



Hermeneutik: Jurnal Ilmu Al Qur'an dan Tafsir

ISSN 1907-7246 E-ISSN 2502-6402

Tersedia online di <https://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/Hermeneutik/index>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/hermeneutik.v18i2.28570>

Critical Orientalism Approaches in Qur'anic and Tafsir Studies: Tracing Armando Salvatore's Contribution to Arab Culture

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Abstract

Traditional Orientalism studies are often seen as neglecting the internal and local contexts of Eastern societies, particularly in the study of the Qur'an and Tafsir. This

approach frequently gives rise to biased views and stereotypes about Arab and Islamic culture. This article examines Armando Salvatore's contributions to the development of critical Orientalism, especially in relation to the study of the Qur'an and Tafsir. Critical Orientalism offers a more contextual and inclusive approach, taking into account local social and political dynamics, while also creating space for perspectives from within Eastern societies themselves. This research analyzes Salvatore's major works through an in-depth literature review, focusing on how his critical orientalism approach can be applied to understanding Arab culture and the interpretation of the Quran. The methods used in this study include a critical analysis of Salvatore's texts as well as a comparison with traditional orientalist approaches. This study found that Salvatore successfully challenged biases in conventional Orientalism and emphasized the importance of understanding the Quran and Arab culture through local and contextual perspectives. The implications of this approach in the study of the Quran and Tafsir are very important, as it offers a new way to understand religious texts that is more sensitive to the Arab socio-cultural context. Salvatore's critical orientalism approach not only helps bridge the gap between Western understanding and Eastern realities but also has the potential to enrich Quranic exegesis studies through a more inclusive and dynamic perspective.

Keyword: Armando Salvatore, Arabic Culture, Critical Orientalism, Contextual Perspective, Qur'anic Studies, Tafsir, Islamic Studies.

Abstrak

Kajian orientalisme tradisional seringkali dianggap mengabaikan konteks internal dan lokal masyarakat Timur, terutama dalam studi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir. Pendekatan ini sering memunculkan pandangan yang bias dan stereotip tentang budaya Arab dan Islam. Artikel ini mengkaji kontribusi Armando Salvatore dalam pengembangan orientalisme kritis, khususnya dalam kaitannya dengan studi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir. Orientalisme kritis menawarkan pendekatan yang lebih kontekstual dan inklusif, memperhitungkan dinamika sosial dan politik lokal, serta membuka ruang bagi pandangan dari dalam masyarakat Timur sendiri. Penelitian ini menganalisis karya-karya utama Salvatore melalui tinjauan literatur mendalam, dengan fokus pada bagaimana pendekatan orientalisme kritisnya dapat diterapkan dalam memahami budaya Arab dan tafsir Al-Qur'an. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini mencakup analisis kritis terhadap teks-teks Salvatore serta perbandingan dengan pendekatan orientalis tradisional. Studi ini menemukan bahwa Salvatore berhasil menantang bias-bias dalam orientalisme konvensional dan menggarisbawahi pentingnya memahami Al-Qur'an dan budaya Arab melalui perspektif lokal dan kontekstual. Implikasi dari pendekatan ini dalam studi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir sangatlah penting, karena menawarkan cara baru untuk memahami teks-teks keagamaan yang lebih peka terhadap konteks sosial-budaya Arab. Pendekatan orientalisme kritis Salvatore tidak hanya membantu menjembatani kesenjangan antara pemahaman Barat dan realitas Timur, tetapi juga berpotensi memperkaya studi tafsir Al-Qur'an melalui perspektif yang lebih inklusif dan dinamis.

Kata Kunci: Armando Salvatore, Budaya Arab, Orientalisme Kritis, Perspektif Kontekstual, Studi Al-Qur'an, Tafsir, Studi Islam.

Introduction

The study of Orientalism, especially in the context of Quranic studies and exegesis, has long been a battleground of academic debate between the East and the West. Orientalism, in its traditional form, is often dominated by a Western perspective that tends to view the Eastern world, including Arab and Islamic cultures, with a biased outlook (Abdul Rahman Ubaid Hussain, 2024). Edward Said, in his work *Orientalism* (Said, 1977), introduced the term "orientalism" as a critique of the Western perspective that discredits and reduces the East to a passive and powerless object. This approach creates a dichotomy between the West, which is seen as rational, modern, and superior, and the East, which is portrayed as irrational, primitive, and inferior. In the context of Quranic studies and exegesis, the traditional Orientalist approach tends to overlook the diversity and richness of interpretations held by the Muslim community, instead simplifying sacred texts like the Quran into mere dogmatic symbols that cannot evolve.

