

Poetry and the Struggle of Forms in the Postmodern Era

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Abstract:

The new writing will re-examine itself, alter its philosophy and form, and exhaust its aesthetic energy. It will become certain that there is a need for change, and it will leave behind values worthy of survival. This is not a prophecy, but rather the nature of poetry, which refuses to remain as it is.

Keywords: poetry, civilization, identity, form, gender, etc.

Introduction:

Since the Arab cultural opening to the contemporary world, particularly Europe and America, Arabic poetry has been engaged in a dual struggle: on the one hand, a battle of genres, types, and forms, and on the other hand, a battle of concepts, entities, and identities. Poetry does not aspire to remain fixed in a specific identity or adhere to a particular form because it is an open-ended experience that continually renews itself through constant openness. However, this openness often collides with philosophical dilemmas primarily tied to the question of identity, discussed at times under the rubric of authenticity and modernity, at other times under the dichotomy of the local and the global, and at other times still as the old and the new. As critical consciousness evolved, these debates took on less ideological titles, such as cultural and civilisational communication, framed within contexts imposed by the discourses of globalisation, dialogue among civilisations, and the new world order. Nevertheless, the civilisational question has remained latent beneath each of these diverse approaches.

The poetry referred to here is that which is fundamentally grounded in formal experimentation and marked by a pronounced departure from most conventional modes of writing. Some have referred to it as post-modern poetry; others have termed it the new text beyond prose poetry; still others have preferred the term "new writing" over

"poetry," in light of its evident transgression of the poetic system. This latter designation will be adopted here, and some of its key characteristics will be identified before being situated within a framework of historical analysis and civilisational critique.

The central problem we intend to address raises two questions. The first concern is whether it is possible to discern a distinct identity for this poetry, whether at the level of form or vision. The second question asks whether there exists an identity that it expresses, which encapsulates a distinct, independent understanding of the human and the social, of the present and the future, of the self and the other. From these two central questions, several subsidiary inquiries emerge: To what extent is Arabic poetry self-aware and aware of its other? What are the civilisational determinants of its systems and structures? Who is the addressee of contemporary Arabic poetry, the self or the other? Moreover, does poetry contribute to the formation of Arab identity, or is it captive to a deconstructive ethos that negates identities and denies particularities?

1. In Defining the Features of Poetic Writing:

The process of continuous experimentation in contemporary poetry has led to the constant generation of poetic forms that surpass themselves, to the extent that criticism has become incapable of keeping pace with them, identifying their identities, discerning their logic, naming their formations, or assigning terms to them. This has led to a state of confusion in describing these forms, leaving us without a descriptive language that accurately approximates this writing, confines its transformations, and defines its types. This writing appears elusive to criticism, escaping containment and perpetually rebellious. Some of its characteristics are as follows:

1.1 Transcendence:

Adonis was the first to popularise this term through the magazine *Shi'r*, then the magazine *Mawāqif*, and subsequently in his other writings, as well as through his followers and disciples. This concept represents the logic and philosophy of this writing, such that poetry does not settle on a specific form, language, or subject. Instead, it continuously destroys itself as it is constructed and continually rises anew from its ashes as it burns. This transcendence is based on a policy of severing ties with the rules and laws that have defined and continue to define the identity of poetry in terms of its structure, vision, function, or aesthetics, without any regard for previous authority, whether that authority is literary tradition, reading conventions, or social aesthetic norms. Here, the only authority listened to is that of the self, which has emancipated itself from literary public opinion and created its distinctive world. Adonis states, "Thus, poetry appears, first and foremost, as a rebellion against old poetic forms and methods. It is a transcendence and a surpassing that accompanies the surpassing of our present era and its transcendence over past ages."

1.2 Fragmentation of Form: The first thing a reader encounters in this new writing is the fragmentation, disintegration, and splitting of form to such an extent that the reader can no longer distinguish the identity of this form or ascertain its affiliation. The reader

faces a text that leads them into textual labyrinths that are difficult to enter, difficult to exit, and hard to comprehend. These texts are multiformed, structurally complex, thrusting the reader this way and that, returning them to their starting point, and burdening them with numerous questions for which answers are often elusive. This type is common in contemporary poetry, as seen in works such as Adonis's three-volume work, Muhammad Bennis's *Book of Love*, Ali Al-Sharqawi's *Book of the Letter Shin*, *The Madness of Layla's Stories*, and Qasim Haddad's *Qasim's Grave*. In addition, other writings, such as Salim Barakat's *Crowds*, Abdel Munim Ramadan's *Stranger in the Family*, and Adonis's *Space of Pollen Dust*, are similar in logic but differ in form. These are merely examples.

