

Subjective Tendencies in Ibn Kaṣīr's Exegesis: A Study of Narrative Selection and Interpretation in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22

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Abstract

Ibn Kaṣīr's approach to simplifying and expanding meaning through the citation of various riwayat suggests a subjective tendency in his interpretation. This study aims to uncover Ibn Kaṣīr's subjective narratives by analyzing his selection and organization of *riwāyah*, comparing them to the interpretations of earlier scholars who followed similar criteria. The research employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing Julia Kristeva's intertextual analysis model, and focuses on the exegesis of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22. The study reveals that Ibn Kaṣīr utilized mechanisms of transformation, transposition, and opposition in relation to previous interpretations when explaining these verses. He appears to have distorted the meanings of existing narrations to support his own views, which can be observed in the way he adjusted certain narrations for use in his interpretative process. The variety of narrations provided by earlier scholars is summarized by Ibn Kaṣīr to align with his intended meaning. His selective presentation of certain narrations over others that have equal interpretative potential results in an identity of meaning consistent with his inclination towards Ibn Taymiyah's interpretative approach. However, unlike Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn Kaṣīr tends to rely on favored narrations to establish a singular meaning. This subjective tendency influences the formation of an interpretative model that emphasizes a subject-object relationship, wherein the Qur'an's own context is overshadowed by the interpreter's will as a subject.

Keyword: *Ibn Kaṣīr, Subjectivity, Tafsīr bi ar-Riwāyah*

Abstrak

Kecenderungan Ibn Kaṣīr dalam penyederhanaan dan perluasan makna melalui pengutipannya terhadap beragam *riwāyah* mengindikasikan kecenderungan subjektivitas dalam pemaknaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan narasi-narasi subjektif Ibn Kaṣīr melalui pemilihan dan pemilahan *riwāyah* dengan mencocokkannya pada pemaknaan penafsir sebelumnya yang mendasarkan pada kriteria penafsiran yang sama. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan model analisis menggunakan intertekstual Julia Kristeva. Penelitian ini memfokuskan kajian pada QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Ibn Kaṣīr menggunakan mekanisme transformasi, transposisi dan oposisi terhadap penafsir terdahulu ketika memaknai QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22. Ibn Kaṣīr melakukan penggiringan makna riwayat dari berbagai riwayat yang ada untuk dijadikan sebagai legitimasi pendapatnya. Penggiringan ini tampak pada penyesuaian beberapa riwayat untuk digunakan dalam proses



pemaknaan. Keragaman riwayat yang diberikan penafsir terdahulu diringkas dengan tujuan makna yang dikehendaki. Pemilihan atas makna dengan menghadirkan riwayat tertentu di antara riwayat-riwayat yang lain yang memiliki potensi fungsi yang sama mengarah pada identitas pemaknaan yang sesuai dengan kecenderungannya terhadap pola penafsiran Ibn Taymīyah. Bedanya, Ibn Kaṣīr cenderung menggunakan dasar *riwayāh* yang disukai untuk membentuk makna yang tunggal. Kecenderungan subjektivitas ini berimplikasi pada pembentukan model penafsiran yang mengarah pada hubungan subjek-objek, sehingga al-Qur'an tidak dapat menghadirkan konteksnya sendiri untuk dipahami dan masuk terhadap kehendak penafsir sebagai subjek.

Kata Kunci: *Ibn Kaṣīr, Subjektivitas, Tafṣīr bi ar-Riwayāh*

Introduction

The perspectives on Ibn Kaṣīr's *Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, once thought to be free from ideological biases, reveal the presence of certain sectarian identities. Norman Calder suggests that Ibn Kaṣīr tends to follow and perpetuate the views of Ibn Taymīyah.¹ This inclination influences the way he narrows the range of narrations used by interpreters into a single narrative identity, which Calder describes as monovalent.² However, Pieter Coppens argues that Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretation is not entirely monovalent; in some verses, he adopts a polyvalent interpretation model.³ Unlike monovalent interpretation, polyvalent interpretation expands the meaning of a verse, potentially leading to ambiguity and pluralism.⁴

The dual interpretation model used by Ibn Kaṣīr implicitly reflects an unclear identity in his explanation of certain verses. Calder and Coppens' research on Ibn Kaṣīr highlights this ambiguity, noting that some of his interpretations are monovalent, while others are polyvalent. However, their research primarily focuses on critiquing Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretation without considering the possibility of a deliberate intention behind his use of these two models. To better understand Ibn Kaṣīr's approach, it is essential to classify these interpretation models. By doing so, we may uncover his underlying purpose in either narrowing or expanding the meaning of different verses. This classification could reveal that, in some instances,

¹ Norman Calder, "Tafṣīr from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kaṣīr: Problems in the Description of a Genre, Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham," in *Approaches to the Qur'ān*, ed. G. R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 125.

² Monovalent interpretation refers to the process of explaining a verse by relying on a single source, which can result in a truth claim by validating only that source while dismissing others. This approach is evident in Ibn Kaṣīr's explanations of narrative verses. See Calder, "Tafṣīr from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kaṣīr: Problems in the Description of a Genre, Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham."

