

## Cognitive Analysis of Madness in Qays ibn al-Moullawwāh's Poem "When Will This Heart Find Rest"

### *Analisis Kognitif terhadap Kegilaan dalam Puisi Qays ibn al-Mulawwah "When Will This Heart Find Rest"*

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#### Abstract

This study analyzes the poetry of Qays ibn al-Mulawwāh to reconsider the notion of madness traditionally attributed to him. Rather than a psychological disorder or a reflection of biographical narratives, madness is shown to function as a cognitive-emotional structure produced through poetic language. Drawing on conceptual metaphor theory, force dynamics, and cognitive grammar, the study demonstrates how imagery, grammatical organization, and embodied patterns construct experiences of longing, alienation, and emotional turbulence, revealing madness as a linguistically structured mode of emotional and cognitive experience in early Arabic poetry.

#### Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis puisi Qays ibn al-Mulawwāh untuk meninjau kembali konsep kegilaan yang secara tradisional dilekatkan padanya. Alih-alih dipandang sebagai gangguan psikologis atau refleksi narasi biografis, kegilaan ditunjukkan berfungsi sebagai struktur kognitif-emosional yang dihasilkan melalui bahasa puitis. Dengan menggunakan teori metafora konseptual, dinamika kekuatan (*force dynamics*), dan tata bahasa kognitif, penelitian ini mendemonstrasikan bagaimana pencitraan, organisasi gramatikal, dan pola yang diwujudkan (*embodied patterns*) mengonstruksi pengalaman kerinduan, keterasingan, dan gejolak emosional. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa kegilaan merupakan moda pengalaman emosional dan kognitif yang terstruktur secara linguistik dalam puisi Arab klasik.

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## A. Introduction

This article conducts a comprehensive cognitive and linguistic analysis of madness in the poetry of Qays ibn al-Mulawwah, focusing on the linguistic elements that shape the emotional and poetic intensity of his work. By examining how Qays's language functions as a medium for emotional expression, the study explores the theme of madness at the center of his tragic love for Layla. Through lexical choices, grammatical structures, and phonological patterns, the poetry generates the depth and resonance characteristic of the Udhri poetic tradition. Madness in Qays's poetry emerges not as a fixed psychological condition but as a linguistic and cognitive process, a way of structuring experience, negotiating social pressures, and transforming longing into poetic architecture.

Although Qays's poetry has been studied from literary and historical perspectives, this research situates linguistic analysis at its core. Rather than interpreting the poems primarily through symbolism or biography, the study applies cognitive linguistics to investigate how meaning is structured, how emotion is encoded, and how madness becomes perceptible through recurring grammatical and semantic patterns (Langacker, 2008; Goldberg, 1995). Each linguistic unit, from single words to extended stanzas, contributes to shaping the poem's emotional force, revealing how layers of intensity and poetic texture emerge (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Widhiarto et al., 2024)

Historical accounts preserved in al-Aghānī provide vivid depictions of Qays's madness, portraying him wandering through the desert, eating alongside wild animals, losing his sense of time and place, and acting beyond ordinary human behavior (Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, 2010). In these narratives, madness appears as dispersal, dissolution, and a transformation into a vast, open space where all possibilities exist. While these sources offer culturally influential readings of Qays's condition, they represent only an external interpretive layer. The poetry itself constructs a distinct, internally generated architecture of madness, arising from rhythm, sound, emotional pressure, and metaphor. In this sense, poetry becomes a flexible symbolic space, and madness emerges as a disturbance of perception, judgment, and emotional coherence rather than as mere biographical fact.

These distinctions make a close reading of the poems essential. If the historical accounts offer an external perspective, the poetry provides an internal, experiential one, raising crucial questions about the linguistic markers that signal a poetic construction of madness and the cognitive patterns that give this madness its structure within the poetic system (Talmy, 1988; Langacker, 2008). By focusing on the poetic text, itself, the study uncovers the emotional, cognitive, and linguistic architecture through which Qays reimagines and reconstructs his experience.

To explore these questions systematically, it is necessary to adopt a theoretical framework that connects language, cognition, and emotion. Grounding the analysis in cognitive grammar (Goldberg, 1995; Langacker, 2008; Talmy, 1983, 1988), conceptual metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999), force dynamics (Talmy, 1983, 1988, 2000; Ijam et al., 2019), and embodied emotion (Damasio, 1994) provides a structured approach to uncover the intricate ways in which linguistic form, imagery, and sound collectively shape the perception and experience of madness.

