

AFTER GOD, AFTER ISLAM

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Abstract

Tulisan ini bertujuan mendiskusikan agama di era postmodern, dengan fokus pertanyaan bagaimana menjadi muslim dan memahami Qur'an di era post-modern. Memakai pemikiran Don Cupitt, dalam beberapa karyanya, tulisan ini berargumen bahwa mengandaikan Tuhan telah mati merupakan jalan alternatif memahami Qur'an agar lebih kontekstual diaplikasikan dalam kehidupan masyarakat muslim di era postmodern. Signifikansi utama tulisan ini adalah memberikan kontribusi alternatif dalam dimensi filosofis kerangka berpikir kontekstualisasi Qur'an.

This article aimed to examine the Cupitt's conception in the light of Islamic paradigm. It is done by identifying negative impacts of postmodernism toward the existence of religion. Religion, in Don Cupitt view is alive in the term of "value", "private realm", "personal faith" and "counterculture". Although Islam came from hundreds centuries ago, it does not mean that authentic Islam is Islam in the past. Islam in the past, Islam in the present and Islam in the future are different. Islam is not timeless doctrine, but changeable expression. Time is running; and Islam demanded to contextualize itself dynamically.

Kata Kunci: Islam, Qur'an, hermeneutika, postmodern, Don Cupitt

A. Introduction

We are living within the postmodern age. 'Post' in term of it can be identified into two meanings, namely *other* and *after*. Postmodern is nothing but another modern. In this age, modern should be clearly understood as becoming-with-time. Postmodern represents modern process in progress. All modern discourses remain lie in postmodern, whether its essence, form or paradigm. What character is the term is the way of looking at. Modernist thinker, such as Jurgen Habermas, applied structuralism to see the postmodern. He calls postmodern as "late modernity",¹ since this age tends to run far from reason and rationality. Meanwhile, those who witness this age from poststructuralism angle denoting this age is really *after* modern age. We had already left the modern age and are standing on the postmodern age. Don Cupitt is one who agrees with. In this paper, I would like to discuss his idea on the future of religion. I take his book *After God: the Future of Religion* as primary source of explanation.²

After God is only one of thousand works on postmodernism condition. It is chosen here for twofold. Most postmodern books share on problem of definition. Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition* is one example. He describes where actually postmodernity come from and how should we see postmodern.³ Discussing on the problem of definition actually shows our problem self. Rather, we do not prepare yet jumping from modernity to post-modernity. Passing over of it, Cupitt proposes on how to we face the postmodern age. Further more, not only solution, Cupitt also produces the new meaning of God. Nowadays, God is regarded sacred. Because of sacred, it is untouchable. God is there and we are here. The relationship of Creator and its creatures was realized as the association of elite and slave. Cupitt disagrees with this. He states that God and human are more like friend. His opinion implies the old meaning of sacred. What the sacred now is. Indirectly, Cupitt's meaning of God "disturbs" the existence of

¹ David Tracy, "Theology, Critical Social Theory and the Public Realm," in Don S Browning and Francis Schussler Fiorenza (ed). 1992. *Habermas, Modernity and Public Theology*. New York: Crossroad).

² Don Cupitt. 1997. *After God: the Future of Religion*. New York: Master Minds. Henceforth written as *After God*.

³ Jean-Francois Lyotard. 1979. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report of Knowledge*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

religion. It because old religions are demanded to re-born himself to new form. For above reasons, *After God* invites us to becoming religious in term of the postmodern age.

The title *after God, after Islam* is intended to examine the Cupitt's conception in the light of Islamic paradigm. As it is well-known, Islam is a revealed religion. All of the laws believed by its followers as taken for granted from God. A Moslem, instead of obeying God, has to purpose his deeds for God; until as though everything is about for God. Essence of the Moslem then depends on his existence along with God, not because his autonomy. Becoming Islam (Muslim) is more difficult when a Moslem believes that everything in which deals with God is holy. Holy is in definition of endless without changing. God is holy. His prophets, not only Muhammad, are holy. God's scriptures are holy. His angels are holy. And so forth. Negative effect of it is the attendance of utopia and phobia. If a Moslem faces problems of the present, he must look for the solution from the sacred, say, the Qur'an and the Hadith as two main source of Muslim life. Instead, the Muslim argues that practicing Qur'an and Hadith must be 100%; and it can not be done without exemplifying how the prophet Muhammad did it in his life.

