

| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Themes of the Female Persona in Nizar Qabbani's Poetry Compared to the Themes of the Female Persona in the Poetry of His Contemporary Female Poets: A Pragmatic, Analytical Study

Nassim Assadi<sup>1</sup> ✉ and Alaaeddin Joudallah<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Sakhnin Academic College for Teacher Education, Sakhnin, 2173, Israel, IL.

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Nablus, Palestine

**Corresponding Author:** Nassim Assadi, **E-mail:** [nw626@hotmail.com](mailto:nw626@hotmail.com)

| ABSTRACT

This article explores the extent to which Nizar Qabbani succeeded in addressing the themes of the female poets of his era in his poems, where the poetic persona was portrayed as a woman. The study delves into the primary themes of the female poetic persona in the works of both Qabbani and the female poets, drawing comparisons between them. The key question is whether Qabbani succeeded in affirming Salah Saleh's assertion that a man can sometimes describe the concerns and life of a woman more effectively than a woman herself, or whether he failed in this endeavor.

| KEYWORDS

Female Persona; Nizar Qabbani's Poetry; Female Poets

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

**ACCEPTED:** 01 September 2024

**PUBLISHED:** 19 September 2024

**DOI:** 10.32996/jpda.2024.3.2.4

### 1. Introduction

We begin by reviewing the themes of the female poetic self as articulated by female poets, followed by an analysis of how these themes manifest in Qabbani's work, and finally, we compare the two.

#### 1.1 The Central Themes that Generate Women's Poetry:

The central themes and issues that give rise to women's poetry can be summarized as follows:

- Sorrow: Sorrow pervades the lives of women in most of their poetry, emerging as a dominant theme. Contemporary female poets often express pain, finding a strange comfort in it, and even sanctifying it. This may be linked to the biological nature of their lives, in which they endure many pains and hardships. Furthermore, feminist poetry is imbued with emotion, which often takes precedence over reason and logic (Loya, 1975). It is filled with sensations and feelings that reflect women's dissatisfaction with their world and their constant anxiety about the unknown. Sorrow remains tinged with a flavor of rebellion and explosion (Jambak, 2024), which dominates much of women's literature and poetry in particular. As Nabīlah al-Khatīb states:

أتلّ المواجه قد أعلنت نافلتي      من البكاء وأوجاع الحشا كثر  
أستمهل الصبر في نفسي فيخذلها      وأكتم الحزن في قلبي فيختم

For Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, sorrow emerges as the predominant theme, intricately woven into every experience and emotion she undergoes (Mummelthei, 2020), reflecting the fluctuations of her inner self (Ma, 2022). A researcher attributes this to the psychological state of the Arab woman, who is often constrained by specific social and cultural norms that do not align with the temperament of the poet, who inherently rejects such constraints due to a heightened sensitivity. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah herself states:

أخيراً لمست الحياةُ  
وأدركت ما هي، أيّ فراغٍ ثقيلٍ  
أخيراً تبيّنت سرّ الفقاقيعِ واخبيتاهُ  
وأدركت أنّي أضعت زماناً طويلاً.

Such sorrow and pain are also prevalent in many of Qabbani's poems, particularly those voiced by a female persona, where he rebels against the society that inflicts suffering and pain upon women (Miloud, 2024). He articulates this through expressions that embody fear, anxiety, and the suppression of freedoms. The female persona in his poetry declares:

أخافُ أن أقولَ ما لديّ من أشياء  
فشرّفكم يا سيّدي العزيزُ  
يصادُرُ الرّسائلَ الرّزقاءُ  
يصادُرُ الأحلامَ من خزائن التّساءِ  
يمارسُ الحُجْرَ على عواطفِ التّساءِ  
يستعملُ السّكينَ.. والسّاطورَ  
كي يخاطبَ التّساءِ.

Sorrow permeates many of the occasions and emotions experienced by the female persona in Qabbani's poems (Gbay, 1973), even in her moments of rebellion, defiance of constraints, and acts of resistance. She states:

حروف سوف أفرطها كقلب الخوخة الأحمر  
لكلّ سجينّة تحيا معي في سجنّي الأكبر..  
حروفٌ سوف أعرّضها بلحم حياتنا خنجرٌ..  
لتكسرَ في تمرّدها جليداً كان لا يُكسرُ..  
لتخلعَ قفل تابوتٍ أعدّ لنا لكي تُقبُرَ.

And:

على كراسيتي الرّزقاء.. أسترخي على كيفي  
وأهربُ من أفاعي الجنس والإرهاب والخوف  
وأصرُحُ ملء حنجرتي.. أنا امرأةٌ.. أنا امرأةٌ  
أنا إنسانةٌ حيّةٌ.. أيا مدن التّواييت الرّخاميّة.

In another occasion, she says:

أنا حزني رماديّ  
كهذا الشّارع المقفر  
أنا نوع من الصّبيّر  
لا يعطني.. ولا يثمر  
حياتي مركب ثمل  
تحطّم قبل أن يبحر.

And:

كفى يا شمس تَمَوِّزُ غبار الكلسِ بعمينا  
فمنذ البدء غير الكلس، لم تشرب أراضينا  
ومنذ البدء غير الدّمع، لم تسكب مآقينا  
ومنذ البدء نستعطي سماءً ليس تُعطينا.

Sorrow may be a recurring state for the female, one that haunts her continuously. As a result, she seeks someone who can alleviate this burden. Suad Al-Sabah expresses this sentiment, saying:

وطموحي هو أن أسمع في الهاتف صوتكُ  
عندما يسكنني الحزنُ  
وبيكيني الضّجرُ

فأنا محتاجة جدًّا لميناء سلام.

This state of sorrow is also evident in Qabbani's poems, where it is voiced by the female persona. In these poems, it is the presence and arrival of a man that ultimately brings an end to her sorrow. She expresses:

ارجع إليّ فإنّ الأرض واقفة...كأثما الأرض فرت من ثوانبها  
ارجع فبعدك لا عقد أعلقه...ولا لمست عطوري في أوانبها  
ارجع كما أنت صحواً كنت أم مطراً... فما حياتي أنا إن لم تكن فيها.

And when she also says:

متى يأتي تری بطلي؟  
ليخطفني  
ليكسر باب معتقلي  
فمنذ طفولتي وأنا  
أمدّ على شبايبكي  
حبال الشوق والأمل  
وأجدل شعري الذهبى كي يصعد  
على خصلاته.. بطلي.

## **2. Introduction:**

### **2.1 love:**

A review of contemporary female poets' works reveals that love is one of the most prominent human themes they explore (Sabzianpoor et al., 2024), often emerging as the primary human concern in their poetry. Unlike previous eras where women's roles were largely limited to subtle allusions, contemporary female poets engage with the theme of love as directly and openly as their male counterparts (Hannawi, 2022). Due to the social advancements affecting their status, women now assert their right to pursue men as actively as men pursue them, expressing their emotional turbulence through poetry characterized by passionate language and bold imagery (Abalkheel & Sourani, 2024).

The expression of love varies from one woman to another, influenced by the depth of their personal experience (Al-Samman, 2022), the nature of the man they have loved, and their perspective on love (AlQahtani, 2024). There is a prevailing view that contemporary Arab women's love poetry is predominantly marked by themes of sadness and complaints about unfaithful lovers. This trend is notably present in the works of poets like Nizar Qabbani, with poems such as "Akhbiruni" ("Tell Me"), "Qittati al-Ghadba" ("The Angry Cat"), and "Sawt Min al-Harem" ("A Voice from the Harem"). Female poets rarely depict the sensory pleasures of love (Al-Hawtali, 2023), a characteristic often found in Qabbani's poetry where the speaker is male. When the speaker is female, such depictions are exceedingly rare and less intense (Alshaer, 2021). For instance, Qabbani's portrayal of sensual pleasures in poems with a female speaker includes:

يغصب القيلة اغتصاباً.. وأرضى  
وجميلٌ أن يؤخذ التَّغْر عنوةً.

