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# INSANIYAT

## Journal of Islam and Humanities

### Literature and Social Issues: Study of Islam, Secularism, and Humanism in Achdiat's Atheis Indonesian Novel

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#### Abstract

*Although religion faces many challenges, such as clashing with modernity and becoming the object of criticism, religion has a thousand lives. One Indonesian novel created by Achdiat Karta Mihardja entitled Atheis (1990) pictured this religious phenomenon. Therefore, this article discusses Islam, secularism, and humanism in the Novel. This is qualitative research with the literary approach that combines the comparative literature theory of American schools and sociology focused on the sociology of modernity and religion. This research finds the novel as a criticism and reconstruction of Islam that is compatible with secularism and humanism in general, though in certain parts they are different. Further, the author of this novel reveals a good and proper Islam based on the text, first, it is concerned not only with the afterlife but also the present and here-ness real life. Thus, he criticizes the Islamic pattern which believes in superstition. Second, the Islamic form according to humanism and moderat feminism as the core of Islam is a public benefit and blessing for the universe. This research concluded that the novel's criticism is in line with the criticism in the scientific sociological Islamic literature.*

**Keywords:** *Islam, Secularism, Humanism, Comparative, Atheist.*

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#### Introduction

Religion has many individual and social functions for its adherents. Religion also serves the thirst of human spirituality as *homo spiritual*. In Islam, it is impossible to live without belief, because the human problem is not atheism but polytheism (Madjid, 1992, pp. 78-79 and Kamil, 2019, pp. pp. 15-17). Thus, religion gives meaning or motivation to life which is seen as an investment in a religious charity to happiness or well-being in the world together for the sake of happiness in the afterlife. Religion does not only serve as a unifying factor that can be able to unite religious communities, but also it as a social control that can be able to bring social order and stability (Nottingham, 1985, pp. 40-41, Riyanto, 2009, pp. 187-223, Mudzakkir, 2009, pp. 55-56, Haryanto, 2015, pp 84-87, Boty, 2015, pp. 35-50, and Maslow, 2021, 5-18).



Moreover, religion, as said by some experts, can create social transformation, because *da'wah* (preaching) in Islam is transforming *jāhili* (bad) society into *ma'rūf* (good) society in its thinking, saying, and deed (Rais, 1991, pp. 23-35). Islamic monotheism (*tauḥīd*) is also a criticism and rejection of the ancient Arab arbitrariness of pre-Islam (*jāhiliyah*). That is why the emergence of Islam that teaches *tauḥīd*, therefore, regarded the ruling Quraysh of Mecca in seventh century implies a threat to the political and economic structures that have long been their wake. They, in this case, can not distinguish between prophetic and power (Madjid, 1992, pp. 72-88, Watt, 1990, p. 4; and Syalabi, No Year, pp. 29-30. See also McCabe, 2022, pp. 195-242 and Irawan, 2018, pp. 77-90). Likewise, the previous religions: Jews and Christians have a similar role in social transformation (Hart, 2005, pp.114-115, Wirjosuparto, 1956, pp.115-116; Abdullah, 1993, pp.1-40, and Setiawan, 2004, p. 175).

Komaruddin Hidayat, the former Rector and also Professor at the State Islamic University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, concluded that religion has a thousand lives His conclusions are almost comparable to those of William James (Hidayat, 2012, p. x and James, 2015, pp. 468-485). Although repeatedly under fire, until now religion remains alive and thriving. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart argue that after a process of secularization, the world is now generally more religious (Norris and Inglehart, 2009).

However, like other phenomenon, between theory and practice, including what is understood, there is a gap. Religion is often not by the ideals above. Religion often does not become media of social transformation, not a strength emancipators, contrary to humanism (human), and also not *ṣāliḥ li-kulli zamān wa makān* (by the whole of space and time). Presumably, the reality of religion that has scripture understood literally by most adherents, especially in less educated societies - even in some cases by a majority of its adherents - makes Islam for example often not in line with modernity.

What is meant by modernization here is new things, whether institutional or value, and facilities by reason and modern science, both in the social, humanities and especially in the field of science and technology (Apter, 1985, pp. 457-461 and Jones, 2010, pp. 32-41). Modernity is the novelty of social, cultural, political, economic, defense and security, as developed in the West (Western Europe and North America). Even so, as stated by Nurcholish Madjid, modernization is not Westernization (all-around West), but the life of new science-based rationality and empirics, though not necessarily the ideology of scientism (the truth of modern science as the only truth) (Madjid, 2008, pp. 179-302, Nasution, *et.al.*, 2003, p. 169).

