CHAPTER: 7

Growth and Development of Poetic Prose in Arabic Literature
Growth and Development of Poetic - Prose (الشعر المنثور) in Arabic Literature:

The Qasidat -al-nathr and the modern poetry based on the prose rhythm were not the first attempts in the contemporary Arabic poetry to use prose as a medium for poetry. From the beginning of the twentieth century, Arab poets mainly Christians wrote poetry in prose, or what they termed as shi'r manthur, which prepared the ground for Qasdat al-nathr. It is important to grasp the main elements of al- Shi'r al manthur in order to show the difference between it, Qasidat al-Nathr and the new trend in modern Arabic poetry.

In Arabic literature there are clear-cut definition of poetry and prose (nathr), distinguishing each from the other, so that the prose cannot be confused with poetry though it may be of homeoteleuton (Saja) rhythm, contain metaphors or any other poetic techniques except metre and the intention (Qasd) to write poetry. This rigid delineation is due to the special attitude Arabs have to their language in as much as it was that of the Quran. The revelation of the Quran is in a highly rhetorical, rhythmical and rhyming prose which slips from time to time into metrical rhythm, and the fact that Quran itself a denial that it is poetry gave added emphasis to the distinction between prose & poetry. Therefore Arab critics who were for the most part theologians, in deference to the pronouncement of the Quran on the matter, added the factor of intention 'Qasd' to the definition of poetry.

In the Abbasid Period, Prose became highly rhetorical. It even adopted the rhetorical techniques of poetry by introducing al-badi (the art of metaphors). This ornate prose reached its highest development in the various types of rasa~il (pl. of risala 'epistles'), and later on in the simple narrative of the maqama, where it seemed that the main emphasis was laid down upon the mastery of the language and its rhetorical and visual techniques.
However, the subject matter of these genres remained Prosaic. The main techniques were parallelism, homoeoteuton, simple and clear similes and metaphors for mere description of the sensual and visual feelings of sense objects and the outer life and the writer's response to it, the whole filled with allusions to Quranic verses, poetry and proverbs. Sometimes the resulting works lacked only metre in order to be considered poetry by the classical critics.5

In classical Arabic literature, however the purpose of his prose was not to convey emotion thoughts or poetic tensions but to display ability in handling the language and mastery of its rhetorical techniques and to invert new and striking but accurate similes and metaphors which do not rise to the poetic tension, emotion and imagery.6

From the beginnings, therefore, the Muslim attitude to strict separation between poetry and prose had a religious stamp which persists to this day. With this in mind, we can understand the unique phenomenon of modern Arabic literature, namely that the main protagonists of the tentative efforts to bridge the gap between prose & poetry, under the influence of western genres were Arab Christians while their opponents were Muslims.

In western literature prose - poetry was inspired by the Bible and Translations of classical and modern poetry.7 Moreover the verset was considered lofty poetry although it has no metre. The conception was easily adopted by Christians Arabs,8 not only because they were acquainted with the verset through the protestant and catholic translations of the Bible, but also because in their liturgies written in Arabic there was a deliberate effort to write lyrically prose and verse. These Arabic liturgies and prayers were based on the techniques of the verset, i.e; parallelism repetition of phrases and words, the use of stanza form and refrains, exclamatory enumerations, alliterations and assonances.9 Moreover, through the impact of French, romantic writers and poets, poetic prose began to invade Arabic literature.
From the second half of the nineteenth century French romantic poetry and he novels have continued to appear in Arabic, leaving and unmistakable impression on the development of Arabic Poetic Prose and later on poetry in prose. In addition these translations encouraged the revival of the highly rhetorical and ornate Abbasid Prose either through adopting this style in translations or imitating French Poetic Prose.

Therefore in modern Arabic literature, two types of Poetic-Prose were developed, the one rooted in Bible, Christian liturgical literature and the French romantic Poetic Prose and the other the Islamic rhetorical style rooted in the Quran and in Abbasid Prose.

However these are many important differences between these types of Arabic Poetic-Prose. The Islamic Poetic Prose is intellectual and clear rhythmical and rhymed, highly Polished and garnished with archaic expressions and rare and literary words, heavily embellished with allusion to the rich heritage of Arabic literature and history and with proverbs and Poetry. It employs complicated techniques of alliteration assonance stereotype adjectives balanced with their synonyms and similes with extensive use of nouns of Pre eminence, intensive and extensive verbs. The diction is noble and allows only the highly polished, rare and poetic words to be used in vague and imprecise expressions. These characteristics rendered this prose artificial and stiff, with a monotonous elegance which hindered the expression of spontaneous emotions and the stream of thought.

On the other hand, the Christian style was Precise, simple, plain and direct. It made possible the expression of meditative mood and the flow of tender, melancholic and dreamy emotions. It is imaginative, sentimental, lyrical and compact. However it was not only Muslim writers who practiced the Islamic rhetorical Prose. Christian did not also in order to raise the standard of their style and to prove that their ability in mastering the Arabic language was not less than that of their Muslim brethren.

