

شاعر البلاط البريطاني يدافع عن التراث العراقي (ملخص)

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عندما اختار رئيس الوزراء البريطاني توني بليز الشاعر أندرو موشن ليصبح شاعرا للبلاط الملكي، وصدقت الملكة على ذلك الاختيار في مايو ١٩٩٩ . لم يكن من المتوقع أن يكتب ذلك الشاعر أشعاراً يندد فيها بالغزو الأنجلو أمريكي على العراق. فوظيفة شاعر البلاط . كما تعارف عليها الجميع . تتطلب منه أن يحتفل بالمناسبات الملكية والوطنية، كما أنها تفترض تأييده للتوجه السياسي للحكومة البريطانية، أو على الأقل تجنب الخوض في الأمور السياسية التي تتعارض مع الخطاب المؤسسي للدولة.

ولذلك فقد فوجيء الجميع بكتابته لتلك المنظومة الشعرية التي لاتزيد عن أربعة أسطر، والمعنونة بـ«أسباب الحرب»، والتي يندد فيها بتبعية إنجلترا لأمريكا، ويعلن فيها أن تلك الحرب قد قامت لأسباب ومغانم مادية. ثم أعقب ذلك بكتابة قصيدة عندما اندلعت الحرب أطلق عليها «تغيير النظام»، وفيها يرثى الدمار الذي لحق بالأمكن الحضارية العريقة بالعراق. وقد أسبغ على تلك القصيدة جواً ملحمياً يذكر بملحمة «الفردوس المفقود» للشاعر ميلتون، وبالخطيئة الأولى. وفيها يتقمص الموت دور إبليس، مشجعاً على قطف الفاكهة المحرمة. وبينما يقوم الموت بتدمير تلك البقع الحضارية العريقة يترنم الشاعر بأسمائها الواحدة تلو الأخرى، وكأنه بذلك يقدم خطاباً ثقافياً يواجه به الخطاب الاستعماري الزائف. ونظراً لتعارض تلك الأشعار مع توقعات الجميع، فإنها لم تحظ بالقبول، سواء من مؤيدي التيار السياسي الذين وجدوا خطوة تتعارض مع وظيفة شاعر البلاط الملكي، أو من معارضي هذا التيار الذين أبدوا دهشتهم من أن يذرف الشاعر دموع التماسيح، بينما تقوم جيوش إنجلترا بمساندة جيوش الولايات المتحدة في غزو العراق.

والغرض من هذا البحث دراسة هذه الأشعار دراسة موضوعية، وإيضاح أوجه القوة والقصور. ولاشك أن هذه الأشعار تعتمد أساساً على أسلوب التيار الشعري الساخر الذي ساد في القرن الثامن عشر، كما أنها تعتبر امتداداً للأشعار المناهضة للحرب والتي ظهرت مع اندلاع الحرب العالمية الأولى. ورغم أن قصائد الحرب العالمية الأولى تتميز بمصداقية الممارسة لجنود خاضوا الحرب، إلا أنها لم تتعرض للخطاب

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الاستعماري، واكتفت بوصفها لحالة الجنود وإنكارها لفكرة البطولة. أما أشعار موشن فإنها تتميز بإدراكها لزيف الخطاب الاستعماري، وخطورة الغزو الأنجلو أمريكي على الثقافات الأخرى. ورغم كلمات الاحتجاج التي توجه إلى هذا الشاعر، فسيظل له السبق كأول شاعر بلاط ملكي بريطاني يقدم خطابا ثقافيا يدافع فيه عن التراث الإنساني، ويهاجم التيار الاستعماري الذي كان من المفترض أن ينتمي إليه.

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weaves the threads of one of the most painful human elegies.

