionalism.<sup>24</sup> One main source of fictionalism in these other regions are the constructive empiricism of Bas van Fraassen's *The Scientific Image* and mathematical fictionalism of Hartry Field's *Science without Numbers*.

As analogy to fiction, in philosophy of science there is a problem of unobservable entities such as electrons and quarks. Our knowledge of unobservable entities is a matter of inference, conjecture and hypothesis. We only observe the consequences of unobservable entities because in principle we cannot observe these entities. Scientists postulated these entities. Philosophers of science refer to such entities as theoretical entities to distinguish them from observational terms or things.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*, xi.

<sup>22</sup> Barbero, Ferraris, and Voltolini, "Introduction: From Fictionalism to Realism – Fictional and Other Social Entities," 3.

<sup>23</sup> Christopher Jay, "The Kantian Moral Hazard Argument for Religious Fictionalism," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 75, no. 3 (June 2014): 207–232.

<sup>24</sup> Matti Eklund, "Fictionalism," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter Edition 2017, accessed February 8, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/fictionalism>.

<sup>25</sup> Howard Sankey, *Scientific Realism and the Rationality of Science* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 11.

Fraassen refused to believe in the existence of the theoretical entities postulated by science. He regarded the theoretical entities as fictions facilitating systematic account, and not as providing a true explanation. He states his theory of constructive empiricism:

But according to constructive empiricism, the only belief involved in accepting a scientific theory is belief that it is empirically adequate: all that is *both actual and observable* finds a place in some model of the theory. So as far as empirical adequacy is concerned, the theory would be just as good if there existed nothing at all that was either unobservable or not actual. Acceptance of the theory does not commit us to belief in the reality of either sort of thing.<sup>26</sup>

Recently, in the region of religious language we have “religious fictionalism.”<sup>27</sup> What is a religious fictionalism? Scott and Malcolm defines that “Religious fictionalism is the theory that it is morally and intellectually legitimate to affirm religious sentences without believing the content of what is said.”<sup>28</sup> This position and attitude held by those who do not believe in God or any sentence and statement related to God, but want to engage in public and private religious practices or engage in public or private religious discourses. In other cases, persons who do not believe in other’s religious practices but want to participate without believing in the truth of the practices. For example, Muslim in Indonesia who do not believe in “tahlilan or yasinan”, for example, are participating in the practice because it is useful for building harmonious neighbourhood and occasion for face-to-face communication.

In other occasion, although, someone does not believe in God, while I reminded the children (who believe in God) in his village not to steal, She/he could tell them: “Do not steal! God is watching you.” Her/his attitude to their belief is acceptance or pretending that their belief is true. In fact, it is false.

---

<sup>26</sup> Bas C. Van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image*, Clarendon library of logic and philosophy (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1980), 197.

<sup>27</sup> Jay, “The Kantian Moral Hazard Argument for Religious Fictionalism”; Benjamin S. Cordry, “A Critique of Religious Fictionalism,” *Religious Studies* 46, no. 01 (March 2010): 77; Mario D’Amato, “Buddhist Fictionalism,” *Sophia* 52, no. 3 (September 2013): 409-424; Andrew Eshleman, “Religious Fictionalism Defended: Reply to Cordry,” *Religious Studies* 46, no. 01 (March 2010): 91; Jon Robson, “Religious Fictionalism and the Problem of Evil,” *Religious Studies* 51, no. 03 (September 2015): 353-360; Michael Scott and Finlay Malcolm, “Religious Fictionalism,” *Philosophy Compass* 13, no. 3 (March 2018): e12474; Andrea Sauchelli, “The Will to Make-Believe: Religious Fictionalism, Religious Beliefs, and the Value of Art,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 96, no. 3 (May 2018): 620-635.

