Islamic literature and western doctrines: The problem of perception and the uniqueness of approach

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Abstract:
Our intellectual and literary world is shaped by various currents and doctrines, some of which are refined, while others are distorted. Writers and critics often find themselves swept up in these currents, influenced by them either positively or negatively. Since the Islamic worldview is the original foundation of our ancient Arab literature, the literary and critical ideas that emerge from this perspective are evolving. This growth has been influenced by the changing conditions within the Arab-Islamic world. It is necessary to recognize Islam's unique perspective as an independent doctrine in both literature and criticism, especially in the face of Western doctrines that are grounded in different philosophical and ideological frameworks. Therefore, it is crucial to explore the features of Islamic critical theory, which is based on the Islamic understanding of man, life, and the universe. This theory aims to free literature from the influence of Western doctrines that conflict with Islamic beliefs. Our research, titled Islamic Literature and Western Doctrines: The Problem of Perception and the Peculiarity of the Curriculum, *seeks to answer several key questions: What is the difference between Islamic and Western perceptions of knowledge? What philosophical foundations support the Islamic critical doctrine? How do Western doctrines view literature in terms of content and form when seen from an Islamic perspective?*

Keywords: beliefs, criticism theory, currents, Islamic perception, philosophical origins, Western doctrines.

Littérature islamique et doctrines occidentales : Problématique de la perception et spécificité de la méthodologie

Résumé :

L'univers intellectuel, en particulier le champ littéraire et critique, est influencé par divers courants, oscillant entre authenticité et altération. L'Islam, en tant que fondement originel de la littérature arabe classique, a vu son influence évoluer face aux transformations du monde arabo-islamique et à la montée des doctrines occidentales, souvent ancrées dans des cadres philosophiques divergents.

Face à cette confrontation, il est impératif d'établir la critique littéraire islamique comme une discipline autonome, reposant sur une vision propre de l'homme, de l'existence et de l'univers. Cette approche cherche à préserver la production littéraire des influences idéologiques étrangères incompatibles avec les croyances islamiques.

L'étude met ainsi en lumière les différences fondamentales entre les perceptions épistémologiques islamiques et occidentales, les principes philosophiques structurant la critique islamique et la manière dont les courants occidentaux appréhendent la littérature à travers cette grille d'analyse.

Mots-clés : *Courants, croyances, doctrines occidentales, origines philosophiques, perception islamique, théorie critique.*

Introduction

In the modern era, the world has experienced many shifts in thought and literature. These changes have been driven by the emergence of various literary doctrines, such as classicalism, romanticism, symbolism, and existentialism. Some of these movements sought to replace traditional virtues and erase their values. They believed that evil was the foundation of life, while others considered pain and tragedy as the essence of existence. The influence of these new schools of thought on Arabic literature has, in many ways, been detrimental. Arabic literature has followed other literary traditions, and writers have begun to depict distorted patterns of human behavior that are alien to our cultural reality. This is a result of the influence of Western societal norms, which have shaped these unusual patterns.

When Islamic intellectuals recognized the threat posed by these foreign ideologies, they called for the development of Islamic literature. Islamic literature is rooted in an Islamic worldview of literature and art, which serves as a counter to these foreign literary doctrines. It is a creative pursuit that blends theory, criticism, and artistic expression. Scholars and critics have emphasized its significance, especially in the present day. Islamic literature is an integral part of Islamic civilization and an essential tool in Islamic dawah. It offers a meaningful artistic expression of life and the universe from the Islamic perspective. Its importance has only grown as the debate intensifies in academic and literary circles about the role of literature in educating society and refining minds.

The Islamic literary movement is one of the most significant critical theories of the twentieth century. It is a natural continuation of both ancient and modern Islamic

literature. Contemporary Islamic trends gained prominence in the Arab world as interest grew in skeptical philosophies, including existentialism, deconstructionism, Marxism, and structuralism. Today, contemporary Islamic theory has become a cultural alternative, providing a solution to the challenges faced by literature, art, and beauty. It has found its place in the Arab literary and critical arenas, particularly during a time when Western and Eastern literary theories are in dialogue.

