



## AN ANALYSIS OF SCOTT SIRAJ AL-HAQQ KUGLE'S THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON HOMOSEXUALITY: BALANCING AFFECTION AND ETHICAL CONCERNS

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### ABSTRACT

Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle is recognized as a leading scholar in Islamic studies, significantly contributing to the understanding of gender and sexuality within the framework of social justice, particularly in the discourse on homosexuality and Islamic ideology. His findings have sparked considerable debate and controversy. This paper presents a comprehensive critical analysis of Kugle's arguments regarding homosexuality in Islam, evaluating the accuracy of the texts and contexts he employs. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the study analyzes religious texts and secondary literature. Primary sources include the Qur'an, hadith, and classical tafsir, while secondary sources encompass Kugle's works and related supportive or critical literature. The analysis reveals that Kugle's works often exhibit selectivity, disregarding well-established traditional views, and are influenced by biases and assumptions. This critique advocates for a more contextual and holistic approach to understanding homosexuality in Islam, aiming to foster academic discourse that provides a fuller perspective.

**Keywords:** Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, Islamic Studies, Homosexuality, Gender, Social Justice, Qualitative Analysis

### ABSTRAK

*Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle diakui sebagai seorang cendekiawan terkemuka dalam studi Islam, yang memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap pemahaman tentang gender dan seksualitas dalam kerangka keadilan sosial, khususnya dalam diskursus tentang homoseksualitas dan ideologi Islam. Temuan-temuannya telah memicu perdebatan dan kontroversi yang cukup besar. Penelitian ini menyajikan analisis kritis yang komprehensif terhadap argumen-argumen Kugle mengenai homoseksualitas dalam Islam, dengan mengevaluasi keakuratan teks dan konteks yang digunakannya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis teks-teks keagamaan dan literatur sekunder. Sumber utama mencakup Al-Qur'an, hadits, dan tafsir klasik, sementara sumber sekunder mencakup karya-karya Kugle dan literatur terkait yang mendukung atau mengkritik. Analisis mengungkapkan bahwa karya-karya Kugle sering menunjukkan selektivitas, mengabaikan pandangan tradisional yang sudah mapan, dan dipengaruhi oleh bias dan asumsi. Kritik ini mengadvokasi pendekatan yang lebih kontekstual dan holistik untuk memahami homoseksualitas dalam Islam, dengan tujuan mendorong diskursus akademik yang memberikan perspektif yang lebih menyeluruh.*

**Kata Kunci:** Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, Studi Islam, Homoseksualitas, Gender, Keadilan Sosial, Analisis Kualitatif



## INTRODUCTION

Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle is a prominent scholar renowned for his work on Islam, particularly in the areas of gender, sexuality, and social justice. Born in the United States, Kugle's diverse cultural and educational background has uniquely positioned him to delve into the complexities of the Islamic faith. He holds a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, specializing in the history of Islamic thought and law. Additionally, he earned an MA in Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School and a BA in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia.

Kugle's scholarship extensively revisits traditional interpretations of Islamic teachings on gender and sexuality. His notable works include "Homosexuality in Islam: Critical Reflection on Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims" and "Sexuality, Diversity, and Ethics in the Agenda of Progressive Muslims." These books explore the reconciliation of sexual orientation and gender identity with Islamic faith, emphasizing the struggle within individuals and their communities. Kugle's research highlights the experiences of LGBTQ+ Muslims, who often face stigma and marginalization within their communities (Living out Islam: voices of gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims, 2014).

Kugle's contributions extend beyond academic scholarship to include significant activism for social justice and human rights, particularly within the context of Islam. His work challenges traditional Islamic discourses,

promoting a more inclusive and progressive understanding of the religion.

This vision is further elaborated in Kugle's book "The Imperatives of Progressive Islam," drawing some of the leading scholarship among progressive Muslim scholars today to address a whole host of issues: politics, jurisprudence, ethics, theology, and hermeneutics. In so doing, this work built upon the fruits of Kugle's research and provided him with a chance to empower subaltern groups within the Muslim-majority world and offer an interpretation of Islamic teachings more just and equitable (Duderija, 2017).

Though Kugle's scholarship was influential in framing discourse on gender, sexuality, and social justice in the Islamic faith, it also attracted negative critiques from elements within the more conservative reaches of the community of Muslims. Kugle's scholarship and activism have contributed to a fast-growing movement of progressive Muslims working and pushing toward waging challenging conventional norms for a more inclusive and just vision of Islam.

Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle is perhaps the greatest leading scholar in this field of Islam and sexuality and has made some very immense contributions to their understanding of homosexuality within the Islamic tradition: his contestation of this traditionalist attitude that had come to view Islam as totally and irrevocably condemning homosexuality, and arguing for an inclusive rereading of the displaced discourses in Islam concerning the subject under discussion.

Probably his best-known work, "Living out Islam: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims," by Kugle ensures an in-depth investigation into how LGBTQ+ Muslims find cohesiveness between their sexual orientation, gender identity, and faith. This book contains a very personal history of queer Muslims, showing the challenges they have overcome, and ways they found to live authentically within their religious communities. Kugle argues that this is an "active struggle" on the part of LGBTQ+ Muslims, by asking them to live between the tensions of their identity and the perceived norms that come from their faith (Living out Islam: voices of gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims, 2014).

His approach-when interpreting Islamic scripture and tradition-has been termed sensitive and nuanced (The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities, 2014). Backed up by pertinent reasoning and counterpointing Qur'anic verses, Kugle is doing exegesis that challenges longstanding interpretations used to condemn homosexuality within the Islamic context. Such work has created a platform for more inclusiveness and acceptance of religious groups toward greater acceptance of LGBTQ+ Muslims.

The importance of Kugle's contributions, therefore, does not fall entirely within the limits of the academic circle. His works have the propensity to touch the lives of LGBTQ+ Muslims everywhere. The insights Kugle offers are invaluable, himself being an ethnic and religious minority; it adds more value to the understanding of issues specifically associated with being LGBTQ+ and Muslim in Western countries, where one may be

thought of as "other" by mainstream LGBTQ+ society, as well as by their own circles of faith, namely religion. (Living Out Islam: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims, 2014; El-Rouayheb, 2005).

Kugle's book has also received accolades for its wider implication, as it would help researchers and students addressing issues related to gender and religion, as well as parents, families, and friends of LGBTQ+ Muslims (Living out Islam: voices of gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims, 2014). In challenging traditionalist interpretations of Islam and offering, in their stead, a more inclusive perspective, Kugle provides a possible contribution to a societal shift in the way Islam and homosexuality are understood and reconciliated.

In summary, Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle has made significant contributions to the study of Islam and homosexuality. Through his scholarship and activism, he has fostered a more nuanced and inclusive relationship between Islamic teachings and LGBTQ+ identities, empowering queer Muslims to live authentically within their faith (Duderija, 2017).

The debate as far as homosexuality and Islam are concerned has been going on for some time now, with considerable disagreement from scholars and theologians. One of the most famous voices on this had been that of Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle whose work is regarded as very attention-grabbing in the form of "Living Out Islam: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims" (Living out Islam: voices of gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims, 2014).

Kugle argues at the core that people who are Muslim homosexually or trans-genderly can reconcile their sexual orientation and gender identity with the dictates of Islam. He further asseverates that such reconciliation will have to include an “active struggle” in the confines of themselves and their communities. His exposition has, however, been highly criticized for the mere fact that Kugle himself is less of an open book as an author.

One critical analysis of Kugle’s works is from a paper examining the views of Islamic Neo-traditionalists, among them Yusuf al-Qaradawi, on gender constructs and their resultant attitudes on same-sex orientation. Homophobic views are, according to this paper, often articulated by these scholars as part of an agenda meant to reinforce the perceived threats against Muslim masculinity. Whether Kugle’s approach toward reconciling homosexuality with Islam is a balanced objective presentation based on religious texts, as would be the question here, or is person- and experience-driven, which makes it skewed under that prism as a gay Muslim, would be the question here (Kugle & Hunt, 2012). Although invaluable for increasing the voices of LGBTQ Muslims, ultimately, Kugle’s work calls for critical scrutiny into the tacit assumptions and possible biases that drive his analysis. Only then, through reflective engagement with diverse opinions and nuance, will a clear approach usher in a more integral knowledge about this complex relationship of sexuality, gender, and faith within the context of Islam.

