

## **New Paradigm of Contemporary Hermeneutics: Analysis of Religious Text Discourse Understanding of Paul Ricoeur's Perspective**

**Ahmad Atabik**

Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kudus, Indonesia  
atabik78@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

The hermeneutic study about discourse before the existence of Paul Ricoeur was around three points: romantic hermeneutics, ontology hermeneutics, and dialectical hermeneutics. They have characteristics that other mainstreams do not have. Ricoeur's thought style cannot be included in any of those three hermeneutic thoughts. In fact, his thought covers almost all contemporary philosophical topics. One of the points of Ricoeur's contemporary hermeneutics is how to combine the phenomenology of Husserl's metaphysical tendencies with Heidegger's existential phenomenology. The text is essentially autonomous to carry out "de-contextualization" (the process of liberating oneself from context) and "re-contextualization" (the process of returning to context). Ricoeur's thought patterns cannot be included in one of the three hermeneutic thought. In fact, his thought allegedly covers almost all contemporary philosophical topics. One of Ricoeur's contemporary hermeneutics is how to combine the phenomenology of Husserl's metaphysical tendencies with Heidegger's existential phenomenology.

**Keywords:** *Paul Ricoeur, Contemporary Hermeneutics, Religious Text.*

### **Abstrak**

*PARADIGMA BARU HERMENEUTIKA KONTEMPORER:  
ANALISIS PEMAHAMAN WACANA TEKS KEAGAMAAN*

*PERSPEKTIF PAUL RICOEUR.* Studi hermeneutika tentang wacana sebelum keberadaan Paul Ricoeur sekitar tiga poin: hermeneutika romantis, hermeneutika onologi, dan hermeneutika dialektik. Mereka memiliki karakteristik yang tidak dimiliki oleh mainstream lainnya. Gaya berpikir Ricoeur tidak dapat dimasukkan dalam salah satu dari ketiga pemikiran hermeneutik tersebut. Bahkan, pemikirannya mencakup hampir semua topik filosofis kontemporer. Salah satu poin dari hermeneutika kontemporer Ricoeur adalah bagaimana menggabungkan fenomenologi kecenderungan metafisik Husserl dengan fenomenologi eksistensial Heidegger. Teks pada dasarnya bersifat otonom untuk melakukan “de-kontekstualisasi” (proses membebaskan diri dari konteks) dan “re-kontekstualisasi” (proses kembali ke konteks). Pola pikir Ricoeur tidak dapat dimasukkan dalam salah satu dari tiga pemikiran hermeneutika. Bahkan, pemikirannya diduga meliputi hampir semua topik filsafat kontemporer. Salah satu hermeneutika kontemporer Ricoeur adalah bagaimana menggabungkan fenomenologi kecenderungan metafisik Husserl dengan fenomenologi eksistensial Heidegger.

**Kata Kunci:** *Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutika Kontemporer, Teks Keagamaan.*

## A. Introduction

Generally, the hermeneutic problem discourse covers three thoughts. *First*, the romantic hermeneutics is represented by Scheilmacher, William Dilthey, and Emilio Betti. *Second*, ontological hermeneutics is represented by Martin Heidegger, Rudolf Bultmann, and Hans-George Gadamer. *Third*, dialectical hermeneutics is represented by K. Otto Appel and Jurgen Habermas. Each hermeneutic thought has different characteristics. Romantic hermeneutics tries to formulate the methodological principles of social science research and compile the epistemological foundation of hermeneutics. The characteristics of ontological hermeneutics are on the concentration of ontology and emphasis on human awareness of its relationship with prejudice and tradition.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile,

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<sup>1</sup> Zaenal Arifin, “Hermeneutika Fenomenologis Paul Ricoeur”, Nafisul ‘Atho and Arif Fahrudin (ed.), *Hermeneutika Transendental: dari Konfigurasi Filosofis Menuju Praksis Islamic Studies* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2003), 249.

dialectical hermeneutics formulates an open communicative and critical communicative society.

