

Exploring Textuality and Reader Orientation: Unveiling Interpretative Tendencies in Understanding *Nafs Wahidah* in QS. Al-Nisa of the Qur'an

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Abstract: The identification of the meaning of *nafs wāḥidah*, as produced by various interpretations through Adam, is claimed to be a biased interpretation mechanism based on certain orientations. This research aims to uncover the interpreters' orientation towards the text by situating the interpretation process as the interpreter's interaction with the text within a specific communication context. To achieve this objective, a qualitative method is employed in this research, utilizing a reception frame introduced by Wolfgang Iser. This study reveals that the interpreter's orientation towards specific meanings is constrained by the linguistic structure of the Qur'an, which has been schematized. This constraint on the interpreter's orientation occurs when seeking the contextual significance of the verse through syntagmatic and paradigmatic interconnections. The interpreter's relationship with the Qur'an within a specific communication context limits and shapes tendencies in the interpretation process, which is text-driven. In this context, the interpretation of the term *nafs wāḥidah*, in its various forms, does not exhibit any discernible biases towards producing meanings in alignment with the interpreter's preferences. Instead, the interpreter solely seeks contextual clues within the verse's structure, thereby associating the meaning of *nafs wāḥidah* with other terms in an interconnected context.

Keyword: *Nafs Wāḥidah*, QS. Al-Nisa [4]: 1, Orientations of Meaning, Receptions

Abstrak: Identifikasi makna *nafs wāḥidah* yang dihasilkan oleh beragam penafsiran melalui identifikasi makna Adam diklaim sebagai mekanisme pemaknaan yang bias yang didasarkan pada orientasi tertentu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan orientasi pemaknaan penafsir terhadap teks dengan meletakkan mekanisme penafsiran sebagai interaksi penafsir terhadap teks dalam situasi komunikasi tertentu. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan bingkai resepsi yang dikenalkan oleh Wolfgang Iser. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa orientasi penafsir terhadap makna tertentu dibatasi oleh struktur linguistik al-Qur'an yang telah diskemakan. Pembatasan terhadap orientasi penafsir berlangsung dalam momen pencarian konteks terhadap ayat yang menggunakan jalinan sintagmatis dan paradigmatis. Hubungan interaksi penafsir dengan al-Qur'an dalam situasi komunikasi tertentu membatasi dan membingkai kecenderungan dalam proses pemaknaan berdasarkan pada intervensi teks. Dalam konteks ini, pemaknaan terhadap diksi *nafs wāḥidah* dengan beragam modelnya tidak ditemukan tendensi dan kecenderungan bias untuk menghasilkan makna sesuai dengan kehendak penafsir. Penafsir hanya mencari konteks dalam struktur ayat sehingga makna terhadap diksi *nafs wāḥidah* dikaitkan dengan diksi lain sebagai jalinan konteksnya.

Kata Kunci: *Nafs Wāḥidah*, QS. Al-Nisa [4]: 1, Orientasi Pemaknaan, Resepsi

Introduction

The interpreters' understanding of the diction of "nafs wāḥidah," as linked to Adam, is argued to result from a misplacement of historical context,¹ patriarchal bias,² neglect of egalitarian principles,³ and the stereotyping of women⁴. This perspective, however, disregards the linguistic construction of the Qur'an, which manifests as a structured scheme. The schematized aspect influences changes in the interpreter's perspective,⁵ guiding them towards the intended meaning and curbing the inclination towards biased interpretations. The significance of the term *nafs wāḥidah* is intertwined with other dictionary words connected through various conjunctions.⁶ Moreover, the interpretation is influenced by the concept of "khitāb" introduced at the verse's onset, acting as a pivotal term shaping the understanding of *nafs wāḥidah*.⁷ Recognizing the presence of other words within the verse reveals that interpretative considerations are not driven by biased tendencies in meaning production.

Many researchers dismiss the consideration given by interpreters who delve into the components of the verse when interpreting *nafs wāḥidah*. Previous studies generally approach the interpretation model from three perspectives. Firstly, they examine the outcomes of interpreters' understandings of *nafs wāḥidah*. Research within this model often presents diverse views from traditional,⁸ scientific,⁹ and feminist circles,¹⁰

¹ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Qira'ah Mubadalah* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2019), 241–242.

² Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 81.

³ Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Quran* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 134.

⁴ Zaitunah Subhan, *Tafsir Kebencian: Studi Bias Gender Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1999), 49–52.

⁵ Andrea Duffy, 'Reorienting Orientalism: Ottoman Historiography and the Representation of Seventeenth-Century French Travelogues', *Tarih Dergisi*, no. 73 (February 23, 2021): 53–76; Paul B. Armstrong, 'The Neuroscience of Literary Time Travel: How Literary Works Cross Historical Distance', *Narrative* 31, no. 3 (October 2023): 324–349.

