

THE NEW THEOLOGY: CONSTRUCTING CRITICAL ISLAMIC THEOLOGY BASED ON HEGEL'S DIALECTIC THEORY

Lukman S. Thahir¹

¹Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab and Da'wa, IAIN Palu, Palu, lukmansthahir@iainpalu.ac.id

Abstract. The current discourse of Islamic theology, like Christian theology in modern times in the West, faces very severe challenges, especially how this school of thought, whether rationally, empirically, or methodologically, can be accepted and in line with the demands and developments of contemporary human dynamics. For almost 10 centuries, theological issues of Islam are still "playing" in the area of the metaphysical debate, and there have not yet touched on physical-humanistic issues, which are historical-empirical, here. As a result, Islamic theology is not only considered meaningless but also powerless, isolated, and marginalized before the forces of contemporary scientism. This article wants to reread Islamic theology in the context of the demands and spirit of the contemporary era, based on Hegel's dialectical theory. The aim is to build alternative theological models that are in line with the spirit of today's demands. To formulate a new model of Islamic theology [the new theology] like this, the issues raised are 1). What is the origin of Islamic theological discourse? 2). Why is Hegel's dialectics used as a framework or tool of analysis for reading Islamic theology today; and 3). How is the reading of Islamic theology based on Hegel's dialectic theory? The results of this study can be formulated as follows: First, the origins of Islamic theology, although there are external influences from Jewish theology, Christianity and Greek sciences, however, internal factors, in this case, the Qur'an itself becomes a source that the most authoritative emergence of discussion on theology in Islam. Second, Hegel's dialectical theory is a sublimation of Plato's philosophical argument theory to melt the two opposing or contradictory poles of thought, Socrates and his interlocutors in Plato's time, empiricism, and rationalism in modern times for Hegel, and Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyah in Islamic theology. Third, the contemporary reading of Islamic theology gave birth to an alternative theological model which in this paper is called The Critical Theology of Islam or The New Theology.

Key Word: Theology, Islamic Theology, Critical Theology, Hegelian Dialectics

Abstrak. Diskursus teologi Islam saat ini, seperti halnya teologi Kristen di masa modern Barat, mengalami tantangan yang sangat berat, terutama bagaimana aliran pemikiran ini, baik secara rasional, empirik, maupun metodologis, dapat diterima dan sejalan dengan tuntutan dan perkembangan dinamika kemanusiaan kontemporer. Hampir sekitar 10 abad lamanya, isu-isu teologi Islam masih “bermain” di wilayah perdebatan metafisik *an sich*, di sana, belum menyentuh isu-isu fisik-humanistik-, yang bersifat historis-empiris, di sini. Akibatnya, teologi Islam tidak hanya dianggap *meaningless*, tetapi juga tidak berdaya, terisolasi dan termarginalisasi dihadapan kekuatan-kekuatan saintisme kontemporer. Artikel ini, ingin membaca ulang teologi Islam dalam konteks tuntutan dan semangat era kontemporer, dengan berbasis pada teori dialektika Hegel. Tujuannya adalah membangun model teologi alternative yang sejalan dengan semangat tuntutan masa kini. Untuk merumuskan model baru teologi Islam [the new theology] seperti ini, masalah yang diangkat: 1). Bagaimana asal usul diskursus teologi Islam?.2). Mengapa dialektika Hegel yang dijadikan *framework* atau *tool of analysis* untuk pembacaan teologi Islam masa kini; dan 3). Bagaimana pembacaan teologi Islam berbasis teori dealektika Hegel? Hasil penelitian ini dapat dirumuskan sebagai berikut: Pertama, asal-usul teologi Islam, meski ada pengaruh eksternal dari teologi Yahudi, Kristen dan ilmu-ilmu Yunani, namun, faktor internal, dalam hal ini, al-qur’an itu sendiri menjadi sumber yang paling otoritatif munculnya diskusi mengenai teologi dalam Islam. Kedua, teori dialektika Hegel merupakan sublimasi dari teori argumen filosofis Plato untuk mencairkan dua kutub pemikiran yang berlawanan atau kontradiktif, Socrates dan lawan bicaranya di masa Plato, empirisme dan rasionalisme di masa modern bagi Hegel, dan Mu’tazilah dan Asy’ariyah dalam teologi Islam. Ketiga, pembacaan kontemporer teologi Islam melahirkan model teologi alternative yang dalam tulisan ini disebut Teologi Kritis Islam atau The New Theology.

Kata kunci: Teologi, Teologi Islam, Teologi Kritis, Dialektika Hegel

Preliminary

Arkoun stated, "Islamic thought, except in a number of critical reform efforts that are very rare and have very little developmental space, has not opened itself to the modernity of thought and therefore cannot answer the challenges faced by contemporary Muslims. Islamic thinking is considered "naive" because it approaches religion on the basis of direct beliefs and without criticism."¹

This article intentionally begins by quoting Muhamed Arkoun's critical statement above, not because he merely wants to justify his concern about the fate of the development of Islamic thought, especially Islamic theology, which will slow or quickly impact on the marginalization of Islamic theology - not to declare experiencing the process of "intellectual suicide", Borrowing the term Fazlurrahman,² in intellectual aspects and modern culture, but also, if forced to accept its existence, it will be considered as meaningless discourse, as has happened in Christian theology in the West.³

In the West, as described by Claud Welch,⁴ in his book *Protestant Thought in The Nineteenth Century*, faced a serious challenge, especially the problem of how Christian theology can be accepted, both rationally and methodologically, in translating his beliefs in the context of the 19th century. according to him, orthodox Christian theologies still existed, but fundamentally they fought desperately when they were alienated before the forces of enlightenment into intellectual backwardness and cultural isolation.