[Sacred] history of the prophet is more important than Qur'an and Hadith. Living in the postmodern age, therefore, is a phobia for the a Moslem. He fears facing postmodern in sense of postmodern. He goes back to the past in order to solve the present problem. The past vis-à-vis the postmodern seems to be the struggle between the sacred and the profane. In this paper, I start from a thesis that Islam need *After God* to being a Postmo[dern] Moslem Postmo[dern], though without *no preserve*. What should we do as a Moslem in the postmodern age?. Again, it is not purposed to do reconstruction, deconstruction or reproduction, yet seek to born Islam in its new form.

This is paper is organized into four discussions. First, the discussion describes Cupitt's conceptions. Second, continued with analyzing the Cupitt's in the sense of philosophical approach. Here, the analysis emphasize on some consequences of the death of God in the postmodern age. In the next discussion, the Cupitt's conception would be implemented in the Islamic world. I explain theoretically how a Moslem should posit God, revelation, the law, the sacred history and create his worldly Islamic system. What our real aim living in the world: for what or for whom? Although I take the

Cupitt's as primary source, it does is not mean to accept it uncritically. So, in the conclusion, I criticize Cupitt's thought briefly. As is well-known, the death of God implies disappearance of absolute truth. Now, the problem arises: Does Cupitt belongs to nihilist? I close the discussion with asking a question on possibility of combining between Islam and nihilist.

B. God Must Die

World is changing. According to Don Cupitt, some factors which activate it are economy, consumerism and high technology.⁴ For the sake of earning money, workers from Asia and Africa seeking for a job to Europe. It is not hundreds but thousands. The workers have their original identities. Indirectly, their identities "live" together with the local people in Europe. This condition causes Europe having many more ethnics and religions. Religion, which is only known in the workers' local contexts, now spread out throughout the world. Second is consumerism, transforming human's paradigm from need to desire. The consumerism keeps in touch with media which alters reality as fiction and fiction as fact. Media constructs humans to buy what is demanded, though unneeded. Third, technology gets away religion in periphery. Doctrines of religious metaphysic can be explained positively clear-cut in terms of technology. It is a challenge to religion. On one hand, religion come from the past and ordered to adapt with the postmodern era. As consequence, on the other hand, it must sacrifice the sacredness of religion, since some religious doctrines in opposite to technology.

Having explained the changing world, Cupitt goes further by identifying negative impacts of postmodernism toward the existence of religion. Religion, according to Cupitt, can stay alive in the term of "value", "private realm", "personal faith" and "counterculture". As a value, religious doctrines will be alienated in front of world. The religious doctrines stand here and the worldly problem stands there. Cupitt take an example, the Politician Right, who regard that economic values just depend on market law and not having relationship with religious values. In other word, the economic value is value-free. As a private realm, religion again will be estranged, yet now from public sphere. Orthodox Jewry, for instance, build a

⁴ *After God*, p. viii – x.

localization for himself in which far from world. Cupitt stated, “They freely admit that they are as much threatened with disappearance by assimilation as any other religious group.” As a personal faith, religion is believed subjectively. The religion seems to be an individual spiritual experience. It implies on the criteria of truth. The truth then is mine. Søren Aabye Kierkegaard is a philosopher who taken Cupitt for this example. As a counterculture, religion now is in line with violence. Fundamentalism movement, as a representation of it, believes that all things which come from the religion are true. If there are some innovations which contrast with some religious doctrines, the innovations are false and the doctrines are true.⁵ In so doing, religion rather becomes foe than friend for the postmodern age. For already conditions, this author of *After God* recommends:⁶

... I shall propose that if we can't beat postmodernity, we should embrace it. I am proposing a very considerable redefinition of religion, a redefinition that will bring religion closer to ... the Sermon on the Mount than to any sort of orthodox theology, and will make it very short-termist in outlook. ... it will “aestheticize” religion, in the sense that it sees religious living in terms of artistic practice and symbolic expression. As redefined here, religious life is an expressive, world-building activity through which we can get ourselves together and find a kind of posthumous, or retrospective, happiness.

