

**New Writing and the Questions of Modernity: Between the Western and
the Arab Concept**

**La nouvelle écriture et les questions de la modernité : entre les conceptions
occidentale et arabe**

Forloul Houria,

University of Mostaganem (Algeria), forloul.houria@hotmail.fr

Received: 18.01.2026

Accepted: 27.06.2026

Publishing: 29.07.2026

Abstract:

This study examines the concept of new writing in both Western and Arab literary criticism. It aims to compare the philosophical and critical foundations that shaped this concept through the writings of Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, and Adonis. The study adopts descriptive-analytical and comparative approaches. The findings reveal that Western criticism conceptualizes writing as a productive space for meaning and textual plurality, whereas Arab criticism reinterprets these ideas within the cultural context of Arabic literary modernity. The study concludes that new writing represents a modern critical project founded on creativity, openness, and the transformation of literary discourse.

Keywords: Creativity, Text, Modernity, Roland Barthes, Adonis.

Résumé:

Cette étude examine le concept de la **nouvelle écriture** dans la critique littéraire occidentale et arabe. Elle vise à comparer les fondements philosophiques et critiques qui ont façonné ce concept à travers les travaux de Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida et Adonis. Pour atteindre cet objectif, l'étude adopte une approche descriptive-analytique ainsi qu'une approche comparative. Les résultats montrent que la critique occidentale conçoit l'écriture comme un espace productif de sens et de pluralité textuelle, tandis que la critique arabe réinterprète ces conceptions dans le contexte culturel de la modernité littéraire arabe. L'étude conclut que la nouvelle écriture constitue un projet critique moderne fondé sur la créativité, l'ouverture et la transformation du discours littéraire.

Mots-clés : Créativité, Texte, Modernité, Roland Barthes, Adonis.

1. Introduction

Contemporary literary criticism has undergone profound transformations in its understanding of writing. Writing is no longer regarded merely as a medium for expressing ideas or transmitting meanings; rather, it has come to be understood as a creative and productive act that generates meaning and reconstructs the text through new philosophical, linguistic, and aesthetic perspectives shaped by the intellectual currents of modernity. This transformation has given rise

to the concept of **"new writing,"** which has become one of the central concerns of contemporary literary theory because it redefines the relationships among the author, the text, and the reader while opening new horizons for literary creation and interpretation.

The concept of new writing has attracted considerable attention among both Western and Arab critics. Western theorists, particularly Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Jacques Derrida, reconceptualized writing as an autonomous signifying practice that transcends its traditional communicative function and emphasizes textual plurality, the production of meaning, and the openness of interpretation. In parallel, modern Arab critics, most notably Adonis and Mohamed Bennis, appropriated and reinterpreted these theoretical developments within the context of Arabic literary modernity, linking the concept of writing to cultural identity, poetic innovation, and the transition from orality to textuality.

Although the concept of writing has been widely discussed in both Western and Arab literary criticism, most existing studies have examined these traditions separately, with relatively limited attention devoted to a systematic comparative analysis of their philosophical foundations, critical assumptions, and conceptual intersections. Consequently, a clearer understanding of the similarities and differences between these two critical traditions remains necessary.

Against this background, the present study examines new writing as one of the most influential concepts in contemporary literary criticism. It seeks to explore the intellectual and philosophical foundations underlying both the Western and Arab conceptions of writing while identifying their convergences and divergences. In doing so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the transformations that have shaped modern literary discourse and demonstrates how the concept of writing has evolved into a central paradigm for interpreting literary creativity.

Accordingly, the study aims to define the concept of new writing, analyze the philosophical and critical foundations underlying the Western and Arab conceptions of writing, compare their principal characteristics, and evaluate their respective contributions to the development of modern literary criticism and creative practice.

To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research question: **What is meant by "new writing," and how have the questions of modernity been reflected in the Western and Arab conceptions of writing?**

To answer this question, the study adopts both the **descriptive-analytical approach** and the **comparative approach**. The descriptive-analytical method is employed to examine the principal theoretical concepts related to new writing, whereas the comparative approach is used to analyze the similarities and differences between Western and Arab critical perspectives through the writings of major theorists, including Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, and Adonis.

The study is organized into three main sections. The first examines the concept of writing and its theoretical foundations. The second analyzes the development of new writing in Western literary criticism through selected critical theories, while the third investigates the Arab conception

of new writing and its relationship to literary modernity, concluding with the principal findings and recommendations.