This alienation of Christian theology, according to Mark R. Woodward,⁵ is not only due to theology being unable to absorb, adapt, and articulate itself in the spirit of the modernity era, but also as Jeffery Hopper said, due to the ways in which the scriptures are understood in the understanding of the pre-modern era,⁶ or borrowing Jean Pierre Jossua's analysis, because Christian theology is powerless to provide a

¹ Rahayu S. Hidayat, Trans., *Nalar Islami dan Nalar Modern: Berbagai Tantangan dan Jalan Baru*, (Jakarta: INIS, 1994), p. 6

² Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), p. 158

³ Oswald Hanfling, *Essential Readings in Logical Postitivism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 10-11

⁴ Claud Welch, *Protestant Thought in The Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1972), p. 59

⁵ Johan Moleman, Ed., *Islam in the Era of Globalization Muslim Attitudes Toward Modernity and Identity*, (Jakarta: INIS, 2001), p. 114-115

⁶ Jeffery Hopper, *Understanding Modern Theology*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 97

convincing picture of the actual scientific status of a harmonious relationship between history, faith and reason.⁷

Arkoun's criticism of Islamic thought as quoted above is also felt by Mouhanad Khourchide and Ufuk Topkara,⁸ by saying that Islamic theology is currently facing a challenging phase of its sustainable development, where on one hand Muslims face modernity and globality in politics, culture, and social economy, while Islamic theology, on the other hand, is reluctant to participate in new forms of discourse that are comparative. Only a handful of theologians of the world seem, said Mouhanad, to realize how important this is for the future of Islamic theology.

What we want to propose in this paper is to respond to the global situation faced by Muslims, by trying to offer a new reading of Islamic theology based on the Hegelian dialectical analysis. Here are three main issues that will be described: 1. What is the origin of Islamic theological discourse? 2. Why is Hegel's dialectics used as a framework or tool of analysis for reading Islamic theology today; and 3. How is the reading of Islamic theology based on Hegel's dialectic theory?

The Origins of Islamic Theology: An Overview

Islamic theology, which is a branch of Islamic religion, is called 'the science of al-kalam. Kalam is usually translated as "theology", although this translation does not express the scholastic method properly. A better term to rely on kalam science is speculative theology. This term expresses in a better way the discussive-theological nature of *mutakallimin*, which uses logical argumentation to prove some religious principles.⁹

How did this speculative theology emerge and develop in Islamic discourse? this problem is not fully revealed or discovered. Modern scholars differ about the origin of its emergence. Alesandro,¹⁰ for example, states "There is an almost general agreement within the ranks of modern scholarship, that the dialectical technique of kalam was borrowed from early Christian theology".

⁷ Hanskung and David Tracy, Ed., *Paradigm Change in Theology*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd, 1989), p. 256

⁸ Mouhanad Khourchide and Ufuk Topkara, "A Contribution to Comparative Theology: Probing the Depth Islamic Thought", *Journal Religions*, Vol. 4, 28 January 2013: 67-68

⁹ Alessandro Cancian, "Islamic Theology", in Albrecht Classen (Ed.), *De Gruiter Handbook of Medieval Studies*, (Berlin: De Gruyter), p. 56-68

¹⁰ Ibid.

In contrast to Alesandro, who stated that the kalam dialectic technique was borrowed from an early Christian theological model, Shabine Schmidtke (Ed.),¹¹ In the introduction to the Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology, was more open to seeing the origins of Islamic theology. Although he does not deny the existence of external factors in the emergence of theology in Islam, internal factors, in this case, the Qur'an itself becomes the most authoritative source for the emergence of discussion about theology in Islam. Thus, for example, he stated: "The factors that have contributed to how Islamic theology has been shaped and developed in its variegated forms over the course of history are multiple and various. Although the Qur'ān, the founding text of Islam, is not a theological disquisition, it is still the most hallowed authoritative source for Muslims engaged with doctrinal concerns. It lays down some of the fundamental doctrinal concepts that characterize Islamic theological thought and have been shared in one way or another by most if not all Muslim thinkers throughout the centuries".

The same view was expressed by Ahmad Amin,¹² that internal factors for the development of *kalām* can be seen in the fact that some Qur'anic verses were revealed to face various sects and idolaters and to deny their religious views. External factors, on the other hand, said Ahmad Amin, are closely related to their existence using Greek philosophy to build arguments in terms of maintaining their views. In other words, internal factors represent the polemic side, while external factors indicate aspects of maintaining Islamic theology (*aqidah*).

The most explicit opinion about the origin of Kalam science can be seen in the work of Joseph van Ess,¹³ and Harun Nasution. Van Ess stated that the emergence of the *Kalam* Science took place internally through political-theological discussions stemming from debates about who had the right to replace the Prophet after he died.¹⁴ This view was also confirmed by Harun Nasution who stated that the theological movements that emerged in Islam originated from political problems.¹⁵

From this political problem then emerged the problem of *aqidah*, namely big sins and small sins, infidels and faith, free will and predestination, and so on, which later had implications for the emergence of various streams in Islam, including,

¹¹ Shabine Schmidtke Ed., "Introduction", in *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, (Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 3.

