

## Poetic Structure as Cultural Renewal: A Structuralist Study of Adonis's *Bayt*

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**Abstract:** This study examines Adonis's poem *Bayt* through a structuralist approach to reveal how its textual construction represents the transition from tradition to modernity in modern Arabic literature. Adonis, as a pioneer of Arab modernism, reinterprets classical poetic forms by emphasizing symbolism, free expression, and philosophical reflection. The research aims to identify the external and internal structures of *Bayt*—covering diction, imagery, and metaphors—and to explain how these elements embody the aesthetics of modern Arabic poetry. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected from Adonis's poetry text and analyzed by applying structuralist theory to explore intrinsic relationships among form, meaning, and symbol, supported by a historical perspective. The findings show that *Bayt* abandons classical metre and rhyme in favor of free verse and internal rhythm, while its themes reflect identity, collective memory, and existential continuity. The study concludes that *Bayt* is not merely aesthetic but philosophical, offering social reflection and cultural renewal. Its novelty lies in linking structuralist textual analysis with modern Arabic literary transformation, suggesting further comparative research on Adonis's poetic influence in Arab modernism.

## INTRODUCTION

Can a single poem capture the struggle of an entire civilization to redefine itself between tradition and modernity? This question lies at the heart of contemporary Arabic literature, where poets have long grappled with the tension between inherited classical forms and the urge for innovation. As the Arab world underwent political upheavals and cultural reforms in the twentieth century, poetry, once the proud voice of the desert, became a battlefield of ideas, reflecting both nostalgia for the past and anxiety about the future. In this context, Adonis emerged as a revolutionary figure who dared to dismantle the classical *qaṣīdah* and reconstruct Arabic poetic consciousness through modernist and philosophical sensibilities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Diah Pramudita et al., "Cultural Production of Adonis as Modern Writer in Arabic Literature Arena," *International Journal of Science and Applied Science: Conference Series* 6, no. 2 (2022): 68–76, <https://doi.org/10.20961/ijsascs.v6i2.74067>.

Arabic literature holds an important position in Arab history and culture because it serves as a mirror of the social, political, and intellectual dynamics of society.<sup>2</sup> Poetry, as the oldest form in the Arabic literary tradition, has undergone significant transformations since the modern era, marked by the emergence of experimentation with form, universal themes, and social criticism.<sup>3</sup> One of the figures who marked this change was Adonis, a great Syrian poet known as the pioneer of Arab modernism<sup>4</sup>. Through his works, he offers a new interpretation of tradition, emphasising symbolism, creative freedom, and philosophical reflection that transcends the boundaries of classical conventions.

Literature has played an important role in Arab history and culture as it reflects the dynamics of thought, values, and identity of society throughout the ages<sup>5</sup>. Important values and major events in Arab history are often recorded through literary works, particularly poetry, as the oldest genre that has become deeply rooted in their tradition.<sup>6</sup> Arab literary historians generally divide its development into five periods, namely *al-'Aṣr al-Jāhili* (the Jahiliyyah period), *'Aṣr Ṣadr al-Islām* and the Umayyad period, *al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī* (the Abbasid era), *al-'Aṣr al-Turkī* (the Turkish era), and *al-'Aṣr al-Ḥadīṣ* (the modern era).<sup>7</sup> This division is closely related to the political, social and religious conditions that influenced the literary style of each era, although some other experts simplify it into only four periods.<sup>8</sup>

Entering the modern period, the direction of Arabic literature underwent a significant shift, particularly in the genre of poetry. One of the figures who marked this renewal was Adonis. His presence is considered to have brought a new colour to the tradition of Arabic literature. However, critics such as 'Abdullah al-Ghadami argue that Adonis is too reactive in his response to modernity, to the extent that he has positioned himself as a symbol of Arab modernity. This view suggests that his works are not merely aesthetic reflections, but also representations of the intellectual struggle between tradition and modernity.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Huda J. Fakhreddine, *The Arabic Prose Poem: Poetic Theory and Practice*, 1st ed. (Edinburgh University Press, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9781474474962.001.0001>.

