

MODERN SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE SECTARIAN TEXTS IN THE ISLAMIC AND WESTERN THOUGHT: HERMENEUTICS AS AN EXAMPLE

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Abstract

This study primarily seeks to find out the impact of modern schools of thought, their reading of revelation (*wahy*) and their attempt to turn the sacred constant to the human variable that allows absolute and infinite interpretation. This study also examines the theories, doctrines and philosophical foundations that were the reason for the existence of these schools. It also investigates the applications of these modern thoughts on doctrines. This study aims at demonstrating the methodological and scientific imbalance of these schools of thought and their projections on revelation. The study makes use of a comparative analytical approach that analyses and assesses these schools and approaches. The study concludes that Hermeneutics as a modern approach take on interpreting the holy text and in particular in regard to belief issues are far from the best practices of interpretation and that they distort the source of meaning and message.

Keywords: Hermeneutics; revelation; interpretation; philosophy; doctrine; modern approaches.

Khulasah

Kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti impak aliran pemikiran moden, pentafsiran mereka terhadap wahyu dan usaha mereka mengubah ciri suci agama

yang tetap kepada pemboleh ubah yang membenarkan pentafsiran suatu yang telah absolut dan mutlak. Ia turut mengkaji teori, doktrin dan falsafah yang menjadi asas kewujudan aliran pemikiran ini serta menyelidiki penerapannya ke dalam sesuatu doktrin. Ia juga bertujuan menunjukkan ketidakseimbangan metodologi dan saintifik aliran pemikiran ini dan unjuran mereka mengenai wahyu. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan analisis perbandingan untuk menganalisis dan menilai aliran ini serta pendekatan mereka. Boleh dirumuskan bahawa Hermeneutik sebagai pendekatan moden dalam mentafsirkan kitab suci serta khususnya membabitkan isu-isu keyakinan adalah jauh dari amalan pentafsiran terbaik kerana ia menatijahkan sumber makna dan mesej yang diselewengkan.

Kata kunci: Hermeneutik; wahyu; pentafsiran; falsafah; doktrin; pendekatan moden.

Introduction

The task of doctrinal (*'aqīdah*) studies is to maintain the foundations of Islam and its origins from deviation, imbalance and misunderstanding when interpreting and applying them. This study comes to respond on the claims of the modern schools of thoughts and approaches including hermeneutics on divine revelation (*wahy*).¹ *Wahy* is particularly the divine inspiration of the Qur'an and other scriptures. Islam teaches that Allah periodically reveals His will, providing precise information to guide human affairs and to lead to a happy afterlife. *Wahy* is the direct transmission of the specific words of revelation (not simply the ideas) through prophets.

¹ God's words and messages through His Messengers and Prophets. See Manna' al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāhith fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mawsū'ah al-Risālah, 1995), 33.

The scholars of the Islamic Ummah including intellectuals, theologians, jurists, interpreters, and linguists, set out linguistic and doctrinal rules to understand the divine revelation. However, the materialist hermeneutic philosophy² seeks to transform the constant doctrines and foundations into variables. It has allowed the interpretation of *wahy* for all readers and for all readings. Therefore, the Western interpretations (hermeneutics), together with the irrational interpretations, became a way of manipulation of the religious text which in turn made up some false substitutional paradigm.

Accordingly, these new schools of thoughts and approaches for interpreting the *wahy* have decontextualized it, which leads to a totally different meanings and messages. Here facts and foundations that build up the doctrine become doubtful. These new approaches depend largely on some ancient and modern Western philosophical claims. In this context, the study finds out the role of the ancient and modern Western philosophies and their methodologies in tackling revelation and its texts and then to reveal the impact of these philosophies on the field of Theology Studies.

Therefore, this study investigates hermeneutics as an example of these philosophies and Western approaches and investigates their role and methodologies in distorting the interpretation of *wahy*. The claims of hermeneutic philosophy constituted the foundations of epistemology which was often adopted by proponents of these approaches in their attempt to circumvent the fact that *wahy* is divine.

2 To preserve the interpretative moment in mimesis by insisting on the monad logical nature of its temporal dimension. Benjamin Loveluck, "The Redemption of Experience: On Walter Benjamin's 'Hermeneutical Materialism'", *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 37 (2011). 167-188. 10.1177/0191453710387069

It can be said that these schools³ and approaches call to look at the religious texts as formulas of a past history and the circumstances surrounding that history, and therefore people in this era have to interpret or understand it in a way that makes it consistent with their principles and ideas, emulating contemporary philosophies. The way to do so is to adopt the Western approach in looking at these texts, which was developed by some schools of literature and linguistics in the Western world in the modern era.

This approach is based on amputation of the relationship between the text and its author, and it seeks as much as possible to extract contradictions among the parts of those texts – as they claim-, and then leaves the door wide open to the reader in every era and under any circumstance to read and understand the *wahy* in a way that is consistent with his own ideas and concepts. Thus, the reading experience is largely affected by one's world and circumstances, apart from any controls on the method of understanding that restricts the reader to the intention of the author of the text itself.

Research Problem

As discussed in the introduction, the problem of this study is to identify the philosophical roots of these schools of thought and approaches and their impact on the understanding of the sacred text. It also questions the validity of the methodology of these approaches in reading religious texts and thematically understanding them. The present study also puts the methodology of these approaches against the traditional rules and norms of

³ Conceptualization of intellectual approaches paved way to a new modern reading to the Qur'an by a couple of scholars such as Hassan Hanafi, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Mohammed Arkoun and their students in the east and west. This, thus, shows that hermeneutics are not a requirement for understanding literary texts, but rather a requirement for understanding the Holy Qur'an.

interpretation (*fiqh*), doctrine (*'aqīdah*) and semasiology (*dalalah*).

Therefore, the problem of this study lies in the fact that the hermeneutics as an independent philosophical system with its goals goes beyond the scope of the narrow interpretation of religious texts as seen by some scholars and authors. Hermeneutics have reached a magnificently independent intellectual level of development that has played a significant role in deeply changing controversies or debates of philosophical views in the 20th century. These debates lie in refuting the intellectual or sectarian and historical context of hermeneutics in the western ideology and theology and adopt instead the Qur'anic context.

It is obvious that philosophical reflection of the controversies of conceptualization caused a serious difficulty for humans to understand religious texts. We face a problem related to understanding the meaning and approach of religious texts and the methodology of understanding the text and its source in light of the various international curricula, religious and positional. Therefore, this study will examine the intellectual and philosophical context in which these curricula were forced to use hermeneuticism in the Arab Qur'anic context, and the seriousness of this approach.

The problem lies in the projection of the intellectual and historical context of hermeneutically in the Western mind and the adoption of these concepts in the different Qur'anic context in the significance and status, and if we shed light in that we find that the philosophical reflection in the problem of understanding strikes its roots in the difficulties that have afflicted humans in the interpretation of religious texts, we are faced with problems related to the significance of the text, the methodology for understanding the text and a source in light of various international approaches, religious and positional.

Therefore, this study will examine the intellectual and philosophical context in which these approaches were forced to use hermeneuticism in the Qur'anic Arab context, and the seriousness of this approach.

