

## Implementation of Rudolf Bultmann's Demythologization Theory on the Stories in the Qur'an

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**Abstract.** This research is motivated by the presence of an interpretative gap in understanding Qur'anic stories containing supra-rational dimensions amidst the dominance of the modern-scientific paradigm. This study aims to critically adapt Rudolf Bultmann's theory of demythologization to extract the existential meaning (kerygma) from Qur'anic stories, while preserving the authenticity and sanctity of revelation. Through a qualitative content analysis approach that integrates Mohammed Arkoun's perspective, this research develops a methodological framework that filters the demythologization process through the principles of *Ulūm al-Tafsir* in the form of a hermeneutics of recovery. The research findings reveal three substantive points: *first*, the formulation of a hierarchical and systematic five-stage implementation model; *second*, the successful identification of the profound kerygma from three Qur'anic stories based on Angelika Neuwirth's two basic categorizations: Myths of Nature in the event of the splitting of the Red Sea (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:50) as divine liberation from oppression; and Myths of Heroic Figures such as the story of *Ashab as-Sabt* (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:65, Q.S. al-A'rāf [7]:163-166), moral degradation as a consequence of wickedness, and spiritual ascent towards enlightenment in the story of the Prophet Muhammad's *Isrā'* (Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1); *third*, the proven effectiveness of hermeneutics of recovery as a methodological filter that maintains the dialectic between text and context within the epistemological framework of *tafsir*. The study concludes that the filtered integration between Bultmann's demythologization and the framework of *Ulūm al-Tafsir* not only enables relevant contextual readings but also preserves the miraculous nature and authority of the revelatory text. The contribution of this research lies in the development of a contemporary *tafsir* model that bridges tradition and modernity, while paving the way for the development of a more dynamic and responsive Qur'anic interpretation methodology.

**Keywords:** Demythologization, Qur'anic Hermeneutics, Rudolf Bultmann, The stories of the Qur'ān, Contextual Exegesis.

### Introduction

In the flow of modernity characterized by the dominance of science, technology, and critical thinking, contemporary Muslim societies, particularly in Indonesia, face unique challenges in understanding and internalizing the religious stories contained in the Qur'an.<sup>1</sup> Narratives such as the splitting of the Red Sea, the story of *Ashab al-Sabt*, or the *Isrā'* journey of the Prophet Muhammad, which are traditionally understood within the framework of miracles and supernatural events,<sup>2</sup> often face skepticism and questioning from circles influenced by the modern-scientific paradigm.<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon not only creates tension in religious dialectics, between literal and contextual

<sup>1</sup> Sufrianti Ramdhani and Muhammad Said Said, 'Semiotic as Tafsir Approach: A Review of Mohammed Arkoun's Thoughts', *Alif Lam: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*, 1.2 (2021), 63–91.

<sup>2</sup> Anzalman Anzalman and others, 'Islam Dan Humanism (When Muslim Learns From The West: A Cross Cultural Project)', *Jurnal Kajian Dan Pengembangan Umat*, 7.1 (2024), 52–71.

<sup>3</sup> Azwar Azwar and Iskandar Iskandar, 'Dakwah Islam Bagi Gen-Z: Peluang, Tantangan, Dan Strategi: Islamic Preaching for Gen-Z: Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategies', *DIRASAH: Jurnal Kajian Islam*, 1.1 (2024), 17–38.

understandings, but also has the potential to obscure the moral and spiritual message that is the core of these stories.

In the socio-cultural context of Indonesia, which is rich in religious traditions yet dynamic in receiving global influences, the need for an interpretative approach that can bridge this gap is becoming increasingly urgent. Society, particularly the younger generation and intellectuals, seeks ways to maintain belief in the sanctity of the Qur'an without isolating themselves from modern intellectual discourse. This situation reveals a complex social fact: sacred texts are not only read as sources of doctrine but are also expected to provide answers and inspiration relevant to contemporary realities, including in addressing issues of freedom, justice, moral degradation, and the search for existential meaning. Therefore, a hermeneutical framework sensitive to the modern context is needed, without reducing the authority and uniqueness of the Qur'an as revelation.

So far, studies on the application of Rudolf Bultmann's hermeneutics within Islamic scholarship have paid insufficient attention to its potential for comprehensive integration with the epistemology of Qur'anic exegesis (*Ulūm al-Tafsir*). Instead, they have tended to focus on partial textual analyses of specific stories. The concept of demythologization as a hermeneutical tool for extracting existential meaning (*kerygma*) has not been widely explored within a framework that preserves the sanctity and miraculous nature of the Qur'an.<sup>4</sup> At least three patterns of study on demythologization and religious narratives in Islamic studies can serve as a foundation. *First*, the most commonly encountered studies discuss the direct application of demythologization to specific narratives, (*Kisah Pengangkatan Nabi Isa a.s.*) such as the story of the ascension of Prophet Isa,<sup>5</sup> or (*demitoligasi jin dalam al-Qur'an*) the demythologization of jinn in the Qur'an,<sup>6</sup> but often lack a clear methodological framework to adapt it to the characteristics of the Qur'an. *Second*, studies discussing Bultmann's hermeneutics in general or its application in Hadith studies—such as the work by Syahna titled "A Demythologizing Religious Narratives: Bultmann's Approach to Hadith within Modern Theological Studies"—though valuable, have not yet addressed the core issue of interpreting the Qur'an as the eternal Word of God (*Kalamullah*).<sup>7</sup> *Third*, studies that critically examine myths in the Qur'an often fall into reductionist approaches that disregard its transcendent dimension and miraculous nature (*i'jaz*).<sup>8</sup> From the three developments in the study of demythologization in Islamic studies above, it appears that few studies have holistically examined how Bultmann's theory can be critically adapted to uncover the *kerygma* in Qur'anic stories, while also constructing an integrative hermeneutical model that bridges classical exegetical tradition with contemporary insights without eroding the authority of the revelatory text.

This study aims to address the shortcomings of previous research, which has not yet established a clear and measurable methodological framework for critically adapting Bultmann's theory within the framework of *Ulūm al-Tafsir*. There is a fundamental complexity of epistemological and theological issues, given the ontological character of the Qur'an as the literal word of God (*Kalamullah*) and its miraculous nature (*i'jaz*), which differs significantly from the New Testament text that forms the basis of Bultmann's thought. The core problem lies in how to extract the existential meaning

<sup>4</sup> Wan Helmy Shahriman Wan Ahmad, 'Tinjauan Terhadap Konsep Kemukjizatan Al-Quran Menurut Pandangan Ulama:[The Concept Of The Miracle Of Al-Quran According To Views Of The Islamic Scholar: A Review]', *KQTEJurnal*, 1.1 (2021), 96–107.

