

## The Concept of Religious Tolerance in Reconstruction and Reinterpretation of Al-Kafirun by Mun'im Sirry (Critical Discourse Analysis of Teun A. Van Dijk)

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### ABSTRACT

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This research aims to explain the concept of religious tolerance of Mun'im Sirry from the reconstruction and reinterpretation of Sura al-Kafirun. This is library research using qualitative method and descriptive-explanatory research design. The analysis employed in this research is Critical Discourse Analysis by Teun A. Van Dijk. The authors use Critical Discourse Analysis to reveal the various strategic interests behind the writing of Sirry's commentary and the struggles of social and understanding of groups. The result of this research explains that the concept of religious tolerance offered by Sirry does not only stop in sociological framework, but, more than that, it also extends tolerance in a theological framework. In Sirry's perspective, Muslims need not only to respect, appreciate, acknowledge differences in belief with followers of other religions and live in harmony (sociological field), they also need to acknowledge the recognition of the possible salvation of other religious followers in the hereafter (theological field). Furthermore, the discourse cannot be separated from the power of the West as the controller of science and the ideologies that influence the discourse are rationalism, empiricism, or neo-mu'tazilism.

**Keywords;** Tolerance; Religion; Al-Kafirun; Critical Discourse Analysis; Mun'im Sirry; Teun A. Van Dijk

## Introduction

The concept of tolerance is interesting to be examined and tested both conceptually and practically. The emergence of this concept is nothing but to manifest a peaceful world, and minimize the conflict, especially between religious people. Religion in the hands of its devotees often appears in the form and in the face of violence. In recent years for example, there has arisen much conflict, intolerance, and violence in the name of religion.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, common attitudes arising in religious life in society are mutual suspicion, mutual distrust, and living in worry and disharmony.<sup>2</sup>

In the scope of Islam, Quran becomes a guideline for its followers and it also talks about the highest reality that is philosophically shown by not accepting any version of truth in other religions. Nevertheless, sociologically, Muslims are also very tolerant of accepting the existence of different beliefs. In Islam, the concept of tolerance between religious people is often based on sura al-Kafirun and other verses in different sura. In al-Kafirun, it is explained that there is need to be respectful of other religions, and simultaneously, it also confirms the difference between Islam and others. As for the verses, it is as follows:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ  
وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينٌ

(1) Say: O those who disbelieve! (2) I will not worship what you worship, (3) and you are not worshippers of what I worship, (4) nor am I ever worshiper of what you worship, (5) nor shall you be a worshiper of what I worship. (6) For you your religion, and for me my religion.”<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Jarir at-Thabari<sup>4</sup>, Ibn Kathsir<sup>5</sup> and Al-Qurtubi<sup>6</sup> in their books of tafsir explained that this sura relates to the disbeliever's offer to the prophet Muhammad to take turns in worshiping and then Allah sent down al-Kafirun. According to Quraish Shihab, al-Kafirun affirms the non-compromise approach on the matter of worshiping God. This is clearly explained in verses 2 to 5. However, Shihab continues that in verse 6, it explains that although it cannot compromise in worshiping, it can compromise in social matters.<sup>7</sup>

In line with Shihab, Hamka explained that al-Kafirun gave firm guidelines that in the affairs of theology (faith), the difference cannot be reconciled. Tawheed and shirk cannot be reconciled. If what is right is combined with what is wrong, according to Hamka, what is wrong will benefit. Furthermore, Hamka said that Tawheed does not recognize syncretism.<sup>8</sup> Simply put, some of the above explanations assert that Muslims should tolerate in terms of community life affairs instead of faith-related matters.

<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Jayus, “Toleransi Dalam Perspektif Al Qur’an,” *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur’an Dan Al-Hadits* 9, no. 1 (2015): 116, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.24042/al-dzikra.v9i1.1728>.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Yasir, “Makna Toleransi Dalam Al-Qur’an,” *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 12, no. 2 (2014): 170, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.24014/jush.v22i2.734>.

<sup>3</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Qur’an Dan Terjemahnya* (Bandung: CV Diponegoro, 2010), 603.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Jarir At-Thabari, *Al-Jami al-Bayan Fi Ta’wil al-Qur’an* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2005), 576.

<sup>5</sup> Ibnu Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur’an al-Adzim* (Libanon: Dar Ibn Hazam, 2000), 2040.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Imam Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami’ Li Ahkam al-Qur’an* (Libanon: Al-Risalah, 2006), 532.

<sup>7</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur’an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2005), 575–78.

<sup>8</sup> Hamka Hamka, *Juz Amma Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Depok: Gema Insani, 2015), 310.

In recent times, the authors find different interpretations and opinions about sura al-Kafirun. It is Mun'im Sirry, a contemporary Islamic scholar, who presents an out-of-the-box interpretation of Sura al-Kafirun. Sirry is a native Indonesian Muslim scholar who became an assistant Professor of Theology in the department of Theology and Research at Korc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, USA. The University of Notre Dame is one of the most prominent and prestigious Roman Catholic universities. It is located in Notre Dame, Indiana, Northeast of South Bend, Indiana, United States.

The difference in Sirry's interpretation with previous interpreters is that before he interprets al-Kafirun, he first reconstructs the text of the verse of al-Kafirun. Such reconstruction originates from arguments that the Quran as a text has undergone a period of transition and changes. The historical Quran undergoes canonization and debate in its efforts. The issue of when the Quran was codified became a debate among Western scholars. Some believe against the opinion of traditional circles which argue that the Quran was codified during the time of Usman, like Theodore Noldeke. On the other hand, some were not, and argue that it was codified more than a hundred years after the death of the prophet, such as Jhon Wansbrough.<sup>9</sup>

For Sirry, the Quran also underwent a shift from *scriptio de-fectiva* towards *scriptio plena*, in the sense that the Quranic text consisting of letters without diacritics transforms to the Quran which is easier to read by using diacritics. The first figure to give diacritics is Hajaj ibn Yusuf. Then Hajaj formed a special commission whose task was to put dots to distinguish between similar letters such as *ba'*, *ta'*, *tsha'* as well as *ja'*, *ha'*, *kha'*. In turn is to add *alif* into the Qur'anic manuscripts. The person who first put *alif* into the Quran was 'Ubaid Allah bin Ziyad.

The shift from *scriptio de-fectiva* towards *scriptio plena* including the addition of such *alif* invited the attention of Western scholars, including Gerd-R. Puin. Puin compared the text of the standard Quran (Cairo edition) with ancient manuscripts. One of the findings is that there are differences in the two, including the addition of the *alif*. This, according to Sirry, illustrates that the change or shift of the Quran text from *scriptio de-fectiva* to *scriptio plena* is not as smooth as people had imagined.<sup>10</sup> In relation to the findings of Puin, Sirry then later cited the reconstruction of the text of the verse of Al-Kafirun without the addition of *alif*.

