

Cultural criticism: Terms and Terminology

النقد الثقافي: مقولاته ومصطلحاته

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Abstract:

This research reviews cultural criticism as one of the most important contemporary critical currents, as it is a branch of textual criticism, which makes it one of the branches of linguistics or one of the fields of linguistics, because it is concerned with criticizing the implicit patterns contained in cultural discourse in all its manifestations and its multiple modes and forms, and thus it is a criticism that seeks to study marginal works whose value or importance has long been denied by literary criticism. This study attempts to identify the theoretical references of cultural criticism, including its theoretical references, terminology, and foundations, as well as its function and its utilization of deconstructionist theories.

Key words: Cultural Criticism, Text, Implicit Forms, Deconstruction.

الملخص:

يستعرض هذا البحث النقد الثقافي كأحد أهم التيارات النقدية المعاصرة، كونه فرعاً من فروع النقد النصي وهذا يجعل منه أحد فروع علم اللغة أو أحد حقول الألسنية، لأنه معني بنقد الأنساق المضمرّة التي ينطوي عليها الخطاب الثقافي بتجلياته كلها وأنماطه وصيغته المتعددة، وبالتالي فهو نقد يسعى إلى دراسة الأعمال الهامشية التي طالما أنكر النقد الأدبي قيمتها أو أهميتها. تحاول هذه الدراسة الوقوف على المرجعيات النظرية للنقد الثقافي من مقولات ومصطلحات ومرتكزات، وبيان وظيفته واستثماره لمقولات التفكيكية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النقد الثقافي، النص، الأنساق المضمرّة، المقولات التفكيكية.

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Introduction

The concept of "cultural criticism" and "cultural studies" starts from a comprehensive definition of the meaning of culture as a "way of life" that covers all meanings of social experience, in its civilizational and political context, and thus the field of cultural criticism becomes so broad that it includes every daily practice of life and the phenomena that result from it, which can be the subject of literary study, which used to be limited to the study of literary texts alone, which express segments of society but not all of society. It follows from this concept that the cultural critic considers any "text" or type of "discourse", whether literary or non-literary, as an available field and a valid material for his work. Cultural criticism contains different formats, including the apparent, i.e. the clear and visible, as opposed to the latent, "this active latent, the hidden engine, which controls all our relationships with acts of expression and interaction, and thus manages our actions themselves, and directs our mental and taste behaviours".¹

Cultural criticism is also used in its central framework through the culture that carries within it dominant patterns, characterized by implication and concealment, because "these connotations and the aesthetic values that clothe them play dangerous roles in that they are masks under which the patterns hide and reach their promotional work that this criticism is expected to discover"²

And in another concept "is every textual connotation hidden under the cover of the aesthetic and mediated by this cover to instill what is not aesthetic in the culture."³

In order to familiarize with the aspects of this study, the research plan came in three basic elements; they were explained in the first requirement: Cultural criticism : Its concept, characteristics, function and project: I talked about the pillars and sayings of cultural criticism, in which I talked about the textual function, the textual connotation, the cultural sentence, the total metaphor, the cultural pun, the implicit pattern, and the double author, and in the third requirement I touched on cultural criticism: Its branches and terminology, in which I talked about colonial and post-colonial studies, cultural studies, cultural criticism, cultural criticism, neo-historicism, cultural criticism and the use of deconstructionist arguments, and feminist theory.

a. Problem of the study

The aspects of this study can be illuminated by asking a number of questions, the most important of which are:

- What is cultural criticism? What are its conceptual references? What are its characteristics, function, and project?
- What are the pillars and propositions of cultural criticism?
- What are the branches and reforms of cultural criticism?

b. Importance of the study

This study seeks to develop a new critical tool, cultural criticism, by laying solid epistemological foundations for this criticism and defining a precise analytical methodology, so that cultural criticism becomes a scientific method with wide applications in the field of literary and cultural studies.

c. Study methodology

This study adopts the hermeneutic approach as a basic tool for analyzing and achieving meaning in critical texts and discourses.