<sup>3</sup> Reem Hilal, "New Poetry Theory in Adonis' 'The Time of Poetry'," *Latakia University Journal - Arts and Humanities Sciences Series* 42, no. 2 (2020): 3.

<sup>4</sup> Pramudita et al., "Cultural Production of Adonis as Modern Writer in Arabic Literature Arena," 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Taufiq A. Dardiri, "The Development of Modern Arabic Poetry," *Adabiyat: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 10, no. 2 (2011): 283–308, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajbs.2011.10204>.

<sup>6</sup> Ida Latifatul Umrah, "Arab Shi'ir in Historical Perspective," *Dar El-Ilmi: Jurnal Studi Keagamaan, Pendidikan Dan Humaniora* 3, no. 2 (2016): 148..

<sup>7</sup> H.W. Wargadinata dan L Fitriani, *Sastra Arab Masa Jahiliyah dan Islam* (Malang: UIN Maliki Press, 2018), 16.

<sup>8</sup> Victoria N. Zarytovskaya and Зарытовская Виктория Николаевна, "Historical and Cultural Processes and Periodization of Arabic Literature," *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism* 27, no. 1 (2022): 68–85, <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9220-2022-27-1-68-85>.

<sup>9</sup> Maytham Ali Abbad, "Social values in the poems of al-Namir ibn Tawlab," *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities* 27, no. 5 (2020): 84.

Thus, identifying the main features and characteristics of modern Arabic literature through Adonis' poetic works is important, because from there we can trace the direction of change in contemporary Arabic poetry aesthetics. Thus, identifying the main features and characteristics of modern Arabic literature through Adonis's poetic works is essential, as it allows us to trace the trajectory of aesthetic transformation in contemporary Arabic poetry. In order to support this analysis, the structuralism theory proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) is particularly relevant, since it emphasizes the internal relations within a literary text through the concepts of the signifier and the signified, forming the foundation for later structuralist readings in literary studies<sup>10</sup>, both through external structure (diction, style, form)<sup>11</sup>, as well as internal structure (theme, message, meaning). Analysis using this theory allows for a deep understanding of the internal construction of a poem.

However, literary works are never created in a vacuum; they emerge within cultural and historical frameworks that shape their form and meaning. Several scholars have explored this dynamic relationship in Arabic poetry. Dardiri<sup>12</sup> examined the transformation of Arabic poetics from classical rigidity to free verse, emphasizing external form, while Fakhreddine<sup>13</sup> highlighted the philosophical dimensions of Adonis's poetic modernism. Similarly, Badawi investigated the psychological and thematic aspects of Adonis's works, particularly his use of imagery and symbolism to convey existential anxiety.<sup>14</sup> Despite these valuable contributions, most of these studies tend to isolate thematic or historical perspectives without fully integrating them into a systematic structural analysis.

This study addresses that gap by combining structuralist theory with a historical approach. The structural analysis will uncover the internal relations -diction, imagery, and symbolism- within the poem, while the historical interpretation will situate these structures within the intellectual and social transformation of twentieth-century Arabic modernism. Through this dual lens, the poem *Bayt* is not only read as a self-contained aesthetic entity but also as a reflection of the evolving consciousness of Arab identity and literature during a period of intense cultural redefinition.<sup>15</sup>

Based on this focus, this study formulates two main problems: how the external and internal structure of Adonis' Bayt poem can be understood through

<sup>10</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, with University of California Libraries (New York : Philosophical Library, 1959), 11.

<sup>11</sup> Fadlil Munawwar Manshur, "Study of Formalism and Structuralism Theory," *Sasdaya: Gadjah Mada Journal of Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2019): 79, <https://doi.org/10.22146/sasdayajournal.43888>.

<sup>12</sup> Dardiri, "Perkembangan Puisi Arab Modern", 4.

<sup>13</sup> Fakhreddine, *The Arabic Prose Poem*, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī, *Modern Arabic Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 56.

