A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT ON KUNTOWIJOYO'S *PENGILMUAN ISLAM* IN REFERENCE TO ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This article aims to review Kuntowijoyo's understanding of the Islamization of science to analyze the relevance of Islamic scholarship as an alternative discourse, from his own words through primary and secondary sources, and to contrast it with the idea of Islamization of science from the original thinkers. This research method uses a literature review. Articles are collected and analyzed descriptively so that it becomes to a conclusion. The results of this study indicate that although Kuntowijoyo is open to his refusal, he still recognizes the need for the Islamization of science in several key parts of his writings, although polemical. This article explores Kuntowijoyo's real view on the Islamization of science and the problem with his understanding, which is significant for Islamic education because it has the potential to lead to a false view of the progress of Islamic science.

Keywords: islamization of knowledge; pengilmuan islam; kuntowijoyo.

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengulas pemahaman Kuntowijoyo mengenai Islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan untuk menganalisa relevansi pengilmuan Islam sebagai wacana alternatifnya, dari kata-katanya sendiri melalui sumber-sumber primer dan sekunder, dan mengontraskannya dengan gagasan Islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan dari pemikir-pemikir aslinya. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan telaah pustaka. Artikel dikumpulkan dan dianalisis secara deskriptif sehingga menjadi sebuah kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa walaupun Kuntowijoyo terbuka atas penolakannya, dia masih mengaku perlunya Islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan dalam beberapa bagian kunci dalam tulisannya, kendati polemis. Artikel ini mengupas pandangan sesungguhnya Kuntowijoyo mengenai Islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan dan masalah pada pemahamannya, yang mana signifikan terhadap pendidikan Islam karena berpotensi mengarahkan pada pandangan kemajuan ilmu Islam yang palsu.

Kata kunci: islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan; pengilmuan islam; kuntowijoyo.

INTRODUCTION

In a world that seems to dicotomize religious value with scientific progress, often times it is unclear to discern the meaning of scientific achievements in any fields mentioning numbers that could be translated properly on how close we are in achieving a progress. A clear example is that the huge number of Muslim majorities in Indonesia that are manifested in big moderate Islamic movements somehow is still out of place with the reality of the mainstream knowledge management in Indonesian universities still not quite favorable for the agenda Islamic reform (*tajdīd* and *iṣlāḥ*) (see Ramadan's (2008) analysis on the need to be faithful with the concept of *tajdīd* and *iṣlāḥ*). For example, is the appropriation of the Western gender curriculum into public Islamic university that offers deconstruction of Islamic methodology of knowledge (*'ilm*) in deciphering Al-Qur'ān and *sunnah* by modern Western ideologies (Cholil, 2013);) has exposed that such appropriation could not be compromised due to the tendency of Muslim feminists to read Islamic text with gender ideological interpretations by compromising the supremacy of Al-Qur'ān and *sunnah*. This issue pertains how knowledge could be meaningful for mankind and in what sense that knowledge is (and shall be) meaningful. The general problem mentioned on the stressing on the quantity of infrastructure while lacking in its quality is a manifestation of the obscurity of knowledge in the contemporary era. We argue that it seems even though with all the infrastructural achievements led by Muslim communities, a proper holistic and meaningful framework of Islamic education is still have not manifested properly in practice—or perhaps it is due to the philosophy developed in Indonesia is still insufficient? One may examine Kuntowijoyo's proposal of '*pengilmuan Islam*' (the scientification of Islam, roughly translated) as an attempt to answer the accidental challenges of the Muslim from an epistemological perspective. As he claimed, (Roibin, 2010)

> *"Even if the Kyai (Muslim scholars) in Indonesia now seems to be reluctant in defending the people, the problem is not necessarily on the Kyai's psychology due that Kyai have the tradition to defend the weak and the oppressed, but perhaps it lays on their epistemology, an even fundamental problem. For them, it is as if development, industrialization, and urbanization do not impact Muslims at all."*

So, we shall further in this discussion approach Kuntowijoyo's proposal as his attempt to offer an answer for the problems had by the Muslims, which later on we shall

discuss more further in how he analyzed the problem that he sees his proposal fit to answer. I argue in this paper that his proposal that is widely known as '*pengilmuan Islam*', brought within it a philosophical problem pertaining the metaphysics of Islam and its relationship with knowledge, especially that Kuntowijoyo himself proposed a 'transcendental structuralism' approach to 'read Islam in terms of knowledge'. The discussion on him is seen as necessary due that many contemporary Muslim scholars in Indonesia regarded his proposal as necessary for the higher educational reform and in Islamic intellectual movement in general.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper will try to discuss the problem risen by Kuntowijoyo and how it related with his proposal of '*pengilmuan Islam*' as well with his arguments for it from primary to secondary references. The discussion will be started firstly on the concept of knowledge (*'ilm*) in Islam, the exposition on Islamization of knowledge by its original thinkers, followed by Kuntowijoyo's understanding on Islamization of knowledge and his proposal on '*pengilmuan Islam*', and lastly the critical assessment of it in resonance with the philosophy of knowledge (*'ilm*) in Islam. This article will try to analyze Kuntowijoyo's argument from his own words in his writings as well from researchers that have written about him in this field.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Definition and Philosophy of Knowledge ('Ilm) in Islam

