

*The Philosophy of Existence and the Conflict of Values in Algerian  
Poetic Expression  
A Semio-Philosophical Analytical Study of Selected Poems by Lounis Ait  
Menguellet*

Thamila Kessai

university of Algiers 3, Algiers (Algeria), kessai.thamila@univ-alger3.dz

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**Abstract:**

This research includes a semio-philosophical study of the subject of the philosophy of existence and the conflict of values in the Algerian poetic organization. We proceed from a fundamental problematic whose purpose is to search for how the ideas of the philosophy of existence and the issue of the conflict of values were embodied in the collection of the Algerian poet "Lounis Ait Menguellet". To study this problematic, the descriptive-analytical method was relied upon, based on a semiotic and philosophical approach on a poetic sample formed from three poems selected for analysis.

After the semio-philosophical analysis, the study reached a set of results, the most important of which is that the Algerian poet "Lounis Ait Menguellet" presented a philosophical intellectual vision about existence that often meets with the ideas of the French philosopher "Jean-Paul Sartre" regarding the ideas of: the precedence of existence over essence, absurdity, the look of the other, nihilism.... The study also proved the sequence and connection of human values in an infinite manner, as they are divided into two value systems based on what the human mind accepts and rejects. The first system consists of ideal, high, and pure values that achieve comfort and happiness for the human being. While the second manifests in base, vice-ridden values that make the human being in anxiety and disturbance; this is what embodies the conflict of values that clash to characterize human nature built on contradictions.

**Keywords:** Conflict of values; Ethics; Philosophy of existence; Semio-philosophical approach; Vices; Virtues.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of the human entity occupied the focus of the philosophy of existence, especially during the middle decades of the twentieth century, where philosophers search for the issue of human existence, which is not limited to his physical existence only, but extends beyond that to include the psychological and social existence of individuals. The philosophers of existence, headed by "Jean-Paul Sartre" and "Albert Camus," have clarified that the human being proves his existence through his essence. This means that the individual, after his existence, seeks to grant meaning to his existence and confront the opposing positions and values that the mind rejects (Camus, 1942, p25), considering it [the mind] the highest driver for humans. This difference and opposition always lead to a conflict between the accepted and rejected values according to this driver (the mind), which judges between what is good and what is bad, a matter that the Greek philosophers called ethics: virtue and vice, which characterize human life with its continuous and infinite conflict. An idea that was defined by "Aristotle" (MOREL, 2017, p141) in his moral philosophy, as he insisted on the necessity of mediation between extreme values, whether vice or virtue.

Existential ideas and the conflict of human values have manifested in various international literary works, including novels and poetic collections, which reflect the tension of social values, internal conflict, and human relationships, as they grant an essence to the human entity that is built on conflict and contradictions. For this reason, we tried within this intellectual context to conduct a semio-philosophical analysis of the issue of existence and the conflict of values in the Algerian poetic organization, by taking a sample from the collection of the poet "Lounis Ait Menguellat," aiming to dive into his philosophical thought about existence and attempting to reveal the contents of poetic signifiers and symbols that suggest the conflict of values characterizing human life.

### 1. Methodological Procedures of the Study:

#### 1.1. Study Problematic and its Questions:

Philosophers of existence have always been interested in issues and values pertaining to human life, such as freedom, authenticity, and other values, considering that they grant meaning to existence on one hand, and confront, on the other hand, values that oppose the existential comfort of humans, such as absurdity, anxiety... a matter that generates conflict between these desired and shunned values among humans. Researchers in this field have been interested in the conflict within the human value system that grants meaning to human existence and justifies the effectiveness of its entity. This is evident in what "Friedrich Nietzsche" presented in his analysis of the ongoing conflict between religious values and traditional values as mental and moral values, yet they clash and contradict (Nietzsche, 2012, p39).

"This intellectual context has moved from the philosophical framework to literary works, through what writers and poets employ of linguistic symbolism to express the philosophy of existence and the conflict of values via characters, emotions, and mental images, as they prompt reflection on the conditions of human life, the dominant values, and illustrate at the same time the existential struggle. This forms an infinite series of meanings upon which human life is founded. This is what we will attempt to reveal through our analysis of a poetic sample from the collection of 'Lounis Ait Menguellat' starting from the following fundamental question:

**'How do the features of existential thought manifest in the perspective of the Algerian poet Lounis Ait Menguellet? And how did his poetic symbolism represent the conflict of human values?'**

To study this problematic, it must be broken down into a set of sub-questions as follows:

- How were the features of the philosophy of existence represented in the poetic sample selected for this study?
- Wherein lies the scale of the conflict of moral values in the poetry of 'Ait Menguellet'?
- How did the poet outline the process of values in human life?

## **1.2. Study Method and its Tools:**

No scientific study can reach its results without following a scientific method that frames the research path, as it represents the steps and methodological ways taken by the researcher in studying and analyzing phenomena to reach scientific facts. Due to the nature of the subject, we decided to adopt the descriptive-analytical method based on the semiological and philosophical approach in the analysis. Where we relied on the approach of 'denotation and connotation' of 'Roland Barthes' (Barthes, 1964, p131), in revealing the implicit meanings of the poetic signs selected for analysis. At the same time, we utilized the 'ethical virtues' (vertus des éthique) approach of the Greek philosopher 'Aristotle' to uncover the conflicting values in human existence (MOREL, 2017, p141). We supported the analysis with the ideas of the philosopher 'Jean-Paul Sartre' in the study of human existence and the conflict of values (Sartre, 1943, pp125-259). The analytical method in this study utilized semiological analysis tools represented in reading, explanation, interpretation, and criticism, through reading the material of analysis, explaining and interpreting its meanings, then criticizing the ideas that require so."

