

## CHAPTER 3

### FAISAL TEHRANI WRITING AND ISSUES IN THE NOVEL 'PROFESOR'

#### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

Discussion in this chapter will be focusing on the writing of Faisal Tehrani who has been regarded as a prolific writer in Malaysia apart of his successful author in Malay literature. The emergence and presence of the author is certainly awaited by all readers of the novel due to influence until the author receives the National Art Award in 2006. In addition, this chapter will look at Faisal Tehrani's writing in novel 'Profesor' which is the subject in this study. Notwithstanding to that, the reason of this book was banned by the state fatwa committee as contrary to akidah Ahl Sunnah wa al-Jamaah.

#### 3.1 BACKGROUND OF FAISAL TEHRANI

Faisal Tehrani or his real name is Mohd. Faisal bin Musa was born on 7 August 1974 in Kuala Lumpur. He received his early education at *Sekolah Sacred Heart Melaka*, then at *Sekolah Rendah Jalan Dato' Palembang*. Faisal then continued his studies at

*Sekolah Menengah Sultan Muhammad* until Form Three and managed to get an excellent *Sijil Rendah Pelajaran* (SRP) result. In relation to that, he was able to continue his studies to the upper secondary level at the *Kolej Islam Klang* (Sultan Alam Shah Islamic College) up to Form Six. He furthered his higher education and graduated with a Bachelor of Syariah and Politics from the University of Malaya (1998), a Master of Arts from Universiti Sains Malaysia (2000) and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (2010).

He is currently working at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia as a Research Fellow at the Institute of Nature and Malay Civilization and his field of study is on the Shiite Minority in the Malay world. His research has been registered with the UKM Research and Innovation Management Center (CRIM) with the code GGPM-2011-062. His expertise is recognized by the Front Line Defenders (FLD), a body with special status in the United Nation namely Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Faisal Tehrani became interested in the field of writing novels and short stories since he was in high school (Abu Seman Mat Karim, 2019).

Among the novels he has published are *Cinta Hari-hari Rusuhan* (2000), *Perempuan Politikus Melayu* (2000), *1515* (2002), *Maaf Dari Sorga* (2003), *Detektif Indigo* (2004), *Surat-Surat Perempuan Johor* (2005), *Bedar Sukma Bisu* (2007), *Manikam Kalbu* (2007), *Tuhan Manusia* (2007), *Nama Beta Sultan Alauddin* (2007) and *Tunggu Teduh Dulu* (2008). While his writing in the short story genre are *Ketupat*

*Cinta* (2008), *Saatul Ibaad* (2008), *Bahalut* (2010), *Sebongkah Batu di Kuala Berang* (2011), *Ketupat Cinta 2* (2012), *Perempuan Nan Bercinta* (2012) and *Bagaimana Anyss Naik Ke Langit* (2014).

Apart from that, Faisal Tehrani also has skills in producing poems because he has also produced a group of poems entitled '*Ingin Jadi Nasrallah*' and '*Mek Bah*'. He has also been involved in theater staging. Among the theatrical performances that have received his touch is *Misi dan Tivi* which has been staged throughout the country through collaboration with Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP).

He has produced 24 novels. The ability to produce novels of various types of literary genres, can further highlight the character and wisdom in his work. Faisal Tehrani often wins national and state level writing competitions, whether organized by the government or the private sector. The victories and awards obtained, certainly strengthen the character and strengthen the style and power of writing in terms of questions, thinking, background, language, technique and the like. Therefore, Faisal Tehrani has long been accepted as an author with outstanding talent if measured by the many books he has produced. Thus, among the generation of writers and scholars who are being observed today is Faisal Tehrani (Ahmad Kamal Abdullah, 2011). Faisal Tehrani's presence and involvement is very meaningful in the development of the country's literature so that it gets recognition and appreciation from within and outside the country. As proof, Faisal Tehrani was appointed as the recipient of the

National Arts Award in 2006 by the Malaysian government and the Young Writers of the State of Melaka in 2009. (Fauzi Hassan, et. al, 2019)

Throughout his book, Faisal Tehrani has shown himself as a short story writer, novelist, scriptdrama writer, critic and researcher of Malay literature who is no stranger to the country's literature. Faisal Tehrani's works are considered to have their own strengths and specialties in terms of thinking, writing techniques and language style expressed in his books.

