

## The Relationship Between Creator, Text, and Recipient in Critical Tradition

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### Abstract

Critical tradition has established important foundations concerning the creative process and its basic axes according to the productive parallel of the creative movement and its harmony with the critical process, since there is no text without a creator, and there is no creativity without a recipient who is aware of this text. The birth of a text must be followed by preservation and care from the recipient who becomes the reason for its survival and presence.

**Keywords:** Critical tradition, critical process, creator, recipient, concept of text, literary creativity.

### Introduction:

Arab critics have addressed the relationship between the creator and the recipient, that relationship which lies in their joint participation in creating and producing the text. The creator attempts to awaken certain responses through the text in the recipient"<sup>1</sup>, so the creator assumes a recipient whom he addresses and may argue with, while working to persuade him with the arguments he embeds in his text, which represents the chapters and conjectures of this dialogue between the creator's self and the audience whose presence he assumes in the capacity of recipient.

Al-Jahiz transmitted through his examination of the Indian manuscript what stipulates that the creator behaves according to the social status of the addressee, provided that this does not distance him from good linguistic formulation. The creator should consider the social and cultural level of the addressee, as addressing a philosopher differs from addressing a commoner. However, in both cases the creator must pay attention to language in terms of its meanings and expressions, and that the clarity when addressing the common people should not reach the point of weakness and feebleness"<sup>2</sup>. Al-Jahiz assigns weight to social status, according to which the extent of cultural awareness, artistic taste, and levels of understanding are determined. "The matter revolves around making each people understand according to their capacity, and dealing with them according to their ranks"<sup>3</sup>. This means that the creator must consider the listener's conditions, either elevating to them and their level of awareness or descending with the subject to the level of their tastes, by examining the general picture of the status of those he addresses. He should not "address the master of the nation with the speech of slaves, nor kings with the speech of the marketplace, and he should have the power to maneuver in every class, and not refine meanings completely, nor polish expressions completely, nor refine them completely,

<sup>1</sup> See: Hassan Ahmad Issa, Creativity in Art and Science, Kuwait, World of Knowledge Series, vol. 24, 1979, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> See: Muhammad Darabsa, Reception and Creativity, Readings in Ancient Arabic Criticism, Dar Jarir, Irbid, Jordan, 1st ed., 2010, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Jahiz Amr ibn Bahr, Eloquence and Explanation, ed.: Abd al-Salam Harun, Cairo, al-Khanji, 5th ed., 1985, vol. 1, p. 93.

and not do that until he encounters a wise man or a knowledgeable philosopher" <sup>4</sup>. Hence we conclude that refining expressions before specialized scientific bodies is a necessity, and doing this before the common people is considered affectation and waste of effort. The safest approach is that for every occasion there is appropriate speech, or as al-Jahiz said, among the ready phrases preserved from him, and what organizes the relationship between the speaker and the recipient.

### **The Relationship Between Creator, Text, and Recipient in Critical Tradition:**

Ancient critics paid attention to the issue of communication regarding meanings and their compatibility with listeners and their social position in conveying the message to the recipient and the extent of its conformity to his conditions. What should be noted in our critical tradition is that through their interest in studying the pillars of the creative process, the creator, the text, and the recipient, they went beyond that to treating the nature of the relationship and interaction between the function of the creator and the recipient and their relationship to the literary text. What is the nature of the critics' view of that relationship?

The creator, whether a poet or prose writer, possesses culture, knowledge, and linguistic ability through which he can employ the text in light of his thought and feelings. He can also transport the recipient to his experience, inform him of his feelings, and invite him to share his experience and emotions.

Therefore, it is the creator's duty to achieve his goal and purpose by considering the linguistic sensibility of the recipient. He must also consider the social, psychological, and cultural levels of the recipient, since the recipient who interacts with the creator's experience and feelings is a reader and critic, indeed he is a participant in creating and producing the text" <sup>5</sup>. These same problematics have been addressed by contemporary criticism with the same interest and deconstructing their dimensions through the reaction to the critical rupture that occurred and the idea of the death of the author, while the text announces the birth of its reader and its new author. The rejecting position supports traditional criticism through the statement of T.S. Eliot: "The poem occurs somewhere between the writer and the reader" <sup>6</sup>.

Consequently, no effective procedure for the act of reading can be established if we ignore the author, especially his creative status. The reader does not read merely for reading's sake, then proceed to produce the text's meanings and fill its gaps according to the interpretive process aiming to construct the text, unless dialogic data are available to him that make him recall the creator and his status. Therefore, there is no escape from paying attention to the text's externality, the writer, his era, his environment.

Thus, "critics of old noticed the creator's personality, its flexibility and ability to deal with all occasions and situations he faces, because of this flexibility's impact in making the creator more adaptable to the nature of subjects and occasions that push him to speak" <sup>7</sup>. In this regard, we find Ibn Rashiq's statement clear in its expression: "The first thing the poet needs, after seriousness which is the goal, is good conduct and policy, and knowledge of the aims of speech. If he attributes lineage, he should be humble and submissive, and if he praises, he should exaggerate and make heard" <sup>8</sup>. Thus, the creator's relationship with his text has received great attention and intelligent observations from ancient critics.

Therefore, we find them paying attention to the importance of composition, arrangement, and

<sup>4</sup> Al-Jahiz Amr ibn Bahr, Eloquence and Explanation, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> See: Muhammad Darabsa, Reception and Creativity, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> See: Najib Fayiq Andraus, Introduction to Literary Criticism, Cairo, Anglo-Egyptian Library, 1974, p. 156.

