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Sickle as Crescent: Islam and Communism in the Netherlands East Indies, 1915-1927

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Indonesian Translation and Appropriation of the Works of Shariati and Hanafi in the New Order’s Islamic Discourses

Abstract: This paper discusses the discourses of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals on the works of Ali Shariati and Hassan Hanafi in Indonesia’s New Order. The literature discussed here consists primarily of the articles written by prominent Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, and most of the articles were introductions to the translated books of Shariati and Hanafi. The articles show us that Shariati’s and Hanafi’s ideas were received, interpreted, criticized, and appropriated by the intellectuals in order to make them relevant to the Indonesian context. The idealization of Shariati as an intellectual, a more open attitude towards Shi’ism, and the discussion of his socialist tendencies could not be separated from the demands of the Indonesian political situation during the New Order. Likewise, Hanafi’s ideas on the relation between religion, ideology and development, and the Islamic Left and Occidentalism found their relevance to the Indonesian socio-political context. Therefore, the discourses are elements of the New Order’s Islamic discourses.

Keywords: Islam, Discourses, New Order, Hanafi, Shariati.

Indonesia is home to the largest Muslim population in the world, but its Islam has frequently been considered peripheral and superficial by outsiders, including some scholars (Roff 1985, 7–34). Indonesia is geographically far from Mecca and Medina of Arabia, the center of Islam. The Islamization of people of the Indonesian regions also came much later than that of the Middle East, that is, around the 13th century. Perhaps, because of the influence of the purist Muslim outlook, some scholars also look at Islam in Java, the most populated island in the country, as simply a mixture (syncretism) of Islam and previous Hindu-Buddhist beliefs and practices. Other scholars, however, argue that Islam in Indonesia is like Islam in other Muslim countries where Islamic beliefs and practices interact with local culture. There is truly no such thing on earth as a pure Islam as long as it is followed by human beings who live in a specific social and cultural context. In other words, there should be interactions between Islamic doctrines and local culture (Varisco 2005).

One of the ways to understand the features of Indonesian Islam is to look at the Islamic literature taught, read and written in this country. The earliest survey of the Islamic literature in Indonesia was carried out by the Dutch orientalist L.W.C. van den Berg in the 19th century. The survey only covers the areas of Java and Madura. If we look at the list of the Islamic literature used in the Islamic boarding schools and mosques in that period, we find that the literature was generally written by the ulama of the Middle East of the late middle ages, that is, not from the period of the so called golden age of Islam. The list also indicates that the literature of Islamic jurisprudence follows the Shafi’ite school, while the literature of Islamic theology and Sufism follows the Ash’arite school and Sunni-Ghazalian school respectively (Steenbrink 1984, 155–57). The literature also indicates what kind of Islamic knowledge was studied by the people of the archipelago around the 17th century onwards in the Middle East, especially Mecca and Medina (Azra 2004). It is interesting that a survey of the Islamic literature used in the Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia in the early 1980s by Martin van Bruinessen (1995, 119–204) indicates that similar literature used in the 19th century was still used in the 1980s, but there was some new literature included in van Bruinessen’s list. A more specific survey of Islamic literature in Banjarese society in the 1980s and 1990s also indicates a similar result except the fact that a very few books of Salafi
background were also found in some modern Islamic boarding schools (Mujiburrahman 2013, 152–83, 2014, 611–41).

The Islamic literature used in the Islamic boarding schools was mostly in Arabic, and some in Jawi (Malay language using Arabic script). On the other hand, there has been Islamic literature written in the Indonesian language, using the Roman alphabet. Probably, the Roman alphabet was initially introduced by the Dutch in the colonial period, and the Indonesians began to use it by the 19th century and gradually the use of the Arabic script was marginalized (Fogg 2015, 86–110). By the early 20th century Islamic publishing started to grow. In this period, the Islamic literature circulated in Indonesia also included the works of the Egyptian reformists such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Rashīd Riḍā, and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. This is in line with the fact that al-Azhar became another destination for Indonesians to study Islam (Laffan 2003). In the 1950s, the translation of Arabic literature (not only on Islamic knowledge) written by Egyptian ulama and intellectuals grew rapidly (Salim 2012, 75–117). However, by the late 1960s, due to an economic and political crisis, Islamic publishing sharply declined. It had to wait until the early 1980s to grow back up again.

In a survey of Islamic books in Indonesia published from the 1980s to the early 2000s, C.W. Watson (2005, 177–210) found that most of the Islamic books in Indonesia were translations of the works of the Middle Eastern, Pakistani, Indian, European and American authors. The variety of the Islamic published materials also indicates different and conflicting schools of Islam. The public interest in these Islamic books was quite high during the Soeharto regime (1967–1998), especially in the 1980s and 1990s due to the rise of the economy and the depoliticization of Islam. Because the door of practical politics was generally closed, many Muslim activists and intellectuals shifted their attention from politics to intellectual discourses. It was in this context that many books of foreign thinkers were translated into Indonesian and enthusiastically discussed.

One of the important aspects of the publishing of the translated works that is not discussed by Watson is the introductions written by Indonesian intellectuals to these books. The introductions are important because they explicitly or implicitly indicate the reasons behind the publication of the translations. It is also important to analyze the articles by Indonesian intellectuals in response to the ideas
of foreign intellectuals whose works were translated. From this analysis, one may find the history of ideas and how they ‘traveled’ around the world. Indeed, several scholars have paid serious attention to the Islamic reform ideas during the New Order period and afterward. However, specific attention to the translated works and the intellectuals’ discourses on them is still uncommon. This paper will fill in the gap by presenting and analyzing several introductions and articles written by prominent Indonesian Muslim intellectuals as responses to the translated works of the Iranian intellectual, Ali Shariati (1939-1977) and the Egyptian intellectual, Hassan Hanafi (1935-). The texts will be understood through their contexts. The texts will be read as discourses within the contexts of power relations. I will argue that Shariati’s and Hanafi’s works were translated, received, interpreted, criticized, and appropriated by these Indonesian intellectuals in order to make them relevant to the religio-political contexts of the New Order period. The discourses on Shariati’s and Hanafi’s works can be seen as segments of the New Order’s Islamic discourses.

