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**Dr. Haigoune Oussama**

**Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria**

Email: ohaigoune@gmail.com

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## **Abstract**

Margin literature has become a very important center in the Arab literary production, because of its artistic and aesthetic aspects, especially what was produced by the Sa'aliks in the pre-Islamic era. This literature received a fierce campaign of self-criticism and first-time recipients. The tribe that marginalizes all that comes from these untouchables, but if we meditate a bit in this literature, we will find what we did not find in the literature center, the ethics and altruism and dignity, and on the other the durability of expression and accuracy of photography, and the rigidity of words.

**Keywords:** Literature, Margin, Thongs, Tabula, Aurwa

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## **The Signification of Rhyme in Arabic Poetry:**

### **1. Rhyme in Language:**

In the Arabic language, "al-rawi" refers to: "A large cloud with heavy rainfall." <sup>1</sup>

It also means: "Complete and satisfying drink." <sup>2</sup>

Additionally, it signifies: "Collection, connection, and tying together, as in the term 'al-rawaa' which refers to the rope used to tie goods and loads." <sup>3</sup>

### **2. Rhyme in Terminology:**

In technical terms, "al-rawi" refers to the rhyme letter, i.e., the letter on which the rhyme of the poem is built and which repeats throughout all its lines. For example, in Al-Mutanabbi's "Mīmiyya," the rhyme is based on the letter mīm, as seen in its opening lines

While my body and state suffer from ailment untold.	★	Oh, how my heart burns for one whose heart is cold,
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While you claim to love Sayf al-Dawla, as others say? <sup>4</sup>	★	Why must I conceal a love that has worn me away,
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Some poems in the history of Arabic literature became renowned for their rhyme letter (rawi), which became like a distinguishing mark, attributed to them, and through it, they were recognized, such as Lamiyyat al-Arab by Al-Shanfarā, Lamiyyat al-Ajam by Al-Tughrai, Siniyyat by Al-Buhturi, and Ta’iyyat by Al-Shanfarā <sup>5</sup>, among others.

The rawi is usually the last consonant in an Arabic verse because the Arabic language, like all Semitic languages, is characterized by the predominance of consonants <sup>6</sup>.

The link between the linguistic definition—"rawi is a large cloud with heavy rainfall"—and the technical definition "rawi is the function of rhyme that stimulates recall and confronts forgetfulness due to the oral nature of ancient Arabic poetry"<sup>7</sup> lies in the way the rawi connects the verses to each other, enabling the reciter to become like a massive cloud, reciting successive verses abundantly and continuously, like the heavy rain of that cloud.

Thus, the rawi holds a significant position in Arabic poetry, as it has important functions in the structure of poetic compositions.

### **3. The Phonetic Structure of Rhyme:**

From a phonetic perspective, al-rawi represents a single consonant, and the poet must adhere to the rawi from the beginning to the end of the poem to maintain the consistency and harmony of the rhyme. All letters of the alphabet can serve as rawi, except for alif, yaa, and waw.

This observation was noted by Al-Akhfash and agreed upon by Ibn Jinni, who made an exception for alif, yaa, and waw when they are intrinsic to the root of the word. <sup>8</sup>

### **4. Rhyme and Meaning:**

Rhyme (al-rawi) represents the essence of the rhyme scheme in traditional Arabic poetry (al-Khalili poetry), as the foundation of rhyme lies in al-rawi<sup>9</sup>. The rawi is considered a consonant that differentiates poems from one another and classifies them into groups based on phonetic competition, as seen in many poetic collections.

Phonetically, the rawi aligns with the meaning of the text, offering a poetic aesthetic that forms a fundamental basis for the reception and admiration of the text. Like other forms of art, poetry is no exception; its content is inseparable from its form <sup>10</sup>. The perception of al-rawi will remain limited if it is merely seen as an auditory device or an additional embellishment, due to the failure to associate it with meaning <sup>11</sup>.

