

# Contemporary Pesantren (A Case Study of Pesantren Baitul Hikmah Yogyakarta)

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**Abstract** This article describes three points about Pesantren modernization development. First: pesantren as Islamic educational institution that has an old tradition in Indonesia has more diversification and differentiation today. One of the forms of that diversification is pesantren becoming academic sub-culture that supports scientific works. Second: this category is very affecting the Kyai role as the leader of pesantren and having academic capacity and reputation at the same time at University in some certain discipline of science. The author takes Pesantren Baitul Hikmah in Yogyakarta as the sample. In this part, the author gives the description of Pesantren Baitul Hikmah's educational process, advantages, and its curriculum. Pesantren Baitul Hikmah has the advance in the field of interpretation of the Qur'an and Hermeneutic as its device. Third, the author attempts to use the significance of hermeneutic analysis as developed at the pesantren for developing interpretative religious research.

**Keywords:** Pesantren; Academic Sub-culture; Hermeneutics; Kyai

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## 1. Pesantren at The First Third Millennium

*Pesantren* education Practice was a signature phenomenon in Nusantara. With the signature and its uniqueness, *pesantren* had grabbed significant attention from many groups of society. In 70's era, Steenbrik had observed seriously about *pesantren's* development and stated that in 20th-century the big change happened in *Pesantren* world with the existence of the madrasah system (Steenbrik, 1974: xiv). *Pesantren* had a step ahead of advanced in dialoguing between traditionalism to modernism. However, the millennium has changed, the world has entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the change that happens in the *pesantren* world is not just in the institutional aspect. "Diversification" and "specialization", borrow from its own terms, until this upcoming of the second decade of the first century of the third

millennium, have become larger and more diverse.

The current researcher, Martin Van Bruinenessen, also seriously developed the observation of *pesantren*. In his phenomenal book about *pesantren*, "*Kitab Kuning, pesantren dan tarekat*" (2015), he was specifically tracking the genealogy of traditional *pesantren* scientific work, especially *Tariqa* in *pesantren*, and found the relevance with Islamic tradition in the Kurdish. However, along with the age of advance, the genealogy of *pesantren* is even larger, involving an intense dialogue with the western scientific tradition. In this matter, it can be stated, that *pesantren* have more varieties, and they were not just being involved in the discourse between traditionalism and modernism, but also with contemporary scientific tradition.

Zamakhsyari Dhofier seems also has the same thought, that *pesantren's* traditional development in Indonesia is very progressive, so that his popular book, *Tradisi Pesantren* (2011) was still showing the revisions and improvement to put some new things inside. One of the viable development points that very important in the *pesantren* world is the emergence of *Kyai* of *Pesantren* who became the highest politic leader at the era of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid. In his opinion, with the number of *pesantren* (s) that achieve about more than 30.000 nowadays, *pesantren* would do some large change of variation, from the most powerful based on tradition to those *pesantren* that creatively combines the modernity of education largely and highly as possible (Dhofier, 2011:277). Zamakhsyari seems optimist to *Kyai's* role and *pesantren* in the future. Basically, the institution's career of *pesantren* in Indonesia is in the process of evolution and transformation as the effort to able to 'recoloring' process of Indonesia's nations in the future (Dhofier, 2011: 26).

Kuntowijoyo also criticizes Dhofier. In his opinion, *pesantren* nowadays has advanced and passed the depiction of scholars, such as Clifford Geertz, who observed *pesantren* at the decade of 50's. Zamakhsyari's description on *pesantren* is the most basic, including *pesantren* elements, mosques, classical scriptures literation, *santri*, and *Kyai*. Kuntowijoyo quoted Soedjok Prasodjo, that there are, at least five *pesantren's* polarizations, from the simplest to the most advanced. The pattern I include the mosque, *Kyai's* house, *Pondok* (dorm), and madrasah (school). Pattern II is a mosque, *Kyai's* house, and *Pondok*. Pattern III includes the mosque, *Kyai's* house, *Pondok* and madrasah. Pattern IV includes the mosque, *Kyai's* house,

*Pondok*, madrasah, the craft center. Pattern V includes the mosque, *Kyai's* house, *Pondok*, sports center, and public school. The last one is identical with the modern *pesantren* (Kuntowijoyo, 1993:253).

Indeed, in addition to internal changes of *pesantren*, the pattern of changes is also viable externally. The emergence of transnational movement of *Tarbiyah* and *Salafi* has changed traditional depiction of Islam in Indonesia, which is no longer dominated by Muhammadiyah or NU. Recently, the new movements have built *pesantren* and *madrasah*, which become another challenge for the well-established traditional Islam. The emergence of new integrated Islamic school was also a challenge for the system of *madrasah* in *Pesantren*. *Salafi* movement also adopted *pesantren* system as a medium of preaching (*dakwah*) and education. This makes the phenomenon of diversification in Islamic education more dynamic (Arifin, 2015: 149).

Thus, *pesantren* as Islamic educational institution still experiences changes. According to the recent development shows that *pesantren(s)* are currently have the new trends in the context of innovation the used system. *First*, *pesantren* begins to familiar with modern method. *Secondly* is increasing orientation toward functional education. *Third*, diversification of program and activities are increasingly open, and at the same time preparing the students with variety of knowledge outside religious knowledge and training the needed skill for future work. *Fourth*, *Pesantren* functions as the center of community development. Thus, basically *pesantren(s)* are experiencing transformation on the

aspect of culture, systems and values (Abu Yazid, 2018: 260).