<sup>7</sup> See: Muhammad Darabsa, Reception and Creativity, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Rashiq, The Pillar, vol. 1, p. 199.

coordination that the creator is required to pursue in order to help the recipient perceive the meanings and purposes that the creator aims for in the text. The goal is to craft the literary text and convey it to the recipient so he may share his experience and concerns, and without that the creator cannot achieve his purpose" <sup>9</sup>. It is essential that the creator respond to what his recipient implicitly expects, as if he imagines and envisions the interactive dialogue between him and the recipients during his production of the text. Ibn Tabataba concluded that: "The poet should contemplate the composition of his poetry and the arrangement of his verses, and observe the beauty of their adjacency, so he harmonizes them so that their meanings are arranged for him and his speech in them is connected, and he should not place between what he has begun to describe or its completion a separation of filler that is not of the same kind as what he is in, lest the listener forget the meaning to which he is driving the speech" <sup>10</sup>.

In order to justify the implicit relationship and its nature between the creator and the recipient, we should address knowing the field of operation of each party separately in order to clarify this relationship and determine its nature.

### **The Creator in Tradition:**

Our critical tradition and the various schools of critical thought have agreed since ancient times in their interest in the writer's life and his psychological, environmental, and historical conditions, which can have a direct or indirect influence on what his talent produces of creativity. Perhaps the relationship between the text and its author in this manner has turned into a close kinship, until it settled in the hearing of successive generations that the writer is the son of his environment and his era, and that what his talent produces of the art of poetry, for example, is merely a mirror reflecting the extent of his response to the psychological situations imposed by the circumstances of his life. For this reason, critics and scholars proceeded to declare this kinship and emphasize their interest in this aspect in judging poets at times, and in discussing the motives and causes of poetry at other times <sup>11</sup>. The creator is the person who possesses a distinguished talent and a culture that helps him innovate and create and perceive the hidden connections between things <sup>12</sup>.

Hence, the creator needs incentives that combine and meet all together in his consciousness until the impulse to write occurs for him. In addition to external factors, there are internal psychological factors whose presence is required. It was narrated about "Muhammad ibn Sallam al-Jumahi" that he asked Yunus the grammarian: "Who is the most poetic of people?" He said, "I do not point to a specific man, but I say Imru' al-Qais when angry, al-Nabigha when frightened, Zuhayr when he desires, and al-A'sha when cheerful" <sup>13</sup>. This scrutinizing view of psychological factors and internal motives stimulating creativity reveals the extent of critics' interest in the creator and his relationship with both the text and the recipient. Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani in his book The Pillar paid attention to the importance of the creator's personality from the moral and physical perspective, because of the influence it helps him have on the recipient and drawing his attention to the creator, as well as to the text through which the creator tries to involve the recipient in his creative experience. Among his statements about the creator: "It is appropriate for the poet to be of sweet demeanor, good morals, cheerful countenance,

<sup>9</sup> See: Muhammad Darabsa, Reception and Creativity, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Tabataba, Muhammad ibn Ahmad, The Standard of Poetry, ed.: Taha al-Hajiri and Muhammad Zaghlul Salam, Cairo, The Great Commercial Library, 1956, p. 124.

<sup>11</sup> See: Mahmoud Abbas Abd al-Wahid, Reading the Text and the Aesthetics of Reception, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1st ed., 1996, p. 124.

<sup>12</sup> See: Abd al-Sattar Ibrahim, Three Aspects of Development in the Study of Creativity, World of Thought Magazine, Kuwait, vol. 5, no. 4, 1985, p. 960.

<sup>13</sup> Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, The Book of Songs, ed.: Ihsan Abbas, Beirut, Dar Sadir, 3rd ed., 2007, p. 74.

trustworthy in conduct, easy in approach, gentle in manner, for this endears him to people, adorns him in their eyes, and brings him close to their hearts. Let him with this be noble of soul, subtle of sense, lofty of ambition, clean of appearance and proud, so that the common people respect him and he enters among the elite" <sup>14</sup>. The creator also works on considering the nature of the recipient, his status, and all his conditions, and his purpose in that is to convey the message to the recipient, which is to achieve a kind of persuasion and pleasure with the aim of establishing a certain idea fermenting in the creator's mind, which he tries to convey to the recipient to convince him of it and then achieve an emotional and sentimental stirring in him, which anchors this idea and establishes it in the recipient's mind and heart <sup>15</sup>.

The contemporary critic in his tracking of critical tradition issues has indicated and clearly alluded to the extent of ancient critics' interest in the basic elements in establishing creativity, and consequently the founding critic was able to form the foundational critical ground for various contemporary theories.

### **The Concept of Text in Ancient Arabic Criticism:**

If the linguistic concept of text means raising something and displaying it, that is, clarification and revelation, and it is said: "He arranged the goods: that is, he placed some of it on top of others" <sup>16</sup>, and so-and-so is comprehensive, meaning he was exhaustive and left neither stray nor common matter without mentioning it in his speech, until he extracted what he had. To raise speech means to elevate it, and the text of everything is its ultimate end <sup>17</sup>. The speaker must raise his text and display it so that the recipient understands it. As for joining one thing to another, it is a reference to the coherence and connection occurring between sentences. From this we conclude "that the text is the joining of sentences to one another by many connectors that cohere, and the text being the utmost and ultimate of something is a representation of it being the largest linguistic unit that can be reached. Thus, as if the linguistic lexical definitions of text share, even by a thin thread, with the terminological concept <sup>18</sup>. There is a fundamental relationship supporting the general significance that we extract from the lexical and terminological definitions of text.