<sup>5</sup> Hayya Ruhama, 'Demitoligasi Pengangkatan Nabi Isa 'alayhi Al-Salām Dalam Al-Qurān: Kajian Hermeneutik Rudolf Bultmann' (STAI Al-Anwar Sarang Rembang, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> Achmad Zakki, 'Demitoligasi Jin Dalam Al-Quran Perspektif Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd', 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Ananda Aprilia Aulia Syahna and Putri Ayu Mayangsari, 'A Demythologizing Religious Narratives: Bultmann's Approach to Hadith within Modern Theological Studies: Demitoligasi Narasi Keagamaan: Pendekatan Bultmann Terhadap Hadits Dalam Studi Teologi Modern', *Aqwal: Journal of Qur'an and Hadis Studies*, 5.1 (2024), 54–71.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad'Ubaydi Hasbillah, 'Sirah Nabawiyah Dan Demitoligasi Kehidupan Nabi', *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies*, 1.2 (2012), 251–75.

(kerygma) from Qur'anic stories without desacralizing them, reducing their linguistic miraculousness (*balaghah*),<sup>9</sup> or disregarding their metaphysical dimension (*ghaybiyyah*).<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, three research questions can be formulated: (1) What is Rudolf Bultmann's Theory of Demythologization and how can its main principles be mapped?; (2) How can this theory be implemented in interpreting Qur'anic stories through an adaptive and hierarchical model?; and (3) Why is it necessary to implement this approach as one of the methods in contemporary exegetical scholarship? Answers to these three questions can provide a new understanding of the potential and limitations of Bultmann's hermeneutics when engaged in dialogue with the science of *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), while also offering a fresh perspective for approaching the sacred text—one that is responsive to the challenges of modernity without sacrificing the fundamental principle of the revelation's sanctity.

This article is based on the argument that Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization approach, if critically and selectively adapted, is not only possible to apply in Qur'anic studies but can indeed serve as a valuable hermeneutical instrument to enrich and invigorate contemporary interpretive methodology. The main argument posited is that the core of Bultmann's project—namely, the effort to extract existential meaning or kerygma from behind narrative forms—is inherently aligned with one of the primary objectives of *tafsir* (exegesis): to understand divine messages relevant to every era. However, this adaptation must be undertaken with great care, by positioning the principles of *Ulum al-Tafsir* (the sciences of Qur'anic exegesis) as an inviolable filter and guideline. This approach aims to uncover the deepest layers of meaning, which are often overlooked (unthought) when relying solely on a literal reading. In this context, the concept of "myth" refers to Roland Barthes' definition: a type of discourse or communication system that conveys a specific message. In other words, myth is understood as a language or mode of communication that contains special messages through distinctive conditions and forms of delivery.<sup>11</sup> Thus, this article does not intend to deconstruct the sacred text, but rather to reconstruct the reader's understanding of it by developing a model of "hermeneutics of recovery." This model is expected to function as a sturdy bridge between the richness of classical exegetical tradition and the demands of modern contextualization, so that the Qur'an can continue to "speak" meaningfully and transformatively for the life of the community in the current era, without being betrayed as an authentic and sacred revelation.

## Literature Review

### Rudolf Bultmann's Concept of Demythologization

Rudolf Bultmann's study of the New Testament texts reveals an inevitable tension between the mythical worldview underlying the scripture and the modern, scientific, and historical consciousness, which ultimately leads to a paradigm shift in understanding sacred narratives from literal to existential meaning.<sup>12</sup> It is Bultmann's critique of mythological language in the New Testament that gave rise to the method of demythologization, which seeks to uncover the kerygma—the core message or existential meaning—hidden beneath the wrapping of mythic language he considers obsolete. According to Bultmann, the task of demythologization is not to reject the text but to reinterpret it so that it can speak meaningfully to modern humans living in a world that has become "desacralized."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Richard E. Palmer's study in *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory*

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Amin Suma, *Ulumul Qur'an* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Manna' Khalil Al-Qattan, *Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an* (Bogor: Pustaka Litera Antar Nusa, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mitologi (Mythologies)* Terj. Nurhadi, A. Sibabul Millah, ed. by Inyiak Ridwan Muzir Hadi Purwanto (Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, 'Jesus Christ and Mythology', *Charles Scribner's Sons*, 1958.

<sup>13</sup> John C Cooper, 'The" New Hermeneutic" and Metaphysics', *The Bucknell Review*, 19.1 (1971), 125.

states that Bultmann's demythologization is essentially not an elimination of myth, but rather an ambitious interpretative strategy to transform the meaning of religious texts by focusing on the existential question of human existence before God.<sup>14</sup> In this context, the term "myth" is viewed as an ancient way of expressing transcendent reality, which needs to be "translated" so that the true message of faith can be recovered and internalized within the contemporary context.

Case studies on the application of demythologization in the Christian tradition reveal several key factors underlying Bultmann's project. David W. Congdon in *The Mission of Demythologizing* states that the primary factor is the need to bridge the wide cultural and epistemological gap between the mythical world of the Bible and the reality of modern humans living within a scientific framework of thought.<sup>15</sup> In his further study, Congdon notes that Bultmann, heavily influenced by Martin Heidegger's existentialism, argued that the core of Christian faith lies not in the acceptance of historical facts or ancient cosmological frameworks (such as the concept of a three-tiered universe), but in a personal encounter with the existential meaning conveyed through the kerygma. Another case study by John Carroll Futrell emphasizes that demythologizing the miracle narratives of Jesus, for example, does not aim to deny the events but rather to shift focus from the physical marvel to their transcendent meaning for the life of faith.<sup>16</sup>

The three case studies above clearly demonstrate that Bultmann's demythologization project is fundamentally not an attempt to undermine the authority of the sacred text, but rather a visionary and strategic hermeneutical response. Its core is to "rescue" the essential theological message by liberating it from linguistic and cosmological forms of expression deemed to have lost their communicative power in the modern era. Thus, through existential reinterpretation, the authority and relevance of scripture are not only preserved but actually strengthened, as it can engage in meaningful dialectics with the contemporary human context of understanding and life's struggles.

### Stories in the Qur'an

The stories in the Qur'an (al-qashash) are fundamental elements that function not only as historical records but also as pedagogical and theological mediums conveying divine messages (hikmah) through engaging and meaningful narratives. The Qur'an itself refers to its stories as ahsan al-qashash (the best of stories), intended so that humanity may take lessons (ibrah) and engage in critical reflection.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, Ahmad Khalafullah defines the Qur'anic story as a form of divine literary art that places greater emphasis on moral values, literary aspects, and theological messages rather than mere historical accuracy.<sup>18</sup> However, the author firmly rejects the implication that such an approach presupposes the existence of mythical elements in the Qur'an. For the author, acknowledging the symbolic and literary dimension of Qur'anic narratives does not automatically negate their historical validity. On the contrary, it reveals the multidimensionality of revelation, which is capable of conveying transcendent truth through literary forms most suited to the human context, while simultaneously preserving the purity of the divine message from any mythological distortion. In other words, the author argues that the very absence of myth in the Qur'an lies in its ability to convey

<sup>14</sup> Richard E Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Diltzey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Northwestern University Press, 1969).

