Poetry as Moral Tribunal: Islamic Verse in *Madjalah Sunda* during Indonesia's 1966-1967 Political Transition

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Abstract

This article examines Islamic poetry published in the Bandung-based Sundanese periodical *Madjalah Sunda* during Indonesia's political transition of 1966-1967. Existing scholarship has established the importance of print in the formation of modern Sundanese literature and Islam-Sunda identity, but it has paid little attention to Islamic verse in a short-lived general-interest magazine whose editorial identity was also political and anti-communist. Using the historical method of heuristics, external and internal source criticism, interpretation, and historiography, the study reconstructs a core corpus of seven poems from issues 43, 47, 49, 65, and 66. It distinguishes composition dates from publication dates and limits chronological claims to poems whose authorship, issue, page, or reproduced image can be verified. The findings show that Islamic expression did not occupy a single devotional register. It ranged from Qur'anic transcreation and contemplations of time and death to moral economy, criticism of political promises, an ethic of productive labor, and eschatological condemnation of named political actors. These poems did not develop in a simple sequence from private devotion to public protest. They formed a layered repertoire through which writers converted economic deprivation, distrust of authority, and disputed memories of 1965 into Sundanese moral language. The article argues that *Madjalah Sunda* made poetry a vernacular moral tribunal. Its pages relocated judgments that appeared unresolved in political life into the ethical and eschatological authority of Islam, while modern free verse, old orthography, and local imagery kept those judgments culturally legible to Sundanese readers.

Keywords: *Madjalah Sunda*, Islamic poetry, Sundanese print culture, 1965-1966 transition, vernacular Islam, historical literature

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Introduction

Sundanese print culture had long been more than a neutral channel for written language. Printing reorganized literary authority, altered the relationship between older verse forms and new prose, and created publics whose sense of language was shaped by schools, publishers, editors, and the circulation of periodicals.[1] By the twentieth century, newspapers and magazines had become important sites where Sundanese writers negotiated local identity, Indonesian nationalism, religious commitment, and the practical demands of modern readership. The periodical page was particularly consequential because it placed unlike materials beside one another. News, political commentary, fiction, satire, advice, and religious reflection could enter the same field of reading and acquire meanings from their proximity.

Studies of Islamic print in West Java have demonstrated how Sundanese-language magazines helped construct Islam-Sunda identity. Jajang A. Rohmana and Muhamad Zuldin show that Qur'anic commentary in six Islamic magazines made religious teaching intelligible through familiar Sundanese expressions, everyday concerns, and the authority of local Muslim scholars.[2] That scholarship clarifies how explicitly Islamic periodicals produced religious identity over a long period. A different problem arises, however, when Islamic discourse appears in a magazine that was not organized primarily as a vehicle of Qur'anic commentary or institutional preaching. In such a publication, religion may work less as a discrete rubric than as a vocabulary through which other subjects become morally interpretable.

Madjalah Sunda offers an unusually concentrated case. Published in Bandung by Duta Rakjat, it succeeded *Mingguan Sunda* and circulated during the breakdown of Guided Democracy and the consolidation of the New Order. Library catalog records identify *Mingguan Sunda* as a Sundanese weekly published in 1965 and list *Madjalah Sunda* as its new title.[3] The magazine's short existence, from 1965 to 1967, coincided with political violence, anti-communist mobilization, a severe economic crisis, student protest, and the gradual displacement of President Sukarno by General Suharto. Abdullah Mustappa later characterized the publication as an example of Sundanese journalism confronting communism, while also stressing the editorial importance of factual accuracy and idealism.[4] Ajip Rosidi's role as editor linked this political periodical to a wider project of sustaining Sundanese literary production. Recent scholarship on Rosidi has emphasized his productive tension

[1] Mikihiro Moriyama, *Sundanese Print Culture and Modernity in Nineteenth-Century West Java* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2005).

[2] Jajang A. Rohmana and Muhamad Zuldin, "Print Culture and Local Islamic Identity in West Java: Qur'anic Commentaries in Sundanese Islamic Magazines (1930-2015)," *Al-Tahrir* 19, no. 1 (2019): 1-27.

[3] HathiTrust Digital Library, "Mingguan Sunda," catalog record, accessed April 24, 2025, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000076382.

[4] Abdullah Mustappa, *Majalah Sunda: Ragam Jurnalistik Sunda Melawan Komunis* (Bandung: Kiblat Buku Utama, 2017).

between Sundanese and Indonesian literary worlds, including his movement between inherited forms and modern literary practice.

The historical context made the magazine page a contested moral space. The national political transition did not simply replace one administration with another. It reorganized the boundaries of legitimate speech, elevated anti-communism, and attached new value to pragmatism, order, and productive action. Student organizations became central actors in the public challenge to Sukarno, although their subsequent relationship with military power was neither politically innocent nor stable.[5] At the same time, inflation placed the language of justice under severe material pressure. The Jakarta consumer price index rose by 639 percent in 1966, then remained at 113 percent in 1967.[6] For urban readers, words such as freedom, peace, sacrifice, work, hunger, and justice therefore carried immediate political and bodily meanings.

