

The Construction of Women's Faults in the Narrative of the Fruit of Khuldi: A Textual Analysis of the Qur'an and Tafsir Tradition

Research Article

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Abstract. In general, popular narratives often portray Eve as the main cause of humanity's fall. However, a textual reading of the Qur'anic verses shows that Adam and Eve are depicted as collective subjects in the act of transgression, while the primary source of temptation is explicitly attributed to Satan. This study aims to examine the construction of female fault in the narrative of the forbidden fruit by tracing the differences between the Qur'anic text and the development of its interpretation in religious tradition. This study uses a qualitative approach with library research methods, through content analysis and a critical-hermeneutic approach to the Qur'anic verses as well as classical and contemporary exegesis works. The research results indicate that the construction of women's errors does not originate from the text of the Qur'an, but is formed through a historical process involving the incorporation of *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives, reproduction within exegetical traditions, and the influence of a patriarchal socio-cultural context. Therefore, it is very important to engage in a comprehensive analysis of religious texts, taking into account the socio-cultural context in which they were produced, to prevent the perpetuation of deep-rooted gender bias that can distort our understanding of sacred writings. This approach will facilitate a more balanced and fair interpretation of the narratives surrounding the fruit of the khuldi, allowing it to be appreciated as a profound illustration of the collective moral obligations inherent to human experience across diverse cultures and traditions.

Keywords:

The Qur'an, the fruit of khuldi, gender, the construction of female faults, interpretation.

Introduction

The narrative about the story of Adam and Eve in religious discourse is often understood through the assumption that Eve was the one who tempted Adam to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree, thus becoming the main cause of humanity's descent to earth. This particular understanding is not only limited to popular religious narratives but also significantly shapes the perception of women in the context of ethics and transgression. However, when the story is read directly through the text of the Qur'an, there is no explicit explanation that places Eve as the tempter or as more guilty than Adam (Ghozali, 2019; Natsir, 2025). The gap between the text of the Qur'an and the developing narrative is what raises critical questions about how the meaning of the story of the forbidden fruit has shifted in interpretive traditions and religious discourse, and how this shift contributes to the construction of women's faults.

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This shift in meaning did not occur suddenly, but rather through a long process of interpretation and the transmission of religious narratives. In a number of exegesis works and popular religious discourses, the story of Adam and Eve is often read with an emphasis on Eve's role as the instigator of transgression, even though such emphasis is not explicitly found in the Qur'anic text. This narrative is then reproduced and widely accepted as an almost unquestionable truth, thereby shaping a theological understanding that places women in a problematic position from the very beginning of human history. The research of Alisa et al., (2024) dan Sholikhah (2025) in the study of interpretive criticism shows that traditional interpretations often reflect gender bias and the subordinate position of women in religious narratives, while contemporary hermeneutic approaches seek to correct this toward justice and gender equality. Therefore, tracing how the construction of women's faults is formed and legitimized through the interpretation of the story of the forbidden fruit becomes important, not only to understand the Quranic text more fairly, but also to critique the social and symbolic impacts of developing religious narratives.

In the Qur'an, the story of Adam and Eve is presented as part of the narrative about the first humans who experienced temptation, made mistakes, and then received guidance and God's forgiveness (Sipayung, 2023). The temptation to approach the forbidden tree is depicted as an experience that Adam and his partner went through together, without any special explanation that places Eve as the more dominant or more guilty party. The wording of the verses used tends to be collective, indicating the involvement of both in the event (Naser, 2019). The story of the Khuldi fruit in the Qur'an is not intended to emphasize gender-based mistakes, but rather to present human experiences in facing temptation, realizing errors, and returning to God through repentance (Permana & Handoyo, 2025).

The narrative that places Eve as the main cause of mankind's downfall has actually become stronger in religious tradition through the process of interpretation and the long-standing transmission of stories (Janah, 2017). In the records of Islamic intellectual history, the story of Adam and Eve is often supplemented with additional narratives that are not always derived from the Qur'an, including those from *Isrā'īliyyāt* (Maarif & Prasetiawati, 2020). Hamdi Putra Ahmad (2017) In his research, he mentioned that Husain al-Zahabi put forward two definitions regarding *Isrā'īliyyāt*. First, *Isrā'īliyyāt* is understood as various stories or narratives that enter into the literature of tafsir and hadith, whose chains of narration originate from Jewish, Christian, as well as other non-Islamic sources. Second, some mufassir extend the scope of this term by including narrations that have no basis in early authoritative sources, but are suspected to be constructions deliberately inserted into tafsir and hadith by parties with certain interests in Islam.

Interestingly, in the authentic hadith tradition, the narrative about the events in paradise actually positions Adam as the main actor, not Eve. As narrated from Abu Hurairah: *"Adam and Moses debated, then Moses said to him: O Adam, you are our father, you have disappointed us and expelled us from paradise. Adam said to him: O Moses, Allah has chosen you with His word and inscribed it with His hand, do you blame me for something that Allah had destined for me forty years before*

He created me? So Adam advised Moses, and Adam advised Moses three times" (Al-Bukhari, 2001, p. 6614). This hadith significantly indicates that even in authoritative accounts, Eve is not at all mentioned as the party at fault for humanity's fall from paradise. On the contrary, Adam himself is the main subject in the narrative, while also affirming that the event is understood within the framework of divine destiny, not as an individual fault attributed to women.

These stories are partly shaped by previous religious traditions, incorporated into collections of interpretations and popular religious knowledge. Through this process, the role of Eve underwent a shift in meaning, from an early human figure who also faced mistakes and sought repentance to a representation of temptation and a cause of the fall of humanity (Permana & Handoyo, 2025; Sholikhah, 2025). It is this shift that then shaped and solidified the narrative of women's fault in religious discourse up to the present day. The narrative that associates Eve as the source of human downfall did not remain merely a theological story, but also influenced social and moral constructions related to women. When women from the very beginning of human history are positioned as sources of temptation and fault, the assumption is formed that women have a more problematic moral tendency compared to men (Ma'shumah, 2012). In socio-religious practice, this understanding often has implications for justifying unequal gender relations, stricter moral surveillance of women, and restrictions on their social roles in the name of religious teachings. Thus, the story of the forbidden fruit is no longer understood merely as a spiritual narrative about human error and repentance, but also functions as a symbol that contributes to the formation of social and moral structures that are gender-biased (Harahap, 2024; Rini, 2019).

A number of studies have examined the story of Adam and Eve in the Qur'an using various approaches. The linguistic approach was studied by Hamdi Putra Ahmad (2017) It shows that the use of grammatical forms such as dual pronouns (*mutसानا*) in the relevant verses depicts that Adam and his partner both become subjects in the event of eating the forbidden fruit. This finding confirms that the text of the Qur'an does not explicitly place women as the more guilty party. However, studies like this generally focus more on the structure of the Qur'anic language to demonstrate the principle of gender equality, while analyses regarding how the construction of women's fault is formed and transformed in exegetical traditions and religious discourse are still relatively limited.

