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“Do You Think When You Burnt Me”: A Stylistic Exploration of Muhthal Al-Saqour’s Poetic Mastery

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Muhthal Al-Saqour’s poem “Do You Think When You Burnt Me” through a comprehensive stylistic lens that highlights the fusion of phonological, syntactic, and semantic elements in crafting a resonant poetic expression. By dissecting the intricate layers of language, the analysis elucidates how Al-Saqour employs sound patterns, sentence constructions, and word meanings to create multi-dimensional symbolism and emotional depth. The poem’s deliberate interweaving of literary and rhetorical devices—such as metaphor, repetition, and rhythm—strengthens its aesthetic fabric while subtly amplifying underlying themes of Palestinian resilience and the inexorable cycle of destruction and renewal. Furthermore, by exploring intertextuality, particularly religious intertextuality, the study reveals how these layered stylistic choices contribute to generating a potent interplay between historical trauma and hope. Drawing on a descriptive analytical approach, the interpretation shows that the confluence of diverse stylistic levels, rhetorical strategies, and intertextual elements not only engages the reader’s emotions but also intensifies the symbolic representation of cultural suffering, endurance, and eventual triumph. Ultimately, this investigation affirms that Al-Saqour’s sophisticated manipulation of language enriches the poem’s aesthetic appeal while embodying a powerful narrative of persistence and renewal, offering a reflective commentary on both individual and collective experiences of hardship and resurgence in the face of adversity.

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1. Introduction

“Do You Think When You Burnt Me”^[1] is a cornerstone of contemporary Arabic poetry, written by the Saudi poet Muhthal Al-Saqour. This poem exemplifies Al-Saqour’s mastery of poetic expression while serving as a heartfelt commentary on the Palestinian cause and the oppression endured by its people. Renowned for its emotional intensity and vivid imagery, the poem has extended its influence beyond literature through its adaptation into a song, captivating audiences far and wide. Its enduring appeal lies in its evocative depiction of the Palestinian struggle, celebrating qualities of courage, resilience, and steadfast conviction among Palestinian youth, while casting the adversary as a ruthless oppressor devoid of humanitarian principles.

Al-Saqour is a prominent figure in modern Arabic poetry. A native of the Yam tribe in southern Saudi Arabia, his works are deeply shaped by his cultural heritage and the socio-political landscape of the Middle East. “Do You Think When You Burnt Me” is among his most celebrated compositions, revered for its seamless fusion of traditional poetic forms with contemporary themes. Its widespread acclaim and recognition underscore the poem’s universal appeal and its profound impact on both literary and popular audiences.

Despite the poem’s considerable popularity, a comprehensive review of the literature reveals that it has not been the subject of any scholarly analysis, neither stylistically, thematically, nor in any other respect. To the best of the researchers’ knowledge, this study represents the first in-depth analysis of the poem, thereby addressing a significant gap in literary research. This study seeks to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive stylistic analysis of “Do You Think When You Burnt Me”, focusing on its phonological structures, syntactic arrangements, and semantic nuances. Furthermore, it explores the use of intertextuality, particularly religious intertextuality, in enhancing the poem’s thematic depth and emotional resonance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Stylistic Analysis in Arabic Literary Studies

Stylistic analysis has emerged as a crucial methodological approach in Arabic literary studies, offering robust tools for examining the interplay between linguistic form and literary meaning. Through this approach, scholars delve into multiple layers of text—from phonological and syntactic patterns to semantic dimensions—to uncover how stylistic devices contribute to the aesthetic and emotive resonance of Arabic literature.

A foundational body of work in this area is attributed to scholars such as Salma Khadra Jayyusi, whose extensive research has expanded the application of stylistic theories to Arabic texts. In her influential anthology, *Modern Arabic Poetry: An Anthology*, Jayyusi employs a range of stylistic analytical tools to not only present but also demystify the works of contemporary Arabic poets. Her analysis foregrounds the importance of phonological elements—such as sound patterns which produce either cacophonous or euphonic effects—as well as syntactic structures that shape the rhythm and flow of poetic discourse. Jayyusi posits that these linguistic devices are not merely ornamental but are integral to conveying the emotional and thematic nuances of the poems^[2].

Building on this framework, subsequent scholarship has sought to extend stylistic analysis beyond canonical texts, venturing into the works of lesser-studied poets. Despite the advancements made through earlier research, there remains a significant gap in addressing the specific stylistic features in the works of emerging or marginalized contemporary authors. This is particularly evident in analyses of poets like Muhthal Al-Saqour, whose poem “Do You Think When You Burnt Me” has not received the same level of detailed stylistic scrutiny as the works of more widely recognized literary figures.

In parallel, the studies of acclaimed poets such as Mahmoud Darwish, Nizar Qabbani, and Fadwa Tuqan have illuminated the vital roles of phonological articulation, syntactic construction, and the employment of figurative language in establishing a unique poetic voice. For example, Darwish’s poetic diction often employs a seamless blend of melodic pho-

netic structures, intricate syntactic arrangements, metaphoric intensities and semantic displacements that evoke both cultural memory and modern sensibilities^[3], while Qabbani's work tends to foreground emotional expression through the rhythmic innovation and striking figurative language^[4]. Similarly, Tuqan's poetry is renowned for its nuanced semantic layers, deliberate sound patterns, and expressive images, which together create an immersive reading experience^[5].

