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	Formal, Thematic, and Aesthetic Transformations of the Poetic Text in Modern Algerian Poetry under Colonial Rule (1900–1962): Between Classical Structure and Free Verse Experimentation	
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Abstract This study examines the formal and thematic transformations of the poetic text in modern Algerian poetry during the period of French colonial rule, with particular attention to the dynamic interaction between classical poetic structures and emerging modern forms. The research seeks to document and critically analyze the evolution of poetic expression in Algeria from the early twentieth century to the Liberation Revolution, focusing on changes in form, content, rhythm, imagery, and poetic function. Adopting a descriptive-analytical and historical-critical methodology, the paper explores selected poetic samples representing diverse artistic orientations, including poets who adhered to the traditional vertical (‘amūdī) poem and others who embraced free verse (shi’r al-tafīla). The study situates these transformations within their broader socio-cultural, religious, and political contexts, particularly the impact of colonial oppression, reformist thought, and revolutionary consciousness on poetic production. The findings demonstrate that early modern Algerian poetry was constrained by religious rigidity, weak critical institutions, and imitation of classical models, which limited its aesthetic and thematic development. However, the emergence of reformist movements in the 1920s and the intensification of national struggle—especially after the massacres of May 8, 1945—catalyzed a decisive shift in poetic discourse. Algerian poetry gradually expanded beyond purely religious themes to address social reform, national identity, resistance, and revolutionary struggle, while simultaneously experimenting with new rhythmic patterns, unified thematic structures, and more dynamic poetic imagery. The study concludes that modern Algerian poetry cannot be reduced to a single ideological or aesthetic mode. Rather, it represents a pluralistic and evolving literary field in which tradition and innovation coexist, reflecting the complex historical experience of Algerian society under colonial domination and during the struggle for independence.		
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1- The reality of literary culture during the Liberation Revolution

It is useful, before we trace the transformations of the poem in modern Algerian literature in form and content based on the reality of the critical movement in Algeria, to grasp the reality of the literary culture that it had come to in general, and modern Algerian poetry in particular, under the French occupation.

The rigidity of some religious men, and their narrow vision toward poetry—which was considered by some of them as *vain talk* that Allah has forbidden (Salman, 1981, p.128)—had a negative effect on the development of the poem in both content and form; its content was limited to religious purposes, until the religious poem became the only outlet through which it could breathe (Salman, 1981, p.180). As for the form, it was stripped of all elements of artistic beauty, and nothing remained of it except the sounds of the meter's feet, and even the refined rhythm was often absent. Prosodic mistakes were common, and imitation and blind copying spread. This was the state to which the poetic poem had come.

Likewise, the very concept of poetry was not clear in the minds of many who composed it; each of them imitated the models of the ancients and wove according to their pattern. Some even derived their metaphors and allusions from disciplines unrelated to literature, such as jurisprudence and theology, so the poems were adorned with some treatises in verse. Poets used to boast that this poem was from the *Burdah* meter and that one from the *Hamziyyah* meter (Salman, 1981, p.181). The absence of literary criticism also had a clear impact on the deterioration of the poem's artistic level; criticism remained weak until the 1930s, and even those few who attempted to critique this poetry expressed their disappointment and pessimism regarding its deteriorated condition, mocking this reality in a way full of sarcasm and irony.

2- The signs of transformations in contents

At the beginning of the twentieth century, signs of a literary renaissance began to appear on the horizon, represented in the poetry of some poets who had acquired a considerable share of advanced culture and were influenced by the reformist and national renaissance in the Arab East. They turned toward addressing social subjects (Salman, 1981, p.181) connected with Algerian and Islamic reality. Among those pioneering poets we find Belkacem Khammar, Saad Eddine, Omar bin Qaddour Al-Jaza'iri, Al-Mawloud bin Al-Mouhoub, Abdelkader Al-Majjawi, and others. Their poetry reflected the pains and hopes of the Algerian people; they fought ignorance, praised scientific progress, and invoked the elements of personal character. Yet the subject that captured the attention of these poets most was the fight against superstitions that spread after the proliferation of Sufi orders. In this field, the poet Omar bin Qaddour Al-Jaza'iri stood out, as a kind of transformation touched his poems in the form of the poem, manifested in the unity of subject and soundness of meter, along with the use of correct eloquent language. Hence, it can be said that a group of poets, small in number though they were, managed to distinguish between the language of poetry and that of jurisprudence, and to rescue the poem from its narrow religious frame to a vast open space.

