

Ideas And Self- Concepts in Andalusian Letters

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Abstract

Arabic letters from Andalusia are ancient prose art, and every literary text has two essential components: the ideas and concepts that the text aims to convey to the recipient, while the second component is the style, which is the material from which the text is composed. This study addresses the subjects discussed in Andalusian letters and how these letters served purposes that met the needs of the Andalusian individual in all aspects of their social, cultural, political, and religious life. We find that they wrote royal letters, brotherly letters, condolences, and marriage letters, as well as expressions of longing for the Prophet and peace be upon him, among other topics. The study also explores the styles that helped convey the message, fulfilling the psychological needs of both the writer and the recipient.

Rhetorical styles (whether figurative or stylistic) do not appear in the text randomly; rather, they are invoked by necessity. They are not merely additions to the text; the writer calls upon styles that meet the text's need to convey the ideas they wish to express. We find that the environment and the era call for the use of a specific artistic style, as the people of Andalusia preferred decorative styles in their discourse. Despite some objections to the excessiveness of these styles, they existed only in the presence of an audience that favored this type of expression.

Keywords: Letters, Arab, Andalusia, Styles, Expression.

1. Introduction

The literary text has two styles. The first is the style that is inherent to a particular creative author, which the recipient feels and distinguishes from others, much like recognizing one person's voice from another. If this style changes, the recipient may doubt the authenticity of the text's authorship. The second style is the framework that the text takes based on its purpose and type. There are many purposes, including official letters that pertain to political matters, as the writer holds a special status as the voice of the caliph. These letters may be from the caliph to the governors, administrative orders to other governors, threats to those who defy his authority, or military correspondence to his leaders and troops. Another type is personal letters, where the social aspect and the writer's relationship with their community are stronger, such as complaint letters, letters of appeal, and letters of mockery or satire directed at individuals. There are also

religious letters that reveal the writer's religious and doctrinal dimensions, such as letters of advice and expressions of longing for the Prophet, among others. Additionally, there are pure literary letters, such as those describing nature and narrative letters (Al-Shanawain, 2009, pp. 49-50). All of these types encompass intellectual orientations that reveal the ideas of their author or the ideas they wish to convey to the recipients.

There is another aspect of letters that serves as a common element among writers yet is not universally shared: the use of rhetorical and figurative styles. These rhetorical arts are essential in writing and are present in non-scientific letters. However, the style of using these techniques varies from one writer to another. We notice that these styles are often palatable in speech, to the point of becoming a characteristic of signatures, which are the immediate reactions of the intended recipient and not a literary text. An example is the signatures of caliphs on incoming letters, where the Almohad caliphs and the kings of the Nasrid dynasty are particularly noted. For instance, the second king of the Nasrids signed a letter from a man who complained about the harm caused by one of his soldiers, stating: 'This soldier should be dismissed, and no compensation should be given for any property lost (Al-Khatib, 1347 AH, p. 39)

First: Factors Influencing Changes in Performance Styles:

The literary text does not arise from a vacuum; there is a purpose behind its production, which serves as the motivation and goal for its existence. To understand this motivation, we must first examine the subject of the text. The subject around which the text revolves may be the broader context that encompasses various purposes within it, and there may be specific purposes that are not immediately apparent in the text. The purpose is 'the goal for which it was said, commonly known as the (subject of the text),' meaning the overarching central idea that the creator has chosen as the content of their message. They employ music, wording, and various styles to convey it in its most beautiful form and to achieve their intended objectives. (Dawood, 2014, p.59). While the recipient and their environment are influential factors, the goal and purpose are the foundation for the existence of any literary text.

In Andalusia, letters began to serve many purposes due to the broadening circle of their recipients. They were not limited to political purposes, which themselves are varied, but also included personal and literary purposes. Notably, the letters lost their confidentiality and became circulated among the public, much like easily shareable verses of poetry. We will mention these purposes, though not exhaustively.

Diwani letters

These are all letters related to authority, which have evolved over the ages. Initially sent to convey specific news, they now encompass many different meanings, such as advice. One example of an official letter is from Prince Sulayman of the Almohads to the King of Sudan. Although the purpose of the letter is political, Prince Sulayman outlines many directives that kings should follow and the policies they should adopt in governance. He states: 'We surpass in kindness, even if we differ in religions, and we agree on commendable conduct, and we must show compassion towards our subjects. It is well-known that justice is essential for kings in virtuous governance, while tyranny is only suffered by evil and ignorant souls. We have heard of the detention of poor merchants and their prohibition from engaging in trade, and the influx

of traders to the country is beneficial for its inhabitants and helps establish its settlement. If we wished, we could have detained those from our side of that region, but we do not endorse such actions, nor should we forbid what is virtuous while committing similar acts (Kanoun, 1969, pp. 424-425). Political matters are not resolved through force alone; they begin with dialogue and understanding between the parties. This is the approach the prince took in his letter of advice to the Sudanese king, where he outlines the ideas and beliefs related to governance that he follows. At the same time, he demonstrates his ability to respond in kind but opts for the most peaceful means. Regardless of the subject, a literary text must reflect the intellectual orientations of its author.

