

# **OCCIDENTALISM IN INDONESIA: A Study of Intellectual Ideas of Mukti Ali and Nurcholis Madjid and Contemporary Legacy**

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## **Abstrak**

Salah satu aspek modernitas, Oksidentalisme, menjadi bagian dari wacana Islam dan Barat disamping sejarah Orientalisme yang telah mengalami perkembangan panjang. Artikel ini membahas gagasan Oksidentalisme di Indonesia. Dialektika Oksidentalisme-Orientalisme dapat ditelusuri dengan melihat beberapa ide yang disampaikan oleh representasi intelektual Muslim Indonesia—Mukti Ali dan Nurcholis Madjid. Sebagai refleksi kritis terhadap fenomena Oksidentalisme, Carl W. Ernst menggarisbawahi proyeksi keilmuan konstruktif. Selanjutnya, dialog antarperadaban yang disampaikan Osman Bakar dapat membantu mengurai kompleksitas pemaknaan Oksidentalisme seperti misalnya yang dipaparkan Hassan Hanafi atau Ian Buruma. Artikel ini menegaskan bahwa dari sisi historisnya studi Oksidentalisme yang dipaparkan Mukti Ali dan Nurcholis Madjid merupakan aspek akademis tentang institusi Barat. Wacana akademis ini ternyata tidak sama dengan konsep Oksidentalisme seperti yang dipaparkan oleh Hassan Hanafi maupun Ian Buruma. Aspek lainnya adalah saling-belajar, kerjasama dan pemahaman bagian integral masyarakat Muslim dan Indonesia pada umumnya.

**Kata Kunci:** Oksidentalisme, Indonesia, Mukti Ali, Nurkholis Madjid, Akademis

## **A. Introduction**

**I**n the realm of Occidentalism, there are two categories distinguishing the intention and the emphasis of the discourse. First, the political notion denotes the concept of Occidentalism such as found in Hassan Hanafi

and Ian Buruma's works. Hanafi argues there is a need for the Third World countries to struggle 'the ego' and the 'other' to have a balance of power; while Buruma refers Occidentalism as anti-Westernism segment from various entities in the world. In contrast, I will explore the second category of Occidentalism—the academic endeavor in this paper.

Based on the fact that there have been multifaceted view of Occidentalism, I will discuss the intended perspective of Occidentalism proposed by Mukti Ali during the early establishment of religious study in Indonesia. This is somewhat different to the growing current perspective of Occidentalism by Hassan Hanafi or Ian Buruma. Both Hanafi and Buruma emphasize a political stance relying on the Western –Eastern dichotomy. In this respect the struggle quest for seeking an academic inquiry particularly amongst Muslim intellectuals is plausible.

I will clarify the position of Occidentalism to contribute to academic inquiry. This effort can be also a part of contribution to academia based on the fact that the study of Occidentalism sounds unfamiliar even among Muslim students or academia entities. In doing this act of clarification itself the clear perspective of Occidentalism in a more academic effort will manifest.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I will posit these research questions on: How does Occidentalism develop its stance out of or beyond the negative reactive notion of the 'West-East' dichotomy? What prospective contribution actually can be proposed for the study of Occidentalism in academia, particularly in Indonesian Islamic education?

The paper consists of four sections. First section consists of an introduction, the research problem and the objective. The second section deals with the theoretical framework in which the theory of dialog among civilization is presented to support the analysis of history of intellectuals in Indonesia. The third section is historical analysis, portraying the

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<sup>1</sup>Occidentalism –*a scholarly study of language, religion and culture of the West*—is a required course offered to students of UIN Sunan Kalijaga for undergraduate program, and to UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta for graduate program at Ushuluddin faculty and Syariah Department, started in 1995.

development of Occidentalism in Indonesia in the midst of twentieth century. The fourth section is the concluding remarks proposing some recommendations based on the findings.

I will aim this paper not only to represent the various concepts of contemporary Occidentalism such as proposed by Hassan Hanafi and Ian Buruma, but also to try to clarify the development of Occidentalism in Indonesia. These two authors used Occidentalism deliberately as a political endorsement of the struggle between the 'East' and the 'West'. In contrast, I explore Occidentalism type of discourse in terms of developing an academic encounter in Indonesia particularly in higher learning education. The general outcome of Occidentalism in academic perspective will propose the facet of Occidentalism that is not monolithic.

