Imitations as Rhetorical Tool and its Position into Literary Influence[(*)]

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Abstract:

This paper examines Arabic poetry imitations, *mu'āraḍāt,* in the aspect of *mu'āraḍah* definition and the aspect of its position in the literary influence and where it can be placed. Those two aspects are problematic because imitation, *mu'āraḍah,* is differently conceived than what comes to mind when hearing the word *imitation*. The paper investigates those two aspects and examines eastern and western scholars' perspectives. It reaches a conclusion that imitation, *mu'āraḍah,* is featured in admiration and desire to challenge, and that makes imitation, *mu'āraḍah,* a rhetorical tool. Imitation, *mu'āraḍah,* does not fit into the study of influence.
Keywords: Imitation, *mu'āraḍah,* literary influence, rhetoric.

الملخص:

تتناول الدراسة المعارضة الشعرية العربية من زاويتين اثنتين: تعريفها، وموقعها في دائرة التأثير الأدبي. والبحث في هاتين الزاويتين غير واضح المعالم في الخطاب الأدبي الإنجليزي لأن المعارضة في الشعر العربي لها مفهوم يختلف عن المصطلح الذي تُرجم له غالبا وهو (imitation)، وهو المصطلح الذي يتبادر إلى الذهن أولاً. تتناول الدراسة الحالية هاتين الزاويتين وتستعرض آراء الباحثين العرب والأجانب وتضعها تحت مجهر الفحص. ومن ثم، تصل الدراسة إلى عدد من النتائج، من أهمها أن المعارضة تتميز عن غيرها من الأجناس لوجود دافع الإعجاب ودافع التحدي لدى الشاعر، مما يجعل المعارضة وسيلة بلاغية، كما أن المعارضة لا تندرج ضمن التأثير الأدبي بمفهومه النقدي.
الكلمات المفتاحية: المعارضة، التأثير الأدبي، البلاغة، النقد.

Introduction:

Men are imitative creatures. Aristotle states that imitation is one of the characteristics of human beings, one of the features of men. He says that imitation is "one of his advantages over the lower animals." Imitation is also the most essential method for a human being to gain knowledge and practice to acquire skills. He "learns first," says Aristotle "by imitation".[1] Imitation is a significant learning tool even in our current century.[2] Thus, it is impossible for a human being to live his life without imitating others. Imitation also helps human beings to improve. Mark Johnson states that "understanding requires simulation."[3] This means people imitate unintentionally because they do so unconsciously. It is, therefore, obvious that imitation is inevitable. Its inevitability reflects on numerous aspects in a man's life including writing poetry. However, this paper examines imitation from a perspective that is different from that of Aristotle. It is rhetorical imitation that Arabic poets have used and for them it is a literary sub-genre called *mu'āraḍah*. This current study discusses two subjects: (a) Arabic *mu'āraḍāt* in general and how they are examined by scholars, (b) the literary influence that enables us to determine whether we can place Arabic *mu'āraḍah* within this concept.

Arabic mu'āraḍah:

Etymologically, *mu'āraḍah,*[4] derived from the verb *'āraḍ* whose root is *'a, r, ḍ,* has five meanings in *Lisān al-'Arab*: (a) *mu'āraḍah* is when two things or people face each other, (b) it is when one has two things face each other, (c) it is when two people study something, (d) it is when one competes with someone else, and (e) it is when one does or brings about something that matches what another person does or brings about.[5] It is worthwhile to pause and see if one or more of these meanings are more favorable to *mu'āraḍāt* as a literary work.[6] The last two meanings seem the most suitable for the term

muʿāraḍah; it is either that a later poet wants to compete with his predecessor and thus writes a *muʿāraḍah,* or a poet wants to create a poem that resembles in some respect his predecessor's poem and thus writes a *muʿāraḍah.* Hence I do not agree with Losensky when he describes Von Grunebaum's translation "matching" as a "remote sense."[7] The meanings *b* and *c* are obviously not relevant to the *muʿāraḍāt* sense. Meaning *a* is not proper to the term's sense because a poet and a predecessor do not literally face each other; even if we interpret this meaning figuratively and think of them as two rival poets, it will not be suitable because two people, not one, must be involved in the action. In most *muʿāraḍāt,* if not all, a poet and predecessor do not meet face to face while writing the allusion and model.

Terminologically speaking, al-Shinnāwī's concept of *muʿāraḍāt* is that a *muʿāraḍah* is caused by admiration of the model and resembles it in rhyme, meter and subject. *Muʿāraḍāt,* the literary present "interacts" with the literary past, or legacy. *Muʿāraḍāt* enrich poetry in general.[8] Al-Shinnāwī's concept of *muʿāraḍāt* is facile, and he does not elaborate on it. By limiting the literary present's interaction with a past legacy, it seems that he believes that *muʿāraḍāt* are made by contemporary poets merely to allude to traditional past models. However, a poet can allude to a past poet and contemporary poet equally. For example, ibn al-Fāriḍ, who is al-Būṣīrī's contemporary, writes a *muʿāraḍah* of the latter's famous poem, *al-Burdah.*

Ahmad al-Shāyib says, with regard to defining *muʿāraḍāt*:

Muʿāraḍah in poetry is when a poet writes a poem in a particular subject, rhyme and meter, and another poet admires its artistic aspects and its great structure. The later poet, therefore, writes a poem in the same meter and rhyme, and about the same subject or with a slight or big swerve. He, [while writing his poem,] is assiduous in matching the predecessor's poem artistically or

surpassing it, without satirizing and abusing him and without overtly boasting; he [the later poet] brings about images and notions that aesthetically equal or surpass the predecessor's.[9]

Besides similarities between the allusion and its model in rhyme, meter, and subject, two significant features are mentioned in al-Shāyib's paragraph: admiration and challenge.