¹² Ahmad Amin, *Dhuha al-Islam*, (Kairo: Maktabah al-Nahdhah al-Mishriyah, 1963), p. 1-3

¹³ J.E. Murdoch and E.D. Sylla, Ed., *The Cultural Context in Medieval Learning*, (Dordrecht/Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1975) p. 87-111

¹⁴ Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam: Aliran-aliran Sejarah Analisa Perbandingan*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1972), p. 1-7

¹⁵ John Mc Taggart and Ellis McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Jabariyah, Qadariyah, Murji'ah, Khawarij, Mu'tazilah, and Ash'ariyah. The two theological schools mentioned last, not only greatly influenced the Muslim mindset in theological debates, but also influenced the main mainstream of Islamic theology, past and present.

Al-Imam Syahrastani,¹⁶ for example, said that it was from Mu'tazilah, referring to the terms *kalam* and *mutakallimiin*. The notion of accountability on the day of judgment requires confidence in human free will, they argue. They also believe that the Qur'an is not eternal; it was created and appeared in a concrete historical context. The development of the *mu'tazilah* theology began under the protection of the caliph al-Ma'mun (ruling 813-32) and al-Mu'tasim (833-42), at which time the Mu'tazilah borrowed many of his ideas from Greek metaphysics and logic. This theology was defeated by a group of hadiths, who argue that the Qur'an is eternal, thus and universally binding. The official imposition and protection of the Abbasids from the theology of Mu'azilah and the trial of the leaders of the hadith movements such as Ahmad bin Hanbal (died 855) caused the unpopularity of this theology and eventually suffered defeat.

With the collapse of the mu'tazilah theological regime, Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari emerged with his Ash'ariyah theology as a turning point in Islamic history. He criticized Mu'tazilah for relying on nonscriptural sources and calling for new theology based on traditional Islamic beliefs. This theology, like Mu'tazilah, initially developed rapidly and had a very wide influence in the Islamic world. But along with the times, especially after the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate, this theology experienced ups and downs in the development of Islamic history, and gradually became stagnant and did not experience significant development.¹⁷ Such conditions, inevitably, in an effort to preserve this tradition, surely necessitates new readings, to be interpreted and constructed according to the demands and developments of the times. One such effort is meant by reading it through Hegel's dialectical philosophical approach.

Hegel's Dialectical Theory Work Frame

An important question to ask in this section, before going further into Hegel's dialectical theory is: Why is this theory used as a tool of analysis for reading Islamic theology in our present context? To answer this, several assumptions can be put

¹⁶ Joseph van Ess, "The Beginning of Islamic Theology," *ibid*.

¹⁷ *ibid*.

forward: First, Hegel's dialectical theory¹⁸ is a sublimation of Plato's theory of philosophical arguments to dilute the two poles of opposing or contradictory thought, Socrates and his interlocutors in Plato's time, empiricism and rationalism in Hegel's time. For the context of Islam, the contradiction of Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyah can be diluted for the present day of Islam. Second, Hegel's dialectical theory¹⁹ does not eliminate or destroy anything contradictory but is raised and preserved. This means that, in the context of Islamic theology, the contradictions of the Mu'tazilah and Asy'ariyah views are historical heritages which must be maintained, not mutually destroying, but mutually reinforcing towards a complete totality. Third, the Hegelian dialectic theory describes the process of scientific development that is not static, but dynamic. That is, the static development of classical Islamic theology today which is only confined in the thesis and antithesis forces Islamic thinkers to dynamically discover its syntax.

If that's the rationale, then where do we start? Admittedly, it is not an easy thing to understand this theory. What makes dialectical thought so difficult to explain is that this theory can only be seen in practice. This is not a "method" or set of principles, such as Aristotle, which can be easily stated and then applied to whatever subject you choose, said Llyod Spencer and Andrzej Krauze, in *Hegel for Beginners*.²⁰ However, to draw the common thread of our understanding of his philosophical ideas, at least we can refer to three social settings of his thought: 1. Briefly trace his life biography, 2, identify the main themes that underlie his dialectical thought, and 3. Weave the core ideas the dialectics are to be used as a tool of analysis for reading Islamic theology.

Overview of Life Biography

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)²¹ was a German idealist philosopher with a background in Post-Kantian philosophy and Christian theology. The scientific structure is built on these two foundations, namely philosophy and theology. He is one of the greatest systematic thinkers in the history of Western philosophy. In addition to symbolizing German idealist philosophy, Hegel boldly claims that his philosophical system is the historical peak of all previous philosophical thought. The entire encyclopedic system of Hegel's science is divided into the science of Logic,

¹⁸ Llyod Spencer and Andrzej Krauze, "Hegel For Beginners", in <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/help/easy.htm>. Compare with Zubaidi, *Filsafat Barat*, (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media Group, 2007, p. 85-88

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy", <https://www.iep.utm.edu/hegelsoc/>

Natural philosophy, and Spirit philosophy. What caught his most attention was his view of history, society, and the state, which belonged to the realm of the Objective Spirit.

The philosopher who acknowledged much was inspired by Emanuel Kant, born in Stuttgart in 1770, the son of an official in the Duke of Württemberg government. He was educated at the Royal High School in Stuttgart from 1777-88 and studied classical works and European Enlightenment literature. In October 1788 Hegel began to study at the theological seminary in Tübingen, Tüberger Stift, where he became friends with the poet Hölderlin and the philosopher Friedrich Schelling, both of whom later became famous. In 1790 Hegel received his M.A.²²

In his life, according to Bertrand Russel,²³ there were several important events. During his youth, he was attracted to mysticism, and his later views could be regarded, in a way, as an intellectualization of what initially appeared to him as mystical insight. He taught philosophy, first as a private lecturer at Jena - he mentioned that he completed his work, *Phenomenology of Mind*, there on the day before the battle of Jena - then at Nuremberg, then as a professor at Heidelberg (1816-1818, and finally in Berlin from 1818 until his death, in his later life he was a Prussian patriotic, a loyal servant of the Prussian State, who comfortably enjoyed the seeds of his famous philosophical fame; Jena