<sup>15</sup> David W Congdon, *The Mission of Demythologizing: Rudolf Bultmann's Eschatological Dialectical Theology* (Princeton Theological Seminary, 2014).

<sup>16</sup> John Carroll Futrell, 'MYTH AND MESSAGE: A Study of the Biblical Theology of Rudolf Bultmann', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 1959, 283–315.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Bestari, 'Al-Qur'an Sebagai Wahyu Allah, Muatan Beserta Fungsinya', *Dirasat*, 15.02 (2020), 118–37 <<https://doi.org/10.1001/ds.v15i02.124>>.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad A Khalafullah, *Al-Qur'an Bukan Kitab Sejarah: Seni, Sastra, Dan Moralitas Dalam Kisah-Kisah Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Zuhairi Misrawi dan Anis Maftukhin (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2002).

eternal truth through symbolic language without falling into mythological constructs contrary to Islamic creed.

Meanwhile, in her study, Angelika Neuwirth categorizes Qur'anic narratives into two main categories: Myths of Heroic Figures (narratives of heroic figures such as the prophets) and Myths of Nature (narratives of divine intervention in nature, like the splitting of the Red Sea). It is crucial to clarify that the term "myth" here is not understood in its common sense as myth or something unreal and fictional. The "myth" in Neuwirth's context refers to a symbolic narrative structure used to convey transcendent truth and to construct a deeper theological consciousness.<sup>19</sup> With this understanding, stories in the Qur'an can be examined as "myth" in a specific academic sense—that is, as narratives that function to explain and depict the experienced world by revealing its archetypes, without negating their essential truth. This is distinctly different from the common societal understanding of myth as something superstitious, fictitious, or merely imaginary.<sup>20</sup>

According to Congdon's study on religious narratives (including al-Qashash, the Qur'anic stories), they are conveyed in two forms: (1) holy narrative, which encompasses universal teachings such as parables (tamthil) and ethical messages that remain relevant across all ages and primarily require contextualization; and (2) narrative-critical, which employs a pre-scientific framework of understanding divine intervention and requires a demythologization process to unveil its enduring and relevant existential meaning.<sup>21</sup> The research tends to focus on the narrative-critical form because it is this form that most requires reinterpretation of its symbolic language to align with modern paradigms of thought, without reducing the theological message it contains. Studies on Qur'anic stories such as the splitting of the Red Sea, the transformation of the Children of Israel into apes, and the Isrā' of the Prophet Muhammad, in this context, focus on exploring how narratives containing supra-rational dimensions can be read as symbolic expressions of transcendent truth with existential relevance for modern humanity. Through this approach, narrative elements containing symbolic language are understood precisely as an effective medium for conveying the kerygma or profound spiritual message—such as liberation from oppression, the consequences of moral degradation, and the attainment of the highest spiritual station—ensuring that the Qur'anic stories remain alive and continue to "speak" dynamically in every era.

### Convergence and Divergence: Demythologization and 'Ulūm al-Tafsir

Demythologization as a hermeneutical method and 'Ulūm al-Tafsir as the epistemology of Qur'anic interpretation share significant points of convergence that allow for their critical integration. This integration can ultimately form what this research generally refers to as hermeneutics of recovery, or in Md. Salleh Yaapar's terminology, can be understood as part of spiritual hermeneutics.<sup>22</sup> Demythologization falls into the category of spiritual hermeneutics because it originates from a belief in the truth of the sacred text and strives to reveal its deepest meaning, not to reject or destroy it. The fundamental point of convergence lies in the shared goal of understanding the text's transcendent message and making it relevant to the contemporary context. Both acknowledge that beneath the text's language lies a deeper meaning that needs to be excavated. However, the main divergence arises in the approach to textual authority. While Bultmann's demythologization is more assertive in reinterpreting narrative forms deemed problematic, 'Ulūm al-Tafsir emphasizes the necessity of adhering to a strict methodology that respects aspects of the Qur'an's miraculous nature, including its rhetorical method

<sup>19</sup> Angelika Neuwirth and Michael A Sells, 'Qur'anic Studies Today' (New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Angelika Neuwirth, *Encyclopaedia of The Quran (Volume Three J-O)*, ed. by Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Brill (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Congdon.

<sup>22</sup> Md. Salleh Yaapar, 'Ziarah Ke Timur: Ta'wil Sebagai Bentuk Hermeneutika Islam', *Ulūmul Qur'an: Jurnal Ilmu Dan Kebudayaan*, Vol. III.3 (1992), 4–10.

(*uslub*), its eloquence (*balaghah*), and the unseen matters it conveys (*al-ghaybiyyat*).<sup>23</sup> It is this difference that necessitates an integrative framework capable of combining the strengths of both approaches without sacrificing either authenticity or relevance.

Within this context of integration, Mohammed Arkoun's reading offers a systematic approach through the critique of Islamic reason and the deconstruction of the "unthought" within the exegetical tradition. Arkoun opens a space for reading the Qur'an not only as a closed sacred text but as an open corpus that interacts with socio-historical realities.<sup>24</sup> Through his approach, narrative elements in the Qur'an can be read as "myth" in a positive sense—not as fictional stories, but as symbolic structures that shape Muslim collective consciousness. This reading aligns with the spirit of Bultmann's demythologization, which seeks to penetrate the literal layer to reach existential meaning, while still paying attention to the uniqueness of the Qur'an as a revelatory text. Arkoun emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between the "historical" and the "historicizable"—where the former refers to fixed historical facts, while the latter is the text's potential to be continuously interpreted within changing contexts. This approach allows for a more measured application of demythologization, while still respecting the text's authority through rigorous linguistic and contextual analysis. Thus, Arkoun's framework serves as a methodological bridge mediating the tension between demythologization and 'Ulūm al-Tafsīr, while providing a solid foundation for developing a hermeneutics of recovery in contemporary Qur'anic studies.

## Methods

The focus of this study is specifically directed at the unit of analysis, namely Qur'anic stories containing symbolic-transcendental dimensions, with three main cases: the story of the splitting of the Red Sea (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:50), the story of Ashāb al-Sabt (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:65; Q.S. al-A'rāf [7]:163-166), and the Isrā' journey of the Prophet Muhammad (Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1). The selection of these units of analysis is based on several crucial methodological considerations.

First, these narratives are generally understood literally in the classical exegetical tradition. However, within the context of the modern paradigm— influenced by scientific and historical thought—they face significant hermeneutical challenges, thus requiring a more contextual interpretive approach without abandoning their transcendental meaning.

