

# The Oxymoron as a Threshold for Entrance into the Modern Poetic Text and Formulation of its Indications: Muḥammad Afifi Maṭar as a Sample

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**Abstract:** This study deals with the employment of the figure of speech of Oxymoron in modern Arabic poetry. It investigates its definition, concept, characteristics, and employment as an important and prominent technical device in poetry in general, which turns it into an important entrance and a key to the understanding of the potential meanings in the poetic text in modern Arabic poetry in particular. To achieve its goals, the study introduces samples from the poetry of the Egyptian poet, Muḥammad Afifi Maṭar, who is considered an independent poetic phenomenon in the process of modern Arabic poetry, and whose first poems are characterized by their rebellious transcendence of the familiar, their complex imagery, and their ambiguous language that is abundant with unfamiliar paradoxes of Oxymora.

The importance of this study is that it highlights the rhetorical figure of speech of Oxymoron as a key to analyzing the poetic texts. In addition, the study introduces a new definition of Oxymoron, and new classifications of its types based on the new theoretical materials and poetic readings.

**Keywords:** Oxymoron, poetic ambiguity, poetic language, contradiction, Muhammad Afifi Matar.

## 1. INTRODUCTION: THE LEXICOLOGICAL AND TERMINOLOGICAL MEANINGS OF 'OXYMORON'

The term Oxymoron comes from the classical Greek language, which indicates a combination of two words of two separate meanings; 'oxus', which means 'sharp' or 'clever' and 'moros', which means 'foolishness' or 'stupidity'.<sup>1</sup> This phrase of 'clever foolishness' undoubtedly refers to the combination of antonyms in an unfamiliar way, and the paradoxical meaning of the two words is what characterizes the oxymoron in particular from other techniques. The term 'oxymoron' was translated into Arabic as 'al-'Irdāf al-Khulufiyy' which means "joining a word to another with which there is some kind of contradiction. It was defined as "an external paradox between two phrases in order to arouse admiration<sup>2</sup> or irony<sup>3</sup> or to achieve a rhetorical impact<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. THE STRUCTURE AND TYPES OF THE OXYMORON

The Oxymoron comes in different forms but all of them are far from the ordinary and clear employment of the language. Probably the most important classification of oxymoron forms is the one that was made by Yeshayaho Shen, who distinguished between two main kinds: *direct oxymoron* and *indirect oxymoron*. The main difference between them is that the first consists of two antonymous consecutive lexical items that are directly contradictory. This means that the first word appears and its antonym follows e.g.: *jafāf raṭb/wet dryness*, where the words *'jafāf/dryness*, and *wet/raṭb*, are lexicological items that introduce two contradictory poles that have clear dimensions.

This type of oxymoron does not distinguish between the noun *jafāf/ dryness* and the adjective *jāff/ dry* as both of them introduce the direct opposite to the word *raṭb*. Regarding the *indirect oxymoron*, the

<sup>1</sup> MaḡdiWahbapoints out that the Greek origin of the term Oxymoron means, "somethings that has no intended meaning", Wahba, 1974, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Wahba, 1974, p. 374

<sup>3</sup> Āṣī, Ya'qūb, 1987, v. 1, p. 122. Also: Ya'qūb, Barakeh, Shīkhānī, 1987, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>Faṭḥī, 2000, p. 22. Muḥammad al-Tūngī, mentions in his book *al-Mu'jam al-Mufaṣṣal fī al-'Adab*, that the purpose of external contradiction is to reach the real deep meaning by a rhetoric effect, in: *al-Tūngī*, 1993, vol. 1, p. 79.

two lexical items that consist of oxymoron are not antonymous in a direct way, as the second item is an adjective that is contradictory to the first item e.g. *jafāf mā'iyy* / watery dryness, where 'water' is not a direct opposite of *jafāf*/ *dryness*, but it is one of the basic components of *wetness*, which are the opposite of *jafāf*/ *dryness*.