In this contemporary era, there is hermeneutic thought which is different from those three hermeneutics. It is the hermeneutics from Paul Ricoeur. His thought is different from the others because his thoughts allegedly cover almost all topics of contemporary philosophy. It shows that Ricoeur's style of thought cannot be included in any of the three hermeneutic thoughts. However, if his works are examined in depth, it seems he has philosophical perspectives that move from existential analysis to eidetic, phenomenological, historical, hermeneutic analysis to ultimately semantic. So from the essence of his thought, it is precisely about the three previous hermeneutic streams.

Ricoeur is considered as a unique hermeneut. His thoughts are considered to be able to facilitate the fierce debate in the hermeneutic between the methodological traditions represented by Emilio Betti and the philosophical traditions represented by Hans-George Gadamer. Ricoeur is also considered to be a mediator of the two traditions of romantic hermeneutics from Schleiermacher and Dilthey and philosophical ontological hermeneutics from Heidegger. Furthermore, Ricoeur is considered to be able to combine two major philosophical traditions, namely German phenomenology represented by Husserl and Heidegger and French Structuralism represented by Ferdinand de Saussure.

In this article, the writer wants to explore Ricoeur's hermeneutic thought that starts from two different thought streams, namely phenomenology and structuralism. From these two thoughts, the writer wants to discuss about the phenomenology of thought toward hermeneutics and hermeneutics structuralism. If both of them are connected, it can produce comprehensive thoughts in hermeneutics studies. In the end, the writer tries to apply Ricoeur hermeneutics in Islamic studies, especially interpretation study.

## B. Discussion

### 1. Ricoeur's Biography and Intellect

Ricoeur has complete name Paul Ricoeur. He was born in 1913 in Valence, Southern France. His family is Protestant Christian and as the leading Protestant scholars for his community in France. Ricoeur grew up in Rennes without father and mother (orphans). His intellect in philosophy was started from his meeting with Dalviez di Lycee, a famous Thomistic philosopher. He was one of the first Christians to undertake a major study of Freud's psychoanalyst.<sup>2</sup> From the results of his undergraduate studies, he obtained the degree of "License de Philosophie" in 1933. In the end of 1930, he enrolled as graduate student at Sorbonne University, and in 1935, he obtained an "Aggregation de Philosophie" (membership or permission to become a member of an organization in the field of philosophy).<sup>3</sup>

After graduating from the program, he taught at Colmar for a year, and then he was called up for military service (1937-1939). At the time of mobilization, Ricoeur joined the French army and became a prisoner of war until 1945. Along as a prisoner, he studied autodidact philosophical works, such as the works of Husserl, Heidegger, and Jaspers. And, it influenced the construction of his hermeneutic thought. Among his habits in developing intellect, he read the complete works of one of the great philosophers every year: Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche. Finally, he gained philosophy knowledge in-depth from classical Greek philosophy to modern Western philosophy. After the war, he became a lecturer in philosophy at Cevinol College, the International Protestant Center for Education and Culture in Chambonsur-Lignon.<sup>4</sup>

His expertise in the field of philosophy made him replaced Jean Hyppolite's position and as the head of the philosophy history

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<sup>2</sup> Arifin, 249.

<sup>3</sup> E. Sumaryono, *Hermeneutik: Sebuah Metode Filsafat* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1995), 103.

<sup>4</sup> Sumaryono, 104.

at University of Strasbourg in 1948. After taking his doctoral degree in 1950, he obtained the title “Docteur des Letter” (Doctor of Literature) through his thesis entitled “Philosophie de la Volonte” (Philosophy of the Will), which he later described it in two volumes, namely: “La Volontaire et l’Involontaire” (the Desired and Undesired). In first volume, Ricoeur used the phenomenological method to discuss the will dimensions which in G. Marcel’s writings is called “incarnate existence”. While in the second volume, he made the title “Finitude et Culpabilite” (Limitations and Errors) which was published in 1960 in two books with title: “L’Homme Faillible” (Humans Who Easily Fall into Sin) and “La Symbolique du Mal” (Symbol of Sin or Crime).<sup>5</sup>

As academics, Ricoeur had a career as a lecturer in philosophy at Colmar for a year. After World War II, he also did his academic life at Cevinol College as a philosophy lecturer. In 1957, Ricoeur was appointed as professor of philosophy at Sorbonne University, but in 1966, he chose to teach at Nanterre, an extension of the Sorbonne University in Paris countryside. Then, he was appointed as dean in 1969. In 1970, for some reasons, Ricoeur put his position as decan and moved to the University of Louvain or Leuven in Belgium.