Among the official letters are also war letters, which include 'varied purposes imposed by the nature of the situations in which they were written.' The letters written from caliphs to those of lower rank have different purposes than those written by governors and leaders to the caliphs and princes. This also necessitates a difference in the nature of the introduction to the letter (Hassan, 2019, p.308). It is natural for the style of the letter to differ based on the recipient and their status in relation to the writer. For example, in a letter composed by the writer Abu Abdullah Ibn Ayash about Prince Muhammad al-Nasir of the Almohads, informing him of the Almohads' conquest of Menorca and Majorca, he begins with: 'Praise be to Allah, the Opener of closures, and the Giver of rewards, who extends this imamate call from the seven heavens, and supports it in the turbulent seas and shifting horizons, the One who created this group to unite in uplifting His religion and in agreement... This is our letter to you, may Allah grant you the tidings of the best news, the most splendid encounters, and the most auspicious thoughts and inspirations, and may it quench the thirst of longing hearts (Provançal, 1941, p. 243). Since the letter is a message of good news, it begins with praise and gratitude to Allah for the victory, as victory comes only from Him.

Administrative orders were also conveyed through letters, and these letters tended to be long rather than short. For instance, this is the letter of dismissal for Judge Ibn al-Maljum, written by Ali ibn Yusuf ibn Tashfin, in which he states: 'May Allah preserve you and honor you with His piety and make it easy for you to do what pleases Him. It has been reported to us and confirmed that the ignorant Ibn al-Maljum is more ignorant of judicial rulings than the Maljum himself, and he has displayed judgments among you that one would wish mercy upon Sodom for. We have appointed him to the position of blame, and we have cast him aside while he is reproached, and we have made the stones of isolation for his devils like the stones of the damned. Perhaps a harsh critic may criticize us for his promotion and cause us painful reproach... Yet the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, chose the words of Allah... for the eyes of Banu Sarh, and Uthman was deceived by Hamran... etc (Idhari, 2013, p. 77). We notice that the Commander of the Faithful explains the reasons for the dismissal to the public. This reveals several things: the importance of the recipients of the letter in the decisions of the caliphate, as well as the significance of the letter in conveying the authority's decisions to those of lower rank.

A letter written by Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Sulayman, known as Ibn al-Qasir, the scribe of Al-Mu'tamid ibn Abbad, was a response to a letter received from the ruler of Egypt. He says: 'Your letter has arrived, which you sent from the Valley of Mina after your return from the direction where you sought support against your adversaries. You have wronged both your new and old

allies, and you have failed to achieve your aims and desires. We have grasped its meanings and understood what is explicitly stated and what is implied within it. We find that you unjustly blame those who do not deserve such reproach, and you turn your faults into virtues, your wrongs into recognized truths, and your clear mistakes into evident correctness. You judge yourself in a manner that gives you an advantage in disputes and attribute to yourself the strongest arguments in all matters (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.159). We notice a change in the style of the discourse and the introduction, resembling a declaration of hostility or a notice before war from the ruler of Egypt. Thus, the letter is mixed with advice to retreat from what he has planned, by highlighting the shared faith between both parties. He says: 'I urge you by Allah, by whom the heavens and the earth stand, was it not when Satan sowed discord between you and Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yusuf, may Allah have mercy on him, and enmity escalated... that we did not deviate from the ignorance of the polytheists, and we accepted only what protects the sanctity of the Muslims, hoping for your enlightenment or your reconsideration. Meanwhile, you are gathering and rallying, taking a stand with fervor and then sitting down, flashing in anger and rumbling, summoning the wolves of the Arabs and their outlaws from afar and near, giving them what is in your treasury recklessly, and spending on them that those have hoarded extravagantly (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.159). He means that they are fighting the enemies of Islam who are invading the lands of Muslims in Andalusia, and the situation cannot withstand a war from the other side as well, since the other Muslim states, such as Egypt and others, are far from this conflict. This is further explained in the rest of his letter, which he concludes by saying: 'And in that island—may Allah protect it—there is nothing good or bad except what brings you before Allah Almighty, raising your voice in complaint against you. Everything that has been spilled in blood, violated in sacred matters, and consumed in obligations is attributed to you, counted against you, recorded in your ledger, and the time for recompense is tomorrow, and it is near. So, consider what will succeed in your endeavors, yield the greatest profit, and rectify your resources and exports (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.160). Thus, he relies on the commonality in faith, belief, and accountability on the Day of Judgment to support his argument and to deter an anticipated attack on the Iberian Peninsula.

Personal letters

There are many types of personal letters, including letters of reproach, such as the one written by Abu Muhammad Abdul Majid ibn Abdoun, who begins with a brief introduction to get straight to the point. He says: 'Peace be upon the one who sees with his heart, not with his eyes, who judges with certainty, not with suspicion, who speaks with reason, not with desire, and who takes from this world for the Hereafter, without being swayed by what is said or heard, and who is not shaken by falsehoods (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.399). The introduction, as is clear, indicates the meaning and purpose for which the letter was written. He then directly addresses the main topic, saying: 'I have heard the words of those who judged me by suspicion and ruled based on conjecture. There are ways of speech that cannot be transgressed without the transgressor facing the consequences, and no one can exceed them without being attributed with deviation, especially in a matter that warrants a penalty (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.399). Then he clarifies his position, saying: 'I swear, and I know what I swear by, and I commit to what I commit. I have left it out of fear of the Hereafter, not for the sake of showing off to people, for indeed, piety is the best armor. How could I, while I am under abundant blessings from Allah,

with continuous acts of worship and fragrant virtues (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.400)? Then he shifts to a tone that is closer to a threat towards the one he is reproaching, saying: 'Do not think that my withdrawal is for an excuse I wish to have accepted, or that I desire to communicate it. I swear by the One who has made reason a foe to its owner and has made some suspicion a sin. I did not seek out whom I sought except out of goodwill, and I did not visit whom I visited except voluntarily. Indeed, I have removed all hope from myself and turned away from all greed and avarice (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.400). And thus, he concludes the letter without a clear closing, to align with the subject of the letter and what he intended to convey to the recipient.

