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Poetic Imagery and Symbolism in Nizār Qabbānī's *Elegy Balqīs*

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Abstract

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Syfte:	The aim of this study is to analyze the poetic images and figurative language in the poem <i>Balqīs</i> by Nizār Qabbān. Also, it depicts the kind of symbol that the poet uses to express Arabism.
Teori:	This thesis relies on Hermeneutic theory. One of the main thoughts and theories in hermeneutics is the metaphorical method which means the use of metaphors, similes and symbolism.
Metod:	This study investigates the poetical images, and Arabism, in Nizār Qabbānī's poem <i>Balqīs</i> .
Resultat:	Nizār Qabbānī was able to create a poem that is a mixture of elegy, praise, and satire. Studying this poem enables us to see his distinctive poetical experiment. The poet uses examples/images taken from Arabic life, religion, and tradition, through metaphor, simile, and symbolism that are drawn from the Arabic life and culture. Thus, they make a clear impact on the Arabic recipient. Qabbānī used those well known symbols in Arabic society to express the state of rejection and discontent of the Arabic man.

Transcription of Written Arabic

	“Litt”		Litt”		“Litt”		“Litt”
ء	’	ض	ḍ	ي	y	يَّ	an
ب	b	ط	ṭ	و	u		
ت	t	ظ	ẓ	و	un		
ث	th	ع	‘	ي	i		
ج	j	غ	gh	ي	in		
ح	ḥ	ف	f	ا	a		
خ	kh	ق	q	ا	an		
د	d	ك	k	آ	’ā		
ذ	dh	ل	l	لآ	lā		
ر	r	م	m	و	ū		
ز	z	ن	n	و	uww		
س	s	ه	h	ي	ī		
ش	sh	ة	a/at	ا	ā		
ص	ṣ	و	w	ي	ā		

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1. INTRODUCTION

Poetry is the aesthetic expression of the human experience through language. Since this study investigates the rhetorical and sensuous poetical images, and Arabism, in Nizār Qabbānī's elegy *Balqīs*, then the first key is to study the poem's images, because those images depend entirely on the language that the poet used. From this point, I have chosen the poem *Balqīs* which is an elegy, the most sincere expression of human feelings.

In this study, many points related to the poem *Balqīs* were tackled, like the poet's life, the poem itself, the many poetical images, similes, metaphors, and many other symbolic methods used in poetry, in order to decipher the codes used, and to present the poet's ability to heighten the rhetorical and sensuous poetical images as well as to present reality. The study also shows the Arab symbols from the Islamic and Arabic culture. By Arabism one means: " a name that indicates the specifications and characteristics of the Arabic people".¹

I have chosen the poem *Balqīs* for many reasons. It is one of the rare elegies in modern Arabic poetry from the 1950's and onwards, which combines the idea of Arabism, passion and elegy. Nizār Qabbānī lost his beloved wife Balqīs when she was killed by a bomb that exploded in the Iraqi embassy in Beirut in December 1981. The poem expresses his loss and how he mourns for his wife. It also expresses his rage towards the Arab politicians that he blamed for her death. Through this poem I can see the role of poetic imagery and how it affects the poem's language.

Here we must say that the poem's translation and the quotes from references, except for the verses from Quran, are translated by me, because I did not find a convincing translation that can transfer the images in the poem in its right spirit or the translation found was done by non-professional translators or resources. The translation presented in this study is not literal, because literal translation is not used in poetry.

¹ <http://www.almaany.com/home>.

1.1 The Research Aim:

The aim of this study is to analyze the poetic images and the figurative language in the poem *Balqīs* by Nizār Qabbānī. The method explained in chapter 1.2 is used to clarify how they interact with the themes of the poem, the poet's expression of grief and his sharp criticism of Arab politics in the Arab world. The analysis aims to show the poet's love and association to his Arabic nationalism through the criticism he directs towards the politics of the Arab world. In accordance to this aim, the following research questions were posed:

- What kind of metaphors and similes does the poet use in the poetic images in *Balqīs*?
- What kind of symbols does the poet use in his poem to express Arabism?

1.2 Method

1.2.1 Hermeneutic theory

The word hermeneutics comes from Greek and the main purpose of it is the interpretational studies of metaphorical texts, but can also be used in other areas. Hermeneutics is reading a text in order to study, and understand what is sometimes “written between the lines” meaning that the words in a text basically stands for something else than what is shown in the text. Sometimes the text and the words in it do not say exactly what they stand for, but need an explanation and analysis which is handed over to its reader. One of the main thoughts and theories in hermeneutics is the metaphorical method.²

By the metaphorical method one means the use of metaphors, similes, and symbolism. These three poetic images are used frequently in the poem. The definitions of simile, metaphor and symbolism were gathered from *the Penguin Dictionary Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, in which a simile is “a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another, in such way as to clarify and enhance an image”.³ Metaphor is a “figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another, the basic figure in poetry”.⁴ As for Symbolism, J. A. Cuddon describes it as being an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or stands for something else.⁵

There are many names of reformers of the hermeneutics theory, like Schleiermacher, Dilthey and Gadamer. Hans Georg Gadamer is the decisive figure in the development of

² Entzenberg, Claes & Hansson, Cecilia. ”*Modern litteraturteori, Från rysk formalism till dekonstruktion*”, 271.

³ *The penguin dictionary Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 830.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 507.

⁵ *The penguin dictionary Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 885.

twentieth century hermeneutics. He puts the subject/character in focus, and according to him, it is the historical, social background and the experience the reader has, which mean a lot when one tries to understand and interpret a text.⁶ That is why he points out that instead of finding the absolute truth about something it is important to see and accept the fact that an idea, a text, a poem, everything can be understood in many ways, there is no right and wrong, instead, there are several ways to understand, and that is why a text can be analysed in different ways and variations. Understanding, for someone who uses the hermeneutics theory, is to get insight into the phenomena.⁷ This draws one to question; what is special about the words written? What does the writer actually want to say and, what is said and what is the purpose? The hermeneutics method involves four kinds of guidelines, themes, pre-understanding, understanding, explanation and interpretation.⁸ This is relevant to my study as Qabbānī's poems are written in the twentieth century in the Arabic society, which means, as a reader I should have some pre-understanding about the political situation in that society. Also because the poem revolves around somehow political themes and for that I will need to understand, explain according to the hermeneutics method.

1.3 Studies about the Poem *Balqīs*

There are few studies on *Balqīs*'s poem, but they did not tackle the subject of the poem's poetic imagery, instead, they studied the poem from a general perspective. Although there have been few essays in the internet but have no solid grounds as they were personal views. There are some researches like “*al-Rithā' fi shi'r Nizār Qabbānī*”⁹ that studies the poem in a broad point of view not mentioning the poetic imageries.

Rashīd Badīda research tackled many aspects: among them is the elegy that impersonates the concept that poetry is the soul of the poet; the poet does not write words, but feelings. The great Egyptian musician Muḥammad ‘abd al-Wahāb, said that Nizār was breathing poetry, and writing the agony. One can say that Nizār is a photographer, presenting his pain from a neutral stand, like someone else watching the agony and feeling it, then uniting with Nizār to write in poetry.¹⁰ To comment on this, I would say that this is a mere personal thought depends more on the person's attachment to Nizār's poetry rather than a proven point of view.

