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BETWEEN QADIM AND MAKHLUK: THE STATUS OF THE QUR'AN IN THE INTELLECTUAL DEBATE OF NURUDDIN AR-RANIRI AND HAMZAH FANSURI

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Abstract: This article examines the theological debate on the status of the Qur'an between two prominent 17th-century Nusantara Islamic thinkers, Hamzah Fansuri and Nuruddin Ar-Raniri. The research focuses on their perspectives on whether the Qur'an is qadim (eternal, uncreated) or creature (created). Using a literary reception approach in philological studies, the research aims to analyze the textual arguments used by both figures based on their works, understand how their respective theological backgrounds influence the interpretation and reception of the Qur'anic text, and reveal the implications of these differing views on how to read, interpret, and live the Qur'an in the context of Nusantara Islamic thought. Hamzah Fansuri, as a follower of Wujudiyah Sufism, argues that the Qur'an is qadim because it is a manifestation of the Word of God that is inseparable from the Essence of Allah. Meanwhile, Nuruddin Ar-Raniri, who holds an Asy'ariyah theological view, argues that the Qur'an is a new creation of Allah (hadith), although its meaning remains qadim. This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of Islamic thought in the archipelago and the complexity of the relationship between sacred texts, interpretations, and intellectual contexts.

Keywords: *Islamic thought, qadim, makhluk, Nuruddin Ar-Raniri, Hamzah Fansuri*

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengkaji perdebatan teologis mengenai status Al-Qur'an antara dua tokoh pemikir Islam Nusantara abad ke-17, Hamzah Fansuri dan Nuruddin Ar-Raniri. Penelitian difokuskan pada perspektif mereka tentang apakah Al-Qur'an bersifat qadim (kekal, tidak diciptakan) atau makhluk (diciptakan). Melalui pendekatan resepsi sastra dalam kajian filologi, penelitian bertujuan untuk menganalisis argumen tekstual yang digunakan oleh kedua tokoh berdasarkan karya-karya mereka, memahami bagaimana latar teologis masing-masing memengaruhi interpretasi dan penerimaan terhadap teks Al-Qur'an, serta mengungkap implikasi perbedaan pandangan tersebut terhadap cara membaca, menafsirkan, dan menghayati Al-Qur'an dalam konteks pemikiran Islam Nusantara. Hamzah Fansuri, sebagai penganut tasawuf Wujudiyah, berpendapat bahwa Al-Qur'an bersifat qadim karena merupakan manifestasi Kalamullah yang tidak terpisah dari Dzat Allah. Sementara itu, Nuruddin Ar-Raniri, yang berpandangan teologi Asy'ariyah, berargumen bahwa Al-Qur'an adalah makhluk ciptaan

Allah yang bersifat baru (hadith), meskipun kandungan maknanya tetap qadim. Kajian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang dinamika pemikiran Islam di Nusantara serta kompleksitas hubungan antara teks suci, penafsiran, dan konteks intelektual.

Kata Kunci : *pemikiran Islam, qadim, makhluk, Nuruddin Ar-Raniri, Hamzah Fansuri*

A. Introduction

The Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims, is believed to be the revelation of Allah SWT, conveyed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW through the angel Jibril. It serves as a guide for life for Muslims, containing moral guidelines, laws, and inspirational stories. The status of the Qur'an in Islam is paramount, establishing it as the primary and irreplaceable source of Islamic law. (Al-Attas, 1993) & (Esack, 2005).

For Muslims, the Qur'an holds several important statuses, including: *Kalamullah* (The Word of Allah): The perfect and preserved word of Allah SWT. (Graham, 1987). *Hukmullah* (The Law of Allah): The primary source of Islamic law and a guide for human life. *Miracles of the Prophet Muhammad SAW*: Proof of the prophethood of Muhammad SAW and the truth of his message. *Guidance*: A guide for Muslims towards salvation in this world and the hereafter. *Source of Knowledge*: The Qur'an encompasses various fields of knowledge, from history and science to spirituality. (Rahman, 2009).

