

An Analytical Study on the Impact of Cultural and Literary Heritage on the Contemporary Arabic Novel

Authors : Sharafat Karimi, Jamil Jafari

Abstract : The impact of Western Literature on other nations' pieces of literature (including Arabic) has caused critics to ignore the importance of Arabic cultural & literary heritage in the formation of contemporary Arabic fiction; but on the contrary, an important part of literary genres in any society, especially fiction has been formed in the past and depends on ancient literary events. The current paper, utilizing the descriptive-analytical method and by means of library studies, tries to challenge those critics who regard Western Literature as the only effective factor on the appearance of Arabic fiction. Furthermore, this research tries to find out effective Islamic-Arabic elements on the development of Arabic novel by the investigation of some fictional works. The results show that in addition to regarding Western literature as an important factor, Arab novelists have applied their heritage, culture, and ancient history, either written or orally transmitted to the current generation, in their innovations. Among great historical works containing moral stories, allegorical legends, myths, tales of heroes, and folklore, we can refer to Arabian Nights, Kalila & Dimna, romantic stories, historical puzzles, history of Islam, history of ancient Egypt, Maqama, and Quranic stories. Famous novels like 'Hadith Isa ibn-Hisham', 'Layali Alif Layla', 'Abas al-Aqdar', 'Radoubis', 'Ahlam Shahrzad, and 'Alam Bela Kharaet' were compiled on the basis of ancient literary heritage not only in the theme but also in the structure; so one can conclude that the ancient literary-cultural heritage and Islamic-Arabian history have been influential on Arabic novel appearance and development.

Keywords : Arabic fictional literature, culture, heritage, history, language, novel

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