Second, these stories possess high symbolic complexity. The elements of miracle and divine intervention within them serve as both a point of convergence and an intense field of dialectic between established Islamic theological understanding and various forms of modern critique against supernatural narratives.

Third, the selection of these specific and diverse narratives allows for a more comprehensive testing of the adaptation of Rudolf Bultmann's concept of demythologization—which seeks to extract the existential message from behind mythic language—into the framework of Qur'anic interpretation. Simultaneously, it serves as a boundary test to ensure that this demythologization process can proceed without disregarding or damaging the fundamental principles of Ulūm al-Tafsīr, which form the foundation of the scholarly authority of tafsīr.

Based on the characteristics of its material object, which consists of sacred texts and the corpus of exegetical literature, this research employs a qualitative approach with a Content Analysis design.<sup>25</sup> This methodological choice is made due to the nature of the data, which requires not merely surface

<sup>23</sup> Abd. Moqsith Ghazali dkk., *Metodologi Studi Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Mohammed Arkoun, *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (London: Saqi Books, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> James W Drisko and Tina Maschi, *Content Analysis* (Oxford university press, 2016).

description, but deep exploration to uncover the meanings, historical-theological contexts, and interpretive patterns contained within it.<sup>26</sup> This study design enables the researcher to conduct a systematic analysis of two layers of data: primary content, which consists of the Qur'anic verses containing the selected stories (such as the splitting of the Red Sea, Ashāb al-Sabt, and the Isrā'), and secondary content, which includes classical and modern exegetical works that form the basis of the interpretive discourse. Operationally, this research applies Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization approach combined with Mohammed Arkoun's deconstructive reading method.<sup>27</sup> This combination is used to explore the layers of symbolic meaning and existential messages behind the structure of the Qur'anic stories, while also examining how the concept of demythologization—which originates from the Biblical tradition—can be critically adapted and modified into the framework of Qur'anic text analysis (interpretation). Therefore, essentially, this research is characterized as an exploratory and descriptive study that aims to understand the interpretive phenomenon in depth and comprehensively, while also opening possibilities for the development of a contextual hermeneutical model.

In this research, data collection is conducted through in-depth exploration of various sources classified as primary and secondary data. Primary data is sourced directly from three main foundations: first, the authentic text of the Qur'an, specifically the verses containing the selected narratives such as the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:50), the transformation of the Children of Israel into apes (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:65), the story of the Sabbath violation (Q.S. al-A'rāf [7]:163-166), and the spiritual journey of the Prophet Muhammad's Isrā' (Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1). Second, the fundamental works of Rudolf Bultmann, particularly his essays on demythologization in *Kerygma and Myth*, which form the core theoretical framework. Third, authoritative books of *tafsir* representing the tradition of classical to modern interpretation, including *Tafsir al-Tabari*<sup>28</sup> and *Ibn Kathir*<sup>29</sup> as representations of classical exegesis, as well as *Tafsir al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab representing contemporary interpretive trends.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from the corpus of academic literature encompassing books and scientific journal articles related to Qur'anic hermeneutics, comparative studies on the application of demythologization in Islamic studies, and various relevant previous researches, which together form the academic context for comprehensive analysis.

The data collection methods used in this research consist of three main approaches. First, document analysis of the Qur'anic text and related literature by applying close reading techniques to identify narrative elements and patterns of symbolism. Second, a systematic literature review of Bultmann's works and classical-contemporary exegetical works to map the development of the demythologization concept in Christian and Islamic traditions. Third, a comparative analysis by juxtaposing traditional interpretations and demythologized readings of the selected stories. In addition to mapping information on the epistemological differences between Bultmann's hermeneutics and *Ulūm al-Tafsīr*, this research also identifies points of convergence that allow for the adaptation of demythologization criteria within the framework of Islamic exegesis. Various analytical categories are developed to explore how the concept of kerygma can be uncovered from the Qur'anic stories without reducing the text's authority, while paying attention to linguistic, historical, and philosophical aspects in interpretation.

<sup>26</sup> Novendawati Wahyu Sitasari, 'Mengenal Analisa Konten Dan Analisa Tematik Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif', in *Forum Ilmiah*, 2022, xix, 77–84.

<sup>27</sup> Mohammed Arkoun, *Berbagai Pembacaan Quran Terj. Machasin*, ed. by Johan Hendrik Mauleman (Jakarta: Inis, 1997).

<sup>28</sup> Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabarī, 'Tafsīr Al-Tabarī', in *Vol. 2* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2008), p. 45.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Imam Abul Fida Isma'il Ibnu Kaśir Ad-Dimasyqi, 'Tafsir Al-Qur'ān Al-'Azīm Juz 15 Al-Isrā' 1 s.d. Al-Kahfi 74', ed. by Terj. Bahrun Abu Bakar (Bandung: Penerbit Sinar Baru Algensindo, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, Vol. 5 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002).

To process and analyze the obtained data, this research uses the content analysis method, operationalized through three main stages.<sup>31</sup> Data reduction is carried out through the stages of selection and categorization of information based on key themes relevant to the research questions. Data display is performed by presenting the findings into an analytical matrix mapping the similarities and differences between Bultmann's theory and the principles of Islamic exegesis, as well as descriptive narratives explaining the interpretive dynamics in depth. Meanwhile, data verification is conducted by re-examining the collected data to assess its authenticity and alignment with the research themes. After all displayed data is deemed valid and credible, the interpretation stage is carried out by correlating empirical findings with the theoretical framework encompassing Bultmann's demythologization concept, the principles of *ulūm al-tafsīr*, and contemporary insights into sacred text hermeneutics. This analysis process is iterative, where the researcher dynamically engages in critical reflection between data, theory, and context to produce a comprehensive understanding.

## Result

This research has successfully formulated and applied a new, innovative interpretation model for reading Qur'anic stories, with the main findings summarized in three key aspects. *First*, an operational framework integrating Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization theory—focusing on uncovering existential meaning behind symbolic language—with Mohammed Arkoun's deconstructive approach to the Qur'anic discourse was successfully developed.<sup>32</sup> *Second*, this framework was successfully tested on selected stories such as the story of "*Ashāb al-Sabt*" (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:65) and (Q.S. al-A'rāf [7]:163-166), and the event of the splitting of the Red Sea (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:50),<sup>33</sup> and *Isra'* Prophet Muhammad (Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]:1)<sup>34</sup> which successfully revealed the kerygma or existential message that remains relevant to the contemporary context. *Third*, a distinctive feature of this model is that the entire interpretation process is governed by the filtering mechanism of hermeneutics of recovery, which plays a crucial role in maintaining a balance between contextual reading and commitment to the authenticity and sanctity of revelation, thereby avoiding reductive interpretations.