Thus, al-rawi is a phonetic structure composed of a consonant, and linking it to meaning is essential for studying poetic texts. A study of meaning cannot yield fruitful results unless it is grounded in the phonetic imagery of the text <sup>12</sup>.

This will be applied to selected examples from the collection of poetry by the "Prince of Vagabonds," ‘Urwa ibn al-Ward al-‘Absi.

**The Structure of Rhyme and the Aesthetic of Sound in the Poetry of ‘Urwa ibn al-Ward:**

To clarify the relationship between rhyme (al-rawi) and meaning, we selected some poetic examples from the collection of the "Prince of Vagabonds," ‘Urwa ibn al-Ward.

The first example highlights ‘Urwa addressing the Banu Nashib, urging them to take responsibility for their people. He then turns to Banu ‘Ud, asking their wise men to restrain their foolish members from attacking him, giving them two options: either to stop them or face a war with no end, one they would not be able to withstand.

The second example is the poem for which the "Prince of Vagabonds" is most famous. It discusses ‘Urwa's excessive generosity and his rescue of the poor. In this poem, ‘Urwa gives his poor neighbor Tawlama an elderly she-camel and a container of clarified butter (humaita). This act upset his wife, Umm Wahb, who became resentful. He reminded her that miserliness and generosity cannot coexist, and that when he misses an opportunity for generosity, he reproaches himself for it endlessly.

In the third example, the poet describes a wave of drought that struck him and his people, causing them to face death from starvation. In response, ‘Urwa slaughtered his camel for them, dried some meat for later, and then instructed them to arm themselves and raid others to secure their livelihood.

The fourth example presents ‘Urwa's response to his older brother, who criticized his lifestyle and vagabonding ways, mocking his thin and pale appearance. ‘Urwa tied his frailty to his excessive generosity and sharing of his food with others, while linking his brother's plumpness to his stinginess and hoarding food for himself alone.

The fifth example features the poet boasting about his bravery, strength, and courage, in contrast to those who flee from the battlefield in fear of their enemies. With his sharp sword, he confronts heavily armed warriors and leaves them slain, becoming prey for wild animals.

The Sixth Example This example highlights the fear ‘Urwa's wife had for him. On one occasion, the poor of Banu Abs requested aid from the "Prince of Vagabonds" during a famine that had afflicted them. He set out to lead a raid to help them, but his wife attempted to dissuade him, warning of the dangers of death and destruction that awaited him. In response, ‘Urwa argued that death could strike someone sitting safely at home just as easily as it could a raider. He then reaffirmed his generosity and determination to assist the poor of Banu Abs, resolving to raid alongside them until they secured enough to sustain themselves. He described the dire state they were in due to hunger and weakness, and how swarms of Um Sarayah (locusts) had left the land of Iraq in search of new places.

The Seventh Example This example reflects a deeply negative social phenomenon: the tendency to value people based on their material possessions rather than the richness of their souls and minds. This value system was entrenched in pre-Islamic society, yet the Sa'alik (vagabonds) rebelled against it in their quest to establish a new value system. Vagabondism was not merely an economic phenomenon, as some studies have suggested, but rather a movement asserting idealistic and higher values. As observed in the sixth example, the poet's wife sought to prevent his travels, fearing the unknown and the possibility of failure during his raids, which could lead to certain death.

The Eighth Example In this final example, the "Prince of Vagabonds" describes the warmth and camaraderie he shared with the Sa‘alik. However, not all of them were noble and honorable. Among these were Balj and Qurra, two of ‘Urwa’s companions. When they achieved wealth and prosperity, they abandoned him. On one occasion, when ‘Urwa was in dire straits and sought their help, they ignored him, leaving him deeply disillusioned. He felt a profound loss of trust, as he no longer knew whom he could rely on. He compared them to two she-goats, Bark and Dar‘a, which became fat and produced abundant milk in a large container (‘as) after grazing in the lush spring. Yet, these goats only cared for their offspring, much like his companions who, after becoming wealthy, denied his favor and let him down.

