

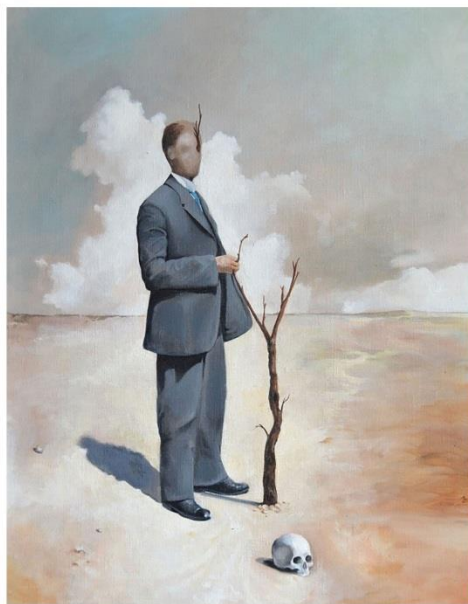
opción

Revista de Antropología, Ciencias de la Comunicación y de la Información, Filosofía,
Lingüística y Semiótica, Problemas del Desarrollo, la Ciencia y la Tecnología

Año 35, diciembre 2019 N°

24

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
ISSN 1012-1587/ ISSNe: 2477-9385
Depósito Legal pp 198402ZU45



Universidad del Zulia
Facultad Experimental de Ciencias
Departamento de Ciencias Humanas
Maracaibo - Venezuela

The Prince of Arab Poets and his Critics: The Battle's Hidden Motives

Mohammad Issa Al Hourani

Al Ain University College of Education
mohammad.alhourani@aau.ac.ae

Hanene Lahiani

Al Ain University College of Education
hanene.lahiani@aau.ac.ae

Abstract

This paper explains the critical conflicts in the literary circle of Shawqi's time, the different intellectual trends and emancipation movements of the time and the conflict axes and their critical issues via comparative qualitative research methods. As a result, poetry must translate the soul and conscience, without the poet being busy with others, echoing the words of his predecessors and their meanings in his poetry. In conclusion, the critical fight extended to four-time stages that represent in its entirety the reflections of Shawqi's poetry. The most lethal of these stages was after he was crowned as the prince of poets.

Keywords: Literature; Arabic Poetry; Criticism; Shawqi

El príncipe de los poetas árabes y sus críticos: los motivos ocultos de la batalla

Resumen

Este artículo explica los conflictos críticos en el círculo literario de la época de Shawqi, las diferentes tendencias intelectuales y los movimientos de emancipación de la época y los ejes de conflicto y sus
Recibido: 10-11-2018 •Aceptado: 10-03-2019

problemas críticos a través de métodos comparativos de investigación cualitativa. Como resultado, la poesía debe traducir el alma y la conciencia, sin que el poeta esté ocupado con otros, haciendo eco de las palabras de sus predecesores y sus significados en su poesía. En conclusión, la lucha crítica se extendió a cuatro etapas que representan en su totalidad los reflejos de la poesía de Shawqi. La más letal de estas etapas fue después de que fue coronado como el príncipe de los poetas.

Palabras clave: literatura; Poesía árabe; Crítica; Shawqi

1. INTRODUCTION

Readers of modern Arabic literature notice a number of serious attempts for the emancipation of poetry from the recession which characterized it during the decadence ages. A generation of poets, the most prominent of whom was Al- Baroudi, the leader of the awakening and revival movement, has thus tried to revive the image of the ancient Arabic literature. This was followed by the appearance of the conservatives, led by Ahmed Shawqi. In the meantime, the school of Al Diwan, which noticed that these conservatives would not accept renovation in form and content, prompted its followers to stand against traditions and imitation and to initiate a movement of criticism calling for the need to innovate in harmony with the spirit of the time.

Shawqi represented the conservative trend while Al-Akkad was the leading figure of the school which called for innovation. This gave way to the greatest conflict in the modern Arabic criticism that continued for a long period of time. The conflict was provoked and

sparked by various interferences and issues, most remarkable was perhaps Shawqi's crowning as the prince of the poets, and the participation of a number of critics - inside and outside of Egypt - in the battlefield either as supporters or as opponents of Shawqi.

According to JUNDI (1983), Ibrahim Mazni, Abbas Al- Akkad and Taha Hussein have all attacked Shawqi. Later, Heikel also attacked him after he had written a preface to Shawqi's collection of poems. The weekly newspaper Al- Siyasa issued a special edition about him, after which Taha Hussein and Mazni changed their opinion about Shawqi while Al- Akkad maintained his attitude (ASHMAWI, 1993). This study is an attempt to remove the ashes, and to understand the phases of that conflict, its most prominent weaponry, and its legacy. It starts from the main pole, AL- Akkad, who waged the long war, and it also displays some of the soldiers of that conflict, those who supported either Shawqi or AL- Akkad or those who were neutral receivers.

