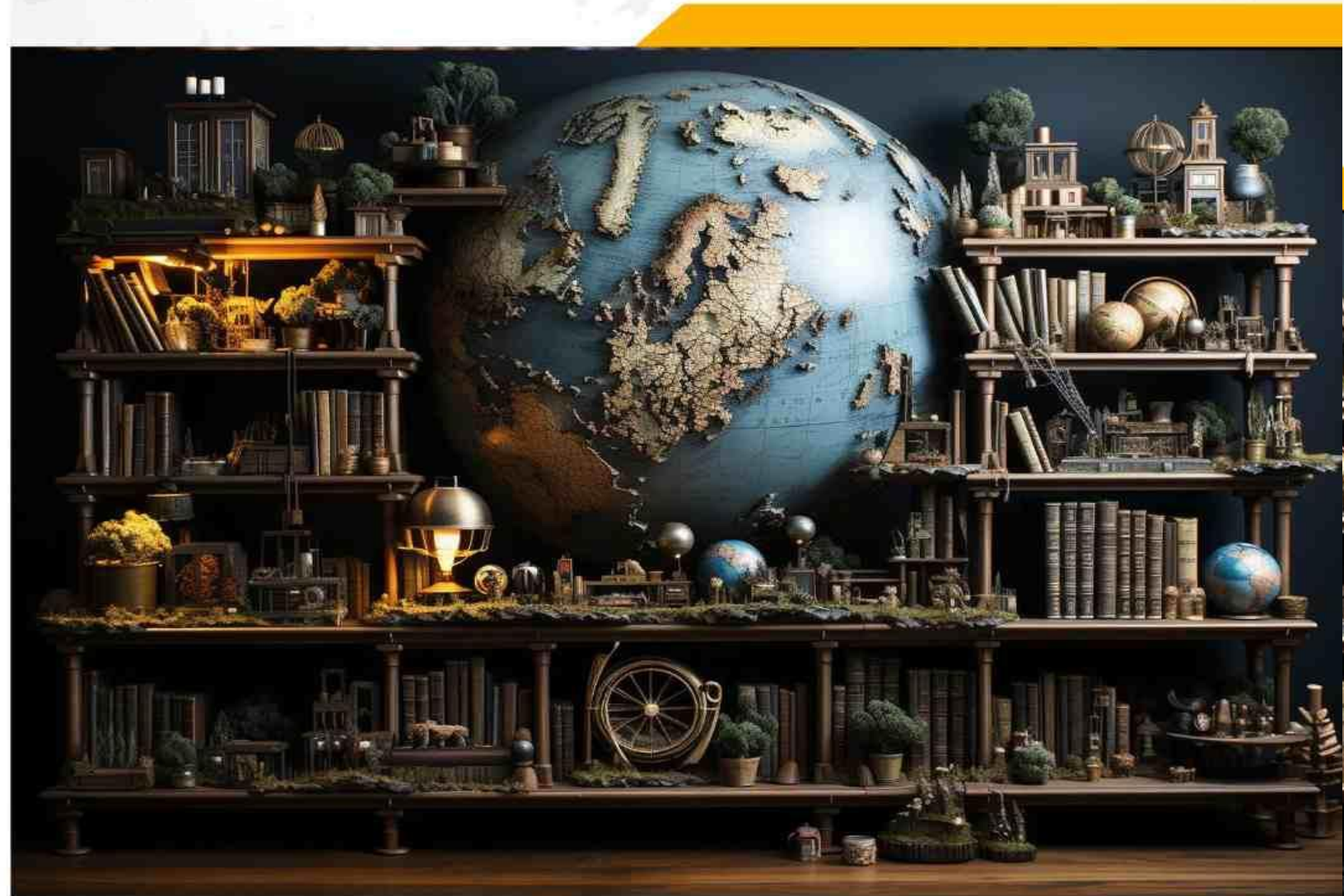




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The Cinematic Image of the Zebra in Al-A'sha's Poetry: A Semiotic Study

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Abstract

The zebra has long raced against time in ancient Arabic poetry, striving toward the pleasures of life. It became an exalted poetic symbol, making its presence prominent in the works of poets.

Accordingly, this study, titled *The Semiotics of the "Zebra" in the Poetry of Al-A'sha*, explores the representation of the zebra in his poetry. Al-A'sha is classified among the cosmopolitan poets due to his extensive travels across Arab and Persian lands. This study seeks to unveil the image of the zebra in his poetry, delve into its semantic dimensions in classical Arabic poetry, and address the lack of scholarly focus on its symbolism in Al-A'sha's works.

The research is structured into an introduction, two main chapters, and a conclusion summarizing the findings. The introduction outlines the research significance, objectives, and key questions. The first chapter examines relevant concepts, meanings, and provides an overview of the poet. The second chapter conducts a semiotic analysis of the zebra's portrayal in Al-A'sha's poetry. Finally, the conclusion presents the study's key findings, followed by a bibliography of sources and references.

Keywords: Al-A'sha, the zebra, semiotics, the pre-Islamic one.

Introduction

The pre-Islamic poetry is considered the foundation of Arabic poetry, due to its rich heritage, which has become the cornerstone of Arabic literature. It remains a vibrant text, capable of inspiring creativity in any time and place. Writers and poets later drew from it an abundance of meanings, images, and metaphors.

The pre-Islamic text is a fertile ground for study. Every time we read a pre-Islamic poetic text and reflect on its symbolic meanings, we find ourselves intellectually and artistically immersed in the text, enabling us to shed light on how the sign functions when the poet refers to an animal. This is evident in Al-A'sha's poem, where he mentions the "zebra."

In the realm of pre-Islamic poetry, there is a unique creativity concerning the natural world and animals. The pre-Islamic poet endowed nature with the essence of signs and symbols, each pointing to specific meanings, as seen in the poetry of Al-A'sha.

Hunting, in pre-Islamic times, symbolizes a scene of strength that showcases a man's courage and his ability to capture his prey. This is particularly evident in the pursuit between the Arab poet and the zebra, which has become a symbolic marker. Thus, we chose the title *The Zebra Scene in Al-A'sha's Poetry: A Semiotic Study* to examine this scene and provide a semiological analysis of its symbolic dimensions. The researcher will focus on the functioning of the sign.

The study adopts an inductive and analytical approach to Al-A'sha's poetry, applying the semiotic method to explore the relationship between the poet and the animal. It seeks to identify the active signs in Al-A'sha's poem, highlight their fundamental components, examine their interactions and integration, and uncover their levels and functions, as well as how they reflect the pre-Islamic poet's vision.

Importance of Research:

The main justifications that led the researcher to choose this topic are as follows:

1. The significance of the research lies in examining the flexibility of the pre-Islamic text and the richness of its connotations, which can accommodate contemporary readings of all kinds, particularly semiotic ones.
2. Previous studies have not addressed the symbolism of the "zebra" in Al-A'sha's poetry, whereas Al-A'sha's poems naturally contain a wealth of animal symbolism.
3. The symbolism of animals is one of the important fields that poets have used historically to support their poetic output.

4. The semiotic approach provides research tools, analytical procedures, and a range of terms and concepts that assist the researcher in studying the system of signs and decoding them.

5. Semiotic analysis helps us process texts by tracing the path of meaning production and generation, especially in the field of pre-Islamic poetry, which remains a fertile ground for study and research due to its inherent ambiguity, resulting in different interpretations and fresh ideas that lead to a new understanding and interpretation of the material.

Research Objectives:

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the semiotic dimensions of the zebra scene in Al-A'sha's poetry.
2. To study the relationship between the zebra and semiotics in Al-A'sha's work.
3. To highlight the use of "semiotics of animals" in the semantic, structural, and linguistic systems in Al-A'sha's poetry.
4. To examine the impact of Al-A'sha's personality and thinking in describing the animal from a semiotic perspective.

Research Methodology

In our research, we relied on the descriptive-analytical method, which helped us present a descriptive text within a specific time and place, focusing on the hunting scene in Al-A'sha's poetry. This allowed us to closely examine and comment on this phenomenon. Additionally, the researcher employed the semiotic method, attempting to identify the active signs in the verses of poetry that mention the zebra scene, clarify their fundamental components, explore the nature of their interaction and integration, and uncover their levels and functions, ultimately assessing how well they align with the poet's vision.

