

Features of Shakespearean Sonnets in the poems of Saadi Youssef

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Abstract: The sonnet, as invented by the Italians through Lentino and more closely associated with Petrarch, means in its original Italian-European form a "short song." By "song" here, we mean a concentrated, distilled, and specific form; it is an internal song of the soul, a flowing whisper, a revelation undisturbed by the noise of an external voice. Just as the sonnet was associated with Petrarch in Italy, it was associated with Shakespeare in England, although it was first brought by English poets in the sixteenth century. However, Shakespeare's sonnets, written at the end of that century, were essentially a tradition of writing, based on a single, specific feeling, with the idea being revealed or closed as a conclusion in the last two lines. In fact, the precursors of the sonnet in Arabic and Eastern poetry in general can be discerned in the lyrical pieces of Andalusian poets. Moreover, attempts at the structural formation of the sonnet in relatively later periods of Arabic poetry are present.

Keywords: Sonnet, Elizabethan era, lyric poetry, aristocracy, petrarch.

First Topic : The presence of the sonnet in Saadi Youssef's poetry: What Saadi did and excelled at here is that he adhered strictly to the Shakespearean form of the sonnet: that is, fourteen lines, not fourteen verses, divided into sections with a changing rhyme that combines quatrains and couplets, where three quatrains with multiple rhymes and a uniform meter are followed by a couplet (of two hemistichs, not two verses) with a different rhyme, as the Arabic verse is built from two hemistichs, not as in the European sonnet where each line forms a verse; and it becomes clear to us that the importance of studying sonnets in Saadi Youssef's poetry of all kinds is due to the different dimensions and connotations it possesses, and because Saadi Youssef innovated in poetic purposes that differ from those brought by Shakespeare, as if the poem passes through another world; and the goal is to reveal the beauty of this poetic type through the study of Saadi Youssef's poetry. The sonnet is a poetic art form that gained great popularity among poets during a period of the Renaissance. Linguistically, the word (sonnet) is derived from the Italian (sonetto), meaning a small song or short poem intended for singing. The distant root is the Latin word (son) which means sound. In terms of terminology, the sonnet is a short poetic poem with a special artistic system that is written and organized in a pause (Anani, 2016). The sonnet system is considered an extension of the Andalusian muwashshah system, which was prevalent in the Andalusian era. When we trace the development of this poetic art and how it became a popular lyrical art in Europe, and then how this poetic style was marketed to contemporary Eastern poets, most European writers and historians of literature believe that the sonnet is a beautiful poetic art that first appeared in Italy, and then moved to the rest of the European countries. The themes around which the sonnet poem revolved were love, passion, and the call of the heart, as well as flirtation. However, we notice that the focus of the poetic themes has developed thanks to the new poetic themes that were enriched by contemporary Arab poets, those themes that mimic alienation from homelands, the pains of separation, and longing. It seems that sonnets became a poetic art when contemporary Arab poets took it up and its new themes began to adorn the themes that Europeans organized their poetry in the style of sonnets. It is a soliloquy about life, alienation, and the recollection of memories. Arabic sonnets broke the shackles of traditional literary poetry and rebelled

against the constraints of meter and rhyme. The sonnet did not adopt a specific rhythm in a specific meter, but it was written in several poetic meters with compatible and different metrical patterns: such as the long, the simple, and the light, but the most common was the ramal, which is the most suitable rhythm for the sonnet, as it was in the muwashshah, as well as the complete, the abundant, the close, and the And poetic meters. In order to apply these theoretical ideas and impressionistic perceptions of the contemporary Arabic sonnet poem, we turn to the poet Saadi Youssef as a model of that literary marketing coming from Europe, as our poet was influenced by the English poet Shakespeare in all the dimensions and features of this art.

Second Topic : Features of the Arabic Sonnet in Saadi Youssef's Poetry: Saadi Youssef wrote his "Sonnet Collection" in 2018. His collection closely resembles a form of Shakespearean poetry, drawing inspiration from its sonnet symbolism and content. The sonnet is a non-Arabic poetic form based on a strict formal unity consisting of fourteen lines. Its rhyme scheme adheres to a specific system, and the sonnet is divided into four stanzas. The first three stanzas each consist of four lines, while the final stanza consists of two lines. The rhymes in the first three stanzas are consistent, with the rhyme of the first line being the same as the third, and the rhyme of the second and fourth lines. Each stanza stands alone. The final stanza, consisting of two lines, ends with a double rhyme (Shakespeare's Sonnets, 2005). In his introduction to "Sonnet Collection," Saadi Youssef states: "The sonnet, as a form, is ancient, written by..." Petrarch (1304-1374), a Renaissance poet, wrote in the five-syllable Iambian meter. Then Shakespeare came along and wrote, between the years 1593-1596, the famous and beloved sonnets, which numbered one hundred and fifty-four. Shakespeare created a new dawn for the sonnet, as he put his stamp on the sonnet (Saadi Youssef: 2018). Saadi Youssef describes the sonnet as: "A difficult self-examination, in a time that is lenient even with its own people, but it is the ordeal of experimentation... The garment has become too tight and worn, and it has brought in what is unsuitable. I have tried to tame a tiger" (same source: 2018). In his formal proposal for the Arabic sonnet, he wrote in several poetic meters, both combined and different, and did not adhere to a specific meter. He wrote in the long meter, saying:

Why do I see the color of violets in the water,

And light from the water in the oak's peaks?

Is this what I longed for in my dream?

Or have my names risen like a rose-colored banner?

I was terrified by my rebellious soul and my neighbor.

The sonnet is very similar to the muwashshah, and both are Western art forms that entered the East later. However, our poet Saadi Youssef adhered to a conformity to the Shakespearean form of the sonnet in terms of transgression and difference, which constitute an obsession for the poet Saadi Youssef. The true dimension of the sonnet art goes back to the East and belongs to an authentic Arab art that was known as (the lyrical muwashshah) to dust it off, breathe life into it, and revive it anew. It is noteworthy that this poetic art did not enter into the interests of prosodists and specialists, and did not take sufficient space in either theory or practice (Saadi Youssef, 2013).

Abstraction in Saadi Youssef's Poetry: Perhaps among the finest fruits of Saadi Youssef's poetic experiments is his poem that seeks to strip language of its superfluities, attempting to approach one or more pure poetic directions, or a pure Arabic poetry in an abstract, pictorial tendency. He emphasized austerity and the abandonment of excesses in expression, presenting the poetic scene to the viewer as if it were a tranquil painting hinting at its inner worlds and avoiding direct emotional expression. Through this inclination, Saadi Youssef was able to create a unique poem that, as far as possible, sheds formal eloquence and lofty style, or the oral tradition that relies on a booming voice and theatrical performance. This is the kind of poetry that aims to release tension and measures the dramatic distance between itself and the reader by arousing in them the possibility of responding to their passionate emotions, because the success of Arabic poetry in general has been linked to the inherent intensity it possesses, from Imru' al-Qais to the poetry of the pioneers of Arab modernism.

We can say that the tendency towards abstract imagery in Saadi Youssef's performance was intended to get rid of the romanticism of revolutionary poetry, of which he was one of the most important representatives. Perhaps Saadi Youssef's poetic performance was foreshadowed, before the maturity of his project, by that tendency towards avoiding verbosity in poetry and moving away from the high, vocal rhythm and the dazzling, fragmented images. He is closer to gentleness in touching things with precision and delicacy. We believe that this tendency constitutes the distinctive and most obvious identity of Saadi Youssef's poetry, some features of which were obscured by the abundance of his production. A large number of his nineties poems attempt to move formally towards this direction: simplicity, reduction, the single image, relief from longing, and intense emotion.

Characteristics of sonnets in Saadi Youssef's poetry : The boundaries between Saadi Youssef's life, marked by exile, displacement, and constant movement, and the unique nature of his poetic experience—characterized by a persistent experimentation with forms (and the resulting transformations)—appear to be largely intertwined. At the same time, his writing is characterized by its richness and diversity in terms of themes. While this poet continues his creative output, in the modern era, poets have begun to embrace free verse and a wide range of themes, meanings, expressions, symbols, metaphors, and similes. This has prompted reflections on various studies of other cultures, all of which have left their mark on Saadi Youssef's new poetry, which is distinguished by the following characteristics.

1. His sonnets were characterized by an abundance of poetic imagery and a dynamic quality.
2. The sonnet became famous in Saadi Youssef's non-Arabic artistic style, imitating Shakespeare's sonnets, as it consists of fourteen lines, not fourteen verses, divided into sections with a changing rhyme that combines quatrains and couplets, where there are three quatrains with multiple rhymes and a uniform weight, followed by a couplet (of two lines, not two verses) with a different rhyme.
3. His personal experience mirrored the poet's life as he summarized his own autobiography.
4. His discourse in the sonnets mimics his image as a child in Basra and as a young man in the bars of Baghdad, as his sonnets are characterized by self-narcissism.
5. The sonnet sections have a new structural identity in their style, and mark the beginning of an era of experimentation.
6. The structural form of the sonnet is formed between the quatrain and the couplet, i.e., two hemistichs (not two verses) with a different rhyme.