And:

يا حبيبي على فمي احترق الشوقُ  
فرققاً بالأحمر المجموع  
ضممتي.. وضممتي.. وحظم عظامي  
والتهم مبسمي.. وكسرت ضلوعي

And:

لا زيت.. لا قشته  
لا فحمة في الدار  
جهز وجاق التار  
في حلمتي رعشةً.

In his poetry, Qabbani's use of sensual pleasures and explicit descriptions of the female body generally serves two main purposes: to incite women to rebel against their societal constraints and to highlight the sexual deprivation experienced by the Eastern Arab girl, as seen in his collection *Diwan Yawmiyat Imra'a La Mubalina* (Diaries of an Indifferent Woman). The love experienced by female

poets is often portrayed as an emotional, idealistic affair that falters at the first obstacle it encounters, leading to dissatisfaction and a desire for its dissolution (Assadi, 2021 b).

Suad Al-Sabah reflects on the impact of romantic discourse on women, illustrating this sentiment with her observation:

فالمراة في كلّ الأعمار،  
ومن كلّ الأجناس،  
ومن كلّ الألوان  
تدوخ أمام كلام الحبّ.

This impact of romantic discourse on women is evident in Qabbani's poetry through the female voice, as exemplified in the poem "Hekaya" (*Tale*).

قال ما قال، فالقميص جحيماً  
فوق صدري، والتّوب يقطر نشوئاً  
قال لي: مبسمي وريقة توتّي  
ولقد قال: إنّ صدري ثروء  
أنا حلوة؟ وأيقظ أنثى  
في عروقي، وشقّ للنور كوّء.

The significance of the romantic words spoken by a man to a woman is highlighted in the poem "The White Shirt," where the speaker reproaches her lover for his silence after she had anticipated kind words about her new white shirt. She says:

ألست تهنّئي يا بخيل  
بهذا القميص الجديد عليّ؟  
جديد وتسكت عنيّ وعنه  
أنت الحنون.. أنت الوفيّ؟  
مغازز خيطانه.. أغنيات  
فيا جاحد الطّيب قل أيّ شيء  
سألتك دغدغ غروري.. فإنّ  
جميلاً لديك، جميلٌ لديّ.

Also in her poem "Words":

يسمعني حين يراقصني كلمات ليست كاللّغات  
وأنا كالطفلة في يده كالريشة تحملها التّسمات  
يروى أشياء تدوّخي تنسيني المرقص والخطوات  
كلمات تقلب تاريخي تجعلني امرأة في لحظات.

Nabila al-Khatib asserts that the connection between a person and love parallels their connection to worship, stating:

الحبّ في نهجي  
عبادة...  
وإذا أتاك نسيمه  
يتلو عليك  
من الهوى العذريّ  
فاسجد  
وانو الإقامة  
للتّهادة.

Nabila al-Khatib imparts a sense of sanctity to love, endowing it with devotional rituals. She states:

بالنّور توضأ  
واستقبل وجهي  
واجعل فوق جبينني  
سجدة الأولى.

Atika al-Khazraji elevates her belief in love to the level of her faith in God, viewing it as a divine decree and inevitable fate.

آمنت بالحبّ إيماني ببارئه سبحانه جلّ عن قولِي وما أصف.

In Qabbani's poems, the female speaker also bestows a sacred aura upon love, either directly or through expressions that convey this sanctity, such as "destiny," "testimony," "prophet," and other similar terms. She says:

وكيف أهرب منه؟ إته قدرِي  
هل يملك التّهر تغييرًا لمجرَاه؟!

She also says:

وادفتني.. تحت رماد يدِيك  
شهيدة عشق صوفيّة.

She also says:

إن كنت نبيًّا.. خلّصني  
من هذا السّحر  
من هذا الكفر  
حبّك كالكفر.. فظّهرني  
من هذا الكفر.

And:

يا أيّها الغالي الذي..  
أرضيت عني الله.. إذ أحببته.

In her collection *Diwan Yawmiyat Imra'a La Mubalina (Diaries of an Indifferent Woman)*, she criticizes the Eastern society's approach to love, stating:

بلادي ترفض الحبّ  
تصادره كأيّ مخدّرٍ خطيرٍ  
بلادي تقتل الرّبّ الذي أهدى لها الخصبا  
وحوّل صخرها ذهبًا  
وغطّى أرضها عشبا  
بلادي لم يرزها الرّبُّ  
منذُ اغتالت الرّتا.

For some female poets, love may remain intertwined with sadness, as illustrated by Nazik al-Malaika, who, in one of her poems, expresses her search for the distant beloved whose whereabouts she does not know, along with her sense of loneliness. She says:

مرّت أيام  
لم نلتق، أنت هناك وراء مدى الأحلام  
في أفق حفت به المجهول.

Jalila Reda vows to wait for her unknown beloved until fate permits her to see him. She says:

أنت يا من لم أزل أجهل اسمه  
أو أراعي في الفراغ المرّ رسمه  
إن يكن قد حُظّ في لوح القدر  
سوف أبقى في سكوني أنتظر

This feeling of sorrow due to the beloved's absence and the uncertainty of their whereabouts is evident in several of Qabbani's poems where the speaker is female. Among these poems are:

متى يأتي تری بطلي؟  
متى يأتي على فرس  
ليخطفني  
ليكسر باب معتقلي  
فمنذ طفولتي وأنا  
أمدّ على شبابيك  
حبال الشوق والأمل

وأجدل شعري الذهبّي كي يصعد  
على خصلاته.. بطلّي.

The same difficulty in sending a message to a man is reflected in both Nazik al-Malaika's poem "Message to Him" and Qabbani's poem "Message to a Man." Nazik al-Malaika says:

لحبيبي أكتب تحت الليل رسالة حبّ  
والظلمة كلب وحشّي يجثم قربي، والريح تهبّ  
هل أكتبها بغمي؟ بغمي؟  
أأريق على الصفحات حروفي؟  
والمرسلة الولهي المسجونة خلف متاهات الأبعاد.

In Qabbani's poetry, the female speaker describes the process of writing her letter:

لا تتقدّني سيّدي  
إن كان خطّي سيئاً  
فإتني أكتب.. والسّياف خلف بابي  
وخارج الحجرة صوت الريح والكلاب.

Nazik al-Malaika intertwines love with lost memories, portraying the lovers as having become strangers to each other:

لم يكن يعرفنا الأمس رقيقين.. فدعنا  
نطفر الذكرى كأن لم تك يوماً من صبانا  
بعض حبّ نرق طاف بنا ثم سلانا.

Similarly, in Qabbani's poem "Hypocrisy," the female speaker describes the lovers' transformation into strangers, blending love with the theme of lost memories:

كفانا نفاق..!  
فما نفعه كلّ هذا العناق؟  
ونحن انتهينا  
وكلّ الحكايا التي قد حكينا  
نفاق.

And when she also says:

"تحبّتي..."  
معزوفة معادة رخيصة الملحن  
تديرها... تديرها لكلّ وجه حسن  
قل غيرها...  
أتلفت أعصابي بها  
أتلفتني...  
قل غيرها...  
قل تشتتهي طيبي ودفء مسكني.

