

## Liberation Hermeneutics in Religious Text Studies: A Phenomenological Analysis of Hasan Hanafi's Thought at Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School

Irma Rosyidah<sup>1</sup>, Dewi Asri Fatma Sari<sup>2</sup>, Mohammad Hasan Jazuli<sup>3</sup>, Mohamad Salik<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

\*e-mail: [osiyirma1105@gmail.com](mailto:osiyirma1105@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

*The hermeneutics of liberation developed by Hasan Hanafi is an approach to interpreting religious texts that is more than just reading texts textually or normatively. Hasan Hanafi sees the holy texts of both the Qur'an and Hadith as dynamic sources that must be interpreted critically, relevant to the problems of the times and the conditions of society that are constantly changing. A progressive religious learning paradigm will be created by applying the hermeneutics of liberation at the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School. The research method used is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach, with data collection through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. The research sample consisted of 5 Islamic Boarding School Ustadz, 2 of whom also taught as Lecturers at Ma'had Aly and 1 as the Head of Madrasah at the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School, who were considered representative as research subjects to gain an in-depth understanding of the application of the research conducted. The results of the study indicate that liberation hermeneutics provides a potential critical and contextual perspective in responding to problems, but its implementation in the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School environment is still limited by the strong dominance of the traditional method of the Syafi'i School which prioritizes textual and normative approaches. For this reason, more intensive efforts are needed to integrate the liberation hermeneutics perspective in order to provide a dynamic and adaptive contribution to change.*

## INTRODUCTION

The issue that continues to be the agenda of renewal in the lives of Muslims and Islam is related to the understanding of the holy text, especially the Quran, which often becomes a complex challenge. The Quran in its call orders Muslims to continue to study and understand the meaning contained therein, through explicit and implicit instructions (Nugroho, 2016). The holy book becomes great and meaningful as a guide and guideline for life, both in the form of teachings of faith, morals, law, philosophy, politics, and worship, because all of that is human interpretation and awareness in realizing their understanding (Adawiyah, 2016). This problem shows that the Qur'an is not sufficient in the form of being able to read and recite it well, but also being able to understand and express the contents and principles contained therein.

Efforts to understand the meaning of the text so that it can be applied in life have been known for many approaches and methodologies. One approach that is currently attracting the attention of the academic world, especially in the field of interpreting the Qur'an, is the Hermeneutics approach (Arifin, 2018). Hermeneutics emerged as an interpretive approach that offers a broad scope in understanding the meaning of the Qur'an. Not only technically reading the text, hermeneutics is also considered a means or tool used in the interpretation process (Anshory & Salsabila, 2024).

Hermeneutics in texts not only functions as a source of teachings but also as a reflection of the social, cultural, and historical context (Gusmian, 2016). An approach that offers a new perspective in understanding religious texts is the hermeneutics of liberation popularized by Hasan Hanafi. Hasan Hanafi offers a hermeneutics of the Qur'an that is social and existential. The interpretation model produced by hermeneutics, according to Hasan Hanafi, is an answer to the needs of Muslim society, which is still struggling with various forms of oppression and backwardness (Anshory & Salsabila, 2024).

Hasan Hanafi built a set of interpretive methodologies that can accommodate the idea of liberation in Islam. Hasan Hanafi longed for the birth of a "revolutionary interpretation" of the Qur'an to become an interpretation that can become a normative basis or perhaps an ideology for the struggle of Muslims in facing all forms of repression, exploitation, and injustice, whether launched by forces from outside the body of the people, or by authoritarian elements that exist within Muslim society itself (Hanafi, 1989). Hermeneutics as a method of interpretation historically appeared earlier than hermeneutics in the sense of the philosophy of understanding (Saenong, 2002). Hasan Hanafi, with his progressive thinking, invites us to see the Quran not only as a text that must be obeyed literally, but as a source of inspiration that can free people from various forms of oppression and injustice. *Al-Turats wa al-Tajdid* shows that Hasan Hanafi's character defends the rights of Muslims who are identical to the majority group who are oppressed, defeated, and dominated (Nugroho, 2016).

