

DOMINATIVE CRITIQUE OF HADITH MATN: A HABERMAS' CRITICAL HERMENEUTICS APPROACH

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Abstract, The dominant criticisms of hadith texts recently have caused a bit of 'disruption' in the methodology of hadith criticism outlined by the scholars. if this phenomenon is left unchecked, there is a potential for the influence of western biases to dominate one field of knowledge over another, even one value over a well-established knowledge. two examples of hadiths that have come under scrutiny are related to the marriage age of 'aisha and the hadith concerning female leadership. therefore, this study explores the application of jürgen habermas's critical hermeneutics, which has the ability to uncover dominance in exposing such issues. the essence of what will be unveiled is the issues in the criticism of hadith texts that are alleged to undergo ideological distortions. in order to address this problem, this paper employs a qualitative literature-based research method, relying on information sources from documents recorded in various books, articles, and magazines. through the critical hermeneutics approach of jürgen habermas, this paper elaborates on and reveals western biases such as ethical standards for marrying underage children and the standards of justice between women and men. it is also revealed in this paper that these values actually emerged post-enlightenment era, indicating that these values are still relatively new

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Proceedings of International Conference on Muslim Society and Thought
Faculty of Ushuluddin and Philosophy UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

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compared to the origin of the discussed hadiths. thus, this paper attempts to initiate a movement to dismantle the hegemonic dominance in the criticism of hadith texts.

Keywords: critical hermeneutics, jürgen habermas, matn criticism, ideological bias, domination.

INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of hadiths has recently been dominated by various interests or ideologies held by their critics. One example is the controversy over the interpretation of the hadith concerning female leadership. Initially, this hadith was not considered problematic by hadith scholars. However, it has since been rejected and deemed problematic due to the emergence of new values. This is evident from the criticism by Fatima Mernissi, who argues that the hadith is inconsistent with gender justice and is riddled with political intrigue (Mernissi, 1991). Furthermore, she asserts in her book that the narrator of the hadith, Abu Bakrah, was in a context that particularly favored such statements (Robikah, 2019). Other scholars, such as Amina Wadud and Riffat Hasan, have also commented on this issue (Stack, 2020). Based on this exposition, it is apparent that critiques, which tend to be dominant in the field of hadith criticism, are increasingly emerging.

To assess the presence of dominance in hadith matn criticism, an appropriate approach is required for this purpose. In this regard, the critical hermeneutics of Jürgen Habermas is deemed suitable to be employed. This is because this hermeneutics possesses several characteristics that allow for the detection of dominance. Among these characteristics are: firstly, the ability to detect ideologies as well as interests that influence the interpreter's interpretation; secondly, the capability to ensure the presence of psychological issues in the interpreter, thereby potentially disrupting the process of understanding their own writings. Thus, Habermasian hermeneutics aligns with the underlying assumptions of suspicion in this paper.

In the development of hadith matn criticism, a critic is highly likely to act non-objectively, thus influencing the spectrum of critiques presented. One of the reasons is the diverse ideological backgrounds among hadith critics, which can lead them to various interpretations (Muttaqin, 2008). Additionally, political and social interests at certain

times can also influence the acceptance or rejection of a hadith, where rulers or certain groups may have agendas to pursue (Rahmi & Taufiqurrahman, 2019). Psychological factors, such as a tendency to support views that align with personal or group beliefs, can also affect hadith matr criticism (Luthfi, 2015). Furthermore, the historical and cultural context in which a scholar lives can play a significant role in how they assess the authenticity and relevance of a hadith (Rizaka et al., 2023). From this perspective, hadith matr criticism becomes highly susceptible to dominance from various factors of its critics.