"The research community for this study is defined within Algerian poetry, from which we selected an intentional, judgmental sample consisting of three poems from the collection of the Algerian poet 'Lounis Ait Menguellet' as units of the sample. These are defined by their titles as: '**Amennuy**' (The Conflict), '**Anejmaε**' (The Meeting), and '**Si lekteb yer tidett**' (From Falsehood to Truth). This intentional selection of the sample for analysis is due to these poems being communicative and semiotic texts that provide a poetic depiction of the philosophy of existence and the conflict of values in a manner consistent with the scientific approaches selected for analysis.

## **1.3. Concepts and Terminology of the Study:**

Within this element, we will attempt to clarify some concepts and terms that constitute the basic variables of the study as follows:

• **Philosophy of Existence (la philosophie de l'existence):** The philosophy of existence represents one of the philosophical theories interested in human existence, as existence refers to that continuous entity. This means that existence includes everything that is present in human life, starting from the individual, the various systems framing his life, the value system, to other existents surrounding human life (Larousse, 1998, p592).

Accordingly, the philosophy of existence focuses on the individual as a being who has the freedom in what he does, employing it for what achieves comfort and happiness for him. Philosophers of existence believe that everything that happens in human life cannot be in isolation from the individual; he is the center of existence, and this latter (the individual) is not limited to his physical entity only, but includes his emotional, intellectual, and behavioral entity.

'Jaspers' clarified existential truth in his theory as representing all the ideas that harness for the individual his distinguishing characteristics; meaning that the individual proves his existence through traits he possesses based on his ideas which he embodies through various practices and values such as freedom and courage (Dufrenne and Ricoeur, 2014, p320). This is the thought presented by 'Jean-Paul Sartre' in his interpretation of the concept of human freedom, as he sees that the individual represents a free being, or rather, forced to be free in what he does, and at the same time, responsible for his actions. According to Sartre's ideas, man is thrown into existence (the world), having the freedom of choice while bearing responsibility. This is what made the philosopher emphasize that existence precedes human essence (**'l'existence précède l'essence'**)—this is the phrase that characterizes the existential movement. This idea refers to human existence in the world; it means that man exists first, then creates for himself traits that distinguish him according to his free will, for these traits to turn into values with continuous and repeated practices. While 'Sartre' insists that man's existence precedes his essence, he defines himself through his ideas and actions stemming from his being free and responsible. Therefore, the individual seeks to organize his life and think about his future, so his view of the 'other' changes; however, 'Sartre' confirmed that these endeavors will inevitably lead to nihilism, for they are mere absurdity, since man's end will be vanishing and disappearance (Lambert, 2002-2003, p53)."

"We mean by the **philosophy of existence** in our study that philosophical presentation depicted by the Algerian poet 'Lounis Ait Menguellet' regarding human existence and its accompanying human characteristics that describe man in himself and his society.

- **Ethics of virtues (éthique des vertus):** The ethics of virtues approach focuses on studying the mental traits of the individual from which actions and reactions ensue. 'Aristotle' interpreted his perspective within a logical and realistic hierarchy of values; at the top of this hierarchy are the virtuous values governed and controlled by the human mind, followed by the rest of the values that conflict among themselves, consisting of virtues (**Vertus**) and vices (**vices**). Aristotle clarified that virtuous values are only achieved in the middle of the extreme opposition of two vice values. By the extreme opposition of values, he means that **excess** in an individual's commitment to a certain trait on one hand (**excès**), and the absolute abandonment or negligence of this trait on the other hand (**défaut**). Thus, the philosopher suggests that virtue mediates the two cases (Rodrigue, 2020, p87).

Accordingly, the **Aristotelian theory of mediation** (doctrine de la médiété aristotélicienne) of virtues confirms that both extreme cases—committing to a certain value or abandoning it—do not make a human feel comfort or happiness; therefore, these values are among the vices. The middle state of this opposition represents moderation, which achieves existential comfort for the individual. This perspective is illustrated through the example provided by both researchers 'Sir Williams' and 'David Ross' in the famous linear representation, which shows that the value of courage (**courage**) is a virtue mediating two vices: the first is recklessness (**témérité**) embodied

by excess in courage, and cowardice (**la lâcheté**) which means the abandonment or stripping away of courage (Rodrigue, 2020, p89).

This means that virtues according to 'Aristotle' represent noble values that suggest what is positive in human life. The happy person, according to 'Aristotle', is the one who is characterized by virtues and feels them. From this, it is clear that ethics are like a logical science at the summit of human values, organizing them and controlling desires (Médivié, 2020, p100).

We mean by **ethics of virtues** in this study those virtuous and vice-ridden values that characterize human life as desirable or shunned traits in all societies, which is what we sought to reveal behind the signs contained in the poetic sample selected for semio-philosophical analysis."

• **Conflict of Values (conflit de valeurs):** Before diving into the depths of the conflict of values, it is worth starting from the meaning of these terms individually as follows:

◦ **Conflict:** The word conflict (**conflit**) refers, according to the French language dictionary, to that opposition in feelings resulting from the difference of opinions between individuals or groups, which reaches the point of collision when it intensifies (Larousse, 1998, p357). This means that conflict suggests arguing and quarreling between two opposing parties over a specific issue or matter, where each party seeks to overcome the other to ensure the continuity of its existence and the survival of its belief.