Among the first Arab writers in whose literary works can be found
influence of Christian Arabic style together with French romantic and Islamic styles is Faransis Marrash. In his book Ghabat al-haqq (Beirut, 1886), and Rihalat Bars (Beirut 1867) there are passages which can be considered poetry in Prose. The earliest date mentioned is 1890, the year in which a short independent composition was first written in clear Christian style with French romantic influence; each line or paragraph is written separately. This composition entitled Taqwaa 'piety' with a sub title 'shi’r manthar' was written by Niqulaa Fa’e’yad and appears in his authology Rafif al-uqhuwan (Beirut, 1950).10

Gibran probably discovered at the opening of the present century the potentiality of the Christian Arabic style for conveying spontaneous and profound feelings and subtlety of thought through his articles in al Muhajir published in New York by the Christian Journalist Amin-al-Ghurayyib, who encouraged him to pursue his new style.11 The results of these experiments were some articles in poetic-prose and poetry in prose published in 1903, and his treatise al Musiqa (New York, 1905). The success of these articles encouraged him to continue his experiments with this style in poetry in prose.

In October 1905 in the monthly al Hilal, Amin al Rihani (1876-1940) published a short poem. In his introduction12 to this piece, the journal’s editor, Jurji Zaidan called it a al-Shi’r al manthur. Only in 191013 did al-Rihani disclose to his readers that he was, in fact, trying to write free verse after the manner of the American poet Walt Whitman, saying; this type of new verse is called in French verse libre and in English free verse, that is Shi’r al hurr or rather al Mutlaq.14 It is the latest stage in which the poetic development has arrived among the Europeans, especially among the English and Americans. Milton and Shakespeare liberated English poetry from the chains of rhyme while the American Walt Whitman [sic] liberated it from the chains of prosody such as conventional measures and the common metres. Nevertheless, this free verse has a new and special measure and the poem may come in
numerous and different metres. Like Walt Whitman, both al Rihani and Gibran used this type of verse in order to express their pantheism and their democratic feelings\textsuperscript{15} for it is form which, because of its free rhythm, is capable of expressing new thoughts, emotions and images. Like Whitman they argued that poetry does not lie in metre, rhyme and memorizing classical verse,\textsuperscript{16} all of which restrict the poets innovation, novelty genuine emotions and freedom of thought because the old themes, diction, style, metaphor and techniques of classical and conventional metre and applied a new medium intermediate between prose and poetry.\textsuperscript{17}

Whitman and Gibran adopted Biblical poetic techniques such as parallelism and rhythm of thought, reiteration and balance of phrases and the rhythm of prose which is more flexible, free and applicable to their thoughts and emotions. The prose rhythm resembles, as Whitman said,\textsuperscript{18} the waves of the sea with their swift gliding and accumulative rhythm. Its movement is freer and more flexible than the metric rhythm, and it is nearer to free movement in nature.

However, while Whitman\textsuperscript{19} and Gibran adopted the Biblical style based upon symmetry and balance in thought and phrases, in the first stage of his prose poems al-Rihani adopted the Quranic style based upon the same techniques, and completely rejected the style of the verset. It seemed that al-Rihani rejected the Biblical style because it had served as the model for European romantic writers and for Whitman's free verse: Al-Rihani was one of the most vehement opponents of romanticism and the romantic style, condemning it in his booklet Antum-al-Shu'ara' (Beirut 1933) and on every possible occasion.\textsuperscript{20} In this he resembled Whitman who called for a departure from the literature of the world which is feudalistic, tyrannical, superstitious and evil melancholic and affectionate. He accused it of being undemocratic, with no free and naïve poetry but artificial, sophisticated, showing the 'scholar ....... the attaché of the throne'\textsuperscript{21}
It would seem therefore that the Biblical style which influenced Gibrans did not suit al Rihani’s themes and moods at least in the first stage of his shīr manthur.

His revolutionary themes his warning and threatening tone were much more suited to the Quranic rhythm and style than to Biblical. Al-Rihani was not a master of Arabic style, and was unable to originate a personal style. He therefore looked for a style which had the technique of Whitman’s free verse, and found what he sought in the Quranic style.

By adopting the Quranic style and the sonorous rhythm, al Rihani was obliged to use its vocabulary and metaphor to such an extent that he was enslaved by it and lost the personal rhythm, originality and sincerity which were distinctive features of the Whitmanian and Gibranian styles.

The influence of the Quranic style, mainly of the Makki Suras dominated al-Rihani’s Shir manthur written in 1907-10. He not only used Quranic vocabulary but also the rhetorical Questions and rhymed prose.

Al - Rihani was not the first writer in the twentieth century to use the Islamic rhymed style as a medium intermediate between prose and poetry to express philosophical thoughts, Ibraim al Hawrani (1844-1916)22 had earlier used it to convey religious and Masonic ideas. In the weekly magazines of the American missionaries’ al-Nashra, al-usbu’iyya, between 1902 and 1908 al -Hawarani published a ‘series of essays in rhetorical rhymed Islamic prose divided into strophes.

