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Problem Of Ugliness Several Arguments For God's Unbeauty Creation

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Abstract

Beauty is in fact fundamental to understanding of divine being. Beauty informs of God's perfections. Within Qur'an, the principle of tawhid which is that God is the Creator of the heavens is one Islamic metaphysical basis for the integration of the Greek heritage and Islamic revelation. The problem in ugliness, especially ugliness in God's creation, raises questions about God's ability to create beautiful things. This study aims to deepen the understanding of imperfections in God's creation, which emerge the idea of bridging the gaps that are not yet well connected between God's most beautiful statement and His creation which is not all beautiful. Using a theological approach, this paper describes three problems not to deny that God is beautiful and loves beauty. First, God is Most Beautiful, and His manifestations in His creation are limited. Second, the formal imperfections in His creation were not created not to confront one another but instead are in a straight gradient line. Third, the physical imperfection is not interpreted as a limitation of God (finitism) but a message to His creatures.

Kata Kunci

Tuhan itu Indah, keburukan, finitisme, manifestasi Tuhan yang terbatas

Abstrak

Kecantikan pada kenyataannya merupakan hal mendasar untuk memahami keberadaan ilahi. Keindahan mencerminkan kesempurnaan Tuhan. Dalam Al-Qur'an, prinsip tauhid yaitu bahwa Tuhan adalah Pencipta langit merupakan salah satu landasan metafisik Islam untuk integrasi warisan Yunani dan wahyu Islam. Permasalahan keburukan, khususnya keburukan ciptaan Tuhan, menimbulkan pertanyaan tentang kemampuan Tuhan. untuk menciptakan hal-hal yang indah. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk memperdalam pemahaman tentang ketidaksempurnaan ciptaan Tuhan, sehingga muncullah

gagasan untuk menjembatani kesenjangan yang belum terhubung dengan baik antara pernyataan Tuhan yang terindah dengan ciptaan-Nya yang tidak semuanya indah. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan teologis, tulisan ini menguraikan tiga persoalan untuk tidak menyangkal bahwa Tuhan itu indah dan menyukai keindahan. Pertama, Tuhan Maha Indah, dan perwujudan-Nya dalam ciptaan-Nya terbatas. Kedua, ketidaksempurnaan formal ciptaan-Nya bukan diciptakan untuk tidak saling berhadapan melainkan berada dalam garis gradien yang lurus. Ketiga, ketidaksempurnaan jasmani bukan dimaknai sebagai keterbatasan Tuhan (finitisme) melainkan pesan kepada makhluk-Nya.

Introduction

There are things that we perceive as ugliness, which raises the question of why God created something that we see with the naked eye as ugliness. Imperfections either in the form of congenital imperfections such as cell failure as it should, various forms of scary deep sea inhabitant fish, several types of reptiles and insects with poison or can be deadly, killer plants such as trapping leaves (Dionaea), pitcher sacs/pitchers (nepenthes), tuba plants (Derris elliptica) and others to landscapes such as the Sahara Desert where rainfall is extremely low and lethal are just a few of these features.

The problem of ugliness has at least a close resemblance to the logical problem of evil in traditional theistic studies. If in the problem of evil it is asked why God allows evil to exist and whether God does not have the ability to completely eradicate evil and so on, then in the problem of ugliness the question has more or less parallels, namely if God is beautiful and loves beauty, why does He allow the existence of ugliness which in turn leaves doubts on God's ability to create all that is beautiful, or God deliberately allows the existence of ugliness in His creation. If we hold on to the former (finitism), then we are faced with the conclusion that God is limited in certain respects. While in the second we need a lot of arguments to explain it.

If the problem of evil is agreed to have a relative parallel with the problem of ugliness, then Alvin

Plantinga, a Calvinist philosopher, has at least given a technical equivalent of the ugliness in his creation. He argued more or less that God's omnipotence did not mean that God could produce logically consistent states.¹ Plantinga's argument seems to contain finitism because it limits God's ability to create a beautiful world even though logic is not a substantive limitation of God's power. How is it possible that the Most Beautiful God has created ugliness in His world.

This paper aims to develop a meta ontological argument that explicitly rejects God's limitations and instead believes that God is beautiful and loves beauty. With a theological approach and quoting some of the opinions of great thinkers among Muslims, it is hoped that they will be able to provide answers regarding the existence of things that are perceived as not beautiful in His creation.

The Most Beautiful Manifestation

Beauty has been at the heart of the Mediterranean philosophical tradition since Plato uttered in the Symposium that "if there is anything worth living for, it is to behold beauty. For Plato scope of beauty included more than just shapes, harmony, proportion, colors and melodies. This was not Plato's personal

¹R. Dennis Potter, "Finitism and the Problem of Evil," dalam Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Winter 2000), pp. 83-95 Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.com/stable/45226740>

idea, but the view generally accepted in the West and the Islamic east well.²

The existence of an objective reality outside our minds that is sensed and realized is the ontology of the philosophy of beauty. The objective reality is nothing but the truth that we perceive and understand (*mafhum*) as beautiful. To some extent, beauty is an attribute of His Being. It is an abstraction from its viewer and captures the transcendental greatness of its Willing. As stated by Ibn Arabi that the Divine in His unconditioned primordial solitude wants to be known by manifesting Himself in His creation. Creation is essentially a revelation of a Divine being. His creation arose not from nothing but from something other than Himself, from His fundamental being, from latent potential and virtuality in His own unseen being.³ The finite presence of the Most Beautiful in the universe is captured in the principle of infinity. The message of the presence of the Most Beautiful transcends the boundaries of sensory sensation and even imagination. As stated in QS. 42:11.