⁶ Entzenberg, Claes & Hansson, Cecilia. ”*Modern litteraturteori, Från rysk formalism till dekonstruktion*”, 271

⁷ Ödman, Per-Johan. ”*Tolkning, förståelse, vetande. Hermeneutik i teori och praktik*”, 19-22.

⁸ Ibid., 23.

⁹ Maḥmūd Nuhā ‘atūm. al Shākīr Tahānī . *al-Rithā' fi shi'r Nizār Qabbānī*. 2009.

¹⁰ Badīda Rashīd. *Al-bunyāt al-'Uslūbiyya li-Marṭhiyyat Nizār Qabbānī Balqīs*, 137.

According to Badīda Rashīd, Nizār Qabbānī succeeded in making the reader contribute in his poetry because of the many images he presented; leaving the door open for the multiple interpretations that make the poem look like many poems with many meanings, giving it the generality characteristic. Moreover, the poet could transfer his poetic experience to the reader, making the latter feel what the poet feels, like sadness, anger, or confusion.¹¹

Nizār Qabbānī tried to color his poems. He flirted with his words and they became soft in his hands. By adding certain voices or assonance to them, they had more effect on the recipient. In reading the poem, one can sense the whispered phonetics that prevailed throughout the poem, because it was meant to be an elegy of sadness. Consequently, the element of music appears in the rhyme which gives it its constancy.¹²

Last but not least, Badīda Rashīd says that the linguistic analysis of the poem helps in breaking many typical and primary interpretations. The statics of some linguistic phenomena give leading points in explanation and interpretation. Thus, the stylistic analyzer should avoid stepping in the trap of plagiarizing the stylistic methodology of another analyzer. He would do injustice to the certain text that he analyzes. Also, what is attractive about Qabbānī's poems is that many phenomena that would not appear in the linguistic analysis (phonology) reveal themselves when the poem is recited aloud.¹³

1.4 Between the Poet and the Poem

1.4.1 The Poet: Nizār Qabbānī

Nizār Qabbānī was born in Damascus, in 1923 and died in London, in 1998. He was one of the modern poetry pioneers in the Arab world. His sister's suicide, because of her refusal to marry someone she did not love, had a great influence on him and on his poetry where he presented the women's case in the Arab World and defended her from men's control.¹⁴

Nizār started writing when he was a student in the Law University. He released his first collection of poems "Qālat lī al-Samrā'" in 1944. He wrote many collections of poems as well as prose poems. He was a diplomat for a while until he resigned.¹⁵

The defeat of the Arab world against Israel in 1967 war had a great influence on the

¹¹ Badīda Rashīd. *Al-bunyāt al-'Uslūbiyya li-Marthiyyat Nizār Qabbānī Balqīs*, 51.

¹² *Ibid.*,123.

¹³ *Ibid.*,132.

¹⁴ Riḍwān Muḥammad. *'Asrār al-qaṣā'id al-mamnū'a*,15.

¹⁵ Gohar Saddik M..*The Six-Day War: The Counter-Poetics of Nizār Qabbānī*, 98.

conversion of his poetry from romantic into political, rebellious poetry.¹⁶ His poem “Hawāmish ‘alā daftar al-naksa“ was a direct criticism of Arabs and their governments for failing to resolve the Palestinian issue.

Nizār Qabbānī married twice, the first marriage was to his cousin with whom he had two children, Hadbā’ and Tawfiq, the second was to Balqīs al-Rāwī, he had Zaynab and ‘Umar. She was Iraqi, murdered by an explosion in the Iraqi embassy in Beirut in 1981. He mourned her with a long poem that was named *Balqīs* after her. The poem was first published in 1981.¹⁷ Nayef Al-Kalali argued that: “One of the most prolific, reactive writers, issuing more than forty collections of both poetry and prose, Nizār Qabbānī produced collections of Poems that often ran into six or seven impressions”.¹⁸

Nizār Qabbānī’s poetry is characterized by simplicity and eloquence. His poems have been sung by many Arabic singers.

1.4.2 The Poem *Balqīs*

This elegy was the poet's reaction towards his wife's death. He held the Arab politics, presented by the Arab rulers, responsible for this tragic accident.¹⁹

It is a long sad poem that is put in the boundaries of sad letters. The poet gave it his late wife's name. He described his wife with many beautiful qualities. He starts the poem, which contains 30 stanzas, with sarcastic accusations towards Balqīs assassins. He says:

Thank you
Thank you

شكراً لكم...
شكراً لكم...²⁰

Then he turns, in the second stanza, into describing Balqīs with the most beautiful aspects, showing his love and her importance in his life. He then moves on to some historical events in the fifth stanza, describing his condition and that of his children after her death, describing his wife's history where she used to fill the house with fun, pleasure, and sympathy. Then he moves between different meanings of history to place and time. This transformation in the poem's stanzas and semantics indicates the troubled condition of the poet's mind resulting from the shock he went through after his wife's death. This troubled condition led him from elegy into praise and satire." The poem was both an indictment of the culture that led to the

¹⁶ Gohar Saddik M..*The Six-Day War: The Counter-Poetics of Nizār Qabbānī*, 97.

¹⁷ Al-Kalali ,Nayef. *The Republic of love Nizār Qabbānī*, 17.

¹⁸ Ibid.,17.

¹⁹ Riḍwān Muḥammad. *‘Asrār al-qaṣā’id al-mamnū’a*, 16.

²⁰ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-’a’ māl al-shi’riyah al-kāmila*, 9.

murder and a sad but beautiful remembrance of an admirable woman”.²¹ The poem has many characteristics; one of them is the long elegy that sings her virtues with the sharp criticism of the political reality. There is a clear concentration on the poet's criticism of the Arab governments' policy. Also, Balqīs was not only a wife and a woman in his poem, but she held all the love, beauty, and inspiration that Nizār needed to express the cruelty of those who murdered her. She was the deer and the butterfly, as he called her. The poem's language combines the eloquence and simplicity which are the characteristics of Nizār Qabbānī. He uses imagery because “Poets need images to express the full complexity of their moods and use them more freely to convey the special thrill which they regard as their essential function”.²²

2. The Poem's Use of Rhetorical Images

In this study, I will present some examples to show the extent of Nizār Qabbānī's imagery and his handling of the poem's language to present extensive love.

Imagery as a general term covers the use of language to represent objects, action, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra-sensory experience. An image does not necessarily mean a mental picture.²³

The poet's grief was beyond imagination because he described Balqīs by using poetic images with deep indications and meanings. In spite of his shock and painful separation, he still woos her and talks to her between now and then in the poem, so when you read the poem or hear Nizār reciting it, you can feel that Nizār is talking to Balqīs as if she is in his presence. Once again, while remembering his life with her, his heart bursts with agony and pain, especially, as all specialists know, when he talks about the small details that meant a lot to him.

Do you know my beloved Balqīs?
She is the most important of what was
written in the books of passion
She was a wonderful mix
Of marigold and marble..

هل تعرفون حبيبتي بلقيس ؟
فهي أهم ما كتبوه في كتب الغرام
كانت مزيجاً رائعاً
بين القطيفة والرخام ..²⁴

²¹ Al-khalil Muḥammad. *Nizār Qabbānī from Romance to Exile*, 275.

²² Khadra Jayyusi. *Salma. Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic poetry*, 676.

²³ Cuddon. J.A. *The penguin dictionary Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 413.

²⁴ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al- 'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 25.

