READING THE QUR'AN THROUGH SEMANALYSIS: TEXT, SIGNIFICANCE, AND INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONS

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Abstract: This study employs the theoretical framework of *semanalysis* to examine the interpretation of a Qur'anic verse concerning the phenomenon of rain. The research applies a methodological sequence that begins with the *semanalytic* approach, proceeds through an analysis of the concepts of *genotext* and *phenotext*, explores the distinction between *signification* and *signification*, and culminates in the investigation of intertextual relations within the text. The findings indicate that the meaning of rain in the Qur'an is dynamic and context-dependent, shaped by the interpreter's engagement with its social, linguistic, and religious dimensions. Ultimately, rain is represented as both a manifestation of divine mercy and a symbolic admonition, urging humanity to contemplate the transcendence and omnipotence of Allah.

Keywords: Existential Approach;Intertextuality;Semanalysis

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Introduction

The discussion of Qur'anic texts concerning rain appears 66 times throughout the verses of the Qur'an. However, only 19 of these instances explicitly carry meanings related to rain. From the total of 66 verses, 71 data points have been identified, consisting of 24 literal meanings and 47 figurative ones (Khalwani, Hasyim, and Miftahudin 2017:1). According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), rain is defined as droplets of water that fall from the sky due to the hydrological cycle (Depdikbud 1989). In the Qur'an, rain is described in various ways but essentially represents a blessing bestowed by Allah upon His creation.

The discussion of rain within Qur'anic texts in Indonesia cannot be separated from its meanings, derivations, and connotations. This is because Indonesia, being a Muslim-majority country, tends to have a practical religious orientation, where the Qur'an functions as the primary source of guidance and thus permeates all dimensions of life. Consequently, it also helps shape societal perceptions and paradigms regarding natural phenomena—one of which is rain (Mauliddin 2018:89).

In one study entitled *Kata Bermakna Hujan dalam Al-Qur'an (A Semantic and Stylistic Review)*, the author explores the meaning of rain in the Qur'an. However, the work does not elaborate on the research process that led to the data findings concerning Qur'anic texts about rain. Therefore, a more systematic process is needed to explain the semantic meaning of the word "rain" in the Qur'an. Since semantics is a branch of semiotics, and stylistics deals with linguistic style, a comprehensive and integrative method is required to enrich the understanding of Qur'anic textual meanings. A relevant analytical approach is also necessary to ensure that the interpretations remain consistent with other Qur'anic verses.

Reading the Quran Through Semanalysis:
Text, Significance, and Intertextual Relations

In addressing this issue, the writer employs an intertextual approach, which involves comparing one text with another related text. This approach cannot be separated from the semiotic theory of Julia Kristeva, a Western philosopher who introduced the concept of intertextuality in textual studies. Kristeva substantially emphasized the dynamic potential within a text, viewing each text as a heterogeneous combination of other texts. She explains that a text is a "permutation of texts, an intertextuality within a specific text," wherein "several utterances taken from other texts intersect and neutralize one another." In this sense, intertextuality represents the configuration of pre-existing words and expressions, making the text "polyphonic" or "multi-voiced." Intertextuality thus relates to the realization of text as a social construct that persists across time and history (Raj 2015:77–78).

According to the author's research, no study has yet been conducted that applies Julia Kristeva's intertextual perspective to the concept of rain in the Qur'an. A previous study by Muhammad Sakti Garwan, *Analisis Semiotika pada Teks Al-Qur'an tentang "Khamar" dalam Pendekatan Semanalisis hingga Intertekstualitas Julia Kristeva*, utilized Kristeva's methods effectively to connect Qur'anic texts with contemporary social issues. Building upon that framework, the present study seeks to explore Qur'anic representations of rain using Julia Kristeva's intertextual approach.

This research focuses particularly on *Surah Ash-Shuraa (42:28)*, which portrays the despair of the Muslim community followed by the mercy of rainfall. This verse was chosen because it reflects both a trial and a blessing. Through this, the author aims to uncover the existential meaning of rain as expressed in the verse, and to intertextually relate it with other Qur'anic verses that address similar themes.

