

# The Qur'an as Scripture

New Color of Orientalist's View on the Qur'an

## *Al-Qur'an sebagai Kitab Suci*

*Cara Pandang Baru para Orientalis atas Al-Qur'an*

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### **Abstract**

*As the center of Islamic civilization, the Qur'an receives numerous intellectual responses both from Muslim and Western scholars within history. One of the prominent names of Western scholars who deals very much with the Qur'an is Jane Dammen McAuliffe. This article discusses the ontological view of the Qur'an of Jane Dammen McAuliffe, within a context of a new growing interest of western scholarship to see the Qur'an. Applying phenomenological and analytical methods of analysis, the article ends in conclusions: [1] Muslims' views on the Qur'an tend to be theologically oriented, while the Westerners have resulted some polemical conclusions [2] however a new growing interest in the West, in which Jane Dammen McAuliffe belongs to, sees the Qur'an as a scripture, that emphasizes the importance of relation between the text and human's belief in the text; the Qur'an and Muslims.*

**Keyword:** *the Qur'an, Jane Dammen McAuliffe, definition, scripture, relation.*

### **Abstrak**

Sebagai pusat peradaban Islam, Al-Qur'an telah menerima sejumlah respons intelektual baik dari kalangan sarjana Muslim maupun sarjana Barat. Salah tokoh utama sarjana Barat yang mengkaji Al-Quran adalah Jane Dammen McAuliffe. Artikel ini membahas pandangan Jane Dammen McAuliffe terhadap sisi ontologis Al-Quran. Menggunakan metode fenomenologi dan analitis, artikel ini sampai pada kesimpulan: [1] pandangan Muslim terhadap Al-Qur'an cenderung bersifat teologis, sementara sebagian sarjana Barat menghasilkan teori yang polemis; dan [2] meskipun begitu, telah muncul kecenderungan baru di Barat, termasuk Jane Dammen McAuliffe, untuk melihat Al-Qur'an sebagai *scripture* (kitab suci), yang menekankan sisi relasi antara kitab tertentu dengan komunitas manusia yang mengimannya; relasi antara Al-Qur'an dan Muslim.

**Kata Kunci:** Al-Qur'an, Jane Dammen McAuliffe, kitab suci, relasi.

## Introduction

To define the Qur'an exactly and rigidly is not a simple matter. This is what a famous Qur'anic scholar, Abdullah Darrāz<sup>1</sup> says, and we possibly have to agree with him. Unlike Abdullah Darrāz, al-Jabiri goes further, questions the appropriateness of the Qur'an to receive certain definition, considering that human beings, or particularly Muslims, commonly know it.<sup>2</sup> In fact, not every exegesis or Ulūm al-Qur'an books review the definition of the Qur'an, unlike the definition of *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*, which evidently are almost found in every exegesis and Ulūm al-Qur'an literatures. However, this does not mean that no scholar pays attention to such topic; somehow since the very beginning it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an had been the center of life, which has radically colored, and even changed a civilization, so that, for that matter, it seems reasonable that some scholars attempt to reveal the most proper definition for the Qur'an. In the other side, academic discussion upon certain matter for sure needs such a definitive limitation to mark and guide the discussion to the best path. However, still in the view of Abdullah Darrāz, the attempt to define the Qur'an is only to gain the nearest meaning of the Qur'an as well to distinguish it from every other scripture and text.

Both Muslims and Western scholars have attempted to discover the proper definitions to the Qur'an. However, the definitions from both sides are fashioned; what from Muslims describe that they are insiders who believe in the Qur'an, and what from Westerns tend to oppose what of Muslims. However, this last decade, there is a shifting paradigm in Qur'anic studies by the Western scholar.<sup>3</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> Abdullāh Darrāz, *an-Naba' al-'Azīm: Naẓrah Jadīdah fī al-Qur'ān*. Qatar: Dar as-Saqāfah, 1985, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Muḥammad Ābid al-Jābirī, *Madkhal ilā al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*. Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wiḥdah al-'Arabiah, 2006, juz 1, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> This last decade shows the paradigm shifting on Qur'anic studies by Western Scholars. If the previous paradigm tends to question the historical problem of divine revelation, to look for the theory of influences and borrowings, Issa J. Boullata says that it has shifted to the new paradigm which treats the Qur'an as *textual corpus* in literary approach. On the other side, Sahiron Syamsuddin suggests that the historical approach into Qur'anic studies in Germany develops and is divided into two boards. One adapts the paradigm of Abraham Geiger which considers Qur'an as the epigonic text, the group ruled by Gerd Puin and friends, whereas the other, in contrast object the first group's claim and propose the Qur'an as the polyphonic text with its own charac-

'friendly' paradigm recognizes the Qur'an as Muslims believe in it and receives Muslim tradition to analyze the study of the Qur'an. Therefore, it is important to describe the ontological view on the Qur'an from this new paradigm. This article, will contribute in Qur'anic studies in this context; to describe the view of Jane Dammen McAuliffe.<sup>4</sup>

This article applies phenomenological and analytical methods. As the article takes the context of the new growing interest, this article will firstly elaborate what Muslims say on the Qur'an followed by the classical Western school on the Qur'an. The classical here means the Western scholars prior to 1980, as this number marks the years this shift begin to emerge. After describing the contestation from within the Muslims and the opposition of the Western, this article will describe the ontological view of Jane Dammen McAuliffe of the Qur'an, from the background of thinking to the effect.

Comparing to previous works, firstly, on Jane Dammen Mc

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ters. See Issa J. Boullata, "Introduction". In Issa J. Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an*. Surrey: Curzon, 2000; Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Studi al-Qur'an di Jerman". *Republika*, Jumat 17 September 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe is an internationally known scholar. Her expertise is related to Qur'anic studies, Islamic history, and comparative religions. Her numerous works on these issues evidently show us such expertise, particularly her full attention to *Tārīkh al-Muluk* of *al-Ṭabari* and her dissertation entitled *Qur'anic Christians: an Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis*. The former is a work in kind of translation, and Jane Dammen McAuliffe eventually much quotes and responses this work in many of her articles, whether those which related to Qur'anic studies, Islamic history, and comparative religions either. She received her BA in Philosophy and Classics from Trinity College Washington, D. C. and her MA in religious studies and PhD in Islamic studies from the University of Toronto. Her academics career remarks are the President of Bryn Mawr University (2008), Dean of College at Georgetown University (1999). As internationally known and rated scholar, Jane Dammen McAuliffe is of the productive scholars. She has already published five books, including six volumes of *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. While the other four are (1) *Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*; (2) *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. Co-editor with J. Goering and B. Walfish; (3) *Abbasid Authority Affirmed: The Early Years of al-Mansur*. Translation, introduction and annotation of vol. 28 *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*; and (4) *Qur'anic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis*. Besides these, she will publish two other books entitled *Norton Anthology of World Religions* and *The Qur'an: A Norton Critical Edition*. From these five books, the only her independent writing is *Qur'anic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis*, which is actually her doctoral dissertation. While in the first three titles, she was the editor, whereas the one rest is a translation. It seems that she obviously does not publish much works as book.