◦ **Values:** If we try to clarify the concept of value, we find it utilized more in the economic field, where value refers to that amount that appraises something, whether in cash, barter, or service (Larousse, p1662). This means that value represents the essence of the thing and its material equivalent. However, the meaning of value did not stop at this concept, but exceeded it to include the moral value of things or abstract concepts. These are the values that various human and social sciences have been interested in, as they study the status of social, cultural, religious, psychological, and other values that appraise the essence of different behaviors, since they highlight personal or collective qualities and characteristics that represent a reference for the mental principles that grant the individual or the social group its values.

Researchers in philosophy, sociology, and anthropology have distinguished between values (**valeurs**), norms (**normes**), and social facts (**faits sociaux**). Values, as we previously indicated, refer to those mental principles that distinguish an individual from others or a social group from others to generate a sense of belonging to a specific identity. Social norms, in contrast, refer to those customary or legal rules that were set arbitrarily to organize societies and manage their affairs to avoid chaos and social transgressions. Accordingly, it is clear that values tend more to be personal and subjective, while norms are characterized more by objectivity and sociality.

Meanwhile, **Max Weber** distinguished the social action from both social values and norms, as he considers social action a group of objective behaviors that can be observed and measured in social reality. Weber confirmed in the same context that social actions are inevitably influenced by social values and norms, as social action represents the embodiment of values and norms in an observable and tangible way (Heinich, 2006, p296).

For this reason, a type of conflict is generated between these values, norms, and social actions characterizing human life, where virtuous values conflict with vices, and strict norms clash with lenient ones. This leads to the collision of desirable and shunned social actions that, in turn, affect human existence. The subject of the conflict of values has formed a pivot of debate for researchers in psychology and philosophy, where **Jean-Paul Sartre** clarified the extent to which the opposition and conflict of values contribute to forming human experiences. Add to that what behaviorists have explained about the relationship of internal conflict with the daily behaviors of the individual.

Conflict of values in our study refers to the total of opposing human values contained in the material of analysis, considering them conflicting values that fill human existence and justify the continuation of its entity.

## **2. Philosophy of Existence and the Conflict of Values in the Poetic Conception of "Lounis Ait Menguellet":**

Through this axis, we will attempt to analyze the poetic signs of the study sample in order to reveal the intellectual conception of the Algerian poet "Lounis Ait Menguellet" regarding existence and the issue of the conflict of values in human life, starting from the methodological reliance on the approach of denotation and connotation of "Roland Barthes" in reading and deconstructing poetic texts, and the ethics approach of "Aristotle," and the ideas of "Jean-Paul Sartre" about existence to understand the meanings of the signifiers expressing the subject of the study.

### **2.1. The Existential Thought of the Poet "Ait Menguellet" through the Analysis of the Poem "The Conflict" (Amennuy):**

This element includes the semio-philosophical analysis of the poetic signs of the poem "The Conflict" in order to dive into the intellectual contents indicating existential thought based on the following:

- **Original Text of the Poem "The Conflict" (Amennuy):**

Tafegrit tamezwarut

d as amenzu deg ddunit

S ilebħar yefyed lħut

yufa-d iħig iqubl-it

Kulči yur-s d amaynut

ilaħq-ed gma-s yetwali-t

I barrez yef gma-s yeyli

yeččat uqbel ad disuy

Ur zriy ara ačimi

lamaeni as ni id yebda umenny

Imuqel læbd iman-is

yeswahm-it wayen iwala

Yesteqsa-y deg allay-is

anda iteddu ansi id yekka

Aken attyefru d array-is

aken ad iqabel azekka

Yarfed allen is s igenni

yenna-as yisek ar alḥuy

Ur zriy ara ačimi

lamaeni as ni id yebda umennuy

Tekker tmurt yer tayed

tenna –as ad imyur-ay

Akal-im ar d it ġġeḍ

mulač yid-m ar d nayay

Iman-im ur tezmired

yef lsas ar akem hudd-ay

Akal-im ilaq iyi

snay amek ar at bnuy

Ur zriy ara ačimi

lamaeni as ni id yebda umennuy

La tnadin yef tsarutt

tawurt weread it ufin

Čeylen ma ad telhu tefsut

nitni deg agris yellin

Wa yenna t̥hebbiren i lqut  
wa yenna mbaeid i twalin  
Yuɣal kul wa amek itwali  
gar asen lefhama tluy  
Ur zriɣ ara ačimi  
lamaeni as ni id yebda umennuy  
Baba-s aken id yelli imi-is  
mis yuzel ad yay awal  
Iḥebsit-id ččix-is  
yenna-as aha uɣal  
Inas ibaba-k unḥis  
mači aka i teddunt temsal  
Ma d it čiyæ-ɖ čiwɛr i y-id  
ma d agi-ɣ naɣ ad byuy  
Ur zriɣ ara ačimi  
lamaeni as ni id yebda umennuy  
Farqen larzaq w atmaten  
kul yiwen yelha w ayla-s  
Yeker-d umeqran deg-sen  
yer umecṭuḥ d ulemmas  
S laemar-iw ugar-aɣ ken  
lamer-iw yesɛa suma-s  
Ugar aɣ ken deg tmusni  
ak n agar-aɣ d aču ar aɣuy  
Ur zriɣ ara ačimi  
lamaeni as ni id yebda umennuy