He explained that the problem in this sura is that the messages are not synchronous. The last verse in Sura al-Kafirun is often quoted as a proof of tolerance, but the previous verses show exclusivity because they deny the God of the disbelievers.<sup>11</sup> To synchronize it, he then based on the reconstruction of al-Kafirun by Puin's letter offering to read لا as *alif zaidah*. In other words, it reads لا with short or with the omitted *alif*, then changes the لا to *lam taukid* instead of *lam nahyi*. The verse becomes as follows:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكٰفِرُونَ لَا عِبَادَ لِي إِلَّا مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۚ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَا عٰبَدْتُمْ وَلَا أَنَا عٰبِدُ مَا عٰبَدْتُمُ  
وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَا عٰبَدَ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ ۗ وَلِي دِينِ ۙ

(1) Say: O those who disbelieve! (2) I worship what you worship, (3) and you worship what I worship, (4) and I worship what you worship, (5) and you are a worshiper of what I worship. (6) For you your religion, and for me my religion.”

<sup>9</sup> Mun'im Sirry, *Kemunculan Islam Dalam Kesarjanaan Revisionis* (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2017), 125–33.

<sup>10</sup> Sirry, 133–43.

<sup>11</sup> Mun'im Sirry, *Islam Revisionis: Kontestasi Agama Zaman Radikal* (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2018), 227.

The result of the reconstruction of the text led to a significant difference in meaning compared to the previous interpretation. From the previous "I will not worship what you worship", "you are not a worshiper of what I worship", the significant words that matter most to the previous interpretation ("will not" and "not") are now gone.<sup>12</sup> The theological implication says that in fact the God who is worshiped is the same but different in religion. Surely this is in contrast to the concept in general which says that there is a theological difference.

In this study, the authors wanted to research more deeply about the process of how such discourse and interpretation are created. Sirry as an individual cannot be seen as a neutral subject who can interpret freely, because he cannot be separated, is always related, and is also influenced by the social forces of his community. The authors use critical discourse analysis to reveal the various strategies of interest that lie behind the writing of his commentary and the struggles of social groups and understanding groups.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, by revealing and explaining the background and various social forces as well as the interests behind the reconstruction of the text and the reproduction of the interpretation, the writer hopes to find out Sirry's intentions and goals.

In relation to critical discourse analysis, the authors use the theory of Teun A. Van Dijk. According to Van Dijk, there are at least some important characters in critical discourse analysis namely: (1) Actions; it is to associate a discourse as an action and then interact with others; (2) Context; it is discourse viewed and understood in specific contexts and situations, according to Van Dijk, the context includes three things: non-verbal context (co-text), verbal, and situation<sup>14</sup>; (3) Historical; it is discourse placed in an accompanying social context; (4) Power; it is to understand that each text appears not as something natural, but a form of power fight; (5) Ideology; it is to understand that a text is a form of ideology practice or a reflection of a particular ideology.<sup>15</sup>

## Results and Discussion

### Intellectual Biography of Mun'im Sirry

Mun'im Sirry was born on March 9, 1971 and his family worked as tobacco farmers in Madura.<sup>16</sup> Currently, Sirry is known as a contemporary Indonesian Muslim scholar who has a concern for contemporary Islamic studies especially in theology, hermeneutics, and Quranic Studies. He has been a researcher at Yayasan Waqf Paramadina, which is a religious institution that realizes the fusion or linkage between Islam and Indonesian-ness as the manifestation of universal Islamic values, with local Indonesian traditions. Yayasan Paramadina itself has a vision for constructive and positive religious activities, which lead to the development of intellectuality by keeping up with the times.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Gerd-R Puin, "Vowel Letters and Ortho-Epic Writing in the Quran", in Gabriel Said Reynolds, ed., *New Perspectives on the Qur'an: The Qur'an in Its Historical Context 2*, 1st edition (New York: Routledge, 2011), 183.

<sup>13</sup> Islah Gusmian, "Paradigma Penelitian Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia," *Empirisma: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 24, no. 1 (2015): 5, <https://doi.org/10.30762/empirisma.v24i1.1>.

<sup>14</sup> Teun A. Vandijk, *Society and Discourse: How Social Context Influence Text and Talk* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Eriyanto Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana, Pengantar Analisis Teks Media* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2001), 8.

<sup>16</sup> Umi Wasilatul Firdausiyah, "Tafsir Modern Perspektif Mun'im Sirry Dalam What's Modern About Modern Tafsir? A Closer Look at Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 6, no. 2 (December 30, 2020): 99, <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v6i2.158>.

<sup>17</sup> Jidin Mukti, "Kontroversi Keabsahan Mushaf Ustmani Dalam Pandangan Mun'im Sirry Tentang Kanonisasi Alquran" (Skripsi, Sumatera Utara, UIN Sumatera Utara, 2017), 24.

Sirry's teenage years were widely spent in the Islamic boarding school environment. He was at Al-Amien Prenduan Madura boarding school (1983—1990), which was founded by Kiai Chotib.<sup>18</sup> Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien is a modern, Islamic boarding school that gives birth to superior generations who are well respected in the Indonesian community. This is evidenced by the actualization of its alumni scattered throughout the archipelago. Al-Amien has a prominent uniqueness. There are at least four uniqueness. First, Al-Amien appears as a modern boarding school. Second, it equips students with Arabic and English competence. Third, it is the autonomy of the Al-Amien curriculum and its independence from all groups. Fourth, it is the fact that Al-Amien delegated outstanding students to further study abroad.

