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QUR'ANIC INTERTEXTUALITY AS DISCURSIVE STRATEGY IN *BAYT BAWS* BY IBRAHIM MUHAMMAD TALHA: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Although Qur'anic intertextuality in contemporary Arabic literature has attracted increasing scholarly attention, studies examining its role in contemporary Yemeni fiction remain limited, particularly those employing critical discourse analysis as their primary analytical framework. To address this gap, this study aims to identify the forms of Qur'anic intertextuality in *Bayt Baws* and analyze their functions in constructing narrative meaning and articulating socio-political critique. Employing a qualitative research design grounded in Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis, this study systematically analyses seven representative excerpts from the novel. It classifies them according to Miftāḥ's typology of Qur'anic intertextuality. The findings reveal that Qur'anic intertextuality in *Bayt Baws* operates through external intertextuality, in which direct Qur'anic quotations provide symbolic authority and ethical weight to the narrative, and internal intertextuality, in which indirect Qur'anic resonances engage the reader's moral consciousness through implicit thematic engagement. These mechanisms function as deliberate discursive strategies to expose political corruption, critique social hypocrisy, and foreground moral contradictions between Qur'anic ideals and contemporary Yemeni realities. This study contributes to Arabic literary studies by demonstrating how Qur'anic intertextuality serves as a tool for reshaping narrative discourse and enhancing critical awareness, while extending the scope of Qur'anic intertextuality research into the largely underexplored domain of contemporary Yemeni literature.

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INTRODUCTION

Ibrahim Muhammad Talha's contemporary Yemeni novel, *Bayt Baws*, constitutes a significant contribution to modern Arabic fiction, particularly in its engagement with socio-political realities and religious discourse. Published in 2018, the novel depicts the complexities of Yemeni society amidst political instability, sectarian tensions, and moral fragmentation (Mocbil, 2024; Mocbil, 2025). What distinguishes *Bayt Baws* is not merely its thematic focus on social and political crises, but also its narrative strategy that embeds Qur'anic language, motifs, and ethical paradigms into the text's fabric. Talha does not employ the Qur'an as a decorative reference, but rather integrates it as a fundamental epistemic framework through which characters interpret events, negotiate moral dilemmas, and articulate social critiques (bin Zabidin & Eldesoky, 2023). Thus, the Qur'an becomes a discursive authority that structures the ideological orientation of narratives and reshapes contemporary reality through the resonance of the scripture (Otaif, 2024; Altahmazi et al., 2023). This characteristic makes *Bayt Baws* a representative case for examining Qur'anic intertextuality as a discursive construction strategy in contemporary Arabic fiction.

Qur'anic intertextuality is rooted in a broader framework of intertextuality. Van Zoonen (2017) maintains that all texts, whether written or oral, artistic or pragmatic, are fundamentally interconnected in a dynamic relational network. Understanding these intertextual relationships is central to understanding how meaning is produced and transformed within a work. Kristeva (1980; 1986) conceptualizes text as a relational space shaped by preceding discourse. In the Arabic literary tradition, the Qur'an occupies a central intertextual position due to its linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural authority (Nurhamidah et al., 2025; Mārtensson, 2020). Scholars emphasize that intertextuality functions not simply as a transfer of texts but as a dialogical transformation (Gordon, 2022; Henke, 2025; Maftuna, 2025). This transformation often takes the form of Qur'anic quotations, allusions, narrative adaptations, and thematic recontextualization (Alhourani et al., 2022; Alshawabkeh, 2022; Zabidin & Eldesoky, 2024). Consequently, Qur'anic intertextuality operates simultaneously at the aesthetic, ethical, and ideological levels (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2017; Ashfaq & Al-Azhari, 2020; Naimat et al., 2025). In *Bayt Baws*, this phenomenon emerges through explicit quotations and implicit semantic evocations that frame moral critique within a culturally resonant symbolic system.