The incompatibility of religion, including Islam, to modernity can be seen in Karl Marx's critique of modern sociology and social philosophy. According to him, considering religion as the top building that serves the economy as its basis, religion, at least helped maintain exploitative situation. The religion, he sneered sarcastically, is essentially an expression of social distress. Religion is the outcry against the oppressed citizens. Religion is a sentiment the world is unbearable, as will be explained later (Pals, 1996, pp. 138-144; Sheed, 1945, pp. 155-160, Johnson, 1994, pp. 134-137, Hidayat, 1994, p. 190, Rais, 1991, pp. 105-107, and Riyanto, 2009, pp. 65-68).

As if justifying Karl Marx's view, in the Indonesian context, the mismatch of religion especially Islam and modernity can be seen from MUI (Indonesian Ulama Council/ Majelis Ulama Indonesia) *Fatwā* (Decree) Number: 7/Munas VII / MUI / II / 2005 on pluralism, liberalism, and secularism. This fatwa declared that those three ideologies are not by the teachings of Islam and *ḥarām* (strictly forbidden) (MUI, 2005 and *Gatra*, 2005, pp. 76-77).

As in the study of religious literature, criticism of religion that is incompatible with modernity, including in the socio-political area, can also be found in the literary work. In the tradition of modern Indonesian literature, it can be seen from Achdiat Kartamihardja's

*Atheis* novel, the novel at the end 1940s (Mahayana, *et.al.*, 2007, pp.102-105). This study will seek to answer: (1) Is *Atheis*'s novel as an author's criticism of Islamic pattern which is not in line with modernity and what kind of Islamic reconstruction is offered by him in the novel? (2). Is Islamic criticism contained in the novel in line with the academic literature in Islamic studies, especially in sociological Islamic studies?

### Method

To obtain the data and comprehensive analysis of the topic, conceptual framework of this research combines the theory of literature and sociological studies, particularly comparative literature's theory of American schools. It is a comparison between the novel text and literature of Islamic sociology and sociology of modernity. The data collection method used in this research is qualitative. This research method is a more qualitative look at the accuracy of the data. The research will make the novel the main object of study. Comparative literature's theory of American schools as the main theory used, a novel text considered comparable to scientific Islamic studies texts, especially in the sociological Islamic sense. The texts is quoted according to novel focus of discussion and is confirmed by contemporary Islamic textbook that discusses the same thing, newspapers, magazines, or other mass media (Remak, 1990, pp. 1-14, al-Khathib, 1999, pp. 50-55, Kamil, 2012, Mangattu, 2022).

### Result and Discussion

#### Synopsis of *Atheis* Novel: Intrinsic Elements of Literature

The novel *Atheis* was first published in 1949 by Balai Pustaka Publishers and has now been published 11 times. This *Atheist* novel, which uses a semi-framed storytelling style, tells the story of a character named Hasan. Hasan was raised by his family in the *tarekat* (*tharîqah*) tradition, a Sufi order (traditional religious pattern) in Garut, even though Hasan's father was also a former elementary school principal. Because his father was a noble, Hasan had the opportunity to study at a modern school up to the senior secondary level, owned by the Dutch Government in Bandung. After graduating, Hasan worked at a water agency office, in Bandung City.

While working, he met Rusli, his old friend from elementary school, who came from an *Abangan* family, a nominal Muslim. Hasan was introduced by Rusli to a woman, a young widow who had run away from her old husband because of a forced marriage. At that time, Hasan lived as an ascetic follower of the *Tarekat*, like his father. He once took a bath in a river to kill his physical desires, even though he entered the *Tarekat* because he failed to get married. Almost 100% different from Hasan's life, Rusli and Kartini lived as followers of communist Marxism. Rusli's lifestyle enjoys Western culture, even though he criticizes capitalism as the culprit of social injustice. Rusli is also an atheist who does not believe in God. For him, God is the illusion of an oppressed society that if society were no longer oppressed, God would no longer be needed.

From the first sight in his office, Hasan fell in love with Kartini. Hasan also hangs out with Kartini and Rusli to straighten out their paths in life, even though it is Rusli who attracts Hasan to his path in life. Apart from the power of logic, for Hasan, it is also because of Rusli's style of speaking and dialogue which does not force his will. Hasan then became an atheist and became close to Rusli's friends such as Anwar, who was an anarchist atheist. One time Hasan returned to his village in Garut, where Anwar came with him. At that time, Hasan had a heated argument with his father. He conveys the knowledge and arguments of atheism in raw terms. His father became furious.