Most of the strophes consists of four rhymed lines. The first three lines share one rhyme while the last strophes are written in rhythmical prose which slips from time to time into metrical rhythm. Each easy ends with metrical verses which conclude the theme. These essays are published posthumously under the title of Ruqum wa-hiya silsilat maqalat li-nasij burdiha - al - murhum al shakh Ibrahim al Hawariani (Beirut, 1936).

Al - Hawrani intended to write porse-poetry. In one of his articles in Nashr. Al usbuuiyya23 he expressed the opinion that poetry can be in both
verse and prose. Besides the word maqalat which appears in the title of the book to define it is also used to define collections of prose poems in modern Arabic literature as al-Bedavi-al-Mulaththam did in describing Raji Abu Jamra's collection al Sharid saying wa-hiya majmu al maqalat min al-shi'r al-manthar.24

Al-hawarani was not the founder of the form of strophe in which the last line has a certain rhyme repeated in each strophe. Abu-'l- Ala al Marri (979-1058) applied the Quranic style and the rhymed strophic structure in his book al-Fusul wa'l-Ghayat25 where he expressed his 'Philosophic' thoughts and was accused of trying to imitate the Quran. The same techniques were employed in his book al-Ayk wa'l-ghusun.26

Therefore it is highly probable that al Rihani, through the influence of al Hawrani and al Ma'arri, applied the Quranic style and the strophic method in his shi'r manthur. Al Rihani translated a selection of Marris Poetry into English entitled Quatrains of Abul- Ala (New York-1903).

Like Whitman in his poems written in 1855 and after both Gibran and al-Rihani applied rhythm of thought, equalizing and reiterating thoughts and sentences in their poems in shi'r manthur instead of using the metric rhythm as in the case of Biblical verset. This rhythm of thought is achieved by administering various types of parallelism in the case the line is an independent unit and the balancing effect of the parallelism unites these in groups similar to the strophe. Besides the reiteration of thought provides a flexible melodious rhythm.

The type of parallelism used by al-Rihani and Gibran are sonorous, Antithetic, synthetic or constructive and climatic parallelisms.27

Another technique for producing rhythmic and musical harmony is the use of reiteration of words phrases and refrains. The function of the technique in prose-poetry is not only to produce emphasis, as in the case of common prose, but also to produce musical harmony and melody, to add
unity to the lines and to join them into strophes, and to evoke associations. Besides this, the repetition adds an incantatory tone to the poem.

Like Whitman unlike Gibran, al-Rihani's wave like rhythm slips into metrical rhythm. This change of rhythm is obvious at the end of the first part and the beginning of the second part of his poem Fuad where he used mutaqarib metre. Another technique used to produce melody is the employment of alliteration and assonance.

Moreover, like Whitman both Gibran and al-Rihani based their shir manthur upon the employment of exclamatory devices as in the case of Christian liturgical prose. Again like Whitman their shir manthur was a medium of conveying their philosophical and pantheistic Ideas.

The general sketch of Gibran's and al-Rihani's shir manthiur, as in the case of Whitman is to approach a subject, stating in the first line or lines then to elaborate it with variations and parallel thoughts images, and embodying symbols. Then they approach another side of it and develop it in the same way and then reiterate the ideas with variations and draw to a conclusion. This gives a symphonic or rhapsodical impression. Moreover, although most of their prose poems are based upon ideas instead of sentiment, like Whitman they developed these ideas like a poet musician, not like a philosopher or a polemical writer.

Gibran mastered the music of his prose poetry. He was able to paint with words and to employ the most flowing and lyrical expressions to convey his delicate sensitivity and suggestive ideas and feelings, to degree which his friend al-Rihani was unable to achieve, mainly because he lacked vision and poetic and artistic talent.

From the above comparison between the techniques of the verse of Whitman and the shir manthur of Gibran and Rihani it is clear that Gibran had more in common with Whitman than al-Rihani.

Many men of letters in the Arab world and America tried to follow
Gibran and al-Rihani in their shi'r manthur by avoiding Arabic metres and adopting prose rhythm dictated by the nature of experience, with new devices and techniques to compensate for the absence of metre. Among the Mahjari poets who worked in his genre were Rashid Ayyub in Aghani 'l-darwish\(^{34}\) and William catzetlis\(^{35}\). The most successful among the northern Mahjaris who did not join Arrabita was Amin Mushriq (1898-1937) in his lyrical prose poem ya ummi, in which the prose rhythm slips from time to time to metric rhythm.\(^{36}\)

Amin al Rihani's visits and travels in the Arab world, his speeches in which he recited many of this shi'r manthur his discussion of the genre, his friendly connections with Arab poets and journalists gave a big push to shi'r manthur in the Arab world, mainly in Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq from the early 1920's. Many writers and poets imitated his\(^{37}\) and Gibran's shir manthur.

