

The Flash Poem and the Haiku Poem in Arab and Japanese

A Comparative Study of Roots, Beginnings and Artistic Sources

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Summary of the Paper:

This paper studies the relationship between the Arabic Flash poem and the Japanese Haiku poem from a comparative perspective based on the principle of influence between civilizations and cultures, and the relationship between similar poetic forms in Arabic and Japanese literature, both in form and content, in an effort to avoid falling victim to the limitations of our own judgment and to guard against reading the literature of others in light of our understanding of our own heritage. In this way, we can avoid finding false similarities between our literature and that of others.

The comparison will be based on the concept of modernism that has cast its shadows on both literatures with different results due to cultural, historical and religious particularity of both the Arabs and the Japanese.

Although Arabs have known the Haiku poem for a relatively long time, they did not know the roots of the Japanese language or the history of Japanese poetry. For this reason, they failed to recognize, in depth, the historical context of Haiku poetry and, consequently, their attempts to produce Arabic Haiku poems were unsuccessful. Consequently, the comparison will not attempt to identify similarities; and will instead address the process of modernism in both literatures. Since poetry is not separable from the public mindset, our study will address the aesthetic essence of the Flash poem and the Haiku poem.

The study aims to trace the development of the Flash and Haiku poetry and the state in which both have settled in the minds of their respective audiences. The study relies on the righteous values of Islam which provide for the nation to avoid being isolated from others. Islam has made intercommunication between nations a cultural requirement. It made the ties of civilization part of the tools necessary for the continuous building of culture, literature and even Man himself, relying on the concept of the unity of creation and truth and the multiplicity and diversity of human civilizations.

Introduction:

In the years since their emergence, most comparative studies were based on the principles of mutual influence. Today, we assume that influence is inevitable given the rising tide of technologies and the communications revolution, which created a sort of intentional and unintentional acculturation. I shall analyze comparative interpretation in order to get results that link the text being examined to its cultural context. Acculturation allows the person making the comparison to reach new unexpected results in terms of the areas of acculturation and the argumentative relationships between civilizations and cultures and how they interact within the literary text and the comparative discourse.

Haiku poetry has become quite famous and well known. It is no longer a Japanese art as it has influenced multitudes of writers who started to contemplate and write Haiku poems with a degree of similarity to the concept on which it is based and with a level of mastery similar to that known by the Japanese. Hence, there are Haiku poems written by poets from the U.S.A., Europe, Australia and some other Asian nations like Singapore. However, despite the numerous attempts other nations made at Haiku poems, Haiku has not been seriously addressed in Arabic. The capabilities and aesthetic character of Arabic were not utilized in advancing this art. Experiments to absorb Haiku poetry in Arabic were not serious, with the few done failing to address Haiku with the same aesthetic physical concept, dimensions and structures as the Japanese. Rather, they remained captive to Arab poetic concepts dominated by different poetic ideas to which poets hold on, either at their own will or because of the specific mentality that has stopped at the threshold of the poetic lesson. Some poets started to write Haiku poems, but soon changed course in terms of form, art or even content and subject and produced what is called "the poetry of the moment" or "thought poem"; i.e., what is known as "Flash poetry". This does not mean that modern Haiku, or what is known as city-like Haiku, has not developed. It has, as it also departed from nature to tackle issues that concern modern Man, although still within the limits of nature's effects and the civilizational and knowledge channels it creates.

Our intended examination is not bound by the limits of Arab imitations of Haiku. It will consider the emergence of this art in Arab countries and Japan and try to discern the intellectual and artistic characteristics of this art.

Emergence of the Flash poem and its historical roots in Arab literature:

Flash poetry was not new to Arabic poetry. Flash poetry was an extension of what the Arabs called the single-line poem where lines, or single verses, stand out of their context and become a complete artistic unit, a lightening flash and passing thought, a short lyric creating its intense expression relying on the poetic moment and its surroundings. Arabs gave preference to independent single lines or verses which gave fame to their authors. Abu Tammam was known for his line:

Take your heart wherever you wish in the realm of love; True love is only for the first love.

Al-Mutanabi was known for his verse:

Stallions, night and the desert know me; and so does the sword, the spear, the paper and the pen.