In this respect, the present paper attempts a critical examination of the arguments proffered by Scott Siraj al-Haqq

Kugle on homosexuality in Islam, impinging on issues of textual and contextual accuracy. In this research, weaknesses in the arguments by Kugle will be analyzed. The arguments will chiefly relate to how he interprets religious texts and traditional sources. Further, this research will compare Kugle’s views with the traditional interpretations and underline how orthodox views respond or probably refute the arguments he puts forward. It thereby aspires to offer a fuller, more critical portrait of the discourse on homosexuality in Islam and take into full account its diverse dimensions.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, focusing on the critical analysis of primary and secondary religious texts. The primary sources include the Qur’an, hadith, and classical tafsir, selected for their foundational importance in Islamic jurisprudence and theological discourse. Secondary sources encompass the works of Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, along with academic literature that either supports or critiques his views.

The research follows a structured analytical framework. Initially, Kugle’s interpretations are extracted and systematically compared with traditional exegeses to assess the accuracy and coherence of his arguments. The analysis also scrutinizes the methodologies Kugle employs to derive his conclusions, identifying potential biases and assumptions that may influence his perspectives.

To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, the study incorporates a robust review

process, critically engaging with divergent scholarly opinions. This approach aims to construct a nuanced and critical understanding of Kugle's stance on homosexuality within Islam, contributing to broader academic discussions on contemporary Islamic thought.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Evaluation of Kugle's Interpretation

Kugle stands as a prominent scholar within the realm of Islamic studies, having conducted extensive analyses on the narrative of Prophet Lut and the related Qur'anic verses concerning homosexuality. His scholarly work endeavors to re-evaluate these narratives and formulate a conceptual framework through which sexual orientation and gender identity can be reconciled with faith for LGBTQ+ Muslims.

Kugle employs a meticulous exegesis approach, scrutinizing Qur'anic verses and their historical contexts while challenging traditional interpretations that have often been utilized within Islamic communities to denounce and marginalize homosexuality. He argues that the story of Prophet Lut is not fundamentally about homosexuality, but rather a broader condemnation of social repression, exploitation, and the disregard for the rights of the vulnerable (Living out Islam: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims, 2014).

However, this assertion by Kugle can be weighed against traditional interpretations, where the narrative of Prophet Lut is primarily seen as a denunciation of the sin of homosexuality. The core elements of the Qur'anic account and historical reports

suggest that the people of Lut were punished specifically for their homosexual acts, which were considered a grave violation of the natural order and divine laws. While the narrative does encompass broader themes such as societal oppression and exploitation, the condemnation of homosexuality remains a central and undeniable aspect. The verses from the Qur'an, along with historical records, indicate that the people of Lut faced punishment for their recurrent engagement in same-sex relationships, which were perceived as severe transgressions against natural and divine law according to traditional exegetical interpretations.

Moreover, Kugle contends that the Qur'an does not explicitly condemn homosexuality, arguing that scriptural references to homosexuality should be understood within the expansive Islamic principles of justice, compassion, and self-determination (Living out Islam: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims, 2014).

This viewpoint, however, has been dismissed by scholars who assert that the Qur'an and Islamic tradition unequivocally prohibit homosexual behavior. They argue that references to same-sex relations should be interpreted in light of broader Islamic teachings on sexuality and morality, which consistently condemn acts of homosexuality as sinful and unnatural deviations from divine order and human nature. From this perspective, it is evident that homosexuality is condemned in the Qur'an and Islamic tradition, as it represents a departure from the intended human sexuality that promotes

procreation and the maintenance of the family unit.

Scott Kugle's work has been instrumental in the ongoing debate regarding the reconciliation of LGBTQ+ identities with Islamic faith. His approach introduces a sophisticated and erudite dimension to the traditionalist, exclusivist, and ultra-conservative interpretations of this issue within Islam. Despite the significant contributions of Kugle's work, it has also faced substantial criticism from other scholars who argue that his exegesis may lack sufficient transparency and accountability to the broader Islamic scholarly tradition (*The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 2014).

Traditional Islamic scholars have heavily criticized much of Kugle's work, asserting that it fails to adequately address the clear scriptural prohibitions against homosexuality found within the Qur'an and other traditional Islamic sources. These critics contend that Kugle's interpretive methods do not seriously engage with the vast corpus of classical Islamic jurisprudence, which uniformly and decisively considers homosexual acts as heinous crimes against God's divinely ordained natural order. They argue that his work does not sufficiently engage with the overwhelming textual evidence and firmly established scholarly consensus within the Islamic tradition, which has historically condemned homosexuality as a violation of natural and moral order.

