

“Kalibokong Theology” and Moeslim Abdurrahman’s Transformative Islamic Education¹

Zuly Qodir

*Department of Government Affairs and Public Administration
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah
Yogyakarta.*

e-mail: zuly_qodir@yahoo.com

Abstract-*This paper discusses the idea of Transformative Islamic Education with Teologi Kalibokong as the illustration. Teologi Kalibokong is used by Moeslim Abdurrahman to describe the disadvantaged situations endured by marginal societies for being exploited by middlemen and capitalists. Nevertheless, those situations cover many aspects including social, economy, education, and politics. From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, marginal society becomes a group of people who are less religious. They are presumed as less religious believers. Related to this, Moeslim Abdurrahman introduces the significance of particular theology for the oppressed (al-mustad’afin), which is the building of Islamic theology as the spirit of Transformative Islamic Education that generates people who capable of breaking the impasse of social injustice with critical Islamic and non-judgmental approaches.*

Keywords: , Moeslim Abdurrahman, Transformative Islamic Education.

Abstrak-*Tulisan ini akan membahas tentang gagasan pendidikan Islam transformatif dengan menjadikan teologi Kalobokong sebagai pondasi pemikiran. Istilah teologi Kalobokong diambil dari Moeslim Abdurrahman tatkala menggambarkan bagaimana masyarakat pinggir menderit karena diperas tenaganya oleh para tengkulak dan pengusaha. Mereka kaum yang menderita secara social ekonomi, pendidikan, serta politik. Kaum pinggir jika dilihat dalam perspektif Islam fikih, maka menjadi kelompok masyarakat yang tidak beruntung secara agama. Mereka bahkan bisa dimasukkan sebagai kaum*

¹Extension of Paper for Discussion to Memorize Antropologist Moeslim Abdurrahman, Muhammadiyah Central Exeutive, Cikditiro, Yogyakarta 8 August 2012.

kurang taat beribadah. Mengenai hal itu, Moeslim Abdurrahman mengintrodusir perlunya teologi untuk kaum mustad'afin yakni bangunan teologi Islam sebagai spirit pendidikan Islam transformatif yang melahirkan manusia yang mampu memecah kebuntuan penyakit ketidakadilan masyarakat dengan prangkat Islam kritis dan tidak menghakimi pemeluknya.

Kata Kunci: *Teologi Kalibokong, Moeslim Abduurahman, dan Pendidikan Islam Transformatif*

A. Introduction

Moeslim Abdurrahman is a renowned scholar in the internal Muhammadiyah and the public for his wide-ranging social activities. He is also popular among NGOs, particularly for his collaboration with Dawam Raharjo in tutoring many young activists in LP3ES, and teaching *pesantren* in Pabelan as well as Bina Swadaya. His modesty is derived from his Muhammadiyah background since his father is the founder and leading figure of Masyumi in Paciran, Lamongan, East Java.

In fact, there are numbers of organizations established and initiated by Moeslim Abdurrahman, or best known as Kang Moeslim, which are aimed for community empowerment. Nevertheless, the author will not specify these organizations because this paper is not intended for it. To mention some of them are LP3ES, P3M, LSPS, Maarif Institute, PSAP, al-Maun Foundation as the small parts of social organization initiated by Kang Moeslim during his lifetime.

Kang Moeslim's advocacy for the youth and the oppressed or marginal (*mustad'afin*) is quite recognized. He served as Chairman of the Institute for Empowerment of workers, Farmers and Fishing Communities (LPBTN) of Muhammadiyah Central Executive under the leadership of General Chairman, Din Syamsuddin, in 2005-2010. After that, LPBTN was changed into Community Empowerment Assembly (*Majelis Pemberdayaan Masyarakat/MPM*) led by Said Tuhuleley for 2010-2021 but he passed away in the middle of his duty and replaced by Mohammad Yamin to the present.

Another most phenomenal thing is Moeslim Abdurrahman and Muhammadiyah students initiated the establishment of the Muhammadiyah Young Intellectual Network (*Jaringan Intelektual Muda Muhammadiyah/JIMM*) in 2003. JIMM has produced several talented and dedicated figures, including Hilman Latief as Chairman

of Lazismuh PPM (2015-2020), Ahmad Najib Burhani (Vice Chairman of Library and Information PPM 2015-2020), Ahmad Noerma Permata (Head of Organizational Branch and Sub-Branch 2015-2021), Pradana Boy ZTF (Chairman of Muhammadiyah Youth of East Java (2016-2021) Andar Nubowo (Director of Lazismuh 2015-2021), Biyanto (PWM Secretary of East Java). Basically, Moeslim Abdurrahman and JIMM have been trying to provide space for the youth of Muhammadiyah throughout Indonesia. The members of JIMM are the youth of Muhammadiyah but not all of them have been in the structure of Muhammadiyah. Therefore, JIMM is frequently perceived as a rebellious network in Muhammadiyah. Yet it appears that JIMM has generated Muhammadiyah cadres in various places, positions, and social forums in Muhammadiyah.

In this paper, the author wants to bring forward about Moeslim Abdurrahman with his phenomenal notion of *Teologi Kalibokong*. The author recognized this idea as the realization of Transformative Islam, an intellectual and authentic idea from Moeslim Abdurrahman, which is parallel to Kuntowijoyo and M. Dawam Rahardjo who instigated Transformative Social Sciences (Prophetic Social Sciences). Furthermore, this chapter will partially discuss the idea of Moeslim Abdurrahman, particularly on the original idea of *Teologi Kalibokong* as conveyed by Moeslim Abdurrahman on several occasions.

B. Theoretical Framework

Currently, the urgent mission regarding with the interpretation of the Qur'an is to liberate social humanity from adverse exploitations. Such exploitations comprise the economic, political, social, cultural, and religious restraints. The Qur'an actually encloses the transformative and liberative vision for humanity. The verses begin the mission of the revelation of Qur'an by performing a theological revolution. This theological revolution articulates its substance through the jargon of “Islamic Monotheism/*Tauhid*” which negates all gods besides Allah (swt). This paper will explicate the idea propounded by Moeslim Abdurrahman by using hermeneutics to obtain a transformative of tafsir Qur'an.