Critics who studied the evolution of the poetic movement in Algeria and its transformations agree that the real beginning of the development of the modern Algerian poem is linked to the beginning of the reformist movement in 1925 (Nasser, 2006, p.88). This is because the avant-garde that determined the start of poetry after the First World War was the same that managed to be influenced by the literary renaissance in the Arab East, admiring it as a producer, not as a spectator. After surpassing the stage of echoing others, it began to draw inspiration from itself and from the surrounding selves, thereby adding a new artistic touch to the Algerian poem by understanding poetry and its function in society and life. At that time appeared what can be considered the first anthology collecting the production of twenty-two poets, the book *Poets of Algeria in the Present Age*, whose first part was published in 1926 and the second in 1927 by its author

Mohammed El-Hadi Essanousi. It is considered the first step through which Algerian poetry entered the field of modernity. From then on, the modern Algerian poem began to record a noticeable transformation and development in both form and content.

Whoever follows the critical texts in Algerian literature notices that the revolutionary-oriented poem in modern Algerian poetry took an ascending direction after the massacre of May 8, 1945. Writers and poets became aware that the only subject they should concern themselves with was the homeland. The critic Hamza Bekkousha referred to this, directing the poets toward this orientation which he considered a natural reaction to the tragedies that befell the Algerian people (Kharfi, 1969, pp. 11–12).

And even if some poets inside the country fell silent during the Liberation Revolution due to their harsh circumstances that cannot be ignored, the Glorious Liberation Revolution unfolded a new generation of young poets who were present outside the homeland. They began singing of the revolution with their revolutionary poems, which were embraced by the Arab press in Tunis, Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad, where they were studying (Nasser, 2006, p.99).

Critics' views differed regarding the role of poetry in shaping the revolution. Some of them saw that Algerian poetry was not at the level of its revolution, because it came as a response to it and was not a harbinger of it. Others went so far as to say that most of it was occasional poetry that was not stirred except at the beginning of every November, and some claimed that this poetry was betrayed by its artistic tool, so it remained deficient from an aesthetic point of view (Nasser, 2006, p.99).

Anyone who contemplates these opinions notices that some of them are marked by improvisation and overgeneralization, while others are driven by specific ideological motives that are far removed from the spirit of honest criticism. In truth, the researcher of Algerian poetry is greatly impressed by these poems of national content, or revolutionary orientation. However, it is not correct to judge that modern Algerian poetry, with all its contents and modes of expression, is nothing but poetry of struggle and nationalism; rather, it varies in its revolutionary character (Nasser, 2006, p.99).

Some critics considered the Liberation Revolution the first Arab revolution that was able to introduce a tone of optimism and pride into Arabic literature, for the Algerian poet whose poetry burst forth on his tongue with the outbreak of the November Revolution had, in reality, poetry that was a burning piece of that roaring volcano. While expressing this overwhelming feeling, he did not hesitate to move from poet to orator without having any choice in that. In this regard, the poet Saleh Kharfi says (Kharfi, Diwan Atlas al-Mu'jizat, 1982, p.180):

*I have never once been a poet of pride // And even if the pulpits were my mouth
Yet I, and Allah knows my secret // Send pride through my veins and my poetry
That I see myself a descendant of that Algeria // That gives birth to courage, sacrifice, and glories*