The poetess often expresses her dedication and sacrifices for love, despite the coldness of the other party's feelings. Suhad al-Sabbagh states:

أحبّك رغم ألوف العيوب الصّغيرة فيك  
وأعرف أنّك لا تستحقّ عطائي  
وأعلم علم اليقين  
بأنّي أوسوس مملكة في الهواء.

We find in the poet's work a lament from the female speaker about the coldness of the other party's emotions, despite her deep love and the efforts she expends for that love. She says:

أحبه.. لست أدري ما أحبّ به  
حتّى خطاياها.. ما عادت خطاياها  
ماذا أقول له لو جاء يسألني  
إن كنت أهواه... إني ألف أهواه.

The female speaker may even sacrifice more by forgiving her lover for his betrayal and wishing him a better life with someone else. She says:

أنتَ طفلي الصّغير.. أنتَ حبيبي  
كيف أقسو على حبيبي وطفلي؟  
هي في غرفة انتظارك.. فاذهب  
بين أحضانها ستعرف فضلي  
يا صديقي.. شكرًا.. أنا أتمنّى  
لو وجدتَ التي تحبّك مثلي.

We find a poetess seeking the delicate poetry of love and desiring her beloved to feel the depth of this love. Suhad al-Sabbagh says:

يا هولاء هذا العصر  
ارفع عني سيف القهر  
إنك رجل سوداويّ  
مأساويّ  
عدوانيّ.....  
إنّ شفاهك مثل الشوك وإنّ سريرك مثل القبر.

Similarly, the female speaker in Qabbani's poetry seeks the poetry of love. In his poem "The Metallic Man," she complains about the man's emotional rigidity and his pursuit of mere physicality devoid of any romance or poetic sensibility (Assadi, 2023 b). This sentiment is also found in other poems with a female speaker by Qabbani, such as "Pustule Vessels" and poem 32 from *Diaries of an Indifferent Woman*. In "The Metallic Man," she says:

شفتاك من حجر.. وصوتك من حجر  
ويداك أنيتان من عصر الحجر..  
وأنا على طرف السرير.. كخلة  
من ألف قرن.. وهي تنتظر المطر  
أنسيّتي شكلي.. وشكل أنوثتي  
وكسرت أعصاني.. وأتلّفت الرّهر.

Nazik al-Malaika paints a picture of her beloved's psyche as she desires it to be—angry, rebellious, and full of vitality.

اغضب أحبّك غاضبًا متمرّدًا في ثورة مشبوبة وتمرّق.

We recall the female speaker's words in Qabbani's poem "Be Angry":

اغضب  
فأنت رائع حقًا متى تثور  
اغضب  
فلولا الموج ما تكوّنت بحور  
كن عاصفًا.. كن ممطرًا..  
فإنّ قلبي دائمًا غفور.

## **2.2. Time:**

Women often connect the passage of time with the deterioration of their youth and beauty, which is a central concern for them. Time becomes a terrifying obsession, and the nightmare of time continues to haunt and trouble them (Assadi, 2021 b). The focus on time in women's poetry reflects their awareness of its threat and its profound impact on their psyche. Nabila al-Khatib expresses this sentiment:

أم أن بريق العمر  
خبثُ جذوته  
فغدت أفراح الرّوح  
رمادا؟!

Women often fall prey to memories, a phenomenon evident in their poetry, where memories hold a significant place in both meaning and imagery. Nabila al-Khatib's poem is built upon the recollection of her youth:

إيه أعلى ذكرياتي  
ذكريات؟!  
ما نسينا..  
كي يكون الأمس ذكرى.

Suhad al-Sabbagh stands calling out to Beirut, reminiscing about its former beauty and wishing she could relive the sweet days in Beirut, which have now become a memory:

أبحث في بيروت  
عن أشيائي الأولى التي تركتها في غرفتي  
أبحث عن أمطار أيلول وعن مظّلتني  
فمن ترى يعيد لي طفولتي  
ومن ترى يعيد لي ذاكرتي؟

In Qabbani's poetry, the female speaker addresses the theme of time and a woman's fear of its passage, saying:

يروّعني  
شحوب شقيقتي الكبرى  
هي الأخرى  
تعاني ما أعانيه  
تعاني الساعة الصّفرا  
قطار الحسن مرّ بها  
ولم يترك سوى الذّكري  
ولم يترك من التّهدين  
إلا اللّيف والقشرا  
لقد بدأت سفينتها  
تغوص.. وتلمس القعرا.

She also adds:

عقاربُ هذه الساعة كحوت أسود الشّفتين يبلعني  
عقاربها كثعبان على الحائط.. كمقصلة كمشنقة كسكين تمرّقني  
كلّصّ مسرع الخطوات يتبعني ويتبعني  
لماذا لا أحظّمها؟ وكلّ دقيقة فيها تحظمني  
أنا امرأةٌ بداخلها توقّف نابض الرّمن  
فلا نواز أعرفه.. ولا نيسان يعرفني.

And:

متى يأتي ترى بطلي؟  
ليخطفني  
ليكسر باب معتقلي  
فمنذ طفولتي وأنا  
أمّ على شباببيكي  
حبال الشّوق والأمل.

And:

سأكتب عن صديقاتي  
عن السّجن الذي يمتصّ أعمار السّجينات  
عن الرّمن الذي أكلته أعمدة المجلّات  
عن الرّزانة الكبرى  
وعن جدرانها السّود



وعن آلاف.. آلاف الشّهيدات.

In Qabbani's poetry, the memories expressed by the female speaker fall into two types: memories of past beautiful days and moments (Assadi, 2023 a), and memories that testify to the woman's suffering and exploitation by men. The first type of memory is found in the amorous poems that are prevalent in his early collections:

كنت أعود في غابة اللوز.. لَمّا  
قال عتّي، أمّاه، إتّي حلوة..  
وعلى سالفّي، غفا زّ وردٍ  
وقميصي.. تفلّنت منه عروة.

The female speaker reflects on moments when she would meet her beloved, revealing the secrets of those times:

وحين أكون مريضة  
وتحمل أزهارك الغالية  
صديقي.. إلي  
ويوم أجيء إليك  
لكي أستعير كتاب.

The second type of memory is found in other poems, such as "Why?" in which the female speaker reproaches her lover who has left her, reminding him of what transpired between them:

لماذا؟  
بعينيك هذا الوجوم  
وأمس بحضن الكروم  
فرطت ألوف التّجوم بدربي  
وأخبرتني أنّ حبّي يدوم.

In the poem "A Letter from a Resentful Lady," the female speaker reminisces about the beautiful words exchanged between her and her lover. She then delivers a harsh criticism and painful reproach for his actions, condemning the unfaithful man who manipulates women, disregarding their feelings and emotions. She says:

فجميع ما وشوشتني  
أيّام كنت تحبّي... من أتّي..  
بيت الفراشة مسكني... وغدي انفرط السّوسن  
أنكرته أصلاً كما أنكرتني.

In the poem "Tell Me," she reflects on her loyalty to her beloved:

أنا أعطيتك الذي ليس يعطى  
من حياتي، وأنت حاولت قتلي.

In the poem "Pregnant," she recalls the man who abandoned her and their child during the most difficult times. She says:

وصرخت كالملسوع بي.. "كلّلا"  
سئمّرق الطّفلا  
وأخذت تشتمني  
وأردت تطرّديني  
لا شيء يُدّهشني

فلقد عرّفك دائماً ندلاً.

