

**CONTESTING DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL  
SUBJECTIVITY AMONG SINGLE YOUNG WOMEN IN  
PESANTREN (MUSLIM BOARDING SCHOOL),  
WEST JAVA, INDONESIA**

**DWI RUBIYANTI KHOLIFAH**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS (HEALTH SOCIAL SCIENCES)  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY  
2005**

**ISBN 974-04-5900-5**

**COPYRIGHT OF MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY**

**Thesis  
Entitled**

**CONTESTING DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL  
SUBJECTIVITIES AMONG SINGLE YOUNG WOMEN IN  
PESANTREN (MUSLIM BOARDING SCHOOL) IN  
WEST JAVA, INDONESIA**

.....  
Miss Dwi Rubiyanti Kholifah  
Candidate

.....  
Asst. Prof. Pimpawun Boonmongkol,  
Ph.D.  
Major-Advisor

.....  
Lect. Iljas Baker,  
M. Phil.  
Co-Advisor

.....  
Lect. Simonetta Cegarle,  
M.Sc  
Co-advisor

.....  
Assoc. Prof. Rassmidara Hoonsawat,  
Ph.D.  
Dean  
Faculty of Graduate Studies

.....  
Assoc. Prof. Luechai Sringnyuang,  
Ph.D.  
Chair  
Master of Arts in Health Social Sciences  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

**Thesis  
Entitled**

**CONTESTING DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL  
SUBJECTIVITIES AMONG SINGLE YOUNG WOMEN IN  
PESANTREN (MUSLIM BOARDING SCHOOL) IN  
WEST JAVA, INDONESIA**

was submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Mahidol University  
for the degree of Master of Arts (Health Social Science)

on  
March 10, 2005

.....  
Miss Dwi Rubiyanti Kholifah  
Candidate

.....  
Assoc. Prof. Pimpawun Boonmongkol,  
Ph.D.  
Chair

.....  
Lect. Iljas Baker,  
M.Phil.  
Member

.....  
Thitiporn S. Puntasen,  
Ph.D.  
Member

.....  
Lect. Simonetta Cegarle,  
M.Sc.  
Member

.....  
Assoc. Prof. Rassmidara Hoonsawat,  
Ph.D.  
Dean  
Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Mahidol University

.....  
Assoc. Prof. Suree Kanjanawong,  
Ph.D.  
Dean  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities  
Mahidol University

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am very much indebted to Almighty Allah, the Merciful, and Helpful, Who has enabled me to complete my thesis.

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to my advisors Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pimpawun Boonmongkon, Iljas Baker, M.Phil, and Simonetta Cegarle, MSc, without whose careful critique and positive affirmation I would never have done this study. I would like to express my special thanks to Dr. Thitiporn S. Puntasen, Faculty of Social Administration Thammasart University, for her critical reconstructive suggestion to my writing. Additionally, my deep acknowledgement express to Dr. Suree Kanjanawong, Dean of Faculty Social Science and Humanities; Dr. Luechai Sringeranyaung, director of Health Social Science Program and all administration supportive staff and special thanks to Mamasan Asst. Prof. Vanawipha Pasandhanatorn, who have helped us in preparing lodging and her kindness.

I must thank to Kyai Ilyas Ruhiyat, the leader of pondok Kota Santri for his welcome me to conduct my study. My deeply gratitude goes to Ibu Ida and Pak Chobir, female and male santri, teachers and women activist in Pondok Kota Santri who have help and give me encouragement to write their story.

I would like to express my heartiest thanks and warm gratitude to my friends at the Health Social Sciences International Program (HSSIP), Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University and my Thai friends of the Center for Health Policy Studies (CHPS) for their personal sharing, kind attention, suggestion that give me much inspiration to write, to reflect my life as a feminist as well as a Muslim woman. My enduring gratitude also goes to Indonesian Student Association in Thailand (PERMITHA) that has helped to shape my thinking on the issue I consider in this thesis.

I wish to thank Susi and Heny from Women's Aspiration (ASPER) who have assisted me during data collection and their fine work in translating and presenting the original *Sundanese* language in clear and understandable Bahasa Indonesia. Thanks for Rahima (Center for Information and Training for Women's Rights in Islam), which has shaped my critical thinking on issue of Islam and women's rights.

I am thankful to my editor Harissebastian Tiano and Sumali Agrawal, who have edited my personal language in clear and understandable English. I wish to express my heartfelt feelings to my friends, sisters and brothers in Islam, the resource persons and many people whose name do not appear on this research and very kindly shared their experiences.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge to my beloved parents, brother, sisters, and my special one Aa who have encouraged, moral supported and made a significant contribution to the success.

Dwi Rubiyanti Kholifah

CONTESTING DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL SUBJECTIVITIES  
AMONG SINGLE YOUNG WOMEN IN PESANTREN (MUSLIM BOARDING  
SCHOOL) IN TASIKMALAYA, WEST JAVA, INDONESIA

DWI RUBIYANTI KHOLIFAH 4637972 SHHS/M

M.A.(HEALTH SOCIAL SCIENCE)

THESIS ADVISORS: PIMPAWUN BOONMONGKON, Ph.D., ILJAS BAKER,  
M.Phil, SIMONETTA CEGARLE, M.Sc

ABSTRACT

This research describes single young women's sexuality in modern pesantren (Muslim boarding school) from their own perspective. This study documents a process of social change in which traditional Islamic prescription on sexuality is being transformed by modern experience of single young women. Beginning from an approach that considers sexuality as beyond biological action, this thesis starts by describing the personal and theoretical context within which the study was designed and conducted. Data was collected by means of a feminist ethnographic study in which full participation in the day to day living of single young women in a boarding school was experienced to get first-hand experience and a social cultural context on sexuality. The material collected was analyzed in two principles ways--- narrative and discourse analysis—in which postmodern feminism is used to bring up multi vocalities, multi subjectivities and multi realities on single young women's sexuality.

Findings highlighted the dynamics of interaction between dominant Islamic discourse and other discourses, which are taking a place not only at the level of ideas but also in personal experience and practice. Personal experience and practice is hybrid, fluid, and fragmented as is signified by changes and trends. This study illustrates strongly single young women's agency in giving meaning to their experiences concerning their body, relationship, sexual orientation, fantasy, desire, the veil etc. They are creating a space to make autonomous decisions about their bodies and sexuality in the sense of negotiating or resisting religious morality, modernity and feminism and this is reflected in this study.

The opportunity to discuss sexuality has offered the single young women in this study an opportunity to develop a sense of entitlement and young men to question dominant masculine images, and form equal meaningful relationships. Therefore, issues of gender, class, human rights should be integrated to sexual reproductive health programs in schools and pesantren curricula. Further research on specific issues like homosexuality, transgender topics, sexual fantasy and desire under the umbrella of human rights, Islam and social political culture needs to be addressed to develop a greater body of knowledge on sexuality among students in pesantren.

KEY WORDS: DISCOURSE /SEXUALITY/ SUBJECTIVITY/ MODERNITY/  
ISLAM/ PESANTREN/ FEMINISM

249 pp. ISBN 974-04-5900-5

# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iv
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	ix
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	x
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	xi
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Rational of Study	1
1.2 Objectives of Study	7
1.3 Research Questions	7
<b>2 CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Sexual Construction of Sexuality	10
2.1.1 Micheal Foucault's Concept	11
2.1.2 Derrida's Concept	13
2.2 Gender and Sexuality in Islam Discourse	14
2.2.1 Overview of Islam	14
2.2.2 Sexuality in Islam	16
2.2.3 Gender in Islam	20
2.3 Literature Review	22
2.3.1 Theory of subjectivities	22
2.3.2 Patriarchy	23
2.3.3 Discourse analysis	24
2.4 Research Framework	26
2.4.1 Theoretical Framework	27

## CONTENTS (Cont.)

CHAPTER	Page
<b>3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	32
3.1 Methodology choice	32
3.2 Research Setting, Methods, and Participants	35
3.2.1 Rationale for site research	35
3.2.2 Methods	36
3.2.3 Participants	39
3.3 Entering the Community	40
3.3.1 Building a fundament of research	40
3.3.2 Shifting the entry point of issue	41
3.3.3 Approaching students, approaching pesantren culture	42
3.3.4 The Placement of “self” as a mean for data collection	44
3.3.5 Reality in pesantren, dilemma never end	46
3.4 Process of Collecting Data	47
3.4.1 Interviewing style	48
3.4.2 Field note taking and recording the data	49
3.5 Data Analysis	50
3.6 The Benefit of Research	52
3.6.1 Empowering the researched is empowering researcher	52
3.6.2 Liberatory goal	54
3.7 Writing up the Result	55
3.7.1 Problem of translation	55
3.7.2 The researcher as the author	56
3.7.3 Style of writing	57
<b>4 ABOUT PESANTREN KOTA SANTRI</b>	59
4.1 The Pondok Kota Santri: Overview	59
4.1.1 Development of pondok	63

## CONTENTS (Cont.)

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>Page</b>
4.1.2 Educational system in pondok	65
4.1.3 The Pattern of pengajian	68
4.1.4 Informal activities	71
4.2 Learning Sexuality in Learning Morality	73
4.2.1 The role of security	82
4.3 Internal Political Situation at Pondok	84
4.4 Female Santri's life	86
4.6 Becoming women in pondok	91
<b>5 THE CONTESTING DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY</b>	<b>96</b>
5.1 The Contesting Discourse on Female Sexual Development	96
5.1.1 Construction Sexuality in Kitab Uqudulujain and Quratuluyun	96
5.1.2 Modernity Movement as an Ideology	109
5.1.3 Feminist Movement	122
5.2 The Influence of Contesting Discourses	131
<b>6 SEXUAL SUBJECTIVITIES OF SANTRI AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>135</b>
6.1 Experience on the Body	136
6.1.1 Menarche; It is part of becoming women	142
6.1.2 Female virginity and chastity	147
6.1.3 Female sexual fantasy and desire	154
6.2 Courtship	163
6.2.1 Heterosexual relations	164
6.2.2 Homosexual relations	172
6.2.3 <i>Kakak angkat</i> relations	182
6.3 Beauty and the Veil	188

## **CONTENTS (Cont.)**

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>Page</b>
	189
6.3.1 The sexy body is...	192
6.3.2 Beyond the veil	
6.3.3 100% veil; it is difficult to apply completely	202
<b>7 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>205</b>
7.1 Reflection of Methodology	205
7.2 Findings	206
7.2.1 Power, femininity and women's bodies	206
7.2.2 Reconstruction of Subjectivity, negotiation and resistance	208
7.3 Political Implication; the Challenge of Muslim Feminism	212
7.4 Replicability	213
<b>8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>215</b>
8.1 Conclusion	215
8.2 Recommendations	217
BIBLIOGRAPHY	224
APPENDIX	231
A. GUIDELINE INTERVIEW	232
B. SUMMARY OF KITAB	238
C. GLOSSARY	245
BIOGRAPHY	249

## LIST OF TABLE

		<b>Page</b>
Table 1	Grouping Magazines	110
Table 2	Verification of hadith	129

## LIST OF FIGURE

		<b>Page</b>
Figure 1	Research Framework of Contesting Discourses and Sexual Subjectivity	26

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASPER	: Aspirasi Perempuan
BF	: Blue Film
FK3	: Forum Kajian Kitab Kuning
HP	: Hand Phone
IAIC	: Institute Agama Islam Cps
LPTQ	: Lembaga Pengembangan Tilawatil Qur'an
MAN	: Madrasah Aliyah Negeri
MI	: Madrasah Ibtidaiyah
MP	: Mens Pertama
NGO	: Non Governmental Organization
NU	: Nadatul Ulama
PB	: Pengurus Besar
Perek	: Perempuan Experimental
PIKTOR	: Pikiran Kotor
PKJD	: Pelatihan Kader Juru Dakwah
SMPI	: Sekolah Menengah Pertama Islam
SMS	: Short Message Service
SMUI	: Sekolah Menengah Umum Islam
SR	: Swara Rahima
STIEC	: Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Cps
STTC	: Sekolah Tinggi Teknologi Cps
TSK	: Tasikmalaya
UNFPA	: United Nation Population Fund
VAW	: Violence Against Women
WARTEL	: Warung Telekomunikasi
WATAK	: Wahana Tulisan Aksara
WCC	: Women Crisis Center
WTS	: Wanita Taat Suami or Wanita Tuna Sosial

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Rationale of Study**

Sexuality is a historical construction, which carries out biological and mental possibilities – gender identity, bodily differences, reproductive capacities, needs, desires and fantasies- within certain social context (Weeks, 1986 in Amuchstegui, 1999 p. 80). The process of internalization of religious values, modernity and feminism, which take place in Muslim community, especially pesantren, and which affect personal sexual experience transform sexuality.

Sexuality of single young women in Indonesian discourse is still invisible. It is virtually absent from public discourse; however, it almost appears in cases such as rape, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, transmission of HIV/AIDS, drug using etc (see studies at previous). In normal situations, young women' sexuality may not be exposed freely, in many societies it is called "taboo", even though, ironically, it is displayed everywhere, through body expression, action or language; but near-silence remains. Their sexual experiences, mostly, are created and expressed in the hands of family, educational institutions, and religion (Woolf, 1997), which determine in what way sexuality should be articulated. These institutions take important roles to produce and edit the notion of single young women's sexuality through discursive act, which, on the one hand, I examine as dynamics of meanings and practices of sexuality. On the other hand, I focus on how they understand becoming women sexually through body image, gender identity, sexual orientation and reproductive health. The description of single women's sexuality culturally involves a set of basic distinctions between cultural ideal vs. actual practices, public vs. private conduct and prescribed vs. voluntary behavior. In the Islamic boarding school context, while a religion may, ideally, require a belief and practice, in reality, belief and practice may manifest differently among single young women. What young women speak and practice in public with regard to sexuality may sharply differ from or even be opposite to their

private sexual behavior. The forms of sexual behaviors which are described in different situations may contrast greatly with the way individuals may behave voluntarily and so on (Parker et al, 1999 420). These gaps between perception and practice in daily life are challenging for scholars to study.

Since the definition of sexuality is exceedingly broad, I used the definition of Chandiramani et al (2002 p. 1) to explore the issue of sexuality in my work. According to her, sexuality encompasses all the feeling, thoughts, and behaviors associated with being female or male, being attractive and being in love, as well as being in relationships that include sexual intimacy, sensuality, sexual activity, and social and cultural meanings. In principle, sexuality is not biological fact; rather, it is a culturally determined experience, created by the inner world and the material world of human lives, therefore Parker et al (1991 p. 79) conceptualized sexuality as “the system of meaning, of knowledge, belief and practices, that structure sexuality in different social contexts”. Thus, “Culture shapes individual sexuality through roles, norms, and attitude, which contribute to the construction of a shared experiential meaning”. In this sense, sexuality and gender are thus socially constructed by what individuals actually do (Jackson, 2001 p. 289), which develop at the level of subjectivity through process of negotiating with a particular cultural context. Basically, this study brings up single young women’s voice to define becoming women through the issue of becoming women socially, biologically and morally within a social context of Indonesian culture and pesantren.

### *Some Previous Studies on Sexuality in Indonesia*

Sexuality has been an interesting subject to study for long time. In Indonesia some studies about sexuality focus strongly on premarital sexual activities (See Khisbiyah et al 1995; Saparuddin, 1999; Sumiarni et al, 1999 in Moeliono 2004; Situmorang, 2001; Singaribuan, 1991 in Herartri 2004). A survey conducted by the National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN) found out that 12.5 percent of adolescents approved of pre-marital relationships for couples that planed to get married and 8.6 percent if in love; 33.7 percent of female respondents knew of other single women who had pre-marital sex, and informed researchers that 89.5 percent of them ended up with unwanted pregnancy. Another report shows that 300,000

abortions per year are performed on adolescents in Indonesia<sup>1</sup>. Another common issue is about unsafe sex; researchers like Budi Wahyuni (Yogyakarta) also found out in her clinics that, in 2002, from 3960 clients, 95% have experienced unwanted pregnancy and 20% of these cases were experienced by unmarried women<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, the issue of HIV/AIDS and STIs among adolescents is also crucial; it is reported that 50 percent of HIV infection in Indonesia is young people aged 15-29 and many of them got infected before 20 years of age<sup>3</sup>.

Specifically, in Tasikmalaya, a survey on sexual reproductive health among adolescents and youth carried out by Association of National Family Planning (branch PKBI), tells us that, in Kawalu and Kota areas, most youth employees and students have special partners. Young males began having girl friends when they were 12, while females mostly started to have boy friends at 15-17 years. This study also found out that 8-12% of them have experienced intercourse once and around 4% were committed to having sex intensively because of love and curiosity about sex. This study also reported that 65% of male youth have consumed pornographic materials, much higher than female youth, in which only 5% used pornography. These phenomena of sexuality among youth are influenced by media such as television, radio, movies, newspapers, magazines etc. (PKBI, 2001).

The study above gives us a picture of how young people's sexuality is discussed as a serious issue with the increasing numbers of pre-marital sex, unsafe abortions, drug use, HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted infections experienced by young people. In normal situations, their sexuality is taboo to talk about, or it is not necessary to discuss. A second study has fantastic numbers (8-12%) of pre-marital sex among teenagers in two sub-districts in Tasikmalaya, which is well known as "kota santri" (city of resident Muslim students). This study is very weak in term of methodology, (Data collection was done only a week with 270 respondents.) It was eager to get detail information on sexual behavior among teenager and youth, whereas the issue of sexuality is very sensitive to talk about and should be sensitively

---

<sup>1</sup> Indonesian country report to 5<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Population Conference, 11-17 December 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Presentation on 2<sup>nd</sup> APCRH, 6-10 October 2003.

<sup>3</sup> See also Khisbiyah, 1996; Utomo, 2001 recorded HIV infected aged 15-24 years were residing in Jakarta;

approached with youth sexual culture. This study never mentioned how to get respondents and also how they selected respondents to involve in focus group discussion (FGD) or in-depth interview (see Profile of Reproductive health of Teenagers in Tasikmalaya (PKBI), 2001). However, it gives me inspiration to look at sexual experience from other groups of teenagers, *santri* (resident student in *pesantren*). *Pesantren* become challenging places to inquire about sexual experiences among young people. Since most youth in this community spend some time in *pesantren*, we will see that it is very possible to have interaction between outside culture with *santri* through newcomers or other occasion. It is not impossible for them to share their sexual experiences outside *pesantren* with other *santri* when they start to live in *pesantren*. Therefore, within strict rules in *pesantren*, *santri* have their own way to study sexuality. They still have a window to interact with outside; moreover, access to media, especially print media, is easier to achieve.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to find previous studies on sexuality in *pesantren*; the reasons are because of poor documentation and few studies in this field<sup>4</sup>. Whereas, in fact, data from the Department of Religion<sup>5</sup> shows that more or less 3,369,193 young people study at traditional educational institutions like *pesantren*, and around 802,063 people study at *pesantren* in West Java. Here, we can see how significant the existence of *pesantren* is in Indonesia; the *pesantren* is quite authoritative, strategic and “safe” in producing and reproducing beliefs, values for a particular religious group, because it has freedom to develop their own system of beliefs (Assegaf, 1995 p. 5).

However one study conducted by Assegaf (1995) about the role of Muslim women in *pesantren Al-Mukmin* Solo tells us that the phenomenon of revivalism in Indonesia are likely central to the issue of redefinition of communal identity which emphasizes seriously the existence, function and role of women. Women certainly are projected as a symbol of society guider; therefore, domestic role is preferred to avoid moral decadence because women is considered as *fitna* (the creation of disorder)

---

<sup>4</sup> A number of study about *pesantren* such as concerning on introduction of *pesantren* and school (See Dhofier, 1980,1982,1999; Abdullah, 1987; Bruinessen, 1994), some study about *pesantren* and modernity are not incompatible but can work together for better future of the nation (especially see Galba, 1991; Prasodjo et al. 1997; Yacub 1985; Luken, 2000)

<sup>5</sup> The Data recorded by Central Office of Department of Religion on 2005

*Discourse on Sexuality in pesantren*

In general, sexuality has been learned in pesantren in the sense of learning morality. Through two popular references, kitab *uqudulujain*<sup>6</sup> and *quratuluyun*<sup>7</sup>, the conservative construction of looking at women as inferior to men, how to become women is socialized to santri without bringing the actual context of the role of women and men in Indonesian society. In general, the *kitab* is concerned on sexual roles of women and men in marriage in which stereotypes of women and men are strongly addressed to be accepted by santri (student staying at Islamic boarding school) almost without questioning “why” and “how”. This explanation has been legitimated by the Qur’an and hadith (prophetic tradition) without proposing pro and contra argumentation from Muslim scholars. Consequently, dominant discourse of single women’s sexuality in *pesantren* creates a discourse of objectification and subjugation in which women are depicted as objects of men’s desire and must be ready any time the husband wants. For single young women, sexuality is understood as maintaining premarital chastity wherein the pesantren strongly addresses issues of the veil (jilbab), morality, and relations with the opposite sex (by controlling not prohibiting).

To keep single young women as virgins and chaste, the issue of jilbab is addressed strongly in pesantren. Young women have to cover the whole of their bodies except face and palm of hand for the reason that those parts of the body are possible to stimulate men sexually, when they show to the public. Women’s bodies not only become locus of sexuality but also symbol of premarital chastity. The veil functions as protection from sexual violence as well as resistance from both religion and modernity.

Young women do not have much opportunity to take a part in public activities at pesantren level because their appearance in public can cause *fitna* (disorder) to arise.

---

<sup>6</sup> *Uqudulujain* is one of classical reference that is popular in pesantren in all over Indonesia, particularly in Java Island. This book contents of Islamic principle in building good relation between husband and wife. Basically, this book teaches what men and women should be which really much reflects patriarchal ideology wherein representation of good women seemingly places women as object of men’s fulfillment, while men on the other hand always have advantages by playing roles as protector, educator, moral guide, etc. (see summary of this book in appendix)

<sup>7</sup> *Quratuluyun* is basic pesantren reference in discussing about sexuality. This book gives guideline how husband and wife should perform sex. Two important ideas are addressed by the author of this book that sex should be in marriage and ethics. Similarly with *uqudulujain*, this book also predominantly discuss

Here, discourse of “*fitna*<sup>8</sup>” and “*aurat*” (part of women bodies that can be exposed in public) are hotly debated. Pesantren takes responsibility to protect young women’s “modesty” by regulating their expression in daily performances such as relationship with the opposite sex, the way to dress up, and contact with outside culture.

In fact, all modern ideology such as materialism, liberalism, and also capitalism has been embraced in pesantren’s life, and is hybrid with local culture<sup>9</sup>. The hybrid of cultures (pesantren and modernity) is present in almost all arenas of social life, including in arena of human sexuality that is also in social construction. Sexuality is shaped by this process and needs to be addressed within this wider context. Therefore, it is not easy to find the importance of which of these discourses that influence to individual in pesantren, because they are varied. Different discourses seem to dominate and control in different settings. On the one hand, discourses on morality (dominant discourse) present strong injunctions to students to control their behavior, not to commit sexual transgressions such as pre-marital sex. On the other hand, ideology of liberalism through the gender equality movement offers a construction of peaceful society to all women and men in which discrimination is absent, wherein the role of women and men are valued equal. Liberalism certainly can be an alternative to conservative values on discourse of gender in pesantren. It also has a space within dominant discourse, to interact and provide influence to students when the conservative gender ideology does not fit anymore in a particular setting of how young people conduct themselves within contemporary Indonesian culture where students live now. How the contesting discourses define, compete, and are accepted by individuals in pesantren is what I am much interested in. Also, the complex process in

---

about husband’s sexual right and less discussion about wife’s sexual rights. (see the summary of this book in appendix)

<sup>8</sup> Kandiyoty ,1988, *Slave Girls, Tempresses, and Comrades: Image of Women in the Turkish Novel* define *fitna* is a rich of connotation and has a wide semantic field. Its root meaning is *affliction* or temptation the straight path. In social or religious term it connotes civic strife or strife within the *umma* (the religious collectivity). It also has a clear referent in the field of sexuality where women are seen as the bearers of *fitna* (chaos and disorder) because they distract men and tempt them to sin (in Ilkcaraca, 2000, *women and Sexuality in Muslim Societies*, Women for women human rights (WWHR): New Ways)

<sup>9</sup> some writers (Galba 1991; Prasodjo et al 1974, Yacub 1985) argued that modernity and pesantren are not compatible but can work together to achieve better life (in Lukens, 2000)

which social discourses meet in individuals and become subjective experience in defining their sexuality is what this study aimed to explore.

This thesis builds on a combination of theoretical and personal experience as a *santri* (Muslim student) who has experience living in boarding school, and as a woman activist who has been engaged in programs of gender mainstreaming in *pesantren* for 2 years. On the theoretical level, postmodern feminism applies as conceptual foundation both in literature and methodology making this research have specifications and be different from previous studies. Moreover, my personal experience engaging with this *pesantren* certainly benefits me during data collection, especially in discovering the crucial problems of gender inequality and sexuality, which are still taboo for public discussion. Finally, I am aware that my identity as a feminist who has strong beliefs in issues of gender and sexuality certainly influence my methodology, analysis and interpretation of data, including my relationship with all participants. Therefore, this research is open to any critics to help improve my future research.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine contesting discourses of single young women's sexuality in *pesantren* in order to know how the discourses define single young women's sexuality. How sexuality discourses of single young women compete and through what means they influence single young women's sexual lives.
2. To study how single young women negotiate within contesting discourses of sexuality in *pesantren*.
3. To explore sexual subjectivities of single young women in *pesantren* in order to understand how they define and place themselves in various social and cultural situations.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What are contesting discourses on single young women's sexuality in *pesantren*? How do they define single young women's sexuality? And how do they compete with each other? How do they influence the way single young women think or behave sexually?

2. How do single young women negotiate within contesting discourses on sexuality in *pesantren*? How do they deal with pesantren values, modernity and gender equality? Are they consistent in a particular ideology? If not, in what part are they different?
3. How do single young women give meaning to and express their sexuality in everyday life?

## **CHAPTER II**

### **CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION**

Ideologically feminism is very powerful applied when women are placed at the center of the research and analyze gender dynamics. It also can bring me to see how gender power dynamics interplay within society. Postmodernist feminism strongly resists a universal definition. Postmodernism was born to oppose essentialism and rationality and objectivity being addressed by contemporary science (Keller 1982, Harding 1986 cited at Humm 1995 p. 216). Feminism and postmodernism are very compatible in seeing a complex network of power relationships that is constantly shifting and changing (Jones, 2004). Firstly, feminism is very concerned with women's lives, particularly with the absence of women's voice in certain places of society, while postmodernism is concerned with diversities and locality which can carry out multi voices of women. For example, in pesantren context, this approach can make women visible because, mostly, Muslim women are deemed invisible within pesantren culture, both in text and context. Secondly, in social practices, feminism is very comprehensive in understanding the ways in which gender differences are created, socialized and normalized through social institutions such as home, work place, school, and other social settings. Lastly, feminism works for reclaiming knowledge for women and the way it is constructed and legitimated in order to give a space for women to empower them to speak out by being reflexive and multi-voiced; the important thing is creating a space for personal experience. By placing postmodern feminism here, we can see the complexity of relationship in society. This approach not only questions the role of gender but also of race, class, and sexual preference, oppressing women based on difference of cultural construction rather than biologically. Postmodernism challenges the struggle of women to speak and live within and outside this category. Lather remarks that postmodernism offers the feminist to work within and yet challenge dominant discourse (2004).

Furthermore, with postmodern feminism, we are able to look at how some issues such as deconstruction, subjectivity, and self-identity of women are addressed

in understanding women's experiences. In principle, postmodern feminism will emphasize diverse elements in the modern sense of self and subjectivities, the idea of history as linear and evolutionary, and the modernist separation of art and mass culture, which all critics address to "transcendence" (structural) reason (Nicholson, 1990 p. 3).

## **2.1 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION ON SEXUALITY**

Peggy Sanday (1996) argues that human sexuality focuses on individual sensation and cultural meaning making. On a personal level, we will look at sexual subjectivities, their ability to define themselves within diverse ideologies. Using the theory of subjectivity, I expect to discover issues of single young women's sexuality with diversities of ethnicity, interpretation on religious teaching, their social class, their family background, and their place of residence etc. (Lober, 2001). In the same sense, Donna Stanton contributes that under historical changing circumstances, differences among subject position at specific moment address the issue of sexuality as dynamics and multiple constructions (Jackson, 199 p. 29).

To sharpen my lens in looking at multi realities and diversities of meanings and practices of single young women's sexuality, I use postmodern feminism. Bordon (1990) remarked that postmodernism offering tools of interpretive insights and method of critiques can be applied to deconstruct existing knowledge (quoted at Allen 1992 p.2). Concerning the issue of sexuality, postmodern feminism does avoid the problem of universalizing in which sexuality is a problem of morality. Sexuality is beyond biological action. It encompasses the process of becoming women sexually, feeling of intimacy, loving and liking, sensualizing women's bodies, sexual identity, sexual, fantasizing, sexual reproductive health etc.; these are socially and culturally constructed, expression of one's sexuality interconnected with the cultural domain (see Chandiramani et al 2002, Parker 1999).

### **2.1.1 Michel Foucault (in postmodern feminism): power knowledge, social and cultural construction of sexuality and resistance**

The French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault has had a great influence on the debate of feminism, particularly poststructuralist thinkers. His work<sup>1</sup> on **power and its relation with the body**, which feminists have worked with as an aspect of women's oppression, has deconstructed essentialism analyzing the biological differences between males and females bodies relating to gender inequality. To him, sex is not natural. It is a cultural construction that is produced with the aim of social regulation and the control of sexuality. It is constructed by special historically power relations, which have provided feminists with a strong analytical framework to explain how women's experience is impoverished and controlled within the contest of certain cultural images of feminine sexuality (McNacy, 1992 p. 3, 17 & 28). Power in Foucault's idea maintains a positive image because it does not work through repressive or oppressive acts, rather it works through normalization and regulation. Gedalof (1999) pointed out that power for Foucault is productive of knowledge. Power and knowledge exist in a state of mutual dependence (pp. 18); power does not exist without knowledge and knowledge is nothing without power. Knowledge itself has important roles to carve, to establish and to manifest the power through a particular discourse. Foucault remarked that this discourse does not assume the authority of truth but the power to make itself truth (Stuart Hall cited on Wethevell, Taylor and Yates, 2001 p. 76). To put it more simply, to him there is no "power free-zone" because power produces certain kinds of knowledge and invests them with legitimacy of "truth" (Foucault cited at Gedalof, 1999 p. 18)

Foucault stated that **power is everywhere**, not because it embraces everything, rather it comes from everywhere (Foucault, 1978 quoted at Gedalof, 1999 p. 19). In modern society, power does not mean that domination is universal, rather power relation is a process of establishment of every social relation: parent-child, senior-junior friend, lovers' relationship, etc. In this sense, power relation can operate among free individuals; therefore, it is fluid, unfixed and reversible. This idea, adopted by

---

<sup>1</sup> His great writings *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* impacted to poststructuralist feminism thinker regarding on issue of sexuality, subjectivity and agency (McNay, 1992 p. 2)

postmodern feminism, which does not look at power relation as analysis of universal domination, rather it needs to really take locality into consideration in understanding women's problem; diversities of gender, ethnicity, race, class, age will result in a different story of women's oppression (Ibid, 1992:65).

The shift of his idea from docile bodies to active individual has influenced much of postmodern feminism. His idea on the self that everyone is able to perceive her/him self as a subject, assisted him in analyzing operation of power relations; women's bodies are really difficult, at first, to understand as actively and autonomously bodies creating reaction in other areas. However, his understanding of power is a dynamic force that, as a result of interaction between social structure and individuals, should influence the self. In this sense, the self, of course, suggested that the potential of diversities of power exist between and among women (and men) through the practice of self-effects to individual reaction (ibid, 1992:59). Then, feminism develops this idea of conception of agency in which subjugation of women's bodies are worked out in negotiating discursive constraint. Therefore, he stated that there is power, there is resistance. Resistance can be defined as struggling in using verbal or non-verbal actions. Therefore, Spivak (1987) came out with idea that silence is resistance, for women, under colonialism, choose non verbal action to negotiate (Humm, 1995). Discourse on silence is often used to postmodern feminism in looking at women as agent, so silence in this perspective is also defined as action of choosing not to speak (Thiesmeyer, 2003).

Foucault also gave great contribution of discourse on **gender identity**, which, to him, is defined as an active and never-completed process of engendering or enculturation (ibid, 1992: 71). It influences Judith Butler who defines gender as a set or relation in which construction of becoming women is being produced at specifiable context. To her, gender is not to culture and sex is not to nature, because the construction of gender is located in bodies, so body itself is a result of social construction. So, gender identity is not a fixed attribute, because it is changeable and fluid (Butler, 1990 p.6-8).

### 2.1.2 Derrida : Construction Sexuality in Language

Derrida is a French philosopher whose theory is about language or writing. To him there are three important points that should be deconstructed in language to get out of or change the system: 1) *logo centrism*, the primacy of the spoken word, a belief in definitive truth or reality of transcendental signifier (God) which provides foundation of all language, thought and experience (Humm, 1999 p. 154); for example, when we want to prove with our own word, but, in fact, it refers to other words and discourse. 2) *phallogentrism*, the primacy of the phallus whose language is the center of male expression, way of thought, and socio economic manifestation. 3) *dualism*, the manner in which everything is described in binary oppositions such as activity/ passivity, sun/moon, culture/nature, etc (Tong, 1989 p. 222) .

These three basic concepts for understanding language have been elaborated by other postmodernist feminists such as Helene Cixous whose concern is the relation between language and the body. She focuses her writing on the female body and how it has been constructed in phallogocentric systems like Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis (<http://www.colorado.edu/English/engl2010mk/irigaray.lecture.html> (15 May 2004)). Additionally, she believes that women's differences from men are rooted to sexual and linguistic differences. Therefore, to deconstruct social language, she creates positive representations of femininity by deconstructing gender binary oppositions operating in syntax, our knowledge, and perceptions (1989, p. 39). To her binary dichotomy, like writing/speaking, high/low, day/night, describes the first term as always superior, as "the self" and the second term is considered as feminine or "the other" (1989 p. 224).

Phallo-centric ideas and discourse are Luce Irigaray's focus in deconstructing language. She demonstrated how language represses women through the same mechanism of phallogocentric system (Thiesmeyer, 2004), the same sense like Cixous; she follows the conception of a feminine language on the multiplicity of the female body, as her locus of deconstructing phallogocentrism. She focuses on female sexuality by saying "female sexuality has always been conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters" (<http://www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/Irigaray.html>, 15th May 2004). She absolutely believes that the female body can speak everywhere, if female sexual pleasure can be derived from everywhere on a

woman's body, not only vaginal sexual pleasure. To her just because all this time female sexual pleasure is defined by male language, just because male genitalia exist outside or visible, while female genitalia is inside or as "nothing", then Freudian psychoanalysis identifies female sexual pleasure as "nothing".

She rejects the assumption of female genitalia as "nothing" being constructed by Freud and Lacan by addressing biological determinism; there is no proper single name of the female genital organ, in terms of binary opposition, because we are "NOT ONE", not like penis- single genital organ- we have clitoris, vagina, labia majora, labia minora and whatever else might be there. So, what is the opposite of "penis"? Obviously, it cannot be answered by dichotomy opposition. Thus, female body, specifically female genital organs are inherently "deconstructive" because they shake the binary opposition that is constructed by Western (phallogocentric) thought. In short, she imagines that feminine language is something unfixed, slippery, not making sense, not anchored firmly within phallogocentric symbolic order (<http://www.colorado.edu/English/engl2010mk/irigaray.lecture.html> , 15 May 2004 ).

## **2.2 GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ISLAMIC DISCOURSE**

### **2.2.1 Overview of Islam**

If we talk about Islam, we are not only speaking about a monotheistic religion, rather a way of life, a system encompassing the vertical and horizontal relationship of the believer; to God and society in general; therefore, it embraces the discussion of human being from birth until death. The word "Islam" in the lexicon of Arabs means "submission" to God. So the religion of Islam is the religion of submission to the will of the omnipotent and omniscient Creator, the only God, Allah. In the eyes of believers, Muhammad is the prophet of God, who was called by Allah to deliver His eternal messages to the unbelieving Arabs and of course to all Muslims in the world.

The foundation of Islam is the Holy Qur'an, which contains the core of Islam, the words of God. It becomes the spiritual inspiration and refuge of Muslims in the world and in the next life. The Qur'an is more than representing the supreme personification of the belief of Muslims; it is a bible as well as a guiding light for the believers. Furthermore, it constitutes the Muslim main references both as a matter of

spiritual and requirement of day-to-day living. On the other hand, *sunnah*<sup>2</sup> (hadith) is understood as the traditional collection of stories relating words and deeds of the prophet, as the chief source of guidance for understanding religious questions. *Hadith* was narrated in particular context, hence it creates a space to dialogue, particularly for answering the believers living in global multi societies, which definitely are different in culture, customs and perhaps social demand.

Both the Qur'an and Hadith become a guideline for those believing women and men in all over the world with different degree of understanding. Islam plays significant roles in gratifying physical and spiritual needs. A contemporary scholar of Islam, Daniel Eastreman argues that Islam does not separate the flesh from the spirit (1996: 613). Accordingly, human sexuality is part of Islam concern that needs to be regulated in the marriage and ethics. Moreover, basically, according to Maududi's remarks, the complete Islamic principle embraces every detail of human life in the domestic sphere, which link to all aspects of national or even international behaviors (1974: 30 in Saadah 2004). Murata, in *The Tao of Islam*, argues that Islamic teaching has generally evaluated human sexual relation positively for the reason that sexual relationship is a natural and normal part of God's good thing. Moreover, marriage in

---

<sup>2</sup> To reduce *sunnah* in to practical use, we need *madhab*, the possibility of interpretation of deriving the rule of Allah form the primary sources; the Qur'an and *sunnah*. *Madhab* in Arabic language means "to go" or "to take as a way". In general, *madhab* represents the entire school of thought a particularly *mujtahid* (interpreter of the canon law) *Imam*, such as Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi'i or Ahmad Hambali, who thus became explainers of the operational of the Qur'an and *sunna* in specific *shari'ah* ruling in our lives collectively being known as *fiqh* or "jurisprudence". Let me tell you in briefly how four *madhab* are different each other. Abu Hanifah was the earliest *madhab* (d. 767) known as the Hanifa rite or judicial school, which is considerable in toleration of using *ra'y*, a personal interpretation of judgment exercised by the jurist in deriving a principle implementing legal sanctity. It is less rigid of interpretation if we compare to the four *madhahib* (sing. *Madhab*). However, a number of countries such as Turkey, the Arab countries, Egypt and India are still prevailed this school. The second *madhab* was founded by Malik ibn Anas in Medina on d. 795. This *madhab* reflected to the jurist and the practices associated to with the city. In principle, it depended on the tradition connected with the Companions' of the prophet rather the prophet him self. When the conflicting debate in the tradition emerged, *Maliki* and the followers after him simply made arbitrary choice. This school is implemented strong in Syria-Palestine but with limited range and also Algeria.

The most popular school of in this time was founded by al-Shafi'i (d. 820), who was a follower of Maliki. Unlike Hanafi and Maliki, with her good knowledge on the Qur'an and hadist, Syafi'i introduced the component of shari'ah law in which the believers should refer in answering the social problem, particularly relating with operationalisation of religious duties. The *shari'ah* law he promoted as consisting of; (1) the Qur'an, (2) *Sunnah*, (3) *Ijma'* (consensus), and (4) *Qiyas* (analogical deduction), which are purposed to reduce the use of *ra'y* even though at that time it was the popular way applied in the cities of Islam. When there was a conflict between the prophet's traditions, then the one closer to the Qur'an or sunnah of Muhammad was preferred. ( Burton, John, 1994, *An Introduction to The Hadith*, Edinburgh University)

Islam is placed to regulate human sexuality. (I elaborate discourse of marriage at Islam and Sexuality).

*Shariah*, is concerned on how we should be Muslim. Based on ethical ideas, it is the rule of human beings to act virtuously with the intention of benefiting by the reward made by God. In contrast, if one negates this idea and has sinful conduct, it brings about loss and the community can punish (perhaps God will punish too) that one.<sup>3</sup> Another important principle imposed by Islam is stated by Al-Faruqi (1992:68 in Saadah, 2004) that Islam defines human's responsibility in terms of one's own deeds. A deed is an act that a sensible adult person enters into bodily, consciously and voluntarily. Islam also declared no act ethically meritorious unless it was so prefaced, so dedicated to "the Face of *Allah*".

### 2.2.2 Islam and Sexuality

Even though the discourse based on analysis the *Qur'an* and *hadith* traditionally are accepted by most believers, it comes into contradiction when it attaches to issues of women's sexuality (Ilkharacan, 2000). Furthermore, she argues that it is almost unavoidable that Islam has recognized that both women and men have sexual drives and the rights to sexual fulfillment. Eroticism is presented as foretaste at the heaven but a divinely ordained necessity for reproduction at earth. Both women and men are believed to experience orgasm. However, satisfaction must take place in the Islamic marriage, *nikah*. In reality, speaking about sexual drives for women and men in our society meets conflicting perception: males are rational and have ability to control "self"; oppositely, women are irrational and lack self-control. This also comes to justify that female sexuality is also uncontrollable, therefore it can cause chaos or social disorder; Islam calls it "*fitna*". The story of Siti Zulaikha and Yusuf<sup>4</sup> in the

---

<sup>3</sup> For those who do right is a goodly (reward) – yea, more (than in measure)! No darkness nor shame shall cover their faces! They are companions of the Garden: they will abide therein (for aye)!(26). But those who have earned evil will have a reward of like evil: ignominy will cover their (faces): no defender will they have from (the wrath of ) Allah: Their faces will be covered, As it were, with pieces from the depth of the darkness of night: they are companions of the fire: they will abide therein (for aye) (27). (Yunus:26-27)

<sup>4</sup> See The Qur'an Yusuf: 12-42, Yusuf 'Ali concludes the content of the story like this Joseph was bought by a man high at court in Egypt, who asked his wife Zulaykha to treat him with honor, with a view to his adoption as a son. But she burnt with a passion of earthly love for him. When Joseph refused to yield her solicitations there was trouble and scandal, and Joseph had to go to prison. Here were

Qur'an may be used to be foundation of (conservative) interpretation that women have great sexual desire and are a temptation to men – women are considered as seductress and men are likely susceptible, but capable of controlling their sexual desire.

Islam is certainly concerned with human sexual desire. Imam Gozali gives details explaining how Islam integrated sexual instinct in the social order and placed it in the service of God. To him, sexual desire has strong relation to social order, quoted from Ibn Qoldun “if the desire of the flesh dominates the individual and is not controlled by the fear of God’s will, it leads men to commit destructive act.” (Cited at Mernissi, 1987 p. 28.). However, if the desire of flesh is guided to “the serve of God”, the individual will enhance life on earth and heaven. The sentence “the serve of God” may relate to the correct direction of sexual fulfillment, *nikah* and reproduction.

Sexual desire was created solely as a means to entice men to deliver the seed and to put the woman in a situation where she can cultivate it, bringing the two together softly in order to obtain progeny, as the hunter obtains his game and this through copulation (cited at Mernissi, 1987)

In Islamic discourse, single women’s bodies represent normal and abnormal sexuality. Normal sexuality is defined as sexual activities that are not against norms and religious values such as sex within marriage, heterosexuality, fidelity and obedience, while what is considered as abnormal sexuality like homosexuality, masturbation, pre-marital sex. Fatima Mernissi (1987) considers single women’s sexuality as associated with the concept of premarital chastity being promoted by issue of ethics and morality, which link with religious and culturally beliefs. Preserving premarital chastity secludes unmarried women because marriage is compulsory for everyone; in fact, it is *sunna* (if you marry, you will get reward from God, but if not, there is no punishment). This concept also isolates unchaste women (losing virginity) in which concept of “chastity” is based on an existing hymen. Meanwhile, ethics and morality are used as glasses whether sexuality is performed with coercion or consensual, wanted or unwanted.

---

shown His greatness, a kindness and wisdom. The king’s cupbearer came in disgrace to prison. Joseph instructed him and others in the eternal Gospel of unity. When released and restored a favor; the cupbearer forgot Joseph-for a time- until it pleased Allah to put into Joseph’s hands the keys of the prosperity of Egypt and the world.....

Discourse on sexuality in Islam strongly correlate with discourse of marriage within which sexual fulfillment can be achieved. Islam restricts unmarried people in guiding their sexual impulse to correct channels, marriage. Therefore, in Islam every path to and kind of sex without marriage, sexual promiscuity, homosexual sexual orientation, adultery, fornication, prostitution and so on are extremely prohibited<sup>5</sup>. Regarding discourse of marriage, Murata (1992) analyzes that it has roots in the verses saying like this, “And everything We created a pair that ye may receive instruction (51:49)” and “that He did create in pairs- male and female...(53:45)”. It is, also, the basis of a generally positive evaluation of human sexual relationship in Islam. The word “a pair” may mean that one will not be complete without the other. The traditional interpretation may provide linkage to the importance of marriage<sup>6</sup>. Islam takes serious consideration in issue of marriage, particularly concerning sexual relation between wife and husband. Murata says that because it is the foundation of society and one of the highest goods, therefore it is natural that Islam expects both husband and wife to behave in best manner toward their spouse. The prophet said “the best among you is the one who acts best toward his wife, and I am better than any of you toward my wife” (1992, p. 172). It is true and very clear that in Islam gender equality is mainly positioned in wife-husband relation as well as any relationship on this earth.

### ***Concept of “fitna”***

The picture of Muslim women’s sexuality represents as active poles of dangerous and potential chaos in society; hence, it needs to be channeled, controlled, legalized and domesticated (Kadiyoti, 1988); Mernissi, 1987). *Fitna* is the most powerful concept addressed to control women’s bodies and sexuality in which social institution needs to control women by applying veiling, sexual segregation, and polygamy. This perception has foundation from *hadith* of the prophet Muhammad, “ *I never left, after me, to men the more dangerous “fitna” than others, is women.*” Conservative scholars use this *hadith* as legitimating control of women’s activities outside the home. In

---

<sup>5</sup> See Al-Isra 17: 31 “nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils)”

normative point of view, women are not allowed to go in public alone without companions. They have to be accompanied by husbands or their relatives. They must observe modesty such as covering whole body and hair, avoiding using perfume, jewelry, which can be perceived as ways of attracting men. In particular groups, a woman's voice can be considered as *aurat*, a part of body that must not be exposed to the public because it is also considered as a source of *fitna*.

In terms of women's sexuality, Qasim Amin remarked that veiling women actually is a manifestation of controlling women's sexuality. It is a way to seclude women from the public. This seclusion including practices such as keeping women at home and prohibiting their going alone to public is the basis of sexual segregation in which women have to be separate from men for the sake of protecting men from their sexual desire, rather than saving women from sexual harassment. His conclusion is that women do much better than men in controlling their sexual impulses (1987, p. 31). In regard to *fitna*, Amina highlighted that it is a fear of making social disorder or chaos. In addition, he argued that *fitna* also means a beautiful woman who always makes men lose their self-control. To put it more simply, *fitna* can be translated as chaos provoked by sexual disorder and initiated by women.

Why does Islam fear *fitna*? Why does Islam fear power of female sexual attraction over men? Does Islam assume that males cannot cope sexually with an uncontrolled female? Does Islam assume that women's sexual capacity is greater than men's? Perhaps Mernissi's reflection can provoke us to think again about women's sexuality in which those seclusion practices are addressed by male power always on behalf of modesty and chastity. This question may cause us to realize how sexual practices are always different from values and realities.

### **2.2.3 Gender in Islam**

The Qur'an is a guiding light for the believers and God's Mercy for the universe. Husein Muhammad, an Indonesian Muslim scholar, says that the Qur'an is a lesson as well as a healing for the believers. God has mentioned in the Qur'an:

---

<sup>6</sup> See Murata, Sachiko, 1992, *The Tao of Islam*, State University of New York Press: Albany

Oh mankind! There hath come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the diseases<sup>7</sup> in your hearts and, for those who believe, a guidance and a mercy (Yunus: 57)

Similarly, the prophet strengthens God's Mercy through moral enforcement stated, " I was sent by Allah for perfecting *akhlaq* (be of good morals)"<sup>8</sup>. From the texts, it is obvious that the principle of the Qur'an is for creating the life of all creatures by placing morality and respecting the principle of humanism. The word *al-akhlaq* is rooted in the word *al-khalaq* (creation), *al-khaliq* (Creator), and *al-mahluq* (creatures). Thus, *al-akhlaq* are the basic values that are embedded in human beings since God created (2001, p. 16). The principle of universal humanism manifests in every effort to create justice, equality, togetherness, freedom, and respecting the rights of humans, whoever they are. Basically, these values are relevant universally.

Regarding the issue of relation of women and men, the fundamental values of the Qur'an place women and men equal; there is no discrimination based on differences of gender, ethnicity, and class, which the most honored of people in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of them<sup>9</sup>. The Qur'an, obviously, never positioned women subordinate to men, like stating in some references below:

For Muslim men and women and for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward. (Al-Ahzab 33:35)

---

<sup>7</sup> See Yusuf 'Ali explains "those who do wrong have a disease in their hearts, which will cause their spiritual death. Allah in His Mercy declares His Will to them, which should direct their lives and provide a healing for their spiritual disease. If they accept Faith, the remedy acts; they find them selves in right guidance and receive Allah's forgiveness and Mercy. Surely those are far better gifts that material advantages, wealth or possessions.

<sup>8</sup> See Muhammad, 2001, *Refleksi kyai atas wacana gender dan agama* (Reflection of kyai to discourse of gender and Islam), LKiS: Yogyakarta

<sup>9</sup> See Al-Hujurat: 13; O...mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (no that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things)

Whoever works righteousness man or woman, and has faith, verily, to him will we give a new life and life that is good and pure and we will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions. (Al-Nahl 16: 97)

The believers, men and women are protectors, one of another...(Al-Tawbah 9: 71)

Additionally, the prophet Muhammad strongly addressed the issue of equality between women and men in his narrative “the believing women are like (blood) sisters of the believing men”<sup>10</sup>. If we look at the spirit of these references, the Qur’an and the hadith are considered as spectacular and revolutionary in the context of Arab Saudi in which the position of women was subordinated by sexist system. The message from Islam never places women subordinate to men and the statement of the prophet has deconstructed basic pillars of society, culture, and tradition which had very much discriminated against and was misogynous to women. Women’s situation in pre-Islam was miserable and degraded; they were considered as “a thing” that could be treated however men liked. Having baby girls was shameful and burying them alive was tolerated<sup>11</sup>. In the sight of law, women were discriminated against because of men’s hegemony over women. Islam had changed these misogynous practices through the prophet Muhammad; women should be treated with justice and humanity. Islam had given women back their autonomy as free human beings. One of the prophet’s companions, Umar bin Khatab said “ *before we did not consider (respect or make them important) about women. When Islam came and God mentioned about them, we just released that actually they also has rights over us (men)*”.

## 2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.3.1 Theory of Subjectivities

In principal, subjectivity can be defined as representing self by means of a verbal or non-verbal expression. Women’s subjectivity means representation of “self” in speech or writing or any kind of responsive actions in their life. By studying

---

<sup>10</sup> This hadist was narrated by Abu Dawud and at-Turmudzi cited at Muhammad, 2001

<sup>11</sup> See the Qur’an :”When the female (infant) buried alive is questioned for what crime she was killed”. (81: 89)

subjectivity and self-representation, we can understand the biography of an individual or the history of women. Subjectivity of women's history can show us how her-story (history) are constructed and fragmented by cultural, political, economic circumstances and the important thing it may be to see women's agency in various work rather than a universal or essential form (Woollacott, 1998 p. 332). Subjectivity is process of negotiating and redefining "self" against the dominant power. Corbett (1992) remarked that like gender, subjectivity is a doing, rather than a being (1998 p. 331-32). So subjectivity can be constructed in many ways: in different time, situation, and place. Therefore, it is considered as a continued process of producing meaning.

How do single women place themselves amidst social and cultural situations? How do they define themselves and relate to others? Kathryn Woodward (1997) in *Culture, Media and Identities* explained that identity marks the ways in which we are the same as others who share that position, and the ways in which we are different from those who do not (<http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-iden2.htm>, 5 April 2004). Giddens views that the "self" is made, it is not inherited or passively static. Self-identity is a process of working and reflecting on. Therefore he calls it as a reflexive project, means it is talking about biography narrative, which one's behavior cannot be identified as identity without linkage to interaction with the others. In his perspective one's narrative is created, maintained and revised to be story about who she/he is and how she/he came to be where we are now (<http://www.theory.org.uk/giddens5.htm>, 5 April 2004). Supporting from Michel Foucault and Judith Butler explained self identity as fluid, not fixed, it is constructed continuously by cultural circumstances. In *pesantren* context, single women's identity can be perceived from the lenses of class, ethnicity, different Islamic thought, environment, education background, family etc, to grasp who are single women among the others and link to the world in which she lives.

### **2.3.2 Patriarchy**

Ruth (1980) defined patriarchy is a system of structures and institutions created by men in order to sustain and recreate male power and female subordination. She explained that

Patriarchy is a system of structures and institutions created by men in order to sustain and recreate male power and female subordination. Such structures include; institutions as the law, religion, and the family; ideologies which perpetuate the “naturally” inferior position of women; socialization process to ensure that women and men develop behavior and belief systems appropriate to the powerful or less powerful group to which they belong (S. Ruth, 1980)

In the same sense, Walby supported that “patriarchy as a system of social structure and practices in which men are dominant to oppress and to exploit women”. The term social structure indicates that it is not biological determinism, rather it is social construction in which every man is dominating and every woman is dominated (1998, p. 20). According to Walby, patriarchy is a dynamic system, which can metamorphose into many forms. When women do win a victory, then patriarchal force will regroup and regain control over women in another way (p. 173). For example, if a couple have the same educational background, mostly they are equal in relation. It means women do win, not to be under control in term of education. However, patriarchal power will regain control over woman with a different way, for example through discourse of romantic love with jargon of love needs sacrificing, then it forces a woman to do anything under the name of love, including serving her partner.

There is no single patriarchy. It has multiple patterns, in which the degrees and actors of women’s oppression are various. In case of female sexuality, the constructors of belief are both men and women (Gruenbaum, 2001 p. 40-42). The degree of male domination, female autonomy, hierarchy of males in every society, the belief or values on becoming women in muslim society, the discourse of ideal modern young women produced by media, are extremely reflected the multi faces of patriarchy. Therefore, multiple face of patriarchy creates diversities of women’s realities, thus shaping women’s subjectivities.

### ***2.3.3 Discourse Analysis***

Discourse in general is the study of a language. According to Woodilla (1998) the term discourse refers to actual practices of talking and writing (quoted at Philipe and Hardy, 2002). When we hear the word “language”, we must think that it is a “talk”, “communication” and further it is “discourse”. Discourse is not only

studying language as linguistic per se, but it is also concerned about the effect of a language. Discourse usually means actual instance of communication in the medium of language (Johnstone, 2002 p. 2). Discourse as communication does not only use language as medium, but also using other media such as photography, gesture, architecture and dance, which are meaningful. Additionally, to communicate, discourse should connect a language to other semiotic system. Semiotic system means reading language with the context. In simple definition, semiotics is the study of sign and symbol, then link it to the context of language production using interpretation.

Through communication (use language), people actually transfer their knowledge as well as they receive other knowledge through language. Normally, based on their memories of thinking, people would say, see, hear or write down to do thing in the world. They will express their feeling, entertain themselves, make thing happen, create beauty, and so on. Then, this kind of knowledge sometimes will create a set of rules (2002, p. 3), what the words mean. In understanding the word meaning, socio context will help people to interpret the symbols (words). Therefore, we call “discourse analysis” rather “linguistic analysis”, because language is not abstract system rather it is tied up with social culture.

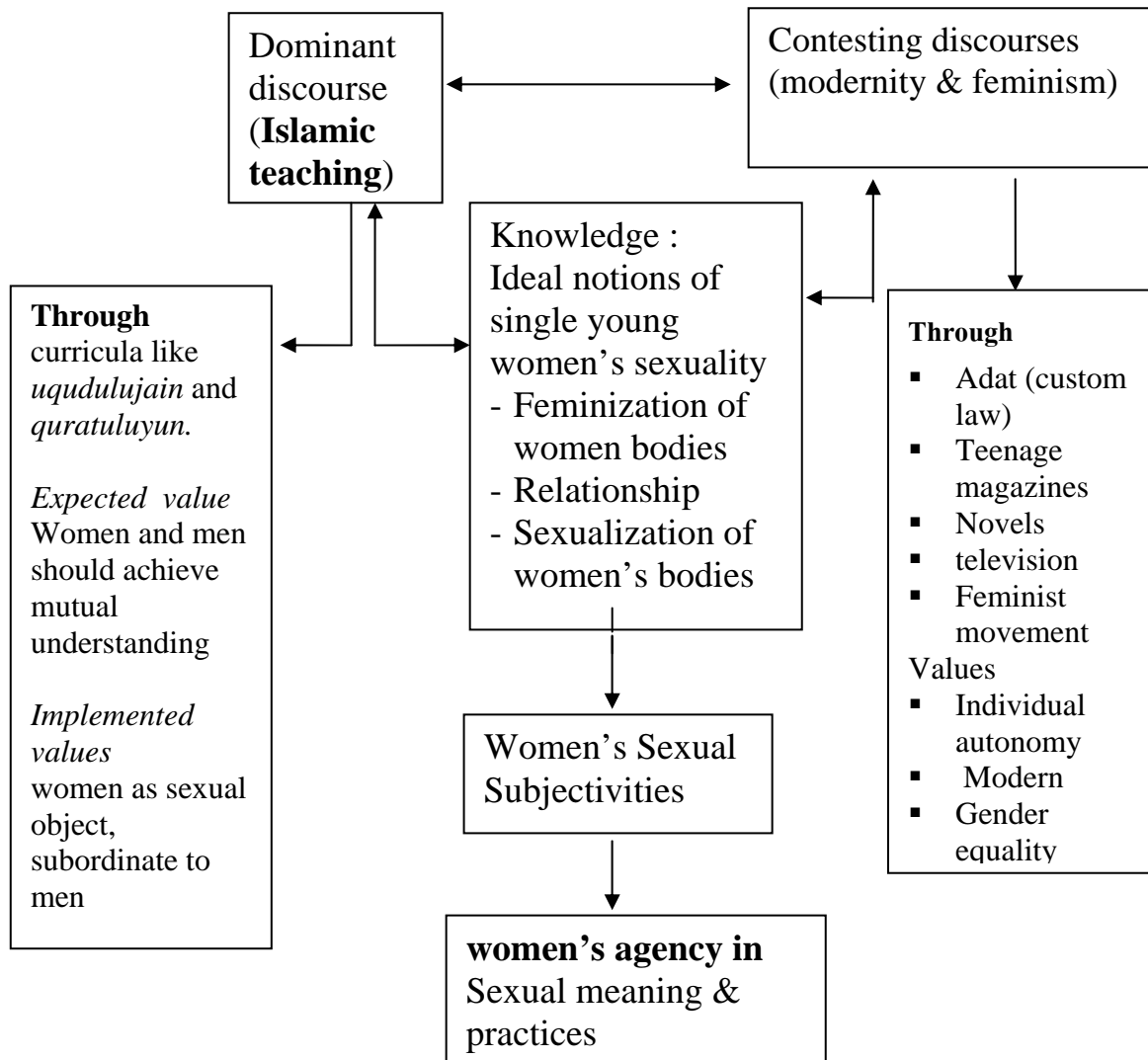
Discourse analysis in social science has more strong definition. Foucault defines discourse as not a set of texts per se, but as something which produces something else (an utterance, a concept, an effect), rather something which exist in itself (Mills, 1997 p. 17). Meaning that for Foucault, discourse can be detected because an idea, a concept or an opinion or a way of life are produced from a particular context then influence on a particular a way of thinking and behavior. (I will elaborate how feminist adopt and develop concept of discourse of Michel Foucault later on). Following Foucault’s idea, discourse for Fairclough and Wodak (1997 p.277) is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking context into consideration...discourses are always connected to other discourse which were produced earlier as well as those which are produced synchronically and subsequently (cited at Phillip and Hardy, 2002 p. 4). These are scholars who focus on discourse as practice of ideology, analyzing language in social culture context, and they do not go deeper in linguistic text.

