




Pantheism and Escapism in Abu Madi's 'Enigmas' and 'The Evening' From English Romanticism Perspectives

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Volume 20 Issue 1 (March 2018) Article 8**Yasser K.R. Aman,****"Pantheism and Escapism in Abu Madi's 'Enigmas' and 'The Evening' From English Romanticism Perspectives"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol20/iss1/8>>

Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 20.1 (2018)**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol20/iss1/>>

Abstract: In his article "Pantheism and Escapism in Abu Madi's 'Enigmas' and 'The Evening' From English Romanticism Perspectives" Yasser K. R. Aman investigates and analyses the possibilities of pantheism's encirclement of escapism in Elia Abu Madi's two poems from English Romanticism perspective. The article compares Abu Madi's fluctuating attitude towards escapism and pantheism to William Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour July 13, 1798," Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," highlighting the affinities and differences. The argument of the article is that Abu Madi's skepticism in "Engimas" (الطلاسم), a representative poem of his works and of contemporary Arab romanticism, hinders him from finding an escape from "the here" and "the now;" while in "The Evening" (المساء), which displays overflow of feelings, Abu Madi makes his escape from the burdens of life and mingles with nature. Therefore, Abu Madi represents the fluctuation of contemporary Arab romantic poets, especially Al Mahjar School: either to embrace pantheism or to retreat in an impenetrable shell of self-isolation.

Yasser K.R. AMAN

Pantheism and Escapism in Abu Madi's 'Enigmas' and 'The Evening' From English Romanticism Perspectives

Ranging from a solid belief in the individual will, to an aspiration for escapism from the "here" and "now", to immersing in nature, the nature of the Romantic poetry is not clearly decided. Jerome J. McGann's discussion of Romantic poetry's natures claims that it follows a fuzzy logic that unsettles established concepts of "that deceptively stable thing we call 'Romantic poetry'" (McGann, "Poetry" 270). For example, Wordsworth in the *Lyrical Ballads* aimed at making individuals and society recover "spiritual and emotional equilibrium" (McGann, "Poetry" 272). However, Romantic poets differed in their depiction and ethical views of nature, so much so, Wordsworth would see a *Blakean* image of nature in "Milton" as catastrophic since Blake asserts that nature, contrary to Wordsworth's solid belief, betrays the heart that loves her. Like Wordsworth, Coleridge tended to spiritualize nature. Therefore, "Wordsworth's and Coleridge's ideas of 'harmony' and 'reconciliation' founded their new Romantic symbolism" (McGann, "Poetry" 275). In fact, the second generation of the Romantic poets did not follow Wordsworth's concept of nature: "Shelley and Byron veered sharply away from *Lakist* ideas of nature and love, and while Keats began in a close kinship with Wordsworth's programme, in the end he too fell off. As he says in 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1820): 'Forlorn! the very word is like a bell / To toll me back from thee to my sole self!'" (McGann, "Poetry" 278).

Owing to the debatable nature of the nomenclature "Romanticism" and the so many markers of "the Romantic Period," McCalman opts for "the age of Revolution" ("Introduction" 3); however, some Romantics saw that they experienced "a second cultural Renaissance" ("Introduction" 5). The *Robinsonade*, depicted in *Robinson Crusoe*, and the *Gulliveriana*, portrayed in *Gulliver's Travels*, had been basic to the imagery of a Utopia, a much better place from the "here" and "now," where one can enjoy the virtues of a simple life away from corrupt society. Islamic and Arabic culture, upon which an image of a different Utopia was constructed, had been traced back to "the English translations of the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*" (Claeys, "Utopianism" 85). The *Arabian Nights Entertainments* offered a fantasy world contrary to which a utopia was provided by al-Fârâbî, which is adapted from Plato's ideal republic. The Brethren of Purity, a secret group of Muslim philosophers, came after al-Fârâbî and both presented utopia as a city with the implications of wealth and luxurious life; that is why the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, as well as Islamic political philosophy, did not mention the "woods and fields of the European fairy tale" (Irwin, "Political Thought" 111).

