

Intertextuality in Qur'anic Studies: *Ulum al-Qur'an* Perspective on Utilization of the Bible in Qur'anic Interpretation

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DOI: 10.29240/alquds.v8.2.8603

Submitted: 2023-10-24 | Revised: 2024-06-09 | Accepted: 24-08-03

Abstract. In contemporary Qur'anic studies, a polemic has emerged regarding the use of the Bible as a reference to interpret the Qur'an, or what is categorized as intertextuality. This article aims to reveal the interpretive distortions that arise from the use of the Bible in interpreting the Qur'an by using the perspective of *'ulum al-Qur'an*. The methodology of this research is qualitative by using the literature method and using the content analysis approach to analyze the data. Through this methodology, it is found that some orientalists such as Michel Cuypers and Edip Yuksel often use the Bible in interpreting the Qur'an (intertextuality). In the perspective of *'ulum al-Qur'an*, this method of interpretation can be categorized as the use of *isrā'iliyyāt* in the interpretation of the Qur'an. However, it turns out that what the orientalists did was not in line with the rules of using *isrā'iliyyāt* itself. Therefore, the intertextuality done by the orientalists can be classified as *al-dakbil fi al-tafsir* (intrusion in interpretation). Ultimately, this method of interpretation is unacceptable, because it implies distortion of Qur'anic interpretation.

Keywords: Bible; Qur'anic Interpretation; Ulūm al-Qur'ān; Intertextuality.

Introduction

In contemporary Qur'anic studies, some scholars use the Bible as a reference in Qur'anic studies. Mustansir Mir recognizes that the Qur'an and Bible have a lot of equal, aligned, and interrelated information, so it is necessary to use the Bible in interpreting the Qur'an.¹ Meanwhile, Edip Yuksel, Layth Saleh al-Shaiban, and Martha Schulte-Nafeh use Bible to explain the Qur'an's contents.² In addition, Abdullah Yusuf Ali elaborated between the text of the Qur'an and the Bible in his interpretation of the Qur'an since the Bible is an authoritative reference.³ Their various works confirm that Bible is worthy of use in interpreting the Qur'an.

Although considered an excellent reference, the use of the Bible in interpreting the Qur'an rise to a distortion of interpretation. For example, the interpretation of Michel Cuypers, a Belgian orientalist, when explaining QS. Al-Fātihah [1]: 6-7 by referencing the Bible of the book of Psalm 1:5-6. He interprets *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (the right path) in QS. Al-Fatihah: 7 is a path not only reserved for Muslims but also a path for non-Muslims. Therefore, Jews and Christians also received help. Whereas the word *al-maghdūb* (those who incur anger) and *al-dāllin* (those who go astray) are interpreted as Jewish and Christian by some scholars, Cuypers understands it differently and considers the concept to be also shared by adherents of other religions, including adherents of the

¹ Mustansir Mir, *Understanding the Islamic Scripture: A Study of Selected Passages from the Qur'an* (London: Routledge, 2016), 9; Azam Azam, "The Irony Approach in the Qur'an: Mustansir Mir's Perspective," *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (June 15, 2020): 21, doi:10.29240/ajis.v5i1.1318.

² E. Yuksel, L. S. Al-Shaiban, and M. S Nafeh, *Quran: A Reformist Translation* (Tucson: Barinbow Press, 2007), 12–13.

³ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation & Commentary* (Lahore: Ripon Printing Press, 1938), vol. 3, ix–x.

Islamic religion.⁴ In addition to causing distortions of interpretation, these interpretations spread liberal thinking and religious pluralism.

On the other hand, the authenticity of the Bible text is currently still questioned by Muslim and Western scholars. From Muslim scholars, Adnin Armas states that the Bible text is a human essay, or the essay of some people, which is undoubtedly very different from the Qur'an as the word of Allah.⁵ Shamsuddin Arif also asserted that at the beginning of its appearance, the Bible was considered sacred and then doubted its authenticity due to a large amount of human intervention compared to what God revealed to Prophet Moses and Prophet Isa.⁶ On the other hand, Western scholars like Richard Elliot Friedman, in his book *Who Wrote the Bible?*, argue that who wrote Bible is still considered a mystery.⁷ The various criticisms of the Bible's authenticity diminish the authority of the Bible as a source of interpretation of the Qur'an.

However, unfortunately, this interpretation of the Qur'an using the Bible, also called intertextuality, has become one of the trends among Western scholars and Muslims. For example, Michel Cuypers in his work *The Banquet: A Reading of the Fifth Sura of the Qur'an*,⁸ Angelika Neuwirth in her book *The Qur'an in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'anic Milieu*,⁹ and the Corpus Coranicum project she founded with Nicolai Sinai and Michael Marx.¹⁰

Not only in the West, but the interest in studying the Qur'an using the Bible (intertextuality) is also in demand among Indonesian academics. Many scientific articles or theses in Indonesian universities take this theme. Among them are Siti Asiah's thesis entitled "Bibel Sebagai Sumber Tafsir dalam Quran: A Reformist Translation (Studi Intertekstualitas terhadap QS. Al-Baqarah)";¹¹ Ahmadi Fathurrohman Dardiri's thesis entitled "Bibel Sebagai Sumber Tafsir Al-Qur'an (Studi Pemikiran Mustansir Mir dalam Understanding the Islamic Scripture: A Study of Selected Passages from the Qur'an)";¹² Nur Anis Rochmawati's thesis entitled "Bible as a Source of Tafsir (Intertextuality Studies in The Holy Quran: Text, Translation & Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali)";¹³ and also his journal entitled "Cross-Reference to Bible in The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation, and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali".¹⁴ Thus, this article is a critical study aimed at responding to various problems arising from the use of the Bible in interpreting the Qur'an using a perspective of *'Ulum al-Qur'an* (qur'anic sciences).