According to Othman Puteh (2001), the author should have sensitivity, perception and try to interpret or respond to this life. The author should also have some set of personal privileges and should appear as a thinker ahead of his time. Morris (1993) also argues that, each writer has a unique style, not the same. Thus, the success of marketing a self-brand and a work depends on the uniqueness or variety featured in his works. The variation that is trying to be displayed as a step to create an image and then invite the excitement of the audience to approach the world of creativity. Efforts to create this variation are highly demanded in any activity including literary works.

Muhd. Nasruddin Dasuki (2000), stated that in order to place oneself in the development of the country's literature must produce works that have differences. Suggestions for authors to produce works that have variety and quality have been voiced by Othman Puteh (1995) by saying; "As authors, we must have an identity that

differentiates ourselves from others because this is where the personality of an author will stand out."

Faisal Tehrani continues to actively create and has contributed a large number of thick and thin novels (novelettes) that explore various issues such as social, political, economic, cultural and religious as well as community problems based on his observations, experiences and studies. Siti Jasmina Ibrahim (2004) said, among the young writers who first became known and studied his work after winning the literary prize was Faisal Tehrani. Along with that, his works, notes and thoughts are often the focus and his novel is considered a new vision after two National Literati Datuk A. Samad Said and Datuk Shahnon Ahmad explored critical and creative thinking (Imlan Adabi, 2014). Jelani Harun (2004) said, Faisal Tehrani is a talented writer who will continue the tradition of writing Islamic literature in the country, and become a generation of potential and talented successors in creating creativity in the light of Islam.

When referring to his novels, Faisal Tehrani strives to exhibit a noble, reactive personality and concern for the phenomena and problems that occur in society at home and abroad. The drawings of subjects, characters and backgrounds that are usually emphasized by Faisal Tehrani also illustrate the ideas and ideas in the work so as to highlight the identity as an idealist author and have excellence.

S.M. Zakir (2009) says that, Faisal Tehrani has redeveloped the characteristics of Malay literary because it has expressed literature in high cultural characteristics that not only transmit language and meaning, but very strong cultural thinking. In this regard, this writing aims to examine the subjectivity expressed in some of Faisal Tehrani's novels which are seen to have their own strengths and differences.

Faisal Tehrani's name was obtained because he was influenced by the reading of Arabic books, and books written by Iman Bukhari and other Islamic figures such as Malik Ben Nabi, Abu Hasan al Nadwi and Hassan al-Banna. The title 'Tehrani' itself refers to an abbreviation of the word 'Tehran' which is one of the place in the Middle East. Furthermore, due to the influence of the reading material as well, cause Faisal Tehrani tends to write on issues and problems such as history and religion. This situation also prompted Faisal Tehrani to express his thoughts in creative work to convey various messages and benefits to the community. Because there is a sense of responsibility as a writer, Faisal Tehrani writes based on the norms, ethics and cultural values of the local Muslim community in order to produce "something holy and sanctifying" in worship through literature (Faisal Tehrani, 2008).

### **3.2 FAISAL TEHRANI'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF LITERATURE**

Faisal Tehrani is not a small name in the field of literature. In fact, he often receives awards and prizes either given by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka or the

Malaysian and state governments through recognition. Among the successes that Faisal Tehrani has received are winning the first place of the Literature Prize-Utusan Malaysia-Exxon Mobil 2002, National Book Award 2005, National Art Award 2006, DBP Gold Jubilee Competition Winner 2007, Malaysian Premier Literature Prize winner 2006/2007, Winner of the Malaysian National Book Award 2009, Winner of the Islamic Literature Prize-Yayasan Pelajaran Islam Malaysia-DBP 2000-2001. Recognition for his novels can also be seen when novels such as *Bedar Sukma Bisu* (2007), *Perempuan Nan Bercinta* (2012) and *1515* (2003) have been translated into foreign languages.

Apart from that, Faisal Tehrani his writing is often the choice of the jury panel in the competitions organized. He won a prize in a competition organized by the DBP-Bank Rakyat Student Literary Prize in 1994 for his short story entitled "Tonight Philadelphia Cries". Next, the competition was organized by the Utusan Melayu-Public Bank Literary Prize in 2004, with the short story 'Anak' and the short story 'Opah'. In 1995, he won a competition organized by the Utusan Melayu-Public Bank Literary Prize with a short story entitled "*Pemberontakan Kedua*" (Fauzi Hassan, et. Al, 2019).

In 1996, her short story entitled "*Perempuan Anggerik*" and the short story entitled "*Api KL Belum Terpadam*" won prizes for the same competition. The uniqueness and advantages by this short story have been translated into Thai, English and Japanese. In fact, this short story was performed in the form of a dance on July 29,

2001 at The Actors Studio by a famous choreographer, namely Jasni Abdul Hamid. Faisal Tehrani's achievement was further proven when he won the Literary Work Prize organized by Utusan Publications Group in 1997. The short story he produced was entitled "*Surat Untuk Gabe 1*" (Fauzi Hassan, et. Al, 2019).