Arab criticism has always celebrated single lines. They made independence of each verse the only aesthetic principle used in the aesthetic classification of verses. Whence came the *moaddel* (modifying), the *muhajjal* (famous), the *muwaddih* (clarifying) and the *murajjil* (beautifying) lines. This is one of the aesthetic bases for constructing a poem; "the best poetry is one composed of independent lines; each with complete meanings". The unity of the line became one of the most prominent phenomena of our old criticism, serving as a measure of quality and mastery in various forms. However, it was perceived through the general unity of the poem.

The single-line poem can include one or two lines representing a passing, dynamic, strong, deep, rich and effective moment.

The single or two-line poem is semantically rich, radiating shadows of implications by focusing on a specific meaning.

Arabs have always had great affection for the poetic line or the single-line poem. They quoted such lines in the repeated situations in their lives, which means that Arab's historical sentiments were based on fast varying flashes that oscillate between sentiment and thought. This establishes that Arabs have [long] known single-line poems, that the roots of single-line poems are deep-rooted in our history and that they are not the product of Western effect as some proponents of modernism claim.

The single-line poem has a poetic essence expressing the poet's self and concerns. Hence, it can reflect the wisdom of the poet's life experience.

Al-Mutanabbi wrote:

My death fears me as if I were its death; and the snake fails to recognize me and my venom kills it.

There are countless examples of such single-line poems in Arabic poetry.

What is at issue here is how the poet achieves his/her objective. If such objective is achieved in one or two lines, then they would be the poem that includes and fully expresses the poet's world.

In my opinion, the single or two-line poem written in light of the true concept of poetry and poetic moment, unlimited by bread-winning and professional perspective, is the one worthy of consideration today.

The short poem started to emerge in Arabic literature in modern times, trying to find its way under different names. Scholars disagree on how modernistic such poems are; are they part of the fabric of Arabic poetry or one of its types presented briefly above? Or, are they the product of Western literature, which had some influence on Arabic literature? One scholar considers the short poem a flash; describing it as: "a revival or re-phrasing of what was known in old Arabic poetry as the muqatta'ah (short poem); which is a poetic form the Arabs knew since the emergence of Arabic poetry, and which formed an important phase of the development of Arabic poetry". He is of the view that the two types match almost completely, not only in form. "In addition to the small size, a function of the small number of poetic verses or lines compared to a qasidah (long poem), there are other significant structural values; i.e., both the muqatta'ah (short poem) and the Flash poem are void of the preamble or introductory part which poets often used in qasidahs (long poems) and which became an essential part of the structure and established form of the qasidah (long poem)". [Another scholar] relates poetic modernism to the art of the Flash poem. "Hence, the creation of a lightening Flash [poem] is a type of adventure whose results are not guaranteed unless the poet masters the secrets of its internal and external structure, and knows how to utilize the language capacities to serve his poem", he wrote. It was described as "one of the new feats of modern poetry; a short focused poem so rich in connotations, symbolism and flow of sentiments". Many critics adopted the essence and content, rather than the length or external form, as the basis of distinction between this type of poem and the long poems. Still, the prevailing aspect of the short poem was the "self-expressionism and lyricism". Simple sentiment, expression of a unified emotional situation, as well as over self-expressionism, remain the artistic characteristics most associated with the Flash poem, in addition to other contemporaneous characteristics such as concentration, intensity, fast response by the poet, and being void of the dramatic structure of the long poem. Others believe that "dramatic structure is not a monopoly of the long poem and that its components can be discerned, although relatively, in short poems as long as the artistic presentation is distinguished by the acceleration of the emotional and intellectual crisis.

One of the issues under debate concerning the short poem, besides those related to its structure, is the issue of its name. I prefer to call this type of poem the Flash poem, due to its intensity and concentration, as the poet expresses his/her meaning or experience in an intense manner radiating with countless connotations that almost exceed the poem's words.

The Flash poem can be defined as follows: A single sentimental flow poem based on "one idea or one state of mind, comprising few words and concise in character.

We can conclude the following: the generally-known Flash poem is not a creation or a new plant that has no roots in Arabic poetry. It is rather a new form of the lines-with-complete-meaning known in our Arabic poetic heritage, carrying shades of meaning, and having a spectrum encompassing the multitude of meanings with which its words are loaded. However, this assumed connection between originality and contemporaneity does not mean that the Flash poem was a development of something that had previously existed. Rather, it was [the result of] renewal efforts intended to connect to the modernistic and renewal movement of modern times. Had poets attempted to return to their heritage and write poems with a modernistic view based on a cultural accumulated knowledge so deep-rooted in memory, they would have achieved better and richer results.