Methodologically, this study employs a **qualitative research approach**, aiming to produce interpretive analysis of the collected data (Sugiyono 2016:8). The research type is **library research**, with data obtained from books, archives, documents, journals, notes, audiovisual materials, monographs, diaries, and letters (Simanjuntak and Sosrodiharjo 2014:8). The primary literature includes Julia Kristeva's works concerning *semanalysis* and *intertextuality*. Because this research centers on a philosophical figure, its **material object** consists of Qur'anic verses related to rain, while its **formal object** is Julia Kristeva's thought on *semanalysis* and *intertextuality*. Accordingly, the main data collection technique used in this study is **documentation**, as documents help identify prior studies, verify data validity, and facilitate interpretation and conclusion-drawing (Djaelani 2013:88).

For data analysis, this study applies a **historical-descriptive analytical method** as a bridge to explain Kristeva's ideas on *semanalysis* and *intertextuality*. This is strengthened by the **sociology of knowledge** approach developed by Karl Mannheim, which is used to examine the relationship between Kristeva's thoughts and her social-historical context (Pratina 2019:6). To uncover the existential dimension of rain in Kristeva's framework, the author also applies **Hans-Georg Gadamer's effective hermeneutics** to analyze meaning within Kristeva's texts. Gadamer's hermeneutics aligns social psychology with interpretive understanding, emphasizing the impact of a text or discourse on its recipients. Thus, the hermeneutic task here is to draw the text into the realm of interpretation (Sukirno 2018:53).

To ensure the validity of data, this research uses **theoretical triangulation**, which involves comparing information with relevant theoretical perspectives to minimize researcher bias (Mamik 2015:118). This method is

chosen because the study is based on library research. In analyzing the existence of rain within the Qur'an, this research employs **Julia Kristeva's semiotic analysis**, extending from *semanalysis* to *intertextuality*. Semiotics, as a field, deals with all phenomena related to signs—their systems and processes of use (Kholifah 2020:130). It assumes that social and cultural realities, including language, are meaningful systems of signs. Hence, extracting meaning from a particular text requires a holistic analysis that considers the text's linguistic and contextual relationships (Hamdani 2016:39–40).

Kristeva's theory of *semanalysis* and *intertextuality* proceeds through several stages: beginning with *semanalysis*, leading to the emergence of *genotext* and *phenotext* (Garwan 2020:54–55), followed by the differentiation between *signifiance* and *signifying*, and culminating in the search for intertextuality. In her *La Révolution du Langage Poétique*, Kristeva defines intertextuality as the transposition of one or more sign systems into another (Roudiez 1941:15), allowing texts to interact with their social and historical conditions (Kristeva 1941:36). She asserts that every text is composed of quotations, carrying information and transformations derived from other texts (Kristeva 1941:66).

Because this study analyzes Qur'anic texts, the intertextual method is applied by connecting one Qur'anic verse to another with thematic or semantic relations. It may also involve comparisons with related texts such as prophetic hadiths, Arabic poetry, as well as Jewish and Christian scriptures that existed during the Qur'an's revelation (Syamsuddin 2020:12).

Biography of Julia Kristeva

Julia Kristeva is a French poststructuralist philosopher of Bulgarian origin (Fotaki 2020:42), born on June 24, 1941 (Yukesti 2015:169). She has been based in Paris

since the mid-1960s (Garwan 2020:52), where she began studying and working in 1965. Kristeva's nomadic lifestyle often reflects her quest for spiritual and intellectual identity, as she has traveled extensively to China, the United States, Europe, and other regions.

Kristeva received an education deeply rooted in the Orthodox religious tradition and developed an early passion for the French language and literature. She began learning French as a child and later earned her bachelor's degree in the subject. Kristeva describes herself as a *"pure product of Francophonie."* She was awarded a French government scholarship to pursue her studies in France, where she prepared her university thesis in literature at Sofia University in 1965 (Meng 2020:113).

Her doctoral dissertation, *La Révolution du langage poétique* (*The Revolution in Poetic Language*), was first published in French in 1974 and later translated into English in 1985. This seminal work secured her position as a full professor in French academia. Among her other major works are *Sémiotikè: recherches pour une sémanalyse* (1969) and *Polylogue* (1977), the former of which remains largely untranslated. During this period, Kristeva was actively involved in writing for and later editing the avant-garde literary journal *Tel Quel*. The central contribution of these works lies in reintroducing the living body into language, framing subjectivity as dialogical and embodied—a foundation for her psychoanalytic understanding of the subject as a process defined by its material and unconscious existence. In her later works, Kristeva turned toward integrating psychoanalysis with linguistics to theorize the evolving process of subject formation (Fotaki 2020:45).

