

The Concept of *Ta'āṭuf* as a Moderate Hermeneutic of Muṣṭafā Nāsīf

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Abstract. This article aims to discuss *ta'wīl* as hermeneutics in modern Arabic literary study by a figure who has a moderate view towards the modernization of Arabic literary criticism, namely Muṣṭafā Nāsīf, an Egyptian scholar, who wrote a book entitled *Nazariyat al-Ta'wīl*. Based on a study of this book using a content analysis approach, this article argues that the *ta'wīl* theory is close to what is implied by Ricoeur, one of the phenomenological figures, in his argument about the discourse between readers and texts. This expression means that we need to appreciate textual problems and their various dimensions. This is what Muṣṭafā Nāsīf defines as a *ta'āṭuf* concept of sympathy, being not arbitrary in treating texts, which according to him the history of texts, that texts and the understanding of them by the reader are in synergy in constructing the meaning contained in them.

Keywords: Hermeneutics, *ta'wīl*, muṣṭafā nāsīf.

1 Introduction

It is undeniable that in criticizing a literary work, an approach is needed. In general, Ronald Tanaka put forward two approaches: First, microliterature whose studies assume that understanding literary works can stand alone without the help of other aspects around it. Second, macro literature understands literary works with other assistance outside of literature. The two approaches introduced by Ronald Tanaka are the intrinsic approach which understands literature focused on autonomous literary texts and the extrinsic approach, namely the study of literary works outside the text proposed by Wellek and Warren. In addition, Abrams introduces four literary approaches: First, an expressive approach that relates to the author. Second, an objective approach that focuses on literary texts will later be called structuralism or intrinsic. Third, the mimetic approach is literary research related to the universe (Universe), and Fourth, the pragmatic approach is related to the reader's reception of the text. Regarding Arabic literary criticism approaches that develop in the analysis of literary texts and provide theoretical and practical assessments, especially modern and contemporary, are the product of acculturation and friction with the West and the study of other people's minds through learning and translation activities [1].

Various attitudes towards the modernity of criticism of Arabic literature. Among them are camps that defend and call for the need to take advantage of everything that is gained from Western criticism as we see in what was done by Muhammad Miftāh, Mohammed Bennis, and Hamīd Hamdani Hussein Wad and Salah Fadl. On the other hand, some groups seek to invite to consolidate Arabic criticism and not rush to negative judgments on classical Arabic heritage. Abdul Aziz Hammouda in his valuable books, such as *Al-Marāyā al-Muqa‘‘arah* (concave mirror), *Al-Marāyā al-Muhaddabah* (convex mirror), and *Al-Khurūj min al-Tīh* (out of the desert). In addition, some are moderate among the critics who defend the old critical approach (*turāts*), while compromising it with the tools and mechanisms of Western criticism, as Muṣṭafā Nāsīf did in many of his books and studies which always adhered to classical *balaghah* science, then Abdel Fattah Klaito in his books *Al-adab wal Gharābah*, *al-Hikāyah wa al-Ta'wīl*, and *al-Ghā'ib*, including Abdullāh Muhammad al-Ghadzāmī in his books *al-Qashīdah wa al-Nashal-Mudhād* and *Al-Musyākilah wa al -Deviation*.

One of the products of critical modernity in the 'Arabic tradition' is Hermeneutics, which is similar to the well-known *ta'wīl* theory in the Arab/Islamic tradition. Hermeneutics and *ta'wīl* in the Arabic tradition are believed to have existed in practice in the classical Arabic literary criticism tradition, although they have not been defined as defined in the modern Arabic literary criticism tradition. *Ta'wīl* and Hermeneutics are approaches that are quite popular in literary criticism because hermeneutics is very necessary for reading literary works, in the development of contemporary literary theory it is also seen that there is a strong tendency to place the importance of the role of the subject of the reader (audience) in interpreting the meaning of the text. In its development, the Egyptian scholar Muṣṭafā Nāsīf used the term *ta'wīl* theory which was intended as Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics.

2 Methodology

Mustafa Muṣṭafā Nāsīf's work in this paper is analyzed using a content analysis approach. Approaches that fall into the category of qualitative research generally have two objectives; first, it aims to find content (content and/or meaning as well as the identity, this is also called content analysis research. Second, researchers can also categorize elements that appear and explore their relationship, this is called ethnographic content analysis [2].

