

The Revival of Arabic Literature through the Ages

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Abstract: Arabic language literature means the best words in the best order. It serves as a mirror which reflects all the humanistic activities in people social life. Their outlook on life, their ideas, emotions and traditions. Literature consists of prose and poetry. Poetry as the main branch of Arabic literature. It has been defined as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, or the expression of imagination. For the Arabic critics, poetry is a rhythmical composition of words expressing an attitude designed to surprise and delight and to arouse an emotional response.

The Arabs believe in poetic inspiration, for them poetry is a holy thing, and there is no invention in the poet's mind until he has been inspired. God takes away the minds of poets, and uses them as his ministers, as he also uses diviners and holy prophets.

Keywords: Invention, inspiration, classical, direct influence, literary phases.

1. INTRODUCTION

Arabic literature passed through different phases: the classical Arabic school, Namely Abbasid golden phase. The famous poets of this phase were al-Buhturi, Abi- Tammam and al-Mutanabi, the neo-classical Arabic school, and this phase passed through two different stages start from a rediscovery of classical Arabic poetry and poetic theories. The main poets of this phase were al-Barudi and al-Yazjii, the gradual spread of English and French literary influences. The major poets were Shawqi and Hafiz Ibrahim.

The new romantic school, produces a new type of poetry, which is marked by a tension between a neo-classical style and new romantic sentiments. It is illustrated by the poetry of three main romantic groups: The Diwan group, the Mahjar group and the Apollo group. The famous poets of the Diwan group were al-Aqqad, Shukri and al-Mazini. The main poets of the Mahjar group were Abu Madi and Jubran Khalil Jubran. Abu-Shadi, Judat and al-Hamshari represent the Apollo group.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2-1- The stages of Sudanese Arabic Literature:

The neo-classical revival of Sudanese Arabic literature also passed through two phases, a rediscovery of classical Arabic literature. The main Sudanese poets of this phase were Mohammad Saeed al-Abbasi and al-Tyjani Yousif Bashir, their poetry was marked by classical qualities of Abbasid age, Gradual dissemination of western literary influences emerged. The major poets of this stages were Yousif Mustafa Attiney, al-Ameen Ali Madani, Mohammad Ashry and others.

2-2-Modern Arabic literature:

Modern Arabic literature is a field in which interest is growing rapidly every day, So a number of serious studies in modern Arabic literature have appeared in English, like *"Tradition and English and American Influence in Arabic*

Romantic poetry" by Mohammad Abdul Hai, and "Some Background Notes on Modern Sudanese Poetry", by Mohammad Ibrahim al-Shoush.

The main problem which the Sudanese romantic poets has to face was, as they realized the hybrid nature of their cultural tradition. A number of articles meant to define the features of 'Sudanese Identity' were published in 'al-Fajr Magazine' which was belonged to 'al-Fajr Romantic School.

Al Mahjoub wrote several essays for Civilization of the Sudan newspaper 'Hadarat –Al Sudan and Al-Fajr ' Magazine which reflected the European romantic influence. His poems in "Heart and Experience "Gulb wa Tajarub "indicate that he receives his inspiration from nature and its glories like 'Wordsworth ' the poet of nature. He accepted the view that 'Wordsworth' was a pantheist a mystic of imagination and romantic critic. Actually Al Mahajoub and Shelly lived and thought in two worlds, one was the world of mankind and it's hopes, the other was the world of their own heart. What made them great romantic poets, is their struggle to free themselves from the shackles of the ' earthly materialist nature, and participate in the 'eternal' or the spiritual element of human life, Romanticism is the awakening of sensibility, which means the power of sensation or perception, according to this definition the writers and poets mostly turn to a free mode of self-expression. They could not follow the neo-classical rules. This romantic view had great impact on the works of 'Al- Mahjoub' as the one of the famous Sudanese –romantic poets and critics.

So al Mahjoub signed many articles for attempt a comprehensive and systematic exposition of his, and more or less of al Fajr concept of 'Cultural Identity' and its relationship to the Sudanese literature. Al Mahjoub was thrilled with his own discovery of the idea of culture applied to the hybrid ethnographic and intellectual character of the Sudan. He defines culture as ' the method and style of an ideal life '.His definition of culture was borrowed from the Victorian culturalist Mathew Arnold who says ' Culture is the ideal intellectual image of life.