Ali Shariati: The Shi’i Intellectual

Socio-Historical Context

Public attention to Ali Shariati’s works in Indonesia, especially among Muslim intellectuals, seems to have begun by the early 1980s. It was a time when the depolitization of Islam by the Soeharto regime was well-established. The Islamic party, the United National Development Party (PPP), was weakened through internal conflicts, and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Muslim traditionalist organization, committed itself to return to its early mission as a socio-religious organization, implying that its association with any political party, especially the PPP, was not a matter of organizational choice, but a private decision by its members. The reformist Muslim groups, especially Muhammadiyah, had already adopted the same policy in 1967, during a time when the Soeharto regime did not allow them to rehabilitate the Islamic Party, Masyumi, banned by President Soekarno in 1960.

Having realized that the Soeharto regime strongly opposed Islam as a political ideology, the younger generation of the reformist Muslims called for the renewal of Islam. This renewal movement started in the late 1960s and became a public debate in the early 1970s. Nurcholish Madjid (1939-2005), who was the leader of the Muslim Students
Association (HMI), coined the slogan: ‘Islam Yes, Islamic Party, No?’ Madjid and his friends invited Indonesian Muslims to rethink and reinterpret Islamic tradition to face the challenges of modernization. In general, the renewal movement opened critical discourses on Islam and questioned established ‘orthodoxy’ (Boland 1974). The most important and controversial idea of the renewal movement was its non-ideological view of Islam (M. K. Hasan 1980). It accepted the state ideology, Pancasila, and paralleled Islamic values with democracy and human rights (Effendy 2003).

On the other hand, senior leaders of the reformist Muslims developed a new long term strategy, that is, to propagate Islam through (secular) universities. Thus, by the 1980s, almost all important universities such as the University of Indonesia, Gadjah Mada University, and the Bandung Institute of Technology, had a mosque as the center for learning Islam and praying. They established study clubs called Campus Islamic Propagation Institute (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus). In their studies of Islam, some of them were attracted to the model of the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt, while others were attracted to Shi’ism. They read some works of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood such as Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb which were available in Indonesian translations. On the other hand, having experienced the failure of political Islam, they were naturally attracted to the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978. It was in this context that Ali Shariati’s works became popular in Indonesia. Many reformist Muslim intellectuals and university students found Shariati’s writings impressive and inspiring.

Probably the first work of Shariati translated and published in Indonesia was On the Sociology of Islam (1979). This Indonesian translation was published by the publisher Ananda in Yogyakarta (1982b). A short introduction to the book by Saifullah Mahyudin gives us a little information about the book. Mahyudin (1982) said that the idea to translate the book came out of a discussion in the Islamic Library, Yogyakarta. Every month, the library organized a book discussion, and a competent speaker was invited to review it. It is unclear whether the monthly book discussion was simply organized by the library or by student activists. In any case, the translation was obviously not simply motivated by business reasons. Mahyudin said that Shariati’s lectures were primarily directed to the intellectuals, so
“this translation is intended to introduce and present him [Shari'ati] to talk to, and discuss with, our intellectuals, especially young Muslims who are developing their understanding of Islam”.

Another early translation of Shariati’s work was the translation of his *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies* published by Mizan, in Bandung (1980, 1983). The book was among a few publications of Mizan in its early days of business. The name ‘mizan’ reminds us of the same name of a publisher in the United States that also published translations of Shariati’s books. One may also associate this name with the highly respected Qur’anic Exegesis by the Shi‘i religious scholar Muhammad Husain Tabataba’i (1903-1981) called *Tafsir al-mizan*. The man behind Mizan Publishing was Haidar Bagir (born in 1957), who was a fresh graduate of the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB). Haidar was actively involved in Islamic programs in Salman Mosque of ITB, and his father, Muhammad Bagir, was one of the preachers of the mosque. He was eventually impressed by Shi‘i literature (Shariati’s book on Marxism was certainly among them) and converted to Shi‘ism (Zulkifli 2013, 38). In 1983, he established Mizan publishing house in Bandung, which was to become the most successful Islamic publisher in the country. What is more interesting is that M. Dawam Rahardjo (1942-2018) made a very sympathetic introduction to the book. Rahardjo was an important member of the Limited Group of Muslim Students Association (HMI) activists in Yogyakarta, who by the late 1960s had already embraced the non-ideological view of Islam. In the 1970s he had joined an NGO, the Institute of Research, Education and Information on Social and Economic Affairs (LP3ES). The LP3ES published a popular and prestigious academic journal called *Prisma*, and Rahardjo was its editor in chief.

By the next year, in 1984, Mizan published another book by Shariati. The book was an Indonesian translation of Shariati’s five articles collected from different books (Shariati 1984a). Jalaluddin Rakhatm (born in 1949), a leading Muslim intellectual in Bandung, wrote an extremely sympathetic introduction to the book. Rakhatm was a graduate of Iowa State University with a degree in communication, and became a lecturer at Padjadjaran University, Bandung. According to Zulkifli (2013, 70), it is unclear when Rakhatm exactly converted to Shi‘ism. Perhaps, it was in the early 1980s. In 1988, he established a Shi‘i institution called Mutahhari Foundation, running an Islamic high
school and publishing Islamic literature, including the works by Shi’ite ulama and intellectuals. Rakhmat, however, has been influential not only among the Shi’ite minority but also among the Sunni majority in Indonesia. In 2000, after the fall of Soeharto, he established a Shi’i organization called IJABI, *Ikatan Jamaah Ahlul Bait Indonesia* (Indonesian Council of the House of the Prophet Associations).

Another important Indonesian Muslim intellectual impressed by Shari’ati’s work was Amien Rais (born in 1944), the leader of Muhammadiyah who was to become the most prominent opposition figure during the mass protest against Soeharto a few months before his fall in 1998, and then became the speaker of the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR). He translated Shariati’s *Man and Islam* (1982a) and wrote a very sympathetic introduction to it. The book was published in 1984 by Shalahuddin Press, named after the Shalahuddin Foundation of which Amien Rais was the head. This foundation was active in organizing Islamic learning activities in the Gadjah Mada University mosque. When the book was first published, it was reported that in only four months, 5000 copies were sold. The book was then reprinted and published by a commercial publisher, Rajawali, in order to reach a wider audience in Indonesia (Anonymous 1984b, v).