Islamic literature is the eloquent expression of existence, seen through the lens of Islamic thought. It is an expression that reflects the Islamic understanding of the Creator and His creatures, remaining true to Islamic values. Islamic literature is not purposeless; it rejects the idea that life, existence, fate, birth, and death are without meaning. Advocates of Islamic literature argue that literature must serve a higher purpose and cannot simply exist as an art form for its own sake. Islamic literature portrays the full scope of humanity, including its material and moral aspects, and addresses the economic, social, intellectual, and spiritual values of human life. This research aims to examine the characteristics of Islamic literature, its features, its influence on other literary movements and modern critical theories, and the principles that allow it to confront foreign literary doctrines that challenge traditional values and virtues.

1. The concept of islamic literature

Islamic literature is regarded as a manifestation of God's spirit, conveying mercy, tranquility, affection, and peace among people. This concept is closely tied to the goals of those advocating for Islamic literature today. Professor Sayyid Qutb views Islamic literature as "an inspired expression of living values that the artist's conscience is

excited about" (1966a, p. 103). He further describes it as "an expression of an emotional experience in suggestive images" (Qutb, 1966a, p. 104). Qutb defines Islamic literature as "an expression arising from the fullness of the soul with Islamic feelings" (Qutb, 1966b, p. 15).Muhammad Qutb expands on this idea, stating that Islamic art

> "is not the art that speaks about the facts of faith crystallized in a philosophical form, nor is it a set of judgments, sermons, and instructions. Instead, it is something more comprehensive and broader... It is the beautiful expression of the facts of existence, from the angle of the Islamic perception of this existence" (1980, p. 119).

He emphasizes that Islamic literature is "the original literature when it stems from the correct Islamic perception" (Barighash, 1985, p. 105). This literature captures the essence of life, expressing human hopes and emotions without distortion. It is "the literature of the living conscience... clarifying what is certain" (Al-Kilani, 1963, p. 35).

Najeeb Al-Kilani adds an important perspective in his work *An Introduction to Islamic Literature*. He argues that Islamic literature is an embodiment of the ideological foundation of Arabic and Persian literature. Reviving the term "Islamic literature" is thus a revival of the core principles of Arabic, Persian, or any other related literature. Al-Kilani asserts that Arabic literature is inherently Islamic, as it serves as the vessel for both artistic expression and philosophical exchange. He believes that Arabic literature is a fundamental part of civilization and plays a vital role in cultural dialogue (Al-Kilani, 1987, p. 44).

Islamic literature represents and reflects life by presenting images that capture various aspects of existence. It offers a beautiful and meaningful portrayal of these aspects,

showcasing the features of the universe, life, and their diverse forms. Islamic literature expands as life itself does, encompassing all the varied dimensions of human needs, conditions, and affairs. Within the framework of Islamic teachings, literature is not incapable of addressing humanity's natural needs. It also accurately represents the diverse lives of people.

Islamic literature examines the spheres of life and work, distinguishing between what is virtuous and what is harmful to human humanity. It is committed, but this commitment is one of purpose, guiding people toward good and noble actions, rather than promoting inertia or imitation. On the other hand, non-Islamic literature often lacks such moral consideration. It tends to wander aimlessly, accepting all aspects of life without discrimination, often blurring the lines between the good, the bad, and the ugly. Islamic literature, however, rejects the exploitation of desire or the promotion of base behaviors. It is purposeful and edifying, aligning with its higher moral objectives.

2. Characteristics of Islamic Literature

Islamic literature possesses several key features that set it apart from other literary traditions. Below are the mostsignificantcharacteristics:

- **Teleology**: Islamic literature is guided by a clear purpose. It does not see art as an end in itself; instead, it uses literature as a tool to strengthen faith in God and instill virtuous values in the hearts of individuals. The aim is to inspire goodness and righteousness, making life, existence, fate, birth, and death meaningful (The Holy Quran, Surah Al-Mu'minun, Verse 115).