In Andalusian literature, many purposes necessitate the writing of letters, to the extent that we find letters reaching a level comparable to poetry in expressing the feelings that stir in the heart of the writer, such as praise, pride, and lamentation. Moreover, we often find letters written by the family of a daughter when she is married to her husband, expressing her status among them and their deep love for her, as well as their advice to treat her well. In this type of letter, the husband is the intended recipient. These letters have many dimensions that reveal to us aspects of Andalusian society, as well as the status, importance, and elevation of women within that society.

It becomes evident to us that the girl sends her to her husband's house, which may be in another city, prompting her family to send a message to her. One such letter was written by Ibn Abd al-Bar al-Namri about Ibn Mujahid, who married his daughter to al-Mu'tasim ibn Samadih. In this letter, he indicates that they had confirmed his sincerity and knowledge of his good qualities before agreeing to the marriage, similar to how inquiries are made today. When the truth was made clear and falsehood was dispelled, he sent his daughter, whom he referred to as a 'gift.' He says: 'And the clear truth has emerged from the sea, and the dawn has been made evident to the one with two eyes. The intended gift has been sent, surrounded by the sanctified and the sacred, enveloped in noble treasures, and then by the noble banners (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.83). The allusion and style highlight the girl's status with her father. He then continues to explicitly state what is required of the husband, saying: 'Then I count on your generosity and care for her, and your kindness and compassion will be my successor to her. She is now your possession, and you are the noble one who will uphold her. She is the merchandise of my trade, and you are the one who will profit from her. By Allah, may He preserve you elevate you, and strengthen your grip on the reins of your hopes and aspirations — you are the treasure of eternity, the support of family, friends, and children. You have received the fruit of my soul and the core of my heart. I parted with her with great reluctance and entrusted her to you after much protection. She was sent only to a noble one who carries her with trust and fulfills her rights (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.83). We note that the husband does not need further explanation of what the sender wants from him; rather, he used a direct approach to convey his message and what he wanted the recipient to understand and act upon.

The letter, like others, does not lack quotations that strengthen the meaning of the Holy Qur'an and the noble prophetic hadith. He says: 'And we have in the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) a good example, and what he said in such matters is a model to be followed, a tradition to be emulated, as he recited the verse: (And He it is who created from water a human being and made him [a relative] by lineage and marriage) and said: (Indeed, Fatimah is a part of me;

whoever honors her has honored me, and whoever dishonors her has dishonored me). O Allah, bless her and bless upon her (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.83)

The letters were not exclusive in the sense we understand them today; rather, they were akin to poetry, circulated widely, and subjected to the scrutiny of critics. Just as the girl was previously referred to as a 'gift,' we find a letter written by Ibn Thawabah with a similar purpose regarding al-Mu'tadid to Ibn Tulun, in which he compares his daughter Qatr al-Nada to a precious deposit. He says: 'As for the deposit, it is like one who has moved from your right to your left, taken care of and protected, and nurtured in your heart (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, pp 83-84). Ibn Khakan states that the deposit is retrievable and that likening it to a gift is preferable, among other criticisms directed at the author. This indicates that letters were a literary art form with their audience and critics, where the writer was expected to choose their words carefully and select the appropriate style. We would not exaggerate if we said that letters were an art form that competed with poetry, not only in purpose but also in literary value among the recipients.

Among the other purposes that lead to the writing of letters are letters of condolence, which begin with an introduction that serves its content. Ibn Abd al-Barr states: 'A calamity of death and a tragedy of distress have struck at the center of hopes, their axis, the brightness of aspirations, and their beacon, as well as the crown of leadership and its adornment (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, pp. 83-84). He then moves on to express his deep sorrow for the deceased and the magnitude of this loss, saying: 'O, how I lament for him eternally! What has the hand of fate snatched away, and what have the arrows of time silenced?! Which sky of greatness has been torn asunder, which star of hopes has been darkened, which sea of sorrow has been kindled, and which eye for weeping has been unleashed? Nothing can be compared to this, nor can anything be matched with it (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.143)

There is a beautiful strategy with profound psychological dimensions that he uses in another message. The writer wants to console the family of the deceased, but before providing comfort, he acknowledges his awareness of the magnitude of this tragedy. He then transitions into offering solace, saying: 'And like my esteemed lord, the president, you have received this calamity that shakes mountains, shatters hopes, tears hearts, and rends souls. In light of what Allah Almighty has commanded regarding patience, to which He has summoned those who seek solace, for He said: (Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account). And you, with your keen understanding and profound knowledge, should not just see but remember (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.143). This approach emotionally connects the text to the recipient, as the writer is fully aware of what the recipient is feeling. He then sends a message of patience, concluding by stating that the recipient is more knowledgeable about the status of patience and does not need to be taught about it; he only intends to remind him. He is aware of what the recipient will be thinking and anticipates events so that nothing remains unaddressed in the recipient's heart.

