

The Poetic Artistic Patterns in the Collection 'I Interpret the Wind's Anxiety' by Syrian Poet Omar Hazaa

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Abstract:

Experimentation is an aesthetic obsession in contemporary literary writing, both poetry and prose. Writers have been fascinated by the world of experimentation and have tended to employ its various techniques and mechanisms to achieve adventure and difference in order to search for new horizons. The concept of experimentation is synonymous with the terms: revolution, rebellion, destruction, fragmentation, and the reconstruction of a literary text in a new creative form, bringing together numerous intellectual products from culture, art, perspective, and cultural patterns that highlight the writer's awareness and ability to create and innovate. It is a creative practice that elevates the literary text, enriching it with knowledge, depth, and semantic power, as seen in the collection 'I Interpret the Wind's Anxiety' by Syrian poet Omar Hazaa.

Keywords: experimentation, otherness, revolution, innovation, anxiety of the wind.

1- Introduction:

Experimentation is a departure from the established norm and a disruption of it. It is linked to continuous creativity, which "cannot be formed in a climate of stability and stillness, but rather with constant movement and continuous transformation. It is a subjective process centred on artistic and intellectual adventure, whose goal is to achieve otherness from the established and familiar forms of

artistic and literary expression, revealing the dialectical relationship between the act of creation and the pursuit of research and experimentation."¹

Arabic poetry has taken experimentation as its horizon for the future, transcending all restrictions, obstacles and taboos, engaging in dialogue with different discourses, genres, arts and heritage in search of the new and unique. The experimental poetry movement has reconciled human, social and intellectual reality, It has also revealed "fertile and rich possibilities, as well as diversity, richness and complexity, subjecting the human and cultural condition to the poetic condition and employing it to create open and diverse climates for poetic writing, with the younger generation in particular – the generation that bore the heaviest burden – with the task of human, cultural and aesthetic (adventurous) exploration into the essence of this poem."²

Arabic poetry is undergoing a constant experimental adventure, not stopping at consuming and regurgitating previous traditional rules, but rather focusing on keeping pace with artistic transformation (in form and content) in Western poetry in general, and Arabic poetry in particular. This has made it a form of poetry that is open to abundant creative outlets, rich in socio-cultural references, diverse in its visions and perspectives, suited to different emotional states, and expressive of the current issues that affect humanity.

The Syrian poet Omar Hazaa enjoys a prominent position in the Arab poetic scene. and has written many important poetic works that have been critically acclaimed and widely publicised for their artistic merit and openness to cultural patterns through which the poet reveals the unspoken.

2- Experimentation in the collection ‘I Interpret the Wind's Anxiety’:

The collection ‘I Interpret the Wind's Anxiety’ is replete with distinctive experimental features that reflect the poet Omar Hazaa's extraordinary ability to invent ideas, themes, styles and artistic tools without resorting to reportage, repetition or consumption. The poet is different, innovative, adventurous, and elusive in the worlds of poetry. He transforms the anxiety of writing into another creative anxiety that provokes a chaos of questions, searching for the splendour of imagery and the creativity of angles of photography, description, and narration. Experimentation also appears in the subject matter through the poet's different vision in his approaches to important and current topics, and his delving into the unspoken (political, social, intellectual, moral, etc.). Experimentation is also evident in the poet's ability to create irony in expression, imagery, narration and storytelling, as well as in the intimate blending of himself and the poem, highlighting the poet's awareness and deep insight into the inner workings of the text. Hazaa's poems do not reveal their identity at first glance, but require an experienced and conscious reader. His poems are distinguished by his use of footnotes and texts, which is a characteristic of contemporary experimental poetry.

Experimentation is evident in the collection at the following levels:

¹ Muhammad Sabir Obeid: *The Plastic Space of Prose Poetry: Writing with the Body and the Conflict of Signs*, Dar Al-Waraq, Jordan, 1st edition, 2016, p. 9.

² Mahmoud Al-Daba: *The Allure of Experimentation: The Arab Poetry Movement at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, Egyptian General Book Authority, Cairo, Egypt, 1st edition, 2014, p. 54

2- Experimentation in technical structure:

2- 2- A- Experimentation in titling:

The poet (Hazaa) moved away from the traditional model of using simple, ready-made titles, and shifted to choosing more surprising titles for his poems, titles that were often ambiguous, shocking to the reader's expectations, steeped in aesthetics and strangeness, and open to the rights of nature, philosophy, and religion. Among these are: I Explain the Anxiety of the Wind, Brothers of Hell, Incantation, Or... As If I..., Feed the Wind His Ashes, In the Second-Hand Market, Registered Trademark, For Which She Has the Stick, Night Foam, Margin in the Core of the Text, Drowned on the Shore, Verses of Resurrection...