According to Ahmad Fawaid Sadjali, *pesantren* cultural shifts brings to the new genre of *pesantren* toward the golden age, marked among other are: 1) *Pesantren's* close institutional relationship with the Government; 2) *pesantren* becomes more global and cosmopolitan; 3) established mutual relations with the local community; 4) literature diversification that was ranging from yellow to white book, and even to journal, newspaper, or magazine; 5) shifting intellectual orientation that was not only in the Middle East but even Europe, and that was affecting *pesantren's* scientific product. Thus, the intellectual *pesantren* of this century produces intellectual works that are more critical and academic; 6) *pesantren* responds to Western culture with no naive and more creative and modified. *Pesantren* will always be processing by dialoguing themselves with the faced reality and bear modifications, improvisation, and creative synthesis, without losing their most basic moral spirit. Borrowing the term of Zamakhsyari, *pesantren* are experiencing a process of continuity and change (Sadjali, 2003:1-7).

## 2. Vision and New Authority of Academic *Kyai* in Yogyakarta

One of the shifts that appear in the tradition of *pesantren* in Yogyakarta until the decade of this century is the rise of new *Kyai* who are more cosmopolitan. Unlike traditional *Kyai* whose knowledge and network connected to the Middle East, they have a strong network with the West, because averagely they are "the product of the West". In the one hand, they have the authority as an intellectual at University; but on the other hand, they also have a strong concern in religious

education informally, either becoming a *Kyai*, *ustadz*, or community leader, because they are also the "local product" of *pesantren*. They hold the spirit of religious tradition on the one hand, and the modernity and cosmopolitan orientation on the other. Thus, they bring a new vision to the *pesantren's* world to get closer to the academic environment. Their presence influences in dialoguing between traditionalism and progressivism.

The emergence of a new generation of *Kyai* as *pesantren* figure in Yogyakarta is close to some historical context. *First*, on a macro scale, that is the context of the cultural space of religious education in Yogyakarta. The city has become a space means not only in culture-tourism and history but also in education. About 300 public and private universities were established in the city. Library centers can be found in some corners of the city. Book shopping Center creates quite scientific reference distribution. The development of the publishing institutions that support cultural literacy and literature were increasing every year.

In addition, the city is also home to the centers of Islamic education development. Hundreds of *pesantren* grow as educational institutions both formal and informal, centered in Krapyak and Kotagede (central), Imogiri (southern part), Pandanaran (northern part), Mlangi (western part), and Piyungan (eastern part). *Pesantren* then not only grow as "the village *pesantren*", but also "*pesantren* in the town", including around the campus. Even some Islamic colleges, *pesantren* dormitory has been built as part of Islamic education in the institutions. *Pesantren* was often selected as an alternative preference for male and

female students who want to study Islamic knowledge. They are often referred to as "maha-santri". Many professor-lecturers, who teach in campus, also initiated the *pesantren* in their community. Around Islamic *pesantren*, usually, there are sites that record the history of the spread of Islam, thus it is inviting the pilgrims coming from out of town, and creating its own religious atmosphere.

The high number of educational institutions with all the facilities, Yogyakarta is successfully attracting the attention of society to study in the city and create a very dynamic educational climate. Inevitably, many intellectual figures were born from the touch of dynamic cultural in Yogyakarta. The dynamic even carries the assimilation between the campus culture and the *pesantren* culture, thus giving birth to the academicians (lecturers) and *Kyai* (leaders of *pesantren*) at the same time; balancing the intellectual (as a progressive Muslim intellectual actor) and activism (*Kyai* is creative and innovative). They not only teach the "Yellow Book", but also "the white book", even making that last one as a part of the material taught in the *pesantren*. They are part of the academics at campus, which has the authority of science with an academic degree to professors, but also religious figures who used to give religious sermon (*pengajian*) in the community and is known as *ulama* (Muslim scholar). They are not the typical of traditional *kyai*(s) who stay 24 hours together with the *santri* in Pondok and guarding the students, but they appear as *Kyai* who divided their time to teach outside, in the half day, and in the *pesantren* for the other half day. Some students (*maha-santri*) were commonly became the student of *kyai* in campus, and the students was also studying with

the same *kyai* informally at the *pesantren*. *Pesantren* systems do not implement *madrasa*, meaning a leveled class. Many of the students became the *maha-santri* were not to become *santri an sich* (solely as santri), but to deepen scientific knowledge they already get on campus. By those descriptions, with a new vision the academics *kyai* shows a new generation of "Ulama-intellect" which become part of the genealogy of the intellectuals of Islam in Indonesia.