Due to the novelty of these modern approaches, there are only a few previous studies about it, especially from the methodological foundations point of view and their effects on the religious text. These studies have been divided into two categories.

The first category of previous studies attempts to employ Western approaches in its reading of the doctrinal issues through the hermeneuticization of the text and its interpretation. Thus, this study will be an analysis of these readings, their practices and their role in the hermeneuticization of the text. The second category of previous studies tries to analyze the impact of these approaches on *wahy*.⁴ The book, *Manāhij al-Fikr al-'Arabī al-Mu'āšir* questions the issues of text and history, historical approach and psychological approach, and discussion about this project and its mechanisms in the Islamic heritage. The second book is *al-Asqāt fī Manāhij al-Mustashriqīn wa al-Mubashhīrīn*.⁵ In some of its chapter, this book explains and illustrates the danger of orientalist approaches and their projections on the Qur'an. It also responds to many of the claims to weaken the authority of the religious text and provides some of the models affected by such approaches, such as Taha Hussein and Salman Rushdie.

⁴ Shākir Aḥmad al-Samḥūnī, *Manāhij al-Fikr al-'Arabī al-Mu'āšir fī Dirāsah Qaḍāyā al-'Aqīdah wa al-Turāth* (Saudi Arabia: Markaz al-Ta'sīl wa al-Dirāsāt, 2010), vol. 1.

⁵ Shawqī Abū Khalīl, *al-Asqāt fī Manāhij al-Mustashriqīn wa al-Mubashhīrīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1998).

There are also some articles on this topic including *al-Manāhij al-Mu‘āṣirah fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*,⁶ which discusses some of these approaches without offering original analysis and foundation. This study proposes foundations and roots of these schools and approaches of thought and return them to their philosophical and intellectual origins, demonstrating the impact of these thoughts on the religious text.

Positivism Hermeneutics⁷ and the Roots of the Imbalance Relationship with Revelation in Ancient and Contemporary Western Philosophy

The term hermeneutics is derived from *hermeneia*, which is obviously related to the name of the god Hermes. From the original significance of Hermes, who clearly is one of the deities of earth, there developed the concept of him as the messenger of the gods, the go-between of gods and men. He makes manifest the divine thoughts, translates the infinite into the finite, the divine spirit into sensory phenomena, and therefore he denotes analysis, measure, and particularizing it.⁸ The essence of *hermeneia* consists in that which the Romans called *elocutio*: the expression of thought - not the understanding, but the rendering intelligible.⁹

⁶ ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Ḥāj Ibrāhīm, “al-Manāhij al-Mu‘āṣirah fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm,” *Islam Web*. <http://articles.islamweb.net/Media/index.php?page=article&lang=A&id=16763>

⁷ The secular and religious hermeneutics, or the philosophical and biblical hermeneutics. The first goes from the philosophical pole to the biblical pole. The second is considered as regional hermeneutics but not philosophical hermeneutics. The biblical or religious hermeneutics can be classified under the first, thus being application hermeneutics. See: Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, trans. Muhammad Baradah (Alexandria: Ain for Human and Scholar Studies, 2001), 91.

⁸ Kurt Mueller-Vollmer ed., *The Hermeneutics Reader* (New York; The Continuum Publishing Company, 2006), 134.

⁹ *Ibid.*

The term hermeneutics is used recently when talking about the readings of the revelation texts, the approximation¹⁰, the modern exegesis¹¹, and esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*)¹². These terms sometimes mean the same thing and other times mean differently according to the context. The concept of 'esoteric interpretation' is sometimes misused by modern schools of thought as a leading type of hermeneutics through which texts can be read in a contemporary enlightening manner. Thus, the constant Qur'anic meanings and the fixed and well-established origins and knowledge of religion agreed upon become historical concepts subject to renewal and change. This comes under the claims that these terms are to be replaced by more sophisticated and more appropriate meanings of the era.

Hermeneutics approach is "the art of textual analysis in literary effects"¹³ and it traditionally refers to the art of esoteric interpreting of divine texts and human texts. It is also equivalent to interpreting what is literal, grammatical or linguistic interpretation of the meanings of words, sentences and texts. This is known as verbal interpretation.¹⁴ It is also a term used in Theology Studies

¹⁰ It is an attempt to understand something according to historical conditions and certain data. This understanding does not claim the final grasp of the reality of the studied phenomenon. It is used in secular discourse in this sense. See: Khālid al-Sa'īdānī, *Ishkālīyyah al-Qirā'ah fī al-Fikr al-'Arabī al-Islāmī al-Mu'āshir: Natāj Muḥammad Arkūn Namūzajan* (bahath li niyl shahādah al-Dirāsāt al-Ma'maqah fī al-Ḥaḍarah al-Islāmiyyah, al-Ma'ahad al-'Alā li Uṣūl al-Dīn, Jāmi'ah al-Zaytūnah, 1988), 31.

¹¹ 'Modern exegesis' is usually used as a synonym of hermeneutics.

¹² Esoteric interpretation is a Qur'anic and Islamic term which has a set of rules and conditions developed by scholars. This term is sometimes misused by modern schools of thought as a lead hermeneutics.

¹³ Paul Ricol, *From Text to Mind*, 85.

¹⁴ Khālid al-Sa'īdānī, *Ishkālīyyah al-Qirā'ah*, 64.

to refer to a set of rules and standards that the interpreter must follow to understand the religious text.¹⁵

Although hermeneutics approach has taken a comprehensive dimension related to all humanities, but it was finally associated with the science of texts, and became means to reveal ways and means that enable the understanding of the text or the development of the reading process.¹⁶ It is also different from interpretation that the latter is looking at the semasiology (*dalalah*) and therefore focuses on the author yet hermeneutics research focuses of the mechanisms of understanding and therefore focuses on the reader.¹⁷

This is the traditional meaning of hermeneutics. But with the development of the theory, it has become concerned with the art of understanding which was established by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), who is the father of modern interpretation. Accordingly, the art of understanding or the art of interpretation deals not only with sacred texts, but beyond that including human texts of daily content.¹⁸

As the actions of the understanding, or the principles according to which one will understand, are everywhere the same, no specific distinction of interpretation can be made with respect to the subjects to be interpreted. Such distinctions as sacred and secular interpretation are accordingly untenable.¹⁹

¹⁵ See: Khālīd al-Sa‘īdānī, *Ishkaliyyah al-Qirā’ah*, 13. Naṣr Ḥāmid, *al-Khiṭab wa al-Ta’wīl*, 173; ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Misīrī, *Mawsū‘ah al-Yahūd wa al-Yahūdiyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1999), 1:88.

¹⁶ Sīzā Qāsim, *al-Qārī wa al-Naṣ* (n.p.: al-Majlis al-A‘lā li al-Thaqāfah, 2002), 102.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁸ Khālīd al-Sa‘īdānī, *Ishkālīyah al-Qirā’ah*, 66.

¹⁹ Kurt, *The Hermeneutics Reader*, 135.