Rather, Cupitt needs religion which give him cheerful not horror, delighted not fear, heaven not doctrine. To grapple his aim, Cupitt advises us to re-analyze philosophical sense of religion. In the same page, he criticizes the old meaning of religion, with asking two questions. First, “why the gods came?” Why do humans always associate the gods with being in which rest on there. Are there no gods which deals with now and here? Second, “how and why did the gods eventually work themselves out of a job and begin to slip away from us?” Why the gods must interfere humans' problems. Where human's free-will is.

⁵ *After God*, p. xi – xiii.

⁶ *After God*, p. xiv.

To answering the two questions, Cupitt writes four thesis of it:⁷

1. As both philosophy and religion have in the past taught, there is indeed an unseen intelligible world, or spirit world, about us and within us.
2. The invisible world is the world of words and other symbols.
3. The entire supernatural world of religion is a mythical representation of the world of language.
4. Through the practice of its religion, a society represents to itself, and confirms, the varied ways in which its language builds its world.

In brief, all metaphysical doctrines of the old religion are language game. The meaning of it is timeless due to language maintain it and protected by the sacred. Now, how to define religion in the postmodern age?

There are several principles, in Cupitt's eye, which must pay more attention to cultivate the futuristic religion, namely: *Eye of God*, *Blissful Void*, *Solar Living*, *Energetic Spinozm*, *Poetical Religion* and *World Religion*. To support the first principle, Cupitt insists, "The person who truly and seriously believes in God is a person who has a special mediated (or, I shall call it, "bounced off") kind of consciousness." God is omnipresent. He looks us every time. He knows all things. He can create everything what He wants. So, eye of God means that we demanded to behave like God behaves. Living in the postmodern age gives a straightforward to realize it. Since world web wide arise, we can watch this world from our notebook monitor. We can send message via electronic mail which delivered in account of second. We can order some food without going out from our home. Even we can finish our job with remain sitting down in front of our computer. The eye of God, Cupitt explains, gives us a global awareness, that we are living within interconnectedness world. There are no boundaries among humans. Whatever your religion is not important. We all are friend.

⁷ *After God*, p. xv.

Next, Cupitt declares, God must die. For the reason, “One can still love God after the death of God.”⁸ Rather, Cupitt gets a match between the death of God and the death of person. Let explain further in my illustration. There are two friends, namely Ali and Ahmad. Because of an accident, Ali must cut off his two feet. Now, he always sits on his wheel-chair. Indeed, he still has high motivation going to school. He is a high school student. His class rest on the second floor. When he wants to enter his class, Ahmad always lifts up Ali until sitting down inside the class. Ahmad respect Ali and vice versa. Both have high compassionate sense among others. One day, as usual, Ahmad lifts up Ali to enter the class. Yet, suddenly some students who run toward both hit them. Ahmad, Ali and the students fall together. Ali’s head bends the floor. He passes away at that moment. Ahmad sad and always visit Ali’s tomb every Friday. Ahmad’s love for Ali is higher than before. Back to Cupitt, he seems to posit God like a friend. My love to a friend will increase after he died.

We turn to the second principle: *blissful void*. This principle is an effort of emptying ourselves from all things. Cupitt defines it simply as “the disappearance of the self into immanence, objectivity and nothingness.” Why do this very important to us now? The death of God implies disappearance of metaphysical basic. Such values, norms or other which regarded as the absolute truths are no longer exist. There is also no rational thing, even logical one. Cupitt repudiates Kant who holds that “although the imagination may be defeated by the vastness of Nature, and although we may feel emotionally overwhelmed by the mighty force of Nature our reason is not defeated.” Through the blissful void, we learn how to see this world as emptiness. There is no beginning as well as no ending. There is neither life before the present life nor life after one. Therefore, we are not confused again by the anxiety of death.⁹

The emptiness feeling influences the principle of *solar living*. In the postmodern age, Cupitt suggests, live like the sun. The sun spreads the lightness, yet in the same time, burning itself into dying. The solar living is therefore not “existentialism” but

⁸ *After God*, p. 83 – 86.

⁹ *After God*, p. 88 – 89.

“expressionism”.¹⁰ Let express our style. Let die all time to enjoy our life. Let lost us into daily life. God is death so that we can create our life according to ourselves. Cupitt call the solar life as “postsainthood”. He admits, “... though I make no sense in myself ... I can make some sense in my expression, my spoken utterance, my work and my lived life”¹¹ The principle of life is moving, working and enjoying our life every time.

