
EXPLORING THE IDEAS OF IDENTITY IN ARABIC LITERATURE: THE INTERPLAY OF TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the evolution of identity concepts in Arabic literature through the dynamics of tradition and transformation. It delves into how identity, traditionally rooted in religious and ethnic elements, is reinterpreted within modern social and cultural contexts. By analyzing the historical progression of Arabic literature, the article highlights the portrayal of individual, national, regional, and religious identities across different periods. It also explores how globalization and modern technologies are reshaping the boundaries of identity. The study is dedicated to uncovering the various manifestations of identity in literary works, showcasing the continuous interplay between tradition and contemporary influences.

KEYWORDS: Arabic Literature, Cultural Traditions, Form and Style, Local Materials, National Culture, Globalization Trends, European Aesthetic Influences, Realistic Novel.

INTRODUCTION

Arabic literature has a rich history of several thousand years. During this period, it underwent a significant evolution, reflecting changes in the cultural identity of the Arab world under the influence of historical events and social changes.

In the 5th-6th centuries of pre-Islamic Jahiliyyah, tribalism and tribalism prevailed among the Arabs. Arabs used to identify themselves without separating themselves from their tribe. The main thing for the literature of the Age of Ignorance is not the depiction of people, but events: conflicts, clashes, wars that are important for tribes, and, as is typical of epic works, a person is depicted here, as if from the outside, only as an embodiment of certain qualities. Examples of this literature usually consisted of poetry, examples of oratory and fairy tales. It was rooted in tribal culture and limited to specific themes. Almost all of these themes had a common theme: the exploits and revenge of an extraordinary man who succeeds in conquering another, a hostile tribe, a woman, or all three. The historical traditions of the ancient Arabs have been preserved orally for a long time and passed down from generation to generation. Only at the beginning of the 8th-9th centuries, Arab philologists began to collect them in special collections, one such collection was called "Ayyam Al-Arab fi-l-jahiliya" ("Days of the Arabs in Ignorance")... brought to us daily materials about behavioral norms and psychology.

The identity of the Arabs of that time is not reflected in an individual person. Their identification consisted of caring for the honor and dignity of their tribe without separating from their tribe and community. They looked at themselves through the eyes of others and needed their approval and

respect. For example; The following phrase can also be found in the narration of "The Day of Al-Shibak": "They have killed our partner, and if they run away from us now, the Arabs will reproach us for this forever."

As we can see, protecting the honor of the tribe and living with the opinions of others is the identity of the Bedouin Arabs of that time and the tribe where they live.

Main part: VIII-XII centuries were the most productive period in the history of Arab culture. Oral creativity typical of the ancient Arabs was passed from one generation to another through narrators. The first written copies of this work appeared in the middle of the 8th century. Poetry occupies an important place in the identity of ancient Arabs. Even in this period, Arab tribal identity prevails. The poet was the "conscience" of the tribe and protected its interests and honor. He was never tired of praising the merits and virtues of his fellow tribesmen and exalting them to heaven, and condemning his enemies and razing them to the ground. Oriental scholar B.Ya. Shidfar describes the identity of Arab literature of this period as "man's close connection with nature, the manifestation of his spontaneous materialism, the lack of individuality of epic heroes." As an example, let's recall the famous author of Imrul Qays:

Stop, let's remember your half address and cry a little.

Between Dukhul and Khovmala valleys.

Yorim did not take away your traces,

Wind blows from south to north .

As we can see, the worldview of the ancient Bedouins was limited and related to nature and animals. All of these are characteristics of the identity of a person who came out of a seed-breeding society. The environment in which the nomadic Arabs lived had very difficult conditions, where nature showed more kindness towards man, but a cruel world.

In the imagination of the ancients, fate ruled over human life, bringing either blessed rains or disastrous droughts. Man does not see himself as a person in this world, he is connected with the world through his clan, tribe. His gaze is not focused on his spiritual world, but more on the external world, the natural world.

In a society with developed tribal relations, a person imagines the whole existence in a holistic form, although he does not understand the universe philosophically, his artistic thinking is unique, bright, attractive and figurative. For him, all natural things are a symbol of beauty. When the Bedouin Arab describes the environment surrounding him, he does not approach this world through abstract philosophical categories, but interprets it through beautiful artistic images. Medieval Arabic literature was formed under the influence of the values of the Arab desert culture of nomadic tribes (Bedouins). The poets of the Middle Ages followed the example of their ancient predecessors and learned from them the main genre and compositional features, images and realities of nomadic Bedouin identity. It was during this period that the concept of "Arabs" gradually changed.

