

HERMENEUTICS OF THE WARIA: WARIA'S HERMENEUTICAL TAFSIR OF AL-FATIHAH

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Abstract

Qur'an, as it is believed by Muslims, is The Holy Book as well as the manifestation of The Words of God (Kalamullah). It has meanings which obviously was being 'monopolized' by The Ulama. In regarding of consequence, the authority of interpreting this Kalamullah seems 'limited' only for particular groups. Then, according the author it becomes the main factor leads the stagnancy of Quranic interpretation studies in this modern era. In this context, Schleiermacher's theory about 'psychological explication' (1998), Paul Ricoeur's theory about 'distantiation and appropriation' (1976), and 'the marginalized reading of Scripture' theory proposed by Simopoulos (2007), create a new path in interpreting Quran. From those theories, the author sheds the lights on hermeneutical interpretation of al-Fatihah by as one of the marginalized groups in Indonesia, the Waria. This paper concludes that the waria use their hermeneutical way of understanding the Scripture and produce not only an original interpretation, but also contextual and full of theological reflections.

Keywords: meaning, hermeneutics, interpretation, waria.

Abstrak

Al-Quran yang diyakini oleh Umat Islam sebagai sebuah Kitab Suci sekaligus manifestasi perkataan Allah (Kalamullah) memiliki makna yang seringkali 'dimonopoli' oleh kalangan ulama. Otoritas penafsiran Kalamullah ini pun pada akhirnya turut 'dianggap' tertutup hanya untuk segolongan tertentu. Hal inilah kemudian, menurut penulis, menjadi factor utama penyebab stagnansi khazanah penafsiran Al-Quran pada era modern ini. Dalam konteks ini, teori 'psychological explication' milik Schleiermacher (1998), teori 'distanciation and appropriation' yang diusung Ricoeur (1976), dan teori 'pemaknaan Kitab Suci kaum marginal' milik Simopoulos (2007), menjadi sangat relevan untuk diangkat dalam usaha membuka jalur baru penafsiran Kitab Suci. Berangkat dari tiga teori hermenutika di atas, dalam paper ini penulis akan mengungkap penafsiran surat Al Fatihah salah satu kaum marginal di Indonesia, waria (skr. wanitapria). Kesimpulan dari makalah ini adalah bahwa waria menggunakan cara hermeneutical mereka untuk memahami kitab dan hasilnya tidak hanya arti secara asli tetapi juga secara kontekstual dan refleksi keagamaan secara penuh.

Kata kunci: makna, hermeneutika, penafsiran, waria.

Interpreting Qur'an and The Problem of Authority

The interpretation of Holy Scripture, which is known as "tafsir" in Quranic studies, is generally crucial for the human being's religious sustainability. A plenty works to actualize and re-actualize it continuously is

shown by many scholars from different disciplines. Quranic interpretation, for instance, obviously shows its progressivity with the progress of its method of interpretation. From the "first interpreter," Muhammad PBUH, followed by Abi>Ja'far al-T{abari<(who also well-known as the leader of the Quranic interpreters) with his work 'Ja>mi' al-Baya>n, up until the recent works on Quranic interpretations, we can clearly see the progressivity of the metamorphosis process of the Quranic interpretation endeavor.¹ One of the most obvious distinctive characteristics of the current Quranic interpretation works is their rejection of imitating the preceding Quranic scholars, which is according to them, leads only to reproducing the foregone conclusions (*tah}si>l al-h}a>sil*). This is shown by the reformers movement who carry with them the idea of refusing one single authority in interpreting scriptures.²

However, the demand to understand and interpret the Holy Scriptures originally based on the fact that reality and The Scriptures are two sides of the same coin. Both are inseparable.³ Reality, invariably, needs The Scripture to be well understood and *visè versa*, The Scripture indeed needs reality to be well interpreted. Moreover, through the final revelation of the Quran and its codification, its texts become statics. Reality, on the other hand, always changes.⁴ In consequence, the *mufassir* (interpreters) have to keep actualizing their understanding of the Quranic texts to make them compatible with current situations.

For Muslim societies, the actualization of understanding texts is actually not only limited to Quranic texts but also the text of the second main source of Islam, the prophetic sayings or *hadith*. *Hadith* is an explanatory for Quran should be read and understood better. At this point, the more responsive kind of reinterpretation of understanding the *Hadith* texts which is able to accommodate the changing occurred in the society is highly needed to make the teachings of prophet be more widely understood by introducing, for instance, a new method of understanding *hadith* using historical, sociological and anthropological approaches.⁵ For the *hadith* was not coming from a vacant reality.