The traditional Orientalist approach in the study of the Quran often fails to consider the socio-historical context in which the text was revealed and interpreted. In other words, this approach frequently views the Quran as a static document, detached from the social, political, and cultural dynamics of Arab society at the time, as well as in the lives of Muslims today (Al-Rammahi, 2024). This leads to the emergence of inaccurate generalizations and stereotypes about Islam and Arab society. For example, the Quran is often viewed as a rigid text that supports authoritarian power, without considering the contexts in which Quranic interpretations can provide more flexible, dynamic interpretations that support human rights.

In facing these biases, there arises a need for a more critical, contextual, and inclusive approach in the study of the Quran and its interpretation. One of the main figures who developed this approach is Armando Salvatore, an influential thinker in the study of Islam and Arab culture. Salvatore offers an approach known as critical orientalism, which specifically challenges traditional orientalism and proposes a new perspective in understanding Arab culture, Islam, and religious texts, including the Quran (Rahman & Rahman, 2024).

Armando Salvatore is known as a key figure in the development of critical orientalism, an approach that critiques Western representations of the East, particularly in the context of Arab and Islam. Salvatore suggests that to understand Arab and Islamic culture more deeply, it is important not only to view it from an external perspective that is often filled with colonial and political biases, but also from an internal perspective that is more contextual and dynamic (Abaza & Stauth, 1988).

The critical Orientalism developed by Salvatore is based on the idea that Arab and Islamic cultures cannot be understood solely through a static lens that tends to define these societies as backward and unchanging entities. Instead, Salvatore emphasizes that Arab and Islamic cultures possess complex social and political dynamics that must be understood through their local and historical contexts. This approach invites us to see how Arab and Muslim societies, both in the past and present, have played an active role in shaping interpretations of their sacred texts, including the Quran.

In other words, the interpretation of the Qur'an is the result of a complex interaction between text, context, and interpretation. Therefore, critical orientalism offers a richer and more inclusive perspective on the study of interpretation, where the interpretation of the text is not seen as something fixed, but as something that can change alongside social and political changes in society. Salvatore's main contribution to the development of critical orientalism is his idea that the Quran and other religious texts must be understood within the social, political, and cultural contexts in which they are interpreted. This means that the interpretation of the Quran cannot be separated from the socio-historical realities of Muslim society, both during the time of revelation and in the present day (Yuli Edi Z et al., 2023). In the framework of critical orientalism, Salvatore rejects the traditional view of orientalism that considers religious texts as something static and dogmatic. Instead, he sees these texts as part of a dynamic process that is continuously recontextualized by the societies that interpret them.

Salvatore also shows that the interpretation of the Qur'an is often influenced by external factors, such as political power, international relations, and social dynamics (Nehru Millat Ahmad, 2024). In this regard, critical orientalism opens up space for a more inclusive approach in the study of Qur'anic exegesis, where interpreters

are recognized as having the agency to interpret the text according to their contexts. This not only helps to avoid stereotypes arising from traditional Orientalism, but also allows for the creation of a richer and more complex understanding of religious texts.

In the study of the Quran, critical orientalism highlights the importance of understanding how social, political, and cultural contexts influence the way the Quran is interpreted. For instance, interpretations of the Quran on issues such as women's rights, social justice, and political power can vary significantly depending on the context in which those interpretations are made (Nehru Millat Ahmad, 2024). Salvatore argues that it is important to understand that these interpretations cannot be separated from their social-historical context. Therefore, critical orientalism offers a more nuanced and contextual perspective in understanding the various interpretations of the Quran.

The critical orientalism approach offered by Salvatore has significant implications in the study of the Quran and its exegesis (Nehru Millat Ahmad, 2024). One of its main implications is the creation of space for more inclusive and contextual interpretations, where religious texts are understood within dynamic social, political, and cultural frameworks. This allows for a richer understanding of the Quran and its interpretations, where interpretation is not seen as something static, but as something that continues to evolve with changing contexts.