Bernard Dupriez distinguishes between other types of Oxymora at the level of the word, the level of the phrase, and the level of points of view and thoughts.<sup>5</sup> Dupriez defines the Phrasal Oxymora as a discourse that consists of two consecutive emphatics that contradict each other but are not discordant. Dupriez defines the Oxymoron of Points of View as a contradiction of paradoxical opinions within the same character<sup>6</sup>. He confirms that the paradox remains latent, implicit but is not against logic, because the meaning of the words in reality remains non-discordant with each other, and when the Oxymoron is accompanied by contradiction in the meaning of the context or connection it means that there is integration between the contradictory thoughts.<sup>7</sup>

The Oxymoron is not limited to these types, as we find more varieties and other classifications. However, after I became aware of all the kinds of Oxymoron, and after reading most of what has been written about this lexical feature, in addition to going over the classical and modernist collections of poetry and the Oxymora that are mentioned in them, I found it appropriate to define other types of Oxymoron, which might be close to Shen's classification of direct and indirect oxymoron, as Oxymora that are not interested not only in whether the oxymoron is direct or indirect, but interested also in the rhetorical figures of speech or poetic techniques that accompany the contradiction, and constitute a significant part of the Arabic poetry in its different stages. Consequently, this study defines the types of oxymoron and treats them as two main types, but the second type is divided into four sub-types, as follows:

1. **Antithetical Oxymoron**, which was traditionally called the *Direct Oxymoron*. This study deals with it with specific reference to the figure of speech of antithesis (Ṭibāq) in its two types: Ṭibāq Salb and Ṭibāq 'Ijāb / Negative Ṭibāq and Positive Ṭibāq,<sup>8</sup> such as: *kathratu qilla/ abundance of littleness* ; *quwati ḍa'f/ my power is weakness*; *ghuyyab ḥudār/ absent present ones*; *al-qharīb al-nā'ī/ the close remote* and other oxymora that consist of two paradoxical words. We notice in the predominantly employed type is Ṭibāq al-'Ijāb, though we might find also employments of Ṭibāq al-Salb (antithesis) such as *ḥaḍer ghayr ḥādhher / present not present*, where the opposite of the word "*present*" is its negative form by the use of "*ghayr*" (*not/ non*).
2. **The Integrative Oxymoron**, which is quite close to the Indirect Oxymoron. This study calls it "Integrative" because it is basically established on integration between two artistic techniques; the first is the oxymoron, while the second is a comparison or a metaphor, the style of integration of senses or coincidental synchronous senses, or the style of symbolism. In view of this, we can define four types of the *Integrative Oxymora*, which are:
  - a. **Comparative Oxymoron**, which combines between the oxymoron on the one side and the comparison on the other, such as: *al-ṣamt oghniya, silence is a song*; or *al-samt qaṣīda / silence is a poem*, where the speaker compares 'silence' to its opposite. The song sends out sounds, and the poem is also based on words rather than silence.
  - b. **Metaphorical Oxymoron**, which is an oxymoron whose two words or the rest of the phrase are connected by a metaphorical relationship, e.g. *al-hawā' al-mayyit/ the dead air*; *al-ḍayf al-ḥaḡari/ the stone guest*, where 'death' is attributed to 'life', which is the source of life, and the quality of petrification and fixation is borrowed for the welcome guest, which makes the contradiction, whether direct or indirect, dominate the phrases between the borrowed one, the borrowed from, or the borrowed for.

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<sup>5</sup>Dupriez, 1991, pp. 311-313.

<sup>6</sup>Dupriez, 1991, p. 312.

<sup>7</sup>Dupriez, 1991, p. 313.

<sup>8</sup>Ṭibāq al-'Ijāb or antithesis is the combination between "something and its opposite", Matlūb, 1996, p. 522. It has two opposites. 'Āṣī, Ya'qūb, 1987, vol. 2, p. 787. Ṭibāq al-Salb occurs when "the speaker says two sentences or two words, one of which is positive and the other is negative, or the two are negative". Ibn 'Abi Iṣba', 1963, p. 114.

