

Beyond Comparative Poetics: An Evaluation of *The Nucleo-genre Paradigm*

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ABSTRACT

The dominance of Western theories in an age of globalization and swift technological advances, which brought to collective consciousness manifestations of literary and artistic genres in distant geographical places that were once viewed as primitive or exotic, necessitates raising the question of comparative poetics anew. During the second half of the twentieth century, scholars such as James J.Y. Liu, Earl Miner, Stephen Owen, Wai-lim Yip and Mohit K. Ray engaged in comparing Western to Eastern poetics. However, their work fell short of reaching a unifying approach to the study of world poetics. This is the gap that Alaa Abd al-Hadi, a thinker, poet and postcolonial critic, came to fill out. Abd al-Hadi's *Nucleo-genre paradigm* is universally oriented. Based on qualitative logic and Lutfi Zadeh's fuzzy sets, it posits that there are essential elements common to various cultural manifestations of a single genre across time and space. It is these common elements, which help decide whether a certain manifestation belongs to a certain genre, that allow for cross cultural communication and understanding while respecting cultural specificities, manifested by an infinite number of aesthetic elements. Unlike the other approaches to the field of comparative poetics, the nucleo-genre paradigm distinguishes between two levels of genre, the poetic level of production and the aesthetic level of reception, and gives primacy to reception, which is often disregarded in genre theories. In this paper, an attempt is made to evaluate the contribution of the nucleo-genre paradigm beyond comparative poetics.

1. Introduction

The question of comparative poetics is more pressing now than ever. Globalization, Mike Featherstone notes, suggests all-inclusiveness and connectivity (2006, p. 387). Indeed, the spread of communication technology and wide access to the internet has brought to collective consciousness manifestations of literary and artistic genres in distant geographical places that were once viewed as primitive or exotic. However, globalization also entails the erasure of

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national boundaries and identities for economic reasons. The economic supremacy of the West has led to the dominance of Western culture with its ceaseless attempts at absorbing the Other.

The term “culture,” Terry Eagleton notes, used to be synonymous with civilization, but while civilization encompassed the political, economic and technical aspects of life, culture had a narrower scope referring only to the religious, artistic and intellectual aspects (2000, p. 13). Around the turn of the nineteenth Century, however, the term “culture” changed into an antonym of “civilization.” “‘Civilization’ played down national differences, whereas ‘culture’ highlighted them” (p. 13). Thus, while culture allowed for differentiation, civilization negated the Other as uncivilized and underdeveloped. “By the end of the nineteenth century,” Eagleton maintains, “‘civilization’ had also acquired an inescapably imperialist echo, which was enough to discredit it in the eyes of some liberals” (p. 15). The problem is that Western culture imposed itself on the world as a civilization, spreading its lifestyle, ideology, values as well as the characteristics of its literary and artistic genres across the globe, relegating any other culture to the periphery and dismissing any other literary or artistic manifestations that do not follow the conventions imposed by Western poetics.

For centuries, Aristotle's classification of literary genres into the lyric, the epic and the dramatic has dominated Western and Eastern thought alike, and came to be viewed as a stable and sacred text. Earl Miner describes Aristotle's *Poetics* as “the purest example we have of an explicit originaive study of the nature of literature as a distinct, separate branch of human knowledge” (1990, p. 13). However, poetics is a theoretical framework which is, by its very nature, historical and transnational. Oswald Ducrot and Tzvetan Todorov (1979) explain the scope of poetics as follows:

Poetics [...] proposes to elaborate categories that allow us to grasp simultaneously the unity and the variety of literary works. The individual work will illustrate these categories; its status will be that of example, not of ultimate end. For example, poetics will be called upon to elaborate a theory of description that will bring to light not only what all descriptions have in common but also what permits them to remain different; but it will not be asked to account for particular descriptions in a given text. Poetics will then be capable of defining a conjunction of categories of which we know of no instance at the moment. In this sense, the object of poetics is constituted more by potential works than by existing ones. (p. 79)

In other words, poetics, defined as “the general theory of literature” (Childs & Fowler, 2006, p. 179), is concerned with two main questions: acknowledging the specificity of every literary work, and discovering the relationship between an individual literary or artistic work and its literary or artistic genre.

