

Contents

Preface to the English Translation xv

Acknowledgments xvi

List of Figures xvii

Introduction 1

1 Contemporary Historiography of Arab-Islamic Aesthetic Thought 5

a) *Western Criticism* 5

b) *Arabic Criticism* 14

2 Aesthetic Theory and Arab Andalusí Aesthetics 22

1 Beauty and the Arts in the Rise of Written Arabic Culture 29

1.1 Pre-Islamic Sensibility and the Vocabulary of Aesthetics 29

1.1.1 *The Supernatural Origin of Artistic Creation* 32

1.1.2 *The Physical and Luminous Character of Beauty in Pre-Islamic Poetry. Woman as an Aesthetic Object and Agent* 35

1.1.3 *The Arts and Architecture in Pre-Islamic Poetry* 44

1.2 The Great Message of Revelation and Its Aesthetic Dimension 47

1.2.1 *Beauty and Absolute Perfection in the Word and the Divine Order* 50

a) The Inimitability of the Quran 50

b) The Creator 54

c) Creation 59

1.2.2 *Artistic Creation in the Sacred Texts* 70

a) The Problem of Figurative Representation 70

b) Architecture and Sculpture in the Quran 78

c) Prophethood and Poetry 85

d) Music in the *Hadīth* 87

1.2.3 *The Development of the Arts under the New Politico-Religious Order of Islam* 88

2 The Arts on the Margins of Knowledge: Ideas and Concepts of Art in Classical Arab Culture 97

2.1 The Arts in the Arab-Islamic Encyclopedia 97

2.1.1 *The Arts in the Classification of Knowledge in the East* 100

2.1.2 *The Arts in the Classification of Knowledge in al-Andalus and the Maghrib* 111

a) The Arts in the *Zāhiri* System of Knowledge 112

- b) Ibn Bājjā: the Practical Arts and Classifications of Intellectual Knowledge in the Founding of Andalusī Falsafa 121
 - c) Ibn Ṭufayl's Self-Taught Philosopher: Man in a State of Nature Neither Produces nor Conceives of the Arts 137
 - d) The Arts and Knowledge in Ibn Rushd's Rationalist Scheme 141
 - e) The Arts in Ibn Khaldūn's Study of Society 155
- 2.2 The Brethren of Purity's Neopythagorean and Neoplatonic Concepts of Art, and al-Tawḥīdī's School in Baghdad 166
 - 2.2.1 *The Brethren of Purity's Pythagorean Theory of Art* 167
 - a) The Geometric Order of the Universe 167
 - b) The Harmonious Concord of the Cosmos 173
 - c) Ideal Proportion, the Key to Artistic Perfection 178
 - d) The Manual Arts and Artistic Creativity 187
 - 2.2.2 *The Aesthetic Neoplatonism of al-Tawḥīdī's School in Baghdad* 194
 - a) Thought, Art, and Inspiration 197
 - b) Artistic Form and the Unicity of God 201
 - c) Artistic Creation as the Emanation of the Soul and the Perfection of Nature 205
 - d) The Nature of Beautiful Form 210
 - e) The Language Arts: Prose, Verse, and Rhetoric 212
 - f) Musical Harmony and Its Affinity with the Soul 214
 - g) Abū Ḥayyān Al-Tawḥīdī's Treatise on Calligraphy and the Foundations of the Genre in Arabic 217
- 2.3 Calligraphy among the Sciences of Language in Ibn al-Sīd of Badajoz 228
- 2.4 Revelation, Morality, and Art in the Work of Ibn Ḥazm 233
 - 2.4.1 *The Divine Origin of the Arts and their Human Transmission* 234
 - 2.4.2 *The Perfection and Immutable Order of Divine Creation* 243
 - 2.4.3 *Man's Works and Revelation: Architecture, Images, and Music in Ibn Ḥazm's Jurisprudence* 247
 - a) Mosques in a Juridical Treatise from Tenth-Century Cordoba. A Moral Warning about Architecture 247
 - b) Religious and Lay Images in Ibn Ḥazm 251
 - c) The Ṣāḥibī Faqīh on Music 254
 - 2.4.4 *Ibn Ḥazm's Theory and Criticism of Poetry* 258
 - a) The Moral Character of Poetry 259

