

**CLASSICAL AND MODERN EXEGESIS STYLES:
THE EVOLUTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT EXEGESIS STYLES
FROM CLASSICAL AND MODERN PERIODS**

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DOI 10.32505/at-tibyan.v8i1.6007		
Submitted: 04-05-2023	Revised: 18-06-2023	Accepted: 23-06-2023

Abstract

This article aims to probe the discourse surrounding the debate between classical and modern interpretations of the Quran and the factors contributing to these interpretation styles' formation and evolution. The first interpretation is considered textualist and does not use much of an outside scientific approach inherited from Islam. In contrast, the modern interpretation is enunciated to depart from the traditional Islamic scholarly traditions and employ social science approaches. The research was conducted through a library research approach, analyzing classical tafsir manuscripts and modern academic research. The study extrapolated that the evolution of interpretation is shaped by the tendencies and interests of interpreters, impacted by their worldview and cultural history. As a result, the emerging interpretation styles enclose classical-literalist, theological, and modern-rationalist.

Keywords: *evolution exegesis, classical, modern periods*

Abstrak

Artikel ini berusaha menganalisis diskursus perdebatan antara corak penafsiran klasik dan modern serta menelaah proses evolusi pembentukan corak tafsir dan hal-hal yang mempengaruhinya. Penafsiran pertama dianggap cenderung tekstualis dan tidak banyak menggunakan pendekatan di luar keilmuan yang diwariskan dalam Islam. Sebaliknya, corak penafsiran modern dianggap meninggalkan konstruksi legal-etis al-Qur'an sebagai wahyu Tuhan (*eternal revelation*) dan cenderung menggunakan pendekatan ilmu-ilmu sosial di luar tradisi keilmuan yang diwariskan kesarjanaan Islam. Bahasan penelitian ini diulas dengan menggunakan pendekatan *library research* terhadap sejumlah manuskrip, baik pada naskah

tafsir klasik (*al-Turāts al-Islāmiyyah*) maupun hasil penelitian sarjana modern. Hasil penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa evolusi tafsir banyak dipengaruhi oleh kecenderungan dan minat penafsir. Setiap penafsir tidak dapat dilepaskan dari cakrawala pemahaman dan sejarah budayanya. Adapun corak tafsir yang terbentuk di antaranya klasikal – literalis, theologis dan modern – rasionalis.

Kata Kunci: Evolusi Tafsir, Klasik, Modern

Introduction

Researchers have diverse thoughts on the typology of interpretation if ordered by classical and modern periodicity.¹ It is founded on determining whether classical and modern typologies relate to time periodization or methodology. Because there are several interpretations² emerged later but were considered traditionalist because the methodology used was relatively similar to the classical exegesis.³

If classified based on time periodization, the initial range of classical interpretations falls between the fourth Hijri/10th century and the sixth/12th century.⁴ However, such a view is not one. Some scholars say that classical interpretation is an interpretation that emerged from the 1st to the 9th century hijriyah.⁵ Some of them provide qualitative limitations, that classical interpretations are interpretations carried out at the time of the Prophet, companions, to *tābi' al-tābi'ūn*.⁶ This last definition is relatively complex because it requires a mapping classification of interpreters who lived up to the tabi'in period. Thus, some scholars make a sequence of interpreters in

¹ Johanna Pink is one of the researchers who argues that interpretation, in general, is of the classical genre. This reason is based on the dependence of interpretation on the prophet's narration and the authority of the previous interpreter. According to Pink, the interpretation that emerged later was also the same. Look Johanna Pink, "Tradition, Authority and Innovation in Contemporary Sunnī Tafsīr: Towards a Typology of Qur'an Commentaries from the Arab World, Indonesia and Turkey," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12 (March 21, 2010): 56–82, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25831165>.

² Sayyid Qutb's interpretation of Fī Dzilāli al-Qur'ān is one of the modern commentaries which is quite influential but is considered to tend to be traditionalist with its classical commentary genre. Isa J. Boullata, as Garsoni called it, said that Qutb's point of view was idealistic but ahistorical. It was further stated that Qutb's perspective illustrates a dogmatic and monolithic view of Islam. Look Aref Ali Nayed, "The Radical Qur'anic Hermeneutics Of Sayyīd Qutb," *Islamic Studies* 31, no. 3 (March 22, 1992): 355–63, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20840085>. Compare with Gershoni, I. (1992). [Review of *Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought*, by I. J. Boullata]. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 28(3), 609–616. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4283517>

³ Shalahudin Kafrawi, "Methods Of Interpreting The Qur'ān: A Comparison Of Sayyid Qūṭb and Bint Al-Shāṭi'," *Islamic Studies* 37, no. 1 (March 22, 1998): 3–17, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20836975>.

⁴ Herbert Berg, "Exegesis," in *The Wiley Blackwell Concise Companion to the Hadith*, 2020, 223–39, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118638477.ch11>.

⁵ Dimitry Frolow, "Ibn Al-Nadīm on the History of Qur'anic Exegesis," *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 87 (June 17, 1997): 65–81.