In term of representation of women in texts, Sara Mills has much written critical discourse using feminist perspective. She analyzed a lot of text like novel, picture, photograph, and also news. She examines how bias text to represent women in subordinate position to men. Her analyzing emphasized on how women are portrayed and marginalized in texts and how a form or pattern of marginalization is done (Eriyanto, 2001 p. 199). Of course it needs a particular discourse strategy to create, to posit women always in a bad picture. Michel Foucault's perspective seems appropriate to understand how contesting meaning works and shape women's identity as part of resistance.

## 2.4 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Historical / globalization

Culture (Patriarchy )/ modernity



### **2.4.2 The Theoretical Framework**

Postmodernist feminism looks at problem of domination as intersection and interaction between dominant discourse (Islamic teaching) and contesting discourse on gender, class, ethnicity in modern Muslim society. These ideologies create knowledge on becoming women sexually including sexual identity, sensuality (experience of sexual pleasure, fantasy, physical attraction), intimacy (caring, sharing, loving and liking, being vulnerable). In postmodernist feminism, “becoming women sexually” is defined in single women point view, which diversities of gender, class, and ethnicity create sexual subjectivity. To get clear understanding of some key words used by postmodernist feminism, I will explained and elaborate them to discover problem of domination in Indonesia context.

#### **Dominant Discourse on Sexuality**

Dominant discourse is defined by Hare-Mustin as “a system of statement practices, and institutional structures that share common values” (cited at Killian, 2002). Normally, in muslim society, dominant discourse is religious teaching, which integrate in many aspect of life and become the single truth. The same sense of *pesantren*, dominant discourse of female sexuality entire in school curricula like in the book of *uqudulu-jain* (Imam Nawawi) and *quratuluyun* (Imam Abu Muhammad), which are very bias in interpreting relationship between wife and husband. The roles of female and male in family and society are influenced much with biologically reproductive function, which females have to be responsible for nursing job, subordinate to men, second class, better stay at home to avoid *fitna*, while male is the head of the family, have the right to decide where the family will go, active in society as leader. Basically, dominant discourse of sexuality tends to posit women subordinately in the hierarchies of gender and class. As part of global society, *pesantren* cannot isolate from interaction with other components of life such as medias, diversities of ethnicities in Indonesia, which each of them promote modern or postmodern ideas of how becoming women sexually.

### **Contesting Discourses on Sexuality**

Religion regulates sexual desire and behavior through the discourse of morality (Mernissi,1987), whereas modern culture gives individual autonomy and choice (Herrera, 1998 p. 106) to the young generation to feel, to define, and to express their own identity in their society. Together with the modernity in which issue of individual freedom, gender equality in Indonesian context have clashed with religious (re: pesantren) norms and values of promoting early sexual activities among young teenagers. Sexual education in one side can help young generation to understand their anatomy of the bodies, the functions and the consequence of reproductive organs. On the other hand if it is not given with clear explanation, it may be interpreted differently. However, *pesantren* should take consideration of providing sexual education with holistic approach (social, cultural and political views) for young generation in all school institution, instead of only putting religion as a moral guider; to keep young people not to commit premarital sex.

The ideal of becoming women in Islamic discourse now are coexisting with modern and postmodern discourses on sexuality and subjectivity disseminating through media (islamic and secular), non governmental organizations. The ideas of becoming women are contestation in media in which secular media impose young women to be part of modern culture with some values like individual expression and choice. The Islamic media on the other hand reproduce values of pesantren which may have more conservative interpretation compare to pesantren values. For example, when pesantren control santri's behavior to opposite sex, Islamic media exposes prohibition of engaging relation with opposite sex before marry. However, the influence of feminist movement in this pesantren opens space for santri to reread religious text with actual context by promoting "value of equality" for women and men to enjoy life opportunities.

Currently, the most widespread discourse of sexuality is produced by television, but television does not convey people with homogenous discourse (See Herrera 1998 p. 106). On the one side, through soap operas, identity of young female really represent modernity in positive way, which issue of fantasy, pleasure, desire, the ideal figure of boy friends, having special friend are a lot exposed as part of being women in modern person with characteristics such as sportive, *gaul* (cool), no border

between female and male. On the other hand, television also exposed the dangerous side of sexuality regarding with having sex out of marriage, issue of juvenile delinquency etc. Additionally, picturing idea of individual freedom of expression is effective in imposing single young women to the way they think, they dress up, they struggle within the constraints.

These competing discourse lead to subjectivity of santri to understand themselves regarding with their sexuality. How to become a young muslim women within modern society?

### **Knowledge**

Knowledge is a traditional organization of ideas. Feminist defines it as interaction of the self and the natural world, which historical context in which we live is interconnectedness with us to shape our knowledge (Humm, 1995 p. 139). Knowledge in this part is an ideal notion of single young women's sexuality that promoted by dominant and contesting discourses. In this sense it is a set of idea, belief of becoming women sexually through their feeling of being women, issue of menstruation which value of being women is placed, virginity and chastity which, issue of partnership, construction of gender identity and sexual orientation. Knowledge also looks at women with a set of moral value "what should be and not should be" for women through issue of virginity and chastity, fantasy sex and sexual desire

Other aspect of becoming women is about body image; how society gives image to women's bodies and how single young women interpret in different words and expression. In this study, women's bodies as locus of religious and cultural values in which issue of beauty and sexy body reconstruct based on traditional values on veiling women's bodies. So the idea of sexy body and beauty are interpreted by using standard of women in *pesantren* in which the veil is part of their performances.

### **Subjectivity**

What is sexual subjectivity of women? It is a process of creating self sexually. How women's sense of being women sexually in center of historical change (Alexander, 1995, p. 20). In *pesantren*, single Muslim women's subjectivity express through verbal and nonverbal way. Verbal way may possible represent their feeling of

loving, fantasizing the ideal husband, but it never express in their live. Therefore, we have to be sensitive to look at the silencing sexual culture of young women by observing how they dress up, they decorate private room, their hobby, their reading, their peer group and of course influence of their subjectivity. By carrying local context of becoming women sexually in *pesantren*, we encourage to counter dominant picture of western construction of young female sexuality like freedom of choosing, or western construction of muslim women's sexuality, which always considered as passive objects. However, female sexuality can be including many aspects such as sexual identity, sensuality, intimacy, sexualization and sexual health and reproduction (life planning education, 1995). And through concept of subjectivity, we can see how dominant discourse of religion interact and intersect with other discourses of romanticism, sexual health, body image (physical attraction), loving and liking, sexual violence and create subjectivity of single women in *pesantren*.

### **Women's Agency**

According to Woollacott (1998) subjectivity is a study about history, we may see how personal history constructed by particular subjectivity, then it may help to see the one's agency, instead of looking at universal and essential pattern (p. 332). And Harrington (2002) used the term subjectivity "to refer to the internal world of each person including various identifications and emotional and intellectual process (p.110). By looking subjectivity of women, we understand women as agency, ability of women in negotiating within discursive constraint. In this sense, we will look at the ability of women in negotiating their sexuality within discourses and create meaning and also practice of their sexuality.

In postmodernist feminist's lens, we see women as actively agent in struggling within difficult situation. In shaping their self, women may choose verbal or not verbal resistance, which silence or choosing not to speak out to public can be considered as resistance. So definition of resistance may not only associate with verbal action because according to Thiesmeyer (2003) silencing discourse, something censoring from public visually or verbally from other, but exist within community. At her books' *Discourse and Silencing*, she explained that silencing is not doing nothing. It produces acts such as choosing not to speak, choosing other alternative form of speaking such as

painting, writing short stories, collecting modern teenagers' clothes or shoes, watching soap opera etc (p. 12).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter will show my reflection on multidimensional experiences in performing my field study in a Muslim community called pondok *pesantren*. This ethnographic study, which is strong with feminist nuance, much more explore personal experiences in implementing basic principles held by feminist ethnography in which women's experiences, researcher and researched; a liberatory goal becomes a stand point of this approach. This chapter also explains what I have done and how I reformulated all knowledge of methodology, theories (sexuality, feminism, gender etc), feeling as a feminist in compiling information needed. To give worthiness so that the data gathered by the researcher and interpretation of it are valid and useful to conduct a next study, this chapter will explore in detail how the researcher excavated data with different methods being suited with the socio cultural situation in *pesantren*.

The organization of this chapter is (1) Methodology choice (2) Research setting and methods, (3) Entering the community, (4) Process of collecting data, (5) The benefit of research, and (6) Writing up the result.

#### **3.1 Methodology Choice**

My study explores two issues: contesting discourses on sexuality and sexual subjectivities among single young women in *pesantren*. This thesis explores sexual experience among female students in *pesantren*, which are constructed by contesting discourses about how to become women sexually in *pesantren*. In short, this thesis examines the notion of becoming women in social and religious context in women's perspective in the sense of understanding subjectivity of women and how they negotiate and resist within dominant discourse. Before going any further with the basic reason for choosing feminist methodology, let me start with ideology underlying my study. Feminism is both about theory and practice in which problems of inequality between women and men become the main concern with understanding why these problems exist and understanding related reasons for overall subordination of women. Furthermore, this movement also very concerned with how domination is produced

and how to eradicate it to achieve liberation for women. In principle, feminism and feminist play significant roles not only in building commitment for social change, but also to break the boundaries between personal and political (Letherby, 2003 p. 4). To impose an agenda of social change individually and socially, feminist research is fit to challenge political commitment to produce useful knowledge for single young women who live within strict regulation like pesantren, to give space to them, to define and place themselves within Indonesian contemporary culture.

I argue that only feminist research is suitable in my study with the reason that, firstly, this approach is concerned with gender power relation in looking at complex power relationships in society; its objective is to focus on women's experience, to listen and to explore the shared meaning between women, and to reformulate traditional agenda (2001). Secondly, historically, the emerging of feminist research has as its purpose to encounter the grand design research which, male-centered, is very focused on the issue of objectivity and rationality. Feminism comes with the idea that "no research is value-free or objective" (Roberts, 1981: Stanley and Wise, 1983 in Atkinson, 2001). This leads to the critique to objectivity and rationality by promoting ideas of fragmentation and multiple-subjectivity. The most important thing: feminist ethnography is performing a liberatory goal wherein every project of women's lives should end by eradicating sexism and women's oppression. 'Liberatory goal' here refers to process of empowering women through interaction in day to day living by encouraging women to enter the process of (re)thinking differently with the dominant culture in order to open an alternative number of ways out. Feminist research is a research to understand women's lives from women's perspective constructed by multi social context: feminism needs to deal with the reality, which forces them emotionally, in the sense of building awareness in positioning herself oppositely to her researched who are different in gender, ethnicity, and class. Hence, self-reflexivity becomes an important issue in feminist research; researchers and informants form an important part of enriching the researcher and, hopefully, it was beneficial for students in pesantren. Mary Fonow and Judith Cook (1999) define reflexivity as an important part of feminist research because it allows the researcher to engage in a kind of critical reflection and analysis. It enables the researcher to be introspective, to analyze the

research process in response to participants and to adjust and refine their research goals as they learn more about those they study.

In order to understand how single young women define their sexuality I need the first-hand experience of women. Therefore, I need to involve day-to-day living and activities and be aware of myself in the process. Hence, **ethnography** is the most powerful method in the great task of giving voice to the voiceless, similar to the goal of feminism in giving voice to women, understanding human's experience from an ethnic view, not only in the particular context but also in representing the experience with lived context. So postmodern feminism and ethnography are suited to each other as both of them concern themselves with experience, participants, definition, meaning and subjectivity as the focus of study by not losing the sight of context (Atkinson, 2001 p. 426). The spirit of postmodernism is against, Jones says, a definitive definition, so that definition is not isolating researcher and researched. Fabian says that postmodernism and ethnography meet in the issue of performance, which ethnography defines as a search for understanding that begins with cultural performance, while postmodernism emphasize feature performance. So, **postmodern ethnography** is a collaborative performance in search of mutual understanding and misunderstanding between the researcher and the researched (Jones, 2004). However, within Islamic and Indonesian culture, issues of sexuality are still taboo and very sensitive. Accordingly, prolonged engagement with this community is considered essential. Besides, it can reduce the gap between "I" and "they"; moreover, it also makes it comfortable for the researcher and researched to talk, to share our sexual experience.

Since I worked with a variety of sensitive experiences of sexuality among single young women, it was necessary to protect the rights of my participants and my responsibility to practice research with my own standards for conducting research. To avoid the violation of privacy in the name of a research goal (Paredes in Guerrero, 1999 p. 24-25), issue of ethics becomes a concern in feminist research. Areas such as privacy and confidentiality, reciprocity, honesty, accountability, responsibility and equality, etc must be dealt with sensitively in order to treat participants of ethnography with respect (Atkinson, 2001, p. 433). Privacy is a moral right in which nobody overrides the participants' rights, while confidentiality is the requirement that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported without participants' consent (p. 27).

Reciprocity is putting a participant in mutual benefit with a researcher wherein participant provides information while researcher returns to the participant something that may be useful to them. Responsibility is to equalize power differences between women in order not to reproduce participant as powerless (Stanley and Wise, 1983 in Atkinson 2001). Another feminist ethical prescription is what Maria Meis (1983) calls conscientization, meaning that the feminist researcher should make the researched aware of the feminist explanation and frameworks that can explain the oppressed condition of their live (cited at 2001). In all, feminist research is defining the uniqueness of women's experiences as suitable problems and sources of answer: designing research for women; and locating researcher and researched on the same critical plane<sup>1</sup>.

## **3.2 Research Setting Selection, Methods and Participants**

### **3.2.1 Rationale for Site Selection**

My interest to this pondok began with my first visiting three years ago, when I handled a program of mainstreaming gender in a traditional educational institution launched by Rahima<sup>2</sup>; *pondok kota santri* became the pilot project. When one of important persons, Ibu (Ms) Ida brought me to visit her father by passing male dormitories, to me, it was the first "abnormal" thing because I had been living in pesantren culture when I was in college in which male and female living separately. Hence, it was strong forbidden for women to pass male dormitories. When we moved the *madrasa* (I: religious school) building closer to kyai<sup>3</sup>'s house, I saw that elementary students were playing together in the yard, chasing each other, bantering back and forth and so on, interacting free like society outside. It was a bit unusual for me, because, in normal life, segregation in pesantren (East Java) was fully applied since they were younger. And, from the fence of kyai's house, I looked outside the gate where many vendors were selling foods and drinks; male and female students were walking around, buying something, talking to each other. According to Ibu Ida, male and female santri were allowed to interact with each other, and that it was

---

<sup>1</sup> Coyner, 1998-1989, p. 291 quoted at Allen at al, 1992, p. 2

<sup>2</sup> Rahima is women NGO, a center of information and training of women's rights and Islam, which has networking in West Java including this pesantren as pilot project.

common place for them to meet, to talk about their activities, to have appointments etc. Then, on the way home I encouraged myself to ask her about segregated life in this pesantren. She said “*we more worried when segregation concept applied in this pesantren, santri would be more incontrollable*”. She believes that even life segregation is applied in pesantren, however, students still make contact with the opposite sex behind teacher’s back.

This impression brought me to think further about the impact of not applying segregation to male and female *santri* lives. My personal experience has been engaging with women’s issues and Islam in which meanings of sexuality were constructed within key terms like passivity, monogamy, and obedience; all inequalities were legitimized by interpretation of religious texts and patriarchal culture. Another principal reason is that I had been working with pesantren community, but, ironically, I found out very few people study about gender and sexuality in this community.

Finally, I chose pondok kota santri as my first research on sexuality issue. With consideration that it is a big pondok *pesantren* where santri from other towns studied. To be able to draw out the deeper experiences of single young female santris in this pondok, I decided to select only a dormitory in order to disclosure the subjectivities of santris regarding issue of sexuality. Another technical reason was that the period of research was very constrained, so it was difficult to choose every single dormitory. Based on Ibu Ida’s consideration, I chose Esa Dormitory for the reason that this dormitory is under Kyai supervisor, hence it was easier to enter and take a part in the activities of santri in this dorm. With 100 students living there, this dorm is considered as the most crowded female dorm. In pesantren culture, the more crowded a space in a dormitory, the more popular it is.

### **3.2.2 Methods**

Ethnography as method is applied in this study with the theoretical assumption of the interconnectedness of the different facets of life: political, economic, social and cultural (Sobritchea in Gerrero 1999). To get the holistic picture of single young women’s life, I utilized several anthropological techniques in data collection:

---

<sup>3</sup> Kyai is highest level of rank of teacher in pesantren.

participant observations, narrative interviews, key-informant interviews, in-depth interviews, and group interviews with the principle of respecting pesantren culture by way of being sensitive in language and voice, behavior, emotions, and diversities. I always involved single young women and had reflexivity during interaction in this study. I also conducted documentary research by collecting and reviewing historical and recent documents about pesantren, classical references (kitab kuning) used in curricula in order to grasp the construction of female (and male) santri's sexuality through discourses.

*Participants observation* I used to figure out cultural context of pesantren encompassing the details about pesantren such as educational system, life as santri, political situation in pesantren, relation between teacher and santri etc (See on chapter IV). In order to get the holistic picture of pesantren, I performed myself as a santri which included a set of roles as a member of pesantren in which I had to obey pesantren regulation. Furthermore, I also participated in any activities inside and outside pesantren. I offered my skill (although limited) in English to help a program of language development in this pesantren by being involved in committee on Sunday morning class. I gave a special class in English on every Friday afternoon to help santri with overcoming homework problems. I also approached some teachers in order to have permission to attend their class (in the morning, evening and night) to know how the issue of sexuality was taught in this pondok as well as to know the response of (female and male) santri. Particularly during fasting month, I intensively attended classes in which kitab (book) *uqudulujoin* (discuss the rights of husband and wife) was taught. I recorded the process of *pengajian* with a tape recorder and asked opinions from single young women about the book after class. In order to have experiences in different level of class, I selected some topic that would fit with my study. Therefore, I always asked female santri what topic they studied so that I could attend. I also used my good relationship with the head of the high school to have permission for doing observation at school. Once I got a chance to sit in biology class to observe how the teacher explained human reproduction as well as how students

responded. Since I used to be a member of Muslim student movement (PMII)<sup>4</sup>, it benefited me to have information about pondok kota santri from a different perspective. Through two male villagers (member of PMII), I obtained interesting information about the political dynamics and the shifting of ideology of the leader there. My conversation with them led me to meet one of alumni of this pondok and we began to talk about the differences of the system used now and when he was studying. In principle, the technique I applied was building friendship with everyone inside and outside pesantren to go closer to their personal life.

Issues of sexual subjectivities were addressed with a technique of telling stories and consultation. Since they knew that I had experiences on issues of reproductive and sexual health, my participants used discussion in any moment to have consultation on reproduction and sexuality. To minimize my academic bias, I did not use some terms that can guide single young women into particular definition. For instance, when I talked about liking the same sex, I did not use the term “lesbian” or “homosexual” however seemingly these terms had influenced people in pesantren. Nonetheless, single young women in this pondok associated my question of “liking or loving the same sex” to the words lesbian and homosexual. I was a bit disappointed with this phenomenon because I wanted to know the local term and definition. However, when I asked them to explain what ‘lesbian’ and ‘homosexual’ meant, finally, I could understand that they used the same term but had a different definition and explanation.

I used a testimony technique to discover their meaning of menstruation through experience on menarche. From their story, I could get some ideas about their meaning of becoming women in Indonesian culture. I also could figure out the issue of negotiation and resistance in facing the problem of menarche. This technique also applied to talking about the issues of sexual fantasy and desire. I knew that discussing fantasy and desire in pondok was still unusual. For example, two single young women I interviewed in the house where I stayed requested to move to my room and locked the door when the discussion came to issues of sexual fantasy and desire. They just

---

<sup>4</sup> Indonesian muslim student movement (PMII) is one of the biggest student movement in Indonesia has close relation with *Nahdatul Ulama* (muslim mass organization). It has branch in every town including in Tasikmalaya where my study was performed.

wanted to talk to me, but not to other students. Therefore, I led this topic under humorous circumstance and of course, sharing my personal experiences on sexual fantasy and desire was helpful. For example, when I interviewed single young men about how they fantasized, they asked me, in turn, how did I fantasize about my boy friend. Even though I felt a bit surprised, I shared my feeling and sexual fantasy about my boy friend by prefacing my statement that this all was normal for me and could happen to everyone.

### **3.2.3 Participants**

At first, I planned to interview only college students with an assumption that women in this age group had had a mature way of thinking and rich sexual experience. However, I shifted my focus and involved both groups; single young women in secondary school and college students to better understand the dynamic of this issue in different groups. They were girls from 15- 25 years old, because, normally, only a few students were willing to stay longer in this pondok after finishing their college, except for those who were selected to share their knowledge in this pondok

The selection had gone naturally. To get the characteristics of santri, I approached a board range of santri who had been staying for years. From Amel, a coordinator of santri who herself had seven years experience living as a santri and who knew characteristics of santri, I mapped who would be my participants and who should represent every room in the dormitory. Approaching college students was easier and they were more open in telling their personal experience compared to secondary students who were more difficult to meet about issues of sexual experience. This might be due to the difference of my age not being too far from those who were in college.

To go into details on personal experiences of single young women in pesantren: I conducted formal interviews with 13 female santris, three santris with in-depth interview and 10 santris who were four times in group discussions; three male santri both in group discussions and personal in-depth interviews; two important persons in this pondok (male and female); two teachers (male and female); two male villagers, and two alumni of the pondok (female and male). While casual interviews were performed with almost all female santri in Esa dormitory, I preferred some senior

santri from other dormitories to enlarge my understanding of santris' culture, during my day to day living with them, vendors or villagers. All of my informants represented various ethnicities: Sundanese, Javanese, Betawi, and Nusa Tenggara Timur.

### **3.3 Entering the Community**

#### **3.3.1 Building a fundament of research**

*Silaturahmi* (visiting) the kyai was the first step I took in my study in order to get permission from him as the central figure in the pondok. It is extremely important for anyone who wants to collaborate with pesantren to approach the kyai in the sense of developing the project easily. Through Ibu Ida, as my first contact to sound out the possibility of my performing my field study in her pondok, I was successfully accepted by the Kyai after discussing fifteen minutes my personal identity, my works, educational background and, finally, my objective of study in the pondok.

Certainly, my success occurred after long negotiation with my first contact, Ibu Ida, regarding positioning my self in a fragmented situation (see chapter IV about pesantren) in the pondok on the first day I arrived at kota santri. At first, she asked me to stay at her house to please me because, perhaps, the situation in the dormitory was very crowded for me. I knew that, in pesantren culture, we could not act right away if we did not agree, hence I told her, "I thought I would decide later after my first survey to dormitory and around pesantren<sup>5</sup>". She also talked about the situation of pesantren currently and requested me to hide my identity in order not to invite negative reaction from particular persons who did not agree with the appearance of outsiders in the pesantren. Her uncle did not agree at all with the idea of gender equality and feminism. (I had just been questioning in my heart about the program of gender mainstreaming in this pesantren and that probably mainstreaming was not supported by the whole of the pesantren, but I just listened and resolved to let the time prove what was really happening in this pondok). The important thing I emphasized to her was that I wanted to begin my study by "telling truth" to santri about my identity. I told her that I wanted to learn about their life as female santri.

---

<sup>5</sup> Gender mainstreaming program for pesantren was leaded by Rahima in 2001. we included some teachers at school and *ustadz* (teacher in pesantren)

It was on 17 July 2004 in the evening when I started my observation in pondok, chaperoned by Ibu Ida and Sus (my old friend); we were visiting the kyai and looking around the pondok, introducing me to some senior santris. Finally, we reached asrama (dormitory) Esa, a dormitory under supervisor of *ibu syeihuna* (the wife of kyai) that, at the last, I decided to be a place in which I would spend three a half months with students. This dormitory, according to *roisah amir* (a leader of board of santri), was the most crowded dormitory as well as the most popular dormitory in pondok kota santri. This dormitory was comprised of a hundred students, mostly secondary school, with perhaps not more than 20 college students living there. My consideration to choose one dormitory is because I wanted to have closer relationship with female santri and participate in their day to day living. Therefore, it was impossible to embrace every single dormitory there.

The second *silaturrahmi* was done with Ibu Zubaid; she was my key informant and also my old partner working in gender issues in this area. She was a daughter of a qualified female santri in pondok kota santri, an important person involved in developing *pondok*. She was also considered as family since she was a good teacher and loyal to the pesantren for long time. We reached her house at 21:00 o'clock when she was sleeping because of spending time for long trip to Subang. I did not make long conversation and we made an appointment to have nice time to talk and she agreed that she would help me during my research and was ready to be my informant, too. At 21:30, we went back to Siliwangi Street, our base camp about 10 kilometers from Kota Santri.

### **3.3.2 Shifting the entry point of issue**

To enter with the issue of sexuality was too risky for me; besides, many people still perceived sexuality as a taboo subject because sexuality always was defined as sexual practices or biological activities. Moreover, since pondok has many stories as well about the controversial issue of sexuality, it becomes a public secret silently. I avoided entering with the issue of sexuality to not make them resist too early. To be accepted, I modified a small part of my proposal with an entry point of issue on reproductive and sexual health, which was more familiar in the ears of people in *pesantren*. I believed that everybody needed to be healthy. In this sense, both

teachers and santri did not resist me and accepted everything from me, which I had worried about at first

One month of observation had guided me to begin my conversation with flexible issues in accordance with the situation and the previous topic. So far, I could handle the flow of conversation to go with my direction that by inserting some jokes in the conversation. Seemingly, the issue of menstruation was interesting for santri knowing that many santri had physical and emotional problems with their period, to some extent influenced by relation with others. For example, Han a secondary student told me that during menstruation she made an effort to control her self by avoiding talking too much to her roommate, because she felt more sensitive during menstruation and it was easy to make others hurt. To know the meaning of menstruation for them, obtaining testimony about their first experience of getting menstruation was very helpful in observing other issues of reproductive health. To examine perceptions on sexuality, an actual issue among santri was extremely effective to lead them into their subjectivities in perceiving sexuality. Especially for issues of intimate relationship with the opposite sex, I carried out an actual issue like *kakak angkat* (like a brother) as interesting prolog before moving further into other types of intimate relationship. It was quite effective to know the way they defined themselves in conflicting feeling, where religious principle did not allow and yet the need for interacting with the other gender as human beings was compelling.

### **3.3.3 Approaching students, approaching pesantren culture**

Since I was introduced in *ta'aruf* (introduction of new student) forum, I began my life as santri in pondok kota santri. It was extremely difficult to live within a crowded situation: no privacy, sleeping on the floor with a thin mattress and with a number of students, dealing with limited bathroom facilities, adjusting with a somewhat dirty environment, dealing with cold weather in which I got health problems many times during my research (back pain, catching cold many times, flu, tonsillitis). Another important thing to get closer with the reality was behaving and performing like them as santri, such as dressing up like them, living in their way, following a schedule as part of my life. I have known earlier that it is not easy, but it does not mean impossible. The only way I prevailed was by accepting the existing

situation, enjoying life with them, being humble; accepting all situations and conditions in the dormitory, not performing in glamour, not showing an educational gap and not using difficult terms when speaking with them, and by *ikhlas* (selflessness), because I belonged to a community as a member with different a set of roles, relationships, status and position.

While the strict regulations sometimes made my life run very slowly; it was boring, monotonous, especially for a feminist who had strong belief in women's empowerment; occasionally, I saw discrimination in front of my eyes, but had to be patient as way to be close to all santris. Many times, I was faced with cases in which female santri were put at a disadvantage in situations then endured everything as a way to survive. My interest to open a space for them to actualize themselves clashed with the concept of "proper" or "improper" for female and male to play their sexual roles in pondok; female santris, to some extent, were marginalized systemically.

I realized that, with a hundred students, it could not be possible to approach every single one; at first, I had difficulties in positioning my self among them as well as managing my time with them. It became a serious problem for me when I spent more time for santri rather than for my work; hence, to some extent, problematic in recording my data. Santris had various purposes in approaching me as well; for example, a group of senior santris liked to use my knowledge and experience to their mini thesis, but later on they were aware of my limitation of time. Mostly groups of santri would like me to be their older sister; every time they needed me, I had to be there, to listen, to give suggestions, even to decide which was the best way to choose. Finally, I realized that to be accepted by them and to be like them even, it did not mean I followed everything they wanted; rather, I had to be able to say "No" and keep "continuing" in a particular situation and case. *Alhamdulillah*, thanks to God, it made me more relaxed and able to manage my work.

Step by step, the trust was built along with my activity as santri; attending *pengajian* class, taking a part in activities in dormitory. Surprisingly, my experience as a feminist who was strong in social analysis was useful for santris, mostly secondary school students, to help them to overcome their daily problems. As an older sister, I really learnt from them how to be a good listener and not to be reactive in responding their problems. My ability (little skill) in English was very helpful for

them, made me closer and closer with them as well as helped to open friendships with other santri from other dormitories, since I was requested to be a member of language committee in *muhadasah*, a Sunday morning class. It was a class for exercising language.

And finally, my identity as a student of Mahidol University, Thailand, besides creating gab in some situations, became an effective way to open my conversation with them. They were so curious with the situation in Thailand, specially relating to how I managed my self as a Muslim woman<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, I decided to open my identity to them in some way to stimulate their curiosity, in the sense of creating useful ways to begin our conversation. To put it more simply, it became a door for me to enter their world, to reveal their story to be women in this community.

### 3.3.4 The placement of “self” as mean for data collection

This method is aimed to approach pesantren community, to get closer with female santri. Since the beginning, I intended to put aside the word “research” and replacing with the word “learning”, so it is not necessary for me to hide my identity. At the first meeting, in *ta'aruf* (introduction) forum for new santris, I presented my self as a student of Mahidol University, Thailand, a single woman from Banyuwangi but had moved to Jakarta for working in NGO. I told them that I wanted to stay with them for less than four months to learn about their experience as young single women and santris, and their problems in daily life during living at pesantren. I also told them that I was really interested in the way they learnt about human reproductive and sexual health. My purpose of study and a personal life history were presented along with my interaction with them. At the beginning, a number of santris, particularly senior santris considered me as a new santri, but after two months living there my identity as a researcher was exposed to all over the pesantren. Moreover, when the committee of language development invited me several times to Sunday morning class to give

---

<sup>6</sup> In santri's perception, Thailand is a non Islamic country, which may not allow women muslim wearing jilbab at school because how miserable situation of muslim after 11st September became serious concern for anyone in this pondok. They were surprised as well as proud when I told that I covered my *aurat* like them in Thailand. I also told them that the way I dressed up of course different with when I stayed with them. I made up my self like other modern women but still kept Islamic principles not showing my aurat. I told them that I was very confidence to be a muslim woman and recreated image that we were not stupid and conservative, that was part of my jihad.

correction on English exercises, I always corrected other santris about my identity, but some of them continued to perceive me as a santri because my age did not fit with my face and performance

In ethnographic research, the use of “self” extremely influences data collection process by the informant’s evaluation of the researcher (Lipson 1991 quoted at Predaswat, 1992, p. 25-26). The informant values the researcher according to her or his personality, cultural background, age, gender, social status, and professional background. I was certainly aware that santris and teachers evaluated me from many aspects: as a 29 year old single woman, as a representative of high class women from my identity as a student of Mahidol University, as a woman activist from my relation with important persons there, as a feminist from my several speeches in front of students in reflective forum and *basul masail* (discussion), as an insider (santri) from my activities and physical appearance, as an outsider for the length of the period of my living there. However, I utilized every single aspects of my identity. For example, being a student of Mahidol University made it easier for me to enter in casual conversation or in gossip with santri in dormitory. I let my female santris ask about my educational background, about the life in Thailand etc.; then, I could guide them easily to go to the topic.

My personal interest in female santris’ sexual life as well as my background of a woman activist kept the direction of my data. Since I was interested in sexuality among female santri, I spent most of my time being together with them rather than with male santri or people in higher level. I always had problems conducting my interviews with male santri because it was not allowed for female and male to sit together without companions. I remembered my personal interview with Ed took attention from anyone who was passing the hall where he and I were sitting without a companion. Then, for the next interview with another male santri, I chose a public space and showed my tape recorder in order to give a sign to anyone that I was interviewing this santri and not to disturb us during our conversation.

In short, I could approach my community expectation by using the self as a tool of data collection with a set of differences in gender, cultural and professional roles. However, to control that my data didn’t go too far in that direction, I recorded and analyzed my field notes or interviews to see the possibility of changing my

methods or technique in collecting data or to design new guideline for the next interview.

### 3.3.5 Reality in pesantren, dilemma never end?

“In principle, I agreed with your research but please if you found out ‘something bad’ about sexual behavior of my *santri*, DO NOT PUBLISH IT, TALKED TO PESANTREN AND WE WOULD TREAT IT AS FAIR AS POSSIBLE. I believed in you ”, she smiled .

The quotation above was Ibu Ida’s statement when, the first time, I visited her to have permission for conducting my field study in pondok. I am aware that my objective of this research was to learn how female *santri* negotiated any difficult matter in their life regarding their process of becoming women. My experiences engaging with pesantren life always reminded me that *pesantren* had two sides of life, positive and negative. The good thing was preparing the young *Muslim* generation with knowledge and morality; in contrast, various controversial sexual practices had existed for long time involving teachers or *santris* as perpetrators as well as victims. In any case, I did not have an intention to blow up this issue to become public; besides, it was far from my purpose. However, three a half months interaction with them had built my sense of belonging as a “three months *santri*” with somehow having a duty to maintain its popularity.

I had undergone conflicting feelings when I faced phenomena of juvenile delinquency among *santri* even though there were only small number of cases. Especially with some of their sexual practices: pre-marital sex, abortion, sexual exploitation of female *santri*, and sexual harassment of female *santri* that never ended with solutions. The perpetrators were untouchable within the regulations, while the victims were in disadvantaged situations; they were left feeling embarrassed, not to be chaste anymore, oppressed etc. and finally moved out from the *pesantren*. Other controversial phenomena like fantasy of male *santri* to their partner, liking the same sex, masturbation etc. placed me in difficult situations to choose between the purpose of academic research and my duty to protect *pesantren* popularity. But, finally, I

decided that hiding the real name of the pondok would be better in order to be freer to give descriptions.

Moreover, since I had known that there are various groups of leader who take a part in management of the pondok, I was not quite comfortable undergoing my field study. Actually, I had planned to visit whole families of relatives of the pondok and to get close with them; however, many incidents that related to the socio-political situation in Indonesia (It was during the presidential election in which every group had a different candidate for president.) had created a strained situation that, perhaps, made it risky to involve all groups in this pondok. Finally, I decided not to visit all of them with consideration that I was absolutely legal with the *restu* (permission) of the kyai, the top leader in this pondok.

### **3.4 Process of collecting data**

My research was carried out in not more than a four month period (12<sup>th</sup> July - 6<sup>th</sup> November) in Indonesia. I began by contacting my colleague Ibu Ida by email to have the possibility of conducting my research in her pesantren, besides re-establishing our old relationship since I had been far away for study in Thailand. *Alhamdulillah* (thanks to God), it was not too difficult to have permission from the pesantren to perform my field study, even though it was my first study regarding issues of sexuality to be conducted in *pesantren*. I was lucky to have social capital in the form of personal contact, which I have built since I worked for a women's NGO, Rahima, a national NGO concerned with the issue of women's rights and Islam. When, the first time, I requested to conduct my research in *pondok kota santri*, Ibu Ida, a daughter of kyai, accepted right away because she may have thought that the objective of my research was empowering female *santri*. Besides, it would help *pesantren* to reflect on themselves by listening to a second opinion from an outsider.

During my study in the pondok, I knew two women activists of ASPER, abbreviation of *Aspirasi Perempuan* (Women's Aspiration); one of them, an alumna of this pondok, accompanied me during the first month of my data collection. Since they were native and had experience in Kota Santri Sub District, they helped me in adapting to *Sudanese* culture, like what should and should not be for me to perform during living with them, including adaptation with language and performance. I

reciprocated with translation of any resource data written in Sudanese language as well as with transcriptions of interviews spoken in local language.

During living for 3.5 months, prominent among my methods of data collection was participant observation. The majority of my time was devoted to doing observation, and the greater part of my field notes derived from my experiences participating in day-to-day living with female santris, inside and outside Esa dormitory, as well as teachers or ustadz who interacted directly at two levels; bureaucrat of the pondok and grass-roots or santris on the whole. To approach the female santri's reality, I stayed in the dormitory with them; I just had a break for writing a diary at my private room in Ibu Ida's house. I participated actively in every santris' activity: formal pengajian class, informal class particularly in regard to developing skill in language, *dakwah* (missionary endeavor), and event organizing. To get closer with female santris' culture, I also spent time going to the shopping center with them in order to know how they placed themselves outside the pesantren.

Because I was with them, I could feel how strong the control of pesantren through regulation and consensus, particularly on code of dress and relationship with the opposite sex, which basically exists for protecting santri from immoral conduct. Through participant observation in the everyday life and social interaction among santri and with villagers surrounding the pondok, I knew of some controversial behavior; what religion demanded was different from santris' conduct in a private sphere. That led me to think about fragmented subjectivities in human beings. I also could feel how female santris were positioned in a patriarchal system in this pondok in which male santri became priority in the great moment in pesantren; female santri, on the other hand, had to be satisfied actualizing themselves inside the dormitory.

### **3.4.1 Interviewing Style**

I used several interviewing styles to elicit different information in different categories of informants. My interviewing techniques included formal interview, informal interview, chatting or gossiping. Formal interview was divided into two categories in-depth personal interview and group interview.

Mostly, my interviews with santri were carried out every day within casual situations: every time we involved in daily chatting or gossiping. However, for some

santri who were willing to be interviewed, they requested a group. The reason was to make them more confident and not too nervous and for them to be more active in answering my questions. Usually, it was not big deal to use my tape recorder, but, in some situations, santri refused to let me use it, even in a group interview. Particularly, the issue of sexual harassment always put them in a dilemma; they would speak out the truth, then get bashful or they would keep silent to be safe. Then, in this unexpected situation, I would ask them to tolerate my taking small notes of their discussion, usually just putting a key word on piece of paper.

To make the situation was as natural as possible, I did not use my interview guidelines. That was my first formal interview in my life; therefore, I forgot some points, but I found out the answer through my daily interaction with them. Meanwhile, for interviewing santri, I followed my feeling as an activist and with strong curiosity and ability as a trainer assisting me to go further to reveal unthinkable problems in relaxed situations, treating them as natural and something normal. For example, when we talked about private things, sometimes the forum became a personal consultation particularly relating to romantic love, reproductive and sexual health.

It was not easy to find a comfortable place for interviewing santri, because there was no private room in the dormitory; it challenged me to be smart in choosing good situations to conduct an in-depth interview or a group interview/ discussion. I also had to be aware of sensitive situations in which santris had tight schedule and needed to take a rest, so timing was absolutely important to take into consideration. Normally, interviews were conducted after *pengajian* (mostly around 9-11 pm) or at the evening class for university students, who only had morning and night classes. Sunday became an alternative day, if they did not spend time outside the pesantren or carry out personal activities like cleaning their room, washing, ironing and so forth.

To assist my understanding on this issue, communications with my local advisor and advisors in Thailand were very helpful in redesigning my plan.

### **3.4.2 Field note taking and recording the data**

My observation for the sake of brain storming was running smoothly during my daily interaction with them. Hence, to keep our conversation going naturally and to

avoid gaps between us, I let all our talk occurred naturally, then before going sleep I recorded in hand writing everything I had listened to from them including description of setting and expression in the form of short stories. Then, in the morning, when everyone had gone to school, I went back to Ibu Ida's house to type everything. I purposely did not keep all my electronic tools; computer and other equipment of research at the dormitory. Besides it was too risky; I did not want more to be looked as the other with all I had.

To me, making a note while talking with them looked impolite and a bit disturbing to the nature of our closeness because almost all our discussion happened by accident. When they started to share their experiences in the school, I inserted a particular topic regarding the issue of sexuality. When I tried to make a note, I did not concentrate on them, made myself get lost, and destroyed my focus. However, for some information regarding issues of development of the pesantren and private sensitive issues that were dug out through formal discussion, I used a tape recorder with their consent. I really relied on my limited ability for memorizing everything as it was occurring around me; consequently, I wrote it down in draft as soon as possible after discussion or made a story from every special moment I made with santri later on. I coded my stories everyday to know how far my progress had come and to help me to reflect and to ask critically, then coming out with a new design and strategy of interviewing. In other words, from the stories I made, I learnt my weakness and strengths during interviewing santri or conducting group discussions or even in daily conversation.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

I have two steps for analyzing my findings, which is part of the research process from the data collection step to writing up the result. The first level of my analysis was running when I was in the field. Group and in-depth conversations were recorded and transcribed. Next, all the written texts were read carefully and coded using terms either from participants' own language or from theoretical frameworks already described. I discussed with two women activists who helped me in clarifying some local terms. For example, the term 'lesbian' spoken many times by single young women to refer to the phenomenon of liking the same sex. Therefore I coded this

word “lesbian” and made analysis whether the definition of this word was similar to what my framework mentioned about this issue. From my analysis, I redesigned new questions to know how could a person be called a lesbian? What was the boundary of being lesbian? And I arranged another time to have another group discussion to clarify some unclear statement or, if it was not possible to make it, I did check and recheck using personal conversation. From this, finally, I found out my definition was definitely different from their definition of lesbian or homosexual.

The next step was to section conversation into a table based on an issue I addressed in order to make it easier for me to look at the fluidity and consistence of a subject toward an issue of sexuality. For example, I sectioned the issue of jilbab into some parts like religious meaning, personal meaning, negotiation and resistance to see how contesting discourses influenced single young women.

The second level of my analysis was when I wrote up my result. This time, I applied all the conceptual foundation to interpret recorded conversation under a postmodern feminism framework. I was, to some extent, confused with sectioning my findings because I studied about culture as well as personal perception of culture. However, finally, I decided that my findings encompassed three parts: about pesantren, contesting discourses on sexuality, and sexual subjectivities on issues of sexuality.

I use narrative analysis as one of the most powerful tools in qualitative research (Tan, 2004), carrying out not only women’s enthusiasm, but also the whole of feelings and subjectivities embracing emotional shifting when she is dealing with competing ideas around her. As Michel Tan (2004) remarks that “narrative do not include exaggerated accounts or outright ‘lies’ “. I agree with him that even in controlled surveys lying commonly occurs. However, qualitative research does not tend to find and to claim the absolute truth. Instead, narratives are meant to reveal the meanings in the context of their lives and people around them. Certainly, I am not interested to prove whether IP, a homosexual santri, is really strict on exploration of feeling without engaging in other sexual practices. Also, it is not interesting for me to provide evidence on whether eating and sleeping are useful to release female sexual desire. Instead, their stories are powerful to reveal how sexual culture among santris is constructed.

While the use of discourse analysis can give me some benefit in analyzing conversation: to look at how the process of gender and sexuality are constructed by contesting ideologies, to examine how language is used to control, limit, and domesticate women in idea and practices, to sharpen our lens in seeing the norms, values and ideologies of gender and sexuality as a knowledge that should not be treated as fixed and stable, but as changeable, to benefit women, men and other genders. Finally, to make us aware that culture and individual practices may be inconsistent, therefore the concept of fluid subjectivity in discourse analysis permits us to break out the status quo of dichotomous definition of women's gender and sexual identities in which there is always "a something" in between good and bad, modern and conventional etc.

### **3.6 The Benefit of Research**

#### **3.6.1 Empowering the researched is empowering the researcher**

What is empowering women? Which woman had been empowered? Liberatory goal as the soul of feminist methodology, in my experiences, was not only to liberate women from sexist system, but also to empower researcher to be more culturally sensitive with women's stories during collecting data. I never thought before that what feminist methodology mentioned about liberatory goal was applied both for researcher and researched because some methodology books I had read, did much to expose empowering the known but discussed less about empowering researcher. My process during data collection educated me how to behave and to control myself. People in *pesantren* did not look at who spoke about but who did; I did not need to talk too much, just proved it through daily activities, then they followed me when they saw something beneficial from the conducts.

In the case of discussing virginity and chastity of women, their argumentation, mostly blaming the victim, made a fool of my feeling, particularly interviewing a male santri or a female santri who was very male biased:

Li: "A chaste woman is untouchable. For me, to be touch by men was not virgin anymore, so being chaste was not always having sexual intercourse".

Rb: “What about a woman who loses her virginity and chastity because of being raped?”

Li: That was her mistake. Women were seducer, she could stimulate men sexually. So, it was common when men raped her. Moreover, women must keep and cover her *aurat*

Rb: I thought no women wanted to be raped. Supposed, it happened to you. Did you still blame yourself? In fact you have covered your body.

Li: ...emm (she looked at me surprisingly while thinking something) yeah...why did I blame women? (with very soft voice, like want to talk to her self)..what do you think?

I was afraid of losing control of my self, in keeping our non-verbal communication, particularly facial expression, in the sense of avoiding being judgmental, but still in the corridor of critical analysis. However, sometimes I could not keep control over myself and then addressed a strong critical question to the informant in gender analysis. I was shocked with myself for the second, to give back a strong response in the form of a critical question, but as quick as I could, at the same time, I neutralized it with a joke. I remember Jane Ribbens’s suggestion that one of the most important excellences for a researcher is the ability to listen and hear what is being said which may both be what is being verbalized<sup>7</sup>. I take this idea to suggest to me to be in charge of my strong belief as a feminist. That is, not only encountering sexist opinion, but also to listen, in the sense of giving space for them to speak out, to reflect and to redefine the meaning of becoming women. I am conscious that living under strong construction of a patriarchal system like pesantren makes women definitely uneasy to speak. The only chance to create a small window for them to look at outside is keeping them comfortable to talk to me, then enquiring with them together, with me in building empathy as well as reflection.

Ip, a tomboy personally shared with me her conflicting identity, that she seemed to have two identities in her body; as a woman and a man at once. She was more attracted by girls rather than boys. But she said that she was afraid of being abandoned by her friends if they discovered who she really was. Then, I told her a story about

---

<sup>7</sup> Ribben, Jane, 1998, *Feminist Dilemmas in Qualitative Research-Public Knowledge and Private Lives*, Saga Publication: London, pp. 95. she explains that for emergent data or unexpected findings, when she was interviewing painful experience, the biggest problem she faced was keeping control over non-verbal communication- particularly facial expression-so that she was not appearing to be judgmental. The expression she suggested must be open and receptive to encourage women to keep talking with us.

Dede Utomo that I read from his book. He was a homosexual from Surabaya (Indonesia). I told her about the process of struggling with his identity in which his family, friends and society around him gave negative response at first but later on they could accept him. However, I said to her “one thing that we could learn from Dede, we had to be able to listen our heart voice and be honest to our selves, and believed that, whoever we were, we had to respect each other”. My conversation stopped because her roommates arrived from school. But then she said, “Sister Ruby...did you have time? I needed to talk to you again.”.

### **3.6.2 Liberatory goal**

What is it? Who has to be liberated? Shulamith Reinharz remarks that (postmodern) feminist ethnography is consistent with three goals: to document the lives and activities of women, to understand the experience of women from their own point of view, and to conceptualize women’s behavior as an expression of social context. In general, feminist research should end with eradicating a sexist system (Canilo 1999), “making visible why we do what we do-and how we do this” (Reinharz 1992 in Venables). Basically, I am fully involved in the research, which becomes “a Muslim woman” who really wants to provide a sharing space to reflect her and my experience of becoming women.

I have been working with women since 1998, so I am really aware that building sensitivity to sexism is extremely concerned with timing. Hence, to me, liberatory goal is not a matter of ability of conversion from dominant culture without doing reflection on why we are in unfair situation and how we can negotiate to come to a responsible solution. Therefore, a liberatory goal is not orienting to a result, rather it is tempting in providing “a space to begin” for women to talk (Ribben in Letherby, 2003), to reflect, and to be aware of her self and her position. Therefore, I am not claiming my success; however I feel I have planted a trust in their hearts to be a friend, a sister, a teacher as well as a stranger. The most important thing, I will have opportunity to see their perspective changing after interaction with me like they said:

It had been long time I never been discussed like today...yeah...we almost never had discussion like this. At the first time it was difficult for me to answer

your question Sis? But after that I felt em....I enjoyed to discuss like this...(Eda, 22)

I would lose a place to share when you went back to Thailand...oh..i would miss you...(Widya, 20)

Sis, did you have time for me? I wanted to talk to you again (IP,16)

You made me to think about who was I? I was a woman, but I did not know what was it? (Han, 18)

Sis, could I come and talk to you next time? (Neng, 17)

### **3.7 Writing up the Result**

Presenting the result of work is the most important step of ethnographic study, in which the text production presents the wealth of empirical materials and a totalizing description of reality<sup>8</sup> or what Geertz called thick description. In this case, I face some difficulties in the process of data management such as problem of translation and the authorship, which strongly influence me to re-present the reality.

#### **3.7.1 Problem on translation**

Transferring narrative in local language into English in order to publicize the result of work is a great dilemma, and causes many reductions. Since this thesis is produced in the English language, I should write up my result of work in English as well as quotations of interviews in order to provide evidence or for me to represent the voice from the field. However, I am really afraid that my ability in describing the reality with my limitation of English may possibly give incorrect reality. Therefore, I put on both local language and translation in every quotation together in my work. I face many difficulties, too, in translating some narratives having much local expression barely understood among young female students in pesantren. For example, the word *zina*, in the Qur'an translation means "adultery". However the meaning of adultery does not fit with what the Qur'an proposes because the word *zina* is applied to explain any kind of sexual relation outside marriage including having pre-marital sex.

### 3.7.2 The researcher as the author

Authorship<sup>9</sup> is the most important issue in postmodernist study in which the researcher as the author at the same time. It is about the interest of researcher to pay attention to the research work. Since postmodernism tends to focus on issues of difference and representation, therefore, the strong discussions also shift away from theory, data and interpretation and toward language and presentation as central elements in research<sup>10</sup>. Language is about the detailed description of the reality full of empirical material, while representation is a process of producing the reality in which the researcher determines what is selected or not selected for attention and how it is observed and presented. Mat Alvetsson (1999) in his work “Reflexive Methodology”, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2000) in “Decolonizing Methodology”, and Gayle Letherby (2003) in “Feminist Research in Theory and Practice” seem to give the same attention to the problem of representation in which the power of researcher through knowledge-claims determine in what interest and in what way the reality is depicted.<sup>11</sup> And ethnographic study is very much concerned with representation by providing the reality in its entirety.

Reflecting to my field work, during the time I wrote my diary and transcript interview from cassette, I released that it is my subjectivity to capture the reality. Then, what I write down in the resulting work is representing my subjectivity too; probably, it is not the real reality. Because it is very possible when I describe “them” in detail, at the same time as I speak as “the other”, perhaps I block other alternative voices. For example, when I brought up the diversity of perception of female santri toward *jilbab*, I found out every santri had different opinions of wearing *jilbab*. Since I apply postmodern feminism, I focus on the issue of diverse reality; in this case, I more emphasize subjectivity of their interpreting religious principles of wearing the

---

<sup>8</sup> Alvetsson, Mat and Kaj Skoldberg 2000, reflexive Methodology New Vistas For Qualitative Research, Saga Publicatio: London, pp 168)

<sup>9</sup> See Alvetsson, Reflexive Methodology, emphasizes this issue to be important in postmodernist research, since they are concerned on subjectivity in representing reality. He said “what exactly is meant this reality is often left rather unclear as the emphasis is on the textual and fictional. Therefore to him, authorship, style and text production is a central to all research far beyond “writing up the result”.

<sup>10</sup> Alvetsson, 2000, pp. 167)

<sup>11</sup> See Smith, Linda T,1999, Decolonizing Methodology Research and Indigenous People, St Martin’ Press: New York, pp. 150-151; Alvetsson, Mat et al, 2000, Reflexive Methodology New Vistas for

*jilbab*. To me, as a feminist who has been working in women's issues over the years, I am much interested to portray women as victim and agency at the same time. I believe every one has a way to survive in difficult situations, including women who live under sexist systems. However, in the lenses of postmodernist feminism, women will be represented as agency; I place female santri as active agents in negotiating their lives within sexist community like pondok pesantren and I provide a small space for other reality which describe women as victim of biased interpretation of religious tenets concerning issues of dress code in Islam. I depict them as agency for the reason that the discourse of jilbab in Indonesia has been overwhelming a result of patriarchal culture as the root of problem. In fact, only a few of them carry out the voice of women in interpreting the religious tenets which they are working out in negotiating within religious demand, particular condition of life, contemporary Indonesian culture and so forth. Even though it is dilemma for me to select which side of women's lives I am going to present in my work, I realize that what Kelly mentions about feminist research is definitely reasonable: that the research may involve misrepresentation of the women's (researched) life from their words/meanings/ experiences, but the important thing, a final goal, is presenting every single reality, having effect in every single life, and not to be concerned solely with the issue of representation rather "reality" itself<sup>12</sup>.

### 3.7.3 Style of Writing

I use descriptive analytical writing to present women's experience on sexuality. To give sense of locality I use bilingual (Bahasa and English) in quotation which I transcribed from a tape recording in order to open a chance for the reader (who may speak Bahasa) to criticize my English translation. Conversation style is utilized in order to get the whole context and situation where researcher and researched are building knowledge. Lastly, since I study about diversities of meaning of sexuality and the spirit of my study centers on women's voices, I do not want to

---

Qualitative Research, Saga Publication: London, pp. 167-173; Letherby, Gayle, 2003, *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice*, Philadelphia, pp. 75-77

<sup>12</sup> See Kelly et al, 1994 cited at Letherby, 2003, pp 78. she said that the possible way to do in minimalizing problem of miss-representation is putting narration of the women as evidence and analyzing with the researcher's own political, personal and intellectual perspective.

arrive at a judgmental opinion so early by situating readers in a particular definition. Therefore, I avoid some theoretical terms on headings or sub-headings in order not to come into judgmental analysis; rather, I prefer to explore meaning through women's narrative and let the reader think. Then, before finishing the section, I put in some theoretical information to underline women's narrative and to make their voice more powerful.

## CHAPTER IV

### ABOUT PESANTREN IN KOTA SANTRI

This chapter explores the big picture of Pondok Pesantren Kota Santri, which encompasses three sub components: (1) Pondok Kota Santri in overview, (2) learning sexuality and (3) female santris' life in the sense of describing becoming women in this pondok.

#### **4.1 The Pondok Kota Santri: Overview**

Kota Santri, a sub regency of a small town, in West Java within which this study was conducted, is a small village with a big modern pondok complex a bit in contrast with the life of surrounding lower class of society, which earn money by selling basic needs for santris. Kota Santri is seven hours from Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, the largest city, by bus, the only comfortable public transportation, and an hour from the bus terminal Cilem. It's called a town of thousand hills marking a fertile countryside with a lot of small hills circling this sub-district, green rice cultivation extending over a hectare of ponds with *gurame* and *ikan mas* (fish) as the main products of this village, more than rice. Big and small pondok are everywhere; in the evening young or old people, female with jilbab and male with *baju koko* and *sarong* (santris garment) going to the mosque for prayer and reciting Qur'an, really much reflect "kota santri"<sup>1</sup>.

500 meters from the main country road, Rp 1000 by *becak* (a pedicab with three-wheels), we can reach specific sight of pondok kota santri complex with a lot of vendors selling many kinds of foods and drinks along the street near by pondok buildings, *pangkalan ojek* and *becak* (the place of hired motorcycle and pedicab). A number of small shops provide accoutrements of santri such as mattress, pillow,

---

<sup>1</sup> Clifford Geertz in the religion of java defines santri as a member of part of Javanese population who take their Islam seriously- who pray, go to mosque on Friday and so on, entirely overshadow by Islamic doctrine (1960: 127). On the other hand the term *santy*, in the narrow sense, it means a student who

blanket, a set of bathing equipment like soap and shampoo, detergent and cosmetics etc. Almost without border, no big wall or fence separating pondok and society, people who live surrounding pondok earn money by running small business such food stalls, coffee shop, *wartels* are an abbreviation for *warung telekomunikasi* (telephone shops), rental computers, book stores, photocopy shop and so on. Those places, besides, function as transaction centers; they are meeting points of female and male santri, where they can interact with each other, sharing information, or spending some time with their boy/ girl friend. Only an internet shop is not there. Eda, one of senior santri explained to me as follow

One of kyai of pondok banned internet business for long time. They worried of bad impact of this technology. When someone who wanted to run internet business near by pondok, he asked permission from kyai, but kyai Bunya did not give permission. He did not want his santris followed the trend of modernization, accessing porn sites and influenced by porn material from internet.

Tasikmalaya has about 251 pesantren officially recorded, and more than the given number exist if we use local definition of pesantren, at least having 3 elements; kyai, santri and *kitab kuning*. Perhaps it is true if we can easily find over 20 pesantren (small and big) around pondok kota santri.

There are a number of researchers who study *pondok pesantren*. One of them, a famous ethnographer Clifford Geertz (1960) describes *pondok* as below:

A *pondok* consists of a teacher-leader, commonly a pilgrim (haji), who is called a kyai, and a group of male pupils, called santris. Traditionally and still to extent today, the santri live at the pondok in cloister-like dormitories, cook their own food, and wash their own clothes...the pondok buildings, almost without exception located in the country side, usually consist of a mosque (masjid), a house of kyai, and a set of dormitories for santri. Classes are held in the mosque, where the kyai chants passages from books of religious commentary, and the santri echo him, line by line<sup>2</sup>...

---

lives in boarding school, pondok pesantren. in kota santri, people say “kalau tidak mondok, bukan orang tasik” (if someone does not study at pondok, he/ she may not be a native (people living in Tsk)

<sup>2</sup> Geertz, Clifford, 1960, *The Religion of Java*, the University of California Press: Chicago, pp 178

However *pondok* kota santri is a typically modern pesantren, which has existed since 1931, locating almost no gap with common villagers. It is unlike typical pondok in Java, where the location of pesantren seemingly have no direct contact with surrounding society; normally, the complex of a pondok is separated from the local community by a wall or a fence<sup>3</sup>. Pondok kota santri is unique in term of physical position, where circumstance of pesantren are blurred with surrounding society. When I asked Muhammad (a son in law of kyai, about the design of pondok, he mentioned like this

“I thought that the location of this pondok not separate to surrounding society, it was by design? He said you were right, but I did not want to debate whether it was designed or not. I felt that like other pesantren it grew up by nature. In principle, human being like *beramal sholeh* (charitable) and with the philosophy of *berbuat* (doing). We lived in big family, so many persons have many ideas. When one thought “it was good to do this, then did it”. In other time, it was needed to build other facility or to add dormitories, then it happened. Therefore, you might see that the buildings here were not in good arrangement. Because it might constraint in many thing; land, money, etc.

The pondok building placed in the countryside is comprised of a mosque, as the center of activities of “male” santri, a house of the Kyai (with K capital means the top leader), other houses of kyais (higher rank of teacher), *madrasah* (religious schools), universities and a set of dormitories for male and female santris. When Geertz mentions pondok, it is associated with a group of male santris; however, in pondok kota santri, the composition of female and male santris almost equal. Mostly, dormitories are located inside the gate of a pondok; because this pondok did not grow by design, two female dormitories (*Arromaniah* and *Esa Baru*) became established outside of the gate, but, in this context, they are still within the complex of the pondok. To rule the relationship of female and male santris, the dormitories of santris are placed in a group. Male dormitories are on the left side of the mosque, while dormitories for female santris, which are normally inseparable with houses of kyais<sup>4</sup>,

---

<sup>3</sup> See Rahardjo in Ibrahim, Ahmad, 1985, Reading on Islam in Southeast Asia, Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, pp 243.

<sup>4</sup> Thus the term kyai in my study has a broad meaning. In this context kyais with “k” is higher rank of teacher in pondok. Almost the manager of female dormitories are called kyai, in contrast people

are mostly on the right side of the mosque (only Al-Uswah and Arruhiya are located side by side with male complex).

