

EPISTEMOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ORIENTALIST THOUGHT AND THE ORIGINALITY OF THE QUR'AN

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Abstract

Differences in views regarding the originality of the Qur'an between classical and contemporary orientalist are increasingly problematic. Library research data collection techniques. The collected data are classified and analyzed using Emmanuel Kant's epistemological theory. The data sources used consisted of primary sources obtained from several orientalist and secondary sources obtained from several previous studies. The result of this study, first, the differences in the view of the orientalist were influenced by three things, namely the main source, methodology, and the validity of the truth used to measure originality of the Qur'an. Second, classical orientalist in their studies tend to be theological in nature, while contemporary orientalist tend to be sociological, anthropological, and do not involve the realm of theology, so the results are more objective. Third, the similarity of some contents of the Qur'an is considered normal because the Qur'an is affirmative and complements existing books.

Keywords: *Epistemological, Orientalist Thought, Originality of the Qur'an*

Abstrak

Perbedaan pandangan mengenai orisinalitas Al-Qur'an antara orientalis klasik dan kontemporer semakin problematis. Orientalis klasik beranggapan Al-Qur'an sebagai karya Muhammad jiplakan dari kitab-kitab sebelumnya, namun berbeda dengan orientalis kontemporer yang beranggapan sebaliknya. Penelitian ini termasuk dalam kajian kualitatif dengan menggunakan teknik pengumpulan data *library research*. Data yang terkumpul diklasifikasikan dan dianalisis menggunakan teori epistemologi Emmanuel Kant. Sumber data yang digunakan terdiri dari sumber primer yang didapat dari karya beberapa orientalis dan sumber sekunder didapat dari beberapa penelitian sebelumnya. Adapun hasil dari penelitian ini, *pertama* perbedaan pandangan para orientalis dipengaruhi oleh tiga hal yaitu sumber utama, metodologi, dan validitas kebenaran yang digunakan untuk mengukur keorisinalitas Al-Qur'an. *Kedua*, orientalis klasik dalam kajiannya cenderung bersifat teologis, sedangkan orientalis kontemporer cenderung sosiologis, antropologis, dan tidak melibatkan ranah teologi, sehingga hasilnya lebih objektif. *Ketiga*, kesamaan beberapa

isi Al-Qur'an dianggap wajar oleh orientalis kontemporer karena Al-Qur'an bersifat penegas dan penyempurna kitab-kitab yang sudah ada.

Kata kunci: Epistemologi, Pemikiran Orientalis, Orisinalitas Al-Qur'an

Introduction

The majority of classical orientalists viewed the Qur'ān as a literary work plagiarized from previous books, but some modern orientalists, such as Karen Armstrong, see it otherwise.¹ Armstrong asserts that the Qur'ān is different from the Bible and the taurah, both in terms of its descent and its sacred language.² Likewise, Huston Smith in his book *The World Religions* that the Qur'ān is a book that is not distorted like previous books and is very difficult to understand and is complete.³ Unlike Armstrong and Huston, Wansbrough believes that the current Qur'an is a conspiracy and a combination of various Muslim traditions in the first two centuries of Islam, even the story of the 'Usmani mushaf is considered fictitious.⁴ The shift in orientalist understanding of the issue of Qur'anic originality is due to the development of methodologies and approaches used in studying the Qur'an.

There are at least two trends in previous research on Qur'ānic originality. First, studies that examine the originality of the Qur'ān from the point of view of classical orientalists, whether in terms of codification,⁵ language, or reading varieties.⁶ As Noldake said, the Qur'ān was written by the Prophet Muhammad and the main source of revelation was the Jewish scriptures.⁷ Second, studies that examine the originality of the Qur'ān from the point of view of contemporary orientalists, whether in terms of revelation, history, or context.⁸ The Qur'ān in Watt's view is the word of God inspired to Muhammad to communicate to humans.⁹ From the existing studies, as far as the author's reading, there is no study that discusses the epistemology of the thought of the originality of the Qur'an in the views of classical and contemporary orientalists comparatively.

¹ Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Menelusik Eksistensi Tuhan, Islam, dan Al-Qur'an Perspektif Karen Armstrong", *Nun* Vol. 7, No. 1, 2021, p. 107-108.

² Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: Prophet for Our Time* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007), p. 7778.

³ Huston Smith, *The World's Religions* (Sanfransisko: Harper Collins Publisher, 1991), p. 268. Habibuna dan Ihdi Aini, "Konsep Kewahyuan Al-Qur'an dalam Kacamata William Montgomery Watt", *Al Fawatih* Vol. 1 No. 1 Januari-Juni, 2020, p. 27.

⁴ Ulfiana, "Otentitas Al-Qur'an Perspektif John Wansbrough", *Ushuluna* Vol. 5, No. 2 Desember 2019, p. 213.

⁵ Muhammad Alwi HS, "Kritik atas Pandangan William M. Watt terhadap Sejarah Penulisan Al-Qur'an", *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* Vol. 21 No. 1 (Januari 2020).