³ Pieter Coppens explores different interpretations of whether Allah or the angel Gabriel is referenced in a verse. He presents various interpretations from earlier mufassirs to demonstrate their diversity, highlighting that traditional interpreters often refer to multiple hadith sources or polyvalent athār. For more details, see Pieter Coppens, "Did Modernity End Polyvalence? Some Observations on Tolerance for Ambiguity in Sunni Tafṣīr," *Journal of Quranic Studies* 23, no. 1 (February 26, 2021): 36–70, <https://doi.org/10.3366/JQS.2021.0450>.

⁴ Coppens.

the interpretation of Qur'anic verses allows for broader meanings, while in others, a more restricted interpretation may be necessary.

Research on Ibn Kaṣīr has primarily concentrated on his intellectual contributions and interpretative methods, with little attention given to his subjectivity in selecting narrations. Previous scholars have not thoroughly explored this aspect of his work. From the study of Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretative tendencies, two main patterns emerge. The first is a partial focus on specific themes, often referred to as thematic studies, where researchers gather verses on a common theme and analyze the explanations provided by the *mufasssīr* in his tafsir. These themes range widely, covering topics such as the relationship between humans and nature,⁵ the connection between humans and God,⁶ stories,⁷ and *tasawwuf*⁸. The second pattern relates to Ibn Kaṣīr's intellectual approach and methodology. Although he is widely recognized for using the *bi al-ma'sūr*⁹ method in his interpretation, he also incorporates *bi al-ra'y*¹⁰. This research underscores that complete objectivity in interpretation is unattainable, as the interpreter's subjectivity inevitably influences the process.

Among the two trends mentioned, no study has thoroughly explored Ibn Kaṣīr's subjectivity in selecting narrations for his interpretation of the Quran. Previous research has primarily focused on analyzing his thematic interpretations and examining his interpretative methods and approach. Ibn Kaṣīr's choices in interpreting the Quran significantly impact the meaning of a verse. By selecting a single narration to explain a verse, he limits the possibility of alternative interpretations. Conversely, when he chooses multiple narrations to interpret a verse, it introduces ambiguity and highlights his inconsistency. This phenomenon implicitly reveals the ambiguity in Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretive identity.

The research by Norman Calder and Pieter Coppens opens a discussion about the ambiguity of Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretive identity. However, their debate is focused and limited to critiquing Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretative model. A more comprehensive classification of Ibn Kaṣīr's monovalent and polyvalent interpretations could potentially reveal his true intentions and highlight the extent of his subjectivity in

⁵ Nia Ariyani, "Ragam Kerusakan Atas Perbuatan Manusia Di Muka Bumi Dalam Penafsiran Ibn Katsir," *Al-Fanar: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 3, no. 2 (2020): 217.

⁶ Muthoifin dan Fahrurrozi, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Tauhid Dalam Kisah Ashabul Ukhdud Surat Al-Buruj Perspektif Ibn Katsir Dan Hamka," *Profetika, Jurnal Studi Islam* 19, no. 2 (2018).

⁷ Bustamar dan Fitri Yeni M Dalil, "Kronologis Kisah Nabi Adam AS Dalam Tafsir Ibn Katsir," *Istinarah: Riset Keagamaan, Sosial Dan Budaya* 2, no. 1 (2020).

⁸ Ahmad Haromaini dan Abdurachman, "Qalibun Salim Perspektif Tafsir Ibnu Katsir," *Rausyan Fikr* 16, no. 1 (2020).

⁹ Maliki, "Tafsir Ibn Katsir: Metode Dan Bentuk Penafsirannya," *El Umdah Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (2018). Lihat juga Abd Haris Nasution dan Muhammad Mansur, "Studi Kitab Tafsir Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim Ibnu Kaṣīr," *Jurnal Ushuluddin Adab Dan Dakwah* 1, no. 1 (2018).

¹⁰ This research indirectly demonstrates that a mufasssīr cannot rely solely on one method of interpretation when explaining verses. Even in tafsir *bi al-ma'thūr*, the mufasssīr's *ijtihad* is inevitably involved. See Wely Dozan, "Epistemologi Tafsir Klasik: Studi Analisis Pemikiran Ibnu Katsir," *Falasifa: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 10, no. 2 (2019).

interpreting the Qur'an. Subjectivity in interpretation is unavoidable, even in *bi al-riwāyah* methods. Interpreters are always shaped by their socio-historical background, intellectual influences, socio-political environment, and the conditions of their time. This inherent subjectivity can lead to the interpreter positioning the Quran as a text or object without intrinsic meaning, while granting themselves authority in interpretation. Such an approach risks creating an imbalance between the interpreter's understanding and the meaning intended by the Quran.

This study aims to uncover Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretive identity by examining whether his interpretations are monovalent or polyvalent. Understanding these interpretive identities will provide insight into Ibn Kaṣīr's subjectivity in interpreting the Qur'an and how it influences his positioning of the Quran – as either a subject or an object. Positioning the Quran as an object implies that the interpreter asserts full authority over its meaning. Conversely, treating the Quran as a subject involves engaging in a dialogue or communicative action¹¹ to align one's understanding with the intended meaning of the Quran. This issue will be explored further in this research.

