Parallelism in the Poetry of Shawqi Bzaie: A Stylistic Study

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Abstract—this research discusses parallelism in Marthiyatul Ghubar (Arabic for Mourning of Dust) a poem by the Lebanese poet Shawqi Bazie. It also links between the structure and the repetition contained therein, as well as the intended rhetorical relationship resulting from that parallel, i.e. an attempt to link poetic formation with poetic vision. The research highlights that the Mourning of Dust contains many forms of parallelism that are not just a filler to complete the speech, but rather serve the poet's vision, ideas, and beliefs. The research also concludes that the phonetic and syntactic parallels are the most present in the poem. The poet focuses on parallelism, in particular, to say what he wants leaving the areas of interpretation open to the reader, and he thus wants a critical thinking reader, not a neutral one who does not dig into the text or interact with it. The poet wants his idea to last and for other people to believe in it.

Index Terms—Shawqi Bazie, Mourning of Dust, parallelism, modern Arabic poetry

I. INTRODUCTION

This study deals with parallelism in Marthiyatul Ghubar (Arabic for Mourning of Dust) a poem by the Lebanese poet Shawqi Bazie. It also links between the structure and the repetition contained therein, as well as the intended rhetorical relationship resulting from that parallel, i.e. an attempt to link poetic formation with poetic vision. I chose this study for several reasons, the most important of which is the lack of studies that have been written about parallelism in Shawqi Bazie’s poetry. The researcher observed, when reading the poem, that it contains much such parallelism and wanted to come up with a research value through the study of the poet Shawqi Bazie.

As for the previous studies, there is not an independent study that deals with this subject concerning the poet Shawqi Bazie, however, there are some studies that dealt with the subject of parallelism in Arabic poetry in general, such as Roman Jakobson’s book, Poetics Function, Sameh Al-Rawashdeh’s book, Maghni al-Nass, Fadel Thamer’s book, Critical Matters On the Problems of Criticism, Modernity and Creativity, Muhammad Muftah’s book, Poetic Discourse Analysis “Intertextuality Strategy”), and other references. The research followed the descriptive and analytical study method; however, the study has benefited from some other critical approaches that serve the ideas, and intersect with the logic of its analysis and description. Accordingly, the research was divided into the concept of parallelism and its theoretical framing, and the modern forms of parallelism, which were identified in the research in three forms: phonetic, morphological, and syntactic, relying on the poems in interpreting those forms. Ultimately, the study ends with a conclusion in which the most important findings of the study were mentioned, as well as a list of sources and references.

II. PARALLELISM

Parallelism is one of the most important rhythmic features of poetry that distinguishes it from other prose texts and captured the attention of ancient and modern critics. In modern Western criticism, It seems that parallelism was first associated with Jakobson (1988, p. 103), who saw parallelism based on his interpretation of Hopkins' principle, summed up in “observing linguistic structures that are connected through the principle of linguistic distribution based on binary composition. It creates a kind of geometric parallel between the elements of the structure that show patterns of duality and contrast. Jakobson (1988, pp. 105-106) considered parallelism as one of the basics of poetry, as he believes that "the basic issue of poetry is possible in parallelism". He also noted, more than a hundred years ago, "the aesthetic aspect of poetry is summed up in the principle of parallelism. The structure of poetry is continuous parallelism that extends from the so-called technical parallelism of Hebrew poetry and the responsive chants of sacred music to the complexity of Greek, Italian or English poetry". Jakobson (1988, p. 106) has expanded his vision of parallelism's ability to control the linguistic components until it includes all the components and systems of the textual work, where he says: "There is a system of continuous proportions at multiple levels: organization and arrangement of syntactic structures, organization and arrangement of grammatical forms and categories, organization and arrangement of lexical synonyms and complete lexical matches, and finally organization and arrangement of sounds and structures.