⁶ Wely Dozan, "Analisis Pergeseran Shifting Paradigm Penafsiran: Studi Komparatif Tafsir Era Klasik Dan Kontemporer," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an Dan Tafsir* 5, no. 1 (June 30, 2020): 38–56, <https://doi.org/10.32505/at-tibyan.v5i1.1631>.

the classical period, from Ibn Abbās (d. 686 h), called the Father of Tafsir, to the interpreters of the ninth or early tenth-century hijrah.⁷ This definition seems more accessible and is used as a framework in this study. In this classic era, the genre of interpretation was primarily influenced by Al-Thabarī's approach.⁸

Meanwhile, the period of modern interpretation was dominated by those born in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Fazlur Rahman describes this period as a time when the impact of Western modernity on the Muslim intellectual and socio-economic spheres had grown.⁹ The modern period is more accurately referred to as the formative period in the history of the science of interpretation. At this time, interpretations were more dialogued with modern scientific fields such as literature, language syntax, and others.¹⁰

One of the topics that have been discussed regarding classical and modern interpretations is the critique of their interpretive methodologies. Muhammad Syahrur¹¹ is recognized as a critic and proponent of critical examination of Islamic doctrine as a revolutionary and groundbreaking approach. Syahrur has highlighted the significance of moving away from impractical and dogmatic interpretations of Islamic texts, including the Quran, towards more contemporary and flexible interpretations.¹² In his work, *Al-Kitāb wa al-Qur'ān Qir'ah Muashirah* Syahrūr does not only discuss the Qur'an and interpretations in general but also other terms such as *Islamic Jurisprudence, science*, and several other matters.¹³

Apart from Syahrūr, Nasr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd also criticized the authority for classical interpretation.¹⁴ If all this time the Qur'an—according to some theologians

⁷ Frolow, "Ibn Al-Nadīm on the History of Qur'anic Exegesis."

⁸ Muhammad ibn Jarīr Al-Thabarī, *Tafsīr Al-Thabān Min Kitābihi Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'An Ta'wīli Ay Al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Muasasah al-Risālah, 1994).

⁹ Fazlur Rahman, "The Impact Of Modernity Of Islam," *Islamic Studies* 5, no. 2 (March 22, 1966): 114, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20832836>.

¹⁰ Jarot Wahyudi, "Literary Interpretation Of The Qur'ān: 'Fawāṣil Al-Āyāt,' 'Qasam' And 'Istifhām,' Three Examples From Bint Al-Shāṭi'S 'Tafsīr,'" *Islamic Studies* 37, no. 1 (June 17, 1998): 19–28.

¹¹ In some literature, his name is often "Shahrūr" with "Sh" at the beginning. The mention of "Syahrūr" with "Sy" at the beginning of this discussion is due to the transliteration used. Syahrūr is a modern Muslim scientist whose views often differ from those of Muslim scientists. Born in Syria with a scientific background in engineering before finally working on Islamic themes focusing on the Koran and its reinterpretation. Look Arip Purkon, "Rethinking of Contemporary Islamic Law Methodology: Critical Study of Muhammad Syahrūr's Thinking on Islamic Law Sources," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022): 2, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7152>.

¹² Michaëlle L Browsers, "Shahrur's Reformation: Toward a Democratic, Pluralist and Islamic Public Sphere," *Historical Reflections / Reflexions Historiques* 30, no. 3 (March 21, 2004): 445–67, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41299318>.

¹³ Muhammad Syahrūr, *Al-Kitāb Wa Al-Qur'ān Qir'ah Muashirah* (Damascus: Maktabah Wahbah, 1997).

¹⁴ Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd was a prominent Muslim intellectual who came from Egypt—completed his Bachelor's studies at Cairo University in Arabic. After that, he continued his master's degree at the same university, did a fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania, and then obtained his PhD. Zayd wrote a dissertation on Ibn Arabī's Hermeneutics of the Qur'an. During this period, Zayd was more influenced by the philosophical hermeneutics developed by Hans-George Gadamer and Toshihiko Imitzu's semantic study of the Qur'an. See more details Georges Tamer, "Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd,"

other than Mu'tazilah and earlier interpreters—is the word of God (*kalām Allah*) that is transcendent, Zayd calls it the word of God that was created (*kalām Allah makhḷūq*) in the human world. Based on this premise, terms such as language texts (*nāsh lughawī*) emerged, human texts (*nāsh insānī*), cultural products (*muntaj tsaqāfi*), cultural producers (*muntijan li al-tsaqāfah*) and historical texts (*nāsh tārikhī*). Zayd also then offered a more humanist interpretation reading model. Because, in Zayd's view, the Qur'an contains a dimension of human values ¹⁵and provides space for humanistic investigation.¹⁶

The discussion relatively close to this research is what Bruce Fudge wrote, with the theme *Qur'anic Exegesis in Medieval Islam and Modern Orientalism*.¹⁷ In this discussion, Fudge attempts to examine the development of interpretation from the Middle Ages to the modern era—especially that of the Orientalists. According to him, interpretation is a branch of knowledge that is rarely discussed by Muslim scholars rather than from the Qur'an itself. Meanwhile, in Fudge's view, there has been a bias made by orientalists in understanding interpretation. Orientalists understand interpretation by bringing a pejorative view of the Qur'an itself.

Syahrur, Nasr Ḥāmid Abu Zayd, and Fudge all offer critiques of the classical interpretation methodology, which is often seen as being overly literal. Fudge goes even further, questioning classical interpretation methods and challenging some of the biases inherent in the work of orientalists. However, while these criticisms are important, there are still gaps in our understanding of how interpretation styles have evolved over time and what factors have influenced them. This article will address these gaps by examining relevant scientific papers and journals using a library research approach.