The study consists of three sections preceded by an introduction and ended with a conclusion. The first topic is entitled during the conflict. It presents the four stages of the battle. The second section presents the motives behind the conflict and shows the reasons that fueled the pens. The last section discusses the conflict axes and their major critical issues. The study uses some supporting references beside the two main references: (Al-Diwan) and (Al- Shawqi at) trying to reach an understanding of the most prominent issues that have been raised about Shawqi, especially after his crowning as the prince of poets, an event which fueled the feelings of those who were aspiring

after the title (Hilali, 1982 & Mahmood, Arshad, Ahmed, Akhtar, & Khan, 2018).

The research has got two tracks: one documentary that records the manifestations of the conflict, and one analytical which applies an analysis of these manifestations and a reading of their data, passing through the particularity of the historical period that bore the motives behind this war and the prominent issues then at hand. The work is concluded with the findings of the research. This work does not claim to be comprehensive. It strives to stimulate internal potentials for further research and investigation of further issues related to the subject matter. The space limits of a journal paper only allow for a brief account of such an epic history with broad geographic borders and a long-time span (TALIB, 2000).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the period leading up to the exile, the conflict about Shawqi was not strong, and it was not raged yet, although Al-Akkad had criticized some of Shawqi's poetry, such as his criticism of a few couplets of the elegiac poem *Elegy of Boutros Ghali* in 1912, two years before the exile.

Shawqi was not unknown at that time. He was known for his praises of the Ottoman Caliphate and its men, as most of his poems were dedicated to this purpose. Although this may be a barrier between

Shawqi and the Arabs receiving his poetry, many expressed their admiration of it since its early stages. Shakib Arslan said:

I left Egypt in late 1890 and I had not heard of a poet named Shawqi in Egypt, but it did not take long before I read some of his poems, I liked it and found that he was one of the poets who were tagged as (this deserves to be heard) (ARSLAN, 2003: 14).

After Shawqi was exiled into Al - Andalus during the First World War, and with the change in the political and social circumstances, a major shift in the substantive dimension of his poems took place: after those poems which had been geared to pay tribute to the palace and the Ottoman rulers, Shawqi's poems became closer to the spirit of the nation and dealt with its causes. So, his *Sinateh*, which later turned into a major point in the critical battle, marked the beginning of that transformation and the beginning of feeling the Arab pain through the expatriate self.

We cannot ignore the situation in which the nation had become after the war, nor the impact of that on literature in general and on poetry and its criticism in particular. There appeared two different trends; a conservative trend headed by Shawqi, and a modernist one led by Al- Akkad who appeared to lead a critical war that the Arab criticism had never seen. Never had the Arabic writers known anyone who showed such a harsh enmity or such a fierce criticism to Shawqi as Al- Akkad (DHEIF, 1953: 10).

In 1927, Shawqi was crowned by his peers as the Prince of Poets, and perhaps that was a new motive to launch multiple

campaigns of different sources against this prince and the coronation which was not pleasurable to many.

The most prominent displeased person was Al- Akkad, who launched a campaign against Shawqi, declaring that he would teach him a lesson to benefit from in his poetry writing. Consequently, Al- Akkad wrote a series of articles talking about the nature of poetry, its message and its misrepresentation and the impact of rhetoric aspects on it, and he criticized the poem delivered at the coronation ceremony (DHEIF, 1977).

Other subsequent reactions followed one after another: some welcomed the coronation and some refused it. There were multiple motives behind acceptance and refusal that formed an entire critical movement about Shawqi, which was topped with distinction by Al- Akkad, who, while criticizing Shawqi's position and coronation, explored the depths of a number of critical issues (AMMAR, 2002 & Shabbir, Abbas, Aman, Ali, 2019).

The war waged by Al- Akkad, and others on Shawqi did not quell, and continued after his death in 1932, but it started to ease violence and dirty methods. Accordingly, Al-Akkad's language became calmer and wiser although he did not keep himself from criticizing Shawqi in many diverse articles and events (ATTAR, 1405 & Akhtar, Arshad, Mahmood, Ahmed, 2018).

Although wars must include two parties, the war Al- Akkad launched on Shawqi before his death was not different from that after his death in terms of confrontation, as Shawqi was not interested in

responding to Al-Akkad, Zahawi or others during their campaign during his life, and the war continued unilaterally after his death.

Al-Akkad published a collection of essays after the death of Shawqi in a number of magazines that showed a change in his extreme intensity against Shawqi, and showed moderation and centrism while dealing with his poems. Although he did not change his position completely, he was just and rightful to Shawqi, and admitted that Shawqi reached the height of the eloquence, though he alluded to Shawqi's poetry being scripted (HILAL, 1989 & Usak, Kubiato, Shabbir, Dudnik, Jermstittiparsert, & Rajabion, 2019).

