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## Reconstruction of Contemporary Da'wah Based on Gadamer's Hermeneutics: An Analysis of the Interpretation of QS An-Nisa 4:1 According to Amina Wadud

Siti Nuri Nurhaidah<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Haris Hakam<sup>2</sup>, Hayatuddin<sup>3</sup>,  
Evalinda<sup>4</sup>, Muhammad Yudi Ali Akbar<sup>5</sup>

\*Corresponding author: \*Sitinurinurhaida.fai@uia.ac.id, harishakam@iiq.ac.id,  
hayatuddin.fai@uia.ac.id, evalinda.uia@gmail.com, yudi\_ali@uai.ac.id

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### Keywords

Contemporary da'wah,  
hermeneutics, Amina Wadud,  
Gadamer, Q.S. An-Nisā' (4:1),  
Gender Equality.

### Abstract

*This study explores the interrelation between contemporary Islamic da'wah and Gadamerian hermeneutics through Amina Wadud's interpretation of Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]:1, emphasizing the reconstruction of gender understanding in Islamic discourse. Contemporary da'wah is not merely a call to faith but a transformative engagement with social realities, while hermeneutics as articulated by Hans-Georg Gadamer provides a dialogical framework for interpreting sacred texts within historical and cultural horizons. Using a qualitative-descriptive and hermeneutical approach, this research analyzes how Wadud's interpretive method embodies Gadamer's concept of the "fusion of horizons" (Horizontverschmelzung), bridging classical Qur'anic exegesis with contemporary gender ethics. The findings reveal that Wadud's reading reconstructs Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]:1 as a text affirming the ontological equality of men and women, challenging patriarchal interpretations rooted in pre-modern exegetical traditions. Her interpretation serves as a form of contemporary da'wah a communicative and emancipatory discourse that integrates spirituality, justice, and gender inclusivity. The study concludes that combining Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics with Wadud's feminist Qur'anic reading offers a viable model for renewing Islamic da'wah in the modern era, promoting human dignity and ethical pluralism in the interpretation of divine revelation.*

## Introduction

Dakwah Contemporary da'wah has undergone significant conceptual expansion, shifting from a primarily normative-transmissive practice to a dialogical and context-sensitive engagement shaped by global socio-cultural transformations.<sup>1</sup> This shift has encouraged scholars to re-examine foundational Qur'anic concepts pertaining to human relations, justice, and equality particularly those involving gender.<sup>2</sup> Q.S. An-Nisā' 4:1, which addresses the origin and ontological unity of humanity, remains central to these discussions and continues to generate debate regarding its linguistic structure and its implications for gender relations within Islamic discourse.<sup>3</sup> In this context, the works of Amina Wadud have become foundational in contemporary feminist Qur'anic hermeneutics, offering a critical reinterpretation of concepts such as *nafs wāḥidah* and *zawj* through a justice-oriented epistemic framework.<sup>4</sup> However, despite the growing interest in feminist interpretations, the integration of philosophical hermeneutics especially Gadamer's hermeneutical paradigm remains underexplored.

Existing research on Wadud generally falls into three categories: (1) normative analyses focusing on theological justification for gender equality,<sup>5</sup> (2) feminist-critical readings emphasizing epistemic reconstruction,<sup>6</sup> and (3) linguistic studies examining semantic issues surrounding key Qur'anic terms.<sup>7</sup> Although these studies provide valuable contributions, they exhibit several limitations: they seldom engage with Gadamer's concept of *Wirkungsgeschichte* (history of influence), they do not systematically apply *fusion of horizons* to clarify the dialogical process between text and interpreter,<sup>8</sup> and they rarely explore the implications of Wadud's hermeneutics for contemporary da'wah. These gaps reveal a lack of methodological integration between philosophical hermeneutics and feminist Qur'anic interpretation, resulting in an

<sup>1</sup> Anis Ahmad, "Da'wah: The Contemporary Challenges.," *Insights* 3, no. 2/3 (2010): 5. lihat Arifuddin Arifuddin, "Dakwah Through Internet: Challenges And Opportunities For Islamic Preachers In Indonesia," *Ar-Raniry, International Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2016): 161, <https://doi.org/10.20859/jar.v3i1.80>.

<sup>2</sup> Novia Firdayanti et al., "Gender Equality in the Perspective of the Qur'an," Atlantis Press, September 28, 2023, 142–48, [https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-102-9\\_13](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-102-9_13). Lihat T. Saiful et al., "Gender Equality Perspective and Women Position in Islam," Atlantis Press, March 13, 2020, 197–200, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200306.212>.

<sup>3</sup> Abdullah Al-Ahsan, "The Origin of Human History and the First Man," *Islamic Studies* 38, no. 1 (1999): 63–86. Lihat Barbara Stowasser, "The Qur'an and Its Meaning," *The Arab Studies Journal* 3, no. 1 (1995): 4–8.

<sup>4</sup> Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> M. Afiquil Adib, "Pemikiran Aminah Wadud Tentang Relasi Kuasa Dalam Rumah Tangga," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 7, no. 2 (2024): 359–76, <https://doi.org/10.14421/lijid.v7i2.5358>. Lihat, Yor Hananta, "Nusyūz Dalam Al-Qur'ān Menurut Amina Wadud Muhsin: Analisis Hermeneutika Gadamer," January 24, 2019, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Nusy%C5%ABz-dalam-Al-Qur%60%C4%81n-menurut-Amina-Wadud-Muhsin-%3A-Hananta/fe2cc58356c7b7ee868f0c4d664239892463b13b>. Lihat, Ai Syaripah and Ibnu Muhammad Yamudin Salaeh, "Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Al-Qur'an Ditinjau Dari Pemahaman Amina Wadud Dan Ashgar Ali Engineer," *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 2, no. 4 (2022): 575–84, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v2i4.18974>.

<sup>6</sup> Miftahul Janah and Muhammad Yasir, "Hermeneutika Tauhid; Kritik terhadap Penafsiran Amina Wadud tentang Nusyuz," *An-Nida'* 43, no. 2 (2019): 194–218, <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v43i2.12327>. Zul Erpan Qurniawan, "Dekonstruksi Tafsir Bias Gender: Kritik Feminisme Terhadap Poligami Dalam Kitab Tafsir Indonesia," *AN-NISA* 18, no. 1 (2025): 46–58, <https://doi.org/10.30863/an.v18i1.8001>.

<sup>7</sup> Mamluatun Nafisah, "Narasi Bias Gender Dalam Tafsir Nusantara:," *Al-Fanar : Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 5, no. 2 (2022): 149–65, <https://doi.org/10.33511/alfanar.v5n2.149-165>. Akmal Alna et al., "Analisis Makna Gender Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* 14 (September 2022): 1–11.

<sup>8</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (Sheed & Ward, 1975).

incomplete understanding of how interpretive horizons shape gender discourse and inform da'wah practices in multicultural contexts.

To address these gaps, this study operationalizes three key conceptual elements from the outset. First, *fusion of horizons* is defined as the dialogical process through which the interpreter's situated understanding encounters the textual-historical horizon of the Qur'an, resulting in a new, ethically relevant meaning.<sup>9</sup> Second, *Wirkungsgeschichte* is understood as the historical influence of interpretive traditions that condition contemporary understanding, especially the patriarchal exegetical legacy.<sup>10</sup> Third, the linguistic concepts of *nafs wāḥidah* and *zawj* are delineated as semantic units that function as the textual anchors for evaluating claims of ontological equality and gender complementarity. By establishing these operational definitions, this study ensures conceptual clarity and methodological coherence from the outset.

This research integrates Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics with Amina Wadud's feminist interpretation to produce a more dialogical and critically grounded reading of Q.S. An-Nisā' 4:1. It examines how Wadud's interpretive horizon shaped by concerns for justice, inclusivity, and methodological transparency interacts with the historical horizon of classical exegesis. The study also evaluates how this hermeneutic synthesis generates new normative implications for gender-responsive da'wah in contemporary Muslim societies. Consequently, the article contributes three innovations: (1) a deeper epistemological mapping of Wadud's method within the framework of Gadamerian hermeneutics; (2) a reconstruction of the linguistic and historical parameters of Q.S. An-Nisā' 4:1 through dialogical interpretation; and (3) a normative model of da'wah grounded in gender justice and hermeneutic ethics.

## Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with philosophical hermeneutic analysis based on Gadamer's theory,<sup>11</sup> to interpret Q.S. An-Nisā' 4:1 through Amina Wadud's work *Qur'an and Woman* as the primary source,<sup>12</sup> as well as classical interpretations and contemporary studies as secondary sources. Data collection techniques were carried out through literature documentation by examining relevant interpretive texts, international journal articles, and monographs, as is customary in contemporary feminist interpretive research.<sup>13</sup> Data analysis was conducted thematically and critically, covering linguistic, intertextual, and normative studies, and verified through conceptual triangulation with classical and modern interpretations to maintain academic validity. Gadamer's hermeneutic framework was used to structure the analysis in four stages: pre-understanding, *Wirkungsgeschichte*, fusion of horizons, and application (*Anwendung*), which

<sup>9</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. Akhmad Aidil Fitra and Yousuf Aboujanah, "Gadamerian Hermeneutical Analysis of Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy's Interpretation of QS. Luqman (31):6 in the Context of Contemporary Entertainment Discourse," *Al-Karim: International Journal of Quranic and Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2025): 59–78, <https://doi.org/10.33367/al-karim.v3i1.6839>.