In some of these writings, the form is based on exceptional textual engineering, where the reader does not find a single text occupying a blank page but, for the first time, multiple texts: one on the right, one on the left, one at the top, and one at the bottom. These texts do not appear to carry equal weight or importance; there is a primary text and a marginal text, an original text and an auxiliary text, a central text and an explanatory text, a poetic text and a proof text, a subjective text and a historical text, a text in bold letters and a text in fine letters. Each text occupies a specific position on the page, performs a unique function, and offers a distinctive aesthetic. Through the aggregation of these texts, the identity of this writing is formed, which necessarily compels a redefinition of poetry and the poem, as well as the development of mechanisms for their reading and understanding. This signals a departure from the concept of the fixed, simple, and horizontal poem to the complex, compound notion of writing. In some instances, the reader encounters texts that defy classification: externally, they lack verses or lines, yet internally, they are grounded in narrative or description.

This is a writing that transcends forms and is resistant to formal and even thematic classification. It is difficult for the text to determine whether it is a poem or not, whether it represents an emotional stance, a philosophical vision, a history, or a plea for or against history.

Here is a text by Muhammad Bennis from his collection *Waraqah al-Bahā'* that confirms what we aim to convey:

The armies that besieged the walls still

Are imprisoned by stones, O children, upon us

Some attack some,

The hills slept on our arms, Fez

Sheltered by its prayers and pride ended prematurely

Jewel dry riverbed in Fez

The emerald basin: A distorted history

Selected gems raised by their tribes

A blanket, and it moved

A trace for those who reclined along sagging banks in the heat of the years

Woollen veils, forgotten with the ascent of childhood

Bundles, and it fell

A cave of detritus, consuming fragments of longing

Gilded saddles on their stirrups, if they had seen

Women's garments, what the arches of their entrances weave

Their swords, like birds attacking passers by roofs

We are faced with a text that disrupts the conventional structural system, forming a dual form based on two seemingly independent columns, especially since the poet distinguished them by the type of script: the right column is written in bold, and the left column is a fine script. The right column refers to the historic market objects in the city of Fez, whereas the left column addresses the present-day city of Fez and its historical context. What is the relationship between the first and the second? Perhaps it is the relationship between place and time, the place where all those hidden heritage objects have gathered, and the time embodied in the history of ancient Fez.

It is challenging for the critic to determine the identity of this text, which initially eludes specification and categorisation. It establishes its identity in the name of writing, experimentation, new text, postmodernism, and postprose poetry.

1.3 Erasure of Genre: The literary genre is the larger text to which texts belong to define their identities. It is a set of unifying characteristics found in several texts that serve as the common denominator among them, akin to a family name around which family members gather. Traditional texts were gathered around a specific genre, which could be either poetry or prose, each comprising multiple forms. This established logic was rebelled against the new writing, which adopted a new logic: the abolition of boundaries between genres. Literary identity is no longer imposed by genre but by the act of writing itself once it is completed. Previously, poetic identity was confined to the genre of poetry in its various forms; however, with the new writing, poetic identity was no longer associated with form but rather with writing itself, transcending genres. When we read a text such as this:

The poet stands near the balcony; behind the balcony, the fleeing girl leans against a table. Dust shakes the chin of the light slanting towards the wall. At the corner is the television; on the screen's ledge, lost numbers are visible. In the exact center, a lady with hair falling to her shoulders; the left side reveals all the ear, cheek, and eye, whereas the right side conceals some emptiness of past things. The earrings wave like pirates, content to be drawn towards the neck. The rustle of the necklace is near enough for the breasts to hear. At the base of the necklace lies a pharaonic emblem that fills the cleft of the breasts. The black dress suffices to silence the voice and begin spelling...