1. Transformative Interpretation

The revitalization based on the transformative interpretation (*al-manhaj al-ijtima'iy fi al-tafsir*) of the Qur'an is commenced by Hassan Hanafi well-known as his revolutionary *ijtihad*, such as “the

Islamic Left” (*al-Yasar al-Islam*). He proposes new interpretation by doing reconstruction of four Islamic sciences, namely *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *kalam* (theology), philosophy, and Sufism (*tasawwuf*). Furthermore, there are three measures within it. *First*, it refers to the primary source of Islamic teachings (*al-Quran* and *al-Sunnah*). *Second* is the understanding of the development the epistemological reasoning, from the classical to the contemporary. *Third* is the substitution of the former school of thought with new epistemology.²

The measures to renew the previous four scientific fields, according to Hassan Hanafi, can be done by using phenomenological approach and by establishing the concept of “consciousness” as a reconstructive methodology of transformative interpretation of Qur’an.³ *First* is the historical consciousness, namely the consciousness of Islamic tradition. *Second* is the eidetic consciousness (*al-syu’ur al-nazari*) which aims to ensure the straight path taken by the interpreter in understanding the aspects of language of the text. *Third* is the praxis consciousness (*al-syu’ur al-‘amali*) which aim to realize the interpretation of Qur’an into the reality. Essentially, transformative interpretation is the interpretation of the Qur’an intended to change the actual condition of society towards a better society. In the other words, interpretation which capable of presenting the Qur’an in the midst of dynamic and volatile society.

2. Humanistic Hermeneutics

Subsequent to Abu Zayd era, it is a necessity to continue his dialectical hermeneutical approach in the vertical dimension where the Qur’an is perceived as a communication medium between God and mankind into the horizontal dimension of the Qur’anic study as the experience of the conveyance of Qur’anic messages by the Prophet Muhammad upon the revelation or dissemination of the messages through corpus interpretation. Abu Zayd defined the horizontal dimension as the content of the structure of Qur’an and the manifestation during the on-going communication process between the Qur’an and its audience.⁴ Meanwhile, the vertical dimension is the textual context of the Qur’an, while the horizontal dimension is the discourse context of the Qur’an. This discourse is a vibrant and dynamic space that refers to initial process of revelation known as the phenomenon of the Qur’an,

²Hassan Hanafi, *Al-Turas wa al-tajdid, Mawqifuna min al-Turas al-Qadim*, (Beirut: al-Muassasah al-Jami’iyah li al-Dirasat wa Nasyr wa Tawzi’, 1992), 149-150.

³*Ibid*, 132.

⁴Nasr Abu Zayd, *Rethinking the Qur’an: Towards a Humanistic Hermeneutics* (Utrecht. Humanistics University Press, 2004), 9.

the spoken discourse. The discourse of the Qur’an is manifested in the context of daily life, it is not merely spoken in Arabic where it was revealed, but it also influences the thought and culture of the recipients.

To examine how the manifestation occurs, it can be traced back through the influence of the Qur’an in daily life. In his work, “The Qur’an in Everyday Life,” Abu Zayd suggested the significance influence of the Qur’an in the daily life of Muslims. He confirmed it based on the implementation of the pillars of Islam, the culture of Muslim philanthropy, as well as the various concerns about orphans, foods, the implications of female nature, mankind as individuals and society, daily communication and preferred language, artistic presentation and crafts, and the Muslim spiritual life.⁵

Abu Zayd began to expand his study on the horizontal dimension of the Qur’an, namely the Qur’an as a discourse. He interpreted the Qur’anic discourse as an attempt to represent the transformative historical moment, from non-Muslim to Muslim community. Abu Zayd concludes that the Qur’an is a living phenomenon. Hence, the humanistic hermeneutics of the Qur’an should involve the aspects of Qur’an as a living phenomenon.

B. Research Methodology

This study employed the method of Life history technique, which is a method to reveal a person’s history, in this case the timeline of Moeslim Abdurrahman. The focus of this study was on the aspects of Transformative Islamic education’s theology and thought as described in detail, multi-facet and broad view of the interaction of a person/group of people with the environment, and society without any space-and time-limit.⁶ The issues that can be scrutinized by this method include opinions, responses, thoughts, feelings, choices, interpretations, decisions and experiences of an intellectual figure who prominent for his partiality to the oppressed.

C. Discussion

This paper was not aimed to promote Moeslim Abdurrahman as a sort of idol or prophet amongst Muslims in Indonesia, or

⁵Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, “the Qur’an in Everyday Life,” in Jane Dammen McAuliffe, general ed., *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2002), 80-96.

⁶Attig GA. The life history as Ethnography. In: A Field Manual on Selected Qualitative Research Methods, (Bangkok: Institute of Population and Social Research, Mahidol University: 1989), 79-91.

Muhammadiyah. It is a truly reflection of the author upon the meetings and companionship with Moeslim Abdurrahman, a modest activist in Muhammadiyah who has many experiences in many “worlds”. He is one of the “invisible” warriors in Muhammadiyah, supported by his multi talents and capacity to mingle with many elements. Moeslim Abdurrahman never once positions himself as an “idol” or “advisor”, but as a companion. It is reflected by his habit to call others by name or by *kang* (older brother) to acquaintances whose vision are similar with his.

This paper might be very subjective since it was composed based on the author’s interpretation of the writings of Kang Moeslim, from some of his phenomenal and influential works, particularly on the author’s attitude and behavior in practicing religious teachings. It might differ from the opinions of others who are familiar with him or read his works. Nevertheless, it is not intended to promote particular honorary title or praise him since he never asks for such admiration. It is the image of Moeslim Abdurrahman based on the author’s experience before he passed away.

1. Intellectual Biography of Moeslim Abdurrahman

Moeslim Abdurrahman is not merely an anthropologist he is also a “skillful” scholar in the social sciences of humanities with comprehensive understanding about Islam. I had intensive meeting and discussion with Moeslim Abdurrahman since 2001, in addition to several occasions and interview while still holding Master in Cultural Anthropology, for the purpose of media publication. He is common person with relatively small and medium tall in figure. However, he “stores” fresh and valuable assets of ideas about Islam and *Kemuhammadiyah* as the basis of social and cultural.

