



THE IMPACT OF LITERATURE ON THE SPIRITUAL ADVANCEMENT OF ARAB SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

This essay explores the significant influence of literature on the spiritual and cultural development of Arab society. This study examines the significant impact of several literary genres, such as poetry, novels, and short tales, on the representation and influence of shared awareness within Arab communities. The article analyzes significant literary epochs and movements, emphasizing how writers and poets have tackled and impacted crucial social, political, and ethical concerns. The focus is on how literature has functioned as a means of conveying spiritual and philosophical concepts, therefore enhancing the overall intellectual and spiritual development of society. This study offers a thorough comprehension of the mutually beneficial connection between Arab literature and the spiritual enhancement of its population, emphasizing the lasting influence of literature as a means for societal introspection and change.

KEYWORDS

Literature, adab, insan al-kamil, Islamic identity, Arab identity.

INTRODUCTION

The impact of literature on the spiritual advancement of Arab civilization is a complex subject that encompasses various dimensions, such as religious, social, political, and cultural

factors. The Arabic literary tradition boasts a lengthy and opulent chronicle, which has exerted a profound impact on the cultural and spiritual legacy of the area. Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry was



closely linked to oral traditions and frequently mirrored the social and political circumstances of that era. These works had a significant impact on the preservation of history and cultural traditions, as well as on the formation of public opinion. Literary works serve as a means of expressing and reflecting social reality, responding to political events, and adapting to ideological changes. Hence, literature actively contributes to shaping the common awareness of a nation and delineating its distinctiveness. Hence, it is imperative to prioritize the instruction of literature, foster a culture of reading, and promote the practice of creative writing throughout the Arab world. Allocating resources toward literary education constitutes a strategic investment in the long-term progress and cultural advancement of the nation.

The Main Part. Arab countries have produced noteworthy cultural and educational achievements in the era of contemporary globalization. These works, which are viewed as being threatened by many spiritual forces, have a significant function in training future generations as individuals who are well-rounded and possess high moral values. During the 9th century, a movement emerged in Arab-Islamic culture that focused on educating individuals about a "praiseworthy code of conduct" passed down from their predecessors through literature. The term used to refer to it was adab. Adib is a writer who has assumed the task of enhancing the most dynamic segment of society. The culture of adab encompassed the establishment of a set of worldly guidelines to be adhered to by individuals

in positions of public service, particularly those close to authority and aspiring for a prosperous professional trajectory, such as judges, educators, bureaucrats, and others. This influenced the structure and substance of "adabic" writing. The content consisted of moral essays, collections of refined poetry, prose passages, jokes, and tales that facilitated casual and effortless discourse. Adab is characterized by its focus on the connection between "ilm and adab," with a thematic emphasis on practical composition and writing. It highlights the significance of disseminating knowledge through the medium of adab, encompassing both scientific and fictional literature. It embodied notions of an exemplary, well-educated, and flawless being. One of the key challenges in Islamic education revolves around the task of cultivating an ideal individual, known as insan al-kamil. This concept represents the embodiment of Islamic moral values.

The concept of Insan al-kamil, or the ideal man, is a well-known idea in Sufi philosophy that embodies the notion of comprehensive human advancement. This thought has its roots in the Islamic religion. The concept of universality in philosophy is inherent in human artistic endeavors, through which individuals delve into the fundamental structures of the world and acquire mastery over them, transforming universal principles into objects of their awareness and volition. In both philosophy and Sufism, a perfect individual is one who has attained spiritual and moral excellence, thereby establishing a state of harmony with God and, consequently, with oneself. Attaining perfection as an individual can



only be achieved via the acquisition of education and information . Hence, treatises on etiquette, which encompassed manners and regulations of conduct, held a significant position in Arab-Islamic culture. These publications provide comprehensive descriptions of the protocols and dynamics governing conduct and communication in diverse social contexts, thereby mirroring the prevailing standards and principles of Arab society. These treatises assisted in fostering self-assurance and promoting adherence to sociocultural norms among educated individuals and aristocracy. Notable treatises of this nature encompass the writings of Al-Jahiz, Ibn al-Muqawfa, and al-Mubashshir.