This arrangement gives the verses connected by parallelism a clear harmony and great diversity at the same time”. Some Arab critics have been influenced by parallelism, and among them is the critic Muftah (1994, p. 149), who believes that parallelism is “particularly found in all international literature; ancient and modern, and that Arabic poetry is the poetry of parallelism”. He (1985, p. 25) sees that parallelism is nothing but “the development of a specific nucleus
by a forced or optional factor of phonetic, lexical, moral and pragmatic elements to ensure the consistency of the message”. Muftah focuses on the nucleus as the basic material that forms the basis of parallel structures. He thinks that this happens intentionally or unintentionally by the poet intending to keep the harmony of the message and the consistency of its two parts. Parallelism was also defined in Modern Arabic Criticism (1999, p. 78) that it is two or more successive sequences of the same morphological-grammatical system accompanied by repetitions or differences in the rhythm, phones, or lexical semantics. Whereas Thamer (1987, p. 237) defines parallelism as “the coordination of experimentation and contrast between two contents or two narrations to demonstrate their similarity or difference, where the emphasis is placed on the congruence or opposition of the two parties through rhythmic or structural repetition”. Yaqtin (1992, p. 37) sees that it is a demolition and construction of the previous texts. He defines it as “the production of a new text that presents to us as a reading and deconstruction of a previous text, and we find that we are facing a process of demolition and construction at the same time of the previous text”.

Al-Rawashdah (2006, p. 137) goes to the fact that “parallelism is a rhythmic feature that hardly any poetry is devoid of, and poetry transcends many other forms of discourse, such as prose, rhetoric, and religious texts”. This is because parallelism is a “musical and moral phenomenon at the same time”(Abu-Asba’, 2009, p. 410).

III. PARALLELISM IN ANCIENT CRITICISM:

It can be said that Arab criticism uses parallelism in vertical Arabic poetry, and has paid special attention even though it was given different titles. In the past, critics were interested in (balancing, repetition and antonyms); however, these terms are connected to the vocal poetic structure and its impact on the meaning. I will mention these terms briefly and link them with parallelism. Balancing “means that the sentence of the speech or the verse of the poetry is balanced in words, equivalent in rhyme and parts in most cases”(Al-Owdani). Ibn al-Atheer (1420AH, p. 272), defines balancing as; “When the words of the verse are equal in number and rhyme”.

As for repetition, it was used in ancient Arabic poetry, where critics studied it. Ibn Masoum (1969, pp. 345-352) defined it as; the repetition of a word or more to emphasize, exaggerate or highlight the repetitive word. The use of Repetition comes at the letter level and extends to word, phrase, and poetic verse level. It should be noted here that the rhythmic aspect of poetry is based on repetition as well. The stanzas of Arabic poetry consist of equal sounds due to the sound devices and their repetition in the verses.

As for the antonyms, it is when the poet comes up with two or more compatible meanings, then he comes up with the antonyms of those meanings in order. Al-Qazwini cited the words of God in Surat Al-Tawbah:5, “Falyadhakoo qaleelan walyabkoo katheeran” which means Let them laugh a little and weep a lot. Antonyms in the Holy Qur’an and Arabic poetry are many. If we observe the previous terms, we find that they are associated with the acoustic rhythmic structure of complex speech to give a rhythmic meaning that is reflected in the verbal meaning. This confirms the fact that words are the meaning holders and that the meaning has to be honorable, according to Al-Jahiz; therefore, the poet must pay attention to the selection of vocabulary, and employ rhetoric to serve the message in his poem, and this is what we will find in the research of the poet Shawqi Bazi’.

Here we will come across three types of parallelism: phonetic, morphological, and syntactic. This does not mean that it includes all forms of parallelism, or surrounds parallelism in its modernist concepts, but it is an attempt to understand it, even in part.