Recent studies have increasingly examined Qur'anic intertextuality in Arabic literature across various national contexts. Ibrahim et al. (2015) show that Qur'anic intertexts in Al-Mutanabbi's poetry function to generate new connotations while simultaneously condensing poetic meaning. A study of al-Buṣīrī's Qasidah Burdah reveals that Qur'anic intertextuality in classical Arabic religious poetry occurs primarily in two forms: assimilative intertextuality, in which the meaning of a verse is creatively absorbed and rearticulated, and revitalizing intertextuality, which revives Qur'anic motifs for spiritual mediation (Turkey, 2025). Studies of Saudi Arabian and Jordanian poetry show how Qur'anic imagery enhances the text's symbolic depth (Alhourani et al., 2022; Alshawabkeh, 2022), while studies of Palestinian poetry highlight the activation of Qur'anic narratives as instruments of collective resistance and identity (Ebayat & Mutawiri, 2014; Mobarakeh & AbuAlsaud, 2023). In the context of novels, Khan & Akhtar (2023) analyze the Qur'anic intertextuality in Najib Kilani's works, while a study of Mahfouz's novels reveals its role in producing layered meanings (bin Zabidin & Eldesoky, 2023; Aldeeb, 2020; Zabidin & Eldesoky, 2024).

Recent studies have also expanded the methodological approach to Qur'anic intertextuality. Karagözoğlu (2025) demonstrates the immense potential of intertextual analysis in Islamic studies. By complementing source criticism, facilitating the exploration of discourse and genre characteristics, and opening up opportunities for digital research, intertextuality has yielded valuable insights in the study of Arab-Islamic texts. In the field of Qur'anic exegesis, Abdorahimzadeh (2023) shows that Qur'anic intratextuality is a productive mechanism in Qur'anic hermeneutics, indirectly underscoring the Qur'an's rich potential as a dialogical source in literary works. In the field of translation, Muhammed & Al-Qazaz (2024) investigate the challenges of translating Qur'anic intertexts, while Zulhamdani & Hussin (2025) reconceptualize Qur'anic narratives within a contemporary intertextual academic framework. Within the broader fictional landscape, Nuruddin et al. (2025) analyze the intertextual engagement between Nizam Ganjavi's *Layli wa Majnun* and the Quran, and Zohra (2025) explores mythological and religious intertexts in Algerian fiction. Both demonstrate that Quranic intertextuality operates beyond geographical boundaries and single genres (Nuruddin et al., 2025; Zohra, 2025). Furthermore, Otaif (2024) reveals that Qur'anic intertextuality also operates in media discourse, indicating that its discursive function goes beyond mere literary aesthetics.

Despite the growing number of these studies, two major gaps remain. *First*, most studies concentrate on canonical Arabic poetry or novelists, particularly Egyptian and Levantine writers, while contemporary Yemeni fiction remains underexplored. This gap has only begun to be addressed by a limited number of recent studies (Mocbil, 2025; Noman, 2025). *Second*, the systematic application of CDA to Qur'anic intertextuality in modern socio-political novels remains limited. Bibliometric mapping of Scopus-based Qur'anic interpretation research by Nirwana et al. (2025) shows that although discourse analysis is beginning to enter the thematic radar of Qur'anic studies, its application in Arabic literary fiction studies, much less the systematic application of CDA, remains very limited. These findings further underscore the necessity of studies such as the one conducted in this research. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by addressing the main question: What are the forms of Qur'anic intertextuality in the novel *Bayt Baws*, and what are their functions in constructing meaning and communicating socio-political messages to readers?

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the role of Qur'anic intertextuality in *Bayt Baws*. CDA was selected as the primary analytical framework owing to its capacity to simultaneously reveal the relationship between language, ideology, and power in literary texts (Fairclough, 2013; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). Unlike stylistic or structuralist approaches that operate exclusively at the textual level, CDA enables researchers to examine how the author's linguistic and intertextual choices reflect, reproduce, and challenge broader cultural and ideological structures. This study specifically follows Fairclough's (1993) three-dimensional model that operationalizes analysis at three interrelated levels: 1) textual description, which focuses on narrative strategies, metaphors, and symbolic structures in which Qur'anic references are embedded; 2) interpretation of discursive practices, which examines how readers interpret intertextuality in the Yemeni socio-religious context; and 3) an explanation of socio-cultural practices, exploring the ideological implications of Qur'anic discourse in critiquing social injustice and political

oppression. This framework is integrated with Kristeva's (1980) theory of intertextuality, which conceptualizes texts as dynamic relational spaces, shaped and transformed by ongoing dialogue with preceding texts.

