RESEARCH ARTICLE	**Foundations of Classical Arabic Poetics**

Hakim Dehimi

	Department of Arabic Language, Faculty of Letters and Languages, university of M'sila
	Algeria
	Email: hakim.dehimi@univ-msila.dz

Abstract

The study summarizes the impact of structuralism and linguistic methodology in establishing a scientific understanding of the literary text. Structuralism is seen as a turning point that views the text as a closed linguistic structure with a coherent internal system, distancing itself from traditional interpretations tied to the context of production. Despite the criticisms directed at it, structuralism remains a foundational approach in modern critical knowledge, particularly through its interaction with post-structuralist and deconstructionist approaches that have broadened the horizons of reading and interpretation. In the Arab context, however, the reception of these Western methodologies has been partial and limited, leading to misinterpretation and a lack of systematic understanding, as noted by thinkers such as Mahmoud Amin Al-Alam and Adonis. Modern linguistics has played a central role in consolidating this scientific perspective by reinforcing the view of the text as a network of internal linguistic relations. This has contributed to the emergence of new critical approaches such as semiotics and deconstruction, transforming the perception of the literary text from being merely a social or historical reference to an independent linguistic entity open to multiple interpretations.

Introduction

The concept of "ancient Arabic poetics" is a complex one, encompassing intertwined aesthetic, linguistic, and historical dimensions, which necessitates a precise definition of its components and terminological boundaries. In theoretical terms, poetics is not limited to the formal structure of the Arabic poem—such as meter and rhyme—but also extends to the mechanisms of artistic production, the tools of reception, and the value system that governed the relationship between the poet and their audience.

Ancient Arabic poetics formed a unique creative system closely tied to the characteristics of the Arabic language and its rhetorical deviations. This poetics was reflected in the concepts developed by early critics, such as the "concept of poetry," the "function of poetry," the "pillar of poetry," "innate talent and craftsmanship," and "literary theft," among others. It was not detached from its cultural context; rather, it served as a means to document history, express moral values, and reflect the artistic consciousness of society. Accordingly, this study aims to present the key foundations of ancient Arabic poetics, focusing on analyzing the most important ideas and principles upon which it was built.

1. The Nature of Poetry According to the Ancients
1.1 Qudamah ibn Ja'far

"Poetry is metrically measured and rhymed speech that conveys meaning."(El-Youssfi, 2002, pp. 31–33)

Ihsan Abbas comments on this definition, which was proposed by Qudamah ibn Ja'far, stating: *"The definition reflects the formalist perspective of poetry during the Abbasid era, but it overlooks the emotional and symbolic dimensions."(Al-Alam)*

Meanwhile, Muhammad Mandur, referring to this concept of poetry, notes: *"This definition was sufficient for its time, but it does not apply to modern poetry, which has abandoned rhyme."*

Ibn Rashiq defines poetry by setting two essential conditions, stating that speech cannot be considered poetry without them: *"Poetry is not poetry unless it is metrical and rhymed."*

In light of this definition, we encounter various positions among scholars and critics, each shaped by their intellectual orientations and academic approaches. Shukri Ayyad, for instance, in his *Encyclopedia of Poetic Terms*, criticizes this concept for failing to encompass the full reality of the poetic act in all its dimensions. He argues that form alone is not sufficient to be considered a fundamental component of poetry: *"Free verse and blank verse have shown that internal rhythm can substitute for traditional meter."(Fadl, 1985)*

Criticism of the Restriction to Meter and Rhyme: In the work of Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi, Arabic poetic meter was linked to fifteen established *bahrs* (metrical patterns), which ancient Arabic poetry—particularly the most widely circulated texts across literary eras—rarely exceeded. These meters became a formal rule that was not to be violated, as any deviation was considered a break from the foundational principles of Arabic poetry and a disruption of the framework set by Al-Khalil when he declared that *"the meters of poetry are fifteen in number." (Fadl, 1985).* This rigidity led many modern critics to question the confinement of Arabic poetry within these fifteen meters, as it left no room for poetic evolution or the emergence of new rhythmic possibilities. These could, in fact, arise naturally from the poet's emotional state and the context shaping their poetic expression. Among those who challenged this limitation was Ezzedine Ismail, who held a critical stance on restricting poetic meters to a fixed number. He believed that: *"Al-Khalil's system was revolutionary in its time, but it has become a constraint in the modern era."(Azzedine, 1992)*

As for Adonis, he attributes the stagnation of Arabic poetry to its adherence to these fifteen meters and strongly criticizes the idea of conforming to them.