The four uniqueness make Al-Amien boarding school different from other Islamic boarding schools. As an Islamic school bearing the label of a modern boarding school, it opens access to positive developments from the outside, by still caring for its sublime heritage in the *salaf* tradition or generally memorized as “*al-muhafadhoh ala qodim al-shali, wa al-akhdu bi al-jadid al-aslah*” (to keep good old traditions, and to take better renewal). On the other hand, the fragrance (good reputation) of boarding school is also present from its alumni who are successful in many kinds of professions and jobs. One of the reasons is that because their alumni have added value, namely Arabic and English language skills and other competencies that complement their skills.<sup>19</sup>

After completing his adolescence education at Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien, Sirry who was hungry for science continued his education level to bachelor and master degrees at Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan (1990-1996), at the *Faculty of Shari'a and Law International*.<sup>20</sup> As an academician who is thirsty for science and knowledge, he continued his scientific journey to the University of California Los Angeles (2005). He was there undertaking a master degree, a level which he had actually taken beforehand in different university in Pakistan. Nevertheless, the concentration of the field he took was different, he took the field of Islamic Studies. After that, he continued his *doctoral* program at the University of Chicago in *Islamic Studies*.<sup>21</sup>

Currently, he is an assistant professor of theology at the department of Theology and Research at the Korc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, USA and is given the additional responsibility of handling the *Contending Modernity* research project.<sup>22</sup>

### The Construction of Mun'im Sirry's Thought

Mun'im Sirry's thought as one of the Indonesian Islamic figures and scholars can be seen from his written works. At least, the authors find two constructions of Sirry's thought that lead to the process of contextualization and reinterpretation of Islamic sources (Quran and Hadith), and also a lot of focus on issues of religious relations, especially in terms of tolerance and pluralism. To elaborate further the construction of his thought, the authors will explain with the following structure:

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<sup>18</sup> “Sejarah Berdiri | Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan,” accessed March 15, 2021, <https://al-amien.ac.id/profil-pondok/sejarah-berdiri/>.

<sup>19</sup> “Catatan | Pondok Pesantren Al-Amien Prenduan,” accessed March 15, 2021, <https://al-amien.ac.id/category/catatan/>.

<sup>20</sup> “About | International Islamic University,” accessed March 28, 2021, [https://www.iiu.edu.pk/?page\\_id=11941](https://www.iiu.edu.pk/?page_id=11941).

<sup>21</sup> “Prof. Mun'im Sirry, Ph.D.,” *PanritaID* (blog), accessed March 15, 2021, <https://panrita.id/prof-munim-sirry/>.

<sup>22</sup> “University of Notre Dame - Profile, Rankings and Data | US News Best Colleges,” accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/university-of-notre-dame-1840>.

## 1. Contextualization and Reinterpretation

Seen from his many works, Sirry seeks to undertake a process of reinterpretation and contextualization of a discourse and a theme that is considered necessary for renewal. Sirry offers many new understandings, as the result of his study of the methodology of contemporary sciences such as hermeneutics, intertextuality, and so on.

For example, in his writing entitled *The Early of Development of Qura'nic Hanif*,<sup>23</sup> Sirry seeks to reinterpret the meaning of the word *hanif* in the Quran. He explained the derivation and origin of the word *hanif* which also comes from the Syriac word *hanpa* which means *pagan*. Sirry also quotes François de Blois, where he points out that in Babylonian Aramaic and Jewish Palestine, the root *h-n-f* has the meaning 'to deceive, to flatter'. Outside of Aramaic, says de Blois, it also has the Hebrew adjective *hanef*, mostly translated as 'unapologetic' or 'hypocritical' (though its exact meaning is disputed) and the verbs *hanef* (in its stem form), 'to be tainted', and (in causative form) 'to pollute' or the like.

From this, it can be seen that Sirry seeks to show how diverse the meaning of the word *hanif*, even outside the Islamic tradition (Quran) itself. Sirry concludes that the meaning of *hanif* in Quran is not self-evident. The word has been used in the Quran to describe the following people or ideals: first, adherents of a pure and real religion; second, the natural religion itself, not part of the scriptural tradition; third, an image of Abraham's religion as the true religion; fourth, the people who are neither Jewish nor Christian. Sirry also said that early interpreters were more open to the word *hanif* than the later interpreters.

Furthermore, for example, Sirry also contextualized the pagan (*kafir*) term in the Quran. He explained that the concept of disbelievers (*kafir*) is not static. From the results of his semantic analysis, Sirry explained that adherents of other religions besides Islam cannot necessarily be labelled as disbelievers. There must be other reasons such as enmity, or involvement in warfare to be labelled as such. He also cited that the disbelievers are those who transcend limits.<sup>24</sup> Thus, Sirry wanted to affirm about the importance of not rashly pointing disbelievers (*kafir*) here and there to others.

## 2. Relationship between Islam and Other Religions

His thoughts related tolerance and pluralism in particular can be seen from his various works that pay much attention to it. For example, in his writings entitled *Other Religions*, Sirry explains the relationship of Islam and other religions, especially Christianity and Jews. In the Quran, according to him, there are two tendencies of Islamic attitude towards other religions. On the one hand, it gives a promise of salvation to other religions (Christian, Jewish and Shabi'in). This is spelt out in Q.S 2:62:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Indeed, the believers, Jews, Christians, and Sabians—whoever ‘truly’ believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good will have their reward with their Lord. And there will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve.”

In this verse, according to Sirry, the criteria of salvation promised apply only two conditions, namely believing in God and in the judgement day and doing

<sup>23</sup> Mun'im Sirry, “The Early Development of the Quranic Hanīf\*,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 56, no. 2 (October 1, 2011): 345–66, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jss/fgr007>.

<sup>24</sup> Sirry, *Islam Revisionis: Kontestasi Agama Zaman Radikal*, 231–34.

good during life. However, on the other hand, the Quran displays its exclusivity to other religions; that salvation is only obtained by Islam as shown in Q.S 3:19:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۗ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعِيًّا  
بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

“Certainly, Allah’s only Way is Islam. Those who were given the Scripture did not dispute ‘among themselves’ out of mutual envy until knowledge came to them. Whoever denies Allah’s signs, then surely Allah is swift in reckoning.”

In addition, it can also be seen from his writing titled *Early Muslim—Christian Dialogue: A Closer Look at Major Themes of The Theological Encounter*. In his writings, Sirry describes the debates between Muslims and early Christians, especially during the time of the caliph al-Ma'mun of the Abbasid dynasty. The debates discussed were about the doctrine of the trinity, the divinity of Jesus, and the falsification of the book. Here, it looks that Sirry wants to show how much the debate about Islam and Christianity has been for a long time, and the relationship built is diverse, ranging from an approach that tends to be exclusive and also inclusive to pluralist.

Subsequently, Sirry also wrote about Quranic criticism of other faiths. For example, in his writings entitled *Memahami Kritik Alquran Terhadap Agama Lain* (Understanding the Quranic Criticism of Other Religions)<sup>25</sup> and *The Quran and Its Polemical Context: Between Chronological and Literary Approaches*. In these writings, he describes how the Quran responds to Christians and Jews. He also explained that the tradition of criticizing other religions is not only present in Islam through the Quran; it is also present in other religious traditions such as Christianity and Jews. For example, in the Gospel of John (8:31, 37, 44 and 47):

“Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, 'If you live according to my teachings you are truly my followers’”; “I know you are the descendants of Abraham. But you are willing to kill me, because you will not accept my teaching’”; “Satan is your father, and you will obey your father’s will. From the beginning, Satan is a murderer. He never sided with the truth, for there was no truth in him. If he lies, it is natural, because it is of his nature. He is a liar and the origin of all lies’”; “He who is from God hears the words of God. But you are not of Allah, that is why you will not hear.”

