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THE INFLUENCE OF HERMENEUTICS IN DOUBLE MOVEMENT THEORY (CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FAZLURRAHMAN'S INTERPRETATION METHODOLOGY)

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Abstract

This study aims to trace the influence of hermeneutics in the theory of double movement. This theory is a new interpretive methodology initiated by Fazlurrahman in response to modernization. In addition, dissatisfaction with the methodology of classical scholarly exegesis is also the reason for this idea. After tracing this theory, it is found that there are several hermeneutic schools behind this theory. Therefore, in the implementation of the double movement theory, controversial legal products are often produced considering that in hermeneutics there is no definite law. While in Islam there are rules that are definite and cannot change the law. With this critical analysis-style research, it is hoped that we can understand and assess the effectiveness of the double movement theory in the treasures of contemporary interpretation.

Keywords: Influence, Hermeneutic, Double Movement, Fazlur Rahman's Interpretation, Methodology of Interpretation

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Introduction

Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988) is one of the reformer and intellectuals of contemporary Islam in the 20th century who offers his concept in realizing the idea of contextualizing the methodology of interpretation.[1][2] The concept offered by Fazlur Rahman departs from his view that there has been an intellectual crisis in the body of Muslims in formulating Islamic legal methodologies to deal with the current modernization. According to Fazlur Rahman, the development of modernism is divided into two, classical modernism and contemporary modernism.[3] The same thing was expressed by several Western scholars such as Coulson,[4] Esposito,[5] and Anderson,[6] in their work on Islamic law.

It was from this academic anxiety that Fazlur Rahman devised a new theory of interpretation called the double movement. The double movement theory is a theory to understand the Qur'an by looking at the context of the present situation, the time when the Qur'an was revealed, and finally returning to the present. Therefore, Rahman's approach is aimed at past texts that are still valid today. This double movement theory consists of two stages: (a) mapping certain laws to find ideal morals and (b) implementing these ideal morals in certain cases in the present era.[7] The problem is, the legal product of the double movement theory often raises controversial issues in Muslim societies. Examples are interpretations of *riba* verses and polygamy verses.

This research will explain the theory of double movement as well as critically analyze the hermeneutic influence in it. It also tests the implementation of this theory in some cases of interpretation[8]. With this research, it is hoped that someone can understand this theory well and can position wisely this theory in the treasures of contemporary exegesis.

This research is also expected to provide direction for similar studies that are more intensive in the future. The continuity between one study and another, in addition to reducing overlapping information, can also be a correction for previous research and offer new views in anticipation of problems faced in his time.

Method

This research used techniques of content analysis and library research to analyze the data and interpret its meaning since the researcher relies heavily on documents as the main sources of information. The complex thought processes of the scholars under review may only be found in the form of published material. It is indeed bibliographical research as it gathers and handles information mostly from published materials. The arguments presented in the

study are so constructed that they examine the ideas and their premises based on a comprehensive analysis of data which have been reduced to separate concepts according to the research theme and objectives to mold it into a coherent narrative.[2]

Library Research is a systematic technique for analyzing message content and processing it to capture the implicit message content contained therein.[9] This study is presented descriptively and analytically-critically. The descriptive method is a method of examining the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present. The purpose of descriptive research is to make a description, a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the facts, characteristics, and relationships between the phenomena being investigated.[10]

The data concerning the idea of the conception of the sunnah are traced from Fazlur Rahman's writings, as primary sources. Among them are: *Islam, Mayor Themes of the Qur'an, Islam, and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition, Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition, Ribâ and Interest, Shariah (Chapter from Islam), Revival and Reform in Islam, Islamic Methodology in History, Islam, Social Change and Early Sunnah, Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy, Islam and Modernity Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, dan *Islamic Modernism: Its Scope, Method and Alternative (International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol. 1, no. 4, 1970, p. 317-330)*.