*Second* is the political context of Islamic education. Since the '80s, multidisciplinary approach and the use of new methods in the study of religion, has been introduced by Mukti Ali as a lecturer at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga. This is done as an effort of balancing Islamic epistemology that at that time considered imbalance and tend towards epistemology of *naqliy* (textual based), then the required enhancement is in '*aqli*' (reasoning), included the intervention to the social sciences. At the time, the idea was a breakthrough and gave rise to a debate that was quite loud but was well received eventually (Ali, 1981:321). Mukti Ali breakthrough of religious thought that followed with the political policy of Islamic education during Munawir Sjadzali period, when he became Minister of religious affairs, by the program of sending educators cadres to the West in the '80s, also provides scholarships for master and doctoral degree. Mukti Ali himself was the first generation of western intellectual products. The policies to open access to the Western education made the orientation of Islamic education not only to the Middle East but also to Europe and America. The candidates, that in fact many of them are the alumni of *Pesantren*, demanded not only for "*melek Babasa Arab*" (Arabic language proficiency that have already

prevalent in Islamic tradition) but also "*melek bahasa Inggris*", (advanced in English proficiency). They "learn Islam to the West".

The cadre program has a significant influence on the advancement of Islamic higher education in Indonesia, and in Yogyakarta in particular. Yudi Latif wrote: "These Muslim scholars would have a significant impact on the future development of Muslim intellectuals and of the religious administration of the country" (Latif, 2008: 257). Two decades afterward, some product of Western scholars began to show their work in the academic world, opening new epoch space, and giving different colors in the campus environment. The political education policy was considered as a breakthrough, but more important was the intellectual impact of the program, which resulted in more dynamic transmission and scientific transformation into religious studies in Indonesia. That is where a more significant encounter takes place between the Eastern scientific tradition and the Western scientific tradition. Many of them became "*cosmopolitan santri*". Instead of destroying the tradition, many of the cosmopolitan *santri* of Western products have maintained traditional Islamic traditions; some of them even founded *pesantren*.

*Third* is the context of the Islamic paradigm. On the more micro scale, UIN Sunan Kalijaga is the most popular State Islamic University in Yogyakarta. The number of *santri* in Yogyakarta, averagely are educated at that college. In the development of its knowledge, this college is in efforts on the process of building "scientific Islam paradigm" which is widely known as the "integration-interconnection" of science.

This paradigm would like to 'parse' back the exclusive boundaries of knowledge, building integrative science and relates an interdisciplinary science to each other. Symbolically, the development is characterized by the institutional transformation of IAIN to UIN since the year 2004, with the establishment of the Faculties of science and technology in the Islamic University. The important figure in this shifting of scientific paradigm and the institutional transformation and epistemology is Amin Abdullah, although he is not the only figure who spoke about the integrative paradigm of Science (Ih. Abdullah, 2007: ix).

Paradigmatic and institutional transformation on the campus of State Islamic University gives significant implications. It not only gives higher prestige for the campus and alumni but more importantly is to make the development of religious academic science to become more dynamic. In the spirit of openness and 'mutual greeting between scientific', social approach towards Islamic studies who formerly expressed by Mukti Ali has now become more dynamic. Moreover, this transformation is supported with the development of human resources; marked with the return of Western scholar cadres to Indonesia and bringing the possibility of big changes in the academic culture. Some of them, for example, are Amin Abdullah (Former Rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga), Yudian Wahyudi (now serving as Rector of the UIN Sunan Kalijaga), Sahiron Syamsuddin, Moch. Nur Ichwan, Noorhaidi Hasan, Al-Makin and etc. One of the cultures, for example, is the emergence of "mahzab Jogja" or "Jogja School" in the Islamic discourse, which is considered as a medium of encounter between modernist and traditionalists

(Kersten, 2018:50). The cadres became part of the movement of the history of Islamic intelligentsia branch in Indonesia who was born through the hand of "third generation" Intelligentsia Muslims, like Mukti Ali, Harun Nasution, Nurcholish Madjid, etc. (See. Latif, 2008:474) Most of them adopt positive and constructive elements of western science, and still keep the Islamic traditionalism that has been developed. They hold the principle of: *al-muhafadzah 'ala al-qadim al-Salih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadid al-ashlah* (to continue and maintain the good old traditions and to take the best things from the new tradition, including the good-best things from the West).

### 3. *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah and Student Activities

One form of "product of encounter" between traditionalism and modernism in the environs of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta is that *pesantren* institution still gains attention and respect in the academic environment. *Pesantren* that notably is the traditional educational institutions still have strong relationships with the academic culture of the University that notably is a modern educational institution. In the strata of education, *pesantren* is a pre-university, because the *pesantren* with the developed *madrassa* system has organized education up to secondary level, so that they who graduated from *pesantren*, with a system of equalization, able to continue their study at University.

Many lecturers at the University are western product who play significant role in the various lines of the University. Many of them still maintain the tradition of *pesantren* outside the university, particularly those who have background of NU traditionalists and became *kyai* and founded *pesantren*. They play

important role in the midst of hectic activities of their teaching in universities and as a place to propagate the idea of extra-institutional campus. For example, Yudian Wahyudi who served as Rector was seen by Kersten as the most prominent figure in the academic environment of UIN Sunan Kalijaga (2018:53), founded the *pesantren* Nawesea (Central Study of Islam in Western Europe and North America Southeast Asia) since his return from America (Republika.co.id). Although initially this *pesantren* devoted to *santri* from graduate student, but now has revised and started from basic education. In addition, other intellectual figures who founded the *pesantren* is Sahiron Syamsuddin (now Vice Rector). He is the renewal figure in the field of Qur'anic exegesis who completed his doctoral study in Germany and he founded *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah: Center for study and development of Islamic and social sciences. This *Pesantren* became one of important references for "maha-*santri*" who studied Islam, especially in the fields of Al-Qur'an, and capture opportunities in the social sciences and Humanities for the development of study of Qur'an. The strong scientific authority of *pesantren* network with Islamic University education made the *pesantren* as "sub-cultural academic" which became part of 'the bowl', that complement and enhance Islamic discourse at Islamic University, and at UIN Sunan Kalijaga in particular.