In the following plot, Hasan marries Kartini which his father does not approve of, because his father has a choice of another woman who is also his adopted daughter. Initially,

their marriage was harmonious, but since contracting tuberculosis, Hasan became irritable. When Kartini came home one night, Hasan was angry. He was jealous and accused Kartini of having an illicit relationship with another man, because of her closeness to Anwar. Kartini later ran away from Hasan's house.

When his father was sick, Hasan returned to his hometown to Garut. However, Hasan was not accepted by his father to meet him, because he did not want Hasan to disturb his *Tarekat's* faith. His father later died. When he returned to Bandung, Hasan then reflected, thinking about other logical considerations related to religion. He got this consideration from the character *Aku*, whom Hasan met before returning home, whose knowledge was more mature. Hasan then returned to religion and realized that his knowledge was irresponsible and immature. Religion and modern science, Hasan emphasized, should work together to make humans live happily based on empirical considerations, reason, and taste.

Regarding his family's problems and his radical atheist attitude, Hasan concluded that the root of the problem was Anwar. Even though he was sick with tuberculosis, he ran to look for Anwar in the middle of the night. In fact, at that time, there was a ban on traveling in the middle of the night. Because he ignored the prohibition, Hasan was shot by militaristic Japanese soldiers. Hasan then died, after saying *Allahu akbar* (Allah is Greatest), becoming a Muslim again (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 224-248, Mahayana et. al., 2007, pp. 102-105, Nauman & Ilyas, 1992, pp. 9-13).

### **Criticism and Reconstruction of Islam: Secularism and Humanism**

Based on the intrinsic novel description above as denotation reading, apparently *Atheis* novel by Achdiat Karta Mihardja is a critique of the authors on Islamic patterns were not answering the demands of modernity, as well as a reconstruction of Islam that they think is ideal. The novel is a kind of Islamic literature that criticizes the social reality of Muslims who do not conform to the values of Islam which is ideal. The novel views the ideal of Islam as not a religion that is not in conformity or even rejects modernity (such as secularism and humanism) as a mindset and a contemporary phenomenon.

The novel --borrowing Fredric Jameson language-- contains social, historical, and political resonances, and buried beneath the plot is a surface of the text that should be explored. Seen in this light, the novel is a critique on the sociology of Muslim community of Indonesia in dealing with modernity, as well as reconstruction of Islam (at least sociological Islam), where the public/Muslims (sociological Islam), ideally in line with modernity and its dimensions/measures, although it should be with criticism, not a total acceptance, without reserve (Damono, 1984, Taum, 1997, pp. 47-56 and Eagleton, 1976, pp. 1-36).

#### *Islam, Secularism, and Atheism in Atheis Novel*

As exposure above, in *Atheis* novel by Achdiat Karta Mihardja, there was indeed a character of Rusli who is an atheist by himself as a symbol of the attitude which receives a total of modernity (absolute secularism) and later followed by Hasan, the main character. The attitude of these two characters is not considered Achdiat as the ideal attitude. He also did not consider Raden Wiradikarta's attitude as an ideal character, Hasan's father, and Hasan himself before being influenced by Rusli. Both are traditional Sufi religious patterns with a member of the *Tarekat* (traditional Sufi order). This pattern is only concerned with the afterlife religious/spirituality (Mihardja, 1990).

Achdiat idealizes the *I* characters who accept modernity with various dimensions, including secularism, but did not leave religion as a basis of ethics and spirituality which become distinguishing between humans and other creatures, because humans have a conscience other than rationality (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 195, 211). This Achdiat's view



is comparable to the view of William James, a US famous philosopher and Henri-Louis Bergson, a French philosophers, that as a spiritual being, religion cannot disappear from humans. Bergson stated: "It could have been reduced or disappear whatever we like of enjoyment of life, but it is impossible religion can disappear from human life. It could be, in the past or the present, we find people who do not know science or art or philosophy, but there is no society without religion" (Shihab, in Hidayat, 2012, p. x).

In the *Atheis* novel, Achdiat Karta Mihardja also recognizes that in some circles the individual level was made modern in science and Western culture in Indonesia, and religious disparagement and even rejection of the role of religion in absolute terms occurred in reality. His confession seemed, as described in plot by Rusli character. However, the massive sociological fact, religion is still alive, are not marginalized, which is different from the experience of Western modernity (Western Europe). Presumably, modernity did not become a public agenda that is equitable, neither the state nor the strength of the community, have contributed to the phenomenon that is different from the West. Another factor that is affected is the modernity factor that occurred in Indonesia are still in development stages different from the West.