Although Romantic poetry is philosophically complicated—combining "deistic theology," "Newtonian physics," Wordsworthian "pantheistic naturalism," Coleridgean "theism," and Shelleyan conflict between French atheism and Platonic idealism—and romantic poets differ in their philosophical viewpoints, "the common feat of the romantic nature poets was to read meanings into the landscape" (Wimsatt, "The Structure" 25-31).

Elia Abu Madi, a prominent figure of Al Mahjar poets, was born in Lebanon and emigrated to the United States of America where "Emigrant literature" (Adab al-Mahjar) was founded. His poetry shows modernist features in Arabic poetry (Jayyusi, *Trends* 123). To some extent, his poetry is similar to the revolutionary trend led by the Al-Diwan school, and later the Apollo School. Claims have been raised that al-Mahjar poets outdid al-Diwan counterparts (Romy, *Diwan* 21). When Abu Madi mingles his thoughts with nature, he speculates in his poetry. This tendency shows itself in many poems, especially "Enigmas" and "the Evening." The Arab Romantics were grouped into three schools: Apollo, al-Diwan and al-Mahjar. Of the most important works are: al-Aqad's *Chapters* (فصول), el-Mazni's *The Harvest of Chaff* (حصاد الهشيم), Mikhail Neima's *The Sieve* (الغربال), and Gibran's *The Storms* (العواصف), and *Broken Wings* (الأجنحة المتكسرة).

Many forerunners of modern literature such as Mahmoud Samy al-Barudy, Ahmed Shawki, and Khalil Mutran read European literature, especially French. The first decades of the century came with a new generation; al-Diwan and Apollo appeared and fought fierce literary battles against each other. This culminated into a huge literary production. Al-Diwan school's founders were Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqad (1889 - 1964), el-Mazni (1889-1949), and Shukry (1886-1958). They rejected the traditional poetic practice of Shawki and Hafiz in favor of a new mode of poetic writing inspired by European romantic poetry. Their poetic production was coupled with critical writings, which argued for a new kind of poetry whose vision, function, and formal features are different from the dominant mode. There were strong connections between al-Mahjar writers and those of al-Diwan. Al-Aqad wrote the preface to Naeima's book *The Sieve*, two chapters of which were devoted to highlight the importance of al-Diwan, and a third chapter was a review of Al-Aqad's book *Chapters*.

The Hegelian concept, "The This" by which he means "the here" and "the now," calls for a Spinozist surrender to the absolute. In fact, Hegel's poem "Eleusis," which focuses on a Spinozist being, represents "oceanic pantheism" (Bowman, "Spinozist" 93). Later, however, Hegel shows a shift in thought since he turned away "from pantheism and toward an emphasis on the ontological dignity of the individual more deeply akin to Christianity—from 'substance' to 'subject'" (Bowman 94). This does not mean that Hegel did not approve of pantheism; rather, he saw it "as a subordinate moment in the achievement of rational selfhood" (Bowman 95).

Coleridge tries to solve Spinoza's dual problem and Schelling's idealism by finding "Trinitarian resolution" (Hipolito, "Coleridge" 548). It seems that Coleridge only discusses Spinoza and Augustine's idea of the relation between Scripture and nature but he also distances himself from their thoughts by developing the notion of the "book of nature" which is "the poetry of all human nature." On the one hand, he highlights a divine Nature and a living God, on the other, instead of reading what nature contains, he advocates a study of "the science and language of symbols" (Hipolito, "Coleridge" 550-52).

Escapism can be seen as a main feature of Romanticism. Nostalgia to the past and recollections of memories make escapism possible. Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" stresses the importance of recollection of past memories in creating an ideal world where the poet escapes from "the here" and "the now." Wordsworth and Coleridge's escapism was a response to life, a view of the human condition. To the same effect, R. J. Smith maintains that: "mystical experiences of the sort Wordsworth describes in Tintern Abbey or the Immortality Ode are an essential part of his poetic response to life, not seen merely as an ordered system of beliefs and tastes. Again, the elemental passions and fears of the Ancient Mariner do not merely suggest an escape into the fantastic from a humdrum world, but embody an imaginative view of facets of the human condition" ("Romanticism" 18-19). Nature works actively on Wordsworth's mind and feelings. Shelley's, "Ode to the West Wind" heralds a new world order where he can escape and live unburdened.