⁶ Muḥammad al-Tāhir Ibn 'Āsyūr, *Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, vol. 22 (Tunisia: al-Dār al-Tunisīyah li Nasyr, 1984), 214–215.

⁷ Muḥammad Rasyīd bin 'Alī Riḍā, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Ḥakīm*, vol. 4 (Kairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitāb, 1990), 264.

⁸ Sama'un Sama'un and Ahmad Bahrudin, 'Term Nafs Wahidah QS. Al-Nisa' Ayat 1 Perspektif Taba'taba'i', *Safwah: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (2023): 51–64.

⁹ Ahmad Fadly Rahman Akbar et al., 'Nafs Wahidah Dalam Al-Qur'an Al-Karim Menurut Zaghlul Raghīb Muhammad An-Najjar', *Zad Al-Mufassirin: Jurnal Ilmu al-Qur'an & Tafsir* 5, no. 1 (2023): 60–77.

¹⁰ Siti Nurbaeti, 'Pemahaman Feminis Muslim Indonesia Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Penciptaan Perempuan: Studi Komparasi Terhadap Tokoh Siti Musdah Mulia Dan Husein Muhammad' (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2022); Aris Mujammil, 'Penafsiran Nafsin Wahidah Perspektif Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir (Studi Analisis Tafsir Progresif Qir'ah Mubadalah)' (UIN KH. Achmad Siddiq Jember, 2022);

showcasing varied interpretations. Secondly, the focus is on the inclination of interpretation. This model of research aims to pinpoint the meaning of "nafs wāḥidah" by analyzing it through the lens of equality concepts.¹¹ Thirdly, an analysis of meaning based on linguistic components is conducted. This involves generating meaning by interpreting the verse using a semiotic perspective¹² that can be applied to real-life situations¹³. The pursuit of authentic meaning and the identification of meaning tendencies are illustrated through interpretation results without assigning a specific position to the interpreter as a reader of the text in this study.

The inclination to portray the interpreter as an engaged reader interacting with the text necessitates exploring the reasons behind divergent interpretations. This research aims to address the alleged bias in interpretations by uncovering the factors contributing to differences in meaning. Achieving this objective involves identifying two key aspects: first, understanding the interpreter's orientation towards meaning, and second, examining the interpreter's reading process of the text in the meaning-making process. The elucidation of these two aspects establishes a framework illustrating the relationship between the text and the interpreter within a communicative context, shaping the overall meaning.

This research diverges from the notion that the interpretation process functions as a communicative mechanism between the interpreter, acting as a reader of the Qur'an, within a specific communication context. The interaction established between the reader and the text inherently holds an asymmetry.¹⁴ This stems from the interpreter, functioning

Husni Mubarak, 'Asal Penciptaan Perempuan Dalam Surat Al-Nisa' Ayat 1 (Studi Komparatif Tafsir Feminis Nasaruddin Umar Dan Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir)' (IAIN Kudus, 2020); Shinta Nuraini, 'Al-Quran Dan Penciptaan Perempuan Dalam Tafsir Feminis', *Hermeneutik: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 12, no. 1 (2019): 71.

¹¹ M Anwar Nawawi et al., 'Legal Verses About Women's Dignity and Actualization of Gender Equality in the Family', *Jurnal Mahkamah: Kajian Ilmu Hukum dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 1 (2023): 85–96; Nailatul Khalishah and M. Fairuz Rosyid, 'Feminism and Gender Equality in Islam Perspective of Al-Qur'an Tafsir (Study of Qur'anic Verses on Term Nafs Wahidah)', *International Conference on Islamic Studies (ICIS)* (2023): 377–387; Agus Afandi, 'Bentuk-Bentuk Perilaku Bias Gender', *Journal of Gender and Children Studies* 1, no. 1 (2019).

¹² Ummu Hani Assyifa and Mirwan Akhmad Taufiq, 'Synchronic and Diachronic Analysis of the Word Zauj in the Al-Qur'an', *Journal of Arabic Language Studies and Teaching* 1, no. 1 (2021): 59–74; Siti Zulfa, 'Semiotika Tafsir Nafs Wāḥidah (Studi Penafsiran q.s. Al-Nisā'[04]: 01, q.s. Al-an'ām[06]: 98, q.s. Al-a'rāf[07]: 198, q.s. Luqmān[31]: 28 Dan q.s. Al-Zumar[39]: 06 Perspektif Roland Barthes)' (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2019).

¹³ Muhammad Parhan Mubarak, 'Hakikat Term Al-Nafs Dalam Al-Qur'an Dan Implementasinya Dalam Pendidikan', *Islamica* 5, no. 2 (2022): 46–50.