Hence, the text is that elevated literary work, and it is a linguistic fabric of tight construction <sup>19</sup>, which justifies the unity of content and form in shaping the text's space and its coherent textural consistency.

The text expresses the creator's inner world, and our understanding of the text is not complete without understanding the creator who embodies his feelings and thoughts in the literary text and presents it to the recipient to share his feelings and thoughts and live through his creative experience with him. On this basis, ancient critics addressed the text through its linguistic structure composed of meanings and expressions about which critics disagreed since al-Jahiz raised this issue in his book The Animal <sup>20</sup>. Critics noticed the text's construction in terms of length and brevity and their relationship to the recipient, and hence its clarity and ambiguity as

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani, The Pillar, vol. 1, p. 196.

<sup>15</sup> See: Jabir Asfour, The Concept of Poetry, A Study in Critical Tradition, Cairo, Dar al-Thaqafa, 1978, p. 302.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Manzur, The Tongue of the Arabs, Dar Sadir, Beirut, 3rd ed., 1994, vol. 7, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> See: Ahmad Rida, Dictionary of the Core of Language, Publications of Dar Library of Life, Beirut, vol. 5, 1960, p. 472.

<sup>18</sup> See: Naima Saadia, Textual Coherence in Arab Tradition, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, no. 5, University of Biskra, 2009, p. 03.

<sup>19</sup> See: Roland Barthes, Theory of Text, trans.: Muhammad Khayr al-Baqa'i, Arabs and Thought Magazine, Beirut, no. 3, 1988, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> See: Al-Jahiz, The Animal, ed.: Abd al-Salam Harun, Cairo, Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi Press, 2nd ed., 1965, vol. 3, p. 131.

well. The understanding of text reached its peak with Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani in the theory of composition which came as a direct result of the issue of meanings and expressions that al-Jahiz raised before. The text in this sense condenses most of the critical issues raised by ancient critics that were the subject of agreement or difference in viewpoints, including the issue of expression and meaning, the artistic image, metaphor, literary theft, and the employment of symbol and ambiguity in Arabic poetry, and other issues connected to the literary text, which was understood as the gathering of expressions and their harmony in performing meaning. This raised new problematics about expression and meaning. Al-Jahiz composed this statement based on its effect in the literary text, not in people's daily speech, through his saying: "Meanings are scattered in the road, known to the non-Arab and the Arab, the Bedouin and the villager. The matter is only in establishing the meter, choosing the expression, ease of delivery, abundance of water, soundness of nature and excellence of casting. Poetry is merely a craft, a type of weaving and a kind of depiction" <sup>21</sup>. Despite the disagreement that occurred among critics in raising the issue of expression and meaning in terms of importance and rank or equality between them, we may consider it the **first foundational building block of the text's structure and its literary concept in ancient Arabic criticism.**

Some Arab critics noticed the importance of good composition and solid casting, as expressions become clearer and closer to the recipient's soul more than when they are in a text that is not well-constructed and composed. This is what "Abu Hilal al-Askari" indicated by saying: "Good composition increases the meaning's clarity and explanation, and with bad composition and poor arrangement and structure there is a branch of obfuscation. If the meaning is captive and the arrangement of speech poor, it will not find acceptance and no sweetness will appear in it. But if the meaning is middling and the arrangement of speech good, it will be better received and more pleasant to hear" <sup>22</sup>. These meanings were included in al-Jurjani's statement, who in turn deduced them through his examination of al-Jahiz's theory of expressions and meanings, as "speech does not deserve the name of eloquence until its meaning races its expression and its expression races its meaning, and its expression is quicker to your hearing than its meaning to your heart, and their saying it enters the ear without permission" <sup>23</sup>. At that point the goal of the creative process is achieved, which is to deliver the text to the recipient to interact with it and share the creator's creative experience <sup>24</sup>. Therefore, we find that the creator carefully selects the opening of his texts with an opening that the recipient is familiar with in order to attract him and capture his hearing and heart. The poet would choose to stop at ruins or flirt and mention loved ones, and allude to the intensity of attachment to their past and consciousness, indicating the necessity of considering the listeners' psychological and cultural conditions to attract them to hearing the text and sharing the creator's experience. "For when speech is light and balanced, it is well-received in the soul, and when it is long and heavy, the soul's dislike of it intensifies" <sup>25</sup>, which confirms the dialectic of the illusory dialogic relationship with the recipient in the text owner's consciousness during the creative process.

### The Recipient in Critical Tradition:

The critic in our ancient tradition did not neglect the process of monitoring the recipient and his implicit presence through the creative text and his imaginary presence in the poet's imagination,

<sup>21</sup> Al-Jahiz, The Animal, p. 132.

<sup>22</sup> Abu Hilal al-Askari, The Two Crafts, ed.: Mufid Qumiha, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1981, p. 179.

<sup>23</sup> Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, Proofs of Inimitability, p. 206.

<sup>24</sup> See: Mahmoud Darabsa, Reception and Creativity, p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Hazim al-Qartajanni, The Path of the Eloquent and the Lamp of Writers, ed.: Muhammad al-Habib ibn al-Khawja, Tunis, Dar al-Kutub al-Sharqiyya, 1966, p. 129.

considering that the recipient represents the goal of the creative process or the final objective, and the one relied upon who will establish importance for the text in terms of spread and fame, and what results from it in terms of impact and influence.

