

Embedded Cultural Patterns in Abu Firas Al-Hamadani's Ra'iyah: Arabic Poetry

Dr. Ahmad Talafha¹, Ms. Mushira Talafha², Dr. Khetam Shraideh³, Dr. Imad Ababneh⁴, Dr. Lina AlJarrah⁵, Dr. May Al. Shaikhli⁶

¹ Assistant Professor, Amman Arab University, Jordan

² A Full-time Lecturer, University of Jordan, Jordan

³ Assistant Professor, Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan

⁴ Associate Professor, Amman Arab University, Jordan

⁵ Associate Professor, Amman Arab University, Jordan

⁶ Assistant Professor, Amman Arab University, Jordan

Correspondence: Khetam Shraideh, Department of English Language and Literature, Jordan

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Abstract:

This paper tackles the cultural patterns in Abu Firas Hamdani's captivity poetry, namely Ra'iyah poem. The poet, who is normally a part of ideological, cultural, or social paradigms, represents and regenerates, consciously or unconsciously, the cultural patterns, especially those represented by his predecessors in their literary works, whether in prose or verse. Antonyms and displacement, and many other linguistic tools, allow a space for the poet to freely criticize, expose, and thus persuade authorities into setting him free. Undoubtedly, cultural criticism, a product of postmodern thoughts, is one of the prominent trends in the world of literary criticism, and it places the focus on culture as a platform from which the authors express their status and agenda. The embedded cultural patterns that are traced in Abu Firas' poetry are divided into three major themes, based on the suggested cultural patterns as elaborated in the current study.

Keywords: captivity poetry, cultural criticism, embedded cultural patterns, Ra'iyah poem

1. Introduction

Cultural criticism has been among the concepts that floated on the surface of postmodernism. The paratexts and social, political, historical, and epistemological contexts have been revived as valuable tools to study the text. Cultural criticism helps navigate through the depths of the text and thus helps track the circumstances under which the text is shaped in the first place and the fashion in which the cultural meaning gets migrated and transmitted towards the text. Cultural criticism uncovers hidden patterns coated with aesthetic devices, through which the scholar finds traces of the predecessor's texts in the text.

The cultural dimension of the Arab Culture cannot be neglected as a vital factor that influences the poetic consciousness of Arab poets, who are a product and a part of the system or the paradigm, which is never stagnant but is naturally and constantly on the go, reproducing itself in different forms, as if incarnated- in the Hindu sense- in the collective unconsciousness of the whole nation. Texts keep shooting out to thrive into cultural spaces where they can overlap, and thus a new text is woven. Artistic creation is formed in the womb of culture, where it is essentially nourished; the text underwriting picks up cultural residues on its way to completion.

In light of postmodernism, cultural studies emerged in around four decades or so as a tool for exploring the interaction between culture and one's social identity. Studies and theories associated with literary criticism, especially structuralism, have their roots in social sciences and philosophy. In these studies, culture has been viewed as a social act linked to every social unit, manifested in the light of power relations, and paired with concepts such as dominance, power, and resistance (Aydee 2018, 32). Cultural studies have received increasing attention in literary analysis over the last two decades. Research focusing on this type of cultural studies in the Arab world, in particular, goes in one of two directions: the first is that it tends to take cultural analysis concepts as a whole from the field of social action and apply them to literary works in a literal way. This approach was particularly evident in Alghathammi's book *Cultural Criticism*, where he advocates for this openness and emphasizes his vision. This trend seems to be exaggerating the adoption of concepts from cultural studies in their social origins - especially power and resistance.

Literary criticism is also dismissed in this regard, as it embodies the authority of the official institution and falsifies critical awareness of literature. With regard to the second path, it seeks to benefit from the concepts and achievements of cultural studies in analyzing the literary text, taking into account its specificity as a language and rhetorical phenomenon. This effort relies on developing literary criticism concepts, on the one hand, and adapting cultural studies concepts on the other. In that sense, this attempt is linked to the critical origins of cultural studies as it falls under the umbrella of modernity and postmodernity; the era that includes modern criticism itself, especially in

light of emerging rhetorical concepts of argumentation, dialogue, and persuasion (Aydee 2018, 33). As it relates to criticizing the central mentality that wipes out the other, cultural criticism dismantles discourse patterns with their creative, logical, and sacred manifestations (Alnaser 2021, 145). This type of criticism examines texts to reveal their multiple implications in relation to ideologies, history, politics, society, and economy. Thus, cultural criticism relates to various fields of culture, to society and power, as well as to race, class, and gender. It focuses heavily on socio-historical pressures at the expense of literary text production (Abdelraheem, 4298). Yousuf Oliamat, in his books *Aesthetics of Cultural Analysis: Pre-Islamic Classical Poetry* (2004) and *Categorical Criticism* (2015), and Abdelqadir Rabbai, in his books *Developments of Cultural Criticism* (2007) and *Discourse Aesthetics in Cultural Criticism: A new Argumentative Vision* (2014), stressed that cultural criticism is an intellectual activity that sees culture – in its totality- is a topic worth research. Among its objectives, cultural criticism uncovers ideologies of text from different historical eras, and uses critical methods to analyze literary texts introducing it in a new aesthetic cultural frame based on convincing interpretation through literary tools, which the critic can use to uncover meanings and investigate their implications, semantic and artistic.

Relating to cultural criticism as seen and applied by Yousuf Olaimat and Abdelqadir Rabbai in their reading and analyzing classic poetry, the researchers delve into the worlds of Abi Firas's captivity poetry to uncover the hidden cultural patterns. Cultural patterns manifest themselves in various linguistically marked forms of displacement, structural and semantic, chiasmic structures, antonyms, and even the music of the text. These rhetorical devices, which are undeniably a phenomenon in Hamdani's poetry, are explored in this paper as tools to uncover the hidden cultural patterns in Hamadani's poetry. In this context, Hamadani's chosen poem is to be read, relating to its historical context, namely his captivity poetry as well as his connections to his folk, the Hamadan, and Saif Al-Dawlah, the character of the "Knight Prince." These contextual elements have their places in the text. These elements could, in one way or another, have influenced his thoughts, attitudes, motives, and ways of expression.

2. Historical Background

Hamadani is a Shiite Muslim poet of the Hamdan Family. He is known as "Abi Firas," which means "The Lion." His full name is Harith Bin Said bin Hamdan Al-Taghlibi. His cousin Saif AL-Dawlah Hamadani fostered Abi Firas when Abi Firas was just a kid following his father's murder by his brother, Nasir Al-Dawlah. Saif Al-Dawlah took care of Abi Firas's Roman mother and his sister, who became later Saif Al-Dawlah's wife. Attentively, Saif AL-Dawlah made sure that Abi Firas received the proper education, knowledge-wise and military-wise. Abi Firas became the second man in the Hamadani State. Love and affection permeated their strong relationship. Abi Firas was loyal to his adopter. He had quite an exuberant personality, in which he integrated a vast range of remarkable interests. Besides him being a prominent state man, he was an exemplary leader that Saif Al-Dawlah appointed him as a "Wali (ruler)" for "Manbaj" and "Harran."