Even so, at least within certain limits, which in most pundits were made modern, Achdiat's view is similar to the Western intellectual figures such as Harvey Cox (1984, pp. 181-183) and Lucian W. Pye (1965, p. 8). He was in this case is also in line with the classical sociologists that the society modernized, they increasingly secular. Religion was then overlooked or marginalized (secularism), even abandoned altogether in the form of atheism and agnosticism. At least, in Achdiat's testimony, applies to some learned societies that made to be western as Rusli who joined the atheist Communist Party.

As described above, Rusli character was described by Achdiat as the man who mastered the knowledge of modernity, especially Marxism. Rusli's Insights of modernity (secularism) was recognized by Achdiat in the novel has guided Rusli fighting against injustice that conducted by Colonialism of Dutch East Indies government through movement/underground organization. However, Rusli has become an atheist, although understandable, remembering his family background that is *Islam Abangan* (nominal Islam). For Rusli, God is the result of human invention, because powerlessness, especially economic injustice that afflict humans. God created because of human helplessness. Therefore, when injustice is missing, then the existence of God is no longer relevancy. The emphasis in modern life, said Rusli, is a science and technology. With it, people can compete with God in creating a new product to facilitate human life. In fact, called literally "The Science and Technology are our God" (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 26-132).

A figure such as Marx is admired by Rusli, for him, God (religion) is opium for the people who turn men on hereafter life as entertainment, but not eliminate economic problems that happened (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 26-138). It seems that what Rusli refers to is Marx's view that religion preaching on transcendental (non-material) and hope of life after death helps distract people from suffering physical and material difficulties in life. The actual religious ideals have shifted natural priorities or normal demands by saying that the suffering and hardship have a positive spiritual value. In the perspective of religion, material wealth, worldly status, and power seen as the illusory, ephemeral, and very dangerous for the spiritual welfare of the individual as well as the reward for later life. Moreover, Marx said further, in the perspective of religion, suffering life should be regarded as acceptable fate. Thus, the attitude of fatalistic, resigned, and was a passive attitude wise as commanded by religion. As the "opium of the people", religion was only given a sedative temporary, superficial and not able to dismantle and eliminate conditions that cause suffering (Pals, 1996, pp.138-144, Sheed, 1945, pp.155-160; Johnson, 1994, pp.134-137; Hidayat, in Taher

(Ed.), 1994, p. 190, and Rais, 1991, pp.105-107).

Religion is also for him a relative truth. If the absolute truth, why there are a lot of God and religion in the world, Rusli asked. Religious truth even dogmatic is not based on reason and a free mind (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 26-138). Though humanity without religion, while discussing with Hasan, Rusli added also, that man would live ethically, because of his humanity. According to him, which distinguishes man from animals is reasonable mind, pi depth of humanity, and consideration of immorality (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 26-138). Rusli's view above exactly the same as experienced by Western modernity. Rusli even in other parts of the novel directly criticizing Islam by asking sarcastically to Hasan: "Have not you satisfied with prayer five times each day? Yet also all the petitions were granted by God ""? He also argued, as a religion, traditional Sufism, or traditional Islamic mysticism, the road taken by Hasan, was a runaway. Indonesian people do not actually have talent in mysticism. They follow mysticism, because it was forced to seek spiritual consolation from poverty, ignorance, fear, oppression, and misery (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 26-138).

In *Atheis* novel, Achdiat also describes, during a dialogue with Hasan, *I* character looked at Hasan and his friends (Rusli and Anwar) as an astray person and he is able to influence their back on the truth. At least, the truth in *I* character version is a guidelines for life, said *I* firmly, is the sense of humanity that is based on compassion. For *I* character, human mind also has its limits. Humans are still in need of knowledge, which is called by Anwar in the novel as an additional knowledge in the form of belief, or religion may be illusory (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 195-21).

In this case, a character *I* represent an ideal human figure in dealing with modernity for Achdiat, as though looking at positive side of modernity such as modern means of struggle, but also did not agree with the view of Hasan and Rusli that become atheists recently. Therefore, at the end of the novel revealed that although Hasan, main character of the novel, previously had atheists, Hasan at the end of the novel is told that he was before he took his last breath, he uttered the phrase "Allahu Akbar" (God is great), a sign that he was *taubat*, back to Islam (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 224-248, Mahayana et. al., 2007, pp. 102-105, Nauman & Ilyas, 1992, pp. 9-13).