The semiotic method is a holistic approach that encompasses various interconnected elements, including the linguistic, semantic, and artistic aspects. It also draws on other disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, and history, which aids in understanding and analyzing the meanings of words and interpreting them. This forms the basis for principles rooted in contextual analysis, which seeks to uncover relationships between elements that generate meaning. Therefore, the semiotic focus

on discourse as a system for producing statements contributes to the discovery of how literary techniques are organized.¹

Research Questions:

1. Did the animal "zebra" form a semiotic sign, with its associated semantic dimensions and behavioral patterns?
2. How is the semiotic inventory of the zebra scene portrayed in Al-A'sha's poetry?
3. What is the relationship between the zebra scene and the poet's experience?
4. How did the poet utilize semiotic techniques in constructing his poetic texts that featured the zebra scene?
5. How are the emotional dimensions reflected in the zebra scenes?
6. What signs did the poet intend to establish in the mind of the recipient in the zebra scene?
7. Did the meaning of "zebra" in the poetic text change according to the poet's changing perspectives, both intellectual and textual?

Research Hypotheses:

1. The zebra was an iconic equivalent of the poetic self.
2. The zebra's experience was an equivalent to the poet's experience.
3. There is a possibility of demonstrating the effective use of the semiotics of the "zebra" in Al-A'sha's poetry.
4. The study of Al-A'sha's poetry is likely to produce various interpretations and fresh ideas, leading to new understandings and interpretations.
5. The poet dealt creatively and flexibly with semiotic techniques, as he built his pre-Islamic text in an open, flexible manner, not a closed one.
6. The emotional dimensions in the zebra scenes were expressed through verbal, syntactical, and imagistic tools.
7. The poet aimed to highlight dynamic and potential signs to enhance the poetic self's experience.

Accordingly, the research was based on an introduction, two researchers and a conclusion that summarized what the research has reached, the introduction included the importance of the research, its objectives and research questions, the first research included concepts, semantics and definition of the poet, while the second research included the study of the zebra scene semiotic study in the poetry of Asha,

¹ Chandler, Daniel. *Foundations of Semiotics*. Translated by Talal Wahba. Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, Lebanon, 2004, p. 358.

and a conclusion that included the most important findings of the research, proven by sources and references.

The First Chapter: Concepts and Meanings.

1- The Zebra between idea and meaning

The uncultivated ass is a living creature "that was abundant in the Arabian Peninsula, and is mentioned in Arab poetry in mentioning hunting, as well as in hadiths, and its creation resembles the domestic Zebra in that it has a hoof and long ears and the rest of its characteristics, and it is not from the domesticated so it is wild, but rather this is an independent species, so the wild is from the good, and the domesticated is from the bad²." Zebra has a unique physical appearance since it is not striped, but it is white and somewhat larger than the domestic Zebra, with darkness in its throat. It is now extinct, and its names include Al-Sahl, Dhu Jaddatayn, Mukarram, 'Ayr, and the Zebra, among others³.

If this is the zebra in nature, then in poetry, it has distinct connotations and essences, which we shall examine below:

2- The Zebra in Poetic Language:

The zebra has a powerful artistic and semantic presence in poetic situations because "its image is closely connected to the migration and movement that Bedouin neighborhoods undertake between grazing areas and water resources⁴." It is a being, but it is a symbolic being with semantic existence, allowing us to interpret its scenes semiotically. So, what is Semiotics?

Second: The concept of semiotics

We can say that understanding the concept of semiotics requires us to have definitions of this science and to seriously trace its historical emergence and development. Especially when we agree on the dominant surfaces of the sign, "the existence of signs is linked to the existence of civilization, in the ordinary sense of the word."⁵ This matter becomes more apparent as we attempt to trace and identify the semantic messages conveyed by a text from contemporary Iraqi poetic theater. We are, therefore, faced with a specific matter that leads us to search for "the semiotic concepts of aesthetics that have begun to crystallize in many studies,

² Al-Saeed, A. R. (1932). The zebra in ancient Arabic poetry: Description and designation. King Saud University.

³ Al-Hadlaq, A. (2010). The legacy of silence and the kingdom. King Fahd National Library

⁴ Al-Batal, A. (1987). The image in Arabic poetry until the end of the second century AH: A study of its origins and development (2nd ed.). Dar Al-Andalus

⁵ Amirno, Eco. *The Sign: Analysis of the Concept and Its History*. Translated by Said Benkrad, edited by Said Al-Ghanemi. Arab Cultural Center, Beirut, 1st ed., 2007, p. 33.

especially those related to the aesthetics of visual discourse, whether in photography or theatrical performances, including lighting, scenography, direction, decor, and so on. These go beyond the realm of linguistic signs, such as cinema, visual arts, and architecture, taking on an iconic expression at times and a symbolic one at others."⁶

It seems that lexicographers have reached the meaning of "sign" after studying the words of God Almighty, considering the various contexts in which the term *sema* (symbol) appears. It appears in its plural form in the verse: From the angels, marked (or identified)} (Al-Fath 29), and in all the verses, this term carries the meaning of a sign or distinction. Islamic scholars of tafsir (interpretation) have discussed this term (*sema*) in their works, stating that "sema is the sign by which something is recognized, its root meaning being elevation; because it is a mark raised to make it visible. From it comes the term *sawm* in commerce, which refers to an increase in price, lifting it beyond its limits. It also refers to the act of sending livestock to graze, elevating them by allowing them to pasture."⁷

The concept of semiotics in the Arab world has long been associated with a group of scholars, such as the scientist Jabir ibn Hayyan, whose knowledge and scientific directions were diverse. He is credited with transforming the science of alchemy into what is now known as semiotics. This term, historically associated with occult rituals, was defined by Ibn Hayyan in his book *Terminology of the Arts* as "the science of commanding the jinn." These examples make it clear that the word "semiotics" originally conveyed the meaning of a sign, and this term has deep roots in the ancient Arab heritage.

In language

We will take a quick tour of Arabic dictionaries to learn about the origin of this word, which serves the progress of research towards venturing into semiotics.

We find that semiotics comes under the linguistic root (سَوَمَ), and it was stated in (Taj al-Lughah wa Sihah al-Arabiyyah): "السَّوْمَةُ" with the dammah: the mark that is placed on the sheep, and also in war, [...], and the marked horses: the pasture. The marked: the marked. And his saying: "مُسَوِّمِينَ"⁸. Al-Akhfash said: It can be marked, and it can be sent, from your saying: "سَوَّمَ فِيهَا الْخَيْلَ", meaning he sent it. In the form of "السَّائِمَةُ", it came with "الياء والنون" because the horses were marked, and their

⁶ Ahmed, Youssef. *Open Significations: A Semiotic Comparison in the Philosophy of the Sign*. Arab Scientific Publishers, Arab Cultural Center, Vol. 1, Morocco, 2005, p. 133.

⁷ Al-Tabrisi, Abu Ali al-Fadl ibn al-Husayn. *Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafseer al-Quran*. Translated by Hashem al-Rasouli al-Mahallati. Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, Vol. 5, 1999, p. 26/127.

⁸ Surah Al Imran, verse 125.

riders were on them." سَوَّمْتُ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ ", if you raided them and caused mischief among them⁹."

The author of (Asas Al-Balagha) agreed with (Mu'jam Al-Sahih) that: سَوَّمَ فَرَسَهُ: he informed it of a mark, and marked horses, and the word “سامت الماشية” means: they grazed [...] and marked my slave: I left him and what he wanted, and the sentence “وَسَوِّمْتُ فَلَانًا فِي مَالِي”, and “مَحَكَّمٌ مَسَوِّمٌ” mean: he is freed and has no hand in a matter.”¹⁰

The root (سَوَمَ) included in the dictionary (Lisan Al-Arab): “السُّومَةُ وَالسَّيِّمَةُ وَالسَّيِّمَاءُ”: the mark. And he marked the horse: he put the mark on

it. **وَالسَّوْمَةُ بِالضَّمِّ** means : the mark is placed on the sheep and in war as well. It was said that: **الْخَيْلُ الْمَسْوُومَةُ** are those that have the mark and the mark. Ibn Al-A'rabi said: **السَّيِّمُ** are the marks on the wool of the sheep."¹¹

Ibn Manzur presented in his dictionary a group of examples and evidence of the root (سوم) which, in general, indicate the meaning of the mark placed on the animal, and in other evidence, the mark by which believers are distinguished from polytheists¹².