DISCUSSION

One of the hadiths that has been widely debated recently is the hadith concerning the age of 'Aisha at the time of her marriage. In this hadith, it is narrated that 'Aisha was married to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) at the age of six and began living with him at the age of nine. The complete wording of the hadith is as follows:

“Muhammad ibn Yusuf narrated to us, Sufyan narrated to us, from Hisham, from his father, from Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), that “the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) married her when she was six years old, and she began living with him when she was nine years old, and she lived with the Prophet for nine year” (Al-Bukhari, 2006).

The hadith clearly states that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) married Aisha at a relatively young age. If contextualized in the present context, the hadith portrays the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the eyes of some scholars as an action that is highly unethical (Hanafi, 2020). This is because the hadith resembles deviant actions such as pedophilia or the like (Usman et al., 2019). For instance, it is considered normal for someone not to consider marrying a young child who is far from both mental and physical maturity. Moreover, in many places, the term 'underage' becomes highly sensitive, especially in the context of marriage (Musfiroh, 2016). This significantly illustrates the controversy in interpreting this hadith, leading to challenges regarding its validity.

In relation to this, criticisms of the hadith text regarding the marriage age of 'Aisha have eventually emerged quite significantly. One of the scholars who critiques this hadith text is Jasser Auda. In a seminar forum documented by Muzakkir, he points out the anomalies

in this hadith text. Firstly, he compares this hadith with the verse urging the marriage of orphaned women after they have reached the age of marriage in Surah Al-Nisa' verse 6 (Muzakkir, 2022).

With the verse above, Auda criticizes the hadith text that Prophet Muhammad, as a prophet, could not have violated what is stipulated in the Quran. Additionally, Auda also compares the hadith text with another hadith narrating 'Aisha witnessing her father's migration to Abyssinia, which occurred in the fourth year of prophethood (Muzakkir, 2022). Furthermore, Auda also critiques using a historical context approach. He explains that the hadith was fabricated to legitimize the practice of child slavery carried out by the leaders of the Umayyad Dynasty (Rofiq, 2019). In the end, he concludes that the hadith about 'Aisha's marriage age is a fabricated hadith.

Based on the explanation, Jasser Auda at least employs the hadith criticism approach in examining the authenticity of the hadith regarding the marriage age of 'Aisha. Firstly, he utilizes the first step in the method of hadith criticism as expressed by hadith scholars such as al-Adlabi, al-Khatib al-Bagdadi, and Ibn al-Qayyim, which is by comparing it with the Quran (Al-Adlabi, 1983). Secondly, he contrasts it with contradictory hadiths. Thirdly, although he does not utilize prophetic language considerations in the fourth step according to al-Adlabi, he takes historical context into account. Through this step, he argues that the emergence of this hadith is due to an attempt to justify child slavery during the Umayyad Dynasty era. This third step is pivotal in the presence of modernity dominance in Jasser Auda's thinking.

In relation to this, Jasser Auda's thinking has unconsciously been dominated by values that were formulated several centuries after the Enlightenment. This can be evidenced by the absence of criticism of the hadith regarding the marriage age of 'Aisha from the perspective of underage marriage. Several earlier literature works, such as the book "Ikhtilaf al-Hadis" by al-Shafi'i or "Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Hadis" by Ibn al-Qayyim, do not mention any issues related to this hadith at all. Auda's thoughts regarding child slavery during the Umayyad Dynasty serve as evidence of a tendency to deny or at least discredit this practice in ancient times. However, upon investigation, values related to the taboo of marrying young children, to the extent of the emergence of the term "pedophilia," were only detected in the early 20th century. This means that these values are relatively new, and

their emergence is recorded after the Enlightenment of Western nations.

