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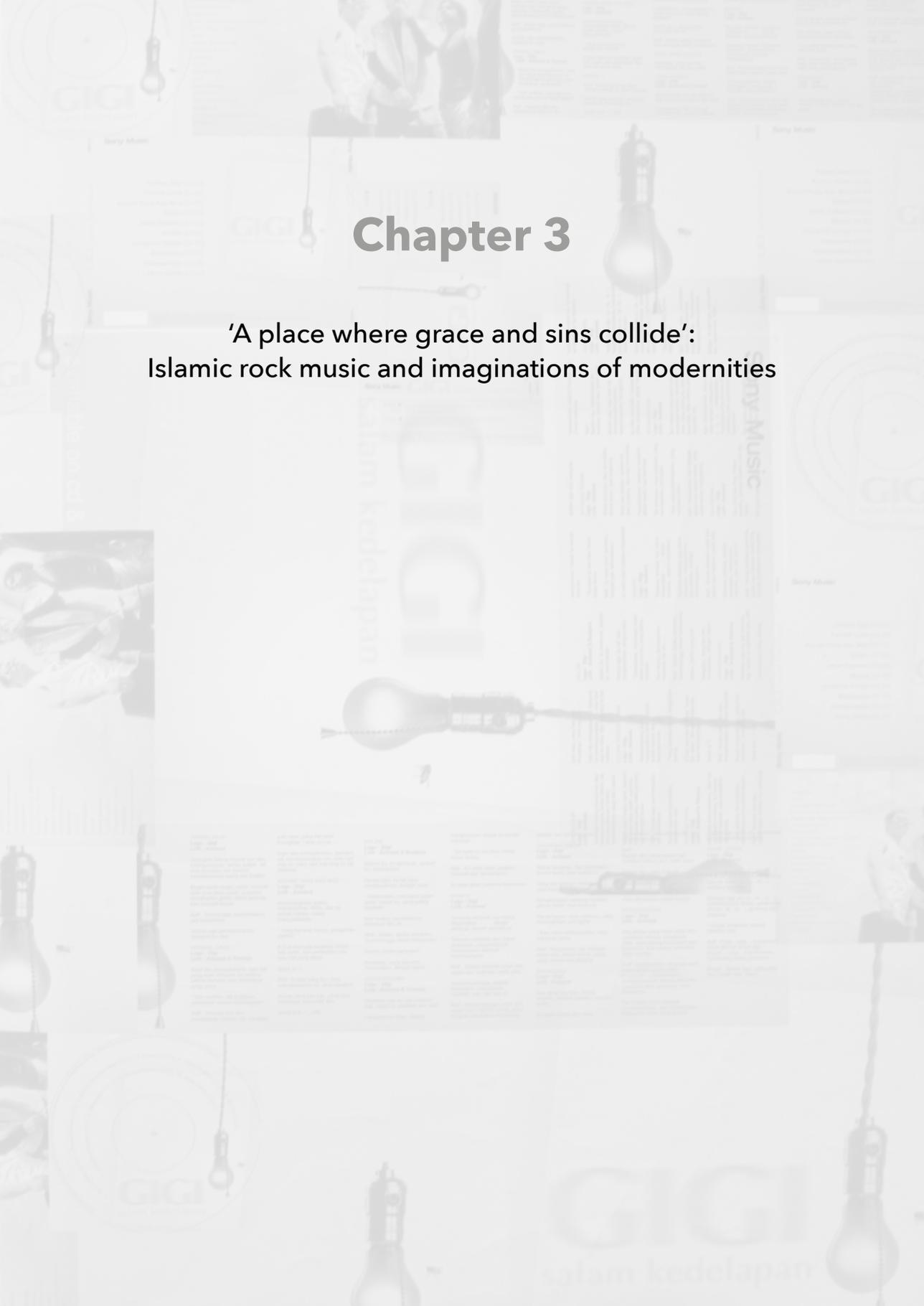
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Chapter 3

'A place where grace and sins collide':
Islamic rock music and imaginations of modernities



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'A place where grace and sins collide': Islamic rock music and imaginations of modernities

"Once an old cleric with a long goatee came to me. I thought he was going to criticize me. But instead he asked us to compose more upbeat religious songs. [He was] bored of slow religious songs. As it turns out, he's a heavy metal cleric."

- Armand Maulana, vocalist of *Gigi* (*The Jakarta Post* 2008)

In Indonesia's post-authoritarian mediasphere, Islamic piety and coolness by no means exclude each other. Today Islam has found its place in an urban youth culture that places 'coolness' as its core value. And while the space of the shopping mall is only temporarily Islamized (cf. chapter 2), the growth of the Islamic popular cultural industries indicates that 'cool Islam' is here to stay.

The Indonesian rock band *Gigi*,¹ which was formed in 1994 in Bandung, represents this new 'coolness' in Indonesian Islamic popular culture. In the past, Islamic music was associated with 'qasidah' (cf. Arps 1996), an Islamic genre blending Middle Eastern, Indian, and Western sounds and 'nasyid', a form of Islamic acappella (cf. Barendregt 2006; 2008b). These genres – and particularly qasidah – are now often regarded as 'conservative' and 'uncool' by today's generation and are shunned (Hermawan, *The Jakarta Post* 2008). By contrast, *Gigi*'s project of rendering their religious reflections and spiritual confessions into distortion-laden rock songs that are accompanied by visually polished music videos, has proved to be phenomenally successful among the young Islamic generation (Ibidem).

Gigi, which consists of vocalist Armand Maulana, guitarist Dewa Budjana, drummer Gusti Hendi, and bassplayer Thomas Ramdhan, reflects the Islamization of the post-authoritarian mediasphere. Although *Gigi* has been around since 1994, they did not always have an Islamic orientation. The band only turned to religion when Islamic-themed popular culture appeared to be commercially successful. The band released its first Islamic-themed album *Railah Kemenangan* in 2004 and has since made five other Islamic-oriented albums, which have all received critical acclaim and were wildly successful (Hermawan, *The Jakarta Post* 2008). Most of

¹ 'Gigi' means teeth. The band was named *Gigi* after the burst of laughs that the band's members had when hearing that the name 'Orang Utan' was nearly decided as the band's name.

Gigi's Islamic-oriented albums are released during Ramadan, as the band's producers try to play in – and cash in – on the extra religious awareness of the consumers during this time. *Gigi's* members explain their switch to Islam by their need to share their love for Allah through music (Ibidem).

The commercial success of their religious albums indicates that *Gigi's* shift to Islam has been well-received by the public. Two *Gigi* fans told me that they were not bothered by the band's switch to Islam, and that they respected the move. In Gilang Sihombing's (26) words: "The band does not really sound different on their religious albums. Sure their message has changed, but it is not like they suddenly became like Opick [another religious singer]. They are still cool." (conversation with author, March 2009) Or as Naufal Cantilan (19) comments: "I think it makes them better artists, they dare to put something out there that is so intimate to them." (conversation with author, March 2009)

The band's switch to Islam did not only entail a change of musical themes, lyrics and iconography, but also of the band members' physical appearance. Whereas before they wore casual hip clothing, or often no shirt at all, they now wear *baju koko* – a long white Muslim outfit – when performing their religious songs (Figures 1-3). Articulating their concern with their cleaner image is also their choice of sponsors. While previously they were sponsored by various cigarette companies, they have now switched to *Enervon C* (a multivitamin produced by a pharmaceutical company). Despite these changes, *Gigi* has retained its rock sound.