<sup>10</sup> Akhmad Aidil Fitra and Oktasandi Oktasandi, "Pembacaan Hermeneutis : Penafsiran Buya Hamka Tentang Lahw al Ḥadīṣ (Studi Pemikiran Hans George Gadamer)," *Syariat: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Hukum* 10, no. 2 (2024): 147–62, <https://doi.org/10.32699/syariat.v10i2.7707>.

<sup>11</sup> Akhmad Aidil Fitra et al., "Historical Influence In Tafsir Al-Mishbah: A Hermeneutical Exploration Through Gadamer's Lens," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an Dan Tafsir* 9, no. 2 (2024): 265–76.

<sup>12</sup> Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*.

<sup>13</sup> Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (University of Texas Press, 2009).

enabled the exploration of the meaning of the text and its relevance to contemporary issues.<sup>14</sup> Using this method, the research not only describes Wadud's interpretation but also examines its hermeneutic contribution to the discourse on Islamic gender justice.

## Results and Discussion

### Meaning Transformation in Contemporary Da'wah

Contemporary da'wah requires a paradigm shift. It is no longer merely a verbal activity or moral appeal, but also an effort at transformative communication that touches on issues of humanity, social justice, and gender equality. Thus, da'wah does not stop at religious rhetoric, but becomes an emancipatory praxis. Through Gadamer's hermeneutical perspective, da'wah can be understood as a dynamic dialogue between the text of revelation and the social context of the ummah.<sup>15</sup> The preacher acts as a mediator of meaning who brings the message of the Qur'an to life in the horizon of a modern society that is pluralistic and critical of social inequality.<sup>16</sup>

Recontextualization: Da'i reads Qur'anic verses/concepts and then applies them to concrete problems (economic inequality, gender-based violence, environmental issues). Example: verses about justice ('adl) are not only explained theoretically but also applied to discuss unfair wages or access to education. Dialogical Engagement: Da'wah becomes a two-way interaction: da'i not only speak, but also listen to the experiences of the congregation, collecting narratives, while presenting a shared textual reading. Practice: question-and-answer sessions, discussion groups, or community forums where verses are interpreted together according to social problems.<sup>17</sup> Hermeneutical Re-reading: Using hermeneutical principles (considering the historical context of the text, the ethical purpose of revelation) to reinterpret verses that have been used to justify injustice. For example, looking at QS An-Nisā '4:1 through the lens of equality of creation (nafs wāhidah) instead of an interpretation that affirms subordination.<sup>18</sup> Praxis-oriented Translation: Transforming theological understanding into concrete programs: skills training, policy advocacy, social services, women's empowerment programs, or anti-violence campaigns. Media and Modalities Expansion. Utilizing digital media, art, drama, podcasts, and social campaigns to spread relevant and accessible messages to the current generation. The Role of Preachers in Gadamer's Framework, As mediators of horizons: preachers need to master classical texts while being sensitive to contemporary realities; they initiate a fusion of horizons by opening up a space for dialogue between the text and the congregation's experiences. As a dialogical facilitator:

<sup>14</sup> Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutika, Tradisi, dan Akal Budi* (IRCISOD, 2021). Lihat Rasha Alsaigh and Imelda Coyne, "Doing a Hermeneutic Phenomenology Research Underpinned by Gadamer's Philosophy: A Framework to Facilitate Data Analysis," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 20 (January 2021): 16094069211047820, <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211047820>. Lihat Theodore George, *Hermeneutics*, December 9, 2020, <https://plato.stanford.edu/Entries/hermeneutics/>.

<sup>15</sup> Dieter Teichert, "Hermeneutics: Polity, Politics, and Political Theory in Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics," *Teoria Polityki*, no. 4 (2020): 123–38.

<sup>16</sup> Ubay Abdillah Muhammad and Muhid, "Penafsiran HR. Muslim dalam Lagu Gala Bunga Matahari: Analisis Hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Ushuluddin* 23, no. 2 (2024): 163–74, <https://doi.org/10.18592/jiiu.v23i2.14968>.

<sup>17</sup> Nailatul Khalishah and M. Fairuz Rosyid, "Feminism and Gender Equality in Islam Perspective of Al-Qur'an Tafsir (Study of Qur'anic Verses on Term Nafs Wahidah)," *International Conference on Islamic Studies (ICIS)*, August 5, 2023, 377–87.

<sup>18</sup> Muadz Abdus Salam et al., "Challenges of Da'wah Research: Understanding Da'wah Models in The Context of Qur'anic Guidance and Social Change," *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies* 7, no. 3 (2024): 1120–41, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v7i3.1604>.

encouraging participation, inviting collective interpretation, helping congregations understand the normative relevance of texts in their lives. As a social transformer: mobilizing communities to implement Qur'anic values in local policies or social practices.

Praxis-oriented Translation: Transforming theological understanding into concrete programs: skills training, policy advocacy, social services, women's empowerment programs, or anti-violence campaigns. Media and Modalities Expansion. Utilizing digital media, art, drama, podcasts, and social campaigns to spread relevant and accessible messages to the current generation.<sup>19</sup> The Role of Preachers in Gadamer's Framework, As mediators of horizons: preachers need to master classical texts while being sensitive to contemporary realities; they initiate a fusion of horizons by opening up a space for dialogue between the text and the congregation's experiences.<sup>20</sup> As a dialogical facilitator: encouraging participation, inviting collective interpretation, helping congregations understand the normative relevance of texts in their lives. As a social transformer: mobilizing communities to implement Qur'anic values in local policies or social practices.

In the context of contemporary da'wah, the paradigm of conveying the message of Islam has expanded in meaning. Da'wah is no longer limited to lectures or moral appeals, but has become an effort at liberation and social transformation (emancipatory praxis).<sup>21</sup> One important discourse in this new direction of da'wah is the interpretation of gender in the Qur'an, developed by thinkers such as Amina Wadud. Her interpretation of QS. An-Nisā' [4]:1 is a powerful representation of the effort to reinterpret sacred texts in the framework of justice and human equality. The meaning of QS. An-Nisā' [4]:1

The verse reads:

*"O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate,1 and through both He spread countless men and women."*

Traditionally, this verse has often been used to legitimize the roles of men and women in patriarchal social systems. However, Amina Wadud reinterprets it using a contextual hermeneutic approach and Qur'anic gender justice.<sup>22</sup> Amina Wadud's Hermeneutical Theory. In her work *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (1999), Wadud introduces a gender hermeneutical approach that focuses on three dimensions of analysis: Textual Analysis: Examining the linguistic structure and original meaning of the verse philologically.<sup>23</sup> According to Wadud, the word *nafsin wāḥidah* does not refer to "Adam" (the first man), but rather to "the single essence of humanity," which is the origin of the equal creation of

<sup>19</sup> Laode Muhammad Saifuddin et al., "Da'wah Transformation As a Social Change in the Digital Era," *Proceeding of International Conference on Islamic and Interdisciplinary Studies 2* (September 2023): 405–9.

<sup>20</sup> Hasyim Hasanah, "Hermeneutik Ontologis-Dialektis (Sebuah Anatomi Teori Pemahaman Dan Interpretasi Perspektif Hans-George Gadamer Dan Implikasinya Dalam Dakwah)," *At-Taqaddum* 9, no. 1 (2017): 1, <https://doi.org/10.21580/at.v9i1.1785>.

<sup>21</sup> Susanti Hasibuan, "Kesetaraan Gender Dan Dominasi Laki-Laki: Konstruksi Peran Perempuan Dalam Dakwah," *Al-Manaj: Jurnal Program Studi Manajemen Dakwah* 2, no. 02 (2022): 24–29, <https://doi.org/10.56874/almanaj.v2i02.1039>.

<sup>22</sup> Najmy Hanifah and Anita Puji Astutik, "Pemikiran Amina Wadud Tentang Dakwah Di Dunia Modern," *Journal of Islamic Communication Studies* 2, no. 2 (2024): 22–31, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jicos.2024.2.2.22-31>.

<sup>23</sup> Sindi Lestari and Alimni Alimni, "Aminah Wadud's Thought on the Concept of Gender and Its Relevance in Modern Life," *Jurnal Hawa: Studi Pengarus Utamaan Gender Dan Anak* 5, no. 2 (2023): 130–39, <https://doi.org/10.29300/hawapsga.v5i2.2569>.

men and women. Contextual Analysis: Examining the socio-cultural conditions when the verse was revealed. Seventh-century Arab society lived in a patriarchal structure; thus, some verses are responsive to that context, rather than universally normative. Ethical Objective: Exploring the universal moral values of the Qur'an: justice, compassion, and spiritual equality among humans. For Wadud, this verse is not merely a narrative of creation, but a declaration of the ontological equality of all human beings before God.