¹⁴ Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, trans. Der Akt des Lesens (London: Uoutledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 167.

as a reader, engaging with the Qur'an without a guarantee of producing the accurate meaning. Additionally, the interpreter lacks access to the text's intended purpose due to the absence of contextual information. To overcome this challenge, the establishment of context in the communicative relationship between the reader and the text is constructed through linguistic codes and their clues.¹⁵ Unveiling context through language empowers the interpreter to grasp the meaning and intent behind the verse as manifested in the interpretation. This process facilitates the identification of the diverse meanings generated concerning *nafs wāḥidah*.

This study employs a qualitative methodology, chosen for its capability to elucidate both what is thought and the reasons behind those thoughts.¹⁶ The research primarily relies on library research, incorporating two distinct data sources. The primary data sources encompass a wide array of interpretations of the "nafs wāḥidah" diction found in QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1, spanning various genres and periods, while secondary data sources are derived from studies related to the theme. The data processing involves three key stages: data reduction, data analysis, and drawing conclusions.¹⁷ The outcomes of the data reduction phase are subjected to content analysis techniques,¹⁸ employing a scheme that delves into the relationships within the text and reader responses, as per Wolfgang Iser's conception.

Interpretations formation of the Meaning of *Nafs Wāḥidah* in QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1

The interpretation of *nafs wāḥidah* in QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1 conveys a consistent meaning, predominantly associated with Adam. However, variations arise due to the word's function within the verse structure. Some interpreters assert that the meaning of *nafs wāḥidah* is linked to *khalaqa minha zaujah*, identified as Eve.¹⁹ Consequently, Adam is deemed responsible for safeguarding his wife.²⁰ The reference to Adam's meaning

¹⁵ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 134.

¹⁶ David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research* (New York: SAGE Publications, 2021).

¹⁷ Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis (a Source Book of New Methods)* (Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications, 1984).

¹⁸ Marilyn Domas White and Emily E. Marsh, 'Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology', *Library Trends* 55, no. 1 (2006): 22–45.

¹⁹ Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āsyūr, *Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, vol. 22 (Tunisia: al-Dār al-Tunisiyah li Nasyr, 1984), 215.

²⁰ 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Abī Bakr Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Dur Al-Mansūr Fī Al-Tafsīr Bi Al-Ma'sūr*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 4.

extends to his role as the progenitor of humanity, from whom all humans originate.²¹ The creation of Eve for Adam serves the purpose of perpetuating human existence through the reproductive mechanism mentioned in the verse, *wa baṣa minhumā rijalan kaṣiran wa nisā'*.²² Al-Biqā'ī (d. 885 A.H.) elucidates that singling out Adam in this context aims to encourage all his descendants to emulate his obedience to God.²³

The comprehension of the meaning of the term *nafs wāḥidah* is broadened by integrating the wisdom conveyed through its association with other expressions that construct the verse. The narrative emphasizing the unity of creation, serving as evidence of God's perfection deserving obedience, is the rationale behind introducing this term.²⁴ Al-Rāzī (d. 606 AH) echoes a similar rationale, linking it to the term *ittaqū* as a cue to underscore obedience in following commands and refraining from prohibitions.²⁵ Additionally, the presence of the term *ittaqū* serves as a basis for al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538 AH) to accentuate the perfection of God's power in creating humans from a singular origin.²⁶ Al-Qāsimī (d. 1332 AH) further reinforces this idea by highlighting the perfection and vastness of God's power through the mention of *nafs wāḥidah* in reference to Adam.²⁷ This establishes a consistent pattern of meaning, identifying *nafs wāḥidah* as Adam and reinforcing the proof of God's power as the ultimate authority to be obeyed.

The expression concerning God's power in creation, encapsulated in the phrase *khalaqakum min nafs wāḥidah*, is subject to diverse interpretations, particularly those underscoring its social implications. Abu Zahrah (d. 1394 AH) contends that the directive to obey underscores the aspect of *wahdah rububiyah* (divine unity), while the reference to a single origin emphasizes the concept of *wahdah insānīyah* (unity of humanity).²⁸

²¹ 'Abd Allah bin Aḥmad Al-Nasafī, *Madārik Al-Tanzīl Wa Ḥaqā'iq Al-Ta'wīl*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kalm at-Ṭīb, 1998), 326; Muḥammad bin Muḥammad Al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt Ahl Al-Sunnah*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 2005), 6.

²² Abd Allah bin 'Umr Al-Baidāwī, *Anwār Al-Tanzīl Wa Asrār Al-Ta'wīl*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turās al-'Arabī, 1418), 58.

²³ Ibrāhīm bin 'Umar Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm Ad-Durar Fī Tanāsub Al-Āyāt Wa Al-Suwar*, vol. 5 (Kairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d.), 173–174.