Hasan Hanafi also argues that traditional interpretations of religious texts tend to be static and unresponsive to current social dynamics. His view of liberation hermeneutics serves as a tool to free the minds of people from the shackles of rigid and dogmatic interpretations (Manshur, 2021). This approach not only focuses on the literal meaning of the text, but also on the social and moral implications that can be taken from the teachings. In this case, it is in harmony and very relevant in the context of a society that continues to change, where the values of justice and freedom are increasingly prioritized. An important aspect of liberation hermeneutics is the emphasis on the social and historical context in which the text was revealed. This approach views the relationship between tradition (*al turats*) and modernity (*al-hadatsah*) (Lukman, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to understand that religious texts are inseparable from the development of the times. By adopting a hermeneutic liberation approach, it can bridge traditional values and the demands of the modern era, so that the understanding of the Quran becomes dynamic and responsive (Negara & Hannah, 2023).

The hermeneutics of liberation of religious texts is seen as a dynamic source that opens up space for critical reflection on various social injustices and ideological domination. This approach moves readers of the text towards an awareness of the transformative dimensions of the text, thereby helping to produce a religious understanding that is relevant to the form of aspirations for integral human liberation (Kersten, 2022). Hasan Hanafi's hermeneutics of liberation approach is fundamentally different from the traditional interpretation methods commonly found in classical exegetes such as Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurtubi, or Al-Tabari, who tend to emphasize literal and textual interpretations based on strong sanad and narrators and the external meaning of the text. Traditional interpretations are often static and conservative, with little room for reflection on social context or changing times (Sehlikoglu & Kurt, 2024). When compared to other liberation scholars, such as Muhammad Arkoun or Fazlur Rahman, Hasan Hanafi emphasizes the revolutionary and normative aspects as an ideology of struggle against oppression, not just textual or historical interpretations (Badruzaman, 2005).

This study aims to analyze how Hasan Hanafi's hermeneutic liberation approach is implemented in the practice of understanding and interpreting the Al-Quran at the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School, which is an Islamic educational institution that has a strong tradition in the study of religious texts. With an approach that seeks to understand the interpretation of Islamic teachings in the context of life and the hermeneutics of liberation plays a role in the interpretation process. The implementation of the analysis is expected to find patterns of understanding that show that Lirboyo students apply religious values in a broader social context. The contribution of hermeneutics is also expected to develop inclusive religious studies that are responsive to the needs of society. By integrating Hasan Hanafi's thoughts, it is hoped that students can develop a broader and deeper perspective, so that they can play an active role in facing the challenges of the times and realizing the values of justice and liberation.

## METHODS

The type of research used in this study is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. Qualitative research is a research aimed at describing and analyzing phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, thoughts of people individually or in groups (Arif et al., 2024; Arikunto, 2013). This qualitative research contains a study of problems that produces detailed and in-depth descriptive data. The use of this approach is because objective conditions in the field have a natural setting, or fairness, no data manipulation, and are not regulated in experiments or tests (Nasution, 2003).

Phenomenological studies are concerned with how people interpret particular experiences and how those experiences influence the way they view the world. Phenomenological researchers aim to investigate the essence of experiences comprehensively and deeply (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Researchers interpret the phenomenological approach according to Cresswell's opinion as a research approach that describes the meaning of the experiences of several people regarding a phenomenon. In qualitative research, data sources are divided into three parts, namely humans, places, and data (Jesica Dwi Rahmayanti & Muhamad Arif, 2021; Moleong, 2016). While data collection techniques are a form of strategic formulation in conducting the research process, this research was conducted to obtain research data. Researchers cannot possibly obtain the data sought if they do not use data collection methods; to obtain credible data, it must be done by digging and obtaining data in the field in depth. The data collection method in this study uses participant observation, in-depth interviews, and in-depth documentation (Sukmandinata, 2020).

This phenomenological research was conducted at Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School, focusing on the experiences of five ustadz who have served for 5 to 14 years. The research population consists of ustadz who have diverse backgrounds and experiences, so they can provide an in-depth perspective on their roles in the Islamic boarding school.