- **Purposefulness**: According to proponents of Islamic literature, literature must have a clear goal or purpose. It is not merely an art for the sake of art. Saleh Bello explains that the goal of the Muslim writer is "to change, develop and promote life to the fittest and most beautiful level by sowing the faith and consolidating it in the chests, and instilling the principles of goodness and beauty in souls" (1985, p. 73).

- **Commitment**: Islamic literature is intrinsically linked to the Islamic worldview. This commitment is voluntary and stems from the writer's personal faith, rather than being externally imposed, as seen in movements like social realism. For Muslim writers, commitment involves staying true to their faith while addressing all aspects of life. Muhammad al-Majzoub notes that "I cannot imagine a writer on the truth who is not committed because I understand commitment to the sincerity of expressing the reality of self and thought" (1984, p. 322).

- **Societal and Moral Responsibility**: Since Islamic society is based on faith and moral values, the Muslim writer has a responsibility to consider these values in their work. As Najeeb Al-Kilani states, "the real artist is the one who, through his art, represents his ideals… He always looks at his world in comparison to his example, values and principles" (Al-Kilani, 1963, p. 53). Writers are expected to promote these ideals and values within their societies.

- **Comprehensiveness**: Islamic literature looks at human life in a holistic and integrated way. It does not separate the material from the spiritual,

recognizing that both the body and the soul are equally significant. The literature represents both the physical and moral aspects of humanity, considering all the economic, social, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of life.

- **Realism**: Islamic literature advocates for a comprehensive realism that captures the full human experience. This differs from contemporary artistic movements that may focus on narrow, specific aspects of reality. Islamic literature presents a more expansive view, acknowledging both the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and societies. It does not glamorize evil or vice, but instead focuses on the virtuous aspects of life while addressing the shortcomings and failings of individuals and societies.

- **Clarity**: Clarity is a central value in Islamic literature. It avoids ambiguity or pessimism, offering guidance and hope, particularly to those who may be lost or confused. Mustafa Alyan emphasizes that "clarity is one of the requirements of clear thought and a clear vision that gives speech a distinctive brightness" (1985, p. 123). In Islamic literature, the language is simple, straightforward, and transparent, ensuring that meaning is clear and accessible.

Positivity: Islamic literature is dynamic and constructive. It encourages human growth and development, urging individuals to overcome weaknesses and strive for excellence. While acknowledging human frailty and failure, "He has created man in a state of weakness." (Surah An-Nisa, Verse 38 .),Islamic literature does not glorify weakness or present it as a heroic trait. Instead, it calls for positive change and moral progress. As Majid bin

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Muhammad Al-Majid states, "everything that calls for evil, violence, vice, or moral and behavioral degeneration comes out of Islamic literature" (1987, p. 87). Islamic literature, therefore, offers a corrective to the negativity of reality, aiming to inspire positive transformation.

3. Islamic Literature: Further Exploration

The characteristics of Islamic literature continue to distinguish it from other literary traditions, particularly through its positive orientation and broad objectivity.

3.1. Positivity and Benevolence:

Islamic literature does not focus on tears, pain, despair, or hopelessness. It does not glorify suffering for its own sake, nor does it foster feelings of anxiety or despair. Instead, it aims to guide those who are suffering or in despair towards a sense of hope, renewal, and positivity. Islamic literature encourages resilience, perseverance, and joy, and it often aims to uplift the spirit, showing that struggle and giving are the pathways to growth and success. In this sense, Islamic literature is positive and benevolent, offering a vision of transformation and redemption rather than one that glorifies sorrow or deprivation.

3.2. Objectivity:

Proponents of Islamic literature reject the idea that it is narrow in scope or limited to specific topics such as Islamic faith, history, and personalities. While it certainly draws on Islamic themes, it is not confined to religious themes alone. Islamic literature is seen as an inclusive art that explores the human experience, encompassing the full spectrum of existence, from the physical world to the spiritual, and from

the mundane to the sublime. It contemplates nature, human emotions, struggles, and triumphs, and it reflects the Islamic worldview on faith, life, and the cosmos.

