

9 The modern subject sensing its agency

Khalil al-Khūrī's aesthetics of “truth mingled with passion”

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This chapter: As already pointed out in several Chapters above, the ‘global’ period of Reproductionism to which the earlier decades of the Arab(ic) Nahḍa belong, has a strong tendency to express itself in ways and forms that underline the – ultimately unshakable – power of the existing old order or system of general laws and rules, a tendency reflected in an overall “restorative” attitude in politics, an emphasis on realism in the arts, and a belief in all kinds of laws in the sciences (positivism). In the preceding chapters, we have seen that this tendency was very strong also in the Arab(ic) Nahḍa:

- Chapter 1 showed how reluctant Arabs were to leave the political framework of the Ottoman Empire;
- Chapters 4 and 7 demonstrated that, in spite of changing meanings and, thus, a new understanding of old terms like *adab* or *riwāya*, these very same old words were preferred to foreign, non-Arabic terminology;
- in Chapter 8, we have looked into aspects of al-Shidyāq’s realism and neo-classicism in his *Sāq* of 1855;
- and in Chapter 5, we could observe how the Azhar shaykh Ḥusayn al-Marṣafī was eager to treat the modern Western concept of ‘homeland, fatherland’ (French *patrie*) in a similar, ‘neo-classicist’ way, i.e., in terms of the old *waṭan*, reading it in a traditional philological way first, then making a ‘realist turn’ and discussing more practical, down-to-earth matters under the heading;
- in Chapter 4, we followed Khalil al-Khūrī’s and Aḥmed Midḥat’s discussion of the pros and cons of Europeanising trends in their societies and noticed that both concluded with a – liberal and open-minded, yet thought-to-be necessary – sticking to indigenous tradition (al-Khūrī’s *wujūd ahlī*, Midḥat’s *alaturkahk*).

However, while all this can be considered strong proof of the Nahḍa’s appreciative acknowledgement of the old order of things, its conservative, ‘restorative’, ‘reproductionist’ tendencies, as well as its ‘realism’, we have, on the other hand, also already come across several indicators of a clear drive for rupture with the old order, typically demanded by individuals who experienced the old order as an obstacle restricting a free unfolding of legitimate wishes etc., as dated, and

sometimes even as inhumane. In the period of ‘global’ Reproductionism, these disruptive tendencies represent the Potentiality component, i.e., those elements of the tripartite Potentiality-Actuality-Resultant (PAR) structure of a period that tend to destabilise Actuality, i.e., the actual state of affairs that is characterised by a tendency to stabilise itself. As the examples of Khalīl al-Khūrī, Aḥmad Midḥat, Fāris al-Shidyāq showed, such a desire for renewal and ‘updating’ to a more contemporary, ‘modern’ attitude towards life could also be virulent in authors who, in principle, believed in the innovative potential of own, autochthonous traditions and therefore advocated a prudent, moderate and modest reform, seeking to combine the best of both: of civilisation in the spirit of progress and modernity, on the one hand, and of an own, precious cultural heritage and autochthonous identity, on the other hand.

This chapter will identify *passion*, and with it *emotionalisation*, as a key element of the Potentiality component of a reproductionist aesthetic (and approach to the world), as sketched by al-Khūrī in the metatextual foreword to his *Way! Idhan lastu bi-Ifranji* and subsequently translated into the novel’s dramatic plot and tragic ending. In this *muqaddima*, the author pleads for a literature in which authenticity and logical plausibility are mingled with *hawas*, literally “frenzy”, but better rendered as “passion” here. The chapter sets out to explain how al-Khūrī’s call for an “indigenous way of life” (*wujūd ahlī*) and literary authenticity and at the same time an emotionalisation of writing may belong together. I will argue that both spring from the same source: the modern subject beginning to feel its agency in the world and seeking to assert itself. The latter wish is inherent also in the concomitant preference of drama and plot narratives over poetry; in drama and narrative prose, the subject’s agency can be observed as unfolding *in time* (cf. above, Chapter 6). The dynamisation implied in this process can be read as an indicator of temporalisation in the sense Reinhart Koselleck identified as a main feature of the European *Sattelzeit* (“threshold period”).¹ Like in this transitional period in Europe, in the Arabic Nahḍa, too, new concepts emerge and older terms acquire new meanings (as we’ve already seen on several occasions in the preceding chapters and will also notice in those to follow below). Arabic key concepts discussed in this context in this chapter include: *taqlīd*, *taṣwīr*, *ḥaqīqa*, *wujūd ahlī* (cf. above, Chapter 4), *hawas*, *istiqlāl dhātī* (see below, Chapter 16), *riwāya* (see esp. Chapter 7) and *adab / adīb* (cf. esp. Chapter 4). Additionally, emotionalisation will be discussed

¹ This chapter was first published as a contribution to a themed section of *Die Welt des Islams/The World of Islam*, 62 (2022), on the Nahḍa as a “*Sattelzeit*”, edited by Florian Zemmin and Alp Eren Topal, who also had organized a corresponding workshop in Bern in 2019.

with reference to Margrit Pernau's idea of "civilising emotions" (for more on emotions, see below, Chapters 10, 11, and 18).

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9.1 Introduction

In the opening chapters of what is often labelled "the first Arabic novel"² – Khalil al-Khūrī's³ *Way, idhan lastu bi-Ifranji* (Woe, so I am not a European then!, 1859), a hilarious satire on the detrimental effects of widespread Euromania (*tafarnu*)⁴ – the author feels urged to not only present his novel's topic and setting (Aleppo) but also to briefly discuss literary aesthetics. He does so (in chapter 3) by way of a comparison between two poems on Aleppo: one by al-Mutanabbī (915–965 CE), the icon of traditional Arab(ic) poetry, and one by the French poet Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869). Although the novel as a whole is very critical about the adoption of Western civilisation and rather pleads in favour of sticking to "the indigenous way of life" (*al-wujūd al-ahli*, 3 and *passim*)⁵, al-Khūrī nevertheless does not prefer al-Mutanabbī over Lamartine. Rather, he argues that the former is ridiculously unauthentic, artificial, almost mechanical, "dry and cruel like a rock" (*nāshif qāsī ka-l-julmūd*, 19). In contrast, the Romantic poet's verses, though not free of a ridiculously unrealistic exoticism, show what in al-Khūrī's view is essential for poetry: passion (*hawās*), and this is why they also appeal directly "to the heart" (*nafs*, lit., soul). The ideal,

² Cf., e.g., Wielandt 1980, 130, or the label *awwal riwāya 'arabiyya / al-riwāya al-'arabiyya al-ūlā* ("the first Arabic novel") attached to the text by two newer editions ('Abd al-Tawwāb 2007, Dāghir 2009), see al-Khūrī 1860 in the Bibliography. – In contrast, Stephen Sheehi still thought it was Salīm al-Bustānī's *al-Huyām fī jinān al-Shām* (Love in the Gardens of Syria), serialised in 1870 in *al-Jinān*, that "could be described as the first attempt at a novel written in Arabic" – Sheehi 2004, 78. Writing before the 'rediscovery', by the above-mentioned editors, of al-Khūrī's *Way!* (and unaware of Wielandt's study of 1980 that had already dealt with al-Khūrī's pioneering text more than two decades earlier), Sheehi consequently attributed the "attempt to produce a new form of Arabic narrative" to al-Bustānī's *al-Huyām* rather than to al-Khūrī's *Way* (*ibid.*).

³ Lebanese journalist and poet, 1836–1907. For a short CV and appreciation of his work, see, e.g., Sadgrove (1998).

⁴ For studies of the text, cf. Wielandt 1980, esp. 130–36; Guth 2003b, esp. ch. 1.1 (§§ 6–25); 'Abd al-Tawwāb, "Khalil al-Khūrī rā'idan riwā'iyyan", in al-Khūrī 1860/2007, 5–17; Dāghir, "Muqaddima", in al-Khūrī 1860/2009, 7–41; Guth 2019/20.