Hegel is a representation of the peak of the German philosophical movement that began with Kant, although he often criticized Kant. His philosophical system would never have appeared without Kant. His influence is huge, not only in Germany. At the end of the 19th century, prominent academic philosophers, both in America and in the United Kingdom, were very Hegelian. Beyond pure philosophy, many Protestant theologians adopted his doctrines and his philosophy of history deeply influenced political theory. Marx, as we know, was a pupil of Hegel in his youth, and in his last philosophical system, he still retains some of the Hegelian styles.²⁴

Other major works published during his life and as a characteristic of his philosophy, and using the same method in his book *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, as well as in all the mature works published in the future - the entire *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy of Science* (including, first part, "Lesser Logic or *Encyclopaedia Logic*, *Science of Logic*, and *Philosophy of Right* [18], has made Hegel one of the biggest and most influential philosophers in the world.

²² Sigit Jatmiko, et. al., Trans. *Sejarah Filsafat Barat kaitannya dengan Kondisi Sosio-Politik Zaman Kuno hingga Sekarang*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007), p. 951-952

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Basic Concepts of Dialectical Thought

To understand Hegel's dialectical model, there are at least three basic concepts of Hegel's thought that we need to know about. First, Totality, second, *Sublation*, and third, Negation. These three basic concepts can be summarized and concisely, as follows:

First, for the concept of totality, Hegel states, Every stage or phase or moment is part, and therefore partly incorrect. Only the whole is true. Totality maintains in it each idea or stage which has been overcome or classified. Overcoming or summarizing is a process of development consisting of "moments" (stages or phases). Totality is the product of that process that maintains all of its "moments" as elements in a structure, not as stages or phases.²⁵

For Hegel,²⁶ the reality is a total circle that assumes its end as its goal, and therefore has an end to its beginnings. In Hegel's language, a kind of concept circle implies the rest of the concept so that it becomes a starting point for the presence of totality in various stages of each development. Thus, a single concept can encompass various meanings and a single meaning can be expressed by various concepts. Besides, from a dialectical perspective, concepts separate from the processes in which they are part are abstractions and, therefore, inherently limited and one-sided, for example, False. In his book *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel emphasizes the meaning of totality as a form of actual awareness of different objects or realities. So says Hegel, as follows:

"Consciousness, at the same time, must have taken relation to the object in all its aspects and phases, and have grasped its meaning from the point of view of each of them. This totality of its determinate characteristics makes the object per se or inherently a spiritual reality; and it becomes so in truth for consciousness, when the latter apprehend every individual one of them as self, i.e. when it takes up towards them the spiritual relationship is just spoken of".²⁷

By interpreting totality like this, Hegel asserted that the visible objects of the world that make up this world are not mere illusions, each of which has a greater or lesser degree of reality, and that reality is achieved because of an aspect of the whole, which will be seen if seen correctly. Therefore, with this kind of view, usually

²⁵ Llyod Spencer and Andrzej Krauze, "Hegel For Beginners", *ibid.*

²⁶ Michael H.G. Hoffmann, "The curse of the Hegelian heritage_ "Dialectic," "contradiction," and "dialectical logic" in Activity Theory", in *Working Papers Series, Scholl of Public Policy Gorgia Institute Tecnology*, Atlanta, USA, 2005, p. 89

²⁷ J. B. Baillie, Trans., *The Phenomenology of Mind*, (Blackmask Online, 2001), p. 288

mistrust of the reality of space and time, if accepted as truly real, involves separation and diversity.²⁸

This view of Hegel's totality, when viewed in the context of the study of Islamic philosophy, is similar to Al-Farabi's emanation theory. The separate parts, among the various levels of reasons that have their respective functions, are not independent, but rather have a unified whole organism in the form of "overflowing" from the One being which Hegel called an absolute form, namely God. It is from this absolute form that all forms that are relative emerge, which Hegel views as illusions. This is what Hegel meant that nothing is really real except "the whole" (the whole).

Second, *sublation*. To find out what Hegel meant about *sublation*, we can trace it in his Science of Logic, specifically, at the end of the first chapter of his book, The Doctrine of Being. Here, he discusses the theme of becoming and determinate being, consisting of only three paragraphs, in which Hegel claims that *sublation* is one of the most important concepts in his philosophy. In the first paragraph, comments on this *sublation* according to Hegel can be translated into two senses. On the one hand, it can mean to preserve, preserve, to maintain, maintain. On the other hand, it can mean to stop, to end. Hegel considers these two meanings to function simultaneously. In the next paragraph line, Hegel suggests preserving including negative elements, by opening up to accept external influences so that they can be preserved. In simple language from Walter Kaufman, *sublation* is "what do you do when something has fallen on the floor". For example, a book falls off a shelf and then I put it back. The negative element, my book fell from the table, but the act of "keeping" the book to the extent that it will not be trampled (an existence that is open to external influences).²⁹

Third, negation. Hegel called this dynamic aspect of his thinking the power of "negation." With "negativity" static thought (or habit) becomes wasted or dissolved, becomes fluid and adaptable, and takes its desire to drive towards "the whole". Dialectical thought derives its dynamics from negation from its ability to express "contradictions" in almost any category or identity. Hegel's "contradiction" does not only mean mechanical rejection or opposition. Indeed, he challenges the classic notion of static self-identity, $A = A$, or $A \text{ no} = \text{no-A}$. By negation or contradiction, Hegel means sharing differences in relations, opposition, reflection, or relationships. This can indicate the inadequacy of a category or its incoherence. Most dramatically, categories are sometimes shown as self-contradictions.³⁰ This contradiction,

²⁸ Michael H.G. Hoffmann, "The Curse of the Hegelian Heritage", *ibid*.