- c. **Synesthesiac Oxymoron.** The technique of synesthesia senses is "an expression that indicates the perception or describes a specific perception with a specific sense through the language of another sense such as: perception of one's voice or describing it as 'velvet' or 'warm' or 'heavy' or 'sweet'<sup>9</sup>. In this type of oxymoron, there is a mixture of between the senses, through keeping contradiction between the two sides of the oxymoron as in: *al- 'Iṭr al-Mu'tim/ the dark perfume*, which combines between the two senses of 'sight' and 'smell'. Perfume, which symbolizes refreshment and any beautiful thing, is given the trait of '*mu'tim/dark*,' which indicates darkening, ambiguity, enclosure. Paradox between the two fields is clear.
- d. **Symbolical Oxymoron**, which consists of two words, whose symbolism is contradictory, or the symbolism of one word is contradictory with the symbolism of the second one. For example, the phrase *baḥr fī ḡidār/ a sea in a wall* is a symbolical oxymoron as the sea is a symbol of expansion and openness, softness, motion, and life, the wall is a symbol of stability, fixation, and narrowness.

### 3. WHO IS MUHAMMAD AFIFI MATAR?

Muḥammad Afifi Maṭar is an Egyptian poet who was born in May, 1945, in a village called Ramlat al-Anjāb, which is located in al-Menofiya region, about an hour's drive from Cairo. He spent his childhood and youth in the village and received his education from its elementary and secondary school. He continued his academic studies at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Cairo and specialized in 'Philosophy'. He started writing poetry at an early age and soon became a popular poet, and in 1989, he received the Encouraging State Award. He also worked as a teacher of philosophy at Kafr al-Sheikh Secondary School in the Delta region. In the nineteen seventies of the twentieth century, he moved to Iraq where he worked as a reporter and journalist between the years 1977-1983.<sup>10</sup>

Muḥammad Afifi Maṭar is considered by many critics to be an independent poetic phenomenon in the process of Modern Arabic poetry. He started his rebellious writing that transcends the familiar in his early poems. In the seventies of the twentieth century, he made a significant achievement by publishing a magazine by the name *Sanābil* (Ears of Grain), which opened the door wide for a new modernist movement that introduced a whole generation of Egyptian poets. The rebellious and revolutionary flame in Maṭar intensified when he travelled to Iraq and stayed there for about ten years, where he wrote one of his most prominent collections of poetry called: *Anta Wāḥiduha wa Hiya 'A'dā'uka 'Intatharat/ You Are Her Only One and She Is Your Spreading Organs*. In this collection, the features of Maṭar's modernist experience was crystallized, which did not disconnect its relationship from the roots of heritage and the smell of the muddy land on which he was born and lived.

Maṭar's poems are characterized by their complex imagery and ambiguous language. Ferial Ghazzūl describes his poems by saying: "They are closer to us than ourselves, even if they are uncategorized. They utter what is in our deepest depths, but they remain indescribable. They draw us with the purity of their vision, confuse us with their radical form, occupy us emotionally, and torture us mentally; they raise us, humiliate us, call us and repel us at the same time, and within this coincidence do the challenges of the poem lie."<sup>11</sup>

Such a poem will inevitably be limited to the intellectual reading elite, because reading of Maṭar depends on a comprehensive encyclopedic education in philosophy, Sufism, heritage and folklore, as "the Maṭar's poem is an explosion of knowledge, and incomparable indicative branching that makes the specialized reader feel that he is no more than a youth and a beginner"<sup>12</sup>.

Matar has been often criticized for his ambiguity and employment of strange language, and described as "extremely fascinated by accumulating images and generating images from other images without basically having an emotional or intellectual line in the poem."<sup>13</sup> Ghazzūl described Maṭar's poetry as

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<sup>9</sup> al-Muhandes, Wahba, 1984, p. 138; Fathī, 2000, p. 69-70; al-Tūngī, 1993, vol. 1, p. 363.

<sup>10</sup> See: Farhūd, 1988, Vol. 2, p. 1271-1272.

<sup>11</sup> Ghazzūl, 1984, p. 176.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>13</sup> Abd al-Ḥamīd, 1986/87, p. 161.