⁵ Inline quotations refer to the "second print" (*ṭab'a thāniya*) of the text, in book form, i.e., al-Khūrī 1860, in facsimile also in the 2007 edition – see Bibliography.

then, is a poetry in which “truth [is] mingled with passion” (*ḥaqīqa mumtazija bi-l-hawas*, 20).⁶

This study tries to locate the author’s poetological considerations on a timeline of historical development between early indications of a changing literary aesthetics in the first half of the nineteenth century and the formulation, roughly a century later, of programmatic manifestos of “national literature” (*adab qawmi*). To this purpose, I will first trace the realist aspect of al-Khūrī’s claim back to the admiration with which Arabs like R. R. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī observed the reality illusion of European theatre in the late 1820s. This will be followed by a detailed presentation of al-Khūrī’s critical assessment of al-Mutanabbi’s and Lamartine’s poems and his addition of the component of passion to that of realism. I will then show how the author translates his idea of “truth mingled with passion” into the story he tells about a Euro-fop, the detrimental consequences of his Euromania, and the corresponding need for Arab fellow-countrymen to stick to their own indigenous way of life and authentic identity. The novella will be read as a narrative exemplification of the author’s theory that allows the reading subject to ‘live through’, in the symbolic representation of factualist/reality-referenced fiction, the choices that the modern Arab subject has to make and the challenges s/he has to face in her/his meeting with European-style modernity. The subsequent section will link the emphasis with which such a dramatic emotionalisation underlines the centrality of the experiencing subject, to other contemporaneous tendencies of subjectivation, observed by earlier research, thus reading al-Khūrī’s theory as one out of a variety of phenomena that all point in the same direction and may therefore, taken together, be regarded as characteristic of the Arab(ic) *Nahḍa* as a *Sattelzeit*. To these features belongs also the temporalisation inherent in dramatisation/emotionalisation, an aspect that R. Koselleck identified as a key marker of the European *Sattelzeit* and that we thus can retain as a marker of the *Nahḍa*, too: the subject experiencing him/herself as acting in time⁷ – time that now becomes History, with a past, a present, and a future.⁸ The last section preceding my summary Conclusion will be dedicated to another role of emotionalisation, namely that of a motor of the de-

6 For a discussion of English translations of *hawas* and *ḥaqīqa*, see below, notes 19 and 16–17, respectively.

7 As, e.g., already Williams remarked, this *active* subject is “in ironic contrast with the passive subject of political dominion” – Williams 1976/1983, 310 (in entry “Subjective”).

8 Cf., for instance, Koselleck 1972/2011, 13, or id. 1975/1997, *passim*. – Cf. in this context also the well-known fact that “[t]he idea of history as the enactment of human self-development found its most dramatic expression in the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel” – Bennett et al., eds. 2005, 157 (in entry “History”).

sired civilisational progress. As nineteenth-century progressivism after the turn of the century, and especially after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, finds its continuation in the ideology of the emerging nation states, al-Khūrī's introduction of the emotional component into literary theory can be regarded as foreshadowing the role emotionalism will play in literature in the second half of the century where the way is paved for the emergence of nationalism. Like in the European Sattelzeit, concomitant conceptual change will be discussed as a marker of the above processes in the Arab(ic) Nahḍa too.

9.2 A new aesthetics (I): al-Ṭaḥṭāwī admiring theatre

The aesthetics that al-Khūrī introduces to his readers both in a theoretical foreword and through the narrated story itself is only partly new, at least with regard to its realist-factualist component. It was already three decades earlier that Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (1801–1873), the former head of the Egyptian study mission to France, observed this realist-factualist component when he visited the theatres of Paris. The description of his impressions clearly shows his appreciation: In section 7, “On the entertainments (*muntazahāt*) of Paris”, of the third essay of his famous account of his stay in France (which lasted from 1826 to 1831),⁹ al-Ṭaḥṭāwī states that although he “do[es] not know of an Arabic word that renders the meaning of *spectacle* (*sibiktākil*) or *théâtre* (*tiyātir*)” (211/231)¹⁰ and although the performances are not free of some “Satanic leanings” (*nazaʿāt shayṭāniyya*, *ibid.*), French theatre nevertheless should be assessed as an institution with “highly beneficial virtues (*faḍāʾil ʿaẓīmat al-fāʾida*, *ibid.*)” “because people learn wonderful lessons (*ibar ʿajība*)” there (208/228). As is obvious from this remark, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī makes his judgment from the position of a traditional man of letters (*adīb*) whom his readers expect to fathom the foreign culture's potential with regard to the humanist ideal of a “refinement of morals” (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*), and he supports it, in sober, well-balanced argumentation,¹¹ by underlining that the *spectacles* are not only jest (*hazl*), as one might think at first sight when looking at things

⁹ *Takhliṣ al-ibriz fī talkhīṣ Bārīz* (The Extraction of Gold: an Overview of Paris) (Cairo 1834).

¹⁰ Here and in the following paragraphs, inline quotations refer to the 3 vols. edn, Cairo: GEBO, 1993 (*italic* page numbers) and the English translation by Daniel Newman (2004/2011) (Roman page numbers, after the slash).

¹¹ As the title of the treatise – *Takhliṣ al-ibriz*... “Extracting the gold...” – makes clear (see fn. 9), a separation of the wheat from the chaff, i.e., a critical assessment (of French culture and civilisation), is the overall goal that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī seeks to achieve with his book.

from a traditional Arab(ic) perspective, but “actually” (*fī l-ḥaqīqa*) something very serious (*jidd*) (208/228).¹² In this remark it seems, however, that an important precondition for theatre to be able to fulfil its function of improving and refining peoples’ morals is the fact that it refers to real life and real history by “re-enact[ing] everything that has happened (*taqlīd sā’ir mā waqa’a*)” (ibid.) by way of symbolic representation (*taṣwīr*):

for instance, if they [sc. the French] want to imitate (*taqlīd*) a sultan and the things that happen to him, they convert the stage to make it *look like* [my italics – S.G.] a palace, create an image of the character (*ṣawwarū dhātahu*), recite his poetry and so on and so forth.
(209/229)

In these *spectacles*, they represent everything that exists (*yūṣawwirūna sā’ir mā yūjad*), even the parting of the sea by Moses – Peace be upon him.¹³ They represent the sea and create rolling waves so that it completely *looks like* [my italics – S.G.] the sea. One night, I saw that they ended the play [...] with a representation of a sun and its course. The light of this sun illuminated the theatre to such an extent that it outshone the chandeliers; it was *as if* [my italics – S.G.] suddenly morning had broken for people.
(210/230)

The close relation between theatrical illusion and reality let al-Ṭaḥṭāwī choose the term *taqlīd*, lit. “imitation”, to describe the basic operation of French theatre (not without specifying, however, that it is not a one-to-one reproduction of reality, i.e., of everything “that has happened” or “that exists”, but only a symbolic *as-if* or *looks-like* representation; see my italics in the above quotation).¹⁴ As I have shown elsewhere, the importance assigned to reality-reference (as opposed to detachedness, self-referentiality, mere word-play, or pure fantasy, etc.) is also evident in the choice of the old word *riwāya*, lit. “transmission” (of pieces of information), as a ‘container’ term to signify novels, novellas, theatrical pieces, operas, etc. all along the nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹⁵ When these genres reached the Arab World, indigenous

¹² For the underlying concepts of *jidd* and *hazl*, cf. Pellat 1957.

¹³ Explanatory note by translator D. Newman: “This is of course a reference to *Moïse en Egypte*, the famous opera by Rossini, which had its first showing in 1818, with a revised version premiering in 1827 in Paris, where the composer had settled in 1824. The opera had several seasons in Paris during al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s stay there.”

¹⁴ For al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s use of the term *taqlīd*, cf. Schulze 1994. Although it would certainly have been giving, Schulze unfortunately did not elaborate on al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s use of *taṣwīr*, i.e., giving a *ṣūra* ‘form’, shaping, forming. I suggest to read this term here in the sense of ‘to assign a form of literary representation’.

¹⁵ Cf. my study on the semantic history of *riwāya*, Guth 2011 (= Chapter 7 of the present volume).

aesthetics evidently did not see a need to differentiate among them according to the specificity of each of them; what mattered most was that all shared the character of report-like accounts referring to the real world.¹⁶ Quite significantly, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī compares the representation of the real world in theatre to the work of scientists, or scholars:

One of the amazing things [*al-‘ajā‘ib*] is that during their performance, they raise issues related to foreign sciences [*masā’il min al-‘ulūm al-gharība*] and difficult questions [*al-masā’il al-mushkila*], which they deal with in depth at the same time [*yata‘ammaqūna*]. They do this so convincingly that you would think them scholars [*‘ulamā’*]. Even the small boys that play refer to important notions from the natural sciences, etc.