The violence surrounding the destruction of the Indonesian Communist Party also produced a highly polarized field of memory. Anti-communist accounts often treated named leftist figures as self-evident embodiments of treachery, while later historical research has shown that the production of the official narrative was part of the seizure and legitimation of power.[7] Poems printed in 1966-1967 must consequently be read in two registers at once. They were responses to fear, political upheaval, and the demand for moral explanation. They were also interventions within an emerging anti-communist order. To treat their accusations as transparent descriptions of events would confuse situated rhetoric with verified historical fact. To detach them from the crisis that made such rhetoric persuasive would be equally misleading.

Research on *Madjalah Sunda* has largely emphasized its institutional history, editorial politics, and place in the career of Ajip Rosidi. Research on Islam in Sundanese print has focused more often on dedicated Islamic magazines, Qur'anic interpretation, or the longer history of religious identity. The poems themselves have not been studied as a small historical archive in which modern Sundanese form, Islamic moral reasoning, material crisis, and regime change converged. This gap matters because poetry could say what ordinary political prose could not say in the same way. Its compressed imagery, rhetorical questions, typographic spacing, and eschatological scenes did not merely decorate political opinions. They reorganized political experience into judgment, repentance, exhortation, and imagined punishment.

This article asks two questions. First, how did the editorial and political setting of *Madjalah Sunda* shape the publication of Islamic poetry in 1966-1967? Second, how did the poems use Islamic and Sundanese literary resources to interpret political authority, economic deprivation, labor, time, and death? The article argues

[5] Francois Raillon, *Politik dan Ideologi Mahasiswa Indonesia: Pembentukan dan Konsolidasi Orde Baru 1966-1974*, trans. Nasir Tamara (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985).

[6] Gunnar Tómasson, "Indonesia: Economic Stabilization, 1966-69," *Finance & Development* 7, no. 4 (1970), https://doi.org/10.5089/9781616353018.022.A008.

[7] John Roosa, *Dalih Pembunuhan Massal: Gerakan 30 September dan Kudeta Suharto* (Jakarta: Institut Sejarah Sosial Indonesia, 2008).

that the magazine made poetry a vernacular moral tribunal. This formulation does not imply a court with stable procedures or impartial verdicts. It describes a textual practice in which unresolved claims about justice were transferred from political institutions to a domain authorized by tauhid, Qur'anic language, ethical labor, remembrance of death, and divine punishment. The novelty of the argument lies in identifying this function within a general Sundanese magazine rather than an explicitly Islamic periodical, and in showing that its religious poetry formed a layered repertoire rather than a linear movement from private spirituality to public politics.

Method

The research follows the four stages of historical inquiry employed in the original study: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography.[8] Heuristics involved identifying and assembling editions and reproduced pages of *Madjalah Sunda*, particularly issues 43, 47, 49, 65, and 66, together with the magazine's bibliographic record, Ajip Rosidi's autobiography, Abdullah Mustappa's retrospective study, works on Sundanese literary history, and scholarship on Indonesia's political and economic transition. The primary poetic evidence is preserved in reproduced magazine pages held by the Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi in Bandung and embedded in the research document. Those reproductions retain pre-1972 spelling, page layout, author names when present, issue references, and in several cases dates of composition.

External criticism was essential because the supplied document did not preserve every citation as a conventional Word footnote. Notes appeared as page-layout text, some bibliographic entries were duplicated under variant titles, and the stated set of issues differed between the Chapter III heading, the conclusion, and the appendices. Each poem was therefore checked through a combination of superscript marker, note text, caption, reproduced page, issue number, visible page number, author line, and composition date. The catalog history of *Mingguan Sunda* and *Madjalah Sunda* was checked against HathiTrust records, while the bibliographic identity of Mustappa's 2017 book was checked against a library catalog that records its title, publisher, pagination, and ISBN.[9]

This procedure produced a core corpus of seven poems for which sufficient provenance survives in the supplied evidence. Four were published in 1966: Rachmat M. Sas. Karana's "Soalna" and "Anu Mere Katengtreman," St. Maemunah D.'s "Demi Waktu," and Kusnadi Prawirasumantri's "Mungguh Manusa." Three appeared in 1967 issues: Yus Rusyana's "Lain Utjap," Abu Dzar's "Njaba ka Naraka," and the unsigned "Liang Kubur."[10] The source inventory mentions other

[8] Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2013), 69-82, 96-103. Dudung Abdurrahman, *Metode Penelitian Sejarah Islam* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2011).

[9] HathiTrust Digital Library, "Madjalah Sunda," catalog record, accessed April 24, 2025, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/010585283. Abdullah Mustappa, *Majalah Sunda: Ragam Jurnalistik Sunda Melawan Komunis* (Bandung: Kiblat Buku Utama, 2017).

[10] *Madjalah Sunda*, nos. 43, 47, 49, 65, and 66 (1966-1967), selected archival reproductions, Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, Bandung.

titles, including "Powe Harita," "Mangsa Srangenge Surup," "Butiti," and "Badeganing Hirup," but the supplied file does not preserve sufficiently complete issue and page provenance for them. They are not used to establish chronological change in this article. This restriction is a result of source criticism, not an assumption that the additional poems never appeared.