Although Motion's poems may appear hopelessly bleak and death obsessed, they introduce a gleam of hope. The binary opposition set by colonial authorities of "we" the civilized peaceful West against "they" the primitive aggressive Arabs is answered back by the poet's discourse of "we" artists and cultured people against "they" the aggressive politicians and military forces that damage human culture. Motion hopes that the discourse of men-of-letters might win in the end and preserve human culture, since he describes it as "ironclad." Motion's refusal to parrot his own authority has to be acknowledged as a brave unprecedented step in the history of British Poet Laureates. It is a rare moment in the history of British Laureates, when the Poet Laureate considered as a private property of the Crown, releases himself from its language of power and regains the power of his language as the preserver of the human heritage.

coming from George Bush, who has become a sort of father fixation that should be followed. This short poem is a declaration of a divorce between political leaders with their language of power and poets with their power of language. It recalls the poet's words when he accepts the appointment that he is not going to write but what he feels

The second poem which has caused a lot of controversy is his poem entitled "*Regime Change*." It is an ironic title referring to the Anglo-American military claims that changing the political regime in Iraq aims at ensuring peace and giving Iraqi people a democratic regime. The poet read this poem on BBC Radio on Thursday April 3, 2003. After reading the poem the poet expressed his sorrow that "death was cutting a swathe through one of the cradles of human civilization" (Majendie). Paul Majendie comments, "The Poet Laureate is appointed by Queen Elizabeth's household and traditionally writes nonpolitical poems to commemorate major national and royal events," he adds that Motion "has taken the highly unusual step of writing a poem condemning the war in Iraq." In fact what astonishes Majendie is not that Motion is writing on a political subject, but the poet's refusal to share in the Anglo-American discourse, which claims that the invasion of Iraq is to instruct people and bring them to understand the advantage of democratic western culture.

The poem is a condemnation of war lamenting the destruction of the Iraqi civilization. The narrator's voice acquires the elegiac strain, while narrating one of the most horrible episodes of the damage that inflicts human heritage. The narrator's voice begins the poem, and then draws back leaving the whole stage to personified Death to speak and act. Employing the heroic couplets of verse, the poem opens with a voice that

drowned." The colonial discourse tries to hush up the language of cultured people and to use mass media to propagate its fake myth, of saving humanity and defending democracy. Commenting on his poem the poet states, "It is a poem about wishing to be more candid" (Ezard). Motion is sure that his language is more durable; it is "iron-clad." Motion deliberately refuses to be categorized as a member of those who propagate war. He chooses to belong to another group whose language is books.

The final line enumerates the real causes behind this war using the satirical technique of Pope in his *Rape of the Lock*. The Eighteenth Century mock-epic poem describes the dressing-table of a lady and her getting ready for a party in the same heroic manner employed in classical epics while describing heroes' preparations for heroic battles. "The bite of this mock-heroic comparison lies in the social criticism it achieves so adroitly" (Callan 261). While Pope uses the heroic verse to stress the great difference between the heroic age of epics and the trivial world of the fashionable families, Motion employs the same medium to introduce his political discourse. Motion plays on the two planes suggesting that the Anglo-Americans consider attacking Iraq as a party gathering. Pope describes the lady's dressing-table, where Bibles are given equal place to that of the lady's make up as well as her love-letters. Motion uses the same technique and writes a parallel line to that of Pope. Instead of the five objects set upon the lady's dressing-table; "Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux," he introduces the real reasons behind this decision of waging war. They are "elections, money, empire, oil, and Dad." The last word that terminates the poem gives an ironic finale to the poet's short burst of emotion. The love-letters of the British authority are the orders

newest poem against the momentum towards a US-led invasion of Iraq using British forces who would be serving nominally under the Queen." , Ezard adds that, "In the 30-word poem, Motion, who was appointed by the Queen in 1999, sides with those who are "doubtful" about a war- and against the official leaders." As a matter of fact, the words "doubter" and "doubtful" are too lenient to describe the poet's attitude. In answer to these attacks Motion states "My underlying feeling is that poetry ought to be part of general life rather than being ghettoized"(Ezard).