Langacker and Goldberg explain how semantic and syntactic schemas, particularly those shaping verbs, prepositions, and predicative structures, arise from repeated linguistic patterns and recurring experiential scenes. These familiar scenes consolidate into structural patterns that speakers internalize, demonstrating how complex cognitive and emotional experiences are encoded through grammar. Conceptual metaphor theory demonstrates how abstract emotional states are structured through systematic metaphorical mappings grounded in bodily experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Widuri et al., 2024) This perspective is essential for understanding how Qays structures madness as an internally generated experiential world rather than as an inherited narrative label. Force dynamics further reveals how language encodes pressure, resistance, blockage, and release, mirroring emotional conflict. Talmy suggests that language schematizes internal tensions and embodied emotional forces into conceptual patterns, which is

central to understanding how Qays constructs experiences of constraint, longing, and emotional rupture. Embodied emotion theory emphasizes that these processes are rooted in the interplay of mind and body, highlighting the multisensory and affective dimensions of poetic expression.

The primary hypothesis of this study proposes that madness in the poetry of Qays ibn al-Mulawwāḥ is not a psychological condition recoverable from the *akhbār* but a cognitive and emotional structure produced by the poet's own language. While the *akhbār* preserved in al-Aghānī offer a culturally influential reading of his madness, framed through images of wandering, social rupture, and dissolution into the desert, this narrative layer represents only an external interpretation. The poetry itself constructs a different, internally generated architecture of madness, emerging from the interplay of grammar, metaphor, force dynamics, and embodied emotional experience. At the core of this hypothesis is the claim that Qays's language does not describe madness; it creates it. His poems transform social constraint, frustrated desire, and emotional pressure into a linguistic system in which madness becomes a way of perceiving, structuring, and expressing reality. Through recurring metaphors, shifts in spatial orientation, tension in grammatical choices, and force-dynamic patterns of pressure and resistance, the poetry reveals madness as a cognitive process, a reorganization of experience driven by the poet's emotional world.

Thus, the meaning of madness in Qays's poetry is fundamentally distinct from that assigned by narrative tradition. The *akhbār* provide an external frame, but the poetry generates an internal logic: a symbolic and conceptual space where longing becomes an engine of thought, social oppression turns into inner pressure, and the yearning for Layla evolves into a deeper yearning for freedom. Taken together, these elements suggest that madness in Qays's poetry is best understood as a linguistic, cognitive, and embodied construction that reflects the poet's attempt to reorganize a constrained emotional reality through the resources of poetic imagination.

This study aims to rethink the poetry of Qays ibn al-Mulawwāḥ by moving beyond the familiar narrative of the Majnun Layla legend. The poem chosen as a case study serves as a paradigmatic model for a broader corpus of works that share similar imaginative and metaphorical structures. Its significance lies in its ability to condense complex emotional, cognitive, and social meanings within a tightly structured linguistic framework, making it an ideal lens through which to explore the interplay of language, emotion, and thought.

Rather than treating Qays's verses as mere reflections of story or cultural symbolism, the research focuses on how his language itself actively constructs emotional meaning. It seeks to uncover the linguistic and cognitive mechanisms that shape his articulation of longing, fragmentation, and the experience traditionally described as madness. The study examines how grammar, metaphor, sound, and embodied expression work together to externalize the poet's inner world, transforming personal emotion into art.

At the same time, the research explores how social and cultural pressures are embedded in Qays's linguistic choices, showing how societal norms, personal desire, and emotional intensity influence the expression of longing. It traces the gradual transformation of attachment to Layla into a broader existential yearning, revealing how the poetry negotiates the tension between individual emotion and the wider social context. By centering on this poem, the study demonstrates how a single text can model recurring patterns across Qays's oeuvre, offering insight into the ways imagination, language, and cognition converge to produce meaning. Ultimately, this research shows how poetic language functions as a medium for lived emotional and cognitive experience, illuminating the intricate interplay between thought, feeling, and literary expression.

In conclusion, this integrated introduction, theoretical framework, hypotheses, and research objectives provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding the poetry of Qays ibn al-Mulawwāḥ. Linguistic structures are not passive containers of meaning but active forces shaping perception, emotion, and poetic experience. By uniting cognitive grammar, conceptual metaphor, force dynamics, and embodied emotion within a unified analytical perspective, the study demonstrates how the complex interplay of language, cognition, and emotion produces the poetic construction of madness and emotional intensity in classical Arabic literature.