Back to the nature is basic of the next principle. As the believer, we usually keep in mind doctrines which dealing with entities beyond natural, for example: ultimate reality, supernaturalism and etcetera. We tend to think that outside us there another world. We trap to dualism, that there are above world and below one; there are soul and body. By *energetic sphinozim*, Cupitt commands us to throw supernaturalism in the garbage. Now, think naturalistic. “There’s nothing inside your head, stupid! It’s all out in front! *All this* is what fills your thoughts: your “consciousness” equals simply the brightness of the public scene before you!” Cupitt affirms.¹²

Whatever we think about supernaturalism is nothing but metaphor. According to Cupitt, “Metaphors cause resonance, activating and invoking more and more other stands in the flux, and metaphors also provide crosslinks and maintain harmony.”¹³ The metaphor of supernaturalism creates an established system. Parents educate the system to his children. The system is implanted in human’s mind continuously. It then believed as the sacred. The metaphor of supernaturalism is just a tool to bound humans who believe it. Along with discovering the high technology, the religious moral will be canceled; and altered with “the telescoped or contrasted vision”, that is, moral which created based on global consciousness outlook.¹⁴

Relating to *poetical theology*, Cupitt quotes from the Roman writer M. Terentius Varro who divides theology into three types, that is to say, first, *civil theology*; second, *philosophic theology*; and the

¹⁰ Don Cupitt, “Post-Christianity,” in Paul Heelas (ed). 1998. *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 230. Henceforth mentioned as *Post-Christianity*.

¹¹ *After God*, p. 90.

¹² *Post-Christianity*, p. 223.

¹³ *Post-Christianity*, p. 224.

¹⁴ *After God*, p. 101 – 104.

last, *poetical theology*. The civil theology is a state-religion. The philosophic theology is philosopher's truth. Meanwhile, the poetical theology is truth which kept inside poet. Both of the first and the second get a match, both is dogmatic. The former is characterized by "revealed theology" which the doctrine strengthened by faith instead of state. The latter portrayed by "rational theology" which the dogma supported by logical propositions. On the other hand, the poetical theology is aestheticism. This principle seeks to "expand the aesthetic to embrace the whole of reality". The truth is not fear ness, but beautifulness. Thus, the truth is poetry.¹⁵

Since the world is being globalized, Cupitt would like religion "to become a unifying expressive activity through which we can simultaneously get ourselves together and build our common world." It is the essence of the fifth principle. *World religion* is religion which contains *eye of God*, *blissful void*, *solar living*, *energetic spinozism*, and *poetical theology*. New religion, according Cupitt, must be able to operate in global level. World religion is our religion which entails the death of the other. There are no longer me and you or we and they. Cupitt states, "We do not need them in order to create community, and, curiously, we do not need them in order to be ourselves."¹⁶ We all are the one.

C. After the Death of God

To analyze the Cupitt's principles, I would like to classify it into four themes. First, back to the nature deals with the energetic spinozism. Second, the death of metaphysic relates to the eye of God, the blissful void and the solar living. Third, the political theology will be examined in term of sign. Last, the world religion vis-à-vis local religion.

Thinking naturalistic is in line with "der wille zur macht".¹⁷ In the past time, human posited his rank based on the power he had. The more power the more prestige. When human was lying in the age which named the Paleolithic era (20000 – 8000 BCE), the power was

¹⁵ *After God*, p. 112 – 118 and *Post-Christianity*, p. 225 – 228.

¹⁶ *After God*, p. 99 and 124 – 127.

¹⁷ In this discussion, I would like to reproduce Nietzsche's concept of will-to-power. For detail about will to power see Friedrich Nietzsche. 1968. *The Will to Power* (translated by Walter Kaufmann). New York: Vintage Books.

measured according to how many and what kind animal which he could kill. For some wild animals, such as tiger, cobra snake, elephant and so forth were regarded having power higher than the laity human. The animals were being the sacred. So, the power then was respected based on the competitor of human's power. It had continued in the next period, Neolithic (8000 – 4000 BCE). In this age, the competitor was nature. Nature was more dangerous than the animal. Nature has unpredictable and unlimited power. Human being could not predict when earthquake, tornado, flood would take place. Humans became aware that there is unseen power behind nature. Then god and goddess were created as a human's expression toward the unseen power. By creating the god and goddess, the past people might be informing to the next generation that nature maintain the incredible power. Instead, after discovering high technology which able to kill the will animal and predict weather climate, the previous power collapsed. Power now is measured based on how high the technology which man have. In so doing, thinking naturalistic is will to power in the world.