Motion's ironic title "*Causa Belli*" sets from the beginning the mode of the whole poem. His choice of the Latin title recalls the ironic title of Wilferd Owen's poem, "*Dulce et Decorum Est.*" Owen denies in his poem that "it is sweet and becoming to die for your own country" as the Latin words say. Owen's poem stresses that the myth of heroism is fake, that classical concepts about heroism are not applicable to what is taking place in the First World War. By using a Latin title the receiver guesses that Motion's poem recants war and denies the idea of heroism. However, Motion's verse is concerned with more than a mere refusal of the new myth of war propagated by the Anglo-American authority. What attracts the attention of the receiver is the first word in the poem "They," when speaking about the Anglo- American political discourse. Motion's usage of the pronoun "they" shows a desire not to spell out the identity of the subject of his sentence, and a denial of sharing the discourse of the political leadership of Britain. The poet categorizes himself as belonging to those who speak "the language of books." The voice wonders at those political leaders' failure to understand "our language." His political authority speaks another language which is "the scream of rocket burn." Although the language of poets is straighter, it "is

manipulates anti-war poems along with other works of his tradition to give his works depth of meaning as a result of the accumulated layers of previous works. His poems rely on the ironic technique used by war poets in particular and on the eighteenth century satiric style in general.

Motion's first poem "*Causa Belli*" is given a Latin title which means "causes, motives or pretexts of war." The title evokes classics' ideals emphasizing that the causes of any war should be honourable and that it should not be waged for merely materialistic gains. It also refers to the political Anglo-American discourse stating that the reasons of the war against Iraq are to save humanity from weapons of mass destruction found in Iraq, and to give the Iraqi people a democratic government. Motion's poem answers these claims and gives the real reasons behind waging the war. Here is the poem quoted in full:

Causa Belli

They read good books, and quote but never learn
A language other than the scream of rocket-burn
Our straighter talk is drowned but ironclad:
Elections, money, empire, oil and Dad.

Thursday January 9, 2003

The Guardian.

In an article published in *The Guardian*, entitled "Poet laureate joins doubters over Iraq," John Ezard comments on this poem saying, "In a rare step for Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion today speaks out in his

the extremes of cold, heat and rains weathered in the open, the meaningless and merciless killing and continuous shouting and bombing"(Paliwal 12). They insisted upon "the authority of experience" as a requisite for war writing. Their poems have the privilege of describing real situations, but they describe the limited experience of victimized soldiers, without considering the imperial power behind it.

Motion's poems can be considered an extension to the anti-war poets of the First World War as some critics claim. The First World War as Terry Eagleton states is "the first imperialist world war"(24). It was accompanied with political propaganda justifying waging war as a divine mission to guide the "other" and to save humanity from German autocracy. The anti-war poems deconstructed the myth of war as a means of purification for the self and the nations, propagated by their authorities, and denied the myth of heroic soldiers fighting for the sake of humanity. However, poets of the First World War were neither fully aware of the colonial reasons behind waging the War and its struggle for imperial dominance, nor its devastating results of bombing culture sites of other nations. This paper tries to reveal that these issues are Motion's main concerns and that the poet is trying to form a cultural discourse to face the fake colonial one. One can argue that, if Motion lacks their "authority of experience," he possesses the global experience of a world that feels that it is indulged in one huge battle-field.

Appreciating Motion's poems relies on the receiver's ability to reveal the hidden meaning behind their ironic tone. This technique depends upon the evocation of some traditional texts, styles and forms as frames of reference and giving the receiver the pleasure of recognizing their ironic significance in the new text (Enani 30-31). In fact Motion

Motion's anti-war poems reveal a complex vision that paradoxically, represents the two cultures of the colonized and the colonizer. However, human beings' reactions when faced with crucial situations can hardly be predicted especially in our postmodern age. The decision of the Anglo-Americans to wage war on Iraq has moved the poet to write his first satirical poem "*Causa Belli*" on the 9th of January, 2003 to show his refusal of the propagandist political discourse prior to war waging. His poem "*Regime Change*" has followed on the 3rd of April, 2003 to answer back the military discourse that accompanied the movement of the Anglo-American military forces on 20th of March, 2003. This paper attempts to write an objective analysis of these two poems, trying to explain the poet's paradoxical attitude.