For scattered Arab tribes, the emergence of Islam became a global event, and the first Arab state in history - the Arab Caliphate - was born. The religion of Islam, the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, the spread of Islam in the lands conquered by the Arabs, and other events that fundamentally changed the lives of the Arabs in the middle of the 7th century had a great impact on the Arab

identity. In particular, while the Arabic ode retains its traditional partial integration and the essence of the genre, new topics related to religion have entered it. The poets who changed from pagan identity to Muslim identity now glorified Islam and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Understanding the Qur'an gave birth to divine prose and religious philosophy. From a local medium of communication, Arabic became the language of a new religion and emerging empire. Literature acquired a strongly expressed Islamic identity, which eventually became its defining characteristic. By the 20th century, Arabic writers continued the ancient tradition and became famous for their romantic works, but they began to express this theme in a more open way, contrary to the Arab-Muslim identity. Among them, we can cite the Egyptian Najib Mahfouz (1911-2006), winner of the 1988 Nobel Prize in Literature and his collection "Love in the Rain" , as well as his compatriot Ehsan Abd ul-Quddus (1919-1990), the author of many famous melodrama scripts .

"Anger took hold of him, then despair replaced him. In the meantime, Rashvan decided that the "fruit is ripe" and it was time to collect it, and suggested:

- The office environment is not very conducive to intimate conversation. Shall we go out for dinner? Something stuck in Mona's throat. But Rashvan did not notice the girl's excitement and added involuntarily:

- It is useful for a movie actress to get to know how they eat at "Al-Amariya" restaurant. Mona heard him gasp and angrily slapped him across the face. Rashwan staggered but stayed on his feet and hit the girl angrily. Mona fell and he was standing over Mona shouting:

- Naughty girl! You think you are! Have you decided to make yourself a fantasy girl in our age?!"

Arabic literature continues to evolve and change in the 21st century in response to the era of globalization and digital technologies. Arab writers engage with readers around the world, while themes of cultural identity are explored in the context of interactions and intercultural communication. This is reflected in the work of modern Arab writers such as Alaa al-Aswani. In the novel "Chicago" by Alaa al-Aswani, the theme of interaction between Arab and Western cultures is covered. "The dream of living in America" for many years influenced the minds of not only Western writers, but also writers of the whole world, including Arab authors who contributed to the creation of works embodying the global concept of the dream.

Alaa Al-Aswani in his novel "Chicago" presented the supernatural concept of the "American Dream" in the Arabic version. The writer describes the integration of Arabs into the Western society in different situations - in the land of dreams, in a crowded place with representatives of different races, in a world rich in political and social events. In the novel, the heroes' desire and lust, alienation and confusion, and the internal struggle between the East and the West are shown. Such a struggle ultimately leads to the inability to renounce the East and join the West, and the inability to accept Western values, culture and identity.

In order to achieve the "American dream", Arab immigrants must abandon their traditions and identity and accept the concept of understanding the dream in American society. Therefore, Arab immigrants who are strongly attached to their culture and traditions cannot fully realize their dreams. The author himself trained as a dentist, but as he explained to Rachel Cook, his fascination with town and country didn't last long, and he eventually returned to Egypt..." .

Many of the characters in the play commit actions that are considered natural and acceptable in Western societies, but tragic and wrong in Arab society at the same time. A. Al Aswani's "American Dream" is presented from the point of view of Egyptian Arabs in the novel "Chicago", Arab immigrants find it difficult to achieve the "American Dream" due to social factors and ancient traditions that subordinate concepts such as "honor".

All the heroes of the novel, who retreated from their traditions and imaginations, could not find a way not to drown in the mire of worldly pleasures due to depression and deprivation. In the novel, Egyptian immigrants abandon the spiritual purpose of life and live for materialism. Adultery is considered one of the greatest sins in Arab culture. But when the novel's characters come to the United States, they see it as a way to assimilate into Western culture and thus embrace the "American Dream" imagined by American society. What is considered success for a person with a conservative oriental upbringing is lost under the influence of western traditions.

If we can conclude from the above, Arabic literature was greatly influenced by other cultural traditions (Persian in the Middle Ages, European classical culture in the New Age) at least twice during its history. It is these three literatures - each of them in their own time and each of them showing examples of form and style typical of that period - based on local materials, absorbed into the national culture and stimulated the development of Arabic literature.

Conclusion: The development trajectory of Arabic literature is undoubtedly closely related, on the one hand, to the complex history of the Arab world, and on the other hand, to globalization trends and the dominance of European aesthetic models. Nevertheless, the works of Arab authors were not lost in any foreign culture. In addition, they "chased" European literature in the realistic novel genre and created works in the style of postmodernism, and were inspired by the national art of words in search of new literary forms. This is the reason for speaking about the "Arabization" of Arabic literature in the second half of the last century. Today, in a situation where the number of works that can be included in the category of ethnoliterature has increased, this tendency can be seen to be growing stronger.

Throughout these changes, Arabic literature remained a powerful tool for expressing and shaping cultural identity in the Arab world. Writers continue to explore the nuances and complexities of Arab societies, and their literary works reflect the ongoing evolution of cultural identity in the region. Thus, the Arab cultural identity remains vital and continues to develop.

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