



Original Article

Egyptian and Indonesian Tafsir Literature: A Critical and Comparative Analysis

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Abstract:

Every work of interpretation will be inseparable from reality, certain tendencies, styles, characteristics and even different typologies. The background factor is the social-historical differences of each interpreter, including interpretive works in Egypt and Indonesia. The aim of this research is to understand the interpretive literature in Egypt and Indonesia using a crisis and comparative analysis approach. The research method used is that this research uses qualitative methods with a study focus on interpretive texts. A historical approach, especially the heuristic aspect, is used in order to trace historical traces, especially the connectivity of teaching the interpretation of the Koran between Egypt and Indonesia and the traces of influence of reform ideas. This research is library research. The results of research on the style and typology of interpretation in Indonesia are heavily colored by local Islam, both culture and conditions when the verses of the Qur'an are interpreted by the interpreter. Then, Indonesian interpretation also has a strong connection and attachment with the Egyptian al-Azhar mindset which gave birth to many Indonesian scholars who indirectly contributed their thoughts in producing works of Indonesian interpretation.

Keywords: Problems, Typology of Egyptian and Indonesian Interpretation

Introduction

The Qur'an, which Muslims consider to be the holy word of Allah, explicitly identifies itself as a guide for humanity and offers a comprehensive explanation of various aspects of life (Alfiansyah, 2024, p. 3). As a basic text for life, the Qur'an has undergone continuous interpretation and understanding throughout history, leading to the development of interpretive works that helped Muslims make the Qur'an the main reference in their lives. Although the content of the Qur'an is considered universal, the realization of its meaning requires engagement with human experience in certain historical contexts, including Indonesia (Taufikurrahman, 2012, p. 1).

The Quran serves as a comprehensive guide for humanity. Various fields of study have emerged from the Quran, including those directly related to it, such as Quranic



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Sciences and Tafsir, and disciplines indirectly influenced by its teachings, including natural sciences, economics, and others ([Al Ayubi & Kurniawan, 2023, p. 250](#)).

As a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has a tradition of interpreting the Qur'an that is shaped by socio-historical circumstances that are different from other Muslim countries ([Taufikurrahman, 2012, p. 2](#)). This tradition of interpretation not only answers the special needs of Indonesian Muslims for a contextual understanding of the Qur'an, but also illustrates the impact of the Islamic intellectual tradition originating from the Middle East, especially Egypt, which is known as the center of Islamic thought renewal ([Junaidi, t.t., p. 153](#)).

The main focus of this study is to examine the extent to which the tradition of interpretive renewal in Egypt has influenced interpretive practices in Indonesia. Prominent figures such as Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha from Egypt have introduced innovative methodologies for understanding the Qur'an, which has since inspired many scholars in the Islamic world, including in Indonesia. To address this issue, a comprehensive and comparative analysis of interpretations from both regions will be conducted to see the contextual patterns and responses that characterize each tradition.

Previous research has shown a significant intellectual connection between Egyptian traditions and the archipelago. Azyumardi Azra researched a network of scholars from the archipelago and the Middle East during the 17th and 18th centuries ([Azra, 2013, p. 6](#)), while William Roff noted the contribution of the Jawi community in Egypt in the early 20th century ([R Roff, 1970, p. 73–87](#)), particularly through media such as Azhar's Seruan. In addition, Jutta E. Bluhm and Rosihon Anwar highlighted the intellectual relationship established through correspondence and contributions made by Nusantara scholars to the al-Manar journal ([Bluhm, t.t., p. 35–42](#)). Collectively, this research builds a fundamental understanding of how the idea of renewal originating from Egypt is adapted into the context of the archipelago ([Anwar, 2009, p. 222](#)).

Although many studies have examined the intellectual relationship between Egypt and Indonesia, there is still no critical analysis comparing the characteristics, methodologies, and approaches inherent to the two traditions. Previous research has mostly focused on the historical dimension of this relationship, and has not adequately discussed the influence of Egyptian interpretation on the development of interpretive practice in Indonesia. Therefore, this study seeks to overcome this gap by conducting a critical and comparative analysis of the main exegetical texts of both the Egyptian and Indonesian traditions.

This study aims to examine and explain the impact of Egyptian tafsir literature on the tradition of tafsir in Indonesia, using critical and comparative methodologies. The originality of this research is rooted in the integration of comprehensive historical and textual analysis, in addition to the exploration of the interrelationships and adaptations seen in the interpretive works of the two regions. Its scope includes important interpretive texts from Egypt and Indonesia, with special attention paid to methodological approaches, related issues, and their significance in addressing contemporary challenges.

