

**READING MUHAMMAD ARKOUN'S THOUGHT ON THE
DISCOURSE OF CONTEMPORARY QUR'ANIC STUDIES:
An Introduction to the Study of QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7**

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Abstract

This paper is a reading of the offer that Mubammad Arkoun has given in the development efforts in the study of the Qur'an in the Contemporary era. Mubammad Arkoun's fundamental disharmony lies in the fact that the reality of society has completely changed, and therefore, requires a new model of reading authoritative religious texts, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. The methodological offers made by classical Islamic thinkers, in the view of Mubammad Arkoun, are considered no longer able to answer the problems of today's society. The majority of them are still often caught up in religious dogmatic pairings. To solve this problem, Mubammad Arkoun offered three models of rereading the Qur'an, namely with linguistic, anthropological, and historical approaches. The results of these three offers of reading of the Qur'an will lead to the results of interpretations relevant to the needs of people living in contemporary reality.

Keywords: *Muhammad Arkoun, Methodology, Al-Qur'an, Contemporary*

A. Introduction

The Qur'an, as scripture, is a verbally derived set of Divine words, including the meaning and moral ideas, and functionally, intended as a guide to all mankind (*budan li an-nās*).¹ By this definition, to achieve the discovery of a guide,² there is a desire among Muslims, especially from contemporary Islamic thinkers, to always dialogue the Qur'an as an officially closed corpus; or mushaf utsmani with reality and socio-

¹ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), hlm. 30.

² Saifuddin, "Hermeneutika Sufi: Menebus Makna Di Balik Kata", Sahiron Syamsuddin (ed.), *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ Press, 2010), hlm. 35.

religious problems that always show increasingly dynamic development over time. At this point, the Qur'an is not only positioned as a religious text that is limited to 'read', but also positioned as a religious text that is 'understood' in terms of its meaning through 'interpretation'.³

The desire raised by Islamic thinkers can be seen from the growing study of the dynamic Qur'an; which is in line with the movement to accelerate the development of social, political, economic, cultural, and certainly civilizational conditions of human life,⁴ which in the process, uses a variety of methods and approaches. These methods of interpretation, formulated by Islamic thinkers in an effort—following the term *Aksin Wijaya*⁵—hunt down God's message—in particular—in the Qur'an, that later gave birth to a variety of scientific disciplines, such as the *Ulumul Qur'an*.⁶

Initially, as the Quraish Shihab notes,⁷ such efforts began long after the early generations of Muslims. In his account, Quraish Shihab saw that Ahmad ibn Abdul Halim, or more familiarly known as Ibn Taimiyah (w.728 AH) in *Mukkadimah Ushûl at-Tafsîr* and Muhammad ibn Sulaiman al-Kafiji (d.879H) in *al-Tafsîr fî Qawa'id 'Ilm Tafsîr* was the early pioneer of this scientific tradition. Both works, by the Quraish Shihab, are considered to be works that explicitly speak of the rules of interpreting the Qur'an. This is reflected in the work of Muhammad ibn Abdilllah az-Zarkasyi (d.

³ Aksin Wijaya, *Arab Baru Studi Ulum Al-Qur'an: Memburu Pesan Tuhan Di Balik Fenomena Budaya* (Yogyakarta: PUSTAKA PELAJAR, 2009), hlm. 3.

⁴ Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LKiS Group, 2010), hlm. 1.; Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*, Edisi Revisi dan Perluasan (Yogyakarta: PESANTREN NAWESEEA PRESS, 2017), hlm. 53.

⁵ Wijaya, *Arab Baru Studi Ulum Al-Qur'an: Memburu Pesan Tuhan Di Balik Fenomena Budaya*, hlm. 3.

⁶ Referring to some understandings that explain the conception of *Ulumul Qur'an*, it is understood that *Ulumul Qur'an* is understood as a science that discusses the elements related to the Qur'an. For example, related to *asbab al-nuzul* (knowledge related to the causes of the revelation of a verse), the collection and preparation in order, the process of codification, *makkiyah* and *madaniyah*, *nasikh-mansukh*, *muhkam-mutasyabihat*, *tafsir*, *takwil*, *I'jaz*, and so forth. see: Manna' al-Qohtan, *Mabakbis Fi Ulum Al-Qur'an* (Kairo: al-Ashruhadis, Tth.), hlm. 15-16.; Ali as-Shobuni, *Al-Tibyan Fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, Cet. 1 (Jakarta: Dinnamika Berkah Utama, 1985), hlm. 6.

⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir* (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2013), hlm. 17.

2015).794 AH) in *Al-Bûrbân fî 'Ulûm al-Qur'ân*⁸ and *Al-Itqân fî 'Ulûm al-Qur'ân* by Jalaluddin Abdurrahman as-Suyuthi (d. 911 H)⁹.