As m ar atexlu dunnit  
kuleč ad yenger deg lqaæa  
Ur d tettili t fejrīt  
suq n tudert yefra  
S kra igellān ulač-it  
amzun deg laæmer ur d yella  
Aneggaru ma yeyli  
ad yini wi yef ar arfuy  
Ur zriy ara ačimi  
lamaæni as ni ad yekfu umennuy

(Ait Menguellet, Amennuy, 2010)

- **Translation of the Original Text of the Poem "The Conflict"**

**The first dawn It was the first day in the world  
From the sea, a fish emerged and found the sun facing it  
Everything to it was new  
its brother arrived and it saw him  
It attacked its brother, who fell;  
it ate him before he could scream  
I do not know why  
But that day was the beginning of the conflict.  
The human contemplated himself  
and was amazed by what he saw  
He questioned within his mind  
where he was going and from where he came  
So that his decision would be settled**

on how to face tomorrow

He raised his eyes to the sky

and said: By you, I am guided

I do not know why

But that day was the beginning of the conflict.

One land rose against another

and said: I shall become greater than you

You shall concede your territory,

or else I will fight you

By yourself, you are unable;

I will demolish you to your foundations

Your lands suit me;

I know how I shall build them

I do not know why

But that day was the beginning of the conflict.

They search for the key,

while the door is still missing

They occupied themselves with whether spring would be good,

while they fall in the frost

Some said they worry about food,

and some said they look from afar

Each has a perspective;

among them, understanding became murky

I do not know why

But that day was the beginning of the conflict.

The father had just spoken  
when the son ran to obey  
His teacher stopped him  
and told him: Hey, come back  
Tell your arrogant father:  
This is not how things go  
If you are sent, consult me,  
whether I refuse or accept  
I do not know why  
But that day was the beginning of the conflict.  
The brothers divided the livelihoods,  
and each took his share  
The eldest among them rose  
against the youngest and the middle one  
By my age, I am greater than you;  
my command has its price  
I surpass you in knowledge,  
and thus my portion shall be larger  
I do not know why  
But that day was the beginning of the conflict.  
On the day the world becomes empty,  
everything on the ground will perish  
There will be no dawn;  
the market of life is over  
All that existed is gone,

as if it never was

The last one to fall will say:

At whom shall I be angry?

I do not know why

But that day the conflict will end.

(Researcher's personal translation)

- **Semio-philosophical analysis of the issue of existence in the poem "The Conflict":**

Before delving into the analysis of the subject of existence and the conflict of existents, it is worth starting from the title of the poem "**The Conflict**", as it represents a reference to the content of the poem. The poet titled his poetic text with the word "conflict" to indicate that the content of the poem suggests opposition, difference, and human or non-human quarreling. The title of the poem under analysis is a verbal symbol that refers to the instability of existents in existence as a result of difference and opposition.

We will try to dive deeper into these meanings during the denotative and connotative analysis of this poem. The poet began in the first section of his poem by describing the beginning of existence, depicting it poetically in the form of a myth telling the story of the first existents. The events of this poetic myth start with the emergence of the fish from the sea on the first morning of the first day in the world, to find the sun observing it, along with the rest of the contents of existence that are unfamiliar to this creature. However, it glimpsed its brother coming toward it and pounced on him before even hearing his voice. The poet concluded his section by stating that this incident represents the beginning of the conflict.

If we try to contemplate more the implicit meanings of the poetic signs of this section, we will find that the poet simulates existence; the emergence of the fish from the sea and finding the rest of the existents observing it is an indication of the birth of a living being into existence that was waiting for him. The poet used the phrase "found the sun facing [him]" to indicate that this creature (the fish) came after existence. The contemplation of this creature of the contents of existence, including his brother heading toward him, suggests a process of exploring a new space that the fish was not accustomed to. Then, the poet shows the fish devouring his brother as a natural case for living beings in the struggle for living, continuity, and survival in this existence. We notice during this analysis the meeting of the ideas of the Algerian poet "Ait Menguellet" with the ideas of the French philosopher "Jean-Paul Sartre" regarding the issue of existence in the idea that existence precedes essence ("**l'existence précède l'essence** "). This is shown in what the poet depicted: that the being exists first, and through his contemplation of existents, he acquires consciousness and possesses traits that he executes to reach goals.

This idea was supported in the second section of the poem, where the poet described the state of the human contemplating existence while being amazed by the story of the fish, questioning his mind about his origins and destiny, to be able thereby

to plan for the future, which is only achieved by seeking height and transcendence—a value that only comes through conflict. The contents of these poetic signs in this section reveal that human existence was in proximity to the events of the poetic myth with which the poet opened his poem. Man is a rational being, contemplating and aware of existence, thinking in an abstract way about his existence, questioning his self and his mind searching for his origins and worrying about his mysterious future, as man in turn seeks to improve it to reach a cheerful and happy life, because the human being is free and responsible. The poet expressed this idea through the poetic line:

**"He raised his eyes to the sky... and said: By you, I am guided"**

Raising the eyes upward is a verbal symbol used by the poet to indicate soaring from afar; he indicated through this symbol that the human being is free in making decisions and executing them for his future destiny. It is clear here that these ideas intersect with the ideas of existential philosophy, which assumes that man is pervaded by anxiety about his future and, thanks to his free will, seeks to improve it.