Tabel 1: Educators in Lirboyo

No	Nama	Age	Department	Length of Service
1	Shidqi Wafa	25	Lecturer at Ma'had Aly Lirboyo	10 years
2	Ahmad Hidayaturrif'an Al Khasani	32	Head of the Female Madrasah	14 years
3	Hilmi Husaini Zuhri	29	Lecturer at Aly Lirboyo Islamic School	14 years
4	Mohamad Mughni	28	Teacher	5 years
5	Abdul Mujib Abidin M,Ag	29	Teacher	6 Years

The research instruments used include observation and interviews. Observations are conducted to understand the social context and interactions between ustadz and the teaching methods applied in the pondok environment. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews will explore the experiences, views, and meanings given by ustadz to the knowledge, tasks and challenges they face. This data collection technique aims to gain a holistic understanding of the ustadz's experience in teaching and interacting with students so that researchers can know whose perspective the teaching applied at the Lirboyo Islamic boarding school uses. The data obtained will be analyzed using a phenomenological approach, by identifying the main themes that emerge from their experiences, so that an in-depth description can be compiled that reflects the essence of the experience. 8 questions have been asked to five ustadz that have been validated by the researcher.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Introduced in religious studies at the Lirboyo Kediri Islamic Boarding School. This approach emphasizes the importance of considering the social, political, and economic context in interpreting religious texts, so that religious teachings are not only understood literally, but are also able to answer issues of injustice and oppression in society. This effort received support from some ustadz and madrasah heads who encouraged the importance of interpretations that were applicable and responsive to the dynamics of the times. However, in its implementation, several obstacles were found, such as the strong dominance of the traditional approach based on the Syafi'i School, which tends to be textual and normative. In addition, the understanding of the liberation hermeneutics method among students and teachers is still limited, so the use of this approach in religious studies has not been optimal. Nevertheless, there is an initial enthusiasm to present a more critical and contextual reading of the text as part of the scientific transformation in Islamic boarding schools.

### **Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School as a Contextual Setting**

Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School is one of the oldest and largest Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, located in Kediri City, East Java. Founded in 1910 by KH. Abdul Karim, this Islamic boarding school is known as one of the centers for the development of traditional Islamic knowledge that influences the East Java region and even nationally. Lirboyo grew from the roots of the Salaf Islamic boarding school tradition, namely Islamic boarding schools that emphasize the study of classical yellow books (*heritage*) inherited by scholars for centuries. The vision of the Lirboyo Islamic boarding school focuses on creating a generation of knowledgeable scholars, have noble morals and can maintain the values of Islam Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah. The educational mission carried out includes the formation of a strong character in students in mastering religious knowledge, spiritual discipline, and commitment to social service based on Islamic values.

The educational approach at Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School uses the sorogan and bandongan systems, two typical methods in the tradition of traditional Islamic boarding schools. The sorogan system allows direct interaction between teachers and students in reading and understanding texts, while bandongan is a method of reading and explaining books by a kiai to students collectively. These two approaches reflect a scientific relationship based on sanad (the chain of knowledge) and respect for the authority of scholars. The characteristics of religious studies at Lirboyo are closely related to the patterns of classical fiqh, tasawuf, and tauhid thought. The teaching of books such as *Fath al-Qarib*, *Taqrib*, *Al-Hikam*, *Ihya' Ulumuddin*, until *The Truth of Tawhid becomes* a daily routine. A Ustadz commented that “the santri's perspective is more directed towards what Masyayikh Lirboyo himself taught”.

The emphasis on Islamic legal discipline (fiqh) and Sufism morals formed the conservative character of the ustadz and students, who were strong in maintaining tradition. However, in the last few decades, there has been limited dynamics towards more contextual studies. Some teachers and

alumni have begun to introduce new approaches to understanding texts, including hermeneutics, Islamic philosophy, and contemporary thought. However, these innovations remain within a framework of caution and do not replace the dominance of traditional methods, which are still considered the most authoritative in the pesantren environment.

### **Understanding of Religious Texts by Ustadz and Students of Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School**

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted in the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School environment, it can be concluded that the majority of ustadz and students have a strong tendency to understand religious texts traditionally. Their perspective on religious texts, especially the Qur'an and hadith, is greatly influenced by the classical teaching system, which emphasizes mastery of the turats books and the derivation of laws based on the Syafi'i school of thought. In daily religious study activities, students are taught to refer to the opinions of scholars of the school of thought, especially scholars of fiqh from the Syafi'iyah group. Books such as *Fath al-Mu'in*, *I am the Talibin*, *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj*, and *The Majmu's Account of the Prophet* become the main reference in understanding Islamic laws. When faced with religious texts, students tend to seek "established opinions" rather than making independent interpretations.