In addition, the approach of critical orientalism also helps to address the stereotypes and biases that often arise in the study of Islam and Arab societies ("Orientalism Revisited," 2023). By paying attention to internal and local perspectives, this approach opens up space for more balanced and inclusive interpretations, which not only reflect Western views but also the perspectives from within the Muslim community itself. This is important in creating a fairer and more balanced understanding of Arab culture and Islam, as well as in fostering more constructive dialogue between the West and the East.

In the current global context, where the relationship between the West and the Muslim world is often marked by tension and misunderstanding, the critical orientalism approach developed by Salvatore offers a way to bridge this gap (Rahim, 2024). By understanding Arab and Islamic culture through a more critical and inclusive lens, we can avoid the generalizations and stereotypes that often hinder dialogue between both

sides. Critical Orientalism allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities and diversity of Arab and Islamic cultures, as well as paving the way for the creation of more harmonious and mutually respectful relationships between the West and the East.

Theoretical Review

The concept of *Orientalism* as first articulated by Edward Said (Said, 1977) provides the foundation for understanding the power dynamics and biases that have historically shaped Western academic studies of the East, particularly Arab and Islamic cultures. Said's critique highlights how traditional Orientalism reduced the East to a static, monolithic entity that is often portrayed as irrational, backward, and incapable of progress without Western intervention. These reductionist views created a dichotomy between the "rational" and "modern" West and the "irrational" and "primitive" East, influencing not only cultural perceptions but also religious scholarship, including studies on Quranic exegesis.

In response to the limitations of this traditional Orientalist approach, **Armando Salvatore's critical Orientalism** offers a more nuanced, contextually sensitive framework for understanding Islamic culture and Quranic interpretation. Salvatore's theoretical model counters the rigid, reductionist views of the past by emphasizing the dynamic and evolving nature of both Islamic societies and their interpretive practices. He posits that any comprehensive study of the Quran and its exegesis must take into account the socio-political and cultural contexts in which these interpretations emerge. This theoretical shift is crucial because it enables a more accurate understanding of how religious texts like the Quran interact with and are shaped by the lived realities of Muslim communities.

One of the cornerstones of Salvatore's theory is **contextualism**. Salvatore argues that religious texts, particularly the Quran, cannot be interpreted in isolation from the socio-historical conditions in which they are read and understood. This contrasts sharply with the traditional Orientalist view that treats the Quran as a static document with a fixed meaning. Salvatore asserts that Quranic interpretations are fluid and adapt to the social, political, and cultural environments of their interpreters. For example, issues such as gender roles, justice, and political authority are often interpreted

differently depending on the societal context in which the text is being analyzed. This approach highlights the role of external influences, including local customs, political power, and social movements, in shaping Quranic exegesis.

Another key theoretical contribution of Salvatore's critical Orientalism is his focus on **pluralism** within Islamic societies. Traditional Orientalism often depicted Islam as a homogeneous and monolithic tradition, where all Muslim societies supposedly shared the same interpretations and beliefs. Salvatore challenges this notion by emphasizing the internal diversity within Islam, both in terms of religious interpretation and cultural practices. He argues that the interpretation of religious texts like the Quran varies widely across different regions and historical periods, shaped by local social structures, historical developments, and intellectual traditions. This pluralistic framework allows for a more inclusive and accurate representation of the diversity within Islamic thought and practice, moving beyond the oversimplifications of traditional Orientalist studies.

Moreover, Salvatore's theory of critical Orientalism addresses how **power dynamics**—both internal and external to Muslim societies—affect Quranic interpretation. He underscores the impact of political regimes, international relations, and social hierarchies on how the Quran is interpreted, thus rejecting the idea that religious texts can be understood in isolation from the broader political and social context. This approach also challenges the assumption in traditional Orientalism that Islam is inherently authoritarian or rigid, showing instead that interpretations of the Quran can support diverse political systems, including those that advocate for social justice and human rights.

Salvatore's approach also has significant implications for the study of **gender** in Islamic exegesis. Traditional Orientalist scholarship has often framed the Quran as supporting fixed, patriarchal roles for women, contributing to stereotypes about the subjugation of women in Islam. Salvatore challenges this static view by arguing that gender interpretations of the Quran are contingent on the socio-historical context and are subject to change. For example, as Muslim societies experience shifts in gender norms and increased advocacy for women's rights, interpretations of Quranic verses concerning gender and family roles also evolve. This dynamic view allows for a more

complex understanding of how Islamic teachings on gender are practiced and interpreted in different contexts.