This expansion of the scope of hermeneutics approach means that this school of thought subjects everything to interpretation, and hermeneutics is the origin of discourse, thus forming a pattern of reading and interpretation of intellectual texts and heritage in full.²⁰

Reading in hermeneutics concludes that it is becoming a concept that represents a perception or understanding of the world, human and heritage, and reflects the reader's thinking and approach to treating the text as a historical existence, and the practice of existence and the universe in terms of the possibility of time and place changes, and reading becomes a hermeneutic and interpretive process of existence and the universe.²¹

The historical research on the semantics of hermeneutics makes us return to the meaning of this term and its linguistic origin. The term goes back to the Greek language. It is derived from the verb 'hermenuo' which may mean 'traduire' of the meaning 'translate' and 'expliquer' of the sense 'interpret', or 'exprimer' of the meaning 'explain'. Therefore, hermeneutics means reading, including interpretation, translation, explanation or illustration.

However, within the Latin language spectrum, the authoritative sources and references indicate that the term 'hermeneutics' was formed only in the beginnings of modern era, although the idea of art or some form of interpretation has existed since ancient times.²²

After this presentation of the definition of hermeneutics, the researcher finds that the special

²⁰ Jābir 'Aṣfūr, *Qirā'ah Jadīdah li Turāthunā al-Naqdī: Kitāb al-Nādī al-Thaqāfī* (Jeddah: Maṭābi' Dār al-Bilād, t.t.), 112.

²¹ 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Misīrī, *Mawsū'ah al-Yahūd*, 1:88.

²² Khālīd al-Sa'īdānī, *Ishkāliyah al-Qirā'ah*, 72. Hermeneutics is from the Latin 'hermenuen' of the meaning to interpret or to explain of the word 'hermenuos' which has unknown roots, yet it is said to be from god Hermes messenger of god Zeus. 'Abd al-Wahhāb, *Mawsū'ah al-Yahūd wa al-Yahūdiyyah*, 88, part 1.

hermeneutics related to the text is only part of the general hermeneutics of the reading of existence. If the special hermeneutics escaped the reading of the text and considers the death of the author, the general hermeneutics is nothing but an escape and oppression in reading existence away from the set of rules and norms of interpretation science.

The positivist doctrines, such as existentialism²³ and others are a true expression of hermeneutics in a more comprehensive and broader sense. When considering full freedom to think without restrictions, and emphasize the uniqueness of human, and that he is a thinker, freedom and has the will and choice and does not need a guide, it is a state of hermeneutics. Another approach represented by Freud, Marx, and Wench is that truth is false and it should not be trusted, but must be removed in order to find the hidden meaning behind it. Both Marx and Wench interpreted the apparent truth as false, and they set a pattern of thought to eliminate it.

Here, the danger of hermeneutics appears in two aspects. The first aspect is its danger on the texts of revelation and the seriousness of its work and applications in the reading and understanding of revelation. The second aspect is shown by the fact that hermeneutics has emerged from the positive philosophy that gave human absolute freedom in the building of atheistic knowledge in Europe during the Renaissance.

Positivistic Hermeneutics and its Impact on the Decay of the Sacred in the Western Philosophical and Religious Knowledge Construction

The discussion of the methodology of revelation reading is incomplete without the understanding of the old Western mental structure and its conception of revelation. This is

²³ See: Thomas R. Flynn, *Existentialism: A Very Short Introduction* (NC,USA: Oxford University Press, 2014).

because Western thought has caused a real distortion of the methodology of dealing to understand the revelation through its ideas and philosophies.

In addition, the Western methodology controls the interpretation knowledge for some of its supports and followers. Therefore, this study illustrates such foundations and clears the confused picture produced by ancient and modern Western philosophy in its reading of the revelation.

i. Revelation and Its Reading by the Old Philosophers

In the sixth century BC, Greece was full of pagan religions, and there was no clear influence of the revelation in their conception of religion. However, some of Western philosophers such as Gilbert Murray believes that the origin of religious believed in ancient Greeks was a divine message that underwent several changes across times until it developed into the current form. He also believes that it is also possible that these pagan religions began as a myth and then mixed with some of the divine doctrines such as Judaism first, and Christianity later.²⁴

These scholars, however, did not know a specific divine revelation that they would consider and accept its teachings and customs. Thus, the people before Socrates tried to explain the existence of philosophical interpretations on their own. Their philosophies, though sometimes carrying some of the impact of the pagan doctrines, attempted to better answer the question of existence. These philosophers also mocked old religious beliefs and manipulated some religious texts without considering any authentic sources in their writings. However, some other philosophers considered those

²⁴ See: Karīm Matta, *al-Falsafah al-Yūnāniyyah* (Baghdad: Maṭba'ah al-Irshad, 1972), 103. See also: Ennhardt, *al-Ālih al-Abṭāl fī al-Yūnān al-Qadīmah*, trans. Hashīm Hijjawī (Damascus: Al-Ahālī li al-Nashr, n.d.), vol. 1.

religions, in fact, a myth created by the fertile imagination of man, which should be replaced by ideas based on reason and logic in the interpretation of the universe.²⁵

These arguments faded by the appearance of the rationalists, led by Socrates (399 BC), who built the philosophy of knowledge based on the demonstration of the value of reason in reaching the abstract macro perceptions by looking at the sense²⁶. These macro mental perceptions enable us to set correct measures of fixed facts and to perceive the value of virtue. He thus confirmed the value of reason in knowledge, and that he was aware of the absolute fact²⁷. There is no doubt that he was referring to the pagan Greek religions that prevailed in.

Then Plato (347 BC) came to develop the philosophy of knowledge following Socrates, adding to it that macro mental perceptions are based in their judgments on pre-existing models that have a real existence outside our minds, which is considered 'the ideal world'. He then divided religion into mythical, political and philosophical; the latter is the one that depicts truth as determined by the mind.²⁸ It is that which is obliged to know God and that it is pure good, acknowledging the self and the truth to be a measure or an example for everything.²⁹ The world is a sign of beauty and order and this can never be the result of the ills of a convention; but it is made by a Wiser, Perfect planner and Good-for-all.

²⁵ See: Muṣṭafā al-Nashar, *Tārīkh al-Falsafah al-Yūnāniyyah* (Cairo: Dār Qubā', 1998), 36, as well as the Greek Philosophy of Karim Matta, 76.

²⁶ Nadīm al-Jisr, *Qiṣṣah al-Īmān*, (n.p.: Dār al-Muthaqqaf al-Muslim, 1941), 28-37.

²⁷ Matta, *al-Falsafah al-Yūnāniyyah*, 76.

²⁸ Aḥmad Fū'ād al-Ahwānī, *Aflāṭūn* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'arif, 1965), 126.

²⁹ Emile Patro, *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, trans. Ahmed Fouad Al-Ahwani (Cairo: Egyptian Commission, 1973), 10.

Aristotle's position was then to arrange access to knowledge through three stages: perception, experience, and theoretical meditation to reach a conclusion and a judgment. He believed that things arise from four reasons: physical, imaginary, active and teleological. And since the teleological intentional actor and imagery are the fruits of his act, only the physical reason is remained to be searched. An old physics has no image, and therefore is only the possibility of receiving, as if it was nothingness itself. Aristotle called it Hyle. Therefore, the world is old represented in its physics, image, movement and engine, and this engine that gave the world its image and movement is God.³⁰

Consequently, the observer in the debates of ancient philosophy in many subjects realizes that people did not know explicitly the revelation, and therefore did not resolve their order to accept and benefit from it. The Greek pagan religion is a man-made religion. And the features of the sayings transmitted within their philosophies seem to benefit from the divine messages that were distorted by human. Revelation was like the faint voice that is hardly heard.