Al-Jahiz (776–868) was a prominent Arab intellectual during his age and wrote notable works including *Kitab al-Hayawan* (The Book of Animals) and *Kitab al-bukhala* (The Book of Greed) . Within his literary works, he not only depicted the conduct of both animals and humans, but also deliberated upon the conventions of etiquette and behavior in diverse situations. Al-Jahiz highlighted the significance of courtesy, deference, and moderation in communication. Furthermore, the treatise authored by Al-Mubashshir (864–931), titled *Kitab adab al-mufarrid* (The Book of Etiquette for the Individual), guides appropriate conduct within society. It covers a wide range of subjects such as culture, religion, daily living, and interpersonal interactions .

These treatises played a significant role in shaping the sociocultural norms and values of Arab-Islamic culture. They underscored the significance of

showing respect, decency, chivalry, and adherence to tradition when interacting with others. These works also showcased Arab expertise and the pursuit of elevated ethical principles. For instance, the renowned Arab poet Abu Tayyib al-Mutanabbi effectively communicates profound insights into the nature of human existence, while also advocating for principles of fairness and ethical behavior in his literary works. His poetry emphasizes the significance of adhering to spiritual norms and moral principles, rendering his works highly significant for the spiritual growth of Arab youth. How long will you cover your nakedness in rags? To languish in obscurity year after year?

You, like everyone else, are mortal and will die in old age.

He knows no honor, hides, is cowardly, and awaits. Rise up with faith in Allah and reject confusion.

The flavor of danger is as sweet as honey.

The initial segment of the poem, which highlights concealment and the impracticability of existing behind "rags" (a symbolic representation of concealing one's genuine identity), might be interpreted as mirroring the notions of integrity, openness, and genuineness that are frequently esteemed in Arab culture. The second segment of the poem elucidates the inescapable nature of mortality and the futility of seeking recognition for those who remain passive and idle. This portion underscores the significance of proactive engagement in life and the pressing need to pursue one's ambitions with a sense of urgency. Furthermore, it is linked to Arab identity, which frequently emphasizes qualities such as



perseverance, tenacity, and courage when confronted with difficulties. Undoubtedly, the poem incorporates religious undertones, namely the belief in Allah. The significance of spiritual faith and religious values in Arab culture and identity is profound. This poetry can effectively emphasize their importance within the framework of human growth and progress. While the poem does not explicitly depict Arab identity, it can be understood by examining the spiritual, moral, and theological principles that greatly influence the development and preservation of Arab identity. Literary education in Arab civilization serves as a conduit between the past and the future. It not only safeguards values and cultural traditions but also stimulates fresh ideas and imagery. Additionally, it is crucial to expose pupils to contemporary Arabic literature that addresses current societal issues. The books of Alaa al-Aswany, an Egyptian writer, such as *The House of Jacobian*, accurately depict the profound social and political tensions that exist in contemporary Egyptian society. It demonstrates the determination of young individuals to pursue transformation, improvement, and a more fulfilling existence, despite encountering hindrances and difficulties throughout their journey. His works not only provide readers with a profound comprehension of social and political dynamics, but also incite contemplation and discourse regarding contemporary matters. Through the process of reading and analyzing his literary works, young Arabs acquire the ability to engage in critical thinking and contemplate delicate subjects such as corruption, poverty, and

gender inequality. An analysis of Aswani's works fosters the development of an engaged civic stance among young individuals.

CONCLUSION

Eventually, one can contend that literary education and creativity are crucial in shaping and preserving Arab identity and cultural legacy. Literature serves as a means of transmitting values, traditions, ideals, and history, all of which form the foundation of a nation's identity. The literary works of both classical and current authors serve as a conduit connecting the past and the future. Additionally, they function as a means of inspiration, self-expression, and intellectual growth for young individuals in the Arab region. Literary education and creativity are essential means for safeguarding cultural identity, and nurturing generations that possess the ability to engage in cultural discourse and are motivated to make valuable contributions to the future of Arab civilization.

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