¹In Indonesian context, Gusman explains the changing of writing method of Quranic interpretation in Indonesia in three periods: first the period of the early 20th century to 1960s, the second period from occurred from 1970s to 1980s and the third is 1990s. More details, please refer to: Islah Gusman, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia dari Hermeneutika hingga Ideologi* (Jakarta: Penerbit TERAJU, 2003). Compare it with Federspiel's explanation on the patterns of Quranic interpretation existed in Indonesia in his work *Popular Indonesian Literature of the Qur'an* translated by Tajul Arifin into *Kajian al-Quran di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996).

²As it is cited by Baljonin *Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 16.

³Sahiron Syamsudin says that an interpretation raises as a response of a close relationship between tafsir and reality in the preface of *Al-Quran dan Isu-isu Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ Press, 2011).

⁴The static nature of the texts and the dynamic nature of the context becomes one of the main arguments showed by contemporary Quranic interpretation, see: Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010), 54.

⁵Said Agil Husin Munawwar and Abdul Mustaqim, *Asbabul Wurud: Studi Kritis Hadis Nabi Pendekatan Sosio-Historis-Kontekstual* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001), 21

Furthermore, the issue of dialectical process between text and reality causes in a more serious problem of the deterioration of Muslim nowadays. As Azra mentioned that many Muslim scholars and thinkers who are trapped in apologetic ideology when they have to answer the main cause of Muslims deterioration by giving a simple answer. "because Muslims have neglected the teachings of Quran and the prophet Muhammad." Thus, "Islamic Solution" becomes the only way out of this crisis and be the best answer of the challenges of the future as well. Here, we need to be critical which Islam is actually can provide the solution. At this point, we can obviously see the significance of a more viable and workable understanding Islam through its texts for Muslims.⁶

The demand to rejuvenate the understanding of Holy Scripture's texts is also applicable for Holy Bible's texts. Wright, in this context, calls Bible as the "progressive revelation."⁷ In the line with him, Beckwith calls for "readjustment of the gospel to the world."⁸ A dozen works on Quranic and Biblical studies are the products of an effort to understand those texts which are both "the texts of past,"⁹ needs to be reinterpreted¹⁰ and presented in their own contexts.

The demand to reread the Holy Scripture's texts unfortunately is not in line with an open opportunity to interpret them. No one is considered as authoritative to be a *mufassir* (Quranic interpreter). It leads positively to maintain the authority of the Holy Scripture itself, but on the other hand, it negatively causes on the stagnancy of works on Quranic studies. Whereas, according to Vishanoff, among the five leading Islamic scholars (Shafi'i, Baqilani, Ibn Hazm, Abdal-Jabbar, Abu Ya'la), three of them (Shafi'i, al-Baqilani, dan Abu Ya'la) declared that the meanings of the Quranic texts are flexible and they (Ibn Hazm, Abdal-Jabbar, serta Abu Ya'la) agreed that those meanings are accessible for non-specialists (lay people).¹¹

Interpreting the Text: Three Hermeneutical Approaches

According to Gracia, there are at least three factors involved in interpretation: first, the text under interpretation (*interpretandum*); second, a text/ a commentary added to the text that is being interpreted (*interpretans*) and this

⁶Azyumardi Azra, "Islam dan Transformasi Budaya Abad Ke-21," in Azyumardi Azra, *Konteks Berteologi di Indonesia: Pengalaman Islam* (Jakarta: Penerbit Paramadina, 1999), 202.

⁷ George Ernest Wright, "Progressive Revelation," *The Christian Scholar*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (March 1956), pp. 61-65

⁸ Clarence Augustine Beckwith, "Redefinition in Present-Day Theology," *The Biblical World*, Vol. 48, No. 6 (Dec, 1916), pp. 341-349.

