

## **Tafsir As Social Criticism: The Case of Tafsir *Malja' Al Thalibin* and *Tamsiyat Al Muslimin* by KH Ahmad Sanusi**

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*Article Accepted: July 29, 2023, Revised: January 19, 2024, Approved: January 31, 2024.*

### **Abstract**

This research examines two seminal works of Ahmad Sanusi, *Malja' al Thalibin fi tafsiri kala mi robb al 'alamin* (in Sundanese) and *Tamsiyat al muslimin fi tafsiri kala mi robb al 'alamin* (in Indonesian Bahasa). By understanding Sanusi's interpretation and context of the production of the text, this research shows that Sanusi used his interpretation as a medium to criticize colonial government policies and emphasize the importance of education, especially mastering secular knowledge, besides the religious one to achieve Indonesian glory and independence. This research explores Sanusi's anti-colonial criticism of the Teacher Ordinance Act, the prohibition of learning in pesantren and performing *hajj*. Furthermore, Sanusi encourages people to master secular sciences besides religious ones to achieve Indonesian independence. This research employs Hermeneutics to analyze Sanusi's two books of tafsir. This method provides an understanding of the social, political, and cultural context of the production of the text.

*Keywords: Tafsir, Ahmad Sanusi, criticism, Islamic education*

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini mengkaji dua karya penting Ahmad Sanusi, *Malja' al Thalibin fi tafsiri kala mi robb al 'alamin* (in Sundanese) and *Tamsiyat al muslimin fi tafsiri kala mi robb al 'alamin* (in Indonesian Bahasa). Dengan memahami penafsiran Sanusi dan konteks produksi teks tersebut, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Sanusi menggunakan penafsirannya sebagai media untuk mengkritisi kebijakan pemerintah kolonial dan menekankan pentingnya pendidikan, khususnya penguasaan ilmu umum disamping ilmu agama untuk mencapai kejayaan dan kemerdekaan Indonesia. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi kritik antikolonial Sanusi terhadap Ordonansi Guru, larangan belajar di pesantren, dan larangan menunaikan ibadah haji. Lebih lanjut, Sanusi mengajak masyarakat untuk menguasai ilmu-ilmu umum selain ilmu agama sebagai upaya mencapai kemerdekaan Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan hermeneutika untuk menganalisis kedua kitab tafsir Sanusi. Metode ini memberikan pemahaman tentang konteks sosial, politik, dan budaya dimana sebuah teks diproduksi.

*Kata Kunci: Tafsir, Ahmad Sanusi, kritik, Pendidikan Islam*

## A. Introduction

The history of Indonesian national liberation cannot be separated from the role of the *ulama* (Islamic scholars) in resisting colonial power (Sulasman, 2012). During the 1920s and 1930s, Indonesian *ulama* began to articulate a rising anti-colonialism and national consciousness as "Indonesians" (Bakti, 1993), and Indonesian political activism increased throughout these years, culminating in the declaration of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945 (Ricklefs, 1993). The anti-colonialism movement was a striking phenomenon that emerged during the colonial period in Indonesia (Shiraishi, 1990), where the *ulama* struggled through many forms of activism, mobilizing people through organizations (Shiraishi, 1990) and religious educational institutions (Laffan, 2003), and expressing ideas through newspapers, magazines, and books (Boland, 1983).

The theme of the history of Indonesian resistance against colonizers is rarely found in the literature on the anti-colonial approach to the Qur'anic exegesis as a medium of criticism related to Islamic education. Perhaps one that is a little closer to this approach is Rahmana's work entitled *Al-Qur'an wa al-Isti'mar: Radd al-Syaykh al-Hajj Ahmad Sanusi (1888-1950) 'ala al-Isti'mar min Khilafat Tafsir Mal'ja' al-Talibin* (Rahmana, 2015). In this work, Rahmana states that some indications of anti-colonial ideas include the issue of Sanusi's exile, the prohibition of studying in the *pesantren* and conducting pilgrimage to Mecca, and the introspection over the defeat of the Muslims. However, Rahmana's discussion does not extensively address the idea of anti-colonialism, particularly in Islamic education. Similarly, Roifa et al. (2017), in an article entitled *Perkembangan tafsir di Indonesia pra kemerdekaan 1900-1945* (the development of interpretation in Indonesia (pre-independence 1900- 1945), stated that the *tafsir* of Tamsiyyat al-Muslimin has some indications of struggle against colonialism as exemplified in Sanusi's interpretation in the Qur'an (2: 85). However, the topic investigated by Roifa, does not mention the specific issue of Sanusi's anti-colonial ideas. This research shows the significant role of the Indonesian Muslim movement in resisting colonial power during the colonial period. In addition, this work promotes the importance of past thoughts as an intellectual legacy that can be used as a reference to answer current and future problems.

Rahmana in *Polemik keagamaan dalam tafsir Malja al-Thalibin*, meaning *religious polemic in tafsir Malja al-Thalibin* (2017), discusses Sanusi's critique of the reformists related to some *khilafiyah* (disputed) issues such as *tawassul* (a method in religious prayer that refers to the pious man), reading surah *al-Fatihah* behind the *imam*, *dhikr* (a ritual performed at the end of worship) after prayer, usury, and some foods that are forbidden in Islam. Rahmana used critical discourse analysis to approach his study, and he argues that Sanusi's responses to the issues of religious polemic demonstrate the influence of the ideology of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah (Sunni) vis-a-vis reformist criticism. His position was never separated from the line of Sunni tradition, which tends to be more flexible in understanding the local traditions in the Indonesian Archipelago.

The works of Nur Wachid Hidayatur Rofi (2019) entitled: *Nilai-nilai budaya Sunda dalam kitab tafsir Malja'u al-Talibin fi tafsiri kalam rabb al-'alamin* (*Sundanese cultural values in the interpretation of Malja'u al-Talibin fi tafsiri kalam rabb al 'Alamin*), discuss three issues. First, the interpretive method used by Sanusi was the *ijmali* (general) method, in the form of *bi al-ma'thur* (tradition-based interpretation) interpretation. Additionally, the

cultural values contained in the Sundanese interpretation work included religious and theological values as a reflection of the beliefs of the ancient Sundanese people, who believed in the existence of one God and the condition of spirituality in harmony with Islam teachings. In addition, Allah is addressed as and referred to in two Sundanese terms, *Gusti* and *Pangeran*, which do not conflict with Islamic principles. Second, social values explain the norms of Sundanese social life as reflected in the philosophy of *silas* (*silih honing, silih asih, silih asuh*). Third, the value of noble personality, the character of the Sundanese people towards the habits or traditions applied in the surrounding environment.