The reader accustomed to reading generic texts would classify this text as a story, owing to its reliance on narrative description. Poetry often expresses the human relationship with the world, and through this expression, one's stance and emotions become apparent. However, in this text, there is a deep immersion in descriptions that are indistinguishable from narrative descriptions. The poetic sentence is absent. However, it is a text in a book titled *Stranger in the Family*, with a classificatory subtitle that defines the book's identity and attributes it to poetry.

The poetic genre has been completely erased and replaced by a text of a different genre, and were it not for the indication on the book's cover that it is poetry, it would not be regarded as such. However, the title may be misleading, losing its credibility, in which case the reader extracts the book's texts from poetry and assigns them to the short story.

What constitutes the identities of literary texts? The critical convention holds that form belongs to its genre and derives from its inherent characteristics. The genre determines its identity and confers legitimacy upon it. However, this text seeks to impose itself and acquire legitimacy not through affiliation with a literary genre but through the logic of its author and his philosophy of creativity. Such a text does not acknowledge a complete identity for poetry, which is an uncontested fact. However, the extent to which poetic identity may be enriched remains a highly controversial issue. The important point is that literary public opinion has been overthrown in favour of private opinion, that is, the author's own view. This revolution occurred outside of poetry, perhaps to the reader's shock, because it transported poetry into another genre. Had it been an internal revolution, as happened with free verse poetry, it would have been accepted, albeit reluctantly. However, the reader senses that this experiment has gone far from poetry, and the question of developing poetic identity will continue to be posed, with ongoing experiments. The absence of literary theory and literary history has contributed to the persistence of this issue.

This type of writing has not transcended a known genre into an unknown literary type but has instead performed a substitution of one type for another with a change of name. The text we cited replaced the story with poetry but retained the name 'poetry' with a narrative vision; thus, it merely exchanged one constraint for another and one genre for another.

Just as the boundaries between genres have been erased, so too have the boundaries that follow between rhythm and rhythm, poetic language and nonpoetic language, order and chaos, and metaphor and reality. Initially, especially in the work of Adonis, the renewal

of ideas was seen as a means of developing the poem. When he founded the magazine *Mawāqif*, the discourse shifted to writing as the antithesis of the poem. He wrote, “The problem today is not a new poem but a new writing.” Adonis and others believed that free verse had exhausted its capacity and was no longer viable; he called for its rescue from crisis by discarding it and finding an alternative embodied in writing. However, writing itself will not be immune to crisis, which will come from within, through defective writings, and from without, when it loses its connection with the audience.

1.4 Betting on the blank space: Several new writing poets wagered on the textual space as a signifier that enriched the original meaning on the one hand and supported its rhetoric on the other. Hence, they combined linguistic signs with nonlinguistic signs such as drawings, shapes, and lines and later with sounds and rhythms in interactive literature. Although this phenomenon is ancient in Arabic poetry, particularly evident in the sixth and seventh centuries, when poetry began to decline, manifesting in the form of triangles, squares, circles, geometric shapes, or drawings, it was revived through cultural exchange and openness to Western poetry, thereby re-emerging in new forms of writing. Moroccan poets, particularly Muhammad Bennis, have shown significant interest in this phenomenon. The poetic text, initially based on language, is transformed into visual text that decoratively fills the spatial field. Faced with such a text, the reader will question whether the text derives its identity from language or from drawing and geometric form. They often wonder about the relationship between the two, how their meanings intersect, the interplay of their rhetoric, and the dialogue of their forms. The reader will question the rules of writing and the mechanisms of reading but will find that everything is left to the author, who determines all of that, except one thing: the mechanisms of reading. The reader has been abandoned by the author, the text, and criticism, left in a wilderness with no path to follow. The poetic genre has been completely erased and replaced by a text of a different genre, and were it not for the indication on the book’s cover that it is poetry, it would not be regarded as such. However, the title may be misleading, losing its credibility, in which case the reader extracts the book’s texts from poetry and assigns them to the short story.

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The author relies on this utilisation of the significance of visual signs and on the interplay of black and white associated with drawing and colours. "Perhaps it is the relationship with Western culture, and the access to its creative achievements, that has heightened awareness of this dimension, which Mallarmé was among the advocates of employing, that is, activating space and liberating writing from the linear stereotypical pattern it had come to embody. This is what he sought to accomplish in *Dice Roll*, where the page, in some of its configurations, appears almost bare, bordered only by white, or where the written discourse becomes more prominent than the filled spaces it formerly occupied."