Moeslim Abdurrahman definitely appreciates the culture of Indonesian society, *santri* community and Muhammadiyah specifically. Nevertheless, he never “shows off” it to the public. Instead, he describes his understanding of the various cultures in light and frequently irritating for those who read his writings or listen to his speech. His calm and humorous style often fades people’s irritation due to the exposure about his ideas. It is the uniqueness of Moeslim Abdurrahman who also graduated from Pondok Pesantren Kertosono, East Java.

Moeslim Abdurrahman (MAR) might left this world, physically, since he passed away on July 6, 2012. Yet his authentic and intellectual ideas remain undying. Moeslim Abdurrahman, or best known as

Kang Moeslim, is very familiar among the young generation, both Muhammadiyah and NU. “Kang”, once people used to call him, never shows his “awesomeness”. In fact, his intellectuality is “haunting”. Full the ideas, spontaneous, humorous, and reflective at them some time.

Moeslim’s humorous, spontaneous, and sociable personality regardless others’ age, socioeconomic or organizational background, has made the young generation as his informal education pupils comfortable and undistant to discuss anything with him. The dialogues range from the serious problems—such as the social condition of this nation, Islam in Indonesia that has less spirit on the advocacy and movement of the marginal people, Muhammadiyah that is preoccupied with charity “the establishment of orphanages, educational institutions and hospitals” but less consideration on the social realities of the oppressed—to the jokes of political parties, figures and his best companion the (late) Gus Dur, for hours.

I have felt it for years that each time I met whit him, he always had “extraordinary” and novel idea. There are many ideas that have not been realized among the youth in Muhammadiyah and I presumed in NU at once. *Kang* Moeslim is in fact has intimate relationship with the youth of Muhammadiyah and NU. He is one of the intellectual mentors for the young generation of Muhammadiyah and NU, even though some do not recognize it. He radiates his spirit at the time of Muhammadiyah senior intellectuals were preoccupied with various activities of Muhammadiyah institutions and organizations, in addition to their respective duties as lecturer, researcher, bureaucrat, entrepreneur and politician or even political broker.

Amid his schedule, *Kang* Moeslim provided time to transfer his knowledge and materials to the youth of Muhammadiyah. He is just one exemplar of many Muhammadiyah intellectuals who pay attention to the intellectual development of the young generation. It might not be perceived by thousands of young people in Muhammadiyah. Yet for those who had opportunity to directly interact with *Kang* Moeslim, his intellectual spirit still inflames all of them. He has instilled the importance of learning, profoundly, since in the next ten or twenty years, the magnificence of Muhammadiyah in particular and Islam in Indonesia in general, is relied on the Muhammadiyah youth’ shoulders. This is the spirit that *Kang* Moeslim inflamed on the young generation of Muhammadiyah, who are frequently perceived “rebellious” for not being part of the Muhammadiyah structure but instead joining JIMM.

Once again, *Kang* Moeslim may leave this world physically, but not his thoughts and ideas.

Is it true that JIMM is “rebellious”? The author as one of the presidiums of JIMM since its establishment in 2003 to July 19, 2014, perceives that JIMM is a component of Muhammadiyah since all of the members are the youth of Muhammadiyah. At the beginning, JIMM is constituted of Muhammadiyah activists from IRM/IPM, IMM, the Muhammadiyah Youth and NA. JIMM might not obtain legitimate approval from Muhammadiyah Central Executive, but still it is “Muhammadiyah seed”, neither external nor illegitimate parties, even though not all of the members are engaged in the Muhammadiyah structure. Meanwhile, JIMM is not promoted to be an “employee” or an “organization activist”, but rather to maintain the spirit of Muhammadiyah from non-Muhammadiyah Autonomous Organization.

Kang Moeslim attempts to be an “umbrella” for the young generation of Muhammadiyah. It is an unforgotten mission. Along with Buya Syafii Maarif, Haedar Nasir, and Abdul Munir Mulkhan, they have been actived in JIMM activities. At the time, Buya Syafii was the General Chairman of Muhammadiyah Central Executive, Ustadz Haedar Nasir was the General Secretary and Sheikh Munir Mulkhan was the Vice Secretary, and due to their duties, it might impossible for them to always “accompany” JIMM activities. However, Buya Syafii Maarif, Ustadz Haedar Nashir and Sheikh Munir Mulkhan also participated in the activities of Muhammadiyah youth under the guidance of *Kang* Moeslim.

The spirit that has been disseminated by *Kang* Moeslim to the young generation of Muhammadiyah in general and JIMM in particular, is admittedly or unequivocally, gradually manifested. Of course not only because of *Kang* Moeslim, but his mentoring, spirit and expectation that have been injected upon us eventually and partially continue to live in Muhammadiyah as an Islamic organization, contribute in line with its ability in the institution as a part of Muhammadiyah, evokes the intellectualism atmosphere and tradition in Muhammadiyah despite numerous adverse spotlight from various elements due to the assumption of being a large organization with many charity and services but being stagnant and even “modern lag”—a phrase that might be unbearable for some figures of Muhammadiyah. It is because Muhammadiyah has long been promoted and perceived by some researchers, observers and Muhammadiyah circle as an advance and progressive Islamic organization. Muhammadiyah is not a conventional Islamic organization since it always innovates its “mind and action”. Suddenly, there is a new

title: Muhammadiyah experiences “modern lag” and stagnation even backwardness.

The annual tradition of “*tadarus*” returning to the Qur’an and Sunnah, with various topics discussed in the scheme of *Muhammadiyah Update*, such as Islamic Thought in Muhammadiyah, Muhammadiyah and Multiculturalism, Muhammadiyah and Post-Modernism, and Muhammadiyah and the New Social Movement, is an evidence that intellectual atmosphere created by *Kang* Moeslim are not extinguished among the young generation of Muhammadiyah. The Rector of UMM Malang, Muhadjir Effendy (the current Minister of Education); Rector of Unmuh Sidoarjo, A. Jainuri; and Rector of Unmuh Surabaya, Zainuddin Maliki, are among the partners of *Kang* Moeslim who are instrumental in “mentoring” Muhammadiyah youth at that time.