Figures 1-3: The change in attire of *Gigi's* frontman Armand Maulana (photos by *gigionline* and *The Jakarta Post*)

Gigi's music has – like other forms of Islamic popular culture – been criticized by conservative groups for its assumed compliance with consumerism, for (re)presenting an embellished set of images, and for merging Islam with banal and profane cultural forms (Hermawan, *The Jakarta Post* 2008). When it comes to music, Islamic authorities disagree on whether Islam forbids, tolerates or encourages Islamic music. Religious leaders have, nevertheless, made distinctions between what is considered music and what religious chant. Although melodious in nature, Qur'anic recitation and the call to prayer are not considered music within Islam. There are strict rules about the ways these texts can be used (Otterbeck 2004: 14–15). Indonesian 'devotional music', in its many genres, generally avoids the direct usage of religious sources (Hermawan, *The Jakarta Post* 2008). *Gigi's* albums too refrain from quoting the Qur'an. Nevertheless, their music has remained a target for critique. "Religion is honesty and so is rock", responds band member Gusti Hendi, when asked how rock music and Islam go together (Ibidem).

Krishna Sen and David Hill (2000) point out that rock music has always been entangled with Indonesia's political history. Under Sukarno, rock music was banned as it was considered to be a genre of the *nekolim*, the neo-colonialist and imperialist countries of the West. For Sukarno, cultural imperialism, like economic and political imperialism, formed a threat to the newly independent nation. The official censorship ironically turned rock music into the symbol of defiance against state-authority and directed young Indonesians' minds to the forbidden far-flung music scenes. Foreign albums were smuggled into the archipelago and Jakartan youngsters tuned into overseas radio broadcasts (Sen and Hill 2000: 166-167).

When Suharto overthrew Sukarno's Old Order in 1966, the ban on rock music was lifted, giving rise to a vibrant rock scene. At the moment that students in the 1970s grew critical of the New Order regime, this rock scene became the vehicle for critical politics (180). The anti-authority message, and particularly the invitation to disorderliness that underpinned Indonesian rock music, essentially opposed New Order ideology. 'Disorder', always the political antithesis of the New Order, became a way for the young to contest the dominant powers. The 'politics of disorderliness', which casted rock as masculine and working class, did not only challenge New Order ideals through their 'disorderly form', but also through their profound critique on middle-class consumerism – the epitome of the developmentalist New Order government (181).

The second half of the 1990s signifies a radical shift away from these tropes. Emma Baulch (2007) describes how during this period, changes in the music industry led rock music to move into the feminized realm of consumerism, where it

transformed from a (criminal) working class, masculine construction, into a bourgeois, image-centered construction. As Baulch writes:

The coincidence of private, advertising-funded television, including the establishment of the advertising saturated MTV Asia, and the transnationalization of the recording industry meant that, increasingly, rock music came to be understood as a set of images. Moreover, on television, and particularly on MTV, rock videos interwove with advertisements for other products, such as shoes, soft drinks, chocolate bars, shampoo, and facial scrubs, indicating a rapprochement between 'rock' and an emerging and increasingly idealized Indonesian consumerism. (Baulch 2007: 26)

What makes rock music political today? What kind of politics are practiced by a band like *Gigi*, a band that was formed amidst these changes in the mid-1990s and that has moved into the consumerist and image-conscious sphere of Islamic popular culture? As I suggested in the introduction of this dissertation, Islamic popular culture engages in debates about the desired course of modernity, and forms an arena where Islamic modernities are imagined, negotiated, and contested. But in which debates does Islamic popular culture actually participate? What kinds of modernities does it imagine? And considering Baulch's (2003) observation that Indonesian cultural scenes often 'gesture elsewhere', to a global cultural scene, how 'Indonesian' are these modernities? What transnational imaginations and politics underpin their construction?

By taking *Gigi* as a case study, and by conducting a discourse analysis of three of their music videos, this chapter will explore these questions. In doing so, it contributes to the study of Indonesian music. So far, scholars of Indonesian music have insightfully explored the genres of among others *qasidah* (Arps 1996), *nasyid* (Barendregt 2006; 2008b), *keroncong* (Hardjana 1996), *dangdut* (Browne 2000; Weintraub 2006; 2010), *campusari* (Sunarto 2007), and death metal (Baulch 2002; 2003; 2007). While omnipresent in the Indonesian cultural scene, Indonesian Islamic (pop)rock music is still an underexplored phenomenon. A study of Islamic rock music could show how a global rock sound feeds into local politics. Whereas the Balinese metal bands that Baulch studied (2002; 2003; 2007) were concerned with the relation between Bali and Jakarta, *Gigi* is concerned with the relation between Indonesia and a larger – Islamic – world. But how does the band negotiate this relation, and how are Islamic modernities mapped upon an imagined Islamic world?

By exploring these questions, my analysis also contributes to the study of (pop) rock music and religion. When looking at research that is concerned with (pop) rock

music and religion, we can observe that a considerable amount of studies focus on Judeo-Christian expressions in music (cf. Howard 1992; Howard and Streck 2004; Stowe 2011; Reed 2004; Luhr 2005; Begbie 2007). Most of these studies focus on American religious (pop) rock music, although a few studies address African engagements with Christian (pop) rock music (cf. Collins 2004; Parsitau 2006). This body of work demonstrates that religion and rock music are compatible. When comparing Christian and Islamic rock music, we see that both articulate piety and devotion. They are also both concerned with issues that their adherents may encounter in their everyday lives. In that sense, Christian and Islamic engagements with rock music do not differ that much. Islamic rock music however differs from Christian rock music through its central engagement with modernity: (how) is Islam compatible with today's modern world? This question does not only underpin *Gigi's* Islamic rock music. In his comprehensive studies of the role of rock music in Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Iran, and Pakistan, Mark Levine (2008; 2009) observes that – particularly after 9/11 – Islamic rock music has become concerned with, and increasingly reflects on, the state of the religion of Islam (Levine 2008: 2). While Levine explores rock music in many regions of the Muslim world, he has ignored Southeast Asian Islamic rock music. My case study of *Gigi's* music here adds an Indonesian perspective to the study of Islam and rock music.

Imagining Islamic modernities, an imagination across time and space

The project of imagining Islamic modernities revolves around a kind of imagination that crosses both space and time. Imagination is spatial since Islamic popular and visual culture fantasizes modern national spaces. This does not mean that the reach of imagination is limited to the borders of the archipelago. As we shall see in the analysis, the modern Indonesian nation is visualized through both a national and a transnational imagination.