Among the other purposes for which letters were written is to congratulate on the birth of a child, as expressed by the writer Abu al-Qasim Muhammad bin Abdullah bin al-Jadd, who said: 'The most deserving of congratulations is a tongue that expresses joy, and the most honorable in the realms of its meanings is a clear statement. A hope that was long awaited and resisted by time, and when summoned, it hesitated. The aspirations chased it, tiring themselves for a while, and ambitions flirted with it, igniting a longing. Then it appeared unexpectedly, arriving amidst

joyful companions, as if it were a sign of what lies ahead in the processions of hopes and a guide to what follows from the stars of prosperity. (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.178). Thus, we observe that letters competed with poetry in fulfilling the needs of the Andalusian individual in all aspects of life.

Religious messages:

The Andalusians yearned to see the noble Prophet (peace be upon him), and traveling to him was one of their greatest devotions. Therefore, we find letters written to the Prophet as well. An example is a letter written by Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn al-Jadd, expressing his thoughts on behalf of those who had the honor of visiting the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the Sacred House. This type of letter uniquely addresses the Prophet directly. Abu al-Qasim ibn al-Jadd states: "I have written to you, O most honorable of prophets, the one with the greatest virtues, the one who encompasses all benefits, and the one who completes both obligatory and supererogatory acts. My heart is filled with love for you, and I am created in faith in you. I am preoccupied by the awe of what I have witnessed of your magnificent deeds. Who can articulate something without flaws, or without fatigue in sending prayers and supplications upon you or distracted from the remembrance of Allah and you? (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.175). We see the spirit of faith clearly reflected, along with a deep attachment to the noble Prophet (peace be upon him). He says: "And when I departed, O Messenger of Allah, after your blessed visit, your awe and love filled the corners of my mind and the space of my heart. The light of your proof overwhelmed me and filled my heart. I was struck by the sorrow of being far from your visitation and the yearning for the honor of being near you, which ignited a flame within me and caused great turmoil in my soul.(Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.176)

The conclusion of this message takes the form of a prayer, in which he says: "O Allah, just as You aided me in performing the pilgrimage to Your sacred House and visiting Your honored Prophet, make him an intercessor for me, and grant me a faithful death upon his creed. Ease for me a return to his sacred places, for You are capable of all things (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, p.175).

Pure literary messages:

The purpose of these messages is primarily artistic and aesthetic, such as descriptive letters and those based on narratives. Among the most famous are the "Messages of Whirlwinds and Followings," "Hayy ibn Yaqdhan," and "The Ring of the Dove" on love and affection by Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi. There are also many scattered letters describing gardens and flowers, showcasing the beautiful nature of the Andalusians. One such letter by Ibn Khafajah describes a park, stating: "And the breeze, during that lovely scene, walks upon a woven carpet; when it passes by a pond, it weaves a shield and perfects its craft. And if it stumbles upon a stream, it sharpens it, leaving nothing but smooth banks, as if defeated battalions have thrown down their polished armor and drawn swords there (Al-Shantirini, 1998 AD, pp 335-336). As we can see, while literary messages draw their ideas from reality, they fundamentally rely on artistic imagination. This is evident in Ibn Khafajah's description of the breeze as if it were a person, conveyed through a series of rhetorical devices that create an atmosphere of fantasy.

Second: The Innovation of Ideas and Personal Concepts

1. The Effectiveness of the Artistic Performance of the Text and Its Relationship to the Audience.

The literary text operates on two main axes: preservation and innovation. Preservation involves following the paths established by previous texts, or what is known as 'formative templates.' When we speak in our native language, we do not simply repeat the words and phrases we have memorized; rather, the words and sentences flow naturally from current usage (Al-Ghanimi, 2015, p. 116). Therefore, we cannot describe the use of rhetorical devices in the formulation of a text in any era as mere imitation or artificiality; rather, it reflects what was prevalent in a specific time or place. On the other hand, innovation distinguishes between eras and marks a period that later becomes traditional.

If we closely examine the letters from al-Andalus, we find that the science of rhetoric was prominent during the era of the Taifa kings. However, in the later periods, the letters exhibited different language and style, and literature shifted to reflect thought more closely. In this context, we find significant figures such as Ibn Hazm, Ibn Rushd, and Ibn Arabi, whose writings engage with pure thought. As a result, their authors sought to eliminate any rhetorical embellishments that might distract the reader. This could be attributed to their focus on pure scientific discourse. Meanwhile, other types of letters continued to rely on rhetorical devices, despite also containing ideas. Ibn Khaldun critiques the excessive focus on stylistic form, stating: "The later writers adopted the styles and measures of poetry in prose due to the abundance of rhymes and the adherence to patterns, placing preambles before their main subjects. If you examine this prose, you will find it akin to poetry and its art, differing only in meter. The later writers continued this path, using it in royal correspondence and confining their prose to this genre they accepted, mixing styles and neglecting the straightforward approach, particularly among the people of the East (Al-Maliki, 732, p. 782). The mixing of literary genres is generally viewed as undesirable, especially since the writer did not intend to blend poetry and prose. Instead, he excessively employed rhetorical arts to the point where the text resembled poetry in rhyme and assonance, leaving only meter as the distinguishing factor between the two. Ibn Khaldun believes that the use of these styles hinders the necessary function of the text, stating: "The royal addresses of this era among the uninformed writers are conducted in this manner we have mentioned, which is incorrect in terms of rhetoric due to the failure to adapt the speech to the circumstances of the interlocutor and the speaker (Al-Maliki, 732, p. 783). If it contradicts the essence of rhetoric that "to each occasion belongs a speech," why then did writers exaggerate this aspect? Ibn Khaldun's argument may be logical, but the abundance of such styles indicates the presence of an audience that encourages writers to adopt this form of expression. Furthermore, the writer likely seeks to fulfill personal psychological desires through this style, aiming to showcase his linguistic prowess and literary competence to enhance his standing with the caliph. Many writers certainly compete for favor in the eyes of the caliph, who is the primary audience the writer wishes to please. In contrast, the public or audience to whom the text is directed is a passive receiver, whose opinion is not solicited. However, in Andalusia, the audience often critiqued the letters and the writers, showing little concern for the writer's status with the caliph or his rank.

