## ELWAHAT Journal for Research and Studies Available online at :https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/PresentationRevue/2

ISSN: 1112-7163 E-ISSN: 2588-1892 Volume(17)/Issue (2) (2024):546-561

## **Literature and Contemporary Ideological Issues**

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Received: 31-10-2024 Accepted: 10-12-2024 Published: 15-12-2024

#### Abstract:

Literature's textual compositions (linguistics and semantics) extend beyond the poetics that structuralist criticism has primarily explored. Rather, ideological frameworks shape it as a creative product, influencing both its explicit and implicit meanings. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between literature and ideology, revealing that a literary work can encompass various human experiences and ideological orientations. As such, literature cannot be seen as an entirely individual creative practice nor a purely ideological process. Instead, it is the reconfiguration of the creator's experience and ideology in a new form, which we call the literary work. Consequently, the literary work is a reproduction of ideology, not its creation. Literature is a manifestation of ideology and one of its fields.

Keywords: Ideology, Literature, Issues, Thought, Contemporary Ideology

#### 1. Introduction

The literary domain has experienced a notable increase in creative production across diverse genres, tackling complex topics that have prompted new enquiries. These enquiries pertain to the core of the work, its linguistic structure infused with ideological significance, historical identity, dedication, liberty, and other questions that have historically engaged literary discourse and critique.

Literature has been perceived as a reflection of the collective consciousness that nations have developed as a result of their turbulent and unstable environments. It encapsulates the experiences of societies across various periods, exploring their depths documenting aspects of life. Literature, therefore, functions as a

record of the present, a foundation for the past, and a vision for the future.

The relationship between literature and ideology is a comparatively new topic in literary criticism, as critics are constantly striving to comprehend it. Ideology is frequently perceived as a reference point for literature, facilitating its evolution by expressing new political ideas and sentiments, all the while engaging with a variety of literary genres.

The intertwining of literature and ideology is one of the outcomes of the ideological disputes that have influenced the past century. We continue to encounter the lingering influence of this relationship in texts and works that appear archaic or out of place in today's context, as it manifests in various ways across cultural and political life. Nevertheless, the union of literature and ideology is not enduring, necessitating the differentiation between the writer's political commitment and the direction of literature and art towards specific ideological frameworks to prevent any confusion or misunderstanding.

Ideology, by its very nature, generates a cultural system and textual dialogue that exposes ideas, events, and judgements that are designed to present reality in a distorted manner. In certain instances, the creative potential of literature to liberate the self, language, and world from the constraints of reality can be undermined by the connection between ideology and literature, resulting in literature becoming a critique of that reality.

Regardless of whether the ideology is political, religious, or sectarian, it is incapable of producing refined literature that promotes noble human values and aims for timelessness, a quality that is exclusively achievable through the written word (Bennis, 2015). The following questions can be posed in light of this, as well as our intention to investigate the relationship between literature and ideology:

- What is the relationship between literature and ideology?
- In what ways has the literary text been able to integrate both the explicit and implicit components of ideology?

-Does the production of literature adhere to ideology? Our objective in this paper is to investigate the relationship between literature and contemporary ideology, as well as to comprehend the essential nature of ideology (its definition and origins).

In order to address these enquiries and explore this research, we have employed a variety of prior studies and research that has been specifically concentrated on contemporary literature and ideology.

#### **Previous Studies:**

Saker (2018) conducted a study titled "The Relationship Between Ideology and Literature".

This study, which was published in the Ishkalat Journal, Volume 06, Issue 3, 2017, was designed to investigate the correlation between literature and ideology. Several conclusions were reached by following the researcher. but the are among A literary work has the potential to incorporate a wide range of human experiences and ideological orientations. Consequently, it is not possible to perceive it as a strictly ideological process or as an individual creative act. In contrast, it is a new manifestation of the creator's ideology and experience, known as the literary work. The novel, as a literary form, is a component of the broader field of literature, which is itself a manifestation of ideology. Novels frequently incorporate one or more ideologies, including the author's, through their characters.