Abu Madi's poetry showed similar pantheistic tendencies highlighting the individual's surrender to the absolute being. However, Abu Madi held a nihilistic view since he saw no value in anything, and for him, the world will end in a state of nothingness. He had his own philosophy concerning man, nature, and God. He believed that human beings were recycled in nature, their decomposed bodies are recycled into new human beings with no afterlife (Nada, "The Philosophy" 447-48). For Abu Madi, one reaches the universal truth when one immerses in and mingles with Nature (477). In fact, Abu Madi fluctuates between belief and disbelief. From his philosophical point of view, an afterlife does not exist, and if it does, it is not desirable since Man will relive with his disturbed psyche or he will be recreated, which means nihilism of the first state of existence.

In his poem, "The Talkative God" (الإله التواكل), he sees that man is defeated against existence and life means nothing: "On the earth you tread a thousand world lies / You're part of the universe, such as earth, plant and pebble / ...From dust to dust, all living things must" (Abu Madi, "The Talkative God" 103-104: 7-10 All translations of Abu Madi's excerpts are mine unless stated otherwise) (في التراب الذي / وتير وتراب [Abu Madi, تنوس عليه/ألف دنيا وعالم لا ترأه/ أنت جزء من الكيان وفيه/كثراً، كنبته كحصاه/ ما لحى بالموت عنه انفصال/ان دنياه هذه أخراه/ [103-104: 7-10]). However, man's relationship to the universe and nature survives this defeat. Unlike Naima's and Gibran's ideas of incarnation, Abu Madi believes that the dead bodies return to two of the four elements of the universe: earth and air. This recycling process results in a new creation, be it a human being, a flower, a rose or a nightingale (Nada, "The Philosophy" 508-511).

The transition from medieval Christian faith to scientific positivism was achieved through the romantic cult. However, the Romantics are incapable of keeping the concept of nature completely neutral. They are not able to dispense with the words spirit and soul. "Shelley...makes free use in his most atheistical work, of the words soul and spirit...Wordsworth finds himself as it were constrained to the use of these same words soul and spirit" (Beach, *The Concept* 51). Moreover, the animating principle of nature entails the concept of plastic nature—a concept that can be interpreted according to hylozoism and atomism (Beach 60)—whose spirit has the power of shaping the matter of the universe and directing its motion and producing phenomena which cannot be accounted for on mere mechanical grounds. In Germany, in his treatise on the concept of a world-soul, Schelling advocates a concept of nature that had a distinctly pantheistic cast which might have affected Coleridge and Wordsworth at its appearance. Schelling sees nature as a single unified whole, in which God is present everywhere (Beach 77).

"Enigmas" is a two hundred eighty four lines poem divided into seventy one stanzas, four lines each followed by a fixed motif of "I do not know." Abu Madi does not follow the romantics in their treatment of dilemma. The poem is compared to Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" and Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" since landscape and seascape are

represented in the two poems respectively. After Abu Madi had travelled over a spiritual landscape and breathtakingly climbed up a purgatorial mountain, he did not find a resort in nature. Many responded to Abu Madi's poem by writing poems attacking his ideas. Moreover, some Arab critics, such as Musa Rababa'a have not discussed the poem as a product of Arab romanticism; rather they focused on Abu Madi's skepticism ("Enigmas" 24-31).