2-3- Arabic practical criticism:

It states that the word criticism derived from the Greek word meaning judgement, and hence literary criticism is the exercise of judgment on works of literature. The main factors which influenced the Sudanese literature were the establishment of Gordon College in 1902 and the foundation of Omdurman Islamic Institute. Al-Mahjoub's literary criticism is divided into two kinds, his theoretical criticism which includes his literary articles for many magazines as al-Fajr and Hadarat al-Sudan, this articles explains his critical theory and his tools of judgment. And his practical criticism where he criticized the Sudanese poet Salih Abdul Gadir. He states that Salih Abdul Gadir is the gifted poet, who lacks aestheticism.

2-4-The Influence of English literature on Arabic literature:

The Arabic poets were gradually influenced by their reading in English literature. They read mostly in the poetry of the second generation of the English romantic poets as Shelley, Keats and Lord Byron. So their poems are full of emotion and describing beauty as the end of pleasure and enjoyment. They believe as Shelley and the other romantic poets of their age, that the spirit of poetry is one in the whole world. There is no oriental spirit or accidental spirit independent of each other. They were regarded and considered more of a band than some great romantic poets, they were thinkers and philosophers who receive their inspiration from nature and reveals the mysteries locked in her treasures.

And some of the Sudanese romantic poets like al-Bannah, Ahmad Muhammad Salih and al-Tijani Bashir participate 'Wordsworth' his deep emotional feelings, as al-Tijani says:

I do believe in beauty as a nice comfort,

While love seems as a hell.

According to the previous study of Mahammad Ibrahim al-Shoush, the Sudanese poets Tambal, Ashri, al-Tinay and al-Mahjoub were famous members of that romantic group, which is commonly known as the '*Fajre school*' after the name of their literary magazine. Their magazine reflected the gradual consolidation and diversification of the cultural identity of the Sudanese poetry which was intimated in their literary product. The main problem that the young Sudanese romantic poets had to face was, as they realized the hybrid nature of their cultural tradition. If they were to identify themselves not with their ethnic groups but with the whole nation, a discovery of a common denominator for all these groups and a definition of it in terms of a cultural identity was an urgent task. Wordsworth says in his famous poem:

"I wandered Lonely as a Cloud"*That floats on high o'er vales and hills,**When all at once I saw a crowd,**A host, of Golden daffodils;***2-5-The Impact of the age of Colonialization:**

The first rays of the dawn of the Arab renaissance in Egypt and in the Arab world at the beginning of the 19th century did not filter through to the Sudan. The country was at that time still suffering under the shadow of the Turkish administration. During the Turkish administration, and more so during the short period of independence following the success of the Mahdist revolution in 1882, the Sudan remained secluded from the outside world, and this isolation persisted until the advent of the first world war.

However, the isolation of the Sudan from the foreign influences and the absence of virtually any intellectual or cultural activities and modern schools up to the beginning of this century, gave the Sudan the unique opportunity to develop its own character and have its own religious, social and linguistic traditions peculiar to it, and to a great extent divorced from other developments in the Arab world.

The Condominium Government of Great Britain and Egypt which established itself in 1899 marked a turning point in the history of the Sudan. It began to introduce that type of secular education. The Gordon Memorial College and a few elementary schools were opened in the main towns. Chances of promotion began to depend on this secular education. The whole construction of the society began to change. New morals and values were appeared to replace the religious values and the old tribal traditions of the society.

This sentiment dominated the poetry written by the first graduates of the Gordon College, themselves not reconciled to the new western values, since they were largely recruited from amongst those who had had their basic teaching on religious lines, and were instructed in the College by the Azhar graduates. They found in the newly established magazines such as *AlRa'id* and *Hadarat el Sudan*, and the new graduates club established in 1919, an outlet for the expression of their poetry and a way of coming into contact with the public.

It was natural that they should turn to the lyrical traditional poetry, as was then prevalent in the Arab world, which reached its peak at the hands of the great renaissance poets, al Barudi, Shawqi, Hafiz, al Rasafi and al Zahawi. The main characteristics of the traditional poetry may be summarized briefly as follows. It deals with all subjects which are now conveniently left for articles, short stories, novels and plays. It follows the same metre and rhyme throughout the poems. Its diction, syntax, imagery, vision and so forth, are heavily borrowed from classical Arabic poetry. The sense depends on each individual line rather than on the poem as a whole. In short, the traditional poet attempts to express his feelings through the familiar form of the classical *qasida*.