This research aims to provide a meaningful contribution to the understanding of the dynamics of the development of the Islamic interpretation tradition in Indonesia, by positioning it in the context of a broader global intellectual discourse.

1. Literature Review

Historical and Cultural Contexts of Tafsir in Egypt and Indonesia

Egypt, as the heart of the Arab world, has historically been a center of Islamic scholarship and religious thought. The tradition of tafsir in Egypt can be traced back to the early Islamic centuries, with prominent scholars such as al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and al-Shafi'i shaping its development. In the modern period, institutions like Al-Azhar University, founded in the 10th century, have played a crucial role in advancing tafsir studies and producing scholars who have influenced Islamic thought across the world.

Egyptian tafsir is typically rooted in classical interpretations but has also been influenced by modernist movements, particularly during the 19th and 20th centuries. The Salafi and reformist currents, such as those represented by figures like Rashid Rida and Sayyid Qutb, have significantly impacted tafsir interpretations in Egypt, especially in the context of political and social changes.

Indonesia, on the other hand, presents a unique case due to its predominantly non-Arab context and its rich diversity in culture and local traditions. Indonesian tafsir literature has been heavily influenced by local Islamic practices and customs, shaped by the spread of Islam via trade routes and missionary activities, rather than direct Arab influences. The entry of Islam into Indonesia through Malay scholars and the establishment of Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren) have provided a distinctive approach to tafsir in Indonesia. Early Indonesian tafsir works were often written in Malay or Javanese, reflecting local idioms and contexts, which differentiated them from classical Arabic tafsir. Over time, with the establishment of modern Islamic institutions like Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesian tafsir has evolved to incorporate elements of Indonesian cultural identity, social issues, and the integration of traditional and modern thought.

Thematic Focus in Egyptian and Indonesian Tafsir Literature

The themes addressed in Egyptian and Indonesian tafsir literature are influenced by both theological and socio-political concerns. Egyptian tafsir literature often reflects the intellectual currents of the Arab world and broader Muslim communities, dealing with classical issues of jurisprudence (fiqh), theology (aqeedah), and sufism. However, modern Egyptian tafsir also addresses the challenges posed by secularism, colonialism, and post-colonial nation-building, with scholars interpreting the Quranic text in light of contemporary political and social issues.

In contrast, Indonesian tafsir literature often engages more directly with local issues, including questions related to Islamic law (sharia), Islam and indigenous beliefs, and inter-religious relations. Indonesian tafsir also reflects the dynamic interplay between Islamic traditionalism and modernist ideologies, with scholars seeking to reconcile Islamic teachings with the diverse and pluralistic society in Indonesia. For instance, the reinterpretation of verses related to jihad, women's rights, and interfaith dialogue has been a significant focus in Indonesian tafsir literature, especially in the context of Indonesia's commitment to pluralism and democracy.

Methodologies and Approaches in Tafsir

The methods employed in tafsir have varied over time and across regions. Classical Egyptian tafsir was largely based on traditional approaches, such as tafsir bil-ma'thur (exegesis based on narrations) and tafsir bil-ra'y (exegesis based on personal reasoning). However, the influence of modernity and intellectual movements has led to the incorporation of new methodologies. For instance, modernist tafsir often focuses on contextual readings of the Quran, seeking to adapt traditional interpretations to contemporary issues. Rationalist tafsir, which emerged in response to Western colonialism, emphasized the Quran's compatibility with reason, science, and modernity.

In Indonesia, tafsir has traditionally relied on tafsir bil-ma'thur, with an emphasis on interpretations from classical Islamic scholars. However, the development of modern Islamic thought in Indonesia, particularly in the 20th century, has led to the incorporation of more socio-political and cultural readings of the Quran. Indonesian scholars have increasingly adopted comparative tafsir techniques, drawing from the Arabic tafsir tradition while integrating local contexts. Moreover, hermeneutical approaches have gained traction, allowing for more dynamic and contextual readings that reflect Indonesia's diverse Muslim population.

Comparative Insights: Egyptian vs. Indonesian Tafsir

While both Egyptian and Indonesian tafsir share a common Islamic heritage, they diverge in their interpretations due to differing historical, cultural, and social contexts. Egyptian tafsir, influenced by its central role in the Islamic world, tends to have a more standardized approach, with a strong emphasis on classical texts and doctrines. It is deeply rooted in the Arabic linguistic and theological traditions, which often prioritize the historical and linguistic context of the Quran.