To sum up, there are two stages that should exist in the allusion process. The first stage is admiration, which should exist before writing the allusion; the later poet should be full of admiration for the model poem when he reads or hears it. The second stage, which should exist after the first stage, is the *desire* for challenge; the later poet should desire to challenge the predecessor to produce an allusion that is aesthetically equal to the model or outdoes it. Based on these two stages, the very famous *naqāʿiḍ* between Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are excluded from *muʿāraḍāt* because they lack admiration; all the other conditions of *muʿāraḍāt,* including the similarity in rhyme, meter and subject, and challenge, exist. A lack of desire to challenge, on the other hand, weakens the later poet's allusion, insofar as it will be regarded weak. Classical Arabic poets, I argue, are very aware of this and realize that it is better not to allude to an admired poem if one does not desire to challenge it, even though high prizes are presented to encourage them to do so. Ibn Bassām's anecdote about Ṣāʿid, an Andalusian poet, is a good example; al-Manṣūr remembers Abū Nuwās's poem *O Neighbor of our Two Houses* and asks Ṣāʿid to allude to it. The latter refuses and says:

Indeed, in your high [presence]

I do not dare to improvise speaking in it [allusion]

How [is it possible] to, without preparation, reach someone [Abū Nuwās]

Who cannot be reached with calculation?

إنــي لمســتــحي عُـــلا   ك من ارتجال القول فيهِ

من ليس يُدرك بالرويـ   ـة كيــف يُدرك بالبـديهِ

Al-Manṣūr still insists that Ṣāʿid allude to Abū Nuwās's poem. After spending the day and night thinking how to compile an allusion, Ṣāʿid comes the following day and recites an imitation for al-Manṣūr in which, according to Ibn Bassām, Ṣāʿid is portrayed as weak.[10] In this anecdote, it is obvious that Ṣāʿid tries to convince al-Manṣūr to excuse and exempt him from alluding to such an excellent model; in his two lines he attempts to convey to al-Manṣūr a message that he does not have the ability to allude to Abū Nuwās's poem at all, either with or without calculation.

After examining three allusions, Paul Losensky points out significant qualities for Arabic *muʿāraḍāt:*[11] (a) each allusion has its own distinct features even though it uses the same rhyme and meter as the model poem, (b) readers' understanding of the model poem informs their understanding of the allusions, (c) the allusions are new interpretations of the model, so they may change the readers' appreciation and understanding of the model in some respect, (d) the model does not impose restrictions on the later poets' freedom and ability to create new poetic images, (e) the later poet expresses his poetic admiration of the model when using the rhyme and meter, and (f) even though a poet may allude to an old poem, he "must speak in his own voice to his own times."[12]

More than one important point will be added to my final definition of *muʿāraḍāt;* for the time being, however, is a *muʿāraḍah* necessarily a new interpretation of its model, as point *c* states? Is it possible that Losensky draws his inference from these three allusions, which coincide with giving new interpretations, and yet we should not generalize this point to *muʿāraḍāt*? I believe that giving a new interpretation, though possible, is not necessary. A *muʿāraḍah* can be merely a demonstration of how poetically skillful the later poet is, or

how much more skillful than his predecessor he is. Al-Shāyib's definition above does not require an artist to give a new interpretation in *muʿāraḍāt*. The example of Ṣāʿid and al-Manṣūr is a supportive one, as well; disregarding the former's poem's quality, the example shows that Ṣāʿid's poem is technically *muʿāraḍah*, as Ibn Bassām regards it, even though it does not give a new interpretation of the model as it is understood from Ibn Bassām's criticism of it.

Before moving to another critic, let me support Losensky's point *f* with an Arabic literary example. Abū al-ʿAtāhiyh's poem, whose first line is:

"What ails my lady?

Is she coy and I must bear her coyness?"[13]

ألا ما لسيدتي ما لها   أدلاً فأحمل إدلالها

is, according to Nawfal,[14] an allusion to al-Aʿshā's poem, whose first line reads:

Say to that [girl], "what is the matter?"

Does she carry her belongings for separation?

ألا قل لتياك ما بالها   أللبين تحدج أحمالها

Abū al-ʿAtāhiyah, in his allusion, does not limit himself to the predecessor's language. He speaks in a new language and uses a new technique; he exploits *ghazal* for political purposes.[15]

Nawfal differentiates between two kinds of *muʿāraḍah*: a complete *muʿāraḍah* (*muʿāraḍah tāmmah*) and incomplete *muʿāraḍah* (*muʿāraḍah nāqiṣah)*. A complete *muʿāraḍah* is one that agrees with its model in subject, rhyme and meter. An incomplete *muʿāraḍah* is one that does not agree with its model in one of three aspects.[16] He mentions that besides admiration, a social relationship is a motivator for a poet to write an allusion. His example is the case of the contemporary poets Ṣafiyy al-Dīn al-Ḥillī and Ibn Nabātah; they were

very close friends and alluded to each other.[17]

I have some reservations regarding Nawfal's opinions. First, I do not agree that a *mu'āraḍah* and its model may not coincide in subject; I believe that its subject has to match the model's subject to a certain extent. In other words, I am inclined to divide a model's subject into a general subject and a narrow one. A *mu'āraḍah,* in order to be considered as a *mu'āraḍah,* has to agree with its model's general subject at least; if it fails to do so, it is not a *mu'āraḍah,* either complete or incomplete. Nawfal and others[18] do not mention examples of poetry that support their claim. The only example of different-subject *mu'āraḍah* that Nawfal mentions in his book is al-Kumayt's *mu'āraḍah*, whose first line reads:

I am enthused, not enthused by yearning for the white [girls]

Nor by playing tricks. Does a man with grey hair play tricks?