In all honesty, it is not easy to define *'ilm* in Islam due to it having so big of categories. But at least from its root words (*'-l-m*), it means signs, guidance, or indication that something is known. It is due to this lexical understanding that Muslim scholars has understood that *'ilm* includes Al-Qur'ān, *sunnah*, *ḥikmah* (meaning), *ma'rifah* (informed knowledge), *khabar ṣādiq* (true report), and many more. Because too many objects could be put within the boundary of *'ilm*, it is seen as impossible to define knowledge demarcatively (*ta'rīf ḥadd*) for Al-Attas(Inayah, 2018). Instead, (Al-Attas, 1980b) offers a descriptive definition (*ta'rīf rasm*) of *'ilm* as: the descent of meaning upon a cognitive being, in

reference to the origin of knowledge from Allah, and the active-acquirement of meaning by a cognitive being upon the object of knowledge, in reference to man as an active agent. It declares two main kind of knowledge: informed (revelation, true report, ...), and acquired (deduction, induction).

The metaphysics of knowledge understood by the Western civilization said to be speculated and attained out of nowhere, from pure chaos to a sudden random cognitive awakening(Kesuma, 2018). Naturalists perhaps may argue that such cognitive awakening of mankind to comprehend meaning and knowledge is a consequence of an evolutionary reality experienced by man(Tomasello, 2009), but it then still leaves the question on how the evolution occurs in the first place. And such naturalists will also answer that it is just a matter of coincidence, which has led the modern world today towards moral nihilism: that there is no granted meaning in this world of coincidence. The consequence on the radical demarcation of man upon its natural disposition alone has lead to a radical denial of metaphysical truth:

> "Humans perceive that aspect of the thing which is most easily made metaphorical in the vocabulary that we have inherited that is imposed on us, and it is with a nihilistic perspective that the notion of truth no longer functions as a basis of thought due to unavailable basis for believing in a basis." (Vattimo, 1987)

Having said that, it is absurd for Muslims then accept the understanding of knowledge is attained in that manner, and then formulate a dualism of religion and knowledge thus try to 'integrate' them together, as if Islam as a religion for Muslims is presupposed as not formulating its key beliefs (*'aqā'id*) on knowledge (*'ilm*). In Islamic worldview, we hold affirm that mankind does not attain knowledge out of random speculation and pure matter of chance(Ali & Junaid, 2018). Al-Qur'ān mentioned the event on Allah teaching Prophet Adam the Names of Things (*asmā' kullahā*), which is the first event mentioned on the attainment of knowledge by mankind as *revealed* by Allah. The stressing on the centrality of revelation in Islam pertaining the metaphysics knowledge is also manifested in the event of Prophet Muhammad receiving the first revelation through the angel Jibrīl of five verses,

ٱقْرَأْ بِٱسْمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ، خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ. ٱقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلْأَكْرَمُ. ٱلَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِٱلْقَلَمِ. عَلَّمَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ.

Translation: *"Read, (O Prophet), in the Name of your Lord Who created—created humans from a clinging clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen, taught humanity what they knew not."* (Al-Qur'ān, 96:1-5).

By the mark of this event, the centrality on the tradition of reading *revelation* in attaining knowledge is central in Islam, which then the tradition of reciting Al-Qur'ān, preserving it, analyzing it, become a necessary consequence of its centrality, thus signifies the meaning of knowledge (*'ilm*) in Islam as the basis for individual eschatology and civilizational building. With a special referenc on the fourth and the fifth verse, the way Al-Qur'ān put the conveying of knowledge from the Pen (*qalam*) to teach mankind things that are unknown to them, shows how Al-Qur'ān ask us to perceive knowledge in a specific manner: that we are first on the condition of not-knowing, then granted with knowledge through Allah's Pen (*qalām*) on something that mankind does not know. From here, we can depict two important parts on this elaboration: 1) that True Knowledge (in the sense of it as a Revelation), is given to mankind from Allah, and 2) that mankind was in the position of not-knowing, and could not know the knowledge that is revealed.

Here then, we argue that the event of the First Revelation of Prophet Muhammad with the five verses, gave us an important conceptualization of knowledge for how we then embark in this world with knowledge. Contrasted with the view of Western worldview that mankind achieveknowledge from an abyss and that reason and senses alone are sufficient to answer the Reality of the world (before the nihilism of the postmodernism worldview), we affirm in Islamic worldview that the Truth of the world is only attainable through Revelation, while reason and senses are only mediums to strengthen the position of knowledge of Islamic beliefs. For example, the event of Prophet Ibrahim asking Allah for signs do not necessarily means that Prophet Ibrahim lacks knowledge on Allah's omnipotence, but that he asks for something that may strengthen his faith (*īmān*). In this manner, it is known as a demonstrative knowledge (*burhānī*) to strengthen the True Belief. We may see the differences between the conceptualization of *'ilm* and *fiqh* in Al-Qur'ān, in which the former refers to knowledge that is eternal, timeless, universally true, while *fiqh* is the spatial-temporal manifestation of its comprehension pertaining the deepening of its meaning for mankind and their relationship with the world (Syafrin, 2009).

