

AL ANDALUS: Literature of the Islamic Iberia

الأندلس: الأدب الإسلامي الأيبيري
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Abstract:

As language teachers, we know the great importance of literature in our English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. Literature is, in fact, language and indeed language can be literary. In the same vein, our main concern is to help learners acquire communicative competence. For this reason, we tend not only to make our students acquiring mastery of structure and form but rather to enable them to acquire the ability to interpret discourse in all social and cultural contexts. Accordingly, this what literature brings in the English foreign language classrooms which can provide a powerful pedagogical device in learners' linguistic development. In addition to that, we all know the sound relationship between our identity, religion, and literature. Consequently, here comes the Islamic personality which is shown in our literary texts. One example of our old flourished works of literature is the literature of AL ANDALUS. So, the proposed paper will be a summary of the book of Literature of AL ANDALUS written by a bunch of expert editors: María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin and Michael Sells published by the Cambridge University Press

Keywords: Literature, AL Andalus, Culture, Teaching, Communicative Competence

الملخص بالعربية:

نحن -بوصفنا أساتذة للغة- نعلم أهمية الأدب في فصول تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. إن الأدب هو، في الواقع، اللغة واللغة بالفعل يمكن أن تكون أدبية. وفي نفس السياق، فإن همتنا الرئيسية هو مساعدة المتعلمين على اكتساب الكفاءة الاتصالية. ولهذا السبب، فإننا لا نميل فقط إلى جعل طلابنا يكتسبون قواعد وشكل اللغة، بل نهدف إلى تلقينهم مهارة تحليل وتفسير الخطاب في جميع السياقات الاجتماعية والثقافية. وبناءً على ذلك، فإن الأدب في صفوف اللغة الإنجليزية هو الطريق لتحقيق

ذلك فهو يوفر جهازًا تربويًا قويًا في التطور اللغوي للمتعلمين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كلنا نعرف العلاقة المتينة بين هويتنا وديننا وأدبنا. ومن هنا تبرز شخصيتنا الإسلامية التي تظهر في جل نصوصنا الأدبية. أحد الأمثلة على أعمالنا الأدبية المزدهرة القديمة هو أدب الأندلسي. لذا، فإن الورقة المقترحة ستكون ملخصًا مختصرًا لكتاب *أدب الأندلس* الذي كتبه مجموعة من المحررين الخبراء: ماريا روزا مينوكال، رايموند ب. شايندلين ومايكل سيلز و نشرته جامعة كامبريدج. وعلاوة على ذلك، البحث سيركز الضوء على استكشاف الثقافة الإسلامية في أيبيريا خلال الحقبة العربية لمساعدة معلمينا على اختيار النصوص الأدبية الجيدة لتقديم مصدر غني للمداخلات اللغوية التي يمكن أن تساعد المتعلمين على ممارسة المهارات اللغوية الأربعة (الاستماع والتحدث والقراءة والكتابة). من أجل هذا، يعتبر الكثير من المعلمين أن الأدب هو الأداة الأكثر قوة في حقيبتهم المدرسية: الأدب كأداة لتعلم اللغة

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب، الأندلس، الثقافة، التدريس، الكفاءة التواصلية

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1. INTRODUCTION

AL ANDALUS, as we all know, is the Muslim Iberia where the ancient Muslims have brought their civilization to the European continent. Iberia is also known as The Iberian Peninsula is located in the southwest corner of Europe. The nowadays Andalus civilization was a war booty governed by Muslims, or Moors, at various times in the period between 711 and 1492. As a political domain or domains, it was successively a province of the Umayyad Caliphate, the Caliphate of Córdoba (929-1031), and finally the Caliphate of Córdoba's life (successor) kingdoms (Esposito, 2006).

The following paper will focus on the flourished Andalusian Literature in the book edited by María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin and Michael Sells published by the Cambridge University Press entitled: Literature of AL ANDALUS as a candle to show the Islam civilization throughout time in the Muslims territory which is a footprint in our Arabic identity. So, the language teachers can take benefit from the pre-mentioned literature to teach and enhance the native culture of the foreign learners of the English language as an effective method of teaching the foreign language.

2. Al Andalus

AL ANDALUS is also known as Islamic Iberia, was a Muslim territory and cultural domain that in its early period occupied most of Iberia, today's Portugal and Spain. At its greatest geographical extent, it occupied the northwest of the Iberian peninsula and a part of present-day southern France Septimania (8th century) (Kees, 1990).

It was the name given to those parts of the Iberian Peninsula governed by Muslims, or Moors, at various times in the period between 711 and 1492. As a political domain or domains, it was successively a province of the Umayyad Caliphate, the Caliphate of Córdoba (929-1031), and finally the Caliphate of Córdoba's life (successor) kingdoms. For large parts of its history, particularly under the Caliphate of Córdoba, Andalus was famous for learning and the city of Córdoba became one of the leading cultural and economic centres in both the Mediterranean basin and the Islamic world (Manfred, 1980).