Therefore, "critics noticed the necessity that the recipient be from among people of taste, knowledge, and expertise in order to be able to receive the creative work and participate in the creator's creative experience" <sup>26</sup>. Critics focused on the importance of the appropriateness of creative language and the simplicity of ideas and the ease of their presentation so that the creative message achieves its purpose. This is what we sense through what al-Jahiz stipulated regarding the recipient: "The speaker should know the values of meanings and balance them with the values of listeners and the values of situations, so he makes for each class of that a speech, and for each situation of that a position, until he divides the values of speech over meanings, and divides the values of meanings over the values of positions, and the values of listeners over those situations" <sup>27</sup>. The indication is clear in highlighting the reader's conditions and the critic's interest in the recipient, which suggests the extent of the ramification of critical tradition and its encompassing of the fundamentals of creative work. Otherwise, what is the explanation for critics' guidance to poets in demanding that they consider the openings of their poems and urging good beginnings and good transitions, for the sake of excellence and what suits the listeners' tastes? "Ibn al-Athir says in this regard:

"One of the manners of this type (poetry) is that the poet should not mention at the opening of a poem what brings bad omen" <sup>28</sup>. Therefore, critics denounced al-Mutanabbi for the opening of his poem in praise of "Kafur al-Ikhshidi" at their first meeting in his palace.

**Sufficient is it as an ailment that you see death as healing \*\*\* And sufficient are fates that they be wishes.**

The fault, as Ibn Rashiq says, is from the perspective of courtesy with kings and good policy. Otherwise, al-Mutanabbi was addressing himself, not Kafur, and it is an approach in opening that the Arabic poem knew and the Arab taste was familiar with at that time. The reception of the text in such conditions did not rely on artistic foundations, but relied on a single axis, which is the court critic as a representative of court etiquette. Even this critic perhaps sometimes relinquished his artistic convictions in consideration of the nature of the task he obligated himself to <sup>29</sup>. Just as the Arab critic justified the reliability of the connection between the text and its author, his focus intensified from another side on the relationship of the text to the recipient's or addressee's conditions. Reception has risen to the meaning of criticism toward the court text or poetry of earning, in which the text's owner is besieged by a set of judgments in which the critic does not proceed from the requirements of poetic art or the writer's conditions as much as he observes the manners of conduct in addressing the emir or caliph <sup>30</sup>. Departing from those manners would implicate the poet or orator in trouble with critics whose habit is to hunt for flaws in every verse that contradicts this approach.

With the aim of putting the text's owner in embarrassment on the one hand, and to declare their loyalty in preserving the emir's prestige and the court's aims lest the poet's talent transgress them on the other hand <sup>31</sup>, or belittling the gift, and consequently the creator is preoccupied with his text with the recipient's awareness present, clever in gaining his approval. Therefore,

<sup>26</sup> Mahmoud Darabsa, Creativity and Reception, p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Jahiz, Eloquence and Explanation, vol. 1, pp. 138, 139.

<sup>28</sup> Diya al-Din ibn al-Athir, The Prevalent Example in the Literature of the Writer and the Poet, ed.: Ahmad al-Houfi and Badawi Tabana, Cairo, Dar al-Nahda, Egypt for Printing, 2nd ed., 1983, vol. 3, p. 97.

<sup>29</sup> See: Mahmoud Abbas Abd al-Wahid, Reading the Text and the Aesthetics of Reception, pp. 102, 103.

<sup>30</sup> The Pillar, Ibn Rashiq, vol. 2, p. 192.

<sup>31</sup> See: Mahmoud Abbas Abd al-Wahid, Reading the Text and the Aesthetics of Reception, p. 103.

the recipient is considered constantly present in the poet's imagination for conducting the illusory dialogue toward him.

Thus, the course of critical thought remained until the fifth century AH oscillating between two trends in dealing with the text. One trend inclines its followers to issuing judgments related to the text and its author, and a trend in which the text is received in a manner that cancels the poet's subjectivity or nearly does. Consequently, the reception process or text study is subject either to a special conviction by which the recipient arbitrarily dominates the field of the text and its author, or to judgments issued from the whim of the soul, or to a conventional standard that has no connection to the foundations of literary art <sup>32</sup>. Otherwise, the creator must achieve in his text the competence of performance, for "the price of speech is that it be given its due of the most eloquent attention and the best listening, and that it be received with the most complete acceptance and enthusiasm it deserves. This does not occur unless the listener is knowledgeable of the aspects of speech excellence" <sup>33</sup>. This idea corresponds with what al-Qartajanni established in his saying: "Since the aim of poetry is the stratagem in moving the soul to the speech's requirement by placing it in the position of acceptance through what it contains of beautiful imitation" <sup>34</sup>.

Thus we conclude the ancient Arabic criticism's celebration of the text, its creator, and its recipient according to an integrated view that places the text at the rank of means and the recipient as the goal of the creative process. This foundation is the same one from which most contemporary critical theories emerged in their interest in the recipient and his role in interrogating the text's ambiguity, its symbolism, and discovering its circumstances to produce its meanings and draw its horizons concealed within it.

### **Manifestations of Tradition in Contemporary Poetry:**

The principle of human nature longing for knowledge and discovery, reaching truth, ascending to creativity, and its conception of the relationship of cosmic things to each other and the attempt to describe them and justify the relationships of their harmony and work to perceive their rational and irrational truths and experiment on them refers to creative motives and humanity's increasing need to know the contents of its reality. This made him the descriptive poet, the connoisseur, and the interrogator of the secrets and hidden meanings of what surrounds him and what it means to him.

Thus, the human is sociable, eager, social, and coexisting. He does not build his knowledge from nothing, but we always find him taking the means of knowledge and benefiting from the laws of the universe and its systems and from others' experiences and what they have achieved in terms of the continuity of his thought and his dealing with his tradition or the traditions of other nations and their civilizations.