## B. Research Method

The objective of this research is to explore Sanusi's anti-colonial criticism by examining his interpretation through the two tafsir books entitled *Malja' al T{a>libin fi> tafsi>ri kala>mi robb al 'a>lamin* (in Sundanese) and *Tamsiyat al muslimi>n fi> tafsi>ri kala>mi robb al 'a>lami>n* (in Indonesian Bahasa) as mentioned previously. This study focuses on Sanusi's Qur'anic interpretation as a medium of criticism in resisting colonial power and has explored the following research questions: 1. What are Sanusi's criticisms in his two tafsir books? 2. How are Sanusi's Qur'anic interpretations influenced by the socio-political realities of the colonial period in Indonesia? This study employs hermeneutical approaches to examine these questions to understand Sanusi's two *tafsir* books.

## C. Findings Research

### Intellectual Map

Ahmad Sanusi was an 'Alim (Islamic scholar) of a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) who contributed to Indonesian independence through many forms of struggle, such as through an organization called *al Ittihad al Islamiyyah* (Islamic unity) and the *Pesantren Gunung Puyuh* by introducing his ideas through numerous writings both in Sundanese and Indonesian Bahasa. Bruinessen (1990) noted Sanusi as one of three original Sundanese writers who were also involved in debates on religious affairs with reformists and his fellow Pakauman *ulama* (Darmawan 2009). Born in the Cantayan Village, *Onderdistrik* (subdistrict) Cikembar, Cibadak District, *Afdeeling* (section) Sukabumi on 12 Muharram 1306 Hijri (Falah, 2009) or 18 September 1888, Sanusi was the third of eight children from Abdurrahim and Epok, his father's first wife. In his childhood, he was raised in a religious environment and received religious education from his parents, who founded *Pesantren Cantayan*.

When Sanusi was sixteen and a half years old, he not only obtained religious education from his parents but also several *ajeungan* (the leader of *pesantren* in the West Java area and is a call for an expert in Islamic teaching) around Sukabumi, namely Cisaat, Cijambe, Sukaraja, Gentur, and Majalengka. Besides this, to deepen his Islamic knowledge, Sanusi also studied several *pesantren* outside Sukabumi, namely *Pesantren Gudang* (Tasikmalaya), Garut, and Cianjur (Sipahoetar, 1946). During his study years, Sanusi spent over four years in a *pesantren* outside Sukabumi. In 1909, he returned to Sukabumi to attend the *Pesantren Babakan Slaawi*. While studying at the *pesantren*, he

met with Siti Juwariyah, the daughter of Affandi (leader of *Pesantren* Babakan Slaawi) from Kebon Pedes, Baros District, Sukabumi. He married Siti Juwariyah in 1910, and a few months later, Sanusi and his new wife went to Mecca to perform the *hajj* (Iskandar, 1993; Sipahoetar, 1946), which deepened his Islamic knowledge.

In Mecca, he then learned from several local scholars and scholars from abroad, some of whom were from the Shafi'i school. Sanusi learned from a variety of sources of modern Muslim reformist thought. Some teachers were Muhammad Junaedi, Mukhtar, Abdullah Jamawi, and a mufti from the Shafi'i school called Shaykh Saleh Bafadil (Iskandar, 1993). During his stay in Mecca, such as Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha, they influenced his thinking (Matin, 2009). Rohmana (2015) revealed that, during his study in Mecca, his ideas of nationalism started taking shape, proven by his defense of Sarekat Islam (SI or Islamic Union), which was slandered for not fighting in the interests of Islam. To respond, Sanusi wrote a defense manuscript entitled *Nahratud'dhargam*. Upon returning from Mecca, he began to get involved in the conflict with traditionalists and reformists, particularly about any religious practices. Sanusi also began criticizing the Dutch colonial government in Indonesia for any anti-social policies that occurred in *zakat* (alms) distribution. The powerful government saw Sanusi as a barrier and thus sought ways to exile him from his place and people. Eventually, he was accused of many crimes, such as his involvement in *Afdeeling B* in 1919, his resistance to Menes Banten Indonesia in 1926, and the destruction of the telephone network in Sukabumi in 1927. All of this resulted in his continuous monitoring by the colonists. He was arrested in Cianjur and Sukabumi in 1927. In November 1928, Sanusi was exiled to Tanah Tinggi, Senen, Batavia Centrum, without being charged for any offense and further detained in Sukabumi from 1934 to 1942 (Falah, 2009). The exile was due to the government's concern about Sanusi's anti-colonial ideas that they considered troublesome for society, not because of his involvement in any religious movement or rebellion—this period of detention shaped Sanusi's character and personality, strengthening his anticolonial ideas, which were expressed through his writing and later published into books distributed to the public for broader circulation.

Sanusi was a prolific writer and wrote extensively about theology, Sufism, Islamic jurisprudence, and *tafsir* (Nurtawab, 2009). According to the *Puslitbang Lektur* (Development and Research Centre of the Department of National Religious Affairs in Jakarta, Sanusi left behind four hundred and eighty (480) pieces of work. However, many of these are out of circulation and difficult to locate (Matin 2009). Matin (2009) stated that only one hundred and twenty-two (122) pieces of Sanusi's writings can be found today, mainly because the publication of the works was prohibited by the Dutch, who considered his writings a threat to the colonial authority. Those who owned Sanusi's work hid it for fear of persecution by the Dutch administrators (Matin, 2009). Saleh (2018) said that Sanusi's works were hard to find and revealed that he has only two hundred and twenty (220) out of four hundred and eighty (480) pieces in his possession, as many of them were taken to the Netherlands.

### **Tafsir *Malja' al T{a>libin* and *Tamsiyat al muslimi*>: History of Writing and Its Content**

One of Sanusi's most important works is Tafsir, which contains his anti-colonial

messages that reflect his response to the socio-political condition. It is important because these ideas tell us about the role of Islam in shaping Indonesian anti-colonialism for Indonesian nationalism.

