

Critical of Jorge J.E. Gracia's Hermeneutical Theory and Its Application to Interpreting Quranic Verse On The Creation of Woman

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Abstract

This research aims to critically examine the interpretive framework developed by Jorge J.E. Gracia, as applied to the interpretation of the Qur'anic verse Surah al-Nisa' [4]: 1, which addresses the creation of women. The focus of this research is to critique the application of the hermeneutical approach in strengthening the principle of gender equality and reconstructing existing interpretations of the origins and social roles of women in the Islamic context. This qualitative analysis employs a descriptive-analytic methodology and utilizes desk research techniques for data collection and analysis. The critique is contextualized through the epistemological framework of Ulumul Qur'an, which serves as the foundational basis for Islamic interpretation. The research outlines the three functions of interpretation embodied in Gracia's hermeneutics—historical, semantic, and implicative—which feminist scholars use to reconceptualize the creation of women and their gender roles. The results indicate that this interpretive approach yields different interpretations from the perspective of classical Islamic theology. The results of this study underscore the limitations and potential risks associated with applying the Western hermeneutical paradigm in Quranic interpretation.

Keywords: *Hermeneutics, Jorge J.E. Gracia, Creation of Women, Feminist Tafsir, Quranic Interpretation*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji secara kritis kerangka interpretasi yang dibuat oleh Jorge J.E. Gracia, kemudian diaplikasikan dalam penafsiran ayat Al-Qur'an surat Al-Nisa' [4]: 1, yang membahas tentang penciptaan perempuan. Fokus penelitian ini diarahkan pada kritik penerapan pendekatan hermeneutika yang digunakan untuk memperkuat prinsip kesetaraan gender dan merekonstruksi interpretasi yang ada tentang asal-usul dan peran sosial perempuan dalam konteks Islam. Analisis kualitatif ini mengadopsi metodologi deskriptif-analitik dan menggunakan teknik penelitian kepustakaan untuk pengumpulan datanya. Kritik ini dikontekstualisasikan melalui sudut pandang epistemologi Ulumul Qur'an, yang berfungsi sebagai kerangka dasar untuk penafsiran Islam. Penelitian ini menguraikan tiga fungsi penafsiran yang terkandung dalam hermeneutika Gracia, yaitu historis, semantik, dan implikatif, yang digunakan oleh para akademisi feminis untuk mengkonseptualisasikan kembali penciptaan perempuan dan peran gender mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan penafsiran ini berujung pada interpretasi yang berbeda dari perspektif teologi Islam klasik. Hasil penelitian ini menggarisbawahi keterbatasan dan potensi risiko yang terkait dengan penerapan paradigma hermeneutika Barat dalam penafsiran Al-Qur'an.

Kata kunci: *Hermeneutika, Jorge J.E. Gracia, Penciptaan Perempuan, Tafsir Feminis, Tafsir Qur'an*

Introduction

The Al-Qur'an is a divine revelation from Allah, granted to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel.¹ As a revelation, the Al-Qur'an serves as a guide and provides direction, compiled and disseminated for 23 years. Verifiable evidence indicates that the Al-Qur'an has been compiled and has its own written form, known as a mushaf, a process that occurred within a specific timeframe and geographical context. Therefore, although the Al-Qur'an is being established as a text, it is essential to acknowledge that the Al-Qur'an is not the same as texts in the general sense.² Similarly, in understanding the Al-Qur'an, the science of tafsir was used by earlier scholars as one way to comprehend the Al-Qur'an; moreover, the science of tafsir is also considered an absolute truth for the Al-Qur'an itself. Scholars are fully committed to creating tafsir works that have significant importance for a comprehensive understanding of the Al-Qur'an as applied within the methodological framework of Qur'anic interpretation.³

Amidst the currents of modernization and globalization, a new interpretive method known as hermeneutics emerged, introduced by Western scholars and adopted by some moderate and liberal Muslim intellectuals. However, the application of hermeneutics to Qur'anic interpretation has been met with significant criticism from the majority of Islamic scholars. This opposition stems from the understanding that hermeneutics was originally formulated for interpreting the Bible. Critics argue that when interpretation relies heavily on textual analysis alone, it tends to neglect critical historical data, including the contextual circumstances and historical background surrounding the revelation of a verse.⁴

Defining hermeneutics as a unified discipline solely dedicated to Qur'anic interpretation is arguably inaccurate. This is due to the complex and multifaceted relationship between hermeneutics and the interpretation of the Qur'an. The diversity of approaches and methodologies within hermeneutics has led to a lack of consensus among Muslim scholars—even among those generally favorable to hermeneutical methods.⁵ According to Adian Husaini, the growing adoption of hermeneutics among Muslim academics cannot be separated from the influence of Western thought in Islamic studies. Today, hermeneutics has

¹ Ainayaa Fadhillah And Anisa Maulidya, "Al-Qur'an Sebagai Manifestasi Wahyu Ilahi: Esensi, Makna, Dan Implementasinya," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu Alquran Dan Tafsir* 1, No. 2 (2025): 11–11, <Https://Doi.Org/10.47134/Jsiat.V1i2.125>.

² Insan Mahmud Fina Mazida Husna Et Al., "Refleksi Hermeneutika Dalam Studi Islam Mengupas Pemikiran Tokoh Hermeneutika Barat Maupun Timur (Islam)," 2024, <Http://Tahtamedia.Co.Id/Index.Php/Issj/Article/View/723>.

³ Mohammad Jailani And Nurkholis, *Kajian Pendekatan Hermeneutika Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Perspektif Ulama Muslim Kontemporer*, 2021.

⁴ Umar Al Faruq Et Al., "Tafsir Kontemporer Dan Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an: Memahami Teks Suci Al-Qur'an Dalam Konteks Kontemporer," *Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Sosial Keagamaan* 1, No. 4 (2024): 4, <Https://Jurnal.Itc.Web.Id/Index.Php/Ikis/Article/View/1032>.