Contemporary Da'wah Views on Wadud's Interpretation. In the contemporary da'wah paradigm, Wadud's interpretation has strategic value because: a) It supports Emancipatory Da'wah: Da'wah not only conveys the law, but also fights for the values of *al-'adl* (justice) and *al-musāwāh* (equality).<sup>24</sup> Wadud's reading provides theological legitimacy for fighting for women's rights and opposing gender-based discrimination. b) Shifting the Orientation of Da'wah from Dogmatic to Dialogical: Preachers act as mediators of meaning who invite congregations to dialogue about the relevance of verses in modern contexts such as family issues, work, and women's leadership. c) Encouraging Social Hermeneutics-Based Da'wah: By combining Gadamer's idea of the fusion of horizons, da'wah can bridge classical texts with the horizons of modern societies that are critical of gender inequality. d) Becoming the Basis of Social Ethics in Da'wah: Wadud's interpretation of *nafsin wāḥidah* affirms the message of da'wah that all human beings have equal dignity, a universal message that is in line with *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*: *hifz al-nafs*, *hifz al-'aql*, and *hifz al-nasl*. Amina Wadud's interpretation of QS. An-Nisā' [4]:1 provides a new foundation for contemporary humanistic and egalitarian da'wah. By interpreting *nafsin wāḥidah* as a symbol of universal equality, she opens up space for a non-discriminatory understanding of Islam. Wadud's hermeneutical approach is in line with the spirit of contemporary da'wah da'wah that does not stop at moral appeals, but fosters critical awareness, social justice, and human transformation.

### Gender Representation and Bias in Traditional Interpretation of Q.S. An-Nisā' 4:1

This discussion analyzes gender representation in traditional interpretations of QS. An-Nisā' 4:1, emphasizing the textual dimensions that are the source of hermeneutic ambiguity.<sup>25</sup> When translated literally, this verse highlights the key terms *nafs wāḥidah*, *zawjaha*, and *baththa*, each of which contains layers of meaning that allow for multiple readings. The phrase *nafs wāḥidah* can be interpreted from the first historical entity to the ontological idea of the shared essence of humanity, so it is not a term that is lexically bound to a single reading. The term *zawjaha* marks a relationship between partners but does not automatically specify a hierarchical relationship; literal interpretation is the main source for the subordinative construction of women. Meanwhile, *baththa* shows the quantitative aspect of human reproduction, so that the placement and duplication of words in the wording of the verse provide material for social and normative inference.<sup>26</sup> The main hermeneutic question that arises is how this editorial choice and word

<sup>24</sup> Najmy Hanifah and Anita Puji Astutik, "Pemikiran Amina Wadud Tentang Dakwah Di Dunia Modern," *Journal of Islamic Communication Studies* 2, no. 2 (2024): 22–31, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jicos.2024.2.2.22-31>.

<sup>25</sup> Faisal Haitomi, "Rekonstruksi Aksin Wijaya Atas Interpretasi Qs. an-Nisa' [4]: 1 Sebuah Kritik Atas Penafsiran Tekstualis Normatif Dan Kontekstualis Progresif," *Mumtaz: Jurnal Studi Al-Quran Dan Keislaman* 5, no. 02 (2022): 167–80, <https://doi.org/10.36671/mumtaz.v5i02.186>.

<sup>26</sup> Mir'atun Nisa, "Penciptaan Perempuan (Kajian Q.S.An-Nisa[4]:1)," *Jurnal Syntax Admiration* 5, no. 5 (2024): 1774–82, <https://doi.org/10.46799/jsa.v5i5.1165>.

order opens up further room for multiple interpretations. In Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]:1 as the Foundation of Gender Relations This verse reads:

*"O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul (nafs wāḥidah), and from it He created its mate,<sup>1</sup> and through both He spread countless men and women."*

Theologically, this verse forms the foundation of human existential equality, because men and women both originate from one soul (nafs wāḥidah). However, in the classical interpretation tradition, this verse is often read through a patriarchal lens, which then influences Islamic preaching, law, and education practices. In the context of da'wah, traditional interpretations such as Tafsir *al-Ṭabarī*, *Ibn Katsīr*, and *al-Qurṭubī* generally place men as the active subjects of da'wah and women as moral and social objects.<sup>27</sup> Some characteristics of this representation are that da'wah is masculine-centric, where the roles of leadership and conveying the message are associated with men. Women are positioned as recipients of moral guidance, especially regarding morals, household matters, and personal purity.<sup>28</sup> The text of the Qur'an is interpreted in a normative-hierarchical manner, without considering the social context or experiences of women as part of the community. Thus, the discourse of da'wah in classical exegesis reinforces the traditional division of roles: public for men, domestic for women.

Gender Bias in Traditional Interpretation, Gender bias in classical interpretation arises due to the socio-historical conditions of the mufassir, who lived in a patriarchal society where social structures and scientific epistemology were dominated by men. Classical Arabic, which is connotative, often contains terms with masculine cultural connotations.<sup>29</sup> Textual and normative methods of interpretation emphasize sanad and law rather than social meaning and moral justice. As a result, the interpretation of nafs wāḥidah is often understood to mean that Eve (woman) was created from Adam (man), not together from one substance.<sup>30</sup> This kind of interpretation then reinforces the idea that women are secondary, not equal.

Implications for Islamic Preaching This interpretive bias has broad implications for Islamic preaching and education practices, including: Preaching materials often emphasize women's obedience to men without highlighting mutual responsibilities, and women's preaching space is limited because it is considered "fitnah" or "social aurat." Religious policies and teachings in many educational institutions still reflect the male authority structure as the guardian of religious truth. As a result, universal messages of da'wah such as justice, equality, and compassion are sometimes reduced by gender-biased social structures.

The Direction of Reconstruction Towards Gender-Equitable Da'wah. Amina Wadud and contemporary female exegetes are attempting to reconstruct the reading of Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]:1 in order to return to the egalitarian spirit of the Qur'an. Using Gadamer's hermeneutical approach, interpretation can be understood as a dialogical process between the text, the interpreter, and social reality. This reconstruction enables inclusive and participatory da'wah, providing space for

<sup>27</sup> Dona Kahfi Ma Iballa, "Korelasi Penafsiran Al-Tabari Dan Amina Wadud (Analisis Kesenjangan Gender Dalam Q.S. Al-Nisa' (4):1)," July 31, 2017, <https://www.Semanticscholar.Org/Paper/Korelasi-Penafsiran-Al-Tabari-Dan-Amina-Wadud-Dalam-Iballa/f2953411fdc8f88488981244d6d9d258020592ef>.

<sup>28</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 783–90.

<sup>29</sup> Zumrotus Sholikhah, "Rekonstruksi Gender Dalam Islam: Studi Kritis Atas Tafsir Tradisional Perspektif Feminisme," *IJouGS: Indonesian Journal of Gender Studies* 6, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.21154/ijougs.v6i1.11623>.

<sup>30</sup> Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir ath-Thabari, *Jami' al-Bayan Fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an* (Yayasan Ar Risalah, 2000).

women as active subjects in conveying Islamic values. Interpretation that is aware of the modern social context, not merely repeating past interpretations. The realization of moral and spiritual equality as the true mission of Islamic da'wah.<sup>31</sup> Amina Wadud, along with contemporary exegetes such as Asma Barlas, Riffat Hassan, and Fatima Mernissi, reinterpreted gender verses in the Qur'an, including Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]:1. There are several characteristics: Emphasizing the concept of spiritual and moral justice: that men and women both have spiritual responsibilities and potential before Allah. Reading verses in a contextual-historical manner, not just textually. They consider the social conditions of 7th-century Arabia without making them a universal norm. Shifting the focus of interpretation from male domination to an interpretation that places women as active subjects, not merely objects of law and morality, and making interpretation a medium for transformative da'wah, which frees people from social inequality and gender-based discrimination.

Amina Wadud's re-reading of QS An-Nisā' [4]:1 through Gadamer's hermeneutics is an attempt to reconstruct meaning so that the interpretation of the Qur'an returns to the principles of justice and human equality. Through a dialogical process between the text, the interpreter, and social reality, interpretation is no longer rigid and patriarchal, but becomes a tool for transformative preaching that is liberating and gender-equitable. A special study of *nafs wāḥidah* necessitates morphological examination and theological implications because the phrase does not provide explicit gender markers. If *nafs wāḥidah* is read as 'Adam', then the narrative becomes historical-anthropological, facilitating derivative arguments against women; conversely, reading it as 'single soul' opens up the possibility of claiming ontological equality between men and women. This hermeneutic approach confirms that patriarchal bias stems more from the socio-cultural context of the exegete than from the text of the Qur'an itself.<sup>32</sup> From a philological point of view, the absence of gender determination forces interpreters to rely on external sources such as Isra'iliyyat history and exegesis, which often carry cultural and gender preconceptions. The decision to choose one interpretation goes far beyond a matter of words; it is a hermeneutic act that manifests the interpreter's normative interests. Therefore, critical analysis must assess the basis of authority used to fill these lexical gaps, including the validity of the history and argumentative logic used. This approach affirms that an egalitarian reading of the phrase is not merely a rhetorical choice but can be grounded textually if strict hermeneutical criteria are applied. Thus, *nafs wāḥidah* serves as a critical point that determines the direction of further interpretation.