In consequence this genre achieved such success that the shir manthur\(^{38}\) of Rihani, Gibran and his other colleagues, were reprinted in many collections of Mahjari works in the Arab world, and in 1922 Habib Salama published the anthology al Shi'r al manthur in which he collected prose poems by ten writers; Gibran, al-Rihani, Khalil Mutran, Mayy (Mari Ziyada), Muhammad Lutfi Juma, Tawfig Mufrij, Rashid Nakhla, Muhammad al-Siba'i, Muhammad Kamil Hajjaj, Murad Mikhail and Habib Salama. Translation from the French and the English romantics were also considered manthur.\(^{39}\)

Since then many collections of prose poems have been published, including Zulumat wa-ashi'a by Mayy (Cairo 1923), who was influenced by Gibran and whom Abu Shadi called Amirat al Shir al manthur.\(^{40}\) Munir al-Husami in 'Arsh al-hubb wal I ' Jamal (1925) Mischil al-Khun in Alhan wa-ashjan (1929), Husayn al Babili in Taht al-Khamail (Alexandria 1920) Muhammad Tawfig Yunis in Durnn. Al hub (192 ?) Jurji Matar in Anasid al-Qimma wa 'I wadi (Beirut, 192 ?) Muhammad Abd al-Munim in al-hubb wa'l Jamal (1927), Raji Abu Jamra in al-Tair al Sharid (1931) Murad Mikhail
In Iraq, Jewish poets played an important part in developing shir manthur as a vehicle of romanticism and symbolism, in style, form and ideas they have tended to follow the northern Mahjari trend of Shi'r al-Manthur. Anowar sha'al Murad Mikha'il, Mir Barri (Baghdadis), Yusuf Salun, salim al Katib, Sami and others published shi'r manthur in the Iraqi periodicals. The poet Ma-ruf al Rusafi, who defended his new genre although it lacked the music of metre, admired Murad Mikhails shi'r manthur. Al Rusafi who wrote in shi'r manthur dedicated one of his compositions in this genre to Murad Mekhail.42

In Egypt, Muslim poets influenced by French romantic poetic prose revived the Islamic prose with its saj and its artificial and stiff style full of allusion to Arab Proverbs, history and literary heritage. It is laden with hyperboles and chains of similes collected from the Quran and from earlier writers and poets. These similes are confined to the formal and aesthetic side to show the resemblance in color, form shape, weigh taste in sophisticated way, thus the aesthetic and sexual purposes are observed but very rarely the emotional significance or association and symbolic value in relation to the writers Psychological and emotional mood. Nature and its various aspects were not personified nor did it reflect the writers emotions and thoughts.

This was the case with Muhammad Tawfiq al-Bakr (1870-1933) in his anthology Saharij al Lulu (Cairo, 1906-07) in which he described the Bois de Boulogne and the battle of Austerlitz in an artificial and hackneyed
sophisticated style, Ahmed Shawki did the same in his Aswaq al dhahab (Cairo 1932) following al Zamakhshari's (1075-1144) Atwaq-al dhahab. Although Shawki discussed new subjects such as freedom, Homeland, Nation, the Suez canal, the sun, the Death the Heart and Islamic subjects such as Fasting, Charity and Pilgrimage, he was not able o develop any new style and was far from writing in a genre between poetry and prose. He remained faithful to the style of the Islamic nathr fanni, although he described his composition al-Dhikra 'Remembrance' as qasida min al-Shi'ir al manthur and his contemporary literary magazines and critics called to his artistic prose shi'r manthur and qasa'id nathriyya.

Islamic prose & French romantic prose were successfully married in the endeavors of the Azhari-educated scholars (Mustafa Lutfi al Manfuluti (1876-1924) in his works al Abrat (Cairo 1915) and al Nazrat (Cairo 1925) yet in his new style the Islamic convention of putting into a chain all the similes Known to the writer to describe an object. Yet in his new style the Islamic convention of putting into a chain all the similes known to the writer to describe an object, is set alongside personification and nature description to reflect the writers emotions and psychological moods and ideas, when the latter tendency predominates in al Munfuluti's style his poetic prose can rise to standard of poetry in prose.

The same can be said of Mustafa Sadiq al Rafi's style in Hadith al Qamar (2nd ed Cairo, 1924), Rasail al ah-an (Cairo 1924) and al-Sahab-al-ahmar (Cairo 1924), although he attacked Shir manthur and its writers and defined as artistic prose 'nathr fanni because of his religious and classical education.

On the other hand Christian writers such as Khalil Mutran who published his Shi'r manthur as early as 1908 and Mayy (Mary) Ziyada (1886?-1914) were among the few writers who wrote shi'r manthur in Egypt neglecting the Islamic rhymed prose. While Mutran wrote very few Shi'r
mantur through the influence of French poetic prose. Mayy Ziyada used it extensively in her works. Zulumat wa-ashi'a (Cairo 1923) and Kalimat wa-Ishrat (Cairo 1922) through French poetic prose and direct influence of Gibran.