The dictionary (Al-Qamoos Al-Muheet) did not deviate from the previous meanings in the meanings of the mentioned root “السَّوْمَةُ بِالضَّمِّ وَالسَّيْمَةِ وَالسَّيْمَاءِ، بِكَسْرِ هَيْنَ” means: the mark, and Sawmā al-Fars Taswīm made a mark on him, and so-and-so: he left him, and سَيْمَةً for what he wanted and in his money: he ruled over him. And the horses: he sent them. And upon the people: he raided and ravaged them, and the phrase : on it are like rings, or marked with white and red, means ¹³ (مِنْ طَيْنٍ * مُسَوَّمَةً) or with a mark that indicates that it is not from the stones of the world.”¹⁴

Modern dictionaries did not deviate in defining the word (سوم) from what was mentioned in ancient dictionaries, including what was mentioned in (Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit) "Someone was marked: he adopted a mark to be known by. Mark: mark and sign, mark: value. Mark: sign. And in the Noble Qur'an¹⁵ (سَيِّمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ (السَّيِّمَاءِ): السَّيِّمَاءِ). (السَّيِّمَاءِ): السَّيِّمَاءِ and السُّجُودِ).

From the above, we find that linguistic dictionaries have agreed on the meaning of the triliteral root (سَوَم) on the meaning of the mark, as we note that the word (السَّيِّمَاء ((

⁹ Al-Jawhari, I. H. (1990). *As-Sahah Taj al-Lugha wa Sahih al-Arabiyyah* (A. A. Attar, Ed., 4th ed.). Dar al-Ilm lil-Malayin

¹⁰ Al-Zamakhshari. (1998). The foundation of eloquence (M. B. A. Al-Soud, Ed.). Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyyah

¹¹ Al-Tabarsi, A. A. (n.d.). *Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran* (H. al-Mahalati, Ed.). Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi

¹² See: previous source, entry (Sawm).

¹³ Surat Adh-Dhariyat, verses 33-34.

¹⁴ Al-Fayruzabadi, M. (2005). *Al-Qamoos Al-Muhit* (Heritage Investigation Office, Ed.). Al-Risala Foundation.

¹⁵ Surat Al-Fath, verse 29.

¹⁶ Arabic Language Academy in Cairo. (2004). Intermediate dictionary (4th ed.). Al-Shorouk International Library

(والسِّيَمَاء) were not present in the dictionaries with the same meaning before Lisan Al-Arab, although they were not absent from them - perhaps - but they did not establish it.

Perhaps the lexicographers have arrived at the meaning of (العلامة) after their investigation of the words of God Almighty, and looking at the different contexts in which the word (سِيَمَاء) appeared, and it came in the plural form in His saying: ﴿مَنْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مُسَوِّمِينَ﴾¹⁷, and this word has carried in all the verses the meaning of sign and distinction, as the scholars of interpretation have stopped at this word (سَوَم) in their interpretations, including their saying that "sign is the mark by which something is known, and its origin is elevation; because it is a sign raised for appearance, and from it is the sum in selling, which is the increase in the amount of the price for its elevation above the limits, and from it is the sum of the sinking for raising in it by loading what is difficult, and from it is the sum of livestock by sending them out to pasture."¹⁸

Semiotics Technically

In an ancient manuscript authored by Ibn Sina, titled "Kitab al-Durr al-Nazim fi Ahwal Ulum al-Ta'lim" and written by Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Sa'id al-Ansari, he states in a chapter regarding "Semiotics" that "Semiotics is a scientific discipline that seeks to investigate the interaction of forces within the elements of the physical world to generate a peculiar phenomenon¹⁹." Additionally, it encompasses many categories: some of it is organized based on spiritual techniques and synthetic instruments designed to address the need to avoid emptiness. A portion of it is organized based on dexterity and velocity of motion. First of these categories is the genuine semiotics.

A manuscript by Muhammad Shah ibn al-Mawla Shams al-Din al-Fanari also referred to these categories, which Rashid ibn Malik elucidates as follows: "They are associated with peculiar movements that an individual executes, some of them are connected to fields of engineering, while others are associated with sorcery."²⁰

Many have regarded it as a distinct science separate from the natural sciences, constituting the third branch of sciences. It encompasses medicine, veterinary medicine, physiognomy, dream interpretation, astrology, magic, talismans, semiotics, chemistry, and agriculture. It is important to note that the science of semiotics does not involve a combination of compound bodies, while the science of

¹⁷ Surat Al-Imran, verse 125.

¹⁸ Al-Tabarsi, A. A. (n.d.). Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran (H. al-Mahalati, Ed.). Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi

¹⁹ Semiotics: Its Origins and Rules, Michel Arrivé, Jean-Claude Giroux, Louis Banier, Joseph Curtis, translated by Dr.

²⁰ Ainou, A., Arivie, M., & Coqui, J., et al. (2008). Semiotics: Origins, rules, history (R. bin Malik, Trans.). Dar Majdalawi.

chemistry does. This distinction between the two sciences lies in their respective requirements for such mixtures²¹.

The field of semiotics, as defined by Dr. Salah Fadl, is concerned with the study of symbolic systems in all indicative signs and the manner in which these indications occur²². It is worth noting that Dr. Fadl did not exclude written and spoken languages from the systems he mentioned; rather, he examined them as a collection of symbolic relationships rather than the sounds that generate and shape them. The Dictionary of Literary Terms provides a definition of semiotics as the examination of all elements of culture, treating them as sign systems, operating under the assumption that these elements are indeed sign systems²³.

Dr. Saeed Benkrad asserts that semiotics derives its origins and principles from a diverse range of cognitive disciplines, including linguistics, philosophy, logic, psychoanalysis, and anthropology²⁴. Therefore, the objective of semiotics is to uncover concealed meanings rather than to determine their origins.

Dr. Mokhtar Zawawi succinctly defined semiotics as the interconnected study of morphology, grammar, constructions, synonymy, rhetoric, stylistics, lexicography, and other related linguistic phenomena²⁵.

It is the study of signs or interpretive processes that arise from language, which he defined as a system of signs²⁶. The fundamental nature of this system is the relationship between meanings and sound pictures, and both aspects of the sign are psychological²⁷. This applies to the work of Todorov and Dekro as well²⁸.

²¹ Al-Ahmar, F. (2010). Dictionary of semiotics

²² Structural Theory in Literary Criticism, Salah Fadl, Dar al-Shorouk, Cairo - Egypt, 1st ed., 1419 AH - 1998 AD, p. 297.

²³ Dictionary of Contemporary Literary Terms, Saeed Alloush, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Lubnani, Beirut - Lebanon, 1st ed., 1405 AH - 1985 AD, p. 118

²⁴ Benkrad, S. (2012). Semiotics: Concepts and applications (3rd ed.). Dar Al-Hiwar

²⁵ From Morphology to Semiotics - An Introduction to the Thought of Ferdinand de Saussure, Dr. Mukhtar Zawawi, Modern World of Books for Publishing and Distribution, Irbid - Amman, 1st ed., 2019 AD, p. 100.

²⁶ Features of Semiology in Saussure between the Concept and the Foundation, Bassam Hussein Al-Amiri, Thi Qar University, Dawa Magazine, a quarterly magazine concerned with linguistic and educational research and studies, 173, p. 5.

²⁷ General Linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure, trans. Dr. Yoel Youssef Aziz, Review of the Arabic Text, Dr. Malik Youssef Al-Muttalibi, a monthly book series issued by Dar Afaq Arabiya, Baghdad - Iraq, 1st ed., 1985 AD, p. 33.