Male dormitories consist of nine buildings (*Pusaka, Bahagia, Selamat, Sejahtera, Nugraha, Al-Jihad, Al-Amin Putra, Al-Bahriyah and Al-Jabar*) which are directly under the supervisor of pesantren. The secretary of pesantren, K.H Bunya (a younger brother of K.H Ilyat, the leader) now holds all management of administration and the policy of pondok. Meanwhile, the leader of pondok, KH Ilyat, focuses more on macro policy, strongly related to the social-political situation in Indonesia. He is one of the important persons in PB NU (the central of broad of *Nahdatul Ulama*, the biggest mass Muslim organization in Indonesia); since his health became unstable, he took a role on national level as a facilitator of Muslim leaders within NU. Together with Gus Dur<sup>5</sup>, he initiated rebuilding Indonesia by bringing back NU to *khitoh* (original goal), not to intervene on political arena. In contrast, female dormitories are located at the same building as the *kyais'* house; *kyais* act as manager as well as parents for them. There are eleven female dormitories (*Al-Bahriyah, Al-Ruhiyah, Raudlatul Banat I, Raudlatul Banat II, Al-Istiqomah, As-Sa'adah, Al-Muna, Al-Amin Putri, Esa, Ar-rohmaniyah and Al-Badriyah*), which were not established at the same time. To make managing as well as controlling female *santris* easy, the administration and management of *santris* tuition, food, and *pengajian* (religious class) for basic class is held by the host. They are the sons and daughter of the founder, senior *ustadz* who were requested by *Aba Ajengan*, the founder of pondok and who are trusted to help *kyai* to manage pondok including controlling *santris* behavior. Hence, in kota *santris*, *santri* are not allowed to cook by themselves because a *dapur umum* (common kitchen) already provides food for them. But then, later on, for the reason of *santris* freedom to enjoy other foods, *pondok* only provide rice for them. They can buy *rencang* (a variety of side dishes) from the vendors nearby the *pondok*, or from small

---

surrounding pondok kota *santri* only believe on one *Kyai*, is KH. Ilyat, the top leader of pondok. The rest of them are just higher rank of teacher and manager of pondok. Normally *kyais* are the sons of the founder

<sup>5</sup> Abdurahman Wahid who is famous with Gus Dur is our previous president as well as the previous leader of NU. During his leadership, issue of democracy was strongly promoted to achieve better situation. He provided priority to social movement to take a part to government mainstream in empowering society.

food stalls around which are cheaper than the price outside. With Rp 1000 Rupiah (\$ 1 = Rp 8000) one can get *nasi uduk* (rice with coconut milk) or *kupat sayur* (rolled rice with coconut milk soup) for breakfast and *soteng* (chicken soup with cucumber), which has three small pieces of chicken, for lunch. If they had money in order to increase nutrition, they can spend not more than Rp 4000 for delicious roasted fish or chicken. It is extremely inexpensive. Only on special occasion, santri are allowed to cook together, they called *ngaliwet*<sup>6</sup>, especially on approaching the fasting month. At this time, *pengajian* classes are free, so every student can use this time to go anywhere, to visit parents or *ngaliwet*; to cook and to go somewhere to enjoy their food.

#### 4.1.1 The development of pondok

Historically, the presence of pondok kota santri was demanded by society, or *swadaya masyarakat* which is based on a collective need for learning religion. Society endowed their property to build *kampong pondok* (a set of buildings) in which they could learn Islam from knowledgeable person, *kyai*. With 40 santri who were brought from pesantren Cilenga where Aba Ajengan, the founder studied, with trust from society, and, of course, with his knowledge and charisma, in 1931, (some documentation<sup>7</sup> mentioned 1930), a *kampong pondok santri* was founded; a mosque, a house of *kyai*, and *pondokan* (house) were made from bamboo and wood. Activity of *dakwah* (missionary endeavor) was to be priority of the *pondok* to promote the mission of *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar* (encouraging good and restraining evil) though holding *pengajian umum* (religious meeting) for villagers (female and male), while *kitab kuning* was only studied in *pondok*, only for *santris*. As an alternative educational institution, *pondok* invited all people who wanted to study Islam without paying tuition. Normally, parents visited the *kyai* to keep their children with him and gave

---

<sup>6</sup> The term *ngaliwet* has a broad and specific meaning. It is special term among santri, which originally taken from sundanese language. In the narrow sense, it means cooking rice with coconut milk then putting egg or salty fish, and anything that make it delicious. However it also means santri are cooking together, then eating it with big group.

<sup>7</sup> See Anonymous, *sekilas tentang pondok pesantren Cps* (a glance of pesantren Cps) tells about the history of pesantren and geneology of the family of pondok. While Garis-Garis Besar Kebijakan Pesantren (Guideline the pesantren's policy) contains of the history of pesantren, model of development and guidance and also main planning for short and long range of pondok

small amounts of money for daily needs. Both *santris* and *santris kalong*, *santris* who just studied at night and did not stay at *pondok*, were treated equally. One of the alumni, Pak Kholil told me:

The first generation were mostly from rural area, because participation of villager in building *pondok*. At the first time, *pondok* was purely from, by, and for society, moreover at that time we were almost absent from government assistance. This *pondok* had existed from donor and also from alumni or other figure who was interested on this *pondok* because the figure of *pondok*, *aba ajengan* was a person who build NU in Tasikmalaya, hence many people take a part in supporting this institution. I was *ngaji* in this pesantren after graduated from junior high school, just simple school in village, then I followed my friend to study at this *pondok*. But I was only study at night, we called it “*ngalong*”, however *Aba ajengan* treated us fairly, he also provided a room for us, because we leaved in the morning. As far as I knew *santris* never requested to pay tuition or other administration fee. Our parents just came to *kyai* asking permission for keeping their children with him, and leaving some small money for daily need of the children. Like me, I never paid during study there, because *Sheihuna* (*kyai*) knew that people living around pesantren were poor. The important thing they were willing to *ngaji*. Now I notice many children from town *ngaji* in *pondok*, but very rarely children from rural area

As mediator of society, *pondok kota santri* developed very rapidly to fulfill the demand of society and modern life in which society did not merely require *ngaji* but also a school. The founder was extremely sensitive to that condition, hence an accommodative principle was taken as a standpoint to expand the *pondok*. At this time, the *pondok* does not produce *kyai* like at the previous, but as a moral educator as well as a moral repairer. Recently, parents send their children to *pondok pesantren* less to get knowledge in Islam, than to protect them from decadence of morality as the impact of modernity reaches out there. In the past, mostly people living in rural areas chose pesantren as educational institutions for their children, but now pesantren are one of the favorite places for parents to protect children from a modern life style or to repair their morality. I found out that more than 50% of *santris* in *pondok kota santri* are from cities such as Jakarta, Bekasi, Tangerang, Karawang, Bogor, and Bandung, whose parents have a good educational background and a higher social-economic status in their community. The only reason is to give earlier protection.

#### 4.1.2 Educational system in pondok

*Pondok kota santri* has developed two educational systems: formal and non-formal. The use of the terms formal and non-formal in this study is just to distinguish between *sekolah* (school) and *ngaji* (learning Islam). In the past, pondok was considered as *kolot* (traditional/ conservative), in term of the system used, which only learned about Islam, was not organized into classes, had no formal means for assessment of students' performance, had no curricula, and so on. However, in the conservative system, the relation of *kyai* and *santri* was closer than in the modern system. The role of *Kyai* (K capital) was clear, as teacher and parents of *santri*. As teacher, he put teaching as a primary duty. Normally, *Kyai* may only hold one class for at least five hours a day. *Santris* read kitab in gathering; it was known as *halaqa* (a circle), sitting together on the floor in circle around *kyai*. The student remained in the group for as long as it took them to master in the subject. Every progress of each *santri* is assessed individually by a *kyai*. It takes more than seven years to finish *ngaji*. Ibu Zubaid, 44 years (a daughter of the late of Ibu Sua, a senior female *santri* being requested by Aba Ajengan to be teacher in pondok kota santri) told me:

In traditional system, when Aba Ajengan taught *santris*, he knew one by one of *santris*. He really did not only teach us, he also woke *santris* up in the morning for *ngaji*. I still remember when he was walking with *troumpa*, the sound was so clear and recognizable *klek...klek...klek...* while coughing slightly..*ehem...* then we immediately woke up. So he paid attention of each *santri*, because the amount was small and also because the *himah* (motivation) of teaching was really serious that teaching was building generation. It was so strong. The idealism was embedded in him. His characteristics influenced to many *kyais*, his *santris* before. When I asked how *aba ajengan* made *santris* understand kitab? She said "at the past, *ngaji* was not only listening *kyai*; understand or not was number two. But we had *taqriban* (weekly examination) every Wednesday. *Santris* were trained by being addressed with many questions, like discussion, really lively. When I was five years old, I strongly remember that moment. And he did not teach all the kitabs, he just gave selected kitab; the basic one such as *sorof*, *jurumiyah*, *alfiyah* (these all about Arabic grammar).

In *pondok kota santri*, graduation for *santris* only happened in the past when Aba Ajengan was still active in managing pondok. They called it *mukimin*, ceremonial for *santris* who were able to finish *kitabs*. *Santri* who could finish the

highest level of kitab such as *jam'ul jawami* (a book about religious duties), *fathul wahab* (a book about religious duties), *ihya ulumudin* (a book about *tasawuf*, piousness, morality) and so on were permitted to go back home and open new pesantren. They called it *mengabdi pada masyarakat*, a time for santri to put their knowledge to use for society. In that moment, Aba ajengan accompanied them as well as introduced them to society so that they could study about Islam in a new pondok with his santris. On the other hand, for santris who were not able to finish the highest level of kitab, they were not awarded or *diwisuda*. Commonly, they returned home alone, without chaperonage of kyai. Recently, with great number of students and the matter of his health, kyai hands over part of his responsibility to *ustadz* or senior santri in monitoring the progress of santri as well as the development of pondok. Only in big moment in pesantren, he gives a speech, normally appealing for all teachers and santri to maintain principles of pesantren and encourage santri to learn more<sup>8</sup>.

On the other hand, since the *madrasah*<sup>9</sup> system was introduced in pesantren all over Java, particularly, and kota santri began to visit other pesantren for comparative study, it changed into the classical system<sup>10</sup>, in which the level of class is determined based on a santri's understanding of Islam. According to Pak Andar, one of teachers who was responsible for pesantren curricula:

Basically *pengajian* class was divided into six classes, which all classes were held on three times a day; morning, afternoon and evening classes (see complete schedule in appendix). The basic classes were for students who did not have basic knowledge of reciting holy Qur'an. In this level, student studied about the basic of Islamic ritual regarding issue of reciting Qur'an correctly, conducting sholat (prayers), ablution before prayer, after menstruation, giving birth, sexual congress etc, basically to understand some fundamental principle of performing worship. Then, classes for preparation were for students who had been able to recite Qur'an. A higher class was a class 1 as level as elementary school, which were for student who had an ability to read *kitab nawu* (Arabic grammar). In this level, at least students could read even a small part of *jurumiyah* (basic Arabic grammar reference), *fiqih* (Islamic jurisprudence). While students in second level should be able to grasp *jurumiyah*, but had not been able to *alfiyah* (higher level of Arabic

---

<sup>8</sup> Pak Kholil (50s), an alumni of santri

<sup>9</sup> *Madrasah* in Indonesia is day schools that follow a government curriculum since 1994.

<sup>10</sup> Ibu Zubaid ( 44 ) is an alumni of pondok and now teach in MAN. Her mother was one of *ulama* (muslim scholar ) in this village teaching many years in pondok,

grammar book) and of course for those who were able in *alfiyah*, were promoted to higher class (class three or four). Unfortunately, recently the highest level of study in pengajian class only could be attained before the death of the founder of pesantren, Abah Ajengan.

I agree that managing 2000 santri is not easy; therefore, modern systems are very helpful in this sense. Even so, there are a lot of values that have been lost by this system like the closeness between kyai and santri and the professionalism of kyai. Not being able to individually assess santris' progress because *ngaji* uses collective system, which is more lecture than discussion makes it difficult to identify whether santris clearly understand the lesson or not. *Taqriban*, a weekly test in which kyai individually takes a part in evaluating santris, is replaced by a writing examination as the only measurement to determine in which class santris should study. The role of kyai has been taken over by *ustadz*, senior santri who are able to teach, who definitely have various perspectives in interpreting *kitab*s.

The *Persekolahan* (school) system in pondok kota santri has two models of religious schools, *madrasah* and non-*madrasah*, which apply modern system like other western schools. The madrasah system consists of:

- a. Kindergarten
- b. *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* I and II (religious elementary school I and II)
- c. *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (the same level as secondary school)
- d. *Madrasah Aliyah* (the same level as senior high school)
- e. Institute Agama Islam Cipasung (institute for Islamic study)

Like other religious based schools outside *pesantren*, the system and curricula of these schools is adopted from governmental policy on educational system for *madrasah* designed by the department of religion in Indonesia, which portion of course should be 70 percent for Islam and 30 percent for public knowledge. Therefore, to produce a young generation, who are adequate in public knowledge as well as in religious

principles, pesantren provide other courses like Arabic language<sup>11</sup>, *aqidah* (faith) and *syariah* (Islamic law).

Additionally, to fulfill society's need to send their children to pondok as well as to study at schools, in 1949, *Sekolah Pendidikan Islam* (school for Islamic education) was established. Five years after that, it changed to *Sekolah Menengah Islam* (Islamic secondary school). Years after a secondary school was established, in succession, the other institutions like Islamic senior high school (SMAI), now known as SMUI (*Sekolah Menengah Umum Islam* or Islamic senior high school). Then, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1965, *fakultas tarbiyah* (faculty of education) was founded as the first faculty of institute of Islamic study in Cps. In 1969, a school for preparing for the state institute of Islamic study (SP IAIN), the *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri* (religious based school for senior high school) was built to complete other schools. In general, pondok has 4 non-*madrasah* schools:

- a. SMPI (Islamic secondary school)
- b. SMUI (Islamic senior high school)
- c. *Sekolah Tinggi Technology CPS* (college for science )
- d. *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi CPS* (college for economic science)

#### 4.1.3 The pattern of Pengajian

Beginning with the motivation of the founder of the pondok, of course, the main reason generally for coming to this institution is for learning *syariah* Islam. Now it extends to other purposes like to repair morality or to protect from moral decadence from modernity. Therefore, I put *pengajian* as formal activities in pondok kota santri because everyone should follow *pengajian* if they stay at dormitories. Every year, pesantren holds a test called *imtihan*, an evaluation of santris the purpose of which is to classify new santris for different level of classes; for older santris, *imtihan* is aimed to evaluate them to promote santris to a higher level. The classifications of santris are based on their ability to understand holy Qur'an and *kitab*

---

<sup>11</sup> Since last year, pesantren encourage student to improve Arabic language through non formal activities in pesantren such as muhadasah (practicing Arabic or English through creative activities like singing, conversation etc), which held every Sunday morning.

*kuning* (yellow book). Regarding skill in languages, Arabic and English are primarily evaluated.

[Each] Every dormitory has [the] authority to design curricula for its basic classes; in Esa, a dormitory under supervisor of the wife of kyai, Ibu Syehuna, in which this study was conducted, divides basic class into three levels; *Marhalat Tamhidiyah* (MT) Ula, MT *Tsaniyah* and MT *Tsalitsah*. The subjects typically taught are Holy *Qur'an*, *tajwid*, *tauhid*, *fiqh*, *akhlaq*, *nahwu*, *sharaf*, Arabic language, and hadith, with different topics and level explanations. Only in MT Ula, *santris* do not study *hadith*; it much focuses on the basic concept of worship. Additionally, other subjects like *falaq*, *tasawuf*, *tafsir*, *tarich*, are taught in higher classes. *Tajwid* and *Qur'an* is the study about how to recite the *Qur'an* correctly; besides, *santris* also are requested to remember by heart some verses in the *Qur'an*. *Tauhid* is concerned with Islamic logic and theology. *Fiqh* is the study of religious duty and has two divisions: that concerned with the correct manner of performance of the pillars- the prayers, pilgrimage, fast, and so on and that concerned with personal relationships – marriage law, criminal law, and commercial law, which strongly promotes morality teaching. *Akhlaq* is ethics, how to behave as *santris* and *Muslims* in general. *Nahwu* (basic: *jurumiyah*, advance: *alfiyah*) and *sharaf* are the study of Arabic grammar as the basic skill of reading *kitab kuning*, and only few chapters of *jurumiyah* are given to *santri* in this level; the rest of the chapters and the advanced ones will be studied in a higher class. *Falaq* consist of astronomical methods for calculating the times of prayers, the fast, and so on. *Tasawuf* (Sufism) is concerned with Islamic mystical philosophy and practice. It is the highest ranking of study Islam, which has much philosophy and mysticism; therefore, the practice is, to some extent, hazardous to younger *santris* because it can lead them to heresy. Senior *santris* better understand the “meaning of religion” philosophically. This subject is what Geertz names in the Religion of Java as the characteristic of mystic *pondok* (1960, p. 186).

*Pengajian* classes are carried out at the same time in which kyai take an important role or advanced *santris* who are promoted to *ustadz/ustadzah* (lower rank of teacher) to handle the class. The *ngaji* hours are from 5.30-6.30 am, 4-5/5.30 pm, 7-10 pm, while in *pasaran*, special class in *Ramadhan* month, the *ngaji* hours are from 1-3 pm, 4-5 pm, and 8-11/ 12 pm. *Santris* have the day off from Friday noon for *ngaji*

and Sunday for school. The *pengajian* is always marked with a bell ringing fifteen minutes before the start. The security staff of the dormitory announce to santri to get ready with an announcement like this “*ali’lan li jamiil talamidu wa talamidoh istaidu litaalum kitab* (for all members of the dormitory, this is time to ngaji kitab, hurry up please!)”. Simultaneously, another board of santri is checking rooms to room ensuring that all santri are getting ready for *ngaji*. Santri must have been at a class 10 minutes before *pengajian* begins. With uniform; sarong, white cloth and *jilbab*, they are moving to their class through two different entrances, female on the right side and male on the left side. Upon arrival, *santri* take a place on the floor, squatting in formal *sundanese/ javanese* sitting posture called *sila*<sup>12</sup> for male *santris*; female *santris* are sitting in another sitting position called *epok*. In front of the class, there is a table and a chair somewhat sticking out into the male’s space on which *Ustadz* is sitting. The class is separated by *hijab* through which female and male *santris* cannot be interacting with each other during *pengajian*. Five minutes after that, a *kyai* or *ustadz* comes and sits on the chair, starting *pengajian* with *assalamu’alaikum* (Islamic greeting), then leads santri to read *Al-Fatihah* (first verse in the Qur’an) and *salawat* (greeting to the Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Pondok, and the author of *kitab* to get their scrutinizing of the *kitab* while giving some commentaries on it). The *ustadz* of *kyai* stops every five lines then asks *santris* to reread the *kitab* collectively.

Other activity to improve Arabic and English languages is *muhadasah*, exercising Arabic and English languages. *Santris* are gathering separately in the yard of the pondok, male *santri* are in the main yard in front of mosque and female *santris* are at the back yard located nearby Esa dormitory, precisely in the center of the buildings of the dormitory and *madrasah tsanawiyah*. *Muhadasah* continues from 8-10 am every Sunday morning. During this time, every dormitory is requested by a language committee, all male, to perform song, conversation, and speech both in Arabic language and in English. Sometimes, the committee randomly selects *santris* to go in front to have conversation in English or Arabic, or they address some questions and the selected *santri* must answer it. If they cannot answer the question,

---

<sup>12</sup> See Geertz on the Religion of Java, he defines *Sila* is sitting with legs folded inward and crossed in front of the body and with the trunk ramrod stiff), while for female they call *epok*, means sitting with legs folded to one side in front of the body and with the trunk ramrod stiff.

the committee will punish them. Therefore, it is a moment that makes their heart beat rapidly, scared of being selected by committee and unable to give a correct response.

Like other majority pondok in Indonesia, kota santri also applies two traditional systems of teaching: *bandongan* and *sorogan*. *Bandongan* is a lecturing method in which kyai read loudly *kitab kuning*, giving interpretations, normally in the local language, while santri are scrutinizing some words of which they do not know the meaning; they write the meaning of the Arabic script in the local language. The *sorogan* system encourages santri to study hard and reflect on the text contextualized with actual phenomena. In *sorogan* method, santri take dominant roles to explore content of classical text, while the *kyai* produces many question from many perspectives to ensure that santri really understand the text<sup>13</sup>. He (an advanced santri who was promoted to be a ustadz) told me:

“the method of teaching used in this pondok, firstly *sorogan*, we maintained it, even though it was different in subject and time. Secondly ***bandongan system***, this was dominant used in here, third *pasaran* system, similar with short pesantren Recently *sorogan* system was different from at the past. At the previous, santri had to read one word and explained it, so everyone had different argumentation. And they had different *anca* (limit of study). For example, A had reached page 7, but B was still in page 3 etc... but now, it was collective. Santris were just requested to solely *ngalogat* (read *kitab* with explanation) or remembered it. It was really much looked like in package, so everyone finished at the same time. Perhaps because we had a big number of santri, so it took time to apply the old system.

#### 4.1.4 Informal Activities

To prepare santri, who are knowledgeable both in *kitab* and other skills, *pesantren* also provides extra activities in order to supply or to sharpen santri with skills like learning the art of decorating and adorning a room, calligraphy being organized by WATAK (*Wahana Tulisan Aksara*). The aim of this organization is to provide or to facilitate students in sharpening their talent and interest in calligraphy

---

<sup>13</sup> See Muhammad, Husein, 2002, *Kultur – The Indonesian Journal For Muslim Cultures*, Center for Language and Culture: Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 67; Soebardi in Israeli, Raphael, 1982, *The Crescent in The East- Islam in Asia Major*, Indian Book House: Bombay, pp 185

and room decoration. Normally, *santris* who were interested in this field chose one of them because both of calligraphy and decoration were held only on Sunday. Starting at 9.00 o'clock to 15.00 in the afternoon, *santris* will be able to focus only on one subject, therefore it will not be easy for those who are interested in both calligraphy and decoration, except that they set up the time one semester for calligraphy and the next semester for decoration. Unfortunately, for calligraphy, it takes more practice and a long time to be a master; therefore, it is difficult to target being skillful in a year. According to Renny, one of the female santri joining for a year in calligraphy class, in every meeting it was possible to practice writing only one to two letters beautifully. To produce high quality of writing, *santris* must persevere in practicing. I assumed that female *santris* would choose more opportunities to join in keeping with their stereotype as persons who are gentle, love beauty, being able to persevere in complicated works. In contrast, most male *santris* involved in this field, presumably had strong intention and are suited for this work. Moreover, most events are prepared at night including room decoration so that female santri cannot take a part in this session optimally. While female *santris* are prefer to spend their time for washing clothes, ironing, or cleaning their rooms on Sunday.

For santri who are interested in missionary activities could join to *Pelatihan Kader Juru Dakwah* (PKJD) or training for cadre of missionary, which is held every Friday evening and on Sunday morning from 9.00 o'clock to 12.00 o'clock at lunch time. Unlike WATAK, seemingly PKJD has been interested in both female and male santri in creating the ability to give sermons to society. It was around 100 santri joining this organization who really wanted to learn to be missionaries in the future, to promote Islamic tenets, when they returned some day to their home towns. In Indonesian culture, graduated students of pesantren seem always to be believed as a person who can manage society; capable of arranging every special moment conducted in their society, and capable of leading society to create a nice environment. Therefore, PKJD provided santri with capability as missionaries in two languages, Arabic and English.

Another organization formed activities to provide *santris* with skill of reciting Al'quran attractively, *sholawat nabi* (prayers of blessing for the prophet Muhammad) and singing Islamic songs; called *nashid*; it was *Lembaga Pengembangan Tilawatil*

*Qur'an* (organization for developing skill in recitation of the Qur'an). These activities also had many participants, both female and male santri. To produce good *qari'ah* (a person who is skillful in reciting Qur'an attractively), students must follow a routine class every Friday evening and Sunday morning. According to Imas, female santri who had been joining this class for a year, to know the improvement of student's skill, they were tested in every the end of the year in all skills; reciting Qur'an, *sholawat* and *nashid*. "Wah..it was difficult my sister, I had been joining this class for a year but I had not been able to recite Qur'an. I just must be happy with my capability in reciting sholawat and *muratul Qur'an* (reciting Qur'an in quick melodious way)", said Imas embarrassedly. Some female santri supported Imas that there were a lot of students participating in extra activities only for the sake of having experiences during staying at pesantren; therefore, it was not easy for the organization itself to produce skillful students. However, for those who continued their study in this pesantren, they became aware and sharpened their skills only with selective talent. In this sense, they began to develop their talent seriously.

#### **4.2 Learning Sexuality is Learning Morality**

Sex in Islam is considered as the main quality endowed by God to human nature. In Islamic discourse, sex is associated with reproduction, pleasure and morality. As reproduction, sex is permitted within marriage to produce babies in order to maintain family lineage. As pleasure, Islam is very concerned with sexual practice between husband and wife giving detailed descriptions how to do sexual foreplay, lovemaking and sexual fantasy under Islamic ethics by referring to the experience of the prophet<sup>14</sup>. Morality is placed to control human sexuality from departing from the

---

<sup>14</sup> See Carroll and Wolpe, 1996, *Sexuality and Gender*, HarperCollins College Publisher: New York. He argues that Islam is a sex-positive religion because it does not separate the flesh from the spirit, unlike Christianity (Easterman,1992). Then he mentions "the holy people who inspired these religion; while Mary was a virgin and Jesus as long as we know celibate, Muhammad married numerous women and his sexuality was recorded in great detail. The result is Islam calls to men particularly to perform foreplay, lovemaking and sexual fantasy in marriage by appealing to Muhammad himself. Opposite to Christianity, Islam does not recommend celibate. Asy-Syekh Al-Imam Abu Muhammad in his book *Quratul uyun* emphasizes that Islam really recommends that satisfaction of sexual relation must be achieved both by husbands and wives. Therefore, to gain the same orgasm in order to maintain love, Islam touch us to start sexual activities with loving words, kissing, touching, which these purposed to prepare both husband and wives to go further to have sexual intercourse. The only approval ethics of engaging sexual intercourse through *farji* (I: vagina), and any sexual relation through *dubur* (I: anus)

correct direction of sexual attitude in Islam, which frames the appropriate borders for what human sexuality should be. Therefore, sexual practices must be in the frame of marriage and Islamic ethic.

*Pesantren* is extremely concerned with the issue of sexuality because it attaches to the fundamentals of Islam; **moral and ritual obligation**. Moral obligation for Muslims concerning the issue of sexuality is about modesty for both male and female believers. The Qur'an states:

Al-Nur30

Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do

Al-Nur 31

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear therefore they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except their husbands, their fathers, their husband's father, their sons, their husband's sons and their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sister's sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their rights hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments and O ye Believers! Turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss<sup>15</sup>

It is obvious that the need for modesty is the same for women and men. It is for refining manner wherein sex is concerned; modesty is beneficial for both the

---

was really condemned by Islam including oral sex is not preferred. Syekh Penazam marked this activity with a hadith of prophet stated "having sexual intercourse through anus is *haram* (I: forbidden). Besides it has high risk of disease, this act is cursed by Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>15</sup> 'Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, 1989, *The Holy Qur'an; Text, Translation and Commentary*, Amanah Corporation: Maryland. In explanation, he mentions three things (1) the rule of modesty applies to men as well as women. A brazen stare by a man at a woman (or even at a man) is a breach of refined manners. Where sex is concerned, modesty is not only "good form" : it is not only to guard the weaker sex, but also to guard the spiritual good of the stronger sex. (2) the need for modesty is the same in both men and women. but on account of the differentiation of the sexes in nature, temperaments, and social life, a greater amount of privacy is required for women than for men, especially in the matter of dress and the uncovering of the bosoms. (3) "while all these details of the purity and good form of domestic life are being brought to our attention, we are clearly reminded that the chief object we should hold in view is our spiritual welfare. All our brief life on this earth is a probation, and we must make our individual, domestic and social life all contribute to our holiness, so that we can get the real success and bliss which the aim of our spiritual endeavor.

weaker sex and the stronger one to achieve spiritual good. However, in practice, the issue of modesty is applied differently to men and women wherein for women the greater amount of privacy is required accordance to the social life strongly imposing issue of *al-aurah*, dress code and sexual segregation. Men and women have different constraint of private organs that should not be exposed to public. In general, men only are required to cover from the navel to the knee, while *aurat* for women is the whole of their bodies except palm of hands and faces<sup>16</sup>.

For santri, sexuality is associated with the concept of premarital chastity being promoted by the issue of morality wherein cultural beliefs on the notion of becoming good women is attached to it. For that reason, the pondok takes account in creating modesty in every single student in order to create an orderly Muslim society. Female santris' sexuality is framed within the concept of normal and abnormal sexuality. Normal sexuality is defined as sexual activities which are not against norms and religious values such as sex within marriage, heterosexuality, fidelity and obedience, while what is considered as abnormal sexuality are behaviors like homosexuality, masturbation, and pre-marital sex. Mernissi (1987) positively remarks that sexuality is tightly linked with the concept of Islamic order; unlike within Christianity, within Islam sexual instinct or libido is not harmful as long as it is channeled into positive outlet, primary conducted under religious law. It will destroy the order if sexual instinct is used negatively, out of the frame of marriage and ethic<sup>17</sup>.

---

<sup>16</sup> In Syafi'i *mahdhab* (the popular school of thought in Indonesia) *aurat* is divided into three groups; (1) *aurat* for male, which descript into three categories; firstly, *aurat* when he is alone, not in sholat (prayer), not staying together with his family, or others, the *aurat* is *dubur* (anus) and *kubul* (genital organ), secondly *aurat* when he does prayers both alone or in darkness, the *aurat* is *baina surra waruba'* (from navel to knee) and thirdly, when he is with someone else who is not his mahram (degree of consanguinity between man and woman that renders marriage impossible but give them the right of association), his *aurat* is *jami'I badaniah* (the whole of his body). (2) for slave (women having no freedom such house maid), the *aurat* is consisted as three; firstly when she is doing prayer, her *aurat* is from navel to knee, when she is working, her *aurat* the whole of her body except part of her body which commonly open when she is doing her work such as hand, hair, feet etc, thirdly when she is not doing prayer or her works, so her *aurat* is the whole of her body. (3) female's *aurat* (female who have freedom) are consisted of four; firstly when she is doing prayer, her *aurat* is the whole of her body except the palm of hands and faces, secondly when she is with the same sex or with her mahram, her *aurat* is *bainal surra wa ruba'* (from the navel to knee), thirdly when she is working wherever, her *aurat* is the whole of her body except part of body that commonly expose when she is working and lastly when she is with non mahram, her *aurat* is the whole of her body (interview with pak Andar, an ustadz )

<sup>17</sup> See Mernissi, Fatima, 1987, *Beyond The Veil- Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*-revised edition, Indiana University Press.

In guiding modesty, *pesantren* regulates premarital chastity in the issue of *ikhtilath* or relationship between male and female santris; clothing and ornaments, viewing pornography, and permission arrangement are regulated and proscribed to avoid influences toward “abnormal” sexual behaviors. The details of the rule will be explored together with my interpretation as follows:<sup>18</sup>

Unlike general pondok, segregation of male and female *santris* only applies in pengajian class, but not at school for many reasons. Many students, males particularly, do not have motivation to study hard. Another reason is that, with the situation in society, a number of teachers and *ustadz* are anxiously imposing segregation on students; this itself may stimulate *santris* to secretly commit controversial sexual practices. Alfi, a 18 years high school student, narrates, “... actually, years ago, not only in *pesantren*, in school, male and female students are segregated, however mostly male students were depressed, did not have spirit to study. So finally we were united again. However in pengajian class, it is extremely necessary to avoid bad behavior. But it is not applicable for educator.” The similar information I obtain from Ibu IN, now the headmaster of MAN attesting that segregation was not beneficial in the learning process, particularly in enhancing students’ motivation to study hard because they study in homogeneous community. According to her, since the rule had been applied in the school, a number of students protested and new students definitely did not want to be serious in learning. Furthermore, segregated life presumably may stimulate santris to be wilder in sexual relationship with the opposite sex. “We gave freedom to santri to have interaction with opposite sex in order not to be wilder”, she added.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> The pondok, especially dormitory has arranged *irsyadah* (the rules) for santri, which consisted of 20 articles purposively to control behavior of santris inside and outside pesantren. I put the complete of the rule in appendix

<sup>19</sup> Comparing with the research of Farha Assegaf in “fundamentalist pesantren” Al-Mukmin Solo, issue of *ikhtilath* and segregation life for male and female are absolutely applied for the reason that one of prerequisite to create Islamic State is by applying this concept. Another reason, they worry of the impact of *ikhtilath*; social diseases, that can impose to moral decadence. *Ikhtilat* is definitely predicted to free life style and uncontrollable in somehow can create *fitnah* or disorder in society. In strict argumentation they said that *ikhtilath* is representation of western life, which purposely want to destroy Islam (1995, pp. 84-85)

However, to control sexual relationship among *santris*, *pesantren* have set up rules to avoid free social intercourse between female and male *santri*. It is mentioned in *irsyadad* as follow;

Article 10: Relationship; this article consisted of three parts:

- (a) Santris are prohibited to visit the dormitories of male santri without reasonable rationale and permission from the guard. Violation will be punished 50 times *jilid* (hitting) or other educating punishment.
- (b) Santris are prohibited to chat with opposite sex without reasonable rationale and permission. 20 times hitting is preferred for any violation.
- (c) Santri are prohibited to conduct such immoral sexual activities like having sexual intercourse, kissing or other sexual acts, both with the same sex or opposite sex. 100 hitting is preferred for those who violate this article or being removed from *pesantren*.

Only point (a) and (c) are applied strictly in *pondok kota santri*, even though somehow male *santri* are much more free to visit female dormitories. Point (c) is an extremely crucial rule for santri to keep on their minds; they must not violate this article if they do not want to be dropped out from the *pondok* as well as from school. Many of them said it is quite difficult for the students who were removed from this pondok to be accepted by other schools or *pesantrens*. In the case of pre-marital sex, commonly, both the perpetrators (female and male santri) resign from *pondok* before the *dewan guru* imposes the sentence on them. Pre-marital sex becomes the most serious violation in this *pondok*; hence there is zero-tolerance for any kind of sexual practice approaching pre-marital sex. In reality, the pondok faces many difficulties in controlling relationships between female and male santri for the reason of the need of study and the large number of santri, which are not balanced with the numbers of teachers or officials. However, to make effective item (b) in application, I think the only way is for *pesantren* to not allow a female *santri* and a male *santri* to have a conversation alone. It is positively preferred to have companions.

The second issue is about identity as *santris*, through Muslim garments. *Pondok kota santri* have relied on traditional garments: used sarongs, avoided trousers

for female santri, and obligated every female santri to wear jilbab as part of religious duties for believing women. Even though it is not stated explicitly in the *Irsyadad* (regulation), the implementation of this article is quite seriously imposed on santris, especially female for the reason that female garments are influenced more by fashion.

Article 11: Clothing and ornaments:

- (a) Santris are obligated to dress in properly garments that are not against religious and pesantren norms. For those who break this article will be sentenced with “push up” or 20 times hitting or other educating punishment and the garments will be confiscated and returned to the parents
- (b) *Santris* are prohibited to wear garments or particular ornaments belong to opposite sex. For those who break this article will be sentenced with “push up” or 20 times hitting or other educating punishment and the ornaments will be confiscated and returned to the parents

Although the definitions of “religious and *pesantren* norms” in the article are never expressed clearly in the regulation, compliance is strongly required. In *pengajian* class, the discussion of covering *aurat* entails on three items: should cover up hair, neck, and bosoms, should not wear transparent garments, which can possibly show the hollow of the body, and should not wear fitted body garments. While item (b) definitely refers to *hadith* of the prophet, “Allah will curse a woman who resembles a man and a man who resemble a woman”. Once more, the cultural interpretation mentions that “trousers” is a representation of men, therefore the *pondok* does not permit female *santri* to wear them. Although a number of female *santri* feel much more comfortable by wearing trousers, it is claimed by *Kitab Kuning* as deviation. So trousers symbolize western culture that is inclined to expose female’s *aurat* and can stimulate men sexually. Presumably, in general opinion, this can be the source of sexual harassment of women. However, I argue that the rule is just effective in the *pondok* complex; they still can create a small window to express their identity as young people outside the pesantren. I give the detailed picture of this session in the chapter findings and discussion.

Besides controlling relationship among santris, the *pondok* also does give protection for *santris* to deal with modernity; therefore, television, radio, internet or

going to the theater and other modern technology that can give a bad impact to *santris* are banned. *Pesantren* are also selective to filter reading materials for *santris*; reading of any kind of magazine, novel or comics is not allowed because it can disturb students during study in *pondok*. Despite the fact that a number of students, especially during my field study, enjoyed (secular and Islamic) magazines, comics and novels, which exposed idea of romanticism, friendship, becoming *muslimah* activist and so on. Issue of residentship and permission to go out of the *pesantren* apparently develop quite gravely to preclude *santris* from engaging in controversial sexual behaviors. Concerning the need to visit the parents, *santris* have not more than three days. For a long school holiday, they just are permitted to go back home for a while because *pengajian* class is still running as usual. The limitation of time is applied to keep students in the correct direction, because, if they are allowed to spend time at home for long period, the values as *santri* will be eroded by outside culture. An *ustadz* that I interviewed told me that, “the behavior of *santri* changed after returning from home town, as result of interacting with out side society. So we have to correct them again”. To give readers the big picture, I quote some related regulations as the efforts of *pesantren* to discipline *santris* in order to create a good *Muslim* generation in the future.

Article 12: Pornography and do Drugs consisted of three items, they are:

- (a) *Santris* are prohibited to own, to keep, to read, or to distribute porn books/ printing other useless materials. For those who violate this verse will be sentenced with push up or 50 times *jilid* or other educating punishment.
- (b) *Santris* are prohibited to own, to keep, to use or to distribute illegal drugs. For those who violate this verse will be sentenced with push up or 100 times *jilid* or other educating punishment or it is very possible to be removed out from *pondok*
- (c) *Santris* are prohibited to go to theater (*bioskop*) or other places outside the *pondok* complex. Push up or 50 times *jilid* is preferred for those who violate this verse

Article 14: *Pemukiman* (residentship), which has two points;

- (a) *Santris* are prohibited to go out from *Pondok* over 10 pm without permission from the security. For those who violate this verse will be sentenced with push up or 20 times *jilid* or other educating punishment

- (b) *Santris* are prohibited to stay over night out side *pondok* complex. For those who violate this verse will be sentenced with push up or 50 times *jilid* or other educating punishment

Article 15: Permission, which consisted of two items:

- (a) *Santris* are prohibited go home or leave pesantren over the limitation time or without permission from manager or the broad of santri or pesantren security. For those who violate this verse will be sentenced with push up or 20 times *jilid* and have to pay Rp. 250 fine per hour (Rp 6000 a day) or other educating punishment
- (b) Santri who has gone back home must be brought back to pesantren being chaperoned by *muhrim*.

Sexuality is learnt as part of **ritual obligation** wherein in every step of human reproduction, in Islamic view, is connected with *ibadah* (worship). The lesson of sexuality is provided in earlier steps of education in which human reproduction is begun in the teenager age, 9-15 years old. For females, the active reproductive organ is marked by *haid* (menstruation) while male is identified by *ihtilam* (wet dream). The discussions about reproduction are included in discussions about *taharah* (ceremonial cleanliness). Muslim must be free from every defilement (*hadast*). There are two *hadast*, great and small. To purify Muslim from *hadast*, they have to do ablution, which have two type; *gusl* and *wudu'*. *Gusl* is necessary after acts of great defilement such as sexual intercourse (real or in fantasy), menstruation, *nifas* (after giving birth). While *wudu'* is preferred after small defilement such as after interaction with opposite sex, sleeping, in principle before doing prayers or reciting the Qur'an, a Muslim must clean her/his self with *wudu'*.

I give you an example, in *kitab Safinatunnaja*<sup>20</sup>, how this kitab represents human sexual and reproductive process. Speaking about sexuality is speaking about

---

<sup>20</sup> See A-Hadhrami, Syeh Salim Ibnu, *Safinatunnajah* (translation into Bahasa), 2003, Penerbit Sinar Baru Aglensido: Bandung. *Kitab Safinatunnajah* is given to santris in basic class. This kitab teaches *fiqh* in very basic knowledge about Islam, particularly in doing practical ceremonial worship in Islam. Issue of reproduction is acknowledged in this step wherein santri are supplied information about menstruation such as to identify menstruation blood, Safina gives simple understanding that if the blood comes out during whole day, it is definitely menstruation. Menstruation normally finishes on six or seven days, and the longest period is fifteen days, more then that day is considered as *istihaadhah* (abnormal). The higher level of kitab kuning (advance) called *Bajuri* or *Nihayatul zain*, in this kitab

the human reproductive process in which in kitab Safina the discussion is involving in some *faslun* (chapter) such as *faslun taharah, haid, hadast (defilement) and alamatul bulugh* or *baligh*<sup>21</sup>. In *faslun alamatul bulugh*, this book explains that there are three things indicating *baligh*; firstly, when a person is in the age of 15 years old both for female and male, secondly, when a male experience *bermimpi jima'* (dream have a sex) with or without discharging *sperm*, thirdly, menstruation for female minimal age is nine years old. From this chapter, the first lesson, muslim must be concerned is that women in menstruation are prohibited to do prayer, fasting, reciting Qur'an, *tawaf* (doing ritual circuit in pilgrimage) and having sexual intercourse. Secondly, women must be sensitive to identify when menstruation comes and stops because the wrong calculation will be severe impact to religious duties. In simple word, when menstruation stops in the morning, we have to clean our self (*gusl*) and start to do prayer in the afternoon, but if we are not aware of it, we will miss afternoon prayer and this consider as "imprudent". Hence we have to make *qadla*<sup>22</sup> the afternoon prayer on the next prayer. On the other hand, in term of *mimpi jima'*, since the beginning of *ngaji* at pesantren, male santri must understand what is "sperm", how to identify that it is sperm, what the duty of men if they discharged sperm and so on. Once more, it has strong correlation with religious duties. Not every single man understands well with this experience, like a senior santri, Edi (22) told me that one morning a younger male santri came to him and asked about his problem. I quote his story when he was giving understanding to the new santri.

I had been asked by junior school santri." *kang...i discharged water? So I asked him what kind of water, urine or not then he openly talked to me. he wanted to know what it was. I explained to him as far as I knew, that it was mani (sperm). "Now..you had to do gusl"* I said. I also explained how to do *gusl*, he was at the first year of junior high school. When I was in his age, I had known this information.

---

menstruation is discussed more detail, for example about the menstruation blood is derived very detail into the color, the smell etc. and also about water discharged from men are consisted of three type; *mani* (sperm), *madi*, *wadi* in which each of it has different characteristic that lead to different religious consequences

<sup>21</sup> *Baligh* or attain one's majority is marked by menstruation for female and wet dream for male in which Islam it has strong correlation with prayers, fasting, etc.

<sup>22</sup> *Qadla'* is performance of ritual prayers at later times.

Regarding with issue of sexual practices, pesantren also provides information for adult santri how to conduct sexual relation when they marry. Two popular kitabs are required to discuss; *uqudul ujain* and *quratul uyun*. *Uqudul ujain* is focusing in the discussion of the relation wife and husband, while *quratul uyun* explores about the attitude to do sexual relation in Islamic way (see the summary of these kitab in appendix). My analysis says that sexuality in this case comes together with issue of reproduction, morality and religious duty. For example, in the case of menstruation, I am saying that this is a meeting point of sexuality and morality in which doing sexual intercourse during menstruation is definitely considered as “abnormal” and “sinful”. It mentioned clearly in *hadist* that “sexual intercourse during menstruation is strongly prohibited, it is forbidden in coitus, for those who conducted they became *kafir* (I: unbelievers)” (Sunarto, 1994).

Finally, it is very obvious that learning sexuality in pesantren is learning morality; both personal and social morality wherein santris are taught to be Islamic sexual being. Meaning pesantren gives large space of discussing about sexuality in the casing of religious duty and morality.

#### **4.2.1 The Role of Security**

To help *pesantren* in implementing the rule, the teacher council creates *dewan keamanan* (security) both in the level of dormitory and pondok as well. In general, one of a member of security explained to me about three important targets, which is concerned by security. Firstly, security has roles to discipline santri in order to maintain chastity of santri in which they guide santri’s behavior inside and outside *pesantren*. Some santri had informed me that member of security spread out in places where *santri* spent their time such as shopping center, bus terminal, telephone shop, in every corner of pesantren. The aim was to spy santri in order to consistent with the principle of pesantren, to correct their conducts when they are against the rule, basically to remind them their identity as santri. “ In principle, we believed that no one missed from us” he, a member of pesantren security said. Actually it is not secret anymore for santri, some santri told me that they have known that they are spied by security everywhere they go.

Rb : *Kalian tahu tidak di Tasik banyak mata-mata?* (did you know that in Tasik had many spys?)

Neng: *Tidak sih. Tapi tahu aja.* (not exactly, but I knew it)

Alfi : *Pokoknya kalau ada masalah apa sering kali ketahuan, soalnya banyak mata-mata, kaya di Singaparna juga banyak*  
(in principle, if there was problem, it was always revealed, because a number of spy, like in Singaparna also had a lot)

Secondly, stricting on permission of going back home. Not all santri get permission to visit their parents easily. They have to give reasonable argumentation in detail and really in urgent, moreover they are not allowed to go back home every month. Licensing only is given for santri who are really in crisis condition such as run off money, get ill, visit parents etc. Santri can not spend more than three days for any purposes. Whoever comes late, they get punishment such as memorizing some subject, *jilid* (biting their feet), or paid some money. Like the last Thursday night, I saw around 10 santri *dijilid* (being hit) in front of others because they were late to come back to pesantren. The punishment was applied from 10 times to 100 times even more, according to how serious the violation, which done in front of *ustadz* and other santri at their own *asrama*. Based on the regulation, santris have the right to choose the type of punishment such as *talaran* (reading kitab kuning) or memorizing the content of holy qur'an, or *dijilid* (hitting the feet with a rattan stick).

The last one was through code dress, which every santri is required to wear sarong , long dress and shirt (if they go out pesantren in far distance) with wide jilbab covering up their bosoms. It is prohibited to wear any kind of trouser, especially jeans that indicated western production, or tight cloths. Especially in *pengajian* class, santri were strongly required to wear white cloth, sarong and white jilbab. “*We had two reasons of disciplining santri’s garments; teaching simplicity of live to santri and to avoid gab of social class because santri came from various social status families. Moreover, the use of white clothing and jilbab were addressed to distinguish santri with common people because the location of pesantren merges with society, hence we were a bit difficult to sign their status*” an *ustadz* explained.

*Razzia* (unannounced action of forbidden materials in pondok) often is applied to pick up any kind of reading materials or pictures which does not support their study

such as porn books, secular magazines that promote free life style outside pesantren, fashion, picture of movie stars or popular singers, and comics, which are very popular among santri whether they are humoristic comics or romantic comics that educated santri how to engage relation with opposite sex. Furthermore, in this moment, security also is targeting tight clothing. They open santri cupboard and pick up all kind private belongings such as personal albums, picture decoration, love mails, garments which are not properly used in pesantren. Normally, razzia is operated once a month without announcement. All razzied materials are kept by security or *dewan guru* (I: teacher council). According to him, from this operation, he finds out santri behavior which considered improperly or destroyed chastity of pesantren and her self. However, during my field study the razzia was not active because the pondok was busy with some great moment, hence at that moment I found out a number of forbidden materials (except porn materials) that should be raided by security spreading out among female santris.

#### **4.3 Internal Political Situation of the pondok<sup>23</sup>**

Pondok kota santri has changed leader twice. The founder of this pondok, Aba had leaded this pondok for 46 years since the beginning of the pondok officially was opened. He passed away on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1977, leaving numerous stories and heroic spirit about his struggle to Netherlands and Japan government during colonialism in Indonesia. This pondok has functioned not only as an educational institution where people in lower class study, moreover pondok at that time is also a symbol of local resistance to colonialism. With its authority, pondok also facilitated society to fight colonialiser. Therefore many students died during colonialism to protect the existence of pesantren. This pondok was developing to be one of the famous pondok in

---

<sup>23</sup> Political history of this pondok I recorded from document of pondok and interview with an male alumni of pondok (13<sup>th</sup> August 2004), two male villagers ( 10 August 2004) who I met during my socialization with villagers around pondok. From them, I got different political situation internal pondok that I did not get from people in structure (1 teacher, 2 relatives) living inside pondok.

Tasikmalaya. Moreover, during new order authority, the resistance of the pondok is still shown clearly through the way this pondok positioned itself within Indonesian government. They refused any kind of social aid from Indonesian government for the reason of avoiding intervention of Indonesian government to internal pesantren. Therefore, this pondok only received local resources to develop. His popularity as muslim scholar invited many people to donate some money or even property to support this pondok.

After Aba passed away on 1977, one of his sons who has charisma to lead, Kyai Ilyas was chaired to replace his position, to continue and develop this pondok. Under his hand, the position of pondok has shifted from opposan to become cooperation not only for the government but also for all social movement which purposed to have betterment for the future of pondok as well as society around pondok. This pondok is aware of the changing of society, therefore the vision has changed too; to prepare young generation to be knowledgeable in religion as well as in non religion. Recently, pondok kota santri more focuses on how to protect young muslim generation from the impact of globalization.

However, at this time because of aging and medical problem, the top leader of this pondok has to share his responsibility to his brother, a secretary of pondok to manage pesantren. During my study, his younger brother, plays important role in this pondok particularly relating to *pengajian* and school curricula, while the leader tackles other roles like keeping communication with society outside. His characteristics as polite person, open minded perspective has placed him to be an important person within political situation in Indonesia in which he is often involved in decision making process of *Nadatul Ulama* (one of the biggest muslim organization in Indonesia). In recent time, he does not teach students anymore, but he still gives speech at the public moment. Unfortunately, the second person has different characteristic and way of thinking. He is a narrow minded person, a bit temperamental, who wants to protect pesantren from outsider. Therefore, any kind of social movement agenda like society empowerment, gender mainstreaming in educational institution, combating violence against women are not seen fit in his eyes. He does not want these activities poisoning the way of thinking of santri who has to be accepted single values from kitab. Since the leader does not take a part fully in managing this pondok, the situation is getting

worse because the second person has large space to control everything. The crucial thing, he, the one who decided any decision concerning on administration of the pondok and development of santri, including designing curricula.

The situation is getting worse within president election because pesantren does not come with single voice to give support to candidate of president as the previous. In this time, the leader of pesantren does give support to all candidate of president, it means pesantren does not purposed to affiliate to any of party. However, this second man does different thing. He has affiliated to one of candidate of president and tries to mobilize students to choose his candidate. What make me questioning is nobody from the family stops him, even the top leader would not give any reaction. When his candidate was not elected at the final turn of national election, the situation becomes worse and worse. He becomes very sensitive that makes great tension within pondok. For example, there is no tolerated for student who comes late in pengajian. She or he gets punishment from him. One day, a female student came late in his class and he punished her in front of other students.

#### **4.4 Female Santris' life**

*Santris* are running their life with applying noble principles of *pondok* such as islamic sisterhood, *keikhlasan* (selflessness), *kemadirian* (self-sufficiency), *kesederhanaan* (simplicity in living), *tawadu* (humble and respect) and *ta'dim* (reverence/ deep respect, particularly for teacher who are knowledgeable in Islam), which Ronald A. Lukens diagnoses as the only component modernism which must be concerned by *pesantren* because another dimensions of modernism such as technology, political and economic, cannot be stopped penetrating *pondok* as one of element of development of *pondok* in the future. By emphasizing on moral education, in the sense of teaching moral behavior, *pondok* strives to create environment in which *santris* can have *pengalaman* (experience) by implementing the morals of religion in practices as well as theoretical. For example in *saum* (fasting) which is required for every muslim in *ramadhan* month, particularly in pondok *santris* are required to do *senin-kamis* fasting, fasting on every Monday and Thursday. It teaches *keikhlasan*, *kesederhanaan*, and also patient to *santri*.

Other values like Islamic sisterhood, *kemandirian* are taught through living communal arrangement in which mostly *santris* sleep on the floor in a room that may hold up at least five students depend on the size of the room, the biggest one may consist of fifteen students. A room size 3X4 meters contains eight students. The more popular dormitory, the most crowded the space. Furthermore, in *pondok*, property is communal. Only private property are kept secretly inside cupboard, everything in outside is for public. For instance, a common experience, sandals is borrowed freely, I often found out mind was always in different place. For them, this way of life can increase their solidarity and sisterhood. To carve *kemandirian*, *santris* learn through doing their own washing, ironing, and housekeeping, in some condition some of *santris*, normally from high class family, send their clothes to laundry, a villager selling this service around *pondok*. They go through routine activities of *ngaji* and *sekolah* (school). I quote my stories during living with them to show how they are undergoing with their schedule every day.

Teettt.....teetttt.....teett.....”. It was around 4.00 o’clock in the morning, when I heard an electric bell was rung to sign time of *ngaji* (learning Islamic teaching) was beginning. The sound was almost deafening my ears, because I was sleeping in the *cobong* (room) two, where the board of dormitory stayed. With many considerations finally I chose Esa dormitory as my resident during data collection. The place where I spent mostly my time getting involve formal and informal activities, sharing experiences with them acting as older sister because mostly they were younger than me. I help them to study English because mostly student in this dormitory had problem with English but they were skillful in Arabic language. Therefore, every announcement was more spoken in Arabic than in English. Why? They said that they were not confidence to speak English.

Five minutes after the bell ring, the board of *santris*, particularly who was responsible for security and education job had to remind *santri* to prepare to have a morning class. “*Ngaji...ngaji...ngaji...*” I heard one of *santri* senior shouting loudly to wake *santri* up and be hurry up while she was sticking out her head to look inside each room. In this situation, it was so crowded, everybody was going to bath rooms at the same time in hurry. The sounds of their steps walking on the wooden floor (some of rooms in this dormitory were covered by ceramic) were so clear to wake me up and also be quick to have *wudu* (ablution). Because only seven bath rooms were available for around 100 *santri*, so the rest of them should be waiting list sitting on the long wooden chair in front of the bath rooms. Everyone was looked preparing them selves with *gayung* (a water dipper for taking water from the tank) for keeping their

bathing stuff such as soap, shampoo, facial form, brush teeth etc beside to function as place for bathing in their body with water, ember for remove water from big tank into small one in the bath room because when water was using at the same time with around 2000 santri, so the water from tabs were not well dropping. For those who woke up early, they could take shower, but for those who woke up late, normally they delayed till morning class. They just took *wudu* and were hurry up to pray and go to the class. The morning *pengajian* normally was started on five o'clock after *subuh* (morning prayer) till six o'clock covering the discussion about *hadist*. Afterward, they had 30 minutes for arranging study to school. After having breakfast with *nasi uduk* or *kupat sayur*, they checked schedule, and left the dormitory in groups. Around 7 o'clock to 12.30 in the afternoon, the condition of dormitory was so quiet, only college students stayed because they had class in the afternoon. Other *pengajian* holds in the evening and night.

Sunday was a happy day for mostly santri in kota santri. In this day, santri could enjoy listening music (domestic or western music), engaging external activities such as sharpening their skill on decoration or calligraphy, training to become *mubaligha* (preachers), and for those who were interested on recitation of the qur'an could join class of developing skill on reciting the qur'an. However, only some of them used this chance for participating to extra activities from school or pesantren. The rest of santri preferred to go to "SGP" (shopping center) or "TSK" (the biggest shopping center) if they still had money, to wash or to iron their clothes, to clean their rooms, or just to chat with others. To me, Sunday was perfect day to get close with them, talk about their experience, to tease each other. They spoke openly and more relax because their burden a bit reduced. Here I attach the daily schedule<sup>24</sup> of santri.

04.00 - 05.00	sholat tahajud (prayer between midnight and before subuh) and sholat subuh (morning prayer)
05.00 - 06.00	morning <i>pengajian</i> (kitab based on level of class)
06.00 - 07.00	preparing for school (take shower, breakfast etc)
07.00 - 12.30	studying at school
12.30 - 14.00	having a rest
14.00 - 15.30	preparing for evening class
15.30 - 17.00	evening <i>pengajian</i> (kitab based on level of class)
17.00 - 19.00	taking a rest , having dinner and sholat magrib (dawn prayer)
19.00 - 21.00	night <i>pengajian</i> (kitab based on level of class)
21.00 – 11.00	studying for tomorrow
11.00 – 04.00	Sleeping

---

<sup>24</sup> This schedule is not regulated officially, but it becomes consensus which every santri should follow. Division of class is based on their capacity in understanding holy qur'an and hadith, so the materials of *pengajian* class is set up based on level of class.

However, as young people who live in contemporary Indonesian culture, their life is also influenced by global culture. Modern life style promoting the idea of “effective” and “fast” conflicting in day to day living, in somehow erodes some of values in pesantren. For example the use of mobile phone (Hand Phone), it was dilemma for *dewan guru* to decide “permissible” or not. At the first time, HP is allowed only for college student for the reason of the need of academic business. So HP is very helpful for them to manage time of consultation with their advisor as well as to maintain parents’ communication during stay at pondok because perhaps it is not easy to make a call using a house phone in dormitory. But later on, *dewan guru* could not stop the use of mobile in pondok. Since the price of HP was reducing times to times, now it is affordable for many santri, not only college student own HP, but also secondary years students begin to use it. They said that it is easier to contact their parents, so with SMS facility it becomes much chipper to communicate with parents or friends. Now, with SMS santri are not difficult to communicate with anybody they like, including opposite sex like make appointment with their boy friends. Some participants<sup>25</sup> share to me their experiences how to communicate with their partner very easily with mobile phone. Yani, a secondary student used mobile to make appointment with her boy friend to do *ngalepek*<sup>26</sup>. It was new phenomena for me, then I asked her how she knew that her boy friend would sit in the opposite building with her so she could also take strategic position face to face with him. She said “of course I knew because we make appointment before sitting here. He sent me SMS and I answered then we did it”.

Another serious impact of modernity to santri is fashion, especially clothing in which nowadays santri or not santri seemingly are going to one direction on the way to dress up. The location of Pondok kota santri, which is only seven hours to Jakarta and three hours to Bandung (city of fashion), is absolutely possible influenced by global fashion both non islamic or islamic fashion. Some santris<sup>27</sup> I interviewed admitted that

---

<sup>25</sup> Euise, Amel, Eda, Jamilah, Ren, Atik, Iskandar and so on explicitly admitted that mobile phone made them easier to have contact with their partners during study in pesantren. My observation showed that mostly santris who have mobile phone made communication with opposite sex very easily.

<sup>26</sup> *Ngalepek* is communicating with opposite sex (a boy friend or one special) in far distance, so normally they just used body language

<sup>27</sup> group interview with Euise, Amel, Eda, on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2004

it is difficult to avoid fashion in her way of dress in. Shi, a secondary school student speaks clearly that she is really influenced with the fashion.

*Shi pingin berpakaian itu mengikuti mode, soalnya kalau shinta bareng ama teman Shi yang mengikuti mode banget, jadi Shi gak pe de. Tapi Shi pingin ngikutin mode itu nutupin aurat dan tidak menyimpang dari ajaran agama (Shi, 17)*

(Shi wished to dress in fashionable, because when Shi was together with my friend who really keened on the fashion, so Shi was not confidence. But Shi wished to follow fashion which could cover up *aurat* and not against religious teaching (Shi, 17)

Dressing up with fashion is only outside pesantren such as when they go to college, do to extra activities at school, spend day off to the town, or when on the stage etc with keeping the basic prerequisite of covering aurat, with their subjective interpretation; not to show the hollow of body and not to use transparent garment. it is very common among santris, when they go shopping for instance, dressing up like “common girls” in order to hide their identity in public area, to make them comfortable to enjoy their times. However, apparently it does not work for member of security because they are very easy to identify the santri from pondok kota santri. I was so curious of this gossip and I confirmed this gossip to one of member of security I met by accident in bus terminal Cilem.

Agus (male), a 20 years college student, was wandering in terminal when I got out from the bus and walking to the car which sent me to the pondok. Surprisingly, he was finally sitting beside me then he started to greet me by saying “were you santri of pondok kota santri, aren’t you?”. “How did you know?” I am very curious. He said “I had been living at pondok for years, so I knew the style of santri there, the way their dressed up, their gesture, and everything” he explained briefly. I was doing my job here, today was my turn to observe the terminal and after that I would go to shopping center, because on Saturday night, a number of santri often spent time there. Before I got out from the car I asked him “was I really looked like santri here?”.....he smiled and nodding his head<sup>28</sup>.(last October)

---

<sup>28</sup> It was on Saturday evening, when I went back from Jakarta on October.

From two examples above, I am not saying that they fail to deal with modernity. Rather both pesantren and santri create modernity itself, in other word they create their own identity as people who live in global culture. Even though in reality, in one side modernity has eroded pesantren values such as *kesederhanaan*, if we look at the two cases above, however it is running side by side with santris' life. To maintain pesantren (re: Islam) values of norms, it may suitable to invent the modernity with new definition; an Indonesian Islamic Modernity<sup>29</sup>.