This research employs a qualitative method, utilizing literature as its primary data source through library research. It seeks data from various sources and literatures to support the research findings. The data sources are categorized into primary and secondary sources. The primary source is Ibn Kaṣīr's *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, with a focus on his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22. This selection is based on the verse's content, which encompasses two central aspects of monotheism: the command to worship and the prohibition of associating partners with God. Secondary sources include earlier commentaries such as *Tafsīr Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl*, *Al-Kashf wa al-Bayān 'an Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, *Baḥr al-'Ulūm*, *Tafsīr Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Ay al-Qur'ān*, and *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm 'an Rasūl Allāh wa al-Ṣaḥābah wa al-Tābi'in*. Additional secondary sources include various books, theses, journals, and articles that provide further support and context for the research. The collected data is systematically processed using the analysis approach by Huberman and Miles, which involves three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification.¹² The analysis process utilizes Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality.

Result and Discussion

Transformations in Historical Composition in Ibn Kaṣīr's Interpretation: The Ideologeme of *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*

¹¹ This refers to interaction between two subjects aimed at reconciling their understandings. This theory, known as Habermas's theory of communicative action or intersubjectivity, is discussed in Fransisco Budi Hardiman, *Kritik Ideologi Menyingkap Kepentingan Pengetahuan Bersama Jurgen Habermas* (Yogyakarta: Buku Baik, 2004), 98–99.

¹² A. Sukmawati dkk, "Pembentukan Karakter Berbasis Keteladanan Guru Dan Pembiasaan Murid SIT Al-Biruni Jipang Kota Makassar," *EHDJ: Education and Human Development Journal* 5, no. 1 (2020): 95.

Interpretation, as a process of searching for meaning, creates an intricate web of influence through the use of quotations between different interpretations. In this process, quotations enable the blending of the reading text with the author's perception. Kristeva refers to the intersection between a specific textual arrangement (semiotic practice) and the utterances (sequences) it incorporates into its own space, or refers to in the space of external texts (semiotic practice), as an ideologeme.¹³ The intertextuality formed in this ideologemic process is notable for its ability to transcend the formal characteristics of the ideological presence within the quoted text, while still preserving its suggestive content and intent. This interplay creates a dialogic pattern that can be mapped out in three aspects: opposition, transposition, and transformation. Opposition emerges when two aspects meet but cannot be reconciled due to differences in ideological and cultural symbols. Meanwhile, transposition and transformation occur through a dialogical process between symbols that leads to change. Transposition results in actions that produce new meanings, distinct from transformations, where changes occur only through the author's insertion within the text being utilized.

In interpreting QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22, Ibn Kaşir draws on various *bi ar-rivāyah* interpretations, manifesting in two distinct forms. The first form pertains to the interpretation of the phrase *yā ayyuha an-nās u'budū rabbakum al-laẓī khalaqakum* (O mankind, worship your Lord who has created you). In this portion of the verse, Ibn Kaşir primarily elucidates it by presenting similar verses.¹⁴ He quotes a narration from Ibn 'Abbās, which interprets the command to worship Allah as directed at disbelievers and hypocrites.¹⁵ The second form concerns the phrase *falā taj'alū li Allah andādan* (do not make partners for Allah). This part of the verse addresses the prohibition of associating partners with Allah. The hadith-reports presented by Ibn Kaşir in this context are numerous, but they can be classified into three main categories. First, those related to *syirk*, both minor (*asghar*) and major (*akbar*). Second, narrations concerning Allah's right to be worshipped by His servants. Third, a narration from Aḥmad bin Hanbal about the commandments given to Yahya ibn Zakaria, intended both for himself and for his people, the Children of Israel, which includes a directive to glorify Allah.¹⁶

¹³ Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Tom Gora and Alice Jardine (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 36.

¹⁴ QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22 is generally divided into two interpretations. In the first, Ibn Kaşir references similar verses when interpreting verse 22, explaining the benefits of Allah's creation of the heavens, the earth, and all within it for humanity. These similar verses are found in QS. al-Anbiyā' [21]: 32 and QS. Gāfir [40]: 64. From the connection between verses 21 and 22, Ibn Kaşir concludes that humans are obligated to worship Allah alone, as He is the creator of all things and the sustainer of life, providing rain that fosters the growth of plants and fruits for His creatures. In the second interpretation, Ibn Kaşir, citing other scholars, presents verses demonstrating that Allah's existence is evident through His creation, such as in QS. Fātir [35]: 27-28, which supports and reinforces the Hadith narrated by Imām Ahmad regarding the proof of God's existence. See Ibn Kaşir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, vol. 1 (Kairo: al-Farūq al-Ḥadişah li al-Ṭibā'ah, 2000), 306-12.

¹⁵ Kaşir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 2000.

¹⁶ Kaşir.

In his interpretation, Ibn Kaṣīr highlights that the Hadīth narrated by Ahmad bin Hanbal, referenced in the third interpretation, serves as evidence that Allah alone is deserving of worship, with no partners beside Him. To reinforce this point, Ibn Kaṣīr cites al-Rāzī and other scholars who concur that this Hadīth is a clear proof of the prohibition against associating partners with Allah. According to Ibn Kaṣīr, those who reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth will recognize that these signs affirm Allah as the sole creator.¹⁷ Ibn Kaṣīr also discusses verses by Abū Nuwās and Ibn al-Mu'taz,¹⁸ which articulate that Allah's existence is evident through His creation. Through this explanation, Ibn Kaṣīr appears to assert that the existence of Allah can be clearly discerned from His various creations, both in the heavens and on earth, including humanity itself.

