ABSTRACT

Abu Zayd believes that understanding the Qur'an is not limited to explanations or comments. It involves an interpretation process for capturing the significance (maghza) from the literal text. Interpretation also requires a presupposition that the Qur'an itself does not produce literal absolutes and certainty. The presupposition needs an interpretation that illustrates the possibility of accepting the diversity of Qur'anic interpretations in the times. By using Abu Zayd's hermeneutics, the Qur'an is an icon of Islam and at the same time a representation of Arab culture itself which is not necessarily literally absolute, but is open to interpretation. Hans Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic circle that inspired Hermeneutics of Abu Zayd emphasized that in understanding and applying the meanings of the text, the subject played a role in the text rather than the other way around. This study aims to open opportunities that the Qur'an on the one hand is an objective thing seen from the content of its truth, that is seen from its universal message, but on the other hand it is subjective, because it is bound by the interpretation of the text. This research is also intended to avoid the sacredness of the ordination of a single interpretation of the Qur'an which has resulted in the emergence of fundamentalism which has recently become so prevalent in global Islamic societies, not least in Indonesia.

KEYWORDS: Presupposition, hermeneutics, sacredness, literal, Qur'an.

INTRODUCTION

There is an impression, if the Qur'an is understood subjectively using the hermeneutic method, then the Qur'an loses its sacredness and holiness. This impression is often conveyed by fundamentalists. However, in its essence, what fundamentalists do is just a way to justify the literal text. In fact, the essence of the sacred text (al-Qur'an) is often expressed using the language of metaphor which cannot be understood directly or literally. There are no less than 10 verses stating that the Qur'anic verse is revealed in the form of metaphors and spread in many suras/chapters, as in QS Al-Ankaboot (29): 43; QS Al-Hashr (59): 21, QS Ar-Rad (13): 72, QS Ibrahim (14): 25, 45, QS An-Nahl (16): 74, QS Al-Isra (17): 48, QS An-Noor (24): 35, QS Al-Furqan (25): 9.39. Therefore, a deep reflection is needed to understand the verses of the Quran and only those who use reason and conscience can understand His verses. Such statements can be found in many suras/chapters, for example in QS Al-Baqarah (2): 17, 171, QS Al-Ma’idah (5): 103, QS Al-Anfal (8): 22, QS Yunus (10): 42, 100. Thus, it is impossible for someone to
understand the meaning and significance of the Qur’an only through the literal. So what is the Qur’an that is expected to be a guideline for Muslims, if it is only then understood only in its textual limits (literalism) which ultimately has an impact on fundamentalism?

Hermeneutics as a method of interpretation is expected to be able to bring the message of the Qur’an to be universally accepted because the workings of hermeneutics are always associated with conditions and objective reality where the text appears and continues to develop without the final process. This means that there is no final word (finished) in studying the meaning and magheza (significance) of the Qur’an. The Qur’an is the word of God that continues to live and be experienced by humans in their entire life journey. This is where the interpreter finds the essence of the Quran through deep understanding and experience which then leads to the fact that the hermeneutic approach cannot be separated from the phenomenological approach.

Hermeneutics - Phenomenology is needed in the interpretation of the sacred text because it cannot be denied that the role of the subject that experiences it is so important to interpret the literal text, so that it determines the output in its interpretation. By approaching the Qur’an in the frame of historicity that is experienced and internalized by the subject, the Qur’an is in addition to being an interpreted object, it is also a subject that interacts with the interpreter. Thus there is a relationship between the Qur’an and the interpreter, which has often been ignored. According to Abu Zayd, the Qur’an itself works when there is dialogue with humans (Abu Zayd, 2004: 15 & 21-24). But in a deeper context, man himself is not only a rational being, but also a cultural being who interacts with the horizon in which he lives; so to understand the meaning and significance of the Qur’an, he must recognize the nature of himself before placing himself faced with the Qur’an. In simple terms, Abu Zayd's concept in describing his hermeneutical theory focused on two things, namely the concept of historicity of the Qurán and the concept of criticism of the Qur'anic text (literary criticism), (Fahmi Salim, 2010: 298, 398). The concept of historicity of the Qurán was arranged as the initial foundation of hermeneutics, while the concept of criticism of the text of the Qurán (literary criticism) was used as the method in his study of the text of the Qurán (Abu Zayd, 1990: 12).

