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Critiquing Modernist Approaches to the Qur'an: A Case Study of Mohammed Arkoun's Hermeneutics

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Abstract

The birth of modern thought in Islam, especially in the study of the Qur'an, was a critique of interpretation in the classical and middle ages, the interpretation at that time, according to him, was only coloured by the use of repeated history, political interests, etc., so that it was unable to produce the meaning of the text according to the needs of the times. Departing from this background, contemporary interpreters provide alternatives to reading the Qur'an that is scientific with the hermeneutic method, one of which is Mohammed Arkoun. This paper will describe Arkoun's thoughts on the hermeneutics of the Qur'an, which has attracted much controversy among Muslims and criticizes his thoughts. This type of qualitative research (library research) uses a descriptive-analytic approach. The study results show that Arkoun's hermeneutics has many shortcomings and aspects that must be abandoned. On a practical level, Arkoun's hermeneutics can only be used at the *mabaulal Qur'an* level, not at the *ma fi Qur'an*.

Keywords

Interpretation, Hermeneutical Criticism, Arkoun

Abstrak

Lahirnya pemikiran modern dalam Islam khususnya dalam kajian Alquran merupakan kritik atas penafsiran di masa klasik dan pertengahan, penafsiran pada masa tersebut



menurutnya hanya diwarnai dengan penggunaan riwayat yang diulang-ulang, kepentingan politik dsb, sehingga tidak mampu memproduksi makna teks sesuai kebutuhan zaman. Berangkat dari latar belakang ini para penafsir kontemporer memberikan alternatif lain dalam pembacaan Alquran yang bersifat ilmiah dengan metode hermeneutika, salah satunya Mohammed Arkoun. Tulisan ini akan memaparkan pemikiran Arkoun tentang hermeneutika Alquran yang banyak menuai kontroversi dikalangan umat Islam, sekaligus melakukan kritik terhadap pemikirannya. Menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analisis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hermeneutika Arkoun mempunyai banyak kekurangan serta sisi yang harus ditinggalkan, dalam tataran praktisnya hermeneutika Arkoun hanya bisa digunakan pada tataran *ma haulal Qur'an* bukan pada *ma fi Qur'an*.

Katakunci:

Tafsir, Kritik Hermeneutika, Arkoun

Introduction

Amin Abdullah, in the introduction to the book *Madzab Tafsir* by Abdul Mustaqim, divides the development of interpretation into three periods: the classical period, the middle period, and the third, the contemporary period. In the classical period, the reading of a text was only coloured using history and the lack of critical culture in highlighting a text, so the production of the meaning of the text did not develop. While the middle period of reading a text is still the same as the classical period, it is just that political/ideological interests have coloured the interpretation at this time. The three contemporary

periods in reading texts have led to scientific culture, as well as criticism of interpretation in the classical and Middle Ages (Mustaqim, 2003). At least the contemporary interpretation in the book *Ittijat fi Tafsir al-Hadis* quoted by Abdul Mustaqim is divided into three parts, namely: first, *Ittijah Salafi* in reading texts/interpretations tends to use authentic meaning, which is based on the narrations of shahih al-furuq. Sources of interpretation fall into *bil al-Ma'sur* and *bil al-Ra'yi*. The pattern of interpretation tends to be coloured by linguistic analysis. The products of interpretation at this time include: *Tafsir fi Dzil lil al-Qur'an* by Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsir al-Hadis* by Izza Darwazah, *Mahasin al-Takwil* by Jamaluddin al-Qosimi, *Tafsir Qur'an li Quran* by Abdul Karim al-Khotib.

Second, *al-Ittijah al-Aqli fi Taufiqi Yuwafiq baina al-Islam wal al-Hadrah Gharibiyah*, the interpretation in this division tends to be rational in interpreting the Koran, as well as integrating Western thought. The interpretation figures are Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, and Mustafa al-Maraghi with *Tafsir al-Maraghi*. Third, *al-Ittijah al-Ilmi*, the interpretation tends to be scientifically based on science and the findings of modern science. The products of interpretation at this time include *al-Jawahir fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* by Shaykh Tanthawi, *I'jaz al-Qur'an wa al-Balaghah al-Nabawiyah* by Mustafa Sadiq al-Rafi'i, *Miracles of the Qur'an* by Hanafi Ahmad (Mustaqim, 2016).