Writers may have other opinions or justifications for this artificiality, as expressed by Abu Al-Mutraf Abdul Rahman bin Fakher, known as Ibn al-Dabbagh: "When genuine affection is

present, the need for artificiality diminishes. If pens were to be used for anything related to it, I would refrain from describing belief and would not adhere to the conventional norms (Al-Shantirini, 1998, p. 176). He believes that excessive artifice, when accompanied by genuine affection, does not constitute true artifice; rather, the genuine meaning of affection is what truly matters, and artifice does not convey this meaning.

The purpose of writing a literary text determines its linguistic value and style, which is what it means for speech to conform to the context. For example, if we encounter a text intended to serve a difficult political purpose, we might criticize its linguistic artifice. However, some literary texts possess a quality that brings them closer to poetic expression. A case in point is the letter written by Safwan ibn Idris to Prince Abd al-Rahman (a debate between the cities of Andalusia). This letter features a literary style and a sincere poetic language, not as a competition between Andalusian cities but as a point of pride for the Andalusian audience, especially to inform the Moroccan recipient, Abd al-Mu'min ibn Ali, about the significance of this land he is entering and will govern. The author chose a rhymed style to ensure its permanence, resembling poetry. He begins with: "May my lord prolong the time of your presence, as your love encompasses your supporters; may you receive all that you wish of bounty and safety, just as the strings of your glory adorn the fabric of time, like pearls. For you are the brave king, the complete moon; your days are rare jewels, and the brilliance of your splendor roams the pages of time (Al-Mursi, 1939, p. 124). It is an appropriate introduction to what he wants to convey, designed to soften the heart of the caliph, especially since the caliph is not from the land the writer wishes to discuss.

Then the text embarks on a competition between the Andalusian cities to win the favor of the caliph so that he may come to them. It begins this competition by saying: 'When the cities of Andalusia quarreled over you, and they stood long desiring your love and longing for your presence, each city declared, saying, "I am the most deserving and worthy," and they listened intently to the call and heeded it, reciting the news of your coming, which was what we had hoped for (Al-Mursi, 1939, p. 124). The text, as it is clear, takes upon itself to express the opinion of the people of Andalusia regarding the entry of Abdel Mumin into Andalusia. The primary or explicit message of the text is the desire of the people of Andalusia for his arrival to liberate them from the attempts of Crusader control. It mentions the place to indicate its people, referring to the whole while meaning a significant part. Since this part is extensive, it is more fitting to speak in the voice of the place. Thus, we see that it resorts to personifying the location, giving the cities a voice that not only speaks but also competes with their fellow cities. We will discuss this style in more detail later, as it falls under the category of metaphor and the generation of new values and meanings.

The external form of the literary text is the first thing encountered by the recipient; the rhetorical images represent the initial impression before the reader delves into the text and its meanings, particularly the verbal embellishments. Although in modern literature we have somewhat abandoned these rhetorical images, contemporary writers rely on the layout of the book, the style of its printing, and the arrangement of sentences to present their work. In contrast, previously, rhetorical figures were responsible for conveying the first impression of the text, which is why writers placed great emphasis on this aspect, often to the point of exaggeration, as noted by Ibn Khaldun. However, if we closely examine the letter of Safwan bin Idris, for instance, will it

convey the desire of the people of Andalusia for his presence in a manner stripped of these rhetorical images? The literary text itself bears the responsibility of conveying the message along with many impactful additions that are influenced by the recipient.

The rhetorical images in the language have varied, including alliteration, as alliteration - and the same goes for rhyme - may seem to the observer that the beauty in them is due to this verbal music that you sense in these two types of embellishments. However, 'Abd al-Qāhir refutes this notion, arguing that punning is only commendable when the meanings of the two words involved have a favorable position in the mind, and the connection between them is not too distant (Allam, 1993, p 272). This means that these figures of speech have two main functions. The first is the aesthetic appeal we previously discussed, which is the initial impression on the audience. The second function, as 'Abd al-Qāhir sees it, is to be in their proper context. Art, therefore, is about placing the literary elements in their appropriate positions.

In a letter composed by Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb to the shrine of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), he begins with poetic verses saying: 'A stranger calls you from the farthest reaches of the Maghreb, while you are close despite the distance to the place of visitation.

The one who brings forth the reasons for hope and its aspects,

Is humble before the judgment of life and invokes.