### **2.3. Motherhood:**

Certain themes can be considered exclusive to women and not part of the male realm, with motherhood being one of the most significant (Assadi, 2021 a). In our analysis, we will compare how women portray motherhood in their poetry and how Qabbani presents it through the female voice.

Raja Samrin observes that the familial perspective remains narrow among contemporary female poets, and the description of the experience of motherhood and childbirth may be uniquely female. Indeed, women are best equipped to express experiences exclusive to them (AYYILDIZ, 2023), given the complex interplay of emotions in their psyche. An example of this is Nabila al-Khatib's poem "The Birth of Death," where she captures the myriad emotions of a mother preparing for labor and childbirth. She says:

هذا الأنينُ  
يذيب أحشاء السكُونِ  
صبرًا..  
فقد أوشتك  
أن تضعي الجنينُ.

Nabila al-Khatib presents the experience of childbirth in the poem "A Sweet Year" within the context of a sermon, discussing themes of life and death.

هل ظنَّكَ ميلادكَ يومًا لم تدرِ عناء تجاربه  
سل أمكَ هل تنسى يومًا فعلَ المطلوبِ بطالبه  
تشدو والموت يصارعها واستلقت بين مخالبه.

In Qabbani's poems, we find descriptions of experiences specific to the female realm, including motherhood, though these are fewer compared to those found in the works of female poets. The poem that encapsulates this experience is "Pregnant," which describes a layered experience. The female speaker recounts the experience of pregnancy (Alshaer, 2021), but it is an illegitimate pregnancy where the mother wishes to terminate the fetus due to the father's abandonment and refusal. She describes moments when her mouth is filled with vomit and times when she feels nauseated, saying:

لا تَمْتَفِعْ  
هيَ كَلِمَةٌ عَجَلِي  
إتني لأشعرُ أنني حُبَلِي  
وصرخت كالملسوع بي..  
"كَلَا"  
سُمِرَقُ الطِّفْلَا  
لا شيءَ يُدْهِشُنِي  
فلقد عَرَفْتُكَ دائِمًا تَدْلَا  
\*  
ماذا.. أَتَبْصُقُنِي؟  
والقيءُ في خَلْفِي يُدَمِّرُنِي  
ووريتك المشؤومَ في بَدَنِي  
سَأَسْقِطُ ذَلِكَ الحَمْلَا  
أنا لا أريدُ له أبًا تَدْلَا.

The theme of motherhood remains dominant for women, not only in their feelings toward their children but also in their affection for men. Soad Sabbah expresses this by describing her lover's childhood and her maternal role toward him, as well as her desire to preserve his youthful innocence and playfulness. She says:

لستُ أفكرُ في تَأْدِيبِكَ  
أو تهذيبِكَ  
لو هدَّبتُ الطِّفْلَ الطَّائِشَ فيكَ  
فماذا يبقى منك؟

In her poem "Eternal Pregnancy," Soad Sabbah describes her deep attachment to her beloved, envisioning him as a fetus she carries within her, refusing to give birth to him no matter how long the pregnancy endures. She says:

أحملكَ كأنثى الكانغارو  
في بطني  
وأقفر بك من شجرة إلى شجرة  
أحملك تسعة أشهر  
تسعينَ شهرًا  
تسعينَ عامًا

وأخافُ أن ألدك  
حتى لا تضيع مَني في الغابة

Soad Sabbah practices her maternal instincts within the realm of love, as depicted in her poem "Motherhood," where she expresses:

أحيانًا  
يخطر لي أن ألدك  
لأحملك  
وأنشفت قدميك  
وأمتنظ شعرك النَّاعم  
وأغني لك قبل أن تنام.

Similarly, this approach toward a lover can be found in Qabbani's work, where the female speaker often addresses her beloved as if he were her child. She says:

أنت طفلي الصَّغير.. أنت حبيبي  
كيف أقسو على حبيبي وطفلي؟

She also says:

فأنت طفلٌ عابثٌ  
يملؤه الغرور  
وكيف من صغارها  
تنتقم الطيور؟  
وعندما تريد أن تراني  
وعندما تحتاج كالطفل إلى حناني  
فعد إلى قلبي متى تشاء.

She also says:

كن مطمئنَّ النَّفس يا صغيري  
فلم يزل حبك ملء العين والضمير.

In contrast to the previous approach, we find in Qabbani's work a situation where the woman feels like a child with her beloved, as expressed in his poem "Words."

وأنا كالطفلة في يده كالريشة تحملها النَّسمات.

### 3. Analysis:

#### 3.1 The Issue of Women and Rebellion against Their Subordinate Status:

No social issue has garnered as much attention from contemporary poets as the women's issue and its connection to the critique of social constraints that have shackled and impeded women's rapid progress toward freedom and equality (Alqahtani, 2024). The vast majority of contemporary female poets lack a comprehensive understanding of the societies in which they live. The impact of social realism on their poetry remains significantly less than that of other philosophies and doctrines (Al-Samman, 2022). Consequently, a researcher in contemporary women's poetry cannot derive a fully accurate and complete portrayal of Arab societies during this historical period due to the limited engagement of these poets with their communities (Abalkheel & Sourani, 2024).

Women frequently address this issue in their poetry. The act of a woman writing poetry and expressing her emotions in a closed society is considered an act of rebellion against a system that imposes numerous restrictions and taboos on her (Hannawi, 2022). The discomfort expressed in women's poetry regarding these constraints and prohibitions reflects their personal struggle, as only they can truly appreciate the harshness of the constraints they endure (Sabzianpoor et al., 2024).

Poet Soad Sabah addresses the issue of women and their rebellion against constraints and prohibitions in much of her poetry (Assadi, 2023 a). This is evident from the titles of some of her collections, such as "Fragments of a Woman," "In the Beginning Was the Female," and "Take Me to the Limits of the Sun." These provocative titles also appear in some of Nizar Qabbani's poems and collections, such as "I Ask You to Leave" and his collection "Diaries of an Unconcerned Woman," where both titles reflect the voice of the rebellious female who breaks her silence to declare new and challenging perspectives that defy established norms.

In her collection "Fragments of a Woman," Soad Sabah begins with the poem "Veto on the Letter Nun of Women," in which she lists the societal prohibitions imposed on her and argues that there is no justification for such prohibitions, providing her justifications and rationales. She asserts her right to write:

يقولون:  
إنّ الكتابة إثم عظيم..  
فلا تكتبي

And she responds to this, and to other prohibitions she has mentioned, by stating:

وأضحك من كلّ ما قيل عني  
وأرفض أفكار عصر التّنك  
ومنطق عصر التّنك.

Here, the poet is not speaking solely for herself; rather, she speaks on behalf of all women. The "I" in her work is not an isolated self but rather a composite of all feminine selves. She rebels on their behalf and dares to dismantle the outdated traditions that have long been revered and exalted. To her, these traditions mean nothing. She asserts this in another part of the collection, saying:

إنّني ضدّ الوصايا العشر  
والتّاريخ من خلفي رمالّ ودماء.

She continues to address the issue of the oppression of women, stating:

هذي بلادٌ.. تختن القصيدة الأنثى  
وتشقق الشّمس لدى طلوعها  
حفظًا لأمن العائلة  
وتذبح المرأة إن تكلمت  
أو فكرت  
أو كتبت  
أو عشقت  
غسلًا لعار العائلة.