In order to better understand the development of classical and modern interpretations, it is necessary first to examine the classification of interpretation styles. This classification is useful for analyzing existing typologies of interpretations. Abdullah Saeed proposes a classification based on the review methodology or nature of the interpretation, which he divides into three categories: Textualists, Semi-Textualists, and Contextualists.¹⁸ Saeed's classification focuses not on periodisation but on the model used.

International Journal of Middle East Studies 43, no. 1 (March 23, 2011): 193–95, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23017376>.

¹⁵ Nasr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Maḥmū al-Nash Dirāsāt Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Markaz al-Tsaqāfi al-Arabī, 2000).

¹⁶ Sukidi, “Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd and the Quest for a Humanistic Hermeneutics of the Qur'ān,” *Die Welt Des Islams* 49, no. 2 (March 23, 2009): 181–211, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006009X458393>.

¹⁷ Bruce Fudge, “Qur'ānic Exegesis in Medieval Islam and Modern Orientalism,” *Die Welt Des Islams* 46, no. 2 (March 24, 2006): 115–47, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20140723>.

¹⁸ Abdullah Saeed, “Some Reflections on the Contextualist Approach to Ethico-Legal Texts of the Quran,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 71, no. 2 (March 21, 2008): 221–37, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40378768>.

Slightly different from Saeed, Johana Pink divides the interpretation into the form of her interpretation. Therefore, Pink divides it into; scholarly, institutional, and popular interpretations.¹⁹ Apart from that, Pink also shares interpretation with other approaches that are more like a time periodization approach. The division includes conservative, orthodox, and modernist interpretations. The three forms of interpretation classification will be used as theoretical thinking in viewing classical and modern times.

Classic Interpretation Style

As previously explained, codifying classical interpretations began at the beginning of the fourth century or the tenth century AD. Considering that there are so many interpretations included in classical periodization, the author limits it to six leading interpretations, which include Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr Al-Qurṭhubī, Tafsīr Jalalain, Tafsīr Ibnu Katsīr, Tafsīr Al-Kasyāf, and Tafsīr Al-Kabīr. This election was based more on its broad influence among Muslims. Jalāin's interpretation, for example, is a straightforward interpretation that is quite well-known among Islamic boarding schools in Java.²⁰ While the interpretations of al-Ṭabarī, Al-Qurṭhubī, and Ibn Katsīr represent the Sunni style. Tafsir Al-Kasyāf represents the Mu'tazilah style, and Tafsir Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib represents the style of interpretation with various approaches in it. The detailed interpretation can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Identification of Classical Tafsīr

Interpretation name	Writer	Interpretation Period
<i>Tafsir al-Ṭabarī; Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān</i>	Abī Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī	83-923 ²¹
<i>Al-Jāmi' Lī Ahkam al-Qur'ān bī Masyhūr Tafsīr Qurṭhubī</i>	Abī Abdillah Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Anshari al-Qurṭhubī ²²	1214-1273
<i>Tafsir Jalalain</i>	Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyuthī ²³	1389-1459

¹⁹ Pink, "Tradition, Authority and Innovation in Contemporary Sunnī Tafsir: Towards a Typology of Qur'an Commentaries from the Arab World, Indonesia and Turkey."

²⁰ Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books In Arabic Script Used In The Pesantren Milieu: Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 146, no. 2/3 (June 18, 1990): 226–69, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27864122>.

²¹ Mustafa Shah, "Al-Ṭabarī and the Dynamics of Tafsīr: Theological Dimensions of a Legacy / العقدية الأبعاد: التفسير وحيوية الطبري," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 15, no. 2 (March 25, 2013): 83–139, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24280441>.

²² Abi Abdillāh Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Abī Bakr Al-Qurṭhubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān Wa Al-Mubayyin Limā Tadhammanah Min Al-Sunnati Wa Āyyu Al-Furqān*, ed. 3 (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 2006).

²³ Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Al-Maḥallī & Abdu al-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakrīn Al-Suyūthī, *Tafsīr Al-Jalālain Wa Ma'ahu Ḥūsiyah Hidāyah Al-Muwaḥḥidin* (Cairo: Dār Al-Kutub al-Mishriyah, 2008).

<i>Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Adzim</i>	Ibn Katsir ²⁴	1300-1373
<i>Tafsir al-Kasyaf</i>	Zamakhshari	1075-1143
<i>Tafsir al-Kabir aw Mafatih al-Ghaib</i>	Fakhr al-Din al-Razi ²⁵	1149-1209

Classics – *Riwāyat Based*

Scholars or authors typically undertake an interpretation of the Qur'an to comprehend its verses' meaning. However, since interpretation is a human activity, it is inevitably influenced by the personal interests and biases of the interpreters involved.²⁶ Borrowing Richard Martin's language—by quoting Heidegger and Gadamer—that in order to understand a text, one must focus on meaning; thus, the need for an understanding of the interpreter and the horizon of understanding the history of culture cannot be denied.²⁷ Depending on which side you look at it, various kinds of interests, methods, approaches and methods used by interpreters will later give birth to various models and styles of interpretation.