Kristeva was born into an intellectual and well-educated family: her mother was a brilliant scientist, while her father was a theologian who likely influenced her spiritual sensibilities. Since the 1970s, Kristeva has remained

an international public intellectual, continuing her academic and philosophical contributions from the 1980s to the present. The post-war sociopolitical climate in Bulgaria also influenced her intellectual development, reflected in her critiques of the Communist Party—often conveyed through coded language understood primarily by Bulgarian intellectuals. Kristeva describes herself as a *"contesting intellectual,"* emphasizing secular humanism, which positioned her as a key figure for posthumanist thinkers who inherited postmodern thought, even though her writings rarely touch directly on her formal education (Downey 2020:201–202).

In France, Kristeva serves as a writer, psychoanalyst, and Professor at Paris Diderot University (Paris VII). She holds honorary doctorates from various universities worldwide. Her numerous international honors include the *Officer of the French Legion of Honor* (the highest national distinction in France, awarded in 1997) and the prestigious *Hannah Arendt Prize for Political Thought* in 2006. In 2004, she became the first recipient of Norway's *Holberg Prize*, in recognition of her "innovative exploration at the intersection of language, culture, and literature, bridging research across the humanities and social sciences with profound impact on feminist theory." She later received the *Simone de Beauvoir Prize for Women's Freedom* in 2008 (Fotaki 2020:43).

Kristeva is known as a non-religious intellectual— evident from accounts noting that Pope Benedict XVI personally invited her, along with three other non-believing intellectuals, to a private meeting (Meng 2020:119). Despite this, various writings report that she was born to Christian parents, her father being an accountant for the Church. Her works, including *Sémiotikè* (1969), have made substantial contributions to cultural theory and feminism, shaping poststructuralist perspectives (Yukesti 2015:169–170).

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As a prolific author, Kristeva has produced an extensive body of work. Among her most influential publications are *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* and *Hatred and Forgiveness* (Chattopadhyay 2017:720). Her intellectual formation was deeply influenced by her position as a foreign woman and hybrid subject bridging multiple disciplines—enabling her to establish herself as a global thinker. Kristeva's semiotic theories were influenced by prominent poststructuralist figures such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Roland Barthes, all of whom helped initiate an intellectual revolution in the social sciences, art, and humanities (Fotaki 2020:43–44). She was also significantly inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin's *La poétique de Dostoïevski*, which profoundly shaped her view of textual development and dialogism (Petrilli and Ponzio 2017:1485).

Kristeva's theory of the process of signification in language proposes that meaning (*signifiance*) consists of two interacting elements: the *symbolic*—associated with the cognitive, discursive, and normative aspects of language— and the *semiotic*, which reflects the preverbal rhythms of the body, a space she terms the *chora*. Her psychoanalytic perspective was influenced by her close friend Jacques Lacan, particularly his idea of the subject's entry into the symbolic order. Kristeva connects the evolution of subjectivity to the evolution of language, focusing on how the subject becomes situated within the symbolic realm (Fotaki 2020:44–46).

In Kristeva's conception, the semiotic and symbolic functions operate within psychological, textual, and social dimensions, reflecting Sigmund Freud's distinction between pre-Oedipal drives and Oedipal sexuality. This framework integrates Freudian analysis with Lacanian structural psychoanalysis and semiology. Hence, Kristeva's semiotics can be seen as anarchic—grounded in pre-Oedipal drives, polymorphous erotic zones, and the corporeal sources of

rhythm and vitality rooted in the maternal body. Her semiotics represents the raw, bodily material of signification, channeling libidinal energies toward social cohesion and regulation. The symbolic, by contrast, is the Oedipalized and socially regulated system governed by the "Law of the Father" (Garwan 2020:53).

In conclusion, Julia Kristeva stands as a French intellectual of Bulgarian origin whose life embodies both intellectual wanderlust and spiritual exploration. Her thought remains in constant motion—after long reflecting on human suffering through psychoanalysis, she later turned to theological contemplation, seeking to understand the deep human need for belief that resides within every individual (Meng 2020:120).

Intellectual Semanalysis of Julia Kristeva

Kristeva is one of the female semiotic figures in the postmodern era who later became known as a feminist theoretician, and her thought is focused on the language that exists within poetry, viewed from various perspectives. Because such an approach can give birth to meanings that correspond to the subject matter being discussed (Garwan 2020:50).