Achdiat disagreement on the Marxist Atheism in *Atheis* novel, can be referred also to his last novel, *Khalifatullah Manifesto*. At almost the end of the novel is told that the world leaders, including the communist leaders such as Karl Marx, Engel and Lenin visited Abah Arifin's place, a regular human. This character is proclaimed manifesto. He equip the world communist leaders with an envelope containing a story. The core of the story is the importance of communism filled by religious spiritualism, for a balance between rationalism and religious values (Mihardja, 2005 and Mahayana, in Nur et. al., 2001, pp. 162-164).

Achdiat's view is certainly justified. Although this novel was born in the 1940s in which the literature books that criticize Marxism is not much, Achdiat's view is in line with many scientific criticism addressed to Marxism. Among these is that Marx's social analysis, which was followed by Rusli, was poisoned by reductionism. Marx has reduced the diversity of human social expression only in the economic field (economic justice). Factors such as country/political and human way of thinking that influences the way people produce, an actual effect of reciprocity, overlooked in the analysis of Marx. It is as if human economic needs are met by the realization of economic justice will be completed, do not need anything else, including religions. If still needed, according to Rusli, when the economic justice was realized, human beings need most, science and technology that could rival God. In fact, humans still need other things besides the economy and technology. For example power factor is a phenomenon that will not disappear --as it is called by Nietzsche that human desire to power is a vicious man (Perry, 2014, pp. 213-219). This side is not readable by

Marx and Rusli.

In fact, he did not capture the change of power experienced by modern countries is currently evolving from used only as a “night watchman” (less of power) in the arena of freedom of social transactions of its people, to become an organizer of public life in almost every aspect (of power a lot). Ranging from education, traffic, social security, investment to job search (Rahardjo, 1991, pp. 12-13).

Achdiat who was in the novel in the 1940s did not idealize Rusli who was atheist is also in line with the discussion of recent academic literature. This is because Marx’s view of religion that followed by Rusli, in recent academic literature, called also been stuck on reductionism. The partial judgment (not departing from the concept of deep religious and thorough), the centralization of observations on the Catholic religion, and of course his analyzes departing only from the factors of production (economic), resulting that Marx and Rusli in the novel did not catch a lot of things. They do not capture: (1) the emergence of religion as a force of social transformation (Abdullah, 1993, pp. 1-40). For example the emergence of Christianity as a criticism of the tyrannical Roman government and Protestantism that affect the level of achievement in business and social status of its adherents, as Weber analyzed (1865, pp. 47-154). Likewise, the Islamic religion to monotheism is his criticism and rebellion against arbitrariness Arab Ignorance. (2) The analysis cannot be used on a religion that does not have a doctrine of life after death. (3) The analysis showed transcendental needs in human being let loose on Marx’s attention, as called by William James and Henri-Louis Bergson, even now, the world is more religious than before, as has been stated above (Suseno, 1988, pp. 271-280, Nawawi, in *Tempo Magazine*, October 12, 1991, and Shihab, in *Hidayat*, 2012, p. x). (4) The analysis cannot be used also on religion, which emphasizes the concept of free will. Such as Protestantism teaches or Islam such as the idea of Muhammad Abduh’s vision (Esposito, 2001, p. 52).

There are a few more notes. Among them: (1) about the relativity of religion, where its existence is not in the *uṣūl* (main) or perennial areas. (2) The human ability to live according to their conscience as in the West today. However, as Nasr calls it, now modern Western society is experiencing sorrow, because they have lost their soul and spirituality, where intuition, spirituality, divine values, and religion are considered low (Paramadina, 1993a, pp. 1-9 and Paramadina, 1993b, p. 212). The most highlighted by Achdiat in his *Atheis* novel is a religious pattern that only emphasizes the hereafter and spirituality are not approved as well. This Islamic pattern is not an ideal Islamic pattern. The ideal is a pattern of Islam which is more concerned with the life of the world, though not forgetting the hereafter (See Qur’an Surah [QS.] al-Qashash/28: 77). In addition to the plot and the text that has been described, which shows that assumption is also plot the death of Raden Wiradikarta, Hasan’s father were members of the *Tarekat* and the death of Hasan himself who his religious pattern same with his father, although then he followed the opinion of Rusli and Anwar.

Before dying and followed Rusli, the novel is told that Hasan never take mystical behavior by as much as forty times shower since the Isha prayer until dawn, events that make him at a later date to have tuberculosis disease. Heavy action style of this order can be done, because the main concern Hasan is the afterlife, and religion should cover life. As a member of the congregation, Hasan also had locked himself in a room for three days and three nights to get closer to God. He fasted did not eat and did not drink, did not sleep and conversed with humans. He just humility ‘worship to God. Hasan even once tried to leave the bodies to get closer to God by fasting seven days and nights (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 24-138).