2.1 The Repetition

Repetition is considered an important and positive element in modern poetry. It helps to strengthen, assert, and describe the meaning. It gives a direct impact on the phonetic and semantic level, and also reveals the hidden meanings and indications.²⁵ The repetition can be in letters, words, or sentences, where the poet repeats to make a musical balance to stimulate and affect the recipient. There is also another motive for repetition which is to emphasise certain words to draw the attention of the reader to the key element or the core of the poem. Verbal repetition repeats certain phonetics that can create an inner rhythm in the poem, which can be seen a lot in modern poetry.

The poem contains letter repetition in the single poetic line, which is the repetition of the convergent letters that leads to phonetic intensification. Also there is the repetition for the divergent letters on the verse level or the whole poem level. An example of the convergent letters repetition:

What an Arabic nation..
That.. assassinates the nightingales' voices?

أية أمةٍ عربيةٍ ..
تلك التي .. تغتال أصوات البلابل ؟²⁶

Where, in the Arabic version, the letter T is repeated eight times, also the L letter is repeated five times, and they are all from the easily pronounced group of letters. Also in this verse:

I swear by your eyes,
That millions of planets lodge into

قسماً بعينيك اللتين إليهما ..
تأوي ملايين الكواكب ..²⁷

The N letter is repeated three times, the L letter five times, also the B letter is repeated four times, and they are all from the easily pronounced group and its existence in the poetic verse gives the suggestion of threat and intimidation in which the poet wanted to avenge Balqīs murderers:

Where death is in our coffee cup..
In our door keys
In the flowers in our balcony..
In the newspapers ...
In the alphabet..

والموت .. في فنجان قهوتنا ..
وفي مفتاح شقتنا ..
وفي أزهار شرفتنا ..
وفي ورق الجرائد ..

²⁵ Whitman Walt. Wallance Stevens. *Poetry and Repetition*, x.

²⁶ Qabbānī Nīzār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*,13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*,15.

The poet repeated the W letter for more impression from the recipient; it is called the conjunction letter W, which works as such because it makes all sentences collaborate in presenting the place of death.

As for word repetition, the poet repeated the word sa'aqulū سأقول 18 times to indicate threat and intimidation by which the poet wanted to expose the Arabic governments who lie to their people. We also have the repetition of the letter Q which is a magnification letter.

My moon, I will tell shocking tales about the
Arabs
When investigated,
I will say:
The thief takes the role of fighter.
I will say:
The talented leader becomes a contractor.
I will say:
The radiation's tale is the silliest joke.

سأقول ، يا قمرى ، عن العرب العجائب
سأقول في التحقيق :
إن اللص أصبح يرتدي ثوب المقاتل
وأقول في التحقيق :
إن القائد الموهوب أصبح كالمقاول ..
وأقول :
إن حكاية الإشعاع ، أسخف نكتة قيلت ..²⁹

The continuous repetition of Balqīs's name has its deep indication and meaning in the poet's soul, because repetition gives meaning, emphasis and assurance. Nizār repeated Balqīs name 47 times, and he opened every stanza by her name and also when he moves from one purpose to another, just as if Balqīs was in his presence and he pours his heart out to her.

Balqīs..
Will you knock at the door in minutes?
Will you take off that winter coat?
Will you come smiling..
And fresh..

بلقيس ..
هل تقرعين الباب بعد دقائق؟
هل تخلعين المعطف الشتوي؟
هل تأتين باسمه ..
وناضرة ..³⁰

Nizār also repeated the name of 'Abū Lahab 7 times, where he indicates that the doings of Arab Politics are equal to that of 'Abū Lahab, the historical character that fought against the message of Islam for his personal benefits.³¹

²⁸ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 22.

²⁹ Ibid., 18.

³⁰ Ibid., 30.

³¹ Muḥammad Ibn Ṭāhā 'abī 'Asma. *Al-'aghshān al-nadīa*, 62.

There is no wheat in ground..
That grows without the permission of 'Abi Lahab

لا قمحة في الأرض ..
تنتبت دون رأي أبي لهب³²

Repetition is one of the techniques that Nizār depended on in his poem to emphasize his main idea and focus on it. The main purpose of Balqīs name repetition is to enrich the poem with passion, to show Balqīs status in Nizār's heart, and to enrich the meaning. The repetition of the Arabic word, as I see it, is to emphasize the meaning implied and what kind of music it gives to the poem, thus, Nizār Qabbānī repeated it to affect the reader and draws his or her attention.

To be assassinated by Arabs..
To be gobbled by Arabs..
To be slain by Arabs..
To be exhumed by Arabs..

أن يغتالنا عرب..
ويأكل لحمنا عرب..
ويقرر بطننا عرب..
ويفتح قبرنا عرب..³³

We can see that Nizār repeated the word Arabs 4 times, here, the indefinite is the opposite of the definite, that it would indicate the absolute generality, in a hideous way. Arabs, here, indicates the Arabic politicians in a certain political era and not for the Arabic nationality or to Arabism. Our evidence for this is that Nizār and Balqīs were Arabs, so it is not possible that Nizār would glorify Balqīs and satirize her in the same poem, because she was a part of this Arabic Land. His satire of the Arabic governments is a kind of an insult and degradation. As for the generalization, it is used for satire and to include all the Arab governments who sold Palestine and traded with Arab blood. So it is unreasonable to satirize both the victim and the executioner.

They took you dear, out of my hands..
They got the poem and left me speechless..
They took writing.. reading, childhood..
And the wishes

أخذوك أيتها الحبيبة من يدي ..
أخذوا القصيدة من فمي ..
أخذوا الكتابة .. والقراءة ..
والطفولة .. والأمني³⁴

Also, we have the repetition of the verb 'akhadhū, أخذوا. He affirms what had been taken from him, who is Balqīs. Also in this repetition, the poet wanted to fulfil an inner feeling to affirm the fact that Balqīs had gone and his life has no meaning now. The verb repetition indicates

³² Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*,70.

³³ Ibid., 51.

³⁴ Ibid.,82.

continuity while the noun repetition indicates confirmation like repeating the name of Balqīs throughout the poem.

One of the words that the poet used for psychological and sensational fulfilment is the word: Missing you.

Balqīs, missing you, missing you, missing you..

بلقيس .. مشتاقون .. مشتاقون .. مشتاقون ..³⁵

The poet repeats the word and what is equivalent, to describe the Arab nation's condition and how it will perish if it continues in this condition.

Tribes have eaten tribes..
Foxes have killed foxes..
Spiders have killed spiders..

فقبائلُ أكلت قبائل ..
وثعالبٌ قتلت ثعالب ..
وعناكبٌ قتلت عناكب ..³⁶

Also the poet moves from repeating the noun and letter, into repeating the sentence, which is repeating the relative pronoun and the interrogative pronoun together to make a nominal clause. The aim of this repetition is to express an inner feeling of yearning for his wife Balqīs.

Who will serve the glasses, my giraffe?
Who will kiss the children when coming from school?
Who moved Euphrates to our house?
Who moved Resafa and flowers of Tigris?

فمن الذي سيوزع الأقداح .. أيتها الزرافة ؟
ومن الذي سيقبل الأولاد عند رجوعهم ؟
ومن الذي نقل الفرات لبيتنا ..
وورود دجلة والرصافة ؟³⁷

The poet repeated the word: necks (أعناق 'A'nāq), differing only in the governed noun, that is, he added the first semi-sentence to men and the second to women. He wanted to deliver a clear message that the cause of killing was the Arabic dagger which does not distinguish between men or women.