#### 4.4.1 Becoming Women in Pondok

I want to begin with two comments of female santris when I asked them about their fantasy to be women, here:

Eda : *Perempuan yang atif. Perempuan yang kehidupannya itu penuh kedislinan, tapi dalam aktifnya itu berguna, ada hasinya.kadang ya kalau ngeliat orang yang energik, itu ngiri.*

(An active woman. a woman who is discipline in her live, but active so she is really useful in her activity. I am jealous with energetic women)

Amel : *Padahal makannya sama. Tapi anehnya hanya dilamunkan saja. Prosesnya giman waktu berjalan aja, ya tpa kalau ada keinginan insyaallah*

( Even though we eat the same thing, but why we are different. But it is just in our dream. The process is just going a long with time, but *insyaallah* (if God willing) I can, if there is a will)

Then I was thinking of my self that since I was a teenager, I had been dreaming a lot to be a tall girl, until I realized that it is never coming true in my life and I accepted it as part of becoming women. What I want to share here is something in our imagination sometimes reflects the opposite condition. Being women in any society are always dilemmatic, moreover in Muslim society<sup>30</sup>, it is extremely full of male

---

<sup>29</sup> See Ronald Lukens-Bull (2000) In his article he examines that pesantren is reinventing the modernity by combining both values Islam and modernity, then they have their own definition of modernity. Teaching morality to santri is the way to counter “modernity” in global mainstream and characteristic.

<sup>30</sup> Muslim society is in real general condition in which men superior then women because they use bias interpretation of the Islamic text and in Indonesian context, this interpretation is merged together with patriarchal system embedded in the pesantren culture.

representation, which women are posited vis a vis with men. Society in general put women and men in dichotomy determination in which women are really close with experiences, passivity, submissive, on the other hand men are represented as more theoretically, activity, promiscuities, in many reasons, it has created discrimination systematically. To explain how female santris have possible roles in pondok, let me trace back to their statement of being “active” and “useful” women in their imagination. To me they have been passived and useless by system, which much more gives opportunities for male to enlarge the skill. Female santris have limited space than male santri. It may associate with the concept of properness in conducting the different of sexual role constructed. The sexual role often related to discourse of “proper” and “improper” for female and male to behave in society, which are constructed from both Indonesian and *pondok* culture, mostly women in the marginal position<sup>31</sup>. In this pondok, female santri are marginalized in level of pesantren, they almost absent in strategic position and activities in pesantren level. I elicit this situation later on.

Speaking about the roles of women, we will talk about a space, where women are playing the roles in society (represent public) or private levels, about type of works; in which a work is categorized as productive and reproductive. There are two levels of arenas for *santris* to be active in *pondok*; dormitory and *pesantren*. The first arena is a place where they only involve with the same sex, spend time for daily activities as *santris*, and the second one is a place where they interact with all elements of *pesantren* such as *kyai*, system of *pondok*, male *santris* and so forth. In reality, the whole activities in pesantren level are more prestigious then in dormitory level, ironically mostly female *santris* are taking a part in this level. Mostly male *santris* dominate arenas and position which sharpen their skills on knowledge and leadership such as library, council of teachers, security, as event organizer in *pesantren* level. In contrast female *santris* must be satisfied as a broad in their dormitory, taking care *santris*, ensuring *santris* to follow the rule of *pesantren*, encouraging them to be active in many activities and so on. But when they violate the rule, the security and teachers council are presiding over the case, almost neglecting the existence of a broad of

---

<sup>31</sup> See Assegaf, Farha Abdul Kadir, 1995, *Peran Perempuan Islam* (the roles of muslim women,

female *santris*. Regarding with the space, Irf, a senior male *santri* told me his feeling to be a man relating with his activities in this pondok:

*Seneng. Saya selama jadi laki-laki senang, karena yg namanya laki-laki mungkin bisa saya rasakan sekarang senangnya terbukti ketika saya di organisasi itu saya dapat bergerak bebas bisa melakukan apapun. Bahkan saya mengajar di istiqamah, itu telah terbukti bahwa menjadi seorang laki-laki itu saya merasa dibutuhkan. Kan perempuan jarang yg mengajar di pesantren. Dengan keadaan saya sebagai santri merasa terpakai, saya berasa bebas. Bahkan hubungannya dengan hobby saya, bola. bulu tangkis Itu kan sifatnya laki-laki, bisa melakukannya.*

(I was glad. I was really happy to be a man because now I could feel it how lucky to be man when I was in organization which I could be able to do anything, moved anywhere free. Moreover I taught in *Istiqamah* (female dormitory), that was proved that I was needed, because women rarely taught in pesantren. With my condition as (male) santri I felt useful, had freedom even relating with my hobby, football, and badminton that were masculine, I could do)

Once, I complained to committee organizer of *Pekan rajabiah* (celebration on the Prophet birthday), about the domination of male *santris* in this moment, but just placed female *santris* as supporting system, which played the role as *seksi konsumsi* (logistic section), and none of them involved in main agenda arrangement. But He, a committee member said that “*memang agak sulit karena di sini yang punya kegiatan adalah laki-laki dan yang melaksanakan itu laki-laki. Jadi perempuan dibawah komando laki-laki. Karena yang namanya di pesantren sulit, bukan berarti tidak bisa karena jalur birokrasinya dewan kyai itu laki-laki, secara otomatis gerak laki-lakipun cepat dibandingkan dengan perempuan*” (it was definitely difficult because men owned activities as well as did these activities. So, women were under men’s order. In pesantren, it was difficult, but it did not mean impossible to do, the bureaucracy in kyai council was male dominant, hence men were easy to move than women).

The male dominance of bureaucracy of pondok seemingly is not allowed for female *santri* to have contact directly with them. Additionally, pesantren culture is concerned with avoiding *ikhtilath* (free relationship between men and women),

particularly in formal activities, which may assume very possible to create moral decadence to santri. Therefore it is better to limit the direct meeting among them. Consequently, in somehow it becomes barrier for female santris to access actual information, to train their skill. For example, the location of library in *Selamet* (male) dormitory is not beneficial for santri because they cannot access freely the book in the library. They feel uncomfortable when they are approaching the building male santris are starting actively to teas them<sup>32</sup>. In contrast this concept sometimes is not consistent to pertain, probably only for formal activities, in fact santris are very lax to interact each other in other places and occasions.

The matter of covering *aurat* perfectly becomes strong concern in pondok besides other crucial matter such as morality. Jilbab is compulsory for female santri when they go out from dormitory. The standard rule of covering *aurat* for female is reflected in the rule of pondok. The regulation (article 11) are rooted to two islamic references, firstly The Sura 24:31 “*and tell to believing women to lower their gaze and conceal their genitals and not reveal their beauty, except what does show, and to draw their khimar over their bosoms, and not to reveal their beauty except....*” is interpreted that the jilbab must be drawn over the front part of body, while not reveal their beauty except what does show means only palm of hands and faces can be exposed, therefore santri must not dress in tight garments or with transparent clothes. Another reference is from the prophet Muhammad saying “*Allah (God) will curse a man who resembles a woman and a woman who resembles a man*”, is applied to warn female santris not to wear trousers, like men do, or to behave or perform like opposite sex, including female santris are not allowed to cut their hair very short like men do.

Space segregation as well as *hijab* does not apply thoroughly in this pondok in which male and female santri has possibility to interact, especially at school and daily life. From this, I was fascinated to study more about this pondok, which for me give different notion of pesantren life. Moreover, santris are not allowed to visit dormitory of opposite sex without understandable reason. Yet when I requested a female santri to

---

<sup>32</sup> But then my first month living there, we, a broad of library and I, discussed how to make easy for every single female santri to access the books. Then finally, we agreed that every Sunday morning the librarian displays mostly books in the complex of female dormitory. The first action was so fantastic that a lot of female santri were interested in the books and enthusiastic to discuss the books.

company me to take some picture off male dormitories, she seemed uncertain but then she agreed with my argumentation. She (a college student) told me “it was my first time to come to area of male dormitory. We were not allowed to visit even to pass male dormitory without reason”. In contrast, this rule seemingly is not relevant for male santri cause during my filed work they were more free to visit female dormitory for the purpose of individual or organizational reasons, as long as keep principle of pondok. Likewise, my interview with male santri was done in a hall near by our dormitory. Basically, *hijab* is applied only in formal activities, like public meeting and *pengajian* class to make easy for teacher to control santri behavior, because sometimes security cannot control a thousand santri at the same time.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONTESTING DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY OF PONDOK KOTA SANTRI

Moral constructs that have been transformed by pesantren, certainly do have great influence, both on the experience of individuals with regard to the issue of sexuality and on the policy of pesantren in terms of *irsyadad* (regulations). The pondok works through both formal and informal channels. The formal channel operates through pengajian classes and in schools which consider morality the greatest portion of Islamic teaching -- in which the issue of premarital chastity is promoted through discourses on morality and sin. Human sexuality is certainly depicted very rigidly for the purpose of ritual ceremonies, particularly relating to cleanliness as a prerequisite when performing religious duties. Thus, learning about human sexuality, means learning about morality, meaning, not to approach *zina* and related conducts. Whereas formal media refers to the day to day life in a pondok, such as how to behave, dress, interact or even how to have roles as women within the pondok; to a greater level the pondok dictates social controls requiring santris to consider premarital chastity as the central concern in Islam. Since pesantren have interacted with the world outside, the efforts of the internal values and norms of pesantren have coexisted with the modernity which has affected issues of identity, courtship, or the sexual culture among young people and has transformed the print and electronic media. Moreover, its interaction with feminist groups also affects the individual perspectives of santris and teachers. To figure out how those discourses are contested in pesantren, I present three different mainstream perspectives: pesantren, modernity and feminism and their relationships, to configure and reconfigure how the development of female sexuality is transferred by way of print media.

## 5.1 The Contesting Discourses on Female Sexual Development

### 5.1.1 Construction of kitab *Uqudulujain and Quratuluyun*

My objective in bringing this issue into focus, is due to the notion that female sexual development in pesantren is influenced strongly by classical references learnt from the *pengajian* class. In the previous chapter, I have illustrated how the lesson about sexuality is taught side by side with the lesson about morality through formal and informal methods in pesantren. Therefore, my exploration in this part will focus on how female sexuality is represented in *kitab uqudulujain* and *quratuluyun* as well as how the constructs affect female (and male) santri. Why am I concerned with this kitab? Firstly, these kitab are the only references that speak of human sexuality and the relation between husband and wife in this pondok, therefore my feminist-lens views these kitab as sources of stereotype and discrimination against women that emplace many misogynistic hadith (prophetic traditions). Husein Muhammad, a muslim scholar from West Java, did research on this kitab and discovered around thirty-three hadith quoted in the kitab which can be classified as *maudu* (false), twenty two hadith as *da'if* (weak) and the rest as *sahih* (original) or *hasan* (good). The first and second categorizations of the prophetic tradition's terminology are, according to scholarly tradition, unreliable for use as religious law<sup>1</sup>. The outcomes of this research, analysis and judgment, are certainly different from the ideas of the kitab, and have marked the beginning of a courageous effort to critically analyze the prophetic tradition.

Secondly, these *kitab* are very popular among santri as guidelines upon entering into marriage. Since the function of pesantren is to create good muslim women and men, the possibility to create *wanita sholeha* and *laki-laki sholeh* (pious women and men) begins at the commencement of religious instruction. My assumption is that it is necessary for santri to study this kitab because it will be beneficial for them when they marry in the future. "*Uqudulujain* has never been taught by the Kyai Ilyas. "My mother taught it, but just to know about it, for it did not become mainstream. It is taught if students want to marry, otherwise it is not listed in

---

<sup>1</sup> See Muhammad, Husein, 2001 in *Ta'liq wa Takhrij Sharh 'Uqud al-Lujain*, by Lajna Dirasa Kutub al-Turath (Forum Kajian Kitab Kuning/ Forum for study Kitab Kuning), Jakarta. The kitab has been translated into two languages Indonesian and Arabic language. some pesantren has the translation in Arabic language, the book was printed in "white paper" therefore it is called "kitab putih", it means the book teaching good lesson.

any specific curricula...”, here Ibu Zubaid speaks of the real position of this kitab in the pondok now that the supplementary status of Uqud has recently been seen to have become the principle in which to believe when discussing the role of women and men.

Only two *kitab* in this pondok specifically bring up and elaborate upon details about human sexuality and reproduction through the lens of morality: the human being’s obligation to reproduce, ethics, the gender roles and relations between husband and wife, with all discussion about sexuality framed within the concept of marriage. Now, I aim to show how these discourses in two kitab are overwhelmingly influencing the santri’s perspective to perceive and define themselves as women (or men) by quoting the sermon of an *ustadz* (teacher) who teaches and explains kitab *uqudulujain*, whereas kitab *quratuluyun* was not given this year due to time constraints on the discussion of this kitab because most student return home during the holiday after Ramadhan. So how has the construct of passive female sexuality been transferred to the santri?

Firstly, it was through the ideology of the presenter or educator, that the gender ideology was transferred. The *uqudulujain* class was the most crowded uproar that I ever attended during my stay at this pondok, because both female and male santri reacted so positively and negatively while an *ustadz* was reading and explaining the kitab. The main reason for this was because his explanation was extremely biased against women; men were superior over women by nature and that was final for him. Additionally, he was typically a *kolot* (conservative) teacher, who read the text solely, without contextualizing it within the actual culture around the pondok. Even though he was a young *ustadz*, even younger than me, he had a bachelor degree, however the way he taught was not realistic and was certainly utopian, and he carried out Arabian culture blindly, particularly when explaining the role of women and men in society. For example when the kitab said “men are able to cope with hardship” and then that women are not, female santri were spontaneously yelling their protest, which led to him stating that “a good woman must be silent, and that is the meaning of *wanita sholeha* (a pious woman)”. I almost could not contain myself and wanted to challenge him to talk further about the book, to facilitate a dialogue session for the santri to ask questions, but somehow I thought better of it. I considered that big questions would arise about my status because I was a newcomer. However, the voices of female santri

made me feel happy, I discovered that they were sensitive, aware of “something unfair” within the teacher’s explanation. And they were also critical (behind the teacher’s back), when we talked about this book after *pengajian* class.

Secondly, the perspective and interest of the author is explicitly presented in the *kitab*. To get a picture of the content of the *kitab*, I place a long quotation from the sermon of an *ustadz* (a teacher) explaining a chapter on *the rights of husbands and wives*. This sermon is originally in *Sundanese* and Arabic, however since this *kitab* is very popular among *pesantren* in Java, and to avoid the interpretation through *bahasa Indonesia*, I use a translated edition of this book<sup>2</sup> to interpret the keywords and get a more accurate rendition of this original source. In addition, getting closer to the true picture of the situation in a present-day *pengajian* may entail using the teacher’s subjective comments, expression, interpretation of the text and position when explaining this *kitab* in *pengajian* class, as well as the responses of female and male *santri* during the *pengajian* class. From this sermon, the construction of femininity and masculinity, the public and domestic roles of female and male, the arena of self-expression, the duties and rights, and the one-sided nature of the teacher in perceiving the book are apparent. The following long quotation contains a detailed explanation on the rights of husbands and wives in the *kitab uqudulujain* written by Imam Nawawi<sup>3</sup>. Here is a transcript of a *pengajian* class on the *uqudulujain* book:

“men are leaders for women”, meaning that the husband had to lead (*qowamun*<sup>4</sup>) and to take care of all the needs of wives including to educate their morals. Allah gave priority to men over women because men provided property to women in marriage in the form of *mahar* (brideprice) [I saw that male and female santri

---

<sup>2</sup> *Kitab uqudulujai* written by Imam Nawawi has been translated into Bahasa Indonesia by Afif Busthomi and Masyhuri Ikhwan from the original title “*Syarhu Uqudullijain fi Bayani Huquqiz Zaujaini*” to “*Etika Berumah Tangga*” (The Ethics in being married) published by Pustaka amani-Jakarta

<sup>3</sup> See Muhammad, Husein, 2001, *Refleksi Kyai atas Wacana Agama dan Gender* (Reflection of Kyai upon discourse of religion and Gender), LKiS: Yogyakarta; he told that Imam Nawawi was born in Banten-Indonesia, who grew up in aristocrat family. He was interested a lot on knowledge of Islam. After finishing studies in some *pesantren* in Indonesia, he chose to spend his life in Saudi Arabia until he died. He produced many writings particularly regarding issue of *fiqh* and how it implemented in society easily, so his writing much more inclined to practical guidelines for ordinary people. This *Kitab* he wrote purposed to common people to understand the rights and duties of husbands and wives, which of course very much reflected the situation of patriarchal society around him at that moment

<sup>4</sup> *Qowamun* in Arabic dictionary has many meanings such as to dominate, to lead, to take charge, to guide, to protect etc. so, the choice of word to replace the word *qowamun* is the authority of the author and will give different result and consequences.

were yelling loudly at this point, and female santri looked upset and unsatisfied, while from many male santri's voices I could feel that they were proudly satisfied]. A number of muslim scholars have said that the superiority of men over women encompassed both the facts and syar'i (the basic law). Firstly, from the facts in society men are superior to women on several points: (1) the intelligence of men is greater than women, (2) men are better able to cope with problems, [...once again, female santris were yelling loudly in protest]. "If you all were good women, you would be quiet. That would mean you were *wanita shaleha*" (pious women), (3) the strength of men is greater than women, (4) the capacity for writing is greater for men, (5) the skill of men in riding the horse, (6) scholars were men. Were any women scholars? [female santris were screaming "there were"] Yes..but...it was very rare. Great scholarship was also dominated by men [to my ears, the teacher's voice was so proud explaining this part...and did not heed the protests of female santris] (7) However, it also could not be separated from women's support [...female santris once again were voicing objections, and the male santri were responding] (8) the superiority of men on the battle, was another point for women could not win in battle. Yes... only men that went to jihad, but for women, it was forbidden by the prophet. The jihad of women was in preparing equipment and food for the men (9) only men could do *adzan*, *khotbah* in Friday prayer, see...women were rarely ever preachers in Friday prayer. This had to be done by men. (10) men were superior over women in *iktikaf* (staying at a mosque), (11) the superiority of men as witnesses in criminal law, the ratio for men vs. women is 1:2, for men, only one person is required as a witness, in contrast, two women are needed to replace one man, so women are not strong or valid witnesses. Another advantage (12) of men was in the islamic heritage law, in which men can get 1 whole part, while women just receive a half of a man's part.(13) the advantage was for men in the distribution of *waqaf* (donated land), but women can not have it. Men can get one whole but women get a half ...[ female santri no longer seemed to respond strongly to the teacher...I saw some of them talking with their friends, some of them were sleeping. Only female santris sitting at the front were seriously listening to the explanation of the teacher. They just said "wios ....(it's fine) as a response to the teacher. Yet they sounded rather unhappy.....which also surprised me during this class], this was really the role of a good wife ...and men could be *wali* (legally responsible for a bride), oh....women did not have place, [...female santri voicing again] (15) men had the rights to *talak* (divorce) but women had the right to be divorced [wiossss...female santri voicing a bit slow], (16) as well as to *rujuk* (reconciliation) [wiossss.....], women could not initiate reconciliation [wiossss....]...this was the time to test women, if they were as usual or quiet, it meant they were patient. The next point, (17) was men had the rights to polygamy, ah.....[his voice was stronger and louder, causing the female santri to start yelling again in protest.....huuuuu....]. This was true, men could have more than one wife, look at what the book said: "allowed to have more than one woman". Was it correct? [yes...but the sound did not indicate that they agreed...seems they had given up.] I expect it is true, having more than one wife. (18) the descent of children is from men. The second one is syar'I, such as to give a bride-price and earnings. In short, these were the advantages of men over women particularly having the rights to marry more then one wife, then how

about women? ya...women had to support them [huh...was yelled once again, I heard protesting voices from the back, because at that time I was sitting in the front row...], like that mentioned in kitab Az-Zawajir by Ibnu Hajar.

The pious women in this article were women who were devoted to Allah and their husbands, they were the women who could guard their husbands's rights -- keeping their private organs to themselves, so if a husband was not at home, a good wife should guard her private parts, and not "open them". Keep them the secret and the property of husbands, because Allah has kept them. So, the good wife is one who keeps her private organ and husband's property. It meant Allah had kept and gave help to the women. He also gave a message and prohibited women to dispute. Abu Hurairah (narrator of hadith) stated that the best women were women whom, if you were looking at them, had to be pleasant to you, not unpleasant. So if her husband was looking at her, and she was unhappy, she was not a good wife. Secondly, when you commanded, she would obey. For example "bring me a glass of water", then she would serve it immediately for husband. Not so that if your husband said "nyi... (a call to a wife in Sudanese culture) could you bring me a glass of water?" and you said "no, you can do it yourself". And she should behave so that when you left her, she would guard your property and her Self.

For those women who were *nusyuz* (disobedient), such was their advice. It meant the women did not assume their duties to their husband, such as leaving the house without permission from the husband, disobeying the husband, or acting with pride, considering the husband inferior. Such was a bad woman's behaviour. So it was necessary for her to be given suggestions that would scare off such behaviour, with the final punishment from God. Giving advice in this case is optional. For example, the husband told her wife to "be afraid of God for the rights you fulfill to me, and be afraid of His punishment". And the husband also had to explain to his wife that the *nusyuz* can abort his duties of earning and time of visit. This advice might not be followed by quieting or hitting the wife. If the wife asks forgiveness for all her mistakes, the husband is recommended to warn her with the hadith of Bukhari and Muslim like this:

"If a wife stays away overnight, leaving her husband's bed, then angels will curse her till morning". For example, if refusing to have sex with her husband because he smelt bad (21 October 2004).

From this excerpt, I would like to show how dispute happens not only about the text, but also regarding the practice (in pengajian class) through analyzing the dynamic situation of the class, the teacher's interpretation and the response of single young women during pengajian.

Let me begin with a text analysis in which the quotation above is about the details of (the author's) interpretation of The Quran Surah Al-Nisa, 34 mentioning that "men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one

*more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill conduct, Admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly): but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, Most Great (above you all)*<sup>5</sup>". This verse becomes the basic polemic of stereotyping women and men in patriarchal society, which covers the rights of women and men both in domestic and public space<sup>6</sup>.

In principle, the sermon focuses on the root issue of *qawwamun* which is interpreted as: to protect and to maintain, by Yusuf Ali. For Imam Nawawi, on the other hand, *qawwamun* literally means "to dominate" and "to educate"<sup>7</sup> with the assumption that men have strength over women in two aspects of life; factual reality and *syar'i* (religious law). Eighteen points of strength in favour of men, are stated in the sermon of *ustadz*, in which he depicts men having strength in many aspects of life by natural law; namely, higher intelligence than women, stronger physique, greater ability to endure any hardship, greater ability to be authors, scholars, or leaders both *al-imamah al-'uzma* (state leadership) or *al-imamah as-shughra* (leader of ritual prayer), having the right to marry more than one wife, being acceptable as a sole witness unlike women, ability to do jihad (go to holy battle) and so on. In principle, he makes it legitimate for men to dominate over women. In contrast, he does not mention the strength of women over men in any way. In this case, it is very obvious that the author is representing men as the only 'perfect one' to provide protection for women, and to educate them with morals. Thus, setting principles whereby men are responsible for everything concerning the life of every woman. On the other hand, women are

---

<sup>5</sup> See Ali, Yusuf M, 1989, *The Holy Qur'an –Text, translation and commentary*, Amanat Corporation: Maryland, p. 195-196

<sup>6</sup> In Indonesia context, this verse was strongly addressed to Megawati in 1999, our former president, by particular muslim group to stop her to be president because she was a woman, means she did not have the right to govern or moreover to provide protection because this was not women's duties base on the Qur'an. Moreover, issue of women leadership has been used to cut the move of women to the political arena wherein men earlier exist to be decision maker.

<sup>7</sup> See Muhammad, Husein, 2001, *Refleksi kyai atas wacana agama dan gender*, discuss about perspective of Imam Nawawi who believed on men have the rights to manage and to control every aspect of life which automatically have higher position over women. Kyai Husein remarks that Imam

represented in a stereotype of femininity: as being weak persons, dependent, and as a risk for disloyalty to the religion, thus having to correct themselves when they are *nusyuz* (disobedient).

The issue of *nusyuz* is strongly utilised to admonish women with the religious consequences of being disobedient to husband, unfortunately this *kitab* never mentions *nusyuz* for men (husbands), so apparently it is only women who are at risk of religious disloyalty, while men are clean. In the case of women who do *nusyuz*, Imam Nawawi says that if women are disobedient to their husbands, they may abort the duties of a husband; namely, providing a means of support and visiting time; moreover, the ultimate way to correct the *nusyuz* is by beating her (lightly), consequently in general, a man may use this *kitab* as a justification for men to beat women for little reason and in the name of religion. This is all about how to maintain women to be *wanita sholeha* (pious women). Here, the construction of *wanita sholeha* entails three important criteria; (1) to be able to maintain husband's rights, (2) to guard their private parts and (3) to keep the secrets and the property of the husband. These criteria certainly represent a pro-male viewpoint in which women have to be obedient to their husband totally, for even in the husband's absence, they must maintain the husband's property and their private organs. If we look carefully in the sermon about what *wanita sholeha* means, the author states the first point as "to keep the rights of husband". In my interpretation this can be seen as the umbrella of the next statement, which includes the ownership of women's private organs as the husband's property. In short, the whole aspect of women; their lives and their bodies are absolutely maintained for the benefit of men (husbands). This is rooted in Islamic fiqh, which is about the definition of the rite of marriage as '*aqd at-tamlík* (a covenant of ownership) and as '*aqd al-ibahah* (as a covenant of authority). In both the first and second definition, women are seen to be an object for male enjoyment. This contract or covenant of ownership/possession has the meaning of male ownership over women's bodies, while the contract of authority can be interpreted as giving authority to males to enjoy women's bodies (Abdulkodir, 2001). So, where does the discourse of *wanita sholeha* come from? How is this discourse maintained in society (pesantren community)?

---

Nawawi preferred to interpret the word *qawwamun* in Al-Nisa 34 as to dominate and to educate rather than to guide, to protect or to maintain (p. 176).

Basically, the content of the kitab represents the perspective of the author, in general, it also reflects the views of the society where the text was produced, in which the socio-economic-political situation of the society at that time gave priority to men to play their roles in the public arena, whereas women were placed in the domestic sphere. My assumption is that the process of character-building during the author's studies in Saudi Arabia, where an extremely sexist system exists, very possibly influencing his perspective and ideology. The picture drawn in this *kitab*, (of how women are to become women) is contradictory with the spirit of the holy Qur'an, wherein women and men are placed at the same level in the sight of Allah :

“for muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast (and deny themselves), for men and women who guard their chastity and for men and women who engage much in Allah's praise -- for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward” (Al-Ahzab 35 )

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things)” (Al-Hujurat: 13)

Similarly, kitab *quratulhuyun* depicts the same picture of female sexuality; obedience and objectification. I would like to explore two concepts I mentioned, instead of describing the content of this *kitab*, because the reader can read my summary of the *kitab* in the appendix pages. In general, this *kitab* talks about sexual ethics within marriage, so it is complete in the sense of exploring sexual practices for husband and wife in Islamic ethics, wherein sexual activities must be done with respect and correct ethics. For example, it is strongly prohibited to have sex with menstruating women, and having anal sex is condemned. The interesting part about it is that the orgasm must be achieved together between husband and wife, even though that is not usually the case.

However, what I am most concerned with here are the issues of obedience and objectification of female desire in this *kitab*. The two following hadith provide

examples, in which the construct of being obedient as well as the idea of women's objectification both appear.

Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq said "I listen to Rasulullah s.a.w. and he spoke thus: 'as I can command one to perform a bow to a human being, so I order women (wives) to do so to their husbands'" (Sunarto, 1994: 38)

Ali *karramallahu wajhah* said " a wife is a vehicle for her husband, so she should be ready to drive at any time" (Sunarto, 1994:136)

The first hadith has a story in which a man came to the prophet's best friend. He told them about the (bad) things happening to his wife. Then one of them responded to the man's complaint by giving some explanation based on the prophet's statement. This hadith appeared as a response to the bad behavior of a wife to her husband, unfortunately this book does not mention the husband's bad behavior toward his wife. Because the learning method in pesantren does not open the way for any dialogue, a teacher often might not go beyond the text, but rather, will interpret it literally, without bringing in the context as to why this *hadith* was produced like this. Then, it may lead to an interpretation as follows: firstly, men occupy a higher position than women, (if it is possible) women must be bent in submission to their husbands, consequently women must be forthcoming to men with what they possess. If we look at the history of the production of this text, one may think that this *hadith* is only fitting in a particular situation, such as when a wife does bad things to her husband while the husband provides everything to her and treats her nicely. Therefore, I argue that this *hadith* can not be applied to answer a husband's problem with his wife in a general situation. What about if a husband does bad things to his wife? Of course it would require a different story to respond to it, even though it does not explicitly mention the book, for it was almost absent from discussion in *pengajian*.

A second *hadith* was also produced, on the issue of the ethics of sexual relations between husband and wife. In this one, a husband is allowed to have sex anytime and with whatever he likes. Islam (through this book) strongly promotes the correct way to have sexual intercourse with a wife stating that the intercourse has to use the vagina and do so with respect. However, to me the statement "wives are vehicles to husbands, so she should be ready anytime to drive" is a clear example of

how women are under domination of men. Women must be ready whenever and wherever men need them sexually. Another related *hadith* which is also popular in pesantren culture also explains how the husband has more rights than women: “*if a husband invites his wife to engage in sexual relations, the wife must fulfill his needs, even while on the back of camel, she cannot refuse him*”. A similar *hadith* written by Imam Ahmad and at-Turmudzi mentions “*if a husband invites his wife to engage in sexual relations, the wife must fulfill his needs, even if she is busy in the kitchen*”.

This *hadith* cannot be taken for granted without understanding the content and context, accordingly we need an analytic tool. The most popular analytical tool is a hermeneutical model. Applying the principle of hermeneutics, firstly, we have to consider the validity of the *hadith*. A forum to study *kitab kuning* (FK3) in Jakarta found false writings on this *hadith*. The narrator, Imam Ahmad (in another story) used the word *falya'tiha* not *falta'tihi*. So the difference in writing between Imam Ahmad and at-Turmudzi is considered awkward and can decrease the level and status of the *hadith*, accordingly people have rejected this *hadith*. Secondly, we need to be critical with the content of the *hadith*; does the *hadith* really mean “while on the back of camel” or may it mean something else, like “the sexual rights of a husband” ? According to Faqihuddin (2001) this *hadith* mentions that the prime task of a wife is to fulfill the sexual right of her husband. What makes muslim feminists concerned about the gender power relation in this *hadith* is that the husband has his sexual rights, while the sexual rights mentioned for women are only that she must be ready whenever he wants. This is in real contradiction to the spirit of Islam for in some *hadith* the prophet says “the best among you is the one who acts best toward his wife, and I am better than any of you toward my wife”. In different words, God says, “*O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will*”<sup>8</sup> (4:19). So in principle, the *hadith* is false both in meaning and content, because it is against Islamic principles that one can do violence to anybody.

Thus, from the *hadith* I argue that the male sexual drive is portrayed as ‘urgent’ and ‘ever ready’, whereas female sexuality is constructed as the object of male desire, with no choice and absolute readiness at any time, in any place and

---

<sup>8</sup> Among nations, including Arabs in the days of ignorance, a step-son or brother took possession of a dead man’s widow or widow along with his goods and chattels. This shameful custom is forbidden

condition, in other words women are portrayed as asexual beings. Without contextualizing the *hadith*, which mostly uses parable as a sentence form, it has the power to absolutely silence female desire. Furthermore, since the kitab is certainly sacred in pesantren culture, female santri may possibly receive it as religious obligation, describing how women should be, hence it is like an imperative for women to position themselves as passive and receptive in a sexual relationship with men (their husbands).

From the two *hadith* above, we also can see how the power of patriarchy works through language “a wife is a vehicle to a husband, so she should be ready to drive anytime”. Here, wives are metaphorically likened to a vehicle, which is passive and ready to drive. A husband on the other hand, takes a role as a driver, who has the authority to lead the vehicle to go anywhere. Another statement, “as it is possible for one to bow to a human being, I order women (wives) to do so to their husbands”. To me it is very obvious that here, a husband is placed higher than a wife. The term “to bow” may position women in subjugation and obedience with less authority compared to men who are in the position of being bowed to. The language used in the *hadith* is always putting women and men at opposite poles, Derrida used the term binary opposition, such as driver vs. vehicle, and similarly, with the term “to bow” I can liken men to “lords” (to be bowed to) and women to “servants”. According to Tong (1989) the first term is always superior, as “the self” and the second term is considered as feminine or “the other”. The idea of phallo-centrism is also reflected through the word choice as in “vehicle”, “driver”, “to bow” in which the creators of the language used, as well as the ‘status quo’, are men. In deconstructing phallogocentric systems, Helena Cixous has suggested we deconstruct social language, and instead create a positive representation of femininity, in which the term “vehicle” can be represented as a tool, whereby men depend on her (vehicle) to move from one place to another place, and whereby men’s social status is thus reliant upon women.

Another interesting discourse is about *wanita shaleha*. As mentioned in the first kitab, this construct is similarly rigid, in that women are represented as wives with a set of roles that have to be received for the purpose of being *wanita shaleha*. Here, in this picture of *wanita shaleha*; wives are not allowed to dress well outside the home, are not to speak loudly to husbands, and there will be a sentence for wives who dare to

take the belongings of husbands without permission, wives are not allowed to make husbands upset or to hurt their feelings etc. Once again, all this does not apply to men in the kitab as well as in pengajian class.

When we go back to the situation on pengajian class (*uqudulujain*), we see dispute also arises as a response to the gap between text and reality. I have quoted some situations wherein kitab *uqudulujain* was taught, and single young women responded, in this pondok:

... men are able to cope with problems, and see that *awewe* (women) are not [once again, female santris were yelling ‘weee’ loudly, as a protest]. If you were all good women, you would be quiet. That would mean you are *wanita sholeha* (pious women), number three, the strength of men is more than women,...

... the advantages are for men in the distribution of *waqaf* (donated land), women can not have it. Men can get one whole part but women get a half – [female santri were not responding strongly to the teacher...I saw some of them were talking with their friends, some of them were sleeping. Only female santris sitting at front were seriously listening to the explanation].

In short, these were the advantages of men over women particularly having the rights to marry more than one wife, then: how about women? ya...women had to support them [“huuuuu”... once again, I heard protest from the back].

From the excerpts, the role of women and men are depicted on two opposite poles; men are capable of dealing with any problem, but women are not, in terms of family heritage, men may have more than women, and men have the right to marry more than one spouse while women cannot do so. These explanations are in contradiction with the current situation in which many women are more capable when compared to men and in many cases the inheritance is divided based on the relative socio-economic situations of the son and the daughter. Lastly, many practices of polygamy demonstrate suffering and violence for women. In fact, what is happening in society is contradictory with the text. However, the teacher still proposes the text be viewed separately from the context by handing down interpretation, for instance, “see that *awewe* (women) can not” or “If you all were good women, you would be quiet. That would mean you were *wanita sholeha*” (pious women). Those explanations may

not make sense to single young women who live in a social context where women also play important roles in society; especially when his personal comments (re: interest) are more dominant than what the book mentions.

The expressions of rejection from single young women, like “weee...”, “huu...” or “*wios*” (it is fine) indicate that contests to the ideas put forth (regarding female sexuality) occurred explicitly in this class. Both the text and the teacher’s voice, were representative of the religion; while the single young women (and men) were representative of the social reality. Thus, both the advocacy and contest expressed in the class, is to me, to be considered as a process of dispute between religious norms and values, and social reality. What makes me surprised is the demonstrated ability of the students to speak up, and their expression of feeling by “yelling” which shows a great change within (pesantren) culture, if I can compare it with the time when I studied at boarding school. The more a teacher proposes the idea that men more have advantages than women, the more the single young women voice their responses. This is what Michel Foucault spoke of when he said, “where there is power, there is resistance” (1978 in Gedalof, 1999). The more power is exercised and imposed, the more resistance appears. From this case, we can see the value of the individual authority of the single young women as agents of change. Moreover, we also see how values of modernity – the freedom to speak up, as well as feminism and gender equality; are conflicting, and now extend their influence into the way that they think and express themselves.

### **5.1.2 The Modernity Movement as an Ideology**

No one knows when modernity began in this pondok. However, what makes this pondok concerned with the discussion of modernity, are the demonstrated characteristics of modernity like individualism, rationality, materialism, freedom to choose, as well as the mental or moral degradations that can replace traditional values like simplicity of living, communal life, religious beliefs, etc. As Robert Bellah (1968) conceptualized, “modernity should be seen not as a form of political or economic system, but as a spiritual phenomenon or a kind of mentality” (cited in Lukens, 2000 p. 33). Another conception of modernity I quote from Appadurai (1996), reminds us that “particular conjunctures of commodity flow and trade can create unpredicted changes

in value structure” (quote in 2000, p. 32). This is true in the arena of what he calls “media-scape” in which media plays an important role in disseminating information as well creating an image of the product of high technology. Therefore, projections of modernity have close relations with inventing and reinventing the human identity. In the context of pesantren, modernity penetrates this pondok through electronic and print media. Since electronic media such as television and internet access are not available in this pondok (or even around the pondok) the only other possible way to absorb the global culture is through print media. I will confine my discussion to examining the means by which modernity influences the way of thinking of female santri, in regard to their notions of developing their female sexuality. Additionally, to how the individual agency (of female santris) gives meaning to being a woman in a contemporary muslim community like a pesantren.

Print media, such as magazines, novels, and comics, are very common among santri, even though some of them are not recommended reading for the reason that they are too secular, and can aggravate the norms and values of pesantren. However, I would like to group these print media that are spreading out all over this pondok, particularly the Esa dormitory. My classification is based on such characteristics as what message the medium carries, the physical appearance, and how much religious matter is included. Hence, my grouping categorizes both secular and religious media.

**Table 1. Grouping Magazines**

Type of reading media	Secular media	Religious media
Magazines	Kawanku, Aneka Yess, Keren Beken	Muslimah, Ummi, Annida, Suara Rahima
Novels		Kado buat remaja, kumpulan cerpen islami (collection of short stories)
Comics	Serial Cantik	

In general, the secular print media exposes the culture of young people, which presents fashion, the activities of young cover models, new celebrities, short stories with topics like friendship, romanticism, activism, and challenges facing young people. In principle, it presents the life of typical, modern, young people, who totally imitate “Jakarta style” wherein youngsters’ identities in Indonesia are produced and reproduced. Young people all over Indonesia, all seemingly gravitate in this direction to establish their identity; which dictates the manner in which to dress, to speak (using *bahasa gaul*, the colloquial language used among youngsters in Jakarta), how to behave, and even how to think. If we find young women wearing mini skirts today, then tomorrow you will see the same fashion in the rural parts of Indonesia, for this is what Benjamin Barber (1995) calls globalization, and it replaces all local culture and remakes it into new culture, with the modern representing the western (quoted in Lukens, 2000, p. 31). Islamic print media, on the other hand, seemingly tries to marry the best of two worlds; modernity and Islam, or as Luken states, “they are making an Islamic modernity”. If modernity is concerned with attitudes about individual authority, rationality, universality, freedom of choice, *gaul* (to be sociable), expressive, then the producer of Islamic media is trying to shape these attitudes in the frame of the ultimate goal of salvation and the hereafter, in the spirit of Islam. For example, regarding fashion and the muslim dress-code, an Islamic teenage magazine uses jargon like *Expresi tanpa decadensi* (expression without decadence) as text placed under pictures of the latest fashions in muslim dress<sup>9</sup>, or in my interpretation, “you can express your self through the way you dress as long as it is covering your *aurat* (Islamic term for the private organ of women)”.

Speaking about young women becoming adults, let me quote a short passage from an article in one of the secular magazines *Aneka Yess*, which is the oldest and most popular magazine among female santris. This is an exposition on the notion of how to be a young woman in contemporary Indonesian society in a short story:

...”I just want to say good bye to you. I don’t want you to go with me, just send me your prayers during my lifetime, that is enough”. Rara felt a strong stroke hit her heart. It was painful. Why did she blind herself from Hesa?

---

<sup>9</sup> This is one of session in teenage Islamic magazine namely *Annida- Cerdas, Gaul Syar’i* (Smart, associable, Religious) No.01/XIV/1-15<sup>th</sup> October 2004 , displaying a group of young muslim women with variety of modern *busana muslim* (women dress).

Behind his selfish attitude, lack of seriousness and hedonism, in fact Hesa had a glorious spirit and a feeling for sacrifice. Rara suddenly felt so sad when she realised how she had just passed so many days trying to avoid Hesa. How time had passed without meaning because of her misunderstanding. Rara was newly aware, she didn't know Hesa at all because she had really kept away from him. The attention she had just dropped. The loving words she had refused to listen to. These were all wrong to Rara. Rara said one day "sorry, Sa. You were not my type". But Hesa never gave up approaching her, and Rara had been too tired to run away from him... but now? The disaster had been two weeks ago, and the situation there was like hell. And Hesa was to go there.

"Will you pray for my safety? Rara just nodded her head.

"Then we will meet next month?

"How long you will go?

"Until the end of this holiday. But, if the situation makes it possible, I will voluntarily take another day, perhaps I will take leave for this semester.

"You sacrifice your study for them?" Rara was surprised. She shed a tear then. She was suddenly aware, that she had cried in Hesa's embrace.

"Wait for me, Rara....wait for me, sweetheart...."<sup>10</sup>

The very essence of "woman" is that she is different from "man", and teenage magazines reinforce this notion. As reflected in the above story, courtship is the most important thing even when craving the rule of heterosexual femininity and masculinity. First of all, I want to analyze how the notions of femininity and masculinity are socialized through this story. A man (Hesa), is presented in this story as an active agent who hunts for his future lover, Rara, and never gives up even though he has been refused, and portrayed in a heroic sense, sensitive to social demands such as helping people in a disaster area. He is characterized as a helper, as an aid to society, or in short, as a hero. On the other hand, the woman, in her heterosexual femininity, is configured as *jinak jinak merpati* (pretending to be shy but in reality liking the man). She is not a steady person, being subjugated as Hesa's heroine, one who has to wait for her future lover. At the same time however, we also see that the representation of women in this story also shows the central importance of the construct of female subjectivity through negotiating between the warring images and the story of what a

---

<sup>10</sup> See Majalah Aneka Yess, 2005, *Selamat tinggal Sayang!* (Good Bye my sweetheart..), edition No. 2, 26<sup>th</sup> Jan – 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2005

woman is. So this means that a woman is not “a passive dupe” (Usher, 1997, p. 13). From the passivity of Rara in accepting Hesa, we learn how the woman makes her most importance choice -- identifying the correct man and saying “yes” to his offer to be his lover in the right situation -- once she recognizes his true personality.

Teenage magazines also inform boys and girls about *pacaran* (engaging with the opposite sex) which is of the most importance in youth culture because it is not only a matter of expressing “love”, but is also a matter of showing existence or social status among a peer group. Therefore, in responding to the dynamic of young people, some rubrics like *Curhat* (sharing a problem) or tips are offered to answer the problems of teenagers. One interesting rubric in a teenage magazine named ‘Majalah Gadis’ offers tricks like “being with a lover at home” as a solution to having no money. What this magazines tries to say is that having relations with a boy is natural, because basically everyone moves into a period of liking or loving the opposite sex. However, in a monetary crisis, teenagers should be creative in using available resources to support their activities with a boyfriend or a girlfriend, for example, it is not compulsory to spend time with a lover outside the home, when in reality we do not have the cash, so a home becomes a good solution. Besides being an economical solution, their parents can supervise them. Through this example, we can see how this magazine guides teenagers to avoid bad conduct such as “having a relationship outside the home”, instead of prohibiting them to have a relationship with a boy/girl altogether, which would be impossible to do:

*Pacaran di Rumah? Bisa juga seru kok!*

*Pacaran memang asyiknya kalau bisa jalan-jalan, makan malam atau nonton berdua. Tapi untuk urusan senang-senang berdua itu, kita juga butuh uang saku lebih. Nah, masalahnya saat mau nge-date kita lagi nggak punya duit . jadi? Hemmmm ...gak usah panik. Pacaran di rumah juga bisa seru, kok.*

Being with a lover at home? It could be pleasant too!

When with a lover, it is possible to hang out, have dinner or watch a movie. But for all this business of love expression, we need extra pocket money. So, the problem is, how are we going to make a date with her when we do not have the cash. So? Hmmm... don't panic. Spending time together with a lover at home could be enjoyable too<sup>11</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup> See, Majalah Gadis,2004, Gaya Favorite Press: Jakarta, edition 10<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> June p. 90

This secular discourse was competing with another discourse on “*pacaran*” and “love” offered in a novel published by Gema Insani Press with the title *Jangan Nodai Cinta* (do not stain the love). This novel was very popular among santri, particularly after the library department held a “Book Discussion” on September 2004. This novel deals strongly with the phenomena of liking and loving among young people, using Islamic arguments that say that Islam never promotes or even allows sexual relations with the opposite sex before marriage. Solihin and Januar, the authors of this novel, apparently catch on to the phenomena of sex before marriage within contemporary Indonesian culture, which according to them, begins with the term “love”. In the introduction of the book, they argue that teenagers are playing with the word “love” too easily, without understanding what the real meaning is for them. “Love” to them is a sword with a double-edge, on the one hand, with love one can always do better, but on the other hand, one who falls in love, stains love with immoral conduct. So, falling in love becomes a time of expressing sexual desire, not a time of enhancing faith and the greater gift of God. The following quotation will show how discourses on love, sex, and religion are depicted in this novel<sup>12</sup>.

*Cuman orang-orang yang keras hatilah yang nggak bakal bisa mendapatkan cinta dan kasih sayang. Adanya perasan mencintai dan menyayangi sesama manusia bukan saja bagian dari fitrah manusia, tapi juga bukti masih melekatnya kasih sayang dan rahmat Allah SWT.*

Only perverse people never obtain love and affection. The existence of feelings of love and affection for other human beings is not just because it is *fitrah* (the nature) of human beings, but also because it is evidence of the adhering love and affection of Allah..

Love is human nature. Love exists inside human beings, and can produce care, respect, responsibility and even knowledge. From the above quotation, we see the ideal of love expressed here is not just about building relationships with other people. Eric Fromm mentioned in *The Art of Loving* that “love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; but it is an *attitude*, an *orientation of character* which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one ‘object’ of love” (1989, p. 43), and including that the related highest values and the desire for the most

---

<sup>12</sup> See Januar, Solihin, 2003, *Jangan Nodai Cinta* (Do not Stain the love), Gema Insani Press: Jakarta

good belong to God. From the first citation, I may say that the love of a human is a manifestation of the love of God, which is of course different in quality and aspect to the love of a human. If God is I, so the love of God is, in as much as I am human (1989, p.62).

Love is easy, but to find the correct object to love is difficult (Fromm, 1989). The main reason is because love is supposed to develop only once, and secondly that marriage is supposed to complete it. What is the correct object of love? The author said this:

*Cinta buta....orang yang jatuh cinta tanpa pandang bulu: apakah orang yang dicintai itu halal untuk dicintai atau nggak. Halo-halo para muslimah? Kamu nggak boleh mencintai cowok yang beragama selain Islam. tha's forbidden love.*

Blind love... means people fall in love without regard to who and what it is they love. Is the one she loves halal (rightful/permitted) to be loved? Hello...to those muslimah (muslim women)! You cannot love a man who has a different religion. That's forbidden love.

The quotation shows us very clearly, with regard to finding the correct object of love, the author puts limits upon female *muslims* (he uses the word *muslimah* not *muslims* in general), and he states that one must be selective when choosing the object of love; for you must be of the same religion. The discourse of “forbidden love” in this novel is addressed to women muslims. He quoted one of *surah* (chapter) in the Qur’an “...they are not lawful (wives) for the unbelievers<sup>13</sup>, nor are the unbelievers lawful (husbands) for them...” (al-Muntahin: 10). The author interprets the word “unbelievers” as people with a different “religion”, in this case unbelievers are non-muslim. However, this is contradictive with what the Qur’an mentions about marriage,

---

<sup>13</sup> See also Surah Albaqarah, 2: 221; “do not marry unbelieving women until they believe: a slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving women. Yusuf ‘Ali interprets “unbelievers” as “pagan”. Here I quoted the description of marriage relating with unbelievers like this “ Marriage is a most intimate communication, and the mystery of sex finds its highest fulfillment when intimate spiritual harmony is combined with physical link. If religion is at all a real influence in life to both parties or to either party, a difference in this vital matter must affect the lives of both more profoundly that differences of birth, race, language, or position in life. it is therefore only right that the parties to be married should have the same spiritual outlook. If two persons love each other, their outlook in the highest things of life must be the same. Note that religion is not here a mere label or a matter of custom or birth. The two persons may have been born in different religions, but is, by their mutual influence, they come to see the truth in the same way, they openly must accept the same rites and the same social brotherhood. Otherwise the position will become impossible individually and socially

including inter-religious marriage, which does not interpret the words “the same spiritual outlook” as religion, but as more. Because marriage is the most intimate communion, therefore two persons in love should come to see the truth in the same way, sharing the same spiritual outlook, they must accept the same rites and social sisterhood/brotherhood. Thus, religion is just a label or “a matter of custom of birth” (Ali: 1989).

One hadith mentions that “men are allowed to marry unbelievers (women) in order to substitute their faith”. From this text, muslim women are not allowed to marry unbelieving men for the reason that in patriarchal society, a woman must follow the husband, including in her individual beliefs. For men, on the other hand, the possibility of marriage with an unbelieving woman is considered a religious duty, the logic is that the man is the head of the family, so wives should follow their husband’s religion. We can see how the constructs of femininity and masculinity interplay in the discourse of inter-religious marriage, which has different meanings to women from men. The discourse of “forbidden love” for muslim women is rooted in femininity stereotypes in which women are not only weak physically but also spiritually. While men, by marrying unbelieving women, are able to do part of their religious duties, to Islamize unbelieving women; thus men are the heroes of the religion.

Love is also positioned vis a vis sex. The following quotation is obviously illustrating the relationship between love and culture. American culture, in this novel, becomes a representation of sexual promiscuity whereby when one says “I love you” it means “I want to have sex with you”. This should not occur in Islamic culture.

*Nah, ngomong-ngomong soal gaya gaul dari Amrik, sebagai remaja muslim kita diwanti-wanti untuk nggak mudah tergoda. Kalau cinta yang diajarkan oleh masyarakat Amerika harus diekspresikan melalui sek bebas, kamu jangan ikutan. Cinta dan seks nggak berbanding lurus. Cinta, ya, cinta. Sementara sex adalah aktifitas biologis. Jadi jelas amat berbeda.*

Well, regarding American style, as muslim teenagers, we feel strongly that one should not be seduced so easily. Although American society maintains that love can be expressed though free sex, you may not follow them. Love and sex are not proportionate not do they run in parallel. Love is love, while, sex is only biological activity. So, they are extremely different.

In anticipation of a Muslim generation absorbing a sexual promiscuous style, the author strongly maintains that any type of sexual relation before marriage is a door to approach *zina* (sex before/ outside marriage). Therefore he also refuses to accept the term “*pacaran Islami*” (engaging in relations with the opposite sex in an Islamic way) so being together, touching hands or kissing are considered sexual activities approaching sex outside marriage. He roots his arguments in a hadith narrated by Ahmad; “for those who believe in Allah and the doomsday, it is forbidden to *berkholwat* (be together alone) with a woman who is not with her companions. Because evil is the third party between you (a man and a woman)”.

*Pacaran adalah pintu menuju z-i-n-a. sebab, nggak ada jaminan kalau kamu udah berdua-dua bisa tahan nggak melakukan “begituan”. Jadi, bias deh antara cinta dan nafsu. Setan memang paling hebat dalam urusan memprovokasi manusia berbuat maksiat, jadi kudu hati-hati.*

*Pacaran* (having a girlfriend/boyfriend) is a door approaching *zina* (sex outside marriage), there is no guarantee that when you are with your boyfriend/girlfriend you will not do “that”. So, there is bias between love and desire. Evil is smart in seducing human being to do immoral conducts, so be careful.

Homosexuality is certainly often mocked or depicted only in order to condemn it. Beside being against the nature of human beings which is to “be fruitful”, in contrast, homosexuality is claimed to stop human regeneration. In a discourse of love, to him, loving the same sex is called deviation from love, similar to sexual deviation.

*Masalah gay dan lesbian adalah salah satu bentuk penyimpangan seksual. Itu namanya cinta yang ternoda. Gimana enggak selain melanggar fitrah, gay dan lesbian juga aktifitas maksiat.*

With regard to being lesbian or gay, this is seen as sexual deviation. Besides being against human nature, being gay or lesbian is considered immoral conduct.

The strongest transformation of young people’s identity may be through television, even though in pesantren it is not easy to access. Besides which pesantren do not provide television -- if santri want to see television, they normally just watch it for a short time in a kyai’s house, telephone shop, or food stall around pesantren.

Santri may have enough time to watch television when they are at home during holidays. Television is considered to have a dangerous impact of modernity on young people such as advocating free relationships with boys, and the sexual identity of young people is something that really concerns the pesantren. What are the influences? My conversations with secondary students Han and Shi tell us that this media does influence her life, in both bad and good ways.

Rb : *Kalau nonton TV dimana?* (where did you watch TV? )

Han : *Paling di warung esa, tapi itupun hanya sekilas saja.*  
(I could see at a stall (*warung esa*), but it was just a glance.)

Shi : *Tapi pernah sih shinta nonton di bawah. Waktu ibu dan bapak tidak ada, "de..pingin nonton tv donk" ya udah tapi tutupin pintunya aja takut orang banyak masuk gak enak. Nonton film disini ada setan.*  
(But, I sometimes watch television downstairs, when "bapak and ibu"<sup>14</sup>, (kyai and his wife) are not at home. Then I ask Dede (midwife), "De...please can I watch TV? She said "yes...you may, but please close the door".)

Rb : *Kalau dirumah sering nonton.* (Do you often watch TV at home?)

Shi : *Shi mah jarang juga nonton TV. Gak tahu gimana, kayaknya lebih baik diam daripada nonton tv. Bukan gak suka, jadi tidak biasa. Lagian teman-teman Shi juga sama tidak suka nonton TV.*  
(I rarely watch TV. I prefer to be alone than to watch TV. It does not mean that I do not like it. My friends also don't like to watch TV).

Han : *Kebalikanya.* (I am the opposite to her.)

Shi : *Apalagi sama Shara. Dia mah tv nonstop teh. Dia paling suka Eminem. Shi mah kalau nonton TV kelamaan itu udah pada sakit badan. Kayaknya ngobrol dengan teman berjam-jam gak kerasa, tapi kalau nonton tv itu kan mata sakit, ih.....mata itu puyeng. Makanya tergantung orangnya. Shinta mah nonton tv itu film2 tertentu saja. Yang shinta suka aja the, ya kayak ceritanya anak sekolah,*  
It is not the same with Shara (her friend), she can watch TV non-stop. She likes Eminem (rap music). I feel pain in my body when I spend too long watching TV. But if talking with friends for hours, I do not feel anything. It depends on the person. I just watched selected movies. I like stories about teenagers at school.

<sup>14</sup> It is common for santri to call a kyai and nyai or the owner of dormitory in general, as *bapak* (father) and *ibu* (mother). And the top leader, kyai Ilyas was famously called "bapak".

Rb : *Pengaruh tidak TV seperti itu. Kadang kan ceritanya jauh ama kehidupanmu, nah kayak gitu pengaruh tidak.*

Did you think it influences your life? Because sometimes the story is different from your life now?

Shi : *Pengaruhnya banyaknya pengaruh yang gak baik. Sering kan kalau di fim2 tawurawan, misalnya pergaulan terlalu bebas. Tapi tidak tahu sih, suka aja. Ya kebanyakan yg sinetron remaja itu nyontohin gak bener.*

I think so, a lot, especially on the bad side. For example, films about young people engaging in gang fights, living a free lifestyle. But I did not know why I like it. I just enjoyed it. Yes...many teenage soap operas are bad examples for us.

Rb : *Tapi sadar tidak*

Do you realize it?

Shin: *Sadar sih kalau dari film itu banyak gak bener.*

Yes...of course, the films have bad impact.

Han: *Kalau hanny sih suka film ya misalnya hamil diluar nikah, pacaran terlalu bebas. Jadi kita tuh musti tidak pacaran terlalu bebas, gitu. Jgn sampai ngepotin orang tua. Kita menghasilkan anak tapi belum pada waktunya*

I liked a film about unwanted pregnancy, outside marriage, engaging in free sexual relations. So, from that I learnt not to be free in engaging in relations with a boy. We do not want our parents to be troubled by us “producing” a baby at the wrong time.

From the quotation above, in my opinion, television is like a “free market” in which the producer of a program may sometimes focus only on entertainment, with less of an educational mission, yet audiences are free to interpret the message of life displayed through many kinds of programs, sometimes without critical questions such as “why?” or “is that true?” Soap operas expose the life of young people in a metropolitan city -- most soap operas take place in Jakarta -- according to my participants who live in a village, and do absolutely influence their life. Shi is aware that this media has had negative impacts on teenager’s lives such as gang fights or having “free” relations with boys. But she does not have a reason why she likes it. In my opinion, as I mentioned at the beginning of this sub-chapter, globalization has created a single identity for young people all over the world, one constructed through media. To me, watching television about teenage life is not only a matter of entertainment but can also be compensation for low self-esteem when one feels her

limitations in expressing herself in real life and cannot be what she really wants to be. Living in pesantren certainly limits santri's free expression of the "self" in everyday life. Their desires have been repressed deep down by a set of norms and values. Therefore, just by watching a soap opera, her self-doubt can be dispensed with. While watching television; she has chosen one character she likes in the movie/ soap opera whose role does not apply in her reality. Then she projects her imagination into the particular character, to express herself through the story, therefore she always wants to follow the story.

When she told me about Shara, her friend who lives in another dormitory and peer group member, that she could watch TV for hours, I was reminded of the young girl I met in room nine whose very provocative performance was in absolute contradiction with other santris. I was there when she was taking care of Han who got stomach cramps one day, during the second week of my stay at this dormitory. I could not forget this girl because of her physical appearance. At that time, she was not with head-scarf because we were in Han's room. I noticed she cut her hair very short and it was colored red, she had decorated her body with ornaments showing symbols of a young metropolitan girl, a big watch on her hand, she had really marked herself different from other santri. Shi looked funky in my eyes. Shi told me that she used to be a courageous person in this dormitory. Accordingly, she had problems many times with the board of santri here because she tended not to obey regulations and convinced other santri to have the share her ideas. Therefore, she was removed to another dormitory by the manager.

The link I want to make is between my first meeting with Shara and Shi's comments upon "the influence of television" on Shara's performance and her behaviour too. Firstly, she really likes watching television, which may impact upon her way of thinking, her mode of dress, and her behaviour, which really demonstrates how much she wants to show her personal identity as a young modern girl. Secondly, that the awareness Shi has of the negative impact of television, is not in itself enough to prevent the modernizing mainstream influence without a more critical understanding about the consequences of absorbing those values into her life. However, through television, teenagers can learn how to be responsible for their own body. For example, Han who really likes to watch television considers it informative

about reproduction and sexuality. The story about unwanted pregnancy was significant to her (and maybe to others among her teenage peers) and has sharpened her ability to think about the dangers and social consequences of having sex before marriage that could effect her future.

All in all, we can see a transformation to modern ideology does happen before and during their stay at pesantren. Andar, an ustadz, believes that most santri who had bad behavior in this pondok had been influenced by other social interactions when they lived with parents. "Pre-society" had carved their personality and behavior before entering pesantren, and it certainly plays an important role in the santris' behavior. Here, his experience interacting with santri over ten years has sharpened his feeling in identifying bad potential santri at the beginning.