In conclusion, Armando Salvatore's critical Orientalism offers a transformative theoretical framework for the study of Islam, Quranic interpretation, and Arab culture. By emphasizing the importance of context, pluralism, and the role of power dynamics, Salvatore provides a more comprehensive and inclusive approach that moves beyond the reductive stereotypes of traditional Orientalism. His critical Orientalism not only enriches academic discourse but also fosters more constructive intercultural dialogue, helping to bridge the gap between the West and the Muslim world by promoting a deeper, more nuanced understanding of Islamic traditions and their interpretations.

Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach with a focus on critical literature review to analyze Armando Salvatore's contributions to the development of critical orientalism and its application in the study of the Qur'an and its exegesis (Fadli, 2020). This approach was chosen due to the relevance of critical orientalism as a theoretical approach that has been extensively developed through reflection and analysis of academic works. The first stage of this research involves an in-depth literature review of Salvatore's works, such as *The Sociology of Islam* and *Islam and the Political Discourse of Modernity*, as well as related articles that focus on the study of Arab and Islamic culture. This review also includes Edward Said's thoughts on traditional Orientalism as a basis for critiquing the biased Western perspective towards the East.

Furthermore, this research applies contextual analysis to explore how the critical orientalism developed by Salvatore can be applied to understanding the interpretation of the Qur'an. This study pays attention to the social, political, and cultural dynamics of Arab society that influence the interpretation of the Qur'an, both in the past and present. This contextual approach is essential to highlight that the interpretation of the Qur'an has always been influenced by historical and social conditions, and therefore, such interpretations are dynamic and cannot be separated from their context. The analyzed data includes various interpretations from different periods, allowing

researchers to understand the changes and variations in interpretation that occur based on social conditions.

This research also compares Salvatore's critical orientalism approach with traditional orientalism. Traditional Orientalism, often used in the study of the Qur'an and Arab culture, is considered reductionist because it tends to simplify the social and cultural complexities of the East (Maarij, Shakoor, & Faseeha, 2018). By comparing these two approaches, this research demonstrates how critical Orientalism can address the shortcomings of traditional Orientalism, particularly in terms of taking into account internal and local perspectives (Sulaiman, 2019). This approach seeks to demonstrate how Salvatore proposes a more inclusive and dynamic way of understanding Arab culture and the interpretation of the Qur'an.

In addition, this research involves case studies as illustrations of the application of critical orientalism in specific issues, such as the interpretation of the Quran regarding gender, human rights, and political authority in contemporary Muslim societies. This case study allows researchers to test the concepts proposed by Salvatore, such as contextualism and pluralism, in the interpretation of the Quran. This case study reinforces the argument that Salvatore's critical Orientalist approach can offer a richer and more relevant understanding of exegesis.

In some cases, this research also utilizes secondary data from interviews conducted by experts in the fields of Orientalism, Quran studies, and Arab culture, as well as observations of related academic discussions. Data from these interviews and observations are used to gain insights from experts on how critical Orientalism is applied in contemporary Islamic studies, as well as to see how Salvatore's contributions are received and applied across various academic circles.

Finally, this research conducts a critical analysis of Salvatore's works with the aim of identifying the main contributions and their relevance in the study of the Qur'an and its interpretation. This analysis focuses on key concepts such as the role of contextualism, cultural pluralism, and internal dynamics, which Salvatore considers essential for a more comprehensive understanding of the development of Qur'anic interpretation and Arab culture.

Results

Deconstructing Traditional Orientalism: Armando Salvatore's Critique of Western Bias

One of Armando Salvatore's main contributions to critical orientalism studies is his profound critique of the biases present in traditional orientalism. Traditional Orientalism is often dominated by a Western perspective that views the East, particularly Arab and Islamic cultures, as passive and stagnant subjects of study. In this framework, the East is depicted as an undeveloped entity, trapped in tradition and subject to authoritarian power, while the West is seen as a rational, progressive, and superior entity. Salvatore's critique of this view focuses on the simplification of the realities of Arab and Muslim societies by traditional Orientalists, who overlook the social, political, and cultural contexts in which these cultures develop.