After moving from one place to another, Ricoeur returned to Nanterre (now called University Paris X) in 1973 and he taught for several months at Chicago University every year. In Paris, he became director of Centre d’Edudes Phenomenologiques et Hermeneutiques (Center for the Study of Phenomenology and Hermeneutics). During this period, it seems that the peak of Ricoeur’s achievement was paying much attention to the problems of language and hermeneutics philosophy. In his next intellectual life, Ricoeur developed and took an interest more in the language philosophy, especially in its relationship with hermeneutics.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Sumaryono, 104.

<sup>6</sup> Kaelan, *Filsafat Bahasa: Masalah dan Perkembangannya* (Yogyakarta: Paradigma, 2002), 201.

## 2. Ricoeur and His Thought

Hermeneutics observers (one of them is Bleicher) noted the important role played by Ricoeur in formulating contemporary hermeneutics. Even Bleicher noted the important role of Ricoeur in facilitating the debate on the hermeneutic between objective interpretation supporters and subjective interpretation supporters. It was previously sparked by Emilio Betti and Hans-George Gadamer. In facilitating the two hermeneutics models, Ricoeur agreed with Betti that hermeneutics is a study to uncover the objective meaning of texts that have space and time differences from the reader, but on the other hand, he also agreed with Gadamer hermeneutics that the interpreter's horizon is the main reference in understanding the texts although it was done subjectively.<sup>7</sup>

Ricoeur also facilitated the previous hermeneutic thought, namely tradition of romantic hermeneutics from Schleiermacher and Dilthey with Heidegger's philosophical hermeneutics. Because Ricoeur agreed with Dilthey, he placed hermeneutics as a study of linguistically fixed life expressions. He did not stop at the step of psychology to reconstruct the writer's experience (such as Schleiermacher's thought) or an attempt to find oneself from other people (such as Dilthey's thought), but he also revealed the potential of "existence" (like Heidegger's thought).<sup>8</sup>

The uniqueness of Ricoeur's hermeneutics is also on the way in combining the Husserl's metaphysical tendency phenomenology and Heidegger's existential phenomenology. Ricoeur agreed with Husserl who stated that someone who becomes the subject had to be well aware of the object he was witnessing mindfully. Meanwhile, in Heidegger's existential phenomenology, Ricoeur looked at the importance of observations referred to as *dasein* or

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<sup>7</sup> Ilyas Supena, *Bersababat dengan Makna Melalui Hermeneutika*, ed. Abu Rokhmad (Semarang: Graduate Program of IAIN Walisongo, 2012), 147.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Norma Permata, "Hermeneutika Fenomenologis Paul Ricoeur", Nafisul 'Atho and Arif Fahrudin (ed.), *Hermeneutika Transendental: dari Konfigurasi Filosofis Menuju Praksis Islamic Studies* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2003), 223.

those that were without consciousness. Although Heidegger did not follow Husserl who moved from eidetic phenomenology to transcendental phenomenology, he persisted on the interpretation of phenomena, namely dwelling on *dasein* towards the determination of the existence meaning. Ricoeur's position followed Husserl. It is in the replacement of eidetic phenomenology with descriptive phenomenology.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, Ricoeur's thought was also seen as meritorious in combining German Phenomenology and French Structuralism. From the phenomenology concept, Paul Ricoeur combines the Cartesian metaphysical tendencies from Husserl and the existential tendencies from Heidegger. While, from structuralism, he adopts both the Ferdinand de Saussure linguistic (mainly related to the concept of *langue* and *parole* differences) and the anthropological point represented by Levy-Strauss.<sup>10</sup> The construction of Ricoeur's thoughts can be said that Ricoeur has a philosophical perspective that switches from existential analysis then to eidetic, phenomenological, historical, hermeneutic, and ultimately semantic analysis. There is a suspicion that Ricoeur's overall philosophy is ultimately directed at hermeneutics, especially on interpretation.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Ricoeur: Structuralism and Hermeneutics

Ricoeur's hermeneutic thought construction also arose from the great change of philosophical thought in France, namely the shifting of phenomenological thinking and existentialism and replaced with structuralism.<sup>12</sup> Ricoeur who is always sensitive to the

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<sup>9</sup> Josef Bleicher, *Hermeneutika Kontemporer: Hermeneutika Sebagai Metode, Filsafat, dan Kritik* (Yogyakarta: Fajar Pustaka, 2007), 364.