<sup>28</sup> Scott and Malcolm, “Religious Fictionalism,” .112



However, their belief in fictional Being (God) is useful for her/him and for them as well. Fictionalists accept someone's talking about God as long as it is useful. Their acceptance of their belief could guide their action. This philosophical position of fictionalism is called "useful fiction" as stated by Hilary Putnam (1926 - 2016), an American analytic philosopher:

For the fictionalist says, in substance" Yes, certain concepts--material object, number, set, etc.--are indispensable, but *no*, that has no tendency to show that entities corresponding to those concepts actually exist. It only shows that those 'entities' are *useful* fictions.<sup>29</sup>

There are two types of fictionalism: revolutionary and hermeneutic fictionalism. Revolutionary fictionalists do not believe religious claims are true and should not believe that it they are true. However, they argue religious discourse has sufficient pragmatic benefits that they should continue to employ religious language and engage in religious thought rather than eliminate it. They are motivated by the wish to continue to receive the social and other benefits of engagement with a religion or religious community without commitment to its truth. Hermeneutic fictionalism about religion is the view about what *do* speakers actually say on religious matters not about what speakers *should* do while saying religious matters. According to this view. speakers accept but do not believe what they say when engaging in religious discourse.<sup>30</sup>

In order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding while listening to the fictionalist engaging in public discourse on religious matters, there are two proposed solutions: (1) silent operator; and (2) quasi-assertion. One option, influenced by David Lewis' treatment of fiction, is that utterances of the disputed discourse should be understood as containing a silent operator.<sup>31</sup> David Lewis suggested the confusion could be clarified if disputed utterances be taken as prefixed sentences. For example, "'In the Sherlock Holmes

---

<sup>29</sup> Hilary Putnam, *Philosophy of Logic (Routledge Revivals)*. (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 63, accessed March 4, 2019, <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1665770>.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Scott, "Religious Language," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter Edition 2017, accessed February 9, 2018, <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/religious-language/>>.

<sup>31</sup> Scott and Malcolm, "Religious Fictionalism," 2

<sup>31</sup> Scott and Malcolm, "Religious Fictionalism,"

stories,...."Context, content, and common sense will usually resolve the ambiguity in practice.<sup>32</sup>

Other solution quasi-assertion or pretend assertion. In a speech act, fictionalists could behave similarly to assertion but they do not commit to the truth of what is said. So, when the religious fictionalist says that "God exists," she does not express the belief that God exists, because she only pretends to assert that God exists.<sup>33</sup> Peter Lipton suggested scientists could immerse in religious discourses and practices without believing in what is said and practiced. He called this as being religious without belief.<sup>34</sup>

Which one of this strategy is successful depends on the nature of the particular religious community within which we imagine the fictionalist taking part.<sup>35</sup> In case of Indonesia where Muslims are majority, but before presidential election political atmosphere is highly combustible and they are sharply divided into two political rivalry camps, particularly between the 212 alliance including the hardline Islamic Defenders Front who support Prabowo versus the voice of moderation of Nahdlatul Ulama who support Jokowi for the second term. In a such condition, speaking sensitive and disputed religious matters will be taken seriously and wildly roasted (*digoreng*) with a hotly intense politicking by respective supporters of the two presidential candidates.

### **Bracketing (RG's Holy Book)**

In this section I will discuss RG's Holy Book from the perspectives of phenomenology and Lewisian modal logic reading.<sup>36</sup> Public reaction to Kitab Suci Fiksi could be clarified from phenomenological "epoche" and David Lewis' theory of fiction.

---

<sup>32</sup> Lewis David, "Truth in Fiction," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1978): 37-46.

<sup>33</sup> Scott and Malcolm, "Religious Fictionalism," 2-3.

<sup>34</sup> Lipton Peter, "Science and Religion: The Immersion Solution," in *Realism and Religion: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. Andrew Moore and Michael Scott (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate Pub, 2007), 31-36.

<sup>35</sup> Eshleman, "Religious Fictionalism Defended."