Hamzah Fansuri (d. 1590s): A prominent Acehnese Sufi and poet known for his teachings of Sufism emphasizing the unity of existence (ittihadul wujud) (Al-Attas, 1970). Fansuri is considered one of the key figures in the development of Sufism in the Nusantara. His famous works include: *Syair Perahu*, *Rubaiyat*, and *Tajridul Ma'ani*. Fansuri's teachings on the unity of existence sparked controversy as they were deemed to deviate from Islamic orthodoxy (Azra, 2004).

Nuruddin Ar-Raniri (d. 1658): A prominent Acehnese scholar known as a jurist, theologian, and Sufi. He was nicknamed "The Shi'a Warrior" for his firm stance against Shi'a Sufism, which he considered deviant from Islamic teachings (Daudy, 1983). Ar-Raniri was a follower of the Shafi'i school and adhered firmly to Sunni tradition. His famous works include: *Ahkamul Qur'an*, *Fathul Majid*, and *Tuhfatul Ikwan*.

The debate on the status of the Qur'an—whether it is qadim (pre-eternal) or created (makhluq)—is one of the significant theological issues in Islamic history (Wolfson, 1976). This debate concerns the nature and origin of the Qur'an and carries implications for Muslims' understanding of their holy scripture. Proponents of qadim believe that the Qur'an has existed since pre-eternity, coexisting with Allah SWT's existence. They argue that the Qur'an is an attribute of Allah SWT, inseparable from His essence. This view is generally held by followers of the Ash'ari and Maturidi schools (Watt, 1973).

Proponents of createdness believe that the Qur'an was created by Allah SWT at a specific time, namely when it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad SAW. They argue that the Qur'an is a creation of Allah SWT possessing attributes like other creations, such as being bound by space and time. This view is generally held by followers of the Mu'tazili school (Martin et al., 1997). The qadim vs. created debate is not merely about theological differences; it also has implications for various aspects of Muslim life, such as interpretation of the Qur'anic text, Islamic law, and spirituality (Abu Zayd, 2004). Therefore, understanding this debate is crucial for comprehending the complexity of

Islamic thought and its historical dynamics.

B. Metode/ Research Method ber data, teknik pengumpulan data, alat analisis data)

This study employs a qualitative approach that integrates philological methods and reception theory to analyze the theological controversy between Hamzah Fansuri and Nuruddin Ar-Raniri concerning the ontological status of the Qur'an. The philological method, as applied in the study of traditional Malay literature (Braginsky, 2004; Chambert-Loir, 2004), is implemented through stages of textual criticism, including heuristics, manuscript verification, and content analysis of the primary works of both figures, namely *Asraru'l-'Arifin* (Fansuri) and *Al-Lama'an bi Tafkir man Qala bi Khalq al-Qur'an* (Ar-Raniri). This process ensures textual accuracy and detects variants and editorial interventions that may influence interpretation.

To deepen interpretative analysis, this study adopts the reception theory framework developed by Jauss (1982) and Iser (1978). This approach is used to explore how the theological backgrounds, horizons of expectation (*Erwartungshorizont*), and socio-intellectual contexts of each figure shaped their understanding of the Qur'anic text. The receptive analysis focuses on how Fansuri, as a Wujudiyya Sufi, and Ar-Raniri, as an Ash'ari theologian, constructed meaning through different epistemological lenses—the former tending toward the esoteric and philosophical, while the latter was more literal and normative. This aligns with Graham's (1987) emphasis on scripture as both written and performed text.

Data were collected from primary sources such as manuscripts and critical editions of the authors' works, as well as secondary sources including historical, theological, and philological studies related to the topic. In analyzing these texts, special attention is given to how both authors engaged with earlier Islamic intellectual traditions, as noted in studies by Al-Attas (1970) and Azra (2004). Data analysis was conducted comparatively and contextually, taking into account the political dynamics of the 17th-century Aceh Sultanate and the broader intellectual networks of the Islamic Nusantara (Fathurahman, 2016).