2-6-Tradational and classical Arabic poetry:

This slavish adoption of the classic model was apparent in early Sudanese poetry, because the Sudanese environment and its tribal way of life was similar to the environment of the classical Arabic poet of the Arabian desert. Also like the classical poets, he addressed his audience from the platform, and like the gatherings of *Ukas* and *Mirbad* in classical times, the Sudanese audience was one which regarded listening to poetry as its sole entertainment. It is a purely romantic notion which called upon the Arabs to cast off their apathy and to revive the greatness and the glory of their predecessors, and not to fall prey to the heretical western civilization. This idea was first conceived at the beginning of the renaissance, when the Arabs regarded the encroaching western civilization as another chapter in the history of the crusades, and discovered in their glorious past something to be proud of, and to cling to, to prevent being swept into the strong current of this suspicious civilization. However, idealization of the past in comparison with a gloomy present is not altogether new to the Arab mind. It is in fact a central idea which has its roots deep in Arabic tradition and one can trace it as far back as the Umayyad period in the 18th century A.D.

The new traditionalist poets who sprang mainly from the first graduates of Gordon College like Arafat Mohammad Abdullah and others, took it upon themselves to fight the new innovations and remind their audience of the greatness of their Arab predecessors. Thus the poets who dominated the literary scene in the twenties were in fact public orators and

reformers. Their poetry was not personal, it was preaching that the public should amend wicked ways and lead a virtuous religious life.

The traditional poetry reached its momentum through the works of the late poet Muhammad Said al- Abbasi. He may be regarded as a great genius in writing poetry and undoubtedly is one of the greatest poets in modern Arabic literature. His stature is nearly as great as that of al-Barudi, Shawqi or Hafiz. The mere fact that he is virtually unknown outside his country and certainly his name has never appeared in any of the learned articles or books dealing with the history of modern literature, should give serious thought to critics and readers of modern Arabic poetry.

Then, follows the famous Sudanese poet Omer al- Banna. His poems and the poems of his period are notably similar in form and content. The poet usually starts by choosing a medium with which to carry his spirit to the past. Another would choose a bird to sing to him of the glorious past, but above all, the theme of the young moon *al-Hilal* was much preferred, since it was the one object that may be said have actually witnessed the past and have once shone upon the great Arab civilization. So Ommer al- Banna's famous poem '*Munajat al- Hilal*' represents that type of poems. He says:

O' young moon, talk of the world or of religion

You emerged like 'nun'(Arabic letter) eternally young as a child

And you have witnessed the age of 'Zhu elNun'. -(The prophet)

In these poems, the poet draws an ideal picture of the past, when moral sound, rulers were just, people religious and courageous, when the Arabs were masters of themselves. The first attack on this traditional poem was led by two Sudanese critics. The first was al-Amin Ali Madani, started his criticism as early as 1923. He was greatly influenced by the writings of the Mahjar poets particularly Jubran Khalil Jubran. The second was the poet and critic Hamza al- Malik Tambal. His critical essays show signs of deep perception and understanding of poetry. His main aim was to expose the shallowness of the traditionalists' poems and to point out to the public their inherent weaknesses. Al-Mahjoub was the famous member of al-Fajr school, he defended the notion that 'Sudanese culture is independence of Egyptian culture'. Al-Mahjoub defines culture as 'the method and style of an ideal life. His definition was borrowed from the great Victorian poet and culturalist Mathew Arnold, who defines culture as the ideal image of a nation.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study shows the great impact of western literature on Sudanese literature. The movement of English romanticism has a great influence on Sudanese Arabic literature. So the researcher would like to show the main factors and causes of that influence, and the role of the famous English romantic poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge, in developing the Sudanese romantic poetry.

3-1-Western impact on the Arabic literature:

Unlike Tennyson or Shelley, Al-Mahjoub expresses his reservations about the limits to which the visionary perception of reality should be pushed. His creative imagination lurks beneath the surface of his tributes to it his perceptions limited to the pleasure of the art. poetry for Al-Mahjoub is the widest gate of happiness, indeed it is only through its gate that happiness enters the heart, and that is clearly shown in Shelley's record of the happiest mind.

Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world. It arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations of life and veiling them, or in language or in form, sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide. In spite of the painful misunderstanding of Shelly's '*News of Kindred Joy*

Al- Mahjoub's definition of genuine poetry could be understood, as he (1967:119) shows that in his poem:

[A leap of a Heart}

Which of the two hearts that leapt over,

Thy soft heart or mine that was affected so ever.

What pretty eyes! By which I was fascinated.

In their beauty remains the mystery of the lovely world.

He who discovers it, will know Allah who creates.

Be merciful and never ignore, thy lover any more.

In God's define light, he believed,

And so his heart had leaped.