However, it is clear evident within the history that Islamic civilization benefited so much from the Greek civilization in terms of its philosophical language and discourse that it is appropriated into the inner philosophical framework in Islamic philosophy. An example of its appropriation is in the case of Ibn Sīnā's cosmology that used Greek philosophical method and tools to demonstrate the Islam's original view of cosmology, though in its manifestation is self-evident as Greek philosophy-laden. What we can say is that though there are events of knowledge and methodological appropriation from other civilization to Islamic civilization, such attempts were always been conducted in a truthful manner that Muslim scholars fitted the appropriated products into the scheme of Islamic worldview that it then enriches the Islamic tradition of knowledge, rather than losing its identity due to the process of appropriation.

This small discussion on the nature of knowledge (*'ilm*) in Islam and how Islamic civilization deal with knowledge from outside of Islamic civilization, should be the basis in how we examine Kuntowijoyo's proposal and how it is consistent (or it is not) with the philosophical framework of knowledge in Islamic worldview.

Brief Exposition on Islamization of Knowledge

Islamization of knowledge, according to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, is *"the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition, and then from secular control, over his reason and his language."*(Al-Attas, 1980b). This definition of Islamization of knowledge by him implies a cognition that knowledge, could be read differently due to the biases that may be due to myth and man-made doctrines, and the faculty where such confusion happens is at the cognitive capacity of man in form of its propositional suggestions, rational deduction, and the articulation of the object of knowledge in form of language. It is because language plays into role in how one conduct the process of thinking, and coming into the agreed term pertaining the object of knowledge in which influences the understanding of a cognitive agent upon an object. For example, to define man as a 'partner for woman' and as a 'main agent of the systemic oppression of woman' will obviously lead to a totally different reading, yet the object of reference is still the same. And the subtle difference in how the language is used in order to reflect the thought of its speaker

is also obvious: that the former example reflects a cooperative relationship between the two while the latter reflects a demonization of an agent that its very existence is a threat and a cause for a historical tragedy for the other. When one is about to verify the truth of the proposition, say, the definition of man, then one shall consult the term in which may reflect the objective reality: in which it relies on the cognition of a being in accordance to the reality it tries to perceive. The words that are being used for its demonstration, lies within its concepts that the usage of the concepts through the words, shall resonates with the reality it tries to perceive, if it is true. This is why where empirical reality is demonstrated and verified through scientific rigors in scientific laboratorium, metaphysical reality is demonstrated and verified through a thought process inside of a mind using words and propositions as its tools, even though in Islamic perspective the revealment of metaphysical reality is also, and mainly, by Allah himself through intuition (*kashf*) and inspiration (*ilham*), hence *ma'rifah* as a knowledge as possessed by Islamic saints (*sufi*) (Al-Attas, 1980a). It is no wonder that Al-Attas sees language as one of the key elements that one need to focus when one is about to enact Islamization, where he argues that the Al-Qur'ān changed the way Arabic language is understood and spoke through the Islamization of the Arabic language through the introduction of Qur'anic key concepts (Ahmad, 2013). Acikgenc also sees the revelation of Al-Qur'ān in the middle of Arabic society which is full of spectacular poets but yet cultivating mundane and degenerade (*jahilliyyah*) poetical theme, is an event of Islamization (Açikgenç, 2014).

The agenda of Islamization of knowledge is proposed by Muslims thinkers with a full understanding on the notion that knowledge by no means is neutral or value-free as claimed by the secular-modern civilization. It is also proposed in realization that Muslims in global perspective has been colonialized since modern era that Western civilization has influenced their (Muslim) colonies to the extend of their philosophical thought, hence there is a need to employ a dewesternization. As Martin Jacques proposed at the end of the Cold War, that there will be a contestation of modernities, meaning that the notion of progress and development will no more be owned by Western civilization alone: different civilization will come up with their own, including that of Islam (Sahari, 2013), as how Wan Daud, the friend and close companion of Al-Attas, delivered in his professorial inaugural speech. It is in this

sense of rearticulation of progress that dewesternization for Islamization of knowledge is truly significant: that unless the notions and the philosophies of the West has been dismantled from the body of Islamic thought, the articulation of true progress in modern time's Islamic thought may start. As quoted from Al-Farūqī by Hasyim on the critical situation of Islamic mind today:

> *"That the West claims that its social sciences are scientific because they are neutral; that they deliberately avoid man judgement and preference; that they treat the facts as facts and leave them to speak for themselves. This, we have seen, is a vain claim.* ***For there is no theoretical perception of any fact without perception of its axiological nature and relations.****"*

With that being said, dewesternization is a key step in the process of Islamization because Muslim thinkers who promote Islamization of knowledge, sees the key importance of Islamic worldview as the foundation of Islamic knowledge, making it unique and distinct from other civilization's sense of knowledge(Al-Attas, 1980a) especially Western civilization in context. Another important problem lies in the importance of Islamization of knowledge is due to the loss of *ādab* within Muslims today (Al-Attas, 1980). He defined it *ādab* as, *"ādab is recognition, and acknowledgement of the reality that knowledge and being are ordered hierarchically according to their various grades and degrees of rank, and of one's proper place in relation to that reality and to one's physical, intellectual, and spiritual capacities and potential."* (Ardiansyah, 2020). With reference to *'ilm*, the lost of *ādab* is when one does not have the knowledge of such hierarchy of being and misput object of being out of its intended place by Allah. Due to the chaos of knowledge as the manifestation of the lost of *ādab*, consequentiated from it the disenchantment of nature, desacralization of politics, and deconscration of values (Al-Attas, 1980). To Islamize knowledge, then, to recast meanings in modern body of knowledge in accordance to the hierarchy of being in Islamic worldview for it to be able to manifest justice that the 'obscuration' of knowledge with secular key elements, caused the body of modern knowledge out of its intended hierarchy of being.