2. Literature Review

Studies of literary genres that followed Aristotle's classification in his *Poetics* ignored the fact that it was based on the literary and artistic manifestations produced by a specific cultural environment. Based on an understanding of literature as mimesis, Aristotle classified literary genres into the epic, the dramatic and the lyric. In Aristotle's view, the lyric is a performed art because the lyric poet, Northrop Frye explains, “normally pretends to be talking to himself or to someone else: a spirit of nature, a muse, a personal friend, a lover, a god, a personified abstraction, or a natural object” (1957, p. 249-50). Despite his familiarity with other poetic forms that were central to Greek culture, Aristotle ignored unperformed or non-mimetic poetry. Notwithstanding its micro-perspective, Aristotle's *Poetics* was generalized across time and space and maintained its strong hold in genre classification. In “Chinese literature in the west” (1975), James J. Liu wonders: “How far are critical methods and standards derived solely from

Western literature valid when applied to Chinese literature, given the widely divergent cultural environments in which the two literatures have been produced" (p.28). In an attempt to counter the hegemony of Western poetics, Liu called for the comparative study of theories of literature, he wrote:

Comparisons of what writers and critics belonging to different cultural traditions have thought about literature may reveal what critical concepts are universal, what concepts are confined to certain cultural traditions, and what concepts are unique to a particular tradition. This in turn may help us discover (since critical concepts are often based on literary works) what features are common to all languages, what features are confined to literature written in certain languages or produced in certain cultures, and what features are unique to a particular literature. Thus, a comparative study of theories of literature may lead to a better understanding of all literature. (p. 2)

Through his *Chinese theories of literature*, Liu aimed at achieving three main goals: The first and ultimate one is "to contribute to an eventual universal theory of literature by presenting the various theories of literature that can be derived from the tradition of Chinese critical thought in order to compare them to theories from other traditions"; the second and more immediate purpose is "to thoroughly and systematically elucidate Chinese theories of literature for students of Chinese literature and criticism;" the third is "to pave the way for a more adequate synthesis than yet exists of Chinese and Western critical views so as to provide a sound basis for the practical criticism of Chinese literature" (pp. 2-5). In an attempt to introduce Chinese poetics in terms familiar to Western readers, Liu drew on M.H. Abram's poetic system founded in *The mirror and the lamp: Romantic theory and the critical tradition*. He modified Abram's poetical triangle that placed the work at the center into a "tetradic circle" that linked each pair of the four elements - universe, writer, work, and reader - with arrows in both directions to show their interrelationships. Liu used this scheme to analyze six Chinese theories of literature from different critics and periods: metaphysical, deterministic, expressive, technical, aesthetic, and pragmatic. However, he stressed that "these theories are not necessarily incompatible with each other but are often interrelated" (p. 14). Though Liu's work succeeded in explicating theories that are central to the understanding of Chinese literature, he failed to achieve his main goal of reaching a universal theory of literature through synthesis of Chinese and Western poetics.

In *Comparative poetics: An intercultural essay on theories of literature* (1990), Earl Miner emphasized the urgent need to discover pastures other than Euroamerican ones, to "inquire into the full heterocosmic range" (p. 7). Upon comparing Western to Eastern poetics, Miner remarked that Aristotle's *Poetics* was founded on drama, while all other poetics were based on lyric. The emphasis on mimesis in Western poetics, Miner observed, is set in contrast with the Eastern affective-expressive poetics. Lyric-based Eastern poetics, Miner noted, is implicit: it regards literature as a distinct human activity; Western drama-based poetics, on the other hand, is explicit: it "defines the nature and conditions of literature in terms of the then most esteemed genre" (p. 7). Though "originative," Western poetics, Miner argues, "is a minority one, the odd one out. It has no claim to be normative" (p. 8).