The Arabic dagger..does not distinguish between
The men's necks..
or the women's necks..

فالخنجر العربي .. ليس يقيم فرقاً
بين أعناق الرجال ..
وبين أعناق النساء..³⁸

He compares this to a stage where the play is over, truth appeared, curtains rise to reveal the true faces of the killers, and the Arabic falseness, represented by decision makers, appears.

³⁵ Qabbānī Nīzār. *Al-'a'māl al-shi'riyah al-kāmila*,28.

³⁶ Ibid., 14.

³⁷ Ibid., 35.

³⁸ Ibid.,52.

Now the curtains rise
Now the curtains rise....

الآن ترتفع الستارة ..
الآن ترتفع الستارة ..³⁹

In other verse, the poet mentioned a certain figure which is the horse. The horse is considered one of the symbols that the Arabic man cherishes because it represents beauty, strength, and goodness. The poet emphasis this sentence to affirm a fact:

It's a country where they kill horses
It's a country where they kill horses

هذي بلادٌ يقتلون بها الخيول ..
هذي بلادٌ يقتلون بها الخيول ..⁴⁰

The poet repeated a whole sentence. But in the example below, he changed one word: live, into die. This is to affirm the fact that the dilemma of death and the delight of living are equal in the Arabic nation, because of the suppression and loss of freedom.

A man does not know...How to live in such a homeland..
A man does not know..How to die in such a homeland..

لا يعرف الإنسان كيف يعيش في هذا الوطن ..
لا يعرف الإنسان كيف يموت في هذا الوطن⁴¹

We can conclude that repetition in Balqīs has many valuable artistic indications that denote the poet's care for the subject that he had repeated many times whether it is negative or positive, good or bad. It also, indicates the poet's eloquence and his ability to express through words. Nizār Qabbānī repeated words and expression to enhance the subject matter that he wanted to convey, and to make the desired effect on the recipient. Through his repetitions, he asserts certain words, because he wants to get the attention of the reader for their importance and value.

2.2 Simile:

There are many elements in similes, like the object, its resemblance, the simile article and the point of resemblance. The aim of the simile is to make adjective more clear or distinct.

The simile can be seen to have a function differing from that of a metaphor, for it is more precise and can be easily limited to one aspect of comparison which may be all that the poet wants to point out.⁴²

The poets used similes for many reasons, like describing the qualities of strength, weakness, increase, and decrease, in order to get the attention of the recipient, also, to praise

³⁹ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 57.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 64.

⁴¹ Ibid., 65.

⁴² Khadra Jayyusi.Salma.*Trends and Movements in Modren Arabic poetry*, 707.

the object and show its high status. And sometimes it is used for the opposite reasons, i.e. to criticize the person or object. "We distinguish similes from metaphor because the former contain an explicit indication of the comparison while it is merely implicit in a metaphor"⁴³

Nizār Qabbānī used similes that are considered some of the most important poetical imagery. His use of similes shows the poet's high rank and education. Also, Nizār wanted to show Balqīs' beauty, rank, and her place in his heart.

2.2.1 Simile of Animals:

The poet uses simile in relation to animals. He chose the deer and bird for its beauty, innocence, and it is much used in the Arabic literature as such.

They murdered you, like any deer in Beirut

قتلوك ، في بيروت ، مثل أي غزالة⁴⁴

The murderers here are the beasts and Balqīs is the deer. This simile is called the general simile (al-Mujmal) which "the aspect of resemblance was erased".⁴⁵ Here Nizār compares Balqīs murder with the murder of any deer, showing the cruelty of the killers against the purity of the deer Balqīs.

In every corner.. your spirit hovers as a bird,
Fully scented as a Balm wood..

في كل ركنٍ .. أنت حائمةٌ كعصفورٍ ..
وعابقةٌ كغابة بيلسان⁴⁶ ..

Nizār compared Balqīs to a hovering bird and heavenly balm trees. The balm tree has beautiful flowers and perfumes are made from it.

2.2.2 Simile of plants:

Nizār uses similes to do with plants and nature because of their beauty, purity, and connotations of love and life.

Balqīs, how did you leave us in the wind..
trembling like leaves?
And you left us.. The three of us.. lost,
as a feather under rain..

بلقيس .. كيف تركتنا في الريح ..
نرجف مثل أوراق الشجر ؟
وتركنا - نحن الثلاثة - ضائعين
كريشةٍ تحت المطر⁴⁷ ..

Nizār Qabbānī had used the simile articles (like, مثل) and the simile letter (as, ك), he compares himself and his children to leaves on a windy day and a feather on a rainy day. The

⁴³ Alm- Arvius Christina .*Figures of Speech*, 129.

⁴⁴ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 26.

⁴⁵ Wahba Majdī .*Mu 'jam Al-muṣṭalahāt Al-'arabiyah fī al-lughā wa-'alādab*, 101.

⁴⁶ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 44.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 38

simile here indicates weakness and the breakdown after Balqīs's death.

Would you come smiling...fresh
And shining like field flowers?

هل تأتيين باسمه .. وناضرة ..
ومشرقة كأزهار الحقول؟⁴⁸

Here, the aspect of resemblance disappears in order to have more impact, and to give more suggestive power to the recipient. Here the similarity is of beauty and tenderness as he compared Balqīs to the field's flowers that the viewer is happy to see.

There, you were combing your hair like a palm tree
And welcome the guests..
like a Yemeni sword..

هناك .. كنت كخلة تمشطين ..
وتدخلين على الضيوف ..
كأنك السيف اليمني ..⁴⁹

Here Balqīs is like the lofty high palm tree, and her resemblance to the sword indicates her power and will.

The simile is different from metaphor in that we cannot omit one of the compared elements (the resembled or the thing resembled to) as for metaphor; we omit one of the compared elements. In simile, the poet uses the innocent beautiful animals and plants to compare them to Balqīs. These images are from reality and the Arabic poetic tradition. This is why I chose those images as illustrations from the poem.

2.3 Metaphorical Images:

Metaphor in language is made by moving the adjective from one person/object to another. Or moving the sentence from the place of use into another in order to explain, exaggerate, or affirm the meaning. "It is used for adornment, liveliness, elucidation or agreeable mystification"⁵⁰. Simile is the base of metaphor; the only difference is that in metaphor, one of the assimilations is to be omitted.

The comparison metaphor is a process of comparing two images according to their similarity in meaning, where the first image is omitted. Metaphor gives the image density, energy, and dynamism. That is why it draws a picture that cannot be seen by the normal eye.

⁴⁸ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 30.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁰ Khadra Jayyusi. *Salma. Trends and Movements in Modren Arabic poetry*, 679.

2.3.1 Metaphor of Stars:

Those denote the image of dignity and high rank that are drawn from the Arabic culture and reality.

I swear by your eyes..

In which millions of planets lodge..

قسماً بعينيك اللتين إليهما ..

تأوي ملايين الكواكب ..⁵¹

Of course, the planets do not lodge in the eyes but it is a metaphor and rhetorical exaggeration. Here in this verse, he expressed his love and attachment to his wife in the most beautiful image.

Among piles of victims, we look for..

A falling star..

ها نحن نبحث بين أكوام الضحايا ..