"(He is) the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He made for you from your own kind pairs and from the kind of livestock pairs (also), He made you develop well in that way. There is none like Him, and He is the All-Hearing and All-Seeing."

So it is very appropriate if Muhammad Abduh who is an Egyptian theologian and modernist once wrote a prohibition for the human intellect to reflect on the essence of God because the existence of the two apart from applying human reason to God is considered sinful by Muslims in general as the hadith of the prophet which states, 'Think about Allah's creation. , do not think about Allah (Creator)'. Man must accept the way He describes Himself as the Qur'an guides. Besides Abduh, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi also stated that the Qur'an expresses the unconceptuality of God in

²Samir Mahmoud, "Beauty and Aesthetics in Classical Islamic Thought: An Introduction," dalam *Kalam: Journal of Islamic Theology*, no 1 (2018): 7.

³Henry Corbin, *Alone With the Alone, Creatif Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 186-187.

the most emphatic way.⁴ So what we can understand from God as the Most Beautiful is a very human dimension.

For a Muslim, the Qur'an contains the basic material of Islamic cosmological metaphysics which is centered on Allah as the sole creator of this universe. Islamic thought on cosmology that accepts its influence from the classical Greek tradition describes God's limited presence in the universe. God's manifestations can be either hidden (*bathin*) or visible (*zahir*). The two limited manifestations of God are mutually complementary. All of His creations are His radiance and the beauty of His radiance is beyond His existence. Beauty in some fashion is an attribute of His being. The radiance of His beauty spreads throughout the various creations. This radiance is beyond the aureole of His infinite existence as metaphors are described in the Qur'an.⁵ The relationship between beauty as the light of God and the created is total dependence on the created. The beauty of God is expressed as an emanation of light in the second order (creation). The light of God brings all things out of the darkness of nothingness. Light adds nothing to light, so everything is real insofar as it is joined to the light of Being.⁶

If the Qur'an is the verbal language of Allah's will, then the universe is the material language. Although not fully understood, the three major religions namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam believe that this world is a time and space expression of the Eternal.⁷ The universe is a limited manifestation of His beautiful names and can only be understood by those who are deep in knowledge (*ar-rasikhuna fil 'ilmi*). The limited universe also becomes the locus forma for the beauty of God. The beauty of God takes place in all forms of the universe.

⁴Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering The Signs of God, A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*, (Albany: State University of New York Press 1994), p. 220.

⁵QS. al-Nur [24]: 35.

⁶Titus Burckhart, "Spiritualitas Seni Islam," dalam Seyyed Hossein Nasr, (ed.) *Ensiklopedi Tematis Spiritualitas Islam: Manifestasi* , (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 2003), p. 659.

⁷John Haugt, "Science, God And Cosmic Purpose," dalam Peter Harrison (ed.), *Science and Religion*, , (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 260.

The manifestation of God does not make Him number because He is a single reality. His manifest entities have existence as creation. Until then, light is not affected by its emanation to the external order, just as the sun is unaffected by the light it emits.⁸ The diversity of this second order implies limitations and imperfections that are not found in the Most Beautiful. But diversity implies a sense of regularity that we can sense in integrity, proportion and clarity as St. Thomas.⁹ Beauty flows from a single source, namely the Most Beautiful, as the springs in the mountains flow their clear waters. God in Himself is outside of time and space, so the universe is God's limited way of existing in space and time. Reality consists of God and not God, the first Reality is only one, He is eternal, creator and transcendent. There is nothing like Him. Ontologically it is impossible for the Creator to become a creation and vice versa, creation surpasses itself to become a Creator in any way and in any sense.¹⁰

It is a very popular hadith especially among the Sufis; "Verily, God is Most Beautiful and loves beauty." Substantively the expression of the hadith is no different from that in the Book of Genesis where God sees that everything He created is good.¹¹ From this substantive statement, the beauty in His creation is the beauty He wants. His entire creation is a creative imagination as well as theophany or God from whom all beings were created. The Most Beautiful God who has no imperfections. Like

⁸William Chittick, "Ibnu Arabi dan Mazhabnya," dalam Seyyed Husein Nasr, (ed.), *Ensiklopedi Tematis Spiritualitas Islam: Maifestasi*, (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 2003), p. 81.

⁹Conrad Pepler, "The Beauty of God", dalam *Blackfriars*, Vol. 31, no. 358, Januari 1950, h. 15, Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43813004>

¹⁰Q.S. asy-Syura, [42]:11.

فَاطَرُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُّكُمْ فِيهَا لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

"Dia Pencipta langit dan bumi. Dia menjadikan bagi kamu dari jenis kamu sendiri pasangan-pasangan dan dari jenis binatang ternak pasangan-pasangan (pula), dijadikannya kamu berkembang biak dengan jalan itu. Tidak ada sesuatu yang serupa dengannya, dan Dialah Maha Mendengar dan Maha Melihat."