1. Cultural criticism: its concept, characteristics, function and project**1.1. Its concept and characteristics****1.1.1. The concept of cultural criticism by Vincent Leitch and Abdullah Al-Ghadhami**

Vincent Leitch introduces the term cultural criticism, naming his critical project by this specific name and making it synonymous with the terms postmodernism and post-structuralism, where the interest in discourse as discourse arose. This is not only a change in the subject of research, but also a change in the method of analysis, using theoretical and methodological data in sociology, history, politics and institutionalism, without abandoning the methods of critical literary analysis.⁴

Cultural criticism, as defined by Abdullah Al-Ghadhami, is a branch of textual criticism, which makes it - in his opinion - one of the branches of linguistics or one of the fields of linguistics. One of the branches of linguistics or one of the fields of linguistics, because it is concerned with criticizing the hidden patterns contained in the cultural discourse in all its manifestations, patterns and multiple forms, and is

therefore concerned with revealing not the aesthetic, as is the case with literary criticism, but rather revealing what is hidden under the masks of aesthetic rhetoric, so it is a kind of It is therefore concerned with uncovering not the aesthetic, as is the case with literary criticism, but with uncovering what is hidden in the masks of aesthetic rhetoric. This makes it an advanced, accurate and rigorous critical practice, and there is no doubt that research into the ills of discourse requires a methodology capable of dissecting texts, extracting implicit patterns and monitoring their movement"⁵.

The most important basis of cultural criticism is to "go beyond formal aesthetic literature to address cultural production, whatever its type and level, and thus it is a criticism that seeks to study marginal works that literary criticism has always denied their value or importance, since they are not subject to the conditions of critical taste."⁶.

1.1.2. Characteristics of Leach's cultural criticism:

Leach's cultural criticism is based on three characteristics:

- a/ Cultural criticism does not frame its work under the institutionalized categorization of aesthetic texts, but rather opens up to a wide range of concerns to what is not counted in the institution's calculation, to what is not aesthetic, and to what is not aesthetic in the institution's definition, whether it is a discourse or a phenomenon.
- b/ This critique will benefit from customary methods of analysis, such as textual hermeneutics and the study of historical background, in addition to benefiting from a critical cultural stance and institutional analysis.
- c/ What characterizes post-structuralist cultural criticism is its fundamental focus on discourse systems and systems of textual disclosure, as in Barthes, Derrida and Foucault, especially in Derrida's statement that nothing is outside the text, which is the protocol statement for post-structuralist cultural criticism, along with the keys to textual dissection as in Barthes and Foucault's excavations.⁷

1.2. The function and project of cultural criticism:

1.2.1. Cultural criticism and literary criticism:

Cultural criticism cannot abandon literary criticism, not as a concomitant, but as a form of training and skill in reading texts, their methods and structures (formats), and what makes them capable of expanding the reader's vision and taking him away from writing ordinary

description or dead analysis of facts, and literary criticism here is not the meticulous practice of analyzing texts, but the theoretical skill in reading each text, by bringing it together with other texts, as no text achieves a strong, effective or influential presence without an extension in a number of past and contemporary texts (...)⁸.

In Arab culture, ancient literary and rhetorical criticism neglected important cultural works such as *One Thousand and One Nights*, folk tales, biographies, riddles, puzzles, news, anecdotes, the salt of the Arabs, and a lot of poetry that the majority of narrators refused to write down. This led to the dominance of critical standards and ethical criteria that led to the degradation of poetry, which led to the degradation of poetry. While ancient Arabic criticism continued to revolve in those taste values that made some poets stallions and others eunuchs, and this led over the historical period to the dominance of critical standards and moral criteria that led to the degeneration of poetry and taste, and cultural criticism comes to reconsider this product as a template for all that was said in this poetry of dangerous or good opinions ⁹)

1.2.2. On the function of cultural criticism (from textual to systemic criticism):

The function of cultural criticism comes from being a theory in the criticism of the cultural consumer and not in the criticism of culture, as such by launching or merely studying it and monitoring its manifestations and phenomena, and the implicit pattern has its effectiveness and ability to control the public conscience, and the conscious personal culture does not have the ability to cancel the effect of the pattern because in our culture every poetic saying and every poetic figure was justified until patterns of implicit values were instilled on the one hand, and because it is embedded and embedded since ancient times and its detection needs a continuous and intensive critical effort.¹⁰