Interpretation of verses or hadiths is done through a textual approach that pays close attention to the rules of classical Arabic and ushul fiqh. A Ustadz said in an interview, "The dominance of the Syafi'i school of thought greatly influences the way students understand religious textually and norms, with a focus on maintaining tradition and using ijthad and qiyas in dealing with new problems". Ustadz and students are trained to interpret texts within the methodological boundaries that have been set by previous scholars, so that their understanding is normative and taqlidi (following the opinions of previous scholars without deviating). This is considered a form of caution in maintaining the purity of Islamic teachings and avoiding misinterpretation.

As for the contextual interpretation approach, most students show caution and even resistance. They consider that such an approach can open up space for free interpretation, which is feared will deviate from the boundaries of sharia. However, there are also a small number of final year students and several young ustaz who are starting to open up dialogue space towards contemporary approaches, including hermeneutics. However, this openness is more academic and experimental, not as mainstream in understanding religious texts. Thus, it can be concluded that the students' understanding of religious texts at the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School is still dominated by traditional interpretation patterns based on the Syafi'i school, with normative interpretations and based on the authority of classical scholars. The contextual approach and hermeneutic thinking have not become part of the mainstream of reading texts in this Islamic boarding school environment.

### **The Existence of Hasan Hanafi's Hermeneutic Ideas at the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School**

Hasan Hanafi's hermeneutics is not yet widely known by the majority of students at the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School. Most students are more familiar with the traditional interpretation approach, which is sourced from classical Arabic books that are based on the Syafi'i school of thought, such as *Tafsir al-Jalalain* and *Tafsir al-Baghawi*. Therefore, the term "hermeneutics" itself still sounds foreign to them, let alone Hasan Hanafi's unique ideas about "liberation" and "reader subjectivity".

Among young ustaz and final year students (Ulya class or post-yellow book study), several individuals are beginning to get to know Hasan Hanafi's thoughts, especially through academic channels or literature outside the pesantren. They know the name Hasan Hanafi through lectures at universities, contemporary Islamic thought books, or more open intellectual discussion forums. However, this introduction is still limited and conceptual, not yet reaching the stage of internalizing methodological thinking in understanding the text. Regarding the idea of "reader subjectivity", most

respondents (especially senior students) expressed objections to this view. For them, the interpretation of religious texts must be limited by the authoritative framework of previous scholars and should not be too influenced by the reader's personal experience. Interpretations that prioritize subjectivity are considered to have the potential to damage the original meaning of the text and open up space for deviations from Sharia.

Meanwhile, the idea of “liberation” in Hasan Hanafi’s hermeneutics also raises ambiguity among Islamic boarding schools. When associated with social liberation and justice for the people, some ustaz accept this idea as part of the Islamic mission. However, if liberation is interpreted as freedom of interpretation that is free from the school of thought or authority of the ulama, then many reject it. This shows the existence of epistemological tension between the traditional reasoning of the santri and the critical emancipatory approach in understanding the text. Overall, the existence of Hasan Hanafi’s hermeneutic idea at the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School is still on the fringes of scientific discourse. Although there is potential for openness among a small number of groups, Hanafi’s hermeneutic approach has not been considered part of the mainstream understanding of religious texts in Islamic boarding schools. Resistance to ideas that are considered inappropriate, as well as the dominance of classical fiqh methodology, are the main factors in the slow acceptance of this idea at the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School.

### **Practice of Contextual Interpretation of Texts by Ustadz and Students of Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School**

Although Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School is known as a traditional Islamic boarding school that is strong in the tradition of textual interpretation based on schools of thought, in several informal discussion spaces, there have emerged practices of interpreting religious texts that show contextual tendencies. This practice is not immediately referred to as “hermeneutics of liberation” in academic terms, but it contains a similar spirit, namely adjusting the meaning of the text to the social reality faced by the community. In observations in several special halaqahs and discussions with senior students, there are efforts to understand the text not solely based on classical words and explanations, but also considering modern socio-cultural conditions. This is usually facilitated by young ustaz who have a higher educational background or intellectual experience outside the pesantren environment.

After being introduced to the limited thoughts of Hasan Hanafi and the principles of liberating hermeneutics, such as meaning as a response to reality and the importance of the reader's position, some students showed a change in perspective. They began to realize that texts do not only speak in a vacuum, but have contextual messages that must be explored according to the needs of the times.