The interpretation of the contemporary period was born in the modern era, and the reading of the verses of the Qur'an is designed using the latest findings in a contemporary context. The connection with the word modern-contemporary is a unit that cannot be separated when referring to contemporary interpretation. It cannot be separated from modern elements regarding content, thought, and methodological

framework used (Mustaqim, 2003). So, it is not uncommon in the contemporary period to read the text of the Alquran; much hermeneutic theory is used. Hermeneutics has become a new trend for contemporary thinkers from Hassan Hanafi, Fazlur Rahman, Nasr Abu Zayd, and Khaled Abu Fadl to Mohammed Arkoun.

Arkoun is a contemporary thinker born in Algeria. Arkoun's thoughts on Islam in general, the Alquran in particular, deserve to be reviewed because his thoughts can be said to be out of the corridor that has been agreed upon by the scholars, one of which Arkoun says the Koran is a product of history. Arkoun said that the Qur'an that arrived at us today was influenced by Arab history at that time, so Arkoun offered an interpretation of the Qur'an with a historical approach (Hariyanto, 2018). In addition, Arkoun also offers an alternative to semiotics in reading the Koran. Therefore, it is necessary to identify Arkoun's thoughts on the Alquran, who are the figures who influence it. This is based on the fact that Arkoun's thoughts are more or less contrary to Islamic principles

Method

Research that raises the theme of the dark side of Alquran hermeneutics: criticism of Arkoun's Alquran hermeneutics is included in the type of qualitative research (library research). Qualitative research is research that emphasizes quality by using library data sources. Library data sources are used to answer a problem; therefore, this research tries to dig up data through books, journals and other sources, then analyze it with descriptive-analytic theory and content analysis (content analysis). The primary sources used Arkoun's works, while the secondary sources used all similar research data related to the research theme. In addition to criticizing Arkoun's hermeneutics, this study uses the theoretical framework of Ulum al-Qura'an, because the theory of Ulum al-Qura'an is an established and standard theory that is the handle of commentators.

Results and Discussion

Characteristics of Contemporary Interpretation

The characteristics of contemporary interpretation as described by Abdul Mustaqim in his dissertation are divided into four parts, namely: positioning the Alquran as a book of instructions, hermeneutic, contextual; oriented to the spirit of the Alquran, finally scientific, critical and non- sectarian (Mustaqim, 2011).

- 1) Positioning the Alquran as a Book of Instructions. In the Alquran in Surah al-Baqarah, it is explained that one of the purposes of the revelation of the Alquran is as a human guide. This also seems to be used by contemporary interpreters to restore the Alquran's purpose as a book of guidance. Contemporary interpreters understand that the Alquran is a living, living revelation. What is meant here is that the Alquran must be understood critically to produce a product of interpretation and meaning of the text according to the times. In addition, the Alquran is understood as a book that is full of the history of humankind, so that humans always need the Alquran in every era.
- 2) Hermeneutic nuance. In order to create scientific interpretations, contemporary interpreters have their own methodologies in interpreting the

Alquran, one of which is hermeneutics. According to him, hermeneutics can produce productive interpretations in understanding the verses of the Alquran. Hermeneutics is a reading tool that focuses on highlighting a text. On its practical level, it always emphasizes the contemporary context. Contemporary interpreters also use it to interpret the verses of the Alquran. The Alquran must be understood in its context. The Alquran with a supernatural language can be translated into human language.

- 3) Contextual and Oriented to the Spirit of the Alquran. The prominent character of contemporary interpreters always emphasizes the context of the Alquran spirit, starting from Syahrur, Nasr Hamid, to Arkoun. Contextual reading is the primary key in their approach. When understanding the text, one does not immediately accept the literal meaning. Furthermore, they want the real meaning of the purpose behind the meaning of the text. So that in this way, you can restore the spirit and spirit of the Alquran.
- 4) Scientific, Critical and Non-Sectarian. Contemporary interpreters' criticism of classical and middle interpretations is one of them by offering a critical reading of hermeneutics that is scientific and out of the interests of certain groups, schools or ideologies. In this way, the Qur'an can be understood as scientifically as possible and ready to accept criticism to test the truth of the meaning of the text.