From the late 1980s through the 1990s, the interest in Shariati’s works continued to grow. More and more of Shariati’s books were being translated into Indonesian and published. In 1989, Pustaka Hidayah, a branch of Mizan publishing, published the Indonesian translation of Shariati’s *al-Ummah wa al-imāmah* (1989a, 1989b). It was somewhat of a brave move to publish this book due to the fact that it touches on a sensitive and controversial issue between Sunni and Shi’i on the right to leadership of the Islamic community. The man behind this was probably Haidar Bagir who made a critical introduction to the book. Moreover, between 1992 and 1997, a group of students in Jakarta organized themselves in a study club called ‘Flamboyan Shelter’. They were interested in discussing progressive ideas of Muslim intellectuals in the world, including Shariati’s. In cooperation with the Mutahhari Foundation, on 9 June 1993, they organized a seminar on Shariati at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Jakarta, and the speakers were Amien Rais, Dawam Rahardjo, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, M. Riza Sihbudi (a researcher at the Indonesian Academy of Science), Afif Muhammad (a translator of Shariati’s books), and Azyumardi Azra (a
younger intellectual who was to become the Rector of the State Islamic University, Jakarta). The chairman of the Flamboyan, Deden Ridwan, remembers that many students came to the seminar and enthusiastically participated. After a lot of effort, in 1999 Ridwan finally published an edited volume on Shariati. It was published by Lentera, a branch of the Mizan group. 4

Responses to Shariati’s Works

There are three main issues that became the focus of attention of the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals after reading Ali Shariati, namely (1) the role of the intellectual in society; (2) the influences of Marxism on Shariati and his criticisms of it; and (3) his Shi’ite background and unique interpretation of Shi’ite doctrines. The Indonesian intellectuals’ reading of Shariati was certainly an appropriation of his ideas to fit the Indonesian socio-political context and their respective idealized self-images.

1. The Ideal Type of a Muslim Intellectual

The most important aspect of Shariati in the eyes of his Indonesian Muslim admirers was his role as an intellectual. Reading Shariati’s works, many Muslims found him to be more than simply a mirror image. He was an ideal type and a model to be followed. Therefore, it is not surprising that these Indonesian admirers are those who have more or less similar academic and religious backgrounds: they have modern western educations, but come from religious families and/or were active in Islamic organizations. They were not specifically trained in Islamic knowledge to become religious leaders, but they believed in Islam and wanted to reform society based on Islamic values. It is also noteworthy that the term ‘cendekiawan Muslim’ (Muslim intellectual) apparently began to be popular around this time, that is, in the early 1980s. Later on, in 1990, an organization called ‘Ikatan Cendekiawan Musim Indonesia’ (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) was established and those who wrote introductions to Shariati’s translated books became its most important figures.

As has been indicated, Mahyudin, in his introduction to the earliest publication of Shariati’s Indonesian translation of On the Sociology of Islam, said that the book was intended to be read by intellectuals. For him, Shariati is a distinguished Muslim intellectual who learned from,
but is critical of, the West, and at the same time, he is confident in using Islamic idioms to express his thought (Mahyudin 1982, iii–iv). The image of Shariati as an ideal Muslim intellectual is more obvious in Dawam Rahardjo’s introduction to the Indonesian translation of Shariati’s *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies* entitled “Ali Syariati: Mujahid Intelektual” (Ali Shariati, an Intellectual Jihadist). Rahardjo explains that there is a special term for intellectual in Iran: *raushaníkr* which refers to a modernist and liberal intellectual who works professionally and at the same time wants to reform society. *Raushaníkr* is usually contrasted with *mullah*, the traditional religious leaders, who masters Islamic knowledge. For Rahardjo, however, Shariati should not be opposed to *mullah* because he is also knowledgeable of Islamic tradition. His book on Hajj, argues Dawam, indicates how deep and genuine is his understanding of the ritual. Rahardjo tells us:

> I myself enjoyed his elaboration of the Hajj ritual in his book, *Hajj*. I feel very lucky to have read it before performing the Hajj in 1401 H, thanks to the recommendations of my friend and former classmate in Islamic elementary school, Dr. M. Amien Rais. “I felt that I had not yet performed the Hajj after reading the book,” said Rais to me when I met him in an event of Widya Karya Nasional, at the Indonesian Academy of Sciences, 1981 (Rahardjo 1983, 9).

His explanation about Hajar, the black slave who becomes the wife of Abraham is very touching. When I was doing the Sa’i ritual, I saw black women walking fast and crying between the Safa and Marwa hills. At that time, I was touched and I remembered Ali Shariati’s comments on a woman who suffered but was glorified by God. My wife and my mother in law who read Shariati’s explanation concerning *ṭawaf* (circumambulation of the Ka’bah) could not prevent their tears. This book is very heart touching, even though it is written by a man who cannot be called *ulama* (a religious leader) but an intellectual (Rahardjo 1983, 10).

For Rahardjo, Shariati not only wanted to bridge the mullah-intellectual dichotomy and make them well-integrated, but also tried to make himself the representation of the idealized *raushaníkr*, a person who is serious with his ideology. According to Rahardjo, Shariati was the architect of the Iranian revolution who talked about ‘suffering, oppression, and martyrdom’ on the one hand, and ‘freedom, liberation, and the people’s struggle against oppression’ on the other.

As indicated by Rahardjo’s statement quoted above, M. Amien Rais probably read Ali Shariati earlier than Rahardjo when the former
was studying in the United States. Rais did not only read Shariati, but also translated Shariati’s *Man and Islam* into Indonesian. The title of the translation is *Tugas Cendekiawan Muslim* (The Duty of Muslim Intellectuals), which is clearly not a literal translation of the original title. It was probably intentionally chosen to attract Muslim university students and the well-educated class. In his introduction to the book, Rais openly expresses his admiration of Shariati’s ideas and his role as an intellectual.

I have read several books of Ali Shariati and after reading them, I feel to have really obtained a new perspective of Islam and modern life. What is unique about Shariati is his radical thought and honesty in assessing social problems in the Muslim world in general, and in Iran in particular.