²⁴ 'Ali bin Muḥammad Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb Al-Ta'wīl Fī Ma'ānī Al-Tanzīl*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 1415), 337; Maḥmūd bin 'Abd Allah Al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ Al-Ma'ānī Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-'Azīm Wa Al-Sab'i Al-Masānī*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 1415), 391.

²⁵ Fakr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ Al-Ghayb* (Bairut: Dār Iḥyā' at-Turās al-'Arabī, 1420), 476.

²⁶ Maḥmūd bin 'Umar Az-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqāiq Ghawāmiḍ Al-Tanzīl*, vol. 1 (Bairut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Arabi, 1407), 461–462.

²⁷ Muḥammad Jamal al-Dīn Al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsin Al-Ta'wīl*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 1418), 5.

²⁸ Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Abū Zahrah, *Zahrah Al-Tafsīr*, vol. 3 (Kairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, n.d.), 1574.

Emphasizing unity in humanity necessitates acknowledging equality among individuals (*yusawiyah fī al-insanīyah*).²⁹ Achieving humanitarian equality requires a recognition of the brotherhood³⁰ in humanity (*waḥdah al-insanīyah*).³¹ Abduh (d. 1905 AD), focusing on the social dimension embedded in the meaning of "nafs wahidah," expands its interpretation. He argues that "nafs wāḥidah," functioning as the unifier of brotherhood through the assertion of a common origin, extends its meaning beyond Adam. According to him, the identification of its meaning can encompass anyone regarded as a community bound together through that individual.³²

Interpreters' Orientation in Constructing the Meaning of *Nafs Wāḥidah*

The process of interpreting the Qur'an entails the reader engaging with the composition of the verse, eliciting a response in the form of a statement of meaning. In the classical interpretation framework, understanding the Qur'an involves exploring its linguistic structure, the instructions provided by God to the Prophet, and the consensus within the community intertwined with the revelation period.³³ Identifying meaning relies on the potential of reason to comprehend intelligible elements (*al-ma'qulāt*). Though the intellect is limited compared to the infinite nature of the Qur'an, focusing on specific aspects and understanding their purpose allows for interpretation.³⁴ The determination of a word's focus has implications for variations in meaning production, influencing the interpreter's inclination in perceiving the structure of the verse.

The utilization of diverse approaches to elucidate the meaning of *nafs wāḥidah* in QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1 yields distinct interpretations. Within the interpretation model of QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1, three prevailing trends emerge. Firstly, there is a tendency to frame the meaning through the central message. Certain commentaries lean towards outlining the general meaning as the primary objective of the verse before delving into a detailed explanation. QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1 is perceived to convey the command of piety towards

²⁹ Aḥmad bin Muṣṭafā Al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr Al-Marāghī*, vol. 4 (Mesir: Muṣṭafā al-Bāb al-Ḥalabī, 1946), 175.

³⁰ Muḥammad bin Muḥammad Abū al-Su'ūd al-'Imādī, *Irsyād Al-'Aql Al-Salīm Ilā Mazāyā Al-Kitāb Al-Karīm*, vol. 2 (Beirūt: Dār Iḥyā' at-Turās al-'Arabī, n.d.), 138.

³¹ ṬanṬawī Jawharī, *Al-Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm*, vol. 3 (Mesir: Muṣṭafā al-Bāb al-Ḥalabī, 1249), 3; Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Munīr Fī Al-'Aqīdah Wa Al-Sharī'ah Wa Al-Manhaj*, vol. 2 (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 1991), 222.

³² Muḥammad Rasyīd bin 'Alī Riḍā, *Tafsīr Al-Mannār* (Mesir: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitāb, 1990), 265.

³³ al-Ḥarīs bin Asad Al-Muḥāsibī, *Fahm Al-Qur'an Wa Ma'anīh* (Beirūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1398), 248.

³⁴ Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī, *Qanūn Al-Ta'wīl* (Beirūt: Mu'assasah 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, 1986), 506.

