

**The Structure of the Text and the Creation of New Worlds in
AlawaKoussa's Novel "Belqis, the Lament of the End of the Night"**

Ridha ZOUARI

Echahid Cheikh Larbi Tebessi University - Tebessa (Algeria)

ridha.zouari@univ-tebessa.dz

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Abstract:

This research delves into the structure of the text and the creation of new worlds in the novel "Balqis: A Requiem at the End of the Night" by AlawaKoussa, with a focus on language as the cornerstone of the narrative work and how the writer used it to create a unique and distinct linguistic world. It also explores the use of the Syrian dialect, the deviation of language, the language's dialogic nature between dialogue and monologue, the condensed text and the intersection of texts, the use of symbolism, and the technique of repetition.

The study revealed that AlawaKoussa used language in innovative ways to enrich the text and create new worlds, as it was not limited to the use of poetic language in the novel but went beyond that to employ the Syrian dialect, albeit in a limited way, to add a touch of realism and linguistic diversity. The novel was also characterized by the language's dialogic nature between dialogue and monologue, where external and internal dialogue was used to express the characters' thoughts and feelings. In addition, the writer relied on the technique of intertextuality intensively, drawing inspiration from various sources, religious, historical, and literary, and reformatting them in a creative way. Symbolism and the technique of repetition were also used to express the hidden aspects of his characters and their thoughts.

Keywords: Balqis, Requiem, End of the Night, Poetic Language, Intertextuality.

- 1Introduction :

The novel *Balqis Weeps at Midnight* by author AlawaKoussa is a unique literary work that embodies a bold experimental vision within the realm of contemporary Arabic fiction. In this work, the author transcends the boundaries of traditional narrative, drawing us into overlapping worlds that break familiar rules and draw on poetry and intertextuality to create aesthetic and structural elements that open the text to new horizons .

This literary work raises fundamental questions about the nature of textual structure and the creation of new worlds, as well as the limits of language in expressing inner and outer worlds. How did AlawaKoussa manage to blend poetry and narrative into a single fictional fabric? What implications does this stylistic diversity carry? And how did poetic language contribute to constructing the novel's worlds and shaping its artistic vision ?

2 -The Structure of Language and the Creation of New Worlds:

Language is considered the cornerstone of the novel; it is the foundation upon which all other elements rest: time and place, the narration of events, dialogue

between characters, and the details of the setting in which the story unfolds. Through language, events unfold, characters take shape, and the contours of the world the author depicts become clear. In contemporary fiction, which seeks renewal and change, writers pay particular attention to language, using it skilfully to shape new and innovative worlds. This is precisely what AlawaKoussa has done masterfully in his novel; he has not merely used language as a means of expressing ideas, but has made it a tool for creating a distinct and unique linguistic world. He has succeeded in taking language beyond its traditional boundaries and endowing it with new dimensions, making his novel a unique and distinctive experience, as it is "closely linked to humanity and its environment; it reveals human society as it truly is. Language is not merely a bond between members of a single society, but rather a vital factor in the cohesion between generations and the transmission of cultures across the ages"¹. In the novel, language has transcended its traditional role as a tool of expression and has become a fundamental element in shaping the fictional work. As the novel has evolved, language has shifted from being merely a means of conveying events to a methodology, a philosophy and a style, used to depict reality and embody the various issues and problems afflicting society, becoming capable of accurately and profoundly mirroring societies. In the novel **Balqis Weeps at Midnight**, we find that the language is simple and clear, free from complexity and ambiguity, making it accessible to all readers.

3 -The use of the Syrian dialect:

Although the novel is written in Classical Arabic, the use of certain words or phrases in the Syrian dialect, even if rare, carries significant connotations and contributes to the creation of new worlds within the text. The latter is: "A natural phenomenon found in all the languages of the world; from this perspective, colloquial language is a language created by the general public for their daily lives, and the proof of this is that it is the language of the home, the street, the market and society"². This is evident in the novel's use of the Syrian dialect, as seen in the lines: "- How are you, Balqis... - How are you, Gaib?"³, and also in her saying: "Hello, Si Badrou"⁴.

