

## THE CONCEPT OF HERMENEUTICS AS A METHODOLOGY OF INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN TEXT

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**Abstract.** Lately the concept of the methodology of interpreting the texts of the Qur'an is not only struggling from the history of the Companions and the Tabi'in but in understanding the Word of God it is necessary to have dialectics with the interpretation of the text with the term hermeneutics. Some contemporary interpretations make a new study of the Qur'an using the hermeneutic approach. Specifically, this paper seeks to contribute to providing concepts related to hermeneutics as a textual interpretation methodology. There are some things that are very urgent to be studied in this discussion, including, First, hermeneutics as a dialectic of text interpretation. Second, the methodology of the hermeneutic approach in understanding texts. Third, the application of hermeneutics as a text interpretation. Thus, the concept of hermeneutics in the texts is to find the Qur'anic values contextually behind the meaning of the text of the verse.

**Keywords:** Hermeneutics, Interpretation, Text, Al-Qur'an

**Abstrak.** Akhir-akhir ini konsep metodologi penafsiran teks-teks al-Qur'an bukan hanya berkuat dari riwayat para sahabat dan tabi'in melainkan dalam memahami firman Allah Swt perlu berdialektika dengan *interpretasi* teks dengan istilah hermeneutika. Beberapa tafsir kontemporer melakukan kajian baru terhadap al-Qur'an dengan menggunakan pendekatan hermeneutika. Secara spesifik tulisan ini berusaha untuk berkontribusi memberikan konsep terkait hermeneutika sebagai metodologi penafsiran teks. Ada beberapa hal yang sangat urgen untuk perlu dikaji dalam pembahasan ini,

diantaranya, *Pertama*, hermeneutika sebagai dialektika interpretasi teks. *Kedua*, metodologi pendekatan hermeneutika dalam memahami teks. *Ketiga*, Konsep hermeneutika sebagai interpretasi teks. Dengan demikian, bahwa konsep hermeneutika dalam wacara *interpretasi* teks adalah untuk menemukan Nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an secara kontekstual dibalik makna teks ayat tersebut.

**Kata Kunci:** Hermeneutik, Interpretasi, Teks, Al-Qur'an

### Introduction

If we look at the contemporary condition of theories in the field of interpretation, at this time, we know that we do not have a solid theory that has tested and selected principles that are directed to achieve certain goals.<sup>1</sup> This shows that there is a new methodology offered to examine the texts of the Qur'an to find the true meaning in the text both through the social and cultural context of revelation, it is important to be understood by anyone who wants to apply the rules or teachings in the text.<sup>2</sup>

Historically, the Qur'an describes itself as a message, and the treatise represents the communication relationship between the sender and the receiver through the language expression system. It is natural that the scientific entrance for the study of the text of the Qur'an is the reality and culture that regulates the movement of human understanding as a target for the text, and regulates the first recipient of the text, namely the apostle, and the culture that is incarnated in

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<sup>1</sup>Hasan Hanafi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an*, Penerjemah: Yudian Wahyudi, Hamdiah Latif, (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawesea Press, 2009), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ingrid Mattson, *Ulumul Qur'an Zaman Kita "Pengantar Untuk Memahami Konteks, Kisah, dan Sejarah Al-Qur'an*, (Jakarta: Zaman, 2008), p. 45.

language.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, interpreting does not mean an attempt to explain and reveal the meaning of the content of the Qur'an. Instead it is related to the understanding and interpretation of the text.<sup>4</sup> Because reading the text can realize the revelation that occurs by God's command.<sup>5</sup>

Reading the text in the current context as a postulate for interpreting the Quranic texts, some contemporary interpreters tend to understand it as a hermeneutic theory (interpretation) or the same as the interpretation of the Quranic text. Aspects in the study of hermeneutics as expressed by Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid "Text in the contemporary definition: A series of signs arranged in an arrangement of relationships that produce an overall meaning that carries a message. Whether in the form of signs in the original language or with signs in other languages, then in fact the uniformity of signs in the composition of the message is what makes the text."<sup>6</sup>