Allah, the creator. Consequently, the construction of the meaning of each word contributes to reinforcing the central message.³⁵ The primary construction of meaning revolves around obedience—complying with commands and refraining from prohibitions—which explains the existence of the term *nafs wāḥidah* as an assertion of the origin of creation.³⁶ Some interpreters argue that, by emphasizing the shared origin, Allah instructs humans to express empathy, kindness, protection, and the preservation of the rights of children, women, and orphans.³⁷ The directive to uphold connections among humans who share the same origin is labeled as "al-waḥdah al-insanīyah" (unity of humanity) by Ṭanṭawī Jauharī (d. 1431 AH) and al-Zuhailī (d. 1436 AH), representing the central focus of the verse's content.³⁸

Secondly, there is a tendency to scrutinize the meaning of each component of the word. Interpreters focus on comprehending the detailed meaning of every word comprising QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1. Al-Māturīdī (d. 333 AH), for instance, dissects the significance of each word, delineating their identity based on the sentence structure.³⁹ A similar approach is adopted by al-Shukānī (d. 1250 AH), who separates the meanings of *an-nās*, *nafsin waḥidah*, and *khalaqa minha zaujaha* to some extent without explicitly illustrating the connections between the words. He contends that word linkage is confined to the presence of pronouns, with the identification of pronouns determining the meaning.⁴⁰ Conversely, al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538 AH),⁴¹ al-Baiḍāwī (d. 685 AH),⁴² and

³⁵ 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad Aṣ-Ṣā'ālibī, *Al-Jawāhir Al-Ḥisān Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-'Arabī, 1418), 159; Aḥmad bin Muṣṭafā Al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr Al-Marāghī*, vol. 4 (Mesir: Muṣṭafā al-Bāb al-Ḥalabī, 1946), 174; Muḥammad Izzah Darwazah, *Al-Tafsīr Wa Al-Ḥadīṣ*, vol. 8 (Kairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutb al-'Arabīyah, 1383), 9.

³⁶ Muḥammad bin Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān Fī Ta'wīl Āy Al-Qur'an*, vol. 7 (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 2000), 512; Maḥmūd bin 'Abd Allah Al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ Al-Ma'ānī Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-'Aẓīm Wa Al-Sab'i Al-Masānī*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 1415), 391.

³⁷ Fakr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ Al-Ghayb* (Bairut: Dār Iḥyā' at-Turās al-'Arabī, 1420), 475; al-Ḥasan bin Muḥammad An-Naisābūrī, *Gharā'ib Al-Qur'an Wa Raghā'ib Al-Furqān*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 1416), 339; Ibrāhīm bin 'Umar Al-Biqā'ī, *Nizām Ad-Durar Fī Tanāsub Al-Āyāt Wa Al-Suwar*, vol. 5 (Kairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d.), 171; Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Ibn 'Ajībah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Majīd*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 2002), 460.

³⁸ Ṭanṭawī Jawharī, *Al-Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm*, vol. 3 (Mesir: Muṣṭafā al-Bāb al-Ḥalabī, 1249), 3; Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Munīr Fī Al-'Aqīdah Wa Al-Sharī'ah Wa Al-Manhaj*, vol. 4 (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 1991), 222.

³⁹ Al-Māturīdī mengidentifikasi dua kemungkinan lawan bicara yang dituju oleh ayat, yakni orang kafir dan orang mukmin. Muḥammad bin Muḥammad Al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt Ahl Al-Sunnah*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 2005), 3.

⁴⁰ Muḥammad bin 'Alī Al-Shawkānī, *Faṭḥ Al-Qadīr*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1414), 479.

⁴¹ Maḥmūd bin 'Umar Al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqāiq Ghawāmiḍ Al-Tanzīl*, vol. 1 (Bairut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1407), 462.

⁴² Al-Baiḍāwī, *Anwār Al-Tanzīl Wa Asrār Al-Ta'wīl*, 2:58.

Abū al-Barakāt al-Nasafī (d. 710 AH)⁴³ approach the examination of each part of speech differently. They establish links between each part of speech and other words to fully construct the meaning and elucidate the primary purpose of the verse.

Thirdly, there is a concentration on the pivotal keywords constituting the verse. Interpreters direct their attention to the significance of the term *nafsin wāḥidah*, which shapes the overall meaning of QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1. Muqātil ibn Sulaimān (d. 150 AH), for instance, explores the meaning by contextualizing the surah with a focus on the creation of Adam and Eve, who, in turn, gave rise to numerous descendants with responsibilities related to fulfilling rights and maintaining kinship.⁴⁴ Al-Qāsimī (d. 1332 AH) centers on the term "ittaqū Allah," drawing the complete meaning of the verse as an affirmation of God's absolute power that demands obedience.⁴⁵ Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373 AH),⁴⁶ al-Khāzin (d. 741 AH),⁴⁷ Ibn Kaithīr (d. 774 AH),⁴⁸ and Abū al-Su'ūd (d. 972 AH)⁴⁹ employ a similar approach by highlighting obedience encapsulated in the term *ittaqū Allah* as the primary keyword. This emphasizes that subsequent words reinforce God's divinity and the perfection of power in creation, legitimizing obedience. Conversely, Ibn Āshūr (d. 1393 AH)⁵⁰ and Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1354 AH)⁵¹ focus on different keywords, placing emphasis on the *khiṭāb* (address) of the verse. This strategic focus shapes the composition of meaning, guiding the interpretation towards the purpose of da'wah.