In contrast, Indonesian tafsir is marked by its adaptability to local cultures, languages, and social conditions. Indonesian interpreters often seek to harmonize Islamic teachings with local traditions, resulting in tafsir works that are more pragmatic and flexible. The Indonesian approach tends to emphasize pragmatic interpretations, especially when dealing with contemporary social issues such as religious tolerance, gender equality, and inter-religious harmony. This cultural relativism makes Indonesian tafsir more open to local adaptation, but also introduces challenges in maintaining doctrinal consistency with classical Islamic thought.

Results

Definition of Tafsir

The author begins a series of presentations on various definitions of tafsir in language with the word tafsir in the Quran. As Allah SWT said: "*They do not come to you with anything strange, but We bring to you with the best truth and explanation*" (Q.S Al-Furqan/25:33). In this verse, the term "tafsir" means to explain, which shows that tafsir is an effort to provide clarity and understanding ([Hasanudin dan Zulaiha, 2022, p. 205](#)). This is also in line with some of the meanings of linguistic interpretation, so the author thinks that the interpretation of linguistic interpretation can be classified as follows: *first*, seen from the aspect of lafadz, Tafsir is a form of mashdar تفسير, this lafadz قَسْر is, this lafadz is scientifically shorof according to the word تفعل - يفعل - تفعيلا, if we look at it in the book *The tahbiq shorfi* compiled by Abduh Rojih in the form of the word 'tafiilan shows several meanings, can show the meaning of *taktisr*, the meaning of *ta'diyah*', the meaning of *tawajuuh*, the meaning of *ratio*, the meaning of *sulbi*, because that is natural and appropriate, the meaning of tafsir has many versions. *Second*, judging from *the qomus* or *mu'jam*, the interpretation in the language of the book *maqoyisul al-lughoh* mentions:

بياناً لشيء وإيضاح

Meaning: "*to explain something and explain it.*"

In the Indonesian Dictionary quoted by Endang Saeful Anwar, Tafsir means an explanation of one sentence (explanation and clarification) which also contains the meaning of disclosure, appointment and information of the meaning of one speech or sentence ([Anwar, 2009, p. 203](#)). So, from here linguistically, linguistic interpretation is something that explains, explains. How to explain it can be in various versions. Because the word *tafiil* shows the meaning of *katsir* or indicates the meaning of many. Among them are those that have the meaning of declaring (*al-Ibanah*), explaining (*al-Idharu*), and opening (*al-Kasyfu*) ([al-Qaththan, 1973, p. 114](#)).

The term "Tafsir" refers to a discipline that includes the methodology of reading the Qur'an, the explanation of its direction, and the interpretation of its legal provisions, both separately (*ifrad*) and simultaneously (*tarkib*). In addition, this field involves the exploration of meanings derived from various configurations of textual arrangements. In this context, the understanding of Tafsir has similarities with the study of nasakh (elimination), because the process of nuzul (revelation) explains meaning through narratives and parables (*matsal*).

Methods of Interpretation of the Qur'an

In the interpretation of the Qur'an, there are 4 kinds of methods that have developed, namely: *Tahlili* (analytical), *ijmal* (global), *muqarrin* (comparison), *maudhu'i*

(thematic) ([Kaharuddin dan Muh. Jauhari, 2021, p. 57](#)), and *Living Qur'an* (study or scientific research on various social phenomena related to the existence of the Qur'an). Each of these methods has its own criteria.

First, the method of interpretation of *tahlili* (analysis) is the interpretation of the Qur'an by articulating *the (reasonable) correlation* between verses and letters, followed by the presentation of the contextual background of revelation (*asbabun nuzul*). It involves a thorough analysis of vocabulary and lafadz (words) in the context of the Arabic language, a thorough presentation of the content of the verse, and an exploration of the legal principles that can be drawn from it. Finally, this method seeks to clarify the meaning and purpose of sharia (Islamic law) embedded in the verse ([Saleh, 2007, p. 12](#)).

Second, the *Ijmali* (Global) method of interpretation refers to an approach to interpreting the Qur'an that emphasizes a comprehensive understanding rather than a detailed analysis, as seen in *the Tahlili method*. Scholars consider this to be the earliest method to emerge in the history of interpretive methodology, which is based on early Islamic practice, where this approach was used to understand and explain the Qur'an. In utilizing this method, interpreters usually begin by discussing the verses in order, as they appear in the mushaf, and then articulate the overall meaning of these verses. The interpretations given are generally arranged in a way that is in harmony with the patterns recognized among most scholars, thus ensuring accessibility for a wide audience. Furthermore, efforts are made to make use of language that strongly reflects, or even replicates, the expressions found in the Qur'an itself. This strategy allows the reader to understand the interpretation that is very much in tune with the style of the Qur'an, thus conveying the original message of the Qur'an effectively ([Saleh, 2007, p. 59](#)).