The poet moved in the third and fourth sections of the poem to draw a mental image of the conflict that prevails among nations for expansion and influence, as this is achieved by powerful nations seizing weak ones and erasing them from existence. The poet confirms through this depiction that in the case of intensifying conflict, both parties search for solutions and an outlet at a time when exits are lost. The poet depicted these ideas in a deep rhetorical style; the metonymy "searching for the key in the absence of the door" expressed solutions in the midst of fierce wars. The metaphors: "the beauty of spring" and "falling in the frost" expressed the state of soldiers on the battlefield who hope and aspire for the end of the war while they fall dead. The poet adds in this context that there are groups of humans who differ and conflict over events: some maintain neutrality, some disturb negotiations so that solutions are not reached, and some gather around the morsel of bread they barely obtain.

Through this analysis, one of the characteristics of existential philosophy manifests, represented in what researchers in this field call absurdity ("**I'absurde**"). This is embodied in what the poet presented regarding the desires of nations for expansion and greatness, fighting bloody wars, destruction and dispersion, the spread of famines and epidemics, the failure of negotiations, and the absence of solutions that satisfy the conflicting parties. All these issues represent negative results that ensued from the starting point of the desire for greatness, which inevitably leads to decline, decay, and destruction. They are absurd ideas depicted by "Ait Menguellet" to express the transformation of the desire for growth and expansion into disappearance and vanishing, leaving behind anxiety, despair, sadness, and death.

The poet dedicated the fifth and sixth sections of the poem 'The Conflict' to depicting the human nature of individuals that stems from intellectual acquisitions and psychological feelings that prove the self-existence of individuals. The fifth section showed parental authority over children, and the authority of the learned over the unlearned; just as the authority of the eldest brother over the rest of the brothers became clear in the sixth section. These poetic codes were employed to express the individual's view of the 'other' (**I'autrui**), as humans are characterized by individual differences that make them distinct and different, and consequently, individuals deal on the basis of these differences. The poet clearly declared, through his poetic symbols, the individual's

view of the other, which is built on the values and authority the individual acquires to impose his existence on the other. This is manifested through the poetic images reflecting the relationship of the father with the son based on command and obedience, the relationship of the eldest brother with the rest of the brothers based on overcoming and control by virtue of power and influence, in addition to the relationship of the learned with the ignorant based on arrogance and contempt by virtue of superiority in knowledge.

These mental images represent an iconic representation of human existence and human nature, which is based on self-assertion and the imposition of existence; this is done through psychological and social practices upon which the individual relies to achieve himself and his goals at the same time. This often makes the individual characterized by bad faith or bad suspicion of the other (**la mauvaise foi**); accordingly, the individual removes whoever hinders him from reaching his goal in daily psychological and social life.

'Lounis Ait Menguellet' concluded his poetic text with the idea of the end of the universe or existence, as he indicated in his saying:

**“The day the world becomes empty... everything on earth will perish.”**

He indicated therein that all existents on the face of the earth will inevitably lead to disappearance and non-existence; there will be no morning, the theater of life ends, and after it, the conflict vanishes. This declaration refers to the fact that existence has its destiny determined toward the end and extinction; it is the vision confirmed by the philosophers of existence in the idea of nihilism (**Nihilisme**), meaning that the end of all existents consists in non-existence. The poet depicted this idea in the annihilation of existence, the end of life, and the absence of all existents on the face of the earth; this will inevitably lead to the human conflict losing its meaning, for there will be no existence for the conflicting parties nor goals for the conflict, to further embody the idea of absurdity with nihilism. The poet proved that every struggle of the individual to prove himself—control and influence, power and greatness, contempt and belittlement—ends in disappearance, nothingness, extinction, and decay. The poet emphasized here the trinity of human life that starts from existence, then conflict, then nothingness; it is a trinity that reflects the ideas of the existential movement.

## **2.2. The Value-based Thought of the Poet 'Lounis Ait Menguellet' through the Semio-philosophical Analysis of the Poem 'From Falsehood to Truth':**

After we addressed in the previous element the analysis of existential thought and the conflict of existents according to the poet 'Ait Menguellet', we will attempt to analyze the process of the human value system according to his perspective through the analysis of the poem 'Truth and Falsehood' as follows:"

Lekteb yurew-d lbaɛel

Lbaɛel d baba-s n lxuf

Lxuf yurew-d turrugza

Turrugza t yelbiten yak

Tirruga tesse-a-d tidett  
Tidett m ar atawed lhed-is  
Ad tesseu lekdeb d mmi-s  
Lekdeb yurw-d lbatel  
Lbatel d baba-s n lxuf  
Lxuf yurew-d tirrugza  
Tirruga t yelbiten yak  
Aka I la tbarren ddunnit  
Lekdeb m idyurew lbatel  
I sarrah-as ad yisserwet  
Yuwal yekkat ur yettwet  
Amkan yef igeedda icebbel  
Lbatel iseggem ussan-is  
Snent yuear d amencuf  
Muhab ula d laxyal-is  
Armi d as m id yurew lxuf  
Lxuf d mmi-s n lbatel  
Yettaqad baba-s atas  
Imuqel amek ar atyeydel  
Yese-a-d tirrugza m tissas  
Tirugza tegra-d wahd-s  
Baba-s yemmut m idetlul  
Sked anwa ig farhen yis  
Byan di ddunit atdul  
Tluled tidett yur-s

M id tlul byan-tt marra  
D yemma-s i yefarhen yes  
Trennu-as d ilqima  
Tidett m itesla I tayri  
Iteyri n ged n gedd-is  
Ma yella a t-id-temekti  
Ad ilal deg idisan-is