This reflects Arjun Appadurai's (1996) observations about imagination. To describe how imagination works in our current epoch of globalization, Appadurai adopts Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of the 'imagined community', and extends it to the concept of 'imagined worlds'. For Appadurai, imagined worlds are the "multiple worlds constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe" (Appadurai 1996: 33). Appadurai believes that we now live in such globally imagined worlds rather than simply in locally imagined communities. In these imagined worlds, imagination no longer takes place

only at the level of the nation-state, but has become transnational or 'postnational'. Two processes underpin this postnational imagination: migration and electronic media. Today, both images and people are in simultaneous circulation: "neither images nor people fit into circuits that are easily bound within local, national, or regional spaces anymore, instead they are in simultaneous circulation." (Appadurai 1996: 4) Through these continuous processes of circulation, the local has for Appadurai become a space that is created by the confluence of many lines of global composition.

But then what constitutes 'the global' that is imagined to be part of 'local' – Indonesian – Islamic modernities? What kinds of transnational imaginations and politics are underlying the construction of Islamic modernities in popular and visual culture? How are these modernities accommodated to a world that after 9/11 has grown suspicious of Muslims? How do transnational imaginations of modernities explore constructive solutions for Muslims?

While I will not be able to address all of these questions in this chapter, the analysis of *Gigi's* music videos will provide a starting point for thinking about how Islamic modernities are constituted by a transnational imagination. The subsequent chapters of this dissertation will further investigate these questions.

Imagining Islamic modernities and futures is not only a spatial venture, but also an essentially 'temporal' project. Again the work of Appadurai (2004; 2013) helps to elaborate and raise questions. In *The Future as Cultural Fact* (2013), Appadurai moves from seeing the social world as an informational space – a domain where diverse imaginations cluster on a topography of pathways and diversions – towards a more pressing concern with *time*. Appadurai's book, and also my own study here, can be seen as replying to Jane Guyer's call (2007) for an anthropology of the futures that people posit, fantasize, fear, await, defer, or dissolve (Guyer 2007: 410).

Appadurai (2004; 2013) suggests that if we want to learn how people fantasize or fear their futures, we should look into their cultural practices. It is for Appadurai in and through culture that ideas of the future are embedded and nurtured (Appadurai 2004: 59). Appadurai asserts that through its assemblages of representation, disposition, practice, and thought, culture produces two distinctive capacities for 'being otherwise'. The first is 'the capacity to aspire' (Appadurai 2013: 126; Appadurai 2004: 67), which means that culture has the ability to imagine forms of human life as forms of life worth living (White 2013). At stake here are the many visions of 'what a good and right life should be like'. People have developed, and continue to develop, these visions in the context of particular forms of collective social existence. The capacity to aspire then involves positioning oneself in a field

that comprises, not just individual means and ends, but also collective understandings of what the means and ends are (Ibidem).

The second capacity of culture is what Appadurai calls 'the social life of design' (Appadurai 2013: 257). This is the capacity to not only imagine, but also to devise the social ecologies and the material and institutional arrangements, within which "lives worth living are plausibly livable" (257). For Appadurai, culture can stimulate alternative forms of living and can accommodate to makings of different social environments.

The capacity to aspire and the social life of design both imagine, and long to create, a better future. It is then not hard to see the link between Appadurai's cultural capacities and the imagination of Islamic futures in Indonesian Islamic-themed popular and visual culture. In its capacity to aspire, Islamic-themed popular culture accommodates to visions of better and 'right' modern lives. Simultaneously, it offers people tools and models through which they are stimulated to actively try to accomplish such a life (the social life of design). Islamic-themed popular culture also points out what kinds of practices lead to the wrong kind of future.

This not only raises questions about what are 'right' and what are 'wrong' kinds of futures. But it also begs questions about the figures through which these futures are imagined – and what these figures say about Indonesia's present. Does Islamic popular and visual culture for instance invoke notions of utopia and dystopia (Jameson 2005) to point at 'right' and 'wrong' roads to the future? Or do popular cultural products, in Guyer's (2007) words, mobilize "reconfigurations of elements that are well-known already"? (Guyer 2007: 416) Does popular culture create in Islamic modernities "temporal architectures [that] become like M. C. Escher drawings: familiar figures, precise, and replicated yet brought together [in] reversions, and [with] shifting focal points"? (Ibidem) The question is not just what spatial and global elements constitute imagined modernities, but also what temporal elements constitute these modernities and through which figures they are imagined.

Appadurai's two 'capacities to be otherwise' always stand at least partially in a negative, or even in a critical relationship, to the given state of affairs, rather than simply affirming it (White 2013). As Appadurai asserts, it is in culture's orientation towards the future that its political potential is located. Although both capacities are unequally distributed throughout society – they are more readily available for the well off than for the lower classes – they always involve an 'ethics of possibility' (Appadurai 2013: 188).

Appadurai puts the 'ethics of possibility' in stark contrast with an 'ethics of

probability', which animates our social life as well. In the first, a diversity of collective goods is imagined. The latter is the ethic of the contemporary finacized economy and its impulse is instead to control and manage risks. Both ethics work simultaneously on Islamic popular and visual culture. On the one hand, popular cultural products give way to an ethics of possibility. Popular culture provides perfect tools to imagine, fantasize, and stimulate the coming into being of desired Islamic modernities. It accommodates to visions of 'better' and 'right' modern lives. On the other hand, these constructions are never free from relations of power. They are always at the same time subject to an 'ethics of probability', which works to diminish risks and which seeks to control what kinds of future are envisioned as wrong and right. Since the dynamics between the two determine how modernities are imagined, their interplay asks for close examination.

This chapter provides a starting point for the investigation of the above-raised issues and questions by analyzing three of *Gigi*'s music videos. While *Gigi* is not the only Indonesian Islamic rock band, I focus on their work since their trajectory and recent transformation mirrors the development of the Indonesian popular cultural scene itself. I focus on music videos – and not just on songs – because they allow me to include the visual dimension in the analysis. I selected *Tuhan* ('God', 2004), *Perdamaian* ('Reconciliation', 2005), and *Nationalism* (2009), since they each engage in a different debate related to modernity.

***Tuhan*: Islam in a modern world**

After a decade of making non-religious music, *Gigi* released their first Islamic-oriented album *Railah Kemenangan* ('Reach for victory') in 2004. Through this album, *Gigi* constructs a discourse in which Islam is a 'flexible' religion that can adapt itself to a modern world, and that is reconcilable with this world. By constructing this discourse, *Gigi* participates in a debate about the reconcilability of Islam and modernity. While there seems to be a general agreement that modern technology and education are desirable, in conservative public discourse modernity has been associated with the dangers of extreme individualism, loose morality, and secularism. Modernity is here seen as something foreign, which is not reconcilable with Islam and is thus unsuitable for Muslim Indonesia (Brenner 1999: 22). Government officials and religious leaders have often warned the Indonesian people not to import the bad with the good. Especially modern(izing) cities like Jakarta with their alluring sinful attractions and distractions are framed as unsuitable places for

(young) Muslims to live. Here modern city lifestyles are seen as troubling Muslim piety. The rising influence of Islamic movements has added particular force to these views (Ibidem).