While data related to analysis (secondary data), tracked from literature and related research results, including *Islam and Modernism* by Maryam Jameela, *The Concept of Islamic Tradition in Fazlur Rahman's Thought* by Ibrahim Ozdemir, *Implementing and interpreting Fazlur Rahman's Islamic moderation concept in the Indonesian context* by Ahmad Hasan Ridwan et.al, *Islam dan Tantangan Modernitas; Studi Atas Pemikiran Hukum Fazlur Rahman* by Taufik Adnan Amal, *Pemikiran Fazlur Rahman Tentang Metodologi Pembaharuan Hukum Islam* by Ghufroon Mas'adi, and *Mempertimbangkan Gagasan Fazlur Rahman* by Musahadi HAM. These secondary sources are needed, especially to sharpen the analysis of the problem.

Furthermore, all collected data, both primary and secondary, are classified and analyzed according to their respective sub-discussions. Then an in-depth study of works containing research objects is carried out using content analysis, which is a systematic technique to analyze the content of messages and process them. By using content analysis, a result or understanding of various message contents will be obtained objectively, systematically, and sociologically relevant.[9]

Because this research is in the style of critical analysis, then in using content analysis, the author applies the method of critical discourse analysis.

Critical discourse analysts such as N. Fairclough, R. Wodak, T.A. van Dijk, and T. van Leeuwen state that the main purpose of critical discourse analysis is to uncover opacities in a discourse. Because discourse is always influenced by ideology, the unveiling of the ideology behind the discourse text is the main task in critical discourse analysis.[11]

As a first step, the author first reveals the background of Fazlur Rahman's thought as the basis of his theories and concepts of thought. The theory used is the phenomenological theory, where this theory can objectively display Fazlur Rahman's statements accompanied by cultural, educational, and social-intellectual backgrounds that surround his life. This is important to get a source of inspiration for Fazlur Rahman's thoughts, especially on the theory of double movement.

After obtaining the ideological foundation of Fazlur Rahman's thought (worldview) using the above method, the author conducted an in-depth analysis using the science of *tafsir* and *qawaid fiqhiyyah* as standing theory. With this standing theory, the author tries to dialectically critically of Fazlur Rahman's thoughts, especially about the influence of hermeneutics on the theory of double movement. To sharpen the analysis, the author also presents some implications of Fazlur Rahman's thoughts on the interpretation. From here, it is hoped that readers can understand where Fazlur Rahman should be placed in the frame of Islamic thought.

Discussion

Fazlur Rahman and His Educational Background

Fazlur Rahman was born in Hazara which is the Indian subcontinent, northwest Pakistan. Fazlur Rahman was born on September 21, 1919.[12] Since childhood, he received education from his family who was obedient in carrying out the teachings of Islam with the dominance of the Hanafi madhab. In 1933 Fazlur Rahman continued his studies at the modern school of Lahore. He earned a B.A. (1940) and a Master's degree in Arabic (1942) at Punjab University.[13]

The influence of Western Orientalists on his thinking began while studying at Oxford, England under Orientalists such as Prof. S. Van den Bergh and H.A.R. Gibb until obtaining a Ph.D. with a dissertation in Avicenna's Psychology for 3 years (1946- (1946-1949). [14] For 8 years Fazlur Rahman was a lecturer in Persian Language and Islamic Philosophy at Durham University, England (1950-1958). After studying Latin, Greek, English, German, Turkic, Arabic, and Urdu, Fazlur Rahman became increasingly immersed in studying the literature on Islamic Studies by Orientalists. According to Shafi'i Ma'arif who had

studied with him, Fazlur Rahman collected the knowledge of an “*alim*” and the knowledge of an orientalist.[15]

In 1958 Fazlur flew to McGill University in Montreal, as Associate Professor to teach at the Institute of Islamic Studies for 3 years (1958-1961).[16] In 1962, when Ayub Khan became President of Pakistan, Fazlur was asked to return to Pakistan to serve as Director of the Islamic Research Institute and he spent 6 years (1962-1968). But due to his controversial thoughts, since 1970 Fazlur returned to the University of Chicago, Canada. For 18 years, he remained in Chicago until his death on July 26, 1988.[13] Wan Muh Wan Daud stated that Fazlur Rahman often expresses his modern interpretations aggressively with the style of shock treatment, which is a style that is blunt without the need for compromise and lip service to his environment, especially when he evaluates the course of Muslim history.[17]