Muslim writers are encouraged to present literature that is both morally and artistically rich. They can address a variety of subjects—ranging from human emotions to historical symbols—and adapt scientific theories into literary form. According to Muhammad Qutb, the Muslim writer enjoys freedom to choose topics and artistic elements, as long as they adhere to the overarching moral and cosmic principles outlined by the Quran: "He is free to choose proportions, dimensions, and shadows in each single painting he draws, as long as he does not deviate from the general proportions drawn by the great cosmic concepts of the Qur'an" (Qutb, 1980, p. 142).

Abdul RahmanRaafat Al-Basha also emphasizes the breadth of Islamic literature's scope, noting that it encompasses "man with his emotions, longings, hopes, pains, good and bad, worldly and lastly," as well as "life with all its happiness, misery, components and values." Furthermore, it embraces the natural world with its "birds, animals, spring, and winter," reflecting the richness and complexity of existence (Al-Majid, 2016, p. 332).

Thus, Islamic literature is open to a wide range of topics. Writers are not constrained by historical period or religious doctrine; they are free to explore the diverse facets of human experience. However, they are always guided by the Islamic worldview, which encourages a moral lens through which to view the universe and humanity.

4. Western Literary Doctrines and Islamic Vision:

The evolution of literature, both in the Islamic and Western traditions, has been marked by continuous

development. As human thought, culture, and society have evolved, so too has literature, adapting to new ideologies and artistic movements. This is true in both the Arabic and Western literary traditions.

In Arabic literature, we have seen the emergence of new literary forms and genres, such as the novel, short story, play, article, free verse poetry, and prose poetry. These literary innovations were not spontaneous but rather the result of significant literary and philosophical shifts. Similarly, Western literature has evolved, experiencing major changes driven by the emergence of various literary movements, including neoclassicism, romanticism, symbolism, realism, and existentialism.

The comparison between Western literary doctrines and Islamic literary vision highlights both shared experiences and significant differences. While Western literature has often been influenced by secular philosophies and diverse ideologies, Islamic literature remains anchored in the moral and cosmic principles outlined by the Quran. It is not that Islamic literature resists evolution or development, but rather that its core values—such as commitment to faith, objectivity, and positivity—guide the way these changes are manifested in the literary form.

4.1. Key Differences Between Western and Islamic Literary Doctrines:

- **Moral Foundation**: Islamic literature is deeply rooted in the Islamic worldview, which provides a clear moral framework. This contrasts with many Western literary movements that often explore more relativistic or secular perspectives on life, morality, and existence.

- **Positive Outlook**: While Western literature has often been influenced by existentialism and other schools of thought that emphasize the absurdity or meaninglessness of life, Islamic literature generally maintains a positive, purposeful outlook, focusing on human agency, struggle, and transcendence.
- **Objectivity and Openness**: Unlike some Western literary traditions that may emphasize individualism or specific ideological movements, Islamic literature is seen as embracing a broader, more inclusive range of topics, as long as they remain consistent with the moral and cosmic truths of Islam.
- **Humanity in its Totality**: Islamic literature emphasizes the integrated nature of the human experience, encompassing the material, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional aspects of life. This contrasts with some Western literary traditions that might focus more narrowly on one dimension of the human condition (e.g., existential crises, romanticism, or the material world).

4.2. Classicism

Classicism is a literary school rooted in ancient Greek philosophy, emphasizing the imitation of Greek literature. It upholds reason as the highest authority, idealizes human nature, and primarily addresses the upper classes. For instance, Jean de La Fontaine referred to the lower class as the "bearer of the sins of the world." While classical literature values both form and content, it maintains that poetry should be both enjoyable and educational.

This school often incorporates pagan references, such as "the god of poetry," "the goddess of poetry," and "Astarte." It contradicts Islamic principles by sanctifying reason and

making it the sole source of laws, as the pagan intellectual tradition is shaped by its own philosophical foundations. In contrast, Islam views human nature realistically, acknowledging the ongoing struggle between good and evil. Additionally, Islam rejects the class distinctions emphasized in classical literature, as it considers piety the true measure of a person's worth. No individual is held accountable for sins they did not commit.