عن نجمة سقطت ..⁵²

Here the resembled is omitted (the victim) and the star is mentioned, that indicates the high rank of Balqīs.

Even the green eyes...devoured by Arabs

Even the braids.. the rings and the bracelets

The mirrors.. the toys..

Even the stars are afraid of my country..

And I don't know the reason why..

حتى العيون الخضراء ..

يأكلها العرب

حتى الضفائر .. والخواتم

والأساور .. والمرايا .. واللعب ..

حتى النجوم تخاف من وطني ..

ولا أدري السبب ..⁵³

The poet mentioned beautiful things in life, but those things that exist in the Arab world are afraid and unstable. He wonders why, although he knows that the reason is the Arab governments, but this is a rhetorical question to affirm this fact wanting the reader to agree with this opinion.

If they had carry out..

From sad Palestine, a star..

لو أنهم حملوا إلينا ..

من فلسطين الحزينة .. نجمة ..⁵⁴

stars could not be moved but the poet wanted to say that whoever claims Arabism and defends it, did not do anything for the occupied land and gives nothing to the Palestinian issue, but directs their killing machines to the Arabs themselves.

⁵¹ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 15.

⁵² Ibid., 49.

⁵³ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 76.

2.3.2 Metaphor of Plants and nature:

The poet uses plants in his images because they are part of the Arabic culture and they have clear impact on the recipient.

The violets in her eyes
Were barely sleeping..!

كان البنفسج بين عينيها
ينام ولا ينام ..⁵⁵

Here, he mentioned the violets and resembled them to the warmth and peace in her eyes. Also he mentioned the word (عطر , عطر , scent)⁵⁶ to the scented beautiful memories, omitting the object of simile which is the memories. Here we have a mental image, (the violets sleep), the image is based on the sensed tangible abstract that cannot be seen but with the mind. Before, it was called imagination. Other poetic images are when humans are compared to plants, because plants do not cry. Here is a poetic image where the poet wants to show Balqīs' high and noble rank, in his heart, as well as how she was a gentle woman who carried all the human characteristics like love, kindness caring, etc. Even the plants cried over the loss of the person who watered and took care of them. Also he compared her to a giraffe, omitting the person and mentioning the resemblance with the giraffe.

The green plants you grow..
Are still crying on the walls
So who will serve the glasses, my giraffe?

إن زروعك الخضراء ..
ما زالت على الحيطان باكيةً ..
فمن الذي سيوزع الأقداح .. أيتها
الزرافة؟⁵⁷

Nizār compares the victim with jasmine. The idea is to show that modern Arabic reality kills whatever is beautiful.

I say:
Our Arab time is specialized in killing Jasmine

وأقول :
إن زماننا العربي مختصٌ بذبح الياسمين⁵⁸

The poet calls Balqīs green Nineveh and blond gypsy, all indicate her beauty. Then he describes her ankles wearing anklets in spring giving the rhythm of beauty while she walks. We can notice throughout the poem that Nizār had repeated the vocative particle over 30 times, which indicate his sorrow and pain.

⁵⁵ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 25.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 60.

Oh, green Nineveh
my blond gypsy, Tigris' waves,
In spring, wears the most beautiful
Anklet in her ankles..

يا نينوى الخضراء ..
يا عجريت الشقراء ..
يا أمواج دجلة ..
تلبس في الربيع بساقها
أحلى الخلاخل ..⁵⁹

We have the image of how the merciless killers took Balqīs, and they shared her hair among them, which indicates that the killers were many against one victim.

I will say how they did share the hair..
That runs like golden rivers..

وأقول كيف تقاسموا الشعر الذي
يجري كأنهار الذهب ..⁶⁰

Here is an allusion that Balqīs is from Iraq because it was called Mesopotamia, indicating the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates.

Who moved Euphrates to our house..

ومن الذي نقل الفرات لبيتنا ..⁶¹

2.3.3 Metaphor of Animals:

The poet uses expression and beautiful poetic image in this verse:

What an Arabic nation, that
Assassinates the nightingales' voices?

أية أمة عربية .. تلك التي
تغتال أصوات البلابل⁶²

In this image, expressed by Nizār Qabbānī, the nightingales appear in the figure of a person, hunted by the powers of evil to kill him; these powers are impersonated by the Arab's politics, so, the metaphor here is based on what is called the personification, which is one of the metaphorical concepts where the object of resemblance is omitted and one of its refrains indicate it. The poet compares between the most precious thing he had, his wife, and the voices of nightingales, which is the most precious thing that nightingales have. When the voices are assassinated, nightingales die, like his wife and like his poem that was assassinated together with his wife.

⁵⁹ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 12.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 72.

⁶¹ Ibid., 35.

⁶² Ibid., 13.

My beautiful mare..
I am ashamed of my history..
It's a country where they kill horses.
It's a country where they kill horses
From the day they slaughter you..
Balqīs, the sweetest homeland..

يا فرسي الجميلة .. إنني
من كل تاريخي خجول
هذي بلادٌ يقتلون بها الخيول ..
هذي بلادٌ يقتلون بها الخيول ..
من يوم أن نحروك ..
يا بلقيس ..
يا أحلى وطن ..⁶³

The poet used many adjectives in these verses; all are metaphors for Balqīs in which he turns to the Arabic tradition and symbols, for assistance. He used the horse which is the figure of beauty, strength, power, and nobility. Also he used the image of homeland which is the most precious thing that a man can have. The small homeland is the man's home represented by family.

2.3.4 Metaphor of Death:

My poem is assassinated..
Is there a nation on the earth, except us..
Who assassinates the poem?

وقصيدتي اغتيلت ..
وهل من أمةٍ في الأرض ..
- إلا نحن - تغتال القصيدة؟⁶⁴

The act of assassination is only for humans, but the poet wanted to express a poetic image which is the image of assassinating his wife, where everything died, even his words.

Tribes have eaten tribes

فقبائلٌ أكلت قبائل ..⁶⁵

Here tribes do not eat, it is the man in the tribe who eats and kills. Thus, Nizār had transformed the human characteristics to the tribe.

The Arabic dagger ... does not distinguish between
The men's necks ... or the women's necks

فالخنجر العربي .. ليس يقيم فرقاً
بين أعناق الرجال .. وبين أعناق النساء⁶⁶

The dagger is only a tool, but the poet wanted to picture the man holding the dagger, and this man, who represents the Arabic doctrines, is the one who does not make a difference between man and woman.

⁶³ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a'māl al-shi'riyah al-kāmila* 64-65.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 52.

My fingers had burned..
And my gowns were covered with blood..

إن أصابعي اشتعلت ..
وأثوابي تغطيها الدماء ..⁶⁷

The poet compared the fingers with candles that burn, omitting the candles makes it a metaphor. Also, the poet here describes his condition after his wife's murder.

I ask you forgiveness, maybe
Your life was a ransom for mine..
I know well, that your killers' aims
Were to kill my words!!!

أسألك السماح ، فربما
كانت حياتك فديةً لحياتي...
إنني لأعرف جيداً .. أن الذين تورطوا في القتل ، كان مرادهم
أن يقتلوا كلماتي !!⁶⁸

The poet resembles the poem and the words with a person omitting the resembled, explaining that the aim of Balqīs murder was not to kill Balqīs but to shut the poet's mouth.