Internal criticism examined the relationship between poetic voice, political claim, and historical context. Names and accusations in an anti-communist satire were treated as evidence of contemporary political memory, not as independent proof of guilt. Religious allusions were distinguished by degree. Direct Qur'anic transcreation, explicit reference to Allah, and eschatological scenes were separated from more implicit moral registers such as ethical work, social justice, or remembrance of death. The analysis also distinguishes a poem's composition date from its publication date. "Lain Utjap," for example, is dated 23 August 1966 on the reproduced page but appeared in issue 65, which belongs to the 1967 sequence. "Liang Kubur" is likewise dated "Kebon Kolot 66" although it was printed in issue 66 in 1967. A publication sequence cannot automatically be interpreted as an intellectual sequence.

Interpretation combines close reading with the historical-literary principle that literature belongs to a changing cultural system. Wellek and Warren's account of literary history is useful here because form cannot be separated from the relations among authors, conventions, institutions, and historical situations.[11] It is used as an interpretive orientation, not as a substitute for source criticism. Historiography then organizes the verified evidence into a contextual account that moves from the magazine's institutional setting to the thematic and formal work of the poems, followed by a discussion of their position in Sundanese print history and the historiography of Indonesia's transition.

Results

From a Sundanese Weekly to a Short-Lived Political Magazine

Madjalah Sunda emerged from *Mingguan Sunda*, which began publication in Bandung in 1965. The HathiTrust catalog records *Mingguan Sunda* as a Sundanese-language periodical published by Duta Rakjat and identifies *Madjalah Sunda* as its succeeding title.[12] The later catalog entry for *Madjalah Sunda* describes an illustrated periodical published in Bandung by Duta Rakjat, with its description based on year one, number 35, dated 30 November 1965.[13] The record reinforces the existence of institutional continuity, although it does not directly explain the editorial considerations underlying the change.

[11] René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), 251-270.

[12] HathiTrust Digital Library, "Mingguan Sunda," catalog record, accessed April 24, 2025, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000076382.

[13] HathiTrust Digital Library, "Madjalah Sunda," catalog record, accessed April 24, 2025, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/010585283.

Ajip Rosidi's recollection supplies that internal history. The original weekly was associated with Achmad Sanusi and Rosidi, while printing costs and a move from the Baharata press to Ganaco or Masa Baru created practical reasons to reconsider the publication's format and name.[14] The transition from weekly newspaper to magazine was therefore not merely cosmetic. It changed production rhythms and opened greater space for essays, literary pages, serialized writing, and visual arrangement. A magazine format could accommodate slower reading and a broader range of genres than a newspaper driven primarily by immediate reporting.

Its political location was nonetheless unmistakable. Achmad Sanusi was linked to Persatuan Sarjana Muslim Indonesia and received support from the West Java branch of Nahdlatul Ulama to serve as the publication's general leader. The paper and magazine were remembered as openly opposed to the PKI, while Ajip Rosidi directed the editorial work.[15] In the licensing environment of the mid-1960s, political sponsorship was connected to permission to publish and access to paper. The periodical's Islam, Sundaneseness, and anti-communism were therefore not independent layers. They met within the organizational conditions of print.

The magazine's brief life ended in a different political economy from the one in which it began. By 1967 the New Order's stabilization program had started to restrain inflation, but publishers continued to face high production costs and reduced support. Rosidi later associated the withdrawal of paper subsidies with the broader interruption of publishing activity, while Mustappa described *Madjalah Sunda* as lasting less than three years, from 1965 to 1967.[16] The end of the magazine resulted from a combination of material constraint, changing political urgency, and Rosidi's decision to concentrate again on literary and cultural work. Its closure should not be interpreted simply as the disappearance of demand for Sundanese reading. It illustrates how vulnerable regional-language periodicals were to the price of paper, licensing arrangements, editorial labor, and shifts in the political field.

Within that short institutional life, poetry occupied a meaningful position. Literary pages did more than soften a political magazine. They offered forms of address unavailable to reportage. A poet could question the moral content of "freedom," convert hunger into an accusation against greed, render political leaders mortal before God, or imagine the afterlife as the site of punishment. The resulting evidence is summarized below.

Table 1. Core corpus reconstructed from the supplied archival evidence

Poem	Author	Issue and year	Evidentiary basis	Dominant register

[14] Ajip Rosidi, *Hidup Tanpa Ijazah: Yang Terekam dalam Kenangan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 2008), 351.

[15] Abdullah Mustappa, *Majalah Sunda: Ragam Jurnalistik Sunda Melawan Komunis* (Bandung: Kiblat Buku Utama, 2017).

[16] Ajip Rosidi, *Hidup Tanpa Ijazah: Yang Terekam dalam Kenangan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 2008), 395. Abdullah Mustappa, *Majalah Sunda: Ragam Jurnalistik Sunda Melawan Komunis* (Bandung: Kiblat Buku Utama, 2017).