This paper tends to use a content analysis approach with the first objective of trying to find content in the form of content or meaning of Muṣṭafā Nāsīf's moderate hermeneutic thought in his work *Nazariyat al-Ta'wīl*, especially regarding the concept of *ta'āuf* or sympathy in reading texts, especially literary texts. After finding his hermeneutic thinking, the author then identifies and sees his tendency to hermeneutic thoughts by western scholars such as Martin Heidegger, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ricoeur, and others.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Hermeneutics: An approach to literary criticism

The term „hermeneutics“ is linguistically rooted in the Greek verb *hermeneuein* which means „to interpret“ and the noun *hermeneia*“ which means „interpretation“. In the works of classical writers, the term hermeneutics and various mentions of it have existed such as Xenophon, Plutarch, Epicurus, and Longinus, where these terms refer to the myth of Hermes whose job is to transmute something beyond human understanding into a format that can be understood by reason [3]. Therefore the Greek tradition lauds Hermes who is considered the founder of the system of language and writing. So the history of hermeneutics begins with the *ta'wil* symbol (allegory) used in Homer's poems before the 6th century AD. Then after a century later, these words were used by Plato in his philosophical essays. Later the same term appears in the writings of Aristotle and the Stoic philosophers because their descriptions in their writings of the importance of hermeneutics in philosophical discourse are described in a broad and detailed manner [4]. The tradition, which is deeply rooted in ancient Greece, reached its first peak. The philosopher is considered the initiator of hermeneutics in the history of western scientists. The hermeneutic tradition which was deeply rooted in ancient Greece reached its first peak after being developed by Augustine (354-430 AD) especially in understanding the doctrines in the Bible. In the post-reformation era of the 17th century, the word hermeneutic appeared in book titles indicating a sub-category of Christian theology.

In subsequent developments, Martin Heidegger in the 20th century is considered a figure who firmly refers to the hermeneutic understanding as meant by Hermes and Plato. There are at least six hermeneutic understandings that have developed in the modern era, namely: bible interpretation theory, philological methodology, linguistic understanding, the methodological foundation of the humanities science, phenomenology of existence, interpretation systems to find meaning behind myths and symbols. In its development, hermeneutics gave birth to three models, namely: objective hermeneutics, subjective hermeneutics, and objective-cum-subjective hermeneutics. Objective hermeneutics developed by hermeneutic figures, in particular Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), and Emilio Betti (1890-1968). According to this first model, hermeneutics means understanding the text as understood by the author, because what is called a text, according to Schleiermacher, is an expression of the soul of the author, so as also stated in Betti's hermeneutics, what is called *Auslegung* or true interpretation is intended so that the thought of something can be understood. What is following the owner of the idea (the author) is in harmony with the surrounding social environment. Therefore, Dilthey suggests that text reviewers can put themselves in someone's position to be understood—in this case, the author by using imagination and insight. According to Schleiermacher, every text has two sides: (1) the linguistic side which refers to the language that allows the understanding process to be possible, (2) the psychological side which refers to the side of the author's mind which is manifested in the style of language used. These two sides reflect the author's experience which the reader then constructs to understand the author's thoughts and experiences. Dilthey's Hermeneutic theory is called reconstructive or reproductive hermeneutics.

In contrast to the two models of hermeneutic thought as stated above, subjective hermeneutics. Hermeneutic figures belonging to this model of thought are Hans Georg Gadamer and Jorge J.E. Gracia. According to Gadamer, one does not need to break away from one's tradition to then enter the writer's tradition in an attempt to interpret the text. It is impossible because going out of one's tradition means turning off the mind and „creativity“. Instead, one has to interpret the text based on what is currently owned (variable), what is seen (vorsicht), and what will be obtained later (vorgriff). This does not mean ignoring the historicity of the text, but more than that, Gadamer wants to emphasize that to get a correct understanding of a text that comes from the past, one must first have a horizon (own) to be able to dive into a historicity situation. In Gadamer's view, the historical reality of the past is not considered as something separate from the present but as a unity or rather a continuity. For Gadamer, the distance between the past and the present is not separated by a gaping chasm but a distance filled with a balance of traditions and customs by which everything that happened in the past reveals itself in the present. This is what forms awareness of historical reality [5].

If Schleiermacher, Dilthey, and Betti as objective hermeneutics figures emphasize the importance of rediscovering the objective meaning desired by the author of the text and Gadamer with subjective hermeneutic theory, then Paul Ricoeur and Barthes as moderate hermeneutic figures who bridge the two (objectivity and relativity). For Ricoeur, to arrive at a correct understanding of the text cannot be solved simply by returning to what is suspected to be the author's intention. But it must be with the ability to be able to read from within the text without entering or placing oneself in the text, and the way of understanding it does not have to be separated from its own cultural and historical framework. A reviewer of literary texts must behave in media res, always in the middle, neither behind nor in front. The intention is to lighten and simplify the content of the text by way of living it. In interpreting the text, the reviewer does not have to appear as though he is dealing with a frozen text but must read into the text.