### Implementation Framework of Bultmann's Demythologization

This research has produced an operational framework for implementing Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization theory in reading Qur'anic stories. This framework adopts Mohammed Arkoun's reading approach, which views the Qur'an's narrative language not merely as historical fact, but as a "symbolic expression of universal reality" that shapes collective consciousness.<sup>35</sup> The process does not replace *ta'wil* (allegorical interpretation) in Qur'anic studies; rather, it employs its principles to strengthen *ta'wil* itself.<sup>36</sup> while utilizing *Ulūm al-Tafsir*—such as *asbab an-nuzul* (occasions of revelation), *'ilm al-munasabah* (the science of intertextual connections), *balaghah* (rhetoric), etc.—as

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<sup>31</sup> Drisko and Maschi.

<sup>32</sup> Arkoun, *Berbagai Pembacaan Quran* Terj. Machasin.

<sup>33</sup> Jajasan Penjelenggara Penterjemah/Pentafsir Al-Qoeraan (1967) / Tim Penyempurnaan Terjemahan Al-Qur'an (2016-2019), *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya Edisi Penyempurnaan 2019*, Lajnah Pentashiban Mushaf Al-Qur'an (Jakarta, 2019). Hal. 10. Allah Swt. memberikan mukjizat kepada Nabi Musa a.s. dengan memberinya jalan untuk dilintasi melalui tersibaknya laut. Belum ada penjelasan ilmiah tentang mekanismenya. Bisa jadi, Nabi Musa a.s. dan kaumnya menyeberang melintasi celah teluk yang sempit tepat saat laut surut maksimum akibat purnama atau bulan baru sehingga memunculkan daratan untuk dilintasi. Sekitar 6 jam kemudian, rombongan Fir'aun mengejar. Saat di tengah, air laut mulai pasang dan menenggelamkan mereka semua.

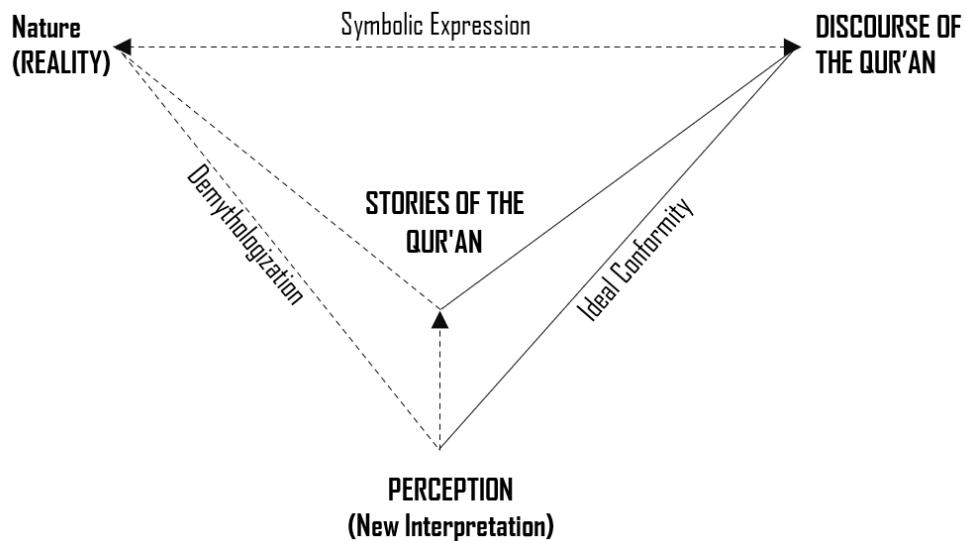
<sup>34</sup> (2016-2019). Hal. 392.

<sup>35</sup> Johan Hendrik Mauleman, *Membaca Al-Qur'an Bersama Mohammed Arkoun* (LKIS PELANGI AKSARA, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir* (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2019).

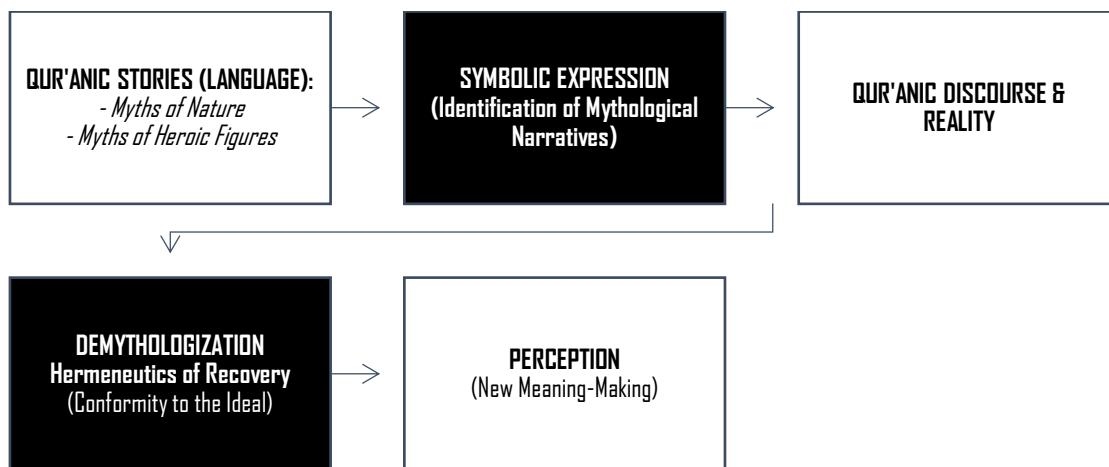
a filter at every stage. This filter functions as hermeneutics of recovery, ensuring that the search for existential meaning (kerygma) does not erode the Qur'an's transcendental dimension and miraculous nature. This procedure is applied through five systematic stages, which can be visualized in the following flowchart:

**Diagram 1. Reading the Qur'an from Mohammed Arkoun's Perspective**



Based on the diagram, Mohammed Arkoun views the reading of the Qur'an as a dialectical process involving a dynamic interaction between the tangible world (empirical reality) and the Qur'anic discourse itself. Through religious narratives expressed in human language, the Qur'an is understood not only literally but more as a symbolic system that bridges material reality with the ideal dimension or transcendent truth. A process of new meaning-making (perception) then emerges when the reader actively reinterprets these symbols using contemporary frameworks of thought. Thus, the Qur'an undergoes a transformation from a mere static text bound to the past into a living discourse that continually engages in productive dialogue with social reality and the evolution of human thought, enabling readings that are always fresh and contextual without losing their transcendental dimension.<sup>37</sup>

**Diagram 2. Flow Process and Procedure for Adapting Bultmann's Demythologization**



<sup>37</sup> Arkoun, *Berbagai Pembacaan Quran* Terj. Machasin.