When Hussayn 'Afif's anthology of Shi'r mantur, Munajat (Cairo, 1933) appeared, it was welcomed by Apollo magazine in his main article, Abu Shadi encouraged this new and limited genre' in Egypt. Hasan Kamal al Sayrafi. in a long critique, praised the style although he did not admire some of the ideas expressed by author al-Sayarafi described the main characteristics of Shi'r mantur published in that period, and the criticism of the conservatives; he stated that when al-Rihani and Gibran wrote Shi'r mantur its opponents considered it as madness, insanity, defect and impediment in speech Junun wa hawas wa ujama w-lakna, while Gibran and Rihani tried to infuse life into Arabic prose and saj. Their method succeeded to the extent that it even reached Egypt. In al-Sayarafi's opinion, Afifi's experiments prove the ability of poetry and its music to dominate prose. It proves also that poetry can express any subject as long as the writer is capable to blending its emotions with his thoughts. Al-Sayarafi was able to distinguish in Afifi's writing, Rousseau's romantic ideas and he stress on imagination, sentiment and escape to nature. Al-Sayarafi also pointed to the resemblance between Tagor's book Lover's gift (Hibat al Ushshaq) and Gitanjali and Afifi's poetry in prose and their blending theosophy with poetry while maintaining melody.

Abu Sahdi continued to encourage the prose poem in his magazine Apollo although he himself did not practice it. In his manifesto on Shi'r hurrr he mentioned Jamil al 'Alyi, Ahmed al-Shayib, Zaki Mubarak Hasan kamil al Sayrafi and Hussayn Affifi among his friends who practiced it.

However al Shi'r al mantur was strongly attacked by the many writers and critics' who denied that it belonged to poetry. The absence of melody
and music and the failure to tend any definite rules for this genre which is based on the prose rhythm and the poet's own personality and ability, led many poet's to write bad prose. And they did not observe the other rules which might have compensated for the loss of metric rhythm, indeed to neglect metre demands great care in observing other techniques strictly, in order to provide a substitute for the ready, fixed melody which metre and rhyme can provide the poet.

The usual term applied to describe this is al shi'r al manthur. The other synonym which al-Rihani suggested in al Rihaniyyat is al -Shi'r al hurr and al mullaq or talaq in Hutaf al awdiya are also used.

Albir Adib (born 1908) called his symbolic poetry in prose and that of Bishr Faris and Thurayya Malhas Shi'r talaq. Ibrahim al Urayyid called it al-shi'r al talaq aw-al marsal while Raif al Khauri spoke of Shi'r talaq. Naimy al Ghabal used several terms to indicate this genre. Beside using shi'r manthur he applied the term Qasida manthuriyya to Gibran's compositions in Dam'a wa Ibtasama and al Awasif, while in discussing al 'Awasif he called it nathr Shi'ri, and after two lines he described Gibran prose poem Ayyah-l-layi as Qasida. However, in 1953 in his article on Walt Whitman's poetry, he found that the Arabic term to indicate this type of poetry was al-Shi'r al munsarih, which was also suggested by Anwar al-Jundi as the best term for this genre, while Jabra Ibrahim Jabra born (1919) in an article on Walt Whitman called his free verse Shi'r mursal.

Thurayya Mathas called the prose-poetry nathr Shi'ri Taha Husayn and Anas Dawud termed it al nathr al fanni to avoid any connexion with poetry while Hasan al Hatim and Aziz Abaza suggested the term al nathr mashur to ridicule it.

These different terms caused great confusion to readers and critics in identifying the genre especially when shi'r mur'sal became the accepted term for blank verse.
At the close of the 1940's, the argument that poetry does not necessarily depend on metre more generally accepted, especially through the encouragement of the Lebanese literary magazine al-Adib edited by Albir Adib. The anthologies of prose poetry which appeared and they did not even contain apologetic preface in defence of genre. The poets either did not mention whether they were prose poems or not and printed the poems in the form of poetry, as Thurayya al Malhas did in her two symbolic and mystical anthologies al Nashid al taih (Beirut 1949) and Qurban (Beirut 1952), or they prefixed the title with the word shi'r poetry; the first to take this revolutionary step was Albir Adib who on the cover of his anthology (Liman ? (to whom ?)) Majmu'a min al Shi'r al -Ramji63 a collection of symbolic poetry' interview, Albir Adib termed his symbolic prose poetry and that of Thurayya Malhas and Bishr Faris (d. 1936) Shi'r talaq and distinguished between it and Shi'r al manthurl of Mahjaris without giving any explanation.64

Under the protection of magazines of al Adib, Shi'r and other literary magazines, writers such as Ilyas Khalil Zakhariya, Henry Hamati, Niquula Qurban Ilyas Masuh, Jurj Dawd, Fua'd Sulaiman Fu'ad Hadad Urkhan, Mayy Muyassar, Ibrahim Shukr Allah Thurayya Malhas and other gave a great impetus to the Arabic prose - poem,

All these poets used unrhymed prose as a medium for poetry although sometimes it slipped into metric rhythm. In some of their poems the Biblical style and that of Gibran can be observed, while in others the poems are detached from emotion with a tendency to meticulous sophistication and personal language and symbols. Most of them depended greatly upon images; others derived their inspiration from the subconscious mind and mysterious zones of consciousness. Their personal symbols led to ambiguity and vagueness.