The poet in him showed itself when he was young, following the example of his poet peers at his time, making him a source of pride for his family. Unlike other court poets who used poetry as a tool to flatter Saif Al-Dawlah and get closer to him, Abi Firas never wrote poetry to serve an agenda and did not even bother to document it. He solely shared his poems with his teacher, Khalawaih, who could not share them with anybody else (Diwan Abu Firas, 11).

As for his "Romyyat" (captivity poems), which Abo Firas wrote during his captivity in the enemy's country because of the constant conflict due to the shared borders with Rome, these poems were the product of a unique experience that the sensitive poet went through then. His captivity poetry represents an integral part of his life during which he experienced the bitter taste of displacement and still is a source of inspiration for several contemporary poets. One day in 351 H, the Romans took him captive in an unequal battle while the poet prince returned after a hunting trip with his friends. He fought them back but was shot in the thigh by the Romans in an unequal battle. It had been a while before his ransom was paid, a thing that anguished him and stirred strong emotions about his destitute state. Some historical narratives assured that he ran away rather than was ransomed (Diwan Abu Firas, 6).

The heroic fights of the Hamdan family against the Romans cannot be denied as they gained several triumphs over the Romans; however, there was an internal political tension among the family's members causing strife and discords. Everyone would do whatever it took to gain exclusive control overall, and some would ally with the Romans against their kin. Some historical narratives explained Saif Al-Dawlah's delay to pay Abu Firas' ransom as an act of jealousy and fear as the former feared the latter's brave acts against the Romans at such a young age. Saif Al-Dawlah wanted to exclude him for a while as the brave poet posed a danger to his ruling status; despite all the opportunities, Saif Al-Dawlah delayed the process of setting his cousin free. He, for example, had the Roman King's son as a captive and could easily buy his cousin's freedom yet preferred to put the prisoners' exchange off.

The poet's mother, who was Roman, was an important figure in the poet's life. Hamdan's family members looked down on her as a woman enslaved as war spoils. Evidence abounds that she was ill-treated by Saif Al-dawleh Al-Hamadani and all other members of the Hamdani family, which made her central to the poet's concerns and agonies and a significant feature of his poetry. It is noteworthy that very few ancient Arab poets, like Alshareef Al-Raddi and Al-Maari, wrote poetry to serve this purpose, writing about and for their mothers, which makes it a phenomenon worth exploring. This purpose, a certainly tragic one, has its special place in Abu Firas' poetry:

لولا العجوزُ بمنجٍ ما خفت أسبابَ المنيةِ
 وكان لي عما سألت من الفدا نفسُ أبيه
 لكن أردت مرادها ولو انجذبت إلى الدنيا

وَأرى مُحاماتي عَلَيَّ ها أَنْ تُضامَ مِنْ الحَمِيَّةِ
أَمستَ بِمَنِيحِ حُرَّةٍ بِالخُزنِ مِنْ بَعدي حَرِيَّةِ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 355)

What increases the poet's psychological pain is obviously manifested in his representation of his mother humiliating herself and helplessly begging Saif Al-Dawlah to pay the young poet's ransom. The humiliation of rejection scorches the poet's heart and creates despair. In this context, the poet says:

بِأَيِّ عَذْرِ رَدَدتْ وَالهِئَةَ عَلَيكَ دُونَ الوَرى مُعَوَّلها
جاءتَكَ تَمَناحُ رَدِّ واجِدها يَنْتَظِرُ النَاسُ كَيفَ تُفَعِّلها

(Diwan Abu Firas, 264)

His tragedy in exile unfolds when he receives the news of his mother's death. Agonized over what she had been through to save her only child, Abi Firas wrote his poem entitled "The Prisoner's Mother", in which he described her years of torment and isolation:

أيا أُمَّ الأَسيرِ سَقاكِ عَيبُ بِكَرهِ مِناكَ ما لَقيَ الأَسيرُ
أيا أُمَّ الأَسيرِ سَقاكِ عَيبُ نَحَيرُ لا يُقِيمُ ولا يَسيرُ
أيا أُمَّ الأَسيرِ سَقاكِ عَيبُ إلى مَن بِالفِدا يَأتي البَشيرُ
أيا أُمَّ الأَسيرِ لِمَن تُرَبِّي وَقَد مُتَّ الدَوائِبُ وَالشُعورُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 161)

Several scholars argued that Saif Al-Dawlah's wife was the poet's half-sister. Had she been his sister, she would never have had her mother humiliating herself among the family members to set her son free. That can be considered a good piece of evidence that the Hamadan family resented the poet's father's marriage to a Roman woman, making her the mother of his child (Imran 1999, 20). The poet suffered alienation in captivity and among his kins; however, the latter caused him more damage. Among the Hamdan family, he and his mother were marginalized among their family while he was treated well by his enemy, the Romans. With the Romans, the enemy, he found hospitality his uncles did not give him, which Nasrat Abdelrahman (1977) explained as the Roman's tactic to make him the leader after Saif Al-Dawlah, who got sick and weak at those times. However, those attempts failed and his good conditions sooner changed to the worst, and his prison turned into a hellish place—the poet, bearing coarse clothes on his weak body and heavy shackles, wrote:

يا ناعِمَ الثُوبِ كَيفَ تُبَدِّلُهُ ثيابنا الصِوفَ ما نُبَدِّلها
يا رابِجَ الخَيلِ لَو بَصُرَت بنا نَحْمَلُ أَقيادنا وَنَنقُلها

(Diwan Abu Firas, 265)

And:

وَأوسَعُ أيا ما حَلَلتْ كِرامَةَ كَأَيِّ مِنا أَهلي نُقَلتْ إلى أَهلي
فَقُل لِبَني عَمِّي وَأَبِغِ بَني أباي بِأَيِّ في نَعماءٍ يَشكُرُها مِثلي

(Diwan Abu Firas, 283)

These stanzas unfold several poetic meanings. Some internal elements are uncovered when the poetic text is read within its contextual frame some internal cause/effect elements are uncovered. In this context, it should be noted that presenting and holding comparisons among all relevant narratives will sound impractical. Hence, the scholar has chosen the most prominent narratives that help disclose the hidden meanings, including the cordial relationship between the Poet and Saif Al-Dawlah, which changed due to the destructive internal conflicts among kins, and the humiliating treatment the poet's mother suffered from the Hamdan family.