Focusing on *zawjaha* and *baththa* reveals how syntactic and numerical aspects in the verse are used by interpreters to construct social meaning. A literal reading that makes *zawjaha* Adam's wife is often combined with the narrative of creation from a *rib* to produce arguments about the 'crooked' nature of women, a reading that carries anthropological and ethical implications. An alternative interpretation that rejects the literalness of the *rib* story places the couple as components of an existential unity without ontological implications of subordination, thus

<sup>31</sup> Rachel Rinaldo, "Pious and Critical: Muslim Women Activists and the Question of Agency," *Gender & Society* (US) 28, no. 6 (2014): 824–46, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243214549352>.

<sup>32</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam & Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 2024).



positioning the verse as a basis for justice and equality. The word *baththa* emphasizes the collective dimension of propagation and reproduction; however, the phrase “*rijālan kathīran wa nisā'an*” triggers various inferences about the visibility and social roles of both genders. Interpretations that affirm male dominance often use the placement of this word as textual evidence, while critical readings emphasize that lexical order is not normative evidence without other argumentative support. Therefore, textual studies must be linked to discourse analysis to reveal how linguistic structures facilitate normative claims.

In the corpus of classical exegesis, names such as al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Qurṭubī display a pattern of argumentation that combines Qur'anic texts with traditional narrations, so that gender relations tend to be framed asymmetrically. Al-Ṭabarī recorded and processed Isra'iliyyat narratives that provided historical accounts of Eve's origins, while Ibn Kathīr confirmed these readings through the use of hadiths that were treated literally. Al-Qurṭubī shifted the focus of the reading to the juridical realm so that the original interpretation became the normative basis for family law and lineage. Rāshid Ridā in the modern tradition, still shows attachment to several classical assumptions even though he tries to rationalize several elements; he does not completely free the reading from hierarchical implications.<sup>33</sup> In the contemporary realm, Quraish Shihab offers a more inclusive reading by rejecting several literal interpretations and emphasizing the message of unity and the commonality of human nature. This comparison confirms that the way mufasssirs describe the relationship between men and women is largely determined by the methodological repertoire they activate, not solely by the wording of the verses themselves. The normative question that arises is how the authority of external sources is weighted so as to form a representation of gender that is then institutionalized.

The gender bias patterns that emerge from this tradition of interpretation are not atomistic but rather internalized in normative and institutional structures, thereby directly impacting social practices. The positioning of women as derivative or secondary fosters theological justification for male prerogatives in the family sphere, such as guardianship, inheritance rights, and domestic leadership. This kind of legitimization allows for restrictions on women's participation in the public sphere and affects their access to economic resources, education, and leadership positions. Further social implications include the reproduction of gender norms in educational curricula, family policies, and legal interpretations that rarely undergo critical testing. The institutionalization of hierarchical interpretations results in the circulation of norms that reinforce intergenerational inequality and close the path to progressive *ijtihad*. Therefore, interpretive analysis must include sociological and legal dimensions to expose the mechanisms of legitimacy and formulate strategies to delegitimize claims that justify injustice.<sup>34</sup> Criticism that is only textual in nature, without reference to institutional consequences, will fail to break the pattern of reproducing inequality.

From a philosophical hermeneutic perspective, bias in traditional interpretation can be understood as a product of the interpreter's historical horizon, which influences the reading of

<sup>33</sup> Hakan Coruh, “The Qur'an and Interpretation in the Classical Modernism: Tafsīrcentric Approach of Muhammad 'Abduh,” *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 4, no. 2 (2019): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v4i2.175>.

<sup>34</sup> Ziba Mir-Hosseini, “Towards Gender Equality: Muslim Family Laws and the Shari'ah,” *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 11, no. 2 (n.d.): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.3366/E1465359109000663>.

the text so that the meaning that emerges is the result of a dialogue between the text and the context. The concept of pre-understanding shows that interpreters do not enter the text as a blank slate, but rather with a cultural, social, and theological repertoire that directs interpretation in a certain direction. The process of fusion of horizons in classical interpretation practice often occurs without critical reflection on patriarchal preconceptions, so that the resulting application reflects the social context of the interpreter rather than other textual potentials. To distinguish readings that are truly based on the text from those that project context, hermeneutical criteria are needed: openness to alternative readings, transparency in the use of external sources, Qur'anic internal coherence, and an applicative capacity that upholds justice. Gadamer himself does not provide a single normative parameter, but his applicative framework leads to a critical evaluation of pre-understandings and allows for reconstructive reinterpretation. Thus, hermeneutic criticism is not merely pointing out bias, but offering a reflective methodology to reconstruct interpretations to be more sensitive to the demands of gender justice as part of the application of the text.

### **Amina Wadud's Historical Horizon and the Formation of Gender Thought**

Wadud's historical horizon must be read as a dynamic matrix in which personal experience, academic authority, and theological commitment interact to shape her interpretive priorities; this understanding is important because it makes interpretation not merely a philological reconstruction but an ethical-theological act. Within an analytical framework, this horizon functions as a "lens" that determines what is considered relevant and how textual ambiguities are prioritized for resolution, such that each of her hermeneutical choices can be traced back to a specific historical orientation.<sup>35</sup> Mapping this kind of horizon helps explain why Wadud places the principles of tawhid, taqwa, and khalifah as the primary evaluative criteria in her interpretation. By placing these normative priorities at the forefront, she not only interprets the text but also assesses its social implications for contemporary gender justice. Academic analysis of the horizon must therefore combine biographical evidence, influential intellectual currents, and traces of public intervention in feminist Islamic discourse.<sup>36</sup> Relying on recent studies on feminist hermeneutics, this kind of shift is seen as a consistent and systematic methodological strategy, not as sporadic rhetoric. The above statements are in line with the contemporary consensus on Wadud's methodological contribution to gender interpretation.

Wadud's intellectual biography provides concrete contours to the horizon she claims; her advanced formal education (Ph.D. in Arabic Studies and the Qur'an) and her teaching experience at international institutions have earned her credentials that allow her to speak as both a mufasssirah and a theorist.<sup>37</sup> Her academic path and transnational mobility provided her with access to Western feminist discourse and linguistic studies, which she then intertwined with the

<sup>35</sup> Sofia Rehman, "Islamic Feminism: Hermeneutics and Activism: By Mulki Al-Sharmani, London, UK, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024, 248 Pp., £81 (Hardback), £26.09 (Paperback), ISBN: 978178360634-4," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 0, no. 0 (2025): 1–3, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2025.2581232>.

<sup>36</sup> Amina Wadud, "Reflections on Islamic Feminist Exegesis of the Qur'an," *Religions* 12, no. 7 (2021): 497, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070497>.

<sup>37</sup> Debra Majeed, "Wadud, Amina," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (n.d.), accessed December 4, 2025, <https://oxfordre.com/religion/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-849?d=%2F10.1093%2Facrefore%2F9780199340378.001.0001%2F9780199340378-e-849&p=emailAQeCsRXepZFSs>.

Qur'anic tradition; this positioned her as an “insider-critic” capable of re-reading the text with scientific legitimacy. When the literature assesses her work, including *Qur'an and Woman* and her reflective writings, as a combination of textual skill and empirical sensitivity, it reflects how her biographical position gives authority to her interpretive claims. Her public role in discourse (publications, lectures, debates) further facilitates the transfer of ideas from the academic realm to the arena of activism and policy, so that her intellectual horizon is not static but practical and impactful. To understand Wadud's reading of QS 4:1, it is also necessary to examine how these assets shape her access to sources and methodologies. Therefore, the reconstruction of her intellectual biography is a methodological step that cannot be separated from the analysis of her interpretation.

Among the various factors that shape the horizon, theological commitment to the tawhid paradigm emerges as the most decisive hermeneutical anchor due to its function as an interpretive norm that demands ethical coherence of the corpus. This tawhidic approach allows Wadud to assess *khâṣṣ* (specific) verses against *‘āmm* (general) principles, which are considered expressions of tawhidic values, a strategy that shifts the burden of argumentation from historical authority alone to corporate Qur'anic coherence.<sup>38</sup> In addition, her empirical experience as a Muslim woman in a cross-cultural context reinforces the practical urgency of egalitarian reading: a horizon that is not only normative but also responsive to social reality. Exposure to feminist theory, modern hermeneutics, and linguistic semantics complements her methodological tools so that her theological insights can be operationalized analytically. In other words, tawhid acts as a structural principle that integrates experience and theory into consistent interpretive choices. Literature examining modern feminist exegesis confirms the central role of this paradigm in shaping Wadud's argument.

Wadud's pre-understanding of gender, which affirms ontological equality and rejects the naturalization of subordination, becomes a premise that permeates all of her methodological steps, so that no verse is interpreted without cross-checking against that principle. Consequently, she places questions of justice (*al-‘adl*) and oppression (*az-zhulm*) as ethical metrics for testing traditional patriarchal interpretations; this makes her interpretation evaluative rather than merely descriptive. Methodological Implications: Evaluative Interpretation Wadud's interpretation is called evaluative, not merely descriptive. Descriptive interpretation only explains “what the text says” according to classical language and context. Evaluative interpretation goes further: “Is that meaning fair and in line with the moral mission of the Qur'an?” With an evaluative approach, Wadud conducts an ethical test of patriarchal classical interpretations.<sup>39</sup> Example: In QS. An-Nisā' [4]:1 and [4]:34, many classical exegetes interpret male-female relationships hierarchically (men as leaders, women as submissive). Wadud argues that such interpretations need to be evaluated because they result in structural injustice in social and domestic relations.