This literature review thus positions the current study within a broader scholarly conversation. While the established canon has focused on the stylistic intricacies of prominent poets, the present research intends to bridge the gap by conducting an in-depth analysis of phonological (cacophony and euphony), syntactic (sentence structures and grammatical moods), and semantic (figurative language) dimensions in Al-Saqour's "Do You Think When You Burnt Me".

In summary, the evolution of stylistic analysis in Arabic literary studies—from the pioneering contributions of early scholars to the contemporary examinations of both canonical and marginal texts—demonstrates the method's potential to unlock deeper layers of meaning within poetic discourse. The current study aims to further this tradition by exploring under-analyzed stylistic features in the work of a modern Arabic poet, thereby enriching our understanding of the dynamic interplay between language and literature.

2.2. Contextualizing Al-Saqour within Palestinian Literary Tradition

Palestinian poetry has long served as a vital medium for articulating national identity, resistance, and the collective memory of displacement. The works of poets such as Mahmoud Darwish, Fadwa Tuqan, and Samih al-Qasim have established a powerful precedent for utilizing verse not only as an aesthetic expression but also as a form of political engagement and cultural preservation.

In "Identity Card" (1964), Darwish employs evocative metaphors and intricate symbolism to articulate the pain of exile and the hope for return, creating a resonant voice for the Palestinian cause. In his seminal poem "Identity Card", Darwish writes:

Write down: I am an Arab
I am an Arab.
I have plundered the vineyards of my ancestors

and a land I used to cultivate^[6].

The act of "writing down" serves a dual function: it is both a bureaucratic directive and a performative assertion of identity. The repetition of "I am an Arab" functions as a rhythmic chant that reinforces self-identification against an imposing external framework of marginalization. The reference to "vineyards" and "a land I used to cultivate" operates as a metonym for generational labor, rootedness, and the intrinsic bond between the people and their territory. Such imagery not only reflects the tangible connection through agricultural labor but also metaphorically encapsulates the profound emotional and cultural attachment inherent in Palestinian identity, a connection that persists despite enforced displacement.

Similarly, Fadwa Tuqan's "The Deluge and the Tree" (1988) encapsulates the themes of sacrifice and continuity through an elaborate natural metaphor:

Arab roots alive
tunneling deep, deep, into the land!
When the Tree rises up, the branches
shall flourish green and fresh in the sun^[7].

Tuqan's use of the tree and its roots operates on several levels. First, the "Arab roots" not only evoke a sense of ancestral lineage but also signify an unyielding connection that has withstood historical vicissitudes. The deliberate repetition of "deep, deep" emphasizes the enduring, almost primordial, fixity of these ties. In contrast, the branches that "flourish green and fresh in the sun" represent hope, renewal, and the possibility of regeneration even amid systemic oppression. The poem skillfully contrasts the destructive imagery of a deluge—a force capable of overwhelming yet ultimately temporary—with the enduring vitality symbolized by sunlight and growth. Through this juxtaposition, Tuqan universalizes the Palestinian narrative of resilience, suggesting that even devastating upheavals can give rise to transformative renewal.

Samih al-Qasim's "I Shall Resist" (1968) further enriches this literary continuum by offering a stark, resolute declaration of defiance:

I shall resist with my last breath,
With my last drop of blood,
With the stones of my house,
With the soil of my land^[8].

Al-Qasim's poem is an exercise in both individual and collective assertion. The iterative structure, "I shall resist", functions as a mantra, reinforcing the steadfast commitment to defiance. Each subsequent line builds on this resolve by substituting traditional symbols of home and heritage—"stones" and "soil"—into the lexicon of resistance. In doing so, Al-Qasim transforms everyday objects into potent symbols of national struggle. The visceral imagery of "last drop of blood" not only underscores the cost of resistance but also celebrates it as an intrinsic aspect of the Palestinian lived experience. This direct and unembellished language foregrounds the reality of ongoing conflict and embodies the enduring spirit that characterizes the Palestinian collective psyche.

Muhtal Al-Saqour enters this robust tradition with a distinctive synthesis of modern stylistic nuances and traditional thematic concerns. While his predecessors have laid the groundwork for a poetic tradition steeped in metaphoric and symbolic language, Al-Saqour's work distinguishes itself through its innovative formal experimentation and intertextual layering. By integrating contemporary narrative techniques with the recurrent motifs of rootedness and resistance, his poetry not only dialogues with but also reinvigorates the established literary canon.

Al-Saqour's strategic use of modern linguistic structures and imagery serves to reframe classical symbols in a context relevant to the current socio-political climate. His work implicitly employs intertextual references to the canonical texts of Darwish, Tuqan, and al-Qasim—while simultaneously pushing the boundaries of form and style. This approach enables Al-Saqour to offer a fresh perspective on the perennial struggle for Palestinian identity and sovereignty, making his poetry an essential link in the continuum of Palestinian literary resistance.

It can be said that the evolution of Palestinian poetry—as evidenced by Darwish's lush symbolism, Tuqan's dynamic natural imagery, and al-Qasim's uncompromising defiance—sets the stage for Al-Saqour's creative innovations. By synthesizing modern stylistic elements with enduring traditional themes, Al-Saqour not only carves out a unique poetic identity but also reaffirms the centrality of literature as a vehicle of political resistance and cultural memory. This study, therefore, situates his work within the enduring, ever-evolving canon of Palestinian literary expression, underscor-

ing the dynamic interplay between form, content, and identity in the struggle for recognition and self-determination.