²⁸ See : The Semiotic Term between Western and Arab Thought - The Maghreb Semiotic Study of Moulay Ali Boukhatem as a Model, Master's Thesis Prepared by: Laila Valli, Supervised by Dr. Jamila Zoubash, University of Mohamed Boudiaf in M'Sila, 1437 AH - 2016 AD, p. 21.

Third: Symbolism:

Symbolism in Language: In *Lisan al-Arab*, it is mentioned that "the symbol is a subtle sound made with the tongue, like whispering, which is done by moving the lips with incomprehensible speech, without using sound, but rather as a sign with the lips."²⁹

Al-Zamakhshari, in his *Asas al-Balagha*, specifies winking with the hand, gesturing with the eye, touching with the mouth, and signaling with the eyebrows and lips are considered symbolic actions: "She gestures with her hand, winks with her eye, touches with her mouth, and signals with her eyebrows. He said: 'He symbolized his lips and eyebrows.'"³⁰

Symbolism in Terminology: Azeddin Ismail defines the symbol as: "The linguistic symbol itself, which serves as a conventional sign indicating a specific subject directly, just as the word points to the object that is referenced by the word, but without a vital relationship—'an interwoven' connection or blending—between the poetic symbol and its subject, and between the symbol and what it symbolizes."³¹

In front of the pre-Islamic poetic achievement, we find a special creativity for the world of nature and animals, as the pre-Islamic poet loaded this nature with the hidden signs and signs that point to special meanings, such as what we see with the pre-Islamic poet Al-A'sha, so who is Al-A'sha?

4- Biography of Al-A'sha:

Upon revisiting the translated biographies of poets and authors, we discovered that the author of Al-Aghani mentioned twenty-one of his grandfathers, namely "Maymun bin Qais bin Jandal bin Sharahil bin Auf bin Saad bin Dabi'ah bin Qais bin Tha'laba Al-Hisn bin Ukaba bin Sa'b bin Ali bin Bakr bin Wa'il bin Qast bin Hanb bin Afsa bin Du'mi bin Jadhil bin Asad bin Rabi'ah bin Nizar"³². According to Ibn Qutaybah, the name Al-A'sha was bestowed upon him, possibly due to his impaired vision rather than his blindness³³. He also mentioned another nickname, Sanajat Al-Arab, which he attributed to the excellence of his poetry, its

²⁹ Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, previous reference, entry (R-M-Z).

³⁰ Al-Zamakhshari, *Asas al-Balagha*, edited by Muhammad Basal Oyun al-Soud, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1998, p. 251.

³¹ *Contemporary Arabic Poetry: Its Issues and Artistic and Spiritual Phenomena*, Dar al-Awda, Beirut, 1981, 3rd ed., p. 191.

³² Al-Isfahani, A. A. (2008). Al-Aghani (I. Abbas et al., Eds., 3rd ed.). Dar Sadir

³³ Ibn Qutaybah. (1980). Poetry and poets (A. M. Shaker, Ed.). Dar al-Maaref

resonance, and the reverberation in the ears, creating the impression of chanting on the cymbal³⁴.

Al-A'sha grew up in a village in the Yamamah region called (Manfukha), and literature books did not mention anything about his upbringing, and it is not known when he died³⁵. Al-A'sha achieved a distinguished position in the field of literature and achieved wide fame that continues to this day³⁶, Ibn Sallam Al-Jumahi placed him in the first class with Imru' Al-Qais, Al-Nabigha Al-Dhubyani, and Zuhair bin Abi Salma, and his most famous themes are praise, wine, and love.

The Second Chapter: The Zebra Scene/ Vision/ Semiotics

We are fully aware that every word in the poem is only a part of the field of semiotic reading because the word forms a relationship consisting of (signifier and signified), so color is a sign, movement is a sign, and any detail of the body is a sign that reflects a certain level of significance that may have an impact specific to the social, psychological, political, or historical field, or possibly any field depending on the affiliation of the semiotic root. Any literary text is a collection of signs; it is possible to explore its depths and trace its semantic possibilities by grasping the text's semantic handles and connecting them to reality, while keeping in mind that "the semiotic analysis of a specific text may differ from one person to another, depending on the personality and environment."³⁷ The poet Al-A'sha emphasizes his identification with the zebra, revealing his fear of an unforeseeable future, in a context saturated with indicative signs that allowed us to savor those scenes expressing the zebra and what it has become as a signifier in Al-A'sha's poetic context, and what this signifier contains of many connotations.

Semiotics in Al-A'sha's poetry and others necessitates an exploratory reading followed by a true interpretive reading, as Al-A'sha's poems, like all poetry, are an expression that accommodates many semiotic carriers that suggest the breadth of the science of signs as well as the signs and connotations that surround them³⁸. According to Peirce, the symbol stands out in zebra scenes because it is the

³⁴ The previous source, Vol. 1/179

³⁵ See: From the History of Arabic Literature, Dr. Taha Hussein, Dar Al-Ilm Lil-Malayin, Beirut - Lebanon, n.d., p. 235.

³⁶ See: Classes of the Masters of Poets, Ibn Salam Al-Jamhi, edited by Ahmed Muhammad Shaker, Al-Madani Press, Cairo, Vol. 1/51.

³⁷ Semiotics / Origins, Rules, History /, Anne Ainou Michel Arivie and Louis Babinet and Jean Coquit, Jean Gerer, and Joseph Cortes, edited by Rashid bin Malik, Dar Majdalawi, Jordan, 1st ed., 2008, p. 54.

³⁸ See: Systems of Signs in Language, Literature and Culture, Introduction to Semiotics, Siza Al-Qasim and Nasr Hamid, Dar Elias, Egypt, 1st ed., 1986, p. 213.

positioning of a term, such as the scales, which are a symbol of justice, or it is the mark between the signifier and the signified³⁹.

This symbol was initially embodied by the same zebra that we found to be a symbol of the poet himself in his emotional experience. We see it triumph in situations of praise, joy, and love, and flee and suffer injustice in scenes of mourning and loss, even though the poet tried to breathe life into the scenes in which that life was lost. In his words, praising Iyas's bin Qubaysah al-Ta'i⁴⁰:

*In his praise of Iyās ibn Qabīṣa al-Ṭā'ī: ** In every station where you spend the night,*

The terrors keep your eyes awake.

*You see it like a dragon with two humps, ** Gathering strength from the earth's dark soil.*

*Many misfortunes fall in its sight, ** But its wealth never caused it harm.*

*When a storm of dust arises, ** Its cloak swiftly flies away.*

*It did not settle for proximity until it became ** A pillow for the sides of its people.*

*It cleansed grudges from their filth, ** Like the twisting of reins by a skilled braider.*

We find that the zebra is a symbol of strength in the context of praise, so the poet made it capable, so we were before: the signifier + the signified = the wild Zebra /symbol

The poet sees that wherever the beloved settles, her beautiful imagination disturbs the eyes, and he found the camel in its activity a wild Zebra with two stripes, gathering the herds of female Zebra s and driving them before him and wandering with them in the desert for a year without offspring or milk, He gathered them from all over the place, and chose them as he liked, and they were his wives for whom he did not pay a dowry or money.

He gathered this huge number of wives, driving them before him wherever he wanted, if the dust stood between them, his curtain rose, going to the sky, and he did not accept to approach her until he stuck his head to her buttocks and took it as a pillow for his jaw; for he established her inclination and perversion until her matter was straight for him and gathered, as if he were a harvested, twisted rope.