Departing from this, it turns out that interpreting the text does not only take place on the concept of hadith and the history of the companions. But the text is also influenced by culture. So it is very appropriate if the concept of hermeneutics is appointed as a methodology of interpretation of the text. This is a huge contribution and contribution in interpreting the text of the verses of the Qur'an. Because the hermeneutic search for the text is beneficial in interpreting the Qur'an, it becomes one of the themes that develops and becomes a subject of discussion in the world of interpretation and the science of interpretation to create contextual understanding. To understand this is an essential need for Muslims to refer to the Qur'an. From various aspects of life on the other hand. The connection with what is

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<sup>3</sup> Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, *Tekstualitas Al-Qur'an "Kritik Terhadap Ulumul Qur'an*, (Yogyakarta: LKis, Cet-Ke IV 2005), p. 19

<sup>4</sup> Fahrudin Faiz, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an*, (Yogyakarta: Qalam, 2007), p 6

<sup>5</sup> Hasan Hanafi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an...*, p.61.

<sup>6</sup> Moch. Nur Ichwan, *Meretas Kesarjanaan Kritis al-Qur'an: Teori Hermeneutika Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid*, (Jakarta: Teraju, Cet.I, 2003), p. 65.

understood contextually can contribute that the Qur'an is indeed a final and operational guide in its study of all times and era.<sup>7</sup>

The author hopes this paper aims to contribute ideas to the model of reading the Al-Qur'an by making the Al-Qur'an more progressive, carrying hermeneutics as a way to understand (Verstehen)<sup>8</sup> to be more contextual in the scientific development of Islamic studies and Islamic law in the future.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Islamic studies in the future require important steps to interpret religious texts both in the realm of Qur'anic Studies and Sunnah so that they are more humanist, transformative, contextual, dialogical, negotiable, humanistic, and deconstructive.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Understanding Hermeneutics as a Dialectic of Text Interpretation*

If we explore and look for hermeneutics' basic meaning, hermeneutic theory is not a theory built by Islamic circles. Instead, this theory is built and adopted by contemporary thinking today, because hermeneutics is considered a universal search for texts. The word hermeneutics (hermeneutics) comes from the Greek word *hermeneuien* which means to translate or interpret.<sup>11</sup> Scholars have three gradations of hermeneutic principles as (interpretation): First, *matan* or text, namely messages that arise from the source. Second, the intermediary, namely the

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<sup>7</sup>Wely Dozan, *Hermeneutika Sebagai Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'an "Melacak Teori Hermeneutika Fazlurrahman"*, (Jurnal: El-Hikam (Jurnal Studi Keislaman), Volume XII, Nomor 1, Januari –Juni 2019), p.157.

<sup>8</sup>Kaelan, *Metode Penelitian Agama Kualitatif Interdisipliner*, (Yogyakarta: Paradigma, 2010), p. 165.

<sup>9</sup>Amin Abdullah, "Pendekatan Hermeneutik dalam Studi Fatwa-fatwa Keagamaan: Proses Negosiasi Komunitas Pencari Makna Teks, Pengarang, dan Pembaca", in book's introduction Khaled M. Abou El-Fadl, *Atas Nama Tuhan dari Fikih Otoriter ke Fikih Otoritatif*, (Jakarta: Serambi, 2004), p. xvii.

<sup>10</sup>Rethinking Qur'an: *Towards a Humanistic Hermeneutics*, (Amsterdam: Humanistics University Press, 2004), p. 22-37. Ghanim, *Kritik Ortodoksi...*, p. viii. Dan Fazlur Rahman, *Membuka Pintu Ijtihad*, (Bandung: Pustaka, cet. III, 1995), p. 149, dan Misrawi dkk, *Islam Negara...*, p. 281.

<sup>11</sup>Sibawaihi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Fazlurrahman*, (Yogyakarta & Bandung: Jalastura, 2007), p.

interpreter (Hermes), and Third, the message transfer to the listener (the interlocutor). So that in interpreting the text, it is not strictly classical interpretation, but the text needs to have a dialogue with the meaning of the text.<sup>12</sup>

Specifically, a common thread can be drawn that hermeneutics is the process of changing something or a situation from ignorance to understanding through language and the ability to understand the thoughts of the author or author beyond understanding oneself.<sup>13</sup> If it is associated with the Qur'an, it turns out that hermeneutics has a function to explain and express the intent and content of the Qur'an, which is insightful as a text. Thus giving rise to the methodology of epistemological knowledge in interpreting the text of the Qur'an.<sup>14</sup>