<sup>36</sup> Frank Jackson and Graham Priest, eds., *Lewisian Themes: The Philosophy of David K. Lewis* (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 2004). David Kellogg Lewis (September 28, 1941 - October 14, 2001) was an American philosopher. He is one of the outstanding analytic philosophers of the 20th century. He is probably best known for his controversial modal realist stance

### **Inside Bracket**

In this section I perform phenomenological description of RG's point of view, so as to ensure that his ((Holy Book))-- "bracketed"-- so can be described exactly as he intended. As a Muslim, in order to understand the "Rocky Gerung's Holy Book" I suspend all external objects (all holy books, including my belief in Holy Qur'an) from entering the bracket. The contents of his HB might be different from the existing holy books out there in his extra-mental world. I use the transcript from Arief Luqman El Hakiem (Bhayangkara Indonesia News, Maspolin, Blogger Polri).<sup>37</sup>

The question is: Does he define the Holy Book as a fiction without even knowing whether there are in fact any other holy books out there which are real not fictional; or does he mean all holy books are fictional?

Given that the RG's discourse takes place in a public context in Muslim-majority country in which Muslims believe in what their Holy Book says is real and not fictional, he might be accused of being blasphemous for insulting their belief and their Holy Book. I, myself, while listening to his speech thought he was offensive to the Holy Quran until I heard in the YouTube he "closed" by saying that he did not mean to be naming any books out there.

*Kitab suci yang mana? Saya tidak jawab, ....saya bilang kitab suci...waktu saya memilih kata kitab suci, dengan sendirinya saya menghindari menyebut nama kitabnya*

He himself "bracketed" his HB and put all other holy books outside. What he intended is intentional object in his consciousness. The contents of his Holy Book do not represent other holy books out there outside his mental world. He was limiting his referential semantic domain exclusively to a distinct object independent of any external objects. His Holy Book is independent of existing reality of other holy books. When he conceived his Holy Book, he did not refer to any existing holy books.

By Lewisian reading, public reaction to and confusion on Kitab Suci Fiksi could be clarified from David Lewis' theory of fiction. With adding prefix: "According to RG's Kitab Suci (*bukan Kitab Suci Al-Quran*)..... those who used this prefix,....All RG's statements about Kitab Suci Fiksi are true if

---

<sup>37</sup> Luqman El Hakiem, "Blogger Polri: Transkrip Lengkap Diskursus Seputar Fiksi Oleh Rocky Gerung (ILC TvOne 10 April 2018)," *Blogger Polri*, April 14, 2018, accessed February 4, 2019, <https://bhayangkaraindonesianews.blogspot.com/2018/04/transkrip-lengkap-diskursus-seputar.html>.

taken as abbreviations for prefixed sentences. (*Menurut Rocky, menurut kitab suci Rocky.....*” This silent operator was expressed by one of comments on YouTube as follows:

*jelas sekali yg di bacanya kan kitab suci agama dia ya terang fiksi.. RK belum pernah baca Al-Quran...yg jelas Al-Quran tidak ada yg fiksi tp masuk akal.... kita sbg umat Islam jg terpancing dulu.... dia non muslim jadi rK mengannnggap kitab suci dia itu fiksi..... enjoy saja.<sup>38</sup>*

In the same Lewisian reading, Buya Yahya states RG did not employ the prefixed sentences referring to Al-Quran. Buya Yahya said “*Kecuali dia menyebut nama Kitab Sucinya, misalnya Al-Quran*”.<sup>39</sup> The problem is not everyone is employing the silent operator while watching and listening to his utterances in the ILC. Confusion remains spread wildly in the public and social media.