⁶ Muhamad Mahfudin, "Muhammad dan Orisinalitas Al-Qur'an dalam Pandangan Abraham Geiger", *Maghza* Vol. 6 No. 1, Januari-Juni 2021. Agus Darmawan, "Mengkritisi Orientalis yang Meragukan Otentisitas Qur'an", *El-Banat*, Vol. 6 No. 1 Januari-Juni 2016. Wendi Parwanto, "Pemikiran Abraham Geiger tentang AlQur'an (Studi atas Akulturasi Linguistik, Doktrin, dan Kisah dalam Al-Qur'an dari Tradisi Yahudi)" *Ilmu Ushuluddin* Vol. 18 No. 1 Januari-Juni 2019.

⁷ Theodore Noldake, *The History of The Qur'an*, terj. Wolfgang H. Behn (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2003), p. 5.

⁸ Moh. Achwan Baharuddin, "Konsep Pewahyuan Al-Qur'an menurut Stefan Wild", *Suhuf*, Vol. 8 No. 1, Juni 2015. Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Menelusik Eksistensi Tuhan, Islam, dan Al-Qur'an Perspektif Karen Armstrong", *Nun* Vol. 7, No. 1, 2021. Habibuna dan Ihdi Aini, "Konsep Kewahyuan Al-Qur'an dalam Kacamata William Montgomery Watt", *Al Fawatih* Vol. 1 No. 1 Januari-Juni, 2020.

⁹ William Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Revelation in the Modern World*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2969), p. 7.

In light of the gap in the literature described above, this study aims to examine the alternative offerings and methodological constructs offered by classical and contemporary orientalists on Qur`anic originality. Based on this objective, this article answers three questions. First, what are the sources of reference used by classical and contemporary orientalists in their studies on the originality of the Qur'an. Second, what is the methodology used by classical and contemporary orientalists to see the originality of the Qur'an. Third, what is the concept of truth about the originality of the Qur'an according to classical and contemporary orientalists. These three questions are important to study in order to reveal the epistemology of thought about the originality of the Qur'an among classical and contemporary orientalists.

The study of the views of classical and contemporary orientalists on the originality of the Qur'an is important because it can provide a broader spectrum of the views of various orientalists on the Qur'an. Qur'an is important, because it can provide a broader spectrum of various orientalists' views on the Qur'an. This study departs from the argument that various methodological buildings and approaches used by orientalists affect their views on the originality of the Qur'an. For example, Theodore Noldake,¹⁰ Abraham Geiger, dan John Wansbrough¹¹ with the approach of historicism and source criticism resulted in the conclusion that the Qur'an was not original, but was made by the Prophet Muhammad who was influenced by Christian Judaism.¹⁴ Another case with Karen Armstrong,¹² who used a traditionalist and historicist approach, so that the conclusions obtained were more open to Islamic literature as one of the sources for studying the Qur'an and were not subjective to her religion. Therefore, the results of the study obtained are not necessarily negative but there are positive sides as well.

Research Methods

This research is a type of library research, precisely the discourse of orientalist thought studies related to the originality of the Qur'an.¹³ The data sources used in this research consist of two types, namely primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is obtained from several views of classical orientalists namely John Wansbrough, Abraham Geiger and Theodore Noldake, and contemporary orientalist Karen Armstrong who specifically discusses the originality of the Qur'an. This figure was chosen for several reasons, first, the three classical orientalists were figures who were very adamant about the view that the Qur'an was made by Muhammad who plagiarized from previous books. Secondly, these contemporary figures were chosen because they are Western scientists who are strong in opposing the misrepresentation of Islam, especially the Qur'an. Third,

¹⁰ Muhammad Farid, "Pandangan Theodore Noldeke tentang Al-Qur`an", *Skripsi* diajukan kepada UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, 2020. ¹² Lenni Lestari, "Abraham Geiger dan Kajian Al-Qur`an (Telaah Metodologi atas Buku Judaism and Islam)", *Suhuf* Vol. 7 No. 1, 2014.

¹¹ Ulfiana, "Otentitas Al-Qur`an Perspektif John Wansbrough", *Ushuluna* Vol. 5, No. 2 Desember 2019. ¹⁴ Kurdi K, "Pandangan Orientalis terhadap Al-Qur`an ("Teori Pengaruh" Al-Qur`an Theodore Noldake), *Religia*, Vol. 14 No. 2, 2017, p. 201.

¹² Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Menelisik Eksistensi Tuhan, Islam, dan Al-Qur`an Perspektif Karen Armstrong", *Nun* Vol. 7, No. 1, 2021.

¹³ Abdul Mustaqim, *Metode Penelitian Al-Qur`an Dan Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2017); Wendi Parwanto, "The Paradigm of Allegorical Interpretation of Heaven (Surga) in Indonesian- Contemporary Interpretation: A Study of Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab," *Ad-Dhikra* 4, no. 2 (2022): 173–92; Wendi Parwanto, "Visualization and Legalization of K . H . Ahmad Dahlan ' s Hisab Method in Tafsir Al-Azhar by Hamka" 19, no. December (2021): 166–77.

the two groups have different methods and tendencies in the study of Islam, especially the Qur'an so it is worth comparing. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from several studies related to the theme both from books, articles, journals, and other scientific works.