Interpreters employ diverse forms and inclinations to actualize the arrangement and composition of words forming a schematic interweaving in linguistic form,

⁴³ 'Abd Allah bin Aḥmad Al-Nasafī, *Madārik Al-Tanzīl Wa Ḥaqā'iq Al-Ta'wīl*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kalm at-Ṭīb, 1998), 326.

⁴⁴ Muqātil bin Sulaimān, *Tafsīr Muqātil Bin Sulaimān*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turās, 1423), 355.

⁴⁵ Muḥammad Jamal al-Dīn Al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsīn Al-Ta'wīl*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 1418), 5.

⁴⁶ Ibn Abbās mengidentifikasi kemungkinan lawan bicara yang dituju ayat ini dapat menunjuk masyarakat Makkah dan seluruh manusia. Naṣr bin Muḥammad As-Samarqandī, *Baḥr Al-'Ulūm*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 1993), 278.

⁴⁷ 'Alī bin Muḥammad Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb Al-Ta'wīl Fī Ma'ānī Al-Tanzīl*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 1415), 337.

⁴⁸ Ismā'īl bin 'Umar bin Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-'Aẓīm*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmiyah, 1419), 181.

⁴⁹ Muḥammad bin Muḥammad Abū al-Su'ūd al-'Imādī, *Irsyād Al-'Aql Al-Salīm Ilā Mazāyā Al-Kitāb Al-Karīm*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' at-Turās al-'Arabī, n.d.), 137.

⁵⁰ Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āsyūr, *Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, vol. 4 (Tunisia: al-Dār al-Tunisīyah li Nasyr, 1984), 214.

⁵¹ Muḥammad Rasyīd bin 'Alī Riḍā, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Ḥakīm*, vol. 4 (Kairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitāb, 1990), 264.

intertwined with other verses, as a fundamental aspect of the meaning of QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1. The variation in tendencies arises due to the intervention of the text through the schematized language structure, influencing the reader's perception.⁵² The scheme structured in QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1, opening with *nida' al-nās, amanū, khalaqa,* and *khalaqa minha zaujah,* diverts the interpreter's perception of the meaning of *nafs wāḥidah* as an integral part of the unified meaning with other terms. The manipulation of the language structure prompts a shift in the interpreter's focus of meaning, identified by Iser as a manipulative mechanism of the text capable of altering the reader's orientation.⁵³ This change in the reader's orientation consequently leads to a shift in the meaning of the term *nafs wāḥidah* through various tendencies.

Changes in the interpreter's perspective are also influenced by the syntactic structure of the verse, establishing connections between words and between verses through the inclusion of keywords, conjunctions (*aṭaf*), and pronouns (*ḍamir*). The alternating and shifting pattern contributes to creating a pause during reading, prompting a shift in perception towards a different focus of meaning.⁵⁴ The text shapes the interpreter's perception, and in response, the interpreter selects a potential meaning aligned with their preexisting conceptualization. The construction of the text intervenes in the reader's mindset, inducing a virtual overflow of meaning as a consideration during interpretation.⁵⁵ During this moment, the interpreter cannot steadfastly adhere to their ideological inclinations, necessitating a negotiation of the orientation of meaning in alignment with the text's structure.

The Interaction of Text and Reader in Interpretation: The Basis of the Debate on the Meaning of *Nafs Wāḥidah*

The variation in the interpretation of the term *nafs wāḥidah*, stemming from the inclination to concentrate on its meaning, can be attributed to the interactive dynamics between the interpreter and the Qur'an. This interaction forms a unique relationship involving the conventions of the text's linguistic structure and a multitude of perspectives held by readers that mutually influence each other.⁵⁶ The Qur'an, serving as the object of reading, encapsulates a set of linguistic principles that shape the interpreter's

⁵² Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 21.

⁵³ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 125.

⁵⁴ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 113.

⁵⁵ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 126.

⁵⁶ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 79.

understanding of the intended message. These limitations imposed by the Qur'an's linguistic structure are perceived by interpreters through the lens of their individual ideas and concepts, embedded in their minds to absorb and actualize the content. The diverse array of perceptions injected into the interpretation imparts a distinctive character to the meaning, setting it apart from other interpretations.⁵⁷ The resulting disparity in meaning, arising from the chosen tendency, is a consequence of the interactive process employed by interpreters engaging with the Qur'an.