"the top of ambiguity in the production of Arabic poetry,"<sup>14</sup>. However, she considered that ambiguity as a sign of the 'perpetual' rather than the 'transient' poems. Oddity of metaphors and unfamiliarity of poetic imagery "makes us feel the virginity of language, as if we were Adam learning the 'names' of things. They surprise us, stop us, and redirect us. Shaker Abd al-Hamid agrees with Ghazzūl's arguments about Maṭar's imagery by saying that though they are complex images, "they are solvable ones; his poetic world is deep but it is fathomable, despite the difficulties that are represented in the structure of his images, despite the [difficulty of] heritage vocabulary, and the [unfamiliarity of] various metaphorical forms."<sup>15</sup> In his reading of Maṭar's collection of poems *You Are Her Only One and She Is Your Spreading Organs*, Shaker Abd al-Hamid reaches the conclusion that the primary chemical materials and their interactions integrate in the structure of Maṭar's poetry. By 'chemistry' in poetry, Abd al-Hamid means the process of transformation of feelings and thoughts through certain stages, which are the stages of creativity and taste. Poetry transfers its creator and its receiver from one state into another that is supposed to be better.<sup>16</sup>

Transformation takes place by means of 'imagination', the elixir of poetry, which is that human ability to combine all contradictions, and to turn the 'absent' into 'present' and the 'present' into 'absent', and the ability to generate imagery and explode the volcanos of metaphor.<sup>17</sup> Transmission can also take place through symbols, which is the means of communication between the world and its followers, and poetry should inevitably 'symbolize' and not 'declare'.<sup>18</sup> Abd al-Hamid also confirms that the raw materials of chemistry and the operations of melting and interaction have become more sensitive and more complicated in Maṭar's collection of *You Are Her Only One and She Is Your Spreading Organs*. The poetic images have become more complicated, the secret has become more ambiguous, and the grinding, smashing and melting of images have become more violent, more integrative and more structural".<sup>19</sup> He confirms that the process of writing a poem by Maṭar constitutes a special action among his other actions in life, if not the most fertile and deepest one".<sup>20</sup>

#### 4. OXYMORON AND ITS TYPES IN THE POETRY OF MUHAMMAD AFIFI MATAR

The reader of Muḥammad Afifi Maṭar's poetry immediately feels that he is facing expressions that are based on contradictions or paradoxes, and notices that he prominently resorts to the use of Oxymoron in its various types in his poetry, mainly the "Integrative Type". This part of the study illustrates each kind with examples from Matter's poetry in order to show the degree of their dominance on the poetic text, and to confirm that the Oxymora constitute a main key that leads to decoding the main idea or message of the poem.

1. **Antithetical Oxymoron:** In the poem 'Ughniyāt min Zaman al-Sanābil al-Muḥtariqa/ Songs from the Time of the Burnt Wheat-Spikes, Muḥammad Afifi Maṭar says:

The night of labor does not come... but I feel it revolve

Lighted-extinguished in the eye<sup>21</sup>.

وليلة المخاض لا تجيء.. غير أنني أحسها تدور  
مسرجة مطفأة في العين

<sup>14</sup>Ghazzūl , 1984, p.175.

<sup>15</sup> Abd al-Hamid, 1986/87, p. 161

<sup>16</sup> Abd al-Hamid connects between the classical idea of 'chemistry' and 'chemistry in poetry'. Chemistry, in its essence, is a process of melting the natural elements, metals and materials, and turning them, through specific stages in which the metal passes in order to reach the desired purpose. The classical idea about 'chemistry' is based on converting cheap metals into precious metals, especially into 'gold' and 'silver' by the use of other metals. That is done by the use of a third material that is called "elixir" or "stone of philosophers." See: 'Abd al-Hamid, 1986/87, p. 174.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>21</sup>Maṭar , 1978, p. 65.

The paradox appears clearly between the two words *lighted* and *extinguished*, which are antonyms. Through this phrase, Maṭar expresses a pessimistic look. He imagines the *night of labor* that he waits for, the night of the birth of his son, Mansour, to be the night of the end of pain and suffering. It is lighted and he feels its approach, but it does not keep this hope of salvation for him, as it dims and is extinguished again, and he no more sees it. He realizes that it is extremely far away from him. In its circulation and revolution, its alternation between *lighting* and *extinguishing* arouses hope in him once and despair once, without letting him settle down on any state.