However, at the advanced stage of development, the presence of this scientific discipline, by some circles, is considered no longer able to help answer the problems faced by today's society.¹⁰ Some methodologies for interpreting the Qur'an as stated in the above works often do not use systematic logic. Aksin Wijaya gave a very clear account of this issue. According to him, in the scientific discipline of Ulumul Qur'an classic, several explanations precede one of the elements in the Qur'an, there are some elements that—intentionally or not—are abandoned, thus giving the impression that there is separation and 'randomness' in understanding the main message in the Qur'an.¹¹

Because of this unease, in the view of Contemporary Islamic thinkers, it is important to consider and reassemble the framework of understanding some of the methodological offerings of classical Islamic thinkers in understanding the Qur'an. Moreover, to make the Qur'an fully understood, by borrowing the term Alim Roswanto in his study of Amin Abdullah's thinking, Islamic scientific disciplines—including in this case ulumul Qur'an—must be "mated" or intertwined with various contemporary scientific disciplines, such as sociological, historical, anthropological, political, economic, semiotic, hermeneutic, and so on.¹² The fundamental reason, that although the Qur'an is present in a certain context and locality, the Qur'an contains

⁸ Badr ad-Din az-Zarkasyi, *Al-Bûrbân Fî 'Ulûm al-Qur'ân*, Tahqiq: Muhammad Abu al-Fadhel, Cet. 1 (Mesir: al-Halaby, 1957).

⁹ Jalal al-Din al-Suyuthi, *Al-Itqân Fî 'Ulûm al-Qur'ân* (Mesir: Al-Azhar, 1318).

¹⁰ Izza Rohman, "New Approaches in Interpreting the Quran in Contemporary Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* Vol. 14, no. 2 (2007): hlm. 208-209.; Majid Daneshgar, Peter G. Riddell, and Andrew Rippin, eds., *The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation*, Routledge Studies in the Quran (London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), hlm. 84.; Abdullah Saeed, *Pengantar Studi Al-Qur'an*, diterj: Shulkhah dan Sahiron Syamsuddin (Yogyakarta: Baitul Hikmah Press, 2016), hlm. 304.

¹¹ Wijaya, *Arab Baru Studi Ulum Al-Qur'an: Memburu Pesan Tuban Di Balik Fenomena Budaya*, hlm. 4.

¹² Alim Roswanto, "Epistemologi Pemikiran Islam M. Amin Abdullah", Moch. Nur Ihwan dan Ahmad Muttaqin (ed.), *Islam, Agama-Agama, Dan Nilai Kemanusiaan* (Yogyakarta: CISForm UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2013), hlm. 19.

universal values, which are believed as mentioned in the definition above, will always be relevant for unlimited occasions and time.¹³

One of the contemporary Islamic thinkers involved in this effort is Muhammad Arkoun. The main unease that prompted Muhammad Arkoun to offer this method of reading was based on, first, liberating the meaning of "Sacra Doctrina" or its pairing in Islamic dogma. The focal point in this effort is to submit the manuscripts of the Qur'an and all the manuscripts to the teaching of truth—which in the history of the journey of Islamic thought, seeks to negate deviations; second, efforts to reformulate a cryteriology; which the various motives analyzed can be re-presented by contemporary Muslim Intelligence. In his view, the majority of the interpretation and methodology of the approach offered by each figure has been largely caught up in the separation between Islamic reason and modern reason; and more concerningly, that the meanings produced by each figure have been reflected in theological doctrine (read: taqlid), which in turn precisely leads to the cessation of Islamic scientific tradition.

Based on the description above, this paper aims to read the offer of Muhammad Arkoun in an effort to understand the Qur'an in the contemporary era. The points of discussion in this paper answer three questions, first, what is the background of Muhammad Arkoun?; second, how is the methodological scheme of Muhammad Arkoun's offer in understanding the Qur'an?; and third, the extent of the effectiveness of Muhammad Arkoun's offers in an effort to understand the Qur'an?.

B. About Muhammad Arkoun

1. Socio-Historical Setting and Intellectual Career

He was Muhammad Arkoun (later be named as Arkoun), a Contemporary Islamic thinker of the Kabylean Tribe, a simple barber tribe located at the foothills of the Taorit Mimoun village of Al-Jazair.¹⁴ Arkoun was born to a lower-level family,

¹³ Shihab, *Kaidab Tafsir*, hlm. 13.; Abdul Mukti Ro'uf, *Nalar Islam* (Pontianak: IAIN Pontianak Press, 2017), hlm. 169.

¹⁴ Robert D. Lee, "Pengantar", Muhammad Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, diterj: Yudian W. Asmin dan Lathiful Khuluq (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996), hlm. x.

on February 1, 1928.¹⁵ Taorit Minoum, a village where he was born and later grown up on the outskirts of Al-Jazair's culture and politics, has made Arkoun live in three segmentations of world life at once, namely the Arab world, the Islamic world, and Europe.

