

**WHEN SCHEHERAZADE CRIES: A DIALECTIC SEMIOTIC READING OF THE
TITLE: A STUDY OF RITA ODEH'S POEM ŞARKHAT 'I'RAB/ A CRY OF
PARSING**

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ABSTRACT: *Literary critics and scholars had not shown interest in the thresholds of the title of the text until modern semiotic studies gave interest to everything that surrounds the text such as titles, prefaces, references, margins and alerts. Semiotic studies pointed out that these elements are significant keys that help to dive into the depths of the text to unravel its mysteries and enigmas. Such studies are rarely empty of references to the textual thresholds, especially the title, which is the main threshold that compels the researcher to inquire it before diving into the depths of the text. "Semiotics of the title" is considered one of the important issues of criticism which modern critics have dived into. Probably the title plays an essential role in understanding the deep meanings of the literary work that is introduced to the receiver. Thus, interest in the title is inevitable because it is the first thresholds of the text through which the reader enters the landmarks of the text to discover its entity and afterwards, to introduce a critical modernist vision that is based on a methodology and theoretical principles that helps to the uncover the hidden landmarks of the text and introduce it to the receiver in the form of a critical reading of the literary work. The majority of the definitions that are given to the title deal with it in discrepant manners, and in spite of that, we ultimately conclude that it is a linguistic coded sign that stands above the text to lend it a certain characteristic, to define it and to tempt the reader to read it and think about its connotations. It requires a clever receiver who can decode its signs that rise above its structure. Without title, many books would remain imprisoned on the bookshelves and the libraries. The titles of many books became popular or unpopular or even a disaster to the books and their authors.*

KEYWORDS: Thresholds, Semiology, Tetralogy, Trans-Textuality, Structuralism, Semiotic, Active Imperative, Para Text.

INTRODUCTION

The title is the first threshold of the text and it is impossible to jump over it or ignore it. It is an important step in the reading and receiving process and the key to the global indications of the text, which the critical reader relies on if he aspires to be scientific in his analysis and aspires to achieve accuracy in his interpretation. It is the real threshold that leads to the ambiguities of the text and to decoding its talismans and enigmas. However, sometimes it plays the role of a camouflage that puzzles the reader, confuses him, and creates a compulsive disturbance in his mind. It can also lead him into a real labyrinth from which he cannot escape except to the text itself, which is the only element that can provide him with valuable tools that enable him to deconstruct the text and study it. The title is also like a candlelight that the reader uses to lighten the dark areas of the text, which cannot be comprehended except by going back to it. To sum up, the text is considered one of the most important signs that achieve the textuality of the text which is integration that is based on the principle of intra-reference between the title and the tale.

The concept of 'title' and its problematic nature

The 'title' has been ignored by many Arab and Western researchers in the classical and modern periods. They mostly dealt with it casually as they considered it as something marginal and invaluable. For them, it is merely an utterance that contributes nothing to the analysis of a literary text. Therefore, it is possible to bridge over it to the text like the other thresholds that surround the text. However, certain classical and modern researchers and scholars in the field of semiotics in both cultures noticed its importance and some of them specialized in it and as a result, a new field of study of its origins, theories, methodology emerged. This study has been known by the name of "Titrologie" (in French), which means: 'The Science of Titles'. It appeared in the West and developed in France. The most outstanding critic who fathomed the depths of this sea is the French Critic G. Génette, who devoted his book *Sueils* to the study of Trans-textuality, which he divided into five types:

- Text Architecture
- Para-text
- Inter-textuality
- Meta-textuality
- Hyper-textuality

These types intertwine and intersect in various ways. Other critics who dealt with these features include: H. Metterand, L. Goldmann. Ch. Grivel, R. Rofer, and Le'o Hoek. Goldmann alerted the Western scholars and critics and advised them to give more interest to the thresholds in general and the title in particular. In his sociological reading to the new French novel, he stressed the small number of critics who dealt with a simple issue such as the title in the novel of *Le Voyeur* by Alain Robbe-Grillet (1955), which refers to the contents of the book and alerted them to investigate it with the care that it deserves.¹

The Arab writer also noticed the importance of the title and realized its functions through the way of its production and taking into consideration the receivers of this art, whose reading the title reflects, too. According to modern critical studies, the title plays the role the 'alarm' and 'instigator' because its domineering authority lends its shades on the text and thus, the body of the text turns into a body that falls under its authority. Actually, it is the link between the two sides of the message that is represented in the duality of the 'creator and the receiver'.

It deserves mentioning here that the most important previous studies that focused on studying the title, its definition, history, analysis and classification are characterized by their general treatment of the poetic and literary title rather than devoting the study to the title only. Here is a brief description of those studies which are arranged chronologically according to the date of their publications:

- Uwais, Muhammad (1988). *Al-'Unwan fi al-'Adab al- A'rabi: al-Nasha'ah wa al-Tatawwur*. 1st edition. This book is the oldest well-known book to us. It is a pioneering work on this newly-emerging scientific field. However, it is a work on titling but not on the title of the poem specifically. Besides, the historical treatment of

¹ Goldman, Lucian et al. (1988). *Al-Riwaya wa al-Waqi'*. Translated by Rashid Benjeddo. U'yun al-Maqalat. 1st ed. al-Dar al-Baydha'. Dar Qurtuba. P. 12.

titling dominates the works. Hence, the reader of the book misses a lot of critical issues that are relevant to the title, and which are raised by modern studies. The reason for that is that at the time of publishing the book, the critical Arabic studies on the title were rare, and do not introduce a convincing scientific material to the reader or the researcher.

- Ismael, Abd al-Rahman (1996). *al-Unwan fi al-Qassida al-'Arabiyya. Majallat al-Malik Su'uod*. Vol. 8. *al-Adab Magazine*. This is an article in 23 pages, which are concerned with the historiography of the title in two definite periods of its development in modern poetry: the stage of the Arab Renaissance, which is called the Classical Period; and the stage of Apollo School, which is called the Romantic Stage. However, this study is not concerned with the study of the characteristics of the title, its functions, types, its artistic aesthetics, and its contextual relations.
- Hlefi, Shu'eib (1996). *Al-Nass al-Muwazi fi al-Riwaya: Istratijiyyat al-Unwan. al-Karmel Magazine*. NO. 46. The article consists of 21 pages and, in my view, it is the first article that studies the title in a historical and structural method in a good way and it is the most important reference that researchers have depended on in their discussions on the title.
- Hamdawi, Jamil (1996). *Muqarabat al-'Unwan fi al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Hadith wa al-Mu'asser*. This is a dissertation for a Diploma Degree in higher studies of modern and contemporary Arabic literature. It was discussed at the University of Malik al-Sa'di, the Faculty of Humanities, Tatwan, Al-Maghreb. Hamdawi introduces in his dissertation a new methodology of studying the titles, which he called: *al-Muqaraba al-Unwaniyya/ The Titling Approach*. In my view, it is the first comprehensive analytical study on the subject of the title and it consists of 562 big-size pages.
- Botayyib, Jamal (1996). *Al-'Unwan fi al-Riwaya al-Maghrebiya*. An article in: *al-Riwaya al-Maghrebiya. As'ilat al-Hadatha*. Manshurat Dar al-Thaqafa. Al-Dar al-Baydha', p. 12.
- Al-Hajmari, Abd al-Fattah (1996). *Atabat al-Nass: al-Bunya wa al-Dalala*. Manshurat al-Rabita. Al-Dar al-Baydha'. The writer studies the 'title' according to the novel of *al-Dhu' al-Harib* by Muhammad Barradeh, 562 medium-size pages.
- Hamdawi, Jamil (1977). *Al-Simiotiqa wa al-'Anwana*. An article in 33 pages. It was published in *'Alam al-Fikr* magazine. Kuwait. Vol. 25. NO. 3. It was a source and reference for many studies which focused on the study of the title.
- Al-Jazzar, Muhammad Fikri (1998). *Al-'Unwan wa Simiotiqa al-Ittissal al-Adabi*. This book is a theoretical research in the title from the perspective of semiotic studies (Science of signs). The book is useful from the critical point of view and is characterized by its philosophical abstraction in several places. The subject of this study is the literary title in general rather than the 'poem' in particular.
- Hamdawi, Jamil (2001). *Muqarabat al-Nass al-Muwazi fi Riwayat Bensalem Hmesh*. a State Ph.D. Dissertation.
- Qattous, Bassam (2001). *Sima' al-'Unwan*. This book deals with the literary title, starting from the point of view of theoretical establishment of semiotics through

looking at the title. It is not like the previous book in its absorption of the methodological starting points and analytical tools of semiotics. Here we notice the methodological remoteness between between the theoretical establishment at the beginning of the book and the applied analysis of the literary titles in its later chapters.