This research begins with a descriptive review of primary and secondary data and written materials from previous studies, such as Abraham Geiger's *Judaism and Islam*, *The History of the Qur'an* by Theodore Noldake, Karen Armstrong's *Muhammad Prophet For Our Time*, or published journals related to research issues that serve as a basis for researchers related to the originality of the Qur'an in the views of classical and contemporary orientalists. Then the data obtained is grouped for further data reduction. The methodical steps of this research were carried out with three stages of analysis of the data obtained,¹⁴ namely data reduction obtained from searching and reading primary and secondary data sources from various articles or journals. Presentation of data (display) by inventorying and selecting data related to epistemology as a formal object, orientalism as a material object, and the originality of the Qur'an as a context. Furthermore, critical analysis of basic assumptions to test the credibility of the theoretical basis with the data obtained. Finally, it is described and interpreted using Emmanuel Kant's epistemological theory and draws conclusions.

Epistemology Overview

Epistemology comes from the English epistemology which is a combination of two Greek words, episteme which means 'knowledge' and logos which means 'knowledge, science, study, theory and discussion'. In relation to philosophy, epistemology examines the nature, meaning, content, source and process of knowledge.¹⁵ As a branch of philosophy, epistemology has four basic concepts in the theory of human knowledge, namely sources of knowledge, means of achieving knowledge, methods of achieving knowledge and limits of knowledge or classification of knowledge.¹⁶ In the context of orientalist thought, epistemology will discuss three basic points, namely first examining the sources of knowledge used by orientalists, so that the arguments used in building the foundation and framework of their thinking will be obtained. Secondly, it is related to the method or approach that is owned, so that the perspective used to manage each source of knowledge obtained is found. Third, it relates to the validity of truth based on inferences. The truth will be considered true if it meets the agreed logical laws by fulfilling three theories, namely coherence, correspondence and pragmatic theories.¹⁷

Epistemology as a basis for exploring thought to show the standardization of truth will be categorized into three types. First, epistemology that is based solely on experience and rejects the

¹⁴ Nursyamsiah Mingkase dan Inayah Rohmaniyah, "Kontruksi Gender dalam Problematika Childfree di Sosial Media Twitter", *Yinyang* Vol. 17 No. 2 Desember 2022 , p. 204-205

¹⁵ Abdi Syahril Harahap, "Epistemologi: Teori, Konsep dan Sumber-Sumber Ilmu dalam Tradisi Islam", *Jurnal Dakwatul Islam*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Desember 2020 , p. 14. Muhammad Alwi HS, "Epistemologi Tafsir: Mengurai Relasi Filsafat dengan Al-Qur'an", *Substantia*, Volume 21 Nomor 1, April 2019, p. 3.

¹⁶ Wely Dozan, "Epistemologi Tafsir Klasik: Studi Analisis Pemikiran Ibnu Katsir", *Falasifa*, Vol. 10 No. 2, September 2019 , p. 154.

¹⁷ Ahmad Ghozali dan Muhammad Azka Noor, "Epistemologi Pemikiran Andrew Rippin dan Implikasinya terhadap Fungsi Asbabun Nuzul", *Mafatih*, Vol. 2 No. 1 Juni 2022 , p. 86.

role of reason or called empiricism epistemology.¹⁸ This epistemology is used by classical and contemporary figures to find universal laws based on sensory experience as the basis of all knowledge.¹⁹ Second, rationalism epistemology is a philosophical approach that emphasizes reason as the main source of knowledge.²⁰ some rationalism figures say that thinking is a definite truth and the senses are only a stimulus for reason and provide materials to be digested by reason.²¹ Third, critical epistemology popularized by Immanuel Kant (German philosopher), which combines empiricism and rationalism as a source of truth knowledge.²²

Originality of the Qur'an

The originality of the Qur`ān means the purity or authenticity of the Qur`ān, as the Qur`ān states in surah Al-Hijr verse 9 that it is God who revealed and preserved the Qur`ān.²³ In looking at the originality of the Qur`ān, it is often related to several aspects, namely its history and relation to the Prophet Muhammad, the codification and writing of the Qur`ān, the process of revelation, and the language of the Qur`ān. Evidence of the originality of the Qur`ān can be seen from the inability of the Arabs when challenged to create a surah that can match the Qur`ān.²⁴ Likewise in the process of codification and collection of the Qur'an, that the Qur'an was codified and collected because many memorizers of the Qur'an died during the war during the time of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. Therefore, to preserve the Qur`ān, it was codified in a very strict and careful manner.²⁶

In the view of Muslim scholars, the Qur`ān is believed to be a holy book that was revealed over a period of more than 20 years.²⁵ On the other hand, orientalist consider the revelation of the Qur`ān to be a mirage that is not true, so many negative assumptions are made.²⁶ For example, the Qur'an is a literary work of poetry made by the Prophet Muhammad compiled based on the Bible,²⁷

¹⁸ Ahmad Ghazali dan Muhammad Azka Noor, "Epistemologi Pemikiran Andrew Rippin dan Implikasinya terhadap Fungsi Asbabun Nuzul", *Mafatih*, Vol. 2 No. 1 Juni 2022, p. 86.

¹⁹ Diana Sari dan Kholilur Rohman, "Kedudukan Epistemologi dalam Filsafat Barat", *JAQFI*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2020, p. 43.