Arkoun's intellectual travel career during his secondary to undergraduate studies took him to Al-Jazair. It is noted that, for his undergraduate education, Arkoun studied at Al-Jazair University, in 1950, with a focus on studying Arabic Literature. Dissatisfied, in 1954-1962, Arkoun continued his intellectual career in France, focusing on Arabic Literature and Islamic Thought. As an alumnus of French education, Arkoun was later appointed to teach Islamic History and Philosophy at Sorbonne. After passing through his own community and right in the center of education in the French city, Arkoun used it to then further develop in the academic field more broadly, namely Europe, America, Africa, and Asia. Based on this contribution, at a later stage, Arkoun was appointed 'Professor Emeritus' in the field of Islamic thought in Sorbonne.¹⁶

During his time in France, Arkoun was heavily influenced by some prominent thinking, whether produced by French thinkers, or outside (especially: Europe), such as: Paul Ricoeur, a thinker who gave birth to the concept of myth in the Book; Ferdinand de Saussure (d. 1913), a Swiss linguistics and structural movement expert; Michael Foucault (d. 1984), a formulated concept of discourse in the archaeology of knowledge; Jacques Lacan and Derrida, experts in semiotics; Roland Barthes, an anthropologist from France, and Louis Hjelmselv, a Danish semiotics expert.¹⁷

The level of influence of some of the above figures can be seen from some of his works, which in this case, the majority use French, which by some figures has been translated into English, Arabic, and Indonesian. Namely,¹⁸ “*Actualite d'une Culture Mediterraneene*” (1990), “*Architectural Alternatives in Deteriorating Societies*” (1992),

¹⁵ Washil Washil, “(De)Rekonstruksi Nalar Islam Ala Muhammad Arkoun: Gagasan Prinsip Hermeneutika Dan Semiotika al-Qur’an,” *Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Ilmu Keislaman* 2, no. 1 (September 15, 2018): hlm. 467.

¹⁶ Robert D. Lee, “Pengantar”, Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, hlm. 242.

¹⁷ Washil, “(De)Rekonstruksi Nalar Islam Ala Muhammad Arkoun,” hlm. 468.

¹⁸ Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, hlm. 231-233.

“*Aspects de la Pensee Musulmane Clasique*” (1963), “*The Concept of Revelation: From Abl al-Kitab to Societis of the Book*” (1988), “*L’ethqie Musulmane d’apres Mawardi*” (1964), “*L’Islam, Morale et Politique/ Al-Islam al-Akhlag wa al-Siyasab*” (1986/1990), “*Panser L’Islam/ Rethinking Islam: Common Question, Uncommon Answers*” (1989), “*Lecture du Coran/ Kajian Al-Qur’an Kontemporer*” (1982/1998).

Some of the works Arkoun produced, as noted above, are most closely related to tyranny in the world of thought, be it Western or Islamic. Furthermore, Arkoun's works above relate to the impact of the views expressed by Muslims on themselves. Arkoun strongly applies a critical attitude to some views that both Islamic and Western, are produced, especially for those who believe in the superiority of reason, which is sometimes insubstantial by reason.¹⁹

2. Position of Thought

To know the position of Arkoun's thinking in the dynamics of contemporary Islamic thought, here, taking into account some of his works, and by following the typology formulated by Abdul Mustaqim²⁰ and Sahiron Syamsuddin²¹, it can be seen in three points of view at once. The three points of view are the categorization of Islamic thought from the XVII century to XIX M, the categorization of the development of interpretation works, and the categorization of Islamic thought formulated in the contemporary era.

First, the categorization of Islamic thought that emerged between the XVII-XIX century AD. This categorization has several kinds of streams. The first trend, pre-modernist revivalism, or a trend familiar with the term fundamentalism²². This trend has several tendencies, namely; have a high enough attitude of concern for the socio-moral degeneration of Muslims and there is an effort to make changes, wanting

¹⁹ Arkoun, *Kajian Al-Qur’an Kontemporer*, hlm. xiii.

²⁰ Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer*, hlm. 108-110.

²¹ Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur’an*, hlm. 54-57.

²² The term was first used by Protestants in the West. This term is indicated for groups who want to return to the basics of religion by interpreting scripture on a harifah basis. see: Syarif Hidayatullah, *Islam “Isme-Isme”: Aliran Dan Paham Islam Di Indonesia*, Cet. II (Yogyakarta: PUSTAKA PELAJAR, 2014), hlm. 76-77.

to return to True Islam; and abandoned a pre-deterministic attitude, demanding renewal and jihad with weapons, and strongly rejecting the West.