Third, the method of interpretation of *Muqarrin* (Comparison) relates to the interpretation of the Qur'an through examination and analysis of differences between the elements being compared. This can involve identifying the correct elements among the less accurate elements, or it can serve to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the problem at hand by integrating the various elements. The process of interpreting Muqarrin is carried out by juxtaposing one verse with another, especially with verses that have the same sentence on two or more different issues or cases, or that indicate different sentences about the same issue, or that are considered related. In addition, this approach can include comparisons of verses with hadith that seem to present contradictions, as well as an analysis of different interpretations put forward by tafsir scholars. Based on this understanding, the author describes three focal points of interpretive studies: the comparison of the verses in the Qur'an itself, the juxtaposition of verses with the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) that seem to contradict each other, and the analysis of various opinions of scholars on the interpretation of the Qur'an, both those that include the early scholars (*salaf*) and the late scholars (*khalaf*) ([Saleh, 2007, p. 60](#)).

Fourth, the *Maudhu'i* (Thematic) Method refers to an interpretive approach to the Qur'an that involves the selection of certain topics that want to be explained in the Qur'an. This method entails examining the relationships between the various verses to ensure that they explain and support each other, ultimately leading to a comprehensive conclusion based on the understanding of these interconnected verses. This method was originally introduced by Sheikh Mahmud Syaltut in 1960 when compiling his commentary, Tafsir Al-Qur'an ul Karim. As an application of the concept proposed by asy-Syatibi, he stated that in each letter, regardless of the diversity of issues presented, there is a central theme that unites and connects various topics. This idea was further developed by Prof. Dr. Ahmad Sayyid Al-Kumi, who served as the Head of the Department of Tafsir at the Faculty of Usuluddin of AL-Azhar University until 1981 ([Saleh, 2007, p. 61](#)).

Fifth, the method of interpretation of *the Living Qur'an*, in the language of *the Living Qur'an* is a combination of two different words, namely *Living* which means "life" and the Qur'an which is the holy book of Muslims. In simple terms, the term Living Qur'an can be interpreted as "(Manuscript) of the Qur'an that lives in society" ([Syamsuddin, 2007, p. 14](#)). *The Living Qur'an* essentially starts from the phenomenon of *the Qur'an in Everyday Life*, namely the meaning and function of the Qur'an that is

actually understood and experienced by the Muslim community ([Mansur, 2007, p. 5](#)). In other words, the application of the Qur'an in practical life goes beyond its textual conditions. This way of engaging with the Qur'an arises from an interpretive approach that does not prioritize the understanding of its textual message; rather, it is based on the assumption of the existence of "*fadhilah*" in certain segments of the Qur'anic text, which are tailored to answer the practical needs of daily life for individuals. Therefore, the author argues that the Living *Qur'an interpretation method* is a manifestation of the practice of integrating the Qur'an into practical life, regardless of its textual provisions. This particular engagement with the Qur'an is the result of an interpretive practice that ignores textual messages in favor of assuming the existence of "*fadhilah*" in certain parts of the Qur'anic text, which is intended to serve the practical interests of society ([Mansur, 2007, p. 5](#)).

Problematic Tafsir

In terms of interpretation problems, the author divides it into three points of view, namely: based on sources, based on methods, and based on patterns.

1. By Source

Historically, the primary source or *tafsir bil-ma'tsur* is one of the earliest forms of tafsir that emerged in the Islamic intellectual heritage. In general, contemporary interpretation is closely related to the narrative elements that explain the verses of the Qur'an ([Ihsan Imadudin dan Aini Qurotul Ain, 2022, p. 383](#)). This particular source of interpretation is considered the most appropriate and reliable way to acquire knowledge, thus helping to avoid potential pitfalls and inaccuracies in the interpretation of the Qur'an. However, this does not mean that the absence of an *ijtihad* process is a significant concern. The absence of the Prophet necessitates the practice of *ijtihad*, which is important and unavoidable for Muslims involved in the interpretation of the Qur'an. Another problem that arises is the variation in the editorial interpretation of some parts of the Qur'an. This phenomenon is caused by the difference in the intellectual ability of the companions in understanding the verses of the Qur'an. As stated in "*Mabahits fi Ulum Al-Qur'an*", as referred to by Ihsan Imadudin and Aini Qurotul Ain, interpreters often use diverse linguistic expressions to convey the meaning of terms, which leads to differences in diction among scholars, even though the underlying meaning is the same. For example, some people associate the term "*shirat al-mustaqim*" with the Qur'an itself, while others associate it with the concept of Islam. Although these interpretations differ, they can be harmonized through complementary arguments that integrate attributes that do not exist with each other ([Ihsan Imadudin dan Aini Qurotul Ain, 2022, p. 384](#)).