Likewise, our contemporary poet cannot claim for himself that his poetic experience is born of his emotional flow and that it is self-sourced, representing the first birth of its era. Hence, tradition represents the cornerstone and the source of seeds for every plant that appears. If the human benefits from others' experiences and inherits what they leave materially, then conscious knowledge is the easiest means of transmission to him. Meaning if poets are influenced by each other's styles, we sense the influence occurring between one generation and another. Consequently, the contemporary poet benefited from all these generations and he thus "did not constitute the first poetic precedent in his employment of this tradition, as there was a first

<sup>32</sup> See: Mahmoud Abbas Abd al-Wahid, *Reading the Text and the Aesthetics of Reception*, p. 103.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Sakkaki Muhammad ibn Ali, *The Key to Sciences*, ed.: Naim Zarzur, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1983, p. 227.

<sup>34</sup> Hazim al-Qartajanni, *The Path of the Eloquent and the Lamp of Writers*, p. 294.

generation that preceded him in this field, paved the way and smoothed the difficulties, forming with its presence an impact on the experience of subsequent poets. Poetry had priority in how to deal with this tradition and the mechanisms of employing it and choosing its symbols that add to the poetic experience its artistic and human dimension" <sup>35</sup> , as inspiration and intertextuality with poetic tradition with its mature fragrance.

Possessing that aesthetic and artistic pleasure that suggests the depth of experience is not born of the creative moment but is that cognitive and traditional accumulation that deepened and enriched aesthetic values through the contemporary poetic experience. Thus it represents: "The human tradition for the contemporary poet is an aspect of his poetic formation, because the contemporary poet's experience is a strenuous attempt to absorb human consciousness in general through the framework of the civilization of the age and to define the poet's position on it as a contemporary human" <sup>36</sup> .

Thus tradition becomes the source of all creativity and there is no room for claiming epistemological rupture, as with it and through it modernization occurs. The poet's connection to his tradition to draw from it represents a connection to his identity. Thus the contemporary poet must realize "that his ancient tradition was the source that led him to new creativity, and perhaps his denial and exaggeration in aversion to it is a manifestation of weak self-confidence among nations" <sup>37</sup> . Even if our contemporary poet denies his dealing with tradition, how can he justify his employment of myth and symbol? Are not these myths and symbols traditional compositions hiding behind them many ancient human civilizational stories and ideas? Hence there is no escape for the contemporary Arab poet but to: "reconsider this tradition in light of modernity to explode what it contains of remaining subjective, spiritual, and human values, and to consolidate the link between the present and tradition through inspiring its spiritual and human positions in our contemporary creativity" <sup>38</sup> . The experience of free verse, for example, even if it seemed somewhat rebellious against tradition and does not harmonize with it in form, we sense in the depth of the experience the fragrance of past tradition and its shattered scent in its general meanings speaking of change. Thus contemporary poetry has not cast aside the issue of tradition, as some critics contradicting themselves imagine. Rather, contemporary poetry manifests and connects to tradition "more deeply and more truly, and all that is in the matter is that it does not live in it as form and molds... but lives in it as an expressive entity intended deliberately, and it has its intellectual and human dimensions... In this the fundamental difference is determined between living in tradition and living by tradition" <sup>39</sup> .

Thus the features of the constructive dialectic between past and present become clear. Our reading of tradition is a review of the present, and our understanding of the present leads to anticipating the future. Despite the distance of times and the accumulations of their products, "the moment of tense unique fusion between the present and the past is what the modern Arab poet must achieve consciously and practically. Through this extremely unique moment, the present fuses with the past together so that each illuminates the other, and each becomes more knowledgeable of itself" <sup>40</sup> . Otherwise, how can the poet's vision and modernity manifest if not

<sup>35</sup> Kamili Belhaj, The Impact of Popular Heritage on Shaping the Contemporary Arabic Poem, Arab Writers Union, Damascus, 2004, p. 26.

<sup>36</sup> Said al-Warqi, The Language of Modern Arabic Poetry, Its Artistic Components and Creative Energies, Dar al-Marifa al-Jamiyya, Alexandria, Egypt, 2002, p. 40.

<sup>37</sup> Nazik al-Mala'ika, Issues of Contemporary Poetry, Dar al-Ilm for Millions, 4th ed., 1974, p. 65.

<sup>38</sup> Izz al-Din Ismail, Contemporary Arabic Poetry, Its Issues and Its Artistic and Moral Phenomena, Dar al-Awda, Beirut, Lebanon, 3rd ed., 1981, p. 28.

<sup>39</sup> Izz al-Din Ismail, Contemporary Arabic Poetry, p. 29.

<sup>40</sup> Ali Jafar al-Allaq, On the Modernity of the Poetic Text, Critical Study, Dar al-Shuruq, Amman, Jordan, 1st ed., 2003, p. 37.

coupled in his essence with the mirror of his age and the mirror of his past to reflect to him the shared image on the one hand, and how can the axes of the creative process be monitored and its course tracked through the critical process and the extent of its procedural effectiveness on the other hand to benefit the recipient, taking into consideration that every critic is a recipient but not every recipient is a critic?

This entails the recipient's need for critical theorization to activate his reading and provide him with mechanisms and terms capable of productive reception, with the necessity of investing his language reservoir and rooting the term without hybridizing it or coining it from other languages.

### **The Crisis of Terminology in Arab Criticism:**

The contemplator of our ancient Arab tradition realizes, after his immersion in research and serious reading of critical references and important foundational sources that were established, the extent of serious awareness of the cognitive advancement of the critic and his contributions to developing creativity that was able to draw the true picture matching the reality of their (the ancients') lives.