This critical effort is a critique of the cultural fabric and the textual tricks that culture uses to reinforce its semantic values, and the manifestations of these tricks, according to Al-Ghadhami, include the following:

- a/** This is the most dangerous rhetorical and poetic trick, through which many things have been passed in favor of irrational thinking in our culture, and in the culture of the emotional side.
- b/** If we recall here the saying "the sweetest poetry is the foulest" and the saying of exaggeration and consider what these two sayings have

caused in terms of isolation between language and thinking, while giving the aesthetic a value that transcends the mental and intellectual, not only in poetry, but there are formulas for the cultural personality of the nation that we have continued to describe it and our language as poetic and poetic. This has given it a magical permanence and hegemony produced by those described as enlightenment and modernization...Adonis and Ihsan Abbas said this and did not realize that poetry is still subject to textual flaws that do not make it ready to lead the discourse of modernization, and be the obstacle to modernization... ¹¹

1.2.3. The Cultural Criticism Project:

The project of cultural criticism tends to expose the tricks of culture in passing its patterns under masks and hidden means, and the most important of these tricks is the aesthetic trick under which the most dangerous and controlling patterns are passed to us, and the matter of exposing these tricks becomes a project in the criticism of culture, and this will only be possible by pursuing the implicit patterns and lifting the covers on them: We say then that the specifications of the textual function are as follows:

- a/** Two modes that occur simultaneously, in a single text or what is considered a single text.
- b/** If there is no hidden pattern underneath the overt, then the text does not enter the field of cultural criticism.
- c/** The text must be beautiful and consumed as beautiful, as aesthetics is the most dangerous trick of culture to pass and perpetuate its patterns.
- d/** The text must be popular and have a wide readership, so that we can see the impact of the texts on the social and cultural mind, these are four conditions, if they are met, we are in front of a case of a textual function.¹²

2. Fundamentals of Cultural Criticism:

Cultural criticism seeks to study marginal works whose value or importance has long been denied by literary criticism, thus going beyond formal aesthetic literature. In other words, "cultural criticism is the critic's willingness to question the critical discourse itself while being open to marginal texts and writings."¹³

It is also based on a set of theoretical and applied concepts and pillars, which the researcher adopts in order to approach texts and discourses for understanding, interpreting and interpreting:

2.1. Formative function:

Cultural critique was built on the theory of the implicit pattern, so it was a project in the critique of patterns, as Abdullah al-Ghadhami says: "We propose a fundamental modification of the model by adding a seventh element, what we call the textual element¹⁴. This means that cultural criticism is concerned with the implicit in texts and discourses, investigates the textual unconscious, and moves semantically from literal and implicit semantics to textual semantics."¹⁵

2.2. Relational Significance:

Cultural criticism is based on three connotations: The literal direct signifier, the metaphorical symbolic signifier, and the cultural textual signifier. And "if we accept - says Al-Ghadhami - to add a seventh element to the six elements of the message. If we accept the addition of a seventh element to the six elements of the message, and we call it the relational element, it will become the generator of the relational connotation, and our need for the relational connotation is the core of the issue, because what we know of the linguistic connotations is no longer sufficient to reveal all that the language hides from the semantic stock, and we have the explicit connotation that is the usual connotation in linguistic circulation, and in literature, criticism has reached the concept of implicit connotation while here we say with a different type of connotation, namely the relational connotation. A different type of connotation is the relational connotation, and it will be a third type added to the connotations, but the relational connotation is in the implicit and not in the consciousness, and it needs careful critical tools that follow the principle of cultural criticism in order to discover it, and for the system of consideration and action to be complete."¹⁶ What concerns us in these three connotations is the symbolic cultural connotation that is discovered at the level of the subconscious and implicit, so it becomes more important than the two previous connotations: literal and aesthetic¹⁷."