In the early stages, interpretation counted heavily on history to elucidate the meaning of the Qur'an. This history defines the meaning of the Qur'an by trusting on reports or statements (*matan*) from the Prophet—as the main interpreting authority—companions (*al-shahābat*) and followers, often referred to as *al-tabūn*.²⁸ Meanwhile, the credibility of the history depends heavily on the continuity of the *isnad* and the quality of the narrator as well as several other criteria, such as not being incongruous and not being defective.²⁹ The credibility of history as a tool in explaining the interpretation of the Qur'an in the early (classical) period is indeed very decisive. Still, with a limited number of narrations (*ḥadīths*), explanations for interpretations are also based on prophetic history (*sīrah*). At this stage, it is not uncommon for interpreters to fall into less accountable stories (*isrāīliyyāt*).³⁰

The method of interpretation that relied on historical reports of the Prophet was prevalent during the early periods. An excellent example of this approach can be

²⁴ Isma'īl ibn 'Umār ibn Katsīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Adzīm*, II (Beirut: Dar al-Kutūb al-Ilmiyyah, 1998).

²⁵ Fakhr Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr Al-Fakhr Al-Rāzī Al-Masyhūr Bi Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr Wa Mafātih Al-Ghaib* (Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr, 1981).

²⁶ Basheer Ibrahim Muhammad Ali, "The Science of Exegesis and the Emergence of the Dogmatic Approach to the Qur'ānic Exegesis," *International Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences* 2020 Vol.2, no. 2020 Vol.22 Issue 41, pp.200–240 (2020): 1–41.

²⁷ Richard C Martin, "Understanding the Qur'an in Text and Context," *History of Religions* 21, no. 4 (March 25, 1982): 361–84, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1062330>.

²⁸ Berg, "Exegesis."

²⁹ Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn Syaraf Al-Nawawī, *Al-Taqīb Wa Al-Taisīr Lima'rifati Sunan Al-Basyār Al-Nadzīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1985), 25.

³⁰ One of the Isrāīliyāt stories cited by al-Thabarī is when he interprets "qauman Jabbārīn" in Surat al-Mā'idah verse 22. Al-Thabarī narrates a story about the people of Musa who met a large-sized creature on a plantation. Inside the plantation were grapes that five of Moses' followers could ride on. The story is considered a story in the Jewish tradition cited by al-Tabarī. Look, Al-Thabarī, *Tafsīr Al-Thabarī Min Kitābihi Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'An Ta'wīli Ay Al-Qur'ān*, Jilid 3. hlm. 68.

found in Tafsir Ibn Jarīr al-Thabarī. In this work, al-Tabarī not only uses historical portrayals as the basis for explaining the verses of the Qur'an but also delves into the reasons for the Quran's revelation (*asbāb al-Nuzul*) and references the history of prophecy.³¹ Meanwhile, the meaning of the Qur'an is mostly carried out literally and several times uses an Arabic lexicographical approach.

Classical interpretations are commonly regarded as conservative because they adhere to traditional approaches such as *asbāb al-nuzul* and *ṣīrāh*, which are intrinsic to Islam. As a result, they tend to reject scientific and rational reasoning. Some classical commentators, like al-Kasyāf Zamakhsyarī, initially use rationality and popular language in their reasoning but are also constrained by mu'tazilah theological dogma, which leads them to attack other theological opponents.³² The Sunni party also embraces this style of interpretation, as seen in the Baidhawī interpretation.

The classical approach to interpreting the Qur'an, which relied on narrations to exemplify its meaning, later became known as the *riwāyah* interpretation. The study of the credibility of the narrators was afterwards referred to as the 'dirāyah science'. There is no decisive periphery for what constitutes a historical interpretation. Al-Zarqānī (in Gusmian) limited it to three sources of explanation: the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the Companions, while other scholars such as Al-Dzhabī had broader restrictions that included the reports of the *ṭābi'īn* as part of the historical interpretation, even though the *ṭābi'īn*s did not instantly accept the interpretation or explanation of the meaning of the Qur'an from the Prophet.³³

Among the views of classical interpretation that are considered conservative, for example, is the opinion of Ibn Katsīr when interpreting verses of the Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah verse 256.

“ There is no compulsion to (enter) religion (Islam); Verily, the true path has become clear from the misguided path. Therefore, whoever disobeys tagūt and believes in Allah, then indeed he has held on to a very strong knot that will not break. And Allah is All-Hearing, Knowing .” (QS. 2 : 256)

In explaining the above verse, Ibn Katsīr quotes the history of Ibn Jarīr al-Thabarī from Ibn Abbās that this verse concerns a woman who is difficulty to have children. Therefore she promises that if she is blessed with children, she will make her a Jew. When the Bani Nādhir were expelled, among them were the children of the

³¹ Herbert Berg, “Thabarī's Exegesis of the Qur'ānic Term Al-Kitāb,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63, no. 4 (March 26, 1995): 761–74, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1465467>.

³² Ali, “The Science of Exegesis and the Emergence of the Dogmatic Approach to the Qur'ānic Exegesis.”

³³ Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia; Dari Hermeneutika Hingga Ideologi* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002), 197.

Ansar, then they said, "we do not preach our children". Then came down the verse above in the Qur'an surah al-Baqarah verse 256.³⁴

However, Ibn Katsir also continued by quoting the words of other scholars who said that the verse had been in the text (deleted) with the *qitāl* (war) verse, then we are obliged to invite people to embrace straight Islam. If some refuse the invitation and do not want to pay the *Jizyah*, then he must be killed, which is what coercion means in this verse.³⁵

In particular, Ibn Katsir did not support this coercive action. However, several researchers said that the history citation indicated a tendency for the perspective of some narrators in classical interpretations, which tended to be exclusive when associated with the plurality of Medina during the prophetic period. The narrations like Ibn Katsir also have some similarities in other classical interpretations such as al-Thabarī, al-Qurthubī, and also the following Mafātih al-Ghaib Fahrūddīn al-Rāzī.