Stephen Owens is another famous Sinologist whose *Traditional Chinese poetry and poetics: Omen of the world* (1985) and *Readings in Chinese literary thought* (1992) have made a great contribution to Chinese-Western comparative poetics. In *Traditional Chinese poetry and poetics: Omen of the world* (1985), Owen compares Western quest for "definition" to Chinese pursuit of "resonance." He points out that the Chinese view poetry as nonfictional. "Meaning," therefore, "is not discovered by a metaphorical operation in which the words of the text point to Something Else. Instead, the empirical world signifies for the poet, and the poem makes that

event manifest” (Owen, 1985, p.34). In *Readings in Chinese literary thought* (1992), Owen adopts the method of “close reading” of classical Chinese literature from Confucius to Yeh Hsieh (Ye Xie) in the 17th century to explain Chinese literary thought to Western readers. Although many other Sinologists have undertaken this role, Owen stands out for his respect for Chinese terminology.

Wai-lim Yip, a Chinese bilingual poet and translator, had a different approach to the study of comparative poetics. Yip was disappointed with the "formidable distortions of the Chinese indigenous aesthetic horizon" (1993, p. 2) in the English translation of Chinese poetry. Therefore, he advocated the study of both Chinese and Western "cultural models" to find "common aesthetic grounds" (1993, p. 1). Comparing the use of metaphors in Chinese and Western poetry, Yip remarks that it is primary in Western poetry but only secondary in Chinese. Yip argues that the objects in a Chinese poem do not refer to some preconceived ideas because the poet does not force his upon Phenomenon; rather, the poet is “Phenomenon itself and can allow the things in it to emerge as they are without being contaminated by intellectuality. The poet does not step in; he views things as things view themselves" (1972, p. vi). Yip concludes that different cultural models are the reason behind the aesthetic difference between the human oriented Western poetics and the Chinese which is Taoist oriented.

In *A Comparative study of the Indian poetics and the Western poetics* (2012), Mohit K. Ray compares Western and Indian aesthetics pointing out the significance of suggestion and symbolic content to Indian theoreticians. Even ordinary expressions in Indian literature, Ray remarks, are endowed with symbolic significance. Unlike Western aesthetics that is based on the philosophy of materialism and individuality, Indian aesthetics emphasizes spirituality and the kinship of man with all beings in the universe. Ray maintains that Indian aesthetics is indebted to the work of the Hindu linguistic philosopher Bhartrhari whose reflections on the ideational character of both words and meanings shaped Indian literary thought and tradition. Ray’s main contribution lies in introducing the Indian schools of *Rasa*, *Alamkara*, *Riti*, *Guna/Dosa*, *Vakrokti*, *Svabhavokti*, *Aucitya* and *Dhvani* on which Indian poetics was founded to their Western counterparts.

The above-mentioned endeavors seem to suggest that comparative poetics, “research and exploration into fundamental issues of literary theory from a comparative and intercultural perspective” (p. 418), is the correct approach to discovering the intersections between poetic worlds or world poetics. However, all the above-mentioned scholars did was to compare Western and Eastern poetics in an attempt to interpret Eastern literary phenomena and explain them to the Western world. None of those scholars presented a universal view that is transhistorical or transnational. This is the gap that Alaa Abd al-Hadi’s *Nucleo-genre paradigm* came to fill out.