If we explore hermeneutics as a tool or method as well as a theory for interpreting the verses of the Qur'an, it turns out that we have several searches on the text. First. Expression of thoughts in words, translation, and action as an interpreter. Second. Efforts to divert from a foreign language whose meaning is dark in the sense of being unknown and transferred to another language that the reader can understand. Third, the transfer of less clear thoughts is changed to a more precise form of expression.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, philosophical thoughts often develop hermeneutics, including Joseph Bleicher, who reveals that hermeneutics is principally a methodology, hermeneutics is philosophy, and hermeneutics is criticism. In contrast, Richard E. Plamer describes thinking into six discussions: hermeneutics as a theory of interpretation of the scriptures, hermeneutics as a philological method,

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<sup>12</sup>Rohimin, *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir "Aplikasi Model Penafsiran"*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007), p. 58

<sup>13</sup>Nanang Gojali, *Tafsir & Hadits*, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2013) p. 26

<sup>14</sup>Fahrudin Faiz, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an "Melacak Hermeneutika Tafsir Al-Manar dan Tafsir Al-Azhar"*, (Togyakarta: Qalam, 2007), p. 8.

<sup>15</sup>Fahrudin Faiz, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an (Tema-Tema Kontroversional)*, (Yogyakarta: Elsaq Prres, 2005), p 4-5.

hermeneutics as a linguistic understanding, hermeneutics as the foundation of socio-cultural science, hermeneutics as phenomenology, and hermeneutics as an interpretation system.<sup>16</sup> Finally, Richard E. Plamer explains in more detail the basic concepts of hermeneutics that have been mentioned above, including the following:

1. Hermeneutics as a theory of interpretation of the scriptures. Here, hermeneutics functioned as a text to understand the scriptures, especially by religious people. Hermeneutics like this can give rise to many styles and styles that sometimes contradict each other.
2. Hermeneutics as a philological method. Hermeneutics functioned as a method of studying texts and placing all readers the same, including the scriptures. The spirit of enlightenment rationalism triggered its emergence. The character is Johan August Ernesti. In its development, it is claimed as a secular style by the church because it presents a historical criticism method examining theological issues. However, studying the Bible cannot be separated from the method of philological research.
3. Hermeneutics as the science of linguistic understanding. From its capacity as a philological method, hermeneutics has stepped into a linguistic science. Hermeneutics functioned as a science to understand based on linguistic theories. Here hermeneutics is the basis for all interpretations of the text because it describes all conditions in every interpretation. The procedure carried out is to try to penetrate further behind a text.
4. Hermeneutics as the foundation of human science. The purpose of hermeneutics in this study is a methodological basis for the humanities. Wilhelm Dilthey is a philosopher of history who tries to accompany

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<sup>16</sup>Mohammad Muslih, *Filsafat Ilmu, (Kajian atas Asumsi Dasar, Paradigma dan Kerangka Teori Ilmu Pengetahuan)*, (Yogyakarta: Belukar, 2004), p. 136

hermeneutics as an epistemological foundation for societies, not only as a science of text interpretation.

5. Hermeneutics as a phenomenon *das sein* existential understanding. Here hermeneutics is functioned as an interpretation to see the wonder of human existence through language. Martin Heidegger and Gadamer are the characters. According to him, hermeneutics is a philological method and a characteristic is the most basic form of human existence.<sup>17</sup>

History records that hermeneutics is a theory owned by Western thought that tries to be used to interpret the verses of the Qur'an. Besides that, hermeneutics as a tool to understand refers explicitly to the text. Therefore, the study of hermeneutics developed to describe the text, more specifically related to historical and humanistic understanding. So that it can be said that hermeneutics has several aspects, including first, understanding the text. Second, the question that leads to what the understanding of interpretation is.<sup>18</sup>

If it is related to the study of texts, the subject of hermeneutics discussion is interpreting a classic text or a foreign text to suit texts that live in different times and places and cultural atmospheres. So it becomes a meal at this time. Its relation to hermeneutics refers to various approaches, starting from the historical context of the descent of a verse.<sup>19</sup> Hermeneutics often refers to contextual understanding. So the Qur'an, which is understood by various kinds of thinking can lead to and give birth to various theories on the interpretation of the Qur'an. Of course, this is a tool to become a new theory in the interpretation of the Qur'an