²⁹ Ralp Palm, *Hegel's Concept of Sublation*, (Leuven: Katolieke Universiteit Leuven, 2009), p. 27

³⁰ "Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy", *ibid*.

according to Hegel,³¹ as a new awareness to solve various difficulties in philosophical problems, through the mediation of various conflicts. This is what Hegel meant, in his speech, "either way of beginning runs into contradiction".

This contradiction in reality was made by Hegel as a methodical starting point. Hegel, according to Frans Magnis Suseno,³² defines reality as a process of breaking or self-statements of reason. Humans experience that process in consciousness as an increase in overall understanding and awareness while simultaneously expressing a process of increasing rationality in history. And since rationality expresses itself through negativity, negativity is the principle of progress both in that reality and in the understanding of that reality and both are processes. Hegel described the process on the one hand as the process of the journey of self-awareness from sense knowledge to absolute knowledge, on the other hand as the development of the spirit, from subjective spirits through objective spirits to absolute spirits.

This concept of negation, and including the two that have been explained above are some of the keywords for understanding the Hegelian dialectic concept. These three keywords, not only constitute a unified whole that is inseparable from one another in understanding Hegelian dialectics, but also at the same time becomes a "bridge" of our understanding to interpret the way the Hegelian dialectic concept works.

Dialectics "is a term used to describe the method of philosophical argument which involves a kind of contradictory process between opposing parties. The most classic version of this" dialectic "can be seen in the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. He, for example, put forward his argument philosophically as a dialogue or debate back and forth, generally between the Socratic character, on the one hand, and some people or groups of people as opposed to talking to Socrates, on the other."³³

Debating back and forth between opposing parties results in a kind of linear development or evolution in philosophical views or positions: when dialogue goes on, Socrates 'interlocutors change or improve their views in response to Socrates' challenges and participate in adopting more sophisticated views.³⁴ The alternating dialectics between Socrates and his interlocutors thus become Plato's way of arguing against previous not-so-sophisticated views or positions and establishing more sophisticated views later. The dialectics of the Plato model are in Hegel's "hands"

³¹ G.W.F Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, translated and edited by George di Giovanni, (McGill University, Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 45

³² Bito Wikantoso, "Konsep Intersubjektivitas dalam Phenomenology of Spirit Karya GWF Hegel", *Darmasmrti*, Vol. XV No 28 October 2016.

³³ Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel-dialectics/>

³⁴ Ibid.

referring to or leading to conflicting processes between opposing parties. While Plato's "opposing parties" were people (Socrates and his interlocutors), however, what "opposing parties" in Hegel's work depended on the subject he discussed

As in Plato's dialogue, the contradictory process between "opposing parties" in Hegelian dialectics leads to the evolution or linear development of less sophisticated or more sophisticated definitions or views. Thus the dialectical process is Hegel's method for debating definitions or views that were not too sophisticated and for more sophisticated ones later.³⁵

For a clearer view of Hegel's dialectics, the authors quote Karl Popper's explanation,³⁶ as follows:

Dialectics (in the modern sense, that is, specifically in the sense in which Hegel uses the term) is a theory which states that something - more specifically, human thought - develops in a way characterized by the so-called triad dialectics: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

First, there are some ideas or theories or movements that can be called a thesis. Such a thesis will often produce conflict, because, like most things in this world, it will probably have limited value and will have a weak spot. opposing ideas or movements are called the antithesis, because they are the opposite of the first, a thesis. The struggle between thesis and antithesis continues until several solutions are reached, in a certain sense, beyond the thesis and antithesis by recognizing the values of their perspectives and trying to preserve values and to avoid the limitations of both. This solution, which is the third step, is called synthesis. Once this is achieved, synthesis can in turn be the first step of a new dialectical triad and will do so if the synthesis of the particles achieved turns out to be one-sided or otherwise unsatisfactory.

Bertrand Russel³⁷ gives a pretty good illustration of thesis dialectics, antithesis, and synthesis. First, we say: "Reality is an uncle" This is a thesis. But the presence of an uncle implies the existence of a nephew. Since no one really exists other than the Absolute, we must conclude: "The Absolute is a nephew". This is an antithesis. But there are objections similar to objections to the view that the Absolute is an uncle; therefore, we move to see that the absolute is the whole which consists of uncle and nephew. This is synthesis.

³⁵ Ralph Palm, *ibid*

³⁶ Karl R. Popper, "What Is Dialectic?", https://www.vorden-ker.de/ggphi-losophy/popper_what-is-dialectic.pdf

³⁷ Bertrand Russel, *ibid*.