⁹ Jansen, J.J.G., *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*, transl. Hairussalim, Syarif Hidayatullah, *Diskursus Tafsir al-Qur'an Modern* (Yogyakarta: Pt. Tiara Wacana Yogya, 1997), 4-5

¹⁰ Henry Clark, "The Dilemma of the Protestant Progressive," *An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (Spring 1969), pp. 1-14

¹¹ David R. Vishanoff, "Five Classical Approaches to the Qur'an," paper presented in International Seminar and Conference on the Quran. UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Feb., 24th, 2013.

interpretans can be mental, spoken, or written; three, *interpreter* who produces the interpretation.¹² On the last factor, interpreter, Schleiermacher reminds us the importance of 'psychological explication' which means that every thought came out of an interpreter is actually a reflection of his/her life experience.¹³ Therefore, as Paul Ricoeur comments, in any effort of interpreting the texts, the interpreter should go through the process of "distanciation and appropriation."¹⁴ The distanciation means a process of interpreter's keeping a distance from any things attached to him/her from psychological, academics, and historical backgrounds. This process is basically an effort to let the text talks by itself which then followed by appropriating it with the reality.

This sub discussion will elucidate more the process that the interpreter goes through it when he/she interpreted the texts by highlighting three main scholars of hermeneutics' perspectives.

- **Schleiermacher's perspectives**

It is interesting to understand what does Hermeneutics mean to Schleiermacher and why does he put the word criticism along with hermeneutics in his famous work "*Hermeneutics and Criticism*." In general, according to Schleiermacher, hermeneutics means the art of understanding the writing discourse of other person correctly. It is a special part of the art of speaking and writing. But, not only limited to the understanding of difficult passages in foreign languages, familiarity with the object and the language area instead presupposed. And criticism on the other side means the art of judging correctly and establishing the authenticity of texts and parts of texts from adequate evidence and data.¹⁵ Given that explanation, one can only be sure of its establishing of meaning if the authenticity of the text or part of the text can be presupposed, then the practice of hermeneutics presupposes criticism.

Furthermore, Schleiermacher argues that as every utterance has such a dual relationship (to the totality of language and to the whole thought of its originator), then all understanding also consists of the two moments; of understanding utterance from language, and as a fact in the thinker.¹⁶ Accordingly, understanding is only a being-in-one-another of these two moments (of the grammatical and psychological).

In his unpublished-manuscripts, Schleiermacher calls psychological explication as technical interpretation, although in the introduction, he regularly

¹²Jorge J. E. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 177.

¹³Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.101.

¹⁴John B. Thompson (ed.), *Paul Ricoeur Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.183.

¹⁵Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism...*, p.3.

¹⁶Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism...*, 8.

called the other side of explication the psychological. But in his lecture of 1832 he calls this part as psychological, but he also distinguishes within this a dual task; purely psychological and technical. The relative opposition of the purely psychological and technical are the first being more concerned with the emergence of thoughts from the totality of the life-moments of the individual, the second being more a leading-back to a determinate wish to think and present, from which sequences of development. Also, the distinguish lies in the fact that the technical is the understanding of meditation and of the composition. Meanwhile, the psychological is the understanding of the ideas.

The common beginning for this side of explication and for grammatical application is the general overview which grasps the unity of the work and the main characteristics of the composition. But the unity of the work, the theme, in this psychological explication is regarding as the main factor stimulates the writer, and the basic characteristics of the composition as his individual nature which reveals to the movement. But the author now orders that object in his individual manner, which is reflected in his order itself. By recognizing the author in this way, he combine two things in the language; producing something new in it and preserving what he repeat and reproduces. That is why the final objective of psychological (technical) explication is also nothing but the development is beginning.

On the finding of the unity of the style, Schleiermacher notes general law that every writer has their own style except those who have no individuality at all. But they do have and create such a common style. As this unity cannot now considered as a concept, but only as an intuition, it is generally only the limit-points which can initially be determined. As the task of psychological explication in its own terms is generally to understand every given structure of thoughts as a moment of the life of a particular person, Schleiermacher mentioned that there are two methods for the whole procedure on this; by observation in and for itself (divinatory method), in which one transforms oneself into the other person and tries to understand the individual element directly, and by comparing with others (the comparative method), which posits the person to be understood as something universal and then finds the individual aspect by comparison with other things included under the same universal.

The psychological task in particular involves two aspects; the understanding of the whole basic thought of the work from which everything develops, the other is the comprehension of individual parts of the work via the life of the author. And both are to be understood via the personal individuality of the author. The first task is questioning how the author arrived at the thought from which the whole developed, i.e. what relationship does it have to his whole life and how does the moment of emergence relate to all another life-moments of the author?