Table 2. Classical Exegesis in Interpreting Al-Baqarah [2]: 256.

Interpretation	Interpretation
Al-Thabarī	Al-Thabarī, in interpreting the letter Al-Baqarah verse 256, argues that the interpreters have different opinions about the meaning of the verse. Some say this verse relates to a group from the Ansar group with Jewish or Christian children. When Islam came, they tried to force him into Islam. Then came down the verse. Al-Tabarī also explains as many as 22 narrations in this regard. According to him, the most reasonable opinion is that there is no compulsion to enter Islam for the People of the Book and Zoroastrians who have chosen a religion other than Islam. However, they are still taxed as part of their regional resident obligations. ³⁶
Al-Qurthubī	Al-Qurthubī cites five opinions regarding the interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah verse 256. ³⁷ <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The letter al-T ahrīm has <i>texted</i> this verse [66]: 9, which explains, "O Prophet, fight the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Therefore the Prophet forced the Arabs to convert to Islam and fought those who were reluctant to convert to Islam. 2. This verse is in <i>the text</i>, which was revealed to the

³⁴ Al-Imām al-Jalīl al-Hafīdz Imaduddīn Abī al-Fidā Ismā'īl Ibn Katsīr Al-Dimasyiqī, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Adhīm* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, nd), 445.

³⁵ Al-Dimasyiqī, 446.

³⁶ Al-Thabarī, *Tafsīr Al-Thabari Min Kitābihi Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'An Ta'wili Ay Al-Qur'ān* Vol. II, 256–59.

³⁷ Al-Qurthubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Ahkām Al-Qur'ān Wa Al-Mubayyin Limā Tadhammanah Min Al-Sunnati Wa Āyyu Al-Furqān* Jil. II, 280–84.

people of the book only.

3. This verse was revealed regarding the Ansar. In the past, there was a woman who did not have children who swore that if she had children, she would make her a Jew. When the Bani Nādhir were expelled, many of the Nādhir people took care of the children of the Ansar people. Then the Ansar said we would not leave our children.
4. This verse relates to a man from the Ansar named Abū Husain. Abū Husain asked his son to convert to Christianity, but he refused. Then the child faced the Prophet, and this verse was revealed.
5. This verse was revealed regarding prisoners of war. If they are from the Ahlu al-Kitab, they cannot be forced to convert to Islam. However, if they are from among the Magi, they are permissible to be forced into Islam.

Mafātīh Al-Ghaib According to Fakhrud-dīn Al-Razzī, there are pretty clear differences between al-rushd and al-gay, so the verse has the meaning according to its original meaning. Al-Razzī cites the history of Abū Muslim and Al-Qaffāl, which says that faith must be based on a conscious choice (*al-tamkin wa al-ikhtiyār*) and not done in a position of pressure (*al-Ijbār wa al-qasr*).³⁸

Based on the table above, it can be seen that even in the classical interpretation, there are various interpretations between one and the other. Concerning the interpretation of Al-Baqarah [2]: 256, Al-Qurtubi has a relatively complete view compared to other interpreters in addressing the verse that there is no compulsion in religion. Thus, the classical interpretation also has its diversity from other interpretations. In simple language, every interpretation has its style and cannot be considered conservative.

Style Theologic (*I'tiqādi*)

In this study, the term "*i'tiqādi*" or "theological" is utilized to describe a type of interpretation because it is deemed more appropriate compared to the term "orthodox". Nevertheless, it is recognized that some scholars, such as Pink, use this term to categorize an interpretation.³⁹ In the Western world, the term *theological exegesis* (in the Qur'an, it is referred to as *tafsīr i'tiqādi*) is interpreted as a critical explanation of a

³⁸ Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr Al-Fakhr Al-Rāzī Al-Masyhūr Bi Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr Wa Mafātih Al-Ghaib* Jil. VII, 15.

³⁹ Johanna Pink, "Modern and Contemporary Interpretation of the Qur'ān," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, 2017, 479–91, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118964873.ch32>.

text that is part of the holy book or an explanatory note of the holy book.⁴⁰ Some experts call theological unification and exegesis as something problematic because interpretation is an explanation. At the same time, combining the two words is feared to produce a partial meaning.

