

*Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu*

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**Truth & Method: An Introductory Study on Mazhab Yoga's  
Methodology for Understanding the Truth of Islam**

*Abraham Silo Wilar*

**Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu**  
Al-Qur'an dan Hadis

# Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis

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## Editorial

Pada edisi XV vol. 2 ini, jurnal “Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu al-Qur’an dan Hadis” menampilkan kepada pembaca sembilan artikel yang cukup menarik.

Artikel pertama “Truth & Method: An Introductory Study on Mazhab Yogya’s Methodology for understanding the Truth of Islam” karya Abraham Silo Wilar. Tulisan ini membahas metodologi memahami kebenaran Islam dari sudut pandang beberapa tokoh penting UIN Sunan Kalijaga (M. Amin Abdullah, Machasin, dan Sahiron Syamsuddin). Pertanyaannya adalah, apa saja nama metodologi yang mereka gunakan, apa saja paradigma, teknik, serta aspek apa saja yang melatarbelakangi lahirnya metodologi tersebut.

Artikel kedua “Hadis di Mata Para Pemikir Modern (Telaah Buku *Rethinking* Karya Daniel Brown) oleh Benny Afwadzi. Tulisan ini membantah Daniel Brown dengan menjelaskan bahwa upaya orang Islam dalam menafsirkan eksistensi hadis dalam tradisi keislaman berujung pada tiga kelompok yang saling bersaing, yaitu kalangan ahli hadis, ahli Qur’an atau *inkar al-Sunnah*, dan golongan pembaharu (revivalis). Ketiganya mempunyai argumentasi sendiri-sendiri yang sulit untuk disatukan. Terkait hal ini, kemunculan ketiganya dalam khazanah studi Islam tidak bisa dilihat dengan kacamata hitam-putih, tetapi harus dengan cara pandang *shifting paradigm*.

Artikel ketiga “Kontribusi *nuḥāt* dalam Pengembangan Studi Hadis (Tela’ah atas *I’rāb Al-Ḥadīṣ al-Nabawī* Karya Abū al-Baqā’ al-’Ukbarī)” oleh M. Yahya. Tulisan ini menjelaskan bahwa status *nuḥāt* yang melekat pada dirinya membawanya pada peranan kontributif dalam menganalisa aspek *naḥwiyyah* redaksi hadis. Karya komentar ini sendiri sebagai jawaban atas kegelisahan para murid hadisnya

di suatu kelas belajar-mengajar. Sehingga, sangat wajar jika objek kajiannya sangat erat kaitannya dengan kondisi kelas saat itu.

Artikel keempat "Model Penelitian Tokoh (Teori dan Aplikasi)" oleh Abdul Mustaqim. Tulisan ini menjelaskan bahwa tujuan penelitian atau kajian tokoh sesungguhnya untuk mencapai sebuah pemahaman yang komprehensif tentang pemikiran, gagasan, konsep, dan teori dari seseorang tolok yang dikaji. Adapun pertimbangan dalam mengangkat penelitian tokoh antara lain, popularitas, pengaruh, kontroversial, keunikan, intensitas di bidang kajian yang hendak diteliti, relevansi dan kontribusi pemikirannya dengan konteks kekinian.

Artikel kelima adalah "Hermeneutika al-Qur'an Muhammad al-Ghazali" oleh Wardatun Nadhiroh. Tulisan ini menjelaskan bahwa Hermeneutika Muhammad al-Ghazali memiliki kemiripan dengan teori hermeneutika filosofis yang digagas oleh Gadamer dalam prakteknya. Ini dapat dipahami dari berbagai penafsiran yang diungkapkannya dalam kitab *Naḥwa Tafṣīr Mauḍū'i li Suwār al-Qur'aan al-Karīm*. Namun terlepas dari semua itu, satu hal yang sangat ditekankan oleh Muhammad al-Ghazali dalam penafsirannya bahwa al-Qur'an itu merupakan satu kesatuan yang utuh sehingga memahaminya pun harus dalam konteks satu kesatuan.

Artikel keenam adalah "Otoritas Pemaknaan Kitab Suci: Problematika Pemikiran Edipyuksel dalam "Quran: A Reformist Translation" oleh Fazlul Rahman. Tulisan ini mengkritisi karya kolektif Edip Yuksel dkk tersebut. Walau bagaimanapun, apa yang dihasilkan para penerjemah atau para penafsir tentu tidak akan pernah sama dengan apa yang diinginkan oleh penutur dan pendengar asli teks tersebut. Dalam teorinya mengenai penerjemahan dari bahasa asing ke dalam bahasa local yang ia sebut sebagai teori 'retrospective', Profesor Postgate menekankan bahwa suatu karya penerjemahan merupakan karya ilmiah (*scientific*), menerjemahkan adalah pekerjaan para kaum intelektual. Dalam hal ini, seharusnya tidak ada ruang bagi sentimen pribadi dalam melakukannya.

Artikel ketujuh "Kontribusi Pemikiran Jane Dammen Mcauliffe terhadap Kerukunan antar Umat Beragama" oleh Fejrian Yazdajird Iwanebel. Tulisan ini menjelaskan bahwa kajian al-Qur'an yang telah dilakukan oleh Mcauliffe dalam karya-karyanya,

setidaknya memberikan pandangan baru bahwa al-Qur'an secara substansial tidak mendiskreditkan kelompok religius lain. Pandangan ini dalam konteks hubungan antar agama sangatlah penting untuk disuarakan. Sebab dengan begitulah pemahaman terhadap al-Qur'an mampu bertransformasi dari eksklusivitas ke pemahaman agama yang inklusif. Dengan demikian, al-Qur'an tidak lagi dijadikan legitimasi kelompok tertentu untuk menyerang kelompok lain.

Artikel kedelapan berjudul 'Abd al-H{ami>d al-Fara>hi dan Sumber-Sumber Sekunder dalam Tafsir Berbasis Surat" yang ditulis oleh Abdul Jalil. Tulisan ini menjelaskan bahwa kecerdasan, ketekunan dan keahlian al-Farahi dalam berbagai bahasa dan disiplin ilmu membuatnya mempunyai kekhasan dalam menulis tafsir yang jarang dimiliki oleh ulama lain di masanya. Melalui metode tafsir berbasis surat, dengan beberapa teori dan prinsip *ala* al-Farahi, menjadikan tafsirnya berbeda dari tafsir lain dalam beberapa sisi, yakni mencari '*amud al-surah*, menghubungkan antar ayat, pendekatan bahasa dan *istisyhad* dengan syair-syair jahili, al-Farahi mampu mengkritik beberapa pendapat tafsir sebelumnya. Keyakinannya akan kebenaran Al-Qur'an, membuatnya tidak pernah khawatir untuk membandingkan teks al-Qur'an dengan teks lain, termasuk dengan tradisi keagamaan lain, karena yang benar pasti akan menang.

Artikel terakhir "Ta'wīl Terhadap Ayat Al-Qur'an Menurut al-Tustarī" oleh Umar Abidin. Tulisan ini menjelaskan bahwa Sahl al-Tustarī adalah tokoh sufi abad ke tiga hijriah yang pertama menafsirkan al-Qur'an dengan pendekatan tasawuf. Ia meyakini adanya makna lahir dan batin dari ayat-ayat al-Qur'an. Pengetahuan lahir adalah pengetahuan umum yang dapat diketahui oleh setiap orang, sedangkan makna batin adalah kepehaman yang diperoleh oleh orang tertentu (*khās*), dan makna khusus inilah yang sebenarnya dikehendaki atau dituju. Tustarī mengatakan bahwa makna batin dimaksudkan untuk orang-orang tertentu yang terpilih, dan bahwa pemahaman makna ini berasal dari Allah.