The second trend, classical modernism. This trend wants an effort to expand *ijtihad* and the importance of absorbing Western institutions with Islamic tradition. This trend tends to be pro with the West and at the same time has apologetic properties. The third trend, neo-revivalism. This trend wanted a separation and, at the same time, the distinction between Islam and the West, but was unable to develop its methodology. The fourth trend, neo-modernism. This trend of thought wants to be able to develop a critical attitude towards the Western world and also critical of the historical legacies of classical Islam. Departing from these four categorization frameworks, Arkoun's position of thought falls into the fourth trend, namely neo-modernism Islamic thought. The fundamental argument, as Robert D. Lee noted, is that Arkoun has always placed his Islamic and Western heritage in equal proportion with several considerations.²³

Second, the categorization of the development of interpretation. In general, the categorization of the development of interpretation in the perspective of The History of Idea can be distinguished into three eras. The first era, formative with quasi-critical or quasi-objectivist conservative-traditionalist reasoning. This classification refers to the view that the teachings of the Qur'an should be understood, interpreted, and applied today, as it is understood, interpreted, and applied to the situation when the Qur'an was derived to the Prophet (s). and delivered to the early Muslim generation. Therefore, in an effort to interpret the Qur'an, those who follow this tradition use classical methods, related to *asbab al-nuzul* (science related to the causes of the revelation of a verse), the collection and preparation in order, the process of codification, *makkiyah*, and *madaniyah*, *nasikh-mansukh*, *mubkam-mutasyabihat*, tafsir, takwil, *i'jaz*, and so forth. The tendency of this tradition in interpreting the Qur'an is literal. Although such interpretations have occurred since the time of the Prophet (s). until the second-century Hijri range, what is meant here is that the interpretation that

²³ Robert D. Lee, "Pengantar", Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, hlm. xiv-xv.

refers to a model or way of thinking that tends to reduce the position of reason (*ra'yi*) in interpreting the Qur'an, has not advanced the tradition of criticism.

The second era, affirmative with ideological or subjective reason. This trend refers to the view that each interpretation is entirely the subjectivity of the interpreter, and therefore, interpretive truth is relative. Generally, interpretations of this category emerged in the Middle Ages when the majority of interpreter tended to accentuate the results of interpretations dominated by the interests of certain madhabs or ideologies. As a result, the Qur'an is often treated as a tool of legitimacy for various interests.

Among the figures who follow this trend are Hassan Hanafi and Muhammad Syahrur. Hassan Hanafi, for example, thinks that an objective interpretation is impossible, because, from every attempt at understanding the Qur'an, there are always a variety of subjective interests of the interpreter. That is, the aspect ratio and context of the demands of the people is the starting point in thought.²⁴ Meanwhile, on the other hand, Muhammad Syahrur has a different argument and is even known to be a very subjectivist figure.²⁵ In any attempt to interpret the Qur'an, Shahrur is not interested in rediscovering the original/historical meaning; and in principle, Syahrur also does not refer to the understanding and interpretation that has been done by previous scholars; it does not even refer to every interpretation documented in the hadith books.²⁶ According to him, an interpreter of the Qur'an in contemporary times, should follow the pace of the development of contemporary science. That interpretive truth, according to Shahrur, can only be measured to the extent that it corresponds to the needs and situations, and developments of science at the time the Qur'an is interpreted.

Furthermore, the third era, reformative with critical reason or quasi-objectivist progressive. This interpretation, which belongs to this categorization, requires

²⁴ Hassan Hanafi, *Studi Filsafat 1: Pembacaan Atas Tradisi Islam Kontemporer*, diterj: Miftah Faqih (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2015), hlm. xxiv.

²⁵ Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*, hlm. 56.

²⁶ Muhammad Shahrur, *Prinsip Dan Dasar Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Kontemporer*, diterj: Sahiron Syamsuddin dan Burhanuddin Dzikri (Yogyakarta: KALIMEDIA, 2015), hlm. 44.

interpreters to bring up a critical attitude towards the various products of past interpretations, escape from the fit of the madhab, and make use of modern scientific knowledges. This era gives the position of the Qur'an (text), reality (context), and reader to walk circularly in a triadic and dynamic. The nuances raised over the product interpretation in this era tend to be hermeneutic²⁷ and emphasize more on epistemological-methodological aspects. Although it has something in common with the conservative-traditionalist quasi-objectivist tradition, it uses a set of traditional interpretations but also contributes to a set of modern sciences, such as historical approaches, anthropology, semiotics, sociology, philosophy, and hermeneutics. Some of the names included in this categorization include Fazlur Rahman,²⁸ Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd, Muhammad al-Thalibi, and also Muhammad Arkoun.

Third, categorization of thought in the contemporary era. In this section, there are three trends. The first, traditionalism trend. Traditionalism trends of thought have a very dominant tendency to use past-oriented and textualist-literalist paradigms. The second, modern-secular trend. This trend has a tendency towards western scientific that are very dominant, that require a clear separation between religion and state, and have the assumption that secularism is an alternative to civilization. The third trend, which in this case Arkoun belongs to, is reformist-moderate. This trend tries to do a form of creative synthesis of the two aforementioned trends using a future-oriented paradigm. The fundamental reason is

²⁷ Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer*, hlm. 61.; At least, by following Richard E. Palmer, there are six different emphasises in the discipline of hermeneutics, namely as a theory in interpreting scripture, philological methods, science in understanding language, as the basis of science about humans, existential understanding, as a system of interpretation. What is meant in this sense is hermeneutics as an interpretation system, namely hermeneutics that emphasize the rules that must be used in an effort to interpret something. Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutic Interpretation Theory in Schleimacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), hlm. 33-35. This scientific disipin, in the view of contemporary Islamic thinkers, is indispensable in the effort to give meaning and produce meaning so that a text (especially the Qur'an and Hadith) becomes relevant in all kinds of conditions.