²⁰ Wendi Parwanto, *Struktur Epistemologi Naskah Tafsir Surat Tujuh (Tujuh Surat) Karya M. Basiuni Imran, Sambas : Kalimantan Barat* (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2019); Wendi Parwanto, "Penafsiran Surat Al-Falaq [113]: 3-4 : Menurut Abd. Ar-Rauf As-Singkili, Hamka Dan M. Quraish Shihab: Telaah Atas Epistemologi Dan Genealogi," *MISYKAT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Quran, Hadist, Syari'ah Dan Tarbiyah* 3, no. 2 (December 20, 2018): 205, <https://doi.org/10.33511/misykat.v3n2.205-236>; Wendi Parwanto, "Structure of Epistemology and Sufism Patterns on Malay-Jawi Interpretation : The Case of Q . S . Al- Fatihah Interpretation in Nurul Ihsan by Said Bin," *Al-Kawakib* 3, no. 2 (2022): 130–38.

²¹ Fariz Pari, "Epistemologi dan Pengembangan Ilmu Pengetahuan", *Ilmu Ushuluddin*, Vol. 5 No. 2, Juli 2018, p. 141-142.

²² Diana Sari dan Kholilur Rohman, "Kedudukan Epistemologi dalam Filsafat Barat", *JAQFI*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2020, p. 42-45.

²³ M Jauharil Ma'arif Annur, "Tafsir Surat Al-Hijr Ayat 9: Jaminan Allah atas Terjaganya Orisinalitas Al-Qur'an, *alif.id*, <https://alif.id/read/mjma/tafsir-surat-al-hijr-ayat-9-jaminan-allah-atas-terjaganya-orisinalitasal-quran-b245160p/> diakses pada 10 Mei 2023.

²⁴ Suswanto, "Mukjizat Al Qur'an", *Edu Religia* Vol. 2 No. 1 Januari-Maret, 2018, p. 33 ²⁶

Arminsyah, "Kodifikasi Al-Qur'an", *At-Tazakki*, Vol. 4 No. 1 Januari-Juni 2020, p. 30.

²⁵ M. Amri, *Sejarah, Teologis, dan Kebudayaan Yahudi*, (Glosaria Media, 2018), p. 169.

²⁶ Muhamad Mahfudin, "Muhammad dan Orisinalitas Al-Qur'an dalam Pandangan Abraham Geiger", *Maghza* Vol. 6 No. 1, Januari-Juni 2021, p. 143.

²⁷ Muhamammad Alfatih Suryadilaga, "Kajian atas Pemikiran John Wansbrough tentang Al-Qur'an dan Nabi Muhammad", *Tsaqafah*, Vol. 7 No. 1, April 2011, p. 95, 96.

the Qur'an is not a revelation because there are many different narrations,²⁸ the Qur'an is a product of sectarian milieu (a confrontational environment involving religious sects such as Jews and Christians), so that its content imitates many traditions and motifs that exist in Jews and Christians,²⁹ and so on. These assumptions are then used as claims by orientalists that the Qur`an is not original.

Classic Orientalists and Contemporary Orientalists

Orientalist In Arabic, orientalist is called *istisyaq*,³⁰ in Arabic language rules it comes from the word *syaraq* then *ditashrif* to *istisyaq*.³¹ Orientalist comes from the word 'orient' which means east, and oriental means an adjective related to the east. Orientalist is a term given to non-Muslims from non-Arabs, especially Western scientists who study the sciences of the East, both in terms of science, language, religion, history, habits, civilization and customs.³² The beginning of the meeting of Islam and the West when the Islamic government moved to Adalusia. Many things were produced by Muslims for the advancement of human civilization, various kinds of science developed rapidly and contributed to the progress and benefit of modern humans. This progress then led to Western interest in studying Islam with different motives.³³

In the period between the Middle Ages and this century, orientalism is broadly divided into three periods: first, the period before the outbreak of the crusades when Muslims were in their golden age (650-1250). Second, the period from the crusades to the enlightenment in Europe, and third, the European enlightenment period until now.³⁴ The three periods are divided into two classifications: classical orientalists and contemporary orientalists. Classical orientalists are aimed at Westerners who prioritize a theological approach in studying the East, so they are reluctant to study Islam for fear of being influenced by Islam. This has implications for suspicions and creates a disharmonious relationship between the two.³⁵ Meanwhile, contemporary orientalists tend to use a sociological approach that allows them to understand and assess Islam as it is and factually. They try to straighten out the erroneous views of classical orientalists about Islam, especially about the Qur'an.³⁶

Orientalist Sources of Inquiry into Qur'anic Originality

The Bible became the main source of reference for classical orientalists to assess the originality of the Qur`an. Starting from the assumption that the Qur`an is not the word of God, but

²⁸ Muhammad Farid, "Pandangan Theodore Noldeke tentang Al-Qur`an", *Skripsi* diajukan kepada UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2020, p. 5, 37.

²⁹ Syamsul Wathani, "John Wansbrough: Studi atas Tradisi dan Instrumen Tafsir Al-Qur`an Klasik", *ALA 'raf*, Vol. 15 No. 2, Juli-Desember 2018, p. 297.

³⁰ Susmihara, "Sejarah Perkembangan Orientalis", *Jurnal Rihlah*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2017, p. 43.

³¹ Syukri Al Fauzi Harlis Yurnalis, "Studi Orientalis terhadap Islam, Dorongan dan Tujuan", *Jurnal AlAqidah*, Vol. 11 Edisi 1, Juni 2019, p. 65.