The discourse that Islam is reconcilable with a modern world is through *Gigi's* first religious album constructed in at least two ways. First, *Railah Kemenangan* shows how Islam in a present-day context makes use of modern media and technology. The songs on this album can be read as *da'wah*. *Da'wah* denotes the spreading the word of Islam and the active encouraging of fellow Muslims in the pursuance of greater piety in all aspects of their lives. *Da'wah* is an age-old Islamic practice, but is on *Railah Kemenangan* now accompanied by *Gigi's* drums and guitar riffs. An example from the album is the song *Lailatul Quadar* ('the night of honor'), which refers to the most virtuous night of the year. In this Ramadan-night, the reward of one good deed is multiplied. The song *Lailatul Quadar* reminds Muslims of the significance of this night and its accompanying practices. The idea that *da'wah* is translatable to rock music is not the only way in which *Railah Kemenangan* shows that Islam is a flexible religion, adaptable to the conditions of a modern world.

Tuhan ('God', 2004) was the first single released off *Railah Kemenangan*. When we look closely at its music video – directed by movie director Hanung Bramantyo – we see that the verbal, visual, and sonic level work together to construct a discourse that articulates that Islam and modernity are reconcilable.

| Lyrics of <i>Tuhan</i> (2004) | |
|---|--|
| Indonesian [original] | English [my translation] |
| Tuhan Tempat aku berteduh Di mana aku mengeluh Dengan segala peluh | God/Allah The place I find shelter Where I complain In all my sweat |
| Tuhan Tuhan yang maha esa Tempat aku memuja Dengan segala do'a | God/Allah God the almighty The place I admire In all my prayers |
| Refrain (repeat) Aku jauh, engkau jauh Aku dekat, engkau dekat Hati adalah cerrmin Tempat pahala dosa bertarung | Refrain (repeat) I am far away, you are far away I am close by, you are close by The heart is like a mirror The place where grace and sins collide |

Figure 4: Lyrics of *Tuhan*

When first looking at the verbal level, at the lyrics of *Tuhan* (Figure 4), we see that the song praises Allah. As can be read from the lyrics, central to the praising of Allah is an (abstract) notion of 'place'. 'Allah' is the 'place' where Muslims can find shelter, where they can complain, where they admire Allah, and where they pray. Hence, it is the place where they can be a Muslim and can practice their religion.



Figure 5: Screenshots of *Tuhan*

When now looking closely at the visual level (Figure 5), there are two 'places' that can be recognized in the music video. First, a symbol of modernity: the big city that looks chaotic and busy with its people, cars, flashing lights, and speedy movements. Second, we see a forest or countryside where *Gigi* performs their song, dressed in *baju koko*. Here, people are shown chopping wood, gathering food, and praying. The video constructs the two places as each other's opposites. On the one hand, we see the chaos and 'modernity' of the city. On the other hand, we see the serenity, quietness, and 'the tradition' of the forest or countryside. The latter is depicted as a place where people can find rest, grace, can pray in all tranquillity, and be a Muslim (see Figure 5). Framed like this, these two depictions at first seem to reflect conservative public discourse: 'tradition' allows you to be a Muslim, while 'modernity', embodied in the modern city space and its alleged chaos, makes it hard to practice Islam and be a pious Muslim.

The video of *Tuhan* however continuously blends these two allegedly opposed

places together by superimposing shots of the city and shots of the forest (Figure 5). As an effect, the flashing lights of the city enter the realm of the forest, while the people in the forest, among whom a praying man and a Muslimah dressed in white (Figure 5), are now placed in the space of the city. The video here thus dissolves the alleged boundaries between 'tradition' and 'modernity'. It creates a place where – as *Gigi* sings in the song's last line – "grace and sins collide". This blending of places, in combination with the song's lyrics, which tell about 'the place', where one can be a Muslim and practice Islam, constructs a discourse that expresses the idea that one can now find that place in both the countryside and the city. Allah can be found in places that are in public discourse often seen as 'traditional' as well as those that are considered 'modern'.

The sonic level further strengthens this discourse. When studying the sonic construction of *Tuhan*, the song can be divided into two parts. The first part combines (A) slow 'easy' rhythm, lengthy, and smooth diction components with (B) fast pace, rough rhythm, and loud, bristly diction components. The second part of the song only uses (B) the fast components as it builds towards a climax.

In the first part, the slow components (A) are mainly linked to shots of the forest, while the fast components (B) are linked to the images of the city. The song hereby thus reinforces a separation between the assumed 'slow', laidback 'traditional' places and the fast-paced (life in) 'modern' places. This separation is challenged as the song progresses. The second part of the song, which contains only (B) the fast components, is accompanied by images of both the city and the forest. By linking these together, the video brings the 'fast' sound of modernity into the realm of the forest.

This interaction between the sonic and visual level, articulates two discourses. First, the interaction constructs a discourse in which the sharp division between 'tradition' and 'modernity' and the connotations that are attached to them in the public sphere disappear as they blend together. And second, the interaction signifies a fear for the disappearance of these allegedly traditional places. The blending of the two places suggests that 'traditional' places are inevitably modernizing, and that one cannot stop modernity from invading these places. The negative traits of the latter discourse are challenged by the interaction between the visual and verbal level, which pointed out that Allah can be found in both places, hence that modernity is not be feared.

Concluding, through *Tuhan*, *Gigi* constructs a discourse in which Islam is a flexible religion that can adapt itself to a modern world, and that is reconcilable with this world. This discourse is constructed through an imagination that is still primarily

'national'. The 'Islamic modern' is here constructed via references to an Indonesian situation in which under forces of nationwide modernization the assumed boundaries between 'traditional' and 'modern' places are increasingly breaking down.

***Perdamaian*: imagining, negotiating and contesting Islamic modernities**

Tuhan constructs a discourse in which Islam is reconcilable with modernity. But what kinds of modernities are then reconcilable with Islam? What kinds of Islamic modernities does *Gigi's* music 'aspire'? Which modernities are suitable for Indonesia? *Perdamaian* ('Reconciliation', 2005) engages with these questions.

Perdamaian was released off *Gigi's* second Islamic-oriented album *Railah Kemenangan Repackage* (2005). This album contains cover songs, of which many were originally composed by 'qasidah moderen' groups. 'Qasidah' is a traditional Arabic poem used to praise the Prophet Muhammad. Ben Arps (1996) has pointed out that when Indonesia started modernizing in the 1970s, a pop music version of qasidah, called 'qasidah moderen' developed to keep up with the rapidly changing social conditions and popular aesthetics (Arps 1996: 393). 'Moderen' here refers to modernity. The songs were concerned with the development of the Indonesian nation. They tried to make sense of the processes that were changing the aspects of social life at that time.