Based on the flowchart developed in this research, it appears that the process of interpreting Qur'anic narratives through the adapted Bultmannian demythologization approach, informed by Arkoun's reading method, occurs within a systematic and hierarchical framework. The diagram represents five fundamental, interconnected stages, starting from text analysis (Religious Narrative/Language) which examines the linguistic structure and narrative categorization (Myths of Nature and Myths of Heroic Figures).<sup>38</sup> then identifies the layers of symbolic meaning behind the text's expressions. Several crucial subsequent stages involve contextualization between the Qur'anic Discourse and modern Reality, which is then followed by the core Demythologization process. This is supported by research findings which indicate that it is at this demythologization stage that the principles of *Ulūm al-Tafsir* function as a Hermeneutics of Recovery,<sup>39</sup> functioning as a methodological filter that sifts through and recovers existential meaning (kerygma) without reducing the authenticity and transcendental dimension of the revelation. This process ultimately culminates in the emergence of a holistic Perception or New Meaning-Making, which not only respects the text's literal meaning as its foundation but also presents a contextual reading relevant to contemporary challenges, thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of this model as a framework for contemporary exegesis.

### Application to the Qur'anic Stories and Kerygma Findings

The implementation framework of the demythologization theory is then operationalized through its application to three selected stories in the Qur'an, based on Angelika Neuwirth's categorization into two basic types: Myths of Nature concerning divine intervention in the event of the splitting of the Red Sea (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:50); and Myths of Heroic Figures such as the story of *Ashāb as-Sabt* (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:65; Q.S. al-A'rāf [7]:163-166),<sup>40</sup> and the divine intervention in the process of the Prophet Muhammad's *Isrā'* journey (Q.S. al-*Isrā'* [17]:1). This symbolic-existential reading process successfully extracts the deepest meaning (kerygma) from each narrative while remaining grounded in meticulous linguistic analysis and the context of revelation. These applicative findings empirically prove that Qur'anic stories are not merely records of past historical events, but contain universal messages that remain relevant in addressing contemporary issues. Through this approach, enduring messages are revealed concerning human liberation from various forms of oppression, warnings about the dangers of systemic moral degradation, and guidance for attaining the highest spirituality in modern life, as comprehensively summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Kerygma Findings in Selected Qur'anic Stories

Analysis Stage	The Splitting of the Red Sea (Q.S. 2:50)	The Story of <i>Ashāb al-Sabt</i> (Q.S. 2:65 & 7:163-166)	The <i>Isrā'</i> of Prophet Muhammad (Q.S. 17:1)
Religious Narrative (Language)	Keywords: <i>faraqnā</i> (We split), <i>agbraqnā</i> (We drowned). Imperative style indicates divine intervention.	Keywords: <i>kunū qiradatan khāsi'in</i> (Be [as] despicable apes), <i>yafṣūqūn</i> (they transgress).	Keywords: <i>asrā bi-'abdihī</i> (journeyed by night with His servant), <i>linurijahū min ayatīnā</i> (to show him of Our signs).

<sup>38</sup> Alizadeh Mousavi.

<sup>39</sup> Yaapar.

<sup>40</sup> Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*. *Ashāb as-Sabt* adalah komunitas Yahudi di wilayah Teluk Aqabah yang secara sengaja melanggar ketentuan ibadah di hari Sabtu. Narasi ini menggambarkan pembangkangan mereka melalui praktik penangkapan ikan di hari terlarang, yang kemudian berujung pada transformasi fisik menjadi kera sebagai hukuman ilahi.

Analysis Stage	The Splitting of the Red Sea (QS. 2:50)	The Story of Ashāb al-Sabt (QS. 2:65 & 7:163-166)	The Isrā' of Prophet Muhammad (QS. 17:1)
Identification of Symbolic Expression	The split sea = symbol of liberation from oppression. Miracle as divine aid at a critical juncture.	Indicates moral violation.	Transformation into apes = metaphor for moral degradation. Ape symbolizes spiritual and rational debasement.
Qur'anic Discourse & Reality	Two levels: (1) Theological miracle, (2) Natural phenomenon (tides) governed by Allah.	Conflict: obedience vs. greed. Test through the abundance of fish on the Sabbath.	Proof of Allah's power ( <i>ayāt</i> ). Humans can attain spiritual stations through servitude ( <i>ubudiyah</i> ).
Demythologization (Hermeneutics of Recovery)	Existential meaning: (1) Pattern of divine liberation, (2) Collapse of oppressive systems, (3) Solutions beyond rationality.	Punishment <i>qiradatān khāsi'īn</i> = moral humiliation, not physical. Transgression corrupts the essence of humanity.	An inner journey towards divine consciousness. Enlightenment ( <i>līnūriyahū</i> ) as a spiritual goal.
New Perception	Literal miracle + symbol of hope for the oppressed. Divine solutions transcend human logic.	Warning against the dangers of materialism. Transgressive behavior = moral "apes" in a state of degradation.	A sacred journey ( <i>rihlah muqaddasah</i> ) with sincerity ( <i>ikhlās</i> ) as the key to enlightenment.

Based on Table 1, a comprehensive overview can be obtained regarding the effectiveness of applying the adapted Bultmannian demythologization framework through Arkoun's approach in extracting the existential meaning (kerygma) from the three selected stories. The systematic analytical process across five stages proves that each narrative contains layers of symbolic meaning that can be brought into dialogue with contemporary reality without reducing their transcendental dimension. In the story of the splitting of the Red Sea, the linguistic analysis of the keywords *faraqnā* and *aghraqnā*, culminating in the new perception of the miracle as a symbol of hope for the oppressed, demonstrates how this framework operates from the textual level towards contextualization.

Meanwhile, the application to the story of "*Ashāb al-Sabt*" through the identification of the symbolic expression "despicable apes" successfully transforms the literal understanding into the concept of moral degradation relevant to the problem of modern materialism. Similarly, the reading of the story of the Prophet Muhammad's *Isrā'* through the demythologization stage filtered by hermeneutics of recovery successfully unveils the inner dimension of that spiritual journey as a prototype for the soul's ascent towards enlightenment. The consistent pattern formed from these three analyses shows that the developed framework is not only capable of uncovering the kerygma but also

maintains a balance between textual authenticity and contextual relevance through a strict filtering mechanism.