In this respect, I do agree the notion of Occidentalism initiated by Mukti Ali who meticulously proposed the dawn of Occidentalism especially in the higher learning in Indonesia in historical perspective. I think his position about Occidentalism needs revitalization in the present development of the discourse in the midst of change and continuity of Occidentalism. For Islamic academia, a lot of attempts have been made to introduce Occidentalism, but most of them are still in ambiguity trying to accomplish understanding and inquiry of the discourse. Therefore, I also relate Mukti Ali's notion to another intellectual who has given a response to Occidentalism in Indonesia. The figure is Nurcholis Madjid, a Muslim intellectual who gave his statement, idea and critique to Occidentalism.

I am fully conscious that the prominent Muslim intellectuals chosen based on their ideas of Occidentalism are from different period in Indonesia; however it does not mean there are no other intellectuals discussing the aspect on Occidentalism. Another intellectuals that have commented on Occidentalism such as Burhanuddin Daya, Syafii Maarif, Amin Abdullah, and Komaruddin Hidayat started discussing the study of Occidentalism not only in a more critical exploration in line with the spirit of age or *zeitgeist* to specific study related to Islamic studies but also in a productive mode of thinking in response to Western scholars such as Karel Steenbrink, who are

interested in the Islam and the West relation. These authors all discuss to Occidentalism discourse; however, I see the most prominent works concerned with academic Occidentalism, as far as I investigate, as clearly represented in books or papers by Mukti Ali and Nurcholis Madjid. Applying these two intellectual works and perspectives to Occidentalism will urge the Muslim communities to situate an appropriate Occidentalism for academic realm.

### **B. Theory of Dialogue of Civilization**

The releasing horizon of the thoughts of Occidentalism should be constructed on the basis of scientific inquiries. I do believe this notion of thinking the idea beyond the dichotomy of the rough 'East-West' should also be delivered. Carl W. Ernst has argued in the need of going out of the dichotomy.<sup>2</sup> I think it is a time now at the dawn of inter-cultural and inter-civilization condition, the recognition of the concept the 'West' and 'the East' that has a very long history should be reevaluated in order to seek an alternative framework of Occidentalism.

It is not an easy way to promote the academic stance of Occidentalism, since the intersection of Occidentalism as the counter discourse of Orientalism is manifest throughout the latter part of the twentieth century. The need of the stance in this sense is, I believe, trying to impose the positive legacy of Orientalism –of scientific inquiry, careful research and motivational traits of research. The critique of Orientalism done by Edward W Said is necessary, but the more effective chore is the mindset of positive traits of act in conducting studies and researches.

Ernst argues that the sharp conflict occurred as the result of 'the West' and 'Islam' opposition.

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<sup>2</sup>Carl W. Ernst, "The West and Islam?" Rethinking Orientalism and Occidentalism" a paper presented at the 7th Tun Razak Lecture, 9 August 2007, at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, p. 1

It is my contention that this type of civilizational and religious conflict is built into the concept of “the West,” particularly though not exclusively when it is put in opposition to Islam. This particular speech has been protested by Muslim leaders both in Europe and elsewhere as a provocation that encourages Islamophobia. Those who do not wish to support an endless series of colonial-style conflicts between Muslims, Christians, and others, need to find ways to reconceptualize the world without relying upon the notion of the timeless East and West. In other words, it is time to move beyond both Occidentalism and Orientalism (Ernst: 2007, 1-2).

This negative consequence of the contra positioning of the ‘West’ versus ‘the East’ or ‘Islam, according to Ernst, is present in particular context, but it does not mean the meeting of the ‘West’ and Islam cannot be framed in a more fluid way. The meta-narrative Occidentalism hence, I think, should be redirected out of the mere limit of dichotomy.