Fazlur's Orientalist influence on thought was evident during his time at the University of Chicago. Between 1977-1978, he participated in research in the Prof. Leonard Binder Project and produced the work *Islam and Modernity* as the culmination of his ideas[18]. It was in this book that he formulated the theory of double movement with a hermeneutic methodology, to understand the Qur'an. Fazlur Rahman Said, "The following pages are the result of a research project undertaken at the University of Chicago and funded by the Ford Foundation in Islamic Education. This project, which was originally conceived as part of a much larger project entitled "Islam and Social Change", directly involved a dozen young scholars besides its co-directors, myself and Professor Leonard Binder." [3]

Double Movement Theory and Its Implementation

Fazlur Rahman used his theory of double movement in interpreting the Qur'an, especially the verses of the law.[3] This theory is intended to bridge the understanding between normative, revealed and permanent texts, and contexts that are sociological, historical and changeable.[19] Measures taken to implement the methods are: (1) Finding the meaning of the Quranic text with a historical approach in a strict and truthful way. In the socio-historical context, the Quran must be studied within a chronological journey, beginning with an examination of the earliest revelations. This study will provide an accurate perception of the basic movements of the Islamic movement[20]. This method can also save public from having an artificial interpretation (man made) done by the modernists though it clearly shows the overall meaning of the Quran. (2) Distinguish specific legal provisions of the Quran with the Quranic moral ideal. Fazlur Rahman expects that the laws established could help him to devote himself to Him (God). (3) Understand the purpose or morality ideal of the Quran to remain focused to sociology, which is the environment or the revelation of the Quran.[21] [22]

In this theory, Fazlur Rahman distinguishes two things, namely the "ideal moral" and the "legal specific" provisions of the Qur'an. To find these two things, in his various explanations, Fazlur Rahman proposed that in understanding the message of the Qur'an as a whole is to study it with a background, so that the Qur'an can be understood in the right context. The application of this historical approach has made Fazlur Rahman emphasize the importance of the moral goals or ideals of the Qur'an with its specific legality. The ideal moral referred to by the Qur'an is more appropriate than specific legal provisions.[23]

With this theory, Fazlur Rahman took three steps in understanding and interpreting the ahkam verses, as Birt explained in *"The Message of Fazlur Rahman"*. First, understand and interpret the statement by looking at the socio-historical situation at the time the statement appeared. Second, conclude the statement by classifying specific formal moral and legal ideals. Third, the ideal moral obtained as a conclusion to the meaning and understanding of the statement is brought into its present context by its socio-historical.[24]

Marriage problems for example, when he interprets QS. An-Nisa: 3 on polygamy,

"And if you fear that you will not be able to do justice to an orphaned woman (if you marry her), then marry the (other) women you like: two, three, or four. Then if you are afraid that you will not be able to do justice, then (marry) only one, of the slaves you have. Such is closer to not persecuting"

He acknowledged polygamy in the Qur'an, but today the law no longer applies. He explained how the condition of Arabia at the time of the Qur'an's descent was the first motion of his theory, namely that marriage at that time did not limit the number of women to marry. So the Qur'an responded by placing restrictions on four wives. The second motion, then, is to classify formal legal and ideal morals. The formal legal of marriage is the restriction of four wives, later he speculates that the ideal moral of the restriction is one wife (monogamy) as a continuation of the first restriction. So when this verse is applied today, the standard is the ideal moral, monogamy.[3]

From this, Fazlur Rahman concluded that polygamy is forbidden to apply today. If he uses the contextualization of interpretation, today's context shows the problem of rampant cases of infidelity and adultery, especially the census of men and women which is quite high in quantity comparison. So it is clear that the rules of polygamy are aligned as a solution to today's (contemporary) problems.