Auliffe, there are viewer works that exclusively discuss her thought on the Qur'an; it is quite strange considering that numerous of her works have been cited extensively either by Muslims or Western scholars. The only explanation found is a very simple commentary from Abdullah Saeed in his *The Qur'an: an Introduction* as he writes that McAuliffe is one of prominent Western scholars on the Qur'anic studies who writes many on interreligious understanding in attempt to bring them life side by side in peace.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, about the basic view on the Qur'an, some orientalisists have written numbers of works such as Abraham Geiger, Theodore Noldeke, John Wansbrough, to mention some names. On the other side, Muslim scholars have been the counterpart, prominently Fazlurrahman as he lived in the West and directly dealt with their scholarship on the Qur'an. In the context of the Qur'an as a scripture, some works already dealt with this issue. As a prominent historians of religions, Wilfred C. Smith explore the concept of scripture phenomenologically, and the Qur'an is recognized under this term.<sup>6</sup> The other scholar, Abd. Moqsith attempts to establish a new paradigm on methodology of interpreting the Qur'an.<sup>7</sup> He makes the concept of the Qur'an as scripture as one of principles. In this case, Jane Dammen McAuliffe's view on the Qur'an plays important role within this dynamics.

### Muslim's Definitions on the Qur'an

The common definition says that the Qur'an is *Kalāmullāh al-munazzal ilā Muḥammad al-muta'abbadu bitilāwatihī* (the word of God revealed to Muhammad which its recitation is regarded as worship). This kind of definition is available in the latter Ulūm al-Qur'an literatures such as *al-Naba' al-'Aẓīm: Naẓrah Jadīdah fī al-Qur'ān* of Abdullah Darrāz,<sup>8</sup> *Mabāḥiṣ fī Ulūm al-Qur'an* of Mannā' Khalīl al-Qaṭṭān.<sup>9</sup> Some other definitions are marked by some additional

<sup>5</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Kitab Suci Agama-agama* terj. Dede Iswadi. Jakarta: Teraju, 2005, p. 12-23

<sup>7</sup> Abd. Moqsith Ghazali (et.al.), *Metodologi Studi Al-Qur'an*. Jakarta: Kompas Gramedia, 2009, p. 79-106.

<sup>8</sup> Abdullāh Darrāz, *an-Naba' al-'Aẓīm: Naẓrah*, ... p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Mannā' Khalīl al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥiṣ fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2000, p. 15.

phrases. Maḥmūd Syaltūt, for example, emphasizes *lafz al-‘Arabi* and attaches the theory of *tawatur*; while Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ as well as Sa’īd Ramḍān al-Būṭī<sup>10</sup> enclose the term of *mu’jiz*.<sup>11</sup>

There are two interesting points in this case. The first is that the qualification of divine’s *kalām* is an attribute, which always exists in every single definition. The Qur’an is divine revelation; the statement that the Qur’an is fully the word of God and contains neither human infiltration nor intervention, even of Muhammad himself, is the matter which Muslims believe in, and who ever regards the Qur’an as human’s work is therefore misleading. This view then leads the Qur’an to its position as the sacred scripture, and therefore needs special threat from human. Many traditions report benefits (*faḍīlah*) for those who politely interact with the Qur’an, by reciting it, learning it, teaching it, memorizing it, or particularly applying its teaching.<sup>12</sup>

As the sacred divine revelation, the Qur’an eventually is one of the recited passages in prayer.<sup>13</sup> Its nature as *kalām* emphasizes its role as recitation, the phenomenon which is in accord to the first Qur’anic command revealed within the first *ayāh*.<sup>14</sup> This kind of role is the major one in comparison to the other for generations. Since it is sacred and free of human influence, the recitation upon the Qur’an ranges within various motives, from eschatological rewards to certain worldly-profane objectives. This phenomenon refers to what Muslims know as *faḍīlah*. Besides, reciting the Qur’an is also involved in esthetic things. In many countries, this recitation is one

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Sa’īd Ramḍān al-Būṭī, *Min Rawā’i al-Qur’ān*. Syria: Maktabat al-Farabi, 1972, p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāḥiṣ fī Ulūm al-Qur’ān*. Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilmi li al-Malāyin, 1997, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Many accounts on this issue are available within various literatures such as al-Nawāwī’s work under title *al-Tibyān fī Adābi Ḥamālāt al-Qur’ān*. Jeddah: Haramayn, t.t. In this book, the author provides many traditions related to Prophet Muhammad (*Ḥadīṣ*) explaining the ideal way to interact with the Qur’an. However, some of which is by no sense relates to prophet, but to companion and even the later *‘ulamā*.

<sup>13</sup> There is the other concept within Islamic studies namely *ḥadīṣ al-quḍsi*. Both Qur’an and *ḥadīṣ al-quḍsi* are divine revelation. However, they differ fundamentally in the way each is revealed. The first is revealed verbatim, as *lafz* and *ma’na*; this contains no infiltration of Muhammad. While *ḥadīṣ al-quḍsi* is divine revelation, which God only sent him the substance of message, and on how to articulate or on what sentence to express is Muḥammad’s own effort. See Mannā’ Khalīl al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥiṣ fī Ulūm al-Qur’ān* ..., p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> Q.S al-‘Alaq/96: 1

of famous and prestigious competition. This makes those who are able to recite the Qur'an as well as to memorize Qur'anic passages completely, having great appreciation from the residents and good social rank.<sup>15</sup>

*The second* is that in addition to having the initial ontological views as *kalām*, these definitions differ in emphasizing other qualification. Some pays attention to the qualification of *gair makhluq*, *mu'jiz*, *lafz 'arabiyyah*, etc. al-Jabiri writes down at least five common definitions for the Qur'an in his book *Madkhal ilā al-Qur'ān*: (1) *allaẓi yaqra'uhu al-muslimūna wa yaktubūnahu fī maṣāḥifihim*; (2) *Kalāmullāh subḥānahu wata'āla nazala bihī Jibrīl*; (3) *Kalāmullāh ta'āla wa waḥyuhu al-munazzal 'ala khātimi anbiyā'ihī Muḥammad ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam al-maktūbu fī al-muṣḥafī, al-manqūlu ilainā bi al-tawāturi, al-muta'abbadu bitilāwaitihī, al-mutaḥaddā bi i'jāzihi*; (4) *kalāmullāh subḥānahu wata'āla gair makhluq al-munazzal 'alā nabīyyihī bilugat al-'arabiyyah, al-mu'jizat al-mu'ayyadāt lahu, al-mutaḥaddā bihī al-'arab*; dan (5) *Kalāmullāhi minhu bud-dan, bilā kayfiyatin qawlan, wa anzala 'alā rasūlihī waḥyan, wa ṣaddaqahu al-mu'minūna 'alā ḡālika haqqan, wa ayqanu annahu kalāmullāhi ta'āla bi al-haqīqah, laysa bimakhluq kakalāmi al-bariyyah, faman sami'ahu wa za'ama annahu kalāma basyar faqad kafara*.