The methodology of this study was qualitative and utilized library method to obtain accurate data. In this study, the researchers collected data about the use of the Bible in interpreting some qur'anic verses. After that, this study analyzed data using a content analysis approach in four stages: 1) Unit processing, 2) Categorization, 3) Data interpretation, and 4) Theory formulation. Thus, after the meaning results appeared and were completed with new data, the desired theory was reformulated in a broader sense, and its categories were narrowed. This study referred to the

⁴ M. Cuypers, *The Composition of The Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 172–73; Anis Tilawat, "Struktur Cincin Dalam Al-Qur'an (Perspektif Orientalis - Nicolai Sinai)," *Nun* 4, no. 2 (2018): 53.

⁵ Adnin Armas, *Metodologi Bibel Dalam Studi Al-Qur'an: Kajian Kritis* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2005), 46–47.

⁶ Syamsuddin Arif, *Orientalisme & Diabolisme Pemikiran* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2008), 181.

⁷ R. E. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Perennial Library, 1989), 15.

⁸ M. Cuypers, *The Banquet: A Reading of the Fifth Sura of the Qur'an* (Florida: Convivium Press, 2009).

⁹ A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai, and M. Max, *The Qur'an in Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

¹⁰ A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai, and M. Max, "Intertexts by Verse," *Corpuscoranicum.De*, 2007.

¹¹ Siti Asiah, "Bibel Sebagai Sumber Tafsir Dalam Quran: A Reformist Translation (Studi Intertekstualitas Terhadap QS. Al-Baqarah)" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2017).

¹² Ahmadi Fathurrohman Dardiri, "Bibel Sebagai Sumber Tafsir Al-Qur'an (Studi Pemikiran Mustansir Mir Dalam Understanding the Islamic Scripture: A Study of Selected Passages from the Qur'an)" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2015).

¹³ Nur Anis Rochmawati, "Bibel Sebagai Sumber Tafsir (Studi Inter-Tekstualitas Dalam The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation And Commentary Karya Abdullah Yusuf Ali)" (UIN Sunan Ampel, 2020).

¹⁴ Nur Anis Rochmawati, "Cross Reference Terhadap Bibel Dalam The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation, and Commmentary Karya Abdullah Yusuf Ali," *UIN Sunan Kalijaga* 7, no. 2 (2021).

books, journals, proceedings, papers, dissertations, theses, and related studies on this topic for secondary sources.¹⁵

Discussion

From Intertextuality Studies to Qur'anic Studies

The use of the Bible in interpreting the Qur'an cannot be separated from the study of intertextuality. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* intertextuality is the relationship between texts, especially literary ones.¹⁶ In terminology, there are various definitions of intertextuality put forward by some Western scholars. Julia Kristeva believes that intertextuality is the relationship between a particular text and other texts that cannot be separated from elements of culture and society.¹⁷ Meanwhile, Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Max assume that intertextuality is a method of finding similarities between Qur'anic texts and other texts analyzed using literary and historical approaches.¹⁸ On the other hand, Theresa Rogers states that intertextuality is a relationship between two or more literary texts that influence each other since it has a connection with a series of other texts in one whole.¹⁹

Intertextuality was a literary theory derived from France's school of linguistic structuralism.²⁰ It can be said that Julia Kristeva was the one who developed the concept of intertextuality.²¹ It was followed by Western scholars who used intertextuality in their literary studies. For example, Graham Allen in his work *Intertextuality, The New Critical Idiom*,²² Norman Fairclough in his journal article *Intertextuality in Critical Discourse Analysis*,²³ Lowell Edmunds in his book *Intertextuality and The Reading of Roman Poetry*,²⁴ as well as William L. Andrews, A.N. Doane and Betsy Draine in their book *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*.²⁵

Angelika Neuwirth has used this concept of intertextuality in Qur'anic studies since the 1990s as a development of the concept which initially applied to literary studies.²⁶ However, studying the Qur'an by looking at other texts (intertextuality) appeared in the West in the 18th century AD. Abraham Geiger examined the Qur'an by looking at the texts of Jewish religious teachings and finding the many contents of the Qur'an, which are imitations of the Torah and the

¹⁵ D. Rusmana, *Metode Penelitian Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2015), 90–92.

¹⁶ A. S. Hornby, M. Ashby, and S. Wehmeier, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 814, <http://archive.org/details/oxfordadvancedle00asho>.

¹⁷ J. Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 36–37.

¹⁸ Neuwirth, Sinai, and Max, *The Qur'an in Context*, 15; Zulhamdani, "Homiletika Al-Qur'an: Refleksi Atas Pemikiran Gabriel Said Reynolds," *Khazanah Multidisiplin* 4, no. 1 (2023): 64.

¹⁹ T. Rogers, "Intertextuality," in *Literacy in America: An Encyclopedia of History, Theory and Practice*, ed. J. G. Guzzetti (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Incompany, 2002), 258.