Muhammadiyah intellectualism idea proposed by *Kang* Moeslim is a significant contribution for Muhammadiyah in entering its second century. The tradition of *Muhammadiyah Update* is actually an interesting “forum” to discuss the problems encountered by Muhammadiyah in particular and Indonesian Muslims in general.

Personally, the author yearns for the *Muhammadiyah Update*, since despite of its relatively short period (four years), it has provided “injections” and powerful energy to several groups. Even though some elements disagree with the *Muhammadiyah Update*, even “suspect” it as an attempt to oppose even “accuse” the intellectualism tradition in Muhammadiyah is the activity or tradition of the young generation to corrupt Muhammadiyah, to compete with Muhammadiyah, and so forth. The author perceives that this tradition might irritate some internal Muhammadiyah, particularly those who did not understand what was discussed in the *Muhammadiyah Update* forum, and only heard from those who did not participate and engage in this intellectual tradition.

The intellectual tradition of Muhammadiyah initiated by *Kang* Moeslim and its realization in East Java, Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Lampung, has provided “enlightenment” and light to recognize the social challenges faced by this nation. Among the young generation of Muhammadiyah, *Kang* Moeslim is relatively consistent in “transferring”, to those who both agree or disagree with the idea. Nevertheless, the younger generation of *Kang* Moeslim has appreciated the authentic ideas generated by social anthropologists from Lamongan.

Period of July 17-19, 2014 were very important days for the youth of Muhammadiyah in Indonesia. In these days, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM) hosted the Tadarus of Muhammadiyah

Youth Thought, after the event was in absence for four years. Muhadjir Effendy provided outstanding support for this event featuring a number of Muhammadiyah scholars, from seniors such as Amin Abdullah (Former Chairman of Majelis Tarjih and Islamic Thought), Zainuddin Maliki (Former Rector of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya), and other Muhammadiyah youth cadres throughout Indonesia. To mention Pradana Boy ZTF, Andar Nubowo, Ahmad Fuad Fanani, Fajar Rizaul Haq, Zuly Qodir, Ahmad Norma Permata, Hilman Latief, Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy and others. This event was inaugurated by the Chairman of Muhammadiyah Central Executive, Din Syamsuddin and Chairman of Muhammadiyah, Haedar Nashir. Many issues were discussed, including internal conditions of Muhammadiyah, Indonesian Muslims as well as International Islamic thoughts and the challenges encountered by Muhammadiyah and Islam Indonesia.

2. The Religious Capital of the Oppressed/Marginal People (*Mustad'afin*)

The oppressed or marginal people (*mustad'afin*) are actually a community entity that does not stand alone. It might be situated in a very religious society. Hence, the religiosity of the *mustad'afin* is often opposed against as the middle-class Muslims who have advantages in many aspects. Nevertheless, the middle-class Muslims are more benefited in the contexts of economic-political and cultural system in compared with the *mustad'afin*. Therefore, to compare the piety of *mustad'afin* Muslims and middle-class Muslims may collide with one another.

In religion, the marginal people are positioned based on a circle developed by Ernest Gellner *in* Islam dan Post Modernism (1992), is categorized in syncretic circle aka low Islamic culture or low tradition, as opposed to the middle-class which is classified in the high tradition. The low Islamic tradition is a piety that is depicted as a natural piety it is not associated to any fashion, economic or political structures. Low Islamic tradition is even closer to the Islamic cultural claimed by the puritans as heresy and superstition. It is the religiosity of the people who suffer from many disadvantaged, which is higher than the religiosity of the high- and middle-class.

Meanwhile, high tradition is the religiosity of those who are intimate to the formalization issue of shari'a jurisprudence, specifically, therefore they incline to adopt conservative perspective rather than accommodative. Low tradition and high tradition in social perspective

often implicitly contradict. High tradition is assumed to be nobler than low tradition. Yet, the Sufis consider the low tradition is more decent than the high tradition. The low tradition has no desire to “rule”, dominance or hegemony, while the high tradition has an agenda to harmonize, dominate and conquer. It is a tradition that emerges from both economic and political middle-class that is actually very temporal, not immortal.

How do we pay attention to the religiosity of the *mustad’afin* that is perceived as low, superstition and *bid’ah*? If we will follow the transformative interpretation of Moeslim Abdurrahman, there is a compulsory to provide equal space for those whom we perceive as “far from the text” and “far from guidance” since they are the shield of Islam in Indonesia. We notice an old woman in a traditional market that has been selling goods for decades. She must leave early in the morning and come home when the sun is unfriendly. She often performs prayer left behind congregational prayers and still believes in the “antidote to demons, *demit* and *tuyul*” but attempts to stay enthusiast and vigorous for supporting her children and grandchildren.

Will they be convicted as *abangan* Muslims because of their less devotion in practicing Sunnah and their belief in the Saints (*Wali*) and shamans and other supernatural forces that can “support” them? Is not such a thing obviously unwise? Therefore, it is better to situate Muslims whom people often call *abangan*, *priyayi abangan* and so on in the perspective of progressive interpretation, i.e. social interpretation which emphasizes the correlation between the structure of piety and the structure of political economy of a nation. There is no need to “punish them” whom we consider less godly because God could have preferred them to gain happiness at the end of time than people who are accustomed to punish the *mustad’afin* in terms of economy and religiosity. It is what we can do about presenting Islam in the language of *abangan* and *priyayi abangan* who are frequently accused of being the bearer of heresy and superstition in the Muslim body.

There are many textual bases capable of raising the position of marginal Muslim in religiosity rather than those perceived as “established” in religiosity. Those who are marginal in religiosity will obtain a “noble place” due to their ignorance, what they do will still be tolerated for not knowing. But not with those who know but do not teach those who do not understand. In fact, a criticism to those who understand but not practice it consistently, only to convey to those who do not understands. The scripture plainly states that those

who are deemed as liar and will be asked for accountability before others. Therefore, it must be considerate to “punish people in terms of religiosity” or piety since we may be chastised for punishing them and they may receive God’s mercy.