# TRUTH AND METHOD

## An Introductory Study on Mazhab Yogya's Methodology for understanding the Truth of Islam

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### *Abstrak*

*Tulisan ini membahas metodologi untuk memahami kebenaran Islam dari sudut pandang beberapa tokoh figur penting yang ada di UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. Figur ini penulis sebut Metodologi mazhab Yogya dalam memahami kebenaran Islam. Tokoh-tokoh tersebut antara lain, M. Amin Abdullah, Machasin, dan Sahiron Syamsuddin. Pertanyaan besar yang diajukan untuk memahami metodologi mereka adalah apa saja nama atau istilah metodologi yang mereka gunakan, apa saja paradigma, teknik, serta aspek apa saja yang melatarbelakangi lahirnya metodologi tersebut.*

### **A. Introduction**

It is commonly said that names of Indonesian-giant scholars of modern times, like, Mukti Ali, Harun Nasution, Abdurrahman Wahid, Nurcholish Madjid, and few other figures are the hallmark for the Islamic Studies development in the country. We even may add younger names in addition. With this reality in background questions must be raised are: "Has the Indonesian setting and its content had substantial differences, comparing to the Arabs countries, which enables the modern Muslim scholars develop their modern methodology so they are more creative in their scholarship than the Muslim Arabs as suggested by Abdullah Saeed?<sup>1</sup> Or, is this a

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<sup>1</sup> Abdullah Saeed, "Introduction: the Qur'an, interpretation, and the Ind -

more personal matter for the development? Or, is there a common/global consciousness among the Muslim scholars to develop modern methodology for engaging with the Islamic texts/Islamic Truth?"

Of many names, and centers for the development, Muslim scholars who are lecturers at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic State University of Yogyakarta (UINSUKA) are among the important figures and centers whose role in making the development of Islamic studies more solid and disseminated to society are remarkable and worthwhile to look at: for instance, the books and articles written by M. Amin Abdullah whose circulation in the country is widely dispersed.<sup>2</sup> Considering its importance, the present paper wants to discuss methodology to understand the Truth of Islam from the UIN SUKA lecturers' perspectives, and for guiding the discussion process the following questions need to be raised: what are the names of the methodology of the lecturers; what are the paradigms and techniques (practical steps) of their methodologies; and what are the defining aspects for making the methodologies?

To address the topic, I have decided to take the following categories to classify the lecturers who are going to become the research samples. First category is the senior-junior lecturers. For the seniors, there are names of M Amin Abdullah and Machasin, and for the younger ones I have chosen Sahiron Syamsuddin. Each name represents different age, and academic trainings. For instance, Amin Abdullah is included due to his prior academic experience as the school's president, and a Turkey graduate, and Machasin is among the few seniors of the school such as A. Munir Mulkhan, and

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nesian Context," in Abdullah Saeed (Editor), *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, 2005, p.15.

<sup>2</sup>M. Amin Abdullah, "Al-Ta'wil Al-'Ilmi : Ke Arah Perubahan Paradigma Penafsiran Kitab Suci", *al-Jamiah*, Vol.39, Number 2, July-December 2001; M. Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies di Perguruan Tinggi: Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2006; M. Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama : Normativitas atau Historisitas*. Yogyakarta : Pustaka Pelajar, 2004; M. Amin Abdullah, "Etika Tauhidik sebagai Dasar Kesatuan Epistemologis Keilmuan Umum dan Agama (Dari Paradigma Positivistik-Sekularistik ke Arah Teoantroposentrik-Integralistik", in Jarot Wahyudi, M. Anas Amin, and Mustofa (Editors), *Menyatukan Kembali Ilmu Agama-agama dan Umum: Upaya Mempersatukan Epistemologi Islam dan Umum*. Yogyakarta: UIN SUKA Press, 2003.

Faisal Ismail and other names, and his post at the Directorate of Islamic Higher Studies of Religious Affairs Department is essential addition to compose his uniqueness. Both the seniors accomplished the undergraduate studies at UIN SUKA. Meanwhile, the younger generation is Sahiron Syamsuddin. Second category is each name has shared opportunity to taste the Western academia setting in addition to their local experience. Also, important to note, the use of senior-junior in this paper is not in derogatory meaning; it is used to explain the time of joining the group of UIN Lecturers. Third category is the skillfulness of each name on mastering foreign languages in their scholarship. With these three categories I hope the paper would be able to expose those as unique scholars who have combined the Western setting and the Domestic setting in their scholarship, and the combination has widened their horizons in looking at the Islamic traditions, and other-related scholarship of Islamic studies conducted by the Western academics.

I have fortunately had opportunity to read the current work of Machasin's *Islam Dinamis Islam Harmonis*, and introductory notes of Sahiron in some books as well as his articles on applying Gadamer' hermeneutic into science of Qur'an. I was challenged by the exam results as the examiners had suggested me to specify in my revised edition the research focus as well as I was challenged by myself to have a research on thought of living scholars, with hope I would conduct the research carefully due to the scholars could give their critical comments for my incorrectness in describing their thoughts. With this experience in the background, I decided to specify my attention to the three of my examiners plus the figure of Amin Abdullah who all are lecturers at UIN SUKA. Yet, I did not take immediate action for realizing the idea. I took days to think again my decision instead. After all, I became day-to-day more solid with the decision and eventually started the journey.

As scholars whose academic trainings are transversally located in between traditionalism, and modernism, where each name has tasted academic atmospheres in the Western academia setting, and in the Indonesia context, the scholars I want to research then have unique combination of both settings. I suspect that this unique combination seems to have contributed to the development

of each own methodology for engaging with Islamic texts, as they have encountered modern methodology in many research which have been conducted by other scholars from other disciplines. For instance, Machasin, while proposing in his book *Islam Dinamis Islam Harmonis Transformative Hermeneutics*, shares his concern on methodology problem for reading the Qur'an, along with his sharing on his effort to develop his own hermeneutics.<sup>3</sup> His fluency in reading Arabic, English, and French is substantial indicator to consider the unique combination. The languages have he mastered makes the combination even more solid. This unique combination may probably be called as an event that might have helped to build certain consciousness within each scholar consciousness, and that is the important point for the paper to draw methodological concern each has build in their scholarships.

It is reportedly said, for instance, that Jalaluddin Rakhmat was increasingly aware of the importance of alternative modes of Islamic thought and practices when he attended and met Muslims from diverse backgrounds.<sup>4</sup> His experience is a plain example of how one occasion influences the academic interests, and builds certain perspective to focus on. Similar story is from Madjid's experience on visiting the State, some European countries, and some Middle Eastern countries he made in the late of 60s. Upon his return to Indonesia, he came up with the idea of "sekularisasi,"<sup>5</sup> and was known for his remarkable defense to it. Moreover, on other venue, Saeed has since few year ago observed the phenomenon of "consolidation of neo modernism," whose initial purpose, in Saeed's words, is to generate open-minded agents of modernization, and able to broaden the outlook of Indonesian Muslims.

At the UIN (formerly IAIN) of Jakarta and Yogyakarta, the project of consolidation was started by Mukti Ali (the first Minister of Religious Affairs) during 1971-1977.<sup>6</sup> So, it may be a verily tempting effort to connect the modernization agenda of the UIN's to the

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<sup>3</sup> Machasin, *Islam Dinamis Islam Harmonis*. Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2011, pp. 18-24.

<sup>4</sup>R. Michael Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.121.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.134.

<sup>6</sup>Saeed, *Op.Cit.*, 11.

development of methodology in understanding the Truth of Islam among its lectures, especially the chosen figures by the paper, from which we may further question whether the methodology shall later be expressed by the figures reflects the success of the agenda. Or, taking a more local context, the effort of integrating science and religion as declared nine years ago by the UIN SUKA,<sup>7</sup> in which the senior names of the figures are the living witness for the birth of the effort, whereas the younger figures were absent at that time, the tempting question may be raised here is “whether the effort has connection to the methodology expressed by the figures in this paper?” I think both are beyond this research, and it may take longer time to have further research to see closely the connection between the expressed methodology and the both events. However, I might discuss it shortly as the closing remarks.

The title above is inspired by and taken from Gadamer's well-known book *Truth and Method*, and that may explain the importance of the so-called method as well as what is Truth in Islam. Speaking of methodology in Islamic scholarship as related to understand the Truth in Islam, it is well understood between the Islamic studies scholars that it is a contestable concepts and none would become the true holder of the Truth. However, while acknowledging the truth of the statement, the present paper thinks it is necessary to have a research on the topic due to the changing landscape of the society, both globally and locally, has contributed to the changing perspective or worldview in viewing things surrounding us. Thus, the discussion of methodology may provide us with directions/descriptions for engaging with the Truth scholarly, so its presence and representation may reflect certain aspects the engaged persons such as his/her understanding/experience of the Truth.