³⁹ Dictionary of Semiotic Terms, Bronwyn Matten, Phyllis Yitzhar Wingham, translated by: Abed Khazindar, National Center for Translation, Cairo, 1st ed., 2008, p. 182

" Zebra is keen on his female with a keenness that only a human can approach him in"⁴¹, so this Zebra is nothing but an equivalent to the poet, as it reflects the psychological state of the poet on the one hand, and highlights Al-A'sha's positions on life and existence on the other hand, as in his saying in the previous section:

In his praise of Iyās ibn Qabīṣa al-Ṭā'ī:

*In every station where you spend the night, ** The terrors keep your eyes awake.*

*You see it like a dragon with two humps, ** Gathering strength from the earth's dark soil.*

*Many misfortunes fall in its sight, ** But its wealth never caused it harm.*

*When a storm of dust arises, ** Its cloak swiftly flies away.*

*It did not settle for proximity until it became** A pillow for the sides of its people.*

*It cleansed grudges from their filth, ** Like the twisting of reins by a skilled braider*

It depicts the psychological level of the relationship between the zebra and the Zebra , which leads us to the code, which is defined as "a system of signs, relationships, symbols, gestures, sounds, or other things that is used by means of a prior, agreed-upon custom, such as transferring information from one point to another."⁴² The code was: In the previous section, it was the lexical field full of signs of strength that referred to the Zebra 's uniqueness, its distinction from other Zebra s, and its ability to lead. This dictionary is made up of the following semantic particles: (Ahqab, with two grandmothers, gathers help and fights her, a camel whose money does not harm him, he is not satisfied with closeness, until he is as a cushion for the snake's limbs...).

The poet associates the zebra with optimism in his ability to face time and be cautious of what the future holds. As a result, he is capable and strong, particularly because he was able to deal with his interpretants in a unique manner, and the interpretants alone (the interpretant) are the interpreter's response to the sign that reaches him. The linguistic meaning (meaning) may be considered interpreted⁴³. Every linguistic meaning we encountered was interpreted. For example:

- To keep you awake (يُورِق): to prevent you from sleeping. The linguistic meaning of "to keep you awake" is to make you sleepless.

⁴¹ The Great Life of Animals, Kamal Al-Damri, trans. Asaad Al-Faris, Dar Talas, Damascus, 1st ed., 1992 AD, p. 41.

⁴² Dictionary of Semiotic Terms, Brunnen Mani, p. 54, p. 182.

⁴³ Al-Qassem, S., & Hamed, N. (1986). Systems of signs in language, literature, and culture: Introduction to semiotics. Dar Elias

- "نحائض": scattered, stripped, from "anhas": to be stripped and scattered, and the she-camel Naha'is is very fat.
- "أحقب": the camel tightened his belt, and Ikhtaqaq al-Ithm: he committed it, and the Ahqab is the wild Zebra, so named because of the whiteness in its loins.
- يتجالها: Ijtala fi al-Bilad: he wandered, and Ijtala min al-Shi': he chose, and Ijtala al-Qawm: he turned them away from their goal, and the devil Ijtala Fulan: he belittled him and wandered with him in misguidance.
- وساداً : Al-Wisad: the pillow, and it was said that the wide-wasad is absurd, and the pillow is the reclining place⁴⁴.

"The symbolic significance of the animal is an expression of a specific situation in which the poet depicts himself, due to the correspondence between his poetic self and the image of the animal." These previous interpretations constitute the connotations that the poet relied on to monitor the semantic level, revealing the dimensions of his emotional experience. "When he compared it to a wild Zebra, he only described its condition in the same way, from concealment and change in the summer and pity for a pregnant Zebra sad about her young that was removed from her while she was expelled to the water. Then he soon returned to his camel, describing its difficult condition and her complaint to him about the effort. He did not rely in all of that on the material comparisons that depict the described in a metaphorical depiction that clarifies and embodies it. The effects of civilization appeared in his description, and he was distinguished by the exaggeration in depicting the camel's pain and troubles, and he was distinguished from his group by describing the wild animal⁴⁵." So, the linguistic connotations (interpretations) were signs Semiotics that clarify the meaning of the details on which the poet built his previous scene.

The poet not only referenced the interpretive signs but also utilized the index, as the depiction of the animal in pre-Islamic poetry serves merely as "a structural component that derives its symbolic meanings from the surrounding atmosphere of the poem and the emotional state expressed by the poet⁴⁶." This positions within a realm abundant with indicators. The index is defined as "establishing a causal relationship between a linguistic or external reality and its corresponding indicator, such as the loudness of a voice signifying the speaker's excitement, or smoke indicating the presence of fire." Thus, every causal relationship between actual

⁴⁴ Awad, R. (1992). The structure of the pre-Islamic poem. Dar Al-Adab.

⁴⁵ Noufal, S. (1945). Poetry of nature in Arabic literature. Misr Press.

reality and psychological motivation acted as an indicator of the poet's psychological state, exemplified by his assertion:

In every station you've passed through ** The horrors kept your eyes sleepless
The preceding verse serves as an indicator by connecting the tangible world (The place where you resided) to the unfulfilled quest for the beloved, subsequently presenting the challenge through imagery. The zebra that rejected the proximity, as if it had established its conditions for such closeness. The Semiotic dimensions in the scenes featuring the zebra in Al-A'sha have proliferated, as "the zebra scene serves as a symbolic representation of the existence of Arab tribes compelled by the cyclical nature of seasons to engage in perpetual departure and constant migration⁴⁷." The recurrence of this scene may have contributed to the notion that the remnants of the zebra's image in poetry embody elements of a lost legend associated with the solar cycle, particularly during the transition from spring to summer, a period characterized by plant growth until ripeness⁴⁸; thus, it is logical for this scene to serve as a semantic icon.

"An icon represents an entity, and virtually anything can serve as an icon for another, including photographs, graphic illustrations, and metaphors⁴⁹." Consequently, the zebra served as an emblem due to its declarative metaphor that embodies the poetic self.

The poetic simile and the simile are the zebra, characterized by a relationship rich in semantic and psychological dimensions. All metaphors in the zebra scenes embody that iconic dimension, as each metaphor denotes a specific, acknowledged meaning.

Semiology revolves in the space of semantic unity, and this unit is: Lexia: words and structures. If we contemplate the zebra scenes in Al-A'sha, we will also find verbal units represented in description, dialogue, narration, and indirect speech⁵⁰. Here, we can say that Al-A'sha's poetic text is rich in semiological connotations.

The self of Al-A'sha emerges as a special indicative element when he tries to form an artistic and objective equation with the zebra, as all the scenes of the zebra summarize an emotional experience that has its psychological projections in his depths, and each relationship of his poetic construction contributes to achieving a basic unit that contributed to developing the event, and achieving the informative and suggestive dimension. The zebra was an icon that carried semiotic dimensions

⁴⁷ See: Systems of Signs in Language, Literature and Culture, Introduction to Semiotics, Siza Al-Qasim and Nasr Hamid, Dar Elias, Egypt, 1st ed., 1986, p. 213.

⁴⁸ Al-Batal, A. (1987). The image in Arabic poetry until the end of the second century AH: A study of its origins and development (2nd ed.). Dar Al-Andalus.

⁴⁹ Dictionary of Semiotics Terms, Bronwyn Mannen, p. 105.

⁵⁰ See: previous reference, p. 117.

radiating with indicative signals⁵¹, so it performed an important semantic function on the iconic level, and Al-A'sha did not stop at that, but rather made the metaphor an iconic color with which he decorated those scenes.

The poet lived a harsh stage of his life, but he only thought about himself, which he found to be refined, creative, and superior, so he tried to fathom the events of the poet's interior and draw the boundaries of the impact of events on the reins of his destinies.

“The image of the zebra is full of vitality, because he is grazing with his Zebra s in a safe place with a lot of grass, and because his virility is shown in his ability to possess a group of females, so we see the Zebra s obeying him and not daring to disobey his command, in contrast to what is common in this place, as we find the Zebra refusing the male and refusing him.” So, the poet wanted to highlight, among a group of indicators, the following:

- Attraction: when the Zebra pulls towards him.
- Strength: when he keeps pace with and overcomes it.
- Endurance: when he persists despite Zebra 's reluctance.
- Activity: when he runs and surpasses.
- Beauty: when his slimness and color stand out.