By synthesizing rigorous philological readings with contextual receptive analysis, this study seeks to uncover not only what was debated but also why the debate emerged and how it reflects broader ideological contestations within the history of Islamic thought, a methodological integration supported by contemporary scholars in Qur'anic hermeneutics (Abu Zayd, 2004; Esack, 2005).

C. Results And Discussion

Results

1. Hamzah Fansuri's Perspective on the Qur'an

Brief Biography of Hamzah Fansuri

Hamzah Fansuri (d. 1590s) was a prominent Sufi and poet from Aceh. He is known as one of the key figures in the development of Sufism in the Nusantara, particularly of the Wujudiyah school (Al-Attas, 1970). Fansuri was born in Barus, Central Tapanuli, North Sumatra, and is estimated to have lived during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1601–1636). Little information survives about Fansuri's life, leaving much of it a mystery. However, his famous works, such as *Syair Perahu*, *Rubaiyat*, and *Tajridul Ma'ani*, provide insight into his thoughts and teachings. Fansuri wrote extensively about Sufism, divine love, and the unity of existence (ittihadul wujud) (Johns, 1955).

Hamzah Fansuri's Theological Stance and Its Influence on His Views

Fansuri was a follower of Wujudiyah Sufism, a school that emphasizes the unity of existence between Allah SWT and the universe (Nasr, 2007). This school believes that everything in the universe is a manifestation of Allah SWT. This view gave rise to the concept of "ittihadul wujud," characteristic of Wujudiyah Sufism. Fansuri's theological stance, based on Wujudiyah Sufism, greatly influenced his view of the Qur'an. Fansuri believed that the Qur'an is a manifestation of the Kalamullah SWT, inseparable from His essence. In other words, Fansuri adhered to the belief in the qadim (pre-eternal) status of the Qur'an.

Fansuri's Arguments for the Qadim Status of the Qur'an

Hamzah Fansuri put forward several arguments to support his view of the Qur'an's qadim status, drawing from the tradition of philosophical Sufism (Chittick, 1989): The Qur'an is Kalamullah SWT: For Fansuri, the Qur'an is the Word of Allah; thus, it is qadim. The Qur'an is an attribute of Allah SWT: Fansuri believed the Qur'an is an attribute of Allah SWT, specifically the attribute of Speech (Kalam). Allah's attributes are qadim; therefore, the Qur'an is also qadim. The Qur'an is the light of Allah SWT: Fansuri metaphorically described the Qur'an as the light of Allah SWT illuminating the universe. Allah's light is qadim; therefore, the Qur'an is also qadim. These arguments are based on his understanding of Wujudiyah Sufism, emphasizing the unity of existence between Allah SWT and the universe. For Fansuri, the Qur'an is a manifestation of the Kalamullah SWT, inseparable from His essence, and thus, the Qur'an is qadim.

Critical Analysis of Fansuri's Arguments

Fansuri states that the Qur'an is the Kalam of Allah. He explained that speech (kalam) is one of the seven essential attributes of Allah. In the concept of tajalli, Fansuri explained that the process of creation of beings (makhluqat) from a'yan thabitah to concrete reality in the form of human spirit (ruh insani), animal spirit (ruh hayawani), and plant spirit (ruh nabati) begins from the Divine Word, "Kun!" (Ibn Arabi, 1980). However, according to Fansuri, the Divine Word "Kun!" is not uttered through tongue and sound, for if it were, it would mean the word is created. He wrote:

> "Sebab inilah maka pada hukum shar'iat Kalam (Allah) tiada makhluq……Kalam Allah peri Dhat. Qadim sama-sama dengan sekalian sedia ketujuh itu. Adapun kalam Allah yang dibawa Jibra'il kepada Nabi Muhammad Rasulu'Llah (*salla'Llahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), yang tersurat pada mushaf, (itu) dapat dikatakan makhluq karena hukumnya sudah bercherai dengan Dhat pada 'ibarat. Adapun kepada haqiqinya, *wa'Llahu a'lam bi'l-sawab*!...Inipun kata Qadim dengan kata isharat juga, bukan dengan lidah dengan suara. Jikalau dengan lidah dengan suara dapat dikatakan makhluq. Karena Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala mahasuchi,* kalamNya pun mahasuchi daripada lidah dan suara". (Hamzah Fansuri, Asraru'L-'Arifin).