This voice has now faded after having risen for a relatively short period and within a relatively narrow scope, perhaps because its goal was not achieved, or perhaps because ongoing experimentation left it no room to persist in the face of subsequent experiments.

1.5 The Arbitrary Nature of Language and Metaphor: New writing is obsessed with escaping what preceded it from writings, if not obsessed with demolishing it altogether. For example, Salim Barakat's *The Crowds* is one of the models embodying this system in writing. The subtitle of the collection signals a "dreamlike" writing steeped in strangeness and estrangement. The subtitle reads: "On the Affairs of the Blood, the Clown, the Pillars, and the Blowing of Clay." This title alludes to delirium, dreams, the strange and astonishing, and everything evoking surrealism. Is this a metaphorical expression to be understood through decoding its metaphors, or is it a literal language to be comprehended as it appears? If it is literal, what does it mean? Moreover, to which reference do we turn to discover its significance?

The creator, broadly speaking, seeks to escape from stereotyped rhetoric towards a new rhetoric because the familiar cannot bear the weight of emotional states. Below is a sample from *Al-Jamharaat*:

Bleeding from my iron and pillar wounds, filling the winds with wind:

Moreover, who else than me strips the savage comfort from the boundaries of existence or pulls apart the whirlwinds of the salamander among the junkies?

Shall I not strike, O sailor, with your long reeds, the entrails of the marsh, and emerge, O moon of darkness and engineering, to awaken in my debate the crabs and the ringing?

Therefore, I strike with my long reeds the surface of tragedy, surrounding my joy with that radiant flame in the masks, granting the noise its boundaries, and decorating defeat with the vibrant handle of a living hand;

To scatter the earth, dirham by dirham, onto the marble-mouthed blood bravely;

However, I prepare the night for the gust of the Barrad, and I review the springs within its cloak,

remaining stationary here, in the enchanting wandering place,

Moreover, when the blades rise in the balance of the last being, I shout:

"Start, O earth, from darkness and ore."

This type of writing transcends form, occupying the entire page as a piece of a sermon or letter. This is common in modern poetry, but it also philosophically exceeds the system of linguistic and rhetorical relations to an excessive degree. It constructs a wondrous world in a fantastical language through a primitive, wandering imagination that pushes forward, is liberated from every constraint, is deeply immersed in darkness, and creates a state of confusion, disorder, and chaos. A state of undulation, transformation, and tension that is the philosophy of the new writing: to open horizons to the infinite and the endless.

This linguistic free-for-all approach produces a language devoid of content, or a scattered content akin to dreams, that is difficult to gather together. It is a language that seeks only to proliferate and revolve around itself, creating shocking phrases that disturb the reception process because they are based on illogical foundations, rendering the meaning endless.

What violence must be committed against this language to tame it into madness?

The endlessness of meaning is an inherent characteristic of this type of writing: "Meaning is eternal and everlasting, like a complete and final sound that no longer exists from this perspective." This is a tolerant interpretation, but it does not distinguish this perspective from others because poetic meaning is rarely final or complete in most types of writing. In every poem, some meaning lies hidden within it, with a balcony from which some of it emerges. However, in this type of writing, meaning is absent, or, to use Derrida's term, a deferred meaning that remains absent no matter how long one searches for it.

These are a set of distinctive features of new writing, although not all characteristics, as it is possible to go beyond what has been said. The richness of new writing enables the researcher to explore multiple characteristics.

2. Identity of the Text in New Writing:

2.1 On Identity: It is not our aim to delve into the question of identity, as it is one of the most complex philosophical issues. First, and second, it is not our current preoccupation. However, we address some of its features related to our discussion. How has postmodernism treated the idea of identity?

New writing falls within the context of postmodernism, and for a deeper understanding of the identity of this writing, it should be viewed from this perspective. Postmodernism

considers the question of identity a thesis subject to deconstruction, capable of being dismantled and reconstructed, meaning that it is a proposition not bound to a context and therefore can be formulated according to individuals' wills. It is not historically determined or governed by the conditions of historical movement but is an individual achievement subject to the thinker's intellect, temperament, and needs. The individual is the maker and director of their own identity, shaped by their desires and interests.