As in methodology, Al-Attas' approach could be put in two steps briefly: 1) the isolation of Western key concepts and elements from a body of knowledge, 2) the infusion of Islamic key concepts and elements. While it seems simple in our statement, lies there a deep comprehension on the problem of knowledge for the thinkers of Islamization of knowledge.

It is due to to the understanding that until a body of knowledge and the cognitive agent comprehending knowledge are fully liberated from such secular bias, any reading claiming to be Islamic, is no less but another biased and distorted view on Islam. Al-Attas (2001) gives pseudo-knowledge (secular knowledge) in example as a fake currency of trade. In small sphere of economic trade, a fake money may seems to work in deceiving the people in using it. But when its economic effect hits at national level, a nation will not be able to evade from its inflation. The same is with pseudo-knowledge, that at a face-value of its understanding may seems as valid or accepted, until it being subscribed at a mass-level and distorted the ummah from its true sense of progress towards Islam. As for (Inayah, 2018), he proposed twelve steps in his project of Islamization of knowledge: 1). Mastery of the modern disciplines. 2). Discipline survey. 3). Mastery of the Islamic legacy: anthology. 4). Master of the Islamic legacy: the analysis. 5). Establishment of the specific relevance of Islam to the disciplines. 6). Critical assessment of the modern discipline: the state-of-the art. 7). Critical assessment of the Islamic legacy: the state-of-the art. 8). Survey of the ummah's major problems. 9). Survey of the problems of humankind. 10). Creative analysis and synthesis. 11). Recasting the discplines under the framework of Islam: the university textook. 12). Dissemination of Islamized knowledge.

The first two steps does not mean that Islamization of knowledge will be biased with modern principles of knowledge, but that it means when one is about to employ Islamization on a discipline, one should have a full comprehension on how the discipline operate, its problems, and its axiological presumption We see here that Al-Farūqī's proposal is more on its definitive work plan, while Al-Attas' mentioned methodology is its operationalization at the level of intellectual analysis of the object of knowledge. Since the two share the same concern on the problem of modern knowledge as being biased with secular key concepts that blurs the ends of its implementation for Muslims, the two proposal is not to be contradicted but to be understood on the term they try to propose on. And it is important to stress from this exposition that Islamization of knowledge does not meant a full exclusion of scientific legacy from other civilization. Instead, it is a framework offered in order for one to be truthful in enacting appropriation from the legacy of other civilization to be truthful to Islamic worldview, that the only thing excluded from modern contemporary knowledge is its secular

bias and key elements that are in contrary with Islamic key elements. So, for one to assume Islamization of knowledge as a reactive approach towards modern knowledge and as an inferiority, will be deeply mistaken on the term it tries to offer.

Understanding Kuntowijoyo's Framework for Pengilmuan Islam

To be able to approach Islam as a source of science, he acknowledges on the importance to develop a Qur'anic paradigm to be a *grand theory*. He affirm that Al-Qur'ān has its own structure of meaning that is capable to be understood so that one may attain its *hikmah* when one read upon reality with such Qur'anic paradigm It is also the reason why he also affirms that Al-Qur'ān is a source of value, ethics, and concepts in which shall be operationalized into an applied science, based on its tangible axiological depiction stemmed from Qur'anic paradigm. To achieve so, one need to analyze the *āyāt* in Al-Qur'ān and synthesize the meanings acquired in order to integrate the big message of Al-Qur'ān. By understanding the 'constitutive substance' of the Qur'anic propositions contained in its *āyāt*, we shall 'construct' Qur'anic paradigm that due of it the Qur'anic paradigm has its own authenticity. It is due to that he sees revelation as important in contrast to the Western epistemology. In this manner, he proposed a transcendental structure paradigm in order to help his reader to comprehend the existence of the inner structure that forms meaning, transcending the realm of time and space (Fahmi, 2005) . That being said, Abdul Munir Mulkhan in Fahmi's (2005) foreword said that his transcendental structuralism paradigm is not to offer a totally new and different ground for exegete works, but to offer the already existing works of exegetes (*tafsir*) as the basis for the functional development of knowledge, even though Kuntowijoyo himself said that it is a methodology itself. Kuntowijoyo said that discovering such structure will help us to transcend the materialized interpretations of scholars that has already solidified within a specific time and space, so that the transendence may help us to distinguish the timeless value of Al-Qur'ān and that of not.

He sees that there are two primary models for Muslims in approaching the text, which are 1) decodification and 2) Islamization of knowledge. He explains the decodification method is as practiced by the classical Islamic scholars on the classical fields, such as *fiqh*, *tafsīr*, and *taṣawwuf*, to articulate the substances in Al-Qur'ān and *sunnah*, resulting in

classical treatises and books on Islamic knowledge that we have today. We shall focus on unveiling his view on Islamization of knowledge and his discourse of *pengilmuan Islam*, which he offers as the third alternative as an attempt of demystification.