Salvatore argues that traditional Orientalism does not provide space for the internal dynamics within Eastern societies, particularly regarding how Arab and Islamic societies understand themselves and interpret their religious texts. He emphasized that in the study of the Qur'an and its exegesis, the traditional Orientalist approach tends to view the Qur'an as a static dogmatic document that is not open to different interpretations. This results in a very limited reading of this sacred text, which ultimately reinforces stereotypes that portray Islam as a rigid religion incompatible with modernity.

With his critical Orientalism, Salvatore seeks to deconstruct these views by emphasizing the importance of internal and local perspectives in Eastern studies. He rejects the assumption that Arab and Islamic cultures can only be understood from an often biased external perspective, and instead, he stresses the need to understand these cultures through their own social and historical contexts. This critique paves the way for a new approach that is richer and more sensitive to the diversity and dynamics of Eastern societies, particularly in relation to the interpretation of the Qur'an.

The Influence of Contextualism in Interpretation: Placing the Qur'an within a Socio-Historical Framework

One important aspect of Salvatore's critical orientalism is his emphasis on contextualism in understanding religious texts such as the Qur'an. Salvatore proposes the idea that every interpretation of the Qur'an is closely linked to the social, political, and cultural context of the society in which the interpretation arises. This is different from the traditional Orientalist approach, which views religious texts as something static and unchanging. In the critical Orientalist approach, texts like the Quran are understood as part of a dynamic process, where their meanings and interpretations can change along with shifts in social and historical contexts.

This contextual approach is very relevant in the study of Quranic interpretation, where Salvatore argues that the interpretation of texts cannot be separated from the social realities surrounding them. For example, interpretations of the Qur'an regarding issues such as gender, human rights, and political power will vary greatly across different societies, depending on their respective social and political contexts. Interpretations that emerge in more authoritarian environments may emphasize aspects of obedience and submission, while interpretations that arise in more egalitarian societies may highlight aspects of social justice and individual rights. In this regard, critical orientalism opens up space for a broader and more responsive interpretation to social changes.

Salvatore's contribution in this regard also helps to avoid the stereotypes that often arise in Western studies about the Qur'an and Islam. By understanding the interpretation of the Qur'an as a result of the complex interaction between text and context, we can see that these interpretations cannot be simplified or generalized without taking into account the social-historical dynamics that underlie them. This also allows us to see how these interpretations can continue to evolve and provide new relevance in various social contexts.

The Pluralism Approach in Interpretation: Acknowledging Cultural and Social Diversity in Islam

The critical Orientalism developed by Salvatore not only emphasizes contextualism but also pluralism in understanding Arab and Islamic culture. In traditional Orientalism, Islam is often viewed as a monolithic entity, where all Muslim

societies are considered to have the same perspective on their religion and sacred texts. However, Salvatore rejects this view and demonstrates that Islam and Arab culture are highly diverse, both in terms of ethnicity, history, and religious traditions.

In the context of Quranic exegesis studies, this pluralism is very important. Salvatore argues that the interpretation of the Quran is always influenced by the social and cultural diversity within Muslim communities. For instance, interpretations that develop in the Middle East may differ from those in North Africa or South Asia, as each region has its own distinct social, cultural, and political context. This diversity reflects the plurality in the way Muslim communities understand and interpret their religious texts.

With this pluralistic approach, Salvatore invites us to view the Quran and its interpretations as an interpretative process that is continuously evolving and influenced by social and cultural dynamics. This approach helps avoid generalizations that oversimplify the social realities of Muslim communities and opens up space for more inclusive discussions about how the Quran is understood in various places and times. This pluralism also plays an important role in bridging the understanding between the West and the Islamic world, where awareness of diversity within Islam can help reduce the stereotypes and misunderstandings that often occur.

Critical Orientalism in the Context of Gender: Confronting Dynamic Interpretations of Gender Justice Issues

One example of the application of critical orientalism proposed by Salvatore is in the study of Quranic interpretations related to gender issues. In many traditional Orientalist studies, Quranic interpretations regarding the role of women are often depicted as rigid and supportive of gender inequality. However, Salvatore argues that this interpretation is highly contextual and can change along with social changes in Muslim society.