### The Crucial Role of Hermeneutics of Recovery

The findings of this research reveal the crucial role of hermeneutics of recovery as a methodological filter that determines the validity of the entire interpretative process. This mechanism functions as a safeguarding system that guides each stage of demythologization to prevent it from falling into reductionism or the desacralization of the text.<sup>41</sup> The application data from the three Qur'anic stories above demonstrate the consistent role of this filter in harmonizing contextual reading with the fundamental principles of *Ulūm al-Tafsir*. The following table maps the specific function of hermeneutics of recovery in each stage of analysis:

**Table 2. The Function of Hermeneutics of Recovery**

Analysis Stage	Filter Function	Application Example
Symbolic Identification	Links symbols with the Islamic theological framework	The ape is not merely a metaphor for moral degradation, but also a form of divine punishment from the perspective of <i>tafsir</i> .
Contextualization	Maintains balance between historical meaning and contemporary relevance	The interpretation of the split sea still acknowledges the literal miracle while developing its meaning of liberation.
Demythologization	Prevents the reduction of transcendental meaning to mere philosophical concepts	The meaning of <i>Isrā'</i> is not reduced to merely a psychological experience, but remains a transcendental journey.
Formulation of Kerygma	Ensures consistency with the <i>maqāṣid al-Qur'ān</i> (Objectives of the Qur'anic Discourse)	The <i>kerygma</i> of liberation from the Red Sea story aligns with the principle of justice in Islam.

Based on Table 2, it can be understood that hermeneutics of recovery functions as a methodological filter that operates actively and specifically at each analysis stage. At the symbolic identification stage, this filter plays a role in linking the symbols within the narrative to the broader Islamic theological framework, ensuring that metaphorical readings remain rooted in the exegetical tradition. In the contextualization process, its role is to maintain a dynamic balance between historical-textual meaning and contemporary relevance, so that new interpretations do not disregard the context of *asbabun nuzul* (occasions of revelation) or the authenticity of the revelation. At the critical stage of demythologization, this filter acts as a bulwark preventing the reduction of transcendental meaning to merely philosophical or psychological concepts, preserving the divine dimension of the prophetic experience. Finally, in formulating the *kerygma*, hermeneutics of recovery ensures that the resulting existential meaning aligns with the *maqāṣid al-Qur'ān* (Objectives of the Qur'anic Discourse),<sup>42</sup> and the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings. Data from the three analyzed stories prove the consistency of this filter's function. For example, in the story of *Ashab al-Sabt*, even though the physical

<sup>41</sup> A Halil Thahir, 'Dari Nalar Literalis-Normatif Menuju Nalar Kontekstualis-Historis Dalam Studi Islam', *ISLAMICA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 5.1 (2010), 1–14.

<sup>42</sup> Arkoun, *Berbagai Pembacaan Quran Terj. Machasin*.

transformation into apes is interpreted as moral degradation, this filter maintains the understanding that it is a form of divine punishment, thus preventing the secularization of meaning. Therefore, hermeneutics of recovery is not merely a passive guardian, but a dynamic mechanism that enables creative dialectics between text and context, while ensuring that the entire interpretive process remains within the corridor of valid exegetical epistemology.

## Discussion

The study on the implementation of Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization theory in the interpretation of Qur'anic stories has successfully identified three key findings that comprehensively answer the research questions. *First*, this research has successfully mapped the main principles of Bultmann's theory—namely, the effort to extract the kerygma or existential message from behind the symbolic language of myth—and confirms that its methodological core can be adopted as a tool for Qur'anic hermeneutics, as emphasized by Bultmann in his work *Jesus Christ and Mythology*.<sup>43</sup> *Second*, this research produces a hierarchical and systematic implementation framework that integrates Mohammed Arkoun's deconstructive approach to Qur'anic discourse with the filter of hermeneutics of recovery. This framework proves that demythologization theory can be operationally adapted within the Islamic tradition without neglecting the fundamental principles of *Ulūm al-Tafsir*, thereby maintaining a balance between critical reading and respect for textual authenticity. *Third*, the application analysis on a number of Qur'anic stories demonstrates that this approach successfully bridges the gap between literal-textual understanding and the need for contextualization in the modern era. Thus, this study not only supports Bultmann's vision regarding the importance of an existential reading of sacred texts but also revises and enriches his theory by incorporating the dimension of the Qur'an's sacredness and miraculous nature as unique characteristics of Qur'anic stories, thereby offering a relevant and responsive contemporary exegetical method.

This research has successfully provided comprehensive and structured answers to the three proposed research questions. *First*, in mapping Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization theory, the research successfully identified its core as a hermeneutical method aiming to penetrate the layer of symbolic language to reach the underlying kerygma or existential message. This identification details its three main principles: (1) demythologization is not a rejection of the text but a deep reinterpretation; (2) its focus lies in seeking existential meaning for the contemporary reader, not in proving historical-scientific facts; and (3) it employs Martin Heidegger's existential philosophical framework as a tool for understanding the human condition.

*Second*, regarding the implementation of this theory in Qur'anic studies, the research designed an adaptive and hierarchical model consisting of five stages. This model creatively integrates Mohammed Arkoun's critical-deconstructive reading of Qur'anic discourse with the filter of hermeneutics of recovery. This filter functions by sifting each stage of interpretation through the lens of the fundamental principles of *Ulūm al-Tafsir* to ensure alignment with the scholarly heritage of exegesis.

*Third*, concerning the urgency of its implementation, the research findings prove that this approach is highly necessary as an adaptive hermeneutical response to the challenges of modernity and the crisis of meaning, while simultaneously preserving the authenticity of revelation. Thus, the resulting model offers a via media or a solution-oriented middle path, effectively avoiding the two extremes that often become stumbling blocks: namely, rigid textual literalism on one side, and radical reductionism that denies the transcendent dimension of the sacred text on the other.

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<sup>43</sup> Bultmann.

The study on the application of Bultmann's demythologization in Qur'anic studies reveals a consistent pattern in the effort to bring the sacred text into dialogue with modern consciousness. This research shares similarities with the studies by Syahna and Mayangsari, which review the concept of demythologization to interpret religious narratives as existential statements.<sup>44</sup> The difference is that this study is more selective, integrating the critique of myth partially while upholding the fundamental principles of Qur'anic interpretation. Furthermore, this study supports the findings of M. Amin Abdullah regarding the importance of reconstructing scholarly paradigms through an integrative approach that connects religious disciplines with general sciences.<sup>45</sup> Not far from previous studies, this research also supports Mohammed Arkoun's argument about the importance of reading the Qur'an critically while considering historical context and interpretive pluralism. The importance of this critical analysis lies in the possibility of "revealing the underlying order" (kerygma) that lies beneath the surface appearance of the text.<sup>46</sup> The results of Fazlur Rahman's research through his double movement hermeneutics also find resonance in this study, particularly in connecting the text with the contemporary context.<sup>47</sup> However, this research places a stronger emphasis on the aspect of hermeneutics of recovery as a filtering mechanism that maintains a balance between contextual reading and the preservation of textual sacredness.

This research holistically explains the integration of Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization approach into the framework of *Ulūm al-Tafsir*, while also establishing its original position in the academic landscape by making a clear distinction from previous studies. Unlike the research by Syahna and Mayangsari, which still focuses on a more conventional textual analysis of religious narratives,<sup>48</sup> or the study by Irfan Afandi which is limited to applying demythologization only to the concept of Hell,<sup>49</sup> this research takes a step further by constructing a comprehensive methodological framework. This framework not only includes a solid theoretical foundation but also provides a clear roadmap for its practical application in interpreting Qur'anic stories.

