

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Study

Orientalism<sup>1</sup> is a study of the Near East and Islam carried out for centuries by Westerners. Therefore, ideological, cultural, and religious biases cannot be avoided because they are coloured by the Western political, religious, and scientific milieu.<sup>2</sup> Islam is considered a major threat to political power and Christianity globally, even as an enemy of civilization.<sup>3</sup>

In recent decades, Qur'ānic scholarship in the West has experienced significant development with increasingly diverse motives and approaches. From the end of the 19th century until the quarter of the 20th century, the nuances of the Qur'ānic study in the West were still sceptical, apologetic, and polemical.<sup>4</sup> This period was marked by the appearance of Abraham Geiger's dissertation (1810-1874) in 1833 entitled: "*Was hat Mohammed aus den Judentum aufgenommen?* (What did Mohammad take from Judaism)." This publication became a momentum for the growth of Western scholarship with

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<sup>1</sup> The terms orientalism and orientalist first took on markedly political meanings referring to European occupation in the late 18th and 19th centuries in the Near East. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, colonial bureaucracies, and colonial styles. See: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Western Conceptions of the Orient) (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Said concluded that what Europeans said about the East (Orient) was still racial, imperialist, and ethnocentric. *Ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> To quote Sir William Muir's statement: "The sword of Mahomet, and the Coran, are the most stubborn enemies of civilisation, liberty, and truth, which the world has yet known." See: Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China: A Neglected Problem* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1910), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> They study more about the origin of the Qur'anic text (what is behind the text). Yusuf Rahman, "Tren Kajian Al-Qur'an di Dunia Barat," *Studia Insania* 1, no. 1 (2013): 2.

similar nuances.<sup>5</sup> Among them are Gustav Flügel (1802-1870),<sup>6</sup> Theodor Nöldeke (1836-1930),<sup>7</sup> Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921),<sup>8</sup> Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936),<sup>9</sup> Gotthelf Bergsträsser (1886-1933), St. Clair Tisdall (1859-1928), Arthur Jeffery (d. 1952),<sup>10</sup> and Joseph Schacht (1902-1969).

Entering the early 20th century, Western scholarship in Qur'ānic study moved towards an academic-dialogical nuance.<sup>11</sup> There tends to be a positive collaboration between Muslim and Western scholars, which

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<sup>5</sup> Stefan Wild, *The Qur'an as Text* (London: E.J. Brill, 1996), vii. See more: Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx, eds., *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic Milieu* (Leiden, Boston: E.J. Brill, 2010), p. 6–7.

<sup>6</sup> This orientalist published a 'critical mushaf' as a result of his philological studies named 'Corani Textus Arabicus'. See: Gustav Flügel, *Corani Arabicus Textus* (Lipsiae: Typis et sumtibus Caroli Tauchnitii, 1834).

<sup>7</sup> He tried to reconstruct the history of the Qur'ān through the work "Geschichte des Qorān" (1860). In this book, Nöldeke believes that the Prophet Muhammad PBUH received oral transmissions of Judeo-Christian teachings, and dogmas which were later incorporated into the Qur'ān. Moreover, it is known, that the Prophet had relations with Jewish figures, such as Zayd ibn 'Amr, and Umayyah ibn Abī al-ʿAlā. See: Theodor Nöldeke et al., *The History of the Qur'ān*, ed. Wolfgang H. Behn (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> According to Goldziher, hadith is just a personal record of religion, history, and society in the first, and second centuries of Hijri. He was the first orientalist who attempt to destroy the hadith building. See: Syamsuddin Arif, *Orientalis & Diabolisme Pemikiran*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2008), p. 35. Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* (Muhammedanische Studien) Translation, (Chicago: Adine Publishing Company, 1966).

<sup>9</sup> He played a major role in providing information about Islamic teachings, reporting on the city of Mecca, and tactics to control Acehnese, which strongly holds Islamic traditions. See: C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007). C.S. Hurgronje, *The Acehnese*, trans. A.W.S. O'Sullivan, and R.J. Wilkinson (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906).

<sup>10</sup> Jeffery's ambition is to make a critical edition of the Qur'ān and restore its text referring to al-Mashahif by Ibn Abi Dawūd al-Sijistāni. This book is currently stored in the Zahiriyyah Library, Damascus, and is suspected to have recorded readings in several rival manuscripts (rival codex). Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1937), preface, p. vii-x. He continued the Bergsträsser and Petzl project which had been struggling to collect the documentation of the Qur'ānic manuscripts but it failed because the archives were destroyed during the World War. See: Arif, *Orientalis & Diabolisme Pemikiran*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Yusuf Rahman, "Survei Bibliografis Kajian Al-Qur'ān dan Tafsir di Barat: Kajian Publikasi Buku dalam Bahasa Inggris sejak tahun 2000an," *Journal of Qur'ān and Hadith Studies* 4, no. 1 (2015), p. 112.

produced joint anthologies.<sup>12</sup> This nuance was marked by the appearance of Angelika Neuwirth's dissertation entitled "*Studien Zur Komposition der Mekkanischen Suren: die Literarische Form des Koran*" (Studies on the Composition of Sūra Makkiyyah: A Historical Testimonial from the Literary Format of the Qur'ān) in 2007.<sup>13</sup> The study of the Qur'ān today no longer questions the originality of the text but leads to a literary artefact approach.<sup>14</sup> In Naṣr Ḥāmid's definition, they are shifting from the paradigm of the genesis of the Qur'ān to the paradigm of *textus receptus*.<sup>15</sup>