Later, Sirry also explained religious pluralism by comparing the figures through her work entitled *‘Compete with One Another in Good Works’: Exegesis of Quranic Verse 5:48 and Contemporary Muslim Discourses on Religious Pluralism*.<sup>26</sup> In his works, Sirry also compared the interpretation of three figures namely Nurcholis Madjid, Asghar Ali Engineer, and Abdul Aziz Sachedina. The differences from the three in interpreting Q.S 5:48 is that, according to Sirry, Madjid was more towards theology, Engineer in practical direction, while Sachedina is more towards political.

Finally, interest in other religious issues and pluralism and tolerance of Sirry can also be seen from his observations on the fatwa controversy of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) related to several themes such as Christianity, liberalism, pluralism, and

<sup>25</sup> mun’im Sirry, “Memahami Kritik Al-Qur’an Terhadap Agama Lain,” *Journal Of Qur’an And Hadith Studies* 3, No. 1 (2014): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.15408/Quhas.V3i1.1160>.

<sup>26</sup> Mun’im Sirry, “‘Compete with One Another in Good Works’: Exegesis of Qur’an Verse 5.48 and Contemporary Muslim Discourses on Religious Pluralism,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 20, no. 4 (October 1, 2009): 423–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410903194886>.

secularism. In his writing entitled *Fatwas and their controversy: The Case of the Council of Indonesian Ulemas (MUI)*, Sirry explained that the differences in responses to MUI fatwas on Christmas celebrations and religious pluralism, liberalism, and secularism reflected the prevailing political climate. Under Suharto when the fatwa on Christmas was issued, the state had restricted public expression of Islam and the government appeared to dictate the course of public debate. The post-Suharto political climate changed significantly, allowing high public participation. The intense public debate over the MUI fatwa on pluralism illustrates the complexity of competing voices in an open political climate. Critical engagement between progressive and liberal Muslims, as well as between radicals and conservatives, serves to stabilize relations between groups by determining each other's positions in relation to each other. The controversy over the fatwa itself is inherently interesting because it marks one of the dividing lines that allows each group to present their position face to face with another group in open contestation.

### The Argument of Text Reconstruction of Sura Al-Kafirun

Sirry's reconstruction of Al-Kafirun, of course, does not just appear without a background and underlying argument. In any case, what Sirry did and chose was a quite bold attempt to break down the textuality of the Al-Kafirun that had been established and mature among various Islamic scholars and ulema during this time. He dared to opt out of the patronage of the official Qur'anic text or borrowing the term of Arkoun, the official closed corpus<sup>27</sup>, the Uthman manuscripts. The point is that the Quran can no longer be added or subtracted, the way it is read is modified with a corpus that has declared its authenticity.

His reconstruction of the text of Al-Kafirun is based on several research results conducted by Western scholars. Many of the studies on which Sirry is based have been involved in textual and historical criticism of the Quran. Sirry's argument started with a debate about how the process of canonization of the Quran. Sirry explained that the history of the process of canonization of the Quran has been debated, especially among Western scholars who have criticized and been skeptical of the history that has been standard in the Islamic world.

As is generally known, the process of canonizing the Qur'an began during the caliphate of Abu Bakr on the grounds that many memorizers died during the Yamamah war and from there Umar proposed the codification of Qur'an. After the codification process, a new problem arose, namely the many differences of *qira'at* which caused conflict among Muslims at that time. Usman as caliph at that time initiated to form a commission for uniform reading (*qira'at*) of the Quran. From the results of this uniformity, the Mushaf that has been used until now is the Uthman Rasm Mushaf.<sup>28</sup>

From the brief presentation, it seems that there are no problems in it, however, during the canonization process, various problems occurred. For example, Sirry explained by quoting from a book by Al-Suyuti entitled *Al-Itqan fi Ulum Al-Qur'an*, that it was narrated that Umar had searched for verses of the Quran that he remembered but they were not very clear. Then Umar was sad because he could not remember it and, in the end, he found the person who recorded the verse had died during the battle of Yamamah, and the verse was lost. In addition, Umar also kept a legal verse on stoning, but he was unable to convince the committees to be included in the Quran because it did not have two witnesses.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Washil Washil, "(De)Rekonstruksi Nalar Islam Ala Muhammad Arkoun: Gagasan Prinsip Hermeneutika Dan Semiotika al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Ilmu Keislaman* 2, no. 1 (September 15, 2018): 471.

<sup>28</sup> Sirry, *Kemunculan Islam Dalam Kesarjanaan Revisionis*, 125.

<sup>29</sup> Sirry, 125.



Furthermore, for example, there is also a difference between the Quran manuscripts that became individual collections at that time. For example, between the manuscripts of Ali and Ibn Mas'ud, it states that there is no Sura al-Basmalah but it is directly starting from al-Baqarah. Another example is verse 19 of the sura al-Imran, in the Ali script, it is written *inna al-dina 'inda Allah al-islam*, while in Ibn Mas'ud's script, it is written *inna al-dina 'inda Allah al-hanifiyati al-samhah*. From there, according to Sirry, various contradictory and inconsistent narrations can be used to question how there was a unanimous agreement (*mutawatir* history) regarding the process of transmitting the Qur'an to date. On the other hand, Sirry also explained that of course, there are narrations that explain the Quran are guaranteed to be true and narrated in a *mutawatir* manner. Many narrations mention that the Quran was guarded by the angel Gabriel by always checking the reading of the prophet Muhammad every month of Ramadan.<sup>30</sup>

Here, it certainly seems problematic. On the one hand, there is an attempt to affirm that the text of the Quran has strong accuracy and true because it is narrated in *mutawatir* way, but on the other hand, there are contradictory narration which did not support Quranic arguments which narrated in *mutawatir* method. According to Burton, a professor at St Andrew's University, Sirry quoted him as saying that there was something wrong behind the contradictions and inconsistencies, namely to cover up that the Quran had actually been compiled since the time of the prophet.

Burton argues that information about the codification of the Quran in the time of Abu Bakr and Usman was ahistorical. Jurists need to make up stories about *mushaf* that are incomplete because of a legal practice that is already accepted by a wide audience but has no legal foundation in the Quran. In order to legitimize the practice of the law, jurists found that the Quran supported it even though the text was no longer found. The principle is called *naskh al-tilawah duna al-hukm* (abrogation of readings, but the law remains valid).<sup>31</sup> Even so in the difference in reading, it is to give the impression of the incompleteness of the Quran.