According to Ricoeur, there are three main characteristics of literary language that need to be considered for a literary reviewer who uses the hermeneutic method. First, literary language is symbolic, political, and conceptual. Second, in literary language, the pair of taste and consciousness produces an aesthetic object that is bound to itself. Third, literary language has the opportunity to publish experiences and is essentially stronger in describing the expressions of life. Regarding Ricoeur's opinion, Abdul Hadi W. M briefly stated the procedures that can be taken using the hermeneutic method as follows. First, the text must be read with full sincerity, using sympathetic imagination. Second, the reader must be involved in a structural analysis of the purpose of presenting the text, determining the signs contained in it before it can reveal the deepest meaning, and before determining the references and context of the significant signs in the text. Third, the reader must see that everything related to the meanings and ideas in the text is an experience of non-language reality.

3.2 Ta'wīl in the tradition of Arabic Literary Criticism

The term ta'wīl in the Arabic tradition is used by various traditional Islamic or Arabic sciences such as interpretation, fiqh, theology, Sufism, and literary criticism. This can be understood because the word ta'wīl with various meanings is mentioned in the Qur'an 17 times. In the Islamic or Arab-Persian intellectual tradition, several forms of interpretive theory and universal principles for understanding texts have emerged and developed rapidly. The theory of interpretation gave birth to the science of colorful interpretation, while universal principles gave birth to a hermeneutic form or what is commonly understood as ta'wīl. The term ta'wīl is often translated as spiritual or symbolic interpretation and is a more intensive form of interpretation and is aimed at the inner meaning of the text. Ta'wīl was born from the activity of understanding the mutasyabihat (symbolic) verses of the Qur'an and hadith, especially the Qudsi hadith.

In the literature of exegesis, the interpretation that uses ta'wīl is the interpretation with the isyārī or at-tafsir al-isyārī approach. In the next chapter, the ta'wīl theory will also be applied in understanding literary texts, especially poetry, especially Sufi poetry, and their allegorical stories. Definitively the term ta'wīl was introduced by the prominent Sufis in the 9th and 10th centuries AD, Sahl al-Tustari and Sulami [6]. In subsequent developments in the 12-15th century AD, its use was increasingly widespread among philosophers, Sufis, and literary experts. For example, it can be seen in the works of Imam al-Ghazali, Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamdhani, Ahmad al-Ghazali, Ruzbihan al-Baqli, Ibn 'Arabi, Jalaluddin Rumi, Fakhruddin 'Iraqi, Sadrudin al-Qunawi, Abdul Karim al-Jili and Abdul Rahman al-Jami. In literary criticism literature, among Arab literary critics who emphasize ta'wīl is Abu Hayyan at-Tauhidi (375/987) who says that a literary reviewer must not only master the science of balāghah, poetry and prose but also ta'wīl. In addition, Abdul Qāhir al-jurjānī (400-471 H) and Ibn al-Asir (w637 H) prioritized meaning. His opinion is different from other critics who see the beauty of literature in its pronunciation. According to him, the meaning does not increase, but what does increase is the pronunciation. The inner meaning/aspect, whether thought, taste, or imagination, is the basis for the expression of language as an external aspect. A literary expression will not be meaningful if the meaning it contains is damaged. Therefore, in the study of literary texts, al-Jurjani also emphasizes the importance of ta'wīl in a more general sense [7].

The hermeneutic theory is almost the same as the term ta'wīl in the Arabic tradition [8]. Ta'wīl in the most appropriate sense is the determination of linguistic meanings in a literary work through analyzing and rearranging words and sentences as well as commenting on the text. Ta'wīl like this usually focuses on pieces of text that are complicated to understand. While broadly, ta'wīl is interpreted as an explanation of the purpose and intent of a literary work in its entirety using language means. With this understanding, ta'wīl includes an explanation of the character and characteristics of a literary work, including the type/variety of literature, its elements, aims and objectives, and their effects.

If we compare the theory of ta'wīl in the Arab/Islamic tradition and hermeneutics, there are also subjective theories such as ta'wīl in the view of Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240 AD) ta'wīl tries to find the spiritual meaning of the text by revealing symbolic expressions. Ibn 'Arabi called ta'wīl as tajdid al-Mutsul (renewing the figurative/symbolic meaning of a text and also calling it tajdid al-Khalq, meaning renewal as a new creation because in ta'wīl a text reviewer has created a new meaning. 'Arabi recognizes the plurality of meanings in understanding the text. In addition, Hamzah Fansuri, a Sufi and Acehnese poet of the 16th and 17th centuries, in his work *Asrar'Arifin* (the secrets of the Sufis gives the equivalent of the word ta'wīl with the syarah of going home. This is because according to him ta'wīl means explaining a text's meaning by returning to the secret of its deepest meaning which is the substance of the text that drives the life of a text. This ta'wīl by sufis can be accepted if it acknowledges the textual meaning first and does not conflict with the sharī'ah [9].