3. The Nucleo-genre Paradigm: An Evaluation

According to Abd al-Hadi, the main problem with the imperialist imposition of Western poetics on world literature lies in that these poetics were based on the manifestations of literary genres that were pregnant with a specific social, ideological, religious, political and cultural context. In the “Introduction” to the *Nucleo-genre paradigm*, he argues:

Western literary genres came to be viewed as stable and sacred although their artistic characteristics and forms of production and reception were subject to relative historical principles. However, their prevalence lessened awareness of their relative truth. The literary and artistic manifestations on which the theory of literary genres was based were produced by a specific cultural environment. (2022, pp. 11-12)

Stripping Western poetics from its context and generalizing it to other manifestations that belong to another context is a grave mistake. It is important to distinguish between the date of production and the date of prevalence of Western poetics; otherwise, we will be “dealing with the origin of genre as if it were genre itself” (Abd al-Hadi, 2022, p. 22). If, however, we know its date of production, we will believe in its historicity and relativity. We will also realize that other marginalized discourses would have turned into established theories of literature had they had the chance to spread as widely as Western poetics.

Representing itself as a civilization that possesses universally valid principles, Abd al-Hadi notes, Western culture has succeeded in dominating discourse and negating other cultures (2009, pp. 23-4). Abd al-Hadi rejects the lingering, pervasive hegemony of Western theories which have continued to exclude manifestations “which belong structurally to the same genre, because they diverge from the framework defining a certain genre based on aesthetic rather than structural elements” (2022, p. 22). As a postcolonial critic, Abd al-Hadi believes that he has the right to pose the question of genre anew to escape the unilateral Eurocentric critical discourse that depended in its study of literary genres on Western manifestations only. He stresses the exigency of deconstructing Eurocentrism in genre studies, which marginalizes the manifestations of genres in other cultures and considers them at worst primitive, at best exotic.

Abd al-Hadi's approach to the study of genre is related to, but separate from the field of comparative poetics. It offers a broader and more comprehensive perspective that seems to agree with Ducrot and Todorov (1979) that “its object is not the set of existing literary works, but literary discourse itself as the generative principle of an infinite number of texts” (p. 79). In developing the nucleo-genre paradigm, Abd al-Hadi was preoccupied with the question: what are the essential elements common to various manifestations of a single genre? Such simple questions often go unnoticed because they seem self-evident. However, it is important to ask this primary question in order to identify the essential structural elements that are common to various cultural manifestations of a single genre across time and space. It is these common elements which help decide whether a literary or artistic manifestation belongs to a certain genre. Such common structural elements, Abd al-Hadi points out, can be discovered empirically by comparing various global manifestations of a literary or artistic genre. They are what remains after “phenomenological reduction,” in Edmund Husserl's own terms, that is, after discarding all the historically formed and culturally oriented aesthetic elements. In Abd al-Hadi's paradigm, “poetics is thus a theoretical discipline nourished and fertilized by empirical research but not constituted by it” (Ducrot & Todorov, 1979, p. 79).

Abd al-Hadi's call for a comprehensive, universally oriented genre paradigm does not annul the cultural and aesthetic specificities of each nation's literary and artistic manifestations. The fixed structural elements of a literary or artistic genre allow for cross cultural communication and understanding while respecting cultural specificities manifested by an infinite number of aesthetic elements. The problem, Abd al-Hadi argues, is that these historically formed and culturally specific aesthetic elements acquire strict authority over time and become well ingrained into collective consciousness forming “habitus,” in Pierre Bourdieu's own terms, that they come to be viewed as genre itself.

Abd al-Hadi's insistence on calling his approach to the study of world poetics a paradigm rather than a theory, despite its logical foundation, stems from his mistrust of the term “theory” which runs the risk of reduction and determinism. A paradigm, on the other hand, is a conceptual framework that is applicable in different ways. The structure of the nucleo-genre paradigm avoids three main problems:

First, closure, reception gives this paradigm constant openness just as it gives coincidence the natural right of existence; second, ahistoricity, the structure of the paradigm is generalizable because of the circumstances of its production and development; it understands its historicity because of its ability to predict new genres through the union of two isomers or through knowing the contexts within which the existing genres could develop via what we call the complement of the Archisotope; third, definitive belonging is avoided by the structure of the Nucleo-genre Paradigm based on a number of notions of the fuzzy set theory, in addition to the suggestions made. (Abd al-Hadi, 2022, pp. 37-8)