²⁰ Z. A. Rahman, "Angelika Neuwirth: Kajian Intertekstualitas Dalam QS. Al-Rahman Dan Mazmur 136," *Empirisma: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 24, no. 1 (2015): 114–15, doi:<https://doi.org/10.30762/empirisma.v24i1.12>.

²¹ Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, 15; V. I. Septiyani and S. A. Sayuti, "Oposisi Dalam Novel 'Rahuvana Tattwa' Karya Agus Sunyoto: Analisis Intertekstual Julia Kristeva (Opposition in Agus Sunyoto's 'Rahuvana Tattwa' Novel: Julia Kristeva's Intertextual Analysis)," *Lensa: Kajian Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan, Dan Budaya* 9, no. 2 (2020): 177–78, doi:<https://doi.org/10.26714/lensa.9.2.2019.174-186>.

²² Graham Allen, *Intertextuality: The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

²³ N. Fairclough, "Intertextuality in Critical Discourse Analysis," *Linguistics and Education*, 4, no. 3–4 (1992).

²⁴ Lowell Edmunds, *Intertextuality and The Reading of Roman Poetry* (Maryland: JHU Press, 2001).

²⁵ W. L. Andrews, A. N. Doane, and B. Draine, *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, ed. J. Clayton and E. Rothstein (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

²⁶ L. I. N. Fina, "Membaca Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'an Kontemporer Di Kalangan Sarjana Barat Analisis Pemikiran Angelika Neuwirth," *Ulumuna Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 18, no. 2 (2014): 273–78.

Gospels.²⁷ Meanwhile, in the 19th century AD, Western scholars principled the old paradigm of studying the Bible-Qur'an relationship by believing that the essence of the Qur'an originated from the influence of the Judeo-Christian tradition.²⁸

Unlike other Western scholars, Angelika Neuwirth stated that the Qur'an has a unique literacy and is different from other scriptures by studying its intertextuality. His studies have contributed to critiquing the old paradigm of the former generation of Western orientalist who refuted the skewed perception of the Qur'an as an imitation product of Jewish and Christian scriptures. In this regard, Neuwirth criticizes the orientalist attitude that denies the existence of the Qur'an and believes that the Qur'an is sacred from God as other scriptures have an essential position for his people.²⁹

In the early 21st century, Michel Cuypers continued Neuwirth's studies by applying intertextuality to study the Quranic text's structure and researching the implications. Cuypers' version of intertextuality studies is part of the Semitic Rhetoric Analysis (SRA) method, initially applied in Bible texts and then in Qur'anic studies.³⁰ Therefore, Cuypers uses a lot of Bible verses to strengthen his arguments and assumptions in dividing texts through this SRA method. In addition, he also uses Bible verses to direct the reader to a specific interpretation.³¹

Criticism of the Use of the Bible as a Source of Qur'anic Interpretation

This sub-chapter will discuss the use of the Bible as a source of interpretation of some verses in the Qur'an as western scholars do.

a. Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 6-7

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ مَغْضُوبٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

“Guide us to the straight path: the path of those whom You have blessed, those who incur no anger and who have not gone astray.” (Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 6-7)

Regarding the interpretation of the above verse, Michel Cuypers, in *The Composition of The Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis*, argued that on QS. Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 6-7 has a similar discussion with the Bible of Psalm 1:5-6: Therefore in judgment the wicked shall not stand, nor shall sinners in the assembly of the just, for YHWH watches over the way of the just, but the way of the wicked goes astray.³²

According to Cuypers, QS. Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 6-7 is often understood by Muslim scholars as a form of asserting that the people harmed are Jews, while the stragglers are the Nazarenes. The existence of *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (the straight path) is not only reserved for Muslims but for non-Muslims such as Jews and Christians also have the opportunity to get the straight path. Furthermore, vice versa, the word *al-maghḍūb* and *al-ḍāllīn* as interpreted by Muslim scholars as Jewish and Christian, Cuypers understood it differently, and he considered the concept also shared by adherents of the Islamic religion (Cuypers, 2015, p. 172–173).

In this case, the existence of Michel Cuypers' interpretation above arises because he previously assumed that the Qur'an was a revelation from God as the Bible. It is undeniable, then, that there have been many similar themes or similar discussions between the two. For example, as

²⁷ A. Geiger, *Was Hat Mohammed Aus Dem Judenthume Aufgenommen?* (Bonn: Baaden, 1833), 40–41; L. Iffah NaFatu Fina, “Survei Awal Studi Perbandingan Al-Qur'an Dan Bibel Dalam Kesarjanaan Barat Sebuah Perjalanan Menuju Intertekstualitas,” *SUHUF* 8, no. 1 (1970): 126, doi:<https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v8i1.17>.

²⁸ G. Bowering, “Recent Research on the Construction of the Qur'an,” in *The Qur'an in Its Historical Context*, ed. G. S. Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2008), 74–78.

²⁹ Angelika Neuwirth, “Orientalism in Oriental Studies? Qur'anic Studies as a Case in Point,” *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 9, no. 2 (2007): 115–16.

³⁰ A. R. Asnawi, “Penerapan Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA) Pada Surah Al-Qiyamah,” *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith* 8, no. 1 (2018): 147–48, <http://jurnal.fuf.uinsby.ac.id/index.php/mutawatir/article/view/1407>.

³¹ Cuypers, *The Composition of The Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis*, 155–56.