Since identity is one of the fundamental centers shaping the character of nations, societies, institutions, and significant intellectual systems, postmodernism has based its strategy on challenging and dismantling these central propositions, shifting them from the core to the margin, from harmony to chaos, and emptying their meaning through scepticism, deconstruction, and nihilism after despairing harmony, logic, and meaning. According to this logic, identity becomes a proposition stripped of any previous content; instead, it becomes a counterproposition that is targeted and placed in the "zone of rejection" by postmodernism, which negates its essence and reshapes it according to a logic founded on nihilism, deconstruction, and the abrogation of reason and meaning.

The identity of new writing can be understood only within this context, with differences imposed by the specificities of time and place.

A researcher can observe the turning points in the transformation from essence to "transcendence of essence" in poetic writing, beginning with:

1. Poetic Manifestos: At the beginning of the modernist movement and a few years after, particularly in the 1950s, a group of articles emerged resembling manifestos, either in the prefaces of poetry collections or in magazines. Some were authored by poets, others by modernist critics, all calling for greater modernity as a solution to the crisis of Arabic poetry and, indeed, as a solution for Arab society, since modernity, as they saw it, begins with language. Later, genuine manifestos appeared, aiming to undermine both old and modern writing and herald a new form of writing led foremost by Adonis, although preceded by others. Adonis's manifestos, owing to his status as a poet and his media presence in the magazines *Shi'r* and *Mawāqif*, had the most significant impact. The core of these manifestos called for transcending all preceding writing, traditional or modernist, on the grounds of their stereotypicality, "coldness," and detachment from history, and for producing a new writing without defining features but with aims centred on transcendence, rebellion, and surpassing precisely as post-modern discourse advocated and sought to enact. Adonis writes in his manifesto of modernity: "Modernity, artistically, means a radical questioning that explores and scrutinises poetic language, opens new experimental horizons in writing practice, and invents modes of expression commensurate with this questioning. All this must stem from a unique personal vision of humanity and the universe."

Similar views are echoed by Muhammad Bennis, Qasim Haddad, and Amin Saleh, with Binaira expressing a more severe tone and a less measured language.

2. Identities and References: Contemporary poetry has become rich in forms, images, symbols, themes, and concerns since the free verse movement. Since then, numerous poetic forms have accumulated and overlapped, but most, despite the artistic value of some, derive their identity from European poetry. The obsession with modernisation became linked to the West, as if there was despair about the possibility of internal modernisation, to the point that Arabic poetry has almost become alien. Except for some returns to Sufism, which are tinged with suspicion and questioning.

A researcher can uncover the Western sources of these poets. Adonis's manifestos are primarily built upon the assertion of the French Surrealist poet René Char, whom Adonis opens one of his articles with the phrase "Revealing a world that remains in need of revelation." Many of his ideas parallel those of the Symbolists and Surrealists, notably in the book translated by Khalida Saeed, titled *"The Age of Surrealism."* It may not be entirely negative for a writer or poet to draw upon another culture during a period of poetic and intellectual void. However, the flaw lies in the aim of such a return being the negation of heritage and the facilitation of dependency on the Other. Nonetheless, Adonis remains a distinguished model for understanding modernity and heritage. However, new writing remains distributed among different identities, and the uncomfortable problem is that this writing will continue to deepen the distance between itself and Arab identity, leading to a rupture that redirects Arab culture in another direction. This is because the theoretical concepts and philosophical visions underpinning new writing concepts of revolution, transcendence, and surpassing do not allow attention to a fixed Arab identity or afford the time to formulate a distinctive identity emerging from its own reality and present. Thus, it remains tethered to an identity or "nonidentity" imposed upon it with authority, which it accepts willingly and submissively.

Here, the aim is not to judge this writing but to understand its identity and affiliation, although if any evaluation arises, it is incidental. Notably, some Arab modernists who gravitated towards new writing were conscious of what they had written and practised. However, many of their followers were misled by the alluring rhetoric of Adonis's manifestos, which diverged from his intentions and produced texts that belong neither to modernism nor to postmodernism, resulting in hybrid texts.

3. Identity and Grand Narratives: A series of critical concepts has played a role in centring poetry upon itself, turning it away from the human and the world. Beginning with the notion of form among Russian formalists, progressing to the concept of structure among structuralists, and culminating in the idea of the sign among Semioticists, the literature began to retreat inwards, shedding social and human functions once ascribed to it. This withdrawal deepened with the rise of postmodernism and globalisation.