⁵ Ahmad Roisy Arrasyid et al., "Kontroversi Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Sebagai Metodologi Menafsirkan Al-Qur'an," *Blantika: Multidisciplinary Journal* 2, no. 5 (2024): 5, <Https://doi.org/10.57096/blantika.v2i5.143>.

become a widespread phenomenon across many Islamic universities, capturing the attention of numerous Muslim scholars. Many who adopt it do so with enthusiasm, perceiving it as a novel and promising approach to societal advancement. Consequently, the long-established scholarly traditions within Islam are increasingly viewed as outdated and, in some cases, are being gradually abandoned.⁶

The emergence of hermeneutics as a product of Western intellectual traditions has introduced a range of interpretive paradigms that, in many cases, are perceived as conflicting with the foundational principles of Islamic *shari'ah*. Among the ideologies influenced by Western thought are feminism, secularism, liberalism, pluralism, relativism, and materialism—each of which has shaped public discourse and social values. Within this context, feminist interpretations of the Qur'anic narrative on the creation of women have been employed to promote the concept of gender equality.⁷ A study by Ilyas asserts that feminism is grounded in the belief that women have historically been oppressed and unjustly subordinated in comparison to men. Consequently, the notion of female creation becomes central to feminist theological and philosophical inquiry.⁸ The discourse on gender equality is often rooted in interpretations of women's origin. Feminist hermeneutics typically challenge the traditional understanding that women were created from the rib of men, arguing instead that such interpretations reinforce dependency and inferiority of women relative to men.⁹

Feminist thinkers frequently draw connections between the narrative of female creation and the historical marginalization of women within various sociocultural frameworks.¹⁰ These interpretations often prioritize rationalist and secular epistemologies over the theological and revelatory essence of the Qur'an. Since hermeneutics operates from a position of skepticism and critical inquiry toward the text, critics argue that applying such a method to the Qur'an risks undermining its sanctity as divine revelation. In contrast, the Qur'an is regarded in Islamic theology as the unequivocal word of God—not a human literary artifact. As such, the use of hermeneutics in interpreting the Qur'an may compromise its authority and divine authenticity.¹¹ This concern underscores the importance of

⁶ Adian Husaini, *Wajah Peradaban Barat Dari Hegemoni Kristen Ke Dominasi Sekular-Liberal* (Gema Insani Press, 2005).

⁷ Neelmani Jaysawal And Sudeshna Saha, "Feminism, Education And Gender Equality-A Review," *Epra International Journal Of Multidisciplinary Research (Ijmr)*, February 21, 2023, 241–46, <Https://Doi.Org/10.36713/Epra12444>. Hilda Husaini Rusdi, Eko Zulfikar, "Rekonstruksi Makna Hadis tentang Penciptaan Perempuan: Perspektif Simbolik, Kontekstualisasi, dan Kesetaraan Gender," *Al-Shamela : Journal of Quranic and Hadith Studies* 3, no. 2 (2025): 124-141. <Https://doi.org/10.61994/alshamela.v3i2.1075>.

⁸ Yunahar Ilyas, *Feminisme Dalam Kajian Tafsir Al-Qur'an Klasik Dan Kontemporer* (Pustaka Pelajar, 1997).

⁹ Siti Lailatul Qomariyah, "Penciptaan Perempuan Perspektif Hermeneutika George J.E. Gracia," *Al-Dhikra | Jurnal Studi Qur'an Dan Hadis* 2, No. 1 (2022): 95–104, <Https://Doi.Org/10.57217/Aldhikra.V2i1.774>.

¹⁰ Medani P. Bhandari, "Feminisms In Social Sciences," In *Women And Society*, Ed. Medani P. Bhandari (Intechopen, 2024), <Https://Doi.Org/10.5772/Intechopen.111652>.

¹¹ Indria Putri, *Pandangan Dosen Ulumul Qur'an Dan Tafsir Uin Ar-Raniry Tentang Hermeneutika Sebagai Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'an*, 2024.

employing traditional exegetical methodologies that uphold the sacred status and doctrinal integrity of Islamic scripture.

This study seeks to critically examine Jorge J. E. Gracia's hermeneutical method, which is based on a theoretical framework of the triadic relationship between author, text, and reader in the process of meaning-making.¹² This interpretive approach is considered relevant in examining verses of the Qur'an because it opens up a dialogue between the ontological meaning of revelation and the social context of contemporary readers.¹³ This differs from other hermeneutical models that tend to negate the authority of the author or emphasize the subjectivity of the interpreter. Gracia asserts that authentic understanding must consider ethical and historical dimensions, as well as the author's intentions. Therefore, the main focus of this study is directed at the problem of the misapplication of Gracia's interpretation theory by some feminists in interpreting Qur'anic verses regarding the creation of women, particularly in Surah al-Nisa' [4]: 1.

Previous research has explored Gracia's interpretive theory and its application to this verse,¹⁴ including efforts by Indonesian Muslim scholars to contextualize Gracia's moderate hermeneutics—which attempts to balance the author's intended meaning with the reader's interpretive role—in Qur'anic and Hadith studies.¹⁵ Other works have applied Gracia's functional theory of interpretation to analyze Qur'anic verses related to warfare.¹⁶ However, there remains a gap in the literature regarding a focused critique of Gracia's hermeneutics as a method misappropriated by modernist interpreters of the Qur'an.

This study employs a library research method, which involves the systematic collection and examination of data derived from classical texts, scholarly books, academic journals, articles, and other relevant written materials.¹⁷ Methodologically, it adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, aiming to objectively present the data while simultaneously interpreting and analyzing it—an approach characteristic of qualitative research.¹⁸ Specifically, this research investigates the verse on the creation of women found in Surah An-Nisa' [4]:1 using an analytical lens. Data collection is conducted through documentation methods, whereby relevant sources and variables associated with the research topic are

¹² Lailatul Munawaroh et al., "Konsep Al-Musāwāh Dalam Al-Qur'an: Interpretasi Hermeneutika Jorge J.E. Gracia," *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 4, no. 2 (2025): 241–55, <https://doi.org/10.58363/alfahmu.v4i2.363>.

¹³ Rofiatul Windariana, "Marital Tape Dalam Al-Qur'an: Analisis Fungsi Interpretasi J.E Gracia Dalam QS. Al-Baqarah (2): 222-223 Dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar Karya Hamka," *REVELATIA: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 3, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.19105/revelatia.v3i2.7370>.

¹⁴ Qomariyah, "Penciptaan Perempuan Perspektif Hermeneutika George J.E. Gracia."

¹⁵ Al-Ayyubi, *Implementation Of Gracia's Hermeneutics In Qur'anic Studies From The Perspective Of Indonesian Muslim Scholars*.

¹⁶ M Rais Nasruddin, *Perintah Perang Dalam Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 191 Dan Relevansinya Dengan Konsep Moderasi Beragama (Analisis Fungsi Interpretasi Jorge J. E. Gracia)*, 2023.

¹⁷ Muhammad Rijal Fadli, *Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, 21, No. 1 (2021).

¹⁸ M. Afdhal Komang Ayu Henny Chatra P Et Al., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Panduan Praktis Untuk Analisis Data Kualitatif Dan Studi Kasus* (Pt. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2023).

identified and compiled.¹⁹ The data comprises both primary and secondary sources, accessible through printed publications as well as online platforms. Primary data is drawn from the works of Jorge J.E. Gracia, while secondary data includes related studies and literature that align with the research theme. To critically evaluate Gracia's hermeneutical framework, the study utilizes the theoretical foundation of *Ulum al-Qur'an*—a well-established and authoritative discipline within Islamic scholarship, widely recognized and employed by classical and contemporary exegetes.