- b) Poetic Concepts and Classes: Technique, Naturalness, and Skill 262
 - c) Ibn Ḥazm's Rhetoric 265
 - d) The Quran is Radically Inimitable 266
- 2.5 Mimesis as the Definition of Art in Eastern *Falsafa* 268
 - 2.5.1 *The Origin and Development of the Concept of Mimesis in Classical Eastern Islam: Mattā, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Sīnā* 270
 - a) Mattā and the Arabic Version of Mimesis 273
 - b) Mimesis in al-Fārābī's Theory of Art: Ethics, Politics, and Imagination 275
 - c) Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and his Translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* 289
 - 2.5.2 *Mimesis as a Unifying Concept of the Arts in Eastern Falsafa* 297
 - 2.5.3 *Artistic Fulfillment: Elements for an Aesthetics of Falsafa* 310
- 2.6 The Theory of Artistic Mimesis in Andalusī Thought and Criticism 317
 - 2.6.1 *Rhetoric and Poetics in Ibn Rushd's Ethical and Rationalist Thought* 318
 - 2.6.2 *Ibn Rushd's Poetics between Rhetoric and Ethics* 323
 - a) Ibn Rushd's *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-Shi'r* and Its Greek original 323
 - b) The Nature and Types of Arabic Poetry. The Averroist Concept of Mimesis 326
 - c) The Ethical Purpose of Poetry 329
 - d) The Components of Eulogy 332
 - e) Harmonious and Unified Composition 333
 - f) The Relationship of Poetry to Truth 335
 - g) Representation of Misfortunes and Defects 338
 - h) The Characters that Eulogy Should Represent 338
 - i) Modes of Imitation in Poetry 339
 - j) Rhetorical Elements: Extrinsic Aspects, Wordplay, and *Taghyīr* or Alteration 343
 - k) Criticizing Poets' Falsehoods 348
 - 2.6.3 *The Pleasures of Imitation as a Path to Ethical Education in Ibn Rushd's Versions of the Rhetoric and the Poetics* 349
 - a) The Various Mimetic Arts: Natural Disposition, Technique, and Faithfulness 350
 - b) The Enjoyment That Every Artistic Imitation Brings 351

- c) The Pleasure of Poetry Should Serve its Ethical Goals 358
 - 2.6.4 *Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī: From the Theory of Mimesis to a Total Arabic Aesthetics* 360
 - a) Theory and Definition of Poetic Ideas 363
 - b) Poetry's Perceptual and Intellectual Dimension 368
 - c) Truth is not an Issue in Poetry. Definition of Poetry 373
 - d) *Muḥākāt* and *Takhyīl*: A Profound Conception of the Imitative Arts 380
 - e) Toward a General Arabic Aesthetics: Imitation, Imagination, Astonishment, Pleasure. An Aesthetics of Light and Reflection 391
 - f) Harmonious Composition of the *Qaṣīda*. Critical Judgment 404
- 2.7 The History, Sociology, and Definition of the Arts in Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima* 412
 - 2.7.1 *The Arts in the Development of Human Civilization and as a Manifestation of Power* 413
 - a) The Geographic Factor, and Moderation as the Physical, Moral, and Aesthetic Ideal 414
 - b) The Arts in the Nomadic-vs.-Sedentary Debate. Necessity and Opulence 416
 - c) The Arts in Ibn Khaldūn's Semiotics of Power 427
 - 2.7.2 *Ibn Khaldūn's Urbanism* 435
 - a) Urban Life Follows the Rise of State Power 435
 - b) The City's Site and Basic Services 438
 - c) The Ancient Arabs and Architecture 439
 - 2.7.3 *Ibn Khaldūn's Definition of the Arts* 442
 - a) The Arts Consist of Both Theory and Practice 442
 - b) The Art of Construction 447
 - c) The Art of Carpentry 452
 - d) The Art of Calligraphy 453
 - e) Ibn Khaldūn's Concept of Poetry 462
- 3 Aesthetic Perception and the Definition of Beauty in Classical Arabic Thought 480
 - 3.1 Theory of Knowledge and Definition of Beauty in the Thought of Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba 481
 - 3.1.1 *Reason versus Imagination. Ibn Ḥazm's Theory of Knowledge* 482
 - a) The Nature of the Human Soul 482

- b) The Perceptive Structure of the Soul. Rational, Sensory, and Linguistic Knowledge 483
 - c) The Importance and Specificity of Visual Perception 491
 - d) Ibn Ḥazm's Theory of Colors and Classical Arab Physics 500
 - 3.1.2 *Physical Beauty in Ibn Ḥazm's Writings on Love* 511
 - a) The Ethical Framework of Love 512
 - b) Conceptualization of Love and Beauty 519
 - c) Spiritual Affinity and Physical Forms 527
 - d) Love against Reason. Transformations in Aesthetic Judgment 536
 - e) Ibn Ḥazm's Participation in the Aesthetics of Light 541
 - f) The Fleeting Nature of Beauty 545
 - 3.1.3 *The Metaphysical Meaning of Ibn Ḥazm's Aesthetics* 546
 - a) Beauty as a Spiritual Accident 546
 - b) The Divinity and Supernatural Beings Cannot be Defined in Aesthetic Terms 548
 - 3.1.4 *Ethical and Moral Beauty* 556
- 3.2 Aesthetic Syntheses in Arabic Erotic Literature after Ibn Ḥazm 559
- 3.3 The Metaphysics and Perception of Beauty in Classical Arabic *Falsafa* 573
 - 3.3.1 *Aesthetic Principles and Concepts in the Arabic Version of Plotinus's Enneads* 574
 - 3.3.2 *Al-Fārābī's Metaphysical Aesthetics* 583
 - a) The Beauty and Perfection of the First Cause 584
 - b) The Perfection and Beauty of Non-Corporeal Substances and Heavenly Bodies 589
 - c) Perfection and Beauty of the Human Being Compared to Those of the First Cause 590
 - d) Modes of the Perception and Fulfillment of Beauty 594
 - 3.3.3 *Divine, Intellectual, and Physical Beauty in Avicenna's Metaphysics* 601
 - a) Definition of Divine Beauty and Goodness 601
 - b) Perception of Beauty in Ibn Sinā's Theory of Knowledge 605
 - c) Metaphysical Perception vs. Sensory Perception: Pleasure and Appropriateness, the Ascent to Supreme Felicity 617
- 3.4 Theory of Perception and Aesthetic Contemplation in the Andalusī *Falsafa* of Ibn Bājjā and Ibn Ṭufayl 623
 - 3.4.1 *Ibn Bājjā's Theory of Perception* 623