Next, his short story entitled "*Cinta Gendang Kasturi*" won the Utusan Malaysia Literary Prize in 1998. His victory continued in 1999 for the same prize with a short story entitled "*Bulan dan Wira*" and a poem entitled "*Sesudah Hujan Dahlia*". In addition, he also won the Islamic writing competition through the Islamic drama writing competition and the Malaysian Premier Literary Prize 1996/ 1997. For this competition, his short story entitled "*Cahaya Pada Jiwa*" won the Islamic Literary Prize (Fauzi Hassan, et. al, 2019).

Apart from achieving success through short stories, Faisal Tehrani also won the novel writing competition. The novel *1511H [Kombat]* won first place for the Utusan Malaysia-Exxon Mobil Literary Prize in 2003. The creation of this novel is through in-depth reference to other works as a guide before composing. The production of this novel is through six years of research on the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese to realize the event. This novel has been used as a textbook for Malay Studies students at the University of Cologne, Germany. The extraordinary recognition from abroad his passion to continue his activities in producing more quality books and novels. Faisal Tehrani's ability in producing creative works of various genres, namely novels, short stories, poems, dramas and essay writing, proves

that he is a writer with a profile and style. The thoughts or materials that are the starting point to his works are from current issues, reading, observation, experience and research in producing various creative works. Faisal Tehrani also argues that each genre has its own strengths and gives different satisfaction to it (Wan Zaliha binti Wan Othman, 2013).

### 3.3 ISSUES IN FAISAL TEHRANI'S NOVEL '*PROFESOR*'

According to Dr. Fatimah Busu, the novel '*Profesor*' is a novel written specifically to convey the author's message or views. Novels like these are often critically motivated and have a tendency to teach through certain angles of thought and philosophies. The novel uses the technique of *in medias res*, a term in Greek that means 'being in the middle of things'. This means that the writer begins the story or its delivery in the middle of the story or gives its ending first. The presentation of previous stories, is usually made in retrospect.

This novel tells the life history of Suliza, a former madrasah student in Kelantan who fell in love with her same-sex partner, Wan Ros. Wan Ros committed suicide after being raped by two *ustaz* in a *madrasah*. Suliza began to hold a grudge against the religious group. After graduating with distinction, Suliza had the opportunity to study abroad and do research on the influence of extremists in fatwa institutions in Malaysia. Suliza has a same-sex relationship with Maria, Hashimah, Dalila and many more. Suliza considers Dalila Wan Ros' successor because of her

similar level appearance. Meanwhile, Suliza was criticized for speaking out on the issue of the rights of minorities, including LGBT. Hashimah was influenced by Dalila to fight the violence of her husband, Ustaz Idros. Finally, Hashimah acted to cut off her husband's penis.

In this novel, the problem of inverse relationships that is raised as the subject is incestuous relationships between women and women or known as 'lesbians'. This act is done by all walks of life regardless of race, religion, educational level, career and in the city or in the countryside. This social symptom is conveyed through the character of a woman who is highly educated, respected and has a career, namely the character of Prof. Suliza. The character adopts an inverted lifestyle by having an affair with several women, namely Hashimah and Wan Ros. In this novel as well, Faisal Tehrani wants to show that this practice is an act that is seen as cursed, despicable and unacceptable by society. Therefore, for individuals who practice this lifestyle should be punished and rehabilitated for being contrary to the religious and cultural teachings of the eastern society (Fauzi Hassan, et. al, 2019).

In addition, the content of the novel '*Profesor*' was found to contain unwanted publications such as containing elements that promote violence against individuals, encourage destruction of property, murder, encourage enmity and hostility against certain parties or institutions such as against fatwa institutions, religious departments, religious groups, the clergy and the courtiers. In addition, its content contains pornographic scenes such as lesbian sex scenes, husband and wife sex and violent sex

including rape. There are many quotes that can be confusing and misleading such as related to the issue of religious freedom, the issue of sexual orientation, support for same-sex marriage, promoting liberal ideology and so on.

According to Abu Seman Mat Karim (2019), the authorities need to look at and review the law as well as law enforcement related to the issue of human rights freedoms if the public mind can later agree or support the views and thoughts of the author in the Professor's novel. Among the issues debated in Faisal Tehrani's writing include human rights, sexual conduct, marriage that legalizes relationships, homosexuality and sexual crimes.