From this quotation, it is apparent that Fansuri's view is that the Word of Allah uttered to initiate creation (the command "Kun") is the essential word (kalam nafsi), which is part of Allah's attributes. Therefore, this word is eternal or qadim, just as Allah's Essence is eternal. Meanwhile, the Word of Allah revealed through the angel Gabriel and received by Prophet Muhammad SAW, in the form of the Qur'an, is the uttered word (kalam lafdzi), and this is hadith (temporal). This distinction reflects classical Ash'ari theological discourse on the nature of divine speech (Wolfson, 1976).

2. Nuruddin Ar-Raniri's Perspective on the Qur'an

Brief Biography of Nuruddin Ar-Raniri

Nuruddin Ar-Raniri (d. 1658) was a prominent scholar in 17th-century Aceh (Daudy, 1983). Born in Ranir, Pidie, Aceh, he was known as an expert in jurisprudence, theology, Sufism, and literature. His famous works include *Hujjatul Siddiq* (a refutation of Wahhabi thought), *Ahkamul Qur'an* (a Qur'anic commentary), and *Bustanus Salatin* (a moral guide for rulers). Ar-Raniri was a student of Shaykh Zainuddin al-Ghani, a prominent scholar in Aceh. He also studied in Mecca and Medina, connecting him to the broader Islamic scholarly network (Azra, 2004). After returning to Aceh, he was appointed as mufti (interpreter of Islamic law) by Sultan Iskandar Muda Perkasa Alam.

Ar-Raniri's Theological Stance and Its Influence on His Views

Ar-Raniri was known as a scholar who firmly adhered to the Shafi'i school and Ash'ari theology (Fathurahman, 2016). He strongly opposed doctrines he considered deviant, such as Wahhabism, Shi'ism, and extreme Sufism (Wujudiyah). His theological stance greatly influenced his view of the Qur'an.

Ar-Raniri's Arguments for the Created Status of the Qur'an

One of Ar-Raniri's controversial views concerned the status of the Qur'an. He argued that the Qur'an is a created entity of Allah SWT (Daudy, 1983). This view contradicts the majority of Muslims who believe the Qur'an is كلام الله (the Word of Allah) or the uncreated speech of Allah. Ar-Raniri based his arguments on several Qur'anic verses and hadiths. He argued that Qur'anic verses using words like "yazid" (written), "nanzala" (sent down), and "huwa min kalami" (it is from My words) indicate that the Qur'an is created. Hamzah Fansuri's opinion that the Qur'an brought by the angel Gabriel is created drew criticism from Nuruddin Ar-Raniri:

> "Dan setengah daripada mereka itu (Qadiriyah Mu'tazilah) i'tiqadnya bahwa Qur'an itu makhluk. Maka i'tiqad yang demikian itu kufur, seperti Sabda Nabi (Salla Allah 'alaihi wa sallam!) "Man qala inna 'l-Qur'an makhlukqun fahuwa kafir. Demikian lagi i'tiqad Hamzah Fansuri dalam kitab bernama Asraru'L-'Arifin, katanya bahwa Qur'an yang dibawa Jibril itu dapat dikatakan makhluk". (Nuruddin Al-Raniri, Tibyan, 70-71).

In his book *Asraru'l-'Arifin*, Hamzah Fansuri acknowledged the existence of Allah's Speech as one of His qadim attributes. However, Allah's Speech translated into human language in the form of the Qur'an brought by the angel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad Saw, according to Hamzah, can be said to be created and new because it has separated from Allah's Essence. Furthermore, in another part of the book *Tibyan*, Ar-Raniri repeats his criticism:

> "Inilah *i'tiqad wujudiyah* Hamzah Fansuri, katanya dalam kitab *Asraru'L-'Arifin* bahwa kalam Allah yang dibawa malaikat Jibril dapat dikatakan akan dia mahluk. Maka *i'tiqad* yang demikian itu kufr, karena Firman Allah Ta'ala (*Inna anzalnahu*) *Qur'anan Arabiyyan* (*ghayra*) *dhi 'iwajin*. Yakni bahwasannya kami turunkan Qur'an dibawa Jibril dengan bahasa Arab bukannya ia makhluk". (Nuruddin, Tibyan).