With the above understanding, the method in the interpretation of the Qur’an is basically a starting point to eliminate absolutism which has long been valid in the classical Qur’anic interpretation of literalism. It is this literalism that always puts the Qur'an's literal authority into an absolute interpretation, so that its interpretation is dry and not creative. This happens although in fact in classical Islamic culture there are at least two types of interpretations, namely tafsîr bi al-ma’ tsûr and tafsîr bi al-ra’ y. The tafsîr bi al-ma’ tsûr is an interpretation of the Qur’an which focuses on the explanation of the verse from the explanation of the Prophet Muhammad or those who have the authority to explain God's intent through the Qur'an, while the tafsîr bi al-ra’ y is an interpretation based on ijtihâd (Al -Dzahabi, 1976: 152 & 155).

The two interpretive traditions above cannot be separated from criticism because they have a tendency towards an ideologization of the sacred text, which will be discussed in the next section. So, the hermeneutic method of phenomenology can be used as an alternative to fill the void of the tradition of the two types of interpretations that existed before in the Islamic world. It is hoped that by following Abu Zayd's and Gadamer's thoughts the interpretation of the Qur’an can follow the demands of the times in this contemporary era.
HERMENEUTIC-PHENOMENOLOGY AS INTERPRETATION

The Qur'an is the source of justification of the beliefs and faith of a Muslim, but the views of fundamentalists who understand the literal Qur'an as absolutism and reject criticism are interesting to be analysed. The reason for absolutism is that the Qur'an as a source of justification has the authority to establish truth, then if criticized it will have implications for uncertainty and reduce the value of sacredness. The absolutism argument of its nature is unwarranted, because the belief in the sacredness of the Qur'an is not diminished due to criticism, and criticism is only to make the Qur'an itself is not closed to the text alone. In other words, to understand the text of the Qur'an as a holy book, dialogue is needed from the subject who tries to comprehend it. This is what literalism ignores and does not make it a reference. With the hermeneutics-phenomenology approach, we are reminded that literal interpretations have placed the Qur'an as an object that is not invited to dialogue, even though the awareness of the subject in dialogue with the Qur'anic text becomes an important element in gaining understanding. So in a literal interpretation, the interpreter is unable to capture the true message that the Qur'an conveys.

Hermeneutics - Phenomenology presented by Hans-Georg Gadamer aims to invite interpreters to establish dialogue with the text (Gadamer, 2004: 8-37 & 277-85). In addition to dialogue with the text, the interpreter also has a dialogue with the historicity of the text and the reality of the phenomenon he experiences. When that happens, the interpreter can make a decision about something after going through deep understanding and is not only guided by the past world, letting alone just fixated on literal scriptures. To put it in another way, the past worldview in a scientific treatise is not necessarily relevant in the present. This statement does not mean that the past world is not important in interpreting activities, because the knowledge gained from the past world cannot be ignored by the interpreter. In a sense that humans always use past experience and knowledge as a tool to shape their new knowledge. Through hermeneutics-phenomenology, humans use what has been valid in the past and use it as a tool to pour out their thoughts in uncovering the meaning of the text, so that the interpreter obtains a new horizon. How to interpret the text using the Gadamer approach is different from Schleiermacher’s approach.