1.2 The Concept of Poetry According to Hilal al-'Askari:
He, too, does not differ from his predecessors in linking Arabic poetry to formal constraints that are not open to compromise. For him, rhyme is unquestionably a fundamental element of poetry—indeed, one of its necessities. He states:
"Rhyme is one of the necessities of poetry. » This position also drew criticism from scholars and researchers, particularly regarding his view of rhyme as a clear dividing line between poetry and prose. Muhammad Ghunaymi, for instance, notes that: *"Rhyme lost its sanctity after the emergence of blank verse in the twentieth century."*(Hilal, 1986, p. 220)

1.3 The Concept of Poetry and the Debate on the Relationship Between Word and Meaning:

Al-Jahiz's Position (Preference for Meaning):
"When the meaning is excellent and the wording refined, that is truly admirable poetry."(Al-Jahiz, 1998, p. 90)

Abdel Aziz Hamouda, in *Al-Maraya Al-Muhaddaba* (*Convex Mirrors*), states that *"Al-Jahiz presented a balanced view, but it overlooks the linguistic deviations that have become essential in modern poetry."* This implies that poetry, as a creative genre, aligns with all the possibilities of linguistic deviation that the language undergoes throughout its historical development.

1.4 Abdul Qahir Al-Jurjani's Position on the Concept of Poetry and the Function of Word and Meaning (The Structural View):
Al-Jurjani believed that the eloquence of poetry lies in the eloquence of structure (composition), not in the individual words. He asserted that: *"The eloquence of poetry lies in the composition of speech, not in the words themselves."*

Kamal Abu-Deeb, in *The Dialectic of Concealment and Manifestation*, comments on this issue, praising the theory of composition but criticizing it for overlooking semantic deviation.

2. The Function of Poetry in Ancient Arabic Poetics:

Ibn Qutaybah considered poetry, by its very nature, a source of wisdom—if not the primary source—and a reflection of the full spectrum of life in society. Accordingly, he stated: *"Poetry is the vessel of wisdom and the mirror of society."*

Jaber Asfour commended Ibn Qutaybah's view regarding the function of poetry, but he added that: *"Modern poetry has gone beyond the moral function toward existential reflection."*

Muhammad Lutfi al-Yusufi, in *Ancient Arabic Criticism*, argues that *"the definitions of the ancients were revolutionary* in their time, but they require re-examination in light of modern methodologies.»*. This means that accepting the ancients' judgments on the definition and function of poetry is something that must be reviewed in light of the evolution of human awareness and the development of life forms themselves. What was suitable for the concept of poetry in the ancients' era is not necessarily valid for us in the modern age. They had their questions and issues within the limits of their old environment, while we have our questions and concerns within the vastness of our world. As the saying goes, a person is a product of their environment. Perhaps this confirms that *"ancient criticism established precise standards, but contemporary poetry has broken them all."* Undoubtedly, this break occurred through the will of the modern human to reshape things anew from the perspective of modernity, through a determined pursuit of exploration and discovery, and a yearning for a form of freedom unlike any freedom sought by the ancients.

Ancient critics considered poetry to have multiple functions, varying according to poetic purposes and social context. Among the most prominent of these functions is:

2.1 The Expressive Function (Emotional and Sentimental):

Ibn Sina spoke about this function when he said: *"Poetry is imaginative speech that affects the soul, moving it to joy or sorrow."*(Sina, 1966, p. 20)

In his book *Cultural Criticism*, Abdullah Al-Ghadhami argues that Ibn Sina was ahead of his time by linking poetry to psychological impact, which aligns with modern aesthetics theories.

In the same context, Muhammad Abed al-Jabri, in *The Structure of the Arab Mind*, observes that this function presents poetry as a means of emotional release but neglects its social dimension. From this statement, it appears that Al-Jabri overlooks the social role that ancient Arabic poetry played as *"the Diwan of the Arabs."* This point deserves further clarification in the next section concerning the social function of poetry.