The global perspective of the Occidentalism should also be clarified in this sense, into two categories. I firmly believe that there are political stream applying Occidentalism as a means of vested interests on the one side. At the following point, Occidentalism goes on the delivery of academic stance particularly on the educational institution and the Islamic society in general. The later proposition I think should act as the betterment of the human communication. The stance of Occidentalism as an academic endeavor is one of the alternative horizons in the cluster of the various concepts of Occidentalism that cannot be avoided. At the stroke of this idea, it also occurred in the perception of Islam. Ernst argues that:

As I have argued in more detail elsewhere, the concept of “the West” is to a certain extent fictive, in so far as it implies a unitary and homogeneous cultural identity that is vaguely ascribed to a number of countries in America and Europe and their would-be associates. Likewise, the notion of “the Islamic world” (interchangeable with Europe’s Orient or “the East”) can also be seriously misleading; it practically suggests that there is a separate planet that is somehow unconnected with Europe and America by political, economic, and military circumstances, and it glosses over as unimportant the many differences in history, ethnicity, language, and culture that characterize Muslim majority countries as well as the Muslim minorities elsewhere (2007: 3).

The longing of the mutual respect between the West and Islam, although Ernst argues trying not to use the terms is, I think, starting from the initiative of more fluid study between the two in a scientific engineering. The mistrust, prejudice, stereotyping are among challenges the civilization should respond to deliver the virtues of Occidentalism. In this sense, Ernst continues to argue that it is necessary to move on more study-center of perspective seeing the Occidentalism.

Rather than an ideological Occidentalism, this would be a kind of academic study that would concentrate on expertise in the culture, history, institutions, and practices of particular countries and regions such as America, Britain, France, etc. While area studies have their limitations, their virtue is to encourage multi-disciplinary approaches to a particular region, which enables specialists from different fields of study to communicate and to broaden their own expertise with a view to creating more holistic and comprehensive analyses (2007: 14).

I do believe that the enrichment of the academic sphere will be accomplished in Occidentalism discourse applying the possible alternative of Occidentalism concept. The Occidentalism concept either from Hassan Hanafi and Ian Buruma is inherently a part of the discourse—they also using the term of Occidentalism, nevertheless they are not in line with the spirit of Occidentalism in a more academic realm. The study of the two has proven to be more in political agenda and statement. Based on this background, the response of how Muslims situates themselves in the face of the complexity of civilization then becomes a sore factor in proposing this beneficial aspect of study—including Muslim who lived in the Western countries.

In this sense, Osman Bakar stated the need of civilizational dialogue that becomes a model of cultural bridge between Muslim world and the West. Bakar argued that Muslims need to develop an Occidentalism that is primarily dedicated to a better understanding and appreciation of Islam in the

West. Muslim can work together with the western entities in promoting equal partners in inter-civilizational dialogues.<sup>3</sup>

This type of Occidentalism project is, I think, the essential proposition of what should be delivered and constructed than ideological or political motif. The need of Occidentalism is a part, then of the inter-civilizational dialogue. In accord to this, it is significant to note the theme of the 2010 the World's Parliament of Religion took the topic on the Islam-the West dialogue in Melbourne, Australia in the beginning of 2010. This is current evidence that actually the discourse of the West and Islam is ever present in the contemporary era.

### C. Analysis

I will discuss the initial proposition of Occidentalism as a study in Indonesia from Mukti Ali and Nurcholis Madjid ideas. In so doing, the academic conversation of Occidentalism in Indonesia perspective can be achieved proportionally since it is not deriving from any single discipline of scholar. I begin the investigation of Mukti Ali's notion on Occidentalism by stating the long history of Orientalism since the 11<sup>th</sup> century done by the Western civilization.<sup>4</sup> The first positive understanding of Islam was manifest after the Crusade War that Islamic *umma* bore the positive traits of hospitality. At the time, according to Mukti Ali, the Islamic civilization was in advance, so there had been a raising tendency exploring of what Islam was in order to understand Islamic civilization.