The main points of Shariati’s thought can be creatively appropriated to the condition of our society, especially to the Muslims who are threatened by stagnant thinking. The specific feature of Shariati’s writings and lectures is their moving force (menggerakkan). He is truly an intellectual and at the same time an *ulama* who dislikes seeing the status quo and stagnancy…

One of his central ideas is that Muslim intellectuals can only be meaningful and functional if they are present among the people, enlightening them, and performing the reform together in order to achieve a better and more Islamic life (Rais 1984, vi, ix).

Like Rahardjo and Rais, Jalaluddin Rahmat’s introduction to Shariati’s translated book also highlights the question of the role of Muslim intellectuals. The title of his introduction is ‘*Ali Syari’ati: Panggilan untuk Ulil Albab*’ (Ali Shariati: the Call for Ulil Albab). Rakhmat uses the Qur’anic term ‘*uli al-albâb*’ to refer to an intellectual such as Shariati. For Rakhmat, this term is the same as ‘*raushanîkr*’, and different from ‘scientist’. “A scientist finds reality, but a *raushanîkr* finds the truth. A scientist presents the facts as they are, but a *raushanîkr* thinks what they should be. A scientist uses universal language, but a *raushanîkr* uses the language of his/her people. In doing his/her work, a scientist is neutral, but a *raushanîkr* engages him/herself with an ideology” (Rakhmat 1984, 15). To be more specific, Rakhmat said that an intellectual is not simply a scholar with a university degree who develops his/her scientific expertise through teaching and research. An intellectual is the one who is concerned with reforming society, accommodating and formulating people’s aspiration, using the common language and proposing alternative solutions. For Rakhmat, Ali Shariati represents the ideal intellectual, *raushanîkr* or *Ulil Albab*. Rakhmat argues further that although Shariati comes up with new ideas, they are not theoretical propositions to be
verified. His theory is not to call for further research, but to open a new perspective and incite intellectual dissonance. He does not only speak by reason, but also by emotion.

Rakhmat finally said that the voice of Shariati is a challenge to (Indonesian Muslim) intellectuals:

Oh, Ulil Albab. You should not be satisfied with the knowledge you already have. You should bring your knowledge to the people. Continue the struggle of God’s messengers. Awaken the consciousness of Muslims to reform the world with your guidance. To do that, you cannot learn from the West or the East, but to understand the basic convictions and historical processes molding them. Eventually, your duty is to destroy injustice and oppression in society and to build an Islamic community based on Islamic monotheism and justice (Rakhmat 1984, 24).

In contrast, in the opening of his introduction to Shariati’s book, Haidar Bagir (1989, 7) begins with an anecdote which indicates the ambivalent attitude of Khomeini towards Shariati’s works. It was said that one day, a group of students asked Khomeini about Shariati’s books. Khomeini’s answer was, “Read Mutahhari’s books!” The question was repeated up to three times, and Khomeini’s answer was still the same. This seems to indicate, argues Bagir, that Khomeini suggests the students to read Mutahhari’s books before reading Shariati’s, or if they have to choose, they should choose Mutahhari’s. The statement does not mean a prohibition to read Shariati’s. It is noteworthy that Mutahhari was a progressive mullah who collaborated with Shariati before the Revolution. Both men, however, finally separated due to important disagreements (Rahnema 1998, chaps. 16, 17, 18).

As we shall see, Bagir is critical of Shariati, but also praises him as ‘mujtahid-mujahid’. A mujtahid is a person who has the authority to give opinions on Islamic matters, while mujahid is someone who performs the jihad, the social, spiritual, and even armed struggle. For Bagir, Shariati’s figure represents the ideal man described in his own writings, namely the one who combines faith and rationality, piety and activism, solitary life and social engagement, reason and emotion, and power and love (Bagir 1989, 14).

2. Shariati as a Shi’a Intellectual

The majority of Indonesians are Sunni, while Shariati is a Shi’i. Most of the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals who wrote introductions to Shariati’s translated books are also Sunni. Therefore, they need to
respond to this issue. In general, their responses are positive but critical. They appreciate Shariati’s ideas but at the same time criticize some of them. They tried to put aside Sunni-Shi’ite differences as remnants of history that should not prevent both sides from learning from each other.

In his introduction, Dawam Rahardjo (1983, 11) said that because Shariati is a Shi’i, he almost never talks about the nobility of the Prophet’s companions such as Abu Bakar and Umar, but of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Abu Dzar, Salman, the Shi’ite imams and Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet and wife of Ali. For Rahardjo, the Shi’ite ideology based on the leadership of the family of the Prophet is difficult to accept. However, the “The Shi’ite movement is a historical reality. The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1978 is also a historical reality, and it is even a very important part of world history in the 20th century”.

In line with Rahardjo, Amien Rais also shows his openness to Shariati’s ideas regardless of the fact that the latter is a Shi’i. “I believe that the readers will find one or more things that are not in agreement with their views. Nevertheless, this is normal because the context of the problem faced by Shariati is different from what we face in Indonesia,” said Rais (1984, ix). Rais (1984, 10) then explains further:

Dr. Shariati is a Shi’i Muslim, while the translator is a Sunni. The drive to translate this book is not to offer stray reflections of Shi’ite thought in Indonesia. For the translator, the Sunni-Shi’ite difference is the legacy of classic history which weakens the Islamic community as a whole. What should be done is not to reopen the political conflict of the past that is useless. Our duty is to reinvent Islamic teachings that have been shut by secular, agnostic and sometimes atheistic Western and Eastern thought. The fact that there is a Shi’ite concept that we cannot accept concerning leadership (imāmah), it should not be overstated. We should be open-minded to learn bezels of truth from wherever they come.

Jalaluddin Rakhmat who was to be known a Shi’i, however, describes Shariati’s shi’ism with total empathy and without any criticism. Rakhmat started his essay by describing the tragedy of Husain, the son of Ali and the grandson of the Prophet who, along with his 72 followers, was brutally killed by Yazid with his 30,000 armies, in Karbala on 10 Muharram 680 H. Every year Shi’ite people perform a ritual to remember the suffering of this man and his followers. This annual ritual, Rakhmat argues, makes the Shi’ite people aware of the continuous historical struggle between good and evil, justice and
oppression. It was on the same day of 10 Muharram 1398 H (1978) that a huge demonstration against the Shah in Iran began and ended with the Revolution (Rakhmat 1984, 9–11).