#### *The General Description of Pesantren Baitul Hikmah*

The description of the *pesantren* Baitul Hikmah here refers to the experience of the author involved in the *pesantren* activities and adapt to scientific activities in it (being *santri* kalong, or students who do not settle fully in the dorm. Starting in 2013 until roughly the

end of 2016, the author follows the learning at Baitul Hikmah, and actively participated in the particular aspect of literacy development and publication). Literally, Baitul Hikmah means "House of wisdom", consists of two words: *Bait* means house, and *Hikmah* means wisdom or philosophy in a broad sense. *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah is one of several *pesantrens* in Yogyakarta, which was founded by a part of the generation of "new intelligentsia" which is more progressive, who even came from traditional NU but attended western education in a strict qualifications, so it is influencing the thinking, movement, grounding the discourse, and also diversify the *pesantren* which they founded.

The founder of the *pesantren* Baitul Hikmah is Sahiron Syamsuddin, a lecturer of UIN Sunan Kalijaga (now served as Vice Rector). He graduated his master degree at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University in Canada, doctoral programs at the Otto-Friedrich University of Bamberg Germany, and Postdoctoral Research at the University of Frankfurt am Main. His reputation is widely known among Islamic studies as an expert on the interpretation of the Qu'ran, especially in terms of the application of hermeneutics for the development of Al-Qur'an and the exegesis

(<https://independent.academia.edu>).

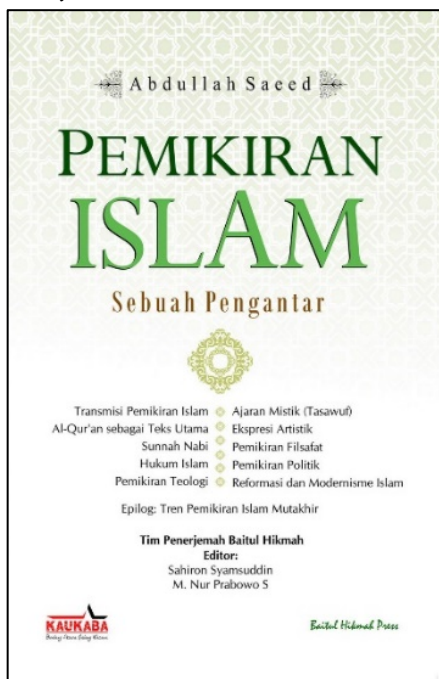
With his reputation, the science of Qur'anic exegesis and Hermeneutics become more advanced in Baitul Hikmah's scientific academic activities. This is as Dhofier said, that "one of the general characters of *pesantren* is the *kyai of pesantren* develops himself to have expertise in a particular branch of knowledge, and that will affect the book or what books are studied in *pesantren*" (Zamakhsyari, pp. 46.)

*Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah is located in the village of Krapyak, Bantul district, Yogyakarta special region province. Krapyak is known as a deeply religious area because there are famous traditional *pesantren*, i.e. *Pesantren* Al-Munawwir and *Pesantren* Ali-Maksum. *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah is located next to the two big *pesantren(s)*. As the socio-educational pattern of Islamic education in several areas, in one of the traditional areas where there is a primary *pesantren* and is surrounded by a small *pesantren(s)* in the vicinity. This is like *pesantren* in areas of Imogiri and Mlangi Bantul, or some big Salafi Islamic *pesantren* in East Java. From this point, the *pesantren* Baitul Hikmah is a small *pesantren* which can be said to be "*pesantren* beginner" compared to *pesantren* Krapyak. Baitul Hikmah is classified as "small Islamic preaching institution", or if it is called *pesantren*, it described as a small *pesantren* with the number of very little *santri*.

The presence of Baitul Hikmah as a subcultural can be seen from two sides. On the one hand, it is sub-cultural academic since it becomes a reference for students who become "*maha-santri*" for deepening the religious sciences and social sciences of campus extras. It is the sub-cultural academic from the University, and all *santri* in this *pesantren* are undergraduate and graduate students. On the other hand, this *pesantren*, likewise Islamic usually in general, is also the development of primary *pesantren* and as community preaching at the village and become "*suburbs pesantren*" which participates for socio-education of community. Considering at the young age, the *pesantren* is still a 'minimalist', meaning some elements of *pesantren* are still not available, especially a mosque as the center of activity. The number of the *santri* is also very limited, about 12 male

*santri* and several female *santri*. Baitul Hikmah *Santri* is divided into *mukim* (settled) and *kalong* (round trip); averagely they are college students who want to add more their understanding of Islamic science. In addition, there are now also some PBSB *santri* or Scholarship Program Achiever students from the Ministry of religious affairs. Interestingly, *santri* who studied in *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah is free of charge, and the *kyai* give his time and energy to teach without expecting rewards from the *santri*.