Popper's explanation of Hegel's dialectics, in fact in everyday life, much reflects what is meant by Hegel. An extreme view to the right gives rise to an extreme reaction to the left which then gives birth to a compromise as an alignment of both which is interpreted as a moderate view. For example, as revealed by Hegel himself, there are three forms of state. The first form of state is a dictator: here social life is well regulated, but citizens do not have any freedom (thesis). This situation gave birth to his opponent "anarchy" (anti-thesis). In this state, citizens have unlimited freedom, but their social life is chaotic. This thesis and anti-thesis are reconciled with synthesis, namely constitutional democracy. In the form of this third State, freedom of citizens is guaranteed, limited by the constitution, and social life is carried out satisfactorily (synthesis).³⁸

In the synthesis, the thesis and the anti-thesis become *aufgehoben* which contain three meanings: 1. Leaving aside, 2. Caring, storing, so not eliminated, but treated in a higher unit and maintained; 3. Placed on a higher altitude, both theses and anti-theses no longer function as opposed to alienating each other. Of the three meanings it can be explained briefly that the truth contained in the thesis and anti-thesis remains stored in the synthesis but in a more perfect form.³⁹

Such is the general description of Hegel's dialectical theory, the figure of modern Western philosophers, whose philosophical thinking, especially his dialectical theory, not only influenced later major philosophers, such as Karl Max, Adorno, and Habermas, to name a few people, but also gave birth to new thoughts in various cross-disciplines of science, including philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and theology. In the following description below, this theory will be used as a glass to read the current issue of Islamic theology.

Discussion

Reading of Islamic Theology Based on Hegel's Dialectic Theory

As explained earlier, dialectics is a process of restoration and development of self-awareness that will eventually achieve unity and freedom that comes from perfect self-knowledge. Dialectics itself is identified with history as going on in time. Thus, in fact, it is a movement that resembles the rhythm of Waltz,⁴⁰ from the thesis to the antithesis to synthesis, which every step is a higher stage of self-development than the Absolute. In the development of dialectical ideas which Hegel called "logic",

³⁸ Karl R. Popper, "What Is Dialectic?" *ibid.*

³⁹ Suyahmo, "Filsafat Dialektika Hegel: Relevansinya dengan Pembukaan UUD 1945", *Humaniora*, Vol. 19. No 2 June 2007.

⁴⁰ "Makna tarian Walz", <https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waltz>

there is no proposition that can be refuted permanently and completely, and similar to that, in historical dialectics, no star is completely lost, while "taking" whatever is significant in it and preserving it as an aspect of a richer and more complete social reality. According to Hegel, each new generation can regard itself as a destroyer, preserver, and perfecter of the culture he inherited from his predecessor.

If Hegel's dialectical point of view is applied in the reading of Islamic theology, then Islamic theological discusses that have colored and contributed to the historical range of Islamic thought, even Islam can reach the peak of its creative civilization, is the glorious history of Islam in a certain period. But over time, this period of the glorious history of Islamic theology began to dim its light, so to re-enlighten it, it needed a new movement similar to the Waltz dance movement (a dance that gave birth to many new developments in Europe and the West, starting from one full cycle with two stages with three steps per stage) which Hegel considered the work patterns of Tesa, Antithesis and Synthesis. Here, in the development of this dialectical idea, the body of interpretation of the Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyah, for example, being dismantled and criticized, is not in the sense of eliminating the legacy of their theological thought, instead, significant things are taken from the thinking of these two schools, preserved and preserved as an aspect of a richer and more complete social reality.

For example, in terms of the views of both schools about the function of reason and Revelation. Mu'tazilah believes that all knowledge can be obtained through reason, and obligations can be known by deep thought. Thus thanking God before the mandatory revelations (Thesis)

This Mu'tazilah's view was rejected by Asy'ariyah. According to As'yariyah all obligations can only be known through revelation. Intellect cannot make something compulsory and cannot know that doing good and avoiding evil is mandatory for humans. True sense can know God, but it is a revelation that requires people to know God and thank Him (Anti-Thesis).

To make the synthesis of these two opposing theological views so that the meaning becomes more meaningful, the thesis and the antithesis become *aufgehoben*, borrowing the term Hegel, which contains the meaning of negation. This negation is a methodical starting point, where reality is understood as a process of breaking down or raising contradictions so that it leads to the evolution or linear development of thoughts or views that are less sophisticated to more sophisticated. For example, the theme of reason and revelation which became the debate of the two schools of theology was felt to be inadequate to access the demands and developments of the times - not to say that they were out of date. One of the weak points of this

epistemology model is the speculative transcendental nature. Such reasoning courses are not only felt "skyline" or are theological-speculative, in the sense of being too busy with debates and discourses that are divine-theoretical, - for example, does God have a substance or nature, does God have an absolute will or is it limited by the absolute will of humans? , etc. -, but also considered not "down to earth", because the issues discussed do not touch aspects of real human life today, such as democracy, structural poverty, injustice, oppression, religious conflict, and so on. This mode of thought, which talks about God "in the sky", but does not relate to the problem of universal humanity on "earth", has reduced the spirit of the Koran, which by Muhammad Iqbal,⁴¹ or Fazlur Rahman,⁴² is said to be empirically-historical.

Realizing this objective condition, as a form of overriding in Hegelian dialectics, it is time for Islamic theological discourse to need a new paradigm to interpret God, with its various attributes, in the context of our "earth" or our present. Theology to interpret God in the context of "earth" and our present, in this paper is called by the term Critical theology (Synthesis). This new theology does not intend to abolish the two previous theologies, Mu'tazilah (*thesa*), and Ash'ariyah (antithesis), but rather to be preserved in a higher unity to be the driving spirit. For example, the construction of such a theological model (critical theology), in the beginning, was well pioneered and exemplified by the *mutakallimin*, in this case, the divine idea they formulated was the answer to the problems faced by Muslims at that time. In Hegel's dialectical view, what is meant by values must be preserved, stored and not eliminated, maintained in a higher unity, both of which, thesis and antithesis, no longer function as opponents, instead become inspiration, values, and spirit for Muslims today to follow in their footsteps in responding to the challenges of their times.