3. METHODOLOGY

It is historically proven that critical and poetic conflicts often begin on personal levels for rather subjective motives. Sometimes, the personal motives are behind the fame of the poet or the writer, and sometimes they are taken by the critic himself as a pretext to reach a goal.

Back to the conflict about Shawqi, we find that the critics come in two teams: exaggerators in moderation, and extremists in calumny...The first one denies all favor and all-new contribution, whereas the second raises him up to the top among Arab poets (MAJZOUB, 1992).

As the most prominent of those who criticized Shawqi was Al-Akkad, we see that behind a lot of that criticism were personal motives

that appeared in many of his essays. He said in *Diwan* and the fact that Shawqi pounced upon musical nonsense was old and deep-rooted in every source, and astounded him with what was not astonishing to any brilliant intellectual (AL-AKKAD, 1968). Here, he explicitly accuses Shawqi of the love of fame and shows off, which - in his opinion – is what pushed Shawqi to fall into the artistic pitfalls of literature.

Contrary to Al- Akkad's view, other critics did not see Shawqi in that rush, and did not see what vilified his personality. Shawqi Dhaif says that the poet was quiet, calm, tongue-free, distancing himself from rivalries, making him not belonging to any political party in his time, very shy, and speaking only with a low voice (Abdul Muttalib, 2000 & Asad, Shabbir, Salman, Haider, & Ahmad, 2018).

The reader of the criticism launched on Shawqi after the coronation can specifically attribute it to personal causes and motives, and we have presented in the first section the opinion of Zahawi in that. Nevertheless, Shawqi was known to have never antagonized anyone, and never responded to his accusers.

4. RESULT

We have already referred to the role played by the *Diwan* School since its inception in the rebellion against the traditional Arabic poem in form, content, construction, and language, perhaps because its pioneers - in particular, Al-Akkad, were fascinated by the Western poetry models. They saw in the Arabic poem restrictions that

contributed to the eras of backwardness, decadence, and imitation. Al-Mazni, for example, denied the poeticism of Shawqi. He says:

Shawqi, for me, is not a poet nor is he like a poet. He is an antique belonging back to distant times which had no good. He is a useless old thing who does not provide any addition to the ancient or the modern (HILAL, 1989: 10).

Since Al -Akkad was the most important role in this school, and his critical attitudes towards Shawqi were the most important in the history of critical fights, it is necessary to discuss the chief critical issues that this school dealt with and their aspects which formed the firewood of Al- Akkad's criticism.

There was a great difference between Shawqi and Al-Akkad's schools. The former was conservative while the latter was modernist rather inclined to the Western approach and rejecting the rigidity of the Arabic poem. Whatever the reasons for this difference between the popularity of the Western newcomer, and the preservation of the Arab tradition, each one was an echo for certain responses amidst the thought and art movement of that time.

Hence, the difference in approach between the two men was a fundamental difference, and was reflected in much of Al-Akkad's criticism of Shawqi. While criticizing Shawqi's elegiac poem of Boutros Ghali, Al-Akkad noticed that Shawqi made a mistake claiming that Boutros Ghali's men went to his club and considered it as a shelter where they begged his charity. He then wondered sarcastically: Or is it a mistake in imitation?

More interesting to us is the last question which discloses what Al –Akkad reproaches Shawqi for in following the traditional approach in a blind imitation that, according to Al-Akkad, makes Shawqi's speech nonsense and inappropriate for the occasion.

In his criticism of Shawqi's elegy of Mohamed Farid, Al-Akkad mocked the poem saying sarcastically, while the philosopher of death approaches creativity and inclines to the independence of his opinion, its meaning is more decadent. What is important here is that, after describing Shawqi as the philosopher of death who is inclined towards innovation and creativity, he accuses him of being rigid and imitative.

However, Al-Akkad expressed in his criticism the philosophy of his school towards the modern and the old. Although Shawqi's poetry obviously bore his spirit, Al-Akkad, and his group claim that the school of conservatives, in spite of its creativity, still lacks the spirit they seek in poetry, which they found when they sought refuge in the West.

5. CONCLUSION

After this review of the manifestations of this fight, we can see from under the ashes that big attention which Shawqi has received as well as the fertile ground that Al- Akkad ploughed for the emergence of a regenerative breath. It was probably a pavement for the birth of the poetic experience which also served those who came afterward and

attempted to dive into Shawqi's poetic self. This study has come up with a number of findings:

- The critical fight extended to four-time stages that represent in its entirety the reflections of Shawqi's poetry. The most lethal of these stages was after he was crowned as the prince of poets.