Where death is in our coffee cup..
In our door keys
In the flowers in our balcony..
In the newspapers..
In the alphabet..

والموت .. في فنجان قهوتنا ..
وفي مفتاح شقتنا ..
وفي أزهار شرفتنا ..
وفي ورق الجرائد ..
والحروف الأبجدية ..⁶⁹

Death always being nearby, it hovers around in everything that surrounds them, in their daily use of materials like the coffee cup, the door keys, the flowers on the balcony. Everything warns of death.

I will say in the investigation:
The burglar now wears the gown of the fighter

سأقول في التحقيق :
إن اللص أصبح يرتدي ثوب المقاتل⁷⁰

There is a metaphor of deceit, the one that the Arabic governors practice over their people, because the government is a thief but pretend to be patriotic. Here also we can sense Nizār Qabbānī's threat to all the Arabic government to expose their falsity.

Balqīs, slaughtered to the bone

بلقيس .. مذبحون حتى العظم ..⁷¹

The poet resembled his blood to a homeland omitting the resembled object. He wanted to say that it is hard for him to leave his country where he lived with Balqīs during his most

⁶⁷ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a'māl al-shi'riyah al-kāmila* 53.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 17.

⁷¹ Ibid., 29.

beautiful days. Being surrounded by flames indicates despair and a feeling of surrender.

Here indicates the depth of death, the brutality of the killer, and the pain and suffering of Nizār.

Balqīs, it is hard for me to emigrate out of my blood
Me, the besieged among flames of fire..

بلقيس : صعبٌ أن أهاجر من دمي ..
وأنا المحاصر بين ألسنة اللهب ..⁷²

Here he indicates the death of Arabism with the death of Balqīs. He knows the answer for this question but he wants to affirm this statement.

If this was your grave..
or the Arabism's grave..

إن كان هذا القبر قبرك أنت
أم قبر العروبة ..⁷³

2.3.5 Metaphor of Art:

The literary arts have a special importance in the lives of nations in general and in the lives of the Arabic society in particular. That is why we see the poet concentrating on the different arts like writing, dancing, and singing, for the evident effect that they have on the recipients. The literary arts are part of the human being's psychology in all times and places, not to mention its strong connection with the daily human life.

Below, we have a beautiful simile for Balqīs's voice, resembling it to the climbing plants, also a metaphor:

The beautiful Iraqi voice climbs

ويعرش الصوت العراقي الجميل ..⁷⁴

Nizār was able to make a moving poetic image out of still objects, making Al-hāshmī, which is the Arabic costume, sing and dance, and the combs suffer:

Where is the Al-hāshmī singing..
Over such a good stature
The combs remember their past.. they cry
Had the combs suffer out of her yearning?

أين الهاشمي مغنياً .. فوق القوام المهرجان ..
تتذكر الأمشاط ماضيها .. فيكرج دمعها ..
هل يا ترى الأمشاط من أشواقها أيضاً تعاني؟⁷⁵

The poet used personification, where he moved the human characteristics to still objects making them move, like Al-hāshmī singing, and combs remembering their past and suffering.

⁷² Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 47.

⁷³ Ibid., 49.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 42.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 46-47.

“Metaphor can ordinarily be considered a subordinator term in relation to personification”⁷⁶

The poet uses of personification indicates creating an interactional relationship between the tangible unintelligent and the tangible intelligent to make the partial picture melt in the general picture. The combs that feel are a mental image.

Balqīs, O Balqīs..

A tear dropping over violin's strings..

بلقيس .. يا بلقيس ..

يا دمعاً ينقط فوق أهداب الكمان⁷⁷

Nizār compares her eye with a musical instrument omitting the eye, which is the resembled. This is creative poetic imagery, where Balqīs is resembled with a tear dropping on the strings of the violin that sings of sadness.

You are the words, before words were existed..

You are the island and the light tower..

أنت الكتابة قبلما كانت كتابة ..

أنت الجزيرة والمنارة ..⁷⁸

The words, island, and light tower are all descriptions of Balqīs which are all metaphors. All show the deep love of Nizār.

To sum up for metaphor, he uses images from nature, like animals and flowers to express Balqīs's beauty and sweetness as well as to express his love and affection. He used other images like insects, savage animals, and daggers to express the cruelty of murderers. All images are from reality and the Arabic poetic tradition. This is why I chose those images as illustrations from the poem which contains a lot of metaphors.

3. Symbolism:

The symbol is considered one of the important poetic phenomena in the modern Arabic poetry, which the poet depends on to express what is on his mind according to the political and social conditions, and the restraints imposed on him. The symbol expresses the feelings and senses through the symbols and suggestion. “A symbol is the deliberate use of a word or a phrase to signify something else not by analogy (for unlike metaphor and simile, it lacks a paired subject), but by implication and reference”.⁷⁹ The symbol gives content and a vast range to the poetic text through the multiple interpretations and different explanations, because the symbol can go beyond the normal. Nizār Qabbānī used many symbols in his poem that are taken from the Arabic tradition because they have an artistic value and

⁷⁶ Alm- Arvius Christina .*Figures of Speech*, 129.

⁷⁷ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 83.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 56.

⁷⁹ Khadra Jayyusi.Salma.*Trends and Movements in Modren Arabic poetry*, 709.

heightened images. He used those symbols to escape the Arabic political system and express his refusal in an indirect way to avoid the government's violence, like 'Abī Lahab. As for the other symbols and poetic imageries, they were used to enrich the poem with different images and to add a high artistic value to it through the multiple interpretations and different explanations.

3.1 'Abū Lahab Symbolism

All the dogs are employees eating, and getting drunk,
At 'Abī Lahab's expenses...

كل الكلاب موظفون .. ويأكلون .. ويسكرون ..
على حساب أبي لهب ..⁸⁰

The symbolism of dogs in this line indicates the power beneficiaries, or what is called the government attendants, who are the tools that the ruler uses to execute his plans, and that 'Abī Lahab is the symbol of evil against the poor and powerless.

The poet needed his poetic imagery to bring over a historical symbol, and not just any symbol, it is 'Abū Lahab. 'Abū Lahab was an opportunist⁸¹, who did not have the noble Arabic values. Being in the times of paganism, standing by the tribe, whether wrong or right was a must, but 'Abū Lahab confronted the Prophet, who was his nephew. Nizār Qabbānī is very smart in choosing this historical character for its consistency with the Arab governments in that time in which Balqīs was murdered. Here we notice that 'Abū Lahab signifies the president or the government and its followers and he wants to say that the Arabic man cannot do anything because he is an invisible man and all the power is in the hands of the governments, big or small, so that personal freedom and everything in the Arab's life is controlled by the government and his commander. That's why Nizār had compared those to 'Abū Lahab, the historical opportunist character.

And I say that I know the executioner who killed my wife.

وأقول إنني أعرف السيف قاتل زوجتي⁸²

The executioner is a symbol for the man who executes the government's orders, because the executioner is the headsman. Here we find a threat that the poet knows the killer (who gives the order) and the executioner.

I will say in the investigation:
How my deer was slain by 'Abī Lahab's sword

سأقول في التحقيق :

كيف غزالتني ماتت بسيف أبي لهب⁸³

⁸⁰ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 69.

⁸¹ Muḥammad Ibn Ṭāhā 'abī 'Asma. *Al-'aghṣān al-nadīa*, 62.

⁸² Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 58.

⁸³ Ibid.,68.