Mudakir et al. (2022) In his research on semantic studies, Toshihiko Izutsu also showed that the Qur'an does not explicitly mention the name of Eve as a specific figure; the text more often uses terms such as *zawjahu/zawjaha* (his/her spouse) or *nafs wāḥidah* (a single soul) to describe Adam's partner. This indicates that the identification of Eve as a clear and personified figure developed more in the tradition of exegesis than in the Qur'anic text itself. Mudrikah et al. (2019) studied the modern interpretation of Hawa from the perspective of Muhammad Asad and Christoph Barth, also emphasizing that the Qur'an depicts Adam and his partner as subjects who both experience the temptation of Satan and make mistakes, so there is no textual basis that specifically blames women, and moral responsibility is understood collectively. On the other hand, the study of the feminist approach to

the story of Adam and Eve conducted by Permana and Handoyo (2025) attempts to uncover the possibility of patriarchal bias in interpretive traditions, by showing that some classical interpretations are likely influenced by social contexts that place women in subordinate positions. Royani Harahap (2025) in her theological study of the story of Adam and Eve, also emphasizes that the main focus of the narrative is not on determining who is most to blame, but rather on the dynamics of sin, repentance, and God's grace. From this perspective, the story becomes a mirror of the anthropological condition of humans who are prone to mistakes but are still given the opportunity to receive Divine forgiveness.

However, despite various semantic, linguistic, modern exegesis, feminist, and theological approaches being applied, most studies still revolve around the analysis of Qur'anic texts or general criticism of patriarchal interpretations. Studies that specifically explore how the construction of women's faults is formed through the shift between Qur'anic texts and the development of their interpretation in the exegesis tradition, and how that shift influences socio-religious discourse, are still relatively rare.

Although previous studies have examined the story of Adam and Eve through linguistic (Ahmad, 2017), semantic (Mudakir et al., 2022), feminist (Permana & Handoyo, 2025), and theological approaches (Royani Harahap et al., 2025), most of them focus primarily on proving that the Qur'anic text does not explicitly blame women for the transgression. Existing studies generally analyze the grammatical structure of the verses, explore the semantic meaning of key terms, or critique patriarchal interpretations in a general manner. However, there remains limited research that systematically investigates how the construction of women's fault emerged through the interaction between the Qur'anic text, Isrā'īlyyāt narratives, classical exegetical traditions, and patriarchal socio-cultural contexts. This gap is significant because the widespread perception of Eve as the primary cause of humanity's fall is not merely a textual issue but also a product of historical and interpretive developments.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative analysis that connects four dimensions simultaneously the textual structure of the Qur'an, the influence of Isrā'īlyyāt narratives, the interpretations of classical and contemporary mufasssirs, and the role of patriarchal socio-cultural structures in shaping religious discourse. By combining these dimensions, this research offers a more comprehensive explanation of how the construction of women's fault was historically produced and legitimized within Islamic interpretive traditions.

Based on this research gap, this article seeks to examine the construction of women's faults in the narrative of the forbidden fruit by tracing the relationship between the Qur'anic text, supporting reports, and the development of interpretation in the exegesis tradition. The analysis is conducted through textual reading of the verses related to the story of Adam and his partner, accompanied by a critical study of the interpretations of classical and modern commentators. Thus, this study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to gender studies and the Qur'an, while also offering a fairer reading of the role of women in the story of the

creation of the first human, as well as opening a space for deconstruction of religious narratives that have so far legitimized gender bias.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a type of research in the form of library research that focuses on the analysis of religious texts and exegesis works related to the story of Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit from a gender perspective (Fitriyah & Rahman, 2024). This approach is in line with recent studies on gender hermeneutics in Qur'anic interpretation, which also rely on classical and contemporary literature studies. The primary sources of the research include Qur'anic verses that recount Adam and his partner, as well as classical exegesis books such as At-Tabari and Al-Qurtubi, and contemporary exegesis like Tafsir Al-Misbah and feminist hermeneutical works such as those by Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas (Islamy, 2020; Ismail et al., 2024). Secondary sources in the form of nationally accredited journal articles (Sinta) and reputable international journals that examine gender bias in exegesis, critical hermeneutics, and gender studies in Islam, which were traced through scientific databases using keywords such as "gender", "tafsir", "hermeneutics", "Qur'anic interpretation", and "patriarchy" (Niam et al., 2025).

Data collection was carried out through documentation studies, namely identifying, collecting, and intensively reading relevant texts, and then noting the verses, traditions, and explanations of exegetes related to the construction of "women's faults" in the story of the fruit of the khaldi. The data were then analyzed using qualitative content analysis and discourse/hermeneutic-critical analysis. Content analysis was used to code and categorize themes such as the representation of Eve's role, attribution of fault, the use of grammatical terms (*mutsanna*, collective), as well as the role of additional narratives (*Isrā'īliyyāt*) in shaping the narrative (Farid et al., 2023). Discourse analysis and critical-hermeneutics are used to examine how social, cultural, and patriarchal ideological contexts influence the way mufassirs narrate the story of Adam and Eve and position women, by utilizing a philosophical and critical hermeneutical framework as applied in gender-sensitive exegesis studies. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation between classical exegesis, modern exegesis, and contemporary academic studies, as well as repeated reading and systematic recording of analytical traces as recommended in qualitative research methodology and rigorous literature review (Hairiyah et al., 2024).

This study uses two main verses, namely QS. al-Baqarah verses 35-36 and QS. al-A'raf verses 19-23, to examine the narrative construction of the story of Adam and Eve comprehensively in the Qur'an. The analysis focuses on the interpretations of classical mufassir, particularly at-Ṭabari and al-Qurṭubi, regarding these two sets of verses. The selection of these two mufassir is based on their representative contributions to the classical exegesis tradition, where at-Ṭabari is known for his expansive narrative approach, while al-Qurṭubi presents a more systematic and normative analytical style. Thus, this study seeks to investigate how the narrative construction in the Qur'an is understood and interpreted within the framework of classical tafsir, as well as to identify possible biases in the interpretation process.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study applies source triangulation by comparing data from multiple categories of sources, including Qur'anic verses, classical tafsir works, contemporary tafsir literature, hadith collections, and recent academic studies on gender and Qur'anic interpretation. Through this triangulation process, interpretations and arguments are cross-checked to identify consistencies and discrepancies among sources. In addition, temporal triangulation is employed by examining interpretations from different historical periods, ranging from classical scholars such as al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī to contemporary scholars including M. Quraish Shihab, Amina Wadud, and Asma Barlas. This approach enables the study to trace shifts in interpretation across time and to critically evaluate the socio-cultural influences underlying the construction of women's fault in the narrative of the forbidden fruit. The use of triangulation strengthens the credibility of the findings by minimizing interpretive bias and ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the Qur'anic text, tafsir traditions, and socio-cultural contexts (Creswell, 1994).

Results and Discussion

Results

The Narrative of the Khuldi Fruit in the Qur'an

The Qur'anic narrative about the event of the khuldi fruit in the story of Adam and Eve is spread across several verses, including QS. al-Baqarah: 35-36 and QS. al-A'raf: 19-23 (Andani & Romario, 2023). The entire verse presents the same scenario, namely Adam and Eve are commanded to live in paradise, allowed to enjoy all the pleasures within it with one prohibition, which is not to approach a certain tree. The temptation of Satan then leads both of them to violate that prohibition, resulting in their descent to earth as a moral consequence.