2.3. Identified Research Gaps

Substantial research has delved more into the thematic and emotional dimensions of contemporary Arabic poetry, a significant gap persists in the scholarly examination of the stylistic techniques employed by poets such as Al-Saqour. In particular, the phonological, syntactic, and semantic patterns that contribute to the aesthetic and emotional resonance of his poetry have not been explored.

Furthermore, the role of religious intertextuality in enriching the semantic layers of his poetry remains underexplored. Although religious references are pivotal in contextualizing and deepening the meaning of his work, there is an absence of analysis regarding how these intertextual elements interact with other stylistic features to enhance the overall impact of the text.

This study aims to bridge these lacunas by conducting a detailed stylistic analysis of "Do You Think When You Burnt Me". It will focus on uncovering the underlying phonological, syntactic, and semantic patterns, as well as examining the deployment of religious intertextuality. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of Al-Saqour's poetic craftsmanship and to illuminate the multifaceted ways in which his work engages with and reflects the ongoing Palestinian struggle.

3. Methodological Approaches in Stylistic Analysis

Understanding the methodological approaches employed in stylistic analysis is essential for recognizing the depth and rigor of this study. Stylistic analysis involves dissecting various layers of language to uncover how poets craft their messages and evoke emotional responses. The analysis is structured around three principal dimensions: phonological, syntactic, and semantic.

3.1. Phonological Analysis

The phonological analysis focuses on examining the poem's auditory elements, including the use of cacophony

and euphony. By systematically analyzing these features, the study elucidates the ways in which sound contributes to the poem's emotional tenor, rhythmic cadence, and overall aesthetic quality. This investigation into phonological devices reveals the auditory strategies employed to reinforce thematic undercurrents and evoke specific mood effects.

3.2. Syntactic Analysis

In addressing syntactic elements, the study scrutinizes the structural aspects of the text, including sentence structure and the strategic use of grammatical moods (such as imperative versus declarative forms), repetition of pronouns, and phrases parallelism. This component of the analysis investigates how these syntactic choices establish a dynamic and engaging rhythm within the poem. These structures convey different emotional tones and intentions, emphasize steadfastness, and create a sense of balance and harmony throughout the work, thereby shaping the interpretive experience of the reader. The dissection of these grammatical structures provides critical insights into the poet's manipulation of language to guide interpretation and evoke emotional responses.

3.3. Semantic Analysis

The semantic dimension of the analysis is devoted to exploring the figurative language within the poem, including the use of metaphors, similes, and symbolism. This facet of the study seeks to illuminate how meaning is constructed and conveyed through layered symbolic and metaphorical expressions, highlighting themes of hope, resilience, and moral steadfastness. Through this semantic inquiry, the research underscores the role of language in articulating complex conceptual and emotional landscapes.

3.4. Intertextual Considerations

Beyond these primary stylistic components, this study also integrates an examination of intertextual elements—particularly religious references—to contextualize the poem within a broader cultural and literary framework. This aspect of the analysis enriches our understanding of the linguistic and rhetorical strategies at play and situates the poem within the ongoing discourse surrounding Palestinian literary

identity and the struggle for sovereignty.

By integrating detailed phonological, syntactic, and semantic analyses, this study not only enhances our comprehension of the aesthetic and emotive dimensions of Al-Saqour's poem but also contributes significantly to the field of Arabic literary studies. The multifaceted approach adopted herein offers subtle insights into the complex interplay between language, form, and meaning, thereby demonstrating the sophisticated use of stylistic devices in constructing narratives of resistance and resilience.

4. Style and Stylistics

Understanding the concepts of style and stylistics is fundamental to conducting a thorough analysis of literary works. These concepts provide the framework through which the intricacies of a poem can be examined and appreciated. This section delves deeper into the definitions, theoretical perspectives, and applications of style and stylistics, setting the stage for the subsequent analysis of Muhtal Al-Saqour's poem, "Do You Think When You Burnt Me".

4.1. Defining Style

The term style originates from the Latin word "stylus," meaning "anything used to write with"^[9]. This broad definition indicates that style encompasses multiple meanings, extending beyond mere tools of writing to encompass the manner in which language is employed to convey meaning and evoke responses.

Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short define style as "the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose"^[10]. This definition underscores the interplay of three essential elements: context, agent, and purpose. Context establishes the situational backdrop against which language unfolds, shaping how messages are interpreted. The agent refers to the individual or entity employing the language, whose distinctive choices and characteristics influence the expression. Finally, purpose highlights the intended effect or objective behind the communication, directing the linguistic choices made to achieve a specific goal. They further elaborate that style is a broad concept applicable to both spoken and written language, encompassing both literary and everyday varieties. This definition underscores the versatility and context-dependence of style, highlighting

its relevance across different forms of communication.

Similarly, Frank Lucas offers a more personalized perspective, describing the style as “a means by which a human being gains contact with others; it is personality clothed in words, character embodied in speech”^[11]. According to Lucas, style serves as an extension of the speaker’s or writer’s identity, reflecting personal traits and emotional states. This viewpoint correlates style with individual expression and character, suggesting that style is as much about the communicator as it is about the language used.

Franklin Painter further elaborates on this by defining style as an author’s mode of expression and a genuine manifestation of mind and character^[12]. This definition aligns with Lucas’s view, reinforcing the idea that style is deeply intertwined with the author’s personal attributes and intellectual disposition.