Biography and Intellectual Background

The biography of Mohammed Arkoun's thoughts has actually been widely studied in commentary research, but it is important to write briefly as material for analysis. Mohammed Arkoun or familiar with Arkoun is one of the contemporary thinkers who was born in the city of Algeria on February 1, 1928. The city of Algeria is located in the northern part of the African continent (Ruslani, 2000). The majority of the population where Arkoun was born are Berbers. Arkoun in his youth was known to be intelligent so he could master three languages at once; starting with Kabilian as a mother tongue, then Arabic, and French.

Arkoun's intellectual journey began with his primary education in his hometown, then his first secondary education in Oran, Algeria. Then in 1950-1962 Arkoun continued his higher education at the University of Algiers with a concentration on Arabic language and literature. In 1954-1962 Arkoun again continued his intellectual journey to France, taking a master's education at the Sorbonne University with the same concentration, namely Arabic language and literature. Arkoun's intellectual journey at the Sorbonne University was long enough until 1969 to lead Arkoun to get a doctorate with the dissertation title of Ibn Miskawih's Ethics Humanism (Ruslani, 2000).

Arkoun's intellectual journey was then continued at the University of Lyon in 1970-1972, then after that, Arkoun returned to Paris to get the highest degree as a professor in the family of Islamic thought. Arkoun is an active intellectual both in the lecture hall and in seminars, this is proven by Arkoun often being a resource person in various discussion rooms and seminars outside Paris. Arkoun has also been a frequent guest lecturer in Belgium, Los Angeles and Philadelphia.

Arkoun's thinking is also very popular in Indonesia. This started when Arkoun visited Indonesia to receive the Aga Khan award as well as an international conference

entitled Cultural Tourism, then Arkoun was also invited to be a resource person at the IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta and IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta campuses, starting from here Arkoun's thoughts began to be known. and began to develop in Indonesia (Ruslani, 2000).

Intellectual Works

Arkoun is a productive thinker who has produced many works from his experience studying in Algeria and Paris. In French, such as: *Pour une critique de la raison Islamique* (For the sake of the Critique of Islamic Reason) was published in 1984. *Lectures du Coran* (Readings of the Alquran) was published in 1991 in Paris. *Essais sur pense Islamique* (Essays on Islamic thought) was published in 1973. *Actualite d'une culture mediterraneene* was published was published in 1990. *Aspects sur la pensee musulmane classique* was published in 1963. *L'ethique Musulmane d'apres Mawardi* was published in 1964. *L'humanise Arabe au IV/X siècle: Miskawayh Philosophe et histrien* was published in 1970. *L'Islam Hier demain La pensee Arabe* (Arabic Thought) was later translated into Arabic *al- Fikr al-'Arabi*>y. *Islam morale et politique. Islam e Societe. Ouvertures sur l'Islam* was published in 1989, then translated into English by Robert into *Rethinking Islam* (Lutfi, 2018). *Islamic Reasoning and Modern Reasoning: Various Challenges and New Paths*, translated by Rahayu S Hidayat was published in 1994. *Various Quran Recitations*, translated by Machasin was published in 1998.

Characters Influencing Arkoun

A thought doesn't just come naturally; there must be a character that influences it, a character that influences Arkoun among them:

- 1) Michael Foucault. Michael Foucault is a philosopher who is famous for his structuralism. According to him, humans, from age to age, have different epistemes in looking at something. On a practical level, episteme and discourse are subject to reality to produce different points of view. This influenced Arkoun that thinking should develop; the door to *ijtihad* is still wide open and not closed. The existence of *ijtihad* indicates that thinking activities are still open; it is a must for every era to have new thoughts and not be confined to old thoughts.
- 2) Jaques Derrida. Jaques Derrida is a linguist who influenced Arkoun with his semiotic theory and the concept of deconstruction. According to him, humans cannot think and write without referring to thought, so one of them is by understanding the text. With language, humans can express themselves and move forward with a culture of criticism, one of which is criticism of texts or discourses. Derrida calls criticism deconstruction, and this is where Arkoun was inspired to deconstruct Islamic thought.
- 3) Ferdinand de Saussure. Ferdinand de Saussure is a linguist from Switzerland. According to him, language is a set of codes and rules related to social theory, be it culture, myth, art, etc. Ferdinand de Saussure is a modern linguist famous for his structuralist movement.
- 4) Paul Ricour. Paul Ricour is one of the thinkers with the concept of myth. According to him, myth is the most critical component in helping humans. In the concept of myth, the most important thing is to eliminate nihilism.