It is worth noting that Abu Madi was one of the pioneers who supported Arab nationalism by both tracing the traditional themes and investigating innovative forms of expression, connecting between the traditional and the modern as evident in many poems of *The Brooks*. Therefore, his poetic experience can be traced in past Arabic poetry. At that time, the Arab American movement was supported by two groups: the southern group which openly supported Arab nationalism and did not show a strong tendency towards innovation; and the northern group which focused on innovation in form and matter, guided by the ideas of al-Rabita whose prominent members were Jibran, Nu'aymah, Abu Madi, and Nasib 'Arida, and introduced philosophical ideas and called for a rebellion against strict imitation of the traditions. Therefore, by joining al-Rabita, Abu Madi's "great poetic talent was channeled from traditional imitative forms of expression to the contemplative, more abstract approach apparent in al Jadāwil" (Romy, *Diwan al-Jadawil* 23) which contains the two poems under study.

Abu Madi escapes into philosophical and metaphysical spheres trying to find answers to his recurrent motif: "I do not know." Apollo School, to which Abu Madi belongs, exercised syllogism tintured thinking while writing poetry. This kind of poetry resulted from a sense of alienation as immigrants suffered a lot of psychological problems. In addition, Western literature left a formative impact on their poetry so much so that they embraced a Cartesian doubt questioning everything: life, death, the afterlife, the creation of man, universe...etc. However, they reached no resolution (Nada, "The Philosophy" 525-27). On the contrary, Nazik Al Mala'eka asserts that Abu Madi is so deeply affected by the Arabic version of the Bible that his poems reflect such an impact in form and content (741-47). Many studies proved that Abu Madi approaches the sea cautiously trying to escape from his tortured self into nature. However, his attempts at escapism do not work since he is unable to accept a pantheistic relation; instead, he doubts the power of nature. The separate identities of God and Man are clear. This notion is in opposition to pantheism where Man, God and Nature are seen as one entity. Despite the alleged influence of US-American Romanticism on Arab émigré poets, Arab Romanticism failed to cope with English Romanticism. Emerson's philosophy, Thoreau's Forest and Whitman's concept of freedom influenced members of the Syro-American School such as Gibran Khalil Gibran (Imangulieva, *Gibran*). This basic difference reflects the contrasting cultural and social backgrounds of Arab and English Romantic poets.

The first five stanzas illustrate the futility of a life in isolation, of ineptitude to escape the enigmatic "here" and "now." The speaker takes an anti-Rousseauistic attitude towards nature. Rousseau saw that the natural man was a self-contained man. In Nature, he found his simplest needs; food, shelter and a female. Those self-contained men were unaware of one another. They had two primal qualities: their needs and a natural pity for others. Once they became aware, in the sense of comparing themselves to each other, they gradually changed into artificial individuals. Rousseau rejected inequality-based societies which is "unknown in 'the original state of man'" (Ellenburg, *Rousseau's* 60-61). The opening lines depict the plight of the poet. He does not know from where he comes or where to go. After each stanza comes a riff, a motif, "I do not know," which asserts the poet's skepticism and dilemma. His existence, freedom, entire course of life, preexistence, and the possibility of recognition of pre-life events are questioned.

In the sixth stanza he addresses the sea in the hope of escaping from his dilemma: "One day I asked the sea: Am I from you? / Was what some say about us true? / Or what they claimed was fake, slander and untrue? / His waves laughed and said: 'I do not know?'" (قد سألت البحر يوماً هل أنا يا بحر منك؟ // هل (صحيح ما رواه بعضهم عني وعنك// أم ترى ما زعموا زوراً وبهتاناً وإفكاً؟ // ضجكت أمواجه مني وقالت// لست أدري [Abu Madi, "Enigmas" [142: 21-24]).

His skepticism is a stumbling block in his way to immerse in nature. He is reasoning with the sea instead of giving full vent of his feelings. Unlike Wordsworth, he is afraid that Nature may betray him. The reaction of the waves illustrates a disturbed relationship. The Romantic concept of pantheism tries to reconcile man with nature as he is thought of as a microcosm of God. Man yearns to go back to the natural society. For Rousseau: "man has lost his identity with physical nature which is also his own identity as man, and in consequence his civilization has grown artificial, in a new pejorative sense of that word, in need of a revolution which will recreate the natural society of liberty and equality" (qtd. in Frye, *A Study* 28).