To recapitulate, style is a multifaceted concept that encapsulates the unique ways individuals use language to convey meaning, express identity, and achieve specific communicative goals. It exists on various levels, representing different personalities, adapting to diverse contexts, and fulfilling multiple functions across formal and informal, spoken and written, literary and non-literary texts.

4.2. Exploring Stylistics

Intricately bound to the investigation of style, stylistics functions as the analytical field tasked with dissecting and elucidating a text’s stylistic dimensions. It bridges the gap between literature and linguistics, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of how language functions within literary works.

Lucas defines stylistics as “the effective use of language, especially in prose, whether to make statements or to rouse emotions. It involves, first and foremost, the power to present facts with clarity and brevity”^[11]. This definition emphasizes the functional aspect of stylistics in enhancing communication and emotional impact through language.

According to some critics, stylistics functions as the critical nexus uniting literature and linguistics. Leech and Short describe it as “a dialogue between literary reader and linguistic observer”^[10], indicating a mutual relationship where stylistic analysis complements the reader’s intuition, enhancing comprehension. This dialogue suggests that stylistics does not replace the subjective experience of reading but

rather enriches it by providing analytical frameworks.

In the same vein, Henry Widdowson defines stylistics as “the study of literary discourse from a linguistics orientation”^[13]. This definition emphasizes the linguistic foundation of stylistics, positioning it within the broader field of linguistics while focusing on its application to literary texts.

Moreover, Mick Short views stylistics as a linguistic approach to studying and analyzing literary texts, spanning the domains of literature and linguistics^[14]. This perspective reinforces the interdisciplinary nature of stylistics, highlighting its role in bridging two distinct yet interconnected fields.

George Turner echoes this sentiment, defining stylistics as “the part of linguistics which concentrates on variation in the use of language, often, but not exclusively, with special attention to the most conscious and complex use of language in literature”^[15]. Turner’s definition underscores the focus of stylistics on the subtleties and variations in language use, especially within literary contexts where linguistic features are deliberately shaped for aesthetic effect.

Tom McArthur defines stylistics as “the branch of linguistics that studies style, especially in works of literature”^[16]. This succinct definition encapsulates the essence of stylistics, positioning it firmly within linguistics while highlighting its specialization in literary analysis.

Ultimately, most scholars and critics agree that style and stylistics are interrelated; style is central to the study of stylistics, and stylistics serves as the intersection between literature and linguistics. Stylistics provides the analytical tools to dissect and understand the stylistic elements of a text, offering insights into how language functions within a literary framework to convey meaning, evoke emotions, and reflect the author’s intent.

4.3. The Interrelation between Style and Stylistics

The relationship between style and stylistics is inherently symbiotic and mutually reinforcing. Style is neither static nor consistent, it is dynamic and context-dependent, varying across different texts, genres, and authors. Stylistics, therefore, must adopt a flexible and nuanced approach to account for these variations. By examining elements such as phonology, syntax, and semantics, stylistics uncovers the underlying patterns and techniques that constitute an author’s distinctive style.

In the context of “Do You Think When You Burnt Me”, stylistics will enable a deeper appreciation of Al-Saqour’s craftsmanship. By examining how phonological choices create auditory effects, how syntactic structures influence the flow and urgency of the poem, and how semantic devices convey complex emotions and political messages, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the poem’s impact and significance.

Moreover, stylistics facilitates the identification and interpretation of literary devices such as metaphor, simile, and repetition, which are pivotal in shaping the poem’s impact. Understanding these devices within their stylistic context enables a deeper appreciation of how Al-Saqour constructs his narrative and engages his audience.

Furthermore, stylistics does not operate in isolation but interacts with other literary theories and disciplines. For instance, intertextuality—a concept explored in this paper—can be analyzed through a stylistic lens to reveal how references to other texts enhance the depth and meaning of a poem. Similarly, understanding the cultural and historical context of a work can inform a stylistic analysis, providing insights into the choices an author makes in their use of language.

5. Stylistic Insights into the Poem

In this section, three levels of analysis are used to examine the poem: phonology, syntax, and semantics. The paper looks at cacophony and euphony at the phonological level of language. Sentence structure, imperative and declarative styles, repetition of pronouns and phrases parallelism are made clear at the syntactic level. Several literary devices, including simile, metaphor, symbolism, and repetition are highlighted at the semantic level. The aesthetic and artistic uses of language have been investigated through the analysis of these levels. In addition, the paper presents intertextuality as one of the distinctive styles that improved the poem, specifically, religious intertextuality.

5.1. Phonological Level

Phonology is defined as the study of how sounds are structured within human languages, focusing on how specific sounds are utilized and combined to create meaningful linguistic units^[17]. It is crucial for examining the poem’s au-

ditory dimensions. As Ken Lodge further elaborates, phonology involves understanding how “sound represents differences of meaning in a language”^[18]. This analysis focuses on how sound patterns in Al-Saqour’s poem contribute both to its aesthetic quality and to its deeper meanings.