3. Analysis

Considering Abi Firas's captivity poetry, the scholar perceives that the rhythm is manifesting itself as being arranged in ascending order, which maintains the organic cohesion of the poem's body from beginning to end. Cultural references strewn throughout the poem make dividing it into parts undoable. With embedded patterns of various components frequently repeating and interloping, dividing the poem's body into stanzas disturb its structural cohesion. Accordingly, the poem is divided into parts based on the manifestations of its embedded patterns as follows:

Part one (Lines: 1 -4): The Superiority of the Arab lord's Self

Part Two (Lines: 27 – 5): The Dichotomy of the Self and the Other (establishing the Center and creating the Marginalized)

Part Three (Lines: 54 - 26): The Infinite Self: Allusions to Antarah's Poetry

3.1 Part one (1 -4): The Superiority of the Arab Lord's Self

أراك عَصِيَّ الدَمعِ شيمَتَكَ الصَبيرُ أَمّا لِلهوى نَهِيَّ عَلَيكَ وَلا أَمْرُ
بَلَى أنا مُشْتاقٌ وَعِندِي لَوَعَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ مِثلي لا يُذاعُ لَهُ سِرُّ

إِذَا اللَّيْلُ أَضْوَانِي بَسَطْتُ يَدَ الْهَوَىٰ وَأَذَلْتُ نَمْعًا مِنْ خَلَائِقِهِ الْكِبْرُ
تَكَادُ تُضِيءُ النَّارَ بَيْنَ جَوَانِحِي إِذَا هِيَ أَذَكَّتْهَا الصَّبَابَةُ وَالْفَكْرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 162)

Context:

The narrative of "The Arabian warrior, Suitor" has a tremendous impact on the Arab's Self, asserting itself on the Arab to form an unconscious collective pattern that grabs the reader's attention, understanding, and comprehension. The narrative of "The Arabian Knight, Lover" summons the image of the pre-Islamic knight and Poet Antarah Ibn Shaddad, who took his central place in the collective Arab's memory. Ibn Shaddad's literary creativity manifests itself only in his image as an Arabian Knight and suitor fighting for his freedom to win his sweetheart cousin, Ablah, whose love is a central issue in his poetry.

The Arabian folk memory has influenced the readings of classical and modern critics. These include, but are not limited to, Shawqi Daif, who declares in his readings of Abi Firas' poem, which he interpreted as love poetry: "His poem is flirtatious intercourse full of youth and strength as he does not cry, but instead he patiently endures love as hardened men despite his broken heart that could not win his sweetheart's closeness" (Daif 1990, 226). Like Daif, Mohammad Rida Murrowwa explains Abi Firas' opening verses as: "Courting attempts, so delicate and sentimental, following for the most parts his predecessors, most notably in standing by the ruins, complaining, grieving, and pledging purity, namely in the first two verses: The poet eloquently and intensely portrays his emotions. The poet covertly describes his yearning for his beloved, whose secrets are not to be uncovered." (Murrowwa 1990, 226)

Both critics do not interpret the opening verses as an impersonal or symbolic alternative for his attitude towards his actual circumstances. They do not tend to consider them elusive techniques to trick the readers into thinking of it as a love poem to channel through for the covert message he wants to convey. The readers conflict with the established folk narrative and the symbolic implications of the Arabic poetry behind which many consciously established readings of women, ruins, traveling camels, and tattoos are bending. It is a creative technique that is inevitably opposed to the direct reporting style. The narratives about Abi Firas and Antarah give the true representation of the Arabian hero/knight, who diligently searches for his true identity, which should be considered when their poetry is studied. Abi Firas exposes his intentions to his readers when he says:

إِنَّا لَيَجْمَعُنَا الْبُكَاءُ وَكُنَّا نِيكِي عَلَى شَجْنٍ مِنَ الْأَشْجَانِ
وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْتُ الْحَبَّ سَبْرًا مَدَامِعِي وَلَعِيرَهُ غَيْنَايَ تَهْمَلَانِ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 340)

Hence, Abi Firas' opening verses cannot simply be reduced as directed to his woman. He instead directly and consciously shapes his poetry by relating to the older texts of his predecessors, using such form of allusions as a literary device through which he can pass his fierce criticism to the authority under cover of mourning his unresponsive beloved. His criticism wears the mask of a feminine being of which the reader cannot see traces of a flesh-and-blood person. The woman is a symbolic being with innate sedition that opens the door for the reader's imagination, rising from myths, rituals, fertility, and reproduction. Notably, critics mostly place women in conflict with men's ego, the patriarchal authority, as a common interpretation of cultural patterns in the literary text.

The superiority of the Self manifests itself throughout the whole poem. The poet draws an image of the Arab master, which can be a model of the hero, very common in Arab culture. The persona's vulnerability does not emasculate him, instead, he is solid and composed, shunning away from grieving over his needs. Both (عصي الدمع) and (الصبر) show the meanings of stamina and endurance. Then comes a monologue in which the persona makes himself the speaker and the spoken-to at the same time. The persona maintains that the night veils his tears whenever he cries in a moment of weakness. The dark gives the honorable man a resort to grieve over life trials (Rabbai 1999, 201). Undoubtedly, the poet's political and social status gives him a good reason to feel high self-esteem and pride, making him feel distinguished at two levels: the authoritarian and the human. Indeed, these factors are properly reflected in his language and poetics. The discourse parallels his narcissistic Self as manifested in the structural and semantic deviations.

The second verse unfolds the aggravation of the relations between the poet and the authority as the nominal sentence is intentionally vague about whom the persona is longing to. He has difficulty reconciling with authority and external reality, namely captivity. In an attempt to remind Saif Al-Dawlah of their intimate relationship, the poet fronts the predicate *عندي* before the subject *لوعه* to imply that their friendship comes first for him so that his cousin might feel the poet's love for him.

To compensate for his peremptory tone, manifested by the negative and imperative structures in the opening verses, the poet uses synonymic lexicons *أضعفني* and *أذلتني*. As the dark weakens him, the Poet, in turn, fights back the dark by restraining his eyes from crying as if conquering over his tears. This image is enhanced by his peremptory tone upon talking about his intimate relationship with Saif Al-Dawlah, which is clarified by metaphors like *بسطت يد الهوى* and *أذلتت معاً*. Nevertheless, the second half of the second verse *ولكن مثلي لا* *ينذاع له سر* is a bitter criticism leveled against the authority, which tries to marginalize others due to fear of competitive political rivals.

Metaphors are an apparently stylistic phenomenon in the poem. Semantic deviations, namely represented by metaphors and similes, prevail throughout the poem. There are 30 metaphors in 22 verses. Similes come second; there are nine similes in nine verses. Some metaphor-associated-meanings uncover culturally established patterns. For instance, the metaphor *عصي الدمع* relates to the typical image of the "Arab Master," who is commonly characterized by inexhaustible patience and heroic fortitude. The metaphor contained in *أما*

connotes strength mixed with pride. To picture vulnerability the poet uses the metaphor in الليل أضواني which implies the poet's vulnerability, and then he comes up with two metaphorical images indicating his strength and pride, which has a radically swift return to the image of the "Arab Master." Both the explicit metaphors in إذا هي أنكتها الصباية والفكر and إذا هي أنكتها الصباية والفكر overflow with intense feelings and emotions for authority.

