

The Textual vs the Contextual: A Heideggerian Reading of Walid Saif's Poem 'Love Again'

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Abstract—This article reads *Love Again* (1992), the last poem written by contemporary Palestinian poet Walid Saif based on Heidegger's concept of the *Dasein* as detailed in *Being and Time* and his concept of art as detailed in "The Origin of the Work of Art" as well as in other of his works. In *Love Again* "togetherness," which is the essence of the *Dasein*, dissolves completely into the kind of being of "the Others". Heidegger's definition of "the truth of being" has the tendency of combining two contesting groups of theories: the first is a modernist group that advocates an intrinsic/textual approach to read literary texts in light of new criticism and other formalist schools. The second is a group that advocates a contextual/extrinsic/political approach to read literary texts like new historicism, postcolonialism and others. A Heideggerian reading of Saif's poem debunks the modernist claim that a detachable aesthetic experience can safeguard the poem's "historical permanence" and transcend its political context. Unlike formalists of his time, Heidegger was not concerned with the tension that emerged between the above two groups since he took both the extrinsic and intrinsic elements of a literary work as indispensable elements towards exploring the literary work. Furthermore, the above tension does not seem to be part of Heidegger's consciousness.

Index Terms—Heidegger, Saif, *Dasein*, intrinsic, extrinsic

I. INTRODUCTION

Walid Saif (1948-), a prominent Palestinian poet, writer of TV drama and novelist, is well known in Palestine and the Arab region for his poetic oeuvre whose chief focus is Palestine, Palestinian resistance, the diasporic identity and others. Saif began his writing career as a poet and then he proceeded to write many successful historical series for different Arabic TV channels, the most important of which is *The Palestinian Odyssey* (*Al-Taghriba Al-Falastiniyah*), written in 2002 (Mahmoud, 2022). He wrote novels, the majority of which were based on many series that he wrote for the TV. Saif was born in Palestine, obtained his PhD degree in linguistics from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, London University). He taught in the Department of Arabic at the University of Jordan for more than fifteen years, and later he decided to quit the academic life and get devoted to writing.

In 2022, he received many awards for his literary achievements, including the Order of Al Istiqlal (Independence Day) of the First Degree by King Abdullah the Second¹, a medal by the Association of the Jordanian Writers², and State of Palestine Prize in Literature, Arts and Humanities³. In the same year, he was announced the man of the year for the Regional Book Day⁴. In 2005, he was given the Appreciation Award from the Arab Broadcasting Union, League of Arab States, for the TV series *The Palestinian Odyssey*⁵. For four consecutive years (2001-2004), he received the annual award of the Best Drama Writer at the Cairo Radio and Television Festival for four of his TV drama series: *Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi*, *Saqr Quraysh*, *Rabi' Cordoba*, and *The Palestinian Odyssey*⁶.

In Saif's last poem, 'Love Again' (1992), the 'I am' of the poem invites the woman he is in love with to join him in an ethereal journey through time and space where they come across people who are memorable for their intellectual

¹ watananews.com/192338/

² ammonnews.net/article/691668

³ <https://www.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/61584>

⁴ alrai.com/article/10743159/%D8%AB%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%81%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86/%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%A8-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%81https://www.katebaktub.org/%D9%85%D8%A4%D9%84%D9%81/%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%81

⁵ [ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9\(%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84\)](http://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9(%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84))

⁶ katebaktub.org/%D9%85%D8%A4%D9%84%D9%81/%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%81

achievements and entrancing fantasies. Saif uses the refrain technique whereby he repeats the following sentence at the end of many of the stanzas of the poem: 'Be, so I am' (كوني/أكن). In the poem, both love and the existence of the other render 'being' possible. Two conditions that are essential in Heidegger's account of the *Dasein*. Denker states that according to Heidegger, 'human existence shows itself most clearly in the extremes of the limit situations (death, love, faith, sickness)' (2013, p. 61). For Heidegger (2002a, 2002b, 1971), being is not a metaphysical concept that can be defined in transcendental terms. He does not raise typical ontological questions impinging on God's existence, humans' free will and others (see Carman, 2013; Philips, 2005; Wrathall, 2013).

The narrator in 'Love Again' is a first person singular who is invented by the poet (see Khalaf, 2007; Salameh, 2019). By virtue of the aesthetics the poet utilizes and the authenticity of the human emotions he projects, each I is relevant as a 'being', using Heidegger's word, now and then. The narrative of the 'I' unconceals both the poet's consciousness, through self-revelation, and the reader's consciousness, through active responses, and renders them part of the world's being. Heidegger (2002a, 2002b) sees that works of art, specifically poems, are possible happening via bonding with the other(s).

In 'Love Again', both the textual experiences of the 'I' and the 'I' of the poet bring forth the long-held controversy between two opponent sets of theories. The first stresses the self-sufficiency of the literary work based on a close-reading approach stressing the intrinsic elements that inhere in the work. Other extrinsic elements that surround the text, including autobiographical elements and the context, need not be considered. Such views are promoted in new criticism, structuralism, formalist theories, the intentional fallacy, the affective fallacy and others (see Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1946; Barry, 2017; Dobie, 2012; Farrell, 2017). The other set of theories asserts that an insightful reading of the work is one that is necessarily informed by both extrinsic elements pertaining to the author and various socio-cultural elements as well as by a close-reading approach of the work. The reader-response theory, cultural studies, new historicism, psychoanalytic theories, phenomenology and postcolonial theory and others are seriously concerned with how extrinsic elements are operational in any work and how the 'I' of the author is inherently imbedded in the literary work (see Parker, 2020; Ahern, 2019; Felski, 2015; Castle, 2007).