Thus, it was incorporated into their philosophies, which in turn were also human philosophies. This is confirmed by the words of the most famous Sophists Protagoras, "Human is the measure of everything". This, obviously, is not an arbitration of the human mind in judging facts, it is at the hands of the most famous sophists, but rather an arbitration of the feeling, opinion, or purely temperament of utterly submitting to certain facts. After this view of the relationship of revelation to ancient philosophy, no doubt one finds that the gap between the Western philosophical mind and the divine revelation. This relationship misleads the contemporary

³⁰ Nadīm al-Jisr, *Qiṣṣah al-Īmān*, 37-44.

Western approaches in its relationship with the revelation reading and understanding.

ii. The Reading of Revelation in Christianity and the Emergence of Hermeneutics

It is not possible to investigate everything that can be related to the reading of revelation in Christianity, including the sources of the Church and its sacred texts, the doctrines that the church ended up and attempts to impose on people, ecclesiastical secrets and rituals of worship, the status of the clergy in the canonical construction, the secularists accusation of the Church of disregarding the minds of the people, their bizarre interpretations of facts, and the complete inability to convince both its opponents and followers.³¹ However, this study is limited to the investigation of the methodology of reading the revelation in Christianity and the effects of hermeneutics on such methodology.

The observer of the methodology of Christians in dealing with the revelation finds from the first sight that the revelation continues uninterrupted in their beliefs. This is clear in their saying that the Church is not the building but the community of believers. When these believers sincerely meet then the Holy Spirit is with them to support and inspire them. Therefore, the communication with the Holy Spirit is uninterrupted, which is voluntary; it is not based on divine alienation, but on the demand optional by this community. As a result, the truth of the matter is timid, not suggestive.³² Here it shows the salient aspect of human action in the origin investigation of the existence

³¹ ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Muṭ’īnī, *al-Islām fī Muwājahah al-Īdūljīyyāt al-Mu’āṣarah* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 69-70.

³² Aḥmad Shalabī, *al-Masīḥīyyah*, 6th edition (Cairo: The Egyptian Renaissance Library, Cairo, , 1978), 209-213; Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Ghafūr ‘Aṭṭār, *al-Diyānāt wa al-‘Aqā’id fī Mukhtalif al-‘Uṣūr* (Mecca: Maktabah al-Muhtadin, 1981), 3:320.

of revelation before talking even about understanding or interpreting.

They say that the Holy Spirit, which came to Mary in the gospel, to Christ in the Baptism in the form of a dove and to the apostles after the ascension of Christ is still, descends on the fathers and saints in the Church to guide them. It is but the Spirit of God and his life, a true God of the true God.³³ This view, in fact, has no documented support from the Bible, and perhaps the author or the viewer wanted to escape from those strange contradictions that are evident to the biblical insider's proof of human divine origin.³⁴

The known sources of Christianity are the four Gospels, the fourteen Epistles, and the Acts of the Apostles. It is called the New Testament as a distinction from the Old Testament that concerns the Jews, the Torah and its annexes. They together constitute the Bible. Despite the separation between Judaism and Christianity, Christians consider the Old Testament as part of the Bible and that every Christian must believe in it.

Accordingly, the revelation for Christians does not mean the gospel of Jesus. This statement excludes the very advanced applicants such as Tertullian (165-220 AD). Tertullian emphasized on the preference of the Gospel over every human effort. Tertullian's time was proximity to Jesus (peace be upon him) which may explain his take on the Gospel of Jesus, saying that it is the revelation. After that time, no one would argue that human effort had a role in the synthesis of the Gospels adopted today.³⁵

All this leads us to mention what the medieval philosophers Alain de Lille said, "The revelation is an idol that his nose is made of wax and bends according to the

³³ *Al-Mawsū'ah al-Muyassarah*, 569, 653 and 1170.

³⁴ Muḥammad Ṭāriq al-Shāfi'ī, *'Aqīdah al-Naṣārā bayn al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa al-Sunnah al-Sharīfah*, 12-15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

will of the public."³⁶ As Alfred Garvey argues, "Bad aims have been behind these amendments. Since the Gospels introduced in Greece, it was influenced by Greek philosophy and Roman law to the extent that it cannot represent the truth anymore."³⁷

Moreover, according to Christian writer, Brenton, "It is a religion that is totally contrary to that of the Christians who were in Galilee. If one lived the New Testament (the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles) as the ultimate expression of Christian doctrine, one would conclude that not only fourth-century Christianity was different from early Christianity, but also that fourth-century Christianity was not Christian at all"³⁸.

Despite all this, the Church firmly insists that the four Gospels faithfully transmit what Christ the Son of God has done and taught. The Scriptures have written the four Gospels, always revealing the truth about Christ. And that if one at some points has an editorial difference or logical disagreement, it is evident that he lacks knowledge and understanding.³⁹

As a result, one can conclude that the origins of the revelation in Christianity are full of uncertainty. Even some Christians describe it as 'disjointed' literature, which opens the door wide allowing wide scope for the application of the phenomenology categories and the use of hermeneutic approach and Derrida's deconstruction. This comes as an attempt to search for the truth hidden behind the letters and words of the text and between its lines, in order to discover the untold through the disclosed.

³⁶ Yūsuf Karam, *Tārīkh al-Falsafah al-Urūbiyyah fī al-'Aṣr al-Waṣī* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.), 109.

³⁷ Shalabī, *al-Masīhiyyah*, 215.

³⁸ Al-Muṭ'īnī, *al-Islām fī Muwājahah al-Īdūlūgiyyāt al-Mu'āṣarah*, 21.

³⁹ Al-Zunaydī, *Maṣādir al-Ma'rīfah fī al-Fikr al-Dīnī wa al-Falsafī* (Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992), 584-585.

Or it is to show the origin of the inspired text or historical fact and amplified made by the human imagination.

The following is a summary of the factors of the collapse of the sacred in Christianity:

- a. The Bible lacks credibility is because of the extensive manipulation.
- b. Modern intellectual methods and their role in criticizing the Bible and making it a field for its experiences.⁴⁰
- c. The Bible does not withstand the scientific arguments.
- d. The history of ecclesiastical corruption, and the behavioral degeneration that characterized the men of the Church, including popes, cardinals, monks and nuns.⁴¹

Problematic Consideration of Hermeneutics Foundations as Tools for Understanding the Religious Text

In order to identify hermeneutics and its interpretations in reading the religious text, one should consider its significant foundations and the resulting problems when considering them as tools to understand the text.

i. The death of the author

Having occupied the focus point in Western philosophies, human puts himself in center position to the universe,⁴² and considers himself as the final reference. This nihilism reflected on the process of reading texts. It is the focus on

⁴⁰ See: Zalmān Shazād, *Tārīkh Nuqad al-‘Ahd al-Qadīm*, (Cairo: al-Majlis al-A‘lā li al-Thaqāfah, 2000).