Nonetheless, Kugle's work has given a clear and powerful voice to LGBTQ+ Muslims, a community that has long struggled between their sexual orientation or gender identity and the perceived intolerance of

religious communities. His efforts have contributed to the growing movement of LGBTQ+ Muslims who are actively engaged in reshaping Islamic identity and reclaiming their rightful place within the faith (*Living out Islam: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims*, 2014).

Historically, traditional and classical models of Qur'anic exegesis have guided Islamic thought. However, recent scholarship has sought to move beyond these paradigms, with scholars like Scott Kugle offering alternative frameworks for analyzing the holy text (Chande, 2004). Kugle's hermeneutical approach has been sharply criticized by more conservative Muslim thinkers, who argue that it undermines core theological and historical precepts.

Critics of traditional and classical Qur'anic exegesis, as they pertain to Kugle's views, often highlight the constraints of these traditional modes. A prominent critique is that these traditional methods fail to engage the Qur'an as a literary text, instead reproducing large portions of the accumulated corpus of authoritative Muslim commentaries (Martin, 1982). As Alford T. Welch described, many Western scholars have tried to ignore or bypass the autochthonous exegetical corpus developed by Muslim authorities and read the Qur'an on its own terms. In Qur'anic studies, this literary turn opens new avenues for analysis but also engenders significant controversy. Kugle's approach differs from traditional and classical models in his attempts to place the Qur'an within the broader context of late antiquity.

Rather than deferring to the authority of established Muslim exegetes, Kugle strives to

read the text on its own merits, attuned to its internal literary structures and symbolic language. His attempts to “construct the text’s significance according to the requirements of the times” have been criticized by traditionalist thinkers, who argue that Kugle’s hermeneutics undermine core theological precepts (Zadesh, 2021; Budi, 2022). As Muhammad Arkoun’s work shows, the stakes in this debate are high, as interpretations of the Qur’an have profound implications for Muslim faith and practice. Arkoun’s critiques of Kugle are threefold: the Qur’an is not divinely revealed, it rejects theological elements, and it is considered a historical product. Ultimately, the tension between Kugle’s hermeneutical framework and traditional models reflects a broader struggle within Islamic thought: modern scholars must reinterpret established modes of Qur’anic interpretation against changing intellectual and social contexts (Budi, 2022; Zadesh, 2021; Martin, 1982; Maburur & Abas, 2023).

Scott Kugle’s work is of enormous importance in redefining the traditional Islamic position on homosexuality within the modern discourse on Islam and sexuality. He argues that homosexual and transgender Muslims can reconcile their gender identity and sexual orientation with Islamic values, though this reconciliation is undoubtedly challenging. This view starkly contrasts with traditional and classical interpretations, which have historically regarded homosexuality as a heinous sin.

Traditionalist scholars, such as the well-known Yusuf al-Qaradawi, maintain a strongly homophobic stance, considering

homosexuality contrary to the perceived ideals of Muslim masculinity (Kugle & Hunt, 2012). Neo-traditionalist thinkers often base their arguments on selective and distorted readings of religious texts, portraying them as opposed to same-sex orientations and relationships. In contrast, Kugle’s approach is more nuanced, seeking to understand the true meaning of the Qur’an and Hadith within their context, and to highlight their fundamental principles of justice, mercy, and human dignity as they apply to the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ Muslims.

The struggle that homosexual, lesbian, and transgender Muslims face is intensified by their position between the mainstream LGBTQ+ movement, where they are often viewed as “other” due to race, ethnicity, and religion, and their religious communities, which stigmatize them based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Kugle’s work builds a bridge between these conflicting identities, empowering LGBTQ+ Muslims to find their rightful place within the Islamic tradition. Although his interpretations have met with substantial criticism and resistance from conservative elements within the Muslim community, Kugle’s work has undeniably advanced a much-needed conversation about the intersection of faith, sexuality, and gender. His hopeful perspective suggests a way forward, with the evolving discourse on LGBTQ+ issues within Islam slowly adapting to changing times—celebrating the diversity of human experience and the potential for growth and reconciliation within the Islamic tradition.

In recent years, many contemporary Islamic scholars have adopted a

hermeneutical approach to interpreting the Qur'an. Scott Kugle is among those proposing a different methodology to understand this central scripture (Dye, 2021; Mabur & Abas, 2023; Budi, 2022; Rakhmat & Abdussalam, 2022). However, this methodology has sparked extensive debate and criticism within the Muslim community.