Moreover, the lexical choices the poet chooses to function as containers of cultural patterns. The opening lines are replete with lexical choices that reflect the poet's sense of superiority rooted deep in the prince's Self as if he is creating his version of the popular legend of the prince/knight. Like other poets/knights, his condescending and full-of-egotism attitude stemmed from his high political and social status. Examples of such lexical choices are: عصي، شيمتك الصبر، نهي، أمر، بسطت، أذلت، خلانقه الكبير. The previously mentioned implicit patterns are not the only ones in the poem; more is revealed in the following verses as they show themselves in an anxiously escalating manner as the poem flows. They occur in clusters, starting from a point that forms the center and then shooting out in different forms. One pattern acts as an agent that controls the agency of the Arab Self. These patterns are connected in an anxiously escalated relationship. It's worth noting that the first part of the poem contains cultural patterns to be unfolded in the following parts.

Part Two (27 - 5): the Dichotomy of the Self and the Other (establishing the center and creating the Marginalized (binaries)).

مُعَلِّتِي بِالْوَصْلِ وَالسَّمَوْتُ دُونَهُ إِذَا مِتَّ ظَمَانًا فَلَا نَزَلَ الْقَطْرُ
حَفِظْتُ وَضَعَيْتُ الْمَوَدَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَأَحْسَنَ مِنْ بَعْضِ الْوَفَاءِ لَكَ الْغَدْرُ
وَمَا هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامُ إِلَّا صَحَائِفُ لِأَحْرَفِهَا مِنْ كَفِّ كَاتِبِهَا بَشْرُ
بِنَفْسِي مِنَ الْغَادِينَ فِي الْحَيِّ عَادَةٌ هَوَايَ لَهَا ذَنْبٌ وَيَهْجَتُهَا غَدْرُ
تَرْوَعُ إِلَى الْوَاشِينَ فِيَّ وَإِنَّ لِي لِأَذْنَابِهَا عَنْ كُلِّ وَاشِيَةٍ وَقُرُ
بَدُوْتُ وَأَهْلِي حَاضِرُونَ لِأَتْنِي أَرَى أَنَّ دَارًا لَسْتُ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا قَفْرُ
وَحَارِبْتُ قَوْمِي فِي هَوَاكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ وَإِسَائِي لَوْلَا حُنُوكَ الْمَاءِ وَالْخَمْرُ
فَإِنَّ بَيْتَكَ مَا قَالَ الْوَشَاءُ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ فَسَدَّ يَهْدِمُ الْإِيمَانَ مَا شَبَّهَ الْكُفْرُ
وَقَيْتُ وَفِي بَعْضِ الْوَفَاءِ مِثْلَهُ لِإِنْسَانَةٍ فِي الْحَيِّ شِمْتُهَا الْغَدْرُ
وَقَسُورٌ وَرَبِيعَانُ الصَّبَا يَسْتَفِرُّهَا فَتَأْتِرُنَّ أَحْيَانًا كَمَا أَرْنَ الْمُهْرُ
تُسَائِلُنِي مَنْ أَنْتَ وَهِيَ عَلِيمَةٌ وَهَلْ يَفْتِي مِثْلِي عَلَى حَالِهِ نُكْرُ
فَقُلْتُ كَمَا شَاءَتْ وَشَاءَ لَهَا الْهَوَى قَتِيلُكَ قَالَتْ أَيُّهُمْ فَهُمْ كُتْرُ
فَقُلْتُ لَهَا لَوْ شِئْتِ لَمْ تَتَّعِنْتِي وَلَمْ تَسْأَلِي عَنِّي وَعِنْدَكَ بِي خُبْرُ
فَقَالَتْ لَقَدْ أَزْرَى بِكَ الذَّهْرُ بَعْدَنَا قُلْتُ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنْتَ لَا الذَّهْرُ
وَمَا كَانَ لِلْأَحْزَانِ لَوْلَاكَ مَسَلُّكَ إِلَى الْقَلْبِ لَكِنَّ الْهَوَى لِلْبَلْبَى جِسْرُ
وَتَسْهَلُكَ بَيْنَ السَّهْلِ وَالْجِدِّ مُهْجَةٌ إِذَا مَا عَدَاهَا النَّيْنُ عَذَّبَهَا الْهَجْرُ
فَأَيْقَنْتُ أَنْ لَا عِزَّ بَعْدِي لِعَائِقِي وَأَنَّ يَدِي مِمَّا غَلِقْتُ بِهِ صَفْرُ
وَقَلْبِي أَمْرِي لَا أَرَى لِي رَاحَةً إِذَا النَّيْنُ أَنْسَانِي أَلْحَ بِِي الْهَجْرُ
فَعُدْتُ إِلَى حُكْمِ الزَّمَانِ وَحُكْمِهَا لَهَا الذَّنْبُ لَا تُجْزَى بِهِ وَبِي الْغَدْرُ
كَأَنِّي أَنَادِي دُونَ مَسِيئَةٍ طَبِيبَةٌ عَلَى شَرْفِ ظَمِيَاءِ جَلَّلَهَا الدُّعْرُ
تَجَجَّلْتُ حِينَئِذٍ ثُمَّ تَرَنُّو كَأَنَّهَا تُنَادِي طَلًّا بِالْوَادِ أَعْجَزَهُ الْخُضْرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 162-164)

Context:

There has been uncertainty about The "Self" and the "Other" in humanistic disciplines, philosophical, Psychological, or social. They are complex terms that are complicatedly different but interrelate. Moreover, they are not static or unchanging but evolve depending on context. Cultural criticism is not far from getting influenced by other disciplines. The "Self" and the "Other" are cultural terms in the first place.

In the second part of Abi Firas's poem, the value of the (Other/Saif Al-Dawlah) is determined by (Self/Poet)'s perspective. The dichotomy of Center/Margin describes the Other and facilitates communication with it, particularly in its conflict with the Self suppressed, decentralized, and marginalized by the Other. Saif Al-Dawlah pushes the poet from the center to the margin by leaving him a captive in the enemy's prison. Several resources support this hypothesis as they mentioned that Abi Firas escaped from Roman's prison rather than being ransomed. Abi Firas defends his central position as a part of the authority while the Other marginalizes and excludes him by leaving him a captive. As a reaction to oppression, the poet embeds cultural patterns behind words. Contradictions (opposites) top all other devices to show the (Other/Authority)'s vices exposed by the Self/Poet. Yousuf Elimat asserts the vital "r". Oliamat contradictions (opposites/binary) to weave a web of relations in which opposing patterns thrive, forming one body, which provides coherence to the

poem (Oliamat, 227).