In conclusion, as one of many methods for reading scripture, Hermeneutics plays a big role in providing a comprehensive way to be able to understand the scripture wisely. It could be done only by taking as many factors as possible in to consideration for understanding and reading the text. Schleiermacher, in this regard, shows the important of the language (the text), and psychological value of the author and reader for understanding the utterance, written or spoken. In the other word, Schleiermacher's hermeneutics sees the strong influence of the text and its originator on the reader in understanding the scripture. However, we may still ask the role of the reader in understanding the scripture; to what extent that readers backgrounds (educational, ideology, etc) negotiate the influence of the text and its originator in understanding the scripture.

- **Ricoeur's Perspective**

Schleiermacher's argument is all understanding consists of the two moments; Understanding utterance from language, and as a fact in the thinker, is very much helpful to put a basis of a process of an interpretation. This formula then was accomplished further by Ricoeur's explanation on the details of the process of interpretation from distanciation, appropriation, guessing, and validation.

These steps of interpretation begin with the process of autonomization of the text (distanciation) to extract what the text says about itself without taking anything around it into account. This process occurred using our ability to guess (guessing) or trying to reveal the "fore-meaning" of the text. Then, it comes the process where we make our guessing more sophisticated through actualizing what have the text said about itself (appropriation). The last is validating the meaning by comparing what we got from the text with current situation. Now, let us see the details of every step to be able to utilize them for understanding Quranic texts.

1. Distanciation

As we mentioned before that the final revelation constitutes the unsustainability of the dialogical process of the revelation between God, prophet, and human being. In other words, what left for us from Muhammad's sayings about Quran after his death is only what has been recorded during his life in the form of memories and texts. Here, the hermeneutical process begins.¹⁷ It means that whenever the prophet sayings about Quran are converted to the text, people begin to interpret what the prophet actually meant to say by his sayings because we do not and cannot have direct access to the meaning that texts are supposed

¹⁷According to Ricoeur, the hermeneutical process begins when dialogue ends. Because without dialogue, one is forced to interpret without the benefit of the other, see: Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and The Surplus of Meaning* (Texas: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 95-110

to convey.¹⁸ By this, we consider the text is autonomous. This is what distanciation actually does to the text. It establishes the autonomy of the text with respect to its author, its situation and its original reader.¹⁹ In practical, distanciation is the process when we let the texts speak by themselves.

2. Guessing

After hearing what the texts said about themselves, in this process, we actively talk to the texts in order to understand them. This process confirms what Ricoeur said that “languages do not speak, people do.”²⁰ In doing so, Ricoeur told us that we do not need to repeat the speech’s event in a similar event.²¹ All we have to do is to guess the meaning of the text. In practical, guessing is a process of psychological self-projection into texts contains a small grain of truth.²² In this regard, Gadamer reminds us that we cannot stick blindly to our fore-meaning to gain the meaning of the text.²³ Moreover, because there are no rules for making good guesses, then we need to criticize and test our guessing.²⁴ To do that, we go to the next step, appropriation.

3. Appropriation

Appropriation is the actualization of the meaning as addressed to somebody.²⁵ It concerns the way in which the text is addressed to someone. Means, to explain a text was essentially to consider it as the expression of certain socio-cultural needs and as a response to certain perplexities localised in space and time.²⁶ To apply this step means to see the socio-cultural where the text is produced.

4. Validation

Ricoeur said that validation corresponds to what Schleiermacher called as “grammatical” which sees the strong influence of the text and its originator on the reader in understanding the scripture.²⁷ The application of this process is by comparing the meaning we got from the previous three steps with linguistic analysis of the text and everything surrounds it. Validation, furthermore,

¹⁸ Jorge J. E. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 147

¹⁹ Ruby S. Suazo, “Ricoeur’s Hermeneutic as Appropriation: A Way of Understanding Oneself In Front of the Text,” available online on <http://sphynxrhuzzhz.webs.com/OPUS/RUBY%20S.%20SUAZO%20DISSERTATION.pdf>

²⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and The Surplus of Meaning* (Texas: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), p.13.

²¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory...*, 75.

²² As Ricoeur said that guessing corresponds to what Schleiermacher called as “divinatory,” see: Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory...*, 76.

²³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1975), 271.

²⁴ E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 203 as quoted by Ricoeur in Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory...*, 76.

²⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory...*, 92

²⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.183.