As opposed to this view, others attribute the emergence of this new artistic form to the external influence of modern means of communication, including the Japanese ones, on world literatures. They rely on the characteristics of brevity, intensity and small number of words as evidence to associate the Flash poem with the Japanese Haiku.

To agree with this, we first need to get familiar with the Haiku and how it emerged, whether or not it emerged and developed in a manner similar to that of the Flash poem, and whether the Japanese view of its emergence and development is the same as in our literature.

The Haiku:

The most important entries to our modern library may be translations from Japanese literature; specifically about the Haiku art of writing short poems that highly and distinctly concentrate on images and the fast, smart glimpse. In recent years, however, Japanese Haiku has been mentioned quite often after some Arab poetic micro-experiences under different names were claimed by their authors to be related to Haiku. So, what is this art?

The word Haiku is composed of two syllables: Hai; i.e., having and giving fun, laughter and making others laugh, changing one's external appearance, amusing others, and acting, while the second syllable, "ku" means a funny, amusing or comic word.

"Hai" may also mean "unusual", while "ku" may refer to a part of a poem, lines, a paragraph or a verse.

According to Haiku historians, "Haiku poems emerged and developed in Japan in the 2nd half of the 17th Century under the name "Huku" at the hands of the poet Matsuo Basho (1644-1694). Huku, however, did not only refer to independent poems, it also referred to a poetic text used as a preamble of a long poem, as well as to another literary genre combining poetry and prose.

In the 2nd half of the 19th Century, the poet Masawaka Chiki (1867-1902) gave independent Huku texts the name Haiku. A Haiku poem is usually composed of three non-rhyming lines. It contains two adjacent images or ideas with one word or short phrase added to them to delineate the moment of separation and, in the meantime, bring out the relationship between them. The phrase that presents the image in a Haiku poem is not in most cases a meaningful sentence; rather, it is a word or a phrase. A Japanese Haiku poem is composed of 17 sound units, with the sound unit being similar to a syllable in Arabic, English and other languages. In the rules of Arabic prosody which govern the rhythms of Arabic poetry, there are two types of syllables: the long one and the short one. Their counterparts in English are the stressed and unstressed syllables. In a Japanese Haiku poem, sound syllables are distributed as follows: 5-7-5; i.e., five syllables in the first line, seven in the second and then five in the third. This is what many of the world's poets who introduced Haiku into their own languages tried to do".

This was a brief synopsis of the history of Haiku and its proximity to the Arabic Flash poem in intensity and economic use of words. If we try to examine the Haiku in terms of how it was affected by modernistic poetry and whether or not it was a development of, and improvement upon, older forms of Japanese poetry, we need to explore the process of Japanese poetry and how the Japanese have appreciated arts over the years.

The Haiku poetry is related to the pattern of Japanese culture which helps a Japanese adjust to his surroundings. For this reason, the Japanese people's view of the Haiku poetry is different from our view of the Flash poem in its capacity as a form of modernistic poetry that is more or less related to heritage. In their view of the meaning of

modernistic poetry and new arts, Japanese poets did not concern themselves much with examining the effects of modernism on Haiku and whether Haiku poems were a transition from the Tanka and the Haiku "which are subject to a well-known rhythmical system to a modernistic poetic form which is free from any old or new rhythmic constraints". Instead, they concerned themselves with the ability of this Haiku form to convey what they want to say. It is the form closest to the Japanese spirit, which favors achievement. This is why only modernistic poetry which is similar in spirit to the Haiku, such as Tanikawa-Shuntaro's poetry, gained popularity. In this sense, Haiku is a component of Japanese identity and a valid description of Japan's outer image.

A Haiku must tackle the present; otherwise, it would not be considered a successful work of art. "Write about the present," says a Haiku teacher, while another adds: "Capture the moment." This is the basis and law of Haiku. A Tanka poem usually turns back and to tackle a recent or a little far past".

Artistic Characteristics of both the Flash and the Haiku Poems:

I will examine the artistic characteristic of both poetic forms to determine the unique characteristics of each and arrive at the truth concerning mutual influence between the two types and whether the issue is nothing but a meaningless imitation or whether it exceeds formal similarity and extends to the depth of each artistic form and its established rules.