Classical literature largely ignores social and political issues, focusing instead on the human psyche and social customs. However, Islamic literature is both realistic and practical. It addresses societal challenges, explores human aspirations, and provides solutions grounded in Islamic values.

4.3. Romanticism

Romanticism emerged as a reaction against classicism's emphasis on reason. It championed individualism and emotion, often to an extreme degree. This movement promoted imagination, detachment from reality, and a rejection of moral purpose in literature. It laid the foundation for the "art for art's sake" ideology and called for complete human liberation from external constraints. However, it also opposed religion, leading its followers to escape reality—whether by retreating into nature, myths, or illusions. In some cases, it even led to despair, isolation, and self-destructive tendencies. Many Romantic writers expressed anxiety, pessimism, and moral recklessness.

Islamic literature, in contrast, balances emotion and reason. Emotion shapes artistic expression, while reason ensures balance and purpose. Unlike Romanticism, which seeks pleasure as its ultimate goal, Islamic literature

provides both enjoyment and practical benefit. It inspires and uplifts the soul while maintaining ethical integrity.

4.4. Realism

Realism in literature is rooted in the philosophical belief that life is fundamentally built on evil. According to this view, goodness is merely a deceptive façade that conceals human nature's true essence. Islamic literature strongly rejects this perspective, asserting that genuine goodness exists in the world, bringing peace, contentment, and mercy. While evil also exists and must be confronted, divine teachings advocate for promoting good and resisting wrongdoing.

Realist literature focuses on depicting reality with precision, emphasizing detailed and accurate portrayals. However, Islamic literature goes beyond mere depiction. It seeks to inspire a love for virtue and moral integrity. When addressing negative aspects of life, its goal is not to normalize them but to evoke disapproval and encourage transformation.

Furthermore, some realist writers encourage young men and women to abandon moral values, claiming that doing so is necessary for success. They argue that their literature "opens the eyes" of youth to hidden realities. However, Islamic literature completely opposes this view. As Abdul RahmanRa'fat Al-Basha states,

> "Meanness cannot become the intelligence of genius, nor can meanness be an aspiring goal. Because Islamic literature does not say to young men and women, 'If you want to get rich, you must pollute your hands, and all you have to do then is know how to wash them'" (2014, p. 134).

4.5. Existentialism

Existentialism promotes absolute freedom, arguing that individuals are solely responsible for their actions and destiny. It denies divine influence over human affairs, effectively negating the role of God. Jean-Paul Sartre, a key figure in existentialism, builds on René Descartes' philosophy, asserting, "I think, therefore I exist." He limits human existence to thought alone, dismissing the concept of God as a "harmful myth." According to Sartre, inherited beliefs should be discarded to allow individuals to shape their own existence. This ideology has led to a culture of unrestrained desire and moral decline.

Islamic literature firmly opposes existentialist principles. It acknowledges human freedom but within the framework of divine guidance. Rather than advocating for the rejection of moral and spiritual values, it upholds the idea that true fulfillment comes from aligning personal choices with ethical and religious principles.

5. The Islamic Perspective on Western Literary Criticism

The Islamic perspective recognizes the value of Western literary criticism but emphasizes the need for a strong intellectual foundation. As Hassan Al-Amrani explains,

> "Self-knowledge and self-immunity are prerequisites for openness. Otherwise, openness leads to loss of identity. There is a difference between openness and disengagement… First, one must know oneself and strengthen their foundation. Only then can they engage with other perspectives, reshaping what they read to create a new, authentic production" (2002, p. 5).

Uncritical adoption of positivist criticism can lead to misconceptions and contradictions with Islamic principles.

However, Islamic critics can still benefit from certain aspects of these methodologies, provided they maintain an Islamic perspective. For example, insights from realism, structuralism, and psychological or sociological critiques can be valuable if applied selectively and within an Islamic framework.