2. The Concept of Writing

The concept of writing primarily signifies the assertion of presence and identity. When an individual writes, the fundamental objective is to assert one's presence, as writing functions as a message conveyed from the self to the Other. This message may be ordinary and familiar, eliciting little or no response; alternatively, it may present something new that prompts the Other to engage with it, interpret its meanings, and understand both its form and content. In this sense, the concept of writing becomes closely associated with creativity.

Secondly, writing represents a transition from ignorance to the realms of knowledge, dialogue, and acceptance. However, society does not readily accept forms of writing that challenge established norms and conventions. Consequently, writing encounters various forms of resistance, often dividing society into supporters and opponents.

Thirdly, writing signifies a movement from marginalization, subordination, and suppression toward enlightenment, centrality, and leadership. It seeks a renewed existence through continuous reading across successive generations and extended periods of time.¹

In this sense, writing functions as a provocative act, stimulating both the self and the Other. As the well-known Arabic saying states, *"Whoever writes exposes himself as a target."* Writing is both the journey and the destination: it originates from itself and ultimately returns to itself, with writing itself remaining the ultimate victor. Moreover, writing constitutes an act of resistance, striving to transcend and challenge the dominance of others through its uniqueness and difference. As a creative act, writing possesses a universal dimension that transcends the individual writer and extends beyond the immediate limits of the self.²

From this perspective, writing cannot be reduced to a mere linguistic or communicative practice; rather, it constitutes an intellectual and aesthetic act that continuously redefines the relationship between language, meaning, and reality. It is through this dynamic understanding that modern critical thought has reconceptualized writing as a space for creativity, innovation, and the production of new meanings. Consequently, the concept of writing provides the theoretical foundation for examining the transformations introduced by modernity and serves as the point of departure for understanding the Western and Arab conceptions of creative writing discussed in the following sections.

3. Creative Writing from the Western Perspective

Western literary criticism has redefined writing as a creative and signifying practice that transcends its traditional communicative function. This section examines the principal Western

¹ - Khalil Mousa, *Writing (Writing Difference, Women's Writing)*, *Al-Mawqif Al-Adabi Journal*, vol. 41, no. 500, Arab Writers Union, Syria, December 2012, pp. 17–18.

² - Abdullah Al-Ghathami, *Writing Against Writing*, Dar Al-Adab, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1991, p. 17.

conceptions of creative writing through the contributions of Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Jacques Derrida.

3.1. The Concept of Writing According to Roland Barthes

In 1953, Roland Barthes published his influential work *Writing Degree Zero* (*Le Degré Zéro de l'Écriture*), in which he reexamined the concept of literature by introducing and elucidating the problematics of writing. He states:

*"The writing to which I commit myself already exists as a constituted institution rather than as a purely free language capable of achieving personal expression. It preserves my history and my freedom, reveals my past and my choices, grants me a history, defines my position, and commits me without the need for explicit verbal declaration."*³

Barthes distinguishes different degrees of writing, beginning with the **zero degree of writing**, which represents a neutral form of expression, and extending to more complex literary forms that vary according to the nature of each text, whether poetic or prose.

For Barthes, writing also possesses a dual nature. On the one hand, it emerges from the confrontation between the writer and society; on the other, it is shaped by a social intentionality that directs the writer toward the institutional foundations of literary creation. As Barthes explains:

*"Writing arises from the confrontation between the writer and society on the one hand, and from a social intentionality that directs the writer, as a tragic transition, toward the institutional sources of creation. Because writing originates in a signifying movement initiated by the author, it engages with history more concretely than any other level of literature."*⁴

Accordingly, writing, in Barthes' view, is not merely a linguistic medium or a vehicle of communication; rather, it is a dynamic process through which meaning is continuously produced and renewed. It transcends the function of transmitting ideas to become a creative practice that liberates language from conventional constraints and enables literary discourse to generate multiple interpretations.

3.2. The Concept of Writing According to Julia Kristeva

Perhaps the first thing that warrants special attention when addressing the concept of writing in the work of critic Julia Kristeva is her reliance on the term "writing" (*écriture*) as opposed to the term "literature." This can be summarized in the following question: Why does Kristeva frame the essence of literature through the concept of writing? And why does she reject the use of the term "literature" when discussing writing? Kristeva owes a debt to Roland Barthes for adopting the term "writing" to address the specificity of literary practice (...). Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that Kristeva's proposition is situated within the context of French

³ - Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. Mohammad Nadim Khasfahi (Syria: Civilization Patterns Center, 1st ed., 2002), 36–37; Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 32.

⁴ - Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, 24–25.

thought, which adopted writing as a foundation for questioning signs and systems, as reflected in the works of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and others.