The researcher also observed that there may occasionally be a discrepancy between the author's creative vision and their ideological stance, emphasising that the novel is not merely ideological thought, but rather a fundamentally artistic and aesthetic creation.

The study, "Littérature et Idéologie", was conducted by Naima Kattan in 2024.

This research study was published in "Etudes Littéraires," Volume 06, Issue 3, on May 15, 2024. The researcher sought to elucidate the intricate relationship between literature and ideology, a consistently problematic subject of study. This relationship frequently encompasses ideas of emancipation from oppression or acquiescence to it. The research yielded multiple conclusions:

Ideology, as manifested in certain civilisations, frequently possesses a theological foundation.

The connection between ideology and literature is dialectical.

This dynamic link endures in literature, even in instances such as Stalinist ideology, which exerted coercive control over literary expression. Literature persistently seeks to comprehend ideology while frequently contesting prevailing ideological powers.

## 2. A Reading into the Concept of Literature:

The meaning of the word "literature" expands or contracts depending on the critical perspective of the reviewer regarding its linguistic and terminological derivation. The term has both general and specific connotations. Generally, it can encompass all forms of knowledge, or it may be limited to high-quality expressions in poetry and prose. Western literature also exhibits this variation, with the term "literature" broadly encompassing all written works in any language, including scientific research, literary arts, and even intellectual outputs in fields such as nature and grammar.

In its specific meaning, literature refers to the expression of the human conscience and emotions in an elegant, structured style that adheres to necessary rules. This includes well-crafted poetry and prose that evokes emotions in the reader and provides aesthetic pleasure.

The meaning of the term "literature" has evolved alongside the transformation of Arab society from a nomadic to an urbanized culture. The definition of "literature" has changed over time, currently encompassing all human expressions of thought and emotion through elegant language, with the goal of influencing the emotions of readers and listeners, whether through poetry or prose.

#### 2.1 Definition of lexical Literature:

The term "literature" carries a wealth of meanings, rooted in linguistic, cultural, and historical contexts. Its definitions have evolved over time, reflecting the interplay between language and societal values. Within the Arabic lexicon, the word "adab" holds profound significance, encompassing both ethical refinement and intellectual cultivation.

## 3.1.1 According to Arab Critical Perspective:

The word "adab" (literature) in the Arabic language originally derives from the meaning of "invitation." This is why a feast is called a "ma'duba" because the host—referred to as the "adib"—invites people to it.

Thus, "adab" came to mean the cultivation of positive qualities and inviting people to adopt them while avoiding negative traits. Al-Azhari stated: "Adab is what the 'adib' (cultured person) learns; it's called 'adab' because it invites people to virtuous traits and steers them away from shameful ones. It is called 'adab' because it 'invites' them.

Therefore, adab refers to refinement and etiquette, which manifest in a person's moral and intellectual discipline. The phrase "adab al-nafs wa al-dars" (literary refinement of the soul and lesson) expresses this concept.

Ibn Khaldoun (808 AH) addressed the meaning of "adab" in his Muqaddimah, dedicating a chapter to the linguistic sciences where he discussed grammar, language, rhetoric, and then literature. He classified literature as one of the linguistic sciences, noting that it does not have a specific subject matter but is concerned with its result—creative expression in poetry and prose following the styles of the Arabs. He further explained that when people define this field, they say, "Adab is the preservation of Arab poetry and stories, along with acquiring knowledge from various fields," thus pointing to both linguistic and religious sciences. In doing so, he connects the term to

the early Islamic and Umayyad periods, when "adab" meant education and learning Arab poetry and history (Ibn Khaldoun, 2008, p. 646).

## 3.1.2 According to Western Critical Perspective:

Western writers have varying definitions of literature. The American critic Emerson views literature as a record of the best ideas, while Burke considers it the intelligent ideas and feelings of people written in a style that attracts the reader. French critic Sainte-Beuve, on the other hand, sees literature as beautiful writing that reflects human truths (Al-Shaib, 1994, p. 18).