A: *Ya... namanya org masuk ke sini beda-beda. Karena yg masuk kesini dari wajahnya itu kelihatan, begitu masuk sudah bisa dilihat orang ini seperti apa? Ya ini dalam satu dua bulanan tidak kelihatan dan setelah berbulan-bulan kemudian bergaul dan menemukan temannya yang klop maka lebih mudah. Seperti sekarang ini lagi adem ayem, tapi bulan-bulan berikutnya pasti akan ketahuan. Pas diusut-usut ternyata memang pemakai dari sananya. Bukan dari sananya bersih lalu disini menjadi seperti itu? Jadi orang yang punya kebiasaan seperti itu kemudian ketemu sesamanya disini.*

Yeah...everyone who came here had various backgrounds. It could be identified easily (the one who had bad behavior), and when they stay here, they prove who they are. We can't recognize it for one, two or three months, but after several months, when they start to have interaction and determine their peer group it is easier for them (to do bad conducts). Right now, the situation is cool and calm, but in several months they (those who did subsequent bad behavior) must be discovered. When the team investigates (in the case of drug users) in fact he was a user before coming here. It is not true that he was clean and became like that here. So, a person who has bad habits like that can later find friends having the same habit.

Rb: *saya melihat sedikit banyak santri bersinggungan dengan masyarakat, dan itu pasti berefek. Apakah anda menemukan hal-hal yg sebenarnya tidak diharapkan oleh pesantren hasil persinggungan tadi.*

However, I saw some santri interact with surrounding society and it certainly had an effect on them. Did you discover something unexpected by pesantren as a result of such interaction?

A : *Itu terasa sekali terutama pada santri baru atau santri lama yg habis liburan. Dari cara mereka bicara, dari cara mereka jalan (tidak seperti santri).*

It was certainly recognized (the changing of behavior), particularly when new santri and old santri had just come back from holidays. The way they talked, the way they walked (they were not like santri<sup>15</sup>).

The last statement of the teacher shows us that the changing of the santris' behavior mostly occurs at home, during holidays spent without pesantren control. This teacher emphasized the condition when santris just returned from home and started to re-adapt to pesantren life. In the process of adaptation to the pesantren, there is a "transition period". At this time, this teacher can recognize changes in physical expression such as the way of talking and way of walking, which are to some extent different from when they had been staying in the pesantren for a long time.

### 5.1.3 The Feminist Movement

There are two main streams of the feminist movement within pondok kota santri, secular and muslim feminist groups. Secular women's groups work outside pesantren on the issue of violence against women lead by ASPER<sup>16</sup>, abbreviated from *Aspirasi Perempuan* (Women's Aspiration), while the muslim feminist group is lead by Rahima<sup>17</sup>, a female NGO which is concerned with the issue of women's rights and Islam which is working inside the system of pesantren. Let me start this part by describing the second organization -- the kind of movement they are, their strategy in

---

<sup>15</sup> The behavior santri reflected principle of respectful to kyai and teachers. Particularly, when they were speaking with kyai, it was seen to avoid having eyes contact directly with kyai. In pesantren kota santri, relation between teacher and santri was more egalitarian in term of having conversation outside class easily without *hijab*. They can discuss anything or even involving in not serious topic. But in class, because of system, teacher rarely invited santri to have question as well as santri were reluctant to arise questions even they were not exactly understand.

<sup>16</sup> ASPER is a local women NGO led by young people who graduated from this pondok. Having experience as women activist in the IAIC, institute of Islamic Studies in this pondok, a group of young women, some of them santri of this pondok, initiated to build a women group which can encounter dominant discourse of masculinity in pondok as well as in Tasik on the whole. This group is concerned on violence against women. Unlike Rahima, this group approached santri directly to be invited to their activities like training, seminar, or workshop regarding issue of VAW and also Islamic discourse.

<sup>17</sup> Another new movement lead by a muslim NGO, Puan Amal Hayati which is concerned on advocacy for victim women of VAW. This group is new in this pondok therefore my present in this pondok was used to involve in building Women Crisis Center (WCC) and promoting VAW issue to women and men muslim leaders in Tasikmalaya. So now, two feminist groups are pushing issue of women in Kota Santri.

promoting the issue of women's rights, the media they use to mainstream gender equality within pesantren. Rahima approaches this pondok with a program of gender mainstreaming, which is targeting the second level of pesantren structure, ustadz/ustadza and teachers that we believe are able to push the process of restructuring within the school and pengajian curricula in the future. "We"<sup>18</sup> were aware that it was not easy to influence the policy of the pondok, particularly in designing the curricula of pengajian. Therefore, the first movement we made was to approach a school which was easier in term of management and bureaucracy. This organization is only focusing on achieving a level of discourse about women in Islam using the feminist approach. We do intensive lobbying at the level of decision-making both within pesantren and schools, however we have to be satisfied with restructuring the way of thinking of some important ustadz since I mentioned that this pondok has become fragmented in some groups.

Although Rahima has gained some opportunity to create negotiating space for teachers and santris in this pondok through an intensive group discussion, namely, Nahdina<sup>19</sup> and Swara Rahima, a quarterly magazine produced by Rahima, but the sexist perspectives are still the dominant discourse. Nahdina is so far able only to move forward on the issue of women's rights outside pesantren by *majlis ta'lim*,

---

<sup>18</sup> With Rahima, I was responsible for running this program for two years through two different approach, for ordinary teachers were involved in training program which divided into two level; gender sensitivity and liberating education using Islamic approach. This training besides providing information about issue of women's rights, violence against women, it also encouraged participants to critical to religion and classical reference used in this pondok by opening debate about misogynic islamic texts. While for those who were in important position in pondok and society around, we invited them into *halaqah* (thematically discussion ) (four times) in Jakarta. This program was running every three months with different topics, but the purpose in to supply, to sharpen, and to encourage muslim leader to do reinterpretation of islamic text which are very gender bias by using methodology of rereading txt designed by Rahima.

<sup>19</sup> Nahdina is a forum of alumni of training program held by Rahima. They formed this forum for the purpose of maintaining communication among teacher and ustadz, in the sense of strengthening self-confidence to work in women's issue, the other purpose is to sharpen their understanding on classical texts in promoting women's right to get betterment in the future. This forum does a monthly discussion about Islamic text which discriminate women and socialize to society around pondok through *majlis ta'lim* (religious meeting). Two important women, ibu Zubaid and Ibu Ida (the daughter of kyai Ilyas) are running this forum, invites muslim leader and college student to join. In 2003, this group held *bedah kitab* (public book discussion) *uqudulujuain* by inviting kyai and muslim leaders in Tasikmalaya. That was the first big movement in pondok kota santri in which the controversial debate was appearing during the discussion. Since then, the term gender, feminism, women's right, violence, are overwhelming among santris with different level of understanding.

together with other feminist groups, ASPER and some women's group<sup>20</sup> like Fatayat, Muslimat, Wanita Persis, which have the same level of understanding on the issue of VAW. On the other hand, Suara Rahima (SR) magazine has a greater possibility to be accessible among female santri despite limited resources of publication. The main reason for acceptance of SR is because this is a typically *muslim* magazine even though the content is unlike most existing conservative Islamic magazines. SR is offering space for dialogue about issues of women's right using a new methodology of understanding traditional classical references, *kitab kuning* in this pondok approach. Normally, female santri, particularly college students, read by turns. The effect, of course could not be identified through *pengajian* class since the *bandongan* system did not open a dialogue session. However, through my personal interaction with students during the data collection period, and the consideration they gave to the topic I addressed them with compels me to believe that this media does influence their perspective.

For the following quotation on the content of SR magazines, I have cited one article concerning the issue of sexuality in the text of the prophet's *hadith*. The author begins the discussion about sexuality by criticizing the text about marriage in Islam. He claims that in the marriage contract, the position of women is viewed as male property. Presumably, the objectification of women within marriage commences with the rite of marriage, in which the religious text explicitly states that marriage is a covenant of ownership and authority. Even though women do have rights over males, it is not mentioned explicitly in the text or even in the sermon of religious leaders of *fiqh*.

In Islamic *fiqh* there are two definitions concerning the rite of marriage. The first is that marriage is a contract or covenant of ownership / possession ('*aqd at-tamlik*), and the second, that marriage is a contract or covenant of authority ('*aqd al-ibahah*). Both, in the first definition and in the second definition, the position of women is seen as an object for male enjoyment. The contract or covenant of ownership/possession in *fiqh* has the meaning of male ownership over a woman or one's right of ownership over her body. The contract or

---

<sup>20</sup> Fatayat and Muslimat are the biggest women mass organization in Indonesia which affiliate to *Nahdatul Ulama* (or NU, the biggest muslim (male) mass organization ). Member of fatayat mostly young married women, while muslim are membering of married women over 50 years old. Wanita Persis is another muslim organization which is more conservative then Fatayat or Muslimat. However, these women organization more focus on gender issue rather than feminism, since the word feminist associated with a group of women who are against marriage institution.

covenant of authority also means the contract gives authority to the male to enjoy the woman's body. Women too have the same right to enjoy their husbands' body, but this right is not mentioned explicitly in the definition of marriage. Another issue pertaining to the rights of males, is that which explicitly says that marriage is only an exploitative right for men concerning the female's body. Consequently, religious leaders of fiqh do not clearly state the obligations a man has to fulfill his wife's sexual desires....<sup>21</sup>

To get closer to the pesantren's culture in which kitab kuning has become the most valid reference and belief among muslims in pesantren, we therefore use the same source to counter the male bias interpretation. By applying the hermeneutical methodology<sup>22</sup> and women's perspective in reading the text, the reading of the Qur'an and hadith is meaningful for women living in the contemporary era, such as in Indonesia. In principle, Rahima introduces a way of reading text using critical analysis of text together with the context, wherein the text was produced. Furthermore, by promoting the new methodology of reading text, a purpose exists to center a number of marginalized writings (the Islamic classical references) within Islamic discourse in Indonesia, especially within pesantren. Here, I show how Rahima does analysis of hadith regarding women's position within marriage. I quote one of the articles entitled "Women's Sexuality in the Texts of the Prophet's Hadith" written by a young muslim scholar Faqihuddin Abdulkodir. He has a good example of how feminist muslims interpret the Islamic text, in which the principle of hermeneutical analysis is combined with gender analysis results:

There are many hadith texts that talk about the subordination of a woman's sexuality. Among them the Prophet has said: *"What's more, if a husband invites his wife to have intimate relations with him, but the wife rejects him and he becomes angry all night long - for this his wife will be cursed by an angel until morning.*

With reference to this hadith, the majority of Islamic teachers say that it is shahih (proper, correct and valid). At least among the critics of the chronological order

---

<sup>21</sup> See, Abdulkodir, Faqihudin, 2002, Women's Sexuality in the Texts of the Prophet's Hadith, Swara Rahima No. 5 year II, July-September 2002

<sup>22</sup> See Wadud, Amina, 1999, Qur'an and Woman Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective, Oxford University Press: New York, she explains that hermeneutical model is concerned with three aspects of the text, in order to support its conclusion: firstly, the context in which the text was written (in the case of the Qur'an, in which it was revealed), secondly the grammatical composition of the text (how it says what it says) and the last, the whole text, it's the world' view

of stories, it has been considered proper, correct and valid. Bukhari places this hadith in *Al-jami al-Shahih* in "an-Nikah," chapter 86, hadith number 5193. But within the Bukhari narrative, he does not express the sentence "the husband becomes angry all night long" (*fabata ghadhbana*). While in other hadith narratives this sentence is considered the most important clause.

Hajar al-Asqallani's book, *Fath al-Bari*, fully supports the validity of this hadith. There are several other texts that strengthen the hadith mentioned above. For example, the Muslim narrative from Abi Hazim "on behalf of Allah, a person may call his wife to bed (for intimate relations) and she that rejects him will be cursed by all of those in the sky above until she apologizes to her husband."

Other supporting narratives are by Ibn Khuzaimah and Ibn Hibban, from Jabirra: " the three types of people whose prayers are not received by God and whose goodness will not ascend to the heavens are: 1) slaves that ran from God (until the time of their return), 2) a person who is drunk (until the time he is conscious again), 3) women who aggravate their husbands (until they have been forgiven), (see, al-Asqallani, *Fath al-Bari*, X/368).

The matters pertaining here are often understood in a simple fashion by Islamic teachers, namely, that a wife is obliged to fulfill her husband's invitation for sexual relations. Wives can sin, but an angel will curse them for rejecting the above-mentioned invitation by their husbands. Bukhari's narrative, which is without the words "*fa bata ghadhbana*", still carries the meaning that the wife will be cursed if rejection occurs. While the narrative by Muslim, Abu Dawud, Ibn Khuzaimah and Ibn Hibban, with the clause "*fa bata ghadhbana*" is understood by several Islamic teachers to mean the curse only occurs if the husbands' anger arises as a result of rejection, rather than being cursed as a result of sinning.

Within the meaning pertaining to *fiqh*, in light of the hadith discussed above, the prime task of a wife is to satisfy her husband sexually. A wife is obliged to fulfill her husband's sexual desires. Within *fiqh* a husband obtains the right to enjoy his wife's body. The meaning here is that, if a wife wants to obtain the right to basic necessities she must at all times be prepared to be enjoyed by her husband. If not, for example, if she is not physically ready, as she is too young, or goes to jail as a result of a criminal act, or she rejects the invitation by her husband for sexual relations, the husband is no longer obliged to support his wife. Within this view the woman's body is indeed controlled by her husband.

Is it true that a woman has sinned just because she rejects a sexual invitation by her husband? According to Ibn Hajar, only a rejection, which results in anger (on behalf of the husband) should be considered sinful, because intimate relations are a right of the husband. When a husband allows or forgives his wife's rejection, then it is considered not to be sinful. The act of rejection is considered 'sinful' when the rejection is a full initiative of the wife and not as a result of any cruel intentions on behalf of the husband. Ibn Hajar's belief is based on another story, *hajiratan firasaha*, which means women consciously and intentionally leaving the wedding bed. Meaning those who are (cursed) are women who intentionally

initiate the rejection rather than rejection that is a result of a husband's bad behavior towards her.

Contemporary views of fiqh, by ulamas including az-Zuhaili, explain that the curse (sin) that descends upon a person is because of rejection for no reason and not because of a religious obligation that must be fulfilled. Meaning, women have the right to reject their husband if he is going to hurt her or if he is carrying out an obligation (see Husein Muhammad 2000:99). From the several views presented here, the subordination of the sexuality of women when facing men is not total. There is a space where women (according to classical fiqh thinking) do have the right to reject an invitation of intimacy from their husband. Meaning that the concept of a wife's total obedience to her husband, is not valid. Hadith that emphasize that a wife must be totally obedient to her husband must be criticized and their meanings must be revised, especially the hadith written by Imam Ahmad and at-Turmudzi: "if a husband invites his wife to engage in sexual relations, the wife must fulfill his needs, even if she is busy in the kitchen." Furthermore, in one story it even uses the example "while on the back of a camel, a woman must carry out her husband's sexual needs" (see Sunan at-Turmudzi, III/465, hadith no. 4697).

When analyzed, the text of this Hadith contains differences or false writings (tash-hif). Because in another story by Imam Ahmad the words *falya'tiha* are used not *falta'tihi*. The text is: 'What's more if you want to have your sexual needs fulfilled by your wife, the wife must partake even if she is busy in the kitchen.' The difference between the writings of At-Turmudzi and those of Ahmad are considered awkward, decrease the level and status of the hadith and are rejected by the people.

Although at first glance the differences seem simple, the consequence of understanding the difference between the wording in the first and second texts, is great. From the wording of the text in the first Hadith, it can be understood that a wife is obliged to fulfill the biological needs of her husband, wherever and whenever. A wife does not have the right to reject her husband. If she rejects her husband, she will be cursed by an angel and by all of the earth's creatures. Yet, if we look to the wording of the text in the second Hadith, it can be understood that it is only a recommendation for the husband to fulfill his sexual needs with his wife (and with no one else and by no other means) for even if his wife is in the kitchen, she must fulfill her husband's sexual desires. Meaning both that there is a restriction on the husband's sexual appetite; also the total obedience of the wife to fulfill her husband's sexual needs is not required.

But the majority of ulama choose to understand the words of the text from the first hadith, not the second. Even though the subordination of women has been explained over and over again. The question thus raised, is why in religious thinking, must a woman be a victim, in order to satisfy a male's sexual needs?

According to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, it is because the male sex is a more aggressive sex than the female sex. Men are not patient enough to go without sexual relations for a long period of time. Their concentration is often distracted

by sexual fantasies about the female body. Because of this, it is hoped that the woman will follow the husband and help stifle his aggressive, male sexual behavior and protect him so he does not engage in illicit sexual activity. Such protection is carried out by fulfilling the husband sexual desires. Meaning, the obligation of a woman is more than just helping her husband, but also respectively, keeping him from extending his desires, as is most important between a married couple.

So, a woman's sexuality must also be placed alongside the same aggressive logic. Because the problem of sexual aggression or passivity is associated with the physical and mental imbalances between the male and female sex. The labeling of females as sexually passive, and males as sexually aggressive, is misleading and there is no empirical evidence of this. Meaning that both females and males, can be passive or aggressive, concerning their respective sexual desires. In Ibn Hajar's logic, men are also obliged to help with and engage in sexual activities so their wives can enjoy their sexual desires too. Syafi'i's view that the male only has to engage in sexual activities with his wife once through their marriage, while a wife's duties concerning her husband are an obligation for the whole length of their marriage; must be stopped. The viewpoint of Madhhab Maliki, that the wife is given the opportunity to demand intimate relations once every four months; must also be stopped. The fulfillment of sexual needs by both by the wife concerning the husband, as well as the reverse; is not associated with time, but associated with one's physical and mental readiness, as well as the condition of one's environment. A woman's needs must not be measured only from the husbands' side.

The concept of *mu'asharah bil ma'ruf* in this situation, concerns both the needs of the husband, and the wife. Both partners must respectively pay attention to each other. In accordance with the concept of *mu'asharah bil ma'ruf* an intimate relationship is not just one-sided. According to the Qur'an, a relationship between a husband and wife is equal. "libasun lakum, wa antum libasun lahunna" (they are your garments and ye are their garments). If the Qur'an expounds an equal voice, why does the subordination of women exist? Why are views of fiqh that subordinate women still preserved?

From the long quotation above, the writer started an analysis of the hadith; **firstly**, by verifying the text to investigate whether the hadith was correct or false by presenting some references that have the same argumentation, supporting the veracity or falsity of the hadith. In this text, he quoted some scholars to identify the correctness of the hadith such as Bukhari, Fath al-Bari, Abi Hazim, Ibn Khuzaimah and Ibn Hibban, who claim the hadith is "correct". The table below shows some writers who support the hadith: *"What's more, if a husband invites his wife to have intimate relations with him, but the wife rejects him and he becomes angry all night long - for*

*this his wife will be cursed by an angel until morning*". The debate is on the word "the husband becomes angry all night long" (*fa bata ghadhbana*)

**Table 2. Verification of hadith**

Name of narrators of hadith	Content of hadith	Interpretation of the content	Status of hadith	Books Resources
<u>Bukhari</u>	What's more, if a husband invites his wife to have intimate relations with him, but the wife rejects him for this his wife will be cursed by an angel until morning	Without "the husband becomes angry all night long" ( <i>fabata ghadhbana</i> ).	considered proper, correct and valid	Al-jami al-Shahih in "an-Nikah," chapter 86, hadith number 5193
Fath al-Bari in Hajar al-Asqallani	on behalf of Allah, a person who calls his wife to bed (for intimate relations) and she rejects him will be cursed by all of those in the sky above until she apologizes to her husband"	Meaning those who are (cursed) are women who intentionally initiate the rejection rather than rejection that is a result of a husbands bad behavior towards her	fully valid	
<u>Ibn Khuzaimah</u> , <u>Ibn Hibban</u> , and Jabirra	three types of people whose prayers are not received by God and whose goodness will not ascend to the heavens are: 1) slaves that ran from God (until the time of their return), 2) a person who is drunk (until the time he is conscious again), 3) <u>women who aggravate their husbands (until they have been forgiven</u>	with the clause "fa bata ghadhbana" is understood as the curse only occurs if the husbands' anger arises as a result of rejection, rather than being cursed as a result of sinning.	valid	al-Asqallani, Fath al-Bari, X/368

**Table 2. Verification of hadith (Cont.)**

Name of narrators of hadith	Content of hadith	Interpretation of the content	Status of hadith	Books Resources
az-Zuhaili	Same text	the curse (sin) that ascends upon a person because of rejection for no reason and appears not because of a religious obligation that must be fulfilled. Meaning, women have the right to reject their husband if he is going to hurt her or if he is not carrying out an obligation		Husein Muhammad (2000:99)
Imam Ahmad and at-Turmudzi	“if a husband invites his wife to engage in sexual relations, the wife must fulfill his needs, even if she is busy in the kitchen.” Or in one story it even uses the example “while on the back of a camel”	a woman must carry out her husbands sexual needs	False, rejected by people for inconsistency using the word “falya'tiha” changed to “falta'tihi”	Sunan at-Turmudzi, III/465, hadith no. 4697

In investigating hadith what needs to be carefully verified is the life history of the narrator, which should have been well-conducted, with no experience of violence, particularly to women which is what Rahima is concerned with, or any other immoral conduct. So they should be perfectly-led lives. Obviously, it may be rejected if the narrator of the hadith ever did something bad. **Secondly**, if the hadith is definitely correct, we go on to exploration (grammatical and socio-linguistic) as the Arabic keywords are much preferred, to draw closer to the real message. For example, in the debate on the meaning of the sentence: *fa bata ghadhbana* (see the table). All the interpretation that stems from this hadith is discussion about the phrase “the prime task of a wife is to satisfy her husband sexually” with different degrees of understanding of the text. Within these interpretations, we can find a small window to argue for enforcement of women’s sexual rights from an interpretation such as this one:

- if physically she is not ready, as she is too young, or goes to jail as a result of a criminal act, or she rejects the invitation by her husband for sexual relations, the husband is no longer obliged to support his wife.
- when a husband allows or forgives his wife's rejection, then it is also considered not to be sinful
- women who intentionally initiate the rejection rather than rejection that is a result of a husband's bad behavior towards her

Thirdly, we have to see the context in which the text was written. It means understanding the sociological, economic and political situation of the society at the time the text was produced, then finally contextualizing the text within the present situation and condition of society. The readers should be aware that the hadith was produced within the context of Arabian culture at a time when the position of women was subordinated to men. Sara Mills in 'Text Analysis'<sup>23</sup> explains that readers now have their own context, therefore the text which is produced by the author and the author's new context may be interpreted differently from the source text because the context of reader and author are different.

At the end of the writing, two paragraphs demonstrate the ideology of Rahima in which both women and men share the same sexual aggressiveness and desire and this needs to be addressed through Islamic ethics; respect and mutual satisfaction. The concept of *mu'asharah bil ma'ruf* (an intimate relationship) is not just one-sided. According to the Qur'an, a relationship between a husband and wife is equal, "*libasun lakum, wa antum libasun lahunna*" (they are your garments and ye are their garments).

## 5.2 The Influence of the Contesting Discourses

I expected my findings would show a number of discourses competing in this pondok pesantren: Islamic tenets, pesantren culture, the culture outside the pondok, electronic media, print media, government programs and NGOs movements; with each of them demonstrating contradictions and thus able to reflect heterogeneous and different powers; however, that was not the case. What I did uncover was a blended culture in which Islamic principles, contemporary Indonesian culture and

---

<sup>23</sup> See Sara Mills in Eriyanto, 2001, Analisis Wacana Pengantar Analisis Teks Media (discourse analysis, the introduction of media text analysis), LKiS: Yogyakarta p. 199-220

modernization were mixed; and this was reflected in the day to day life of the community. While the feminist movement was to some extent far away from the mainstream pesantren, nevertheless, it existed for some individuals. From a first analysis, it is obvious that the accounts relating to the development of female sexuality, contain consistent images of sex, and gender, in all sites that are related to a social interpretation of Islamic teaching. The sexuality of single women is about premarital chastity, and culturally dominant notions of femininity and masculinity. However, some female participants showed that they were increasingly influenced by discourses within print media and by notions of gender equality.

I emphasize looking at how two contesting discourses (modernity and gender equality) are influences in the process of female santri becoming women, within the dominant religious discourse in pesantren. The fact that this pondok has categorized itself as a modern pondok; which through my lens, means the two radical characteristics of modernity and Islam are forcedly co-existing; must create a negotiation space as a filter to the ambition of modernization that otherwise replaces traditional values.

At the grass-roots level, I find that the contesting discourses influence female santri in such a way as to create a way of thinking that positions their identity “somewhere-in-between” a santri and a modern youngster. In this blend of cultures, my participants are trying to give meaning to their actions, desires and expectation and set some values in the process of developing their female sexuality.

The differences between all the participants, relate to the degree they absorb the modern discourses about self-identity. That is, those who have experience with some issue of gender equality, are strengthened by the discourses of modernity and feminism, and their sense of individual understanding of their self-identity, their actions and decisions, as well as their individual resistance, is greater than those who have no experience with discourses on gender equality. Widya, a 20-year-old college student from a rural area of Tasikmalaya, who had a bad experience of sexual assault when she was sixteen, is an example of someone who has developed her sense of self: she defends a woman’s right to decide to be an independent and educated woman. Additionally, from her narrative, we see her resistance to local culture and her

resistance to her parents' wish that she marry soon (before she may reach success) shows explicitly:

Rb : What do you want to be as a woman in the future?

Wid: *Ah...saya ingin menjadi perempuan yang mandiri. Yang tidak tergantung pada cowok. Saya pingin merasakan saya jadi perempuan tidak tergantung ama kalian (laki-laki). kalau udah nikah juga cita-cita saya pingin cepet kerja, gak mau saya di urmah. Apalagi suami kita pelit, gak mau. Mudah-mudahan bisa.*

(ah...I want to be an independent woman who does not depend on men. I want to experience being a woman who does not depend on men. If I marry, my dream is to have a job, I do not want to stay at home, moreover if my husband is stingy, I do not want it. I hope I can.

Rb: What do you plan?

Wid: *Gak mau nikah dulu sebelum orang tua saya merasakan keberhasilan saya. Masa bodoh saya dibilang perawan tua, emang di desa itukan klau udah 20 atau 25 itukan wa..gimana gitu. Yang penting kita harus berhasil dulu. Kalau saya bisa kaya mbak Ruby s2 dulu. Dan kata ibu "lah..kumaha atuh jadi perawan kolot". Ya biarin orang saya tidak tinggal di rumah ini. Saya pernah ngomong gini, "mamah tong mikiran jodoh abi, pokoknya bihar saya yang mikirin jodoh saya".*

(I do not want to marry before my parents benefit from my success. I do not care about being called *perawan tua* (a late virgin), in my village, for a woman approaching 20 or 25 years old it, seems society has questions. The important thing is, I have to be successful first. If possible, I could be like Mbak Ruby, and get a higher degree. And if my mom asks me "what if you became a late virgin". "well...I don't care, I need not stay at my home". I told her, "mom, you need not think about my future husband, in principle, let me think about my future husband".

However, currently modern discourses of rationality, self freedom and choice, co-existing with feminist discourses on women's rights are being introduced to negotiate or even to counter pesantren principles regarding the role of women. This was demonstrated in several conversations in which the participants used gender equality and self-benefit as arguments for women to resist religious authority.

Eda, a college student, presents a picture of a woman who is able to re-contextualize (seeking out benefits for women in contemporary society) the religious teaching about the role of women contained in one classical reference from pengajian class, Kitab *Uqudul Ujain*. This Kitab strongly socializes a sexist interpretation of the relationship of a married couple, wherein women are inferior to men. Here, her

argumentation in understanding the Kitab stems from her context, as a woman living in contemporary Indonesian muslim society.

Rb : *Pendapat teman-teman tentang uqudulujai itu gimana? (What do you think about Uqudulujain?)*

Eda : *Ada beberapa hal itu kayaknya gini, kita itu harus patuh pada suami. Yang gak setujunya perempuan itu kayak pembantu. Ya kalau misalkan bolehlah perempuan misalnya menyediakan minum untuk suami tapi harus seimbang. (in several matters like this, we have to be obedient to our husband. What I do not agree with is a woman as a domestic servant. For example, it is acceptable if a woman prepares a drink for her husband, but a husband has to do equally)*

Rb : *Teman-teman sendiri menyikapinya seperti apa dalam kehidupan sehari-hari (how do you implement this in your daily life ?)*

Eda : *Sebisa mungkin kita mengambil yang baiknya ada dari uqud, tapi kalau yang lainnya itu harus bisa punya argumen tersendiri. Pasti deh kitab uqud itu di buat pegangan. Itu senjata buat ceweknya, kan ada dikitab tersebut masalah berhubungan badan, meskipun di dalam kendaraan itu harus mau, atau istilahnya meskipun di atas onta harus mau. Harus mau. Pokoknya harus*

*(We take the good things from uqudulujain wherever possible, but for the rest, we have to have our own reason (to argue). This kitab always becomes a guide, it is like a weapon (for men) against women. In one part of the Kitab concerning sexual relationships, we (women) have to perform even if in a car! or as the Kitab's language states 'on the back of camel' women must agree. Nothing else, they must.*

From her narrative, I remark on two things. Firstly, her first statement really reflects ideas of gender equality influenced by modernity and feminism that make this young woman think that women and men can share a household. Secondly, in the second narrative, we can see her agency in responding to the teaching of the kitab. Her statement “ We take the good things from *uqudulujain* wherever possible, but the rest, we have to have our own reason (to argue)”, shows her ability in positioning herself between religion and her social reality in which some women and men do not play fixed gender roles in society. This young woman is also aware that the construct of female sexuality in this kitab is somehow used by men as a weapon to objectify women under the name of religion. For example, a hadith talking about sexual duties of wife to her husband “*if a husband invites his wife to engage in sexual relations, the wife must fulfill his needs, even while on the back of camel, then she cannot refuse him.*”

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **SEXUAL SUBJECTIVITIES, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter deals specifically with discourse about female sexuality within pesantren and the adoption of the concept of ‘becoming a muslim woman’. My findings will cover the experiences of single young women in pesantren to give meaning to their process of ‘becoming women’ in sexual terms. Narrative analysis will be applied to reveal not only the sexual ‘lives’ of female santri but also, their emotions, personal judgment, critical thinking, resistance, agency and fluidity of their subjectivity<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the discourse analysis will help me to determine the way in which social norms, values and ideologies regarding issue of gender and sexuality have been constructed. My coverage will encompass two arenas in which the discourses on sexuality, gender and power affect the contesting discourses of ‘becoming women in sexual terms’ in the pondok pesantren and then look at the ‘real-life situation’ in which the subjectivities of female santri regarding the issue of sexuality are constructed.

In this section I present the second core findings (the first findings are in chapter V) of the study. I have divided the discussion into the following three sections:

---

<sup>1</sup> See Thaweessit, Suchada’s article “Representation of Gender and Sexual Identity in Research” in Henderson, Virginia ed. al., 2004, *Researching Sexuality and Sexual Health in Southeast Asia and China*. With narrative and discourse analysis, she discovered the insights of Thai Women, which are ambiguous, contradictory, and incoherent of expression when they talk about gender identity. To her, this analysis is very powerful to reveal some aspect; first, to give writer critical looks in analyzing the way in which way social norm, value and ideologies regarding gender and sexuality issue have been constructed, second, to illuminate the language that constitute social values, norms, and ideologies that often subordinate women in patriarchal system. Third, to provide lens for understanding social values, norms and ideologies as a set of knowledge that should not be treated as fixed, it is changeable, to benefit women, men and another gender and sexual orientation. Lastly, this analysis can help researcher to understand the gap between belief and practice regarding issue of gender and sexuality that are vary in culture and individuals. (2004, PP. 32); See Tan, Michel, *Talking Sex: Anthropological Narrative in Sexuality Research* in the same book, he believes that using the narrative, the researcher can reduce personal judgment by placing the narrative, so the analysis will be on the meaning being perceived by the women, then we also can look at how they negotiate within the meaning, and the people surround her.(pp. 13-14)

1. Experience of the Body
2. Courtship
3. Beauty and the Veil

I present this section as my interpretation and analysis of women's narrative. Firstly, a section discussing the experience of the body, will present findings about constructs of gender and sex in which the individual perception of the image of women's bodies in society is examined (biologically, morally and sexually) in order to understand the ideology, meanings, and circumstances of young women in this pondok. Then, the discussion about partnerships among female santris in which the understanding of self-identity and sexual orientation are seen to be very essential elements for female santri to distinguish the meaning between "us" and "them". And finally the discussion about the sexualization of women's bodies is examined through a discourse on the concept of beauty and Jilbab, or 'the veil'. I present the conflicting phenomena in which there is a gap between the dictates of the religion and the conduct of the female santris.

### **6.1 Experience of the Body**

I start this part with my personal stories about the way my mother dealt with the process of becoming a woman. When I was teenager, "I did not like to be a woman", particularly since my mother quoted a Javanese aphorism that said "*Perempuan itu seperti daun padi, tipis tapi mbeleri* (a woman is like a rice leaf, thin but able to slice through). Moreover, she oftentimes mentioned "*Dadi wong wedok iku kudu sabar, kudu bisa ngalahi bojo* (being a woman you have to be patient and able to give in to a husband), which has carved my strong characteristics in opposition to her beliefs. Amazingly, she is stronger-willed than my father, imposing my younger sisters and me to get a higher education and good jobs before entering upon a married life. "*I did not want my daughters to be like me, just waiting for my husband's salary. Sometimes I felt embarrassed because I was unable to earn money*" she spoke to me in this way when I had almost graduated. What I have understood from her is the way she taught me how to be a woman, in the sense of having the ability to negotiate within a difficult situation, demonstrating her various roles in day to day living: how

she dealt with her life as a sister in law who had to take care of her husband's younger brothers and sister, since they were newly-wed couples; and as the daughter in law of my father's parents; as the wife of my father, who spent most of her time working at home; as the daughter of her parents, who was not allowed to continue her studies to a higher level; and finally as the mother of a son and three daughters who always inspired us to achieve a better future. These identities have different roles and consequences. And she plays them all as a professional actor does. The term *daun padi* (rice leaf) symbolizes what a woman is; and she metaphorically likened femininity to a rice leaf with the term *tipis tapi mbeleri* (thin but able to slice into things), here two different characteristics meet; as weakness with a sharp strength. So she may want to say "being a woman means being strong in her femininity".

This part is the most difficult part for me, to begin my writing speaking about 'becoming women'. Not because I was born a woman, but because discussion about 'becoming a woman' is absolutely complicated by, and entails all aspects of womanhood: the biological body, feeling, fantasy, fear, desire, myth, social values, femininity, sexuality and so on. In many societies, women's status is lower than men. They are not involved in decision making processes because they are considered emotional, irrational, and passive. Their voices, desires, and even fantasies are being silenced by culture and religion.

I begin this section by exploring female santris' feeling for 'becoming women' in which through (the social) construction of one's identity, and the role of women in family or society, the notion of femininity emerges in their stories. When I asked her what she gives the most happiness being a woman, she answered as follows:

Han: *Perempuan itu gimana ya, pokoknya beda dengan cowok. Kalau cowok itu orangnya semaunya, cuek. Cewek juga ada yang kayak gitu. Tapi kebanyakan cewek itu pendiam, rendah diri. Beruntung juga jadi perempuan kan karena kalau kita menikah nanti kita bakalan jadi seorang ibu. Dan kata agama itu kan kalau ditanya siapa yang paling harus kita hormati? Itu kan ibumu, ibumu dan ibumu, jadi ayah itu nomer dua*

Women are like...well... in principle, different from men. *Cowok* (men) are selfish, never taking care of others. Some *cewek*/ women also have the same characteristics. But commonly, women are humble, and do not talk much. I am lucky to be a woman because when I marry with a man, I

definitely will become a mother. And religion has said a mother is the number one of those we have to respect. Like a hadith said “whom must I respect first ?”. The Prophet s.a.w. answered, “your mother”, then your mother, then your mother. So the father is number two.

Rb: so you were happy to be a woman, weren't you? Supposed you are reborn, do you still want to be a woman?

Han: *Iya, kan kalau laki-laki aja banyak yang pingin jadi cewek kan teh...operasi kayak Dorce<sup>2</sup> itu. Ampe nangis-nangis pingin jadi perempuan karena mungkin perempuan punya kelebihan misalnya pingin ngurus anak. Nah kalau cowok kan cuman bisa cari uang.*

(Ya. I think many men want to be women...they have an operation like Dorce. He cried because he wanted to be a woman. Probably, its because women have strengths, like taking care of children, while men are only able to earn money.)

Within this excerpt, I discover the roles of women and men have different values in her eyes. Women definitely play a number of roles in society, as well as in family, such as being a mother who is the only one who has the ability to take care of her children. She interprets feminine characteristics like humility, not being too talkative yet being sociable, all in a positive way, because she sees women have to play many roles both in family and society. On the other hand, men seemingly only have one role, as breadwinners. The doctrine of religion in her narrative, may be the key reason for her acceptance and feeling of pride in becoming a woman, with a number of roles. The authority of religion in creating the value of being a woman interplays with the patriarchal ideology in remaking the identity of being a woman by producing the discourse of “tiga kali mulia” (be noble three times) in which religion is seen to place women three times higher over men. In contrast, the reality shows that the lack of education of women, or even their death due to the reproductive burden<sup>3</sup> is overwhelming. However, this young woman is able to shift the dominant discourse of femininity, which is seen by some to extend negatively, to be beneficial for them with a positive image. This is what Michel Foucault calls “disciplinary power”, making

---

<sup>2</sup> Dorce, a transgender, is a famous celebrity in Indonesia who operated his male genitalia to be female. His decision to be women became public debate in which medical experts, religious leaders, psychologists, and some figures of society involving in controversial debate.

<sup>3</sup> UNFPA reported that in every minute a woman dies because of her reproduction. In this case, it is not only unfulfill need of access of reproductive services but also neglectness of the sexual and reproductive rights of women

bodies “knowable” and “useful” within the dominant construction of femininity. The fact is that femininity is seen to be one source of positioning women as the second class in a patriarchal society. For example, women who experience pregnancy and give birth are often obstructed from public roles, considered unsuitable to be leaders. To her, on the other hand, the ability of women to give birth, and to take care of children are the strengths of being a woman that men do not have. The idea of femininity is exercised not only *on* but also *through* women’s bodies by forcing her not to say “no” to the negative consequences of femininity, but negotiated to produce pleasure, happiness, and respect (from the prophet’s statement “a mother is three times higher in degree than a father”). The discourse of (negative) femininity produces a discourse on the “usefulness” of female bodies, which can produce and take care of babies. She sees that men don’t possess these features. Here, women’s description of womanhood are diverse, while a particular woman feels that bearing children and taking care of them are part of patriarchy control over women, in this case women have the ability to benefit from their reproductive capability and achieve a value higher than men.

Another santri also gives a us a positive image on the notion of women within a patriarchal system in pesantren.

Wid: *Mungkin dari segi fisik juga perempuan sudah mempunyai kelebihan dari laki-laki, yah dari daya tarik dan dari bentuk badan juga sudah mempunyai kelebihan, kalau perempuan itu...(kela mikir heula)... selain itu dari soal perasaan juga perempuan bersifat feminim sedangkan laki-laki itu bersifat maskulin.*

(perhaps from physical appearance, women have more than men, well...their powers of attraction and body shape has more value, if women.....(wait let me think)...

Rb : *Keuntungannya menurutmu apa ? (what is the benefit of it?)*

Wid: *perempuan itu kalau berbuat ini, akibatnya selalu difikirkan kalau perempuan itu, kalau laki-lakikan tidak berfikir panjang kalau melakukan sesuatu.*

(when women do something, they always consider the consequences, in contrast men do not think it over when they do something).

Rb : *Apa laki-laki tidak demikian? (do you think men can not do so?)*

Wid: *bukan begitu, cuman laki-laki tidak sepeka perempuan dan pemikirannya berbeda aja sih dengan perempuan*  
 (It is not like that, but men are not as sensitive as women and their thinking is different from women.)

This young woman considers the woman's physical appearance, such as the power of attraction and the body shape, as powerful attributes which have more value compared to men. What I am more interested in, is her ability to take benefit from the stereotype of woman as an "intuitive" being, wherein "intuition" plays an important role in women's lives. She believes that "intuition" can guide women to think twice of any conduct, while men can not. Her statement is in extreme contradiction to the dominant opinion of women in which society considers such attributes irrational. What she mentions in the last statement definitely fits with Wollstonecraft's argument in her book '*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*' (1792) stating "women have the potential to be fully reasoning and rational creatures, and consequently are as capable as men of complete moral responsibility". To my understanding, the meaning of "potential" is related to "intuition", this ability to understand something immediately is one that most women have. As she said, "when women do something, they always consider the consequences". However, women's intuition should be articulated in systematic sentences which can be understood by others. So the ability to articulate thoughts verbally or non-verbally, to me, can be called "rational". To put it more simply, the ideals of reason apply both to women and men. What make the ideals of reason different in their application in society is in the way which men use rationality to exclude and oppress women (Griffin, 1982b quoted on Humm, 1995 p. 235), on the contrary, I argue that women shift the power of intuition into a sphere of reason which is more inclusive and liberalistic.

However, I find other santri gave a more negative picture of women, in which discourses on propriety and impropriety attach themselves to the argument. Matelda, a 20 year old college student was born in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), an island in the eastern part of Indonesia. She said that being a single young women in her culture is the source of most of the unhappiness in her/ NTT women's life, as she narrated thus:

*“Gak bebas. Kalau kita masih gadis-gadis gak boleh kemana, katanya cari laki-laki lah gitu, trus orang NTT itu memandangnya itu sekali disentuh, “Disentuh” maksudnya dipegang itu udah, itu berarti cewek gak bener. Itu makanya orang NTT itu kejam*

(It was not free. As girls, we were not permitted to go anywhere. They said “it was like seeking out men...or whatever”. The NTT people believe girls can be “touched” which means people will point you out, meaning you are not a good girl. Therefore, NTT people are so strict.)

People in her village seems to be suspicious of schooled women, they are afraid of moral decadence among women such as “naughty girls” and “wanita perek” (*wanita* means a woman, while *perek* is an abbreviation of *perempuan experimental* meaning freewheeling girl). Going to school, to them, means going to seek out a man because the possibility of having interaction with men opens up, hence it can erode the virtue of female chastity. After six years involved with Javanese, Sundanese, and Betawi culture, she is experiencing study at pesantren in Sukabumi, Jakarta and recently Kota Santri, she describes how women should be, and she refers to issue of morality thus:

Matel: *Kalau kita jadi perempuan itu musti tahu martabat kita itu kaya apa? jangan sampai memalukan. Contohnya yang berbuat tidak karuan, karena tidak pantas*

(To become a woman, we must have our own sense of dignity, what are we like? Do not be a disgrace. For example, by engaging in improper conduct, because it is not appropriate.)

Rb : *Yang tidak pantas kaya apa*  
(What does improper conduct appear as?)

Matel: *Kaya narkoba, main sama laki-laki yang berlebihan*  
(Like taking drugs, or playing around with men.)

Rb : *Kalau ngobrol*  
(What about just chatting with men?)

Matel: *Berlebihan sampai apa yang ada di badan itu diserahkan.*  
(Once she hands over her body she loses whatever she has.)

Rb : *Kalau laki-laki menurutmu*  
(What about for men?)

Matel: *Kalau kita wanita itu kan berbekas mbak, kalau laki-laki biarpun sudah punya anak utuh kene.*

(As women, traces will always remain; by contrast a man remains intact even if he has a child)

A woman should know how to keep her dignity, consequently they must control their behavior and not be disgraced by involvement in any improper conduct. I elaborate further to gain a mutual understanding of “improper conduct” because she uses rethoric in which her interpretation may differ from mine. My clarification is to avoid using my personal judgment, even though actually, her explanation points directly towards prohibited conduct like having pre-marital sex, but she explains it in a very rhetorical, discreet manner. From her narrative, I can catch how she distinguishes the discourses on the virginity of men and women. It really represents the general culture in which the meaning of virginity is the intact hymen in female genitalia. From her narrative, the cultural belief on this discourse emerges, wherein people are seen to believe that it is very easy to identify a woman who is not a virgin, because a trace will remain for a woman i.e. the broken hymen, while men remain intact.

### **6.1.1 Menarche; it is part of becoming women**

Menstruation is only experienced by women, therefore it is an important mark of femaleness. Laws (1990) remarks that the way menstruation is understood can reflect the way women are situated in any social structure. Similarly, Janet Lee points out that menstruation as a biological act, has cultural implications, and produces the body and women as cultural entities. To her, the body is “the text” of culture; it is a symbolic form upon which the norms and practices of society are inscribed (Lee in Weitz 1998, p.82). In this section, I share the story of menarche or, the first menstruation of female santri, wherein we can learn how women experience these important aspects of their lives, as well as something significant about how they experience becoming women. Moreover, the narrative of women’s stories about menarche highlight the agency of women; for when women can remember their first menses, their memories are framed by many competing discourses, framing them as

their own subjects, making meaning out of their experiences (1998, p. 83)<sup>4</sup>. Here, are some stories about menarche, and within their stories is the social construction of menstruation.

Cik, 16 and a senior high school student, told me that her first menstruation was terrible because she had never been informed about menstruation. “I did not understand why a woman must experience menstruation” she complained, with a sad expression when she remembered her first menstruation. She was fifteen years old when she was in her second year of secondary school in Ciamis. She was in a panic when she found red spots on her underwear. She was scared of something happening to her body, because she never imagined such a thing coming into her life, beyond her expectation. Her mother never taught her about menstruation before for the reason that she might consider that it was a common problem for women. In her mind, menstruation always made her imprisoned. Here, is her confession:

“...the first time I had my menstruation I was scared and shouting when I found a blood spot in my underwear. Fortunately my mom explained it. However, I could not walk properly, I felt that the pad was hindering me when I was walking. I had a stomach pain during menstruation. I did not want to do anything except just lie down in the bed. I was too emotional, with no passion to study, and especially not to interact with the opposite sex. I still remember my male friends were teasing me “..heeee.. Cicik got MP (Mens Pertama/ menarche)”. I was really embarrassed (Cik, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2004)

Similarly, the first menses of Fat (18) from Karawang was so scary that she rejected the reality “I did not want to have it”. The first time she stained her underwear, she was screaming, afraid something had happened to her. Her mother knew her daughter had grown up, so then she explained to her about menstruation. Moreover, because she never expected it would happen to her, she refused to use a pad. Then what did happen? At night when she woke up from her sleep, she saw blood on her clothes and bedcover. At that moment she was aware and started to use pad.

---

<sup>4</sup> See Rose, Weitz, 1998, the Politics of Women’s Bodies, Oxford University Press: New York, in which Janet Lee in “ Menarche and the (Hetero) sexualization of the female body” brings up issue of menarche as central aspect of body politics since it is loaded with the ambivalence associated with being a woman in western culture today. Menarche also represents the entrance into womanhood in a society that devalues women through cultural scripts associated with the body.

Cik and Fat are two examples of female santris negative experiences, of their first menstruation such as feelings of rejection, fright, pain, laziness, and shame. Both of them feel that menstruation is something that they never expected to occur in their life. Cik stated “I did not understand why a woman must experience menstruation”. Lee pointed out that menarche was viewed as something that seemed to appear external to women, rather than being a part of them, which is frequently mentioned in the female santris’ narratives, in such statements as “I did not understand why a woman must experience menstruation”, “I did not want to have it”, “ I was afraid of something happening” (1998). Many female parents do not provide information about menstruation earlier on to their daughter, on the other hand the daughters are likely to ask about menstruation to their senior friends who had the experience before. I agree with Rodger who claims that on the whole, women had a negative and uninformed experience of menstruation, which was, in turn, connected within negative feelings about it (2001, p. 533).

The feeling of rejection indicates that menstruation is viewed as something “abnormal” for girls. Because during menstruation, they are not comfortable to do daily activities like on normal days; walking improperly, feeling ashamed, feeling tension because male friends may recognize her mens and begin to tease her, having stomach pains and being lazy to study. Also, a lack of preparation, knowledge about biological change for single young women can be fragmented between body and self, in which menstruation seems to always be something to cope with, adjust to and manage, because it is considered to be something that appears from outside and invades the self (Lee, 1998 p. 87). In a patriarchal society menarche also leads to alienation and objectification of women from society and self. Like Cik’s narrative about her experience and her male friends’ response, which placed her as the object of derision of her male friends. She said, “*I still remember my male friends were teasing me [..heeee.. Cik got MP (Mens Pertama/ menarche)], I was really embarrassed*”, we can see this young woman makes a clear association between menarche and her relationship with boys, that presumably makes her withdraw from friendship with boys during her period.

More than this, Lee said that menarche is a transition from girlhood to womanhood, as well as the beginning of a gender-based sexualized happening (Weitz,

1998, p. 97). What is extremely crucial here? Menarche is an indicator of a girls rise to womanhood and the remodeling of her gender identity and gender relations. Such is the relationship among women; menarche makes a woman frame herself as “a normal woman” and, in my opinion, repeatedly attributes other women who have not got or never got a period as “abnormal” or else as “free” for those who have negative feelings about menarche, for example in the case of Cik and Fat.

However, for some santri menarche is interpreted in a positive way. The menstrual blood is symbolizes fertility and the maturity of women, which, within human reproduction, is the burden of women. The following narrative shows the relationship of the meaning of menarche to gender identity, what it means to be a “normal” woman.

*Untuk menstruasi waktu itu mau masuk SMP, caturwulan 3 tanggalnya berapa ? pokonya bulannya Maret, waktu itu takut banget loh teh waktu pertama menstruasi. Dikira Lin itu keputihan biasa itu teh, terus kan perut Lin sakit eh malah kena bola lagi ya keluar, dan linda kaget waktu itu karena kan waktu SMP dulu Linda disini, dan Lin langsung minta tolong sama saudara Linda ini apa ? terus kata saudara Lin ih serem.... kan waktu itu Linda sempat nangis teh tapi ada seneng juga berarti kalau gitu Lin itu normal. Ih serem banget dech ya Allah*

I got my menstruation when I graduated from elementary school. It was the last semester, around March. It was so scary, because I thought that it was just common white discharge and I got a stomachache too. Of course the bloodstain was there, so I requested some help from my relative. She said wow...so strange. I was crying for a moment. But later on I felt so glad because I am a normal woman (Lin, a high school student)

I was in my second semester of junior high school, and my first menstruation had not come yet. My friend said “to be careful for if I had not got menstruation yet, perhaps I was pregnant or infertile”. They was really scary for me. Therefore, when I got my period, I was so happy but also scared. My friend said that and I felt too, after that, I was mature, they said that I was calm, not too attractive like others, besides based on my friends’ experiences, I was able to give a solution to them.” (Iren, 16)

*Menstruasi itu menjadi ciri yang membedakan antara perempuan dan laki-laki, tiap bulan itu dari menstruasi itu kita mengeluarkan ovum. Kalau tidak dikeluarkan akan jadi penyakit*

Menstruation is a marker that distinguishes between women and men. In everyone, our ovum come out through menstruation. If it did not come out, it would become a disease (Neng, 17)

*Menstruasi..oh..kalau menurut saya dilihat dari agama, iut tanda-tanda baligh, tapi penting banget tuh menstruasi buat kita, so kita kan pasti pingin punya anak dong. Tapi ada sisi jeleknya juga soalnya kita di akhirat bakal menanggung dosa sendiri*

Menstruation...for me... if we look at it from a religious side, that is a marker of baligh (maturity). However menstruation is very significant for “us” (women), so we must want to have children. It also has a bad side because in the future life, we will be responsible for our own sin. (Siti, a high school student).

As shown in the excerpts, these young women associate menstruation with womanhood, such as feelings of “growing up”, “normality”, and “an ability” to produce babies. The term “us” from the last statement refers to women in general that can reflect that menstruation is indeed significant for women in a patriarchal society like Indonesia as an identity-marker of being a normal woman. Furthermore, menstruation also plays important in creating a gender identity in which women can prove their femaleness through the notion of a first menses. The discourse of womanhood, or even motherhood, gives me an idea to see another discourse of “incomplete women” caused by the absence of menstruation in their lives. Through this narration, we can assume how society responds to women who do not have the experience of menstruation. They may call them “abnormal women”, or perhaps even say “they are not women”. Here, we can see how the discourse of menstruation produces another discourse, such as womanhood, motherhood, normality and abnormality in which, through these discourses, culture takes an important part in creating female identity, gender roles, and a principle of how to become women.

Menstruation is seen as a private affair, which women should keep to themselves (Brooks-Gunn and Ruble 1983; Lee 1998; Rodger 2001). Female santri reported that they had learned earlier that they must hide all evidence of menstruation from men.

*Iya katanya kalau pas mens itu harusnya jangan bilang-bilang orang tua cowok...Saya belum dulunya tahu apa itu mens, tapi mungkin kalau punya kakak sih bisa karena telah mengalami haid duluan. Meski sama ibu deket tapi kalau masalah begitu..mah....(dia tidak meneruskan tapi dari ekspresi wajahnya sepertinya dia ingin katakan “gak perlu”)*

People say that when women have a period, we cannot even talk to our parents. Especially to a male parent. I did not know about it beforehand, but if I had a

sister, I may have understood “what it is” because she may have had firsthand experience before me. Even though I am close with my mother, in this matter ... (she did not continue, but from her expression she meant it was not necessary to talk). (Eda, 22)

*Pengalaman pertama ema waktu itu kelas 2 akhir mau kelas 3, tapi waktu itu sempat kaget juga, takut, mau bilang juga takut.tapi lama-lama juga ditanya kenapa gak sholat. Trus kenapa gak ngomong ? takut. akhirnya orang tua tahu sendiri kenapa gak sholat-sholat*

My first menarche experience, was when I was at semester four of junior high school. I was shocked and scared, I wanted to talk but I was afraid. My parents always asked me why I did not pray, but I did not tell them. Finally they knew why I did not pray. (Amel, 22)

*Waktu pertama haid itu fia tidak ngaji, tapi untung cuman 3 hari jadi tidak kelihatan, dan ditanyain ama bapak “fia kenapa tidak ngaji 3 hari”, sakit perut, emang sakit deh. Tapi pas 5 harian gak ngaji, bapak ngerti “oh mungkin lagi haid” jadi tidak nyuruh-nyuruh sholat lagi*

When my first menstruation came, I did not go to ngaji (learning about Islam), but luckily it was just for three days, so it was not visible and my father asked me “Fia..why didn’t you go to ngaji for three days”. I said I had a stomachache, and it was true, I had got it. But when the next menstruation took five days and I was absent for ngaji, my father could understand that I got menstruation and he did not ask me to do the prayer anymore (Alfi, 18)

The excerpt above, shows menstruation for muslim women is more than just reproductive process, it is part of learning religion. In Islam, menstruating women cannot have a set of roles in doing religious obligations such as *sholat* (prayer), *puasa* (fasting), *hajj* (pilgrimage) and concerning sexuality, men are extremely prohibited to have sex with menstruating women. Therefore, in pesantren, menstruation is not taught at the level of biological process, but rather it is concerned with the timing of when the blood begins and stops flowing, and the performance of religious rituality.

### **6.1.2 Female virginity and chastity**

Female virginity has had special significance for centuries, especially for traditional patriarchal societies. In many cultures, unmarried women are expected to stay pure and untouched until their wedding night. Being a virgin bride signifies a woman’s purity and her loyalty to her family. To put it more simply, virginity is an asset to both her family and the groom’s family. Therefore, especially in muslim

society, pre-marital sex is a powerful taboo because it will negate the virtue of female virginity, meaning it damages the woman's future life and the honor of her family. Everyone seemingly agrees that virginity is a woman's hymen itself. However, this is a powerful issue in which the discourses of honor, shame, and chastity interplay and contest for control of the female's body, it being controlled by the patriarchal power in a family, a future husband, a husband's family and society in general.

To study the meaning of virginity among single young women in pesantren, I carried out this case study through long narratives, as instruments that examine it from the subjective understanding to the broader, cultural construction. Mostly my participants consider female virginity to be highly valued in their communities, even though they have different terms to depict it. On the issue of chastity, all the participants agree that it links to the morality of women, hence this term is more exacting when looking at the problem of losing virginity (whether by accident or by immoral acts) for any type of woman.

My conversation with Widya and Lail is a good example of how the issue of female virginity and chastity come to have different interpretations.

- Rb : *sebenarnya beda ga kesucian dan keperawanan itu ?* (do you think chastity is different from virginity?)
- Wid : *Kalau sekilas memang sama tapi kalau secara arti itu berbeda. Kalau keperawanan itu lebih condong pada selaput darah tapi kalau kesucian yah dikatakan sebagai keseluruhan yang ada di perempuan itu* (at a glance, they are similar, but the meanings are different. Virginity is inclined to mean the hymen, but chastity ? well... it could be said to mean the whole woman)
- Rb : *Secara biologis ?* (is it biological?)
- Wid : *Engga kalau kesucian itu* (not chastity)
- Rb : *Atau lebih dikatakan moralitas bisa engga ?* (or do you mean morality or what?)
- Wid : *Iya...bisa mungkin* (yes, it could be)
- Rb : *Kalau kamu tul ?* (what about you?)
- Lail : *Ya...sama ! kalau sudah hilang keperawanan maka sudah hilang juga kesuciannya, orangkan pernah bilang bahwa kesucian adalah keperawanan itu.* (they are the same. If a woman loses her virginity she loses her chastity as well. People say that chastity means virginity itself)
- Rb : *kalau dalam kasus perkosaan, perempuan masih suci tidak?* (in the case of rape, do you think a woman is chaste?)

- Lail : *Kalau menurutku sudah engga, ya karena yang namanya kesucian itu menurutku yah perawanan jadi kalau orang yang sudah diperkosa itu sudah ga suci sebenarnya kalau menurutku. (in my opinion, she is not, because chastity for me is virginity, so if a person was raped, she is not chaste anymore)*
- Rb : *Kalau menurutmu Wid ? (what do you think Wid?)*
- Wid : *Yah...mungkin kalau dari segi biologisnya itu sudah tidak suci lagi tapi kan itu bukan karena keinginan dia karena itu suatu musibah buat dia maka syah-syah aza ya menganggap dirinya masih suci tapi jarang sekali yang perempuannya itu menganggap dirinya masih suci yang ada malah benci sama diri sendiri. Tapi kalau ada orang yang mempunyai pandangan lain maka dia masih suci karena perlakuan itu bukan karena kehendak keinginannya di dia dan itu perkosaan yang mutlak gitu.*  
(ya...biologically she is not chaste anymore, but it was not by her consent because it was *musibah* (an event causing great damage), therefore it was absolutely fine if she considered herself chaste, however it was very rare that a raped woman still calls herself chaste, in fact, most of them blame themselves. If somebody is of a different opinion, she might consider her self chaste because it was not her will, it was absolutely, rape.)

The quotation above shows us that the concept of virginity is associated with the biology of the hymen, while chastity is related to morality. However, for Lail, virginity is chastity itself. To put it more simply, to her, the damage to virginity is accordingly the damage to chastity as well. For example, in case of rape, Lail absolutely agreed that a raped woman is not a virgin or chaste anymore. For Widya on the other hand, with her experience of being harassed by her employer when she was working as a caretaker for an aging woman, makes her judge cautiously on the issue of chastity and a rape case. To her, there is no parallel correlation between virginity and chastity. In the case of rape, she argues that the destruction of the hymen by violence does not mean damage to female chastity. Her standpoint was very clear: only by engaging in immoral acts purposefully, can a woman damage her female chastity. Moreover, that it is not easy to build up the self-confidence of a woman who has been raped to give her back her self-worth, especially when speaking in public about her condition.

