

Rise of Islamic Literature between Fact and Fiction

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Abstract—The Islamic literature does not take its proper place among the world arts as one of the significant areas of research. Islamism does not spring up as a tool of literary criticism worthy of studying and writing about. Many studies need to be done on the Islamic literature to highlight this sort of literature and culture. Critics may not give sufficient concern for the Islamic literature and they have not been encouraged to go deeply into the literary works of the writers who classify themselves Islamic writers. This article attempts to set a place for the Islamic literature and traces the first attempts and origins of this sort of literature. It introduces a number of Islamic critics who are interested in this area of the Islamic literature. The main argument is how the Islamic critics define and present what they claim to be Islamic literature and Islamic theory in their writings in general and literary writings in particular. The results indicated that the Islamic critics attempt to put the foundations of this new literature but their efforts do not show sufficient concern with the Islamic literature and the literary works of the Islamic literature do not get sufficient study and research.

Index Terms—Islamic literature, theory, Islamism, Islamic Scholars, Islamic theater, criticism

I. INTRODUCTION

The Islamic writers, critics and researchers do not seem to pay enough attention to the Islamic issues in literary writings. Alternatively, they may not be interested in practicing Islamism as a critical theory in their literary criticism because it is not known globally or practiced by world critics. Is it a phobia of anything involved with Islam? Or is this fear connected with the absence of enough Islamic critics and researchers in this area of interest? The Islamic culture and values have been represented inappropriately, particularly after 9/11 era. Many writers may not address the Islamic issues in their literary works because Muslims are stereotyped as backward, uncivilized and terrorists as a result of what they claimed to be Muslims' involvement with global terrorism. When writers address Islamic issues, they discuss them from a dark perspective. The Islamic discourse is marginalized and is not appreciated enough in world literature. The focus is on such a significant area of writing that requires Islamic critics to expose the reality of Islamic culture and literature. This study argues that the Islamic literature deserves to be among the world literary writings in terms of study and criticism. Why are Islamic literary writings and criticism neglected? The world criticism does not show a concern with Islamic literature. What is Islamic literature? How do Islamic writers highlight the Islamic issues and values in their literary works? Are there any genuine efforts or attempts to establish a solid area of Islamic literature? How do Islamic critics define Islamic literature? What are the characteristics of the Islamic literature? The Islamic literature is not a cutting edge area but it has its roots in the history of Islam. The Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him (henceforth PBUH), asked Hassan Bin Thabet, an early Arab poet, to reply to the Quraish's poet who had offended the Prophet (PBUH) in particular and Muslims in general. (Quraish was the tribe of the Prophet PBUH). Hassan was considered the Prophet's poet who defended Muslims and their values. During that period of early stage of Islam, the people would not find that big gap between the Islamic literature and the Arabic one because the language was the same: i.e. the Arabic language. The critics categorized the Islamic literary writings as Arabic literature with paying no great attention to the specialty of the rubric "Islamic literature" and its values and culture. At an early stage of Islam, the huge concern was given to poetry with which the Arabs at that time were much known for. Their contests in the area of poetry and their unique poems were praiseworthy.

The Companions of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) were very concerned with the Islamic concepts in their writings, their acts and actions. For this reason, when Abdullah Bin Rawaha, another early Arab poet, heard a Quranic ayah (plural: Ayat; meaning a verse of Quran) warning poets against drifting with the Arabs poets who go against the Word of God (i.e. the Quran), he felt very upset. However, the Quranic Ayat do not address the Muslim who defends Islam and the Prophet (PBUH) and who do not exceed the limit of the boundaries of the Islamic values. However, the Quranic Ayat warns people who do not pay attention to the values and ethics of Islam in their poetry. The Holy Quran does not include the people who are committed to their Islamic values and faith, that is Muslim who make use of poetry to defend the values of Muslims and are simultaneously stuck to such values themselves. They should not go against their words that are supposed to call for good deeds and Islam in general.