### **Outside Bracket**

Did RG consistently stay inside the bracket? While RG was replying the question from his interlocutor (Dwi Ria Latifa from PDIP) by questioning her back whether a holy book is fiction or fact, I think he was going outside his bracket. The conversation went as follows:

*(Dwi Ria Latifa dari PDIP menyela).*

*Dwi Ria Latifa (DRL) : ee, tunggu Prof. saya.*

*RG : Ya, silakan.*

*DRL : eee. Kurang paham saya ini. Kitab suci, sebagai suatu hal yang fiksi itu..., penuh tanda tanya buat saya ini.*

*RG : Okay, saya jawab sekarang supaya tanda tanya itu hilang.*

*DRL : Karena jangan sampai ini nanti menjadi suatu hal yang... ee terjadi kesalahpahaman.*

*RG : Ya saya tahu, saya tahu akibatnya. Karena itu saya terangkan, supaya nggak jadi, dicari-cari jadi delik. Saya ngerti dari awal itu, problem itu.*

*Kalau saya tanya sekarang, "Kitab suci itu fiksi atau fakta, Anda mau jawab apa ?".*

*Is it fact too? Enggak. Jadi kesalahan kita, kita memakai kata fiksi itu untuk di-bully sehingga seolah-olah fiksi buruk.*

---

<sup>38</sup> “Rocky Gerung: Kitab Suci Adalah Fiksi! - YouTube,” accessed March 2, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yStUnSqVnvA&t=2s>.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Bahjah TV, *Kitab Suci Fiksi : Penistaan Agamakah? - Buya Yahya Menjawab*, n.d., accessed March 10, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9I0blTnsSU>.

When he elaborated what he meant by fiction attributed to holy book to his interlocutor (Dwi Ria Latifa), he repeated what he had said in slightly different words. Before he said the holy book is fictional not factual (adjective) and then it is fiction not fact (noun). As he said before: *“Anda abaikan sifat fiksional dari kitab suci. Kan itu bukan faktual, belum terjadi.”*

By asking his interlocutor’s perception of holy book whether it is fictional or factual, he was assuming semantically his interlocutor in the same “bracket” with him, shared the same meaning and perception about the fictionality of holy book. His another interlocutor, Akbar Faisal, reminded him this semantic difference in terms of sense and reference. Akbar Faisal said:

*AF : Nggak apa-apa, aa ini bagus saya suka, saya tiba-tiba harus kembali ke kelas-kelas filsafat. Karena beliau adalah... Saya, sebagian pemahaman saya yang sederhana tentang argumen Anda mengatakan kitab suci itu adalah fiksi, pada titik tertentu saya bisa pahami. Tapi saya tidak tahu, argumen tentang ini Anda bangun pada kitab suci yang mana ? Hati-hati ! Tentu saja saya mencoba untuk memahamai apa yang Anda katakan, tapi di dalam agama kami, di Islam, fiksi yang saya katakan tadi sebagian saya pahami, dalam kenyataannya terbukti dalam kehidupan kami sebagai muslim. Jadi dia bukan fiksi lagi, dia sudah menjadi sebuah fakta. Jangan katakan bahwa saya tidak paham yang Anda maksud. Saya paham yang Anda maksud.*

Akbar Faisal semantically and ontologically committed his holy book (Quran) contains real and factual things. Some of what Quran says have become a fact (*sudah menjadi sebuah fakta*). It refers to factual and real things in this world.

### **Fictional Eschatology**

No doubt that the book we actually see on the table in front of us is real and concrete. It is real for we can spill coffee over the book. When RG said the holy book is fiction, I think he did not mean the holy book is not real. What he meant is the holy book contains fictional objects. One of its contents is eschatology. He said:

*Kalau saya bilang kitab suci itu fiktif, o besok saya dipenjara tu. Tapi kalau saya bilang itu fiksi, saya punya argumen. Karena saya berharap terhadap eskatologi dari kitab suci.*

What does he mean by eschatology? From his further clarification in the media, he mentioned “heaven” and “hell.” They are two matters among other

matters discussed in eschatology, such as death and the afterlife. RG clarified when someone is reading holy book that mentions and describes heaven and hell, she/he will imagine what hell is really like. We may imagine the hell contains fires from coal or electric current that are burning.