She was a professor of Qur'ānic studies at Freie University in Berlin who focuses on studying classical and modern Arabic literature. Later, her studies developed into the study of the Qur'ān using a literary-historical approach. Marked by the establishment of the Corpus Coranicum, she aimed to explore the early manuscripts of the Qur'ān, referring to the late antiquity phase. The main objectives of this project are the documentation of the early Qur'ānic manuscripts and their variant readings (*qira'at*); the creation of a data bank texts around the environment of the Qur'ān (TEQ, *Manuscripta Coranica*); and carrying out a critical interpretation of the Qur'ān.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For examples: Andrew Rippin (ed.), *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Quran* (1988); Stefan Wild, *The Qur'ān as Text* (1996); Issa J. Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'ān* (2000); Andrew Rippin (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān* (2006); Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai dan Michael Marx (ed.), *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical, and Literary Investigations into the Quranic Milieu* (2010), *Journal of Quranic Studies* (Edinburgh University) published since 1998, *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association* published in 2016, and so on.

<sup>13</sup> In this dissertation, she continues Nöldeke's work by analyzing the structure of Makkiyah's letters using a very strict literary approach. See: Lien I.N. Fina, "Membaca Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'ān Kontemporer di Kalangan Sarjana Barat: Analisis Pemikiran Angelika Neuwirth," *Ulumuna: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 18, no. 2 (2014), p. 272.

<sup>14</sup> She recognizes the superiority (*i'jaz*) of the Qur'ān in the rhetorical aspect (*balagha*) which renders the other rhetorically impotent.

<sup>15</sup> Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Rethinking the Qur'ān: Towards a Humanistic Hermeneutics*, Universiteit Voor Humanistiek, 1st ed. (Utrecht: Humanistics University Press, 2005), p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> Based on textual history, the project creates a chronological commentary using methods of literary studies and referring to relevant texts from Antiquity and Late

Her starting point is the two faces of the Qur'ān as a communication process (pre-canonical text) on the one hand and a closed corpus on the other. Citing a Tijuana anecdote about 'wheelbarrows', she criticized Muslim and Western scholarship, which has so far only focused their study on the canonical text of the Qur'ān.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the Qur'ān loses its historical aspect as a result of the dialogue process between civilizations at the time of its emergence. According to Neuwirth's definition, the Qur'ān is a medium of transport, not a fixed compilation.<sup>18</sup> She said:

*The Qur'ān in its emergent phase is not a pre-meditated, fixed compilation, a reified literary artifact, but a still-mobile text reflecting an oral theological-philosophical debate between diverse interlocutors of various late antique denominations. It is a text that first of all demands to be read as a drama involving multiple protagonists. What is demanded is a change in focus from the exclusive perception of a reified codex to a still-fluid pre-canonical text that can provide a solution to the historical problems that Qur'ānic scholarship addresses.*<sup>19</sup>

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Antiquity. These source texts are accessible in the database "Texts from the environment of the Qur'ān" (TEQ). The development of the first Muslim community is reconstructed for the first time as the interaction between the Prophet and the first addressees in Mecca and Medina. This online (open access) project was funded by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences in 2007 and can be accessed at: <https://corpuscoranicum.de/en/about>. See more: "Corpus Coranicum," Coranica (Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften), 2021, <https://webarchive.bbaw.de/default/0210819141519/http://www.coranica.de/corpus-coranicum-en> (accessed on April 15, 2022, at 08.20 am).

<sup>17</sup> This anecdote is about smuggling wheelbarrows that transport sand across the Tijuana border. Every time they pass, instead of being caught, smugglers can walk freely every day for 30 years because no evidence is found. One day, it was discovered that they were not smuggling sand-covered goods, but smuggling carts. This anecdote is used by Neuwirth to criticize Qur'ānic scholars to see what the Qur'ān says about as a medium of transport, not literary compilation.

<sup>18</sup> The Qur'ān is not a fixed compilation but rather a chain of oral communication delivered by the Muslim community in Mecca, and Medina with the expectations and religious backgrounds reflected in the text of the Qur'ān. See: Angelika Neuwirth, "Two Faces of the Qur'ān : Qur'ān and Muṣḥaf," *Oral Tradition Faces* 25, no. 1 (2010), p. 142-143.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

The ahistorical aspect of the post-canonization text (*mushaf*) can be seen from the neglect of the process registration in the language, the style, and the referentiality of the Qur'ān.<sup>20</sup> This finding is based on the fact that the Qur'ān has so far been understood as a text whose character is timeless, eternal, and beyond history. This understanding is contrary to the oral character of the Qur'ān, which was born from the communication process.<sup>21</sup> For example, the loss of historical aspects appears in the mention of stories which are not explained in detail except in separate fragments. The story only serves as a moral guide for the believers.<sup>22</sup>

Through the offer of pre-canonical readings, Neuwirth tries to open dialogue and awareness that the Qur'ān has shared its history with other scriptures during Late Antiquity.<sup>23</sup> However, this study is completely different from the historical studies which carried out by Moslem scholars since the early days. Those are, the *Tarikh al-Qur'ān al-Karim* by Muhammad Thahir al-Kurdi (d. 1400 AH) and the *Tarikh Nuzūl al-Qur'ān* by Muhammad Ri'fat Sa'id (d. 1425 AH).