³² *Ibid.*, 172–73.

found in QS. Al-Fāṭihah [1]: 6-7 and the book of Psalm 1:5-6 which both have the same discussion in explaining the straight path and the stray path. This interpretation does not mean the Qur'an imitates the Bible but that the Qur'an is a development of the content of the Bible.³³

Cuypers' interpretation leads to a distortion of interpretation that results in liberal thinking and the doctrine of religious pluralism. He believes that the salvation of the religion is not only owned by Muslims but can also be obtained by followers of other religions whom they also obey in religion. On the other hand, for those who are harmed and misguided for disobeying worship, the claim is not only reserved for Jews and Christians, as previously understood by Muslim scholars, but Muslims also have the potential to obtain it.³⁴

Cuypers' opinion regarding all religions owning salvation is contrary to the fact that Muhammad, as the prophet of Islam, preached to several kings, such as Heraclius, Kisra Abrawaiz, Muqouqis, and Najasyi, to embrace Islam. If salvation is for all religions, why did the Prophet Muhammad preach?³⁵ According to Islamic teaching, this fact indicates that Islam is the only religion calling for the path of truth. However, Prophet Muhammad never forced the infidels to convert to Islam. On the contrary, the Prophet Muhammad did not want them to convert to Islam on the condition that he must worship what the infidels worship, even if only for a moment.

Arguably, Michel Cuypers' interpretation above led to the doctrine of religious pluralism,³⁶ eventually impacting Muslims' beliefs. Although religious pluralism teaches religious tolerance, Islam only recognizes the existence of religious plurality without recognizing pluralism, which views all religions as equal. That is because Islam is a Tawhid religion that recognizes God as God, while Jews recognize Jehovah as God for their class. In addition, Christianity believes in one God in the trinity; God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Meanwhile, non-Semitic religions such as Hinduism, Majusi, and Taoism have faith in many Gods or groups called polytheistic. Thus, the emergence of these various religions does not make Islam tolerate theologically that other religions are the same as Islam.³⁷

In addition to pluralism teaching religious tolerance, this discourse of religious pluralism will lead to the concept of relativism of the meaning of truth. It is viewed that all religions share truth, and absolute truth is not monopolized by a particular religion.³⁸ Proponents of religious pluralism often seek justification for their opinions. They declare that all religions have a heaven of God consisting of many doors and rooms. The condition for entering heaven is sincerity and fear, regardless of what religion it is. Therefore, this is the universal way of heaven for all religions dialogue cooperation between religious believers can be possible.³⁹

In essence, religious pluralism is problematic, and finally, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), in the VII National Deliberation in 2005, issued a fatwa to prohibit this understanding from developing in Indonesia. This fatwa emerged because the doctrine of religious pluralism violated the Islamic teaching from the Qur'an and the hadith by believing that all religions are the same and that each religion should not claim its religion alone is valid while the other religion is wrong. Thus, they assumed all religious believers would enter and coexist in heaven.⁴⁰

³³ Cuypers, *The Banquet: A Reading of the Fifth Sura of the Qur'an*, 30–31.

³⁴ Cuypers, *The Composition of The Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis*, 172–74.

³⁵ B. R. Santoso, U. Baroroh, and A. D. Abdullah, "Surat Sebagai Media Dakwah: Studi Atas Praktek Dakwah Rasulullah Saw Terhadap Raja Heraclius, Kisra Abrawaiz, Muqouqis, Dan Najasyi," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 35, no. 1 (2015): 118.

³⁶ Anis Malik Thoah, *Tren Pluralisme Agama: Edisi Kritis* (Jakarta: INSIST, 2021), 11.

³⁷ A. N. Nuriz et al., *Problem Pluralisme Agama Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Kehidupan Sosial Keagamaan* (Ponorogo: Centre for Islamic and Occidental Studies UNIDA Gontor, 2015), 11.

³⁸ J. N. Farquhar, *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), 331.

³⁹ H. F. Zarkasyi et al., *Pluralisme Agama: Telaah Kritis Cendekiawan Muslim* (Jakarta: INSISTS, 2013), xii–xiv.

⁴⁰ Departemen Agama RI, *Himpunan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Jakarta: Departemen Agama RI, 2003), 96–97.

Cuypers' interpretation above also contradicts many Muslim scholars' interpretation regarding the verse. For example, Al-Ṭabarī, in his interpretation, states that the meaning of *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* is essentially the path of enjoyment bestowed upon those who devout worship and those who have faith in the religion of Allah, i.e., the religion of Islam.⁴¹ says the majority of scholars hold the view that the existence of *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* is the path given to the Prophets, *shubadā'* and *ṣālibīn*.⁴² Agreeing with Qurṭubī, Wahbah az-Zuhaylī understands that Allah gave *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* to the class of Prophets, the *ṣiddīqīn*, *shubadā'* and those who do pious charity in carrying out their worship to Allah.⁴³

It can be said that Cuypers' thought, which impacts the understanding of religious pluralism above, is problematic because it deviates from the thinking of the Islamic worldview. In addition, in its interpretation, there is also no hadith quotation, *asbāb an-nuzūl*, nor the interpretation of interpreters. Thus, Cuypers' interpretation has taken away from the various essential elements in interpreting the Qur'an that scholars have agreed.

b. QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 228

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَيُعَوِّذُهُنَّ بِأَحَقِّ بَرٍّ هِيَ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا ۗ وَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ
حَكِيمٌ