"Soalna"	Rachmat M. Sas. Karana	No. 43, 1966	Reproduced page and caption	Social justice and moral economy
"Demi Waktu"	St. Maemunah D.	No. 47, 1966, p. 19	Reproduced page and footnote	Time, accountability, literary memory
"Anu Mere Katengtreman"	Rachmat M. Sas. Karana	No. 47, 1966, p. 18	Reproduced page and footnote	Political distrust resolved through tauhid
"Mungguh Manusa"	Kusnadi Prawirasumantri	No. 49, 1966	Reproduced page and caption	Qur'anic transcreation and obedience
"Lain Utjap"	Yus Rusyana	No. 65, 1967, p. 17	Reproduced page and footnote	Ethical labor against empty rhetoric
"Liang Kubur"	Unsigned	No. 66, 1967, p. 16	Reproduced page, visible page number, and caption	Death and self-recollection
"Njaba ka Naraka"	Abu Dzar	No. 66, 1967, p. 17	Reproduced page and footnote	Anti-communist eschatological satire

1966: Moral Economy, Time, and Distrust of Earthly Authority

The 1966 poems show that Islamic expression entered the magazine through several levels of explicitness. "Soalna" is the least doctrinal in vocabulary, yet its date and ethical structure place economic suffering within a Muslim moral calendar. Written by Rachmat M. Sas. Karana and reproduced from issue 43, the poem is dated Idul Adha 1385 H.[17] Its central move is corrective. The problem is not merely a cup of coffee or a plate of rice. The problem is that rights and justice have been buried by greed. By shifting from small items of consumption to the structure that makes them inaccessible, the poem refuses to reduce poverty to appetite. Hunger becomes an indictment of unjust accumulation.

The poem's concreteness is historically significant. The national inflation crisis was not experienced by readers as a statistical abstraction. It was encountered in the price of food, transport, paper, and other necessities. "Soalna" uses bodily and domestic nouns to bring justice into the scale of everyday life. Its religious force does not depend on repeated sacred names. Idul Adha supplies an ethical frame of sacrifice, distribution, and responsibility, while the accusation against greed makes

[17] Rachmat M. Sas. Karana, "Soalna," *Madjalah Sunda*, no. 43 (1966), archival reproduction, Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, Bandung.

economic relations answerable to a moral order. Islamic poetry in the magazine could therefore operate through moral economy without becoming a sermon.

"Demi Waktu," published on the next major issue in the reconstructed corpus, turns from subsistence to temporality. St. Maemunah D. imagines time as something that begins small, accumulates into years, and may either be buried or used as a stepping-stone toward the future.[18] The title recalls the Qur'anic oath by time in surah al-'Asr, but the poem does not reproduce the surah. Its Islamic character is allusive and is strengthened by the date in the Hijri calendar at the end of the reproduced page. The poet treats time as a field of accountability. The past cannot be recovered, yet it can be made ethically productive through remembrance and writing.

The poem's final confidence in poetry is not an escape from history. It is a claim about preservation. If years can be forgotten, poetry can carry them across generations. In a short-lived periodical, that proposition gains an institutional irony. The magazine disappeared, but its poem remained legible because the page was collected, reproduced, and cited. "Demi Waktu" thus joins ethical reflection with the material work of the archive. The literary text becomes both an argument about memory and an object through which memory survives.

"Anu Mere Katengtreman," printed on page 18 of the same issue, brings political distrust into explicit theological language.[19] Its structure begins with questions. What is peace? What is freedom? The answers reverse the expected meanings. Peace is experienced as anxiety, while freedom is called false. The poem then depicts ordinary people as having been lulled, deceived, and entertained by promises. Typographic indentation separates the political ideals from their bitter answers, making the distance between official vocabulary and popular experience visible on the page.

The poem's resolution is tauhid. From the present until the end of time, it declares, no leader of the people is eternally great except God, who does not break promises. This movement does not withdraw from politics. It establishes a limit on political authority. Human leaders become temporary and morally unreliable when measured against divine constancy. Tauhid supplies a language of political demystification. The target remains unnamed, which allows the complaint to reach beyond one officeholder, even though readers in 1966 would have encountered it within the crisis of Sukarno's authority.

The poem should not be reduced to a simple endorsement of the New Order. Its skepticism toward broken promises can attach itself to more than one regime. The fact that it appeared in an anti-communist magazine during Sukarno's political collapse gives the immediate criticism a clear direction, but the theological standard it invokes is structurally wider. Any ruler who demands lasting reverence or substitutes political speech for moral reliability remains vulnerable to the same

[18] St. Maemunah D., "Demi Waktu," *Madjalah Sunda*, no. 47 (1966): 19, archival reproduction, Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, Bandung.

[19] Rachmat M. Sas. Karana, "Anu Mere Katengtreman," *Madjalah Sunda*, no. 47 (1966): 18, archival reproduction, Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, Bandung.

judgment. This ambiguity helps explain the endurance of religious political satire. Its immediate referent can be historical, while its criterion remains transferable.

"Mungguh Manusa," by Kusnadi Prawirasumantri, makes the Qur'anic source far more explicit. Published in issue 49, it is a Sundanese poetic transcreation of surah al-'Alaq, especially the verses that condemn human arrogance, obstruction of prayer, and refusal of truth.[20] The poem retains the directional force of Qur'anic address. God creates, teaches, witnesses, warns, and commands. The human subject becomes arrogant when he imagines himself self-sufficient. The final imperative is not to submit to the obstructer, but to bow to God.