Perhaps the first thing to be noticed in this field is the poets' explicit expression of their absolute belief in the success of this great revolution since its early years, and rarely do we find in this poetry a tremor of doubt, even in that poetry which was written inside the camps and prisons. This poet Abu al-Qasim Khammar expresses in the introduction of his Diwan (Awrak) about the revolution that transformed him from a poet of love into a poet of revolution, as he says (Khammar, 1982, p.7):

*And I left singing little by little // That singing was no longer young
Where is from me a poem that blazes // From a poem that overflows with proud embers
Where is from me a song for the nights // From a shout that covered the land with a roar
Where is from me, and in the Algerian there are groans // That shake the hearts with a strong shaking
O my thinness if I raised with the revolutionaries // My voice and it was not firing*

Those young men who were present abroad for study felt a severe crisis, because the revolution required them to be on the front, not at study desks, and more than one poet expressed this noble feeling. Among that is the saying of the poet Abu al-Qasim Khammar (Khammar, 1982, p.17):

*Is there a revolutionary rising in the land of Algeria // While I am here like rock, like the dead
Do my family die under the might of an oppressor // And I live in peace despite all my defects
Does among the believers one become a fighter // Calling for my freedom and my salvation*

Perhaps the first thing to be noticed in this field is the poets' explicit expression of their absolute belief in the success of this great revolution since its early years, and rarely do we find in this poetry a quiver of doubt, even in that poetry which was written inside the camps and prisons. This poet Abu al-Qasim Khammar expresses in the introduction of his Diwan (Awrak) about the revolution that transformed him from a poet of love into a poet of revolution, as he says (Khammar, 1982, pp.20-21):

*Let your institutes be the mountains and study them // They are more beneficial and more firmly lasting in life
What will the certificate avail you and Algeria // Is crying for help in misery and wretchedness
The certificate is not a page we obtain // The certificate is our dying as martyrs*

And perhaps the most intense of the poets and the most believing in the language of bullets is the great poet Moufdi Zakaria, truly the poet of the revolution, in whose poetry the tone of glorifying the language of gunpowder, deifying the machine gun, and writing with blood appeared clearly; rather, the titles of some of his poems came indicating this tendency, where he says (Moufdi, 1983, p.30):

*And the sacred flame is nothing but a fire // Of the hearts of those who ascend to it as fuel
My poetry flared with its embers as missiles // If they descend, the disciple falls to them
And from the melting of lead I printed my book // So that even iron melted in the heat of its mold
And from the war of Algeria I forged my meter // Mafā'ilatun, so Labid blessed it
And from the wound of the martyr I squeezed my poetry // As blood, and the presses of the martyrs are black
And from the bottom of the prisons I played a tune // Its rhythm is marked by chains and fetters*

Alongside this ascending revolutionary tendency, which the poets' poems shaped as burning pieces, there is another tendency in the revolutionary poem, the tendency of challenge and self-denial. Therefore, we rarely find poems in which poets sing of their individual emotions and personal concerns; the poems concerned with the collective conscience, or the altruistic tendency and collective feeling, have prevailed over them. The most wonderful verses of challenge and self-denial are those poems through which the poets expressed real suffering during the Glorious Liberation Revolution in Algeria. Many poets stood out in this field, among the most prominent of them are the poets: Moufdi Zakaria, Sheikh Ahmed Sahnoun, Saleh Kharfi, Mohamed al-Saleh Bawiya, and many others.

3- Transformations of the form of the poem

a- Musical formation

Perhaps the most important thing that attracts ears to poetry and makes the soul more drawn to it and influenced by it is the sound rhythm that springs from the repetition of homogeneous sound units that are repeated in a regular repetition, and this musical system is the difference between poetry and prose. Music in poetry is not something separate from it; rather, it is closely connected to the general meaning of the poem. It is not possible to find poetry that has a high musical beauty and a weak, bad meaning, for the meaning of the poem may be completely lost if it is translated into scattered words. The meaning in poetry requires the music of poetry so that we may understand it fully and be affected by it with the effect that is due to it. If this meaning is translated into prose, it does not affect us with that complete effect, because in this translation it does not lose the music only, but it loses a part of it which is from the complete meaning. The reason for that is that the poet reaches the limits of consciousness then goes beyond them to a world that scattered words cannot

reach; only composed words can reach it. This world that goes beyond the limits of consciousness has a meaning, but its meaning is reached by poetry alone with words that have poetic music (al-Nuwaihi, 1971, p.17).