2-2- B- Musical experimentation:

Rhythm plays a prominent role in the construction of the poem. Some rely on pure metres, while others prefer compound metres, so that the metre takes its meaning from the main theme of the poem and expresses its psychological context and subject matter.

Omar Hazaa writes out of a desire to break free from constraints and express reality freely and honestly. The reasons for the diversity in prosody, metre and rhyme are:

- The desire for renewal and the search for a new poetic form that sees breaking with convention as a new form of creativity.
- The poet's experiences of fragmentation and brokenness as a result of his circumstances, including his exile from his homeland, Syria. This fragmentation is reflected in the sea, the rhythm, and the rhyme.

This is evident in many poems in which the poet frees himself from the constraints of meter, rhyme, and rhythm, leaving ample space for expression and emotional imagery, especially as he experiences a crisis of exile and funeral rituals that dominate the collection. His feelings were sincere, mixed with pain, sorrow and grief. How could it be otherwise, he who was a poet familiar with the rituals of exile, having lived in exile, a stranger in his homeland and in his soul? The poet says:

"Ha...

They extinguished it with contempt...

And poured it out...

And it was embers; before; when they lit it...

I called out to him:

- (O I...)

- (Hey you, you are not me)..

He answered me..

And disappeared..

When they followed him..

He is who I am..

I have no doubt about that..

But they likened him to me..

And they failed.." ¹

Freedom from the constraints of form gives the poet absolute freedom to express the innermost feelings of the soul, the fractures of the self, and the vagaries of reality.

¹ - Omar Hazaa, *Interpreting the Wind's Anxiety*, Lines and Shadows for Publishing and Distribution, Jordan, 1st edition, 2021, p. 18.

The poet tended to employ sad poetic meters that matched his melancholic state of mind, including the ramal and the basīm, two meters that symbolise sadness and pain, sorrow and despair, condemnation of a miserable reality, and highlight its psychological, social and emotional effects.

The poet's inclination to write prose poetry stems from this new poetic form, which combines the genres of poetry and prose and gives the poet more space for feeling, granting him creative energies for symbolism and intensification, and invent new, rich and unusual poetic images. Prose poetry is based on 'organic unity, freedom and conciseness.'¹

The poet has resorted to transcending the traditional structure of presentations in search of a poetic form that allows him ample space for creativity, writing and expressing the stirrings of the soul and contrasting emotional states of joy and sorrow, pain and hope, revolution and rebellion.

What is apparent in this poetic passage is that the poet has adopted the approach of the poet Adonis in terms of the structure of the poem, and has invented a new poetic form that attacks the traditional form, destroying it in order to create a new and different style. This innovation is evident in the poetic vision, form and content (ambiguity, use of mythology, frequent shifts, surrealism, explosive rhythm, etc.). He says:

"If you wish to discover

the most wonderful revelation, venture into danger.

The pleasure of the unknown cannot be understood, in its extremes, except by the innovator...

Look closely...

How butterflies became flames of fire

Not flowers

When they fluttered to their destination, they scattered in paradise...

From hell...

Try...

To drink the light from the black stabs...

So that you may triumph..."²

¹ Suzanne Bernard: *Prose Poetry from Baudelaire to the Present Day*, Vol. 2, translated by Rawya Sadek, Sharqiyat Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, Egypt, 2nd edition, 2000, p. 36.

² Omar Hazza, *Interpreting the Wind*, p. 13.

This poetic passage is distinguished by its innovation in terms of vision, structure, poetic stance, ideas, and visual composition. Huzaa's poetry is also characterised by its use of myth, the grandeur of language, and the use of natural and mystical symbols. He says:

". ..

They shouted at him when his band and musicians betrayed him; about the melodies; they beat him:
His rhythm was still intoxicating...
His rababa was drunk...
So they rushed...
To raise him...
And discipline him...
By burning the grass in his blood...
And they declared his apostasy...
And they cursed him...
And they reviled him..."¹

2- 2- B- Linguistic dictionary/shift:

The poet Omar Hazaa'a tended towards linguistic experimentation in the formation of the vocabulary of his poem about prevailing linguistic patterns in order to achieve contrast and difference. He also tended towards semantic intensification of language, the formation of symbols, astonishing flights of imagination, and the invention of new poetic images. This is what we find in many passages, including:

"In the beginning...
There was water...
When they formed...
With clay...
Then they transformed..."²

We note in the poem the syntactic and semantic shift, as the poet builds his poetic image by immersing himself in symbolism and suggestion, often leaning towards ambiguity, thus forming a new lexicon with new vocabulary that is more suggestive and evocative. This greatly impresses the reader with his unique, distinctive language. He says:

"In the corner...
Where my fingers are language...
And their rhythms are a thousand...
And you are distraction...
In the corner...
The audience is stunned...
And every gesture from me is suggestive...
In the corner...
The strings are a hurricane...

¹ Omar Hazza, *Interpreting the Wind*, p p 19- 20.