In Kristeva's perspective, the strength of semiotics is based on the elimination of sexual difference, because if such sexual difference exists, it will give rise to gender bias. Therefore, it is not surprising that Kristeva only discusses men as writers or creators at the forefront, representing that men are the best semiotic order of the repressed feminine (Kristianto 2017:31). Furthermore, regarding the application of Julia Kristeva's theory chosen by the author, it concerns the existence of rain, in which the author connects the theory with the content or messages contained in the Qur'an. The existence of rain in the Qur'an is explicitly described as a

mercy bestowed by God, as stated in *Surah Ash-Shuraa*, verse 28:

وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى يُنَزِّلُ ٱلْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا۟ وَيَنشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُۥ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْوَلِىُّ ٱلْحَمِيدُ

The meaning of the verse is: "And He it is who sends down the rain after they have despaired, and spreads His mercy. And He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy."

The explanation of this verse, when viewed directly through classical interpretation, one of which can be found in *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, focuses on the *asbab an-nuzul* (circumstances of revelation) of the verse. It explains that there was a man who said to Umar ibn al-Khattab that rain did not fall and people had fallen into despair. Then the Commander of the Faithful answered that they would indeed receive rain, while Umar recited Surah Ash-Shuraa verse 28 (Al-Sheikh 2005a:253–54).

Meanwhile, when it is brought into the realm of modern interpretation, one of which can be found in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, it is explained that the verse carries a broader meaning not only concerning rain. Buya Hamka contextualized it with the despair once experienced by the Indonesian people and also by Muslims outside Indonesia who were colonized and enslaved by foreign nations. And by Allah's mercy, they finally gained independence (Amrullah 2007:6513). However, both interpretations are, in the writer's view, still not sufficient to explain the meaning of rain in the present and local contexts. This is because, in the contemporary era, not only scholars of Qur'anic exegesis engage with tafsir, but many beyond that field, including lay people, also refer to tafsir for understanding.

According to the writer's view, Julia Kristeva's theory, which offers the approach of *semanalysis*, followed by *genotext* and *phenotext*, then *significance* and *signifying*,

and finally *intertextuality*, is a relevant framework for the current condition. Through this, the interpreter of the verse can contextualize it with present situations while maintaining awareness of the Qur'an's eternal attribute *likulli zaman wa makan* (for all times and places). Furthermore, other texts that discuss rain may also be examined to strengthen perspectives in understanding rain. Although it cannot be denied that Julia Kristeva's approach is essentially a method for analyzing texts, this approach can still be applied to the Qur'anic text and can offer broader and more logical insights for understanding the meaning of the Qur'an.

Surah Ash-Shuraa verse 28 specifically explains rain as a mercy. When it is juxtaposed with other interpretations, it may yield various layers of meaning, including those related to the environment and human life. For instance, in Indonesia, some regions experience rain as a source of coolness, fertile crops, and sufficient water supply. Yet, in other areas, frequent rainfall leads to floods that force local residents to evacuate to higher grounds, as occurred in 2021 in regions such as South Kalimantan and parts of Java and Sulawesi.

In this context, there are also instances of misunderstanding in interpreting the verse, particularly when it is taken purely textually without comprehending its complete and intertextual meaning. When employing Julia Kristeva's *semanalysis* approach, every interpreter must distinguish between *genotext* and *phenotext*. *Phenotext* refers to all linguistic aspects that serve communicative, representative, and expressive functions, and that shape cultural values (Fajri 2014:17). It encompasses the phenomena and characteristics of language structure, genre rules, codified melismatic forms, the author's idiolect, and interpretive style (Garwan 2020:57). *Genotext*, on the other hand, is the underlying process that contains the historical

evolution of language and various signifying practices, which can be perceived before they are covered by the *phenotext* (Fajri 2014:17).

It can thus be understood and concluded that the *genotext* of this verse explains the mercy of rain in Surah Ash-Shuraa verse 28, as explicitly expressed in the phrase *"wayansyuru rahmatahu"* (and spreads His mercy). The word *"rahmatahu"* contains the attached pronoun *"hu"* which refers back to *"alladhi"* (He), which is none other than Allah. Therefore, it can be understood that the rain mentioned in the verse is the outpouring of mercy granted by Allah. Meanwhile, the *phenotext* can be understood as the meaning derived by the interpreter, or more precisely, as the thought that is born from the *genotext*. The *phenotext* of this verse explains explicitly that rain is sent down after human beings fall into despair over the long absence of rain, and that the descent of rain from the sky is a manifestation of Allah's compassion for His creatures. It is also an expression of His protection, as Allah possesses the attributes of the Protector and the Praiseworthy. In essence, the *phenotext* is born from the *genotext*, with Surah Ash-Shuraa verse 28 serving as the *genotext* and the meanings derived from it constituting the *phenotext*.