(209/230-1)

9.3 A new aesthetics (II): al-Khūrī introducing “passion”

A generation century later, Khalīl al-Khūrī adds a new dimension. For him, good literature should be characterised not only by its realism but also, as we shall soon see, by its emotionalism. The new aesthetics is for the first time developed in the “Introduction” (*muqaddima*) to his *Way, idhan lastu bi-l-franjī*, which not only introduces the setting and topic of the ensuing novella but also serves as a brief treatise on literary criticism. In it, al-Khūrī undertakes a comparison between the poetry of two icons of their respective literary cultures, one by Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī, representative of the indigenous Eastern, classical Arab(ic) tradition, and one by Alphonse de Lamartine, representative of contemporary Western poetic art. The first and foremost defect that al-Khūrī criticises in both of them is their detachment from reality, lack of authenticity, and logical plausibility. Although al-Mutanabbī has lived in Aleppo for many years, al-Khūrī says, he did not mention the city except for in “a few instances where the [need to find a suitable] rhyme compelled him to do so” (*Way*, 17). Furthermore, al-Khūrī finds quite a few of al-Mutanabbī’s verses contradictory in themselves, defying logic and common sense for the sake of exquisite expression and witty wordplay – in fact, “nothing but noise in the air” (*ḍajij yataṭāyar fī l-hawā’*, 18), “mere frenzy talk from which you cannot get an idea [*lit.*, smell the scent] of the *adab*-related facts/reality/truth” (*lā tashumm fihī rā’iḥat al-ḥaqā’iq al-adabiyya*,

¹⁶ Cf. ch. I.2.1 “*ḥaqīqa* – Faktizität und Wahrheit als Leitlinie der neuen Prosa”, in Al-Bagdadi 2010, 41–50. – The emphasis on reality-reference is also the reason why al-Ṭaḥṭāwī does not distinguish between theatrical plays and operas and why I will allow myself, in the present article, to compare his observations on the *spectacles* of Paris to al-Khūrī’s discussion of poetry and, at the same time, take these as valid for prose fiction too. – See also below, p. 227 with fn. 51.

18).¹⁷ On the other side, while al-Mutanabbī has lived in Aleppo almost without composing any poetry about the city, Lamartine has written his poem, “À une jeune Arabe Qui fumait le Narguilé dans un jardin d’Alep” (Lamartine [1832]), without ever having been there, unrealistically and ridiculously exoticising the ‘Orient’ in it, to the extent that “anyone of an Eastern taste (*dhawq*)¹⁸ cannot help but feel disgusted (*lā yatamālak nafsahū ‘an il-nufūr*).” In contrast, good poetry – and we may well say: literature in general, since al-Khūrī applies the principle (as we shall soon see below) to his own novella, which is in prose – should in any case always be authentic and take reality as its “starting point” (*mabda’*, 18), its basis, or point of reference.

Reality-reference and authentic, realistic representation, however, are not enough any longer for al-Khūrī. Unlike al-Ṭaḥṭāwī who had approached the aesthetics of the French *spectacles* from a soberly arguing moralist perspective that contented itself with referentialism, al-Khūrī now also demands that in good literature, authenticity and realism should be combined with “passion” (*hawas*) and an appeal to the reader’s/spectator’s “heart” (*nafs*, lit., soul). Thus, literature should be an expression of “truth mingled with passion” (*ḥaqīqa mumtazija bi-l-hawas*, 20) and should engage the reader/spectator emotionally.

Peter Hill (2017, 407) translated *hawas* as “foolishness”, a semantic value that the word certainly *can* take also in al-Khūrī’s text (see above, p. 218, where I rendered his *hawas maḥḍ* as “mere frenzy”). However, given that, in the phrase under discussion here, the word is contrasted to the “dry seriousness” (*jidd nāshif*, 19) of artificial poetry that does not appeal to the *heart*, “passion” seems to be the more appropriate rendering, as “foolishness” would hardly be relatable to the

¹⁷ As often in nineteenth century Arabic, terminology is difficult to render exactly here (cf. also below, p. 220 cum fn. 21, with remarks on semantic volatility as characteristic of the Na-ḥḍa). Like many other terms, both *ḥaqīqa* (incl. its plural *ḥaqā’iq*) and *adab* cover a wide range of meanings so that the proper English equivalent is difficult to grasp. In many cases, as probably here, the meaning remains ambiguous. Al-Bagdadi renders *ḥaqīqa* with “Faktizität und Wahrheit” (2010, passim). In the literary ‘manifesto’ of 1921 with a quotation from which I will conclude this article/chapter, English *realism* (or French *réalisme*) is transliterated (as «الرياليسم» *al-riyālism*) and translated as *madhhab al-ḥaqā’iq*, i.e., ‘the factualist approach’ or ‘the school of facts/truths’ – see p. 234 with fn. 79, below. – In a similar vein, the f. adjective *adabiyya*, used as attribute of *ḥaqā’iq* here, means more than just “literary” (as one would understand it today), as *adab* also means “politeness; morals; civilisation, civility, culture; humanism”, cf. my study Guth 2010b.

¹⁸ Perhaps one should even render *dhawq* as “sensibility” here – cf. al-Tahānawī’s explanation of the meaning of *dhawq* in the use of “the eloquent ones” (*al-bulaghā’*) as *muḥarrik al-qulūb wa-l-bā’ith ‘alā l-wajd*. Al-Tahānawī 1854/62 [1996, s.v.

semantic fields of ‘dry/wet, juicy’ and ‘heart/soul, emotion’.¹⁹ *Hawas*, then, seems to be, like *ḥaqīqa*,²⁰ one of the many ‘Janus-faced’ terms that are so typical of the lexicon of the Nahḍa, this *Sattelzeit* that, like its European counterpart, is characterised by large-scale conceptual change and the semantic ‘volatility’ of many terms: rooted in traditional, ‘classical’ usage, they often acquire new meanings.²¹ – My rendering, in the present context, of *hawas* as “passion” is also encouraged by Pernau’s finding (for Urdu and a later period though, but the cases seem to be typologically comparable), that, in the climate of early nationalism, a new demand for passion can be observed (cf. chapter “II. Das Verlangen nach Leidenschaft – Gefühle in der Moderne”, Pernau 2018, 68 ff.) ; to this corresponds a reconfiguration of the emotional vocabulary (“Rekonfiguration des Emotionsvokabulars”, *ibid.*: 76), where Urdu *jazbat* (an originally mystical term signifying the adept’s – passive – “being drawn” to God) began to take the positive value of “passion” in the course of the re-evaluation of nature as something positive, opposed to artificiality. Instead of balance and harmony, exuberance and passion became the new ideals (*ibid.*: 70). Given that also al-Khūrī’s text is written on the threshold of inventing a national culture²² (cf. his emphasis on the need to stick to the “indigenous way of life” and his praise of “Oriental/Eastern” virtues),²³ the shift in the meaning of *hawas* from a rather negative “foolishness, mania, obses-

19 Given Freytag’s “Amentiae pars aliqua” (vol. iv, 1837) and Lane’s “Somewhat of madness, or insanity, or diabolical possession” (vol. viii, 1893) as the primary values of *hawas*, “foolishness” seems to be the original meaning and “passion” therefore probably secondary. Note, however, the fact that quite a few nineteenth-century dictionaries give “passion, mania, obsession” as the word’s *first* values, cf., e.g., Kazimirski 1860: “désir ardent, passion, manie de...”, or Wahrmund 1887: “leidenschaftliche Begierde, Passion; Manie; Ehrsucht; Lust, Vergnügen, Unterhaltung; Thorheit, Tollheit; [*mod.*] Leichtsinn”.