Here Ar-Raniri incorrectly quotes and translates this Qur'anic verse. The correct translation is: "It is an Arabic Qur'an, without any crookedness, so that they may be righteous." Ahmad Daudy also does not validate the translation made by Ar-Raniri of that verse (Q.S. Az-Zumar: 28). However, Ahmad Daudy clarifies Ar-Raniri's opinion

regarding the Word of Allah brought by the angel Gabriel by quoting Ar-Raniri's statement in the book al-Lama'an bi tafkir man qala bi khalq al-Qur'an, which, according to him, was written to answer questions about the Qur'an sent by the Sultan of Banten to Ar-Raniri, and it also contains his criticism of Hamzah (Daudy, 1983).

> "Jawab kami tiada lagi shak bahwasannya *'ibarat* kalam itu *hadith.* Maka kami kehendaki dengan *'ibarat* itu, iaitu segala lafaz dan suara dan logat, seperti Arabi dan Suryani, dan Ibrani dan Farisi dan Hindi dan lain dari itu sekaliannya *hadith*, ialah yang menunjukkan kalam Allah yang nafsi lagi azali ialah bernama Qur'an" (Nuruddin, *al-Lama'an bi tafkir man qala bi khalq al-Qur'a*, 21-22).

From this quotation, it can be understood that according to Ar-Raniri, all Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah have agreed that the Word of Allah brought by the angel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad Saw (the Qur'an) contains a meaning that is qadim and subsistent (qa'im) as Allah's Essence. As for the language and expression of that Word, Ar-Raniri states:

> "Jawab kami tiada lagi shak bahwasannya *'ibarat* kalam itu *hadith.* Maka kami kehendaki dengan *'ibarat* itu, iaitu segala lafaz dan suara dan logat, seperti Arabi dan Suryani, dan Ibrani dan Farisi dan Hindi dan lain dari itu sekaliannya *hadith*, ialah yang menunjukkan kalam Allah yang nafsi lagi azali ialah bernama Qur'an" (Nuruddin, *al-Lama'an bi tafkir man qala bi khalq al-Qur'a*, 21-22).

From this statement, Ar-Raniri says that what Gabriel brought is the essential word (kalam nafsi), which is qadim in nature. Meanwhile, the language and expression used to convey the essential word are created and hadith (temporal).

Therefore, according to Ar-Raniri, the Qur'an brought by Gabriel contains both these aspects: the essential word and the Arabic language that expresses it. In terms of the first, it is qadim and eternal; in terms of the second, it is created and hadith (temporal or perishable). This nuanced position attempts to navigate between the orthodox Ash'ari position and the challenges posed by theological opponents (Watt, 1973).

Ar-Raniri continues his statement, which also serves as criticism of Hamzah regarding his opinion on the status of the Qur'an as the Word of Allah that has separated from His Essence. In doing so, Hamzah essentially denies the existence of the essential word within the Qur'an brought by Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad Saw.

> "Dan karena ia (Hamzah) mengatakan bahwasannya kalam Allah yang dibawa Jibril itu dapat dikatakan dia makhluq, dari karena bahasannya ia cerai dari Dhat Allah Ta'ala Yang Tinggi, maka perkataan itu kufur yang nyata, dari karena bahwasannya dijadikan sifat itu tanggal daripada kata mulhid itu…maka nyata murad kata Hamzah itu bahwasannya kalam Allah itu yang dibawa Jibril kepada Nabi Muhammad (salla Allah 'alaihi wa sallam!) bukan kalam nafsi" (Nuruddin, Jawahir, 43).