- **The First Example:**

‘Urwa ibn al-Ward says:

O rider, if you pass by, then convey	★	My message to Banī Nāshib and those who stay
Is every one of you choosing a home to reside	★	While leaving ruins, yet no guilt to abide?
And convey to Banī ‘Udh of Zayd a message	★	By the sign that if they slander me, they lie
If you wish, restrain your fool from his ways	★	And let your wise one ask him, 'Where do you stray?
And if you wish, you may wage war against me for long,	★	But the struggle will weary you, like a distant race drawn
So the worthy shall attain the blessings in store	★	And ‘Abs shall know whose head bows to the floor <sup>13</sup>

The voiced bilabial plosive “bā” <sup>14</sup> is crowned as the rhyme (rawi) in this excerpt. The choice of “bā” appears highly fitting, reflecting the connotations of anger and frustration toward the actions of those people. Its bilabial nature, which signifies interaction with others, combined with the air trapped and then explosively released, conveys the poet's overwhelming anger and his deep resentment toward others. This symbolizes that the situation has reached its peak, prompting him to address the wise among the tribe to guide their people back to the righteous path—or else ignite the flames of war.

However, this intense anger and the threats remain controlled, as ‘Urwa suppresses his fury and maintains extreme self-restraint. This is underscored by the ḍamma vowel and the articulation of “bā”. The rounded lips narrowing the airflow outward, the tongue's elevation narrowing the oral cavity, and its retraction backward<sup>15</sup> all contribute to the meaning of suppressing rage within oneself. This implies refraining from immediately unleashing it as force upon others, demonstrating restraint and patience while awaiting the intervention of the wise. If they fail to act, ‘Urwa himself will confront those evading their responsibilities and those criticizing him.

- The Second Example:

‘Urwa ibn al-Ward says:

Shall we grant a destitute one from our share,	★ A rope to our tent, renowned everywhere?
And a leftover portion of fat that he claimed,	★ While much of his right remains untamed?
Umm Wahb lies awake on her resting side,	★ While other eyes sleep, their worries denied.
If you forbid, then forever it is banned	★ Yet no neighbor of ours is ever unmanned
How often a meal I chose to forgo,	★ For a hand that arrived in hunger and woe.
Truth says: 'A noble request is fair,'	★ Yet they pleaded with you, but found nothing there.
I told him, 'Live on, for you are free,	★ You shall feast in your life or die with dignity.
If I miss out, I do not resent,	★ For life goes on, and fate is meant.
Sulaymā knows my views stand apart,	★ From misers whose greed controls their heart.
For miserliness never clouds my sight,	★ Whether I thirst or drink with delight.
And when the spears in battle entwine,	★ My steadfast mind remains aligned.
I rely on wisdom where I excel,	★ And seek the eloquent when in doubt I dwell. <sup>16</sup>

The letter “tā” is used as the rhyme (rawi) in this poem, symbolizing the combination of two contradictory traits: strength and weakness, represented by "explosion" and "whisper" <sup>17</sup>. This duality reflects a conflict between a praiseworthy quality in the balance of reason and social values generosity and a despised weakness in reason, rejected by society miserliness.

The articulation of “tā” plays a significant symbolic role. The contact between the flexible, mobile tongue and the firm, immovable gums <sup>18</sup> suggests a confrontation between two opposing forces, one strong and the other weak. Additionally, the energetic breath released at the end of pronouncing this sound (the rhyme) reflects the state of the woman, representing human instincts <sup>19</sup>, who is almost consumed with anger, producing repeated sighs and groans out of frustration with the poet’s actions.

Furthermore, the ḍamma vowel that connects the rhyme in this poem symbolizes the "whisper of meaning" alongside the weakness in human nature, all of which hint at miserliness.