Departing from this, Arkoun has his concept of myth. According to him, myth has a positive meaning, then Arkoun uses the term *usthurah* in a historical approach (Ali Imron, 2017).

Arkoun's Thoughts About Islam

Arkoun's thoughts about Islam in general lead to the criticism of Islamic reasoning, at least Arkoun divides the criticism of Islamic reasoning into three parts, namely; first, regarding the theme of reason in the Alquran, according to Arkoun, many themes of reason in the Alquran are only understood through the *majaz* approach, it is rare for verses about reason to be discussed through the science of logic or thought. Second, in the classical period, according to Arkoun, philosophical thought entered the realm of thought activity and the scientific realm, so in this period, there were many large-scale translations of western works into Arabic. Many Islamic figures were born during this period, such as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Miskawih. This period was between 150-450 Hijriyah. Third, according to Arkoun, in this period, thought activity began to lead to a narrowing of thinking because, in this period, the thinking was confined to *fiqh* culture alone, so there were many figures of priests of schools of thought such as Imam Maliki, Imam Hanafi, Imam Hambali and Imam Shafi'i appeared. (Arkoun, 2017).

In the following period, Arkoun wanted to fill the void by offering his thoughts. With intellectual experience from Algeria and France, Arkoun seems to have myriad breakthrough issues surrounding Islam. However, Arkoun's offers are all western products used to deconstruct Islamic thought in general (Azhar, 2012). Arkoun's general offer is that he wants to reread all Islamic treasures with a fresher and more recent look, starting from aspects of history, language, sociology and anthropology. However, specifically, Arkoun's offer in the realm of application uses the point of view of philosophical reasoning in assessing and determining something. Arkoun says Muslims can be more advanced and leading (Arkoun, 2017).

Arkoun's Hermeneutical Thoughts on the Alquran

Before considering Arkoun's Alquran hermeneutics, it is necessary to know Arkoun's views in general about the Alquran because, after all, Arkoun's framework of thinking about the Alquran will lead to Arkoun's hermeneutics in general. First, Arkoun views the Koran as a product of history, and this idea is almost the same as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's thought that the Al-Quran is a cultural product (Fauzan, 2015). Both of these ideas have sparked controversy among Muslims. Arkoun emphasized that the Alquran that arrived at Muslims today is in reality, influenced by Arab history and culture. Besides that, according to Arkoun, the Ottoman *Mushaf* was a product of power that was neatly arranged at that time. Arkoun took the initiative to read the Alquran, one of them with historical aspects. (Ma'rufi. 2016).

Second, the Qur'an is a book that is free to be interpreted because it contains unlimited knowledge. The Alquran openly accepts new interpretations and is not confined to one absolute interpretation. This diversity and interpretive activity indicate that the Alquran always follows the context of changing times (Muctar, 2016). However, in reality, there are still many Islamic groups who understand the Alquran only in the interests of their group, so the meaning of the Alquran is only monopolized

for specific groups. On this basis, Arkoun is concerned and encourages him to make significant changes to understanding the Qur'an (Rudy, 2014).

Third, Arkoun offers the concept of Islamology in reading the Alquran. Islamology is a western thought that focuses on epistemological issues. One of the goals of implementing Islamology is to develop Islam that can answer the problems of the times. Besides that, Islamology aims to understand Islam more freshly and rationally. The connection with the Alquran aims to understand the Alquran with various scientific approaches, not only confined to one scientific discipline (Hariyanto, 2018). From the thought steps above, Arkoun re-emphasizes the reading of the Alquran with the hermeneutic method. At least Arkoun's Alquran hermeneutics can be mapped into two parts, the first is the language aspect, and the second is the historical aspect.

