



Examining the Development of Hadith Interpretation: Insights from Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, & Zakaria Ouzon

This article aims to advance the field of hadith interpretation by examining the ideas of three influential figures: Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, and Zakaria Ouzon. Their distinctive approaches, characterized by both logic and critical analysis of traditional methods, resonate with contemporary trends in hadith hermeneutics studies. This makes them ideal subjects for exploring new avenues in hadith interpretation. By analyzing relevant literature, this research will explore the connections between these figures' ideas and their impact on hadith scholarship. This analysis will then serve as the foundation for building a new framework for interpreting hadiths effectively. Their unique approach to evaluating both the chain of narrators (*sanad*) and the content of the hadith (*matn*) opens up fresh possibilities for a more dynamic and meaningful interpretation process (*ijtihad*). This means judging a hadith interpretation not only by who told it, but also by how well it aligns with the core values of the Qur'an and established scientific knowledge. Drawing inspiration from the work of Gadamer and Gracia, this research emphasizes the importance of skilled interpreters for understanding hadiths fully. By considering the broader context and implications of each hadith, this approach ensures interpretations remain relevant to the ever-changing world.

Keywords: Hadith hermeneutics, Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, Zakaria Ouzon.

Tujuan dari artikel ini yaitu mendorong pengembangan penafsiran hadis melalui kajian atas pemikiran tiga tokoh: Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, dan Zakaria Ouzon. Basis rasionalitas dan pembacaan kritis mereka atas dinamika penafsiran hadis arus utama menjadi alasan ketiganya dipilih seiring dengan perkembangan kajian hermeneutika hadis dalam beberapa waktu terakhir. Melalui analisis pustaka, penelitian ini akan menyajikan pertautan antara pemikiran mereka serta konsekuensinya bagi keilmuan hadis untuk kemudian dijadikan pijakan bagi usaha memunculkan suatu konsep hermeneutika yang mendukung pengembangan penafsiran hadis. Hasilnya, pemikiran mereka seputar kritik sanad dan matan memungkinkan terbukanya kesempatan *ijtihad* yang liberatif. Keabsahan penafsiran hadis tidak ditakar dengan kriteria kualitas sanad, tapi pada kesesuaian matan dengan nilai-nilai universal al-Qur'an dan ilmu pengetahuan. Kerja hermeneutika yang berhasil dirumuskan dalam penelitian ini mengacu pada teori-teori hermeneutika Gadamer dan Gracia. Rumusan tersebut secara signifikan memperlihatkan capaian penafsiran hadis yang holistik sangat bergantung pada kualitas penafsir. Dipadu dengan proses interpretasi yang menekankan fungsi implikatif, rumusan hermeneutik ini juga berorientasi pada relevansi hadis dengan perkembangan zaman yang bersifat lokal dan temporal.

Kata kunci: Hermeneutika hadis, Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, Zakaria Ouzon.

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Introduction

One current challenge in developing hadith interpretation is ensuring its relevance to contemporary social issues. Whereas established methods of sanad analysis and critical evaluation remain crucial, incorporating text interpretation approaches like hermeneutics is gaining traction.¹ Recent trends in hadith interpretation, which incorporate insights from other disciplines, aim to provide comprehensive and relevant interpretations for contemporary issues.² This approach, often called “critical hermeneutics,” utilizes various methods to delve deeper into the meaning of hadith texts.³ However, integrating external approaches can sometimes lead to interpretations that challenge established scholarly interpretations within specific schools of thought.⁴ This raises concerns about whether the focus on contemporary relevance risks compromising the traditional understanding of hadith.

In recent years, research on hadith hermeneutics in Indonesia has revealed three

major trends. The first involves actively embracing Western hermeneutic methods⁵, applying them to hadith interpretation in novel ways. This approach seeks to unlock new layers of meaning within hadith texts. Secondly, scholars are drawing comparisons between these new methods and the established framework of traditional interpretation⁶, fostering dialogue and potential integration. Finally, a wave of research strives to harmonize this modern hermeneutical lens with the wisdom of past hadith scholars and the voices of contemporary Islamic thinkers. Ultimately, these diverse directions represent a vibrant and evolving landscape of hadith interpretation in Indonesia, aiming to navigate contemporary challenges while remaining rooted in Islamic tradition⁷. The revival of hadith hermeneutics studies was marked by two key factors: the dissemination of existing Qur'an hermeneutics studies, as well as efforts to balance critical *matn* studies (textual

¹ Ulvi Karagedik, *Hadithhermeneutik: Methoden, Grundlagen Und Praxis* (Leiden: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022), 165.

² Erwin Hafid and Mahmuddin Mahmuddin, “Criticism of Hadith Authenticity on Contemporary Islamic Thinkers,” *Journal of Islam and Science* 9, no. 2 (2023): 124, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jis.v9i2.31696>.

