

In Stemming Out Societal Depravity: Existentialism, Realism, and Contrapuntal Criticism in Nigerian Arabic Poetry: Ibn Yusuf's Anthology as Paradigm

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Abstract : The intrinsic nexus between man and society is apparently unknown to many people despite understanding the real responsibility and immense roles in society. Amongst the in-depth roles of a man as an agent of the societal reformer is to be a driven force towards installing normalcy and socio-cultural change in society. The paradoxical attitudes of man in engaging in social vices, illicit characters, and unwanted attitudes have given birth to decay and ill-society. However, the need for social change or socio-cultural evolution might be necessary to install normalcy and social order. Nigerian Arabic poets since the 19th century have tremendously engaged in utilizing their poetry for social change through socio-cultural, religious, economic, scientific, or technological forces. This engagement has hitherto yielded a positive outcome for societal reform. The anthology of Ibn Yusuf is one of the compendiums of poetries revealing societal depravity, man's social vices, and atrocities; which later called to flawlessness. The theoretical framework would be examined through the Heraclitan model, focusing on a parallel to that of a living organism, which, in order to remain alive, must constantly change. Therefore, the thrust of this paper is to examine the societal maladies as elucidated in Ibn Yusuf's anthology and proffer a contrapuntal criticism of it. Before delving into the main discussion, the paper will examine the concepts of existentialism and realism as a philosophical interface. Likewise, the issues of man and social change, an overview of Nigerian Arabic poetry, will be discussed. Ibn Yusuf's biography and scholarship and the review of his anthology will be studied. The paper will conclude by critically examining the contrapuntal criticism of societal maladies through Ibn Yusuf's anthology.

Keywords : societal depravity, existentialism, realism, Nigeria Arabic poetry, Ibn Yusuf's anthology, contrapuntal criticism

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