Gigi's Perdamaian was originally sung by the qasidah moderen group *Nasida Ria*, which was founded in 1975 in Semarang. The group was put together by HM Zain, an Islamic teacher, who assembled nine of his female students for the band. *Nasida Ria's* work is known for its critical reflection on the social changes that came with processes of modernization in 1970s and 1980s Indonesia. In this context, the band commented on a variety of issues like justice, environmentalism, gambling, and warfare. *Nasida Ria's* social engagement is also apparent in the lyrics of *Perdamaian* (Figure 6), which were written by Ahmad Buchori Masruri, a *kyai* (expert in Islam). When we look at the lyrics, we see that the song calls for peace and tranquility as it observes that there are a multitude of wars going on.

The references to peace and wars need to be read in the context in which Masruri originally wrote *Perdamaian*. The song was produced and released amidst the Cold War, and can be read as a comment on this tense period. Through its critique on the Cold War, *Perdamaian* comments on a developmentalist project of modernization that was at that time spearheaded by the New Order government.

| Lyrics of <i>Perdamaian</i> (2005) | |
|--|--|
| Indonesian [original] | English [my translation] |
| Perdamaian, Perdamaian (x 8) Banyak yang cinta damai, tapi perang semakin ramai (x 2) Bingung, bingung kumemikirnya (x 4) | Reconciliation, Reconciliation (x 8) Many love peace, but there are a multitude of wars (x 2) Confused, confused, my thoughts/mind becomes confused (x4) |
| Perdamaian, Perdamaian (x 4) Banyak yang cinta damai, tapi perang semakin ramai (x 2) Wahai kau anak manusia, inging aman dan sentosa (x 2) Tapi kau buat senjata biaya berjuta-juta, banyak gedung kau dirikan kemudian kau hancurkan (x 2) Bingung, bingung kumemikirnya (x 4) | Reconciliation, Reconciliation (x 4) Many love peace, but there is a multitude of wars (x 2) Ohhh, you children of humanity, you all want peace and tranquility (x2) But if the money to make weapons, millions, comes from the many buildings that are created (x 2) Confused, confused, my thoughts/mind becomes confused (x4) |
| Perdamaian, Perdamaian (x 2) Banyak yang cinta damai, tapi perang semakin ramai Bingung, bingung kumemikirnya (x 4) | Reconciliation, Reconciliation (x 2) Many love peace, but there are a multitude of wars Confused, confused, my thoughts/mind becomes confused (x4) |

Figure 6: Lyrics of *Perdamaian*

As we can read from the lyrics, the conflicts are imagined to be stirred by a developmentalist project of modernization as “the money to make weapons, millions, comes from the many buildings that are created.” Like other qasidah moderen groups frequently did, *Nasida Ria* here engages with changing social conditions of that time. In the 1970s and 1980s social life (in the capital) changed radically as, under the repressive developmentalist² New Order government, Jakarta grew out to be the symbol of capitalism, industrialization, and urbanization. High

² Suharto’s New Order government has been labeled ‘repressive/authoritarian developmentalist’ (Suryakusuma 2012) Developmentalism here refers to a set of ideas which converge to place economic development at the center of political endeavors and institutions and also as a means through which to establish legitimacy in the political sphere. Economic development is here framed by modern-day Western criteria: economic success is gauged in terms of capitalistic notions of what it means for a country to become developed, autonomous, and legitimate (Yu and Chung 1996: 22-24).

buildings arose and people increasingly migrated to the newly industrialized capital (Emmerson 1999: 34).

These developments prompted both feelings of excitement and fear. *Nasida Ria's Perdamaian* constructs a discourse that has strong dystopian sentiments. It emphasizes that when capitalism is practiced without good morals and values, its profits could be used for the wrong ends, such as warfare. This discourse thus critically assesses the unbridled capitalism that was at the core of the New Order government's developmentalist outlook, and that was supposed to bring about a modern and prosperous Indonesia.

Today not only Jakarta but many other spaces undergo processes of modernization. As a result, the desired path to modernity again becomes a topic of debate. In this debate discourses appear that are very similar to those articulated by *Nasida Ria* in the 1970s and 1980s. The fear over the loss of morals and values for instance still features prominently in discussions about the desired course of modernity. As will be shown in the following two chapters about self-help books and films, the loss of morals is today particularly linked to two issues: loose or 'deviant' sexuality and the advent of a consumer society.

It is in this context that *Gigi's* cover of *Perdamaian* takes up *Nasida Ria's* critique of modernization and geopolitics and translates it to present-day Indonesia. In what follows, I suggest that through mobilizing the figure of dystopia, *Gigi's* version of *Perdamaian* constructs a discourse that profoundly criticizes a capitalist and consumerist road to an Islamic modern future.

In *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (2005), Jameson points out that 'utopia' and the concept spawned by it, 'dystopia', are figures that explore social and political structures. Through the figure of utopia, a perfect, but unrealistic, ideal world is imagined, while through the figure of dystopia a nightmare world is constructed. Jameson observes about dystopia that: "although there are many different dystopias, they share the negative characteristic of being undesirable societies. Dystopias are societies where the condition of life suffers from destruction, deprivation, oppression, or terror." (Jameson 2005: 120) According to Jameson, narratives often use the figures of utopia and dystopia as metaphors for the different directions humanity can take in its choices, ending up with one or two possible futures (119). Utopia and dystopia are thus figures through which futures are imagined, and through which narratives reflect on the directions humanity can take towards those futures.

In *Gigi's* translation of *Perdamaian*, the dystopian sentiments that were recognized on the verbal level, i.e. in the song's lyrics, explicitly manifest themselves

on the visual level. When looking at the opening shot of the music video (Figure 7), we see that – like Jameson’s fictional dystopias which are often set in the future – *Gigi’s Perdamaian* is set in space (Figure 7). This suggests that the world it depicts is set in the future. The camera zooms in on the planet and we see *Gigi* playing on this desolated, smoking – as if it has just been destroyed – planet, without any sign of life to it.

On this smoking planet, a red and white storm is continuously raging (Figures 8-9). Red and white are the national colors of (the flag of) Indonesia, and the storm is at times even resembling the waving of the Indonesian flag. This creates the impression that the desolated planet represents the dystopian future of Indonesia. This suggestion becomes stronger when further analyzing the video clip.



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

Figures 7-9: Opening shots of *Perdamaian*

The opening shots (Figures 7-9) are followed by a flashback. This flashback shows how the destroyed, desolated planet, 'the dystopian future of Indonesia', has come into being. The video maps the road to dystopia through a recurring pattern. In this pattern, first images, signs, and symbols that refer to capitalist modernization are shown. Subsequently these signs are destroyed by terror.



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

Figures 10-12: Screenshots of *Perdamaian*

Figures 10-12 illustrate this pattern. Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the first part of the pattern. Both figures display symbols of capitalist modernization and of a consumer society. Figure 10 shows how skyscrapers are being build/placed on the planet.

Subsequently, the planet turns into the head of *Gigi's* vocalist Armand Maulana. In Figure 11 and 12, we see that in addition to the buildings, now big cars are also placed on the planet/Armand's head. Cars are in Indonesia seen as the ultimate symbol of middle class consumerism. Figure 12 shows the second part of the pattern: the destruction. When Armand's head is full with cars and skyscrapers, knives are pierced through his head. Guns appear on the right side of the screen, shooting him in the head (Figure 12). During this sequence question marks appear (Figures 10-11), while Armand angrily sings "confused, confused, my mind becomes confused." The combination of lyrics and visuals here underscores *Gigi's* confusion and anger about the rise of consumerism, while constructing it as a destructive force.