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<sup>17</sup> Sibawaihi, *Hermenetuka Fazlur Rahman*, (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2007), p.8-9

<sup>18</sup>Imam Musbikin, *Istanthiq Al-Qur'an (Pengenalan Studi Al-Qur'an Pendekatan Interdisipliner)*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016), p. 43

<sup>19</sup>Yayan Rahmatika, Dadan Rusmanan, *Metodologi Tafsir Al-Qur'an (Strukturalisme, Semantik, Semiotik, dan Hermeneutika)*, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2013), p.449

Hermeneutics, in terms of terminology and epistemological framework, is a tool as a new epistemological-interpretation method used to examine the origin of revelation or the Qur'an. Thus, hermeneutics as a science that reflects on a word in the past can be understood existentially and meaningful in the current situation. Suppose the Qur'an is interpreted by previous scholars in the sense that there is no interpretation that refers to the current contextualization faced by various models and currents of problems. In that case, it can be said that the interpretation produced by the ulama is still not relevant because the historical reality of today is very much different.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Hermeneutic Approach Method in Understanding Text*

The initial point of exploring the idea of meaning is an understanding that the Qur'an is a communicative act that has a specific purpose. However, the message of the Qur'an is constantly being actualized and actualized throughout the Muslim generation after the Prophet Muhammad and the generations of the Companions. Therefore, the new contexts remain connected with the context of the first revelation.<sup>21</sup> So that it does not become a solid interpretation theory, which is actually a method of reform and change in the aspect of approach in the study of the Qur'an.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the text of the Qur'an is not final in the sense that it refers to the interpretation of the companions. Regardless of anyone who interprets the text of the holy book, he is still an ordinary human being, complete with all his

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<sup>20</sup>Yayan Rahmatika, Dadan Rusmanan, *Metodologi Tafsir Al-Qur'an (Strukturalisme, Semantik, Semiotik, dan Hermeneutika)* p. 458

<sup>21</sup>Abdullah Saeed, *Al-Qur'an Abad 21 "Tafsir Kontekstual"*, (Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2016), p. 139.

<sup>22</sup>Hasan Hanafi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an*, Penerjemah: Yudian Wahyudi, Hamdiah Latif, (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawesea Press, 2009), p. 8.

shortcomings and strengths on his side bound by space and time.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the idea in a study approach to the Qur'an which is characterized as a dialectic for reading and understanding the text, namely, by looking at the historical aspects of the revelation of the Qur'anic verses, and looking for Qur'anic values that can be responded to. In today's society. This is as in Fazlurrahman's view in exploring the text.

If you look closely, the steps in interpreting the text of the contemporary era today really need to be applied in the current context, because along with the time span from the past, it is very different. So the interpreter is very important to approach the text of the Qur'an. First, pay attention to the micro and macro context when the Qur'an was revealed.<sup>24</sup> What is meant by *asbabun* al-Qur'an micro is to look back at the revelation of the text of the verses of the Qur'an. the purpose of studying this macro context is to obtain an excellent logical understanding of the overall condition of the texts of the Qur'an being revealed. So in interpreting the text of the Qur'an, what you want to see in the interpretation in the context of micro 1 and micro two. Which means that translating the meaning of the Qur'anic text from the micro context 1 to macro 2 means tracing the theory of *asbabun nuzul* Qur'an in the era of its descent and how the text is applied today, where there are many differences.<sup>25</sup>

In this contest, pre-understanding is social that surrounds the interpreter as described above. There is a link between historical, social understanding and this theory, including current understanding or contemporary interpreters' situation and conditions. For this reason, in expressing text messages so that they are objective, it is required to leave pre-understanding in the sense that understanding

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<sup>23</sup> Fahrudin Faiz, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an "Tema-tema Kontroversional*, (Yogyakarta: Elsaq Press, 2005), p.16.

<sup>24</sup> Sibawaihi, *Hermenetuka Fazlur Rahman*, (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2007), p.59.