In this regard, Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala; meaning glory be to Him; henceforth SWT (SWT) says:

والشعراء يتبعهم الغاؤون * ألم تر أنهم في كل واد يهيمون * وأنهم يقولون ما لا يفعلون * إلا الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات وذكروا الله كثيرا وانتصروا والشعراء يتبعهم الغاؤون * ألم تر أنهم في كل واد يهيمون * وأنهم يقولون ما لا يفعلون * إلا الذين آمنوا وعلّموا الصالحات وذكروا الله كثيرا وانتصروا
 ومن بعد ما ظلموا وسيعلم الذين ظلّموا أي منقلب ينقلبون
 As for the poets, the erring ones follow them (26: 224) See you not that they speak about every subject (praising people—right or wrong) in their poetry? (26: 225) And that they say what they do not do (26: 226). Except those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah—Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous deeds, and remember Allah much, and vindicate themselves after they have been wronged [by replying back in poetry to the unjust poetry (which the pagan poets utter against the Muslims)]. And those who do wrong will come to know by what overturning they will be overturned (26: 227).

Here, Abdullah Bin Rawaha felt relieved when he found the real meaning of the Quranic Ayat which put conditions of the Islamic literature. Muslim poets should adhere to what they call people for. A poet has to set a good example of a real Muslim who believes in Allah (SWT) and the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH). Third, the exception in the Quranic Ayat addresses Muslims who believe in Allah (SWT) and their faith is translated into good deeds. They always intend to meet with the orders of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) in their acts and actions. They follow the words recommended by the Prophet, Mohammed (PBUH), to keep them in the right track of Islam.

Poetry was one of the most significant areas in literature in the beginning of Islam because it occupied a very significant position in the Arabic and Islamic literature and it reflected the literary works of the eloquent Arabs in the Arabic language who were known for the unique rhetoric used in their poems. Arabs in the past ages held many poetry contests to give people an opportunity to compete in creating poems. Suq Okaz, an occasion named after a famous market place then, was one of their occasions to compete in creating the best poems. Every tribe would be very proud of their winning poets. The best poems were hung in the wall of the Holy House, i.e. Ka'ba in Mecca, as a glorification of those unique poets and poems. The contest ended by hanging seven winning poems on the wall of the Holy House. It was an honor for the tribe which the poet belongs to. Here the readers may realize the position of poetry in the Arab early stages and how Islam came to surpass their eloquence and rhetoric despite the big gap between what Arabs addressed in their poems and what Islam does. This article focuses on the Islamic literature and how it started on the very early stage of Islam particularly in the area of poetry which was known among the tribesmen in the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic ages. The second important area of literature which is revealed in the Holy Quran is the narratives of the Prophets and past nations. The Holy Quran portrays their lives, in brief as well as in details. For instance, Yusuf Surah, i.e. a chapter in the Quran, tells about Yusuf story, which narrates the Pharaoh wife's attempt to seduce Yusuf, in detail without arousing the human sexual instincts. Many Suwar (singular Surah; meaning a chapter in the Quran) of the Holy Quran address a lot of Prophets' stories in a very unique style that have defied the eloquence of the Arabs in the Jahili age, that is, the age before Islam.

II. LITERARY THEORIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN LITERATURE

What is literary criticism? Matthew Arnold defines literary criticism as "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." (qtd. in Bressler 1994). Bressler (1994) explains Arnold's definition as "a disciplined activity that attempts to study, analyze, interpret, and evaluate a work of art" (p. 3). Literary theory becomes the tool and the framework which assists critics in their analysis and discussion of literary texts. Every literary theory has its own concepts and standards used to expose literary texts from the perspective of such theory. The literary theories may be found overlapped and each one has been developed upon the other theories' concepts. For instance, postcolonialism shares the same concepts with some other literary theories such as Marxism and psychoanalytic theory. However, it still retains its vision.