Such rebellion and rejection, exemplified by the use of mocking terms like "The Age of Tin" and "The Ten Commandments," are vividly and forcefully present in Qabbani's revolutionary poems, particularly in his collection *Diary of an Indifferent Woman*. Rija Samreen observes that the women's cause has garnered significant attention from poets more than other issues. However, it is noteworthy that women's poetry is often devoid of experiences addressing ignorance, illness, and the superstitions and falsehoods prevalent in Arab societies, as well as ugly customs, sectarian conflicts (Miloud, 2024), and religious fanaticism—topics extensively explored by contemporary poets who have not spared any social vice. This contrast is clearly evident in the poetry of Qabbani's female persona, as seen in his poem "A Letter to a Man," where he addresses:

لا تتفدني سيدي  
إن كان خطي سيئًا  
فإتني أكتب.. والسّيّاف خلف بابي  
وخارج الحجرة صوت الرّيح والكلاب  
يا سيدي  
عنترة العبيسي خلف بابي  
يذبخني.. إذا رأى خطابي  
يقطع رأسي  
لو رأى الشّقاقت من ثيابي  
يقطع رأسي.. لو أنا  
عبّرت عن عذابي  
فشرّفكم يا سيدي العزيز  
يحصّر المرأة بالحراب  
وشرّفكم، يا سيدي العزيز  
يبايغ الرّجال أنبياء  
ويطمر النساء في التّراب.

In her poem numbered 4, the poetess describes her relatives and family as the dead and refuse, criticizing their backwardness regarding women's rights and freedom. She uses these vivid metaphors to highlight the stagnation and regressive attitudes of her family concerning the evolving concepts of women's autonomy and liberation.

مع الموتى أعيش أنا مع الأطلال والدمن  
جميع أقاربي موتى بلا قبر ولا كفن  
أبوح لمن؟ ولا أحد من الأموات يفهمني؟  
أثور أنا على قدرتي على صدني على عفني  
وبيت كل من فيه يعاديني ويكرهني  
أنا في منزل الموتى فمن من قبضة الموتى يحزني؟

In poem number 2 from the "Yawmiyat Imra'a La Mumbalia" ("Diary of an Indifferent Woman"), the female poetic persona expresses the unjust suffering she endures from her society solely because she is a woman. She articulates her grievances about the systemic oppression and discrimination imposed upon her, emphasizing the arbitrary nature of this injustice based on her gender.

أنا أنثى.. أنا أنثى  
نهار أتيت للدينا وجدت قرار إعدامي  
ولم أرب محكمتي ولم أرب وجه حكّامي.

In her poem, the female poetic persona vehemently rejects the patriarchal authority embodied by the father. She challenges and defies the power structures that subordinate women, using her verses to critique and resist the male-dominated societal norms that impose limitations and control over her life.

لماذا يستبد أبي؟ ويرهقني بسلطته؟!  
وينظر لي كأنية كسطر في جريدته  
ويحرص أن أظل له كأنني بعض ثروته  
وأن أبقى بجانبه ككرسي بحجرته  
كفرت أنا بمال أبي بلؤلؤه بفضته  
أبي رجل أناني مريض في محبته  
مريض في تعصبه مريض في تعنته.

In her poem, the female poetic persona mocks and rejects the patriarchal traditions of oriental society, embodied by the figure of the father. She uses satire to critique the entrenched norms and values that perpetuate male dominance and constrain women's freedom (Jambak et al., 2024). Through her verse, she questions and ridicules the traditional authority that seeks to control and limit her, underscoring her defiance against these outdated and oppressive conventions.

أبي صنف من البشر  
مزيج من غباء الترك من عصبية التتر  
أبي أثر من الآثار تابوت من الحجر  
تهزأ كل ما فيه كباب كنيسة نخر  
كهارون الرشيد أبي، جواريه، مواليه، تمطيه على تخت من الطرر  
ونحن هنا.. سبأياه.. ضحاياه.. مماسح قصره القدر.

And:

أريد أفر من شرقي الخرافة والتعابين  
من الخلفاء والأمراء.. من كل السلاطين  
أريد أحب.. مثل طيور تشرين  
أيا شرقي المشانق والسكاكين.

She also adds:

ملايين من السنوات.. والسياف مسرور  
مقيم في مدينتنا  
أراه في ثياب أبي  
أراه في ثياب أخي  
فكل رجال بلدتنا

هم السّيّاف مسروؤ.

In the preface to his collection *Yawmiyyat Imra'ah La Mubi'alah* ("Diary of an Unconcerned Woman"), the poet Nizar Qabbani articulates that the female poetic persona in his work speaks not only for herself but for women collectively, presenting the female experience in a broad context rather than an individual one. He writes:

"These diaries had remained dormant in the drawer of my desk for ten years. The owner had entrusted me with a request not to publish her diaries. After ten years, I suddenly decided to betray the owner and publish her words to the world. Why should I not betray her? What she wrote does not concern her alone. When she speaks of her sorrow, she speaks of all sorrow. When she speaks of her body, she speaks of all bodies. When she speaks of her feelings, love, hatred, and desire, she speaks of the feelings, love, hatred, and desire of all women."

Through this declaration, Qabbani emphasizes that the experiences and emotions described in the diaries are emblematic of a universal female experience, reflecting the shared truths and struggles of women everywhere.

The poetic persona states in the collection:

حروف سوف أفرطها كقلب الخوخة الأحمز  
لكلّ سجينّة تحيا معي في سجنّي الأكبر.

She also says:

ومن فحم رخيص نحن سوانا...  
ولا يمحو خطايانا.

The poetic persona often merges with the collective "we," transcending individuality to cast its shadow on the reading self and embrace it, akin to the female poets who speak on behalf of all women. She says:

سأكتب عن صديقاتي  
فقصة كلّ واحدة أرى فيها.. أرى ذاتي  
سأكتب عن صديقاتي  
وعن آلاف.. آلاف الشّهيدات

In poem number (26), she says:

يروّعني  
شحوب شقيقتي الكبرى  
هي الأخرى  
تعاني ما أعانيه  
تعاني السّاعة الصّفرا.

In Nazik al-Malaika's poem "Washing Away the Shame," one can perceive a spirit of rebellion against the derogatory perception of women. The poet expresses her frustration with the concept of shame, which is meted out by tribal men with a double standard. After describing the cries of a girl who was killed under the pretense of washing away shame, the poet turns to mock those who imposed the punishment upon her, oblivious to their own immersion in shame. She says:

ويعود الجّلد الوحشيّ ويلقى التّاس  
"العار؟" ويمسح مديته- "مَرَقْنَا العارَ"  
يا ربّ الحانة، أين الخمر؟ وأين الكأس؟  
نادِ الغانية الكسلى العاطرة الأنفاس

This is the stance of the tribal men, who undertake the tasks of cleaning and purifying, but according to double standards. The strict laws applied to women are not applied to men themselves. The poet then addresses the women of the tribe, warning and alerting them:

سنقصّ جدائلنا وسنسلخ أيدينا  
لتظللّ ثيابهم بيض اللّون نقيّة

لا بسمة لا فرحة لا لفتة فالمديئة  
ترقبنا في قبضة والدنا وأخينا.

The issue of men applying double standards to their own benefit is a matter addressed by Qabbani in his poems through the voice of the female perspective. He emphasizes that what is considered a grave mistake when committed by a woman is regarded as natural when committed by a man. The poetic persona in poem 18 from the *Diaries* compares herself to her brother, saying:

يعود أخي من الماخور عند الفجر سكرانا  
يعود كأنه السلطان، من سمّاه سلطانا؟  
ويبقى في عيون الأهل أجملنا وأغلانا  
ويبقى في ثياب العهر.. أظهرنا وأنقانا  
فسبحان الذي سواه من ضوء ومن فحم رخيص نحن سؤانا  
وسبحان الذي يمحو خطاياهم ولا يمحو خطايانا.