Textually, the Qur'an depicts the series of events consistently using the dual pronoun form (*mutsannā*), as in the expression *fa-azallahumā al-syayṭān* (Satan misled both of them) and *fa-akalā minhā* (both of them ate from it). This linguistic structure indicates that the subject of the transgression is always collective, involving Adam and Eve, rather than either party individually (Ahmad, 2017). Thus, error is positioned as a collective act, not as a sin attributed to women. At the same time, the Qur'an explicitly places Satan as the source of temptation and a contributing factor to wrongdoing. The focus of the blame is directed at Satan's deceit and the general weakness of humans in facing temptation, not on the 'nature' of a particular gender. This aligns with the reading of *maqāṣid* that emphasizes the values of equality (*al-musāwah*) and freedom accompanied by responsibility (*al-ḥurriyyah ma'a al-mas'ūliyyah*) in the story of Adam's expulsion from paradise (M. R. Maulana & Rifdi, 2025). Men and women are equally tested, can equally slip, and are equally able to repent and be forgiven.

The text of the Qur'an never mentions the name Eve throughout this series of stories, but uses the general term *zawjahu* (his spouse). A linguistic-thematic study shows that if the structure of pronouns and key terms in these verses is read holistically and linked to the principle of equality in creation in QS. an-Nisa: 1, then the position of women (Eve) is always equated with Adam, not placed as the more guilty party or as the main instigator of sin (Ahmad, 2017; Ismail et al., 2024).

Therefore, textually, the Qur'an does not provide a basis for the construction that blames women in the story of the forbidden fruit.

وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾

We said, "O Adam, dwell you and your wife in Paradise, and eat freely from its provisions as you wish, but do not approach this tree, lest you become among the wrongdoers!"

Then, the devil caused both of them to slip away from Him so that they were removed from all the bliss when they were there (in paradise). We said, "Descend, some of you will be enemies to others, and there will be a dwelling and enjoyment for you on earth until a specified time." (QS. Al-Baqarah 35-36)

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَسَوَّسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْآتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِيَّاهُ فَقَسَمَهُمَا إِيَّاهُ فَدَلَّهُمَا بَعُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْضِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْتُ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢١﴾ قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

(Allah said,) "O Adam, dwell you and your wife in this paradise. Then eat whatever you both like and do not approach this one tree so that you both do not become among the wrongdoers."

Then, the devil whispered (evil thoughts) to both of them, which resulted in something being revealed to both of them that was hidden from their private parts. He (the devil) said, "Your Lord did not forbid you two from approaching this tree, except that He does not want you two to become angels or you two to be among the eternal ones (in paradise)."

He (the devil) swore to both of them, "Indeed, I am truly among the ones who give you both advice."

He (the devil) led both of them astray with deceit. So, when both of them had tasted (the fruit of) that tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to cover themselves with leaves in Paradise. Their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you both from that tree and did I not tell you that indeed Satan is a clear enemy to you both?"

Both of them said, 'Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will surely be among the losers.' (QS. Al-A'raf 19-23)

The Influence of *Isrā'iliyyāt* Narratives

Leila Ahmed (2021) In her work *Women and Gender in Islam*, she explains that the emergence of Islam cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context of the Arab society where the revelation was delivered. The Qur'an appeared in a specific historical environment and interacted with traditions that had previously developed. In this regard, there is an implicit acknowledgment of the connection with earlier religious traditions, specifically Jewish and Christian, each based on the Torah and the Gospel.

The implications of this interconnectedness are evident in a number of normative and narrative aspects in the Qur'an. Some legal provisions show continuity or similarity with legal practices that were already known in Jewish and Christian communities (Rahmatullah, 2019). Similarly, the stories contained in the Qur'an, whether related to the prophets, previous communities, figures of authority, or non-human beings such as Satan, show intersections with narratives that had previously appeared in earlier sacred traditions. This indicates that the Qur'an does not merely repeat these stories, but often presents a new perspective or correction to the existing narratives, especially those related to the history of the prophets and previous communities that are popular among the followers of the Abrahamic religions (Affani, 2017; Ahmad, 2017).

From that definition, the concept of *Isrā'īliyyāt* becomes important to explain how the construction of women's faults in the story of Eve can be formed and persist in the interpretive tradition (Fadlillah, 2019). For example, in At-Tabari's history in *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, which is categorized as *Isrā'īliyyāt*, there are frequent narratives that portray Eve as the first to be tempted by Satan, even as the primary cause of Adam's fall from paradise. Such narratives are not explicitly found in the Qur'an but bear a strong resemblance to stories in Judeo-Christian tradition, particularly in the Book of Genesis, where the woman (Eve) is depicted as the initiator of the transgression against God's command. Although the Qur'an explicitly states that Adam and Eve were both tempted by Satan, interpretations influenced by *Isrā'īliyyāt* portray women as the inferior party and form the view that the origin of women comes from the rib of men (Akmaliah & Khomisah, 2020; Janah, 2017).

Another example, in al-Tabari's exegesis through his work *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, there is a narration that shows the influence of previous traditions in explaining the story of Adam and Eve. To understand this form of influence more concretely, it is important to see how the details from the Book of Genesis also color the interpretation and expand the narrative that is not explained in detail in the Qur'an. In the comparative study by Muhammad Amin (2020) and Hamdi Putra Ahmad (2017), it is seen that the similarity between the two traditions lies more in the substance of the stories, whereas the differences appear in the narrative details, which in fact become the entry point for the *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives into the exegesis.

These details include, among others, the narrative of the creation of Eve from Adam's rib while he was asleep, the presence of the serpent as a mediator of temptation, and the assumption that Eve was the first to be tempted and became the cause of Adam's fall. In addition, there are also expansions of the story in the form of dialogues after the transgression, such as the story of Adam hiding and covering his body with leaves, as well as more specific details of punishment, such as the suffering of women during pregnancy and hard labor for Adam. These various additions do not have the same emphasis in the Qur'an, and are therefore often regarded as problematic *Isrā'īliyyāt* elements that contribute to forming certain biases in interpretation (Amin, 2020).

The entry of *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives into tafsir literature then contributed to the formation of gender bias in interpretation. When these stories are accepted without a strict verification process, they have the potential to shift the focus of the Qur'anic

narrative, which was originally collective the fault of Adam and Eve into a narrative that unilaterally blames women (Irsyadunnas, 2015). In this context, *Isrā'īyyāt* not only functions as additional information, but also as a medium that carries certain cultural values, including patriarchal views that have taken root in earlier traditions (Permana & Handoyo, 2025).

As a result, the figure of Eve in some interpretations is no longer seen as an equal subject in the human existential experience, that is, equally tested, tempted, and repenting, but is reduced to a symbol of moral weakness and a source of seduction. This reduction further reinforces the assessment of women in religious discourse, which impacts the broader social formation (Janah, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a critical reading of the *Isrā'īyyāt* narratives in tafsir, especially those concerning the story of Eve. By positioning the Qur'an as the primary reference and separating it from problematic additional narratives, a more just and balanced understanding can be rebuilt.