In the interpretation of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21, which commands the worship of Allah, previous mufassirs generally aligned in their interpretations, emphasizing the need to deify and worship Allah. The primary differences arise in the details provided afterward. For instance, in al-Ṭabarī's interpretation, he adds that Allah is the most deserving of worship because He created all things, including idols that can neither benefit nor harm.¹⁹ Ibn 'Aṭīyah interprets the phrase *u'budū rabbakum* as glorifying Allah through worship.²⁰ Al-Baghawī also focuses on the word *u'budū*, interpreting it as the glorification of Allah, supported by a narration from Ibn 'Abbās, who explains that every instance of *u'budū* or worship in the Qur'an signifies tawhid.²¹ Other commentaries, such as those by al-Ša'labī and al-Samarqandī, interpret the command as glorifying Allah combined with obedience to Him. Al-Ša'labī bases this on the word *u'budū*,²² while al-Samarqandī grounds his interpretation on the phrase *yā ayyuh an-nāsu u'budū rabbakum*.²³

In the verse *falā taj'alū lillāhi andāda*, the earliest commentary to provide a narration as an explanation is al-Baghawī's. However, the narration is used to clarify the phrase *allaḏī ja'ala lakum al-arḏa fīrāsyā*. Al-Baghawī cites a hadith narrated by al-Imām al-Bukhārī, which highlights the grave sin of polytheism by creating a counterfeit of Allah, the Creator of humankind.²⁴ Another early commentary that includes a narration for explanation is al-Ša'labī's, specifically regarding the phrase

¹⁷ Ibn Kaṣīr further references the opinions of several scholars regarding parables that illustrate Allah's existence. Among these are the views of al-Rāzī, who narrated from Imām Mālik, as well as narrations from Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shāfi'ī, and Imām Ahmad. For a more detailed explanation, see Kaṣīr.

¹⁸ Kaṣīr.

¹⁹ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd ibn Kaṣīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī Min Kitābihī Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy Al-Qur'ān Al-Mujallad Al-Awwal* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1994), 134.

²⁰ Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥaqq ibn Gālib ibn 'Aṭīyah Al-Andalusī, *Al-Muḥarrar Al-Wajīz Fi Tafsīr Al-Kitāb Al-'Azīz*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2001), 105.

²¹ Abū Muḥammad al-Husein bin Mas'ūd Al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr Ma'ālim Al-Tanzīl*, vol. 1 (Riyāḏ: Dār al-Ṭaibah, 1989), 71.

²² Abū Ishāq Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm Al-Ša'labī, *Al-Kasyf Wa Al-Bayān 'an Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān*, vol. 3 (Jeddah: Dār al-Tafsīr, 2015), 155.

²³ Lihat Abū al-Lais Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm Al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr Al-'Ulūm*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1993), 101.

²⁴ Al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr Ma'ālim Al-Tanzīl*.

falā taj'alū lillāhi andāda. Al-Ša'labī offers two narrations: one from Ibn Mas'ūd, which explains that associating partners with Allah is a sin, and another from Ikrimah, which discusses the concept of minor *syirk*.²⁵

In the first discussion, the narration of Ibn 'Abbās that Ibn Kašir presents is sourced from al-Ṭabarī's and Ibn Abī Ḥātim's tafsirs. While Ibn Kašir retains the meaning of the narration, he makes certain modifications, such as omitting specific diction, particularly in Ibn Abī Ḥātim's interpretation, where he excludes the *isnād* and condenses the narration's content.²⁶ Similarly, Ibn Kašir also narrows the narration when quoting from al-Ṭabarī.²⁷ These changes—trimming the *isnād* and condensing the narration—result in a more concise explanation from Ibn Kašir compared to the earlier sources, indicating his adaptation of al-Ṭabarī's interpretation. Interestingly, Ibn Kašir's use of Ibn 'Abbās' narration aligns with that of al-Baghawī, though the resulting interpretations differ. Ibn Kašir employs the narration to emphasize the rationale for worshiping Allah, while al-Baghawī uses it to highlight God's oneness. The divergence in meaning, despite quoting the same narration, illustrates Ibn Kašir's transposition of Ibn 'Abbās' narration compared to al-Baghawī.

In his interpretation of *falā taj'alū lillāhi andāda*, Ibn Kašir cites one narration from Ibn 'Abbās, as recorded by al-Ṭabarī, and two narrations from Ibn 'Abbās quoted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim. While Ibn Kašir does not alter the substance of the narration, there are slight differences in diction compared to al-Ṭabarī²⁸ and Ibn Abī Ḥātim²⁹. Despite these variations, Ibn Kašir maintains the original meaning of the narration. The earlier tafsir that references this narration as an explanation is found in al-Ṭabarī's work, as previously discussed. Additionally, al-Baghawī includes a narration from al-Imām al-Bukhārī regarding major *syirk* (*asy-syirk al-akbar*) to explain the phrase *allažī ja'ala lakum al-arḍa firāsyā*.³⁰ The differences in how these narrations are used, and the choice of different narrations, reflect the subjective

²⁵ Al-Ša'labī, *Al-Kasyf Wa Al-Bayān 'an Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān*.