In this respect, Mukti Ali wants to portray the legacy of Orientalism in European backgrounds. I argue that this is actually the framework of studying the positive legacy of Orientalism. By less paying attention to the negative aspect of Orientalism to the constructive one, I think Mukti Ali wants to go deeper in exploring the recent legacy of Orientalism in some

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<sup>3</sup>Osman Bakar, *Islam and Civilizational Dialogue: The Quest for A Truly Universal Civilization*, (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1997), p. 43

<sup>4</sup>A. Mukti Ali, *Ilmu Perbandingan Agama: Sebuah Pembahasan tentang Methodos dan Sistema*, (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Annida, 1965), p. 28

scholarly works. Ali argues that it was in Germany that there began the works and the writings of Islam and the Arabic language<sup>5</sup>. This is somehow a different stance of Orientalism which was explored by the critique – Edward W Said who emphasized the imaginative geography between the ‘East’ and ‘The West’ in a more ‘the oppressed’ and ‘the oppressor’ relationship. The domination type of analysis found in Said is compatible in a particular space and time when the economic and political strives really recalling his analysis. The time is now demanding stimulant insight in the pursuit of peace and cooperation. I think, what Said commented on is valuable in order to warn the hegemony of the power between ‘The East’ and ‘the West’, but it is also critical to evaluate what should be done consecutively in promoting balance stance, for instance, that of academic motif and emphasis.

Furthermore, by stating the historical evidence, Mukti Ali is meticulous to mention the establishment of *Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, in Batavia or now Jakarta in 1778. The institution published the writing on the Eastern culture and society. Mukti Ali actually realized the deviance of the Orientalism as the instrument of investigating the negative judgment of Islam, for instance by stating H.A.R. Gibb study of the Prophet Muhammad psychology, but it seems that Ali wants to propose the unnecessary of such a negative things.

In a constructive way, Ali urges Muslims to impose the study of the Western legacy—of its society, religion, culture and civilization. Accordingly, Ali was rather interested in promoting how Muslims should respond to the Western civilization. I think Mukti Ali’s proposition of Occidentalism began from this very act. In response to the Muslim attitude toward the Western civilization, he classifies the situation into the two different stances. The first is for those of Muslim who totally accept the notion of the West without any criticism and the second one is Muslim who

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



completely reject of any notion related to the West ideas.<sup>6</sup> Based on these categories, the two acts are neither suitable nor compatible with the advancement of Muslim, according to Mukti Ali, so I argue that the notion of Occidentalism, in this very perspective, should be in between the study of the West and at the same time also focuses on the study of Islam.

This proposition is significant in the issue of contemporary Muslim in Indonesia. The median way to balance the virtues of the study of the West and Islam can start from the inclusive mode of thinking. This act is in an accord to Johan Mueleman's notion that the inclusivity of science is essential. Mueleman (1998) argues that in terms of science, the critical point is the positive attitude toward the development of science outside the Islamic world or the tradition of science in which they are less paid attention to related to religious studies, for instance. The inclusion of social sciences, history, textual critiques, language theory and philosophy are amongst the disciplines tightly related to the Islamic discussion. In short, the dual mode of critique and inclusivity are the basis of truth in its fullest sense.<sup>7</sup> In this act, I think there is no extremity of any discourse, so it is beneficial for Muslim entities, for instance, to mingle the academic blend of the West and the rich knowledge of Islam.

In this regards, I think, one of the alternatives act on how to deliver Occidentalism is in educational background, so the form of Occidentalism is implemented through the various sciences of Islamic studies and the branches of science of Western culture and civilization. The example is what has been done by Muslims intellectuals on the academic basis for religious development, i.e, new spiritual movement or new religious movement occurred in the West. In this respect, Mukti Ali's notion of Occidentalism is obvious that it is necessary to consider the significance of the theory and the science of religion, culture and civilization of the West among the

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31

<sup>7</sup>Johan Meuleman, "Islam Stance to Contemporary Development" in Mukti Ali, *Religion in Contemporary Society Discourse*, (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1998), p. 30

Indonesian Muslims entity.<sup>8</sup> By doing so Mukti Ali firmly believed that by gaining the Occidentalism, the Muslim intellectuals are in a dialogue mode to the Western entity.