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21

Figures 13-21: Screenshots of *Perdamaian*

In the video, this pattern recurs several times, and every time it recurs the planet is destroyed a little bit further. Figures 13-21 provide an illustration. Figure 13 shows how symbols of capitalism and a consumer society, respectively skyscrapers and cars, are one by one placed on the planet. Figures 14-16 shows how they are subsequently destroyed and blown into space. After these explosions, chaos and destruction take over. The future planet is now ruled by wars and terror (Figures 17-19) and ultimately reaches the state of a dystopia (the smoking planet) that was also shown in the video's opening shots (Figure 20). In the end the destruction reaches an apocalyptic climax, as in the video's last shot, the planet implodes (Figure 21).

Through this recurring pattern, references to capitalist modernization and a consumer society are in *Perdamaian* turned into images of dystopia, and eventually lead to the destruction of the planet that was suggested to be the future Indonesia. What we see here is that while mapping the road to a dystopian future, the video mobilizes elements (capitalism and consumerism) that are already part of Indonesia's present. This reflects Jameson's (2005) observation that:

Fictional dystopias [...] serve to critique current actual cultural, social, economic and/or political trends that are by the author observed as dangerous and threatening for the future. Fictional dystopias critique these trends by extrapolating and exaggerating specific elements of contemporary society. This functions as a warning against a specific modern trend or the threat of oppressive powers in one form or another. (Jameson 2005: 156)

Like Jameson's dystopias, *Perdamaian* criticizes current social, cultural, economic, and political processes. In *Gigi*'s case, these processes are related to modernization. In its construction of a dystopia, *Perdamaian* exaggerates very specific elements of modernization. It extrapolates those elements that are in Indonesia linked to a capitalist, consumerist style of modernity and frames them as leading to the destroyed planet that is 'the dystopian future of Indonesia'. In this way, the figure of dystopia has become a metaphor for the direction modernity can take in Indonesia, and the direction *Perdamaian* here warns for is a capitalist and consumerist road to a modern future.

This warning is strengthened by the use of sound in *Perdamaian*. The sound of the drums and electric guitars that is accompanying the images of dystopia is both daunting and enraged, while Armand's voice sounds angry and desperate, thereby framing the video as a wake-up call, a last chance or attempt to turn the situation around.

The warning is in *Perdamaian* explicitly framed as coming from 'Islam'. In between

the shots of destruction, which are accompanied by rough up-tempo drums and guitar riffs, the video suddenly breaks away from the visual and sonic unruliness. The instruments are muted and the video cuts to Armand (Figures 22-24). The replications of the Kaaba that we see in the background (Figure 22) and the architecture of the Al-Masjid al-Haram mosque (Figure 27) suggest that Armand is preaching from Mecca. During his 'preach' he is shown in direct-address, while singing in a calm, but desperate-sounding voice: "ohhh, you children of humanity, you all want peace and tranquillity, but if the money to make weapons, millions, comes from the many buildings that are created...". The use of direct-address and the muting of sound call for attention and invite viewers to listen to Armand.

The fact that Armand is shown preaching from Mecca and not from Indonesia is significant, because it frames 'Islam' as Arabic or Middle-Eastern. As explained in the previous chapters, an Arabic or Middle-Eastern Islam is in Indonesia often associated with a modernist style of Islam. *Perdamaian* then not only frames a capitalist and consumerist style of modernity as undesirable for a modern future of Indonesia, but it constructs this path as specifically undesirable for a modernist Islamic future.



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27

Figures 22-27: Screenshots of *Perdamaian*

The suggestion that a capitalist or consumerist style of modernity is not right for a modern Islamic future is in the video of *Perdamaian* articulated through a transnational imagination. It is mapped onto past and present conflicts in the

transnational Islamic world. In the video of *Perdamaian*, a discourse is constructed that frames capitalism as a 'dystopian' force to other (majority) Muslim countries as well. In the music video, this discourse is constructed through the insertion of shots (Figure 28-29) in which the earlier described symbols of capitalism and consumerism are superimposed on, and combined with, newspaper headings that refer to past and present wars in the Muslim countries of Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine.

The visual references to these conflicts can be read in different ways. First, these images can be read as suggesting that the planet of which we thought represented a future Indonesia, is actually representing the transnational Islamic world. It is then not only a future Indonesia that is threatened by a capitalist project of modernization, but the future of a transnational Islamic modern world. Second, it can be noted that in all of these conflicts, the United States are involved. The destructive capitalism/consumerism that seems to threaten the Islamic world, can then be read more specifically as 'American capitalism and consumerism', and the rejected style of modernity as a 'Western' style of modernity. Third, and this contrasts the second reading, these images can be read as suggesting that the transnational Islamic world itself is not adopting a capitalist project of modernization in the 'right' way, that it uses capitalism to make weapons and that indeed, as the lyrics suggest, they are destructing themselves.



Figure 28



Figure 29

Figures 28-29: Screenshots of *Perdamaian*

What these readings show is that in *Perdamaian* the imagination, contestation, and construction of the Islamic modern transcends national boundaries. In a context in which the desired path to modernity is a topic of debate, *Perdamaian* imagines and negotiates Islamic modernities. It points out what kind of modernities are not to be 'aspired' (Appadurai 2013: 126). *Perdamaian* constructs a discourse that is critical of a capitalist Western-style of modernity, and frames it as leading to a dystopian prospect for a (modernist) Islamic future. *Gigi's* full-fledged critique of capitalism and

consumerism is ironic, considering the band's own recent transformation and their tactics to release albums during Ramadan to increase sales numbers. At the same time, the band here also shows that capitalism and Islam are not necessarily irreconcilable.

Nationalism: building a modern future

At this point in the analysis, it has been demonstrated that whereas *Gigi's Tuhan* constructs a discourse of Islam as reconcilable with modernity, *Perdamaian* constructs a discourse that is highly critical of a capitalist Western-style of modernity, while gesturing via a transnational imagination to a Middle Eastern oriented Islamic style of modernity. How an 'aspired modernity' is to be reached or established is still unclear. In 2009, *Gigi* released *Nationalism*. In what follows, I will propose that *Nationalism* constructs a discourse that holds Indonesian citizens responsible for reaching and securing a 'right' modern Islamic future.

This discourse is constructed through the figure of utopia. In *Nationalism* a narrative is constructed in which (1) a reference to a specific utopia is made, where after (2) specific ills that prevent this utopia from coming into being are shown. Finally, (3) Indonesian citizens and their nationalist sentiments are framed as antidotes against these ills and are seen as providing the road towards an aspired 'own' Indonesian Islamic modernity. Here *Nationalism* attests to both the capacity to aspire as well as the social life of design (Appadurai 2013: 126; 257).