2.2 The Social Function of Poetry (Pride, Satire, and Elegy) According to Ibn Qutaybah:

One of the most commonly cited sayings about the social function of poetry is Ibn Qutaybah's famous statement: *"Poetry is the Diwan of the Arabs; through it, virtue is recognized and lineage is preserved."* (Qutaybah, 1966, p. 5). Taha Hussein criticizes this view, considering that *"it turned poetry into a political tool more than an artistic one."*. Meanwhile, Ali Jawad Tahir emphasizes that *"pre-Islamic poetry was a means of preserving history, but he exaggerates in politicizing literature."*

2.3 The Moral Function (Wisdom and Sermon):
Al-Mutanabbi says:

'A'azzu makānin fī al-dunā sarju sābiḥin
(The most precious place in the world is the saddle of a rider)

Wa khayru jalīsin fī al-zamān kitāb
(And the best companion in time is a book)

Jaber Asfour believes that Al-Mutanabbi *"used poetry to spread wisdom, but he transformed it into a philosophical discourse addressed only to the elite." ('Usfur, 1980, p. 150)*. Meanwhile, Kamal Abu-Deeb, in *The Dialectic of Concealment and Manifestation*, considers that this function *"reduced the role of creative poetry in favor of educational purposes."* (Deeb, 1979, p. 110)

Regardless of the differing views on the moral function of ancient Arabic poetry, it is important to emphasize the role of ancient Arabic poetry in purifying the soul and building the value system of the ancient Arab individual. These values were inspired by the limits of their environment and deeply rooted customs, such as generosity, courage, supporting the oppressed, and the honorable defense of the tribe—among many other values that no ancient Arabic poem is without calling for and taking pride in.

2.4 The Aesthetic Function (Enjoyment and Art for Art's Sake):

The essence of poetry is to provide an aesthetic value, and undoubtedly, the primary source of these values is language and the poet's ability to adapt it to their emotional state. Al-Jahiz was aware of this issue when he stated: *"Poetry is appreciated for its own sake, even if it lacks utility."* (Al-Jahiz, 1965, p. 120)

Ezzedine Ismail praises this view in *The Psychological Interpretation of Literature*, considering it *"close to the Romantic school."*

Meanwhile, Muhammad Lutfi al-Yusufi criticizes Al-Jahiz in *Ancient Arabic Criticism* for failing to distinguish between serious enjoyment and superficial entertainment.

2.5 The Religious Function (Prophetic Praise and Asceticism):

The religious function of poetry became associated with the advent of Islam,

Muḥammadun sayyidu al-kawnayn wa al-thaqalayni
(Muhammad is the master of the two worlds and the two heavy ones)

Wa al-farīqayn min 'Urb wa min 'Ajam
(And the two groups—from Arabs and from non-Arabs)

This function is linked to the arrival of Islam and the poets' inspiration from its principles and values, conveying new meanings that call for faith, brotherhood, and peace. It also includes praise of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and descriptions of his noble qualities and attributes. In this context, Al-Busiri and his famous poem *Al-Burdah*, which includes praise of the Prophet (peace be upon him), are noteworthy examples.

Muhammad bin Sharifah observes that *"religious poetry transformed language into a ritual act of worship but narrowed the scope of creativity."*(Muhammad, 1988, p. 75). In other words, it abandoned some of the original poetic purposes in Arabic poetry, such as love, pride, and satire—purposes that were traditionally arenas for competition and creativity due to the interest of the ancient Arab audience.

As for Abdel Fattah Kilito, he doubted the sincerity of the religious poet, asking: "Was Al-Busiri writing for God or for the caliphs?" Undoubtedly, such a question calls for reconsidering the historical and social contexts in which religious poetry was composed, in order to understand the genuine values of this poetic genre and to identify the meanings and ideas introduced to serve the rulers.

In general, the principle of functionality in poetry has led many contemporary scholars to criticize it and to absolve poetry from it, each approaching the issue with their own logic and awareness. Among the most prominent advocates for freeing poetry from the principle of functionality is Adonis, who believes that "Arabic poetry remained imprisoned by utilitarian functions (such as pride, satire, etc.) and was only liberated through modernity."

However, by returning to ancient Arabic poetry, we find many poetic examples in the genre of love poetry in all its forms, especially obscene love poetry, which reached a high degree of freedom and evasion from the control of tribal surveillance and Arab customs. This suggests that the issue of linking the liberation of Arabic poetry solely to modernity requires reconsideration and discussion.