Tafsir *i'tiqādi* can be interpreted as an interpretation approach that prioritizes the science of aqidah, such as kalam theology in its approach. According to Al-Dzahabī, interpretation with this style requires relying on rationality which is more than just studying the text. The interpreter generally does this to get the desired meaning in accordance with the meaning that goes along with his opinion.⁴¹

Al-Dzahabī's theological pattern can be seen, for example, when interpreting the verse about encounters and the ability of humans to see their Lord on the Day of Resurrection in sura al-Qiyāmah 22-23 as follows:

“ *The faces (of the believers) on that day will be radiant. It is their Lord that they look.* ”

Al-Zamakhsyarī interprets the word face in verse above as a parable of happiness/beaming of the many blessings. As for the word see, for Zamakhsyarī, it is interpreted as *king'* (hope), which means hoping for God's favor. Furthermore, according to Zamakhsyarī verse 23 of Surat al-Qiyāmah, it means prioritizing objects (*taqḍīm al-Ma'ful*), while the meaning of looking at God has a special meaning.⁴²

The style of Zamakhsyarī's interpretation as above further confirms that Zamakhsyarī's theological views were heavily influenced by his mu'tazilah school of *kalam*. In the view of the Mu'tazilites, the attributes of God are only human definitions of themselves. From this view, the Mu'tazilah want to place God's nature as something ontologically eternal but as a description of human action.⁴³

Modernist – Rationalist (*'Scientific Style*)

There are many modernist interpretations, but of the many interpretations that will be identified in this discussion, there are three main interpretations. 1) Tafsir Al-Manār compiled by Muḥammad Abduh and his student Muḥammad Rāsyid Ridhā, 2)

⁴⁰ Floyd V Filson, “Theological Exegesis,” *Journal of Bible and Religion* 16, no. 4 (March 28, 1948): 212–15, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1456547>.

⁴¹ Muhammad Ḥina Al-Dzahabī, *Al-Tafsīr Wa Al-Mufasssūrūn. Juz Al-Awal* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, nd), 315.

⁴² Abī al-Qāshim Maḥmud ibn Umar Al-Zamakhsyarī, *Al-Kasyāf 'An Ḥaqāiq Gawāmiḍh Al-Tanzīl Wa 'Uyūn Al-Aqāwil Fī Wujūh Al-Ta'wīl* (Riyad: Maktabah al-'Abikān, 1764), 269.

⁴³ Muḥammad Ibn Abdu al-Karīm Ibn Abī Bakrīn Aḥmad Al-Syakhrastānī, *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nḥal* (Beirut: Dār Al-Ma'rifah, 1993); 57. Compare also with Kelly's views on Islamic theology. Look, Alexander Key, “Theology,” in *Language between God and the Poets*, 1st ed., Ma'na in the Eleventh Century (University of California Press, 2018), 110–51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv941sks.10>.

Tafsir Al-Munir compiled by Shaykh Wahbah al-Zuhaili⁴⁴ and Tafsir Al-Misbah compiled by Muhammad Quraish Shihab.⁴⁵ The choice of the three interpretations is due to their broad influence on Muslims - especially in the area where the interpretations were published. Quraish Shihab, for example, his Tafsir al-Misbah is quite influential in Indonesia and Southeast Asia in particular.⁴⁶ In contrast, Wahbah Al-Zuhaili is a contemporary Islamic commentator and thinker from Syria who influences various Islamic worlds.⁴⁷

In general, interpretations in the modern era have various scientific patterns. Al-Manar tends towards a rationalist interpretation style by offering a new understanding of Islam.⁴⁸ The form of al-Manar's rationality, for example, can be seen in looking at the discourse on the relationship between Islam and non-Islam when interpreting the following surah al-Baqarah verse 62;

" Indeed, those who believe, Jews, Christians and people Sabi'in, whoever (among them) believes in Allah and the Last Day, and does good, they will get a reward from their Lord, there is no fear of them, and they do not grieve". QS. Al-Baqarah: 2 : 62.

In interpreting the verse above, Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha in Tafsir Al-Manar explain;

"God's law is just and equal. He treats all adherents of religion with the same sunnah, does not side with one group and tyrannizes other groups. This sunnah stipulates that they will receive a certain reward with the promise of Allah through the mouth of their Messenger... This verse explains the sunnah of Allah swt. In treating people both formerly and later in accordance with the provisions of Allah SWT ...

⁴⁴ Wahbah Al-Zuhaili, *Al-Tafsir Al-Munir Fi Al-'Aqidah Wa Al-Syan'ah Wa Manhaj* (Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 2003).

⁴⁵ Tafsir al-Misbah; Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an it is a category of interpretation that is quite influential in Indonesia. As an influential commentary, Johanna Pink compares it to carrying out investigations related to historical methodology with other major interpretations such as Tafsir al-Manar, Al-Azhar Hamka's commentary and Tafsir al-Munir Wahbah al-Zuhaili. Look, M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah; Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, II (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2006); Also compare with Pink, "Tradition, Authority and Innovation in Contemporary Sunni Tafsir: Towards a Typology of Qur'an Commentaries from the Arab World, Indonesia and Turkey."

⁴⁶ Nico JG Kaptein, "Kaptein, NJG (2017). [Review of The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World. Context and Interpretation. [Routledge Studies in the Qur'an]," in *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde*, ed. Majid Daneshgar, Peter G Riddell, and Andrew Rippin, vol. 173 (Brill, 2017), 398–99, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26281602>.

⁴⁷ Sami E Baroudi and Vahid Behmardi, "Sheikh Wahbah Al-Zuhaili on International Relations: The Discourse of a Prominent Islamist Scholar (1932–2015)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 53, no. 3 (May 4, 2017): 363–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2016.1263190>.

⁴⁸ Jajat Burhanudin, "Aspiring for Islamic Reform: Southeast Asian Requests for Fatwas in Al-Manar," *Islamic Law and Society* 12, no. 1 (March 29, 2005): 9–26, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3399290>.