## B. Method

This study adopts a qualitative cognitive-linguistic methodology to examine how madness is constructed through language in the poetry of Qays ibn al-Mulawwah. The analysis is grounded primarily in cognitive grammar, which provides systematic tools for examining how grammatical structures encode conceptualization, perspective, and emotional experience (Langacker, 2008; Goldberg, 1995). Cognitive grammar enables the investigation of how linguistic forms function as schemas that organize the poet's conceptual and emotional world, revealing the ways in which Qays conveys internal states and social pressures through grammatical choices.

This framework is complemented by conceptual metaphor theory and force dynamics, which allow for the systematic analysis of metaphorical patterns, embodied schemas, and relational configurations underlying poetic expression (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Talmy, 1988). Conceptual metaphor theory facilitates the identification of recurring mappings in which abstract emotional states are projected onto concrete physical, spatial, or force-dynamic domains, demonstrating how Qays transforms intangible psychological and social experiences into perceptible poetic structures. Force dynamics provides a model for understanding how language encodes interactions between competing forces, including internal emotional pressures and external social constraints, reflecting the oscillatory and dynamic nature of the poet's emotional and cognitive states. Embodied emotion theory further grounds the analysis by highlighting how cognitive and somatic experiences converge in poetic expression (Damasio, 1994).

The corpus consists of a selected poem by Qays ibn al-Mulawwah taken from *al-Diwan*, edited by Abdul Sattar Ahmed Farrag (2010). This poem is treated as a representative case study that reflects recurrent linguistic, metaphorical, and phonological patterns across the poet's oeuvre. Focusing on a single poem allows for an in-depth qualitative analysis while maintaining relevance to the broader Udhri poetic tradition. The selected poem demonstrates the density of cognitive, emotional, and metaphorical mechanisms, making it suitable for a detailed study of the linguistic construction of madness.

The analytical procedure is conducted in multiple, integrated stages. First, the poem is examined at the grammatical level, focusing on predicative structures, nominal and adjectival constructions, modality, and prepositional schemas to identify patterns of agency, constraint, and relational meaning. These features are analyzed to determine how argument structure, semantic roles, and syntactic configurations encode oscillatory mental and emotional states, demonstrating how Qays structures the internal logic of his poetic mind.

Second, metaphorical expressions are analyzed to identify the conceptual metaphors and embodied schemas employed, particularly those associated with containment, motion, pressure, contraction, and expansion. This stage examines how abstract emotional experiences are rendered concrete through metaphor, including the iconic bird-in-a-child's-hand schema, which models constraint, vulnerability, and societal influence on personal emotion. The analysis explores both isolated metaphors and their integration into complex metaphorical networks that sustain the cognitive architecture of madness across the poem.

Third, force-dynamic configurations are identified to examine the interactions between internal emotional forces and external societal constraints. This stage investigates how linguistic structures encode patterns of resistance, blockage, release, and oscillation, providing a cognitive map of how emotional tension and social limitation are rendered experientially within the text. Force-dynamic analysis also highlights how grammatical and semantic structures interact to reinforce the embodied sense of contraction, expansion, and oscillatory pressure in the poet's language.

Phonological features are also systematically analyzed, including rhythm, consonance, assonance, and sound repetition, as these elements contribute to emotional intensity and perceptual impact. These features are interpreted as integral to the embodied experience of madness, rather



than as purely aesthetic devices, and demonstrate how prosody, alliteration, and internal rhyme amplify the cognitive and affective dynamics of the poem (Tsur, 2008, 2010).

Throughout the analysis, linguistic patterns are interpreted in relation to broader cognitive, embodied, and affective processes, without reliance on biographical explanation or historical narrative. This approach foregrounds the poetry as an autonomous system in which emotional experience, cognitive structure, and linguistic form interact to construct the lived reality of madness. By integrating cognitive grammar, conceptual metaphor, force dynamics, and embodied emotion theory, the methodology provides a unified framework for examining how Qays transforms social constraint, emotional turbulence, and longing into a structured cognitive and poetic experience (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Fatkhullah et al., 2025).