Kuntowijoyo's Understanding of Islamization of Knowledge

In his book *Islam sebagai Ilmu: Epistemologi, Metodologi, dan Etika* (Islam as a Knowledge: Epistemology, Methodology, and Ethics), he opened his foreword on his issue with the notion of 'Islamization of knowledge'. However, it seems from his foreword that his formulation of the problem is polemical, that he rejected the usage of the term due to some non-Muslims in Indonesia used Islamic symbols for their advertising ends in a superficial manner. In his own words:

> *"I am disheartened, because an intellectual movement (Islamization of knowledge) that is laden with religious value is put in equal footing with pragmatic business movement. Due to that, I do not use the term 'Islamization of knowledge' anymore and I want to push that the intellectual movement of the ummah shall leap further, to change 'Islamization of knowledge' into 'scientification of Islam'. From a reactive (approach) towards a proactive (approach)."* (Fahmi, 2005)

Islamization of knowledge, is understood by him as a method so that Muslims do not take mindlessly the knowledge production gained from other civilization, that Muslims shall read knowledge in a full reading of *tawḥīd*, with the understanding that not all knowledge are granted its objectivity pertaining the value laden within its proposal. He put it with an active proposition, that Islamization of knowledge means to return back the knowledge towards *tawḥīd*, understood as a movement from 'context' towards the 'text' (Kuntowijoyo, 2006). In the process of Islamization of knowledge, he acknowledged that one cannot try to avoid the amalgamation of the Western thought in the process of Islamization because it requires appropriation and synthesis, that one do not need to fear westernization of Islam (Kuntowijoyo, 2006).

That being said, he sees that there are some knowledge that ought to be Islamized and those that do not need so, that some attempts to Islamize the latter is futile (Kuntowijoyo, 2006):

"There shall be no worries with the sciences that are truly objective and true. So, some (attempts of) Islamization of knowledge are needed, while the others are futile attempts." (Kuntowijoyo, 2006)

An example in which he said as not in need to be Islamized is art. He himself cannot fathom to think of 'an Islamic literary critique':

"And as for art, novel as its example which will always be subjective, what else there need to be Islamized? Writing novel is clearly different for each person. But, we also could not imagine how literary criticism could be Islamized. Wouldn't it be beneficial (to say) the statement that Islamic literature is a part of the world literature?" (Kuntowijoyo, 2006)

As an intellectual writer of literature like him, it is difficult to really believe that either he did not realize the essential element of Western literature and art that are laden with the purging of existential tragedy, or that he did not see the need to tackle such essence in tragedic art expressions? As exposed by Rudi in Suwondo's work (2010), Kuntowijoyo constantly receiving awards in writing short stories in Kompas newspaper, and that he quoted Kuntowijoyo on his secret that he simply said, *"Secara jujur harus dikatakan bahwa saya menulis begitu saja, yang saya rasa baik, tanpa resep-resep."* (In all honesty, it should be said that I just write as it is, what I think as good, without any kinds of recipe) (Suwondo, 2010). According to Rudi, Kuntowijoyo's stories are characterized as using symbols in signifying the reality it tries to portray, for example is his short story 'Rumah Yang Terbakar' as a symbol to the chaos of the New Order of Indonesia. We believe that he should understand, or to the very minimum subconsciously realize that the art one produces, for example in the form of stories and fictions, are the symbolization and the expression of the reality. After all, he himself acknowledged that knowledge is a cultural product (Kuntowijoyo, 2006)

Al-Attas has exposed the tragedic nature of Western art as the manifestation of the tragedic reality lived by the modern Western man due to their divorcement with religion made them in need to traverse the world with no true sense of meaning. Al-Attas put the canonical example of the Greek story of Sysiphus who is cursed to eternally shove a boulder

all up to the mountain only for it to roll over back to where it begins and to repeat it again with no and tragedy as a form of art in Western drama is performed to purge fear and self-pity, made the audience symphatize with the burden of the character). And to contrast it with Islamic sense of art and aesthetics, it is ladenly inspired by the revelation, that its manifestation across different Islamic civilization resonates the same transcending feeling within, though that its material expression differs (Nasr, 1993). Here, the realization on the role of revelation in the artistic expression of Muslims, and also the realization on the incompatibility of the meta-narrative within the art tradition of Western civilization with that of Islam, we see it as sufficient as the building of Islamic literature criticism. 'Alam (2020) also sees Al-Attas' criticism on the Western tragedy and the proposal of Islamic metaphysics (*taṣawwuf*) as an alternative in artistic expression as a valid approach of an Islamic cultural criticism (*kulturkritik*). It seems to us with his claim of such, Kuntowijoyo failed to demonstrate the capability to 'objectificate' (we shall shed light on his term in the later part of this article) Islamic art literature, by saying that Islamic art literature should be put as *the part* of the world art literature (Kuntowijoyo, 2006) not as its aim and standard. However, still regarded that Kuntowijoyo's true intention is in accordance with the concern of the philosophers of Islamization of knowledge, pertaining that Kuntowijoyo seen as trying to offer a discourse that can fight against the Western secularism. Yet it is in this manner that we see him in absence of capacity in realizing the potential of Islamic thought to be unleashed in trying to demonstrate a full decolonization, at least in the field of literature art. We will discuss our notes on him more on his understood intention yet has problems in its articulation.