Is there any relationship between getting the power and the death of God? The postmodern condition is obviously characterized by the death of God. God is symbol of sacred. By killing the God, the sacred destroyed. Like the Paleolithic and Neolithic people, God is believed as "power laden".¹⁸ Yet, it does not mean having relation with getting the power. In the postmodern age, God is no longer considered as the unseen power, but a friend. Through the eye of God, the blissful void and the solar living, postmodern men as if have had power in order to balance God's power. We have internet which has function akin to God's eye. Adopting Richard Rorty, the death of God, "being religious no longer means dependence upon specifically observable phenomena regarded as intuitively evident."¹⁹

God is nothing but shared interpretation. God exist since we agree He exist. It is an agreement which "always related to a sort of continuity." Following Gianni Vattimo, God is "the Logos interpreted

¹⁸ Santiago Zabala, "A Religion without Theist or Atheist," in Santiago Zabala (ed). 2005. *The Future of Religion*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 2. Henceforth written as *The Future*.

¹⁹ *The Future*, p. 16 – 17.

as dialogue, *Gesprach*, as the actual discussion among people.” God then is “no facts, only interpretation,” as Nietzsche said.²⁰

The relationship of human vis-à-vis supernatural had evolved in the three periods. First, in the pre-modern period and before, it was the problem of essence. In the case of power above, the unseen power is a reflective mirror for human’s power. Here, comparison between human’s essence and supernatural essence occurred. In the beginning, human thought that physic was power he has; and the supernatural had unphysical power. Human has his own essence and so does the supernatural. In the modern period, human think, is there any relation of physical and unphysical power. Human seek to search for his existence. Human aware that the supernatural is the Creator and human is creature. So, the human’s existence is always influenced by presence of the supernatural power. In the postmodern period, after the death of God, at least through the solar living, human attempt to express himself as he want. Sometimes, human express for himself. Occasionally, for other people. In sum, the evolution is essence – existence – expression.

The expression is manifested through the poetical theology. This principle has changed dualistic structure either signifier – signified or soul – body. Since Ferdinand Mongin de Saussure wrote *Cours de Linguistique Generale*,²¹ the basic of structuralism had established. There are two component inherent in the structure, namely signified and signifier. The former like soul whereas the latter like body. Signifier is representation of its signified. If, for instance, the body gets sick, meaning the soul does too. The death of God requires the death of signified. Signifier is not exactly dealing with signified. Signifier represents signifier itself. Body embodies body itself. Borrowing Carl Raschke’s analysis,²² body becomes

... a ‘metaphor’ for the metaphoric postmodern ... it becomes the pre-discursive horizon for all possible significations that transcend the logic of linguistic acts

²⁰ “What is Religion’s Future After Metaphysics?” in *The Future*, p. 57 – 58.

²¹ Ferdinand de Saussure. 1976. *Cours de Linguistique Generale*. Translated by T de Mauro. Paris: Payot.

²² Carl Raschke, “Fire and Roses, or the Problem of Postmodern Religious Thinking,” in Philippa Berry and Andrew Wernick (ed). 2004. *Shadow of Spirit: Postmodernism and Religion*. New York: Routledge, p. 103.

and their application ... Body becomes a metaphor for the dance of signification. The 'dance' of the metaphoric postmodern The body as metaphor contravenes the totalizing force of ideological belief system ...

Of the world religion, the problem which arise is dealing with, what Roland Roberson called, *relativization*. This term denotes "the challenge of coexisting with other—often very different and perhaps antagonistic—cultures". The world religion causes "the sense that 'one's own' culture is under threat".²³ It is very difficult to ignore boundaries which inherent in local cultures, including religions. What will happen is clash of identity. A model which operates within the clash is the oppressor culture and the oppressed one. One culture conquers other cultures. Hence, the world religion seems to be a polarization. All cultures in the world must be connected with one culture in the up position.