Among Sanusi's books of *tafsir*, this study focuses on two Sanusi's *tafsir* books called *Malja' al Talibin fi tafsiri kala mi robb al 'alamin* (in Sundanese) and *Tamsiyat al muslimi>n fi tafsiri kala mi robb al 'alami>n* (in Indonesian Bahasa), which were both written while he was in exile. *Tafsir Malja' al-Talibin* contains anti-colonial criticism written in Sundanese script, circling between 1931 and 1932 in Priangan (Rohmana, 2015). Through this *tafsir*, Sanusi expressed his anger towards other traditional Islamic scholars who supported the colonial government for expelling him from his homeland. The importance of this *tafsir* lies not only in his strong criticism against colonialism but also in his interpretation of the Qur'anic verses in his mother tongue, Sundanese, which facilitated the understanding of readers in regions such as Bandung, Tasik, Malaya, Garut, Sukabumi, and Purwakarta.

The second is *Tamsiyat al muslimi>n fi tafsiri kala mi robb al 'alami>n* (in Indonesian Bahasa), written in October 1934, contains messages about the importance of justice, self-esteem, freedom, brotherhood, and equality among the *ummah* (community). Falah (2009) said that Sanusi was an exegete who explored verses mainly related to these concepts. According to Matin (2009), this *tafsir* was very famous in Indonesia, especially in Java, Madura, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Menado, Ambon, Flores, Bangka, Sumbawa, as well as in Johor and Singapore. The anti-colonial theme in Tafsir's messages demonstrated Sanusi's deep understanding of his time's social and political issues. Therefore, it can be said that he attempted to link the teachings of the Holy Qur'an with the political events and situations occurring during the colonial era.

These two *tafsir* books demonstrate Sanusi's mature thoughts when reflecting on his life experiences, particularly his struggle against colonialism. In exile, he attempted to find the root cause of the problems faced by the nation, including the backwardness of society, social inequality, the foreign-controlled natural wealth of Indonesia, and the oppression and injustice of the Dutch colonial and indigenous bureaucrats alike. The oppression experienced by the nation, for instance, was illustrated in a sentence on the cover of *tafsir Tamsiyat al Muslimi>n as a tanbihat (warning)*, stating, "We are not independent people at this time."

Of all Sanusi's works, these two *tafsir* books were more popular in the community. Also, they caused controversy, as the Dutch government viewed them as propaganda to embed an anti-colonial feeling among the community and as a threat due to many embedded messages calling for unity and confidence to become an independent nation. On this, Iskandar (2001) noted: "The *fatwas* that raise awareness of the self-esteem of the community, as human beings equal before Allah."

### Contextualization of Tafsir

This section discusses Sanusi's criticism in his two *tafsir* books. In interpreting the verses, Sanusi begins with literal meaning, followed by his commentary as a medium of criticism against the colonizer. The criticism against the Dutch colonial government and the bureaucrats mainly refers to his own experience of injustices, those thrust upon him by the colonial government, namely his expulsion and the prohibition of carrying out religious

obligation, which included spiritual teachings in the *pesantren* and performing pilgrimage to Mecca. His criticism of his isolation is written in chapter al-An'am, verse 52.

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُمْ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

And do not drive away those who invoke their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His pleasure all the time. You are not accountable for them, just as they are not responsible for you. You will become among the wrong-doers if you still drive them away (Quran.com).

Sanusi interprets:

Sundanese ( <i>Malja' al T{a&gt;libi&gt;n</i> )	English
<i>Lantaran eta ngusir ka batur, atawa wungkul samata2 ngahinakeun jeung mikabenci ka eta jalma padahal sakabeh jalma anu iman anu Islam éta misti kudu diaku jeung kudu diagungkeun jeung kudu dihormat, jadi lamun aya jalma anu sok ngusir ka jalma Islam iman eta samata2 iblis setan, komo lamun eta jalma teh make aya ngaran guru, eta lain guru Islam, tatapi guru iblis sahakekatna Dajjal Ajajil...Jadi kacida belegugna lamun jalma dipaparin kabeungharan dipaparin kamulyaan di dunya make tabeat gumede pelegig dolim kanu hina kanu pakir (Sanusi, 1931; 159).</i>	Because you drive people away from their homes or just want to humiliate or hate others even though all those are professing Mu'min(believers), and Muslims must be glorified. So, if there are Muslims who like to drive away another Muslim brother, they are devils. Moreover, they claim to be an Islamic teacher, they are not an Islamic teacher, but the devil teacher and they are Dajjal... how impertinent if there are humans who are given wealth and glory in the world behaving arrogantly and doing evil deeds to the poor and the weak.

At the beginning of the sentence, as stated by Sanusi, there are three keywords: expelling, insulting, and hating. These three acts, Sanusi said, should not be done by a believer to other fellow believers; believers should respect and glorify one another. The following sentence illustrates Sanusi's justification by saying that those who expel others are akin to the devil even if they are respected people in religion, for example, the *ulama*. Sanusi continues that they are teachers of the devils, and a Muslim who is given power and glory should not be arrogant to the poor. Sanusi emphasizes that the *ulama* who support the government aim to reach the glory of worldly life through the oppression of their people. Though it is not explicitly stated who was expelled in this sentence, within this context, it can be concluded that the expulsion was that of the Dutch colonial government with the support of the Pakauman *ulama*.

Sanusi's interpretation above shows his criticism and resistance against the religious bureaucrats who act unjustly towards Sanusi by isolating him from his community. The resistance is demonstrated in this message using harsh words for the bureaucrats, such as *iblis setan* or Satan, symbolizing evil.

On the issue of Islamic education, Sanusi criticizes the ordonnance policy, restriction of learning in *pesantren*, and going to Mecca for pilgrimage that the Dutch colonial

government issued in 1905 AD. It is written in some parts of his interpretation in his *tafsir*. For example, in chapter al-Baqarah, verse 114.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

*Who is crueller than the one who prevents the mosques of Allah from His name being recited therein and strives for their destruction? It was not for such men to enter them except in awe. There is disgrace in this world, and for them, there is a mighty punishment in the other world. (Qur'an. com)*

The historical background of this verse speaks to the prohibition (by the Quraysh) of the Prophet Muhammad from praying near the Kaaba in the Masjidil Haram. Narrated by Ibn Abi Hatim, sourced from Sa'īd or Ikrimah, which came from Ibn 'Abbas. Another narration claims that it was polytheists who prevented the Prophet Muhammad and his companions from coming to Mecca to perform *Umrah* on the day of *Hudaibiyah* in 628 AD.