Drawing upon Heidegger's concept of art, the happening of the truth, and time and being, along with other author-related theories, I argue that in 'Love Again' the poet's self-revelation does not forsake the poem's aesthetics nor does it limit its humanist scope. The recognition that the persona in the poem is also representative of the 'I' of the poet can positively affect readers' response to the poem and the way they bond with it. Heidegger's views of the author and his/her work of art mediate between the above two theoretical positions.

Saif's commitment to the cause of Palestine is reflected in all of his works, whether literary or non-literary, directly or indirectly. Resistance to the occupation of Palestine led him to be an activist in the Students' Union at the University of Jordan and he took a leading part in many demonstrations organized against the Israeli occupation of Palestine in the sixties and seventies of the twentieth-century. He wrote many articles condemning the peace treaty between many Arab countries and the state of Israel. His attitude towards the treaty was similar to that of Edward Said in that both exposed the unethicity of the treaty and how the Zionist propaganda has for long been working to justify the uprooting of Palestinians from their lands. Saif expressed his resentment to how the previously oppressed becomes an oppressor and the victimized becomes a victimizer, stressing that neither the Palestinians nor the Arabs had anything to do with the Holocaust and yet they were the ones to be punished for it. In *The Witness, the Witnessed*, Saif opposes Mahmoud Darwish's stand regarding the Zionist entity when Darwish considered the Israeli existence a *fait accompli* that has to be recognized by all the Arabs even though he never denied that the land of Palestine belongs to the Palestinians. Darwish (1993) argued that the historical solution for the Palestinian conflict lies in the transformation of the Middle East to the socialist system and with the victory of global socialism over capitalism. This ensures the historical progress of the region and its evolution into one big socialist nation (Saif, 2016). Saif continues to be preoccupied with the Palestinian cause through the creation of an imaginative world that fulfils his desire for freedom, justice and love. Saif believes that dictatorship and authoritarian regimes are responsible for the deterioration of the region and for the continued Israeli occupation of Palestine.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Walid Saif started his poetic career by accentuating the dilemma of the Palestinian cause, resistance as an ontological necessity and the importance of redeeming the land. In the poems he wrote in the 1960s, Saif made specific reference to the Palestinian city he was born in, Tulkarm. In this phase, Saif was hopeful of freeing the Palestinian land from occupation. Like Darwish, he was named as a poet of resistance (Salameh, 2019), and was classified, along with Fadwa Toukan, Nizar Qabani, Bader Shaker Al-Sayyab and others, as one of the most important Arab poets in composing free verse (Salameh, 2019). Odeh (2020)⁷, Abu-Nidal (2000), Al-Mashayikh (2005), Ibrahim (2019), Fakhri (1990), Khalil (2021)⁸, Saleh (2022)⁹ and others acknowledge the impact that Saif has on the development of modern poetry and free

⁷ balkinews.com/?p=29438

⁸ sahabi.jo/files/art.php?id=285661dbd89e6d3fa15f1b2ff7a4c2622989586e

⁹ diffah.alaraby.co.uk/diffah/opinions/2022/9/7/%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%86%D9%83%D9%87%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-

verse in Jordan and Palestine and on the protection of the historical memory of Palestine through his poetry and the TV series he authors. Saddouk, in *The Palestinian Poets in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology* (2000) includes Saif as one of the most important poets who influenced the style and topics of other Arab poets despite the fact that he turned from writing poetry into writing drama and novels. About his abandonment of poetry, Saif states in his biography *The Witness, The Witnessed* that 'I took poetry with me in my dramatic writing ... The concept of poetics is broader than the limits of the poem, and it can really be manifested in other literary forms' (2016, p. 465). Saif finds that 'poetry hates division, partnership, and constraints; poetry demands to remain in the center of the "I", and poets do not reach their full potential unless they take poetry as a craft and devote their mental and emotional abilities completely to it' (2016, p. 466).

Nevertheless, Saif's above shift did not prevent some Arab critics from pursuing serious scholarly work on his poems. In *The Manifestations of Artistic Creativity in the Poetry of Walid Saif* (2007), Khlaf draws attention to the artistic creativity in Saif's poetry as manifest in the remarkable stylistic elements, lexicon, imagery, and dramatic structure enriched by intense utilization of paradox, intertextuality, ancient myths from different locations and allusion. In addition, she shows how Saif is influenced by writers from the West like Federico Garc ía Lorca and other non-Arab poets.