We can interpret his view of eschatology as fiction by applying Roman Ingarden's theory of reader experience. Someone who reads the word "hell" and its description in the holy book only gets a partial not the whole picture of the hell. This incompleteness activates the reader's imagination of the hell as far as her/his horizon could reach. If someone lived at the time where he only knew fires produced from wood, this horizon of the reader will shape her/his understanding the fire in the hell from the wood. Thus, the reader expects and imagine the properties of fire in the hell like properties of fire in the real world where she/he lives now. If the book already mentioned the word "wood", the reader still imagine what the wood is really like.

When RG said the eschatology is fictional, the hell is fictional, and the heaven is fictional, what did he mean? These statements can be interpreted *epistemically* or *ontologically*. In terms of epistemology, our source of knowledge about eschatology is our holy book. The extent of our knowledge as far as described in the holy book. We as ordinary human beings never directly see the hell and heaven. Our imagination is activated by this incomplete description of the hell and heaven. When we can see the hell or heaven as real concrete objects our imagination finished because we already have the whole picture. There is no any spot of indeterminacy any more for our imagination to fill out and concretise.

Logically, not whatever we do not and cannot see is nonexistent. Interpreted in this way, *epistemically* by saying the hell or heaven is fictional it is not necessarily the case he is committed to *non*-existence of eschatology such as hell and heaven. We may say "Even though I never see hell, still I believe the hell exists." In RG's view, epistemological status of fictional objects and eschatology is the same. Therefore, we cannot certainly say what he meant is the hell and heaven does not exist.

On the other side, if we decide the ontological status of objects after epistemology, the hell does not exist neither does the heaven. RG interpreted holy book contains things similar to fictional objects in terms of ontological incompleteness (*belum selesai, belum tiba*). He said: "*kitab suci itu adalah fiksi, karena belum selesai, belum tiba itu.*" RG points out the heaven and hell are

examples of things incomplete (*belum selesai, belum tiba*). Therefore, it is fictional but does mean it is ontologically non-existent.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, the confusion surrounding RG's "Kitab Suci itu Fiksi" could be clarified by phenomenological and lewisian modal logic reading. This reading is successful if only if we as readers or listeners keep our assumption and belief in our own holy book keep separate from RG's assumption and belief either by means of phenomenological epoche (bracketing) or by employing silent operators suggested by David Lewis.

By applying Roman Ingarden's theory of reader experience and ontological status of fictional objects, I have clarified what RG meant by "fictional" is "incomplete" (*belum selesai, belum tiba*) and "fiction" as "incompleteness." We should not read his definition: "*Kalau saya pakai definisi, bahwa fiksi itu mengaktifkan imajinasi, kitab suci itu adalah fiksi,*" separate from "*karena belum selesai, belum tiba itu.*" I propose he should modify his definition as follows: "*Kalau saya pakai definisi bahwa fiksi itu belum selesai, belum tiba, kitab suci itu adalah fiksi, karena mengaktifkan imajinasi.*"