The first definition is based on the way human roughly see the Qur'an, while the second to the last one never leave the qualification of divine's *kalām* out. Beside this consensus of qualification, those definitions differ in offering the other qualification. Al-Jabiri shows these definitions in order to prove that they are not an empty difference, but rather a debate, the ideological one. As it seems to

<sup>15</sup> Nasr provides a descend explanation about the practical side of the Qur'an in Muslims' daily life. He connects this phenomenon to his statement that the Qur'an is *muntaj al-ṣaqāfi* as well as *muntij al-ṣaqāfi*, particularly the later. As doing so, he presents four points to explain how the Qur'an builds Muslims' everyday life. The first is that the Qur'an forms Muslims activities through its regulations, from the order to read, to perform prayer, to perform fasting, etc. the second is that the Qur'an is, and this is the main role, the recitation; the Qur'an is recited in massive intensity, in many aspects of life. The third is related to daily conversation in which many Muslims use *kalimāt al-ṭayyibāt* particularly the very name of *Allāh*. His last point is related to the esthetic side of the Qur'an, whether as recitation or artistic calligraphy. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, "Everyday life, Qur'an in". In Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. Leiden: Brill, 2002, II, p. 80-97.



him, every single definition supports their school or what we can say *mazhab*, and is the mark for them.<sup>16</sup>

The analysis of al-Jabiri makes a sense in relation to the growing interest of exegesis in medieval. Following the number of *ahl ra'y* or rationalist from mu'tazilite increased, many reason-based exegesis raised; the exegesis which appeared as the compensation for unsatisfying of tradition-based exegesis and which uses reason mainly in *mutasyābihat* category of the Qur'an. This community grew stronger by the support of political power from Kingdom. For that matter, theological debate about interpretation among exegetes faced intervention power from *khalīfah* and is followed by anarchical threat, which commonly is known as *mihnah*.<sup>17</sup> It is in this era, as Jabiri says, these definitions arisen and every definitions was the mark for further understanding of teaching of the Qur'an within its variety.

The debate runs in some themes. The first relates to the qualification of the Qur'an whether it is *qadīm* or *ḥādīṣ*. A group of Muslim says that the Qur'an is *qadīm* while the other argues that it is *ḥādīṣ*, and one other group initiates a synthesis that the Qur'an has both dimensions as *ḥādīṣ* and *qadīm*. The second topic is about the way the Qur'an revealed, whether merely by its substance or contains both substance and *lafẓ*, whereas the third is about whether the Qur'an is revealed fully in Arabic or it contains some non-Arabic to some extent. Beside nature of the Qur'an, the issue of etymological definition of the Qur'an is also the matter of debatable. The arguments arisen for this topic are whether the terminology of *Qur'an* has its origins from *qara'a*, *qarana*, *qur'u*, or it is *ism 'alam* which has no derivation.<sup>18</sup>

The theological debate through these interpretative frameworks of definitions evidently shows that this has already run for long time, since the medieval age at least. Furthermore, the existence of such views in modern literatures leads us to say that this is still the main way of Muslims to think about the Qur'an. What

<sup>16</sup> Muḥammad Ābid al-Jābirī, *Madkhal ila al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, p. 17-18.

<sup>17</sup> Qomaruddin Khan, *Teori Tentang Politik Islam*. Bandung: Pustaka, 1996, p. 1-2; Gamal al-Banna, *Al-Islām: Dīn wa Ummah wa Laiṣa Dīn wa Dawlah*. Mesir: al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyah, 2003, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Aksin Wijaya, *Arah Baru Studi Ulum al-Qur'an: Memburu Pesan Tuhan di balik Fenomena Budaya*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009, p. 58-68.

al-Jabiri attempts to do by showing such debate is to go beyond such ideological bias. He says that the Qur'an is '*Divine revelation which Jibril sent down to Muhammad used Arabic language, and is including to a kind of revelation which was written in previous scriptures of previous messengers.*' Unlike previous views, this one is the one which he says neutral because this definition comes directly from the Qur'an, Q.S al-Syu'arā [26]: 192-196.<sup>19</sup> Beside al-Jabiri, another modern scholar, Fazlur Rahman says "... the Qur'an is entirely the word of God and, in ordinary sense, is entirely the word of Muhammad."<sup>20</sup> Through this view, he proposes a new unique theory that the mode of divine revelation for the Qur'an is in close meaning to inspiration; the Qur'an is the eternal entity within Muhammad's soul. Even though al-Jabiri and Rahmad propose the new way to see the Qur'an, both definitions are interpretative; their definitions are the Qur'an for Qur'an, not the Qur'an for human. In this context, their definitions do not propose something new from the common definitions to the Qur'an.

What Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd proposes seems a matter of exception. He arises an argument, which eventually is controversial within Muslim's world of thought, that the Qur'an is *muntaj al-ṣaqāfī* and at once is *muntij al- ṣaqāfī*. This is the implication of treating the Qur'an as text, the same views as Amin al-Khullī has with his dictum *Alqur'ān huwa al-kitāb al-'arabiyyah al-akbar*.<sup>21</sup> This view is successful to go beyond theological view of the Qur'an. This view than lead him to use certain approach to interpret the Qur'an, literary structure.<sup>22</sup>

One other exception seems possible to Muhammad Abduh. As it seems to us, his view is the best then that of many others. For Abduh, the Qur'an is *kitāb al-hidāyah*.<sup>23</sup> He successfully, in the very simple way, shows that the Qur'an is fully revealed to human be-

<sup>19</sup> Muḥammad Ābid al-Jābirī, *Madkhal ila al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Fazlurrahman, *Islam*. London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Nur Khalis Setiawan, *Al-Qur'an Kitab Sastra Terbesar*. Yogyakarta: eLSAQ, 2006, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Tekstualitas Al-Qur'an* translated by Khoiron Nahdliyyin. Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005, p. 19-20.