4- Linguistic innovation:

The stylistic diversity of the language is one of the most prominent features of the novel **Balqis Weeps at the End of the Night**, where AlawaKoussa employs language in innovative ways to enrich the text and create new worlds. This was not limited to the use of poetic language in the novel; he went further to employ the Syrian dialect, albeit to a limited extent, to add a touch of realism and linguistic diversity. John Cohen defined it as: "a departure from prose, in that he describes prose as the 'zero language' of writing"⁵.

A novel may require the use of poetic language to express feelings and ideas in a more profound and impactful manner. Poetic language is capable of penetrating the superficiality of prose and delving into the depths of the human experience, as "poetic language carries suggestive connotations that charge the reader with an emotional surge"⁶.

Since AlawaKoussa is first and foremost a poet, he has skilfully employed poetic language in his novel, making it a faithful interpreter of the feelings and concerns of his characters, such as Khalil and Balqis. This poetic language is evident in the description of Balqis's feelings towards Khalil in the passage mentioned, where it lends the text depth and beauty, and accurately reflects her innermost thoughts. He says: "You should have... remembered that you left me in a barren valley... in a place devoid of familiarity... Time is merciless... You left me with nothing but my memories"⁷. And among the passages that best embody the feelings of sorrow and grief that fill Balqis's heart, we find her words that express her deepest suffering:

"May what was between us live on Somewhere in between

Between the veins of hell... and two paradises "I have come, Khalil, in search of... the Beloved And his necklace... and two tears..."⁸. Among the passages conveying Khalil's feelings, his longing and yearning for his beloved Balqis, we find the following lines:

"I caught a glimpse of her at the far end of the hall, on the far right... and I was at the far end, on the far left...

We were alone...

... Your companion, a rose...

... and my companion a black shadow with a magazine

... and both from that city...

The place remains unchanged... and we – alone – are the ones who have changed..."⁹. In this passage, we reach the height of description and expression, where longing blends with everyday speech and poetic language in exquisite harmony. The longing and yearning for his beloved Balqis are embodied in this passage,

and the writer demonstrates his skill in describing emotions through the contrast in the physical locations of Khalil and Balqis, yet they are spiritually united in their oneness. The rose is used as a symbol of Balqis's beauty, whilst the 'black ghost in the magazine' reflects Khalil's sorrow, highlighting the contrast in their emotional experiences. The writer emphasises their belonging to the same city, which deepens their emotional bond, It highlights the idea of the permanence of place versus the transformation of the self, affirming that shared memories remain etched despite changing circumstances. The passage skilfully blends precise description with poetic language, using contrast to enhance meaning and highlight the depth of the emotional experience. The author has also employed poetic language in other passages of the novel, such as in the words of the protagonist Khalil, and he has also used poetry in the words of the protagonist Khalil:

"You come thirsty...

**And behind you the sound of rain... And in your pupils,
longing...**

And something of the hidden apparent"¹⁰

The author demonstrates a mastery of poetic language, not only in internal

monologues and symbolism, but also in the direct description of the characters' emotions, as seen in the protagonist Khalil's words: "You come thirsty... and behind you the sound of rain... and in your pupils, longing... and something of the hidden manifest." This passage, despite its brevity, condenses a poetic image rich in meaning. The word "thirsty" refers not only to physical thirst, but to a deep spiritual and emotional longing, whilst "the sound of rain" symbolises renewal, hope, or even the tears that follow this longing. As for the phrase "and in your pupils, longing... and something of the hidden within the visible", it highlights the depth of the repressed and hidden feelings that Balqis carries, which Khalil perceives through the look in her eyes. This intensive use of poetic language enriches the text, lending it emotional and aesthetic depth, and allowing the reader to engage with the characters on a deeper level, moving beyond simple descriptive narration to a sensory and intellectual experience

This poetry reveals the depth of Khalil's feelings towards Balqis, as the author excels at blending prose with poetry, lending the novel a unique beauty. Folk poetic language is a shared language within a single community, expressing their feelings and emotions through words and melodies. If words alone are capable of expressing what is in the heart, then the folk song adds another dimension to these feelings through melody, reflecting and embodying the thoughts of the community. The author has employed this type of poetic language in his novel, when Balqis was on the bus heading to the studio, and a mountain voice emanated from the radio, singing a folk song. This is expressed in his words:

Aneyemetaneye...