Another problem that arises from the *tafsir bil ma'tsur* is the existence of many narrations introduced by Jewish and Persian sources, which are intended to weaken Islam through the spread of false information. Furthermore, various groups that were considered deviant have attempted to incorporate their own interests into these histories. In addition, there is a mixture of authentic and weak hadiths, in addition to the many narrations of *Isra'iliyyat* that contain stories that have no proof ([Shiddieqy, 1972, p. 20](#)).

The problem that arises in *the tafsir bil ra'yi* is related to the proliferation of various schools and sects among Muslims. Each faction tried to persuade people to join their sect. This is achieved through the examination of texts from the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet, which they interpret according to their respective beliefs. The interpretation of *bir-ra'yi* should not be based solely on reasoning that may ignore evidence or historical history. Such an interpretation does not imply understanding the verses through the widest application of reason; rather, it requires an interpretation based on a methodology that adheres to the principles of the Arabic language and is informed by the literature of the Jahiliyah period ([Ihsan Imadudin dan Aini Qurotul Ain, 2022, p. 384](#)).

2. By Method

The problems associated with the *method of tafsir tahlili* include the dominance of the *bi ra'yi aspect*, which is more prominent than the *bil ma'tsur component*. The subjectivity of the interpreter is often more prominent than the narrative itself. Interpreters have many avenues of self-expression, which creates opportunities to introduce speculative philosophical ideas and the imposition of *the Israiliyat* narrative. Furthermore, this interpretive approach can sometimes show inconsistencies, leading to the perception that certain verses in the Qur'an contradict each other. Such perceptions can foster the assumption that the instructions given by the Qur'an are less coherent.

The problems associated with *the Ijmali* method are mainly centered on the perception that the Qur'an seems to be interpreted in a fragmented manner, thus undermining its usefulness as a comprehensive source for understanding the Qur'an as a whole. Given that this method uses a global approach to interpretation, it fails to offer a broad and thorough analytical framework; In fact, one can assert that there is no real opportunity for a more in-depth examination ([Al-Shalih, t.t., p. 299](#)).

The problem that arises with the Muqaran method is that it cannot be considered as a reliable approach to solve social problems ([Shihab, 2002, p. 117](#)). This is because this method focuses more on comparison than problem solving. In addition, this method is not ideal for beginners due to its vast expanse.

Problems related to *the Maudhu'i* method include changing verses selectively to be in harmony with the specific theme being discussed. The interpreter is required to extract parts of a verse that may cover several themes, focusing only on those fragments that are considered relevant to the ongoing discourse. Because of its thematic approach, this method limits the interpretation of the verse to a single theme under discussion, effectively ruling out discussions about other potentially relevant themes related to the verse ([Shihab, 2002, p. 117](#)).

As stated by Muhammad Yusuf, as referred to by M. Mansur, the issues that arise in the *Living Qur'an methodology* are related to the response of society to the Qur'an, which can be related to the concept of *the Living Qur'an*. This response includes a dual perception of the Qur'an in society, on the one hand, it is considered a collection of knowledge in the profane (sacred) realm, while on the other hand, it is recognized as a source of guidance (*huda*) that embodies sacred values ([Mansur, 2007, p. 36–37](#)). The concept of "*Living Qur'an*" can be understood as a manifestation of a social phenomenon that is reflected through the pattern of behavior that arises from or responds to the principles enshrined in the values of the Qur'an. The way a society interacts with the text of the Qur'an is the community's acceptance of a certain part of the Qur'an and the results obtained from its interpretation. Furthermore, social acceptance of the results of these interpretations is manifested and institutionalized in certain interpretations that permeate society, which is manifested at the macro and micro levels. The text of the Qur'an that is actively present in society is referred to as *the Living Qur'an*, while the practical application of a particular interpretation in society is referred to as *The Living Tafsir* ([Hakim, 2019, p. 22](#)).