He bears the crescent's disk a greeting,

As it descends, while the sun sets (Al-Khatib, 1980, p. 62)

Lisān al-Dīn is a well-known poet skilled in poetry, which he demonstrated in the introduction of his message. He could have continued the message in verse, but after exhausting his lines, he chose to shift to prose, proving that he is equally talented in prose as in poetry. This shows that prose also enjoys the same fame and popularity as poetry. In his message, which resembles poetry yet lacks meter, he writes: "To the proof of Allah, supported by the evidence of His lights, the benefit of the universe and the essence of its stages, the chosen one and the essence of existence, who has not been enriched by the generosity of the one who lacks it, and the chosen one from the lineage of Adam, before the bones are clothed in flesh, sealed in the beginning, and in the darkness of non-existence, at the truth of his precedence and distinction (Al-Khatib, 1980, p. 65). In his prose introduction, we notice a richness of vocabulary that lends weight to the text, capturing the attention of the audience, and the words are well-suited to their meanings. For instance, his phrases: "(His lights — His stages — His forms)" as well as "(Present — existence — generosity)," and the words "(precedence — nonexistence)" along with their subsequent phrases ("the sealed precedence — the truth of precedence — His preference"). To elaborate on his phrase "the essence of His stages," the essence means "a slight influence in something (Zakariya, 2008, p.1009). Here, it implies that the stages of creation are equal, while his role (peace be upon him) made a significant difference in the universe. The term "present" means "existing," while "existence" refers to the universe, and "generosity" signifies generosity. The term "precedence" is a perfect homonym, which "only rarely occurs for an eloquent speaker; it does not find its rightful place in beauty unless the meaning calls for and leads it, and unless the word is one that the writer does not seek to replace or find an alternative for (Al-Hashimi (n.d.),

p. 416). The position of 'precedence' in meaning is well-placed, as the first precedence (the sealed precedence) refers to 'the opposite of creation; something is said to be ancient if its time is in the past (Zakariya, 2008, p.847). In other words, he (peace be upon him) is the Seal of the Prophets before the creation of humans. This meaning is reinforced by his subsequent phrase: 'and the darkness of non-existence.' As for the second 'precedence' in the phrase 'the truth of precedence, his promotion and distinction,' it indicates 'precedence and honor... and someone has a place of truth, meaning something distinguished by a good effect (Zakariya, 2008, p. 847). The phrase 'his promotion and distinction' that follows, along with 'precedence' and 'his promotion,' also reflects a form of wordplay (jinas).

In another part of the letter, he says: 'Neither the supererogatory nor the obligatory is known, Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn Abd Manaf, the praiseworthy, the distinguished one from the Glorious... Peace be upon him, as long as the sun rises and the lightning flashes, and a distinction is made between the bright day and the dark night, a prayer that rises (Al-Tlemcen, (n.d). with the fragrance of time, and radiates from the glow of the bright stars, echoing between the secret and the public (Al-Khatib, 1980, pp. 66-67). Jinas (alliteration) occurs in his words (al-Khalal - al-Jalal) and (fareq - frq). He also employs antithesis, which is the juxtaposition of two contrasting words in meaning (Al-Baghdadi, (n.d), p. 384). In his statement, "(the bright day and the dark night) (the hidden and the apparent)," we see the use of antithesis. The Arabs have historically paid great attention to the beauty of language. Letters have gone through many stages, evolving from mere communication of messages or commands to becoming a medium that competes with poetry in terms of vocabulary and meaning, and with oratory in purpose. A modern reader encountering such a text might consider it poetic due to its internal rhythm, reflecting the changing concept of poetics from that era to the present. If we examine the message of Abu Umar ibn al-Baji, he states: "We are commanded among us, and we are ruled over, by the best of rulers, and judged by the fairest of judges. Had Allah willed, He would not have created us, let alone those who were created for us and with us. Allah has blessed you with blessings that you enjoy as long as He wills, and then He acts in what He wills. If you face the descending decree with patience and accept His just judgment, then it is better for your sorrow to turn into joy, and for your grief to be compensated by Allah's reward (Al-Shantirini, 1998, p.117). We pay tremendous attention to verbal embellishments, which align with the expectations of the contemporary reader of the text.

Since we have mentioned what the contemporary recipient expects, there is no harm in transmitting some of the letters that praise the rhetoric and the opinions of their contemporaries about it. Ibn al-Baji has a message titled "On the Descent of Rain After Drought," in which he writes: And that it was from the withholding of the water and the cessation of life that the safe was frightened and the inhabited were blown away, and the hearts trembled with fear, and the hearts were astonished with grief, and the heat of its heat was kindled, and the sky withheld its milk, and the gardens were covered with dust after their greenness, and were clothed with pallor after their freshness, and the coolness of the gardens was almost folded, and the extensions of Allah's blessings were cut off, then the Almighty spread His mercy, extended His grace, offered His blessings, and removed His trials. He sent forth the winds as fertilizing breezes and sent the clouds pouring down with abundant water, nourishing and plentiful, from a vast sky. Its eyelids opened and shed tears, and its tears flowed freely. Its rain fell and soaked the earth. The land

became satiated, and it flourished with vegetation, becoming a splendid sight. The beauty of the earth is well-known, and the blooms are displayed. The Lord's bounty is abundant, and hearts are at ease after their turmoil, with faces smiling after their frowns. The signs of distress have been erased, and the walls of gratitude are recited. We seek more from the Giver of the blessing of guidance, and we ask for His guidance in fulfilling rights, towards the straight path. We seek refuge in Him from the return of trials as tribulations, and from blessings that may turn into hardships (Al-Shantirini, 1998, p. 121). Ibn Bassam describes his letters, saying: "The kindness of the Banu al-Baji is abundant, and their correspondence is well-known. In it, there are many remarkable things, and it is not possible to encompass all of it in this collection (Al-Shantirini, 1998, p. 121)