Whereas Deconstruction, as a fundamental aspect of postmodernism, formulated the notion of centralities and adopted the strategy of dismantling them, known as deconstruction, globalisation articulated the concept of grand narratives embodied in ideological, doctrinal, and political systems and called for their transcendence as particular identities that impede intercultural recognition in the era of civilisational dialogue. This process pushed poetry's self-centredness to its utmost extent when it rided

itself of cultural, social, and religious affiliations and consequently had to abandon its identity. The philosophy of globalisation drives poetry to shed an identity that serves it or an identity it serves, leaving it merely as language that speaks without signification and as a structure that rises without meaning.

It is supposed, in our view and in the era of globalisation, that poetry, alongside other arts, should work to save and preserve identity because it is uniquely capable of capturing the delicate sensitivity vulnerable to damage under the compulsions and pressures of globalisation. However, this new writing may have contributed to the process of destruction itself, having become part of globalisation and a weapon within its apparatus.

4. Identity and Open Form: New writing is undeniably a revolutionary phenomenon, yet it lacks a defined self-presentation or, perhaps, deliberately refuses one, as it opposes fixed definitions and the fabrication of identities. It offers its philosophy and vision but does not provide specifications for its form. It is an open horizon: a “form” that is unformable, that is, incapable of stability. Its identity is difficult to define except as a variable. New writing is open to the self and the world and is unconcerned with other preexisting determinants. “Poetry is a kind of explosion of the self and a release that allows it to return to the cosmos. Poetry, like all explosions, occurs after a phase of repression and pressure, when conflicting elements can no longer coexist, forcing those elements to split and return to their primal sources, just as fire returns to air.”

Explosion, self-escape from captivity, and return to the cosmos and primal origins are the defining themes of new writing. Form, for it, is a constraint, akin to language, and its designation as “writing” rather than “poetry” is itself a flight into the realm of shapelessness. The poem implies a defined form and thus a defined identity, whereas writing is a general name, a generic term encompassing all and defined by nothing. It is founded on broad freedom, gathering and dispersing all types of writing simultaneously. It seeks to be the text before it is formed, classified, or specified; that is, it aspires to return to the “primal sources” when the text is absolute, moving beyond names and labels. In this way, it is unlimited and infinite. It always comes first, and nothing precedes it. This is how new writing wants to be, and this is what it is.

5. Identity between Two Extremes: The identity of contemporary Arabic poetry is threatened by two types of writing. The first repeats itself in form and content without any creative anxiety; it is static, submissive, and haunted by silence and surrender. It ruminates on itself and remains unstirred by anything. It opposes what might be delusion, or indeed delusion itself, by employing cultural and critical mechanisms that have lost their capacity for insight and argumentation. Writing here is a submission to a model and conforms to a pattern. It advocates for a closed, complete identity that does not reflect reality and uses this identity as an obstacle to progress. Hence, it attempts to defend history against itself. It is bound to the past.

The second type repeats others in form and content, carrying no creative concern. It is dependent, submissive, and beholden to the Other. Its discourse is harsh and distant, and its motto is a lust for demolition and destruction. It advocates an identity that has no true

identity, a form without form, a history without features, an enemy of the past without reason, and a friend of the future without certainty. It defends a closed notion of progress rooted in a metaphysical vision of advancement, using modernity and postmodernity as obstacles to the autonomous operation of thought, blocking the path without reflecting on its own civilisational moment, and continuously pushing thought beyond itself. It is a peacock proud of itself.

Like modernity, identity can be a closed, metaphysical, and obstructive concept if viewed from a nonhistorical logic. However, they can be open and realistic concepts if examined through a logic that fully comprehends the conditions of historical movement. Had Arab thought operated with civilisational awareness, it would have recognised that identity is openness itself. However, this thought established a contradictory relationship between the two concepts, negating the other, thus leading to crises in both the crisis of identity and the crisis of modernity.