The interaction unfolding between the interpreter and the Qur'an establishes a communicative scenario that significantly influences the generation of meaning. These communicative situations, consistently involving both the text and the reading process, emerge as pivotal factors in shaping meaning.⁵⁸ Two distinct patterns characterize interpreters' interactions with the text, yielding diverse interpretations. Firstly, there is the narrative setting approach to the text. The construction of meaning in QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1 evolves through an exploration of word meanings and their intricate connections, facilitated by the narrative setting formed through syntactic and paradigmatic interweaving. Al-Biqā'ī, for instance, constructs the verse's message by linking QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1 with QS. Āli Imrān [3]: 200. The transition from the mention of the interlocutor (*khiṭāb*) *āmanū* in the previous verse to *al-nās* is interpreted as representative of human relations.⁵⁹ On the contrary, Darwazah attributes the meaning to al-Aḥzāb [33], revealed before al-Nisā' [4].⁶⁰ Another perspective targets the interrelation between the component words of the verse. Ibn 'Ājibah, for example, links the diction of creation with the mention of God's attributes at the verse's end, intertwining the dimensions of *musyāhadah* with *muraqabah*.⁶¹ Some interpreters opt for paradigmatic interweaving of meanings between verses to frame the meaning of *nafs wāḥidah*.

The interpretation of *nafs wāḥidah* is further elucidated by establishing connections between the word's structure and other words within QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1. The sequencing of the verse, commencing with *al-nās*, *ittaqu*, *rabb*, *khalāqa*, is interpreted as

⁵⁷ Musā'id bin Sulaimān Aṭ-Ṭayyār, *Fuṣūl Fī 'Uṣūl Al-Tafsīr* (ar-Rayyān: Dār Ibn al-Jauzī, 1423), 34.

⁵⁸ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*.

⁵⁹ Ibrāhīm bin 'Umar Al-Biqā'ī, *Nizām Ad-Durar Fī Tanāsub Al-Āyāt Wa Al-Suwar*, vol. 5 (Kairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d.), 172.

⁶⁰ Darwazah, *Al-Tafsīr Wa Al-Hadīs*, 8:10.

⁶¹ Aḥmad bin Muhammad Ibn 'Ājibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Majīd*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutb al-'Ilmīyah, 2002), 460.

a signal highlighting Allah's undeniable power demonstrated through the creation of a singular being (*nafs wāḥidah*) without delving into its identity details.⁶² Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538 A.H.) aligns with this perspective, asserting that the verse's construction underscores Allah's absolute power by linking the words *nafs wāḥidah*, *khalāqa minha zaujahā*, and *baṣa*.⁶³ The presence of the conjunction serves as a tool for other interpreters to discern the meaning of the relationship between *nafs wāḥidah* and *khalāqa minha zaujahā*.⁶⁴ Ibn Āshūr underscores the role of *isim mauṣūl* (conjunctions) in intertwining the two concepts.⁶⁵ Conversely, some commentators focus on the conjunction *wāw* as an indicator with two possible meanings: emphasizing the certainty of a singular origin established in the context of the conversation and underscoring Eve's origin from Adam.⁶⁶ This concept, embraced by the majority of interpreters, shapes the verse's meaning, culminating in the construction of a central message that emphasizes societal relationships.

Secondly, there is the development of the message within the interpreter's perspective. The mention of the origin of creation, juxtaposed between male and female, is recognized as conveying a message that embodies purpose and wisdom. Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327 A.H.) and al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 A.H.) refer to a narration attributed to Ibn 'Abbās, asserting that women being created from the male part influences their inclination to protect women.⁶⁷ This perspective is reiterated and emphasized by Ibn Kaṣīr (d. 774 AH), who adds a narration about the creation of woman from Adam's most crooked rib, suggesting that men should find enjoyment in their companionship without imposing undue burdens.⁶⁸ al-Khāzin (d. 741 AH) notes that after Adam woke up, he realized the presence of another person, a woman, in charge of accompanying him in heaven. Consequently, Adam assumed the responsibility of providing maintenance and protection

⁶² Muḥammad Mutawallī Al-Sya'rāwī, *Khawāṭirī Ḥawl Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, vol. 4 (Mesir: Akhbār al-Yawm, 1991), 1986.

⁶³ Az-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqāiq Ghawāmiḍ Al-Tanzīl*, 1:462.

⁶⁴ Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Abū Zahrah, *Zahrah Al-Tafāsīr*, vol. 3 (Kairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, n.d.), 1574; Riḍā, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Ḥakīm*, 4:264.

⁶⁵ Ibn 'Asyūr, *Al-Tahrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, 22:214–215.

⁶⁶ Abū al-Su'ūd al-'Imādī, *Irsyād Al-'Aql Al-Salīm Ilā Mazāyā Al-Kitāb Al-Karīm*, 2:138; Maḥmūd bin Umar Al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr Al-Kasysyāf 'an Ḥaqāiq Ghawāmiḍ Al-Tanzīl* (Bairut: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 2009), 461; 'Alī bin Muḥammad As-Sakhāwī, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-'Azīm*, vol. 1 (Kairo: Dār an-Nasyr li al-Jāma'āt, 2009), 165.