Among the various strands of hermeneutical theory, gender remains one of the most prominent and contested topics in contemporary Islamic discourse.²⁰ In recent years, feminist movements have amplified demands for gender equality, often framing the debate around scriptural interpretation.²¹ Central to this discourse is the creation narrative, which underpins gender theory and thus warrants deeper critical examination. The present study aims to assess and critique Jorge J.E. Gracia's interpretive theory as it relates to the exegesis of the female creation narrative, along with its broader implications in Qur'anic interpretation. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into the impact of hermeneutical approaches on socio-religious understandings, particularly from the perspectives of Qur'anic and prophetic teachings.

Results and Discussion

Jorge J.E. Gracia's Biographical Sketches and Works

His full name is Jorge J.E. Gracia, and he is a professor in the Department of Philosophy and Comparative Literature at the State University of New York at Buffalo, as well as a philosopher deeply interested in his field. Gracia was born in Cuba on July 18, 1942, and passed away on July 13, 2021. He completed his undergraduate education with a B.A. in philosophy at Wheaton College at the age of 23. He then continued his graduate studies (M.A.) at the University of Chicago in the same field in 1966. He completed his doctoral program at the University of Toronto in the same field in 1971.²²

In addition to being a philosopher, Gracia was also an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo from 1971 to 1976, until becoming a Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the Akademie für Internationale Philosophie in Liechtenstein in 1998 and a graduate adjunct professor at Shandong University in 2009. He has also received many awards. For example, in the study of Metaphysics, he received the

¹⁹ Pederson LL Et Al., "Use Of Secondary Data Analyses In Research: Pros And Cons," *Journal Of Addiction Medicine And Therapeutic Science*, July 8, 2020, 058–060, [Https://Doi.Org/10.17352/2455-3484.000039](https://Doi.Org/10.17352/2455-3484.000039).

²⁰ Rahmat Zulfikar Hamid Et Al., "Gender: Menelaah Keadilan Dan Kesetaraan Dalam Perspektif Antropologi," *Journal Pegguruang: Conference Series* 5, No. 1 (2023): 243, [Https://Doi.Org/10.35329/Jp.V5i1.4043](https://Doi.Org/10.35329/Jp.V5i1.4043).

²¹ Alexandra Scheele Et Al., Eds., *Global Contestations Of Gender Rights*, 1st Ed. (Bielefeld University Press / Transcript Verlag, 2022), [Https://Doi.Org/10.14361/9783839460696](https://Doi.Org/10.14361/9783839460696).

²² Nurhanipah Harahap, *Pembagian Harta Waris Pada Surah An Nisa Dalam Teori Interpretasi Fungsi Jorge. Je. Gracia | Jiqsi: Jurnal Ilmu Al Qur'an Dan Studi Islam*, October 24, 2024, <Https://Ejournal.Stiqmiftahulhudarawalo.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Jiqsi/Article/View/16>.

John N. Findlay Prize, awarded by the Metaphysical Society of America in 1992, and the Aquinas Medal from the University of Dallas on February 1, 2002. In education, he received the 2003 Teaching and Learning Award from the University at Buffalo, the 67th Aquinas Lecture at Marquette University in 2003 and so on.²³ After looking at the history and history of his education, it has been confirmed that he has an areofinterest or a very linear field of interest, namely the science of philosophy. Gracia automatically mastered several things in the field of philosophy, such as metaphysics/ontology, philosophical historiography, philosophy of language/hermeneutics, scholastic philosophy and Latin American philosophy.²⁴

His writings, in the form of books, articles, and anthologies, tend to focus on philosophy, language, identity issues, topics of ethnicity, and nationalism. Some of his works are as follows: (1) *Latinos in America: Philosophy and Social Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008; (2) *Surviving Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in the Twenty-First Century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005; (3) *Old Wine in New Skins: The Role of Tradition in Communication, Knowledge, and Group Identity*. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2003; (4) *How Can We Know What God Means? The Interpretation of Revelation*. New York: Palgrave of St. Martin's Press; (5) *Hispanic/ Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000; (6) *Revised and expanded trans. into Spanish of Hispanic/ Latino Identity: Identidad hispana/Latina: Una perspectiva filosófica*. Mexico City: Paidós, 2006; (7) *Jorge J. E. Gracia and Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, eds., Latin American Philosophy for the 21st Century*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus; (8) *Metaphysics and Its Task: The Search for the Categorial Foundation of Knowledge*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999; (9) *Filosofía hispánica: Concepto, origen y foco historiográfico*. Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 1998; (10) *Texts: Ontological Status, Identity, Author, Audience*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996; (11) *Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995; (12) *Philosophy and Its History: Issues in Philosophical Historiography*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992; (13) *Jorge J. E. Gracia dan Douglas Davis, The Metaphysics of Good and Evil According to Suárez: Disputations X and XI*. Munich and Vienna: Philosophia Verlag, 1989; (14) *Individuality: An Essay on the Foundations of Metaphysics*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988; (15) *Introduction to the Problem of Individuation in the Early Middle Ages, in Analytica Series*, Munich and Washington, DC: Philosophia Verlag and Catholic University of America Press, 1984.

Jorge J.E. Gracia's Biographical Sketches and His Works. Among the many works produced by Gracia, two core works focus on the discussion of interpretive theory and hermeneutics: *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology* and *Texts: Ontological Status, Identity, Author, Audience*. Sahiron Syamsuddin stated that other works by Gracia are difficult

²³ Munirah Munirah, "Interpretasi Hadis Zakat Pertanian Dan Perdagangan (Aplikasi Teori Interpretasi GorgeJ.EGracia)," *Al-Risalah* 14, No. 1 (2018): 1, <Https://Www.Jurnalstairakha.Com/Index.Php/Alris/Article/View/42>.

²⁴ Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*, 1st Ed. (Pesantren Nawesea Press, 2017), <Https://Digilib.Uin-Suka.Ac.Id/Id/Eprint/40731/2/Hermeneutika%20dan%20pengembangan%20ulumul%20qur'an.Pdf>.

to find in Indonesia. As stated by Gracia, these two works already contain all his thoughts in the field of hermeneutics.²⁵

Jorge J. E. Gracia's Hermeneutics and Theory of Interpretation

Within the realm of Hermeneutics, Islamic scholars are categorized into different factions, with some supporting the application of Hermeneutics as an interpretive framework for the Qur'an, while others argue that they oppose its use in the interpretation of the Qur'an. This distinction arises from the tendency of Western scholars to engage in the interpretation of the Bible/Biblical texts.²⁶ Studies related to the Qur'an and Hadith with a hermeneutical approach attracted the attention and sympathy of scholars and Islamic society. Especially for those who study the approach of Quranic Hermeneutics, any differences in the formulation and interpretation of the Qur'an contain aspects of science that are present among scholars and scholars.²⁷ Information in the disciplines of the Qur'an on the methodology of reading the Gospel based on the Qur'an as the revelation of Allah, makes the approach of Hermeneutics in the Qur'an absolute. Therefore, Muslim scholars and scholars have different views on hermeneutics.²⁸