<sup>10</sup> Ilyas Supena, *Bersahabat dengan Makna Melalui Hermeneutika*, 217.

<sup>11</sup> E. Sumaryono, *Hermeneutik: Sebuah Metode Filsafat*, 105.

<sup>12</sup> Structural linguistics tries to describe a language based on the language characteristics. This view is a result of new concepts or views on language and studies found by the Father of Modern Linguistics, namely Ferdinand de Saussure. One of Saussure's theories in Structuralism is the different concepts of *la langue* and *la parole*. De Saussure distinguishes *la langue* and *la parole*. What is meant by *la langue* is the whole sign

philosophical thought development must determine his position in the structuralism debate. And in turn, he must determine his philosophical thinking. In its change, structuralism, especially under Ferdinand de Saussure, raised modern linguistics and phonology that explain all models of the use of signs in human life. According to structuralism thinking, language must be understood as a system before it can be seen as a creative process. This system is not based on the language user but it determines at an unconscious level. The radical attitude of structuralism is expressed by refusing the subjectivity and it is emphasized in existentialism and phenomenology. This is a big challenge and difficulty for hermeneutics because according to structuralism, language does not refer to the scope outside the language itself. Language is a closed system where each element is related to other elements. Therefore, look for meaning that points outside the language is useless. For structuralism, language does not refer to the scope outside of language itself because it forms its own scope.<sup>13</sup>

The process of interpretation is actually devoted to linguistic texts and rests on the analysis of text linguistic phenomena. But this process aims to uncover various levels of implicit meaning. It leads us to Ricoeur's concept about language understanding. Ricoeur refused the language structural understanding on the principle that language is a closed system from various relationships that do not refer to anything outside it. In Ricoeur's view, structuralism ends in making language as the basis of a realm with itself. Each unit refers to other various units in the same system according to the interaction among various contradictions and differences that underlie the system. In short, language is not considered as the essence of its existence

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system that functions as a verbal communication means among members of a language society and it is abstract. Meanwhile, *la parole* is the use or realization (speech) of language by each member of the language community. It is concrete because parole is a physical reality. In this case, the object of linguistic study is language. It is done through parole because it is a concrete language form which can be observed and researched. See, Abdul Chaer, *Linguistik Umum* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2007), 347-348.

<sup>13</sup>Kaelan, *Filsafat Bahasa: Masalah dan Perkembangannya*, 231.



form, but rather it becomes a system that stands above subjective needs for various internal relations.<sup>14</sup>

This thought discourse leads to structuralism revival in which subjects were lost and texts tended to be autonomous. Religious discourse which initially relied heavily on the spoken language is now beginning to be intervened by written language which emphasizes langue rather than parole. Langue is the abstraction and articulation of language at the socio-cultural level, while parole is an expression of language at the individual level. In this case, language observers from the linguistics, anthropology and language philosophy have different opinion: which one is more primary between the written and spoken language and between parole and langue.<sup>15</sup>

Ricoeur explained that structuralism in language analysis focuses on langue language and not in parole utterance with the assumption that language presents the system, while utterance presents language events. The system represents the consistence and accepts understanding. Meanwhile, the conversation does not stagnate in understanding violation. Starting from here, Ricoeur began to have views based on meaning. Language events actually appear in predication sentences. This sentence is not words collection but it is independent. This sentence sometimes refers to linguistic events but these events remain in the sentence. The relationship between meaning and linguistic events is a dialectical relationship. Language does not speak but man who speaks. In addition, linguistic events sometimes refers to the speaker and sometimes refers to the conversation. Both of them influence each other.<sup>16</sup>

The radical attitude of the structuralists understands Ricoeur thoughts about language philosophy, especially related to the text hermeneutics. Ricoeur acknowledged the linguistic character of the symbols, and those symbols are indeed included in the language

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<sup>14</sup> Kaelan, 232.