5.1.1. Cacophony

In the poem, Al-Saqour strategically employs cacophony—a literary technique characterized by unpleasant or dissonant combinations of sounds^[19]—to underscore themes of defiance and resilience in the face of oppression. The deliberate repetition of harsh sounds, particularly the Arabic letters ‘R’ (ر) and ‘Q’ (ق), creates a striking auditory effect. For instance, words such as ‘R’ (ر) sound in words like ‘أحرقنتي’ (you burnt me), ‘تركنتي’ (you left me), ‘رفاتي’ (my ashes), and ‘النفرات’ (fanaticisms) utilize ‘R’ (ر) sound to evoke feelings of fierce movement and unwavering strength. Similarly, the repetition of the ‘Q’ (ق) sound in ‘أحرقنتي’ (you burnt me), ‘رقصت’ (you danced), ‘الأحقاد’ (hatred), and ‘معتقداتي’ (my beliefs) adds a sharp, determined tone that reinforces the poem’s themes of defiance and steadfast resolve^[20].

5.1.2. Euphony

In contrast, Al-Saqour also incorporates euphony—the quality of a pleasing or harmonious sound combination^[19]—to create a counterbalance within the poem. Here, the careful repetition of softer, consonant and elongated sounds notably ‘L’ (ل), ‘M’ (م), ‘A’ (ا), and ‘W’ (و) introduces moments of calm and stability amidst the overall tension. Words such as ‘الذاريات’ (dust storms), ‘الصلوات’ (prayers), and ‘سأعود’ (I will return), exemplify this technique, generating an auditory pattern that mirrors the reflective and meditative qualities of the text. This delicate balance between cacophony and euphony not only tempers the intensity but also deepens the emotional resonance of the poem.

The integration of these phonological techniques with the poem’s central themes is a key aspect of its stylistic power. It does not only establish a rhythmic musicality but also serves to reinforce the thematic unity of defiance and resilience. This deliberate coupling of sound and meaning enhances the evocative capacity of the poem, ensuring that the auditory patterns echo the emotional and intellectual messages embedded in the text.

5.2. Syntactic Level

Syntax pertains to the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language. It plays a crucial role in conveying meaning and enhancing the stylistic quality of a poem. In Al-Saqour's poem, the syntactic choices significantly contribute to the overall impact and effectiveness of the poetic expression.

5.2.1. Sentence Structure

Al-Saqour employs a variety of sentence structures to create a dynamic and engaging rhythm within the poem. The use of both simple and complex sentences allows for a balance between clarity and depth. For instance, short, declarative sentences such as "سأعود" (I will return) provide powerful, emphatic statements that underscore the speaker's determination. In contrast, more complex sentences with subordinate clauses, like "ترككتني" (you left me) followed by elaborative phrases, add layers of meaning and emotional complexity to the narrative.

5.2.2. Imperative and Declarative Styles

The poet skillfully alternates between imperative and declarative moods to convey different emotional tones and intentions. Imperative sentences, such as commands or exhortations, create a sense of urgency and direct engagement with the reader or a subject within the poem. For example, phrases like "Do you think" (أتظن) function as rhetorical questions that challenge the listener's perceptions and provoke introspection.

Declarative sentences, on the other hand, assert statements of fact or belief, reinforcing the speaker's stance and convictions. Statements like "I will return" (سأعود) serve to assert resilience and unwavering commitment. The interplay between these styles not only maintains the reader's interest but also mirrors the internal conflict and resolution experienced by the speaker.

5.2.3. Repetition of Pronouns and Phrases

A notable syntactic feature in the poem is the repetition of pronouns and key phrases, such as "I" (أنا) and "I will return" (سأعود). This repetition serves to emphasize the speaker's personal journey and steadfastness. By consistently returning to the first-person perspective, Al-Saqour ensures that the reader remains intimately connected with the speaker's emotions and experiences.

Furthermore, the repeated use of imperative phrases like "Do you think" (أتظن) creates a rhythmic questioning that challenges external forces or adversaries. This syntactic repetition reinforces the themes of defiance and resilience, as the speaker continuously asserts their position against oppression and injustice.

5.2.4. Parallelism and Balance

The poet utilizes parallelism to create a sense of balance and harmony within the poem. By structuring similar grammatical forms in successive lines or phrases, Al-Saqour enhances the musicality and coherence of the text. For example, parallel structures in listing actions or emotions—such as "أحرققتني" (you burnt me), "ترككتني" (you left me), and "رقصت" (you danced)—establish a rhythmic flow that accentuates the cumulative impact of these experiences on the speaker.

This balanced syntax does not only contribute to the aesthetic quality of the poem but also underscores the interconnectedness of the speaker's experiences and emotions. The deliberate arrangement of words and phrases through parallelism and balanced structures ensures that the poem maintains a cohesive and compelling narrative.

5.3. Semantic Level

Drawing on Frank Robert Palmer's conception of semantics as the study of meaning^[21], it is evident that the poet's rhetorical choices are not merely decorative but serve as critical vehicles for conveying layered and transformative meanings. The poem relies on a diverse array of literary and rhetorical devices that not only deepen its meanings but also enrich its overall style. Among these devices, simile, metaphor, symbolism, and repetition are pivotal in shaping the poem's structure and in effectively conveying its underlying poetic message.

5.3.1. Simile

The similes in the poem contribute both to the clarification of internal experiences and the evocation of extratextual mythic and cultural connotations. For instance, the line:

"I am like Jesus, returning with strength"

operates on multiple semantic levels. On the one hand, the simile clarifies the notion of return and regeneration; on the other, it invokes the rich, mytho-religious narrative of

the resurrection in Christian iconography. The reference to Jesus is not accidental. It is an intertextual choice that aligns the speaker's personal suffering and subsequent transcendence with a symbol of universal redemption. In cognitive terms, this simile activates the reader's pre-existing schema of Christ's narrative, which reconfigures the poet's portrayal of suffering as an initiatory process leading to empowerment. Scholars such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that such metaphors and similes are indispensable in structuring human experience, effectively bridging abstract ideas with experiential reality^[22].