The weaknesses of religious capital are inextricably linked to the economic capital of *mustad’afin*. The duty to give alms to others certainly cannot be carried out by this group. Similarly, it might be impossible for them to afford the children to study in high-class pesantren where the religious learning is appropriate. How a *mustad’afin* can attend the studies with the famous *ustadz/ustadzah* at the time they hardly have something to eat. How a *mustad’afin* is able to access information about Islam in proper situation while there is no time for rest except to work hard for earning. Therefore, it is an obvious distance between classes in term of economy. It also distinguishes that people from lower-class who are diligent in worship is hardly refused.

There are several things that should be the concerns of people who relatively have economic stability even wealth in compared with the *mustad’afin*. In fact, the number of the poor in Indonesia has reached 37 million people with income Rp.15.000/day. Nevertheless, the higher the number if the parameter is changed into an income of Rp.30.000 per day to live. It is where the interpretation of transformative progressive must truly get the attention from Indonesian scholars, both Muhammadiyah and NU as the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia.

We firmly never aspire for the high number of Muslim in Indonesia is accompanied by its “poor” human resource development. Being ‘poor in terms of economy, politics, education and other dimensions will only hinder the development of Muslims in general. We must aspire for Muslims in Indonesia to have a fair and high competitiveness, instead of unfair, manipulative and violent accomplishment. There should be an understanding that violence, injustice, dishonesty, political crime will not lead to a transformation towards a better, but a worse things such as dispute, conflict and assassination that will only shed blood among people born with diversity in Indonesia.

3. *Kalibokong Theology: Pro-Marginal Theology*

MoeslimAbdurrahman showed his support for the young generation and also the oppressed or marginal people rather than the middle-class society. The original idea of *Kalibokong Theology*, which had been popularized in the 1990s, is to spread the phenomenon of injustice in the nation over a particular social class to the marginal people, so as

the basis for them for doing good deeds. It is inappropriate to judge the marginal people in terms of their low religiosity as observed by the middle-class Muslims and *santri* based on their absence in attending religious gatherings (*pengajian*) held by *kyai*, *ustadz*, hajji and hajjah in particular residence or in the mosque in adjacent to the market. The marginal or the poor, for Moeslim Abdurrahman, is an entity that must not be judged infidel, misguided, syncretic and so on. Instead, it should be inquired why they are trapped in such conditions.

Kalibokong Theology is an illustration of the injustice committed by the capitalists aka investors who set the marginal people merely as exploited labors to produce as much as possible products and subsequently pay them as low as possible. It reflects the oppression done by an entity of upper-middle class toward another entity of community with no access to education, wealth, and high culture (modernism). It is a depiction of how a powerless minority group is only capable to show off their back whose value is considered inexpensive. In addition, it is true that the marginal, the oppressed and the poor are truly socially, politically, economically even theologically oppress subjugated.

Kalibokong Theology portrays how the oppressed or marginal people suffer from being exploited by the middlemen and capitalists. Those who are marginalized because of the absence of economics capital as well as religious capital hence they undergo the stigma as disadvantaged who hardly can enter heaven. They are perceived less religious, particularly due to their rare charity (*shodaqoh* and *infaq*). Moreover, they live in unclean, less hygienic circumstance and less opportunity to practice Islamic jurisprudence such as *zakat*, *hajj* and *umrah*. They live by rivers and seaside in slum houses without any ornament or wall paintings of Mecca-Medina or Islamic leaders. They are disadvantaged in terms of social, education, and politics. In the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, they are a group of people who are disadvantaged in religion. Even, they can be included as less religious believers.

In such conditions, Moeslim Abdurrahman informed about *pengajian* held in star-rated hotels, *pengajian* held by inviting popular *ustadz* with high fee, some Muslims who annually perform hajj to Mecca. Moeslim Abdurrahman made a lot of analogue to portray numerous Islamic phenomena in Indonesia, particularly since the 1990s. Furthermore, he identified the phenomena as the rise of popular Islam, or fashion Islam, not just fashion in its narrow meaning but in its more religious meaning, namely a sort of piety showed off to the

oppressed class.

Moeslim Abdurrahman seemed to be anxious and weary of noticing the phenomena. *Kang Towil* and *Siti Marjinal* are the expressions used by the author to represent Moeslim's concerns about the Islamic phenomena since the 1990s in Indonesia. Performing hajj is one of the pillars of Islam, but to perform it several times when some people have serious problems for not having a job or being laid off due to rationalization, should be a concern of some Muslims and Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU.⁷

Conducting and attending *pengajian* is certainly good deeds that should be done by Muslims. Nevertheless, the meaning of *pengajian* by inviting highly reputed ustadz, *da'i* and *kyai* and organizing it in exclusive hotels or conducting it on television stations that require participants to pay and dress in uniforms showing that they are particular community "groups" from middle-high social classes. It is not different from other "groups" that have certain attributes as a symbolic political form that "we" are part of the community while the others are not.

Moeslim Abdurrahman was certainly anxious with the social and political clamor occurred in the 1990s, thus he expressed it in an inspiring writings: how to instill a society with high concern for those who are oppressed, marginalized and deemed for less pious, as well as have no access. It is the definition of the poor in terms of spiritually and materially. It will be pathetic and pity for the poor, of being underprivileged, being disadvantaged, having no economic, political and cultural access, and being judged heretical and *abangan!*

Recognizing those circumstances, Moeslim Abdurrahman initiated the necessity for an Islamic interpretation in favor of the poor. He conceived the stipulation to provide transformative interpretation. Islamic interpretation must incline to the poor because Islam is essentially a religion that opposes against the injustice. In the Islamic context, Islam is unwilling to see the oppression of marginal, ignorant, and poor entity in society. Islam must liberate the oppressed society by promoting the "revolutionary" movement of Islam; i.e. fighting against oppression, injustice, poverty and ignorance.

4. Social Abandonment versus Social Piety

The transformative Islam collapses since the Islamic societies and Islamic elites are more concerned with what we identify as "religious liars". Most Muslims are more concerned about individual symbolic

⁷Moeslim Abdurrahman, *Kang Towil dan Siti Marjinal*, (Jakarta, Firdaus, 2000).

of piety rather than contemplating and practicing the substantial piety. Substantial piety is actually a structural and systemic piety because it has to directly face the contemporary issues. The cosmopolitan and fantastical world in terms of symbolic expression of piety repeatedly blinds people mind and soul for far-sighted thinking.