طربتُ وما شوقا إلى البيض أطربُ   ولا لعبا مني، وذو الشيب يلعبُ

of Dhū al-Rummah's poem. He considers it an example of an incomplete *mu'āraḍah* because it praises and defends the Prophet Muhammad's descendants, while the model praises 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān.[19] I do not see that this is a sufficient example to support and accept Nawfal's formulation that *mu'āraḍāt* can differ than their models' subject. Again, an allusion has to match its model's general subject at least, as seen in Nawfal's example above. Therefore, I disagree with al-Jamal who regards ibn al-Khaṭīb's very short satirical passage (*qiṭ'ah*) as a *mu'āraḍah* of Abū Tammām's famous and long victorious and panegyric poem, *al-Sayf Aṣdaq Anbā'-an min al-Kutubi*.[20] The former is only four lines; therefore, it is a mistake to determine it is *mu'āraḍah* from such a minute passage. Such shortness does not enable us to see how the *mu'āraḍah* follow the model thematically and structurally, even though it has the same meter and rhyme as the model.

Second, I want to be precise and say that an incomplete *mu'āraḍah* can differ from its model in the *vowel* of the rhyme (*ḥarakat al-rawī*) only. Nawfal does not provide literary examples to support his claim that an incomplete allusion can differ from its model in the letter of rhyme. An example of my claim is Muḥammad ibn Shukhayṣ's allusion to Abū Tammām renowned poem, "Swords [turn out] to be more correct than letters are." The model's vowel of the rhyme is *bi*; its first line reads:

The sword is more honest in foreseeing than books are.
  In its edge is the border between seriousness and triviality

السيف أصدق إنباء من الكتبِ   في حده الحد بين الجد واللعبِ

While the allusion has a different vowel of rhyme *bu*; the first line reads:

Sha'bān finished what Rajab started

Before hopes expect

أتمّ شعبان ما أبدا به رجبُ   من قبل ما كانت الآمال ترتقبُ

The later poet in his incomplete *mu'āraḍah* keeps the model's rhyme and uses it in his allusion. He only changes the vowel of it.[21]

Finally, Nawfal's example of the contemporary friend poets Ṣafiyy al-Dīn al-Ḥillī and Ibn Nabātah does not prove the claim that social relationships among poets are motivation for writing allusions. I believe that the close relationship is only a motivator that encourages these two poets to read each other's poetry; afterwards, if one admires the other's poem, that admiration is the main motivation for writing the *mu'āraḍah*.

'Abd al-Raḥmān Ismā'īl al-Simā'īl has presented a definition of *mu'āraḍāt* that includes the most essential requirements for a *mu'āraḍah.* A *mu'āraḍah* in his definition is when "a later poem agrees with an earlier one in its meter and rhyme and has the same

subject [as the earlier one] or similar, and the later poem should be a clear echo of the earlier one and be a result of admiration."[22] After presenting his definition, al-Simāʿīl terms a *muʿāraḍāt* that this definition applies to *clear muʿāraḍāt* (*muʿāraḍāt ṣarīḥah),* as opposed to *implied muʿāraḍāt* (*muʿāraḍāt ḍimniyyah*). I believe that al-Simāʿīl's definition above is a fine one, but his division of *muʿāraḍāt* to clear one and imply others is not acceptable because he deals with the implied ones and states that when writing an implied *muʿāraḍah* "the poet's conscious is disappear"[23] in addition to differences in rhyme, meter, and subject. In other words, a poet writes his implied *muʿāraḍah* unconsciously and unintentionally without alluding a specific earlier poem. I disagree with this because it makes *muʿāraḍah's* definition too loose that we cannot surely identify any *muʿāraḍah.* And this is why we see al-Simāʿīl himself examines only *clear muʿāraḍāt.*

Before ending this section, I would like to indicate that some critics[24] believe that *muʿāraḍah* was known in the pre-Islamic period. Their example is Ibn Qutaybah's anecdote that ʾImruʾ al-Qays and ʿAlqamah went to ʾUmm Jundub and asked her to elevate one of them over the other. After listening to their poems, which possessed the same subject, rhyme and meter, ʾUmm Jundub preferred ʿAlqamah and justified her judgment.[25] I agree with al-Jamal[26] in believing that this anecdote is not an example of *muʿāraḍah*. It is just a poetic contest that lacks admiration.

Can Arabic *muʿāraḍah* be placed in the concept of literary influence?

Examining different definitions of Arabic *muʿāraḍah* in the previous section, we can move on now to see where *muʿāraḍāt* can be placed in the concept of literary influence. It is not my intention in the following discussion to exhaustively enumerate and expound upon every view on the concept of literary influence as it relates to Arabic *muʿāraḍāt.* My intention is to provide different views and approaches that are

sufficient to enable us to determine whether Arabic *mu'āraḍāt* can be categorized into the concept of literary influence, and where we can place Arabic *mu'āraḍāt* in the concept of literary influence.