In an attempt to explain Motion's attitude some critics comment that his two poems can be considered an extension to the tradition of anti-war poems of British protest poets which emerged with the First World War. Those poets were famed for graphic imagery bringing home the horrors of this war trenches, especially Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen (Majendie). Motion's poems have some similarities with the anti-war poets of the First World. However, there is a difference between his discourse and theirs, due to the change taking place in the global world and the kind of experience described. The anti-war poets of the First World War were mostly, officers, identified with soldier-poets. They were men who faced war and who described the atrocities experienced in trenches. They revolted against war which had come to seem insane slaughter. (Perkins 274-298). They also wanted to disturb civilian complacency. Civilians "did not recognize the realities of war, waste of youth and resources, agony of shell –torn, rat-infested life in the trenches,

to cope with the requirements of the postmodern world.

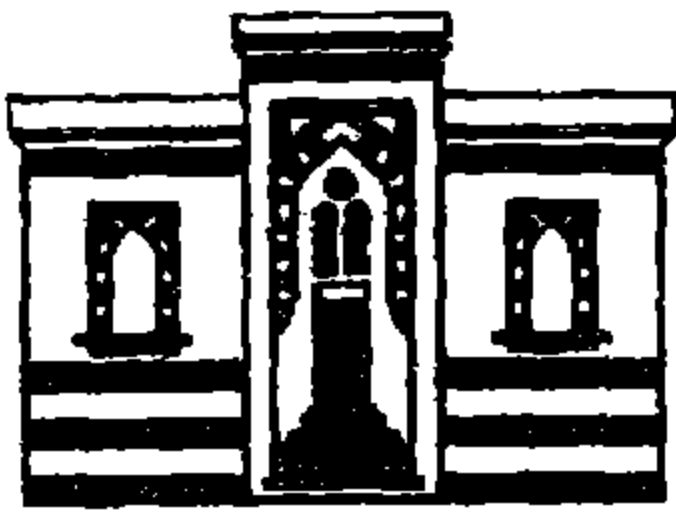
Thus when Motion finds that the Anglo-American political discourse is propagating the invasion of Iraq, he refuses to reiterate its words or back his political institution. Since critics are accustomed to divide men of letters into two camps; those who back the global political power and reconstruct its discourse, and those who oppose it and deconstruct its fake claims, Motion's anti-war poetry violates their expectations. Needless to say, that the English Poet Laureate was supposed to belong to the first camp. Poet Laureate is not merely an honoree degree but it is an appointment for ten years with an honorarium of £ 5, 000 a year. The poet himself has accepted the appointment saying that he feels "honoured" by the appointment to the 300-year-old post ("Entertainment"). Motion, the oxford – educated poet is believed to have been chosen by Prime Minister Tony Blair, and approved by the Queen because he is a traditional poet. Motion is famous for his engagement with classic lyric line, his clarity, iambic rhythms, natural idiom, subtle evocation of shades of emotion, and elegiac tone (Wardle). He declares that he likes to write in the traditional way and that "in a lot of ways his poems are conventional"(Ferguson 2). Thus when the poet wrote two poems against the Anglo-American political discourse, he was attacked by both camps. Those who back the political mainstream discourse find that his duty as Poet Laureate is either to defend the British political discourse or at least ignore the whole issue, while the second camp wonders whether these two poems are crocodile tears, and whether it is possible to be the poet of the Court and in the mean time attack the British authority.

Britain's Poet Laureate Defends Iraqi Heritage

Hoda El-Akkad*

When Andrew Motion (1952) was appointed Poet Laureate in May 1999, no one imagined that he would write poems recanting the Anglo-American political discourse propagating war against Iraq. Britain has had poet laureates since the mid-17th century. They are appointed as official poets to commemorate major national and royal events (Majendie). Motion's role was thought of as some one who " 'churns' out verse to order for the nation"(Miller 1). Commenting on his new job, Motion states that "The Laureate is a mysterious position. It's very ancient and very honourable but it hasn't always been clear what a person in such a position might do (Thomas). He thinks that "his job has wider political significance" than merely celebrating coronations of kings and queens, elegizing their death, and blindly hailing the mainstream political discourse. Motion thinks that living in a postmodern age affects the nature of his job. He states, "If I had been appointed Laureate some years ago and my name were Tennyson, I would be writing public poems and/or royal poems feeling pretty safe in a consensual idea of society. If I were to write like that now, somebody in a white coat should come and take me away." The poet explains that, "happily, we live in an extremely diffused, disparate culture" and wonders "How can any sort of artist, whether they be a writer or a painter, who's accepted a public role possibly do that to please everybody"(MacCrum 3). The poet thinks that even the artist who has a public role has to be given a space of freedom