A study on *Isrā'īyyāt* written by Norhidayat (2016) emphasized that the main problem is not merely the existence of these reports, but the way they are received and used in exegesis without adequate verification of the chain of transmission (*isnad*) and content (*matan*). When weak or strange reports are treated as if they are equivalent to the revealed text, a shift in authority occurs from the Qur'an to secondary narratives that do not always align with its theological vision (Mawardi, 2022). It is here that cultural biases, including patriarchy, more easily infiltrate and color interpretation.

In gender issues, it is shown that the infiltration of *Isrā'īyyāt* is often interrelated with the patriarchal worldview that has long existed in society, thus reinforcing interpretations that demean women (Ahmad, 2017). For example, the narrative about the creation of women from a crooked rib and Eve's involvement as Adam's main tempter becomes a symbolic foundation for the assumption that women are essentially weak, irrational, and prone to leading men astray. In fact, such constructions are difficult to sustain if the Qur'an is used as the sole reference and read with a linguistic approach (Ningsih & Susanti, 2025).

Muhammad Amin (2020) In his research, he also reminds that criticism of *Isrā'īyyāt* should not be oversimplified as if every exegesis containing them is necessarily gender-biased. There are commentators who cite these narrations merely to show a spectrum of opinions, then still base their conclusions on the general principles of the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah. Such an approach shows that the relationship between *Isrā'īyyāt* and gender bias is complex; the same narration can be interpreted differently depending on the methodological framework and ethical sensitivity of the commentator (Norhidayat, 2016).

From the perspective of feminist hermeneutics, the problem lies in the dominance of the male reader's horizon and the absence of women's experiences in the process of meaning production. Historical-ethical hermeneutic studies affirm that many verses actually contain principles of reciprocity and gender justice, but are interpreted within the framework of a patriarchal social structure, thereby resulting in the legitimization of unequal power relations (Ningsih & Susanti, 2025). In the case of the story of Eve, *Isrā'īyyāt* becomes one of the media that mediates the

absorption of those patriarchal values into religious discourse, which is then considered normative (Hasan et al., 2022).

Along with the growing study of intertextuality and comparative studies of scriptures, it becomes increasingly evident that the Qur'an does not merely repeat earlier stories, but performs significant narrative and theological transformations (Dodds, 2022; Muhafizah, 2021). Research on the stories of Joseph, Noah, and the creation of the universe shows the Qur'an's pattern of simplifying details, shifting thematic focus to monotheism, moral responsibility, and ethical dimensions, as well as correcting aspects deemed theologically problematic (Prayogo et al., 2024; Ummu Salamah Al-Hasyimi et al., 2025). If this pattern is applied to the story of Adam and Eve, then it is reasonable that the narrative that emphasizes Eve's fault is actually contrary to the corrective spirit of the Qur'an itself (Dodds, 2022).

Therefore, a critical reading of *Isrā'īlyyāt*, especially those concerning female figures, must be accompanied by a theological reconstruction effort derived from the Qur'an's anthropological vision. Recent studies emphasize that humans (men and women) are placed as *khalīfah* with equal ethical responsibilities, not as superior or inferior parties (Dodds, 2022). Returning the story of Eve to this framework means seeing her not as a symbol of women's moral downfall, but as part of the human narrative that affirms equality in trials, negligence, and the possibility of repentance.

Ultimately, the critique of the influence of *Isrā'īlyyāt* in the construction of female fault in the story of Eve is part of a broader agenda, namely the purification of religious understanding from elements that are not aligned with the ethos of monotheism and justice. In this way, the tradition of exegesis is not rejected but invited to engage in dialogue again, narratives containing many gender biases are reread in the light of the Qur'an as the primary source, and women's experiences are given space as one of the legitimate horizons in the process of interpretation.

Views of Classical and Contemporary Scholars

Exegesis of Classical Scholars

This study selects At-Ṭabari and Al-Qurṭubi as the objects of study. At-Ṭabari is chosen because of his position as an early classical mufassir who compiles various interpretive traditions (*bi al-ma'tsur*) comprehensively and systematically, thus representing the early stage of Qur'anic interpretation codification, including in the story of Adam and Eve. Meanwhile, al-Qurṭubi is chosen because of his more analytical and reflective interpretive approach, which not only cites traditions but also provides linguistic, theological, and contextual explanations of the verses being interpreted. Therefore, this study seeks to trace the construction of women's mistakes in the narrative of the forbidden fruit through two different styles of interpretation, namely the transmitted interpretation systematically compiled in At-Ṭabari's work and the analytical interpretation developed in Al-Qurṭubi's work.

At-Ṭabari's interpretation in the exegesis *Jami' al-Bayan fi Ta'wil al-Qur'an* on QS. al-Baqarah verses 35-36 indicates a strong tendency to maintain the dual structure as found in the Qur'an. In his exegesis, At-Ṭabari said: *In this verse there is a clear indication of the truth of those who say: that Iblis was expelled from heaven after arrogance refused to prostrate to Adam, and Adam was placed in paradise*

before Iblis descended to earth. Have you not heard Allah SWT say: And We said, "O Adam, dwell you and your wife in paradise, and eat freely from both thereof wherever you wish, but do not approach this tree, lest you become among the wrongdoers." Thus Satan led both of them astray from that command, causing them to be expelled from what they were in. "It is then clear that Satan misled them from obedience to Allah after being cursed and showed arrogance, because the prostration of the angels to Adam occurred after the soul was breathed into him, and at that time Satan's refusal to bow to him, and at the moment of that refusal, the curse befell him" (Al-Ṭabarī, 1980, Juz 1, p. 512).

It can be consistently understood that this verse emphasizes that both Adam and Eve became objects of Satan's temptation. Al-Ṭabarī's interpretive focus in this context is more directed at the role of Satan as the main cause of humanity's downfall, rather than at determining which party is more at fault. This finding is important because it shows that at the level of classical textual interpretation, there is no explicit assertion that blames Eve as the primary cause of humanity's fall. This also indicates that the construction of women's fault does not automatically originate from the Qur'anic text or from all classical interpretations, but may potentially arise from certain narrations or narrative elaborations within the exegetical tradition.

Meanwhile, Al-Qurthubi in his exegesis *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* explains among other things: *In His word that says: "Stay" is a warning about departing, because staying does not constitute ownership, and because of this, some of the knowledgeable people have said: Staying occurs for a period and then ends, so their entry into paradise is entry to stay, not entry to reside permanently. Al-Qurthubi said: And if this is the case, it indicates what the majority of scholars have said: Whoever places a man in a place of residence, he does not gain mastery over it by staying, and he has the right to remove him after the period of staying ends.*

In His word which says: "And do not approach this tree," that is, do not approach it to eat from it, because in it there is what is permitted. Ibn Al-Arabi said: I heard Asy-Syasyi in the gathering of Al-Nadr bin Shumayl say: If it is said 'do not approach' (with a fathah on the letter ra) the meaning is do not engage in the act, and if (with a dhommah on the letter ra) the meaning is do not come near it.

Allah SWT says: Then Satan whispered to him, as mentioned earlier in Al-A'raf. He said, meaning Satan: (O Adam, shall I show you the tree of eternity and a kingdom that will not perish?), and this indicates a direct encounter, and that he entered paradise in the body of a serpent, as mentioned earlier in the explanation of Al-Baqarah. And previously, the tree had been determined, and what the scholars have said about it, so there is no need to repeat it. (Then both of them ate, so their nakedness became apparent to them, and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of paradise) (Al-Qurthubi, 1964, Juz 1, p. 299).