³ Taufik Kurahman, “Rasionalitas Barat Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Studi Hadis,” *TAJIDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 21, no. 1 (2022): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.30631/tjd.v21i1.221>.

⁴ Alex Nanang Agus Sifa and Ahmad Faizal Adha, “Understanding the Hermeneutic Debate as a New Method of Understanding Hadis,” *Journal of Hadith Studies* 2, no. 1 (2019): 69, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32506/johs.v2i1.538>.

⁵ Ahmad Tri Muslim HD, “Diskursus Fertilitas Dalam Perspektif Hadis (Aplikasi Hermeneutik Fungsionalisme Jorge J. E. Gracia),” *Jurnal Living Hadis* 3, no. 2 (2019): 277–97, <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2018.1695>; Mohammad Muhtador, “Memahami Hadis Misoginis Dalam Perspektif Hermeneutika Produktif Hans Gadamer,” *Diya Al-Afkar: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadis* 6, no. 02 (2018): 257, <https://doi.org/10.24235/diyaafkar.v6i02.3787>; Muhammad Nurkhanif, “Nalar Kritis Hadis Rukyah AL-Hilal: Kajian Hermeneutika Dan Dekonstruksi Hadis,” *Riwayah: Jurnal*

Studi Hadis 4, no. 2 (2018): 265, <https://doi.org/10.21043/riwayah.v4i2.4625>; Muhammad Sabri, “Konstruksi Pemikiran Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Hermeneutika Hadis,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah* 19, no. 2 (2022): 185, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v19i2.14421>.

⁶ Muhammad Syarifuddin and Masruhan Masruhan, “Interpretasi Hadis: Antara Hermeneutika Dan Syarh Al-Hadits,” *Tajdid* 20, no. 2 (2021): 373–400; Nurkholis Hauqola, “Hermeneutika Hadis: Upaya Memecah Kebekuan Teks,” *Jurnal THEOLOGIA* 24, no. 1 (2016): 261–84, <https://doi.org/10.21580/teo.2013.24.1.324>.

⁷ Agusni Yahya, “Pendekatan Hermeneutik Dalam Pemahaman Hadis (Kajian Kitan Fath Al-Bari Karya Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani),” *Ar-Raniry* 1, no. 2 (2014): 365–86; T A Wil, Mukhtalif Al, and Muhammad Sakti Garwan, “Telaah Hermeneutika Dalam Kitab” 19, no. 2 (2020): 139–63; Bisri Tujang, “Hermeneutika Hadis Yusuf Qardawi (Studi Analisa Terhadap Metodologi Interpretasi Qardawi),” *AL-MAJALIS* 2, no. 1 (2014): 33–68, <http://ejournal.stdiis.ac.id/index.php/Al-Majalis/article/view/21>; Ahmad Suhendra, “Hermeneutika Hadis Khaled M. Abou El Fadl,” *Mutawatir* 5, no. 2 (2016): 343, <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2015.5.2.343-362>; Heru Susanto, “Hermeneutika Hadis-Hadis Hukum Fazlur Rahman,” *Bilancia: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Syariah Dan Hukum* 13, no. 2 (2019): 233–56, <https://doi.org/10.24239/blc.v13i2.494>.





interpretation),⁸ which had been somewhat neglected within the domain of sanad studies due to a stronger emphasis on the *ma'ānī al-hadīth*.⁹ The driving force behind the emergence of hadith hermeneutics studies is no different from the central issue motivating the need for hermeneutics in Qur'anic studies: the necessity of contextualizing Islamic texts. This emphasis on contextualization remains the foundational rationale for the importance of hadith hermeneutics research.

Examining current trends in hadith hermeneutics reveals a field still seeking its ideal form, despite having achieved much. The diversity of applied hermeneutical models inevitably generates different opinions on which approach should be prioritized. Whereas some attempt an apologetic synthesis between hermeneutics and hadith sharia, others rely on interpretations cherry-picked from previous scholars, lacking a systematic engagement with hadith texts themselves. However, the value of contemporary Muslim thought exemplified by scholars like Fazlur Rahman, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, and Khaled Abou El-Fadl cannot be overlooked. Whereas primarily focused on the Qur'an, their scholarship demonstrates substantial and robust hermeneutical work applied to hadith as well. Nevertheless, these efforts remain largely standalone, hindering the development of a unified approach akin to the "*ma'na cum maghza*" method in Qur'anic

interpretation. This fragmentation presents a ripe opportunity for exploration and collaboration, potentially leading to a significant leap in hadith interpretation and unlocking new avenues for engagement with these vital texts.