<sup>23</sup> The paradigm of *tafsīr* which emphasizes and attempts to explore the Qur'an in the sense that this is *hidāyah* for Muslims is described in chapter of introduction to *tafsīr* (*Muqaddimah al-Tafsīr*) of *Tafsīr al-Manār*: See Rasyid Ridha, *Tafsīr al-Manār*. Cairo: Dar al-Manar, 1947, p. 17.



ings. Human can take advantages from teachings that says in every word, phrase, *āyāt*, and *sūrah* within the Qur'an. This view opens the gate of new character of exegesis that is commonly called *Adabi al-Ijtimā'i*. According to Abduh, this is the synthesis of useless previous exegesis, which he accuses that those are much more like an experiment of language analysis rather than an exegesis to gain the meaning of the Qur'an so human can take its guidance.

### Non-Muslim and the Qur'an

If Muslims with their scholarship propose some considerations about the ontological view of the Qur'an on some theories—range from what the Qur'an is or where it is from and how it formed—whether it is intentionally or not, Western scholarship on the Qur'an results in certain theories which challenge those of Muslims. Muslim scholars believe that the Qur'an is a Divine revelation, while the western scholarship tends to argue that the Qur'an is merely the work of Muhammad; furthermore, some orientalist attempt to search Judeo-Christian influence on the Qur'an. If Muslims say that the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, some western scholars state that the Qur'an is problematic while arguing that some word of the Qur'an are originated from Syriac language. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is divine words, and therefore it contains no change and disorder, whereas the western scholars try to argue that the *sūrah* and even word order of the Qur'an is confusing and therefore needs revision.

Abraham Geiger challenges Muslims' faith that the Qur'an is divine revelation, as he says that the Qur'an is not the word of God, *kalāmullāh*. As the first scholars who go beyond polemical tension to see the Qur'an, Geiger compares the Qur'an to the Bible theoretically and scientifically alike. His comparison ends up with the idea that some parallel subjects between the Qur'an and the Bible are identified to come from the era before VII. Then he raises some questions: Did Muhammad wish to borrow from Judaism? Could Muhammad borrow from Judaism? And if so, how was such borrowing possible to him?"<sup>24</sup> However, it is necessary to note that he did not compare it in simple way, in the sense that he easily judges that the Qur'an

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<sup>24</sup> Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Islam*. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970, p. 1-25.

borrow something from the Bible because the former simply has some parallels to the later. He rather did it through sophisticated analysis on philological, historical, and literary approaches. He compares Qur'anic word of *tābut* to *tebuta* and *teba*, for example. This parallel did not make him claim in hurry that Muhammad cheat Judaic culture, until he found out that the ending of *-ut* evidently could be traced back to Jewish-Aramaic tradition. Finally, he concluded that Muhammad was evidently influenced by Judaism to form the Qur'an. For him, the Qur'an is the work of Muhammad instead of that of Almighty God; Muhammad borrowed from Judaism to make his new religion recognizable and acceptable to his Arabic inhabitant.<sup>25</sup>

Having the same paradigm as Abraham Geiger, Richard Bell developed textual criticism toward the Qur'an. Assuming that the Qur'an in its phrase, sentence, or *āyāt* has a repeated structure in many places and confusing structure, he argues that this is the evident for Judeo-Christian influence in Islamic formulation. For him, the Qur'an itself contains the record of Muhammad's effort to reach knowledge of the great religions around Arabia. He says that Muhammad had been gathering much knowledge from both traditions and this additional knowledge create every single repetition within the Qur'an with some additional values and different characters.<sup>26</sup> As example, he argues that *surah al-Baqarah* [2], from *āyah* 15 up to 29, has the overlapping themes in some ways. For that matter, he then assumes that the random theme is the result for importing, inserting, and adding some themes into this sequence.<sup>27</sup>

Wansbrough, considering all accounts of Islam including the Qur'an as salvation history, ignores the possibilities that they are historically actual. He therefore considers Qur'anic presentation of several stories of the previous prophet not as historical accounts, rather as literary ones. As a result, the notation of referential style of the Qur'an, he assumes, shows that the Qur'an raised in the cir-

<sup>25</sup> Reuven Firestone, "The Qur'an and the Bible: Some Modern Studies of Their Relationship" In John C. Reeves (ed.), *Bible and Qur'an: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, p. 7-11.

<sup>26</sup> Reuven Firestone, "The Qur'an and the Bible...", p. 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> W. Montgomery Watt, *Pengantar Studi Al-Qur'an: Penyempurnaan atas Karya Richard Bell* translated by Taufik Adnan Amal. Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 1995, p. 163.

cumstance in which dealt with sectarian polemical movements. For him, creation of the Qur'an is not merely an attempt to reproduce the Bible in Arabic or adapting it into Arabia. Nevertheless, it rather, because the situation of such polemics, the attempt to separate the Qur'an from Mosaic revelation.<sup>28</sup>

On the next point, that Muslims believe the Qur'an contains Arabic words, Luxemberg is one of scholars who challenges it. Within his *The Syiro-Aramaic Reading of the Qur'an*, he says that the origin of Qur'anic language is much more reliable to be related to Syriac, the lingua franca in Middle Eastern when the Qur'an was in time of formation.<sup>29</sup>

This is hardly new thing within Qur'anic studies discourse, even for Muslim scholars. Al-Şuyūṭi in his *al-Itqān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, besides explaining some experts' opinion on this subject, he also listed many words, which are possibly hardly come from Arabic origins; this kind of words are commonly known under terminology of *mu'arrab*.<sup>30</sup> However, even such discourse parallel and share each other, between Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, they differ fundamentally about what this premise implies to. For Muslims, this group of words, on some explanation, does not lead them to decrease their faith about the Qur'an, that it is an Arabic revelation. Whereas

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<sup>28</sup> Andrew Rippin reviews the thesis of John Wansbrough in one of articles within *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* that is edited by Richard C. Martin. Fazlur Rahman denies this essay as well as what this essay reviews. Rahman says that this essay is what Abdul Rauf pays attention in the next essay. Rahman argues that John Wansbrough entirely unanchored the Qur'an from its historical moorings and relocated it into the other. Furthermore, Wansbrough creates his new main topic of the Qur'an, as follow: retribution, sign, exile, and covenant. Rahman questions this; why does Wansbrough choose them? Why does not he choose, for example, *jihad*? This is probably what Abdul Rauf says as unfairness of Western to study Islam. See Reuven Firestone, "The Qur'an and the Bible...", p. 17; Andrew Rippin, "Literary Analysis of the Qur'an, *Tafsīr*, and *Sīra*: The Methodology of John Wansbrough". In Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*. Tucson: The University Arizona Press, 1985, p. 158-161; Fazlur Rahman, "Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies: Review to Essay". In Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*. Tucson: The University Arizona Press, 1985, p. 198-201; Muhammad Abdul-Rauf, "Outsider's Interpretation of Islam: A Muslim Point of View". In Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*. Tucson: The University Arizona Press, 1985, p. 159.