²⁸ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), hlm. 5-7.

that Islam, as a universal religion; comprehensive-integral, will always be actual and contextual to be applicable to different occasions and times.²⁹

C. Muhammad Arkoun's Criticism of Islamic Reason

The tradition of criticism is something that can no longer be said as a new tradition in Islam. This tradition is very tied to the birth of Islam itself, namely criticism of the condition of the Jahiliyyah Arab community shackled to issues around belief, economy, and culture.³⁰ This fact, which has been embryonically born since the birth of Islam itself, but in reality, this tradition can't be precisely developed. But this is compared to the fact that happens in the reality of Arab people's lives. What happened has led to the tradition of the orthodoxy of religious science.

This may be seen from Arkoun's criticism of religious groups that have the most established religious reasoning, namely reasoning that makes efforts to establish practical links with technical reason in a theological alignment.³¹ This reasoning has no attempt to investigate the various presumptions, postulates, or assumptions on which argumentation is based, as well as beliefs that allow events without relation to each other in the frame of such pairing. Therefore, this has raised a problem, that religious reason has lived and developed in tension with scientific reason.

The above facts run for a long period of time, which in turn, has given rise to a standard and frozen pattern of Islamic reasoning.³² The religious text, which originally lived and was open to all forms of interpretation, has been transformed into an 'officially closed corpus'. Things that were originally thought (thinkable) turned into completely unthinkable, both because of the hierarchy of religious and state authorities.³³ To make it easier, in detail, Arkoun characterizes the reality of

²⁹ Alim Roswanto, "Epistemologi Pemikiran Islam M. Amin Abdullah" (ed.), *Islam, Agama-Agama, Dan Nilai Kemanusiaan*, hlm. 13.

³⁰ Ahmad Syafi'i, "ARKOUN DAN KRITIK NALAR ISLAM," *Al-Adabiyah* 10, no. 2 (July 2015): hlm. 109.

³¹ Muhammad Arkoun, *Kajian Kontemporer Al-Qur'an*, diterj: Hidayatullah (Bandung: Penerbit PUSTAKA, 1998), hlm. 9.

³² Syafi'i, "ARKOUN DAN KRITIK NALAR ISLAM," hlm. 109.

³³ Arkoun, *Kajian Kontemporer Al-Qur'an*, hlm. 18.

Islamic society thus by dividing it into three;³⁴ first, submit and obey revelation in the frame of orthodoxy. This feature puts the mind of Islam in a position of surrender to be used, except in the frame of the provisions he has set. Second, excessive respect for the presence of authority and or majesty which in turn is required to submit to him. In this feature, the authority in question, for example, the figure of the imam of madhab and or prominent scholars in charge of various scientific disciplines, which the decision issued can not or should not even be debated, which in this tradition belief the act can not be justified.

Third, the dominance of role-playing through a certain point of view is built on the epistemological principles of medieval scientists. This epistemological building is considered "the end of history" of the history of Islamic glory. Another thing, which is no less alarming; which also received criticism Arkoun, which includes the existence of state reason that falls into religious reasoning, and vice versa, even being a unit, which precisely leads to one assumption that fighting the state is the same as fighting religion, and vice versa.

D. A Rereading of the Qur'an: A Methodological Offer

Departing from some of Arkoun's criticisms, there is a kind of need for critical knowledge concepts that require a review.³⁵ As for the cause of the critical review process, there is not only new information about a scientific discipline, but also related to the configuration of reason that changes in the face of its own procedures, postulates, and statements, as well as related to disclosure, which Arkoun often refers to a "from the unthinkable to the thinkable" especially with regard to the Qur'an.³⁶

Therefore, based on the desire to, first, free the meaning from the fit of Islamic dogma "Sacra Doctrine", then all that needs to be done is to submit the manuscript

³⁴ Syafi'i, "ARKOUN DAN KRITIK NALAR ISLAM," hlm. 110.

³⁵ Richard C. Martin Rippin Heather J. Empey, Mohammed Arkoun, Andrew, "Islamic Studies," n.d., <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0395#e0395-s0002>. Di akses pada Kamis, 17 Juni 2021, pukul 16:34 WIB.

³⁶ Mohammed Arkoun, "Rethinking Islam Today," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588 (2003): hlm. 24.

of the Qur'an and all the manuscripts to the teachings that remain true to avoid blurring and deviation. Second, to reformulate a criteriology. This effort hints at analyzing a variety of past motives so that contemporary intelligence can be found. In this case, Arkoun offers hermeneutics (de)construction. The methodological scopes that must be taken, according to Arkoun, should include three momentums at once;³⁷ linguistic momentum, anthropological momentum, and historical momentum.