In general, hermeneutics is defined as a theory or interpretation of meaning. The word hermeneutics itself comes from the Greek word *hermeneun* which means to interpret, interpret, or translate.²⁹ Hermeneutics is divided into three major streams: the objectivist stream, the objectivist cum subjectivist stream, and the subjectivist stream. Each stream is represented by figures that embody the thoughts associated with that stream. Like Schleiermacher, representing the objectivist stream, Gadamer and Gracia represent the subjectivist cum objectivist stream, and poststructuralism represents the subjectivist stream. Sahiron Syamsuddin explained in one of his books that Gracia's concept of hermeneutics was quite comprehensive. In one of Gracia's works focused on the theory of interpretation, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology*, Gracia discusses fundamental matters related to hermeneutics. Related to the concept, Gracia argues that the text is a historical entity, in the sense that it was produced by the author or appeared at a specific time and place. The text not only reflects its historical context, but also serves as a tool for understanding broader realities.³⁰

Gracia also explain about text and sign. He said, thus the distinction between text and sign, on the one hand, and the entities that constitute texts, on the other, is that the latter,

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

²⁶ Jailani And Nurkholis, *Kajian Pendekatan Hermeneutika Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an Perspektif Ulama Muslim Kontemporer*.

²⁷ Muzayyin Muzayyin, "Resepsi Hermeneutika Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an Oleh M. Quraish Shihab: Upaya Negosiasi Antara Hermeneutika Dan Tafsir Al-Qur'an Untuk Menemukan Titik Persamaan Dan Perbedaan," *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 1, No. 1 (2015), <Https://Jurnalnun.Aiat.Or.Id/Index.Php/Nun/Article/View/11/11>.

²⁸ M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir* (Lentera Hati, 2013).

²⁹ Harahap, *Pembagian Harta Waris Pada Surab An Nisa Dalam Teori Interpretasi Fungsi Jorge. Je. .Gracia | Jiqsi*.

³⁰ Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*.

considered merely as the entities they are, have no meaning, whereas the former are related to a meaning an author or user intend to convey through them. The distinction between texts and sign rests in the fact that a text is always composed of more than one sign and the meaning of a text is at least in part the result of the meanings of the signs of which it is composed. Signs by contrast may be composed of other signs, but their meaning is not the result even in part of the meaning of the sign of which they are composed.³¹

After seeing Gracia's explanation of the concept of understanding text, Sahiron Syamsuddin argues that when we interact with the text, we are acting as historians and trying to get to the past. According to him, interpreters face the challenge of not being able to access the meaning directly contained in a given text, but instead only being able to access the entities used in an attempt to convey a particular meaning. The attempt to restore historical meaning to Sahiron poses a fundamental problem for hermeneutical patterns, which can also determine the nature and function of the theory of interpretation. Thus, Gracia presents a solution to the hermeneutical problem with the term "the development of textual interpretation" or the development of textual interpretation to connect the gap between the conditions when the text appears and the conditions surrounding contemporary audiences, i.e., readers or interpreters of texts trying to absorb the meaning and implications of historical texts.³²

In his book *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology*, Gracia explains that interpretation requires three components: the interpretandum (the interpreted text), the interpreter, and the interpretans (additional captions). The interpretandum is a historical text, while the interpretans contains additional expressions made by the interpreter to facilitate understanding of the interpretandum. Thus, the interpretation according to Gracia consists of an interpretandum and an interpretant.³³ Qomariyah summarizes the definition of Gracia's interpretation in her research. Gracia etymologically explains that the term "interpretation" is an English translation of the Latin word "interpretatio" which comes from the word "interpares" meaning to spread out. The Latin term interpretatio has three possible meanings: a) meaning, b) translation (translation of text from one language to another), and c) explanation (explaining something hidden and obscure, making something irregular orderly, and providing information about something or another). Terminologically, Gracia states that interpretation can be defined in three forms of understanding, among them: a) The understanding that a person has of the meaning of a text. b) The process or activity in which one develops an understanding of the text. c) Interpretation.³⁴

³¹ Jorge J.E Gracia, *Text: Ontological Status, Identity, Author, Audience* (State University of New York Press, 1996).

³² Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*.

³³ Jorge J.E Gracia, *A Theory Of Textuality: The Logic And Epistemology* (State University Of New York Press, 1995).

³⁴ Qomariyah, "Penciptaan Perempuan Perspektif Hermeneutika George J.E. Gracia."

Functions and Varieties of Jorge J.E. Gracia's Interpretation

The concept of interpretation formulated by Jorge J. E. Gracia originates from the process of identifying a text. According to Gracia, a text is conceived as a historical entity produced by an author and situated within a specific temporal, situational, and spatial context. Hence, the existence of a text is inseparable from the historical circumstances and contextual environment in which it was created.³⁵ Sahiron Syamsuddin explains that, according to Gracia, the general function of interpretation is to facilitate an understanding of the text being interpreted for a contemporary audience. This function is broken down into three types of specific functions, namely:

1. The historical function is to reconstruct within the cognitive framework of the contemporary audience, the understanding shared by the author of the text and the historical audience.
2. The meaning function is to generate an understanding in the minds of the contemporary audience by which the contemporary audience can perceive and develop the meaning of the text, regardless of whether the meaning corresponds to what the author of the text and the audience mean, historical or not.
3. Implicative function that is to bring up in the minds of the contemporary audience an understanding, so that they understand the implications of the meaning of the interpreted text. In this function, the interpreter seeks to establish relationships between the text being analyzed and the various disciplines that are relevant to the text under study, such as the psychological sciences, physical sciences, biological sciences, and others.

The function above explains that interpretation contains additional information for the *interpretandum* (the text being interpreted). This creates a dilemma that Gracia refers to as the Interpreter's Dilemma. This dilemma is specifically focused on the function of historical interpretation because, on the one hand, interpreting or adding information to the text will distort the interpreted text. On the other hand, without interpretation, contemporary audiences are likely to struggle to understand the text because they are culturally and temporally distant from it. Gracia offers a principle to overcome this dilemma, which he calls the Principle of Proportional Understanding. This principle explains that the quantity of understanding possessed by the contemporary audience must be equal and directly proportional to the quantity of understanding by the historical audience and the author of the text.³⁶ Based on this, Gracia sets the purpose of interpretation as: "to create a text producing in the audience (the contemporary audience) acts of understanding that are intentionally the same as those produced by the historical text's historical author and the historical audience of the historical text."³⁷ To create an interpretive text that can form in

³⁵ M. Dani Habibi, "Interpretasi Hermeneutika Jorge J.E. Gracia Dalam Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Maidah: 51," *QOF* 3, no. 2 (2019): 195–204, <https://doi.org/10.30762/qof.v3i2.1377>.