“Divorced women must wait for three monthly periods before remarrying, and, if they believe in God and the Last Day, it is not lawful for them to conceal what God has created in their wombs: their husbands would do better to take them back during this period, provided they wish to put things right. Wives have [rights] similar to their [obligations], according to what is recognized to be fair, and husbands have a degree [of right] over them: [both should remember that] God is almighty and wise.” (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 228)

Edip Yuksel, Layth Saleh al-Shaiban, and Martha Schulte-Nafeh, in their book *Quran: A Reformist Translation*, interpreted this verse as the elimination of male superiority, which is often considered to have absolute authority in carrying out divorce.⁴⁴ They argue that men and women have the same right and authority to divorce. In other words, they seek to uphold the principles of gender justice and equality in the family through their interpretation.⁴⁵

In other words, they understand that the wife can impose *'talaq'* rights on the husband. Meanwhile, they criticized scholars who adhered more to the Prophet's hadith than the Qur'an in determining the law of *'talaq'*. This interpretation is because they understand that Bible also recognizes women as having the right to divorce as described in the book of Proverbs 2:17; Mark 10:12; Leviticus 21:14; Numbers 30:9, and Deuteronomy 24:1. The quotation of the Bible text influenced the interpretation of Edip Yuksel, et al. in bringing down the *'talaq'* law.⁴⁶

They believe the Bible can be used as a quote to add information to the Qur'an and described in the Bible. In addition, their basic assumption departs from an understanding that the teachings of the Qur'an cover the whole of humanity regardless of gender, ethnicity, or even a particular group. Therefore, the interpretation of the Qur'an should emphasize humanity's purpose and the contemporary context that advocates for the equality of women and men in social life.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wil Ay Al-Qur'an*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1994), vol. 1, 76–77.

⁴² Ibn Abū Bakr Al-Qurṭhubī, *Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Mu'assasah ar-Risalah, 2006), 230.

⁴³ Wahbah Al-Zuhailī, *At-Tafsīr Al-Munīr Fi Al-'Aqīdah Wa Al-Shari'ah Wa Al-Manhaj* (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 2003), vol. 15, 60.

⁴⁴ A. Matswah, “Menimbang Penafsiran Subjektif Terhadap Al-Qur'an: Telaah Terhadap Penafsiran Edip Yuksel Dkk Dalam Quran: A Reformist Translation,” *Jurnal Dialogia* 12, no. 1 (2014): 17.

⁴⁵ Yuksel, Al-Shaiban, and Nafeh, *Quran: A Reformist Translation*, 53.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 71–72.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 10–11.

Thus, they understand the presence of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 228 above can be a discourse on gender equality in family relations.⁴⁸

According to the authors, there is their interpretation of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 228 above has some record of criticism. They incorrectly used the Bible verse as a source of interpretation of the Qur'an because the quote they cited does not explain the authority of women in imposing 'talaq' on men. They quote Mark 10:12: "And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery".⁴⁹ This verse condemns a wife who divorces her husband, not asserts a wife who may impose a 'talaq' on a man.

In addition, they understand QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 228 as a form of gender equality principle to uphold human rights. This understanding uses the aspect of rationality in expressing verses of the Qur'an subjectively. Such interpretations deviate far from context and include arbitrary interpretations. It contains dystrophic interpretations attached to sharia deconstruction.⁵⁰

Sharia deconstruction is being pursued by some Muslim scholars on the assumption that the Islamic sharia that has been established since Islam emerged can no longer accommodate the needs of Muslims to compete in the modern era. This assumption has been adopted by several contemporary Islamic thinkers who focus on law.⁵¹ For example, Muhammad Syahrur, a Syrian liberal figure, believed that the *budūd* theory could be used to understand legal verses appropriate to the socio-historical context of contemporary society. Through *the budūd* theory, Shahrur sought to keep the teachings of the Qur'an contextual in this day.⁵² In line with this, Muhammad Arkoun reveals that both the Mushaf (Qur'an) and the Bible are the embodiment of God's word in human language, either through oral transmission by human voices or in written form. He also claims that the only correct way to interpret this revelation is by relating it to its historical context.⁵³

The above interpretations of Yuksel, Al-Shaiban, and Nafeh deconstruct the law that was initially *thawābit* later changed to *mutaghayyirāt*. They understand that the authority to establish such 'talaq' is owned by men and can also be carried out by women. However, the argument contradicts the opinions of scholars who are experts in *uṣūl al-fiqh* and Islamic law. Wahbah az-Zuhaylī, in his book *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuhu*, explains that the right of authority in imposing 'talaq' is given to the man because of the great responsibility in providing for his wife and protecting his family. Therefore, a man must be very careful in making decisions and considering the good and bad of such decisions in domestic affairs.⁵⁴

In other words, the law in the 'talaq' decision, as described above, is clear. This legal determination does not exist because it aims to keep the sacred marriage rope from being easily separated by divorce. On the other hand, women are sometimes more affected by their emotional feelings compared to men. If he has the right to marry his spouse, he may drop the 'talaq' with a simple cause that can quickly destroy his marriage.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Ibid., 53.

⁴⁹ Dan Cogliano, *The King James Version of the Holy Bible* (Brand: www.holybooks.com, 2004), 585, <https://www.holybooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/The-Holy-Bible-King-James-Version.pdf>.