In the same context, Dr. Salah Fadl asserts that "the aesthetic function is the most enduring because it transcends the poet's time and speaks to humanity as a whole."(Salah, 1992, p. 210)

What can be concluded from the above is that there are two main trends regarding the social function of poetry. On one hand, there is a traditional trend represented by Ibn Qutaybah, Al-Jahiz, and others, which affirms the social and ethical functions of literature. On the other hand, there is a modernist trend represented by Adonis, Kilito, and others, which rejects reducing poetry to specific functions and calls for viewing poetry as an independent art.

3. The Pillar of Poetry among the Ancients:

The "pillar of poetry" is considered one of the most important critical concepts established by ancient critics to describe good poetry that adheres to specific standards. Al-Marzouqi (d. 421 AH) defines the pillar of poetry by saying: "The pillar of poetry is what aligns with the nature of the Arabs and does not violate their linguistic customs." This position sparked many reactions, the most important of which is that Ihsan Abbas, in *The History of Literary Criticism Among the Arabs*, believes "that Al-Marzouqi meant by this poetry that preserves the pre-Islamic principles of truthfulness and eloquence." (Abbas, 1993, p. 215) Meanwhile, Muhammad Ghoneimy Hilal, in his book *Modern Literary Criticism*, views the concept of the "pillar of poetry" as conservative, as it linked quality to tradition rather than creativity. From the latter's statement, we can conclude that the issue of the pillar of poetry is a matter of convention, not creativity, based on the idea that adherence to the principles of the pillar of poetry is a preservation of the ancients' method of composing poetry because this method represents the original standard

that should not be deviated from, and does not represent the creative sensibility in any form—a sensibility that varies from one poet to another.

3.1: Elements of the Pillar of Poetry According to the Ancients: The ancient critics defined essential elements for the pillar of poetry, including:
A-Sincerity of Emotion: In the view of Qudama ibn Ja'far, this means: "The first condition of poetry is that it must arise from a sincere emotion."(Qudamah ibn Ja'far, 1978, p. 60) . Abdel Aziz Hamouda comments in *Convex Mirrors* that "the ancients did not set precise criteria for measuring emotional sincerity, which made it a subjective matter."

B. Eloquence of Expression and Soundness of Structure: Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani defines this as the foundation and essence of poetry. From his statement, it can be inferred that poetry should be free from complexity and awkwardness, as he says: "Poetry is not good unless it is free from complexity and awkwardness." Kamal Abu Deeb criticizes this condition in *The Dialectic of Concealment and Manifestation*, stating that "it deprives poetry of linguistic deviations that enrich the text."(Abu-Deeb, 1979, p. 120)

3.2: Unity of the Poem and Consistency of Meanings:

In Al-Amidi's view, good poetry is that whose verses are consistent in meaning and do not contradict each other. This statement means that a poem has a solid structure with its own system based on specific rules, which are the same principles as the pillar of classical Arabic poetry. However, Jaber Asfour in *The Artistic Image in Critical Heritage* argues that this element reflects the ancients' obsession with logic, whereas modern poetry relies on condensation and deviation.

3.3: The Stance on the Issue of the Pillar of Poetry in the Modern Era: In this matter, two positions can be discussed: a conservative stance that supports it, and a modernist stance that opposes it. These two positions are reflected as follows:

1. **The Classical School (Preserving the Pillar):**
Perhaps the most prominent representative of this current is the poet Ahmed Shawqi, who believes that "poetry remains poetry as long as it preserves meter and rhyme." (Shawqi, 1932, p. 80) However, this position drew criticism from Mohamed Mandour, who accused Shawqi of rigidity, considering that Shawqi clung to the origins and ignored innovation.

2. **The Modernist School (Rejecting the Pillar):** The most prominent figure representing this trend is Adonis, who sees "the pillar of poetry as a prison for literature, and renewal requires its destruction." Undoubtedly, such an acknowledgment reveals his rejection of the classical Arabic poetry pillar, viewing it as an obstacle to creativity. Supporting Adonis in this direction (the issue of the poetry pillar in classical Arabic poetics) is Salah Fadl, who agrees that "the pillar restricted creativity, but he warns against completely abolishing the heritage."(Fadl, 1985, p. 150)