20 See above, fn. 17.

21 For the phenomenon in general, cf. Koselleck 1972/2011, xiii–xxvii, 7–25. – For the Nahḍa as a period of terminological and semantic transition, cf. Zemmin 2018, esp. 177–84; see also below, p. 225, and (for *Verzeitlichung* “temporalisation” as the underlying factor) p. 228. – For some examples of other socio-political and cultural terminology being ‘re-activated’ by intellectuals of the period, see, for instance, Abu-’Uksa 2019, esp. 6 ff., on the old/new *tamaddun*, or my own studies on *adab* and *riwāya*, Guth 2010b and Guth 2011 (↗ Chapter 7), respectively. Semantic extension of the meaning of existing words is one of the five default methods with the help of which the need for new vocabulary was – and is still – met in Arabic, the other four being direct borrowing; integration of the foreign word morphologically and/or phonologically; analogical extension of an existing root; and translation of the foreign word, i.e., calquing – see Versteegh 1997, 179; on the shaping of Modern Standard Arabic in general, see the classic studies by Monteil 1960, Stetkevych 1970, Rebhan 1986, and Lewis 1988.

22 As I have argued elsewhere, cf. Guth 2019/20.

23 See below, p. 231 with fn. 71.

sion” to the more positive “passion” in al-Khūrī’s *Way* may perhaps be seen in line with Pernau’s observation that, in India, the development of passionate feelings came to be a precondition in a nation to be able to shape its future, or even to survive (Pernau 2018, 56).

According to al-Khūrī, a way for an author to achieve the desired combination of realism and emotional engagement on the side of the reader is to try to “make people feel what he himself feels” (*ja‘ala l-nās tuḥiss bi-mā yuḥiss bihī huwa nafsuhū*, 20), even if this means that the poet becomes like a “drunkard” (*sakrān*) – emotional exuberance (which a scholar like al-Ṭaḥṭāwī would certainly have rejected) is perfectly fine, and even desirable, for al-Khūrī, as long as the author remains authentic and expresses the truth (*yatakallam bi-l-ḥaqīqa*, *ibid.*). In the critical comparison between al-Mutanabbī and Lamartine along which the author develops his aesthetics, the Arab poet comes off much worse than the French romanticist in this respect. According to al-Khūrī, al-Mutanabbī’s verses neither speak *from* the heart nor *to* the heart, they speak of a “seriousness [that is as] dry and cruel as a giant rock (*jidd nāshif qāṣi ka-l-julmūd*)” (19). In contrast, Lamartine, his Orientalist exoticising notwithstanding, is “passionate” from the very beginning:

Qui ? toi ? me demander l’encens de poésie ?
Toi, fille d’Orient, née aux vents du désert !
Fleur des jardins d’Alep, que Bulbul eût choisie
Pour languir et chanter sur son calice ouvert !

From the very first lines, the voice of the lyrical subject is very strongly felt in this poem, and this is mainly due to the highly emotional character of the opening – cf. the many interrogation and question marks, and the elliptical nature of all the phrases in the whole stanza. While al-Khūrī quotes only four verses of al-Mutanabbī’s poem he takes the pain to render more than half of Lamartine’s long poem into Arabic – and not any Arabic, but beautiful *ṭawīl* verses.²⁴ The same repletion with emotions and passion was probably the reason for the previously mentioned al-Ṭaḥṭāwī to decide, the very same year al-Khūrī published his *Way*, to render the French author Fénelon’s *Les aventures de Télémaque* into Arabic, significantly in beautifully embellished, ornate rhyme-prose.²⁵

²⁴ The metre *ṭawīl* (most common subtype: ◡ – ◡ | ◡ – – – | ◡ – ◡ | ◡ – ◡ – , in both hemistich-es) can be counted among the more prestigious ones, used predominantly in ancient Arabic poetry – Stoetzer 2012.

²⁵ At the same time, the subtitle of the Arabic ‘translation’ underlined the referentiality of the content: ... *fī waqā‘i Tilmāk* “... What Happened [!] to Telemachus”.

9.4 Applying the new aesthetic theory: al-Khūrī's novella

Following the introduction, al-Khūrī sets out to translate his new ideal of a literature in which “truth [is] mingled with passion” into the story that forms the main body of the work. On the one hand, the author here acts as a sober, rationalist, scientist-like observer and analyst who is interested in the facts of contemporary reality: the topic of the novella – the widespread ignorant imitation of Western habits and fashion (*tafarnuj*)²⁶ and its dangerous consequences – is taken from contemporary everyday life where it is felt to be an increasingly urgent issue;²⁷ the characters are ‘real’ characters, and the setting is ‘real’;²⁸ and the perspective from which the author-narrator looks into these matters, the “truth/facts” (*ḥaqīqa*, pl. *ḥaqāʾiq*), is that of a distanced, heterodiegetic²⁹ third-person narrator who at any moment can come in with explanations, background information and critical comments and thus displays the habitus of the scholar, scientist (*ʿālim*) and man of letters (*adīb*) who also is in the position to pass moral judgments, a habitus we know from al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and his assessment of the moral-improving, civilising potential of the French *spectacles*. – On the other hand, the narrator is not only the ‘cool’ rationalist-moralist intellectual but also somebody who uses his omniscience to grant the reader insight into the thoughts and feelings of the main characters (inside perspective, personal style), lets us participate in the challenges they meet, the expectations they have, the suspicions they are troubled by, the conflicts they have to master, the choices they are forced to make, their motivations, feelings, thoughts, etc. And, unlike al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, al-Khūrī does not content himself with the theoretical dis-

26 According to Lewis 1998/2012c, al-Khūrī's novel is the earliest text in Arabic featuring the term *tafarnuj* (but it may be older). In any case, it is derived from *ifranj*, the ‘Franks’, i.e., Europeans. Hill 2017, 407, renders *tafarnuj* by “excessive Frankification”.

27 Cf. al-Khūrī's description of contemporary Beirut as a city that “has changed stupendously in many respects within only a few years” (8).

28 The author is eager to underline that the events that he is going to report about actually happened while he was in Aleppo. Although he did not know the main character himself, his story can claim authenticity nevertheless as it is based on the first-hand report (*rawā-hā*) he got “yesterday evening” (*laylata ams*) from one of Mikhālī's “relatives” (*aqārib*) (46).

29 Given that the narrator claims to have been in Aleppo himself while the events took place and that he got the story from one of Mikhālī's relatives, his position is not completely outside the diegesis, i.e., the narrated world. However, while the narrator figures in person in the framing narrative, where he is part of the setting, he remains completely absent from the embedded main story itself and, thus, heterodiegetic with regard to the Mikhālī plot. – For the types of diegesis and narrators, cf., e.g., the concise overview in Martínez and Scheffel 2007, 80–84 (= ch. II.3.c on narrative voice and the relation between narrator and narrated world).

course but sets out to exemplify in practice the issues dealt with in the introduction in that he tells the story that forms the main body of his text:

The principal character of this story, Mikhālī, is a well-off merchant from Aleppo who thinks of himself as a European, superior to his Arab-Oriental fellow countrymen, and therefore also does not want to give his daughter, Émilie,³⁰ to his wife's cousin, As'ad, although he is a decent and virtuous young man from an honorable family with whom Émilie is in love. In his class conceit-like arrogance, Mikhālī regards As'ad as a 'barbarian' and plans to give Émilie to a Frenchman named Edmond who – allegedly – is of aristocratic descent. For quite a while, Edmond plays the game, because he is charmed by beautiful Émilie and lives a comfortable life as Mikhālī's guest. Soon, however, it turns out that 'count' (*comte*) Edmond is nothing but a waiter who fled from France in order to avoid prosecution for a crime he has committed. But when this truth is revealed (and Mikhālī has to realise that he has been fooled and that he has to blame himself for this³¹) it is already too late: after some initial scruples, Émilie has abandoned her earlier fiancé and instead granted her favour to the Frenchman. For some time she tries to win back As'ad whose faithfulness she had betrayed. But As'ad is clever enough to see through the game and turns away from her, deeply hurt in his feelings. On this, Émilie, full of remorse and as a broken woman, decides to become a nun.³²

It is clear already from this summary that the topic of *Way, idhan lastu bi-Ifranji* – the dangers of 'Euromania' and neglecting one's proper, indigenous identity – is treated here not through reasoning analysis, soberly weighing the pros against the cons, but with the help of a highly dramatic enactment, a combination of derision (of Mikhālī's ignorance and arrogance) and tragedy in which the main purpose of the text, the teaching of a moral lesson that is beneficial for society, is achieved not through logical argument but through an interplay of emotions: love, pride, arrogance, hope, suspicion, disappointment, honour, disgrace, shame, remorse, ... The reader is shown these emotions 'as if'³³ they were real *in the characters*, and for the moral lesson to be learnt, the author also counts on the emotional engagement of the *readers*³⁴ – a consequent translation

³⁰ On this name, cf. below, note 72.