⁵⁰ A. Matswah, "Reinterpretasi Ayat-Ayat Tentang Relasi Gender Dalam Keluarga: Analisis Terhadap Penafsiran Edip Yuksel, Dkk," *Jurnal Subuf* 7, no. 2 (2014): 323–25.

⁵¹ A. Taufiq, "Pemikiran Abdullah Ahmed An-Naim Tentang Dekonstruksi Syari'ah Sebagai Sebuah Solusi," *International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din* 20, no. 2 (2018): 149.

⁵² M. Shahrūr, *Al-Kitāb Wa Al-Qur'ān: Qirā'ah Muā'şirah* (Damaskus: Al-Ahālī li al-Ṭabā'ah wa al-Nashr, n.d.), 445–46.

⁵³ M Kholid Muslih, Muhamad Shofwan Muttaqin, and Amir Sahidin, "Konsep Historis Al- Qur ' an Dalam Pandangan John Wansbrough: Sebuah Tinjauan Worldview Islam," *Al-Quds: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 7, no. 2 (2023): 341, doi:10.29240/alquds.v7i1.5561.

⁵⁴ Wahbah Az-Zuhailī, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī Wa Adillatuhu* (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 1984), vol. 7, 360–361.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 360–61.

Yuksel, Al-Shaiban, and Nafeh's interpretations that impact the above understanding of sharia deconstruction are problematic because they deviate from the thinking of the Islamic worldview. In addition, they are also wrong in using the Bible verse as a source of interpretation of the Qur'an because the quotation of the Bible verse does not explain the authority of women in imposing *'talaq'* on men. Thus, this needs to be further critiqued, given that their interpretation of other verses could have serious repercussions that could undermine the faith of Muslims.

c. QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1-5

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

"Read by (mentioning) the name of your God who created! He created man from a lump of blood. Read! Your God is the Most Exalted, who teaches (man) with a pen. He taught man what he did not know.. ."

(QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1-5)

Michel Cuypers, in his book *A Qur'anic Apocalypse: A Reading of the Thirty –Three Last Sūrah of the Qur'an*, states the word *iqra'* in this first verse does not indicate a command to read, nor is the first revelation passed down to the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a sign of prophetic mission as interpreted by the Muslim scholars. However, he interpreted the word as a call to prayer.⁵⁶ This interpretation came from the structure of Surat Al-'Alaq with a concentric symmetrical structure based on Cuypers' analysis of the letter using Semitic Rhetoric Analysis.⁵⁷

According to Michel Cuypers, the interpretation is supported by the linkage of QS. Al-'Alaq: 1-5 with the book of Psalms 95:1-7 in the Bible.⁵⁸ Cuypers argues that *iqra' bi-sm* is a Hebrew translation; *qārā beshēm* means 'call' or 'mention the name of God'. Again, he wanted to gather arguments saying that *iqra'* is not read, but *iqra'* means pray. Therefore, the verse essentially does not say: 'Read by the name of your Lord', but 'Name your Lord', which signifies an invitation to pray and in no way indicates to someone sent for a prophetic mission.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, Michel Cuypers' argument above essentially departs from his basic assumption that the Qur'an descends during a Bible environment of powerful influence. This condition causes the Qur'an to have similarities with the Bible, so the interpretation of the word *iqra'* is a call to perform prayers. According to Cuypers, the similarity of the content and structure of the QS. Al-'Alaq with this Psalm, indicates that Jewish and Christian influences were present when the Qur'an appeared.⁶⁰

In addition, Michel Cuypers declared QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1-5 has a meaning related to the book of Psalm 95:1-7. He understands that there are similarities in the content of the verses contained in Sura Al-'Alaq and the Psalms as shown in the following table:

QS. Al-'Alaq: 1-5	Psalm 95:1-7
اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (1) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (2) اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ (3) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (4) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ (5)	1) Let us cheer for the Lord, cheer for the rock of our salvation. (2) Let us face His face with thanksgiving, cheering for him with psalm singing. (3) For the LORD is a great God, and a great King overcomes all gods. 4) The deepest parts of the earth are in His hands, the tops of the mountains belong to Him. (5) His own the sea, He is the one who made it, and the land, it is His hand that forms it. 6) Come in, let us bow down to worship, kneeling before the LORD who

⁵⁶ M. Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse: A Reading of the Thirty –Three Last Sūrah of the Qur'an* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2018), 186.

⁵⁷ Cuypers, *The Composition of The Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis*, 7–8; .Abdullah Muhammadiyah et al., "Struktur Surat Al-Hijr Perspektif Semitic Rhetorical Analysis (SRA)," *Jurnal Reflektika* 17, no. 2 (2022): 298.

⁵⁸ Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse: A Reading of the Thirty –Three Last Sūrah of the Qur'an*, 196.

⁵⁹ Cuypers, *The Composition of The Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis*, 163.