In subjective ta'wīl theory, it is not only seen in Sufi ta'wīl thought but also in fiqh studies among ahl al -Ra'y who allows ta'wīl ba'id. Meanwhile, objective ta'wīl theory can be seen in ta'wīl theory in ushul fiqh which requires that in doing penta'wīlan two things must be fulfilled, namely; must be linguistically justified and supported by reasons or qarinah that can be justified in the structure of the text and also in its historical context. The ta'wīl theory of this model can also be seen from the perspective of the science of interpretation as understood by Hamid Abu Zaid that a penta'wīl must master the knowledge of the Qur'an such as the concept of nasikh mansukh, typical-'Am, muhkam-mutasyabih, and others because according to him a penta'wīl without imu al-Qur'an will have difficulty in releasing its ideology or there will be a jump from ta'wīl to talwin (ideologizing) or al-qira'ah al-Mugridah (tendential reading). Meanwhile, the ta'wīl theory according to 'Ain al-Quddat al Hamazani, Said, and Muṣṭafā Nāsīf and can be called a ta'wīl theory which is similar to the moderate hermeneutic theory. In the context of ḥadīts, Yūsuf Qardawī is considered by some scholars as one of the muḥaddīth who uses the moderate hermeneutics method in understanding the ḥadīts [10]. According to him, a text reviewer who performs ta'wīl must master the language, historical context of the text, and knowledge related to the content of the text, although he also admits that all texts are social, ad-Dilalah presents various possible meanings.

3.3 Theory of Ta'wīl in Arabic Literary Criticism from Perspective of Muṣṭafā Nāsīf

Muṣṭafā Nāsīf is an Egyptian critic who has been concerned for nearly half a century on modern literary criticism, literary heritage, and balaghah, and has presented a variety of critical and applied theoretical studies. He has also contributed to the formation of modern Arab trends inspired by classical heritage and opening up to modern global trends.

Muṣṭafā 'Abduh Nāsīf was born in Kafr El-Sarm, Gharbia, Egypt, 1922. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts in the Arabic Language Department at the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University (Egypt's Fuad al-Awwal University, earlier in 1945, as a master's degree from the same faculty on the criticism of Balaghah Abd al-Qahir under the guidance of Amin Al-Khuli, 1948. Doctoral degree with the title of dissertation on Al-Balaghah according to Al-Zamakhshari under Mahdi 'Alam, 1954. He was appointed as an assistant lecturer at the Faculty of Arts, Aif Shams University, 1951. He was promoted to head of the Arabic language department at the same faculty in 1966, he also worked at other universities outside Egypt, including Benghazi University in 1970, as University of Sana'a 1981, when he lectured at various awards at university He also taught at Lander University, Oriental Language School, 1966-1963 Nasif received several honorary awards, including the award for best book k in literary criticism Ministry of Culture 1992, as a prize from the Abdul Aziz Al-Babtayef Foundation in Poetry Criticism 1994, He was awarded the points of excellence and the Al-Dila Appreciation Award from the Supreme Council of Culture 1998 At the Literary Studies Awards such as the Criticism of the Akis Cultural Foundation in Dubai 2003, as King Faisal Al-Alameya Award, 50/50 with Muhammad Al-Amram 2007.

Among his works include the theory of meaning in Arabic criticism (nazhariyat al-ma'na fi naqd al Adabī), Arabic literary studies (Dirāsāt al-Adabul 'Arabī), interpretation theory (Nazariyātut Ta'wīl), Arabic criticism of the second theory, language between rhetoric and style and others. His book "The Theory of Interpretation/ Nazariyat at-Ta'wīl" published in Jeddah is an attempt to revive Arab culture through interpretation/ ta'wīl. As it is known that Arab culture has paid attention to the ta'wīl system since the early days.

In his book, Muṣṭafā Nāsīf points out that there is a contemporary appeal to ta'wīl and its important position in theological studies, philosophy, and literary interpretation, and it seems to be becoming increasingly popular in recent times. He also reviews the most famous figures who spoke about ta'wīl and contributed to the development of ta'wīl theory such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Heidegger, and other German and European researchers, and discusses the development of this theory during the modern era until now.