1) Artistic Characteristics of the Flash Poem:

The Arabic experience of writing and characterizing Flash poems has a bias towards form. Hence, a Flash poem is identified by considering its length, the space it occupies on paper, the economy in the use of words and the avoidance of rhetoric and embellishments, thus making it the conclusion or concentration of an idea that has coherent elements giving it a solid organic unity and a deeper semantic structure.

The main characteristics of the Flash poem are determined in light of the achievements of the current era, where everything tends to be faster. This is what gave rise to the Flash poem, which was influenced by the prose poem in terms of breaking the barriers of rhythm and unneeded words and entering the inner world of Man.

When addressing the Flash point, I am not addressing a complete, mature experience created by modernistic poetry. Rather, the experience showed good and bad results. While some poetic experiences succeeded, others failed in having presence on the cultural arena. This does not mean that the Flash poem does not have a distinguished margin of its own in the body of Arabic poetry, in its capacity as one of the most prominent diversifications in modernistic poetry.

Title:

The poet may give a title to his/her Flash poem, in which case the title becomes the key to understanding the poem, especially that intensity and economic use of words in a Flash poem may make the text difficult to understand. The body of the poem, eventually, becomes an extension of the title; i.e., the title is a part of the creative work of art. I will tackle the experience of Al-Munsif Al-Mirghani in his poem "the Possible":

["The Possible"

Turns into ..

Our impossible love ..]

Ostensibly, this Flash poem's title conflicts with its body. The verb "turns into", however, catches the overall meaning of 'transformation'; i.e., the impossible love is transformed into something possible because of the transformation.

Intensification:

Flash poetry is new poetry that relies on intensification and distillation of meaning. In this way, the Flash poem responds to the requirements of modern-day life, expressing the spirit of an era in which everything is fast, accelerated and non-stopping, just like the flash of a rainy thunder which disappears quite quickly leaving behind its effects. Such effects are the expression of the poet's vision.

Intensification allows a flash poem to be read multiple times, with the meaning flowing in each reading through poetic, concise and symbolic language.

The purpose of intensification is to focus on the meaning free from its verbal associations. A poet wrote:

[Satisfied with her death, she falls asleep

With nothing to disturb her except some weeping

Satisfied, she feels and sees us

And is content with so little of what she saw]

The poet here draws a new picture of nice comforting death that eradicates pain. Such comfort raises questions that bring in the hidden meaning; i.e., the worries of the living. To deepen the meaning, the poet uses verbs that imitate the moving characteristic of a state of worry. Each verb, if examined out of its context, implies prosperous life. However, the context transforms the words into symbols; with death becoming satisfaction and sleep while life is a source of worry. The poet expressed meaning using words that derive meaning through interpretation. "It is worth mentioning here that a Flash poem does not use words in their lexical specific meanings. It is a kind of writing that sees in language the transparency and ability to communicate based on its interpretations. The function of language would thus be to keep up with the poet's experience in all its richness, succession, conflicts and sensitivity".

I believe that one of the most important conditions for a successful Flash poem is the appropriate balance between clarity and intensification; the Flash poem should neither be too vague nor deviate from its purpose, as the artistic aspects of the Flash poem crystallize between the two ends.

Many Flash-poem impostors may revert to increasing white spaces, relying on the reader to fill them in. This is in fact a type of linguistic disability. Language, "to Flash poem writers, represents a concern through which they seek a homogeneous linguistic structure, with a level of semantic relationships and verbal references flashing inside the text through a homogeneous musical system interwoven in the relationships of the words with their verbs, names, letters, prefixes and suffixes within the internal structure of the text".

There are examples of intensification which undermine the meaning, such as the one wrote by Samer Abu Hawwash in his Flash poem entitled: "King":

I'm a king when I go to sleep

Brevity, alone, does not create a literary genre; brevity must be accompanied by the rich and significant utilization of the words.

Organic Unity

A Flash poem has some aspects of modernistic poems, such as organic unity. Authors of Flash poems drop the tools of conjunction between sentences, delegating the issue of unity to an invisible factor; the psychological factor that combines the parts of the poem.

A Flash poem must have an independent organic unity because it presents a complete world in a distinguished aesthetic order that is different from other artistic genres like short stories, articles or novels.