Unlike the other approaches to the field of comparative poetics, *The Nucleo-genre paradigm* distinguishes between two levels of genre, the poetic level of production and the aesthetic level of reception, and gives primacy to reception, which is often disregarded in genre theories. It is reception that turns the fixed structural elements of a genre from the state of "possibility" to the state of "possibility in action." Unlike Western poetics that have shunned away its relativity claiming ahistoricity, the nucleo-genre paradigm "understands its historicity." Its structure allows for the formation of new genres through the union of two sets of structural elements as well as the extension of an infinite number of culturally specific aesthetic elements. Time therefore plays a crucial role in the evolution of existing genres and the formation of new ones. Last but not least, the nucleo-genre paradigm avoids the problem of "definitive belonging." Based on Lutfi Zadeh's fuzzy set theory and qualitative logic, it does not definitively identify genres: it accepts changes in the values of its membership function due to the dominance of one structural element on the set manifestations, due to reception which is crucial for the realization of genre, and because time as a "vector" distance the paradigm from the Aristotelian "either or" principle. "The genre membership function," Abd al-Hadi explains, "lies mathematically between 0 and 1, but does not reach any of them, which exceeds the law of non-contradiction, on the one hand, and the law of the excluded third, on the other" (2022, p. 41). In other words, manifestations of a genre form an infinite set: any simple addition or removal of an aesthetic element creates a new member of the infinite set.

Derived from the Latin prefix *Nucleo* and the French term, *Genre*, the term theoretically and abstractly defines the essential elements which give the literary or artistic work its special identity. Ontologically, Abd al-Hadi points out, the Nucleo-genre consists of two main components:

1. A nucleus by which we mean the "Homogeneous Medium" without which the artistic work does not ontologically exist.
2. The structural elements that are present in thousands of manifestations of some genre. These structural elements are common to the various manifestations belonging to different cultural poetics. They are what remains after discarding the historically aesthetic elements which differ from one place to another and one culture to another. Without these structural elements, a work loses its original artistic identity that distinguishes it from other works. They are the elements that together constitute the nucleo-genre, a state we call "Possibility." (2022, p. 46)

The nucleo-genre paradigm thus consists of a Homogenous Medium, the work material without which the literary or artistic work does not ontologically exist, to which are added structural elements, that Abd al-Hadi calls the "Isomer," which determines at the pure theoretical level whether one or more of the different manifestations of a certain genre belong to that genre or not.

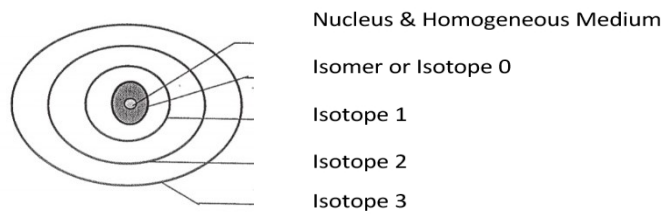


Figure 1. (Abd al-Hadi, 2022, p. 54)

When these structural elements are received, a state named “Possibility in Action” is formed and the isomer turns into “Isotope 0.” Any further aesthetic elements are called “isotopes,” the number of which is infinite and uncountable. Isotopes of a certain genre share the same isomers, or structural characteristics; however, this does not mean that they are identical for the isotope in the nucleo-genre paradigm is a mere aesthetic difference.