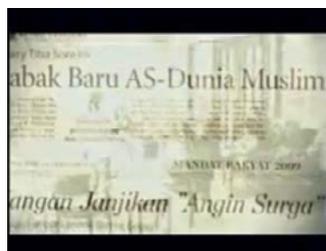


Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32

Figures 30-32: Screenshots of *Nationalism*

In the music video of *Nationalism*, which shows *Gigi* in the process of recording the song in the studio, close-ups of newspaper headings are inserted and superimposed over images of the band (Figures 30-32). The newspaper heading that is shown first announces: "Hillary visited quickly this afternoon: a new phase for the Muslim world." (Figure 30) This is a reference to the visit that US Secretary of State Hillary

Clinton made to Indonesia in February 2009. During this visit, she applauded Indonesia for being a “Muslim nation that demonstrates that Islam, democracy and modernity are compatible” (Arshad and Davies 2009). She also told Indonesians that their nation “is an example of how Islam, modernity, and democracy cannot only co-exist, but thrive. As I travel around the world over the next years, I will be saying to people: if you want to know whether Islam, modernity, democracy, and women’s rights can co-exist, go to Indonesia!” (Ibidem) This image, of a thriving democratic modern Muslim nation, is an ideal image that has been created for and by, Indonesia since the fall of Suharto’s authoritarian regime (Hartono 2009). It is then no surprise that Indonesian news media hailed Clinton’s speech with great enthusiasm. *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, the newspaper of Yogyakarta, for instance wrote: “finally our work is rewarded, we have made ourselves into an example for a new modern Muslim world.” (Hartono, *Kedaulatan Rakyat* 2009)

Nationalism criticizes the triumphant idea that Indonesia has reached this ideal state. After the video has displayed this reference to a modern Islamic utopia, it points out, on the verbal and visual level, that there are still dilemmas that prevent Indonesia from being and becoming the thriving democratic modern Muslim nation that was envisioned.

On the visual level, close-ups of newspaper headings are superimposed that relate to the instability of the Indonesian economy (Figures 31-32). Figure 31 for instance refers to the Indonesian oil crisis that reached a critical point in 2009 and that caused turmoil among Indonesians. Oil and natural gas represent one of Indonesia’s largest sources of export revenue. But as a result of red tape and corruption scandals after the liberalization of parts of the market, Indonesia has become a net oil importer, as companies shy away from investing (Arnold 2009). At \$50 a barrel, oil has become a big threat to Indonesia’s economic health and the oil issues have slowed down the archipelago’s economic growth tremendously. As Malaysia and Thailand faced the same problems, a new Southeast Asian crisis was at that time lurking, something to which the newspaper heading in Figure 32 refers. Adding to the problem is the fact that Indonesia used to subsidize fuel to keep it affordable for its citizens. But to protect the government’s budget, subsidies were cut and the burden was placed on the shoulders of the people (Robison 2008: 68).

Another example of how *Gigi* points to dilemmas that are keeping Indonesia from fitting the utopian image that Hillary Clinton sketched, is found on the verbal level, in the lyrics of the song (Figure 33). *Gigi* sings that they are tired of the “collusion and corruption disasters, which keep hitting us.” Corruption is still a big problem in present-day Indonesia and sometimes has dramatic consequences for Indonesians.

Government politics still sees many corrupt officials and politicians. The business sector has also seen corrupt leadership, which often led to bankruptcy, leaving thousands of Indonesians unemployed (Arnold 2009).

Gigi thus challenges the idea that Indonesia is a thriving democratic modern Muslim nation by pointing to the specific ills that prevent this utopia from coming into being. Noteworthy, in both the dilemmas pointed out here, it is the elite: the politicians, the leaders, and the businessmen who are the cause of the problems, while the (lower class) Indonesian people are duped. In what follows, I propose that through a specific nationalist discourse, the video of *Nationalism* frames ‘the Indonesian people’ themselves and the action that must be taken by them as a solution to these dilemmas. Both the lyrics and the visuals tell Indonesians to forget about these ills, and instead ‘get ready’ to serve the Indonesian nation. *Nationalism* here thus puts the responsibility for ‘healing’ the nation and bringing about a thriving modern Muslim nation on the shoulders of ordinary people.

| Lyrics of <i>Nationalism</i> (2009) | |
|--|---|
| Indonesian [original] | English [my translation] |
| Lupakan saja kehancuran yang ada di bumi Indonesia Masa kini, dan masa yang akan datang | Just forget all the destruction that is on the Indonesian ground In the time that is now, and the time that is going to come |
| Janganlah bicara dan berpikir licik tentang kejadian di Timur dan Barat Utara, Selatan | Don’t talk and think negative about what is happening in the east and the west The north and the south |
| Dan siap, siap (x 2) kau bertaruh untukmu, untukmu! Indonesia! | Get ready, get ready (x2) you must give everything for you, for you! Indonesia! |
| Kolusi dan korupsi bencana yang terus menghatam kita Lelah... Bagi kehidupan tidak akan pernah hilang Janganlah bicara dan berpikir licik tentang kejadian di Timur dan Barat Utara, Selatan | Collusion and corruption disasters which keeps hitting us Tired... The life will never disappear Don’t talk and think negative about what is happening in the east and the west The north and the south |

Figure 33: Lyrics of *Nationalism*

As can be read from the lyrics, the song suggests to Indonesians that they need to forget about “the destruction” that is on the Indonesian ground, hence, that they need to forget about the ills and problems that threaten the prosperity of the nation. The song gestures to the future and suggests that the road to a healthy and prosperous Indonesia will not be easy, as it urges people to do this “in the time that is now, and the time that is going to come”. At the same time, the song promotes a positive mental attitude since people should not “talk and think negative” about what is happening in Indonesia. Moreover, *Nationalism* proposes that instead of complaining, people should take action and “get ready” to “give everything” for Indonesia. In combination with the narrative that evolves on the visual level, the lyrics thus assign responsibility for curing the ills that prevent the coming into being of a modern Indonesian ‘utopia’ to Indonesian people themselves.

Not only the lyrics stimulate positivity and action, but the song also sonically articulates vivacity and optimism. *Nationalism* contrasts strongly with the daunting sound and feel of *Perdamaian*. In *Nationalism* this is achieved mainly through using mid-tempo beats and less-disorderly sounds. The use of voice is also pertinent. Like in *Perdamaian*, Armand calls out to an audience, however, this time not in desperation or anger, but in wholehearted (higher pitched) enthusiasm. In contrast to *Perdamaian*, which ‘threatened’ with destruction, *Nationalism* motivates people in a more positive way to take action.

The nationalist discourse that is constructed through the lyrics, and which frames ‘the Indonesian people’ themselves as being the solution to the nation’s ills, is strengthened by the video’s visuals. As can be observed from the screenshots below (Figures 34-39), the video’s visuals illustrate the lyrics as we see people saluting the flag. These shots position the people as subservient to a bigger national project. They literally serve the nation. Importantly, the visuals also further specify who are ‘the people’ that are expected to serve Indonesia.