The speaker/poet discusses the concept of ageless nature, asking the sea how old it is. He is trapped in a quagmire of skepticism, of questioning the integrity of nature: whether it is mechanical,

systematized, or unknown: "O sea, do you know how many thousand years are you; / Does the beach know it lies prostrate before you; / Do rivers know they are part of you; / What did the waves say when they rage? / I do not know" (أبيها البحر أتدري كم مضت ألف عليك/ وهل الشاطئ يدري أنه جاث لديك/ وهل الأنهار تدري أنها منك إليك/ ما [Abu Madi, "Enigmas" [142-3: 25-28]). Strangely enough, the poet identifies with the sea, not as an escapism from "the here" and "the now." He finds something in common both are captives: "O omnipotent, you, like me, can't make a decision" (أنت مثلي أيتها الجبار لا تملك أمرك) [Abu Madi, "Enigmas" [143:29]].

The seascape does not provide the poet with a traditional model of escapism; rather, the poet questions it in order for him to find something in common to identify with. Despite his plight, he does not throw himself into nature. On the contrary, when Coleridge's mariner passed by an ordeal, he resorted to nature to solve his problem. Surrounded by ice, the mariner and his crew were having hard times. When the Albatross appeared, a Christian soul blessed, the ice melted. The mariner enjoyed nature till he breached it by killing the Albatross. Things went worse as they were stuck with no motion "As idle as a painted ship / Upon a painted ocean" (Wordsworth & Coleridge, "The Rime of The Ancient Mariner" 14: 113-114). They betrayed nature; therefore, they did not find repose. Their relationship with nature is disturbed so much so that they could not drink water when they were very thirsty.

Abu Madi's skepticism dismembers nature and suspends any pantheistic relations among nature and man that he introduces different dichotomies about the sea: "You combine death and a life in clover" (قد جمعت الموت في صدرك والعيش الجميل) [Abu Madi, "Enigmas" [144:43]]. The skeptical mood of the poet segregates him from the sea, from nature. He even sees opposites in the seascape. He retreats into an impenetrable shell unable to see the beautiful forms of nature and, instead, he has a psychedelic vision, a pastiche of doubts coated with a philosophical tincture.

On the contrary, the ancient mariner's nightmarish image of the sea haunted him after committing a sin that made him aware of his presence as a Rousseauistic artificial man, apart from nature. Coleridge answers Abu Madi's question about the sea being a cradle or a grave. The ghostly ship refers to possibilities of rescuing the mariner and his crew; on the other hand, it carries death and life in death, which symbolize man's fear from being detached from nature.

Abu Madi's skepticism is his dilemma. He can neither believe in God the Omnipotent, who controls life and death and all the universe including nature nor can he indulge in a pantheistic mood and immerse into Nature instead of keeping at bay. Unlike Abu Madi, Coleridge solves the dilemma of the mariner through praying: "The self-same moment I could pray; / And from my neck so free / The Albatross fell off, and sank / Like lead into the sea" (Wordsworth & Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" 21:280-83). Therefore, Coleridge indulges in religious pantheism in order to find a solution to the burdens of man. In order to obtain complete salvation, the mariner asks the hermit: "O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy Man!" (Wordsworth & Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" 34:607).

In "Enigmas" the speaker discusses the idea of immortality of nature versus the mortality of man, stressing a clear separation of both. The speaker-poet sees himself better than the sea, but he cannot answer this question: "I wonder, why do I pass away but you stay?" (فلماذا يا ترى أمضي وتبقى؟) [Abu Madi, "Enigmas" [146: 55]]. His attempts at pantheism falls short from the reader's expectations. The speaker escapes from his dilemma when he portrays his course of life as someone lost at sea. However, he cannot mingle with the sea since his mind is occupied with the question whether fate controls his course in the sea of life, only to reach the same recurrent conclusion "I do not know" In fact the secrets inside the speaker's / poet's soul hinder him from immersing in the sea and from answering his questions.