From here, it is noticed that the relation of poetry to music is a complementary relation, “for poetry, if it does not shake and stir with its music, loses its most important elements and is no longer poetry, but may be considered versification or prose with meter, and much of contemporary poetry loses its importance because it lacks the element of musical stimulation in it” (al-Saharti, 1948, p.5).

So what is the state of the modern Algerian poem regarding this vital issue which has drawn the attention of critics in the past and the present?

If the basic factors that helped the dominance of the traditional tendency in Algerian poetry are set aside, especially in the era of reform (1925–1954), and the poetic texts themselves are dealt with directly, what draws attention is the character of imitation and the strong preservation of the old poetic rhythm and the full commitment to the conditions that the ancient Arab critics set for the Arabic poem. There may be no difference between their concept of poetry and its essence and the concept of al-Marzūqī, al-‘Askari, and Ibn Rashīq, for a poet like Ahmed al-Akhal, who is traditional in tendency, is found repeating the statement “poetry is measured, rhymed speech” (Ibn Rashīq, 1955, p.33). Among these poets there are even those who do not differentiate between versification and poetry, and when they move beyond content to form, this form for some of them does not go beyond being a selection of the best words, which confirms their care for verbal craftsmanship. This absolute dependency on the traditional concept is what pushed the romantic poet Ramadan Hammoud to criticize this situation by saying: “You see in these last years nothing but quintains and tetrastichs and imitations and followings and praising and satirizing and amorous verse and muṣammat, and other such things which indicate the utmost idleness that has attacked these miserable peoples in the core of their homes.” Then he says mockingly (Hammoud, 1928, p.106):

*They brought words that do not move a listener // An old man, half of it is the hemistich and half is the first line
And they crammed its parts under a tent // Like decayed, worn bones enclosed by the grave
And they adorned it with the meter that has become followed // With a rhyme for the wave that the sea throws
And they said: We have set poetry as a guide for people // While it is not enchanting poetry, nor yet prose
But it is versification and scattered speech // And lies and deceit by which thought dies*

Alongside this traditional tendency, there was an emotional romantic tendency, but it did not crystallize except after the Second World War. Therefore most of the poems that appeared before the fifties remained connected to the Arabic poetic pillar represented in al-Khalīl’s meters and the continuous rhyme. As an example of that, these verses of the poet al-Hussein bin ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Batni are presented, in which he sings of freedom, saying (al-Batni, 1939, p.8):

*Torment me, for I do not care // About the hell of passion and the strike of arrows
Smash me, for there is nothing more joyful for me // Than your aggression if you want my fighting
Tell me, are you a heavenly apparition // That has sent magic into the hearts of men?
Oh my enchantment, come close to me // So that my eyes may see the wondrous beauty*

It is noticed in these verses that the musical rhythm does not only arise from this khafīf meter and the open rhyme, which help the troubled soul to exhale frequently; in addition to this, the poet has exerted great effort in selecting the words and forms that have an emotional effect on souls: torture me, I do not care, hell, the strike of arrows, aggression, my fighting. All these are enthusiastic words that drive toward revolution, anger, and violence more than they suggest compassion, love, and tenderness, which suit the nature of ghazal. Alongside that, there is this oratorical tendency reflected in the successive imperative verbs: torture me, smash me, tell me. There is no doubt that this has spread within the folds of the poem an enthusiastic atmosphere that has wronged the poet’s meanings, for the freedom that the poet

sings of and seeks is not restricted to the hearts of men alone, and perhaps the poet intended what it carries of the meaning of manliness, strength, and defending the sanctuary.