(Ait Menguellet, Si lekteb yer tidett, 1981)

• Translation of the Original Text of the Poem "'From Falsehood to Truth"

|                                                              |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>Falsehood gave birth to injustice</b>                     | <b>Injustice is the father of fear</b>   |
| <b>Fear gave birth to manliness<br/>indeed</b>               | <b>Manliness surpassed them all,</b>     |
| <b>Manliness gave birth to truth</b>                         | <b>When truth reaches its limit</b>      |
| <b>It will have falsehood as its son</b>                     | <b>Falsehood gave birth to injustice</b> |
| <b>Injustice is the father of fear</b>                       | <b>Fear gave birth to manliness</b>      |
| <b>Manliness surpassed them all, indeed</b>                  | <b>This is how the world turns</b>       |
| <b>When falsehood gave birth to injustice</b>                | <b>It gave it free rein</b>              |
| <b>It began to strike without being struck<br/>prevailed</b> | <b>Wherever it passed, chaos</b>         |
| <b>Injustice settled its days</b>                            | <b>Known for a reputation of misery</b>  |
| <b>Even its shadow is dreaded</b>                            | <b>Until fear was born</b>               |
| <b>Fear is the child of injustice</b>                        | <b>It dreads its father greatly</b>      |
| <b>It looked for a way to topple him<br/>manliness</b>       | <b>So it gave birth to valiant</b>       |
| <b>Manliness was left alone</b>                              | <b>Its father died at its birth</b>      |
| <b>Look who rejoiced in it<br/>world</b>                     | <b>Hoping for its permanence in the</b>  |
| <b>Truth was born to it<br/>wanted it</b>                    | <b>When it was born, everyone</b>        |

It was its mother who rejoiced in it

Increasing its status and rank

When truth heard the call

The call of its grandfathers

If it remembers them

It will be born at its sides

(Researcher's personal translation)

• **Semio-philosophical Analysis of the Sequence of Values according to the Poem "From Falsehood to Truth":**

We begin this analysis with the title of the poem **"From Falsehood to Truth"**, as it is composed of two opposite, antithetical, and conflicting words. The poet "Ait Menguellet" intended to title his poetic text with this value-based antithesis to refer to two common values in human life, namely: **"Falsehood (lekdeb)"** and **"Truth (tidett)"**; the first is a vice (**vice**) and the second is a virtue (**vertus**). Thus, this title suggests what ensues from these two values in terms of other values, as "Falsehood" and "Truth" represent a ground for the flow of virtuous and vice-ridden values that conflict in human life, starting from falsehood and sequencing until reaching truth.

The idea becomes clearer if we read behind the poetic symbols of the poem under analysis, where the poet provided a report on the sequence of values in human life. He placed in the first ring of this chain the trait of "Falsehood," which, if it prevails among individuals, gives birth to "Injustice." The repeated practice of this vice will necessarily lead to the spread of "Fear" among individuals. Fear in humans always generates the desire for self-defense and self-assertion under the banner of courage, honor, sanctity, and freedom... these are the values that "Ait Menguellet" collected in the term **"Manliness (tirruga)"**, as it represents in Kabyle society the highest and greatest of values, due to the virtues that stem from it, such as **"Truth (tidett)"**, as it is a value inseparable from manliness. However, the poet indicated that the state of reaching the peak of truth or exceeding its limit will turn into its opposite, and falsehood will be born anew.

This agreed with what the Greek philosopher **"Aristotle"** confirmed: that excess in a certain value will turn into a vice. Here, the thought of the Algerian poet "Lounis Ait Menguellet" meets with Aristotelian thought in the poet's declaration that exaggeration in truth will lead to a vice that generates a chain of vices. We notice within this analyzed pattern a dense and deep poetic rhetoric, where the poet intended to personify abstractions to depict the chain of values in human life to strengthen and clarify the meaning in the mind of the recipient, relying on several kinship terms such as father, mother, son, birth, death... to express the excess in values. The birth of injustice and oppression from falsehood and slander are hated vices among individuals, as they are sources for the spread of terror, fear, and instability. The poet presented a depiction of the birth of manliness from fear and the death of the latter (fear) with its (manliness) birth. That is a poetic image eloquent in expressing what Aristotle called **"deficiency (défaut)"**; for the individual's commitment to manliness and gallantry means the total abandonment of fear. The poet confirmed here the impossibility of the presence of the value of manliness with any of the vices such as fear, injustice, falsehood... even though the birth of this virtue (manliness) resulted from the excess in these vices, the

permanence of this virtue requires the deficiency (abandonment) of all vice-ridden values.

It appears through this analysis that the poet "Ait Menguellet" meets with Aristotelian thought on the issue of ethics, specifically in the idea of **excess and deficiency**. Excess in a certain value leads to its opposite, and the abandonment or deficiency in another value proves its reverse. This is what explains the process of values in human life that rotate according to situations and circumstances. According to the Algerian poet "Lounis Ait Menguellet," excess in falsehood, injustice, and fear (vices) leads to the emergence of the values of manliness and truth (virtues), and the deficiency (abandonment) of these vices ensures the permanence of virtues. Conversely, excess in manliness and truth (virtues) leads to the absence of falsehood, injustice, and fear (vices).