⁴¹ I refer here to the book of Pastor De Rosa, *The Black History of the Church*, translated from German by Asser Hutaiba. De Rosa was a lecturer of Christian Theology in Rome and at the most important papal universities, amazed by the dark history of the popes and the church and retired from the theological work of church in 1970.

⁴² See: Wahhāb al-Missīrī, *Mawsū‘ah al-Yahūd wa al-Yahūdiyyah*, 1:1, 261. See also: Pierce Zima, *Deconstruction: A Critical Study* (Beirut: University Foundation for Studies and Publishing, 1996), 37.

language, its operational methodology and its implications.

Thus, the meaning has become dependent on the reader in determining the content and significance of the text in his desirable way and preferences, away from the author's intended meanings and messages. This in turn ultimately led to the declaration of the death of the author.⁴³ In order for the reader to reach his preferred text, it is necessary to consider the death of the author. Thus, the link between the text and the author ends. The reader wins and the author lose, allowing the reader to exercise his desires on the text to the maximum.⁴⁴

This philosophy assumes that the author is the father for the text. This is a common idea among modernists where the author is considered as a 'father' who exercises an authoritarian role on the reader and therefore one must get rid of him in order to allow the reader to freely tamper with the text, away from the father (author) who monitors and judges the reading. Accordingly, it allows absolute freedom to interpret the universe and deny its teleology.

ii. The lack of innocence in reading and every reading is a misreading

One of the most dangerous ideas that prevailed after the domination of modernity and beyond is that reading

⁴³ See: Arkūn, *al-Qur'ān min al-Tafsīr al-Mawrūth ilā al-Tahlīl al-Khiṭab al-Dīnī*, trans. Hāshim Šālīḥ (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, 2001), 1:34. See also: 'Abd al-Azīz Ḥumūdah, *al-Marāyā al-Muḥadibah min al-Bunyawiyah ilā al-Taḥkīk* (Kuwait: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1990), 336-340.

⁴⁴ See: Pierce Zima, *Deconstruction: A Critical Study*, 58-59. However, the idea was essentially taken from Freudian individual and collective psychoanalysis when taboos and religions arose as a result of the father's domination and dictatorship in the first human group. See: Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. 'Alī Yashin (Syria: Dār al-Ḥiwār, 1983), 22.

cannot be innocent.⁴⁵ This idea is in fact linked to a philosophical position that dominates the Western mind and is desperate for certainty. Thus, knowledge is of a hypothetical nature, not a definitive one. It is always open for modification, change and transformation from the sophist philosophy which dominated the Western mind for some time.

Thus, reading becomes a process of changing the truth, not a transfer or interpretation of it. The assumption that every reading is a misreading corresponds to the assumption that all readings are correct. In both assumptions, every reading is correct until another new reading comes with another interpretation of the text, concluding that the first reading is a misreading. Accordingly, the second reading will be accused also of being a misreading when a latest reading emerges into the discussion.⁴⁶

In fact, these ideas have a long history that is rooted in the dialectic philosophy of history,⁴⁷ that difference and controversy lead to harmony and agreement. We can also link this idea to Freud's⁴⁸ psychoanalysis. Freud

⁴⁵ See: 'Abd al-'Azīz Ḥumūdāh, *Convex Mirrors from Structuralism to Dismantling* (Kuwait: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1990), 104 onwards.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁴⁷ The meaning of dialectic in its Greek origin, 'dialegomai' clash of opposing views with the intention of knowing the truth, or a method of persuasion, used by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus in the sense of conflict and constant change in nature. In the nineteenth century, the German philosopher gave the argument that Marx took from him. The argument is an approach that considers that everything in nature, society and thought develops from the lowest to the highest because of the internal contradictions that move in it. Materialism historique argues that historical facts and social phenomena arise from special economic causes, in the prime of historical idealism that gives everything to thought. Jamīl Ṣalībā, *al-Mu'jam al-Falsafī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, 1974), 2:310.

⁴⁸ He is an Austrian doctor of Jewish descent, who specializes in studying neurology. He is considered the founder of psychoanalysis.

established the sense of negative meanings of the human soul in the Western philosophy, and this negativity always prevailed over the other positives in the psyche. Hence, the misreading arises from the mistrust of the human soul. Freud said that the willingness to deviation is a basic and common human characteristic and that is part of the creation.⁴⁹

In addition, Freud's hermeneutic system is based on the search for subconscious, as a sceptic weapon against false consciousness, and decoding of the psyche.⁵⁰ It is based on the detection of deception, cruelty, suspicion, rivalry, evasiveness and other meanings to reveal the meaning and slips of the tongue, and lack of confidence in the surface level or conscious understanding.⁵¹

Thus, one finds that reading in the conceptualization of hermeneutics and deconstruction,⁵² cannot be innocent.

His real name is Sigismund Schlomo Freud (1939), an Austrian neurologist who founded the School of Psychoanalysis and Modern Psychology. Freud is best known for theories of the unconscious mind, the mechanism of defense of oppression and the creation of clinical practice in psychoanalysis for the treatment of mental illnesses through dialogue between the patient and the psychoanalyst. While much of Freud's ideas were bypassed, or have been modified by neo-conservatives and Freudians at the end of the twentieth century and with advances in psychology many flaws began to appear in many of his theories, and his ideas still have influence on some humanities and social sciences. See: Sigmund Freud, *Sexuality*, translated by George Tarabish (Beirut: Dar Al-Taleea, Second Edition, 1999).

⁴⁹ See: Sigmund Freud, *Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory*, translated by Muhammad 'Usman Najati, (Cairo: Dar Al-Qalam, 1960), 86-117.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵² Deconstruction philosophy is based on the dismantling of the text and analysis into multiple paragraphs, and this disassembly is not only the reader, it decrypts this text, and rebuilds it according to the mechanisms of thinking. The reader employs the religious text according to his experience and understanding, and the religious text

However, the absence of an innocent reading does not mean that the reading is wrong, there is no wrong reading, because there is no reading is totally correct. Based on both ancient and modern Western philosophies, one always misunderstands the text and its implications.

Promoting Hermeneutics in the Reading of Divine Revelation and its Impact on the Islamic Doctrine

The propaganda project of the modern schools of thought for a new reading⁵³ of the Qur'an began by several writers such as Hassan Hanafi, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Muhammad Arkoun and their students in the East and West. For them, hermeneutics approach does not only offer readings for literature but also for the Qur'an.

In this context, Abu Zayd claims that for Gadamer,⁵⁴ dialectic hermeneutics, after being modified through a materialist dialectical perspective, is a solid starting point to look at the relationship between the interpreter and the text, not only in literary texts and theory of literature, but to review our religious heritage about the interpretation of Qur'an since the earliest ages to date.⁵⁵

has many readers, and therefore multiple readings produce multiple interpretations. See: Kamāl 'Abd al-Laṭīf, *Qirā'ah al-Falsafah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'āṣarah* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, 1994), 1.