In contrast, Haidar Bagir (1989, 17–18) explains the distinctive features of Shariati’s interpretation of imāmah can be seen as an attempt at reconciling Shi’ite and Sunnite doctrines. Bagir argues that for Shariati, during the time of the hiding of the imam, his followers should create a condition ready for him to appear. Unlike the common Shi’ite beliefs, Shariati does not consider Abu Bakar, Umar and Utsman, the three Sunni caliphs (successors of the Prophet) before Ali, as traitors and robbers of the right of Ali to imāmah. The reason is that for Shariati, imāmah is something ‘natural’ in the sense that someone becomes the imam because he naturally has specific attributes of the imam, while the succession of the Prophet in terms of leadership (khilāfah) is not. What was lost was the right of the Islamic community to have access to his imāmah guidance. The leadership of the imams, for Shariati, is needed when the Islamic community is not yet mature. When it becomes mature, an imam should be elected through mutual consultation. Moreover, for Shariati, an imam is an ordinary human being because he is a model for other human beings to follow.

On the other hand, a younger intellectual, Nadirsyah (1999, 131–60) wrote a critical essay on Shariati’s shi’ite political doctrine mentioned above. He praises Shariati for his attempt at transcending the existing Shi’ite and Sunnite doctrines. Nevertheless, for him, Shariati’s interpretation raises further questions. First, if imanah is part of a person’s inherent character, why does Shariati still believe in the necessity of the Prophet testament (waṣīyah) for that? If an imam is recognized by one group and denied by another—as happened in the history of Shi’’a—how can we determine a true imam by simply looking at his distinctive personal characters? Shariati said that the imāmah was not needed after the hiding of the twelfth imam in 250 H. Before that, imāmah was needed because the Islamic community was not yet mature. For Nadirsyah, this is historically questionable. The history of the early caliphs was politically successful until the assassination of the third caliph, followed by the clash between Ali and Muawiyah. Thus, Shariati’s argument that the downfall of Islam was because the succession was not given to Ali is weak. From before the time the
twelfth imam hid (in 250 H/862CE according to Shariati) and for some decades following, the Islamic community attained its golden age in terms of arts and sciences. Thus, it was not the time of crisis.

3. Shari‘ati, Marxism and Revolution

Anybody who reads Shariati will find that his dichotomic description of society between the oppressors and the oppressed, apart from its appropriation of the Qur’anic story of the two sons of Adam, Abel (Habil) and Cain (Qabil), is similar to Marxist dichotomy. This issue is important because during the New Order period of Soeharto, Marxism was officially prohibited in Indonesia. Moreover, Marxism in the form of communism is a revolutionary ideology. Probably in order to avoid state suspicions, the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals tried to soften Shariati’s revolutionary tendency. Moreover, some of them also criticized Shariati’s thought.

The inclination to soften Shariati’s tendency towards revolution can be seen in Dawam Rahardjo’s and Amien Rais’s respective introductions. Rahardjo (1983, 30) said that Shariati is very critical of Marxism, especially of its materialist philosophy, but like Marx, he is very concerned with the life of the poor and the oppressed. For Rahardjo, the current program of empowering the poor in villages of Iran was in line with Shariati’s ideas. Rahardjo then quickly said that this was not a socialist, but a cultural revolution. “Iran emphasizes cultural revolution and an Islamization process rather than material achievements as the primary goal.” Likewise, Rais (1984, ix) said that Shariati’s *Man and Islam* “is not a revolutionary book. In this book, Shariati primarily invites us to radically think about the function of human beings, the meaning of ideology and worldview, the use and revitalization of one’s cultural resources under the guidance of Islam, and the duties that should be taken by Muslim intellectuals.”

On the other hand, Mochtar Pabottinggi, an intellectual from the Indonesian Academy of Sciences, criticizes Shariati’s views of Marxism. For Pabottinggi (1986, 10–18), to criticize Marxism in terms of materialism as opposed to spirituality as Shariati did is misleading. When Marx said that the basis of human behavior is economic interest, he does not promote excessive love of material things. Marx actually proposes an epistemology for understanding human behavior. Moreover, Marx wrote very little about religion, but
he wrote a lot about capitalist exploitation. For Pabottinggi, in many cases, Shariati simplifies Western schools of thought to be opposed to Islam. He is actually an apologist. This makes him exclusive and unfair. He often looks at other religions in the historical perspective but compares them with normative Islam. Pabottinggi, however, can understand why Shariati took this step. Shariati wrote and spoke in a socio-political context of struggle. He should draw a clear line between ‘we’ and ‘them’, friends and foes. It was a concession that he should have taken as an engaged intellectual. Nevertheless, the very core of Shariati’s discourse is still universal: human equality and liberation from any oppression.

In line with Pabottinggi, Haidar Bagir (1989, 10–11) also criticizes Shariati. For him, the disagreements between Mutahhari and Shariati alluded to above, were not simply a conflict between an intellectual and a mullah, but about important points of thought. First, Shariati shows that the lower class is always good while the upper class is always bad. This is not so in reality. For Bagir, we should not lose our hope for the people of the upper class. Bagir argues that Khadijah, the wife of the Prophet, was a wealthy woman who supported Muhammad’s mission. Second, Shariati seems to believe that revolution is the only way to liberation. For Bagir, revolution is only an alternative if the situation demands it. In this case, the revolution should not be based on revenge but sincere consciousness. Third, Shariati loses individuals in society. For Shariati, it is not the individual but society that has authentic existence. For Bagir, both individual and society should seriously be taken into account.

**Hassan Hanafi: The Egyptian Intellectual**

*The Socio-Historical Context*

In our discussion on the socio-historical context of Shariati’s Indonesian translated books, we mentioned that in the early 1970s, the reformist Muslims called for the renewal of Islam. In this period, Abdurrahman Wahid, who was to become the president in 1999 after the first elections following the fall of Soeharto, was involved in the discussions and activities of the renewal group. He also wrote articles for *Prisma*. In 1984, he was elected as the executive chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the traditionalist Muslim organization. Wahid took NU out of practical politics in the sense that it did not affiliate with
any political party as it did before with the Islamic party, the PPP. This ‘socio-cultural strategy’ eventually pushed the energy of the younger generation of NU, especially those of the Indonesian Islamic Students Movement (PMII), to develop intellectual Islamic discourses, similar to what had been undertaken by the Muslim Student Association (HMI) a decade earlier.