Contradicting to Burton, John Wansbrough considered that the new Quran was codified over a hundred years from the Prophet saw's deathbed. For Wansbrough, stabilization or fixation of the Quranic text only occurred in the early ninth century. According to him, the reason why Quran was only codified in the ninth century is because the process of selecting which passage (locality, stories or wise words) or prophetic logics that needed to be included took place along with the development of a religious community to be distinctive from others. In other words, Wansbrough wanted to explain that the Quran is a product of what he calls "sectarian milieu", inter-confessional or political polemics that occur between various religious communities; Christian, Jewish, *Majusi* and Islam.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to Burton and Wansbrough who are examples of extreme opinions about the codification of the Quran, there is also a Western scholar who accepts the traditional opinion on the codification of the Quran, namely Theodore Noldeke. He acknowledged that the codification or canonization of the Quran occurred during the time of Usman, so is Friedrich Schawally. In addition, a view that is quite widely followed is offered by Alphone Migana who says that the process of codification of the Quran only occurred during the time of caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, the fifth

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<sup>30</sup> Sirry, 129.

<sup>31</sup> Further readings: John Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'an* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 120–79.

<sup>32</sup> In relation to that, Sirry quotes from the results of Wansbrough's research on the origin of the Quran and the passage covering it, Further reading: John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, trans. Andrew Rippin, 1st Edition (Amherst, N.Y: Prometheus, 2004); John Wansbrough and Gerald Hawting, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (Amherst, N.Y: Prometheus, 2006).

caliph of the Umayya dynasty which based on Christian sources written in Suryani (*Syriac Sources*).<sup>33</sup>

Sirry, by explaining various views on the formation of the canonization of Quran, actually wanted to say that the process of canonization of Quran was not as smooth and black-and-white as what has long been known. On the other hand, since the process of canonization itself, the Qur'an has experienced debates even about when the Qur'an began to be codified. It is important to know how the Quran actually exists.

Sirry explains that nowadays the Quran used around the world is a print of the Cairo edition that was first published in 1924. The Qur'an until it arrived at the printing experienced debates and contradictions. In schools, there are religious versions of the Quran and some contain errors. With the help of the Saudi Arabian government, the Cairo edition of the Quran appeared, and as was the case in the time of Uthman, apart from the Cairo edition, all of them were destroyed and thrown into the Nile. According to Sirry, this uniformity is like being fenced off. Even *qira'at* is restricted only to the recitation of Hafis from Asim, whereas it is only one of the many *qira'at* versions.<sup>34</sup>

Sirry argues that the current Cairo edition of the Quran reading system is included in the *scriptio plena* in the sense that it has been equipped with diacritics (dots above and below the letter) and affixed with vowels. Meanwhile, the Quran which has not been equipped with diacritics and affixed with vowels is called *scriptio defectiva*. The first person who knew the *scriptio plena* according to many histories was Hajaj ibn Yusuf. Hajaj established a commission to calculate the consonants of the Quran and introduce diacritics to facilitate reciting verses of the Quran.<sup>35</sup>

In the narration it is stated that the commission formed by Hajaj consisted of Basrah scholars such as Hasan al-Basri, Abu al-Aliyah, Nasr bin Ashim, Ashim bin Jahdari, and Malik bin Dinar. One of the tasks of the special committee is to put a dot (.) to distinguish letters that have similarities such as *ba*, *ta*, *tsa*. It is also against the letters *jim*, *ha*, *kha*. The next step is the affixing of alif by Ubaid Allah bin Ziyad. Sijistani states that the addition of *alif* made by Ubaid was to distinguish between long and short readings.<sup>36</sup>

The shift from *scriptio defectiva* to *scriptio plena*, including the addition of *alif* invited attention of many modern scholars, including Gerd-R Puin. Puin conducted research by testing the orthography of the Quranic text, whether it was equipped with diacritics or not. Puin led a restoration project of a Quran manuscript found in 1972 in the mosque of Sana'a, Yemen. The manuscript is believed to be the oldest manuscript. In the course of observation, fragments of the Sana'a manuscript show that scholars in reading his *scriptio defectiva* were wrong in some respects.<sup>37</sup>

Puin also conducted research on comparing the standard Quran text of Cairo and ancient manuscripts of the Quran stored in various places such as Samarkand, Paris, Birmingham, London, St. Petersburg, and Sana'a. One of the findings is that there are orthographic differences, including in the affixing of *alif*. In relation to this, Sirry further emphasized Puin's findings in terms of the addition of alif after *la* (ل). For example (Q.S 14:7) in standard script, it is written لا يزيدنكم whereas in ancient script it is written لا يزيدنكم. In its traditional reading, لا in the verse is not interpreted as prohibition (negation) or *lam nahyi*, but instead it is read as *lam taukid* or emphasis. In other words, the *alif* after the *lam* has no function or only limited as *zaidah* (addition), or which in the Puin discussion is referred to as *otiose alif*.

<sup>33</sup> Sirry, *Kemunculan Islam Dalam Kesarjanaan Revisionis*, 135.

<sup>34</sup> Sirry, 137–38.

<sup>35</sup> Sirry, 139.

<sup>36</sup> Sirry, 141.

<sup>37</sup> Sirry, 142.

It is the same with Keith Small who states that it has long been known that *alif* and *ya* were used in ways in early manuscripts that are no longer practiced in the orthography of the Qur'an. The use of the letters *alif* and *ya* is much more varied than the other letters of the *rasm*. The letters *alif* and *ya* are omitted, added, and sometimes exchanged. The standardization of the use of these is one phenomenon that can be observed in manuscripts spanning the first three centuries of Islam.<sup>38</sup>

From Puin's research and also Small's statement, according to Sirry, it confirms that the process of shifting from *scriptio defectiva* to *scriptio plena* was not as smooth as people imagined. The styling of the *scriptio plena* is also often subject to debate and distinction. In relation to it, by basing on the research of Puin and other scholars, Sirry chose the results of Gerd-R Puin's reconstruction for his reinterpretation. The result of Puin's reconstruction is one of the sura Al-Kafirun with an offer to read لا as *alif zaidah*. In other words, it reads لا with short or by removing the *alif* which then change such لا became *lam taukid* instead of *lam nahyi*.<sup>39</sup>

The results of the reconstruction of sura al-Kafirun are as follows:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكٰفِرُونَ لَا عِبَادَ لِي إِلَّا مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۚ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَا عٰبَدْتُمْ وَلَا أَنَا عٰبِدُكُمْ مَا عٰبَدْتُمْ  
وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَا عٰبَدْتُمْ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَلِي دِينٌ ۚ

(1) Say: O those who disbelieve! (2) I worship what you worship, (3) and you worship what I worship, (4) and I worship what you worship, (5) and you are a worshipper of what I worship. (6) For you your religion, and for me my religion.”