Literary criticism at that time continued to probe the depths of this creativity, develop and evolve it. The ancient Arabs were sharply aware that poetry is the highest type of speech and is the house of Arabs and the preserver of their entity, memory, and cultural identity, until al-Jahiz considered poetry a gift from heaven that God deposited in the nature of Arabs and distinguished them with it over all other nations. After him, both al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi and Ibn Sina proceeded to place the poet in a high position unmatched by anyone <sup>41</sup>, through al-Khalil's saying: "Poets are the princes of speech, they manipulate it as they wish, and what is permitted for them is not permitted for others, from releasing meaning and restricting it, from manipulating expression and complicating it, extending the shortened and shortening the extended, combining its dialects and separating its attributes, and extracting what tongues are too weak to describe and characterize and minds are too weak to understand and clarify. They bring the distant near and distance the near, they are cited as authority and no authority is cited against them, and they portray falsehood in the image of truth and truth in the image of falsehood" <sup>42</sup>.

We find that every phrase, indeed every word, will interrogate a contemporary critical theory standing on its own, researching the phenomenon and establishing its rules and clarifying its details, or becoming research topics based on a real problematic as critical literary studies and mechanisms that would shape discursive and communicative knowledge between the creator and the recipient and the code that brings them together through the text. Hence Ibn Qutayba considered the matter of writing a jihad act that preserves for people their religious matters and their poetry matters. Therefore, he insists that the scholar working on these two matters cannot shield himself from the pitfalls of fall and error except when he maintains listening, attention, verification, and reflection. Error in religious matters would make the scholar misguided and misguiding, so he perishes and with him every simple good believer perishes. The same danger can come to the scholar working on poetry and its marvels. His slips are not forgiven because he will contribute to erasing the difference between poets and those who claim the name who pretend they are poets and the craft loses its honor. Every science needs listening, and the most in need of it is the science of religion, then poetry <sup>43</sup>. Hence the nation needs the work of the critic, the guardian of its interests and defender of its jewels, who seeks through his criticism to

<sup>41</sup> See: Muhammad Lutfi Yousfi, Al-Aqsa University Journal, vol. 14, no. 1, January, 2010, p. 38.

<sup>42</sup> Hazim al-Qartajanni, The Path of the Eloquent and the Lamp of Writers, p. 295.

<sup>43</sup> See: Ibn Qutayba, Poetry and Poets, ed.: Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, Cairo, Dar al-Maarif, vol. 1 (n.d.), p. 48.

correct every crookedness and reveal corruption, so that nature, faculty, and instinct retain their light, source, and disposition.

Critics' importance is not a trivial matter. They are the protectors of the tongue from error, and if they are absent, the consequences are dire. We cannot be safe from the pitfalls of the tongue if they are absent from correcting it. But this awareness that poetry is the house of Arabs will be accompanied by another awareness more acute and more penetrating: that poetry is a schismatic discourse completely and totally. There is insistence that poetry is a schismatic event fundamentally, as if it contradicts completely the requirements of the city and society. Here is where the artistry in inventing stories that consider poetry a gift from devils to humans is situated. The devil in the Arab Islamic imaginary has a story with schism, rebellion, and rejection. The likely view is that awareness of this schismatic nature is what made narrators surrender to the temptation of storytelling <sup>44</sup>.

What excuse does our contemporary critic have to abandon and forget what ancient critics established of concepts and terms that they rooted with rooting fulfilling the scientific conditions of the term and its rootedness in Arab speech? Among our examples by way of mention not enumeration: (transgression, deviation, emulation, isomorphism, meaning of meaning, fabric, plagiarism, poetic faculty, artistic image). They deviate from these concepts that in the modern era became productive critical theories with foreign Western names, although translation distorted the critical term twice:

**First** - Poor translation and its distortion of the intended meaning.

**Second** - Taking the term out of its environment in which it was produced and attempting to re-environmentalize it in texts other than its own.

What the ancient critics left behind in tradition suggests their constructive diligence, their high scientific status, and the extent of presence of intuition and pure natural insight in what they composed of jewels and what they classified of arts in dictionaries according to scientific methods of utmost precision and organization. Meanwhile, the generation of descendants in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries neglects this and pays attention only to what comes from across the sea. They do not trouble themselves with the effort of research and rooting except for being influenced by Western civilization and studying their literatures, translating their works, and weaving terms under different names. Their joy and delight in what they arrive at from translated conclusions and products, while what they rejoiced in is the same thing that saddened them when they found what corresponds to it, approximates it, and resembles it in our tradition standing before their eyes. If only he rejoiced the second time, but instead he turned back on his heels, denying and rejecting the beautiful favor, replacing the free original term, rejecting the gentle expression, preferring to choose foreign concepts copied from our productive Islamic Andalusian civilization, abundant with scholars whose knowledge spread throughout the world. Oh, our lost glory and the witnessed unique necklace.

Among those critical terms, specifically without expansion in this field: "semantic deviation, surface structure and deep structure, opposition, contrast, isomorphism, intertextuality, paratext, poetic image... and others that were translated from critical theories, yet we find them with the same depth and quality in our critical tradition. There is no excuse for contemporary Arab critics who are inspired by Western cultures at the expense of traditional Arab culture and not reviving, rooting, renewing, developing, and enriching it, except the excuse that Arab countries were historically targeted by invasion and occupation, which led to weakening their power and turned them into that despicable dependency, crushing crises, suffocating conflicts. Among the most prominent problematics raised by the critic "Muhammad Lutfi al-Yousfi" is

<sup>44</sup> See: Muhammad Lutfi al-Yousfi, Reading in Critical Terminology, Al-Aqsa University Journal, vol. 14, no. 1, 2010, p. 38.

his text: "How can modern Arab criticism unveil ancient texts, rediscover them, and stand on their literariness as long as it has not begun to discuss the ancients' terms in light of what the texts say and their achievements, instead of reading creative texts in light of those terms that conspired against texts and erased their schismatic character?