Alongside this adherence to the old poetic pillar, another phenomenon is noticed among Algerian poets in the period between the twenties and thirties, which can be called “sound harmony”, and by it is meant that tone issuing from the repetition of letters close in articulation, such as nūn and lām in the previous verses, as hardly a single verse is free of these two letters (torture me, I, arrows, smash me, etc.).

The same phenomenon is found in the poetry of Moufdi Zakaria, as in these verses where he addresses a phantom from inside the cells of torment, where he says (Moufdi, 1983, p.28):

*We race the sun, we invade it with our little boat // So the wave mocks us: how can we catch up?
And the sun sets, folding in its cloak // Two secrets, the twilight feared to disclose them
How many nights we stayed awake while the eye of the star watched over us // As we met like visions at times and parted*

In these verses, there is a sound harmony arising from the recurrence of the two letters sīn and shīn, which are close in articulation, and it is not hidden from a delicate sense what these two letters have of subtle effect, especially the latter, the letter shīn, because it grants the verses a sad, gloomy music as if it were a monotonous, particularly human complaint.

Perhaps this attention to sound harmony appears more clearly in the poetry of Moufdi Zakaria, to the point that it seems to the reader as if it were a hidden, precise law without his being conscious of it or affecting it, and in that there is definite indication of what the poet possesses of a delicate poetic sense; however, the poet does not always reach such an overwhelming abundance of repetition of a single letter in one verse or in a few verses, but in most of his poetry he reaches what the ancient critics used to call “compatibility (munāsaba)”. There is no explanation for this phenomenon among these poets other than “their saturation with Arabic poetry in its golden ages and their clear influence by it, for the poetry of al-Buhturi was known for this feature and gained admiration for it, and the poetry of the Neo-Classical School became famous for this phenomenon, and Shawqi was distinguished by it and excelled in it, and it is one of the most prominent features that bestowed on his poetry its own special character” (Nasser, 2006, p.103).

However, alongside this care for this internal or hidden music, there are some attempts at renewal in the external music through Andalusian muwashshahat, for Algerian poets used to compose muwashshahat, but they did not adhere to the conditions required in them, as in this muwashshah by Sheikh Mohammed al-Laqqani bin al-Sa’ih, in which he prefers the love of his country over the love of beautiful maidens, saying (al-Sanoussi, 1926, p.56):

*I love you, and one like me in love // Does not care
My body from the pangs of passion // Has become like a thread
I do not love a wide-eyed gazelle // Or an oryx
Nor the beautiful, exquisite maidens // In their qualities
Nor those fresh, flourishing branches // In the open country
I do not love shining stars // Swimming in space
All my concern is to see my queen // In perfection*

*The poet built his muwashshah on the ramal meter, which is originally:
Fā ‘ilā tum lā ‘ilā tum lā ‘ilā tum // Fā ‘ilā tum lā ‘ilā tum lā ‘ilā tum*

Then he made the first hemistich one unit, so the first line became three feet and the second line one foot, which the poet made the rhyme for the qufls and the gusn-s, and by that he managed to manipulate the system of the meter to get rid of the usual monotony of the music. The same attempt is found with the poet Mohammed al-‘Aid al-Khalifa in some of his poems, as well as with Moufdi Zakaria in many of his anthems despite his categorical rejection of free and blank verse (Nasser, 2006, p.146).

With the beginning of the forties, a clear inclination appeared toward breaking away from the old system of the Arabic poem and gradually freeing oneself from the constraints of al-Khalīl's meters and rhyme, especially on the part of emotional poets such as Mohammed al-Akhdar al-Sā'ihī, al-Tahir Bouchouchi, Abu al-Qasim Khammar, Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, and others. The same phenomenon is found with the poet Abdallah Shrit in his Diwan (Al-Ramād). From here it can be said that the emotional poets tried to renew the music of the modern poem: some of them followed the path of the muwashshah without binding themselves to its conditions, as has come to us in the poem of Ibn al-Sā'ih, and some of them divided their poems into stanzas, each stanza having its own independent rhyme and rawī. However, this renewal trend in the musical formation of the modern Algerian poem continued to proceed slowly, especially before the fifties.