First, linguistic momentum. In this momentum, Arkoun was deeply influenced by the idea of language, particularly the semiotics that Ferdinand de Saussure and Louis Hjelmslev conveyed.³⁸ Saussure, in this context, states that language is not *subtansi*, but rather form. The two key terms Saussure has are related to *signifiant*, namely the material aspect of language, whether it is said, heard, written, and read; and *signifie*, i.e. mental imagery, thoughts, and or concepts.

It should be underlined, that language signs always have two elements at once, *signifiant* and *signifie*. The two are inseparable. Instead of departing from separate facts (read: phonemes, words, propositions, and phrases), that with this approach, it has led to one consideration of reading the manuscript in its entirety as a system that contains internal connectedness. Furthermore, after rediscovering the connectedness formed in the text of the Qur'an, it will lead us to not only the framework and dynamism that is typical in Arabic, but will also lead to the capture of a way of thinking. In other words, this analysis can only be done within the Arabic language to explain the 'how' aspects of physiology, acoustics, psychology, sociology, and history, underpinning leadically and forming an inseparable network of meanings.

Second, the momentum of anthropology. At this momentum, it is a form of effort to try to recognize languages that contain mystical structures in the Qur'an. Mysticism or myth is one of the most developed fundamental notions; which is then rehabilitated and highlighted by the disciplines of social and cultural anthropology. Later, some, including Paul Ricoeur, Roland Barthes, and Frey, have agreed that

³⁷ Arkoun, *Kajian Kontemporer Al-Qur'an*, hlm. 48.

³⁸ *Ibid*, hlm. 49.

myth is a symbolic expression of an original and universal reality. Therefore, according to Arkoun, it becomes important to present the mythical discourse (anthropology) in one of its momentum to revive the age of modesty, a space that makes various human actions not only quality, but become more passionate.³⁹ Furthermore, by questioning the type of mythology used in shaping the Qur'an, it will serve to open up, even expand the opportunity to understand the various mechanisms of symbolic expression of the Qur'an that are difficult to digest.

Third, historical momentum. At this momentum, Arkoun directs the focus on where the term, the limitations of the interpretation of lexicographical logic, and the imaginative interpretations pursued by early Muslims to the present day will be formulated. At this stage, any reflection on the presence of religious facts that are considered one of the objective reality data, should consider not only aspects of scripture, but also through the study of various works of previous generations.

For this purpose, Arkoun gives two steps to reread the tradition of interpretation that has been done by previous scholars. First, it requires research into how to solve a problem by making choices to its experts that have been standardized through a broad agreement. Second, this method requires reading the results of classical interpretation as a testimony to the Muslim consciousness that puts the manuscript on a different level of reality. For the record, that at the first level, it leads researchers to accept a teaching that is recognized as saheeh, which in turn avoids criticism. On the second level, researchers put all Islamic thought in phenomenological and epistemological viewpoints. At this last level, Arkoun placed himself, in his view, freeing intellectual insight from the preconceived preconceptions of ancient theological and philosophical circles, and would open up a new path to one of the study of the scriptures.

E. Methodological Application to QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7

To understand more deeply the methodological offer of Arkoun in rereading the Qur'an, and to know the extent of the effectiveness of his offer, here, the author

³⁹ Arkoun, *Kajian Al-Qur'an Kontemporer*, hlm. 55.

specifically explains Arkoun's explanation of QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7. Readings of QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7 will be directed at three readings at once, as explained in the previous section. However, in his work, Arkoun did not go into great detail explaining this. For a note, in his study of QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7, Arkoun provides only a guide in the efforts to conduct further studies of QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7.

Before entering the point of discussion, the important thing to do is to believe that the Qur'an is a limited corpus and open to "various speeches" in Arabic, which only have limited access to manuscripts that were written standardized after the IV to X centuries, which this standardized manuscript has been processed as a work. Furthermore, in actual linguistic practice, the thing to note is the distinction between the teaching, or the production of tangible manuscripts and speech that is tangible manuscripts, or verbal results from global learning.⁴⁰

F. Linguistic Momentum

On the momentum of QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7 as ajaran, Arkoun's attention is directed at the division of the word structure in six parts. First, various determinants, i.e. all nouns—be they substantive or self-name, perpetrator name, and object, substantive adjective—are determined by both the word and the determinative complement. Second, various pronouns, which are words used to replace people or objects. All pronouns indicate another category of determinants. Third, a wide variety of verbs. Fourth, various nouns and nominalization. Fifth, the structure of syntactic sentences. Sixth, prosodi, which is related to the teaching, be it studying pressure, mantras, rhymes, and verses. To understand the parts of Arkoun analysis can be seen in the table as follows:

⁴⁰ Arkoun, *Kajian Al-Qur'an Kontemporer*, hlm. 120.