REFERENCES

- Al-Bahjah TV. *Kitab Suci Fiksi : Penistaan Agamakah? - Buya Yahya Menjawab*, n.d. Accessed March 10, 2019.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9I0bITnsSU>.
- Al-Kutubi, Eiyad S. *Mullā Ṣadra and Eschatology: Evolution of Being*. Routledge sufi series. London ; New York, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015.
- Barbero, Carola, Maurizio Ferraris, and Alberto Voltolini. "Introduction: From Fictionalism to Realism — Fictional and Other Social Entities." In *From Fictionalism to Realism*, edited by Carola Barbero, Maurizio Ferraris, and Alberto Voltolini, 1–7. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013.
- Black, Deborah L. "Avicenna on the Ontological and Epistemic Status of Fictional Beings." *Documenti E Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 8 (1997): 425–453.
- Bundgaard, Peer F. "Roman Ingarden's Theory of Reader Experience: A Critical Assessment." *Semiotica* 2013, no. 194 (January 5, 2013). Accessed March 10, 2019.  
<https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/semi.2013.2013.issue-194/sem-2013-0027/sem-2013-0027.xml>.
- Cordry, Benjamin S. "A Critique of Religious Fictionalism." *Religious Studies* 46, no. 01 (March 2010): 77.
- D'Amato, Mario. "Buddhist Fictionalism." *Sophia* 52, no. 3 (September 2013): 409–424.
- David, Lewis. "Truth in Fiction." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1978): 37–46.
- Eklund, Matti. "Fictionalism." Edited by Edward N. Zalta. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter Edition 2017. Accessed February 8, 2019.  
<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/fictionalism>.
- Eshleman, Andrew. "Religious Fictionalism Defended: Reply to Cordry." *Religious Studies* 46, no. 01 (March 2010): 91.
- Iser, Wolfgang. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." *New Literary History* 3, no. 2 (1972): 279.
- Jacquette, Dale. *Alexius Meinong, the Shepherd of Non-Being*. Synthese library 360. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015.
- Jaroszyński, Piotr. *Metaphysics or Ontology?* Brill, 2018. Accessed March 5,



2019. <https://brill.com/abstract/title/36001>.
- Jay, Christopher. "The Kantian Moral Hazard Argument for Religious Fictionalism." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 75, no. 3 (June 2014): 207–232.
- Kalin, Ibrahim. "Mulla Sadra's Realist Ontology of the Intelligibles and Theory of Knowledge." *The Muslim World* 94, no. 1 (January 2004): 81–106.
- Karimi, Mirsaeid Mousavi. "Ibn Sīnā's Solution to Kant's Challenging View of Existence." *Philosophy East and West* 68, no. 1 (2018): 112–139.
- Leaman, Oliver. *Islamic Philosophy*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2013. Accessed March 10, 2019. <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:101:1-201412306685>.
- — —. "The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, Shahrazuri, and Beyond." *Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* 9, no. 4 (2016): 504–506.
- Lit, Lambertus Willem Cornelis van. *The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, Shahrazūrī, and Beyond*. Edinburgh studies in Islamic apocalypticism and eschatology. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2017.
- Morewedge, Parviz. "Philosophical Analysis and Ibn Sīnā's 'Essence-Existence' Distinction." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92, no. 3 (July 1972): 425–435.
- Park, Ynhui. "The Function of Fiction." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 42, no. 3 (March 1982): 416–424.
- Peter, Lipton. "Science and Religion: The Immersion Solution." In *Realism and Religion: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*, edited by Andrew Moore and Michael Scott, 31–36. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate Pub, 2007.
- Putnam, Hilary. *Philosophy of Logic (Routledge Revivals)*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014. Accessed March 4, 2019. <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1665770>.
- Robson, Jon. "Religious Fictionalism and the Problem of Evil." *Religious Studies* 51, no. 03 (September 2015): 353–360.
- Sankey, Howard. *Scientific Realism and the Rationality of Science*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Sauchelli, Andrea. "The Will to Make-Believe: Religious Fictionalism, Religious Beliefs, and the Value of Art." *Philosophy and*

*Phenomenological Research* 96, no. 3 (May 2018): 620–635.

Scott, Michael. "Religious Language." Edited by Edward N. Zalta. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter Edition 2017. Accessed February 9, 2018.  
<<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/religious-language/>>.

Scott, Michael, and Finlay Malcolm. "Religious Fictionalism." *Philosophy Compass* 13, no. 3 (March 2018): e12474.

Thomasson, Amie L. *Fiction and Metaphysics*. Cambridge studies in philosophy. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Van Fraassen, Bas C. *The Scientific Image*. Clarendon library of logic and philosophy. Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1980.

"FICTION | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary." Accessed February 9, 2019.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fiction>.

"Rocky Gerung: Kitab Suci Adalah Fiksi! - YouTube." Accessed March 2, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yStUnSqVnvA&t=2s>.