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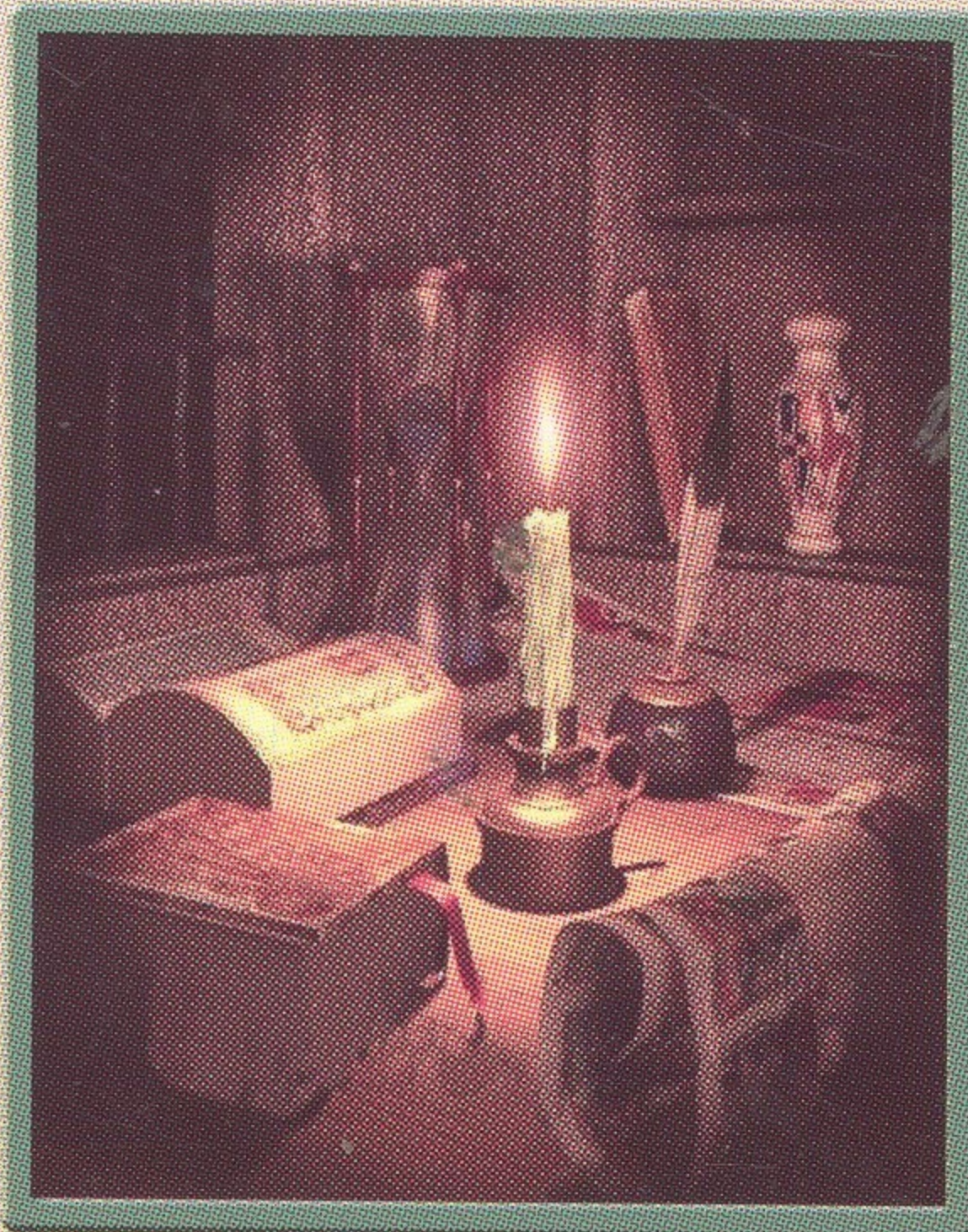
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