Tabel. 1 Linguistic Reading Momentum against QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7 as a Teaching⁴¹

No.	Type	Indicator	Description
1.	Determinants or nouns defined by the word or determinative complement	“Al”: <i>al-hamdu, al-shirath, al-maghdudbi, al-dballin, al-rabman, al-rabim, rabbi-l-‘alamin</i>	All forms of <i>ism ma’rifah</i> , the existence of a form called <i>idhafah, mudhaf-mudhaf ilaih</i> is based on Allah Swt. because of dependency
2.	Various pronouns, which are words used to replace people or objects. All pronouns show other categories of determinants to trace speaker intervention	“ <i>yya</i> ”	As an affirmation of <i>na’budu</i> (the purpose of a worship) and <i>nasta’in</i> (a call for help). The recipient of the purpose here is God
		<i>an’amta ‘alaihim and ghairi al-maghdhubi ‘alaihim</i>	The editorial “ <i>ta</i> ” in the indicator hints at two meanings at once. First, the helpers in the grammatical agent are directed at certain humans. Second, the grammatical agent can refer to Allah Swt.
		<i>na’budu, nasta’in, and ibdina</i>	The existence of the term “we” in the editorial has a double meaning, namely me and you; me and them. So “we” has a connection with a single “you”. The consequences of this understanding point

⁴¹ This table is based on the author's reading of Muhammad Arkoun's analysis.

			to the "we" form within the scope of the sender-recipient deed. Aktan I is God as the sender-recipient. Aktan II is a human being as the recipient-sender
3.	Verb	<i>mudbara'ah</i> (two interconnected words): <i>na'budu</i> and <i>nasta'in</i>	This word underlines the permanence to narrow the distance between a caller or servant who has limitations with the donor, namely a figure who deserves praise and then able to care for, in this case God Almighty.
		<i>ibdina</i>	It does not hint at an order, but rather describes the implied plea and is formulated in the cues " <i>na'budu</i> " and " <i>nasta'in</i> "
4.	Nouns and Nominalization. This refers to a number of original terms, i.e. terms narrowed to semantic root words that are detached from various logical and morphological articulations; and the use of nominalization. Attention to this dimension will lead to an understanding of the typological definition of Qur'anic discourse and other discourses in general	- <i>ism, Allah, hamd, rabb, yaum, din, and shirath</i> - <i>'alam, and two finished words rabman rabim</i>	The two stages that must be examined regarding the indicator, namely the first, are associated with the entire etymological structure of the Arabic lexicon. Second, look at the semantic transformation in the lexicological language of the Qur'an. However, the matter of these two issues is not explained in detail by

			Arkoun. In his notes, he only gives the importance of the work being done to measure the involvement of speakers in the formation of a new sense of nature
		<i>malik</i>	Demonstrates the ultimate will of an offender who is always associated with the Court Day deadline and the decisions taken
		<i>al-dhallina</i>	Showing nominal syntagma is the same as a verbal sintagma using a relative nominal subject (<i>ism mausbul</i>): <i>al-ladzina-yadbilluna-l-sbirath</i> and <i>maghdbubi 'alaibim</i> . Verbal word selection allows for a pure category, a means-saving and an exclusion more rooted in categories without a <i>bidayab</i> . That is, the thing to note is that an exterior actor who is not mentioned here, can return to his relationship with <i>al-hamdu li-llah</i> by stopping the process that leads him to active misguided behavior
5.	Syntax structure. Attention to this analysis focuses on specific relationships and	<i>-Bi-smi-l-lāhi</i> with <i>al-rahmani-l-rahim</i>	In the indicator, the first part is 4 basic lexicons and 7

	<p>syntax functions by observing the modalizer of discourse</p>	<p><i>-Al-hamdu-li-llāhi</i> with <i>rabbi-l-'alamin;</i> <i>al-rahman-al-rahim;</i> <i>māliki yaumi-l-din</i></p> <p><i>-Iyyāka na'budu wa</i> <i>īyyā ka nasta'in;</i></p> <p><i>-hdi-na-l-shiratha-l-</i> <i>mustaqim</i> with <i>shirātha-l-ladzīna</i> <i>an'amta 'alaihim;</i> <i>ghairi-l-maghdubi</i> <i>'alaihim; wa la-l-</i> <i>dhallin</i></p>	<p>predicate lexicons. The separation between the two lexicons leads to an understanding of the central syntactic role of the subject of targeting by God Almighty.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Prosodi or emphasis on the fundamental relationship between syntax and intonation</p>	<p><i>min (15), lam (12), nun (12), in (5), and ha (5)</i></p>	<p>At this point Arkoun doesn't give much of a clear explanation. He only gave further recommendations to pay attention to the symbolic study of the signs to the next researcher</p>

G. Historical Momentum

On this momentum, as well as on the momentum after, which Arkoun often refers to as momentum that focuses on aspects of speech, basing on two important questions about QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7.⁴² First, what is the content, function, and range of the last sign according to the tradition of interpretation? Second, today, can you find the level of equalization between the last sign posted by the forming manuscript and the last sign compiled by classical interpretation?