We observe the deprivation experienced by the female persona in poem 12, where the poetess compares herself to the cat living in the household, ultimately concluding that the cat enjoys a happier life than she does. She says:

أفكر: أيتنا أسعد؟  
أنا.. أم قطننا الأسود؟  
أنا؟ أم ذلك الممدود.. سلطانا على المقعد؟  
سعيدا تحت فروته كربي مطلق مفرد  
أفكر: أيتنا حرٌّ ومن متّا طليق اليد  
أنا أم ذلك الحيوان.. يلحسُ فروه الأجد؟  
أمامي كائنٌ حرٌّ يكادُ للطفه يُعبدُ  
لهذا القَطّ عالمة، له طرٌّ، له مسندُ  
له في السّطح مملكةٌ وراياتٌ له تُعقدُ  
له حرّيّةٌ وأنا أعيشُ بقمقمٍ موصدُ.

In other poems from the same collection, the female poetic persona alludes to the issue of male duplicity, highlighting their public facade which contrasts with their true nature and the hidden depths of their hearts. She says:

لماذا نحن مزدوجون إحساسًا.. وتفكيرًا؟  
لماذا أهل بلدتنا يمزّقهم تناقضهم  
ففي ساعات يقظتهم يسبّون الصّفائر والتّنانيرا  
وحين اللّيل يطويهم يضمّون التّصاويرا.

The female poetic persona in Qabbani's poem depicts the hypocrisy found among religious men, who are entrusted with the responsibility of guidance and correction and are considered role models. The poetess reveals that these men use religion as a disguise to achieve base goals that nestle within their souls. She says:

قصدنا شيخ حارتنا، ليرزقنا بأطفال  
فأدخلنا لجرته  
وقام بنزع جيّته  
وباركنا وضاجعنا  
وعُدنا مثلما جئنا  
بلا ولد.. ولا مال.

And she says about the Eastern man who follows the path of religious leader

قضينا العمر في المخدع  
وجيش حريمنا معنا  
وصكّ زواجنا معنا  
وصكّ طلاقنا معنا  
وقلنا: الله قد شرّع  
ليالينا موزعةً  
على زوجاتنا الأربع

كأنّ الدّين حانوت  
 فتحناه لكي نشبع  
 تمّتّعنا "بما أيماننا ملكت"  
 وعشنا في غرائزنا بمستنقع  
 وزوّرنا كلام الله بالشّكل الذي ينفع  
 عبثنا في قداسته  
 نسينا نبل غايته  
 ولم نذكر سوى المضجع  
 ولم نأخذ  
 سوى زوجاتنا الأربع.

And she says, critiquing our culture:

ثقافتنا  
 ففاقيع من الصّابون والوحد  
 فما زالت بداخلنا  
 رواسب من أبي جهل  
 وما زلنا  
 نعيش بمنطق المفتاح والقفل  
 نلفّ نساءنا بالقطن.. ندفنهنّ في الرّمّل.

### 3.2 National Issues:

Raja Samarin argues that there has never been an era in which Arab women did not contribute, in one way or another, to shaping the events that concern their people and captivate their interests. The scope of nationalist themes in contemporary Arab women's poetry is perhaps second only to the scope of personal themes, and this can be attributed to three factors (Mummelthei, 2020):

A. The increasing involvement of Arab women alongside men in national work. B. The freedom provided by the Arab revolutions, which allowed female poets to address topics that were previously prohibited under conservative regimes.

B. The revolutions led to extensive political, social, and economic changes, opening new avenues for female poets to respond to, describe, and depict the impact of these changes on their own lives.

Contemporary Arab female poets have bravely fought against colonialism and its retrogressive, client, and foreign allies, depicting the plight of refugees and their suffering, as well as their intense longing for their homeland. These poets have engaged with the joys and sorrows of their nation during major events (Loya, 1975).

When comparing the nationalist themes in the poetry of Arab female poets with those in Qabbani's poems where the poetic persona is female, we find that Qabbani does not dedicate extensive space to these themes (Gabay, 1973). He does not dedicate a single poem to the nationalist cause within the female poetic persona's voice but addresses the topic briefly in a few lines within one poem, "Love and Oil."

تمرّغ يا أمير التّفط... فوقّ وحول لّداتك  
 كهوفّ اللّيل في باريس.. قد قتلت مروة اتك...  
 فبعت القدس.. بعت الله.. بعت رماد أمواتك  
 كأنّ حراب إسرائيل لم تُجهض شقيقاتك  
 ولم تهدم منازلنا.. ولم تحرق مصاحفنا  
 ولا رايّاتها ارتفعت على أشلاء رايّاتك  
 كأنّ جميع من صلبوا..  
 على الأشجار.. في يافا.. وفي حيفا..  
 وبئر السّبع.. ليسوا من سلالاتك  
 تغوصّ القدس في دمها..  
 وأنت صريع شهواتك  
 تنام.. كأنّما المأساة ليست بعض مأساتك.

The reason for the lack of focus on nationalist issues in poems with a female poetic persona until the June 1967 war is likely due to the predominance of the theme of women's liberation in Qabbani's works. After the war, however, nationalist and broader human rights themes in the Arab world took over the majority of his poetry.



### 3.2.1 The Poetess's Relationship with Others:

The relationship of the female poetic persona in Qabbani's poems with others is depicted through various characters: the husband, lover, father, brother, sister, mother, friend, and neighbor. Female characters appear in love poems such as "The Two Sisters" and "The Tale," as well as in poems of rebellion and revolution against the patriarchal society, such as those in poems 19, 23, and 26 from *Diaries of an Indifferent Woman* (1968). Male characters, on the other hand, including the lover, are present in both the romantic and revolutionary contexts against patriarchal society, while other male figures (the husband, father, brother) appear mainly in poems criticizing society and patriarchal authority, such as those in poems 7, 15, 18, 20, and 31 from the same collection.

### 3.2.2 The Relationship with the Father:

A noticeable difference exists between the relationship of the female poetic persona with the father in Qabbani's poems and in the poetry of female poets. In Nabiela Khalifa's poem "At the Threshold of Silence," the relationship with her father is one of love and respect, as she states:

يا أبي  
أحبك جمًّا  
أحنّ إليك كثيرا  
وما زال صوتك همس النَّجِيّ  
وما زال وجهك طيف الحبيب.

In the poem "The Surge of Anger," she attributes her strong will to her father, describing him as her first teacher. She emphasizes how a woman continuously needs her father throughout her life, portraying him as the compassionate one, the guide, and the refuge she turns to when all other paths are closed.

هذا أبي  
ابيضت عليّ عيونه  
وبكت بعينيه المهابة  
يا والدي  
صيرًا  
فقد علمتني  
العبء ما لم يقصم الأكتاف  
يُكسبها الصلابة.

In contrast, we find the opposite relationship between the female poetic persona and her father in Qabbani's poems. There is no depiction of a natural or positive relationship with the father; instead, the father is portrayed as oppressive, tyrannical, and self-centered. She says:

لماذا يستبدُّ أبي؟ ويرهقني بسلطته؟  
وينظرُ لي كأنيةً.. كسطرٍ في جريدته  
كفرْتُ أنا بمال أبي.. بلؤلؤه.. بفصته  
أبي رجل أنانيّ.. مريضٌ في محبته  
مريضٌ في تعصبه.. مريضٌ في تعنته.