The primary data source for the present study is the original Arabic edition of Ibrahim Muhammad Talha's novel *Bayt Baws*, published by Markaz ʻAzīz lil-Dirāsāt wan-Nashr in Sanaa, Yemen, in 2018 (Talha, 2018). This novel was selected as the analytical corpus for three mutually reinforcing reasons. *Bayt Baws* is recognized as a significant contribution to contemporary Yemeni literature for its distinctive representation of Qur'anic intertextuality within a modern Arabic narrative, a feature particularly relevant to the study of literary discourse. Ibrahim Muhammad Talha is considered a leading Yemeni novelist whose work combines artistic creativity with incisive socio-political criticism, thus offering a productive discursive ground for analysis. The novel's diverse and layered use of Qur'anic verses, allusions, and Arabic rhetorical structures provides fertile ground for investigating how religious texts operate within literary discourse to construct meaning and convey moral critique. The novel's literary quality has been recognized through critical evaluations by Yemeni literary scholars who have assessed its narrative depth and high cultural authenticity, further strengthening its status as a valid and representative primary data source.

The data collection process involved a comprehensive, systematic reading of the entire novel (including the narrative, dialogues, and interior monologues) to identify every occurrence of explicit or implicit references to the Qur'an. Each identified candidate quotation was recorded along with its narrative context, then verified against the original Arabic Qur'anic text to confirm its intertextual relationship. From this selection process, seven representative quotations were chosen because each showed a clear and meaningful engagement with the language, imagery, or themes of the Qur'an, in its role in constructing narrative meaning and conveying socio-political critique. Each quotation was then classified according to the external (direct quotations) and internal (indirect resonance) typology proposed by Miftāḥ (2005), and systematically documented in four components: the Arabic narrative text and its English translation, the corresponding Qur'anic verse and its translation, the type of intertextuality, and its discursive function. The selection of these seven quotations also took representativeness into account: three quotations represent external intertextuality, and four represent internal intertextuality, resulting in a balanced data set for further analysis.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study employed two trustworthiness procedures that adhere to qualitative research standards (Creswell & Poth, 2024). The first procedure was expert validation: two academic experts in Arabic literature and Islamic studies (both senior lecturers specializing in contemporary Arabic literary criticism and Qur'anic studies) were assigned to carefully and independently review the entire analysis. These experts assessed the accuracy with which narrative quotations were identified as forms of Qur'anic intertextuality, the correspondence between the narrative text and the Qur'anic verses referred to, and the appropriateness of the classification of intertextuality types and the justification of their discursive functions. Based on feedback from both experts, the analysis was revised iteratively until a substantive interpretive consensus was established. The second procedure is source triangulation: each intertextual finding is systematically compared with relevant secondary literature, particularly previous studies on Qur'anic intertextuality in Arabic novels, to verify consistency and strengthen the basis of interpretation. The combination of these two procedures mitigates analytical bias. It ensures that the research

conclusions accurately reflect the complexity of the relationship between Qur'anic references and narrative meaning-making in the Yemeni socio-political context.

RESULT

The findings demonstrate the existence of external and internal intertextuality in the novel *Bayt Baws*. Based on the collected data, seven Qur'anic intertextualities were found in the novel's narrative. The number, distribution, location, and brief discursive function of these intertextualities are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Number, Distribution, and Function of Qur'anic Intertextuality in Bayt Baws

No	Type of Intertextuality	Page	Amount	Perc.	Discursive Functions
1	External Intertextuality	15, 39, 66	3	42.9%	Granting epistemic authority to narrative characters, creating an ironic distance between Qur'anic ideals and socio-political realities.
2	Internal Intertextuality	9, 24, 51, 68	4	57.1%	Implicitly activating the reader's moral awareness, it constructs social criticism through the Qur'an's thematic resonance.
Total			7	100%	

External Qur'anic Intertextuality in the Novel *Bayt Baws*

External intertextuality refers to the direct citation of Qur'anic verses within the novel's narrative. In this category, Qur'anic verses appear in dialogue, monologue, or other narratives within Bayt Baws. The form and function of external intertextuality can be seen in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1

كلامي فصل ليس بالهزل.. فلا تأخذك العزة بالإثم.. أعرف أنك في قرارة نفسك لا تعبأ بي ولا تلقي لي بالاً، ولكن احسب حساباتك بدقة، وتأمل في كلامي، فليس على عواهنه ... (Talha, 2018:66)

My words are decisive, not jest. So do not let arrogance lead you into sin. I know that deep within yourself you pay me no heed and give me no consideration — but calculate carefully, and reflect upon my words, for they are not spoken carelessly...