- Hamdawi, Jamil (2006). Surat al-'Unwan fi al-Riwaya al-'Arabiyya'. An article in 21 pages.
- al-Harithi, Hamdan (2007). Al-'Unwan fi al-Nass al-Shi'ri al-Hadith fi al-Mamlaka al-'Arabiyya al-Su'udiyya: Dirasa Wassfiya Tahliliyya" M.A. Thesis. The Department of Arabic. Im al-Qura University in Mecca. The researcher deals with the poetic title in the works of three Saudi poets: Dhiya' al-Din Rajab, Ghazi al-Qussaybi, Sa'd al-Din al-Hamidin, who are considered to be representatives of different trends of poetry. It is clear that the title of the thesis is far from methodological accuracy because it is a general title that is not in harmony with the contents of the thesis, which is exclusive to the study of the title in the works of three poets only.
- Al-Rashed, Abd Allah bin Salim (2008). *Madkhal Ila Dirasat al-'Unwan fi al-Shi'r al-Sou'di*. Originally, this book was a research that was published in *Alam al-Kutub Magazine*, 2004. It is a summarized book in 70 medium-size pages that is based on a descriptive study of the title in Saudi poetry. Though it is a short research with intersected methodology, it is characterized by the introduction of some accurate observations regarding the title. The book is concerned with a theoretic study of the title of the poem and all the relevant critical issues. Of course these are not all the studies about the subject and there are many others.

The scholars of semiotics were widely interested² in the title in literary texts because it forms a semiotic system that has other semantic and symbolic dimensions that tempt the researcher to follow its indications and attempt to decode its symbolic code.³ This interest in the title was not arbitrary or incidental but because it was "a -writing necessity" that turned it into a successful procedural concept in approaching the literary text and a fundamental key that the analyst is armed with in order to dive into the depths of the text in an aim to inquire and interpret it. Gradually, the title started to be included in every general theoretical and analytical context that is interested in pointing out the function of the thresholds in understanding the particularity and defining of an fundamental aspect of its semantic purposes. It is an interest that has become currently a source of coining delicate questions that regain privilege to these multi-typed textual aspects, deals with their characteristics and defines the ways of their function.

² The term 'semiotics' or 'semiology' is a science that is concerned with studying the signs or structure of signs / allusions and their relationship with the universe, and consequently, it studies their distribution and their internal and external functions. Thus, it deals with all the indicative signs whatever their kinds and origins are: rites, symbols, customs, allusions, writing and language.

What is significant of all these indicative signs is the linguistic signs since language is the most important of all these systems, as Saussure maintains. This notion was stated at the beginning in two different terms: "semiology" and "semiotic". It seems that the source of difference between the terms is the source language of each of them: as "semiologie" is French, which appeared in Saussure's theory and "semiotics" is English, which appeared in Charles Sanders Peirce's theory. Both are borrowed from Greek "semeion", which means "sign". See, for example: Kamel, Issam Khalaf (2003). In: *al-Ittijah al-Semiologi wa Naqd al-Shi'r*. Dar Farha li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', Egypt. P. 44; Ben Malik, Rashid (2000). *Muqaddima fi al-Demyas'iyya al-Sardiyya*. Dar al-Qassaba li al-Nashr. Algeria. P. 9; *Jean vior, Claude COQUET*, *La quiete du sens*, (Paris: preese universitaire de France, 1997), p. 147.

³ Qattous, Bassam (2001). *Sima' al-Unwan*. 1st ed. Amman: Ministry of Culture. P. 33.

Basically, the title is considered a type of *intertextuality* and a main link because it is a text - a subject and the whole body of the text is a predicate. Thus, it is the beginning of writing⁴ that appears on the cover of the book like a commercial advertisement and a motivator for reading. It is the sign that imprints the book or text, names it and distinguishes it from other works; it is one of the adjacent and surrounding elements of the main text in addition to other margins, notes, introductions, quotations, and iconic evidence.⁵ Therefore, writers have dealt with it with care and interest, especially in modern and contemporary novelistic production. All this motivated the creators to introduce it in an artistic way to the reader so that it will become a source of inspiration and an incentive of search in the depths of this intellectual work through taking in consideration the tastes of the public and, at the same time, the needs of the literary arena, which constitutes a popular market for this raw material, which requires a clever receiver who knows how to decode it. André Martinet maintains that "the title constitutes a semantic foundation on which the action of reception should be based because it is the highest possible authority of reception, its being characterized by the highest possible degree of linguistic economy and its denseness with relations of intentional free allusions to the world, the text and the sender. Therefore, it is necessary to decode this ciffre that is compressed in the title⁶. Leo Hoc defined it as the total linguistic signs (single words, sentences, text) which can be registered on the top of the text to define it, tells about its general content and introduces it to the public by reading it.⁷ In spite of that, Leo H. Hoek remembers what he has said about the title and refers to the difficulty in its definition because it is used in different functions. Abdulla al-Ghadhami maintains that issue of the "title" is a fan that is imported from the West and the 'titles' in modern poems are also modern fans, which were adopted by the Arab poets through imitation of the poets of the West, particularly the Romantics.⁸

However, al-Taher Rawayniyeh maintains that the title is the first prominent printed phrase of the book or a text that opposes another text to substitute, support or define it and emphasizes its uniqueness through time; it is, first and foremost, a created sign that can be moderated and its interpretation allows to introduce a number of allusions and prophecies regarding the content of the text, its referential role, its associations and its symbolic meanings. Out of these characteristics, the title performs the functions of incitement and publicity.⁹

⁴ Qattous says about him that it is the face of the text in miniature on the cover page. Therefore, it has always been considered a semiotic system that has indicative and symbolic indications that tempt the researcher to follow its indications and decode its symbolic codes in an aim to clarify its accumulated textual concepts within the textual space. Ali Ja'far al-'Allaq says that 'the title precedes the text and starts the process of its growth, merely a name that tells about the literary work that defines its identity and devotes its belonging to a certain father; it has become larger than that, and its relationship with the text has become extremely intricate; it is an entrance to the structure of the text, a clever and ambiguous gleam that enlightens it and its complex paths.' The title has rebelled against its negligence for long periods and rises again from its ashes which concealed its effectiveness and deported it to the night of forgetfulness, and only recently was the function of title was taken care of. See, for example: Qattous, Bassam (2001). *Sima' al-'Unwan*, 12; al-'Allaq, Ali Ja'far (1997). *Shi'riyyat al-Riwaya. ('Alamat fi al-Naqd. Magazine: Vol. 6, p. 23.)*, p. 100.

⁵ Hamdawi, Jamil (22/1/2007). Surat al-'Unwan fi al-Riwaya al-Arabiyya, on:

<http://www.arabicnadwah.com/articles/unwan-hamadaoui.htm>

⁶ Jalawji, Izz al-Din (1981). Su'aal al'Unwan - 'Atabat al-Lamanzour: qira'ah fi Riwayat: *al-Ramad al-Lazi Gasal al-Ma'a*. On: <http://djellaoudji.maktoobbolg.co> (p. 3-4).

⁷ Léo H. Hoek (1981). *La Marque du titre, dispositifs Sémiotiques d'une moutors*. Paris, p. 5.

⁸ Al-Ghadhami, Abd Allah (1985). Al-Khati'ia wa al-Takfir - min al-Bunyawiyya ila al-Tashrihiyya - Qira'ah Naqdiyya li Namouzaj al-Insan al-Mu'asser. 1st ed. Jedda. *Al-Nadi al-Adabi al-Thaqafi*, p. 26.