*"(The reward from Allah is not according to your empty imagination and not (also) according to the imagination of the People of the Book. Whoever does evil will surely be recompensed for that crime, and he cannot be a protector and no helper for him other than Allah. Whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, while he is a believer, then they will enter paradise and will not be wronged in the slightest (Qs an-Nisa/4: 123-124)."*⁴⁹

The open view of non-Muslims, as explained in Al-Manār, has made this interpretation known to be quite rationalist in explaining Islam in the modern age.⁵⁰

Apart from Abduh and Ridhā, Quraish Shihab's interpretations can also be grouped into the category of modern-rationalist interpretations. Although he mostly uses a literary approach⁵¹ in explaining his interpretations, it is undeniable that in certain subjects, the closeness of rationality is more visible in Tafsir Al-Misbah. This can be seen, for example, when Quraish Shihab interprets the verse about the headscarf in Surah Al- Nisa : 3 : 34 as follows:

"Men are leaders for women because Allah has made some of them (men) superior to others (women), and because they (men) have spent some of their wealth. Therefore, a pious woman obeys Allah and takes care of herself when her husband is not around, because Allah has taken care of (them). QS. 3 : 34.

In interpreting the verse above, Shihab cites Muhammad Thahir Ibn Asyur's opinion that the word *rijāl* is not used in Arabic—even in the language of the Qur'an—as a husband. Such terms will be different from *al-nisā* or *imra'ah*, which are used to refer to the term wife.⁵²

Quraish Shihab also expressly rejects the classical interpretation model as follows:

"Many scholars understand the word al-rijāl in this verse to mean husbands. The author does not support that opinion. The author points out that al-rijālu qawamūna 'ala al-nisā, does not mean men in general because the consideration

⁴⁹ Muḥammad 'Abduh, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Ĥakīm Al-Masyhūr Bism Al-Manār* (Cairo: Dār Al-Manār, 1947), 336.

⁵⁰ Asma Afsaruddin, "The Hermeneutics of Inter-Faith Relations: Retrieving Moderation and Pluralism as Universal Principles in Qur'anic Exegeses," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 37, no. 2 (March 29, 2009): 331–54, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40378048>.

⁵¹ Arabic literary and lexicographic approaches must be distinct from Tafsir Al-Misbah Quraish Shihab. This cannot be separated from the educational background that Shihab was involved in while studying at Al-Azhar, Cairo. Quraish Shihab pursued his undergraduate education at Al-Azhar by concentrating on interpretation and hadith. The same goes for master's and doctoral education. However, before entering higher education, Shihab first studied Arabic at the Tsanawiyah level in Egypt. Look, Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Mizan, 2002); Also compare with Afrizal Nur, "M. Quraish Shihab Dan Rasionalisasi Tafsir," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (June 1, 2012): 21–33, <https://ejournal.uin-suska.ac.id/index.php/ushuludin/article/view/696>.

⁵² Muḥammad Thāhir Ibn 'Āsyūr, *Tafsīr Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr* (Tunis: Dār Al-Tunisiyah Lī Al-Nasyar, 1984), 37.

*of the statement above, as in the continuation of the verse, is because they (husbands) spend their wealth " namely for their wives.*⁵³

By looking at the model of interpretation above, it is clear that Quraish Shihab has a different view from previous opinions, which translated the word *al-rijāl* as male. Thus, Shihab's rationality style in responding to the modern era with an ethic of openness and accessibility between men and women can be seen in his interpretation.

Meanwhile, Wahbah Al-Zuḥailī, with his commentary *Al-Munīr*, is better known for being rational in defending human values.⁵⁴ Wahbah seeks to present a tolerant Islamic face by basing it on classical Islamic scientific traditions extracted from religious texts, both in the form of hadiths and the opinions of scholars. This view of Wahbah can be seen, for example, in interpreting Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 143:

“And thus (also) we made you (Muslims) a just nation (wasathan) so that you may be witnesses of human (actions) and that the Messenger (Muhammad) may be a witness of your deeds. We did not make your Qiblah (formerly) towards it but so that We would know who followed the Messenger and who turned backwards ... QS. 2 : 2 : 143.

When interpreting the word " *wasathan* " Wahbah Al-Zuḥailī explained as follows:

*“Al-Wasath means the middle of something or the axis of a circle. Then this word is used to express commendable things because every praiseworthy quality (for example courage) is the midpoint between the two ends: excessive ifḥāth , excess and tafīth (negligence, negligence). So, fadhīlah (the main/good quality) is in the middle. What is meant by wasath here are people of good character who combine knowledge and charity.*⁵⁵

Furthermore, Wahbah Al-Zuḥailī also interpreted the continuation of the verse as follows:

“They are the best of the people, and they are wasath (moderate, balanced) in all matters, do not go too far and are not negligent in matters of religion and the world; they are not extravagant in religion, but neither are they negligent in fulfilling their duties. So, they are not materialists like the Jews and polytheists or spiritualists like the Christians. They combine the two rights of the body and the rights of the spirit. They do not neglect any of these aspects. And this

⁵³ Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah; Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2000), 403.

⁵⁴ Sami E Baroudi, “Hannah Arendt, the Human Condition and the Embrace of Human Diversity in the Discourses of Two Contemporary Islamists: Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zahra (1898–1974) and Sheikh Wahbah Al-Zuhaili (1932–2015),” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 4 (August 8, 2021): 666–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2019.1699775>.

⁵⁵ Al-Zuhailī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Munīr Fi Al-'Aqīdah Wa Al-Syarī'Ah Wa Manhaj* , 326.