Hence, the term "writing" was the sole concept Kristeva sought to grasp. In adopting the term writing, she aspires to achieve a precise understanding of the nature of literature from a perspective that views it as a signifying practice possessing its own distinct specificity, taking language as the starting point for the problematique upon which it is built.⁵

3.3. The Concept of Writing According to Jacques Derrida

Derrida states:

*"What interests me in the readings I attempt to establish is not critique from the outside, but rather settling or positioning oneself within the homogeneous structure of the text, and locating internal tensions or contradictions. The text is read without referring except to itself (...) This does not mean that it follows a self-referential movement-a movement of a text that refers only to itself-but rather that there are conflicting forces within the text that come to dismantle and fragment it."*⁶

This generalized concept of difference (*différance*) finds in the concept of writing one of the fields of its diagnosis and operation through what Derrida calls a radical critique of the concept. Derrida first leads us to observe that in the familiar division dating back to before De Saussure, privilege always remained with the *signified* (*signifié*)-that is, writing within its system of meanings-at the expense of the *signifier* (*signifiant*), meaning writing in its materiality and what links it to writing.⁷

He emphasizes the existence of a contradiction in Saussure's theory between the arbitrary (*arbitraire*) nature of the sign and the subordination of writing to language. He questions this and finds that the only answer, in his view, is that De Saussure returns here to *"the only mode of writing known to Westerners (which they undoubtedly consider superior to all others): an alphabetical, or phonetic, writing that operates, as Saussure himself wrote, to reproduce the sequence of consecutive sounds in writing."* Thus, the term "writing" for Derrida appears to *"exceed the scope of language and overflow from it, as though writing contained language in every sense of this verb-not because the word 'writing' no longer denotes the 'signifier of the signifier,' but because it has begun to become clear under a strange light that the expression 'signifier of the signifier' itself has ceased to signify accidental duplication or degraded secondary status."*⁸

Writing, as it establishes a place for itself, forms a presence in the consciousness of the one with whom it engages through the *trace*, which is the configuration resulting from it. Writing in this sense is but one face of *"the manifestations of the trace, and is not the trace itself. To be sure,*

⁵ - Halima El-Sheikh, "The Concept of Writing According to Julia Kristeva," *Nizwa Journal*, No. 66, Oman Establishment for Press, Publication and Advertising, April 2011, pp. 69–70.

⁶ - Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, translated by Kadhim Jihad, Toubkal Publishing House, Morocco, 1st ed., 2000, p. 49.

⁷ - Derrida, *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁸ - Derrida, *ibid.*, p. 104.

*a pure trace does not exist, as Derrida says, and the goal of deconstructive analysis is to trace the mark within writing, and through and alongside it."*⁹

The *trace* can be considered the alternative that Derrida offers for the sign through the science of writing (grammatology) that he establishes. Thus, Derrida heralds the emergence of "*a new science whose features are not yet complete, and this science is the science of writing. It serves as the matrix from which all writing throughout the ages emerges; he calls it the 'science of the place of the world.'* Indeed, with writing, history began and the establishment of science became possible. This writing consists of a set of differences between indeterminate yet determinable boundaries, which, due to their indeterminacy, seem capable of continuously producing themselves endlessly time and time again."¹⁰

Here is the accurate, high-level academic translation of this section into English, formatted with structural numbering and numbered footnotes at the bottom:

4. Creative Writing from an Arab Perspective

Creative writing from an Arab perspective reflects the transformation of Arabic literary discourse through modernity, moving from traditional forms of expression toward new modes of textual creation, experimentation, and aesthetic renewal.

4.1. From Orality to Writing

There is no doubt that modern Arabic poetry is no longer platform-oriented, rhetorical, or intended for a mass audience in the conventional manner of traditional Arabic poetry. Simply put, it has mostly liberated itself from many of the constraints and formal considerations that constitute what is termed the "rhetorical focus" (*al-bu'ra al-khitabiyya*) of the poetic text. Originally, poetry was composed:

*"to be recited, chanted, narrated, and heard, because most people were not literate-even some of the poets themselves were not. Poetry was written down and recorded subsequently to preserve it from loss, to immortalize the histories, cultures, and glories of nations, and to be heard by those who wished to listen, including epics and extended odes (...). The practice of reciting poetry, singing it, and performing it for an audience persisted in Europe even after the spread of writing and the dissemination of books; it was well known among certain 15th- and 16th-century poets such as Clément Marot and Edmund Spenser (...). As for the ancient Arabs, they chanted their rajaz verses, sang them, and recited their poems and panegyrics in peace and war, across encampments, oases, seasonal gatherings, and markets."*¹¹

Modern poetry constituted an intellectual excavation; it emerged from a new vision whose motives, objectives, conditions, circumstances, and underlying laws differed fundamentally from

⁹ - Abdullah Al-Ghathami, *Sin and Thought* [Al-Khatee'a wa al-tafkeer], p. 54.