Ambiguity:

Ambiguity may be of a type that stimulates the reader to search for the meaning. This is where the poet catches the flash of the poem, but he never reaches a final meaning. With each flash, the meaning is renewed and opened to many interpretations. Having a single interpretation for a poem kills it. An endless meaning keeps moving into new poetic horizons, ones that can only be touched partially; rather than conclusively".

I am of the view that rich creative ambiguity adds fertility to the Flash poem and opens it to several interpretations, it being a poem that reveals and conceals its elements between its different flashes. Consider the following lines by one poet:

[The road is just a turn toward your face
 But the wind
 Are columns
 That have rested their hands on my depression
 Whose flags have extinguished the bells
 But the winds
 Are a form of gloating
 Moving among people]

The poet's hopes of meeting with his beloved evaporate as the columns of wind prevent him from meeting her. In other words, she has turned into a memory. What are the columns of winds?

Antonymy:

Everything in existence has an opposite. Life is full of pairs that form life, depict its movement and maintain its balance, such as the duet of ability and disability, past and present, individual and group, life and death, will and caprice, and other duets that occupy a prominent position in a person's thought.

Our critics understood the importance of antonymy and its effect on people. Al-Jerjani realized that combining elements that are naturally far from each other is something that attracts the audience and amplifies reactions. He was far ahead of our contemporary critics when he addressed antithetic pairs. Coming after the time of Coleridge, he asserts that simulation is not aesthetic unless the elements of similarity and difference are achieved together in it.

For this reason, the poet employs opposites in structuring the Flash poem to create a surprising effect that stimulates and challenges the mind.

In his poem "Margins in the Book of Defeat", Nezar Qabbani says:

[Our skins have lost their feeling
 Our souls are bankrupt]

Our days are wasted between exorcisms

Chess

And sleepiness]

The poet shapes his images as opposed to one another, or a state versus a different state.

The poet presents the idea of dullness and defeatism through the antithesis of a man living a reality of defeat, thus impressing on our minds the opposite image and giving depth to the feeling of a life of honor versus a life of humility.

This gives the poem the sense of tension that is manifest in the framework of antithetic opposites.

Parallelism:

Parallelism is said to exist when we observe linguistic structures having relationships of proportionateness based on the principle of structural linguistic distribution. This principle relies on the dual synthesis that creates a type of symmetric parallelism between the structural elements which manifest patterns of duality and opposition while they relate the artistic formation in these structures and the principle of parallelism. This methodology emanates, in my opinion, from the nature of parallelism which imposes itself on the textual structure of poetry as a structural aspect pertaining to texts that adopt in their structure rhetorical and aesthetic forms as basic means.

Jackson expanded his view of how parallelism can control the linguistic components to include all components and systems of the literary work. Mohammad Muftah sets a definition for parallelism that incorporates the principle of repetition and the relationship between the repeated elements in its capacity as a basic technique employed in building parallelism in linguistic expressions. [To him, parallelism is:] "a repetition of a certain structure, or certain components of a structure, with common and different meanings". To apply these theoretical principles, we quote a Flash poem by Adounis (Asfour), in which he wrote:

[I listened

A bird on Saneen Hill

Making chirping noise for calmness to prevail

For singing to be like

The blade of a knife

That cuts with hoarseness and crying

The coldness of the city]

Parallelism is realized through equivalent trochee, restricted alternating rhyme and the succession of present-tense verbs with the bird chirping noisily on the Saneen Hill for calmness to surround the place and for singing to be like the edge of the knife cutting through the coldness of the city. This parallelism in Adounis' Flash shows the relationship between Adounis and the place.

Celebrating Nature:

The Flash celebrated nature and drew a scene showing the reflection of things in us and the aesthetic imaginative dimension of described items; thus changing immaterial things to items that can be heard, smelled and seen.

It is true that at later periods, the Arab poet wrote the poem in the form of an art tableau, and in the Flash, the poet created a visual form for it.

In the Flash poem, we encounter a lot of visually-typified imagination; where the hill is a poet, the tree a pen, the river a line, the stone a point, the phantom horses on water, and people a herd of cattle, and young girls paper, and windows paper and water dust.

Poets changed words to visual tableaux inspired by imagination where vision is linked to clairvoyance to draw an integrated scene.

The Flash is an art that grew and originated under the influence of the Arabic single line poem or poem-line; however, when Arab literature interacted with western and eastern literature since old times, it influenced/became influenced by them judging by the different thinking, social and political referential sources in both forms of literature.