⁹ Al-Taher, Ruwaniyyeh (1995). Shi'riyyat al-Dal fi Bunyat al-Istihlal fi al-Sard al-Arabi al-Qadim dhimn al-Mashi'a wa al-Nass al-Adabi. *Proceedings of: Forum of the Arabic Language and Literature Institute*. Annaba: Publications of University of Baji Mukhtar, 17/15, May, 1995, p. 141.

Muhammad al-Hadi al-Matwi believes that the title is a linguistic message that tells about the identity of the text, defines its content, draws the reader to it and tempts him to read it.¹⁰ Similarly, Bushra al-Bustani believes that the title is a linguistic message that tells about the identity of the text, defines its content, draws the reader to it and tempts him to read it and considers it as the external text that indicates the internal one and its content."¹¹ However, the Spanish researcher Joseph Besa Comprubi openly admits that the title is multidimensional because it creates different links of signs that are connected with the literary work, the text and the reader.¹² Thus, the title is considered fundamental in any creative work. It is agreed by critics that the title is connected with the text in a natural way. It completes it without disagreeing with it and reflects it sincerely and accurately. Bassam Qattous maintains that the title constitutes a semantic load but primarily it is a sign or a communicative allusion that has a physical materialistic existence. Actually, it is the first concrete materialistic meeting that takes place between the sender (text writer) and the receiver.¹³ In view of this, we can say that the title is an allusion that has a semiotic dimension from which the operation of interpretation starts. The reader finds it easier to read the body of the text by building up on what he has received in his brain. Shu'eib Khalifi maintains that the title is a reference that contains within it a sign and a symbol, an intensive meaning where the writer tries to confirm his purpose completely. In other words, the title is the moving nucleus around which the writer weaves the texture of the text.

However, the French critic Gérard Genette calls what surrounds the body of text by the term of "para-text" and divides it into a '*surrounding text*', which includes the text space of the title, the introduction and subtitles, and anything that is related to the external appearance of the book such as the publisher's words, the book-cover, and a '*hypertext*' that includes all the discourses that are outside the book or related to it and move in its orbit such as private correspondences, bits of evidence, comments and the readings that contribute to this field.¹⁴ Gérard Genette considers the title, introductions, acknowledgement, dedications, and quotations as thresholds that have functional, historical and textual contexts and compositional functions that abridge part of the writing logic. He confirms that the structure and significance of the title are not disconnected from the structure and indications of the works because the title includes the work exactly as the work includes the title. The choice of the title, which is added after the writing process is not void of intentionality that reveals the nature of intertextuality that exists between the text and the title.¹⁵ Gerard Genette defined four functions of the title: seductive function, connotative function, descriptive function and function of designation or referential function.¹⁶ However, Muhammad Fikri al-Jazzar maintains that, despite its brevity, the title constitutes the highest possible degree of economy by which the creator can draw the receiver's attention to his work. By choosing a title, the creator links the power of his product with the power or weakness of the title. In view of this, the definitions give elevation to the title putting it at the highest point of communication and

¹⁰ Al-Matwi, Muhammad al-Hadi (1999). Shi'riyyat Unwan Kitab al-Saq 'ala al-Saq fima Huwa al-Faryaq. *Alam al-Fikr Magazine*. Kuwait: Published by al-Majlis al-Watani li al-Thaqafa wa al-Funun wa al-Adab. Vol. 28, N0. 1, July/September, p. 457.

¹¹ Al-Bustani, Bushra (2002). *Qira'at fi al-Shi'r al-Arabi al-Hadith*. 1st ed., Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, p. 34.

¹² Comprubi, Joseph Besa (2002). Les fonctions du titre nouveaux actes sémiotiques 82, Pulim Université de Limoges, p.91.

¹³ Qattous, *Sima' al-Unwan*, p. 36.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 50.

¹⁵ Gérard Genette, and Bernard Crampé, Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature, in: *Critical Inquiry* 14, 4 (1988), pp. 692-720.

¹⁶ Genette, Gerard & Crampé, Bernard (1988). Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature. *Critical Theory*, 14, (4): 692-720.

thus it becomes an equivalent to the language as a system.¹⁷ The observer of most studies that are based on treatment of the title realizes in a clear way the extreme importance that the title gains as an abridged condensed text that is directly related to the text that is marked by it.

¹⁸ Thus, the title and the text constitute one duality and the relationship between them is an established one as the title is considered a linguistic message that is connected at the moment of its birth with an umbilical cord that connects it with the text at the moment of writing and reading and thus it becomes the head and body of the text. Due to the expressionistic and aesthetic and strategic characteristics that the title enjoys such as simplicity of phrase and density of indication, it occupies the first place in the textual space of the literary work."¹⁹

What is the Goal of this Study?²⁰

After this exposition of the most important previous studies about the function of the 'title', it is time to introduce the most important aspects that characterize this study and distinguish it from other studies:

- a. The study deals mainly with the title of the poem, leaving other types of titles such as: the title of a collections of poetry, title of any essay, title of a short story and title of a novel for other separate studies. Other previous studies focus on the types of poetic and fictional titles, except the short study by Abd al-Rahman Ismael, who studied the title in the Arab poem/ qassida. Besides, I have not found any previous study that deals with the title in such a detailed and comprehensive way as this study does. Yet, it should be pointed out that the previous studies that are mentioned here and those that are not mentioned gave a large benefit to this study as they constitute its scientific components and sources. Besides, they contributed to development and maturation of

¹⁷ Al-Jazzar, Muhammad Fikri (1988). *Al-Unwan wa Semiotica al-Tawasul al-Adabi*. Cairo: *al-Hay'ah al-Missriyya al-'Amma li al-Kitab*. P. 15.

¹⁸ Bouderbala, al-Tayyib (2002) *Qira'ah fi Kitab Simya' al-Unwan li al-Doctor Bassam Qattous*. Lectures of the Forum of: *al-Multaqa al-Watani al-Thani: al-Simya' wa al-Nass al-Adabi*. Algeria: Publications of University of Baskara, N0 15, 16: p.52.

¹⁹ Shaqroush, Shadya (2007). *Simyai'yyat al-Unwan fi Maqam al-Bawh li Abdallah al-Aish*. Lectures of the Forum of: *al-Multaqa al-Watani al-Awwal: al-Simya' wa al-Nass al-Adabi*. Algeria: Publications of University of Baskara, N0 6, 7: p.271.

²⁰ Regarding the importance of the title, Jamil Hamdawi says: The importance of the title arises from the new rhetoric approach, which seeks to break up the total literal comprehensive dominance and establish instead of it a connotative suggestive meaning. The title is one of the most important elements that constitute the literary work; it is the authority of the text and its advertising parlor; it is its indicative part that contributes to its interpretation and decodes its ambiguity. Therefore, the author is careful in titling his texts because it is a procedural key that opens the enigmas of the text in a semiotic way. The researchers of the title maintain that the title constitutes the 'head' of the text and sometimes it is the main guide of the text while the body of the text constitutes its 'nucleus'; the end is its result and conclusion. Therefore, while we are studying the title, we should distinguish between classical titles and modern ones as researchers have noticed that the modern title is different from the classical one. Shu'eib Halefi dealt with these differences in a study that is considered a founding one in Arabic literature about the strategy of the title. The classical title was an issue that had answers but the title in modern fiction is a communicative relationship and "if harmony in classical thought meant non-division from the text, i.e. sizing the authority of interpretation and reduction of metaphor in its stranger face, the title in modern fiction breaks this harmony artistically and it no more necessarily expresses the event or the characters as much as it constitutes a rebellion against the text. Thus, the relationship of the title with the text is no more like the classical title – a relationship of question-answer; it has become a relationship of a question that extends from the title into the text and the modern title is no more the only meaning that the text defines. In fact, the text contributes to the creation of mirrors and multi-meanings to the title. See, for example: Hamdawi, Jamil (1997). "al-Semiotiqa wa al-Anwanah," *Alam al-Fikr*, 25/3, Kuwait, p. 107.

the critical visions of this study and its analytical tools as it includes a lot of distinctive thoughts regarding the 'title'.