The issues of poverty, ignorance, negligence, disrespect, political violation and public lies are tangible forms of the treachery on the religion which we embrace from birth, but most of times, the substantial matters are considered to reduce one's faith from a symbolic one. Meanwhile, the Qur'an has been very assertive that those who are active in the symbolic matters and yet negligent the substantial matters are the real religious liar. It can be examined from *al-Maun* which explicitly and boldly describes about the noble religious liars.

The alluring daily life shown by Muslim celebrities, politicians, bureaucrats, officials, and suddenly popular religious activists is actually the “ultimate enemy” of social piety. The symbolic forms of glamor and exhibition of piety in the public sphere is untolerated true enemy, since it is a “new style social disorder” which is not only prohibited but also a violation of the substantial values of monotheism as the basis of the believers. The believers should not just stand idly by the rise of social abandonment set up partly from Muslims.

Recently, heresy, *bid'ah* and superstition are no longer found in classic forms such as worshipping idols, statues, wood, and stone. They manifest in more attractive and mesmerizing namely the worshipping on material wealth, power achieved by justifying all means and piety as political and religion commodity simultaneously. Such issues should be of concern to Muslims with social piety (sensitivity) because they are opponent to the manipulative forms of individual piety.

Therefore, the various “social abandonment” as the manifestation of the religious liars due to their emphasis on symbols must be immediately eradicated. It is urgent since Muslims in Indonesia in particular and Muslims around the world in general will endure the defeat from competition with other nations. Nevertheless, Muslims may continually blame external parties for their defeat. It is a disease of *wahan (hubud dunya)*, the fear of death and of losing worldly powers in which we are unaware and yet put other nations as scapegoats. Meanwhile, it is us who are not immediately conscious from all the tricks of symbolic piety wrapped in the tantalizing political and economic dimensions.

It is acceptable to argue some issues related to the economic and political globalization. Nevertheless, the phenomena of the display

of wealth, *hubbud dunya*, the fear of the hereafter, or the excessive adoration for the mundane but at the same time the careless and less empathy to others is something we cannot argue with. Such situations are a form of social abandonment in which there must be a faith that such situations have to be resisted. Otherwise, it will be a serious problem in the future for the Islamic society living in the middle of blunder and ignorance of transformative theology initiated by Moeslim Abdurrahman.

Nevertheless, Kuntowijoyo has suggested the necessity of social movements to attain Muslims transformation since there are many forms of social abandonment that desolately emerge within the body of Muslims. Several measures are certainly required to solve this issue, including the preparation of social-structural interpretation of the problems within Muslim societies. This structural social interpretation is more significant than an individual interpretation which frequently bears symbolic and individual piety as well as condemnation to those who live in the glamor and profane world.

It is understandable if we are bothered and upset with those who show off their wealth amid poverty since this phenomenon is common in many villages and cities. Nevertheless, it is urgent to inquiry why many believers who remain ignorant with the absolute poverty among them. How people gain immense wealth while others suffer the real insufficiency. Is there any cause of the structural dimension so that there is a small part of the Muslims who live in luxury while most of the Muslims live in underprivileged situations? Is there any imbalance of unjust political economic structures so that luxury is merely present among the minority, while the majority remains poor and in need? It is more important in structural and systemic approaches when examining the phenomenon of wealth exhibition among the middle-class Muslims.

The absence of the approach of structural social interpretation will lead to inadequate explanation of the wealth exhibition that currently becomes the middle-class lifestyle in Indonesia. The structural social interpretation must be presented after underprivileged society in a lighter, simpler, and communicative language thus it can be a “soft criticism from the marginal” to some middle-class Muslims without any direct dispute. Progressive social interpretations that highlight the structural-political-economic approach are vital in addressing issues relating to the wave of individual symbolic piety and negligible social piety.

Structural perspective is a systematic development that is suitable

to incorporate Islamic religious understanding that is more favorable to the *mustad'afin*. With such systemic structural interpretation, it can be recognized that various problems among Muslims indeed come from the internal instead of the external parties. Hence, it will be a precious lesson when during the simultaneous regional head elections, we can assess from the beginning who will be the candidate at level of province, district/city and even village. Does the candidate have a good and close relationship with the poor and marginal, or only displays symbolic piety among public. Here, the role of *Kyai*, preachers, *ustadz*, lecturers, and progressive preachers is crucial in conveying enlightenment.

If this is the reality, the recent Islamic populism promulgated in various demonstrations is nothing but the political articulation of the elites to “exploit” the common people who suffer from socio-economic drawbacks. It can be identified that the wave of mass protest claimed as Islamic populist movement will come to a halt when the political agendas have been reached. The simultaneous regional head elections in Indonesia, namely in Jakarta and Yogyakarta are the actual examples of the Islamic populist movement. In the author’s opinion, in approaching the simultaneous election in 2018, a wave of Islamic populism will be re-inflated. It is a tiring and upsetting situation, isn’t it?!

Islamic populist movements often entail a negative signal between the piety of pious people and the political interests surrounding them. A Muslim should prioritize the characters of *rahmatan lil alamin*, such as deliberation and dialogue, and not to abuse, perform blasphemy, even punish indiscriminately, because of the political loads people do not hesitate to punish others whose political choices are different, even though they are Muslims. The ultimate character of Islam’s *rahmatan lil alamin* is solely exploited as a political jargon!

The piety taught by Islam is completely obscured by individual political desire, covered by the name of the aspirations of Muslims. Personal arrogance has made others with different perspective as the eternal enemy. Personal ambition has blinded people from the wisdom of the others. The “other” is an enemy. The “other” must be destroyed. The “other” is insane.

It is a tormenting illustration. A wave of forged Islamic populism is happening, while in fact, it is the ambition of a small elite group that is continually echoed as if it were the aspiration of people in general. The current government will be deemed for disappointing the aspirations of people. On the contrary, people who suggest the insignificance in imposing a *take over* or political coups will be perceived insane,

insensible to the aspirations of people. People who are indisposed to chase after the elite's political ambitions will be declared fiercely as "over" and will be "over" since the endurance of people has run out!