Based on the interpretation outlined above, if we observe, there is a change in meaning that occurs between the text of the Qur'an and the exegesis. In the Qur'anic text itself, it clearly does not question the mistake committed by a single individual, in this case, Eve, but rather the consequence of a joint negligence by both Prophet Adam and Eve. Meanwhile, in the classical scholars' tafsir mentioned

above, it explains that the source of the error seems to be pointed at Eve, who persuaded Adam to approach and eat the khuldi, which Allah had previously forbidden. Thus, the author attempts to trace proportionally why there is a change in context between the verses of the Qur'an and the interpretations of the classical scholars.

The change or difference in meaning is caused, among other things, by the sources of reference which also function as al-bayan (explanation) of the Qur'an, namely the Hadith of the Prophet shallallahu 'alaihi wasallam. The author found several Hadith texts that, textually, clearly provide guidance that Eve is the cause of men being betrayed by women, especially in the context of the relationship between husband and wife in the household. The following are the Hadith texts that the author refers to,

In the interpretation of verses: "فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْآتِهِمَا", At-Tabari said: Allah SWT said: (فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا), that is, he seduced both of them and the 'whisper' was his words to both of them: (مَا تَهَيَّأْتُمَا رُبُّكُمْا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَائِكِينَ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنْ (الْخَالِدِينَ), and His oath to both of them concerning that. It is also said: 'he tempted both of them,' meaning as has been mentioned, as it is also said: 'I have been destined for him,' that is, I have longed for him, but it means: I have been destined for him, that is its meaning.

Then Satan whispered to both of them from himself with the lies that had been spoken, in order to show them the evil that was hidden from them. And the meaning of his words: Then Iblis led Hawwa (Eve) to Adam, and said to them: What has your Lord forbidden you from eating the fruit of this tree, except so that you may become kings or become immortal? This was intended to show them what Allah had hidden from them about their private parts, then covered it with the covering that He had provided for them (Al-Ṭabarī, 1980, p. 348, Juz 12, p. 348).

In interpreting QS. al-A'raf verses 19–23, al-Ṭabarī explains that the incident of Adam and Eve's transgression began with a deceptive strategy from Satan that targeted both of them directly. The term waswasa is understood as a whisper containing lies, namely the claim that Allah's prohibition of the tree aimed to prevent them from obtaining immortality or a status like the angels, even reinforced with an oath to convince them. Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī emphasizes that the purpose of the temptation was to reveal the private parts that had previously been hidden by Allah as a form of protection. Although in one narration it is mentioned that Satan influenced Eve first before Adam, the overall interpretation still indicates that the temptation was directed at both of them simultaneously. Thus, al-Ṭabarī does not explicitly place Eve as the main cause, but rather emphasizes the role of Satan as the central actor in the incident.

In the exegesis of Al-Qurthubi, it is mentioned that Allah said to Adam after expelling Iblis from his place in paradise: "You and Hawa (Eve) shall remain in paradise." Previously, the meaning of remaining was explained in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 1, so there is no need to repeat it. It has also been previously explained the meaning of 'Do not approach this tree there. In His words, Allah SWT said: (فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا (الشَّيْطَانُ) That is to both of them. It is said: enter paradise along with the snake being

brought with him, and some say: from outside with the power given to him. This has been explained previously in the letter of Al-Baqarah. And word (الْوَسْوَسَةُ) is a hidden voice and also the whisper of the soul.

In His decree: "فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ" that is, they ate it. And it has been discussed in the letter of Al-Baqarah about the differing opinions regarding this tree, and how Adam ate it. "Then their private parts became visible to both of them." Eve ate first but was not affected by anything, then when Adam ate, the punishment befell, because the prohibition had been directed at them, as previously mentioned in Al-Baqarah (Al-Qurthubi, 1964 Juz 7, p. 180).

In his interpretation of the same verse, al-Qurṭubi also emphasized that Adam and Eve both became objects of Satan's temptation, as indicated by the use of the dual form in the wording of the verse. He explained that waswasa is a subtle whisper that is hidden, whether directly or indirectly, including the debate about how Iblis could convey the temptation. When they both ate the forbidden fruit, only then were their private parts exposed as a consequence of violating God's prohibition. Although al-Qurṭubi mentioned in one narration that Eve ate first, he did not use it as a basis to blame Eve absolutely, because the divine prohibition was directed at both of them. Therefore, his interpretation still places Adam and Eve in the same position as subjects involved in the transgression, without giving emphasis on the fault of either party exclusively.

Contemporary Scholars' Tafsir

The selection of contemporary mufassirs in this study is based on the need to present a reading of the Qur'an that is more contextual and sensitive to gender issues. M. Quraish Shihab was chosen for his moderate approach and language skills that can bridge between classical tafsir tradition and modern contexts. Meanwhile, Amina Wadud and Asma Barlas were selected for their contributions in developing a critical reading of the Qur'an that rejects patriarchal bias and emphasizes principles of justice and gender equality. Thus, the three of them represent an effort to reinterpret the text more fairly in understanding the position of women, particularly in the story of Eve.

Contemporary exegesis quotations that support gender equality include Quraish Shihab's Tafsir, Tafsir Al-Mishbah, which states, "The Qur'an does not explicitly mention the name Eve, but rather uses 'zawjuhu' (his spouse). The use of the dual form 'fa-azallahumā' (tempted both of them) and 'fa-akalā minhā' (both of them ate) indicates shared responsibility. Narratives that specifically blame Eve come from inauthentic Isra'iliyyat. The Qur'an emphasizes the role of Iblis as the clear enemy, rather than making women a symbol of sin." (Shihab, 2002, Juz 1, p. 215-217).

In the interpretation above, Quraish Shihab emphasizes that the Qur'an never explicitly mentions the name Eve, but rather uses the term zawjuhu (his companion), which indicates an equal relationship between men and women in the creation narrative. The use of the dual grammatical forms such as fa-azallahumā (both were led astray) and fa-akalā minhā (both ate) reinforces that the responsibility for the transgression is collective, not individual. Thus, there is no textual basis in the Qur'an that specifically blames Eve. According to him, the narrative that places women as the main cause of human downfall is more an influence of unauthentic Isra'iliyyat.

On the contrary, the Qur'an consistently asserts that Satan is the main actor in the event, so women cannot be made a symbol of sin or a source of wrongdoing.

Meanwhile, Amina Wadud in her book, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, writes: *"The Qur'an presents Adam and his mate as equal subjects of divine address and equal objects of satanic temptation. There is no 'Eve' figure who tempts Adam... The consistent use of dual grammatical forms throughout the narrative precludes any gender-specific assignment of blame. This Qur'anic narrative stands in stark contrast to the Biblical account where Eve is the primary agent of disobedience (Wadud, 1999, pp. 18–20).*

Amina Wadud, in her feminist hermeneutical approach, emphasizes that the Qur'an presents Adam and his partner as equal subjects in receiving God's command while also being objects of Satan's temptation. She strongly rejects the existence of the figure of "Eve" in the sense of being the primary tempter as in the Biblical tradition. The consistent use of the dual form in the Qur'anic narrative indicates that there is no assignment of fault that is gender-specific. Thus, according to Wadud, the Qur'an presents an egalitarian paradigm in viewing the relationship between men and women. This also serves as a critique of religious readings that adopting constructions outside the Qur'an that tend to blame women.