Therefore what the Arab poets called Shi'r manthurl was an imitation of French vers-libre or English free verse, as we have seen from the above definitions of al Rihani and others65
Shi’r manthur may be defined as prose-poems and not ‘free verse’ mainly because the avant-garde in the use of Shi’r manthur was inspired by Whitman who himself referred it as prose, so did Amy Lowell, who termed some of her free verse as polyphonic prose.66

However it is obvious that Shi’r manthur departs from prose and as Eduard Dujardin said, "Le poeme en prose etait la tentative –de liberar la poesie in prenant la prose pur point de depart; le verse libre et le verset representing la meme tentative en partant du vers—67 professor P. Mantel Janes in commentary as this argument said,68 any attempt to discriminate theoretically between the vers libre and other rhyymical forms not written in metre (such as poetic prose or the verset is dogged by tendency all these forms have to encroach upon one another . . .and so the verse libre remains negative in principle, not conforming regularly to any single pattern or type, "Poly morph" as Mallarme called it what at least is clear is that the term itself covers a series of approximate varieties.

The group led by Albir Adib can be considered the link between two groups; the former group of writers of shi’r manthur who published their works up to 1950, and who were logical and rational with the stress on imagination, sentiment and escape to nature, and most of whom expressed pantheistic thoughts: and the later poets who-called their poetry Qasidat al-nathr and disregarded all former concepts of poetry, trying to write modern and universal poetry, reflecting the spirit of the new age. A group which rejected the former rational, logical, idealistic and humanistic vision of the world in favour of the irrational sub conscious and new universal vision of the world, led by the shi’r magazine In Beirut. Although their poetry was termed by protagonists Qasidat al-nathr (poems en prose) yet from the point of view of form they ignored conventional metre.

From the discussion of the ideological trends in modern Arabic poetry in the previous chapter we can easily distinguish two main concepts although poets of the main trends used what the Iraqi poets called Shi’r hurr (literally;
free poetry) which is as already seen, a form very far from ‘free verse’ in the European sense’. These two concepts are in Sharpe contrast with each other. The first is that of the poets who follow the nationalists and many socialist and communist trends. Their concept of poetry is still humanistic and optimistic in its essence as well as natural and logical, somewhat like the nineteenth century concept of the modern world, although they differ in their sources of European influence which is English-American or French.

The concept of this group has a universal and modern vision which is non-rational, not ordered, and tries to explore the invisible and sub-conscious, reflecting their visionary world or their view of the modern world. Among the main poets of this group are al-sayyab, Khalil Hawi, Yusuf al-Khat, Adunis and Salah Abd-al Sabur. Al Bayyati in his recent collection al Mawi-fil-l-hayyat (1968) joined his group. For this reason the first group clungs to the metric form and logical vision and the optimistic outlook of the Arabic nationalism, or the triumph of the socialist or communist world those poets neglected the pre-determined forms and used Shi’r hurr and ultimately prose, or what some of them mainly Adunis French poeme en prose which influenced it. The link between it and symbolic poetry of Albir Adib can be seen in the poems of Tawfiq Sayigh entitled Thalatun Qasida (Beirut 1954) in which new concept already prevailed. According to Adunis69 he was the writer of the first Qasidat nathr, doing so in 1958, when he translated a poem by Saint John perse (pseudonym of Alexis Leger born 1887). These translations exposed him to energies and ways of expression which metre could not supply. Influenced by this translation, Adumis wrote his first Qasidat nathr wahda- al Ya’s. He also discussed his new genre in the study group of shi’r al Ya’s. Like perse, his vision, too is universal, roving over the past and its buried civilization. His images and vocabulary are precise, clear and simple, but sometimes unusual and exotic. His poetry is distinguished by historical images and clear symbols which reflect the tragic past and present of his country, the invasions of the foreign races such as the Mangols, the
destruction and stagnation which it underwent the enslaved present. 'you capricious map of wheat, petrol & ports. You gazelle stabbed in the heart and waists, when your wounds heal ...... No friend, no hope. All of them barbarians, spitting on the word and devouring the children ............. They export to you the bombs, heavy artillery and tanks, they educate for you the youths who kill their fathers while they laugh .......... they steal from you the wheat and the word (Kalima, the cotton and the word, the oil and the word ..............."

Adonis describes the past of his country as seven centuries and another seven more, we sought under the boughs of magic; and live over a carpet of dancing, when the neither garments are swept away, the wood (al suf ) conceives a miracle, the locusts of spirit enjoy the good graces of her spring ............. In which sea brooks we wash this part of our history which is wrapped with turbans , soiled with the sweet of Dervishes, perfumed with the musk of spintress and widows who are returning from pilgrimage?