3. Based on Pattern

Interpretation pattern refers to the dominant thought or idea that exists in an interpretation product. Although it is recognized that some patterns can coexist in a product of interpretation, there are certain patterns that appear as dominant patterns and become characteristics of interpretation. In cases where an interpretive product includes a variety of shades without a clear dominant theme, it can be classified as an interpretive product that exhibits a general pattern or, in some cases, as a product without a pattern ([Ihsan Imadudin dan Aini Qurotul Ain, 2022, p. 385](#)).

One of the problems that arises from this pattern of interpretation is the continuous development of variations in patterns, which coincides with the expansion

of increasingly specialized branches of science, which are often characterized by subtle differences. For example, in the realm of science, the emergence of more nuanced subdivisions such as physics, chemistry, and biology leads to interpretations that are based on a specific scientific paradigm i.e., those related to physics, chemistry, and biology along with more specialized categories such as materials physics and organic chemistry. Similarly, in the context of legal frameworks, these trends produce different shades such as criminal law and civil law. While these evolving patterns are currently under a unified classification, it is anticipated that they will eventually give rise to an entirely new paradigm, similar to a historical shift in which the interpretive framework was once limited to *the lughawi* model but then developed as a result of the interaction between interpreters and emerging disciplines ([Ihsan Imadudin dan Aini Qurotul Ain, 2022, p. 386](#)).

Another problem arises in the special category of interpretation products, where interpretation seems to be limited to only the specified type. This form of interpretation, originally intended to offer a new perspective, has inadvertently turned into an obstacle that seems to ignore alternative viewpoints, thus limiting understanding to a single interpretive lens due to an exaggerated tendency towards its own patterns ([al-Qaththan, 1973, p. 146](#)).

Typology of Tafsir Studies in Egypt

Egypt has long been known as a center for Islamic studies, providing a supportive environment for the advancement and exploration of Islamic studies, especially in the field of interpretation. Many of the works of prominent scholars, ranging from the classical era to the contemporary era, deserve a thorough review, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of each.

The author's study of the evolution of interpretive studies in Egypt, which spans the classical era to the modern era, reveals a clear paradigm development in interpretation. This development is evident in the various methodologies used by interpreters (*mufasir*) from the beginning of this discipline to the current era. By categorizing the approaches in Islamic studies, the author effectively describes the historical and methodological frameworks used by scholars of interpretation, classifying their interpretive efforts into two distinct typologies namely normative and descriptive ([Mudzakir, 2021, p. 250](#)).

From the formative period to the classification era, the interpretations that emerged in Egypt mostly adhered to the normative level characterized by the methodology of history, although there was a gradual transition to the dimension of the *dirayah*. The interpretive studies in these two phases are strongly inspired by theological content and show a significant degree of subjectivity, which is greatly influenced by the respective schools of thought and the knowledge possessed by the interpreter. During the formative era, the interpretation that developed used a normative approach that focused on the historical context of the Prophet's hadith and the statements of the companions, leading to the characterization of this paradigm of interpretation as *al-tafsir al-matsur*. On the contrary, during the codification phase, although still adhering to the normative framework, the interpretive works that emerged began to include not only the historical aspect but also investigated the components of *the dirayah*, with the main emphasis on linguistic studies. As a result, the paradigm of interpretation during this phase developed into *al-tafsir al-lughawi*, which later inspired some modern mufasirs to further develop it into a literary style, referred to as *al-tafsir al-adabi*. Therefore, it can be concluded that in both phases, the interpretive studies that developed in Egypt were generally categorized as pre-scientific stages, mainly due to their dominant reliance on normative approaches ([Mudzakir, 2021, p. 250](#)). However, in these two phases, it can be stated that there has been a paradigm shift, especially since the emergence of the Egyptian school of interpretation in the 2nd century AH.

Moreover, during the renewal phase, the field of tafsir has started a new chapter

marked by the contributions of the mujaddid tafsir, initiated by 'Abduh and his disciple Rashid Rida. Their new approach is characterized by a higher objectivity, positioning the Qur'an not only as a source of guidance but also as a solution to the social challenges facing Muslims. This methodology, referred to as the "descriptive" approach, discards religious subjectivity and embraces critical scientific values in the realm of religious studies ([Kaharuddin dan Muh. Jauhari, 2021, p. 251](#)).

This approach makes the Qur'an more relevant, as it addresses social issues directly. As a result, it can be said that, at this point, the paradigm of its interpretation is classified as *al tafsir al-ijtimai*. However, subsequent developments have given rise to a new paradigm, as evidenced by Jansen's reading, which highlights other interpretive trends outside of *al ijtimai*, namely al-adabi and al-ilmi. This evolution underscores the important progress of interpretive studies in Egypt, which has shifted from a predominantly normative-theological framework to a more descriptive-critical approach.