Regarding the above verse, Sanusi interprets that *z}ulm* (wrongdoing) refers to those trying to prevent others from going to mosques or teaching religion and that they will be humiliated and *su>'ul kha>timah* (end in a bad life), and on the day of retribution they will go to hell. Sanusi interprets:

Sundanese ( <i>Malja' al T{a&gt;libi&gt;n</i> )	English
<i>Jeung heunteu aya jalma anu leuwih dzolim leuwih goreng lebih dosa eta jalma tibatan jalma anu nyeugat ngahalang haling eta jalma kana masjid na Allah kana disebut di baca dina eta masjid jeuneungan Allah atawa ngahalangan kana pangajaran pangajaran ilmu na Allah, anging kudu pada sieun kabeh ku sabab di ancam ku gusti Allah eta sakabeh jalma anu sok ngaharu ganggu nga haling haling kana masjidna Allah atawa kana jalan jalan agama Allah di dunya di persen kahinaan anu luar biasa sanajan dina akhir umurna jeung di ancam ku gusti Allah di akhirat buat disiksa kalawan siksa naraka anu pohara gedena (Sanusi, 1931; 95).</i>	And there is none more <i>z}a&gt;lim</i> , worse, and sinner compared to someone preventing people from going to Allah's mosque where the name of Allah is called and read or hindering the learning of Allah's knowledge. Then, you all shall fear because Allah threatens those who are disturbing and obstructing them from going to Allah's mosque or the ways of Allah. In the world, they will be given tremendous humiliation at the end of their life, and in the hereafter, they will be tortured with the terrible pain of hell.

A similar point is found in the interpretation of the *Tamsiyyat al Muslimi>n*:

Indonesian ( <i>Tamsiyyat al Muslimi&gt;n</i> )	English
<i>Dan siapakah orang jang lebih dzolim dan lebih koefoer dan lebih djahat dari pada orang-orang jang menghalang-halangi dan merintangikan segala masjid Allah dan segala tempat ibadah kepada Allah dan segala tempat beladjar akan</i>	And who is the more <i>z}ulm</i> and more <i>kufir</i> and more evil than the people who obstruct all mosques of Allah and all places of worship to Allah and all places of study of Allah's knowledge called in

<p><i>ilmoe Allah akan diseboet didalamnja nama Allah ataoe dikerdjakan di dalamnja ibadah kepada Allah atau diadjarkan didalamnja ilmoe Allah yaitoe ilmoe agama Islam Maka manoesia jang dianggap paling dzolim dan jang paling djahat oleh Allah itoe sekalian orang yang menghalang-halangi dan merintangi akan agama Allah (Sanusi, 1934; 329).</i></p>	<p>the name of Allah or worship to Allah or taught in it the knowledge of Allah, namely the science of Islam. Then the people who are considered as the most <i>z}ulm</i> and the most evil by Allah are all people obstructing the religion of Allah.</p>
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These two messages above consist of two essential points, including the most *z}a>lim* who obstruct people going to the mosque, and the second point is that the *z}a>lim* will be threatened and go to hell. The word *z}a>lim* or wrongdoers in this context refers to the colonial authority, including the Dutch colonial government, indigenous bureaucrats, and ulama who support the colonial government's policies. Sanusi calls the *ulama* who support the colonial government Satan, hypocrites, and tyrannical (Sanusi, 1931; 159). Sanusi (1931) emphasizes the resistance against colonization as an obligation for every Muslim, and he condemns the people who do not involve themselves in the struggle, even if they are otherwise devout worshippers or claim themselves as *ulama*; they do not deserve to be called Muslims, and they should be punished together with those who carried out any wrongdoing.

From the text, we see that the word mosque in his interpretation not only gives the literal meaning of the physical mosque itself but also contextualizes the word mosque as a place to learn the knowledge of Islam and the way of Allah, indicating that it could apply to all rules of religion. In verse, Sanusi contextualized the prevention of going to the mosque as his criticism of the government on some issues regarding the ordinance policy that disadvantages Islamic education, especially learning in the *pesantren* and performing pilgrimage or *hajj* to Mecca. In a textual context, the meaning of preventing people from going to the mosque does not only refer to the mosque in the literal sense but also relates to the disturbance toward people who learn the knowledge of Allah and from the path of Allah. Regarding this, Sanusi equates those who prevent others from doing good with Satan, as he affirms his explanation in chapter Qur'an (7:16), quoting the Prophet:

Sundanese ( <i>Malja' al T{a&gt;libi&gt;n</i> )	English
<p><i>Dawuhanana: 'Saeunya-eunyana setan eta geus diuk meugatan ka jalma jalma dina sakabéh jalan kahadean. Mimiti meugatanana dina jalan Islam nyaeta ceuk setan ulah asup Islam maneh, karana lamun maneh asup Islam jadi maneh ninggalkeun agama karuhun-karuhun maneh. Lamun eta jalma meunang hidayah tangtu nyulayaan kana pameugatanana setan sarta teurus manehanana asup islam. Jeung eta setan meugatan deui ka jalma jalma dina jalan hijrah, pokna ulah hijrah maneh (nyaeta ulah</i></p>	<p>Satan preventing a human being from doing good starts with the path of Islam, the devil says, "do not convert to Islam, because if you convert to Islam, you will leave the religion of your ancestors" and if that person receives guidance, then he will ignore the invitation of Satan and will convert to Islam. Satan prevents people from migrating, Satan says you don't migrate (don't go from your own country) like to Mecca or Islamic boarding schools because if you leave, it will be miserable, and if that person gets guidance,</p>

<p><i>incah ti leumbur sorangan) saperti ka Mekah atawa ka pasantrén, karana ari incah ti lembur sorangan eta kacida sok balangsakna, lamun eta jalma meunang hidayah tangtu nyulayaan kana kareupna eta setan sarta teurus hijrah atawa masantren atawa ka Mekah...” (Sanusi, 1931; 268).</i></p>	<p>then they will not obey the devil and will migrate to <i>pesantren</i> or Mecca...</p>
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According to Sanusi (1931), this Hadith about Satan will lead people astray. Sanusi criticizes the government policy limiting the Muslim community from pilgrimage and learning in the *pesantren*. The government considered this policy that the *pesantren* during the colonial period was where kai embedded a sense of anti-colonial spirit in their students.