³¹ It is at this moment that Mikhālī exclaims "Woe, so I am not a European then!", i.e., the utterance that al-Khūrī chose as the title for the whole text.

³² This summary is a concise version of the one given in Guth 2019, 314.

³³ The *as-if* illusion is also underlined by al-Khūrī's eagerness to present the narrated world as though in theatre. The author even asks his readers to imagine themselves wearing a cap of invisibility and then takes them to Mikhālī's room, showing them around and subsequently letting them overhear, quasi in the room itself, a conversation between Mikhālī and his wife. Moreover, the conversation is then rendered *verbatim*, like a dialogue in theatre (34).

³⁴ It is significant for this first piece of 'modern' Arabic literature that the author still feels the need to supplement the story told with a theoretical frame (in the introduction and afterword) where the moral lesson is made *explicit*, i.e., the meaning of fiction is explained through non-

of the claim, made in the introduction, that an author should make the readers *feel* what he or, we may well add, other acting characters, feel (*com*-passion).³⁵

9.5 Framing al-Khūrī's new aesthetics (I): The subject's agency

Why did al-Khūrī – and so many after him – choose to treat a current socio-cultural problem with a recourse to prose fiction rather than stick to the hitherto available genres? Why did he not content himself with a more elaborate version of his introduction and afterword, or some poems? I am convinced that the reason for his choice lies in the increased relevance of the *subject* and its *agency* and a wish to *assert the self* as such a subject with its own agency.

An awareness of the subject's agency in the world and a tendency to underline this also in one's writings can be observed already before the nineteenth century, or even earlier. This has been shown, not least, in a collection of studies edited by Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse on Middle Eastern "ego documents".³⁶ I would argue, however, that the full and final break-through of this awareness and desire does not come before the mid-nineteenth century,³⁷ clearly observable, for instance, in significant changes in traditional genres, but mostly, and much more virulently and better visibly so, in the new genres – which in this way become key indicators of modernity. Given that genres are concepts, this process is without doubt comparable to the large-scale and profound conceptual change that made Reinhart Koselleck posit, in the European context, "the emergence of a threshold period (*Sattelzeit*)" from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards (Koselleck 1972/2011, 9).

fiction. It is as if the author, standing at the threshold to a new aesthetics, the point of transition from traditional to modern *adab*, still does not have enough confidence in the efficiency of fiction and its *implicit*, indirect ways of influencing the readers' minds; therefore he still feels the need to frame the story with discussion in the style of a theoretical treatise (*risāla*). – On account of this dual character of *Way*, Mārūn 'Abbūd, in his characterisation of the literary production of early Nahḍa writers, would probably have grouped the work among what he labels *kutub takād takūn qīṣṣa*, or 'almost-novels,' as Tomiche 2012 renders the expression (referring to 'Abbūd, *Ruwwād al-nahḍa al-ḥadītha*, 2nd edn, Beirut 1966, 131).

³⁵ Cf. Al-Bagdadi's remarks on the embodying function of the metaphor of the "mirror of thoughts" (*mir'āt al-afkār*) with which the Lebanese woman writer Zaynab Fawwāz identifies the novel – Al-Bagdadi 1999b, 7 ff.

³⁶ Elger and Köse, eds. 2010.

³⁷ Cf. Al-Bagdadi who locates the major "anthropological turn" that she observes in her article, in writings by Arab authors "from the 1850s until the end of the century" – Al-Bagdadi 1999a, 4.

With regard to changes in traditional genres, I have demonstrated, for example, how Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, in one of the *maqāmāt*³⁸ contained in his famous *al-Sāq 'alā l-sāq fī-mā huwa l-Fāryāq*³⁹ (1855), exhibits a shift of focus from the traditional trickster to the narrating subject.⁴⁰ As a matter of course, the same importance of the narrating subject also speaks from the fact that al-Shidyāq wrote this text – which in earlier times would have been an ensemble of travelogues, poetry, and treatises on all kinds of topics – as an autobiography with fictional elements (or fiction with autobiographical elements)⁴¹ and that the main purpose of the book, according to its subtitle, is nothing less than a critical assessment, by the author/al-Fāryāq himself, of the world around him as the object of this assessment.⁴² The same type of critical, superior, self-confident subject – the prototype of the modern Arab public *intellectual* – is speaking also in al-Khūrī's omnipresent auctorial first-person narrator in *Way, idhan lastu bi-Ifranji*, a narrator who intervenes to explain, comment, contemplate, evaluate, deride.⁴³ While this narrator is, as we saw, primarily an instance of the subject's *reasoning*, emphasising the *adīb*'s role and capacity to discern and pass critical judgments about the truths of empirical, objective reality, the self-assertion of

38 The *maqāma* (pl. -āt) genre of Arabic literature was 'invented' by "Badi' al-zamān" al-Hama-dhānī in the tenth century. Its main formal features are the use of rhyme-prose (*saj'*) and witty wordplay, often paronomasy. The plot of a typical *maqāma* is centered round a *pícaro*-like trickster whose story is told by a first-person narrator ("When I was in the city of X, ...") who, as a rule, eye-witnessed the events, but only at the very end recognises who the *pícaro* actually was.

39 For a translation of the various elements of the title (and a longer subtitle), see below, notes 41, 42, 43.

40 See my study "Even in a *maqāma*!", Guth 2010b = Chapter 8 in this volume.

41 Cf. the second part of the full title, ...*fī-mā huwa l-Fāryāq* "on who the Faryaq is", where the name of the text's protagonist, al-Fāryāq, is easily recognisable as composed of the author's own names (FĀRis al-ShidYĀQ) and is thus a hint, from the beginning, at who will be the main hero of the book.

42 The subtitle reads *Ayyām wa-shuhūr wa-a'wām fī 'ajm al-'arab wa-l-a'jām*, i.e., literally, "Days, months, and years [spent in] putting Arabs and non-Arabs to the critical test", where the key word is '*ajm*', lit. 'to bite on a coin in order to know if it is genuine,' rendered by al-Shidyāq himself into French on the cover as "observations critiques".

43 Satire is one of the most salient modes for the intellectual subject to accentuate his superior critical stance *vis-à-vis* conventions and to underline the freedom and independence of his thinking. The superior habitus is expressed by al-Shidyāq already in the relaxed posture of "leg over leg" (*al-sāq 'alā l-sāq*) that the author even makes into the main title of his work. In al-Khūrī's *Way*, we can observe it, for instance, in the gesture to let a brief "Introduction to the introduction" (*muqaddimat al-muqaddima*, 2) precede the introductory chapters, and a "Conclusion to the conclusion" (*Khātimat al-khātima*, 162–63) follow his final remarks. – On satire in other contexts (derision of the fellaheen), see Selim 2004, ch. 1 ("The Garrulous Peasant").

the newly emerging secular-minded⁴⁴ bourgeoisie, the *efendiyya*,⁴⁵ is increasingly expressed, from the 1870s onwards,⁴⁶ through lachrymose sentimentalism.⁴⁷ The feeling subject that comes in addition to the intellectual, reasoning subject⁴⁸ is a phenomenon that is well-known also from European literary history where the emancipation of the newly emerged bourgeois class of the eighteenth century, the *troisième état*, was accompanied in literature by a similar emphasis on the reasoning subject (cf. Enlightenment) and a flood of tears (cf. the Age of Sensibility).⁴⁹ While the new class had already gained a considerable degree of

44 Often educated in institutions of the non-Islamic, more worldly-oriented track of learning (military, naval, medical academies, engineering and administrative training colleges, law and economy schools, etc.) and/or foreign missionary schools and/or in Europe, this group of ‘engineers’ (as I like to call them) had a pragmatic, almost ‘mechanistic’, positivist-scientist attitude towards their own society – for them, it was a *hay’a*, a “structure” that could be analysed, dissected, repaired – and welcomed the curbing of the traditionally strong influence of religious institutions on worldly affairs by the state; cf. Flores 2003, 225–28 (ch. “Säkularismus”), esp. 226.