<sup>29</sup> Christoph Luxemberg, *The Syiro-Aramaic Reading of the Qur'an*. Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler, 2007, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Şuyūṭi, *al-Itqān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. Beirut: Dār el-Fikr, 2008, p. 193-200.

Luxemberg, or we may find the same explanation from Arthur Jeffery's work,<sup>31</sup> deduces this premise to the conclusion that Muslim never willing to accept, that Muhammad gained some concrete influences from non-Arabic language and culture while he was writing the Qur'an.

About the structure of the Qur'an which is assessed to be random and confusing, again Bell's work would be the great example besides some other textual criticism<sup>32</sup> exercisers. Bell published *The Qur'an Translated, with a critical re-arrangement of the Sūrah* in two volumes in the late 1930s.<sup>33</sup> It is quite clear what the book possibly take account from such title, that he re-arranges parts of the Qur'an from place to the other. For textual criticism, of the example is on *sūrah Ṭāhā*/20: 63, which is read by *Ḥafṣ* as "*inna hāzāni lasāhirāni*" is emended to be "*inna hāzaini lasahirāni*."<sup>34</sup> The other interesting example is Barth's revision of *al-Qadr*/97: 4-5, from "*tanazzal al-malā'ikatu wa al-rūḥ fiḥā biizni rabbiḥim min kulli amr salāmun hiya ḥattā maṭla'i al-fajr*" to be "*tanazzal al-malā'ikatu wa al-rūḥ fiḥa biizni rabbiḥim ḥattā maṭla'i al-fajr salāmun hiya min kulli amr*."<sup>35</sup>

After all, we can see that many western works on Qur'anic studies evidently result something which just challenge that of Muslim. In the context we discussed earlier, about ontological view on the Qur'an, these works apparently fall within the same characters to what of Muslims, regardless their confrontation of conclusion. Not-

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Textual criticism is science of discovering error in texts and the art of removing it. Most Muslim scholars are unwilling to apply it to the Qur'an, unless non-Muslim, they did it. Classicists divide the process of textual criticism into three phases: recension, examination and emendation. Recension is the establishment of a preliminary text; one examines it to determine whether it is the best possible text and, where it is not, one tries to emend. If the work is well done, the result should be a revised version that is closer to the author's original. Arthur Jeffery, "Textual Criticism". In Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. Leiden: Brill, 2004, 5: p. 237.

<sup>33</sup> Reuven Firestone, "The Qur'an and the Bible...", p. 11.

<sup>34</sup> There is an attempt of al-Şuyūti to justify and rationalize this. He says that this is how exactly the *āyah* revealed in one of accent of Arabic, besides some other grammatical arguments. However, Moqsiṭh Ghazali tends to deny al-Şuyūti and argues that this is one of grammatical error of the Qur'an. For further reading, see Arthur Jeffery, "Textual Criticism ...", p. 239; Abd. Moqsiṭh Ghazali (et.al.), *Metodologi Studi Al-Qur'an*. p. 79-106.

<sup>35</sup> Arthur Jeffery, "Textual Criticism ...", p. 239

withstanding one seems refuse and challenge another, both groups have just interpreted what the Qur'an is, what its language is as well as its structure, and any other about the Qur'an itself. None of them consider the role of this to human, as Abduh did, neither human relation to this; Abduh emphasizes the role of the Qur'an as the guidance of God for human beings as he criticizes exegesis books in which, he accuses, exegetes used to pride themselves on their expertise on the Qur'an and were careless of the real role of the Qur'an for human beings.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Qur'an as Scripture**

It is important to note that not every western scholar does so, particularly some works appearing last decades. In this last decade, many Western scholars produce the new color of Qur'anic Studies on the Qur'an, including Jane Dammen McAuliffe. She bases her paradigm on how Muslims behave on and believe in the Qur'an. At least, this is what she states in many of her articles or books. She admits that for Muslims, the Qur'an is God's full and final revelation to His Prophet;<sup>37</sup> Muhammad is the seal of Prophet; and the revelation he received abrogates the previous scriptures.<sup>38</sup> Even more, she states that Muslims believe that the Qur'an is not merely the continuation for the earlier scriptures. It is rather the truly word of God, which He revealed the same truth to Muhammad as He did before to his ancestors. As God revealed his words to Musa and Isa, God revealed his word to Muhammad, and therefore the theory of borrowings and influences is by no sense relevant to the Qur'an; the Qur'an is just a re-revelation.<sup>39</sup>

If she has such paradigm of thinking, to receive Muslim's belief about the Qur'an, the question is then, which Muslim does she mean? This is the relevant matter to question since Islam itself is

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<sup>36</sup> Rasyid Ridha, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, p. 19.

<sup>37</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "Text and Textuality: Q. 3:7 as a Point of Intersection". In Issa J. Boullata, *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an*. Surrey: Curzon, 2000. p. 64.

<sup>38</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "The Abrogation of Judaism and Christianity in Islam: A Christian Perspective". In Hans Kung dan Jurgen Moltmann, *Islam: A Challenge for Christianity*. London: SCM Press, 1994, p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "The Qur'anic Context of Muslim Biblical Scholarship". In *Islam and Christian—Muslim Relations*, VII, 1996, p. 141-154.

various. Islam contains many groups, which if we attempt to map it, it would possibly be complicated. There are some bigger groups, which contain the smaller ones, which likely confront and cross each other in some way; every group possesses certain framework of thought, challenges the other, and possibly shares much subjects with other some groups at once. For that matter, it seems logic if many scholars classify Muslims into some groups, which are distinguished by certain terminologies, such as *traditionalist*, *rationalist*, *feminist*, *emancipationist*, etc.<sup>40</sup>

To answer this question, our duty therefore is to analyze her key words when discussing the Qur'an, taken together, and to compare them with what Muslims say about the Qur'an. Considering a classification of traditionalist and rationalist, what McAuliffe sees about the Qur'an is little bit traditionalist. She states that the Qur'an is a verbatim revelation,<sup>41</sup> while this was one of the debatable aspects that occurred within Muslim scholarships. Traditional Muslims believe that God revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad as *kalām*, verbatim revelation constructed with substance and wording at once.<sup>42</sup> This faith leads Muslims to regard every single word of the Qur'an is sacred, and reciting it is one of beloved worship.<sup>43</sup> This eventually

<sup>40</sup> It is the matter of fact that Islam has various groups, even since its very beginning. In the first decade it established, one political event divided Islam into groups: *murji'ah*, and *syi'ah*. Harun Nasution in his *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya* explains in detail even to the smaller group each *mur'jiah* and *khawārij* contain of. These groups used theological issues to identify themselves, and therefore the other categories rose, called *Jabariyah* and *Qadariyah*. Furthermore, these two groups grew and developed the new categories namely *Asy'ariah* and *Mu'tazilah*. This was the classic movement of various groups in simple explanation. On the other side, nowadays, many people attempts to identify groups within Islam. They tend to use modern technical term such as *liberalist*, *fundamentalist*, *rationalist*, *traditionalist*, *secularist*, *feminist*, etc. see Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya I*. Jakarta: UI Press, 2005, p. 88-102; Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya II*. Jakarta: UI Press, 2005, p. 26-41.