The Dutch colonial politics towards Islam in Indonesia included three central policies, which, according to Effendi (2012), could be formulated as follows: First, dividing Islamic forces in Indonesia through "*de vide et empera*" politics. Second, eradicate the influence of Islam by advancing Western culture through education and teaching. Third, firmly suppress the emergence of Islamic political doctrines and movements, especially those influenced by the ideas of Pan Islamism.

Dutch East Indies government policy towards Islamic education is essentially oppressive because of the fear that it will raise militancy among Muslim students, which will threaten their colonial power. An adverse treatment from the Dutch colonial government marginalized Islamic education, which was considered backward and orthodox. Apart from that, the content of education is oriented towards religious rituals and pays less attention to science and technology (Tilaar, 2000). This policy triggers *madrasas* and *pesantren* to isolate themselves from the outside world. Regarding this situation, Sanusi encourages all Muslims to resist the policy and return to the Islamic tradition of knowledge. According to him, to achieve Indonesian independence, people should prepare various powers based on their abilities to build such an ideal country. This is shown in Sanusi's interpretation of the Qur'an (8;60), which says:

*Prepare against them whatever force you can, and the trained horses whereby you frighten Allah's enemy and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know. Allah knows them. Whatever you spend in Allah's way will be paid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged (Qur'an. com).*

In this verse, Sanusi (1937) explains that Muslims must strive with all their ability to obtain glory in the world so that they will not be humiliated by the enemies of Allah and by people who intend to destroy them, and whatever they spend in the way of Allah will be returned to them in manifold increase and (they) will be rewarded. In this regard, he emphasizes the power of science. This is referred to in his interpretation of the Qur'an (3;110), which says:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ  
 أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِمَّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

*You are the best 'Ummah ever raised for humanity. You bid the Fair and forbid*

*the Unfair, and you believe in Allah. If the people of the Book had considered, it would have been better for them. There are believers among them, while most are sinners (Qur'an. com).*

Sanusi interprets:

Indonesian ( <i>Tamsiyat al Muslimin</i> )	English
<p><i>Adapoen kebaikan doenia maka segala perkara jang berfaedah dan jang manfaat bagai machloek Allah jang tiada terlarang oleh sjara' itu diseboetkan dengan ini ayat. maka wadjib atas oemmat Islam memperhatikannja mengetahoeinja dan mengoesahakannja seperti ilmoe Shoena'ah (ilmu pekerdjaan) dari moelai membikin koekoesan sampai membikin geudong-geudong2 goedang2 fabrik2 dan moelai membikin djaroem sampai membikin kapal, kereta api, kapal oedara, ilmoe Choja'ah, Nassajah (tenoenan) dari moelai kain sapoetangan sampai segala matjam kain, ilmoe hojatoh (ilmoe mendjait) membikin matjam benang ilmu zaro'ah (segala pertanian) ...Dan dan lain-lainnya daripada ilmoe yang manfa'at dan berfaedah bagai hamba Allah maka semoeanja itoe diperintahkan dan dan diwadjibkan atas oemmat Islam mempeladjarinja dan mengoesahakannja. maka apabila oemmat Islam telah mempunyai ilmoe2 yang terseboet itoe maka disitoelah oemmat Islam mendjadi Khoiru Ummah (sebaik-baiknja oemmat) di doenia, dan oemmat Islam djaman sekarang itoe memang sunji daripada ilmoe2 itu maka tentu oemmat Islam bukan "Khoiru Ummatin" akan tetapi "sjarro ummatin" tegasnya sedjelek-djelek nja oemmat, sehina hinanja oemmat. dan mereka itu djauh daripada undang-undangnja dan daripada wetnja, jalah dari Qur'an (Sanusi, 1937; 1083).</i></p>	<p>The goodness of the world is all things that have benefits for Allah's creatures that do not violate the <i>Syara'</i> contained in this verse. So, it is obligatory for Muslims to pay attention, know and work on it, such as skills in making goods such as making steamer to making buildings, warehouses, factories and from making needles to making ships, trains, airships, weaving skills from making handkerchiefs to all kinds of things, cloth, sewing, making various kinds of threads, agricultural knowledge... and others from knowledge that is beneficial to the servant of Allah, then all of that is commanded and obligated for Muslims to study it and work on it. So, if Muslims have such good knowledge, then they will become <i>Khoiru Ummah</i> (the best nation) on earth, however, nowadays are indeed far from those knowledges, then they are not the best people but the backward society as they are far from the Qur'an.</p>

Here, Sanusi (1937) emphasizes giving others benefits and the importance of science as a medium to reach glory. He viewed science in Islam as not only related to worship but also to natural and social science. This is also strengthened in his interpretation

of the Qur'an (2:30), where he states that the meaning of science mentioned in the verse not only talks about religion but also includes life science, natural science, flora, rock science, and soil science.

Sanusi explained that Islam has taught Muslims to learn about the study of life. If the study were merely about the knowledge of worship, such as prayer, fasting, and *haji*, Muslims would never build the world, making life unbalanced and equal to the illustration of a human with one leg. Sanusi stated that Islam has made humans perfect creatures – much different from animals (Sanusi, 1937). Furthermore, he added that it is different from the beliefs of people before the arrival of Islam, in which they believed that religion and the progress of worldly life were two contrasting things. At the same time, according to Sanusi, Islam asks the opposite, as reflected in the prayer taught in Islam: "My Lord, increase me in knowledge." This principle undoubtedly recognizes the importance of achieving glory in life, considering that people's progress depends upon how much knowledge they acquire (Sanusi, 1935).

Quoting the Hadith of the Prophet: "Seek knowledge even if you have to go as far as China." Sanusi (1935; 399) viewed this Hadith as an evident command from Islam to its people to seek knowledge in the world's life. If Islam only teaches people to learn to worship alone, the Prophet will never deliver the Hadith, considering that the source of worship is from Medina and Mecca. Even Sanusi stated that sending students to study various world sciences in multiple countries is necessary. If people were asked to look in China in the past, now, according to Sanusi, they can go to countries in Europe, America, or Japan (Sanusi, 1937; 1088).