³² H. Muhammad Bahar Akkase Teng, "Orientalis dan Orientalisme dalam Perspektif Sejarah", *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, Vol. 4 No. 1, Juni 2016, p. 51. Susmihara, "Sejarah Perkembangan Orientalis", *Jurnal Rihlah*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2017, p. 43-44.

³³ H. Muhammad Bahar Akkase Teng, "Orientalis dan Orientalisme dalam Perspektif Sejarah", *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, Vol. 4 No. 1, Juni 2016, p. 66-68.

³⁴ Susmihara, "Sejarah Perkembangan Orientalis", *Jurnal Rihlah*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2017, p. 46.

³⁵ Susmihara, "Sejarah Perkembangan Orientalis", *Jurnal Rihlah*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2017, p. 27.

³⁶ Susmihara, "Sejarah Perkembangan Orientalis", *Jurnal Rihlah*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2017, p. 39.

a literary work created by Muhammad, which was conveyed by several orientalists such as Theodore Noldake, Ignaz Goldziher, Richard Bell, William Muir, and so on.³⁷ The classical orientalists' doubts about the originality of the Bible as their holy book made them insist on proving that the Qur'ān was also unoriginal.³⁸ As Noldake and Goldziher in conducting their research on Qira'at used the Biblical reference standard of New Testament variant readings. The result is that the differences in qira'at are due to Arabic writing itself and these differences make the Qur'an questionable in its authenticity.³⁹ Likewise, Geiger explains the number of vocabulary that is the same as the Bible, so that the Qur'an is not a transcendent book, because it is proven that there are combinations and duplications of various vocabulary in the Bible.⁴⁰

Logic and empirical experience became supporting references to the Bible, which was used to examine the content of the Qur'ān. Some classical orientalists, besides rejecting some of the qath'i accounts of Qur'ānic history, interpreted the Qur'ān very electively according to the purpose of their study, such as religious texts, fictional stories, poems, stories that were authentic or not. They discarded data that did not fit their objectives and propositions. They use the propositions to create new theories without caring whether their theories are in line with the foundations of Islam or not.⁴¹ The data obtained is never traced to its validity, because the purpose of the data is its content, not the source of the data obtained.⁴² Wansbrough, for example, believed in the events that were recorded, even though the sources about these events did not describe the real situation and only presented the thoughts of the author of the source.⁴³ Wansbrough then used this source to measure the originality of the Qur'ān.

Islamic history and Islamic sources linked to Qur'ānic verses are the main sources Armstrong uses to assess the originality of the Qur'ān. Armstrong is more objective about the sources used and does not involve theology in his research. In discussing the Qur'ānic text, Armstrong illustratively quotes the explanations in the Qur'ān and collaborates with the history encountered in his reading.⁴⁴ For example, in her historical research Karen states that Mohammed never read the Bible and never heard of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Moreover, it is a historical fact that the Bible was not translated into Arabic until the 7th/8th century AD,⁴⁵ so the Qur'ān is not a copy of the Bible but the word of God with absolute authority.

³⁷ M. Muzayyin, "Al-Qur'an menurut Pandangan Orientalis (Studi Analisis "Teori Pengaruh" dalam Pemikiran Orientalis), *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* Vol. 16 No. 2, Juli 2015, p. 206-207.

³⁸ Hasani Ahmad Sai, "Potret Studi AlQuran di Mata Orientalis", *At-Tibyan* Vol. 3 No. 1, Juni 2018, p. 34.

³⁹ Agus Darmawan, "Mengkritisi Orientalis yang Meragukan Otentisitas Qur'an", *El-Banat: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam* Vol. 6 No. 1, Januari-Juni, 2016, p. 103-104.

⁴⁰ Wendi Parwanto, "Pemikiran Abraham Geiger tentang Al-Qur'an (Studi atas Akulturasi Linguistik, Doktrin, dan Kisah dalam Al-Qur'an dari Tradisi Yahudi)" *Ilmu Ushuluddin* Vol. 18 No. 1 Januari-Juni 2019, p. 57.

⁴¹ Hamid Fahmi Zarkasyi, "Tradisi Orientalis dan Framework Studi Al-Qur'an", *Tsaqafah* Vol. 7 No. 1, April 2011, p. 1-2, 7-8.

⁴² Ahmad Shams Madyan, "Penelusuran Sejarah Al-Qur'an Versi Orientalis: Sejarah Gambaran Metodologis", *Empirisma* Vol. 24 No. 1 Januari, 2015, p. 35.

⁴³ Ulfiana, "Otentitas Al-Qur'an Perspektif John Wansbrough", *Ushuluna* Vol. 5, No. 2 Desember 2019, p. 215.

⁴⁴ Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Menelisik Eksistensi Tuhan, Islam, dan Al-Qur'an Perspektif Karen Armstrong", *Nun* Vol. 7, No. 1, 2021, p. 110-112.

⁴⁵ Karen Armstrong, *Sejarah Tuhan: Kisah 4.000 Tahun Pencarian Tuhan dalam Agama-Agama Manusia*, Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2014, p. 186.