45 For the *efendiyya*, cf. Ryzova 2014.

46 Beginning with the melodramatic “social romances” of Salīm al-Bustānī (1846–1884) or Nu‘mān al-Qasāṭīlī (1854–1920) in Lebanon, the flood of tears found its apogee in the often highly sentimental plots of Jurjī Zaydān’s (1861–1914) historical novels and particularly before WWI in the writings of Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī (1876–1924) and Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān (1883–1931). – On the flood of tears, cf. my own study, Guth 1997, with further references.

47 Traditionally, melodramatic tendencies in early novels are explained, at least partly, as due to the fact that the new reading public consisted to “a relatively high percentage of women, who had a particular liking for romantic literature” and benefitted from “a proliferation of works characterised by eponymous heroines and serialised romances” – Tomiche 2012. This may be true; but the reasons for emotionalisation go certainly deeper than that – and are definitively not limited to a female audience/readership.

48 Cf. Al-Bagdadi’s observation that the “sensual perception of the soul” is now gaining “priority [...] over the intellect, [...] experience over dogma, [...] change over the normative. This preference, however, was not, as in later romantic movements, an absolute rejection or dismissal of the intellect, of dogma, and of the norm [...]”; rather, they came in addition to the latter, a process that resulted in the re-distribution of the tasks of these elements – Al-Bagdadi 1999a, 10–11.

49 Cf. the genre of the bourgeois drama (*Bürgerliches Trauerspiel*), in which the newly emerged bourgeoisie no longer was the object of ridicule (as in pre-18th century literature) but was regarded, for the first time, worthy of tragedy, i.e., participating in a genre that until then had remained the upper classes’ exclusive domain, due to the theory of *Fallhöhe* and the *Ständeklausel* (estates-clause) of Classicist French drama, according to which only people of high social rank, i.e., kings and nobility, could experience a fall so deep that it was worth tragedy. In contrast, lower and middle classes until then only appeared in comedies. – Tears were also characteristic of German *Empfindsamkeit* and *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) or the English sentimental novel, or novel of sensibility, all phenomena connected to the self-assertion of the new middle class.

self-confidence and self-esteem, they had still remained impotent on the political level, so that the nobility of the sensible, feeling heart came as a compensation of a nobility of blood, i.e., noble descent.⁵⁰ – Another indication of the increased attention paid to the human subject and its agency in the Middle East is certainly also the steadily growing demand, observable from the middle of the nineteenth century, for fiction and scenic art, in the (mostly French) original as well as in translation/adaptation and indigenous production.⁵¹ These genres not only underline, by their being products of human imagination and phantasy, the subject's agency, but they also could serve, as we have seen above, in the safe *as-if* mode of fictional/dramatic representation, as 'laboratories' of the subject's agency in the world, as sites of observing and testing out this agency⁵² – an agency that was felt to matter more and more, on several levels: that of the individual human being who came into sight as an agent in the world the more the secularisation process⁵³ advanced; that of the *efendiyya* bourgeois middle-

⁵⁰ I owe this idea to my former teacher of Modern German Literature at the University of Bonn, Peter Pütz, who developed it in, among other books, his seminal study on G.E. Lessing (Pütz 1986).

⁵¹ The first novels to be translated into Arabic seem to have been Fénelon's *Les aventures de Télémaque* and J.-F. Marmontel's *Bélisaire* (manuscripts extant from the 1810s) as well as J. Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (first translated 1834) and D. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (manuscript versions predating the first printed translation published 1835 in Malta). [Thank you, Peter Hill, for updating me on recent research here!] These were followed by al-Shidyāq's semi-fictional *al-Sāq 'alā l-sāq* (1855) and al-Khūrī's *Way* (1859) as well as al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's first rendering of Fénelon's *Les aventures de Télémaque* (1859, printed 1867). From the 1860s onwards, translation/adaptation and own production exploded (cf., e.g., Moosa 1997, chs. 5, 7-8). Alongside with fiction, theatre activity expanded steadily after the Lebanese Mārūn al-Naqqāsh (d. 1855) had first staged, in 1847, in his own house, an adaptation of Molière's *L'avare* (versified, and as an opera! – Moosa 1997, 27) and when the enthusiasm for theatre had then swept over to Egypt after many Lebanese-Syrians had decided to move to the country on the Nile after they had encountered various political, social, and religious obstacles in their home countries (cf. *ibid.*, chs. 2-3). In Egypt, the khedive ('vice-king') had already commissioned Verdi's *Aida* (= Arabic 'Ā'ida) for the opening of the Suez Canal in 1871. (For the lack of distinction in the perception of reality-referenced genres – fiction, theatre, opera – see above, p. 217 with fns. 15 and 16, as well as Chapter 7 in the present volume; the same lack of distinction facilitated also, e.g., S. al-Bustānī's turning *Télémaque* into a musical drama in 1869).

⁵² Cf. Al-Bagdadi who underlines the importance of *experiencing* the world as a key marker of the "anthropological turn" she observes in the second half of the nineteenth century: in her view, authors of the period "vigorously sought to create literature as a specific sphere of an *Erfahrungswissenschaft*, to use Kant's expression" – Al-Bagdadi 1999a, 10.

⁵³ By 'secularisation' I mean the processes that increasingly questioned the traditional dominance of religious institutions over politics and intellectual life ("institutionell abgesicherte Dominanz der Religion über Politik und Geistesleben", Flores 2003, 226) and instead favoured the autonomy of human life and its independence from such dominance (*ibid.*). – Cf. also fn. 44, above.

class who had grown since the beginning of the nineteenth century and was now striving for more influence in society; and on the political level where Western cultural hegemony and political intervention (colonialism, political balance after the Crimean War) made the Middle Eastern proto-nation states aware of a need of self-awareness and self-confidence as independent *political* subjects with their own agency.⁵⁴

9.6 Framing al-Khūrī's new aesthetics (II): Processuality and temporalisation

In all that, the aspect of moral usefulness that had been al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's ultimate criterion in his assessment of the value of the French *spectacles* remains prominent, both in al-Khūrī's *Way* and throughout the whole century – political structures remained undemocratic, so the new middle class still stuck to *their* criteria of distinction and nobility: not only the feeling heart (see above), but also morality.⁵⁵ However, the emotionalisation of narrative discourse that came in addition to its rationality and referentiality (facts, truth, authenticity, logical plausibility, etc.) not only brought the subject and its agency to the fore, but simultaneously underlined the *processuality* of the subject's experiencing the world and acting in it.

Subjectivation is thus complemented by *temporalisation*, a process that Reinhard Koselleck identified as a key aspect of the European *Sattelzeit*⁵⁶ and that we now can confirm to be a key feature of the Arab(ic) Nahḍa, too, which therefore can be posited, as a similar central “heuristic presupposition (*heuristischer Vorgriff*)” (Koselleck 1972/2011, 9) guiding our research, as such a threshold period. It is particularly in the new genres that we encounter *plots*, i.e., processes, developments that happen gradually, *in time*, and in this way again underline the sub-

⁵⁴ Cf. the fact that al-Khūrī, in his introduction to *Way*, parallels the call for poetical authenticity and “independence of the self” with an emphasis on the need to remain culturally authentic – which corresponds to the need to assert oneself in the political arena.

⁵⁵ On the importance of usefulness for the new reading public, cf., e.g., Holt 2009, 43 ff., Al-Bagdadi 2010, 24–31 (ch. I.1), or Guth 2003b, §§79b and 81b, all with further references.

⁵⁶ Cf., for instance, Koselleck 1982, or, in more detail, Koselleck 2000. – While I am ‘deducing’ temporalisation from emotionalisation here, Koselleck approached the complex from the other end when he noticed that “the introduction of a temporal dimension (*Verzeitlichung*) into categories of meaning” also meant that “[o]utmoded themes (*topoi*) now [i.e., in the *Sattelzeit*] became emotively charged” – Koselleck 1972/2011, 11.

ject's agency: the subject effects changes from a 'before' to an 'after',⁵⁷ and the reader/spectator⁵⁸ can observe 'live' how the subject's agency influences the course of events, i.e., (narrated) history.⁵⁹ Fiction and drama thus allow the reader/spectator to observe and re-live, in an *as-if* constellation, processes of internalisation of modernity by the acting subject in its confrontation with the challenges of the world, a world that is no longer static but can be improved, reformed, by the subject acting in it.⁶⁰ This is neither possible in the discursive prose of, say, newspaper articles (mainly the domain of the *intellectual* subject) nor in traditional poetry which, due to its "molecularity",⁶¹ focuses on the 'frozen' moment rather than on change in time (poems usually do not have a plot). I would argue that, alongside with the spread of the private printing press – an important material aspect that has already been described and studied in detail elsewhere⁶² – tem-

57 Cf. Tomiche 2012, who notices that the new, Western-type texts, "are distinguished [...] by a progression of the action towards a climax and a conclusion".