D. Toward the Death of Islamic Metaphysic

What will happen with Islam when it is analyzed by Cupitt's *After God*? This session follows the organization of discussion before, but in the term of Islam. First is impact of the energetic spinozism. As is well-known, literally, Islam means "to submit" or "to surrender".²⁴ Loyalty here is closer to the meaning of consciousness. In that time, self-consciousness needed because the people forget their identity. The people lay in the positions which lower than animal. When the mother born gives birth? a female baby the father bury her.²⁵ Muhammad invites the people to conscious what they did and what its reward. War among tribes usually happened. It least since the Arabic forgot their identity as human and applied animal's rule as their law. If the people have good behavior they get happiness. If they behave bad thing, they undergo sadness. It is all about cause and effect so that very naturalistic. For this reason, Islam seemed to be a religious

²³ Roland Robertson, "Globalization and the Future of "Traditional Religion", in Max L. Stackhouse with Peter Paris (ed). 2000. *God and Globalization Volume I: Religion and the Powers of the Common Life*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, pp. 60.

²⁴ Ilyas Antun Ilyas. 1982. *Qamus Al Ashr*. Beirut: Dar al Jil, p. 312.

²⁵ See Albert Hourani. 1991. *A History of Arab People*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

essence. The Holy Qur'an calls this community the believer, refers to those who believe to Allah and Muhammad as His messenger. Belief is a confession, that outside us there Being which have unlimited power. Beside that, the belief is also a confession, that there man who had high consciousness, namely the prophet. I said like that since the prophet is the first man inside his community who aware of existence of Being.

By the presence of consciousness, I would like to doubt *Gesprach's* Vattimo. If Being exist within a dialogue, why must be there the prophet as the first man who inform the existence of being. One day, the prophet Muhammad had said, "*kullu mauludin yuladu 'ala fitrah.*" Every baby was born rooted in his *fitrah*. *Fitrah*, put it simply for now, is self-capital of knowing, either to know ourselves as being or the other as being. *Fitrah* like God's spot in definition of Zohar.²⁶ As a result, knowing Being is an self-effort. We can see all founder of world religion having the same behavior. Muhammad, Mahavira and Buddha are for example. Muhammad left his worldly life and went to the Hira' in order to dwell for several days. Mahavira left his aristocrat life and meditated without wearing his cloth for years. Gautama left his glamour behind? and found out Bodhisatva. Their stories end in the same episode, namely, they get enlightenment. The enlightenment is nothing but self-consciousness.

Instead, after the death of Prophet Muhammad, Islam became a religion. Religion, here, means an abstract institutional. What Muhammad said or deed legalized as Islamic law. Because Islam sent down within Arabic land, automatically the Arabic culture taken a role in creating Islamic law. Islam now is a combination between an essence plus the Arabic culture. Up to now, being a Moslem is similar to being Arabic people.

Most Moslem always associate Islam with three important elements: revelation – history – power. As a common, Muhammad's consciousness believed as something given by Being (God). This is revelation, which manifested in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith. But, strangely, Moslem chooses history of Muhammad as an example of Islamic practice; because the history regarded maintaining the Qur'an and the Hadits in practice as a whole. Based on the history, Moslem builds Islamic society.

²⁶ Zohar and Ian Marshal. 2001. *SQ*. Bandung: Mizan.

In the postmodern age, that is not sufficient enough. Moslem must back to the early context in which Islam sent down in the first time. Revelation is a form and the real essence of Islam is consciousness of being human. There are so much revealed doctrines which inapplicable for this time that must be contextualized, take an example is polygamy. It more relates to Arabic culture, and not about human condition. Islamic history is not the sacred story, since the history is his-story (Muhammad's story). What happened in the Muhammad's period is an event in the past time. Moslem should exemplify this if there is any relation with the present time. Hence, the existence of Islam depends on the present, not the history. Moslem has to create his-own-story now in the postmodern age.

Although Islam came from hundreds centuries ago, it does not mean that authentic Islam is Islam in the past. Islam in the past, Islam in the present and Islam in the future are different. Islam is not timeless doctrine, but changeable expression. Time is running; and Islam demanded to contextualize itself dynamically.