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ
(al-Baqarah [2]:206)

And when it is said to him, 'Fear God,' arrogance leads him to sin. Hell is enough for him — and how wretched a resting place.

In Excerpt 1, the author employs external intertextuality through the sentence *fa la ta'khudhka al-'izzah bi al-ithm* 'so do not let arrogance lead you into sin'. The sentence quoted from al-Baqarah [2]:206 functions to warn the reader or the intended character against the dangers of arrogance arising from excessive power, knowledge, or self-esteem. In the context of the novel, the narrator (Misha'an) deploys this phrase to guide his friend towards caution and humility, emphasizing that true awareness of events and analytical abilities should not lead one to become arrogant or stubborn. Furthermore,

this intertextual reference underscores the dialogue between the Qur'an's spiritual and ethical dimensions and the characters' positions in the narrative. The Qur'an's warning against sinful arrogance and pride parallels the novel's context, highlighting the dangers of hubris and hasty judgment, especially in a vast world where politics, society, and creativity intersect. Thus, the process of intertextuality strengthens the moral dimension and the warning message, establishing a direct and explicit connection between the narrative text and the Qur'anic text, deepening the ethical context of the characters and their dialogue.

Another form of external intertextuality is evident in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2 ويتداولونَهُنَّ في أحاديثهم مهما كُنَّ - في ظاهر الأمر - مسلمات مؤمنات قانتات تائبات عابدات سائحات"... يعاكسونهن "ثيّباتٍ وأبكارًا"...!!" (Talha, 2018:39)

They pass them around in their conversations, no matter how outwardly they appear — as Muslim women, faithful, devoutly obedient, repentant, worshipping, fasting — yet they harass them, 'whether previously married or virgins'!!"

عَسَى رَبُّهُنَّ إِن طَلَّقَنَكُنَّ أَن يُبْدِلَهُ أَزْوَاجًا خَيْرًا مِنكُنَّ، مُسْلِمَاتٍ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ قَانِتَاتٍ تَائِبَاتٍ عَابِدَاتٍ سَائِحَاتٍ ثَيِّبَاتٍ وَأَبْكَارًا (al-Tahrim [66]:5)

It may be that if he divorces you, his Lord will give him in your place wives better than you — submitting to God, believing, devoutly obedient, repentant, worshipping, fasting, previously married, and virgins.

The external intertextuality of *muslimat mu'minat qanitat taibat 'abidat saihat* 'muslim women, faithful, devoutly obedient, repentant, worshipping, fasting' and *thiyabat wa abkara* 'whether previously married or virgins'. The author quotes al-Tahrim [66]:5 to criticize the gap between appearance and reality. Shadhab, one of the characters in the novel, describes a group of women who, in their self-descriptions, present themselves to others as devout and pious Muslims, outwardly committed to religion and morality. However, in reality, they are depicted as dishonest, indecent, engaging in promiscuity, and exchanging lewd conversations. The Qur'anic intertext creates a contrast between the model of pious and virtuous women in the holy book and the contemporary social reality depicted in *Bayt Baws*, underscoring that what is publicly displayed is merely a mask of arrogance and deception. At the same time, the inner self stands in stark contrast to this appearance. It emerges as a moral and cultural critique. By referencing the Qur'an, the author highlights the discrepancy between outward appearance and inner truth, exposing contradictions within society and thereby giving the text referential authority and intellectual depth.

The novel's external intertextuality is further emphasized by Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3 أنت على المساكين أسد مفترس.. آخرتها تتفلسف فوقي يا عفط؟!.. "أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكَ إِنَّكَ لن تستطيع مَعِيَ صَبْرًا"؟"...! (Talha, 2018:15)

You are a ferocious lion against the weak — and now, in the end, you dare to philosophize over me, you fool?! 'Did I not tell you that you would never be able to have patience with me?'!...

قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا (al-Kahfi [18]:72)

He said, 'Did I not tell you that you would never be able to have patience with me?

In Excerpt 3 above, external intertextuality is reflected in the sentence *alam aqul laka innaka tastati' ma'iya sabra* 'did I not tell you that you would never be able to have patience with me?' By quoting al-Kahfi [18]:72, the author grants epistemic authority to the narrative speaker, Khidr, thereby positioning the reader to perceive the speaker as possessing privileged interpretive knowledge within a satirical, hyperbolic narrative context. In this intertextuality, a moment arises when Shadhab rebukes his friend Aziz, as if quoting the character of Khidr from the Qur'an, where Khidr rebukes Musa (may peace be upon him) for his impatience in understanding divine wisdom and the secrets of cosmic matters. In the narrative, Shadhab uses this phrase to signify the inherent human weakness in facing the mysteries of life and the inability to understand its details. He criticizes the nature of his friend, Aziz, who wants to know all the secrets and demands explanations for every event, but lacks the patience to understand complex matters. Through direct quotations, the author demonstrates the limitations of human perception when faced with profound and complex knowledge. The novel further foregrounds the relationship between mentor and apprentice, or between one possessing experience and wisdom and one in the process of learning, within a narrative context marked by wonder, irony, and the psychological complexity of Shadhab's character.

Internal Qur'anic Intertextuality in the Novel *Bayt Baws*

Internal intertextuality is an intertextual strategy that does not quote Qur'anic verses directly but conveys their substance through narratives. In this type, Qur'anic verses serve as inspiration for the novel's narrative. An example of internal intertextuality appears in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4 "كُل ما وقع ويقع وسيقع، لنا فيه دخل، من قريب أو من بعيد.. قلنا: "إنَّ الله يضع سره في أضعف خلقه"؛ لذا تجدني هنا، وتجد أمثالي هناك، لنضع النقاط على الحروف، فنحن كلمة السر أو الباسورد الذي يفتح مغاليق الأشياء المسكوت عنها..."
(Talha, 2018:24)

Everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen — we have a part in it, near or far. We say: 'God places His secret in the weakest of His creation.' That is why you find me here, and others like me there — to set the record straight, for we are the password that unlocks the sealed things left unspoken..."

ولا تَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وأنتم تعلمون (al-Baqarah [2]:42)

And do not conceal the truth while you know it.

In Excerpt 4, the author refrains from directly citing the Qur'anic text but draws upon its underlying semantic and thematic premises. The narrative about those who conceal the truth is inspired by al-Baqarah [2]:42, which highlights the concept of *kitman al-haq* 'concealing the truth'. In the novel, Shadhab uses dialogue to demonstrate

to his friend, Aziz, that humans play a crucial role in revealing the truth in major events unfolding around the world, particularly in the Arab world. Aziz embodies a segment of society that prefers silence and disengagement. Aziz does not deny the facts themselves, but avoids engaging with them and does not wish to intervene. In a sensitive political context where intervention carries significant risks, he chooses not to intervene, fearing consequences or personal loss. Thus, the author uses the narrative to illustrate that some individuals choose to remain silent and avoid intervening in political and social issues. In contrast, others seek to uncover the truth regardless of the dangers involved.

Furthermore, internal intertextuality is also reflected in Excerpts 5 and 6.

Excerpt 5

"...آن للشبعان أن يدري ما ببطن الجوعان.. آن للإنسان أن يشعر بأخيه الإنسان..."
(Talha, 2018:68)

"...The time has come for the well-fed to know what lies in the stomach of the hungry. The time has come for man to feel for his fellow man..."

"وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِين"
(al-Baqarah [2]:195)

And spend in the cause of God, and do not cast yourselves into destruction by your own hands. And do good — indeed, God loves those who do good.

Excerpt 6

"خير الخطائين التوابون، وخير التوابين الخطاؤون"!! (Talha, 2018:51)

The best of sinners are those who repent, and the best of the repentant are those who sin!!

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ (al-Baqarah [2]:222)

Indeed, God loves those who constantly repent and loves those who purify themselves.