² Omar Hazza, *Interpreting the Wind*, p 5.

And your waist, for the night watchers, is a black palm tree..."¹

The writer has tended to paint more beautiful poetic images, relying on metaphors and similes that contribute to placing the conceptual images in tangible images, so as to deeply reveal the difficult human situation in which his homeland lives, the psychological and emotional state he experiences, and the pain, longing, and sorrow he endures in his exile and internal exile.

2-2- C. Employing philosophical vision:

Contemporary poetic creations are replete with philosophical vision, which is evident in the poet's perspective as expressed in his poems to convey his stance on a particular issue or his treatment of a specific topic.

The philosophical vision of the poet Hazza is evident in his poems through his view of the world and his emphasis on the fierce struggle between existence and annihilation, in addition to the dominance of the theme of alienation in his most prominent poems.

A nihilistic philosophical vision dominates many of the poems, expressing a troubled and anxious self, constantly thinking about death, which has come to control its daily life. The poet has addressed the subject of death in a philosophical and metaphysical manner, through an existential vision that has contributed to the crystallisation of the problem of death. and embodied his nihilistic vision, as death represents an important question for humans that makes them constantly think and reflect. The philosophical approach helped to realise the self and existence. Metaphorical imagery contributed to deepening the tragic dimensions of death and the poet's pessimistic vision, as we find in poems such as 'Ya Layta' (Oh, if only):

"The flowers ask me:

O boy...

When will you enjoy poetry in my presence?

When?

I said:

When my corpse rises from the dead, and Deir al-Zour cries out:

He who left has returned..."²

The poet's philosophical vision brought him closer to the concept of death, a death resulting from his own inflated ego, his explosive emotions, and his muffled cries. He lives in a world that is not his own, in a time that is not his own. This is what made the funeral atmosphere dominate the space of the poem, and the language came out hysterical and sad, expressing the pain formed in the poet's patience. In the poem 'Or... as if I...', he says

"One day...

Death will pass us by...

And the two stars will go out...

And it will be said: Two great men have been assassinated...

The first left us with a collection of poems...

And the other left us with the meaning of humanity..."³

The theme of alienation is also strongly present in the poems. Alienation is one of the contemporary themes that preoccupied writers and thinkers, and it appears in poetry as an equivalent

¹ -Ibid., p 110.

² Omar Hazza, *Interpreting the Wind*, p 118.

³ Omar Hazza, *Interpreting the Wind*, p 30.

to what the contemporary poet experiences in terms of alienation inside and outside his homeland. Through his poetry, he depicts his tragic inner world and his longing for salvation through many means, including death, suicide, and isolation. Traits of alienation appear in many passages, including this poetic passage from the poem 'Transformation':

"Leave me...

In the darkness of my depths...

For the night is my veil and my mask...

The lights of the world are but an echo of the light within my ribs...

The noise of the universe overwhelms me...

And isolation is a prerequisite for creativity..."¹

What is apparent from this context is that the poet's character has chosen to alienate herself psychologically and intellectually, to live a life of meaninglessness and alienation, and to choose isolation, night and darkness as an escape from her dark reality.

2-2- D. Use of narrative techniques:

The prose poem uses narrative techniques as a form of experimentation and contrast. We see the use of story elements (character, place, time, event, etc.) in order to excite the reader and keep them from becoming bored. The combination of the arts of poetry and prose deepens the dimensions of the poem, increasing its beauty, symbolism, and intellectual richness.

The poet often appears in the guise of a storyteller who recounts events, whether real or imagined, such as in this passage, which recounts the stories of the oppressors and corrupters of the earth (Habil, Pharaoh, Nimrod, etc.).

"Habil saw me as a murderer...

A tyrant...

And a transgressor...

Then, Jundah fled...

And the soldiers...

Nimrod and Pharaoh returned to their terrorist notebook...

To carry out their rituals...

They used my methods to oppress the barns...

Then, I became Judas...

Whom God crucified...

I gamble...

Then I am an executioner...

If dawn breaks, he cuts off the Scheherazades...

And assassinates the braids...

And during that time, in the security branch, the braids are cut off..."²

Narrative storytelling is very prominent in the collection, forming a distinctive feature of it. The poet is fully aware of the role of storytelling in opening up other creative avenues that enrich his poems, giving them depth, beauty and excitement. He makes extensive use of pronouns, places, temporal events, and past actions, in addition to suspense, irony, question marks, and exclamation marks. He says:

¹ Ibid., p 33.

² Ibid., p 38.

"Because I am no longer that... (they loved him)...
 They were walking over my dead body...
 I was confused...
 But she remained silent...
 How I understood them
 They pounced on him with their hands
 Then they bit him
 And knocked him down
 They shouted at him when his band and musicians betrayed him; they stopped playing the melodies
 and beat him up:
 His rhythm was still intoxicating...
 Perhaps this narrative style opens the door to interpretation for the reader, prompting them to search
 for the meanings behind the poet's use of these characters and the extent to which they reveal the
 hidden meanings of the texts.