We note that his poetry is characterized by a deep sense of daily life and a deep dramatic sense of the tragedy of human existence. The poetic image in his poetry is based on comprehensiveness and depth. He developed the poetic music and made it appropriate to its linguistic structure, so it moves away from lyricism to a kind of internal rhythm and structure that responds to his new experiences. The Egyptian poet Ahmed Abdel Mo'ti Hegazi says about him: (Saadi Youssef is a unique, comprehensive voice, in which is the essence of the art of those who preceded him. And he is also a vanguard for those who came after him, a pure, chosen language, and a named melancholy that, if it touches you, you smell the scent of Saadi) (Al-Arabi Magazine, 2021); The poet Ahmed Rafeh said of him, affirming that Saadi Youssef is the epitome of modern Arabic poetry. He searches beyond language for the deprivation that pervades this universe. He is a poet of a great cause, which he tried to present in his own unique style. Poetry became his ultimate refuge, indeed the only thing that truly understood him. We find him addressing any subject in his poetry, whether political, social, or historical. For him, revolution is capable of protecting people. Rafeh added that Saadi was swept away by the winds of travel, and his poetry overflowed with diverse geographical locations, employing them to express his immediate emotional state through his extensive wanderings. The texts he presented are unconventional, reflecting a prolific poetic output intertwined with historical, religious, mythological, and political symbols. He added that "his experience, spanning more than half a century, enabled him to shift from one direction to another and from one poetic phase to another. During this time, he was influenced by numerous Arab and foreign sources, as well as Marxist thought, which inspired him and

which he pondered at length as he continued to write poetry within the fabric of life, both on a personal and poetic level." (Dhiaa) Khodair, 2021).

The suggestive backgrounds of Saadi Youssef's sonnets: Water is one of the most important vital and desirable elements in the life of the poet Saadi Youssef, and it is more evident in his symbolic works and semantic variations. Saadi is a poet who lived amidst an aquatic geographical environment, and succeeded in formulating the Epic of Gilgamesh, which was published in the *Al-Adib Al-Thaqafi* newspaper. Water is considered one of the elements of the theory of imagination, which Saadi Youssef dealt with as one of the major symbolic patterns. He possesses a leaping imagination that tries to comprehend what we see, as he searches for the essences of poetry. Saadi Youssef's poem was influenced by the Shakespearean sonnet, as it is an impression of a historical touch on the sonnet and the Andalusian *muwashshah*. In addition, Saadi Youssef's poem encompasses the subject of the poetic meter of the English sonnet written in the (Imby) pentatonic meter, and the system followed in the Arabic *muwashshah* and the focus on places in the poem. In addition to the clear and significant influence of the Greek poet Yannis Ritsos (1909-1990) on our poet Saadi Youssef in his collection (*The Sonnet*), where he translated a number of his poems into Arabic (Yannis, Ritsos, 1979); perhaps the most prominent feature of Ritsos's poetry is his keen interest in observing the details of daily life in Greece. He evokes many simple, neglected things that seem outwardly forgotten, and he reformulates their aesthetic qualities and reveals the poet's hidden poetic talent, which is not apparent at first glance. He relied on this simplicity, which is based on scrutiny and examination – on hidden depths, beginning with the title of the poem (*The Meaning of Simplicity*) (Peter, 1985). All these details are the most prominent feature of his poetic method, which has found tangible echoes in modern Arabic poetry, especially among poets of the prose poem who found in the narrative presence what suits them (An-Najah University, 2011). In addition to the aforementioned suggestive influences on Saadi Youssef's sonnets, another noteworthy point is Youssef's translation of some of Ritsos's poems. This translation reflected an admiration and influence that had begun to develop within Youssef. From the outset, Youssef identified the distinctive poetic features of Ritsos, features whose echoes are clearly evident in Youssef's own poetry. In the introduction to his translated anthology, Youssef states, "I have always felt, while reading Ritsos's poetry, that behind his work lies a tremendous effort and a refined, pure spirit that has elevated his poem of everyday life to this extraordinary piece of crystal. His poem is a poem of the everyday phenomenon imbued with a reconstructed mythology" (same source). This contrasts sharply with the grand pronouncements and rousing themes that characterized some of the poetry of the 1950s and 60s (Jaber Saadi, 2003). Youssef's poetic inclinations aligned with Ritsos's poetic style, adopting some of its features, including "the reduction of the rhetoric of modern Arabic poetry and its increasing reliance on..." The imagery is important, and metaphor is the actual determinant, and perhaps the only one for the poetics of the text, as many resort to it to write poetry devoid of rhetorical means, and are satisfied with the poetics of paradox and the tension of the scene, benefiting in his poetry from the techniques of narration and its rhetoric (Saleh Fakhri, 1998); and Saadi Youssef's following of these minute details and monitoring them came as a result of the influence of the environments in which he lived and his movement between many cities of the world with their diversity and difference (Imtinan Al-Samadi, 2001). It is worth noting that the presence of narrative in Saadi Youssef's poetry is no less than the presence of narrative in Ritsos, and that this suggestion cannot be confined to his poetry alone (Al-Alaq Ali Jaafar, 2002). The dividing lines between Saadi Youssef's biography with exile, travel, and changing places, and the nature of his poetic experience with its persistent experimentation with forms (and the attempts that led to transformations), seem to be greatly overlapping. At the same time, his writing experience is characterized, on the level of themes, by abundance and diversity. While this poet continues his creative fertility, all these flashes came as a result of subjective and objective pressures, and they are part of the pleasure in rejection and the pleasure in deprivation that Saadi Youssef focused on in this multiplicity in the process of exile. It came latent in the depths of consciousness, but in it is a shift of travel to the places of alienation, loneliness, and fascination with strange things. It is worth mentioning that there is an analysis of spacetime and a flow that leads to many points and relationships that allow for approximating the type of those sites, scenes and investigative references. Saadi Youssef focuses

