

Homeland and Exile in the Poetry of Aati Al-Barakat

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Abstract—Among the many Iraqi poets who left their homeland, Iraq, in the 1990s, a time of great political turmoil that saw the exodus of many creative people, Aati Al-Barakat was one of the poets who left Iraq and eventually made his emigration to his new home in North America. The poet lived in exile spatially, but emotionally and intellectually, he remained inhabiting the cocoon of alienation, just as it also inhabited him. He established a cultural isolation in his new home. His daily life is in one valley, and his intellectual and emotional spaces are in another valley. Indeed, his vital life is limited, if not non-existent. This study aims to shed light on the life of the poet Aati Al-Barakat, his works, his poetry, and a critical literary analysis of his writing style, and to clarify his suffering in exile.

Index Terms—migration, Aati Al-Barakat, Iraqi poetry, modern literature, exile

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Migration of Aati Al-Barakat*

Exile has been an ancient Iraqi poetic pain since Al-Mutanabbi until now. It is worth noting that Iraqis have not become accustomed to exile and migration to this intensity in modern Iraq, except in the last five decades, during which their country has been plagued by regimes that excel at nothing but oppression and injustice. Before that, there were cases of individual migration. Three reasons drove Iraqis to emigrate from their homeland: religious, political, and economic. Iraqi emigration began in the modern history of Iraq in the 1930s and 1950s during the Iraqi monarchy. It was a religious emigration that was limited to the Christian community with the encouragement of the Church, and to the Jewish community with the incitement and encouragement of the Zionist movement after the establishment of the Israeli entity in Palestine in 1948 AD.

The migration began in the late 1970s, between 1978 and 1980 AD, during the republican era after the Ba'ath Party seized power in Iraq in 1968 AD. It was a forced political migration consisting of two cultural groups that differed politically and intellectually: leftists who were persecuted by the ruling Baath Party, which had turned against the National Front that it had formed with their Iraqi Communist Party in 1973 AD, and Islamists who were persecuted for supporting the outbreak of the revolution in Iran and the establishment of the Islamic Republic there in 1979 AD. In both groups were distinguished Iraqi intellectuals, including thinkers, writers, journalists, artists, and others, especially teachers and instructors who opposed the decision on “Ba'athify education”, and thus became outside the framework of the teaching profession, because they refused to belong to the ruling party.

The third migration began in the 1990s and continued until the beginning of this century, during the period of the sanctions imposed on Iraq between 1990 and 2003. This was a purely economic migration, encompassing all Iraqi social groups dissatisfied with the ruling regime. Finally, the fourth migration occurred after the US invasion and the fall of the former regime at the beginning of the twenty-first century, in 2003.

If we look at the migration of individual Iraqi poets into exile, the first migration was of Abu Tayeb Al-Mutanabbi to Egypt, and Abu Zurayq Al-Baghdadi to Spain, and a later migration that included Abdul Mohsen Al-Kadhemi to Cairo and Ahmed Al-Safi Al-Najafi to Damascus, and the migration of the sixties included Muhammad Mahdi Al-Jawahiri to Prague and Saadi Youssef to Algeria.

The migration of the seventies included leftist poets to socialist countries and some Arab countries, especially Syria, Democratic Yemen (Aden) and the Arab Gulf states, the migration of the eighties, the repercussions of the Iran-Iraq war, the migration of the nineties, the consequences of the Kuwait war, the imposition of the blockade on Iraq, and migration to all parts of the world, then most to the Arab countries, then to North America, and this period included poets from different generations who did not leave Iraq except during the blockade, as many of them went legally to work in various Arab countries, and from here some of them headed to European countries and (North America). Among the most

prominent of those who emigrated was the poet Aati Salman Kadhim Al-Barakat, Born in January 1970 in Al-Karamah village, Al-Warka sub-district, Samawah city, Iraq. See Fig. 1. He completed his primary and intermediate education in the sub-district, his secondary education in the governorate, and he holds a Bachelor's degree in Law from Al-Qadisiyah University. He is a poet, short story writer, novelist, journalist, lawyer, and traveler. He arrived as a refugee to the USA on March 5, 1991.



Figure 1. The Poet Aati Salman Kadhim Al-Barakat

He belongs to the nineties generation, the generation that sailed inside and outside the homeland. He is the only generation that escaped the culture of authority, to impose a culture without mediation and nightly decisions. He is a generation that is honest with itself.