The worlds of literary theories compete in occupying larger spaces in the area of literary criticism because the one who controls literary theories is the one who directs and leads the academic world. If critical criticism is a ship, the sea waves would be the theories that move the ship. Literary theory is a tool which is used by critics. For this reason, the world competes to create new theories and trends. It propagates such theories to convince critics about those theories' effectiveness in the area of literary criticism. To create a theory means to lead people to one's beliefs and ideologies, that is to one's cultures and concepts. If one's theory becomes unquestionably dominating, they would undoubtedly be the dominator and the controller of the world's vision and thought. Theories are the ideologies that rule the fate of the world and make people closer to the thought of the theories' makers, whether in the area of education or politics. They reshape the thought and identity of the people who use such theories in their social, intellectual, political lives. People find themselves believe and defend the concepts of those theories which are unquestionably a sort of defense of the ideology and identity of the theories' makers while the indigenous identity gets assimilated with those waves of literary theories.

As such, literary theories gain a very significant position in literary criticism. Every literary theory has its own concepts and concentrations which highlight the area of its interest. Consider, for instance, such theories as Marxism, Feminism, Postcolonialism, and Psychoanalytic, etc. As theorists are concerned with their own theories and their developments, the writers are concerned with exposing their culture, literature, and values through their literary works. The Islamic critics read literary works, such as Najuib Al Kailani's literary works particularly in the area of novel, from an Islamic framework. Also, Ali Ahmad Bakathir's plays would not find the global interest they deserve. The Islamic literary works that address Islamic issues and values may not meet with the concepts of other theories. The Islamic

writers and critics begin to talk about the specialty of their Islamic writings which should be read from an Islamic perspective which gives a top priority to the Islamic culture and values.

Writers who are concerned with their Islamic values and Islamic thought exert their efforts to make their Islamic voice heard in the world of theories, literary criticism and literature in general. There are some writers who write in Arabic about the Islamic literature, whether in form of articles, books or literary works as novels and plays or short stories, but sometimes their works could not reach an international level. Further, there are some other pioneers of the Islamic novel, Najuib Al Kailani, Ali Ahmad Bakathir in the Islamic theater and many new writers who start to pay more attention to the Islamic issues and Islamic history in the area of writing literature and culture. However, their literary works do not receive proper interest of critics in terms of translation into global languages.

Each literary theory has its literary dimensions and its political ideologies. Let us take Marxism theory as an example. How have such theories managed to gather many countries under the tenet of Marxism by their political ideologies which attract large segments of people to follow? It is because such a theory touched the vulnerable feelings of those nations. By the theory concepts and claims, such theories managed to unite many countries of the world under the Marxist ideology which was not only a tool of literary criticism but also an ideology. The Marxist ideology is one that influenced many countries of the world during the defunct Soviet Union. So far, some of the people of such countries have adhered to the Marxist concepts all over the world. The faster the ideologies and the literary theories spread, the faster they dominate the cultural, social, and political aspects of life. Theorists are aware that the more space for the Islamic literature in the world, the faster Islam spreads. The Islamic writers may not succeed, by the international standards, in their Islamic writings and they may not find an opportunity to publish their literary writings in different international languages. However, they attempt to secure a place for their Islamic writings and theories that may not contradict the Islamic values and culture. You may not find any mention for the Islamic literature or Islamic theory in books of literature, literary criticism and literary theories. Most Arab writers in the area of literature may not present Islamic writings well. Many attempts of some Islamic writers step over the boundaries of their nations or in the best state the Arab world, but such attempts may not find an international or even regional concern.

The problem is that when the Muslim researchers attempt to think about writing on the Islamic literature using the English language as a medium, they get shocked due to the shortage of references in the English language. Such researchers are in need of providing their supervisors with references so that the latter understand the area of research, particularly an English version of such literary works under their study. When references in English are lacking, supervisors apologize for not being able to supervise such Islamic research. Another reason is that they may not find a supervisor who would accept to see the Islamic ideas expressed in academic research. Most postgraduate students prefer not to take the trouble and spend their valuable time searching for references. So, they prefer any easy way to finish their studies as soon as possible. Some Islamic researchers at the level of postgraduate studies think only of how to finish their research to find a satisfactory job, ignoring the responsibility of their nation and religion to explicate the Islamic literary works and manifest their values so as to guide the Muslim youth in reading literary history and history itself from an Islamic perspective. The history of the Companions of the Prophet, Mohammed (PBUH), needs to be exposed for the new generations to read about those brilliant people and wonderful history of Islam. The literary theory is the framework that keeps the researcher on track on research. Tyson (2006) stated that the competition among theories takes a strong political dimension "Thus, competition among theories has always had a strong political dimension in at least two senses of the word political: (1) different theories offer very different interpretations of history and of current events, including interpretations of government policies, and (2) advocates of the most popular theories of the day usually receive the best jobs and the most funding for their projects" (P. 8).