Here is also a symbol for the brutality of the killers as well as the tenderness and innocence of the victim.

3.2 The symbol between Past and Present

In these verses the poet moves back and from between the past and the present, the glorious past that held all the manners and bravery and the opposite present.

They murdered you, Balqīs..

What an Arabic nation..

That enjoys..

Assassinates the voice of the nightingales?

Where are a- Al-samw'al and Al-muḥalḥal?

And the Al-ghaṭārīyf Al-'awā'il?

Tribes have eaten tribes

Foxes murdering foxes

Spiders have killed spiders

قتلوك يا بلقيس ..

أية أمة عربية ..

تلك التي

تغتال أصوات البلابل ؟

أين السمائل ؟

والمهلل ؟

والغطاريف الأوائل ؟

فقبائلٌ أكلت قبائل ..

وثعالبٌ قتلت ثعالب ..

84 .. وعناكبٌ قتلت عناكب ..

In these verses, Nizār accuses the Arabic governments of killing all that is beautiful and magnificent, like the voices of nightingales, which are a simile to Balqīs's voice. He asks about al-Samū'al, the pre-Islamic poet who was known for his generosity, courage, and wisdom.⁸⁵ He also wonders about Al-muḥalḥal, the famous knight poet, and Al-ghaṭārīyf Al-'awā'il, the Arabic man that was known for its bravery, generosity, humanity, and great manners⁸⁶ in spite of its ignorance and Bedouins mentioned by Nizār to indicate the generous man.

Then, Nizār mentioned the foxes that murdered foxes, the spiders that smashed spiders, because in Qurān there is a verse that says " And most surely the frailest of the houses is the spider's house "⁸⁷ thus, Nizār wanted to emphasis on the spider's life structure which is a savage life that is not based on the work of a group and they don't accept each other just like the murderers of his wife. He compares the Arabic governments who held the fate of the people in their hands and do not accept each other's opinions. Also there is a simile between

⁸⁴ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a'māl al-shi'riyah al-kāmila*, 13-14.

⁸⁵ Al-ward Bāqir 'Amīn .*mu'jam al-'ulamā' Al-'arab*, 129.

⁸⁶ *Al-rā'id Dictionary*.

⁸⁷ *Holy Qurān*. Translates by M.H.Shakir. Tahrike Tarsile Qurān. The Spider Verse N.41.

the foxes and spiders on one hand and the Arabic governments on the other on the base of cruelty, crime, and not accepting each other.⁸⁸

We can notice how the expressions correlate and circulate around the Arabism core, Nizār used the historical terms that represent the powers of good like Al-muḥalḥal, al-Samū'al, and Al-ghaṭārīyf Al-'awā'il against the cruelty and evil represented by manipulation. The cunning foxes and the spiders are a group of animals and insects that do not believe in team work, reject each other, murder those who stand in their way, and believe in the survival of the fittest.

3.3 Karbalā', the Symbol

Balqīs:

If they blew you up.. we have

All the funerals start from Karbala'

And end in Karbala'..

I will not read history from now on

My fingers got burnt..

My clothes are blood- covered..

بلقيس :

إن هم فجروك .. فعندنا

كل الجنائز تبثدي في كربلاء ..

وتنتهي في كربلاء ..

لن أقرأ التاريخ بعد اليوم

إن أصابني اشتعلت ..

وأثوابي تغطيها الدماء ..⁸⁹

In this stanza, the poet expressed many concepts that are closely bound with the concept of Arabism, which he had discussed and related with images of the past and present with the help of his muse Balqīs. He addresses her by managing to bring back the images of the past to express contemporary life, especially when he mentioned Karbala' and the straying party who killed the al-Imām al-Ḥusayn. The concept of Karbalā' is not only bound to murder and injustice but also to the concept of freedom and fighting injustice. Here we must mention that those who killed Al-ḥusayn in Karbalā' are the minority but to speak not about this act makes the others connected in some way with murderers and even participants in murder.

When we come back to Nizār and his beloved Balqīs, who was murdered by the decision makers and war traders of the Arabic governments, normal people take the blame as well because they were silent in front of this hideous act. Thus, Nizār brought examples from history to ask the people to rebel against the Arab governments. Also, he refuses to read

⁸⁸ Ṣalāḥ Rashīd. *The Scientific Inimitability in the Holy Quran*, seventeenth issue.

⁸⁹ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a'māl al-shi'riyah al-kāmila*, 52-53.

history anymore, because history is full of unjust governments as well as Arabism lovers and defenders. So, his refusal to read history is evidence that people had abandoned their history and accepted things at face appearance.

We can notice here that Nizār uses history to influence the reader's conscience to stimulate the rebellious historical aspect in him. Also he wanted to say that the phase that the nation is going through is a defective one similar to the Age of Ignorance because of the control that the Arab governments hold on people which stops them from thinking.

There is another evidence for his stance against the people who say that he was a traitor and against the Arabic nation. The traitor is the one who forges the facts and stands by the government.⁹⁰ Moreover, Nizār refused to join the poets who stand by and glorify power; he considered them to be the true traitors and that standing against power, and spreading hope in the people's souls to wake them up, is true patriotism.

3.4 Balqīs's Image

Balqīs is present in most of the poem's lines because Nizār wanted her to be a witness to the crime, in spite of the fact that the crime was committed against her. Because of his immense love for her, he wanted her to share everything with him and to inspire him. He repeated Balqīs name many times and in this repetition of her name, he wanted to keep in touch with her. In every verse of the poem, Nizār recollects the image of Balqīs as if she is standing by him.

Balqīs:

It is the fate of Arabs to be assassinated by Arabs..

Our flesh being eaten by Arabs..

Our bellies being ripped open by Arabs..

Our graves opened by Arabs..

So, how can we evade such a fate?

بلقيس :

إن قضاءنا العربي أن يغتالنا عربٌ ..

ويأكل لحمنا عربٌ ..

ويقر بطننا عربٌ ..

ويفتح قبرنا عربٌ ..

فكيف نفر من هذا القضاء ؟⁹¹

Here, he used his imagery to reject the Arabs, not as an identity, but as the Arabic policy represented by the Arab governments. When he wonders about the grave of Arabism, he wanted to show that Arabism and the hope of freedom is dead. Also, he wants to warn the unaware people and stimulate their consciousness telling them that the one that shouts about

⁹⁰ Jihād Fāḍil. *fatāfīt shā'ir waqā'i'u ma'raka ma'a Nizār Qabbānī*, 29.

⁹¹ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a'māl al-shi'riyah al-kāmila*, 51.

freedom is the one who is deceiving you. The Arab governments are murdering all that is beautiful, deforming anyone who does not go along with them and establishing their policy so that they would open the graves after death. When Nizār was asked about Arabic nationality, he answered: "out of my great love to my country, I couldn't stand still in front of this great coma that the Arabic people had drowned in, and drown likewise".⁹²

Balqīs ...

Don't leave me

The sun after your departure..

Will not lighten the shores..