One significant issue scholars raise is Kugle's assertion that the Qur'an is a product of history, not a "faithful" text (Budi, 2022). This view contrasts sharply with the long-held belief that the Qur'an is the literal word of God, divinely revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Another critical problem with Kugle's approach is his tendency to downplay the theological dimension of Qur'anic verses, focusing instead on their historical and social contexts.

The methodological gaps in Kugle's work extend further. For instance, the Ma'nacum-maghza approach, which is based on a quasi-objectivist-progressive interpretation of the Qur'an's meaning, suggests that the teachings of the Qur'an must be understood and applied in the modern era, just as they were during the time of revelation, using contemporary scientific instruments (Tesa et al., 2023). This approach differs significantly from Kugle's methodology.

Scholars also criticize Kugle for disregarding the concept of an author, a central element of traditional Qur'anic exegesis. This makes Kugle's reliance on modern hermeneutical tools, like form criticism and redaction criticism, questionable. Critics argue that these methods, designed for biblical studies, cannot be applied to the unique scripture of the Qur'an (Budi, 2022;

Mabur & Abas, 2023; Zadesh, 2021). The methodological tension between traditionalist and modernist approaches to Qur'anic interpretation is epitomized in Kugle's work.

While the hermeneutical approach may offer valuable insights, it is crucial that any new methodologies remain faithful to the core beliefs and teachings of Islam (Budi, 2022; Mabur & Abas, 2023). Some scholars argue that Kugle's hermeneutical approach fails to adequately account for the Qur'an's divine origin and the theological significance of its verses (Mabur & Abas, 2023).

Scott Kugle's hermeneutic approach to incorporating homosexuality into the Islamic tradition has been widely discussed and debated academically. This paper aims to present five distinct critiques of Kugle's methodology and the implications of his readings.

The fundamental critique of Kugle's work is that he does not transparently address his personal orientation and biases. Kugle, as a scholar dedicated to reconciling homosexuality and Islam, faces scrutiny regarding his objectivity, as his identity and personal experiences may influence his interpretations and conclusions. The nature of Kugle's scholarship, wherein he not only researches but also advocates for the reconciliation of homosexuality with Islam, has led many to question his impartiality. Critics argue that such bias is evident in his exegesis of Qur'anic passages and hadith, as well as in his efforts to accommodate LGBTQ+ identities and reshape traditional Islamic teachings on gender and sexuality to align with contemporary Western LGBTQ+ norms and values. Some contend that Kugle's

identity as a gay Muslim scholar biases him toward manipulating Islamic sources through selective interpretation, only embracing ideas that support his case while disregarding others.

A second critique focuses on the selectiveness of sources and evidence used by Kugle. While he presents individual stories of gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims, he appears to neglect the extensive scholarship and jurisprudence within the Islamic tradition that strongly condemns homosexuality. Kugle's attention to the experiences of LGBTQ+ Muslims comes at the cost of a serious engagement with the broad theological and juridical literature historically rejecting homosexuality as incompatible with Islamic teaching. This selective use of source materials raises questions about the rigor and balance of Kugle's analysis.

A third area of contention is his propensity for "cherry-picking" Qur'anic interpretation. Kugle often highlights Qur'anic verses that support his inference—along with supporting hadith—that homosexuality is not viewed as fornication within Islamic tradition. He does this by downplaying or overlooking scriptural passages and legal rulings that unequivocally denounce acts of homosexuality as sinful and contrary to traditional Islamic values. This inherently partial and selective approach to scriptural evidence undermines the depth and fairness of Kugle's analysis, making it appear more like an attempt to reconcile Islamic sources with his own conclusions rather than a balanced textual analysis.

A fourth critique concerns the limited engagement with broader historical and

cultural contexts that have shaped Islamic understandings of gender and sexuality. Kugle's analysis risks non-historicization and decontextualization by not situating his work within the intricate socio-political contexts of the contemporary Muslim world. He does not adequately consider the multiple systems of social, political, and cultural forces that have influenced traditional Islamic positions on homosexuality. Analyses should consider factors such as colonialism, religious traditionalism, and the contemporary geopolitical landscape, which have collectively shaped discourses on gender and sexuality within Muslim-majority societies.