This article delves into the exploratory space of hadith hermeneutics through an examination of the hadith thoughts of three figures: Abu Rayyah (1889-1970), Juynboll (1935-2010), and Zakaria Ouzonn (n.d-present). Their selection stems from their engagement with 'sensitive corridors' within mainstream hadith scholarship, challenging established norms and perspectives. Abu Rayyah, drawing on Islamic modernist principles, questioned the concept of '*adalatu as-sahābah*' (righteousness of the Companions). Juynboll, an orientalist scholar, challenged the established framework of hadith transmission by introducing the concept of the common link. Ouzonn, meanwhile, critically examined the authority of Al-Bukhari in his role within hadith dissemination. This research will explore the connections between these scholars' hadith thoughts and their impact on the field. The findings will then serve as a foundation for developing a hermeneutical concept that fosters the advancement of hadith interpretation. Whereas previous studies have explored the ideas of these figures, and some have even delved into their specific hermeneutical methods (particularly concerning Abu Rayyah¹⁰ and Ouzonn¹¹), this research will build upon this

⁸ Mohammad Ahyan Yusuf Sya'bani, "Interpretation of Hermeneutics and Religious Normativity: Hermeneutic Approach in Scientific Studies in the Islamic World," *IJISH (International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities)* 2, no. 1 (2019): 19, <https://doi.org/10.26555/ijish.v2i1.535>.

⁹ Darul Siswanto, "The Paradigm of Matn Hadith Criticism and Its Transformation in the Modern Era," *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam* 21, no. 1 (2020): 134–35, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v21i1.8936>.

¹⁰ Muhammad Sobirin, "Hermeneutika Hadis Mahmud Abū Rayyah Dalam Kitab Adhwa' Ala Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyah (Kajian 'Adalah Al-Sahābah)," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 15, no. 1 (2014): 113, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2014.15106>; Ade Pahrudin, *Studi Pemikiran Hadis Abu Rayyah Dalam Kitab Adwa' ala Al-Sunnah*

Al-Muhammadiyah (Serang: A-Empat, 2021); Siti Qurrotul Aini, "Kritik Matan Hadis Perspektif Mahmud Abū Rayyah," *Alhamra Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 2 (2021): 170, <https://doi.org/10.30595/ajsi.v2i2.11815>.

¹¹ Hasan Mahfudh, "Hermeneutika Hadis Zakariya Ouzonn," *Mutawatir* 4, no. 2 (2015): 309, <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2014.4.2.309-323>; Baharudin Zamawi Zamawi, "Kritik Hadis Zakaria Ouzonn," *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 2, no. 1 (2019): 35–48, <https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v2i1.221>; Muhammad Rikza Muqtada, "Zakaria Ouzonn's Thought on Hadith," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (2007): 59–70, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v18i1.1470>; F Hasan, "Telaah Kritis Atas Pemikiran Zakaria Ouzonn,"





existing scholarship to offer a new and comprehensive analysis.

This research hypothesizes that combining the hadith thinking patterns of Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, and Ouzon regarding hadith authenticity will have a sequential impact on the fluidity and scope of hadith interpretation. By questioning the concept of *'adalatu aṣ-ṣahābah*, introducing the common link concept, and critically examining the authority of Al-Bukhari, these figures challenged the established framework for evaluating hadith authenticity. This, in turn, opens up new possibilities for interpreting and applying hadith that go beyond the limitations of traditional approaches. The research posits that the strong emphasis on rationality in the thinking of these figures will lead to a hermeneutical approach that is more context-dependent and less bound by rigid interpretations based solely on the chain of sanad.¹² This broader contextualization has the potential to enhance the relevance of hadith interpretation for contemporary Muslim communities. Ultimately, the research aims to develop a novel hermeneutical framework that integrates the insights of these three figures, fostering a more nuanced and flexible approach to hadith interpretation.

The Fluid Nature of Sanad: Problems of Authenticity and Sacredness of Hadith

Sanad analysis has been central to hadith studies for centuries, driven by concerns about widespread forgeries during the early Islamic period. This focus emerged alongside efforts to ensure the authenticity of hadith as a source of guidance alongside the Qur'an.¹³ Hadith with questionable sanad validity also raises questions

about their sacredness as a basis for Islamic teachings and law. Examining sanad is inherently subjective, reflecting the diverse perspectives and inherent biases of scholars throughout history. These differences ultimately led to the establishment of mainstream hadith scholarship, dominated by the *'ulūm al-hadīth* methodology.¹⁴ This mainstream approach relies on established rules like *'adalatu aṣ-ṣahābah*, the corridor of criticism and praise of narrators (*al-jarḥ wa at-ta'dīl*) and standardized literature (*al-kutub al-mu'tabarah*) to assess hadith authenticity. Sanad studies within this mainstream framework largely adhere to these established rules, leaving a little room for challenging them.