Upon his arrival in America, his birth took place. After those events ravaged the country, he was born when everything was burning, even the glimmer of hope vanished between the hammer of globalisation and the anvil of dictatorship. His birth was the first stage of burning, to be the turning point in writing away from the self's being. He wrote while hiding from one place to another outside the prison walls about those who wandered the paths of ancient sadness, pursued by eternal damnation. He continued writing about them even when he immigrated. He says: **“I believe in the politics of literature because we are born politicians by nature”**. His words are true that many of the prominent figures in Iraq were involved in politics in middle or secondary school. Politics is not strange to our world; it surrounds us from every side. From this standpoint, writing is the revolution that he carries within him wherever he goes. He said:

أذكر في زمن النسيان
وأصرخ في دروب الخيبة
وألعن في عصر الخيانة!

**I mention in the time of oblivion
And I scream in the paths of disappointment**

And I curse in the era of betrayal! (Al-Barakat, 2007)

He immigrated from Iraq after escaping the Rafha camps in 1991, after participating in the popular uprising against the dictatorship of the former regime. He then immigrated to a number of cities until he settled in the United States of America, Michigan, in 1996.

B. His Education and Professions

He holds a Bachelor of Laws from Al-Qadisiyah University, Iraq.

Previous professions:

- Director of the Japanese Fuji TV office in Iraq from 2003 to 2007.
- Director of the International Medical Corps (IMC) program from 2007 to 2009.
- Assistant Program Director for the Iraqi organisation IMC from 2009 to 2013.
- President of the Iraqi American Writers Union from 2013 to date.
- Assistant Secretary of the World Poets Movement in the Arab world, based in Chile, since 2017.

C. His Literary Achievements

- Novelist, with two novels published by Al-Jamal Publications:
 1. The Prophecy of the Clouds, in 2004.
 2. The Scent of Saffron, in 2010.
- Short story writer with four short story collections published:
 1. Cities of Snow, Beirut 1999.
 2. Harvest Season, Damascus 2001.
 3. Sands of Time, Cairo 2004.
 4. Barhout, Cairo 2007.
 5. Journalist with a book of newspaper articles published.
 6. Beyond the Secret Evidence, Cairo, 2007.
 7. 100 poems of modern Iraqi poetry were published in the Chinese language in Taiwan.
 8. Along with poets from various countries of the world, he published an anthology in Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish.
- Poetry participations:
 1. Taiwan International Poetry Festival 2016.
 2. Argentina International Poetry Festival 2017.
 3. Nicaragua International Poetry Festival 2018.
 4. Peru International Poetry Festival 2018.
 5. Babylon Festival of World Cultures and Arts 2019.
 6. Babylon Festival of World Cultures and Arts 2023.
 7. Mexico International Poetry Festival 2023.
 8. Bolivia Poetry Festival 2023.
- Activities and memberships:
 1. Member of the Iraqi Writers Union.
 2. Member of Writers Without Borders Organisation.
 3. Member of the Arab American PEN League.
 4. Editor and Cultural Officer of Safahat Council.
 5. Member of the Founding Board of the Arab American Writers Union.
 6. Founder and President of the Iraqi American Writers Union.
 7. Member of the World Poets Movement based in Chile.
 8. Secretary of the World Poets Movement for Arab Poets (Al-Barakat, 2006a).

D. His Poetry Collections

- The Sidewalks of Asylum, Aati Al-Barakat, Dar Al-Khayal, Beirut, 2006.
- The Owner of the Four Letters, Arab Civilisation Centre, Cairo, 2007.
- He Who Falls Apart from the Rosary, Aati Al-Barakat, Dar Ninawa, Syria - Damascus, 2009.