Picture 1. Book by Abdullah Saeed (Melbourne University) which translated by the *santri* and the *Kyai* as the editor. This book used as



academic reference in campus specifically to the field of philosophy and Islamic thought

*Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah does not use *madrasi* system, where particular academic level must be obtained by the students. With traditional systems of *sorogan* (the student reads and the teacher listens) and *blandongan* (the teacher reads and the students listen) teaching, the *maha-santri* can be more flexible in following activities without having to be

tied to the long duration of the study. In addition, given the Baitul Hikmah "maha-*santri*" is college students who are deemed to understand the academic traditions of the University, they are given the opportunity for scientific discussion in the dorm, besides also developing their literacy abilities by writing and translating books. This method proved suitable for adult learning who already considered more settled emotionally and intellectually.

In addition to discussion, the book translation activities become a favorite activity of the *santri* of Baitul Hikmah. *Santri* actively involved in the activities of the translation from English to Indonesia, and *kyai* as editor of the translation resulted by the *santri*, and then published by the publishing institution belongs to the *pesantren*. However sometimes, the *Kyai* and students play oppositely: *Kyai* as translators and students as editors. With those activities, *pesantren* is not identical to the "Yellow Book", but even producing "the white book" which provides the scientific references to university level. The translated books are academic reference books which are used both in *pesantren* and college. The published books are usually introduced and being reviewed in college. Thus, the relationship between the campus and the *pesantren* becomes closer.

This *pesantren* labeled as the "Center for study and development of Islamic and social sciences ". To support the studying process and the development of science, literacy activities are getting the most attention. *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah in relatively new age has been equipping the institution with the publishing. The *Pesantren* has a publishing institution Baitul Hikma Press, which

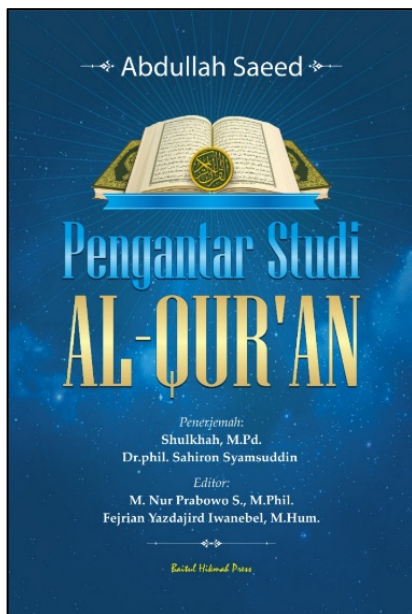
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publishes academic papers, especially those from the writings of the *santri*. Publishing activities deemed very important to the development of science accessibility. This indicates that this *pesantren* emphasis on creative science activity.

Picture 2. Book by Abdullah Saeed (Melbourne)

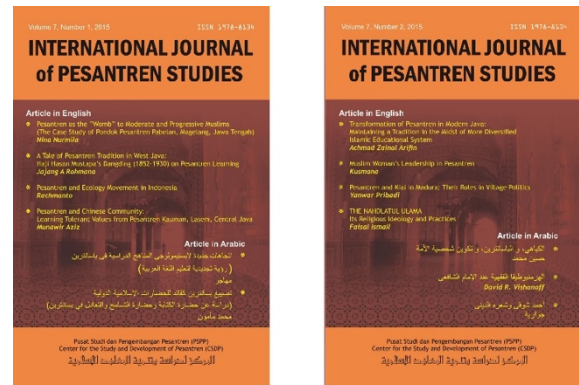


translated by the Kyai, and edited by the *santri*. This book used as academic references in campus specifically to the field of al-Quran and Tafser

The translation activities of these books were used as transmission of science and idea, particularly the Islamic sciences fields of Tafseer (exegesis), social sciences and philosophy. Thus, with such tradition, *pesantren* Baitul Hikmah seems to take the spirit of revivalist, and of course in different contexts, from the pattern of traditions that Baitul Hikmah institution ever built by the Caliph Harun al-Rasyid and developed by the Muslim philosophers at the time of Abbasid dynasty in 900's. Historically, these institutions play a major role in the development of Islamic civilization and progress thanks to the transmission of thoughts of Greek

through the activity of translation. Beyond the internal activities of the *pesantren*, the *santri* are also given the freedom to develop their literacy abilities with good creative writings in the form of newsletters writing, opinion media, journal articles, and others.

Picture 3. In the year 2015, the Pesantren



Hikmah also publishes a scientific journal in international scale, in collaboration with the Center for the study and development of Pesantren (PSPP). Pesantren Baitul Hikmah's Kyai is the Editor Chief in this journal

With those literacy activities, *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah is developing the bilingual climate on Arabic and English. The English indeed emphasized to be mastered by the *santri* as requirements for further education. *Kyai* strongly supports language proficiency enhancement, and in particular, to continue higher education in abroad with scholarship programs. For mastering English, the *Kyai* often invites native guests from abroad and organizes special programs of English directly to the *santri*. Language development is also done with English written books review as part of the regular activities with the *sorogan* method so that students can study the material and English analytically at once.