2. **Integrative Oxymoron.** This type is more present in Maṭar's poetry and can be divided into two sub-types:

a. **Comparative Integrative Oxymoron.** Here is an illustration from Maṭar's poem 'Ughniyat al-Mughannī al-Akhras/ the Songs of the Dumb Singer.

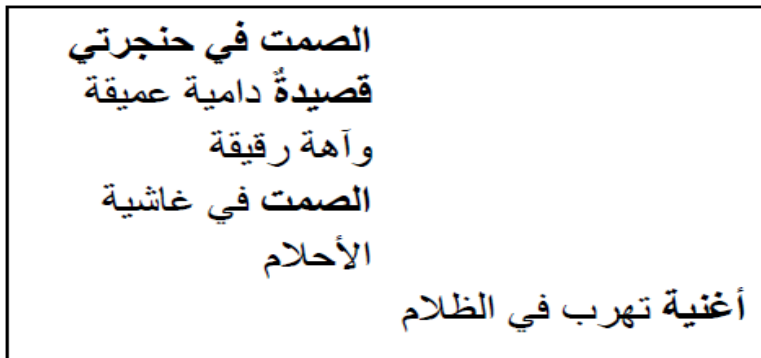
The title itself is an oxymoron. The poem says:

Silence in my throat is a deep bleeding poem

And a soft sigh,

Silence in the swoon of dreams

Is a song that escapes during the night.<sup>22</sup>



The poet describes the singer who sends out his voice to sing as 'dumb' and cannot speak. This is a comparative oxymoron in which the trait of *speaking* is negated and the singer is given the trait of being *dumb*, as if the phrase should be *the singer as a dumb person*. This singer is the speaker in the passage, and he considers *silence* to be a *poem*, a *sigh* and a *song* considering *silence* to be the best way that expresses serious issues and personal emotions. The two phrases *silence is a poem* and *silence is a song* go under the category of Comparative Oxymoron. *Silence* is compared to a *poem* in all its linguistic, formal, and content characteristics. It is also compared to a *song*, as if the speaker wanted to emphasize that *silence* is deeper than *speech*, more expressive and more suggestive. It is also the best means that describes sadness, pains, and sighs, and the best singer and pacifier to human beings.

b. **Metaphorical Integrative Oxymoron**

This type of oxymoron is the most common one in modern poetry and it is clear in Muḥammad Afifi Maṭar's poetry. He employs it in a single poem in a conspicuous meaningful way, which is connected to the general meaning. Here is an interesting example:

My mother gave birth to me on the bed of hunger

I drank the flowing rust from the nail of the world

And danced at the rhythm of death

And ate the stony loaves

A spear penetrated my chest at the weddings of silence<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 1

أمي ولدتني فوق سرير الجوع  
فشربت الصداً السائل من مسمار  
العالم  
ورقصت على إيقاع الموت  
وأكلت الأرغفة الحجرية  
فاخترقتْ صدري الحربة في أعراس الصمت

Here, *death* has a *rhythm*, *silence* has a *wedding* and he describes the *loaf of bread*, can be eaten, as *stony*. All this confirms the poet's reliance on oxymoron as a linguistic poetic technique, and he employs it in an intensive way in the poem, and even in the same passage/stanza. *Death* is the absolute silence, stagnation and eternal sleep, where there is no beating of hearts, no life and no rhythm, but Muḥammad Afifi Maṭar makes it lively with a rhythm, and not just any rhythm – it is a rhythm that people can dance according to. In other words, it is a singer who calls to integration and dancing. In addition to that, silence turns into a wedding. It no more means silence and muteness, but expresses an atmosphere of joy, singing, dancing and other activities that create an atmosphere of wedding.