- b. The study supports theory by application by analyzing the title of the poem, which reveals the artistic aesthetics of the title and its importance, its semantic functions, its characteristics, its contextual relationships and the method of studying and analyzing it. All that is done in the light of the modern Arabic critical studies.
- c. The study provides the best known tools and styles that connect between the title and the poem itself, which ultimately serves the comprehensive critical analysis of the poetic text and points out its artistic aesthetics. While reading the main title and subtitles, it is necessary to pay attention that the theoretical and applied studies of the indications of the title and even the surrounding text were not known or common as they are now in our time.

It should be pointed out here that this study sheds light on a specific aspect that did not exist in previous studies in this field of study. The study discusses a specific poem called "An Cry of Parsing" by the poet Rita Abdo Odeh as a sample from the perspectives of structure, semantics, and currency.

The Poem of *A Cry of Parsing* by Rita Abdo Odeh²¹

The observer of the picture on the book cover *Maraya al-Wahm/ Mirros of Illusion*, published in 1998, sees a rectangular rock with a key on the right side and an eye above the rock. The writer/ poet / painter chose the colors of yellow, brown and green to be a background for the picture with emphasis on 'yellow' and brown', which are in harmony with the titles that are given to the poems inside the book. This implies the poet's deliberate intention and thought to choose a suitable painting that suits, first, the title of the book, and second, its contents. Qaddour says in this regard that each printed text or electronic one includes a picture in a clear modernist embodiment that indicates a metaphysical belief in the precedence of the picture to the 'word', an idea that is implied in the Chinese famous wisdom that says: "a picture is worth a thousand words."²²

This is what Bashir Abd al-'Al implies when he says that reading one picture is theoretically as multiple as the multiplicity of the readers. He also considers the external cover of any creative written work to be the first open parlor to indications and interpretations that visually meet the eye of the observer or investigator of the work; it also motivates the receiver to approach or retreat from purchasing the work and read it as the book cover is a technical and publicity parlor.²³

Through a visual reading of the cover of Rita Abdo's collection of poems *Maraya al-Wahm*, the receiver clearly notices the threshold of a cover that bears indications and digital codes that summarize the identity of the book, which includes the name of the poet below the picture of the cover. The title of the collection is printed at the top of the cover in a black

²¹ Abdo, Rita (1998). *Maray al-Wahm "Literary Cards"*. Nazareth: Municipal High School in Nazareth. P. 24. (The text of the poem is appended at the end of the study).

²² Qaddour, Abdallah Thani (2004). *Simya'iyyat al-Sura*. Wahran: Dar al-Gharb li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'. P. 152.

²³ Ben Youb, Mohammad (2006). Aliyyat Qira'at al-Sura al-Bassariyya. *The Fifth International Forum for the Novel*; Abd al-Hamid ben Hadouqa, *Dirasat wa Ibdat'at the Eighth International Forum*. Province of Burj Boa'rierij: Ministry of Education. Education Division, p. 82.

color, too. The script is in a large size to reflect the meanings of destruction and suppression that the title carries.

Probably the abyss between the title of the book and the name of the poet is represented by the digital/ time distance that is filled by the picture of the rock with the key and the eye between them. Besides, the brown color in the picture conveys the meanings of this embodiment to the receiver, which are emphasized by the key and the eye. The *eye* observes the prevailing injustice and persecution and the *key* represents the tool to fight that injustice and persecution. In this way, colors play an important role in affecting the individual's psychological feelings.

Besides, tendency towards some specific colors is attributed to certain circumstances in our life and culture and our psychological conditions through which the Arab individual undergoes in his life battle, which is full of severe sorrow and disappointment that reflect the depth of pain and longing for justice and free soul from the manacles of injustice and persecution. This is what is summarized by the identity of *Maraya al-Wahm* through its allusions that are represented in the picture on the book cover.

The book cover of *Maraya al-Wahm* represents a visual semiotic sign that expresses the hidden meanings of the whole collection of poems. It is possible to argue that the group of poems in *Maraya al-Wahm* gives a specific view about some psychological, intellectual and political tendencies of one of the Palestinian poets who sincerely went through the experience of the feminist creativity. It is clear that she gave a lot of effort in her choice of suitable titles for her poems. In my view, she does not differ in this from other modernist writers or poets, who generally choose a main title that combines the total indicative meanings of the creativity that is filled with the essence of the poetic experience. Let's have a random look at some titles of the book, *Maraya al-Wahm*:

- Signs of my Existence
- Twin of the Soul
- A Rainy Whisper
- A Silent Guitar
- From the Records of Life
- Behind the Bars
- A New Year
- There is a Woman Beside Each Great Man
- To You in the Twentieth Century
- On your Departure, Nizar!
- An Attempt
- Respect
- The Woman
- An Entrance
- Alienation

- Cinderella
- Friendship
- The Woman and the Prophet
- The Man and the Tribe
- Faint Gleams
- Birth in the Womb of the Language
- Circles of the Labyrinth
- Illusion of Hope
- A Cry of Parsing
- The Mirrors of Illusion

These titles have linguistic deviations, which appear also in the poems themselves, each of which includes some transparent symbol that is soon discovered by the reader. In short, a look at the titles of *Maraya al-Wahm*²⁴ shows that they are often incomplete; they are single words, phrases or units of two or three words.

Syntax has always been one of the linguistic branches that establish verbal sentences. It is generally considered a very complicated linguistic science that deals with sentence structure (spoken and written), sentence order, position of adjectives and objects.²⁵ The basis of the structure is the "sentence", which is considered the main linguistic unit in the communicative process. The titles that have a sentence structure appear in the poems: *Signs of my Existence, Twin of the Soul, the Woman and the Prophet, The Man and the Tribe, A New Year, A Rainy Whisper, A Silent Guitar, and Faint Gleams*. The titles which constitute a phrase structure appear in the poems: *From the Records of Life, A Woman Beside Every Great Man, To You in the Twentieth Century, On Your Departure, Nizar!* The titles that consists of one word are: *The Woman, Entrance, Alienation, Cinderella, Friendship, An Attempt, Respect*.

The syntax structure of the three titles: *Rainy Whisper, The Woman and the Prophet, and The Woman*, have the following orders: *Rainy Whisper* is a compound noun that consists of an adjective + a noun; *The Woman and the Prophet*, consists of two nouns joined by a conjunction, while *The Woman* is a single item with the definite article (al-/ the).

We can conclude from these syntactic structures of the titles that the poet chose titles that indicate her psychological stability in expressing her psychological experience in all her poems. The nominal sentence "indicates stability and solidity" while the verbal sentence is characterized by "occurrence". This type of verbal sentence is reflected in one title in the collection where the predicate of the subject in *Nero Does not Burn* is a verb through which the extent of the poet's political, psychological and social excitement is revealed to the receiver.

²⁴ Since the study deals with a poem from a collection of poems that has its structural interacting features, we should pay attention to these features in order to understand them at the structural level.

²⁵ Toussaint, Bernard (1994). *What is Semiology*. Translated into Arabic as: *Ma Hiya al-Semiologia* by Muhammad Nazif. 1st ed. Dar al-Nashr Ifriqya al-Sharq, p. 17.

Before starting to deal with the title of poem **Sarkhat 'I'rab/ A Cry of Parsing**, it is necessary to deal with the title that the poet chose for her collection, which is: *Maraya al-Wahm/ Mirrors of Illusion*, which is also a title of one of the poems of the collection. In my view, the poet was successful in choosing this title rather than the others. It is also successful in its position in the series of poems. The number of the poems is 63 and the place of *Maraya al-Wahm* is the 37th.

The poem is in the middle of all the poems. In my view, the writer probably wanted to imply something about this position in this order, which might be random, but if the title *Maraya al-Wahm* is in the middle, it might be considered as a main title for every title of the other poems as each poem reflects and points out one aspect of the "mirrors" and the "illusion".

There are some questions that the reader might raise before he starts entering the world of the poems in *Maraya al-Wahm*. He might get answers when he looks into the condition of the 'mirrors' and the condition of the 'illusion' in his time or the time in which the poems were written and their actions took place; it might also be identical with or different from the condition of the mirrors and illusion in which the poet lived. If the condition at the time of writing the poems and the time of the event is similar to the time of reading the text, the reader can draw the conclusion that what the poems say is what reality says.

However, if their condition in his time is different, he will read about another world or life. Here he might reach a conclusion that says that the condition in reality is different from the condition in the poems, and the cause of the difference is that the 'poems' are different from reality, and the lived time, the time of reading, is different from the previous time, the narrative time or the time of writing.