Another reason to argue about the importance of methodology is it helps us to understand the connection and the influence of the Truth and its readers (see Reinhart's article below). Thus, for instance, the environmentalists say that the fast-growing of deforestation has led contemporary society to understand its truth, as instance, men are dependent to nature, none of us could survive without the presence of nature, so it imposes contemporary people

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<sup>7</sup> Jarot Wahyudi, dkk, *Op.Cit.*

to think again of the co-relationality between men and trees, men and fresh air, men and availability of water, and to consider that returning to the nature is necessary consciousness. Here, the truth, and the methodology are closely connected, and the “exteriority” influences contemporary society to build certain understanding and method to understand the truth revealed by the phenomenon.

In the case of Islamic studies, the presence and the influence of Orientalism in Islamic studies has been severely criticized and even cursed for its Christian-missionary’s interest within the approach. However, the approach seems to gradually have found its place among Modern Muslim scholars, and is now more appreciated its content. For instance, Machasin has openly stated his appreciation for the so-called Orientalist whose efforts to study Islam had revived the viability of classical texts.<sup>8</sup> Also, Amin Abdullah and Sahiron Syamsudin have similar tone with Machasin as may be seen in their works. However, the opposition to the Orientalism has also mushroomed among the Muslim scholars, and among the Western scholars, too. This fact is exactly what I want to mean by mentioning the changing landscape of the society. So, while the Orientalism have been criticized by the Western scholars, some Muslim scholars appreciate its approach, and are also hotly engaged with other Muslim scholars debating and rebuking one another about their own understanding of Islamic texts, including the appropriate methodology to deal with.

Of course, there has been some research on Islamic exegesis in Indonesia. For instances, R. Michael Feener’s research paper has tried to historically trace names and works of the practices of Qur’anic exegesis in Southeast Asia, and the influences from the Arabs on the works, as in Hamka’s *Tafsir al-Azhar* whose content was heavily drawn the influence of Sayyid Qutb,<sup>9</sup> Peter G. Riddell’s book on Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World puts well-known Muslim scholars of Indonesia such as Harun Nasution, Nurcholish Madjid, Hasbullah Bakry, Djarnawi Hadikusuma, Abdurrahman Wahid, and

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<sup>8</sup>Machasin, *Islam Dinamis Islam Harmonis.*, p.48.

<sup>9</sup>R. Michael Feener, “Notes Towards the History of Qur’anic Exegesis in Southeast Asia”. *Studia Islamika*, Vol.5 Number 3, 1998, p. 63.

Amin Rais into his discussion;<sup>10</sup> Saeed's book we have encountered earlier is also important literature to look at on the subject in contemporary Indonesia.<sup>11</sup> However, if I am not mistaken, a research on the UIN lecturers' methodology on understanding the Truth of Islam seems to be a rare discussion. So, based on this argument, I am humbly proposing this to be the topic of my revised paper. In addition to this, Islah Gumian's book entitled *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia: Dari Hermeneutika hingga Ideologi* is worthwhile to mention here because he has exhaustively researched Islamic interpretation of Modern Indonesia (1990-2000), and provided in his book a critical discourse analysis on the existing interpretations proposed by the scholars in the country.<sup>12</sup>

## B. The Context for the Emergence of New Intellectuals Wave

UIN SUKA (formerly IAIN) is among the active founders of the emergence of New Intellectuals Wave of contemporary Indonesia. Its distinct difference, comparing to the Islamic studies at the more traditional institutions like *pesantren* has somehow built one unique history of building Islamic studies in the country. For instance, at the more traditional institutions, the teachers are at most "Mecca or Medina" alumni, whereas at the UIN the *kiblat* is UIN itself, plus the centers of Islamic studies at Western universities. It may have graduate students or lecturers graduated from the Arabic countries but it seems it is a minor reality.

Noted in Saeed's book concerning the state's initiation in 1950s to found a number of educational institutions (IAIN) for Islamic studies by which we may probably explain it is the origin of the emergence of new wave of intellectuals among modern Muslims in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of the country. It was in Jakarta and Yogyakarta which became the first two places where the initiation came into being, and the similar institutions were gradually built in other areas of the country. Saeed said that in the 1960's there

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<sup>10</sup>Peter G. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.

<sup>11</sup>Saeed., *Op.Cit.*

<sup>12</sup>Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia: Dari Hermeneutika Hingga Ideologi* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002).

was a substantial reform effort for making the institutions more advanced in its character in studying Islamic studies by including other disciplines into the studying process of Islamic studies. The effort has found its refinement which was initiated by the UIN SUKA relatively ten years ago.

What had happened in the schools during the early years after the effort is necessary to look at. Fauzan Saleh notes that the year of 1974 became a witness for the publication of Harun Nasution's book entitled *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya* whose content was intentionally intended by the author to popularize the effort and make it more advanced.<sup>13</sup> The book became the textbooks for the IAIN students, and was severely criticized by H. M Rasyidi. He even sent a protesting letter to the Minister of Religious Affairs Department (1971-1977), Mukti Ali, for expressing his critics to the book. However, his critics had not been replied by Mukti Ali.<sup>14</sup> Eventually he got his critics booked and published under title *Kritikan terhadap Dr. Harun Nasution tentang Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*. Here we may assume Mukti Ali's position for not replying the critics that it is because he was actually on the side of Nasution. In other words, both are among prominent actors for creating certain "academic atmosphere" that allows advanced elaborations utilizing any sources from "Islamic tradition" to study Islam. Moreover, says Saleh, Nasution's book had gained more supports from the IAIN presidents and they argued that the book was important and needed for being the textbook for the IAIN students.<sup>15</sup> Other books of Nasution such as *Teologi Islam: Aliran-Aliran, Sejarah, Analisa Perbandingan* (1986), *Islam Rasional: Gagasan dan Pemikiran Prof. Dr. Harun Nasution* (1996) and *Muhammad Abduh dan Teologi Rasional Mu'tazilah* (1987) were published in the following years and they also became compulsory reading at IAINs. Prior to Nasution's publications other introductory books on Islamic theology or Kalam were existed already. For instance, Hanafi's book *Pengantar Theology Islam* was published in 1967, and *Theology Islam (Ilmu Kalam)* published in 1974.<sup>16</sup> Not only

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<sup>13</sup> Fauzan Saleh, *Teologi Pembaruan: Pergeseran Wacana Islam Sunni di Indonesia Abad XX*. Jakarta: Serambi, 2004, p.268.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p.269.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.292.

Nasution's books the book/article written by Mukti Ali such as *Ilmu Perbandingan Agama di Indonesia* (1988), and *Agama, Moralitas dan Perkembangan Kontemporer* (1998).<sup>17</sup>

Another defining element to influence public on Islamic discourses is the figures of Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid, etc. The paper would not discuss these figures and their influences in the development of Islamic studies: it is beyond this capacity to grasp and put all the information about the figures' role in the development into the present paper. So, it must limit itself.