IV. PHONETIC PARALLELISM

The study of morphological parallelism “reveals the role of the acoustic-rhythmic dimension- in the achievement of the semantic dimension” (Al-Malaika, 1978, pp. 263-291); that is because “the essence of poetry is the sound” (Al-Zaidi, 1987, p. 61), and that poetry as a first idea is a “repeated sound form” (Fadl, 1987, p. 390). In the poem of Mourning of Dust by Shawqi Bazie, this parallelism is almost clearly visible, and spreads throughout the pages of the poem, where the poet says in the Deir Qanun al-Nahr poem (Shawqi, p. 373):

When the earth was a nebula and there was no time
Other than fish there was nothing
Reproduce in Swarm
In the ocean and its surrounding

In the Arabic version, we can notice a repetition of the letter "س" four times, "ت" four times, and "ت" four times. We also do not miss the phonetic significance of these letters that serve the value of parallelism. The poet focuses on the letter م، which is equivalent in the number of repetitions. They are two letters that carry a sequence of phonetic pattern represented by alternating friction and explosion; the ت، which is an explosive sound and the س، a fricative sound (Ateeq, 2012, p. 8). Here, the م، touches the poet’s vision of the beginning of the universe, to explode the ت، in the process of the completion of creation, and the maturation of experience. This is the law of life that transcends it and revolts against it, the law of Deir al-Nahr, which flies outside the cosmic law and makes its law that is biased towards nature and man. In another example, the poet says, in his poem The Women’s Representations (Shawqi, p. 379):

The roots all around him burnt

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Of walls, the sky remained without
Above his confused hand
Suddenly
On the white sheet, the sapphire of her arms shine
His black blood into nothingness is thrown
His present and past hit
And he runs like a storm of dust
Behind the kingdom

He repeats the letter "ج" in the previous syllable five times, the "ض" four times, the "ت" nine times, and the "د" five times. The sound of ج is consistent with the sound د, so they are from the same phonetic system in terms of articulation and vocal features. The ج and the are two loud explosive sounds (Abdel-Hadeeq, p. 10). This vocal feature leads us to the poet's obsession with the woman and her manifestations that bore the title of the poem. He sees her disturbing his life and his dream, and she is the one who fills his life with all that is beautiful, and he is openly and publicly aware of that, rather he is not ashamed of that, and he declares his bias towards the woman. The two letters (ج and د) parallel in number with the voiceless letter ت, which reflects his disobedience to silence that does not serve love or promote it, and he came with the opposite of the ostentatious letter. The poet uses the letter "ض" the ostentatious letter, in order to exalt his declaration of disobedience in favor of the woman and to confirm his complete bias towards her.

V. MORPHOLOGICAL PARALLELISM

Jakobson (p. 106) found that “synonyms and similarities of vocabulary are included in the structure of parallelism”, which means that the repetition of vocabulary or its morphological derivatives in the folds of the poetic syllable, whether at the beginning or within it, is based on the repetition of the derivation that highlights a main point in the phrase and reveals the speaker’s interest in it. In this sense, it has a valuable psychological significance that benefits the critic who studies the effect (Al-Malbaika, 1983, pp. 276-277) and deals with the poetic text. An example of this is when Bazie’ says in the poem “Al-Gha’ib” (Shawqi, p. 401):

White are September’s night
These hills on the horizon are also White
White is also the universe
Tasteless
Colorless
Voiceless
There is only smoke hitting the floor
It must come then, my lord,
It's the proper time

Here he repeats the word (white), once by derivation (Abyad), and once by (Baydaa). This whiteness is not required in the poetic syllable, but rather it is the whiteness that the poet sees while waiting for the long-awaited person and makes things tasteless, colorless, and voiceless to give us a sign that everything seems the same in nostalgia and to tell us that the death of loved ones does not hurt the dead, but rather hurts the living.

Parallelism of antonyms: It is when the second poetic line contrasts with the first line (2000, p. 95). This is evident in Shawqi’s words in the poem al-Kharoub:

Until the war ended with the victorious and the defeated
In the sky
A crescent whiten like a white horse
As soon as the sun sets and it hides like a hero who won his trophy
Then it gets a Full moon
Carried above a sky of aroused passion

The previous stanza employs the antonym in the poet’s saying (the victor and the defeated) to draw a scene of contradictions that result from war, and express the duality of life and death, war and peace, and the victor and the defeated as if that were part of the composition of life. The previous stanza ends with drawing a scene that speaks to life. After the war ended, then she draws the scene of the crescent that turns white as a white horse. Then it grows slowly until it becomes a full moon. We note that the previous antonym served the meaning and from it, the poet was able to deliver the meaning that he wants; which is the completion of the full moon and then its ascension to heaven. We note that the parallelism of antonym served the meaning and affected the parallel poetic rhythm and helped the poet to deliver the meaning he wanted.