<sup>25</sup> Abdullah Saeed, *Al-Qur'an Ababd 21, Tafsir Kontekstual...*, p. 14-15

the text of the verses of the Qur'an must be based on the problems faced today (context has its context), so to interpret and understand the text. Social studies are needed where the text appears in the application stage. Rahman also does not use the literal meaning of the text but the moral ideal of the text.<sup>26</sup>

Second, in interpreting the text of the verses of the Qur'an, it is not only textual conclusions, but in the current contemporary era, the interpreter can try to apply these general values and principles to the context of modern Qur'anic readers. This movement is a process that departs from a public view of specific views that must be formulated and realized in the present. This shows that the context of hermeneutics is actually to apply the historical context of the verse in the descending period and actualized in the current era of the contemporary context.<sup>27</sup>

So to obtain and facilitate the *asbab al-nuzul* macro. So several things need to be considered in interpreting the text, including, 1.) how to reconstruct history in interpreters. 2) coverage of *asbab al-nuzul* macro as well. 3) the significance of *asbab al-nuzul* macro in determining the interpretation results. This needs to be considered in a hereditary approach to studying a text. Because looking at the historical verse can determine the development of the meaning contained in the text of the verse.<sup>28</sup>

In this approach, the essential object in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an is the need to analyze and look back at the history behind the revelation of the verse. Therefore, *Asbabun nuzul* knowledge is essentially needed.<sup>29</sup> Usually, in the context of *asbabun nuzul* Qur'an, contemporary thinkers, including Rahman, analyze

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<sup>26</sup> Abdul Fatah Abdul Gharu al-Qadhi, *Asbab al-Nuzul 'an al-Shababah wa al-Mufassirin* (Mesir: Dar al-Salam, 2005), p. 64

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>28</sup> Mu'ammarr Zayn Qadafy, *Sababun Nuzul Dari Mikro Hingga Makro "Sebuah Kajian Epistemologis Seri Ullumul Qur'an Kontemporer*, (Yogyakarta: IN AzNa BookS, 2015), p. 186.

<sup>29</sup> Sibawaihi, *Hermenutika Fazlurrahman*, (Yogyakarta: Jalastura, 2007), p.52.

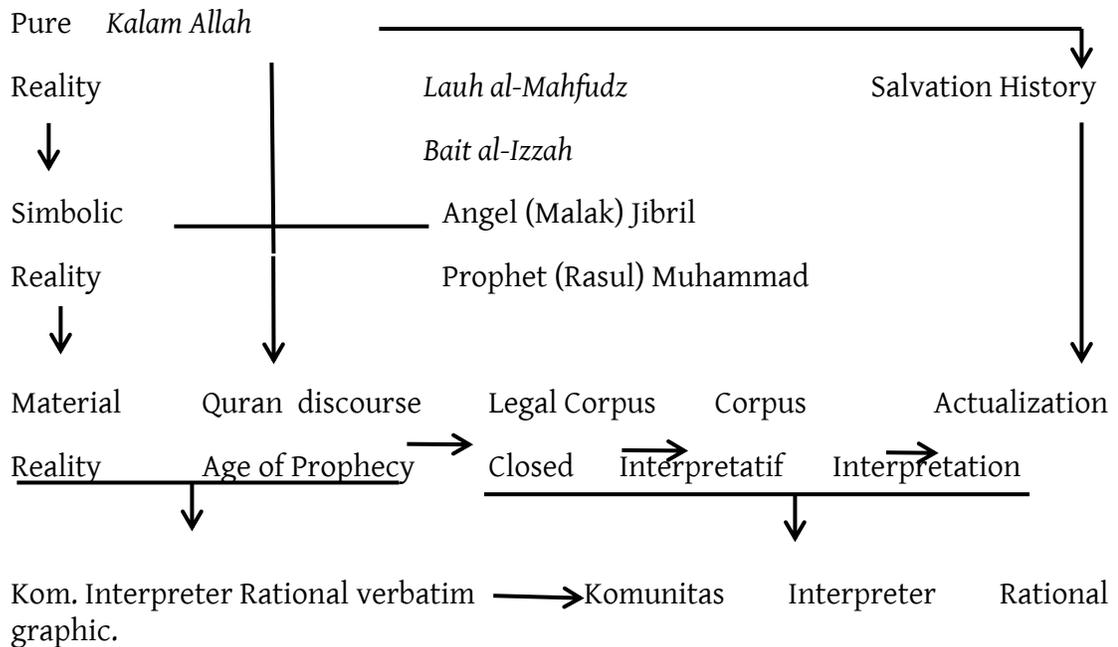
it through macro and micro contexts. In short, micro views of *asbabun nuzul* is understanding the historical situation, which includes the people around the revelation of the Quranic verse and all situations that have a bearing on the emergence of the verse. While micro are narrations regarding the disclosure of a verse of the Qur'an. Between the two discussions above, the *asbabun nuzul* al-Qur'an on a macro basis has a broader scope that is not only related to the narrations of the companions.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, heremeneutics can be selected in three categories: philosophy and criticism. First, theoretical hermeneutics, as a form that focuses its study on aspects (understanding), namely how to understand correctly. Meanwhile, the meaning of the goal in the search in hermeneutics is the meaning of the text. It is essential to study the Qur'an through hermeneutics. Therefore, there are several aspects of the paradigm approach in the development of the study of the Qur'an.<sup>31</sup>