²⁶ This difference can be observed in how Ibn Kašir and Ibn Abī Ḥātim narrate Ibn 'Abbās' words. Unlike Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Kašir does not include the *isnād* before Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, as detailed in Ibn Abī Ḥātim's commentary, which lists Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā, Abū Gassān, and Salmah Ibn al-Faḍl. Additionally, while Ibn Abī Ḥātim separates the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās' narration into the phrases *yā ayyuhannās* and *u'budū rabbakum*, Ibn Kašir merges them into a single meaning, *yā ayyuhannās u'budū rabbakum*. See 'Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad bin Idrīs al-Rāzī Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm 'an Rasūlillāhi Wa Al-Šaḥābah Wa Al-Tābi'īn*, vol. 1 (Riyāḍ: Maktabah Nazār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1997), 59–60.

²⁷ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin Jarīr At-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Ay Al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1 (Kairo: Dār al-Hijr, 2001), 385.

²⁸ One of the diction differences between al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kašir is found in the final sentence of the explanation. Al-Ṭabarī uses the phrase *huwa al-ḥaqq lā syakka fih*, while Ibn Kašir adds the word *allažī* to make it *huwa al-ḥaqq allažī lā syakka fih*. See Kašir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 2000. dan At-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Ay Al-Qur'ān*.

²⁹ Another diction difference between Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Kašir appears in a sentence narrated by Ibn 'Abbās. Ibn Kašir includes the word *al-bāriḥah* in the phrase *lau lā kalbata hāzā la'atānā al-luṣṣūš al-bāriḥah*, a word absent in Ibn Abī Ḥātim's commentary. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm 'an Rasūlillāhi Wa Al-Šaḥābah Wa Al-Tābi'īn*. dan Kašir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 2000.

³⁰ Al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr Ma'ālim Al-Tanzil*.

dialectic in *tafsīr bi al-riwāyah*, highlighting Ibn Kaṣīr's contrasting approach to al-Baghawī. Furthermore, al-Ṣa'labī's citation of narrations from Ibn Mas'ūd and 'Ikrimah to explain *falā taj'alū lillāhi andāda*³¹ demonstrates the presence of subjectivity, even though Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretation aligns in meaning. The consistency in meaning, despite differences in diction, illustrates how Ibn Kaṣīr transforms al-Ṣa'labī's interpretation (see Table 1 for further details).

Table 1: Ibn Kaṣīr's Ideologeme in Relation to Previous Works of *Tafsīr bi al-Riwāyah*

No.	Tafsir figures	Ideologeme form	
		Al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22	
		The Command Worship	Prohibition to <i>syirk</i>
1.	Al-Ṭabarī	Transformation	Transformation
2.	Al-Samarqandī	-	-
3.	Al-Ṣa'labī	-	Transformation
4.	Al-Baghawī	Transposition	Opposition
5.	Ibn Abī Ḥātim	Transformation	-

The differing interpretations of historical narratives between Ibn Kaṣīr and al-Baghawī in the exegesis of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21 reveal a mechanism of transposition. Ibn Kaṣīr's alteration of the narrative structure from that of al-Baghawī reflects a move towards a monovalent interpretation, emphasizing a singular narrative identity. Conversely, in explaining QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 22, Ibn Kaṣīr introduces multiple narrations, referencing three distinct meanings. This approach contrasts with the works of al-Ṭabarī, al-Ṣa'labī, and al-Baghawī, who each present narrations pointing towards a single meaning. Ibn Kaṣīr's method of explanation, although influenced by previous interpretations, differs notably in how he positions and cites narrations compared to al-Baghawī, demonstrating his opposition to al-Baghawī's approach. While there are parallels between Ibn Kaṣīr's explanations and those of al-Ṭabarī and al-Ṣa'labī, differences in how the narratives are handled indicate a process of transformation. Among the various narrations presented, Ibn Kaṣīr selects the narration of al-Imām Ahmad as the definitive evidence for the prohibition against associating partners with Allah. This selection process, where one narration is singled out from among others, underscores the subjective element and oppositional mechanism within Ibn Kaṣīr's exegesis, which ultimately aims to monopolize the interpretation of the verse.

Ibn Kaṣīr's textual production reflects a dialogical engagement with the interpretations of previous exegetes. This interaction involves a complex interplay of influence, including criticism, addition, or modification of meanings established by earlier scholars. The variation in meaning provided by different *mufassirs* is a manifestation of the interpreter's subjectivity. This subjectivity is evident in Ibn Kaṣīr's work, particularly in his use of opposition, transposition, and transformation

³¹ Al-Ṣa'labī, *Al-Kasyf Wa Al-Bayān 'an Tafsīr Al-Qur'Ān*.

in the interpretation of historical narratives. For instance, his approach to selecting narrations for the interpretation of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 22 reveals a distinct contrast with al-Baghawī's methodology.³² Ibn Kaṣīr's use of the opposition mechanism against al-Baghawī's interpretation illustrates this subjectivity, as noted by Quraish Shihab, who argues that such differences reflect the inherent subjectivity in exegetical practices.³³