Within the same collection she also says:

أبي صنفٌ من البشر  
مزيجٌ من غباء التُّرك من عصبية التُّنر  
أبي أثرٌ من الآثار.. تابوتٌ من الحجر  
تهزُّ كلُّ ما فيه.. كبابٍ كنيسةٍ نخر  
كهارون الرّشيد أبي، جواريه، مواليه، تمطّيه على تخت من الطّرد  
ونحن هنا.. سباياه.. ضحاياها.. مماسح قصره القذر.

The pronoun "we" here refers to women in general, including sisters, mothers, and others, all of whom are subjected to the authority of the tyrannical father/husband.

She says:

ويحكمننا هنا الأموات.. والسّيّاف مسرورٌ

يفتّش في خزاننا  
يفتّش في ملابسنا  
عن الأحلام نعلمها  
أراه في ثياب أبي.

### 3.3 The Relationship with the Sister:

In Qabbani's poems featuring the female poetic persona, the relationship with the sister is characterized by a fraternal bond, where the sister feels comfortable with and relies on her sibling for support. In the poem "The Two Sisters," the poetic persona asks her sister to assist her in preparing for a date with her lover, confiding in her about her emotions and the deep longing she experiences. She says:

قلم الحمرة أخته.. ففي شرفات الظنّ، ميعادي معه  
أين أصباغي.. ومشطبي.. والحلي؟ إنّ بي وجدًا كوجد الزّوبعة.

This relationship continues in the *Diaries of an Indifferent Woman*, where the female poetic persona expresses her emotions, identifying with her sister as they share the same experiences and face similar male oppression and fear of the "zero hour." She says:

بروّعني  
شحوب شقيقتي الكبرى  
هي الأخرى  
تعاني ما أعانيه  
تعاني السّاعة الصّفرا  
تعاني عقدة سوداء  
تعصر قلبها عصرًا.

The relationship between the female poetic persona and her sister in women's poetry is similar to the relationship depicted in Qabbani's poetry. Nazik al-Malaika says:

هياّ معي تتبسّم الدّنيا إذا أنتِ ابتسمتِ  
ماذا يثير أساك ما دمنّا نطلّ، أنا وأنتِ؟

The poetic persona in Nazik al-Malaika's work shares experiences, sorrows, and tears over the past with her sister, in a close relationship that resembles the poet speaking to herself due to the deep emotional bond between them.

### 3.5 The Relationship with the Mother:

Nazik al-Malaika expressed her feelings towards her mother in her poem "Three Times for My Mother," where she does not address her in a conventional manner but instead conveys her genuine emotions and sorrow over the loss of her mother.

In Qabbani's poetry, the mother appears in several poems featuring the female poetic persona. The first instance is in the poem "I Am Deprived," where she laments the inability of her mother and her lover's mother to accept their love for each other. She says:

لا أمّهُ لانتت.. ولا أمّي  
وحبّه يتأمّ في عظمي  
إنّ حبات أمّي بصندوقها  
شالي، فلي شال من العيّم

In the poem "The Tale," the female poetic persona recounts to her mother what transpired between her and her lover during their meeting, revealing intimate details that are generally considered socially unacceptable. This openness illustrates the candid relationship between mother and daughter, reflecting the mother's understanding of her daughter's romantic situation. The poetic persona attributes the mother's acceptance and understanding to their shared gender, suggesting that they can relate to and empathize with each other's experiences as women (Hannawi, 2022). She says:

كنت أعدو في غابة اللوز.. لمّا  
قال عني، أمّه، إتي حلوة  
يغصب القبله اغتصابًا.. وأرضى

وجميلٌ أن يؤخذ التَّغْرُ عُنُوهُ  
أنتِ.. لن تنكري عليّ احتراقي  
كلّنا في مجامر النَّارِ.. نسوةٌ.

The mother is mentioned in the poem "The Return of September," where the poetic persona asks her lover, with whom she is about to engage in a sensual relationship, if anyone has informed her mother of her whereabouts (Alqahtani, 2024). Here, the mother is depicted in her traditional oriental role, reflecting the societal rejection of her daughter's involvement with a young man outside of marriage. She says:

جَهَّزْ وِجَاقَ النَّارِ  
فِي حِلْمَتِي رِعْشَهُ  
أَيْلُولَ لِلزَّمَمِ  
فَمَدِّ لِي زَنْدَكَ  
هَلْ أَخْبَرُوا أُمَّيْ  
أَتِي هُنَا عِنْدَكَ؟

In the poem "The Taffeta Dress," the poetic persona hides from her mother the dress she has designed to wear for her lover. Here, the mother is again portrayed in her traditional role, reflecting societal norms and expectations. The persona says:

أَمْسَ أَنْتَهَى.. فَسْتَانِي التَّفْتَا  
مِنْ عِنْدِ حَانِكْتِي  
أَكْمَامَهُ عَشْبِ الْبَحِيرَاتِ  
أَزْرَارَهُ.. كَقَطِيعِ نَجْمَاتِ  
أَمْسَ أَنْتَهَى.. لَمْ تَدْرِ وَالِدَتِي  
فِيهِ.. وَلَمْ أَخْبِرْ رَفِيقَاتِي.

In Qabbani's poetry, the mother is generally depicted as the traditional Eastern figure, except in the poem "The Tale," where she is portrayed differently. In this poem, the mother understands her daughter's longing and permits her to have a relationship with her lover outside the bounds of marriage.

مَعَ الْمَوْتَى أَعِيشِ أَنَا.. مَعَ الْأَطْلَالِ وَالذَّمَنِ  
جَمِيعُ أَقَارِبِي مَوْتَى.. بِلَا قَبْرِ وَلَا كَفَنِ  
أَبُوحَ لِمَنْ؟ وَلَا أَحَدٌ.. مِنْ الْأَمْوَاتِ يَفْهَمُنِي؟  
أَتُورُ أَنَا عَلَيَّ قَدْرِي.. عَلَيَّ صَدْتِي عَلَيَّ عَفْنِي  
وَبَيْتِ كُلِّ مَنْ فِيهِ.. يِعَادِينِي وَيَكْرَهْنِي  
أَنَا فِي مَنْزِلِ الْمَوْتَى فَمَنْ مِنْ قَبِضَةِ الْمَوْتَى يَحْزَنْنِي؟

The dead here are of two types: male and female. The males, represented by the father and brother, are intellectually and culturally dead due to their oppression of women and the restriction of their roles, denying them basic human rights such as love, solely because they are female. On the other hand, the females, embodied by the mother and sister, are alive yet dead, as they are treated like prisoners confined to their rooms or homes, expected only to serve men (the father or brother).

### **3.6 The Relationship with the Brother:**

In Qabbani's poems, the female poetic persona discusses her relationship with her brother, who represents oppressive authority and continues the patriarchal dominance of the father. She says:

وَيَحْكُمُنَا هُنَا الْأَمْوَاتُ.. وَالسِّيَافُ مَسْرُورٌ  
مَلَائِيْنٌ مِنَ السَّنَاتِ  
يَفْتَشُّ فِي خَزَائِنِنَا  
يَفْتَشُّ فِي مَلَابِسِنَا  
أَرَاهُ فِي ثِيَابِ أَبِي  
أَرَاهُ فِي ثِيَابِ أَخِي.

This relationship is indirectly illustrated through a comparison between how her parents treat her versus how they treat her brother, who, due to his male status, receives preferential treatment and favoritism. The poetic persona says:

يعود أخي من الماخور عند الفجر سكرانا  
ويبقى في عيون الأهل أجملنا وأغلانا  
فسبحان الذي سواه من ضوء ومن فحم رخيص نحن سوانا  
وسبحان الذي يمحو خطاياها ولا يمحو خطايانا.