What can be concluded regarding the issue of the pillar of poetry is that there are two main directions: one supports the idea of the poetry pillar, and the other opposes it. On one hand, the first trend (the traditional current) views the pillar of poetry as the criterion of quality (represented by Al-Marzouqi and Ibn Rashiq). On the other hand, the second trend considers it a constraint on creativity, with Adonis and Kamal Abu Deeb as its main representatives.
3. **Poetics according to Hazem Al-Qartajani:**
4.1: The theoretical framework of Hazem's poetics:

The foundations of poetics according to Hazem Al-Qartajani can be identified through his definition of the essence of poetry in his statement:
"Poetry is a precise intellectual art, whose quality depends on good imagination composed of truthful conception and good composition."(Al-Qartajani, 1981, pp. 5-10)
This definition reveals the pillars of poetics for him, which are embodied in:
A) Imagination: as a philosophical basis, which for him means "creating a meaningful image in the soul that reaches the level of truth in its effect."
It consists of the formal part, where the image is defined by two conditions: perfect formation and clear features, as he expressed: "The poetic image must be complete in its elements and clear in its features."

The Emotional Aspect: This aspect relates to the emotional charge that the image conveys to the soul, as it is emphasized that "an image has no value without the emotional force that drives it into the soul."

4-2: The Constraints of Poetry in His View:
4-2-1: The Constraint of Proportion:

This is the most important constraint for him: "There must be proportion between the parts of the poem to ensure its harmony, like a single body."

4-2-2: The Constraint of Illusion:
This represents the highest level of poetry, and it is what "makes you believe in reality while depicting the impossible."

4-3: The Analytical Levels of the Poem Within His Poetic Vision:
A. Structural Level
B. Linguistic Fabric
C. The Word as the Vessel of Meaning: The word is the vessel of meaning, but it is also a vessel that participates in the formation.

D. Logical Structure: This refers to the coherence of meanings without contradiction within the poem, as he expressed it by saying: "The meanings must not be conflicting; rather, they should progress like interconnected links."

B. The Aesthetic Level: This represents the internal rhythm, through which meanings leave an echo in the soul due to their flow within the poem. Rhythm as a whole is defined by two types: "an external rhythm in the meter, and an internal rhythm in the flow of meanings."

E. Artistic Paradox:
"The finest poetry is that which unites opposites in an artistic unity."
This implies that one of the qualities of good poetry is its ability to stimulate the mind to think and stir the soul through the paradoxes it encounters in the poem. In this sense, the poem becomes a space where opposites are brought together in a tightly woven artistic context that broadens perspective and provokes questioning.

The ideas of Hazem al-Qartajanni received a positive reception among scholars in every era. Taha Ahmed Ibrahim considers him "the first to present a comprehensive theory of poetic imagination," and his theoretical scholarly effort is also appreciated by Abou Deeb, who believes that "Hazem moved beyond the mechanical view of poetry to a dynamic vision."
There is no doubt that the ideas presented by Hazem al-Qartajanni laid the foundational ground for a broader perspective on the structure of the text and the network of relationships among its elements, within a Western-style critical approach whose primary goal and starting point is the text itself and its dynamic characteristics that propel it into continuous movement, formation, and renewal.

From the above, we can infer three essential characteristics that distinguish the text according to Hazem al-Qartajanni:

1. **Philosophical Depth:** Influenced by Aristotelian logic, with further development.

2. **Comprehensiveness:** Combined form and content.

3. **Flexibility:** Acknowledged the limits of theorization.

5.Poetics According to Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani: Poetry, in his view, is defined as "the balance between meter and meaning," as he states that poetry is "rhymed and metered speech that carries meaning. If it lacks meaning, it is not poetry, and if it lacks meter, it is not poetry."(Al-Qartajani, 1981, p. 81)

Shukri Fayṣal comments on this definition by saying: "Ibn Rashiq restores value to meaning in the face of the rhetorical exaggerations of the Badiʿ school, but he also rejects purely philosophical poetry devoid of aesthetic quality."

The implication of this statement is that poetry is a state of balance established by the poet between the meaning he seeks to express and the linguistic form that this meaning requires in order to appear in the most beautiful way possible.