⁵³ The use of new modern theories in the reading of the religious text leads to the idea that each era is to have a new reading of the text.

⁵⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer is the founder of the School of Interpretation (Hermeneutics Philosophy). He explained that interpretation should avoid randomness and limitations arising from mental habits, focusing on the same things and on the texts. He stressed that we are always approaching the text through a project we are doing or by an idea of what is being said. This project changes and is reformulated with an in-depth reading of the subject, hence we resort to confirming or changing assumptions. As this process can be extended to infinity, we can never say that we have a definitive explanation. See: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method, Basic Guiding Principles of Philosophical Interpretation*, translated by Hassan Nazim and Ali Hakim (Tripoli: Dar Away, 2007).

⁵⁵ Naṣr Hāmid Abū Zayd, *Ishkaliyāt al-Qirā'ah*, 49.

This is Gadamer's hermeneutics that Abu Zayd considered a necessity to understand the Qur'anic text. According to him, Gadamer's hermeneutics should be merged with the dialectical material approach in order to be fruitful. Thus, the interpretation does not sway from reality, and in turn, Marxism remains the dominant elements of this approach.

It is the same idea advocated by Tayyeb Tizini who considers the fundamentalist approach as an illusion disguises the social situation and reality, describing it as profligacy of ignorance. He appealed to Michel Foucault⁵⁶ who called for the rejection of studies seeking the true meaning inherent behind the superficial structure.⁵⁷ Tizini did not stop only here but went on to favor the approach of Mikhail Bakhtin in the study of the Qur'anic text.

Mikhail Bakhtin devotes his research and studies on Marxism and philosophy of language, and on the relationship between language and society. He views dialectical language evidence as an effect of social structures.⁵⁸ The materialistic historical dialectic approach contrasts with Foucault's approach, which tends to adopt metaphysics methodology and therefore do not benefit much from its layers.⁵⁹

This trend seeks to consecrate the positivist approaches to keep the interpretations in the readings of the revelation infinitely as long as it is subject to the materialistic historical dialectic reality. Interpretation thus

⁵⁶ Michel Foucault (1926-1984) is a French philosopher, one of the most important philosophers of the latter half of the twentieth century, influenced by the Structuralist wave, and distinguished from them through his archaeology approach. He created the term 'The Archaeology of Knowledge' which was the title of his book *L'Archeologie du Savor*, published in 1969.

⁵⁷ See: Tayyib Tizini, *al-Naṣ al-Qur'ānī amām Ishkālīyah al-Bunyah wa al-Qirā'ah* (Damascus: Dār al-Yanābī', n.d.), 2:45.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

takes the form of a continuous process that does not stop, and the ruler is the reality that produces and shapes the text. Thus, interpretation remains as a permanent process that does not stop and continues to repeat the production of text.

This production is made through the hermeneutic circle and without rules, but one rule that is to correlate with reality, to consider modern values and to align with modernity. It is not necessary that the interpretation is consistent with the text or not, nor harmonious with it or not. It is important that the reader is able to transfer, twist, flip and deconstruct the text in order to respond to this reality whatsoever. It is therefore assumed that such philosophies consider the Islamic fundamentalist approach as a one-way approach, but their intention is not the diversity of meaning and its possibilities, rather a chaos of meaning or relativity of meaning. These philosophies went on to claim that "there is no text that cannot be interpreted in order to find its own reality".⁶⁰

Accordingly, there are two approaches in the Islamic arena to interpret the text:

i. Scholars of Islamic Foundations and Interpretation: It is based on doctrinal, linguistic and *sharī'ah* grounds in which they are keen to get closer to the understanding of God's message through the text. This methodology, through some mechanisms and rules, encourages one meaning based on the signals found in the text, its surrounding clues, the context, or the general foundations of the law and the rules of interpretation. Inference is not built upon defamation, absurdity, imagination, talent, or from philosophies and ideologies that are subsequent to the text and not its predecessor; it is rather built upon evidence. Their interpretation is based on valid evidence

⁶⁰ Hasan Hanafi, *Min al-'Aqīdah ilā al-Thawrah* (Cairo: Maṭba'ah al-Qāhira, 1988), 1:397.

that distracts the word from its apparent meaning to others. This evidence is stronger than the apparent, otherwise the apparent meaning should be considered.⁶¹

ii. The Modernists

Traditionally, scholars prefer a possible meaning than the surface meaning. However, the modern approaches take a different stance which considers the totality of the text and its susceptibility to the infinite interpretation. At some points, it also distracts it from its legislative destination, and at other point, it makes the contemporary mind judge it.⁶² But how this interpretation is in harmony with the Qur'an, and the Qur'an was revealed to be understood and to constitute the doctrine, law and behaviour. Nevertheless, what comes after the symbolic or indicative benefits belong to the first, basic and intrinsic purposes, and must not contradict or collide with them.

The holiness of the Qur'an is necessarily taught. No Muslim can overcome or ignore it. To be a Muslim, one shall have love for the Book of Almighty Allah and glorify His words. There is no contradiction between this holiness and between the explanation and understanding of Almighty God. Almighty God revealed his words to be understood by scholars first. Allah says: "And We sent not

⁶¹ See: Mufeed Abu Aishia, "The Rules of Interpretation of the Fundamentalists," *Journal of Studies*, 20 (1997), 192. See also the book of *Conflict and Weighting Between Evidences* (213-236) by Abdul Latif Barzanji.

⁶² Whereas scholars of theology and interpretation were devoted to legal and linguistic jurisprudence, keen to get closer to what is required of the text, the modernists are often motivated by paratextual motives. These motives are produced by the contemporary culture, influenced by external factors such as the cultural gap suffered by Arab countries and military defeats culminated in the fall of many Arab countries under direct colonialism. This led to become closer to the approaches of the West, and subject to it sometimes. Thus, some intellectual Arabs rushed to describe heritage as negative, and even exceeded it to the texts, and even peremptory ones.

before you except men to whom We revealed [Our message]. So, ask the people of the message if you do not know." (Al-Nahl, verse 43).

Hermeneutics and its Applications on Matters of Doctrine

This school did not stop at the level of promoting positivism hermeneutics as discussed earlier but moved from theory to practice. It understands doctrines of the religions from the claimed hermeneutic perspective, mind-made imagination and Western philosophies in the interpretation of the verses and semantics. An example of these applications and practices is Hassan Hanafī who has presented one of the most unpleasant images of the application of the hermeneutic perspective in reading the revelation. Hassan Hanafī says:⁶³

“God is a word that one uses to express the cries of pain and the cries of joy. That means, it is a literary expression rather than a description of reality. It is a structural expression rather than a narrative description that does not express a certain meaning. It is an existential cry rather than a meaning that can be expressed by a language. It is a reaction to a psychological state or an expression of a feeling rather than an expression of intent. It is all what we believe then magnify to compensate for the loss. It is in the popular sense is God.”

In other works, he said:⁶⁴

“God is the only existence or abstract figure. All these perceptions are in fact human categories express the maximum characteristics of man. Man creates part of himself then deified it, that is to say he creates

⁶³ Hasan Hanafī, *al-Turath wa al-Tajdīd* (Cairo: n.p., 1980), 128-130.