From the Late Antiquity perspective, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and pre-Islam Arab have a relationship within the same historical-socio-

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<sup>20</sup> She considers the structure of the letters and verses of the Qur'ān problematic. For example, she comments that the letters in juz 'amma. Because they appear in different periods, then these letters should not have any narrative connection with each other. She found that several verse narratives have forms that follow each other even though the contexts are different. See: Angelika Neuwirth, *The Qur'ān and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage*, ed. Samuel Wilder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 105-107.

<sup>21</sup> Angelika Neuwirth, "Qur'ān and History – a Disputed Relationship: Some Reflections on Qur'ānic History and History in the Qur'ān," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2003), p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> For example, the story of Israel is told piece by piece in various verses, and in separate letters. The Qur'ān also does not mention in detail the identity of the Prophets, and nations before the prophetic treatise. Except in the narration that the apostles are callers among people when the people disobey, they will get painful torment. Thus, she comments on the Qur'ān as a cyclical view of history.

<sup>23</sup> Asep Nahrul Musadad and Adrika Aini, "Konteks Late Antiquity dan Analisis Struktur Mikro sebagai Counter atas Skeptisisme Orisinalitas Teks Al-Quran: Refleksi Atas Pemikiran Angelika Neuwirth," *Suhuf* 10, no. 1 (2019), p. 190.

cultural framework. Those religions also have connected each other with the Prophet Abraham's traditions and heritage. Prophet Abraham himself lived long before the birth of those religions as recorded in the QS Ali Imran [3]: 67.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the word of Abraham the Qur'ān was recorded 63 times in various verses and sūras, even being the name of a sūra in particular. Around one-third of this story contains God's affirmation of Abraham as the bearer of the message of Tawheed (the iconoclast) as taught by the Qur'ān and the denial of Jewish and Christian deviation.<sup>25</sup>

Abraham was known as the founder of the Meccan sanctuary. His prayer for Mecca reported in QS Ibrāhīm [14]:35-41, mentions that he has settled some of his progeny in Mecca. Although the prayer was silent, it relocated Abraham's focal activities from the Holy Land to the Arabian Peninsula. Then, this character will elaborate on the relationship between the Abrahamic tradition, the Medinan Jews, and the Qur'anic community in Late Antique.<sup>26</sup>

Not only among Western scholars but Neuwirth's approach to the Qur'ān has also become a trend among Muslim scholars. Placing the Qur'ān in the context of Late Antiquity has even given fresh air to study the Qur'ān at several Islamic universities in Indonesia.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, most of the study's results stop at appreciating and agreeing with what Neuwirth has done. It is rare to find a critical review of Neuwirth's method and its

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<sup>24</sup> See: "Abraham," Article of Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham> (accessed on April 15, 2022, at 09:43 am).

<sup>25</sup> Among them, in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 134, 135, 136, 140; Ali Imran [3]: 67, 68, 84, 95; An-Nisa' [4]: 163; Al-An'am [6]: 161; Yusuf [12]: 38; An-Nahl [16]: 120, 123; Maryam [19]: 58; Al-Hajj [22]: 78; Al-Ahzab [33]: 7; Ash-Shurā [42]: 13; Al-Hadid [57]: 26-27; and Al-A'la [87]: 18-19.

<sup>26</sup> Neuwirth, Sinai, and Marx, *Qur'ān Context Hist. Lit. Investig. into Qur'anic Milieu*, p. 499–500.

<sup>27</sup> For example, a study conducted by Ubaydillah Fajri, Lien Iffah N. Fina, Rahma Lestari, and Fadhlinaa 'Afiifatul 'Aarifah at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. The results of studies provide the assumption that the Qur'an was born in the historical context of Late Antiquity. An explanation of their study can be seen in sub-chapter 1.5. Literature Review, p. 9.

interpretation of the Qur'ān.<sup>28</sup>

To prove this paradigm, an analysis of Neuwirth's thought and its influence on the interpretation of the Qur'ān is needed. A critical study needs to be done to clarify and also fortify Muslims from destructive thinking, particularly regarding the Qur'ān.<sup>29</sup> As Hamid stated, "no matter how scientific it is, the Orientalist scientific tradition is still based on Western presuppositions, and even, sometimes Christian."<sup>30</sup> Then, the story of Prophet Abraham can be analyzed to examine the Neuwirth's approach and its influence on the interpretation of the Qur'ān. At the same time, it proves whether there is the influence of Jews and Christians on the Qur'ān and proves the sacredness of the Qur'ān as an Islamic revelation.

## 1.2. Problem Formulation

Based on the background description, the researcher formulated the research question as follows:

1. To what extent is the validity of Late Antiquity context to the Qur'ānic interpretation through analysis of Prophet Abraham's story in the Qur'ān?

## 1.3. Purpose of Study

In this study, some of the objectives that the researcher wants to achieve are as follows:

1. To disclose Neuwirth's approach to the study of the Qur'ān.

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<sup>28</sup> One of the studies that the researchers found was the criticism of Tarek Elkot, an Assistant Professor at the University of Al-Azhar, Egypt. See: Tarek Elkot, "Is the Qur'an of the Late Antiquity of Europe? A Reading in German Orientalism," *Journal of College of Sharia & Islamic Studies* 35, no. 2 (2018): 100–134.