As Ibrahim Awadin states,

> "The Islamic critic can benefit—to a certain extent—from various theories explaining literary texts, whether through environmental influences, psychological motives, social structures, or aesthetic factors. However, they must remain balanced, avoiding a one-sided approach. Instead, they should integrate multiple perspectives to achieve a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the text" (1991, p. 209).

Islamic literary criticism, therefore, encourages engagement with diverse schools of thought while preserving its unique vision. It seeks to enrich literary analysis by combining beneficial elements from different traditions with a steadfast commitment to Islamic principles.

Some Islamic critics argue that what can be adopted from contemporary critical theories should be limited to artistic techniques and aesthetic methods, provided that these elements are carefully examined to distinguish between those that carry misleading connotations and those that are neutral and do not contradict the principles of the Islamic critical approach. This conditional acceptance of Western critical methodologies does not conflict with the call to establish an Islamic approach to literary criticism, as Islam does not oppose factual truths or reject correct conclusions, regardless of their source.

However, one major concern arises in the translation of human sciences, particularly when dealing with theories

concerning human nature, origin, mission, purpose in life, and destiny. Unlike the natural sciences, which reveal God's creation, the transfer of human-centered theories may introduce misinformation, myths, and false perceptions. Therefore, studying contemporary critical approaches through an Islamic lens serves to rigorously analyze these methodologies, distinguishing correct principles that can be integrated into the Islamic critical framework while rejecting flawed conclusions and misleading theories at both theoretical and applied levels (Bouzouina, 1990, p. 220).

Among the theories that require cautious engagement are Freud's psychoanalysis, Marx and Engels' historical materialism, Darwin's theory of evolution, and Durkheim's concept of the collective mind. The Islamic critic must critically evaluate these ideas based on their compatibility with Islamic perspectives. It is essential that these theories do not restrict the critic's intellectual independence or dictate his vision. If an Islamic critic passively accepts the deterministic assumptions of these theories, it could hinder his creativity and lead him away from truth. However, understanding these theories and benefiting from their insights does not equate to endorsing or adhering to their conclusions (Abdul Raziq, 2002, p. 158).

Islamic criticism does not wholly dismiss these disciplines or view them as inherently harmful. Instead, their value depends on their content and purpose. An Islamic critic can utilize elements of Western literature to critique Western civilization, its values, and its philosophical doctrines. For example, Muhammad Qutb analyzed Greek mythology, including the myths of Sisyphus and Prometheus, to reveal their ideological implications (n.d., p. 31). Similarly, Najib al-Kilani interpreted the theme of madness in Western

literature as evidence of the decline of human conditions in Western societies (1981, p. 57).

Moreover, Imad al-Din Khalil highlighted the presence of existential chaos in Western theater as a reflection of the intellectual and civilizational crises afflicting the Western world—crises that, he argued, could only be resolved through Islam (Khalil, 1977, p. 35). He further examined the faith-based values embedded in the Spanish play *A Boat Without a Fisherman* by Alejandro Casona as a critique of Western civilization (Khalil, 1972, p. 98). Additionally, in his analysis of *The Strangled Scream* by John Strachey, Khalil exposed contradictions within Marxism by examining five literary movements across Europe, England, America, and Russia, which he classified as representing "archaeological literature" (1987, p. 26).

Beyond these ideological critiques, the study of Western literary doctrines through an Islamic framework allows for the integration of artistic insights and engagement with contemporary issues. This approach enables Islamic critics to address modern challenges while remaining grounded in Islamic principles and values.

6. Western Literary Criticism and the Role of the Muslim Critic

Muslim critics must be cautious when using Western critical terms. Many of these terms are rooted in ideological foundations that conflict with Islamic thought. As Abdul Hamid Bouzouina warns,

> "most of them are of a corrupt Western ideological nature, so it is not permissible for our critics to be affected by them for fear of the penetration of invasion methods in our thinking, literature, perceptions, and position. It has been scientifically proven that members of society who are forced to

> open up unconditionally gradually change their adaptation—felt or not—and become impossible duplicates of their foreign origins... Hence, many of our critics are deceived by the glamour of contemporary terms, thinking that they are (purely scientific). In fact, it is said that most of them derive their essence from their ideological sources, and in order to be popular with naïve critics, they follow a (scientific) camouflaged path" (1992, p. 224).