⁶⁴ Hasan Hanafī, *Min al-'Aqīdah ilā al-Thawrah*, 2:88-89.

deification. He interprets his dreams and desires, then he devotes and worships them. The idol is a sign of powerlessness, and the sacred is a presumption of inability. The choice of a set of absolute qualities and putting them together in the form of an idol indicates that man has deified himself. The divine self is the human self in its fullest form. Any evidence that reveals the existence of God, reveals a false consciousness. In the sense that the natural position of the human being is to think about society, and every other discussion that transcends society and the world is blind and unaware of reality."

The previous texts of Hassan Hanafi show the extent of that doctrine deviation, starting from hermeneutics and its projections on the text and beliefs. They show multiple and forked images illustrated by Hanafi, who seems to mystically believe in the unity of God's existence, about the existence of God and His attributes. Something, he seems mystically believing in the unity of existence and sees God and man as one thing. Other times, he seems atheist and denial of the existence of God. At some other points, he seems positive Marxist. All this manipulation between doctrines and ideas is not but interpretations dropped by Hanafi on his conception of God. Hanafi's deviations are called by deviant approaches interpretations and manifestations dropped by the reader on ideas and texts and their implications.

The hermeneutic approach extends its irrational interpretation to the interpretation of the prophet's connection with the angle and revelation. It claims that "prophecy that discusses of the possibility of the Prophet's

communication with God and communicating His message is in fact a nexus between thought and reality."⁶⁵

A study by another scholar of this approach claims that the prophecy and revelation are not miracles or paradoxes of the laws of matter and nature and reality. It also claims that prophecy and revelation are only a strong degree of imagination arising from the effectiveness of the human imagination, the Prophet links to it in a similar manner that a poet links to the devil, and as the priest links to jinn. Therefore, it is a state of creative effectiveness of the human imagination and not a superior phenomenon away from reality and laws of physics.⁶⁶

As for prophecy and revelation,⁶⁷ he says, "The interpretation of prophecy based on the concept of 'fiction' means that the transition from the human world to the world of angels happens through the effectiveness of the human imagination the prophets possess."⁶⁸ This is in contrary to the consensus of Islamic scholars.⁶⁹

However, these interpretations are of the hermeneutic approach and its irrational analysis of the text. If it is as

⁶⁵ Ḥasan Ḥanafī, *Dirāsāt Islāmīyah*, p. 397.

⁶⁶ See: Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Maḥmūd al-Naṣ: Dirāsah fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: n.p., 1190), 56, 59, 65.

⁶⁷ Revelation means that God informs those who He chooses from His servants all types of guidance and knowledge, but in a secret, unusual way, unusual for human beings, and of various kinds. One way is a talk between God and His servant, as in the case of Prophet Moses. Another way is inspiration of God to the heart of the chosen people. Another way is a dream comes true. The most common way is by the Secretary of Revelation Jibril - peace be upon him -. It is one of the most famous and most important types of revelation, and the whole Qur'an revelation followed this method. It is what is called a clear revelation. See: Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīm al-Zarqānī, *Manāḥil al-'Irfān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1995), 46.

⁶⁸ Ḥasan Ḥanafī, *Dirāsah Falsafīyah* (Cairo: al-Lajnah al-Miṣriyyah, 1987), 38.

⁶⁹ Al-Zarqānī, *Manāḥil al-'Irfān*, 46.

Abu Zayd claims, we do not have any miracle, but an imaginary power that brought the Qur'an. This interpretation of the concept of revelation does not have a fundamental fixed meaning, so as to keep the concept of revelation open for possibilities of infinite interpretations by other readers.

After considering God as a human being, and considering prophecy as an imagination and emotion, denying the descent of revelation and the miracle of the Qur'an, and denying all immortality for all the meanings of the Qur'an, the contemporary hermeneutics go to deny the unseen world. Hermeneutics considers the unseen world as artistic expressions and imaginary images reflect the aspirations of man.

It expresses the unseen in its own way, and in the artistic way, which depends on the images and imagination of the aspirations of man for a world of justice and law. It expresses the future of man in a 'better world'.⁷⁰ As for the Preserved Slate, Allah says "But this is an honored Qur'an [inscribed] in a Preserved Slate." (Al-Buruj, verses 21-22). It is an artistic image intended to prove the documentation of science in the sense that documented science is more accurate than the science saved in memory or imagined in the mind.⁷¹

After the deification of man, the humanization of God, the humanization of prophecy, revelation and the unseen world, the contemporary hermeneutic approach glorifies human mind and neglects divine revelation, that is, the approach only considers the physical world and totally neglects the spiritual world. It claims the mind does not need a helper, and there is nothing acts on behalf of the mind, the mind makes things beautiful and ugly, capable of realizing the qualities of beauty and ugliness in things. Sense is capable of perception, observation and

⁷⁰ Hassan Ḥanafī, *Dirāsah Falsafīyyah*, 104.

⁷¹ Hassan Ḥanafī, *Min al-'Aqidah ilā al-Thawrah*, 4:135.

experimentation, and can know the morality by natural constitution. Revelation does not give humanity something that it cannot discover itself from within.⁷²

These approaches have dared to describe the Book of God (Qur'an) as a distortion and forgery. For example, the works of Muhammad Shahrour, Hassan Hanafi and Rashid Alkhion, among many others.⁷³ Accordingly, this school declares a complete dissociated from the known origins of Islam.

Criticism of the Hermeneutic Reading of Revelation

One can say that these multiple readings of revelation are built upon a misunderstanding of the relationship between the text and reality, and the extent of confusion in that relationship. These readings looked at this relationship from the Marxist understanding considering the problem of divinity and human existence. They consider the relationship between God and human is ultimately the relationship between thought and reality and materialism and idealism. They also study the dualism from the perspective of the relationship between heritage and history, considering heritage as a product of history.⁷⁴ The approaches they projected on revelation are only issued by the Western mentality affected by the dialectical historical approach.

One can also say that the claims of these approaches to revelation are, but one source of voice is the Western mind with all its intellectual and historical results. The observer of the Arab and Western perspectives finds it a reflection of the positivist materialist philosophy devoted by European Renaissance philosophers since Descartes

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Muḥāmmad Shahrūr, *al-Kitāb wa al-Qur'ān: Qirā'ah Mu'āshirah*, 160; Rashid Alkhion, *Jadal al-Tanzīl ma'a Kitāb Khalq al-Qur'ān* (Germany: Dār al-Jamal, 2000), 23, 24, 36, 37.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Tayyīb Tizīnī, *Min al-Turath ilā al-Thawrah* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Khaldūn, 1978), 2:29 onwards.

and Spinoza to Feuerbach and Marx, and then to the philosophy of contemporary modernity. Spinoza says: "The revelation of the prophets differs according to their moods, environments and conditions. The joyful prophet suggests peace incidents, victories, and the sad prophet suggests evil, defeats, and sorrows." Similarly, Hassan Hanafi says: "Revelation is a human attitude full of hope, suffering, effort, individuality, pain, hypocrisy experiences, deception, anxiety, distress, hope and pain felt by the individual."⁷⁵

Moreover, Arkoun's works offer similar claims to the prophets as poets' adults, and as the great artists.⁷⁶ Abu Zayd claims that prophets, poets and fortune teller are the only people able to use the effectiveness of imagination in the waking and sleeping alike. This does not indicate equality between these levels in terms of the ability of imagination and effectiveness. Prophet comes without doubt at the top of the arrangement, followed by Sufi then the poet comes at the end of the order.⁷⁷

Therefore, one can say that the discussion proposed by these approaches about revelation have not brought anything new about the concept of revelation or its critics, but rather a repetition of the positions of Western philosophers. It is also found that their discussion neglects the *sharī'ah* understanding, which is supposed to be the scientific and objective basis for understanding the text.