Fundamentally, specifically to see from the historical momentum, according to Arkoun, this should be presented in the form of its own volume, which is large, for an adequate responsibility of any QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7. Here, by comparison, Arkoun wants to see a dish from Fakhruddin al-Razi (w.606 H) on the grounds that

⁴² Arkoun, *Kajian Kontemporer Al-Qur'an*, hlm. 112.

he had conducted a long and comprehensive review of this letter. For that purpose, Arkoun sees the dish with five codes.

First, linguistic code. This code is an attempt to align with some previous studies that looked at aspects of linguistic code before entering other codes. It must be recognized that this linguistic code is a very reliable code to see one important event. Through the understanding of this code, it will lead the interpreter to understand the existence of linguistic data separation which is often combined with various considerations in some interpretation works.

Second, the religious code. This code is a dogma, belief, and rite that revolves around the growth and development of a thought that leads to the emergence of a discourse. The things to note in this code are symbolic, cultural, and anagogical codes. Third, symbolic code. The presence of this code is based on an expansion of imagination that departs from his understanding of the text of the Qur'an which is considered unattractive to actual Islamologists. Fourth, the cultural code. To understand this, it is important to look at the offerings performed by Fakhruddin al-Razi. In it, he has done an overview of the broad interpretation of the points of Arabic science based on his ideological madzhab. As a differentiator, in this case, Arkoun wanted to understand the level of discourse in which a cultural code was raised.

Fifth, anagogic code. This code is a code to bring together some of the codes mentioned earlier, namely to understand the last sign in a manuscript of the Qur'an, in this case QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7. In the final stages of this code will direct each interpreter to see it not about the preparation of a second manuscript with the help of classification presented in the codes, but for the purpose of reordering a typology of meaning by comparing authenticity with culture, symbols with signs, ideas with ideology, and mystical language with logocentric language.

H. Anthropological Momentum

It must be acknowledged that the presence of scientific disciplines covered by anthropological approaches to religions, calculated until Arkoun's work is written, has not received an over-attention. As for the efforts to review QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7 this, by looking at the fact of the efforts to discuss Islamic science conducted by the West, and also the efforts of researchers who conduct studies on the truth of The Jewish-Christian religion, in Arkoun's view is a factor that makes it possible to refute ideological orientation and what the West does in the name of religious science.⁴³

QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7 has provided some kind of opportunity to raise some important issues. Today, it is said that the Qur'an has changed considerably in the view of observers to be more symbolic, compared to denotative and logical. This symbolic assessment of religious language can help to find a characteristic feature of mystical thought, as it is a very influential force. Therefore, by putting aside some of the phrases listed in QS. Al-Fatihah [1]: 1-7 this, Arkoun's center of attention in this momentum is centered on philological studies.

This study is considered important, because at its stage, this study leads to a way out to understand each word as a graphical sign that can record usage through etymology, historical, social, and cultural considerations. This study will ultimately confirm that Allah Almighty is only a speciality of one word of god, deity. Furthermore, in the study of philology, an interpreter will be ushered in an attempt to compare the conception of God with the concept of God before the advent of Islam.

I. Conclusion

Departing from the above explanation, it can be concluded that what Arkoun has tried in his methodology formulation is Arkoun's efforts in presenting the 'discourse of the Qur'an' which has often been 'unthinkable' or even 'unthinkable'. This is due to several factors. First, that the dissemination of various intellectual works, both from the West and the East, still favors the advantages of reason

⁴³ Arkoun, *Kajian Al-Qur'an Kontemporer*, hlm. 116.

(methodology) between the two. The relationship should be balanced, according to Arkoun. Second, the existence of taqlid culture that actually makes the discourse that the Qur'an does not develop. Third, there is a connection to orthodoxy in religion.

As for the offer of Arkoun in an effort to do a reading of the Qur'an ranges from three models of reading. First, linguistics. At this momentum, Arkoun wants the interpreters of the Qur'an to pay attention to the structure of the language. Here, Arkoun is heavily influenced by several characters, among whom are Ferdinand de Saussure and Louis Hjelmslev. Second, anthropology. At this momentum, Arkoun wanted to pay attention to the mythical structure in an emergence of language and civilization. Some of the names that influence Arkoun are Paul Ricoeur, Roland Barthes, and Frey. Third, historically. At this momentum, Arkoun wanted to pay attention to some of the results of the methodological offer and the results of the interpretation of classical Islamic thinkers as a benchmark in determining the next interpretation.

As a record and a measure of effectiveness of Arkoun's offer, referring to Robert D. Lee, that there are several reasons that make Arkoun's works less well known. First, as someone who lived in the western and Islamic academic fringes, part of Arkoun's work originally appeared only in limited journals. Second, the methodology offered by Arkoun is basically very complicated to understand among the general public. Arkoun's methodology tends to use a lot of socio-scientific terminology, and his studies on Islamic tradition still require a more detailed explanation. To understand Arkoun's works, a set of sciences on contemporary literature relating to humanitarian science is needed to comprehensively identify the history of Islamic thought—including mastery of French.

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