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THE QURANIC HERMENEUTICS APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY IN AMINA WADUD MUHSIN'S VIEW

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Abstract

Gender is a social construction of what is called masculine and feminine and the division of social roles. Studies on gender issues often return to the position of women being subordinated again or vice versa, placing women beyond their nature. How to position them in the right place? This study aims to analyze Amina Wadud's hermeneutics of interpreting the texts of the Qur'an on gender issues. The data presented comes from the references from a variety of relevant sources—the method of critical analysis conducted to explore Amina Wadud's views ideas. She confirmed that personal, family, intellectual, and cultural background cannot be separated from her thoughts on gender issues. Besides, there were no truly objective interpreters. Indirectly, she was included in the statement that no truly objective interpreter. She proposed a holistic method to reduce excessive interpreter subjectivity and selfishness in understanding texts, especially gender issues. The hermeneutics stands on the analysis of language, history, and contextualization. Amina's hermeneutics is influenced by the thoughts of Fazlur Rahman and Gadamer.

Keywords: Hermeneutics; Qur'anic text; Gender; Method

المخلص

الجندر هو بناء اجتماعي لما يسمى الذكوري والأنثوي وتقسيم الأدوار الاجتماعية. قد تعود الدراسات حول قضايا النوع الاجتماعي إلى وضع النساء في مرتبة التبعية مرة أخرى أو العكس، وضع النساء خارج طاقة طبيعتهم. كيف تضعهن في المكان المناسب؟ فتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل تأويل (هيرمينوطيقا) أمينة ودود في تفسير النصوص القرآنية في قضايا الجندر. تأتي البيانات المقدمة من المراجع المتنوعة والمصادر ذات الصلة - طريقة التحليل النقدي التي تم إجراؤها لاستكشاف أفكار آراء أمينة ودود. وأكدت أن الخلفية الشخصية والعائلية والفكرية والثقافية

لا يمكن فصلها عن أفكارها حول قضايا الجندر. إلى جانب ذلك، لم يكن هناك مفسرون موضوعيون حقًا. وبغير مباشرة، كانت هي في تلك الحالة. فاقترحت طريقة شاملة للحد من الذاتية المفرطة للمفسرين وأنانيتهم في فهم النصوص، وخاصة في قضايا الجندر. تعتمد الهرمينوطيقا على تحليل اللغة والتاريخ والسياق. فتأثر هرمينوطيقاها بأفكار فضل الرحمن وجد مير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: هرمينوطيقا; النص القرآني; جندر; المنهج.

Abstrak

Gender merupakan konstruksi sosial dari apa yang disebut maskulin dan feminin serta pembagian peran sosial. Kajian tentang isu gender seringkali merujuk kepada posisi perempuan yang ter subordinasi atau sebaliknya, menempatkan perempuan melampaui kodratnya. Bagaimana cara memosisikannya di tempat yang tepat? Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hermeneutika Amina Wadud dalam menafsirkan teks Alquran tentang isu gender. Data yang disajikan berasal dari berbagai sumber yang relevan — metode analisis kritis yang dilakukan untuk mendalami ide Amina Wadud. Ia menegaskan bahwa latar belakang pribadi, keluarga, intelektual, dan budaya tidak lepas dari pemikirannya tentang isu gender. Selain itu, tidak ada penafsir yang benar-benar objektif. Secara tidak langsung, dia termasuk dalam pernyataan penafsir yang tidak benar-benar objektif. Ia mengusulkan metode holistik untuk meminimalisir subjektivitas dan egoisme penafsir yang berlebihan dalam memahami teks, khususnya masalah gender. Hermeneutika berdiri di atas analisis bahasa, sejarah, dan kontekstualisasi. Hermeneutika Amina dipengaruhi oleh pemikiran Fazlur Rahman dan Gadamer.

Kata kunci: Hermeneutika; Teks al-Qur'an; Gender; Metode.

A. Introduction

Amina Wadud Muhsin is a feminist figure who entered the world of interpretation with a hermeneutic approach.¹ There are also several hermeneutic experts. Contemporary Muslims thinkers, either men such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd,²

¹See Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an and Women* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti Sdn Bdn, 1994); Rihlah Nur Aulia, "Menakar Kembali Pemikiran Feminisme Amina Wadud", *Jurnal Studi Al-Quran* 8, no. 1 (2011): h. 45-62.

²See Nasr Hamd Abu Zayd, *Dawâir al-Khawf: Qirâ'ah 'alâ Khitâbi al-Mar'ah*, 3rd edition (Beirut: Dâr alBaydla', 2004); Wely Dozan, "Metodologi Tafsir Kontemporer: Aplikasi Teori

Asghar Ali Engineer³ and Syahrur⁴ or women such as Fatimah Mernissi,⁵ Riffat Hassan⁶, ect. firmly argue that Islam is a religion without discrimination. Unfortunately, the dominance of male interpreters has colored the history of the Qur'anic interpretation. Between Islamic doctrine and historical Islam often shows gaps. To harmonize the historicity of the text with its meaning, an interpreter - as Talabi did - must focus on examining the Qur'an socio-historical context to understand a ratio legis of a particular verse.⁷ There are many verses in the Qur'an that state that human beings - both men and women - who believe and do good deeds will get the same reward from Allah (Qs. al-Nahl/16: 97). If the gender is understood as a social construction of what is called masculine and feminine,⁸ this is a fatal misunderstanding about gender itself. Gender is the division of human roles in masculine and feminine, which contains the roles and traits attached by society to men and women and are constructed socially or culturally.⁹ It refers to relations in which men and women interact.

However, women are subordinated by cultural relations. Or vice versa, culture positions them beyond their nature. The result is social-imbalance. The dehumanization of women has taken place on the stage of history. Perhaps even today, both in the West and in the Islamic world. It is unfortunate and even embarrassing, it happened in the Islamic world. Whereas the Quran as its holy book normatively highly values women as men.¹⁰ It shows how the Qur'an expressly views men and women equally (*al-musawah*)¹¹ and appreciates every good they do and threatens those who commit crimes.

Hermeneutika Nasr Hamid Abū Zaid QS. al-Nisā'4: 3", *Journal of Qur'an dan Hadith Studies* 6, no. 2 (2017): h. 42 – 68.

³See Irsyadunnas, "The Hermeneutic Thoughts of Ashgar Ali Engineer in the Interpretation of Feminism", *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 25, no.1 (2017): h. 99.

⁴See Abdul Mustaqim, "Teori Hudūd Muhammad Syahrur dan Kontribusinya dalam Penafsiran Alquran", *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 1, no 1 (2017): h. 2580-3190.

⁵See Fatimah Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, translated by Mary Jo Lakeland (New York: Basic, 1991).

⁶See Riffat Hasan, *Women's and Men's Liberation* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991).

⁷Rachel M. Scott, "A Contextual Approach to Woman's Right in the Qur'an: Readings of 4:34", *The Muslim World Journal* 99 (2009): h. 70.