From this reconstruction, the meaning of Sura al-Kafirun undergoes a fundamental change and has implications for wider interpretations and is certainly not the same as in general. In any case, the change in meaning here deeply touches the sensitive aspects of faith for some communities. From what was “(1) I will not worship what you worship, (2) and you are not worshipers of what I worship, (3) nor shall I ever be a worshipper of what you worship, (4) nor shall you be a worshiper of what I worship (5)” turns into “(1) I worship what you worship, (2) and you worship what I worship, (3) and I worship what you worship, (4) and you worship what I worship (5).”

### The Concept of Religious Tolerance in Reinterpretation of Al-Kafirun

Sirry's concept of religious tolerance seen from the results of his reinterpretation is very different from the interpreters of sura al-Kafirun in particular and the figures who speak of religious tolerance generally. The first visible fundamental difference from Sirry's concept of religious tolerance is from the foundation of his reconstruction of al-Kafirun. The foundation of Sirry's reconstruction of the structure of al-Kafirun gave such great implications for the change in meaning and to the concept of tolerance in terms of theology and faith built by previous scholars.

Reconstructing the *lam* in al-Kafirun is based on Puin's research especially, from which it had been functioning as a *lam nahyi* (negation) instead turned into *lam taukid* (emphasis). With this change, the theological concept that the God of Muslims and other people (especially the polytheists, Christians and Jews) is different, becomes incorrect. It comes precisely with the change from *lam nahyi* to *lam taukid* that the God

<sup>38</sup> Keith E. Small, *Textual Criticism and Qur'an Manuscripts*, Reprint edition (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2012), 35.

<sup>39</sup> Gerd-R Puin, “Vowel Letters and Ortho-Epic Writing in the Quran”, in Reynolds, *New Perspectives on the Qur'an*, 180–84.

worshiped by Muslims and other people (especially the polytheists, Christians and Jews) is the same God.

With this reconstruction, according to Sirry, it can show the true meaning of tolerance. According to him, if there is no reconstruction of Sura al-Kafirun, then the meaning will be out of sync and not so impressive, because in the previous five verses there are negations. In other words, that the initial five verses are intolerant, but the last verse is tolerant. Sirry said that although the religions professed are worshipping the same God, but people believe their respective religions.

To corroborate his argument, Sirry gave his explanation using another verse of the Quran. According to him, God's testimony of Muslims and other religions (especially the polytheists, Christians and Jews) is equally confirmed in Q.S al-Ankabut 29:46 which explains that Muslims are ordered not to argue with the people of the book except in the best way and are also ordered to say that their God and our God is one, *الْيَنَّا وَانزَلِ الْيُكُم وَالْهَنَّا وَالْهَكُم وَاجِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ*. Here's the whole verses:

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ  
إِلَيْنَا وَانزَلِ الْيُكُم وَالْهَنَّا وَالْهَكُم وَاجِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

“Do not argue with the People of the Book unless gracefully, except with those of them who act wrongfully. And say, “We believe in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to you. Our God and your God is ‘only’ One. And to Him we ‘fully’ submit.”

Not only that, Sirry also quoted another verse to strengthen his argument. He quoted Q.S al-Shura 26:15 according to which there are similarities with the last verse of al-Kafirun because there is the word *لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ*.<sup>40</sup> Here's the whole verses:

فَذَلِكَ فَادُعْ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَقُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ  
مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ  
أَعْمَالُكُمْ لَا حِجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

“Therefore, call upon them and stay as told you, and do not follow their desires and say: “I believe in the Book which Allah has revealed, and I am commanded to be fair among you. God our Lord and your Lord. For us our deeds and for you your deeds. There is no quarrel between us and you, Allah gathers between us and to Him (we) will return.”

Sirry explains that in the verse clearly mentions that “God is our Lord and your Lord”. The question is who is referred to in the word “you” in the verse? Sirry quotes Ibn Kathir and at-Thabari in his explanation. Ibn Kathir did not explain the word “you”, but explained the word “them” in the previous verse quote. According to Ibn Katsir, the word “they” in the verse is the polytheists. Whereas at-Thabari identifies that the word “they” is a party that doubts the truth of what has been proclaimed to you from among those who have inherited the Book. Sirry suspected that the word “them” referred to at-Thabari was the *Ahl of the Book* (Jewish and Christian). Even so, with the word “you” according to Sirry is the same person as the word “they”. Despite that, Sirry still insists that the Lord of the faithful (Muslims) and those who reject the Prophet's call are the same God, Allah.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Sirry, *Kemunculan Islam Dalam Kesarjanaan Revisionis*, 145.

<sup>41</sup> Sirry, 146.

After seeing the argument about the worship of God between Muslims and other people (the Jews and the People of the Book), then why is there a difference in religion? For this, Sirry remains to explain about religious differences by sticking to the meaning “for you your religion, and for me my religion”. Sirry explains by quoting Q.S al-Maidah 5:48:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

“And We have sent down the Book to you by bringing the truth, which justifies the books that were revealed before and guarded them, so put them down according to what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires by forsaking the truth that has come to you. For every people among you, we give a rule and a light path. Had Allah willed, you would have made him a people, but Allah would have tested you against the gifts He had given you, so go on to do virtue. Only to Allah do you all return, and He tells you of what you used to confront.”

According to him, the Quran has clearly emphasized to support or endorse religious and legal pluralism. The most important fragment of the verse according to Sirry is the passage “To every people among you, We give the rules and the path of light”. Here it clearly indicates and shows the different communities. With that, the Quran hints at the existence of God's religion in every human family in the past that must be respected as in the Ahl of the Book. Sirry also explained that the concept of the Ahl Book not only shows Jews and Christians, but also Zoroastrians, Hindus, Buddhists, Konguchu and so on.<sup>42</sup>

Not only that - how then the Qur'an does not even only emphasize religious plurality, according to Sirry, furthermore, the Qur'an also emphasizes that there will be a possibility for people other than Islam to obtain salvation.<sup>43</sup> This is asserted in Q.S al-Baqarah 2:62:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Verily the believers, the Jews, the Christians and the *Sabi'in*, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, and does virtue, they have a reward from their Lord, there is no fear of them, and they don't grieve.”

Thus, the concept of religious tolerance offered and initiated by Sirry not only ceases to the sociological realm to appreciate differences in terms of his sharia, its laws and moral values, but much further, he also moves on the theological realm by asserting to give acknowledgment of the existence of the possibility of obtaining salvation from the same Lord though it differs in terms of his religion. That is what he calls the true tolerance.