¹¹Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, Kitab Kejadian pasal 1, (Jakarta: Percetakan Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2004), p. 1

the number one, it is the cause of the number two, three, four and so on. But these numbers are not one itself, but their existence depends on the number one. He who created from nothing we know as Augustine and Aquinas thought as *creatio ex nihilo* and in contrast to the pre-existing demiurges of Plato and Aristotle who only allowed God to be the cause of motion, not as the cause of existence.¹² God who is behind the big bang in the Big Bang theory, God who is behind the chronology of the Archaeum, Paleozoic, Mesozoic to Neozoic times, God who answers our prayers yesterday, today and tomorrow. The God who started the world, ended it and who started the Day of Judgment later, the Creator God who has always been and will be.

The statement 'God is Beautiful' is a substantive statement about the existence of Existence, not a statement about the concept of God. If parsed in other words the statement 'God is Most Beautiful' is equivalent to (X) is the Most Beautiful Substance but the statement is not equivalent to (Y) 'If that substance is God, then He is Most Beautiful. If God is all-powerful and all-beautiful, He is able to create a beautiful world without any ugliness. The same logical contradiction in the form "God cannot do X," which means without substantive limitations on God. Logistics limits themselves are substantive limitations. By basing that God is omnipotent if and only if He is able to bring about a logistically consistent state of affairs, we will find some quite technical problems in this definition. It is admitted that there are possibilities where God allows beauty to exist in this world, both physically and mentally in all biotic and abiotic creatures. Physical and mental disorders as well as congenital organ dysfunction in biotic creatures (blind, mute, deaf, paralyzed, and mentally retarded), etc., as if the existence of these imperfections admires God's inconsistency with His Most Beautiful and loves beauty. In humans, the same thing is experienced by anyone regardless of whether they are among the theists who have a high level of piety with their God or not.

¹²Janet Soskice, "Aquinas and Augustine on Creation and God as Eternal Being," dalam *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 95, No. 1056 (March 2014), h. 193. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43251809>

God is beautiful and His beauty is limitless. His splendor is not potential, but as stated above is beyond space and time. So concluding the ugliness of His creation as the finitism of the Most Beautiful is a misguidance. We are faced with very deep consequences if we do not have any justification for believing in that, namely; we cannot know that there is a Supreme Being. If so, we cannot know whether God is Most Beautiful. Such doubt is tantamount to turning orthodoxy into general agnosticism and opening the door wide for escaping from orthodoxy.¹³

This world is basically beautiful because it was created earnestly and flows in it the greatness of His beautiful names (*asma* > *al-husna*). We can understand this from the universe which has been the object of admiration for painters and poets for thousands of years. The findings of modern ancient human paintings in the Leang Tedongnge karst area in Maros, Sulawesi, dated 45,000 years ago to similar paintings in El Castillo Cave in Cantabria, Spain, testify to how this awe has begun since humans began their civilization. From the praises of the poets on the desert expanse of the Arabian Peninsula to the Ferris wheel that separates the expanse of the star clusters in the sky from our earth, the sound of the sound of water sneaking between the river rocks, to the layout of the grouse flocks flying through the sky, all of which cannot be denied by common sense. as beautiful as it is. Beauty is a language that communicates creatures with their creator. He is a marker that reminds of the contingency that ends in Him

Imperfection (*qabh*) and the Gradation of Beauty

When ugliness, contingency and individuality are placed at the pole of negation, the consequence of the philosophical axiom is that the ugliness will be thought of from the point of view of beauty. At the logical level ugliness is the negation of beauty and at the perceptual level it is the opposite of beauty. This has been presented since ancient times. As Aristotle said that objects are said to be beautiful if they have the ideal

¹³Douglas Lackey, "The Epistemology of Omnipotence", dalam *Religious Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Maret 1979, pp 25-30.

structure of an object and are formed as a whole. Beautiful objects including works of art must be fully articulated, internally they show coherence and externally they are sharply distinguished from the world outside. This is the connection between perfection and the idea of a beautiful object.¹⁴ Imperfection has traditionally been seen as the opposite of beauty; that a work solely because of its subject matter contradicts its definition of beauty as an order that fulfills three factors, namely integrity, proportion and unity.¹⁵

Certain requirements that must be met by an object in formal aesthetics to be evaluated as beautiful or not beautiful have presented the concept of binary aesthetics. The meaning of a concept conditions the values contained in objects that fulfill the fulfillment of the concept. Objects cannot escape from the meaning of the concept if it is desired to be an ideal example for the concept. In the minds of many, the opposite of beauty can be achieved through a simple denial of the concept of beauty itself. Everything that is outside the realm of difference or opposite to the realm of aesthetics is the opposite of that beauty or non aesthetic. If Kant argues that beauty is if an object is approached aesthetically without interest and non conceptually causes pleasure, then what does not cause pleasure is ugly. Meanwhile, Hume calls ugly with the term 'deformity', namely the negative pole of the subclass of aesthetic order.¹⁶

Beauty and ugliness are parallel phenomena and not opposites. All of God's creations that have not been touched by humans contain relatively the qualities of God's beauty. Between the beautiful and the ugliness (nonaesthetic) passes through the points where the beauty is progressively degraded and fades as the fulfillment of the formal requirements of the beautiful diminishes. This gradation moves from the pole that is required for beauty to deformity or vice versa as Hume termed it. In the light metaphor, dimness peaks at the point farthest from the emitting source. The beautiful pole

¹⁴Mark Cousins, "The Ugly [part 1]", dalam *A.A. Files*, No. 28, Autumn 1994, h. 61-64.

¹⁵ ¹⁵Ronald E. Roblin, "On Beauty...", pp. 101-109.