Tyson (2006) also pointed out the significance of literary theories which may take a political dimension in domination. This article is an investigation of the reality of the Islamic literature and the decent efforts of the Islamic critics in the area of Islamic literature. Islamism as a critical theory presents the Islamic literature that meets the needs of the Islamic community and the global human community alike. The theories which are presented by western theorists are suitable for the western discourses and reflect the identity of the western community. Therefore, those critical theories pay no attention to the particularities of the Islamic community which adheres to the Islamic faith and values. The existing theories serve the culture and the identity of the nations that created them. They do not give a sufficient space for the Islamic and Arabic discourses. In other words, those theoretical frameworks do not fit with the demands of the Islamic and Arabic literature. The argument here concentrates on positioning the Islamic literature in its appropriate place among the world literature. It is to show the lasting efforts of Islamic writers who try to show the Islamic literature as an indispensable part of the world literature. The Islamic critics endeavor to see the Islamic culture and values appreciated through the Islamic literature.

Most theories, if not all, focus on one side of literary works more than the others. For instance, feminist theory glorifies the female body and behavior without paying sufficient attention to the other important aspects of works as if literary works have no concern but only the woman's life. That is to say, theories eliminate many aspects of literary works. Tyson (2006) stated that "Even within the ranks of any given critical theory there are countless disagreements among practitioners that result in the emergence of different schools of thought within a single theory" (p. 3). Another example is Marxism. This theory comes to touch the poor's feelings and shows the honor of those poor without taking any concern with their souls and their need for a faith. In fact, this theory looks at religion as opium that deceives

people and impedes their progress in life. Tyson (2006) pointed out that "Think of each theory as a new pair of eyeglasses through which certain elements [my emphasis] of our world are brought into focus while others, of course, fade into the background" (P. 7). George Orwell in one of his novels, *Animal Farm* (1945), mocks communism and Marxism that they express powerful words to attract people to Marxism's promising principles of prosperity. But when they come to power, they do not pay attention to their promises of equity and equality: "all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" (Orwell 1945)

Therefore, the Islamic literature and Islamic theory are inevitably necessary to take back Muslims to the right track of Islam, that is, the track of their cultural identity and values. A host of Islamic writers feel this huge responsibility towards the Islamic values; hence their responsibility to call their nations to return to their cultural and Islamic origins. Islamic writers and critics attempt to find a place for the Islamic literature and criticism. First, the article is going through the varied definitions of the Islamic literature and how the writers and critics define the Islamic literature or expect the message of such literature. It also tackles the way Islamism as a critical theory may serve literary criticism in this area of interest.

III. ISLAMIC LITERATURE, WRITERS AND CRITICS

There are many definitions of literature. The word 'literature' is derived from the Latin word 'littera' which means 'letter', and from this origin the word of literature is defined as "a written word". By this definition, the word of literature has taken a larger space to include any sort of writing as scientific writings, guiding books and the instructions of any machine or apparatus. However, there is no comparison between a literary work as Forster's *A Passage to India* and a scientific text that is free of imaginative art. Many critics link the definitions of literature with schools of criticism. For instance, the formalists would consider the text only as a reflection of the characteristics of literature. The psychoanalysts would focus on the psychological relationships among the characters, etc.

Whatever the definition of literature may be, literature includes special features that may not be found in any other types of writings such as scientific texts or guiding books. Literature requires imagination and creativity. It has an aesthetic quality that is lacking in scientific texts or guiding books. The raw material of literature is the community itself. It goes through describing and analyzing human experiences and attitudes towards human being in particular and life in general. It shows a special concern with human sentiments and passions. It presents human values, emotions and beliefs in an imaginative way. In literature, honesty is an abstract quality in the literary works but it is concretized with actions. 'Courage' is another quality that is proved by brave actions in the narrative. Such characteristics are exposed through actions and daring deeds. The literary works tell stories of human beings. The story material is the human beings' experiences with their spiritual and physical potentials.

