POSTMODERN QURANIC INTERPRETATION IN POP CULTURE: AN ANTITHESIS TO THE AUTHORITY OF TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION

Romario*, Zulfikar Riza Hariz Pohan**

Abstract

This article examined the interpretation of the Al-Quran in the discourse of pop-culture in the era of postmodernism which emerging in Instagram account @quranreview. The research method used a netnographic approach in looking at the patterns and posts from the @quranreview account in 2022. The results of this study indicate that in the old religious authorities, Al-Quran interpretation could only be carried out by a commentator with in-depth knowledge, but after the development of technology the interpretation of the Al-Quran was no longer the authority of the interpreter, but has shifted to a new religious authority which packs Al-Quran interpretations. Quran with light packaging and can be understood by ordinary people. @quranreview uses modern language and the tastes of young people in its posts to attract the interest of Instagram users and invites them to interpret verses freely through published books.

Keyword: @quranreview, Instagram, Religious Authority, Postmodernism

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji tentang tafsir Al-Quran dalam wacana budaya populer di era postmodernisme yang muncul dalam akun Instagram @quranreview. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan netnografi dalam melihat pola dan unggahan dari akun @quranreview pada tahun 2022. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pada otoritas keagamaan lama, tafsir Al-Quran hanya dapat dilakukan oleh seorang mufassir yang memiliki pengetahuan yang mendalam, namun setelah berkembangnya teknologi tafsir Al-Quran bukan lagi menjadi otoritas mufassir, melainkan telah bergeser menjadi otoritas keagamaan baru yang mengemas tafsir Al-Quran dengan kemasan yang ringan dan dapat dipahami oleh masyarakat awam.

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@quranreview menggunakan bahasa modern dan selera anak muda dalam unggahannya untuk menarik minat pengguna Instagram dan mengajak mereka untuk menafsirkan ayat-ayat Al-Quran secara bebas melalui kitab-kitab yang diterbitkan.

Kata Kunci: @quranreview, Instagram, Otoritas Agama, Postmodernisme

INTRODUCTION

When the Quran is printed and reproduced it makes it easy for anyone to access and read it. The presence of a translated Quran makes readers of the Quran understand the meaning of each verse. Since the presence of social media, quranic messages are easier to find by da'wah accounts. This phenomenon is called Religion Online when religious messages are easily accessed on social media. The development of the internet also provides space in creating interpretation websites that can be accessed by anyone and anytime.[1] Various Islamic websites in Indonesia with a background of understanding contain interpretations of the Quran on their websites.[2]

The study of the interpretation of the Quran on social media, became the attention of scholars who showed that social media presents a new model in the interpretation of the Quran. Fadhil Lukman sees that facebook has become a vehicle for popular interpretation whose appearance is simple and straightforward so that there is decentralization and a challenge to authority. Salman Harun, Buya Gusrizal Gazahar, and Irena Hardono are religious actors who use facebook as a means to convey their interpretation of certain Quranic verses.[3] Wildan Imaduddin Muhammad, who focuses on Salman Harun's interpretation, argued that Salman Harun's model of interpretation on Facebook relied on Arabic language skills without taking from mufassir. The same thing in M.Ulil Abshar's research shows that youtube is an audiovisual interpretation, which Gus Izza Sadewa uses as a religious

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[1] Helmi Maulana, "Onlinization Tafsir: Studi Al-Quran Di Era Disrupsi," *Tajdid* 28 (1) (2021): 73–104.

[2] Istianah and Maulida Ayu Fitriani, "Integration Of Islamic Da'wah And It: Phenomena Of Quran Interpretation In Indonesian Online Islamic Media," *The 2 Nd Education, Sciences and Technology International Conference 2021*, 2021, 10–19.