Critical Analysis of Ar-Raniri's Arguments

Ar-Raniri's view on the status of the Qur'an has been widely criticized by other scholars. Critics argue that Ar-Raniri's arguments are weak and inconsistent with the majority scholarly understanding of the Qur'an (Fathurahman, 2016). First, critics point out that words like "yazid" and "nanzala" in the Qur'an do not necessarily imply creation. These words can also mean conveyance or revelation (Abu Zayd, 2004). Second, critics argue that the hadiths used by Ar-Raniri to support his arguments are weak and unsound. Third, critics point out that Ar-Raniri's view on the status of the Qur'an has dangerous theological consequences. If the Qur'an is created, it can change and perish. This contradicts the Muslim belief in the sanctity and eternity of the

Qur'an (Graham, 1987).

Discussion

Comparative Analysis of the Perspectives of Nuruddin Ar-Raniri and Hamzah Fansuri

A nuanced analysis reveals both significant divergence and subtle convergence in the theological positions of Nuruddin Ar-Raniri and Hamzah Fansuri regarding the status of the Qur'an. Despite their fierce polemic, a foundational agreement underpins their discourse: both scholars unequivocally affirm the Qur'an as *Kalamullah*—the divine speech of God (Al-Attas, 1970; Daudy, 1983). For Fansuri, steeped in the metaphysics of *Wujudiyah* Sufism, this meant the Qur'an was an eternal attribute (*sifat*) of God's essence, inseparable and co-eternal (*qadim*), a direct manifestation of the Divine (Chittick, 1989). Ar-Raniri, while his ultimate conclusion differed, also began from this core theological premise, dedicating his exegetical work *Ahkamul Qur'an* to elucidating this divine speech. Furthermore, both figures shared a profound reverence for the Qur'an's supreme authority, recognizing it as a transcendent source of guidance, wisdom, and moral law essential for Muslim life (Johns, 1955; Azra, 2004). Their intellectual endeavours, though framed by opposing schools, were fundamentally projects of articulating the Qur'an's role within the Islamic cosmos.

The central and most consequential area of disagreement lies in the ontological status of the revealed Qur'an. Hamzah Fansuri, guided by the principle of the unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujud*), maintained a strict position of the Qur'an's pre-eternality. He argued that since it is the speech of God—a divine attribute—it must be uncreated and eternal, just as God Himself is (Al-Attas, 1970). In his framework, even the physical revelation to the Prophet was a manifestation of this eternal attribute. Nuruddin Ar-Raniri, rigorously defending an Ash'ari theological framework that emphasized a strict ontological distinction between the Creator (*al-Khaliq*) and the created (*al-makhluq*), arrived at the controversial conclusion that the Qur'an, in its recited and written form, was created (*makhluq*) (Watt, 1973; Daudy, 1983). His argument hinged on a critical distinction between the eternal, inner meaning (*kalam nafsi*) subsisting within God's essence and its temporal, linguistic articulation (*kalam lafdzi*) in Arabic. For Ar-Raniri, it was this latter, expressed form—the vehicle of revelation—that was created in time (Fathurahman, 2016).

This fundamental ontological disagreement stemmed from their divergent epistemological and theological foundations. Fansuri's worldview was shaped by the experiential and philosophical Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi, which sought the underlying unity behind all manifestations (Nasr, 2007). His hermeneutic was thus esoteric, favouring allegorical and symbolic interpretation (*ta'wil*) to uncover the inner (*batin*) realities of the text. Ar-Raniri, in contrast, was an arch-defender of Sunni orthodoxy as defined by Ash'ari *kalam* and Shafi'i jurisprudence. His methodology prioritized the apparent, literal meaning (*zahir*) of the text, rigorous dialectical reasoning, and adherence to established exegetical and legal norms to safeguard communal belief and practice from what he perceived as deviant innovation (*bid'ah*) (Azra, 2004).