The Islamic literature has to include the same qualities as those just mentioned, but it requires being stamped with the Islamic culture, values, and philosophy. The Islamic literature reflects the Islamic codes existing in the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). The values and history of the Prophet's Companions and their stories would be a material of such Islamic narrative. The Islamic literature in its definitions needs to be the same worldwide. The critics may categorize the Islamic literature based on countries with such terms as the Turkish Islamic literature, the Malaysian Islamic literature, etc. However, the content of the Islamic literature may be the same in all the Islamic countries in terms of values and codes. The Islamic literature springs up from the same origins: the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophet PBUH. The Islamic literature is an art that includes the elements and qualities of world literatures with a special emphasis on the Islamic values and culture.

The Islamic literature is not restricted to the Arab countries but includes the Islamic countries even if the latter's literature is written in their own languages, such as Turkish, Pakistani, etc. There are many Islamic writers as well as critics who attempt to provide their vision and projection about the Islamic literature. One of the pioneers in the area of the Islamic literature is Najuib Al Kailani. He was born in Egypt in 1931 and wrote many Islamic novels, short stories, plays and poems. However, his creativity manifests itself in writing Islamic novels which carve out a name for Al Kailani in the world of the Islamic novel. In addition, he was a medical doctor. He won a number of awards and prizes, including the Supreme Council Prize For Arts that introduced him to the regional community as a pioneer of the Islamic novel. He wrote more than forty novels, seven collections of short stories, four plays, and seven collections of poetry, twelve critical books and sixteen different books in the different areas of knowledge. He died in 1995 and left behind a large number of literary works that require discussion and analysis from an Islamic perspective.

Many Islamic critics expressed their concern about establishing the Islamic literature and criticism during the second half of 20th century. One of those Islamic writers and critics is Abu Al Hassan Al Nadawi in one of his early papers presented in Damascus Scientific Complex where he was selected as a member in this complex. In 1988, a conference was held in India entitled 'World Symposium about Islamic Literature' to culminate Abu Al Hassan A Nadawi's efforts to establish this sort of the Islamic literature and call the Islamic writers and critics to introduce this sort of literature to the world. One of the most significant recommendations in this conference is to establish the International League of Islamic Literature and call the scholars to manifest the concepts and values of Islam in their literary works. In 1952, Sayed Qutb with his rubric "Islamic literature" in one of his articles 'Literature Methodology' in *Muslim Brothers Journal* pointed out the urgent need for the notion of the "Islamic literature". His book 'In History a Thought and a Method' explained the sense of the Islamic literature as "the expression that aroused from the fullness of human psyche

with human feelings". In 1961, Sayed Qutb's brother, Mohammed Qutb, wrote "Islamic Art Approach" to trace his brother's Islamic approach in Islamic writings. In 1963, Najuib Al Kailani wrote a new book about the Islamic literature entitled 'Islamism and Islamic Approaches'. Then, in 1974, Emad Al Din Khalil wrote his book entitled: 'In contemporary Islamic Criticism'. By the efforts of those Islamic writers and critics, the first foundation of what is called the "Islamic literature" is established. They have left the door open for the concerned writers and critics to enrich the Islamic literature. The history of the Arabic and Islamic literature is classified into chronological stages, namely Jahili, Islamic, Amawi, Abbasi, Uthmani, without paying attention to the Islamic faith, values and special qualities of such Islamic literature. The Arabic literature need be included under the tent of the Islamic literature, without neglecting the rubric "Arabic literature" which was one of the tools of introducing the Islamic literature.