<sup>38</sup> Riffat Hassan, “The Issue of Woman-Man Equality in the Islamic Tradition,” in *Women's Studies in Religion* (Routledge, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> Yahya Fathur Rozy, “THE HERMENEUTICS INFLUENCE ON FEMINIST EXEGESIS: A CASE STUDY ON AMINA WADUD,” *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 2, no. 3 (2023): 369–81, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v2i3.2908>.

This pre-understanding also explains why Wadud is very careful in weighing historical accounts that could reproduce cultural bias, because for him these sources must be tested against the principles of the Qur'anic corpus. In practice, this pre-understanding encourages her to apply intensive semantic analysis and contextualization in order to distinguish between lexical meaning and relational meaning within the network of texts. However, it is important to note that this orientation also places her in a critical position that challenges the authority of tradition; therefore, she formulates transparent hermeneutic procedures to maintain academic legitimacy. Empirical analysis of feminist Islamic studies journals supports the interpretation that Wadud's pre-understanding acts as both a critical tool and a generator of methodological breakthroughs.

The feminist interpretation methodology developed by Wadud emphasizes three interrelated techniques: linguistic-semantic analysis (covering basic vs. relational meaning), corpus intertextuality (cross-referencing between verses), and historical-social recontextualization of the application of law and norms.<sup>40</sup> These techniques conceptually distinguish it from classical interpretation, which tends to be philological-historical and oriented towards the formulation of fiqh as the end result; Wadud's approach changes the purpose of interpretation to be evaluative of ethical and applicative implications. By placing the meaning of words within a network of corpus relations, she reduces the space for atomistic readings that isolate specific verses to reinforce patriarchal norms. Her intertextuality aims to build thematic coherence so that hierarchical claims must withstand the test of consistency with the principles of tawhid and taqwa. His contextualization does not merely explain the reasons for the revelation of verses, but also criticizes the historical ways in which the text has been applied, resulting in injustice. A comparative empirical study of feminist exegesis versus classical exegesis shows that this difference is not only methodological but also conceptual in terms of the social norms that are sought to be achieved.

Finally, Wadud's historical horizon, shaped by the position of modern Muslim women, transnational life experiences, and access to Western academic traditions, serves as a legitimate hermeneutical starting point for approaching QS 4:1 with a priority on justice. Reading QS 4:1 from this starting point shifts the emphasis from historical arguments that justify subordination to an analysis of corpus coherence and ethical applications that demand equality.<sup>41</sup> Within the Gadamerian framework,<sup>42</sup> this step can be interpreted as a conscious fusion of horizons: the new horizon (Wadud) interacts with the textual-traditional horizon to produce a more reflective understanding, rather than simply replacing the old authority without dialogue. For interpretive transformation to gain broader academic legitimacy, this process must be characterized by methodological transparency, argumentative dialogue with traditional exegetes, and concrete evidence of social application.<sup>43</sup> Hermeneutical literature emphasizes that this kind of fusion is only productive when accompanied by a critical evaluation of the pre-understanding of both

<sup>40</sup> Haikal Fadhlil Anam, "Poligami Dalam Hermeneutika Feminis Amina Wadud," *Musāwa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 19, no. 1 (2020): 43–56, <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2020.191.43-56>.

<sup>41</sup> Kecia Ali, "The Making of the 'Lady Imam': An Interview with Amina Wadud," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 35, no. 1 (2019): 67–79, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudrel.35.1.06>.

<sup>42</sup> Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Yale University Press, 1991).

<sup>43</sup> Dedi Junaedi et al., "METODOLOGI TAFSIR AMINA WADUD DALAM MENAFSIRKAN AL-QUR'AN," *Ta Dib Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (2019): 654–65, <https://doi.org/10.29313/tjpi.v8i2.5229>.

parties, a procedure that was developed and practiced by Wadud. Thus, his historical horizon is not merely a biographical background but a methodological starting point that systematically reconstructs the possibility of an egalitarian reading of the text.

### **Textual Analysis: Amina Wadud's Interpretation of Q.S. An-Nisā' 4:1**

Amina Wadud's linguistic reading of Q.S. An-Nisā' 4:1 begins with the key term *nafs wāḥidah*, which in traditional interpretation is often associated with Adam as the first man. Wadud rejects this interpretation, asserting: "In the Qur'anic account of creation, Allah never planned to begin the creation of humankind with a male person; nor does it ever refer to the origins of the human race with Adam".<sup>44</sup> This statement marks an important shift from a patriarchal approach to an egalitarian understanding of human origins. Wadud positions *nafs wāḥidah* as a symbol of the ontological unity of humanity, not male domination over women. This perspective also challenges the assumption that women are secondary entities. Outline of the verse: Q.S. An-Nisā' 4:1 is often translated/referenced as a verse that affirms that humans were created from "one soul/*nafs*" (نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ), making this verse the focal point of debates regarding the basis of humanity and gender relations.<sup>45</sup> Wadud's hermeneutic approach to reading such verses within the framework of *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God) and the moral universalism of the Qur'an emphasizes that the text affirms the shared humanity of men and women, not justifies a gender hierarchy. She rejects patriarchal readings that limit the meaning of the verse to reinforcing male authority.

In line with Barlas's (2002) research, Wadud's emphasis on *nafs wāḥidah* opens up a space for interpretation that affirms gender equality.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the linguistic standpoint becomes an initial strategy for deconstructing patriarchal bias. In addition to *nafs wāḥidah*, Wadud highlights the concept of *zawj*, commonly understood as "partner" or "wife." According to her, "The other term of significance in verse 4:1 is *zawj*... conceptually, it is neither masculine nor feminine" (Wadud, 1999, p. 22).<sup>47</sup> Here, Wadud rejects interpretations that assume women were created from men and are therefore inferior in origin. She emphasizes that *zawj* means a mutual partner who complements each other, not a hierarchical one. This concept is in line with the idea of "gender partnership" put forward by Mir-Hosseini (2015) in her study of Islamic family law.<sup>48</sup> By describing *zawj* as a non-hierarchical entity, Wadud seeks to dismantle the theological myth that has legitimized the subordination of women. Therefore, Wadud's linguistic analysis is not merely technical, but is fraught with normative implications. Textual methods used: Contextualization (reading verses in the context of the surah and Qur'anic themes, rather than isolated verses).<sup>49</sup> Analysis of language and terminology (paying attention to vocabulary such as *nafs*, *insan*, *khalq*, etc.) and the use of an egalitarian perspective when the text discusses the creation of humans. Critique of the tradition of interpretation: examining how classical interpretations are often

<sup>44</sup> Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, 18.

<sup>45</sup> Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, 18–20.

<sup>46</sup> Asma Barlas, "Believing Women" in *Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (SAMA, 2004).

<sup>47</sup> Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, 22.

<sup>48</sup> Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Marriage on Trial: A Study of Islamic Family Law* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2000).

<sup>49</sup> Abdul Samad Tahir and Professor Dr Muhammad Akram Rana, "Reframing Quranic Exegesis through the Lens of Gender: A Critical Study of Contemporary Feminist Interpretations," *AL-HAYAT Research Journal (AHRJ)* 2, no. 1 (2024): 41–49.

influenced by patriarchal contexts and selectively choose narratives/interpretations that support subordination.

Implications for contemporary da'wah are that reading An-Nisā' 4:1 according to Wadud supports da'wah that emphasizes social justice and inclusivity, placing women as active subjects (agents) in religious interpretation and practice, not merely objects described by male exegesis.<sup>50</sup> Wadud's gender pre-understanding as a new horizon in interpretation. It shows how Wadud's interpretation dialogizes text, context, and women's experiences in accordance with Gadamer's dialogical principle. It emphasizes the need for an inclusive and gender-just reading of the Qur'an.

Wadud's rejection of patriarchal narratives is evident in her criticism of classical interpretations that adopt the biblical story of Eve's creation from Adam's rib. She asserts: "It is perhaps this scarcity of detail that has caused Qur'anic commentators... to rely on Biblical accounts which state that Eve was extracted from the rib or side of Adam".<sup>51</sup> This criticism shows that some interpretive biases stem from non-Qur'anic intertextuality. Thus, Wadud offers a reading that is faithful to the text of the Qur'an without burdening it with external patriarchal narratives. This context is in line with Abdullah Saeed's findings regarding the importance of "contextual hermeneutics" in avoiding the reduction of text to myth.<sup>52</sup> Wadud's rejection of patriarchal narratives provides space for the construction of more egalitarian relations between men and women. This demonstrates her methodological courage in breaking the authority of traditional interpretation.