58 It is highly significant in this context that al-Khūrī often asks his readers to imagine a scene as if they were observing it on stage or 'live'; cf., e.g., "[anybody] arriving [nowadays] in glorious Beirut may think he is entering a huge theatre (*marsah*)" – al-Khūrī 1860, 5; "Here we are, dear reader, arrived today at the Sirwardī (?) gate, so have a look with your own eyes at Glorious Aleppo in its entirety (*fa-ḥamliq bi-a'yūnika... bi-wajh al-ijmāl*)" – *ibid.*, 16; "In order to alleviate for our reader the troubles of investigation/observation (*kulfat al-fahṣ*) let us now jump with him [...], with the help of a literary move (*bi-wathba adabiyya*), to a place close to Mikhālī's house, so that he may intrude himself, invisible thanks to a magic hood (*muta'ammim*^{am} *bi-qubba'at al-akhfā*), and we may overhear the conversation going on between the owner of the house and his wife. He [the disguised reader] will so see (*yushāhid*, i.e., become an eye witness, *shāhid*), first, an unusually small square room [...]" – *ibid.*, 34. All these excerpts speak of the author's eagerness to create in the reader the illusion that s/he is part of, and/or witness to, the narrated scenes, as if real life was happening in front of his/her eyes. – On scenic elements in this and other early novels in general, cf. Guth 2003b, 44–45 (§ 24b) and 105 (§ 52d).

59 Among other types of writing, this is particularly evident in *utopian* prose, for which the same stages of development as in European utopian fiction (utopia of place > subjectivised utopia > temporalised utopia) can be observed during the Nahḍa; cf. Guth 2021a (= Chapter 17).

60 For the notion of *perfectibilité*, cf. Koselleck 1975/1997, 17–18 and *id.* 1982, *passim*, as well as, inspired by Koselleck, Guth 2021a / Chapter 17.

61 In poetry, one verse (line) usually equals one syntactic unit, and also one idea. This is why traditional Arabic literary criticism typically praised as "beautiful" only individual verses, not whole poems. Cf., for instance, Wolfart Heinrichs' ideas on the 'molecularity' of classical Arabic poetry (sketched, e.g., in Heinrichs 1974) or Benedikt Reinert's illuminating description of the *conchetto* style in classical Islamic literatures (Reinert 1990).

62 Cf., Ayalon 1995, esp. chs. I.2 ("Enthusiastic Beginnings: The Private Press") and II.8 ("The Press as Merchandise and as Enterprise"). – For the wider perspective (print capitalism, the novel, imagining the nation, etc.), cf. Anderson 1983. For the link between economic and literary history in the Levant and Egypt, cf. Holt 2017.

poralisation is *the* main reason for narrative prose and theatre to emerge in the mid-nineteenth century Middle Eastern literary scene⁶³ and gradually ‘take the lead’ after poetry had been the main literary genre.

9.7 Framing al-Khūrī’s new aesthetics (III): Virtues, vices, and civilising emotions

What is more, the emotionalisation and concomitant temporalisation of narrative discourse also allow for the conscious functionalisation of this discourse by the Nahḍawī writer for the envisaged project of modernity and process of civilisation, i.e., the reform of society that the intellectual and ‘social engineer’ feels he is called to work for. The new genres (novel, theatre, opera) are at the “interface between emotion and civilisation”⁶⁴ and thus become a site of “civilising emotions”, i.e., emotions that are believed to serve (or obstruct) civilisatory/moral progress.⁶⁵ Margrit Pernau has observed a change in the emotional lexicon of Urdu that is closely related to the nation building process in the Urdu-speaking regions. She identified *passion* as a ‘modern’ emotion of particular importance in the socio-political and cultural context she studied.⁶⁶ My assumption is that a comparable change in the emotional vocabulary also happened in Arabic,⁶⁷ all the more so since the new genres, as is well-known, were instrumentalised from the very beginning to serve the didactic function of teaching beneficial moral lessons.⁶⁸ The interplay between moral discourse and emotionalisation is more than obvious already in al-Khūrī’s *Way, idhan lastu bi-Ifranji*.⁶⁹ In the field of tension between

⁶³ Cf., however, also the importance of speed and the centrality of suspense as well as the link between time and money highlighted by Holt 2009 and Holt 2017.

⁶⁴ Pernau and Jordheim 2015, 3.

⁶⁵ Cf., among many other titles, Pernau et al., eds. 2015. – See also the seminal collection of articles on *Adab and Modernity: a ‘Civilising Process?’*, procured by Mayeur-Jaouen, ed. 2019, esp. Part 3 “Education and Emotions in the ‘Civilising Process’ in the Middle East” (pp. 349 ff.). – For the valorisation of actions/practices with emotion and the idea of ‘moral economies’, cf. Boddice 2018, 194 ff.

⁶⁶ Pernau 2015, Pernau 2018; cf. also the subtitle “From Balance to Fervor” in Pernau 2019.

⁶⁷ For some pertinent observations and speculations, cf. my etymological essay on “Arab(ic) Emotions – Back to the Roots” (Guth 2018). It is planned to follow up this question in the framework of a research project, working title *A Dictionary of Nahḍa Arabic* (DiNA).

⁶⁸ See above, p. 228, with fn. 55. – Cf. also Al-Bagdadi 2010 with its ch. I on *adab* as “Erziehung der Empfindsamkeit”, including sub-ch. I.1 “Die Aktualität des *adab* – Moralische Erziehung als kollektiver Lernprozeß.”

⁶⁹ For more details, cf. my discussions of the novella in Guth 2003 and Guth 2019.

the desire to be on equal level with Western modernity, experienced as global standard, and the need to preserve one's identity (*wujūd ahlī*, lit. 'the indigenous way of being') in the process of appropriating this standard,⁷⁰ al-Khūrī's text exposes Mikhālī's ignorance (*jahl*) and lubberly behaviour to hilarious ridicule and his arrogance (*kibriyā'*, *takabbur*), class-conceit, cowardice, self-love and greed to the deepest contempt. In contrast, the author is full of praise – explicitly in the introduction and epilogue, implicitly mainly through the positive character of Émilie's Arab cousin – of indigenous, "noble Eastern" virtues,⁷¹ like upright manliness (*muruwwa*), generosity (*karam*, *jūd*), modesty (*tawāḍu'*), and sensibility (love of poetry). Mikhālī's pseudo-Europeanness is explained and shown to be superficial and artificial, 'fake', and also lacking dignity (*karāma*), while As'ad's naturalness, simplicity (*basāṭa*) and self-esteem (*'izzat nafs*) are made to emerge as morally superior. The course of events makes the skeptical, sober, down-to-earth attitude that Mikhālī's wife displays towards her husband's 'Frankish' ambitions and the alleged French '*comte*' turn out to be thoroughly justified. Most important, however, is probably Émilie's development:⁷² In the beginning, she seems to be As'ad's faithful loving fiancée; then she lets herself be tempted by the idea to become a rich 'European' lady and turns away from As'ad, betraying their love; when the *comte*'s true identity is revealed and he disappears, she tries to regain As'ad without really loving him any longer; and when the latter rejects her, she starts to repent; finally, she is full of remorse and becomes a nun. As'ad's sincerity (*ṣidq*), faithfulness (*wafā'*), and sense of honour are thus sharply contrasted with Émilie's insincerity, coquetry, and betrayal. – While the dramatisation of the dangers of an ignorant emulation of the Western model implies, as we said above, temporalisation and thus the possibility, for the reading subject, to follow an example of failed Westernisation 'live', as a *process* unfolding in time, the negotiation of the 'East vs. West' topic in form of a story of temptation, love

70 Cf. Sheehi who underlines that it is the argument of his whole book-length study on the *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity* that "the genesis of new narratives, genres, and styles in Arabic literature was a product of this tension" – Sheehi 2004, 78.