This is perhaps what Ihsan Abbas meant when he used the term "integration" to express his stance on the definition of poetry, linking it to Qudama ibn Ja'far's concept of poetry when he said:His definition embodies the integration of form and content, and it is a development of Qudama ibn Ja'far's definition. (Ihsan 1971, p. 290)

5.1: Ibn Rashiq and the Impact of the Debate on Language and Meaning in Shaping the Concept of Poetry:

The foundation of this issue, in his view, lies in prioritizing meaning, as it is the primary purpose behind producing the text (the composition of poetry). He acknowledges the necessity of giving precedence to meaning when it conflicts with wording, as he states: *"If there is a conflict between wording and meaning, meaning deserves more attention, for the wording serves it."*

Muhammad Mandur comments on this matter by saying: *"This opinion shows Ibn Rashiq's influence by al-Jahiz, but he adds an aesthetic condition: that the wording must suit the meaning without negligence.".* And if there is anything to be added, it is necessary to recall that the efforts of the early scholars in studying the state of poetry were not isolated from one another. Rather, they were based on an epistemological continuity, where later scholars built upon the efforts of their predecessors in a spirit of complementarity. The ultimate goal behind this was to establish a science centered on the poetic text. Perhaps this is what led Muhammad Mandur to point out the nature of the relationship between Ibn Rashiq's concept of poetry and that of al-Jahiz.

On the other hand, Abdel Aziz Ateeq acknowledges the moderation that characterized Ibn Rashiq's perspective, as he *objectively* and precisely combined various viewpoints. He harmonized earlier and later opinions in a way rarely matched in modern studies. For "Ibn Rashiq transcends the old debate between the advocates of wording and meaning through a balanced approach."('Atīq, 1972, p. 210)

5-2: Poetic Plagiarism

One of the key subjects that constituted a major issue in classical poetics during Ibn Rashiq's time was what is known as literary plagiarism. It is a form of borrowing from others with the intent of creating a coherent and complete text. This practice is defined by a set of conditions; when these are met, it becomes a commendable act that adds value and benefit to the text.

According to Ibn Rashiq, the best literary plagiarisms are those that fulfill two essential conditions, as he states: *"The* best plagiarisms are those in which an obscure meaning is clarified or a distant meaning is brought closer." Mustafa Nasif comments on this issue, stating that: "Ibn Rashiq speaks of creativity within the framework of cultural accumulation, and he precedes modern concepts of intertextuality." As for Abdullah Al-Ghadhami, he believes that Ibn Rashiq's classification of literary plagiarism represents "the first attempt to scientifically organize the concept of literary influence."(al-Ghidhāmī, 2000, p. 78)

5.3: Poetic Comparisons:

One of the fundamental issues shaping Ibn Rashiq's poetics is critical comparison, especially between Abu Tammam and Al-Buhturi. The significance of such comparisons lies in their role in enriching the Arab poetic tradition with new criteria and rules that govern the functioning of the text. These rules are the result of experience with poetic texts and comparing them—making poetic and critical comparisons an early path in the pursuit of scientific and objective criticism, and in laying the foundation for a literary theory that elevates the poetic text.

In his comparison between Al-Buhturi and Abu Tammam, Ibn Rashiq delivers a remarkably analytical judgment by classifying each poet according to the dominant faculty that defines him: *"Abu Tammam is a master of innovative meanings, while Al-Buhturi is the prince of expression."*

5.4: Poetic Deviation (Rules of Metaphor):

This is one of the fundamental issues on which the logic of classical Arabic poetics was built. It is a distinctive feature of poetry alone and represents a linguistic path through which language moves beyond conventional meanings agreed upon by a linguistic community, toward meanings dictated by the poetic context and the emotional state experienced by the poet while composing the poem. It occurs as the poet renames things according to his unique poetic logic, personal poetic intuition, and individual poetic consciousness—at a moment when he transcends tangible, lived reality into a world of ideals and abstract meanings that emerge before him as he confronts the uniqueness of the experience and the unveiling of truth. As he states: *"The best metaphor is that which is close to reality and whose intended meaning is not obscure."*

Muhammad Abu Musa comments on Ibn Rashiq's statement by clarifying the significance of the clarity that Ibn Rashiq advocates, explaining that *"Ibn Rashiq's criterion of clarity resembles the concept of 'acceptable deviation' in modern criticism."*

6.Al-Jahizian Poetics:

6.1: His Concept of Poetry:

Al-Jahiz defines poetry through two essential actions: **craftsmanship** (*ṣināʿa*) and **weaving** (*nasj*), both of which have their own foundations and methods. While the word *craftsmanship* indicates skill and precision, the term *weaving*—at least linguistically—suggests structure and meticulousness. This can be inferred from Al-Jahiz's statement:
"Poetry is a craft and a kind of weaving; it has foundations just like any other craft."