### **2.3. Conflict of Values from the Perspective of the Poet "Ait Menguellet" according to the Semio-philosophical Analysis of the Poem "The Meeting" (Anejmaε):**

Through this element, we will attempt to deconstruct the semantic structure of the poem "The Meeting," through which the poet "Ait Menguellet" presented the state of the value system in human life, according to the semio-philosophical approach selected for analysis, as follows:

- **Original Text of the Poem "Anejmaε":**

D as unegmaε

s ubarraḥ id yessawel

Wḍen-d marra

inṭeq-d deg sen laεqel

A nessiwel I lḥeq yak tidett tezdeg d lferḥ

siwa netni ar ad neqbel

Yewweḍ-d lḥaq

I tebeit-id lbaṭel

Yugi as yeḍlaq

nek yid-k ar neddukel

Lamer ur lliy ur tettiliḍ lamer ur telliḍ

rwaḥ-iw yar da yebṭel

Tewweḍ-d tidett

lekdeb yedda-d d uḍar-is

Yak akken I ntett  
wa ar aysemḥen deg warfiq-is  
Yes a yelli-γ tella yissi kul ma ateyli  
ttaṭafay-d amḍiq-is  
Yewwed-d laḥzen  
yesles-d i lfarḥ abarnus  
Aken I dduklen  
tezdeg tettas-d s wammus  
Akken i ttilin aken I ttyimin aken i ttwalin  
wa ur yetta-k deg wayeḍ afus  
Ahya alēeqqal  
sefrutay-d anegmaε  
Yekfa wawal  
iban-d lhal aken yella  
Tugi-m lekdeb yak d lbaṭel tugim ammus  
llan yak deg wen marra

**Ait Menguellet, Anejmaε, 1981**

• **Translation of the Original Text of the Poem "The Meeting"**

|                                                        |                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>The day of the meeting,</b>                         | <b>everyone responded</b>                     |
| <b>The herald called,</b>                              | <b>and the mind (reason) speaks</b>           |
| <b>We shall call for Right, Truth, Purity, and Joy</b> | <b>We will not accept anything but</b>        |
| <b>these.</b>                                          |                                               |
| <b>The Right arrived,</b>                              | <b>but Injustice refused to leave it</b>      |
| <b>It followed it</b>                                  | <b>You and I are companions</b>               |
| <b>If it weren't for me, you wouldn't be;</b>          | <b>if it weren't for you My presence here</b> |
| <b>would be void.</b>                                  |                                               |

Truth arrived, and Falsehood followed in its footsteps

For both of us have the same food Indeed, as we eat: who would let go of his companion?

I am in it, and it is in me whenever it falls, I take its place.

Sadness arrived and dressed Joy in a burnous

They are in commitment no purity exists without defilement

They are all in a continuous meeting they have the same assembly

O wise ones, solve this for us

The words are finished the situation has appeared as it is

You rejected Falsehood and Injustice, you rejected defilement

Yet they are all present within you.

(Researcher's personal translation)

- **Semio-philosophical Analysis of the Conflict of Values according to the Poem "The Meeting":**

We begin this analysis by attempting to decode the title of the poem, which came in a single word, "**The Meeting**" (**Anejmaε**), as a verbal code indicating the gathering of certain elements to achieve a specific purpose. The poet titled his poem "The Meeting" to suggest the existence of an issue or a problem that requires a meeting to find appropriate solutions with the presence of all concerned elements, noting that pending and complex issues are only resolved by the presence and dialogue of all parties. Accordingly, the poem's title "The Meeting" refers to a problem or an emergency case that requires solutions.

The idea becomes clearer if we dive into the implicit meanings of the poetic signs through which "Ait Menguellet" expressed the meeting of human values under the leadership of the **Mind (Reason)**, which called for and demanded the presence of virtuous values such as Truth, Right, Purity, and Joy... emphasizing that there is no acceptance except for such values. However, the poet showed in his poem the reality of human life, which is dominated by conflict and opposition. The human mind's summoning of virtuous values only was not achieved; this is due to the nature of human life built on contradictions and conflict.

Virtuous and vice-ridden values are in constant conflict; joys have always accompanied sorrows, falsehood has taken the place of truth, injustice has settled where right is absent, and there is no purity without the defilement that necessitates purification. The poet concluded his poem with a definitive summary in which he acknowledges the reality of life for humans, which is built on noble rational judgments and what the human conscience dictates of virtuous values on one hand, and on the

whims of the human soul that controls man and pushes him toward vices to achieve goals and pleasures on the other hand. Such as resorting to falsehood, injustice, and slander... vice-ridden values that the human mind rejects. Thus, the values imposed by the latter [the mind] conflict with the values dictated by the human soul, and thereby the conflict of values occurs between **vices** and **virtues**.

"According to this thought, the absence of mediating values that limit the extreme conflict of values is evident—a concept established by the philosopher 'Aristotle' and which we revealed in the analysis of the second poem of this study's sample. Where the poet 'Ait Menguellet' presented a mental depiction of the conflict of human values in an oppositional, symmetrical, and parallel manner. This depiction does not accept any mediator; the opposition of joy with sadness, the contradiction of falsehood with truth, the difference of slander from right, and the parallelism of purity with defilement are a schema illustrating the impossibility of these values meeting. The existence of the first value means the absence of the second, and the existence of the second value negates the existence of the first. This is what made the poet 'Ait Menguellet' show that human life is founded on mental and psychological contradictions that generate a continuous and permanent conflict between values, a matter that reflects the good and evil side of man, as he is a body carrying the mind and the soul, which impose different values that conflict and contradict throughout human life.