71 Cf., e.g., al-Khūrī 1860, 45-46, where the author praises places in the Arab East which, like Damascus, have been able to resist "the vicissitudes of time and taste" (*taqallubāt al-zaman wa-l-dhawq*) and remained centres of the "noble Oriental/Eastern manners, customs, ways of dressing and modes of appearance" (*al-ādāb wa-l-'awāyid* [sic!] *wa-l-aksām wa-l-hay'āt al-sharqiyya al-sharīfa*).

72 In spite of the fact that Émilie's development forms an important part of the plot it is probably too far-fetched (though perhaps not completely beside the point) to assume that al-Khūrī might have chosen the character's name as a reference (and/or counterfoil?) to Rousseau's Émile (*Émile, ou De l'éducation*, 1762).

and betrayal, hope and disappointment, coquetry and remorse, etc. adds the moral dimension, which then, again, is taught not only explicitly, in theoretical discourse, but through emotionalisation: what is shown to obstruct a sound development of society is exposed to ridicule, disgrace, shame, and/or moral gratification/satisfaction on the part of the reader (*Schadenfreude*, ‘serves him/her right!’ feeling) while the victims of Mikhālī’s unhealthy Euromania become the object of the reader’s compassion (‘poor As‘ad!’, etc.).⁷³

9.8 Conclusion

The new type of literary production that historians of Middle Eastern literature use to label “modern” and that begins to emerge from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, for the first time theorised, in the Arab(ic) context, by Khalīl al-Khūrī as “facts mingled with passion”, is a literature that

- not only refers to the real world as if it were a reliably transmitted authentic report (“*riwāyat...*”) about it,
- but it also does so via literary representation (*taqlīd*) in which the reality (*ḥaqīqa*) of “what happens/-ed” (*mā waqa‘a*) is re-presented, in *creative imagination*, through generalising abstraction (*taṣwīr*),
- so that the world and its current challenges (pressure to modernise, etc.) appear on stage or in fiction as a kind of *laboratory*, a testing ground that allows the newly emerging Middle Eastern subject (that is forced to act in the rapidly changing world) to study this world and its ‘typical’ challenges in symbolic abstraction, concretely enough however to live with the representative characters through the typical situations as if they were real (verisimilitude!);
- protagonists who *act* in this world are not only presented as *reasoning* subjects, i.e., as rational beings who reflect about the situations they have to master and make ‘pro vs. con’ decisions in, but also as *feeling* subjects, with their emotions, so that the modernisation process does not remain a purely mental exercise but also is embodied (compassion, shedding tears, etc.);
- in this process, the “feeling heart” that reacts to the repercussions of the world becomes a value in itself – with also a social aspect to it: emotionalism serves the emerging ‘middle class’ subject as a tool of compensatory

⁷³ Here, again, the new Nahḍa aesthetics are clearly comparable to the aesthetics of European Enlightenment, cf., e.g., Lessing’s *Mitleidsästhetik* (aesthetics of compassion) as elaborated in his *Hamburg Dramaturgy* and translated into plays like *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755). – On the link between (the history of) morality and (the history of) emotions in general, cf. Boddice 2018, 190 ff. (= ch. 8 “Morality”).

- self-ennoblement: while the old elites are the ‘nobility’ that still holds the power in state and society, the new *efendiyya* group is still powerless but proud and already self-confident enough to claim that it is them who, with the nobility of their “feeling hearts”, are the true – i.e., the moral – nobility;
- moreover, to have *a certain type* of feelings with which one relates to the world – those Pernau calls the “civilising emotions”⁷⁴ – is in itself a manifestation of modernity and a way for the subject to express its very being modern: in a way, emotionalisation ‘guarantees’ civilisation and, thus, modernisation and progress;
 - implicit in dramatisation and emotionalisation is also the fact that the events unfold *in time* (temporalisation) so that they can be observed and re-experienced as *processes* that are the results of decisions made and actions taken by the protagonists; in this way, each novel-drama-opera becomes, to all intents and purposes, the enactment-emplotment (on stage or in literary imagination) of a civilising process *in nuce*, i.e., an instructive, salutary example of ‘performed’ modernity;⁷⁵ this dramatic enactment-emplotment also marks the transition from a static to a dynamic, ‘processualised’ approach to the world: the acting subject becomes the shaper of its own history;
 - as fictional prose and scenic art (theatre, opera) are better suited than poetry (with its “molecularity”) for the representation of processes (because processes unfold in time), prose fiction and drama gradually become the dominant vehicles to express and underline all these aspects of the *agency of this multiple subject* that seeks to assert itself: the *reasoning* subject, the *creative* subject, the *sentimental, feeling, emotional* subject, the *civilised* subject, the (en)noble(d) *middle class* subject, and the subject as the *master of its own history* – all of which are expressions of the *modern* subject;
 - the agency of this subject is at stake on several levels: When al-Khūrī demands that the individual *poetical* subject should never “sell the truth” (*bayʿ al-ḥaqīqa*, 21) nor give up his/her “personal independence and freedom” (*istiqlāl dhātī, ḥurriyya*, *ibid.*), this can also be read on a class- and a national- emancipatory level – the Nahḍa is the period in which all three modern oppositions take shape: the individual that is striving to assert itself in and against

⁷⁴ See above, fn. 64 and 65.

⁷⁵ Cf. E. Holt’s remark that “the literature printed in the journals coming out of Beirut in the early 1870s enacted [!] a debate over the comportment proper to its newly emerging bourgeois audience” – Holt 2009, 39; in the abstract she talks of a “*negotiat[ion]* of changing notions of class and gender” – *ibid.*, 37 (my italics, S.G.).

society; the middle class that is positioning itself between the old elites (*khāṣṣa*) and the ‘masses’ (*‘āmma*); and the proto-nation states that are emerging from the old empires under the simultaneous colonial situation.

From the 1860s onwards, creative imagination combined with factualist-realist referentialism, emotionalism combined with rationalism, all expressing civility, moral nobility, and agency in history (especially as social reformers), remain constants of Arabic literary production.⁷⁶ Khalīl al-Khūrī’s call for a literature in which “truth [is] mingled with passion” can be regarded as the first formulation of a new, “modern” aesthetics. This new conception was going to unfold more broadly during the following decades and find its next prominent expression (and further elaboration) shortly after WW I and the collapse of the old empires in the context of the emerging idea of a *national* literature (*adab qawmī*).⁷⁷ In the programmatic foreword⁷⁸ to a collection of short stories that are meant to be specifically *Egyptian* stories (1921), ‘Isā ‘Ubayd, a member of the group of writers who called themselves “The Modern School” (*al-Madrasa al-Ḥadītha*), demands that the new type of literature that the group aspires to create for the benefit of the independent Egyptian nation-to-be, should be based on an understanding of literary writing as an art that is able

to arouse [in us] a strong and noble feeling (*iḥsās rāqīⁿ qawīyy*) that we enjoy feeling creep into us, producing in our hearts a drunk, capturing pleasure (*ladhdha muthmila jallāba*). It takes control over us and refines our morals / makes us civilised (*yuhadhdhibunā*). Nothing can evoke this feeling but Truth (*al-ḥaqīqa*)⁷⁹ because it touches the sensitive fibers in the depths of our hearts [...].

(‘Ubayd 1921: *nūn*, i.e., end of section 4, my translation, as in Guth 2020 = Chapter 12, below)

⁷⁶ As I have shown in my *Brückenschläge* (Guth 2003b), this does not hold true for Arabic literature alone. The validity of the observations made in the present article may therefore well be extended to include the beginnings of other modern Middle Eastern literatures, esp. late Ottoman literature.

⁷⁷ As the phenomenon is not limited to the Arab world, the argument is pertinent also for Turkish and Persian, where we can observe, almost simultaneously, the emergence of the ideas of *millī edebiyāt* and *edebiyāt-e mellī*, respectively. Cf., e.g., the programmatic writings of ‘Ömer Seyf-eddīn and Ziyā Gökalp (for Turkish) and of Moḥammad-‘Alī Jamāl-zādeh (for Persian).

⁷⁸ On the emergence of the programmatic foreword in this context, cf. Al-Bagdadi 2010, 36–38 (ch. I.1.2 “Paratexte: Das literarische Vorwort”).

⁷⁹ For the difficulty of rendering the term *ḥaqīqa*, see above, note 17.