

to England to study, expresses his vision of the Western rape of his world and its bias. Salih uses a complex strategy to deconstruct the ready-made image of Africa, using hyperbole and satire. He presents Mustafa Sa'eed as a false hero, as the product of a cultural union between oppressor and oppressed, between authority and dependency. The result is a hybrid belonging neither to his homeland nor to the foreign land and culture.

Ben Jelloun's moving story "I Am an Arab, I Am Suspect" uses structural irony in which the reader knows more than the protagonist. Narrative structure contrasts the simplicity of the subaltern with the meanness of society and the deviation of the world. The Arab is guilty until he proves his innocence in a Western world that is prejudiced against him and treats him as a suspect at all times. He is surprised for being perceived as a fundamentalist, indicating to the reader how the evaluation of the Other does not necessarily spring from the behavior of the Other, but from preconceived accusations and ready-made condemnations. The innocent worker asks why he is always suspect, and the reader is moved to disapprove the present set-up with all its prejudices. Ben Jelloun does not conclude or sermonize, but juxtaposes two faces of treatment, leaving judgment to the reader while basing his narrative on the technique of dramatic irony.

Thus we see how African writers have contributed to resisting bias by denouncing it and by formulating it fictionally and creating identifiable strategies of resistance. These techniques include comparing what is viewed as different, reinterpreting a master narrative, and defamiliarizing the familiar and projecting it. The result is a negation of a vertical hierarchy and a displacement of the center of the dominant discourse. In this way, the creative writer presents a comprehensive view of biases while deconstructing the basis for prejudice.

Chapter Eight

Beyond Methodology: Forms of Bias in Western Literary Criticism

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Methods of literary criticism in the West are biased in favor of the cultural context that engendered them. If the non-Western critic, such

as one whose culture is Arabo-Islamic, applies any of these methods to the literature from his/her own culture, he/she is faced with two choices: to apply such methods as they are, involuntarily adopting the implications and ideologies that formed them, causing misunderstanding of the literary material; or to radically change a method where the resultant applied method departs dramatically from the original one. To claim that methodology can be stripped of its context with little or no change is made groundless by a historical analysis of the cultural and philosophical background of such a methodology.

The question of Western bias should be reconsidered and its justifications checked, rather than treated simplistically. Some critics and scholars do not believe some methods are biased and instead believe they are neutral tools. Contemporary Arab critics have used the structuralist method as a neutral critical tool, believing its effectiveness in enhancing Arab scholarship, overcoming barriers in cultural contexts, reviving national heritage, and keeping pace with progress. This familiar viewpoint in the history of Arabic thought and literary criticism has almost as strong historical and ideological roots as the contrary viewpoint. And its tendency to embrace universality connotes evolution according to cultural standards of the West.

There remains the problem of distortion in literary works and the cultural structure as a whole. A reading of the methodology reveals the bias of cultural specificity in its origin prior to its actual manifestations. However, assuming the bias of method does not always mean that methods as a whole are irrelevant. It does not preclude the possibility of mutual benefit or common characteristics. Bias of method means the high degree of homogeneity in a culture and the difficulty of using the same elements in another culture for the same purpose or significance. The Western critical output discussed here is not concerned with Arabo-Islamic elements interwoven into its culture. Numerous Western thinkers have expressed a desire to overcome Western self-enclosure.

Philosopher Ibn Sina (Avicenna) presented the problem of methodology within the realm of logic, stating that the science of logic follows a comprehensive philosophical outlook. The difference in this outlook hinges on the difference in methodological or logical bases and often refers to the Aristotelian (Greek) philosophy. If philosophy changes, there should be concomitant changes in the methodological bases of inquiry and epistemological deduction on which such philosophy is based. Philosopher Ibn Rushd was a proponent of Greek thought in

Islamic civilization, but his assessment of the limited applicability of Aristotelian poetics strongly indicates general sensitivity to the potential bias engendered by cultural difference.

Other conservatives among ancient Muslim intellectuals resisted the call for a cultural open-door policy. According to American philosopher John Dewey, logic is naturally biased in favor of a certain philosophical principle. To say that methodology has to be dissociated from its epistemological objective is to call for a separation between form and content. Similarly, the presence of common human objectives does not preclude the diversity of means leading to such goals. According to Northrup Frye, the harmony between methods and objectives of criticism could only be achieved if critical principles and hypotheses were to issue from the art dealt with in criticism, for literary works represent an organic unity based on common symbols, traditions, or models. Frye's methodology differs from other formalist tendencies in that it attempts to be comprehensive by studying types as symbolic or typological connections among literary works.

Modern Western culture tends toward secularity but that does not mean the disappearance of religion from Western thought or culture. In the mid-18th century, the Enlightenment, which generally opposed religious orthodoxy, caused a religious critical movement to emerge and defend religion through a new interpretation of the Bible that emphasized its literary and mythological nature as Oriental poetry. Such developments paralleled the rise of Romanticism and helped crystallize the new sacred/secular criticism combination, which equated the religious text in Western literary criticism to human, worldly texts. Frye highlights the mythological nature of the Bible yet holds to a metaphysical concept of the archetype. Doubletalk is one of the very significant dilemmas of a culture embracing the secular yet unable to break away from its religious and metaphysical roots, despite efforts over the centuries to overcome the metaphysical in works by Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger.

Overall, Western critical methods enjoy a considerable degree of universality. Yet there will always remain another considerable degree in them that is culture-specific and cannot be transferred. Due to this latter quality, people not sharing the Western cultural context should thoroughly revise such methods before using them.