For Schleiermacher, interpreting the text means returning to the creator of the text. The purpose of the interpretation is to reproduce the text as it was originally. The interpretation of the sacred text such as returning to the beginning, if it is misunderstood, will allow the emergence of a restoration of the spirit of literalism. In the literalism I have been mentioning here, it is too not limited to how the reading of the text is limited to how the text exists, but how the text is also confined to who has the authority over it. It is clear that the reconstruction of the work raised by Schleiermacher has the implication that a work would seem meaningful when looking at the fragmentation of what lies behind it; history of the making (year of the making, conditions in that period, etc.), the creator (author, etc.), or who understands the work. In this context, it does not have to be a creator, but a human who has a relationship with the creator, or another work that can be used as a reference in seeing other works. Such interpretations make a text always confined to authority. The authority is none other than the ruler or those who are blessed by the power holders as the holders of the truth claims.

A single interpretation as mentioned above will dominate the claims of truth in the text.
and lead to absolutism. This is what must be avoided in interpreting a text, especially the scriptural text, because the influence of authority makes the text no more than the product of the creator who is free from context. In other words, text becomes a tool for authority holders to direct the reader's awareness to what the owner wants. Here comes the ideological mechanism. In the holy text of the Qur'an, the owner of the text is essentially Allah SWT, but because there is an ideological content, in the end the owner of the text is no longer God, but the interpreter on behalf of God. This can be understood from the strength of the interpreter's defence mechanism in his interpretation by rejecting other interpretations that are not in line with his mind which are considered misguided and erroneous interpretations as can be seen in the interpretation of fundamentalism (Salafi). So the power of the text seems to be held hostage by the interpreter. (See Armanios, 2003).

If we pay attention to the truth claims in philosophical theory, it is clear that the claims of knowledge / truth have various interests behind them. And this was expressed by many famous philosophers, as in the perspective of Nietzsche who said that truth is not referring to what truth is, but "whose truth is that?" So nothing can be called truth but 'truths' (see Nietzsche, 1887: Essay 3, Part 12). The same thing was stated by Marx who said that criticism of religion was essentially a way for criticism of its people.

It is true that every form of knowledge has an interest (Habermas, 1973: 73). Does that also include the Qur'an which is a sacred text? As explained earlier, that the Qur'an is very likely to have such implications; that the sacred text has a tendency as a tool to convey its interests only. Interest in this case is the interests of power which then becomes the authority of the truth claim. It is this interest that finally regulates the interpreter whose essence is the subject of the observer, so that the observer is not a subject to observe but as a directed object. Because the interpreter becomes a directed object, the meaning becomes dry and distorted by power and far from the actual objectivity value. If it is said that such meaning is dry and distorted by power, then how can it be justified? These are so many in the Islamic tradition, especially in the tradition of the Salafi Wahhabis (Van Martin, 1995: 157). Then the Qur'an changed its function from what was originally used as a justification of belief / faith to be a tyrannical ideological justification. Making the Qur'an as an ideological text only through interpretations of the text / literal has ignored the human mind and conscience, because the Qur'an explains the command to look for new meanings that will never be completed (QS Al-Mujadila (58): 11; QS Al Imran (3): 18, and QS Az-Zumar (39): 9).

Departing from literal interpretations, we will turn to what Gadamer said, namely presupposition. Presupposition has a vital role in forming criteria for the interpreter in making a decision and in uncovering meaning. Presupposition is not only used as an interpretation tool, but as an entrance to phenomenology. However, before leaving for understanding interpretations, it is better to briefly elaborate on the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger. In his book *Being and Time*, Heidegger explained that as *Das Sein*, human beings exist in their world, so that the disclosure of meaning itself must see what construct *Das Sein* in such a way. In other words, what *Das Sein* does, how *Das Sein* interacts with his world, and how *Das Sein* can live in the surrounding world greatly influences himself in uncovering a meaning (Heidegger, 1996: 49-59). That way, in the process of disclosure the meaning, it is very determined and influenced by the following things. First: What construct *Das Sein* and how it interacts. This means that,
hermeneutics has begun working through vorhabe, vorsicht, and vorgriff in the concept of vorstructure. Second, through the concept of vorstructure, according to Heidegger, human beings as a Das Sein interpret their always directed world which originates from their projections of something. Thus, the projection can be in the form of direct presupposition or decision, where this decision is formed from its interaction with the world, meaning that in the interpretation itself there is always an effort to see its relevance to the world, not only seeing objects as their significance, but objects formed at the significance of the world as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd said, that the Qur'an which contains the teachings and messages of God when it is conveyed to the people, one must use the language used by the people who receive the message itself. This means that the Qur'an when it is intended to be conveyed cannot be separated from the cultural context, namely the Arabic language used by the Arab community. (Abu Zayd, 1996: 24). So that the understanding of the text cannot be separated from the cultural context in which the text was revealed, the context of the society and the present context faced by the interpreter with all his cultures behind him. In other words, a text should not be interpreted textually (outwardly; dzahîr), because then the text is only able to describe the mind at that time. That is why the text should be transferred to its inner meaning (contextual). Therefore, from that, the Qur'ân must be brought to the realm of reality, up to date, and down to earth.