If the first individual attempts are excluded, it is found that the real start of free verse began in the fifties at the hands of a group of poets such as Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, Abu al-Qasim Khammar, Saleh Bawiya, and others, who from time to time composed some poems in the tafīlah manner alongside their vertical poems. "At the same time, however, there are those who turned to free verse in a decisive way and did not look back afterwards at the old form, such as Saadallah and Bawiya" (Nasser, 2006, p.147).

The poet Saleh Bawiya is perhaps the one who most managed to prove his ability in composing free verse, and from his poem (Al-Sadā) these verses will be presented, in which the characteristics of this homeland in the comprehensive sense are manifested, where he says (Bawiya, 1971, p.36):

*... And the years pass
And I remember, my gentle little girl
In your eyes my tragedy trembles
And (Yafa) and (Haifa) and their companions sleep
In your eyes there is a depth, dense in shadows
Terrible, wrapping a thousand questions
That pursue me
Struggle with my humiliation and my arrogance
Tear my night
And invade my being in my tent*

The prosodic scansion of this stanza shows that the poet Saleh Bawiya has managed to rid himself of the monotony of the old poetic column music, as he varied the number of feet between the hemistichs and freed himself from the rhyme in a way that is almost complete. This is about the musical formation; as for the poetic language:

b- Poetic language

Poetic language is considered one of the most important aspects by which the ranks of poets differ and their artistic tastes vary in expressing meaning and attaining the intended goal in the view of critics. In addition to that, it is a criterion by which the depth of their rhetorical culture is tested, and from which the extent of their literary reading is known. It is the only tool by which the man of letters conveys his experience to others, for the poetic experience remains latent in the souls until the expressive image brings it out. The element of wording, then, in this vital field is of great importance: "A poem may be achieved by it without need for imaginative images or overflowing music, for the words, their sound, their denotation, their atmosphere, and their harmony are sufficient to create a wonderful poem" (al-Saharti, 1948, p.57).

Since ancient times, Arab critics have been aware of the importance of the verbal element in the artistic work, thus they said: "Meanings are strewn in the road; the non-Arab, the villager, and the Bedouin all know them; the real issue is in establishing the meter, choosing the word, the ease of pronunciation, sound taste, and good casting" (al-Jahiz, vol.1, p.40).

If the period of the twenties and early thirties is set aside, when the poets' poems bore the function of reform and enlightenment and were dominated by a language of pale patterns that did not rise to the level that stirs in the soul feelings, thoughts, emotions, or effects of that charge that resonates inside the poet's self—of this type is what is found with the poet al-Tayyibi al-'Oqbi in his poem (I Tasted the Water of Life) and with the poet Ramadan Hammoud as well before he turned to renewal and declared it openly (Hammoud, 1928, p.121)—the fact is that this is not a characteristic peculiar to modern Algerian poetry alone; rather, it is “one of the results of the decline in the cultural level and one of the features of the intellectual renaissance in its beginnings” (Kharfi, 1969, p.341).

At the beginning of the forties, the modern Algerian poem began to take another direction—under the emotional trend—at the hands of the second generation of poets such as Abdallah Shrit, al-Akhdar al-Sa'ih, Jawah al-'Abbasi, Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, Abu al-Qasim Khammar, and others, with a note about the variation among these poets in the levels of poetic language, fertile talent, and the capacities and ability to absorb the renewal trends in Arabic poetry in the East. In this renewing poetic renaissance, Algerian poetry found what ignited its edges, so it began to move the emotionality in the word and explode the charge hidden in it—that revolution whose features were defined by Gibran Khalil Gibran in his saying: “You have your language and I have my language; you have from it the dictionaries, lexicons, and large volumes, and I have from it what the ear has sifted and the memory has preserved of familiar, intimate speech, circulated by people's tongues in their joys and sorrows. You have your language and I have my language; you have from your language rhetorical embellishment, eloquence, and logic, and I have from my language a look in the eye of the defeated, a tear on the eyelid of the longing, and a smile on the lips of the believer. You have your language and I have my language; you have to gather what has scattered in rags from the garments of your language, and I have to tear with my own hands every worn-out ancient thing and to throw on the side of the road everything that hinders my walk toward the summit of a mountain. You have your language as an old, crippled woman, and I have my language as a young girl drowning in a sea of the dreams of her youth” (Gibran, 1955, p.88).