To construct an alternative interpretation, Wadud uses a hermeneutic approach that emphasizes lexical analysis, intertextuality, and the normative principle of equality. For example, she states: "Min primarily has two functions... it can mean 'from' or 'of the same nature as'" (Wadud, 1999, p. 20).<sup>53</sup> When min is understood as "of the same nature as," then men and women have equal origins, not hierarchical ones. This strategy broadens the horizon of interpretation because it connects Q.S. 4:1 with other verses such as Q.S. 30:21 about sakinah. Wadud's analysis shows that the intertextuality of the Qur'an supports the concept of egalitarian couples, not subordination. In this case, Wadud is in line with Asma Barlas, who emphasizes the importance of reading the Qur'an as an anti-patriarchal text. With this hermeneutic strategy, Wadud constructs both linguistic and normative arguments.

In addition to the linguistic approach, Wadud emphasizes that the creation of humankind did not begin with male or female, but rather with a universal entity: "The Qur'anic version of the creation of humankind is not expressed in gender terms".<sup>54</sup> This claim dismantles the social construct that for centuries has placed men as the "standard" of humanity. Thus, Wadud deconstructs interpretations that normalize gender as an ontological category in creation. This perspective is reinforced by Hidayatullah's (2014) research, which shows that Muslim feminist

<sup>50</sup> Farid Esack, *Qur'an Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression* (Oneworld Publications, 1997).

<sup>51</sup> Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, 24.

<sup>52</sup> Gaes Rizka Nugraha and Haringun Trisiwi Adhi Rachmawati, "Hermeneutics of Apostasy: Fazlur Rahman and Abdullah Saeed on Reconciling Islamic Tradition with Modern Human Rights," *Mafatih* 4, no. 1 (2025): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.24260/mafatih.v4i2.4141>.

<sup>53</sup> Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, 20.

<sup>54</sup> Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, 23.

hermeneutics seeks to unravel the positioning of gender as a social construct, not divine nature.<sup>55</sup> Wadud's analysis paves the way for viewing the relationship between men and women as inherent equality since the origin of creation. The epistemological implication is that gender differences are not the basis for legitimizing hierarchy.

An important implication of Wadud's analysis is the reinterpretation of Q.S. 4:1 as the foundation of gender justice in Islam. By emphasizing the egalitarian origins of humanity, Wadud reverses the narrative that previously perpetuated patriarchy. She writes: "This verse transcends not only time but space as well" (Wadud, 1999, p. 29),<sup>56</sup> emphasizing that the message of equality is universal and cross-contextual. This resonates with Gadamer's hermeneutical approach, particularly the concept of "fusion of horizons" which opens up a space for dialogue between the text and contemporary issues of justice. Thus, Wadud's interpretation is not only academic but also practical providing theological legitimacy for the struggle for equal pay, women's leadership, and family law reform (Ali, 2016). Thus, Q.S. 4:1 in Wadud's interpretation becomes the ethical basis for modern social reform.

Through this textual analysis, Wadud shows that patriarchal bias in traditional interpretations reflects the historical context of the interpreter rather than the text itself. By dismantling linguistic, intertextual, and normative layers, Wadud presents a reading that emphasizes the Qur'anic principles of tawhid, 'adl, and equality. In line with Roded's (2020) argument in the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Muslim feminist exegesis is not intended to reject tradition, but rather to expand horizons in order to align with universal values of justice.<sup>57</sup> Thus, Wadud's reading of Q.S. 4:1 serves as an epistemological critique of classical interpretation as well as an offer of a new methodology. She positions the Qur'an as an open text that is always relevant to contemporary issues. This strengthens the position of feminist interpretation as a form of "living interpretation" in the Islamic tradition.

Classical readings often associate this verse with patriarchal social structures, but Wadud emphasizes its transcendental nature. According to her, "The Qur'anic account of the creation of humankind is important, above all, because it points out that all humans share a single point of origin".<sup>58</sup> This unity of origin negates the ontological justification for the domination of one gender. Referring to Gadamer's perspective, it can be understood that Wadud's historical horizon, rooted in contemporary feminist issues, shapes the way she interprets the text. However, it is precisely through this "pre-understanding" that Wadud is able to reveal the dimension of equality that has been hidden in the layers of patriarchal classical interpretation. Thus, this interpretation is not merely a linguistic re-interpretation, but also a hermeneutics of liberation that targets social structures.

### Amina Wadud's Interpretation in Gadamer's Hermeneutics Perspective

<sup>55</sup> Mulki Al-Sharmani, *Islamic Feminism : Hermeneutics and Activism*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024, 1–264.

<sup>56</sup> Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, 29.

<sup>57</sup> Muzaffar Iqbal, "Orientalism and the 'Encyclopedia of the Quran' Leiden," *The Qur'an from Orientalists Point of View* 4, no. 6 (2009): 11–30.

<sup>58</sup> Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, 32.

Gadamerian hermeneutics offers a productive conceptual framework for evaluating Wadud's interpretive practice because it places preconceptions and historical consciousness as the starting point for understanding the text, rather than as methodological distractions that must be eliminated.<sup>59</sup> In Gadamer's terminology, interpretation always occurs within historically effected consciousness, so that the interpreter's starting position, including Wadud's theological commitment to the principles of tawhid and justice, is a structural element of the process of understanding. This approach changes the question from "is Wadud biased?" to "how do these preconceptions influence the form of his dialogue with the text and tradition?" so that the evaluation becomes nuanced: preconceptions can enrich understanding when they are hermeneutically justified.<sup>60</sup> The study of hermeneutical philosophy explains that recognition of pre-understanding allows for a more honest dialogue between the interpreter's horizon and the text's horizon, rather than illusory neutrality. Therefore, applying Gadamer's concept to Wadud's case focuses the analysis on methodological transparency and the opening of space for dialogue between horizons. Applied literature that combines Gadamer with al-Qur'an studies indicates that this step is an approach that is increasing in popularity in contemporary tafsir studies.

The fundamentals of Gadamer's hermeneutics, namely the philosophy of understanding (philosophical hermeneutics).<sup>61</sup> Three main concepts that are highly relevant to Amina Wadud's interpretive framework are: (1) *Vorverständnis* (Pre-understanding): All interpreters approach a text with a horizon of understanding that is shaped by their social and cultural backgrounds and experiences. (In Wadud's context, gender pre-understanding and a commitment to justice form the methodological foundation of her interpretation). (2) Fusion of Horizons: Understanding arises from a dialogue between the horizon of the text (historical meaning) and the horizon of the reader (contemporary reality). (This explains Wadud's dialogical approach between the Qur'anic text and the experiences of modern women). (3) Effective History (*Wirkungsgeschichte*): The meaning of a text is influenced by its history of reception and interpretive tradition.<sup>62</sup> (With this principle, Wadud criticizes the patriarchal tradition of interpretation that obscures the egalitarian spirit of the Qur'an).

The identification of Wadud's initial position (pre-understanding) reveals a clear combination of normative priorities and empirical experience: the tawhidic paradigm and commitment to equality provide a normative framework, while life experience and feminist theory provide practical urgency. In Gadamer's view, this position does not automatically criminalize her interpretation as a distortion, but rather as an effective horizon one that must be revealed, tested, and dialogued. The normative question of whether pre-understanding enriches or limits her interpretation does not have a single answer; it depends on the testing procedures used to test argumentative coherence and corpus coherence. As a good hermeneutic practice,

<sup>59</sup> Aysha A. Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an* (Oxford University Press, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199359561.001.0001>.

<sup>60</sup> Roya Haghir-Vijeh and Dr Carol McDonald, "Gadamerian Hermeneutics with Intersectionality as an Analytical Lens," *Journal of Applied Hermeneutics*, March 10, 2022, 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.55016/ojs/jah.v2022Y2022.74902>.

<sup>61</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*.

<sup>62</sup> Haghir-Vijeh and McDonald, "Gadamerian Hermeneutics with Intersectionality as an Analytical Lens."



Wadud demonstrates a systematic effort:<sup>63</sup> he traces lexical meanings, juxtaposes verses, and places history in a position that is tested against general principles, so that his pre-understanding becomes a critical tool rather than merely a presupposition. Comparative analyses conducted by other researchers show that when preconceptions are made explicit and tested, they tend to enrich the reading rather than limit it. Academic debates on this issue reinforce the need for transparent and dialogical procedures in feminist hermeneutics.

The history of interpretation, namely the effects of historical tradition and patriarchal exegesis,<sup>64</sup> spans a horizon of the past that Wadud must confront, this interpretive legacy injects old narratives, histories, and cultural assumptions into the reading of the text. Wadud's response to this "heritage of interpretation" is methodologically critical, she does not simply reject tradition, but examines the sources used (e.g., the use of *Isra'iliyyat*), scrutinizes the strength of arguments, and demands the coherence of the Qur'anic corpus as a benchmark. This approach is an example of the application of hermeneutical criticism that integrates historical attention to tradition with normative demands for justice, so that corrective actions appear argumentative rather than ad hoc.<sup>65</sup> This kind of approach is also noted in contemporary hermeneutical studies that bring together Western theory (Gadamer) with traditional *ulum al-Qur'an*, the results are often reconstructions that still respect textual authority but reject patriarchal cultural projections. In scientific practice, this step requires documentation of the reasons for rejection or downgrading of a narration, including evaluation of the quality of the chain of transmission and historical relevance. Comparative studies show that this strategy is effective in shifting interpretations without severing communication with tradition.