It is different from other *ulama's* view in Priangan, who, according to Sanusi, frequently misinterpreted world science by saying that this world belongs to kafir (infidels), and for this, there is no reason for Muslims to interfere with the issues relating to the world science. This is a sinful thought. Sanusi explained that Muslims understand natural phenomena, such as plants, soil, rocks, mountains, sea, and air, only the way they are, without any intention to see the meaning behind all these natural phenomena. In this case, Sanusi questioned whether recent Muslims are trying to observe nature, including its function and meaning. Sanusi admitted that Muslims seem not to have much power in science and stated that Muslims today are not much different from goats because they never listen to what is commanded by Allah and His Prophet.

Also, Sanusi argued that learning natural science is a worshipping complement to Allah. Allah has created mountains and nature and given them to Muslims as a motivation to think and increase their faith in the omnipotence of Allah. Sanusi criticized the condition of the Indonesians who are not concerned with world science, allowing this country to be colonized by other nations as found in his interpretation of the Qur'an (14: 32-34):

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا  
لَكُمْ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الْأَنْهَارَ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ الشَّمْسَ  
وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبِينَ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَآتَاكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِنْ تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَتَ  
اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَذَلُولٌ كَفَّارٌ

*Allah is the One who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the sky, then brought forth with sustenance for you from the produce, and subjugated for you the ships, so that they may sail in the sea with His command and subjugated for you the rivers. And He overpowered for you the sun and the moon, moving constantly, and dominated for you the day and the night, and He gave you whatever you asked for. If you (try to) count the bounties of Allah, you cannot count them all. Indeed, man is highly unjust and ungrateful (Qur'an. com).*

According to Sanusi, the above verse has six calls to Muslims. In explaining this verse, Sanusi uses a subtle satire by stating that the calls are for Muslims as stated in the Qur'an and interprets these as follows:

Indonesian ( <i>Tamsiyat al-Muslimin</i> )	English
<p><i>...kami disini loekiskan sedikit keterangan dari pada pendapatan kami itoe jang terlihat dengan doea mata kami bermoea tanaman dan segala boeah-boeahan jang ada di tangan oemmat Islam itu sangat sedikit kami kira tiada tidak ada 10% tjobalah periksa daripada beras ataoe onderneming ataoe segala keboen itu sebagian jang paling besar ataoe 90% adanja di tangan boekan oemmat Islam maka apalagi nomor jang kedoea jaitu segala kapal yang berdjalan di segala laoetan manakah kepoenjaan oemmat Islam dan jang ketiga yaitu segala soengai dan kali hampir keadaan soengai sedunia itu terpegang di tangan boekan oemmat Islam malahan nomor jang keempat jaitoe keadaan matahari dan boelan, maka oemmat Islam tiada lebih pengetahoeannja daripada matahari itoe jang menerangi di waktoe siang dan hangat dan boelan itu jang menerangi di waktoe malam dan adem ada ataoe kekeoatan kekal pada mah itoe beberapa reboe rahasia dan hikmah djikalaoe tiada seoempama demikian nistjaja Allah tiada didjadikan setengah dari pada tanda kebesaran Toehan dan nomor lima jaitoe siang dan malam oemmat Islam tiada lebih pendapatannja daripada siang itoe waktoe terang dan malam itu waktoe gelap waktoe tidoer</i></p>	<p>...we provide information to you all and we give an overview of our view where we see that the plants and all kinds of fruits in the hands of Muslims might be few – not more than ten percent, please check the rice supply or the companies or garden that ninety percent are in the hands of non-Muslims. Moreover, the second case is related to ships sailing in the oceans, (of) which one is owned by Muslims. The third case is about the rivers that almost all over the world are controlled by non-Muslims; even for the sun and the moon, there is no knowledge at all about the sun shining in the daytime and the bright moon at night. The lesson or the benefit of this is that it can be a strength and a way to glory, but it is far for Muslims to achieve it. In fact, the sun, and the moon, in addition to being able to shine, have thousands of secrets and wisdoms; therefore, they become a sign of the greatness of God. The fifth problem is the problem of daylight and night in which the knowledge of Muslims is only limited to that the day is light and the night is dark or is for bedtime. The knowledge is limited. There are many secrets and wisdoms from the air, and this has been taken by non-Muslims. The case number six is Allah's promise given to Muslims if they ask Him, but where is the</p>

<p><i>habislah sebegitoe pengetahoeannja padahal hikmat hikmat nja daripada hawanja dan oedaranja itu boekan sedikit dan kecil faedahnja dan kemanfaatannja seperti telah diambil oleh oemmat oemmat yang boekan Islam dan nomor enam jaitoe perdjandjian Toehan boeat berikan kepada oemmat Islam akan permintaan oemmat Islam tetapi Bagaimanakah boektinja oemmat Islam boekan serendah-rendahnja oemmat dan sehina hinanja dan melarat melarat nja dan selemah lemahnja dan sebodoh-bodohnja (Sanusi, 1935; 401).</i></p>	<p>proof that Muslims are not lowly, despicable, destitute, weak and stupid? Is this all the request of the Muslim community? This is something impossible for someone to ask to be despicable, lowly, impoverished, and stupid.</p>
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Sanusi attempted to explain these facts to warn about the weaknesses of Muslims in exploring knowledge; therefore, those who hold the power are non-Muslims. The glory of this nation can be achieved by increasing knowledge.

From the explanation above, Sanusi understood the retardation of Indonesian Muslims concerning the weakness of the Indonesian nation, especially in science. Sanusi stated that science is an important factor in fighting colonialism. This scientific-teaching problem even became an essential point in Sanusi's independence movement.

### Social Facts Forming Interpretation

To understand Sanusi's text, it is crucial to reveal the historical background as an essential part of hermeneutical reading. This section describes the social and historical facts that Sanusi's interpretation produced. The historical fact is constructed by society and has also been related to other social facts (Latief 2018).