⁸Muhammad Yusuf, "Women Leadership in Local Wisdom Perspective: Bugis Muslims Scholars' Thought and Bugis Culture", *Analisa Journal of Social Science and Religion* 22, no. 01 (2015): h. 70.

⁹Manshour Fakhri, *Pendidikan Perempuan* (Yogyakarta, STAIN Porwokerto, 2003), h. 111. Amy J. C. Cuddy and Elizabeth Baily Wolf, Peter Glick, Susan Crotty, Jihye Chong, & Michael I. Norton, "Men as Cultural Ideals: Cultural Values Moderate Gender Stereotype Content", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 109, no. 4, (2015): h. 622– 635.

¹⁰Andi Fitriani Djollong, "Al Mar'ah dalam Al Qur'an", *ISTIQRAR* 6, no. 1 (2018): h. 51-80.

¹¹Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Quran and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), h. ix-x. Athoillah Islamy, "Gender

One of the points that need to be responded to appropriately is Amina Wadud's statement highlighting the interpreters' subjectivity, especially relating to the dominance of men over women. She declared that women, not men, should reinterpret these sacred texts. Women must re-handle all these texts according to their own experiences as women. The texts should be reinterpreted based on the context facing both men and women issues. It should not be ignored in the texts.¹² She concentrated on Muslim women's problems related to gender discrimination and the issues between the sexes in different fields, especially the issues women experience in Muslims' countries. According to Barlett, she was very careful in regards to Islamic rules and understanding women: "If it was true that the Qur'an really women as inferior, she could no longer be a Muslim. She would abandon the religion". It shows that she was very determined to abandon Islam if had she witnessed anything negative about women in Islam.

In the Islamic world, there is still a treatment that causes dehumanization or, at least, reduces the existence of female humanity. It is partly due to gender biases in the interpretation of the Qur'an, which is mostly dominated by men. As an implication, the Qur'an interpretation tends only to accommodate the awareness, vision, and mission of men. There is no doubt that theologically the Qur'an is considered to have absolute and eternal truth. However, when the Qur'an is interpreted as the result of human reasoning, which is loaded with various prejudices and socio-historical situations surrounding it, then the truth of that interpretation becomes relative. It is evidenced by the many schools of thought developed in Islam, including in the field of interpretation. In this line, Nimat Hafez Barazangi¹³ mainly blames patriarchal readings of the Quran. She especially emphasizes that the Prophet's hadiths have been deliberately misinterpreted and transformed by Muslim men. She believes that to change those patriarchal and harmful views, they need to change paradigms of studying Islam and reconstructing Muslim societies. She underlines that the best way to reconstruct the perspective of the Islamic societies is through reinterpreting sacred texts and the Qur'an according to women's view. The critical approach of reviewing the Quran as a text that reflects the prejudices of patriarchal Arabic society and confines women in the second class.¹⁴

Based on the background, the research focuses on the hermeneutic method of the Qur'an proposed by Amina Wadud Muhsin in responding to scholars' interpretations judged to be gender-biased. It begins with the assumption that many factors influence every ideology of interpretation. In this regard, fundamental

Mainstreaming In The Hermeneutics of Islamic Family Law", *Al-Bayyinah: Jurnal of Islamic Law* 4, no.1 (2020): h. 20-35. Compare with Usman Jafar, "Muslims' Thoughts of non-Muslims' Political Rights in Majority Muslim Areas in Makassar", *Jurnal Adabiyah* 19, no. 2 (2019): h. 204-223.

¹²Cengiz KOC, "Fatima Mernissi and Amina Wadud: Patriarchal Dominance and Misinterpretation of Sacred Texts in Islamic Countries", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6, no. 8 (2016): h. 176.

¹³Nimat Hafez Barazangi, *The Absence of Muslim Women in Shaping Islamic Thought*, *Theological Review* XXX (Florida: University Pressof, 2004), h. 157.

¹⁴Hayri Kırbaşoğlu, "Kadın Konusunda Kur'an'a Yöneltilen Başlıca Eleştiriler", *İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 5/ 4 Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Açıklamalı Meali (1993) (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, Ankara, 2011), h. 271.

questions are asked (1) Whose hermeneutic thinking influences Amina's hermeneutic thinking significantly? (2) Why did Amina make gender issues the hermeneutic spotlight's focus? To answer these questions, the content analysis method is applied. This method emphasizes the relationship between a character's thoughts and the background of that character's life. As the central figure in this study, Amina certainly has correspondences with the initiated hermeneutic idea. Before tracing hermeneutic thinking, his background is the starting point for tracing his thoughts. It is expected to give birth to an objective and critical scientific attitude towards any figure's thought. With this viewpoint, the act of reading will be able to adapt each relevant part or leave those that lose relevance.

B. Background of Amina Wadud Muhsin

When she saw the deterioration of Islamic women in all fields, as a Fully Human Agency, she began to look for the cause of the downturn by looking at the sources of Islamic teachings related to women. She found that most interpretations and outcomes of Islamic law were written by male scholars and often carried biases in their views. According to her, patriarchal culture has marginalized women, denied women as *khalifah fi al-ard*, and denied the teachings of justice carried out by the Qur'an.¹⁵ She was challenged and fought (*jihad*) to reinterpret the problem using the hermeneutic method.¹⁶ This anxiety finally inspired the writing of the book *Qur'an and Woman*, then *Inside The Jihad Gender, Women's Reform in Islam*, the work that made a reformation of Islamic women and was a grand intellectual project¹⁷ so that his thoughts and roles were taken into account.

Her thoughts have been widely published in several media, especially since the "historic Friday", which took place in the Anglican Church of St. John The Divine in the Manhattan area of New York, United States, on March 18, 2005. Amina Wadud performed the Friday prayer together with the Muslim NGO Wake Up! America, where she acts as a priest and preacher. He Friday prayer based on a hadith found in Sunan ibn Daud when the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) saw him. Told Ummi Waraqaah to lead the people in the environment. Likewise, the leadership of Ratu Bilqis mentioned in the Qur'an is an indication of women's right to play a role in various fields, including in the rhythm of worship.¹⁸

However, from several literatures and sites, the writer found that she was born in 1952, in America. Her parents' names are unknown; it is said that her father was a

¹⁵Quoted from Khalid Aboe el-Fadhl in giving an introduction in Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Inside the Gender Jihad, Women's Reform in Islam* (England: Oneworld Publications, 2008), h. xii, 50, 187. Mulki Al-Sharmani, "Marriage in Islamic Interpretive Tradition: Revisiting the Legal and the Ethical", *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 2 (2018): h. 76-96.

¹⁶Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Inside*, p. 188; Erlan Muliadi, "Telaah ats Pemikiran Amina Wadud Muhsin dalam "Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's reform in Islam", *Qawwām* 11, no. 2 (2017): h. 109-120.

¹⁷Wajiran, "Polygamy and Muslim Women in Contemporary Indonesian Literature", *Humaniora* 30, no. 3 (2018): h. 292.