Writing the story of IAIN establishment from 2012 situation has lead me to the following questions: the first question presents critical outlook, "did the establishments of IAIN under the Soeharto regime have basic motive to "locate" the discussion of Islam and its relations to other issues into certain locations so the public sphere would not be endangered by the discussions?"; the second is more positive in tone, "had the regime had anticipated the changing landscape of modern Indonesia, including the shifting authority to understand, speak and interpret Islam from the pesantren to the IAIN, so the IAIN establishment was indeed built in this vision?" Related to this, methodologically speaking, Angelika Neuwirth has drawn the connection between the development of methodology among Christian community of Europe, and the shifting authority to understand, speak and interpret Christianity from the Churches' dominion to the lay.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the shift had provided and inspired the lay to play pivotal point for understanding, and speaking of the Scripture in their own way. This shift is actually disturbing process for the *status quo*.<sup>19</sup> What was at stake, need to be underlined, the churches were not merely perceived as the sheer believing community, but they had been also representing a social body of believers whose faith-based claim was rather assuming the

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<sup>17</sup> H. A. Mukti Ali, *Ilmu Perbandingan Agama di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 1988); H. A. Mukti Ali, "Agama, Moralitas dan Perkembangan Kontemporer", in Imron Rosyidi (Editor), *Agama dalam Pergumulan Masyarakat Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: PT. Tiara Wacana Yogya, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> Angelika Neuwirth: *Qur'an and History – A disputed Relationship: Some Reflections on Qur'anic History and History in the Qur'an*. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*. Vol.V. Issue 1, 2003, p.3.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Ibid*.

sole authority and the right one to understand the faith manners, and, consequently, others were just illegitimate and wrong to talk the subject. In other words, the faith-based claim of the churches had turned the believing community (individual body) to authoritarian body (social body), along with the authoritarian state. This was the context for the connection between the developments of methodology with the authority shift within the Christian community. Here, another underlined focus, the faith or the believing community which have been identical with non-political community may in fact easily be swerved into political position through their faith claim.

One thing that may adequately become the connecting factor for both questions is it is the discourses which have become the background for the modern Indonesia that seems attached from the regime and its content. For instance, politically speaking, the regime must have been learning from the predecessor regime of the competing discourses, such as the Islamism (Pan-Islamism, Modernism Islam, etc), the Communism, and the Nationalism, and its discontents so the regime really needed stability, and for pursuing this it had taken the security approach/repression, and the incorporation approach for the regime maintenance. So, therefore, the establishment of IAIN may probably have been related to the discourses above and the anticipation of the regime maintenance. All of this what I have in mind as I looked at the establishment story in parallel with the story of Soeharto regime, and the competing discourses in public at that day.

Whatever and however the analysis might suggest of it the establishment of IAIN has explicitly successful generated a movement of new intellectuals among Modern Muslim of the country, and that suggests us that the schools, especially the lecturers, have been able to produce certain methodologies for engaging with Islamic studies, including the engagement with the Truth of Islam. Related to this, the notion of interconnection between the methodology development and the authority shift as mentioned by Neuwirth is obviously relevant. However, the paper is not devoted its entire effort to analyze the connection between the two, neither to connect the development of methodology as is proposing by the

paper with the assumed shifting in the country. Yet, it understands the possible connection between the development discussions with the changing landscape as happening in the country. However, one thing is clear, as Saleh has pointed it out the country has witnessed the internal shift within Islamic discourses among Sunni Islam in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to this, Andrée Feillard has excellently summed up the shifting authority, even the competition, between the political party group, the popular group, the pesantren ulama, the NU-based group, and the Muhammadiyah-based group, etc, to speak of Islam.<sup>20</sup> Machasin's article on *Struggle for Authority: Between Formal Religious Institution and Informal-local Leaders* in the same book containing Feillard's article interesting looks at the shifts in other areas. Within this complexity, if I may add, the group of UIN lecturers may be added as one promising group whose relevancy to methodologically scholarly understand and speak of Islam cannot be denied its authority. At this point, I think the UIN SUKA and the figures discussed in the paper exposes the public the knowledge they have learned on building the methodology of understanding Islamic Truth.

Part of this development that is worth to note is the undergraduate students from UIN SUKA who eagerly wanted to pursue higher education in Islamic Studies in Western Universities. It is worth to mention here Mc Gill University as one of the centers participating in making of the development. The formal partnership made by these two schools has helped the advancing process of studying Islam becomes more visible and fruitful. This reality is important for explaining of what the students have brought into the community in the country upon their return to the country as especially their methodology of understanding Islamic truth as compared to the methodology of understanding Islamic Truth being taught at the pesantrens: do they bring advanced methodologies upon they returned from the schools? If so, what are they, and how is the application of the methodology in the effort of understanding Islamic Truth?

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<sup>20</sup>Andrée Feillard, "From Handling Water in A glass to Coping with An Ocean: Shifts in Religious Authority in Indonesia," in Azyumardi Azra, Kees van Dijk, and Nico J. G. Kapiten (Editors), *Varieties of Religious Authority: Changes and Challenges in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesian Islam*. (Singapore: ISEAS, 2010), pp.157-176.

## C. The Figure Profiles, Works and Thoughts

### C.1. M. Amin Abdullah (1953 – Present)

Amin Abdullah was born in Pati, Central Java, on July 28, 1953. He accomplished his bachelor degree at Institut Pendidikan Darusalam of Pondok Pesantren Gontor, Ponorogo, (1972), pursued master's degree at UIN SUKA (1982), and earned his Ph.D degree from Institute of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey (1990).<sup>21</sup> Feillard mentions M. Amin Abdullah as part of the emergence of new liberal Muslim generation of Muhammadiyah. In her article she describes Amin Abdullah's tolerant interpretation on the question of relations with non-Muslims presented in a book entitled "Tafsir Tematik"<sup>22</sup> whose content had sparked critics from the Persis ulama of Muhammadiyah. He had occupied two top posts at the institution: first, the first associate president of UIN SUKA (1998-2001), and second, the university's president (2001-2005).

Amin Abdullah has extensively written articles, written for seminars in many places, and those articles reflect his academic interests: these are his expertise areas, philosophy, ethics, education, and Islamic interpretation. His articles are collected into two books which I have since the outset mentioned those in the footnotes. Of various thoughts has he exposed to public, his concerns on reintegrating science, and religious education, and shifting exegetical paradigm on the Scripture are chosen to be the focused concentration for the paper to engage with.

#### 1. Reintegrating *al-kauniyyah*, and *al-qauliyyah*

Amin Abdullah starts reintegrating efforts with a turn to ethics of *Tauḥīd* in which he firmly believes that its ethics may become solid foundation for the effort. What it is? To Amin Abdullah's understanding, while explaining it, it is actually part of religious ethics of Islam in which each Muslim realizes that *Tauḥīd* contains not only metaphysical dimension but also ethical dimension.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, its integrality further assumes that both al-Qur'an and

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<sup>21</sup> M. Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama*, p.346.

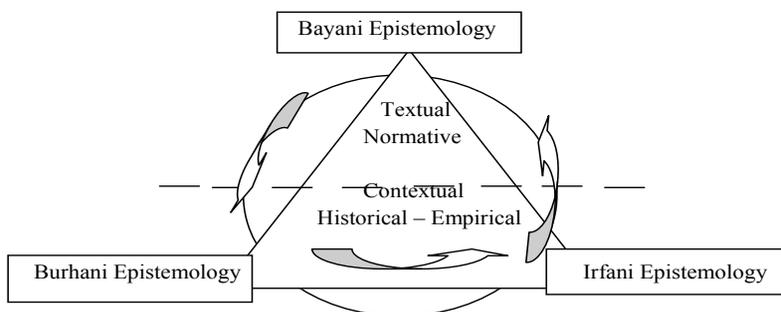
<sup>22</sup> Feillard, *Op.Cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>23</sup> M. Amin Abdullah, *Etika Tauhidik*, p. 11.

sunnah (and all religious area of studies) are at inner circle of the sciences, whereas other disciplines are at outer circles. Yet, both are as illustratively depicted as an integrated web of spider.<sup>24</sup> So, at the end there will be no in results sharp divisions between secular knowledge and religious knowledge. Also, each discipline is assumed to conceive both elements from the outset. He has called it as “theo-anthroposentric-Integrated” perspective due to its combination of Oneness of God, and human efforts in generating knowledge.

## 2. Shifting exegetical paradigm on the Scripture: *al-ta'wīl al-'ilmī*

*al-Ta'wīl al-'ilmī* is believed as an alternate exegesis on the Scripture because it utilizes three epistemologies of Islamic exegesis, -the Bayani epistemology, the Burhani epistemology, and the Irfani epistemology, for building its construction and puts the three into its hermeneutical circles. Thus, it employs hermeneutical approach as supporting device in its construction. When he started to build a new way of doing exegetical exercises, Amin Abdullah had been long observing the limitedness of each epistemology, and therefore he has decided that the three epistemologies need to be put in a dialogue, and come up with the following figure of the dialogue between the three:



In the illustration above we can notice that the *al-ta'wīl al-'ilmī* is composed of the three epistemologies, and that means that it is acknowledged the importance of text, intuition, and research logic as the defining values for doing exegetical exercises. Connected to this, Amin Abdullah also describes the differences of each epistemology as follows

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.13.