<sup>41</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "The Abrogation of Judaism ... p. 116.

<sup>42</sup> Regardless this is one of great debate for classical scholarship, the over-spread understanding is probably the concept that the Qur'an is the verbatim revelation. According to Aksin Wijaya this is so because the winner in that classic contestation is those who support such understanding. Furthermore, he says that there is a tendency that who believes the Qur'an is verbatim, will also chose that it is *qadīm* and is revealed completely in Arabic. Aksin Wijaya, *Arah Baru Studi ...*, p. 66.

<sup>43</sup> Common view to the Qur'an says that reciting the Qur'an is worship.

القرآن هو كلام الله المنزّل إلى محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم المتعبد بتلاوته

Mannā' Khalīl al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥiṣ fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, p. 15.



sets the Qur'an identical with the concept of 'recitation', as the first *āyah*<sup>44</sup> revealed, *al-'Alaq* [96]: 1-5. Many Muslims recite the Qur'an every day in certain time, even if they do not understand what it says semantically nor hermeneutically. In addition to that, this faith leads Muslims to believe that the Qur'an is the clear Arabic revelation,<sup>45</sup> and even more implies to set Arabic as the superior language to many other languages.<sup>46</sup>

However, some considerations deny this classification of traditionalist and rationalist, to be accurate for McAuliffe paradigm. She also stated that Muslim believes the Qur'an is not merely a continuation of the previous revelations, but rather as re-revelation; unfortunately, McAuliffe does not present clear reference for such claims. On the other hand, what traditional Muslims believe is that the Qur'an is the last revelation, in which this position creates it as the cessation, complement, and corrector for what is believed to receive such deviation within previous scripture.<sup>47</sup> That is all, and

<sup>44</sup> *Āyah* is commonly translated as verse. However, this translation does not much accurate since the verse is technical terminology of the Bible. The Biblical concept of chapter and verse does not fully apply to the Qur'an. The *sūrah* may not discuss themes in consistency from title to the final *āyah*. The names of *sūrah* itself may refer only to some particular themes therein; as well it may appears in various names for one *sūrah*. For example, *sūrah* 17 commonly names *al-Isrā'* or *Banī Isrā'īl*, while each names refers to different theme within the *sūrah*. On the other side, the most important reason for this is that the term of *āyah* or *āyat* mentioned nearly to hundreds times throughout the text, and it refers to some particular substances. See Vincent J. Cornell, *Qur'an as Scripture* In John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*. New York: Oxford, 1995, p. 388.

<sup>45</sup> Comprehensive explanation on this subject is available in *al-Itqān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*. *Al-Ṣuyūṭī* explains some debates that ever happened within the topic of the Arabic of the Qur'an, whether there are several words of the Qur'an come from other language, '*ajam*', or not. As the challenge, several works in the West argue that the origin of Qur'anic language is much more reasonable Syriac than Arabic. For this case, the work of Arthur Jeffery and Luxenberg are possibly the best examples. For the deeper explanation see *Al-Ṣuyūṭī*, *al-Itqān fī Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, p. 190-200; Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

<sup>46</sup> Aksin Wijaya, *Arah Baru Studi ...*, p. 64.

<sup>47</sup> Husain al-Zahabi explains both theologically and historically this 'abrogation' relation between the Qur'an and Bible. Historically he evidently says that the Jews were actually the immigrants came into the Peninsula of Arab since 70 M. They went out from their homeland scaring of bad treatment of King Titus Romani. Then, many Jews lived in Yamane and Sham. On the other side, Arabians had the routine journey every year to both directions; Yamane and Sham for some reasons especially trade. This brought them to the long-routine interactions with Jews indeed. This huge migration, which then implied to the big interaction, certainly gave such a big effect

besides, there is no claim like McAuliffe proposes, stating that the Qur'an is not a continuation but rather re-revelation; both are completely different. On the other side, Abd. Moqsith Ghazali, an Indonesian rationalist scholar, clearly stated that the Qur'an is, in contrast to McAuliffe, a continuation for the long history of revelatory from Abraham, and therefore is by no sense superior upon previous scripture.<sup>48</sup> This second paradigm of thought obviously different from that of McAuliffe, and therefore her view is by no means affiliates into later group, as well it is not very much accurate to classify her to the first group.

We have already found that such classification is obviously inappropriate enough for her framework of think. Little terms that she uses is debatable among various schools of thought in Islam, and again, those who are involved in such debate are just small in number, in comparison to the whole Muslims. This small number therefore cannot be representative to characterize a whole. On the other hand, her other terms tend to deal with universal issue in Islamic faith, the very basic teachings that Muslims, no matter what is their schools whether traditionalist-rationalist, fundamentalist-moderate-liberalist, etc. They believe that the Qur'an is the latest and the final revelation from God; as well, Muhammad is the latest and the final prophet.

This argumentation leads us out of previous classification into the new one, which should be much more accurate for her. However, considering that she takes the very basic teaching of Islam, it seems that no classification will be appropriate for her. We should see that she considers Muslim as a general term, Muslims as a certain community of mutual belief in certain teachings; regardless some partic-

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to the acculturation between both cultures, and therefore it makes sense of Qur'an and previous scriptures share many materials. Then, theologically he says that even there are some parallel materials between those *kitāb*, the *Injīl* and *Tawrah* apparently receives human intervention and therefore they were no longer authentic. To proof his argument, he quote five *āyāt*: *al-An'ām* [6]: 91 and *al-Mā'idah* [5]: 13, 14, 15, and 41. See Husain al-Zahabi, *al-Isrā'illiyāt fī al-Tafsīr wa al-ḥadīṣ*. Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1990, p. 8-11.

<sup>48</sup> The Qur'an identifies itself as *kitāb* once it identifies previous revelation as *kitāb* and previous people who received *kitāb* as *ahl kitāb*. It automatically implies that the Qur'an identifies Muslims as *ahl kitāb* as well. On the other sides, this identification also places itself within the family of revelations or family of *kitābs*. This leads him to deduce that there is no superior of the Qur'an beyond the others. Abd Moqsith Ghazali (et.al.), *Metodologi Studi Al-Qur'an*, p. 46-47.

ular groups within Islam. We should note this point as important for the next sub-chapter when we discuss how Jane Dammen McAuliffe considers the Qur'an as *scripture*.