¹⁸As written by Navin Reda, Muslim Issues What Would the Prophet Do? *The Islamic Base for Female-Led Prayer*. See www.muslimwakeup.com/main. access on October 23, 2009.

devout priest.¹⁹ She admitted that he was not very close to her father, and her father did not influence her view much. Her guidance and interest in Islam, especially in the matter of the concept of justice in Islam, led her to say two sentences of shahada she called “thanksgiving day”, 1972.²⁰

In America, Amina joined the Muslim community. This community includes minority groups in America who struggled to establish their identity amid accusations of being a radical group. Her identity as a Muslim has greatly helped her and the black Muslim community to defend their honor from the threat of racial harassment because African-American descent is still very vulnerable to racist discrimination in the superpower.

The American Muslim community itself has high regard for ethnic and racial differences because most of them come from migrants. Liberalism that flourished in America helped support their activities in practicing Islam as their belief. For this reason, with some Muslims, he joined a community of Progressive Islam.²¹ Their mission is to make the progression of Islamic teachings and thought a solution to the complexity of Muslims' problems and challenges from modernity and postmodernity. Progressive Islam aims to maintain the integrity of Islam's teachings and carry it in the context of the current era's dynamism.

In his book *Inside the Gender Jihad*, she wrote that she has been a single parent for more than 30 years for her four children. It was the beginning of her *jihad* in fighting for the rights of justice for Muslim women.²² According to Charles Kurzman's information,²³ Amina Wadud's research on women in the Qur'an contained in the title of her book, *Qur'an and Woman*. It appears in a historical context closely related to the experiences and struggles of African-American women in efforts to fight for gender justice.²⁴ She interpreted the verse based on gender equality principles.²⁵ So far, the system of male relations men and women in society often

¹⁹Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Inside*, h. 4; Safet Bektovic, “(Post) modern Islamic philosophy: challenges and perspectives”, *Journal of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 23, no. 3 (2012).

²⁰Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an and Woman* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajai Bakti, 1992), h. x; Suha Taji-Farouki, *Modern Muslims and The Qur'an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), h. 99; Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Inside*, h. 9.

²¹Abu Bakar, “Women on The Text According to Amina Wadud Muhsin in Qur'an and Women”, *Al-Ihkam* 13, no. 1 (2018): h.167-186.

²²Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Inside*, h. 2 & 113-119; Irma Riyani, “Muslim Feminist Hermeneutical Method to Method to the Quran (Analytical Study to the Method of Amina Wadud)”, *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 21, no. 2 (2017): h. 298-314.

²³Charles Kurzman, *Wacana Islam Liberal: Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer tentang Isu-isu Global*, trans. Bahrul Ulum and Heri Junaedi (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001).

²⁴Affur Rochman Sya'rani “Islamic Feminist Reading on the Qur'an: A Comparative Study in Amina Wadud's and Muhammad Talbi's Interpretation of Q. 4: 34”, *Agama dan Feminisme, Proceeding* presented in International Conference on Feminisme: Persilangan Identitas, Agensi dan Politik on 23-24-September 2016 at Arion Swiss-Belhotel Kamang, Jakarta and published by Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta, h. 23.

²⁵Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an and Woman, Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), h. xii-xiii; Mohammed Talbi, *Ummat al-*

reflects patriarchal biases. As an implication, women lack justice more proportionally. Her work is intellectual anxiety she experienced regarding gender injustice in her community. One reason is the influence of the ideologies of Qur'anic interpretation, which are considered patriarchal biases. In the book, Amina Wadud tries to deconstruct and reconstruct the classical interpretation model, a condition with a patriarchal bias.

According to her, what needs to be re-criticized is when the interpreter interprets the words *nafs wahidah*, *min*, and *zauj* in QS al-Nisa'/4: 1 & al-Rum/30: 21. According to her, both verses show the main elements of the human version of the story Al-Qur'an. But usually generally understood as the creation of Adam and Eve. There is no clarity understanding in the al-Qur'an regarding the word *nafs*, whether Adam or Eve. Because when viewed from the root word *nafs* is *mu'annas* (feminine), but why do traditional commentators interpret it Adam (male).²⁶ This kind of understanding is also found in past interpretations. One of the underlying assumptions used by her mindset is that the Qur'an is the highest source of values that equitably equals men and women. Therefore, Islamic commands or instructions contained in the Qur'an must be interpreted in specific historical contexts. In other words, the socio-historical-cultural situation when the Qur'anic verse went down, the commentator must pay attention when interpreting the Qur'an. Not only that, but even the cultural background surrounding a mufassir also needs to be considered because it greatly influences the interpretation of the Qur'an.

C. The Holistic Method in the View of Amina Wadud Muhsin

The spirit of egalitarianism in the reading of the al-Qur'an verses about divorce generally applies the concept of *munasabah* or interpretation holistic.²⁷ She established "hermeneutic of *tawhid*" which means a holistic method.²⁸ She views that gender is closely related to the concept of *tauhid*. She built her hermeneutics on five types of critical analysis. First, questioning in what context a verse was revealed. Second, observing various topics on the Qur'an. Third, analyzing the diction and syntactic structure of the Qur'an. Fourth, making an explanation based on the Qur'anic principles. Fifth, positioning the Qur'an as the life worldview.²⁹ Wadud named those five principles as *tawhidi* hermeneutics.

Wasat (Tunis: Sarar li al-Nasyr, 1996), h. 115-117. Masyithah Mardhatillah, "Keberpihakan Al-Qur'an terhadap Perempuan (Studi atas Hermeneutika Amina Wadud)", *AJIQS: Asyasyahid Journal of Islamic and Quranic Studies 1*, no. 2 (2019), h. 22-49.

²⁶Amina Wadud Muhsin, "Qur'an and Women", in Charles Kurzman (ed.), h. 128. See also Amina Wadud, *Wanita di dalam al Qur'an*, Trans. (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 1994), h. 25. Rini, "Kontekstualisasi Tafsir Feminis Amina Wadud pada Masyarakat Islam di Indonesia", *Fokus : Jurnal Kajian Keislaman dan Kemasyarakatan 4*, no. 01 (2019): h. 67-90.

²⁷Masyithah Mardhatillah, "Semangat Egalitarian al-Qur'an dalam Otoritas Menginisiasi dan Prosedur Perceraian", *Esensia, 16*, no. 1 (2015): h. 7.

²⁸Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an and Woman*, h. 5; Alimatul Qibtiyah, "Mapping of Muslims' Understandings on Gender Issues in Islam at Six Universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia", *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies 56*, no. 2 (2018): h. 305-340.

²⁹Amina Wadud Muhsin, "Qur'an and Women", in Charles Kurzman (ed.), h. 129.