The concept of influence varies from one western critic to another. I will review here several different perspectives. Harold Bloom believes that a poet imitates a predecessor and is influenced by him; a later poet lives in continuous anxiety because of the immense amount of traditional poetry that he finds himself encountering and imprisoned within. A poet, therefore, initially makes a "*clinamen,*" a swerve, from his predecessor or "poetic father." After this *clinamen,* he is able to create and present his own "*tessera,*" or answering movement. These two stages are the main factors in imitation.[27]

Bloom's psychological concept, which focuses on writers rather than texts, is not favorable for Arabic *mu'āraḍāt* since later Arabic poets explicitly or implicitly state that they emulate a specific text with a fundamental aim to poetically surpass it. Hence, in examining Arabic *mu'āraḍāt*, one's focus should be mainly on the intertextual relationship between a *mu'āraḍah* and its base poem. Without expounding on his deduction, however, Losensky states that "Bloom's underlying premises are generally unsuitable for the study of influence and imitation in this tradition."[28]

Moving to W. Jackson Bate, we see that in examining how poets feel toward a rich literary tradition, he does not give the psychological relationship between later poets and predecessors a main priority. Only intelligent poets become aware of the burden of rich tradition[29] and wonder if there is something new that can be represented. Goethe realized this and admitted that he was fortunate that he was not born as an Englishman because, otherwise, he would live in acute anxiety as a result of trying to create an original work in the face of such a rich literary legacy.[30] Bate sees that latecomers' direct imitations are not appropriate contributions to their legacy, and completely different representations "for the sake of mere

difference"[31] are not satisfying either. Poets have many other ways to contribute to their literary legacy; "the discovery of even a handful of new facts, the correction of some others, or even the mere ability to rearrange details or arguments with some ingenuity for debate or supplement, will permit the writing, again and again, of a new work."[32] Bate, in other words, believes that every new literary work necessarily gives a new opportunity for a later poet or artist to represent something new.

Bate's views can describe the Andalusian poets' situation; they somewhat suddenly encountered an intense and worrisome literary legacy, and, at the same time, they wanted to build their own national literature. "Literary influence," says Shaw "appears to be most frequent and most fruitful at the times of emergence of national literatures."[33] They did not present exact replicas of former and contemporary Mashriq poets, and at the same time, they did not completely differ from their legacy and invent an entirely new literature. They did, however, compete with the Mashriq poets and contributed to this legacy, while confining themselves to its constraints, mainly by reconsidering this literary legacy. For example, Ibn Darrāj, while praising Khayrān al-'Amirī, changes the she-camel's theme in the journey section of the classical three sections and uses a ship's theme.[34]

Claudio Guillen, regarding literary influence, is concerned with the genesis of a literary work.[35] He criticizes what he calls "the concept of transfer," the method of comparing two literary texts to ascertain similarities between earlier and later works to see how notions transfer from the earlier work to the later one. Three disadvantages[36] are present in this method: (1) it treats an influence as an objective affair among examined texts; (2) it elevates the concept of influence and equalizes it with an examined literary text; (3) it causes confusion between textual resemblances and influences.

Guillen emphatically distinguishes between textual

resemblances and influences; they are two separate and different issues. After citing the example of Jorge Guillen, who writes his poem *Cara a care* influenced by the rhythm, only the rhythm, of Ravel's poem *Bolero,* he believes that it is not correct in this case to look for "objective parallelism;"[37] for the later poet is only influenced by the rhythm of the earlier poet's poem. Even if there is an obvious similarity, such as rhythm, between two texts, critics should not make a snap decision that the earlier poet influenced the later one; the similarity may be caused simply by the same "psychic state" or the same experience that both poets have encountered.

Guillen thinks that if we do not know the "genesis" of a later literary work and how its writer establishes it, then the comparative method is "insufficient." As an alternative to the comparative method between texts, he proposes a method that "would first ascertain that an influence has been operative; and then evaluate the relevance of *genetic function* of that effect."[38]

I disagree with Guillen in considering the idea that the comparative method treats an influence as an objective affair as a disadvantage. This method seeks internal evidence in a later text to either support or deny the assumption that a specific earlier literary work influences a specific later one. Such internal evidence should naturally be objective. I also disagree with him in distinguishing between textual resemblances and influences and in treating them as two separate and different things. I believe they are related to each other; textual resemblances are a result of influence, and the latter is cause of the former. Definite textual similarities are strong evidence of influence, especially if there is no external evidence, such as historical facts or the artist's statements, that precludes or weakens them.[39] In his above example of Jorge Guillen, there is, in my opinion, external evidence that encourages Guillen to say, either consciously or unconsciously, that it is not "correct here to seek an objective parallelism." The external evidence is that the artist himself states,

according to the author, that he is influenced by the predecessor's rhythm.[40]

J. T. Shaw distinguishes between originality and innovation. Originality is not to create something new; it consists of two aspects: genuineness and effectiveness. A literary work is original when it "genuinely moves the reader aesthetically and produces an independent artistic effect."[41] Imitations, therefore, do not necessarily indicate that imitators are not able to produce new original literary works and therefore seek help from their predecessors; they produce original works when they succeed in borrowing from their predecessors and combining these borrowings in a new way. "The critic's and scholar's task with borrowings," says Shaw "is to discover the relationships of the use of the material in the new work to that of the old."[42]

I do not disagree with Shaw when he regards imitation, if some qualities are met, as new original works; I would add, however, that these imitations can also be considered innovations. Shaw does not explain what "innovation" means for him or why he describes imitations as original but not innovative. I believe that if an imitator succeeds in borrowing from a predecessor and, in combining the borrowings creates and presents a new coherent work, this new work is both an innovation and original (while only being original according to Shaw).