In aspects of language, Arkoun offers a recitation of the Alquran through semiotics. Semiotics is a branch of linguistics, especially in explaining text problems. The connection with the semiotic Alquran aims to reveal the meaning of the text through the signs contained in verse (Sharif, 2018). In addition, Arkoun emphasized that reading texts through language or semiotics from the past until now is considered essential for mufassir. Arkoun mixes them with new discoveries at the applicative level and integrates them into reading the Alquran. In the end, according to Arkoun, Muslims can play an essential role in Islamic history (Sukron, 2016).

Concerning the example of interpretation in the semiotic aspect, Arkoun provides an interpretation of the Surah al-Fatihah. First, Arkoun places the order of Surah al-Fatihah in the forty- sixth order of the other letters; this is much different from the Ottoman manuscripts, which place Surah al-Fatihah in the first place, this is because the letter is the subject of worship for Muslims. After that, Arkoun checked the language structure in Surah al-Fatihah, distinguishing the signs on each letter because this search could identify the sender of the meaning and the intended party. After that, Arkoun started to analyze word by word using linguistic methods, starting from isim, fiil, musama. In the arrangement of the isim ma'rifah the meaning primarily refers to Allah, such as the sentences al- Rahman, al-Rahim etc. For this reason, Arkoun suggested that in reading the word, one should know the 45 letters that came down before Surah al-Fatihah. Because the Arab tradition in the seventh century AD interpreting the isim marifah is still general and difficult to understand. Arkoun then explains the wording of isim ma'rifah, which is not related to the meaning of Allah, besides explaining the word dhamir both mukhatab and dhamir munfasil nasab. Then explain the word dhamir mutakalim and the word dhamir in general (Salahudin, 2021).

Furthermore, Arkoun concluded that using dhamir in Surah al-Fatihah is an aktan category. In this case, God in the word structure is the sender, while humans are the recipients. This can be exemplified in the word al-Hamdu lillahi rab al-'Alamn. Through this semiotic analysis, Arkon divides surah al-Fatihah into four parts, starting from the core speech, predicate and developer speech (Salahudin, 2021).

Aspects of history, Arkoun offers a theory of history by reading a text of the Alquran. Because basically, everything essentially cannot be separated from the historical context, including religious life, thoughts and the religious text itself, namely the Alquran. The western concept brought by Arkoun is expected to be able to see the interpretation in its entirety without any discrimination/monopoly of a particular culture because, according to Arkoun, the Alquran at the time it was revealed was

influenced by Arab history and culture, so Arkoun offers a historical theory to answer the problem (Ricard, 2005).

Arkoun gives two views regarding the contextualization of the reading of the revelation of the Alquran: first, the Alquran uses a language that is very high in the use of symbols, so according to Arkoun, the reading of the theory of symbols is very much needed to reveal the mythical meaning contained in the Alquran, as well as to actualize scientific thinking on the meaning. The symbolic. Second, many classical thinkers are not very interested in the discussion of symbols; on the contrary, many despise the discussion. Therefore Arkoun offers a new concept in reading texts using contextual history-based hermeneutics. It is hoped that this theory will be able to provide a new colour to the reading of a Alquran text, which helps transform meaning (Arkoun, 1999).

Thought in the Islamic tradition is always open, so the opportunity for *ijtihad* is still wide open, so that thought in the Islamic tradition always develops according to the context of time, including the interpretation of the Alquran. The Alquran, in its context, will always be interpreted by humans to produce new meanings according to human needs so that humans, in responding to an interpretation, are not trapped in one meaning and are not indoctrinated in an interpretation at a specific time. That is why in every era, interpreters of the Alquran will try to interpret the Alquran in the latest context. In this case, Arkoun has two theories in responding to the text of the Alquran. First, the concept of the Alquran when it was still in *lahul mahfudz* status was still original and maintained; the truth was absolute and transcendent. Second, the Alquran, which is in the world has been reached by humans, or it can be said "there is a human intervention"; the truth is transcendent (Salihu, 2003). In the end, Arkoun realized that the production of text meaning in the interpretive tradition indicates that human understanding of the Qur'anic text has begun to develop, so according to Arkoun, the goal in reading a text is expected to be able to know the message of the Prophet in the Alquran text.