II. DISCUSSIONS

Homeland and Exile in Aati Al-Barakat Poetry

The linguistic definition of homeland is: (A person's home and place of residence. The homelands of sheep are their pastures, where they take refuge. It is said: So-and-so has settled in such-and-such a land, meaning: he has taken it as a place and residence in which he resides) (Al-Azhari, 1975). It is also said: Where is your hometown? Meaning your destination. The hometown is the place from which horses are sent out in a race, and it is the beginning of the destination. The dead place is the end of the destination (Al-Farabi, 1987). The linguistic definition does not differ from the technical definition. A person's homeland is his birthplace and the place of residence of his family and relatives, whether it be a tent, a house, a quarter, or a place of refuge. It is the place where a person spent their childhood and youth. The soul

becomes accustomed to the homeland to the point that it is like a body if it is abandoned, perishing. "Men love homelands because they remind them of the goals they spent in their youth" (Wahib Tannous, 1976). Al-Jurjani defined it, saying: "The original homeland is the place of a person's birth" (Ali Al-Jurjani, 1983).

Homeland is the place of a person's existence, residence, and settlement. Homeland is the place of birth and residence. A person is familiar with their homeland because it reminds them of the places they have passed through. As for the concept of exile, linguistically: "You banish a man and others, banishing them if you expel them, so they are banished. It is also said that it means imprisonment. Banishment from one's children means disowning them. Banishing the wind means what is banished from the soil, as well as banishing rain, banishing a pot, and banishing a camel: what is thrown with pebbles. Banishing something means banishing it, meaning it is removed" (Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Khalil ibn Ahmad ibn Amr ibn Tamim al-Farahidi al-Basri, 1988).

The concept of exile, technically, is complex because it refers to the humiliation and isolation that a person is forced or compelled to endure (Saleh, 2016).

The word exile means expelling a person from their homeland, and it is a severe punishment for leaving one's homeland. Exile means migration and displacement from the country in which one grew up. Exile has many names and two faces: internal and external.

Internal exile is a person's alienation from their society and culture, and a profound self-reflection due to their perspective on the world and the meaning of their existence differing from that of others. This makes them feel different and alienated. Here, exile has no spatial boundaries. It resides within the self, deprived of its freedom of thought and expression, due to the coercion of political authority or the authority of tradition. This occurs in the opposite place; by definition, exile occurs within the homeland.

External exile is a person's separation from a reference space, from their first place, and their emotional geography. It is a sharp break in their life and a profound rift in their rhythm. Here, the exile carries all the elements of their formation: childhood, natural landscapes, memory, recollections, and linguistic references, in defence of their privacy and identity. The expression of their longing for their homeland takes the form of a prayer to the sacred. Here, the exile develops his difference from others because he fears assimilation and oblivion. He lives on the wide margin between "here" and "there". He sees his distant land as solid, while the land of others is foreign and soft.

The exile is the non-belonger par excellence. He does not belong to any place outside his first memory. Memory becomes a country and an identity, and the contents of memory are transformed into idols. Thus, the exile amplifies the aesthetics of his country and imbues it with the qualities of a lost paradise. As he looks at history with anger, he does not ask: Am I a child of history, or merely its victim? This happens when exile is forced, due to war, natural disasters, political persecution, occupation, or ethnic cleansing. This is what happened to the Iraqi poet Aati Al-Barakat (Darwish, 2015). Professor Ilinca Zarifopol describes exile as a state of displacement, separation, and uprooting (Ali Nasser Kanana, 2013).

The poet Ali Abdul Amir Ajam spoke about this terrible stage of documenting the stormy political and social events in Iraq during the period from 1991 to 2003 AD in his book (In the Wind of Iraq) (Ajam, 2019), as well as in his book (A Nation in Exile) (Ali Abdul Amir Ajam, 2019), describing this stage of Iraq: (The Iraqi scene cannot be approached, specifically since the wars and campaigns of repression spread their heavy and destructive presence over the country and its people, except as a scene devoted entirely to alienation and exile) (Ali Abdul Amir Ajam, 2019). He also adds: If we were to ask about the reason for the emigration of these Iraqi poets, writers, and artists from their homeland, we would only find one answer, the motherland was always in turmoil, whether from a security, political, or social perspective. The homeland that they always sang about, its ancient history, dreamed of a bright future for it, and in it. However, political systems practised much sabotage. As the Lebanese writer Jihad goes on examining the Iraqi phenomenon of exile and alienation, he also arrives at the acknowledgement that if it weren't for those hellish policies, the Iraqis wouldn't have gone into exile and been displaced. What drove them to emigrate was the search for a free and dignified life abroad, which they were denied in their homeland. If their homeland had guaranteed them their natural rights, they would most likely not have left (Al-Barakat, 2006b). In the poem "There", Aati Al-Barakat makes the demonstrative pronoun the name of the poem, thereby pointing to his distant Iraq. The poet creates an image of his beloved in Iraq, whom he loved more than anyone else, and through her, his heart became closed to anyone but her, for no reason other than that, she was the daughter of his land. He begins to talk to her as if she came from his homeland, asking her to talk anything about his homeland, as he is in constant groaning, longing, and eagerness for everything in his homeland. He says in the poem "There":