¹⁶Ruth Lorand, "Beauty and Its Opposites," dalam *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 1994, pp. 399-406.

contains a lot of God's beauty compared to the pole that is not beautiful or less beautiful. Integrity, proportion and unity are the factors of the principle of unity and order in the creation. Integrity is meant that in the whole the parts must consist of a complete form between material and beautiful with their respective roles required. Proportion, on the other hand, consists in the reciprocal adjustment of the parts to one another and unity is the fact that all proportionate integral parts unite in one unified whole.¹⁷ Thus, beauty is defined by Kovach as the fulfillment of the principles of unity and order above and vice versa, beauty is defined as the lack or even the absence of the two principles of unity.

The Most Beautiful with His beauty is beyond any imagination so that it does not leave the slightest room for the void of beauty within Himself. His entire creation contains a quality of beauty to a certain degree of complexity and unity. Even the things that we initially thought were the ugliest, but when judged aesthetically, they turned out to have a certain level of beauty.¹⁸ He who created with His all-knowing puts a degree of beauty in each of His creations. All representations in detail are in His intelligence. Nothing can be evaluated in His existence as Creator because God is in the "territory of eternal truth."¹⁹

The beauty and the ugliness in God's creation, among others, have a role as a comparison as well as an affirmation of the infinite diversity of His creation. His entire creation is in a teleological framework that is only understood within certain limits by certain people. Many deep-sea inhabitant creatures such as goblin sharks, fangtooth fish, fanfin sea devils, hatchet fish look ugly and scary, but that's not the case. If observed carefully, these fish meet the formal requirements for beautiful categories of symmetry, proportion, composition, unity and

have been part of deep-sea biota for thousands and even millions of years. The beauty has meaning because it is not only attractive but can also be an inspiration. It is different from randomness or incongruity. Inconsistency is possible due to the collision of opposing components in certain contexts. It's a different case with beauty. It does not contradict the will of God revealed by beauty. There are many examples of beauty that contain ugly parts, or in other words that there are many beauties that require bad parts. Evil can destroy a work, but it can also strengthen it. The stronger the totality of a work of art (beauty), the more it must overcome the elements within itself that oppose its unification.²⁰

When we view beauty as merely a reflection of material realities, at the same time we lose divine values that transcend the boundaries of humanism (atheism). This is explained by Paul Tillich by assuming that everything outside of God is subject to the category of limitations, namely in the form of objects that occupy the dimensions of space and their physical existence. Adhering to classical theology, Tillich agrees that God must be different from physical objects, God is not a physical object so He is not limited. God transcends the categories that apply to physical objects. God transcends the world, if we include God in the category of creatures then we have made the mistake of considering Him as an object that may be unique but ultimately limited.²¹

Once again that both beauty and ugliness are dichotomies outside of Him, this is in line with the rule "beauty only comes out of the beautiful". When everything will return to Him, only beauty will reach Him. Ugliness remains related only to the concept of the world we experience today. As far as His creation is concerned, the duality of beauty and ugliness persists as a pairing principle. Only God and no one has a partner. The world that we experience is a world that is possible for the principles as stated in the Qur'an. God is not limited by the existence of the

¹⁷Ronald E. Roblin, "On Beauty and Ugliness in Art," dalam *Journal of Thought*, Vol. 11, No. 2, April 1976, pp. 101-109.

¹⁸Eddy M. Zemach, "The Ontological Status of Art Objects," dalam *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 25, No., 2, 1966, pp. 145-153.

¹⁹Mark Ian Thomas, "Divine Maximian Beauty: A Reply to jon Robson," dalam *Religious Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2, Juni 2014, pp. 199-215.

²⁰Mark Cousins, "*The Ugly....*," pp. 61-64

²¹Robert R.N. Ross, "God and Singular Existence," dalam *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol 8, No. 2, 1977, pp. 121-141.

beautiful and the ugliness in a single dimension of space and time. He is able to create a paradise of only beauty and a hell of only beauty.

Even though the term beauty needs to be defined in such a way that it can be understood more objectively and at the same time be able to distinguish it from beauty, any definition still does not close people's view that there is something ugliness. Francis Kovach in his book *Philosophy of Beauty* describes a systematic study of beauty. By adopting the thinking of St. Thomas Aquinas, Kovach based on the realistic metaphysics of beauty by looking for the underlying principles in the form of objects. Just as in the problem of evil (this logical dilemma is well known in Augustine's thinking)²² which distinguishes between natural crimes such as disasters caused by tornadoes and moral crimes as a result of human actions, in the problem of beauty also distinguishes between natural and artificial beauty. Still according to Kovach, he incorporates natural phenomena as God's creations and human works into aesthetic subjects. Integrity, proportion and unity are the factors of the principle of unity and order in the creation. Integrity is meant that in the whole the parts must consist of a complete form between material and beautiful with their respective roles required. Proportion, on the other hand, consists in the reciprocal adjustment of the parts to one another and unity is the fact that all proportionate integral parts unite in one unified whole.²³

In the realm of aesthetics that an object is declared ugly is simply the clearest and most direct opposite of beautiful. In this case, ugliness (ugliness) is opposed to beauty. Most of the leading theories of beauty and artistic value present the concept of aesthetics as binary: An object is evaluated as beautiful or otherwise regarded as non-aesthetic. If beauty is interpreted as an expression of high order, the impression that a beautiful object is well-ordered and every element is in its right place then ugliness is the opposite. In the world of birds, for example, how

beautiful it is when the green peacock (*Pavo muticus*) develops its tail feathers to form a perfect semicircle, the special bird of paradise (*Lophorina superba*) is able to metamorphose itself into a mask and perform rituals in the form of amazing movements to attract the attention of the female. On the other hand, we see the beauty of the Greater Adjutant bird (*Leptoptilos dubius*) with its almost hairless head perched on the top of a tree branch. The same thing can be found in the insect world where various insect species look very beautiful such as glass butterflies, ladybugs, mantis orchids and so on, but may not apply to dung beetles (dung beetles) which are dark black in color, bed bugs. etc.