The Moors lived on the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily, parts of Southern France, and North Africa in the Middle Ages. They are the Muslim inhabitants of Andalusia, the word Moors means the people whose origins are from North Africa and Berber ancestry. Many of them came to what is now Spain and Portugal. They had a huge influence on the culture of these countries.

The Moors were the ones who governed Al Andalus and named it Al Andalus, Which means land of the vandals.

Andalusia's civilization was fully advanced at architecture, building style and urban planning. The Moors were rich because they dominated the gold trade from the Ghana Empire in West Africa. They built many beautiful buildings in all the land they ruled. Many of their large buildings still stand in cities in Andalusia, such as in Seville, Granada, and Cordoba.

The Muslims of Spain were multicultural and tolerant; they lived side by side with Jews, Christians. There was also a large Slavic (Slavs are the people who live in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Southeast Europe, Central Asia and North Asia) population near the Mediterranean coast. Although these people were at first brought in to be slaves, some of them

became generals (as did some Mamluks in another caliphate) and some generals became rulers of their cities (taifas) for a short time (Esposito, 2003).

3. Literature of Al Andalus

The editors of this volume are María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin and Michael Sells published by the Cambridge University Press in 2000. It was developed to put a finger at the Arabic literature at that time which was in its whole and the restricted sense is the enduring statue both of civilization and a people. The atomicity of pre-Islamic literature and the conventions naturally flavoured short compositions on single themes. During the second half of the sixth century AD, a far-reaching variation came over the soul of Arabic poetry. The Umayyad period witnessed a poetic endowment memorial of the pre-Islamic one in sixth-century Arabia. The revolution which brought to power a new dynasty, the Abbasids, also opened for Arabic literature its golden age. The political decentralization of the Arab empire in the fourth/tenth century, and the reduction of Baghdad itself in 334/945 to a provincial capital by the Buyids, necessarily affected the course of literature. The spirit of the Arabic literary tradition was transferred to younger and more robust Islamic literature, whose growth it had directly or indirectly invigorated, namely, Persian, Turkish and Urdu. One of the various passions of this scene is how strongly it suggests how the Arabic universe of al-Andalus, once at the heart of many aspects of European culture in the Middle Ages, will be so driven from the consciousness of European history that only specialists will be able to read its texts and cultivate its memory. This book comprises few essays of the now traditional sort on the "legacy" or "influence" of al-Andalus on the rest of medieval Europe. Instead, the editors attempt to reform the problem by defining this Andalusian-Arabic universe in ways where Arabic is not easily divisible from other strands of medieval culture, where it is often a part of a strict weave – as opposed to a proposed foreign "influence" – and by

making the whole of the cloth might recognize the language but not be able to read it (Menocal, 2000).

4. Shapes of Culture

4.1 Language

To a great extent, all the major languages of the peninsula followed their chronologies of development, but the historical events that brought their speakers together could alter this natural evolution. To a considerable extent, the Roman province of Hispania shared the early linguistic history of other portions of the empire. Al-Andalus proved unique in the medieval Arab world in cultivating its colloquial speech for literary purposes. It is known that the original invasion force included many more Berbers than Arabs and that the disproportion continued during the first century or two of settlement. As the Islamic tide engulfed the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa, the Jews of those lands became Arabized together with the other indigenous populations. At the mid-thirteenth century, with all but the Nasrid kingdom of Granada retaken by Christians, the Reconquest paused, and the frontier remained stable for almost two hundred years. At this period the "Aljamiado phenomenon" began to take shape (Morillas 2000: 31-59).

4.2 Spaces

The Great Mosque of Cordoba, the first and most important public project of Abd al-Rahman I, appropriated the city centre, inscribed public meeting space with its signs: horseshoe arches falling on Corinthian capitals fashioned or painted with alternating voussoirs. The insularity of the spaces of palaces like the Aljaferia in Saragossa and the elaborate nostalgia for architectural morphemes and compositions that recall the great years of

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Umayyad rule in Cordoba reflect a kind of architectural embattlement in the past, one designed to create a space where the act of denial might be maintained a few years longer. The Taifa kings of Saragossa made Christian alliances, hired Christian mercenaries, and created a mythic space of desire, of undisturbed Umayyad cultural hegemony. The bipolar image of Christians and Muslims facing off at a single frontier is a mythic image born of Spanish Christian fear and Taifa despair (Dodds 2000: 38-95).

5. The Shapes of Literature

5.1 The Muwashshah

One of the Arabic literature in al-Andalus is the strophic poetry which is known to have originated on the peninsula. The muwashshah is both the product of particularity and the special cultural condition special of al-Andalus. The muwashshah embodies the flexible changing relation between the written languages and the oral forms. The muwashshah exemplifies a pluralistic cultural politics that allowed for difference and plurality, clashes and contiguities. Modern research into the muwashshah was and sometimes continues to be hard-pressed to accept the cultural diversities. The study of the muwashshah, now more than a century old, has generally been divided among the proponents of the Arabist and the Romance schools, each with its hypotheses about the origin and nature of the genre. Until the appearance of Hartmann's book, the muwashshah had been almost totally ignored by Arabic literary criticism and was virtually unknown to Western scholarship (Rosen 2000: 163-189).