Abu Rayyah was a critical voice within hadith scholarship, advocating for a more nuanced approach to analyzing the authenticity and interpretation of hadith based on *riwāyah bi al-ma'nā* (transmitting the meaning). He identified irregularities in mainstream hadith studies, which he argued resulted in an overreliance on the principle of *'adalatu aṣ-ṣahābah*. This, according to Abu Rayyah, stifled critical examination of hadith narrators and hindered progress in Muslim thought.¹⁵ He saw the unquestioning acceptance of narrator reliability as a factor contributing to a "tentative decline of Muslims," though the specific meaning and evidence for this claim require further clarification. Moreover, Abu Rayyah challenged the established hierarchy of narrators based on their "*ṣiqah*" (reliability) status. He believed that this rigid classification system prevented a deeper understanding of individual narrators' strengths and weaknesses and called for a more open and dynamic approach to

Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities 1, no. 2 (2016): 209–26, <https://doi.org/10.18326/millati.v1i1.209-225>.

¹² Ayub Ayub, "Matn Criticism and Its Role in The Evaluation of Hadith Authenticity," *IJISH (International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities)* 1, no. 1 (2018): 71, <https://doi.org/10.26555/ijish.v1i1.136>.

¹³ Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: One World, 2009), 16.

¹⁴ Adis Duderija, "Evolution in the Canonical Sunni Hadith Body of Literature and the Concept of an Authentic Hadith During the Formative Period of Islamic Ought as Based on Recent Western Scholarship," *Arab Law Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2009): 411, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157302509X467371>.

¹⁵ Mahmud Abu Rayyah, "Al-Hadith Al-Muhammadiyah," *Al-Risalah Ed.* 633 (Kairo, 1945).





assessing their trustworthiness.¹⁶ Furthermore, Abu Rayyah emphasized the importance of understanding the meaning of hadith texts rather than solely focusing on the accuracy of their pronunciation. He argued that oral transmission inevitably leads to slight variations in pronunciation over time, but the core meaning of the message should remain consistent.¹⁷ This emphasis on meaning led him to propose that the quality of hadith should be judged based on its coherence with the Qur'an and established Islamic values, rather than solely relying on the sanad. This new approach, centered on "the stability of meaning," as reflected in the *mutawātir* (meaning-based) hadiths, aimed to provide a more nuanced and context-dependent evaluation of hadith authenticity as the second source after the Qur'an.¹⁸

Juynboll, an orientalist scholar influenced by Abu Rayyah's ideas, focused on the sanad in his dissertation research on the debate on the authenticity of hadith among modern scholars in Egypt.¹⁹ Similarly to Abu Rayyah, Juynboll focused on the sanad in his hadith research. One key area of his scholarship was developing the "common link" concept, initially proposed by Joseph Schacht. Unlike traditional methods that evaluate each narrator individually, Juynboll's approach integrates the concept of *al-jarḥ wa at-ta'dīl* within this science of *rijāl al-hadīth* (the study of hadith narrators). He posits that the common link narrator, due to their presence in various transmission channels, serves as a central

point for historical analysis and dating of the hadith. Juynboll's historical criticism methodology emphasizes pinpointing the era of the common link narrator as the key to dating the hadith.²⁰ This approach raises the possibility that the narrator, rather than the Prophet directly, might have influenced the content of the hadith. In fact, Juynboll was not content with traditional approaches. Unlike most scholars, except Abu Rayyan,²¹ who considered *mutawātir* hadith beyond doubt, Juynboll dared to apply his common link concept to these universally accepted reports. This rigorous analysis revealed the potential influence of individual narrators, even within *mutawātir* hadith, casting doubt on their direct transmission from the Prophet. This was a groundbreaking finding, exposing a potential chink in the armor of hadith sacredness – the very idea that hadith are infallible pronouncements from the Prophet himself.

Building upon Abu Rayyah's *riwāyah bi al-ma'nā*, Zakaria Ouzon proposed a radical shift in how we view and interpret hadith. He argued that the centuries-long focus on analyzing sanad has become largely arbitrary and ineffective. Instead, Ouzon proposed defining hadith as the "continuous reaction of the Prophet transmitted through generations", culminating in his "*Ṣaḥīh al-ma'nā*" collection. This approach directly challenges the authority of *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī*, questioning its authenticity and even suggesting

¹⁶ Mahmud Abu Rayyah, "Adwa' 'ala Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyah" (Riyad: Majmu' al-Buhuts al-Islamiyyah, 1958), 50; In particular, Abu Rayyah accused his friends, Abu Hurairah and Ka'b al-Akhbar, of inaccuracies in their narrations of hadith. Mahmud Abu Rayyah, *Syaikh Al-Madīrah: Abu Hurayrah* (Beirut, 1993); Mahmud Abu Rayyah, "Ka'b Al-Akhbar Huwa Al-Suhyuni Al-Awwal," *Al-Risalah Ed.* 665 (Kairo, 1946).

¹⁷ Abu Rayyah, "Adwa' 'ala Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyah," 366.