Literacy and linguistic activities show the strong "networking" owned by the *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah, especially with the tradition of the European Islamic thought, either in scientific or as

personal as well as *Ulama* and academician. The scholarship and academic networks are indeed very influential to the development of Islamic thought, as ever happened among *Ulama* in Indonesia and Malaysia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (See. Azra: 2004 and Bruinessen: 2015). Unlike the *Pesantren Salafiyah* (traditional) or modern in general which has intensive networking and scientific chain with *ulama* in the Middle East, the *Pesantren Baitul Hikmah* builds network with *ulama* and thinkers of Islam in Europe, such as Germany, the Netherlands, as well as Australia. This is of course very influenced by the reputation of the *kyai*. The network followed by a "scientific authority transfer" to transmitting the thought.

Picture 4. Some Baitul Hikmah students actively



participated in the International Workshop on Contemporary Approach to the Qur'an in Europe which is the Leader of Pesantren Baitul Hikmah and Karel Steenbrink, popular scholar from Utrecht, became the key speaker.

The networks and the scientific chains certainly affect the *santri* to study in Europe. Germany is still the favorable goal and as main destination (*ka'bat al-qusad*) of the *santri* of Baitul Hikmah to continuing their study. Some Baitul Hikmah's *santri* has managed to obtain a scholarship for further study or exchange programs in Germany. The study of Islam in Germany already has a fairly

long history since the Qur'an was first translated into the language of Germany in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and has given birth many orientalist of the Qur'an; and until now, the development of Islamic studies in Germany, especially in the areas of al-Qur'an, still quite significant (Schimmel: 2010).

Picture 5. Author (left) accompanied the leader



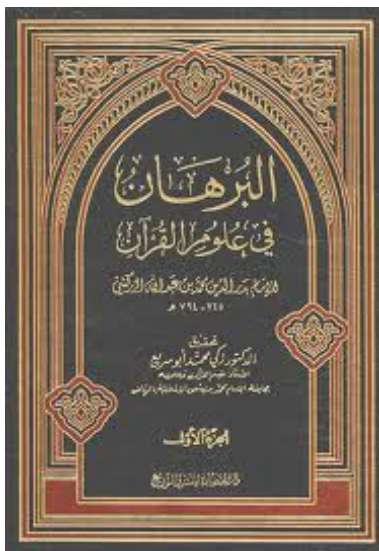
of Pesantren Baitul Hikmah, Sahiron Syamduddin (middle) in the meeting with Abdullah Saeed (Melbourne University) (right), as part of strengthening "networking" in the activities of the knowledge.

In this case, many of the *santri* are motivated to "follow in the footsteps of the *Kyai*" has been involved in research for quite long about the Quran studies in Germany and introduced about "a new trend of al-Qur'an studies in Germany" and "the Qur'an in the sight of the orientalist".

Besides Germany, the *pesantren* Baitul Hikmah's scientific networking is also done scholars from the Netherlands. The one that ever done the communication and cooperation in the scientific activities program is, for example, Karel Steenbrink (1942-), an Indonesian-ist who has conducted research of religious education in Indonesia since the early '80s. One of form of transmission of knowledge is the translation of his book on the interpretation of the Quran over the

verses about Jesus and translated as: “*Nabi Isa dalam al-Quran: Sebuah Interpretasi Outsider atas al-Qur’an*” (2005). Besides the Netherlands, the other important academic network is Australia. One of them is Abdullah Saeed, Professor in Islamic studies who recently develops the contextual interpretation of the al-Quran at Melbourne University in Australia.

Picture 6. The classical initial Book in the field



of Al-Qur’an and exegesis science, al-Burhan fi ulum al-Quran, works of Imam Zarkasyi (745-794 H) read by Baitul Hikmah Students

With *kyai*’s high academic reputation in the field of the Qur’anic exegesis, then the science of al-Quran becomes advance study in the curriculum areas of the *pesantren*. In the study of Islam in general, the Quran has a central position, and the field of exegesis it is the authoritative scientific branch of Islam (Ma’arif, 2004:151). The *santri* of *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah learn the –Qur’an exegesis by examining regularly and analytically the main scripture in the fields of *tafseer*-exegesis, namely *Al-Burban fi ulum al-Quran* by Imam Badrudin Zarkasyi. However, as the development of interdisciplinary in Islamic studies, it is realized that the approach and methodology in the interpretation of Al-

Qur’an are more diverse, one of which is philosophy. Many methodological tools can be adopted for the development of the science of the Qur’an, as done by scholars in Germany. One of important devices of interpretation is hermeneutics. The study of hermeneutics or philosophy of interpretation becomes important as part of the methodology for developing the-Quran exegesis science. Therefore, analytically, the students examine the hermeneutics books written by contemporary analytic philosophers, Jorge J. e. Gracia, “*A Theory of Textuality*” (1995), who is acknowledged for giving the contribution to the development of *ulumul Qur’an* (the science of the Qur’an). Within this plan, Sahiron Syamsuddin has developed further theory *ma’na cum maghza* (meaning and significance) in the interpretation of the Quran and *Hermeneutika al-Qur’an Mazhab Jogja* (2003) and *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur’an* (2009).