Accordingly, the origins of interpretation, the principles of jurisprudence and linguistic studies are not mentioned in their claims. The shared conclusion is that they are immersed in subjective analysis that contradicts

⁷⁵ Hassan Hanafi, *Fī Fikrinā al-Mu'āṣir*, 180.

⁷⁶ See Muḥammad Arkūn, *Tārīkhuh al-Fikr al-'Arab al-Islāmī*. trans. Hāshim Šālīh, (Beirut: Arab Cultural Center, 1996), 38; see also Muḥammad Arkūn, *Nāfiḍah 'alā al-Islām*, trans. Saiyyah al-Jihm (Beirut: Dār 'Attiyyah, 1996), 134.

⁷⁷ Naṣr Hāmid Abū Zayd, *Maḥmūm al-Naṣ*, 56.

science and objectivity. They also missed the fact that Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. One cannot go beyond the nature of the Arabic language, grammar and semantics in analysing the Qur'an. Moreover, they came with results that they had in mind in advance to match what was decided in another culture, which is not what an objective researcher does.

Looking for the verses of revelation, one finds verses in the divine texts describing the status of these approaches and the positions of their adherents, answering their claims, as Almighty says,

"Have the people been amazed that We revealed [revelation] to a man from among them, [saying], "Warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe that they will have a [firm] precedence of honor with their Lord"? [But] the disbelievers say, "Indeed, this is an obvious magician." (Yunus, verse 2). And "But they say, "[The revelation is but] a mixture of false dreams; rather, he has invented it; rather, he is a poet. So let him bring us a sign just as the previous [messengers] were sent [with miracles]." (Al-Anbiya', verse 5). And "And were saying, "Are we to leave our gods for a mad poet?"" (Al-Safat, verse 36).

And "So remind [O Muhammad], for you are not, by the favor of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman." (Al-Tur, verse 29). And "Nor the word of a soothsayer; little do you remember." (Al-Haaqqah, verse 42). And "But when the truth came to them, they said, "This is magic, and indeed we are, concerning it, disbelievers." (Az-Zukhruf, verse 30). And "And they said [to Moses], "O magician, invoke for us your Lord by what He has promised you. Indeed, we will be guided." (Al-Zukhruf, verse 49). And "Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, "A magician or a madman." (Al-Dharyat, verse 52).

Based on the above-mentioned, the various schools of Islamic thought have unanimously rejected this absurd interpretation of the Western hermeneutics and its Arab applications, which represents a great felony and a major affliction on the text and the divine revelation in particular, and a violation of the *sharī'ah*. Ibn Rushd says "the interpreter of the surface of *sharī'ah* is infidel"⁷⁸. He is referring to the heretics who made the Qur'an a site for their interpretation, which also applies to hermeneutics and its interpretations.

Muslims should first make use of authentic scientific approaches in reading and understanding the Qur'anic texts, should second use scientific instruments that are consistent with the sources of inference such as language,⁷⁹ understanding context and reasons of revelation. This, thus, helps Muslims avoid misunderstanding and misinterpreting religious texts based on sceptically religious deviations which lack scientific evidence.⁸⁰

Conclusion

This study has been able to identify the definition of the term hermeneutics and its synonyms. It is also called 'reading the texts of revelation', 'approach', 'modern interpretation', and 'interpretation'. These terms are usually synonyms yet sometimes their meanings vary in the sense of context. The concept of interpretation as a Qur'anic Islamic concept is misused as an introduction to hermeneutics in order to read the text in a new, contemporary or enlightenment approach.

⁷⁸ Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (Cairo: n.p., 1990), 124-125.

⁷⁹ See: 'Abd al-Sattār Nasār, *Manhaj Dirāsah al-'Aqīdah fī Ḍaw' al-Taṭawwur al-'Ilmī al-Mu'āṣir*, al-Muna'taf, 1991), 2:48.

⁸⁰ See: Manṣūr Zuwayd al-Muṭayrī, *al-Siyāghah al-Islāmiyyah li 'Ilm al-Ijtīmā'* (Qatar: Kitāb al-Ummah, 1992), 138-159.

Through its foundations, 'the death of the author' and 'consideration of every reading is a misreading', hermeneutics thus announced the advancement of the human rank over the divine. It considers human beings, based on western philosophy, as the main reason of the universe existence. It went beyond all sacred and subjected it to absolute interpretation.

However, the observer finds that these ideas are grounded in the Western heritage and mentality. It is noticed that the old philosophy in many subjects was not aware of the revelation basically, so there were no principles to deal with this sacred. Thus, the philosophical heritage was distorted in its conception of revelation, and this perception was not far from the religious conception of Judaism and Christianity.

It is also found that the origin of the principles in Christianity is surrounded by a huge amount of interpretation, even some described it as 'disjointed literature', which opened the door wide to the freedom to apply the claims of hermeneutics and Derrida's deconstruction approaches. Consequently, the religious sacredness in the West has fallen for two main reasons, the fragile ground that the Bible carries in Western perception, the multiplicity of translations and interpretations that contradict the axioms of science; and secondly, because of its wide openness to criticism and interpretation.

In the Islamic arena, we find two schools; the first is the school of scholars of foundation and interpretation. It is based on ideological, linguistic, and legal controls to understand the intended message and meaning of God through the text. This approach, through mechanisms and rules, prefers the meaning to be based on the probabilities found in the text.

The second school is of contemporary modernists, which is nothing but a mimic school of Western

propositions, which is far from the spirit of the Arabic language and Islam. It began to take a serious turn, extending its interpretation to the text, subjecting it to infinite interpretation, distracting it from its legislative direction and appointing contemporary philosophies as a judge.

As discussed earlier, these multiple readings of revelation arise from an irrational understanding of the relationship between the text and reality, and the large extent of confusion in that relationship. They consider this relationship as a result of the problem of divinity and human existence based on the Marxist understanding, considering God's relationship with man as the relationship of thought to reality, and materialism to idealism. These approaches study dualism in terms of the relationship of heritage to history upon the assumption that heritage is the product of history. The methodology that they used to approach revelation was only from the Western mentality influenced by the dialectical historical approach.

The special hermeneutics related to the text is only part of the general hermeneutics in its reading of existence. If the special hermeneutics escapes the reading of the text and claims the death of the author, the general hermeneutics is nothing but a tyranny in reading existence away from its Creator. The positivist doctrines, such as existentialism and others are but a true expression of the hermeneutics in a more comprehensive and broader way.

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