Subjectivity is intricately linked to the interpretation of texts, presenting inherent challenges in the process.³⁴ Factors such as the interpreter's background, social context, and psychological conditions contribute significantly to this subjectivity.³⁵ The trend of subjectivity in interpretation emerged during the Middle Ages, roughly between the 3rd and 9th centuries AH (9th to 15th centuries AD).³⁶ The establishment of the Abbasid dynasty in 132 AH (750 AD)³⁷ played a crucial role in the evolution of interpretative practices,³⁸ leading to diverse interpretive styles shaped by individual perspectives. The official endorsement of Mu'tazilah as the state ideology during the reign of Caliph al-Ma'mun (198-218 AH)³⁹ notably influenced interpretative approaches, particularly in theological matters.⁴⁰ During this period, various interpretative styles developed, including *fiqh* interpretations, such as *Tafsīr Ahkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Jaṣṣās; theological interpretations, such as *al-Kashshāf* by al-Zamakhsharī; and sufi interpretations, such as *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* by al-Tustarī.⁴¹

Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretative methods reflect a significant influence from his teacher, Ibn Taymīyah. Notable similarities exist between the principles of interpretation outlined in Ibn Kaṣīr's preamble and those described by Ibn Taymīyah in his *Muqaddimah fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr*. Despite these parallels, Ibn Kaṣīr does not explicitly credit Ibn Taymīyah as a source. References to Ibn Taymīyah appear in Ibn Kaṣīr's tafsir in relation to various verses, such as those in QS. al-Baqarah regarding the *fawātiḥ al-suwar*,⁴² QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 240⁴³ and [2]: 275⁴⁴, as well as QS. al-Nisā

³² While Ibn Kaṣīr uses narrations on major *syirk* to explain the verse *falā taj'alū lillāhi andādā*, al-Baghawī employs similar narrations to clarify the phrase *allaḥi ja'ala lakum al-arḍa firāsyā*.

³³ Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an Jilid 2* (Ciputat: Penerbit Lentera Hati, 2011), 530.

³⁴ Zuhairi Misrawi, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Toleransi; Tafsir Tematik Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamīn* (Jakarta: Pustaka Oasis, 2017), 107.

³⁵ Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qur'an Jilid 2*.

³⁶ Abdul Mustaqim, *Dinamika Sejarah Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Studi Aliran-Aliran Tafsir Dari Periode Klasik, Pertengahan, Hingga Modern-Kontemporer Edisi Revisi* (Yogyakarta: Adab Press, 2014), 89.

³⁷ Philip K. Hitti, *History of The Arabs* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 288.

³⁸ Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010), 46.

³⁹ Ahmad Sugiri, *Dimensi Politik Pada Epistemologi Teologi Islam Pada Masa Pemerintahan Bani Umaiyah Dan Abbasiyah* (Serang: A-Empat, 2021), 66.

⁴⁰ Lendy Zelvian Adhari (ed), *Struktur Konseptual Ushul Fiqh* (Bandung: Widina Bhakti Persada Bandung, 2021), 327.

⁴¹ Abd. Rahman, *Ideologi Dalam Tafsir Indonesia; Tafsir An-Nur Karya Hasbi As-Shiddieqy* (Depok: Rajawali Pers, 2020), 29-30.

⁴² Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 2000.

⁴³ Ibn Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, vol. 2 (Kairo: al-Farūq al-Ḥadīshah li al-Ṭibā'ah, 2000), 411.

⁴⁴ Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 2000.

[4]: 23⁴⁵ and [4]: 78⁴⁶. The alignment in interpretative principles, alongside explicit mentions of Ibn Taymīyah, suggests that Ibn Kaṣīr's tafsir is deeply influenced by his teacher. This influence is also evident in Ibn Kaṣīr's monovalent approach to theological verses, mirroring Ibn Taymīyah's style. While Ibn Taymīyah presents his views directly and critically,⁴⁷ Ibn Kaṣīr's approach is subtler, using numerous narrations to ultimately convey a singular meaning.

The Significance of Ibn Kaṣīr's Subjectivity in Interpreting QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22

The presence of subjectivity in interpretation supports Habermas' view that knowledge is always intertwined with particular interests, implying that truly value-free knowledge is unattainable.⁴⁸ The notion of value-free knowledge, which suggests that science should operate independently of external values, contrasts with the reality that values inevitably influence the production of knowledge. This is evident in the work of Ibn Kaṣīr, whose interpretations are shaped by his personal experiences, including his intellectual background, the historical context, and socio-historical factors. These influences collectively affect Ibn Kaṣīr's approach to interpreting verses.⁴⁹

Ibn Kaṣīr's approach to interpretation, particularly in his selection of different narrations, reflects his subjectivity in understanding the meaning of a verse. In theological matters, he employs mechanisms of transformation, transposition, and opposition in relation to the narratives presented by earlier interpreters. For instance, in interpreting QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 22, Ibn Kaṣīr uses an opposition mechanism against al-Baghawī by presenting a different narration. In contrast, when engaging with al-Ṭabarī and al-Ša'labī, he employs a transformation mechanism, altering the diction to provide a revised interpretation. Additionally, Ibn Kaṣīr utilizes the transposition mechanism in interpreting QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21, offering the same narration with a different meaning compared to al-Baghawī. Conversely, not all interpreters address the same themes; for example, al-Samarqandī, al-Ša'labī, and Ibn 'Aṭīyah do not provide narrations in their interpretations of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21.

The difference in handling historical data between Ibn Kaṣīr and earlier interpreters is evident in his use of single interpretations for theological verses. Ibn

⁴⁵ Ibn Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, vol. 3 (Kairo: al-Farūq al-Ḥadīṣah li al-Ṭibā'ah, 2000), 418.