Ultimately, this methodology allows for a systematic, rigorous, and theoretically informed investigation of the ways in which language actively generates emotional and cognitive meaning. Madness in Qays ibn al-Mulawwah's poetry emerges as a dynamic, linguistic, and embodied phenomenon, enacted through the interplay of grammar, metaphor, phonology, and cognitive schemas. This approach demonstrates that poetic language is not merely a vehicle for narrative content but a primary medium through which emotional experience, social tension, and cognitive perception are realized and shared with the reader (Langacker, 1987, 2008; Goldberg, 1995; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Talmy, 1988; Damasio, 1994; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

### C. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of Qays ibn al-Mulawwah's poetry demonstrates that madness emerges as a complex cognitive and emotional construct, systematically generated through the poet's linguistic choices. The examination of predicative constructions, nominal compounds, prepositional phrases, and phonological patterns reveals that these linguistic structures are tightly interwoven with the poet's expressive intentions. The interplay between grammar, metaphor, and embodied schemas produces an oscillating emotional state characterized by tension, constraint, and the alternation between contraction and expansion.

The poem under analysis is as follows:

When will this tormented heart find respite from you?  
Even death's arrow feels gentler than your touch.  
Longing, distance, trembling and despair,  
You neither draw me near, nor allow me to approach.

Like a bird imprisoned in a child's grasp,  
Tasting the edge of death as the child plays,  
Neither mindful of tenderness nor aware of harm,  
While the bird, wingless, cannot escape its fate.

A thousand paths lie open before me,  
Each one familiar, yet none within my reach.  
For without a heart, where can I go?  
Adrift in sorrow, bound by love's cruel tether.

(Qays ibn al-Moullawwah, *Al-Diwan*, edited by Abdul Sattar Ahmed Farrag, Publisher Egypt Library, 2010, p. 38)

Analysis of the poem shows that metaphorical patterns, such as the containment and squeezing schemas, illustrate how social pressure and internal desire are transformed into poetic forces. For instance, the bird trapped in a child's grasp metaphorically represents the lover's self,

oppressed and constrained by societal norms. The oscillation between contraction and expansion, as seen in lines such as “Neither mindful of tenderness nor aware of harm,” demonstrates how emotional tension is linguistically encoded and embodied.

Sound patterns, including consonance and assonance, amplify the perceptual intensity of the poem. In the opening line, the repeated harsh consonants in “Longing, distance, trembling and despair” create a tactile sense of pressure and shock, reflecting the internal disorientation and torment of the lover. This rhythmic and sonic tension interacts with conceptual metaphors to construct an experiential perception of madness, rather than merely describing it.

The poem also highlights the dynamic interplay between internal and external forces. The internal oscillations of desire, longing, and emotional turmoil interact with the external constraints of society, illustrating the force-dynamic relationships central to Qays’s emotional experience. The multidirectional pressure in the squeezing metaphor reflects both the intensity of emotional suffering and the impossibility of escape from social expectation.

Moreover, the interplay of contraction and expansion schemas captures the oscillatory nature of Qays’s mental state. The poet’s mind, metaphorically compressed by external pressures, experiences alternating waves of hope and despair, mirroring embodied physical oscillations. Madness, in this context, emerges as a process mediated through language, rhythm, metaphor, and cognitive schemas.

Ultimately, this analysis confirms that Qays ibn al-Mulawwah’s poetry constructs a unique internal architecture of madness. While historical narratives depict wandering and social rupture, the poem presents a cognitive-emotional system where linguistic choices, embodied metaphors, and sound patterns generate an internally coherent, intensely felt experience of love, longing, and constraint. Madness is thus revealed as an emergent property of linguistic, cognitive, and emotional interaction, highlighting the intricate ways poetry mediates the experience of extreme emotional states.

## 1. Structure of the Poem

Qays ibn al-Mulawwah’s verse articulates the turmoil of the soul, entwined with both time and the earthly landscape, symbolizing confusion, yearning, and desire. Vivid imagery fragments the poet’s consciousness, creating a pervasive sense of abandonment, introspection, and heightened vulnerability. The tension between constriction and suffocation captures the struggle between desire and reality, revealing a mind constrained by rationality, societal norms, and unattainable aspirations. Throughout the work, the poet oscillates between hope for fulfillment and the affliction of the soul, depicting a complex interplay of psychological and spiritual turmoil that transcends narrative description. The verse enacts the experience of inner conflict, allowing readers to perceive the oscillations of emotion as tangible cognitive and embodied phenomena.