Transcreation is a more accurate term than literal translation because the poem reorganizes scriptural address into Sundanese rhythm, diction, and typography. Arabic-derived religious vocabulary appears inside local grammar rather than as an ornamental foreign layer. The poem's political relevance comes from this act of vernacularization. A Qur'anic account of arrogance and obstruction becomes available as a moral template for judging contemporary power without requiring the poem to name a current ruler. Scripture is not used as a coded newspaper report. It provides a typology through which readers can recognize pride, coercion, false sufficiency, and resistance.

The four 1966 poems therefore resist a single definition of Islamic content. One frames economic deprivation through justice and greed. One alludes to Qur'anic time and uses poetry as memory. One answers political deception with the sovereignty of God. One transcreates Qur'anic admonition. Together they show that religion in *Madjalah Sunda* was not confined to devotional instruction. It supplied several modes of historical interpretation, from the intimate management of time to the public limitation of authority.

1967: Labor, Mortality, and Eschatological Judgment

The poems published in issues 65 and 66 place ethical labor, death, and punishment beside one another. Their publication order might appear to mark a movement toward more direct political accusation, but the manuscript evidence requires a more careful conclusion. "Lain Utjap" appeared in issue 65, yet the reproduced page records its composition at Gegerkalong Girang on 23 August 1966.[21] The poem belongs to the 1967 publication sequence, but its language was formed during the preceding year. What changed can be stated securely at the level of editorial circulation. A poem written amid the 1966 crisis was selected and made public in the magazine's later sequence.

Yus Rusyana builds "Lain Utjap" around repeated negation. Neither speech nor spittle can cool barren ground, summon rain, obtain pearls from the sea, or fill the world with prosperity. The answer arrives through *gawe rancage*, diligent and

[20] Kusnadi Prawirasumantri, "Mungguh Manusa," *Madjalah Sunda*, no. 49 (1966), archival reproduction, Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, Bandung.

[21] Yus Rusyana, "Lain Utjap," *Madjalah Sunda*, no. 65 (1967): 17, archival reproduction, Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, Bandung.

productive work.[22] The poem's anaphora creates a rhythm of refusal before it offers a positive ethic. Speech is not condemned because language is inherently empty. A poem that denounced all language would negate its own medium. The target is language detached from accountable action, particularly rhetoric that promises transformation without producing it.

This ethic would have been legible in the early New Order, when performance, stabilization, and practical achievement were increasingly opposed to the slogans of Guided Democracy. A United States government assessment from August 1967 described a generational shift toward pragmatism, rationalism, and performance.[23] Such a document records an American interpretation shaped by Cold War interests, not an impartial summary of Indonesian consciousness. Even so, it helps identify the international political vocabulary surrounding the new regime. "Lain Utjap" shares part of that vocabulary, but it grounds work in Sundanese agrarian and maritime imagery rather than technocratic policy. Sun, soil, crops, sea, water, boats, nets, and pearls make productive ethics visible within ordinary ecologies.

The poem should therefore not be read as propaganda for a regime. Its call for labor can affirm collective responsibility while remaining critical of rulers who substitute declarations for results. The final movement is inclusive. The community is invited to sail together toward well-being. Ethical action is collective rather than concentrated in a heroic leader. This feature links the poem to "Anu Mere Katengtreman." The earlier poem limits political reverence through tauhid, while "Lain Utjap" relocates agency from promises to shared work.

"Liang Kubur," printed on page 16 of issue 66, changes the scale of reflection. The unsigned poem calls the grave a door of earth and a resting place for the tired heart.[24] Its imagery is domestic and local. A door, a house, earth, and a bamboo stump make death familiar without trivializing it. The poem rejects the image of the grave as a well that should simply inspire fear. Its sharper concern is forgetfulness. A person can pass through life while failing to remember the end that gives conduct its moral horizon.

The phrase "Kebon Kolot 66" on the reproduced page probably records the place and year of composition. Publication in issue 66 occurred in 1967. This gap again complicates any claim that 1967 poems were newly more contemplative than those of 1966. The poem demonstrates continuity. Reflection on mortality was composed alongside political upheaval and later printed beside much harsher satire. Editorial juxtaposition is therefore more important than an assumed annual

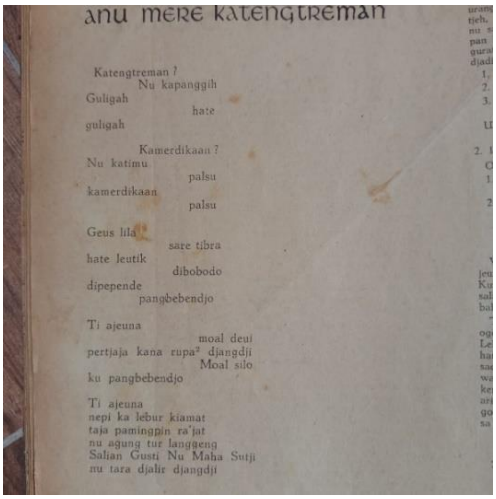
[22] Yus Rusyana, "Lain Utjap," *Madjalah Sunda*, no. 65 (1967): 17, archival reproduction, Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, Bandung.