Meanwhile, the study by Panggabean et al. only discusses Bultmann's existential hermeneutics in general without a specific connection to the Qur'an,<sup>50</sup> this research, on the contrary, constructs a concrete and hierarchical implementation model, strengthened by the filter of "hermeneutics of recovery" to ensure the interpretation process remains within the corridor of exegetical principles.<sup>51</sup> Another advantage lies in its ability to respond to and integrate Mohammed Arkoun's findings regarding myth as a symbolic structure within Qur'anic discourse, without then becoming trapped in the implications of radical deconstruction that could erode the text's dimension of transcendence.<sup>52</sup> Thus, this research does not merely fill the methodological gaps present in previous studies, but also actively offers a new, more balanced and methodological perspective for bringing Western hermeneutics into dialogue with the Islamic exegetical tradition, paving the way for a contemporary approach that still respects the authenticity of revelation.

<sup>44</sup> Syahna and Mayangsari.

<sup>45</sup> Parluhutan Siregar, 'Integrasi Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman Dalam Perspektif M. Amin Abdullah', *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 38.2 (2014).

<sup>46</sup> Muhammad Ikhsan AR, 'METODE "PEMBACAAN" AL-QUR'AN (Telaah Atas Pemikiran Mohammed Arkoun)', *Shautut Tarbiyah*, 18.2 (2012), 18–41.

<sup>47</sup> Muhammad Yusuf and Anwar Sadat, 'Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement and Its Contribution to the Development of Religious Moderation.', *International Journal of Islamic Studies & Humanities*, 4.1 (2021).

<sup>48</sup> Syahna and Mayangsari.

<sup>49</sup> Irfan Afandi, 'Demythologizing Neraka Huthomah', *Jurnal Darussalam: Jurnal Pendidikan, Komunikasi Dan Pemikiran Hukum Islam*, 7.2 (2016), 425–40.

<sup>50</sup> Vai Sar Maduma Panggabean and others, 'Hermeneutika Eksistensial Rudolf Bultmann Dan Gagasan Demitologisasi', *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah Multidisipliner*, 1.04 (2025), 748–54.

<sup>51</sup> Yaapar.

<sup>52</sup> Siti Rohmah Soekarba, 'Kritik Pemikiran Arab: Metode Dekonstruksi Mohammed Arkoun', *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia*, 8.1 (2006), 5.

The findings of this study have successfully provided a comprehensive mapping of both the potential and the critical limitations of adapting Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization theory to Qur'anic studies. However, alongside its contributions, the research honestly acknowledges several significant limitations. The main limitations lie in two aspects: first, the scope of Qur'anic narratives analyzed is still limited in number, and thus does not fully represent the thematic diversity and complexity of stories within the Qur'an. Second, the exploration of the linguistic-morphological dimension of the Qur'an's Arabic as the medium of revelation has not been conducted in depth, which is a crucial element in any discussion of sacred text hermeneutics. Beyond these limitations, the theoretical implications of the research are very promising, as they open a dialogical space for the development of a contemporary exegesis epistemology that is responsive to the challenges of modernity, while still engaging in critical and constructive dialogue with the classical heritage of *Ulūm al-Tafsīr*.

Practically, the resulting hermeneutics of recovery model offers a valuable operational guide for exegetes and academics to read Qur'anic stories in a more contextual and existential manner, without falling into the simplistic dichotomy between literal and allegorical understanding. Therefore, for further research, it is highly recommended to expand the scope of the study by testing this model on more complex and layered narratives, such as the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), rich with psychological drama, or the story of Dhul-Qarnayn, full of eschatological enigmas. Additionally, deepening the linguistic aspect through a semiotic approach to analyze the structure and word choices within these narratives is an important next step. In this way, the developed hermeneutical model can not only be tested more comprehensively for its validity and reliability, but will also continue to be refined and enrich the treasury of dynamic contemporary exegetical methodology.

## Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Rudolf Bultmann's demythologization theory holds significant potential for constructive adaptation in Qur'anic exegetical studies through the formulation of an appropriate methodological framework. The rationale for this adaptation is based on the urgent need to address modern hermeneutical challenges, particularly in responding to the gap between the understanding of classical texts and contemporary reality, without neglecting the authenticity and sanctity of revelation. This research proves that the application of the hermeneutics of recovery model—which functions as a filtering mechanism at each stage of interpretation, guided by the principles of *Ulūm al-Tafsīr*—is not only capable of extracting relevant existential meaning (*kerygma*) from Qur'anic stories but also consistently preserves the transcendental dimension, the sanctity of the text, and the miraculous nature of the Qur'an as Divine revelation. Therefore, a careful and controlled integration of Bultmann's hermeneutics and the framework of Islamic exegetical sciences can offer an alternative approach that bridges tradition and modernity.

This research makes a significant contribution to the development of a contemporary exegetical methodology that is responsive to the complexities of modern challenges. Until now, Western hermeneutical approaches have often been considered difficult to reconcile with, or even opposed to, the well-established Islamic exegetical tradition. However, the findings of this research, on the contrary, prove that a synthesis conducted selectively, critically, and with rigorous filtering is not only possible but can substantially enrich and expand the scope of the *Ulūm al-Tafsīr* heritage. Its main contribution lies in the effort to deepen and enrich academic understanding regarding the potential integration between existential philosophical hermeneutics—as conceptualized by Bultmann—and the principles of Islamic interpretation, particularly in reading Qur'anic stories laden with symbolic-transcendental dimensions. The proposed "hermeneutics of recovery" model

successfully bridges these two worlds often perceived as opposites. Furthermore, this research paves a promising way for future studies, both to test and develop similar models for other types of Islamic religious texts beyond narratives, such as law or theology, and to conduct a more in-depth and technical exploration of the Arabic linguistic and semiotic aspects within the narrative structure of the Qur'an itself.

Several limitations in this study open opportunities for further research development. The scope of narratives analyzed is still limited to three main stories, thus not yet reflecting the full thematic and structural diversity of all Qur'anic narratives. In addition, the exploration of linguistic aspects, particularly the linguistic-morphological analysis of the Qur'an's Arabic language, can be deepened further. Therefore, future research is recommended to apply the hermeneutics of recovery model to other stories such as Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), Dhul-Qarnayn, or the People of the Cave (*Ashab al-Kahf*) to test the validity and applicability of this model in various narrative contexts. Furthermore, semiotic, stylistic, and critical discourse analysis approaches can be integrated to dissect more complex and multidimensional layers of meaning. Thus, these limitations actually serve as a foundation for developing more comprehensive Qur'anic studies, which will not only enrich the treasury of interpretation but also strengthen the methodological framework for reading the sacred text in the contemporary era.

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