¹⁰ - Abdul Hamid Jaida, *New Trends in Contemporary Arabic Poetry* [Al-Ittijahat al-jadeeda fi al-shi'r al-arabi al-mu'asir], p. 344.

¹¹ - Ahmad Mohammad Ma'touq, *The Supreme Language: Critical Studies in the Language of Poetry* [Al-Lugha Al-'Ulya], Arab Cultural Center, Morocco, 1st ed., 2006, pp. 187–189.

ancient perspectives. Consequently, the concept of poetry transformed in its nature, form, structure, performance, and the modes of interacting with and being influenced by it.

The modern poet, as Adonis conceives, *"is linked to the aspirations of discovery, the obsession with change and transcendence, and the invention of the future. By this alone can the poet influence the reader-that is, the consciousness of the public."*

Hence, among the primary aims of the poet is liberation from all constraints perceived as restricting freedom, hindering entry into vast imaginative and emotional horizons, or impeding aspirations toward discovery, change, transcendence, innovation, and creation. The poet remains in a state of continuous revolt. The new poem leads-as Nizar Qabbani expresses-a dangerous rebellion against ingrained linguistic and rhetorical habits, liberating itself musically from determinism, the inevitability of Khalilian meters, and the fetishism of the unified rhyme, thereby shifting from "imitation" (*al-wilada*) to "opposition" (*al-mu'arada*). Through this opposition, the modern poem challenges many ancient aesthetic standards.¹²

The principal task of the writing manifesto (*Bayan al-Kitaba*) by Mohamed Bennis is the transition from orality to writing. Bennis asserts:

*"The tradition of poetry in Morocco is recitation-as it is throughout the Arab world. Anything else is merely a foreign justification invoked by researchers seeking an illusory legitimacy. Opponents are free to disagree, but as for poetry, it continues to face a situation that has grown suffocating to our silence, at least here in Morocco."*¹³

For this reason, Adonis considers that it is impossible to fully comprehend the emergence of modernity in Arab society-on the political, intellectual, and social levels on one hand, and the poetic level on the other-unless we *"understand the significance of the Arab transition from oratory to writing, or from orality to codification-the revolution that arose against rhetoric, in both prose and poetry."*¹⁴ This fundamental shift was catalyzed by the written recording of the Qur'an. In his book *The Qur'an Text and the Horizons of Writing (Al-Nass Al-Qur'ani wa Afaq Al-Kitaba)*, Adonis aimed *"to indicate that his discussion of Qur'anic writing treated it as a text outside any religious dimension, regardless of the scribe, the circumstances of codification, or the surrounding debates, while noting that he does not intervene in the historical controversy regarding the sequence of chapters or texts, given that the Qur'an was revealed as divine inspiration and communicated orally."*¹⁵

Fundamental differences have been uncovered between primary oral cultures (cultures with no knowledge of writing whatsoever) and deeply literate cultures regarding their modes of

¹² - Ma'touq, *ibid.*, pp. 192–193.

¹³ - Mohamed Bennis, *Modernity of the Question [Hadaathat Al-Su'al]*, p. 11.

¹⁴ - Adonis, *The Static and the Dynamic [Al-Thabit wa Al-Mutahawwil]*, Vol. 4: *The Shock of Modernity and the Authority of Poetic Heritage*, Dar Al-Saqi, p. 19.

¹⁵ - Adonis, *The Qur'an Text and the Horizons of Writing [Al-Nass Al-Qur'ani wa Afaq Al-Kitaba]*, Dar Al-Adab, Lebanon, pp. 19–20.

structuring knowledge and verbal expression. The findings of these revelations are astonishing, as *"many features we took for granted in thought, literature, philosophy, science, and even in oral discourse among literate individuals are not inherent features of human existence per se, but came into being due to the possibilities enabled by the technology of writing for human consciousness, thereby requiring us to revise our understanding of human identity."*¹⁶