[3] Fadhli Lukman, "Digital Hermeneutics And A New Face Of The Qur`An Commentary The Qur`An In Indonesian`S Facebook," *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 56 (1) (2018): 95–120.

authority in interpreting verses in an uncomplicated way so that it can be understood by the audience.⁴ In line with M.Ulil Abshar, Ali Hamdan sees Youtube as an audiovisual interpretation for the Al-Quran Pentashihan Institute (Lembaga Pentashihan) of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (Kementerian Agama) about "Bees according to the Quran and Science" which although problematic is still acceptable to the public.⁵ In contrast to previous research Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy and Althaf Husein Muzakky highlighted the *ngaji online* (reciting and learn Quran dan Islamic books) presented by Gus Baha, that as a charismatic scholar Gus Baha with his delivery around the interpretation of the Quran displays a harmonious and humanist image of Islam, this is because Gus Baha has a deep Islamic educational background.⁶

Unlike previous research on the interpretation of the Quran on social media which still shows religious actors, @quranreview do not rely on religious actors but @quranreview is a medium that seeks to make the interpretation of the Quran understandable to ordinary people. This shifting phenomenon cannot be separated from Postmodernism which collapsed the scientific authorities that Mufasir had once fenced off and then became a science that could be accessed by anyone without studying deeply.

The presence of social media has practically shifted Mufasir as the old religious authority in interpreting verses, @quranreview account into a new authority in interpreting the Quran in a way that is understandable to young Muslims. The account @quranreview publish a book whose content is similar to @quranreview post, the interesting thing about the book is that it gives the reader the freedom to interpret the Quranic verses that are on blank paper. It shows how the requirements as Muffasir have shifted by @quranreview account with a method of interpretation that relies on language and gives the reader the freedom to interpret verses. This study examines how the fragmentation of authority in interpreting verses on social media. The

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⁴ M. Ulil Abshar, "Penafsiran Keislaman Di Laman Youtube: Tafsir Lisan Gus Izza Sadewa," *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualitas* 8 (1) (2022): 1–27.

⁵ Ali Hamdan, "Dimensi Sosial Dalam Wacana Tafsir Audiovisual: Studi Atas Tafsir Ilmi, 'Lebah Menurut al-Qur'an Dan Sains,' Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al-Qur'an Kemenag RI Di Youtube," *Religia Jurnal-Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman* 22 (2) (2019): 248–66.

⁶ Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy and Althaf Husein Muzakky, "Dinamika Ngaji Online Dalam Tagar Gus Baha (#Gusbaha): Studi Living Qur'an Di Media Sosial," *POROS ONIM: Jurnal Sosial Keagamaan* 2 (1) (2021): 1–19.

discussion in this article looks at how the requirements of a muffasir in interpreting verses, and when the presence of social media makes the interpretation of verses decentralized so that it can be done by anyone.

This research method is qualitative with a netnographic approach. Netnography is an approach used to look at people's behavior in the internet world. In this study we focused on @quranreview accounts in looking at the social media posts generated, and the religious discourse generated from @quranreview Instagram page in 2022. The data in this study were taken by sorting posts uploaded by @quranreview both in the feed and in the story, then observing how @quranreview followers responded in interacting with the @quranreview account, in addition to observing the book launched by @quranreivew which allows its followers to interpret the Al_Quran themselves. Research focuses on @quranreview as a new religious authority in the field of interpretation. In this paper we compare how the old religious authorities in studying the verses of the Quran, by looking at the requirements of Mufassir and focusing on the figures of interpreters in Indonesia. Then saw a shift in @quranreview accounts as a new religious authority.

DISCUSSION
Interpretation of the Quran on Social Media

On social media, it can be found that the interpretation approach taken is to focus on themes, colors, attractive images, and language that can be understood easily. On Youtube, it can be seen how the interpretation of the Quran is conveyed in a recitation and then uploaded to Youtube by adding an attractive appearance, connecting relevant images with related verses, and language that is easier to understand.[7] On Facebook appeared actors who conveyed personal interpretations through threads that were understood.[8]

According to Nadirsyah Hosen, the free-style interpretation of the Quran and Hadith without any interpreters started from the Salafi

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[7] Roudlotul Jannah and Ali Hamdan, "Tafsir Al-Quran Media Sosial: Kajian Terhadap Tafsir Pada Akun Instagram @Quranriview Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Studi Al-Quran" 1 (1) (2021): 1–15.