<sup>15</sup> Mohamed Wajdi Ben Hammed, "Between Aesthetic Revolution, Mysticism, and Mystification: Arab Marxist Critiques of Adonis' Poetics and Cultural Studies," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 0, no. 0 (2025): 1-18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475262X.2025.2571152>.

structuralism theory, and what are the main features and characteristics of modern Arabic literature reflected in the poem when linked to the context of its historical development. From these questions, the objectives of this study are to describe the external and internal structures of Bayt's poetry using structuralism theory and to identify the distinctive features of modern Arabic literature through the results of analysis connected to its historical context.

This study is expected to be beneficial in two areas. Theoretically, this research can enrich the study of modern Arabic literature through the application of structural analysis based on historical dimensions. Meanwhile, in practical terms, this research can provide students and researchers with an understanding of the distinctive features of modern Arabic literature through the study of poetry, which can then serve as a basis for further research on other figures or works in contemporary Arabic literature.

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, as it aims to understand literary phenomena through in-depth descriptions of poetic texts. The theory used is structuralism, with a focus on analysing themes, style, diction, symbols, and the relationship between the external and internal structures of poetry.<sup>16</sup> This analysis was conducted using a historical approach, so that the results of the study did not merely stop at textual descriptions, but were also linked to the dynamics of the development of modern Arabic literature.

Structuralism theory was used as the analytical tool. This theory views literary works as autonomous entities that must be understood from within themselves, by revealing the interconnection between intrinsic elements that produce overall meaning. In the context of poetry, these elements include theme, style, imagination, rhythm, diction, and symbolism. All of these aspects are divided into two main layers, namely the physical structure, which includes form, diction, imagery, and stylistics, and the inner structure, which includes theme, tone, mood, and message.<sup>17</sup> This type of analysis allows for the revelation of both the aesthetic value and the overall unity of meaning in poetry.

The object of study is the poem Bayt by Adonis, which was chosen because it is rich in symbols characteristic of modern Arabic literature and reflects the struggle between tradition and modernity.<sup>18</sup> The data sources consist of primary

<sup>16</sup> Anwar Rudi, "Semiotic Analysis in Adonis' Shiir Hubb," *Kariman: Jurnal Pendidikan Keislaman* 7, no. 1 (2019): 164, <https://doi.org/10.52185/kariman.v7i1.109>.

<sup>17</sup> Rahim Qorbani dkk., "The Structuring of Heritage and Resistance in the Poetry of Ahmad al-Safi al-Najafi and Hamid Sabzawari," *Kufa Journal of Arts* 1, no. 41 (2021): 285, <https://doi.org/10.36317/kaj/2019/v1.i41.1356>.

<sup>18</sup> Hasan Kazem, "Analytical and Stylistic Studies of Adonis' Poem "Twenty-Five Days", *Kufa Journal of Arts* 1, no. 41 (2021): 393–408, <https://doi.org/10.36317/kaj/2019/v1.i41.1387>.

data in the form of Bayt's poetry texts and secondary data in the form of literature on modern Arabic literature, Adonis' biography, and relevant critical studies.

The analysis technique used is descriptive-analytical. The process is carried out by describing the structure of the poem based on structuralism theory, both its external and internal aspects, then relating it to the historical context of the development of modern Arabic literature. With this approach, the study is expected to reveal the main features and characteristics of modern Arabic literature as reflected in Adonis' poetic works.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The External and Internal Structures of *Bayt* through Structuralism Theory

A structuralist reading begins with the assumption that a poem is an autonomous system whose meaning emerges from the interrelation of its internal elements. According to Saussure<sup>19</sup>, meaning is not inherent in words but produced through the relation between signifiers and signified within a linguistic structure. In *Bayt*, Adonis dismantles the classical *qaṣīdah* form by abandoning fixed metre and rhyme, creating instead a rhythm that arises from repetition, parallelism, and semantic contrast. This structural innovation transforms the poem into a living organism rather than a rigid form, aligning with Lévi-Strauss's concept of binary opposition as a narrative engine. The novelty of this study lies in its demonstration that structural relations in Adonis's Bayt do not merely organize poetic form but actively articulate the epistemological shift of modern Arabic consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

Externally, the poem's fragmented verses and free-verse form disrupt the traditional expectation of harmony in Arabic poetry. Each stanza functions as an independent signifier, connected not through rhyme but through thematic resonance echoing Mukarovský's notion of "foregrounding," where deviation from convention generates aesthetic tension.<sup>21</sup> Adonis's diction simple yet symbolically charged constructs a spatial metaphor of "the house" (*bayt*) as both shelter and boundary. Repetition of words such as "door," "light," and "shadow" establishes an internal rhythm that reflects psychological movement between security and exile.