The rounding of the lips, the closure of the airflow, and the retraction of the tongue <sup>20</sup> all point inward, symbolizing an internal struggle. Yet, this internal force strives to push the explosive quality of strength outward, connecting with others through generosity and benevolence.

- **The Third Example:**

He also said:

I told a group in the shelter to rest,	★ That evening we stayed near Mawan, distressed.
Seek wealth, or lead your souls to a place,	★ Of relief from hardship's relentless embrace.
For one like me, with a family to feed,	★ And little wealth, must go where fate leads.
To justify himself or secure a gain,	★ For excuse and success are much the same.
Perhaps you may mend after what I see,	★ Like the desert shrubs swayed by the breeze.
They strain with their hands, their best supply,	★ A remnant of salted camel to survive <sup>21</sup>

- **The Third Example:**

The rhyme (rawi) of this poem is the letter "ḥā", a voiceless fricative sound articulated from the pharyngeal region. It symbolizes the weakness that overtakes the self, perfectly aligning with what the poet conveys in the poem. The characteristics of "ḥā" and the depth of its articulation point to the profound weakness experienced by the poet's people due to the lack of sustenance and the severance of livelihood to the extent that they faced death by starvation, even in the kanīf (a wooden or tree-constructed enclosure for livestock to protect them from wolves).

The ḥā' also reflects, through the delicacy and extreme sensitivity of its pharyngeal articulation, the degree of frailty that afflicted those people. Its narrow articulation space suggests their constrained circumstances and helplessness in the face of the hunger that exhausted them. The kasra (short "i" vowel) that links the ḥā' signifies the daring venture 'Urwa took as a way out of their predicament and weakness. The closed nature of the kasra <sup>23</sup> symbolizes the risk and the blocked paths before them they wore the cloak of certainty in success, knowing they would either achieve wealth or find peace in death.

For a poor man with many dependents, there is no alternative; he must do everything in his power to secure sustenance. Even if he fails and meets his end, he would have fulfilled his duty to himself and his family.

- **The Fourth Example:**

He also said:

I am a man who shares his meal,	★ While you keep yours with selfish zeal.
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I see Umm Hassān this morning chide,	☆ Fearing my foes—yet my own fears abide.
Sulaymā says, ‘Stay, and we shall rejoice,’	☆ Not knowing I wander, bound by no choice.
Perhaps what you fear ahead in the fray,	☆ Shall meet the one who chose to stay.
When I say, ‘Wealth has come at last,’	☆ A starving father blocks my path.
A man of virtue, burdened and torn,	☆ By trials that left him tattered and worn.
So I journey afar with a band so fleet,	☆ To find my excuse or my fate to meet.
I see Banī Lubnā, their sorrow grows,	☆ Their homes enclosed where hardship flows.
And Umm Siryāh, in veiled retreat,	☆ Gazes at Sham and Iraq in her fleet. <sup>32</sup>

The rhyme (rawi) of this poem is the letter "fā", which carries its meaning through the contact between the teeth and the lower lip during its articulation<sup>33</sup>. This contact symbolizes the conflict between two opposing aspects of the self: the bold, adventurous pursuit of risk and annihilation, represented by the poet as a man, and the fear of destruction and failure, represented by the woman.

The characteristics of fā' as a fricative and voiceless sound<sup>34</sup> reflect the weakness and frailty that afflicted ‘Urwa’s people due to hunger and the lack of means to sustain themselves. ‘Urwa, along with his band of vagabonds, traversed distant paths across the earth, seeking a way to escape poverty, hunger, and need. They were united, knowing that none of them could survive unless they all succeeded together.

The ḍamma (short "u" vowel) adds meaning through its oval mouth shape and lack of sharpness during articulation<sup>35</sup>, emphasizing the unity and shared destiny of this group. Their relationship was characterized by warmth, communication, and solidarity, rather than sharp, individualistic concerns where personal interests outweighed the welfare of the group.