Another study entitled *Myth and Folklore in Walid Saif's Poetry* (Nada, 2013) draws attention to Saif's utilization of mythic figures like the phoenix, mermaid, Osiris, Ishtar, folklore like folk proverbs, songs, tales, and costumes. Nada analyses the function of those mythic and folklore elements as they occur both in Saif's poetry and in the original myth and folklore tales. She elaborates on how this utilization affects the structure of Saif's poem as well as its meaning, emphasizing that Saif does not use myth and folklore as mere decorative tools; rather they are intended to be a chronicle guarding the Palestinian memoir and an implicit critique of corrupt and complicit political authorities. The mythic elements in two poems by Saif also constitute the subject of the article 'Depicting Reality in Walid Saif's Poem 'Ghadra and Zaid Al-Yasin Tal' as a Model' (Al-Deek, 2008). Al-Deek explicates how myth has always been indispensable to the poetry genre and how Saif makes use of mythology to endow his poems with dramatic energy and dream-like visions so as to reveal the different layers of the identities projected in both poems.

While Saif's literary work is the focus of many Arab scholars, Heidegger's work is the focus of scholars from all over the world. Many western scholars read poetry through Heideggerian lenses. For example, Backman (2011) argues how being in Stefan George's poetry is influenced by Heidegger's concept of unconcealment through linguistic articulation - releasement of words from metaphysics to being. The being of the word, its meaning, is historically and contextually determined and not a purely subjective process. Rogers (2006) finds that Heidegger's view of poetry does not differ much from his view of philosophy despite the fact that Heidegger later defends poets against philosophers; 'the words in a poem may be less formal, but truth never depended on an academic degree' (p. 6).

In the process of reading Wallace Stevens' poetry from a phenomenological perspective, Tan (2022) points out that Heidegger and Stevens stress the importance of poetic language as an opening that surpasses transcendental ego and a strict dualistic view of the world. Both see the truth in poetry as openings and happenings that figure out methods for potential transformation of reality rather than a mere representation of it. Appropriation is for both a major function of the poetic language. Similarly, 'Love Again' is all about the poet's endeavour to appropriate images that defy the existing status quo and express a desire for things to be. Gordon (1998) emphasizes Heidegger's interest in proving that language as a way of thinking is what makes human existence meaningful. Apart from being a communicative means, language, unconceals human truth. Poetry is not merely a source of pleasure or a site for the aesthetic; poetry is an educational tool that has the potential of awakening people to deeper perception of ontological issues.

Heidegger's philosophy is also drawn upon to read novels. For Heidegger, Kim shows, uncovering a phenomenon is a sort of epiphany that belongs to the truth; art is a 'manifold revealing' (2012, p. 41). Art is all poetic and allows for an opening through which the luminosity can be possible. Epiphany is the mysterious opening itself. 'The opening is neither the light nor the darkness but the space that allows both to play' (2012, p. 44). Heidegger's description of epiphany is used in the twentieth century in place of the word vision. Both Heidegger and Joyce use the term to denote resistance to order in disciplines and institutions. Scholar (2018) analyzes Leopold Bloom, the main character in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, through Heidegger's concept of the *Dasein*, where via his phenomenological approach, affirms how human beings cannot be dissociated from their environment. Bloom is as much in Ithaca as much as Ithaca is in Bloom. The transformation that Bloom undergoes is also the transformation in the place.

Babich (2006) points out the convergences and divergences between Nietzsche, Heidegger and Hölderlin in philosophical thought, music and love. She draws attention to the deterioration that is befalling the real world in term of politics, science, ecology and economy. She holds that philosophy can nourish an ethical attitude to deter this deterioration. Also, Grosser and Sahouri (2021) show how Heidegger turned from philosophical thinking into poetic thinking after his engagement with the Nazi movement to name phenomena anew. Their book underscores some critics' reading of individual poetic and literary works drawn on Heideggerian themes, specifically those concerned with immanence and transcendence in modern times. They show affinities as well as divergences in world literature to unfold the complex relation between literature and philosophy rather than rendering one a mirror of the other.

Allen (2007) argues that it is important to account for the specificity and excessiveness of literary language within the ontological terms laid out by Heidegger. This is so since literature is grounded in the human nature, human relations and human history. This approach entails that critics consider Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin from an aesthetic perspective and not in terms of its convergence with Heidegger's philosophy. Allen maintains that a combined approach of the two can enable a discovery of the truth which is, in Deriddean term, can be found in ellipses (see Pelmas, 1993; Bové 1980). Griffiths (2014) explains how sensitive and personal moments that T. S. Eliot experienced in his life and expressed best in his poetry are reminiscent of those moments of unconcealment that Heidegger refers to in *Ereignis*. Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin invokes the same situation as that of T. S. Eliot. It is poetic language that transforms this subjective experience into a generic human condition.

In the Arab region, scholars refer to Heidegger a lot; many of his works are translated into Arabic. However, we could not come across a study that undertakes the analysis of any Arabic literary work from a Heideggerian perspective. For example, Moser (2014) argues that there are many Arab thinkers who are interested in Heidegger's philosophy; those include Meskini, Miftah and al-Shaykar who read Heidegger as a critic of metaphysics. They also apply Heidegger's critique of metaphysics to their own philosophical projects, but not to any literary work.

Mohammad (2012) draws attention to Heidegger's interest in poetry not merely as an aesthetic object but as a primordial mode of thinking. Poetic language is imbued with potentials that account for both transcendental, historical and ontological issues. He established a dialogue with Hölderlin to free language from its rigid reference to one phenomenon or another in the modern age. Mahmud shows that poetry derives its value from the philosophy that poetry inheres. For example, Al-Dihaji (2022) mentions in his study that the Modern Egyptian poet Mohammad Amin raises ontological questions influenced by Heidegger's philosophy; but he does not talk in detail about those questions. His study is concerned with Amin's interest in modernist ideas.