Therefore, based on these issues, it is appropriate for the Johor State Fatwa Committee to take the role to prevent the writing of this novel from being disseminated, read and used as reading material for violating the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 (Act 301).

### 3.3.1 Human Rights Issues

When talking about human rights the west will be irritated saying they are a very fair and just nation. Their civilization recognizes human rights. At the same time, the west will accuse the east of failing in upholding human rights (Abu Seman Mat Karim, 2019). In this novel, there are dialogues and notes stating that recognition of human rights has been practiced by eastern societies since ancient times. This can be

proven through the dialogue between Prof. Dr. Ali Taqi and Dalila about the ancient manuscript given by Prof. Ali Taqi to Dalila.

*“Dalila mengepil kemas dalam buku catatan. Dia tahu, entah mengapa dia dapat merasakan, apa yang diserahkan itu akan menjadi sesuatu yang sangat berharga. Kunci untuk kajian. Tidakkah itu sesuatu yang besar dan hebat? lapis-lapis pengertian, kepanasan jiwa, roh manusia yang dipandu takdir dan hening akal. Dan kini hak asasi manusia tradisional? Inilah buktinya orang Melayu, orang Timur, dari rantau sebelah kita telah punya gagasan hak asasi manusia yang amat sejagat sifatnya.”*

*(Profesor, 2017, p. 123)*

### 3.3.2 Sexual Treatment Issues

The text of the Professor’s novel is also laden with old traditions depicting sadistic sexual acts or violent sexual acts that often occur in traditional societies. This sadistic sexual behavior usually happens to women or wives who are abused by their own husbands. These sadistic behaviors occur without any action because the woman or wife is ashamed or afraid to report to the authorities (Abu Seman Mat Karim, 2019).

In fact, Professor Suliza also once advised Hashimah to reject the invitation to have sex by her husband Ustaz Idrus if she was not ready. This is considered violent and unacceptable sexual treatment as found in the novel.

*“Ini berlaku terlalu cepat. Hashimah terjatuh. Idrus menghela Hashimah bagaikan haiwan. Kaki isterinya terkangkang dan Idrus terus menyeret Hashimah ke tengah rumah dengan niat memperkosa. Siku dan lengan Hashimah melecet.”*

*(Profesor, 2017, p. 292)*

### 3.3.3 Marriage Issues That Legalize Relationships

In this novel the purpose of marriage can be seen through the marriage between Hashimah and Ustaz Idrus who had first raped Hashimah before they got married. Meanwhile, Hashimah was forced by her stepmother to marry Ustaz Idrus who was described as a pious person and had a high level of religious knowledge.

*“Masuk dalam kepala Hashimah bahawa perkahwinan dalam Islam itu mestilah dengan anutan ‘tawahhud al-zawj’ atau prinsip monogami. Ia lebih adil dan munasabah dari segi praktis. Rumah tangga mestilah berdiri di atas prinsip kerelaan atau ‘al-taraadli’, juga kesetaraan iaitu ‘al-musaawah’, kemudian keadilan iaitu ‘al-adaalah’, menimbangkan kemaslahatan atau ‘al-mashlahat’ dan keberagaman dalam rumah iaitu ‘al-ta’addudhiyyah’. Sebuah perkahwinan mestilah mengamalkan ‘al-dimuqrathiyah’ atau bersikap demokrasi. Hashimah mengerti kini bahawa sebuah perkahwinan wajib bertujuan ‘mawaddah’ dan ‘rahmah’ iaitu cinta demi menegakkan unit keluarga yang ‘sakiinah’ iaitu bahagia sehingga unit-unit itu menyatu dalam masyarakat Islam yang utuh.”*

*(Profesor, 2017, p. 288)*

### 3.3.4 Homosexual Issues

Homosexual acts are something that violates religious law and societal values.

The curse of Allah and the humiliation of society have been ingrained in the Malay Muslim community against homosexual acts. The novel has shown how the attitude

towards old traditions has caused Professor Suliza to be stoned to death by a society that cannot accept same-sex practices and acts.