Another example he raises in his interpretation of socio-historical criticism is when interpreting the verse about punishment for thieves stated in the Qur'an

with the head of chopping off hands. This verse is contained in QS. Al-Maidah: 38,

" *Men and women who steal cut off their hands (as) retribution for what they have done and as a torment from Allah. And Allah is mighty and wise* "

According to Fazlur Rahman, the word *faqtha'u aidiyahuma* (cut off the hands of both) is a form of order to block the hands of thieves through economic improvements. Thus, the ideal moral, in this case, is to cut off the thief's ability not to steal again. Even when Rahman visited Indonesia and was interviewed by Tempo magazine, he said, "It's very horrible (chopping off hands), it's a tradition that was born in Saudi Arabia before Islam. So it is not Islamic law." [25]

This interpretation negates the express law and violates the hadith, the scholars of tafsir, whether from the companions, *tabi'in*, and so on. Because the word *aidiyahuma* in the verse is intrinsic, not *majazi* (figurative) which can be replaced with other meanings. Ibn Jarir al-Thabary narrated from Abdul Mukmin of Najdah al-Hanafi, he asked Ibn Abbas about this verse of the law of cutting off hands, 'Is it general or specific? He replied that the verse was general. In other words, the verse applies not only to 7th-century AD Arabs. Although the law of cutting off hands existed before Islam came, this was maintained in Islam during Islamic times by adding some strict considerations and conditions, including the minimum size of stolen property and the motive for the theft. So in Islamic law, not all thieves are cut off by hand, especially if they steal to just maintain life.

Fazlur Rahman believes that understanding and knowledge are not final, but will always change according to relatively dynamic times. The *qath'i* law in the Qur'an, therefore, must be viewed as moral principles only, which can change in their formal legal form. This is also confirmed by Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud in his book "*The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas*", that Fazlur Rahman uses an open - namely secular - approach to the issue of the validity of science. [26]

Hermeneutic Influence on Double Movement Theory

From the working pattern of double movement theory, the author analyzes that Fazlur Rahman in reading texts uses two approaches. The first approach is the historico-critical method, and the second is the hermeneutic method. [3] These two scientific approaches according to Fazlur Rahman are two approaches that are closely related in text interpretation. The Historico Critical Method method functions as an effort to deconstruct the methodology, while the Hermeneutic method functions as an effort to reconstruct it. [27] Hermeneutics is a method of understanding and interpreting ancient texts such as scripture. The term comes from the Greek *hermeneuein* meaning to interpret. [28]

Historical criticism is used by Fazlur Rahman to study historical Islam, namely criticizing Islamic traditions and disciplines from the classical era to the contemporary. This method is a historical approach that principally aims to find objective facts as a whole and look for certain values contained in them. What this method emphasizes is the disclosure of values contained in a number of historical data, not historical events themselves.[29]

Historical criticism as a method of Islamic historical research, was first pioneered by Western orientalists. Names such as David Margoliouth, Ignaz Goldziher, Henry Lammens, Joseph Schacht, H.A.R Gibb, and NJ Coulson are noted as orientalists who apply the method of historical criticism.[30] However, many theses that they formulated were quite shocking to the Muslim community because the fundamental teachings of Islam believed for centuries were questioned again with a 'historico-critical' approach.[29] The same thing was experienced by Fazlur Rahman who is an alumnus of Western educational institutions and is listed as a student of H.A.R Gibb. Ahmad Shukri Shaleh in his dissertation stated that Gibb's assessment of the need for Muslims to use historical criticism had influenced Fazlur Rahman's thought.[13]

As for the hermeneutic method, it is used to study normative Islam (the substance of the Qur'an and Hadith). Musahadi analyzed that the hermeneutic method was widely applied by Fazlur Rahman for the interpretation of legal verses and hadiths.[31] As for the hermeneutic school used by Fazlur Rahman, it leads to the hermeneutic school of Emilio Betti. This analysis is reinforced by the opinion of Leonard Binder. Leonard Binder analyzes that Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutic method tends to lead to Edison Betti's objective hermeneutics. However, in studying normative Islam, Fazlur Rahman perfected this method by adding two main mechanisms: sticking to the general principles contained in the text, and considering the background and situation of the emergence of the text.[32]