He also wrote a letter from Ibn Hud to Ibn Dhun Nun, thanking him for the release of Ibn Ghasan from prison. In it, he says: "My letter—may Allah support you—is one stripped of expressions of affection, and I have deviated from descriptions of belief, breaking the custom of those who express fondness, and turning away from the path of pretenders. Yet, I swear by Allah, I am among the foremost in loyalty to you, part of the first rank of those who support you. I dedicate this to thank you for your generous hand and your commendable deed, which you have adorned with a necklace of fine manners, a necklace that will endure through the ages, and you have placed on the fire of intellect a fuel that shines with sweet praise (Al-Shantirini, 1998, p. 119)

Then he continues: "If there were a form for noble deeds, this act would be like kohl at its edge; or if there were a garden for seriousness, you would be the one to possess its sweet fragrance. If the tongues of etiquette could speak, they would have set you free, or if the choicest praises were sent forth, they would not surpass you (Al-Shantirini, 1998, p. 119). Ibn Al-Hanāt wrote a letter discussing Ibn Al-Bāji's message, in which he said: "I have sent you a letter from the minister and scribe Abu Umar Al-Bāji regarding the seas, transcribed in my handwriting, despite its flaws and the irregularities of its forms. However, the beauty of the message and its eloquence and richness overshadow the shortcomings of my handwriting and the inadequacies of my style. I beg you, may Allah honor you, to treat it as a bride of thought, with ink as its adornment, enchanting words, a wonderful meaning, and a lofty conclusion. Its aim is sound, using unusual words while striving for distant meanings. It inspires both hope and despair and brings both alienation and comfort: its hopeful aspect lies in the gentleness of its words and the ease of its themes, while its despairing aspect arises from the challenges of fulfilling it and the difficulty of attaining it. May Allah grant you enjoyment in the gardens of literature, where you can harvest its flowers and select its finest (Al-Shantirini, 1998, p. 119). These opinions serve as evidence that this style is both desirable and anticipated by the contemporary recipients of these letters.

2. The Impact on the Recipient: The Nature of the Values Produced by the Text

The essence of rhetoric is to guide the recipient to the meaning, not to mislead them. Its aim is to "convey to the listener the fullest extent of the meaning that occupies your heart, allowing them to envision it as you do, through clarity and explicit expression (Al-Baghdadi, (n.d), p. 76). Rhetorical techniques serve two main functions: the first is to clarify meaning, and the second is to influence the recipient. This influence only occurs after the recipient understands the meaning; a listener who hears a simile or metaphor without grasping its meaning or similarities is like someone listening to a foreign language, unaffected by it. Once they comprehend the meaning

and the points of comparison, a vast array of emotions reaches them, allowing them to appreciate the beauty of that simile. If we trace the history of Arabic literature and rhetoric, we find competition and evolution in the meanings created by writers and poets. What is the secret behind this? Is the author competing to clarify their meanings, or are they competing to impact the recipient? The truth is that many meanings can be conveyed through repeated images, yet the writer seeks to invent new images. This has led to the existence of anthologies in our literary heritage based on meanings, where each meaning has numerous images that express it. Thus, influencing the recipient becomes a constant goal for the author. These rhetorical images act like medicine for the body; when the body has absorbed a dose of medicine, the doctor may prescribe a larger dose. Similarly, these rhetorical images are doses of meaning that engage the recipient's mind. Meanings are "the occurrences that are mentioned, conceived in the mind, circulating in thought. They are distant and wild, nonexistent at one moment but present in another, extending without end, and spreading infinitely (Al-Baghdadi, (n.d), p. 75)

This rhetorical image has an impact when it also provides benefits to the recipient. For instance, a useful metaphor must contain "a benefit and a meaning, along with a purpose. Without the presence of that metaphor, you would not have attained this benefit. The essence of this benefit and purpose is comparison, although the ways of expressing it vary to the point of reaching an endpoint (Al-Jurjani, 1404 AH, p. 24). The metaphor is beneficial to the recipient in terms of comparison and is more impactful than a simile because it stimulates their thinking more profoundly, prompting them to find similarities and understand the meaning. For example, as Ibn Khaldun said: "Trust in Allah does not allow the darkness of adversity to obscure its light (Al-Khatib, 1980, p. 366). He likens trust in Allah to light and adversity to darkness. The metaphor becomes palatable to the recipient, as they may not even notice its presence due to their expectation of it. Delaying the phrase "its light" after "trust in Allah" encourages the recipient to reflect more deeply. While similes are among the simplest concepts that the mind processes, metaphors represent a more complex equation. But what if metaphors operate on different levels? If the comparison of light and darkness is straightforward, the metaphors change, as in the statement: "When the tyrant saw his downfall, the state of Islam renewed its youth, and Allah opened a door for the victory of this island (Al-Khatib, 1980, pp. 367-368). He sees Islam as a person with youth that is renewed, and that Allah has opened a door for victory. In another place, he describes the actions of the enemy: "They came upon it with their steeds and horses, dragging the excess of their tails over its outskirts, and they obscured its bright horizons with the darkness of their night (Al-Khatib, 1980, p. 368). The phrase "the excess of their tails" refers to the leftover fabric of a garment, resembling a train. The enemy aspires to control the lands of Andalusia, and with that control, Andalusia would not return to its former state. If it were to thrive in the presence of the enemy, it would be as if the enemy were the garment itself, not merely its excess. The meaning goes deeper than mere dominance. His statement "they obscured its bright horizons" reinforces this point, as cultural and scientific flourishing is akin to light. The arrival of the enemy would represent night for these Andalusian lands, which only experienced prosperity in the presence of Islam and Muslims.