In Muṣṭafā Nāsīf's view that the essence of ta'wīl theory is very close to what is implied by Ricoeur, one of the phenomenological figures in his words about the discourse between the reader and the text. This expression means that we must appreciate the problem of the text and its various dimensions. According to him, interpretation is thus in line with directing the text or following the intent of the text, or thinking according to the text. Hence it leads to the understanding of entities. So there is an equivalence between the entities that were born from understanding the text with the entities that appeared before. And text with its capability to reveal nature. That is what helps in developing the meaning of an entity, away from ego and domination of various discourses and concepts. This is the moral spirit that must be prepared and included in the heart of ta'wīl.

If viewed from the understanding explained by Muṣṭafā Nāsīf in his book Nazariyatut ta'wīl, it can be seen that his tendency to moderate ta'wīl theory is echoed by Paul Ricoeur. Where he calls for the concept of ta'ātuf / sympathy is not arbitrary in treating the text, where according to him that the history of the text, the text itself, and the understanding of the text by the reader synergize in revealing the meaning contained in the text. This is a moral spirit that must be upheld in hermeneutics [11].

Hermeneutics according to Muṣṭafā Nāsīf is one of the basic principles in the literary text approach. Muṣṭafā Nāsīf's hermeneutics is based on various schools rooted in the heritage of Arabic criticism as well as on the achievements of Arab Islamic thought (tafsir, ushul, and tasawwuf) through the pioneering ideas of language, thought, and reality [12]. Richards' new critique and philosophy of meaning are excellent backgrounds from which Muṣṭafā Nāsīf forges himself before turning to hermeneutic theory and phenomenology to deal with structuralism and the formal approach of criticism and the critic's task to the openness of literary texts to existence and reality. The cultural dimension is considered the biggest conception in Muṣṭafā Nāsīf's hermeneutic which reflects the initial awareness of the task of criticism and the function of the critic in revealing literary texts based on existence and reality. Nāsīf's reading of pre-Islamic poetry (jahiliyah), contemporary poetry, Mazni literature, and classical prose is only inspired by cultural and phenomenological readings, which are based on sympathy, amazement, love, and communication, which do not neglect great concern. National concerns between freedom of reading and openness of meaning to commitment and responsibility.

Muṣṭafā Nāsīf is considered a phenomenologist who specializes in hermeneutic philosophy and considers it an important reference in reading literary texts, especially in its practical dimensions, and he practices cultural interpretation, especially in reading classical criticism and reading contemporary poetry which is closest to the poet and critic's situation and problematics era [13]. According to Nāsīf openness to reading for aesthetics, social, psychological, astigmatic, and cultural can only be achieved through texts. The Nāsīf states that Jahili poetry is one part, and Jahili poetry is more coherent and profound than sharh words. The words lover (al-Habibah), al-Dar, and the she-camel are symbols that may be closer to the collective consciousness of partial incidents and unexpected experiences. He did not refuse to respond to what is deeply engraved in the reading of pre-Islamic poetry and the rhetoric that flows in the poem. The reading process, according to Nassif, begins with presenting the context of poetry as a general meaning that influences the effects of the partial meanings included in any poem, and reading is considered closed to language when comparing it with critical, classical, and modern trends. There is a cultural and civilized context from which the poet originates and creates his poetry and his artistic linguistic opinions. For Nāsīf, reading is not an impartial job. Nāsīf reads contemporary poetry from the point of view of his involvement in contemporary concerns and responses to the problems of the times.

4 Conclusion

The existence of the concept of hermeneutics is very significant in literary interpretation. This is because hermeneutics a very deep understanding model and way of meaning and spurs the interpreter to a substantial understanding. Literature requires complex understanding related to the text, context, and the quality of the reader (interpreter). The three variants of hermeneutics (traditional, dialectical, and ontological), each have weaknesses. In this connection, the most important thing for the interpreter is how the hermeneutics can be applied critically so as not to be out of date. In this context, perhaps the interpreter needs to realize that an understanding and interpretation of a text is dynamic. An interpretation in a literary text is not a definitive interpretation but needs to be done continuously because the interpretation of the text is never complete and complete. Thus, every literary text is always open to continuous interpretation. The process of understanding and interpreting texts is not an effort to revive or reproduce, but rather a recreational and productive effort. Consequently, the role of the subject is very decisive in the interpretation of the text as the giver of meaning. Therefore, it is important to realize that the interpreter must be able to bring the actuality of his own life intimately according to the message that the object gives him. Overall, it can be stated that hermeneutics can indeed be applied in literary interpretation. In literary interpretation, hermeneutics is no longer only placed in a methodological framework, but it has followed the latest hermeneutic thinking in an ontological framework.

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