In Excerpt 5 above, the character reflects upon the divergence between those who live in comfort and abundance (*al-shab'an*, 'the well-fed') and those who suffer from deprivation or social pressure (*al-jaw'an*, 'the hungry'), highlighting the obligation of individuals to empathize with others, especially those who are weaker or marginalized. The author uses this indirect internal intertextuality with al-Baqarah [2]:195 to reflect the principle of human and moral responsibility in the novel. This intertextual evocation underscores that even creative or socially prominent members of society must remain cognizant of others' suffering and strive to show kindness to them. The novel links this principle to the predicaments of its characters: creative figures like Shadhab or Misha'an endure immense pressure in a society that does not value creativity, and they are forced to balance their personal ambitions with their obligations to others. This intertextual reference reinforces the narrative's social and ethical message, underscoring that empathy and kindness are integral to refined human behavior, even in turbulent or harsh environments.

Excerpt 6 embodies a profound moral reflection on the nature of sin and repentance, indirectly referring to al-Baqarah [2]:222, which emphasizes God's love and compassion for those who repent and purify themselves (*al-tawwabin*, 'the repentant

ones'). Within the narrative context, the character uses this intertextuality to underscore the flexibility of morality and human reality. Not everything that appears transgressive is inherently wrong, nor is every claim to truth invariably. Instead, there is room for learning, correction, and repentance. In the novel, this principle is linked to the behavior of the characters, particularly creative or independent individuals in society, who face internal and external struggles. The character in the narrative conveys the informal wisdom that admitting mistakes and repenting for them are part of the human experience, not limited to external societal structures or strict legal codes. The internal intertextuality thus reinforces the character's moral argument, namely the equilibrium between personal autonomy and ethical discipline, illustrating how transgressions may serve as occasions for learning and moral development. This connects the religious-moral dimension with the characters' everyday narrative situations.

Furthermore, internal intertextuality is evident in Excerpt 7.

Excerpt 7 تغيرت الدُّنيا وتطورت التكنولوجيا، غير أنَّ ذلك كله تم بالتزامن مع الحساسية المفرطة في (بيت بوس)، حيث المخزون الهائل من السلم الاجتماعي والعلاقات الودّيَّة بين طوائف متعددة ... إلى آخر القائمة من تلك الجماعات التي لم تعد تلتقي في السنوات الأخيرة إلا للكذب على ذقون عامة أشياعها وأتباعها. (Talha, 2018:9)

The world has changed, and technology has advanced — yet all of this unfolded in parallel with the excessive sensitivities within Bayt Baws, where there had once existed a vast reservoir of social harmony and amicable relations among multiple sects and communities... and so on down the list of those groups that in recent years no longer gather except to deceive the masses of their own followers and adherents.

لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ (Al-Mumtahanah [60]:8)

God does not forbid you from those who have not fought you on account of religion, nor driven you from your homes, that you should treat them with kindness and deal with them justly. Indeed, God loves those who act justly.

The internal intertextuality in Excerpt 7 is demonstrated by the indirect citation of al-Mumtaḥanah [60]:8. The passage depicts *Bayt Baws* as a locale inhabited by diverse sects and religious communities, where relations among them were once friendly and harmonious. However, over time, with technological transformations and heightened social fragmentation, these communities began to betray social trust, feign communal solidarity, and deceive the broader public. The Qur'anic meaning that the novel embodies in this context is the obligation to practice virtue and justice towards those who do not commit aggression. This emerges in the narrative as social criticism directed at the local community, which has lost its sense of justice in its dealings with others and has deviated from upright behavior. Shadhab recounts these events to highlight the tension between ideal behavior prescribed by religion and the realities of community life. The novel further connects this issue to the historical and social context, showing that chaos and hypocrisy in social behavior arise whenever people's interests clash. This reflects the suppression of truth and the erosion of justice, which constitutes the ideological core of the internal intertextuality in this instance.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the intertextuality of the Qur'an in *Bayt Baws* is not merely a rhetorical embellishment or a conventional literary device, but rather a conscious, structured discourse practice. In the textual dimension of Fairclough's (1993) CDA framework, Miftāḥ (2005) distinguishes between external intertextuality, which involves direct quotations of Qur'anic verses, and internal intertextuality, which operates through resonances of meaning and themes without literal quotations. The quantitative data in Table 1 show that internal intertextuality dominates, accounting for 57.1% (4 out of 7 data), while external intertextuality accounts for 42.9% (3 out of 7 data). The dominance of internal intertextuality indicates that Talha favors implicit discursive strategies: rather than directly invoking verses, he evokes Qur'anic resonance in the reader's consciousness through implicit thematic engagement. This approach presupposes an informed and active readership in the construction of meaning, as conceptualized by Kristeva (1980). While in al-Buṣīrī's Qasidah, Qur'anic intertextuality operates through an overt assimilation of meaning (Turkey, 2025), Bayt Baws shifts this strategy toward a latent, yet more ideologically pervasive, resonance.

