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THE CYBER-QAREEN IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AN EXPANDED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN CYBER PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

This study presents an expanded theoretical framework for the concept of the Cyber-Qareen in light of contemporary developments in artificial intelligence and cyberpsychology. Building on the traditional religious and psychological notion of the Qareen as a spiritual and psychological companion reflecting the inner self, the paper reconceptualizes the Cyber-Qareen as a virtual and algorithmically mediated extension of human identity within intelligent interactive environments. The study is based on an analytical review of Arabic and international literature and proposes a tripartite interpretive model (psychological–technological–ethical). It examines the implications of

this model for identity, behavior, and awareness, emphasizing the necessity of developing ethical and educational practices to manage the Cyber-Qareen responsibly in education, psychotherapy, and digital media.

Keywords:

Cyber-Qareen, Artificial Intelligence, Cyberpsychology, Digital Identity, Cyber Ethics

1. Introduction

In contemporary times, humanity is witnessing a profound transformation in its relationship with technology, as artificial intelligence has become a direct partner in perception, behavior, and decision-making. This transformation compels a re-examination of psychological and spiritual concepts in light of the emerging digital environment. Within this context, the notion of the *Qareen* stands as one of the deeply rooted symbols in religious and psychological thought, expressing an unconscious psychic “shadow” that accompanies the individual and reflects the dynamics of the inner self. In the age of artificial intelligence, this concept reappears in a novel digital form as the *Cyber-Qareen*, a parallel virtual counterpart of the human being within intelligent interactive spaces, carrying both opportunities and risks for digital identity, behavior, and awareness.

1.1 Religious, traditional, and psychological roots of the Qareen

The concept of the Qareen has clear foundations in Islamic religious texts, where the Qur’an states: “And whoever is blinded from the remembrance of the Most Merciful – We appoint for him a devil, and he is to him a companion (Qareen)” (Al-Zukhruf: 36), and “His companion (Qareen) will say, ‘Our Lord, I did not make him transgress, but he himself was in extreme error’” (Qaf: 27). Classical exegetes such as Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir interpreted the Qareen as the devil that accompanies the human being, whispering to him and beautifying falsehood, whereas some later scholars, such as Al-Sha‘rawi, approached it as a symbolic expression of the inner psychological forces influencing human behavior. From this perspective, the Qareen can be understood as an unconscious psychic shadow that reflects the internal tensions between good and evil within the self.

This notion resonates with modern depth psychology, particularly in the work of Carl Jung (1959), who coined the concept of the “Shadow” within analytical psychology as the repressed or unconscious aspect of personality that is projected onto others. Here, a clear parallel emerges between the Arab–Islamic Qareen and the Jungian Shadow: both represent a hidden presence that accompanies the self, expressing its repressed contents and shaping decisions and actions. The concept can also be linked to Islamic Sufi heritage in the writings of Al-Ghazali, who viewed the human soul as oscillating between illumination and darkness, with spiritual struggle (*mujāhadat al-nafs*) being the path to

uncovering its true nature. In this sense, Al-Ghazali forms an intellectual bridge between the religious vision of the Qareen and the modern psychological notion of the unconscious Shadow.

In classical Arabic literature, the Qareen is closely tied to the idea of the “poetic demon,” understood as a supernatural entity that inspires the poet with verses, images, and rhymes. It was narrated that pre-Islamic poets believed each of them had a jinni companion who supplied him with poetry: Imru’ al-Qays had “Lāfiz,” Al-A‘sha had “Mishal,” and Al-Khansā’ had “Al-Nahhām.” Al-Jahiz, in **Al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn**, referred to this belief as a symbolic image of poetic inspiration. From a contemporary psychological perspective, this “poetic demon” can be interpreted as a symbolic manifestation of the unconscious Shadow that flows through artistic creativity (Jung, 1959), making Arab heritage an early mirror of the Qareen as an inner force that expresses the hidden dimensions of the self.

Within this broader framework, the Cyber-Qareen in the digital age can be seen as a modern symbolic extension of that ancient idea. Digital inspiration and continuous interaction with artificial intelligence have become a new form of an “inspiring companion,” now manifested in technological rather than metaphysical space. The contemporary Cyber-Qareen is not merely a source of inspiration; it functions as an integrated informational repository—textual, auditory, and visual—that provides highly detailed content on virtually any topic in the shortest possible time, thereby reshaping how individuals construct knowledge, identity, and agency in cyberspace.