³⁶ Syamsuddin, *Hermenentika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*.

³⁷ Gracia, *A Theory Of Textuality: The Logic And Epistemology*.

the minds of a contemporary audience, acts of understanding that are intentionally the same as those produced by the historical author and the historical audience of the historical text.

In her study, Siti Lailatul Qomariyah expands upon Jorge J.E. Gracia's theory of interpretation by categorizing it into two main types:

1. *Textual interpretation* involves efforts to uncover the meaning embedded within a given text. This mode of interpretation may seek to retrieve the original or historical intent of the interpretandum—the text being interpreted—as conceived by its author and its initial audience. It may also aim to generate new meanings that emerge through the interpreter's engagement with the text in a specific contemporary context or to draw out the broader implications of the text's meaning. Thus, textual interpretation functions as a means of disclosing both the semantic content and the potential implications of the text.
2. *Non-textual interpretation*, on the other hand, seeks to go beyond the surface meaning of the text to establish a more integrated understanding—one that encompasses the text itself, its interpreted meaning, and its broader implications, along with the text's relation to other external elements. This category includes interpretations that are historical, psychological, philosophical, legal, scientific, literary, and inspirational.³⁸

The following is Jorge J.E. Gracia's hermeneutical framework as outlined by Khoirul Imam:

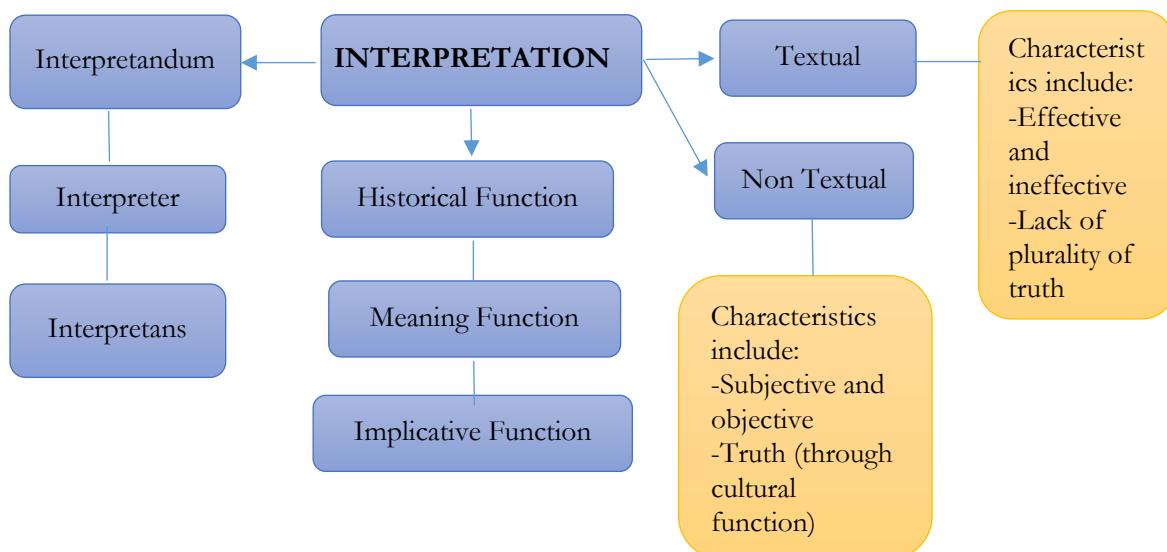


Figure 1. Jorge J.E Gracia's hermeneutical scheme

Application of Jorge J.E. Gracia's Hermeneutical Theory to the Qur'anic Verse on the Creation of Women

Drawing from Jorge J.E. Gracia's interpretive theory, Siti Lailatul Qomariyah, in her research, seeks to translate its functional framework into the realm of Qur'anic exegesis, specifically about gender theory and the verse concerning the creation of women. The Qur'an

³⁸ Qomariyah, "Penciptaan Perempuan Perspektif Hermeneutika George J.E. Gracia."

does not provide a detailed account of the creation of Eve, the wife of Adam and the first woman created by God (Hanafi, 2016). The only verse directly referencing the creation of a woman is found in Surah An-Nisa' [4]:1. Interpreting this verse, Qomariyah applies Gracia's hermeneutical functions to examine the narrative of female creation.

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نُفْسِسٍ وَحْدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسْأَلُونَ بِهِ وَأَلْرَحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَّقِيبًا

“O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate, and through both He spread countless men and women. And be mindful of Allah—in Whose Name you appeal to one another—and ‘honour’ family ties. Surely Allah is ever Watchful over you.”

The verse mentions the phrase *nafs wahidah* (a single soul), which has long been a point of debate among Islamic scholars regarding the origin of the woman created to be Adam's wife. According to many classical exegetes, Eve was created from a part of Adam's body—specifically, his rib, which is referenced in the verse by the phrase *minhā* ("from it"). This verse has become a focal point for feminist and liberal interpretations, which argue against gender bias and maintain that the first man and woman were created from the same essence and substance. Qomariyah argues that this verse can be understood through the lens of Gracia's three interpretive functions: the historical, the meaning, and the implicative. According to her, Gracia's theory facilitates an interpretation that combines subjective and objective elements, balancing historical reconstruction and textual meaning with contemporary implications. This section of the study critically evaluates how Gracia's interpretive theory, as applied by Qomariyah, aligns with the concept of gender equality. The following outlines how Qomariyah applies Gracia's hermeneutical framework to the interpretation of the creation of women.

1. Application of the Historical Function

In applying the historical function, Siti Lailatul Qomariyah explores the socio-historical context surrounding the revelation of the verse, drawing particularly from the interpretation of Zaitunah Subhan, a feminist scholar from Gresik, Indonesia. Subhan argues that the position of women within the framework of Islam can only be fully and proportionally understood when contextualized against the backdrop of women's status prior to the advent of Islam, particularly during the *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic) era. During this period, social structures were heavily influenced by hierarchical norms that favored elite social classes, often defined by the ownership of enslaved people. This enabled exploitative practices and granted unchecked authority over women and enslaved people. Among the sociocultural features of that era were practices such as polyandrous slave marriages, transactional relationships involving the barter of female slaves for goods, and unilateral

seizure of women's property and wealth. Such treatment reflects the arbitrary dominance exercised by male slaveholders.³⁹

Qomariyah also cites Quraish Shihab, who notes that among lower-class pre-Islamic Arab societies, women were routinely degraded. In some cases, men would "inherit" their father's wives, meaning they could marry them or force them into marriage regardless of the woman's consent.⁴⁰ This was predicated on the belief that a wife was the property of her husband and, upon his death, his heirs had the right to claim her. If they were pleased with her, they would marry her; if not, they would exert control over her life and prevent her from remarrying.⁴¹ Adding to this portrayal, M. Faishol highlights that the practice of burying newborn daughters alive was widespread at the time, justified by the belief that female children were an economic burden and a source of shame.⁴²