²⁷ As we can conclude from his concept of “grammatical explication,” see: Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 30, 44.

occurred by doing Rahman's double movement: from the present situation to Quranic timesthen back to the present.²⁸

In the line of concluding what have been said so far, I would like to say that the process of an interpretation begins with the consideration of many things surrounding the texts that might play role in interpretation. These many things, according to Schleiermacher, categorized in two: grammatical and psychological. The first concerns more on textual analysis in interpreting the text while the second pay very much attention to the 'condition of possibility' of the interpreter to interpret the texts. Ricoeur then comes explaining the details of that condition by providing the steps (distanciation, guessing, appropriation, validation) that the interpreter should go through it in doing interpretation. The next question arises then, for whom those steps are available? Or in other words, does that 'condition of possibility' applicable for every one? To answer this, let us listen to Simopoulus' interesting expalanation of the marginalized reading of Hagar.

- **Simopoulus' Perspective**

In the beginning on his article "who was Hagar?," Simopoulus in his introduction quoted Gotwald that "no reader comes to the text 'naked' " which means that every individual-ordinary, untrained readers and biblical scholars are equipped by same tools for reading the text known as pre-understandings and pretexts that shape what they see and what they focus from Biblical messages. For him, all interpretations are, rather, reflections of the lenses through which we see and experience ourselves, the world and God. Based on this point of view, Simopoulus interviewed three groups of ordinary, untrained readers: white, middle-to-upper-class of Catholic and Protestant women living in Northern California; Latina Presbyterian immigrants and refugees from Mexico and Central America living in Northern California; and black South African Protestan women from both rural and urban South African to know how they read the story of Hagar and Sarah as found in Gen 16.

His own work brightly concluded that each group read and interpret the story of Hagar and Sarah differently based on their life background's circumstances. For more details, we may take one example of the Caucasian's point of view. To give information of their background, the author mentioned that the group of Caucasian women are both Catholics and Protestant, and it had been studying Bible through weekly meeting for five years. They are relatively wealthy and high educated. Interestingly, they had been divorced by adulterous husbands when they found new mistresses. Being as divorced women, they had been marginalized and stigmatized by their social, familial and religious networks.

In relation with how those women read the story of Hagar and Sarah, based on his interview, the author found that the majority of the women in this

²⁸FazlurRahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 5 and p. 20.

group viewed from two different perspectives. *First*, the women saw Hagar from the perspective of Sarah, the privileged but barren wife. In this sense, they identified Hagar as Abraham's mistress. Hagar was seen as an accomplice in adultery who maneuvered her way into Sarah and Abraham's marriage. The women in the Bible study, reading from their own experience of rejection when their husbands replaced them with mistresses, identified with Sarah's jealousy and rage toward this other woman. *Second*, the women identified Hagar as an outcast or a "divorced" woman. As divorced women themselves, the Caucasian women identified Hagar's experience of being used and ultimately cast out. No longer desired by or of use of their husbands. These women were served with divorce papers much like Hagar was served with a satchel of water and some bread.

Redemption in this group's interpretation of the text was found in the fact that God provided the means of survival for both Hagar and themselves. The women in the Bible study started their own careers, and they are now teachers, interior decorators, analysts with the state, and one of them is pursuing her master's degree in spirituality. Many of the women in the Bible study related that they, just as Hagar, had personal and psychological encounters with God in their deserts.

The previous example of how the Caucasian women interpretation of the story of Hagar and Sarah was highly influenced by their life background's circumstances, also clearly was shown by The Latina women which identified with Hagar as an exile from her native country of Egypt as well as an outsider and outcast living in a foreign and hostile land. The same case with The Black South African women who identified Hagar's exploitation as a slave and worker under her master's oppression.

In concluding to his work, the author stated that the validity requires boundaries. However, the distinct interpretations that have been articulated in this paper are valid simply because they are genuine, they speak meaningfully to the particular context of each group. The women have interpreted the text in such a way that a liberating and redemptive message of hope has emerged for them in the midst of their varying experiences of tragedy and suffering. The author also emphasized the importance of interpretative dialogue and listening from the ordinary readers of the Bible.²⁹

Ibu Mariyani: A General Picture of Waria's Life

Different from the existing scholarly works on what exactly *waria* is, how is this controversial identity is being placed in the context of Indonesia, and how

²⁹ Nicole M. Simopoulos, "Who Was Hagar? Mistress, Divorce, Exile or Exploited Worker: An Analysis of Contemporary Grassroots Reading of Genesis 16 by Caucasian, Latina, and Black South African Woman," in Gerald O. West, *Reading Other-Wise Socially Engaged Biblical Scholars Reading with Their Local Communities* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).

is the *warias* religiosity as the creature of God,³⁰ this paper will specifically highlight how they interpret the first *surah*(chapter) of Holy Quran. Before that, I would like to introduce Ibu Mariyani, who is waria and the founder of Pesantren Waria. As I came and interviewed her on May 2013.