[8] Lukman, "Digital Hermeneutics And A New Face Of The Qur`An Commentary The Qur`An In Indonesian`S Facebook."

movement. The Salafist movement argues that anyone can understand the Quran and Hadith. The existence of traditional scholars such as Mufasir is considered to place scholars higher than the Prophet Muhammad SAW. As we saw earlier that an interpreter studying the Quran takes years to memorize and study it.[9]

In practice, the interpretation of the Quran on social media has the freedom to interpret verses and produce them. On the other hand, this undermines the old religious authority which must have conditions in interpreting verses, but the new religious authority is acceptable because of the way it packages the message of proselytizing in contemporary language and can be seen by the public.

New Religious Authority: @quranreview

The presence of new religious authorities cannot be separated from democratization, globalization, and the use of new media. Since the collapse of the New Order, religious authority has shifted, if during the New Order period, the authority of a Mufassir is still recognized because he has a deep understanding of the Quran. After the Post-New Order religious authority was no longer based on qualifications but ability in a different approach to the old religious authority. It is this approach that attracts many ordinary people. But in certain cases it caused a stir.[10]

The new religious authority relied on the ability to carry religious messages in a contemporary context and adapt to the tastes of young Muslims. This pattern is used @quranreview as a new religious authority, utilizing Instagram social media to convey religious messages and attract many ordinary people. @quranreview started to be active in 2021. The account @quranreview displays proselytizing content that connects certain Quranic verses with current phenomena using contemporary language. To date it has a following of 327 RB. In the bio @quranreview it says Quranic Creative Media. The logo of the @quranreview depicts the moon and the number 17 inspired by Surat Al Qomar verse 17, with the hope that their

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[9] Nadirsyah Hosen, *Tafsir Al-Quran Di Medsos* (Yogyakarta: Bentang Pustaka, 2017), 18–25.

[10] Syafiq Hasyim, *New Contestation in Interpreting Religious Texts: Fatwa, Tafsir, and Shariah. The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020).

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content @quranreview will serve as a reminder that the Quran is an easy thing that Allah has made easy.

Image 1. Akun @quranreview

@quranreview has so far published a book entitled 30 Days Make it Better and You Are Loved, an explanation of quranic verses in light language. In addition, @quranreview also has events that invite interesting young Muslim figures such as Muzammil, Hawariyun, Dodi Hidayatullah, Sherly Annavita, and others.

The pattern used @quranreview in his post, raising a verse and then linking it to phenomena that occur such as disasters and viral things. @quranreview use Arabic skills to interpret Quranic verses and contextualize the phenomena. @quranreview does not quote from any particular mufassir in discussing the phenomenon of verse. @quranreview received a positive response from his followers, many became more understanding of the Quran.

What @quranreview conveyed cannot be separated from the presence of new groups such as the Sunnah group, the Hijra group, and the Populist Islamic Group. This group uses social media in seeding ideas packaged in instagramable form and youtube abel to reach the wider Islamic community. This group leverages the Muslim community market with practical exposure and implications so that it is easier to digest when compared to the deeper exposure of Muslim scholars.[11]

In this context, @quranreview more widely accepted by the wider community than interpreters who have a deep ability to explain verses of the

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[11] Hasyim, *New Contestation in Interpreting Religious Texts: Fatwa, Tafsir, and Shariah. The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia*.