When viewing the pattern of the implementation of the double movement theory, Fazlur Rahman believes that his *istinbat al-ahkam* must be objective by capturing a meaning – an ideal moral – from the text of the Qur'an. Departing from Fazlur Rahman's belief in the objectivity of understanding, his hermeneutic theory tends to imitate the objective methodological hermeneutics of Emilio Betti (1890-1968) who is very concerned about objective interpretation, even Betti himself uses the same theory, namely double movement.[33]

In Betti's hermeneutics, interpretation is a means of understanding. In this regard, as asserted by Josef Bleicher in *Contemporary Hermeneutics*, Betti believed that objective interpretation would help overcome the constraints of understanding and provide re-accuracy of the objective mind that exists on other

subjects. Furthermore, relatively objective knowledge requires an interpreter to enter into the relationship of subjects and subjects, i.e. the text to be interpreted.[24]

In the implementation of objective interpretation and understanding, Betti pays attention to four important theoretical aspects that must be present in the interpretation process. First, is the philological aspect, which is the reconstruction of the coherence of an expression from the grammatical and logical sides. Second, aspects of criticism that are faced with things that need to be questioned such as illogical statements or gaps in a set of arguments that arise. Third, the psychological aspect is applied when the interpreter puts himself in the author, namely when understanding and recreating the author's personality and intellectual position. Fourth, aspects of technical morphology are aimed at understanding objective (ideal moral) content about specific logic and the principles it uses. In this case, the object is viewed as it is without being associated with external properties or factors.[24]

After the four theories are involved in the interpretation process, three types of interpretation occur, namely recognition to re-understand the author's knowledge when describing a statement he wrote that is influenced by historical context, reproduction to produce new knowledge, and normative application to apply the understanding of objective content by taking into account basic principles (ideal morals).

Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory as an application of Emilio Betti's methodological hermeneutics will result in changes and even deconstruction of the law of the *qath'i ahkam* verses in the Qur'an or the Sunnah Nabawiyah. These changes continue to accompany differences in time and place according to their socio-historical context which results in the relativity of interpretation. Although with both methodologies are considered systematic, the relativity of interpretation and the subjectivity of the interpreter are inevitable. This also shows how Fazlur Rahman uses Hegel's Western worldview (d. 1831) which states that knowledge and understanding are ongoing processes, where what is known and I who know continues to develop; The stage already reached is negated by the new stage. This is not to say that the old stage is no longer valid, but that the old stage, in the light of later knowledge, seems limited.[34] Likewise, Fazlur Rahman affirmed that the understanding of the Holy Apostle (peace be upon him) was seen as correct with the lens of his time, whereas today Fazlur Rahman considers his understanding that deconstructs the law of *qath'i* in harmony (read: correct) by the breath of the times.

With the double movement theory inspired by Betti's theory, Fazlur Rahman could have annulled the law stated in the Qur'an which is *qath'i*. Because

the main considerations of this theory are reality and socio-historical, rather than the express Shari'ah which he called formal legal. Although initially, he adhered to the text of the Qur'an as ideal moral only, without formal legal convictions or explicit laws being the basis of benefit, either past or present.

In addition to using Betti's hermeneutics, there is also an opinion that Fazlur Rahman also used the tools of Habermas's theory of criticism, especially in understanding the social conditions of early Islamic society. This critical theory was born by the Frankfurt School which had the intention of opening up all the veils of ideology and irrationalism that had eliminated the freedom and clarity of thought of modern man.[35] This is as stated by Ibrahim Ozdemir in his article entitled *The Concept of Islamic Tradition in Fazlur Rahman's Thought*, which matches Fazlur Rahman's theory with Habermas's theory of criticism. In his writings, it was concluded that *Rahman's critical method can be compared and contrasted with Habermas's critical theory, for there are many similarities between the two contemporary thinkers despite their very different backgrounds and different aims for employing the critical method... What distinguishes Rahman from Habermas is that he uses reason enlightened by revelation, whereas Habermas employs in his method the criticism of reason by reason.*[36]

Thus, the explanation of the finality of Islamic law described in the Qur'an in the verses of the law is *qath'i*, as referred to in QS. Al-Maidah: 3, "... This day I have perfected for you your religion, and I have satisfied you with My favor, and I have pleased Islam to be your religion." considered as reference material that is not necessarily the same in practice. When speaking of the Qur'an as the foundation of law, Fazlur Rahman stated that the laws in the Qur'an were adapted to the moral and social situation of the Arabs of that time. He stated, "The Qur'an is the divine response of the Qur'anic times, through the thought of the Prophet, to the moral and social situation of the Arab prophet, especially the commercial problems of Meccan society at that time" [37].