Here it can be said that binaries are used to maneuver, and at the same time, they seem an inevitable consequence of the clashes between the Self and the Other. This binary is used as the critical base on which we revisit the Other and read the Self. The Other is indicative of the Self as things can be recognized when compared to their opposites. Opposites are mentioned in twenty places as put in order in the table:

Verse one	أمر and نهى
Verse two	سر and يذاع
Verse five	القطر and ظمانا
Verse six	ضبيعت and حفظت
Verse ten	بدوت/حاضرون - اهلهما/فقر
Verse twelve	يهدم الايمان / ما شيد الكفر
Verse fourteen	تأرن and وقور
Verse fifteen	نكر and عليمه
Verse seventeen	خبر and تسالي
Verse twenty	الجد and الهزل
Verse twenty-six	انكرته and يعرف
Verse twenty-seven	غير منكر and تنكريني
Verse thirty	ترتوي and أظما يشبع and أسغب
Verse thirty-four	لم يلقها and القيتها
Verse thirty-six	الفقر and الغنى
Verse thirty-nine	بحر and بر
Verse forty-four	الموت , لم يموت , حبي
Verse forty-six	علي ثيابي and خلوا ثيابي
Verse forty-eight	البدر and الليلة الظلماء

It is worth noting that binaries (opposites) prevail in the whole poem, yet they are prominent in this part, generating a range of significant aspects that contribute to the aesthetics of the poems. Binaries (opposites), alongside with conventional pattern of the woman, create a space for the poet to pour vitriol on authority; criticism for the Other is thus masked with this hidden cultural pattern. Aware of the Other/Center's power to exclude him by procrastinating paying the ransom to the enemy, Abi Firas considers it as a sign of marginalizing and thus pronounces him different, different in the sense of inferiority, from the authority. As he can see his death, which is what the authority aspires is closer to him than his ransom is. The poet's death, which the authority aspires to, seems an option better than the ransom for the authority. The poet's suppressed desperation looms over part two as indicated by his lexical choices such as الموت, مت , ضمناً, لا نزل القطر.

There is no comparison between Abi Firas, who is clear and direct, and the authority, who is twisty and changing. Linguistic deviation occurs when the word شيمتك is fronted to highlight the features of both the Self and the Other. Criticizing the Other through contradictory comparisons then extend throughout part two, obviously in line 14 (فتأرن أحيانا كما يارن المهر) and in line 38 (ولا فرسي مهير ولا ربه غمر). In these two lines, the readers find the significant difference between the indiscreet and reckless Other and the wise expert.

Part two, which is full of opposites, brings us back to the first part when the poet breaks the monotony of the chain of opposites by using comparisons between the Self and the Other as in شيمتها الصبر and شيمتها القدر. Linguistic deviation occurs when the word شيمتك is fronted to highlight the features of both the Self and the Other. Criticizing the Other through contradictory comparisons then extend throughout part two, obviously in line 14 (ولا فرسي مهير ولا ربه غمر) and in line 38 (فتأرن أحيانا كما يارن المهر). In these two lines, the readers find the significant difference between the indiscreet and reckless Other and the wise expert. Further, images support opposites in a way that stimulates the minds and brings forth all aspects of the conflict between the Self and the Other without distancing it from the psychological and emotional dimensions as in:

حَفِظْتُ وَضَبَيْتَ الْمَوَدَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَأَحْسَنَ مِنْ بَعْضِ الْوَفَاءِ لَكَ الْغَدْرَ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 163)

The explicit metaphor brings the opposites حفظت وضبيعت the fore and the marked inverted structure in الوفاء لك والغدر, in which the ungratefulness of the authority is highlighted by fronting the phrase الوفاء بيننا. It is imperative that the Other should maintain the friendship and appreciate the poet's loyalty by setting him free. Another image comes to talk about what the Self/Poet has maintained for friendship and what the Authority/Other has disregarded:

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامُ إِلَّا صَحَائِفُ لِأَحْرَفِهَا مِنْ كَفِّ كَاتِبِهَا بَشُرُ
بِنَفْسِي مِنَ الْغَادِينَ فِي الْحَيِّ غَادَةٌ هَوَايَ لَهَا ذَنْبٌ وَبَهْجَتُهَا عُذْرُ
تَرَوُّعٌ إِلَى الْوَاشِينَ فِيَّ وَإِنَّ لِي لِأَذْنًا بِهَا عَنْ كُلِّ وَاشِيَةٍ وَقُرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 164)

Days are likened to records on which events are written down as highlighted in the explicit metaphor الأيام صحائف. What the Self/Poet has

made for the friendship and what the Other/authority has wasted, thus, the history of the Other/Center depends on the Other's deed, that is, the Other's deeds determine his position in the center or in the margins.

The dynamic picture of constant writing and erasing the records is indicative of two important things: first, the poet's constant tracking of the authority's actions, which he appears hesitant to record, and second the significance of his ransom as a historical point which can be counted for the interest of the authority or can be used against it.

Opposition dramatizes the conflict between the Self and the Other, gliding freely to and fro in time, which creates a space for the poet to expose the authority recklessness and betrayal as shown in the picture drawn by the lexical choice *تروغ*. In turn, the poet could present the shining picture of the Self as suggested by the explicit metaphor *لاندنا* and other metaphors as in the following verses:

فَإِنْ يَكُ مَا قَالَ الْوُشَاةُ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ فَقَدْ يَهْدِمُ الْإِيمَانَ مَا شَيَّدَ الْكُفْرُ
وَقَبِثٌ وَفِي بَعْضِ الْوَفَاءِ مَذَلَّةٌ لِإِنْسَانِيَّةِ فِي الْحَيِّ شِيمَتُهَا الْعَدْرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 163)

And the explicit metaphor in:

بِنَفْسِي مِنَ الْغَادِيَيْنِ فِي الْحَيِّ غَادَةٌ هَوَايَ لَهَا ذَنْبٌ وَبِهَجَّتْهَا عَدْرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 163)

In these metaphors, the poet draws for himself the picture of the loyal selfless side, while the authority appears as the treacherous ungrateful one. Opposition intensifies the comparison and the conflict between the two sides: the marginalized Self and the central authority, which fears competition. Such comparison uncovers the authority's ethical flaws. Abi Firas sacrifices himself for the authority while the ungrateful authority denies him his basic rights. Abi Firas embarrasses the authority and appears on the good side by making excuses for the authority. The poet uses a marked structural displacement in *العذر لك أحسن من بعض الوفاء*, in which the word *الوفاء*, loyalty, is fronted in an attempt to mitigate the authority's fears and mistrust against him.

Opposition is oversimplified if studied at the apparent structural level as it also uncovers a hidden cultural pattern rooted deep down in human civilization as a whole. Relationships among humans have been controlled and even determined by contradictions and differences related to races, colors, dogmas, cultures, politics..etc. We all consciously or unconsciously in a constant search for differences to be. Opposition is itself a space in which all conflicts and affiliations gather and mix, and the dynamics are based on what's right and what's wrong. The Self is in that space searching among all contradictions to form an identity. Cultural patterns prove a valid tool to compromise. It is really the raw material with which the Self forms an identity for itself. In Abi Firas's case, the influence of the predecessors is obvious, namely his influence on Antarah's experience in his tribe as elaborated in part three.