In contrast, Talbi acknowledges a historical reading on the Qur'an by which one must examine the socio-historical and anthropological context of particular verse, in order to derive its goals of sharia (the substantive values/objectives behind a verse).³⁰ Among these theories, namely the normative approach with a narrative, sociological, theological, hermeneutic approach with some arguments and historical approaches. The emergence of many approaches and theories can be said to respond to Muslim societies' conditions that place women as subordinated beings. With this approach, it is hoped that the Qur'anic concept of humanity leads as men and women will be equal as the moral message of the Qur'an and the hadiths.³¹

Amina's thought in interpreting the Qur'an was influenced by the thought of "Neo-Modernism" Fazlur Rahman, especially about the style of interpreting the Qur'an with holistic interpretation methods, which emphasized the study of normative aspects of the Qur'anic teachings.³² Amina agreed to Rahman's criticism and emphasized the consequences, namely the marginalization of women's position in the realm of Qur'anic interpretation. She carried out internal criticism (*al-naqd al-dakhili*) as Muhammad Syahrur did. In this case, she put more emphasis on interpretation in the context of gender equality.³³ It has an impact on the social situation of women. Although Islam provides an equal position with men, it does not necessarily indicate Muslim women's independence.

The urgency of understanding the Qur'an as a whole and holistic, because the Qur'an is not a collection of writings has a clear relationship between chapters and sub-chapters. Instead, the Qur'an was revealed following the guidance of the situation and the conditions faced.³⁴ In this connection, Amina hopes that with the holistic method, the Qur'an's interpretation will be obtained that has meaning in harmony with the context of modern life. The content and general principles which form the basis of the Qur'an remain eternal, because these principles are not limited to the historical situation when the Qur'an was revealed, but are always in line with the development of human life and civilization.

1. Discovering General Principles

To discover the general principles of the Qur'an as an effort to contextualize women's current situation, Amina adapted the Rahman's double movement theory.

³⁰Mohammed Talbi, *Ummat al-Wasat*, h. 118-119; Abdullah Zubaidi, "Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Muhammad Talbi (Socio-Historical Hermeneutics)", *Hermeneutik Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 12, no. 1 (2019): h. 110-161.

³¹Amaliatulwalidain, "Diskursus Gender: Tela'ah terhadap Pemikiran Amina Wadud", *Tamaddun* 15, no. 1 (2015): h. 80; Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, et. al., *Rekonstruksi Metodologis Wacana Kesetaraan Gender dalam Islam* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002), h. v.

³²See Khoiruddin Nasution, *Fazlur Rahman tentang Perempuan* (Yogyakarta: Tafazza dan Academis, 2002), h. 120.

³³Muhammad Yusuf, "Bacaan Kontemporer: Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Muhammad Syahrur", *Jurnal Diskursus Islam* 2, no. 1 (2014): h. 58.

³⁴QS al-Isra / 17: 106. Mudofir, "Marriage in Islam and Gender Equality Problem of Gender Equality: A Philosophical Perspective", *Ulumuna, Journal of Islamic Studies* 22, no. 1 (2018): h. 57-76.

The first step is to start with a concrete case in the Qur'an to find a general principle. The second step is to depart from the general principles used as a primary reference in determining the *weltanschauung* of the Qur'an,³⁵ namely social and economic justice, and the principle of equality. When interpreting the word '*zawj*', the purpose of Amina Wadud is similar to Bugis culture. In the gender partnership culture, a married couple is proactive in taking a role together.³⁶ Both *hausban* and wife are equal partners.

In the process of her research, she also examined further on the textual analysis aspects of the Qur'anic verses. In this way, Amina focused on understanding the composition of the language of the Qur'an, which has a double meaning. This method aims to describe the purpose of the text accompanied by 'prior texts' (perceptions, circumstances, backgrounds) of people who interpret the Qur'an about women as has happened in many verses that result in the marginalization of women. Just as women must serve their husbands, wives must obey their husbands and the like.

Amina used one of these methods in the word *qanitat* in the case of *nushuz*.³⁷ Wadud interpreted *nusyuz* with an egalitarian perspective. According to her, it is used in the Qur'an concerning both wife and husband. This word means 'good', describes a characteristic or personality of people who believe in God. This word applies to men (Qs. Al-Baqarah / 2: 238, Ali Imran / 3: 17, and women Qs. Al-Nisa' / 4: 34, Qs. Al-Ahzab / 33: 34). Then in terms of composition, these verses show that obedience is advocating personal response, not following external orders (outside oneself). Because the Qur'an uses *nushuz* for men and women, the word *qanitat* cannot be interpreted as 'disobedience to husband', but as Amina quoted from Sayyid Qutb, it means "a state of chaos among marriages" that is the existence of harmony in husband family,³⁸ as in Qs. al-Nisa' / 4: 34 and 128. It leads to the solution to the problem through four stages: 1) verbal solution, 2) through arbiters or *hakam* (a mediator), 3) separation solution, and 4) beating solution. Whereas the view of life emphasized through this special event is, first, the Qur'an emphasizes harmonious conditions and emphasizes the importance of restoring Harmony. Second, if subsequent disciplinary action is followed as stated in the Qur'an, it seems that harmony is reached before the final step, and third, it must be done not to create violence between partners³⁹ In Islam, divorce is the last alternative solution in resolving household difficulties after going through stages or processes of peace and reconciliation.

³⁵Muhammad Yusuf, "Memahami *Weltanschauung* Al-Qur'an: Perspektif Pendekatan Kontemporer", *Tanzil: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran* 1, no. 1 (2015): h. 41-52.

³⁶Muhammad Yusuf, "Relevansi Nilai-Nilai Budaya Bugis dan Pemikiran Ulama Bugis: Studi Tafsir Berbahasa Bugis Karya MUI Sulsel", *el Harakah* 15, no. 2 (2013): h. 207.

³⁷Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, h. 74-47; Nur Syamsiah, "Wacana Kesetaraan Gender", *Sipakalebbi' 1*, no. 2 (2014): h. 265-301.

³⁸Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, h. 75; Afifur Rochman Sya'rani, "A Hermeneutic Reading of Qur'anic Exegesis: A Comparison of Amina Wadud's and Mohammed Talbi's Interpretations of Q.4: 34", *Shūḥuf* 9, no. 2 (2016): h. 193-214.

³⁹Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an and Woman*, h. 136-138.

2. There is no Method of Interpretation that is Truly Objective

According to Amina, there has not been any method of interpretation that is truly objective. Each interpretation tends to reflect subjective choices⁴⁰ because an interpreter is often trapped in his gambling-prejudices, so the text's content is reduced and distorted. It was here that she tried to research the Qur'an interpretation, especially those related to gender issues. The purpose of the research conducted by Amina is that the interpretation of the Qur'an has meaning in the lives of modern women. Every understanding of a text, including the Holy Quran, is strongly influenced by the interpreter's perspective, cultural background, and prejudices that lay behind them. That's what she called prior text.⁴¹ Because without pre-understanding, the text will be mute or die.⁴² In this context, we need a methodological set of meaning texts that achieve the maximum possible objectivity.