Theheartbeatsfaster...

Whenyouturnedaway,mylove...

Youtravelledandleftmealone...

...Evenifthewholeuniversecametome... Without you I remain alone..

Alone...alone..."11.

Longing and nostalgia are evoked in this passage through a folk song, which enhances the novel's realism and draws the reader closer to Balqis's simple life. The song—"Eyes met eyes... my heart beats faster... when you turned away, my love... you left and left me alone... even if the whole universe came to me... Without you I remain alone... alone... alone...", the intensity of the emotions Balqis experiences after her lover's departure. The moment their eyes meet, her heart beats faster, reflecting the depth of her attachment; then this love turns into a crushing loneliness, for even if the whole world were to surround her, his absence renders everything meaningless. This use of the folk song not only lends credibility to the novel, but creates a unique textual structure that touches the heartstrings and makes the characters seem as though they are of "flesh and blood". The folk song lends the novel an intense sense of realism; it brings us closer to Balqis's simple life and highlights her humility, thereby enhancing the novel's credibility and making it feel closer to reality, as if it were reflecting real events experienced by flesh-and-blood characters. This use of the folk song is an

innovation that creates new worlds and a unique textual structure.

5- **The dialogue between dialogue() and monologue:**

Dialogue is a central element of daily life, forming the basis of communication between people. Its role is no less significant in the novel, where it serves as a fundamental building block in its construction and presentation to the reader. This is because: "it is an important element that, together with narration and description, contributes to the construction of the fictional text, as dialogue constitutes an artistic part of a literary entity in which integrated literary elements are present"¹². We find it in every novel, and it is divided into two parts: internal dialogue and external dialogue

5-1 **External dialogue: (Dialogue):**

It is also called 'direct dialogue', in which two or more characters take turns speaking directly to one another, as this alternation is its defining procedural feature"¹³. Among the interesting dialogues between the two protagonists in the novel, we mention the following dialogue, which reveals important aspects of their characters and their relationship, and serves as an example of the author's ability to create moving and compelling dialogues:

"When did you arrive in this city?

Yesterday evening

Is this your first time here?

Yes, for the first time..."¹⁴. There is another passage in the novel between Khalil and Balqis where she says: "The new... ah... ah...

In the field of writing, of course... Ah... some poetry... perhaps

And what is this 'perhaps'?"¹⁵.

And similarly, the following exchange takes place between Pedro, the husband of Al-Mursami, and Balqis:

"Could you hand me the text, Professor? Yes, it is... I have it...

Is it a new text or an old one?

... from one of her most recent writings..."¹⁶.

As mentioned elsewhere in the exchange between the painter Zuleikha and Balqis in the following passage:

"Good morning, artist Ah... Have a lovely morning, O literary poetess... Or are you one of our own... I wish I were a painter... like you..."¹⁷

And in another exchange between the Governor Ali and Khalil, as seen in the following passage: **"Hello, Khalil... You've been away for a long time, my dear**
"Hello, Professor Ali... The studio has been missing you, my friend... You left us all alone... Why?"¹⁸

From the above, we can see the author's skill in employing direct external dialogue, where the exchanges between the characters highlight the depth of their relationships and reveal important aspects of their personalities. The first dialogue between Khalil and Balqis, "When did you arrive in this city?!" and "Yesterday... in the evening", right up to "Yes, for the first time by chance...", reveals the

spontaneous beginnings of their relationship and the role of chance in bringing them together. As for the second dialogue, "The new... ah... ah... in the field of writing, of course... ah... some poetic texts... Perhaps... and 'perhaps' this one?" reveals Khalil's interest in Balqis's writing, and hints at details—whether personal or emotional—behind her hesitation to reveal her work. In contrast, the dialogue between Pedro and Balqis, "Could you give me the text, Professor?" and "Yes, it's... with me... Is it a new text or an old one? ... From the latest I've written...", highlights a professional aspect of Balqis's life, revealing that she is a writer and that she has new works, which adds another dimension to her character. Generally speaking, these dialogues serve as windows into the characters' worlds, allowing the reader to understand their motivations and interactions, enriching the fabric of the novel and making it more vivid and realistic.