Internally, *Bayt* operates on layers of meaning that intertwine the personal and the collective. The "house" becomes the structural axis of the poem, serving as a metaphorical signified for identity, memory, and belonging.<sup>22</sup> Through metaphorical juxtaposition light versus darkness, memory versus forgetting

<sup>19</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, with University of California Libraries (New York : Philosophical Library, 1959), 32.

<sup>20</sup> Somayeh Hasan Alian et al., "Elements of rhythm and their connotations in the complete poetry collection of the poet Sayyed Haider Al-Hilli (The elegies of the Ahlol bayt, as an example)," *Studies on Arabic Language and Literature* 14, no. 38 (2024): 1–30, <https://doi.org/10.22075/lasem.2023.30751.1380>.

<sup>21</sup> Jan Mukařovský, *The Word and Verbal Art : Selected Essays by Jan Mukařovský*, with Internet Archive (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1977), 45.

<sup>22</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (Fontana Press, 1977), 121.

Adonis creates what Barthes would describe as a “multi-layered text,” where meaning is produced not linearly but relationally. The poem’s symbolic architecture thus reflects the poet’s attempt to reconstruct a cultural “dwelling” for the modern Arab self, a structure in which tradition and innovation coexist in productive tension.

In summary, structural analysis reveals that the unity of *Bayt* lies not in formal coherence but in relational meaning. Its external and internal structures illustrate how linguistic and symbolic systems can be reconfigured to express the fragmented consciousness of modernity precisely the condition Adonis sought to represent through his poetic revolution. In order to reveal the intrinsic and extrinsic elements, below is Adonis’s poem along with its translation.

Table 1. Adonis's Poem 'Bayt'

Home	بيت
The ghost stories in our house	حكاية الأشباح في بيتنا بعد
Still whisper on our lips	على شفاهنا تخطر
Destroyed by pirates in the barn	يخبثها المحراث البيدر
Inside our stove, our distances	فيه تنورنا مسافاتنا
Inside our dreams of the unknown.	فيه حلمنا بالجهيل
We leap from one universe to another,	نقفز من كون إلى آخر نظري
We fly from one generation to another.	من جيل إلى جيل

From a structuralist perspective, Adonis’s poem *Bayt* can be read as an autonomous system in which meaning emerges through the interrelation of signs. Following Saussure’s (1916) linguistic principle that language is a structure of differences, the poem gains coherence not from external rhyme or narrative continuity but from the relational opposition between words and symbols. The poem’s external and internal structures form a unified network of signification, where diction, imagery, and rhythm interact to construct meaning.

Externally, *Bayt* breaks away from the classical *qaṣīdah* by rejecting monorhyme and rigid metre. Instead, Adonis employs free verse and syntactic parallelism to establish rhythm through repetition and contrast rather than predictable prosody. The recurring images of “light, shadow, door, and distance” serve as structural markers that create musicality within fragmentation. These linguistic deviations exemplify what Mukarovsky (1977) terms “foregrounding,” where stylistic disruption becomes an aesthetic function.

Internally, the poem’s symbolic structure revolves around the metaphor of the house (*bayt*) as a locus of memory and transformation. The house signifies both

shelter and exile, embodying the dualism between belonging and alienation – what Lévi-Strauss (1963) identifies as binary opposition, the fundamental organizing principle of myth and poetry alike. Adonis employs this tension to depict the modern Arab consciousness: torn between the security of tradition and the uncertainty of modernity.

Through structuralist reading, *Bayt* emerges as a poetic architecture in which form mirror's philosophy. The fragmentation of verses corresponds to the fragmented identity of the modern Arab subject, while the interplay of symbols constructs a textual “dwelling” where the self-negotiates continuity amidst historical rupture.