We cannot be sure that the persona/ the poet Rita Abdo herself was aware of this aspect in a theoretical and applied way, but this does not mean that she did not think about the titles of her poems and about the shape of the cover page of her book *Maraya al-Wahm*.

As for the poem ***A Cry of Parsing***, its position is the eighteenth in the order of series of the poems. The title was separated from the text and did not appear in its body. It is typed in a larger size in bold so that it will take a directional, guiding and indicative value.

The title might be a predicate of an omitted subject. ***A Cry of Parsing*** is a nominal sentence that consists of a subject and its predicate is omitted. What is omitted of the title is the predicate, the following information that is given in the body of the text and it serves as the predicate of the omitted subject. Therefore, it is a complementary title that includes within it the center of the poem. However, the reader might be able to understand the text and the central idea of the text of the poem without going back to it. This means that this title is different from the other complementary titles without which the text cannot be understood. Depending on that, it is possible to consider it a partially complementary title. Besides, the presence of the subject at the level of writing does not absolutely mean its presence at the level of thought and intellect and thus, the "Cry " will continue to be a deluge or, in short, merely a dream that will continue to escape from us as long as the condition is static and does not change.

Thus, the title of *A Cry of Parsing* summarizes the content of the poem. However, the absence of the predicate or its omission in the title of *An Cry of Parsing* is likely to refer us to the absence of a fundamental issue in the life of the writer/ poem, which is in my view, the absence of 'change'. Under the section about the 'components of the title', Shu'eib Halifi

writes in his study about the 'main title' and subtitle or 'secondary title' and about the two features of 'ambiguity' and 'omission'. He writes about the structure of the title, saying: This is defined in five types: the nominal sentence, adverbs, adjectives, sentence type, and exclamatory type. He also sees that there are other components that look at the title in a free liberated and active way, which includes five components: the active component, the time component, the space component, the objective component, the event component, and the animate or inanimate components.²⁶

If we focus on the two features of 'ambiguity' and 'omission', we can argue that the first feature is absent as there is no ambiguity in the title of the poem here, and if 'ambiguity' exists, the text soon removes it because it, i.e. the text, constitutes a reply and a clarification. What remains is the feature of 'omission'.

As said before, in order to understand the indication of the title of the study here, it is a must to connect it with the body of the poem as a whole and read the whole body attentively and insightfully. If we take the method of looking for the indication of the text in its title, starting from the top to understand the bottom, we may not achieve our goal. Therefore, we have to read the title and the text simultaneously in order to understand it and its purpose. Thus, the word "Cry" is connected organically with the body of the text through its indication. The 'Cry' is the best linguistic style that suits the form in which the poem is written. By doing so, the poem adopts a form through the tyranny of pain and the labyrinth of wondering. The best expression about this form is the 'impression' that we see in the form of the poem: "*Till when will the true human being stay like a 'hidden pronoun' and the dwarfs that are semi-verbal make this person 'a subject' and that person 'an object' when they like?*" This means that the word "Cry" is used to express the essence and content of the poem and its form. The real life is neglected and the evidence is that the 'dwarfs', who are "semi-verbal" continue to make "nouns" (people) "objects" or "subjects" as they like! The poet uses 'grammatical' terms to symbolize political and social deeds. Making someone a 'subject' means in colloquial Arabic 'putting him in a high position' and making someone an 'object' means 'putting him at a 'lower position'. This metaphorical comparison implies the idea that non-valuable small insignificant low people rule real life and they have the power to decide and to raise or lower the status of other valuable significant high people.

However, when we finish reading the poem, we are likely to reinforce one condition and discard other conditions but the body of the poem is the rest of the title, which appears through its reading, isolated from the text or an incomplete title that raises queries and the answer comes through the poem. Thus, the reader realizes that the 'Cry' is a cry of pain and moaning.

The title "Sarkhat 'I'rab/ A Cry of Parsing" summarizes the poem and urges the reader to investigate, scrutinize and contemplate. So, he reads it twice: if there is a 'Cry', why is it connected to 'I'rab/ parsing? This 'Cry' calls for a 'change' and if the 'Cry' stands for 'change', 'I'rab, linguistically, implies the declension that takes place at the end of nouns and verbs to imply a change in their grammatical function. Thus, it implies the desire for change in social and political life. 'I'rab is the change of fragmentation and breaking up of positions and statuses, which should take a final form. The case diacritics should be put in their right places

²⁶ Halefi, Shu'eib (1992). *Istratigiyyat al-U'nwan: al-Nass al-Muwazi li al-Riwaya. al-Karmel*. Haifa: University of Haifa 81/46, p. 86.

and the words should take their right places despite the differences in the factors that are added to the "Cry" and cause a change in its pronunciation and indication and grammatical function. In this way, the utterance of "Cry" identifies and corresponds with "'I'rab" in the structure of the title.

If the "Cry" is to express pain, sorrow and disappointment and its linkage to "'I'rab" is to indicate the idea that 'change' is desirable, though it did not and will not take place, then the name is separated from the named. When the reader reads the title after reading the poem, he will recall his first reading and consolidates the second reading and will know that 'Cry' indicates the depth of pain that results from absence of change; there is pain in death, and there is rebirth in the 'Cry'. Injustice exists wherever semi-verbal dwarfs lower and raise whatever they like while the true human being remains a 'hidden pronoun'. This is what the query that opens the poem emphasizes. It asks: *Till when?*

Through this indication, the title has become a key for interpreting the text²⁷ which was able to draw a painting in which two realities are in conflict in which the 'dwarfs' beat the true human being; corruption overcomes goodness and righteousness; humiliation overcomes honor, and decline overcomes loftiness. There is no doubt that this interpretation would not work without our tight connection between the body of the text and its title. If the title is separated from the text, it will not convey the real indication and the poetic message that the text intends to convey to the readers. The title of this poem is indicative and effective as a linguistic sign and it works according to accurate tools that connect it with the text on the one hand, and guarantees its effect on the receiver, on the other. It is the "poetics" that characterizes a lot of Rita Abdo's poems if not all of them. With these attributes, the title becomes the "real medium" of the text, according to Fortier.²⁸

The title of *An Cry of Parsing* refers to extreme cases of fragmentation in a horribly infected reality that is filled with pain, protest and rebellion. The word "Cry" is a general, broad, comprehensive loaded word at the indicative and connotative levels.²⁹ It refers to a funereal atmosphere which marks the indicative plains of the texts. It suggests disappointment, confusion, weeping, sadness and pain. The word 'I'rab/ Parsing is the indication, the clue and the sign that suggests the 'change' of those conditions and atmosphere. In this way, the title turns into evidence to a reality. Therefore, we do not wonder why the poet chooses the

²⁷ To study the title of any text, Muhammad Muftah suggests two paths: one starts from the title/ the top to understand the textual body, the base/ which he calls "al-Qim'ada (a combination of two Arabic words: *qimma*/top + *qa'iada*/ base = 'qim'ada'); the second path starts from the studied text, which he calls "al-Qa'ima", (which is a combination of two Arabic words: *al-qa'ida*/ base + *al-qimma*/ top). Both paths lead to understanding the title. It seems that the second path is more beneficial because a lot of titles do not help in understanding the text or even approximate the reader from the content. Usually, the title tends to create illusion, disturbance and ambiguity. With this regard, Umberto Eco says that the title should intend to create disturbance in the reader's thoughts rather than to register them. The formation of any title in any text should not be arbitrary, but connected to the body of the text in any way. In fact, it is an integral part of the body. Therefore, it is the wide road to decode the total group of symbols and enigmas. Muhammad Muftah says that the title provides a valuable information that enables the reader to decode the text and study it. See, for example: Muftah, Muhammad (1990). *Dinamiyyat al-Nass*. Beirut: al-Markiz al-Thaqafi al-'Arabi, p. 72.

²⁸ *Al-'Aalam al-Thaqafi*. Al-Ribat, S. 33, N0. 27/09/2002. P. 7.