Then Asma Barlas in her book *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* mentions, *"The Qur'an exonerates women from the charge of innate disobedience by portraying Adam and his wife as equally culpable... Unlike the Bible, the Qur'an does not hold women responsible for "original sin." Iblis, not woman, is the source of temptation. Any reading that blames Hawwa reflects patriarchal hermeneutics, not divine intent". (Barlas, 2019, pp. 142–144).*

Asma Barlas emphasizes that the Qur'an frees women from theological accusations as sources of sin or inherent disobedience. In its narrative, Adam and his partner are depicted as equally responsible for the transgression, without any hierarchy of fault. Unlike the Biblical tradition that associates women with the concept of original sin, the Qur'an actually places Iblis as the main source of temptation. Therefore, any interpretation that specifically blames Eve does not reflect the normative message of the Qur'an, but rather results from a reading influenced by patriarchal bias. This view underscores the importance of critiquing interpretive legacies that are not in line with the principles of gender justice in the Qur'an.

Analysis of the story of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Qur'an, particularly in QS. al-Baqarah verses 35-36 and QS. al-A'raf verses 19-23, shows that the structure of the textual narrative is arranged neutrally without emphasizing the fault on either party. This is evident from the use of the dual form in the wording such as "فَأَزَلَّهُمَا" and "فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ", which consistently depicts that Adam and Eve both became objects of the Devil's temptation (Latifi & Udasmoro, 2020). Thus, the Qur'an does not construct the existence of a party more dominant in the fault, but rather presents the involvement of both equally in the event.

At-Ṭabarī's interpretation of these verses tends to maintain that neutral structure by continuing to use the dual form and emphasizing the role of Iblis as the main actor causing humans to slip. Although some narrations mention the role of

Hawwa in the process, At-Ṭabarī does not explicitly make her the primary cause (Furqan, 2023). A similar thing can also be found in al-Qurṭubī's interpretation, which, in explaining the related verses, still shows that Iblis' temptation is directed at both of them simultaneously (Abidin et al., 2019). Thus, these two classical mufassirs basically do not give a strong affirmation toward a construction of fault centered on Hawwa.

Based on this, it can be concluded that the construction of women's fault in the story of the fall of man does not have a strong basis either in the Qur'anic text or in the interpretations of al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī. On the contrary, the narrative that scapegoats Eve as the main cause is more a result of interpretive developments within the exegetical tradition influenced by factors outside the text. This indicates that understanding the role of women in this story needs to be critically examined by considering the difference between the structure of the Qur'anic text and the construction of its exegesis.

The Construction of Women's Errors in the Tradition of Exegesis

Although the text of the Qur'an does not explicitly blame women in the story of the forbidden fruit, the development of interpretive tradition actually shows a tendency in the opposite direction. In various religious narratives present in society, Eve is often depicted as the one first tempted by the devil, then influencing Adam to violate God's command (El-Ali, 2022; Fitriyah & Rahman, 2024). This shift shows the existence of a gap between the message of the Qur'an and the construction of meaning formed in religious tradition.

One of the important factors contributing to this construction is the inclusion of *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives in tafsir literature. *Isrā'īliyyāt* are stories originating from Jewish and Christian traditions that were later adopted by some mufassirun as additional material to explain the verses. In the context of the story of Adam and Eve, these narratives often portray Eve as the first to be tempted, even as the one who persuaded Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. Although the authority of these narratives is not always strong, their widespread use in classical tafsir has helped shape the perception that women played a dominant role in the event (Norhidayat, 2016).

The process of reproducing narratives in the tradition of exegesis also has a crucial role. When these reports are continuously cited by the mufassir, both with a critical attitude and without strict verification, narratives that blame women gradually gain legitimacy (Sifa, 2019). In practice, the boundary between the text of the Qur'an and additional explanations becomes blurred, making it difficult for the general public to distinguish between what is textual teaching and what is merely interpretation (Afifah Fitria Nugroho et al., 2025). As a result, the construction of women's mistakes is no longer understood as interpretation, but rather as if it is an inherent part of religious teachings.

In addition to textual dimensions, the socio-cultural context also greatly influences the direction of interpretation. In patriarchal societies, women are often positioned as morally weaker or as a source of potential temptation (Hanif & Syarifah, 2022). This way of thinking then subtly colors the way commentators read and narrate religious stories (Hasan et al., 2022). Thus, interpretation is not only an

explanation of the text, but also a mirror of the social structure and dominant values of a certain period.

Thus, the construction of women's fault in the story of the forbidden fruit can be understood as the result of the interaction between the text, interpretive tradition, and the ideology surrounding it (Fitriyah & Rahman, 2024). When relatively neutral text is read through a biased lens, the meaning produced also becomes biased (Ismail et al., 2024). Within this framework, women are not merely presented as characters in the narrative, but are also made into symbols of moral weakness or sources of temptation.

So it can be concluded that the narrative blaming women in the story of Adam and Eve is not a direct reflection of the Qur'anic text, but rather the result of a long historical construction. This process involves the inclusion of additional narratives, repetition in the tradition of exegesis, as well as the strong influence of a patriarchal socio-cultural context. Therefore, it is important to clearly distinguish between the text and interpretation, so that reading of the story can be done more critically, fairly, and in accordance with the ethical spirit of the Qur'an.

The Socio-Cultural Influence of Patriarchy

The interpretation of the story of Adam and Eve cannot be separated from the influence of the patriarchal culture that surrounds the lives of the interpreters (Ahmad, 2017). In patriarchal social structures, men are placed as the center of authority, while women are positioned as the subordinate party often associated with weakness, emotionality, and the potential to tempt. The story of Eve, considered the cause of Adam's expulsion from paradise, becomes one of the narratives that reinforce this view, placing women in a position of blame and attaching negative stigma to them (Abidin et al., 2019). This kind of mindset not only shapes social relations but also influences the way reality, including religious texts, is understood and interpreted. As a result, the interpretation of texts does not occur in a vacuum but is interconnected with cultural values that have already taken root in society. This gender-biased tendency in interpretation creates symbolic domination in which women are often portrayed as rebellious, emotional, or sources of temptation in religious texts (Adam Yudha Aryasatya et al., 2025).

In the context of the story of the fall of the first humans, the influence of patriarchal culture is evident in the tendency to focus blame on the female figure. Although the Qur'an does not explicitly blame Eve as the main cause of the transgression, some interpretations actually direct the narrative in that direction (Nihayah, 2021). This indicates the presence of an interpretation process influenced by patriarchal assumptions, where women are more easily placed as the party responsible for moral wrongdoing (Adam Yudha Aryasatya et al., 2025). Thus, the construction of Eve's error can be understood not as a direct reflection of the text, but rather as the result of a reading that has been framed by a certain cultural perspective.