Composite Aspects	Epistemologies of Islamic Thought		
	Bayani	Burhani	Irfani
<b>Origin</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nash/The Qur'an Passages (Text Authority)</li> <li>2. Al-Khabar/Al-Ijmā' Salafiyah Authority)</li> <li>3. Al-'Ilm al-auḥiqy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Al-Wāqī' (Reality)</li> <li>2. Al-'Ilm al-Ḥusūli</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Al-Ru'yah al-Mubāsīrah</li> <li>▪ Al-'Ilm al-Ḥuḍuri (Direct experience)</li> <li>▪ Preverbal; prelogical knowledge</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Method</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ijtihādiyyah <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Istīnbatīyyah/Istintājiyyah</li> <li>▪ Istidlālīyyah/Qiyās</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Qiyās (Qiyās al-ghāib 'ala al-syahīd)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abstraction (al-maujūdah al-barī'ah min al-mādah)</li> <li>2. Bahtiyah-Tahlīliyah-Tarkībiyyah-Naqdiyyah (al-Muḥākamah al-'Aqlīyyah)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Al-Ẓauqīyyah (al-Tajrībah al-Baṭniyyah)</li> <li>2. Al-Riyāḍah; al-Mujādah; al-Kasufīyyah; al-Israḥīyyah; al-Laduniyyah (Tasawuf)</li> </ol>
<b>Approach</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lugawīyyah (Language) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dalalah Lughawīyyah</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Philosophical-Scientific</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Psycho-gnosis (Ẓauq/Qalb) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Al-La'aqlaniyyah</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Theoretical Framework</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Al-Aṣl al-Far' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Istīnbatīyyah (Text-based Deduction)</li> <li>▪ Qiyās al-'Illah (Fiqh)</li> <li>▪ Qiyās al-Dallah (Kalam)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Al-Lafẓ al-Ma'na <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ām, Khaṣ, Musytarāk, Ḥakikat, Majāz, Muḥkām, Mufassar, Ẓahir, Khafī, Musykil, Mujmal, Mutasyabih</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Al-Tasawwūrāt al-tasdiqatī-al-Ḥad-al-Burhān</li> <li>2. Logical Premises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Syllogism</li> <li>▪ Tahlīlu al-'anāsir al-asiyyah li-tu'ida bina'ahu bisyaklin yubarrizu ma huwa jauhariyyūn fīhi</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Kulliy-Juziy Jauhār-'Aradh</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ẓahir – Batīn</li> <li>2. Tanzil – Takwīl</li> <li>3. Nubuwwah-Wilayah</li> <li>4. Ḥaqīqī – Majāzi</li> </ol>
<b>Function and Role of Reasons</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reason is used to control human desire (cf. Lisan al-Arab)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Heuristic-Analytical-Critical</li> <li>2. Idrāku al-sabāb</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participatory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Al-Hads wa al-Wījdan</li> <li>▪ Bila Wasitah;</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<p>Ibn Manzur)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justification &amp; Repetition/Ihqli diy (Affirming the Truth/Text Authority)</li> <li>Al-Aql al-Diniy</li> </ol>	<p>wa al-musabbab</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Al-'Aql al-kauny</li> </ol>	<p>Bila Hijab</p>
<p><b>Types of Arguments</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dialectic (Jadaliyyah); al-'Uqūl al-Mutanafisah <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defensive</li> <li>Apologetic</li> <li>Dogmatic</li> </ul> </li> <li>Stoic's influence</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrative (Explorative, Verifying, Explanative) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under influence of Aristotle's logic and general science logic</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Atifiyyah-Wijdāniyyah</li> <li>Spirituality (esoteric)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Validity Measurement</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The closeness/similarity of text and reality</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correspondence</li> <li>Coherency</li> <li>Pragmatic</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universal Reciprocity</li> <li>Empathy</li> <li>Sympathy</li> <li>Understanding Others</li> </ol>
<p><b>Basic Principle</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infiṣāl (Discontinue)/Atomistic</li> <li>Tajwiz (no causality law)</li> <li>Muqarabah (closeness/similarity) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deductive Analogy</li> <li>Qiyas</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Idrāk al-sabāb (Nizam al-Sabaniyyah al-tsabit); Causality principle</li> <li>Al-Hatmiyyah (Certainty)</li> <li>Al-Muṭābaqah baina al-'aql wa niẓām al-tabī'ah Al-Ẓauqiyyah (al-Tajrībah al-Baṭniyyah)</li> <li>Al-Riyadhah; al-Mujadah; al-Kasufiyyah; al-Isrāqiyyah; al-Laduniyyah (Tasawuf)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Al-Ma'rifah</li> <li>Al-Ittihād/al-Fana' (al-Insan azubu fi al-Allāh); al-Insān (particular) yazubu fi al-nās (Universal)</li> <li>Al-Hulūl (Allāhu nafsuhū yagz al-nafs al-insāniyyah fa yaḥulla fīha wa yataḥawalu al-insānu hīna idzin ilā kāinin jadīdin)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Related-Disciplines</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kalam</li> <li>Fiqh</li> <li>Nahwu Balāghah</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philosophy</li> <li>Humanities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Al-Mutasawwifah</li> <li>Ashāb al-Irfan Ma'rifah (esoteric)</li> <li>Hermes/'Ārifun</li> </ol>

<b>Object-Subject Relations</b>	1. Subjective (Theistic subjectivism)	1. Objective (al-Nazrah al-Mauḍu‘iyyah) 2. Rational objective (sharp division between subject and object)	1. Intersubjective 2. Wihdātul al-Wujūd (Unity in Difference; Unity in Multiplicity) ▪ Ittihād al-Ārif wa-l-Ma‘ruf; Ittihād a-aql, al-‘āqil wa al-ma’qūl
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### C.3. Machasin (1956 – Present)

He was born on October 13, 1956 in Purworejo, Central of Java, and accomplished his undergraduate studies at UIN SUKA in 1979 whose major was Arabic Literature studies. He finished his master’s degree (1988), as well as his doctoral degree (1994) at the same institution. His academic trainings have led him some to produce academic works such as *Menyelami Kebebasan Manusia* (1996; originally his master’s thesis), *Al-Qadli ‘Abd al-Jabbar: Dalih Rasionalitas Al-Qur’an, Tuhan Pun Lalu Tertawa* (1999), *Islam: Teologi Aplikatif, dan Islam Dinamis Islam Harmonis* (2011). Besides those books, he also has written some articles in books or journal: “*Struggle for Authority: Between Formal Religious Institution, and Informal-local Leaders*” (ISEAS, 2010); “*Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and the Sufi Tradition* (al-Jamiah, 2005); “*Etika Spiritual Epistemologi dalam Islamic Studies di IAIN*” (SUKA Press, 2003). All of this is his works I have found insofar. He may have other works that I have not found yet.