In such circumstance, what really happens is the phenomenon of "silent majority" since it is bothered to collide with fellow citizens. Nevertheless, it is also dangerous because as if this country is being led by those who have powerful political ambitions. This silent majority is a menace because it contributes to the stigma that Indonesia is a state of terror, a *coup d'état*, an anti-dialogue as well as an anti-law enforcement state, except the street law.

If it is the case, it is reasonable if we are actually in a wave of street democracy. Democracy is led by large mass demonstrations intended for political and economic transformation that essentially is the ambition of the elites to meet their political ambitions. It is a democracy taken hostage by the wave of Islamic populism as the majority of the Indonesian population driven by the anguished groups whose political ambitions (hidden on the behalf of people's aspirations) are not achieved. Therefore, it is the moment for silent majority to move immediately for saving the unity of people and for not being torn apart just because of the elites' political ambitions hidden on behalf of a people. It must synergize with the power of others to serve as "goalkeeper" of this Republic. This Republic cannot be left to a small (elite) group who is not fasting because its political ambitions have not been achieved.

Silent majority must be active to stop the wave of movement yearning for a transformation of the NKRI into the Islamic caliphate. The inquiry about Islamic symbolism is crucial at a certain moment, but how to establish symbolism more important than Islamic substance is definitely misleading. Substance is apparently very fundamental because it is the "essence of Islam", i.e. sincerity and genuineness in charity. Social piety is the substance of Islam that is in line with the Islamic symbolism which recently fought over its substance.

The core of Moeslim Abdurrahman's idea will be found if we explore it profoundly. Moeslim Abdurrahman wants the presence of Islamic substance, not merely Islamic symbolism since the latter frequently brings deception. Substantialism of Islam is also advocated by *al-Maun* that compels charity for those who are in need, in shortage, and in suffer. For anyone who (symbolically) worships but abandons and abstains from the marginal people is actually a religious liar. Here, Moeslim Abdurrahman finds his position as a pioneer of Transformative Islam and an advocate for the *mustad'afin*. It is so-called the partiality of

Islam, not a pseudo-Islam that highlight the symbolism alone.

5. Transformative Islamic Education

The interpretation of transformative revelation is used by Moeslim Abdurrahman in the attempt to “expose” and devise a methodological framework of Muslim movement to advocate the *dhuafa*. It has been done by the founder of Muhammadiyah, KH. Ahmad Dahlan, who “liberates” people from under development by founding school or educational institution, which has “liberated” people from health facilities shortage by building the centre of *Penoloeng Kesengsaraan Omoem* (PKO) as an embryo of the services for the poor and oppressed. PKO is the most noticeable form of Ahmad Dahlan’s movements as the advocacy for the poor from against the misery of physical illness, poverty and other social diseases, as well as shelter for the orphans.

KH. Ahmad Dahlan might not formally study the critical social sciences, structural anthropology, or post-structural anthropology. Yet he successfully practiced critical and Marxian social sciences in Islam. In addition, he applied structural anthropology and post-structural anthropology in Muhammadiyah since its early establishment until he died. The popular interpretation of *al-Maun* is another manifestation of critical and structural theory instigated by KH. Ahmad Dahlan who read the social reality at that time.

In the perspective of the Marxian and structural social sciences, it is obvious that the oppression endured by an entity in society is not “fate” but the socio-political-economic and cultural system that repress society hence there is massive oppression takes place from generation to generation. It is a systemic oppression with systemic impact.

It is triggered from the unjust structure over some elements in the society, thus, it is required to advocate the distribution of justice to people who undergo protracted oppression. Consequently, Moeslim Abdurrahman propounded the idea of a Transformative Islam. It is his authentic idea that is detached from the theological reflection and devised based on oppressive social reality among Muslims. As a solution, he created an alternative based on Islamic teachings which capable to shift injustice to justice in order to practice the revelation of the Heaven into the revelation of the Earth. The revelation of the Heaven is the holy revelation entailing numerous values, while the revelation of the Earth is a praxis which capable of transforming the social abandonment into the social piety. May you rest in peace, *Kang* Moeslim hopefully his thoughts and ideas perpetually inspire us in

practicing Islamic teachings.⁸

The spirit of Moeslim Abdurrahman to develop Transformative Islam is expressed in a book entitled *Islam Transformatif* (1998) published by Penerbit Firdaus. It adequately explicates the frame of thought of the anthropologist who humorously tells stories about anything including his companions Abdurrahman Wahid, Akbar Tandjung, Amien Rais, Bahtiar Effendy and Din Syamsuddin. He suggests the Muslims to use Revelation as part of the social transformation. It should be presented progressively and used to advocate the poor, the oppressed and the marginal people at the same time. He attempts to put social reality as the basis of analyzing the sacred texts of the holy book and to situate it on extraordinary interpretations of reality, but reality as a basis of the framework of instilling authentic and ethical values in understanding the texts of the Qur'an.⁹

The interpretation of transformative Islam is an interpretation of Islam that advocates the oppressed instead of the authorities of power both religious and political and economic power which often compromise with sacred texts and religious leaders in oppressing the marginal people. The interpretation of transformative Islam is a critical reflection of how Muslims practice religious teachings amid various social problems that become an integral part of society, particularly the oppressed. Therefore, without the courage to break out the conventional interpretation, the idea of becoming a Muslim and the sacred text as a liberating power is unattainable, but on the contrary, the Islamic society will be spoiled by the altruism that opposes the spirit of liberation as carried by Prophet Muhammad and the ethical values of the Qur'an.¹⁰ Hence, as a social anthro-pologist, Moeslim Abdurrahman seizes the message of the sacred texts in pertaining with the reality—which he observes and even experiences for several years during his staying in the rural and metropolitan cities in America and Jakarta. His idea, however, will survive only if it is transformatively understood.

Islam yang Memihak is a book where Moeslim Abdurrahman critically discusses how Islam is presented in the broader society. In his perspective, the central issue in the contemporary Islamic thought is no longer about the renewal, re-interpretation, or re-actualization of Islamic thought. It shifts to the issues of poverty, injustice, and social inequality in daily reality. It deteriorates by the presence of the state

⁸Moeslim Abdurrahman, *Bersujud di Baitullah*, (Jakart: Kompas, 2010).