The death of God sees off Islam toward the death of revelation. Islam is no longer about God. Moslem must pay great attention to human's problem. Some precedents of Muhammad's story which inappropriate in the present time should be transformed flexibility. *Zakat*, for example, is not applicable if it just 2,5 %. The measurement is better to heighten more than that. *Zakat* is no longer a strict law, but an expression to help the other people. In the postmodern age, we can denote Islam as expressed human consciousness for the other.

By the death of God, now, Islam has no deep structure, no signified. It opens a possibility to see a Moslem as it is. Generally, a Moslem whose high piety has good behavior. Faith becomes measurement of good people. The faith always regarded having influence for behavior. The faith is a signified and the behavior is a signifier. In the postmodern age, both of are a signifier, no more signified. It is possible, a Moslem whose high faith in the same having bad behavior, doing affairs for instance.

Does it signify process of secularization run? According to Nurcholish Madjid, secularization simply means remapping which one

is religious discourse and which one is worldly discourse.²⁷ Rather, the Moslem postmodern refuses to accept the concept of dichotomy. All Islamic ritual is for worldly aim, or at least, can not be separated from worldly interest. A popular Islamic propagator, for instance, in the first time, he is similar to other propagators. Having given a religious speech in front of TV camera often, he demanded to show up like a celebrity or a humorist. Then, after becoming icon of propagator, he builds show rooms which sell all properties dealing with him, such as his recorded cassette, his photo, and et cetera. Which one religious and which one not religious? Agree or not, our daily life always deals with ethic of capitalism.

If the ethic of capitalism interferes inside the world religion principle, it becomes dangerous thing. On one hand, the world religion, quoting Mark Juergensmeyer, “it helps to ease the cultural difficulties experienced in multicultural societies by providing the shared values that allow peoples of divergent cultures to live together in harmony.”²⁸ On the other hand, mode of togetherness in the world religion is polarized toward Americanization. It seems to be a cultural hegemony. When clash of American culture and other ones happen, the other must be surrendered. This condition foster fundamentalism movements appear. They try to do a resistance effort to defend their culture from the invention of American culture. Therefore, the world religion becomes a principle to conquer enemy.

E. Conclusion

According to Graham Ward, there two types of postmodern thinkers, namely: “a radical nihilism” and “thinkers of difference”. Roland Barthes, Gilles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard and Jacques Lacan belong to the first type. While, the second are Emmanuel Levinas,

²⁷ Nurcholish Madjid, “The Necessity of Renewing Islamic Thought and Reinvigorating Religious Understanding,” in Charles Kurzman. 1998. *Liberal Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 284 – 294.

²⁸ Mark Juergensmeyer, “Religious Ambivalence to Global Civil Society,” in Mark Juergensmeyer (ed). 2005. *Religion in Global Civil Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 5.

Jacques Derrida, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva and Helene Cixous.²⁹ How about Don Cupitt? He includes the first group.

Nietzsche is man who fosters process of nihilism through his famous jargon, “*Gott ist tot! Got bleibt tot! Und wir haben ihn getotet!*”³⁰ God is death, God is death and we killed Him. The death of God implies that the absolute truth disappears. In the postmodern era, the disappearance is caused by global system which make world too narrow. Through television and internet, we can see regions throughout the world. It is not human mistake, but human consequence. In first time, human invent and controls the global system but in last time the global system manages him. The global system as if creates its own world.

The postmodern age is an age of continuous competition. High technology opens possibility producing a new item fast. We can see the models of? hand phone always changing every month. And we can see also every month the rich man exchange his hand phone. For some people, the hand phone is not merely seen its function. Owning the hand phone is an expressive fashion. We can call it the moment of desire. Our consumption is led into temptation of the word “want”. The want transforms all human need.

Will Islam through *After God* be trapped into nihilism? It is difficult to answer. On one hand, if we want to follow the postmodern desire, we must be nihilist. One the other hand, if we want to defend Islam from the postmodern threat, we must be fundamentalist. Could we combine Islam and nihilist into one word?

²⁹ Graham Ward, “Kenosis and Naming: Beyond Analogy and Towards Allegoria Amoris,” in Paul Heelas (ed), *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity*, p. 254.

³⁰ Quoted from St Sunardi. 2001. *Nietzsche*. Yogyakarta: LKiS, p. 23.

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