on the comprehensiveness of these flashes, and he assumes their extensions with a flow of detail and random selection to investigate the event and negate random selection. Saadi reveals things with an investigative distribution approach and with focused review processes so that they turn into a retrospective diagnosis based on estimated things. In his poem "The Sun That Doesn't Come," there is an unnatural pull towards place and language, and its meanings, which managed to capture Saadi's perceptions and also the poetic structure and rhythm. Reaching that painful transparency was reaching a skillful interpretation and all the meanings of alienation within place. These are "Poems from Fortessa," Sweden. The general meaning of the word is "longing," and longing takes on its true meaning in alienation because it coincides with the truth of the definition. It becomes a connection and a basis that can be understood hazily, but Saadi defines his highest basis in longing and its appreciative nature, which ends in a dialogue with the self: "Even in the shade of the palm trees without shade." This attributive description contains compelling subjective qualities. There is a time assumed beforehand. The desire for extension, avoiding scandal, and liberation from attachment and the distance of connection urge Saadi to strip himself of all secret qualities and for Saadi to regain his resistance: "On this cold Sunday, I longed for My country "The bone is weak and my head is ablaze with gray hair." It is difficult to retrieve the complex past times, and the place returns to Saadi's memory for a support that includes this spatiotemporal turn until he investigates all the possibilities of non-existence for the poet because he agreed to extend into this turn, and he investigated the possibility of non-existence and futility, but he is real in all the solutions, and the word tempts with the methodology that Saadi mobilized in forming a sensory turn that beautifies this text that took care of the longing for his country, and Saadi reached at this moment an experience of abstraction in forming the phrase, and the ultimate touch of the alienation that Saadi evoked in his sonnets.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the sonnet, a European poetic form originating in Italy with Giacomo da Lentino and associated with Francesco Petrarca, later flourishing in England with William Shakespeare, did not remain a closed mold within its original cultural context. Rather, it transformed into a poetic structure transcending languages and cultures, open to reshaping and interpretation. Upon its arrival in contemporary Arabic poetry, it was not merely a formal imitation, but became a field for creative interaction between the Arabic lyrical heritage and the rigorous European structure.

The study also reveals that the poet Saadi Youssef approached the sonnet as an aesthetic and epistemological challenge. He adhered to Shakespearean structure in terms of line count and division, but simultaneously redirected this form towards themes of self, exile, memory, and longing. For him, the sonnet became a space for intensifying personal and existential experience, not simply an imitation of a European model. He combined formal rigor with semantic freedom, expanding the themes of the sonnet beyond traditional love poetry to encompass alienation, existential questions, and the plight of contemporary humanity.

The study also revealed that Saadi Youssef's tendency toward abstraction and linguistic austerity endowed the sonnet with a distinctive modernist dimension. He dispensed with rhetorical embellishments and high-flown, oratorical rhythms, opting instead for a focused image and an internal rhythm that resonated with profound emotional experience. In this sense, his use of the sonnet was not a return to the past, but rather a conscious experimental act seeking to revive an ancient form within a new poetic framework.

Therefore, Saadi Youssef's experiment in writing sonnets represents a prominent example of the capacity of contemporary Arabic poetry to absorb and reinterpret imported forms within a different cultural context, thus achieving a balance between authenticity and innovation. This experience confirms that the sonnet is no longer a purely European art form, but has become part of the modern Arab poetic scene, bearing the poet's imprint and experience, and proving that major poetic forms remain viable as long as they find someone to breathe new life into them.

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