The dimensions of the Qur'an can be said to be monodual, meaning that the Qur'anic text has a sacred-profane, absolute, relative, open-bounded, historical-metahistorical, and transcendent-immanent dimension. So, in this case the author summarizes the openness in the study of the Qur'anic text which we will plot the flow of the study of the development of the Qur'anic text as follows:

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<sup>30</sup>Mu'ammarr Zayn Qadafy, *Asbabun Nuzul Dari Mikro Hingga Makro (Sebuah Kajian Epistemologis seri Ulumul Qur'an Kontemporer)*, (Yogyakarta: Azna Books, 2015), p.



The mapping shows a study of the Quranic text starting from its closedness in understanding both in terms of the closed official corpus and the interpreter community's interpretation corpus.<sup>32</sup> So the hermeneutic approach generally discusses the pattern of triangular relationships (triadic) between the text, the text maker, and the reader (text interpreter).<sup>33</sup>

The process of understanding the Qur'an requires methods and approaches to interpret the Qur'an that can provide answers that are appropriate and following

<sup>32</sup>Yayan Rahmatika, Dadan Rusmanan, *Metodologi Tafsir Al-Qur'an (Strukturalisme, Semantik, Semiotik, dan Hermeneutika)*, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2013), p. 457.

<sup>33</sup>Imam Musbikin, *Istanthiq Qur'an "Pengenalan Studi Al-Qur'an Interdisipliner"*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016), p. 55

the many problems that develop in society. The answer, which is in accordance with what is needed and felt by society, is very meaningful and has a positive impact on Islam, known as the Religion of *rahmattalil alamin*. In its development, the methods used by the commentators were many and very diverse, but this resulted in differences in providing interpretations of the verses of the Qur'an.<sup>34</sup>

In this case, the al-Qur'an can be positioned as a dialogue partner for its readers by assuming that the text of the Qur'an is an independent, autonomous, and objective person who has the truth that can be understood rationally. This shows the existence of continuity and new methods for interacting with the Qur'an.

History records that the reading of the text of the Qur'an has been carried out since it was first revealed, but until now, fresh ideas have never dried up flowing from the crevices of the springs related to this revelation of God. The diversity of approaches and methods used is directly proportional to the resulting understanding. Because the study of the Al-Qur'an in any model, whether in the form of interpretation, *ta'wil*, interpretation, or translation of the text of the Al-Qur'an, is a hermeneutic area that is very open to any attempt to reform the understanding of the Al-Qur'an.<sup>35</sup> Hermeneutics seeks to systematically re-establish the above triadic backward to form the conception of interpretation. This is because an interpretation that pays attention to traditional elements in building a functional interpretation of the Qur'an has become a reality during the time of the Prophet. In addition, hermeneutics seeks to reinterpret appropriately in non-traditional ways or methods.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ahmad Fadlol dkk, *Studi Al-Qur'an Teori dan Metodologi*, (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2011), p. 160.