Some scholars have also criticized Kugle's work for its Western-centric bias, which overlooks the unique challenges and experiences of LGBTQ+ Muslims living in predominantly Muslim societies, where homophobia and transphobia may be more prevalent. Kugle's focus on perspectives and issues concerning LGBTQ+ individuals in Western contexts neglects the specific social, cultural, and religious pressures faced by queer Muslims in non-Western Muslim-majority regions. This oversight risks ignoring the nuanced and sometimes severe barriers that LGBTQ+ Muslims encounter in their countries of origin, where traditional Islamic teachings on sexuality and gender are more strictly adhered to and LGBTQ+ identities are often heavily stigmatized or criminalized. A more meaningful inclusion of the voices of queer Muslims living in the Global South is necessary to understand this multi-dimensional issue within diverse Islamic contexts.

In the final analysis, while Kugle's work has significantly contributed to ongoing debates on Islam and homosexuality, the critiques outlined above highlight the need for an approach that is more sensitive to nuance, context, and transparency if progress is to be made in this emotionally charged and complex area of study.

### **Bias in Kugle's Interpretation**

Bias can emerge whenever faith-based and historical texts are interpreted. These texts are inherently complex and may be further obscured by various cognitive biases (Tetlock, 2000; Meterko & Cooper, 2021; Pauleen et al., 2006; Benjamin, 2019). Researchers have identified ways in which heuristics, preconceived beliefs, and social influences can shape the interpretation of these critical documents (Cooper & Meterko, 2019).

One prominent bias that can significantly impact the perception and interpretation of Kugle's work is confirmation bias. This occurs when individuals seek out or interpret information in ways that confirm their preexisting beliefs and hypotheses. Such a bias can skew scholarship by overemphasizing aspects of Kugle's analysis that align with the authors' views while overlooking or minimizing evidence that challenges these preconceptions. Additionally, motivated reasoning, where individuals process information in ways that serve ideological interests, can lead to biased interpretations favoring certain ideological perspectives over others (Kahan, 2012).

These phenomena often extend beyond what can be attributed to individual cognitive

biases alone. Such biases can originate from the social and institutional contexts in which Kugle's work is reviewed. Social influences, such as the desire to conform to the majority view within a field, have been shown to impact academic discourse and inhibit the prevalence of alternative explanations, even when contradicting evidence is present. Consequently, under the expectations of academic communities or religious perspectives, Kugle's work risks being unduly shaped by prevailing norms and biases.

Mitigating these biases requires critical self-reflection by scholars, coupled with the active pursuit of diverse perspectives that challenge their views. An open-minded and evidence-based approach to understanding religious and historical texts is essential to avoid the cognitive biases that frequently shape academic discourse (Baddeley, 2015; Cooper & Meterko, 2019; Meterko & Cooper, 2021; Kahan, 2012).

### **Impact and Implications of Kugle's Views**

Kugle's work has profoundly influenced academic discourse, pioneering innovative pathways across various disciplines. His discourse-based philosophy, rooted in pluralism and a critique of authority, has catalyzed new avenues for further research and critical debate. Consequently, his perspectives hold particular importance for fields such as Philosophy, Politics, Art, History, Literature, and Education, as they challenge established parameters and the interrelations of boundaries.

The linguistic turn of the late 20th century heightened interest in discourse, with scholars moving beyond a functional view of

language to recognize its symbolic and constructive role in shaping social and organizational realities (Heracleous, 2006). In this context, Kugle's work aligns with the growing importance of discourse in forming theories, shared meanings, and coordinated actions (Kamler et al., 1997). His anti-authoritarian stance and focus on difference and otherness resonate with critical discourse analysts who seek to unpack the power dynamics and ideological underpinnings of language use. As Kugle's ideas have gained prominence, they have opened new opportunities for dialogue and debate within academic discourse.

Kugle's view of the text as open to "negotiation of meanings," shaped by intertextuality and social interaction, challenges traditional perspectives on textual analysis and interpretation (Khaghaninejad, 2015). This approach suggests that contemporary signs embody multiple voices and represent an "arena of struggle" in discourse, prompting scholars to adopt more sophisticated and contextual research methods. Kugle's most notable impact has been in the education sector, where his philosophical foundations have spurred radical reflections on educational goals, the roles of teachers and students, curriculum design, and teaching-learning approaches. His emphasis on deconstruction and questioning established norms has paved the way for alternative educational practices and more democratized classroom interactions (Farahani, 2014; Heracleous, 2006; Khaghaninejad, 2015; Kamler et al., 1997).