Several terms are used to express ugliness. Among those that fall into the group of simple to complex sensory sensations are disgusting states called noises such as dirt, decay, corruption which are examples of what is dirty, filthy, terrible, and inappropriate. Then, for the more complex ugliness of sensory sensation, it is termed abortive, namely abortion, deformity, disability, and humiliation.²⁴ Meanwhile, Karl Rosenkranz, defines beauty as containing three categories; lack of form (amorphousness), asymmetry (asymmetry), and disharmony (disharmony). In aesthetic theory, absolute absence of form is relative as long as it already has form. In installation art, which installs and unites and constructs a number of objects which are seen as capable of voicing a certain awareness and meaning, it is clear that they give meaning rather than monotonous forms that are naked and undifferentiated. The purity of a certain feeling of a certain shape, color, or sound can make it beautiful. The unification of unity and difference is possible if the form is repeated but in a reversed manner. Repetition of form is the similarity of regularity, inversion is the difference of irregularity. The differentiation it presents invites a dialogue with a language that, although not fully understood, is at least not silence in an empty and mute monotonous spatial space. Symmetry is similarity identical in difference. Symmetry is not a simple unity, not a clear variation or a simple difference, neither

²²Lihat Paul R. Clifford, "Omnipotence and Problem of Evil," dalam *The Journal of Religion*, V. 41, No. 2, April 1961, p. 118.

²³Ronald E. Roblin, "On Beauty and Ugliness in Art," dalam *Journal of Thought*, Vol. 11, No. 2, April 1976, pp. 101-109.

²⁴Peter A. Charmichael, "The Sense of Ugliness," dalam *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 1972, pp. 495-498

regularity nor ordinary irregularity, but a unity containing differences in their similarities. In its abstract meaning, symmetry contains contrast up and down, right and left, big and small, light and dark, in an abstract sense, which is actually just an order. More precisely, however, it is an order containing contrasts up and down, right and left, big and small, high and deep, light and dark; or even more precisely, which in the same repetition includes the reciprocal of position, which we call inversion, in the way the eyes, ears, hands, feet of the human organism are in a symmetrical order. If the unity of the differences that compose it apart becomes a contradiction without returning to its unity, then a kind of division called disharmony arises because it invalidates the aesthetic design fundamentally. Disharmony is ugliness. The stronger the power of harmony, the greater the disharmony it transcends.²⁵

Imperfection and Finitism

It is undeniable that there is a diversity of our sensory perceptions that some of us declare as beautiful and some that are not beautiful (less beautiful) in others. Our encounter with many unbeauties, especially those of a natural nature such as congenital defects, terrible forms in certain creatures, leaves the question of what these unbeauty was created for. In the aesthetics of beauty is a problem that is close to or more or less equivalent to the problem of evil that we know in the study of religious philosophy, "Either God does not have the ability to eradicate evil, or He does not desire to do so, if He cannot then He is not all-powerful, if He doesn't want to, so He's not all right." Thus this logical dilemma was well known in Augustine's thinking.²⁶ If God is beautiful, why did he create beauty in this universe? Isn't it with His omnipotence that He can make all things beautiful? He did not create defects in the occurrence of humans, animals, plants, or in inanimate objects.

²⁵Karl Rosenkranz & Sarah Haubner, "Aesthetics of Ugliness," dalam *Log*, No. 22, 2012, pp. 101-111.

²⁶Paul R. Clifford, "Omnipotence and Problem of Evil," dalam *The Journal of Religion*, V. 41, No. 2, April 1961, p. 118.

Ugliness does not originate from our understanding of visual forms but from our character. Understanding beauty as a sensory perception is a preliminary conclusion, but if our heart hints at God's inability to provide perfection, then it is already a mistake. That the universe is designed according to His Wisdom. As can be found in the Qur'an Surah 32:7, "We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them except with the truth." That there is a truth out there that we cannot reach." The idea of beauty arises from the Most Beautiful, therefore, all the beauty that is under His hierarchy will not come to the understanding beyond its destiny. It can be said that apart from the things that God has created, or had to create, there is no ugliness possibility but only an active and limitless force, as we find in the QS. 16:5-6.

"And He has created livestock for you, in them there are (feathers) that have various benefits, and some of them you eat. And you get that beauty, when you bring it back to the cage and when you release it (to the place of the snack).

It is a dung beetle or scarab beetle (family Scarabaeidae) as mentioned above, which is estimated to have more than 7000 species spread across various parts of the earth. With black evenly on all parts of the body, the dung beetle or scarab beetle is not visually beautiful. However, if we apply the principles of beauty as proposed by Kovach, the definition of beauty according to Rosenkranz, and avoid a purely materialist perspective as offered by Tillich, the conclusion will be different. The dung beetle or scarab beetle in their daily life cannot be separated from the dirt produced by the digestive process, especially the herbivorous species which makes it avoided by most people. Based on the way they use dung, there are three models of the scarab beetle. The first group are endocoprids which spend time hiding in the feces and eat it until the feces are exhausted or damaged in structure. Then the second group is the species that dig tunnels under the soil surface just below the dung pile or nearby and transport the dung into the burrow. Furthermore, the third model is the one that forms the dirt into a round and then rolls it towards the hole up to a distance of 1 to 15

meters or even more which they have prepared in advance.