In some Muslim societies, the interpretation of the Qur'an regarding the role of women has changed significantly over the past few decades, particularly due to the influence of social and political movements advocating for women's rights. Salvatore shows that this change in interpretation reflects the ongoing social dynamics, where the

role of women in Muslim society is no longer seen as something fixed and unchanging, but rather as something that is continuously evolving. In this regard, a critical orientalism approach allows us to see that the interpretation of the Quran regarding gender is part of a larger social process, where Muslim communities have the agency to interpret their sacred texts according to the social contexts they face.

This approach also helps to challenge the stereotypes that often arise in Western studies about the role of women in Islam. By demonstrating that the interpretation of the Qur'an regarding gender is something dynamic and influenced by social context, Salvatore opens up space for a more complex understanding of how Muslim societies perceive issues of gender justice. This approach also offers a new perspective in the study of Qur'anic interpretation, where the interpretation of texts is no longer seen as static, but as something open to social and political change.

The Impact of Critical Orientalism on Intercultural Dialogue

Armando Salvatore's contribution to critical orientalism not only influences the academic realm but also affects the intercultural relations between the West and the Islamic world. By challenging traditional, reductionist, and biased views of orientalism, Salvatore paves the way for a more constructive and mutually respectful dialogue between both parties. Critical Orientalism, with its focus on contextualism, pluralism, and internal dynamics, allows for a richer and more complex understanding of Arab and Islamic cultures, which ultimately helps to reduce the stereotypes and prejudices that often arise in Western-Eastern relations.

This approach also helps to address the tensions that often arise in the relationship between the West and the Islamic world, particularly regarding the understanding of Islam and its religious texts. By offering a more inclusive and contextual perspective, critical orientalism enables the creation of a more open and respectful dialogue, where cultural and religious differences are no longer seen as obstacles, but as opportunities for learning and mutual understanding.

Salvatore demonstrates that by understanding the social and cultural context behind the interpretation of the Qur'an, we can avoid the misunderstandings that often occur in the dialogue between the West and the Islamic world. In an increasingly

interconnected global context, this approach becomes ever more important in fostering more harmonious and respectful relationships between different cultures and religions.

The Relevance of Critical Orientalism for Contemporary Quran and Tafsir Studies

Armando Salvatore's contribution to the development of critical orientalism holds significant relevance in the study of the Quran and tafsir today. This approach not only offers a new perspective in understanding religious texts, but also helps enrich Islamic studies by highlighting the importance of the socio-historical context in the formation of interpretations. In the context of an increasingly complex and interconnected world, critical orientalism helps us understand that the interpretation of the Quran is a dynamic process influenced by various social, political, and cultural factors.

Salvatore also demonstrates that critical orientalism can help us better understand the diversity and plurality in the ways Muslim societies interpret the Quran. By taking into account local and internal contexts, we can see that Quranic interpretation cannot be understood as something monolithic and unchanging, but rather as something that is always open to change and renewal. This approach offers a new way to view interpretation as part of a broader process in the formation of identity and culture in Muslim communities.

Thus, Armando Salvatore's critical Orientalism is not only relevant in academic studies but also has significant implications for intercultural relations and global understanding of Islam and the Arab world. This approach paves the way for a more inclusive, contextual, and dynamic understanding of religious texts, as well as helping to address the stereotypes and prejudices that often occur in traditional Orientalist studies.

Discussion

The critical orientalism approach developed by Armando Salvatore has a significant impact on how we understand the study of the Qur'an, tafsir, and Arab culture. In this discussion, we will further examine how critical orientalism contributes new insights in addressing the biases of traditional orientalism, enriching Qur'anic

studies through contextual perspectives, and how this approach can foster better dialogue between the East and the West. This discussion will also highlight the important implications of critical orientalism in contemporary Islamic studies and intercultural relations in an increasingly interconnected world.

Overcoming Traditional Orientalism

Traditional Orientalism, as identified by Edward Said, often views the Eastern world, particularly Islam and Arab culture, through a reductive and biased lens (Gündüz, 2024). This approach gives rise to many stereotypes, where the East is seen as a stagnant society, lagging behind, and incapable of self-development without the influence of the West. This approach also positions the West as an objective observer with the authority to define and understand the East, while the East is regarded as a passive object of study. Salvatore's critique of this view is evident in his works that aim to deconstruct traditional orientalist narratives that tend to be simplistic and colonial.