Given these concerns, Muslim critics should reject Western terms that dominate academic discourse. Instead, they must actively resist the influence of these foreign concepts, as they often lead to ideological deviation. A return to a pure Islamic framework in literary criticism is necessary. This framework should be distinct in both terminology and content, grounded in the realities of Islamic art and thought (Sa'i, 1985, p. 104).

However, some scholars argue that engaging with Western literary criticism can be beneficial. Muhammad IqbalAroui suggests that exposure to various critical approaches allows critics to analyze different methodologies, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and make informed evaluations (Aroui, 1987, p. 100). He further explains that embracing diverse perspectives enriches the critic's analytical skills and broadens their understanding of literature (Aroui, 1988, p. 96).

Similarly, Imad Al-Din Khalil emphasizes that learning from Western experiences enhances the growth and development of Islamic literary criticism. He argues that such engagement helps Islamic criticism stay relevant, making it more effective in communicating its principles to a global audience. At the same time, it provides critics with

advanced tools for self-expression and deeper insights into the creative process (Khalil, 1988, p. 168).

Despite these potential benefits, some scholars caution against the risks of unfiltered exposure to Western literary theories. There is concern that adopting these perspectives may erode moral and ethical values, distort perceptions, and introduce harmful ideas. Literature and art often reflect the moral and intellectual state of a society. If a society is plagued by instability, excess, or decline, its literary works may transmit these negative influences to others. Emerging intellectuals are particularly vulnerable to such effects.

To mitigate these risks, critics must strengthen their intellectual and ideological foundations. A strong sense of moral clarity and critical awareness allows them to engage with foreign concepts without compromising their beliefs. Khalil notes that exposure to Western literature can have two outcomes: first, it can sharpen moral awareness and enhance creative abilities; second, it can provide a clear view of the chaos, confusion, and suffering that arise from societies disconnected from divine guidance. Recognizing these realities strengthens one's commitment to Islamic principles and reinforces the value of a balanced, purposeful approach to literature (Khalil, 1985, p. 77).

Islamic literary criticism is urgently needed to restore literature's original function, integrating beauty, morality, art, and purpose. This approach is especially crucial in an era dominated by Western literary schools that have shaped global thought.

Conclusion

For decades, Arab literary criticism has been influenced by Western literary and critical schools. However, applying Western principles to Arabic literature without considering their cultural and ideological differences is problematic. Islamic literature must maintain its authenticity rather than adopting foreign methodologies that contradict its values. A Muslim critic should not attempt to produce literature solely based on Western critical frameworks. Doing so risks weakening the Islamic voice in literary works, as seen in writings influenced by realism.

That said, this does not mean rejecting Western literary thought entirely. It is possible to benefit from certain artistic and analytical techniques while ensuring that they align with Islamic values. Muslim writers should adapt and refine these elements within an Islamic framework, preserving their cultural and ideological identity. This balanced approach fosters intellectual exchange while maintaining originality and authenticity.

Western literary traditions often embrace extremism and exaggeration, whereas Islamic literature promotes moderation. This moderation ensures that literary works serve both artistic and ethical purposes, addressing the mind, emotions, and spirit. It integrates beauty with meaning, catering to the human experience at all levels.

Unlike Western literary schools that often prioritize form over substance, Islamic literature remains deeply committed to its intellectual and moral foundations. It unites content and artistic expression into a cohesive whole, offering a truthful representation of life. As a literature of "living conscience" and "constructive imagination," it avoids

psychological distortions and philosophical confusion that have influenced contemporary Western thought. Instead, it presents a balanced depiction of human existence, addressing economic, social, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions.

Islamic literary criticism is essential in today's world. It provides a foundation for meaningful artistic expression while preserving the moral and intellectual integrity of literature. By adhering to these principles, Islamic literature can continue to thrive, offering an alternative to the fragmented and often chaotic perspectives found in many Western literary doctrines.

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