This type of Occidentalism, I think, is the dream of Mukti Ali to enhance the academic notion of Occidentalism. This positive act of Occidentalism should be promoted in the present era outside the various concepts of Occidentalism that denotes more on political and ideological perspectives. This proposition also bears the stream of intellectuals who always aware and keep the equilibrium between the West and Islam. I am of the opinion that the extremity type of response is not wise in the current era. Moreover the more Muslims are conscious on the designated academic Occidentalism, the more beneficial they will get since the multi-disciplinary perspectives are available. The common falsity among Muslims especially for those still trapped in the legal-formal or normative type of approach<sup>9</sup> in seeing the phenomena, I argue, can be overcome by stimulating this type of Occidentalism. The hate, the envy and other negative traits are the common enemy should be tackled. The act of terrorism and anti-Westernism sentiment as the result of narrow understanding of Islam and the West are the *realia* of the case. It is the task of academic Occidentalism elaborating the complexity of Islam and the West as well. Islam as well as Western entities have differently emerged larger than the scholars imagined. What I mean here is Islam cannot be represented only in a sequence of event and moment. Such reduction—also occurred seeing the Western entity, will result in an inaccurate data and facts. The inadequacy of coping with the materials for analysis will lead to over-generalization of the issue. The overgeneralization ends to the falsity of perception. This shifted view is a

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<sup>8</sup>A. Mukti Ali, *Ilmu Perbandingan Agama: Sebuah Pembahasan tentang Methodos dan Sistem*, (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Annida, 1965), p. 32

<sup>9</sup> Charles J. Adams sees the normative-religious type of approach as a view should be reevaluated in the study of religions. This view emphasized more on the study of culture and religion based on the strong religious commitment from the researchers, in Amin Abdullah, "Gelombang Orientalisme dan Studi-Studi Islam Kontemporer", dalam *Menjadi Indonesia: 13 Abad Eksistensi Islam di Bumi Nusantara*, (Bandung: Mizan, 2007)

very long journey, although it is not basically far enough to reach. Applying this stream of awareness of Occidentalism will contribute significantly, I believe, to abridging the gap between Islam and the West in the crowd of dismay, prejudice and terror. These little steps of endeavor are done purposively, so the educational institutions both formal and informal—as the ultimate agency of the discourse of Occidentalism—can be approached constitutively.

The balance stance of the ‘West’ and ‘Islam’ have also addressed by Mukti Ali in delivering the commentary of the science and religion. Ali (2004) argues that:

But in ages thereafter, when science and technology were taken over and developed by the West and through them governed the world over, the split between science and transcendental perception arose. Taking all of these into consideration, it is the prime duty of Muslims to create a culture with the effectiveness and creativity of science and technology in the transcendental world view. It is only this kind of culture and science that is able to bring about meaning in life, to shower blessings and happiness on the human race.<sup>10</sup>

The equilibrium shown by Ali, I think is important consideration inasmuch the relational stance between the ‘West’ and ‘Islam’ is constructive. What I want to convey is that the rich values of Islam and the Western concept of science for instance, can be best implemented without having to worry on the rivalry between the two entities. In this regards, the mutual symbiotic mode of thinking is manifest for Muslim in Indonesia.

Furthermore the real instance of the Occidentalism is the inclusion of understanding among students in Indonesia on how complex the Western entities as well as Islam are. Many students in the various level of education still consider that the West is monolithic. The perception of the students are

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<sup>10</sup> Abdul Mukti Ali, "Friends or Foes? Islam, Religion, and Science," *Mizan* (The balance)

1:2 (1984), pp. 38-39 in Howard M. Federspiel, Muslim Intellectuals and Indonesia's National Development, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 3. (Mar., 1991), pp. 239

varied starting from every Western people should keep a gun; they tend to have excessive sexual behavior and abrupt negative temper or traits.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, I argue that the relevant basis for promoting academic Occidentalism still and always fights against the stereotyping, the image and the depiction massively produced and delivered by media. Movies, games and VCD spread out in Indonesia have a psychological impact on the people. The image of the popular culture will extrude the mindset of the people so that the depiction will reveal when they have a real encounter with the Western entity. Some are probably true, but those mindsets of falsity, I believe, should be entangled to the outcome of Occidentalism. The final assessment will be the non-monolithic view of the West, and as the result the horizon will be not in a limited scope any longer.

In conjunction with this, Tariq Ramadan urges the need of how Muslims reform the educational sector—of not merely ‘taught to fix ‘differentness’ by means of a critical and deprecatory discourse vis-à-vis the ‘Other’, the Westerner, whom ‘they must never resemble’. The educational structures should put in place in order to look reality and think of steps that can be taken toward an-in depth reform.<sup>12</sup> This type of initiative, I think, is also compatible with the need to design an appropriate courses as well as activities or programs containing the essence of Occidentalism. The education element is a key in which the future generation will base their view much on what they have learned in school.