Three embodied perspectives illuminate the structure of this poetic architecture. Time functions as an ever-present shadow. The opening and closing lines convey the relentless passage of hours, days, and years, intertwined with the enduring pain of abandoned spaces. Time in the poem is not merely chronological but deeply experiential, shaping the poet’s identity, sense of belonging, and perception of personal loss. Each temporal reference exerts subtle psychological pressure, reinforcing the continuity of longing and the impossibility of emotional closure.

Society’s intrusion is portrayed through the bird metaphor and sensory depictions of rejection, dramatizing the body’s silent rebellion against social judgment. External forces constrain freedom, regulate desire, and impose existential pressure on the self. Society emerges as an omnipresent antagonist, shaping the contours of thought, emotion, and physical expression. Despite these limitations, the poet’s voice seeks liberation through imaginative and metaphorical articulation, highlighting the tension between internal drives and external restrictions.

Internal struggle pulses continuously through the text, as the soul bears an unnamed, persistent illness. This conflict reflects the oscillation between hope and despair, desire and restraint, fragmentation and the search for emotional wholeness. Cognitive, emotional, and embodied

experiences intersect, and imagery of compression, expansion, and disruption mirrors the poet's inner turbulence, giving perceptible form to otherwise abstract experiences of longing and psychological disquiet.

Together, these perspectives form a layered portrayal of madness, longing, and the poet's anguished quest for resolution. Emotional intensity, social constraint, temporal pressure, and internal conflict converge, transforming personal suffering into a structured, immersive, and resonant poetic experience. In this cognitive-emotional landscape, madness and longing become perceptible, tangible, and profoundly human.

Building on the overall structural and cognitive analysis of the poem, the following sections examine specific mechanisms through which Qays ibn al-Mulawwah constructs the experience of madness and emotional intensity. Each subsection focuses on a recurring pattern or schema that shapes the cognitive-emotional architecture of the poetry. The squeezing schema illustrates how external pressures and internal desire interact to produce embodied tension. The oscillatory patterns of contraction and expansion reveal the poet's fluctuating mental and physical states. The metaphor of the dismembered body and distorted imagery highlights the fragmentation of perception and embodiment, while the shock and weaving structures demonstrate how abrupt linguistic, phonological, and syntactic shifts generate immediate cognitive and emotional effects. Together, these analyses show how linguistic, metaphorical, and embodied devices converge to create a coherent, immersive experience of longing, constraint, and madness in Qays's verse.

## **2. Squeezing Schema in Qays ibn al-Mulawwah's Poetry**

To understand how Qays constructs madness, it is essential to examine the interplay between conceptual metaphors, force-motion schemas, and embodied cognition in his poetry. Harmful mental states are frequently externalized through metaphorical forces that reflect the pressures of societal norms and arbitrary expectations. These pressures are multidirectional, producing an oscillatory tension within the poet's psyche. Through squeezing and containment metaphors, abstract emotional conflict becomes tangible, bodily, and perceptible, allowing readers to engage with the poet's inner turbulence on both cognitive and somatic levels.

The metaphor of the bird trapped in a child's grasp exemplifies this dynamic. The bird represents the fragile, yearning individual self or lover, while the child embodies the irrational and unpredictable forces of society. The child's pressure is not malicious but unintentional, mirroring societal constraints that provoke suffering without conscious cruelty. The multidirectional nature of the squeezing metaphor amplifies the containment schema: the object, whether the bird or the poet, is compressed, while the container, whether society, circumstance, or mental space, may simultaneously shift or stretch, creating tension that is both psychological and corporeal.

Beyond simple containment, the squeezing metaphor highlights the interaction between internal and external forces. The poet's psyche is depicted as elastic yet vulnerable, oscillating between contraction and expansion in response to pressure. This oscillation reflects not only suffering but also creative engagement: it is through these pressures that the poet produces poetic form and conceptual structure, rendering madness both performative and intelligible.

The schema further connects to spatial and temporal cognition. In Qays's poetry, the shifting boundaries of the desert metaphorically mirror the oscillatory forces within the self. As physical space contracts or expands, so do emotional and cognitive limits, suggesting that external landscapes encode inner experience, transforming the desert into a cognitive map of emotional extremity.

The squeezing schema also reveals subtle dimensions of agency and resistance. The bird's futile flapping and the oscillation between compression and attempted escape reflect the poet's negotiation with societal norms. Madness emerges as a structured, embodied state, in which the individual is neither fully constrained nor entirely free—a dynamic tension between reason and desire. The poet's language enacts this oscillation, embedding the forces of compression,

containment, and fleeting release within syntax, rhythm, and sound patterns, so that each line enacts the mental and bodily experience it describes.