⁹Moeslim Abdurrahman, *Islam Transformatif*, (Jakarta: Firdaus, 2005), 110.

¹⁰*Ibid*, 115.

which extremely powerless in facing the market (economics capital) as a form of capitalism. Therefore, the most progressive Islamic discourse is actually to situate social problems as the basis of the theological reflection. By this way, revelation will be both an idea and an emancipatory spirituality that encourages social movements, in the framework of empowerment and liberation beyond the state with new collective consciousness.¹¹

Realizing the power of capitalism, particularly in forming social injustice between the rich and the poor, Moeslim Abdurrahman personally and through organizational collective set up the social transformation as a form of resistance against the capitalist hegemony and the less reflective and transformative Islamic interpretation. Hence, the critical ideas about social transformation as the prolongation of Transformative Islamic interpretation are required, since this interpretation is a critical reflection of the current conditions of the Muslims throughout the archipelago.

Moeslim Abdurrahman has suggested the contemporary Islamic thought should not discuss the text in the realm of intellectual freedom. Instead, it should revive the idea of God to participatively integrate in the struggle of mankind in facing the dehumanization process through theological reflection that originated in the history of the daily struggle of mankind. It is a theological process that elicits the diverse meanings of Islam based on the diversity is mankind engage in anti-hegemony struggles individually or collectively. They carry out counter-hegemony against oppression in the relation of multi-faceted power structures.¹²

In such a circumstance, Islamic education should be devised as an education that teaches about culture as a learning process (human and learning) about the society. Education should be a pedagogy that teaches the learners how to understand their environment and how to transform their life experiences into the contemporary era. Its duty is to share the experiences with learners and transform them into the liberation movements for the present and future.

In addition, Islamic education is inseparable from the interrelationship between knowledge and power. Due to this interrelationship, education must competent to prepare a new society capable of shaping a political-cultural understanding about the future of society. Islamic education should be heartened to create space for

¹¹*Ibid*, 117.

¹²Moeslim Abdurrahman, *Islam Transformatif*, 118.

the learners to be actively engaged in community empowerment, in addition to contribute cultural reproduction based on the changing times. Either the success or failure of Islamic education as a manifestation of Transformative Islamic education can be determined from here.¹³

In constructing the Transformative Islamic education which promotes the advocacy and empowerment of the *mustad'afin*, there are three aspects in the process of liberation pedagogy. *First*, educators as teachers should encourage the formation of creative humans based on the empirical experiences of learners whose backgrounds are diverse. *Second* an understanding about the philosophy of education. The philosophy of Islamic education should be directed to understand the interrelationship between knowledge and power. Hence, education should not disregard the roles of political power within a country. Educators and learners must be brought to a fundamental understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power. *Third*, the educational methodology should be developed based on the socio-economy of a community. Islamic education should not rely solely on the interpretation of scriptural texts or on the dissemination of stories and experiences of the past, but it requires in-depth criticism of the discourse and theological reflections.

All ideas about the advocacy of the *mustad'afin* are identified by Moeslim Abdurrahman with terms of interpretation of Transformative Islam. Transformative interpretation is an activity of interpreting revelation collectively in a dialogical forum by giving each other opinion and criticism in order to formulate the praxis. How bring the revelation in tangible social conditions surround us. From there, we will find how revelation is able to have actual dialogue with the recent socio-economic conditions.

Transformative interpretation can be done in three stages. *First*, started from social readings in order to determine appropriate constructions to describe social hegemonic congregations (presumed as social shirk), which is perceived as social exploitation since it excludes the marginal people in which the ideal figure should be determined and subsequently advocated through the theological approach of the *mustad'afin*. *Second*, the realization of the Qur'anic verses within the community. The revelation of God is not merely a hymn of praise, but a contemporary text to dialogue with His servants in the social sphere to condemn the injustices and social hegemony. *Third*, transformative

¹³*Ibid*, 121.

interpretation is aimed to seek for God’s guidance in the public. How the text of the Qur’an is presented in the midst of diverse society. Revelation should be understood as part of the monotheistic message based on the understanding of reflective and critical interpretation over social phenomena among the society. Empirical understanding is presented in the midst of holy’s scripture with the critical and contextual contemporary reading (Moeslim Abdurrahman, 1996).

Transformative interpretation requires a set of tools and theological frameworks, as well as structuralist framework to identify the phenomenon of poverty, ignorance and backwardness of the marginal people based on normative and cultural perspectives. Nevertheless, most of the problems endured by the *mustad’afin* are rooted from poverty and backwardness which main source is related to the policy and access that cannot be penetrated by those who are economically and politically disadvantaged. Therefore, the establishment of structural and systemic approach to liberate the *mustad’afin* is required.

D. Conclusion

Following the description about how Moeslim Abdurrahman understood the text of the Qur’an in relation to the theological perspective of the *mustad’afin*, with Teologi Kalibokong as an illustration, it can be perceived that the Transformative Islamic Education aspired by Moeslim Abdurrahman is lied on the need for a reflective and critical reading of the sacred text. Presenting the text of the Qur’an in the contemporary conditions loaded with hegemony of social capitalism and economic capitalism as a manifestation of social abandonment or social shirk. Therefore, the idea of Transformative Islamic Interpretation can be regarded as the idea of realizing the revelation of God in the public sphere with extremely different situations from the era when the Qur’an is revealed for the first time. At that time, the social formation was dissimilar to the present hence the success of Islamic propagation and Islamic education was determined by the capacity of the Muslims to present God’s revelation independently, contextually, reflectively and critically.

The understanding of theology based on the standpoint of medieval Islamic theology (where scholars codified the texts of the Qur’an and Hadiths) should gain serious attention. Codification has facilitated us to array the issues of the events that occurred at the time. Nevertheless, it is also vital to entail the critical and reflective perspectives to represent the current context. As the articulation of the Transformative Interpretation,

Teologi Kalibokong seeks to provide the fundamental framework for Transformative Islamic Education that is able of greeting reality based on monotheistic treatises and contemporary hegemonic social constructions as well.

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