²⁹ The semiotic research has developed very quickly since Breal and de Saussure and difference and variety between scholars have become a characterizing feature due to the elaborate abstract research and the expansion of the space of study and appearance of new systems that competed with the linguistic system. The semiotic type has become one of the most present types in critical literary readings of the text as a network of indicative signs. Research in the semiotic fields is considered one of the fields that has not crystallized a comprehensive semiotic theory before the twenties and thirties of 20th century despite the linguistic efforts that have been made by semioticians. See, for example: Abd al-Jalil, Manqour (2001). *Ilm al-Dalala: Usuluho wa Mabahithuhu fi al-Turath al-'Arabi*. Damascus: Union of Arab Writers, p. 43.

indefinite word "Cry"³⁰ as indefiniteness has the property of generalization and absoluteness. If the title is 'indefinite' and non-specific, it becomes 'general' and unlimited or confined to a specific case. Besides, an 'indefinite' 'non-specific' title can raise a lot of questions in the receiver's intellect and arouses its interest in reading the text.

From the conjugational point of view, the word 'Cry' /Sarkha has the rhythm of the grammatical radical "Fa'la" (in Arabic) in the singular indefinite form. In Arabic grammar, it is a form that indicates the "Name of Number of Times" of the action: an (*Ism Marrah*) that is based on the root (s.r.kh. / Sad. Ra'. Kha'). It indicates distinction of the 'singular' from the 'plural' and the general 'kind' of things. It is *one* "Cry"/ "Sarkha" out of the whole 'kind' of "Sarkhat" (cries). Thus, indefiniteness has indication and if it is 'absolute' it can indicate 'singularity' or generality of 'kind'. Al-'Alawi said: "Indefiniteness in nouns e.g.: *a man, a horse, a lion* has indication of two things: 'singularity' and 'kind'. The intention is connected to one of them and the other is a follower. If you say: Is there *a man* or *a woman* in the house? The 'kind' is indicated and 'singularity' is a non-intentional follower. If you say: Is there a man or two men? The intention here is 'singularity' only, not 'kind'.³¹

As mentioned above, the title 'Sarkhat 'Irab/ A Cry of Parsing' is a nominal sentence/ phrase that consists of two connected words. Each of them is a *legal sign* (légisigne), informative and symbolical. The first sign "Sarkha/ Cry" is *legal* (légisigne) because it belongs to a linguistic process and system that has special grammatical rules (Standard Arabic), and *symbolical* because it is one of the words that can express meaning by itself (Les catégorématiques). Regarding the syntactic aspect, it consists of a subject (in the nominative case), with a 'governing' meaning according to the Basra Grammarians/ Syntacticians. Regarding its dictionary lexicological meaning, Ibn Manzour al-Massri (711 H.) says: "al-Sarkha/ the Cry" is a strong shout at a moment of fear or disaster; al-Sarikh is 'al-Mustaghith', the one who calls for help.³²

The second sign 'I'rab/ Parsing is also a legal sign (légisigne). In my view, Rita Abdo resorted to the word "'I'rab", which is in the view of many semioticians, an indexical sign (Les Syncatégorématiques) because it does not express any meaning on its own outside context; it gives meaning by its combination with other items. The word 'I'rab has the rhythm of the radical If'al (إفْعَال).

From the syntactical grammatical point of view, the word 'I'rab is governed (mudhaf ilayhi) by a noun to the governing word "sarkha" (mudhaf) and the predicate is omitted as we mentioned before.³³ Ibn Manzour says in al-Lisan: 'I'rab means changing the annotation

³⁰ To indicate indefiniteness in language, the noun can be used as an indefinite noun to express 'singularity' such as God's words: (wa ja'a min aqsa al-Madina rajulun yas'a/ and a man came from the remotest place in Madina seeking.....) in: the Koran's Sura of (Ya-Sin), Verse 20. Another goal of indefiniteness can be to express alarming or glorification such as God's words: (wa ittaqou yawman la tujzi nafsun 'an nafsin shay'an/ (beware of a day when no soul can reward anything for another soul), in: The Koran's Sura of (al-Baqara/ the Cow), Verse, 48. See, for example: al-Samarra'i, S. Fadel (2003). *Ma'ani al-Nahiw/ Meanings of Syntax*. 2nd ed. Jordan: Dar al-Fikr. p. 37-38.

³¹ Al-'Alawi, Yahya bin Hamza (1914). *Al-Tarraz*. 2nd ed. Egypt: Matba'at al-Muqtataf. 12.

³² Ibn Manzour, Abu al-Fadhl Muhammad bin Mukarram (1994). *Lisan al-'Arab*. 1st ed. Vol. 15. Part 1. Beirut: Dar Sader. P. 85.

³³ It is known in Arabic syntax that in the genitive construction (Idhafa), the Idhafa to a 'Mua'arraf (definite) noun, adds 'definiteness' to the Mudhaf noun. e.g. ghulamu Zaid / Zaid's lad: "Ghulam" is Nakira (indefinite) before Idhafa. By Idhafa to the Proper noun Zaid, Ghulam becomes Ma'rifa/ definite, too. However, the noun that is "mudhaf" to Nakira/ indefinite noun, e.g. Ghulam Imra'ah / a Woman's lad. In this combination, the Idhafa adds the meaning of "Takhshis"/ Specification, because (Ghulam/lad) before "Idhafa" is Nakira (indefinite) and is not specified. When it was added to Nakira/ Indefinite, it became specified by a woman. (What is meant by Takhshis is that the meaning does not become fully definite. Thus, "Ghulam Imra'ah" (a woman's lad) is more specific than (ghulam) but it is not distinguished and specified like (ghulam

signs of parsing at the end of the word as a result of the difference of explicit or implicit elements that enter it.

"al-'I'rab, according to the definition of linguists, is: Expression and clarification of something. If you say to an Arab "'A'rib li" you mean: express and clarify your words to me. Similarly, "A'raba al-kalam wa 'Araba bihi" means "showed and clarified it". "'I'rab" was given this name because it shows and clarifies. Therefore, the person who is eloquent in his speech is described as "'A'raba", i.e. "He was eloquent".³⁴

To sum up, the title as a linguistic sign and a miniature text crowns a larger text and it consists of two prominent legal symbolical signs. Their structure indicates that the content of the whole text is concerned with an 'Cry of pain'.

The word "Sarkha" consists of two syllables; the first one (Sar-) has tendency towards the downward corner; the second syllable (-kha) has tendency towards the upward corner. In my view, this reveals that the 'Sarkha/ Cry' comes out of the bottom of the heart ascending upwards to heaven to complain about its distress, pains and moans.

Nariman al-Madhi says that the position of the title before the text leads to its consideration as an introducer to the work. Consequently, this supposes that there is a certain reader to whom the work is introduced. Thus, the supposed reader approaches to read the title first before he reads the work because of its introductory position.

In this stage, the title affects the reader through activating his previous background knowledge and focusing it in the direction of the title. The reader poses several interpretations to the title depending on his previous knowledge and then moves on to the text as those interpretations are already stored in his mind. Such interpretations and anticipations are negated or confirmed in the course of reading the text. The reader of the title continues steadily to achieve understanding of the title and its indications within the deep strata of the text in case the title asks the reader to give this effort and does not reveal its meaning easily.³⁵

The persona/ poet starts the poem with the question: "Ila mata / Till when?" This anxious and puzzled version, which is full of doubt, expresses the existential worry that obsesses the writer/ poet and her agony, her tension and the pains of her soul as she faces a difficult condition in which the 'dwarf' occupies a place where he should not be, while the true person is put in an isolated corner, invisible and hidden, where he should not be!

It should be pointed out here that if the opening sentence in poetic texts is characterized by being an interrogative (or subjunctive) sentence, what characterizes the poetic sentence is its linguistic clear exclusiveness, which allows it to broaden in its elegance, which also creates a quick rhythm.

The question (Till when?) transfers the anxiety which is conveyed by the title due to its multiplicity of its indicative semantic tracks. Anxiety has extension through the disease of the

Zaid/Zaid's lad). See for example: al-Azhari, Khalid (2000). *Shar'h al-Tassrih ala al-Tawdhiih*. Edited by: Basel 'Uyun al-Soud. 1st ed. Beirut: Dar l-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, p. 677.

³⁴ Ibn Manzour. *Lisan al-'Arab*. P. 589.