In addition to these oppressive customs, several pre-Islamic marriage practices were eventually abolished by Islamic law. These included *mut'ah* (temporary marriage with a predetermined duration), *zawwaj al-badal* (wife-swapping arrangements), *zawwaj al-sighār* (a reciprocal marriage without dowry where two men marry each other's female relatives), and *zawwaj al-istibdā'* (where a husband permits his wife to sleep with another man to become pregnant). Such practices illustrate the degraded status of women prior to the arrival of Islam.⁴³ Moreover, in the interpretation offered by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, the term *nafsun wahidah* linguistically means "a single soul." The majority of classical scholars interpret this phrase as referring to Adam. Consequently, the word *zanjabā* (his spouse) is interpreted as Eve, who is believed to have been created from Adam himself. This interpretation has often been used to support the notion that women are derivative of men, thereby implying their ontological and social inferiority.⁴⁴

2. Application of the Meaning Function

The meaning function in Jorge J.E. Gracia's interpretive theory lets the interpreter explore and develop a text's meaning, regardless of whether that meaning precisely reflects the author's original intent. This function, therefore, covers a broader interpretive range than the historical function.⁴⁵ In this context, Quraish Shihab explains that the Qur'an strongly condemns the pre-Islamic practice of burying infant girls alive—a custom not practiced everywhere but limited to certain tribes. This cruel act was driven by two main concerns: first, economic worries related to poverty—either the father's inability to support his

³⁹ Prof Dr Zaitunah Subhan, *Al-Qur'an Dan Perempuan: Menuju Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Penafsiran* (Prenada Media, 2015).

⁴⁰ Qomariyah, "Penciptaan Perempuan Perspektif Hermeneutika George J.E. Gracia."

⁴¹ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membaca Sirah Nabi Muhammad Saw.: Dalam Sorotan Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis-Hadis Shahih* (Lentera Hati, 2011).

⁴² Muhammad Faishol, *Hermeneutika Gender* (Uin-Malang Press, 2011), <Https://Malikipress.Uin-Malang.Ac.Id/Product/Hermeneutika-Gender-2/>.

⁴³ Faishol, *Hermeneutika Gender*.

⁴⁴ Qomariyah, "Penciptaan Perempuan Perspektif Hermeneutika George J.E. Gracia."

⁴⁵ Qomariyah, "Penciptaan Perempuan Perspektif Hermeneutika George J.E. Gracia."

daughter or anxiety over the daughter's future inability to support herself; and second, social fears that the daughter might be enslaved due to the violence and oppression of the era marked by war, robbery, and abuse.⁴⁶

Qomariyah also incorporates views from modern scholars. Muhammad Abduh, known for his rationalist approach to interpretation,⁴⁷ argues that the apparent meaning of the verse does not necessarily mean that the "single soul" (*nafs wāhidah*) refers to Prophet Adam. His conclusion relies on two main points: (1) scientific and historical (archaeological) findings challenge the traditional interpretation, and (2) the phrasing in the verse uses *rijālan kathīran wa nisā'an* (many men and women), instead of *al-rijāl wa al-nisā'*, implying a different nuance. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs also notes that the Qur'an does not definitively confirm or deny that Eve was created from Adam. Some scholars see *nafs wāhidah* as representing the human species, meaning that both Adam and his spouse were created from the same human essence, and all of humanity descended from them.

In *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, al-Rāzī presents several insights into the verse *khalaqakum min nafsin wāhidah*. First, the phrase signifies that all of humankind was created from a single human origin. Second, this shared origin fosters social cohesion and mutual compassion. Third, recognizing that all people share a common essence fosters humility, equality, and the eradication of arrogance among individuals. Similarly, Irsyadunnas in *Hermenentika Feminisme* posits that the creation of man and woman as a pair reflects divine intentionality, with both partners being equally valuable. The Qur'an does not suggest that one is superior to the other. Instead, any differentiation is limited to biological functions, intended for mutual complementarity and cooperation. This interpretation represents a broadened understanding of the verse within the meaning function. Drawing on Surah An-Nisa' [4]:1, Qomariyah concludes that women were created from the same essence as men, not directly from Adam's physical being.⁴⁸

3. Application of the Implicative Function

In applying the implicative function, Qomariyah connects the discussion on the creation of women to gender theory, highlighting its influence on the social positioning of women. According to Zaitunah Subhan, *gender* etymologically refers to biological sex, but terminologically, it is understood as a cultural construct aimed at distinguishing the roles, behaviors, mentalities, and emotional characteristics between men and women.⁴⁹ Lips, as cited by M. Faishol, defines gender as the set of cultural expectations imposed on men and women. Wilson expands this definition by emphasizing that gender should be analyzed as a

⁴⁶ M. Quraish Shihab, *Membaca Sirah Nabi Muhammad: Dalam Sorotan Al-Quran Dan Hadis-Hadis Shahih* (Lentera Hati, 2018).

⁴⁷ T. Mairizal and Muhammad Nur, "Penciptaan Perempuan Pertama Dalam Al-Qur'an; Tinjauan Komparatif Studi Tafsir Al Manar Dan Tafsir Munir," *Wathan: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora* 1, no. 3 (2024): 3, <https://doi.org/10.71153/wathan.v1i3.154>.

⁴⁸ Qomariyah, "Penciptaan Perempuan Perspektif Hermeneutika George J.E. Gracia."

⁴⁹ Subhan, *Al-Qur'an dan Perempuan: Menuju Kesetaraan Gender dalam Penafsiran*.

conceptual framework shaped by socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, Indonesia's Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 132 states that gender refers to socially and culturally constructed roles and responsibilities of men and women, which can evolve.⁵⁰

Given the perception that men are inherently superior to women, feminist scholars have advocated for gender equality as a corrective measure against systemic inequality.⁵¹ Asghar, cited by Subhan, argues that gender equality in the Qur'an entails two core principles: first, the equal recognition of dignity for both men and women; and second, the acknowledgment of equal rights in social, economic, and political spheres—such as the right to contract or dissolve a marriage, to own and manage property independently, to choose one's lifestyle freely, and to share equal responsibilities and liberties.⁵²

Qomariyah refers to Subhan's interpretation of Surah An-Nisa [4]:1, asserting that the verse encapsulates one of the core principles of Islam: the equality of all human beings as God's creation. Subhan maintains that the Qur'an, as a sacred text and transformative force, promotes human equality by eliminating distinctions based on gender, race, ethnicity, or nationality. The only criterion of superiority in Islam is piety. Within this framework, the Qur'an elevates the status of women and affirms their entitlement to equal rights alongside men. Subhan articulates this principle of equality in two ways: first, the Qur'an universally affirms the inherent dignity of both men and women; and second, it grants men and women equal rights and responsibilities across all dimensions of life. Although biological differences exist, the normative teachings of Islam uphold gender parity.⁵³ From this, Qomariyah concludes that the implicative function affirms that men and women hold equal roles, status, and value.