¹⁸ Abu Rayyah, 368; Abu Rayyah supported his opinion by aligning it with the modernist Islamic hadith thought of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rasyid Ridha. More precisely, Abu Rayyah's intellectual lineage aligns with the ulama actors who contribute to the discourse he developed.

See Abbas Behnejad, Hamidreza Mostafid, and Jawwad O. Mohaddesin, "Critical Discourse Analysis in Islamic Intellectual and Revision of Sunnah: Case of Mahmud Abu Rayyah," *Quarterly Journal of Socio-Cultural Development Studies* 9, no. 4 (2021): 164–87.

¹⁹ G. H. A. Juynboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussions in Modern Egypt* (Leiden: E. J. BRILL, 1969).

²⁰ Juynboll, 167; also see G. H. A. Juynboll, *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadith* (London: Routledge, 1996).

²¹ G. H. A. Juynboll, "Some Isnād-Analytical Methods Illustrated on the Basis of Several Woman-Demeaning Sayings From Ḥadīth Literature," in *Hadith*, ed. Harald Motzki (London: Routledge, 2004), 42.





a “conspiratorial” agenda in its compilation.²² Ouzon further disrupted traditional perceptions by declaring hadith as non-holy (*ghayru muqaddas*) documents distinct from the Qur’an. He argued that they cannot be solely relied upon for Islamic teachings, as their value only lies in conveying the Prophet’s reactions and interpretations of the Qur’an, not revelations themselves.²³ Ouzon adopted a very open-minded approach to hadith, arguing that they generally lack the depth and comprehensiveness of scholarly treatises in offering guidance. However, hadith attributed directly to the Prophet hold a special value, as they provide insight into his interpretation and application of the Qur’an. These hadith are valued not as independent revelations,²⁴ but as the Prophet’s reactions to the existing divine message. This perspective drastically contrasts with the mainstream focus on sanad.²⁵ Ouzon argued that this emphasis on sanad ultimately restricts our understanding of hadith by prioritizing transmission authenticity over grasping the deeper meanings and values embedded within them. Instead, he advocated for a reason-based approach that prioritizes the universal values enshrined in the Qur’an.

Examining the approaches of scholars like Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, and Zakaria Ouzon towards sanad analysis reveals the need for a more fluid understanding of its role in hadith interpretation. Their critiques challenge the traditional method of solely measuring sanad validity, arguing that it holds limited significance for analyzing the *matn* and historical context (*culdesac*) within discussions of sacredness. This perspective posits that even hadith deemed valid based on sanad alone require in-depth study of the *matan*. However, assuming hadith with validated sanad are directly applicable without

closely studying the content (*matn*)²⁶ implies the need for critical reading of the *matan* to extract solutions for various life problems through hadith interpretation. Recognizing hadith as recorded texts passed down through generations, this perspective emphasizes interpreting them in light of their historical context and evolving interpretations. While sanad studies traditionally focused on transmission chains, they are now seen as valuable for understanding the development of Islamic doctrine in different contexts. This opens doors to integrating scientific insights through hermeneutics for a richer understanding of hadith’s meaning and applicability.

Matn Criticism: Integrating Reason with Universal Qur’anic Values in Hadith Interpretation

Analyzing Abu Rayyah’s scattered remarks in his works reveals his approach to *matn* criticism. He emphasized building a critical lens towards hadith transmitters by identifying inconsistencies within the text itself. For instance, he found the inclusion of “*muta’ammidan*” (intentionally) in the hadith forbidding lying in the Prophet’s name suspicious, arguing it was an addition driven by narrators’ self-preservation concerns, distorting the Prophet’s true message.²⁷ Secondly, Abu Rayyah championed interpreting texts critically, rejecting mythical elements like *Israiliyyat* narratives.²⁸ He prioritized foundational rationality, aligning hadith interpretations with the core values of the Qur’an and transcending limitations imposed by specific contexts (*sabab al-wurūd*).²⁹ When facing conflicting hadiths, his approach emphasized immediate recourse to the Qur’an as the ultimate

²² Zakaria Ouzon, *Jinayat Al-Bukhari* (Beirut: Riad El-Rayes Books, 2004), 13–14.

²³ Ouzon, 43–46.

²⁴ Ouzon, 14.

²⁵ Zakaria Ouzon, *Al-Islam Hal Huwa Al-Hill* (Beirut: Riad El-Rayes Books, 2007), 26.

²⁶ Ladfar Lamin, “‘Uluwwu Manzilat Al-Sunnah ‘Inda Al-Salaf Wa Al-Aimmah,” *Majallat Ishamat Lil Buhuts Wa Al-Dirasat* 7, no. 2 (2022): 23–34.

²⁷ Abu Rayyah, “Adwa’ ‘ala Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyyah,” 34.

²⁸ Abu Rayyah, 118.