Thus, the text has implications for the reader based on how to interpret it. To arrive at mağhâ (significance) of the text requires a deep appreciation from the interpreter in order to arrive at the essence of the text. This is where the interpreter delves into his intention to arrive at the essence of the text. If instead, the text will become dry because there is no intention that is sufficiently attached to the interpreter, and because the text cannot represent the condition of the interpreter, but is limited to merely describing the creator of the text. Thus, the significance is clearly in the hands of the interpreter not in the hands of the text (Gadamer, 2004: 159-60).

PRESUPPOSITION AS HERMENEUTICS

As has been seen from the previous sub-section, starting from the hermeneutic-phenomenology of Haidegger's work, then in this chapter we will explain Gadamer's thinking related to hermeneutics itself which is not limited to contextual disclosure. Gadamer's thinking will be used as a backing for the author to understand Abu Zayd's hermeneutical thinking especially in the context of criticism of literalism and fundamentalism in interpreting the Qur'an. In other words, Gadamer's hermeneutics is an attempt to understand the text not limited to textual or non-textual, but as an effort to find out the truth. However, the truth referred to here is not absolute truth derived from literalism and negating others. In the postmodern world, absolute truth as grand narration needs to be criticized because it is often used as a tool by the owner of power to get rid of others. Here what is sought is not the truth that is most suitable for particular subjects, but how humans with their reasoning are not easily influenced by mere subjective mechanisms, but rather from various subjective products. Here there is an effort to get truth more objectively because it combines various horizons, namely the text horizon, dialogue with the interpretation of the past and present, and the interpreter's activities themselves with all the horizons they experience. Here also can be said, that the implication of what is meant by Gadamer is that it is an invalid attempt to legitimize truth only by following a past experience
that has been considered as a truth. The following statement can be captured from Gadamer in his book *Truth and Method*:

_The understanding and the interpretation of texts is not merely a concern of science, but obviously belongs to human experience of the world in general. The hermeneutic phenomenon is basically not a problem of method at all. It is not concerned with a method of understanding by means of which texts are subjected to scientific investigation like all other objects of experience. It is not concerned primarily with amassing verified knowledge, such as would satisfy the methodological ideal of science—yet it too is concerned with knowledge and with truth. In understanding tradition not only are texts understood, but insights are acquired and truths known. But what kind of knowledge and what kind of truth? (Gadamer, 2004: XX)._