<sup>29</sup> For example, what did Al-A'zami do to answer Toby Lester's challenge (the *Atlantic Month*, 1999) by conducting a study of the transformation of the Qur'anic text from revelation to compilation. See: Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Al-A'zamī, *The History of The Qur'anic Text from Revelation to Compilation (A Comparative Study with the Old and New Testaments)* (Leicester, England: UK Islamic Academy, 2003), p. 3-4, 314.

<sup>30</sup> Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, *Misykat; Refleksi tentang Westernisasi, Liberalisasi, dan Islam 1* (Jakarta: INSITS and MIUMI, 2012), 43. See more: Said, *Orientalism (Western Conceptions of the Orient)*, p. 204.

2. To elaborate on the influence of Neuwirth's approach on the interpretation of the story of Prophet Abraham in the Qur'ān.

#### **1.4. Significance of Study**

This research is expected to provide benefits, both theoretically and practically as follows:

##### **1.4.1. Theoretically**

1. This research is expected to enrich the Orientalism studies and Qur'ānic studies at the University of Darussalam Gontor. In addition, this research is also expected to be a reference for similar studies related to the history of the Qur'ān and Late Antiquity.
2. This research is also expected to increase the spirit of critical studies among Muslim scholars toward the Western study of the Qur'ān, especially in the history of the Qur'ānic text and its interpretation.

##### **1.4.2. Practically**

1. This research is expected to provide new insights for both academic and non-academic readers on the dynamics of the discourse on the study of the Qur'ān in the West and the East.
2. To give a positive influence on raising the awareness and the faith of Muslims towards their holy book, the Qur'ān, as well as building arguments to fortify Muslims from the orientalist attacks on the Qur'ān.

#### **1.5. Literature Review**

To find out how far the object of the research is about Late Antiquity, the researcher conducted a preliminary study on several kinds of research, either in the form of bachelor theses, master theses, or dissertations. This literature review ensures no repetition of the research with a similar theme to the previous. Some of the studies found include the following:

*First, "Al-Qur'ān dalam Tradisi Late Antiquity (Studi atas Metode Angelika Neuwirth dalam Historisitas Al-Qur'ān)", by Ubaydillah Fajri, a student of Concentration of Al-Qur'ān dan Hadith Studies, Department of*



Religious and Philosophical Studies, Postgraduate School of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2016. This research departs from a critical historical study of orientalist who question the traditional narrative of the Qur'ān and its supporting literature. By using a historical-philosophical approach, and descriptive-interpretative method, the researcher conducted a reading of Neuwirth, which connected the Qur'ān with similar and relevant texts in the late antiquity period. The results of this study conclude that the influence of the Bible on the Qur'ān in the pre-canonical period is no longer seen as an aspect of plagiarism or imitation but as an added value of the Qur'ān from its rhetorical aspect, which shares its history with other scriptures at that time. However, the researcher ignores the influence of late antiquity on the interpretation of the Qur'ān.

*Second*, a bachelor thesis entitled: “*Perdebatan Historisitas Al-Qur'ān Perspektif Orientalis Skeptis dan Dialogis-Akademis*” by Aisyah Ali, a student of Qur'ānic Science and Tafsir, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Da'wa, Institute of Al-Qur'ān Science (IIQ) Jakarta, 2020. This study seeks to reveal the evolution of the Qur'ān from an outsider's perspective. By using the descriptive-comparative approach, the researcher tries to compare the thoughts of John Wansbrough and Angelika Neuwirth on the historicity of the Qur'ān. The results of the study indicate that the two figures have different views on the history of the Qur'ān. Using a literary and hermeneutical-transcendental approach, Wansbrough views the history of the Qur'ān as a fictional story and doubts the power of oral tradition in Islam. While Neuwirth, through pre-canonization readings, concluded that the canonization of the Qur'ān had started since the beginning of its appearance and had different characteristics from the Biblical texts. Unfortunately, the researcher stopped at this conclusion and did not relate it to the Qur'ānic interpretation.

*Third*, “*Pre-Canonical Reading of the Qur'ān (Studi atas Metode Angelika Neuwirth dalam Analisis Teks al-Qur'ān Berbasis Surat dan Intertekstualitas)*” by Lien Iffah Naf'atu Fina, a student of Master of

Islamic Study, Postgraduate School of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2011. This study attempts to read Neuwirth's thoughts on the composition of the Qur'ān. Through the historical-philosophical approach and the descriptive-interpretive method, Lien concludes that Neuwirth's letter-based, intertextuality studies and the development of literary and historical criticism, are no longer viewed negatively. Then, the pre-canonization reading method was used as inspiration for repositioning the Qur'ān and the dialogue between scriptures. Unfortunately, the researcher has not correlated this method to the interpretation of the Qur'ān. On the other hand, the study results appear to be in line with the orientalist studies.

*Fourth*, a thesis entitled: "*Kajian Intertekstualitas Kisah Kematian Isa dalam QS. An-Nisā (4: 153-162) dan Injil Yohanes (19: 16B-30)*" by Rahma Lestari, a student of Qur'anic Science and Tafsir, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2020. Through a descriptive-analytical approach, Rahma analyzes the narrative of the death of the Prophet Isa in the Qur'ān using the theory of intertextuality by comparing the Qur'ān with the text of the Gospel of Johannes. At the end of the research, he concluded that the Qur'ān and the Gospel of John have different narrative prologues. Second, the narration of the story of the crucifixion of Jesus in the Gospel of John is considered invalid and full of doubts. In contrast to this study, Rahma instead uses an intertextuality knife as a tool for reading the Qur'ān without conducting a critical analysis of the method.