Moving to the next point, on what is the evidence that Jane Dammen McAuliffe's paradigm views the Qur'an as Muslims do, there will possibly be two answers for it. The first is that she accepts the Islamic literatures as a reference. As other literary approach does, McAuliffe questions about words, phrases, or sentences within the Qur'an and often compares them to other *āyāt*, *ḥadīṣ*, historical information, and exegesis. In "*Text and Textuality: Q. 3:7 as a Point of Intersection*",<sup>49</sup> for example, she discusses about methodological principles which this verse implies; passages she reads obviously show us that she uses many Islamic literatures. Even more, her dissertation entitled *Qur'anic Christians: an Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis*,<sup>50</sup>—she finished it in 1984—which explores how exegetical books from time to time, from Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabari up to al-Ṭabaṭaba'i explore many verses appreciating Christianity in term of community.

Somehow, it does not mean that she blindly refers to numerous Islamic literatures. Indeed, she evaluates them if there are possibilities of some weakness. The concrete example is how she responds the 'anecdote' that al-Ṭabari wrote down in his *Tārikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, which tells that Musa did something extraordinary, or much more like irrational. She questions, how in tenth-century a Muslim historian tells a tale of Moses taking a Superman-style leap to whack a giant with his rod?<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "Text and Textuality..." p. 56-76.

<sup>50</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Qur'anic Christians: an Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

<sup>51</sup> The tale is as follow: Moses sent out twelve chiefs, [one] from each of the Israelite tribes, who set out to bring him an account of the giants. One of the giants, who was called Og, met them. He seized the twelve and placed them in his waistband, while on his head was a load of firewood. He took them off to his wife and said to her, "Look at these people who claim that they want to fight us." He flung them down in front of her, saying, "Shouldn't I grind them under my foot?" But his wife said, "No, rather let them go, so they will tell their people what they have seen." Ibn BaṢṢār—related to us—Mu'ammal—Sufyān—Abū Ishāq—Nawf: The base of Og's head was eight hundred cubits high, while Moses' height was [only] ten cubits and his staff [another] ten cubits. Then he [Moses] jumped into the air ten cubits and struck Og, hitting his anklebone. Og fell down dead, becoming a bridge for the people to cross over. See Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "Connecting Moses and Muhammad". In *The Old*

Such attitude is in contrast to that of, for example John Wansbrough, John Burton, and Michael Cook-Patricia Crone. These four scholars do not accept Islamic literatures. Patricia Crone and Michael Cook<sup>52</sup> express their mistrust to Islamic accounts first before going further to come into Islamic studies and manage to proof their thesis. John Burton sees that Islamic literatures contain much confusion with contradictions and inconsistencies. He argues that Islamic sources have little assistance to construct historical theory about Islam itself as well as the Qur'an. To argue for it, he shows various information related to one single fact, especially related to the codification of the Qur'an. Some says that the first compilation of the Qur'an was done by Abu Bakr, some other say that Abu Bakr only initiated the compilation and the finishing is on Omar's hand, while one other group of literatures says that the codification was in the period of Othman.<sup>53</sup> If John Burton emphasizes the contradiction within Islamic literatures, John Wansbrough goes further to see that every Islamic literature is such kind of *salvation history*, the history which is actually evidently unhistorical, but rather a creation for certain objectives in the future. For Wansbrough, entire account of Islamic literatures is *salvation history* appeared in polemical circumstances, including the Qur'an.<sup>54</sup>

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*Testament in Byzantium*, edited by Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, 2010, p. 279-298.

<sup>52</sup> Both Michael Cook and Patricia Crone are of the prominents Western scholars who write and contribute much in either Islamic or the Qur'anic studies. Their books and articles are found in many books in the issues. They are also contributors of *The Encyclopaediae of the Qur'an* edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe. Both have collaborated in a work entitled *Hagarism: The Making of Islamic World* which unfortunately we have no direct access to the book. On his review to Western and the Qur'an, Abdullah Saeed explains that Michael Cook and Patricia Crone belong to the revisionists. They questioned the origins of the Qur'an and suggested the possible link to Judaism. They chose term of *Hagarism* rather than Islam. They suggested that the Qur'an first began to be compiled under governor al-Hajjaj of Iraq around 85/705. Their work was challenged by both Muslim and non-Muslims scholars, including Wansbrough whose his approach was followed by Crone and Cook. See Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introductoin*, p. 108.

<sup>53</sup> John Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'an*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 225.

<sup>54</sup> To explain the concept of salvation history, Andrew Rippin gives an analogy with the phenomena of *asbāb an-nuzūl* (the occasions of revelation). For him, *asbāb an-nuzūl* is the anecdote adduced to explain historical events when the certain *āyah* is revealed. For him, *asbāb an-nuzūl* is a media which is created as a step to create the

The second answer is that she eventually cannot bridge some biggest points of confrontation between Islam and Christianity as well the Qur'an and Bible. On the context of the Qur'an as abrogating previous scriptures, the concept which Christianity is never willing to receive, she says this will be the eternal different between both.<sup>55</sup> What is interesting is that she chooses to be neutral on this issue; she does not choose one of the claims and attempts to justify it. McAuliffe rather acknowledges that Islam has advantages that it comes later, as Christianity has upon Jewish. This neutrality is one other evidence for her paradigm that bases her scholarship upon what Muslim believes. Otherwise, she would not be neutral but rather judge what the Qur'an says as irrational, unacceptable, etc.

After all, as the most important point for her paradigm is that she regards the Qur'an ontologically as *scripture*. She clearly admitted that the idea of scripture is interesting to her, and something that take her into long scholarship spending years of her life.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, this kind of view is quite new for the Qur'an and is possibly one of solutions to our problem, which arises within the ontological debate between Muslim and western scholars on the Qur'an. She suggests a paradigm that the Qur'an is a scripture, a view that emphasizes the concept of relationship between certain text and human who believe in it. This means that, in the context of holy books or text, she does not consider it unilaterally, or what we can say one-side consideration upon the text itself. She rather sees it as well as human in balance; she considers that human's faith is a necessary attribute for the theory of scripture. There are two point will be the matter of discussion: what she means with scripture and what it implies to Qur'anic studies.

McAuliffe does not explain much about her theory on scripture, explicitly at least. However, what is important to note is that for her, the term of relationship is the main key in understanding this term. She suggests scripture as a concept in which group of community set aside certain text that they regard is as sacred. Therefore, it is not a free immanent attribute to the text, but rather is formed by

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other thing namely *exegesis* (*tafsīr*). See Andrew Rippin, "Literary Analysis of the Qur'an...", p. 153.

<sup>55</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "Is there a Connection ... p. 315.