Therefore, the crisis of the term (ancient Arab critical) will reappear more violently, more severely and penetratingly when this contemporary Arab discourse deals with terms and concepts imported from Western cultures and stripped from their rooted origins within them, without encompassing the creative texts in whose light Western critics were able to invent those terms and concepts" <sup>45</sup>. Acculturation does not play its positive role unless a set of factors capable of determining the percentage of contribution in benefiting from foreign cultures or universal human creativity combine, whether represented in critical theorization and its procedural aspect or creative texts of different genres. Among these factors, **First:** consideration must be given to tradition as prior knowledge that requires our great attention and epistemological importance so that we transcend the meaning of rupture between the past and our neglect of it, and the modernist present and our clinging to it or dissolving and preoccupation with foreign culture in all its spectrums and colors. Knowledge of tradition is one of the most emphatic matters. **Second:** The matter of rupture with tradition or the past in various fields of life is among the most dangerous cognitive phenomena, as it creates a clear rift in the nation's belonging, authenticity, and identity. For this reason, we find the fear of it more intense in tone, and the insistence on connecting the present to the past is more important as a goal. The foreign creator may deceive us with new theories, and with good promotion and their spread, and showing the extent of their contemporaneity, but after long research and tracking we discover that what is new in the theory is a part that is original in our tradition that we neglected.

Therefore, attention to tradition and restudying it and encompassing it is considered cultural enrichment and cognitive provision that may form a cradle and foundation for every emerging creativity that keeps pace with aspirations and horizons in achieving creative uniqueness.

"Thus, ancient and contemporary Arab creative texts remained waiting for us to listen to them and rediscover them in light of what they abound with of evident values and dimensions" <sup>46</sup>. Hence we arrive at excavation and discovery of the critical problem that poses itself acutely and insistently through what the critic "Jabir Asfour" raised of problematics.

What is critical tradition and how do we read it? This question splits into two parts. **The first part** lies in attempting to know the possibility of determining the essence of tradition, its boundaries, and formations. As for **the second part**, it searches for reading mechanisms and how to study it and according to which procedural approach enables deepening knowledge of it. These problematics remain close in presentation despite being repeatedly posed questions with changing answers, because they are questions necessarily implicit, even if their order differs in each critical direction. The constancy of questions is connected to their implicit presence in every literary movement whose theoretical and applied aspects are integrated. The goal of reading tradition, in a new pattern, is no longer to restore the past with all its colorations and all the aesthetic values and literary principles associated with it. These principles and values have become associated with a rejected reference framework. Rebellion against it has become associated with individual liberation that proceeds from an opposite reference framework. This new framework elevates emotion over thought, imagination over reason, intuition over observation, spirit over body, ideal over matter, individual over group, innovation over imitation, originality over tradition, nature over craft, art over science, poetry over prose. In it,

<sup>45</sup> See: Muhammad Lutfi Yousfi, Reading in Critical Terminology, p. 44.

<sup>46</sup> See: Muhammad Lutfi Yousfi, Reading in Critical Terminology, p. 37.

imitation of the external world falls so that the voice of expressing the internal world of the "unique" individual who has become in his absolute presence a symbol of the entire era rises<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps the most prominent example of this analysis presented by "Jabir Asfour" is the liberation wave led by the pioneers of free verse since the mid-twentieth century in their rejection of the constraints of the poetic pillar and the establishment of a new vision more in keeping with its era. "The difficulty we face in new Arabic poetry is that we must define it in harmony with our tradition and in difference from it at the same time"<sup>48</sup>. Free verse had to get involved in the problems of change starting from the present that faces its challenges in various fields, especially the cultural among them and what it witnessed of awareness and openness to the other and being influenced by it. "Every creativity includes criticism of the past we have transcended and the present we change and build. The sign of newness (modernity) in Arabic poetry is its transformative energy that manifests in the echo of differences and the extent of addition in the extent of its difference from past works and in the extent of its enrichment of the present and future"<sup>49</sup>, with the aim of keeping pace with the frameworks of theoretical development of criticism and civilizational impact so that it forms its uniqueness that distinguishes it.

Effective critical reading requires determining the specificity of the critical text vis-à-vis the creative text that called for a particular reading at the time of the text's emergence, which necessitates paying attention to the nature of the literary text that the critic treats. It is not possible to criticize the text according to predetermined standards from texts that are temporally and intellectually prior.

Because the nature of creativity, literary renewal, and vision have differed in this era<sup>50</sup>, given what it witnesses of cognitive accumulations and critical approaches with their procedural mechanisms that require familiarity with them and precise knowledge of their theories and what they entail of thought in critically probing the creative text. But the matter is deeper and more profound if we direct criticism toward a critical text built according to the concomitants of its era and its cultural and social specificities. Thus it "does not transform into critical modernity except when it employs a critical apparatus by which it directly approaches the text as predecessors did not approach it"<sup>51</sup>, considering that what he does falls within receiving the critical text. It is a reading of the recipient's creativity who in turn received the creative text, and how to justify the result of those dialectical relationships that connected to tradition and critical practices that fed on different cultures that barely harmonize in a unified mold, due to the multiplicity of their currents, doctrines, origins, philosophies, ideologies, convictions, and intellectual paths "negatively and positively, summoning and projecting, research and technique. This cannot be achieved naturally without us killing tradition with knowledge, just as this killing that resembles in some aspects killing literature is the first means of liberation from its dominance and making room for natural growth. It falls in the positive zone between two negative positions, one of which is absolute dependence on it, and the other is categorical revolution against it, and both are dead ends"<sup>52</sup>, when we do not position tradition in the position it deserves of study and verification, and activate it as a foundational past for building

<sup>47</sup> See: Jabir Asfour, *Reading Critical Tradition*, p. 25.