During the Indonesian revolution, the *pesantren* was one of the guerrilla centers in a war against the Netherlands to take over independence (Boland, 1985). *Kyai* established a *pesantren* not only to strengthen religious knowledge but also to fight against the inhumanity of the colonizers. Furthermore, the *pesantren* was a place to spread the idea of anticolonial sense among its members. It was because of this that the Dutch colonialists strictly monitored the *pesantren*. In this regard, Sanusi criticizes the unfair policy issued by the colonial government of controlling teachers who want to teach their students.

In the colonial period, to control the *kyais*'s activities, the Dutch colonial government issued a rule called Guru Ordonantie (Teacher Act), which gave the *kyais* the responsibility of obtaining a teaching license. The *kyai* was forced to explain the contents of the lessons they intended to teach their students and followers, and they had to align with the government rule. Teaching activities of the *kyai* were always be supervised by the Dutch colonial government by placing secret police in classrooms. The suspicion of the colonial government of the *pesantren* was just because there was an indication that the anti-Dutch movement was underway. Regarding this issue, NU (Nahdlatul Ulama or *ulama* awakening) asked that the Dutch revoke the Teacher Ordinance policy, which is considered discriminatory toward *madrasahs* and *pesantrens*.

The Dutch colonial policy on Islamic education was motivated by a sense of worry seeing the Muslim's resistance against their authority, primarily as this movement was led by Islamic figures who were very influential in society, such as *kyai* and *ulama*. The following will explain Dutch colonial policies toward Islamic education that discriminated against Muslims in Indonesia (Sumanti, 2018).

1. Teacher Ordinance 1, issued on 2 November 1905, this ordinance applies to Java-Madura, except Yogya and Solo. Its contents include:
  - a. An Islamic teacher is only permitted to teach if he has obtained permission from the Regent. This permission can only be given if the religious teacher has suitable qualifications and the lessons do not conflict with security and public order.
  - b. The religious teacher must complete the list of students and must explain the lesson he is delivering.
  - c. The Regent and authorized agencies may examine the list at any time.
  - d. A teaching permit can be revoked if it turns out that the religious teacher has repeatedly violated the regulations or is deemed to have acted up (Suminto, 1985).

This ordinance suppressed and hampered the progress of Islamic education, which at that time was being carried out independently by the Muslim community. The impact on Islamic education is as follows:

- a. The number of religious teachers is becoming small due to the difficulty of obtaining teaching permits from the government.
  - b. It isn't easy to fill out the report list for the authorities because almost all teachers only understand Arabic, while the forms given are in Dutch and use Latin letters. Those who experience the most difficulties are parents because they do not have good administration regarding lists of students, teachers, and subjects, so it isn't easy to fill out reports (Noer, 1994). Of course, this could cause the government to close these educational institutions.
  - c. The implementation of teaching needs to be improved. Apart from the few teachers, the lessons are small because everything is under government supervision.
2. Teacher Ordinance II has been applied since June 1, 1952. This time, the policy is softer than the first, and its contents include:
    - a. Every religious teacher must show proof of receipt of notification
    - b. He must fill in the student list and lesson list, which authorized officials can check at any time.
    - c. Supervision is deemed necessary to maintain public order.
    - d. Proof of eligibility can be revoked if the teacher actively encourages students to earn money.
    - e. Religious teachers can be punished with a maximum of 8 days in prison or a maximum fine of F25 if they teach without a report receipt letter, the report needs to be corrected, or they are negligent in filling out the registration.
    - f. They can be punished with a maximum of one month in prison or a maximum fine of F200 if the teachers are still teaching after having their rights revoked.

These two ordinances were intended as a controlling medium for the Dutch colonial government to supervise the activities of Islamic religious teachers because it was from them that several upheavals against the colonialists emerged.

3. The Illegal Schools Ordinance, which applied in October 1923, contains:
  - a. Schools that the government needs to fully fund are permitted to operate.
  - b. Only graduates of government schools or subsidized private schools are entitled to teach.

Conceptually, this ordinance does not apply to Islamic educational institutions. Still, in practice, it is Islamic schools that bear the consequences because Islamic education, which is managed by indigenous without any government interference in its financing, is threatened with closure. In 1932 AD, a regulation was issued that the government had the authority to eradicate and close madrasas and schools that did not have permits or provide lessons that the Dutch government did not like (Hasbullah, 1995).

The PERMI (Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia) congress in West Sumatra opposes and declares that this ordinance violates Islamic and general principles and also reduces the freedom of the Indonesian people to regulate and develop their education. The ordinance was considered an attempt to eradicate Islamic schools and prevent their alums from continuing their education to a higher level because their certificate was not acknowledged. This ordinance benefits Christians, and the facts prove that this policy brings fresh air for advancing Christian education in Indonesia.

Thus, these policies ultimately greatly influenced the development of Islamic education, also erasing the critical role of the Muslim community in Indonesia because, in several cases, religious teachers were often blamed in every movement against Christianization for reasons of order and security. Spiritual teachers were eliminated from the world of education, so Christian missionaries took over the role (Maksum, 1999).

However, the Dutch colonial policy towards Islamic education had started before the Teacher Ordinance I of 1905. This was related to Dutch policy towards Islam and education in general, so even though the policy was not labeled as a policy towards Islamic education, in the end, it significantly impacted Islamic education at that time. For example, in 1855, the government issued the policy of being religiously neutral; however, in fact, the government prioritizes the church to have a large donation from the government, compared to the Islamic religion, including the field of education, are fully covered by the Muslim community itself (Steenbrink, 1986). This causes the condition of Islamic education in general to lag far behind the education provided by Zending (Steenbrink, 1986).

In the nineteenth century, the majority of Sukabumi's population was Muslim. Hence, its social and cultural life was underpinned by Islamic values. The situation was strengthened by the developing religious life in Java since the late nineteenth century (Kartodirdjo, 1984). In Sukabumi, the development of spiritual life was marked by the increasing number of people who went to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage, the number of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) increased, and the construction of mosques also rapidly increased (Steenbrink, 1984; Sulasman, 2007). The Dutch East Indies Government was worried that the growth of Islamic values among Sukabumi people would become a

religious movement. Due to this, the colonial government strictly supervised the behavior of the ulama or kya, who strongly influenced the people. In addition, the Dutch also attempted to convert the local inhabitants to Christianity. The effort was particularly accelerated in the mid-nineteenth Century by S. van Aendenburg from *Rotterdamsche Zendingsvereniging* (Rotterdam Missionary Association).