Summarizing the three interpretive functions of Jorge J.E. Gracia as applied to the creation of women, Qomariyah outlines the following:

1. The historical Function: Suggests that Eve was created from Adam, leading to perceptions of women as derivative and therefore subordinate to men.
2. The meaning Function: Argues that women were created from the same human essence as men, not from Adam's physical being.
3. Implicative Function: Interpreted through the lens of gender equality, affirming equal roles, status, and dignity for both men and women.

Critical Analysis of Gracia's Hermeneutics Regarding the Interpretation of the Creation of Women

Muslim scholars do not fully accept the establishment of hermeneutics as a method of interpretation. Some of them criticize that the hermeneutical approach is not in line with the spirit and characteristics of the Qur'an. This is due to the historical roots of hermeneutics,

⁵⁰ qomariyah, "Penciptaan Perempuan Perspektif Hermeneutika George J.E. Gracia."

⁵¹ Faishol, *Hermeneutika Gender*.

⁵² Subhan, *Al-Qur'an Dan Perempuan: Menuju Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Penafsiran*.

⁵³ Subhan, *Al-Qur'an Dan Perempuan: Menuju Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Penafsiran*.

which originated from the tradition of understanding the Bible in the West, so it is considered inappropriate to apply it directly to the Qur'an, which has a different dimension of sacredness and divine authority.⁵⁴ The Qur'an should not be regarded as an ordinary text that can be interpreted solely through human reasoning. Human intellect, by its nature, is limited, prone to bias, and susceptible to the influence of personal interests and subjective inclinations. Consequently, the interpretation of the Qur'an must be grounded in the divine will and the guidance of the Prophet, rather than in human desires or interpretive subjectivity.⁵⁵ The following is a critical analysis of the application of Gracia's interpretation function with reference to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

1. Criticism of the Application of the Historical Function

In critiquing the historical function within Gracia's interpretive theory as applied to the creation of women, the author reexamines the position of women following the advent of Islam, particularly as a corrective to the negative portrayals common in the *Jahiliyyah* period. With the establishment of Islamic teachings, women were granted comprehensive rights, including the right to inheritance, the full legal ownership of personal property, and autonomy over their affairs unless legally overridden through due process. In Islamic tradition, legally accountable women (*mukallafāt*) are entitled to enter into contracts, make oaths, and offer vows—whether concerning fellow human beings or in acts of devotion to God. These rights are firmly protected and cannot be invalidated arbitrarily, as reinforced by Qur'anic injunctions, such as the one stating: “*Allah will not call you to account for your thoughtless oaths, but He will hold you accountable for deliberate oaths. The penalty for a broken oath is to feed ten poor people from what you normally feed your own family, or to clothe them, or to free a bondsperson. But if none of this is affordable, then you must fast three days. This is the penalty for breaking your oaths. So be mindful of your oaths. This is how Allah makes things clear to you, so perhaps you will be grateful.*” (QS: Al-Maidah: 89).

The arrival of Islam as a religion of guidance and mercy significantly transformed the status of women by granting them full autonomy in choosing their life partners. Islamic law strictly prohibits guardians or parents from arranging a woman's marriage without her explicit consent, ensuring that no marriage is considered valid unless the woman herself agrees to it.⁵⁶ Islam establishes equal legal standing and rights for both men and women under its legal framework. Women are also afforded equal freedom in matters concerning the dissolution of marriage, particularly through the legal mechanism of *khulu'*, whereby a woman

⁵⁴ Siti Fahimah, “Kritik Epistemologi Metode Hermeneutika: Studi Kritis Terhadap Penggunaannya Dalam Penafsiran Al Quran,” *Al Furqan: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 2 (2019): 109–24, <https://ejournal.iai-tabah.ac.id/Alfurqon/article/view/461>.

⁵⁵ Bahrul Ulum and Alwi Alatas, “Kritik Metode Hermeneutika Pada Al-Qur'an: Sebuah Refleksi,” *EL-BANAT: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 2 (2022): 179–97, <https://doi.org/10.54180/elbanat.2022.12.2.179-197>.

⁵⁶ Sri Aisyah And Lusi Tania Agustini, “Rekonstruksi Hak Perempuan Dalam Perkawinan Menurut Syaikh Ali Jum'ah: Kajian Pemikiran Dan Metode Istimbāt Hukum,” *Jurnal Hukum Das Sollen* 11, No. 1 (2025): 125–59, <Https://Doi.Org/10.32520/Das-Sollen.V11i1.4154>.

may initiate separation with or without compensation, either by requesting divorce or by invoking the term *khulu'* directly.⁵⁷

This emphasis on equality reflects Islam's broader educational and ethical framework, which accords women and men equal dignity and honor. Islam does not assign rigid gender-based roles; instead, it promotes justice and recognizes the distinct yet equal value of each individual. The Prophet Muhammad actively challenged the oppressive norms of pre-Islamic society (Jāhiliyyah), working to elevate the status and dignity of women in both spiritual and social spheres.⁵⁸ When examined through a faithful reading of Qur'anic verses and the teachings of the Prophet, it becomes evident that Islamic teachings place considerable focus on women's issues, advocating their rightful position within society. One of the foundational principles embedded in Islamic education is the belief in the inherent equality and dignity of all human beings.

2. Criticism of the Application of the Meaning Function

In critiquing the meaning function, this study references the classical interpretation offered by Wahbah al-Zuhaylī in *Tafsir al-Munir*. He interprets *nafs wahidah* as referring to Adam and *zānjahā* (his spouse) as Eve, who was created from a part of Adam's body. His interpretation is grounded in linguistic analysis, in which *nafs* is commonly rendered as "person" or "self," and *wahidah* as "one." Wahbah's understanding is supported by a *sahīh* ḥadīth narrated by al-Bukhārī, in which the Prophet said: "*Treat women with kindness, for indeed they were created from a rib, and the most crooked part of the rib is its upper portion. If you try to straighten it, you will break it; but if you leave it as it is, it will remain crooked.*".⁵⁹ Wahbah's approach aligns with the views of earlier classical scholars. For instance, al-Qurṭubī states that the use of the feminine form *nafs wahidah* grammatically refers to Adam, and Eve was created from his rib. He maintains that this formulation preserves the integrity of the original expression while conveying its intended meaning. Wahbah also concurs with al-Ṭabarī's interpretation of the phrase *wa khalaqa minhā zānjahā*—that God created Adam's wife, Eve, from him.