Some scholars linked the Flash to the Haiku which is based on concentration, condensation and linguistic brevity. Then, what are the artistic features of the Haiku?

2. The Artistic Features of the Haiku:

The line of the short Haiku poem contains 5, 7 and 5 syllables. Let us imagine an iceberg floating on the waves of the cold sea. The iceberg only shows a small part above the water. The main part is hidden under the waters of the sea. Like the iceberg, the Haiku shows a very small part in 5, 7, 5 syllables. The poet's emotion and unsaid messages are left hidden under the water. If we try to fill the Haiku with too much information when it can only take a small number of words, the messages will then be very thin, scattered particles that carry a certain meaning. Therefore, it is the (best) choice to be like an iceberg by uncovering part of the information and omitting or leaving a great deal of information under the water for the reader's imagination to figure it out.

[In a hurry - kakekon de (ka-ke-ko-on-de = 5 syllables)

Confusion on the waves - namini tsumazuki (na - mi - ni - tsu - ma - zu - ki = 7 syllables)

Children are swimming - oyogu koyo (o - yo - gu - ko - yo = 5 syllables)]

It can be easily seen that this Haiku was written by the beach and not at the side of the pool. The expression "kakekon de namini tsumazuki" carries a very clear picture of children pushing through the waves fighting the resisting waves and swimming towards the deep water. Children "do not wish to waste any swimming time". This does not show clearly in the words used. It shows in the good signification of the final and descriptive note "kakekon de namini tsumazuki". The signification of the children's wish matches the hidden part of the iceberg that develops the reader's imagination world.

This form is an ancient Japanese poetic tradition. In the beginning, it was called the "Huku"; a small part of a longer poem (called Maringa or Hai Kabi) which is composed by a number of poets each replying to the other as part of a long cumulative poetic exercise or game. However, in the 17th century, the distinctive content, the style and the creative system that dominates the poem gave the Haiku a self-attracting form that allowed several major poets to be mainly known for their skill in the poetic form of the Haiku.

Traditionally, the Haiku was an unrhymed poem made up of seventeen (17) syllables in three (3) lines: the first made up of five (5) syllables, the second of seven (7) and the third of five (5). It must be said that the Japanese have what is called "sound" rather than a syllable, and as such, the poem is made of 17 sounds.

Description of Nature:

The Haiku was dedicated for handling themes based on nature. The Haiku also has a “seasonal” requirement or condition; i.e., each poem connects itself to one of the seasons. The poem usually starts with an observation of a certain natural phenomenon, a plant, an animal or an aspect of a natural scent to connect implicitly or explicitly with a human feeling or sensation.

The above reference to nature is not unintentional or arbitrary; it is essential for the meaning behind the phenomena.

This adherence to nature comes from the Buddhist feeling of nature as being organized and healthy; however incidental and transient. As humans are part of that unified system, other parts of nature will play roles as “natural” reflections of human states. Naturally, the Haiku that has been taken to non-Japanese languages and cultures cannot depend on religious assumptions or the same viewpoints; however, it can be said that most Haiku poems struggle to maintain a meaning for the humanistic and natural as interdependent and that contemplation in any of them will lead to the other.

The Haiku poem often links the “natural” to the human using a combination of sightings and fantasies. The relationship between the Haiku and nature may be seen clearly only through deliberate crossing to the most famous Haiku in Japan which is always repeated by old and young and heard by the whole world:

[O the old pond

A frog leapt

The sound of water – Basho (1644 – 1694]

This Haiku carries the artistic characteristics of this art. We are concerned here with the description of nature. The frog makes a sound in the spring; particularly at sunset on clear, quiet days. When the frog hears another sound, it mutes and “swallows” its own sound.

Within this context, one of the four seasons, known in Japanese as (kigo) or (season word) is mentioned or referenced. (Kigo) is sometimes never directly expressed¹.

This also includes mentioning the (sakura) or the season when the (cherry blossoms); a season that is dear to the Japanese and one of the greatest symbols in their culture.

These flowers are known for their extraordinary beauty as well as their short life. They blossom and glow quickly showing absolute beauty, then die quickly. This makes it a symbol of human life as it shines and glows, however Man soon dies.