The poet is waiting for the wind and the rain to carry away the sand the ruins and the history of the people he is waiting for the future when a new leader comes and changes the present: C A brown-skinned man will rise from the sea in the garment of divinity ........ Teach rejection [raf'd], and confer new names under his eyelids the eagle of the future is getting ready ......71 In the last line of the poem en prose the poet says my homeland is not complete yet, my sprit it is far off, I have no sovereignty'. The qasidat -al-nathr received fresh impetus from other poets such as Unsi al -Hajj, Niqula Qurban and Shawqi Abir Shaqra, in Ma ila hisan al-'a'ila72 (Beirut 1962).

Among those who have been influenced by the French poem en prose, is Unsi al Hajj (born 1939) to whom it is a medium to express his revolt against the holiness of the Arabic language and its cultural heritage, and to challenge the stagnation in Arab life and its narrowness of view. The preface
to this collection of poems en prose Lan (Never) (Beirut, 1960) can be considered a manifesto of the new trend in poetry. In it al-Hajj distinguished between prose and poetry. Poetry can be without metre provided it has emotional tension and evocative and suggestive images while a versification without metre and rhyme are an external and ready-made music, of which a talented poet has no need. Afraid of progress, the conservative in their battle with progressives, the arguments of continuity in history, the holiness of the language, the needs of Arab people and the political, social and spiritual condition's of the Arabs in order to preserve stagnation, to delay the revolution in intellectual and emotional life.

Al-Hajj added: 'A Thousand years of pressure, a thousand years we are slave, ignorant and superficial. In order to be saved, we have to be stand in front of this wall and break through it: Al-Hajj continued that in the face of this conservative life in Arab world, in schools and among Arab writers there are two ways, suffocation and madness. By madness the rebels conquers and lets his voice be heard. In order that any revolutionary attempts will be able to stand against those who challenge against them with weapons of politics racialism and sectarianism, nothing helps but absolute sincerity. Those who are trying to break the thousand years have to destroy and destroy. They might be killed but they will have been able to tell the truth to those who want to make decadence dominant.

Both Adunis and al-Hajj admitted that they were guided by Suzanne Bernard's work Le poème en prose, de Baudelaire Jusqu'à nos Jours (Paris, 1959). Its characteristics, 'brievete, intensite' gratuite son pur lui, nous l'avons vu non dos 'ele'ments de beaut possible mais vraiment constitutifs san lesquels il n'existe pas.

The elements Adunis referred to as al-wahada al Uduwiya, al - Israq and al-majaniyya while Unsi al-Hajj translated them into al- lyjaz al tawahhaj and al majaniyya.
In al Hajj's poem en prose we find the influence of Saint - John Persé, Henri Michaux (born -1899), Antoin Artaud (1895-1948) and Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891)

As with those poetry, the poets of al- Hajj contains almost detachable sentences, spontaneity, with sexual symbolism and tension, irrational images and vision which reveal chaos of his inner universe. These abnormal images resemble the fantasy of the imagination liberated by slumber, in a way which makes him the nearest Arab poet to the surrealists. The main protagonist of this genre in Israeal is Mishil Haddad in his collection al Daraj al muaddi ila aghwarina (Tel Aviv, Nazareth, 1969)

With Jabra Ibrahim Jbra Muhammad al-Maghut (born - 1930) and Tawfiq, Sayigh, the influence of English and American modern poetry, especially that of T.S. Eliot, is obvious, and not that of the French poets. The impact can be clearly seen in Jabra's poem 'Monologue by a contemporary Faust' in which he speaks of the establishment of Israel and the Arab refugees and is influenced by the Triumphal march of T.S. Eliot.

In al Maqut's Huzn fidaw al qamar (sadness in the moonlight) (Beirut, 1959), we find the influence of T.S. Eliot in the following lines

The night came in the middle of May,
Like a sudden stab in the heart,
Like a patient covered with a winding sheet;
Upon and operating table,

However, this influence is rare, because every poet of this group shows individuality in his poetic experience, vocabulary and images. Their use of imagery the words in not for the purpose of conveying logical thoughts or images but mainly for evoking particular moods and instinct emotions, and to exploit the underlying melody of the words and their harmony to produce allusive and esoteric suggestions.

In the poetry of Twafiq Sayigh there is transparent ambiguity, and
sensuous images which evoke associations, and suggest abstract meanings and deep emotions. The images are impressive, surprising and personal. The style is simple but sometimes there are colloquial and foreign expressions. His poetry is deprived of metre, rhyme and narrative elements.

The attitude of the shi'r magazine group towards this poetry which does not conform to the conventional rules of metrics, is easily detected in the prose-poem in al Magut's Huzn fi daw' al qamar.80

Huzn fi daw' al-Qamar is a poetic anthology which did not apply the conventional metre and rhyme. Most of the readers in Arab works do not call the content of this collection Shi'r in a clear statement. They rove around the name by saying that Shi'r manthur or nathr Shi'r or nathr fanni, still the readers admires it and takes an interest in reading it not on the basis that it is prose dealing with numerous subjects or story or a conversation, but on the basis that it poetic material. Nevertheless the reader refuses to bestow upon it the title of poetry. However this is natural from the historical point of view of the ordinary reader, while a critic has to be more courageous, to call things by their names. I consider this poetic prose poetry.