³⁵ Al-Madhi, Nariman (2005). Al-'Unwan Inda Abd al-Qader al-Janabi. An M.A. Thesis in Arabic Literature. University of Haifa. Haifa. P. 96.

question (Till when?) and it increases the reader's anxiety and puzzle when he enters the text, where he clashes with a bitter reality that is related by the poem. In this way, the title is connected with the text through a direct relationship that is revealed in its expansion into the introduced meanings within the body of the text.

Thus, the poem recalls the relationship of the 'Cry' with 'parsing' in its real dimension, which is represented through their adjacency. However, the real connection between the title and the text is revealed in their investment of 'anxiety' and 'pain', which are present in the surrounding reality that the poem describes and where the 'true' person is 'hidden' and concealed while the 'dwarfs' have the power and are decision-takers. The absence of the question mark at the end of the question "Ila mata/ Till when" implies that the poet does not want to ask about "till when will the true person stay *an implied hidden pronoun*". In fact, it is a kind of a 'rhetoric question, an exclamation and expression of denunciation of an unjust situation regarding the 'true' person, who is kept 'hidden' and invisible while the 'untrue' 'false' dwarfish one is prominent and visible and has the power to take decisions.

As we move deeper into the text, we find it more shining with its direct allusions and thus, it continues to enlighten the indications of the title as if they were essential windows that allow the reader to comprehend its intentionality. The persona/ poet suffers and feels helpless opposite a strange situation – the true person is the one who always cries out a cry of pain hoping that there will be some change in his reality. It seems that the story here is the story of every true person versus human dwarfs who rule the affairs of life and it carries the poet's Cry and the cry of every true individual who is suffering in an unjust society and is suffering from the severity of his pain and oppression.

In my view, only the poet knows when the answer to the question of "Till when!" She intends to keep the title's indication evasive and absent, and cannot be arrested so that it will continue bearing several interpretations. This feature motivates the reader to define the indication of the title through research in its interconnectivity with the following text semantically and linguistically. The title and the text constitute a major correlative structure and consequently, the title generates most of the text indications. If the text is the born creature, the title is the real creator of the intertwinements of the text and its intellectual and ideological dimensions.

Sarkhat 'I'rab/ A Cry of Parsing as a title declares about itself as an initial sentence/ phrase in the text emphasizing that it has a following completion. The exclamatory rhetoric question (Till when!) as a first sentence is a logical completion to the title, which refers and tells about the theme of the poem. Perhaps the poet has some sympathy for the Arab reader and his condition and avoids him the great shock which comes in the text and avoids revealing it in the title leaving the essential thing to the depth in the middle in an attempt to keep for the reader the pleasure of diving into the text. Thus, it discovers the meaning and forms the semantic indication so that he will become an active reader rather than a passive receiver.

The title *Sarkhat 'I'rab/ An Cry of Parsing* deserves a second treatment and contemplation, not just for its structure but because of the density of its semantic indicative structure that demands different tracks that are capable of semantic fulfilment. What draws attention in it is its combination between two different lexical items from two different worlds, which makes the poem a discrepant world that combines between "Sarkha/ Cry" and "'I'rab/ Parsing".

The ironic paradox is not perceived from the dictionary load only but from the contradictory reconciliation between the semantic indicative worlds that are connected to the word

"Sarkha" in our daily memory because the Sarkha/ Cry is a human behavioral action; it is a behavior that is performed by human beings, and mostly when pain and sadness reach their climax. Sometimes, this behavior appears on occasions of pleasure. The 'Cry' went beyond its daily life use to the world of language where it settled.

Thus, the title went beyond the 'Cry' to the language that has no borders. However, 'I'rab is a word that the poet borrowed from the world of Arabic syntax as if change would inevitably take place due to the indications that the word 'I'rab carries in its specifications which makes the word "'I'rab" connected to the world of Arabic syntax and grammar. There is a great significance in this connection thanks to the indication that lead us to a linguistic object. In this way, the title penetrates the borders and went beyond it in order to express the extent of pain, disappointment and sadness.

All this is likely to make us believe that we are dealing with a political poem that tells the story of every head or president or man in charge of a public position and describes him as a semi-verbal dwarf. On the other hand, it tells the story of every true and straight person whom she describes as an implied "hidden pronoun".

To sum up, we can say that, generally speaking, this study deals with two semantic fields: the political semantic field and the social semantic field³⁶. Rita Odeh's political vision is derived

³⁶ When we speak about the political semiotic field, we should point out that the novel is considered one of the literary genres in which the author's soul darts towards a creation of a kind of visions that are spread on the scene of work and introduce the author's vision about his reality in an artistic and aesthetic way in the world of aesthetics and sentiments because he/she sees things in their fresh stage. His viewpoint is not a result of logical thinking or science but an intuitive feeling. His tools are not tools of analysis and construction but productive imagination. See for example: al-Karaki, Khalid (1989). *Al-Rumuz al-Turathiyya al-'Arabiyya fi al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Hadith*. 1st ed. Beirut, Amman. Dar al-Jil. Maktabat al-Rae'd al-Ilmiyya, p. 21. The title demands that the writer should spend a lot of time thinking to create it and turn it into a semiotic and publicizing structure for the fictional text. Each title that the writer puts on the cover of his poem or at the top of his poem like a star or in the middle of a text or subtext undergoes a lot of effort to coin. Coining a title of any creative work is a part of an artistic writing due to the fact that the title has a special significance, first, at the publicity and promotional level, second, at the intellectual level, and third, at the aesthetic level. Due to these considerations, the title has a special importance to the author and the receiver alike because it is the essence of the text and its summary. Thus, the title has a strategic position that constitutes a sign that declares its intentions and goals. Through the title, the text hints at its contents without telling it in a complete open way. The title reflects the text in its surface morphology and deep structure. Consequently, the title is the text and the relation between them is a dialectic and interactive relation. It is also the nucleus of the text and its greater theme on which it revolves. The text is nothing but a complementation of the title and an extension to it through elongation, expansion and change into different versions. See for example: Hamdawi, Jamil: "Surat al-Unwan fi al-Riwaya al-'Arabiyya", p. 6.

The artist is likely to borrow some of his political tools, meanings, symbols, history, and characters to communicate a certain message to the receiver, who contributes to the interaction of the politically educated intellectual without studying or teaching it such as: motivation to armed or intellectual revolution or eulogistic oration of a political personality. Thus, the relationship between literature and politics is fertile and complicated. Politics in literature should not be limited to the artistic meaning as that negates its literary nature. Politics in literature is limited to the historical meaning and the writer's awareness of its forms and his practice of social and literary life and his practice of political life in his own products but in his own tools. That is quite difficult when poetry is the tool of vision. See, for example: Suleiman, Nabil (1985). *As'ilat al-Waqi'yya wa al-Iltizam*. 1st ed. Syria: Dar al-Hiwar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', p. 92, 93. When we talk about the social semiotic field and before we deal with the issue of the relationship between the creative work and social environment, it is necessary to point out that the creator/ artist is an individual who is living among a group of people and expresses himself as a social individual about a group of social individuals, whether intentionally or unintentionally. He is the voice of the people with whom he lives and breathes his dreams, his pains, and his joy within a human environment; he interacts with this group, crystalizes their thoughts and directions, and embodies their hopes, and expresses their reality and aspirations starting from this reality into the battle of life and future life. The creative artist in general is responsible for the development and backwardness of his society because he is a participant in it, affects it and is affected by it. Probably the responsibility of the author is greater and more serious because literature specifically is based on a linguistic material, i.e. frank semantic indications. See for example: Assi, Michael (1970). *Al-Adab wa al-Fann: Bahth Jamali fi al-Anwa' wa al-Madaris al-Adabiyya wa al-Fanniyya*. 2nd ed. Beirut: Manshurat al-Maktab al-Tijari li al-Tiba' wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', p. 41, 43. In general, the social role of literature is revealed in developing its cognitive, intellectual and educational loads

From Sarkhat 'I'rab, and from her relationship with her Palestinian society and certain events through which this people undergoes and their effect on her.