حدثيني عن هناك فهناك يا منى روعي
وأوجاع الليالي يا أنيني وحنيني
ليس للذكرى معانٍ خبريني عن هناك

Tell me about there, for there, O desire of my soul, and the pains of the nights, O my groaning, and my longing, for memory has no meaning. Tell me about there. (Abdullah Ibrahim, 2012a)

Tell me about friends, about hopes and dreams that they wove together. Then he says that his dreams were killed and crucified in the shadow of exile that forced him to disappear. He says to her, "I wept for you". Exile opens new spaces for the soul and new horizons for the eye, sight, and insight. Space becomes a complex space through the comparative vision-conscious and unconscious, which he described. Nothing remains the same in the presence of the exiled exile: the present is adorned with the garbs of the past, and the past is draped in the garments of what is and what might be; alienation is renewed, Abu Tammam said in his alienation. But the truth is that you are not only renewed, but the world is renewed:

things and beings are renewed, the place from which you were stripped and shed its fur, and the place to which you were stripped to wear its fur. The skin becomes two or more skins, and the senses become more sensitive and exhausted to capture every scent, shape, tone, texture, and sight with greater subtlety and illumination, and within a network of connections that bind everything to something else and another time. From the exile's vision, this complex vision, from the complex perspective that alienation and exile gain, what the exile has been stripped from is reshaped. Also, what has been stripped away sometimes appears as a unified, harmonious whole, and sometimes appears as a scattering of small details that emerge bright and shiny, even though they were not so in the first act of entering the exile's consciousness before exile. The homeland cries out as grapes, a cup of coffee, a disc of falafel, a girl's dress in an olive grove, and Bedouin eyes. The original identity becomes a composition of these scatterings that the imagination and the soul reinvent and reconstruct, connected, interconnected, harmonious, and musical in an act of resistance to the discontinuity, scattering, and fragmentation that characterise the life of the exile (Al-Barakat, 2006b), in the manner of his saying:

عن بقايا أصدقائي وأمانينا القديمة
فأنا يا حلومي المصلوب ما زلت أعاني
أذكرني ماشنت حتى الهفوات
غربليني بليالي التيه وأنين الكلمات
فأنا بعدك أقفلت فؤادي وما زلت بين عينيك أطوف
تخجل الأشعار عن ذكر سواك وتنتحر الحروف
عندما كنت هناك كنت أبكي كي أراك
فالقوافي بين عينيك إرتجاف وإرتباك
صادر الليل أوراقي ومزق الصور
لأنها تحمل أشواقي لتلك الطفلة العمياء!
راقبوا خط هاتفي وفاتهم بأن الطفلة صماء!
اعتذر السنونو فاستغرب القمر
من ترى سينقل البريد وكلها تخاف من عواقب القدر

About the remains of my friends, and our old hopes, I, my crucified dream, am still suffering. Mention whatever you want, even the mistakes...

Sift me through the nights of wandering and the groaning of words, for after you, I closed my heart, and I still do. Between your eyes, I wander around. Poems are ashamed to mention anyone but you, and letters commit suicide. When I was there, I cried to see you, for the rhymes between your eyes are trembling and confused.

The night confiscated my papers and tore up the photos because they contained my longing for that blind girl! They monitored my phone line and realised the girl was deaf! The swallow apologised, and the moon wondered who would deliver the mail, and they all feared the consequences of fate. (Al-Barakat, 2006b)

Thus, alienation drives the poet from one groan to another, from one yearning to another, from the alienation of place to the alienation of the soul, from yearning for family, friends, and homeland to the yearning of loved ones. We know that stories of love and lovers are fickle, strange, and deeply affecting, and the most painful thing a lover suffers is from his beloved. Love, with what it contains of ecstasy and longing, prevents sorrow from leaving its owner, for alienation engulfs him, and his entrails are ignited with tears for that beloved who is his homeland in the land of exile (Al-Tamimi, 2017). So, yearning in exile is sincere, moving, and capable of expressing the emotions and feelings of its owners, who shaped it to carry their sorrows and pains that their tormented souls experience in alienation, and their hearts that have suffered much misery and humiliation (Al-Asmi, 1995). The effect of forced residence in another country due to oppression and persecution, or the absence of freedoms in general, or an attempt to preserve one's personal life from an imminent danger resulting from the nature of the political situation in the homeland.