Thus, the renewal of interpretation is understood by the opening of the door of *ijtihad* in the realm of *qath'i* legal verses. This can be seen, in how the deconstruction of Fazlur Rahman's *ijtihad* is followed by stating that *ijtihad* is a critical study, innovative, progressive, creative, and dynamic thinking as true and autonomous thinking, in the sense that there is no need to refer to the Qur'an and al-Sunnah regarding worldly things because these things cannot be found clear references in the Qur'an and al-Sunnah .[38]

This double movement theory is widely followed by Muslim scholars, one of whom is Abdullah Saeed.[37] The ideal-moral term Fazlur Rahman was also developed by several Muslim academics with more terms, namely *maqashid al-syariah* and *mashlahah*. This is evidenced by the emergence of "*qawaid al-ushul*"

such as *Al-'Ibrah bi al-maqâshid lâ bi al-alfâzh* (The standard of law is the purpose of the Shari'a, not its expression in the text), *Jawâz naskh nushûsh bi al-mashlahah* (May remove nash with maslahat), *Tanqîh nushûsh bi 'aql al-mujtama'* (May correct the text with public reason).

Hermeneutics as a science is not value-free, but on the contrary – full of value (value-laden) -, because science is the result (by-product) of the worldview of a nation, religion, or civilization. In other words, a science when viewed the principles of epistemology, shows the content of value derived from the worldview of a nation, religion, and civilization.[39] Departing from the problem of the Bible in contrast to science, it reaps the consequences of biblical hermeneutics to be able to adjust to the reality of science that many find contradictory. Thus the problematic relation of revelation and reason ends with the superiority of reason, which in the end the secular worldview gives birth to secular sciences as well.

The logical consequence that will occur, as a result of the application of the hermeneutic method of the Qur'an in the verses of the law is the deconstruction of the law itself. The verses that *qath'i al-tsubut* and *qath'i al-dilalah* (which have one clear and fixed meaning, without any other interpretation) can be turned into *zhanni*, which *muhkamat* becomes *mutasyabihat*, *tsawabit* becomes *mutaghayyirat*, so that Fazlur Rahman's articulation above is often misinterpreted as "the desacralization of the Qur'an".[40]

Conclusion

From the discussion above, several points can be concluded. *First*, the double movement theory was initiated by Fazlur Rahman to respond to the problem of interpretation of the Qur'an which is considered unable to solve contemporary problems in the modern era. *Second*, in the theory of double movement Fazlur Rahman distinguishes two things, namely the "ideal moral" and the "specific legal" provisions of the Qur'an. To find these two things, Fazlur Rahman proposes that in understanding the message of the Qur'an as a whole is to study it with a background, so that the Qur'an can be understood in the right context. The application of this historical approach has led Fazlur Rahman to emphasize the importance of the moral goals or ideals of the Qur'an with its specific legality. The ideal moral referred to by the Qur'an is more appropriate to apply than specific legal provisions. *Third*, the hermeneutic influence of double movement theory is very strong. By looking at Fazlur Rahman's work pattern in implementing this theory, it was found that the double movement theory tended to imitate the objective methodological hermeneutics of Emilio Betti (1890-1968) who was very concerned about objective interpretation, even Betti himself used the same theory, namely double movement. To obtain an objective legal product, a researcher conducting *istinbath al-ahkam* must prioritize ideal morals rather than specific legal. *Fourth*, the implications of the Double movement theory are very risky to produce controversial legal products. This stems from

the use of hermeneutics as a means of reading or interpreting verses that deny *qath'i* laws by speculating only on the ideal morals obtained.

Credit author statement

Kharis Nugroho: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Muhammad Zawil Kiram:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. **Didik Andriawan:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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