- The Seventh Example:
- ‘Urwa said:

Let me strive for wealth and gain,	☆ For I have seen that the poor bear the most pain.
The furthest, the least esteemed of men,	☆ Even if noble, even if wise within.
The council shuns him, his wife disdains,	☆ Even the child speaks with sharp refrains.
But wealth commands a mighty grace,	☆ Its owner met with awe and praise.
His faults are few, though many they be,	☆ For wealth has a lord who forgives endlessly <sup>36</sup>



The letter "rā'" serves as a fitting rhyme (rawi) for these verses due to its distinctive feature of repetition <sup>37</sup>. This repetition reflects two aspects: the poet's repeated wandering and relentless efforts to seek wealth, and the repeated reproaches from his wife, who represents the weaker self. The persistence of her reproaches is evident in the opening word of his poem, "Da'īnī" ("Leave me"), suggesting she had frequently blamed and nagged him, prompting him to address her in this manner.

In this poem, the rā' symbolizes two stages of the internal struggle within the poet. The first stage represents the desire for safety from poverty, which calls for stillness and the avoidance of travel, akin to the momentary trapping of air during the articulation of rā' <sup>38</sup>. The second stage represents the drive toward daring adventures filled with risks, akin to the release of air in the pronunciation of rā', with the goal of achieving great wealth and securing a position of respect among his family, tribe, and community.

The "high resonance of rā'" <sup>39</sup> serves as the poet's loud outcry against his society and its unjust value system. It is a confrontation with a reality rooted in unreasonable and inhumane divisions among individuals.

#### ENDNOTES:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, entry (R-W-Y), p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Fayrūzābādī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, previously cited reference, p. 337.

<sup>3</sup> Mūsā al-Aḥmadī Nūyawāt, *Al-Mutawassiṭ al-Kāfi fī ‘Ilm al-‘Arūd wa al-Qawāfi*, Dār al-Baṣā’ir, Ḥusayn Dāy, Algeria, 1st ed., 2009, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> See: Majdī Wahbah, *Mu‘jam Muṣṭalaḥāt al-Adab*, Maktabat Lubnān, Beirut, 1994, p. 456 (Rhyme).

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Jūrj Ḥenrī ‘Abd al-Masīḥ, *Lughat al-‘Arab*, Maktabat Lubnān, Beirut, 1st ed., Vol. 1, 1993, p. 282.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, previously cited reference, p. 349.

<sup>9</sup> Muḥammad al-Hādī al-Ṭarābulusī, *Khaṣā’iṣ al-Aslūb fī al-Shawqiyyāt*, Munshūrāt al-Jāmi‘a al-Tūnisiyya, Tunisia, 1981, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> See: Fāḍil ‘Awwād al-Janāy, *Al-Munqidh fī ‘Ilm al-‘Arūd wa al-Qāfiyah*, Dār Qandīl lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, Amman, 1st ed., 2009, p. 437.

<sup>11</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Shaykh, *Al-Shi‘riyya al-‘Arabiyya*, Dār Tūbqāl, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st ed., 1996, p. 217.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

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<sup>13</sup> *Dīwān ‘Urwah ibn al-Ward*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Ḥusām Bahnasāwī, *‘Ilm al-Aṣwāt*, Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, Cairo, 1st ed., 2004, p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> See: Dr. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Muḥammad Abū Sikkīn, *Dirāsāt fī al-Tajwīd wa al-Aṣwāt al-Lughawiyya*, Maṭba‘at al-Amāna, Egypt, 1983, p. 75.

<sup>16</sup> *Dīwān ‘Urwah ibn al-Ward*, pp. 22-24.