[23] United States Department of State, "Paper Prepared in the Department of State for the National Security Council, August 4, 1967," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, vol. 26, document 241 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v26/d241.

[24] Unsigned, "Liang Kubur," *Madjalah Sunda*, no. 66 (1967): 16, archival reproduction, Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, Bandung.

progression. A reader could encounter remembrance of death on one page and the imagined punishment of political enemies on the next.

That adjacent punishment appears in Abu Dzar's "Njaba ka Naraka," printed on page 17.[25] The poem adopts the narrative device of a journey through hell and names Aidit, Subandrio, Untung, and Gerwani. It also invokes a "Dalang Nasakom," an expression that implies a controlling political figure without naming him directly. The work converts the political narrative of 1965 into an eschatological spectacle. Formerly powerful actors are deprived of authority, their speech becomes meaningless, and punishment extends across an exaggerated duration.



anu mere katengtreman

Katengtreman ?
Nu kapanggih
Guligah
hate
guligah

Kamerdikaan ?
Nu katimu
palsu
kamerdikaan
palsu

Geus lila
sare tibra
hate leutik
dibobodo
dipepende
pangbebendjo

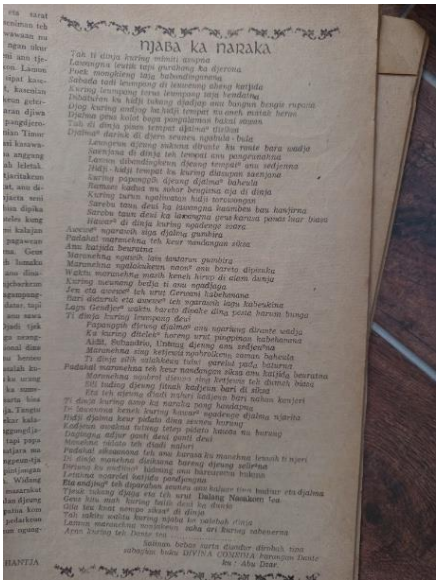
Ti ajeuna
moal deui
pertjaja kana rupa² djangdji
Moal silo
ku pangbebendjo

Ti ajeuna
nepi ka lebur kiamat
taja paminggir ra'jat
nu agung tur langgeng
Salian Gusti Nu Maha Sutji
nu tara djalir djangdji

Figure 1 Rachmat M. Sas. Karana, "Anu Mere Katengtreman," Madjalah Sunda, no. 47 (1966), p. 18.

The contrast with "Anu Mere Katengtreman" is instructive. Karana's poem does not identify the ruler who offered false peace and freedom. Its accusations move through abstraction, typographic distance, and theological limitation. Abu Dzar names enemies and assigns them punishment. The difference is not simply one of courage. The two poems use different technologies of judgment. One creates a portable standard that can be applied to any unreliable ruler. The other stabilizes a particular anti-communist memory by attaching proper names to hell.

[25] Abu Dzar, "Njaba ka Naraka," *Madjalah Sunda*, no. 66 (1967): 17, archival reproduction, Perpustakaan Ajip Rosidi, Bandung.



njaba ka naraka

Figure 2 Abu Dzar, "Njaba ka Naraka," Madjalah Sunda, no. 66 (1967), p. 17.

The named accusations cannot be accepted as independent evidence about the events of 1965. They reveal how one segment of the Sundanese reading public was invited to remember those events in 1967. John Roosa has shown that the story of the 30 September Movement became central to the political justification of the new regime.[26] "Njaba ka Naraka" participated in that production of meaning by moving political guilt beyond legal contestation. In hell, there is no appeal, uncertainty, or competing testimony. The poem's eschatology closes historical debate by presenting punishment as already deserved.

At the same time, the poem's literary borrowing complicates any description of it as a purely local reaction. The journey through hell recalls Dante's *Divine Comedy*, but its moral geography is rewritten through Islamic terms and Indonesian political names. World literature is not simply imitated. It is appropriated as a narrative instrument for a local verdict. This combination of European allegory, Islamic eschatology, Sundanese language, and Cold War accusation shows that vernacular print was not culturally isolated. It was a site where transregional forms were made to serve immediate historical claims.

Form, Orthography, and the Historical Work of the Page

The core corpus uses modern free verse rather than the fixed metrical requirements associated with older Sundanese *pupuh*. Ajip Rosidi's literary work helped articulate the distinction between inherited verse forms and modern *sajak*, while the magazine provided a medium in which such modern writing circulated.[27] Freedom from fixed syllable counts and end-vowel patterns allowed line length to follow argument, emotional pressure, and visual emphasis. The change did not sever modern poetry from oral qualities. Repetition, parallel syntax, and rhetorical questions preserved a declamatory force that could be heard even in silent reading.

[26] John Roosa, *Dalih Pembunuhan Massal: Gerakan 30 September dan Kudeta Suharto* (Jakarta: Institut Sejarah Sosial Indonesia, 2008).