The question which arises is which type of western poetry these poets are trying to imitate. In their criticism of Nazik al- Malaika's attack's attack on this kind of poetry in her book Qadaya 'l-Shi'r al-mu'asir, Yusuf al-Khal and Jabra Ibrahim Jabra in French and free verse in English that is free of metres and rhymes81 and depends on assurance, poetic images and internal music.82

In the preface of his anthology Tammuz fi'l Madina,83 Jabra Ibrahim explained that principle of his poetry is the freedom to apply the taflila and rhyme. Some verse have metre and different metres while others have not because they depend more upon the rhythm of thought and images in order to avoid completely any monotone of metre. He added that by declaiming his poem with an understanding of its internal running and climatic structure. The
new orchestral and rhapsodic music will be discerned, while in the long poems there is a symphonic structure which is the objective of the poetry of the future. Jabra employed a simple style and deliberately avoided any poetic diction, or use of infinitives and adjectives, using the direct style convey his theme and to embody his emotions. The poetry which the second group writes Is free verse in the western sense while from the point of view of form, Shir hurr is equivalent to vers irregular. As Ghali Shukri observed the terms qasidat al nathr, Shi'r hurr etc. are not successful because they suggest the opposite and not the essence of this poetry which springs from a new concepts and vision, and reflects anxiety, restlessness desperation, revolt and non-values of the new world. However these terms have been used for convenience, since this book deals mainly with form.

In an article Shi'r Kamil Sa'ada tried to designate the main elements of what he called harkat al Shi'r al-hadith 'the movement of the modern poetry". These elements are the endured poetic experience (al-bajriba-al mu'-anat) i.e; which not conscious expert experience as in the case of conventional poetry, but in which the poet endured the experience (shummuliyyat al -tajriba), i.e; to penetrate and to vanish into the universe of life. The third is the poetic vision (al-ruya, l-Shi'riya) which is not penetrating into the depth of consciousness, rational symbolism and obscurity through stupor and daze,not in the synonymous to dreaming. The poetic vision unites the dissimilarities and enables the poet to see the oneness and united in them. Therefore his philosophy' is stable because it acts according to the consciousness and sound logical method. The poetic climate (al-munakh al Shi'r) is the forth element, it means the symphonic emanation from the poetic experience and in organic unity with it. The fifth element is the thrust, condensation, and concentration (al Zakhm, al takthif and al tarkiz) its first part is he momentum which poetry bears in the moment of creation; the second is the spontaneous process of sensibility and mental vision of the poet who has experience, historical perception and memory. The shufa
element in this connexion of the word with poetic climate, the seventh is the spine of the poem (al amud al-fiqr li ' qasida) the sequence of the poetic experience the vision and climate which prevail in the poem.

The most interesting explanation of modern poetry is that in its unusual and personal use of words and images it is like a song in a foreign language which the listener does not understand but he can feel the theme and emotions by which the music in its harmony and disharmony, reflects the climate which the singer wanted to depict.86 Beside the defenders of modern poetry,87 there are many critics who attacked the neglect of metre and rhyme, especially in the genre called qasidat al nathr. Apart from al Mal'ika, there are many Egyptian critics who reject it, especially after other poets from Lebanon and Egypt such as Hani Mandas, 'Abbas Baydum, Khalil Ahmad Khlii saniyya Salih, Ibrahim shukr Allah and Fatih al Madarris, supported it.

The same accusations which were directed at all the former new genres, starting with the strophic verse of the Mahjaris up to al-Shi'r al hurr which is now recognized by those critics, are now directed to Qasidat al-nathr. The chief accusation is that Qasidat -al-nathr is backed by two magazines influenced by western literature and suspicious intellectual values. They argued that his poetry is backed by imperialism because it tries to spare pessimistic philosophy, emphasizes the ugliness of the world and the beauty of death, and strives to spread pessimitic derided human values, and corrupt the Arabic language and nationalism.88

Modern Arabic poetry seems to be developing towards this last new trend discussed above. This is shown clearly by the fact the nationalist and socialist poets who pay attention to rational vision in realism and art are declining, compared with the new trend in modern poetry and universal vision, which rejects any pre-determined poetic diction, form and conventional aesthetic values.

With the establishment of Shi'r hurr, colloquial Arabic poetry gained a
new impetus. It acquired a pronounced direction towards humanistic and universal poetry. This direction is felt more in colloquial Egyptian poetry, led by Fu’ad Hadad and Salah Jahin, than in its Lebanese counterpart, led by Muris - Auwad, said Aql (born 1900) and Juzif Ghusayan, the last two poets preached the use of Latin characters.

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