However, this for the Japanese may be accompanied with the knowledge that he has lived his full glow or as he should have lived it, so he does not feel sorry taking after the life of this flower.

In the following example of (Takahama Kyuchi):

Cherry blossoms

In full bloom

¹ nnn

No petals falling

[زهرات الكرز]

انفتاح كامل

[لا بتلات تسقط], the poet portrays the captivating beauty of these flowers in their full bloom where no petals are falling. This shows that the flowers are at the beginning of their blossom and vitality probably as a symbol of some type of life or period in the life of the poet.

Brevity and Obscurity:

The Haiku is a fleeting glimpse and a quick shot. The text ends as soon as it starts. These are the Japanese Haiku poems: simple, brief, shining and arbitrary. They are far from philosophizing. They imitate the clarity of nature of which they are fond. They satisfy the rural desire of poetry. The Haiku is motion in space and time; however, they represent an obscure moment between clarity and obscurity. Although scintillating, their glow continues for a long time. Therefore, not everyone can be a Haiku poet and that is why it is considered unattainably easy in Arabic. It only gives the impression of being easy. The moment someone hears it, he thinks that he can make one like it. This simplicity comes from its being based on a poetic language with several features that are known to the Haiku poets: most importantly, brevity and simplicity of terms that mostly fall under the classification of language that is unattainably easy. Although the Haiku attempts to be simple, it is lively. By adhering to brevity, the Haiku does not resort to metaphoric usage or pompous expressions that are too beautiful because the Japanese are particularly cautious of exaggeration. They find beauty in simplicity and naivety. However, after the war, the poets returned to rhetoric usage.

On this basis, the Haiku does not have deep structure. This is based on the mental structure of the Japanese who do not care about detailed explanations of pieces of writing and see in the thing the thing itself. It is known that the Haiku poet does not generally express his personal feelings.

When Nozawa – Pontocho says:

[One river

A long, very long one

Crossing the fields of snow], the Haiku does not carry an implicit meaning. It is brief, clear and direct. It imitates the clarity of the scene about which it is speaking. However, when we read it with our way of thinking, we load it with meanings that may have never crossed the poet's mind. That is why the Japanese disapprove of the translation of the Haiku as it is a Japanese verse written in Japanese.

Directness and clarity of the Haiku go beyond the surface. Meanings are dealt with intelligently. The poet does not say: the music of the ocean, he makes you feel it skillfully; or tell you that the battle is raging, he makes you feel that the battle is raging: this is the meaning of the vitality of the language.

The Flash and the Haiku in light of comparative studies:

Is the emergence of the two artistic forms decided through influence? Or, is each artistic form different from the other?

Art is linked to the epistemological theory of its originator and recipient and their semantic references. However, Arab composer's eagerness to imitate the Haiku was not based on attentive understanding of the Haiku. They thought it was sufficient to arrange words on lines to make the Arabic Haiku. They called their composition different names; one of which is the one used here; i.e., "the "flash", which is connected in its epistemological principles to

what is known to the Arabs as “muqatta’at: or short poems”. The Japanese Haiku is strictly connected to Japanese. However, what are the points shared by the Flash and the Haiku? Scholars linked the emergence of the Flash to the time of translation of the Japanese Haiku. Translation is an important bridge for influence in comparative literature; however, attempts to imitate Haiku failed for several reasons including the following:

1. Arab poets participated in the composition of the Haiku without grasping the particularity of this art and its link to the Japanese character and mind.
2. Arab translators copied Haiku texts and critical studies from other languages particularly English. Most of these translators were researchers; not poets.
3. Translators translated Haiku into Arabic without understanding the cultural and intellectual context of this art with its aesthetic philosophy built on the Unity of the Universe.

The poetic Flash, although affected by foreign influences, mostly in form, is not a copy of Japanese or English poetry. It is revival or reconstruction of what is known in old Arabic poetry as “muqatta’at” (short poems) after mixing it with folklore and international characteristics.

We will try to compare the technical characteristics of the two forms of art to show the originality of each form.