²⁹ Abu Rayyah, 376.





source of guidance.³⁰ These four principles coalesce in Abu Rayyah's call for comprehensive independent reasoning (ijtihad) by hadith reviewers. He discouraged blind acceptance of past scholarship³¹, advocating instead for critical reading and interpretations grounded firmly in the Qur'an's overarching message.

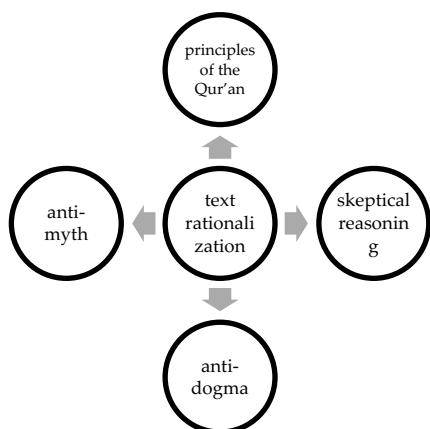


Figure 1. Abu Rayyah's *matan* criticism (hadith content)

Compared to other scholars in this discussion, Juynboll leaned less towards *matn* criticism. Whereas his historical analysis of hadith prioritizes authenticity, his most prominent use of *matn* criticism involves scrutinizing variations within *mutawātir* hadith.³² He identified discrepancies, even in these supposedly irrefutable traditions, arguing that slight variations undermine their absolute authority, even though it was labeled as *mutawātir ma'nāwī*. However, Juynboll acknowledged the potential influence of narrator interests on hadith standardization, particularly their role as the "common link" in transmission. He has captured value in modern scholarship's approach to *matn*, as evidenced by his analysis of the evolving modernist Muslim *matan* criticism criticism. Juynboll opined that scientific advancements can serve as a reference point for evaluating hadith quality. He proposed examining the interests of narrators (acting as "common links" in

transmission) and applying scientific scrutiny to widen the gap between past and present interpretations. This exploration aims to uncover the ideal relationship between hadith texts and interpretation: are they interconnected within an evolving framework of meaning, or does evolving science necessitate distinct transformations? Ultimately, he deemed that linking Islamic studies with science holds the key to upholding Islam's glory.³³

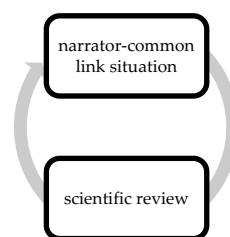


Figure 2. Juynboll's *Matn* Criticism

Ouzon championed a "liberated interpretation" approach to *matn* criticism, emphasizing principles like demystification, psycho-historical analysis, semiotics, and alignment with the Qur'an's universal values. Demystification involves dismantling layers of dogma surrounding hadith. Ouzon employed psycho-historical criticism to delve into the reasons behind a hadith's development, considering both the Prophet's psychology and the narrators' political influences, cultural contexts, and doctrinal biases. This analysis is then sharpened through a semiotic lens, allowing for deeper understanding of the hadith's symbolic meanings. Ultimately, Ouzon seeks to align these interpretations with the universal principles enshrined in the Qur'an, ensuring hadith remain relevant and impactful in contemporary settings.³⁴ Ouzon championed a flexible approach to hadith interpretation, arguing that guiding principles lead to diverse interpretations informed by local contexts and

³⁰ Abu Rayyah, 374.

³¹ Abu Rayyah, 366.

³² G. H. A. Juynboll, "(Re)Appraisal of Some Technical Terms in Hadith Science," *Islamic Law and Society* 8, no. 3 (2001): 303–49, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/156851901317230611>;

Juynboll, "Some Isnād-Analytical Methods Illustrated on the Basis of Several Woman-Demeaning Sayings From Ḥadīth Literature."

³³ Juynboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussions in Modern Egypt*, 105.

³⁴ Ouzon, *Jinayat Al-Bukhari*, 94–95.





individual abilities. This “relativity” empowers interpreters to address real-life challenges by crafting interpretations directly relevant to specific situations.³⁵

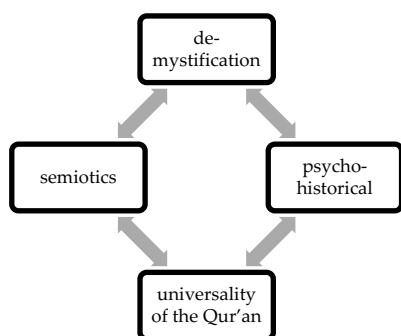


Figure 3. Zakaria Ouzon's *matan* criticism

Whereas the presented approaches neglect traditional sanad studies, they emphasize connections between textual analysis (*matn* criticism) and external factors. This suggests an equal importance for both internal (*an-naqd al-bāṭini*) and external (*an-naqd al-kārijī*) criticism in hadith interpretation. An additional key element is the subjectivity of the interpreter. While freedom of thought is encouraged through flexible conceptual frameworks, maintaining balance is crucial. Interpreters must avoid arbitrary interpretations by drawing connections that support a “holistic and liberating” understanding of the hadith.