Based on the anatomy, the scarab beetle has strong legs and a shovel-shaped front tibia that can be used to pat to compact feces. The hind legs are equipped with spines pointing backwards to allow the scarab beetle to gain good traction when pushing dung/dung with its head.²⁷ It is conceivable that the amount of dung that herbivores produce in the African grasslands and savanna would accumulate without the presence of dung beetles. This had happened in Australia when the herding industry was growing rapidly in the British colony. The local scarab beetle only consumes the feces of native Australian herbivores such as kangaroos. Finally, efforts to bring the scarab beetle from Africa were carried out by involving experts in the fields of entomology and grassland agronomy with the basic assumption that the migrant beetles were expected to be able to effectively bury cow dung in Australian grasslands and be successful.²⁸

The scarab beetle is beautiful in itself because it fulfills several principles of beauty and avoids the appearance of ugliness such as the anatomical shape of the organs, colors that are camouflaged with the color of herbivore droppings, proportional morphology and harmony of function and has a sense of smell that is able to quickly pick up on the scents released by animal waste. The herbivorous manure that nature presents to him is not only used as nutrition for the survival of their own species, but it is also capable of making and utilizing herbivorous manure as a place to lay their eggs until they hatch along with sufficient food for the larvae in the future. The herbivorous manure that it decomposes will fertilize the soil, which is needed for the growth and development of the vegetation on it. Lush and nutrient-rich vegetation can meet the needs of herbivores.

²⁷Bern Heinrich & George A. Bartholomew, "The Ecology of African Dung Beetle," dalam *Scientific American*, Vol. 241, No. 5, November 1979, pp. 146-157.

²⁸Hughes, et al., "Introduced Dung Beetles and Australian Pasture Ecosystem: Paper Presented at a Symposium During the Meeting of the Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science at Canberra in January 1975, Vol. 12, No. 3, December 1973, pp. 819-837.

Such is the cycle that has been going on for who knows how many million years. In addition, the scarab beetle itself "provides" for predators such as red-billed birds and malvus in England, horseshoe bats also in England, sugarcane frogs in Queensland Australia, lizards *Cnemidophorus exanguis* in Texas, three species of cordylid lizards in Australia. South Africa as well as several types of snakes although only based on observations on their dung pellets.²⁹ This natural wisdom concludes that there is a principle of justice which is the presence of God in the inner form in grazing the grasslands, especially among herbivores. Natural beauty teaches not only scientific truths, but also transcendent values from the Most Beautiful. Although the dung beetle or scarab beetle is not beautiful in sensory perception, the element of its ugliness or rather its lack of beauty is needed to support the totality of its role in the possible world.

There are several traditional solutions to this problem of beauty, including the so-called 'spirit-building theodicy' and 'understanding of free will'. The solution to this problem is an attempt to show that although God is omnipotent and completely beautiful, He will not essentially eliminate ugliness. Ugliness is something that exists outside of Him. Ugliness is an attribute of the finite. The basic idea in the soul-building theodicy is that God allows for imperfections in His creation because it makes us grateful people. Many people are born with imperfections and organ dysfunction, such as cleft lip, heart defects, blindness and so on. God created that beauty so that we can reflect on what is in us if it happens to other people. If that happens to us, apart from being a self-evaluation, there is an opportunity for self-examination not only on physical emphasis, but also on moral ethics. Physiological beauty in biotic creatures opens research for the development of biological and medical sciences; from agricultural and horticultural technology to transplantation and plastic surgery on humans. More than that, we are also given the opportunity to share the beauty with the ugliness. It does not count how many social organizations are engaged

²⁹Orrey P. Young, "Predation on Dung Beetles (Coleoptera Scarabaeidae): A Literature Review," dalam *Transaction of the American Entomological Society*, Vol. 1421, No. 1, September 2015, pp. 111-155.

in raising donations for cleft lip surgery from the poor.

Almighty God could have carried out the development of the soul without going through the existence of ugliness and made everything beautiful and humans were not bothered by these efforts. It could be that God gives humans the opportunity to gain His pleasure through caring as well as God's way of reminding humans to stay on the side of humanity, a dimension that is on a higher level than the rest of His creation. Similar ideas are found in the free will of the Mu'tazilite theodic as Abd al-Jabbār who argues that pain is not only a punishment for sin but also for the purposes of testing, warning and prevention.³⁰ Of course many object that we would be better off if we build our own soul. But the reality is that we are in a virtual reality machine that exists today, and we are able to overcome the problem of the beauty that is in front of us.