For the first time, the poet mingles with nature in stanza 17, the last stanza addressed to the sea: "O sea, I am a sea. We share the same beaches of you: / The unknown tomorrow and yesterday around you / Both of us are but a drop in the two / Do not ask me what's tomorrow, what's yesterday / I do not know" (يا بحر، في هذا وذلك// لا تسلني ما غد، ما. إنني، يا بحر، بحر شاطنة شاطناكا// الغد المجهول والأمس اللذان اكتنفاكا// وكلانا قطرة / I do not know" [Abu Madi, "Enigmas" [147-48: 64-67]]. This mingling does not get the poet out of his dilemma because it results into making the poet and the sea part of the unknown, not of nature. Time and again, Coleridge may offer Abu Madi a solution through his religious pantheism: "He prayeth well, who loveth well / Both man and bird and beast. / He prayeth best, who loveth best / All things both great and small; / For the dear God who loveth us, / He made and loveth all" (Wordsworth & Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" 35: 645-50).

In "The Prelude" and in nature poems of 1798, Wordsworth tried to show how the beautiful and noble objects of nature became associated in one's mind with esthetic and moral ideas: how by this means one's personal morale is improved, one's character is strengthened, one's attitude towards

men is humanized, and one is enabled to see the essence of things, that is, one is given insight into the spiritual governance of the universe. Wordsworth's "'Tintern Abbey' is another classic instance, a whole pantheistic poem woven of the landscape, where God is not once mentioned" (Wimsatt, "The Structure" 31). Wordsworth relies on the spontaneous overflow of feelings and "the direct dealings of his mind and heart with the visible universe" (Willey, "On Wordsworth" 113), when he writes poetry.

Wordsworth's pantheistic thought is clear in these lines. A sublime being is present in everything and he feels he is connected to this being and to nature: "And I have felt / A presence that disturbs me with the joy / Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime / ...And rolls through all things" (Wordsworth & Coleridge, "Tintern Abbey" 113:95-103). He vividly portrays the real world in so simple a manner resorting to no established mythology or fabricating of a new one. He is convinced with the truthfulness of what he creates only when his mind deals with a fact, intently observed by him, and value, coming from within (Willey, "On Wordsworth" 119).

On the contrary, Abu Madi depicts a dismembered nature which shows no connection among its elements: "Rain falls against its will / Flowers unwillingly give away their smell /The Earth can't but show its thorns or flowers still / Don't ask: which is more delicious or beautiful? / I don't know" (إن هذا الغيث يهيم حين يهيم مكرها// وزهور الأرض تفشي مجبرات عطرها// لا تطيق الأرض تحفي شوكتها أو زهرها// لا تسئل: أيهما أشهى وأبهى؟//لست أدري! [Abu Madi, "Enigmas" [168-69:216-19]]).

The poet's skeptic thinking and his sense of isolation are reflected in his depiction of natural phenomena. The unwilling Rainfall and blossoming of flowers create a disharmonious ambience. Unlike Wordsworth who mingles into the seascape, Abu Madi stands away surrounded by his doubts. Wordsworth mingles with Sylvan Wye, with nature, "How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, / O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods, / How often has my spirit turned to thee!" (Wordsworth & Coleridge, "The Tintern Abbey" 112:56-58).

Abu Madi's attempts at identification with nature ends, as usual, in "I do not know," shaking any belief in his connection to natural elements around him. On the other hand, Wordsworth has a solid belief in nature's faithfulness for those who love her. For him nature is the source of continuous joy: "Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege, / Through all the years of this our life, to lead/ From joy to joy" (Wordsworth & Coleridge, "The Tintern Abbey" 114:123-26). Unlike Wordsworth's expression of love of faithful harmonious nature, Abu Madi highlights the incongruity of natural elements and the illogical course they take. He even doubts what he enjoys in nature. For him nature does not lead "from joy to joy" as Wordsworth mentions. He thinks he is the source of the pleasure he enjoys.