*Sixth*, a thesis entitled: "*Intertekstualitas dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an: Studi Analisis Intertekstual Angelika Neuwirth*" by Fadhlinaa 'Afifatul 'Aarifah, a student of Qur'anic Science and Tafsir, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2021. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, she explains the intertextuality method used by Angelika Neuwirth in interpreting the Qur'ān. Intertextuality is a literary theory initiated by Julia Kristeva as a development of Michael Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. This method is often called *Israiliyyat* in

Islamic tradition. At the end of her thesis, she concluded that Neuwirth's intertextual method had a significant impact on contextual understanding of the Qur'ān so that it was accepted by both Western and Muslim scholars. In this thesis, the researcher only focuses on exploring one of Neuwirth's methods in the literature, namely intertextuality. She ignores the analysis of its application to the interpretation of the Qur'ān.

*Seventh*, a thesis entitled: "The Comparative Textual Study of the "Abraham Story" in the Bible and the Qur'ān", by Amira Elias, student of Master of Arts at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 2000. This research attempts to analyze how the message in both texts relates to the Abraham story. This study is based on a paradigm of the unity of faith that is derived from a comparative textual study and the correlation between the Bible and the Qur'ān. This study aims to initiate a future project that will compare both texts thoroughly to create a cooperative and mutually respectful discourse between the two communities. Moreover, try to replace the old paradigm of cultural competition and hostility.

*Eighth*, a dissertation entitled: "The Qur'ānic Narratives Through the Lens of Intertextual Allusions: A Literary Approach", by Waleed F.S. Ahmed, the Doctor of Philosophy in *Arabistikund Islamwissenschaft*, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, 2014. Through a critical analysis of contemporary allusion studies, this research aims to explore the significance of the intertextual allusions contained in the narratives of the biblical Prophet Jonah, the creation of Adam and Eve, and the laughter of Sarah. Similar to the researcher, this research discusses the intertextual use of interpretation. but the difference is that the object of research is the narratives of Prophet Abraham as well as building arguments to criticize the use of intertextual interpretations.

*Ninth*, a dissertation by John Zaleski entitled: "Christianity, Islam, and the Religious Culture of Late Antiquity: A Study of Asceticism in Iraq and Northern Mesopotamia", the Doctor of Philosophy in Study of Religion, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, Harvard University, Massachusetts,

2019. This dissertation examines the development of Christian and Islamic writing on asceticism, especially fasting and celibacy, in Iraq and northern Mesopotamian during the formative period of Islam. The researcher argues that Muslims transformed Late Antique models of asceticism and led East Christian Christians to reshape their ever-evolving monastic traditions. Through these mutual responses, Christians and Muslims formed new traditions of asceticism, which have perdured among Muslim and Christian communities in the Middle East. Thus, this dissertation only limits research on the practice of Muslim and Christian Sufism (asceticism) during Late Antiquity without any discussion of the holy books of the two religions at all.

*Tenth*, a journal article by Etsuko Katsumata entitled: “Abraham the Iconoclast: Different Interpretations in the Literature of the Second Temple Period, the Texts of Rabbinic Judaism, and the Qur’ān” in *JISMOR* (8), 2012. This paper presents translations of passages taken from the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Genesis Rabba*, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, and the *Qur’ān* that relate to the tradition of Abraham, the iconoclast. Through comparative reading, the following observations can be made: the focus is placed on the importance of knowing one God in the Book of Jubilees and on confrontation with idolatry in the Apocalypse of Abraham; various narrative components appear evenly with similar frequency in Genesis Rabba and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, possibly to maintain conformity as exegeses; in the Qur’ān, the focus is on Abraham’s role of introducing the monotheistic notion to residents.

From the description above, it can be seen that there has been no similar research that has conducted a critical study of the late antiquity tradition in the interpretation of the Qur’ān.

## **1.6. Theoretical Framework**

The researcher will analyze the application of the Late Antiquity in the Qur’ānic interpretation with the theoretical framework perspective based

on Muslim scholars' interpretations organized in the thematic Qur'ānic interpretation method. Therefore, the conceptual framework in this research is late antiquity and the thematic Qur'ānic interpretation method.

### **1.6.1. Late Antiquity**

Several key periodizations in Western and European history consist of antiquity, Middle Ages, and modern times. This model replaces the periodization of Western history in the Christian tradition, particularly the theory of the four empires.<sup>31</sup> Antiquity is an ancient (classical) period that includes Greek, Roman, and Barbarian civilizations from the 5th century BC to the 4th century CE. The Middle Ages is a period that spans from the 5th century CE to the 13th century CE. Meanwhile, the modern times consist of the renaissance period in the 14th-15th centuries CE and the enlightenment period in the 18th century CE to the present day.<sup>32</sup>

Antiquity itself is divided into classical antiquity and late antiquity. The late antiquity phase is the transitional period between ancient and medieval times. Peter Brown first introduced this term in his book entitled: "The World of Late Antiquity." He explained that the late antiquity period (between 150-750 CE) had a different nuance from the classical antiquity, marked by the disappearance of ancient institutions forever. In 476 CE, the Roman empire disappeared from Western Europe, and in 665 CE, the Persian empire disappeared from the Near East. Late Antiquity also explained a new phenomenon, the expansion of Christian power in Europe and the birth of Islam in the Near East. Brown's explanation answers an essential question in world history world: how did the Mediterranean world become so homogeneous, divided into three civilizations, and alienated from the Middle Ages (consisting of Western European Catholicism, Byzantium, and Islam).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Stefan Rebenich, "Late Antiquity in Modern Eyes," in *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 77.