## 3.2 Operational Definition of Literature:

In modern times, the meaning of "adab" has become restricted to the concept of "creativity," where writing serves as the medium and words as the material for this creative expression, with the aim of influencing the audience.

The term "adab" has come to refer to a collection of written works that express the human mind through the craft of writing and literary art. In essence, literature refers to high-quality speech, whether in prose or poetry. To arrive at a comprehensive definition of literature or understand its nature, we can examine the perspectives of some contemporary scholars to form a synthesis of these definitions.

Karl Brockelmann posits that the term "literature" can be used in its broadest sense to encompass everything humans have crafted in a linguistic form that imprints itself in memory.

Mikhail Naimy defines literature as an expression of both psychological and social life from all aspects. His definition stems from his exposure to Western culture. While influenced by Russian literature, Naimy advocated for a writer's commitment; however, when immersed in American life, he shifted his focus inward, considering the individual as the core of literature. He states, "Only works that carry something of the eternal spirit will endure."

On the other hand, Dr. Mohamed Mandour points out that the Western concept of literature is broader and deeper. According to Western thought, literature includes all linguistic works that evoke emotional reactions or aesthetic feelings due to their distinctive structure (Lectures on the Introduction to Literary Studies, 2019).

One of the common Western definitions of literature he mentions is: "Literature is an artistic expression of human experience." This definition spread among Arab advocates of literary renewal, such as Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad and Ibrahim Al-Mazni, who critiqued the poetry of Ahmed Shawqi and Hafez Ibrahim in their book The Diwan. Mikhail Naimy was also influenced by this definition in his book Al-Ghirbal (The Sieve).

However, these advocates interpreted the phrase "human experience" narrowly, believing it referred solely to personal experience that the poet must have lived through. Otherwise, their poetry would be deemed inauthentic. Yet a creative writer is capable of crafting deeper human experiences beyond what is encountered in real life.

Dr. Shawqi Daif defines literature as eloquent creative speech that aims to influence the emotions of readers and listeners, whether it is poetry or prose. Dr. Mohammed Abdelkader agrees with this definition in his book Studies in Literature, where he describes literature as "eloquent human speech intended to influence the emotions or minds of readers or listeners through persuasion, whether it is in verse or prose."

Dr. Mohammed Hassan Abdullah describes literature as "the expression of a human experience in a figurative language that aims to create an impact, presented in an artistic and aesthetic form capable of conveying that experience."

Dr. Mohammed Ghoneimi Hilal points out that scholars differ in their definitions of literature, but they agree on two fundamental elements: the idea and the artistic form. He emphasizes that literature can depict the poet's feelings toward the beauty of the universe or express a writer's thoughts about humanity and society, whether through a letter, article, play, or story.

Finally, Dr. Maryam Baghdadi defines literature as "a collection of human experiences imposed by life's variations over time and stages of human development, with all its contradictions".

## 4. Ideology: Origins and Development

## 4.1 Origins and Development

Ideology is regarded as a prevalent notion in the worldwide intellectual landscape, often employed by scholars, philosophers, and researchers across diverse disciplines. Their ascent coincided with the dissemination of ideological thought during the European intellectual revolution, as Napoleon Bonaparte's forces traversed Europe, propagating Enlightenment principles. These concepts battled vehemently with the dominion of the clergy, landowners, and aristocrats. Napoleon's military ambitions and expansionist objectives clashed with the reformist principles of the Enlightenment, which threatened military authority, leading to attempts to discredit the ideologues and label their ideas as unrealistic and illusory (Belhassen, 1975).

The term "ideology" first appeared in France after the French Revolution, coined by the French philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836). In his book Elements of Ideology, he aimed to establish a new science, which he called the "science of ideas," distinguishing it from metaphysics (Ailan, 2011, p. 2018).