Furthermore, Wahbah al-Zuhaylī identifies three core semantic elements following the phrase *nafsin wahidah*: (1) Adam was the first human created without parents, (2) Eve was created in the same form and from the same essence as Adam, and (3) all human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve. Therefore, terms such as *al-nisā'* (women), *al-rajul* (man), *al-zānjah* (wife), *al-umm* (mother), and *al-ab* (father) all trace their lineage to a shared human origin. When Wahbah interprets gender-related verses—particularly those concerning the

⁵⁷ Amelia Husna Et Al., "Hak Dan Kedudukan Perempuan Dalam Perjalanan Sejarah Sebelum Dan Setelah Datangnya Islam," *Madinatul Iman* 1, No. 2 (2022): 2, <Http://Madinatul-Iman.Com/Index.Php/Jurnal/Article/View/16>.

⁵⁸ Indah Saputri Et Al., "Kedudukan Perempuan Dan Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Pandangan Islam," *Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendikia* 1, No. 7 (2024): 7, <Https://Jicnusantara.Com/Index.Php/Jiic/Article/View/923>.

⁵⁹ Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir*, 2nd Ed. (Gema Insani, 2013).

creation of women—he consistently upholds the view that Adam was the first human and Eve was the second, created from one of Adam's ribs.⁶⁰

On the other hand, Riffat Hassan challenges traditional interpretations by asserting that the Qur'an does not distinguish between men and women in terms of creation or responsibility for the "fall." She rejects the claim that women were created from or solely for men. According to Hassan, everything God creates is purposeful. In the Qur'anic perspective, worship of God is inextricably linked to service to humanity. Thus, belief in God must be accompanied by a commitment to human rights and social justice. This idea is affirmed in verses such as Qur'an 3:195, 4:124, and 9:71-72, which promise an equal reward for righteous deeds performed by both men and women. The resistance among some Muslim communities to gender equality, she argues, stems from entrenched beliefs that women are ontologically inferior—created from a "crooked rib," more easily deceived, and designed primarily to serve men.⁶¹

3. Criticism of the Application of the Implicative Function

In critiquing the implicative function, this study emphasizes that the concepts of feminism and gender, in their modern ideological form, are not explicitly recognized within Islamic theology. Islam asserts the fundamental equality between men and women, with the only distinguishing factor being the degree of *taqwā* (God-consciousness), as stated in the Qur'an. Islam assigns men and women to roles that are complementary rather than hierarchical. Thus, orientalist and Islamophobic claims portraying Islam as degrading or marginalizing women are unfounded. In fact, Islam holds women in high esteem, as evidenced by numerous Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions that honor women in their various capacities—as mothers, daughters, wives, and integral members of society.

In Islam, the distinction between men and women lies not in value, but in function and responsibility.⁶² The Qur'anic verse often cited in discussions on gender is Surah Al-Hujurāt [49]:13, which reads:

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُّوبًاٰ وَقَبَّالٍ لِتَعَارِفُواٰ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَنُكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ حِلْمٌ حَبِيبٌ

"O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most."

⁶⁰ Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir*.

⁶¹ Natasya Agustina Et Al., "Perspektif Tentang Kedudukan Wanita Dalam Islam Dan Peran Sosial Wanita Dalam Islam," *At-Tarbiyah: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pendidikan Agama Islam* 1, No. 1 (2023): 1, <Https://Journal.Staittd.Ac.Id/Index.Php/At/Article/View/31>.

⁶² Puspita Amanah Et Al., "Pandangan Islam Terhadap Keadilan Gender: Analisis Tafsir Maudhu'i," *Shād: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2, No. 1 (2024): 30–47, <Https://Ejournal.Stai-Mas.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Iat/Article/View/125>.

A servant's rank before God—whether male or female—is ultimately determined by their level of piety (*taqwā*). Accordingly, no individual has the right to claim superiority over another, for all are equal in their servitude to Allah. Although Islam assigns different roles and responsibilities to men and women based on divine wisdom, this does not imply inequality; instead, both are regarded as spiritually equal in the sight of God. Hence, it is far more virtuous for individuals to complement one another and to invest their time in the pursuit of righteous deeds.

Islam further emphasizes the universal moral obligation to do good toward others, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, or any other social distinctions. This principle of equality is reinforced by Ibn Kathīr's interpretation, who cites a *sahīh* ḥadīth narrated by Imam Muslim. According to the narration by Amr An-Naqid, transmitted through Kasīr ibn Hishām, Ja'far ibn Barqān, and Yazīd ibn al-Asam from Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "*Verily, Allah does not look at your appearance or wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.*" Ibn Mājah also records this narration through Ahmad ibn Sinān with the same chain of transmission. It affirms that moral and spiritual excellence—not material status or physical attributes—is the accurate measure of human worth in Islam.

Conclusion

Based on the preceding discussion, it is essential to reaffirm that hermeneutics cannot be applied uncritically in the interpretation of the Qur'an. The Qur'an possesses its established exegetical methodology, governed by principles and conditions rooted in *shari'ah*. The adoption of hermeneutical methods, especially those developed outside the Islamic tradition, often leads to interpretive controversies and misunderstandings, both among the general public and within academic circles. This concern is exemplified in the application of Jorge J.E. Gracia's functional theory of interpretation to Surah An-Nisa' [4]:1, a verse concerning the creation of women. Gracia's model is built upon three key components—*interpretandum* (the text being interpreted), *interpreter*, and *interpretans* (the supplementary explanation)—and three interpretive functions: historical, semantic (meaning), and implicative. Each function carries specific applications that require critical examination.

In the application of the historical function, the position of women during the *Jahiliyyah* era is portrayed negatively, as they were frequently subjected to dehumanizing treatment. However, the advent of Islam granted women their full legal rights, including the right to inheritance and property ownership. The application of the meaning function, as interpreted by some feminist scholars, leads to the conclusion that women were created from the same essence as men, rather than from Adam himself. In contrast, traditional interpretations of the phrase *min nafsin wāhidah* identify Adam as the first human and Eve as his spouse, created from his rib. The implicative function is often used to advance the concept of gender equality, asserting that men and women hold equal roles, status, and dignity. However, within Islamic theology, concepts such as feminism and gender, in their

modern ideological formulations, are not recognized as legitimate frameworks. Islam affirms the equal value of men and women, with piety (*taqwā*) as the sole criterion for distinction, as stated in Surah Al-Hujurat [49]:13.

This research contributes to Islamic scholarship by offering a critical perspective that bridges social dynamics and the study of interpretive thought. Nonetheless, the field of hermeneutics and Qur'anic interpretation remains vast and requires further in-depth investigation. Given the importance of maintaining interpretive integrity in line with Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings, the study highlights the need for careful integration between classical Islamic knowledge traditions and contemporary hermeneutical discourse. Future research is encouraged to expand upon this critique by examining the interpretive methodologies of notable female Muslim scholars, such as Zaitunah Subhan and Amina Wadud, among others. Such work would enrich our understanding of the evolving interaction between sacred texts and critical intellectual inquiry.

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