The central idea behind maintaining free will is that the presence of ugliness can be explained by the presence of free will. The freedom that God gives to man because he has freedom for us in this world is better than we do not have it. Thus, it is God's intention to maintain the existence of imperfections in His creation, therefore He will not eliminate them. Ugliness is not the main factor in producing beauty, on the other hand, ugliness is a by-product of something that the Most Beautiful has to allow for its existence. We still have to live in God's plan and we understand that all the imperfections are part of God's plan. Although not fully understood, finitism offers better solutions to practical problems. As for instrumental ugliness, it is clear that if God is limited, it is possible that He achieves certain things by using ugliness as an instrument. It is also possible that people will ask if ugliness is a necessary tool for greater beauty, why do we try to reduce it. The epistemic distance between man and God once again cannot fully convince us to

understand the usefulness of this ugliness. Beauty is not only needed for yesterday, today, but also for the future.

Natural beauty meets all beautiful categories. Ugliness or more precisely the lack of beauty can be explained in the ontology status which gives the most basic answer, it could be that there is only the One and Only One who is not paired, then apart from Himself, He created pairs, both actual and conceptual, including in it. couples beautiful and not beautiful (less beautiful). In Him there is only beauty. However, when he manifests Himself into space and time, then in the dimensions created indeed for the human context, then he imagines in a dualism beautiful and not beautiful because that dualism is not Himself. Beauty and ugliness are dichotomies outside of Him, so that when everything will return to Him, only beauty will reach Him. If the argument about the problem of evil states that the world has more good than evil and the tendency of people to value good, then the same is true of the problem of beauty. The beauty that God has created in this world must be at a minimum level because this universe is indeed dominated by natural beauty rather than natural beauty.

More than that, ugliness becomes a creative potential in humans to achieve something more beautiful. With the beauty, the aesthetic potential bestowed on humans referred to in the Qur'an as the best form (*ahsan al-taqwi>m*) or in terms of the image of God (imago Dei) in the al-Kitab can function. Various advances in medical aesthetics have contributed greatly in making congenital imperfections (birth defects), accidents, battles, diseases, which claimed beauty can be restored or at least become more beautiful than before. The ugliness of His creation is God's way of explaining His power, namely to distinguish what He is and what He is not.

The ugliness in the senses is needed for beauty itself, not as something opposite (binary opposition) but as the meaning of white in the presence of black. As beauty is gradative as a sign of God's role and involvement, Naturalist theology and the mechanistic nature of the universe fail to defend their arguments. God presents beauty in a natural window that spreads out in various levels of gradation so as to form a

³⁰Jon Hoover, "The Wise Purpose And Origin Of Evil" dalam *Ibn Taymiyya's Theodicy of Perpetual Optimism*, p. 177. Retrived from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76tv7.9>

chain that extends from the one full of beauty to the one with the least amount of beauty.

Al-Baqal'i reversed the notion that the world that exists is not the best and there is a better possibility by saying that if all humans were created like Adam, who was wise and knew the names of things without having to study them first, or God could have made humans as handsome and beautiful as Yusuf as, or have the power of memory like Imam Bukhari ra, or like Prophet Sulaiman as who can conquer the jinn and understand the language of animals. However, none of the above is done by God. We have no right to conclude that this universe represents fully what God is capable of doing. If desired, God is able to make all this beautiful all in an instant. God is not required to do as wisdom requires. There is no one who demands His accountability as stated in the Qur'an in the letter al-Anbiya verse 23:

"He is not asked about what He does and it is they who will be questioned." (Q.S. al-Anbiya [21]: 23).

According to as-Suyuti, everything that is most beautiful in the present (i.e. the opposite of it or what it replaces in time) is relative. What is beautiful now may not be in the future. God created for each moment one of the two opposites as the most beautiful for that moment. Continuing as-Suyuti's idea, al-Samhudi explained that Divine wisdom requires that something be the most beautiful and most perfect in relation to time, and its opposite (which is not beautiful) will be the most beautiful at other times.³¹

This world is an unfinished universe; an unfinished world where the process of creation is always in repetition that displays a series of beauty according to His will. His creation contains values such as instrumental beauty, utility value, and teleological value as a virtue and truth that encourages the upholding of morality to always maintain and preserve it. It is from nature that we learn about the beautiful as well as correcting the things that are not

³¹Eric L. Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought, The Dispute over Ghazali's "Best of All Possible World"*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 135-143.

beautiful. He mandated to beautify the world as the heritage of Javanese cosmology *memayu hayuning bawono*. The world needs a new image of Man that integrates thought and remembrance in carrying out its role as imago Dei.³²

Beauty as stated by Schuon is both happiness and truth. Without the element of happiness, beauty leaves only geometric, rhythmic forms and so on, on the contrary, without truth, there is only subjective pleasure. So that beauty stands between the alienation of form and the loneliness of blind pleasure.³³

Disability or imperfection is a problem as in theodicy which must be responded positively as an example (ibroh). Disability is indeed unpleasant at the sensory level, but if it is accepted in wisdom and high awareness as the Most Beautiful Will, it will give birth to meaningful servitude as well as ease and forgiveness to get His heaven and as a medium of gratitude for those who see it because it can be a greater beauty experienced by another. There is a higher importance in aesthetics above pleasure and enjoyment, namely awareness of where beauty comes from.

Even the shape of the dung was designed by God in such a way, so that with the design of the dung we can at least identify the animal that excretes it. From this identification, it continues to identify the male or female that excretes it, how long the feces have been removed, the food consumed, the disease suffered, the number of distributions of the species in a certain area in an ecosystem and so on. Animal waste is a sign of its existence both for the species concerned, competitors and for predators. Not including its use as a producer of methane gas (CH₄) as an energy source and also its use as a fertilizer even though these two things are not an aesthetic approach. It is beautiful because it was designed by the Most Beautiful as a marker that contains a

³²Damarjati Supajar, "Sosok dan Perspektif Filsafat Islam: Tinjauan Aksiologis," *Filsafat Islam Kajian Ontologis, Epistemologis, Aksiologis, Historis, Prospektif*, ed. Irma Fatimah, Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Filsafat Islam (LESFI), 1992.