<sup>35</sup> Muhammad Syahrur, *Prinsip dan Dasar Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Kontemporer*, Penerjemah: Sahiron Syamsuddin & Burhanuddin, (Yogyakarta: Elsaq Press, 2004), p. xvi

<sup>36</sup> Muhammad Syahrur, *Prinsip dan Dasar Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Kontemporer*, (Yogyakarta: Elsaq Press, 2007), p. 6

*Hermeneutics Application as Text Interpretation.*

In this discussion, the author will give an example of the importance of hermeneutics as an interpretation of the text. Specifically, the author will explore the interpretation of M. Qurais Shihab regarding the interpretation of *Wasthiyyah* Islam, which has been discussing the concept of *Wasthiyyah* Islam. The reason the author took the text of the Qur'an is to do what the hermeneutic concept is in interpreting the text of the Qur'an.

Regarding Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 143<sup>37</sup> as the legitimacy of the *Wasthiyyah* Islamic concept in the Qur'an which reads as follows:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَيَّ عَقْبَيْهِ ۗ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمُ بَیْرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِّعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

And thus We have made you a median [i.e., just] community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you. And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels.<sup>1</sup> And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith [i.e., your previous prayers]. Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful.

If the verse is examined textually, the actual interpretation of *Wasthiyyah* Islam means the concept of a just people. In this discussion, the author will describe the results of the context of the meaning of *Wasthiyyah* Islam in the Qur'an. if we look at some of the interpretations above, the definition of context is limited to

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<sup>37</sup>Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahanya*, (Bandung: Diponegoro, 2010), p. 22

doing justice and being middle. As in contemporary thought such as M. Quraish Shihab<sup>38</sup>, the concept of *ummatan wasathan* is a moderate society that is not immersed in the life of materialism, nor soars in the life of spiritualism. When the view is directed to the sky, the feet must remain on the ground.

The middle position makes humans impartial to the left and right, which can lead humans to be fair. The central position makes anyone can see a person from a different angle, and at that time, he can be an example for all parties. This position also makes it possible to see anyone and anywhere. Allah swt made Muslims in the middle position so that you could witness the actions of humans, namely other people, but you cannot do this unless you make Apostles.<sup>39</sup>

Contextually there are several fair concepts when viewed from hermeneutics. First, the principle of not exceeding limits (*ghuluww*), good in attitude, speech, action, including worship. Second, the principle of not doing things in vain, both in words and deeds. Third, the principle is always in al-Shirath al-Mustaqim (the straight and right path). That is, the *wasathan ummah* is required to always be in the direction of the straight and right path (Islam) by always obeying its sharia, following the Qur'an and as-sunnah. In addition, *ummat al-wasath* can be said as the straight and true path, which is the peak of moderation because being on the right path means being during the truth, not deviating, and not being extreme. In addition, Mecca, the cradle of Islam, proves to be at the center, the earth's midpoint. Islam is not a liberal religion, nor is it secular or extreme.

#### *Tracing Hermeneutics as Text Interpretation*

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<sup>38</sup> M. Quraish Shihab was born in Rappangan, South Sulawesi, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1944. Expert of tafsir achieved his M.A. for tafsir Al-Qur'an in University of Al-Azhar Cairo, Egypt. Read M. Quraish Shiha, *membumikan Al-Qur'an, Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam kehidupan Masyarakat*, (Bandung: Khazanah ilmu-ilmu Islam, Cet.1 2013).

<sup>39</sup> M.Qurais Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah (Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian al-Qur'an)*, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, Cet.1. 2017), P.415.

The text is an autonomous corpus, which is characterized by the following four things:

- 1) In a text the meaning contained in "what is said (what is said), regardless of the disclosure (the act of saying), whereas in spoken language it cannot be separated.
- 2) The meaning of a text is no longer tied to the speaker, as is spoken language. What the text means is no longer related to what the author originally intended. This does not mean that the author is no longer needed. However, the author's intention has been hindered by a standardized text.
- 3) Because it is not tied to a dialogue system, a text is no longer bound to its original context (ostensive reference). It is not tied to the original context of the conversation. What the text points to is thus an imaginary world constructed by the text itself and about other texts.
- 4) The text is no longer bound to the initial audience, as spoken language is bound to its listeners. A text is written not for a specific reader, but for anyone who can read and is not limited to space and time. A text builds its own life because a text is a monologue.<sup>40</sup>