Similarly, the line:

"And you danced like the devil over my ashes"

employs simile to produce an affective dissonance. By likening the addressee's actions to a devil's dance, the poet utilizes an image that conjures both moral degradation and physical desecration. The use of "dancing" is paradoxical; typically associated with celebration, it is here repurposed to accentuate a grotesque inversion of joy. This perversion reinforces the reader's sense of horror and revulsion, a reaction that is deeply embedded in cultural understandings of devilish imagery. The simile thus extends beyond simple comparison, functioning as an emotional amplifier that subverts conventional associations between movement and vitality.

5.3.2. Metaphor

Metaphors in the poem work at a more abstract level, serving as a lexicon for articulating non-tangible experiences of oppression and identity erasure. Consider the line:

"Do you think when you burnt me"

Here, "burning" is repurposed as a metaphor for the multifaceted process of both physical and psychological destruction. It suggests that the experience of being "burnt" transcends the literal flames to symbolize a systematic attempt to dismantle identity and spirit. This conceptual metaphor resonates with theories in narrative identity^[23], wherein traumatic experiences are encoded in language as processes that strip away layers of selfhood. The metamorphic use of fire also conjures classical associations with purification and rebirth, aligning the experience of destruction with the potential for renewal—a dualistic interpretation that challenges linear narratives of victimhood.

In another instance, the metaphor:

"Kohl for the eye of the sun in the wilderness"

constructs a visual and sensory tableau in which "kohl" is not merely an adornment but an emblem of persistent sorrow and cultural memory. Kohl, traditionally used to enhance beauty or signify identity in various cultures, here becomes a mark of grief, suggesting that the land itself bears the scars of historical trauma (see **Appendices A and B**).

Finally, the metaphor in:

"Do you think you have erased my identity?"

moves beyond the visceral act of erasure to critique political and cultural hegemony. The verb "erase" implies an impermanent, yet aggressive, attempt to expunge not only the poet's physical presence but the accumulated cultural and historical narratives embedded in that identity. This echoes postcolonial critiques concerning the deconstruction of identity imposed by dominating discourses. The metaphor thereby functions as a potent rhetorical denunciation of cultural assimilation and historical revisionism, inviting readers to consider the sociopolitical dimensions of symbolic violence.

By integrating these rhetorical devices, the poet constructs a multilayered semantic space where personal anguish and broader socio-political struggles converge. This analytical framework not only aligns with linguistic theories—such as Conceptual Metaphor Theory—but also with socio-cultural critiques that examine the ways in which language functions as a tool of both oppression and resistance. The employment of simile and metaphor thus emerges as a deliberate strategy to destabilize conventional meanings, challenging the reader to rethink the relationship between language, power, and identity.

Moreover, this linguistic strategy reflects an intrinsic ambiguity that resonates with the ideas of Roland Barthes regarding the "Death of the author"^[24]. The multiplicity of interpretations allowed by these devices demonstrates that meaning in the text is not fixed but is instead continuously negotiated within a cultural and historical context. Such a dynamic view of language underscores the capacity of poetic discourse to engage in a transformative dialogue with its audience, creating a complex interplay between the subjective and the collective.

In sum, the semantic analysis of the poem reveals that the use of simile and metaphor operates on multiple levels to articulate themes of suffering, resistance, and identity. Through these rhetorical devices, the poet not only commu-

nicates personal experiences of pain and resilience but also engages with broader cultural and political narratives, inviting a rich and multifaceted interpretative engagement. This analysis situates the text within a continuum of literary theory and cultural critique, offering a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed and contested in poetic discourse.

5.3.3. Repetition

Repetition in the poem functions as a critical semantic device operating on multiple levels—phonological, rhythmic, and thematic—to create both aural and affective resonance. The deliberate echo of key phrases, such as “I will return” (سأعود) and “Do you think” (أتظن), serves a purpose far beyond mere stylistic ornamentation. In establishing a rhythmic cadence, the recurrence of these phrases propels the reader through the narrative, mirroring the cyclical nature of resistance and renewal. The oscillation between questioning and declaration not only provides a steady, driving momentum but also aligns the reader’s inner tempo with the poem’s overarching narrative of defiance.

Each instance of repetition contributes cumulative emotional weight, reinforcing central themes of resilience and defiance. The assertion “I will return” evolves beyond a simple statement into a potent mantra, symbolizing continuity in the face of oppression. Similarly, the query “Do you think” acts as both a provocation and a challenge, inviting the reader to interrogate established hierarchies and oppressive narratives.

Beyond these rhythmic and intensifying effects, repetition establishes a dialogic space within the poem, creating a metaphorical conversation between the speaker and an implied adversary. Each repeated phrase functions as a refrain that fuses personal resolve with public defiance, blurring the line between individual experience and collective struggle. This layered semantic strategy deepens reader engagement and encourages multiple interpretative readings.

5.3.4. Symbolism

Symbolism in the poem operates as an essential device for condensing and conveying multifaceted ideas. Through the use of specific symbols, the poet transforms tangible objects, actions, and figures into carriers of broader, often abstract, themes.