[27] Ajip Rosidi, *Mengenal Kesusasteraan Sunda* (Bandung: Dunia Pustaka Jaya, 2013).

Anaphora is especially important. "Lain Utjap" repeats *lain*, meaning "not," until the sequence of negations yields to productive labor. "Anu Mere Katengtreman" repeats temporal and interrogative structures to turn disappointment into refusal. "Mungguh Manusa" repeats commands and questions derived from Qur'anic address. These devices make argument memorable. They also transform the poem into a social act. The reader is questioned, warned, or recruited rather than left to observe a private lyric voice.

Typography performs historical interpretation. In "Anu Mere Katengtreman," indented answers separate ideals from experience. "Peace" stands at a distance from anxiety, while "freedom" is displaced from its promised meaning by the word "false." This arrangement cannot be fully preserved through plain-text extraction. The reproduced page is therefore not merely an illustration. It is evidence of how spatial form produced meaning. External criticism must attend to page layout because the order of words alone does not contain the whole argument.

Pre-1972 Indonesian and Sundanese orthography supplies another temporal layer. Forms such as *utjap*, *djalma*, *djaman*, and *sjahid* locate the poems before the Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan reform. Orthography is not proof of political position, but it makes the historical distance of the page immediately visible. Arabic-Islamic vocabulary is also domesticated within Sundanese usage. *Gusti*, *sudjud*, *iman*, and related terms do not appear as detached quotations from another linguistic world. They function inside vernacular syntax and local images.

The seven poems can therefore be arranged along two axes rather than a single chronology. The first axis concerns religious explicitness. "Mungguh Manusa" and "Njaba ka Naraka" make scriptural or eschatological authority direct, while "Soalna" and "Demi Waktu" work through moral economy and Qur'anic allusion. The second axis concerns the object of judgment. Some poems direct attention inward to time, mortality, and responsibility. Others address labor, political promises, or named enemies. A poem can be explicitly religious but politically indirect, or politically sharp with relatively little doctrinal vocabulary. This two-axis pattern explains the corpus more accurately than a claim that Islamic poetry simply became more political from 1966 to 1967.

Discussion

A Vernacular Moral Tribunal

The phrase "moral tribunal" identifies a recurring operation in the corpus. Political and economic experiences are brought before standards that exceed the authority of the state. Greed is judged against justice. Rhetoric is judged against work. Leaders are judged against divine fidelity. Human arrogance is judged through the Qur'anic account of creation and dependence. Political enemies are judged through an imagined afterlife. The tribunal is vernacular because these standards are expressed through Sundanese language, agrarian images, familiar objects, and the visual conventions of a regional magazine.

This function differs from formal religious instruction. Rohmana and Zuldin describe Sundanese Islamic magazines in which Qur'anic commentary helped form

pious identity through local expression.[28] *Madjalah Sunda* was not one of the six magazines in their study, and its Islamic poetry did not operate as a regular tafsir rubric. It inserted moral language into a mixed publication. This distinction expands the historiography of Islam-Sunda print. Islamic identity was produced not only through magazines explicitly dedicated to religious interpretation. It also emerged when a political and literary periodical made social conflict answerable to religious concepts.

The magazine's general character gave the poems particular force. A reader did not encounter "Soalna" in isolation from reports of inflation or protest, nor "Njaba ka Naraka" outside a publication identified with anti-communist journalism. Genre adjacency shaped interpretation. Poetry condensed the magazine's larger political world without merely repeating its prose. It could turn a policy crisis into hunger, a legitimacy crisis into broken promises, and political revenge into a journey through hell.

The tribunal was not impartial. "Njaba ka Naraka" demonstrates its exclusionary capacity. By imagining named actors as already punished, the poem transformed a contested political history into a closed moral narrative. Its religious authority intensified the finality of the accusation. This is precisely why the poem is valuable historical evidence. It records how eschatology could help naturalize anti-communist memory. The task of the historian is neither to endorse the verdict nor to dismiss it as mere propaganda. The task is to reconstruct the conditions that made such a verdict meaningful, publishable, and emotionally satisfying.

Layered Repertoire Rather Than Linear Development

The evolution of the work demonstrates a shift from reflective and personal poetry toward a more collective and persuasive form, increasingly clear in its delivery of satirical criticism. Part of that pattern is visible in publication order. "Demi Waktu" is contemplative, "Lain Utjap" advocates collective work, and "Njaba ka Naraka" names political actors. Yet external criticism weakens a strictly linear interpretation. "Lain Utjap" was composed in August 1966 before its appearance in issue 65. "Liang Kubur" was also dated 1966 before appearing in issue 66. Composition and circulation formed overlapping timelines.

The more defensible conclusion is that the magazine assembled a layered repertoire. Contemplation, Qur'anic warning, economic criticism, work ethic, political distrust, and punitive satire coexisted. Editorial selection made older and newer compositions available within a changing political moment. The significance lies less in a steady transformation of authorial consciousness than in the magazine's capacity to reactivate a poem under new conditions. "Lain Utjap" could be written during crisis and published when the New Order's language of performance was gaining strength. "Liang Kubur" could be composed in 1966 and acquire new meaning when placed beside anti-communist punishment in 1967.