³³Seyyed Hossein Nasr (ed), *The Essential Frithjof Schuon*, (Indiana: World Wisdom inc), p. 370.

lot of information and benefits not only for the creature, but also for other creatures, either directly or indirectly. It becomes an element of a teleology

In the animal world we witness a lot of beauty in which some animals become prey and others become predators. Maybe we are sad to see how baby seals become delicious food for a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*), or a capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) that is swallowed alive by a caiman (Caiman), or a herd of wildebeests (*Connochaetes*) who are confronted by dozens of crocodiles. While crossing a river in the Serengeti savanna on Tanzania's border with Kenya. However, the animal world that is at peace with each other as we want is not possible in the concept of the animal world where God created various herbivores, carnivores and omnivores in a system in which there is a food chain and a food pyramid. God created the best world that reflects His attributes such as perfection, wisdom, strength and mercy. There is no more beautiful possibility than what lies before us.

The imperfections of creatures make it a part that is dependent on each other and forms a natural order that is united by the power of God. In the plant world, the principle of this dependence can be seen in several types of plants that require wind assistance in their distribution, known as anemochory, such as occurs in dandelion and maple plants. Several other plant species are included in the hydrochory group or whose distribution is assisted by water so that they can reach such long distances even across the ocean such as palmaceae seeds in this case coconut. Mutualistic symbiosis between mongoose and coffee plants shows the distribution of these plants. The ripe coffee beans selected and eaten by the mongoose eventually come out along with their droppings in a place that could be far from the tree of origin. That's how God created the imperfections of nature as well as solving the problem.

Quantitatively, ugliness is not much more than beauty. The offer to humans as a wise choice to believe rather than find out in human limitations that do not allow him to fully understand the beauty that exists. In the kalam approach, many unbeaties are caused by human activities

themselves. Ecological disaster is the result of human greed in defining nature. As mentioned in QS. 30:41. The 1986 Chernobyl nuclear reactor explosion that had a wide impact in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, the release of millions of tons of carbon dioxide due to deforestation of primary tropical forests around the equator followed by flooding and soil erosion, disruption of the water cycle, climate change, loss of some species, drought, the destruction of ecosystems, coastal abrasion and so on is a picture of the beauty that is not from God. Various diseases due to deviant sexual behavior, defects in the fetus due to consuming alcohol, smoking, modifying the body to extremes, using drugs are lessons from the past not to repeat the same thing. Ignorance opens up opportunities to organize oneself and turn to God. From the beauty above, we also understand how valuable beauty is, how loving and merciful God is with the idea of beauty in His creation.

Still in the explanation of kalam, the ugliness that befell people outside of unexplained causes such as pious people can be associated with the opportunity to humbly turn to God instead of having a bad attitude towards God. Oppression under unjust rulers can also wash away sins and motivate them to return to God for forgiveness. Willingness to accept beauty (aesthetic voluntarism) such as people with disabilities, whether congenital, chronic illness, disability due to accidents or disasters, opens the door for forgiveness from God.

Ugliness raises morality to achieve more beautiful and enlivens competition. The beauty of the promised heaven and the impurity of hell that is threatened give life to morality to race in goodness. Many children are born with a cleft lip (cleft lip and cleft palate) which is a congenital abnormality as an imperfect union of tissues in the lip or palate of the fetus. Cleft lip is an beauty partly because of the non-fulfillment of the requirements for aesthetic formalities. This situation has encouraged many people from different ethnicities, religions and even countries to participate morally in alleviating the burden of cleft lip sufferers from the poor community by performing free cleft lip surgery either through institutions that were deliberately established for

this purpose or other activities. unscheduled charity work.

In addition, cleft lip is also caused, among others, by the use of illegal drugs and cigarette consumption, especially during pregnancy. Such risks have encouraged campaign efforts against these bad habits, especially as a form of competing in goodness. The movement to avoid or at least suppress the consumption and use of these illegal drugs has found its basis for its struggle. Again, ugliness is necessary for the fulfillment of beauty.

Conclusion

The Most Beautiful God is present in a limited way in the universe as well as the material locus for the radiance of His beauty. His entire creation, both hidden (bathin) and visible (zahir) is within a teleological framework which is only understood within certain limits. The finite cannot accommodate the infinite (finitum non capy infiniti)."

Beauty and ugliness are not opposites of each other but are parallel phenomena. All of God's creations that have not been touched by humans are beautiful. Its beauty is gradative from a pole full of beauty to a deformity or vice versa. Beauty and ugliness both contain the relative qualities of His beauty. Both beauty and ugliness are dichotomies outside of Him. The duality of beauty and ugliness is in the principle of pairing and only God is One and there is no partner

Beauty and ugliness cannot be built entirely in sensory categories because beauty and ugliness do not stand alone separately but have a relationship with things outside of themselves. With the kalam approach to ugliness, it can be interpreted that God allows the existence of ugliness so that humans can have free will because ugliness raises morality to achieve something more beautiful. Imperfection as part of the imperfection of the creature makes it a part that is dependent on one another and forms a natural order that is bound by the power of God.

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