<sup>42</sup> For example, the opinion of Maulana Muhammad Ali who argues that Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu Majusi and Shikh belong to the Ahl Book. Likewise with Rasyid Ridha in his interpretation of al-Manar and also later quoted by Abdul Hamid Hakim a cleric of Padang Panjang, see: Abd. Muqstith Ghazali, *Argumen Pluralisme Agama: Membangun Toleransi Berbasis Al-Qur'an* (Depok: KataKita, 2009), 275–77.

<sup>43</sup> Mun'im Sirry, *Tradisi Intelektual Islam: Rekonfigurasi Sumber Otoritas Agama* (Malang: Madani, 2015), 199.

## The Critical Discourse Analysis of Mun'im Sirry Concept

The concept of religious tolerance as a discourse born out of Sirry's reconstruction and reinterpretation process cannot be released from his social cognition. The discourse generated from the text is not enough to be based solely on the analysis of the text alone, but it must also be seen how a text is produced. Text is not something that comes from the sky, nor is it a void and independent space. The text is formed in a practice of discourse or a discourse practice.<sup>44</sup>

In this case, the authors will dissect the discourse of Sirry's religious tolerance concept with a critical discourse analysis model of Teun A. Van Dijk's social cognition. Van Dijk describes several important characteristics in his critical discourse analysis as follows: (1) Action; it is to associate a discourse to an action and then interact with others; (2) Context; it is discourse seen as manufactured and understandable in specific contexts and situations<sup>45</sup>; (3) Historical; it is discourse placed in an accompanying social context; (4) Power; it is to understand that each text appears not as something natural, but a form of power fight; (5) Ideology; It is to understand that a text is a form of ideology practice or a reflection of a particular ideology.<sup>46</sup>

### 1. Actions

Discourse constitutes text in context and it constitutes as evidence to be elaborated empirically. Therefore, discourse should be understood as action.<sup>47</sup> The characteristic of discourse as action is to associate discourse as an interaction. Discourse is not placed in an internal enclosed space. Discourse is seen as something that has a purpose whether it is to influence, refute, persuade, reject, react and others.<sup>48</sup> In relation to Sirry's concept of religious tolerance, he aims to refute an understanding which he felt was incompatible or insufficiently appropriate.

This can be seen from his statement which explains that the message of al-Kafirun is out of sync because in verses 1-5 it confirms the God whom the disbelievers' worship, while in the last verse (6), it is not. In other words, according to Sirry the last verse is tolerant but the previous verses are not. From there, it can be seen that the discourse produced by Sirry aims to refute. In this case he denied a verse in al-Kafirun which he thought had the message out of sync. In addition, Sirry also seeks to bring Western thoughts to Muslims in the East, especially Indonesia.

### 2. Context

Discourse is not only considered a constant or final area, it happens anywhere, anytime, and in any situation. Discourse is formed so that it must be interpreted in special conditions and situations such as discourse in certain social situations. There are several important contexts that Van Dijk says have an effect on discourse production. First, the discourse participants, whose background produces the discourse; gender, age, education, social class, ethnicity, religion and others that are relevant to describe the discourse. Second, certain social settings such as place, time, position of speaker and listener.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Haryatmoko, *Critical Discourse Analysis (Analisis Wacana Kritis): Landasan Teori, Metodologi Dan Penerapan* (Depok: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2019), 221–22.

<sup>45</sup> According to Van Dijk context includes three things: non-verbal context (co-text), verbal and situation. Further readings: Vandijk, *Society and Discourse: How Social Context Influence Text and Talk*.

<sup>46</sup> Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana, Pengantar Analisis Teks Media*, 8.

<sup>47</sup> Zubad Nurul Yaqin, "Representasi Ideologi Dalam Struktur Wacana Kata Hari Ini" 12, no. 2 (Desember 2017): 100, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ling.v12i2.4056>.

<sup>48</sup> Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana, Pengantar Analisis Teks Media*, 8.

<sup>49</sup> Eriyanto, 10.

Mun'im Sirry is an individual or subject for the first context relating to the background of who is producing discourse. Seen from his education, he has touched the highest level of education in the academic world, namely professor. He is an assistant professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. From this it can be seen that the discourse he has been an academic discourse. At the same time answering the second context, that the discourse is produced in the campus space and as an academic debate. In addition, the object or consumer of the listener or reader of such discourse is from among academics in particular and does not rule out the possibility to be consumed by the public more widely because he published in a book.

What is an interesting context point is that he lives in a predominantly Christian environment. As it is well known that he is a lecturer at the University of Notre Dame where it is the most advanced Catholic university.<sup>50</sup> In other words the author would like to mention that Sirry lived in a plural context and had greater access to the understanding and knowledge of Christian theology in particular and discourse, unable to escape the influence of social forces.

### 3. Historical

The discourse will not escape its historical context. In short that discourse is not ahistorical. In relation to this discourse of the concept of religious tolerance, it arises from the response and reception to Western scholarly textuality criticism of the Quran. As explained above, the subheading of the reconstruction argument, that Sirry's reconstruction is based on Puin's research results. On the other hand, it is also a refutation of the asynchronous message that is in al-Kafirun. In addition, in his other works, Sirry uses the discourse against the background to respond to Muslims who often say disbelievers towards Christians especially.<sup>51</sup>

### 4. Power

In relation to discourse with power, it is important to look at what is called control. Control here does not have to be in direct physical form, but it can also be through mental and psychic. The dominant group as an example will have a greater probability of controlling other groups and can act as they wish. According to Van Dijk, the dominant group has more such access to knowledge, money and education. In relation to discourse with control there are several forms: it can be control over context, or control over the structure of discourse. Control over context for example is being able to determine who should or should speak and who can also hear and say. Cementing control over the structure of such discourse can control any part that needs to be displayed or not.<sup>52</sup>

In relation to Sirry's concept of religious tolerance, the discourse of power behind it can be seen from the many opinions he quotes from Western scholars. That today, the West as the center of civilization of science. Of course, apart from being the center of scientific civilization, the West has also become the center of control over science itself, in other words, that it is the West that then has the current power in the field of science, including Islam or Islamic Studies. Islamic studies in the West have now even become the mouthpiece and mecca of Islamic studies in Muslim countries themselves.

One of the concrete examples of Western power over knowledge, including about Islam, is the term orientalism. Orientalism is Western scholars who study

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<sup>50</sup> University Communications | University of Notre Dame, "About," University of Notre Dame, accessed April 22, 2021, <https://www.nd.edu/>.