So, Gadamer's hermeneutic thinking departs from efforts to find truths that are intersubjective or in other words beyond subjectivism. Truth is an effort to unite with the unlimited and unspoken in a unity of meaning (Gadamer, 2004: 471). From this it can be said, the truth sought is not necessarily a truth that can be observed empirically, but the truth that can be achieved through a complete understanding, namely understanding that emerges from a horizon from the subject that interprets joining the interpreted object beginning with the *vorurteil* process, namely presupposition (Gadamer, 2004: 273). Presupposition becomes a very important thing in Gadamer's thinking and becomes a trigger in every interpretation activity. According to him, presupposition is an initial effort to open the horizons of interpretation and from there comes a decision to make a publication of the meaning of the text (Gadamer, 2004: 273). Presupposition here should not be interpreted as something negative because it is a point of reference in identifying the position of meaning itself when having dialogue with the world. It can also be understood, in Heidegger's conception, that with the presence of presupposition, that meaning can be understood as something that continues to interact with its world. This means that with the presence of presupposition is pre-knowledge appears on the subject (the interpreter). This is where anxiety arises that directs the subject to open himself to all horizons (past, present, text, and the interpreter's horizon). This process is a process of internalization within the subject (the interpreter). Such an effort is an effort to uncover and construct the meaning of the text.

Pre-knowledge itself is not limited to what the subject has in interacting with the environment, but what he experiences is internalized and used as capital in building presupposition. This is similar to the concept of *vorhabe* in Heidegger's thought, where presupposition here is nothing but what is said to be historicity in which the role of the subject is so great. Historicity cannot be understood as something that is outside the subject's self, but as something that unites with the subject. What needs to be considered here is that when we talk about historicity, there emerges tradition / culture because through tradition the subject always looks back to bring presupposition and through tradition the subject is formed in such a way and even through tradition is born the foundation in constructing knowledge. So pre-knowledge is formed through tradition and finally understanding is created.

From the description above it can be said that historicity and interaction with the
surrounding world play an important role for the subject to construct knowledge which is then expressed in language because language is a means of expressing the constructed knowledge.

READING THE QUR’AN THROUGH HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY

The Qur’an is a living phenomenon, like the music played by the orchestra, whereas the mushaf, the written text, is analogous to the musical note; it is silent. A humanistic hermeneutics of the Qur’an must take seriously the living phenomenon and stop reducing the Qur’an to the status of solely a text. (Abu Zayd, 2004: 13).

Often the Qur'anic study focuses on literal / textual studies. That means the investigation of the Qur'an is limited to the investigation of the clarity or clarity of the text alone. Studies that only focus on the clarity of the text are in essence the views of the author will cause a lot of problems, such as inflexible understanding or even creating radicalism, as done by the Wahhabis or Salafists. Such an interpretation effort is an attempt to confine the Qur'an in a large hole, namely the hole of humility and for the sake of power hegemony. Al-Qur'an is confined to interest discourse, so that it is easily made a justification for both science and power, for example a case study of the understanding of "Flat Earth".

The flat earth notion is justified as the truth derived from the literal interpretation of the Qur'an and more dangerous is that they bring this notion as a religious doctrine to convince others and quote some opinions of scholars from Arab countries stating that the shape of the earth is flat (https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/5966/الأرض-الارض). We can see for example, how the followers of “Flat Earth” tried to convince the public by uploading a "fatwa" video from Syaikh Soleh Al-Fauzan as shown in the following video transcript:

"Question to the Shaykh Soleh Al-Fauzan, Allah said, "... and the sun runs in its circulation ... "does this mean the sun goes around the earth? Answer: There is no doubt about that. Al-Qur'an says, the Sun runs (in its circulation) ... "But they say that the sun is silent and the earth is moving around it, this is contrary to the Qur'an. Ignoring the Qur'an and accepting modern theory are things that a Muslim cannot do. A Muslim must obey the Qur'an."

Furthermore, still in the same video said

"In 1993, Muslims were shocked by the statement made by the highest religious leader in Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Abdul Azeez Ibn Abdullah bin Baz. In his book entitled "Evidence that the Earth does not move" he stated "The earth is flat. Those who say round earth are atheists who deserve punishment. "This statement is reinforced by a piece of this video from the opinion of another Saudi Arabian cleric, Syaikh Al-Khaibari who said:" Indeed, what our scholars say Imam Abu Baz and Shaykh Sholeh Al -Fauzan, this is in accordance with the text and makes sense. Westerners convey various kinds of theories, but we Muslims, also have theories and brains."
Thus, the Qur'anic text is used as a closed corpus which is used as a source of justification for claims of scientific truth. If this is the case, it is not impossible that Muslim societies will enter the era of the dark ages as experienced by the Western Christian world in the Middle Ages.