The symbol of “ashes” (الرماد), for instance, is emblematic of destruction and loss; yet, it simultaneously

evokes notions of transformation and rebirth. This duality reflects the inherent complexity of the human condition under duress—wherein destruction does not solely signify an end but also harbors the latent potential for renewal. By invoking such a potent emblem, the poet encapsulates the paradox of devastation and resurgence, enriching the reader’s interpretative experience.

Furthermore, in the use of “prayers” (الصلوات), the poem navigates the interplay between hope, faith, and resistance. Prayers here are not passive supplications; rather, they represent an active engagement with the divine, a call that bridges personal agony with collective aspiration. This symbolic layer aligns with discussions in religious symbolism where prayer is simultaneously an act of devotion and a subtle yet potent form of protest—an assertion of agency against the forces of oppression. Such symbols reflect the poet’s broader critique of socio-political structures that often seek to silence

The persistent interplay of symbolism with devices such as simile, metaphor, and repetition constructs a cohesive semantic framework that challenges conventional narratives of defeat. Each symbol—whether evoking physical destruction, spiritual hope, or cultural memory—is interwoven with other textual elements to reiterate themes of oppression, resilience, and identity in a unified and compelling manner. In doing so, the poet not only crafts a narrative of personal defiance but also posits a broader vision of resilience—one that champions cultural memory and collective identity as integral to the human experience.

The semantic choices underpinning the symbolism in the poem invite intertextual readings, whereby the reader is encouraged to draw connections with historical, cultural, and mythic narratives. This intertextuality is integral to the poem’s capacity to transcend its immediate context and resonate on a global scale, positioning the personal as a microcosm of larger collective struggles. Scholars such as Barthes have posited that such symbols function within a “system of signifiers” that can be reinterpreted across different cultural contexts, further amplifying the text’s multidimensional impact^[25].

6. Intertextuality

One of the notable techniques that enriches the poem is the poet’s employment of intertextuality, particularly within

a religious framework. Intertextuality, defined as the network of relationships between texts, illustrates how a text absorbs, transforms, and resonates with earlier works. As Julia Kristeva posits, “A text is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another”^[26]. In this context, intertextuality refers to both explicit and implicit allusions to other texts, a phenomenon that is further explored in the following sections.

Religious Intertextuality

Religious intertextuality serves as a significant rhetorical tool in Arabic literature, where religious texts and symbols are utilized to embed a profound semantic layer within literary works. Its significance lies in connecting contemporary human experiences with sacred historical and spiritual narratives. This connection not only strengthens literary texts but also imbues them with a sense of continuity and resilience. In the poem under analysis, the invocation of religious texts serves to articulate identity and resilience while intertwining religious symbolism with collective identity, thereby enhancing the psychological and spiritual dimensions of the text.

Religious intertextuality is manifested in several instances throughout the poem, as detailed below:

(1) Intertextuality Related to the Day of Resurrection

The poem’s allusion to the Resurrection is encapsulated in the phrase “I am like the Resurrection, one day I will come.” This intertextual reference is significant due to its invocation of a potent religious symbol in Islam. Rather than merely citing a familiar image, the poet employs the concept of the Resurrection to affirm themes of rebirth and return following attempts at erasure or destruction. This symbolism reinforces the notion of undying hope and reflects the resilience of the Palestinian people in their determination to reemerge despite adversity.

The intertextual reference to the Resurrection serves multiple purposes. It adds a spiritual dimension to the text by associating the Resurrection with the triumph of truth over falsehood and light over darkness. The repeated phrase “one day I will come” suggests an ongoing process of renewal, reinforcing the resilience of the Palestinian struggle. Here, intertextuality connects Palestinian identity with the idea of rebirth, underscoring that even if identity is compromised or suppressed, it will ultimately be revived with strength. Consequently, the Resurrection functions as a rhetorical de-

vice that enhances hope and underscores the inevitability of return and resistance.

(2) Intertextuality in the Use of Jesus Christ, Son of Mary

Another critical instance of intertextuality occurs with the mention of Jesus in the phrase “I am like Jesus, returning with strength.” In this passage, Jesus is emblematic of endurance and sacrifice, serving as a bridge between personal suffering and the broader narrative of sacrifice found in religious tradition. His reference is not only a signal of return after suffering but also a means of aligning Palestinian experiences of oppression with the renowned sacrificial narrative of Jesus’s crucifixion and persecution.

The phrase “returning with strength” adds further nuance, indicating that the anticipated return is both triumphant and revitalized. This intertextual connection reinforces the notion that suffering is not terminal but a precursor to renewal. Thus, the invocation of Christ enriches the text both rhetorically and morally, imbuing the Palestinian struggle with an elevated, almost sacred, significance.

(3) Intertextuality with the Divine Scriptures

The poem also features intertextual references to the divine scriptures through the phrase “I will return with the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur’an, with hymns and prayers”. This reference underscores a deliberate rhetorical strategy aimed at fostering a sense of spiritual and human unity. By integrating the three divine scriptures, which collectively embody shared moral and spiritual values, the poet suggests that the struggle against injustice is universally relevant and transcendent of sectarian or doctrinal divisions.

The repetitive structure, “I will return,” associated with each scripture serves to reinforce the inevitability of revival imbued with spiritual fortitude. This repetition not only bolsters the overarching theme of resilience but also endows the Palestinian struggle with a sacred dimension, implying that it is a defense not only of territorial integrity but also of enduring ethical and spiritual values.