- The fight was not due to a purely artistic motive, but there were a number of other motives, such as a political motive and a personal one, that made others draw their swords.

- The issues sparked by the fight revolve around the form and content, around whether the poetic experience is genuine or false, and around the word and its meaning. Though, the most prominent of those issues revolved around the artistic image and metaphors specifically, which is resumed in the conflict between the traditional image based on common sense, represented by Shawqi, and the image of the psychological or internal mind that Al-Akkad wanted.

After all, we see that there is a fertile material, some of which can be the subject of extended research. The research at hand is no more than an attempt to understand the battlefield and follow it as a phenomenon, more than to dive into its depth, because depth requires the comprehension of all the aspects of the situation, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

REFERENCES

Abdul Muttalib, M. (2000). "Literary Battles And Its Impact On The Cultural Movement". **Qatar News Agency**. Qatar.

Akhtar, S., Arshad, M. A., Mahmood, A., & Ahmed, A. (2018). "Gaining recognition of Islamic spiritual intelligence for organisational sustainability". **International Journal of Ethics and Systems**. Vol. 34, N° 1: 70-77. USA.

Ahmed, A., Arshad, M. A., Mahmood, A., & Akhtar, S. (2016). "Holistic Human Resource Development: Balancing The Equation Through The Inclusion Of Spiritual Quotient". **Journal Of Human Values**, 22(3), 165-179.

Al-Akkad, M. (1968). "Hours Between Books". **Al- Nahdeh Egyptian Library**. Cairo. Egypt.

Asad, M., Shabbir, M., Salman, R., Haider, S., & Ahmad, I. (2018). "Do Entrepreneurial Orientation And Size Of Enterprise Influence The Performance Of Micro And Small Enterprises? A Study On Mediating Role Of Innovation". **Management Science Letters**, 8(10), 1015-1026.

Ammar, M. (2002). "The Literary Battle Between Al- Akkad And Shawqi". **Dar Alem Al- Kutub, Riyadh**. Egypt.

Arslan, C. (2003). "Shawqi, Or Forty Years Of Friendship". **Dar Al-Fadelh**. Cairo. Egypt.

Ashmawi, M. (1993). "A Study In Contemporary Literary Criticism". **Dar Al- Ma'refh Al Jame'iah**. Alexandria. Egypt.

Attar, M. (1405). "Al- Akkad". **Dar Tehama**. Jeddah. Saudi Arabia.

Dheif, S. (1953). "The Poet Of The Modern Era". **Dar Al- Mar'ef**. Egypt.

Dheif, S. (1977). "Chapters In Poetry And Criticism, Dar Al- Mar'ef, Egypt". **Abdul Hai, Diab, Al- Akkad: The Critic, Dar Al- Sha'b**. Cairo. Egypt.

Hilal, M. (1989). "The Modern Literary Criticism". **Dar Al- Nahdeh**. Egypt, Cairo.

Hilali, A. (1982). "Al- Zahawi In Literary And Intellectual Battles". **The Ministry Of Culture**. Baghdad.

Jundi, A. (1983). "The Literary Battles". **The Egyptian Library Anglo**. Egypt.

Mahmood, A., Arshad, M. A., Ahmed, A., Akhtar, S., & Khan, S. (2018). "Spiritual intelligence research within human resource development: a thematic review". **Management Research Review**. Vol. 41, N° 8: 987-1006. UK.

Majzoub, M. (1992). "Scholars And Thinkers Ever Known". **Dar Shawwaf**. Vol. 2, P. 82. Egypt.

Shabbir, M. S., Abbas, M., Aman, Q., & Ali, R. (2019). "Estrategias De Reducción De La Pobreza. Explorando El Vínculo Entre Pobreza Y Corrupción De Países Menos Desarrollados". **Dilemas Contemporáneos: Educación, Política Y Valores**, 6(2).

TALIB, A. (2000). "The Many Lives of Arabic Verse: Ibn Nubātah al-Misrī Mourns More Than Once". **Journal of Arabic Literature**. p. 263. Egypt.

Usak, M., Kubiatio, M., Shabbir, M. S., Viktorovna Dudnik, O., Jermsttiparsert, K., & Rajabion, L. (2019). "Health care service

delivery based on the Internet of things: A systematic and comprehensive study”. **International Journal of Communication Systems**, 4179.



REVISTA

opción

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales
Año 35, N° 24, (2019)

Esta revista fue editada en formato digital por el personal de la Oficina de Publicaciones Científicas de la Facultad Experimental de Ciencias, Universidad del Zulia.
Maracaibo - Venezuela

www.luz.edu.ve
www.serbi.luz.edu.ve
produccioncientifica.luz.edu.ve