In the course of Islamic realm, there are excellent resources of the religion, language, laws, and politics. The delivery of the references is also promising since it is available in almost every school and *pesantren*. The critical inquiry is whether the references have included sufficient materials on how to read and understand the Western entity. This question is plausible

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<sup>11</sup> The data is based on interview taken from students coming from various educational backgrounds of public school, vocational school and *pesantren*-based type of school on February 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Toward A Reform of Islamic Education: Western Muslims and the future of Islam*, (New York: Oxford Press, 2004), p. 128

in the massive development of Islamic studies on the one side and the advancement of knowledge and science particularly from the West on the other. If the references are not richly balanced, I think, the common falsity of misunderstanding and misperception will happen. If these happen, there are tendency to lead the stream of perspectives into extremity of hate and intolerance. The need of academic Occidentalism then manifests in a type of studying the Western entities from religion, culture, politics, and thoughts. In so doing Muslims will not only get the benefit of exploring literatures but they can also step their horizons in a broader sense of understanding.

In response to those who did not agree that Occidentalism is used to promote the dialogue between Islam and the West, this typical Occidentalism bears strictly the notion of scientific inquiry of social, culture, and the miscellany of the West. In so doing the motif of revenge of the Orientalism is not relevant any longer. It would be better to situate this academic Occidentalism in a more area of the objectivity of science. Comments, critiques and perception in this proposition are welcome nevertheless the need to establish the act of studying the academic Occidentalism is urgent. Notwithstanding of its limitation, the usage of term Occidentalism does not mean always related to political agenda and ideological motif. The upcoming legacies of Indonesian Muslims intellectuals are one of the evidence supporting the designated study of Occidentalism in its constructive line. The complexity of taking Occidentalism meaning back to its nature as proposed by for instance Mukti Ali is one of problems proposing the issue. Confirmation type of strategy is beneficial whenever the intersection of Occidentalism meanings emerged in the discourse. This, what I mean as a long journey to ponder situating academic-objective Occidentalism.

How significant the study is, albeit the conversational challenge encourages Nurcholis Madjid supporting this type of Occidentalism. In this respect, I will interpret what important notion embedded in his thought on Occidentalism. In the middle of his study, Madjid actually emphasized the critical view on the dichotomy of the term the 'East' and the 'West in which

it needs to be meticulously paid attention to. Evidently he elaborates the two terms as amorphous. The instances Madjid offered from Mecca, Jewish, Europe, and Java of applying the terms made him did not really believe in the usage of such dichotomy. In brief, he argues that every entity will have their definitions and borders of what considers the 'East' and what constitutes the 'West'. Madjid argues that:

Wherever we direct our face, there will be the face of God. Based on this, the truth itself is not basically referring to the 'East' or the 'West'. In this sense, any humans should seek the truth whether in the 'East' or the 'West' in order to accomplish the grace of God. The dichotomy of the 'East' and the 'West' should end since the stigma is not compatible to the spirit of God words.<sup>13</sup>

I think despite of his disagreement of the dichotomy, Madjid actually supported what he called it a scholarly knowledge on culture, language and peoples carried out based on the assumption of the Eastern institution (p. 43).<sup>14</sup> In this aspect, he honors what have been done by Harun Nasution opening the Western Studies in Islamic higher education. At the initial step, Madjid is fully aware that the proposal of Occidentalism still got stuck in the pioneering step or even in the level of ideas.