5-2 Internal Monologue:

In this dialogue, which is not without depth and reflection, the character addresses themselves, expressing their thoughts and feelings, whereby "gives the reader a sense of the author's hidden presence, and uses the perspective of the absent first person rather than that of the speaking first person" (19), and internal monologue is clearly evident in the novel **Balqis Weeps at the End of the Night**. The character of Balqis is also a central figure in the novel **Balqis Weeps at Midnight**, embodying feelings of longing, reproach and nostalgia through her internal dialogue with herself. In moments of loneliness and waiting, Balqis engages in profound conversations with herself, in which she reproaches herself for Khalil's absence and expresses her pain and loneliness. These feelings are evident in numerous passages throughout the novel, where the inner dialogue is interwoven with moving poetic language, lending the text depth and beauty, such as: "O Ibn Arabi... let me reproach you... just this once..."²⁰.

And in another passage, when she said:

"To whom have you left me, Khalil... and to whom have you entrusted me? I don't want you to answer I left you to your memories... and your wounds ... I took the clothes I made for you from my own wardrobe... and left..."²¹.

Internal dialogue also appears in Khalil's narrative, where he expresses his feelings and longing for Balqis through his soliloquy. This can be seen in the following passages: **"... Oh my friend... Fate has brought me here this evening... after a gruelling journey to the Eastern Station... and here I am entering the city you entered before me, laden with sorrow and bags of disappointment... I entered it having crossed bridges of longing suspended between my veins..."**²².

Elsewhere in the novel, the inner monologue is laden with pain and sorrow, as expressed by Balqis: **"I closed the windows of pain in my memory ... and I turned towards the open door of the hall ...and between the windows of my pain... and the hall door, the breeze of your face blew across the curtains of my mirror"**²³. It should be noted that internal dialogue, or monologue, is a powerful narrative device in the novel **Balqis Weeps at the End of the Night**, as

it gives the reader a sense of the author's hidden presence and reveals the depth of the characters' inner thoughts and feelings. The character of Balqis emerges as a central figure in this type of dialogue; through her soliloquies, she expresses longing, reproach and nostalgia for Khalil's absence, as in her words: "O son of Arab... let me reproach you... just this once...", and "To whom have you left me, Khalil... and to whom have you entrusted me?". This pain and loneliness are expressed in moving poetic language, adding depth and beauty to the text. The internal dialogue is not limited to Balqis alone, but also appears in Khalil, where he expresses his longing for Balqis in passages such as: "Oh my friend... Fate has led me here this evening... after a gruelling journey to the Eastern Station... and here I am entering the city you entered before me, laden with sorrow and bags of disappointment... I entered it having crossed bridges of longing suspended between my veins...". Balqis's monologue also reflects: "I closed the windows of pain in my memory.. I turned towards the open door of the hall... and between the windows of my pain... and the door of the hall, the breeze of your face blew across the curtains of my mirror" the extent of the pain she suffers despite her attempts to overcome it, confirming that this dialogue serves as windows into the characters' inner worlds, enriching the narrative and revealing the hidden layers of their emotions.

We also note in this novel the presence of a third narrator who describes the protagonists' feelings of torment, longing and anguish. This narrator writes and addresses future generations, saying: **"Mum, nobody knows me... But... it is my honour to write about you both for those who come who pass through these places of residence and travel"**²⁴ .

Elsewhere in the novel, the narrator laments the fate that has befallen the two parties, saying: **"... O my conscience, a moving yet still pain, you are one... You were two souls in one body... And two flutters in a single breast..."**²⁵ .