Table 1. Main Areas of Debate

No.	Aspect	*Hamzah Fansuri*	Nuruddin Ar-Raniri

1.	*Status of the Qur'an*	The Qur'an as the Kalamullah is pre-eternal (qadim), but the Qur'an revealed to earth by the Angel Gabriel is created, as it is separate from God's Essence.	The Qur'an as the Word of God is pre-eternal. The Qur'an brought by Gabriel to earth is pre-eternal in terms of meaning, but created in terms of its wording.
2.	*Theological Foundation*	Wujudiyya Sufism	Ash'arite Theology
3.	*Qur'anic Interpretation*	Allegorical, philosophical	Literal, normative
4.	*Kalam Ilahi*	Kalam nasfi (qadim — pre-eternal)	Kalam nasfi (qadim) + wording (temporal/hadith)

The implications of their differing perspectives extend into the realms of theology, hermeneutics, and religious authority. Theologically, Fansuri's view risked, in the eyes of his critics like Ar-Raniri, blurring the distinction between God and His creation, potentially leading to incarnationism (*hulul*) (Daudy, 1983). Ar-Raniri's stance, while intended to protect divine transcendence, risked undermining the absolute, uncreated nature of revelation as held by mainstream Ash'arism. Hermeneutically, their approaches fostered different modes of engagement with the scripture: one seeking mystical union through the text, the other seeking legal and doctrinal guidance from it. Ultimately, their debate was as much about authority as it was about theology. It represented a contest between the authority of direct mystical insight and the authority of established scholastic tradition in defining Islamic orthodoxy within the 17th-century Acehnese Sultanate, a dynamic that continues to resonate in Islamic intellectual history (Fathurahman, 2016).

D. Conclusion

Nuruddin Ar-Raniri's view on the status of the Qur'an as a created entity of Allah SWT represents a distinct theological position within the Malay-Indonesian world, one that has been critically examined by later scholars. Ar-Raniri's arguments, while rooted in his Ash'ari commitments and concerns for orthodoxy, navigated a complex position that distinguished between the eternal meaning (kalam nafsi) and its temporal expression (Daudy, 1983). This nuanced stance, however, placed him at odds with both the prevailing Ash'ari orthodoxy, which upheld the uncreatedness of the Qur'an in all aspects, and with the Wujudiyah mysticism of Fansuri. It is important to note that this issue is a complex theological one with deep roots in classical Islamic discourse, and its manifestation in the Nusantara context reflects the dynamic engagement of Southeast Asian scholars with global Islamic intellectual currents.

The differing views of Hamzah Fansuri and Nuruddin Ar-Raniri on the status of the Qur'an reflect the richness and complexity of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia. Their debate transcends a simple binary of "qadim vs. created" and touches upon fundamental questions about revelation, language, divine attributes, and the nature of scripture itself (Abu Zayd, 2004; Graham, 1987). Studying their arguments in depth, through the dual lens of philology and reception theory, helps us understand

not only a historical polemic but also the various hermeneutical strategies employed by Muslim intellectuals to comprehend their holy scripture. This analysis underscores that the Qur'an, as a living text, has been and continues to be received, interpreted, and debated within diverse intellectual and spiritual frameworks, each contributing to the multifaceted tradition of Islamic exegesis and theology.

E. Limitations of the Study

This study has demonstrated that the theological debate between Hamzah Fansuri and Nuruddin Ar-Raniri on the status of the Qur'an reflects not only divergent doctrinal commitments—Wujudiyya Sufism versus Ash'ari theology—but also deeper epistemological tensions between esoteric and scriptural hermeneutics. However, several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The analysis is confined to a select number of primary texts, leaving other relevant works by both figures underexplored. Limited access to original manuscripts and reliance on critical editions also constrained philological verification. Furthermore, the study does not fully examine the broader socio-political context of 17th-century Aceh or extend its comparison to other contemporaneous Nusantara scholars. Additionally, the research remains entirely textual-historical, with no empirical investigation into the contemporary reception of these theological debates in Muslim communities today. Future studies are encouraged to expand the textual corpus, incorporate comparative figures, and explore the living legacy of these polemics in modern Qur'anic hermeneutics and religious education in Southeast Asia. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of classical Islamic intellectual history in the Malay world and opens new avenues for interdisciplinary inquiry.

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