*"Ancient prose took a new direction among modernists, as modern reading seized upon the unthought-of aspect within rhetorical heritage (...). The poeticity of ancient prose became linked to the field of writing when those early indications appeared within the ongoing rivalry between writers and poets. Taha Hussein possessed a conception of prose writing wherein it transcended its generic definition into a realm that almost encompassed poetry itself, virtually dissolving the opposition between poetry and prose into a poeticity that Taha Hussein discerned in Al-Jahiz's Risalat al-Tarbi' wa al-Tadwir (The Letter of Squaring and Circling), which embodied an act of transcending the rhetoric of poetic satire toward a distinct mode of writing. These represent the points of connection and overlap between poetry and prose generated by the interweaving of literary discourse genres. Hence, writing came to 'encompass all central issues while remaining silent on meter and rhyme—a silence signifying a departure from conventional boundaries set by prosodists, poets, and rhetoricians.' Perhaps this is what led Mohamed Bennis to define this link between poetry and writing in Arabic poetics to outline a perspective revealing the extent of connection between these two realms within an intertextual strategy blending poetry and prose."*¹⁷

Writing as a profession originated with the codification of the Qur'an; while it may have existed prior, no written book in Arabic from before the Qur'an has reached us. *"Writing in the modern creative sense did not emerge until the 8th century, reaching a high degree of maturity and diversity with mystics such as Al-Niffari and with Al-Tawhidi, because the writer in the modern sense (...) is one who possesses writing talent and writes in a distinctive, specialized manner."*¹⁸

Thus, the maturation of writing in its creative sense developed alongside the Holy Qur'an. Prior to that, *"oratory signified the art of speech that impels action—that is, practical speech—such that it aimed not merely to influence the mind of the audience, but to influence their will."*¹⁹ It addressed both reason and emotion to direct the will toward action. *"How did the foreign linguistic structure begin to change in Arab society? In short, it began transitioning from the structure of oratory to the structure of writing."*²⁰

¹⁶ - Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy [Al-Shifahyya wa Al-Kitaba]*, p. 37.

¹⁷ - Stamboul Nasser, *Intertextuality of Literary Genres: Contemporary Arabic Poetry as a Model* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Oran, 2005–2006], p. 81.

¹⁸ - Adonis, *Al-Ṣadma [The Shock of Modernity]*, p. 20

¹⁹ - Adonis, *ibid.*, p. 253.

²⁰ - Adonis, *ibid.*, p. 260.

Here is the accurate, high-level academic translation of the remaining sections of your paper into English. It includes structural numbering, numbered footnotes at the bottom of the page, and a fully standardized References section (APA-adapted for international academic publishing).

4.2. The Concept of Avant-Garde Writing According to Adonis

Adonis identifies the decisive factors distinguishing ancient Arabic poetic writing from modernist poetic writing, framing the difference fundamentally as one between expression and creation:

*"The ancient poem was expression: it stated the known in a ready-made, familiar template, thereby reflecting reality and ideas. The modern (avant-garde) poem is creation: it presents the reader with what was previously unknown in an unfamiliar formal structure. Since it does not reflect-and that is the essential characteristic of modern poetry-it replaces the language of expression with the language of creation. The avant-garde always stands in the position of initiating and founding-that is, in a position of dismantling and transcending. For this reason, it becomes the target against which the prevailing order, with all its ideas, values, and institutions, mobilizes to strike, reject, and combat. Because it occupies the place of initiation, it inhabits freedom-that is, it inhabits a project, a project of another reality, another world (...) a project of opening what ends; hence, it cannot settle even in what it achieves; it is perpetual inquiry. Thus, avant-garde writing offers no final answer, for it is avant-garde only insofar as it is a question. This question is posed not only to the past, but to the future as well; not only to answers, but to questions themselves (...) Starting from there, paradigms are inverted."*²¹

By shifting the criteria of reading, the very meaning of writing transforms.

Creative writing is that which engages in a comprehensive re-examination of the dominant system and its relationships. But why "poetic writing" rather than "the poem"-the term widely circulated in ancient and modern critical literature? These questions compel us to lay out the following justifications:

*"If pre-Islamic poetry was born as a song, subsequently establishing an orality that cast its shadow over the trajectory of Arabic poetry across the ages, it led the Arab individual to rely in creative pursuits on the critical standards and paradigms produced by this orality, which governed the creative process for both early and later poets over long periods. Thus, the poet forged a pact with collective memory regarding the trajectory of the poem and its poeticization from one poet to another and from one sensibility to another."*²²

The poet's transition during the era of writing from reliance on auditory structure to written structure shattered the concept of the poetic verse (*al-bayt al-shi'ri*) that was subject to traditional poeticization. This heralded "a different trajectory for poetry in naming, favoring 'poetic writing'

²¹ - Adonis, *The Time of Poetry [Zaman Al-Shi'r]*, Dar Al-Saqi, Lebanon, 6th expanded ed., 2005, pp. 358–360.