The expression of feelings and thoughts in the novel is not limited to dialogue in its two forms; rather, the author also employs silence as an effective expressive tool. This silence is manifested either directly through the word 'silence', or indirectly through the use of ellipses (...) to signify it. This can be observed in the following passages: **"... Here we are now, silent... stone... upon stone... and upon the hardness of our memory we engrave the facts"**²⁶ . Among the passages explicitly referring to silence, we find this excerpt: **".. Speech fell silent in the presence of speech"**²⁷ , and silence also appears in: **"... our silence together... and on the white page appeared something resembling two lines"**²⁸ .

Silence is also considered another language in the novel, expressing many feelings and thoughts that words alone cannot convey. This silence is represented by ellipses (...) in numerous places, including: **"I will read a text entitled: The Neighbourhood Fortune-Teller**

..... ?

..... ?

..... ???!

.....?

And they clapped

.....?

.....?"29.

Silence in the contemporary novel is considered an innovation unknown to classical novels. This trend may reflect a scarcity of events or pages, but at the same time it is regarded as a new style on which the writer focuses in his narrative.

6 -Condensedtextandintertextuality:

Julia Kristeva drew inspiration for the concept of intertextuality from the works of her Russian professor Mikhail Bakhtin, who: **“coined the term ‘ideologeme’, which Kristeva termed the ‘multiple voice’ and defined as an intersection within the text of expression taken from other texts”**³⁰. The reader finds it difficult to understand the new text because of this intersection between texts. They are compelled to return to the previous texts in order to decipher the new text; hence, **“the reader’s role is decisive in this regard, as they explore the absent text and evoke it within the present text”**³¹.

In his novel **Balqis**, AlawaKoussa made extensive use of the technique of intertextuality, drawing inspiration from various religious, historical and literary sources and reworking them creatively. This intertextuality has added depth and richness to the novel, inviting the reader to engage with it and search for the origins of the intertextual sources. Koussa succeeded in striking a balance between authenticity and modernity, as he did not merely reproduce previous texts, but reworked them in a manner befitting the spirit of the age.

6- 1.IntertextualityfromtheHolyQur’an:

AlawaKoussa’s clear influence by the language and meanings of the Holy Qur’an is evident, as he implicitly quotes from it in his novel **Balqis** without directly citing the verse. This technique is considered a hallmark of innovation in contemporary fiction, lending the text depth and resonance. This is evident in his statement: **“Which neither fattens from disappointment nor enriches from ruin!!!”**³², as there is an intertextual reference to the Qur’anic verse in which God says: **“It neither fattens nor enriches from hunger”**³³. We also find another quotation in the novel in his statement: **“... we realised for just a few moments that we were alive in (Purgatory) and that we had to leave it for Paradise... so we said, perhaps...”**³⁴. This allusion is to the Qur’anic verse in which Allah says: **“Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds—for them are the Gardens of Paradise as a reward”**³⁵.

The quotation is also evident in the depiction of the planets at the end of the novel, where each planet carries its own particular feelings and sorrows. The sun is used to express Bilqis’s feelings, and the moon to represent Khalil, who carries his longing for his beloved. This depiction is inspired by the Holy Qur’an in the words of the Almighty: **“When Joseph said to his father, ‘O my father, I saw eleven**

stars, and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating themselves before me” (36).

In his novel **Balqis**, AlawaKoussa demonstrates exceptional skill in employing religious quotations, particularly from the Holy Quran, to serve his artistic vision. He does not use these quotations in a superficial or decorative manner, but rather integrates them organically into the fabric of the novel, so that they become an integral part of its fictional world, with the aim of creating new worlds.

6.2. The use of heritage through an intertextual lens:

Al-Koussa further utilised Arab heritage by employing the introductory verse that resonates with his state of weeping over ruins and his longing for his beloved, as he says: “... So that the empty spaces and corners of the room are not filled with standing and waiting... weeping and lamentation, memory and longing... loneliness and our sighs”³⁷. This is an intertextual reference to the words of the poet Imru’ al- Qais: Let us stand and weep for the memory of a beloved and a home As the heart sinks between entering and leaving

In Western literature, numerous instances of intertextuality have been employed, as evidenced by the following: “And above your left shoulder hovered the azure ghosts of Portorco; the song fades with you into the memory of roses”³⁸. This text dates back to the Middle Ages, a period marked by a revolt against Christianity and religious control, which culminated in the intellectual Renaissance.