That interpretation not only reproduces the meaning of the text but also produces the meaning of the text. Interpretation of the scriptures is not only reproductive but also productive. It seems that she wanted to be creative and innovative in interpreting the Qur'an. This hermeneutic model looks similar to Gadamer.⁴³ They want to make a text not only reproduce its meaning but also produce new meaning along with and in line with its cultural background interpreter.⁴⁴ That way, the text becomes alive and rich in meaning. The text will be a dynamic meaning that is always contextual and the development of human culture and civilization.⁴⁵

Even though the text is single, if many readers read it, the results will vary. Amina Wadud firmly said: "Even though each reading is unique, the understanding of various readers of the single text will converge on many points".⁴⁶ That is because there is no method of interpretation that is truly objective. Each interpretation tends to reflect subjective choices. In this case, she said: "No method of Qur'anic exegesis is

⁴⁰Amina Wadud, "Qur'an and Woman", in Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, h. 128. Nur Said, "Hermeneutika Amina Wadud sebagai Wadud sebagai Basisi Tafsir Harmony Adil Gender di Indonesia", *Hermeneutik Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir 11*, no. 1 (2019): h.128-143.

⁴¹Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), h. 127. Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, "Contemporary Islamic Thought in Indonesian and Malay World: Islam Liberal, Islam Hadhari, and Islam Progresif", *Journal of Indonesian Islam 05*, no. 01 (2011): h. 91-129.

⁴²M. Abduh Wahid, "Tafsir Liberatif Farid Esack", *Tafsire 4*, no. 2 (2016): h. 149-164.

⁴³Nancy J. Moules, "Hermeneutic Inquiry: Paying Heed to History and Hermes An Ancestral, Substantive, and Methodological Tale", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods 1*, no. 3 (2002): h. 1-21.

⁴⁴See Pdt. E. Girrit Singgih, *Mengantisipasi Masa Depan; Berteologi dalam Konteks di Awal Milenium III* (Jakarta: PT BPK Gunung Mulia, 2005), h. 36-37 & 40-42.

⁴⁵Ahmad Solahuddin, "Epistemologi Hermeneutika Hassan Hanafi", *Living I*, no. 1 (2018): h. 151-175.

⁴⁶Amina Wadud Muhsin, "Qur'an and Woman", in Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, h. 127. Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, "Contemporary Islamic Thought, h. 91-129.

fully objective. Each exegete makes some subjective choices".⁴⁷ That is why understanding the Qur'an's general principles will make it easier for readers to capture the principal signatures of the Qur'an's objectives in the form of welfare and social justice.

3. Understanding the Basic Principles

Efforts to get out of the actions of subordination and marginalization of women need steps to break the old reading methods. To obtain a relatively objective interpretation, an interpreter must return to the Qur'anic basic principles as a paradigm framework. The need for a commentator must capture the fundamental principles that can not be changed in the text of the Qur'an. Then, do a unique reflection to make interpretive creations according to society's demands in his day. With this endeavor, people can understand weltanschauung or world view from the text of the Qur'an.⁴⁸ To realize this, the interpreter must reconstruct a reading method that can open the veil and blind that covers women's rights.

Text for Gender-Specific Language According to Amina Wadud, one of the elements for interpreting and understanding various texts is the so-called "prior text (background, perceptions, and circumstances) of individual interpreters language and cultural context where the text is interpreted. On the one hand, the prior text shows the variety of variations naturally found among the commentators, and on the other hand, pays attention to the uniqueness of each interpretation. It is the prior text that broadens the perspective and conclusions of the interpretation. It also shows the individualist interpretation. It cannot be said whether the interpretation is good or bad. However, when individual interpreters and their views of life and specific accompanying prior texts say that the interpretation is the only one that can be accepted or obtained. This attitude will face other interpretations, different situations, circumstances, time (conditions), looking for interpretations that are following their context.⁴⁹ Amina is not satisfied with the interpretations of ulama that seem gender-biased. For this reason, he sought a method of reading texts that attempted to break the chain of "men's arrogance" in interpreting verses about women.

4. Categorization of Qur'anic Interpretation

The competence and tendency of interpreters determine models of interpretation. Oriented interpretation also determines the substance or meaning produced, in addition to the interpreter's pre-understanding, and this looks in the subjectivity of the classical interpreter. In this connection, Amina classifies the tendency of classical clerical interpretation methods in three patterns, namely: 1) Traditional methods carry out atomistic interpretations following the order of verses in the Ottoman Manuscripts⁵⁰; 2) Reactive interpretation method, namely interpretation which is a reaction to many obstacles experienced by women who

⁴⁷Vanessa Rivera de la Fuente, "Feminist Hermeneutics of The Quran and Epistemic Justice", *Analyze – Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies*, no. 4 (2015): h. 39-57.

⁴⁸Muhammad Yusuf, "Memahami Weltanschauung Al-Qur'an, h. 41-52.

⁴⁹Dedi Junaedi, Muhammadong, Sahliah, "Metodologi Tafsir Amina Wadud dalam Menafsirkan Al-Qur'an", *Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (2019): h. 654-665.

⁵⁰See Amina Wadud Muhsin, "Qur'an and Woman" i Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, h. 128.

considered to originate from the Qur'an;. 3) Holistic/hermeneutic approach,⁵¹ this is intended as a way out to cover the lack of methods offered by traditional thinkers and reformist thinkers. This is one contribution to knowledge from research conducted by her.

According to Amina Wadud, traditional interpretations use certain subjects following the interests and abilities of interpreter, such as law (*fiqh*), *nahwu*, *sharf*, history, sufism, and so forth. This kind of interpretation model is more atomistic, that is, the interpretation is done verse by verse and not thematic, so the discussion seems partial, there is no attempt to discuss specific themes according to the Qur'an itself. There may be discussions about the relationship between verse one and another. However, the absence of the application of hermeneutics or methodology that connects ideas, syntactic structures, or similar themes makes readers fail to grasp the Qur'an's versatility.

Furthermore, according to Amina Wadud, this interpretation of the traditional model seems exclusive, written only by men. It is not surprising that only the awareness and experience of men are accommodated in it. Even though the experience, vision, and perspective of women must also be included in it so that there is no patriarchal bias that can trigger and spur gender inequality in family or community life. Whether we realize it or not, people often use religious legitimacy to validate their behavior and actions. What Peter L. Berger said is true that religion is commonly used as the highest legitimacy because it is a sacred canopy.⁵²

The reactive interpretation is an interpretation that contains modern thinkers' reactions to some obstacles experienced by women what is considered to originate from the Qur'an. The issues discussed and the methods often arise from feminist and rationalist ideas without a comprehensive analysis of the relevant verses. Thus, even though the spirit he carries is liberation, there is no relationship with the source of Islamic ideology and theology, the Qur'an.

The holistic interpretation, that is, interpretations that use comprehensive interpretation methods and relate them to various social, moral, economic, political issues, including women's issues that emerged in the era of modernity. It is where Amina Wadud's position is in interpreting Qur'anic verses. This type of reading model is similar to what is offered by Fazlur Rahman. He argues that the verses of the Qur'an that revealed at a particular time in history the general and special circumstances that accompany them use expressions that are relatively following the circumstances surrounding them. Therefore, it cannot be reduced by the historical situation at the time it was revealed. With this motto, she argued that to maintain the relevance of the Qur'an to the development of human life, the Qur'an must be re-interpreted continuously.