⁴⁶ Ibn Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, vol. 4 (Kairo: al-Farūq al-Ḥadīṣah li al-Ṭibā'ah, 2000), 168.

⁴⁷ Hamka discusses Ibn Taymīyah's views on tawhid and wasilah, as expressed in his work *Qā'idah Jalilah fi al-Tawassul wa al-Wasilah*, which opposed practices like grave pilgrimage and seeking intercession from the deceased. See Abdulmalik Abdulkarim Amrullah, *Tafsīr Al-Azhar*, vol. 3 (Singapore: Kerjaya Printing Industries Pte Ltd, 2001), 1727. For more on Ibn Taymīyah's stance, refer to Aḥmad Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taimīyah, *Qā'idah Jalilah Fi Al-Tawassul Wa Al-Wasilah* (Riyād: Ri'āṣah Idārah al-Buḥūs al-'Ilmiyyah wa al-Iftā', 1999), 47-49.

⁴⁸ Jurgen Habermas, *Ilmu Dan Teknologi Sebagai Ideologi*, trans. Hassan Basari (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1990), 158.

⁴⁹ Trio Kurniawan, *Personal Knowledge Elaborasi Konsep Pengetahuan Personal Michael Polanyi* (Malang: Discourse Book, 2022), 102.

Kašir makes an effort to unify the meanings of various narrations he presents. For example, in his interpretation of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 22, he uses al-Imām Ahmad's narration as the primary evidence to demonstrate the prohibition of associating partners with Allah. This narration serves as a key explanation supporting the meaning of al-Imām Ahmad's statement. Ibn Kašir consistently applies this approach in interpreting theological verses, aiming for a cohesive meaning as seen in his use of the opposition mechanism.

Ibn Kašir's approach to interpretation, which often leads to a singular understanding, reflects his intellectual alignment with his teacher, Ibn Taymiyah. To achieve this, Ibn Kašir selectively employed narrations that supported his arguments in explaining theological verses. For instance, in his interpretation of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 22, although he presents various narrations on the prohibition of associating partners with Allah, he ultimately favors the narration of al-Imām Ahmad as the definitive evidence. This preference for al-Imām Ahmad's narration indicates Ibn Kašir's tendency to prioritize certain interpretations over others, demonstrating his alignment with Ibn Taymiyah's views. This influence is particularly evident in Ibn Kašir's focus on the Hambali school,⁵⁰ which was significant to Ibn Taymiyah's intellectual development due to his father's prominent role in the Hambali's madhhab and hadith scholarship.

Ibn Kašir's subjectivity in interpreting theological verses to arrive at a single meaning reflects his effort to establish a definitive interpretation model. This approach introduces a distinct nuance in his work compared to previous interpreters. While Ibn Kašir sought to apply Ibn Taymiyah's thought pattern on theological issues, he employed a different methodology. Ibn Taymiyah was known for his direct and critical stance on opposing views, firmly defending his beliefs. In contrast, Ibn Kašir embraced the substance of Ibn Taymiyah's assertiveness but presented it in a more nuanced and accessible manner. By focusing on the narrative text and guiding the interpretation toward a unified meaning of theological verses, Ibn Kašir's approach reflects his alignment with Ibn Taymiyah's assertive stance. This indicates that while Ibn Kašir aimed to innovate within the field of interpretation, he did so without disregarding Ibn Taymiyah's influence or his strong positions on theological matters.

A Critique of Ibn Kašir's Subjectivity in Quranic Interpretation

Ibn Kašir's interpretation of theological verses, marked by subjectivity and personal interests, often appears forced. This forced interpretation highlights the dominance of Ibn Kašir's subjectivity in his Quranic exegesis.⁵¹ The authority of an

⁵⁰ Ibn Taimiyyah's connection to the Hambali school stemmed from his father's influential role as a leader of the school and a professor of hadith at a prominent university in Damascus. This familial and educational environment provided Ibn Taimiyyah with a solid foundation in the Hambali madhhab, which significantly shaped and informed his broader intellectual pursuits. For more details, see Bukhori At-Tunisi, *Konsep Teologi Ibn Taimiyyah* (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2017), 2-3.

⁵¹ Aksin Wijaya, *Arah Baru Studi Uloomul Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2020), 209.

interpreter to interpret verses can lead to positioning the Quran as an object of analysis, which may create a disconnect between the interpreter's understanding and the intended meaning of the Quran. This subjective authority and the objectification of the Quran can result in interpretations that serve ideological purposes or support specific truth claims.⁵² Consequently, the interpreter may selectively use verses or narratives to align with their pre-existing beliefs.⁵³

The selective use of narrations by Ibn Kaṣīr reflects his interpretive authority. He directs the chosen narrations towards his desired meanings, as demonstrated in his handling of Ibn 'Abbās' narration from al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21. Ibn Kaṣīr narrows and refines the narration, showing his subjective influence.⁵⁴ Similarly, his adaptation of Ibn 'Abbās' narration, which differs from al-Baghawī's in meaning,⁵⁵ illustrates his mechanism of transposition. Additionally, Ibn Kaṣīr's preference for Aḥmad bin Hanbal's narration in interpreting QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 22, over other available narrations, highlights his effort to align the interpretation with his perspective.⁵⁶ This approach contrasts with al-Baghawī's, both in the application and validation of narrations, reflecting Ibn Kaṣīr's opposition to al-Baghawī's interpretation.⁵⁷

The dominance of Ibn Kaṣīr's subjectivity in interpreting the text, as evidenced by his mechanisms of transformation, transposition, and opposition, highlights how he uses the selection of narrations to legitimize or reinforce his beliefs. His expertise in hadith leads him to employ these narrations as tools for explaining the verses. However, this approach, which is heavily influenced by his own subjectivity, affects the alignment between the intended meaning of the Qur'an and Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretation. As a result, reconciling the meaning between the two becomes challenging, as Ibn Kaṣīr's interpretive subjectivity positions the Qur'anic text as an object rather than a neutral point of reference.