2- 2- D - Investing in cinematic and visual art techniques in poems:

The poet sought to open up to cinematic art, as the collection is dominated by visual motion scenes, close-ups, sounds and moving images. The poet moves through his camera to capture visual scenes, deepening the meanings, messages and implications contained in his poetry.

Cinema focuses on the language of images, which carry many meanings and implications, and in many cases become a substitute for language. The image represents 'the primary material of film, but it is also the most complex, because its composition is characterised by a profound duality. It is the automatic product of a technical machine capable of producing reality with precision and objectivity.'¹

The poet Omar Hazaa focused on constructing the filmic image, framing the location, and constructing the cinematic shots. The poems contained a series of shots related to description, narration, or the psychological aspect. One of the most prominent shots dominating the poems was the close-up shot, 'Plan Rapproche':

"The birds are a stone's throw away...
 The melodies explain; secretly; to the string...
 While the hunter; in her absence; loads the gunpowder in the moonlight...
 A flash...
 Then a shot rang out.
 The feathers fell and the heart exploded...

Close-ups usually reveal the psychological and emotional depth of a scene, focusing on specific parts of the body due to their prominent role in developing the narrative and escalating the plot.

We also find the general shot, 'Plan général,' in which the poet focuses on framing the place in its various dimensions, saying:

¹ Muhammad Nur al-Din Afaya: Cinematic Discourse between Writing and Interpretation, Okaz Publications, Morocco, (n.p.), (n.d.), p. 15.

"...

Even if halfway...

Their blood was boiling...

In the darkness...

And roaring...

It was moving...

If darkness flows through it...

And if the lamps dry up in it...

It shudders...

There was a call..."¹

It is clear that the poet relied on imaging techniques, framing the entire space in which the scenes take place as a space of (futility), which encapsulates the poet's nihilistic emotional state.

The poet also employs extreme close-ups (Plan Très Rapproché), focusing on a specific part of the character and presenting its semantic and emotional connotations. He says:

"In the corner...

Where my fingers are language...

And their rhythms are a thousand..."²

The fingers of the hand suggest tenderness, delicacy, splendour, containment and warmth, and in the poem they are associated with music and melody.

The poet also borrows from the visual arts, using metaphors of appearances, elements, colours and visual icons to highlight the extent to which the poet engages with nature as a refuge, a sanctuary and a warm embrace that cradles his pain, alienation and existential anxiety. The poet merges with nature in lavish intimacy, presenting us with a poem that is like a painting, overflowing with visual semiotic signs (shadows, colours, drawings, shapes...). The poet makes abundant use of exquisite imagery, forming a total visual aesthetic image that is vibrant with life and movement, as we see in many passages, including: "Do not send flowers...

Flowers are a prelude...

To carnival...

Its candles are black...

Do not send it without a visa The borders; here; she says:

(Sorrows must be renewed)..."³

The poet borrowed elements of nature in his poem, painting visual scenes that combine his tormented self with nature, which is his refuge from his painful reality. He treats nature as a friend to whom he confides his sorrows, his feelings of alienation, and his deep wounds.

The poet repeatedly depicts natural scenes, their joyful images and exquisite colours. The poet was influenced by natural philosophy in his poem, saying:

"The flowers ask me:

¹ Omar Hazza, *Interpreting the Wind*, p. 9.

² Omar Hazza, *Interpreting the Wind*, p 110.

³ *Ibid*, p 77.

O boy...

When will you enjoy poetry in my presence?

When?

I said:

When my corpse rises from the dead, and Deir al-Zour cries out:

‘He who has gone has come...’¹

The poet succeeded in transforming the meanings of natural elements and symbols to serve psychological contexts, so that they harmonised with his inner psychological state, the human monstrosity that afflicted him, and his inner tragedy that extended to become anxiety that only nature was able to interpret to a large extent.

Conclusion:

The poetic experience of the poet Omar Hazaa is replete with experimental features that highlight his unbridled desire to rebel and revolt against prevailing traditional forms, to express his inflated ego and broken spirit, having settled in exile and suffered alienation, anxiety, pain and exile, resulting in the fragmentation of his soul, haunted by anxieties, death and nothingness, and the desire to be freed from the constraints of a dark life.

The poet also utilised cinematic and visual art techniques, resulting in poems that are visual paintings overflowing with scenes, images, colours and dynamic shadows.

Experimentation in artistic styles is also evident in the poet's use of a highly symbolic, suggestive and ambiguous vocabulary to reinforce meanings, and his preference for prose poems that incorporate elements of narrative.

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¹ Omar Hazza, *Interpreting the Wind*, p 118