Orientalist Methodology in Assessing Qur'anic Originality

Orientalist Methodology in Examining the Originality of the Qur'ān Historical criticism method, which is used to separate legends and myths from historical facts that actually occurred in the Bible.⁴⁶ The method promoted by Geiger in his work *Was hat Muhammad aus dem Judentume Aufgenommen?*,⁵⁴ is juxtaposed with several related approaches such as textual criticism, philological criticism, literary criticism, form criticism and redaction criticism. In practice, Geiger and Noldake utilized the method of historical criticism with a philological approach to prove the originality of the Qur'ān by looking for evidence of the influence of Jewish and Christian traditions in the Qur'ān, so that according to them the Qur'ān is not a transcendent product but was made by Muhammad who plagiarized Jewish-Christian books and Jahiliyyah traditions.⁴⁷ Geiger's historical critique brings the Qur'ān to the Late Antiquity period to question the Qur'ān's originality and historicity. Likewise, Geiger uses philological methods to analyze words or phrases in the Qur'ān that are suspected of being plagiarized from previous traditions.⁴⁸

The literary analysis method is used to identify external factors, including the words of the Prophet, which Wansbrough believes have been infiltrated and added to the original wording of the Qur'ān. Similar to Geiger and Noldake, Wansbrough used the literary analysis method to analyze the stories revealed in the Qur'ān. The existence of different stories in the Qur'ān indicates the mixing of traditions in it, namely the Jewish-Christian tradition, meaning that the Qur'ān is an extension of the Torah.⁵⁸ Wansbrough does not use the historical analysis method because Islam cannot be approached by historical methods, Islam is an ahistorical religion.⁴⁹ This assumption is then used as a reference for Wansbrough to say that the Qur'an is not authentic. From these three figures, it can be concluded that the method used to see the authenticity of the Qur'an is more of a skepticism method, namely no truth claims without empirical evidence.⁵⁰

The method of historical criticism with an empirical approach that seeks to find the origin of Islam and the Qur'ān both from religious traditions and previous scriptures. Armstrong uses this method based on its objective nature, because it is seen from the religion that is embraced as a free monotheist so that it does not take sides with any religion. His findings in Islamic history, Armstrong explains that for approximately 23 years, Muhammad proclaimed himself as the recipient of a direct message from God whose text was collected into one unit to carry out the mission of God, which in terms of its decline is different from the Taurah which according to the

⁴⁶ M. Muzayyin, "Al-Qur'an Menurut Pandangan Orientalis (Studi Analisis 'Teori Pengaruh' dalam Pemikiran Orientalis)" dalam *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Hadis*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2015, 215-216. ⁵⁴ Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Islam* (New York: Publishing House, 1989), p. 10-12.

⁴⁷ Ihwan Agustono, "Potret Perkembangan Metodologi Kelompok Orientalis dalam Studi Al-Qur'an", *Studia Quranika* Vol. 4 No. 2, Januari 2019, p. 171. Andi Asdar Yusup, "Metode Bible dalam Pemaknaan AlQur'an (Kajian Kritis terhadap Pandangan Orientalis)", *Hunafa* Vol. 13 No. 1, Juni 2016, p. 55.

⁴⁸ Ihwan Agustono, "Potret Perkembangan Metodologi Kelompok Orientalis dalam Studi Al-Qur'an", *Studia Quranika* Vol. 4 No. 2, Januari 2019, p. 172. ⁵⁸ Ahmad Fadholi, "Studi Kritis terhadap Pemikiran John Wansbrough tentang Historisitas Al-Qur'an", *Hermeneutika*, Vol. 8 No. 2, Desember 2014, p. 290.

⁴⁹ Ulfiana, "Otentitas Al-Qur'an Perspektif John Wansbrough", *Ushuluna* Vol. 5, No. 2 Desember 2019, p. 214.

⁵⁰ Syarifuddin, "elacak Skeptisisme dalam Islam Klasik", *Refleksi* Vol. 22 No. 1 Januari 2022, p. 57. ⁶¹ Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Biografi Nabi Muhammad SAW dalam Sejarah Perspektif Karen Armstrong", *Jurnal Ulunnuha* Vol. 9 No. 2, Desember 2020, p. 188.

biblical story was revealed to the Prophet Moses.⁵¹ The Qur'ān is merely a confirmation of the previous scriptures.⁵²

The Validity of Orientalist Truths in Assessing Qur'anic Originality

The validity of truth is based on rational arguments. According to Wansbrough, as long as there is no convincing empirical evidence, the validity of all conventional sources of Islamic history must be rejected. In the Western scholarly tradition, academic study of the Qur'an in particular must be based on rational arguments supported by rational arguments. Qur'an in particular must be based on rational arguments supported by evidence in research.⁵³ Wansbrough's radical skepticism in studying the Qur'an assumes that all historical documentation surrounding the Qur'an and Islam must be seen as salvation history because there is no empirical evidence for it.⁵⁴ Therefore, Wansbrough and Noldake tested the originality of the Qur'ān against the Old and New Testaments,⁵⁵ which led to their doubts about the Qur'ān as a revelation of God.⁷² According to Wansbrough, the authentic Qur'ān was written in the third century AH after the death of the Prophet, because the Qur'ān had been finalized for uniformity in reading.⁵⁶

The validity of truth based solely on experience. For example, Noldake looks at the originality of the Qur'ān by comparing his experience of Jewish stories with the teachings in the Qur'ān. In terms of his experience of the most ignorant Jews, he never mistakenly called Haman the minister of Pharaoh, or Maryam the sister of Moses.⁵⁷ Likewise, Muhammad, logically, could not have forgotten to convey the verse that was directly conveyed by God through the touch of the angel Gabriel. But in reality, according to Noldake, many of the errors in the Qur'ān are due to Muhammad's ignorance of the early history of Judaism, carelessness with names and other things stolen and adopted from Jewish sources.⁵⁸

The validity of truth is based on experience and rational argument. Armstrong's view of the Qur'ān is based on several events related to the Qur'ān and compares them with the Bible. For

⁵¹ Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Menelisik Eksistensi Tuhan, Islam, dan Al-Qur'an Perspektif Karen Armstrong", *Nun* Vol. 7, No. 1, 2021, p. 109. Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Biografi Nabi Muhammad SAW dalam Sejarah Perspektif Karen Armstrong", *Jurnal Ulunnuha* Vol. 9 No. 2, Desember 2020, p. 189.