Then, in the process of uncovering meaning, Julia Kristeva further divides it into two aspects, namely *significance* and *signifying*. The explanation of *significance* refers to a process that carries hidden connotative meanings within certain conditions that are not visibly present in the text but serve as indicators of something. Meanwhile, *signifying* or signifying practice refers to the formation and balancing of a sign system that requires the speaking subject's identity within a social framework, which is received within the sign system as its own identity, though this identity is indirectly questioned (Kristeva 1941:18).

In this context, the writer finds that the emergence of meaning from human perspectives undergoes different processes, since every individual's background influences how they interpret the verse. This results in varied perceptions: some view rain as a source of joy, while others see it as a source of sorrow due to floods caused by continuous rainfall. Consequently, there may be those who perceive rain not as a blessing but as a calamity for those affected by flooding. The writer explains this through the concepts of *significance* and *signifying* in the interpretation of the verse about rain as mercy. From the *signifying* perspective, meaning is aligned with the content of the Qur'an without blending it with external realities beyond the Qur'an's explanation. When applied to Surah Ash-Shuraa verse 28, it reveals that the verse explains the descent of rain following human despair, as well as Allah's mercy and compassion granted to His servants. From the *significance* perspective, which is essentially the discovery of new meaning arising within societal contexts, this can be seen as an innovation of meaning.

The *significance* interpretation of this verse, in the writer's own perspective, explains that Surah Ash-Shuraa verse 28 portrays the notion that every problem has a solution, and that there is no place to seek help except from Allah. Indeed, Allah does not test a servant beyond his ability. It is as if the verse conveys that Allah knows best the needs of His servants. Another interpretation of *significance* may also indicate that Surah Ash-Shuraa verse 28 conveys that Allah does not intend to burden His servants, but rather to test their patience and piety. Just as rain is a form of Allah's mercy poured upon His creatures, so too are other manifestations of His mercy, such as the blessing of life, the abundance of sustenance, happiness, health, and others. Nevertheless, the broader range of meanings in this discussion of *significance* may also arise from readers or

researchers who hold perspectives different from the writer's.

From this process then emerges the pursuit of *intertextuality*, which refers back to the *asbab an-nuzul* (circumstances of revelation) of Surah Ash-Shuraa verse 28. The term *intertextuality* was coined by Julia Kristeva, who sought to synthesize Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics. The concept of *intertextuality* was initially developed to analyze discourse arguments as part of systematic textual analysis, comparing or linking one or multiple works to uncover similarities or to achieve better understanding of a given text (Lara and Vijila 2018:95–96). When examined further, Surah Ash-Shuraa verse 28 about rain shares similar meanings with several other Qur'anic verses, such as Surah Al-Anfal verse 11, which also speaks about mercy.

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ ٱلنُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِۦ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمْ رِجْزَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ ٱلْأَقْدَامَ

Meaning: "(Remember) when Allah caused drowsiness to overcome you as a means of tranquility from Him, and He sent down rain upon you from the sky to purify you with it, to remove from you the defilement of Satan, to strengthen your hearts, and to make firm your feet."

It does not stop at that verse alone. There are also other verses that explain that rain can be a punishment and a calamity, as in Surah Hud verse 44 and Surah Al-Ahqaf verse 24. In addition, rain is also mentioned in the Qur'an as a natural phenomenon, as in Surah An-Nur verse 43 and Surah Ar-Rum verse 48 (Mauliddin 2018:93):

وَقِيلَ يَٰٓأَرْضُ ٱبْلَعِى مَآءَكِ وَيَٰسَمَآءُ أَقْلِعِى وَغِيضَ ٱلْمَآءُ وَقُضِىَ ٱلْأَمْرُ وَٱسْتَوَتْ عَلَى ٱلْجُودِىِّ ۖ وَقِيلَ بُعْدًا لِّلْقَوْمِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ

Meaning: "And it was said, 'O earth, swallow your water, and O sky, withhold your rain.' And the water subsided, and the matter was accomplished, and the ship came to rest upon Mount Judi. And it was said, 'Away with the wrongdoing people.'"