And the cries of Ilya Abu Madi rose from the depths of his “Jadawil”, opposing the ancient school, when he said (Ilya, 1977, p.9):

You are not of me if you reckon poetry as words and meter //
Follow your road and I follow mine, and what was between us is over

This revolution against the linguistic molds of the ancients had a clear effect on the poetic language of the modern Algerian poem, as some poets moved away from the two tendencies of report-like plainness and oratory.

In fact, the response to this renewing revolution in Arabic literature came early. This Ramadan Hammoud, one of the poets of the twenties, openly announced his call for renewal in poetic language when he said: “Strain yourselves to study your language, to understand its secrets, to scrutinize its meanings, to master it to the utmost degree of mastery. When your aim is achieved and you have mastered a considerable side of it, then cast off every bond between you and its past; make it a means to attaining your aims, not an end you do not go beyond. Change, vary, widen, reform, for by that you will be an independent, luminous age with a distinction over others” (Hammoud, 1928, p.121).

To perceive this transformation achieved by the modern Algerian poem in poetic language, two models dealing with one subject will be presented to you; one represents the period of the twenties and thirties, and the second represents the period after that. Jaloul al-Badawi, one of the conservative poets, says (al-Badawi, 1928, p.28):

Have pity on my state, O Su'ad // So that I may attain your meeting
Return someday to my pillow // By the right of your love
I came in obedience to my passion // To you when it called me
The bonds of emaciation have seized my bones // And the tears are in flowing
For you I endured my death agony // And I still endure

*Will you keep my covenant // O you who have possessed my reins
For in my rapture // And my burning and my humiliation*

It is clear that the language of these verses is pale and report-like, very far from the element of poetic suggestion and emotional charge. In contrast to this, look at these verses by the poet Jallouh al-'Abbasi as he addresses his beloved, saying (al-'Abbasi, 1976, p.28):

*She has spent the night asking, after you, the moons // A soul that melts, and with its melting it melts eyelids
Her yearning is increased by the silence of the planets // And do the planets possess the news?
How were you able to be patient about a covenant in which // We were moons in the green fields of passion?
We exchanged hopes as poems // Which, when set up, caused temperaments around us to swoon
And we repeated melodies in the ear of eternity // So it returned from our ecstasies the sorrows
And we flirted with pleasures in the shelter of union // So they spent the night beneath our tread vying with one another*

The language of these verses relies essentially on imagery, which has made the words carry strong emotional charges. Look at his saying "We were moons in the green fields of passion", and what it carries of poetic suggestions and what it spreads of an enchanting atmosphere full of vitality and joy; and his saying "We exchanged hopes as poems", and his saying "We repeated melodies in the ear of eternity", and what it contains of giving concrete form to abstract meanings, as well as his saying "We flirted with pleasures". In addition to these elevated rhetorical images, there are spontaneous semantic embellishments which have increased the artistic value of the verses, such as the apparent contradiction in his saying "our ecstasies the sorrows". The listener will surely not miss that sound melody resulting from the repetition of the letter nūn in his saying "We repeated melodies in the ear of eternity", a letter hardly absent from any word. All of these are undoubtedly vital elements that help the poet to stir feeling in the recipient.

c- Poetic image and imagination

Since poetic language—as a vital element—is of great importance in the process of poetic creation, as has been seen, poetic imagery or imagination is no less important as one of the artistic means on which men of letters in general, and poets in particular, rely in conveying their emotions first and their thoughts second to recipients. The image, in all its kinds, for the poet is not mere ornamentation for beautification or extra elements of no value; rather, it is part of the creative process itself, by which the poet expresses obscure states he cannot reach directly. Thus he must provide in his poetic images what ensures that they depict the psychological emotion and convey the feeling of the one expressing it and the vibrations of his soul faithfully, because art in its essence and true nature is nothing but complete equivalence between the emotion the artist feels and the image by which he expresses this emotion.

