

The Unity of Form and Content in Modern Stylistics and Traditional Rhetoric of the Holy Qur'an

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The inter-relatedness of form and content is a basic principle in both modern Western stylistics and traditional Islamic rhetoric, particularly in Abdolghaheer Jorjani's theory of construction. According to this principle, form and content are not two separate elements but two aspects of the same phenomenon, namely *text*. Thus, literary figures and techniques should not be reduced to a mere decoration of the text, for they constitute an important part of the process of signification. Since from a linguistic viewpoint no two forms are entirely synonymous or produce the very same effect, even a minor change in the form results in a change in the content. The present essay first offers an analysis of the theory of form-content unity from three perspectives, that is, philosophical, linguistic and literary-critical, and rhetorical. Then, highlighting the necessity of a pathological approach to current research in Qur'anic rhetoric and stylistics, three sample Persian essays are analyzed and evaluated to show that substantive research in this area of study seems a long way ahead.

Key words: Unity of Form and Content, Formalism, A. C. Bradley, Peter Lamarque, Abdolghaheer Jorjani's Theory of Construction (Nazm), Qur'anic Rhetoric.

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