In these two writings, there is a notable absence of awareness of the civilisational self. The primary issue lies in how the self perceives itself and the other within a specific civilisational moment and in understanding the nature of the questions that should be posed in response to the pressing questions of the age. The construction of writing, like the construction of history, is based on self-awareness, which provides the methodological vision necessary to identify social and aesthetic needs. Every historical moment has its questions and answers, and progress occurs according to the degree to which the self understands the questions of its age and how well it answers them. Does our historical moment adequately respond to its own questions, or is it preoccupied with searching for the questions of others and seeking answers that have already been given? Partly the latter, and this represents a significant epistemological defect.

3. The Text of Identity in New Writing: Since the fall of Baghdad in 656 AH and the fall of Andalusia in 1492 CE, a balanced relationship has not existed between Arab culture and foreign cultures. Arab-Islamic civilisation has eroded and gradually declined, and even when the Ottomans assumed control over this civilisation, the Arab self could not express itself with sufficient freedom, as it was living off its civilisational heritage rather than producing new, creative outputs. It remained dependent, albeit within a single civilisational context, the Islamic context.

With Western colonialism, this nation completely lost its civilisational efficacy, and its identity remained latent within, rarely expressed through revolutions or uprisings intermittently here and there.

At the end of the colonial settler era and the resulting state of underdevelopment, it was natural for the Arab nation to inherit a crucial civilisational question: What is the path to progress? Scientifically, economically, culturally, politically, and in all respects. Naturally, answers varied, condensed under the formula of authenticity and modernity, with factions advocating for either side, one defending the old culture as a means to progress, and another championing Western culture. Decades of debates and experiments later revealed that both answers were incorrect because the essence of progress lies in

prioritising the present, and severing history between its past and future is an act against history itself.

We live in a civilisation that does not recognise cultures withdrawn into themselves, and it is the fate of history that we find ourselves in an uncomfortable civilisational position, one in which we need everything.

There has been a turn towards the past in all matters and simultaneously a turn towards the West in all matters. In poetry, renewal movements began by drawing upon Western influences with groups such as Al-Diwan, Apollo, and Al-Mahjar, then evolved with the free verse movement, followed by the emergence of prose poetry, and ultimately led to new writing. Each process of modernisation distances itself from the past via a certain measure and approaches the other through the same measure. Within this context, new writing emerged as an expression of the most important recent achievements in Arabic poetry. However, has this writing expressed an Arab identity?

It is not easy to find a convincing answer to this question because it is equally difficult to define the identity of this “Arab identity.” Whenever a definition of Arab identity is proposed, a contradictory concept emerges alongside it, as if we are dealing with an illusory condition. If identity derives from history with all its interactions and accumulations, history does not reveal its content in itself but is subject to human interpretations. Every interpretation is a history, and indeed, it is history itself. Thus, we face a multiplicity of identities.

What worsened the situation was that Arab identity in our modern culture was assigned ideological interpretations that monopolised identity. It may have been more prudent to approach identity epistemologically, describing the historical transformations that produce it, to avoid ideological divisiveness (nationalist, religious, leftist, Arab, non-Arab). Consequently, identity was artificially constructed and burdened with the ideologies of various factions rather than being extracted organically from the historical human experience and the essence of its movement through time and space, encompassing both constants and changes. The contradiction between approaches delayed the formation of a common concept of identity, which, under the influence of globalisation culture, has become more difficult and complex, if not a lost intellectual struggle. Identity, as we see it, is the synthesis of its immutable aspects that transcend history and its historical variability.

Returning to the previous question about the relationship of new writing to identity, we analyse it through the following:

3.1 Reception crisis: New writing presented itself as an alternative that liberated the poem from its contrived classical rhetoric to the realm of spontaneous and sincere creativity. However, discourse on the crisis persists. It is well known that new writing lacks a predetermined model or style to emulate. However, the model proposed by new writing has not satisfied the aesthetic needs of the reader, nor has it touched the spiritual

and artistic desires of society, nor has it expressed the social ambitions of the nation. This implies a paradoxical relationship between the text and the reader.

From a critical standpoint, most writings about new writing have been either flattering or analyses confined to the limits of form without transcending its external description. A harmonious relationship could exist if there were a shared point between the reader and the text, whereby the text expresses a dream, preoccupation, or desire of the reader, satisfies one of their aesthetic states, or realises some of their conception of poetic form in language, imagery, and rhythm. Interaction cannot occur between two opposing parties.