Mohammed Qutb (1960) stated that "the Islamic literature is the beautiful expression of universe, life, and mankind. It is the art which prepares the perfect meeting between beauty and righteousness. Beauty is a fact in this universe and righteousness is a peak of that beauty. As such, they have met in the story whereby all the facts of universe are gathered" (P. 6). A host of Islamic writers and critics represent the second generation of Islamic scholars who present their projection of the Islamic literature. They show their concern with the Islamic literature by writing books and articles that discuss contemporary Islamic issues. Some of such writers and critics are Mohammed Al Rab'e Al Nadawi who wrote his book *Islamic Literature: An Issue and Construction* and Mustafa Aliyan wrote *Introduction to Islamic Literature*. Another book in the Islamic literature was written by Sami Makki Al Ani entitled *Studies in Islamic Literature*. Abdelbaset Badr wrote *Introduction to Islamic literature Theory*. All these just mentioned books and articles are written in Arabic. By such books, the idea of the Islamic literature and culture has begun to spread and the road map of the Islamic literature and culture has been designed.

Al Kailani is one of those who established solid foundations of the Islamic literature, whether in writing Islamic novels or other books that address the Islamic literature such as *Madkhel ela Aladab Al Islami (An Approach to Islamic literature)*, *Afaq Aladab Al Islami (Horizons of Islamic Literature)*, *Tagribati Al Thatiyah fi Al Qissah Al Qasseerah (Self –Experience in Short Story)*, *Rihlati Ma'a Al Adab Al Islami (My journey with Islamic Literature)*, and *Hawl Al Masrah Al Islami (Around Islamic Theater)*. Al Kailani enriched the Islamic library with many literary writings, particularly in the area of narrative such as novels and short stories. He began writing about this area of research to draw attention of other writers and critics to analyze and discuss Islamic issues in their literary works. Al Kailani (1987) expressed the meaning of the Islamic literature as follows:

The Islamic literature is not inflexible rules, or isolated pieces of writing detached from reality. It is not a discourse or a sermon overwhelmed by rules and texts, but it is valuable images decorated with what increases their beauty and greatness and make them more effective. Islamic literature is beautiful, artistic, effective expressions that spring up of real Muslims. Such expressions become genuine images of life, humanity and universe. These images match with Muslims' beliefs and principles. They are a source of benefit and enjoyment. They mobilize the sentiment and thought, and they are an incentive to take a situation or do an action.' (P. 27)

The Islamic writer and critic Emad Aldin Khalil (1981) pointed out that the Islamic literature is the "aesthetic expression that influences by word. It is about an Islamic projection of the universe". The Islamic critics need to fully realize what the Islamic literature means and not to be taken by enthusiasm with regard to the basics of the Islamic knowledge. Shallow knowledge of the Islamic literature would not serve the Islamic literature as it may damage its accuracy and credibility and make it vulnerable for attack on the part of the secularists who have no accurate knowledge about the Islamic literature in particular and Islam in general. Simultaneously, some Islamic writers could not offer a clear and accurate Islamic literature and their efforts are still very limited. For these reasons, the Islamic writers and critics alike need to do much reading before beginning to address any Islamic issues in literature or in their other Islamic writings.

Al Kailani wrote a host of Islamic novels and other critical books all of which would lead the Islamic writers and critics to the right track. He wrote more than forty novels that have left much influence in the area of the Islamic novel in particular and the Islamic literature in general. Some of such novels are *Hamza's Killer*, *Allah's Light*, *Night and Bars*, *Men and Wolves*, *Jad Allah's Story*, *Omer Appears in Jerusalem*, *North Giants*, and *Turkestan Nights*, etc.

Another Islamic writer who exerted his efforts to reflect the Islamic values and culture in literature, particularly in the area of drama, is Ali Ahmad Bakatheer. He wrote *Red Retaliation*, *Brave Biography*, *Wa Islamah*, *Smart Knight*. Emad Al din khalil wrote *Sword and Word*, and *Jihad Al Rahabi I'll not Die for Nothing*. Salam Ahmad Adriso wrote *The Returner*. Ahmad Al Qari wrote *No One Knows What I Want*. Those are examples of Islamic writers and critics who enriched the Islamic literature with masterpieces that do not go beyond the Islamic framework. The Islamic literature does not receive encouragement from the Islamic countries in terms of providing writers and critics with books and references they require in their research.