Typology of Tafsir in Indonesia

The style of interpretation and the typological framework in Indonesia is heavily influenced by local Islamic traditions, which include cultural aspects and contextual circumstances in which the verses of the Qur'an are analyzed by interpreters. The typology and style of interpretation that are characteristic of the archipelago show differences when compared to the previously established interpretation approach. For example, classical interpretation has unique attributes that distinguish it from modern interpretation. Similarly, the interpretation of the archipelago differs in nuance from the interpretation produced by interpreters from the Middle East. This characteristic of Indonesian interpretation is particularly noteworthy ([Said, 2017, p. 215](#)).

Furthermore, the style and typology of Nusantara tafsir are closely related to the transmission of the tafsir tradition from Hijaz, Azhari, and Western scholars. The term "Hijaz" refers to the transmission of writing styles, ideas, and interpretation traditions originating from Mecca and Medina. In addition, the interpretation of the archipelago is closely related to the intellectual framework of Al-Azhar in Egypt, which has produced many Indonesian scholars who indirectly contribute their insights to the development of the archipelago's interpretation works. This interaction was particularly evident from the 16th century to the early 20th century. Beyond these influences, it is important to acknowledge the significant contributions of Indonesian Muslim scholars who continue their studies in the West, as well as Western scholars themselves, who enrich the research and analysis of the archipelago's interpretation. Equally important is the local wisdom of indigenous scholars, which has unique characteristics shaped by the social and cultural dimensions of the archipelago, in contrast to the knowledge transmitted from the Middle East or the West ([Said, 2017, p. 216](#)).

The interaction between "new players" and "old players" significantly affects the production and dissemination of Qur'anic interpretations. The existence of the Qur'anic interpretation as a fundamental academic discipline that provides an important framework for Muslims in understanding Islamic principles seems to serve as a powerful tool for both factions to promote their respective ideas and doctrines. In particular, the modernist Muslim faction attempted to publish translations of the Qur'an by Muhammad 'Abduh, in addition to periodicals inspired by him, such as al-Munir and al-Imam. The development of Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia is closely linked to the social struggle, which includes efforts to purify Islam and to strengthen traditionalist Islamic beliefs.

From the modernist Muslims, works of tafsir have emerged that are full of ideas for their renewal such as Mahmud Yunus's Tafsir Qur'an Karim, Hamka's Tafsir al-Azhar, Muhammad Romli's Tafsir Nurul Bayan, Moenawar Chalil's Tafsir Al-Qur'an Hidajaturrahman, and the *Lenyapuen Holy Verse* written by E Hasyim. Then the interpretations from traditionalist Muslims include *Tafsir Fayd ar-Rahman* by Kiai Shaleh Darat, *Tafsir Marāḥ Labīd* by Sheikh Nawawī al-Bantani, *Tafsir al-Iklīl fī*

Ma'ānī at-Tanzil, and *Tafsir Tāj al-Muslimīn* by Kiai Misbah Mustafa, *Tafsir al-Ibrīz* by Kiai Bisri Mustafa, *Tafsir al-Mu'awwizatain* by Ahmad Yasin Asmuni, and *Tafsir Malja' at-Tālibīn* and *Rauḍah al-'Irfān* by Ahmad Sanusi ([Gusmian, 2015, p. 225–234](#)).

Among the common characteristics of traditionalist tafsir are first ([Azra, t.t., p. 266](#)), tafsir is more likely to be written using Arabic characters (pegon) and/or Arabic. However, after the implementation of Dutch ethical politics and the youth oath, many traditionalist interpretations have been formulated by utilizing the national language and the Latin/Roman script ([Gusmian, 2015, p. 20–22](#)). Second, they showed acceptance of *Israiliyyat*, as shown in works such as "*Tafsir Marāḥ Labīd*" by Nawawī al-Bantani, "*Tafsir al-Ibrīz*" by Kiai Bisri Mustofa, "*Tafsir Tāj al-Muslimīn*" by Kiai Misbah Mustofa, and "*Tafsir al-Iklīl fī Ma'ānī at-Tanzīl*" by Kiai Misbah Mustofa. Furthermore, in their interpretation of the *aḥkām* (law) verses, traditionalist Muslim mufassirs usually base their analysis on the opinions of imams from various schools and scholars of classical interpretation. Therefore, it is customary for traditionalist mufassirs to give a broad explanation of the viewpoint held by these priests when discussing the verses of the law. Lastly, they consider the Qur'an to be a text endowed with extraordinary power. The Qur'an not only serves as a guideline for life and a source of legal principles, but also as a means to face life's challenges. For example, verses of the Qur'an are often used as a method of petitioning for various needs ([Gusmian, 2015, p. 156](#)).