<sup>32</sup> Musadad and Aini, "Konteks Late Antiquity dan Analisis Struktur Mikro sebagai Counter atas Skeptisisme Orisinalitas Teks Al-Quran: Refleksi atas Pemikiran Angelika Neuwirth," p. 179.

<sup>33</sup> See: Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150-750* (New York: W. W.

This phase can then be stretched to 800 AD, even 1000 AD, which Averil Cameron calls long late antiquity. The Qur'ān itself appeared at a certain point in Late Antiquity, the time of pagans, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and the development of religions in the Arabian Peninsula and Syria.<sup>34</sup> The emergence of a Muslim Arabs group who controlled the Christian and Jewish territories in the Arabian peninsula resulted in the intersection of several civilizations. Therefore, the Qur'ān must be read under the umbrella of intertextuality by involving elements of the Late Antiquity tradition, the Jewish and Christian texts and Arabic and Greek rhetoric. Neuwirth offers a model of pre-canonization reading and seeks to open up space for dialogue between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.<sup>35</sup>

To realize this agenda, Neuwirth implemented the Corpus Coranicum project. The project explores the Qur'ān from three different perspectives: 1) The Qur'ān as a historical text is a database of ancient manuscripts and reading variations that provide insight into the history of the text; 2) The historicity of the Qur'ān is the text document in the cultural and religious environment in the late antiquity period; and 3) The text history, contains a chronology of interpretations of the Qur'ān and its literary comments.

### 1.6.2. Thematic Interpretation of the Qur'ān (*Tafsīr Mawdhu'i*)

*Tafsīr Mawdhu'i* consists of two words, the word *tafsīr* and *mawdhu'*. *Tafsīr* according to the Arabic means enlightenment (*īdākh*) and explanation (*al-bayān*) or explanation (*ibānah*) and disclosure (*kashf*).<sup>36</sup> In terms, the

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Norton & Company, 1989).

<sup>34</sup> Musadad and Aini, "Konteks Late Antiquity dan Analisis Struktur Mikro sebagai Counter atas Skeptisisme Orisinalitas Teks Al-Quran: Refleksi atas Pemikiran Angelika Neuwirth," p. 179.

<sup>35</sup> Lien I.N. Fina, "Catatan Kritis Angelika Neuwirth terhadap Kesarjanaan Barat dan Muslim atas Alquran: Menuju Tawaran Pembacaan Alquran Pra-Kanonisasi," Nun 2, no. 1 (2016), p. 76-77.

<sup>36</sup> See: Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān Al-'Arab*, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣadr, 1993), vol. 5, p. 55; Rāghib Al-Asfāhanī, *Al-Mufaradāt fī Gharīb Al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1991), p. 636; Muḥammad Husayn as-Sayyid Adz-Dzahabī, *At-Tafsīr wa Al-Mufasssīrūn* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2000), vol. 1, p. 12.

*tafsīr* as quoted as-Suyūṭī is the science used to understand the book of Allah which was revealed to His Prophet, Muhammad PBUH, and explain its meanings and take the laws and wisdom contained therein.<sup>37</sup> Or the science that discusses the pronunciation of the Qur’ān about the meaning of the words (*lafẓ*), both words and sentences as well as the things that complement them according to Abu Hayyān as quoted by al-Qaṭṭān.<sup>38</sup>

While the Word *al-mawdhū’* refers to the word *al-wadh’* which means a substance that indicates the absolute of making a thing in a place, whether that means: *al-ilqā’ wa at-tathbīt fi al-makān* (in the sense of throwing and fixing in place). According to the scholars of *tafsīr*, *al-mawdhū’* is defined as the issue whose methods and places are many in the Holy Qur’ān, and it has one side that brings it together, through one meaning or one goal.<sup>39</sup>

Then, ‘Abd al-Sattar divides the *tafsīr al-mawdhū’i* into two definitions, those are: (1) The *tafsīr al-mawdhū’i* as the meaning of the “descriptive compound”, which is defined as a science that investigates issues of the Qur’ān, united by meaning or purpose by collecting its verses, and considering them in a specific form with a specific condition to clarify their meaning, extract their elements, and link them with a comprehensive link. (2) The *tafsīr al-mawdhū’i* in the sense of “the written art” which in the issues of the Noble Qur’ān are collected and interpreted scientifically based on the subject, and written in a single research, or a comprehensive book in the style of encyclopedias of analytical interpretation, so that the researcher returns to the topic he wants, and knows the position of the Qur’ān on it in pleased and ease.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Jalāl ad-Dīn Al-Suyūthī, *Al-Itqān fi ‘Ulūm Al-Qur’ān*, ed. Muhammad Abū al-Fadhl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Mu’assasat al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyat, 1973), p. 195.

<sup>38</sup> Manna’ Al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabahith fi ‘Ulūm Al-Qur’ān* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2000), p. 335.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Abd al-Sattar Fathullah Sa’īd, *al-Madkhal ilā at-Tafsīr al-Mawdhū’ī*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Tawzī’ wa al-Nashr al-Islāmiyyāh, 1991), p. 19-20. See more: Mushthafā Muslim, *Mabāhith fi at-Tafsīr al-Mawdhū’ī* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 2000), p. 15.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 20-21.