Gadamer's concept of fusion of horizons is represented in Wadud's practice as an ongoing dialogue between her horizons (theological, feminist, life experience) and the horizon of the text/tradition; this process forms a new understanding that does not simply attach the modern world to the text but negotiates it.<sup>66</sup> The question of whether the result is merely a reinterpretation or a transformative interpretation needs to be viewed from two dimensions: the depth of textual coherence and its capacity for social application. In many case analyses, including Wadud's reading of QS 4:1, the result achieved is not only lexical recontextualization but also the substantialization of normative claims that demand practical change (e.g., the legitimacy of women's leadership). However, theoretical criticism of 'fusion' reminds us that this process does not automatically validate new claims without critical dialogue with traditional *mufassir*; productive fusion requires openness on both sides and argumentative evidence. The literature on hermeneutic philosophy also highlights that fusion is not finalization but a recurring process that continues to enrich understanding and open up possibilities for ethical transformation. Therefore, Wadud's interpretation can be considered transformative insofar as it upholds the coherence of the corpus while opening up space for argumentation with tradition.

<sup>63</sup> Jeannie Kerr, "Unsettling Gadamerian Hermeneutic Inquiry: Engaging the Colonial Difference," *Qualitative Inquiry* 26, no. 5 (2020): 544–50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419829785>.

<sup>64</sup> Iñaki Xavier Larrauri Pertierra, "On Gadamerian Hermeneutics: Fusions of Horizons, Dialogue, and Evolution(s) Within Culture as Dynamic System of Meaning," *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* 4, no. 4 (2020): 45–62, <https://doi.org/10.14394/eidos.jpc.2020.0040>.

<sup>65</sup> Pertierra, "On Gadamerian Hermeneutics."

<sup>66</sup> Valerie Fleming and Yvonne Robb, "A Critical Analysis of Articles Using a Gadamerian Based Research Method," *Nursing Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2019): e12283, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12283>.

The stage of *Anwendung* or application is a practical test of Gadamerian hermeneutics as applied by Wadud: how the resulting interpretation is translated into the socio-political realm (equality, women's leadership, family law reform). From Gadamer's perspective, application is the continuity of understanding, understanding of a text is only complete when its relevance in a concrete situation is tested and operationalized and here Wadud clearly has an explicit applicative agenda.<sup>67</sup> Empirical studies on the effects of feminist interpretation in the legal and policy spheres show that interpretations that are coherent in corpus and communicative in dialogue have a greater chance of influencing family law reform and gender policy (e.g., Mir-Hosseini's study on family law reform). However, this application also requires a persuasive strategy to convince traditional interpretive communities that it is not merely an import of foreign ideas. Thus, conformity with Gadamer's dialogical principle requires argumentative legitimacy, methodological transparency, and a readiness for substantial cross-horizon dialogue. The literature on religious-political studies emphasizes that successful normative change combines textual evidence, historical argumentation, and socio-political coalitions.

Criticism and validation of Gadamer's application to Wadud's interpretation must be balanced: the main strength of this method is its dialogical and text-based nature, which acknowledges pre-understanding while demanding argumentative confrontation; its weakness lies in the risk of eisegesis, reading modern values into the text without sufficient coherence testing.<sup>68</sup> To balance feminist hermeneutics and Gadamerian hermeneutics, several practices are necessary: make pre-understandings explicit, document the criteria for weighting sources, test the consistency of the corpus, and engage in public dialogue with traditional exegetes and the scientific community. Research on feminist hermeneutics methodology also emphasizes the need for empirical validation of the impact of social application so that interpretation is not only rhetorical but also tested in practice. Gadamer himself provides a theoretical safeguard fusion must be dialogical and not absolute, which reduces the possibility of relativism while encouraging interpretive accountability. In conclusion, the integration of Gadamerian hermeneutics with feminist hermeneutics as done by Wadud offers a potentially powerful methodological model as long as the steps of validation and critical dialogue are carried out consistently.

### **The Normative Implications of Amina Wadud's Interpretation on Gender Justice**

Epistemologically, Amina Wadud's interpretation contributes to the expansion of religious knowledge by challenging the epistemic monopoly of traditional exegetes and proposing the inclusion of women's experiences as a valid source of interpretation. She positions the Qur'an not merely as a philological object of reading, but as a corpus that must be read with the ethical sensitivity of a change that shifts the center of authority from "who is the interpreter" to "how arguments are constructed and tested."<sup>69</sup> This epistemic impact not only adds variety to readings but also reshapes the criteria for the validity of interpretation: corpus coherence, transparency of

<sup>67</sup> Janan Izadi, "Women's Nature in the Qur'an: Hermeneutical Considerations on Traditional and Modern Exegeses," *Open Theology* 6, no. 1 (2020): 342–59, <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2020-0015>.

<sup>68</sup> Doaa Nabil Sayyed Embabi Embabi, "Production of Knowledge by Translating 'Islamic Feminist' Works: The Case of Amina Wadud's Work," *Occasional Papers in the Development of English Education* 61, no. 1 (2016): 213–36, <https://doi.org/10.21608/opde.2016.86131>.

<sup>69</sup> Fajar Nugraha et al., "AMINA WADUD'S THOUGHTS ON THE BOOK OF TAFSIR QUR'AN AND WOMEN," *El-Umdah* 8, no. 1 (2025): 154–74, <https://doi.org/10.20414/el-umdah.v8i1.12551>.

pre-understanding, and applicative relevance become the main benchmarks. Thus, the study of interpretation has shifted from a mode of elite expertise to a collaborative model of science (epistemic pluralism) that recognizes the contributions of female mufassirah and interdisciplinary studies.<sup>70</sup> Consequently, the interpretive research agenda must now include methods that explicitly weigh social experience and empirical evidence when assessing normative claims. Several empirical studies and theoretical reviews place Wadud's epistemological contributions as a starting point for contemporary inclusive interpretation.

The paradigm shift in tafsir studies driven by Wadud's approach is evident in a methodological shift: from the dominance of the philological-fiqhi approach to hermeneutics that integrates linguistic analysis, intertextuality, and ethical evaluation.<sup>71</sup> This shift encourages researchers to read particular verses within the corpus of the Qur'an and assess the relevance of the history with the criteria of corporate coherence of a practice that reduces the possibility of atomistic readings that produce patriarchal norms. Furthermore, the new paradigm places social problems (e.g., inequality) as part of the object of interpretation, so that interpretation is also seen as a tool for social transformation, not merely a textual explanation. In other words, the study of interpretation now demands closer interaction between normative theory and socio-cultural data. Comparative hermeneutic studies show that Wadud's model changes academic interpretation practices and demands a more interdisciplinary interpretation curriculum. These changes have been documented in a number of academic reviews that highlight the shift from text to practice and the ethics of reading.

Socially and normatively, the implications of Wadud's interpretation are directed at practical demands such as equal pay, access to education, and the legitimacy of women's leadership in the public sphere; her interpretation provides a theological basis for these claims by affirming the principle of egalitarianism in sacred sources.<sup>72</sup> However, this potential for transformation does not automatically become a social reality; it requires a network of legal advocacy, religious education, and public opinion formation in order for theological arguments to be translated into policy. Case studies of family law reforms in various Muslim countries show that interpretive claims are only effective when supported by socio-political coalitions and a liturgy of knowledge that embraces scholars, intellectuals, and civil actors. Thus, Wadud's interpretation serves as a powerful source of normative legitimacy when followed by mature implementation strategies: strategic litigation, quality religious education, and public policy advocacy.<sup>73</sup> Contemporary literature on religion and policy emphasizes the need to bridge theological arguments with institutional mechanisms in order for change to become real.

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<sup>70</sup> Eko Prasetyo Budi and Rosyida Amalia, "Paradigma Hermeneutika Feminis Amina Wadud," *Hamalatul Qur'an : Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an* 6, no. 1 (2025): 88–95, <https://doi.org/10.37985/hq.v6i1.364>.

<sup>71</sup> Muhammad Fauzi Noor, "A FEMINIST INTERPRETATION OF QUR'ANIC TEXTS BY AMINA WADUD AND ZAITUNAH SUBHAN," *INTIHA: Islamic Education Journal* 1, no. 3 (2024): 144–56, <https://doi.org/10.58988/intiha.v1i3.311>.

<sup>72</sup> Eko Zulfikar and Abdul Mustaqim, "Argumentation of Gender Equality in the Interpretation of Jilbab Verse by Amina Wadud's Perspective," *QOF* 8, no. 2 (2024): 169–86, <https://doi.org/10.30762/qof.v8i2.2502>.

<sup>73</sup> Naili Rosa Urbah Rusydiana and Hadiana Trendi Azami, "Interpretation QS. an-Nisa': 34 Perspectives of Amina Wadud Muhsin and The Implication of Her Thinking In Indonesia," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 29, no. 1 (2021): 87–100, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v29i1.11931>.