Quran. This @quranreview post is what we analyzed to see how the interpretation patterns of the @quranreiview.
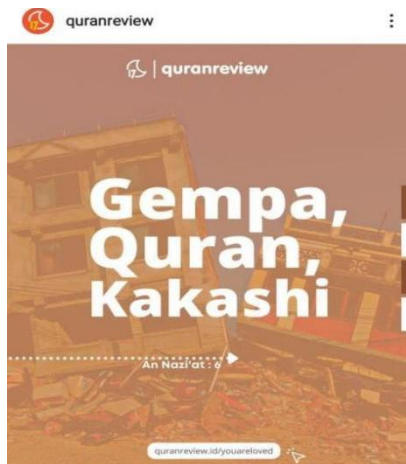

Image 2. Post @quranreview on Instagram

In a post titled "Earthquake, Quran, Kakashi" focusing on the verse An-Nazi'at verse 6 @quranreview on November 25, 2022, it made an iconic title in attracting followers. In addition, the title relates to the actual issue of the earthquake that occurred in Cianjur, and raised the anime character Kakashi in the Naruto series which became a taste for young people. The creation of iconic titles has become the hallmark of hijra groups in attracting young social media users. The desire to be pious and enjoy popular culture, this form is commonly called popular Islam. In the next post, @quranreview uses light and communicative language in providing interpretation explanations

Disclaimer

> *Konten ini mengandung ayat Al Quran, terus ilmu shorof, video anime; hatake kakashi dan reflection untuk kehidupan sehari-hari he he. Nah kita mulai dari yang kadang sering bikin pusing dan nyebelin yaitu pelajaran shorof, he he.*
> *Banyak definisi ttg shorof tentunya. Hmm… shorof itu… adalah gimana kita men-transform satu kada dalam bahasa arab ke banyak pola/cetakan. Mulai pusingkan? Wkwkwk . gini deh.. ibarat susu nih yaa, itu jadi susu kaleng, susu sachet, susu botol bahannya tetap susu, tapi pola/wadahnya beda*
> *(Disclaimer)*

This content contains verses of the Quran, continued shorof, anime videos; Hatake Kakashi and Reflection for He He's daily life. Now we start from what sometimes makes us dizzy and uncomfortable with shorof lessons, he he.

Many definitions of about shorof of course. Hmm... that shorof... is how we transform one cadaver in Arabic into many patterns/prints. Starting to get dizzy? Wkwkwk . here it is.. it's like milk, yes, it becomes canned milk, sachet milk, bottled milk the material is still milk, but the pattern / container is different.

The aspect that @quranreview emphasized is the matter of shorof science which is a branch in Arabic science. In the content, @quranrevie explains what a shorof is and for example, then shows a video of Kakashi's anime that uses earthquake moves to provide easier understanding. Verse An-Nazi'at verse 6 is only focused on the word earthquake. Furthermore, @quranreview explained that there were many earthquakes as a rebuke from God, then @quranreview explained that earthquakes are increasingly frequent as a sign for the end of the world.

From what @quranreview said by taking a verse, then writing it in the language of young people, it shows how @quranreview interprets the verse in a popular style. @quranrevie uses simple language so that it is easy for followers to understand. The use of non-standard language shows how @quranreview is applying to make it easier to understand. The new thing about @quranreview is to use the example of anime videos in explaining earthquake-related events. What @quranreview is doing is a new model of interpreting using Instagram social media. The use of anime as a means of proselytizing has been carried out by religious actors and hijra groups, the existence of Ustaz Naruto and Hijab Cosplay is a phenomenon of how anime popular culture is made in Islamic form[12], as well as content creators who display anime videos with Islamic message dubbing.[13]

@quranreview not only posted about the interpretation of the Quran in his post, but also invited his followers to interpret the verses of the Quran. This can be seen in the book 30 Days Make it Better which contains 30 verses from 30 Juz in the Quran. The book makes room for its readers to interpret

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[12] Ranny Rastati, "Dari Soft Power Jepang Hingga Hijab Cosplay," *Jurnal Masyarakat & Budaya* 17 (3) (2015): 371–88.