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Kamāl Muḥammad Bashīr, *‘Ilm al-Lugha al-‘Ām: al-Aṣwāt*, Dār al-Ma‘ārif, Cairo, 1st ed., 1980, p. 101.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>19</sup> See: Dr. Samīr Sharīf Istītiyya, *Al-Aṣwāt al-Lughawiyya: Ru‘ya Nuṭqiyya wa Taṭbīqiyya wa Fīziyā‘iyya*, Dār Wā‘il lil-Nashr, Amman, 1st ed., 2003, p. 134.

<sup>20</sup> Dr. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Muḥammad Abū Sikkīn, *Dirāsāt fī al-Tajwīd wa al-Aṣwāt al-Lughawiyya*, previously cited reference, p. 75.

<sup>21</sup> *Dīwān ‘Urwah ibn al-Ward*, previously cited reference, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> Bassām Barakah, *‘Ilm al-Aṣwāt al-‘Ām: Aṣwāt al-Lugha al-‘Arabiyya*, Markaz al-Inmā‘ al-Qawmī, Beirut, p. 126.

<sup>23</sup> Bassām Barakah, *‘Ilm al-Aṣwāt al-‘Ām: Aṣwāt al-Lugha al-‘Arabiyya*, previously cited reference, p. 131.

<sup>24</sup> *Dīwān ‘Urwah ibn al-Ward*, previously cited reference, p. 34.

<sup>25</sup> Dr. Sa‘īd Hādīf, *Dalālat al-Lafẓ wa al-Ma‘nā fī al-Lugha al-‘Arabiyya*, previously cited reference, p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> Dr. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Abū Sikkīn, *Dirāsāt fī al-Tajwīd wa al-Aṣwāt al-Lughawiyya*, previously cited reference, p. 137.

<sup>27</sup> *Dīwān ‘Urwah ibn al-Ward*, previously cited reference, p. 35.

<sup>28</sup> *Dīwān ‘Urwah ibn al-Ward*, previously cited reference, pp. 65-66.

<sup>29</sup> Dr. Muḥammad Maḥmūd Ghālī, *A‘immat al-Nuḥāt fī al-Tārīkh*, Dār al-Shurūq, Jeddah, 1st ed., 1976, p. 72.

<sup>30</sup> Dr. Samīr Sharīf Istītiyya, *Al-Aṣwāt al-Lughawiyya: Ru‘ya Nuṭqiyya wa Taṭbīqiyya wa Fīziyā‘iyya*, previously cited reference, p. 88.

<sup>31</sup> Dr. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Muḥammad Abū Sikkīn, *Dirāsāt fī al-Tajwīd wa al-Aṣwāt al-Lughawiyya*, previously cited reference, p. 85.

<sup>32</sup> *Dīwān ‘Urwah ibn al-Ward*, previously cited reference, pp. 70-72.

<sup>33</sup> Munāf Maḥdī al-Mūsawī, *‘Ilm al-Aṣwāt al-Lughawiyya*, Manshūrāt Jāmi‘at al-Sābi‘ min Abrīl, Libya, 1st ed., 1983, p. 54.

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<sup>34</sup> Dr. Ḥusām al-Bahnasāwī, *‘Ilm al-Aṣwāt*, previously cited reference, p. 64.

<sup>35</sup> Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ṣīgh, *Al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ṣawtī fī al-Dirāsāt al-‘Arabiyya*, Dār al-Fīkr, Damascus, 1st ed., 2000, p. 181.

<sup>36</sup> *Dīwān ‘Urwah ibn al-Ward*, previously cited reference, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> Dr. Kamāl Muḥammad Bashīr, *‘Ilm al-Luḡha al-‘Ām*, previously cited reference, p. 175.

<sup>38</sup> Bassām Barakah, *‘Ilm al-Aṣwāt al-‘Ām*, previously cited reference, p. 128.

<sup>39</sup> Dr. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Muḥammad Abū Sikkīn, *Dirāsāt fī al-Tajwīd wa al-Aṣwāt al-Luḡhawīyya*, previously cited reference, p. 75.