If we reflect on the scenes of the Zebra depicted here, we find that these indicators are extended axes around which many meanings revolve. The text thus becomes a multi-meaning one, leaving the receiver the opportunity to interpret these meanings according to the emotional scene imposed upon them. This is evident in Al-A'sha's poem, where he describes both the Zebra and the she-camel. Al-A'sha depicts the she-camel as being sturdy and unaffected by long travels, causing her belly to slim down and her strap to loosen, as if in her energy she resembles a wild Zebra in a lush land covered with plants. He describes the Zebra as robust and hefty, still a hunter's prey. He continues describing the Zebra, following it into the heart of the desert, forgetting his she-camel and moving along with it to fulfill his need for detailed imagery. This is evident in his saying⁵²:

*A tough she-camel, whose purpose the journey cannot break, ** Like a thickset Zebra of the wilderness, worn and battered.*

⁵¹ Disguised Visions Towards a Structural Approach to the Study of Pre-Islamic Poetry, Kamal Abu Deeb, Egyptian General Book Authority, Egypt, p. 214.

⁵² Al-A'sha, A. (1983). Diwan Al-A'sha Al-Kabir (M. M. Hussein, Ed.). Al-Risalah Foundation.

*It grazed the meadows and spring bloom, ** Until it seems as though the bitter aloes fill its gaze.*

*It followed a swift she-camel, driven fast, ** Whenever it strays from the path, he reproaches it.*

*When he approached her, she met him with a hoof, ** As if in her chest is the sting of a cupping scar.*

*If she challenged him in the open plains, he would leap toward her, ** With a rush like the blaze of a raging fire.*

*And when the fast pace overcame her strength, ** He persisted with the strength of a weary, damaged limb.*

*When the sun rose high and the stones were set ablaze, ** He remembered the closest watering place to quench his thirst.*

*So, he led her to a spring, a drink from the sword's edge, ** Whose cure was as clear as well-washed linens.*

*He constructed them from resilient rams, prepared ** To slay the lead camels, tame and domesticated in pairs.*

His body became plump and swollen, as if the dry desert plant in his mouth tasted like wormwood, because he had been accustomed to soft living for a long time. He describes it as having grazed the dense vegetation where water gathers in valleys and also grazed the vegetation that was left behind by the spring rain. The poet goes on to describe the company that drew the Zebra. It was thin and tame, and its upper arm stuck to its side. So, he followed it, and when it disobeyed him, he would bite it. As a result, the Zebra would kick him in fear whenever he approached it, and its hoof would leave bruises on his chest similar to the mark of cupping. So, he ran quickly, competing with the Zebra and pushing it in front of him to a plentiful spring on the valley's bank. Surrounding this spring were rough places where the hunter would lie in wait, presumably for the purpose of killing the beasts. The Zebra 's chest turned feverish from the intensity of its running.

We notice that Al-A'sha included in his text many semiological angles represented by:

-The Color as a Symbol in Poetry

Color is an essential aesthetic symbol in the poem, and the poet sought to utilize its underlying connotations that accompany this symbolic element.

A- The Sun as an Icon of Light (Yellow):

The color yellow carries various meanings depending on its contextual use. Here, it symbolizes something precious and valuable, as the sun is indispensable. The significance of the yellow color is reflected in the image of the sun and the prosperity it brings, emphasizing its elevated status and great importance.

B- Dryness as an Icon (Yellow):

In this context, the yellow color signifies withering and illness, along with signs of approaching death and destruction.

C- The Meadow as an Icon of Fertility (Green):

The green color has always been associated with renewal, vitality, fertility, and life. The poet crafts a beautiful descriptive imagery where the meadows symbolize abundance, stability, and flourishing life.

Interpretations:

A- ‘Arandisa’ (عندسة) – Strong and Massive:

This term signifies the poet’s desire to establish power and strength.

B- ‘Rawḍ’ (الروض) – Plants Nourished by Spring Rain:

This word reinforces the poet’s inclination to infuse fertility and life into his poetry, reflecting his aspiration for continuity and survival.

C- ‘Wasmiyy’ (الوسمي) – Plants Left Behind by Spring Rain:

This term suggests a state of weakness and fear.

D- ‘Iḥtidām’ (احتدام) – Struggle and Heat:

The poet employs this word to highlight the beauty of resistance, both for survival and self-assertion. The bull, in this instance, serves as an artistic counterpart. The term *ih̥tidām* symbolizes struggle, making the poetic narrative unfold dynamically with a rising rhythm, leading to an essential revelation.

E- ‘Ghasīl’ (الغسيل) – A Young Palm Wrapped for Protection:

This word signifies an intrinsic meaning of optimism and hope for the future.

F- ‘Al-Mukammam’ (المكمم) – Covered/Protected:

Here, the term denotes protection, which the poet aims to express.

These linguistic meanings go beyond rigid lexical definitions, transforming into semiotic signs that convey deeper interpretations, as explained in the analysis of this excerpt.

These linguistic meanings expanded beyond the strict lexical structure to include semiotic signals that were made clearer by the meanings we previously discussed to explain the meanings of the passage. The zebra is shown by Al-A'sha occasionally by itself and other times with the rest of the herd. As stated by Al-Asha in the preceding section:

*A tough she-camel, whose purpose the journey cannot break, ** Like a thickset Zebra of the wilderness, worn and battered.*

The strong "Arandasa" female-Zebra is resilient, with a saddle strap that is securely fastened. It was like a strong Zebra making his way across the desert, trailed by a submissive she-Zebra (Saqba) who obeys him because he will bite her if she does not. Then, as he stated in the previous verse, we witness him declare a lead in running intensity:

*He grazed the meadows and the spring bloom, ** Until it seems as though the bitter aloes fill his gaze.*

*He followed a swift she-Zebra, driven fast, ** Whenever it strayed from the path, he reproached it.*

*When he approached her, she met him with a hoof, ** As if in her chest is the sting of a cupping scar.*

*If she challenged him in the open plains, he would leap toward her, ** With a rush like the blaze of a raging fire.*

The Zebra was an artistic and objective equivalent to Al-A'sha, as he was in his quest to win a wife while he was in the prime of his youth and he got what he sought after much hardship, and he lives with his group, which created a clear sense of reassurance, and this is what made every linguistic lexical part with its linguistic structure a tool for building a semiological level that has a specificity in:

- Significance

2- Structure

3- Reference to a special relationship

Al-A'sha's description of the wild animal may seem lengthy because he describes the wild Zebra 's journey to the water with his female Zebra, the hunter's exposure to it, and the arrow that passes by the Zebra without hitting it⁵³. All of this is done while keeping an eye on the finer points of movement and skill, without considering the metaphorical images that his group may encounter. His previous poem serves as the best illustration of this, as he attempts to turn these details into semiotic building blocks that he uses to build the semantic level. In order to move his poetic painting and imbue it with emotional brilliance, the poet tries to be diverse in the signs he uses to transmit semiotic codes. This is because the process of semantic production of feeling is a unique relationship carried by words, structures, and images towards what we see in many expressive details towards the following:

- The word "عندسة": feeling of admiration.
- The image (كأنّ احتدام الجوف في حمي شده): feeling of admiration.
- The structure of "دنا منها": feeling of love.
- The structure of "إمرار علقم": feeling of resentment and denunciation.

The fact that the wild Zebra and his female counterpart have arrived at the good and water is proof positive that Al-A'sha is able to fulfill his paternal responsibilities and act as a perfect father because he bestowed upon the wild Zebra the same ability he bestowed upon himself.

A communicative mechanism that accomplishes the primary goal of the communication process is carried within the semiology of emotions, whose details we found to be based on various expressive tools like the word, the structure, and the image. This is especially true since the process of emotional influence "must have an axis of communication that exists between the sender and the recipient, through which they exchange data or information, as the sender informs the recipient

⁵³ Nature Poetry, Sayed Noufal, p. 75.

of something⁵⁴," which brings us to semiological frameworks that Al-A'sha wanted to crystallize in accordance with a semiotic image. By connecting the future to the fundamental meaning, the term "احتدام" seems to indicate the conflict that caused the poetic event to develop and take on an increasingly intense rhythm, ultimately leading us to a point of disclosure.

Caution is an essential trait of the zebra, which thrives in security and tranquility. Consequently, the text is attuned to any disruption of the familiar eras concealed behind peace. The zebra's pursuit of stability means that any disturbance to it parallels a disturbance in the poetic text. This creature adeptly embodies contradictions, representing both weakness and strength, as well as desire and aversion. Thus, it emerges as an iconic figure.