This approach can be enriched by integrating insights from neurocognitive and ethical perspectives. The oscillation between contraction and expansion parallels physiological responses to stress, such as somatic tension and affective fluctuation, suggesting that Qays encodes bodily experience into poetic imagery. Simultaneously, the poet's refusal to fully submit to social norms demonstrates ethical cognition, in which resistance generates oscillatory suffering experienced both mentally and physically. The squeezing force is also temporally layered: it encompasses past traumas, present constraints, and anticipatory longing, creating a multi-dimensional experience of emotional pressure and madness.

Through these conceptual, embodied, and temporal dimensions, Qays transforms emotional chaos into structured poetic architecture, making madness a cognitive and bodily reality. His metaphors do not merely describe inner turmoil; they perform it, inviting readers to inhabit the oscillatory space of longing, constraint, and fleeting liberation, and offering a vision of madness that is both deeply human and artistically profound.

### **3. Contraction and Expansion: The Oscillating Body in Qaysibn al-Mulawwah's Poetry**

The interaction between contraction and expansion is deeply embedded in Qaysibn al-Mulawwah's poetry, representing the dynamic interplay between compression and motion within the "container" of the poet's mind. This is more than just a linguistic or metaphorical device; it symbolizes a physical and emotional experience, one that reflects the bodily oscillations between contraction and expansion. In his poetry, these oscillations suggest a bodily experience that is continuously in motion, subject to the force of external pressures and internal desires.

The metaphor of compression can be understood as a squeezing force that limits the capacity of the poet's emotional and mental space. This compression process involves the contraction of the container—the body or psyche—that holds the poet's emotions, often pushing them beyond their limits. As the poet is "squeezed to demise," this compression results in a tension that is both physical and emotional. The oscillations between contraction and expansion are not merely metaphoric but are bodily embedded, meaning they mirror the rhythms of the poet's own body, which, like all humans, is subject to constant fluctuations between tension and release, movement and stillness.

The poet's mind, caught in this oscillation, is disturbed because it does not submit to the societal norms that compress and restrict it. The force of repression—a societal mechanism—is metaphorically felt as a squeezing or compressing pressure, forcing the poet to oscillate between opposing forces: one that seeks freedom and fulfillment, and one that is constrained by societal rules and expectations. The poet becomes like a squeezable object, constantly pressed by the forces of social order, unable to escape or find balance. This metaphorical oscillation reflects the force dynamic at work, where pressure alternates between expansion and contraction, creating a constant tension within the poet.

This tension leads to a conflict in which motion becomes an essential component. The oscillations are not simply the result of an external force but represent an interaction between the poet's internal emotional states and the external societal pressures. In the source domain of this metaphor, external forces (society) compress the individual (the poet), causing internal motion and a sense of waver in the mind. The oscillations symbolize the imbalanced relationship between internal desires and external restrictions, creating a dynamic flow of tension that both balances and unbalances the poet's psyche.

This leads us to the crucial contrast that the poet presents between death and play, two powerful symbols in the poetic language. The child playing with the bird represents the absurdity of the poet's situation, while the death it evokes points to the deep, emotional turmoil experienced by the lover. The contrasting imagery serves to highlight the realism of the poet's suffering, as he navigates the painful intersection between desire, love, and the unyielding pressures of society.



The bird and child metaphor are another significant embodiment of this struggle. The bird in the child's grasp symbolizes the lover—his individual self—crushed and suffocated by the oppressive forces of society, represented by the child. As the child compresses the bird, the poet's emotional and mental state is squeezed, bound by social forces, but unable to break free. The metaphor reinforces the experience of suffocation, not just physically but mentally and emotionally, where the boundaries of the lover's world are contracted, leaving him in a state of internal conflict.

The internal conflict is then expressed in the poet's emotional and physical longing, symbolized by his mental and physical oscillations. These oscillations are not merely descriptive of his emotional state but are deeply connected to neural oscillations—the very physiological responses that align with emotional and cognitive experience. The contrast between constriction and expansion reveals a constant tension within the poet's psyche, akin to neuronal responses to physical stimuli, such as pain and touch. In this sense, the poetry acts as a metaphorical reflection of the bodily and emotional oscillations the poet undergoes.