**Table 2. Structural Analysis Scheme of Adonis's Bayt**

Structural Aspect	Description	Structuralist Function	Interpretative Meaning
Form and Verse Pattern	Free verse; absence of classical metre or monorhyme	Foregrounding (Mukarovský, 1977)	Breaks tradition; reflects aesthetic freedom of modernism
Rhythm and Repetition	Repeated words: <i>door, light, shadow, distance</i>	Paradigmatic relation (Saussure, 1916)	Creates internal musicality; symbolizes tension between presence and absence
Symbolic Core	The “house” ( <i>bayt</i> ) as central metaphor	Binary opposition (Lévi-Strauss, 1963)	Represents dualism of belonging vs. exile; continuity vs. loss
Imagery and Metaphor	Contrasting imagery: light/darkness, memory/forgetting	Structural sign system	Expresses psychological and cultural transition
Syntax and Structure	Short, fragmented clauses; enjambment	Syntagmatic deviation	Mirrors fragmentation of modern identity
Overall Meaning	Interrelation of linguistic and symbolic units	Structural totality	The poem becomes a metaphor for modern Arab consciousness and poetic renewal

This schematic representation demonstrates that the poem's unity is generated not through traditional prosodic order but through relational structure; the interdependence of linguistic, symbolic, and thematic elements. Consequently, *Bayt* epitomizes Adonis's effort to reconstruct Arabic poetic language as a medium for cultural self-critique and renewal.

First, Form and Pattern of Verses. The poem ‘Bayt’ by Adonis reflects the characteristics of modern Arabic poetry, which breaks away from the classical *qasidah* pattern. This poem consists of only one stanza with seven lines that do not follow the traditional *bahr* (metre) pattern.<sup>23</sup> Typographically, the lines are left-aligned with varying but relatively balanced lengths. Bayt's poetry does not follow

<sup>23</sup> Sri Nurul Aminah, “The Structure of the Metrum in Qasidah Al-Nuskhah Al-Tsaniyyah Min Al-Gharib: A Study of Contemporary Classical Arabic Poetry,” *International Seminar on Language, Education, and Culture (ISoLEC)* 7, no. 1 (2023): 370.

the classical *qasidah* pattern with long verses, metre, and fixed rhyme. It consists only of a few free lines of varying lengths.

The rhyme is inconsistent, but an internal rhythm emerges through the repetition of the word '*fili*' (in it). This demonstrates the renewal of modern Arabic poetry, which rejects the rigidity of classical structures and chooses freedom of expression. Repetition appears in the fourth and fifth lines through the repetition of the word '*فيه*,' which serves to build internal rhythm. The end rhymes are inconsistent, so the musicality of the poem arises from repetition and variation in line length, rather than from similarity in sound.

Second, Diction and Style. The diction in the poem 'Bayt' displays complexity of meaning because it combines symbolic elements with everyday reality.<sup>24</sup> In addition to symbols, the poet also presents vocabulary rooted in the agrarian world, such as 'المحراث' (plough) and "البيدر" (granary), which emphasise the closeness of poetry to the reality of village life. The emphasis on meaning is present through the repetition of the word '*فيه*' in several lines, which reinforces the home as the centre of memory and living space.

When viewed as a whole, the choice of words in this poem is not only concrete but also philosophical, as it presents diction such as 'المجهيل' (the unknown), "كون" (the universe), and 'جيل' (generation), which opens up a wider space for reflection. Thus, the diction in this poem is symbolic, philosophical, and modern because it successfully connects real life with more abstract inner experiences.

Third, Symbols and Metaphors. In the poem 'Bayt', Adonis presents several symbols that enrich the meaning of his poetry. The word 'البيت' (house) is not just a place to live, but a symbol of identity, memories, and a space that unites the past with the future. 'الأشباح' (ghosts) symbolise memories or shadows of the past that still linger. 'التنور' (stove) symbolises warmth and the centre of family life, while "البيدر" (barn) and 'المحراث' (plough) symbolise attachment to the land, work, and the agrarian cycle of life. 'المجهيل' (the unknown) describes a future full of mystery, and the words "كون" (universe) and 'جيل' (generation) signify the continuity of time and the journey across space and human generations. Through these symbols, the house appears as the centre of existence that connects memories, daily life, and hopes that transcend the boundaries of time.