Patriarchal culture also plays a role in shaping and maintaining negative labels towards women through religious legitimacy (Mustaqim, 2007). When gender-biased interpretations are accepted and widely passed down, they not only affect the understanding of certain stories, but also reinforce the general view of women

as a source of temptation and the cause of men's downfall (Suhendra, 2012). In this case, interpretation not only serves as a tool to explain the text, but also functions as a medium for the reproduction of patriarchal values (Maulana, 2016).

This tendency of patriarchal-biased interpretation often stems from an incomplete understanding of the sacred verses, thereby reinforcing the marginalization of women in theological and social constructions (Malik, 2019). Many classical interpreters, dominated by men, tend to be less accommodating of women's interests, resulting in interpretations that reflect patriarchal bias when read in a contemporary context (Zulaiha, 2016). For example, the belief that Eve was created from Adam's rib has given rise to a gender-biased conception that identifies women as bearers of original sin and objects of male lust (Ritonga, 2016). This significantly impacts the shift in understanding that women are a source of wisdom to a source of sin, a construction that has harmed women's dignity and caused multidimensional discrimination (Natar, 2020). Therefore, it is important to realize that bias in interpretation is not merely a matter of the text, but is also closely related to the socio-cultural context that shapes the interpreter's perspective on women.

In the 7th century, women's lives took place within a social order that was largely communal and clan-based, especially in the Arabian Peninsula. Women lived in social spaces that were heavily influenced by family relations and group honor. In daily life, they carried out domestic roles such as managing the household, caring for children, and maintaining the continuity of the family, although in some cases they were also involved in economic activities, such as trading or assisting with clan work (Hana, 2020). Socially, the position of women is not entirely uniform; some have relative independence, especially from certain groups, but many are also dependent on male authority, whether fathers, husbands, or other male family members. Access to rights such as ownership, inheritance, and decision-making is generally limited, and in some traditions, women can even be treated as part of the family's property (Islami, 2022).

Entering the early period of Islam, significant changes occurred that began to shift that position. Women were recognized as independent moral and spiritual subjects, gaining certain rights such as inheritance, marriage dowries, as well as clearer legal protection. They also began to be seen in intellectual and social spaces, for example as narrators of hadith or participants in important societal events (Hanif & Syarifah, 2022). However, this change does not completely erase the old structure because society continues to operate within a deeply rooted patriarchal cultural framework. The power relations between men and women are still imbalanced, and the division of gender roles is maintained in many aspects of life (Aminah & Rohmana, 2025).

This condition indicates that Arab society in the early Islamic period was still structured with a strong masculine orientation, where men were positioned as the main subjects in religious discourse, while women often had to negotiate their voices to be acknowledged. Nevertheless, women were not entirely passive. They were present in religious spaces, attended the Prophet's gatherings, listened to teachings, and even posed questions, criticisms, and complaints about issues they considered unjust (Masruri, 2012).

One important example is the event of Khawilah binti Tha'labah who voiced a protest regarding the practice of *zihār*, which was then immortalized in the word of Allah: *"Indeed, Allah has heard the statement of the woman who pleads to you (Muhammad) concerning her husband, and she reports (her case) to Allah, and Allah hears the conversation between both of you. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing"* (QS. Mujadilah ayat 1). The fact that the experiences and demands of these women were directly responded to in revelation shows that women have a position as moral and spiritual subjects, even though in practice they still have to fight for their voice in the midst of male dominance (Masruri, 2012). Thus, this phenomenon not only affirms the active participation of women, but also shows that the meaning of women from the beginning has been shaped within a patriarchal cultural framework

In this context, the patriarchal cultural system operates not only as a social structure but also as a way of thinking that shapes understanding of women (Hasan Ahmad Hasan, 2025). Women are often positioned in subordinate relationships both in the domestic and symbolic realms, including in religious narratives that later developed (Islami, 2022). From the perspective of feminist hermeneutics, this condition is important to pay attention to because it shows that the interpretation of a text is never born in a vacuum, but is always influenced by the social and cultural context that surrounds it.

Within the framework of feminist hermeneutics, the next step is to shift the focus from merely describing social conditions to a critical reading of the process of meaning production. This means not only looking at how women lived within the patriarchal structures of the 7th century but also how these structures influenced the way texts were understood, interpreted, and transmitted. In many cases, interpretation does not stand neutral but carries cultural assumptions that are often unconscious (Wasik, 2023). The male-dominated perspective in scholarly tradition makes women's experiences rarely appear as the center, so the meaning of the text tends to move within an andro-centric horizon (Sofiana & Meiningtias, 2023). This is where feminist hermeneutics works, namely opening space to question who interprets, from what social position, and what interests might be hidden behind that interpretation.

When this approach is applied to the story of Eve, it appears that the emphasis on the woman's fault is not something inherent in the text, but rather the result of a long interpretive process. The Qur'anic text itself presents a more balanced narrative, but in certain exegetical traditions, there is a tendency to focus the blame on the female figure (Hasan et al., 2022; R. Maulana, 2023). This tendency cannot be separated from the influence of additional histories as well as the social context that has previously shaped the perspective on women (Hamam Aqil Barid & Kholid Mawardi, 2025; Hana, 2020). Thus, feminist hermeneutics does not merely defend women, but strives to return the text to its possibility of a more just meaning while also revealing the historical layers that have shaped our reading all this time.

Through this approach, the reading of religious narratives becomes more reflective and critical. Feminist hermeneutics does not stop at what the text says, but also traces how the text is understood in history, who benefits from a particular

interpretation, and how that meaning can be reconstructed to be more inclusive. Thus, the story of Eve is no longer seen as a justification for women's mistakes, but as part of a human narrative that affirms shared moral responsibility. This approach opens up the possibility for interpretations that are not only faithful to the text but also sensitive to gender justice in the context of the ever-evolving human life.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of the Qur'anic text and the development of interpretive traditions, the narrative of women's fault in the story of the forbidden fruit does not appear to stem directly from the message structure of the Qur'an, but rather is the result of interpretive constructions that settled over the course of the history of exegesis. The Qur'anic text itself presents Adam and his partner as collective subjects in the event of transgression, with prohibitions and responsibilities directed to both equally, without emphasis on the superiority of the fault of either party. The shift in meaning occurred in the process of interpretation, when the story was read through the lens of patriarchal culture, gradually forming the image of women as the primary cause of humanity's fall (Alfani et al., 2025).

From a hermeneutic perspective, this phenomenon shows that the meaning of a text is never born in a vacuum, but always interacts with the horizon of the interpreter's understanding. When a potentially neutral text is read in a patriarchal social context, the interpretation that emerges tends to reproduce the same biases. Studies on classical and modern exegesis confirm that many earlier mufassirs carried with them the social norms of their time, such as the depiction of Eve being created from Adam's rib and the assertion of absolute male leadership, which then reinforced the narrative of female subordination (Alfani et al., 2025; Mujahid, 2021). Thus, interpretation is not only a medium for explaining meaning, but also a subtle arena for the operation of power relations and ideology, as seen in gender-biased interpretations about polygamy, women's testimony, and verses on male-female relations (A. Latif, 2019; Ats-Tsauri, 2020).