Ideology has deeply influenced literary works, as humans have relied on it as a theory that encompasses literary genres since the early 20th century, starting with Homer's epic. Thus, ideology has become closely intertwined with various forms and genres of literature (Ragheb, 2003, p. 80), making it one of the key issues in human thought in general and in literature in particular.

## 4.2 The Concept of Ideology

The attention given to the concept of ideology in dictionaries, encyclopedias, and scientific references came much later than its initial emergence. One definition found in the Dictionary of Sociology describes ideology as a system of intertwined ideas that includes the beliefs and myths held by a specific group, reflecting its social, economic, political, religious, and moral interests (Ghaith, 1979, p. 234). However, there is a need to move beyond the various conflicting perspectives on the concept of ideology and work toward understanding the relationship between literature and ideology. Literature, in one way or another, plays an ideological role (Nassar, 1986, p. 8).

The term "ideology" entered modern Arab thought through translation and retained its original name due to the absence of an Arabic term that captures its multiple meanings. Although some thinkers attempted to call it "fikriya" (a proposed Arabic term for ideology), this name did not gain widespread acceptance (Al-Akeeli, 2024).

Ideology is a collection of perceptions, beliefs, and opinions expressed by a particular group at a certain time, which outwardly appears to serve the public interest but in reality supports private interests (Saker H., 2018). These definitions highlight the broad meaning of the problem and the duality of the concept of ideology. As a result of ongoing disagreements about its comprehensive definition, ideology remains a subject of constant debate, surrounded by ambiguities and misunderstandings, particularly in the context of globalization, which has emerged as the primary driving force in the world.

## 5. Literature and contemporary ideological issues

The interplay between literature and contemporary ideological issues offers a profound understanding of how societal values and beliefs are articulated through creative expression. Literature not only

mirrors the prevailing ideologies of its time but also serves as a platform for challenging or reimagining them. By engaging with contemporary ideological debates, literature fosters critical dialogue and contributes to the cultural and intellectual evolution of society 5.1 The interaction relationship:

Studying literature and contemporary ideological issues leads us to explore the relationship between the two, which is highly sensitive. The ideology embraced by a writer influences their view of literature, its role, and its function, reflecting in the literary work's themes, content, and structure. Raising the question of the relationship between literature and ideology allows us to examine various literary productions across different eras to understand human concerns in diverse historical contexts. This relationship is a literary-human phenomenon and a mirror that reflects the history and the time in which the work was produced. It forms a contradictory unity in which historical, temporal, and social factors intertwine, making ideology a crucial element in shaping literary production and an outcome reflected in literary texts (Amouri, 2013, p. 106).

Ideology directs, and art must adopt its colors to reflect artists' attitudes and reality. For example, literature may advocate for social justice and defend the rights of the working class, as seen in the writings of those who adhere to socialist ideology. Similarly, if a writer draws on Islamic ideology, their artistic content will differ, emphasizing moral values and respect for religious boundaries.

## **5.2** The Suggestive Relationship of Content:

It is difficult for literature to completely detach itself from ideology or escape its continuous influence. Every literary work reflects a particular stance, even when it attempts to avoid taking a specific position, ultimately expressing a stance of detachment. However, this does not mean that ideology and literature are the same; their relationship is complex, and the distinction between them cannot be ignored. There remains a level of independence, albeit relative,

because ideology represents a system of specific social concepts and perceptions, while literature and art are characterized by a constant rebellion against boundaries, laws, and rules (Ismail, 1974

In every era, literature is linked to an ideology that allows it to achieve its essence and exert its influence on society and individuals (Madas, 2011). This demonstrates the close and complex relationship between literature and ideology.

Idealist thought views literature as a purely individual creative practice, solely produced by the creative self. It considers the "literary subject as an absolute creation defined only by its creator, requiring the study of literature through the lens of talent and genius" (Belhassen, 1975, p. 166). This suggests the independence of literature from ideology and society, as "a literary work is not merely a means of conveying ideas, nor is it a reflection of social reality." Literature is written "outside of history and social relations and their developments," thus carrying no traces of societal ideas or ideologies. By originating from the self and returning to it, literature affirms its autonomy from ideology.