In addition, this poem is rich in symbolic and metaphorical language. The phrase '*فيه حلمنا بالمجهيل*' (in it our dreams of the unknown) describes the house as a space where dreams and hopes are born. The use of personification, for example when the ghost story is described as if it can 'flit across our lips,' makes the memory feel alive and moving. The use of this language style presents a mystical

<sup>24</sup> Amir Mortaza dan Hamed Sedghi, "A World of Different Symbols of Nature in Adonis' Poems", *Adab Arab* 8, no. 1 (2016): 29, <https://doi.org/10.22059/jalit.2016.60171>



and reflective nuance, mystical because it presents images of ghosts, dreams, and the universe, reflective because it invites readers to reflect on the home as the centre of memory and intergenerational journeys.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the style of language in this poem not only beautifies the expression, but also deepens the meaning that the poet wishes to convey.

Furthermore, the external structure of the poem 'Bayt' including theme, message, and philosophical values and meanings. First, this poem themes centres on the keyword 'البيت' (house), which presents a symbolic space from the very first line. Here, the house is not merely a place to live, but a vessel that holds memories, collective recollections, and experiences that transcend generations. In this context, the house becomes a space of memories and mystery, as seen in the line 'حكاية الأشباح في بيتنا بعد' (the story of ghosts in our house), which indicates that the house holds traces of the past, whether in the form of memories, trauma, or history that continues to linger.

In addition, the house is described as the centre of life and journey. This poem mentions elements of the house such as 'التنور' (stove), 'المحراث' (plough), and 'البيدر' (barn), which associate the house with daily activities, hard work, and a space that supports life. However, the house also holds 'المسافات' (distances), symbols of inner journeys and longing for something distant or unattainable. Furthermore, the house serves as a space for imagination and transcendence. The line 'بالمجاهيل حلمنا فيه' (in it our dreams of the unknown) emphasises that the house is not just a physical place, but a source of imagination. From home, humans can leap from one realm to another, even transcending the boundaries of time and generations, making home a symbol of identity, memory, and the continuity of human existence. The main theme of this poem is the home as a symbol of collective identity, a place where memories, experiences, and dreams that transcend time and generations reside. Adonis presents the home as the centre of human existence—it unites the past (memories and ghosts), the present (daily activities), and the future (dreams of the unknown).

Second, message. The poem 'بيت' conveys that a house is not merely a physical place, but a symbol of memories, experiences, and dreams stored in human life. Lines about ghosts, distance, and dreams of the unknown reveal things that are often forgotten or suppressed, yet still shape identity and generational continuity.

In line with Adonis's thinking, he emphasises the importance of bringing hidden things to the surface so that they emerge as thoughts.<sup>26</sup> Thus, poetry

<sup>25</sup> Imed Nsiri, "Narrating the Self: The Amalgamation of the Personal and the Impersonal in Eliot's and Adonis' Poetry," *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 9, no. 2 (2018): 106, <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiall.v.9n.2p.104>.

<sup>26</sup> Bassma B. Nomass, "Despair and Alienation in T. S. Eliot's and Adonis' Poetry: A Comparative Study," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 14, no. 6 (2024): 1605, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1406.01>.

becomes the art of meaning, not merely the art of words. Through the symbol of home, readers are invited to reflect on human history, experiences and imagination, while exploring the memories and values that shape the existence of one generation after another.