Achdiat’s view about the importance of the life of the world today can be seen in dialogue between *I* and Hasan. For *I* figure, when counsel for Hasan, the most important duty for a man is living in here and now. The life of this moment is the most important issue

and it is more important than death. Hell problem is a matter beyond human power. People who disregard life in the here and now, as the issue of politics, economy and culture, is the one who betrayed God obligation imposed on him (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 195-211).

Presumably, Achdiat views secularism as no problem in Islamic terms, if not in an absolute sense that throws away religion altogether, whether in the form of atheism (such as Rusli) or agnosticism. At least, in the sense of understanding that makes the region such as economic and political world is viewed and addressed the world (secular) rational and empirical, not addressed in the sacred (hereafter). For him, secularism means making worldly (*dunyāwī*) the things that are worldly (secular things), but still making *ukhrāwī* things (hereafter/spiritual things) that should be *ukhrāwī*. In other languages, desacralization of anything other than things are truly divine/transcendent. For him also, Islam is a secular religion, in the sense of religious orders, concerns, and concern important to here or now and contemporary, emphasizing alive today. In this sense become a secular Muslim is a must (Madjid, 2008, p. 229-231, Nasution at. al, 2003, p. 169, and Luth, 1998, p. 16-25). An Ideal Islam, for Achdiat, is not a religion that gives much attention to religion or spirituality of hereafter only. The real Islam for him is Islam that sees the world (here or now) and its happiness, including material things. At least, there is a balance between this world and the hereafter, between spirituality with materiality, between secular thing and spiritual thing. However, that does not mean to be materialistic.

#### *Islam, Humanism, and Feminism in Atheis Novel*

The construction of Islam idealized for Achdiat also apparently is Islam that goes along with humanism as a measure of modernity, despite having criticism. The idea of Islam and humanism Achdiat in the novel *Atheis*, that through figure Hasan, Achdiat conveyed a certain humanism side which often does not exist in the behavior of the scholars. As has been parsed above, for Hasan, though Atheist, the striking excess of Rusli is his attitude that is not urgent insistence opinion. He was able to dialogue with smile and convinces Hasan. The Rusli figure, for Hasan, is considered different with the clerical who scared the students or the Muslims as their audience with hell. Rusli was also different with the polemical that attack suddenly or ridicule. For him, on the basis of humanism, imposing of mind attitude is a sort of attitude that should not be performed. Someone, at best, can only express opinions to ponder his interlocutor. Therefore, according to Hasan, had a dialogue with Rusli was not boring, even though he often disagreed with his opinion (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 26-138).

A matter way of preaching in the Muslim community with frighten people with hell, in the novel, were repeated in various places. Among these are, the fear of Hasan on hell that always had delivered his parents and caregivers is always in his mind. By character *I*, this matter was analyzed by Freud that the hell story he had gotten since childhood was very haunting his mind, as has actually occurred. One of the hell stories are, humans will be boiled in tin turbulent scene and no one can help him. His parents though. Also told in the novel that people go to hell are those who failed to pass the sharp bridge as cut hair into seven, because it does not carry out the commands of God and away from the ban (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 176-194, 6-9).

Through those two plots, first, for Achdiat, presumably, the propagation of Islam should be as per the instructions of the Quran (Qur'an Surah [QS] An-Nahl/16: 125), with wisdom and good advice. Even should with the argument, do it gently, not based on violence, but gracefully and humanism (Qur'an, Ali Imran/3: 159 and QS. Al-Anbiya/21: 107). This is because in Islam there is no compulsion in religion (QS. Al-Baqarah/2: 256). Hasan criticism of the practice of preaching that forces the opinion above is Achdiat criticism indirectly toward Islam; it does not match to the real Islam.

Second, the plot of hell in the novel seems an Achdiat criticism on religious patterns that adhered many Indonesian Muslims ones who worship at that time not because of devotion and love for God, but fear of the torment of hell. Presumably, Achdiat wanted to argue as well that such as way of worship is just like the workings of a merchant. God is not seen as a lover, which therefore, worship is not because of God.

Achdiat implicitly was just like Rabiah Adawiyah walked around the village. His right hand held the wood with the fire that burns on the tip. In his left hand there was a vessel filled with water. The wood along with the fire that burns in his hands, Rabiah wanted to burn heaven, because a lot of people do worship just for heaven. With water, she wanted to extinguish the fire of hell, because many people do worship are afraid of hell (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 176-194, 6-9 and Mahayana, in Nur et. al., 2014, pp.156-159). For Achdiat, a good Muslim prays with sincerity and love of God. Thus, he would be willing to put into hell even by God, because He is beloved one, though it is impossible.