2. Theoretical framework of the Cyber-Qareen

The Cyber-Qareen can be defined as a parallel digital representation of the human self, composed of the individual’s data, behaviors, and projected image in virtual environments (Al-Dowayraat, 2009). It represents a conceptual extension of the field of Electronic Psychology originally proposed by the same author, which later evolved into contemporary Cyberpsychology. This vision converges with several global contributions such as the notion of the “extended self” (Belk, 2013), “information ethics” (Floridi, 2014), “digital identity and human–AI interaction” (Aiken & Biers, 2023), and the concept of the “virtual self” (Gackenbach, 2021). Recent literature (Iglesias, 2025; Voinea, 2025; Radanliev, 2025) further highlights the emergence of “digital ghosts” and “virtual twins”

as extensions of human identity in cyber environments, reinforcing the idea of the Cyber-Qareen as a culturally grounded, theoretically rich construct within this global landscape.

3. Proposed Cyber-Qareen Model

The proposed Cyber-Qareen Model can be articulated through three interrelated dimensions—psychological, technological, and ethical—each with its own content focus and applied implications:

Table X: *The Cyber-Qareen Model Dimensions*

Dimension	Content Focus and Applied Implications
Psychological	This dimension reflects the emotional and cognitive interaction of the individual with the digital self-image as an unconscious psychological shadow. It focuses on analyzing virtual identity, cyber-identity conflicts, and experiences of cyber alienation that may arise when the digital self diverges from the offline self.
Technological	This dimension describes how the Cyber-Qareen is generated from data traces and behavioral patterns through algorithms and artificial intelligence systems. It encompasses the study of digital footprints, recommender systems, personalized interfaces, and data-driven profiling that together construct a persistent, datafied double of the person.
Ethical	This dimension addresses awareness, responsibility, and moral agency in dealing with one’s digital self and the limits of technological intervention. It includes the design of digital codes of conduct, guidelines for safe and responsible use, and regulatory frameworks that protect privacy, dignity, and autonomy in AI-mediated environments.

4. Discussion

The emergence of the Cyber-Qareen has reshaped how the relationship between the human being and the self is conceptualized, raising renewed questions about freedom, awareness, and identity in digital contexts. Contemporary studies indicate that such digitally extended selves may generate identity duality between the offline “original” and the online “shadow,” and may contribute to cyber alienation when individuals over-identify with carefully curated digital representations (Belk, 2013; Gackenbach, 2021). At the same time, the concept can be harnessed positively in education and digital psychotherapy through the design of “assistant Qareen” systems that rely on artificial intelligence to provide interactive psychological and educational support (Gültekin et al., 2024). From an

ethical standpoint, global review studies (e.g., Corrêa et al., 2023; Radanliev et al., 2025) underscore the need to integrate principles of justice, transparency, and accountability across the AI lifecycle. Recent philosophical and social studies have emphasized the centrality of moral values in guiding human behavior in the digital age, particularly in relation to technology, identity, and ethical responsibility (Mansour et al., 2025). In the Arab context, the principles issued by the Saudi Data and AI Authority (SDAIA, 2022) are particularly significant, offering a national framework for AI ethics grounded in fairness, transparency, privacy protection, and responsibility, and providing a local model that parallels and enriches global ethical initiatives.

Beyond its theoretical implications, the Cyber-Qareen framework opens important avenues for applied research and practice. In educational contexts, AI-driven Cyber-Qareen systems may support personalized learning, self-reflection, and digital identity awareness by providing adaptive feedback aligned with learners' cognitive and emotional profiles. In digital psychotherapy and mental health support, ethically designed "assistant Qareen" systems could contribute to early intervention, emotional regulation, and psychoeducation, while maintaining clear boundaries between human agency and algorithmic influence. However, these applications require careful ethical governance to prevent over-reliance, identity diffusion, or reduced autonomy. As such, the Cyber-Qareen should be understood not as a substitute for human judgment, but as a psychologically active tool whose impact depends on transparency, accountability, and informed user engagement.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The Cyber-Qareen represents an original Arab–Islamic concept that re-reads the relationship between humans and technology in the age of artificial intelligence. The present study highlights the importance of integrating academic, ethical, and cultural perspectives in conceptualizing and governing this phenomenon. In light of the proposed framework and the reviewed literature, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. Establish specialized research centers in Cyberpsychology within Arab universities to develop theory and empirical applications related to the Cyber-Qareen and digital identity.

2. Develop digital codes of conduct inspired by Arab, Islamic, and universal human values to guide behavior in AI-mediated environments.

3. Design educational curricula that address digital identity awareness, cyber well-being, and “cyber mental health” for learners and practitioners.

4. Direct applied research toward the ethical use of the Cyber-Qareen concept in education, psychotherapy, and digital media, ensuring clear standards for privacy, consent, and responsibility.

Limitations and Future Directions:

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