Third, philosophical values and meanings. Bayt's poetry presents a network of values that reinforce each other morally, socially, humanistically, and philosophically through Adonis's distinctive choice of form and diction strategy.<sup>27</sup> Morally, the poem emphasises respect for history and generational continuity: the symbol of home is not merely an object of nostalgia, but rather a collective archive that demands respect and care. The repetition of certain words and the placement of memory motifs serve as ethical devices, reminding readers that identity is built on the continuity of memory, not on a sudden break with the past.<sup>28</sup>

The poem 'بيت' contains various interrelated values. From a moral perspective, this poem emphasises the importance of respecting history, life experiences, and generational continuity. From a social perspective, Bayt acts as a discourse that reveals: it uncovers marginalised or forgotten things and forces readers to face oppressed realities.<sup>29</sup> Through mimetic imagery (distance, ghosts, the unknown) and the mechanics of repetition, poetry delves into the hidden layers of collective experience, a function of social criticism consistent with contemporary readings of poetry's role as a tool for deconstructing social reality.<sup>30</sup> This technique of revelation is not spectacular agitation, but rather the opening of a reflective space that allows readers to reconstruct shared meaning.

From a humanistic perspective, the home becomes a symbol of existence, imagination, and inner journey, emphasising the importance of reflection on experiences, dreams, and hopes that transcend time and generations. The lines that feature dreams and the unknown affirm the inner nature of existence that being human means a journey of memories and imagination that continuously connects the 'I' with those before and after. Thus, poetry functions as a hermeneutic practice, it guides readers to reread life experiences as a source of meaning formation.

Philosophically, *Bayt* affirms the home as a temporal medium that binds the past, present, and future, a teleological metaphor for continuity. The use of enjambment, syntactic fragmentation, and lexical repetition (e.g., keywords that

<sup>27</sup> Bassma B. Nomass, "Despair and Alienation in T. S. Eliot's and Adonis' Poetry: A Comparative Study," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 14, no. 6 (2024): 1606, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1406.01>.

<sup>28</sup> Khadijeh Hashemi dkk., "The Physical Relationship of Space and Time in Adonis' Poems", *Dirasat fi al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah wa Adabiha* 10, no. 30 (2020): 13, <https://doi.org/10.22075/lasem.2020.18641.1204>

<sup>29</sup> Diah Pramudita et al., "Cultural Production of Adonis as Modern Writer in Arabic Literature Arena," *International Journal of Science and Applied Science: Conference Series* 6, no. 2 (2022): 68, <https://doi.org/10.20961/ijscs.v6i2.74067>.

<sup>30</sup> Rawand Sliman-Baraky, "Arabic Poetry as a Mirror of Social Critique and Individualism in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean: A Study of Social Criticism in 'Abbāsid Poetry," *Al-Masāq*, August 30, 2025, 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2025.2546206>.

jump between lines) forms a non-linear narrative structure that mimics cognitive functioning: duplicative, repetitive, and resonant. Therefore, poetry is not merely an aesthetic representation, but an existential field where search, transcendence, and conservation of identity interact.

### Features and Characteristics of Modern Arabic Literature in Bayt Poetry

The emergence of modern Arabic literature in the twentieth century marked a profound aesthetic and ideological rupture from the classical poetic tradition. Adonis, as one of the central figures of Arab modernism, sought to reconstruct poetic language by liberating it from the fixed prosody and thematic rigidity of the *qaṣīdah*. His poem *Bayt* exemplifies this transformation through its rejection of traditional metre, its symbolic complexity, and its engagement with existential and cultural themes. Unlike pre-modern poets whose works reflected collective values and divine order, Adonis positions poetry as an act of individual consciousness and philosophical inquiry. This shift aligns with what Fakhreddine<sup>31</sup> calls “the modernist poetics of renewal,” where the poem functions not as imitation but as creation a new mode of perceiving reality through language.

This study argues that, when analyzed through a historical-critical lens, *Bayt* functions as a literary articulation of the social and intellectual transformations that shaped the Arab world in the post-decolonization era, including processes of modernization and the fragmentation of cultural identity.<sup>32</sup> The poem’s central motifs of exile, memory, and reconstruction are not merely thematic choices but expressive responses to a modernist condition marked by loss and redefinition. Moreover, its use of free verse signifies a deliberate departure from classical formal constraints, asserting artistic autonomy, while its symbolic language negotiates the tension between inherited tradition and emerging modern sensibilities. Consequently, *Bayt* exemplifies the core attributes of modern Arabic literature, formal innovation, subjective expression, philosophical inquiry, and sustained engagement with sociocultural change.