Both Mukti Ali and Madjid are the Muslim intellectuals enrolled and educated from the West universities. This type of background, I think, shapes the way the two intellectuals see the perspectives on how Muslims should act to the Islam and the West. The formulation of academic Occidentalism colors their intellectuals lineage, particularly in the academia of Indonesian higher learning. In a respective sense, the two are the Occidentalists in their field of studies. The fact is not exaggerated, I argue, since they see the balance between Western perspective and Islamic studies found largely in works such as the relation between Islam and the United

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<sup>13</sup> Madjid, Nurcholis, *Orientalism-Occidentalism*, a paper presented on Tuesday, February 20, 2001 at the Institute Technology of Bandung, <http://www.mailarchive.com/itb@itb.ac.id/msg21970.html>, retrieved February 12, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43

States in a book depicting *Muslim Muhajir and Bilali in the United States*<sup>15</sup>; *Islam, The Religion of the Civilization: Constructing Meanings and the Relevance of Islam Doctrine in History*<sup>16</sup> and many others. In the two works, Ali investigates the plurality of being American Muslims in historical view, while Madjid encourages Indonesians Muslims to honestly study the complexity of Islam and the West without any stratagem ignoring one into another.<sup>17</sup> Of course, it needs a further study in terms of assessing the two prominent intellectuals' works during their intellectual period in Indonesia academia in a more comprehensive investigation.

The next question is what makes the two intellectuals's proposal still stuck in the process of inquiry of ideas? The long gap of intellectual space—I mean Mukti Ali has proposed academic Occidentalism 35 years before Madjid gave the commentary of the study. If three decades are missing in answering the calling, it is interesting to note some factors making the space of time of the study. First, the continuation of the discourse is mainly intended for the students of the state Islamic universities. The internal circle of thought and publication contributes to this limited segment. The book and paper in which they presented their ideas were not easily found in the public outreach.

While the limited publication is present in the first factor, the next factor is on the obstacle of the academic aspect. After their legacy of academic level, there were not many Muslims intellectual concentrated in the discourse of Occidentalism in Indonesia. It is not really surprising if the development of the study is not like some scholars expected. This factor is

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<sup>15</sup> Mukti Ali wrote the experience of American Muslim classified into Muslim Muhajir and Muslim Bilali in *Muslim Bilali and Muslim Muhajir in America* (Jakarta: Masagung, 1990)

<sup>16</sup> Nurcholis Madjid encourages the keen observation of related issues developed in the West and its encounter with Islamic perspective in *Islam, The Religion of the Civilization: Constructing Meanings and the Relevance of Islam Doctrine in History* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995)

<sup>17</sup> Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam, The Religion of the Civilization: Constructing Meanings and the Relevance of Islam Doctrine in History*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), p.313

also in line to the coming crucial fact. Occidentalism is a pervasive vast study of multi-disciplinary approach. The discourse includes history, religion, international politics, cultural studies, sociology, and other related social-humanities science.

In the current era, academic Occidentalism, I think, is one of the prototypes of the interconnected-integrated paradigm in Islamic higher learning<sup>18</sup>. The applicable term of Occidentalism is still in critical discussion but the urgency as shown in this paper is inevitably demanded. The proposition of academic-objective Occidentalism thus meets its significant urgency and intelligibility.

#### **D. Concluding Remarks**

At the dawn of the massive need of peace and tolerance, some challenges of prospective proposition may need further consideration. Conflict occurs in the history of civilization—including the tension come up from the dichotomy of the West and Islam is inevitable. Terrorism, hatred, prejudice, discrimination and other social ills are manifest, but the need of common ground to clarify those act are more demanded. I think this present background of problem needs to be responded in mutual-respectful mode of approach.

Thus I believe that every act of promoting mutual understanding and learning should be advanced. Accordingly, we all should signify an actual act carried out in its truest sense. In this respect, I believe, the need of objective-academic Occidentalism, notwithstanding its challenge of terminology limitations, is one of the alternative aspects in which individuals, groups, and entities of Islam can contribute to the virtues of knowledge and understanding of the Western complexities. Occidentalism in this facet of proposition is a keen balance of intellectual study of the Western

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<sup>18</sup> In this respect, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta has settled university paradigm in a 'interconnected-integrated framework' in accordance with the IAIN-UIN transformation in 2004 .



society, culture, religion, and the state in a comprehensive perspective under the spirit of constructive-dialog and objective-scientific endeavor.

The challenges of socializing and promoting academic Occidentalism are not only a task of Muslim, but actually this is also the integral element of Indonesian society. The starting point of the initiative will support the fact that Indonesia is the largest Muslim countries in the world. Indonesian Muslim in particular and the citizen in general can accomplish the median entity. The median ways of mode of thinking bears the inclusive type of mindset on how to deal with multicultural entities in the globe.

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