Part Three (54 - 26): The Infinite Self: Allusions to Antarah's Poetry:

فَلَا تُنْكِرْنِي يَا ابْنَةَ الْعَمِّ إِنَّهُ لِيَعْرِفَ مَنْ أَنْكَرْتَهُ الْبَدْرُ وَالْحَضْرُ
وَلَا تُنْكِرْنِي إِنْ نِي غَيْرُ مُنْكَرٍ إِذَا زَلَّتِ الْأَقْدَامُ وَإِسْتَنْزَلَ النَّصْرُ
وَإِنِّي لَجَزَائِرُ لِكُلِّ كَتَيْبَةٍ مُعَوَّدَةٌ أَنْ لَا يُجَلَّ بِهَا النَّصْرُ
وَإِنِّي لَنْزَالٌ بِكُلِّ مَخَوْفَةٍ كَثِيرٍ إِلَى نَزَالِهَا النَّظْرُ الشَّرُّ
فَأَطْمَأَ حَتَّى تَرْتَوِي الْبَيْضُ وَالْقَنَا وَأَسْعَبُ حَتَّى يَشْبَعُ الذَّنْبُ وَالنَّسْرُ
وَلَا أَصْبِحُ الْحَيِّ الْخُلُوفَ بِغَارَةٍ وَلَا الْجَيْشَ مَا لَمْ تَأْتِهِ قَبْلِي النَّزْرُ
وَيَا زُبَّ دَارٍ لَمْ تَخْفَنِي مَنِيْعَةٌ طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهَا بِالرَّدَى أَنَا وَالْفَجْرُ
وَخَيِّ رَدَدْتُ الْخَيْلَ حَتَّى مَلَكْتُهُ هَزِيمًا وَرَدْتَنِي السِّبْرَاقِعُ وَالْحُمْرُ
وَسَاجِبَةَ الْأَذْيَالِ نَحْوِي لَقَبَيْتُهَا فَلَمْ يَلْقَافَا جَافِي السَّلْمَاءِ وَلَا وَعْرُ
وَهَبْتُ لَهَا مَا حَازَهُ الْجَيْشُ كُلُّهُ وَرُحْتُ وَلَمْ يُكْتَفَ لِأَبْيَاتِهَا سَبْرُ
وَلَا رَاحَ يُطْعِمُنِي بِأَنْوَابِهِ الْعَنَى وَلَا بَاتَ يَنْتِنِي عَنِ الْكَرَمِ الْفَقْرُ
وَمَا حَاجَتِي بِالْمَالِ أَبْغِي وَفُورَهُ إِذَا لَمْ أَفِرْ عِرْضِي فَلَا وَفَرَ الْوَفْرُ
أَسِيرْتُ وَمَا صَحْبِي بِغَزَلٍ لَدَى الْوَعَى وَلَا قَرَسِي مُهْرٌ وَلَا رَبُّهُ عَمْرُ
وَلَكِنْ إِذَا حُمِّ الْقَضَاءِ عَلَى إِمْرِي فَلَيْسَ لَهُ بَرٌّ يَقِيهِ وَلَا بَحْرُ
وَقَالَ أَصْحَابِي: السُّفْرَاؤُ أَوْ الرَّدَى قُلْتُ: هُمَا أَمْرَانِ أَحْلَاهُمَا مُرُ
وَلَكِنِّي أَمْضِي لِمَا لَا يُعِينُنِي وَحَسْبُكَ مِنْ أَمْرَيْنِ خَيْرٌ هُمَا الْأَسْرُ
يَقُولُونَ لِي: بَعَثَ السَّلَامَةَ بِالرَّدَى قُلْتُ: أَمَا وَاللَّهِ مَا نَأْتِي خُسْرُ
وَهَلْ يَتَجَافَى عَنِّي الْمَوْتُ سَاعَةً إِذَا مَا تَجَافَى عَنِّي الْأَسْرُ وَالضَّرُّ
هُوَ الْمَوْتُ فَاخْتَرُ مَا عَلَا لَكَ ذِكْرُهُ فَلَمْ يَمُتِ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا حَيَّيَ الذِّكْرُ
وَلَا خَيْرَ فِي دَفْعِ الرَّدَى بِمَذَلَّةٍ كَمَا رَدَّهَا يَوْمًا بِسَوْءَةِ عَمْرُ

يَمُنُونَ أَنْ خَلَّوْا ثِيَابِي وَإِنَّمَا
وَقَائِمٌ سَيْفٌ فِيهِمْ انْتَقَى نَصْلُهُ
سَيَذْكُرُنِي قَوْمِي إِذَا جَدَّ جِدُّهُمْ
فَإِنْ عَشْتُ فَالطَّعْنَ الَّذِي يَعْرِفُونَهُ
وَإِنْ مُتُّ فَالْإِنْسَانُ لَا بُدَّ مَيِّتٍ
وَلَوْ سَدَّ غَيْرِي مَا سَدَّدْتُ إِكْتَفُوا بِهِ
وَنَحْنُ أَنْاسٌ لَا تَوَسُّطَ عِنْدَنَا
تَهْوُونَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْمَعَالِي نُفُوسَنَا
أَعْرُ بَنِي الدُّنْيَا وَأَعْلَى ذَوِي الْعَلَا
عَلَيَّ ثِيَابٌ مِنْ دِمَائِهِمْ حُمُرُ
وَأَعْقَابُ رُمَحٍ فِيهِمْ حُطْمُ الصَّدْرِ
وَفِي اللَّيْلَةِ الظُّلْمَاءِ يُفْتَقَدُ السَّبْرُ
وَتِلْكَ السَّقَا وَالْبَيْضُ وَالضَّمْرُ الشَّقْرُ
وَإِنْ طَالَتِ الْأَيَّامُ وَإِنْفَسَحَ الْعُمْرُ
وَمَا كَانَ لَوْ نَفَقَ الصُّفْرُ
لَنَا الصَّدْرُ دُونَ الْعَالَمِينَ أَوْ الْقَبْرُ
وَمَنْ خَطَبَ الْحَسَاءَ لَمْ يُغْلِهَا الْمَهْرُ
وَأَكْرَمُ مَنْ فَوْقَ السَّرَابِ وَلَا فَخْرُ

Arabic cultural patterns determine the frameworks within which event-making and event-changing heroic images manifest themselves in a way that defends the tribe's identity and achieves its institutional goals. Antarah could enhance that sense of belonging to the tribe. He did not want to split off the tribe, but instead, he wanted to blend with the group. Antarah always projected himself as a heavily armed knight to get the tribe's recognition. His heroism was his ticket to freedom, and being a subordinate did not fulfill his ambitions. Him being a knight was the only thing that granted him acceptance and recognition amongst his tribe. In this context, he says:

وَلَوْلَا سِنَانِي وَالْحُسَامُ وَهَمَّتِي
لَمَا ذُكِرْتَ عَيْسٌ وَلَا نَالَهَا فَخْرُ

(Antarah, 72)

He mentioned in another poem that the tribe of Bani Abs's recognition making him officially a knight:

يَدْعُونَ عَنَّتْرَ وَالرَّمَاخَ كَأَنَّهَا
أَشْطَانُ بِنْرِ فِي لَبَانِ الْأَدْهَمِ

And:

وَلَقَدْ شَفَى نَفْسِي وَأَذْهَبَ سَقَمَهَا
قِيلَ الْفَوَارِسُ وَيَكُ عَنَّتْرُ أَقِيمِ

Such a successful endeavor is worthy of being simulated and reenacted by Abu Firas. Thus Abu Firas in his poem saw in Antarah's presence a side that brought back to him his self-esteem to a point where he could feel proud again and relate easily to Antarah. The feeling of pride that Abu Firas felt firsthand is an involuntary state of mind by which a person can live the full experience of the state of being of another person. As a result, a person can experience fully or partially the state of being of another person. In the presence of an abundance of similarities between both poets, relating to each other, became almost something that develops a definite pattern.