Understanding the meaning of the Quran requires positioning both the interpreter and the text as subjects. This means acknowledging that the Quran possesses its own distinct meaning, and the interpreter must strive to reconcile their understanding with the text's intended message. Effective interpretation involves integrating the interpreter's perspective with the Qur'anic intent. This integration is crucial because both the Qur'an and the interpreter bring their own subjectivities, which shape the resulting tafsir. Abdul Mustaqim identifies two main factors contributing to variations in interpretation. The first factor is internal to the Quran,

⁵² Didi Junaedi, *Menaḥsir Teks, Memahami Konteks (Menelisik Akar Perbedaan Penafsiran Terhadap Al-Qur'an)* (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2016), 73.

⁵³ Rahman, *Ideologi Dalam Tafsir Indonesia; Tafsir An-Nur Karya Hasbi As-Shiddieqy*.

⁵⁴ The difference in how Ibn Kaṣīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim present Ibn 'Abbās' narration is notable. Ibn Kaṣīr omits the isnad before Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, unlike Ibn Abī Ḥātim, and consolidates the interpretation into a single meaning. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm 'an Rasūlillāhi Wa Al-Ṣaḥābah Wa Al-Tābi'īn*. Compare with Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 2000.

⁵⁵ Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 2000. Bandingkan dengan Al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr Ma'ālim Al-Tanzīl*.

⁵⁶ Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm*, 2000.

⁵⁷ Al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr Ma'ālim Al-Tanzīl*.

including the text's various readings (*qira'at*) and the multiple meanings that a single word can convey (*musytarak*). The second factor is external, encompassing influences on the interpreter such as socio-historical conditions, political context, and prevailing ideologies of the time.⁵⁸ Additionally, the richness of the Arabic language, which is the Quran's medium, plays a significant role. The language's extensive vocabulary can generate diverse meanings, further informing the interpretation of the Quran.⁵⁹

Given this context, interpreters should aim to align their understanding with the meaning intended by the Quran. While ideological subjectivity is inevitable, it can be minimized by treating the Quran as a subject in its own right, seeking to uncover its true meaning. Ibn Kašīr attempts to introduce a new approach in *tafsīr bi al-riwāyah* by unifying the meanings of various narrations in theological verses. He incorporates the assertive spirit of Ibn Taymīyah, though this approach reveals his own ideological biases. Consequently, his interpretation sometimes appears forced, as he selectively chooses narrations that bolster his arguments. Ibn Kašīr's approach often positions the Quran as an object of interpretation influenced by his subjectivity. This method can overshadow the Quran's inherent meanings, which require a communicative approach to interpretation. Such an approach aims to reconcile the subjective interpretations of both the Quran and the interpreter, thereby minimizing ideological bias in the interpretive process.

Conclusion

This study reveals that *tafsīr bi ar-riwāyah*, contrary to expectations, does not escape interpretative subjectivity. Instead, it uncovers subjective narratives through the selective use of narrations that align with Ibn Kašīr's preferred meanings in his *tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, which employs the *bi ar-riwāyah* method. The model of *riwāyah* selection is evident in Ibn Kašīr's interpretation of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22, the focus of this research. This selection process is analyzed by comparing it with other interpretations that use the same method. The tendency for opposition and transformation in Ibn Kašīr's interpretation highlights his inclination to narrow meanings through alterations and the rejection of traditions similar to those used by al-Baghawī and al-Ša'labī. Meanwhile, the meaning derived from the same hadith is adapted to reflect Ibn Kašīr's preferences, resulting in differences from al-Ṭabarī's interpretations. This approach illustrates the subject-object dynamic that shapes the subjective model of meaning in interpretation.

The identification of subjective narratives in Ibn Kašīr's interpretation, particularly through his use of the *bi ar-riwāyah* method, emerges from analyzing how *tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīm* interacts with previous interpretations sharing similar criteria. This analysis, known as intertextuality, explores three relational forms:

⁵⁸ Mustaqim, *Dinamika Sejarah Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Studi Aliran-Aliran Tafsir Dari Periode Klasik, Pertengahan, Hingga Modern-Kontemporer Edisi Revisi*.

⁵⁹ Quraish Shihab, *Mukjizat Al-Qur'an Ditinjau Dari Aspek Kebahasaan, Isyarat Ilmiah Dan Pemberitaan Gaib* (Bandung: Mizan Pustaka, 2007), 98.

opposition, transposition, and transformation. These forms reveal the role of the narrator in engaging with earlier texts. However, this study is limited to QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 21-22 and does not address appropriation in other verses. Further research is required to fully validate the presence of subjectivity in Ibn Kaṣīr's *tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīm*.

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