From the abovementioned publications his academic expertise are seen on the following areas: linguistic, philosophy, sociological analysis, ethics, and Sufism. Of many aspects of his thoughts, I want to concentrate on two issues from which we can notice his academic expertise:

#### 1. Literary Analysis

His analysis is basically running on the verses of the Qur’an, and those verses are linguistically analyzed for discovering meaning, and as the meaning has been discovered he further attempts to find logical inferences from the meaning of the verses.<sup>25</sup> In addition to

<sup>25</sup>Machasin, *Menyelami Kebebasan Manusia: Telaah Kritis terhadap Konsepsi al-Qur’an*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1995, p.xvii.

this, he also employs “*munasabah*” approach whose concern is to find the contextual connection as exists among the verses within one surat/reading, and their further connection with other verses whose topics are rather similar. He has discussed the words of soil (*turāb*; *tin*; *lāzib*), and water (*mā'*; *mahīn*; *nutfah*; *maniyy-yumma*) as are used in many passages of the Qur'an.<sup>26</sup> To him, it helps him to understand the integrality of topic in the Qur'an.<sup>27</sup>

This literary analysis he has applied into a discussion of human creation in regard to scientific discourse of creation.<sup>28</sup> The creation of men is reportedly said in the Qur'an is utilized “soil”, “water”, and “spirit of God”. Even, Q.s 3:59 states that Prophet of Adam and Jesus were both created by God with “soil”, though at the same time Jesus is believed in Islam as born by Mary who is a virgin.<sup>29</sup> In responding the differences of the two, Machasin, while commenting on the Prophet Jesus and the “soil”, says that the “soil” which is used in the text may probably be referring to “soil elements” of human body, not the empiric material of soil, and for answering the Prophet Adam and the soil he is not yet explaining it.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. Islam, Terrorism and Human Freedom

In discussing Islam and Terrorism, he tries to respond to a current popular identification of Islam and terrorism as especially the coverage of 9/11 blast on many medias are as extensive as the coverage of Iraq war proposed by the Bush and the Blair' administration. Both had affected certain consciousness of public, and certainly created certain perspective on Islam. Within this circumstance he writes an article entitled “Islam and Terrorism” for responding such identification. Started with his exploration on the meaning of terrorism in Western language and Indonesian language, he then moves his focus on texts of *fiqh* mentioning or describing certain act of terror. In the *fiqh* texts, he has found an

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xix

<sup>28</sup> Machasin, “Penciptaan dalam Islam dan Tanggapan terhadap Teori-teori Ilmiah Baru“, in Zaenal Abidin Bagir, Liek Wilardjo, Arqom Kuswanjono and Muhammad Yusuf (Editors). *Ilmu, Etika, dan Agama : Menyingkap Tabir Alam dan Manusia*. (Yogyakarta : CRCS UGM, 2006) pp.143-166.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.148.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.148-149.

act of terror as similar as “armed-robbery”, as mentioned in Sheikh asy-Syāfi’i’s book and Sheikh al-Nawawi’s book.<sup>31</sup> Such act of terror is explained together with certain punishment for those committed themselves to the act, such as imprisonment, excommunication and cut their hands/legs off. The punishment is different in its degree, depending on how harmful has the act caused to the victims. One thing is clear from his description that Islam is not and never will be connected to terrorism. Although he realizes and has quoted Ali Sina’s Letter whose content is to foster hatred and promote war at kafir, he thinks that all of the hatred and the calling for war that takes the Qur’an as authority for such acts, these are not necessarily directly presenting the image of Islam, or the truer Islam because all the acts are terribly horror, and many passages in the Qur’an contend such terrible act, as instance, Q.s 42:40. So, all in all, he suggests his Muslim fellows as well as non-Muslims not to as fast as possible connect and take Islam to terrible acts. Instead, the use of kind-heart perspective in understanding “the-often-quoted-war-texts” must be promoted at first place rather than listening to the hatred perspective on the texts.<sup>32</sup>

While his book on “Understanding Human Liberty: A Critical Studies on the Qur’an” in its making process Machasin testified in his introductory notes in the book his “serial of difficulties” he had to face during the process. Those experiences seemed have certain relevant connections with the concern of human liberty he tried to address.<sup>33</sup> In his book he includes a discussion Jabariyyah and Qadariyyah, along with his address on men liberty and God power on men, and ends his discussions up with his own interpretation on the discussed topic between the two groups. Summing up his thought, according to my comprehension on reading his thought, it may probably be appropriate to call his perspective in the book as to apply “*huddud*” perspective, which means he absolutely believes that God has power on earth, on one side, and men also has his own power to decide what he want to do. Yet, as both parties are making connection to one another, each party relates to each other in each

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<sup>31</sup> Machasin, *Islam Dinamis Islam Harmonis*, pp.216-217.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.222.

<sup>33</sup> Machasin, *Menyelami Kebebasan Manusia*, pp.vii-ix.

own liberty, it does not necessarily mean that each other can have direct/immediate intervention/impacts on others. Rather, it means that each party within each own liberty certainly has freedom to build the connection and that liberty is then referring to the certain dimension of men and God by which the limit (*huddud*) for each other to connect with one another as well as to acknowledge the substantial difference of the two is clear. Also, within this limit, the liberty of human beings In short, liberty is rather perceived as limit of each power: it is not a limitless space/unknown space. The liberty is a known space where each other has freedom to determine a connection between one another. This kind of liberty is related more to practical dimension than to ontological dimension. Therefore, since God is ontologically Supreme Being, God has more possibility to keep eye on human liberty, so it would be on God's judgment whether the decision the humans had taken in their liberty right or wrong.<sup>34</sup>

#### C.4. Sahiron Syamsuddin (1968 - Present)

He was born on June 5, 1968 in Cirebon, West Java, accomplished his undergraduate studies in Islamic Law at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga in 1993, and continued his Master's degree at McGill University (1996-1998), and earned his Ph. D from Otto-Friedrich University of Bamberg, Germany (2006). He has written articles, and books in Islamic Studies. For instance, Bint al-Shāti' on *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*," *Islamic Quarterly* XLII, 1 (1998): 1-23, "Muhkam and Mutashābih: An Analytical Study of al-Tabarī's and al-Zamakhsharī's Interpretations of Q.3:7," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1, 1 (1999): 63-79, "Abū Hanīfah's Use of the Solitary *Hadīth* as a Source of Islamic Law," *Islamic Studies* 40, 2 (2001): 257-272, *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawesea Press, 2009), *Die Koranhermeneutik Muhammas Šahrurs und ihre Beurteilung aus der Sicht muslimischer Autoren: Eine kritische Untersuchung* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2009), *Tafsir Studies* (Yogyakarta: Elsaq, 2009), and so forth. In addition to his academic engagement is he has been lecturing at his alma mater since 1996 in Ushulludin Faculty, teaching at Postgraduate level at the same institution, at the Center for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies (CRCS), UGM (Universitas Gajah Mada/Gajah Mada

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.143-144.

University, as well as at Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS) in Yogyakarta, and so forth. In the last institution he is part of academic members. Also, he has been Vice Rector of University of Qur'an's Sciences (UNSIQ) in Wonosobo since 2007.

Below is the discussion on the selected issues of his academic concerns. From the topics below we may notice his academic expertise, and horizons on studying Islam in contemporary age.

### 3. Islam, Muslim Scholarship, and Foreign Scholarship (Orientalism)

Sahiron has clearly stated that Muslim scholarship studying Islam must better lead its learning process to scholarship exchange with "foreign scholarship" because it seems just impossible to alienate Muslim scholarship from it. We may call it by its name, "Orientalism". The later has long developed critical tradition as its mindset so it has been addressing Islam in a very different way as it is presented in the former. However the Orientalism itself has been severely criticized by the Western scholars as well as Muslim scholars. Therefore, instead of building skeptic-apriority mindset to it, says Sahiron, it would be much better to adopt critical mindset for responding it.<sup>35</sup> The basic spirit for making such interaction is an intention to seek academic truth that may exist in the exchange. It is possible to make the mindset up because the foreign scholarship may contain "improportionality" in data, methodology, and interpretation of data during the making process, and it has in result brought "improper" conclusion.<sup>36</sup>

### 4. Islam, Social Works/Social Workers and Contemporary Issues

Islam, argues Sahiron, must have contribution on building religious foundation/framework/paradigm that may be useful for social works studies and social workers as well. So, therefore, studying Islam should connect with the contemporary issues. The first reason he suggests to make such contribution is his understanding of Islam as Humanity-oriented Religion. Its humanistic orientation is actually part of the core message of Islam as to become precious grace for

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<sup>35</sup> Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Memahami dan Menyikapi Metode Orientalis dalam Kajian al-Qur'an," in Sahiron Syamsuddin, et.al (Editors), *Hermeneutika al-Qur'an Mazhab Yogya*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Islamika, 2003), p.79.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.80.