Moreover, the negative relationship formed through structures like "Neither mindful of tenderness nor aware of harm" reveals the oscillations in the poet's emotional responses. This duality in the structure emphasizes the negative, unresolved tension that pervades the poet's experience. The negation in the sentence mirrors the oscillating effect within the poet's mind, as he vacillates between contrasting emotions, from tenderness to harm, from love to anguish. These oscillations can also be linked to neural coding theories, where pain intensity and touch intensity are neurologically registered, creating an emotional experience that oscillates between extremes.

Thus, the oscillating metaphor in Qaysibn al-Mulawwah's poetry represents a profound interplay between physical compression, emotional contraction, and the search for release or expansion. It encapsulates the poet's struggle against societal oppression, the emotional toll of that struggle, and the perpetual conflict between the lover's desire for union and the suffocating force of external restrictions. Through these metaphors, the poet's body and mind become one, embodying the profound tension between desire and constraint, freedom and oppression, life and death.

#### **4. Metaphor of Dismembered Body and Distortion**

The poem conveys a sense of fragmentation that mirrors both psychological turmoil and bodily disintegration. It can be read as a gasp of death or a gasp of longing, where the very structure of the verse enacts the poet's emotional rupture. Qays ibn al-Mulawwah presents the poem itself as a site of dismemberment: just as his soul is fractured by social constraints and unfulfilled desire, so too are the metaphors, images, and linguistic units cut, broken, and recombined. Society, represented in these metaphors, exerts an external pressure that dismembers the poet's expression, mirroring the internal disruption of his mind and body. As Reuven Tsur observes in the context of poetic language, this extremely divergent alliterative structure displays a structural resemblance to diffuse human emotions, with divergent and interlacing sound patterns blurring each other and sometimes escaping conscious attention, a description that captures the chaotic and unstable texture of Qays's verse.

Music and sound are intimately connected to this imagery. The assonance and consonance in words such as "longing," "distance," "trembling," and "despair" evoke the poet's perplexity, frustration, and emotional shock. These sharp, hammer-like sounds resonate in the reader's ear, producing an auditory sense of violence, rupture, and fatalism. Tsur notes that rhyme and sound patterns exploit the working of the auditory short-term memory and actually enhance it; in an aesthetic context they may be perceived as harmonious fusion or musicality, very much like human emotions on the one hand, and emotional qualities in poetry on the other. The repeated consonantal strikes mimic physical jolts, creating a multisensory experience that links linguistic form with embodied sensation. The reader does not merely understand the poet's suffering cognitively; they experience it somatically, feeling the tension and disruption as a lived effect.

This fragmentation extends to metaphorical content. By dismembering images and recombining them in unexpected ways, the poet enacts a cognitive distortion, where conventional perception of objects, bodies, and relationships is disrupted. The body is no longer a stable container of emotion; it is stretched, compressed, fragmented, and reconfigured by the pressures of desire and social repression. In the lines under discussion, the dismembered imagery of the body parallels the oscillating forces of contraction and expansion described in previous sections, reinforcing the sense that the poet's inner world is in constant flux, vulnerable, and destabilized. As Tsur emphasizes, abstractions and structural parallels in poetry may have an emotional character when active in the back of one's mind, suggesting an emotional quality pervading the poem, highlighting how formal and semantic fragmentation generates the affective intensity that defines the Udhri poetic icon of madness.

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The effect of this technique is twofold. First, it emphasizes the embodied nature of madness and longing, making them perceptible not only as abstract states but as physically and emotionally disruptive forces. Second, it intensifies the cognitive and emotional engagement of the reader, who encounters a linguistic landscape in which continuity is suspended and emotional intensity is heightened. The poem thus enacts the very experience it describes: the disorientation, shock, and fragmentation of a mind caught between desire, constraint, and social expectation.

Ultimately, the metaphor of the dismembered body and distorted imagery serves as a central device for conveying the extremity of Qays's emotional and cognitive experience. Through sound, rhythm, and fractured metaphor, the poetry transforms private anguish into a shared, immersive encounter. As Tsur's theory suggests, the interplay of phonetic and semantic patterns allows readers to feel the rupture, tension, and fatalistic despair that define the poet's relationship with love, society, and himself, making the poem itself an iconic enactment of Udhri madness.