Critical Interpretations: How Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, and Ouzon Approach Implicative Hadith

This section aims to build a hermeneutic framework based on the idea of a flexible sanad analysis and the well-developed critical methods of the three scholars mentioned above. Three key nodes form the foundation of this framework: the Qur'an's universal values, historical context of hadith, and the inherent subjectivity of hadith interpreters. This framework takes inspiration from the “subjectivist cum objectivist

hermeneutics” approach, drawing on the ideas of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jorge J. E. Gracia.³⁶ Whereas all three scholars emphasize rationality in hadith interpretation, their methods do not necessarily embrace absolute freedom from the author's intent. The Qur'an acts as a crucial anchor, guiding the interpreter's continuous process to ensure interpretations align with its core principles. In other words, even if a hadith is traced back to the Prophet, we must consider how he conveyed it within the broader context of his divinely revealed message (the Qur'an). This necessitates engaging with the “metaphysics of presence,” exploring the relationship between the author's historical context and the enduring meaning of the text.

a. Pre-understanding: strengthening the basis of the Qur'an

In Gadamer's hermeneutics, interpreters are situated within a specific context that shapes their understanding of any text. This “pre-understanding” influences how they interpret hadith.³⁷ In their approaches to hadith interpretation, Abu Rayyah and Ouzon emphasized a significant shift: Qur'anic values now play a central role in evaluating the validity of interpretations. This shift away from traditional methods underscores the importance of the interpreter's deep understanding of the Qur'an and their chosen interpretive approach. Different schools of thought offer various frameworks for understanding the Qur'an's meaning, so an interpreter's awareness of their specific model is crucial. Therefore, Abu Rayyah and Ouzon stressed the importance of strengthening the interpreter's pre-understanding with a broad base of Qur'anic knowledge. This solid foundation ensures that subsequent stages of hadith interpretation are

³⁵ Muqtada, “Zakaria Ouzon's Thought on Hadith,” 66–68.

³⁶ Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika Dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Nawasea, 2017), 50.

³⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit Und Methode: Grundzüge Einer Philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: J.C. B. Mohr, 1990), 307.





grounded in alignment with the Qur'an's core values.

b. Criticism of the narrator's attribution

Hermeneutics often goes beyond a simple, linear relationship between authors and texts. In Gracia's work, he identified various levels of authorship, including "pseudo-historical authors" relevant to this discussion. These are individuals credited with creating a text even though historical evidence points to someone else, often due to greater fame or authority.³⁸ The three scholars, Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, and Ouzon, closely examined narrator attribution, which refers to the process of assigning a hadith to the Prophet. They focus on situations where narrators, intentionally or unintentionally, attribute hadiths to the Prophet even though evidence suggests otherwise. This scrutiny, conducted with meticulous attention to detail, highlights the potential impact of narrator actions on the authenticity and interpretation of hadith. Beyond outright misattribution, even more subtle modifications can occur. On a less critical level, a narrator might engage in minor editorial adjustments while transmitting a hadith through *riwāyah bi al-ma'nā*. This approach allows some flexibility in expression, leading to a composite text where the narrator's interpretation subtly blends with the Prophet's original message. This complicates authorship to some extent, necessitating careful analysis to distinguish the narrator's influence from the intended meaning.³⁹ This shift in focus necessitates a different hermeneutical approach. Instead of solely concentrating on the Prophet, interpreters must now delve into the historical, psychological, and socio-cultural backgrounds of the narrators themselves. This deeper understanding is crucial for analyzing how their

individual perspectives might have influenced the transmission and content of hadith.

c. Universality of the Qur'an and Science

In this context, the dynamic relationship between text, author, and interpreter leads to a unique adaptation of Gadamer's concept of "fusion horizon." This concept refers to the merging of the interpreter's own understanding with the historical context and intended meaning of the text. In the usual interpretation process, the interpreter strives to bridge the gap between their own perspective and the distant "horizon" of the text, shaped by the author's time and circumstances. However, when interpreting hadith, this gap becomes particularly vast. The interpreter's "horizon" arises from their present-day context, while the "text horizon" encompasses the Prophet's era and the transmission history of the hadith.⁴⁰ Bridging this immense distance necessitates a more nuanced approach than the traditional fusion horizon model. Interpreting this specific hadith through the lens of the fusion horizon requires navigating the complex issue of authorship within the text's transmission history. This means considering the historical context and potential influences of each narrator through whom the hadith passed. Additionally, the interpreter's own "horizon" must actively engage with the universality of the Qur'an and the implications of current scientific advancements. As recommended by the three scholars, this approach seeks to connect the hadith's core message to contemporary issues and ensure its continued relevance.

d. Implicative function

Ultimately, integrating hermeneutics with the hadith approaches of these three figures culminates in an interpretive process focused on uncovering the 'implicative function' of the

³⁸ Jorge Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology* (New York: Albany State University, 1995), 97.