- a) Faculties of the Soul and the Theory of Forms 624
- b) Sense Perception. Vision and Color Theory. Acoustic Perception 626
- c) Intermediate Faculties: Common Sense and the Imaginative 636
- d) The Rational Faculty: Universals, Spiritual Forms, and Higher Knowledge 641
- 3.4.2 *Parameters of Ibn Bājja's Transcendental Aesthetics* 642
 - a) Ibn Bājja's Theory of Pleasure. Contemplative Aesthetic Delight 645
- 3.4.3 *Ibn Ṭufayl and Gustatory Union with Divine Beauty* 650
- 3.5 Sensibility and Intellection: Ibn Rushd's Shaping of Aesthetics as a Conceptual Field 658
 - 3.5.1 *Ibn Rushd's Theory of Sensibility. Visual Perception as the Nucleus and Paradigm of Sensory Knowledge* 659
 - a) The Judicious Function of the Senses 662
 - b) Visual Perception and Color Theory 666
 - c) Sensibles in the Soul 670
 - 3.5.2 *Common Sense, Imagination, and Cogitatio: The Judgment of the Senses and Artistic Composition* 673
 - 3.5.3 *Reason, Imagination, and Intellection* 677
 - 3.5.4 *Nature, Art, and Knowledge. Ibn Rushd's Aesthetic Order* 690
- 3.6 Ibn al-Haytham's *Optics* and the Creation of an Arabic and Universal Theory of Aesthetic Visual Perception 701
 - 3.6.1 *Visual Knowledge and Aesthetic Knowledge* 704
 - a) The Distinctive Faculty and Its Syllogistic Visual Functions 707
 - b) The Innate and Experiential Nature of Aesthetic Knowledge 711
 - 3.6.2 *Ibn al-Haytham's Theory of Aesthetic Perception* 714
 - a) The Beauty of Individual Visible Properties 717
 - b) Beauty as a Combination of Visible Properties. Proportion and Formal Harmony 723
 - c) Ugliness as the Absence of Beauty 728
 - d) Circumstances and Alterations of Aesthetic Perception. General Moderation of Visual Factors 729
 - 3.6.3 *On Ibn al-Haytham's Artistic Terminology* 731
- 3.7 Al-Ghazālī's Aesthetics between Theology (*Kalām*) and Sufi Mysticism (*Ṭaṣawwuf*) 737
 - 3.7.1 *Love for Both Sensible and Divine Beauty* 738
 - 3.7.2 *Definition of Sensible and Artistic Beauty* 743

3.7.3	<i>The Superiority of Internal Beauty</i>	746
3.7.4	<i>Spiritual Faculties for Mystical Knowledge and Aesthetic Taste</i>	750
3.8	Harmony and Appropriateness: Aesthetics in the Historical Evolutionism of Ibn Khaldūn	755
3.9	The Other Side of Reason. The Aesthetic Core of Ibn 'Arabī's Sufism	763
3.9.1	<i>Mystical and Universal Love</i>	768
	a) "God Is Beautiful and Loves Beauty"	768
	b) "Beauty Reached in Thee Her Utmost Limit: Another Like Thee Is Impossible"	777
	c) "God Created Adam in His Own Image"	787
3.9.2	<i>Imagination versus Reason</i>	790
	a) Theory of Gnostic Understanding	790
	b) The Science of Imagination	795
3.9.3	<i>Divine Beauty and Majesty. Ibn 'Arabī's Aesthetics in the Dialectic of Tanzīh and Tashbih</i>	804
	a) <i>Tanzīh</i> and <i>Tashbih</i> : The Form of God	804
	b) The Aesthetics of the One and the Many	810
	c) Beyond Iconoclasm	811
	d) Seeing God	817
	e) Divine Majesty and Beauty in the Soul	823
3.10	The Aesthetic Vocabulary of the Poems of the Alhambra	827
3.10.1	<i>The Divine Origin of Beauty</i>	828
3.10.2	<i>The Sovereign as Aesthetic Agent</i>	831
3.10.3	<i>The Aesthetic Narcissism of Architecture</i>	834
	Conclusion	845
1	Aesthetics at the Center of Arab Anthropology and Humanism	846
2	Arabic Aesthetic Concepts and Islamic Art	849
3	Arabic Aesthetic Thought in al-Andalus	851
	Bibliography of Primary Sources	855
	Bibliography of Secondary Sources	866
	Index	884