Pengilmuan Islam: Kuntowijoyo's Alternative

Kuntowijoyo proposed his own approach other that of Islamization of knowledge, which is a 'demystification' approach. He declared that today Islam as a religion has experienced a 'mysticism', being that it is lost from reality in relation of its significance to it. Therefore, to demystify is to bring back the relevance and the actuality of Islam back into reality, to (re)connect the text with its context. The movement of *pengilmuan Islam* is, therefore, an attempt to demystify Islam (Kuntowijoyo, 2006).

We see it as important to also put his discourse on demytologization relating with his attempt to demystify Islam in order to bring back the relevance of Islam towards reality. He sees that there are two important factors contributing to the agenda of demystification: the introducement of Western science and Islamic puritan movement(Roibin, 2010). It is through the agenda to be critical to presupposed myth is to shed light upon reality. However, it is interesting to note that his notion on reality seems to still resonate the Western modern view that laden with positivism and empiricism, shown from his attitude in treating Western science as and his usage of the word *ilmu* in the sense of science. Abidin (Abidin, 2016) noted that his approach towards thinking stage is hard to be distinguished from the thinking stages of August Comte(Comte, 1844), especially that such influenced his view on the historical development necessity of thinking framework as the myth – ideology – science stages of his is similar to Comte's stages of thinking: theological – metaphysical – scientific (positivism) (Abidin, 2016); see also (Comte, 1844). With this unveilment of such tendency, it becomes important to understand his usage of the word *ilmu* in Indonesian as 'science', rather than knowledge, which is significant as we already discussed on the differences between the two in the West and its meaning in Islamic philosophy.

In order to demonstrate *pengilmuan Islam* in method, there are two steps according to him: integralization and objectification. First, to integrate the knowledge and meaning of revelation through the key concepts in Al-Qur'ān with human experiences so that it archieve what is called as 'integralistic science' (*ilmu integralistik*). What is important to note here that, Kuntowijoyo acknowledged the importance for one to undergo the process of Islamization before achieving its integration:

> *"But of course, the inheritance of all scientific heritage shall undergo the process of Islamization. I am certain, we may find a mechanism to Islamize science, which is how to convert and integrate all inheritance of thinking heritage from anywhere into the theoretical paradigm in accordance with the transcendental structure of Al-Qur'ān. Nevertheless, the formulation of Islamic theories is a part of pragmatical ends of Islam in fulfilling its prophetical mission, to build civilization."* (Kuntowijoyo, 2006)

He then gives a comparison between the secular science with integralistic science. The secular science started its ontological departure from philosophy, in detail he put that the

origin of secular science developed from the modern wave of Renaissance who separated revelation from a valid source of knowledge. It consequentiated from there an anthropocentrism as a phenomenon where man is being the center of truth and the only one capable to produce truth. Davutoglu (1997) observed this phenomenon as an ontological proximity of man in usurping the authority of truth from God, formulated as the epistemo-ontological confusion in deciding the departure point of knowledge: either from man through philosophy, or that from tradition and revelation. But Davutoglu, unlike Kuntowijoyo here, analyze deeply that the origin of secularism do not stemmed from Renaissance: Renaissance is rather the evental culmination of the inner tragedy within Western civilization accumulated within the history, already finding their basis in Aristotle and Platos' pantheism, started then in *pax romana* period where Judeo-Christian religious traditions amalgamated with the pagan tradition of Rome and the philosophical tradition of Greek, resulting into a confused civilization in comprehending the reality of knowledge on treating reason and revelation. It is in this moment too that Jesus which in Islam deemed as a prophet, attributed divinity in the *pax romana* phenomena by the people at the time, and here also stemmed the genealogical origins of St. Augustine's philosophy of the city of God and the city of the man. Such consequence of anthropocentrism leads to what Kuntowijoyo said as the differentiation (*diferensiasi*) of knowledge between the ethical elements of knowledge stemmed from revelation, divorced from the hard-facts of empirical and rational findings. It is the result of the differentiation leads to what Kuntowijoyo declared, as a secular science: a science who claimed itself as value-free, override the authority of God in articulating reality.

While integralistic science, Kuntowijoyo stressed the importance of religion as the departure of science by its revelation as the guidance. Due to that, the approach to attain truth is therefore, Kuntowijoyo said, as theoanthropocentric: the acknowledgement of revelation and reason-sense capacity of man as the sources of knowledge. With this cognition on the role of reason and revelation in Islamic mind, it will shall continue the attempt to de-differentiate science that previously being divorced by secularism, hence resulting into an integralistic science. It is the integralistic science that Kuntowijoyo deemed as the 'weapon' to fight against secularism.

While objectification as its continuation, Kuntowijoyo put it as an attempt to make Islam with its integralistic science as applicative and acceptable for the world, arguing by the notion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin.* It is by the understanding of the ayat that Islam is not meant only for Muslims, but also for all mankind, that its Truth and Reality is meant as an objective one to be propagated and brought onto the world. Kuntowijoyo gives examples on Islam as science being objectificated is as any product of consumptions that finds it consumers all across community in which everyone being benefited from it, objectively. By his definition, to objectificate is to translate values into objective categories. It is by the translation of values into categories that are deemed objectives, that the manifestation of the values will be comprehensible and acceptable in the objective sense of the universe, just as like advertising a product into a free marketplace. To achieve so is by conducting internalization of value meaning that the comprehension of the cognitive agent (mankind) upon the value shall grasp all of its essence, its deepening, and its meaning, until that it is ready to be externalized, manifested into the realm of the objective.