2.3. Cultural sentence:

Cultural criticism seeks to go beyond the cultural operative, by revealing the implicit and esoteric, as we may find one cultural sentence

as opposed to a thousand grammatical sentences. In other words, a cultural sentence is a hoarded and condensed expression¹⁸

2.4. Total metaphor:

Cultural criticism aims to extract the major cultural tropes that go beyond the rhetorical and literary metaphor, where the text or discourse turns into metaphorical cultural tropes: this means that we need to uncover the major and implicit tropes of language, and with every linguistic discourse there is a textual implication that uses metaphor and metaphorical expression to establish a semantic value through it that is not clearly defined, and its detection requires digging into the depths of the language's textual composition and what it does to the mentality of its users.¹⁹

2.5. Cultural puns:

Cultural puns in cultural criticism have two meanings: An unintended proximal meaning, and an implied distal meaning, which is the intended one. This means that a cultural pun is a revelation of the cultural implication hidden behind the lines. In this regard, Al-Ghadhami says: "According to the concept of total metaphor as a different concept from rhetorical and critical metaphor, the pun is a precise and tight term, which in its usual sense means the existence of two meanings, one close and the other far, and the intended is far away, and revealing it is a disciplined rhetorical game, and here we expand the field of puns not to be in this specific rhetorical meaning, but we say cultural puns. That is, the discourse carries two modes, not two meanings, and one of these modes is conscious and the other is implicit"²⁰

2.6. Implicit formatting:

Cultural criticism relies on the term implicit pattern, which is a central pattern within the framework of the cultural approach. As every culture carries with it dominant patterns, the aesthetic and rhetorical patterns in literature conceal implicit cultural patterns. In other words, there is not only a literary and poetic function in literature, there is also a textual function that cultural criticism is concerned with. In this regard, Abdullah al-Ghadami says: ": In our presentation of the project of cultural criticism, we claim that in literary discourse, and poetry in particular, there are implicit textual values that cause the establishment of a dominant cultural pattern from which Arab culture has been

suffering for as long as it has existed, and this pattern has remained uncriticized and undetected because of its use of the literary aesthetic, and because of the blindness of literary criticism to reveal it, since literary criticism has been concerned with the aesthetic and its conditions, or the flaws of the aesthetic, and has not been concerned with implicit patterns, such as the pattern of poetics."²¹

This means that cultural criticism reveals contradictory and conflicting patterns, showing that there is an overt pattern that says one thing, and an implicit, unconscious and unspoken pattern that says something else. This implicit one is what is called the cultural paradigm.

Thus, cultural criticism seeks to investigate the hidden patterns of culture. In its simplest sense, it is not a search or excavation of culture, but rather a search for its hidden patterns and complex issues. Thus, it is a human activity that attempts to study cultural practices in their social and subjective aspects. Hence, cultural criticism differs from literary criticism, as the methodological tools of literary criticism look at the structure of the discourse and what is (rhetorical/aesthetic), while cultural criticism looks at the hidden patterns of discourse and deals with the text as a cultural event."²²

2.7. Double Author:

The concept of the double author comes after this terminological system to emphasize that there is another author in addition to the usual author ... and the author is in a state of full creativity according to the condition of creative beauty. However, we will find underneath this creativity and in the text, we will find a latent and active pattern that is not in the consciousness of the author of the text, but a pattern that has a real existence, albeit implicit, we say that culture is an active and influential author, and the creator creates a beautiful text while culture creates an implicit pattern, and only cultural criticism with its tools proposed here can reveal this."²³

3. Cultural criticism: Branches and terminology:

3.1. Colonial and post-colonial studies:

It is an integral part of cultural criticism." Various dominant issues are rooted in Said's work: the struggle for identity, the focus on imperial power and colonial discourse, the denunciation of political and cultural oppression, attention to the material conditions of thought and writing, the rejection of hegemonic models of literary and cultural theory."²⁴ This

is what Said sought by deconstructing the structures of Western discourse to reveal the dominant and authoritarian patterns in which the Western Other sees its Eastern counterpart.²⁵