Accordingly, a person becomes the same as another in terms of knowledge and reasoning- sometimes, completely or partly (as a secondary result) (Laplanche 1988, 198). In Abu Firas's case, Antarah's reasoning becomes a pattern imposing itself on Abu Firas's poetry. Images of wars and morals are of a pragmatic nature, making the amplified self-image a creative pattern that entails heroism, which dynamically maintains the tribe's identity. In turn, the tribe is obliged to acknowledge the knight making him a member again. Aware of the efficiency of this theme, Abu Firas merges it into his poem, making it a tool to channel through for his Self.

Antarah draws with details on the aspects and implications of his knighthood, whether on the practical level as a warrior or the moral level as a nobleman in everyday life. Like Antarah, Abo Firas creates a mythical image of the Self, surprisingly unique in heroic acts in war. In his poem, the pronoun "I" prevails, priding himself as a valiant, bold man in war compared to the fragile enemy. The first-person pronoun goes hand in hand with other devices like "Emphasis," "Repetition," and "Gemination" to create the mythical image of the Self. Using the pronoun "I" in every verse of the poem is a psychological indicator of the glow in his character and a strong desire for personal fulfillment. The Other's presence is conditioned by the heroic acts of one's ego. Antonyms in the following lines intensify metaphors:

فَأَظْمَأُ حَتَّى تَرْتَوِي الْبَيْضُ وَالْقَنَا
(وَأَسْغَبُ حَتَّى يَشْتَعِ الذَّنْبُ وَالنَّسْرُ)
(والـ) (ولا الجيشن ما لم تأتيه قبلي النذرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 164)

The following light image is one of the best examples of images referring to the Self:

وَيَا رَبُّ دَارٍ لَمْ تَخْفِي مَنِيْعَةً
طَلَعْتُ عَلَيْهَا بِالزَّيْدِ أَنَا وَالْفَجْرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 165)

The poet's ethics, including honesty and integrity, in verses (37, 36, 35, and 31) are parallel to Antara's. The negative expressions such as (فلا وفر، لم أفر، ولا بات، ولا راح، ولا بات، لم أفر، فلا وفر) go hand in hand with metaphors too. Vertical repetitions in verses (26 and 27) accentuate the poet's voice and lay bare his power of speech made against authorities. In this line, the poet highlights his deeds, which authority can never obliterate. The meaning achieved by the music is further emphasized by non-negated antithesis (Tibaq Ijab) (البدو والحضر), which signifies the holistic knowledge of the hero known for his great deeds and sacrifices.

The heroic image is supplemented by scenes of captivity, which all reflect the poet's goodwill. This heroic image is yet associated with a

history of degradation. An enlightened introspection of the heroic image gives the reader a full view of the past and the present exposing the cultural blindness of the authorities throughout history. The selfless knight, who prefers captivity over cowardly escape, is given up by his nation, thus uncovering its fragility. The poet draws the readers' attention to the dire situation of the nation, namely the authority and its retinue. He also brings to light the differences between the Islamic and Roman civilizations. The Romans, the enemy, acted as the noble host for the captive, the poet. They did not even force him to change his outfit as a gesture to honor his bravery. The rest is negatives in *وَمَا صَحْبِي بِغَزَلٍ لَدَى الْوَعْيِ، وَلَا فَرَسِي مُهْرٌ، وَلَا رُبُّهُ غَمْرٌ* and that is the poet's way to indicate that captivity is the only unchanging truth that has a hold of his thinking. Although taken captive, Abu Firas still ranks himself and his horse at the top of the rest of his peers in fighting nobly and bravely in the battle. He finds in himself all that make a knight. His lexical choice (أصحابي), which comes in the diminutive form of the word (أصحابي) intensifies his underestimation of the performance of his peers in the battle as they escaped death, unlike him who fought until the end. Thus, the poet records and reaffirms his historical position vis-a-vis the authority, which he referred to in the following dynamic image, whose goal is to cast doubts on its achievements:

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامُ إِلَّا صَحَائِفٌ لِأَحْرَفِهَا مِنْ كَفِّ كَاتِبِهَا نَبَشُرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 162)

Rhetorical devices are predominant in this verse. The reporting style evolves from its original function, which commonly serves the semantic purpose of informing the addressees; it instead goes beyond it to show the meaning of pride and bravery. This rhetorical meaning is a shift of what is invariable into what is variable. That is to confirm the hero's image, who never accepts injustice, which is proven by his brave deeds, which he prides himself on. His view about himself goes in line with his heroic deed, which his peers could not make. Moreover, implicit metaphor such as "وفي الليلة الظلماء يُتَقَدُّ البدرُ" and "وَمَا كَانَ يَغْلُو اللَّيْبُرُ لَوْ تَفَقَّ الصَّفْرُ" match the heroic image he draws for himself. Conditional sentences alongside opposites go perfectly with his heroic self-image, supported by his captivity.

As for the victories the poet valiantly gained, he gave credit to his cousin, Saif Al-Dawlah, who represents the authority that in turn denies. To articulate the authority's arrogance, the poet uses an implicit metaphor (وساجية الأديال), which entails the image of a luxurious woman swaggering towards him to diminish his good deeds. Authority, who lives a luxurious life in the palace, with no harm coming to them, gains the honor of the battles fought against the enemy on their behalf.

In this part, the poet describes his glory that singles him out from other warriors. He also never humiliate himself by taking a share from war spoils: (وَأَسْغَبُ حَتَّى يَشْبَعَ الذَّنْبُ وَالنَّسْرُ). He has all morals that make him transcend all, including his enemy. He never attacks women or places with no men to defend and never does with no prior warning. He leaves the authority to judge. How would a knight like himself, who is noble with his family, be even nobler to his cousin and folk? The great mass of powerful and dynamic images - alongside rhetorical devices- is dedicated to featuring the uniquely brave knight and entailing the Other's need for such heroism. The Other's destiny is rather dependent on these heroic deeds. These images bring us back first to the resources from which Antarah drew his images of life in the desert. These shared images go in the poem as if in a circle that ends from where its starts.