When reading a text, Arkoun offers three approaches, namely: first, with a liturgical approach, in practice, the reading of the text is done through ritual or worship, starting from prayer, prayer, etc. The goal of this theory is that humans can communicate directly, both vertically and horizontally. Besides that, humans can appreciate the understanding of the Alquran in depth. Second, with an *egsegical* approach, in practice, this theory focuses on the "second word" in the Alquran text. Third, by utilizing all the theories and methodologies of science that have been contributed by humans, one of which is Arkoun's thoughts. So to apply all of these theories, Arkoun uses the theory of applied Islamology in reading or interpreting the Alquran through a deconstructive historical analysis (Salim, 2010).

Arkoun's Hermeneutic Criticism of the Qur'an with the Theory of Ulum Alquran

Islam, from the beginning, has had a standard and well-established theory to understand the text of the Alquran, namely the theory of *ulum Alquran*. The theory of *ulum Alquran* consists of *sabab al-nuzul*, *muhkam mutasyabih*, *makiyyah* and *madaniyah*, *nasikh mansukh* etc. In addition, in reading the Alquran, Islam provides strict rules regarding the requirements of a commentator and his scientific requirements; this aims to avoid misinterpretation (Budi, 2021).

Along with the times, the reading of the Alquran began to develop with the emergence of western theories, one of which was the theory of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is a reading tool to analyze a text. Hermeneutics is a reading tool for understanding the bible (Agustin, 2017). However, apart from that, the hermeneutic theory has penetrated the Islamic area. The penetration of hermeneutics into Islamic thought was brought about by Islamic thinkers who studied in the west, from Fazlurahman, Syahur, and Nasr Hamid to Arkoun. Arkoun is an Algerian-born thinker who offers historical theory and language/semiotics in reading the text of the Alquran. In reading a Alquran text, Arkoun is very bold, and this can be seen in his attitude in reading a text; not seeing and positioning the theological meaning like the majority of scholars of interpretation, Arkoun puts forward new findings according to his understanding of the text itself. This changes the paradigm from "text meaning to understanding" to "understanding to meaning". So in reading the Alquran, the text is considered dead, while the living and becoming the authority is an interpreter, the actor as the regulator of revelation. As a result, using the above paradigm in reading a text must eliminate the author's nature in the context of the Alquran, namely Allah. According to Arkoun, eliminating the author in a text can be more optimal for understanding it.

On the other hand, Arkoun views that the Qur'an is no longer authentic. This concept is very contrary to the majority of scholars of interpretation. Because most commentators view the Alquran as good since it was in lauhul mahfudz to the world, its authenticity is maintained. Departing from here, Arkoun has different views on the concept of tanzil (the process of the revelation of the Alquran), so that finally, the Alquran is seen as the same as the Gospels, and the Torah can be read as critically as possible (Ma'rufi, 2016).

From Arkoun's thought, at least it has caused much controversy, especially for Muslims in general. Even if analyzed further, this is contrary to the concept of one's faith, especially for the faith of ordinary people. So if Arkoun's hermeneutics is juxtaposed with the theory of the Ulama of the Alquran, it is not very specific, like the heavens and the earth are very far away. In the author's opinion, the need for more in-depth criticism is one of them with the theory of the ulema of the Alquran. Because at the practical level, Arkoun's hermeneutics cannot be used to interpret the Alquran, but if it is used in reading outside the Alquran, it is possible. This means that the area of Arkoun's hermeneutics lies in ma haulal Qur'an (outside the Alquran), not on ma fi Qur'an (inside the Alquran). Furthermore, Arkoun's hermeneutics is still only a theory because Arkoun has not interpreted the Alquran. Arkoun only writes theories that have not yet reached the stage of interpretation.