This study differs from previous studies on Saif's poems in that it is the first to read 'Love Again' or actually any of Saif's poetry from a Heideggerian perspective and, drawing specifically upon Heidegger's view of art, it is the first to make use of many aspects of the poem to probe whether any separation between contextual readings and textual readings is possible or constructive. None of the foregoing studies and other studies on Heidegger provides analysis of any poem or work of art to demonstrate how Heidegger's views of art can reconcile between two different theoretical positions that still occupy the thought of many scholars. This study shows that Heidegger attributes importance to both extrinsic and intrinsic elements of art, to the value of the writing 'Self', and to the permanence of the historical functionality of the literary text.

III. THEORY IN THE RESEARCH

Being for Heidegger is a *Dasein* which denotes the entity's relation to the other, and more specifically the interaction with that other without whom the world is plunged into nothingness. The earth and the world are two different but inseparable entities. The world manifests its being through the different aspects of humans' actions, interactions, production, struggle, etc. Earth is the site which shelters the world – this dynamic presence. Everyday *Dasein* thus exists as being-with in any mode of involvement, be it harmonious or cacophonous (Heidegger, 2002a, 1971). In 'Love Again', the 'Other' is depicted as constitutive of the 'Self', through love and empathy at times and through struggle, disturbance and uprooting at others – an instance stressed by Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* (2002a). The persona in 'Love Again' is a highly dynamic entity whose presence is not confined by temporality or locality.

The dynamic re-emergence of the speaker and the spoken in Saif's poem is reminiscent of what Heidegger terms in his article 'The Origin of the Work of Art' 'permanence,' 'a continued existence' (2002a, p. 268). In fact, Saif wrote various poems about the Palestinian tragedy and resistance to the Israeli occupation. Those include 'Poems in the Time of Fath' (1968), 'The Odyssey of the People of Palestine' (1979), 'Tattoo on the Arm of Khadra' (1971), and others. However, 'Love Again' was more attuned with Heidegger's definition of a literary work of art as not simply a 'thing' or a 'vocal in the linguistic work,' a feature that is characteristic of all literary works, but one that 'makes publicly known something other than itself, it manifests something other: it is an allegory ... the work is a symbol' (2002, p. 3). Yet, unlike the outward being of things, a work has a core that is naturally derived from its 'thingliness'; it is that 'which always appears and comes forth along with the core' (2002a, p. 6). The sentence, he argues, does not provide the structure of the work, for the structure of the thing (the being of the poem) and the sentence are derived 'from a common and more primordial source,' whose 'familiarity' as 'a long-established habit' has led to overlooking 'the unfamiliarity from which it arose.' A mere interpretation of the work as a thing, as it stands, is 'inadequate to its thingliness, its self-sustaining and self-containing nature' (2002a, p. 7).

Obviously, by emphasizing 'primordial source,' Heidegger gives weight to human sentiments, values and inclinations. Proust, Deleuze and Barthes hold a similar point of view in focusing on the sublimity and eternity of the work of art due to the spiritual power it has. This power is derived from the relation that exists between the work and people's various experiences. In 'Love Again', the speaker/the poet is aware of his value as an originator of unique linguistic words that invoke timelessness and spacelessness. Thus, he invites his woman to

Come nigh and enter the heart of my realm,
To a timeless time, a spaceless space. (1992, p. 9)

The reference to a human core whether through allegory or symbol, according to Heidegger, is a crucial element of his definition of the aesthetics of works of art. This human core is a vital presence and a central theme in Saif's poem. Palestinian resistance to occupation in Saif's other poems can be underscored reference to Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* where Being is meaningful in terms of one's engagement with a cause. In 'Love Again', 'historical permanence' and 'primordial source' are more clearly projected than in his previous poems. Despite the fact that Heidegger applies his views to what he labels as 'great works of art,' what counts as a great work of art or a canon has become a highly debated issue now. For Langfeld (2018), canonisation is a dynamic process that cannot be reduced to the aesthetic elements of an artistic work. It can be a site of power struggle (see Dobie, 2012; Eagleton, 2013; Parker, 2020).

Heidegger in 'The Origin of the Work of art' shows how the poem or any work of art allows 'the artist to emerge as the master of art. The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other' (2002a, p. 1). The reciprocal relation between the two is where the happening of the truth can be found. The artist or the orator is presented through the language which enables meanings and speaks historically the artist's name and identity. Poetic language unconceals the poet's inner world and brings it partly into being. This reminds of the Freudian perspective of dreams, for like dreams, language and literary texts can be symptomatic of the unconscious, the latent. Unlike dreams, a poetic text is a form of being, a *Dasein*. Heidegger, influenced by Husserl's phenomenology, stresses the impact of subjective consciousness on the formation and perception of art and actually any worldly phenomenon. Unlike Descartes who maintained that disinterestedness is conditional for an 'objective' account of any phenomenon, including art, Heidegger admits that great works of art are a site of openness and a source of light through which the artist's subjective self is disclosed. Heidegger's viewpoint on 'great' works of art offers a situation where the personal and the impersonal coexist.