For example, what they have done, especially the enthusiasm and courage to accept ideas from outside the belief system of their teachings is a tradition that should be followed. In other words, if in the past, the history and development of Islamic theology in the classical century could not be separated from its touch with Greek civilization when, then now Islamic theology, it should be struggling and dealing directly with the ripples of waves and thoughts of Western civilization today. The use of terms and keywords of Western thought today, such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, structuralism, hermeneutics, semiotics, and others, as a consequence of the contact of Islamic theology with contemporary Western thought is an inseparable building from the theological discourse today.

⁴¹ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1981), p. 59

⁴² Fazlurrahman, *Major Themes of the Al-Qur'an*, Trans Anas Mahyudin, *Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an*, (Jakarta: Pustaka, 1983), p. 4

Based on this interpretation, what is meant by critical theology can be simply understood in terms of "turn to praxis" or return to praxis, which means: 1. Praxis is always reflective, dialectic, and transformative; 2. Praxis is always a constructive conflictual setting of generally accepted social and cultural awareness; and 3. Praxis means always liberating and hence emancipatory and reconciliatory.⁴³ From these notions, Critical theology can be understood as a theology that is always reflective, dialectic, and transformative for conflictual settings that are constructive to social and cultural awareness that are generally accepted and are therefore liberated and emancipatory.

With this interpretation, the theology of Islamic discourse in the perspective of critical theology is not assumed to be the science of classical divinity alone, nor is it a doctrine of speculative metaphysics, but more than that, it is a science of humanity, a science that talks about the human situation, human existence, human understanding, human history, and about the psychological and sociological conditions of humans,⁴⁴ the science of social struggle,⁴⁵ the science of the critical task of the believing community,⁴⁶ or more specifically, the science of a critical reflection about Muslim praxis about liberation.⁴⁷ So clearly, Islamic theology in the perspective of critical theology is a critical reflection of Muslims on the social reality of humanity from a divine perspective. This means that the relationship between humans and God is centered on a creative and concrete commitment to helping and serving others.

For example, the formulation of the doctrine of the absolute will of God, to name one of the classical theological doctrines, has a deep structural effect for Muslims, such as being the basis of Muawiyah legitimacy to perpetuate its corrupt and violent authority; become a hegemony of political power, using religion for the sake of seizing and maintaining power (religion is subordinated to certain interests); triggered various social and political conflicts which ultimately forced theological doctrine and became the ideology of the State, as did the Caliph al-Makmun. All of this is the effect of the formulation of classical Islamic theology.⁴⁸

Likewise concerning the formulation of the doctrine of harmony (tolerance) - to cite one example in Indonesia the form of theological doctrine formulation - which from 1970 to 1988 was formulated by the New Order government had a profound

⁴³ Darmont A. Lane, *Foundation for A Social Theology: Praxis, Process and Salvation*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), p. 8, 66

⁴⁴ Paull Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 4

⁴⁵ Hasan Hanafi, *Min al-Aqidah ila al-Saurah*, (Kairo: Maktabag Madbuli, 1988), p. 6-7

⁴⁶ Gregory Baum, *Religion and Alianation a Theological Reading of Sociology*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), p. 193

⁴⁷ G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, (New York: Orbis Book, 1978), p. 16

⁴⁸ Ahmad Baso, Trans., in *Post Tradisionalisme Islam*, (Jogyakarta: LKIS, 2000), p. 52-54

structural effect on Muslims, such as being the basis of government legitimacy Suharto to control and uniform religious opinions; lead the formation of attitudes and behaviour of a person or group to be closed, may not discuss or question religious issues openly, let alone to criticize, because it is considered SARA; the centralization of religious systems in the apparatus of State power or religion becomes a source of legitimacy of power; raises an apologetic attitude, both textually (through the legitimacy of textual doctrines) and contextually (through historical legitimacy, anthropology, sociology) which does not seem to reduce existing tensions, but instead add new tensions. All of these things are the effects of the formulation of theological doctrine on religious harmony in Indonesia.

That is the task of Critical theology trying to explain how the existing social systems and conditions have created a form of false understanding and awareness of the social reality that must be accepted by society to perpetuate the system. This means that critical theology seeks to dismantle or deconstruct the discourse behind the text (social reality, power systems, teaching systems, interpretations of the scriptures, etc.), to provide critical awareness to the people of the reality they face. Thus, for critical theology, to borrow Hegel's expression, all that exists in nature is only those parts that interrelate with each other interconnectedly to achieve perfection. Only with this intersubjective relationship can human consciousness reach the real consciousness, the Absolute Spirit, the Perfect God.

Conclusion

From various accounts related to the contemporary reading of Islamic theology above, using the basis of Hegel's dialectical analysis, it can be concluded as follows:

First, in Islamic thought, the more appropriate term to express the meaning of kalam science is speculative theology, not theology. The term speculative theology expresses in a better way the nature of the theological discussion about *mutakallimin*, which uses logical argumentation to prove some of the principles of faith in Islam. Meaning like this directly indicates two factors that greatly influence the origin and emergence of theology in Islam, its speculative element as an external factor, influenced by the Yunanian tradition, while its Islamic element, as an internal factor, is based on the Qur'an as its main source. Thus, although there is no denying the existence of external factors in the emergence of theology in Islam, internal factors, in this case, the Qur'an itself become the most authoritative source for the emergence of discussion about theology in Islam. Three modern representative figures used in this paper as the basis for theoretical support related to the origin of Islamic theology are Shabine Schmidtke, Ahmad Amin, and Joseph Van Ess.