The earliest publication of Hassan Hanafi’s work in Indonesian translation was probably the article on the Islamic theology of land, translated by Daniel Dhakidae and published in *Prisma* (1984, 39–50). Dawam Rahardjo said that in 1981, he met Hanafi at the United Nations University in Tokyo, and was impressed by him. Hanafi gave him some of his articles, and one of them was probably the translated theology of land. However, it was in the early 1990s that Hanafi’s ideas apparently started to become public intellectual discourses in Indonesia. He was even invited to Indonesia to speak in seminars and more of his works were translated into Indonesian. Among his works that attracted Muslim intellectuals were his *Islam, Ideology and Development, Islamic Left and Occidentalism*. Some of the books were translated from English, and some from Arabic.

Although both the reformist and traditionalist groups talked about Hanafi’s ideas and published translations of his works, their cultural and political background somehow influenced their respective readings of Hanafi. In the early 1990s, partly due to internal conflict with certain army generals, Soeharto shifted his political alliance from the *abangan* (nominal Muslims or Muslims outside the Islamic movements) and Christian minorities to the reformist Muslims. In 1990, Soeharto supported the establishment of the Association of the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) and endorsed B.J. Habibie—who was later to become his vice president and then president, to replace him—as its top leader (Liddle 1996, 613–34). As has been mentioned, almost all of the intellectuals discussed above who wrote on Shariati joined the ICMI. Abdurrahman Wahid, however, refused to be in the ICMI. He said that the ICMI was a sectarian organization. For Wahid, the ICMI made Muslim intellectuals an exclusive group based on Islamic identity. The true intellectual, said Wahid, is not bound by any sectarian identity (Abdurrahman Wahid 1991a, 69–72). Wahid’s criticisms of the ICMI were certainly significant due to the fact that he was the leader of NU, the biggest Muslim organization in the country.
Another important point to note is that Hanafi seems to be more interesting for young traditionalists because he proposes that Islamic reform should start from reforming the ideas found in Islamic traditional texts (turāth). Most of the young traditionalists are graduates of Islamic boarding schools where they studied the turāth. Thus, unlike most of the reformist intellectuals, the traditionalists generally have a better mastery of Arabic. Hanafi’s voluminous books are also mostly written in Arabic. Therefore, with their Arabic, the traditionalists can read Hanafi’s works.

Responses to Hanafi’s Works

There are at least three important points that have become the locus of discourses on Hanafi’s works. The first is his idea of religion, ideology and revolution. The second is his idea of the Islamic Left. The last one is his work on Occidentalism. The Indonesian Muslim intellectuals’ responses to Hanafi’s ideas certainly cannot be separated from the socio-political and historical contexts of the respective speakers.

1. Religion, Ideology and Revolution

It seems that the first translation of Hanafi’s book in Indonesian was Religion, Ideology and Development published by the Association for Pesantren and Society Development (P3M) (1991a), an NGO where the traditionalist and reformist Muslims came together to empower people from Pesantren, the Islamic boarding schools. Abdurrahman Wahid wrote an analytical introduction to this book and implicitly shows his own standpoint which is in line with that of Hanafi. It seems that Wahid was very familiar with Hanafi’s ideas. One should remember that Wahid studied in Cairo in the second half of the 1960s.

The title of the book does not include the word ‘revolution’ but ‘development’. Wahid, however, from the very beginning of his introduction discusses the trifecta of religion, ideology and revolution.6 Wahid argues that the interaction between Islam as a religion with ideology and revolution took different forms. In one case, Islam simply absorbs a certain ideology. In another, Islam becomes the opponent of an ideology. In one case, the opposition to an ideology does not lead to a revolution, while in another it does. All these cases have happened in the Muslim World, including the Middle East and Indonesia.
Wahid (1991b, vii–xi) laments that in many cases, Islam simply legitimizes the dominant existing ideology such as socialism in the Middle East in the 1950s and 1960s. A similar thing happened in Indonesia when the ideology of developmentalism was promoted by the New Order. On the other hand, communist revolutions did not take place in the Middle East or Indonesia partly due to Islamic opposition. Nevertheless, revolution exploded in Iran when the opposed ideology was western modernization. Another possibility is a non-revolutionary strategy through gradual cultural transformation. This gradual transformation may take two forms: one is like Maududi’s attempt at Islamizing society, while another is to bring Islamic values into the common universal humanitarian struggle. For Wahid, Hanafi tends to choose the latter strategy. Hanafi calls for human liberation from feudalism and oppression. He started from a reforming Islamic tradition, but his goal was universal humanism.

Wahid’s observation, no doubt, shows his own Islamic ideological position vis-à-vis the state. He chooses the non-revolutionary cultural strategy in bringing Islamic values for the benefits of all. This is somehow in line with Hanafi’s standpoint, but different from Maududi’s and the like. In the Indonesian case, in the eyes of Wahid, ICMI activists took the approach of formal Islam, and therefore, he disagreed with them. For Wahid, the slogan is ‘Islam for the whole nation’, not the opposite (Mujiburrahman 1999, 339–52).

2. The Islamic Left

In 1993, there were two publications of Hassan Hanafi’s Islamic Left (al-yasār al-Islāmī). The first was published in the first edition of a journal called Islamika. The journal was edited by the younger generation of reformist Muslim activists, and supported by the publisher Mizan. This publication of the Islamic left was based on the English book of Kazou Shimogaki’s work (1988). In the appendix of this book, Shimogaki gave a summarized translation of Hanafi’s Islamic Left. This text was then translated into Indonesian by a young reformist Muslim intellectual, Saiful Mujani. The text was discussed in the Paramadina Foundation, and Nurcholish Madjid, the leader of Paramadina, became the prime reviewer. The discussion took place on 18 February 1993, and was attended by around 50 people, including Dawam Rahardjo. The transcript of the discussion was also published in Islamika.
In the same year, another publication of the same work was introduced by the Institute for Islamic and Social Studies (LKiS), an NGO of young Muslim traditionalists, most of whom were PMII activists in their student days, and based in Yogyakarta. This one is the translation of the whole book of Kazou Shimogaki, and Hanafi’s article on the *Islamic Left* is translated into Indonesian from the original Arabic (Shimogaki 1993). They got the copied version of the original Arabic from Abdurrahman Wahid. It is not surprising that Wahid writes a descriptive and sympathetic introduction to the book.