Shaw also believes that a definite model or source of a later literary text can be recognized if there are satisfactory similarities in that text. The study of similarities displays how distinct and special an individual text is. He thinks that "when one studies parallels … he nevertheless should consider the possibility of direct relationships."[43]

Shaw's view is that imitation differs from influence in degree. An imitator imitates his predecessor in specified details, such as images or themes. Influence, on the other hand, is "something

pervasive;"[44] when *A* produces a literary work influenced by *B*, critics are not able to restrict the influence to a specific image. If they are able to do so, it will be an imitation rather than influence.

External evidence plays an important role in determining whether or not an author is influenced by a predecessor. At the very least, there should be no external evidence that precludes the possibility that influence exists between those artists. Their texts, however, are the "essential" factor to determine if the later artist is really influenced by his predecessor.[45]

Finally, Shaw proposes that the author and tradition are the most important factors in the process of accepting or denying literary influence:[46]

> The seed of literary influence must fall on fallow land. The author and the tradition must be ready to accept, transmute, react to the influence. Many seeds from various possible influences may fall, but only the ones for which the soil is ready will germinate, and each will be affected by the particular quality of the soil and climate where it takes root, or, to shift the image, to the shoot to which it is grafted.

Before moving to another critic, the above analogy raises several points that are worthy of reflection. First, I understand that Shaw here is discussing influence in one tradition and in a totally different one; he does not include intra-traditional influence. In other words, if a later poet is influenced by a predecessor, Shaw's above statement is not applicable to him, or at least, not directed at him. Second, I believe that *tradition* in "the author and the tradition must be ready to accept…" is vague. If readers accept a particular new poem, whose writer was influenced by another tradition, the poem will survive, and may be welcome, in the new tradition. Therefore, using *beholder* as a general word to include audience, readers, etc. is more definite. Third,

if my first reservation is accepted, Shaw's analogy implies that if a later poet imitates a predecessor from the same tradition, the beholders' (or tradition's) acceptance is not necessary. I agree with this; because the predecessor has already been accepted, the later poet has no reason to seek acceptance. Gian Biagio Conte considers allusion as a rhetorical device that functions "like the trope of classical rhetoric"[47] and concentrates on texts rather than authors. He believes that critics who concentrate on the authors of texts will fall into a "common philological trap of seeing all textual resemblances as produced by the intentionality of a literary subject whose only desire is to emulate."[48] Critics' inference that allusion exists in every literary work leads them to exaggeration and to exhaustedly look for evidence of this inference. Moreover, Conte curtails the intentionality that occurs when studying imitations; examining two texts that resemble each other, he assumes that both authors have "recourse to a common literary codification" the pride of place in order to circumvent intentionality. Furthermore, even when intentionality is obvious and irrefutable in a later text, Conte prefers to examine the functions that such resemblances perform in the texts. His main precondition to ascertain such functions is that "one must examine how the process that shapes the production of a literary text and permits its readability absorbs and transforms not just a single work but a whole series of texts."[49] Examining the intertextuality in an imitation and its original leads to the discovery of how an imitator, in a specific time period, reads and interprets an original text that is written in a different period.[50]

Literary tradition, in Conte's eyes, does not only limit a later classical poet's work; it also "helps him to formulate its distinctive qualities." Allusions, in turn, are attempts to compete with that tradition,[51] which legitimizes the poet and "through which he can claim, 'I too am a poet!'"[52] I argue that Conte's concept of allusion is suitable for Arabic classical poetry. Since Arabic classical poems have

a somewhat firm tripartite structure and form, one can easily assume that a later poet does not intentionally imitate an earlier poet at all, or, further, one can assume that the former does not read the latter's work because both poets write within the confines of the tradition, or to use Conte's word, because both have the same "recourse." Since Arabic classical poets write within the same confines and have the same recourse, it is not acceptable to regard, for example, every Abbasid poet who confines his works to the tripartite structure as an emulator of a pre-Islamic poet. Concentrating on intertextuality rather than authors is more fruitful in examining Arabic *muʿāraḍāt*. This is because when a poet emulates another poet, he announces his new own interpretation and reading of the original text and invites the audience to re-examine the original text and compare his *muʿāraḍah* with the original. The series of *al-Burdah*'s *muʿāraḍāt* praising the Prophet Muhammad is a good Arabic literary example of how later poets contribute to the literary legacy and present in their *muʿāraḍāt* their own perspective on the subject of the prophet's praise and their own reading of al-Būṣīrī's *Burdah*. Aḥmad Shawqī, who emulates it, adds in his *Nahj al-Burdah* new factors in praising the patron that are not in the original text. He praises the Prophet by confuting that he was pro-war[53] whereas al-Būsīrī praises the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions for their *jihād*[54] without debunking such a stereotype, which might not exist at that time. Al-Bārūdī, who is among *al-Burdah*'s emulators, in his long poem *Kashf al-Ghummah fī Madḥ Sayyid al-'Ummah* also creates new factors, such as enumerating the prophet's raids, and including a poetic biography of him.[55] Nevertheless, while inventing new images and adding to the legacy, Shawqī and al-Bārūdī restrict themselves to the classical prelude; al-Bārūdī explicitly says that he starts with such a prelude only to follow the traditional rules. Lines 426 and 427 read:

> I have not compiled it [the prelude section] uselessly, but rather
> I in my poetry have followed people whose legs [are stable in

poetry]

I followed Ka'b and Hassān,

Who are good examples for me and are not questionable

لم أتخذه جزافا بل سلكت به   في القول مسلك أقوام ذوي قدم

تابعت كعبا وحسانا ولي بهما   في القول أسوة بـر غير متهَم

Conte's view can be applied to the above example; we see that the tradition which al-Būṣīrī's *Burdah* represents here has a twofold effect on al-Bārūdī. It confines al-Bārūdī in some respects, such as by compelling him to start with a prelude, and allows him to be creative in other respects, such as in his use of poetic images.