A statement from one of the ustadz in an interview regarding the traditional interpretation of the Qur'an and hadith with a hermeneutics of liberation approach stated: “The main difference lies in the source of interpretation. Traditional interpretation emphasizes interpretation through hadith sources, the history of the companions and imams of the madzhab. While Hermeneutics is more dynamic in that the interpreter interacts with the text, historical background, culture, and the interpretation of their reason.

The following is an example of a table of contextual meaning-making practices that emerged among ustadz and santri:

Table 2: Context of Differences in Meaning

No	Religious Texts (Books)	Traditional Meaning	Contextual Meaning by Ustadz and Santri	The Influence of Liberation Hermeneutics
1	Hadist: كَادَ الْفَقْرُ أَنْ يَكُونَ كُفْرًا	Poverty is closer to disbelief.	Interpreted as a call to free people from structural poverty through economic empowerment.	The text is seen as a call to social action and a defense of the mustadh'afin
2	Kitab al-Hikam	Emphasizing asceticism, patience, and surrender to fate	Interpreted as a basis for spiritual strengthening in the face of modern oppression and injustice.	The spirit of Sufism is read as a motivation for resistance against social inequality.
3	The Book of Fath al-Qarib (The Book of Faith)	Focus on the procedures for mahdhah worship, such as ablution and prayer	Being the gateway to understanding worship as a social ethic, not just a ritual.	The spiritual dimension is shifted to the social dimension consciously.
4	Inheritance verses in Surah an-Nisa'	Details of inheritance law according to classical Islamic law	Reinterpreted to support gender justice in family economic rights, with notes on fiqh and sharia benefits.	Students question the social context of the verse and offer a reinterpretation based on the interests of the community

These practices show that although the contextual approach has not yet become dominant, awareness of the importance of interpreting texts in a way that is relevant to reality has begun to grow. The introduction to Hasan Hanafi's thinking has encouraged some students to see texts as tools of liberation, not just static sources of law. In this context, the hermeneutics of liberation becomes a bridge between the traditions of pesantren scholarship and the challenges of the modern era.

## DISCUSSION

### The Relevance of Hasan Hanafi's Hermeneutics of Liberation at the Liboyo Islamic Boarding School

The concept of hermeneutics comes from the Greek language, known as the word "*hermeneuein*," which means interpret (Richard, 1967) "*Hermeneia*", as a derivative it means interpretation. Both words, according to the figure of Hermes or Hermeios, who in Ancient Greek mythology is considered a messenger of the Olympus gods, who is tasked with conveying and translating the messages of the gods into a language that is easy for humans to understand (Palmer, 1969). According to Gerhard Ebeling, the explanation process carried out by Hermes includes three basic concepts of hermeneutics, namely: 1) expressing thoughts into words, 2) explaining something that is still unclear rationally, and 3) translating a foreign language into a language that is more

familiar to the audience (Grondin, 1994). Hermeneutics can be simply defined as the art and science of interpreting texts (Leidecker, 1976).

According to Bertens, hermeneutics is defined as a set of rules or patterns that must be followed by a person. An *interpreter* in understanding the study of religious texts (K. Bertens, 1981). In the broad context, hermeneutics is known as a science that reflects on words or past events to be understood existentially in the present context (Brennan, 2015).. Hermeneutics always tries to examine issues related to discourse (*speech*) and explanations of things that do not yet have a clear meaning by using language expressions and translations (*translation*) from one language to a clearer language (Robinson & Jhon B Cobb, 1964). In the development of hermeneutics, it is not only limited to the interpretation of religious sacred texts, but also extends to understanding various other forms of texts such as literature, works of art, and community traditions.

The context of Hasan Hanafi's thinking that placed in the hermeneutics of liberation school, which not only aims to understand the text linguistically or historically but also emphasizes the practical, social, and political aspects of the text. For Hasan Hanafi, hermeneutics is the science of transforming revelation from text to reality, from divine inspiration to human liberation action (Hanafi, 2003). This idea is a critique of the way of interpretation that is only fixated on literal or authoritative meanings that are not contextual to the reality of the people. However, when this paradigm is brought into the epistemological space of traditional Islamic boarding schools such as Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School, an unavoidable tension arises. As is known, traditional Islamic boarding schools uphold imitation of classical scholars, making the sanad of knowledge and the text of the commentary the pillars of authority in understanding Islamic teachings. In this tradition, the dominant hermeneutics is more like Schleiermacher's objective hermeneutics, where the meaning of the text must be explored according to the intention of the author or the initial interpreter (Bleicher, 2017; Sukmandinata, 2020; Sumaryono, 1996).