[13] Romario, "Konten Kreator Hizbut Tahrir: Budaya Populer Anime Sebagai Narasi Dakwah," *Prosiding Konferensi Integrasi Interkoneksi Islam Dan Sains* 4 (1) (2022): 184–96.

freely with what is understood about a particular Quranic verse. The interpretation by readers of the book 30 Days Make it Bette, is generally a self-reflection on the verses understood, about the test of life, the world as a temporary place, hope only in God, etc.
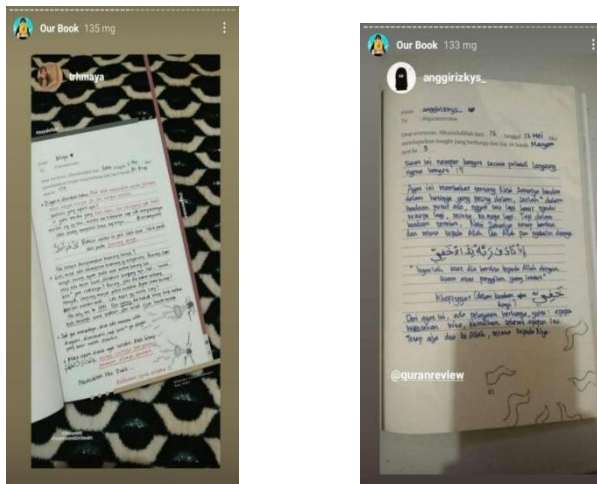

Image 3. Instastory @quranreview on Instagram

From what @quranreview does in the book 30 Days Make it Better, it only focuses on verses whose content is for self-reflection. @quranreview choose verses that are easy for ordinary people to understand. In this case, there is a decentralization in interpreting the Qur'an, if in the old authority, those who can interpret the Qur'an are only those who have studied and have the tools to interpret the Qur'an to give birth to a binding Tafsir. With the existence of Instagram social media, the interpretation of verses is carried out freely by anyone, which is initiated by the @quranreview account which is then followed by followers. This situation cannot be separated from the spirit of the Hijra group in understanding religion in an easy and understandable way. The difference in the method of interpretation by mufasir as an authority in interpreting verses is neglected, so it is not clearly understood that in understanding the verses of the Quran is not only the use of Arabic, but also the understanding of Ulumul Quran as a device in understanding verses

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The Qur'an in the Cage of Postmodernism : The Blurring of Boundaries and the Fall of the Great Narrative

Postmodernism seeks to subvert the metanarrative form from great narratives such as scripture, boundaries, and authority within them. Postmodernism challenges the greatness of narratives that seek to 'monopolize' truth in different ways such as repression, social pressure, power and authority. The impact of postmodernism is quite diverse, there is a huge wave of fringe discourse that rises to the fore and begins to be considered the antithesis of a grand narrative that was once considered an inviolable absolute.

In terms of interpretation, modernists and conservatives agree that the authority of interpretation can only be held by scholars who are indeed competent in their fields on the grounds of maintaining the purity and substance of the Quran. Thus, fringe discourses that want to free anyone to interpret the Quran are regarded as depravity and transgression. Mufasir is like giants who seem to be irreplaceable at first, however, the era of postmodernism changed this with a side discourse that anyone can interpret the Quran freely. Nigel Wheale mentions that "postmodernism is often described as blurring or destroying distinctions between established cultural hierarchies..."[14] Therefore, in the discourse of interpretation, it is also related to the increasing prevalence of countercultures that oppose the grand narrative of the authority of interpretation and the mufassir itself.

The emergence of a counter-discourse on the interpretation of the Quran that is freely influenced by the rapid development of technology and information media. The role of the internet and social media as an open platform for anyone who can access it. Activities with interesting visual nuances, presentations that are in accordance with the times, as well as various interesting sound and image media are more in demand than thick volumes of books on the interpretation of the Quran. In short, the era of postmodernism as it now stands is 'the death of the author' which has abandoned the orientation of writing towards the era of the reader. [15] The

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[14] Nigel Wheale, *Postmodern Arts* (London: Rouledge, 1995). Page. 34

[15] Roland Barthes, "Modern Literary Theory," in *The Death of The Author*, ed. Patricia Waugh (London: EdwardArnold, 1977).

focus on the book of tafsir and mufassir even the Quran itself is replaced with simulations and imagery from the reader of the book of tafsir or the Quran.