Isomer = Homogeneous Medium

+ Structural characteristics shared
by all the manifestations of a genre
that have the same Homogeneous Medium

Isotope 0 = Homogeneous Medium + Reception

+ Structural characteristics shared by
the manifestations of a certain genre
that have the same Homogeneous Medium

Isotope 1 = Homogeneous Medium + Reception

+ (Structural Isomeric characteristics)
+ (An unstable aesthetic characteristic that is liable to increase)

Abd al-Hadi identifies the Homogenous Medium (H.M.) of the theatrical genre to be spatio-temporal relations. Movement in theatrical space, which extends beyond the stage to include backstage as well as the viewing space, “creates tension between two times: the illusionary time of the dramatic idea or text [the stage time], and the real non-recurrent time of performance [the viewing time]” (Abd al-Hadi, 2022, p. 76). Without these spatio-temporal relations, theatre does not ontologically exist. Thus, videotaped plays presented on the T.V. screen, and shadow plays, in which stories are told to the accompaniment of flat cut-out figures that move between a source of light and a translucent screen, do not belong to the theatrical genre because they are not three dimensional and so they lack spatio-temporal relations. However, the homogeneous medium alone is not enough to determine membership because the homogeneous medium can be shared by more than one genre. Thus, although the spatio-temporal relations, the homogeneous medium of theatre, exclude videotaped plays screened on T.V., it does not exclude real scenes on the street. To differentiate between real scenes on the street and performed plays on the stage, structural elements that are shared by various manifestations of theatre need to be identified. Through the empirical study of various manifestations of theatre, Abd al-Hadi could identify the following common structural elements, which he calls the theatrical: 1) possible worlds and secondary reality, which simply means receiving the possible worlds presented on the stage as secondary reality even if it were not so; 2) duality of the spatial sign and the stage, which is a direct result of the existence of possible worlds. Abd al-Hadi points out, “It suffices to receive the spatial sign and theatrical space as secondary reality to

have this duality” (2022, p. 80). Accordingly, real scenes on the street do not belong to the theatrical genre because they are not received as secondary reality. Reception thus plays a crucial role in determining membership to a genre. According to Abd al-Hadi, the theatrical isomer remains a pure theoretical level until received. Upon reception, the theatrical isomer turns into Isotope 0. Since the Aristotelian dramatic, epic and lyric share the same theatrical isomers – they were all performed in front of an audience and received as secondary reality with the duality of the spatial sign and the stage, it follows that they all belong to the theatrical genre. Their differences are mere aesthetic differences; in other words, they represent theatrical Isotopes of the same theatrical genre. Isotopes are aesthetic elements that are not integral to the theatrical nucleo-genre including costumes, light, music and decorations etc. In contrast to the finite isomeric set, isotopes are infinite: every new performance of a single dramatic text is a different isotope.

In every cultural environment or era, Abd al-Hadi notes, a large number of isotopes dominate recipients’ taste forming a strong network of conventions. Such network of historical artistic and literary codes gradually turns into fixed historical laws on which the interpretation of the manifestations of genre depends. Meanwhile, this network of isotopes resists adventure or rebellion to the historical genre authority whether during the stage of reception or production of the literary or artistic genre (p. 57). As Pierre Bourdieu (1993) explains,

Every expression is an accommodation between an expressive interest and a censorship constituted by the field in which that expression is offered ... discourse owes its most specific properties, its properties of form, and not only its content, to the social conditions of its production, that is, the conditions that determine what is to be said and the conditions that determine the field of reception in which that thing to be said will be heard. (p. 90)

In *The Nucleo-genre paradigm*, Abd al-Hadi calls this network of isotopes, which creates artistic conventions that become so well grounded in collective consciousness in a certain cultural environment at a certain time that they are mixed with the structural elements of a certain genre, the “Arch-isotope.” An example of such laws and conventions which became well grounded in collective consciousness that they restricted the generic development of poetry is the convention of rhyme and rhythm.

Abd al-Hadi believes that genre is not transformed: what is most often called transformations are mere isotopes that have the same structural but different aesthetic elements. Through the process of “evolution,” Abd al-Hadi explains,

genre undergoes great progress through long and multiple practice both qualitatively and quantitatively, which leads to influential shifts in its aesthetic elements till it reaches a high degree of perfection either in a single work or in different manifestations that fall under the Arch-isotope. This refers to artistic perfection achieved through a long process of Arch-isotope evolution even though the structural elements remain unchanged. (2022, p. 61)

Through the empirical study of various manifestations of the theatrical genre, Abd al-Hadi proves that the operatic performance is not a new genre resulting from the union of the dramatic and musical isomers, but a theatrical isotope par excellence because it shares the same theatrical isomer, that is, the structural elements that are common to all manifestations of the theatrical genre.