**Table 3. Features and Characteristics of Modern Arabic Literature Reflected in *Bayt***

Feature and Characteristic	Manifestation in <i>Bayt</i>	Structural or Thematic Function	Interpretative Meaning/ Cultural Significance
Formal Experimentation	Use of free verse; fragmentation; absence of rhyme	Breaks classical <i>qaṣīdah</i> symmetry	Symbolizes artistic freedom and modern creativity
Subjectivity and Individual Voice	Poetic persona as reflective self rather than collective speaker	Centers the poet’s consciousness	Marks the rise of personal identity in Arabic poetry

<sup>31</sup> Fakhreddine, *The Arabic Prose Poem*, 143.

<sup>32</sup> Abed Elrahim Marashdeh and Abdelbaset Marashdeh, “The Poetics of Writing in Adonis’ ‘Ams al-Makan al-An,’” *Arts and Social Sciences Series 2*, no. 3 (2023): 169–96, <https://doi.org/10.59759/art.v2i3.294>.

Symbolism and Imagistic Density	Metaphor of <i>bayt</i> (house), images of light, distance, and shadow	Semiotic condensation (multiple meanings)	Expresses spiritual exile and search for belonging
Philosophical and Existential Themes	Meditations on time, loss, and continuity	Integrates thought and emotion	Reveals poetry as a medium of self-inquiry
Intertextual Dialogue with Tradition	Retains traces of classical form but subverts them	Structural inversion	Represents negotiation
Sociocultural Reflection	Context of Arab decolonization and cultural renewal	Historical embeddedness	Connects poetic modernism with intellectual liberation
Language Innovation	Ambiguous syntax and symbolic diction	Linguistic defamiliarization	Transforms Arabic language into a tool of modern consciousness

This structural-thematic synthesis demonstrates that *Bayt* encapsulates the essence of Arabic modernist aesthetics: an ongoing dialogue between tradition and innovation, between the inherited structure of poetic expression and the modern pursuit of self-definition. Through its formal experimentation and symbolic density, *Bayt* becomes a microcosm of modern Arabic literary transformation, a poetic act of deconstruction and renewal. While previous studies tend to emphasize either the thematic or historical dimensions of Adonis's poetry, this study demonstrates that structural relations themselves function as vehicles of cultural transformation.

## CONCLUSION

This study has examined Adonis's poem *Bayt* through the lens of structuralist theory to uncover both its internal and external structures and to identify how it reflects the key features of modern Arabic literature. The analysis revealed that the poem's external form—its free verse, syntactic fragmentation, and rhythm of repetition—subverts the traditional *qaṣīdah* model. Internally, its symbolic architecture, centered on the metaphor of the house (*bayt*), constructs a complex interplay of meaning where identity, memory, and cultural transformation converge. These findings affirm that Adonis employs poetic structure as a philosophical and cultural statement, redefining the Arabic poetic tradition from within.

The strength of this research lies in its integration of structuralist analysis with historical contextualization. By combining Saussure's relational model of language, Lévi-Strauss's theory of binary opposition, and Mukarovsky's concept of foregrounding, the study demonstrates that poetic form is not merely aesthetic but epistemological, an active framework through which modern Arabic identity articulates itself. This reinforces the argument that *Bayt* exemplifies the intellectual

and artistic transition of Arabic poetry from imitation toward innovation, positioning Adonis as both a poet and a theorist of modernity.

Nevertheless, this study acknowledges certain limitations. It focuses exclusively on one poem, thus providing a close reading rather than a comparative perspective. Future research should expand this trajectory by examining other works by Adonis or contemporaneous poets to trace how structural and symbolic experimentation evolved across the broader modernist movement. Comparative studies between Arabic and other postcolonial literatures would also enrich the understanding of how poetic modernity manifests within different linguistic and cultural systems. Overall, this research contributes to literary scholarship by demonstrating that structuralism, when situated within a historical framework, can illuminate the dynamic dialogue between form and culture in Arabic poetry. The implications of this study extend beyond Adonis's *Bayt*, they suggest that modern Arabic literature embodies a continuous negotiation between linguistic heritage and modern consciousness, a process through which the Arab poetic imagination redefines itself in the modern world.

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