Figures 34-39 show that ‘the people’ – the ‘you’ that is addressed in the lyrics – refers to a very diverse group of people. The video thereby suggests that it is the collective of the Indonesians that is being called upon. Figure 34 for instance shows a group of Muslims saluting the flag, while Figure 35 depicts a young boy saluting. In Figure 36, we see a man who is saluting the flag while wearing a T-shirt that reads ‘I Love RI (‘I love the Indonesian nation’). The man is filmed from a low angle, which makes us look up to him and which idealizes his love for Indonesia. In Figure 37, we see that women are also imagined to take part in the development of the nation. Figure 37 depicts a group of veiled women. Significantly, in contrast to the men, these women are not saluting. Instead, the images of the women are superimposed

with an article that reads *Etika* ('ethics') and which shows the 'right way' for Muslim women to dress. This suggests that the way in which women 'serve the nation' is not through direct action, but through 'guarding' Muslim values and ethics. The ways in which Indonesians contribute to the development of the nation is thus highly gendered, an idea that I will explore further in chapter 5 where I discuss Islamic-themed films.



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39

Figures 34-39: Screenshots of *Nationalism*

Figure 38 also includes *Gigi* in the group of people, as the band's members are shown with the Indonesian flag superimposed over their faces. Figure 39 gives a concrete example of the ways in which Indonesians might serve the nation. Under the heading that announces "taxes for multimillionaires" a second heading is shown. This heading advises Indonesians to "not misuse the [economic] facilities that the nation offers" and in this way help the progress of the economy.

In *Nationalism*, a nationalist discourse is constructed that frames Indonesian people, and the action that must be taken by them, as the solution to the dilemmas that prevent an Islamic modern utopia from coming into being. In this way, a discourse is constructed in which ordinary people build the road to a modern Muslim nation and in which each and everyone can contribute. This discourse is in contrast to *Perdamaian* constructed via a 'national imagination'. The 'Islamic modern' is in *Nationalism* imagined to be constructed through the nation's very own

'resources'. This suggests that the modernity that is aspired is above all an Indonesian modernity, one that is initiated by Indonesians themselves.

Aspiring and actualizing an Islamic modern future

The analysis of *Tuhan*, *Perdamaian*, and *Nationalism* shows that these songs together construct a narrative that critically imagines, negotiates, and contests Islamic modernities. This narrative tries to formulate an answer to the question what kinds of Islamic modernities lead, and do not lead, to the 'right' modern Islamic future. By constructing such a narrative, *Gigi's* songs participate in different debates that revolve around Islam and modernity.

We have first seen that *Tuhan* constructs a discourse, which articulates that Islam is reconcilable with modernity. The song thereby challenges conservative voices that view modernity as unsuitable for Indonesia. Subsequently, we have seen how *Perdamaian* negotiates different Islamic modernities and mobilizes depictions of dystopia to construct a discourse that warns for a capitalist and consumerist style of modernity, which the video links to the United States. This style is specifically framed as irreconcilable with a Middle Eastern-inspired style of Islamic modernity. *Perdamaian* is however still unclear on how to reach a desired modernity. Here, *Nationalism* constructs a discourse that specifically holds Indonesian people responsible for actualizing a prosperous and healthy modern Indonesian nation.

As shown, *Gigi* imagines the modern future of the archipelago through a kind of imagination that is both national and transnational. This shows contra Appadurai (1996) that the nation still matters. Although *Gigi* gestures to Mecca, the band also emphasizes that 'the national' forms a very important part of a desired modernity. The modernity that *Gigi* imagines is thus composed of the confluence of both the national and the global.

At a moment when the course of modernity is publicly debated, *Gigi's* songs thus constitute a site where experiments with Islamic modernities are taking place, and where critical politics are practiced. *Gigi's* music is therefore not to be exempted from political contestations in the Indonesian society. The band shows that the post-New Order transformation of rock music from a working class, masculine construction into a commercialized, bourgeois, and image-centered construction does not necessarily de-politicize the genre. On the contrary, it can be seen as re-politicizing rock music in a post-authoritarian context. The analysis shows that in an increasingly image-centered environment, the polished visuality of *Gigi's* music

videos plays a key role in the practice of politics.

This does not mean that *Gigi's* rock sound is irrelevant or apolitical. By contrast, in *Tuhan*, the fast and chaotic feel that is established through the use of rhythm represents the sound of modernity, while in *Perdamaian* the anger and unruliness of *Gigi's* rock music accommodates to, and strengthens, the discourse that discourages the 'wrong' style of modernity. In *Nationalism* the use of sound articulates optimism and calls out to an audience in wholehearted enthusiasm to get ready to serve Indonesia.

Another way in which rock music is re-politicized in the post-New Order period, is through its move into the realm of Islamic popular culture. By moving into this realm and targeting middle class Muslim youngsters, not only are those with purchasing power targeted. But also those who are considered to hold the modern future of the nation in their hands are addressed. In a time in which Indonesian Muslims increasingly consume abstract elements of Islam (ideas, concepts, thoughts) through Islamic-themed popular culture (Muzakki 2007), we need to look critically at the politics practiced by these artefacts.

In this context, *Tuhan*, *Perdamaian*, and *Nationalism* demonstrate how Islamic-themed popular culture articulates the cultural capacities that Appadurai (2004; 2013) has distinguished. The songs first attest to the 'capacity to aspire' (Appadurai 2013: 126). The songs point out what kinds of practices lead to the wrong kind of future. At the same time, the songs accommodate to desires and aspirations of better and 'right' modern lives. And as we have seen in the analysis of *Nationalism*, the song also offers people tools through which they are stimulated to accomplish such a life. *Nationalism* actively stimulates the making of a different social environment. It thereby attests to what Appadurai calls the social life of design (Appadurai 2013: 257).

By embodying these two capacities, *Gigi's* songs demonstrate how Islamic-themed popular culture gives way to an 'ethics of possibility' (Appadurai 2013: 188). *Gigi's* songs show how popular culture provides the tools to imagine, fantasize, and stimulate the coming into being of desired Islamic modernities. However, as particularly the analysis of *Nationalism* has shown, these constructions are never free from relations of power. As I have pointed out earlier in this chapter, popular culture is also subject to an 'ethics of probability'. This is the ethic of the contemporary finacized economy and it always tries to diminish risks.

Nationalism shows the dynamics between the ethics of possibility and the ethics of probability. On the one hand, the song encourages the coming into being of a prosperous modern Muslim nation. But on the other hand, it gives way to a

governmental narrative (cf. Foucault (1978a; 2007 [1977-1978], see also chapter 4), which stimulates people to forget about the structural causes that hamper the development of the nation – and which puts responsibility for successful modernization on the shoulders of people themselves.

These observations beg the question what relations of power are actually underpinning Islamic-themed popular and visual culture. How to view Islamic-themed popular cultural products? Do they constitute sites of creative experimentation and contestation, or do they indeed attempt to discipline people into responsible modern citizens? Or do both apply? And if so, how do both go together? How are an ethics of possibility and an ethics of probability balanced? I will turn to these questions in the next two chapters, which explore Islamic self-help books (chapter 4) and Islamic-themed cinema (chapter 5).