Thus, we can argue that these two phrases of *rhythm of death* and *weddings of silence*, in which Maṭar integrates life and death, silence and motion, sadness and joy and other contradictions are two metaphorical oxymora as he compares *death* to a *song* or a rhythmic tone. Besides, he compares *silence* to a *celebration* at a certain wedding, or it is the wedding itself with the rites that it includes. In addition to that, Maṭar employs a third oxymoron, which is the *stony loaves*, where the *stone* is a symbol of *stagnation*, solidity and death, while the *loaf* is a symbol of *living* and it is not made of stone or rigid things, but from plants in order to give its eater health and life. There is no doubt that since Maṭar introduces these expressions in a consecutive way, he is aware of this type of integration of contradictions, and he aims at targets beyond mere innovation in the linguistic poetic coinages. Rhythm of Death and Stony Loaves and Weddings of Silence participate to introduce the dialectic of life and death, and to express those circumstances in which the first person speaker (I) is born in the poem. The general atmosphere in that place in which the first person (I) is born is summarized in hunger, death and silence. However, the poet reduces the effect of the pressure of this description, and turns death into a song with a rhythm, and silence into a wedding. Besides, he does not ignore the existence of the basic needs of life and growth, i.e. bread. He mentions it but he makes it stony. Thus, he lends some special beauty, surprises the reader and dazzles him by his extraordinary structures.

In the third passage (stanza) of the poem, he says:

The unknown dead person in the evening streets

Comes every day from my village

He leaves his stretched skin on the asphalt

And his vest on the stripes of the guards<sup>24</sup>.

الميت المجهول في شوارع  
المساء  
من قرיתי يجيء كل يوم  
يترك جلده الممتد في الإسفلت،  
والصدار في أشرطة الحراس

<sup>24</sup>. Ibid., p. 8

The poet returns to integration between life and death, as he makes the dead man able to come from the village. This is a metaphorical oxymoron also, in which he compares the dead person to a human being who can go and come and make visit too. Here, he seems to come to the village to give her something of himself, his skin and his vest and then to leave. The relationship between him and this city seems to be unbreakable even after death.

In his poem, 'Aḥzān al-Shabaḥ al-'Awwal/ Sorrows of the First Ghost, Maṭar says:

**If the cruel black sun** uprooted you  
From the fields of your childhood and threw you  
Into the carriages of exile and the desert,  
And took off the garment of first warmth  
And dressed the parchments of snowy colors and darkness,  
You would know how I am dying<sup>25</sup>

لو أن الشمس القاسية السوداء  
قلعتكم من غيطان طفولتكم ورمتمكم  
في عربات الغربة والصحراء  
فخلعتم ثوب الدفء الأول  
ولبستم رقع الألوان الثلجية والديجور  
لعرفتم كيف أموت

Describing the sun as *black* makes the phrase go under the category of metaphorical oxymoron due to the clear contradiction in comparing the *sun* to a deeply *black* or dark night. Through this expression, the poet hints at the disadvantages of life, to the transformation of conditions from comfort, childhood and innocence into troubles, distress, and running after one's bread that can lead to death. The addressee in the poem did not live such life. The cruel *black sun* did not move them from childhood into exile and desert, and they did not taste the bitterness of hardships and darkness. Therefore, they do not realize what the speaker's suffering and the hardships he has undergone is like. Besides, they do not realize the closeness of death to him, and his feeling that it accompanies him.

#### **a. Symbolical Integrative Oxymoron**

We find some examples that illustrate this type of oxymoron in Maṭar poems and here is an example:

In the **stony fields**

The night planted gypsy roots  
And legends of Bedouin songs

في الحقول الحجرية  
غرس الليل جذورًا غجرية  
وأساطير غناء بدوية

The expression *stony fields* goes under the category of Symbolical Oxymoron, as the fields symbolize life, blossoming and giving, while the stones symbolize solidity, hardness, rigidity, death and non-

<sup>25</sup>. Ibid., p. 91

giving. By qualifying the fields as *stony*, Maṭar cancels the trait of blossoming, giving and life, and makes them a place where the cities of silence and fires were planted.

#### b. Synesthesiac Oxymoron

This type of synesthesia oxymoron is the least common one. Here is an illustrative sample from Maṭar's poem **Mamlakat al-Ya's/ Kingdom of Despair**.