<sup>48</sup> Adonis (Ali Ahmad Said), *Introduction to Arabic Poetry*, Dar al-Awda, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1971, p. 99.

<sup>49</sup> Adonis, *Introduction to Arabic Poetry*, p. 99.

<sup>50</sup> See: Salah Fadl, *Production of Significance*, Mukhtar Foundation, Cairo, 1st ed., n.d., p. 169.

<sup>51</sup> Abd al-Ghani Bara, *The Problematic of Rooting Modernity in Contemporary Arab Critical Discourse, A Dialogical Approach to Epistemological Origins*, Egyptian General Book Authority, Egypt, 1st ed., 2005, p. 231.

<sup>52</sup> Salah Fadl, *Production of Literary Significance*, p. 171.

contemporary creative criticism that encompasses our present and includes our past, memory, and civilization, seeking to form the project of renewed contemporary Arab criticism that rises with the literary text formed according to the spirit of the age and its requirements and awareness of it. "The strength of awareness of reality and its various components, entrenched in the critic's conscience and awareness, makes his relationship with tradition dialectical and selective. In this reality, whether at its local level or at its global level, not only newly emerging elements are represented, but also the fermentations that will soon bear fruit in the future as well" <sup>53</sup>. However, this intellectual dimension and awareness of it from the critical perspective led to divergence of visions and difference of positions toward our creative and critical heritage in the field of literature and other cultural and civilizational fields.

Consequently, viewpoints toward the creative process took a different space from conflicting positions about the elements forming creativity (the creator, the text, and the recipient), and that transformation it witnessed across literary eras and the changing field of interest. Just as ancient critics' interest intensified in the poet creator, his specifications, status, motives of creativity that ignite his talent, inflame his feelings, and his soul yearns for them, a period came in which the textual context swept the ground of creativity with the extra-textual space of the circumstances of the era, society, environment, and other influences that were long considered creative incentives and factors dictating to the creator his text and his concerns moving according to them and their variables. Then critical interest shifts with the development of linguistic research and interest in the internal relationships of language itself and its system based on the principle of duality toward sign formation, which opened the field widely before criticism and its systemic transformations in producing its sign meanings. Hence the task was entrusted to the recipient who receives the text and works on producing the meaning or the text's hidden meanings or saying what the text did not say, as well as filling its gaps and interpreting its implications or anticipating its prophecies, which opened the field before the contemporary critic toward systemic theorization of the text's structure, stylistics, and other levels of reception. The contemporary Arab critic's attempt to prove precedence for Arabs through "a reductive regressive reading of critical tradition whose result is that we repeat what we previously knew or that we confiscate what others arrived at knowing" <sup>54</sup>, from searching for the foundations of theorization and the circumstances of convergence and cognitive precedence by measuring "the present against the past. There is always a witness by which the absent is measured, and this measurement is not achieved unless both the witness and the absent share within their one nature in one specific thing that is considered for each of them one of the components" <sup>55</sup>.

This critical approach to tradition has been prevalent in tracking the Western import of critical terms or theoretical conceptions and what corresponds to them in Arab tradition. "It either attempts to arrange Western concepts first and then follow them in tradition to collect a nucleus for building a complete theory of a concept or critical orientation in it, or brings out the two together to give the illusion of their unity, or proposes them as advanced results at that time, and through modern critical questions naturally arrives at modernist results appearing latent in the depths of ancient Arab tradition" <sup>56</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> See: Salah Fadl, Production of Literary Significance, p. 172.

<sup>54</sup> Ali Harb, Thus I Read Beyond Thinking, Arab Foundation for Studies and Publishing, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 2005, p. 133.

<sup>55</sup> Muhammad Abid al-Jabiri, We and Tradition, Contemporary Readings in Our Philosophical Tradition, Arab Cultural Center, Beirut, Lebanon, and Casablanca, Morocco, 4th ed., 1985, p. 17.

<sup>56</sup> See: Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Problematics of Reading and Mechanisms of Interpretation, Arab Cultural Center, Beirut, Lebanon, and Casablanca, Morocco, 6th ed., 2001, p. 152.

**Conclusion:**

We conclude finally that reading critical tradition has not only risen with receiving the traditional text, whether creativity or criticism, by revealing its aspects, studying it, and reviving or reshaping it, but has taken a comparative and foundational path for what is modern or contemporary, Arab in formation or Western in coloring.

This has led to widening the circle of disagreement in positions calling for renewal according to a contemporary Western conception keeping pace with the transformation and cognitive development of criticism, and another clinging to tradition, adhering to its rules and standards, and a position seeking mediation between the two positions in establishing the combination of the two orientations toward the idea of authenticity and contemporaneity and defining critical culture in what serves the spirit of the age and its requirements and what corresponds with the ancient tradition that should not be underestimated for its abundance and richness inspiring important historical periods of our civilization, and with the aim of inspiring the experience and enriching it with its origin and the contemporary developments of the age and its requirements of theorization and cognitive accumulation of criticism.