Even so, in Islamic tradition, virginity (the intact hymen) does not become the center of the discussion of premarital chastity, unless it refers to “immoral conduct” such as premarital sex (See the Qur’an Annur 30-31). Islam promotes the concept of

chastity on sexuality for both women and men, as it is stated in the Qur'an that every Muslim has to control their sexual desire and keep their private organs only for their couple. However, this idea is shifting at the level of a social reality in which virginity and chastity is similar. This idea is rooted in biological determination in which the existence of the hymen in female genitalia is considered as a marker of female chastity. When she has had a sexual experience, whether by consent or coercive sexual intercourse or even by accident, the broken hymen will be identified. Therefore, society is very concerned with female virginity, rather than male virginity. Lail (20), who lives in a rural area, points out very strongly that virginity and chastity are similar because of their social consequences but attention is never paid to the cause of losing one's virginity<sup>5</sup>. When I asked about how society's responded to the phenomena of female and male virginity, she replied:

*“Kalau laki-laki tidak kelihatan, meskipun sudah melakukan itukan tidak kelihatan atau bisa dilihat gitu, bedanya sama cewek itu yah kelihatan kalau yang sudah pernah melakukan. kan mungkin sekarang di zaman modern tidak terlalu mementingkan apa gitu tapi kalau sayakan di desa mba, jadi yang kaya gitu itu masih berarti gitu mba dan menjadi hal yang penting, terus kalau menikah sudah tidak perawan lagi itu dikatakan si ceweknya tidak berharga he...3x itu kalau di desa aku.*

Male virginity is invisible, although he has done it, it does not show or can not be identified. It is different from the female case ...for those who have done so, perhaps in the modern era it is not too significant, but to me, I live in the village, so this is meaningful and significant. When a woman gets married, it will be discovered if she is not virgin anymore. She would be meaningless in my village (Lail)

The narrative points to the fact that the virginity of women is not only a personal matter, rather it is also a social phenomenon in which the acceptance of women's bodies in marriage is signified by an intact hymen. Being a non-virgin bride may signifies the woman is incorrect and has consequences such as being humiliated,

---

<sup>5</sup> See Carol Delaney pointed out the issue of virginity in Turkish village society is very crucial, which the absent of hymen at marriage is reason for repudiation (Buckley and Gottlieb, 1988). This is not only because the bride has given to other man that the husband absolutely possess it completely, but also because she has been contaminated with other man's semen. And another study conducted by Murtadha Mutahhari in java- Indonesia virginity can affect the bargaining power of wives to husbands. Furthermore, virginity can lead to violence against women (physically or mentally).

looked down upon, disrespected by her husband or perhaps her husband's family. Female virginity, so far, is the main priority to be accepted by a husband in marriage, it is an asset not only to the individual woman but also the to the whole family. Therefore all the participants avoided transgression of female virginity before marriage because besides being seriously against religious and social norms and values, without virginity, women are very possibly placed in a humiliated position. Her narrative shows us how male and female virginity are viewed differently in terms of perceptions and perhaps meaning. Male virginity is seemingly almost absent from the discourse of social control, or as she said "can not be identified". Meaning it is impossible to determine from the biological organ, like Lail mentioned "*Soalnya susah itu mbak, kalau cowok itukan tidak ada tanda-tandanya, perjaka atau enggak* (because it is difficult, as for men, there is no marker to justify virginity or not). Generally speaking, it is not really attached to manhood because it is too difficult to prove biologically. Like Widya said "*Masih banyak yang terlalu melihat perempuan itu kaya gimana gitu, dan laki-laki itu jarangkan diperhatikan mau ini atau itu. Pokoknya kalau laki-laki seperti itu kayanya dianggap biasa gitu tapi kalau perempuan selalu digituain. Karena apa ya ? ya mungkin selama ini perempuan itu dilihatnya itu selalu begitu dari dulu, dari segi biologis atau keperawanan* ( there were a lot of people who still looked at women like that, but they rarely paid attention to men, as to whether he wanted to do this or that. In principle men were considered normal but women were not. Because of what? Perhaps because women just a year ago were visible biologically in their virginity.)

The meaning of virginity is sometimes not applied to the word "hymen", like Han and Shi who do not directly refer to virginity as a woman's hymen, to them, a rhetorical term like "self-esteem" and "something that we should keep until we are married" illustrate that female virginity is a matter of honor and dishonor in which a woman will be respected by her husband and her husband's family when she presents her hymen on the wedding night. In contrast, a woman will be disregarded by her husband or husband's family, if her husband discovers she is not virgin anymore.

---

*Keprawatan itu merupakan harga diri seorang cewek yang harus dijaga sebaik mungkin agar ....jangan sampai keprawatan itu rusak gara-gara sesuatu yang cuman buat kesenangan sesaat*

Virginity is a women's self-esteem which has to be kept as well as possible ... moreover virginity is destroyed just because of a moment pleasure (Shi, 17)

*Keprawanaan itu sesuatu yang harus dijaga sampai kita menikah nanti...ya....*  
Virginity is something that we should keep until we get married ... (Han, 18)

What do men really think about male virginity or *keperjakaan*? Two male santris I interviewed represent *keperjakaan* as moral conducts, particularly relating to sexual relation with opposite sex. Particularly, male virginity is associated with a male's experience of sexual intercourse outside of marriage.

*Katanya sih aku pernah saya baca buku, katanya ada kejantanan pria itu, kalau dia sudah pernah berhubungan intim maka dia tidak bujangan lagi karena dia sudah pernah mencoba. Saya pernah baca buku, buku apa ya lupa lagi. (Ed)*

(I once read a book that said males lose their virginity, if they engage in sexual intercourse so they are not virgin anymore because they have tried. That is what I read from that book, but I forgot what kind of book it was.)

*Kalau masyarakat memandangnya itu relatif. Tapi kecuali masyarakat yang agamis. Kalau laki-laki suka berpelukan, berciuman itu sudah tidak suci. Menurut saya sendiri. Jangankan jauh-jauh berhubungan seksual, berduaduaan aja itu sudah dikatakan jelek oleh masyarakat (Irf)*

(However, society perceives things relatively, perhaps, in religious society, if men like to hug or to kiss this is considered not being chaste. In my opinion, besides sexual intercourse, just being together is considered bad in that society.)

From these two male's narratives, I think that the issues of male virginity and chastity are not strong in (non-religious) society. But it becomes definite and clear in a religious society in which virginity and chastity can be measured by sexual acts such as kissing, hugging or even being together with a lover alone, which can all lead to *zina*; considered to be damage to both male and female chastity. It is to some extent strange when female santri perceive female virginity as more highly valued compared to male virginity. The characteristics of society give great store to the production and reproduction of the ideology of male and female virginity. The religious community

like pesantren provide more equal perceptions on the issue of virginity and chastity both for females and males, which are based on a moral corridor, even though in implementation of the values it is totally different. For example, as Lia told me about how a kyai responded in the case of sexual harassment or even rape, “You are right sister, in *pengajian* (learning religion) class, the *kyai* always blame women. Even though they are the ones capable of explaining *hadith* (Islamic jurisprudence) the way they explain it is humiliating to women,” she complained.

Seemingly, the issue of feminism promoted by some women NGOs<sup>6</sup> in this pondok is influencing the way of thinking of some teachers. In the case of the issues of virginity and chastity, based on Islamic teaching and humanistic argumentation, slowly but surely, a better understanding arises in some violence cases such as rape and sexual harassment. These are to be approached by providing a space for women to speak out, rather than giving a judgmental opinion.

*Istilah ketidaksucian dalam pandangan islam tidak hanya ditujukan pada kaum perempuan, laki-laki juga ada yang tidak suci. ukurannya suci atau tidak bukan pada hilangnya keprawanan atau keperjakaan tapi pada perbuatan orang tersebut. Ketika orang tersebut melakukan zina dan yang sejenisnya maka dia dianggap tidak suci meskipun keprawanan dan keperjakaan masih utuh. Sebaliknya ketika orang tersebut tidak melaksanakan perbuatan zina dan sejenisnya maka dikatakan suci meskipun hilang keprawanan atau keperjakaan*

(The term un-chaste in the Islamic view does is not addressed solely to women but also applies to men. The measurement of being chaste or not, is not the loss of virginity or keperjakaan (male virginity), but rather, the conduct of the person. When a person commits zina or a related action, she/he can not be considered chaste anymore, even if their virginity remains intact. In contrast, when a person does not commit zina and other related actions, they are considered chaste, even if their virginity is damaged, (Pak Andar, 35, ustadz/ male teacher)

*Saya tidak setuju kalau makna kesucian itu diartikan keprawanan. Itu sangat material, karena di dalam kesucian itu bukan material. Kesuci rohaniah itu. Kalau dihubungkan konsep keprawanan tadi memang kemudian jadinya sempit.*

---

<sup>6</sup> Rahima is concerned on reinterpretation Islamic text has invited some teachers and societal figures in some workshop and training regarding issue of women as well as to start to socialize new interpretation of some texts in gender perspective. While Puan Amal Hayati more focuses on issue of Violence Against Women by inviting pondok to be Women Crisis Center. So this organization is influencing the way of thinking some of teachers and santri, but the dominant opinion is still sexist.

*Dan sangat material perempuan hanya dihargai sesuatu yg hanya jasmaniah padahal perempuan kan tidak hanya jasmaniah saja kan.*

(I do not agree that chastity can be interpreted as virginity. For this is too materialistic a viewpoint because within chastity is not a material thing, for example, spiritual chastity. If we relate it to virginity, it becomes narrow and extremely materialistic. Women are then just appreciated through physical appearance, moreover, being a woman is not only about physical attributes (Ibu Zubaid, 54, teacher of senior high school and a woman activist)

Despite the pessimistic perceptions of female santri, even though it is very small, humanistic voices still exist in society although they are just a small number and are marginalized from the pesantren structure. Pak Andar and Ibu Zubaid are very good examples, that show how the influence of the muslim feminist movement in this pondok creates strong individual beliefs, but has not been institutionalized and embedded yet into every single leader in this pondok. From their narratives, one can see Pak Andar really emphasizes that the issue of chastity has no relationship to one's virginity, wherein Islamic teaching ultimately mentions that being chaste (modest) or immodest, is just about the moral conduct of a person, against or consistent with religious values. The measurements are made from the Quran and hadith. On the other hand, Ibu Zubaid perceives that chastity is a matter of spirituality, and is not materialist. If chastity is associated to virginity of the hymen, indirectly we understand women from a very narrow perspective, perceiving women just as physical beings. Moreover it neglects the spiritual, emotional or mental components of women.

### **6.1.3 Sexual fantasy and desire**

Having a sexual fantasy does not necessarily mean we want to engage in sexual practices. Carroll stated (1996) "many researchers believe that sexual fantasies are not only normal and healthy but may also be a driving force behind human sexuality". Therefore, he remarks that sexual fantasies are normal parts of sexual activity. Sexual fantasies among santris may be a compensation for the sexually passive conducts within a strictly Islamic system in pesantren. Only few of my participants are willing to share their experience on sexual fantasy, mostly those are college students. All my participants agree that sexual fantasies are only stimulated by

or occur when they read a romantic or porn novel, watch an X movie, or when it is difficult to sleep at night.

*Salah satu yang bikin kita berfantasy itu seringnya baca novel-novel atau setelah lihat VCD BF. Tapi kita berfantasy itu ya waktu tertentu saja. Pada saat baca itu aja..nah..baru. kalau tidak baca ya tidaklah!*

(one thing that made us to go into sexual fantasy was frequently reading novels or watching blue movies. But we only fantasize at that time, such as when we read a novel.) (Amel)

*Berfantasy. He..he..sepertinya semua orang pernah, apalagi kalau umur-umurnya dah kaya kita, sebelum tidur ngayal dulu*

(To fantasize, he..he...it seemed like everyone has an experience, moreover those were the same ages as us, before going to sleep, we fantasied first (Eda)

*Saya kira semua orang pernah merasakan, kalau saya dulu pertama kali kelas 2 SMP, saat itu saya baca novel..wah..panas dingin rasanya..*

(I thought everyone felt it, to me, the first time was when I was in second year of junior high school, I was reading a novel, waw....i felt cold and hot alternately (Lail)

Sexual fantasies are normal, common and socially acceptable but it is taboo to talk about them. For those who are approaching their twenties, it is normal. Probably it is more beneficial than harmful. All the participants admit that sexual fantasy is difficult to achieve without stimulation, such as reading novels or watching movies. On the contrary, these activities are extremely prohibited in pesantren but why do they exist? My interpretation goes into the curiosity of young women on “sex” in which the knowledge of sexuality that they derive from *pengajian* class is not enough to answer their curiosity on sexual practices in particular. The novels apparently are very popular among santri as well as easier to access rather as opposed to watching blue movies.

The function of sexual fantasy is to allow women to experience sex without guilt and sexual abandonment without consequences (Usher, 1997, p. 46). Women have the authority to manage their inner world; with whom, and how the sexual acts should be performed. In this fantasy, female santri can experience any kind of sexual acts without the fear of losing her honor. Moreover, since in the pondok environment it is strictly prohibited for santris to approach *zina*, meaning any kind of activities that are near to *zina* are strongly controlled, including consuming romantic novels or movies, hence fantasy becomes an alternative to having sexual experience even just in

their imaginative world. Eda said “*kita berfantasi yang gak seharusnya dilakukan eh..kayaknya tanpa batas sih. Seperti kalau cowok kan berkhayalnya itu gak tanggung-tanggung* (we fantasied about what should not be done eh....it seemed like going beyond reality. Like what men did, they did the whole)”. However, when I asked santris further how their fantasy emphasized particular sexual acts, they replied like this:

*Ketika saya dengar orang cerita tentang ciuman nih, trus timbul hayalan ya...ih..aduh sampai dibawa dalam mimpi jadi pas bangun itu masih...uh...(mulutnya terasa seperti masih berciuman) he..he...sampai segitunya.*

When I heard somebody speak about kissing, then immediately my fantasy emerged, waw....until I brought it into my dreams, so when I woke up I felt my mouth still uh....(still feeling like kissing) he..he....it was like that. (Eda)

*Tapi mengkhayalnya itu memang gak bisa des....(ekspresi bebas). Menghayalnya itu gak sampai kejadian. Tapi pas adegan-adegan ciuman. Pas gitu bayanginnya oh gitu. Tapi pas hubungannya itu tidak bisa, kenapa ya? Tapi kalau cowok itu bisa membayangkan pas gituannya.*

However, my fantasy could not (go free). The fantasy never reached that part. It was just in the kissing stage. I could imagine how that was, but as for the sexual intercourse stage, I could not fantasise that, I do not know why. But men are able to fantasise that part. (Lail)

Female santris' fantasy is emphasized more on kissing (perhaps including feelings, partner's responses, as well as their own physical and emotional responses), while fantasizing upon sexual intercourse is difficult to do. I argue this has strong correlation with the construction of femininity and masculinity in society. Dixon Muller (1993) pointed out that in some cultures, ideologies of sexuality including sexual expression are influenced by concepts of masculinity and femininity. The meaning of being “real” men is associated with virility and potency as well as honor, bravery (active and aggressive), and responsibility. While the meaning of the “good” women likely affiliates with chastity and modesty, which are depicted in some characteristics as not to be aggressive, be passive, be obedient, and by not going away from normality in expressing sexuality including sexual fantasy. Sexual fantasy encompasses individual psychology, interpersonal connection and culture. Culture through family, school, religious institution, media and society provides guidelines for us how to be a good person sexually within a set of certain norms and values. These

constructions have been socialized and internalized in the conscience and contribute to a style of being a sexual person (Levine, 2002 p. 47). One of my female participants, Eda, stated “ *mungkin karena perempuan terbiasa dipaksa untuk tidak begitu maka jadi biasa gitu* (perhaps because women are accustomed to be forced not to do that, so they become used to it)”.

In my study, sexual fantasy among female santris mostly occur when they are reading novels or watching movies that can stimulate sexual feeling and imagination. While in the normal situation, it is difficult to have a sexual fantasy. Dri told me “*tapi kita berfantasi tentang sex itu ya pas waktu baca atau nonton, kalau tidak ya tidak pernahlah* (But we fantasise only at that time. When we are reading the novel or watching the movie, it never happens of course)”. It was difficult to uncover deeper issues of sexual fantasy among female santri, they seemed to avoid this discussion. However, from their statements below, my interpretation is that female santris’ fantasies are often about a current partner or someone who they really want to have as a partner.

*Kalau kita berfantasi itu dengan orang yang kita sukai*  
(we have fantasies about someone we really love)

*Berkhayal tentang berciuman jelas pernah, misalkan saya dengan “itu” gimana ya. Seandainya he..he..*  
(fantasizing about kissing occurs, for example if I was with “that guy” how would it be... supposing he..he...)

*Kadang saya itu ingin banget merasakan ciuman. Tapi tidak berani. Iya pacar saya sudah pingin banget, udah mau nyium tapi saya giniin bibirnya dengan tangan.*

(Sometimes I really wanted to be kissed. But I did not dare to do so. My boy friend really wanted to do so, he had approached me to kiss, but I refused his mouth with my hand...)

Having a fantasy about a particular sexual practice or activity does not mean that a person actually wishes to engage in that behavior or that he/she would enjoy the behavior. While fantasy may enhance actual sexual practices, it should not be assumed that a fantasized behavior represents an unconscious desire. Thus, some female santris fantasize about being kissed or it may even be about having sexual intercourse like Eda said “going beyond the reality”. But this does not mean they actually want to be

kissed or to engage in sex before marriage. Similarly, some male santri fantasize about sexual intercourse, but this does not mean they really do so to their girl friends. However, sexual fantasy, an intimate conversation, pornography or a romantic novel often cause early arousal or stimulate sexual desire<sup>7</sup>. One of the male santri, Iskandar (25) told me his experience of dealing with sexual desire.

*Iska: segi negatifnya banyak yaitu sampai-sampai ketika saya berhubungan dengan lawan jenis, misalnya kadang waktu yg seharusnya kita belajar dengan bener, pikiran kita terganggu dan ternyata pikiran-pikiran kotor (piktor) itu suka nampak sampai lier or leneng bukan migren itu pararuguh. Padahal mah kebanyakan pikiran-pikiran ngeres kalau kita membayangkan pacar kita. Kebiasaan kalau malem itu pikiran kita wuw...pararuguh lah. Sampai-sampai harus terjadi besok, harus ketemu, harus apa yg direncanakan malam itu harus diwujudkan.*

(on the negative side, when I had relations with my girl friend, for example, we should study, but our minds were disturbed by *piktor* abbreviation from *pikiran-pikiran kotor* (dirty thoughts). It caused me to have a headache... I could not stand it. Those *pikiran-pikiran ngeres* (dirty thoughts) appeared when I fantasised about my girl friend. It was usual, at night my mind wow....*pararuguh* (uncontrollable). Even if I knew that tomorrow I had to meet her, what I had planned to night must be applied. (Iskandar)

Rb: *berhasil?* did you succeed?

Isk: *tidak, sebagian terwujud* (no, but some were applied)

Rb: *kenapa?* why?

Isk: *realisasinya dibatasi oleh aturan agama?* (the realization was limited by religious norms)

Rb: *cara kamu menyalakan pikiran kotor yang masih ada itu gimana?* (how did you deal with your remaining thoughts?)

Isk: *Apa yg kita lakukan ketika sudah memuncak, ketika keinginan itu tidak terlaksana dengan berbagai factor? Satu hal kita marah, emosi, tapi kalau itu emosinya emosi nafsu birahi. Ada dihadist arbain, "kalau kita marah dalam keadaan berdiri maka duduklah, kalau kita marah dalam keadaan duduk maka berbaringlah, kalau kita marah saat berbaring maka terlentanglah, kalau kita maka dalam keadaan terlentang maka tidurlah. Kalau masih marah matilah kamu" saya mungkin bercerminnnya disana, ketika nafsu birahi sudah memuncak. Apa negosiasi yg kita lakukan. Pertama, kita menenangkan dulu, artinya kita lepas landas seperti kapal itukan kalau dari memuncak...sampai kita bisa meninjau pijakan kita. apa?*

---

<sup>7</sup> See Levine, Stephen B, 2002, Reexploring the Concept of Sexual Desire, *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 28:39-51. in his theory, after watching 20 min of a movie about two people falling in love and having their first emotional kisses, most people's sexual desire is merely arousal. Many individuals recognize increased desire during lovemaking- that is, as they begin to be aroused, they recognize that they become motivated to be even more aroused.

*agama dan norma masyarakat. Mungkin yang dilakukan kita berdzikir, istighfar, dengan wudlu, sholat, berdzikir, atau baca quran, mungkin itu yg banyak dilakukan oleh santri. Berbeda dengan yg bukan santri, jadi kalau nafsu birahinya memuncak itu mereka cari WTS.*

(What we did occurred when desire was on top of us, but my desire was not carried out. At first, I was upset, emotional, but it was emotional sexual desire. One hadith said “if you are angry while standing, having a seat is better, if you are angry while you are sitting, then lying down is better. When you are angry while lying down, then stretching out on your back is better and lastly when you are angry while stretching out on your back then go to sleep”. Then if you are still angry, you will go on to death. I perhaps replicated this principle when my sexual desire was on top of me. How did we negotiate with it? Firstly, I calmed down, meaning as if I was a plane landing on and finding the earth, similarly, we found a place to stand on. What was it we stood on? That was our religion and societal norms. What we did was *dzikir* (remembrance of God), *istighfar* (begging forgiveness from God, take wudu’ (ablution), sholat (doing prayer) or recite the Qur’an, all that which normally has often been done by santri. It is different for a non-santri, when their sexual desire is on top, he might go to a WTS abbreviation from *Wanita Tuna Susila* (sex worker). We also went to find WTS abbreviation from *Wanita Taat Suami* (a woman who totally submitted to her husband).

From the quotation above, the term *piktor* abbreviation from *pikiran-pikiran kotor* (dirty thought) or *pikiran ngeres* refers to the sexual fantasy of he that is aroused by stimulating his sexual desire. Levine (2002) remarks “sexual desire is at the center of what causes us, by mid-adolescence, to classify ourselves as sexually ordinary persons, or as having some unconventional identity status”. So, the *piktor* in this young man are obviously representations of his identity as a sexually ordinary person in which his girl friend is the person where his sexual aspiration goes. Levine also points out that sexual aspirations reflect our beliefs about what we need to be fulfilled. It is obvious to me that his sexual fantasy emphasizes all sexual acts, and even goes on to sexual intercourse, if we consider his personal identity; as a 25 year old single man, his degree of attractiveness is high to female santris<sup>8</sup>. Within a religious community like pesantren, sexual desire may lead to sexual frustration in which expression of

---

<sup>8</sup> Some female santris (Lia, Zq, and Eda) told me that this guy was typically play boy male santri. He easily made relationship with a girl as easier as leaving them at short time.

sexuality is strongly restricted by religious and societal norms and values, which dictate one should be a good person sexually.

The narrative above shows the fact that he needs to express his sexual desire is conflicting with his religious principles and cultural beliefs; not to approach sex until the time he marries. Therefore, he needs to deal with his passion and religious and cultural demands, in the sense of creating a small negotiating space. He gives two alternatives to release his sexual desire; firstly, performing religious rituality such as ablutions to purify himself from the devil, doing prayers and *dzikir* as a manifestation of his seriousness to beg forgiveness from God, in principle to seek *ketenangan batin* (quietness of the soul) or secondly, going to see a woman who is loyal to a husband, meaning his girl friend. His statement "...that had normally been done often by santri. It is different for non-santri..." presents a discourse on santri and non santri. His identity as a santri is showing in his negotiation, which in his claim is different from non santri, who may go to find a sex worker when their sexual desire is uncontrollable. Irf explains in his narrative, how status as santri as well as an educator in this pondok, is the main serious consideration rather than the sin itself to control his sexual desire. Being a santri and an ustadz in my understanding means being a pious person, in other words being able to control his sexual desire.

*Ketika saya mempunyai hasrat seperti itu, otomatis ini tidak mungkin diteruskan. Saya selalu teringat, bukan pada dosa, tapi teringat pada status saya, pertama sebagai santri dan kedua sebagai staf pengajar. Itu yang pertama kali untuk membendung diri saya. Lebih-lebih lagi bahwa ini perbuatan dosa, malah saya berpikir dari pada harus melakukan seperti itu mendingan saya memilih pilihan berpacaran itu hanya sebatas hubungan biasa.(Irf)*

(When I had a sexual desire, I immediately thought that it was impossible to continue. I always remembered, not to sin, due to my status, first as a santri and secondly as an educator. That was the first thing that stopped me. Moreover, the fact that all of this was sinful. Even though I was only thinking about engaging in sexual relations with a girl, which is just ordinary relations and better than doing sexual acts.)

Unlike male santri, the problem of sexual desire among female santris is not regarded as urgent. Basson (2000) remarks "sexual desire runs into the matter of the differences in the patterns of males and females at any given era of the life cycle". In

the life cycle of a human being, men generally have more sexual desire from puberty onward, in which his desire lasts longer in the life cycle and is more reliable. While female sexual desire is more easily ignored, weaker and easily eradicated. Sexual desire distorts women's sensibilities far less than it distorts men's. Levine remarks that female desire is less biologically supported. The hormone system raising desire, fluctuates in response to the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, lactation and menopause and fatigue (Levine, 2000 p. 44). The gender difference in sexual desire is rejected by feminists. Research conducted by Sandra R. Leiblum<sup>9</sup> shows that gender differences in sexual desire could not be generalized because it is not only due to the biological and psychological factors, but also the social environment, which places women in situations where they are disrespected, devalued or degraded, also often losing sexual desire (2002, 66). Similarly, Wallen (2000) notes that "women are sexually interested, they are as interested as men are. They are capable of experiencing as much pleasure as do men from sexual exchange. In fact, female sexual capacity is probably greater than is male, in that women are capable of multiple orgasms" (quoted at Leiblum, 2002). Moreover, how can we still say that women and men have different sexual desires while in some parts of society more women are displaying an active interest in sexual erotica and explicit pornography as well as in erotica chat rooms (Cooper et al. 2000; Leiblum & Doring, in Leiblum 2002). Many women choose "sex work" as an occupation, despite its dangers, because of the sexual freedom it permits.

In all, when socio-cultural restrictions on female sexuality "relax", there are many areas in which sexual desire are expressed in different ways. Male santris's sexual desire experience is a more continuous drive across the lifecycle of sexual drive while female santris experience has more variations across the month and over the years (2002, 62).

Female sexual desire is considered as "something that should not be done", meaning it is not appropriate for women to do so. However, perhaps it is safe for female santri to have sexual experiences without "reproductive consequences". Therefore, sexual fantasy among female santri does end with "ignorance". They

---

<sup>9</sup> See Leiblum, Sandra R, 2002, Reconsidering gender differences in sexual desire: an update, *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, Vol. 17, No. 1 p.57-68

seemingly do not have big problems in dealing with sexual desire during sexual fantasy performances. Sleeping, eating, or just ignoring their arousal feeling is effective for them so far, even if it is an extreme way to silence their female desires.

*Kalau saya sendiri, misalkan berfantasi itu tanpa batas, tapi bagi saya itu hanya sebatas khayalan aja, toh gak perlu harus menyiasati supaya lepas, dan biasanya lupa begitu aja (Eda).*

I, myself fantasised about going beyond the limits, but for me it was just fantasy and it was not necessary to deal with how to release it. Normally I forgot about it right away.(Eda)

*Soalnya dulu itu, bacanya pas malem, mau tidur. Kan dulu itu lagi bulan puasa, jdi bacanya sampai sahur. Tidak tidur, baca itu. Kan masih puber2 nya. Trus gak pernah ih....pas saat itu. Tapi habis itu udah....kan ada cium-ciuman gak ada pingin nyoba ciuman. Tapi kalau sekarang, misalkan pas timbul gitu pelampiasannya dengan makan, beli-beli makanan kalau enggak ya paling melamun, membayangkan dikit-dikit he..he..*

(It was at night, when I was reading (a novel), before sleeping. Because it was in the fasting month, so I read until sahur (the meal eaten before daybreak during the fasting month). It was at the age of puberty. But after that it just finished...even if it was about kissing, I did not have longings to try kissing. But currently, when it emerges, I release it by enjoying a meal, or buying some food, at least I was just dreaming, fantasising a bit, he..he..(Lail)

Quietening the female desire in muslim society is a main target to achieve in the islamic order. Mernissi (1987) in 'Beyond the Veil' elaborates a theory of active female sexuality developed by Imam Gozali which states that women have the power to deceive and defeat men by cunning or intrigue, not by force. To him, the power of women is the most destructive element in the Muslim social order, and in which the feminine is regarded as synonymous with the satanic. Hence, Murdock categorizes muslim society as a seclusion and surveillance society, with a fear of female aggressiveness causing *fitna* (disorder or chaos) because women make men lose their self-control. And the chaos is provoked and initiated by women. The way female santri respond to their sexual desire, is not because they are weak and ignoring it, but rather, because they have internalized such norms and values to guide them to be good sexual persons. A woman's aggressiveness in expressing her sexual desire may be interpreted as being a bad and uncontrollable woman. In contrast, their narrative, again, guides me to think that sex through sexual fantasy is absolutely the male

discourse wherein the construction of active male sexuality shows through the male santri's fantasy and sexual desire. Whereas female santri, on the other hand, by silencing their sexual desire; sleeping, eating, forgetting, or ignoring, definitely reproduce the construction of the female as an asexual being or perhaps being as a sexual object to male desire.

However, it was difficult to guide male santri to further exploration about how they fantasize about women. In our group discussion, three of them were just laughing in response to my question about the content of their fantasy but did not give any explicit answers. But one of them, Iska, asked me about my fantasies about my boyfriend in return. I was just smiling, a bit surprised and there were conflicting emotions in my heart, thinking about the consequences of sharing my true experiences. Would they become closer with me or would they walk away when they knew that my fantasy was beyond my reality. This was really an unexpected response and honestly, I was really not confident to share. However, a minute later, I was conscious that they also wanted to know about my life history too, in order to get mutual benefit perhaps, then finally I said *"of course I want to discuss many things with him and be close to him, holding his hand...em...something that you may understand...(we were laughing and then this situation became quiet for a minute)"*. I really expected they would share more with me after that, but I was wrong, and then Iska tried to shift the topic of our discussion by saying *"but it is all about the situation, condition or the perception and the guidance. When the situation is urgent, and one's sexual desire is on top, "he" would cross everything in front of him, the more so when the opportunity was opened"*. His narrative to simply say that a male santri can have premarital sex if he cannot control his desire anymore. What he means perhaps, is that the hard effort of negotiating with his desire, may of course, not be completely successful. At such a time, the religion may not function at all because of the desire he needs to fulfill. Some cases of premarital sex do occur in this pondok when santri have the time and the opportunity arises, such as when they go away from the pondok without companions.

## **6. 2 Courtship**

I come now to the discussion of courtship, a term I use to include various processes, like the expression of interest, the meaning of a relationship, and the way to

achieve the relationship. This issue is so popular a topic among both female and male santri because having a relationship is definitely important for my participants, mainly because having a boy friend or a girl friend, best friend and *kakak angkat* (like a brother or sister) means having someone to go to if they have problems. Expectations about relationship are expressed in notions of romantic love, spending time together, *curhat* is an abbreviation of *curahan hati* (outpouring of feeling).

One part of courtship is the issue of partnership. Parker remarks that the concept of partnership is somewhat different with regard to sexuality. In society, it is useful to mark partnership as sexual or non sexual to understand the blend of social and sexual roles throughout a society that somehow influence sexual partnerships. Similarly, systems of sanction and prohibition in society will constrain sexual relations, therefore it is necessary to recognize an individual's own meaning of partnership at different levels; adolescents may have a different meaning of partnership from adults, that is to say, another subgroup may define the meaning of partnership within society in another way (1999, p. 421-422).

Let me begin my discussion with the sexual relationship among santri. In pesantren, the issue of sexual relationships is one of the pesantren's main concerns, since the interaction between male and female santri cannot be avoided. Even though officially, the pondok has regulated this issue in article 10 about *ikhtilath* (relationships) saying that every santri must have prior permission to communicate with the opposite sex, in reality, santri need to interact with the opposite sex for many reasons. There are two types of sexual relations in pondok kota santri; heterosexual (*pacaran* or having a boy/ girl friend) and homosexual.

### 6.2.1 Heterosexual Relations

*Pacaran*<sup>10</sup> (having a girl /boy friend) is one of the forms of heterosexual partnership among santri alongside *kakak angkat* (like a brother), which was a popular discourse during my field study. I place the discussion of *kakak angkat* later on in another sub topic. Having a girl/ boy friend is officially prohibited in pondok kota

---

<sup>10</sup> *Pacaran* in Indonesian language can function as noun and verb. *Pacaran* (noun) means having a boy friend, or *pacar* means a boy/ girl friend. *Pacaran* (verb) is to engage relation with opposite/ (same) sex.

santri, however it is very important for santri, particularly those who are at college level, to have someone to share their feelings with, besides for the purpose of marriage. Even though it is prohibited in pesantren, santri apparently know how to position themselves, so as not to move away from religious norms by engaging in sexual relationships. Amel, one of them, mentions that having a boy friend can motivate them to study hard, and enhance their spirit of life. Furthermore, in difficult situations she has a place to go, however it also can bring negative impact to their study performance or activities. It absolutely depends on the individual, like Euis's statement "*pacaran itu ya tergantung bagaimana dianya menyikapi pacaran itu sendiri karena bisa menimbulkan sesuatu yang negative, tapi ada sisi positifnya juga* (having a boy friend depends on how she deals with it, because it can cause negative effects, but it also has a positive side). The system of sanction and prohibition on the issue of *ikhtilath*, leads santris to create different meanings about having a boy friend which may be different from ordinary society by way of constraining the sexual relation's activities on the positive side. From her narrative, I found out that having a boy friend is a step before entering into marriage. When I asked what having a boy friend means to them, they explained:

*Berpacaran dalam Islam ya...mungkin dilarang gitu ya, tapi saya pernah membaca sebuah buku tentang berpacaran islami..dalam buku itu dijelaskan bahwa pacaran yang islami itu..mungkin dalam istilah islamnya itu pacaran itu seperti ta'aruf lah, pengenalan seseorang dengan lawannya sebelum menikah.*

(having a boy friend in Islam... is perhaps prohibited, but I once read a book about engaging in relations with a boy in an Islamic way. The book explained that pacaran in Islam ... in Islamic terms it may be like *ta'aruf* ; is an introduction for someone, to her partner, before marriage, Amel)

*pacaran...emang di dalam Islam dilarang (tapi dilakuin). Tapi kan nada tahap-tahap sebelum pernikahan yaitu PDKT, jadi jangan sampai orang menikah itu seperti membeli kucing dalam karung. Mereka harus tahu mulai dari nasab, seluk beluk dan pribadinya gimana gitu...*

(having a boy friend... is definitely prohibited in Islam (but we still did it). But there are steps approaching marriage like getting to know each other. So somebody who wants to get married does not like to buy a pig in a poke. They have to know the family lineage, the details of their partners, and how their personalities are... Euis)

As shown in the above excerpt, these young women would condone having a boy friend for the purpose of marriage, even though they realize that Islam does not recommend (prohibits) having this kind of sexual relation because it can lead to premarital sexual behavior<sup>11</sup>. However, for those of them who were approaching the marriage stage, the need to get to know the partners before marriage is probably necessary in order to avoid getting the incorrect guy to be their husband. Marriage itself means belief in a long-term commitment. It requires the couple to be willing to take part in any difficult situation, therefore only by engaging in relations with the opposite sex before marriage, may a woman obtain the necessary details to examine her boy friend's personality. These young women are able to shift the authority of religion from "prohibition" to the humanistic discourse, in which everyone has the right to choose her boy friend. Euis's metaphor "like buying a pig in a poke" provides the rationale that she does not want to gamble her life on uncertain commitment, therefore it is absolutely important to have the socio historical background of her future partner before marriage. How could we choose the correct husband without acquainting ourselves with him first? The term *pacaran islami* in Amel's narrative, in my analysis, reveals her authority to negotiate with and to persuade religion to provide a space for young women to have sexual relations, as long as it is not against the religious norm i.e. premarital sex. She is able to turn the external authority of the religious discourse of "prohibition" to the benefit of her internal discourse, by saying: "*berpacaran itu kebanyakan dapat memberikan motivasi pada seseorang dalam belajar and menambah semangat hidup serta ada tempat untuk mengadu kalau ada masalah* (having a boy friend gives me the motivation to study hard and enhance my spirit of life, and provides me with a place for sharing any problems I have)".

Here, I find Parker's theory that the meaning of having a boy friend can change the course of women lives quite useful. My secondary school participants present me with different meanings for having a boy friend. Engaging in sexual relations with the

---

<sup>11</sup> The Qur'an mentions on Al-Isra: 32 "nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road to other evils. Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali translates the road literally "it is evil as a road (or a way)". Adultery is not only shameful in itself and inconsistent with any self-respect or respect for others, but it opens the road many evils. It destroys the basis of the family: it works against the interest of children born or to be born: it may cause murders and feuds and loss of reputation and property, and also loosen permanently the bonds of society. Not only should it be avoided as a sin, but any approach or temptation should be avoided

opposite sex relates to the notion of selfhood, status, and even just for fun, not to be called *jomblo* (having no partner). *Pacaran* does not always lead to marriage. Shi, *gadis gaul* (a sociable girl) perceives *pacaran* as an uncomplicated relationship, even sometimes having a correlation with “love” or even the appearance of someone. When I asked her about what her first impressions were of the boys she had approached to be her boy friends. She told me like this :

*“Yah.....maksudnya pertama jadian, Shi gak terlalu memandang dari muka dari apa itu atau gimana, yang penting Shi itu jadian aza sama dia he....3x. Tapi kesini-sininya Shi jadi sayang gitu sama dia ! kalau Shi gitu teh, ga mandang dari muka meskipun dia jelek, jadi aja....Ah sayang mah ikut belakang.*

(well...the first time I became a lover, I was not concerned about his face or... whatever, the important thing was just to become his lover, that’s all, he..he.. but later on I loved him! That’s for me, I did not pay much attention to his face, even though he was not good looking, it was possible, so we engaged in relations... ah, love would follow later on.)

From her statement, “love” is not always a prerequisite for engaging in sexual relations with the opposite sex. Moreover, the other physical attributes of her partner are almost absent too, from her criteria of an ideal boy friend. Apparently, she does not think it over when somebody is interested in her and asks her to be his lover, as long as she feels ok, the relationship occurs right away. It seems the status of being *jomblo* is so frightening, that she won’t let herself be *jomblo* for more than a month. In a separate interview, she told me that *“punya pacar yang penting cocok aja, trus ada status, gak dibilang jomblo. Trus sebagai penyemangat biar betah di sini* (in having a boy friend, the essential thing is he is suitable for me, then I have a status, not to be called *jomblo*, then finally, he could be motivated to feel at home here). Now, it is very obvious that the need to have a partner is not always for exploring romanticism. Besides, helping them to feel at home during their study at the pondok, having status in order not to be called *jomblo* by one’s peers is very significant. In these teenager’s eyes ‘being *jomblo*’ is associated with *tidak laku* (not being saleable), meaning no boy is interested in her at all.

Another factor strongly imposing itself on female santri is the boy’s physical appearance. Many of them are concerned with finding good-looking, slim or athletic

boys, or light-skinned boys, even though in reality they rarely found the ideal criteria in their partner.<sup>12</sup> For example, Lin, who is the same age as Shi, was very concerned by physical appearance. She places being good looking as the main reason, she accepts a boy to be her boy friend. To her, being good looking is the number one factor to seek a boy friend, while love is the next. One day a boy asked her to be his girl friend, and she never had not thought of him before. She was confused “*if I refused him, it was too much a pity because he was so handsome. Truly, talk about love was so lacking, but oh...God...he was really, really handsome...*” moreover, most of her friends supported her to accept him because of his perfect physical appearance. Similarly, Lin believes that love comes later after they have run with the relationship.

What do male santris think about having a special woman? Even though it is not my purpose to bring up the issue of male sexual relationships, however, since I am discussing sexual partnerships, I also would like to show the subjectivities of male santris in perceiving their partners. I interviewed Iskandar, a santri from Karawang, then two of his close friends, Irfan and Ed came to the library, and they finally took an active role in our conversation. The narratives from Iskandar and Ed reveal their notions of womanhood and give their opinions about having a girl friend. Please take note of their argumentation below about the meaning of having a girl friend.

*Ed: Saya ya mbak menjadikan seorang perempuan itu jadiin pacar itu, satu, untuk mengenal tentang keperempuanan, intinya gitu. Agar saya mengenali sifat-sifat perempuan itu. Takutnya gini kita udah waktunya udah menikah, kalau belum tahu sikap-sikap perempaun maka dikhawatirkan yg enggak-enggak*

(personally, sis, I asked a woman to be my lover just once, to know about womanhood, that was the principle thing. In order for me to know the characteristics of women. I was afraid lest I had not known the characteristic of women, and then something unexpected happened to me. Ed, 20)

*Is: Walaupun saya bukan pelakunya (kita bertiga ketawa-ketawa)...ha..ha...ha...begini untuk mengarah pada proses pernikahan itu betul-betul kita berada di dalam pintu, yg pintu tersebut ketat. Dalam artian pintu yg sudah terkunci rapat yg sudah menjadi dinding tebal dan kita tidak boleh melakukan hal-hal yg diluar batas. Adanya hal itu walaupun pelakunya bukan saya, sebelum memasuki dunia perkawinan, saya menganjurkan, teman-teman saya menganjurkan bahwa jangan*

---

<sup>12</sup> Group discussion with Shi, Lin, and Han, 30 Augustus 2004

*sampai salah kamar, kita harus punya pacar lebih dari satu, dua, tiga, intinya banyak. Kenapa? Karena untuk proses pendidikan penjiwaan perempuan karena mungkin seorang **suami wajib menafkahi istrinya, nafkah lahir maupun batin**, (ada sms dari orang tua “uangnya udah nyampai belum..) termasuk harus sampai-sampai kita harus **bisa mengayomi istri dari segi mental spiritualnya**. Nah untuk bisa mengayomi itu kadang ada beberapa pihak melakukan hal itu jauh-jauh hari dengan cara mengetahui banyak karakter perempuan, harus banyak perempuan. Kalau ingin mengenal banyak perempuan harus punya pacar banyak.*

(although I was not the actor here ... [three of us were laughing...and watched him meaningfully...], in approaching the marriage process, it was really like facing a door, a closed door. Meaning a door which was locked tightly, a door embedded within a thick wall and were not allowed to do anything beyond the bounds of normality. That was what it was all about, even though I was not the actor, before entering upon marriage, I suggested, and my friends also suggested that we did not want to enter into the wrong room. We had to have more than one girl friend, perhaps two or three, in principle, have many. Because a husband must give a wife a living, supplying both the material or non material needs, furthermore a husband has to be able to give protection to a wife. Therefore, to be able to protect, we should prepare ourselves long beforehand for marriage, by way of understanding the many characteristics of women. And how are we to achieve this, if not by engaging in relations with a variety of women. In short, if you want to know a lot about women’s characteristics, you have to have a number of lovers.)

Rb : Do you agree?

Is : *Saya setuju (saya tertawa..) kenapa? Karena perempuan itu tidak akan terbuka kalau tidak didekati dan dikenali. Betul kan. Jika sudah memasuki jenjang pernikahan dah tahu betul dengan karakter perempuan ada yg seperti ini, ada yg seperti itu. Dia bisa menyimpulkan untuk perempuan yg seperti ini, dia harus bersikap seperti ini*

(I agreed. (I was smiling and watching him.) Why? Because women are never open if we do not approach them and get to know them, are they? If we enter into marriage... we had better know the characteristics of the woman; whether she was like this or like that. Then we could be able to respond to the woman. One who had characteristics like this, must be faced like this... etc.)

Within the conversation above, I found out that both Ed and Iskandar share the same concern; to better understand women for the reason of marriage preparation. However, they have different techniques to comprehend the characteristics of women.

For them, a woman may be unique, and must be approached before marriage, therefore his having a girl friend is compulsory, in order to make his adjustments in the future. But Iskandar gives insight into the sexual culture of men in which part of his sexually promiscuous stereotype, is the idea of having multiple partners. He uses metaphor to describe the notion of marriage. Metaphor<sup>13</sup> is also a powerful device, using narrative analysis in which symbols and images play a key role in the explanation and define what is deemed to be salient. It can be useful for individual's interpretation in communication with others. In the conversation, he metaphorically likens marriage to a closed door: a limited chance and sacred. Marriage is also regarded in all human societies as a sacrament in which a sacred transaction exists that establishes a relationship of the highest value to man and woman (Montagu quoted in Caplan, 1987 p. 12). In the narrative above, marriage is metaphorically described as a closed door embedded in a thick wall. When he said "we do not allow doing something out of normality", I interpret that he metaphorically likens norms (islamic or local culture) to a thick wall. So if a man considers marriage similar to a closed door, the chance to express individual interest is limited because he has to face a set of norms both culturally and religiously. Therefore, before the door closes, it is better to have as much experience as possible with women. The more girls he has, the more experiences he achieves, and the more ability he has to manage any characteristics of the woman, he faces after marriage.

I underline also how the construction of masculinity in his conversation is explicitly expressed. Men have the responsibility to earn money and give protection to their wife. Therefore, to him, the only potential way to achieve this is by allowing or recommending men to have a number of girl friends in order to train him to be a husband. In contrast, by mentioning the role of masculinity, at the same time, he positions femininity in an opposite role in which, as a wife, a woman should be protected and should take a role in the household while men have taken the role of breadwinner. It becomes clear when he mentions "women are never open if we do not

---

<sup>13</sup> See Amuchastegui, Ana, 1999, Dialogue and the negotiation of meaning: constructions of virginity in Mexico, *Culture, Health and Sexuality* Vol.1, No. 1, 79-93. the using of metaphor in her study is part of applying narrative analysis. According to her, "metaphors transform meaning by turning what is being described into something else. In similar way to personal narrative, the metaphors we use to communicate our experience area drawn from the culturally available resources.

approach and get to know them, are they?" Women, in his world, are just passive beings who will not be able to be an active initiator. Because they are closed individuals, it is necessary for men to open up and get into their world.

From his statement, I find out his subjectivity is fragmented, and inconsistent, in the first explanation he said "I was not the actor here", which has been repeated frequently, to ensure the reader understands that what he explains is about somebody else. But then, when the argumentation moves to the role of men, he apparently does not realize that his explanation represents his ideas about having a sexual partner.

Their narrative about the meaning of having a boy/ girl friend reveals many deeper themes of self representation, the discourse of *jomblo*, agency, the construction of masculinity and femininity in the eyes of men, and the discourse of marriage. In short, most of my participants agreed that having a girl/ boy friend is a step in exploring personality before marriage. However, Alfi (18), a secondary school student told me that having sexual relations before marriage just creates sin. She also does not agree with the idea of "pacaran Islami". To her, Islam only advocates the concept of *khitbah*, in which a suitor only gets acquainted with the girl he proposed to, from the palms of her hands or feet, to get a picture of her personality and capability to be a wife, in that way. In my opinion, the concept of *khitbah* is believed in by the fundamentalist muslim groups to avoid having free relationships with men, because women's bodies are only to be presented to their husbands.

Alfi : *Lagian mah, pacaran belum nikah kan dosa melulu. Enakan pacaran kalau udah nikah,*

(moreover, engaging in sexual relations before marriage is sinful. It is better to do that after marriage.)

Rb : *kalau pacaran islami?*

(what about pacaran Islami?)

Alfi : *Ah..yang namanya pacaran islami itu ya gak ada pacaran teh....*

*Ada juga khitbah, itu buat minang, tapi dari itupun hanya dari telapak tangan dan kaki, jadi dari telapak tangan dan kaki itu bisa tergambar siapa sebenarnya. Sekarng mah susah*

(ah...Islam does not recognize any form of pacaran sis... we have the concept of ***khitbah***, that is for proposing to a girl, but that is just a showing of the palms of the hands and feet. Because from them, it is believed, a true reflection of the owner can be obtained. Although, currently, it is difficult to do.)

### 6.2.2 Homosexual Relations

Other variations in sexual partnerships must be explored to get the sense of emphasis in the true distinctions of sexual behavior and sexual identity in the cultural context. Homosexual is a controversial as well as a challenging issue in the arena of debate of sexuality. It is very possible for someone to engage in homosexual behavior, who does not identify themselves as homosexual (Parker, 1999 p. 422). Basically, the discourse of homosexuality in pondok pesantren becomes a public secret and is to be silenced by the pondok community itself, to maintain the popularity and sacred nature of pesantren. However, unlike transgender spread out in society, this group exists silently. They do not overtly display it in their physical appearance. A tomboy girl dresses like a heterosexual woman. However, when I look further into the way she walks, the motif choice of garments and sarong, the way she defines herself, the orientation of her sex, it leads me to conclude that homosexuality can be said to exist. My discussion will focus on two things: the phenomena of the tomboy and the meaning of 'lesbian' among female santri. To open my discussion, I will use one case study about a third-gender girl.

Normally speaking, a third gender is recognized in the pondok from uncommon behavior patterns such as always spending time together, even in a bathroom, sleeping in one blanket, hugging from the back, etc. Some historical factors like never engaging in sexual relations with a man or having a broken heart also lead to conclusions of being lesbian. Here, some participants share their experiences about living with other girls who were finally uncovered as being lesbian.

*Kalau sama linda itu biasanya suka pingin meluk dan dia sering meluk linda dari belakang dan waktu itu linda wah..... takut jadinya, terus pura-puran kan pingin kencing gitu...*

She really liked to embrace me from the back and I was so afraid of her...wah...then I pretended to go to toilet ...(Lin)

*dia itu engga kaya kita ini pokonya dia itu beda....apalagi dia itu selama disini ga pernah punya pacar dan ke kita itu ngangapnya itu pacar dan dia sama kita itu suka meluk-meluk gitu dech, hanny juga takut sebenarnya karena dia suka bilang ih aku pingin meluk linda atau pingin meluk hanny katany terus kalau tidur itu dia sering pingin dekat dengan siapa*

She was different, not like other girls...Moreover during her stay here, she never had a boy friend. To us, she behaved like a boy, she liked to hug me.

Actually I was afraid of her. She often said “I want to embrace Lin and Han. And when she slept, she always wanted to be close to anyone.(Han)

*Karena mereka sekamar dengan ema sendiri. Sering gerak geriknya mencurigakan. Mandi itu kadang berdua, di kamar mandi itu kadang lama. Dan kita pernah suatu malam melihat langsung karena selama itu gerak-geriknya mencurigakan, karena sering duaan. Di mana-mana duaan, kayaknya gak wajar gitu. Sedekat-dekatnya orang itu tidak sperti itu. Suatu malam ketika dia tidur, anak yang itu beda kamar, cuman dia nginep ke kamar saya, mereka satu selimut dan satu kasur. Kita ingin membuktikan bagaimana sebenarnya anak ini. Pas kita tidak tidur semaleman yang besar-besarnya. Ternyata ada gerak-gerik yang mencurigakan dalam satu selimut itu, ngapain mereka? Kayaknya ada yang gak wajar, dnn salah satu dari kami memberanikan diri untuk membongkar selimut itu. Dan ternyata mereka melakukan hubungan intim, sampai meraba-raba gitu*

They were staying in the same room with me, and all their gestures and behavior were arousing suspicion -- like taking a shower together, and spending long hours in the bath room. And one night, we saw it for ourselves, because thus far we had just noticed it from her gestures, but wherever they went, they were always together, it seemed like something abnormal between them. One night, when she was pretending to be sleeping, at that time the partner was in a different room from her, but that night she stayed overnight in my room and they slept under the same blanket. To prove who they were really, we were staying awake and we, the senior santri, were watching the movement inside the blanket. We thought “what are they doing?” It might be something wrong, then one of us was encouraged to open the blanket. And... they were having intimate relations like touching each other.....(her expression showed discomfort about this practice) (Amel)

As shown in the excerpts, a lesbian is represented as a free sexual being in which at every moment she is making efforts to attract someone else. The strange behavior they explored, in the above quotation, is against normality in society. In particular in pesantren culture, taking a shower together while there are still a number of bathrooms available is considered to be abnormal behavior, so it brings other santri to the conclusion that she is lesbian. If the condition is really constrained, it is acceptable. It is really against religious norms in which we are strongly prohibited to see our own genitalia, let alone that of others. Here, from her narrative, the sexually promiscuous stereotype of a lesbian is viewed as easily leading to sexual practices that strengthen the bad image of the lesbian. On the other hand, it really neglects the struggle of someone whose identity is somehow marginalized and closed off from

every space where there is a feeling of loving and being loved like other human beings.

Han's statement "*She was different, not like other girls...Moreover during her stay here, she never had a boy friend*", is interesting to examine further. As far as I know, in communal life like pesantren, everyone is very much concerned with building sisterhood. Sharing food, property, even personal stories about parents, or friends or boy friends, is very usual, therefore, people always go in groups or at least go with a companion. Besides which, it is also in the regulations, and most santri are not confident walking alone even around the pesantren. The association between not having a boy friend and the idea of lesbianism may also be effected by media spreading out in pesantren, like daily newspapers (we have KOMPAS and Media Indonesia) provided in the pesantren to encourage santri to be aware of global information. Therefore, the idea of lesbianism may also come from this media. But I would argue that liking the same sex in pesantren seems an old story. In East Java santri use the word "*meril*" for one who loves the same sex. They know it of each other but people tend to be silent because they believe it is just a temporary condition because they are living in a homogenous community<sup>14</sup>.

However, the absence of a boy friend does not necessarily mean being lesbian because learning from this lesbian case in this dormitory, Amel has said, "*Anaknya tomboy. Tapi anehnya mereka disekolah punya pacar masing-masing. pacarnya cakep-cakep lagi.* (The girls were tomboy [the lesbian couple]. But it was strange that at school they had boy friends and moreover those were handsome boys)."

Most of my participants knew about homosexuality or lesbianism, even though I did not use the term "lesbian" or "homosexual" during my participation in the pondok. The next quotation will explore their perceptions on homosexuality.

*Kalau menurut hanny itu, suka sama cewek itu aneh. Masa ya..cewek sama cewek itu suka sama suka yah. Tapi ada juga sich, mungkin dasarnya dia itu*

---

<sup>14</sup> Ruqoyah, a 32 years woman from Bondowoso (East Java) who I met in training for women's right told me that her lesbian roommate, when she was staying at pesantren, one night was kissing her when she was sleeping, but she kept pretending to sleep. She said that in homogenous community like pesantren, being *meril* (a person who likes same sex) was possible. But perhaps she might stop after finished studied at pesantren. Because another friend of mine was also married after graduated from school (February 2001).

*begitu karena dulunya pernah disakitin, karena punya pacar cowok itu sering nyakitin maka dia pacarannya sama cewek. Lagi kan dari pada sama cowok mungkin dia punya pikiran kaya gitu juga yah. Atau bisa juga karena orang tuanya itu pingin punya anak cowok tapi jadi cewek, akhirnya anaknya itu kecowok-cowokan. Iya gitu, terus anak cewek itu biasanya kan feminim tapi malah dia mah tomboy*

I thought liking the same sex was *aneh* (strange) how could a woman like a woman? Yet it existed too, perhaps she was hurt by her boy friend. Her boy often did bad things. Then she had a relationship with a woman, rather than have an experience with another man. Or it could be because her parents expected a son, but they had a daughter. So their daughter became like a boy. She was a tomboy, (Han )

*ih...geleuh. Kayanya gak ada cowok aja kalau orang sampai lesbian.*  
ih.... Disgusting. It was like, no men anymore if someone became lesbian. (Euis)

*jijik, ngeri gitu lho. Seolah-olah di dunia ini tidak ada lawan jenis, padahal kita diciptakan di dunia berpasang-pasang.*

It was disgusting, so terrible. Acting as if there is no opposite sex in this world, when we were created in pairs (Amel).

*Pingin mencoba kali*  
Perhaps, they just wanted to try (Eda)

In general homosexuality or lesbianism is stigmatized. The term, *aneh* (strange), *jijik or geleuh* (disgusting), *ngeri* (horrific) indicate that this group is not acceptable in this community. It is non-conformity and against the heterosexual norm in which the dominant ideology of sex sees it as “innate” and “natural” ( Caplan, 1999, p. 2). The woman engaging in a lesbian relationship is categorized as abnormal, as long as in this world there are a number of men available to be partners and because of the view that everyone is born to have a partner. The pair in the above excerpt, as well as in dominant culture, should be a male and a female that have the possibility to produce a next generation, while homosexuality is believed to stop human reproduction. Murata (1992) interprets “one pair” in the Qur’an -- “And everything We created is a pair that ye may receive instruction (51:49)” and “that He did create in pairs -- male and female...(53:45)”- thus the concept of heterosexual relationship, because the term “a pair” logically means “it is clearly incomplete without the other”. Here, I find the construction of correct sexual relations (certainly in Islam too) is only the heterosexual relationship in which being male or female is inborn and existing in

the society. Secondly, the construction of sex through heterosexual relations must serve the end-purpose of reproduction.

Lesbianism, in their view is seen as the result of an unbalanced social situation which guides a woman to be lesbian, such as being treated badly by a man, being the unexpected child of a parent, engaging in very close relations with another woman or other unjust system. One of the santri thinks that it starts with *kakak angkat* relations. Another possible reason is curiosity about sexuality. Maryam told me that the cases of lesbianism two years ago in this dormitory were to some outside the mainstream, for the girls engaging in this relationship had boy friends too<sup>15</sup>.

Different culture may lead to different forms of lesbianism. My participants have a demarcation regarding what level of practices can be categorized as lesbian. Three of my participants (Euis, Amel and Eda) remark that a woman is a lesbian if her physical contact with the same sex arouses *syahwat* (lust). Only Eda gives the details of the physical contact, like touching and caressing sexually.

*Batasan lesbian, kontak fisik cewek ama cewek apalagi sampai menimbulkan syahwat*

The boundary of being lesbian is having physical contact with the same sex, when it arouses lust (Euis)

*Batasan lesbian itu seperti hubungan badan atau tubuh dengan sesame jenis, tapi hubungan itu menimbulkan syahwat antar keduanya*

The boundary of being a lesbian is body contact with the same sex, when this arouses lust between both (Amel)

*Pernah saya ngalami sendiri, pas sesame jenis, pegang-pegang, meraba-raba. Pertamanya gak disadari, tapi pas kesini-sini kemudian geli aja. Apalagi ngeliat photo-photo yang lesbian*

(I once witnessed it, the same sex touching and petting each other. The first time I did not realise it, but later on it was horrifying, the more so when I saw lesbian photographs (Eda)

My question is what to name a woman who loves the same sex but without sexual physical contact? Can they be accepted in pesantren community? The next case study is about a tomboy girl, who is more attracted to girls. Hopefully it can provide a

---

<sup>15</sup> Group interview with Putri, Amel and Eda on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2004

good picture of variations of lesbianism and how pesantren culture responds and how a woman who loves a woman defines herself.

***Ip, I am a man and a woman at once.....***

“I have felt for a long time that I am different from others. I have two feelings (hearts) I feel both as a woman and as a man does. I do not know why I have these feelings. When I am shown a beautiful girl, I feel my heart pounding. But it never happens with boys.”<sup>16</sup>

Ip, is a sixteen-year-old secondary school student who has been staying at pondok kota santri for four years. She is different from the other girls in the dormitory I stayed in. She is tall and thin, but looks strong. She has deep eyes, an incisive sharp gaze, cool smile, male hair style, strong facial structure, and with square glasses standing on her sharp well-formed nose, she really gives the impression that she is a tomboy girl. Additionally, the way she walks is unlike female santris in general. Even though she dresses in muslim style (*jabab*, long blouse and sarong) I can distinguish the difference in her style/ taste, which is extremely far from mainstream. She prefers to wear pinstriped or checked motifs on garments and sarongs, expressing masculine tastes, while most female santris prefer to choose flowered motifs for sarongs and long-sleeved blouses. All the santri agree that her face is a result of the perfect mixture of masculine and feminine characteristics. She is very beautiful with the veil on, but looks handsome without the veil. I was surprised by her one morning in the dormitory when she passed by my room and I asked Eda “how come there was a boy in this dormitory?”. But then she smiled and said “she is not a boy, she is Ip. She is handsome, isn’t she”. However, she seems to control herself, she is not a talkative person, and she only builds relationships with a small number of female santris who have similarities with her. For example, Cik is one of her close friends, and together they always go to karate exercises, every Sunday afternoon. Another girl, Tyas, many

---

<sup>16</sup> My narrative of Ip is based on my personal sharing with her, who never agreed to be recorded by tape recorder, but give me permission to take a note during conversation and hidden her real identity. I recorded everything immediately after our chatting. Therefore I do not dare to place the original word before my translation. So, the quotation may not be precise, but this is what I catch base on my note and memory.

santris calls her *jalu*<sup>17</sup>, has physical characteristics like a boy, and the way she thinks is apparently similar to Ip, hence they are like a pair of brothers, *ujang* and *jalu*.

She has been struggling with her identity for many years. She has felt different from others for a long time now. She feels both as a woman does and as a man does but she does not know why. When she entered puberty, she felt she was more interested in a beautiful girl than a handsome boy. She said, “when I was showed a beautiful girl, I felt my heart pounding. But it never happened with boys”. Since then, she worries about herself and is scared that the people surrounding her would like to find out who she really is. “I was really afraid of being left by them when they finally discovered I was like this,” she spoke sadly. This feeling makes her unconcerned about her surroundings with the result that she has had no friends these last years. Only Lala, her younger sister, gave her attention and took care of her, when they studied together in this pondok. But since her mom has sent Lala back home to study in her home town, she tries to open herself up and get involved with others. Here, her narrative highlights that the third gender is still unacceptable in society, the more so in the pondok. On one side she wants to be honest with herself and express her identity, however the circumstances constrain her not to do it and place her in an anxious situation.