Therefore, Wadud's normative claims must be viewed as a source of legitimacy that needs to be mobilized politically and academically in order to produce real social impact.

In the realm of practical implementation, Wadud's interpretation has the potential to translate egalitarian arguments into family law reform, fatwa revision, and religious education policy; however, concrete mechanisms require recognized ijthadi procedures and inclusive legal deliberation spaces.<sup>74</sup> To enter the realm of fatwas and law, interpretations must pass traditional tests (e.g., sanad, maqāṣid, maqāyīṣah studies) while meeting the standards of coherence proposed by Wadud, which is a methodological and institutional challenge. The experience of reformists in Muslim countries shows that the successful translation of interpretations into policy depends on the social legitimacy of decision-makers and the capacity of legal advocacy networks that combine empirical evidence.<sup>75</sup> In addition, formal and informal religious education must include critical hermeneutic competencies so that future generations of scholars and law enforcement officials understand the fundamentals of egalitarian arguments. Therefore, an effective implementation strategy must unite academic work, legal advocacy, and public education so that interpretations do not remain merely academic discourse but become instruments of policy. National and international literature confirms that without an institutional ecosystem, the potential for textual transformation remains hampered.

Significant challenges stand in the way of this transformative effort: harsh criticism from traditional scholars who defend patriarchal interpretive authority, political resistance that views change as a threat, and the risk of eisegesis, which reads a modern agenda into the text without sufficient argumentative justification.<sup>76</sup> To respond to this resistance, Gadamerian's dialogical approach, which emphasizes the fusion of horizons, provides a strategic map: opening up space for argumentative dialogue, making pre-understandings explicit, and demanding transparent textual coherence. In addition to hermeneutic strategies, institutional legitimation mechanisms are also necessary: inter-institutional seminars, peer review by scholars and exegetes, and the publication of comparative studies that elaborate on the weight of historical and textual evidence. Critical studies of Wadud herself show that long-term success requires argumentative compromise without sacrificing the principle of justice a balance that requires strong rhetorical capacity and scientific evidence.<sup>77</sup> In other words, confronting resistance is not only a matter of textual truth, but also a matter of communication strategy and socio-political consolidation. Literature discussing resistance to feminist interpretation recommends a combination of hermeneutics, institutional dialogue, and public advocacy as the most effective response.

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<sup>74</sup> Taufan Anggoro, "The Methodology of Contemporary Gender Interpretation: A Study of Qirā'ah Mubādalāh," *Sawwa: Jurnal Studi Gender* 15, no. 1 (2020): 53–74, <https://doi.org/10.21580/sa.v15i1.5198>.

<sup>75</sup> Rahmah Eka Saputri et al., "THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN MARITAL DYNAMICS: Hadis Interpretation of Amina Wadud's Hermeneutic," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 48, no. 2 (2024): 282–300, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v48i2.1180>.

<sup>76</sup> Fuad Fansuri et al., "Reinterpreting Islamic Inheritance Law For SDGs: A Comparative Analysis of Ibn Kathir and Amina Wadud on Gender Justice," *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam* 25, no. 02 (2024): 471–86, <https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v25i02.7887>.

<sup>77</sup> Nafiseh Shirmahi and Elahe Hadian Rasanani, "Revisiting the Concept of Nafs Wahidah in the Qur'an: A Critique of Amina Wadud's View Based on Islamic Commentaries," *Classical and Contemporary Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2025): 63–72, <https://doi.org/10.22059/jcis.2025.392779.1416>.

From an academic and social perspective, Wadud's contribution is significant<sup>78</sup>: she shows that the Qur'an can be read as a relevant source for the struggle for gender justice while stimulating the discipline of interpretation to become more normatively responsive. Academically, her work stimulates interdisciplinary research combining textual studies, semantics, social history, and feminist theory that enriches the methodology of contemporary Islamic studies.<sup>79</sup> Socially, Wadud's works have become a reference for activists, policymakers, and scholars seeking a theological basis for gender-sensitive reform. However, this contribution also opens up a new research agenda: empirical evaluation of the impact of feminist exegesis on legal change, longitudinal studies of public acceptance, and analysis of advocacy networks that have successfully translated exegesis into policy. Thus, Wadud's intellectual legacy lies not only in her normative recommendations but in the epistemic changes that enable global dialogue on gender and religion. In conclusion, Wadud's contributions expand the horizons of global interpretation and place the study of gender in Islam at the center of contemporary socio-religious studies.

In the context of contemporary da'wah, Amina Wadud's interpretation presents a new paradigm that places da'wah not merely as the normative delivery of teachings, but as a dialogical and reflective hermeneutic process.<sup>80</sup> Dakwah is understood as an interpretive space that opens up participation for all parties, including women, to build ethical and social awareness based on the principles of Qur'anic justice. Through a Gadamerian approach, Wadud's interpretation emphasizes that dakwah must depart from a fusion of horizons between sacred texts and the reality of the ummah, so that the message of the Qur'an is not only preached, but also brought to life in a concrete social context. This paradigm requires preachers and da'wah academics to master hermeneutic sensitivity that is, the ability to read texts while understanding the horizon of social experience so that the message of da'wah is not trapped in the reproduction of patriarchal values, but rather becomes an instrument of spiritual and social empowerment.<sup>81</sup> Thus, contemporary da'wah has the potential to become an arena for inclusive and transformative interpretive praxis.

Furthermore, the practical implications of Wadud's interpretation on da'wah lie in the reconstruction of the message and methods of da'wah that are oriented towards gender justice and social equality. Da'wah inspired by Wadud's hermeneutics no longer places women as passive recipients of the message, but as active subjects who interpret and convey the message of the Qur'an. This model of da'wah encourages the emergence of gender-inclusive da'wah discourse that is, a discourse of da'wah that broadens the horizons of Islam with values of equality, justice, and appreciation for the human experience as a whole. At the institutional level, this can be realized through a da'wah curriculum that is critical of classical interpretive biases, strengthening the capacity of female preachers, and forming research-based and cross-gender

<sup>78</sup> Harahap, U. H., & Zulkarnaen, Z. (2024). Hermeneutika feminisme dalam tafsir Al-Qur'an: Kajian metodologi Amina Wadud. *Alhamra Jurnal Studi Islam*, 5(1), 85-96. <https://doi.org/10.30595/ajsi.v5i1.2064>

<sup>79</sup> Nur, M. Y., Santalia, I., & Latif, M. (2021). Amina Wadud Muhsin gender thinking in the hermeneutic perspective of Hans Georg Gadamer. *International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(2), 81-94. <https://doi.org/10.24252/ijis.v1i2.32743>

<sup>80</sup> Najmy Hanifah and Anita Puji Astutik, "Pemikiran Amina Wadud Tentang Dakwah Di Dunia Modern," *Journal of Islamic Communication Studies* 2, no. 2 (2024): 22-31, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jicos.2024.2.2.22-31>.

<sup>81</sup> Agus Fatuh Widoyo, "HERMENEUTIKA FILSAFAT DAKWAH," *Mamba'ul 'Ulum*, March 29, 2022, 61-66, <https://doi.org/10.54090/mu.58>.

dialogue da'wah communities. Thus, Wadud's interpretation not only enriches the epistemology of feminist interpretation, but also provides a normative and methodological foundation for contemporary da'wah that is responsive to social change, while remaining rooted in the ethics of tawhid and the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the integration of Gadamerian hermeneutics and Amina Wadud's feminist reading of Q.S. An-Nisā' 4:1 produces an inclusive, dialogical, and gender-just model of Qur'anic interpretation. The linguistic examination of *nafs wāḥidah* and *zawj* reveals that gender inequality reflected in classical exegesis does not originate from the Qur'anic text itself but from the historical and socio-cultural constructions of earlier exegetes. Through the concepts of *Wirkungsgeschichte* and the *fusion of horizons*, this research shows that understanding the Qur'an cannot be detached from the text's reception history and the horizon of contemporary readers, thereby affirming interpretation as an ongoing dialogical process guided by the Qur'an's ethical mandate of human equality.

Methodologically and epistemologically, this study contributes to shifting the paradigm of interpretive authority from a centralized, patriarchal scholarly structure toward a participatory and pluralistic model. Wadud's approach expands epistemic authority by recognizing women's lived experiences as legitimate hermeneutical data, while Gadamer's framework provides the philosophical scaffolding that demands argumentative coherence, historical consciousness, and transparency of pre-understanding. These findings enrich Qur'anic studies by advancing a methodological synthesis that integrates textual analysis, tradition critique, and ethical sensitivity, while also reinforcing a research trajectory that places social justice as a valid criterion for interpretive adequacy.

Academically and socially, this integrative model opens new directions for developing hermeneutics-based Qur'anic interpretation within Islamic higher education and for reformulating da'wah practices into more inclusive and gender-responsive forms. By positioning gender justice as a normative foundation for da'wah, this research underscores that the Qur'anic message must be actualized in social praxis through participatory, textually grounded, and ethically transformative preaching. The study also identifies future research agendas, including empirical assessments of feminist exegesis in legal, educational, and policy contexts, and the development of Qur'an-based models of da'wah capable of translating the values of equality and justice into tangible social realities.

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