Heidegger calls revelation through language of poetry a 'projective' statement in a historical sense. Through art, the poet's subjective experience enables readers to understand permanence and images in temporal time. Poetry is a process of preservation of the truth, 'the setting-into-work of truth' (2002, p. 33). Through it 'history either begins or starts over again' (2002, p. 74). Given the historical function and nature of art, a poem is always in a position of a genuine beginning. Whenever art happens, through reading and rereading, it discloses new dimensions of people's being in the world. Heideggerian above perspectives prove useful in understanding how the subjective dimension – the 'I am' of the poet – in 'Love Again' does not prevent the poem from permanently becoming a genuine beginning and an infinite reservoir of human 'truth'(s). 'Love Again', as the study aims to show, is both a subjective narrative and a poetic happening; the 'I am' in the poem is both intentional/biographical and impersonal/infinite in its permanent historical functionality.

Moments of self-representation for an inclusive interpretation of 'Love Again' as a literary text in its own right and as a disclosure of Saif's own psychological status call for reference to authorial theories of Roland Barthes, Freud, Lacan as well as to autobiographical theories. This study will explore anxieties and ontological concerns that are manifest in 'Love Again' in relation to the Palestinian traumatic political and cultural context. The issue of the author's being in the text and the historical being of the text *per se* will be discussed in reference to Heidegger's perception of the *Dasein* – being as an act of involvement with the other (Heidegger, 2002).

In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger argues that 'art is historical and, as historical, is the creative preservation of truth in the work. Art happens as poetry' (2002, p. 49). In any work of art, there is 'a disclosure of the being as that and how it is, there is a happening of truth at work' (2002, p. 16), and this being is none other than the producer of the artistic work. What Heidegger seems to be implying here is that the artist does not only speak the momentary truth through his art, but s/he also preserves it, for every time the work is visited, a new opening is revealed, which is reminiscent of defamiliarization, a term first coined by Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky, to signify art's power to transform the ordinary and release it from the monotony of typical perception (Eagleton, 1996).

In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger affirms that 'Art is the origin of both the artwork and the artist. An origin is the source of the essence in which the being of a being presences' (2002a, p. 33). He presents us with a pattern of thought that supports both a linguistic/intrinsic reading of the text as well as an extrinsic/contextual reading – both approaches help to illuminate the truth in this work. The historical survival of the work is as important as the creator of the work since 'it is the work which makes the creators possible in their essence and which, in virtue of its essence, needs the preservers' (2002a, p. 44). The reader, the preserver, of the work is not a contingency; s/he is 'unavoidable' and naturally comes to the essay from without, at first and for a long time thereafter, represents and interprets the facts of the case from out of the silent domain that is the source of what has been thought. But for the author there remains the necessity to speak each time in the language that is, in each case, appropriate to the various stations on his/her way (2002a, p. 56).

Heidegger describes the language of poetry, which has a privileged place in his thinking, as the truth of all the truths since it speaks the orator's name and unconceals her/his identity (see Magrini & Schwieler, 2018). The potential of great art is 'to attune, transform, and displace *Dasein*, representing its ecstatic entry into the unconcealment of Being' (Heidegger, 2002, p. 54). Collins and Selina maintain that art for Heidegger 'opens space the space for disclosure (lighted clearing or *Lichtung sens Sein*)' (2012, p. 251). 'It is more like a field of flickering illumination and darkening. Beings appear in the light, but in that same light beings also retreat, slide into shadow, become absent ... every presence arrives with Absences' (Ibid, p. 259). Heidegger points out that 'the clearing is pervaded by a constant concealment in

the twofold form of refusal and obstructing' (2002, p. 31). This invokes Virginia Woolf's famous statement in her article 'Modern Fiction' where she asserts that life is 'not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end' (1984, p. 160). The essence of truth in art is that which stands between obstruction/concealment and clearing/unconcealment; 'the essence of truth is in itself the ur-strife [*Urstreit*] in which is won that open center within which beings stand, and from out of which they withdraw into themselves' (2002, p. 31). The oscillation between disclosure and closure sustains art and creates a continuous strife/struggle.

Heidegger (2002) maintains that, for art to be accessible, it has 'to stand on its own' and this is 'the innermost intention of the artist' who is 'like a passageway which, in the creative process, destroys itself for the sake of the coming forth of the work' (p. 19). Yet, he wonders if it is possible for the work of art to stand outside all relations; he answers that it is not possible, since 'a mere reversal, made for its own sake, reveals nothing' (2002, p. 21). Both the creator and the preserver are the thrust behind the survival of a 'good' work of art. The artist seeks an expression of a sense of 'historical humanity' that is based on 'the foundational experience of the thinking,' reflecting an ability to unconceal beings (2002, pp. 38, 40). The creator of the work of art sets forth the work, allows beings to assume appearance and uses his/her handicraft to capture the truth of the human existence. Heidegger's assertion that the artist aims to capture what is true about the human existence attributes importance to the artist's intention. Heidegger in the process does not overlook the importance of how the artist's handicraft determines the kind of effect the work of art has on readers or audience. The above views of Heidegger will be made use of while analysing 'Love Again' to explore how authorial impulses and other contextual elements help to elucidate works of art and understand their permanent ontological significance.