In the practical dimension of discourse, quoted Qur'anic texts are not simply transferred into the narrative but recontextualized to create a new ideological orientation. External intertextuality, such as the direct quotations in Excerpts 1 and 3, endows the narrative character with the epistemic authority of the sacred text, creating an ironic tension between the invoked sacred authority and the social reality it reflects. Meanwhile, internal intertextuality, as in Excerpts 4 to 7, works more subtly by activating Qur'anic meaning without literal quotation, thereby generating a sustained contrast between the Qur'an's normative ideals and the distorted narrative reality. This accords with Van Zoonen's (2017) contention that intertextuality is not solely a product of the author's intentionality but also of the reader's interpretive process. The findings are relevant because the internal intertextuality in *Bayt Baws* relies on the reader's familiarity with the Qur'an to activate layers of meaning that are not explicitly stated. This dual mechanism confirms Fairclough's (1993) concepts of interdiscursivity and dialogical transformation (Gordon, 2022; Henke, 2025). Karagözoğlu (2025) further demonstrates that intertextual analysis can reveal the relationship between discourse and genre, a relevant perspective for understanding *Bayt Baws*'s negotiation between fictional narrative and religious registers.

From a socio-cultural practical perspective, the integration of Qur'anic discourse into *Bayt Baws*'s narrative constitutes a discursive response to the crisis-stricken Yemeni context: political conflict, sectarian divisions, corruption, and moral rift. Abdorahimzadeh (2023) points out that, in the Qur'anic hermeneutical tradition, the Qur'an draws on its internal intertextual context to produce new, context-sensitive meanings. Talha appears to internalize this hermeneutical logic and transpose it into fictional narrative discourse, where the Qur'an is not only quoted but functions as a mirror that critically reflects social contradictions. Furthermore, Van Zoonen (2017) reminds us that intertextuality is also a product of the social and cultural conditions surrounding the author and his readers; in the context of *Bayt Baws*, it is the Yemeni crisis that shapes Talha's selection of specific and strategically positioned Qur'anic references. From this perspective, Talha mobilizes the religious heritage as a symbolic reservoir, but transcends its aesthetic function by making Qur'anic intertextuality an instrument of measured social and political critique.

Compared with previous studies, the CDA approach in this study allows for a deeper reading of the ideological dimensions of Qur'anic intertextuality. Ibrahim et al. (2015) showed that Al-Mutanabbi uses Qur'anic intertext to condense poetic meaning through innovative codes. In *Bayt Baws*, similar mechanisms operate in prose narrative for a fundamentally different purpose—not poetic aesthetics, but rather as an instrument of socio-political critique. Khan & Akhtar (2023) approach Qur'anic intertextuality from a thematic perspective, Zabidin & Eldesoky (2024) from a descriptive standpoint, while Alhourani et al. (2022) and Alshawabkeh (2022) focus on symbolic depth in poetry—none of these studies has systematically integrated CDA. The analysis of *Bayt Baws* reveals that the sacred text serves not only for aesthetic value but also as a tool of social resistance, in line with the findings of Ebayat & Mutawiri (2014) and Mobarakeh & AbuAlsaud (2023) regarding Palestinian poetry. The bibliometric mapping of Nirwana et al. (2025) confirms that the integration of discourse analysis with the study of Qur'anic intertextuality in fictional literature remains a substantially underexplored domain, thereby underscoring the scholarly relevance of this study.