The analysis above is certainly based on the assumption of Habermas's hermeneutical theory, which suspects the presence of certain ideologies or interests that unconsciously pervade the author. In this case, the author is Jasser Auda, who is also a critic of the hadith regarding the marriage age of 'Aisha. According to Habermas, before arriving at an understanding of someone's interpretation, it is necessary to consider the possibility of ideological biases in the individual so that critical scrutiny can be maximized (Habermas, 1971). Based on Auda's explanation of the historical context of the Umayyad Dynasty, this indicates a negative portrayal or stigma attached to the act under scrutiny, namely underage marriage. Moreover, Jonathan A.C. Brown, in a seminar attended by Muzakkir, also revealed the influence of Western bias on Jasser Auda's thinking (Muzakkir, 2022). However, such criticism, if indeed significant, would have been thoroughly examined by previous scholars. If this were to become the standard in hadith criticism, it could lead to conclusions far from what has been delineated by the scholars of hadith.

The second hadith that often sparks controversy in society is the hadith regarding the leadership of women.

'Usman ibn al-Haisam narrated to us, 'Auf narrated to us, from al-Hasan, from Abu Bakrah, he said: "A people will not succeed if they let a woman be their leader" (Al-Bukhari, 2006).

Some circles argue that the hadith should always be applied according to its textual meaning (Anshori, 2015). Thus, the message of the hadith can clearly continue to be implemented without time or universal limits and is not temporal (Tohet & Maulidia, 2018). This opinion is based on the interpretation of the verse in Surah An-Nisa' regarding men who should always be leaders over women. Logically, if women lead, then men automatically become one of the types of people they lead. This clearly contradicts what has been outlined in the Quran.

The opposing view to the conclusion above is also expressed quite massively by various circles. In fact, this view is quite dominant compared to the first opinion. This opinion is initiated by the idea and the quite massive feminist movement, one of which was initiated

by Amina Wadud (Hakim, 2017). Although she did not directly criticize the hadith text on the leadership of women, other scholars have been quite intense in critiquing this hadith.

One noted figure who criticized the hadith text regarding women's leadership is Fatima Mernissi. She even considers that the first narrator of this hadith, Abu Bakrah, indeed forged it for political motives to avoid participating in battles or conflicts between Ali ibn Abi Talib and Aisha bint Abu Bakr (Dadah, 2018). By employing the steps in the method of hadith criticism, she first compared the hadith with the Quran, then with other hadiths. Next, she compared it with the values of justice. She argued that Islam should not discredit a particular gender; rather, this hadith suggests otherwise (Robikah, 2019). Thus, in this regard, Mernissi seems to engage in criticism that has been mixed with her feminist ideology. A strong impulse to adhere to the correct 'justice' standards, according to her, makes her quite discerning in criticizing even to the realm of companions who might be involved in political intrigue.

From the perspective of Habermasian hermeneutics, this indicates the influence of ideological dominance. According to some data found, Mernissi was born at a time when Morocco was under the rule of nationalists who desired an extraordinary gender equality movement (Handayani, n.d.). Under the influence of her environment, it is strongly suspected that the ideology shaping the 'equal' standard between men and women had taken root in her thinking. Therefore, her criticism of the hadith regarding women's leadership shows a strong ideological bias, namely from a feminist ideology. Moreover, with all her abilities, she directs the conclusion that the hadith is merely a fabricated one based on political interests (Yunita, 2015). From this standpoint, the author concludes the existence of a strong dominance in the criticism of this hadith text, thus leading to new conclusions that have not been questioned by previous scholars for centuries.

CONCLUSION

Jurgen Habermas's critical hermeneutics can be employed as a tool to explore the presence of dominance in the criticism of hadith texts. The critique of hadith, which should ideally evolve from the scholarly tradition of hadith studies, has indeed been compelled to conform to contemporary standards derived from Western modernity post-

Enlightenment. The existence of dominant criticism in the hadith texts concerning the marriage age of 'Aisha and women's leadership serves as strong evidence of mental hegemonic colonization among scholars engaging in hadith criticism. Therefore, there is a need for a movement to break free from the shackles of domination, which can even infiltrate the minds of scholars and 'contaminate' their ways of thinking. Through the critical hermeneutics offered by Habermas, this becomes one way to initiate such a movement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to our funding provider, the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Philosophy, Sunan Ampel State Islamic University, Surabaya.

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