³⁹ Gracia, 101.

⁴⁰ Gadamer, *Wahrheit Und Methode: Grundzüge Einer Philosophischen Hermeneutik*, 310; Hans-Georg

Gadamer, "Text and Interpretation," in *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy* (New York: Albany State University, 1986), 396.



hadith. This function goes beyond simply understanding the historical meaning. It seeks to identify insights within the hadith that can be applied to and inform contemporary challenges. This pursuit aligns with the scholars' emphasis on liberative interpretation, allowing the hadith's message to remain relevant and impactful in ever-changing contexts.

As Gracia explained, interpretation has three key functions: historical, meaning-oriented, and implicative.⁴¹ In the context of hadith, the historical function as the first function often connects to the *sabab wurūd*, exploring the specific context and circumstances surrounding the hadith's revelation. The second function involves the interpreter creatively tailoring their articulation of the hadith to address the specific needs and context of their audience. In the hadith tradition, this approach is often manifested through *sharh* (detailed explanations) that unpack the meaning and implications of the hadith in a way that resonates with the listeners. The third function is to effectively convey the meaning and potential applications of the hadith to the audience, prompting them to reflect and engage with its message. Disciplines like *ma'ānī al-hadīth* (understanding hadith meaning) and *fiqh al-hadīth* (legal implications of hadith) fall under this category.

However, the interpretation approaches championed by the three figures in this study place greater emphasis on the third function of generating meaning and its implications. This shift is evident in how scholars like Abu Rayyah and Ouzon minimized the focus on understanding the historical context (*sabab wurūd*) associated with the first function. Their approach prioritizes drawing out the hadith's enduring relevance and contemporary applications, even if it means sacrificing some attention to the specific historical details surrounding its origin.

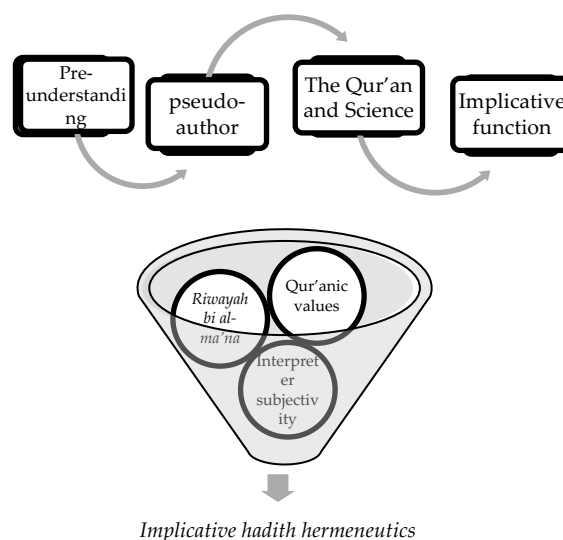


Figure 4. Conceptual framework of hadith hermeneutics

Prioritizing the “implicative function” in hadith interpretation, as advocated by Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, and Ouzon, naturally leads towards local-temporal interpretations. This means interpretations are tailored to the specific context and challenges of a particular time and place. While this approach values the interpreter's subjectivity, it makes it difficult to achieve interpretations that are universally applicable across different contexts. Instead of aiming for standardization, the focus shifts towards the quality of the interpretation. A high-quality interpretation, according to these scholars, is “holistic-integrative”, meaning it considers all aspects of the hadith and its historical context while drawing out its relevance for contemporary situations. This emphasis on a well-rounded understanding connects back to the interpreter's own hermeneutical skills, as discussed earlier. While all three scholars emphasize rationality in the interpretation process, this emphasis comes with the understanding that interpretations need to be flexible enough to adapt to the ever-changing dynamics of the world.

⁴¹ Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology*, 157.



Conclusion

This research proposes combining the hermeneutical works of Gadamer and Gracia to develop a framework for interpreting hadith based on the ideas of Abu Rayyah, Juynboll, and Ouzon. This combined approach emphasizes the “implicative function” of interpretation, where the focus is on drawing out the hadith’s contemporary relevance. Achieving holistic interpretations requires highly skilled interpreters who can consider all aspects of the hadith and its context. The framework aligns with the scholars’ call for interpreting hadith locally and temporally, which means tailoring interpretations to specific contexts. Interestingly, whereas this approach might seem to challenge traditional interpretations (mainstream establishment), it does not necessarily lead to direct confrontation. However, this research also acknowledges limitations. The current presentation remains abstract, and further research is needed to explore its practical applications and address potential shortcomings.

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Competing Interest

The authors have no affiliations with any party that may influence the objectivity of the research results.

Author’s Contributions

I conducted this research independently, including the preparation of materials, compilation, review, and revisions.

Ethical Consideration

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Disclaimer

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