As a lover of nature, Wordsworth closes his poem by stressing the fact that recollection of memories in nature is a life-giving force. Unlike Wordsworth, Abu Madi's concluding lines subvert any relationship between Rousseauistic artificial man, nature and even any divine being. He neither resorts to nature nor finds an escape there: "I do not know when I was born and when I die / I am a riddle...and an enigma is my birth and my passing away / Who creates me is a great enigma anyway/ Do not argue with the wise who say: / I do not know" (إنني جنث وامضي، وأنا لا أعلم// أنا لغزٌ، وذهابي كمجيبني طلسمٌ// والذي أوجد هذا اللغز لغزٌ [Abu Madi, "Enigmas" [177: 281-84]]).

"The Evening" is compared to Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" since skyscape is represented in both poems ("The Evening" can also be compared to Pushkin's "A winter's Evening"). Such a comparison, though not in the scope of the current study, can open new horizons of studying Arab Romanticism in light of other European literatures (see Aida Imangulieva's Gibran, Rihani & Naimy). "The Evening" consists of ten stanzas, six lines each, while "Ode to the West Wind" consists of five cantos, fourteen lines each divided into four terza rimas and a final couplet.

The opening lines of Abu Madi's "The Evening" portray an image of death that looms in the horizon with running clouds, a pale faced sun, and an unexpectedly calm sea (Al Swaifan, "The Night" 342). "In the horizon, as the scared do, Clouds run / Behind, with a pale face and a bound forehead, is the sun / The sea rests as quietly as pious men / In the far horizon your eyes were dim / Salma...What do you think of? / Salma...What do you dream of" (السحبُ تركضُ في الفضاء الرَّحْبِ ركض الخائفين// والشمس تبدو خلفها صفراء عاصبة [Abu Madi, "The Evening" [56: 1-6]]. Salma is not a fictitious character, rather, she is claimed to be Abu Madi's mother who lived with him in New York for twenty years. Contrary to his attitude in "Enigmas," he glorifies all aspects of nature and calls Salma to enjoy an immersion into nature, an escape from the "here" and "now." "The Evening" is a symbol of aging (Afifi, "Symbolizing" 383), and gloom which is reflected in the uneasiness felt by Salma who is part of nature.

Abu Madi follows Shelley's necessitarianism, who on forming this concept, draws heavily on d'Holbach who sees that man is himself the work of nature, subject to her laws, unable to extricate himself from their web, unable even to conceive getting clear from the cycle of natural law. For Shel-

ley, necessity is another name for the Universal Spirit or the Spirit of Nature. Like many of the French philosophers, for Shelley necessity entails atheism. Necessity rules out the notion of arbitrary and capricious interference of anything which would confuse or interrupt the working of natural law. Abu Madi fluctuates between skepticism and atheism on the one hand, and assurance of and belief in God, or even the universal spirit on the other.

Shelley starts the poem focusing in the literal meaning of the wind. Later, the wind acquires a metaphorical meaning and changed into a "wind of inspiration" (Abrams, "The Correspondent" 44): "O Wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, / Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead / Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing" (Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" 573:1-3). The first idiosyncrasy recognizable here is that the wind is essential to life and representative of nature.

Abu Madi urges Salma to enjoy the beauty of nature even when it is dark. The image he creates combines the seascape, landscape and skyscape: the sound of running streams, the smell of flowers and the moving meteors are there in order for Salma to escape "the here" and "the now," the Hegelian "This," to immerse in nature. "Listen to brooks running in plains / Breathe in the smell of flowers flourishing in gardens / Enjoy meteors appearing in heavens / Before a time as unpleasant as smog comes / When you do not see rivers / Nor you enjoy its murmurs" // (فاصغي إلى صوت الجداول جاريات في السفوح // واستنشقي الأزهار في الجئات ما دامت تفوح // وتمتعني بالشهب في الأفلاك ما دامت تلوح // من قبل أن يأتي زمان كالضباب أو الدخان // لا تبصرين به الغدير // ولا يلد لك الخريف [Abu Madi, "The Evening" [60-61: 43-48]). The first three lines vividly depict images of a seascape, a landscape and a skyscape. The aural image in the murmuring of running brooks which Salma is advised to listen to, the olfactory image in smelling the flowers and the visual image of moving meteors, together give a sense of complacency and tranquility and stress the importance of immersing in nature in order for Salma to escape from "the here" and "the now." The last three lines are exhortation for Salma not to lose the chance.