### 3.7 Relationship with Men (Lovers/ Husbands):

Nizar Qabbani presents various types of relationships between the female poetic persona and men through several poems discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter: grief and love, time, motherhood, the issue of women, and rebellion against the demeaning perception of women. To avoid repetition of ideas already covered in these sections, we will briefly outline the types of men depicted by the female poetic persona in Qabbani's poems, which can be summarized as follows:

1. **The Loving, Passionate Man:** This type is exemplified in poems such as "Hikaya" (The Tale), "Washaya" (Betrayal), "Nar" (Fire), "Awdat Aylul" (Return of September), "Al-Qamis Al-Abyad" (The White Shirt), (What Should I Say to Him), and other love poems.
2. **The Abandoning Man:** This man leaves his beloved after their romantic relationship. This type is illustrated in poems like "Ila Rajul" (To a Man), "Ta'ud Sha'ri 'alayk" (My Hair Returns to You), "Limadha?" (Why?), and reaches an extreme in "Hablal" (Pregnant), where he abandons his pregnant lover and rejects any relationship with her and their child.
3. **The Betraying Man:** This type is characterized by infidelity and is depicted in poems such as "Risaala Min Sayyida Haqidah" (A Letter from a Resentful Lady), "Akhiruni" (Tell Me), and "Sawt Min al-Harem" (A Voice from the Harem).
4. **The Imaginary Man:** This is a conceptualized ideal lover whom the female poetic persona eagerly awaits and builds hopes upon, as seen in poem number 22 from the collection *Yawmiyyat Imra'a La Mubalina* (Diary of an Indifferent Woman).
5. **The Neglectful Husband:** This husband fails to consider his wife's feelings, as portrayed in poem number 33 from *Yawmiyyat Imra'a La Mubalina*. His neglect can extend to sexual indifference, failing to fulfill his marital duties, as depicted in poem number 32 from the same collection and in the poem "Al-Rajul Al-Madini" (The Metallic Man).
6. **The Unresponsive Man:** This type is characterized by a lack of attention and concern for the female poetic persona's affections, as illustrated in the poems "Ma'a Jarida" (With a Newspaper) and "Shu'un Saghira" (Small Affairs).

Through these poems, Qabbani explores a broad spectrum of male types and their relationships with the female poetic persona. This exploration mirrors the depictions found in contemporary female poets who also present diverse portrayals of relationships with men. However, Qabbani delves into more extreme and unconventional aspects of these relationships, as seen in poems such as "Hablal," "Al-Rajul Al-Madini," and poem number 32 from *Yawmiyyat Imra'a La Mubalina*.

### 3.8 Other Relationships:

In addition to these relationships, Qabbani addresses various other relationships, including the interaction between the female poetic persona and her neighbor in *Yawmiyyat Imra'a La Mubalina*.

خرجتُ اليوم للشرفة  
على الشباك جارتنا المسيحية، تحييني  
فرحتُ لأنَّ إنسانًا يحييني  
لأنَّ صباحية.. يذا كمياه تشرين  
تلوِّحُ لي تناديني  
أيا ربّي متى تُشفى هنا من عقدة الدّين؟  
أليس الدّين كلّ الدّين إنسانًا يحييني  
ويفتحُ لي ذراعيه ويحملُ غصنَ زيتون.

### 4. Conclusion:

In this article, we extensively reviewed the issues and themes presented by women in their poems where the poetic persona is female. We compared these with the issues and themes in Nizar Qabbani's poems featuring a female poetic persona. We found that these issues were strikingly similar. Additionally, we observed that Qabbani successfully delved into the female experience and spoke on behalf of women with significant power. He addressed numerous issues that female poets have articulated in their works with clarity, transparency, and audacity. In doing so, Qabbani demonstrates that sometimes a man can effectively describe the concerns and lives of women even more vividly than women themselves.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID: **Nassim Assadi:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8725-7882>

**Publisher's Note:** All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

### References:

- [1] Abalkheel, A., & Sourani, M. (2024). The interplay of voiceless and voiced sounds in Qabbani's elegy immortalizing Balqis. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 11(1), 2290786.
- [2] Al-Hawtali, A. M. (2023). Exploring the theme of death in Nazik al-Malaika's poetry: an analytical study. *International Journal of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics (IJMAL)*, 7(2), 100-118.
- [3] Alqahtani, R. S. F. (2024). Community, Identity, and Resistance in Minority Literature: Arab American Poets-Samuel Hazo, Nathalie Handal, and Naomi Shihab Nye.
- [4] Al-Samman, H. (2022). Arab Women's Literature From Anonymity to Global Presence. In *Routledge Handbook on Women in the Middle East* (pp. 454-469). Routledge.
- [5] Alshaer, A. (2021). Love and Poetry in the Middle East. *Love and Poetry in the Middle East*, 1-272.
- [6] Assadi, N. (2021). Stylistics of The Syntactic Structures: Occurrence of the Present Tense in the Text and its time-related significance, Nizār Qabbānī's Poetic Collection Yawmiyyāt Imra'a Lā Mubāliya as a Model. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 4(9), 144-156.
- [7] Assadi, N. (2021). The Stylistic Features of the Isolated Voice Attributed to the Poetical Work "Fragments of a Woman" by Suad Al-Sabbah as a Model. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 4(10), 176-188.
- [8] Assadi, N. (2023). Presence of the Female Persona in the Poetry of Nizar Qabbani. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 6(3), 124-131.
- [9] Assadi, N., & Ras, K. A. (2023). Stylistics of Grammatical Structures: The Presence of Verbs and their Temporal Connotations in the Poetry Book "Fragments of a Woman" by Soaud Al-Sabah as a Model. *International Journal of Linguistics Studies*, 3(2), 56-70.
- [10] AYYILDIZ, E. (2023). *Arab Women in Ink: Exploring Gender Perspectives in Modern Arabic Literature*. Livre de Lyon.
- [11] Gabay, Z. (1973). Nizar Qabbani, the poet and his poetry. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 9(2), 207-222.
- [12] Hannawi, A. R. (2022). *Assessment of Translating Nizar Qabbani's Yawmiyyat Imra'a La Mubaliya in To English: A Stylistic Analysis* (Doctoral dissertation, Tikrit University).
- [13] Jambak, M. R., Ilmi, K. A., & Halimi, H. (2024). WOMEN'S IDENTITY, POWER, AND AGENCY IN THE POETRY OF ASHHADU AN LA IMRO'AN ILLA ANTI BY NIZAR QABBANI: A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF RIFATERRE. *Journal of Arabic Literature (JaLi)*, 5(2), 85-95.
- [14] Loya, A. (1975). Poetry as a social document: The social position of the Arab woman as reflected in the poetry of Nizar Qabbani. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 6(4), 481-494.
- [15] Ma, T. (2022). *Speaking for Voiceless Women: A Comparative Study of Nizar Qabbani's and Zhai Yongming's Poetry*. Indiana University.
- [16] Miloud, K. (2024). The Innovative Features in Contemporary Poetry.
- [17] Mummelthei, V. (2020). *The Sea and the Beloved. A Corpus-Linguistic Study of Frequencies, Keywords, and Topics in the Poetry of the Syrian Writer Nizar Qabbani (1923-1998)*. Freie Universitaet Berlin (Germany).
- [18] Sabzianpoor, V., Naderfar, A. R., & Rezaei, E. (2024). Comparison of Romantic Illustrations by Nizar Qabbani and Simin Behbahani Using Childrens Traits and Moods. *Research in Comparative Literature*, 14(2), 25-50