In the poem "Labyrinths", the poet lives a tornado of thoughts between a homeland he was forced to emigrate from, and a homeland he is forced to live in. (Exile leads to a rift that cannot be mended and to a wound whose bleeding cannot be stopped, so the sorrow of exile cannot be overcome) (Abdullah Ibrahim, 2012b). Poetry often erupts from a person when he is at the height of his sadness, or the height of his joy, so his talent erupted from the depths of despair that accompanied him in his exile, a long, endless night, and the memories of his beloved homeland, the eyes of his loved ones, accompanying him in his night, tormenting him. Since he was exiled, alienation, despair and pessimism made him draw on the element of time to share his state; night is one of the main elements in his poetry, and we see that he mentions night a lot in his poetry if we compare it to other times, and this matter suits his alienated state where he complains of the night darkness and its length and his frequent supplications, reciting poetry, then (the exile and the banished build their home from the writing itself, and from here we find how exile - in a striking paradox - contributes to the development of writing and the generation of a different and alternative consciousness, despite its being accompanied by the sorrow of separation and the ordeal of absence. And a lot of harm would be useful) (Abdullah Ibrahim, 2012c), in the manner of his saying:

لكنها الهوموم لم أك يوماً شاعرا
وحين ذقت نشوة الحروف رجوت حزني أن يدوم
دروبي مقفرة والليل طويل دام
وعيون الأحباب تلاحقتني تعذبني

والحزن يغربلني واليأس طوى هذي أعوام المنفى تتراكم قدامي وتدفعني بجنون

I was never a poet, but it's the worries. And when I tasted the ecstasy of letters, I hoped my sadness would last. My paths are deserted, the night is long and lingering, the eyes of my loved ones pursue me, tormenting me, sadness sifts me, and despair has folded these years of exile, racing ahead of me, driving me madly.

The reader finds in Aati's estranged poetry easy, clear ideas that are neither ambiguous nor complex, rich words, and traditional partial images. His poetry is free from obscure rhetorical devices. Aati Al-Barakat complains of his pain in exile to his mother, where he can almost hear everything despite the distances, and he is overcome with pain over his past. The memories he left behind in his homeland (And living in this land far from his homeland, deprived of his loved ones, the path of his soul, and the scene of his childhood and youth, is often like uprooting the roots from its soil, as the expatriate is afflicted with diseases, not the least of which is the disease of longing for the homeland) (بسيوني شريف, 2009), so he says:

أه يا أمي أه من هذا المنفى المأفون
بكاؤك أسمع في ليالي على طول مسافات البعد الشاسع
أه يا أمي أه يا ذاك الماضي الرائع في بيتي

Oh my mother, oh this fool exile. I hear your crying in my nights, throughout the vast distances. Oh my mother, oh that wonderful past in my home.

Then he began to lament his life that he lived from exile to exile, the beginning of which was his exile that he lived in his homeland, the persecution that the poet felt as a boy, the effect of injustice, oppression, hunger and the unjust siege that took his childhood and his bright youth until the end of his life. Now they have stolen his dearest loved ones, and they have distanced him from them. This is the exile far from them. If hunger and poverty were painful for him, then being away from his loved ones is more painful. At night, during his exile in his homeland, there was his mother who protected him and provided him with safety and reassurance. Now, even his mother has been deprived of him, so no one is near him. He continues to call out and complain to his mother, as he is in pain, and he expressed that with the word (Oh), as in his saying:

ما لون الغربة الآن؟! قد كنت حزينا في وطني
كيف أنا في هذي البلدان؟! كسروا أقلامي وأنا طفل
صلبوا أحلامي وأنا شاب وفي العقد الثالث من عمري
سرقوا كل الأحباب كانت أمي تحرسني حين أنام
وكانت تغدقني عطفًا حين أفر من تلك الأحلام
أه لو تدري أمي بكوابيس الرعب وبما تفعل في أحشائي تلك وهذي الآلام