As for the poets themselves, they are, in Al-Jahiz's words, "the most untruthful of people," for he says: *"Poets are the greatest liars, yet the best at portraying truths.".* This characterization stems primarily from the poet's boldness in expressing truth—both in language and in naming—even if that approach to truth is metaphorical.

For Al-Jahiz, poetry is based on pillars, the most important of which are:

6-2: The Pillars of Poetry According to Al-Jahiz:
A. Meaning and Imagery:

This represents the foundation of the poetic act, as *"Poetry is not about the abundance of words, but rather about the beauty of meanings and the quality of imagery."*

B. Rhythm and Meter:

Rhythm, according to Al-Jahiz, is the *soul* of poetry, due to the vitality it brings to the listener and the lasting impact it leaves on their emotions and behavior. In his words:
"Meter to poetry is like the soul to the body—without it, there is no existence."

6-3: The Functions of Poetry in Al-Jahiz's Perspective:
A. The Social Function:

Poetry, for Al-Jahiz, is deeply connected to society—it emerges from it and returns to it. It is the interpreter of individual life within the community, portraying both its joys and sorrows. Thus, it rightly became *"the register of the Arabs, preserving their genealogies and immortalizing their glories."*

B. The Aesthetic Function:

The source of poetry's aesthetic function, according to Al-Jahiz, lies in **imagination (takhyīl)**, which has a strong emotional effect. It causes the soul to stir, to flare up, and to fluctuate through the emotions it evokes. This is the essence of his statement:
"Poetry stirs the soul and arouses emotions through the beauty of its imagination."

6-4: The Issue of Wording and Meaning in His View:

The relationship between wording (lafẓ) and meaning (ma'nā) is one of complementarity—each carries and supports the other in harmony. This is why Al-Jahiz declared:
"At first, meaning was the mount of wording, then wording became the mount of meaning."

Distinguishing Features of Al-Jahiz's Poetics:

- A combination of scientific perspective and literary taste

- Emphasis on the social functions of poetry

- Linking poetry with rhetoric (balāgha)

- Affirmation of the importance of artistic imagery

- Establishing objective criteria for poetry criticism

7-Poetics of Qudāma ibn Ja'far:
7-1: The Fundamental Criteria for Poetry:

A. The Condition of Meter and Rhyme:
"It is not called poetry unless it is metered, rhymed, and confined to a specific meaning."
B. The Linguistic Criterion:
"Poetry must be eloquent, free from grammatical error and linguistic weakness."

C. Content Criteria:

C.A. Truthfulness of Imagery:
"The meaning should be truthful in its depiction, not forced in its expression."

C.B. Logic and Organization:
"Meanings must be arranged in a natural order, prioritizing the important before the less important."

D. Artistic Formulation Criteria:
D.A. Balance Between Wording and Meaning:
"The best poetry is that in which the craftsmanship of wording and the craftsmanship of meaning are balanced."

D.B. Avoidance of Affectation:
"Avoiding verbal complexity and artificiality in meaning is a condition for good poetry."

E. Ethical Criteria:
"It is not appropriate for the poet to go beyond the limits of modesty and decorum."

E-1. Artistic Truthfulness:
"Lying in poetry is acceptable if it serves the artistic purpose without deception."

E-2. Observance of the Requirements of Each Poetic Purpose:
"Each poetic purpose has its own criteria: praise requires conciseness, and elegy demands emotion."

F. Unity of the Poem:
"The poem should be an integrated whole, with its verses not contradicting each other."

J. Prosodic Criteria:
J-a. Integrity of Meter:
"The integrity of the prosodic meter must be observed, avoiding distortions that spoil it."

J-b. Appropriateness of Rhyme:
"The rhyme should be natural, not forced, and appropriate to the context of the poem."

7-2: Critical Analysis of the Criteria:
A. Scientific Methodology: Many scholars acknowledge Qudama ibn Ja'far's merit in establishing the first methodological foundations for critical analysis. This is affirmed by Taha Ahmed Ibrahim, who states, "Qudama is distinguished for setting the first methodological standards for the criticism of Arabic poetry."