By the end of the nineteenth century, they succeeded in establishing the first Christian village in Sukabumi, which is in the Pangharepan area (Falah, 2009). To support the spread of Christianity, they built schools and hospitals. Therefore, it is not surprising that until 1921 in Sukabumi, as reported by L. de Steurs on January 2nd, 1921, two schools were established: zending school (missionary school) and a private school called Hollandsch- Chineescheschool Zending Venture (Falah, 2009). To counter the colonial attempts to convert locals to Christianity, the *kyais* in Sukabumi tried to counter Christianisation by pushing their students to establish the *pesantren* in their homes after finishing their studies. The *pesantren* spread to almost every region in Sukabumi, such as in Cantayan, Genteng, Gunung Puyuh, Cipoho, Babakan Cicurug, Sukamantri, Cibalagung, and Cipanengah. They were known as a center of *pesantren* education in Sukabumi (Sulasman, 2007).

The government issued a policy prohibiting visiting Mecca for pilgrimage. When the people returned from Mecca, their patriotism increased due to their closer relationship with Muslims worldwide (Laffan, 2003). The Dutch colonial government was afraid of Muslims who had a relationship with the international community, especially those who performed pilgrimage and studied religion there. It is not surprising that the Dutch colonial government at that time acted severely to limit the movement of Muslims in Indonesia, especially in the case of the pilgrimage to Mecca, which was considered the culprit causing agitation and rebellion in Indonesia (Benda, 1980).

Supervision of the *Hajj* was stricter in 1859. The government intended to minimize the entry and exit of people on the *Hajj*, namely by making it difficult for them to perform the *Hajj*, because it was from them that reform ideas were usually introduced to the broader community, a person who is going on the *Hajj* must first test his knowledge. People who were ready to leave and gathered in hundreds at the port were searched and inspected for the money they were taking with them because they would not be stranded in Mecca. Prospective pilgrims who intend to reside there must also buy return tickets. There are also regulations on *Hajj* certificates; those who are certified are the ones who are fit to wear *Hajj* clothes to prevent fake *Hajj*. This way, the number of people wearing turbans and caps is reduced because they assume that people with accessories like this will increase their influence (Algadri, 1983). Those who want to make the *Hajj* are made difficult in various ways, so the number of clerics traveling from the Middle East increases slightly.

With this burdensome policy, Islamic education was also affected because both material and religious teachers at that time were very dependent on the presence of *Hajj*. Most of the books he used were from Egypt or Mecca, so it took a lot of work for Islamic education to advance with this policy. It is not surprising that the idea of reform promoted by Pan-Islamism was late in spreading in this country.

In the context of the Sukabumi community, Falah (2009) stated that Islamic values influenced their socio-cultural life. This situation was then reinforced by the revival of the

religious life movement, which occurred in the Java Islands at the end of the nineteenth century (Kartodirdjo, 1984). In Sukabumi, the revival of spiritual life could be characterized by the increasing number of people going to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage, the rising number of Islamic boarding schools, and the rapid development of mosques (Sulasman, 2007). However, the Dutch East Indies government had attempted to Christianise the indigenous population from the mid-nineteenth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, Christianisation succeeded in establishing the first Christian village in Sukabumi, located in the Pangharepan area (Noer, 1991).

To support the spread of Christianity, both missionaries and sending (Catholic Church missionary) groups used schools and hospitals as a medium for the spread of Christianity. Such a situation then encouraged the *ulama* to turn on Islamic activities increasingly. They then encouraged their students who had finished studying at the *pesantren* to establish a new one in many other regions. Although *pesantren* education could be found in almost every area in Sukabumi, such as Cantayan, Genteng, Gunung Puyuh, Cipoho, Babakan Cicurug, Sukamantri, Cibalagung, and Cipanengah, they were seen as the basis of *pesantren* education (Sulasman, 2007). On the other hand, the Dutch government attempted to prevent the Islamic values practiced by the Sukabumi people from developing into a religious movement. The colonial government closely monitored the behavior of the *kai*, who had a powerful influence on society. This showed that the authorities were worried about the spread of hatred and resistance from the community. So, the *ulama* and *pesantren* were considered obstacles to extending colonial power in Indonesia.

#### D. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Qur'an, as the guidance of Muslims, can become a medium of social criticism. In this research, Sanusi interprets the meaning of the Quranic verse to criticize the Dutch colonial policies that suppressed Muslim life in Islamic education. Sanusi's interpretation mentioned in the verses discussed above would find that an unjust act done by the colonizer becomes Sanusi's attention. For instance, in the understanding of Q.S. al-An'am verse 52, This verse textually speaks of the expelling of unbelievers to the Prophet Muhammad's companions; Sanusi contextualizes it with his personal experience of his isolation by the Dutch colonial government, bureaucrats, and *ulama* who supported this policy. In addition, Sanusi's criticism of the Dutch colonial policy on the Teacher Ordinance Act and the restriction of learning in *pesantren* and conducting hajj is shown when he interprets chapter al-Baqarah verse 114 and encourages people to pay more attention to education as the power to obtain Indonesian independence.

Sanusi's interpretation discussed in this research demonstrates that tafsir is the medium of social criticism. Sanusi used his commentary to criticize a particular socio-political condition and embed a sense of nationalism among the people during his lifetime. In doing so, he tries to contextualize the Quran's verses to his personal horizon. Here, he bridges the gap between Quranic texts and social realities. Furthermore, this research confirms that every text produced is inseparable from the author's horizon. In other words,

the author's subjectivity is always included in a text created, as shown in Sanusi's two tafsir works discussed.

While acknowledging the limitations of this research to two books of *tafsir* and Sanusi's criticism of the Dutch colonial policy related to Islamic education, this study recommends further research on Sanusi's works concerning anti-colonialism. To honor Sanusi's contributions to Islamic scholarship and Indonesian independence, other works, such as Raudhat al-'Irfa>n, should be examined closely to explore themes that may emerge from those texts. A comparison of Sanusi's criticism and ideas on anti-colonialism to other Sundanese works, and other interpreters from the Indonesian region will enrich the understanding of Islamic scholarly works and their contributions, particularly those related to *tafsir* and thoughts on anti-colonialism in Indonesia.

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