Despite the growing acceptance of Kugle's views, they have also faced criticism

and scrutiny. Some argue that his theoretical frameworks may suffer from practical limitations and call for a more balanced and pragmatic approach. Nonetheless, the impact of Kugle's ideas on academic discourses is undeniable, as they continue to challenge and reshape how scholars engage with various disciplines and social phenomena.

Scholarship has long been interested in defining religion's role in shaping social and legal norms within the prism of Islamic society. Recently, as Islamic law has re-emerged as a sign of identity in the Muslim world, it has become the focus of renewed academic attention.

This scholarship, exemplified by Scott Kugle's work, is crucial in challenging traditionalist interpretations of Islamic law within broader discussions. If deeply considered, Kugle's work has the potential to radically alter perceptions and applications of Islamic law in contemporary societies.

One critical aspect of Kugle's thought is the emphasis on the situatedness of Islamic jurisprudence, in contrast to immutable legal principles. Simply put, Kugle advocates for lawmaking in Islam—scripture interpretation and application—to be responsive to the evolving needs and sensibilities of Muslim communities.

This view parallels the role of "public reason" in Rawlsian political theory, positing that the legitimacy of Islamic law depends on its capacity to address the interests and values of the broader public, not merely its adherence to theological precepts (Fadel, 2008). In this regard, ethics were normatively pluralistic, rendering a legal system derived

entirely from revelation epistemologically untenable. This shift implies that Islamic substantive law employs non-theological methods of justification (Fadel, 2008). It represents a fundamental change in the epistemological foundations of Islamic law, significantly impacting its engagement with social norms and cultural practices. Indeed, the integration of sharia principles into regional regulations in Indonesia has sparked considerable academic debate, with concerns about the potential for such measures to incite socio-political turmoil or conflict with the country's constitutional principles (Selly, 2023).

Assuming Kugle's work is accurate, it highlights non-theological modes of justification within Islamic law, necessitating a more nuanced, context-sensitive approach to religion vis-à-vis social norms (Feener, 2012). This realization aligns with the author's views on the "Integration of Sharia in Regional Regulations in Indonesia," suggesting that the adoption of Islamic law into positive law is a legal "novelty" that requires careful consideration of the philosophical underpinnings of both legal traditions: Islamic and secular (Selly, 2023).

Finally, the potential impact of Kugle's thought on Islamic social norms and law is likely to be multifaceted and complex due to the broader challenges and opportunities in the ongoing dialogue between religion, culture, and the emerging demands of modern societies (Feener, 2012; Bowen, 1998; Fadel, 2008).

## CONCLUSION

In summation, this paper has meticulously analyzed Scott Siraj al-Haqq

Kugle's arguments regarding homosexuality within Islam, emphasizing both textual accuracy and contextual relevance. Several critical weaknesses in Kugle's methodology have been identified, including highly subjective exegesis of religious texts and a tendency to disregard broader, more entrenched traditional viewpoints. While Kugle's hermeneutical approach occasionally offers innovative and provocative insights, it often neglects to contextualize the complex historical and cultural frameworks of traditional interpretations.

Future scholarly endeavors should undertake comprehensive studies incorporating perspectives from the full spectrum of Islamic thought, spanning from conservative to moderate viewpoints. Fostering dialogue among these diverse perspectives is essential to achieving a more holistic and inclusive understanding of LGBT issues within an Islamic framework. Furthermore, future research should consider the social and psychological ramifications of both the acceptance and rejection of LGBT communities within Muslim societies.

The implications of this critique for Muslim communities include acknowledging the plurality of interpretations, thus permitting broader and more inclusive views on homosexuality without compromising the integrity of Islamic texts and traditions. A rigorous critique of Kugle's work can promote balanced and profound discourse, leading to a more inclusive and tolerant society. This, in turn, can contribute to developing a more just and humane attitude toward LGBT individuals within the Muslim

community, who frequently encounter discrimination and marginalization.

Despite the contentious nature of Kugle's views, the continuous effort to harmonize traditional interpretations with contemporary social and psychological dynamics remains imperative. Such endeavors will assist Muslim communities in cultivating a more inclusive and equitable understanding, in alignment with the compassion and humanity that Islam espouses.

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