Three, how to preach by frighten the audience with the threat of hellfire is true. Such a way of preaching in Islam called *nadhīr*. However, it would be a better way preaching with *bashīr*, means encouraging/persuading. This is because the majority of the relevant verses of the Qoran is starting more with *bashīr* or *mubasyir*, whose meaning are almost the same, rather than starting with *nadhīr* (Compare for example Qur'an Surah [QS.] Al-A'raf/7: 186 with QS. Al-Maidah 5/21 Surah al-Baqarah/2: 119 and Fathir/35: 24). It shows what should come first is preaching with persuasion, which is able to listen and dialogue, not imposing mind. At least, there is a balance between *nadhīr* with *bashīr*.

Humanism in *Atheis* can also be seen from the expression of Rusli when dropping off Kartini to get Hasan's body at the headquarters of the Japanese army: "It is, Tin, human life is just short, but the humanity stays longer... then, forget your sadness with work harder. Work for humanity" (Mihardja, 1990, p. 5). In this case, for Achdiat, a high civilized human existence (humanism) is determined by how much his role in helping others, working for humanity, not only beneficial to themselves and their families, as the hadith mentioned. Although Rusli who was an atheist revealed it, but there was no correction from character I in the novel.

In the modern period, according Achdiat, humanism is something more central than science and technology. At least, this assumption can be seen from: (1) the views of I stated that the guidelines of life are a sense of humanity based on affection (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 195-211). (2) Secondly, it appears from the Bung Hatta views, a senior figure of Rusli. He said, considering at this time when science and technology into a kind of "God" for the modern society, the progress in this field could destroy humanity, if it is in the hands of the imperialists that oppressing other nations. The reason is, because they have lost their humanity (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 26-138). Achdiat emphasizes it; besides humanism in general it is also for women, which was later known as feminism. At least, in terms of ideology or movement that carries the idea and practice of equality of rights for women, which is not related to discrimination because of nature (nature childbirth and breastfeeding), particularly in the public sphere, that is not given to them because of the dominance of patriarchal culture (Jones, 2010, pp. 91-101 and Djajanagera, 2000).

This matter can be seen from the plot narrated Achdiat who has noted above that Kartini was a young widow of Arab descent that escaped for protection by Rusli, because of being treated unfairly. She was forcibly married by her mother with wealthy Arab merchant man, but old, wherein became his fourth wife. She chose to live to be a modern woman, that feel entitled to enjoy public life, by not being an ordinary woman who seclusion, a very modern style dresses. Kartini was also good at playing musical instruments, especially the piano. Kartini was attending the meeting and participate in the discussion of the party

belonged to Rusli, a will to know how well public affairs of her nation and desire to do not depend on men, a phenomenon which was still very rare (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 212-223).

Although in the novel *Atheis*, Kartini is narrated familiar to smoke, in general Achdiat seems to affirm women injustice issues and affirm how Kartini trying even to rebel in order to escape from this patriarchal domination. Achdiat also seems to agree, silently accepted injustice, especially for long lasted, it just the same as receiving it. Because of that, he also seems to affirm the role and equal rights for women in public spaces as did Kartini. Through his plot above, Achdiat also criticized the practice of polygamy among Muslims who bore unfairness to women. Moreover, it is practiced by Arabians who was a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad as Arabians fellow, as experienced by Kartini. He seems to see nothing wrong on the practice of polygamy. If anything might be done, it should be ensured that a husband is able to be fair to his wives and children.

Achdiat implicitly, looking at the ideal Islamic perspective that should be considered as principle of marriage in Islam is monogamy. Polygamy is just only an emergency way out. And of course this is true, as seen from the structure of the verse that allows polygamy (Qur'an 4: 3), the context is the issue of orphans. So, in the 7th century, in the early period of Islam, polygamy was a way out of the problem of orphans (Dzuhayatin, in Dewantoro & Asmai [Ed.], 1996, p. 11). Therefore, the terms of polygamy must be strict, as recently recognized by progressive scholars like HAMKA and KHI (Compilation of Islamic Law) as a product of *ijtihad* scholars Indonesia that accepted in Indonesia in 1991. According HAMKA, one wife is a way of living close enough to avoid persecute. While more than one wife would be difficult for husbands to be avoid the attitude of persecution, or cruel, hurt, lied, and so on. Polygamy is a street close to doing injustice to the old wives and their children, as they experienced directly, because his father polygamists (Hamka, 1982, p. 255).