The happiest episode in her life was when she fell in love with Ry, a beautiful girl from Jakarta. There is ambivalence in the pesantren when responding to the phenomena of a third gender. In the literature, third gender behaviour, especially homosexual behavior, is strongly prohibited. According to some senior santris, this topic is never even seriously debated in pesantren. In contrast, in day to day life, it is positioned “in-between” acceptance and rejection. It is absolutely unclear. One day, I was surprised when on Friday morning Ip came to *cobong* (room) two and told us openly (the members of room 1 and 2) that Ry had asked her to be someone special in her life and she had accepted. “*Aku dan Ry dah jadian* (Ry and I have been lovers)” she smiled, and walked away to her room. Before I left the dormitory to do my work, I stopped by her room to take part in her happiness. I pulled her hand and brought her to

---

<sup>17</sup> Tyas was famous with *jalu*, while Ip was popular with *ujang*. *Ujang* and *jalu* is a call for son in sundanese culture

sit close to me. I looked at her eyes, smiling and asked about her feelings. “Wow... how can it be expressed through words, sis...?” she was smiling, while enjoying a piece of bread for her breakfast. But then she said:

“This morning, Ry took back her bag from me. She came to my room in a bashful mood. When she was going back to her room, she turned suddenly and asked me whether I was willing to be “orang yang paling dekat dengannya” (to be the closest one for her). I also had the same feelings for her so I received her (Ip)

Since that day, gossip about her spread out among female santris in my dormitory, especially those who live on the second floor. It was just a common phenomena, that many of them would gossip about her. Some of them did not agree, even sneering while saying “she was abnormal”. But there was an absence of serious action from the broad majority of santri. One of them said “no... it is not too serious a problem. But when it leads to sexual practice, we will admonish them”.

I was afraid of the misinterpretation of her story of *jadian* (engaged relation) with Ry, then I asked her in on another day, only to be somewhat vulgar in the sense of teasing her with “do you like Ry as a friend or a lover?”, then unexpectedly she talked to me like this:

Ip : I have two different characteristics: both as a woman and a man. My feelings for Ry are a man’s feeling to love a woman. Hence it is different from my feelings for Esty. We are friends, I was *ujang* and she was *jalu* (Esty was smiling with her comments, knowing that she preferred to perform like a boy, for the way she walked and her posture was really like a boy).

Rb : did you ever fall in love with a boy? I asked her smilingly and curiously but really carefully.

Ip : Yes, of course I used to love a boy but now I just treat them as friends, not more than that. Boys are misleading. When I meet a boy, it is just normal, nothing to do with my feelings. It might be that I just appreciate him at a glance. But it is different when I meet a beautiful girl, my heart beats rapidly, and I want to know her more.

With a girl, she really feels that she can gain more attention than with a boy. “I just needed someone to love, since my “*kakak angkat*” (like a sister) left me and never replied to my SMS anymore” she mentioned. And in her perception, Ry is just a

normal girl who has the wish to be loved and to be cared for and needs somebody to talk to. When I lead my conversation to the phenomena of liking the same sex, she said *“I am not a lesbian, because I just have feelings for her, so it is not like doing sexual practices. When I had “hasrat” (a sexual desire) to hold Ry’s hands and kiss her, I forced myself to avoid it because if I did so, people would categorize me as lesbian.”* She spoke with a very gentle voice ensuring only I could hear her confession. So far, according to her, she had been successful in controlling herself not to “be trapped” into lesbianism. *“Awat lho...jangan sampai lesbi (watch out... not to become lesbian),”* Tyas warned both her and herself too, one day. In a separate conversation, Ry told me her feelings for Ip and also the response of her surrounding friends in the dormitory as follows:

Rb: Ry, how do you feel now?

Ry: Sister... I am so glad. I always miss her.

Rb: Ry, please be honest (I was looking at her eyes deeply and handling her hand, like sisters talk), what kind of feelings have you addressed to Ip?

Ry: emm...most of my friends assumed we were having special relations like a couple of lovers. But I did not care about it, I just felt that with her I felt ok. She really gave special attention to me. But now I am so sad because she did not pay me any attention this evening, her face looked so grim. She said she was thinking of Lala, her sister. But why did she give primacy to her, while I tried to love her maximally by forgetting for awhile my beloved brother.

Ry is the only a daughter in her family. Before she studied at pondok kota santri, she really relied on her brother who took care of her much like “a baby” (everything done under his supervision) including controlling her relations with the opposite sex, hence she has never had a boy friend in her life. Consequently, she is closer to her brother than her parents. When she met Ip, she felt like she found a brother in this pondok. I was curious whether her interest in IP might just be because of the similarity of her face to her brother. But then it was confusing that she was interested in the performance of Ip as both a boy and a girl at once, which was to her quite unique and delightful.

Ry : I love teh Ip, because when she is wearing the veil, she looks so beautiful. While, when she is bare of the jilbab, she looks so handsome. He..he.. I thought it was so nice being able to have two faces; she could become a boy and a girl as well.

Rb : So, you liked or loved Ip because she had two faces, as a boy and a girl, didn't you?

Ry : yes exactly teh.....

She allowed me to look inside her cupboard in which she had carved the name of Ip, behind the door of the cupboard. Every time she met me, she liked to speak about her feelings for Ip. Then I assumed that she did not just perceive Ip as her brother or sister, moreover, when I saw her expression to Ip, for example she was very ashamed when Ip introduced her to me as someone special and the way she expressed her miss to her, make me come to assumption that she also “likes”/ “loves” her as a boy friend. The different is she never mentioned explicitly her identity like Ip, but she prefers to express through writing, decoration, behavior, face expression and so on.

Concerning with issue of sexual desire, Ip was able to distinguish her double feeling and to some extend conflicting in her inside. She shared like this “*sometimes my feeling of being together with Ry was really my feeling as a man, but when I was starting to caress Ry's hair, I could feel that it was my feminine feeling*”. Furthermore, she said that when Ry made her disappointed, for example avoiding her suggestion to have meal in time, her feeling is like a boy who is disappointed with his girl friend. In this relation, she positioned herself as another gender, a boy. This girl is able and to me a bit confidence to show her identity, at least to me. From her narrative, I see her agency in defining her self as a tomboy but not lesbian as well as her ability to place herself with her identity within constraint community with issue of homosexual. I catch the religious norm strongly interplay with her reality guiding her to define who she is and who lesbian is.

Only Matelda (20) responds this to phenomenon with cynicism and condemns strongly that lesbian is extremely sinful and against Islam, which through the story of the people of prophet Lot, the Quran has warned to the believers not to engage in this relation. While the rest of santris feel fine with this as long as she does not lead to sexual practices, moreover they like to talk about the progress of Ip's relationship with

Ry and gossip many times but never come to the action like keep distance with them or not being friend with her and so on.

Here was another insight of the third gender culture in pesantren. Part of the local resistance of sexual identity of Ip is her identity as a tomboy, which is different from a lesbian. With regard to the orientation of her feelings, I do not wish to enter into judgemental argumentation, however it is somewhat difficult to categorize her as a lesbian, if she says she is not. Being a tomboy girl is much safer for her, for she is free to have relations with her girlfriend as long as it does not lead to sexual practices. On the other hand being a lesbian, has numerous social consequences in her community such as stigmatization, marginalization, and very possibly removal from the pesantren. Moreover in Islam, it is clearly mentioned in the Qur'an that a homosexual lifestyle is condemned and which is depicted to the people of Prophet Lot (Lut in Arabic). The passages that appear refer to the activities at Sodom (sodomy). Homosexuality is like adultery and is clearly sinful.<sup>18</sup>

Her narrative reveals many of the issues of masculinity, gender identity, sexual orientation, local resistance, and homosexual culture, which are fragmented into different shapes. Also, the humanism issue in which everyone needs love and to be loved, whether by the opposite gender or the same gender.

### 6.2.3 *Kakak angkat*<sup>19</sup> (brotherly / sisterly) Relationships

This is a further issue when talking about non-sexual relationships among young people. *Kakak angkat* can be with an older sister or brother. In heterosexual

---

<sup>18</sup> There are five references in the *Qur'an*, which have been cited as referring to gay and lesbian behavior. Some obviously deal with "effeminate men" and "masculine women." The two main references to homosexual behavior are as follows:

We also sent Lut. He said to his people: "Do ye commit lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you? For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds. (7: 80-81)

What! Of all creatures do ye come unto the males, and leave the wives your Lord created for you? Nay, but ye are forward folk. (26: 165)

Both references relate to gay sexual activities; lesbian practices are not mentioned in the *Qur'an*. There is a consensus among Islamic scholars that all humans are naturally heterosexual. Homosexuality is seen by scholars to be sinful and a perverted deviation from the norm. All Islamic schools of thought and jurisprudence consider gay acts to be unlawful.

<sup>19</sup> *Kakak angkat* (like a brother or sister) can be male or female. For younger sister, they call *adik angkat*.

relations, normally, female *kakak angkat* (for female santri) is less of a problem. Their relations are likely to be normal relations, like sisters. Rini, a secondary school student narrated, “ *I was glad to have a ‘kakak angkat’ because she was full of attention. Particularly when I was ill, my kakak angkat visited me. That was my happiness*”. ‘*Kakak angkat*’ is a place where she can share her feelings of happiness or sadness during her life as a santri in the pondok. Particularly when she fell ill, and because her own family could not visit her, the ‘*kakak angkat*’ relationship in this case was very valuable. The attention and care of her ‘older sister’ was very meaningful for her as the ‘*adik angkat*’ (younger sister) and acted like a powerful medicine.

However, what I really want to share in this part is the phenomena of male *kakak angkat* which really can be interpreted in many ways. This relationship could be as a brother but it could also be as a boyfriend (disguised for security in the pesantren) or it may even be a relationship which is just a bridge to go towards a lover’s relationship.

No one knows when this phenomenon began, but it has recently spread out all over the pondok. A senior santri, Irf, told me that there are several factors which may lead someone to have this relationship, based on his experience. Firstly, some junior santri need someone who can give them advice if they meet some academic or life problem during their studies in the pondok, so a *kakak angkat* (*older brother*) is preferred. The second possible reason, in his experience, is to change his former position as a friend, to become an older brother towards a younger sister or brother who studies at the pondok.

Living far away from one’s family sometimes has negative effects if one cannot manage it, for even though the pondok can function as a safeguard, or as a screen, it is nevertheless difficult to control a thousand students individually. In this case, the *kakak angkat* is an effective relationship, and is applied as a control on the behavior of santri, as well as to help them solve their problems. Ren, a secondary school student was born as single child in her family. Since she started studying in this pondok, her parents only visit her once a month, hence she needs someone to go to when she faces some problems in her new home. She feels fine about having a ‘*kakak angkat*’: “*Ya untuk menasehati. Jadi kalau kita salah melakukan perbuatan trus untuk membimbing kita. Trus membantu masalah yang ada* (well... to give me suggestions.

If we make a mistake they will guide us to the correct way and furthermore, help us if we have a problem)”.

Their relationship is sometimes close, sometimes distanced, in accordance with their personal characteristics and status, and whether they have another intimate partner or not. For those who did not have boyfriends, their relationships with their *kakak angkat* were close. They really acted like a brother and younger sister, as someone who could provide motivation to study hard, or as a forum for sharing, in order to find a way out of a problem. On the other hand, for those who had a boy friend, the relationship seemed more distant. One of the female santri, Han, told me:

Personally, I did not care for my adik angkat. He started out with the intention to be my brother “eh... that girl looks so nice”. Then he proposed I become his ‘big sister’. Yet, after that I did not feel anything special for him, instead he was often jealous of my boyfriend (Han, 30 August 2004)

Han considered the existence of *kakak angkat* quite usual, and when she entered into a ‘kakak angkat’ relationship she did not feel any different. Perhaps, as she was the one who did not consider it important to enter into a ‘kakak angkat’, she never initiated it. In fact, she felt uncomfortable every time her adik angkat was envious of her intimate relationship with her boyfriend. However, she admitted that her ‘adik angkat’ (little brother) did become ‘number two’ after her lover. The same experience also happened to Neng, who had a bad experience with ‘kakak angkat’. She related the following:

*Trus pernah ada kakak angkat eneng itu nulis “aku hanyalah lilin yang menyinari kalian semua, aku gak bisa lagi dekat ama kalian”. Trus dicari ku Eneng karena kirain Eneng yang jadi masalah, trus semua anak al-jihad, slamet, anak pusaka, curhat...eneng bingung. Kayaknya kalau ada eneng sih mereka suka bareng-bareng gitu, tapi pas sendiri-sendiri jadi bubar.... ternyata masalahnya kakak angkat eneng punya adik angkat, trus kakak angkat yang ini suka ama dia, cemburu ke kakak angkat. Kan pusing.*

(One of my ‘kakak angkat’ wrote, “I was just a candle lighting the way for you all, but now I can not be close to you anymore”. Therefore, I sought him out because I thought I was the source of his problem. Many friends from Al-jihad, Slamet, and Pusaka dormitory talked to me... it was confusing. In front of me, they seemed fine, but not when they were separate from me ... finally the problem emerged: one of my ‘kakak angkat’ was interested in the ‘adik angkat’

(younger sister) of another of my ‘*kakak angkat*’. It was therefore, really confusing.)

For a girl born as the eldest child in her family, a *kakak angkat relationship* can be a source of happiness. For the fact is, she also needs to be loved, as well as giving love to her younger sisters. However, it is never quite smooth, because it is problematic for her too, in terms of managing the feelings among them. Alfi, one of the female santri who never agreed with this kind of relationship questions critically, whether in fact their relations are like lovers. She said:

*“Tahu fia juga, anehnya ..masak kakak angkat ada putusnya. Masak hubungan kakak dan adik ada putusnya coba. Punya kakak angkat lagi kenapa musti cemburu, kan mengikat silaturahmi kenapa ada cemburu segala”.*

(I do not understand, for it seems strange, if their relationship is like a brother and sister why did they have to break up (putus)? How could a brotherly relationship end? If she wanted to have another brother, why does he become jealous too? If the purpose is for tightening brotherly and sisterly ties, why does there have to be jealousy?)<sup>20</sup>

In the statement above, the young woman uses the term *putus* (ending a relationship) and *cemburu* (jealousy) to indicate that she believes it is not a pure *kakak angkat* relationship. Because it is against the principle of Islam to break the *silaturahmi*<sup>21</sup> (friendship) ties among muslims, those who do so are not considered to be amongst the group of people who enter into heaven. Bukhari and Muslim quoted from the prophet Muhammad “*la yadhulul jannah khotiul rohim*”, which means heaven will not be enjoyed by believers who end a good relationship. Furthermore, in Javanese culture, it is believed that breaking a friendship or good relationship can bring bad luck. Like other heterosexual relationships, power-gender relations also interplay, in which the *kakak angkat* seemingly has the authority to have more than one *adik angkat*, while the *adik angkat* cannot. I also underline Alfi’s comment about

---

<sup>20</sup> Group interview with Alfi and Neng on 20 October 2004

<sup>21</sup> the Qur’an on Al-hujurat:10 says “the believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers: and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy. Abdullah Yusuf’s translation mentions that the enforcement of the muslim brotherhood is the greatest social ideal of Islam. on it was based the prophet’s sermon as his last pilgrimage, and islam cannot be completely realized until this idea is achieved

the rights to have another brother. Secondly, this relationship places the female santri to be a dependent person who always needs to be helped and guided by her 'kakang angkat', on the other side, it maintains the masculine stereotype of men who are always superior to women by positioning them to be protectors, solution-providers, heroes who are able to solve any kind of problem faced by a younger sister. In contrast, women are represented as disabled beings; they need to be protected all the time, and cannot handle their own problems; all of which maintains the feminine stereotype of women.

*Kakang angkat* is also used as a trick to approach younger beautiful female santris. This occurs among many male santri who already have a girl friend but who fall in love with others. Seemingly, the sexually promiscuous stereotype of men also exists in this pondok, in which a male santri benefits from the discourse of *kakang angkat*. His status as the boy friend of a particular girl, is clean, while he still has a chance to have an extra partner as another alternative. Ed's narrative is clearly to learn how male santris benefit from this relationship for their sexual interest.

*Kalau saya tidak punya adik angkat. Gini ya mbak, saya punya teman yg terlibat dengan adik dan kakak angkat, "kenapa kamu angkat adik dia" tanya saya. "karena saya suka ama dia sedangkan saya sudah punya pacar" katanya gitu. Daripada nggak hubungan, lebih baik jadi adik angkat kan bisa ngobrol. Daripada dijadikan pacar dia sudah punya, lebih baik jadikan adik angkat saja. Tapi mah saya disini belum punya adik angkat*

I have never had a younger sister/brother or been an older brother before. Well, I have a friend involved in a 'kakang angkat' relationship: "why did you make her your adik angkat?" I asked him. He said, "because I like her while I already have a girl friend." Instead of never having a relationship with her, "it was better for me to propose that she be my younger sister, then I could talk to her freely. Instead of making her my girl friend, it was better just to have her be my 'adik angkat'. Since I have been here, I have never had a younger sister" (Ed)

Iskandar's narrative is a very good example of how to discuss sexual culture among male santri in pondok kota santri. Parker defines social culture as "the system of meaning, of knowledge, beliefs and practices, that structure sexuality in different social contexts". "Culture shapes individual sexuality through roles, norms, and attitudes" which then contributes to the construction of a shared experiential meaning

(1991: 79). From his narrative, the issues of sexual partnerships, subjectivities and agencies are clearly demonstrated.

*Saya belum pernah saya mengamati seorang santri putra mengangkat santri putri sebagai adik angkat, sebulan dua bulan saja, bulan ke berikutnya “dimakan”. Istilahnya dimakan itu gini, dijadiin pacar dan dia dijadikan sebagai objek pemuas sex. Di alquran itu kan ada “wastanibu kaba illa hisni illala lamma” artinya jauhilah perbuatan dosa-dosa besar, kecuali yg kecil-kecil. Seperti halnya alamam, alamam itu bisa diartikan kubla, mencium, pegang-pegangan, pegang tangan, memang itu dosa tapi dosanya dosa kecil tapi saya tidak tahu ini versi penjelasan ustad saya, ya artinya itu boleh-boleh saja selama tidak istimror, kan gini dalam ka’ida menyatakan laisa kabar’ir istimror taubatuhu, alaisa soghoir maniya har downhum” artinya begini tidak ada dosa kecil kalau dilakukan terus menerus, berarti jadinya dosa besar. Berarti kalau dilakukan terus menerus maka jadinya dosa besar. Dna tidak ada dosa besar kalau ditobatkan terus menerus.*

(I have never seen a male santri promote a female santri to be a real ‘adik angkat’. For only two months perhaps, but the next month they will “eat” them. The term “dimakan” (eaten) here, means to make her his girl friend and his sexual object too. The ‘Al-Quran’ mentions restraining bad behavior which can lead to great sin, except for lesser sins like kissing, touching hands, considered as small sins -- this was my ustad’s (teacher’s) version. Well it meant it might be acceptable as long as it did not happen continuously. There is a principle like this, “ if it is done continuously, it becomes a great sin. This means that if we continuously perform small sins, they become a great sin. However, there would be no great sin if we were to repent, on and on.)

Iskandar is a bit skeptical about the male santris’ behavior in approaching junior female santris to be *adik angkat*. His experience<sup>22</sup> involving male santris’ lives for over six years gives him the details of their sexual lives. The term *dimakan*, literally means to be eaten, which in his interpretation as a senior male santri, means making a female santri one’s girl friend. But because of the normal use of the term *dimakan* for food, my interpretation is that he metaphorically likens women to food, which in his narrative has a similarity with a sexual object. It is obvious that the picture of female sexuality in his construction is as an object, with characteristics such

---

<sup>22</sup> Iskandar is one of important senior santri in this pondok. He had been staying at this pondok since senior high school, he was at the last level of bachelor when this study was performed. He got involve in many activities in pondok. He has been an coordinator of broad of male santri in asrama Selamat for more then two years. His experiences dealt with male sexuality and his knowledge on discourse of sexuality in Islam made him to be selected as teacher and a young ustadz in this pondok.

as passivity, exploitability, or even edibility too, if it tastes good. On the other hand, the male is represented as the subject of sexuality who takes all control in the sexual relationship; as initiator, decision maker, or the main actor.

Islamic discourses are different from the official interpretation of Islam, and Mernissi remarks that there is in fact, no such belief in female inferiority. To the contrary, all the system tends to place women as powerful and dangerous beings, therefore the sexual institutions such as polygamy, repudiation, and sexual segregation can be perceived as a strategy for enclosing women's power.<sup>23</sup>

From his narrative, I can uncover his subjectivity in reading the text, in the sense of negotiating within a religious context. To my eyes, used as discursive strategy, Sylvia Estrada's term refers to the concept of strategy of Van Dijk<sup>24</sup>, to achieve the purpose. Strategies here may be a manipulation, to legitimate male sexual behavior by playing with the interpretation of the text: *wastanibu kaba illa hisni illala lamma* (restraining bad behavior which can lead to great sin). Here, at the same time, he uses another discourse like *dosa besar* (great sin) and *dosa kecil* (small sin) which interplay with discourses on "promiscuity" to negotiate with the discourse of "modesty" in Islamic principles. Concerning the terms used: *dosa besar* and *dosa kecil*, I argue that most Islamic texts do not use this term, they likely apply the term "forgiveable sin" and "unforgiveable sin", which lead to different interpretations.

### 6.3 Beauty and the Veil

Foucault (1994) considers the body to be a site of control. He argues that the body is the ultimate site of political and ideological control, surveillance and regulation. This is the battle of contesting ideologies that in someways, produce resistance both verbally and non verbally. Most feminist approaches emphasize bodily discourses, in which women's identities are constructed by class, age, ethnicity,

---

<sup>23</sup> See Mernissi, Fatima, 1987, *Beyond the veil- Male-Female Dynamics in modern muslim society*, Indiana University Press

<sup>24</sup> see Estrada, Sylvia, 2002, *Rape, love, and sexuality – the construction of women in discourse*, university of the philippines press: Quenzon city. In this book, she uses the term discursive strategy in issue of representation rape in media. According to her , the discursive strategy reflects to the construction of news of rape in Phillipines, to her, the term strategy is similar with manipulation or formulation of language so that the reader may be swayed to accept the "correctness" of the fact and opinions expressed.

religion, gender, sex. Deborah Lupton remarks that the discourse of the body in society tightens closely around the discourse of gender and sexuality in which the construction of the body can represent femininity and masculinity. In addition, using a discourse of the body, normal or abnormal sexuality in society is depicted, and can be said to be speaking specifically about the sexual orientation of a person. Through the body, the reconstruction of meaning becomes possible. This study tends to bring up the reconstruction of a sexy body, the beautiful body and the veiled body, through the subjectivities of female santri.

### 6.3.1 The sexy body is....

What is the first picture in your thoughts, when you hear the word “Sexy”? You may think of a woman who dresses up with tight-fitting clothing, or of a woman having big breasts, big buttocks, or a woman having an attractive smile and so on. These definitions definitely associate with the biological body wherein people all over the world tend to go in the same direction in accepting, internalizing and reproducing the meaning of sexy. Through beauty contests, advertisements, media, “we” have a role in producing and reproducing this meaning. How we present meaning on this word is really much affected by the dominant culture. Now, I would like to bring you to see how the construction of the ‘sexy body’ is produced in pesantren within the dominant and contesting ideas about being ‘sexy’.

The quotation below will give a description of ‘sexy’ from my participants’ viewpoints, helping me to see the fragmented meaning of ‘sexy’ through the subjectivities of female santri living under the dominant religious discourse and other discourses such as media, local culture and modernity. Here I bring up examples of their personal opinions, reconstructing their perceptions on the ‘sexy’ body...

*Professional maksudnya bisa mengkombinasikan baju dengan kerudung*  
 Sexy means being professional, it means being able to combine your dress and kerudung ( Amel,22)

*Yah...maksudnya pakai baju apa aja itu pantas*  
 It means looking good whatever you are wearing (Euis,21)

*Perempuan sexy itu yang menarik pas dilihatnya. Meskipun buka-bukaan, menurut saya tidak sexy*

A sexy woman is attractive and looks good. Exposing part of your body to the public eye, is not sexy, in my opinion. (Eda,22)

From their comments, these young women, concurrent with global opinion, are directing the definition of a sexy body to the way women dress. Significantly, they do not assign the dominant criteria to particular parts of women bodies, such as breasts, buttocks, thighs or even the face, or particularly sensual lips. They do not mention how a woman should dress in detail, but when we catch their final considerations, we see that to appear attractive in the pesantren context, the sexy body (as in the first definition) “should match clothing and jilbab”. So in this case, jilbab and Muslim garments represent the religious norms. From the last statement, the expansive idea of professionalism can be clearly derived and ‘professional’ dress provides no limitations on how to be attractive; as long as it is done properly, in keeping with the religious norm.

The discourse of dress-code for muslim women is expressed and negotiated through the discourse of a ‘sexy’ body. These discourses also illuminate the way that female santri create a negotiating space to invent the new definition of the word ‘sexy’: to reconstruct the idea of beauty from global culture. When I asked them about what beauty is, they answered me as follows:

*Cantik itu yang membuat orang senang melihatnya gitu !*

(Something that makes people pleased to pay attention to her! Euis, 21)

*Yah...setiap perempuan cantik lah selain fisik apalagi hatinya, yang dilihat dari sikapnya atau kepribadiannya atau inner beautynya*

(Every woman is pretty, besides her physical appearance she also has her heart, which could be reflected through her attitude and personality, Amel, 22)

They are able to turn the global discourse of beauty into a limitation on the expression of beauty in the pondok by placing together the opposing characteristics of modernity and religious appropriateness, which are normally poles apart. To adopt every single aspect of beauty is absolutely impossible, therefore they create a small space in which they can express themselves as “youngsters”, representations of modern culture and as

“santris”, representations of Islamic culture. Two big ideologies are marrying and producing a new identity: the modern muslim. I will give you an example. When I asked them about fashion and muslim garments, one of them said, “*Itu dia dengan mode sangat berpengaruh banget dan itu dia... Orang cantik sekarang itu karena mode iya kan? (that’s it... the mode... it really has an influence and the beauty of a woman nowadays is also the effect of fashion too, isn’t it ? Eda, 22)*”.

I think that the dominant religious discourse in this pondok still has a space to negotiate in, within the arena of social interpretation of the text in which the teacher provides a number of different sources. It is absolutely a part of their learning of text, to have the skills of reading the text, both linguistically and contextually. Therefore, in *kitab kuning*, santris have to be trained not only to read the text but also to refer their argumentation to the main sources they have. This technique is called *asbabun nujul*<sup>25</sup> and is definitely popular in the muslim context. However, because we have both diverse and rich sources in the Islamic tradition, these can somehow create a breathing space for the santri to understand the text and give them the ability to deal with real life situations. As a result, they are able to place themselves within the contesting discourses and use their ability to deal with the dominant idea of beauty.

My assumption is, that their ability to read the text, gives them self-confidence as well as talents of self-representation as Indonesian muslim women, those whom also have a dynamic life as youngsters. They are able not only to invent new definitions of beauty wherein the religious cultural aspect goes along with modern discourses, but also to place themselves into these categories. The quotation below gives us a picture as to how female santris are representing their beauty together with their religious identity.

*Engga...ga hilang cantiknya kalau di kerudung, tapi pengalaman ema setelah pakai kerudung kata temen-temen ema malah banyak yang beda katanya, katanya malah makin cantik itu kata orang jadi anggapan orang yang bilang berkerudung itu malah ga cantik menurut ema itu ga bener malah, atau malah sebaliknya.*

---

<sup>25</sup> Asbabu anujul means reading the text using socio historical approach. In western tradition, this approach has been famous with the name hermeneutics, which the reader must place the text in the particular context where the text was produced.

You never lose your beauty with the jilbab. I had the experience that all my friends said I looked more beautiful wearing the jilbab, so it is not true that wearing the jilbab makes one look ugly. (Amel, 22)

*Saya lebih cantik dikerudung*

Truly, I was more beautiful with kerudung (Euis, 21)

### 6.3.2 Beyond The Veil...

There are two points I would like to consider more carefully in this section of my discussion about the veil or jilbab. Firstly, with a look at the ‘motivation’ of wearing the headress and secondly, with a look at how female santri define ‘jilbab’ in their lives, in which I stress the analysis on the transformation of their identity, in the sense of giving meaning to the wearing of the ‘jilbab’. To put it more simply, I give strength to the issue of negotiation. Motivation is *niah*, a basic reason in which a person decides to do something. How to wear jilbab is a matter of interpreting jilbab based on personal understanding in which one is extremely influenced by one’s knowledge and situation. Evidently, most women place a strong *niah* on wearing jilbab as it is obligatory for muslim women, but they may differ in interpreting how to wear it. The guidelines may be the same but the conducts are very possibly, different.

To understand the diverse realities of women wearing the jilbab at different times, and in different places and situations, I involved myself in a pondok pesantren. I did so in order to better understand how they define themselves, and particularly to discover their *subjectivity* in interpreting jilbab, as well as their art of *negotiation* between religious discourse and non-religious discourse. Finally, I also want to bring up the question of their *resistance* (I use my own term here) to the strict regulations and religious principles that apply to them. Thus, I have three keywords here with which to wrap up my findings and discussion: subjectivity, negotiation, and resistance.

*For me, jilbab is ....*

We come now to a discussion about the veil or ‘jilbab’ from the perspective of female santri. The term jilbab<sup>26</sup> in this study refers to a head-cover, and encompasses

---

<sup>26</sup> Jilbab literally means an outer garment which is large and open can cover up women’s *aurat*, except faces and palm of hands. Jilbab is rooted from the word *jalaba*, which means “carry out” or “to assemble”, while in plural from we call *jalabib*, means *baju kurung* (outer garments or mantle, cloak).

both the social and religious meanings of jilbab; that is to say, both personal knowledge, and the subjective interpretations of the religious message in the Qur'an and *sunnah*. My interpretation of the data and discussion will be lead by a theory of subjectivity, in which the fragmented phenomena that exist (regarding wearing the jilbab) will show in my interpretation as well as my discussion of the data.

In the main, Alexandre defines subjectivity as a process of defining "self", which is always in the making, is never finished or complete<sup>27</sup>. In other words, it is like gender, it is "a doing" rather than 'a being'. Sally Robinson (1991) has the same idea, as she describes subjectivity as an ongoing process, meaning it is not constructed once and for all, at the some locatable point in the individual's history; but rather, is a continuous process of production and transformation<sup>28</sup>. I underline the terms production and transformation, for this study is associated with the production of knowledge on jilbab, as well as the manner in which knowledge is represented and transformed by different specific contexts, throughout the santris' life-history.

Within the conversations, the 'motivation' for wearing jilbab is often described in the women's accounts of themselves wearing jilbab, at different times during their lives. Most female santris began their story from the time in which they decided to wear jilbab; with or against their will; influenced by the surrounding culture or religious doctrine. The following examples come from high school students and two college students (with different socio-economic backgrounds) whom I asked about their motivation for wearing jilbab.

---

In Middle East, it is common to call *jalabiyyah*, or *tajalbaba* which mean "put dress on". The dictionary of *Lisanul 'Arab* defines jilbab as an outer garment or a cover twisting on the upper part of body in order to wrap her self from the head to feet. So the jilbab is really hidden the body. Ibnu Hazm defines that "in Arabic language *jilbab* is an outer garment which cover up the whole of body, while a small piece of clothing to cover up the body cannot be defined as jilbab.

In the context of *pondok pesantren* or Indonesia in general, Jilbab is head-cover, it is not large outer garment like as the original form, it refers to head cover, which is also known in some terms like *tudung* (*kerudung*) in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, South Thailand, Brunei and Phillipine, in some countries like Egypt, Sudan and Yemen is known as hijab, *chador* in Iran, *pardah* in India and Pakistan, *milayat* in Libya, *abaya* in Iraq, *charshaf* in Turkey. I underline once again that in my thesis the term jilbab refers to a head-cover or in local language we call *kerudung*.

<sup>27</sup> Woollacott, Angela, 1998, the Fragmentary Subject" Feminist History Official Records, and Self-Representation, Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 21, No. 4 pp. 332. See also Sally Alexander (1995), becoming a woman; and other essays in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century feminist history quoted at, New York: New York University Press.

<sup>28</sup> Woollacott, Angela, 1998 pp. 333

*Case Study 1: Euis, 'jilbab' is not 'Gamis'.*

The first case study, Euis, is a college student whose family was very close with Islamic culture, her parents have *majlis ta'lim* (religious meetings) and most of her family studied in the pesantren before her. Her parents were people trusted by society to teach children a basic understanding of Islam at her home. Therefore, wearing jilbab became part of the culture in her house, and since then she has construed that muslim women must wear jilbab.

*Kalau dulu kan pakai jilbabnya karena memang keluarga semua pakai jilbab maka kalau ga pakai jilbab itu akan malu dan setelah mesantren kan pakai jilbab itu wajib jadi setiap santri diharuskan pake jilbab gitu, dan kalau sekarang kitakan sudah tau dasar-dsar agama gimana jadi gak ikut-ikutan lagi pakai jilbabnya (Euis,21)*

(In the past, I wore jilbab because all the members of my family did so. I was shy if I did not wear it and after I had been studying at Pesantren, wearing jilbab was an obligation, for all santri must veil their body. Recently, I understood the fundamental reason... so I did not just follow anymore, to wear jilbab (Euis, 21)

As shown in the statement above, this girl has two religious environments; the family and the pesantren, in which the power of religion operated effectively through two different channels; by tradition, and by the rules of the pondok. Since she was a child, her parents had created an Islamic environment through codes of dress for the members of the family, by way of doctrine and practices. In this manner, was she situated to be a woman who must be familiar with jilbab. There was no other truth than the jilbab itself. Jilbab as a culture was due to her family life, in which everybody had to put on jilbab as a symbol of being muslim women. Hence, any distortion of the family's culture is considered "alien". To be called alien was embarrassing for her. Therefore only with the jilbab could she make herself a part of "them" (her family). It is obvious that the power of religion did not work through oppression but rather through the socialization of values in the family, to promote what "should be" for a daughter who lives in a Muslim family. Additionally, the discourse of "shyness and modesty" is definitely effective in persuading her to wear jilbab. In contrast, the second environment gives the idea of oppression, wherein power operates through the

rule of pesantren. Her statement, “all santri must veil their body” means that jilbab is obligatory for any student living in the pesantren, and that was final.

Euis had been spending her time in pesantren since she was a child. Her father was a strict adherent to his religion. She experienced studying in more restrictive pesantren too, in which males and females were separated. So, at that time she very rarely “saw” men, much less interacted with them. The previous pesantren protected female santri from male santri and from the external culture. In pondok kota santri, she felt free to do anything and felt it very easy to interact with men and surrounding society, so of course it influenced her. In one of them, it was much easier to access information, including information about Islam. During the last three years she also learned a great deal about Islam from other references, one of them *Swara Rahima*<sup>29</sup> magazine, which published many articles about women in Islam, using the new methodology of reading text within a gender perspective.

Rb : Ok, now could you tell me what religion mentions about the jilbab? And what your own interpretation is, what you understood from the text, as being the correct way to use jilbab?

Euis: *Itu mesti menutupi leher, dada, rambut dan pakaiannya juga tidak memperlihatkan lekukan-lekukan tubuhnya, sebenarnya hadist yang shoheh juga bukan hanya kerudung aza tapi bajunya juga itu.....*

(it has to cover the neck, breast, hair and the clothing also is not to show the shape of body, actually the *shoheh* (valid) *hadist* mentioned that it was not only the jilbab but also the garments too.)

Rb : What about yourself, how do you interpret wearing jilbab in relation to your daily life? What does it look like?

Euis: *Kalau seandainya jilbab itu kaya orang arab itu budaya, Cuma kita melihatnya bukan dari itunya jadi karena di Arab itu negara islam tapi kalaupun kita melihat dari inipun dalam al-quran yang penting kan ada pemenuhan syarat yang sesuai dalam alquran seperti tidak tipis, tidak memperlihatkan lekukan tubuh, ya udah gitu aza dan ataupun akan memakai apa saja karena sebenarnya ga mesti harus selalu pakai baju gamis gitu doank. Yang penting syarat-syaratnya itu doank kan*

(If we wear jilbab like Arabian people, for me it is one culture, but we do not see it in that way, we have to refer to the Qur'an -- that the important thing is the fulfillment of prerequisites such as not to be transparent, not to show the hollows of the body, that's all. Then wearing any kind of clothes are ok, not always wearing *gamis*. In principle, we have to meet the conditions.)

---

<sup>29</sup> Swara Rahima is a magazine published by Rahima, which focus on empowering Muslim women's rights

Euis's subjectivity is constructed by her home culture and the pesantren emphasizing that jilbab is obligatory for muslim women, and that is final. In addition, her interaction with contemporary culture outside the pesantren, as well as the feminist perspective through Swara Rahima, has transformed her understanding of jilbab from a doctrine to a choice, as a consequence of being a muslim women. Interestingly, her interaction with the muslim feminist ideology carves her ability to negotiate in creating a new interpretation of the text. On this point, she strengthens the basic principle of covering *aurat* such as avoiding any transparent garment and avoiding exposing the hollows of the body. It is obvious that she does not refer to the dress code of *gamis* (an Arabic style) as the correct dress for women. She believes that *gamis* is only a matter of a particular cultural product, in Arabian culture.

*Case 2; Jilbab is new for us*

However, the construction of jilbab has a different meaning in the case of Lail and Han, who have only become familiar with jilbab since they have studied at pondok kota santri. To them, jilbab is a new tradition because they never dressed in jilbab before, when they were schooling in their home town. So, even though at first they were forced to use it, later it became part of their identity as santri.

*Kalau hanny sih sebenarnya gak mau pake jilbab dan waktu SMP juga hanny pake rok pendek. Tapi pas semenjak disuruh mesantren aza sama orang tua lalu hanny pake jilbab dan pas dengar soal agama juga kalau ga pake jilbab itu katanya wajib dan nanti kalau ga pakai itu akan bergini....3x. diakherat, jadi hanny takut juga. Tapi kalau sekarang mah atas dasar diri sendiri jadinya. (Han,17)*

Actually I did not want to wear jilbab, so when I was in junior high school, I wore a short skirt. However, since then I have been sent to pesantren by my parents, so I wear jilbab. Moreover when I hear many things about religion including that wearing jilbab is an obligation and if we did not wear it, it would be this and that in the next life, I am afraid of it. But now I wear jilbab with my own consent (Han,17)

*Terus terang memang aku disini pake kerudung tapi kalau dirumah itu engga dan kalau keluar juga biasa ya kaya gini ini ga pernah selalu pake kerudung kaya disini ini, kan disini kalau keluar pasti pakai kerudung dan kalau dirumah engga, yah terus terang lah! (Lail,20)*

Clearly, I only wear kerudung here (in the pesantren), but it is not so at my home, so when I step out at home, yes... I'm just usually like this (showing herself without jilbab). I never always dressed in kerudung as I do here. Now, I always put on jilbab every time I leave the house and it was never the case in my home... yes, I am speaking honestly. (Lail,20)

In the case of Han, her willingness to wear *jilbab* is much more influenced by religious doctrine, somewhat enforcing it upon her, by telling her the consequences in the next life regarding covering *aurat*, besides which it is strongly regulated in the rule of pesantren. A muslim believes in the next life as part of their faith. In her own words, “if we did not wear it, it would be this and that in the next life”, there shows how she fears suffering the punishment of not obeying her religion, even though she just uses rhetoric “this and that” which must refer to a miserable punishment. In my own childhood experience of learning Islam, my teacher emphasized discipline to us by showing us a picture of the hell in which people who did not practice religious duties are suffering everlastingly. On the other hand, he also described heaven for those who complied with God’s dictates. Seemingly, this method is extremely relevant; imposing upon her to cover her *aurat*, or imposing frightening circumstances, as illustrated in her last statement, “I was so afraid of it”. The output of learning is obviously against Islamic principles, wherein any compulsion in Islam is not to be preferred at all. The Qur’an also states very clearly in Al-baqarah: 256 that “*let there be no compulsion<sup>30</sup> in religion: truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks*”. Unlike in the two previous cases, Lail treats jilbab as just a uniform. She dresses up like other santri while she stays at the pondok, but not at her home. Two years living in Pesantren circumstances has apparently not presented her with the idea to change her performance. Till the day I interviewed her, she confessed that she has not yet felt comfortable dressing in jilbab all the time. Therefore, she said “jilbab for me was just formality”.

---

<sup>30</sup> See ‘Ali translation, compulsion is incompatible with religion: because (1) religion depends upon faith and will, and but would be meaningless if induced by force: (2) truth and error have been so clearly shown up by the mercy of Allah that there should be no doubt in the minds of any persons of good will as to the fundamentals of faith; (3) Allah’s protection is continuous, and His Plan is always to lead us from the depth of darkness into the clearest light.

Besides the religious reasons, I discovered some santri admitted that jilbab also gave many benefits to their life, particularly to cover the flaws of their body such as a hair problem, pimples, skin problems<sup>31</sup> and so on, or some even believed that jilbab enhanced their beauty. Eda, 22 years old told me her story about jilbab:

*Sama, gimana rasanya pakai kerudung ? terus terang tidak ngerasa kepanasan atau gimana gitu tapi punya cerita unik he...3x dulu tuh pernah crisis rambut yaitu ubanan, mungkin karena kewalat kali yah. dulu tuh pernah pakai cat rambut, yang pertamanya itu cat merah terus hitam, coba-coba aza, pas lama-lama timbal uban satu-satu aduh astagfirullohal adzim he....3x terus pakai shampo apa gitu itu memperlambat ubanan itu..., tapi kelebihanannya walaupun pakai sabun colek itu tidak masalah tapi yah masalahnya karena ubanan aza.(Eda, 22)*

(“How did I feel wearing jilbab? Truly, I did not get heated up or anything, but I have a funny story regarding this matter. I had a hair crisis at that time, having grey hair a lot. It may be because I painted my hair with red color then changed it to black, just trying it out. Later on, the grey hairs appeared a lot, wow ... good lord, but there were never problems with any kind of shampoo, even soap was ok, but the problem was grey hair. Ever since I have stayed at the pesantren, I have had to wear jilbab, so I have since forgotten that I have grey hairs”. (Eda, 22)

From the quotations above, I underline statements like “since I have been studying at pesantren...” or “since my parents sent me to pesantren, then...” or, “I never always dressed in kerudung as I do here” and “since I stayed at pesantren” which often emerge in the argumentation -- exploring the background of their motivation for wearing jilbab. In this homogenous community, like pesantren, everyone outwardly wants to put religious reasons at the forefront when giving any judgment on their behavior; they acquire a realistic reason afterwards. When they placed the term “pesantren” at the end of the explanation, I analyze pesantren not only as a representation of “religion” per se, but also as a male supremacy, in which they produce the meanings of wearing muslim dress through the rule of pesantren. Furthermore, since males have authority in interpreting the religious text concerning

---

<sup>31</sup> On group discussion 5<sup>th</sup> September 2004, Rin and Ima told me that jilbab can protect them from the sun shine that is very beneficial for their skine, so their skin were not dark anymore. While another group discussion (7<sup>th</sup> September 2004) Euise said that she did not feel confidence with her hair before. It was red and *lepek* (not develop), but then since she wore jilbab, her hair was getting darker

transfer of jilbab rules into practical actions, consequently, the representation of female santri's dress in this pondok is confined to the male sense.

To reveal their subjectivity, we have to pay attention to the time, place and situation in which the conversation occurs, because it may produce different statements, besides paying attention as well to non verbal communication, which must be an important part, since language sometimes cannot represent the whole story, without bringing in the context. In terms of the issue of subjectivity, the argumentation is also not fixed, and is inconsistent to some extent. My conversation with Han, and her discovery about use of jilbab for religious reasons, and her own reality, shows how the self is reconstructed many times even at the same moment. One day, we were involved in discussion about body-hugging clothing, when I told them that I often wear this kind of clothing, one of them responded like this:

*Ya kalau tetehkan didalam ya ga apa-apa,dan kita juga suka kalau pergi ketasik pake baju yang aga ketat atau yang seperti kaos tapi tetap kebawahannya itu lebar gitu teh, jadi nyelarasin sama bajunya atau kalau celananya ngetat bajunya yang gede terus panjang gitu roknya.*

(well... you just used it inside the home. It was OK. We also like to wear it when we often spend time in Tasik. Dressing in tight clothing or a T-shirt for example, but we still had to combine it with a wider skirt, so we had to be synchronized with a wider skirt. If we put on tight trousers then we combined it with longer and wider clothes.)

This quotation demonstrates the inconsistent "self" at some points such as when she said, "body-hugging dress must consider *aurat*" (first statement), therefore they include this point in the list of prerequisites of wearing jilbab, but in reality to be called a modern person, she follows fashion as well, therefore in the second statement, in one particular situation, she also puts on "tight clothes" but to give Islamic taste in the sense of keeping Islamic principles, she had to modify this with "a wider skirt" in which she can feel more comfortable. I questioned how she could be quite successful in doing this, for in fact it was strongly forbidden for santri to wear trousers. Finally, I found out that she changed from her sarong into trousers inside her friend's house (outside the pondok) otherwise the board would give her a warning or even a punishment just before leaving the pondok. Her inconsistency develops further, to be

clearer in her other statement. When I told her that at first I did not recognize them in their jilbab, she said “*ya memang meskipun gak bener pake jilbabnya tapi yang penting kan ketutupan* (well ... even though I did not wear jilbab correctly, the important things had been covered).” This argument is extremely different from the previous one in which a religious reason is strongly attached to her statement. In contrast, the last statement is apparently just to fulfill the minimal demands of religion: “cover up the aurat”; and it seems like it has nothing to do with the rigid prerequisites and the practicalities of how to do so.

The next case will show you a sharply ambiguous narration between what she told me about jilbab and her conduct in her private space, her home. The example comes from Shi, a 17 year old high school student.

Shi: *Ya kalau menurut shinta sih memang pake jilbab itu sudah kewajiban apalagi dilingkungan pesantren, ya begitulah. Di sekolah teteh pakai jilbab di kuliah?*

(Yes... for Shi, wearing jilbab has been an obligation, moreover it is in the pesantren atmosphere, that’s all. Did you wear jilbab in school?)

Rb : *Pakai, tapi Engga semua karena mereka kan bukan muslim jadi ga pake jilbab, dan dari sekelas itu ada dua orang yang muslim yang satu pake dan yang satu engga*

(Yes, but not all of my friends dressed like us because they were not muslim, so they did not wear jilbab. In my class, we only had two muslim students, one of them wore jilbab but the other one did not.)

Shi: *Emang kalau dirumah sih sering tapi kadang-kadang pake jilbab dan kadang engga juga !*

(Like me, when at home, sometimes I put on jilbab but sometimes not!)

Inconsistency in the narration above is concerned with place; a pesantren and a home, which definitely have different powers to impose upon her to be strict with her dressing. “Home” may represent “freedom” or “private space”, which to her means less social or institutional control compared with the pondok wherein she has to obey a set of rules for santri. To put it more simply, I argue that in her case, jilbab is obligatory only in pesantren (her public space) while at home, it is a bit flexible.

By reinventing a new identity, they are creating negotiating spaces to bridge their difficulties in applying a totally religious teaching in daily life. Therefore, they

have to make a reconciliation within cultures. In discursive feminism we call it negotiation, a process of bargaining inside “self” to choose the best outcome. Post structuralist and postmodernist feminism situates women in the negotiating space in which every single work of a woman is categorized as “work”, and is valuable. The following narrative depicts their way of negotiation within the Islamic principle and the modern lifestyle in which the participant told her story; containing both the ideals of a muslim and of a modern person in a particular situation.

*Shi pingin berpakaian itu mengikuti mode, soalnya kalau shinta bareng ama teman Shi yang mengikuti mode banget, jadi Shi gak pe de. Tapi Shi pingin ngikutin mode itu nutupin aurat dan tidak menyimpang dari ajaran agama*  
(I wished to dress in fashion, because when I was together with my friends who are really keen on fashion I was not confident. However I wished to follow a fashion which could cover up aurat and not go against religious teaching (Shi, 17)

*Kita juga suka kalau pergi ketasik pake baju yang agak ketat atau yang seperti kaos tapi tetap kebawahannya itu lebar gitu teh, jadi nyelarasin sama bajunya atau kalau celananya ngetat bajunya yang gede terus panjang gitu roknya* (Han, 17)

(We also liked to wear those clothes when we spent time shopping at Tasik. Dressing in tight clothes or a T-shirt for example, but we still had to combine it with a wider skirt, so we had to synchronize it with a wider skirt. If we put on tight trousers then we combined it with longer and wider clothes.) (Han, TGR, 17, 30 August 2004)

To me, the last statement Shi makes, “to follow a fashion which could cover up *aurat* and not go against religious teaching” is questionable. What does it mean? And how does she apply it? She did not clearly explain in detailed description. Presumably, it has a strong correlation with her previous statement mentioning about her motivation for wearing jilbab, which refers to religious duty. So, covering *aurat* or wearing jilbab is an obligation that she could not refuse. In this sense, she is not against the religion. While how to cover up her *aurat* is much influenced by her surrounding culture, her relationship with her peer groups and also teenage reading materials, expose her to a lot about how to be an Indonesian youngster. The second girl spoke more practically, showing how she did negotiation with her way of dressing. In another occasion she mentioned it again but more completely as follows:

*Misalnya Han kalau pergi ke Tasik lebih suka pakai celana tapi atasnya agak lebar dan juga bisa rok bawahnya agak lebar, atasnya kecil. Asalkan pakai kerudngnya agak lebar jadi bisa menutup daerah sini (front area of women). jadi cowok juga ngelihat tidak terlalu merangsang (27 october 2004)*

(When I go to Tasik (shopping center), I prefer to wear trousers and combine it with a wider dress, or a wider skirt with smaller dress, and have to wear a wider and longer jilbab, to cover my breast, stomach and waist. Hence it never stimulates boys sexually). (27 October 2004)

I wish to highlight two things about her narration; firstly, her combination of clothing and secondly, her jilbab, which both achieve the ultimate goal, of hiding her eroticized parts of body (in general Muslim opinion) such as hair, neck, breasts, buttocks, and thighs in “her way”. At that point, I position her efforts as a negotiating process between religious demands and the social conditions around her. To be acceptable in the eyes of religion, she modifies her performance and does whatever she likes, as long as it does not stimulate men sexually. Even though she does not precisely know what men consider attractive about women’s bodies, she believes in a general opinion saying that the crucial parts of women’s bodies are the neck, breasts, and buttocks. Therefore she is tempted to hide them from the public gaze. Interestingly, her way of remaking her identity as a santri as well as a muslim girl, is by mixing the two different cultures; Islam and modernity that apparently say she cannot apply the rules of pesantren in all situations.

### **6.3.3 100 % Jilbab; “It is difficult to apply completely”**

*Kita sadar bahwa dalam berjilbab atau dalam berpakaian ini belum sesuai dengan aturan yang ada dalam agama. Intinya bersebrangan antara aturan agama dan dengan apa yang kita lakukan. Jadi dalam berpakaian itu kita sesuai atau seimbang.*

(I realize that in using jilbab I have not been as proper as religion dictates, for in principle there is still contradiction between islamic tenets and my conducts. So, I think in dressing up there should be a balance between what we believe and what we conduct (Amel, 22)

I quote the statement of one of the female santri from my movie data two weeks before I left the pondok. I am extremely aware that implementing religious teaching into day to day living is not easy for anyone. Here is the case of Amel, a 22

year old college student from Tangerang, demonstrating the agency of women in interpreting religious teaching, as well as showing how she opposes it at a different level.

She had been studying at pondok kota santri for six years. Her family background is non pesantren, but since she has studied at pesantren, her parents have sent her younger sister to pesantren too. She was a *rois am* (a coordinator of the santri in a dormitory) who has to be responsible for disciplining santri, including private problems. From her, I know another side of the santris' life -- both the good and bad sides. What made me interested in her, was the way she negotiated with her life; struggling with her love, finishing her relationship with her boyfriend and engaging in a serious relation with a man from a wealthy family because of her mother's demand. Regarding the issue of jilbab, she gives me a good example of how a human being has difficulties in applying the whole of their religious beliefs in day to day living. Moreover, living in a modern pesantren, the nature of the modern livelihood of the surrounding society has a great effect on the livelihood of the santris. From the group discussion, I discovered that she does not adhere too strictly to the rule of muslim women's dress code. Even her daily conduct is at many times contradictive with the ideal norms and values of the pesantren. When I asked her to what extent she is convinced of her religion, she answered me like this:

Amel : *Engga...kita sadar bahwa kita itu belum sepenuhnya berada atau mengikuti semua aturan agama yang ada dalam aturan agama dan cara berpakaian juga sepenuhnya sadar belum bisa sesuai...atau lebih banyak melanggarnya gitu ?*

(No, we realized that we were not fully involved in or following the religious rules, and regarding the way of wearing jilbab we were definitely aware that it has not been precisely applied ... or more like in violation of them?)

Rb : *Melanggarnya itu gimana?*

((How does a violation appear ?) Euis interjected: "We should wear jilbab and loose clothes or else it must be like this and that.")

Amel : *Tapi kan kita kenyataannya masih tetep dan sering menggunakan model-model bajunya itu yang dikatakan modern, walaupun engga tansparan tapi cenderung menampakkan diri atau kelihatan gitu.*

(But in fact, we still use, and often dress, in a modern style, using clothes considered to be modern, even though they are not transparent or tend not to expose our body.)

Here, she is aware that it is absolutely impossible to implement 100 percent of the Islamic teaching into her life. Moreover, perhaps it is utopian to think one could do so. In her narrative, we can see how her life is affected by a modern culture in which the identity of a modern person should be shown through her way of dressing. Conflicting ideas about correct garments allow her to think practically and flexibly, addressing the minimal conditions such as wearing a long skirt and a blouse, and lowering the jilbab to cover the bosom, and not being too transparent which can be considered to show the body intentionally.

The above statement presents her as an active agent who has ability in working out solutions within a strict system. I may use the word resistance to name her efforts, which in feminist's terms means an attitude of refusal -- based on her awareness as a muslim woman. Resistance (in her way) is only applicable in some parts of religious teaching, because her identity as a santri imposes the upkeep of the principles of her religion.

In principle, the discourse on the jilbab cannot be discussed in isolation, so it must be placed together with a specific condition and situation. In this sense, the jilbab is a very cultural construction in which every single woman may have a different interpretation of the jilbab. To my eyes, santris are symbols of Islam, as well as the local and global culture. Through their bodies, their identity as muslims, Indonesians and the global forms of modernity, are embedded and showing. Therefore, they are inventing and redefining themselves within these cultures, or, as Lukens says, they are making an Islamic modernity. If Islam entails *ibadah* (religious service), *aqidah* (morality) and *muamalah* (social interaction), then the santris are seeking the most optimal way of establishing the three basic forms of Islamic teaching through the way they dress. As long as it is not against religious teaching and does still fulfill the basic prerequisites of covering the private parts of the body, this is still considered to be Islam.

## CHAPTER VII

### DISCUSSION

This chapter presents my second level analysis is leading towards re-conceptualizing the experiences of single young women on sexuality. I will highlight some interesting issues such as discourses on power, femininity, and examine the reconstruction of subjectivity, negotiation and resistance. The second chapter is on the level of feminist methodology used in this study.

#### **7.1 Reflection on Framework**

I was really interested in revealing the subjectivities of sexuality among female santri, to listen their voice in describing their place within all the contesting ideologies around them. However, the lens of postmodern feminism forces me to see locality, diversity and fluidity in the discursive practices among female santri, and forces me, to some extent, to ignore the structural problems in this pesantren. While I was very busy approaching santri in order to get close to their realities, on the other hand, there was insufficient time to go further at a structural level. Thus, my data on structural relations is based on the santri's opinions, and my feelings, during the time I spent living with them. This is also a consequence of my experience in interviewing two teachers and one other important person, who seemingly showed me only the good side of the pesantren and hid the sexual reality of the santri. In general, my findings have covered the discourses of gender and sexuality among santri, but does need more data from teacher's perspectives.

Secondly, there were conflicts in leadership in this pesantren and the second person, a secretary in the pondok, played a dominant role in this pondok, managing santri and designing curricula as well as taking control of santri's behavior. The real Kyai, who I respect deeply, seemingly became a symbol of peacefulness in this pondok. He did indeed welcome me performing my research, however he could not

guarantee that I might not to removed “with or without respect” from this pesantren if the secretary did not allow me to study there. I canceled my interview with him (the secretary) since the candidate of president Megawati, whose party he supported, was not elected. One male santri whom I requested to arrange my visit, informed me that it was not suitable for outsiders to see him because he was really in an unstable condition. Moreover, I was not daring enough to challenge myself to approach the bureaucracy any farther because of time limits on the period of data collection. I preferred to think pragmatically; avoiding conflicts with the most powerful person in this pondok. Moreover, I had a feeling that by using this strategy in approaching santri I actually could get the real picture of the bureaucracy from the perspective of grass-roots, because if we want to discover facts about an oppressed culture it is better to ask the oppressed people rather than the oppressor.

## 7.2 Findings

My discussion of findings actually runs together with my interpretation of data. However, in this part I will highlight some issues such as power, femininity and women’s bodies. The second discussion emphasizes the idea of reconstruction of subjectivity under contesting discourses which place single young women in negotiation between what the dominant religious idea demands (regarding how young women become adult women sexually) and what social contemporary society is offering them; such as ideas of individuality, freedom of choice, and gender equality. Of course the process of negotiation comes up with two alternative results: acceptance or rejection.

### 7.2.1 Power, femininity and women’s bodies

In term of self representation, my study strongly demonstrates the shifting power dynamics of discourses on femininity from the powerless to the powerful.

Women are like.....well..., in principle different from men. *Cowok* (men) are selfish, never caring. Some *cewek* (women) also had the same characteristics. But commonly, women are humble, and do not talk much. I am lucky to be a woman because when I marry with a man, I definitely will become a mother..Ya. I think many men want to be women...they have an operation like Dorce. He cried because he wanted to be a woman.

Probably, its because women have strengths, like when taking care of children, while men only are only able to earn money (Han)

Perhaps from physical appearance, women are more than men, well...their powers of attraction and body shape have more value..., when women do something, they always think about the consequences, in contrast, men do not think about what they do (Widya, 20)

From the narrative of these single young women, I would like to discuss the dichotomy of masculinity v.s femininity as well as that of rationality v.s irrationality (men v.s women) as constructed in a patriarchal system. Let me begin with a discussion of power. Willis (1998) defines power not as a monolithic system but as a system of overlapping and contradictions (cited from McNay, 1992 p. 42). The French philosopher, Michel Foucault points out that power is productive; multi-vocal and diffuse, which does not sit in exterior opposition but rather, emanates from within (Gedolaf, 1999 p. 18). Because of such power dynamics, women have always struggled accordingly, against their situation, both individually and collectively. Oppressive constraints from within, operate around the very idea of femininity in pesantren. Limitations exist on the physical space, movement, activities, and roles. There are inconsistencies and instabilities in pesantren regulations that do not apply in life such as segregation. Free interaction with the opposite sex at the school would otherwise provide women a space to explore their agency. Their statement "I am lucky to be a woman because when I marry with a man, I definitely will become a mother and women are more than men" comes from the awareness of female reproductive ability and the power of the feminine body. According to Barty, feminine characteristics can be identified from gesture, posture and movement (cited in Weitz 1998 p. 27). The feminine body can produce babies, an attraction that these single young women think will never happen to men and value higher than men's capacity.

The idea of rationality represents a phallogocentric concept of universal reason and autonomy in which 'objectivity' becomes a standard claim of truth. Feminist researchers refuse the idea of universality because of the domination of male definitions and masculine characteristics which are often historically situated, and the contingent terms which somehow position emotions, desires and materiality as a representation of women outside the center (1992). Therefore, feminist researchers

reject enlightenment, rationality and dichotomy (rational/irrational, subject/object etc) and have reformulated alternatives and distinct feminine knowledge. Accordingly, I did not use the word “irrational” to define women’s inclination on feeling, but I used “intuitive” which is not the opposite of rational, but an alternative concept to increase women’s potential. The experience of women can guide their intuition to claim another truth like Widya said “when women do something, they always consider the consequences”. The ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning, is the potential women have when acting responsibly.