The most striking difference is seen in Hanafi's approach, which emphasizes the active participation of readers in shaping the meaning of the text, similar to Gadamer's subjective hermeneutic approach, which assumes that meaning is not a fixed entity, but rather the result of a dialogue between the text and the reader's world. In the structure of pesantren thought, this approach can be considered to loosen traditional authority and open up space for interpretations whose validity is not guaranteed by the Salaf scholars. However, in a more reflective nuance, Hanafi's approach does not necessarily contradict the goals of pesantren. If seen from the basic principles of hermeneutics, as emphasized by Ebeling and Robinson, namely revealing hidden meanings and translating language into a context that can be understood by today's audience, then there is potential creative meeting between Hanafi thought and the orientation of Islamic boarding school preaching (Robinson & Jhon B Cobb, 1964)

In reality, Islamic boarding schools not only function as preservers of knowledge but also as agents of social transformation of the community. It is at this point that Hasan Hanafi's hermeneutics of liberation finds its relevance, namely as a tool for criticizing the stagnation of rigid and non-contextual religious understanding. Hanafi's spirit in defending the mustadh'afin and demanding that religious texts voice social justice can be an inspiration for Islamic boarding schools to form students who are not only obedient to the text but also care about the social reality of the community. Hasan Hanafi's great project through the *Torah and the Holy Quran* aims to renew Islamic thinking to be able to respond to the challenges of the times (Saenong, 2002). If Islamic boarding schools open up a space for dialogue regarding this discourse, then it is not impossible that the Islamic boarding school tradition can synergize with the spirit of tajdid that Hanafi fought for, without having to abandon its classical roots.

Thus, the relevance of liberation hermeneutics in the context of Islamic boarding schools is not in the direct methodological structural aspect, but rather in the ethos of renewal and siding with



the oppressed people. This is in line with the principle of hermeneutics as “the science of translating meaning into a context that can be understood and is useful for the people”. Therefore, if developed carefully and dialogically, Hanafi's thoughts can enrich the treasure trove of Islamic boarding school interpretations and foster critical awareness among students.

### **Integration of Hermeneutics of Pesantren Liberation in the Study of Religious Texts**

Efforts to integrate Hasan Hanafi's liberation hermeneutics into the intellectual tradition of Islamic boarding schools face various epistemological, cultural, and methodological challenges. However, these limitations are not final, because in the gaps there is a transformative potential that is relevant to the spirit of dynamic and contextual Islamic scholarship. The relevance of Hasan Hanafi's ideas can be strengthened through an approach that emphasizes the importance of social, historical, and cultural contexts in understanding religious texts. Understanding texts, including religious texts, cannot be separated from the social and cultural contexts of the place where they are produced and read. In the context of Islamic boarding schools such as the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School, which strongly maintains the continuity of tradition and the authority of classical scholars, this approach is both challenging and enriching. Hanafi's liberation hermeneutics, which raises the active position of the reader and social needs in interpreting the text, has a common thread with Eagleton's theory, namely that meaning never stands alone, but is influenced by historical and ideological forces (Eagleton, 2008).

The study of religious texts must take into account the historical background and traditions that surround them. He emphasized that meaningful interpretation does not only interpret the text from a linguistic perspective, but also from the perspective of its influence on the morals, beliefs, and practices of society. This opens up a space for dialogue between the pesantren's scientific tradition and a more critical hermeneutic approach. By understanding that sacred texts do not only speak in normative language but also historically and morally, pesantren have a great opportunity to transform their function from merely preserving the heritage of knowledge to becoming agents of social change (Arif, 2022; Nasr, 2009).

As explained previously, the epistemological obstacles in the form of the dominance of taqlid and the authoritative model of the scientific sanad make the idea of the reader as the center of meaning (Hanafi) seem subversive to the established structure of knowledge. This is a major challenge for the integration of the contextual hermeneutic approach. The same thing applies in the cultural context, when Islamic boarding schools as social institutions have resistance to discourses originating from outside the classical treasury or influenced by modern Western thought.

