

Migration as a Trigger Causing Change to the Levant Literary Modernism

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Abstract : The beginning of the 20th century marked the period when a new generation of Lebanese radicals sowed the seeds for the second phase of Levant literary modernism, situated in the Levant. Beirut, during this era popularly fit every radical writer's criterion owing to its weakened censorship and political control, despite the absence of a protective womb for the development of literary modernism, caused by the natively prevalent political unsettlement. The third stage of literary modernization, in which scholars used Western-inspired critical techniques to better understand their own cultures, coincides with the time period examined in this paper, which involved the international-inspired critical analysis of native cultural stimulants, which raised questions among Arab freethinking intellectuals. Locals who ventured outside recognised the difference between the West's progress and their own nations' stagnation. The awareness of such 'gap of success' aroused an ambition from journalists, authors, and proletarian revolutionaries who had studied in Europe, and finally developed enlightened ideas. Some Middle Eastern authors and artists only adopted current social and political frameworks after discovering western modernity. After learning about the upheavals that were happening in the West, these thinkers aspired to bring about equally broad drastic developments in their own country's social, political, and cultural milieu. These occurrences illustrate the increased power of migration to alter the cultural and literary scene in the Levant. The paper intends to discuss the different effects of migration that contributed to Levant literary modernism. The exploration of these factors as causes begins with addressing the politically influenced activism, that has always been a relevant part of Beirut, and then diving into the psychological effects of migration in the individuals of the society, which might have induced an accommodability to alien thoughts and ideas over time, as a coping mechanism. Nature or environmental stimuli, a common trigger for any creative output, often having the highest influence during travel will be identified and analysed to inspect the extent of its impact on the exchange of ideas that resulted in Levant modernism. The efficiency of both the stimulating component of travel and the diaspora of the indigenous, a by-product of travel in catalysing modernism in the Levant has to be proven in order to understand how migration indirectly affected the transmission and adoption of ideas in Levant literature. The paper will revisit the events revolving around these key players and platforms like Shir, to understand how the Lebanese literature, tied down in poetry drastically mutated under the leadership of Adonis, Yusuf et Khal, and other pioneers of Levant literary modernism. The conclusion will identify the triggers that helped authors overcome personal and geographical barriers to unite the West and the Levant, and investigate the extent to which the bi-directional migration prompted a transformation in the local poetry. Consequently, the paper aims to shed light into the unique factor that provoked the shift in the literary scene of Twentieth century in the Middle East.

Keywords : literature, modernism, Middle East, levant, Beirut

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