[28] Jajang A. Rohmana and Muhamad Zuldin, "Print Culture and Local Islamic Identity in West Java: Qur'anic Commentaries in Sundanese Islamic Magazines (1930-2015)," *Al-Tahrir* 19, no. 1 (2019): 1-27.

This layered model also prevents politics from absorbing the entire corpus. "Demi Waktu" and "Liang Kubur" preserve longer Islamic and literary concerns with accountability, memory, and death. Their presence does not make them apolitical. It shows that historical actors continued to inhabit temporalities not exhausted by regime change. Daily devotion, mortality, literary ambition, and public crisis remained simultaneous.

Regional Print, Modern Form, and Editorial Mediation

Moriyama's history of Sundanese print demonstrates that modernity in West Java was shaped through institutions that selected forms of language and literature for new reading publics.[29] *Madjalah Sunda* belongs to a later phase, but the institutional principle remains relevant. The magazine did not passively receive poems that already possessed stable meaning. Issue sequence, page placement, captions, typography, and coexistence with political journalism mediated how the poems were understood.

Rosidi's editorial position further connected regional-language activism with modern literary form. His career cannot be reduced to a choice between local tradition and Indonesian modernity. It was marked by continual negotiation between them. The poetic pages of *Madjalah Sunda* materialize that negotiation. Modern free verse carries Qur'anic admonition. A European infernal journey is rewritten in Sundanese and Islamic terms. Local agricultural diction is used to criticize empty political speech. The magazine therefore preserved regional language by making it capable of addressing the most urgent contemporary conflicts.

This finding contributes to press history as well as literary history. Press studies often privilege editorials, news reports, ownership, censorship, and licensing. Those categories remain necessary, especially for a magazine that depended on political sponsorship and paper allocation. Yet poetry could perform editorial politics at a different level. It created affective alignment, moral hierarchy, and historical memory. A full history of the periodical must therefore treat the literary page as part of political communication, not as a decorative supplement.

Evidentiary Limits and Historiographical Position

The article's argument focuses more specifically on key themes relevant to the objective of the discussion. The supplied document preserves 114 numbered notes, but not every bibliographic entry is complete or traceable. Several secondary references appear in variant or duplicated forms, while some poem titles lack recoverable issue and page data. The core corpus is restricted to seven poems because their provenance can be checked through reproduced pages, captions, and notes. This limit improves rather than diminishes the historical claim.

The surviving issues are also not a statistically representative sample of all Sundanese poetry in 1966-1967. The findings describe editorially selected poems in one short-lived magazine. They cannot establish how all Sundanese Muslims

[29] Mikihiro Moriyama, *Sundanese Print Culture and Modernity in Nineteenth-Century West Java* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2005).

understood the political transition. Nor can named accusations in satire establish responsibility for the events of 1965. The evidence supports a history of representation, mediation, and moral language.

Within those limits, the corpus adds a distinct position to the historiography. Studies of Indonesia's transition explain the military's political ascent, student mobilization, anti-communist violence, and economic stabilization.[30] Studies of Sundanese print explain the formation of literary and religious publics. Reading *Madjalah Sunda* across those fields shows how a regional-language magazine converted national crisis into morally intimate forms. The political transition was experienced not only through decrees, demonstrations, and elite negotiations. It was also experienced as the price of rice, the failure of promises, the demand to work, the memory of time, fear of death, and the imagined certainty of divine judgment.

Conclusion

Madjalah Sunda provided Islamic poetry with a role that exceeded devotion and entertainment during the political transition of 1966-1967. In the seven-poem core corpus, Islamic language ranges from implicit moral economy and Qur'anic allusion to direct transcreation, tauhid, remembrance of death, and eschatological punishment. These forms allowed writers to interpret inflation, unreliable authority, labor, mortality, and the contested memory of 1965 through a Sundanese ethical vocabulary.

The article's central contribution is the concept of the vernacular moral tribunal. Poetry transferred unresolved judgments from political life into forms authorized by divine fidelity, Qur'anic admonition, moral accountability, and the afterlife. That transfer could criticize earthly power, dignify collective labor, and console readers. It could also close historical uncertainty by representing political enemies as already condemned. Islamic moral language was therefore both critical and disciplinary.

The evidence does not support a simple annual progression from private reflection to public protest. Composition dates and publication dates overlap, and contemplative poems were printed beside political satire. A layered repertoire is the more accurate description. *Madjalah Sunda* selected, arranged, and reactivated different poetic modes within a rapidly changing regime. Its novelty as a historical object lies precisely in that mixture. A short-lived general Sundanese magazine became a site where regional language, modern verse, Islam, and national crisis were made mutually intelligible.

[30] Harold Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978). Francois Raillon, *Politik dan Ideologi Mahasiswa Indonesia: Pembentukan dan Konsolidasi Orde Baru 1966-1974*, trans. Nasir Tamara (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985). Gunnar Tómasson, "Indonesia: Economic Stabilization, 1966-69," *Finance & Development* 7, no. 4 (1970), https://doi.org/10.5089/9781616353018.022.A008.

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