#### **5.3 Influence of Social Fluctuations:**

Isolating literary thought from its socio-historical context is considered a significant slip, as it leads to the perception of literature as if it emerges from nothing, which is illogical. The creative self exists within a socio-historical context that affects it and is affected by it; therefore, it cannot be regarded as purely an individual product.

With the emergence of historical materialism, the idea of "creation" as a metaphysical concept incapable of analyzing the nature of literary practice and understanding the complex relationships linking literature to ideology—and subsequently to social relations and their structures—has diminished. It has been replaced by another concept aimed at precisely defining literature scientifically, which is the concept of production (Bellahcen, 1975, p. 166).

According to this concept, literature becomes a form of ideology, as it is its product. The infrastructure produces the superstructure represented by the dominant ideology, reflecting the ideas of the ruling class. Additionally, "literature is partially linked to a system of values, i.e., a worldview, which enables it to express the perspectives of its practitioners" (Rabbas, 2016).

# **6.** Critics' Perspective on the Relationship Between Literature and Ideology

To understand the relationship between literature and ideology, "Amar Belhassen" proposes analyzing this relationship according to the following three theses (Belhassen, 1975, p. 165):

- The Literary Work as an Organizing Process: The literary work is a process of organizing and adopting ideology, as it provides it with a structure and form that produce new and distinct meanings that vary in each work, making it appear original and new. Thus, each work carries its own experience and unique meanings, both in terms of form and content.
- Transformation and Embodiment of Ideology: The literary work transforms and embodies ideology, allowing it to be discovered and reconstituted as a general ideology linked to a particular era or society. The work reveals its author and exposes what they hide in terms of thoughts and visions. When the ideology that the author carries becomes clear in expression, even though it is embedded and concealed in various forms and images, it reveals its latent aspects.
- Cognitive Elements Reflecting Reality: The literary text contains cognitive elements that reflect actuality; it is an artistic representation of its phenomena, characters, relationships, and emotions, including that which is hidden.
- Dialectical Relationship Between Literature and Ideology:
   Literature and ideology are intertwined in a dialectical relationship, as literature is naturally charged with ideology,

reflecting a vision of existence and a rephrasing of reality. Moreover, the author cannot separate themselves from their environment and personal experience (Halwani, 1998, p. 192). It is impossible to conceive the existence of litbeing raised without including an intellectual and civerary issues ilizational awareness and an ideological vision that each writer embodies in their works.

The Marxist theory considers the relationship between literature and ideology to be one of mutual influence, advocating for the social nature of literature through the theory of reflection. According to this theory, we can only realize literature through its connection to ideology and history, which includes the history of social formations and the history of literary production (Draj, 1998, p. 132).

Consequently, we may ascertain that literary works has the capacity to encapsulate diverse human experiences and ideological perspectives. Moreover, studying the connection between ideology and literature uncovers its complexity and ambiguity, resulting in diverse perspectives and schools of thought concerning the essence of literature.

### 7. CONCLUSION

concludes with This research report several notable conclusions. The term "ideology" has significantly evolved and has been widely incorporated into numerous intellectual, philosophical, political, and literary domains, rendering a clear definition difficult. In literature, ideology serves as an artistic medium, allowing writers to convey their particular convictions or interact with dominant ideological conflicts grounded in reality.

Moreover, literary works intrinsically encapsulate ideology, reflecting the author's thoughts and viewpoints. A literary work embodies various human experiences and ideological viewpoints. Consequently, it should not be perceived solely as a personal artistic

effort or a simply ideological activity. Rather, it embodies the creator's experiences and ideals, manifesting in a distinctive literary form. Consequently, literary works transform into replicas of ideology rather than serving as its source. Ultimately, literature functions as a manifestation of ideology and holds a unique position within its wider context.

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