In the area of short story, there are many writers such as Al Kailani who wrote *Nightmare*, *Allah's Men*, *Doctor's Stories*, and Emad Khalil who wrote *Allah's Word*, *Streams of Love and Certainty*. Many other Islamic writers show their concern for the Islamic literature such as *Awdet Allah Al Qaisi*, *Yusuf Al Burqadi*, and *Ahmad Zuraiq*, etc. In the Islamic Theater, Khalil wrote *Contemporary Islamic Criticism*, *World Anarchism in Contemporary Western Theater*, Mohammed Aziza wrote *Islam and Theater*, Omar Mohammed wrote *Hints of Arabic Islamic Plays*, and Ali Ahmad

Bakatheer wrote a host of plays that introduce the Islamic theater to readers such as Chain and Forgiveness, Politics Theater, Paradise Back, Zainab's Misery, Harout and Marout, Cats and Mice, Juha's Nail, and others.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC LITERATURE

Al Kailani (1987) discussed many characteristics in his definition of the Islamic literature such as expressing the Muslims' belief and principles and introducing artistic and effective expressions. To him, the Islamic literature translates the universe, humanity and life. It is a sort of enjoyment and benefit alike. The Islamic literature arouses thought and sentiment of readers and motivates them to take action. It is an expression of life, humanity, and universe under the tenet of Islam with expressing aesthetic value. It is clear and independent in the sense that it does not eliminate the concepts of other world theories that might match with Islamic values and culture.

The Islamic literature shows stability and accuracy. It is a comprehensive term that includes convincing analysis of human actions and universal manifestations while the western theories may appear overlapped in a way that makes distinction between the concepts of theories confusing regarding the origins of the concepts and how the same concepts in one of the western theories may serve another concept in another one. For instance, in the Psychoanalytical theory, Feminism and Marxism, a reader would be confused about how those theories' concepts work in those theories. The concept of hegemony in Marxism appears in the area of economics and in postcolonialism. The focus would be in the area of language and culture.

The Islamic literature presents the Islamic culture and values that take the concepts from the principles and teachings of Islam without ignoring or devaluing the artistic value of a work. It is a combination of art and literature; it redresses the balance between sentiment and thought. It works on harmonizing the relationship between Muslims' values and their faith. This sort of literature might not offer concessions or show confusion about the basics of Muslims' faith.

V. ISLAMISM AS A CRITICAL THEORY

Najuib Al Kailani is the first writer and critic who used the term of Islamism in his book 'Islamism and Literary Approach'. Then, the Islamic critics have initiated to use this term in their Islamic writings such as Anwer Al Jindi's Islamism, and Hassan Al Amarani's book 'Islamism in Contemporary Poetry in Morocco'. Khalil uses this term to address the Islamic writers and critics to pay attention to Islamism in literature. The Islamic literature comes as a reaction of the international critical theories that have taken human beings far away of the Islamic faith, value, and position. Most of the used theories may not satisfy all aspects of human beings in life, connection with God, faith, and values. Writers and critics may get lost with the variety of theories available: existentialism, Marxism, psychoanalytic, feminism, new criticism, schools of romanticism, classicism, naturalism and other critical theories which may not provide a satisfactory answer to human inquiries about self and life.

The Islamic literature and Islamic theory have commenced to take a space in the Arabic literature and other Islamic countries literature in the last two decades of the twenties century. Some Islamic countries show some concern for the Islamic literature. They begin to theorize for this Islamic literature using their own languages as Turkish Islamic literature, Urdu Islamic literature and other Islamic countries. However, Islamic writers and critics endeavor to create their own theories and literature which present their cultures and codes in daily life. The Islamic literature may not find that concern or use in the world of literary criticism and analysis because some people who claim their concern for the Islamic literature do not properly present this sort of literature to the world. Researchers find themselves short of references that assist them to analyze the Islamic literature written in Arabic. They may not find the solid foundations that may help them to build their argument and criticism upon. Another point is that the Islamic literature written in Arabic would not find the suitable audience who are interested in translating this sort of literary works into English or other international languages.