خفقة قلب

أي قلبينا الذي قد خفقا وبكأس من هوي الغيد أستسقى
 قلبك الناعم أم قلبي الذي أورت الجفن هوان الأرقاء
 سحر عينيك وما أعجبه يلهب الحس ويديمي الحدقا
 فيه سر الكون من يعرفه يعرف الله الذي قد خلقا
 فاتركي الصدّ وحيي والهأ وأرحمي العاشق موفور التقى
 راهب الحسن الذي يكلوه كلما شام جمالاً صعقا
 هو نور الله لا تجهله مقله حري وقلب خفقا

It has been mentioned before that Al-Mahjoub has been greatly affected by the Diwan group whose romanticism was immature, they occupied a threshold position between neo-classicism and romanticism. Their perception of reality remained hybrid, there was a hiatus between what they thought a poet should be, and what he actually was in their own practice. Instead of a visionary prophet, theirs was in practice, an imaginative reformer. These influences have been reflected in Al-Mahjoub's poem 'The Poet-' (1967:12):

{The Poet }

O' The real poet whose songs were spread widely,

All over fields and green lands.

As a diligent poet started his way of life,

Guiding all the hesitant ones in the dark nights.

Helping the weak, poor and needy and for them he fights.

Giving people and pigeons a peaceful life,

And so of joy all of them they shout.

الشاعر The poet

شاعر فجر الرياض غناء والروابي أثارهن وثارا
 سار في مهمة الحياة مجدداً في ظلام الوجود يهدى الحيارى
 بأسطاً كفة نعيم سؤال بل لمسح الدموع تهمني غزارا
 عاش للحب دهره وشجاه هزج الطير في الغصون تبارى
 فرحة الناس أغنيات بغيّة علم الورق شدوها والهزارا
 يعصر الوجد قلبه وغناه كشهي المنى وحلم العذارى

Showing his own mistrust Shelley says: " A poem is the image of life expressed in its eternal truth" in Shelleyan tone, the poet is a prophet, a philosopher, a painter, a musician and a kahin' a priest' or a hierophants", and so Al – Mahjoub (1967:56) reflects these Shelleyan ideas in his poem:

{The Sweet Love }

My heart neither was unfaithful to thy promises,

None was haunted by, but by thy lovely spirit.

If I try to get rid of thy love. I'll be drawn back to its longing.

How can the precious victim of thy love be tired of its likeness?

We spent all life as loyal worshiper of thy brightness.

Otherwise our life will be meaningless.

If there who may ignore his lover's kindness,

For sure we save our lover's nice memories.

أعلى الحب

ما خان عهدك قلبي ولا عمرت بغير حبك يا روجي حناياه
 بأن رمت أبرح عنه قيد أنملة ردت الي سعير الشوق رؤياه
 وهل ينو بحب كان يعيده من كان للحب من أعلى ضحاياه
 ولم يعنت مع الأنسام بارقة من العمار لعل الشوق يغشاه
 عشنا على الدهر عباداً لطلعته لا كانت الدنيا إذا كنا فليناه

4. CONCLUSION

This paper deals with a comparative study. The researcher uses a descriptive and comparative approach method to achieve the purpose of the study. To evaluate the romantic values of the Arabic poems and their poetic worth according to the western romantic features.

Sudanese Arabic literature, particularly the interplay in it between tradition and western influence. Shedding light on the nature not only of Sudanese Arabic romanticism, but on the differences between Arabic and English romantic poetry and literary criticism. It will be an essential addition to the study of the subject, providing an original and penetrating analysis of several aspects of modern Sudanese Arabic literature.

As a result of the study it has been realized that, by the end of the 19th century a new type of poetry was being written, which is marked by a tension between a relatively neo-classical style and new romantic sentiments. This is best illustrated by the poetry of Khalil Mutran, al-Mazint, Shukri and al-Aqqad, who were influenced by their reading in western poetry and criticism. With these three younger poets English and American influence in the emergence and growth of Arabic romantic poetry begins. The poets of the Diwan, Mahjar and Apollo group reflect the real western influence on the Arabic romantic poetry. The Sudanese romantic poets who were related to 'The Diwan group' like Mohammad Ahmad al-Mahjoub, Mohammad Ashry and Yousif Mustafa Attinay, graduated from Gordon Memorial College. Cordon College had a great role that led the development of the Sudanese romanticism, as well as 'Madrasat al-Mualimin' in Egypt. Their romantic poems reflect the influence of Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth and other English romantic poets.

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