<sup>15</sup> Komarudin Hidayat, *Memahami Bahasa Agama: Sebuah Kajian Hermeneutik* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, *Hermeneutika Inklusif: Mengatasi Problematika Bacaan dan Cara-cara Pentakwilan atas Diskursus Keagamaan* (Yogyakarta: ICIP, 2004), 57.

system. On the other hand, Ricoeur criticized structuralism as a biased view about language. Based on his thoughts, Ricoeur developed hermeneutics in the text. Among other language elements, a text (i.e. a discourse which cannot be indefinitely attributed to oral discourse) has special features.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4. Ricoeur: Interpretation About Symbol and Text

Ricoeur is a hermeneutic figure that is unique and different from previous hermeneutic experts. His thinking is very complete and he has many works. His works show that he has a philosophical perspective that moves from existential analysis to eidetic analysis (such detailed observations), phenomenology, history, hermeneutics, and semantics. However, there is a suspicion that Ricoeur's philosophy is ultimately directed at hermeneutics, especially on interpretation. He explained that basically the whole philosophy is an interpretation of interpretations.<sup>18</sup> Ricoeur added that if there is meanings plurality, interpretation is needed. If symbols are involved, interpretation becomes important because there must be multiple meanings. Essentially, philosophy is a hermeneutic, implicit meaning of the text.<sup>19</sup>

According to Ricoeur, words are symbols too because they describe other meanings that are "indirect", not so important, figurative and can only be understood through these symbols. Thus, symbols and interpretations are concepts that have meaning plurality contained in symbols or words. Ricoeur further explained that the text is the object of interpretation in hermeneutics. According to Ricoeur, the text has broad understanding that includes symbols and myths. Therefore, hermeneutics reveal problems that hinder myths and symbols understanding and reflectively systematizing the reality behind the languages, symbols and myths.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Kaelan, *Filsafat Bahasa*, 231.

<sup>18</sup> E. Sumaryono, *Hermeneutik: Sebuah Metode Filsafat*, 105.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutika Ilmu Sosial*, ed. M. Syukri (Bantul: Kreasi Wacana, 2010), 93.

<sup>20</sup> Ricoeur, 94.

In explaining the terms of the text, Ricoeur explains the meaning of the text and its owner. According to him, the text is any discourse fixed by writing. Based on this brief definition, what we need to know is what Ricoeur meant by discourse before understanding the word “writing”. The term “discourse” according to Ricoeur refers to the text as “event”, not “meaning”. Because, if the text is only interpreted as meaning, it will stop only limited to a static and historical meaning. But, if it is positioned as an “event”, then the text includes its meaning and historicity as well as the living and dynamic. Furthermore, Ricoeur then asserted that “language (text) always says something, as well as about something”.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, Ricoeur explained that discourse is the language when it is used to communicate. In this case, there are two types of discourse articulation, namely spoken language and written language. The written language forms direct communication where the hermeneutic method is not really needed, because the utterances that are delivered (speech) are still attached directly to the conversation. Therefore, the meaning of the utterance can still be referred directly to the reader’s intonation and gestures whereas the text is an autonomous corpus.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, Ricoeur raises two keywords about the text that are very important in his hermeneutical thinking, namely what is said (what the text says) and the act of saying (the way or process of text expressing it). The first keyword, what is said, is the event contained in a text. The meaning of written text has become so autonomous and completely independent from the author’s context. The text does not provide a direct communication space between the writer and the reader. The absence of this space automatically makes the text expresses autonomously to anyone who reads it. It depends on the readers’

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<sup>21</sup> Ahmad Norma Permata, “Hermeneutika Fenomenologis Paul Ricoeur”, 233.