In analyzing and understanding the intent and revealing the values contained in a text, the importance of hermeneutics as the concept of interpreting a text is. In short, it can be said that hermeneutics is a way of working that must be followed by anyone who wants to understand a text, whether it is visible from the text, or is obscure, even hidden due to the course of history or the influence of ideology and belief.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, hermeneutics, when applied makes its application like digging up old relics or fossils that lived or existed hundreds of years ago, even more. Thus, the main issues generally discussed through hermeneutics are historical or

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<sup>40</sup> Abdul Wachid, *Hermeneutika sebagai Sistem Interpretasi Paul Ricoeur Dalam memahami Teks-teks Seni, jurnal, Imaji Vol.4, No.2, Agustus 2006*, hal. 203

<sup>41</sup> Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2013) hal. 340

religious texts, their nature and their relationship to customs and culture, and the researcher's relationship with these texts in the context of conducting critical studies on them.

The question is, how can generations living in different historical places and spaces grasp the idea of a text produced by previous generations? Can an idea be conveyed to generations living in different cultures without distorting and distorting meaning? Regarding Islam, is the understanding of a Muslim towards the contents of the Qur'an exactly as desired by the author?<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, answering questions related to the sociological life of people who generally accept texts and do not understand the meanings contained and reveal the values in a text. Thus, the presence of hermeneutics as an interpretation offers several concepts in understanding and analyzing a text that was developed by several figures in hermeneutics.

The first concept is how texts in hermeneutics always have two components: the structure of the author's ideas and the actualization of these ideas into the language structure. The structure of ideas and language structure must be considered together in understanding a text. Therefore, the text must be understood with a hermeneutic circle model between the world of the text, the author, and the world of the reader integrally. Implicitly, this triadic structure contains conceptual hermeneutical problems regarding the text, the ways used to understand the text, and how understanding and interpretation are determined by the presupposition, belief, or horizon (horizon) of the audience target of the text.<sup>43</sup>

In understanding a text, the second concept offered by hermeneutics is through grammar and psychological thinking—language as a tool to understand the

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<sup>42</sup> Ilyas Supena, *Hermeneutika Al-qur'an Dalam Pandangan Fazlur Rahman*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2014) hal. 16

<sup>43</sup> Ilyas Supena, *Hermeneutika Al-qur'an Dalam Pandangan Fazlur Rahman*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2014) hal. 18

author's intent. The object of grammatical interpretation is communication between the writer, and the reader (Gramatical Interpretation) is a step offered by hermeneutics in understanding and analyzing a text. Besides language understanding the text as a fact in the author's thought (Psychological Interpretation), what is meant by psychological analysis is not emotion, but thoughts surrounding the author's world.<sup>44</sup> The method used in psychological interpretation is a comparative method and a hunch. The hunch method, namely, transforming itself into the author to capture the rest of the author's mental processes to access perfectly the meanings and values contained in a text, this concept was initiated by Friedrich Schleiermacher known as the hermeneutic romance.

## **Conclusion**

From several sub-discussions related to how the concept of hermeneutics as a text interpretation, the writer tries to conclude that, the presence of hermeneutics as an interpretation concept in understanding and analyzing and revealing the values contained in a text. The first point, the concept offered by hermeneutics in studying and analyzing and revealing the values contained in a text is to master grammar (pragmatic interpretation) and try to enter the author's world, namely understanding the author's thoughts (psychological interpretation). The second point, the text must be understood with a hermeneutic circle model between the world of the text, the world of the author and the world of the reader integrally. Implicitly, this triadic structure contains conceptual hermeneutical problems regarding the text, the methods used to understand the text and how understanding and interpretation are determined by the persupposition, belief or

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<sup>44</sup> Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutika Teori Baru Mengenai Interpretasi*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2016) Terj, hal.100,

horizon (horizon) of the audience who is the target of the text. In short, the concept of hermeneutics as a text interpretation because it brings a breakthrough in its own framework in analyzing and understanding and revealing the values contained in a text. This does not mean that hermeneutics replaces existing textual interpretation methods but opens new insights in interpretation and enriches existing methods.

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