In the transcript of the discussion of the text of *Islamic Left* published in *Islamika*, we find that Nurcholish Madjid said that the *Islamic Left*—originally a journal published in 1981 and never appearing again—is a kind of manifesto because its word choice is somewhat sloganistic, and Hanafi puts every school of thought in Islam that is opposed to the establishments on the left, and the others on the right. For Madjid, Hanafi’s idea is relevant to Indonesia in so far that it is concerned with social justice. He reminded the participants of the discussion that the Indonesian reformist Muslim party, Masyumi, was once called ‘leftish Islam’ because of its attention to social justice. Tjokroaminoto, the first leader of Sarekat Islam (SI), the early Islamic modern organization in Indonesia, said that socialism is in line with Islam. Colonialism, argues Madjid, is an exploitation of other people. He said that the coming of the colonial power to Indonesia in the 17th century was perhaps because they were trying to find another silk road in the East when the original silkroad was controlled by Muslims. Madjid’s appreciation of Hanafi’s socialist tendency was certainly related to the fact that the social gap between the rich and the poor in Indonesia was and has been serious.

On the other hand, many participants in the discussion saw Hanafi’s left-right dichotomy as very Marxian. Then, a question came up whether this dichotomy is acceptable in Islam. Madjid acknowledges that in the Qur’an, there are verses indicating a kind of dichotomy, but he was not convinced that it was like Marxian class dichotomy. Rahardjo, on the other hand, said that Marx actually knows that there are various layers of people in society but he specifies two classes because these two are always in conflict in the making of history. For Rahardjo, a dichotomy is not always a binary opposition. It can also become complementary, like *Yin* and *Yang* in Chinese tradition. In other words, opposition is not always the outcome. Perhaps, in terms political context, Rahardjo’s
view can be interpreted that the Islam-government relationship, or more precisely, the ICMI-government relationship, should be seen as complementary rather than in binary opposition.

In contrast to reformist comments, the traditionalists look at Hanafi from a different angle. A young traditionalist intellectual who was to become the icon of liberal Islam, Ulil Abshar Abdalla, said that Hanafi was disappointed with nationalist and socialist revolutions in the Arab world that failed to bring society into its ideals. In his analysis, the failure of the revolution was because the ideology was not rooted in society. It was imported by the elites from outside. Therefore, to reform Muslim society one has to start from reforming the Islamic intellectual tradition (turāth). It seems that Abdallah implicitly said that this standpoint of reform is important for Indonesian Muslims too.

Abdurrahman Wahid, in his introduction to the book explains that as a thinker, Hassan Hanafi has at least three phases of development. In the beginning, indicated by his celebrated PhD thesis, he tried to combine Islamic legal theory with the phenomenological school of philosophy. This became the basis of how he later developed his ideas by looking at Islamic norms as well as empirical realities of Muslim life. The second phase was when he became attracted to socialist and populist ideology. It was in this phase that he wanted Islam to become like a socialist ideology. He disregarded historical determinism of Marxism and tried to put Islam within its ethos. The Islamic Left is Hanafi’s thought in this phase. However, having witnessed the failure of the socialist ideology in the Arab world, Hanafi started to think of Islam as a universal struggle for human rights and dignity through a social organization and the empowerment of the masses (Abdurrahman Wahid 1993, 11–13). It seems Wahid implicitly said that he was taking the job proposed by Hanafi.9

3. Occidentalism

Muslims generally have an ambivalent attitude towards Western culture. They hate the West for its colonialism, orientalism, and missionary activities, but admire it for its advancement in science and technology. When the Soeharto government started its modernization programs in the early 1970s, some Muslim leaders were afraid that modernization would lead to Westernization and de-Islamization. Nurcholish Madjid (1987, 171–203) who was the leader of the renewal

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movement tried to clarify the issue by saying that modernization is rationalization not Westernization. Therefore, Islam is not opposed to modernization. Later on and until the end of his life, Madjid tirelessly developed ideas to put Islamic teachings in accordance with what he considered positive aspects of modernity.

However, it is not easy to separate modernity from Western culture, especially because of its hegemonic nature. Partly because of this reason, the idea of Occidentalism is attractive. During the discussion on the Islamic Left, Madjid came up with a newly published book of Hassan Hanafi, Muqaddimah fi ‘ilm al-Istighrāb (Introduction to Occidentalism) (1991b). Madjid said that this book is interesting because it tries to counter balance the Orientalism of the West. If the West makes the East an object of study, now the East should also make the West an object of study. The book, for Madjid, is an attempt at reaffirming the Arab self vis-à-vis the West. Moreover, Wahid also touches the issue of Occidentalism in his introduction to the Islamic Left. For Wahid, Occidentalism is part of Hanafi’s effort to liberate Muslims from the hegemony of the West. The Muslims should learn the strengths and weaknesses of Western culture and then make policies based on this learning.

In 1994, a younger intellectual who studied in Jordan and then Malaysia, Luthfi Assyaukanie (1994, 118–31), wrote an article on Hassan Hanafi’s Occidentalism. The article was published in an Islamic academic journal called Ulumul Qur’an. Again, the journal was managed by Dawam Rahardjo, and it was probably the most successful popular Islamic journal during the New Order. Assyaukanie also published his interview with Hanafi in the journal. In his article, Assyaukanie discusses the history of Orientalism and its ‘sins’. Then he presented Hanafi’s Occidentalism. In his final remarks, Assyaukanie was critical of Hanafi. For him, Hanafi’s Occidentalism is no more than an expression of disappointments with the historical reality of Muslims. It is much more ideological than scientific. He asked: in the current condition when Muslims are politically and economically weak under the hegemony of the West, how can they develop their knowledge of the West? Knowledge and power are strongly related, aren’t they?