3.2. Cultural studies:

The concept of cultural criticism is intertwined with many terms and concepts with which it shares a common methodological and epistemological perspective, and differs from it in other areas, such as Cultural studies formed an important base and foundation for those working in cultural criticism. Therefore, cultural studies mainly seek ²⁶. to expose and expose the institutional discourse and expose its falsity and lies, through its mechanisms of controlling people and directing them in a way that serves the holders of power and enhances their continuity and hegemony. They have focused on films, songs, videos, jokes, and even the material means used in various institutional bodies, exposing the systems through which power seeks to control and direct the minds of the masses and peoples.²⁷ "Cultural studies is similar to cultural criticism in confronting and deconstructing institutionalized discourses and does not respond to them, but is concerned with the neglected, marginalized, and excluded in the discourse as a popular one." ²⁸

3.3. Criticism of culture:

Cultural criticism is one of the most important postmodern products, as it is concerned with the search for institutionalized cultural patterns that infiltrate discourses, while culture criticism does not stop at the boundaries of a particular method or trend, but is based on keeping up with the cultural, civilizational and human development in a place, as "cultural criticism and culture criticism share a number of points, perhaps the most important of them: Culture remains the basis of the critical process in both cultural criticism and culture criticism" ²⁹

3.4. New Historicism:

Neo historicism is a branch of cultural criticism that prevailed in the United States at the end of the last century. Its pioneer, Stephen Greenblatt, coined the term cultural poetics in 1980, only to change it in 1982. He called his approach "neo-historicism" and then soon returned to the first term"³⁰ .It is presented as the American version of cultural criticism, or in other words, cultural criticism as seen, received, and practiced by a number of American cultural critics. The American

cultural critic Stephen Greenblatt was the first to use the term neo-historicism to name his critical project, which takes history and culture as a starting point to expose and interpret texts and discourses as a tool of control and domination. This was precisely in 1980, when Greenblatt and other neo-historians announced the need to reread American literature, English literature, and European Renaissance literature in general.³¹

3.5. Cultural Criticism and Deconstruction:

Cultural critics have benefited from several deconstructionist arguments, such as the idea of "de-centering", "presence and absence", "intertextuality", and the idea of "deferral", among others.

The idea of deconstruction helped the cultural critics who invested in it to abolish the authority of reason, as these critics called for the need to consider reason and "alleged rationalization" ... and was the basis of the critical process against the modernist Enlightenment project and its political and economic systems and its implications for societal relations ...³² Just as cultural critics invested in the concepts of "presence and absence" and "intertextuality" to reread discourses and texts, as they carry patterns that are absent in the signification of the discourse/text itself, or may refer to another discourse/text that is intertwined with it, Derrida's idea of "deferral" helped also helped cultural critics to search for the final meaning or at least the intended meaning in the connotations of discourses/texts, which opened the door for these cultural critics to raise doubts by searching for the lost meanings represented by a number of implicit and passive texts in the discourses.³³

3.6. Feminist theory:

Feminist theory is one of the most important branches of cultural criticism that researchers, thinkers, and those interested in feminism have worked on. The ideas of Simone de Beauvoir, Julia Kristeva, Kate Millet, and Virginia Woolf were a starting point for exposing the male discourse and exposing the discourse systems that shape it. In doing so, they utilized several philosophies based on skepticism, demolition, and nihilism, starting with the pioneers of the Frankfurt School, Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida.

Thus, feminist critiques, such as the right to write, the right to create, and the right to live with the same rights and duties as men, have been a starting point for re-reading, analyzing, and interpreting all male

discourses that continue to degrade the status and value of women and work to elevate the status of men.³⁴

Conclusion

Through what has been presented, it has become clear that cultural criticism has benefited from various methodological, critical and philosophical trends and strategies, and is based on a set of theoretical and applied concepts and foundations, as it has presented alternative questions:

- The format question as an alternative to the text question.
- The question of the implicit as an alternative to the question of the indicative.
- The question of mass consumption as an alternative to the question of the creative elite in the eyes of institutionalized criticism.
- Cultural criticism is the closest type of criticism to deconstructionism in that it does not value what has been accepted or rejected in criticism, and it seeks to deconstruct everything, because it is concerned with criticizing the hidden patterns implicit in cultural discourse in all its manifestations, patterns, and multiple forms. It is therefore concerned with revealing not the aesthetic, as is the case with literary criticism, but revealing what is hidden under the masks of rhetoric and aesthetics.

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