Concept	<i>Ulum Alquran</i>	Arkoun's Hermeneutics
the concept of <i>tanzil</i> and the authenticity of the Alquran	All the majority of Ulama of interpretation viewing the Koran both original from <i>Lauhul Mahfudz</i> to the natural world,	According to Arkon, the Alquran in the revelation process is no longer authentic. It has undergone many changes, both in the first phase (the word of Allah in the form of an idea)

	authenticity is maintained	to the second phase (the word of Allah in Arabic), until the form of the manuscript has been modified a lot.
Theological reading	At the practical level in reading the Alquran always put forward the theological side/meaning of the verse.	Eliminating theological elements focusing more on findings outside of these elements through the latest discoveries through his thoughts.
The text paradigm	Placing the meaning of the text and the author (Allah) is more dominant than the interpreter.	Placing the interpreter more dominant in viewing a text, eliminating the element of the author.
Looking at the Alquran	The Alquran is the word of Allah.	The Alquran as a historical product

Table. 1 the difference between Arkoun's hermeneutical view and the theory of ulum al-Qur'an

Mohammed Arkoun as a Liberal-Secular Thinker

After describing Arkoun's thoughts, from the beginning to the end, it can be concluded that Arkoun's thoughts in viewing the Alquran in particular and Islam in general fall into the category of liberal thinkers. The liberal concept itself was a western product which at that time, wanted to get out of the confines and hegemony of the church and the king. The term liberal comes from the word liber, which means free and independent (Zainuddin, 2015).

With his scientific background, Arkoun uses a Western perspective to read and understand the Alquran. Western thinkers heavily influence Arkon. The location of Arkoun's project does not refer to the geographical location of the west but the use of thought, civilization and his way of life. In the context of the Alquran, Arkoun wants to understand and interpret the Alquran freely because his free will is more dominant in colouring his thought process. With a liberal (western) spirit, Islam is expected to be more advanced. Besides, why is the benchmark west and not east? According to Arkoun, the west is not shackled to the concept of divinity and is afraid of sin. This is what Arkoun applied in reading the text of the Koran.

Besides being liberal, Arkoun is also very secular in understanding Islam. Secularism is a movement that wants to separate the concept of religion from human life, even the state. Secularism is the mother of the birth of Western thought rooted in various fields, including religion, politics and economics. In the end, liberal and secular are Western frameworks; in practice, Arkoun in reading the Alquran text leads to scientific modernism (Zainuddin, 2015).

For this reason, Arkoun emphasized that Islam should accept western ideas openly because, in fact, this way Islam can catch up. The presence of science is not a threat and a scourge for Islam. It is precise with the existence of Islamic knowledge that it will become an open religion in facing challenges (Farida, 2003). Even if there is a rejection by some Muslim thinkers, this signifies the death of some Muslim intellectuals who are trapped in traditional anti-progress traditions (Farida, 2003).

Then what is the impact of secularization, which emphasizes the concept of modernism? According to Arkoun, secularism existed at the time of the Prophet, but Arkoun's explanation regarding this matter is still unclear. According to Arkoun, Muslims should not be afraid of secularization; what should be more feared are the fundamentalists who understand the Alquran and hadith with the understanding of their group. According to Arkoun, this is the natural secularization movement. In short, according to Arkoun, Muslims should not be afraid of secularization because they cannot change Islamic values rooted in society in modern times (Farida, 2003).

Conclusion

Arkoun's thoughts in Indonesia are prevalent, which can be seen since Arkoun visited Indonesia to present his thoughts on the IAIN Sunan Kalijaga and IAIN Jakarta campuses. Since then, Arkoun's thoughts began to emerge and are in great demand. One of Arkoun's thoughts is to offer historical theory and language/semiotics theory in reading the Alquran text. However, according to the author's opinion, Arkoun's thoughts have many shortcomings and aspects that must be avoided, even the need for in-depth criticism, one of which is the theory of ulum Alquran. As far as the author observes, many figures place Arkoun as a liberal-secularist figure, and this can be seen from his ideas and thoughts. The scientific discourse will constantly develop, including the study of the Alquran. We as Muslims should be more optimal in using the theory of ulum Alquran in the realm of interpretation because this theory is the best in interpreting the Alquran and is considered standard and established by most scholars. Our attitude toward the presence of hermeneutics should be used for knowledge and additions in strengthening interpretation, not using hermeneutics as a method of interpretation and then shifting the theory of ulum Alquran; this will have an impact on fatal misinterpretations.

Declaration of competing interest

There are no known conflicts of interest.

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