God's creation.<sup>37</sup> The message is simply rooted in the apostleship of Muhammad whom God sent him down either as grace or as oasis for living being (men and nature),<sup>38</sup> and in the God's initial intention to keep His creation (men and nature) save and meaningful their lives. All of this is explained by Sahiron in a more practical instruction as follows:

- To initiate a graceful life for all creatures
- To be able to practically conduct the God's core message
- To remember God who is sensibly Caring and tangibly Engaging with human dignity problems
- To spread Islam as Peace and Wisdom
- Not to do harmful action on nature
- To care the needy, the weak, and the marginalized people

Doing all this practical instructions are similarly equal with developing religious piety through helping others, taking care of nature, and so forth.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile, addressing Islam and Contemporary Issues, he explicates the paradigm of Islam as grace as to bring social transformation in society, and in this regard the role of interpreter of the Qur'an, the authoritative source of Islam, is crucially urgent. However, he underlines that each interpreter may have his/her own tendency, which in his introductory notes he explains four common positions of exegesis within Muslim community as it has been practiced insofar. First, the practice reflects the need of the community; second, the practice mirrors the civilization development of the community; third, the practice is to protect sectarianism interests; and fourth, the practice as media for bringing social transformation in the society.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Landasan Normatif Islam untuk Pekerjaan Sosial," in Sahiron Syamsuddin & Asep Jahidin, *Antologi Pekerjaan Sosial*, (Yogyakarta: Program Studi Pekerjaan Sosial UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2010), 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.6-9.

<sup>40</sup>Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Relasi Antara Tafsir dan Realita Kehidupan," in Sahiron Syamsuddin (Editor), *al-Qur'an & Isu-Isu Kontemporer*, (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ Press, 2011), pp.vii-x.

## D. The Figure's Methodology on the Truth of Islam

### D.1. M. Amin Abdullah : Ethics as Method Interpreting the Qur'an

Seemingly, as seen in many articles, Amin Abdullah has not explicitly exposed yet practical example of his methodology in interpreting the Qur'an passages, and that fact generates another challenge for me to address a practical example of his methodology. Some of his articles, of course, mentioned principles for guiding one to do exegesis on the Qur'an such as *Hudan linnās* and *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn*, and other articles shown us his tendency or agreement to Rahman' ethical approach, as well as hermeneutic as method interpreting the Qur'an, though both have not been fully addressed by himself. In many places of the articles, he clearly shows us his open-minded character, as well as his favor to make a dialog/dialectical mechanism between the Qur'an, the readers, and the present social setting. This is actually an implicit manifestation of his "integrated-approach" of three Islamic epistemologies as mentioned earlier.

So, having such condition, I would like to take a risk by discussing his methodology as far I can construct it from his articles. Therefore, the following is rather "imagined construction" would I suggest to address his methodology, instead of his direct and original version.

In this "imagined construction of his methodology" Amin Abdullah is more concerned about the application of the Qur'an values for the present reader and the present setting. Of many crucial values has the Qur'an offered to human beings is the "rahmatan lil 'alamin" has he agreed with to become the paradigm of his methodology. With this paradigm, he considers al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah's thoughts on personal pietism, and or Salafiyah framework as not promoting the enhancement of the paradigm of his methodology as well as not fostering inter-connectivity of different values with which human beings may have more benefits and be grace for others than staying alone in al-Ghazali's pietism and in Ibn Taymiyyah's salafism. At end, he concludes that the figures thoughts must be revisited.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>M. Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama: Normativitas atau Historisitas*, p.321.

Making Ethic as his methodology Amin Abdullah actually adopts Rahman's perspective on the nature of the Qur'an as rather being ethical book than being legal book.<sup>42</sup> As such the Qur'an has a great deal with practical and ethical manners rather than emphasizing theory and legalistic perspective. So, therefore, interpreting the Qur'an must include dialectical mechanism, between the context of the text, and the context of its readers, and the benefits for all creatures. At this point, his effort on integrating the three epistemologies seems to be parallel with his ethics-methodology because it allows the readers to utilize other disciplines, as well as to spiritualize the disciplines through dialogue between the disciplines and the spiritual meaning (takwil) of the text for generating ethical perspective. So, as results, the exegetical exercise is to affirm both personal piety, as well as social piety in which the cultural enhancement is included within.

Since Amin Abdullah did not respond to my questioners-based Interview, questioning him of his specific method approaching/interpreting two things constitute the Truth of Islam: first, Tauhid; second; the Prophethood of Muhammad, so I think I am obviously not capable to utilize his Ethic Methodology for constructing his answer to the questions. So, therefore, I would rather leave this as an open end which deserves further research to conduct in the future.

## D.2. Machasin

### 1. On Transformative Hermeneutics

By quoting J. J. Leese's hermeneutical circle, in which Leese has listed four circles to engage with while doing exegetical exercise: first, Literary circle; second, Historical circle; third, Canonical circle; fourth, Present-time circle, Machasin seems to have expressed his agreement to the circle, and adopted it as lying foundations of his own hermeneutics. In his exegetical exercise, he applies the circles into the Qur'anic verses. For instance, as one approaches the Qur'anic text, he/she must be aware of words, literature genre, redaction form (adjective shift), and the connection of the words/redaction form with the verses, and the verses with passage, and the passage the entirety of the Qur'an. Thus, the historical context

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.122.

of text must be noticed during the exercise, and this observation includes the particular way of speaking, thinking and responding as lucidly stated in the text as commonly practiced in the text's time.

These two steps/methods are then continued by the third and the fourth step, so both are not detached from the main frame of doing exegetical exercise. By doing so, at the end, one may find the meaning of the text from within as he/she dives into the text in-depth through which the first three steps constitute the rudimentary pillars, and one may also find the significance of the text for himself/herself through exemplifying the fourth steps. With this set of steps, Machasin has tried to establish his own hermeneutics, and named it as "Transformative Hermeneutics", as his is to propose as is to seek the relevancy and significance of the Islamic texts for the present readers, and the social problems.<sup>43</sup>

## 2. On Methodology Interpreting Two Constitutive Parts of Islamic Truth

In answering my questioner-based Interview on one constitutive part of Islamic Truth, the Islamic confession on the Oneness of God, Machasin states on his methodology to understand the Islamic Truth that he refers to use an integrated exegetical approach of sociological-historical-philosophical methods in combination with canonical-theological approach so his integrated methodology is intentionally used for exploring the Islamic Truth as experienced by Muslims, and finding the relevancy of the Truth not only for the Muslims as their guiding path but also for the society where they live with. In other words, interpretatively speaking, the Truth of Islam may find its actual meaning as the Truth both in personal dimension and in societal dimension. In other words, his approach seems to have suggested me as his reader to understand that God as the one and only God may only become the one and only God if his presence among human beings brings benefits not only for Muslims such as living-guidance, but also for the wider community such as the concrete expressions of Gracious God to which he has been frequently emphasized the importance of graces of God in his writings as the essential and only of Islam for human beings.

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<sup>43</sup>Machasin, *Islam Dinamis Islam Harmonis.*, pp.18-24.

Meanwhile, trying to give his comment on the Prophethood of Muhammad, another constitutive part of Islamic Truth, he took the aspect of Muhammad's finality as Prophet to become his main concern for discussing the Muhammad's prophethood . In discussing this part, he has taken philosophical method and with the method he sees the finality as referring to the very philosophical and essential understanding of prophets –to guide human beings in accord with the guidance of God. It is the *essentielle raison d'etre* for the coming of the Prophets, including the Prophet Muhammad, that is, human beings are incapable to think and act rightly. If there were men who had reached his/her capability fullness to think and act rightly the importance of the prophets would accordingly fade away gradually. So, his method is set to consider the finality of the Prophet Muhammad as philosophical concerns rather than the finality in time or space of life.