²² - Al-Jilali Kourat, *Architectonics of Poetic Writing: An Iconic Approach to Its Modernist Forms* [Master's thesis, University of Oran, 2000–2001], p. 7.

over other designations due to the transformation in its rituals of production, given that singing was no longer the driving force of poetry."²³

The pattern of thought regarding the concept of poetic writing-which I subject here to critical inquiry as an alternative perspective on life and existence-emerged from a profound transformation in human consciousness generally, and Arab consciousness specifically. This occurred through the presence of writing in a concept calling for transcending the Aristotelian approach to literary genres and rejecting their separation. This concept opened wide avenues for the dynamics of the poetic page, transforming it into a linguistic signifier for the poetic text so that the role of writing in the communicative process could be fully realized.²⁴

Adonis proposes a different, broader methodology for writing. In the preamble to the inaugural issue of *Mawaqif* journal, he establishes the concept of writing as a poetic potential carrying an expanded theoretical framework for understanding new writing. Furthermore, he critiqued the experience of *Shi'r* journal after his departure from it, justifying that *"the core difference stems from the conception of poetic practice, which shifted from the 'new poem' to 'new writing'"*²⁵ through the platform of *Mawaqif*.

Adonis summarizes the true foundations underpinning the concept of new writing into the following points:

- Written speech remains scattered without a rigid organizer, considering that writing is an act of gathering (*jam'*).
- Writing is performed not only through the known, but through the unknown as well.
- Writing is a spiritual craft-that is, an embodiment of inner images conceived in the mind.
- Writing is creation (*insha'*); it is a foundational act.
- Writing is arduous work known only to those who practice it.
- Writing is infinite in form and subject, confronting an infinite world.²⁶

Through these criteria, writing realizes itself and enters its era *"just as the Qur'an first opened it upon revelation, as practiced in Sufi writing, and as found in the works of Al-Tawhidi and Ikhwan Al-Safa, for instance. Here, Bennis observes that Adonis translated-interpreted the term writing by appending two qualifiers to it."*²⁷

Mohamed Bennis remarks:

"Adonis translated the term writing by adding two attributes to it: 'new' and 'creative.' Through them, he sought to belong to the dynamic element in tradition while simultaneously

²³ - Al-Jilali Kourat, *ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁴ - Al-Jilali Kourat, *ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁵ - Mohamed Bennis, *Modern Arabic Poetry (Vol. 2): Contemporary Poetry*, Dar Toubkal, Morocco, 2nd ed., 1996, p. 78.

²⁶ - Mohamed Bennis, *Modern Arabic Poetry (Vol. 2): Contemporary Poetry*, Dar Toubkal, Morocco, 2nd ed., 1996, p. 78.

²⁷ - Soufiane Zedadqa, *ibid.*, p. 398.

*separating from non-creative writing. This interpretation-and consequently translation from ancient to modern Arabic-negated a set of primary elements in the definition of writing according to Roland Barthes and the Tel Quel group."*²⁸

Adonis's motive for shifting his theoretical and textual locus from the prevailing status of the poem to the concept of new writing was heavily influenced by the following conception:

*"Writing ceases to be a mere tool and becomes the activity of human existence and its verbal manifestation. Writing becomes an extension of the self—spirit and body. In this case, we can say that writing is itself the object and the question surrounding it is not to what degree it is artistically beautiful, but rather: to what degree is it charged with meaning, significance, and revelation?"*²⁹

The second influence is that of Sufism. Adonian writing is a compound derived from two directions: one ancient and Eastern, and the other borrowed and Western-Sufi writing and automatic writing as heralded by Surrealism.

A. Sufi Writing

Sufi writing established a mode of writing dictated by subjective experience within a culture dictated by general institutional religious knowledge. Sufi writing illuminates our understanding of three issues related to writing as a whole, which drove the transformation of Arabic poetic writing as identified by Adonis:

"The first is that poetry is not a linguistic game assuming that words are decorative tools carrying no emotional or intellectual charge beyond free play. Poetry, on the contrary, is something else that transcends formal play; it is simultaneously emotion and action-the movement of human existence, in feeling and thought, toward understanding things."

*"The second is that what we call external, material, or natural reality is merely one aspect of existence-and indeed its narrowest aspect. What we call life or existence is far broader; hence, poets who confine their expression to the first aspect care ultimately only with what is visible to everyone, expressing only what everyone already knows."*³⁰

*"The third is what can be termed: in the world of immediate phenomena, truth exists only in its positive-scientific form; truth, on the contrary, is a secret residing within things in their inner realm."*³¹ Sufi writing is an experience of reaching the Absolute.