<sup>22</sup> Permata, 234.

intentions, interests, and capacity. At the level of “what is said”, the author/writer’s meaning is not to be insulated on any meaning standard. Ricoeur even referred to the text writer as the first reader. The meaning he wrote on the text and the meaning caught by the second, third, and next readers will be different and there will be meaning shift.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, Ricoeur considers that a text has independence and totality which is characterized by four things. *First*, the meaning in “what is said” is independent from “the act of saying”. While in the second language, the process cannot be separated. *Second*, the meaning of a text is no longer bound to the speaker, like spoken language. What is meant by the text is no longer related to what is originally meant by the writer. It does not mean that the writer is no longer needed even though Ricoeur ever said about “the writer’s death”, but the intention of the writer is blocked by a text that has been standardized. In the end, Ricoeur assumed that the writer is as “first reader”. *Third*, because it is not bound to a dialogue, a text is no longer bound to the original context (ostensive reference). It is not bound to the original context of the conversation. What is pointed out by the text is an imaginary world built by the text itself. *Fourth*, because it is not bound by the dialogue system, it is no longer bound by the initial context, as the spoken language is bound to the listener. So it can be concluded that a text is written not for a particular reader, but to anyone who can read, and not limited to space and time. In other words, a text builds its own life, because a text is a monologue, not a dialogue.<sup>24</sup>

Ricoeur explained more deeply that the concept of this text became a revision of Dilthey’s concept about explanation and understanding. Dilthey considered that explanation is a characteristic of natural science: to uncover the real workings of natural phenomena without intention. Meanwhile, understanding is

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<sup>23</sup> Ilyas Supena, *Bersababat dengan Makna Melalui Hermeneutika*, 155.

<sup>24</sup> Ahmad Norma Permata, “Hermeneutika Fenomenologis Paul Ricoeur”, 234-235.

the workings of humanities and has a dimension of intentionality. So, both of them work mutually exclusive. Ricoeur revised Dilthey's view by saying the two methodological ways could not be separated dichotomically by applying to the relationship between metaphor and text as a codification of the spoken language and written language. Ricoeur showed how explanation and understanding can be applied to different sides. Explanation is a working way that connects metaphor with text, namely standardization of the spoken language to the written language. Meanwhile, interpretation is a way of working from text to metaphor, namely the transcription of the written language into the spoken language.<sup>25</sup>

Ricoeur further expanded the concept of this text, not only to the language that settles in writing but also to every human action that has meaning, namely every intentional human action to achieve a certain goal. Starting from here, Ricoeur wanted to build a new epistemology for the social sciences and humanities. For Ricoeur, the object of social sciences and humanities has character as text and it must study about the interpretation of existing studies on hermeneutics.<sup>26</sup>

## 5. Ricoeur: Explanation and Understanding

From those symbols and words concept, Ricoeur stated that the whole concept of symbols and words need not appear as if filled with mystery. According to him, a word is also a symbol because both of them present something else. Each word is basically conventional in nature and does not carry its own meaning directly to the reader or listener (except onomatopoeitic words such as words that describe goat sounds, rifle sounds, etc.) Furthermore, according to Ricoeur, speaker forms the meaning pattern (semantics) unconsciously in the words that are issued. This meaning pattern broadly provides a description of the person's life context and history. This is the reason

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<sup>25</sup> Ilyas Supena, *Bersahabat dengan Makna Melalui Hermeneutika*, 155.

<sup>26</sup> Supena, 156.

why Ricoeur gave an explanation about the difference between the terms “explanation” and “interpretation or understanding”.<sup>27</sup>

On another occasion, Ricoeur contributed hermeneutic theory in the theory he developed to understand the text: to combine *verstehen*/understanding and *erklaren*/explanation which has been a long debate for the hermeneutists. Ricoeur argued that both (*verstehen* and *erklaren*) are needed to uncover the meaning of the text. For Ricoeur, an explanation (*erklaren*) will clarify or open a range of positions and meanings while with understanding (*verstehen*), we will understand or comprehend the partial meaning as a whole in a synthesis effort. Thus, according to Ricoeur, reading is interpreting and interpreting is understanding and explaining.<sup>28</sup>

In explaining the dichotomy between “understanding and explaining”, Ricoeur argued:

Using the dialectics between *erklaren*/explanations and *verstehen*/understanding, I hope it is able to present written analysis into my interpretation theory which becomes a kind of opponent that can be juxtaposed with the text as a work of discourse. If the activity of “reading” is positioned as opposition to the activity of “writing”, then the dialectics between events and meanings are so essential to the structure of discourse. It is like what we have seen in previous essays. It makes a dialectic between understanding (*verstehen* in the German hermeneutic tradition) and explanation (*erklaren*) in reading texts. Without intending to force into our discussion, too mechanical correspondence between the main structure of the text as the writer discourse and the interpretation process as the reader discourse. At least, as an introduction, we can say that understanding means reading what the relations of event discourse to the words of the discourse (the utterance of discourse) is. Meanwhile, explanation means reading what the relation of spoken words autonomy and text with the discourse objective meaning. Therefore, the reading dialectical structure corresponds to the discourse dialectical structure.

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<sup>27</sup> E. Sumaryono, *Hermeneutik: Sebuah Metode Filsafat*, 106.

<sup>28</sup> Syafa'atun Almirzanah and Sahiron Syamsuddin (eds.), *Upaya Integrasi Hermeneutik dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an dan Hadis: Teori dan Aplikasi* (Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2011), 66.

This correspondence corroborates my opinion as mentioned in introduction that the theory of discourse discussed in the essay and this book directs further consequences for my interpretation theory.<sup>29</sup>

Ricoeur's explanation above provides an understanding of the importance of integrating understanding (*verstehen*) and explanation (*erklären*) in one interpretation process as seen in the initial moments of text interpretation. In Ricoeur's interpretation theory, there are three moments.<sup>30</sup> *First*, the process of interpreting the text begins with guessing the text meaning (words) because the reader actually does not have access to know the author's meaning. For Ricoeur, this is the earliest understanding process (*verstehen*/understanding) and we try to understand the text meaning in general, not in detail yet (pre-reflective understanding). At this early moment, the text might present a variety of meanings. *Second*, we begin to look for critical and methodical explanations regarding the initial meaning generated through pre-reflective understanding. That understanding can be validated, corrected or deepened by considering the text objective structure. In this point, we see a detailed understanding that must be obtained through a moment of methodical explanation (an argumentative-rational process). *Third*, appropriation is the process of understanding oneself that is projected by texts and it is the top of interpretation process in which someone becomes understanding himself more. At this moment, there is a dialogue between the reader and the text.

If those three stages of thought are examined more deeply, we can find Ricoeur's hermeneutic project insolving the dichotomy problems between *erklären* and *verstehen* through its dialectical

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "Penjelasan dan Pemahaman", transl. Mun'im Sirry, in Syafa'atun Almirzanah and Sahiron Syamsuddin (eds.), *Pemikiran Hermeneutika dalam Tradisi Barat* (Yogyakarta: Research Center of Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2011), 23.

<sup>30</sup> Syafa'atun Almirzanah and Sahiron Syamsuddin (eds.), *Upaya Integrasi Hermeneutik dalam Kajian Al-Qur'an dan Hadis: Teori dan Aplikasi*, 203.

concept based on scientific linguistic analysis. Thus, it can be said that Ricoeur's hermeneutics summarizes two major trends in twentieth-century philosophy, namely the language philosophy and an attraction to provide a foundation for social sciences.<sup>31</sup>

### C. Conclusion

The hermeneutic study before the emergence of Paul Ricoeur revolves around three large points: romantic hermeneutics, ontology hermeneutic, and dialectical hermeneutics. All of them have different characteristics. Ricoeur's thought patterns cannot be included in one of the three hermeneutic thought. In fact, his thought allegedly covers almost all contemporary philosophical topics. One of Ricoeur's contemporary hermeneutics is how to combine the phenomenology of Husserl's metaphysical tendencies with Heidegger's existential phenomenology. According to Ricoeur, the text is essentially autonomous to carry out "de-contextualization" (the process of liberating oneself from context) and "re-contextualization" (the process of returning to context). According to him, the text is "any discourse fixed by writing". Ricoeur gives meaning to "discourse" as referring to the text as "event", not "meaning". For Ricoeur, the text as meaning is limited as a static historical meaning. While the text as "event", includes the meaning and historicity as well as the living and dynamic.

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<sup>31</sup> Zaenal Arifin, "Hermeneutika Fenomenologis Paul Ricoeur", 260.



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