From this starting point, imagination "in poetry has a function that parallels the function of music in creating the emotional atmosphere required by the situation and coloring it with its hues, for the succession of mental images that imagination sets in motion, wherever their direction, has its significance in determining what lies behind them of feeling. In other words, just as music is nothing but a garment that emotion wears to appear, so too imagination is nothing but a mirror in which emotion sees its face clearly; therefore this clarity varies between cheerfulness and frowning according to the psychological lights and shadows surrounding the mirror" (al-Quraydi, 1952, p.41).

And in spite of what the images in the Algerian poem in the twenties were characterized by—under the old critical trend which was fond of ideas, meanings, and grammatical and prosodic rules (Asfour, 1983, p.30)—of dryness and rigidity, and the description of things in an external, photographic way in which there is no trace of psychological suggestions or allusive hints, with the beginning of the forties poetic images, or unbridled poetic imagination, were found among Algerian emotional poets, or those of the emotional trend. This trend "began to exalt the status of the subjective experience, to fall in love with the absolute, to wander in the boundless, to rely on vehement, unbridled emotion, and to be filled with sorrow, melancholy, and longing for the unknown. You feel that the poem of this type lifts the mask of

familiarity from the face of the universe and lays bare the sleeping beauty to onlookers, clings to the marvelous, the astonishing, and the strange, and searches for the secret of life” (Abbas, 1979, p.40).

To grasp this development achieved by the modern Algerian poem in the field of poetic image and imagination, the following example from Moufdi Zakaria is presented:

The wave carries in its echoes kisses // At which the rock grows moist until it almost splits

The poet Moufdi Zakaria has given the image freshness and innovation, so that he has carried us with him to a wide imaginary world whose contours the sensible and non-sensible clues alike cannot draw. His metaphor of kisses for the wave is not artificial, but a natural outpouring of the state that overtook the poet, which made him confer upon the rock that spiritual responsiveness to the kisses of the wave in a roaring emotional moment and intense impression (Nasser, 2006, p.402).

What has perhaps distinguished the poetic image among these emotional poets is their liberation from the lexical, dictionary use of words and their reliance on exploding their psychological significations by using metaphors more than similes, because metaphor, as a realm of new relations between things as imagination draws them, is a language of embodiment; therefore critics have considered it “a fundamental principle and a clear proof of the poet’s genius.”

As an example of such images in which their authors relied on metaphors, the following verses are presented from a poem by Abdallah Shrit entitled (Sunset), in which he says (Shrit, 1966, p.126):

*And the stars of dreams in my distant horizon // Have hung down like converging drops of tears
And the lame years crawl // With forgetfulness away from the memories of my slain yesterday
In red sands that eat from my heart // And drink from my flame and my blood*

Among the poets who stood out in embodying these artistic images are Moufdi Zakaria, Mohammed al-Akhdar al-Sa’ihi, Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, Abu al-Qasim Khanmar, al-Tahir Bouchouchi, and others. With some of them, one even finds those who delve further into the use of metaphor in a new way in which the senses respond and harmonize, in the manner for which the poets of the Symbolist school became famous, led by Baudelaire, who used to say: “Perfumes, colors, and sounds correspond.”

Ethical Considerations

This study is based exclusively on textual analysis of published literary and critical sources. No human participants, interviews, surveys, or personal data were involved. The research adheres to established academic standards of integrity, originality, and proper citation, and all sources have been acknowledged in accordance with scholarly ethical norms.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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