⁵² Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: Prophet for Our Time*, p. 125.

⁵³ Ihwan Agustono, "Potret Perkembangan Metodologi Kelompok Orientalis dalam Studi Al-Qur'an", *Studia Quranika* Vol. 4 No. 2, Januari 2019, p. 68.

⁵⁴ Wansbrough, *Sectarian Millieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. ix, 37, 147. Ihwan Agustono, "Potret Perkembangan Metodologi Kelompok Orientalis dalam Studi Al-Qur'an", *Studia Quranika* Vol. 4 No. 2, Januari 2019, p. 175. Andrew Rippin dan Ibn Warraq, "Literary Analysis of Koran, Tafsir, and Sira: The Methodologies of John Wansbrough", dalam Ibn Warraq (ed), *The Origin of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book*, (Newyork: Prometheus Books, 1998) p. 205. Fazlur Rahman, "Some Recent Books on the Qur'an by Western Author", *Journal of Religion* Vol. 61 No. 1, Januari 1984, p. 73-90.

⁵⁵ Rusmana, *Al-Qur'an dan Hegemoni Wacana*, (Bandung: CV. Pustaka Setia, 2006) p. 84. ⁷² Kurdi Fadal, "Pandangan Orientalis Terhadap al-Qur'an ("Teori Pengaruh" Al-Qur'an Theodor Nöldeke)", *Religia* Vol. 4 No. 2 Oktober 2011, p. 204. Cut Zaenab, "Bantahan terhadap Argumentasi Orientalis: *Textual Criticism of The Quran* (Studi Kritis Tentang Tuduhan Kesalahan Penyalinan)", *Tesis* diajukan kepada UIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh, 2022, p. 52.

⁵⁶ Ulfiana, "Otentitas Al-Qur'an Perspektif John Wansbrough", *Ushuluna* Vol. 5, No. 2 Desember 2019, p. 218.

⁵⁷ Teodor Noldake, "The Koran" dalam Ibn Warraq (ed), *The Origin of the Koran: Classic Essay on Islam's Holy Book* (New York: Prometheus Book, 1998), p. 43.

⁵⁸ Hasani Ahmad Sai, "Potret Studi AlQuran di Mata Orientalis", *At-Tibyan* Vol. 3 No. 1, Juni 2018, p. 34.

example, the story of the Torah's revelation at one time on Mount Sinai to Moses and the Qur'ān's gradual revelation to Muhammad, which indicates the difference between the two. The nature of the Qur'ān is essential to Islam, which teaches obedience to God the Creator, and the Qur'ān is believed by Armstrong to be a revelation in which God explained many of the developments of the situation to the Prophet Muhammad.⁵⁹ According to the author, these explanations of God are strong arguments that according to Armstrong the Qur'an is original from God and not made by Muhammad. As he said "the Qur'an is the holy word of God, and its authority remains absolute".⁶⁰

A Critique of Orientalist Views on the Originality of the Qur'an

Some orientalists at the beginning of the emergence until the 19th century into the 20th century viewed that the originality of the Qur'an was not absolute, but in later developments there were contemporary orientalists born in the early 20th century began to straighten out their views that the Qur'an was an original revelation from God.⁶¹ The difference in views occurs because the methods and approaches used in analyzing the Qur'an have developed. Initially, classical orientalists used a lot of theological approaches, so they rejected many Islamic sources. It is different with contemporary orientalists who compare more sociological, anthropological and phenomenological approaches in analyzing the Qur'an,⁶² so that the arguments obtained are not fanatical but neutral. This dynamic needs to be re-examined, especially by comparing the views of classical and contemporary orientalists regarding the originality of the Qur'an to see the methodological buildings offered in accordance with their respective scientific developments. Epistemology becomes one important thing as a source of exploring these methodological buildings.

Classical Orientalists such as Noldake, Geiger and Wansbrough used historical criticism and literary analysis to assess the originality of the Qur'ān, its validity based on rationalism and empiricism. Some assumptions that are not in accordance with the Bible and logic and empirical experience are rejected, until finally the Qur'ān is proven to be unoriginal. Armstrong, on the other hand, is more objective with the historical method and empirical approach in researching the Qur'an, obtaining data that the Qur'an is essential for Islam which contains teachings of obedience to Allah the Creator. Supporting assumptions are obtained in several Islamic sources and Islamic history which are then associated with the verses of the Qur'an. Armstrong based on the validity of his criticism said that the Qur'an is the holy word of God, and its authority remains absolute.