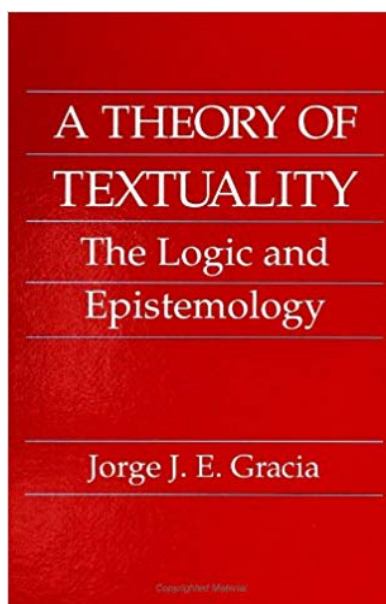


Picture 7. The initial contemporary Book in Hermeneutics field written by American philosopher Jorge J.E. Gracia (1942-) as a part of Curriculum of Pesantren

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Besides the field of exegesis of the-Qur'an, other disciplines also became the study of the *santries*, including *fiqh ibadat*, *Hadith-akhlaq*, *Arabic*, and *English*. The subject of *fiqh* usually delivers in the public discussion at the village or at the house of *kyai* along with the community around. The discussed book is the basic *fiqh* of *Sullam al-Mumajat* by Shaykh al-Nawawi Al-Bantany, which discusses the worship matters (*ibadah*) like prayer. This subject is intended for the enhancement of santri's worships (*ubudiyah*). As for the subject of *Hadith-akhlaq* aimed for shaping good characters as a muslim, which is taken from the book of *Riyadh al-Shalihin* works of Imam al-Nawawi (Imam Abu Zakariya Yahya bin syaraf An-Nawawy). The study of the subject is routinely done once a week. The enhancement of the Arabic and English are done together with the book review discussion, or with extra activities initiated by each *santri*.



Picture 8. Written book by Kyai of Pesantren Baitul Hikmah on hermeneutics to develop the science of al-Quran published by Nawesea Press in collaboration with Baitul Hikmah Press

As a form of spiritual enhancement effort, *Kyai* invites the *santries* to always do *amaliyah dzikir* (do chanting) which in this case refers to a collection of *Dzikir Ratib al-Haddad* compiled by Habib Abdullah al-Haddad. There is no special place, like a mosque or surau (prayer house), to conduct the discussion and *amaliyah*. The *santries* typically carry out the studies in the dormitories or at the house of *kyai*. With such a routine, both include spiritual activity and intellectual activity, especially with the number *santries* that are still very limited, the relationship between *Kyai* and *santries* become more intimate, and the transfer of knowledge become more effective.

#### 4. Pesantren Baitul Hikmah Supports Scientific Efforts

*Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah becomes part of the creative and innovative change and synchronization in the historical tradition of *pesantren* in contemporary Indonesia. This shows, that the *pesantren* was not only running a traditional education, but also very likely to support the work of the scientific research and development. By supporting interdisciplinary science, scientific work collaboration, and extensive knowledge transmission, *pesantren(s)* were capable to support, up to a certain level, the development of social sciences and humanities. Thus, the development of social science now was not only becoming academic monopoly formally on campus, but it is distributed to an informal institution like *pesantren*, and *pesantren* become "sub-cultural academic" that supports the work of the campus. *Pesantren* is known as the center of Islamic science development, but also transform inclusively and build integrative scientific authority by adopting constructive elements from

Social-Humanities Sciences. In this case, the discipline's philosophy is very important for the work of the knowledge.

Along with the appearance of the integrative paradigm of science and religion, both in the world of philosophy as well as the social sciences and religion, now *pesantren* is not exclusive anymore, but already done cultural transformation more inclusive. This new phenomenon indicates that *pesantren* as religious institutions, particularly Islam, not just become a locus of religion, but also a social and cultural locus, until some certain limits, having social science authority has become important medium for the intelligentsia-millennial in the context of social cultural transformation. It is at once also deny the stereotype of *pesantrens* as Islamic old-fashioned institutions even tend to be radical. *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah has performed this role of being the "Center for study and development of Islamic Sciences and the social sciences".

One form of inclusive science developed at Baitul Hikmah is, for example, enhancing the study of methodological and philosophical bases for the social-humanities science and religious affairs through "the study of hermeneutics". They examine the Hermeneutics in analytic tradition through the work of philosopher Jorge J.E. Gracia regarding his thoughts on the basis of logic, epistemology and ontology of text. This is considered important because the text is the source of important information in any science, including the science of religion and social sciences. Scholars struggle with the text, all kind of text, classical, modern and contemporary. The teaching of religion is also sourced from texts that are sanctified (Holy scripture) and is considered a

source of legal and moral teachings of religion, and which religious science developed through the interpretation of the sacred text. Hermeneutics as the study of the nature of the text and its interpretation is believed, to some extent, applicable to enrich the methodology of Islamic studies. Similarly, social sciences get a strong inspiration from the basic values within the contextual religious norms. Besides that, the development of science is also done with the process of transmitting knowledge, translating text as source of knowledge and collaborative work for knowledge.

In terms of Amin Abdullah, *pesantren* Baitul Hikmah does "developing critical tradition-epistemological in *pesantren*," to enrich the Islamic science literature based on *al-kutub al-sofro* (Yellow books) and integrated with the literature of *al-kutub Al-baidho* (the white book), enriching new approaches in Islamic studies, especially social science and historical approach, and not solely centered to the study of truth, normative unity, but is also a plural reality, investigating more about "*maknawi*" (the meaning) in religion, and responding to the new social-religious issues (Abdullah, 2012:313).