Brevity and economy is a characteristic feature of both forms of art. Because this feature of the Flash depends on paradigmatic force of the word and its use outside the lexical meaning to convey symbolic meaning and thus act as a center of radiation of meanings beyond the number of words, this paper opts for the use of the word “condensation” as it combines the meaning of brevity and economy. When we read this Flash:

[God gave me

Eyes and what I do not see]

We note that the poet attempts to convey his feeling in an indirect manner. So, he loaded the words with a number of meanings that the reader is required to figure out. Arabic poetry is built on indirect insinuations. In the Haiku, there is no meaning beyond the direct meaning of words. What Rayukan says in his Haiku:

O the old pond

A frog leapt

No sound of water], is no more than what is said by the words. This summarizes the meaning of the word Haiku: “Using words in their exact, clear and apparent meaning without any beating around the bush that leads to strange and funny fringes of usage. This is the literal meaning of the term “Haiku”.

The difference between the two forms of art is a difference in the cultural and knowledge principles of the Arab and Japanese people.

An Arab will need the Flash to satisfy his/her cultural need in brevity and at the same time to move out of the circle of established rules of poetry of meter, rhyme, music, rhythm and trochee...

The Japanese need the Haiku to satisfy a dire need for enjoyment and entertainment to counter the harshness of Japanese history.

The two forms of art, however, meet in the desire to rid of the rhetorical ameliorative as they contain no imagery or metaphor in order to maintain the solidness of the idea, copy the daily sensation and get in touch with daily events which may be distorted by multiple images that makes understanding difficult. The Flash takes this arbitrariness and directness from Haiku to get close to daily life and its surprises. The poet says:

[The money wallet

Filed a separation case

Between it and its description

Since it now

Contains only unimportant papers

Except one

Carrying the names of creditors]

The Flash came close to the paradoxes of factual life through the paradox of the name “money wallet” and the opposite defined by the word “creditors”.

Also when Yuri says:

[A bird in a cage

Of seventeen bars

Singing happily]

The meaning is clear, direct and arbitrary and carries the paradox between freedom, cage (jail) and happiness in our Arabic way of thinking. This simplicity is borrowed by the Arab poets who took the experience of the Flash from Haiku as received by them via the English language where some of its well-known writers studied the Japanese culture and introduced the Western reader to the religious, literary, social and political Japanese culture along with lengthy explanations. This was not made available to the Arab readers. That is how the Japanese text was distorted twice before it reached the Arabic culture which knew Haiku in a general, simple way through shallow newspaper reports. In light of this, the influence between the Arabic and Japanese forms of art was indirect.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that the proximity of two forms of art that belong to different heritage may inspire a critical comparison based on comparative studies as attempted in this Paper.

We started this Paper by an introductory study of Flash and Haiku and specified the characteristics of each and its connection to the cognitive features of the two peoples. However, the two forms of art shared some features; such as, brevity, arbitrariness and touching on factual life. These points formed the starting points of this experience. The paper concludes as follows:

- The Flash is a form of art that agrees with Arabic heritage knowledge of the single line or the poem's line which sums the whole meaning of the poem. This line has been widely used in modern times to meet the cultural need at an age of fewer readers. The Haiku is strange to the Arabic culture and poetic traditions which limit the concept of poetry to rhetoric concepts such as the simile and the metaphor. Some samples of Flash differ from this concept. The Haiku, as said earlier, shows no interest in these two rhetoric models and is concerned with picturing the thing in itself for itself. There are also many other differences between the Arabic and Japanese languages.
- Some poets and composers considered the Flash to be easy. They grouped words together in imitation of Japanese poetry. However, the fact is that, Haiku is not an easy form of art in which everyone may be

involved. It is an old, well-established form of art with characteristic principles, poets and features that make it close to the Japanese character and language.

- The mutual influence between Arabic and Japanese poetry is difficult to establish because translation of Haiku is close to being impossible. The Japanese scoffs when he/she reads Basho's Haiku about the frog in French or English and says it is a European frog that is unrelated to his/her national frog as portrayed by Basho and the lake is a Japanese lake.

This special relationship between the Japanese and his/her language and the art of Haiku shows the cultural uniqueness of the Japanese people. It can be said here that Arabs cannot create the Haiku under the Japanese concept unless they know the context in which it is created.

The Arab translator will be limited in his/her translations unless he/she knows the cultural background of the text being translated and looks at Haiku through Japanese eyes; not through the eyes of Ibn Qutaibah and Qudamah ibn Jaafar.

The Arab translator presented the Haiku with the view of a person who wishes to show modernistic appearances while he/she understands none of the truths behind it; therefore, he/she presented the Haiku with Arabic taste not as an art that can be savored and that opens horizons for creativity.