The main criticism put forward by feminist hermeneutics is that the patriarchal reading of the story of Khuldii's Fruit contradicts the principles of monotheism and divine justice (*'adl*) (Sifa, 2019). If Muslims believe that God is Most Just, then it is impossible for God to reveal a message that supports injustice or the subordination of women. Therefore, interpretations that place women as the primary cause of sin and human suffering must be questioned, as they contradict the nature of God's justice. Asma Barlas, in her influential work, asserts that the Qur'an fundamentally opposes patriarchy, and readings that result in patriarchal conclusions reflect a hermeneutical failure, not divine will. Barlas develops an anti-patriarchal approach that reads the Qur'an within the framework of its fundamental principles: monotheism, justice, and the ontological equality of humans before God (Barlas, 2001).

The construction of women's fault in the story of the forbidden fruit can be understood as part of a symbolic mechanism that places women in a problematic position from the very beginning of human history. Women are represented not only as perpetrators of transgression but also as symbols of temptation, weakness, and

moral deviation. This pattern is consistent with findings from feminist and gender studies which show that religious texts, when read within a patriarchal framework, are often used as symbolic legitimization for unequal social structures, positioning women as emotional, easily tempted, and in need of control, while men are depicted as rational and holders of authority (Wasik, 2023; Zulkarnaini, 2021). In this context, religious narratives function to affirm a social order that places women in subordinate positions, rather than simply conveying a universal moral message.

However, a critical reading of the Qur'anic text opens up a space for deconstructing this narrative. By returning to the textual structure that emphasizes the joint involvement of Adam and Eve and positions Satan as the primary source of temptation, it becomes apparent that the moral responsibility in this story is universal, rather than associated with a specific gender. Historical-ethical hermeneutic studies and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* show that the essence of the Qur'an's message is justice, reciprocity, and the spiritual equality of men and women, as reflected in verses that affirm that both have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to perform Good deeds (Alfani et al., 2025; Ats-Tsauri, 2020). Within this framework, mistakes are not an inherent attribute of women, but part of the human existential condition in general.

The deconstruction of narratives blaming women is therefore not only a correction of biased interpretations, but also a step of reconstruction to restore the ethical message of the Qur'an. In line with the ideas of feminist-Islamic readings and contemporary interpretations that are gender-just (such as Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Quraish Shihab, and Hamka), the story of the forbidden fruit can be re-understood as a reflection on human vulnerability, the freedom to choose, and the possibility of repentance, where men and women are present as equal moral subjects before God (Alfani et al., 2025; Siti Abidah Subkiyyah & Mokhamad Sukron, 2025; Zulkarnaini, 2021). Thus, this story is no longer a theological legitimacy for the subordination of women, but rather a gateway to the ethics of monotheism that rejects all forms of gender injustice.

So, the assumption that women are the main cause in the story of the forbidden fruit does not actually come from the Qur'an itself, but arises from interpretations influenced by patriarchal culture and the incorporation of *Isrā'īliyyāt* stories. The Qur'an portrays Adam and his partner as two parties who both make mistakes, so there is no basis to blame only the woman. Therefore, through a more critical rereading, as done by Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, and M. Quraish Shihab, this story should be understood as a lesson about humans in general that everyone can be wrong, has the freedom to choose, and always has the opportunity to repent without singling out one gender.

Author's Analysis

Beyond the descriptive findings and discussion presented in the preceding sections, this part provides a critical analysis of the construction of women's fault in the narrative of the forbidden fruit. Based on the findings, this study argues that the construction of women's fault is not rooted in the Qur'anic text itself but emerges through a complex historical process involving interpretive expansion, narrative

transmission, and socio-cultural influences. The Qur'an consistently presents Adam and his spouse as collective subjects who receive divine commands, experience temptation, commit transgression, and seek forgiveness together. Therefore, the textual foundation does not support the attribution of exclusive blame to women.

The analysis further indicates that the shift from collective responsibility to gendered blame occurred largely through the incorporation of *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives and their subsequent reproduction within exegetical traditions. These narratives were often received within patriarchal social environments that already tended to associate women with temptation and moral weakness. Consequently, interpretive traditions sometimes absorbed cultural assumptions that were external to the Qur'anic worldview.

The author also finds that both classical and contemporary tafsir traditions demonstrate varying degrees of engagement with these narratives. While some classical commentaries transmit reports that appear to emphasize Eve's role, their primary interpretive conclusions still place Satan as the central agent of temptation. Contemporary scholars, however, tend to re-examine these traditions critically and emphasize the Qur'an's egalitarian narrative structure.

Therefore, the construction of women's fault should be understood as a historical and interpretive phenomenon rather than a doctrinal teaching of the Qur'an itself. Recognizing this distinction is essential for developing a more balanced and textually grounded understanding of gender relations within Islamic thought.

Academic Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

This study contributes to the growing field of Qur'anic gender studies by demonstrating that the construction of women's fault in the narrative of the forbidden fruit is primarily a product of interpretive developments rather than a direct teaching of the Qur'anic text. The findings reinforce the importance of distinguishing between the normative message of the Qur'an and historical layers of interpretation that may have been influenced by particular socio-cultural contexts. This conclusion is consistent with the arguments of Wadud (1999) and Barlas (2019), who emphasize that gender-biased readings often emerge from patriarchal interpretive traditions rather than from the Qur'anic text itself. In addition, this research provides a framework for examining how external narratives, *Isrā'īliyyāt* traditions, and patriarchal assumptions can shape religious discourse over time.

For future research, scholars may further investigate the reception of Eve-related narratives in specific Muslim societies and analyze how these interpretations influence contemporary gender perceptions and religious practices. Comparative studies involving Jewish, Christian, and Islamic interpretive traditions may also offer deeper insights into the transmission and transformation of the narrative. Furthermore, future studies could employ reception theory, discourse analysis, or digital humanities approaches to explore the persistence of gendered narratives in contemporary religious media, educational materials, and religious institutions.

Conclusion

This study shows that attributing fault to women in the story of the forbidden fruit does not have a strong basis in the Qur'an text. Through a textual reading of the verses related to Adam's fall, it appears that the Qur'an consistently presents Adam and his partner as a collective subject in the act of disobedience, while the primary source of temptation is explicitly attributed to Satan. Thus, there is no textual indication that the woman, in this case Eve, is placed as the more dominant or more guilty party in the event.

However, in the development of interpretive tradition, there has been a shift in meaning that leads to the construction of women as the main cause of human downfall. This shift is related to the entry of *Isrā'īliyyāt* narratives, the process of reproducing narratives in classical and popular exegesis works, as well as the strong influence of a patriarchal socio-cultural context. Through these historical and hermeneutical processes, the construction of women's faults was formed, which then gained legitimacy in religious discourse and everyday religious practice.

On that basis, this study emphasizes the urgency of a clear distinction between the text of the Qur'an and the interpretations that emerge in tradition. Critical, contextual, and gender-sensitive reading is needed so that interpretations no longer unconsciously reproduce the subordination of women. By returning to the textual structure of the Qur'an and critically re-examining the legacy of exegesis, the story of the forbidden fruit can be understood more fairly as a reflection on human moral responsibility universally, rather than as theological justification for the inferiority or inherent fault of women.

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