It is in line with the contemporary reading of Muhammad Syahrur, a liberal-controversial thinker from Syria in his book *al-Kitab wa Alquran; Qira'ah Mu'ashirah*. The idea is one of the logical consequences of the dictum, which states that the Qur'an is *shalihun li kulli zaman wa makan*. As a manifestation, the Qur'an

⁵¹See Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 33-34. Karimatul Khasanah, "Revisiting Gender Thought in Islamic Studies", *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 6, no. 1 (2017): h. 43-54.

⁵²Titus Hielm, "Peter L. Berger and the sociology of religion", *Journal of Classical Sociology* 18, no. 3 (2018).

interpretation should always be open to criticism at any time to avoid *taqdis al-afkar al-diniyyah* (the sacredness of religious thought)⁵³ - borrowing the term Muhammad Arkoun - which embraces intellectual creativity in dialoguing the Qur'an in every context.

D. Reconstruction of Interpretation Methodology

After she criticized various methods and previous interpretations, she offered the hermeneutics method of the Qur'an, which she said had never been done by anyone else. The hermeneutics model is one form of interpretation method that intends to obtain a conclusion about the meaning of a text or verse in its operation. In this method, an interpreter must always connect three aspects, namely: First, in what context that the text was written. If it is related to the Qur'an, then in what context is the verse revealed. Second, what is the composition of the text (verse), how is it expressed, what does it say. Third, how the entire text (verse), *weltanschauung*, or view of life.⁵⁴ Often this difference in interpretation can be traced to variations in the emphasis of these three aspects.

In addition to the hermeneutic method, she also uses the traditional interpretation method of the Qur'anic Interpretation of the Qur'an to analyze all the verses that give specific instructions to women, both mentioned separately or together with men. As a technical step, when interpreting Qur'anic verses, the three principles can be further elaborated as follows: that is, each verse that is to construe is analyzed:

1. In its context.
2. In the context of the discussion of the same topic in the Qur'an.
3. Regarding the matter of the same language and syntactic structure used in all parts of the Qur'an.
4. Regarding the attitude of really holding fast to the principles of the Qur'an.
5. In the context of the Qur'an as *weltanschauung* or worldview.⁵⁵

Although the hermeneutic model is claimed to be new, with full honesty, she finally admitted that he was inspired and even deliberately used the method Rahman had offered. In this case, she said: "Thus, I tried to use the method of Qur'anic interpretation proposed by Fazlur Rahman (Pakistan United States 1919-1988). By adopting the double motion carried by Rahman, Amina continued her obsession to show that the Qur'an is a holy book, who positions women as equals with men, continues to strive to open the fog of the interpretation of the domination of male clerics in the classical period which subordinates women.

1. Application of Interpretation Offered

The following are examples of the application of the hermeneutic model offered by Amina Wadud, such as the origins of humankind and the equality of men and women. Although there are differences between the treatment of men and the

⁵³Muhammad Rikza Muqtada, "Utopia Khilāfah Islāmiyyah: Studi Tafsir Politik Mohammed Arkoun", *Jurnal Theologia* 28, no 1 (2017), h. 145-164

⁵⁴Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 36; Charles Kurzman, *Wacana*, h. 188.

⁵⁵Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 38.

treatment of women when the Qur'an discusses human creation, she believes there is no difference in the essential values carried by men and women. Therefore, there is no indication that women have fewer or more limitations than men. Gender status is not to determine its strengths and weaknesses, but rather to create mutualism.

All the Qur'anic records regarding human creation begin with the origins of the first mothers: "O son of Adam, do not ever be deceived by Satan as he has taken your mothers and daughters out of heaven" (Surat al-Anfal/7: 27). Amina Wadud explained that we consider our first father to be similar to us. Although this assumption is correct, the purpose of the discussion is to emphasize one thing; their creation process. After the creation of these two creatures, all humans were created in the womb of their mother.⁵⁶ Thus, the discrimination argument that departs from the origin of creation is automatically eliminated, so a more relevant and more human perspective is needed.

In discussing the equality of men and women, Amina draws her to the theological root of her problem, namely the origin of human creation, as explained in Qs. al-Nisa'/ 4: 1 and Qs. al-Rum / 30: 21. According to her, what needs to be criticized is when the interpreters interpret the words *nafs wahidah*, the words *min* and *zawj*. The term *nafs* refers to the origin of all humans in general which technically does not mean masculine or feminine and is an essential part of every human being.⁵⁷ Both of these verses show the main elements of the Qur'anic version of the origin of humanity. But usually, in general, is often understood as the creation of Adam and Eve. There is no clear understanding of the Qur'an regarding the word *nafs*, whether Adam or Eve. Because if judging from the root, the word *nafs* is *muannath* (feminine), but why do traditional interpreters interpret Adam (male)?⁵⁸ It is an unfinished workshop and needs to get serious attention.

The scholars interpreted the word *nafs wahidah* with Adam's body. In contrast, the word *minha* is interpreted as 'Adam's left rib,' which based on understanding the hadith text about creation above. It seems that we need to be examined more carefully here. First, textually the hadith does not indicate the interpretation of Qs. al-Nisa; / 4: 1. Second, contextually from the commentators of the hadith, such as Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in *Fath al-Bari*,⁵⁹ al-Kirmani in *Syarh al-Kirmani*,⁶⁰ al-Qastallani in *Irshad al-Shari* 'or Imam Nawawi in *Syarh Muslim*,⁶¹ does not explain the background of the

⁵⁶Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 16.

⁵⁷*Nafs* linguistically interpreted as 'self' or 'spirit', Ibrahim Anis, *Mu'jam al-Wasith*, Vol. I (Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1972), h. 940; Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 57.

⁵⁸The commentators who hold such views are: al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, al-Alusi, Wahbah al-Zuhaili, al-Qurtubi, al-Fakhr al-Razi, al-Zamakhshari, Abu Su'ud, al-Khazin, Ibnu Muhammad Abd al-Haq, Ahmad al-Sawi al-Maliki. Read more Ahmad Fudhaili, *Perempuan di Lembaran Suci; Kritikatas Hadis-hadis dan Alquran* (Yogyakarta: Pilar Relegia, 2005), h. 198.

⁵⁹Ibnu Hajar al-Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari bi Syarh al-Bukhari*, Vol. XIII (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qahirah, 1978), h. 172.

⁶⁰Al-Kirmani, *al-Kirmani Syarh Shahih al-Bukhari*, Juz. XIII (Beirut: Dar al-Ihya' al-Turas al-Arabi, 1991), h. 228.

⁶¹Imam al-Nawawi, *Shahih Muslim bi Syarh al-Nawawi*, Juz X (Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Misriyah, n.d.), h. 58-59.

tradition as an interpretation of Qs. al-Nisa / 4: 1. Third, the interpretation is the *ijtihad* of *mufassir* to explain the purpose of the word *nafs wahidah*. In that case, not all interpreters have the same *ijtihad*.

The word *nafs* in the Qur'an shows that all human beings come from the same origin. In the Qur'an, it has never stated that Allah. Beginning of human creation with the *nafs* in the sense of Adam, a man. The origin of human creation, according to the Qur'anic version is actually never stated in gender terms. Amin Wadud firmly stated: The Qur'anic version of the creation of humankind does not express in gender terms.⁶² The term *nafs* is related to the essence of human male and female, which is a fundamental determinant of its existence and not gender.