B. Automatic Writing

Automatic writing aimed to remove constraints and eliminate intermediaries (...), placing the writing hand in direct contact with something primordial, turning this activity into a sovereign passivity-not a hand with a feather or a slavish machine, but an independent force. Automatic writing in Surrealism, liberated from rational censorship, was known and practiced by Sufis "in

²⁸ - Mohamed Bennis, *Interrogating Modernity* [Musa'alat Al-Hadaatha], pp. 150–151..

²⁹ - Adonis, *Sufism and Surrealism* [Al-Sufiyya wa Al-Suryaliyya], Dar Al-Saqi, 3rd ed., p. 180..

³⁰ - Adonis, *ibid.*, pp. 154–155.

³¹ - Adonis, *ibid.*, p. 398.

the form of dictation or what is termed ecstatic utterance (shath)... Shath in Arabic language denotes movement, and among Sufis it is the movement of the secrets of ecstasies when their ecstasy intensifies, expressing it through ambiguous phrasing that sounds strange to listeners unless they belong to their ranks."³²This led to a confusion between Surrealist and Sufi writing.

Adonis defines automatic writing not merely as *"an overflow of the unconscious, but a message: the supreme instrument through which human objective chance is revealed-the veil of the universe or the spirit of the world. Language in it is not merely language, but an extension of the cosmic word or language (...) Automatic writing is spontaneous writing that escapes constraints imposed by the censoring mind and conventions. It is liberation from the everyday and its obstacles, impelling the writer to exit the familiar self into another space (...) Automatism in the Surrealist concept is a form of de-concentration, an absence or emptying of thought."*³³

5. Comparative Analysis of Western and Arab Conceptions of New Writing

The comparative analysis demonstrates that both Western and Arab literary criticism regard writing as a creative practice that transcends its traditional communicative function. However, despite this shared understanding, each tradition is grounded in distinct philosophical, critical, and cultural foundations. While Western critics primarily emphasize textual plurality, deconstruction, and the autonomy of the text, Arab critics reinterpret these theoretical perspectives within the context of Arabic literary modernity, cultural identity, and the transition from orality to textuality. The following table summarizes the principal points of convergence and divergence between the two conceptions.

Approach / School	Critic	Key Concept	Analytical Role in the Text
Western Perspective	Roland Barthes	Textual Plurality	Liberating meaning from authorial intent and introducing the "zero degree" of writing.
	Julia Kristeva	Textual Plurality	Framing literature as a dynamic, open-signifying practice (<i>écriture</i>) distinct from traditional "literature."
	Jacques Derrida	Deconstruction	Critique of Western metaphysics, prioritizing the signifier, the <i>trace</i> , and establishing Grammatology.

³² - Soufiane Zedadqa, *Truth and Mirage: Reading the Sufi Dimension in Adonis*, Editions Ikhtilaf, Algeria, 2008, p. 408.

³³ - Soufiane Zedadqa, *ibid.*, p. 411.

Arab Perspective	Adonis	Renewal of Arabic Poetics & Cultural Reinterpretation	Transitioning from expression to creation by synthesizing Sufi mysticism with Surrealist automatic writing.
	Mohamed Bennis	Arab Modernism	Driving the shift from traditional oral recitation (<i>Inshad</i>) to a dynamic, written space that transcends classical prosody.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded from the foregoing that new writing represents one of the most significant transformations in modern literary criticism. Writing is no longer regarded merely as a means of transmitting meanings; rather, it has become a creative act based on the production of meaning and the reconstruction of the relationship between the author, the text, and the reader. The analysis has shown that the Western conception of writing, particularly in the works of Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Jacques Derrida, emphasizes textual openness, the plurality of meanings, and the transcendence of authorial centrality, whereas Arab criticism, especially through Adonis and Mohamed Bennis, has reformulated this concept within the specific context of Arabic literary modernity by highlighting the transition from orality to writing and the renewal of poetic discourse.

Accordingly, new writing constitutes a modern critical and aesthetic project founded on experimentation, openness, and the transcendence of traditional forms, while its manifestations vary according to different cultural and intellectual contexts. Therefore, further comparative studies are needed to explore the dimensions of this concept and its transformations in contemporary literature.

Based on the comparative analysis of "new writing" across Western and Arab criticism, this study synthesizes key findings and actionable recommendations. The primary insights and proposed directions are outlined below:

First: Findings

1. The study concluded that the concept of new writing represents a radical shift in the concept of literary creation, where writing has become an act of production, creation, and reshaping of meaning rather than a mere tool for expression.
2. The study demonstrated that the Western conceptualization of writing, as embodied in the works of Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Jacques Derrida, rests on philosophical and linguistic foundations that treat writing as an open space for generating meaning and deconstructing traditional textual structures.
3. The study revealed that the concept of writing in modern Arab criticism, particularly in Adonis's work, was linked to the transition from orality to writing and to drawing upon Western critical frameworks while repurposing them in harmony with the specificity of Arab culture.