IV. NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a reading of Walid Saif's poem 'Love Again' through a Heideggerian perspective. In 'Love Again', Saif raises lots of ontological questions and concerns, some of which are specific to the Palestinian question, the history of the Arab world and others relate to humanity in general. Through Heidegger's views of *Dasein* and works of art, the study shows how the poem combines the specific concerns of the poet with timeless issues and how the specific itself can be transcended to become timeless and borderless.

The article first introduces the speaker in the poem (the persona) and shows how he can be identified with the poet himself and influenced by the context in which the poem is produced. In 'Love Again', there is repetition of sentences like 'Be, so I am' and 'love's not but for me to be and for you to be'. This conditional mode of existence is how Heidegger sees *Dasein* (being in action), which manifests itself in the extreme through love. The poem is imbued with instances and themes that evoke many of the thoughts that Heidegger confers. This correlation was encouraging to undertake this study.

Heidegger's attentiveness to the concept of the originator of the work of art and of the revelation of the work through a linguistic activity brings forth the argument that his views assume a position that mediates between contextual and non-contextual theories. Accordingly, the study will underscore how the aesthetic of the work is inherently linked with the author's performance (handicraft) and influenced by the author's own context. It is on this performance that readers can make ethical, political and aesthetic judgement. A reference to any of the contextual and non-contextual theories will be made as relevant to the discussion of 'Love Again' and to Heidegger's perception of the work of art.

The analysis of 'Love Again' will be qualitative – emphasizing thematic, aesthetic, contextual and authorial issues. The poem, as such, is intended as an example to show that Heidegger's perception of the work of art proves that the contest between textual theories and contextual theories proves unnecessary or even chimerical.

V. APPROPRIATION AND REVERSAL

In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger assigns great significance to poetry to save humanity from being enslaved by accelerating progress in the world of technology. He believes that poetry expresses the authentic truth of the human being (2002a, 2002b). In the following lines from 'Love Again', the speaker allows his imagination to travel back in time only to recreate history

Love Again

....

Here Al-Ma'arri peruses life and seeks explications in explications,
 And here Al-Ma'arri devours history and epochs in seconds of speculation,
 And observes the epics, the battles, the ladders and the paths in the trunks of oaks;
 And here Al-Ma'arri observes the odds in their odds.
 As the wheel of fortune rotates unchecked against the odds.
 And here Al-Ma'arri, reclining, unravels in the body tempests and subordinate morasses,
 And here Al-Ma'arri's eyes opened to the expanses. (1992, p. 9)

Al-Ma'arri (937-1057) is considered one of the greatest classical Arab poets and philosophers. He became blind at a young age and was known for his pessimism and hereditary views. Saif reinvents Al-Ma'arri and bestows upon him

what he did not have, sight, and glorifies through fantasia what he already had, insight. Al-Ma'arri is an allusion that expresses the poet's desire for reversing historical facts and producing an effect of estrangement. Al-Ma'arri in the above lines can observe and 'open his eyes to the expanses,' and 'unravels in the body tempests and subordinate morasses.' He is depicted as indulged in a world of desires and sensuality, a world to which he was an alien. But such is the shock that Saif induces in the reader. Heidegger (2022) asserts that aesthetics is located in the disturbance of the familiar and traditional (see Grosser & Sahouri, 2021). Al-Ma'arri who lived in the Abbasid era is recreated through the poet's imagination and so he becomes the truth of being at the moments of reading; 'the undisclosed abundance of the unfamiliar and the extraordinary, which means that it also contains strife with the familiar and ordinary' (Heidegger, 2002a, p. 74).

Al-Ma'arri is shown as a free man who is not hindered by blindness. Heidegger attributes to poetry a special status because it is that special nature of the language of poetry that brings the original core of humans into the open, which in the case of Al-Ma'arri is the desire to be released from the imprisonment of blindness. The projection of this desire is bringing the human core into being by disclosing it; Heidegger describes poetry as a 'projective saying' (2002, p. 46). The truth, however, 'is intended to denote that opposition which exists within the essence of truth between clearing and concealment. It is the conflict of the primal strife. The essence of truth is in itself the *ur-strife*' (2002, p. 31). Al-Ma'arri's presence in the poem entreats a situation where the power of the image is based on the creation of oppositions between what is real and what is illusionary.

A similar opposition between reality and illusion is found in another stanza that describes Hassan Al-Nawasi, a Muslim Persian (650-814) who pioneered the genres of wine poetry and erotic poetry addressed to both men and women. In 'Love Again', Al-Nawasi is cooped up in this world, creating his world in a glass of wine.

He Beholds on the martyr's head a dove perching, and headless tyrants walking,

He beholds countries recovering their firmaments and their birds. (1992, p. 9)

Saif creates images inspired not much by the reality of Al-Nawasi as officially chronicled, but rather by Saif's own desire to render him an agency for the transformation of an oppressive condition. This recalls Heidegger's description of art as capable of 'exposing the unreality of the arrangements of our ordinary life, releasing us from the closure and rigidity of conventional perception.' So even if poetic elements are based on *being* at a specific moment in time, Heidegger argues that 'what truth the work of art reveals can never be identical to what went before' (2002, p. 75).