Likewise, the word *zawj*, is neutral, because conceptually the language also does not show the form of *muannaths* (feminine) or *mudhakkar* (masculine). The term *zawj* which is plural *azwaj*, is also used to refer to plants (Qs. Al-Rahman / 55: 51) and animals (Qs. Hud/11: 40) in addition to humans. What is questionable: why do traditional *mufassirs* fall to interpreting the word *zawj* with his wife, namely Eve, who is female? Mufassirs, like al-Zamakhsyari and others, did this because they relied on the Bible.⁶³ In explaining the word of Allah. Qs. al-Nisa / 4: 1, the author emphasizes his explanation of the Meaning and Meaning of the words *min* and *nafs*. The word *min* in Arabic has at least two meanings, which can mean 'from' to indicate the Meaning of extracting something from something else. It can also mean 'equal' or 'like' (*min al-jinsiyyah*). However, why do classical-traditional commentators fall on the choice of meaning that *min* means 'from'? Why not *min*, which means 'kind'? Whereas in other verses, for example, Qs. al-Rum / 30:21 and al-Taubah / 9: 128, when the words *min* and *nafs* are plural *anfus*, *min* is defined as 'the same kind' (*min jinsiyyah*).

According to Amina Wadud, the word *min* has two functions. First, it is used as a preposition 'from', to show the meaning of extracting something from something else. Second, it is used to say 'the same type or type'. Every use of the word 'min' in verse has been interpreted in those meanings, so the results are different.⁶⁴ The meaning of the term *nafs* can be used in general and technical terms. The Qur'an never uses the term to denote creatures other than humans. In technical use, the word *nafs* in the Qur'an shows that all human beings have the same origin.⁶⁵ Although in terms of grammar, the word *nafs* is a feminine word (*muannaths*), but conceptually the *nafs* contains a neutral meaning, not for men nor women.

In the Qur'anic account of creation, Allah never planned to start human creation in the form of a man, and never also referred to the origin of humankind as Adam.⁶⁶ The Qur'an never even states that God started human creation with the *nafs*

⁶² Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 19-20.

⁶³ Ahmad Fudhaili, *Perempuan di Lembaran Suci*, h. 195-220.

⁶⁴ Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 18.

⁶⁵ Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 19.

⁶⁶ Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 20.

of Adam, a man.⁶⁷ This thing that ignored is very important because the creation of the human version of the Qur'an is not stated in gender terms.

E. Analysis

If mapped, Amina is in two periods. First, the period Amina appeared as an academic who produced interpretations and entered into the struggle for the meaning of the Qur'an. Second, when Amina came the level of action that symbolically opposes male domination. In the first period, she created an interpretation methodological framework that was heavily influenced by Fazlur Rahman. However, it seems that she was not very patient struggling for too long in the academic world. Therefore, she stepped in the second period by becoming the Imam of Friday prayers. At the level of action, criticism of the domination of men and subordination of women, he led when Friday prayers are performed at church, touching on two sensitive matters. First, when leading Friday prayers and secondly, when Friday prayer was conducted at church. The two caused pro and contra among Muslim scholars. Both are considered unusual in the Muslim tradition of understanding. In discovering the general principles of the Qur'an as an effort to contextualize women's current situation, Amina adapted the Rahman's double movement theory.

Many criticisms were leveled at Amina because the courageous act was considered to be counter-productive to the women's movement that had been under construction. As if women's problem is only limited to the struggle for position in the area of worship. However, it must be admitted honestly, Amina managed to fight over interpretations known to be very misogynistic. she took the issue of women's leadership in prayer because she wanted to seize authority in the mosque. After all, the mosque was an area that had never been touched by feminists. Besides that, women's leadership in public areas such as being president and so on has become commonplace.⁶⁸ Amina wanted to enter an area that has never been considered by feminists and seize the authorities' leadership. Finally, what she did was counter-productive, because she did the action, not in the mosque but the Church.

In principle, what Amina Wadud wanted is to capture the spirit of the Qur'an and the Qur'anic ideas as a whole, holistic and integrative.⁶⁹ So, lest an interpretation is trapped informal and partial legal texts, but rather emphasize how to capture the whole idea and spirit behind the text. The Qur'anic real interpretation problem is how to interpret the text of the Qur'an, which is limited to an unlimited context because the context is always developing. Moreover, at the same time, we want the Qur'an always is relevant to the development and demands of the times. However, it should be noted that there are language and prior text problems in the Qur'an interpretation. An

⁶⁷ Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Qur'an*, h. 20.

⁶⁸ Wafda Vivid Izziyana, "Pendekatan Feminisme dalam Studi Hukum Islam", *Istawa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, Volume 2, no.1 (2016); h.139-158.

⁶⁹ Aspandi, "Hermeneutik Aminah Wadud: Upaya Pembacaan Kontekstual Teks Keagamaan", *Legitima 1*, no. 1 (2018): h. 52.

interpretation wants to reveal the meaning of the text itself. However, it must be realized at once that this cannot be truly objective because there is a great distance, especially the Qur'an, with today's readers. Therefore, it is necessary if the reader or interpreter is now also very influenced by socio-cultural conditions, backgrounds, perspectives, and even prejudices. That is what is called prior text. Because without pre-existing understanding, the text will mute or die.

Amina focused on understanding the composition of the language of the Qur'an, which has a double meaning. Amina Wadud said that the holistic method is something new. If it is mapped, the holistic method initiated connected with tawhid is only a new term, but not substantially new. The holistic method substance is the science of munasabah, which has long been known in the tradition of Quranic science. Al-Quran experts call it inter-relationship interpretation techniques.⁷⁰ It has long been known as the al-Qur'an yufassir ba'dhuhu ba'dhan. This rule has been known since Ibn Abbas, followed by Abu Bakr al-Naisaburi (d. 324 H).⁷¹ The expert of Ushu Fiqh, al-Syatibi (1388 AD / 790 H) used this technique in understanding texts. Without Amina's holistic method theory, Muslims have recognized that tanasub and the tafsir scholars have implemented it.

Amina's criticism of the atomistic system interpretation in the past has been recognized by commentators other than her. In responding to the dynamics of life, a thematic method was born.⁷² According to her, to avoid this potential of relativism, an interpreter must be able to grasp fundamental principles that cannot change in the Qur'anic text itself. Then the interpreter makes a unique reflection to make interpretations following the demands of the people of his day. So, that interpretation will always be flexible, but it does not lose its basic principles. There is no definitive interpretation definitive.⁷³ He quoted the words "Alî bin Abî Tâlib: "Al-Qur'an was written on two straight lines and between the covers, he didn't speak by itself, it needs an interpreter and the interpreter is human."⁷⁴ There is no method of interpretation that is truly objective. Each interpretation tends to reflect subjective choices. In this case, she said: "No method of Qur'anic exegesis is fully objective. Each exegete makes some subjective choices. What Amina's statement not only shows is the existence of the subjectivity of interpreters in understanding the text of the Qur'an. Of course, that applies to Amina herself, although she proposes a holistic method of understanding texts. Wadud propose the hermeneutic method of the Qur'an as offered

⁷⁰Muhammad Yusuf, *Horizon Kajian Al-Quran: Pendekatan dan Metode* (Makassar, Alauddin Press, 2017), h. 46-47.