Similarly, the first lines of the second stanza of Shelley's Ode provide an image in which there is a mingling of seascape, landscape and skyscape: "Thou on whose stream, mild the steep sky's commotion, / Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed, / Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and ocean, / Angels of rain and lightning" (Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" 573:15-18). This image binds earth to heaven: the stream of the sea is dug in heaven where the clouds fall.

In "The Evening" the second stanza contains two antithetical images of life and death: the dreams of childhood and the ghosts of old age; however, unlike Shelley's second stanza, Abu Madi's focus is on the individual, not on a deity that pervades nature. Therefore, he expresses what is reflected in Salma's eyes: "Have you envisioned childhood's dreams hiding behind borders? / Or have your eyes caught ghosts of aging in clouds? / Or have you feared deadening darkness coming without stars? / I do not see such scenes / But your eyes host their shadows / Creating an image of you" (أرأيت أحلام الطفولة تختفي خلف النجوم؟ // أم أبصرت عينك أشباح الكهولة في الغيوم؟ // أم خفت أن يأتي النجمي الجاني و لا تأتي النجوم؟ // أنا لا أرى ما تلمحين من المشاهد إنما // (أرأيت أحلام الطفولة تختفي خلف النجوم؟ // أم أبصرت عينك أشباح الكهولة في الغيوم؟ // أم خفت أن يأتي النجمي الجاني و لا تأتي النجوم؟ // أنا لا أرى ما تلمحين من المشاهد إنما // أظلالها في ناظريك // تنم ، يا سلمى ، عليك [Abu Madi, "The Evening" [57: 7-12]).

In stanza four, Abu Madi stresses man's failure to cope with nature for which reason Salma seems overburdened and depressed. Stanza five poses many questions about Salma's depression. He wonders what Salma thinks of: "Of Earth and how did thrones of light fall from its hills? / Of how did silence prevail in green meadows? / Of birds and how do they fly back to their nests? / Or of the evening? The evening hides cities as well as villages, / Where there is no difference between a cottage and a great palace. / Or thorns and Jasmine" // (بالأرض كيف هوت عروش النور عن هضباتها؟ // أم بالمروج الخضر ساد الصمت في جنباتها؟ // أم بالمدان كالفقرى // و الكوخ كالفقرى // و الشوك مثل الياسمين [Abu Madi, "The Evening" [58-9: 25-30]).

Stanza four shows Shelley's fluctuation: he wants to follow the wind, however, he finds it changeable. He calls his childhood into retrospection: "If even / I were as in my boyhood, and could be / The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven, / As then when to outstrip thy skiey speed / Scarce seemed a vision; I would never have striven. / As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need" (Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" 574:47-52). Shelley puts the Rousseauistic man and the artificial individual in juxtaposition: boyhood's innocence and the "I" of the poet. The artificial individual fails to cope with nature: "The stanza expresses an imaginative failure in the face of the wind" (Cronion, *Shelley* 240). This failure echoes in Salma, who undergoes the same ordeal of Shelley's artificial individual. The prophetic idiosyncrasy of the poet identifies with the repercussions of the wind, and the wind's energetic blowing is, in fact, nothing but the poet's indefatigable hope for reform. The poet addresses the wind: "Be thou, Spirit fierce, / My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!" (Shelley, "Ode" 574: 61-62).

On the other hand, Abu Madi sees that the individual, Salma in this case, can escape from "the here" and "the now," from burdens of life, and effect change by imitating and immersing in nature; therefore, he wishes Salma would cope with changes in nature by sticking to her happy mood. In the ninth stanza, he expresses his wish: "May your all life be one of nice, good hope / And in youth and

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