⁶⁰ Cuypers, *A Qur'anic Apocalypse: A Reading of the Thirty –Three Last Sūrah of the Qur'an*, 197.

	made us. (7) For He is our God, and we are His people and the flock leads His hands.
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Table 1: Differences between QS. Al-'Alaq and Psalm 95:1-7⁶¹

From the explanation of the table above, Michel Cuypers understands that QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1-5 bears a resemblance to the book of Psalm 95:1-7 on the following sides:

- *Iqra' bi-sm rabbika* sentence on QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1 means the same as Psalm 95:1, which is the verse: **let us cheer for the LORD**. This sentence is meant as a call to praise (worship).
- *Khalaqa* said on QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1 means the same as Psalm 95:5, i.e., the verse: **His possession of the sea, He is the one who made it, and the land, it is His hand that forms it**. This sentence explains God as the Creator of all things.
- Sentence *khalaqa al-insāna* on QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 2 means the same as Psalm 95:6, that is, the verse: **that makes us**. This sentence explains God as the Creator of man.
- And fourth, the sentence *wa rabbuka al-akram* on QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 3 means the same as Psalm 95:7, i.e., verse: **for He is our God**. This sentence explains the similarities in explaining God.⁶²

Thus, Michel Cuypers understands that QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1-5 does not indicate a call to read but leads to a call to worship. Cuypers reinforced the argument that the intent of the call to worship was prayer as in the following book of Psalm 95:6: *“Come in, let us bow down to worship, kneeling before the LORD who made us.”*⁶³

Michel Cuypers' interpretation above has several notes of criticism. Cuypers' analysis of similarities between QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1-5 with Psalm 95:1-7 is incorrect because Cuypers only plays a role in quoting biblical verses as reinforcement of his argument. The essence of the Psalm quotation is with QS. Al-'Alaq is not the same and has many differences between the two. The psalm verse quote *“let us cheer for God”* obviously cannot be confused with the rabbinical *iqra' bi-sm* verse on QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1. This is because the descent of Surat Al-'Alaq is accompanied by *ashab an-nuzūl* and the hadith of the Prophet to which he is explained. Meanwhile, the Psalm itself does not have these two things as a background for the descent of the verse. It can be said that the letter al-'Alaq and Psalm do not have any connection or similarity in the content and structure of the verse.

In addition, Michel Cuypers was also inconsistent in using the Semitic Rhetoric Analysis (SRA) method to indicate the similarity between Sura Al-'Alaq and Psalms if Cuypers applies his analysis in QS. Al-'Alaq [96]: 1-19 to show the similarity of the word *iqra'* and the word *iqtarib* in the first verse, which is symmetrical to the last verse,⁶⁴ so why didn't Cuypers also apply the SRA analysis to Psalm 95:1-11 in order to prove the call to worship or prayer? This interpretation is not Cuypers applied to the Psalms. However, in the beginning, he stated that between Sura Al-'Alaq and the Psalms, the two have a connection of meaning and similarity in the content of the structure of the verse.

Moreover, Cuypers, in his interpretation, has pointed out his error by understanding the meaning of *iqra'* as a call to prayer, which is essentially understood as a call to read as the interpretation of the Muslim scholars. Among other things, Al-Ṭabari, in his book, explains that the presence of this letter hints at being a revelation first passed down to the Prophet Muhammad

⁶¹ Ibid., 196.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ A. R. Asnawi and I. Idri, “Examining Semitic Rhetoric: A Qur'anic Sciences Perspective,” *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 28, no. 2 (2020): 133–34, doi:<https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v28i2.9898>.

SAW.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Wahbah az-Zuhaylī stated that the command to read is also a call to learn and write because both are the principles of the advancement of science, culture, and the progress of civilization. The descent of QS. Al-'Alaq, as the first revelation, is inscribed to reading the Qur'an and a command to read many things and study science.⁶⁶

Michel Cuypers' interpretation has distorted the opinion of scholars because he disclaims *asbāb an-nuzūl* and the hadith of the Prophet as used by earlier Muslim scholars. Meanwhile, in the hadith of the Prophet, it has been explained about the indications that QS. 'Alaq is the first verse that came down when Prophet Muhammad SAW preached in the cave of Hira' as follows:

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ: أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِئَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ فِي النَّوْمِ، فَكَانَ لَا يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلَّا جَاءَتْهُ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ، ثُمَّ حُبِبَ إِلَيْهِ الْخَلَاءُ، وَكَانَ يَحْلُو بِعَارِ حِرَاءٍ فَيَتَحَنَّنُ فِيهِ - وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ - اللَّيَالِي دَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزِعَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ، وَيَنْزَوُدُ لِدَلِّكَ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى حَدِيحَةٍ فَيَنْزَوُدُ لِمِثْلِهَا، حَتَّى جَاءَهُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءٍ، فَجَاءَهُ الْمَلَكُ فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ، قَالَ: «مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ»، قَالَ: " فَأَخَذَنِي فَعَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي، فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ، قُلْتُ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ، فَأَخَذَنِي فَعَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي، فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ، قُلْتُ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ، فَأَخَذَنِي فَعَطَّنِي الثَّلَاثَةَ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي، فَقَالَ: { اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ. خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ. اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ } ... (رواه البخاري)

*"Narrated from 'A'isyah um al-Mu'minun, she said, "The beginning of the revelation that came to the Messenger of Allah SAW. He did not dream unless it came like the light of dawn. Then he was endowed with a love of solitude, and then he chose the cave of Hira and preached to prepare provisions. Until finally came the truth when he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came and said, 'Read it!' He replied, 'I'm not a person who is good at reading.' The Prophet SAW explained, 'Then, the angel held me and hugged me very tightly before letting go of me and saying again, 'Read it!' He said, 'I'm not the one who reads.' And so, the angel held me and hugged me very tightly before letting go of me and saying again, 'Read it!' He said, 'I'm not a person who is good at reading.' The angel held me back and hugged me for the third time very tightly. He then let go of me and said again, 'Iqra bi'smi rabbika alladhī khalaq. Khalaq al-insān min 'alaq. Iqra' wa rabbuka al-akram.'"*⁶⁷

In addition, Michel Cuypers used a quote from the Bible verse only to corroborate his Semitic Rhetoric Analysis (SRA) analysis to align with his interpretation. Cuypers only looks for Bible verses that support his interpretation and disclaims other verses that do not align with his interpretation. With this, Cuypers finally understood that QS. Al-'Alaq is not the first verse to come down as interpreted by interpreters.