Goran Hermeren draws important distinctions between influence on the one hand and paraphrase, allusion and copy on the other. The two main requirements that a literary work should fulfill to enter into the concept of influence, either in its narrow sense or in its extended sense,[56] are intentionality and similarity requirements. As for intentionality, an artist, when being influenced in producing his work, may or may not be aware of this influence, whereas when copying, alluding, or paraphrasing, an artist has to be aware of this. As for similarity requirements, when an artist's work is influenced by another's work, similarities between these two works are more subtle than when an artist is copying, alluding to or paraphrasing.[57]

According to Hermeren's requirements, I can deduce that Arabic *muʿāraḍāt* are excluded from the concept of influence for two reasons. First, emulator-poets in the Arabic literary tradition are aware of the original poems. In fact, they have to be aware of them because they intentionally compete with the original ones and try to invoke their beauty and surpass the precursor poets thematically and figuratively.[58] Unlike with influence, in which Hermeren does not require intentionality as a fundamental condition, intentionality is an

essential requirement in Arabic imitations. Second, one may be inclined to say that similarities between an Arabic *mu'āraḍah* and the original poem are conspicuous; using the same subject, rhyme, and meter of a famous earlier poem, a poet refers his audience to that poem and indicates that he is emulating.

After establishing that influence requirements are not satisfied in Arabic *mu'āraḍāt*, one should pause and ask in which category they fit in Hermeren's view. Among the concepts that Hermeren discusses are those of copy, paraphrase, and allusion. Copies' distinctive feature is that there are great similarities between them and the originals; it is sometimes very hard to tell the differences between them. He adds that "this does not, however, prevent copies from having, in many cases, distinctive features of their own by which they differ from the original, especially if the painter who made the copy is a great artist."[59] Before I comment on the last sentence, it is obvious from Hermeren's main distinction for copies that Arabic mu'āraḍāt are not suitable to be included in this category. It is simply because in *mu'āraḍāt* a later poet competes against an earlier poet and tries to surpass him in some respect; a later emulator-poet restricts his work to the same rhyme, meter, and subject of the precursor's work, and distinguishes his work in other respects, such as themes and structure. As for Hermeren's formulation that great artists, when copying, distinguish their work from originals, it will not be a digression to say that I do not agree with him; it conflicts with the fundamental principle that he states when he first clarifies "copy." He says, "If X is a copy of Y, then there is a high degree of similarity in all respects between X and Y; in some cases it may even be difficult to distinguish between the copy and the original."[60] In addition, it conflicts with his view that "it can be very difficult to draw a sharp line between, say, a free paraphrase and a poor copy."[61] It is difficult to draw a sharp line between them because, as I understand the concepts of "paraphrase" and "copy", a poor copy is a copy that is not identical or quite

identical to its original. To conflate his statements is impossible in my view. Finally, if an artist's copy is not as similar as possible to the original, it fits into the paraphrase category, as will be shown in the next paragraph. Thus, I believe that great artists make copies whose differences are very subtle from their originals.

The main feature in the concept of paraphrase is that a paraphrase is similar to the original, but not very similar.[62] To clarify, I say that the difference between a paraphrase and a copy is a difference in degree, not in kind. In paraphrases, differences are conspicuous; otherwise, it will be considered a copy. Thus far, one can classify *mu'āraḍāt* under paraphrases. Hermeren, however, adds to the next category, allusion, features that exclude *mu'āraḍāt* from paraphrases.

In addition to being similar to a certain degree to its original, an allusion has to entail the following three principles: (a) "the artist who created X [the allusion] … intended to make beholders think of Y [the original] … (b) … beholders contemplating X make associations with Y; and (c) the beholders recognize that this was that the artist wanted them to do."[63] Considering these principles, I understand that intentionality is the main distinctive feature for allusions. Before proceeding, I should stress that one should ruminate on Hermeren's precise principles and perceive that the later artist's intentionality by itself is insufficient; to make his work an allusion, the later artist should have, besides similarities, intentionality *and* succeed in conveying his intentionality to his audience, readers, watchers, etc. This is important because a poem is a mix of original and intentionally/unintentionally borrowed idea. In Tom Dolack's words, "poetry… presents many shades of gray between the original and the stolen, the invented and the copied."[64] If Hermeren's only condition was the intentionality of the artist, I would have objected that it is too difficult to determine whether or not an artist intends to allude to an earlier artist's work, especially when external evidence and data, such

as historical facts, are not known; the only way in this case to definitively identify the intentionality is to ask the artist himself, who may deny or claim it, or may be unavailable for questioning due, for example, to his death. The contrary is not quite right, in my opinion; to understand intentionality from works themselves is sufficient to classify these works as allusions. In other words, if Hermeren conditioned only that beholders see an artist's intentionality in his literary work, I would have considered this work an allusion based on internal evidence, even though the artist himself does not intend to allude to the earlier artist's work; unless we have strong external evidence that the later artist has not come into contact in any way with the earlier artist's work. I do not deny that unintentional coincidences[65] (*tawārud*) exist in poetry. For instance, al-'Askarī mentions that he thought that he had invented a poetic image in his half of a line, describing a group of women:

They discover [their faces] like full-moons,

And veil [their faces] like crescents

<div dir="rtl">

سفرن بدورا وانتقبن أهلة

</div>

After composing these lines, al-'Askarī found the same image in the work of an earlier poet.[66] Although it is possible, I stress that if internal evidence exists, it is very difficult to regard the later poet's work as a mere unintentional coincidence. In fact, al-'Askarī states later that "indeed, no one knows the truth [the truth of a later poet's claim that he has not alluded to and never heard the earlier poet's work], but God."[67] By internal evidence, I mean evidence that beholders, by reading, looking at, or listening to, can use to perceive the intentionality without asking the artist.