In critical orientalism, Salvatore emphasizes that Arab and Islamic cultures cannot be fully understood from a biased external perspective. Instead, we must incorporate internal and local perspectives into the analysis. Salvatore argues that these biases can be addressed through the recognition of internal dynamics within Muslim societies, which are often overlooked by traditional orientalists. By considering the complex social, political, and cultural contexts in Muslim societies, critical orientalism opens up space for fairer and more comprehensive interpretations (Fattah, 2019).

The greatest influence of this approach is that critical orientalism is able to address the simplification of Arab and Islamic cultural realities that has been characteristic of traditional orientalism ("Orientalism Revisited," 2023). Critical orientalism teaches us to no longer view the Arab and Islamic world as a homogeneous and unchanging entity, but rather as societies with diverse, complex internal dynamics influenced by specific historical contexts.

The Role of Contextualism in the Interpretation of the Qur'an

One of the main contributions of critical orientalism in the study of the Qur'an is the emphasis on the importance of contextualism in understanding religious texts. In traditional orientalism, the Qur'an is often viewed as a static text that is not open to

varying interpretations. This has led to many studies that simplify the meaning of the Qur'an, without taking into account the social-historical dynamics surrounding the interpretation of the text (Nehru Millat Ahmad, 2024).

Salvatore, through his critical Orientalism, argues that the interpretation of the Qur'an must be understood as a process influenced by specific social, political, and cultural contexts. Tafsir cannot be separated from the reality of the society in which it develops. This approach provides a new perspective that the interpretation of the Qur'an is a dynamic product that is always open to change (Faqih, 2023). Salvatore also demonstrated that the interpretation of the Qur'an on various issues, such as gender, justice, and political authority, will always vary across different Muslim societies, depending on their respective socio-historical contexts.

Thus, the contextual approach offered by Salvatore not only helps to broaden our understanding of the interpretation of the Quran but also avoids the stereotypes that often arise from traditional Orientalist views. The interpretation of the Qur'an can be seen as a reflection of specific socio-historical conditions, rather than merely a rigid dogma (Amir et al., 2024). This approach acknowledges that the interpretation of religious texts is an evolving process, in line with changes in the society that interprets them.

Pluralism in Interpretation: Acknowledging Social and Cultural Diversity in Islam

The pluralistic approach advocated by Salvatore in critical orientalism also has a significant impact on the study of the interpretation of the Qur'an. Salvatore emphasizes that Islam and Arab culture are very diverse, both in terms of ethnicity, history, and religious traditions. In traditional Oriental studies, Islam is often depicted as a monolithic and homogeneous entity. However, critical Orientalism rejects this view and demonstrates that Islam has many faces, depending on the social, cultural, and geographical contexts of Muslim communities around the world.

In the context of Quranic interpretation, this pluralism is very relevant. Salvatore shows that interpretations of the Quran are always influenced by the social

and cultural diversity surrounding them. For example, Quranic interpretations in the Arab world can differ significantly from those developed in South Asia or North Africa, as each region has its own distinct socio-historical context. This approach is important because it opens up space for a more inclusive dialogue about how the Quran is understood in various different contexts(Akib, 2024).

Critical Orientalism also makes an important contribution to avoiding generalizations that simplify the social realities of Muslim communities. With a pluralistic approach, we are invited to see the diversity in interpretations and the ways in which the Muslim community understands the Quran. This approach acknowledges that Islam is not a homogeneous entity, but rather a complex network of traditions and interpretations that have developed in various places and times(Wael, B., 2018).

Critical Orientalism and Gender Issues in the Interpretation of the Qur'an

One important application of critical orientalism in contemporary studies is in the interpretation of the Qur'an related to gender issues. In many traditional orientalist studies, the Qur'anic interpretation regarding the role of women is often depicted as patriarchal and supportive of gender inequality. This approach implies that the Qur'an, and therefore Islam, inherently supports social structures that are unjust towards women.

Salvatore, through his critical Orientalism, argues that such interpretations are overly simplistic and overlook the context in which the interpretations arise. The interpretation of the Qur'an regarding gender cannot be viewed as something static; it is influenced by the social-historical conditions present at that time(Rahman & Rahman, 2024). In some contexts, more patriarchal interpretations may dominate, while in other contexts, more egalitarian interpretations can develop alongside social struggles for women's rights. Therefore, Salvatore emphasizes that the interpretation of gender in the Qur'an is something that can change, and this change is often driven by social dynamics within Muslim communities.