VI. SAIF'S AND HEIDEGGER'S PHENOMENOLOGY

Heidegger was influenced by Husserl, a founder of modern phenomenology, who thought of the human consciousness not in Freudian terms but in terms of what might be true of the universal structure of the human mind/consciousness. Heidegger did not settle for a transcendental human consciousness. In *Time and Being*, he argues how the human consciousness is not an abstract entity. Rather, it is *being* in the world, it is *being* in time and place. Being turns into *Dasein* through an active engagement with others. More recent studies show that the phenomenology of many human experiences prove that the affect and consciousness cannot be separated (Miller, 2017; Wehrs, 2017). This implies that our interpretation of a literary text is a sort of affect that is inseparable from how we respond to this text.

The truth is perceived differently by people based on their different experiences and the truth represents itself to the reader through a sublime linguistic activity. The reader's perception of the truth is a subjective process informed by her/his own mental activities. Perception is what turns up in one's consciousness and does not have to correspond with what exists in the real world. '*Dasein* is not primarily a detached observer of 'objects', but a 'concerned' user of practical entities...So the world is not something 'out there', external – but part of *Dasein*'s being, as being-in' (Collins & Selina, 2012, p. 128; see Andrew, 2018). Saif in *The Witness, the Witnessed* maintains a similar position: "The eye of the beholder changes, so the image of the visible person changes. The self-identity that connects me to the distant past gives me the feeling that the stages of my life represent a process of one self. And to the extent that the past contributes to the production of the present, the present contributes to the reproduction of the past insofar as it is a narrative constructed by the present consciousness" (2016, p. 5).

In 'Love Again', there are many places and names that are inspired by the poet's cultural and historical location but are transcended to address what Heidegger calls the human core which he defines as the struggle between what is hidden and what is revealed. Saif appropriates historical figures to induce the idea of resistance as conducive to freedom.

Saif repeats the expression 'it is love again' and 'be, so I am' eight times in the poem. Love is ever-regenerated and the I's being is conditioned by the other's being whose togetherness makes *Dasein* possible. The speaker in the poem addresses his beloved by saying 'Start your trip to a metaphysical time beyond the scope of time.' Love, *Dasein* and timelessness are three main terms that Heidegger finds necessary for sublime works of art: "The time is desolate because it lacks the unhiddenness of the essence of pain, death, and love. This desolation is itself desolate because the essential realm in which pain and death and love belong together is withdrawn. Hiddenness exists so long as the realm where they belong together is the abyss of being" (Heidegger, 2002a, p. 205).

Love, according to Heidegger, is the 'invisible innermost,' which is true in terms of its presence 'like that of the customary consciousness of calculating production, is a presence of immanence' (2002, p. 125; see Marshall). Saif's reference to metaphysical time and immanence in 'Love Again' does not mitigate the intensity of the Palestinian crisis

as an issue in the poem. Saif witnessed the 1967 war between the Israelis and some Arab countries, which ended in the Israeli's occupation of Tulkarm, the poet's own town, and the rest of the Palestinian land that remained after the 1948 war. The poetic is not carried out at the expense of the political in the poem. Saif depicts vivid images of the battlefield, martyrs and barricades. He compares those images with his own poetic rhyme:

I'm the lounge where jaded warriors recline
 I'm the conglomeration of oxymora where east and west entwine.
 ...
 My rhyme is the burning of the bosom in the way of lassies.
 My rhyme is a walking martyr
 Squelching in his blood, stalked by fires and ashes. (1992, p. 9)

The horror of the war is rendered less strenuous through a human/humanist encounter between the speaker, who now assumes the role of a soldier, and the enemy soldier. In a beautiful stanza, the speaker expresses fear of surrendering to the other soldier out of empathy which, however, does not last for long since he knows that the being of the other is the annihilation of the self.

Let's part now then, before our acquaintance is complete,
 For we're two warriors – let's not with sophisms compete.
 ...
 We may meet at the dart shooting spree,
 After which you will be but I won't be,
 Or I will be but you won't be. (1992, p. 9)

This crisis is both personal and collective; it is expressed through visual and perceptual senses:

I am still searching in my spirit's space for an orb that guides me to my motherland.
 I want to extol my motherland,
 It's a land where bards and lovers command,
 Reigned not by Kafur, nor does a policeman in ink-colour uniform has the upper hand. (1992, p. 9)

The speaker expresses not what is but what he desires things to be; a free land that is not governed by Kafur¹⁰ and policemen. It is in that gift of the sublime poetic that the desired becomes unconcealed. It is *being* that renders poetry a source of pleasure and a call for renewal. For Heidegger, beauty lies in the truth¹¹ and the poet is the primal source of art who has the talent to appropriate humans to the sublime in many ways, and appropriate being to places and earth to sky through "an upward glance that spans the between of earth and sky... The poet it is who, looking to the sky, sees in its manifestness the self-concealment of the unknown god ... At the basis of man's ability to build in the sense of cultivating and constructing there must be, as primal source, his poetic ability, the ability to take the measure of the world." (1971, p. xiv). The lines below from 'Love Again' articulate a situation – images – similar to Heidegger's above comment on the poet and poetry, especially in relation to the ascendance of lands for heavens:

And seagulls wailing, and powerful poetry flowing!
 How could a shepherd's pipe take me back to myself?
 Wherefrom does this nightfall purloin its tint, for aught I know?
 Love Again then.
 Wonderous is the place whence comes this ocean, these embers,
 The land ascends for the heavens to give her a kiss so aglow! (1992, p. 9)

Saif in 'Love Again' uses poetry to disturb reality and to make the unconscious patent through an activity. This reminds of Freudian interpretation of dreams, where one's dream can illuminate the gist of the concealed dream. But unlike dreams, poetic articulation is a presence fashioned through the poet's premeditated artistic skills. There is a resemblance between what Saif does in his poem and what Heidegger says about poetry:

Projective saying is poetry: the saying of world and earth, the saying of the arena of their conflict and thus of the place of all nearness and remoteness of the gods. Poetry is the saying of the unconcealedness of what is. Actual language at any given moment is the happening of this saying, in which *a people's world historically arises for it and the earth is preserved as that which remains closed* [Italics mine]. Projective saying is saying which, in preparing the sayable, simultaneously brings the unsayable as such into a world. In such saying, the concepts of an historical people's nature, i.e., of its belonging to world history, are formed for that folk, before it. (1971, p. 71)

Disruption and linguistic deviation in poetry are for Freud a sign of the artist's neuroses that nevertheless can be therapeutic for both the poet and the reader. Like Heidegger, Saif and many others, Freud linked aspects of the work of art with the life of its originator, a genre which was later called psychobiography (Dobie, 2012). Freud shows how the unconscious can emerge through art 'to give a neurosis socially acceptable expression' (Dobie, 2012, p. 61). This view has led to emphasize the author's life and her/his intentions. Lacan later focused on how the unconscious constitutes the core of one's being. While the 'I' self for Lacan is always fragmented and often absent, the healthy 'I' self for Freud is

¹⁰ A ruler of Egypt whom Al-Muttanbi, a well-known poet who lived in the Abbasid period, described as tyrant and dictator

¹¹ It echoes Blake's poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn" where Blake situates beauty and truth in a similar philosophical tone: 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.' It is worth referring to this interesting intertextuality briefly.

characterized by unity. Freud was interested in art as symptomatic of the author's unconscious. For Lacan, the text does not have an outside reference in the physical reality. The only reference is the words that make up the text. This indifference to the author and to the world outside the text is a condition that is rejected by Heidegger and subscribers to contextual theories (Dobie, 2012).

Despite the fact that the link between the author's intention and the text is not perfectly reciprocal or simplistic, Heidegger does not undermine the role of the author in originating the text, nor does he undermine history and its ever-emerging effect on the text and the reader. It is true that knowing about the author's intention might illuminate many aspects of the text, but equally true is that the text might illuminate many aspects about the author and his/her context. Formalists are usually more rigid about their theoretical standings than contextualists who make use of many of the components that formalists develop in their work, including the close-reading approach and the infinite/deferred meanings (*Différance*) of the text by deconstructionist theorists and others. Contextualist readings of the text acknowledge that fissures, contradictions, absences, gaps and inconsistencies in the text itself can tell more about the author's unconscious or his/her inhibitions.

VII. CONCLUSION

The literary text can say about the author what the author does not say about his/her own text or about him/herself. Literary language, on the other hand, especially poetry, has a wide range of connotations and implications that can be revealed through interpretive activities and analytical approaches. Literary language can expose the unconscious of the author and tell a great deal of her/his inner complex world. This dilutes the far-stretched contest between those who invoke the context in the process of reading/interpreting the text and those who advocate the autonomy of the text and focus exclusively on its intrinsic aspects. The text could illuminate the status of the author and her/his world and the context in which the work is produced much more than the author's own account of his/her own text. This recognition neither subdues the text to the context nor the reverse.

Heidegger's approach to the work of art is attentive to the text in terms of its unique linguistic articulation, origin, originator, permanent historicity, aesthetics and humanist function, and inherent relation to the world. Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* is crucial to understanding how the work of art relates to the world not merely as a being but also as an operative dynamic tool that links humans with the world. The poem, or the work of art, continues to re-emerge and reveal what Heidegger calls the human core. The continuous happening of the truth (the core/the unconscious and the conscious) necessarily involves different agencies including the reader and the world.

In 'Love Again', Saif presents us with many concepts that Heidegger develops in many of his works as pertaining to love and being and art and being. Otherness and love as components of the Self's being are emphasized by both Heidegger and Saif. A significant convergence exists between many elements in Saif's poem and Heidegger's views of art at the conceptual level. This study has also shown how 'Love Again' does not extol the aesthetic at the expense of the personal, nor does it sacrifice the personal at the expense of aesthetics. In different positions in the poem, the poet elevates his own linguistic abilities and his rhymes. Nevertheless, the poem continues to reflect Saif's commitment to, and nostalgia for, Palestine and his resentment to tyranny. His belief in the power of poetry leads him to a reversal of miserable realistic conditions and as such he depicts impressive images reference to his own subjective desire and patriotic wishes. A Heideggerian reading of 'Love Again' has shown how Heidegger himself does not see that a conflict actually exists between textual and contextual approaches to works of art (probably he took those two positions for granted). A separation is neither feasible nor even possible.

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