In 2000, the Paramadina Foundation (established by Nurcholish Majdjid in 1986), published the Indonesian translation of Hanafi’s Muqaddimah fi ‘ilm al-Istighrāb (2000). I believe that the publication
Indonesian Translation and Appropriation of the Works

of the book was strongly endorsed by Madjid who, in the discussion on the Islamic left in 1993 discussed above, mentioned this book. Therefore, although the book was published about two years after the fall of Soeharto, its discourse is still of the New Order’s Islamic discourses. The introduction to the book was written by a younger intellectual, Komaruddin Hidayat (2000, xiii–xx), who was to become the rector of the State Islamic University, Syarif Hidayatullah, in Jakarta. Hidayat argues that globalization makes people of the world close to each other, but it does not narrow the gap between the rich and the poor countries. Globalization can even be seen as Westernization. It is in this context that, for Hidayat, Hanafi’s Occidentalism is important. Hanafi’s Occidentalism is not Orientalism in reverse. It is an attempt at establishing equality between the East and the West. It is true that Hanafi’s discourse is ideological—as criticized by Assyaukanie—but for Hidayat, it is also scientific in the sense that it endeavors to objectively look at the West. Finally, Hidayat argues that Occidentalism is a big project, and Hanafi’s book is just the beginning. Other intellectuals, including Indonesians, should take part in the project. 10

In general, the responses of the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals to Hanafi’s Occidentalism were generally similar. They were ambivalent in the sense that on the one hand, the idea was welcomed but they also realized that it was not easy to be materialized. The common feeling in the Muslim world of being hegemonized by the West through political and cultural invasion seems to be the backbone of this ambivalence. This problem became more important when Samuel Huntington’s thesis on the clash of civilization 11 in the early 1990s seemed to be ’proven’ by the Gulf War, the 9/11 terrorist attack and the other political crises in the Middle East that followed.

Conclusion

Our discussion has shown that both Shariati’s and Hanafi’s works were published and discussed by Indonesian Muslim intellectuals in a time when political Islam was generally oppressed in Indonesia and even in the world. Indonesian Muslims tried to find inspiration from other Muslim intellectuals to face the challenges in their home country. Therefore, it is not surprising that they appropriated and/or criticized the ideas of these foreign intellectuals in order to make them relevant to their own context. In other words, they told a story through
another story. The idealization of Shariati as an intellectual, a more open attitude towards Shi’im and discussion of his Marxist and socialist tendencies cannot be separated from the demands of the Indonesian political situation when the public role of intellectuals, the unity of the opposition groups to the government and the gap-narrowing between the rich and the poor were badly needed. Likewise, Hanafi’s idea of the relation between religion, ideology and development, the Islamic Left and Occidentalism was interesting because during the New Order period, the government carried out modernization projects and adopted western developmentalist economic policies. However, the Indonesian Muslim discourses are also influenced by their respective Islamic views and political interests, namely as reformist, traditionalist or Shi’ite.

It is also noteworthy that although Shariati is Iranian and Hanafi is Egyptian, like many other intellectuals of their generation, both share a similar tendency, namely a strong inclination toward social justice and revolution inspired by Islam. This was one of the reasons why their ideas were attractive to the Indonesian intellectuals during the repressive Soeharto regime. It is not a coincidence that both Hanafi and Shariati took their PhDs in Paris. In 1995, Hasan Hanafi was invited to speak in a seminar in Jakarta as a part of the Istiqlal Festival, the Islamic cultural event supported by the state. After the seminar, I came to see him. I said, “Your socialist tendency is similar to that of Shariati?” “Yes, of course, he was my friend in Paris!” Hanafi replied. Although I fail to find the tracks of their friendship, they are certainly friends in terms of ideas of Islamic reform, just like their friends in Indonesia.

Finally, the intellectuals who participated in these discourses on Shariati’s and Hanafi’s ideas consisted of the first and second generation of the Islamic renewal movement in Indonesia’s New Order. There is no doubt that the second generation learnt a lot from the works of their seniors and directly or indirectly became part of their cadre. As Kersten’s study indicates, the second generation eventually becomes the promoters of progressive Islam in the 21st century Indonesia, and they have to face the challenges of the conservative and fundamentalist Islamic groups in the country (Kersten 2015, chaps. 2–5). The rise of democracy in Indonesia in the late 1990s has opened the door for everyone, including conservatives and fundamentalists who were previously oppressed to speak up. Ever since, the contest among these Islamic groups has become more open and intricate in the public sphere.
On the other hand, nowadays, the discourses on Shariati and Hanafi are not prominent anymore. Thus, it is safe to say that the intellectual discourses on the works of Shariati and Hanafi are elements of the New Order’s Islamic discourses. They have already become something of the past, a part of Indonesian Islamic intellectual history.
Endnotes

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1. Among the studies are B.J. Boland (1974); Muhammad Kamal Hasan (1980); Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy (1986); Masykuri Abdillah (1997); and Greg Barton (1999). The recent study of the Indonesian Muslim intellectual discourses from the New Order to the present Reformasi period is Carool Kersten (2015).

2. The use of discourse analysis in the study of religion has been suggested and applied particularly by Talal Asad (1986, 1993).

3. However, in an interview published recently in his book, he said that he is neither a Sunni nor a Shi‘i (Bagir 2017, 173).


5. See Rahardjo’s account concerning his meeting with Hanafi in Islamika (1993, 29).

6. It is noteworthy that before the publication of his introduction to Hanafi’s book, Abdurrahman Wahid already published an article in English (1985). This article provides longer and broader arguments than the introduction to Hanafi’s book.

7. For the full text of the translation, see Hassan Hanafi (1993, 3–22).

8. The following account of the discussion refers to the transcripts under the title “al-Yasār al-Islāmī: Manifesto Hassan Hanafi” (1993, 23–32).


10. It is noteworthy that an Indonesian scholar, Yudian Wahyudi (2003, 233–48), also publishes an article in the Muslim World, discussing the responses of Arab intellectuals to Hanafi’s Occidentalism.

11. Huntington’s thesis also incited intellectual debate in Indonesia. In 1993, the journal Ulumul Qur’an publishes the translation of Huntington’s article and some articles responding to the controversial thesis by Indonesian intellectuals.

12. For the studies of the ‘conservative turn’ in Indonesia in the last decade, see Martin van Bruinessen (2013).

13. The recent study indicates that the new Indonesian ‘millennial’ generation mostly interested in popular Islamic literature influenced by the Islamist ideology rather than serious and more academic Islamic books like those of Shariati and Hanafi. See Noorhaidi Hasan (2018).

Bibliography


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