### **D.3. Sahiron Syamsuddin: Hermeneutics as Method to Understand Islamic Truth**

He seems have strong faith in and also be faithful to hermeneutics as method to understand Islamic Truth. In describing his faith on hermeneutics, he has three arguments: first, hermeneutics is art of interpreting and this is equally similar to Tafsir in Islamic-sphere due to the essential teaching of both parties are to understand and interpret text accurately and rightly; second, hermeneutics is inclusively incorporated into social sciences, and humanities studies, whereas the Tafsir has been limited only to text; third, despite of the differences of the Qur'an and the Bible, both contain God's revelation in humane language so both may be researched/understood by either using hermeneutics or utilizing the Tafsir; fourth, the aspects of hermeneutics may comply with the prevailing concepts of the Tafsir. <sup>44</sup>

In discussing hermeneutics as method he has elaborated the thought of Gadamer, especially his four hermeneutical theories, as

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<sup>44</sup>Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an dan Pembacaan al-Qur'an pada masa kontemporer", in Syafa'atun Almirzanah and Sahiron Syamsuddin (Editors), *Upaya Integrasi Hermeneutika dalam Kajian al-Qur'an dan Hadis: Teori dan Aplikasi*, (Yogyakarta : Lembaga Penelitian UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2011), pp.42-43.

specifically equal to the aspects of Interpreting the Qur'an in Islamic sciences. Comparatively speaking, he describes Gadamer's theory of historically effected consciousness and of pre-understanding as similar concept to the aspect of *ra'y* in Islamic Tafsir. Here he comprehends it as rather pre-understanding, than *aql* as it has been commonly interpreted. The word of '*ra'y*' derives from the Prophet Muhammad who is reportedly to have said this: "whoever interprets the Qur'an using '*ra'y*', they would go to the hell". It is incorrect to interpret the word '*ra'y*' as *aql* because the word of *aql* contains positive meaning of thinking activity. Therefore, he suggests pre-understanding as the appropriate meaning for '*ra'y*' because it refers to those who have no appropriate knowledge to interpret the Qur'an.<sup>45</sup> To support his understanding he goes on to Hadis whose content states "*man fassara l-Qur'ana bi-ghayri 'ilm*" (whoever interprets the Qur'an without knowledge) and has been understood as "the Prophet prohibits exegetical exercise which is based on subjectivity and does not have the acquired knowledge to conduct the exercise." In other words, both suggest us to be cautious and aware of the acquired knowledge needed for doing such exercise. Meanwhile his discussion on the fused horizon locates it as comparatively similar to *Dirasat ma hawla n-nashsh* (study on the hull of the text),<sup>46</sup> and Gadamer's Application Theory is equivalent to *ma'na cum-maghza* (study on the inner and explicit meaning of the text).<sup>47</sup>

To make concrete how his methodology works practically he discusses some verses of the Qur'an, portraying gender issues in the text, which have been frequently quoted for eternalizing male domination over female. It is Q.S. 4:34 which has been cited as the source of gender injustice:<sup>48</sup>

"Men are in charge of women, because Allah has made some of them excel the others, and because they spend some of their wealth. Hence righteous women are obedient, guarding the unseen which Allah has guarded. And those of them that you fear might rebel, admonish them and abandon them in their

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<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.43-44.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.45.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p.46.

<sup>48</sup>*The Qur'an - A Modern English Version*. Translated by Majid Fakhry. United Kingdom: Garnet Publishing Limited, 2005, p.54.

beds and beat them. Should they obey you, do not seek a way of harming them; for Allah is Sublime and Great !”

The text above is reportedly said to prohibit female leadership in public space. Many ulama have taken this way of understanding by interpreting the opening words of the text, “*ar-rijalu qawwamuna ‘ala n-nisa’i*”, as men are designated to lead women and therefore no otherwise occurs. Among the ulama who holds such bias interpretation is Ibn Katsir.<sup>49</sup> Notice his interpretation below:<sup>50</sup>

Man is leader, superior and judge over woman and man is educator for woman if she is deviated, because man is the primacy than woman. Man is better than woman. Therefore, all the Prophets are men. Thus, the leadership primacy is designated for and owned by man. The Prophet says: “there will be no happiness over a group of people whose leader is woman.”

This sort of interpretation, says Sahiron Syamsuddin, is negligent to the context of the verse. Its context is rather a familial-setting, instead of public-setting. Also, there has been a record from ‘Ali ibn Thalib who is reported to have mentioned the meeting of the Prophet with a woman who had been beaten by her husband, and the woman told the Prophet her experience, and the Prophet replied: “*al-qishash*” (beat him back), or, another record mentions the Prophet response, as follows: “*laysa lahu dzalika*” (he –the husband– has no right to do that). Thus, taking another text, he discusses Q.S.27: 29-35 whose content is about the Queen Balqis, and the Prophet Solomon. Here is the complete text:<sup>51</sup>

She said: “O my dignitaries, a gracious letter has been delivered to me. It is from Solomon, and it says: “In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Do not rise against me, and come to me submissively.” She said: “O my dignitaries, give me your counsel in this, my affair. I will make no decision until you bear witness to me.” They said: “We are endowed with force, and great might, but the command is yours; so see what you will command.” She said: “When kings enter a city, they ruin it, and reduce its proud inhabitants to subjection. Thus they will always do.”

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<sup>49</sup> Sahiron Syamsuddin, “Hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer“, p. 52.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> The Qur’an, p.236.

From these proofs, responding the bias interpretation, Sahiron Syamsuddin thinks the text (Q.S 4:34) must be researched its *ma'na-cum-maghza*, the inner meaning of the text, and the later text (Q.S 27:29-35) has considered and approved by many ulama as clear illustration of the Qur'an's approval on women leadership despite the story is about the Queen Balqis alone.<sup>52</sup> The ulama have come to such understanding because the text does not have implicit and or explicit criticism over the Queen but agrees with her.<sup>53</sup> The later text is interpreted by researching its *ma'na-cum-maghza*, and he lists some of which: first, democratic character; second, people prosperity-oriented; third, peace and diplomacy-oriented, and fourth, keen, and cautious.<sup>54</sup>

With this example, Sahiron Syamsuddin has tried to elaboratively discuss the Gadamer's hermeneutical theories and apply the theories to understand the Qur'an verses. He had referred not to answer the questions of the interview, but suggested me to find his methodology in his article I mentioned above.

## E. Conclusion

Summing up the exploration above the following questions may represent the core concern of the Mazhab Yogya: "What would Islam say on gender injustice, dignity of migrant workers, economic injustice, rapid deforestation, etc?"; "Does Islam support dignity of migrant workers?"; "Does Islam disagree with rapid deforestation, gender injustice, and economic injustice?" If Islam supports dignity of migrant workers, and disagrees with rapid deforestation, gender injustice, and economic injustice, how do we interpret the Qur'an passages in the light of those concerns? It is under these actual realities, the problem of methodology to understand Islamic Truth is important to look at. The context of text is dialoging with the context of the present time where the present interpreters of

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<sup>52</sup>Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer", p.55.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* I want to note here that we may compare the Qur'an's agreement on the Queen Balqis, and on the Satanic verses. The former is accepted as part of the Qur'an despite its story does not mention God's or the Prophet Muhammad's instructions, whereas the later is abrogated and not considered as part of Revelation since then.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.57.

the Qur'an belongs to. In the dialogue, the context of the text is researched for finding the inner meaning and its importance for the context of present time, whereas the context of present time is dialogued with the context of the text to challenge the finding of creative thinking for letting the Truth speaks to the present time.

The contextualization of Islamic Truth, so the Truth may speak for the forest dignity, the migrant worker dignity, the practitioners of economic injustices, the active actors of gender injustice, constitutes Mazhab Yogya's core concern of its figures while studying Islamic studies, and interpreting the passages of the Qur'an. With this, the Truth may become the Truth in present time, not only the Truth in the text's time. Thus, another concern of this Mazhab, the figures are eagerly to learn from other traditions as especially the Western scholarship as well as the other religious traditions. The passion for learning from others is evidenced in many references which are used in their works. These two fundamental characters which are shared among the figures have led the figures to being considered as leading resources for fostering new culture and organization of studying Islam in contemporary era. It offers not a conventional way of learning but enlightening way of studying Islam because the Truth has to speak to the actual realities of human and nature conditions, and this may be believed as part of God is speaking to his creation. The conventional way of learning is rooted in "obedient tradition" to religious corpus, and the enlightening way of learning stands on "human independency" in combination with interdisciplinary studies, and strives for having certain understanding on religious texts that may show God is speaking and God is caring the creatures.

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