The example is like the command of *zakah*, that one need to believe it in certainty as a process of internalization, in addition of learning the knowledge pertaining it, until then the deep certainty upon the meaningfulness of *zakah* drives one to manifest it into action, objectively bringing out good in accordance to the proportion of the knowledge pertaining the *zakah*, the individual, and the beneficiary. A value is deemed as objective when its demonstration or its manifestation is felt by the non-Muslims as something that is desirable, as natural, as it is It is also applicable in the other way, that the non-Muslims may objectificate their religious value into the 'objective realm' that Muslims may receive its benefits. This is, for to prevent political domination within a plural society, that one does not feel alienated by the implementation of a certain religious-motivated policies.

He demonstrated his proposal of prophetic social science (*ilmu sosial profetik*) as an attempt to objectificate Islam in the sense of social sciences, as inspired by Muhammad Iqbal and Roger Garaudy Rather than proposing a total shift of theology for the ends of transformation like Moeslim Abdoerrahman does, Kuntowioyo sees the proposal of *ilmu sosial profetik* as more truthful to the agenda. It is because the main issue on addressing channge shall not lies on the theological realm that concerns the timeless doctrine on God,

but rather the spacial-temporal realm of the empirical sense within social sciences. The discourse to implement *ilmu sosial profetik*, shall be based on the spirit of *'ammar ma'rūf*, *nahī munkar*, *wa tu'min billah*, translated into humanization (to treat human as they shall be truly treated), liberation (to liberate mankind from ignorance and falsehood), and transcendention (to leap towards a transcendental meaning of the world inspired by God).

An Assessment on Kuntowijoyo's Thought on Knowledge and Islamization of Knowledge

We may see from his formulation of the problem that it seems that he did not really come into term with the actual ends of the Islamization of knowledge movement is as how it is offerred by its true propagators. Perhaps he do understand what the term means, but in any way, his formulation of the problem do not sufficiently represent it. Had he truly understood Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas' seminal speech at the First World Conference on Muslim Education in Makkah that caused Ismail Rajī al-Farūqi to wrote his Islamization of knowledge treatise, perhaps there might be a more discourse with justice that he shall put as his foreword before proposing to the reader what might actually be the alternative of Islamization of knowledge that being put as trivial and mundane. Even though he mentioned that he knew that the origin of the idea came from Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and popularized by Ismail Rajī al-Faruqihe (Kuntowijoyo, 2006) did not put any just elaboration on what the idea is truly about sufficiently as offerred by themselves, before then declaring his rejection of the term. For us, it seems consequential for one to be responsible in his discursive proposal: if a discourse is related with a criticism of a previous discourse, one should put a full, or a sufficient exposition on the idea before dismantling it and offer another idea as an alternative-for the significance of the alternative other than the criticized idea lies within the *incommensurability* (to borrow Kuhn's word (1970) of the idea that the alternative should deemed capable to fulfill the *incommensurability*, before the paradigm shift could be seen as justifiable. It is why that our section on his view of Islamization of knowledge is not that much due to his say, unjust treatment of it.

Here, as we have compared between the original exposition of Islamization of (contemporary) knowledge with Kuntowijoyo's understanding, it shows that Kuntowijoyo's attempt to represent Islamization of knowledge is not only insufficient, but also distortive.

With a careful and throughout methodological approach that of Islamization of knowledge concerning the ontology of knowledge and its epistemological categorization, it is not by any means trivial and 'reactive' at all. Perhaps one may favor Kuntowijoyo's thought as it is with no evental context of its formulation. Even if such treatment is valid, while actually it is not due to the separation of *pengilmuan Islam* out of its context that gives it a character and a dimension of identity of the idea, we will also comment on how *pengilmuan Islam* and its framework as it is has inner problem that even if it is not meant to response the issue of Islamization of knowledge, it lies within it problems and how it may consequentiated to Islamic higher education world.

Pertaining the interconnection of meaning in Al-Qur'ān is actually nothing new within Muslim scholarship especially within the communities of *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* scholars (*'ulamā'*), that to understand the meaning of the verses by the means of *tafsīr*, shall be supported in the relation of other *āyāt* (*tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān*) and also by reading the Al-Qur'ān with the prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*), known as *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi al-ḥadīth*. The scholarship done on this work has been immense and known as *tafsīr bi al-ma'tsūr*, an exegete by Tradition. As quoted from Ibn 'Arabī: *"The Qur'anic āyāt are interrelated with one and another that it forms a word with one consistent meaning with a throughout explanations that does not contains contradictions in it."* (Heinen, 1982)

This understanding is also shared by other giant scholars in the field of Qur'anic studies such as 'Izzu ad-Dīn 'Abd as-Salām, Shaykh Abu Bakar an-Nishāpuri, and Shaykh Walī ad-Din al-Mulawwī (Heinen, 1982). So in this sense, the assumption that Al-Qur'ān's message contained an integrated meaning is nothing new, yet Kuntowijoyo sees the view to impose his own acknowledged borrowed approach from Western structuralism without discussing the ontological argument on its importance, as how he often does in his claims in other parts of his writings.