The alteration of the actual image, whether through embellishment or distortion for the recipient, also falls on the shoulders of rhetorical techniques. The text aims to convey what it wishes through the image it desires. For example, Ibn Khafajah, in a letter congratulating some kings,

states: "Its rule has neither died nor has its supporter, the ones who revitalized Al-Rusafa and Al-Zahra, and married the noble women of the Romans, giving nothing but the most honorable dowries (Al-Tlemcen, (n.d.), p. 679). Here, (the noble women) refer to veiled ladies from distinguished families. Ibn Khafajah implies that they captured Roman women, but he presents it in a more refined manner by saying "married the noble women of the Romans." The indication that these women were taken as captives is found in the phrase "giving nothing but the most honorable dowries," where "Almashrefiya" refers to swords, implying that they triumphed over the Romans and returned with captives. In this letter, he also expresses: "Indeed, I have been gifted by you with a king more resolute than a well-aimed arrow, with a long sword and a broad handle." This imagery highlights strength and valor, enhancing the grandeur of his message and celebrating the qualities of the ruler he addresses (Al-Tlemcen, (n.d.), p. 679). The term proceeding means "implementing the matter (Al-Jurjani, 1404, p. 951). His kingdom is not only effective in the matter but also directed and aimed at the target because he preferred it over the directed arrow, so the matter was as if he compared the king to the directed arrow, and his saying (tall of the sword) is a well-known metaphor meaning tall in stature (Matlub, Al-Basir, 2011, p. 358). Ibn Khafajah did not mean tall, but rather he meant bravery, and this was in accordance with the purpose of the message and his saying (the emulated was welcomed) as well, and welcome means spaciousness, and embracing the sword means wearing it and carrying it like a necklace, so all the meanings reach his bravery, not his physical description.

Since we have discussed levels of influence on the recipient through the creation of new ideas and the introduction of new values, we find another type of message that employs metaphor as its foundational element. This is achieved through "humanization," which in literature means "attributing specific human qualities to places, animals, objects, and natural phenomena." This process shapes them in a human-like manner, allowing them to move, feel, express, empathize, and react according to the situation for which they have been humanized. This distinction is significant as it differentiates between the humanization of literary texts and that of religious texts, highlighting the unique approach and intention behind each (p. Ali, 2023, 225). Animating inanimate objects is a natural instinct; it's even a common game among children. When this quality is employed in literature, it transforms the literary text into something akin to a play or a story, grounded in imagination. In those times, the message was a flexible text that could encompass all these arts, which fundamentally rely on fantasy.

Earlier, we presented an introduction to the letter of Safwan ibn Idris, and here we will share some excerpts from it. He worked on humanizing the Andalusian cities, making them articulate and longing for the arrival of the caliph, competing for his attention. After (Homs) initiated the dialogue and praised itself, the conversation shifted to Córdoba, where it said: "Córdoba looked at you with disdain and said: 'You have become numerous yet insignificant, sowing seeds in the deaf stone. The words of the enemy are mere madness, and I am for clarity and expression (Al-Mursi, 1939, p. 125). Cordoba looks and denounces like a human being, and the text is not without rhetorical devices, of course. Granada boasts of its rivers, saying: "And its waters flow down my neck like the tears of lovers (Al-Mursi, 1939, p. 125). In this passage, the waters are compared to the tears of lovers, emphasizing their flow and emotional quality. As for (Tadmir), upon witnessing this conflict, it expresses itself dramatically: "A spark from Tadmir fell with the flames, and its arrows were drawn against the necks of the sparks, saying: 'Live long, and you

shall see wonders (Al-Mursi, 1939, p. 127). That is, she became extremely angry as if she had a burning coal. The word “istadat” is of the same weight as “istaf’alat” and comes from “sadam” which indicates filling something up and making it fit. The word “istadam” means that something has a filling (Zakariya, 2008, p. 455). It filled the void in the conversation due to its previous omission, and its response was like arrows aimed at the other cities as if targeting them directly to assert their pride.

2. Conclusion

Despite the shared use of rhetorical and stylistic techniques in Arabic literature, both rely on innovation in imagery and the appropriate application of these techniques, which is the essence of eloquence. This leads to notable differences in literary texts, reflecting the historical evolution of literature through these artistic contrasts.

The Andalusian letters mirrored poetry in serving the needs of the Andalusian individual, particularly in official correspondence, which was tied to politics and authority. The style of these letters varied depending on the status of the recipient, whether the sender was of a lower or higher rank. Additionally, these letters played an informational role for the authority, updating the populace on victories in wars or explaining decisions made by the state.

There were also personal letters that played significant social and psychological roles for both the recipient and the writer. These letters varied in their topics and purposes, encompassing congratulations, condolences, and reproaches. The most important feature of these letters is that they express the writer's emotions.

The religious letters often express longing for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), with numerous examples of such correspondence. There is also a category of letters characterized by their poetic language and narrative imagination, representing a new literary type. These letters are considered the seeds of many modern literary genres, such as the novel.

The innovation of ideas and concepts relies on the effectiveness of delivery and the impact on the recipient. Rhetorical techniques are the means through which the writer conveys their thoughts and achieves the desired effect. Andalusian letters frequently incorporate rhetorical devices like similes and metaphors; however, what distinguishes them are the decorative techniques such as parallelism, punning, and antithesis. Often, these letters resemble poetry in terms of rhyme, stanza distribution, and poetic language, though they lack meter.

Letters hold a unique place in Arabic literature, which explains why writers compete in this form despite their proficiency in poetry. This highlights the particular interest of both writers and recipients in this literary art form, independent of the various purposes it serves.

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