Based on Emmanuel Kant's epistemological theory, the epistemology built by classical orientalists is more on rationalism and empiricism, where orientalists in assessing the originality of the Qur'an are based on experience and the process of sensory perception, so that the data obtained is as the object is. Rationalism epistemology leads to the assumption that certainty or

⁵⁹ Karen Armstrong, *Sejarah Tuhan: Kisah 4.000 Tahun Pencarian Tuhan dalam Agama-Agama Manusia*, (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2014), p. 194-196, 199. Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Biografi Nabi Muhammad SAW dalam Sejarah Perspektif Karen Armstrong", *Jurnal Ulunnuha* Vol. 9 No. 2, Desember 2020, p. 192.

⁶⁰ Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: Prophet for Our Time*, p. 16.

⁶¹ As Karen Armstrong views, the Koran is a book of God's treatise or the holy word of God whose authority is absolute. Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad Prophet For Our Time*, p. 31.

⁶² Badarussyamsi, "Islam di Mata Orientalisme Klasik dan Orientalisme Kontemporer", *Tajdid*, Vol. 15 No. 1, Januari-Juni, 2016, p. 33-34.

knowledge can only be obtained through the work of the mind, where humans have innate ideas that are universal. Then empiricism epistemology provides an assessment of the object as it is. Meanwhile, modern orientalists are more on critical epistemology, where the data used as validity of truth is obtained from rationalism and empiricism data.⁶³ Therefore, there is a shift in epistemology from one generation to the next.

The epistemological theory promoted by Emmanuel Kant explains that do obtain valid scientific truth, knowledge is obtained through the category of intellect⁶⁴ with the development of the methodology and approach used by orientalists in studying the originality of the Qur'an, it can change the way orientalists view Islam, the Qur'an an especially. The study which began prioritizing a theological approach developed into a sociological and academic approach, so as to asses Islam as it is and factually.⁶⁵ When researchers start to use a more academic methodology and approach, meaning without involving religious elements in the process of studying something, they will produce objective conclusions and of course without elements of demonizing or favoring certain religions. Therefore, these conclusions will be more easily accepted by various groups.

This study reviews the originality of the Qur'an from the epistemological point of view of classical and contemporary orientalists to see how the development of methodologies and approaches used in the study of the Qur'an. The theory used to analyze is Emmanuel Kant's epistemology, in contrast to most previous studies which are more on critical analysis and only focus on certain elements. In addition, most studies that have been done only focus on one particular figure or group. Therefore, the research is specifically presented related to epistemological studies including the main sources used by orientalists in examining the originality of the Qur'an, methodology and validity of the originality of the Qur'an. Qur'an, methodology and validity of the truth used by comparing two groups at once.

The topic of orientalist epistemology about the originality of the Qur'an is still very possible to be researched further, especially in the context of contemporary orientalists who have not been touched by many researchers. As the times evolve, while the Qur'an is 'fixed', meaning that it has not changed since it was first revealed until now, it does not reduce its interest to be studied. So the author recommends continuing the discussion on this topic with various approaches, perspectives, methods or theories. The same topic and title are still open to research, it is just necessary to change the character who will be studied more deeply about his thoughts.

Conclusion

The difference in perception regarding the originality of the Qur'an between classical orientalists and contemporary orientalists is caused by several things, namely the main source used, the methodology used and the validity used to measure a truth. Classical orientalists are more inclined to study in the name of religion, meaning that theology becomes a strong grip that cannot be separated from the studies carried out. Consequently, the conclusions obtained tend to be subjective and there is a defense of religion in it. Therefore, they conclude that the Qur'an is not

⁶³ Lalily Muthmainnah, "Tinjauan Kritis terhadap Epistemologi Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)", *Jurnal Filsafat*, Vol. 28 No. 1 Februari, 2018, p. 81-84.

⁶⁴ Lalily Muthmainnah, "Tinjauan Kritis terhadap Epistemologi Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)", *Jurnal Filsafat*, Vol. 28 No. 1 Februari, 2018, p. 89.

⁶⁵ Susmihara, "Sejarah Perkembangan Orientalis", *Jurnal Rihlah*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 2017, p. 39.

original but only made by the Prophet Muhammad who imitated the Bible. Another case with contemporary orientalist who are more likely to be academic and sociological without mixing with theology, so that the conclusions obtained are more objective from various points of view. Namely, from various sources, methodologies, and validity used by contemporary orientalist, it results in the conclusion that the Qur'an is original from God, although in it there are some words or stories that are the same as the Bible, but it is considered normal because the Qur'an is a book of confirmation or perfection of the previous books.

This research provides a scientific contribution as a complement to existing studies. At least, the existence of a study that directly compares the epistemology of classical and contemporary orientalist related to the originality of the Qur'an can facilitate readers or other researchers in understanding the issue. This study describes and categorizes in a structured manner starting from the source, methodology, and validity used by orientalist with different concepts adjusted to the epistemological theory used by researchers.

This research is limited to the issue of orientalist epistemology about the originality of the Qur'an which is focused on certain figures during the classical and contemporary periods. However, the author is well aware that this research is far from perfect. The identification and analysis carried out on the topic still lacks references as a reference for obtaining data. Time constraints and reading on primary sources are also considered so that the important points that should be outlined have not been fully presented. Therefore, there is still a need for follow-up research on the topic, of course with more references and different theories are highly recommended, so that the results of the next study can strengthen, criticize or straighten out the existing studies.

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