The term *tafsīr al-mawdhū'i* has only been known since the 14th century AH as one of the subjects in the Faculty of Ushuluddin at Al-Azhar University.<sup>41</sup> Then this model interpretation was developed and enhanced more systematically by 'Abd Al-Hay Al-Farmawi, in 1977, in his book: *al-Bidayah fī al-Tafsīr al-Mawdhū'i: Dirasah Manhajiyah Mawdhū'iyah*.<sup>42</sup>

In practice, Al-Farmawi divides thematic interpretation into two categories, namely: *first*, thematic methods that focus on one sūra of the Qur'ān. This method interprets the Qur'ān by discussing one particular sūra of the Qur'ān by taking the main subject and elaborating at length from the sūra in question.<sup>43</sup> This category was first initiated by Shaykh of Al-Azhar, Shaykh Mahmud Shaltut, by publishing *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* in January 1960. He interpreted the Qur'ān by discussing sūra by sūra or a section of the sura, then explains the main objectives and the instructions that can be obtained from it.<sup>44</sup>

*Second*, the thematic method is based on the topic or subject. This method interprets the Qur'ān by specifying a particular topic, then collecting all or part of the verses from several sūras that talk about that topic, to be linked with one another, so a comprehensive conclusion can be drawn about the problem according to the view of the Qur'ān. The method was first proposed by Ahmad Al-Kumi, Head of the Department of Tafsir at the Faculty of Usuluddin Al-Azhar University until 1981.<sup>45</sup>

This method is based on the unity of meaning and purpose between its parties and individuals, so the link between them is special and close. For example *al-Yahūd fī Dhaw'u al-Qur'ān* (The Jews in the light of the Qur'ān) or *Aqīda al-Yahūd ad-Dhālah fī Dhaw'u al-Qur'ān* (The misguided belief

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<sup>41</sup> Muslim, *Mabāhith fī at-Tafsīr al-Mawdhū'i*, p. 17.

<sup>42</sup> Moh. Tulus Yamani, "Memahami Al-Qur'ān dengan Metode Tafsir Mawdhū'i," *J-Pai* 1, no. 2 (2015), p. 276.

<sup>43</sup> M Yunan Yusuf, "Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'an: Tinjauan atas Penafsiran Al-Qur'an secara Tematik," *Syamil* 2, no. 1 (2014), p. 62.

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Quran* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998), p. 104.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 106.



of the Jews in the light of the Qur'ān). Among the contemporary books of this type, such as *as-Shabr fī al-Qur'ān* by Yusuf al-Qaradawīy, *al-Yahūd fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* by Muhammad Izzat Darwaza.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, the description of the story of Abraham in this study is included in the category of thematic interpretation based on the subject as explained above. Where the researcher will collect all the verses related to the themes of various sūras, and then collect several interpretations related to the verses and themes, to then produce conclusions.

## 1.7. Research Method

The research method is a scientific method carried out by a researcher to obtain data to be used to obtain research results by what is intended by the researcher and can also be used for certain things. Conducting scientific research must be based on accurate, rational, and empirical data because in essence research will be held accountable if it is not by the existing reality. Therefore, what must be considered in scientific research is the scientific method, data, purpose, and also usability.

This thesis is based on the study of the Qur'ān, so to complete this thesis, researchers use a Qur'ānic approach (*'ulūm al-Qur'ān*). A Qur'ānic approach is an approach that can be used to understand the Qur'ānic text, its meaning and interpretation (*tafsīr*) which has been developed by Muslim scholars since the early first century. The study of the Qur'ān is not only focused on the Qur'ānic text itself but focuses on the methodology and how its approach to the Qur'ān. Thus, the study of the Qur'ān will help researchers to analyze the problem of the orientalist methodology to the Qur'ān and produce meaning within it.

### 1.7.1. Kind of Research

The type of research used is library research which limits its activities to library materials without the need for experimental research.<sup>47</sup> In this kind

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 25-26.

<sup>47</sup> M. Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008),

of research, a researcher will investigate a topic, answer a question, fill in the blank, and in short, it will solve a problem. In theological education, this type is commonly used in three main areas: theology, history, and pastoral theology.<sup>48</sup> It involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question, a necessary component of every other research method at some point.<sup>49</sup>

The substance of library research lies in its content, which is more about things that are theoretical, conceptual, or ideas, and so on.<sup>50</sup> To distinguish this research from the ordinary humanities research, the library materials collected must relate to the Qur'ān and its interpretation. Some of the essential instruments in this type of research are preparing quote cards, schedules, and others. These steps ensure the availability of reference sources and consideration of the timely completion of research following the plan.<sup>51</sup>

### 1.7.2. Source of Data

Because this study uses a library (literature) research approach, the method of data used is documentation. Data is collected from various documents in records, transcripts, books, and other written documents obtained.<sup>52</sup> The data sources in this study consist of the following two-component:

#### 1. Primary Data

Primary data are the documentary evidence upon which the

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p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Nancy Jean Vyhmeister and Terry Dwain Robertson, *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology* (Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2020), p. 61.