بلقيس

لا تتغيبي عني

فإن الشمس بعدك

لا تضيء على السواحل . .⁹³

In this verse and the one after, Nizār draws a picture of Balqīs. In my opinion, it is a way to stimulate Nizār and to draw the reader into a zone where he can show the latter the main idea, which is laying the Arabic governments bare, and exposing their false pretensions of being the nation's protectors. Also, through recalling Balqīs image, he exposed the government's desire to get rid of him. Thus he presented to us a beautiful dualism: his Balqīs, the murdered wife and the power represented by the Arabic governments and their followers. The indications that this verse shows have several purposes, the first is Balqīs high position in the poet's soul. The second is his bravery in front of power, and the third is the power's rage on him because his shock had shaken his world and stirred him from the silence of fear that envelopes its citizens. Thus, the poetic imagery of Nizār is stimulated by going beyond the norms.

Here we are.. Balqīs..

Entering, once again, to the era of Paganism..

Here we are, entering Savageness..

Retardation, ugliness, meanness..

We are entering, once again, the era of Barbarism..

Where writing is a journey

Between a fragment of a bullet and another..

Where assassinating a butterfly in its field,...

Becomes the main case..

ها نحن .. يا بلقيس ..

ندخل مرةً أخرى لعصر الجاهلية ..

ها نحن ندخل في التوحش ..

والتخلف .. والبشاعة .. والوضاعة ..

ندخل مرةً أخرى .. عصور البربرية ..

حيث الكتابة رحلة

بين الشظية .. والشظية

حيث اغتيال فراشةٍ في حقلها ..

صار القضية ..⁹⁴

⁹² Jihād Fāḍil. *fatāfīt shā'ir waqā'i'u ma'raka ma'a Nizār Qabbānī*, 28.

⁹³ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a'māl al-shi'riyah al-kāmila*, 16.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 23-42.

In those verses, the poet refuses all the surrounding bitter reality that the Arabic nation lives in, and he describes the present era by words that make the recipients shiver. Thus we can see that Nizār's imagery is the outcome of experience and knowledge, sensitivity, his awareness of reality, minute observation of life in its historical, interior and exterior development. The matter would not allow him to live in solitude away from his society. So we can notice his rebellion against reality through the death of Balqīs, where he was able to, through his knowledge and poetic skills change the poem's intention from a bitter reality and personal experience, into a criticism about the Arabic reality, in which he aims to change this reality. And all of this, from my point of view, is the climax of patriotism and Arabism, especially when he left his ordeal and the pain that he endures because of Balqīs death and turned to a bigger case that is the Arabism issue that he belongs to.

3.5 The Arab World

Arab" Relating to the Middle East or North Africa or to the people, language or culture of those regions"⁹⁵

Thank you ..	شكراً لكم ..
Thank you ..	شكراً لكم ..
My beloved was murdered.. and thus you can	فحبيبتي قتلت .. وصار بوسعكم
Drink a glass of wine on the martyr's grave..	أن تشربوا كأساً على قبر الشهيد
My poem was assassinated ...	وقصيدتي اغتيلت ..
And what nation on the face of earth	وهل من أمة في الأرض ..
Except us - assassinates a poem	- إلا نحن - تغتال القصيدة؟ ⁹⁶

The poet starts his poem after congratulating and thanking them for the murder of Balqīs. Here he confesses that Balqīs his muse, poem, and everything in his life, and he blames the nation for her assassination. But here, from my point of view, he does not mean all the Arabic nation, because the word nation can be given to a group or an individual, as written in the Holy Qurān "Surely Ibrahim was a nation, obedient to Allah, upright, and he was not polytheist".⁹⁷

In this verse of Qurān, we see the word nation given to our master Ibrahim alone, so, Nizār used this word to put the responsibility of murder on the Arabic governments and

⁹⁵ *English Dictionary for Advance Learners*, 64.

⁹⁶ Qabbānī Nizār. *Al-'a 'māl al-shi 'riyah al-kāmila*, 9.

⁹⁷ *Holy Qurān*. Translates by M.H.Shakir. The Bee. Verse, 120.

decision makers in the Arabic political world. Nizār also used the word nation to describe all the Arabic governments, saying that their cruelty and savageness equal that of a nation. Since Balqīs was Arabic, and he praised her, so the poet cannot disparage all Arabs as she was a part of this nation.

When Nizār was asked: why all this satire to Arabs, why don't you shut up like other poets who stand with the governments? He said:

I, as a poet, can't breathe this air that is full of poisonous gas. I am troubled by the destruction that surrounds politics, humans, and writings. I cannot imagine a more hideous phase that our history had went through. So, you found me screaming.⁹⁸

Nizār, here, talks about a certain phase where the Arabic man falls under individual, suppressive, and powers that burn and destroy everything, and do whatever they like. This phase that the nation goes through, is one of the hardest times of the Arab nation, due to the people who are chained by government and can't do anything but surrender. So, Nizār here is talking about a certain phase that the Arab nation is going through. Also, we see him declare to his wife that this is not an elegy, which means that he does not want to mourn Balqīs, but he made use of his poetic imagery to escape the poem's boundaries as an elegy into a criticism of the Arabic reality.

The poet's usage of certain types of images has many indications, by which he wants to influence the recipient to feel his pain, like using familiar historical and Islamic characters. Some characters are known for their cruelty, thus the comparison with the Arabic governments is clearly understood. On the other hand, he uses other characters that represent freedom and generosity, to present the Arabic people.

⁹⁸ Jihād Fāḍil. *fatāfīt shā'ir waqā'i'u ma'raka ma'a Nizār Qabbānī*, 72.

4. Conclusion:

In studying the poem, and bringing out its artistic values that were out of the readers' perceptions, by emphasising the usage of rhetoric, presented by the poetic imageries. Qabbānī was able to create a poem that is a mixture of elegy, praise, and satire. Studying this poem enabled us to see his distinctive poetical experiment, where he used the daily language using examples taken from religion and tradition. He also used other ways that gave the poem its beauty and enabled him to use varieties in the subject matter and a mixture of elegy and praise. He used repetition in letter, noun, verb, and sentence, similes, and many other rhetorical and devices.

As for the poetic imagery which was prevailing in the poem, there were the rhetorical and symbolic imageries. Much of the imageries were based, mostly, on personification, that is to add the emotional to the tangible, in other words, to add human characteristics to the inhuman things.

The images that the poet uses through metaphor and simile are drawn from the Arabic life and culture, thus, they make a clear impact on the recipient. The poet uses nature's beauty with all its concepts to express the beautiful and magnificent traits, while using some harmful insects and wild animals to express the notion of ugliness and cruelty that do not cope with the nature of the human being.

Criticism that the poet aimed at Arabic politics in the twentieth century was the result of the political, economic, and cultural deterioration caused by greedy Arabic governments. They were more interested in their personal gains and disturbances than the general good of their people. For instance, they overlooked the political Arabic issue of the time, which was the occupation of Palestine by Israel, to focus on the issue of exploiting more resources for their personal "issues". The Arabic man endured a great deal under the injustice of their practices, one such injustice was the murder of Balqīs during the bombing of the Iraqi Embassy in Beirut. Thus, the poet tried to focus his grief on the general injustice, making Balqīs a martyr, trying to awaken the Arabic conscience.

As for the symbolic imagery of the Arabic rulers, the poet chose them from the religious and social tradition; Qabbānī used well known symbols, in Arabic society to express the state of rejection and discontent of the Arabic man. In spite of the poet's pain because of his wife's murder, he did not get far from the Arabic reality, to prove that he was an Arab citizen who loves his country and could not abandon it in the most hard circumstances. Needless to say, the reason for the poet mixing elegy with praise and politic is the state of loss that he had endured after his wife's murder.

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