As the author also states: **“How can my footsteps not grow heavy, ‘Zorbuba’, as I bid farewell to the city by the sea... It was dragging me towards the grave, not towards life, Zorba”³⁹**. This is an intertextual reference to the protagonist of the novel *“NioxKazAntazaki”*, a symbol of wealth.

7- The use of historical heritage:

The title of the novel, *‘Balqis’*, is a semantic focal point brimming with diverse intertextualities, as it evokes prominent figures from history, religion and literature. Balqis is the famous Queen of Sheba, considered one of the greatest queens in history; she is also the wife of the Prophet Solomon, peace be upon him, and was the muse of the poet *NizarQabbani* and his wife. These multiple references lend the character of Balqis different dimensions; she is not merely a queen or a wife, but a symbol of beauty, love and strength. This intertextuality transcends the boundaries of time and connects with contemporary reality, reviving heritage in a vibrant manner suited to the spirit of the age. This use of heritage, which represents the essence of the experimental trend in contemporary fiction, contributes to enriching the text and deepening its meanings.

8. The use of symbolism:

The author employs symbolism in his novel as a means of expressing the hidden aspects of his characters and ideas, which are difficult to convey directly. Symbolism allows him to explore the depths of the human psyche and to express feelings and emotions that words alone cannot encompass. This is clearly evident in the character of Bilqis, who is a symbol of many meanings and values. **“A**

woman who captivated the ancients and whom we are still captivated by today, owing to what humanity has inherited about her over countless centuries, so numerous are the elements of truth and fiction intertwined within her”⁴⁰. Thus, Bilqis is a symbol of love and femininity, and the queen of the soul, glory and prestige.

He also employed many symbols, among which we may mention his statement: **“Had you read me at that moment as you returned to me... a smile escaped from the Mona Lisa painting...”**⁴¹, for the Mona Lisa painting is a symbol of mystery, and this is evidence of the power of description that distinguishes AlawaKoussa.

Elsewhere, Balqis says: **“I had to remain in the studio... with Sisyphian torments”**⁴², where **“Sisyphus”** symbolises eternal torment; he was known for his deceit and cunning, so the

chief of the gods, Zeus, ordered him to be bound to hell as punishment for his deeds.

The use of symbolism is a central artistic device in the novel ***Balqis Weeps at the End of the Night***, as it enables the author to express the hidden aspects and profound meanings that are difficult to address directly. The character of Bilqis herself transcends being merely a name to become a symbol of love, femininity, spiritual strength, and pride, inspired by her historical and mythological persona, which “fascinated the ancients and continues to fascinate us today”. Furthermore, the author employs other symbols to deepen the description, such as ‘a smile that has slipped from the Mona Lisa’, which symbolises the mystery and allure of a character, reflecting the author’s power of expression. The symbol of ‘Sisyphus’s torments’ also appears to embody eternal torment and constant struggle, lending a mythical dimension to the characters’ suffering. These symbols do not merely enrich the text rhetorically; they also broaden the scope of interpretation and deepen the reader’s understanding of the characters’ inner worlds and the challenges they face.

These symbols point to the vast cultural worlds from which the author draws his inspiration, inviting the reader on an exploratory journey into the depths of the text in search of the meanings and implications of these symbols.

Conclusion:

AlawaKoussa’s novel ***Balqis Weeps at the End of the Night*** is a significant contribution to contemporary Arabic literature, representing a unique artistic experience that combines the creation of new worlds with a distinctive textual structure. The novel is distinguished by its poetic language rich in metaphor, the use of elements of poetry and intertextuality, the incorporation of the Syrian dialect, linguistic displacement, dialogic language, dense text, and symbolism. This diversity has helped to capture the reader’s attention and prompt them to search for the hidden meanings behind the language. The author also demonstrates a mastery of poetic language through internal monologues and symbolism; he employs symbolism in his novel as a means of expressing the hidden aspects of his characters and ideas, which are difficult to convey directly.

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