⁷¹Muhammad Yusuf, *Horizon Kajian Al-Quran*, h. 46-47.

⁷²Uun Yusufa, "Kerangka Paradigmatik Metode Tafsir Tematik Akademik: Kasus Disertasi UIN Yogyakarta dan Jakarta", *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 4, no. 2, (2015): h. 191-214

⁷³Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), h.199.

⁷⁴Wadud, *Inside*, h. 197. See also Mutrofin, "Kesetaraan Gender dalam Pandangan Amina Wadud dan Riffat Hasan", *Teosofi* 3 no. 1 (2013): h. 236-266.

by Fazlur Rahman.⁷⁵ One of Wadud's goals was to use this method is to reinterpret the meaning of the Qur'an.⁷⁶ He tried to do a methodological reconstruction of how to interpret the Qur'an to produce a gender-sensitive and gender-just interpretation.

Feminist interpretation is a separate genre that emerged in the contemporary era when gender became a global issue. This interpretation paradigm departs from the assumption that the basic principles (universal doctrine) of the Quran in the relationship between men and women are justice, equality (*al-musawah*), *al-ma'ruf* (appropriateness), *shura* (deliberation). So that the products of classical interpretation that contradict these principles will be considered inappropriate. It is mainly applied to respond to the contemporary context because the situation and conditions are entirely different from those of the past. The analytical model used in the paradigm of feminist interpretation is gender analysis, which clearly distinguishes between nature as something that cannot change and gender as a changeable social construction. Naturally, then the hermeneutic approach with the thematic interpretation method is finally an option in examining verses on gender relations. Because with such a methodology, it is hoped that the product of interpretation will be more intersubjective and critical in seeing the problem of gender relations.⁷⁷ Amina's hermeneutic thinking was influenced by other hermeneutic figures, such as Fazlur Rahman and Gadamer. When the hermeneutic is still at the contextualized level, it is still flexible in dealing with changes. However, if she followed Rahman's hudud theory, Amina could almost be trapped when dealing with cultural diversity in society.

However, Amina's understanding is only one of the many possible meanings of the Quran. Never mind the language of the Quran, Arabic is a very rich language, so limiting one meaning is just a trap. The Hermeneutics of Fazlur Rahman's and Gadamer's understanding, which were used as sources of inspiration by Amina, within certain limits experience trapped. Amina's trapping can also occur when she responds to the socio-cultural reality of society. When Amina touched the worship aspect, Amina was trapped in counter-productive and high tension, especially when dealing with fuqaha. An expert on ushul fiqh as rational as Najmuddin at-Thufi⁷⁸ stated that *ijtihad* to seek benefit in worship matters is impossible. What is possible is in muamalat cases. That was where Amina was offside when leading Friday prayers. The problem of praying at church is still the pros and cons of the ulama. Some allow, and some do not qualify with the following considerations of their respective arguments. The text may not contradict *maslahat*, as the texts came to serve as a guide for humankind's benefit. What is very likely to happen is the failure of the interpreter

⁷⁵Mutrofin, "Kesetaraan Gender, h. 244.

⁷⁶Amina Wadud Muhsin, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), h. 7.

⁷⁷Eni Zulaiha, "Tafsir Kontemporer: Metodologi, Paradigma dan Standar Validitasnya", *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama dan Sosial Budaya* 2, 1 (2017): h. 81-94.

⁷⁸Mustafa Zaid, *Al-Maslahah fi Tasyri Al-Islam wa Najmuddin at-Thuufi* (Kairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1964), h. 127-132.

to reconcile the text and *maslahat*⁷⁹ However, in the matter of worship, there is no *ijtihad*. At this point, Amina takes action that goes beyond the thinking tradition of her predecessors, resulting in a global and robust reaction.

F. Conclusion

After researching previous Qur'anic interpretations about gender, Amina Wadud concluded that no method of Qur'anic exegesis is fully objective. Each exegete makes some subjective choices. It means she could not be objective in interpreting the Qur'an. She expected an interpretation that leads to a change from a conservative understanding of a reformist interpretation. That leads to the realization of the social structure of an Islamic society that is not dominated by patriarchy, does not differentiate women and men based on sex, and without social presumptions that cannot be justified. It must be admitted that the spirit of the Qur'an to be conveyed was quite prominent. Likewise, the hermeneutic methodology offered is an alternative in developing and blending gender-sensitive interpretation discourse. However, the offer is not new at all, because Fazlur Rahman has initiated it. Her hermeneutics is influenced by the thoughts of Fazlur Rahman and Gadamer. This spirit and challenge, besides aiming at reforming Muslim women, also invites men to realize that Islam itself never mentions the superiority between men and women. Even a history of the hadith narrated by Thabrani and Ibn Majah states that the best man is the best treatment for his wife.

An important point that can be concluded from Amina Wadud's thoughts is that he wants to dismantle old thoughts or even myths caused by interpreting patriarchal bias. Through the reconstruction of her interpretation methodology because it is not in line with the basic principles and spirit of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is very fair in terms of men and women. It's just that this has become distorted by a biased interpretation of patriarchy, especially reinforced by a highly patriarchal political system and society. Her view of functional relations is a gender relationship formed through an equal division of roles between men and women. The purpose of the relationship is none other than maintaining human balance in carrying out the mission of God's caliphate on earth. The Qur'an does not provide qualification parameters between men and women in functional relations unless abstract, namely their charitable deeds (*taqwa*). From these parameters, Amina Wadud concluded that the qualification parameters of functional relationships are relative. Therefore, it would not be excessive if the author says that women's existence is a balancing power for men. A living system cannot be considered balanced and good if it ignores one of them. Both men and women have to be able to work in a symbiotic-mutualistic way (Bugis: *sibaliperri'*) if they want a harmonious life system. That is one of the Qur'an spirits that must be captured to build gender justice in society. When a thought is reactive, the chances are that it will give a casuistic response to gender. In other spaces and opportunities, it is possible to lose relevance when dealing with different realities. Therefore, the thought that is constructed should be anticipatory and take into account the signs of the times to reach a long and flexible era in response to every development that occurs.

⁷⁹M. Solahudin, "Membincang Pendekatan Kontekstualis Abdullah Saeed dalam Memahami al-Qur'an", *QOF* 2, no. 1 (2018), h. 50-64.

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Example in footnotes:

¹Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), h. 18.

²Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West* (Oxford: One World Publications, 1991), h. 190.

³Syeikh Ja’far Subhānī, *Mafāhim Al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Mu’assasah Al-Tarīkh Al-’Arabī, 2010), Juz 5, h. 231.

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4. Translation Books

¹Toshihiko Izutsu, *Relasi Tuhan dan Manusia: Pendekatan Semantik terhadap al-Qur'an*, terj. Agus Fahri Husein dkk (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2003), h. 14.

5. Voluminous book

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