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VI. STRUCTURAL PARALLELISM

Some critics have included the rhetorical level in one of the structural parallelism levels, so Fadel (1987, p. 243), in this regard, said: “On the rhetorical level: noticing many aesthetic such as simile, metaphor, equality, contrast, inlay, etc.”. He (p. 242) alluded to the possibility of benefiting from the ancient rhetorical and critical effort in this field and said: “we can study many parallel forms by consciously benefiting from the data of the Arab rhetorical and critical heritage on more than one level”, and here it is worth referring to the poem The Apple of Absence, where Shawqi (p. 387) says:

Thirsty, I squeeze what’s left of her fingertips on my chest
Hugging the walls I feel her warmth
To stay alive
One minute later
Thirsty I am oh God

Here we find the poet repeating the word (thirst), twice, which is an exaggeration of the intensity of thirst, and despite this thirst, he squeezes the fingers of his beloved without drinking, and is satisfied with the pleasure of holding her finger, and in the moment of supplication to God, asking for watering that people despair of. Then we find him changing the significance in the story of prophet Yusuf so he turns picking into a means of survival and permanence, although it was a means of death and annihilation in the original story, and he resorts to the era and picking to stay near his beloved even for a minute, that he leaves a lot in order to get a little, but it is the little that is possible, available and desired. Then he expresses his action and his ability to survive and keep the beloved by verbs: (pick, squeeze, and keep), which are verbs that indicate the present moment that the poet wishes and dreams of, as he expresses the present, to express the past and the future, with his dream of possession, and his ability to keep the one he loves.

In the third example from (Little Ali) poem, Shawqi (p. 366) says:

A thousand years ago, his name was Little Ali
And after a thousand years his name remained
Little Ali
As if he throws up what the years feed him.

We note that the poet repeats the same line in the stanza, with a slight change in the words. This repetition, in which the first line is synonymous with the second line, is intended to confirm the idea of the poet who insisted that (Little Ali) did not change his position and his steadfastness in what he saw and what he believed. Neither the thousand years, nor the many years, their pressures, or even their temptations were able to change his attitude towards life and ideas, but rather he remained steadfast, strong, and resilient to everything.

Therefore, Little Ali practiced all types of rejection and methods of resistance. Life tried to extend his unruly and arrogant self, but could not because he revolted against all that and he set out for himself on the path of struggle and resistance: although he was young, his actions were great. It is not in vain that he is called Ali, which is a reference to Ali the companion of the prophet, and the rejection of injustice, sacrifice, redemption, and honor that his personality bears. It is assumed that he represents small Lebanon in its size and capabilities, the great in its ability to stand in the face of the enemy, even with will and determination, and with a little patience and faith, even if the neighbors abandoned it, leaving it in the pit of fear and siege alone.

Peak parallelism: It is the parallel in which the poetic lines following the first line are complementary and supplementary to it (1989). This appears in the poem of Bazi’” (p. 387) in the poem “Apple of Absence:

I am the strange wave and my shores in chaos
Touch me to be absolved of all my sins
And cover my water
With what you have
Received from the agony of absence
O love
O, my heartbreaks with bells and drowning?

It seems that the peak parallelism here appears in the connection of the poetic lines to each other; the second line completes the first and can be the answer to it. In his saying, I am the strange wave and my shores in chaos, “touch me” is associated with the line that precedes it, and also in his saying and cover my water with what you have received from the agony of absence.