Besides, this study limited the social lexicon of the poem through a number of indications that reflect the social life of the Palestinian Arab people of: faith, social types and behavior, injured psychological soul and Rita Odeh's viewpoint to them within this system. All this is to reflect the intuitive vision of the poet and then to project it on the reality the Palestinian Arab who, no sooner had he finished the battle of struggle, he found himself again falling into another battle of another kind, which is the battle of search for a lost identity. Thus, he found himself in another kind of struggle, which is the struggle against values that have become violated and upside down.

The writer's language dominated the language of the poem here. There is no doubt that there is an ideological attitude that the writer reflects in her employment of such language.³⁷ Jamil Hamdawi says in this regard that the title declares the writer's purpose and his ideological intentions. It is a reference that includes within itself the relationship, the symbol and the intensity of the meaning in which the writer tries to assert his intention in a full way.³⁸

The size of confrontation and the dominance of reality and its insistence on the writer kept her away from the temptation of poetic liberation. This requires loyalty to reality with a meta-language that makes the reader forget the power of reality and the bitterness of the experience, as if the effort and purpose were diverted towards the content more than the towards the form. Therefore, it is a language that is charged with indications and as a result, the poem sounds to be inclined to the social bottom, which is the condition of the Arab societies. This situation deprived the poet from the possibilities of linguistic elegance and taking care of imagery and eloquence of discourse from making us feel that in the poetic diction. Instead, the poet turned to the artistic language that is charged with pain and excitement.

The poem has some irony that we notice in the description of the semi-verbal dwarfs : "Till when will the true man be an 'implied pronoun' and the semi-verbal dwarfs make this person a 'subject' and that person 'an object'.... as they like?"

Irony is one of the most important techniques that are current in literary writing. In the first case, it is employed as a technique that requires wit and shrewdness. In the second case, it requires critical knowledge, especially that it includes different types, styles and tools. The human being employs it to face serious conditions that he cannot face at the level of ordinary life. It is possible through irony to approximate the world and bring it into the familiar and the habitual. Thus, it is a dramatic instrument to face dramatic conditions, which might appear frightful and irresistible in daily life. From this perspective, literature appears to be in

by the knowledge, experience and guidance with which it provides the receiver. See for example, Suleiman, Nabil, *As'ilat al-Waqi'iyya wa al-Iltizam*, p. 93.

³⁷ In my view, it is impossible to imagine an ideology that is based on a cold mental basis like science and philosophy. The word 'emotion' means here 'liberation of a feeling that was imprisoned because of a crisis of alienation and was liberated as a result of a gap or a hole in the wall of alienation. The written text is an existential extension of the writing Self and intensification of the cultural, educational, social, ideological and psychological dimension. Therefore, the written text by the woman who lives a special exile is distinctive from other, and when she expresses her exiled and alienated existence through symbols and writing, she produces original writing. It is known that writing of exile and exclusion, danger and prison is the most violent and tense type of writing. See for example: Affaya, Muhammad Nur al-Din (1985). "al-Mar'ah wa al-Kitabah." *Majallat al-Wihda*. 1st year. NO 9, June.

³⁸ Hamdawi, Jamil (1997). *al-Simiotiqah wa al-Anwana*. Alam al-Fikr. 3/25. Kuwait, p. 107.

need of this technique throughout generations and there is no generation that did not employ it. Both the Western and the Arab literatures employed this technique and thus it occupied the space of poetry, prose and imagery.³⁹

SUMMARY

The importance of the subject of the title appears through realization of its high status, and the interest of poets and critics in it, especially after criticism has become interested in the thresholds of the texts in general and the title in particular. Despite its small size, the title has become a guardian on the text. The text is no more a guardian on the title. As a result, a new literary field emerged called the science of the title.

The importance of the title emerged from the rhetorical approach that seeks to break the domination of total denotative literal meaning of the title and substitute it with a connotative title. The title is considered one of the most important constituting elements of the literary work. It is the text authority, its advertising parlor and its indicative part. The title contributes to the interpretation of the text and decoding its ambiguity. Therefore, the writer was careful about titling his texts because the title is a procedural key to clarify the enigmas of the text in a semiotic way.

The title is the first threshold to the text and its gate because it introduces clarification, connotation and supposition that allows the reader to enter the world of the text through the semantic indicative possibilities that it introduces. It defines the horizon of the reader's reading horizon, directs his reading to the text, defines the path of this reading and seduces the reader to enter the world of the text or keeps him off it.

The title of Sarkhat 'I'rab performs all these tasks through its implied indications that reveal the contents of the poem, which is in complete harmony with its form. *The title is considered the beginning of enjoyment and this is what moves the pain of writing, which changes gradually into a pain of continuous reading in a process in which the text becomes equivalent to the narrator. Therefore, it is necessary for the creator to take into consideration the aesthetics and artistic aspects of the title in order to make it a procedural term or concept in textual approaches.*

The selection of the writer to the title of his work is often mixed with the writer's intentionality. Anyway, the writer does not choose a title arbitrarily; on the contrary, he intends to express through it many indications and enlightenments that contribute to decoding of the symbols of its text whether in its style and structure or its semantic indications and its interconnectivity with the following text. Selection of Sarkhat 'I'rab suggests a lot of indications. When the reader finishes reading the poem in a semiotic way, he/ she will notice that the title is an independent discourse of text in itself.

³⁹ The term "Parody" refers to every literary or artistic work that imitates the style of a certain writer in an ironic way and arouses laughter and ridicule. Bakhtin clarifies the term Parody by describing it as a kind of 'stylization' in which the purpose of the personifying language is opposite to the purposes of the personified language which makes the first capable of destroying the second. One of the conditions of Parody is to recreate a language of Parody as if it were an essential whole that is available in its internal logic and revealing to a unique world that is connected to the language that was the subject of Parody. See for example: Bakhtin, Mikael (2009). *Al-Khitab al-Riwa'iy*. Translated by: Muhammad Barradeh. Cairo: Dar al-Fikr li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'. P. 30-31.

It is also a semantic nucleus and everything that follows it is considered interpretation and clarification to it. Thus, the title at the top of the page is the basis of every discourse and the text, the scene, the chapter or the section is built up on it through modification, explanation, elaboration and expatiation or detailing of the meaning. It is possible to argue that it is impossible to read the literary texts isolated from their titles. Similarly, we cannot study titles isolated from the body of the texts.

The poem under study here is focused on the title because it is the center of the poem and anything else is just an environment. However, the relationship between them is a dialectic relationship that is reflected in the interaction of the text with the title through harmony and semantic indicative objectification or disappointing the reader's horizon of anticipation. The title Sarkhat 'I'rab constitutes a complicated symbolic image in which the retroactive flashback dimension identifies with the connotative one.

In other words, the strings of the title naming intermingle and the lights of truth fade to be compensated by indications of the symbolical or, more accurately, the allegorical implication.

It is possible to consider it as an exciting title that draws the reader's attention because of the difference and contradiction between the words "sarkha" and "'I'rab". Besides, it is possible to consider it as one of the 'directing' titles as the subject of the title does not appear to be clear but symbolized. While reading the text, the reader reaches discovery and exploration that the title is intended to the poet's criticism of the Arab society and Arab individual who is living in a reality where the true person remains 'unknown hidden pronoun' and the dwarfs have become the rulers who can raise or lower the others.

It is possible also to consider the title as a thematic one because it is a direct phrase. It talks about the idea in a direct way and describes the subject of the text, which is done in a symbolic way as the two lexical items are symbols that are decoded after reading the text. Thus, the "Sarkha" symbolizes deep pain, sadness and disappointment, and 'I'rab' symbolizes the need of constant 'change' of declensions and signs of grammatical case. This implies a change in the role of the 'dwarfs' who make some people 'subjects', i.e. 'doers' superior, and other people 'objects', i.e. receivers, lower, and inferior. The connection between the two words is intended to symbolize rejection and refusal of this unnatural situation, where the "good subjects" are made "inferior" "objects" and vice versa. The persona refuses and denounces this situation.

In my view, in her poem Sarkhat 'I'rab, Rita Abdo contributes a special contribution to the reading during a period of self-destruction and social fragmentation that the Palestinian Arab human being is living. She does not only separate herself from the intellectual aspects and keeps the emotional lavish aspects in order to express but establishes a specific feministic poetic school through which she reflects the image of the struggling Arab woman.

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