What colour is alienation now? I was sad in my homeland. How am I in these countries? They broke my pens when I was a child, they crucified my dreams when I was a young man, and in my thirties, they stole all my loved ones. My mother used to watch over me when I slept and shower me with compassion when I woke up from those dreams. Oh, if only my mother knew about the nightmares of terror and what they do to my insides and these pains. (Al-Barakat, 2006c)

There is an important note on Iraqi exile poetry, as it is not restricted to revealing the country's secrets and the injustice and oppression that have befallen it. The poet's mission is to carry the message of the nation and the concerns of the people and to delve into the details of the Iraqi wound. Aati Al-Barakat always raises this issue in his poems and poetic and prose texts. The poet talks about the difference in timing between Iraq and the USA, the day and his exile (Your night is our day, your day is our sleep), saying:

طواف
تختلف الأوقات
ليلكم نهار عندنا
نهاركم لنا سبات

Rove

Times vary

Your night is our day

Your day is our sleep (Aati Al-Barakat, 2006a)

The poet swears to his beloved and calls her (Hoda), for the difference in time and distance prevents his voice from reaching her, and the night is long without her, for she wanders in his mind and does not leave him. His exile prevents the meeting that he knows will not return, and he stutters with shyness and moves with interrogative tools between (how, where, ...), but he knows for certain that he only wishes, so he hopes that the waves of the sea would take him to her, but he continues to suffer the pain of distance and separation, and the pains accompany him in his exile, as he says:

أقسم ياهدي يرتبك الصدى
الليل ملّ الوقوف وهدي تشاكس خاطري
كل الخواطر حول عينيه تطوف!
أتمنى لو يأخذني الموج إليك
وهدي تعاتبني الأسفار تحاصرني
فيخرجني الإستفهام تساءلني دوما

وأين وحتام في عينيها وأنا أتقلب من كيف
سوى أن أتمنى! وأني وأنا لا املك
يرتعض المدار يحتضر المدى
دوما إلى هدى! ويسافر النهار
ترتعض الدروب ويختفي الصدى
طيفك دون موعد حين يداعب الشغاف
ترى متى يذوب الدفء للقلوب
قد مضت السنون في وطن الردى؟!
وهذه الأصقاع!... تغازل الأوجاع في تلكم الربوع

I swear, Hoda, the echo gets confused. The night is tired of standing, and Hoda teases my mind. All thoughts float around her eyes! I wish the waves would take me to you. Travels surround me, and Hoda reproaches me. She always questions me, and the question embarrasses me. In her eyes, I turn over from how, where, and when, and I have nothing but to wish! The orbit trembles, the distance dies, and the day travels, always to guidance! The paths tremble, and the echo disappears when your specter caresses the heart without an appointment. Do you wonder when warmth will return to the hearts in the homeland of destruction? The years have passed, flirting with pain in those regions and these lands!... (Aati Al-Barakat, 2006a)

In the poem (Above the edges of the eyes), Aati Al-Barakat paints a picture of the gathering of things and their prominence in his eyes. Grief intensified upon him and gathered and became prominent in his city, Orak, which never left him. He became in constant insomniac, so everything went away, the beautiful wishes and even love. His heart stopped loving any woman in his exile. The heart no longer beats as it used to beat with love in his country. He did not find anything like the longing, sincerity of feeling, and brightness that he saw with his beloved. Exile, with all its beauty, does not comfort his soul, which suffers every day. There is no beauty in the seas or the picturesque nature of his exile. Everything is lonely here, and he is in constant groaning and a long night of tears and pain that does not stop.