This phenomenon can be observed in multiple poems from the pre-Islamic era. A notable example is found in Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī's *'Ayniyyah* (a poem ending in the letter 'Ayn), where the animal appears as a restless, unsettled being. This instability causes it to fluctuate between the past, present, and future, navigating through a temporal space filled with a desperate hope. By *desperate hope*, we refer to the self's dream of bringing back deceased loved ones—an understandable yet impossible wish, leading to despair over its unattainability. This is why the poet declares:

"When death sinks its claws deep, you will find that no charm can ever avail."

Here, he proclaims the futility of any attempt to defy these scenes brimming with death and annihilation, as mortality is an inevitable fate for all beings. Abū Dhu'ayb states:

(They wrestled for a while amidst his meadow, Fighting fiercely at times, yielding at others.

Until the waters of Ruzūn receded, And in whatever time remains, it shatters.

He remembered the spring and longed for its return,

Yet misfortune pursued him, marking his inevitable hour.)

The poet constantly seeks to evoke scenes of life, yet he soon introduces an opposing force that erases them. Among these life-affirming images is the zebra's struggle for survival, its attempt to escape and persist. The poet also mentions the torrential downpour, as if hoping it might alter fate by weakening it. However, heavy rain is too relentless to be described as *weak*—the poet explicitly states that it "does not

⁵⁴ Rhetoric of Discourse and Textual Science, Salah Fadl, Supreme National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Kuwait, 1st ed., 1992, p. 317.

cease." Continuous rain, which never stops, shifts in meaning from a symbol of revival to one of destruction. This illustrates the contradictions inherent in semiotic theories.

The zebra's symbolism, based on its significant placement within various scenes, suggests a rich human experience where the animal serves as a marker of that experience's scope. The poet utilized this symbol to enhance feelings of pride and admiration, while the relational aspect of the animal's connection to both the living and inanimate environment emerges as a semantic icon that underscores the following:

- Living relationships.
- Silent relationships.
- Mutual relationships between silent and living things.

The Zebra serves as a prelude to the meaning of presence after absence, so we always see it after the time of connection has ended. However, we find that Al-A'sha used words to give the situation all of its semiotic dimensions, so the words and vocabulary stood in the form of a sign from the semiotic signs that were a witness to many different phenomena at all levels, all of which formed Al-A'sha's emotional experience. This perfectly captures the relationships of the emotional existence that resulted from Al-A'sha's emotional experience.

Al-A'sha aimed to establish a channel of communication to convey his poetic signals to his intended audience. He established a channel of communication between the sender and the recipient, or between the creator and the recipient, allowing them to exchange the emotional context in a way that is flexible and full of beauty. He attempted to infuse this beauty with a dynamism that would create a poetic drama. However, we discover that this dynamic drama is nothing more than movement, and movement is nothing more than a semiotic device that denotes a sign with a unique meaning, whether it be the movement of characters, animals, actions, inanimate objects, or other things. In many of his poetic scenes where he gave the zebra the main role, the poet Al-A'sha drew on this⁵⁵.

*O slain one, the new has grown old, ** But your love neither fades nor dies.*

*She captured your heart when she aimed for it, ** If a lovesick man could truly hunt.*

*But he cannot capture her when he throws, ** Nor can a distant, ungrateful one be caught.*

⁵⁵ Al-A'sha, A. (1983). Diwan Al-A'sha Al-Kabir (M. M. Hussein, Ed.). Al-Risalah Foundation.

*Is it that, or a lean-bellied, rough one, ** Who obeys the strong winds and rugged paths?*

*He turns a slim, proud steed, ** Certain that it will bring what harms him.*

*The summer passed her by, and she became thin, ** With memories and losses growing frequent.*

*When he turns, she strikes his nostrils, ** And his forehead, as the blow of a strong arm.*

The poet likens his exhausted she-camel to a stout Zebra, made lean by running. It is plump, with a thin belly, frolicking in the valleys and grazing on the grass that has sprouted. The pasture stretches wide before it. He chases a long-backed female Zebra that evades and resists him but eventually submits. This Zebra spent a long summer watching and waiting for her, losing its fur due to the scarcity of grass and water. His desire for her grew stronger, yet she shunned him, kicking him with her legs each time he approached, striking his nose and forehead.

"The animal kingdom is vast and rich." While the image of the domestic Zebra is often associated with humiliation and disgrace, the Zebra holds a different dimension related to vitality and belonging⁵⁶. The sound of the Zebra is considered a call to the rest of the herd, something only humans can replicate. Movement in the previous excerpt evokes a sense of energy through the following actions:

• Verbs

- خلق (created) – past: creation occurred, affirming its certainty.
- يمح (erases) – present: the act of erasure is renewed and continuous.
- يبيد (destroys) – present: the act of destruction is renewed and continuous.
- صادت (captured) – past: the capture occurred, affirming its certainty.
- رماها (threw at him) – past: the throwing occurred, affirming its certainty.
- يصيد (hunts) – present: the hunting is renewed and continuous.
- رمه (threw at her) – past: the throwing occurred, affirming its certainty.
- تصطاد (hunts) – present: the hunting is renewed and continuous.

⁵⁶ Animals in Arabic Literature, Shaker Shukr, Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya Library, Alam Al-Kutub, Beirut, 1st ed., 1985 AD, Vol. 1/9.

- اطاع (obeyed) – past: obedience occurred, affirming its certainty.
 - يقلب (turns) – present: the turning is renewed and continuous.
 - تأتي (comes) – present: the coming is renewed and continuous.
 - يكد (plots) – present: the plotting is renewed and continuous.
 - بقي (remained) – past: remaining occurred, affirming its certainty.
 - صار (became) – past: transformation occurred, affirming its certainty.
- كثـ: Past: The occurrence of abundance and the confirmation of its occurrence.
- ردـ: Past: The occurrence of the response and the confirmation of its occurrence.
- تضربـ: Present: The occurrence of the strike is renewed and continuous.
- ضربـ: Past: The occurrence of the strike and the confirmation of its occurrence.

We notice that time has taken an extension that swings between two times, the past and the present, and they are two times full of events that have taken place or those that are still taking place until the time of declaring the emotional experience.

"The steppes of the Arabian Peninsula knew types of animals such as wild Zebra s, wild boars, oryx, gazelles, ostriches, pigeons, doves, quails, and others, and they are not like the animals of the mountains and valleys such as tigers, lions, wolves, hyenas, and ibex", so we can make the sound an indicator of the living being that the poet chose to build the frameworks of his experience on.

The sound indicates⁵⁷:

- A- The nature of the being.
- B- The emotional state of the being.
- C- The effect that the being leaves on the other.

It seems that the sound factors were one of the semiological tools on which the poet built many visions with their own connotations, especially when he tells stories of the zebra and narrates his experiences, forming from those experiences a special poetic revelation.

⁵⁷ Juma, H. (2010). Animals in pre-Islamic poetry. Dar Raslan.

In one of his poems, Al-A'sha expressed his passing of his camels as a traveler, and his passing of their horrors on top of an active, strong camel, stretching its neck in its walk when the plan expands, continuing in a long, spacious walk, or as if his journey and his belongings were on a zebra that had swelled and become fat after it had grazed the plants and eaten the legumes, as it was enduring the heat of summer and the biting and braying of the stallions, as the poet said⁵⁸:

*I have surpassed it, and beneath me is a strong one, ** Like the brave and fierce warrior.*

*As if the stalls, the haste, and the frenzy ** Are like the followers chasing the drivers.*

*Above a future I strike, ** And among the stallions and the braying.*

The sound was mentioned in the following two parts:

* Na'aba. نَعَابَة

* Tanhaq التَّنْهَاق

The croaking and braying evoke distinct responses in individuals; modern man may experience resentment and disgust, whereas the poet, a child of the desert, perceives these sounds as rich existential elements, symbolizing life and vitality in his environment.