Allusions' are applied to Arabic *mu'āraḍāt*. In *mu'āraḍāt* a later poet *intentionally* writes his poems to surpass a specific earlier poet's poem; in order to enable the audience and critics to decide whether or not his poem surpasses the earlier one, intentionality *has* to be manifested as internal evidence inside the poem itself. In fact, it is

so well-manifested that the mention of the earlier emulated poem is "usually unnecessary … [and] would quickly be recognized by the informed audience."[68]

After the above reviews, the discussion has shown that the main features of Conte's concept are that literary tradition helps and encourages later poets to allude to predecessors, and that later poets, while alluding to predecessors, compete with them. The main features of Hermeren's theory are that some similarities to the original poems must exist in allusions, and that later poets must have the intention to allude to predecessors and successfully manifest this intentionality in their poems as internal evidence.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion we can draw a conclusion about the definition of *mu'āraḍah*. The paper demonstrates that in order to consider a poem as a *mu'āraḍah,* there are some components that should exist in the poem and others that should exist in the poet himself, which are admiration and desire to challenge. This renders a *mu'āraḍah* as a rhetorical tool that a poet uses. Those two components have been overlooked by researchers. It has been shown that the a poet, when writing *mu'āraḍah*, explicitly or implicitly expresses his respect and admiration for the beauty of the model. As for the position of *mu'āraḍah* in the study of influence, the paper has shown that an Arabic *mu'āraḍah* does not fit into the study of influence, especially it is noticeable that some critics, such as Bate, do not aim to differentiate between allusion, imitation, copy, influence, etc. They, therefore, use a general word, such as influence. Some western scholars', such as Hermeren, precise conditions for allusion, as opposed to copy, paraphrase and influence, can be perfectly applied to Arabic *mu'āraḍāt*. Moreover, the paper has demonstrated that *mu'āraḍah* can be considered as an original work, when applying Shaw's perspective, because Shaw's criterion, namely that the later poet is successful in borrowing and using these borrowings, is met.

Notes

(1)   Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). 144.

(2)   Robet E. Terrill. "Rhetorical Imitation and Civic Diversity." *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 22, no. 2 (2019): 167.

(3)   Mark Johnson, *the Meaning of Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007) 164.

(4)   A note of transliteration: I have followed the Library of Congress system with slight modification.

(5)   Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab,* edited by ʿAbd Allah ʿAlī al-Kabīr and others (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1981) *ʿa, r, d.*

(6)   I believe that ʾImān al-Jamal is mistaken when she mentions four etymological meanings and implies that there are no differences between them. ʾImān al-Jamal, *al- muʿāraḍāt fī al-Shiʿr al-ʾAndalusī* (Alexandria: Dār al-Wafāʾ li-Dunyā al-Tibāʿah wa al-Nashr, 2007), 49. Muhammad Nawfal is wrong as well. He implies that all these etymological meanings have the same meaning. Muhammad Maḥmūd Qāsim Nawfal, *Tārīkh al-Muʿāraḍāt fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1983) 11-13.

(7)   Paul e. Losensky, "The Allusive Field of drunkenness," in *Reorientations/Arabic and Persian Poetry,* ed. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 231, and Gustave E. von Grunebaum, "The Concept of Plagiarism in Arabic Theory," *Jouranl of Near Eastern Studies* 3 (1944): 242. The latter says, "… literally the 'matching' of a discourse."

(8)   ʿAlī al-Gharīb Muhammad al-Shinnāwī, *al- Muʿāraḍāt fī al-Shiʿr al-Andalusī: al-Qaṣīdah al-ʿAbbāsiyyah Numūdhaj-an* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Adāb, 2003) 3-4.

(9)   [1] Aḥmad al-Shāyib, *Tārīkh al-Naqāʾiḍ fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Miṣriyyah, 1966), 7. The Arabic text is: " أن المعارضة في الشعر
يقول شاعر قصيدة في موضوع ما من أي بحر وقافية فيأتي شاعر آخر فيعجب بهذه القصيدة لجانبها الفني وصياغتها الممتازة، فيقول قصيدة من بحر الأولى وقافيتها وفي موضوعها أو مع انحراف عنه يسيرٍ أو كثير، حريصا على أن يتعلق بالأول في درجته الفنية أو يفوقه فيها دون أن يعرض لهجائه أو سبه، ودون أن يكون فخره صريحا علانية، فيأتي بمعان أو صور بإزاء الأولى تبلغها في الجمال الفني أو تسمو عليها"

   All translations in this paper are mine except where otherwise noted.

(10)   ʿAlī ibn Bassām, *al-Dhakhīrah fī Maḥāsin ʾahl al-Jazīrah,* edited by Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1979) 4:122-3.

(11)   Losensky discusses three Persian allusions as examples of Arabic and Persian allusions; his discussion of these Persian poems and conclusion, therefore, can be generalized to include Arabic *muʿāraḍāt.* Losensky, "the Allusive Field of Drunkenness."

(12)   These points are understood from ibid., 254, except points e and f; they are from p. 238.

(13) It is Stetkevych's translation. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *the Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002) 146.

(14) Nawfal, *Tārīkh al-Muʿārdāt fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī,* 54.

(15) Stetkevych studies the poem. Stetkevych, *the Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy,* 149.

(16) Nawfal, *Tārīkh al-Muʿāraḍāt fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī, 13.*

(17) Ibid., 69.