⁶⁷ Abd al-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, vol. 3 (Riyād: Maktabah Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1419), 852; 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Abī Bakr Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Dur Al-Mansūr Fī Al-Tafsīr Bi Al-Ma'sūr*, vol. 2 (Beirūt: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 423.

⁶⁸ Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-'Azīm*, 2:181.

due to the shared origin of creation.⁶⁹ On a different note, al-Biqā'ī highlights that the emphasis on a singular origin of creation is connected to the command to fear, rationalizing the common creation of human beings.⁷⁰ The shared origin from the creator results in the obligation to protect each other's rights and foster familial connections,⁷¹ symbolizing universal human unity (*al-wahdah al-'ammah al-insanīyah*).⁷² Abū Zahrah identifies two wisdoms behind mentioning creation through *nafsin wāḥidah*, the unity of divinity and the unity of human creation.⁷³

The quest for the meaning of QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1, employing these two mechanisms, signifies the interpreter's dedication to uncovering underlying patterns and codes within the narrative framework of the text. The linguistic structure, conveying information about reality and meaning through the organization of its internal components, is the catalyst for divergent discoveries of patterns and codes during the reading process.⁷⁴ The exploration of the meaning within QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1, encapsulating information on creation, piety, and humanity, is accentuated by its unique opening and closing constructions, serving as a repertoire that prompts interpretative engagement. The identification of the text's repertoire as a strategy for extracting meaning heightens reader engagement, instigating a range of actions and interactions.⁷⁵ The interpreter's deliberate selection of various verse repertoires, facilitated by both the relationship between words and verses (*munasabah*) and the extraction of wisdom from the content, significantly contributes to establishing the foundational elements of meaning, forming the fundamental structure of the interpretation of *nāḥidah*.

The combination of an internal segment of the verse with pertinent structures forges a fresh connection between the verse and the interpreter, transcending its immediate context. The adoption of a specific repertoire shapes the reader's inclination toward the corresponding aspect.⁷⁶ An interpreter concentrating on the mention of *khiṭāb*, for instance, is inclined toward exploring the interweaving between verses (*munasabah*).

⁶⁹ Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb Al-Ta'wīl Fī Ma'ānī Al-Tanzīl*, 1:337.

⁷⁰ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm Ad-Durar Fī Tanāsūb Al-Āyāt Wa Al-Suwar*, 5:174.

⁷¹ Al-Qāsimī, *Mahāsīn Al-Ta'wīl*, 3:5; Al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Munīr Fī Al-'Aqīdah Wa Al-Sharī'ah Wa Al-Manhaj*, 4:223.

⁷² Jawhārī, *Al-Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm*, 3:6.

⁷³ Abū Zahrah, *Zahrah Al-Tafsīr*, 3:1574.

⁷⁴ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 61.

⁷⁵ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 86.

⁷⁶ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 96.

Another focusing on vocabulary directs attention to deciphering word meanings, while an interpreter prioritizing the interweaving between words constructs meaning through a sequence of words. These choices, each imbued with a distinct tendency, are intricately influenced by the interplay of the reader's focus on meaning and their existing horizon, giving rise to a mechanism that governs interpretive inclinations.⁷⁷ The reader's engagement with their pre-existing predispositions and the text is channeled through choices and their combinations, collectively shaping interpretive proclivities.

Conclusions

This study dispels the notion of bias in interpreting the term *nafs wāḥidah* in QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1, often attributed to various tendencies. It demonstrates that the perceived bias in interpretation is not rooted in the interpreter's inclination to impose their orientation on the meaning. Rather, the divergence in meaning arises from distinct interpretative focuses due to the contextual formation within different communication situations with the text. An interpreter who contextualizes the *khiṭāb* verse in producing the meaning of *nafs wāḥidah* emphasizes the unity of humanity. Conversely, an interpreter framing *ittaqū* as the context directs the meaning towards obedience, while an interpreter making *baṣa* the context identifies Adam, created from Eve, as his partner, elucidating the mechanism of reproduction.

The exploration of meaning construction, driven by the understanding of context within language structure, is facilitated through the application of the reception concept, emphasizing the reader's response to the text. However, the delimitation of the discussion on the meaning of *nafs wāḥidah* within QS. al-Nisā' [4]: 1, as presented in this study, restricts the communication process arising from the interpreter's engagement with the Qur'an. The collaborative interplay of meanings between interpreters during the process of meaning formation is excluded in this study. This aspect serves as a potential avenue for future research to uncover the interconnected processes of meaning that influence interpreters across the spectrum of interpretation history.

⁷⁷ Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, 98.

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