Many Iraqi poets emigrated from their homeland, from different generations and schools, but they all carried Iraq and their city in their poems and hearts. Their texts became hymns written with tears at the end of the night, as we find with Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, how he cried and sang about his city, Jikur, its river, Buwaib, and the poets followed that, so Aati al-Barakat cries and calls out to the hips in his town, as he says in his poem (Above the edges of the eyes):

من عالم الأشجان من ذا رأى أوراك
والليل البهيم والأحزان ،
يعلن الخطب الأليم زأرتي اليوم رسول
وقصور الحب حتى صغار الأمنيات ذهبت
!وجراحي في صميم ؟ أضحت في هشيم
قسماً يازهرتي

**Who has seen hips? from a world of sorrows
And grief, and the dark night
A messenger visited me today announcing the painful news
Even the smallest of wishes and the palaces of love
Have become straw and my wounds are at the core?
I swear, my flower.** (Aati Al-Barakat, 2006b)

The most prominent position and the most dangerous connotations are when the poet lives in spatial exile, but emotionally and intellectually, he remains inhabiting the cocoon of the alienated place, just as the place also inhabits him. In the new place, the exiles create what is called cultural isolation. Their daily lives are in one valley, and their intellectual and emotional spaces are in another. The extent of their cultural, even life, interaction is limited, if not non-existent. The effectiveness of the new place on them does not extend beyond the surface of things and rarely penetrates the formation of their artistic visions or writing techniques. Indeed, most of them are ignorant of the language prevalent in exile or know only enough of it to practice daily life in its purely material dimensions. This experience is truly one of negation and reverse negation: exile from the alienated place first, then exile from the inhabited place to an imaginary visual space, which is the old place (Aati Al-Barakat, 2006b).

Whoever browses the Iraqi poetry that was printed in exile will see that the state of melancholy is what frames the concept and meanings of the poems, and the poet is the most sensitive and delicate being; he is the one who possesses the superior ability to depict things in a wonderful, musical, imaginative language.

Aati Al-Barakat remained in his exile, playing a symphony of longing. When he opens his window every morning, dreaming through this window to see his homeland, which wars have torn it apart, and whose borders and skies have become permissible for death and destruction. In the poem:

ليل العناكب سادفن في ناضريك إغترابي
وسأرجيء ليل العناكب والمستحيل الذي نام ببابي
جرّعتني السكوت الذليل وسألن صبح المنافي الذي
ووجد على مسافات حزني الطويل
إليك أعود كما طائر أتعبه التحليق بين وجع البحث

عن عش نستنه القبائل على كوة باب عتيق
إليك وبين شغاف مواويلا لباس طليق
إليك وعلى مفترق الأبعاد
إليك أعود تركت النذور أو طريق
كانت امنيتي أن أجذك وكما سمتك أمك
إليك عبق كوكبا نساها الأفلول
بين العذوق تنسمته هناك
إليك يا حكاية تروى على الأجيال
يا جملة تغازل السؤال
يا حالة تتحنى أمامها الأحوال
يا وجع الغريب يا أنه تعاند الطبيب
إليك عاند من وجع الدموع
وحرقة المحال

**Night of the Spiders, I will bury my alienation in your eyes
And I will postpone the night of the spiders and the impossible that slept at my door
And I will curse the morning of exile, which made me drink humiliating silence
And found my long sadness in the distances
To you, I return like a bird tired of flying amidst the pain of searching
For a nest forgotten by the tribes on the window of an ancient door
To you and between the passion-wailings of a free despair
To you, and at the crossroads of dimensions
I left the vows or a path to you, I return
My wish was to find you, and as your mother named you
A planet forgotten by sunset, to you, a fragrance
I breathed there among the clusters of grapes
To you, Oh, the story told to generations
Oh, a sentence that flirts with the question
Oh, state before which conditions bow
Oh, pain of the stranger, Oh, that defies the doctor
To you, I return from the pain of tears
And the burning of the impossible (Aati Al-Barakat, 2006c)**

III. CONCLUSION

Aati Al-Barakat emigrated from Iraq, fleeing the persecution of the former regime. Aati Al-Barakat is a poet, belonging to the nineties generation. This is the generation that sailed within and outside the homeland. It is the only generation that escaped the culture of authority, imposing a culture without mediation and overnight decisions. It is a generation that is honest with itself. His arrival in America was his birth. After the events that swept the country, he was born when everything was burning, even the glimmer of hope was fading between the hammer of globalisation and the anvil of dictatorship. His birth was the first stage of the burning, to be a turning point in writing, far from the essence of the self. He wrote while hiding from one place to another outside the prison walls, about those who wandered the paths of ancient sadness, pursued by eternal damnation. He continued writing about them even when he emigrated, but he remained suffering from alienation and estrangement from his homeland. America was his place of exile, and he suffered from spiritual and intellectual alienation. He continued to inhabit the cocoon of the estranged, just as it inhabited him.

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