<sup>49</sup> Mary W. George, *The Elements of Library Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Nashruddin Baidan and Erwati Aziz, *Metodologi Penelitian Khusus Tafsir*, 2nd ed. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2019), p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> Sandu Siyoto, and Muhammad Ali, *Dasar Metodologi Penelitian* (Sleman: Literasi Media Publishing, 2015), p. 66.

researcher builds the case.<sup>53</sup> The objective of this source is to see what it tells and to attempt, to understand it in its original context.<sup>54</sup> In this research, the primary sources used about Late Antiquity context that offered by Angelika Neuwirth and her thinking construction to the interpretation of the Qur’ān, both in the form of journal articles, books, and scattered in the writing compilation with others, those are:

- a. Angelika Neuwirth, “The Qur’ān and Late Antiquity (A Shared Heritage)”, translated by Samuel Wilder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).
  - b. Edited by Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx, “The Qur’ān in Context (Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur’ānic Milieu),” (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010).
  - c. Angelika Neuwirth, “Qur’ān and History – a Disputed Relationship: Some Reflections on Qur’ānic History and History in the Qur’ān,” in *Journal of Qur’ānic Studies* 5/1 (2003): 1–18.
  - d. Angelika Neuwirth, “Locating the Qur’ān and Early Islam in the ‘Epistemic Space’ of Late Antiquity,” in *Islam and Its Past: Jahiliyya, Late Antiquity, and the Qur’ān*, edited Carol Bakhos, and Michael Cook (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 165–185.
  - e. Angelika Neuwirth, “Two Faces of the Qur’ān: Qur’ān and Muṣḥaf” in *Oral Tradition*, 25/1 (2010): 141-156, and so on.
2. Secondary Data

Secondary data means available data which has already been collected and analyzed by someone else who supports the research. In this case, the researcher collected various data associated with the original data in books, journal articles and proceedings, theses, dissertations, and newspapers that are still relevant to the theme being researched. Such as orientalist works on the study of the historicity of the Qur’ān, books on the *‘ulum* of the Qur’ān, books of Tafseer, the interpretation

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<sup>53</sup> Vyhmeister and Robertson, *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*, p. 63.

<sup>54</sup> George, *The Elements of Library Research*, p. 41.

of *mawdhu'i*, the story of Prophet Abraham, and other writings that related to the late antiquity tradition, and so on.

### 1.7.3. Method of Data Analysis

All data collected will then be processed and analyzed through the data interpretation stage to be described in a narrative, descriptive or tabular manner on the data obtained. Conclusions or explanations from the data analysis will be research conclusions.<sup>55</sup>

#### 1. Content Analysis

Content analysis is a form of textual analysis used to describe and explain the characteristics of messages embedded in the text. It is helpful that allows researchers to manage and summarize large quantities of information, provide valuable historical and cultural insight into a research problem, and triangulate with other research methods. It is conducted by selecting texts, unitizing message units, generating content categories, coding the text, and explaining the results.<sup>56</sup>

This analysis can be used to describe communication phenomena to allow triangulation with other research methods. This method helps in increasing the validity of research results.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, according to Bambang Setiawan (1995), this technique is used to make inferences that can be imitated (replicable) and the validity of the data by considering the context.<sup>58</sup>

#### 2. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis focuses on ideology in discourse that examines how identities, relationships, beliefs, and knowledge systems

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<sup>55</sup> Samsu, *Metode Penelitian: Teori dan Aplikasi Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Mixed Methods, serta Rresearch & Development* (Jambi: Pusat Studi Agama dan Kemasyarakatan (PUSAKA) Jambi, 2017), p. 103.

<sup>56</sup> Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 109.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p. 111.

<sup>58</sup> Samsu, *Metode Penelitian: Teori dan Aplikasi Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Mixed Methods, serta Rresearch & Development*, p. 111.

are constructed in language use. It combines textual interpretation by social theory with linguistic analysis.<sup>59</sup> This method will achieve through the following activities: (1) understanding the data strand as an analytical text; (2) linking the representation of words and sentences as forming the text analytically; (3) determining the meaning or value contained in the text contextually and intertextually according to the pattern of presuppositions, assumptions, or theoretical conceptions used; and (4) make comparisons between conclusions and justifications made with data concretization as well as with facts as contained in the world of experience of researchers.<sup>60</sup>

### 1.8. System of Study

The systematics of writing this thesis will be explained in the outline of the arrangement of each chapter so that it is easier to understand the complete description of this research. Systematically, the chapters are as follows:

**Chapter One: Introduction.** This chapter contains a background of the study, problem formulation, purpose of study, significance of the study, previous study, theoretical framework, method of research, and system of study (writing outline).

**Chapter Two: Angelika Neuwirth, Late Antiquity, and The Story of Abraham.** This chapter contains the biography of Angelika Neuwirth, her thought about Late Antiquity and its problems in the historical aspect of the Qur'ān, and a description story of the Prophet Abraham in the Qur'ān. Also, a specific description of the Corpus Coranicum and QaSLA projects currently underway.

**Chapter Three: A Discussion of Late Antiquity's Influence on Interpretation of the Story of Abraham in the Qur'ān.** In this chapter, the

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<sup>59</sup> Stausberg and Engler, *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, p. 133.

<sup>60</sup> Suyitno, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Konsep, Prinsip dan Operasionalnya* (Tulungagung: Akademia Pustaka, 2018), p. 133.

researcher attempts to conduct a critical study of the methods, interpretations, and conclusions of the reading of Angelika Neuwirth's thought through Late Antiquity contextualization and its influence on the Qur'ān interpretation, especially the stories about Prophet Abraham.

**Chapter Four: Conclusions and Suggestions.** This chapter contains the results of the researchers' conclusions regarding the research being studied. The author will give some suggestions to improve research on orientalism and the study of the Qur'ān in the future.