We notice through this analysis the meeting of 'Ait Menguellet's' thought with the perspective of 'Plato' in the basic ideas of the Theory of Forms (théorie des formes/idées), where he presented an abstract image of eternal, everlasting truths stemming from an intellectual essence that represents the core of man that distinguishes him from the rest of existents. All virtuous values such as justice, goodness, beauty... according to 'Plato' are forms or intelligibles, contrary to what exists in the sensory world of corruption and perishing embodied by human practices of vices. This idea was embodied in the poem 'The Meeting,' which we subjected to analysis, through what the poet 'Ait Menguellet' depicted as the human mind leading the value system to impose noble values and reject vice. The human mind, according to 'Ait Menguellet', is like the wise one who does not accept vices, but rather seeks to teach man ideal, pure, and noble values to form a cheerful and happy world. However, the poet in his poem proved that human nature based on the judgments of the mind and the soul does not allow for the existence of this pure world alone, but rather there is a parallel world; for every ideal value, there is an opposing value that contradicts and clashes with it. Accordingly, two value systems are formed that characterize human life: the system of high values sought by the mind, and the system of base values rejected by the latter, as human nature contains these two systems that conflict continuously throughout human existence."

## **II. Results and discussion :**

After the semio-philosophical analysis of the idea of existence and the issue of the conflict of human values in the thoughts of the Algerian poet "Lounis Ait Menguellet" through a poetic sample formed of three poems: "The Conflict," "The Meeting," and "From Falsehood to Truth," we reached a set of results, the most important of which are:

- The ideas of the Algerian poet "Lounis Ait Menguellet" met with the ideas of the French philosopher "Jean-Paul Sartre" in the idea: "existence precedes essence." This is

in what the poet depicted that the being exists first, and through his contemplation of existents, he acquires consciousness and possesses traits that he executes to reach goals.

- The semio-philosophical analysis proved that the Algerian poet "Ait Menguellet" indicated that man is free and responsible, aware of his existence, and bears responsibility for his actions.

- The poet "Ait Menguellet" depicted absurd ideas to express the transformation of the desire for growth and expansion into disappearance and vanishing, leaving behind anxiety, despair, sadness, and death.

- We reached through the study that the natural existence of man shapes his view of the "other" according to what is consistent with his self, and the individual acquires "bad suspicion" (distrust) in cases opposing his goals.

- It became clear through the semio-philosophical analysis of the study sample that the poet has proved that every struggle of the individual for self-assertion, control and influence, power and greatness, contempt and belittlement, ends in disappearance, nothingness, extinction, and decay.

- It appears through this analysis that the poet "Ait Menguellet" meets with Aristotelian thought in the issue of ethics, specifically in the idea of "excess and deficiency." According to the Algerian poet, excess in falsehood, injustice, and fear (vices) leads to the emergence of values of manliness and truth (virtues), and the deficiency (abandonment) of these vices ensures the permanence of virtues. Meanwhile, excess in manliness and truth (virtues) leads to the absence of falsehood, injustice, and fear (vices).

- The material of analysis proved that the poet "Ait Menguellet" indicated that human nature, based on the judgments of the mind and the soul, does not allow for the existence of a purely pure world; rather, there is a parallel world. For every ideal value, there is an opposing value that contradicts and clashes with it. This is what contradicts Platonic thought, which acknowledges the existence of a world of forms (ideals), pure and absolute, different from the defiled sensory world.

### III. Conclusion:

This research addressed the subject of the philosophy of existence and the conflict of values in a sample from the collection of the Algerian poet "Lounis Ait Menguellet" according to a semio-philosophical approach. We reached a fundamental idea stating that the intellectual principles of the philosophy of existence are present par excellence in the poet's perspective. The analysis of the poem "The Conflict" (Amennuy) proved that man's existence precedes his essence or nature; he is aware of himself after his existence and feels his freedom and responsibility simultaneously. This matter makes him anxious about his future, so man takes the available means to ensure the continuation of his existence, which leads the latter to "bad suspicion" of the other. The study added in the same context that the poet "Ait Menguellet" has insisted in his poetry on the idea of absurdity and nihilism through his poetic depiction of wars, quarreling, contempt, annihilation, and extinction... all of which are states that characterize human endeavors, according to "Ait Menguellet," with naivety and absurdity, as they inevitably lead to the end and vanishing.

The study sample selected for analysis showed that "Ait Menguellet" referred to the reality of human existence, which is characterized by mental and psychological values and norms that create ethics. The poet confirmed in the poems "The Meeting" and "From Falsehood to Truth" that human values are sequenced in the entity and conflicting for dominance. This means that the birth of human values is continuously sequential by virtue of the human mind and soul; the strength of a certain value gives

birth to another value, and the weakness or absence of a value allows room for the emergence of a value that is contradictory and opposing to it. Thus, human values conflict between what the mind accepts as virtues and what the latter rejects as being among the vices.

Accordingly, it can be said that the Algerian poet "Lounis Ait Menguellet" has presented mental images in his poetry about human existence, which is characterized, on one hand, by the noble endeavors and values of man that he commits to in order to achieve comfort and happiness, according to the virtues accepted by the mind as it represents the wise side in man. On the other hand, according to the poet, existence is characterized by the whims of the human soul that does not care for the judgments of the mind and takes values contradictory to rational judgments to achieve desires; thus, the conflict intensifies between the values of the mind and the whims of the soul.

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