<sup>56</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "Is there a Connection ...p. 303.

human construction through such faith and special behavior on it.<sup>57</sup>

Unfortunately Jane Dammen McAuliffe does not explain much such a concept in detail, and since so, it probably is important to explore such concept. For Moqsith Ghazali, to understand this concept comprehensively, the subject cannot set apart from the history of script, and therefore he track far away to the back untill 2900 BC when the script was firstly founded. After all, he pictures how this script is used within history including by the Bible.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, we can say that long pages Moqsith Ghazali wastes for this is nonsense the genuine exploration for the meaning of scripture. To fullfil this emptyness, we can find the other comprehensive explanation from Wilfred Cantwell Smith's work that says in XIX, terminology of scripture is identical to Bible, which is understood as Divine revelation. This term implies that there is no other scripture as well there is no other Divine revelation but Bible. This means that such terminology contains the absolute transcendent value.

However, there are large numbers of 'holy books' in this world as much as numbers of human variety who believe and hold them. Therefore, Smith says, the concept of scripture, alongside every other theory about this, never successful to gather every single 'scripture' with their various form and content within itself, while the problem of scripture is much more complicated than what every person imagines and its diversity much larger than everybody ever thinks about.

A concept of scripture, which equally cover scriptures in its diversity, appears to be necessarily achieved. There is something missing in the prior conception about scripture, something that potentially compile every scripture with its diversity in one conception. This is the conception that this terminology, scripture, inherently implies to a "relation", a relation between the text and its people. There is no text sacred by itself. Rather this quality comes from the appreciation, attitude, and respect from human beings who regard it sacred.<sup>59</sup> Even more, those who believe that certain text is a gift from God—as divine message—have to agree that without the response of people the scripture would be ineffective.<sup>60</sup> Finally, at this point we can find the origins of Jane Dammen McAuliffe on the scripture.

<sup>57</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "Is there a Connection ... p. 303.

<sup>58</sup> Abd. Moqsith Ghazali (et.al.), *Metodologi Studi Al-Qur'an ...*, p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Kitab Suci Agama-agama*, p. 12-23

<sup>60</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Kitab Suci Agama-agama, ...* p. 32.



Further, there are two dimensions which cross over each other within the explanation about scripture above. The nature of scripture that requisites the existence of relationship between human and the sacred text is the first dimension; what we call then the dimension of faith. For this dimension, there are numbers explanations available within Islamic literatures. Every Muslims has to believe that the Qur'an is divine revelation which He sent down to His messenger.<sup>61</sup> Since God is sacred, consequently, his words are so. Vincent J. Cornell<sup>62</sup> suggests how Muslims believe that the Qur'an is a result of communication between God and Muhammad as the *unique communication*.<sup>63</sup>

Then, this faith forms human to treat extraordinarily upon the text, and this is our second dimension, practical dimension. Muslims are supposed to purify themselves before touching and reciting the Qur'an. Beside they are suggested to put it in the high place, the Qur'an must be in the top position; there is supposedly nothing placed on it. Those who recite it, must follow such a role that regulate the way it must be read correctly; they have to read letter per letter, word per word, in accurate way in which *tajwīd* discourse tells us. Then, a person who is able to recite the Qur'an in beauty and artistic way gets good social prestige in community. After all, this faith shapes Muslims how to conduct to other teachings, religious believers, and scriptures.

What does this view imply? There are possibly three answers for this question. The first is this concept take the Qur'an beyond its theological framework. Talking about the Qur'an is not only about the Qur'an *an sich*, but has big relation to human who believes in it. The Qur'an can hardly be just interpreted as *kalām al-mu'jiz* or

<sup>61</sup> Q.S. al-Najm/53: 4

<sup>62</sup> Vincent J. Cornell is one of Western scholars who contributes in Islamic studies. He is Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Professor of Religion, Duke University. He gained his PhD in Islamic Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles with dissertation *Mirrors of Prophethood: The Evolving Image of the Spiritual Master in the Western Maghrib from the Origins of Sufism to the End of the Sixteenth Century*. He has published a number of articles in international journal on Islamic thought, Islamic legal issues and the Islami history of North Africa, such as "Tawhid: The Recognition of the One in Islam" in *Concilium* (1994) and "Understanding is the Mother of Ability: Responsibility and Action in the Doctrine of Ibn Tumart" in *Studia Islamica* (1987). See List of Contributors in Hans Kung and Jurgen Motlmann (eds.), *Concilium*. London: SCM Press, 1994, p. 157.

<sup>63</sup> Vincent J. Cornell, *Qur'an as Scripture* ..., p. 387-389.

*kalām al-‘arabiyyah* regardless that human has faith and practical construction coming from it. If we relate this with human’s various reception towards the Qur’an, the Qur’an cannot be understood as the judge to choose that one kind of reception is accepted while the other is not, but rather is understood as subject that establishes those receptions. At this point, McAuliffe has the same stressing with Wilfred Cantwell Smith on the qualification of certain book to be regarded as scripture. The difference is that McAuliffe exclusively talks about the Qur’an as scripture, while Smith has the more general and abstract interest, concerning with the theory of scripture in the widest sense.

Therefore, the second answer, scriptures in their diversity is equal. The measurement of this view uses is that there are groups of people believe certain scripture, and conduct extraordinarily upon it. The challenges of certain scripture for the other scriptures do not make one of them lesser than the other. No matter what one scripture says about the other—let say the Qur’an’s claim that itself is the abrogation for previous scripture due to its deviation—is just the matter of faith of Qur’anic people, and in term of scripture, they have to save it for themselves without making it as a reason to do for example an anarchic threat. It means that this concept proposes a great motivation of tolerance.

The third answer is that this view brings McAuliffe never forget Muslims view in every Qur’anic works she does. She always correlates what the Qur’an says about something to Muslim reception to the Qur’an. Her dissertation for example, does not talk exclusively on the Qur’an, but rather the exegesis, in fact exegesis in an intellectual reception to the Qur’an. Furthermore, McAuliffe seems make this intellectual reception as the part of the Qur’an. In term of Qur’anic Christians, as her dissertation entitled, she surveyed seven *sūrah*s within ten exegesis works talking about Christianity. The Qur’anic Christians than is what the exegesis say about the Christians.<sup>64</sup>

## Conclusion

After elaborating the above-mentioned topic, at this stage there will be some conclusion. *The First*, the Qur’an viewed theologically by manly Muslim scholars on some definitions which also describe

<sup>64</sup> Further consideration about Qur’anic Christians is available in chapter of conclusion of her dissertation, see Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Qur’anic Christians...* p. 285.

ideological and political contestation in history. *The Second*, classic Western scholars produce the view which oppose what of Muslims while deny the Muslims beliefs and their literatures. *The Third*, there is a new paradigm which sees the Qur'an as the text received and constructs how Muslims' believe and behave. This view emphasizes the importance of relation between certain text and the community of the text; the Qur'an and Muslims.

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