However, through the figure Hasan, Achdiat disagreed with Anwar attitude that total humanist/radical feminist. As already noted above, Anwar criticized the marriages, which for him; it is a damned bond that makes women as slaves, while boys become sovereign. He also argued, the religious explanation stated that women who be patience in marriage will be rewarded with heaven was just a discourse that is made by men so that he able to do as they wish (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 212-223). Although in this matter is not clear with Achdiat real attitude, but by his attitude that considered Anwar Rusli was misguided especially for extremity/radical, presumably Achdiat agreed with the views of Anwar as something that Muslims who been practiced by high patriarchal culture. And this is also Achdiat critique towards the practice of marriage in the Muslim community in Indonesia at that time (the 1940s). When referring to the view of the importance of religion and humanism above, presumably with Achdiat believes it is not a correct view of Islam. At least, as a matter of debate, which should not right that Islam, would be left behind religion later on as Anwar had done.

Based on Islamic literature, *shari'a* (Islamic law) emphasized that marriage is not like a sale and purchase agreement, but similar to the lease. In this case the marriages is not a contract that resulted in the property of the husband over the wife because had been "purchased" from her trustee, but the contract is therefore possible that both parties (husband and wife) are mutual giving and getting the benefits (*milk al-manfa'ah*), according the rights and obligations of each (Abidin & Aminuddin, 1999, p. 11). Similarly with the taking care of home issues such as sweeping, washing, and others, indeed, according to some experts on Islam, taking care of the house is an issue of wives liability. However, According to Imam Malik, Imam Shafi'i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Imam Hanafi course, husbands should never force his wife to conduct the affairs of the household, even if only a wife asking for payment for cooking, washing, or breastfeeding, then husbands should pay for it, because

it is not her duty, but merely as East manners, namely in the framework of cooperation (mutual assistance) only (Abdillah & Sirri, in Munhanif et.al., 2002, pp. 113-114, 118, 120, Yunus, 1996, pp. 106-107). Ideally, therefore, the issue of taking care of house is couple responsibility that can be shared between them.

In the novel narrated that Anwar also often incite women to protest religious rules that forbid women to marry more than one man, that idea actually is motivated by his desires to have affair with Kartini (Mihardja, 1990, pp. 212-223). In this section, presumably Achdiat is disagreed because its extremity, not in accordance with the concept of the middle way as described above. After all, the practice of polyandry in the modern West is never happening. Therefore, it seems that Anwar demands as it was just born from the radical feminism.

### Conclusion

The *Atheis* novel is a criticism of the author, Achdiat Karta Mihardja. Not only a criticism of modern Western secularism and humanism but also of Islam which rejects both. The novel also contains a reconstruction of Islam which is considered ideal. On the one hand, the *Atheis* novel is a criticism of absolute secularism, namely the complete elimination of religion in the public sphere, whether in the form of atheism or agnosticism. For Achdiat, absolute secularism is a historical for humans who have a conscience and spiritual tendencies, which will not disappear even in a society that has experienced economic justice. Atheist Marxism, for Achdiat in the novel, is full of reductionism. However, this novel is also the author's criticism of Islam in relation to secularism as part of Islam. At least, in the sense of desacralizing things that are *dunyāwī* which are not *ukhrāwī* (spiritual) and having to use a rational and scientific approach in *dunyāwī* (material) areas. According to Achdiat, good and true Islam is Islam that prioritizes real life in the physical world. He criticized the Islamic pattern of the *tarekat/tarīqah* (traditional sufi organization) which only prioritizes the afterlife and the Islamic pattern which believes in irrational superstitions, such as the excessive sanctity of saints.

Likewise with humanism in the sense of respect for humans, where humans have basic rights that are owned from birth as a gift from God, without having to be bought, inherited, or rented. Without these rights, humans cannot live in dignity, because what differentiates them from animals is their mind and conscience. Also their senses are empirical. At least, we don't differentiate between humans based on something that God has chosen, not as a result of their efforts. For example, skin, race/ethnicity, nationality, gender, even religion. The essence of Islam is public benefit and mercy for the universe. In fact, in her novel, Achdiat is also concerned with feminism (the idea and movement for equal rights for women), as long as it is outside the realm of nature. Therefore, the principle of marriage in Islam is monogamy and polygamy is an emergency solution. Achdiat also criticized the way of preaching (*da'wah*) which was less humanistic. Good *da'wah* is humanistic preaching, which can bring wisdom, good advice, and is also more about persuading than frightening. Implicitly, Achdiat believes that the foundation of religion is freedom, and a good Islam can make its people worship because of their love for God. *Wallāh a'lam*.

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