In this case, the interpretation of the Quran in the era of postmodernism is carried out not to enjoy the usefulness of the interpretation, or the function of the explanation of the interpretation of the Quran, but rather to discover the identity of the reader. In @quranreview account, the Quran is interpreted to find the identity of the interpreter himself, not heeding the standard rules and rules of interpreting the Quran. Thus, the existing interpretation is a banal interpretation carried out by anyone, anywhere and anytime. The existence of @quranreview Instagram account seems to reaffirm the identity of millennials who want to understand the Quran easily and quickly, unwittingly has played a role in the collapse of old values regarding strictness in the method of interpreting the Quran .

The existence of @quranreiview confirms the statement that when the holy book enters digital, it will lose its sacralization that makes it interpretable by anyone, thus giving rise to various meanings. This makes the holy book as accessible as comics, magazines, and newspapers.[16]

Meanwhile, the methodology of interpretation is also no less important in seeing the validity of the interpretation of the Quran. In general, there are 4 (four) methods of interpreting the Quran; 1) *ijmali* (global interpretation), the *ijmali* method of interpretation is the earliest method even carried out by the Prophet Muhammad himself. The purpose of this interpretation is to explain the interpretation briefly and universally, the substance of the whole verse of the Quran is conveyed 2) *tahlili* (analytical), this method is more focused on explaining the correlation between the verse and the surah, also explaining the causes of the descent of the verse, the explanation also tends to be still common 3) *muqarin* (comparison), the muqarin method of taking verses and then comparing them with other verses to reach one conclusion and 4) *maudhu'i* (thematic) a method of later interpretation that prioritizes the search for explanations of one problem or law by looking at verse by verse in the Quran. In addition, there are

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[16] Phil. Mullins, "Sacred Text in an Electronic Age," *iblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture* 20 (3) (1990): 99–106.

classifications on the interpretation of the Quran, namely the source of interpretation (*al-mashdar*), systematics (*al-manhaj*) and pattern (*al-laun*). [17]

Apart from the translation side, the interpretation of the Quran is also important in the Islamic world. The interpretation of the Quran which is also very exclusive, authoritative of the scholars in determining the implied meaning of the Quran is an agreed upon thing.[18] There are two things that determine the interpretation of the Quran; Mufassir and Tafsir Methodology. Mufassir in various discussions about Tafsir Science must have a qualified capacity both in terms of background and science owned by mufassir. The requirements regarding the background of the mufasir as explained by Ahmad Sarwat are; 1) have a clean faith, (sehat aqidah) 2) be free from Lust (terbebas dari hawa nafsu), 3) it is sourced from the Quran, 4) it is sourced from the As-Sunnah (hadith), 5) it refers to the Companions (sahabat Nabi) of the Prophet, 6) Refers to Tabiin, 7) Masters Arabic, 8) Masters knowledge related to interpretation, 9) Deep understanding.[19]

CONCLUSION

Social media has provided a significant change in the interpretation of the Quran, the presence of interpretive websites and audiovisual interpretation has become a new pattern in the interpretation of the Quran. The presence of Instagram as a medium that highlights visuals is a morning attraction for young Muslims in accessing religious knowledge, including the interpretation of the Quran. The account @quranreview became a source of knowledge in the Quranic tafsir. Unlike Muffasir who explained the verses one by one in the Quran and made volumes of interpretations, @quranreview account of the Arabic language in interpreting verses and using contemporary language, actual issues, and popular culture in attracting young Muslims. @quranreview not only posts but also invites his followers to interpret quranic verses freely through the book 30 Days Make it Better.

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[17] M Al-Fatih Suryadilaga, *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Teras, 2005).

[18] Nashruddin Baidan, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia*, Cet 1 (Solo: PT Tiga Serangkai Pustaka Mandiri, 2003).

[19] Ahmad Sarwat, *Ilmu Tafsir: Sebuah Pengantar* (Jakarta: Lentera Islam, 2020).

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