The theoretical significance of this research lies in presenting an applicable model that combines Miftāḥ's (2005) classification of intertextuality (internal and external) with Fairclough's (1993) three dimensions of CDA. This integrative model offers a more encompassing analytical framework than a purely structuralist approach, as it simultaneously bridges the textual and socio-cultural dimensions. Methodologically, this model responds to Karagözoğlu's (2025) call for intertextual analysis in Islamic studies to transcend source identification and encompass deeper dimensions of discourse and ideology. Talha's ability to integrate religious and narrative registers confirms that the Qur'an remains a productive symbolic resource for rereading social transformation, in line with Zulhamdani & Hussin's (2025) view of the continuous transformation of Qur'anic meaning in new textual contexts. Practically, this model can be adapted by other researchers to examine other contemporary Arabic novels that employ Qur'anic intertextuality as a discursive strategy in response to the socio-political conditions of society.

This study opens new scholarly horizons for researchers in comparative literature and Qur'anic studies to explore how sacred texts interact with the literature of crisis and trauma in the Arab world. Such inquiry is increasingly pressing given the expanding literary production arising from contexts of armed conflict and social disintegration in the Middle East, which demands an analytical framework capable of capturing the complex relationship between the sacred and the profane. The substantive contribution of this research lies in repositioning the study of intertextuality from a purely descriptive to a critical-interpretive framework, enriching the scholarly literature with a more nuanced understanding of the dynamic relationship between sacred texts and discourse in Yemeni novels. This paradigmatic reorientation provides methodological legitimacy for similar studies that position the Qur'an not as a passive cultural backdrop, but as a textual agent actively shaping the construction of meaning. Thus, *Bayt Baws* emerges not merely as a literary work but as a discursive document that cultivates critical awareness and confronts social falsehoods by affirming Qur'anic ideals in a reality marked by fracture and moral disintegration.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Qur'anic intertextuality in *Bayt Baws* appears in the form of external intertextuality, which works through direct quotations of Qur'anic

verses, and internal intertextuality, which operates through the resonance of meaning and themes without literal quotations. These two forms perform different but complementary discursive functions in constructing meaning and communicating socio-political messages to readers. External intertextuality gives the narrative's characters epistemic authority derived from the sacred text, thereby creating an ironic distance between the claimed ideal and the reality presented. Meanwhile, internal intertextuality heightens the reader's moral awareness more subtly by comparing the Qur'an's normative values with the deviant narrative reality. Through this dual mechanism, the novel establishes a dynamic relationship between the sacred text and the contemporary Yemeni context by positioning the Qur'an as a productive discursive force that exposes societal contradictions, exposes political corruption, criticizes social hypocrisy, and emphasizes the moral dimension of everyday struggles. Consequently, the Qur'an is construed not as a rhetorical ornament or a conventional religious reference, but rather as a deliberate narrative strategy for advancing meaning-making and socio-political critique in modern Arabic literature.

The scope of this study is delimited to a single novel and a selected set of intertextual instances. Consequently, the findings may not fully represent the full spectrum of Qur'anic intertextual practices in Yemeni or other contemporary Arabic novels. This corpus limitation is an inherent methodological consequence of in-depth qualitative research, but equally underscores the imperative for replication and expansion in subsequent research. This limitation presents opportunities for future research to broaden the analytical scope by examining additional literary works from more diverse contexts, incorporating the perspectives of readers and critics through a reception approach, and employing complementary methodological frameworks such as corpus analysis, multimodality, or ethnographic approaches, each of which is relevant for uncovering dimensions of Qur'anic intertextuality beyond the scope of a single discourse analysis. A cross-genre comparative approach encompassing Yemeni poetry, drama, or autobiographical narratives would yield a considerably more representative account of both recurring and idiosyncratic intertextual patterns. Such an expansion would furnish a more comprehensive understanding of how Qur'anic intertextuality operates across diverse literary contexts, while deepening insights into its generative influence on narrative creativity and critical discourse in Arabic literature arising from socio-political crises such as those experienced in contemporary Yemen.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author was responsible for conceptualizing the research, collecting and analyzing primary data from the novel, and writing the original draft of the manuscript. The second and third authors contributed to the methodological framework, specifically in applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and provided academic supervision throughout the research process. The fourth and fifth authors were responsible for refining the English translation of the excerpts, enriching the literature review with contemporary sources, conducting the final proofreading, and formatting the work.

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