From the author's arguments above, it can be concluded that the interpretation of Michel Cuypers above leads to a distortion of interpretation that results in a liberalism of thought that has the potential to affect Islamic beliefs. Through his liberal thinking, Cuypers understood that QS. This Al-'Alaq indicates the command to perform prayers and does not hint at the command to read. Thus, the presence of this thought may influence the belief of Muslims to doubt that QS. Al-'Alaq is not the first verse to come down as understood by Muslim scholars.

In essence, the liberalism of thought results from adopting ideas and concepts contained in religious traditions and Western civilization.⁶⁸ Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, in his book *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam: Gerakan Bersama Missionaris, Orientalis Dan Kolonialis*, states that liberalism is a concept of freedom of thought obsessed with freeing oneself from the intellectual, religious,

⁶⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jamī' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wil Ay Al-Qur'an*, 544–45.

⁶⁶ Al-Zuhailī, *At-Tafsir Al-Munir Fi Al-'Aqidah Wa Al-Shari'ah Wa Al-Manhaj*, 708.

⁶⁷ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Riyāḍ: Dār as-Salām, 1997), 1–2.

⁶⁸ Mujahid Imaduddin, "Dampak Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam Terhadap Kehidupan Sosial," *Kalimah* 15, no. 1 (2017): 114, <https://doi.org/10.21111/klm.v15i1.837>.

political, economic, and even Godly spheres.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the fundamental challenges facing Muslims today are not economic, political, social, and cultural, but rather the challenges of thought. Therefore, the result of this liberalism of thought is the mixing of foreign concepts into the thinking and life of Muslims, so the confusion of thinking and intellectual confusion is inevitable.⁷⁰ It can be said that the liberalization of Islamic thought through westernization programs has a significant impact on Muslims' social life, which will lead to the destruction of Islamic teachings.⁷¹

Thus, Michel Cuypers' interpretation, which impacts the liberalism of the above thought, is problematic because it deviates from the thinking of the Islamic worldview. In addition, in its interpretation, there is also no hadith quotation, *asbāb an-nuzūl*, nor the interpretation of interpreters. Cuypers' interpretation has finally taken away from the various essential elements in interpreting the Qur'an that scholars have agreed.

Solutions Offered: Intertextuality as Part of the Use of Isrā'iliyyāt in Tafsīr al-Qur'ān

The use of the Bible in the interpretation of the Qur'an as practiced by orientalist figures such as Michel Cuypers and Edip Yuksel et al. can be categorized as the use of *isrā'iliyyāt*⁷² in the interpretation of the Qur'an which is classified as *al-dakhil fī al-tafsīr* (infiltration in interpretation). Regarding the use of *isrā'iliyyāt* itself, there are three categories and parameters in assessing the law of its historical status. Among them are being accepted because they are following Islamic law, being rejected because they are contrary to Islamic law, and being left because the status of truth or lies is unknown.⁷³

The earlier Muslim scholars, such as al-Biqā'i and al-Ṭabārī, had also used *isrā'iliyyāt* with accepted parameter categories. Arguably, the existence of *isrā'iliyyāt* can be used if it meets some requirements by applying accepted rules of *isrā'iliyyāt*, among them such as not contradicting human reason, taking only on aspects of the stories and stories of earlier peoples, and not making as a source of law or basis of aqidah.⁷⁴

Conclusion

Through the above discussion, it can be concluded that the use of the Bible in the interpretation of the Qur'an or what can be called intertextuality, is often done by orientalist figures such as Michel Cuypers and Edip Yuksel. They use the Bible as a reference in interpreting Qur'anic verses, which often results in distorted interpretations that do not conform to the rules of *isrā'iliyyāt*. Despite the similarities between the texts of the Qur'an and the Bible, the use of the Bible as a source of interpretation is considered *al-dakhil fī al-tafsīr* (intrusion in interpretation) which is unacceptable as it leads to distortion of meaning and has the potential to spread liberal thinking and religious pluralism. The study also shows that the authenticity of the biblical text is still debated by Muslim and Western scholars, who increasingly doubt the authority of the Bible as a source of Qur'anic interpretation.

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⁶⁹ H. F. Zarkasyi, *Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam: Gerakan Bersama Missionaris, Orientalis Dan Kolonialis* (Ponorogo: CIOS UNIDA Gontor, 2008), 30.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1–2.

⁷¹ Imaduddin, "Dampak Liberalisasi Pemikiran Islam Terhadap Kehidupan Sosial," 107–8.

⁷² M. Ulinnuha, *Metode Kritik Ad-Dakhil Fī Al-Tafsīr* (Jakarta: PT. Qaf Media Kreativa, 2019), 131.

⁷³ M. Ḥusain Adz-Dzahabī, *Al-Isrā'iliyyāt Fī Al-Tafsīr Wa Al-Ḥadīth* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1990), 36–37.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 48–51.

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