*“Perempuan macam apa dia itu pun sukar kita nak hurai. Rambutnya pendek, pakaiannya macam budak lelaki remaja, seluar singkat kasual dan kemeja. Habis jantan. Saya tak nampak pula di dalam telekung apabila keluar. Tak ada sesiapa yang tarik atau paksa. Dia buka sendiri, dia yang membuka pintu pagar dan jeriji dengan sendiri. Dia sendiri yang beritahu begini, selamba, haji-haji kalau begitu, bolehlah mari lempari batu. Memang saya pendosa. Saya ingin bersih ibarat bayi. Haji-haji berhak buat begitu kepada saya. Saya sudah bosan hidup di dunia”.*

*(Profesor, 2017, p. 176)*

### 3.3.5 Sexual Crime Issues

In this novel as well, sexual behavior does exist but is worked on with great care and symbolic language to explain the matter to the reader. This sexual behavior occurs between the characters in the novel whether it is normal sex or reverse sex behavior. Sexual acts committed involuntarily by any party are considered a crime. There are statements and dialogues in this novel that refer to involuntary sexual acts. Both of these incidents are very notable sexual crimes. In the novel it is also stated that the husband is also considered a rapist if he has sex without the desire and will of the wife.

*“Hashimah menelan air liur, selalu dia dihimpit dan ditunggang bila-bila masa sahaja kala ustaz datang selera. Pernah sedang dia sembahyang sunat, ustaz datang menggesel. Sudahnya dia tidak dapat melengkapkan sujud kerana ustaz rakus menebus dari belakang.”*

*(Profesor, 2017, p. 283)*

### 3.3.6 Criticism of Religious Groups (Mufti)

The religious group in the Professor's novel is indeed described as a person who has a high level of religious knowledge. However, there are some people of this prominent religious group who have committed abuses against religion in the guise of their clothes and religious knowledge. This applies to Wan Ros who was raped by two young ustaz and Hashimah who was raped by Ustaz Idrus as in this novel,

*Dia memadam filem yang terbiar tidak dilayani. Wajah Wan Ros kembali, dan wajah Ustaz Haizam meradak Wan Ros dengan ganas selepas mereka tertangkap mandi kolam itu masih kuat meskisudah bertahun-tahun berlalu. “Ubat jadi lesbian ialah merasa tongkat lelaki” Dan dia lihat semuanya, mendengar suara sendiri menjerit, memohon supaya Ustaz Haizam berhenti dan mengasihani Wan Ros. “Ini ubat jadi lesbian. Dapat sekali nak lagi”*

*(Profesor, 2017, p. 16)*

Criticism of the religious group in this novel can also be seen against the actions of Ustaz Idrus who founded a terrorist organization. Ustaz Idrus and his friends use religious masks to spread their terrorist ideology and this is also quoted in the novel.

*“Hanya sayup-sayup dia dapat mendengar yang Idrus terlibat mengasaskan sebuah stesen radio dari Batam yang pengisiannya mengajar tentang Islam. Dia mendapat tahu stesen radio itu anti Marjusi. Hashimah dicit rasa pelik juga, sejak bila pula ada Majusi yang harus dimusuhi di Batam? Pernah juga dia mendengar secara tidak sengaja, Idrus dan kawan-kawannya “mahu memasang bunga api cantik di atas langitnya mercu tanda Singapura, di Marina Bay”*

*(Profesor, 2017, p. 290)*

Apart from that, the religious groups no longer play a role and behave as the religious groups before and their position has deteriorated. Religious people are no longer always considered noble due to a handful of those who are perverse and lose the trust of society.

*“Justeru fatwa boleh menjadi fatwasis. Ini kerana kaum fasis agama bermaharajelela dan berselindung di sebalik serban, jubah, janggut dan terompah kayu mereka. Suliza menyarankan agar kumpulan ulama membaca di luar bidang dan berinteraksi dengan bahagian masyarakat dan menuntut ilmu. Ini kerana masyarakat sudah lebih abstrak dan kompleks, justeru fatwa yang tergopoh-gapah daripada mereka yang tidak ada kelayakan akan dipertikaikan, menimbulkan keresahan dan mendatangkan pertelingkahan dalam masyarakat.”*

*(Profesor, 2017, p. 354)*

The issues discussed through this novel are not trivial issues that should be taken lightly. The implications for the reader, as well as the open space in discussing matters related to sexuality should be given due attention. This is an important analysis in this study so that readers know the factors deemed appropriate by the Johor

State Fatwa Committee decided to discuss this issue and refined in depth so that this novel should be restricted distribution and debate in the novel which has 371 pages is discussed.

### 3.4 CONCLUSION

Based on the content that can be shared above, it can be understood that there are significant problems and make research on the novel '*Profesor*' is studied, reviewed and proposed to be banned from publication by the Johor State Fatwa Committee which will be discussed in the next chapter of this study. In the context of faith, sharia and morality, of course, this novel has great implications for the reader if it is not studied specifically for the younger generation who make their reading material a novel.