### **7.2.2 Reconstruction of Subjectivity, negotiation and resistance**

My study shows that the contesting realities in pesantren have formed santri’s identity and been internalized through repeated assumption in the course of daily life of what Judith Butler calls “performativity”. So, the notion of becoming women is performatively constituted by every expression, such as how to dress, to behave, to walk, that really forms individuals as feminine subjects (Butler 1990). It is clear that subjectivity and identity are repeatedly constructed until they are experienced as if they are second nature. Therefore they are fluid, not fixed and inconsistent. In my study, the construct of ‘becoming women’ has been socialized through the discourse of “*wanita sholeha*” (pious women), which manifests in dressing (wearing *busana muslim* (muslim dress), in ways of behaving (should not resemble the opposite sex, not to go to the male dormitory), ways of talking (should speak with a soft voice, should not speak rudely to her husband), being steadfast in providing her husband with sexual fulfillment. This is repeatedly constructed through *pengajian class* (*Kitab Uqudulujoin* and *Quratuluyun*), the regulations of the pesantren, and the islamic conservative magazine (UMMI magazine). At the same time, modern discourses on the ideas of individual autonomy, and freedom of choice are imposing themselves through teenage magazines and television, and offer modern lifestyles as alternatives. The feminist discourse on gender equality presents a sense of entitlement to women to work for betterment through a magazine for women’s rights (Swara Rahima), which works on the level of reconstruction of the notion of ‘becoming women’ by way of applying pesantren traditional principles. I agree with Corbett (1992) when he states that subjectivity is a process of negotiating and redefining “self”. Butler said that when

they are successful internalized, they may become part of lived subjectivity. However if this does not happen, they may develop into ‘counter-identification’ which involves a rejection of hegemonic values. For example, a female santri may argue about having sexual relations before marriage.

*Pacaran* (having a boy friend) ... is definitely prohibited in Islam (but we still do it). But there are steps when approaching marriage like getting to know each other. So somebody who wants to get married is not likely to buy a pig in a poke. They have to know about family lineage, the details of their partners and about their personalities. (Euis, 21)

Considering the quotation above, first I want to state that *pacaran* is prohibited in pesantren, and everyone knows it. However, the “performativity” in this pesantren concerning a boy/ girl friend operates differently. The culture outside the pesantren, for example, teenage magazines that overwhelmingly socialize the idea “you do not want to buy a pig in a poke”, has opened a negotiating space for santris to have a different interpretation, or has created another discourse “*pacaran Islami*” (engaging in sexual relations with the opposite sex in an Islamic style). As Amel (22) said “engaging in sexual relations is perhaps prohibited, but I have read a book about engaging in sexual relations in Islamic ways. The book explained that *pacaran* (the Islamic term may be *ta’aruf*) serves in Islam, as an introduction to your partner before marriage.” The failure to internalize the processes of the dominant discourse shows through individual counter-identification or what feminists call resistance. Do they feel guilty? Amel’s statement may be useful to explain the processes of individual resistance that occur within subjectivity.

We realized that we were not fully involving or following our religious rules. We were definitely aware that they had not been precisely applied ... or even more ..., violating them?

Discourse on guilt in Butler’s perspective is understood as the origin of reflexivity in which a part of the “self” can be brought into line -- calling on authority to regard our selves in fear “we do not, but we should meet the required standard of

authority” (in Harrington, 2002). So the process of reconstructing subjectivity is recognized as being a reflexive moment. In my understanding, when this young woman feels guilty as a result of acting against a religious norm by not accepting it (fully), then part of her “self” is tempted to find a justification by regarding herself with rationality and considering that engaging in sexual relation with a man only for the purpose of *ta’aruf* (knowing each other) before marriage, does not constitute sexual exposure. Her sense of conscience inclines to refuse the (conservative) religious norms, and to accept the dominant cultural performance around her.

A process of shifting from self-guilt to self-confidence is recognized as a reflexive moment, a time to select the best calls for negotiation. If the negotiation results in counter-definition, we name it resistance. Accordingly I agree with Butler, that resistance is best understood as being based in reflexivity, not as just oppositeness to dominant culture. For this reason, I think resistance is a result of reflexivity which arises from an experience of guilt (2002 p. 119). There comes a time when this young woman who fears refusing her religious (pesantren) norm, distances herself from it because it is not “the real her”, and at the same time it opens up space for resistance. This is what Michel Foucault means “where there is power, there is resistance”. When the power intensively represses the individual, then the repression itself produces resistance (Gedalof 1999; McNay 1992). To him, the repressor, controller, and limiter of individual freedom is not an institution but rather an individual who has been internalized by religion (the dominant social interpretation). Interestingly, in terms of the idea of resistance, Foucault has a different self image from Butler. To him, the idea of resistance is understood as an authoritative self image; it is an ability of the individual to resist “government of individualization” (1992, p. 66-68). He uses the term governmentality, or, the temptation of one individual to control other individuals. Since this power relation is operating among free individuals, it is therefore unstable and changeable. In practice, individuals autonomously order their own lives, and in doing so, attempt to influence other individuals. Accordingly, he links the interaction of self through the practice of self interaction to the idea of governmentality.

I say that governmentality implies the relationship of self to self, which means exactly, that in the idea of governmentality, I am aiming at the totality of practices, by which one can constitute, define, organize, instrumentalize the

strategies which individuals in their liberty can have in regard to each other. It is free individuals who try to control, to determine, to delimit the liberty of others and, in order to do that, they dispose of certain instruments to govern others. That rests indeed on freedom, on the relationship of self to self and the relationship to the other (Foucault 1988b in 1992 p. 68)

In the case of *jilbab*, the idea of jilbab as a religious duty is influenced by an individual religious authority like a teacher, *nyai* (women religious leader), and *kyai* interacting with santri. On the other hand, they are also influenced by another individual authority who believes in the idea of freedom of authority and choice, gender equality etc. Even though most participants are very confident about wearing jilbab as it is definitely a religious demand. From the interaction of self to self in different sets of roles, I find out that it is unique that the idea of *jilbab* comes to vary at the level of implementation, in which the local culture is playing around with the social interpretation of “how to cover women’s *aurat* correctly”. The interaction of power through an individual’s religious authority apparently is as strong as the power from modern and feminist authority, which accordingly positions single young women in-between religious demands and individual wants. It is accepted that wearing jilbab is a religious duty, on the other hand, it is difficult to apply the religious requirement fully. Dressing with *jilbab* may be effective to avoid sexual harassment, yet in contrast dressing in modern fashion is really taken to be unavoidable. Such identity is resisted through their choice of self-description (Harrington, 2002 p. 120), through reinventing their identity, becoming a modern Islamic woman, and controlling how the application is done by fulfilling the minimum prerequisite of covering the *aurat*. For as long as it covers hair, neck, bosom and does not show the hollows of bodies, then any kinds of fashion are welcomed.

To summarize, the production of subjective experience is recognized as a reflexive moment in which self-worth shifts, from guilt to authority, and which can open up space for resistance. It does not matter whether resistance is applied fully or partly, the important thing that these young women achieve through reflexive moments is the ability to manage “self guilt” to become “self-authoritative”.

### **7.3 Political Implications; the Challenge of Muslim Feminism**

Political implications are frequently defined as a sort of political action, normally-speaking a national movement that benefits women. In this study, the political implication is understood to be giving empowerment to individual women, and generally achieved by consciousness-raising (Armstead, 1995). However, it could link to political action too, at the pesantren level, as it places emphasis on sharing knowledge with (muslim) scholars who have different perspectives in understanding religious texts; to reconfigure women's experiences and to create a system which is equal for women and men. This is one of more hotly contested issues, as well as a challenge too, in the muslim feminist debate about the reinterpretation of misogynic religious texts. Therefore, in this space, I agree with Maria Mies (1983 in Armstead 1995) that feminist research can be integrated with political activism, not just located in the academic world.

In general, feminist research can be implicated in reducing the gap between "they" and "I", to build knowledge for female and (male) santri, and leading to an understanding of the experiences of 'becoming women' by reducing self-blame and feelings of inadequacy among women. Feminist research is also useful in encouraging women to galvanize women towards taking political action for their own interest (1995 p. 629). In this study, I believe that my research can challenge (1) female santri to learn more about understanding religious texts with a more comprehensive methodology, that places women and men as equals. (2) At the pesantren level, this can impose the pioneering work of 'gender sensitivity' not only through individual action but also through greater efforts to enforce restructuring the curricula at the higher level. (3) Muslim feminist groups, which perceive religious tradition as a source of women's problems as well as a solution for achieving betterment for them, have a big chance to challenge *kyai* and *ustadz* (teachers) in this pondok, by using the new methodology of reading text from a woman's perspective. Therefore, approaches have to be made to the conservative groups in this pondok to involve them in the noble project of "creating a secure society" for women, men and a third gender.

#### 7.4 Replicability

My study tries to show the dilemmas and difficulties of santri living under a strictly pesantren culture as well as to glimpse the ability of negotiating with contesting discourses in the pesantren. This offers young female students an opportunity to develop a sense of entitlement and to make autonomous decisions about their bodies and their sexuality. For male santri on the other hand, the idea of sexual promiscuity can open the possibility for more equal and meaningful partnerships between female and male santris, but only if female santri are supported and empowered to act according to their own wishes and expectations. Additionally, the gender inequality expressed in female santris' stories can enforce government or non-government organizations to act upon their cultural conditions, and youth sexual culture.

However, I am very optimistic that my framework can also be replicated well in other pesantren, within both conservative and modern pondok, with of course, modifications on the **entry point** and the **strategy of approach to the community**. To me, the entry point is like a cover, to avoid telling lies, we have to be smart and sensitive in modifying our objective; to provide mutual benefits. My experience tells me that people in pesantren like to talk about "sex", in a different way from people outside pesantren. Sex, within pesantren is part of learning religion, hence it is better to speak about sex under the guise of a discussion about religion. Secondly, the strategy I applied was to approach female santris who live in contemporary society, with an almost unclear border between the pesantren's complex and the surrounding society, absent of sexual segregation. This will become a different strategy indeed if you conduct research in a closed-environment pesantren in which a wall or fence segregates the female santri from the male santri as well as from society.

Moreover, it will be very powerful if this framework can be applied within a fundamentalist group, to give a voice to women who are greatly subordinated to men. Research conducted by Farha Assegaf (1995) in one such fundamentalist group has been successful in capturing the public role of women. This group is constructed systematically by the pesantren's authority, but there is less discussion on how young women are negotiating and resisting the oppressive system. However, you may get different results regarding sexual culture among young women in particular pesantren.

You may see a different form of patriarchy operating in a particular society, as well as a different mode of negotiation and resistance to the dominant ideology.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.1 Conclusion

In general, the objective of this study is to understand what contesting discourses on sexuality play a part in the muslim boarding school and how they influence and shape subjectivities on the issue of sexuality among single young women. I wanted to have first hand experience of single young women's sexuality, therefore the feminist ethnographic methodology was applied in this study to discover the gender power dynamics and the inherent notions concerning 'becoming a woman' from the perspective of a single young woman.

The findings of this research reflect a pattern of ambiguity in the relationship between the dominant moral and gender-related discourses of sexuality, and the other configurations of knowledge which they express through their stories and accounts, which reflect local sources of discourses such as the voice of general society, peers, religion, family, school and so on. The idea of 'becoming a woman sexually' is affected by the dominant religious discourse and by other contesting ideas that come from reading materials like religious references (*kitab kuning*), teenage and islamic magazines, novels and so on. While religious discourse imposes the idea of premarital chastity upon santris through a set of norms and values centred around being a muslim woman, on the other hand this discourse must coexist with other discourses of individual autonomy; with choices required between the ideologies of modernism and feminism spreading out all over pesantren. From the participants' stories, it is clear that the strong influence that comes from pesantren, through both formal means (Islamic classical reference and regulation) and informal means (consensus on social norms, secret agents spreading throughout meeting points of santris). In spite of how strong the religious injunctions may still seem, they are not entirely followed, by either female or male santris. The conflicting ideas are imposed by non-pesantren discourses about teenage lifestyle, women's emancipation, and individual authority, all of which certainly influence the process of making decisions about "what I should be".

However, all of my participants do agree with pre-marital chastity (only at the level of not engaging in pre-marital sex), while issues of partnership, gender identity and the veil are negotiable, as far as they fulfill the minimal requirements and avoid committing an unforgivable sin.

All the participants spoke about inconsistencies between the rigid traditional values of pesantren, and their gender-related values and their actual behaviors as young people using a rationale that is half-Islamic and half-modern. This may mean that applying the perfect Islam (*kaffah*) is difficult in Indonesian contemporary culture. Furthermore, Islam entered and spread out all over Indonesia and has been accepted by most Indonesians because it embraced local culture. It also may mean that the norms and rules of pesantren are inefficient in practice, because they were not followed totally by the majority of santri. In the case of interpreting the dress code, most participants were affected by the modern ideology and so existed without (big) conflict in this pondok as long as jilbab was used. Modern discourses were thus used by most participants, to justify or to express certain transgressions (for example interpreting code dress for female santri).

The dynamic of interaction between the dominant discourse and other discourses is taking place not only at the level of ideas but also in personal experience and practice. So the personal experience and practice is hybrid, fluid, and fragmented that is, signified by changes and trends. For example, the issue of jilbab is strongly influenced by modern trends wherein most female santris are likely to adopt suitable, actual fashions which are tolerated as long as they hide the hair, neck, bosom and buttock from the public. The rigid values of pesantren go together with discourses of tolerance at a practical level. Perhaps the ambiguity of certain values (social interpretation of islamic texts) happen to every individual (including the pesantren's family), so it allows people in pesantren to maintain their own values without having to confront other values or having to find a way to eliminate the values of others.

There are possible parallels for the pesantren (re: islamic) culture and the dynamic of subjectivity in the spirit of Islam wherein the Qur'an mentions "*let there be no compulsion in religion: truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks (AL-baqarah: 256)*". Pesantren certainly can control students dress when they are

studying, but it is difficult to control students' desire when they are away from this place. I give you an example of ambiguity, and it may come from the interpretations of how to cover women bodies in which many muslim scholars have been debating the issue of *aurat* (the private part of the body which is not to be exposed to the public). The Qur'an only gives a guideline to believing women to cover their *aurat* (lowering jilbab to cover bosom) without a detailed explanation. However, the *hadith* (prophetic tradition) explains further, using various pictures, in accordance with the situation that prophet faced. Since, in Islamic tradition, we have thousands of hadith, not all of them are well-documented and accessible to all the believers. Those hadith that were narrated by the prophet's companions have their different context and ideologies, so it may come down to different interpretation as well. Muslims in Indonesia may not have the complete references of the hadith. This situation leads to multiple interpretations (on how to cover *aurat*). Moreover, the cultural trends seem to unavoidably influence many people. The issues of modern culture, individual autonomy, gender equality, violence against women, education, family planning and human rights do not stand in opposition to religion anymore, rather they involve religion, taking account of it, in this movement to eradicate violence against women, men and children, even though it is still difficult.

## **8.2 Recommendations**

My recommendation will be focused on sexual and reproductive health, specifically in the gender and human rights approaches, to intervention at individual level. I know that there are a number of intervention programs on sexual reproductive health for teenagers at macro level, unfortunately pesantren have not been targeted by government and non government very much. Hence, this study aims at producing recommendations which are immediately achievable. Thus, my recommendation will concentrate on local policy; in pesantren, schools, local NGO's and religious groups. My recommendations avoid policy legislation for the reason that there are many laws produced which are poorly enforced, and which may contribute to new problems, such as a policy on sex education enforced by NGO's which has become polemic not only at the level of government but also at the level of grass-roots, especially among religious leaders. Sex education is understood negatively, therefore we avoid the term

“sex education” and promote the term “reproductive and sexual health” to be more acceptable in Indonesian society.

In order to make my recommendation suitable for use at different levels and by different groups, it is better not to mention clearly which groups; government, school, pesantren, local or national non government organization, local religious group (*majlis ta'lim*) and other possible peer groups, should tackle the responsibility of a particular intervention. My recommendations emphasize the spirit and content of an educational campaign on mainstreaming gender and sexual and reproductive health education for youth. This is based on a basic trust in most female santri to enjoy their sexuality (sexual expression) and their lives, therefore I am not claiming this recommendation is definitive and final. I have six recommendations which can be achieved by the prospective groups.

1. *Educational programs for youth in pesantren and schools should address issues of gender, class, human rights and these should be integrated in the curricula of the pengajian and schools.*

The research shows clearly that the female and male santris do not have a homogenous understanding on the issues of gender and sexuality. These are distinctly based on gender, class, age, life experience and so on. I have shown in the findings chapter how the differences manifest. However, the majority of participants have been influenced by conventional definitions on ‘becoming women and men’ in which females mostly become a feminine subject, while males still exist as being a masculine subject. This construction is carved to students through *pengajian* and school literature with little critical analysis of religious references, moreover an inadequate method of teaching is applied, and this creates “*budaya bisu*” (a silent culture) amongst students.

Thus, “redesigning curricula” in pesantren is likely to become a solution to create a younger generation that has sensitivity to the problems of gender, class and human rights. Accordingly, education institutions like pesantren (including schools) should be selective in providing religious references, as well as to modify the traditional method of teaching (*bandongan* and *sorogan* system)

with a spirit of “*pendidikan orang dewasa*” (education for adult) which encourages everyone to become a source of information, not only the teacher and *ustadz*. Regarding the issue of “breaking the silence”, educational institutions should encourage students to have critical thinking not only on linguistic problems (references printed in Arabic language) but also ability in contextualizing text within the on-going culture around them. Lastly, educators (who are one of the most important actors in the learning process) should not move towards judgmental opinion in perceiving human problems, or when regarding the issue of violence against women.

Intervention programs like training and workshops should be provided for educators in order to provide them with a space for dialogue concerning issues of gender and sexuality in Islam. To carve abilities in creating critical thinking among students, teachers need to learn how to apply education for adults in schools and *pengajian*. This may be significant in building critical thinking and relating text within a context mainly by enforcing experiences (the student’s and the teacher’s) as the best teacher rather than only keeping strictly to the textual references.

2. *Sexual and reproductive health program should be provided in schools and pengajian using gender sensitive and youth-cultural approach*

Curiosity about “sex” (sexual roles or sexual acts) appears in this research in which female and male santri (particularly those who are in puberty) need a room to talk about their sexual experience with a sex-positive attitude. Hence, it is necessary to provide sex education in secondary schools to build responsible behavior among young people. Since the word “sex” is associated with “negative” and “prejudice”, it is necessary to approach schools or pesantren with more familiar terms like “reproductive and sexual health” rather than using the term “sex education” from which a polemic can arise in pesantren and also amongst parents.

Sexual and reproductive health programs should include topics on gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights, not just moral teachings. This is extremely valuable to carve self-confidence and self-authority for female santris to make decisions about their own bodies and sexuality. While for men, this can build self-responsibility, to make equal and meaningful partnerships between female and male santris. In principle, gender equality is given to students for the purpose of creating responsible, respectful and humanistic characteristics amongst the young people.

The diversities of meanings attached to sexuality and how these meanings constitute distinct sexual cultures certainly are framed in the concept of gender (how to be women, men or third gender) and are linked to normal and abnormal sexuality and to the standard objectives of sexuality (having children and a family). Therefore, understanding sexual culture must recognize how the rules regarding 'becoming women, men or third gender' are made, as well as the ways in which the rules are broken.

Educators need to be conscious about the dangers of reinforcing conservative sexual and gender ideologies. Representing men as "dangerous" and "dishonest" can sometimes be used by controllers to justify the domestication of young women at home. This just creates a reification of the gender ideology in society. Educators also have to be aware that the concept of gender equality is sometimes interpreted as a movement by women to control the world, that causes a "cynicism" to arise among men and makes them move away from the gender equality movement. Therefore, the representation of genders should include the spirit of human rights. For example, discussion about homosexuality should not be guided by judgmental opinion (whether sinful or not sinful, normal or abnormal) but rather provide for reflection on the issues of discrimination and violence upon them.

Peer education seems to be a suitable solution for the normalization of santris when speaking about sexuality. Most female santris are likely to talk about

sexual experiences only to their friends, since families do not welcome discussions about sex. Accordingly, peer education is a better way to see how young people in pesantren communicate with each other, find common ground, and build on their differences as well, which may be quite different from the young people outside.

3. *Issue of menstruation should be emphasized in school or pondok curricula.*

Regarding the issue of reproductive health and based on my findings, the issue of menstruation among santri is not well-prepared for, either at home or at school. Feelings of rejection from some santri are indications that this issue is not addressed well in schools or pondok. Menstruation is a part of ‘becoming a woman’, therefore the school or pondok should provide information on this issue, not only from a medical perspective but also with more discussion on the socio-cultural concepts.

4. *Discussions about sexuality should be provided more openly to young people in any social institution*

I still remember what the reaction of my participants was about our group discussion. It opened a space for reflection on the meaning of becoming women sexually. One of them said, *“It has been a long time, I have never had a discussion like today’s... yeah... we almost never have a discussion like this. At first, it was difficult for me to answer your questions, sister. But after that I felt ... I enjoyed discussing like this...(Eda, 22)”*.

This means female santris are forced to be silent with the assumption of keeping them “virgin” for the reason of protecting them from a polluted influence outside. Young women (and men) need to be encouraged to break the silence especially within their families. Sexuality is a normal subject and should be normalized in families, schools (pesantren) and society. Society in general needs to be educated that talking about sexuality need not be concerned with the issue of “vulgarity”, but rather, is about interpersonal reflection on the meaning of becoming a woman (man or other gender) sexually.

5. *Gender mainstreaming programs in pesantren and schools should involve all the elements of education*

It has been five years since the gender mainstreaming programs have taken place in governmental institutions, including the schools. My organization is one of the non-governmental organization which is concerned with this issue by selecting pesantren as the most significant muslim element in Indonesia which produces and reproduces gender ideology. To reflect upon our work, it is extremely necessary to re-examine the situation of pesantren which is not similar with other school institutions in Indonesia. Every pesantren has a different characteristic and culture, therefore the approacher should be sensitive to the local political situation before launching the program, whether the pesantren has a single leadership or it has “*kepemimpinan ganda*” (more than one leaders having contrast ideology). In principle, it is better to encourage both the pro and the contra group to sit together, to talk, to reflect and to enforce re-structuring of the school or the *pengajian* curricula.

Since gender ideology is also constructed by the media spreading out all over the pesantren and through religious references and teenage magazines, accordingly any publication – such as Swara Rahima – which is more gender sensitive, should be accessible for both teachers and santri to help them compete fairly with conservative ideology. This is valuable for them, to have many alternative sources of knowledge that describe how to become women to avoid monopoly of an ideology by a conservative point of view.

6. *Based on this study, I would suggest thinking about further research.* Research on sexuality and reproductive health in traditional Muslim boarding schools, (pondok pesantren) in Indonesia is still limited. Specifically, researchers need to share the same study areas on sexual culture, behavior, and health, which taken together, can develop a body of knowledge on sexuality among students in Pesantren and impose a process of cross-culture exchange within the wider context of modernization and globalization.

Other intentions should be recommended to provide a focus beyond this study; on the issues of sexual fantasy and desire among single young women. Marginal groups like homosexuals and transgender types in pesantren are presently identified, interpreted, and judged under the powerful patriarchal heterosexual system of Islam which can be a barrier to gender equality. The discussion should rather be held under the umbrella of human rights, Islamic human rights, the social and political (local) culture, and the religious values of a good Muslim. These should be acted upon comprehensively, instead of just representing them on the basis of concepts of what is sinful and not sinful without the application of critical thinking as to why it should not only be represented like that.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, 1989, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary New Revised Edition*, Amana Corporation: Maryland
- Abdulkodir, Faqihudin, 2002, *Women's Sexuality in the Texts of the Prophet's Hadith*, Swara Rahima No. 5 year II, July-September 2002
- Al-Handhrami, Syekh Salim Ibnu Samir, 2003, *Safinatunnaja* translation edition translated by Moch. Anwar et al., Sinar Baru Algensindo: Bandung
- Allen, Katherine R, 1992, *Ethical and Epistemological Tensions in Applying a postmodern Perspective to Feminist Research*, *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 16 p. 1-15 USA
- Alvetsson, Mats and Kaj Skoldberg, 2000, *Reflexive Methodology New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, Sage Publication: London
- Amuchastegui, Ana, 1999, *Dialogue and the Negotiation of meaning: Construction of Virginity in Mexico*, *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 79-93
- Amushastegui, Ana, 1998, *Virginity in Mexico: The Role of Competing Discourses of Sexuality in Personal Experience*, *Reproductive Health Matters*, Vol. 6, No. 12, p. 105-114
- Aneka Yess, 2005, *Selamat tinggal Sayang!* (Good Bye my sweetheart..), edition No. 2, 26<sup>th</sup> Jan – 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2005
- Anonymous, 1984, *Garis-Garis Kebijakan Pondok Pesantren (the Guidelines for Policy of Pesantren)*
- Anonymous, 2002, *Sekilas Tentang Pondok Pesantren CPS (the history of Pesantren)*, unpublished
- Anonymous, 2005, *Subjectivity and Identity*, no publication.
- Armstead, Athleen, 1995, *Writing Contradictions: Feminist Research and Feminist Writing*, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 18, No. 5-6, p. 627-636

- Assegaff, Farha Abdul Kadir. (1995). *Peran Perempuan Islam (Penelitian di PP. Al-Mukmin, Sukoharjo Jawa Tengah Indonesia)* (the role of muslim women in pesantren al-Mukmin Middle Java Indonesia). Unpublished Thesis.
- Atkinson et al, 2001, Handbook of Ethnography, Saga : London
- Badriyah, Dewi. (2001). Needs assessment of sexual reproductive health among adolescents and youth in Tasikmalaya (Need assessment *kehidupan remaja dalam konteks kesehatan reproduksi*). Tasimalaya: PKBI
- Berg, Bruce L. 1995. Qualitative Research Methods for The Social Sciences (Second Edition). London: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bruinessen, Martin Van,1999, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat* (kitab kuning, pesantren and tarekat). Bandung: Penerbit Mizan.
- Bruinessen, Martin Van. (1994). "Pesantren and Kitab Kuning: Maintenance and Continuation of a tradition of religious learning", in Wolfgang Marschall (ed), Texts from the islands: Oral and Written tradition of Indonesia and the Malay world [Ethnologica Bernica, 4]. Berne: University of Berne pp. 121-145
- Bull, Roland Lukens, 2000, Teaching Morality: Javanese Islamic Education in a Globalizing Era, *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 3, p. 26-46
- Busthomi, Afif, 2000, Terjemahan Uquduljain Etika Berumah Tangga (translation of Uquduljain Ethics in Sexual Relation), Pustaka Amani: Jakarta
- Butler, Judith. 1990. Gender Trouble- Feminism and the subversion of identity. Routledge: Chapman & Hall, Inc.
- Canilao, 1999, Ethics in Feminist Research, in Guerrero, H. Sylvia "Gender-Sensitive & Feminist Methodologies A Handbook for Health and Social Researchers". Quezon City: University of the Philippine.
- Caplan, Pat ed, 1987, The Cultural Construction of Sexuality, Routledge: New York
- Carpenter, M. Laura, 1998, From Girls into Women: Scripts for Sexuality and Romance in Seventeen Magazine, 1974-1994. *The Journal of Sex Research* vol. 35, No. 2, May 1988: pp. 158-168
- Carroll, Janell L and Paul Root Wolpe, 1996, Sexuality and Gender, Harper Collins College Publishers: New York.

- Creswell, John. W, 1998, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design – Choosing Among five Traditions*. Sage Publications.
- Eriyanto, 2001, *Analisis Wacana Pengantar Analisis Teks Media* (discourse analysis, the introduction of media text analysis), LKiS: Yogyakarta p. 199-220
- Eriyanto, 2001, *Analisis Wacana Pengantar Analisis Teks Media* (Discourse analysis: introduction of media text analysis), Yogyakarta: LKiS
- Foster, Don and Tamara Sheffer, 2001, *Discourse on Women’s (Hetero)sexuality and Desire in a South African local Context, Culture, Health and Sexuality*, Vo. 3, No. 4, p. 375-390
- Fromm, Erich, 1989, *The Art of Loving*, Mandala Unwin Paperbacks: London
- Gadis Magazine, 2004, *Gaya Favorite Press: Jakarta*, edition 10<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> June p. 90
- Gedalof, Irene, 1999, *Against Purity Rethinking Identity with Indian and Western Feminism*, London: Routledge.
- Geertz, Clifford, 1960, *The Religion of Java*, University of Chicago Press, Ltd.: London
- Gruenbaum, Ellen, 2001, *The Female Circumcision Controversy*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Harmon, Brenda. “Luce Irigaray”. <http://www.colorado.edu/English/engl2010mk/irigaray.lecture.html> (15.5. 2004).
- Harrington, Carol, 2002, *Agency and Social Identity: Resistance among Pakeha New Zealand Mothers*. *Women’s Studies International Forum*, vol. 25, No. 1, PP 109-126
- Healey, Lucy, 1999, *Gender, Power, and the Ambiguities of Resistance in a Malay Community of Peninsular Malaysia*, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 49-61
- Herartri, Rina, 2004, the 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of Australia Population Association, 15-17 September, Comberra.
- Herrera, A. Amuchastegui, 1998, *Virginity in Mexico: the Role of competing Discourse of Sexuality in Personal Experience*. *Reproductive Health Matters*, vol. 6, No. 12, November 1998 pp. 105-115

- Holland, Bridget. (25.10.2001). "Luce Irigaray: A Biography" in Biographical Information. <http://www.colorado.edu/English/engl2010mk/irigaray.lecture.html> (15.5.2004)
- Humm, Maggie, 1995, *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory* second edition. London: Prestice Hall.
- Ikkaracan, Pinar, 2000, *Women and Sexuality in Muslim Societies*, Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR), Turkey
- Iskandar, Adad et al., 2004, *Irsyadad* (Regulation for Students), unpublished
- Jackson, Peter (ed) al.(1999). *Genders and Sexualities in Modern Thailand*.Bangkok: Silkworm Books
- Januar, Solihin, 2003, *Jangan Nodai Cinta* (Do not Stain the love), Gema Insani Press: Jakarta
- Johnstone, Barbara, 2002, *Discourse Analysis*. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing.
- Jones, Holman Stacy, 2005, *In Defense of Rogue Scholarship: Performing the Scholar in Qualitative Work*, no publication
- Killian, Dkyle D, 2002, *Dominant and Marginalized Discourse in Interracial Couple's Narrative: Implications for Family Therapists*. *Family Process*, vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 603-618
- Leiblum, Sandra R, 2002, *Reconsidering Gender Differences in Sexual Desire: an Update*, *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, vol. 17, No. 1 p. 58-68
- Letherby, Gayle, 2003, *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice*, Open University Press: Philadelphia
- Levine, Stephen B, 2002, *Re-exploring the Concept of Sexual Desire*, *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 28:39-51
- Life Planning Education, 1995. No publication.
- Illen, R.Katherine, 1992, *Ethical and Epistemological Tension in Applying a Postmodern Perspective to Feminist Research*. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*,6 (1992) 1-15.
- Lober, Judith, 1994, *The Social Construction of Gender*. In Estelle Disch, *Reconstructing Gender A Multicultural Anthology* pp. 73-80

- Marddent, Amporn, 2004, *Sexual Culture among Young Urban Migrant Muslim in Contemporary Thailand*, unpublished
- McNay, Lois, 1992, *Foucault and Feminism*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Mernissi, Fatima, 1987, *Beyond the Veil*, Indianapolis : Indiana University Press.
- Mills, Sara, 1997, *Discourse*, London: Roudledge
- Muhammad, Husein, 2001, *Fiqh Perempuan Refleksi Kiai atas Wacana Agama dan Gender* (fiqh for Women : Reflection of Kiai over Discourse on religion and Gender), LKiS: Yogyakarta
- Muhammad, Husein, 2001, *Fiqh Perempuan, Refleksi Kiai atas Wacana Agama dan Gender* (the Islamic Jurisprudence of women: Reflection of Kiai on Religion and Gender), Yogyakarta: LKiS
- Muhammd, Husein, 2002, *Pesantren and the Issue of Gender Relation*, KULTUR the Indoensian Journal for muslim Cultures, Vol. 2, No. 2 p. 63-81
- Muliono, Laurike, 2004, *Sexual behavior of Young Out-of-Schol mles in an Indonesian Urban Slum in Researching Sexuality and Sexual Health in Southeast Asia and China*, Yayasan Surviva Paski: Yogyakarta-Indonesia
- Murata, Sachiko, 1992, *The Tao of Islam*, State University of New York Press: Albany
- Nicholson, J. Linda (ed), 1990, *Feminism/ Postmodernism*. New York: Roudledge.
- Parker, Richard, 1999, *Sexual Diversities, Cultural Analysis, and AIDS Education in Brazil* in Anggleton ed. al "Culture, Society and Sexuality A Reader. London: UCL Press
- Phillips, Nelson et al, 2002, *Discourse Analysis- Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. California: Sage Publication.
- Predaswat, Pimpawun, 1992, *an Anthropology of the Stigma of Leprocy in Rural Northeast Thailand*, Unpublished Dissertation.
- Quasem, Abul Muhammad, 1981, *Salvation of the Soul and Islamic Devotions*, Kegan Paul International: England
- Ramazanoglu, Caroline & Holland, Janet, 2002, *Feminist Methodology Challenges and Choices*, London: Sage Publications.
- Ribbens, Jane ed. al, 2000, *Feminist Dilemma in Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications: London

- Riessman, K. Catherine, 1993, *Narrative Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.
- Rodger, Jackie, 2001, Pain, Shame, Blood, and Doctors: How Women with Learning difficulties Experience Menstruation, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 24, No. 5, p. 523-539
- Ruth, S, 1980, Patriarchy, Sexism and Masculinity in Issue in *Feminism An Introduction to Women's Studies*, Myfield Publishing Company pp. 61-74.
- Shadeed, Farida, 1999, *Constructing Identities: Culture, Women's Agency and the Muslim World*, UNESCO: Malden
- Situmorang, Augustina, 2003, *Consultancy report on Adolescent Reproductive Health in Indonesia*, John Hopkin University/ Center for Communication Program: Jakarta
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, 1999, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Zed Book Ltd: London
- Sunarto, Achmad, 1994, *Berbulan Madu Menurut Syariat Islam* (Honeymoon based on Islamic Law ) translation of Quratuluyun written by Abu Muhammad, Al-Hidayah: Surabaya
- Tan, Michael L et al., 2001, *Love and Desire*, University Center for Women's Studies: University of the Philippines
- Thaweesit, Suchiada and Micheal L Tan, 2004, *Researching Sexuality and Sexual Health in Southeast Asia and China*, Yayasan Surviva Paski: Yogyakarta-Indonesia
- Thiesmeyer, Lynn (ed). (2003). *Discourse and Silencing*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company
- Tong, Rosemarie. (1989). *Feminist Thought a Comprehensive Introduction*. San Francisco: Westview Press.
- Ussher, Jane M, 1997, *Fantasies of Femininity*, Penguin Group: England
- Venables, 2005, *Women Working with Women: Determining my position in the Field*, no publication
- Viesweswaran, Kamala, 1997, *Histories of Feminist Ethnography*, *Annual Reviews Anthropology*, 26, p. 591-621
- Viesweswaran, Kamala, 1998, *Defining Feminist Ethnography*, *The Center of Cultural Studies* (cari di website)

- Wadud, Amina. 1999. *Qur'an and Woman Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Walby, Sylvia. (1998). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publisher Inc.
- Weitz, Rose, 1998, *The Politics of Women's Bodies – Sexuality, Appearance and Behavior*, Oxford University Press: Oxford
- Wethevell et al. (2001). *Discourse as Data/ Discourse Theory and Practice; a Reader*. London: Sage Publisher.
- Wolf, Naomi. (1997). *Promiscuities the Secret Struggle for Womanhood*. New York: the Random House Ballantine Publishing Group
- Woollacott, Angela. (1998). *The Fragmentary Subject: Feminist History, Official Records, and Self-Representation*. *Women's Studies International Forum*, vo. 21, No. 4, pp. 329-339.

## **APPENDIX**

## APPENDIX A

### GUIDELINE INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION

#### I. Information about *Pesantren*

**Method: (1) observation; key-informant and oral history**

##### a. *Pesantren* in observation

1. Where is this *pesantren* located? What are the physical characteristics of this *pesantren*? How is everyday life there? How do single young women spend time in this *pesantren*? What are the social relations created inside this community?
2. How are *pesantren*'s social relation with other *pesantren*, society and links with politicians in Tasikmalaya? And how does *pesantren* influence local government policy (vice versa)?

##### b. History of *Pesantren*

1. Could you please tell me the history of this *pesantren* and community: when and how this *pesantren* was established? Who is the founder? How is the change in this community? When and why does it change?
2. Which school of thoughts (*madzab*) is used by this *pesantren*? Why? Is this *pesantren* open to other *madzab* or interpretation of text? How does *pesantren* deal with different *madzab*?
3. Could you tell me the role of *kyai* and *nyai* in this *pesantren*? Who does always take initiation in decision making?
4. Does this *pesantren* ever have female leader (women who are knowledgeable in *Islam*? Tell me how it happened and why it happened? Do you think any difference exist in leadership between female and male leaders?

##### c. Religion

1. Could you tell me what *Islam* mentions about how to be good young women and men? How does *Islam* regulate it? Why? Do you think your explanation is based on the *Koran* or interpretation of *muslim* scholars?
2. What do you think about single young women's sexuality? Does *Islam* regulate it? How and why does *Islam* regulate it in that way?
3. Tell me about the concept of chastity and modesty for young women in *Koran*. How does this *pesantren* interpret it and regulate it? Why does *pesantren* interpret and regulate the idea of chastity and modesty in that way? What references that *pesantren* use to support its interpretation?
4. Do you think all female *santri* in this *pesantren* follow *pesantren* regulation, especially the implementation of concept of chastity and modesty? How do they apply this concept? Are they the same with *pesantren* expectation? Why? What will happen if they do not apply precisely with *pesantren* regulation?
5. Why should female *santri* cover up their body? Do you think it is necessary, while they are living separately with men? How *pesantren* regulate it? Why? What about *santri* who breaks the rules?

## II. Sexuality of single young women

### Method: personal narrative, in-depth and casual interview

#### a. Sexual identity

##### 1. Gender Identity

- i. Could you tell me your experience to be women? What women are supposed to do in family, *pesantren*, society and when you are with opposite sex or with your peer group? When was the first time you realized you were a woman? Are you happy to be a woman? Why?
- ii. Do you think to be a woman in your culture and Islam are different? In what part are they different? Why?
- iii. What make you different from other young woman? How do you make your self different from others? Why? Do you think it is necessary to make your self different from your friends? Why?
- iv. Could you tell me about men (young and old). What they are supposed to do, to perform, to talk about with family or society, when they are with opposite sex or with their peer group? Why?

##### 2. Gender role

- i. Could you tell me what are your roles in your family, school and *pesantren*? Do you play different roles? Why? How do you play your role as daughter, as a student and as a santri etc?
- ii. Are you happy playing your roles? Why? Do ever think of playing opposite sex's roles? Why?

##### 3. Sexual orientation

- i. Do you have experience about liking or to be liked by opposite sex? Could you tell me your feeling? How do you express your feeling?
- ii. Do you have somebody to share your feeling? Why do you need her/him?
- iii. Have you ever heard of a young woman who likes the same sex? What does Islam mention about loving the same sex? Why?
- iv. Now, I want to know your personal opinion about loving the same sex. What do you think? Why?
- v. How about in this *pesantren*, do you have this kind of case? Tell me how are they? What do they call themselves? How are nature of their relationship with their partner, with other *santri* or with *pesantren*? What do *santri* and *pesantren* do? Why?
- vi. What about men who behave like women or women who behave like men? Do you have friends like this? What do you think? Why? What did *pesantren* do to them? Why?

#### b. Sexual intimacy = ability and need to experience emotional closeness to another human being

1. Could you tell me when the time is that you really need somebody else? Why? To whom are you comfortable to talk, to woman or man? Why?
2. What do you think about having a special one (boy friend)? Why?

3. What does Islam think about having a boy friend? Why? How does *pesantren* regulate this in internal regulation? Does everyone obey this rule? How do they interpret the rule? Why?
4. Now, I want to know your personal opinion, what do you think about having a boy friend? What does it mean to you? Why?
5. Could you tell me your ideal picture of a boy friend? How do you get this idea?
6. If you have boy friend, does he stay here? How do you communicate with him? How do you express your love? Why? What does love mean to you? How do you get this idea?
7. What do you think about kissing? Do you have experience to be kissed? How do you feel? What does kissing mean to you?
8. Could you tell me about virginity? What does it mean to you? How to keep it? Why?

**c. Body image**

1. Sensuality is awareness and feeling about one's own body and other people's bodies, especially the body of a sexual partner
  - i. Could you tell me what beauty is? Do you think veiling women are beautiful while they don't show their body to public? Why do you define beautiful like this? How do you get this idea?
  - ii. Could you tell me when the first time did you want to be looked attractively? How did you make your body attractively? Where and to whom you perform attractively? Why?
  - iii. Could you describe to me what is an attractive and sexy body? How do you get this idea? Why do you use this idea? Can you perform like what you want here? Why?
  - iv. How do you feel when you look at your body in the mirror? Which part of your body that you think attractive? Why? How do you often treat your attractive body?

Code dress for muslim women

- v. When did you wear "jilbab"? Why did you decide to wear "jilbab"? Could you tell me your feeling before and after you wear jilbab?
- vi. What does "jilbab" mean to you? Do you think you feel safe by covering your body? Why?
- vii. There are many way of covering women's bodies. In your opinion, how is exactly to cover young women's bodies? Do you cover up your body differently inside and outside *pesantren*? Why?
- viii. Could you tell me when did you feel unsafe or uncomfortable even though you are wearing "jilbab"? Why? How did you deal with your feeling?
- ix. Do you apply totally in your daily life what religion mentions about covering aurat? Why?

**Feeling closeness (with parents or friends)**

- x. Could you tell me how close you are with your parents? To whom you feel comfortable to share your feeling, mother or father? Do they teach you about sexuality? What did they say about “to be a woman”?
- xi. During your stay here, do you still communicate with your parents? What problem that you often share with them? How do you communicate with them?
- xii. What does mean having friends to you? Do they help you when you have problem? What is new thing you learn from your friends and never think before relating with your sexuality?

**Fantasy**

- xiii. Could you tell me the most interesting experience of becoming a woman? What do you want to be in your imagination? Why? How do you deal with your feeling if your fantasy is difficult to be real?
- xiv. Have you any fantasy (berhayal) to have sexual experience (having special partner or staying closely with someone special)? What kind of sexual experience that you often think to have? Do you share with your friend about your fantasy? How did you deal with your feeling if you are not able to do in reality? Why?
- xv. Do you think your fantasy to be influenced by other things? What are they? How they are influenced in your life?

**2. Sexualization**

- i. *Refers to section code dress of muslim women*
- ii. What about male *santri*, do they also have to cover their bodies? How and why?

**d. Sexual reproductive health**

- i. Could you tell me your experience of menstruation? How did you feel at that time? Why?
- ii. What does menstruation mean to you? What are differences as woman before and after having menstruation? Why?
- iii. What do you think about pregnancy? How women can get pregnant?
- iv. How do you know this information? What other information did you know about reproductive and sexual health?
- v. Could you tell about sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS? How are they transmitted to people? How to prevent it?

**III. Contesting Discourses on Sexuality**

**Method: (1) Observation** inside and outside *pesantren* regarding how they spend leisure time, day off outside, how they access reading materials, when and where they discuss their life. **(2) Discourse analysis;** analyzing text on reading materials, utterance or speech that are considered to maintain ideology

**a. Print Media**

- i. What is your favorite teen magazine? Why? What menu do you really like to follow every edition? Why?

- ii. What do media expose about how to be young women sexually? How this idea influence to your life (thinking and practices)? Why?
- iii. Do you like reading novel? What is favorite story about you like? Why?
- iv. How do novel, short stories describe romanticism? Do you think it can happen in your life? How and why?
- v. Does *pesantren* allow *santri* to have novel or teen magazine? Why? How is it regulated?
- vi. How about if *pesantren* ban this magazine, how do you deal with this rule?

**b. Electronic media**

- i. What is your favorite program in television relating about teenagers? Why? Tell me what is your interesting experience in this program? How popular is this program within your peer group?
- ii. What lessons do you get from this program? How does this program describe being young women (identity, having close with others, body image, sexual reproductive health) in contemporary Indonesian culture? Do they describe differently with picture of becoming young men in society? Why? Do you think it can happen in reality or in your life? Why?
- iii. Do you have radio program which concern on young people? What is the program name? When is the program often scheduled (day, time)? What make this program interesting to you?
- iv. What does the program mention about how to be good women and men in society? Are they different? What issue of sexuality often discuss in this program? How do they represent women sexuality in this program? In your opinion, do you agree with their definition? Why? What should it be?
- v. Can you access internet here? How do you access it? What sites do you often open to have information about reproductive and sexual health? Why?
- vi. Can you learn about sexuality from internet? What are they? Do you think it is enough learning sexuality from internet? Why?
- vii. How does this media represent women's sexuality? Do you agree with them? Why?

**c. Religious references on sexuality**

- i. Could you tell me how many reference do you have to learn about sexuality? What they explain about female and male sexuality? How do learn about sexuality from this text?
- ii. What do you think about it? Do you think what happening in society the same like in the text? Why?
- iii. Can you use the explanation on the text in your life as young woman living in modern culture? Why?
- iv. How do you deal with your self if the explanation in the texts are different from your feeling and reality?
- v. Part of observation, how teacher educates the text and how students respond it?

**d. Government and non governmental program**

- i. Could you tell me your experience on learning sexual and reproductive health from government or non government organization program.
- ii. What do you think about them? Is it enough for understanding sexual reproductive health?

## APPENDIX B-I

### **The Summary: Qurtul ‘uyun; Honey Moon ala Islam**

Sex is taboo to talk in public, but not to discuss in the class. This statement appeared after spending two hours reading the book of *quratul yun* written by Asy-Syekh Al-Imam Abu Muhammad in *bahasa Indonesia* version. So far, we pretend to our selves always being chaste by avoiding discussing about sex. Wrapping up all needles complications of sex in the basket and putting on the dark and cool corners of the house or even throwing out to the rubbish box. In fact, deliberating sexuality issue could derive good response from *santri* (students in islamic boarding school/ pesantren) because it was related to personal intimate relation in marriage status. Is it true only for that reason? Or do not you think it is need of anybody to know how to engage sexual relation correctly particularly for the first experience?

Unlike *uqudul lujain* which more emphasized on the role of gender relation between husbands and wives in Islamic way of thinking, *quratul ‘uyun* seemingly examined about marriage including detail sexual activities within it. Abu Muhammad divided the book into three parts; firstly, preparation of marriage, it is including how to select the candidate of wives, how to determine good day of party etc. Secondly, about detail activities within marriage, meaning the attitude of engaging sexual relation in Islamic way. This part deliberated in detail about the duty of husbands to do prayer and read some prayers before beginning sexual activities with their wives. It was totally different with porn novel which only exposed eroticism, vulgar sexual activities, this *kitab* (I: book in Arabic, but to call Arabic script printed book) much much focus on providing guidelines of engaging sexual activities for new couple as well as supplying them with some rituality and prayer before, in time and after having sex in order to produce sholeh/ sholeha (I: pious) children in the future. The last one was about how to educate children to be good human, meaning it was much discuss about the division of labor in the family, which the responsibility of husbands and wives were determined in rigid dichotomy; husband as bread winners and wives as house keeper, to stay at home in taking care children and serve husband nicely.

The law of marriage was placed as introduction of this *kitab* to remind us that *nikah* (i: marriage) could be judged in many status accordance on situation and necessity of human. It could be obligation, if somebody wished children and be afraid of trapping into *zina* (I: having sexual relation out of marriage). It was also possible to be *makruh* (I: the avoidance of which yields merit but the performance of which is not sinful), if it never been intended to do. It was *mubah* (I: neither forbidden nor required) for anybody who never felt afraid of approaching *zina*, never expected children and performed worship continuously. And of course it could be absolutely *haram* (I: forbidden) if it was purposed to torment his partner like not provide material or non material *nafkah* (I: basic necessity of live), incapable of having intercourse etc. According to Syekh Ibnu Urfah, getting marriage became obligation for women who could not control her self from sexual desire, thinking that only marriage was able to protect her.

How to be married women was explained by Abu Muhammad in long description involving obedience of wives to husband. A hadist stated:

Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq talked : I listen to Rasulullah saw. Spoke: if I were commented someone to perform a bow to human being, I will order women (wives) to do so to their husband” (Sunarto, 1994: 38)

The misogynic hadist discussing about the role of women in family much more focused in domestication and objectivity of women sexuality, for instance wives are not allowed to dress well out side home, not to speak loudly to husbands, women must be willing of her husband enjoy her effort, there will be sentence for wives who dare to take belongings of husband without permission, wives are not allowed to make husband up set or to hurt his feeling etc. *Wanita sholeha* (I: pious women) was represented in the eyes of men, where superiority of masculinity through attribute of head of family and breadwinners are legalized by religion. Of course, it is placed women in acting opposite role of men, which more attached to reproductive role.

In this sense, men, in deed, the one enjoy benefit of this *kitab*. Construction of being men as responsible, active sexually, innovative, masculine person, as educators, leaders, having many sexual experiences were so strong reflected in attitude toward sexual relation. Meanwhile, only men were recommended to do religious rituality and reciting prayers before beginning sexual activities with their partners in order create

anak sholeh / sholeha, on the other hand wives were illustrated as passive agent, waiting husband finishing his duty, then preparing to be flirted by husband. My feminist analysis speaks that men are represented as active agent in whole steps of engaging sexual activities, in contrast, women were constructed as passive agent, obedience, never to be initiator, waiting husband to start sexual movement, then finally must give good service whatever husbands want like a hadist stated that:

*Ali karramallahu wajhah said* “ women are vehicle to husband, so she should be ready anytime to drive (Sunarto, 1994:136)

However, the positive side, I underlined from this *kitab* is Islam really recommended that satisfaction of sexual relation must be achieved both by husbands and wives. Therefore, to gain the same orgasm in order to maintain love , islam touch us to start sexual activities with seductive words, kissing, touching, which these purposed to prepare both husband and wives to go further to have sexual intercourse. The only approval ethics of engaging sexual intercourse through *farji* (I: vagina), and any sexual relation through *dubur* (I: anus) was really condemned by Islam. Syekh Penazam marked this activity with a hadist of prophet stated “having sexual intercourse through anus is haram (I: forbidden). Besides it has high risk of disease, this act is cursed by Prophet Muhammad.

Another strictly prohibition is about having sexual relation during menstruation. Islam explicitly urged in surah al-baqarah ayah 222 that *wayasalu naka 'anilmahidhiqulhuma adzan fa'tazilunnisaafilmahidh* , meaning “they asked you about blood of menstruation, talk to them, haid (I: menstruation) is pollution, therefore, you were expected to keep away from women in menstruation period.

The term “keep away” by Sayidah Hafshah was interpreted withholding from vagina of wives, meaning not to do sexual *intercourse*. Furthermore, *kitab qasthalani* supported that sexual intercourse during menstruation is strongly prohibited, it is forbidden in coitus, to those who conducted they became *kafir* (I: unbelievers). Meanwhile, other sexual activities out side intercourse are allowed such as kissing, being intimate with wives. Supporting by Imam Malik’s argumentation that prophet Muhammad still engaged sexual relation with his wives during menstruation. He said “ women during menstruation must keep their tampon, while you (husband) on the top

of her”. It may be interpreted that having other sexual activities are allowed to do during menstruation, except intercourse.

In sum, privacy in sexual relation is extremely recommended in Islam, in this case sexual relation between husbands and wives must be done in convenient time and place, safe from children disturbing, and other activities. The last words, there are a number of laxities in sexual relation as well as there are a lot of prohibition in maintaining degradation of morality of believers, to keep essence of marriage and to remind us that sexual relation is not only for pleasure but it is a process of human reproduction.

## **APPENDIX B-II**

### **The Summary:**

#### **Uqudulujain; Ethics on Husband and Wife Relation**

In general, this book consisted of four chapters; the rights of wife over her husband, the rights of husband over his wife, the priority of prayer at home for women, and the prohibition of men to see another women and oppositely women to another men. The discussion of the rights of wife over her husband encompasses on the rights of wife to have good treatment, basic necessities of life, bride price and other gifts from husband. Husband has duty to give education on religion appropriately with wife's need including ritual or moral obligation. Another thing that husband must teach wife is about the duties of wife to obey husband in doing moral conducts. I give an example of the idea of balancing women's rights and duties. It stated in the Qur'an Al-Baqarah 228:

And women shall have the rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable: But men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And Allah is Exalted in power wise.

The author gives too simple interpretation of this verse that one of degree of advantage of men is that men have the rights to marry more than one wife, while women cannot. Because a husband who provide bride price, accordingly a wife must obey to husband, beside because she can help husband in implementing his responsibility in fulfilling wife basic needs as well as providing protection for wife.

The second chapter is about the rights of husband over his wife, which embraces issue of obedience of wife to husband, giving in wife to husband. Another important issue addressed in this book is about the duties of wife for example wife must be at home when her husband is away home, including she must keep her self from immoral conducts. Another aspect of womanhood being focus in this book is about aurat. The idea of aurat in this book is interpreted as the whole of women's bodies including their faces and palm or hands. The reason is because the male gaze to women's palm of hand as mentioned on the kitab is considered *haram* (prohibited). Wife should have normal request, it means that she does not ask something over even

though her husband can afford it. Furthermore, a wife must be honest informing when she gets period and not. Seemingly, issue of men has higher degree over women in this book become core of discussion of relation a husband and a wife couple. Here I quoted 18 items wherein men have more degree of advantage over women;

1. men have intellectual over than women
2. men are more patient to face difficult problem
3. the authority of men are more
4. the capacity of academic writing are dominated by men
5. men are skillful in riding horses
6. many men become religious scholar
7. many great imam/ leader are men
8. men are more advantage in the battle
9. men are allowed to do calling prayer (adzan), Friday speech (Khutbah), and doing Friday prayer
10. men can stay at mosques for long time
11. men are valid to be witnesses in criminal case
12. men get more property
13. men have more benefit in *ashabah*
14. men can be wali
15. men can divorce
16. men can return
17. men have the rights to marry many women
18. the family line drive from men

The third chapter is more concerned on prayer for women. Women are allowed to pray at home, at room or at mosque with the prophet. This chapter examines about the influence of devil to women, and the suggestion of the prophet related to devil influences. Another important issue is about performance of women in which women are not allowed to perform over fashion that can attract other people.

The last chapter is about the prohibition for men to see other women as well as women to see other men. In this section the author address issue of controlling the gaze is mainly for men, not to see other women who are not included in his family

linage or married women. in related with this issue, the author also suggests for young generation to prohibit shake hand, a woman and a man stay alone without companion, and other related issue that can lead to zina.

**APPENDIX C****GLOSSARY**

Amar makruf nahi mungkar	: encouraging good and restraining evil
Akhlaq	: character, morals
Aqidah	: faith
Asbabunnujul	: a method of reading text which is concerned with looking at the specific context where the text was produced
Asrama	: a residential place for students in pesantren
Aurat	: private organs that should not be exposed to public. (For males in general the aurat is from the navel to the knee. For women the aurat is the whole body excepting the palms of the hands and the face
Baju kurung	: Muslim garment for females which has long upper shirt and a skirt and is used in Indonesia or Malaysia
Basul masail	: a thematic forum in which students play a significant role in exploring their knowledge of a particular theme while teacher will conclude at the end on the discussion.
Cewek	: girls
Cowok	: boys
Dakwah	: religious proselytizing/ missionary endeavor
Dewan Guru	: Teachers council which functions as decision maker for students violating regulation in pesantren. A teachers council also has responsibility to design and redesign pengajian curricula.
Dzikir	: Remembrance of God. There are two senses of remembrance of God; firstly remembrance of God as a purely mental activity (without the use of tongue). This consists of mental recalling of God by considering His essence and secondly to remember God by utterances

(with the tongue) of His Oneness, His beautiful names and attributes, His majesty and glory, and His greatness and might.

Fiqh	: study of laws pertaining to ritual obligation
Fitna	: a false statement damaging to a person's reputation
Gamis	: Arabian –style clothing
Hadith	: a collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad which together with accounts of his daily practice (the Sunna), constitute the major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Koran.
Halaqa	: a discussion group. The term halaqa also means a thematic meeting discussing Islam
Ibu	: mother or Ms
Ikhlas	: selflessness
Ikhtilath	: the mixing of women and men
Imtihan	: semester examination
Irsyadad	: student regulation in pesantren
Jilbab	: a head-cover. Some related terms are also used in Indonesia, like <i>kerudung</i> , <i>tudung</i> .
Jomblo	: a perjorative term used among teenagers to address a person who does not have a boy/ girl friend
Kakak angkat	: like an older brother or sister. While <i>adik angkat</i> is like a younger sister or brother
Khitbah	: a phase of introduction to the bride before marriage. This tradition is commonly used among conservative Muslim groups who have applied lifelong segregation, therefore they just can see the future bride only by looking at her hands or face.
Khitoh	: Original Goal.
Kitab kuning (yellow book)	: Islamic classical references studied in pesantren printed with yellow paper and written in Arabic script

Kitab	: Books. This term is only used referring to classical Islamic references
Kolot	: traditional and conservative
Kyai	: highest range of teacher in pesantren
Madrasah	: religious based school. Since 1994, they have to follow government curricula
Majlis Ta'lim	: a religious group in which members are gathering once a week. They have male and female group. In this group an ustadzah/ ustadz gives teaching about ritual and moral obligation. In Majlis Ta'lim, people do not learn kitab kuning because normally they just learn religion in general through ustadz or ustadzah.
Meril	: a term for a person who loves the same sex
Mukimin	: a phase to apply knowledge from obtained in a pondok. Normally, the kyai sends the student back to their hometown to open a new pondok.
Muhadasah	: language exercise for santri/ student
Niah	: intention/ plan/ aim
Nikah	: to marry
Nyai	: wife of kyai or women muslim scholars
Pengajian or ngaji	: a religious meeting. Related words exist such as pengajian class, meaning a study class about religion
Pondok Pesantren	: Muslim boarding school. People in Indonesia sometimes call them pondok or pesantren
Rasia	: raiding banned materials such as porn readings, alcoholic drinks, body-hugging clothing etc for the purpose of protecting student from immoral conducts
Restu	: a blessing
Roisah Amir	: a leader of board of santri in pesantren
Salawat	: reciting prayer for the prophet
Santri	: resident students in pesantren
Santri kalong	: students who just come to study but not to stay

Santri negeri	: santri who stay at kyai's or relatives' house; helping in the household and doing many other things as compensation for the kyai's kindness to allow her/ him to stay at the pondok without paying any money.
Silaturahmi/ silaturahmi	: friendship/ good relationship
Sundanese	: one of the major ethnic groups in Java Island which is predominant in West Java
Syahwat	: lust
Syariah	: the Islamic law
Swadaya Masyarakat	: social donation
Ta'aruf	: introduction session to the pesantren
Taqriban	: oral examination. It can be weekly or monthly
Ujang/ jalu	: term of address for a boy in sundanese culture
Ustadz	: term of address for a male Islamic teacher
Ustadzah	: term of address for a female Islamic teacher
Wanita sholeha	: a pious woman. The construction of <i>wanita sholeha</i> is commonly from a male perspective in which women must totally obey their husbands
Rujuk	: reconciliation after separation or divorce
Wali	: a person who is legally responsible for a bride
(di) Wisuda	: an award given to a student at the end of their studies

## **BIOGRAPHY**

NAME : Dwi Rubiyanti Kholifah

PLACE AND DAY OF BIRTH : Banyuwangi, 4 April 1975

HOME ADDRESS : Jl. Pancoran Timur IIA/ 10 Perdatam, Pasar Minggu , Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia Tlp. +62-21-7984165 E-mail : [dwiruby@yahoo.com](mailto:dwiruby@yahoo.com)

ADDRESS FOR CONTACT : AMAN (Asian Muslim Action Network)  
House 1562/113, Soi 1/1 Mooban Pibul,  
Pracharaj Road Bangkok 10800, Thailand Tlp.  
(66)29130196 Fax (66) 29130197

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: - Bachelor of English department, University of Jember  
- Master of Art on program of Health and Social Science, faculty of social science and humanities, Mahidol University, Thailand

RELIGION : Islam

FELLOWSHIP : The Ford Foundation