Another example is when *jihād* is interpreted as a war against unbelievers and verses about war against unbelievers are considered as not bound by space and time. If so, then there is a very clear danger that will occur, namely dehumanization through war and killing that will never be completed. Let us take an example from the Qur'an (QS. At-Tawbah [9]: 5)

> "And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

In addition, in other verse of QS. At-Tawbah [9]: 29

> "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled."

Two examples of the above verses if understood by literalists, their interpretation will make the Qur'an as a tool to legitimize the truth claims of acts of violence. This indicates that the Qur'an has died substantially because the Qur'anic verses are used as an instrument of ideological interest to gain justification. There are times when the verse of the Qur'an is also used as a justification tool for a political system, such as the Caliphate system as an ideal government system that must be practiced in the Islamic world and replace a democratic or royal system that is considered contrary to God's message. Here the Qur'anic verse is used by someone or the social environment to fight for the model of the Caliphate as a tool of mere power hegemony. This means that his actions to fight for the idea of a Caliphate have had a historical justification and are subjectively considered to have been established and final which need not be reviewed. If so, it can be said that, ontologically the Qur'an cannot be said to be a sacred text that invites its readers to think and reflect, but it only becomes a justification of the ideological interests of certain groups. What needs to be stressed here is how this ideological interest finally has a mechanism to dominate, either directly or indirectly through the symbolism of the sacred text. In other words, the holy verses have become nothing but a symbolic mechanism for extremism and fundamentalism. This does not differ much from how the simulation concept or simulacra works. (See Baudrillard, 1970 & 1983: 31-55, 167-182).

From the description above, it can be said that comprehending Qur'anic literally has a tendency to legitimize the text absolutely and assume the text is dead, the text is held hostage in a single authority, whereas in Gadamer's hermeneutics, the text never dies, even though the author is dead, let alone the holy text of the Qur'an is believed to remain relevant in all times and places. Thus, here a phenomenological hermeneutic is needed to uncover meaning and maghza
from a text. When the Qur'an is placed as a closed text, the essence is that there is no more effort to uncover the deepest meaning of the Qur'an and there is no more participation combining the subject's horizons as interpreting what is interpreted and no new knowledge even though the purpose of understanding text is to find new meaning from the text according to the demands of the context it faces. It is true that the Qur'an is a guide and source of truth from Allah SWT who is the owner of perennial knowledge (perennial knowledge), but to be able to understand perennial knowledge, theory and methodology are needed to understand the message, so that the message of eternal knowledge can be conveyed to benefit of humanity. In the Qur'anic verses themselves there are various tools to capture God's message, such as al-nazhr, al-fikr, al-aql, and al-qalb. All of these words contain scientific activity signals to capture the contents of Qu'ran. Related to the understanding of the Qur'an which is the word of God by using Arabic as the language used by the Arab community which was then the target of Islamic preaching, so understanding it using a hermeneutical-phenomenological method was needed to uncover the meaning and maghza of the text.

CONCLUSION

The hermeneutical circle initiated by Abu Zayd was an attempt to make a dialectic from the text horizon, context, and the interpreter with their historical background. With this method the work of phenomenological hermeneutics is a critique of literalism which gives rise to fundamentalism and radicalism. Thus, we can prevent the abuse of the sacred text as a distorted text for the interests of the authorities. The work of phenomenological hermeneutics is also intended to make the text of the Qur'an as a humanist-anthropological text whose meaning will always change and develop according to space and time. What remains is only the text which is indeed a useful symbol of guidance, while the meaning and the significance (maghza) always follow the development of the times. If meaning only represents historical clues for the text and in what context the text is formed, then the significance is the result of the present reading that is different from the period of appearance of the text and finally, the text is understood quite dynamically and progressively.

REFERENCES