Second, Hegel's dialectical theory is a sublimation of Plato's philosophical argument theory to melt the two opposing or contradictory poles of thought, Socrates and his interlocutors in Plato's time, empiricism, rationalism during Hegel's time, and Mu'tazilah and Ashariyah in Islamic theological discourse. The latter mentioned, Hegel's dialectical theory is one of the proper foundations to break the deadlock of Islamic theology in the contemporary Islamic era. Hegel's dialectical theory also does not eliminate or destroy anything contradictory but is raised and preserved. This means that, in the context of Islamic theology, the contradictions of the Mu'tazilah and Asy'ariyah views are historical heritages which must be maintained, not mutually destroying, but mutually reinforcing towards a complete totality. In other words, Hegel's dialectical theory describes the process of scientific development that is not static, but dynamic. That is, the static development of classical Islamic theology today which is only confined in the thesis and antithesis forces Islamic thinkers to dynamically discover its syntax.

Third, the contemporary reading of Islamic theology based on Hegel's dialectics results in a new synthesis in Islamic theology, which in this paper is called the Critical Islamic Theology. What is meant by Critical theology here, can be understood as the new theology, a theology that is always reflective, dialectic, and transformative for conflictual settings that are constructive to social and cultural consciousnesses that are generally applicable, and are therefore liberated and emancipatory. Islamic theology in the perspective of this critical theology is not assumed to be a science of classical divinity, nor is it a doctrine of speculative metaphysics, but further than that, it is a science of humanity, a science that talks about the human situation, human existence, human understanding, history human, and about the psychological and sociological conditions of humans. Thus, to be more explicit, Critical theology is a critical reflection of Muslims on the social reality of humanity from a divine perspective.

References

- Amin, Ahmad, *Dhuha al-Islam*, (Kairo: Maktabah al-Nahdhah al-Mishriyah, 1963)
- Classen, Albracht, eds. *Islamic Theology*, in *De Gruiter Handbook of Medieval Studies*, (Berlin: De Gruyter)
- Jatmiko, Sigit, et. al., Trans. *Sejarah Filsafat Barat kaitannya dengan Kondisi Sosio-Politik Zaman Kuno hingga Sekarang*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007)
- Wikantoso, Bito, "Konsep Intersubjektivitas dalam Phenomenology of Spirit karya GWF Hegel", *Darmasmrti*, Vol. XV No. 28, October 2016

- Welch, Claud, *Protestant Thought in The Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1972)
- Lane, Darmont A., *Foundation for A Social Theology: Praxis, Process and Salvation*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984)
- Rahman, Fazlur, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press)
- Mahyudin, Anas, Trans., *Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an*, (Jakarta: Pustaka, 1983)
- Gutierrez, G., *A Theology of Liberation*, (New York: Orbis Book, 1978)
- Giovanni, George di, Trans. Eds., *The Science of Logic*, (McGill University, Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- Baillie, B., Trans. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, (Blackmask Online, 2001)
- Baum, Gregory, *Religion and Alianation A Theological Reading of Sociology*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1975)
- Nasution, Harun, *Teologi Islam: Aliran-aliran Sejarah Analisa Perbandingan*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1972)
- Hanafi, Hasan, *Min al-Aqidah ila al-Saurah*, (Kairo: Maktabag Madbuli, 1988)
- “Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy”, in <https://www.iep.utm.edu/hegelsoc/>
- Hanskung, and Tracy, David, Eds., *Paradigm Change in Theology*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd, 1989)
- Hopper, Jeffery, *Understanding Modern Theology*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987)
- Hidayat, Rahayu S., Trans., *Nalar Islami dan Nalar Modern: Berbagai Tantangan dan Jalan Baru*, (Jakarta: INIS, 1994)
- McTaggart, John, and McTaggart, Ellis, *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, (Cambridge University Press), 1992.
- Murdocj, J.E., and Sylla, E.D., Eds., *The Cultural Context in Medieval Learning*, (Dordrecht/Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1975)
- Popper, Karl R., “What Is Dialectic?”, https://www.vorden-ker.de/ggphilosophy/popper_what-is-dialectic.pdf
- Llyod Spencer and Andrzej Krauze, “Hegel For Beginners”, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/-archive/hegel/help/easy.htm>.
- Zubaidi, *Filsafat Barat*, (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media Group, 2007)

- Moleman, Johan, Eds., *Islam in the Era of Globalization Muslim Attitudes Toward Modernity and Identity*, (Jakarta: INIS, 2001)
- Michael H.G. Hoffmann, “The curse of the Hegelian heritage_ “Dialectic,” “contradiction,” and “dialectical logic” in Activity Theory”, *Working Papers Series, Scholl of Public Policy Gorgia Institute Tecnology*, Antlanta, USA, 2005
- Khourchide, Mouhanad, and Topkara, Ufuk, “A Contribution to Comparative Theology: Probing the Depth Islamic Thought”, *Jurnal Religions*, Vol. 4, 28 January 2013
- Baso, Ahmad, Trans., *Post Tradisionalisme Islam*, (Jogyakarta: LKIS, 2000)
- Iqbal, Muhammad, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1981)
- Hanfling, Oswald, *Essential Readings in Logical Postitivism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981)
- Tillich, Paull, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951)
- Palm, Ralp, *Hegel’s Concept of Sublation*, (Leuven: Katolieke Universiteit Leuven, 2009)
- Schmidtke, Shabine, Eds., *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, (Oxford University Press, 2016)
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel-dialec-tics/>
- Suyahmo, “Filsafat Dialektika Hegel: Relevansinya dengan Pembukaan UUD 1945”, *Humaniora*, Vol. 19. No 2 June 2007
- Wikipedia Ensiklopedi Bebas, <https://id.wikipedia-.org/wiki/Waltz>