The Islamic theory is a tool of criticism and evaluation of the Islamic literary works manifested in the Islamic culture and values. The Islamic literature as other international arts gets developed and is categorized into four stages: early, medieval, modern and contemporary.

The Islamic theory is the first attempt of the Islamic writers and critics to bring satisfactory answers to many issues involved with the Islamic literature. It is also a result of not finding appropriate concepts in other theories to fit the Islamic issues. This theory takes its balance from Islam itself as a global religion of moderate look and faith of millions of Muslims all over the world. The Islamic critical theory is a broad perspective whose references are the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed PBUH. This area of literature still requires more efforts to establish its solid ground in world literature. Many Islamic literary works are still in their mother tongue, something that does not help researchers to know more about the Islamic theory and literature. The burden on Muslims' shoulder is huge so as to let the world recognize Islamism and Islamic literature.

The question now is "what is the position of the Islamic literature and theory in the Arab curricula and academic institutions in particular and in Muslim academic institutions in general" Researchers might not find the Islamic literature welcomed in the English departments of the Islamic countries. This sort of literature may not take a significant position in our academic institutions. As a result of negative propaganda about Islam and the campaign of attack on the Prophet, Mohammed (PBUH), many people in the world may view Islam as essentially hostile to humanity and to

human rights as well. Muslims are in some of world eyes terrorists and makers of troubles. Any word connected with Islam is a source of fear and mistrust. The stereotype of Muslims does not encourage researchers to study and analyze the Islamic literary works. The word of Islam is involved with politics that portray Islam as a taboo. Many researchers prefer to cope up with the secular literary movements which are represented with well known theories and writing about world literature. This makes researchers view the Islamic literature as an unworthy religious discourse. In the eyes of some people, such works express the ideology of Islam which is better to be restricted in mosques and religious schools. The Islamic literature is the guide of the world to recognize more about this life. However, Islamic writers and critics believe that the Islamic literature is a combination of art and values. This Islamic literature has a message in life as it leads to its betterment. It is the literature that harmonizes human actions with values. It redresses the balance of humanity on this earth.

VI. CONCLUSION

There are many Arabic literary works and many critical books that address the Islamic literature and Islamic issues. Islamic writers and critics work hard to position the Islamic literature in its proper place among international literatures. The Islamic literature may not find proper attention from critics because it is not presented well enough. The foundations and concepts are not clear for many researchers who do not like to bother themselves to search and establish foundations of such a literature. The Arab Islamic writers and critics attempt to establish this literature but the area is still wide open for more research.

The masterpieces of the Islamic novelists and writers would not find proper attention to be translated into the English language or other international languages. Arab researchers, in particular, and Islamic critics in general, have not given enough attention and interest for the Islamic literature in the English language departments in their academic institutions. Therefore, they become tied with research using established theories that are not suitable for the area of Islamic studies. In other words, they do not take the responsibility to promote their culture and religion to the international community. Islamic critics need to pay more attention to the Islamic literature. They also need to read it Islamically by presenting the theory of Islamism to world.

There are a big number of Islamic literary works that need to be translated into world languages especially into English. Many Islamic issues in these works need critical investigation from an Islamic perspective. Islamic critics in academic institutions need to direct research to the Islamic literature so as it goes beyond the regional boundaries. However, as a result of scarcity of Islamic critics interested in the Islamic literature, the English departments in Islamic academic institutions may not make it an easy mission for the Islamic critics and researchers to do research on the Islamic literature.

Many Islamic literary works written in Arabic would not be welcomed from translators, particularly if they bear an Islamic imprint. Islamic literary works of Najuib Al-Kailani might not find interest to be translated into global languages. Islamic critics are in need of further efforts to introduce the Islamic literature to the world. This article found the attempts and efforts of Muslim critics in introducing their own literature and literary theory to the world are still weak. Muslim writings still require discussion and analysis by the more critics. The article found the Islamic critics' efforts still very limited to reach an international level. The article also found that the efforts of Islamic critics in translating the masterpieces of the Islamic Arabic literary works into the world languages are not sufficient for the Islamic literature or Islamism as a critical theory to reach universality. The working attempts on some Islamic issues are still confined to the Arabic language and to the regional level.

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