(18) See, for example, al-Jamal, *al-Muʿāraḍāt fī al-Shiʿr al-'Andalusī,* 55; and ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr Ḍayf Muḥammad, *al-Muʿāraḍāt fī al-Shiʿr wa al-Muwashshaḥāt al-'Andalusiyyah,* (Egypt: Matbaʿat al-'Amānah, 1987) 34. The latter mentions the same example as Nawfal.

(19) Ibid., 30-1.

(20) Al-Jamal, *al-Muʿāraḍāt fī al-Shiʿr al-Andalusī,* 474.

(21) Stetkevych examines both poems. Stetkevych, *the Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy,* 156 and 256.

(22) ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ismāʿīl al-Simāʿīl, *al-Muʿāraḍāt al-Shiʿriyyah: Dirāsah Tārīkhiyyah Naqdiyyah* (Jiddah: Nādī Jiddah al-Adabī al-Thaqāfī, 1994), 19. The Arabic text is " أن توافق القصيدة المتأخرة القصيدة المتقدمة في وزنها وقافيتها وأن يكون الغرض منهما واحدا أو متماثلا، بحيث تكون القصيدة المتأخرة صدى واضحا للقصيدة القديمة بدافع الإعجاب".

(23) Ibid., 22. The Arabic text is " يختفي فيه وعي الشاعر".

(24) Nawfal, *Tārīkh al-Muʿārḍāt,* 16; and Muhammad, *al-Muʿāraḍāt fī al-Shiʿr wa al-Muwashshaḥāt al-Andalusiyyah,* 15.

(25) Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Shiʿr wa al-Shuʿarā',* ed. Aḥmad Maḥmūd Shākir (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1958), 107.

(26) Al-Jamal, *al-Muʿāraḍāt fī al-Shiʿr al-Andalusī,* 73.

(27) Harold Bloom, *a Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 97.

(28) Losensky, "The Allusive Field of drunkenness," 256, endnote 7. See also Franklin D. Lewis, "The Rise and Fall of a Persian Refrain," in *Reorientations/Arabic and Persian Poetry,* ed. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 212-213.

(29) W. Jackson Bate, *the Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (New York: Norton Library, 1970), 25.

(30) Ibid., 6.

(31) Ibid., 5.

(32) Ibid., 8.

(33) J. T. Shaw, "Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literary Studies," in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. Newton P. Stallknecht, Horst Frenz (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), 92.

(34) See the poem in Muḥammad al-Ḥumaydī, *Jadhwat al-Muqtabis fī Dhikr Wulāt al-Andalus* (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyyah lil-Ta'līf wa al-Tarjamah, 1966), 370.

(35) Claudio Guillen, "the Aesthetics of Literary Influence," in *Iflux: Essays on Literary Influnce,* ed. Ronald Primeau (London: Kennikat Press, 1977) 57.

(36) Ibid., 59.

(37) Ibid., 60.

(38) Ibid., 62.

(39) The next critic's opinion that I examine in the following paragraphs supports my argument.

(40) Ibid., 60.

(41) J. T. Shaw, "Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literary Studies," 85.

(42) Ibid., 90.

(43) Ibid., 91

(44) Ibid., 91.

(45) Ibid., 93.

(46) Ibid., 91-2.

(47) Gian Biagio Conte, *the Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 23.

(48) Ibid., 27.

(49) Ibid., 28.

(50) Ibid., 29-30.

(51) Ibid., 37.

(52) Ibid., 42.

(53) Ahmad Shawqī, *al-Shawqiyyāt,* ed. ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Munʿim ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: al-Sharikah al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿālamiyyah lil-Nashr Lūnjmān, 2000), 212; lines 118 and 119.

(54) See Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "From Sīrah to Qasīdah: Poetics and Polemics in Al-Būsīrī's Qasīdat Al-Burdah (Mantle Ode)," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 38, no. 1 (2007): 37-45.

(55) Maḥmūd Sāmī Al-Bārūdī, *Kashf al-Ghummah fī Madḥ Sayyid al-'Ummah* (Cairo: Maṭbūʿāt Dār al-Shaʿb, 1978), 43. He says, "I have compelled [my poem] based on *Sīrah* of ibn Hishām." His poem is, according to Saʿd Salām who writes the forward before the poem, is 447 lines; p 21.

(56) He distinguishes between two kinds of influence: genuine influence, or influence in the narrow sense, and influence in the extended sense. Goran Hermeren, *Influence in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 92.

(57) Ibid., 96.

(58) Al-Shāyib, *Tārīkh al-Naqāʾiḍ fī al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabī*, 7.

(59) Goran Hermeren, *Influence in Art and Literature*, 62

(60) Ibid., 62.

(61) Ibid., 73. I will talk about "paraphrase" in the next paragraph.

(62) Ibid., 68.

(63) Ibid., 77.

(64) Tom Dolack, "Imitation, Emulation, Influence, and Pound's Poetic Renewal," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Literary Studies. Vol. 15, No. 1.* (2013): 5

(65) This is Grunebaum's translation of the term *tawārud;* Gustave E. Von Grunebaum, "the Concept of Plagiarism in Arabic Theory," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 3 (1944): 238.

(66) Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī, *Kitāb al-Ṣinā'atayn: al-Kitābah wa al-Shi'r,* edited by 'Alī al-Bajjāwi and Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, (Egypt: 'isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Shurakāh, 1971), 202.

(67) Ibid., 236. The Arabic text is "فإن صحة ذلك لا يعلمها إلا الله".

(68) Losensky, "Allusive Fields of Drunkness," 238.

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