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا مُّسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَتِهِمْ قَالُوا۟ هَٰذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا ۚ بَلْ هُوَ مَا ٱسْتَعْجَلْتُم بِهِۦ ۖ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

Meaning: "Then, when they saw the punishment as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, 'This is a cloud bringing us rain.' No, rather it is what you sought to hasten, a wind within which is a painful punishment."

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُزْجِى سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُۥ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُۥ رُكَامًا فَتَرَى ٱلْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَٰلِهِۦ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مِن جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنۢ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُۥ عَن مَّن يَشَآءُ ۖ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِۦ يَذْهَبُ بِٱلْأَبْصَٰرِ

Meaning: "Do you not see that Allah drives the clouds, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap, and you see the rain emerge from within them? And He sends down from the sky, from mountains within it, hail, and He strikes with it whom He wills and averts it from whom He wills. The flash of its lightning almost takes away the sight."

ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى يُرْسِلُ ٱلرِّيَٰحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُۥ فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُۥ كِسَفًا فَتَرَى ٱلْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَٰلِهِۦ ۖ فَإِذَآ أَصَابَ بِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِۦٓ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

Meaning: "Allah is the One Who sends the winds, and they stir up the clouds, and He spreads them in the sky as He wills, and makes them into fragments. Then you see the rain emerge from within them, and when He causes it to fall upon whom He wills among His servants, behold, they rejoice."

It can be understood from the similarity of these verses that the explanation of rain in the Qur'an essentially contains different understandings, yet all of them are solely the will of Allah the Exalted. Whether the rain is interpreted as mercy or punishment, both have their causes, and these are closely related to how humans behave. When rain is understood as mercy, humankind is required to always be grateful and to contemplate the love of Allah who sends down the rain, whereas when it is as punishment, humankind should reform themselves and also understand it as a form of Allah's compassion (Mauliddin 2018:101). The presence of intertextuality from the understanding or theoretical approach proposed by Julia Kristeva indicates a similarity and intersection with other texts that also explain about rain.

This occurs because the text is a productivity related to language and its nature is "redistributive" (destructive-constructive), which has an impact that can also be examined through logical categories besides purely linguistic ones. This explanation is none other than the permutation of the text or intertextuality itself, and within the scope of texts, there is often a repetition of other texts or an intersection with them which neutralize one another, because the text is part of the disposition of language itself, born from ideological struggles and tensions that are taking place. Therefore, it can be understood that the meaning contained in a text is not constant, because the text symbolizes the conflict of reality found in the meaning of words (Raj 2015:78).

The intertextuality carried out by the author is not limited only to verses, but also considers the *asbāb an-nuzūl* of the verses, as it is told that the *asbāb an-nuzūl* of Surah Ash-Shūrā verse 28 is found only in its macro-historical context, since not every verse has a micro-historical background (Asriadi 2019). The macro-historical background of that verse, as previously explained, tells the story of a man who despaired while waiting for rain and complained to the Commander of the Faithful, namely Umar, who then replied by saying that rain would soon come while reciting that verse.

Meanwhile, in Surah Al-Anfal verse 11, it is narrated that the rain in that verse refers to an event that took place during the Battle of Badr, when the polytheist army had already taken control of the water, and Satan whispered into the hearts of the Muslims to make them angry. Then Allah sent down heavy rain upon the Muslims so that they could drink, purify themselves, and perform prayer in a state of cleanliness (Al-Sheikh 2005b:16). There is also Surah Hud verse 44, which narrates about heavy rain that lasted for days and caused floods that destroyed the unjust people and only left those who followed the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him).

At one point, Allah then commanded the earth and the sky through this verse, so that the earth swallowed its water and the sky withheld its rain (Al-Sheikh 2005b:350). It can be understood from both Surah Al-Anfal verse 11 and Surah Hud verse 44 that although heavy rain was sent down in both, their contexts were different. Likewise, in Surah Ash-Shūrā verse 28, where rain was not sent for a long time and then was finally given, it did not occur during a battle as a blessing granted to the Muslims during the Battle of Badr in Surah Al-Anfal verse 11.