In the land of the bare shivering heart

I walk trembling through the fields of blood

The **dim perfume** descends, and suffocates me.<sup>26</sup>

في أرض القلب المرتعش  
الغريان  
أمشي مرتعدًا عبر حقول  
الدم  
فيحطُّ عليّ ويخنقني العطر المعتم

The phrase *dim perfume* illustrates the type of Synesthesiac Oxymoron. *Perfume* is a superordinate for all types of scents.<sup>27</sup> It symbolizes intoxication, openness, and can be conceived of by the smell sense. The trait that is given to it *dim* implies *darkness*, ambiguity, and opaqueness, which are conceived of by the senses of *sight*. As we see, the paradox is clear between the two sides of the oxymoron.

The employment of this type of oxymoron is repeated in other poems by Maṭar. Here is one of them in the second stanza of his poem **Washm 'ala Kharā'iṭ al-Jasad. Al-Washm al-Thālith/ Tadoo on the Maps of the Body- The Third Tadoo**.

Here are the armies of the sultans, lying motionless in the colored silence

(Don't cross the river, my child, the doe of my fear

And my intensified dream,

Your time will come... my time will come, and we will go through

The body of dance, and penetrate the **stony cry**).<sup>28</sup>

هذي جيوشُ السلاطين هامةٌ في السكون الملون  
( لا تعبري النهر يا طفلي يا غزالة رعي  
وحلمي المكثف..  
يأتي زمانك.. يأتي زمني.. فنعبر في  
جسد الرقص، نخترق الصرخة الحجرية.)

Here, the *stony cry* represents an obstacle that the speaker tries to cross and overcome.

In another poem, Maṭar uses a more unusual phrase:

There is nothing organized over the drum of the public stretched land

Except the steps of the Daraki, and the sound of the heavy shoe upon the **stone of hearing**.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Mandhūr, 1988, vol. 9, p. 266.

<sup>28</sup> Maṭar, 1994, p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 134.



ليس منتظمًا فوق طبل البراح المشاع سوى  
خطوة التّركي وصوت الحذاء الثقيل على حجر السمع

This integration between the two words *stone* and *hearing* has clear contradiction. The *stone* does not hear, and it is not influenced by any voice, while the sense of *sight* catches voices and is affected by them. Here, it is possible to consider this addition an **oxymoron of synesthesia**, where the *stone* is a visible and a tactile object, while *hearing* is a different sense. This phrase depicts the degree of heaviness of the sound of the steps of the Turkish gendarme (*Daraki*), and the people's hatred to him, and if the sense of *hearing* is inactive, if it is a stone, it will feel the heaviness of this sound and be drawn to it. This phrase is repeated in the poem, as the speaker says at the end of the poem:

(One step or two

And from between their faces, a flame and smoke,

And the cigarettes smoke, like an illuminated mattress,

Returned to the resting place of the heavy shoe

On the **stone of hearing**)<sup>30</sup>.

(خطوة.. خطوتان..  
ومن بين وجهيهما شعلة  
ودخان  
السجائر كالفرشة  
المستضاء،  
عاد إلى مستراح الحذاء  
الثقيل على  
حجر السمع.)

Thus, he makes the sound of the shoe steps a *weight* that cannot be ignored, to which he returns at any time, and even the cigarette smoke returns to its resting place.

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, we suggest that the Oxymoron is an artistic technique that is based on external paradox that stems from real life and a foggy grey existence. It can be repelling on the surface, but deeply expresses the human self and human society, its reality and the whole world.

Treatment of the oxymoron requires a special state of awareness, persistence and working of the intellect. The ordinary unpracticed reader cannot deal with oxymoronic phrases and deduct their indications. Besides, the reader of traditional poetry, whose role was exclusive to listening or reading and clarifying difficult expressions, is no longer apt for the modernist method in writing, which requires a reader-writer, a reader-poet, and a reader-critic who is familiar with the poetic styles in their classical and modern forms, and a well-educated reader who has a store of an abundant legendary heritage and cultural legacy.

<sup>30</sup>. Ibid., 1994, p. 135.

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