Pic 1.

Ibu Mariyani and her picture of transormation to waria before and after using hijab

She told me that she has just returned from Mecca to perform *umrah*(small pilgrimage). It was such a blessing experience for her as waria to be able to go to *baitullah*. She told me that before going to Mecca, some of her friends warned her about what will happen to her in that holy place and people of hersurrounding because of her non-ordinary physical looks. Interestingly, she said that “*saya yang membuktikan bahwa Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala di sana tidak memandang manusia apa saja, tidak memandang orang kaya miskin, orang jelek cakep, ternyata Allah SWT menerima semuanya.*” (I have proved that Allah there (in Mecca) does not see whether one is rich or poor, neither good looking nor bad, but Allah accepts every one). She even more told me that the authority of Arabians were very welcome and she had no any experience of being discriminated during her staying in Mecca, Medina, and Jedda.

About her identity as *waria*, she mentions that her condition is natural and God creation. She was born as a male but feels that her soul was female and should be accepted as such by Muslims as part of the muslim. She told me that from her little age (approximately playgroup age) she played with girls toys. At

³⁰Among them are: Koeswinarno, “KehidupanBeragamWaria Muslim di Yogyakarta,”dissertation submitted to the Universitas Gadjah Mada for the degree of Doctor in Social Sciences and Humanities., 2007; Muslim Hidayat, “Waria di HadapanTuhan: EksplorasiKehidupanReligiusWariadalamMemahamiDiri,”a thesis submitted to Graduate Program of Faculty of Psychology, UniversitasGadjahMada Yogyakarta, 2012; Tom Boellstorff, ‘Playing Back the Nation: Waria, Indonesian Transvestites,’ Cultural Anthropology, May 2004; Michael R. Stevenson, ‘Searching for a Gay Identity in Indonesia,’ Journal of Men’s Studies 4, 2 (Nov 30, 1995): p. 93.

this point, she emphasized that "*waria sebenarnya bukan penyakit dan bukan pilihan. Kalo penyakit saya dari kecil sampe sekarang saya usia 54 tahun lek memang ada dokter yang memang bisa nyembuhin saya itu berarti memang (kehendak) Gusti Allah. Kalo pilihan, saya tidak bisa mengganti apa yang dikasih Allah (bahwa) saya laki-laki padahal saya pengen jadi perempuan.*"

(*waria* actually is not an illness nor a choice. If it was an illness, from my little age till now iam at my 54, if there is a doctor who is able to cure me I really thanks God for this. If it was a choice, I could not change that God chose me to be man while I prefer to be a woman).

Ibu Mariyani is also known as the founder of Pesantren Khusus Waria (Senin-Kamis). The boarding school was established in 2008 which aims to accomodate warias who want to learn about religion. According to Mariyani, *warias* are oftenly underestimated by the society while actually there is no perfect human being in this world. At this point, for Mariyani, *warias* are also human being who must worship their God. If they do not know how to perform worshipping and learn more about Islamic rituals in the existing *pesantren*, they will never be accepted. KH. Amroli and Bu Maryina in this case then took an initiative to build this Pesantren Waria and finance this boarding school from her own pocket.



Pic 2.

The identity board of Pesantren Waria

The religious activities of this boarding is regularly held in Wednesday night and Sunday night at 5 pm which began by reading *shalawat nariyah* then followed with performing maghrib prayer together. After that, the *warias* continue to read *Al Fatihah* not less than 100 times until isya prayer which then followed by learning how to perform Islamic rituals correctly (prayer, take ritual ablution, reading Quran, etc.) under the guidance of one *ustadz* (teacher). The *pesantren* periodically holds an open preaching (*pengajian*), and gets involvings in some social activities.