5.2 The Maqama

Few classical Arabic literary phenomena have achieved as much fame, both inside and outside the Arabic world, as the *maqama*. The *maqama* appeared on the Arabic literary spectacle in the tenth century, when the literary system was already well established, when bodies of knowledge constituting the core of Arabic education and learning had consolidated in the form of *Adab* literature. The first *maqama* texts were created with obviously humorous intention by Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadhani in Nishapur. The *maqama* flapped on the periphery of canonized Arabic literature for about a century, until the *maqamat* of al-Hariri came into sight. Al-Hariri openly shaped his *maqamat* on those of al-Hamadhani. Different eleventh-century writers in al-Andalus quote al-Hamadhani's *maqamat* as their inspiration and others cite his *maqamat* extensively. The Haririan models of *maqama* offered an imaginary concept designed for processing erudition and knowledge. Hebrew *maqamat* and other rhymed narratives flourished in Christian Spain and Provence from the mid-twelfth to the fifteenth century (Drory 2000:190-210).

5.3 The Qasida

The *qasida* belongs to those crucial areas in which the Andalusian literary world is an extension of the classical Arabic one. The *qasida* is a formal multi-thematic lyric addressed to a member of the elite in praise and admonition. Poets and scholars travelling in both directions brought in the Eastern legacy into Andalusia, and by the fourth/tenth century, the faraway province became the home to centres of patronage that attracted even Eastern poets. The affiliation manifested itself in the Andalusian simulation of famous Eastern *qasidas* by Abū Nuwās, al-Mutanabbī, and others. Only as a second step did Andalusians give up competing with their Eastern cousins to find their tracks, as evidenced by the emergence of the *muwashshah*. At first, eliminated from the poets' official collected works (*diwans*), the *muwashshah* gradually conquered high literature, eventually

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competing with the qasida in its sphere of the speech of praise. But while giving appropriate credit to Andalusian self-assertion within the Arabo-Islamic literary universe, one must also recognize that al-Andalus first gained its legality by excelling in qasida poetry (Gruendler 2000: 211-232). Not surprisingly, the study of Andalusian Arabic literature has been dominated by the study of the distinctively Andalusian Zajal and Muwashshah or the question of literary effects between Muslims, Jews, and Mozarabs. As a result, research on classical poetry in Arabic, a major unifying field in this culture, has suffered (Schmidt 66). Moreover, scholarship on classical Andalusian poetry has tended to focus on genres perceived as typically Andalusian, such as nature poetry, or on personalities differing from the courtier-poet, such as the doomed last Abbadid king, al-Mu'tamid, and the independent Valencian aristocrat Ibn Khafāja (Jayyusi, Legacy 317–97; al-Nowaihi; Scheindlin, Form).

6. Teaching Andalusian Literature

As language teachers, it falls to us now to instruct the Arabic identity of the Andalusia golden age to our EFL learners in view of the fact that during the Islamic 'golden age' between the 8th and 14th century, al-Andalus became a centre for social and cultural exchange, while the arts, science, architecture, agriculture, medicine and mathematics flourished. Many attribute these achievements to religious open-mindedness and collaboration between Muslims, Christians and Jews, which is why that period of history is also sometimes referred to as La Convivencia, or co-existence.

The era also gave birth to some of the most significant scholars, poets, musicians, philosophers, historians and thinkers of the medieval age - such as Ibn Arabi, Ibn Rushd (also known as Averroes), al-Zarqali (Arzachel in Latin), al-Zahrawi (Abulcasis in Latin) and Ibn Firnas, among others.

It is our responsibility to teach all the intense cultural elements of the Andalus Culture to our learners as a way of improving their cultural and linguistic awareness. As university teachers, we must design specific

cultural and literary courses that consider Andalusia's golden age to have been a minaret of enlightenment for Europe and the lands around the Mediterranean Sea.

7. CONCLUSION

All in all, the period of Arab Muslim rule over the Iberian peninsula was arguably the only time in European history when Muslims, Jews and Christians lived relatively peacefully together, producing a common culture and harmonious society. Muslim forces entered the Iberian peninsula from North Africa. They eventually occupied most of present-day Portugal, Spain and parts of southern France, which became known as al-Andalus as it joined the expanding Umayyad Empire. The period and place have powerful lessons for what we could take benefit from to teach our pure Arabic identity to our EFL learners for a good civic education in today's globalized world.

While the focus of the proposed research is on literature, the study extends to the related fields of shapes of culture, language, spaces, etc. Edited by an Arabist, a Hebraist and Romance scholars, who are considered as the world's leading experts in the field, this is a truly interdisciplinary and comparative work offering a radical new approach for AL ANDALUS Literature and its teaching in the field of EFL.

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