These images affirm the conscious knowledge of the features and the aspects of this heroic image of the knight, reflecting the poets' overwhelming desire to get access into and be a part of the collective mind of the folk. Hence, these images underline the question of identity and belonging through recollecting Bedouin's military character, represented by Antarah. Abu Firas, the city boy, takes Antarah as his champion in his poem. Hamdan family's state was founded on the Roman frontiers and the individual's place in the clan is based on laws of chivalry. This cultural pattern is also prominent in many of Antarah's poems. To name a few:

أَنَا الْجِصْنُ الْمَشِيدُ لِأَلِ عَيْسٍ إِذَا مَا شَادَتِ الْأَبْطَالُ جِصْنَا

(Tabrizi 2007, 195)

In the last three verses, there is a trace of cultural assimilation and a pattern that is derived from the pre-Islamic era which prides itself on the "collective Self", with which the "Poet's Self" merges (Arabic Language Academy, 16). The individual's pride in the tribe is a cultural pattern associated with the individual's pride in his Arab roots. As Swaif affirms: "The tribe is the base on which the Arab character achieves its balance. Any form of imbalance causes a deep crack in the individual's character" (Swaif 1981, 125).

The collective voice supports the individual in the first place and the tribe itself in the second place. It is an artistic phenomenon that has psychological and social dimensions. What is striking about this poetic cultural pattern is that, on the one hand, it deepens the moral as well as the military virtues. On the other hand, it crowns all their successes and obliterates the other tribes. As the poet belongs to the tribe of "Taghlib", he invokes the spirit of Amr Ibn Kulthoum, in whose famous ode the poet's "I" is transformed into the collective reference "we", i.e., the tribe. When the poet unites with the collective self, he tries to reach a finish line where he reconciles with the other. Only at this point, the poet merged with the tribe, and the pronoun "I" is transformed into the pronoun "we".

Abu Firas keeps following Antarah's poetic trails in a manner that matches his ambition to merge with the tribe. Antarah's invocation of Amr Ibn Kulthoum is a device by which he merges with the tribe. Although in one way or another, Antarah was excluded by his tribe, he kept their presence in several poems, surely beside his presence too:

وَنَحْنُ الْعَادِلُونَ إِذَا حَكَمْنَا وَنَحْنُ الْمَشْفِقُونَ عَلَى الرَّعِيَّةِ
وَنَحْنُ الْمُنْصِفُونَ إِذَا دُعِينَا إِلَى طَعْنِ الرِّمَاحِ السَّمْهَرِيَّةِ
وَنَحْنُ الْغَالِبُونَ إِذَا حَمَلْنَا عَلَى الْخَيْلِ الْجِيَادِ الْأَعْرَجِيَّةِ

(Tabrizi 2007, 217)

Abi Firas's influence on Antarah can be seen in his excessive pride in his tribe, Hamadan. Like Antarah, Abi Firas attempts to refer to his position among his tribe through an implicit simile, in which he stresses their need for a person like him:

تَهْوُنُ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْمَعَالِي نَفْسُنَا وَمَنْ خَطَبَ الْخَسَاءَ لَمْ يُعْطِهَا الْمَهْرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 165)

And through another implicit simile:

وَلَوْ سَدَّ غَيْرِي مَا سَدَّدْتُ إِكْتَفُوا بِهِ وَمَا كَانَ لَوْ نَفَقَ الصَّفْرُ

(Diwan Abu Firas, 165)

Believing in the impossibility of achieving materialistic immortality, the pre-Islamic poet compensates for it by achieving another spiritual form of immortality, which deems him alive as long as his name is mentioned. Such a form of immortality is achieved through committing to social values and virtues such as generosity, bravery, chivalry, and other drawn from ancient Arab heroes. Such collective concepts can function as a tool by which the poet could show his mythical heroism and could block any attempt to obliterate or exclude him as his name and memory are kept through his good deeds and sacrifices.

4. Results

Throughout the history of literature, continuous cultural patterns among poets have been a valid device functioning as an incubator in which predecessors' traditions are unconsciously cultivated, indirectly and furtively contributing to the formation and progression of the literary text. These collective and traditional concepts, as a product of constant social, cultural, and ideological conflicts, literary texts, whether in verse or prose, eventually get reincarnated and keep revolving, and thus get passed through with time passing.

Investing Antarah's cultural patterns, Abi Firas proves cultural patterns a vital device through which he could magnify and elaborate on themes, which intensifies the text's power with various epistemological and cultural components. Furthermore, transmitting the predecessor's concepts helps extend experiences through the ages.

Abi Firas does not only use obvious literary devices to articulate the contradictions he went through, but he also utilizes cultural patterns to do so. To Abi Firas, contradictions can really be articulated through tyrannical cultural patterns, in which the poet finds it difficult to prove his identity unless he creates new patterns of relationships by which distances between him and the Other are cut or shortened. The poet's marginalized Self heads towards the center, a space where hidden cultural patterns thrive.

- Culture has made the woman a symbolic epitome behind which cultural patterns reside, which surely fits the typical symbolic character of Arabic poetry. The scholar has found that most of their studies have focused on the concept of patriarchy instead of extending their studies to the power that woman can exercise in patriarchy. In Abi Firas' case, the woman exercises a despotic authority over the poet, a thing that intensifies the poet's marginalized status.

- Abi Firas's poem is naturally a text rich in hidden cultural patterns as he lived up to the common society's values that cherish chivalry and celebrate men's capabilities to bravely go through trials. The tribal codes also help individuals to represent themselves in a magnified way that the tribe itself supports and encourages.

- Concepts like royalty and pure lineage have had a powerful position, just like other social and political concepts. Such concepts have been core to the Arab culture since the pre-Islamic era until now.

- Through Antarah's experience, Abi Firas could uncover the Arab cultural mindset that controls his destiny and other patterns which can be gotten rid of for the sake of other powerful patterns. For instance, Antarah's tribe acknowledged Antarah for his strength and bravery, which in turn maintained his presence among them. The cultural pattern of hybrid parentage and distorted descent is canceled by the cultural pattern of knighthood. Such compromise maintains both Antarah's identity and the tribe's status among others.

- The scholar uncovers Abi Firas' pride and arrogance, which really contribute to him being marginalized. His language is revealing too. These are factors that make authority, represented by Saif Al-Dawlah, backfire against individuals, like Abi Firas, who challenges it.

- Cultural references create a space in which the poet feels powerfully free to criticize the authorities and convince them to end his captivity.

5. Conclusion

Abu Firas al-Hamdani's Ra'iyah describes what he experienced. The cultural analysis of his Ra'iyah is built upon the political, social, and ideological struggles he went through. By exposing embedded cultural patterns, the Ra'yiah reveals the superiority of the Arab man, who seeks to create a myth that aligns with his ego. The other cultural pattern illustrates how the ego and the Other are combined to form the center and the margins. The feminine mask serves to critique the Other in front of the ego. In Ra'yiah, opposing dualities play a crucial role in defining the stylistic features that reflect the inevitable struggle between the ego and the Other. Reviewing and evaluating the Other and reading the Self critically, it allows a critical deductive efficacy. Further, another cultural pattern can be found in the story of Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, which is an anecdotal inheritance that combines the struggle of Prophet Joseph with the conflict between Saif al-Dawla and Bani Hamdan. The study of Abu Firas al-Hamdani's Ra'yiah should not be limited to the Ra'yiah alone but should encompass his entire diwan, as this material is rich in social, political, and intellectual conflicts.

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