*attitude is in line with human nature because humans are made up of the body and the spirit.*⁵⁶

The interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah above shows that the style of interpretation is quite rational from Wahbah Al-Zuhaili, who understands a middle attitude not only in the field of religion but also in an attitude of life that is not materialism and also not fatalism.

Sociological Aspects and the Influence of Interpretation

Classical interpretation—as previously explained—generally cannot be separated from at least three kinds of interpretation, the linguistic approach, the shari'ah legal approach and the theological approach.⁵⁷ Because interpretation cannot be separated from the three scientific horizons above, this scientific influence may have occurred on an interpretation or vice versa. The following presents the interpretations and scientific fields covered during the periodization of these interpretations.

Table 3. Styles of Interpretation and the Science Covering It⁵⁸

Interpreter	Time Periodization	The Theological Flow in Time Periodization	Scientists and Scholars in Time Periodization
<i>Tafsir al-Taba'i; Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān</i>	838-923	Qatadah (670-735 AD) Al-Ĥasan Al-Bashrī (642-728 AD) Al-Asyarī (874-936 AD)	Mālik bin Anas (715-795 AD) Al-Syafi'ī (767-820 AD) Ahmad bin Hanbal (780-855 AD) Ja'far Al-Shādiq (700-765)
<i>Al-Jāmi' Lī Aĥkam al-Qur'ān bī Masyhūr Tafsīr Qurthubī</i>	1214-1273	Ibn Taimiyah (1263-1328 AD) Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah (1292-1350 AD)	Ibn Sinā (980-1037 AD) Al-Ghazalī (1058-1111 AD)
<i>Tafsīr Jalalān</i>	1389-1459	Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 AD)	Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah (1292-1350 AD) Imam Nawawī (1233-1277 AD)
<i>Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Adzīm</i>	1300-1373	Ibn Taimiyah (1263-1328 AD) Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah (1292-1350 AD) Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 AD)	Imam Nawawī (1233-1277 AD)

⁵⁶ Al-Zuhaili, 369.

⁵⁷ Patrick Sookhdeo, "Issues of Interpreting the Koran and Hadith," *Connections* 5, no. 3 (April 1, 2006): 57–82, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26323255>.

⁵⁸This division is a hypothesis or conjecture and an initial analysis that allows the interpretation pattern to be influenced by other scholars. This grouping also shows how far cultural influences surround the interpreter as Abu Zayd's thesis on a product of culture. Look Sukidi, "Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd and the Quest for a Humanistic Hermeneutics of the Qur'ān."

<i>Tafsīr al-Kasyāf</i>	1075-1143	Abu Ali al-Jubbaī (835-915 AD) Al-Baqillanī (946-1013 AD) Al-Maturidī (d. 944 AD)	Al-Ghazālī (1058-1111 AD) Sheikh Abdul Qādir al-Jailanī (1077-1166 AD)
<i>Tafsīr al-Kabīr aw Mafūtih al-Ghaib</i>	1149-1209	Al-Baqillanī (946-1013 AD) Al-Asyarī (874-936 AD)	Al-Ghazālī (1058-1111 AD) Imam Nawawī (1233-1277 AD)

As seen in the table mentioned above, Tafsir Al-Thabari, who is in periodization time 838-923 AD, no can be separated from Genre emerging theology era such thinking theological Hasan Al-Bashri and Al-Asy'ari . Temporary in relationship with thinking para existing scholars on his time, no can be released from influence cleric jurisprudence like Malik bin Anas, Al- Syafi'i, Ahmad bin Hanbal as well as Ja'far al-Shadiq . Based on the influence of sociology that encompasses it, in al-Thabari's interpretation, nuances of Sunni theology are like that. Because No can be released with aspect sociological before And in his time, mostly stream Sunni theology.

This is different, for example, with Tafsir Al-Kasyaf patterned Mu'tazilah. Interpretation This also no can be released from the aspect of sociological thinking before And on emerging eras, like thinking of Abu Ali al-Jubba'i and Al- Baqillanī . As for Al-Baqillanī , though included in the Al- Asy'ari group, however, his view of properties lord own proximity with Mu'tazilah.⁵⁹ Influence sociological here it seems to affect so that pattern theology mu'tazilah in Tafsir al-Kasyaf so seen. Aspect is sociological; this influences interpretation other like Tafsir Al- Qurthubi , Tafsir Jalalain , Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al- Adzim, and Tafsir Al-Kabir .

Conclusion

The way interpretations originated is affected by various factors such as the interpreter's interests, understanding, and cultural background. During the classical period, which began in the fourth century, interpretation was predominantly transmitted through spoken reports, which led to literalist interpretations like Tafsir Al-Thabari. However, with time, interpretation has evolved through a dialectical process with other disciplines such as fiqh, theology, history, literature, and others. This has resulted in the development of a scientific form of interpretation. This study supports Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's thesis that interpretation cannot be separated from the surrounding culture. It also aligns with Abdullah Saeed and Johanna Pink's typology, classifying interpretation into textual/literal, dogmatic/theological, and modern.

⁵⁹ Sabine Schmidtke, "Early Ash'ari Theology: Abū Bakr Al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) And His 'Hidāyat Al-Mustarsyidīn,'" *Bulletin d'études Orientales* 60 (June 18, 2011): 39–71, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41608658>.

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