This parallelism was reflected in the message that the poet wants to convey to the reader, as he is like a strange wave and the chaos is like shores and needs the beloved to recover from that chaos and return to his awaited coast. We also note that the poet employs structural parallelism to emphasize his need for that beloved and that without her he is scattered, for she is the one who unites his parts, organizes and brings him back to life. The poet also employs the “Ya=O” used to call someone and repeats it in his saying, “O love, my heartbreaks.” Undoubtedly, the “O” here indicates the extent to which the poet needs that woman who takes him away from his loneliness and heartbreaks. In the second stanza of the poem, the poet says:

Isn’t it the time

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The poet eagerly asks, isn’t it the time, for the child to sleep over his pale agony? The first part alone does not give meaning without the second line and this indicates the poet’s loneliness, fear, surprise, and the extent of his need for rest, which is associated here with sleep. The poet likened himself to a child who lies in his agony, which he placed instead of his bed, and these two lines can stand together to give a complete meaning. As for the second line, which he started by asking how long this soul will pass over the fire, it was the continuation of that question, inaugurated by the repetition of the sound “kaf”, which gave a percussive musical sound that serves to complement the question.

The initial reading of the stanza reveals the parallelism of this syllable at various levels. On the stylistic level, we find that the first line parallels the second and third lines (interrogation) (interrogation) (interrogation). The repetition of the interrogation led to astonishment and wonderment, especially in the last line; how many streams of tears I will shed before the fire happily extinguishes. It is clear that syntactic parallelism is the relationships between the lines; It serves as a linking tool between poetic lines, as the reader cannot understand the poem if he relies on the first two lines. Parallelism of vanishing: in which the second line is less than the first line, that is, the poetic lines begin to decrease before the fire. It is evident that the poet compares the state of uselessness that he sees, and they live. Perhaps it is appropriate to call this kind of parallelism a poem that vanishes, so its words keep decreasing until they reach one word. This is a message from the poet who baptizes this text of the poem the state of despair, sadness, and diminishment that the poet lives in light of the refractions and the isolated state of uselessness that he sees, and they live. Perhaps it is appropriate to call this kind of parallelism a poem that vanishes, so its words keep decreasing until they reach one word. This is a message from the poet who baptizes this kind of parallelism that he lives in a state of vanishing and absence to reach the farewell word, which is the main word valid of the analysis of his exile and his search for another land, his saying in the next line: 

"Goodbye." We note that the more the poet approaches the farewell, the words become fewer and the lines fade away. In the first line, the number of words reached seven, and in the second line it faded to six words, and in the third line it faded to five words, and in the fourth, it became three words, and in the end, it became one word (Wadaan). This gave the text of the poem the state of despair, sadness, and diminishment that the poet lives in light of the refractions and the state of uselessness that he sees, and they live. Perhaps it is appropriate to call this kind of parallelism a poem that vanishes, so its words keep decreasing until they reach one word. This is a message from the poet who baptizes this kind of parallelism that he lives in a state of vanishing and absence to reach the farewell word, which is the main word and the axis around which the line of the poem revolves.

Parallelism of accumulation: It is the opposite of parallelism of vanishing, and the poetic lines increases, as Bazi says:  

"O child

Ala’thana man tafkhur bali jawhali bin daraikey?"

The poet here asks the child using "O child", then he returns to repeat, Oh boy who I was thirty years ago as if the completion of the poetic line corresponds to the completion of the growth of that child who was thirty years old. Then he returns to employ the exception, the hamza (Ama kana) as if they were inspired by the poet Shanfari:

"And on earth, there is protection for the generous from harm, and therein for those who fear, the heart is isolated"

This influence aims at the resemblance between his condition and that of Shanfari, who left his tribe and traveled, but he asks whether he could have traveled to a land other than the one in which he is a stranger, which strengthens the validity of the analysis of his exile and his search for another land, his saying in the next line:

"Am I not the one getting muddy in your arms?"

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It is clear that the cumulative parallel here helped the poet to reach the main idea of showing his rejection and rebellion to the state he reached, so he blamed himself for spending his youth in a place, and that he did not leave for another land in which he finds himself.

VII. CONCLUSION

This research discusses parallelism in Marthiyatul Ghubar (Arabic for Mourning of Dust) a poem by the Lebanese poet Shawqi Bazie. It contains many forms of parallelism, and this parallel was not just a filler to complete the speech, but rather it is intended by itself to serve the poet's vision, ideas and beliefs.

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