Regarding to her religious background, Ibu Mariyani confessed that she was a christian because she was being adopted by a christian family. In journey of her life, particularly when she was experiencing a black night, she oftenly involved and held religious rituals. Furthermore, Ibu Mariyani told me that a turning point of her life was when she heard the voice of Islamic *takbir* blessings at the night before eid and immediately joined without knowing anything how to perform prayer the tarawih prayer in KH. Ham Sugeng's mosque which then continuously followed his open preaching (*pengajian*) until she finally embraced Islam. The experience helped her to went out of her 'black' life and started to open salon to survive.

Waria'hermeneuticizing' al-Fatihah

In this sub section, I will provide the description of my interview with Ibu Mariyani regarding her interpretation of al-fatihah.

Me: As waria, how do you see the concept of *syukur* (gratefulness)?

IbuMariyani: We should be grateful to Allah in everything that Allah has given us. Being a waria, in this context, should also be something grateful. Not just like a waria who has no religion, She/ he will live this life however it flows. The most important thing for them is enjoying life. An human being actually should not behave like that. Human being should fight for thier life and worship God at the same time because it is human's destiny to worship God. In front of God, the bad people will not always be bad. As long as they want to change and ask Allah to help them change their life. God, for sure, will always grant His creatures' requests. And He will never regret if we ask Him continuously. As I proved it in my life when I continuously prayed *tahajud* asking Allah to allow me to visit His house (*baitullah*) which finally He makes it comes true. Here, He showed that he is the Most Gracious, and Most Merciful (الرحمن الرحيم) who does not discriminate any of His creatures.

Me: About the verse *مالك يوم الدين*, how do you find yourself, as waria, will be in the Day of Judgment?

IbuMariyani: All what I can do is just leaving everything to God's will. As a stupid person, I do not know exactly how, I just surrender my whole life here and afterlife to God. This also be my attitude toward people who claims that *warias* are *haram* (religiously prohibited), *najis* (religiously dirty), and impossibility accepted by God. People have no right to judge what other people did. Let God decides with His justice later in the afterlife. Unfortunately, people oftenly act as if they are God for another people. Shortly, I do believe the justice of God who will reward every good deed with His blessings.

Me: The next verse of *AlFatihah* will be *إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين*, how do you find the word 'worship' should be understood by the *warias*?

Ibu Mariyani: Here (in the Pesantren Waria) we provide *sarung* and *mukena* (the cloth in doing worship) all together. Anyone of the waria is freely to choose which of *sarung* and *mukena* do they feel more comfortable to put on for praying. For me, I prefer *mukena* as I feel more comfortable using *mukena* in performing prayer. At this point, I do believe that God understands me and my friends' conditions. God granted His paradise for people not based on neither their sexual identity nor their appearances. As I experienced it when I went to Mecca for performing *umrah*. I did not find anyone there call me "hey you waria!"

Me: Regarding the verse saying *اهدنا الصراط المستقيم*, do you see that *warias*' path is the straight path?

Ibu Mariyani: I leave the answer to Allah. The right or not is fully on God's decision. Let me give you an example, the claims that waria are haram, najis is actually wrong. How could people claim that someone worshiping God as haram? If *warias* are najis, why then God gave them life?

Me: So do you believe that *warias* are not included in what Quran says as *الضالين* and *المغضوب*?

Ibu Mariyani: I believe there are not. But, again, the decision is in God's justice. All what I have to do in this world is being a good God's servant.

Conclusion

If we compare how Ibu Mariyani interpret the verses of *alfatihah* with the the three hermeneutical perspectives provided by Schleiermacher, Ricoeur, and Simopoulus, we can clearly see that her interpretation confirms their hermeneutical perspectives at least in three points:

First, what Ibu Mariyani did was exactly confirm Simopoulus argument saying that interpretations is reflection of the lenses through which we see and experience ourselves, the world and God. This clearly shown in her overall interpretation of the *alfatihah* which she always relate her understanding of the text with what she experienced in her life as waria and as a creature of God.

Second, Schleiermacher's conclusion saying that as every utterance has a dual relationship (to the totality of language and to the whole thought of its originator), then all understanding also consists of the two moments; of understanding utterance from language, and as a fact in the thinker. Ibu Mariyani's interpretation of *alfatihah* clearly confirms that conclusion in a way that her understanding is resulted from her short understanding of the text and completed with her life experiences as waria.

Third, Ricoeur's steps of understanding (distanciation, guessing, appropriation, validation) are, at least two of them (distanciation and guessing), successfully done by Ibu Mariyani in her interpretation of alfatihah. This limited effort is understandably in a way that she might not be able to do appropriation and validation due to her academic ability.

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