<sup>51</sup> Sirry, *Islam Revisionis: Kontestasi Agama Zaman Radikal*, 226.

<sup>52</sup> Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana, Pengantar Analisis Teks Media*, 12.

the East. With the emergence of orientalism, Western scholars studied the East, including Islam in it, for its initial hegemony and domination efforts. In turn, to balance the power and domination of the West with its orientalism, the Islamic scholar Hasan Hanafi initiated a counter-hegemony by sparking Occidentalism, in which scholars from the East studied the West.<sup>53</sup>

## 5. Ideology

Van Dijk explains that ideology is primarily intended to regulate the actions and practices of an individual or a group. Ideology has several important implications: ideology is inherently social and ideology although it is social it is used internally among the members of groups or communities. In relation to that, discourse analysis cannot simply put the language in a closed manner, but it must also be looked at the context in particular how the ideologies of existing groups play a role in shaping the discourse.<sup>54</sup>

Ideology according to Destutt de Tracy, as Van Dijk cited, is nothing less than a general “science of ideas”, the study of how we think, speak, and debate, something now called psychology or even 'cognitive science'. Ideology is concerned with systems of ideas, and especially with social, political or religious ideas held by a group or social movement. Ideology is the fundamental belief of a group and its members. In addition, for example, according to Karl Marx, ideologies are forms of 'false consciousness', namely popular but misguided beliefs instilled by the ruling class to legitimize the status quo, and to hide the true socioeconomic conditions from the workers.<sup>55</sup>

In relation to Sirry's discourse, as already described above in the subtitle of power, Sirry quotes many Western scholars. Western scholars have a very rational, objectified and scholarly view of things including towards religion and its teachings. So, in this case, the ideology that is built is the ideology of rationalism and empiricism. The approaches taken by Western scholars to the religion of Islam in particular are historical ones.<sup>56</sup> In other words, a historical approach is an approach that should research things with contemporaneous sources. Here it can be seen how much empirical evidence is indispensable.

Seen from the perspective of ideologies that exist in internal Islam, or the theology schools of thought, the ideology is mu'tazilism or borrowing the term from Nasution, it is neo-mu'tazilism. The school of mu'tazilism strongly emphasizes the use of reason against Islam. In fact one of the doctrines of the school is that we can find God though without being guided by the divine revelation.<sup>57</sup> From this, it can be concluded that the ideology that shaped the discourse thus producing the concept of religious tolerance of Sirry's perspective is the ideology of rationalism and empiricism or neo-mu'tazilism.

<sup>53</sup> Regarding orientalism and occidentalism, further reading: Moh Fudholi, “Relasi Antagonistik Barat-Timur: Orientalisme Vis a Vis Oksidentalisme,” *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 2, no. 2 (December 3, 2012): 389–406, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2012.2.2.389-406>; Saifullah Isri, “Orientalisme Dan Implikasi Kepada Dunia Islam,” *Jurnal MUDARRISUNA: Media Kajian Pendidikan Agama Islam* 10, no. 2 (June 15, 2020): 311–33, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jm.v10i2.7788>; Abdurrohman Kasdi dan Umma Farida, “Oksidentalisme Sebagai Pilar Pembaharuan (Telaah Terhadap Pemikiran Hassan Hanafi),” *FIKRAH* 1, no. 2 (December 27, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.21043/fikrah.v1i2.540>.

<sup>54</sup> Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana, Pengantar Analisis Teks Media*, 13–14.

<sup>55</sup> Teun A. Vandijk, *Ideology and Discourse A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (Barcelona: Universitas Pompeu Fabra, 2004), 6–8, <http://www.discoursees.org>.

<sup>56</sup> Further readings: Muhammad Anshori, “Tren-Tren Wacana Studi Al-Qur'an dalam Pandangan Orientalis di Barat,” *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Tafsir di Nusantara* 4, no. 1 (May 4, 2019): 13–44, <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v4i1.35>; Mokh Fatkhur Rokhzi, “Pendekatan Sejarah Dalam Studi Islam,” *MODELING: Jurnal Program Studi PGMI* 2, no. 1 (March 21, 2015): 85–94.

<sup>57</sup> Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam: Aliran-Aliran Sejarah Analisa Dan Perbandingan* (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 2015), 48.



To sum up, the discourse that Sirry constructs is nothing but largely an excerpt from Western scholars, particularly about the reconstruction of the text of al-Kafirun. In addition, Sirry also forgot authoritative sources from among Islamic scholars such as Abu Amr ad-Dani's book of *Qiraat*. Nevertheless, again, Sirry only took sources contemporaneous with the Quran, as a reference and principle of historical methodology and according to Sirry, works from Islamic scholars were only recently created and booked.

The author also views that Sirry seeks to listen to Western thoughts to Muslims with the aim of spurring criticism towards Islamic traditions. On the other hand, Sirry also seeks to listen to Western thoughts such as discourses of tolerance, pluralism and so forth. Surely this is nothing but for the agenda of modernization or perhaps even westernization because the strong discourse of the current Western power and ideology in the world is no exception about religions including Islam.

## Conclusion

The concept of religious tolerance in the reconstruction and reinterpretation of Mun'im Sirry broke down and gave the offer a more profound concept. Sirry's concept of religious tolerance offers two fundamental perspectives, sociological and theological. In Sirry's concept of religious tolerance, Islam followers are not only encouraged to respect, appreciate and acknowledge the existence of other religious social events, but further than that, Sirry also advocate to give recognition of the possibility of salvation of other religions later in life after death.

In relation to how the process of discourse formation of the concept of religious tolerance of Sirry, from the results of the author's research using Teun A. Van Dijk's theory of critical discourse analysis which includes analysis of action, context, historical, power and ideology, it is as follows. First, in terms of action, Sirry started from his intent and purpose to refute the incongruity (asynchronous) message in the thought line of sura al-Kafirun by basing it on Puin's research. Second, in terms of context, Sirry cannot be released from his social environment living in academic space and in a predominantly Christian environment, at the University of Notre Dame. From there, his discourse was heavily influenced by his social forces.

Third, in terms of its history, the discourse as a response and reception to the written critique of the Quran of Western scholars. In addition, it is a response to the asynchronization of the message of al-Kafirun. Besides, it is also a response to the many people who still say disbelievers against Christians and other religions. Fourth, in terms of power, he cannot escape Western powers that dominate and control the knowledge including *Islamic Studies*. Fifth, in terms of ideology, he is deeply affected by the ideology of rationalism, empiricism as a logical consequence of Western power and or in the Islamic theology, it is mu'tazilism or if drawn to the current age, it becomes neo-mu'tazilism.

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