Similarly, Surah Al-Ahqaf verse 24 explains a punishment that was brought by clouds, while Surah An-

Nur verse 43 and Surah Ar-Rum verse 48 describe the greatness of Allah regarding the phenomena in the sky. It is clear that these three have their own contexts and explanations concerning the descent of rain, but they are not aligned with the explanation in Surah Ash-Shūrā verse 28, only having a textual connection with it. Therefore, it is clear from Surah Ash-Shūrā verse 28, when contextualized with the other four verses, that there are differences in the circumstances or motives of Allah in sending down rain. It can also be justified that rain is indeed a blessing and mercy from Allah to His servants, yet at times it may also be a punishment or a warning for their deeds, as well as a means for contemplation upon the greatness and power of Allah as the Creator. This shows the existence of rain that is sent down to the earth as purely the will of Allah and as a consequence of human actions.

The Relevance of Semanalysis and Existential Meaning of the Word "Rain" in the Qur'an

In general, the theory of semanalysis and intertextuality pioneered by Julia Kristeva has contributed to the study of literary texts in general, and in particular has also provided significant contributions to the Islamic intellectual tradition, as a theoretical framework that can be applied in the study of Qur'anic texts. Moreover, the theory she formulated can facilitate researchers in finding correlations among verses in revealing their meanings. In recent times, it has been developed as part of the methodological steps in Qur'anic interpretation, as seen in the approach of *ma'na-cum-maghzā* introduced by Sahiron Syamsuddin, the pioneer of hermeneutical interpretation methods in Qur'anic studies.

Within the steps of the *ma'na-cum-maghzā* approach, particularly in the process of exploring historical meaning (*al-ma'nā al-tārīkhī*) and phenomenal historical significance

(*al-maghzā al-tārīkhī*), it is explained that intertextuality functions to see the extent to which a text can be oriented toward other texts, and to observe differences in meaning and concept expressed by those texts (Syamsuddin 2020:12). In using the theory of semanalysis and intertextuality to reveal the existence of rain, the author believes that it can complement the explanation presented by Ahmad Khalwani, Mohamad Yusuf Ahmad Hasyim, and Ahmad Miftahudin in their work *The Word Meaning Rain in the Qur'an (A Semantic and Stylistic Review)*. However, this study conducted by the author represents an effort to demonstrate how data can be formed through findings derived from other data related to rain.

Julia Kristeva's theory of semanalysis and intertextuality, in the author's view, helps to represent the study entitled *The Word Meaning Rain in the Qur'an (A Semantic and Stylistic Review)*, because it is interconnected with the method used in that study. The semantic method is essentially part of semiotics, and textual semiotics developed by Julia Kristeva is also a part of semiotics that focuses on text analysis. Similarly, textual analysis of the Qur'an (Piliang 2004) carried out by the author in this study is also part of textual semiotics, through the steps applied by Kristeva in understanding texts. It cannot be denied that research using semiotics is essential (Gunalan and Hasbullah 2020:46) for uncovering the meaning of a text and can be used as a subject in studying the Qur'an (Fadhliyah 2021:119–21). From this explanation, it can be understood that the relevance of Kristeva's semiotic theory to the world in general and to Islamic scholarship in particular has contributed significantly in every application. Furthermore, this study written by the author can also contribute to the examination of verses about rain discussed by Arif Iman Mauliddin in his work *A Critical Study of the Meaning of Rain*

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in the Qur'an, which can be integrated with the comparative method used in that study (Mauliddin 2018).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the application of Julia Kristeva's semiotics, particularly through the semanalysis approach, opens a new space in understanding the verses of the Qur'an. The process of analysis begins with the framework of semanalysis, then develops into the stages of the genotext and the phenotext, continues with the differentiation of meaning between *signifiance* and *signification*, and finally culminates in the exploration of intertextuality. Through this framework, it becomes evident that the meaning of a verse is never singular; it is always open to multiple possibilities of interpretation. Such differences arise because meaning can be under the control of certain institutions, religions, or schools of thought (*signification*), or may instead emerge freely as a new expression (*signifiance*).

The specific discussion concerning the existence of rain in Surah Ash-Shūrā [42]:28 illustrates how rain is portrayed as the mercy of Allah that descends after trials befall previous peoples. The analysis of this verse serves as a concrete example of the application of the semanalysis method in exploring the meaning of the word "rain" in the Qur'an. Ultimately, this research affirms that every theory and method possesses its own relevance and contribution. In this regard, Kristeva's thought offers a significant contribution not only to textual studies in general but also enriches the discourse of interpretation within the corpus of Islamic scholarship.

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