The animal appears in pre-Islamic poetry in a variety of dimensions, serving as a true testament to desert life. This artistic inclination manifests as a distinct form of realistic creativity, with poets taking various approaches to the animal motif. However, the portrayal of the animal in the poetry of the Hudhailis and the Sa'alik takes a unique approach in both meaning and form, as their authors experienced deprivation more acutely than others and were deeply engaged with the social and geographical context of the desert. They made a living by seizing opportunities, demonstrating a strong affinity for wild animals' existence and behavior⁵⁹.

Animal behavior always takes on two things:

- 1- The environment in which it lives.
- 2- The living beings that exist with the animal.

The pre-Islamic era was distinguished by mentioning the animal as a companion to it in life and poetry, so it began to bet on its animal, and "the scene of the Zebra is more revealing of this social human phenomenon in poetry, as the Zebra is less

⁵⁸ His collection of poems, pp. 211-212.

⁵⁹ Hafni, A. H. (n.d.). Poetry of the vagabonds. Egyptian General Book Authority

speed than Abu Kharash" and others⁶⁰.

The poet mentioned the animal to emphasize his own experience, using the animal's experience as a mirror to reflect his own experience and relationship with himself in the midst of his life changes. Poets were creative in "talking about the wild animal," as they came through their descriptions of their mounts, on their way to their praised ones or loved ones, because they wanted to give these mounts a character of severity, strength, solidity, and speed. They couldn't find anything tougher, stronger, or faster than wild bulls, cows, and Zebras to compare these mounts to in terms of resistance, ability to walk continuously, and ability to bear the exhausting burden and long nights imposed by the nature of the journey. This pauses at the manifestations of some of these animals led them to present some artistic images from which we sense renewal, creativity, and innovation⁶¹, "as the depicted animal refers to a form unique to the poet, through the following:

1. Animal form: The poet's external and internal appearance. If he is sick and weak, he will show a broken, anxious psychological level. If the animal is strong, he will show a strong poetic self.
2. Animal fate: The animal's fate is linked to the fate of man, not because he is his friend and companion, but because the poet paints the dimensions of his experience with the color of the poetic scene that represents the true creative poet in it.

The image of the zebra is almost similar to the image of the wild bull or the wild cow in terms of the poets' exposure to its descriptions, because in these descriptions it is subject to the factors that the wild bull or the wild cow was subject to. The poets talked about this animal in the context of their descriptions of their camels, their roughness and hardness, and the strength and intensity of their running. However, the introduction of some new elements to the image made the general framework of the painting, which we considered to be somewhat different from what we found in the image of the zebra⁶². Therefore, the fate of the wild animal is equivalent to the fate of man and the fate of the animals that the poet placed to be equivalent to his poetic self.

- Poetic purpose: The description that the poet evokes to describe the animal is the same description that is consistent with his poetic purposes according to the following:

A- The purpose of praise: a happy ending.

⁶⁰ Jumaa, H. (2010). Animals in pre-Islamic poetry. Dar Raslan.

⁶¹ Nature in Pre-Islamic Poetry, Nouri Al-Qaisi, Narjis Library, 1st ed., 1970, p. 375.

⁶² ibid, p. 137.

B- The purpose of elegy: a sad ending.

C- Pride: a happy ending.

The poet Al-A'sha praises Al-Aswad ibn Al-Mundhir Al-Lakhmi⁶³:

The weeping of the great one is not by the ruins, ** And my question is, will you answer my inquiry?

A desolate place where the blind strive, ** With breezes from the east and the north.

A wild stallion gallops if touched by the wind, ** Like a wandering one, restless and roaming.

In the summer glow, in hunting and in despair, ** It stands on Saada like a bow of the lost.

The glowing of the heart to the Jihash, ** So move away from it, for what a dear price!

He left the young Zebra in the dust, ** Hastily racing towards the depths of the valleys.

That is how I likened my she-camel to the right of the burrow, ** After the words and the deeds.

*And you see her complaining to me, having worn out, ** With a thin neck that wears the soles of shoes."*

If we contemplate the following signs:

- **Al-Muṣaḷṣal المصلصل** refers to the zebra, deriving from the sound of its braying. This term comes from the root meaning "to make a sound."
- **Al-Ṣiyāl الصياد** is the source of the verb **ṣādil**, which refers to the act of engaging with the strong among zebras.
- **Al-Ṣa'da الصّدة** refers to the female zebra.

The poet Al-A'sha speaks of a sturdy she-camel that gallops when touched by the whip, much like the zebra that runs wildly, weakened by the summer heat and the pursuit of the male zebras. The camel appears to be pregnant, reflecting the poet's sorrow for her weaned young one, which is troubled by the separation from its mother. This thick, rough zebra rolls in the dust, losing its hair due to exhaustion. Thus, the young Zebra, worn out from running, is left lying in the dust while the zebra pushes its female companion toward the fresh water source. This thick, lively

⁶³ Al-A'sha, A. (1983). Diwan Al-A'sha Al-Kabir (M. M. Hussein, Ed.). Al-Risalah Foundation.

zebra resembles the poet's she-camel as it runs beside the mountain, fatigued after much effort, lamenting its worn and sore feet, which have been covered by sandals.

The poet gave each of the following words (al-Musalsil, al-Sayyal, and al-Sa'dah) a semantic tone that indicates both a sentimental and a present sign. Standing on the ruins served as an introductory threshold for the scene, but he quickly followed it with confusion (my question), transforming the question into a picture that required interpretation. The first interpreter was (Damna), a desert representing erasure and drought.

Al-A'sha presents a picture of his camel that is full of movement and events, with images following one another and scenes changing. The Zebra follows his female Zebra and pushes her to a spring of water, surrounded by dens where hunters hide, built by a skilled man and ready to kill these beasts. The hunter was pleased to see him for this hunt, so he prepared a special arrow for him to push and quench his thirst. He dies in a melodious manner, passing under the Zebra's chest, so he folds on his side and continues without delay, and the colt runs with him, and the dirt is stirred up beneath them, and it has spread in the space, dusty and dark⁶⁴.

We can see that the poet created a sophisticated semiotic text in which he was able to reach the dimensions of his emotional experience by dealing with the living beings in his environment, which he highlighted with precision in choosing their movements, qualities, and advantages, reflecting his genius in knowing his surroundings with all of its living and silent details.

Conclusion

The presence of the wild ass (*himār al-waḥsh*) in al-A'shā's poetry was symbolic, shaped both by the objective coordinates imposed by the pre-Islamic environment and the lyrical dimensions dictated by the poet's personal vision. Al-A'shā enriched the meaning by relying on the integration of semantic units with the symbolic brilliance of the central icon in the text. The wild ass served as a significant signifier, imparting multiple dimensions to the poem, reflecting various perspectives on life's course. This analysis leads to the following conclusions:

- Although the wild ass appears infrequently in ancient Arabic poetry, it has not received sufficient critical examination to explore its deep symbolic and aesthetic implications. This study, therefore, provides a new contribution to enhancing its understanding.

⁶⁴ Al-Qaisi, N. (1970). Nature in pre-Islamic poetry. Narjis Library

- The symbolism of the wild ass in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry represents a unique phenomenon that poets continued to draw upon. Its meanings remain open for further exploration and interpretation.
- The wild ass served as a symbol of embracing a harmonious life.
- It also represented endurance and self-preservation amidst existential struggles.
- The wild ass played a significant role in aesthetic poetic employment.
- It became a symbolic representation of the life of the pre-Islamic Bedouin, illustrating his confrontation with harsh environmental challenges.
- The experience of the wild ass mirrors that of the human being, expressing the seasonal nature of life and how one adapts to it.
- The imagery of the wild ass highlights the human inability to escape the inevitability of death.
- Semiotics was one of the creative arts that al-Aʿshā skillfully employed, integrating various techniques to serve his poetic vision.
- The poet utilized **mufasssira** (interpretive descriptors) as an advanced technique to transform linguistic meanings into vibrant, living symbols.
- The poet and the wild ass became equivalent semiotic icons.
- The textual indicators in al-Aʿshā's poetry clearly revolve around revealing his unique emotional experience.

Thus, it can be said that al-Aʿshā was a remarkable innovator, capable of crafting a flexible poetic text that accommodated traditional elements and semiotic richness.

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