And as previously he acknowledged the need to transcend a reading from past scholars from its historical bias, he also acknowledged that there might be a possibility of an intellectual bias in reading and completing the puzzle of Qur'anic *grand theory*. However, he said himself that there might be a positive and negative biases when one read the Qur'anic paradigm. A negative bias for him is when a bias is trapped within a spacial-temporal realm

that are out of the current spacial-temporal world, that it does not help in contextualizing the transcendence meaning within Al-Qur'ān into the 'current' reality. While a positive bias, however, is when one approach the Qur'an within the bias that resonates with the current time and space realm, as he said:

> *"...it is (historical bias) not always attributely negative. Now for example, due to the depiction on the contemporary historical situation, we tend to catch an industrial society bias when we imagine the Arabic society in the prophet's time. This kind of bias is a positive bias because we will depict the prophet's society as a society that is also dominated by capital as the industrial society in today's time.".*

Not only that, he also acknowledge that there is a positive intellectual bias that can be desirable for him in helping us to read the Qur'anic paradigm:

> *"For me, it is not a problem whether our knowledge on the 'grand design' of the revelation is influenced with this knowledge or that of. I think that instead, we shall take benefit from all the knowledge heritage that we have to understand the messages of* Al-Qur'ān*. Indeed, we used to borrow 'Greek logic' in order to construct Islamic philosophy, a construction that instead accelerate a flourishing intellectual development in the history of Islamic thought."*

All of these importance on bias, he sees it as such for us to 'construct' a same complexity between the Arabic society of the prophet with the society of ours. He goes so far to say that Al-Qur'ān 'experimented' Islam repetitively on the non-glorious Arabic society at the time compared to 'experiment' it on an already established civilization of China or India, before then Islam being propagated upon the world. It seems to us that Kuntowijoyo confused the difference between the hikmah that could be attained of such reality, and the ontological reason on why Islam was descended in Arabic society. We issue such claim that it might be close to be blasphemous to think that Islam as a timeless religion and descended in perfection as its reality, require 'experimentation' as in modern social science until its variables are mature enough to be demonstrated upon the world. Thus, one will not be truthful that Al-Qur'ān is actually transcending time and space as he himself affirm, but it also being contradicted through his view on why Islam was descended in Arab. Not only that, his approach in 'objectification', to put 'Islam' into 'objective categories', are also subject to questioning. Where does the objective category came from for Islam shall be fitted within it? With his approach being not cautious enough to tackle his historical bias, it is subject to

concern that one will categorize Islam in accordance to the categorization of modern knowledge that is laden with its axiological presumption, as Al-Farūqī said. The clear example is his approach to categorize the thinking stages of Muslims in three steps of myth – ideology – science as exposed by Abidin (2016) as biased with the influence of Comte's view on the thinking stages, to then operationalize it to Muslim world. Perhaps (we speculate) Kunto meant to illustrate the situation of Madura people in accordance to his dissertation study, but then it is unjust to use the framework to generalize the historical phenomenon of the *ummah*, to the extent that it influence his problem formulation on Islamic knowledge. To put Islam into the 'objective category' in his sense, is then subject to criticism, which it will fail to do the transendency that he himself tries to undergo to Islam in terms of knowledge. In reference to higher educational ends, the development of his biased view on knowledge and his still-subject-to-criticism-methodology will consequentiated into an incautious development of Islamic science that fail to distinguish secular key elements with Islamic key elements in the body of knowledge, as we put the examples at the introduction pertaining gender curriculum. Al-Attas (1993) has discussed on the need to rearticulate the true sense of progress and development in the sense of Islamic worldview, that could be seen in accordance with what Daud (2013) has proposed as well. It is only through a rigorous assessment of secular knowledge and the historical development of Islamic society from the prophet until the world today, that a true assessment on progress towards Islam in terms of knowledge will be unveiled, which Kuntowijoyo fail to do so, and we suspect that his discourse would not sufficiently help Muslims in 'dedifferentiate', to borrow his words, knowledge from its secular key elements attachment. As Al-Farūqī said that the ends of higher Islamic education shall 'recast modern discipline with Islamic values' Kunto's approach will fail to distinguish the secular key elements, hence it being recasted back into the solidity Islamic knowledge, which we refrain ourselves from it.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we would like to declare that even though Kuntowijoyo polemically declare that we should leave the intellectual movement of Islamization of knowledge, he acknowledged that to undergo integralization of knowledge is still impossible without the process of Islamization of knowledge, even though his understanding on the notion is not as deep with the same reference to the modern philosophical problem of knowledge shared with the Al-Attas and Al-Farūqī. Not only that it is literally represented by his own words, but his demonstration on his alternative of pengilmuan Islam also do not solve the problem of the mixing of secular key elements embeded in Western worldview with Islamic science, which will confuse the sense of progress in the sense of Islamic worldview. Having said that, it is important to note that we can understand his noble intention to solve modern knowledge problem for Muslims with his own approach while his methodology is still subject to criticism as we already demonstrated. Therefore, there is no need to contradict the aims of Islamization of knowledge with his proposal of *pengilmuan Islam* at the level of Kunto's intention, except to criticize the incommensurability of the methodology offered in *pengilmuan Islam* in reference to Islamic worldview. We acknowledge that there could be made a more rigorous assessment focusing on Islamic education and sense of progress, that could be written comprehensively in another chance, due to the short amount of space and time.

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