(4) The Story of the People of the Ditch

The poem alludes to the story of the “People of the Ditch,” as narrated in the Qur’an (Surah Al-Buruj). The phrase “a man from the Ditch has no doubt about my return” invokes this well-known episode, thereby linking the poet’s personal experience with a broader historical narrative of steadfast faith under persecution. The intertextual reference to this story is employed to illustrate the resilience and un-

wavering commitment of believers in the face of extreme adversity.

By drawing on the narrative of the People of the Ditch, the poet connects Palestinian suffering with a legacy of religious martyrdom and steadfast resistance. This allusion serves not only as a reminder of past religious tragedy but also as an affirmation of the heroes who have historically resisted oppression. The brief yet potent invocation of this story encapsulates complex themes of pride, identity, and resistance, thereby deepening the reader's understanding of the Palestinian struggle as part of a timeless narrative of defiance and moral conviction.

In summary, the poem utilizes religious intertextuality as a multifaceted rhetorical strategy. By drawing on potent religious symbols—the Resurrection, the figure of Jesus, the divine scriptures, and the story of the People of the Ditch—the poet establishes a profound connection between the individual struggle and broader religious and historical narratives. This intertextual layering not only amplifies the thematic depth of the poem but also reinforces the idea that the Palestinian struggle is not solely a geopolitical issue but is also rooted in a larger, eternal conflict between truth and injustice. The integration of religious intertextuality adds complexity to the poem's themes, allowing for multiple interpretations and a richer reading experience. It enables the poet to explore themes such as suffering, redemption, and divine intervention with greater nuance, as these concepts are inherently multifaceted within religious discourse. This complexity invites readers to engage with the poem on both a personal and a spiritual level, deepening their appreciation of its artistic and thematic intricacies.

7. Conclusions

Through a comprehensive analysis at the phonological, syntactic, and semantic levels, it is evident that Al-Saqour's poem employs a sophisticated interplay of linguistic and literary devices to convey its themes of defiance and resilience. The deliberate use of cacophony and euphony creates an au-

ditory landscape that mirrors the emotional tenor of the poem. Syntactic variations enhance the rhythmic and structural coherence, while semantic devices such as simile, metaphor, symbolism, and repetition, enrich the poem's meaning and cultural resonance. The incorporation of religious intertextuality further deepens the thematic complexity, positioning the poem within a broader spiritual and ethical framework. Collectively, these stylistic elements work in harmony to produce a powerful and evocative poetic expression that engages the reader on multiple levels.

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Conceptualization, A.A.A.; methodology, M.N.; analysis and interpretation, A.A.A. and N.A.A.; resources, I.-e.N.M.A.A., M.N.—original draft preparation, A.A.A., N.A.A., M.N. and I.-e.N.M.A.A.; writing—review and editing, A.A.A. and N.A.A.; supervision, N.A.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Appendix A

	أَتَظُنُّ أَنَّكَ عِنْدَمَا أَحْرَقْتَنِي
وَرَقَصْتَ كَالشَّيْطَانِ فَوْقَ رُفَاتِي	أَتَظُنُّ أَنَّكَ عِنْدَمَا أَحْرَقْتَنِي
كُحْلاً لَعِينِ الشَّمْسِ فِي الْفُلُوتِ	وَتَرَكْتَنِي لِلدَّارِيَاتِ تَذُرُنِي

وَمَحُوتٌ تَارِيخِي وَمَعْتَقِدَاتِي	أَنْظَنُ أَنْكَ قَدْ طَمَسْتَ هَوِيَّتِي
أَنَا كَالْقِيَامَةِ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ آتٍ	عَبَثًا تُحَاوِلُ ... لَا فَنَاءَ لثَائِرِي
مِنْ كُلِّ عَاصِفَةٍ أَلُمْتُ شَتَاتِي	أَنَا مِثْلُ عَيْسَى عَائِدٌ وَبَقَاوَةٌ
سَاعُودُ أَعْظَمُ أَعْظَمِ النَّوَرَاتِ	سَاعُودُ أَقْدَمَ عَاشِقٍ مَتَمَرِّدٍ
قِرَآنُ وَالتَّسْبِيحِ وَالصَّلَوَاتِ	سَاعُودُ بِالتَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْ
خَالٍ مِنَ الْأَحْقَادِ وَالنَّعْصَرَاتِ	سَاعُودُ بِالْأَدْيَانِ دِينًا وَاحِدًا
بَدْ ... أَنَا كُلُّ الزَّمَانِ الْآتِي	رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَخْدُودِ مَا مِنْ عَوْدَتِي

Appendix B

Do You Think When You Burnt Me

Do you think that when you burnt me
And danced like the devil over my ashes

And left me for dust storms to bury me;
And (left me) to be a Kohl for the sun's eye in the nowhere,

Do you think you have erased my identity
And wiped out my history and beliefs?!

For no avail you try... No death There is for a rebel
I am like the Resurrection, one day I will come

I am like Jesus, returning with strength
From every storm I shall gather my parts,

I will return as the oldest rebel lover
I will return as the greatest of revolutions

I will return with the Torah, the Gospel, and the
Qur'an, with hymns and prayers

I will return with all religions as one faith
Free from hatred and divisions

A man from the Ditch I am, I must return
I'm all the coming time.

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