Methodologically, the literal reading and fiqh-oriented approach that is dominant in Islamic boarding schools is also not yet familiar with the methods of ideological analysis, sociological criticism, or historical reflection offered by Hanafi. As stated (Rosihon et al., 2019) Understanding the socio-historical context of the text is essential to avoid anachronistic misinterpretations and to enable more ethical and relevant interpretations. Herein lies the transformative potential that must be strengthened in introducing a contextual hermeneutic approach as an effort for methodological refreshment, not an ideological threat. Limited discussions that have begun to bring together heritage and contemporary critical thinking are early indications of a productive dialogue space. In this way, Islamic boarding schools can maintain their scientific integrity while opening themselves to a plurality of reflective and contextual interpretations as described by the hermeneutic approach in the study of religious texts.

Based on the description above, the integration of hermeneutics of liberation in the pesantren tradition must be based on a critical and dialogical interpretive approach that combines respect for tradition (ta'dzim) with sensitivity to the context of the times (mu'asharah). This is in line with the principle of hermeneutics as a bridge between text and reality, between turats and contemporary social

demands, to realize a reading of religious texts that is liberating, relevant, and remains rooted in Islamic values.

### Obstacles to the Implementation of Hermeneutics of Liberation from Hasan Hanafi's Perspective

Hasan Hanafi's hermeneutics of liberation, which focuses on siding with the oppressed (al-mustadh'afin) and the contextual reinterpretation of religious texts, has significant implications when studied in the context of the pesantren tradition, especially in the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School, which tends to be traditional. According to Amin Abdullah, who emphasizes the importance of Islamic education that is responsive to the social and cultural context, and how education can function as a tool to empower society (Dwikirani & Ridwan, 2024). The phenomenological approach reveals how the experiences, meanings, and collective awareness of Kiyai, Ustadz, and Santri towards religious texts can change when faced with down-to-earth and transformative interpretations of the texts.

Table 3: Obstacles to the Implementation of Hasan Hanafi's Hermeneutics of Liberation

Aspect			Information
Dominance of Textual Interpretation			The Pesantren tradition places great emphasis on literal understanding of texts and is oriented towards sanad (authoritative transmission), which leaves little room for contextual-critical interpretation.
Obedience to Kyai			The highly vertical authority structure makes space for critical discussion limited, making it difficult for new ideas to be accepted without the blessing of the highest authority.
Suspicion of Westernization			Hasan Hanafi's thoughts, which are heavily influenced by Western philosophy and contemporary approaches, are often suspected of being a form of disguised liberalism or secularism

Based on the description above, although Hasan Hanafi's hermeneutics of liberation offers a progressive and relevant approach to social reality, its application in the context of traditional Islamic boarding schools such as Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School is not easy. Obstacles such as the dominance of textual interpretation, hierarchical authority structures, and suspicion of elements of modern thought indicate epistemological and cultural resistance. Therefore, efforts to integrate Hanafi's thoughts require a dialogical, gradual approach, and still respect the roots of the Islamic boarding school tradition so as not to cause total rejection, but instead open up space for renewal based on contextual and transformative Islamic values.

### CONCLUSION

The Liberation Hermeneutics Approach at Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School faces several limitations, especially the strong dominance of the traditional approach based on the Syafi'i School, which causes the understanding of religious texts to tend to be textual and normative. The curriculum that has not fully accommodated this method and the limitations of academic resources and supporting literature are obstacles to the comprehensive application of liberation hermeneutics. In addition, internal resistance to methodological changes slows down the adaptation of this approach. Therefore, further research is needed to dig deeper into the internal dynamics of Islamic boarding schools and external factors that influence the acceptance of liberation hermeneutics, as well as to develop effective strategies for integrating this approach into Islamic boarding school education. As a step forward, it is recommended to conduct comparative research between Lirboyo Islamic

Boarding School and other Islamic boarding schools that have different scientific traditions or with Islamic schools in urban areas that are more open to contemporary hermeneutic approaches. This study will provide broader insights into the variations in the application of liberation hermeneutics and the challenges faced in different social and cultural contexts. In addition, policy recommendations include the systematic integration of liberation hermeneutics into the curriculum, increasing academic capacity through training and workshops, developing relevant literature resources, and encouraging constructive dialogue between traditional approaches and liberation hermeneutics. With these steps, it is hoped that religious understanding in Islamic boarding schools can be more critical, contextual, and responsive to the challenges of the times.

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