4. The study concluded that creative writing represents a renewed modernist project grounded in experimentation, openness, and the transcendence of traditional paradigms, thereby contributing to the development of contemporary literary and critical discourse.

Second: Recommendations

1. Encouraging further comparative studies between Western and Arab conceptualizations of new writing to highlight points of agreement and divergence between them.
2. Incorporating the concept of new writing into modern literature and criticism curricula at universities due to its importance in understanding the evolution of contemporary critical discourse.
3. Expanding research examining the intellectual and philosophical foundations of new writing, focusing on the contributions of Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, and Adonis.
4. Supporting applied studies that investigate the manifestations of new writing in contemporary Arabic literary texts and connecting them to the intellectual and aesthetic transformations produced by modernity.

7. References

1. Adonis. *Qur'anic text and the horizons of writing* [*Al-Nass Al-Qur'ani wa afaq al-kitaba*]. Beirut: Dar Al-Adab, 2008.
2. Adonis. *Sufism and surrealism* [*Al-Sufiyya wa al-suryaliyya*] (3rd ed.). Casablanca: Dar Al-Saqi, 2008.
3. Adonis. *The static and the dynamic (Vol. 4): The shock of modernity and the authority of poetic heritage* [*Al-Thabit wa al-mutahawwil*]. Beirut: Dar Al-Saqi, 2008.
4. Adonis. *The time of poetry* [*Zaman al-shi'r*] (6th ed.). Beirut: Dar Al-Saqi, 2005.
5. Al-Ghathami, Abdullah. *Sin and thought: From structuralism to deconstruction* [*Al-Khatee'a wa al-tafkeer*]. Cairo: Egyptian General Book Organization, 1985.
6. Al-Ghathami, Abdullah. *Writing against writing* [*Al-Kitaba dhid al-kitaba*] (1st ed.). Beirut: Dar Al-Adab, 1991.
7. Barthes, Roland. *Writing degree zero* [*Le degré zéro de l'écriture*] (N. Khasfahi, Trans.; 1st ed.). Damascus: Center for Cultural Development, 2002.
8. Bennis, Mohamed. *Modern Arabic poetry (Vol. 2): Contemporary poetry* [*Al-Shi'r al-arabi al-hadith*] (2nd ed.). Casablanca: Dar Toubkal, 1996.
9. Bennis, Mohamed. *Modern Arabic poetry: Structures and textual permutations (Vol. 4)*. Casablanca: Dar Toubkal, 2001.
10. Bennis, Mohamed. *Modernity of the question* [*Hadaathat al-su'al*] (2nd ed.). Beirut: Arab Cultural Center, 1988.
11. Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and difference* [*L'écriture et la différence*] (K. Jihad, Trans.; 1st ed.). Casablanca: Dar Toubkal, 2000.
12. El-Sheikh, Halima. Julia Kristeva's concept of writing. *Nizwa Journal*, No. 66, 2011.

13. Jaida, Abdul Hamid. *New trends in contemporary Arabic poetry* [*Al-Ittijahat al-jadeeda fi al-shi'r al-arabi al-mu'asir*]. Beirut: Dar Al-Tali'a, 1980.
14. Kourat, Al-Jilali. *Architectonics of poetic writing: An iconic approach to its modernist forms* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Oran, 2001.
15. Ma'touq, Ahmad Mohammad. *The supreme language: Critical studies in the language of poetry* [*Al-Lugha al-'ulya*] (1st ed.). Casablanca: Arab Cultural Center, 2006.
16. Mousa, Khalil. Writing: Writing difference, women's writing. *Al-Mawqif Al-Adabi Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 500, 2012.
17. Nasser, Stamboul. *Intertextuality of literary genres: Contemporary Arabic poetry as a model* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Oran, 2006.
18. Ong, Walter J. *Orality and literacy* [*Al-Shifahyya wa al-kitaba*] (H. Al-Banna, Trans.). Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, 1994.
19. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *What is literature?* [*Qu'est-ce que la littérature?*] (M. G. Hilal, Trans.). Cairo: Nahdet Misr, 1990.
20. Zedadqa, Soufiane. *Truth and mirage: Reading the Sufi dimension in Adonis* [*Al-Haqiqa wa al-sarab*] (1st ed.). Algiers: Editions Ikhtilaf, 2008.