

## REVIEW

Methods, Methodologies, and Perspectives in the Humanities and Social Sciences with Particular Reference to Islamic Studies: A Critical Rationalist Interpretation. Ali Paya. ICAS Press, 2022

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Although this book was designed for graduate students in the humanities, with drills and exercises to ensure full benefit from the topics discussed, it is quite useful for the general reader and, more pertinently, for academics and scholars in the field. I personally have benefited immensely from some sections of the book. The book is quite voluminous, spanning over 700 pages and covering a wide variety of topics related to the methodologies in the humanities and social sciences (HSS) including, among others, Critical Rationalism, Positivism, Cultural Studies, Phenomenology, and Hermeneutics. The book sheds light on the above topics both as schools of thought and methodologies of research in the HSS. To do justice to the content and importance of the book would require an essay-length treatment or even a monograph. Because of consideration of space only a sketch of the book can be given.

It is an indispensable tool for students of and researchers in the humanities and social sciences and the best way I can describe it is that it constitutes a succinct distillation of thought processes in order to approximate the truth as manifested in objective reality. Its importance is augmented by the fact that it attempts to apply the fruits of the modern methodologies in the HSS to the field of Islamic Studies and hence represents a venture at the epistemic level related to the intricacies and nuances of the encounter between Islam and the discourse of the Enlightenment.

The book is partisan in the positive sense of the word in that it argues cogently for the validity of Critical Rationalism both as a school of thought and research methodology and an investigative tool in the field of Islamic Studies which opens new avenues and may yield innovative insights in this regard. The book also does justice to the historical contribution of Muslim scholars in the various sciences and methodologies they have developed including *Fiqh*, *Uṣūl*, Hadith Studies, *Hikmah* and *ʿIrfān*, in order to plumb the depths of the Islamic worldview, while reserving its judgement on the plausibility and applicability of these sciences for Muslims living in the modern world.

This said, I believe that the book would benefit greatly from shedding light in a detailed manner about epistemology in the Qur'an, particularly Qur'anic epistemological methodology related to knowledge formation as the holy book seems to endorse a variety of epistemological tools including induction, deduction, and various other tools with the balance titling, in the inexperienced opinion of the reviewer, towards induction. What I am aiming to say is that there is certainly an underlying theory of knowledge in the Qur'an which consists of different elements and methods and there is a need to construct an elaborative assembly of this epistemology by putting all these elements in a cogent system. With his sound grounding in the philosophy and history of science, both modern and Islamic, I believe the author is eminently placed to accomplish this task.

Overall, this book opens new horizons in the HSS and represents an innovative and qualitative addition to books in the field. An encyclopaedic effort; highly recommended.