This approach is important because it allows us to see that the interpretation of the Quran regarding gender is not something final and closed off to change. With a more contextual and dynamic approach, we can observe how the Quranic

interpretations of gender issues can evolve alongside social changes in Muslim communities. This approach also helps to address the stereotypes that often arise in Orientalist views about the role of women in Islam.

The Impact of Critical Orientalism on Intercultural Dialogue

One of the most significant impacts of Salvatore's critical orientalism approach is its contribution to intercultural dialogue between the West and the Islamic world. Traditional orientalism often reinforces the differences between the West and the East, creating a deep and prejudiced divide. With a critical orientalism approach, Salvatore helps to open up space for a more balanced and respectful dialogue between both parties.

This approach emphasizes the importance of viewing Arab and Islamic culture through a more inclusive and contextual lens, recognizing the internal dynamics and the diversity that exists within it. By avoiding generalizations and stereotypes, critical orientalism provides a stronger foundation for building a better understanding between the West and the East. This is very important in the current global context, where misunderstandings and tensions often arise due to a lack of deep understanding of one another (Ibnu Ali et al., 2023).

By inviting us to view the Arab and Islamic world as a dynamic and diverse entity, critical orientalism makes a significant contribution to strengthening intercultural dialogue. This approach offers a new way to bridge the gap between the West and the East, expanding our understanding of the complexities and diversities within cultures and religions.

The Implications of Critical Orientalism in Contemporary Islamic Studies

In contemporary Islamic studies, the critical orientalism approach developed by Salvatore holds significant relevance. By emphasizing the importance of contextualism and pluralism, critical orientalism opens up space for a more dynamic approach in the study of the Qur'an, interpretation, and Islamic culture. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, this approach helps us understand that Islam, like other religions and cultures, is an evolving entity influenced by social, political, and cultural dynamics.

This approach also offers a new perspective in the study of Quranic interpretation, where interpretation is no longer seen as something fixed and unchanging, but as a process open to change. By understanding that interpretation is always influenced by its socio-historical context, we can see how the interpretation of the Quran can continue to evolve in accordance with changes in Muslim society (Turner, 2023).

Thus, critical orientalism is not only relevant in academic studies but also has significant implications for intercultural relations and global understanding of Islam. This approach paves the way for a more inclusive, contextual, and dynamic understanding of religious texts, as well as helps to address the stereotypes and prejudices that often arise in traditional orientalist studies.

Conclusion

The critical approach to Orientalism developed by Armando Salvatore has made a significant contribution to understanding the study of the Qur'an, exegesis, and Arab culture. Through his critique of traditional Orientalism, Salvatore has successfully deconstructed the reductionist views and biases that often dominate Eastern studies, particularly in the context of Islam and Arab culture. Critical Orientalism emphasizes the importance of considering local perspectives, socio-historical dynamics, and diversity within Arab and Muslim societies. By placing Arab culture and religious texts like the Qur'an within a more contextual framework, Salvatore opens up space for more dynamic, inclusive, and context-sensitive interpretations.

Salvatore's contribution is also evident in the application of critical orientalism in the study of Quranic exegesis, where the interpretation of this sacred text is understood as a developing process influenced by social, political, and cultural conditions. Through a contextual approach, Salvatore demonstrates that Quranic interpretation is never detached from the dynamics of the society interpreting it, whether in issues of gender, social justice, or political power. This approach offers a new perspective in understanding exegesis that is more responsive to social change.

Critical Orientalism also emphasizes pluralism, acknowledging that Islam and Arab culture are very diverse and cannot be understood through a single monolithic

perspective. This approach helps to address the stereotypes and prejudices that often arise in traditional Oriental studies, as well as providing richer insights into the diversity of interpretations within the tradition of Quranic exegesis.

In a broader context, Salvatore's critical Orientalism also has a positive impact on intercultural dialogue between the West and the Islamic world. By offering a more inclusive and contextual perspective, this approach helps to build a better understanding and mutual respect between both parties, reducing the tensions that often arise from misunderstandings. Overall, Armando Salvatore's critical orientalism provides an important framework in the study of contemporary Islam and intercultural relations, paving the way for a more equitable, dynamic, and diverse approach to understanding religious texts and Islamic culture in an increasingly interconnected global world.

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