The idea of "restoring the Qur'an as a source of guidance," as stated by Muhammad 'Abduh, has had a significant impact in Indonesia. Muslims who adhere to Abduh's perspective are then known as modernist Muslims. Similar to Abduh, they argue that the interpretation of the classical period is merely a reflection of the opinions of earlier scholars, which deviates from the original purpose of the Qur'an as a frame of reference for human life. Modernist converts seek to restore the Qur'an as a vital source of guidance, rejecting the notion that the Qur'an is merely a stagnant revelation as perceived by their predecessors ([Ramdhani, 2023, p. 378](#)).

The general characteristics that can be found in modernist interpretation include first, using the paradigm of *hida'i tafsir* so that it is more loaded with the nuances of *adabi ijtimai' tafsir* ([Aulia, 2014, p. 11](#)). Over time, such nuances have also been observed in contemporary traditionalist interpretations. Furthermore, there is a tendency to globalize the interpretation of verses related to *aḥkām* and theology. Modernist mufassirs often show hesitation in providing a detailed and extensive explanation of these two verses, instead aiming to present them in a way that appears non-sectarian and devoid of fanaticism towards a particular school of thought ([Kiftiah, 2018, p. 279](#)). Third, in the precontemporary era, modernist interpretations were mostly composed in Indonesian. However, in later developments, traditionalist interpreters also used Indonesian for their writings. This shift in language use has expanded the scope and target audience for these interpretations. Fourth, there is a rejection of the use of the Qur'an for magical purposes, as well as a disregard for the historical context of mythological hadith and *Israiliyyat*. For these interpreters, the history of *Israiliyyat* is regarded as mere superstition, falsehood, and irrationality. When discussing the authenticity of the hadith, they show a selective approach, accepting only those that are considered authentic. They reject *the hadith of da'if* even though its substance is for the sake of *faḍā'il al-a'māl*. See, for example, in the preface of *Tafsir al-Manār* by Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rasyīd Riḍā, as well as in the preface of Mahmud Yunus' s Tafsir Qur'an Karim and Hamka's Tafsir al-Azhar ([Ramdhani, 2023, p. 379](#)).

The synthesis of modernist and traditionalist perspectives is represented by the traditionalist-progressive approach, which seeks to combine cultural interpretation with the spirit of renewal, thus fostering an eclectic way of thinking. This intellectual framework seeks to combine the most advantageous elements of traditional and modern methodologies, bringing them together in a way that is in harmony with established models.

Conclusion

Egypt stands as a leading center of Islamic scholarship, particularly notable for its advancement in the field of Islamic studies, with a special emphasis on the discipline of tafsir. The outstanding contributions of scholars in this domain, spanning the classical to contemporary eras, deserve careful study, taking into account their strengths and weaknesses. This phenomenon underscores the deep commitment of Muslims in Egypt to engage the Qur'an as an integral aspect of their way of life. Therefore, it is imperative that the scholarly works on tafsir produced in Egypt are diligently studied and passed on to subsequent generations, in order to ensure that they do not become obsolete or, worse, damaged or lost, as was the case during the early stages of the tafsir tradition in Egypt. Such omissions will inevitably hinder future scholars from accessing established works of interpretation, potentially creating the perception that the current generation has not adequately preserved the treasures and priceless heritage of classical Islamic scholarship.

The style and typology of interpretation in Indonesia is greatly influenced by local Islamic traditions, both culturally and in the context of the situation surrounding the interpretation of Qur'anic verses by interpreters. The typology of Nusantara interpretation cannot be separated from the transmission of interpretive traditions from Hijaz, Azhari, and Western scholars. The term Hijaz refers to the stylistic, intellectual, and interpretive traditions that emerged in Mecca and Medina. In addition, the interpretation of the archipelago has a strong relationship with the intellectual framework of Al-Azhar University in Egypt, which has produced many Indonesian scholars who in turn have contributed to the development of the works of archipelago interpretation. These influences were particularly prominent from the 16th century to the early 20th century. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the significant contributions of Indonesian Muslim scholars studying in the West and Western scholars themselves, who have enriched the discourse around the interpretation of the archipelago through their research and analysis.

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