Contrarily, this writing has only deepened the reader's anxiety and confusion. Intensified by poets' own accusations of the reader's incapacity, this has led to feelings of disappointment and perhaps aversion, causing the reader to turn to other works, some of lesser quality but more resonant with their being.

Great poets understood poetry as more than a subjective expression of an emotional stance towards an event or condition; accordingly, they composed complex and profound poetic projects. For example, Adonis's *The Book*, included within the context of new writing, represents its conscious aspect.

Betting on the Future Reader: Adonis may have been the first to popularise this notion when he was asked about the ambiguity of his poetic experiment, responding that he writes for a future reader. If this is so, does poetry and poets end in the present time, leaving the poetry of these poets as a substitute for it? The truth is that poetry is read today and tomorrow, and it may be read differently on different days, which is natural. The *Mu'allaqāt* continues to be explained today, and the Qur'an remains subject to interpretation today. However, the claim that poetry is not read at all today and must wait until tomorrow becomes readable is a logical and factual fallacy; it is logical because it justifies ambiguity from outside itself without evidence and factual because poetry expresses a reality experienced by both the poet and the reader. The poet indeed perceives what the reader does not and possesses expressive means beyond the reader's but not to the extent of negating today's reader and awaiting an assumed reader tomorrow. Who says the reader of tomorrow will be more capable of deciphering symbols, interpreting codes, and understanding signs? Might it not be the opposite?

The speaker in new writing: In classical poetic works (not in the critical terminological sense, but meaning works that have become part of the life of nations), poetry does not express its speaker or author; rather, it transcends to become a collective means of expression. The genius of the poet enables them to become a collective in the form of an individual. The speaker in the poetry of al-Mutanabbi is not Abu Ahmad ibn al-Husayn ibn al-Hasan ibn Abd al-Samad al-Ju'fi Abu al-Tayyib al-Kindi al-Kufi, born in 303 AH, but rather the voice of the fourth century AH within Arab-Islamic civilisation. It is the voice of the Arab being that sensed danger and cried out through Abu al-Tayyib. It is the voice of the intellectual confronting an authority whose entity began to deteriorate. Like other poets, Al-Mutanabbi remains a teacher of poetry and a mentor to poets. Strikingly,

when poets of new writing are asked about their poetic sources, they answer: Imru' al-Qais, Bashar, al-Mutanabbi, Abu Nuwas, Abu Tammam, Abu al-'Ala', Ibn Arabi, and so forth. What kind of relationship connects these figures to these new poets?

New writing rejects this logic, as it also rejects the notion that poetry is a captive expression of an elite class, history, or civilisation. It is entitled to do so because the poet has the right to refuse obedience to others and focus on crafting their text. However, a great text is one in which humanity, history, and civilisation pulse intensely. It is a text that extends horizontally and vertically, encompassing the transformations of the age and compelling them to disclose what they reveal to no one else through language, imagination, and imagery. It is a magical text that possesses a sixth sense, capturing the hidden within humanity and reality.

Conclusion

Everything in creativity is relative, and everything within it is subject to reading and rereading, with poetic writing at the forefront of these relativities. This writing is undoubtedly a reaction to previous poetry, with its vision and language striving toward a more eloquent and creative text, an escape from repetition and stereotypicality. This is the nature of creativity; the lifespan of its forms is short, especially in this accelerated age, and many of these forms exhaust their aesthetic energy quickly through impact, becoming hollow entities. For this reason, modernisation and experimentation are natural phenomena, particularly when influenced by external factors such as globalisation and its cultural, literary, and philosophical repercussions, as is the case with new writing. The identity of new writing corresponds to that of contemporary Arab culture, and its crisis reflects the culture's own crisis. The problem lies with culture before poetry; a poem cannot separate its culture from the general culture.

New writing expresses anxiety, an anxiety that surpasses poetry and extends to society. Our society, in its current state, is rife with contradictions; harmony is rare in speech and action, as well as in food and drink, clothing and architecture, customs and worship. Internally, it remains defeated, paralyzed in will, and entirely dependent on the other. The ruler has no expertise, the politician has no insight, the intellectualist has no wisdom, and the poet has no vision.

New writing revisits its own reading, altering its philosophy and form, and exhausts its aesthetic energy. It will become clear that there is a necessity for change, leaving values worthy of preservation. This is not a prophecy but the nature of poetry, which does not accept permanence.

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