## 5. The significance of The Hermeneutic Study for Social-religious Research

*Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah has shown the ethos as "*pesantren plus*", which is not solely organizing traditional Islamic education *an sich* (only), but also concerning to developing scientific knowledge with philosophical base enhancement (logic, epistemology, and ontology) as academics do on Islamic campus. Although it is not successful yet, at least this already built the foundation for more dynamic science development

for *pesantren* that shown with "open behavior" to the social science and humanities. "Hermeneutics studies" become dominant among other studies in the *Pesantren* Baitul Hikmah. Meaning "The development of interpretive religious discipline with hermeneutics approach", this is familiar in the study of the social sciences and humanities, as a methodology of interpretation with various operational devices. More specifically, this part is trying to see the significance of the hermeneutics study in the context of enhancing philosophical base for the work of religious research in General.

The Hermeneutics study has a couple of "significance" (*magħza*) for the development of contemporary religious research in general, especially for the mental attitude of researchers at a research institute that conducts religious research. *First*, is enhancing the interpretation of religious subject. According to the view of Waardenburgh, to conduct better religious research, it takes some viable approaches; among other is hermeneutics approach, as well as historical and contextual approach. This approach used analyze to the aspects of "meaning" of religious data. Along with the rapid changes in modernity, many changes happen in understanding religious data, even the data that comes from the Holy Scriptures as the most authoritative source which colored with new radical interpretation. (Gem, 2000:478). Researcher responsibilities are openness toward various forms of religious thoughts and views. A researcher is required to have an open "hermeneutics attitude" so that he/she does not understand the social-religious reality dogmatically. Religion has two sides, according to Amin Abdullah, "normativity" as "high

tradition", and also "historic" and "low tradition", and researchers must understand the epistemological flexibility of the data that comes from these two sides (Abdullah, 2012:254).

*Second*, is strengthening contextual approach in the field of religious research. Contextual-ism means interpreting religious data which is not merely literary (textual), but relates the text to its context. Religion itself cannot be separated from the context, whether political, economic, social or cultural context. The approach to religion by ignoring the context is fragile and insignificant. Indeed, the religion would be only an exclusive and closed doctrine. Contextual-ism means realizing that text, both verbal and non-verbal, which is the source of religious values and norms and practices, is born in a certain context. According to Waardenburgh, the trend of contemporary religious research is concerning on the contextual-ism. Religious research should pay attention to the religious transformation that occurs in every religion, from the context of beginning to the current. In that transformation, surely, there are many religious elements that are permanent (*tsawabit*) and changeable (*mutaghayyirat*). Thus, by contextual approach, the researchers can explain the changes in elements and religious meaning by observing the shifting context (Permata, 2000: 478).

*Third* is revitalization in the field of religious ethics. By bringing an emancipatory spirit, the contextual approach also pays serious attention to the ethical issues in socio-religious research. The reason is that religion must be able to provide solutions to the actual problems within society. The actual problems that become issues in the social

sciences are also concerned, such as the issues of tolerance, gender, *jihad* and war, violence and radicalism, poverty, justice, and so on so forth. The contextual approach that emphasizes the ethical spirit of religion is somewhat different from the legalistic approach used in religious research, and even in many ways, the first approach criticizes the second by unpacking the problems of legal-ethic in the religion. They stressed the importance of understanding of religious ratio-ethic, so the religion is not dominated by *ratio-legis*. The thinkers express this ethical understanding in the various ways. One of the most recent is Abdullah Saeed who offers a new understanding of the reinterpretation of *ethico-legal* verses in the Qur'an (Saeed, 2006).

*Fourth* is strengthening scientific interconnectivity. The current scientific challenge is the rejection of exclusive tendencies and closed relations between and among field of science. One of important developed paradigms is integrative paradigm, which emphasizes interconnected scientific relations. Interconnectedness by mean the various fields of science have been developed with various types and models. Also, the latest research paradigm, which requires the collaborative work, because, there are many unsolved problems by a single field of science. The hermeneutical approach is very important in the framework of "greeting one another", "mutual understanding" of one scientific characteristic with the other, and "mutual dialogue" in order to find rationality in inter-subjectivity. A scientific institution, both a university and a research institution, is ultimately required to open up and expand scientific networks. In the context of developing religious research, social science is an approach to religious

studies, and religious studies try to provide solutions to social problems.

## 6. Conclusion

The practice of education as found in *Pesantren* "Baitul Hikmah: Center for the Study and Development of Islamic and Social Sciences" in Yogyakarta has differentiation and diversification as the typical of contemporary *pesantren*, among others: *first* is familiar with modern methodologies; *second* the diversification programs and activities is increasingly open, and at the same time also providing students with various knowledge outside of religious studies and also improving skills needed for future job vacancies; *thirdly*, it has a close relationship between the institution of the *pesantren* and the government, this relation is unlike previously, especially the relation with universities and the Ministry of Religious Affair; *fourth*, *Pesantren* has become more knowledgeable and cosmopolitan with the wide expansion of scientific networks; *fifth*, diversification of literature from yellow books to white books, even to journals; *sixth* is a shift in intellectual orientation that is not only the Middle East, but even Europe, which affects the scientific product of *pesantren*; *seventh*, *pesantren* intends to produce more critical and academic intellectual works; *eighth*, *pesantren* responds Western culture by not being naive and more creative and modified.

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