In addition to the evolution of existing genres, Abd al-Hadi refers to the “generation’ of new genres “through the union of the structural elements of two different Isomers forming what we call the Arch-isomer, a new genre resulting from the union of the structural elements of two

different Isomers” (2022, p. 62). Abd al-Hadi regards motion pictures as an example of an Arch-isomer that developed through the union of two historically prior isomers, the dramatic isomer and the plastic art isomer. He explains that when a new genre is born of two different isomers, the characteristics of both isomers are made use of. “This means,” Abd al-Hadi maintains, “that the current original genres were historically formed through the union of two different prior Isomers that were engrained in the general aesthetic consciousness till their manifestations were characterized by purity and unity and formed dozens of Isotopes for a single perfect genre” (2022, p. 62-3).

Although the nucleo-genre paradigm is based on observing existing manifestations of literary and artistic genres, it can theoretically predict new genres or explain the manifestations of old ones through the notion of the “Arch-isomer.” The arch-isomer structure, Abd al-Hadi points out, is synchronically governed by two characteristics:

1. **Stability:** The existence of an Isomer means that some genre has been formed. It will be described as structurally stable and aesthetically malleable when the Isotope is formed. This means that there is a symbolic system imagined as established around which a group gathers and which is characterized as stable in their imagination. They believe in taking part in this system that represents a form of collective myth, being a symbolic structure the elements of which revolve around a topic that can be described as a semiotic system, in Barthes’ own words.
2. **Idiosyncrasy:** The idiosyncrasy of the Isotope of some genre means its difference from other Isotopes despite its synchronic stability through the genre authority expressed by the Arch-isotope. That is, its idiosyncrasy springs from the aesthetic level of each realized manifestation despite its membership in the Arch-isotope. (2022, p. 63)

These two characteristics of stability and idiosyncrasy impart to the *Nucleo-genre paradigm* its universality while respecting the cultural specificities of every nation. The isomers, or fixed structural elements, are common to various manifestations of a certain genre, while the isotopes, or the malleable aesthetic characteristics, are culture-specific and, therefore, infinite.

4. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it appears that the *Nucleo-genre paradigm* moves beyond comparative poetics towards a unifying approach to the study of world poetics. According to the *Nucleo-genre paradigm*, genre is one, and each of its manifestations, regardless of its maturity, is in fact a constantly deferred isotope indicated by the isomeric set. Subgenres have no place in the nucleo-genre paradigm because they belong to the isomer of some genre and its origin is a merely theoretical origin that is always deferred and cannot be absolutely realized. Once reception starts working on the isomeric set, which is limited because it is ontologically based and fixed because it is common to all manifestations of a certain genre, it turns into an isotope. The union of sets in the manifestations of a certain genre in the *Nucleo-genre paradigm* is valid on the level of the arch-isotope as well as the isomeric level, thus creating a new arch-isomer. In other words, the *Nucleo-genre paradigm* does not only explain the existing manifestations of literary and artistic genres in different cultural and historical contexts but can also predict the development of future ones, like its prediction two decades ago of the formation of a new arch-isomer in the field of cybernetics from the union of the human cell and the robot. To conclude, literary and artistic poetics need to be approached from a broader, humanist perspective that encompasses different literary and artistic manifestations in different historical epochs and geographical locations, rather than imposing some culture-specific poetics on world literature and using it as a measure of its value. Alaa Abd al-Hadi’s *Nucleo-genre paradigm* seems to offer such a perspective by presenting the theoretical framework necessary for

examining various literary and artistic manifestations inseparable from their sociocultural and historical contexts and finding out the constants where they intersect.

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