B. Integration Between Form and Content: Muhammad Mandur recognizes this feature in Qudama's poetics, saying, "Qudama's criteria combined prosodic form with intellectual content."

Based on the above, Qudama's criteria can be summarized as:

- Formal criteria: (meter, rhyme, language)

- Content criteria: (truthfulness, order, logic)

- Artistic criteria: (balance, avoidance of affectation)

- Ethical criteria: (modesty, taste)

- Specific criteria: (particularity of poetic purposes)

7-3: Applying Qudama ibn Ja'far's Criteria to Two Poetic Examples: One Classical and One Modern:
Classical Example: Two verses by Al-Mutanabbi
Text:

Wa mā naylu al-maṭālibi bi-al-tamannī (One does not attain aspirations through mere wishing)
Wa lākin tu'khadhu al-dunyā ghilāban (But the world is seized through struggle and force)
Wa mā istaʿṣā ʿalā qawmin manālun (No goal is ever out of reach for a people)
Idhā al-iqdāmu kāna lahum rikāban (If courage serves them as their mount)

Criterion	Application	Evaluation
Meter and Rhyme	The two verses follow the *Ṭawīl* meter (*faʿūlun mafāʿīlun* ×4) with a unified rhyme.	Consistent
Linguistic Eloquence	The text is free from grammatical errors.	

Truthfulness of Imagery	Precise depiction of the idea of struggle (*the world is seized through force, courage as a mount*).	**Consistent**
Verbal Harmony (*Balance between wording and meaning*)	"*The world is seized through force*" ← strong in both wording and meaning.	**Consistent**
Logical Order of Ideas	Introduction (*negation of mere wishing*) → Conclusion (*necessity of courage/initiative*).	**Consistent**

Unity Objectivity / The two verses are connected by a single idea (achieving goals through effort, not wishes) / **Consistent**
Conclusion: The model complies with all the criteria of Qudamah ibn Ja'far.

The modern model: Two verses by Adonis (from *al-shi'r al-taf'īlah*):

Text:

"Yaḥmilu al-mawtu sirra al-ḥayāh • wa yaḥmilu al-qabru bidhra al-ṣamt
Kullu ṣawtin yughannī • wa kullu ṣamtin yunbitu al-kalimāt"

| **Linguistic Eloquence** | Use of uncommon expressions
("the seed of silence," "silence grows words"). | **Partially consistent** |
| **Truthfulness of Imagery** | Figurative imagery
("death carries the secret of life," "silence grows words"). | **Artistically consistent** |
| **Verbal Harmony** | Imbalance between wording and meaning
(Density of metaphor may weaken clarity). | **Relative** |
| **Logical Order** | Non-linear philosophical ideas
(Apparent contradictions: death/life, silence/speech). | **Different / inconsistent** |
| **Thematic Unity** | Thematic coherence
(Dualities of life/death, sound/silence). | **Consistent** |

Conclusion:
The model violates some criteria (meter, clarity), but preserves the essence of poetry.

Critical Summary:
Classical Poetry:

- Fully adheres to Qudama's criteria (both form and content).

- An example of "complete poetry" according to the standards of the 4th century AH.

Modern Poetry:

- Maintains the content criteria (imagination, unity).

- Breaks the formal criteria (meter, rhyme) in favor of innovation.

If Qudama were to critique this modern text, he would see in it a "departure from the pillar of poetry."

Conclusion

From the above, it can be said that classical Arabic poetics represents an integrated artistic and cultural system based on deep aesthetic and intellectual foundations that embody the spirit and uniqueness of Arab civilization. This study addressed the fundamental components of Arabic poetics, starting from the linguistic and technical concept of poetry, passing through its function and pillar, and examined the key concepts and essential tenets that shaped classical Arabic poetics as developed by its early pioneers.

The research also revealed the interaction between Arabic poetics and the ancient critical perspective, where critics such as Al-Jurjani, Ibn Qutaybah, and Ibn Rashiq contributed to shaping the concepts of imitation, deviation, and semantic depth, enriching poetic theory and endowing it with a philosophical dimension.

Despite the passage of centuries, classical Arabic poetics remains a creative model carrying universal traits and human values, affirming that artistic beauty is inseparable from human truth. Thus, this study opens horizons for comparative research that explores the possibility of employing poetic heritage to understand modernity and its challenges.

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