## 5. Shock Weaving Structure

To further understand how Qays ibn al-Mulawwah conveys the intensity of emotional experience in his poetry, it is essential to examine the role of shock and weaving structures as central mechanisms in shaping meaning and affect. These structures operate on multiple levels, lexical, syntactic, phonological, and conceptual, creating a dynamic interplay between language, cognition, and embodied experience.

In the context of loneliness, social constraint, and alienation, the imagery of longing is not merely descriptive; it functions to weave shock into the poetic fabric, reflecting the lived reality of intense emotional suffering. Human beings internalize trauma physically and cognitively, and the poet channels this bodily and mental energy into his verse, rendering the consequences of isolation palpable. Through vivid, sometimes jarring imagery, such as the motif of dying, crushing, or the imprisonment of the self, the poem dramatizes the harsh realities of social rejection and unfulfilled desire, emphasizing the toll of navigating societal expectations.

Structurally, the poem operates as a whirlpool of movement rather than a static composition. The lines spiral, interweave, and oscillate, creating a visual and auditory rhythm that mirrors the turbulence of the poet's inner life. This weaving of shock is reinforced through the eloquence of

negation, abrupt syntactic shifts, and semantic tension, producing cognitive dissonance in the reader that mirrors the poet's own emotional disturbance. Words, clauses, and phrases are deliberately arranged to jolt the reader, generating an embodied response akin to the oscillations, constrictions, and expansions experienced by the poet.

Linguistic choices, lexical selection, grammatical constructions, and semantic layering play a crucial role in this process. Certain verbs, adjectives, and prepositional phrases encode forces of pressure, resistance, and tension, reflecting the poet's internalized struggle between desire and social limitation. Each conceptual entity interacts with specific grammatical structures, creating a synergistic effect where form and meaning reinforce the emotional content. For example, the repetitive, hammer-like consonants in words such as longing, trembling, and despair produce an auditory shock that complements the thematic intensity of the verse.

The poem also demonstrates how embodied schemas, such as expansion, contraction, and the squeeze metaphor, are deployed to convey the forces acting upon the poet. These schemas are not abstract constructs; they mirror the physical and cognitive oscillations of the body, translating internal pressure, tension, and emotional upheaval into poetic form. The compressive and expansive forces encoded linguistically allow the reader to experience the poet's turbulence somatically, bridging the gap between textual analysis and lived sensation.

Through this weaving of shock, Qays ibn al-Mulawwah's poetry constructs a cognitive-emotional architecture that transcends narrative description. Madness, longing, and alienation are rendered as dynamic, embodied phenomena, generated through the interaction of linguistic form, conceptual metaphor, sound, rhythm, and bodily experience. The poem thus exemplifies how classical Arabic poetry can transform private emotional turmoil into a structured, perceptible, and profoundly affecting literary reality.

In conclusion, the shock and weaving structures are not merely stylistic devices; they are integral to the cognitive and emotional construction of the poem, shaping the reader's perception of madness, longing, and constraint. By intertwining linguistic, conceptual, and embodied elements, Qays ibn al-Mulawwah enacts his inner experience, creating a multi-layered poetic architecture in which language itself becomes the medium of thought, feeling, and embodied cognition. From this perspective, the poem can be fruitfully approached as an icon within 'Udhri love poetry.

## **6. Madness as Icon in 'Udhri Love Poetry**

From the perspective of the poem as an icon (Freeman, 2011, 2020), 'Udhri love poetry can be understood as an aesthetic and cognitive embodiment of the gasp of death rather than the tremor of pleasure. Desire in this poetic tradition is not fulfilled sensually but suffocated, suspended at the limit where longing turns into pain and where love is lived as an existential ordeal. The poem constitutes a single imagined world in which artistic convention, collective pragmatic norms, and the poet's individual experience intersect. Within this world, the individual self, socially condemned and marginalized, emerges amid a loss of temporal and spatial coordinates, under the pressure of a society that constricts its very breath.

The poem immediately seizes attention, spinning upon itself like a whirlpool. It opens with a question about the timing of union, yet this is not a request for knowledge; it signals bewilderment and existential uncertainty. Through its direct imagery, the poem embodies the poet's suffering, uniting the whirlpool-like movement, oscillation through space, persistent negation, and repetitive questioning into a single cognitive and affective structure.

Negation plays a key role, signaling cruelty, opposition, and antithesis. These oppositions, alongside repetition, emphasize contrast and intensify the iconic image of the lover's torment. Declarative statements anchor the poem in an unalterable reality, whereas interrogatives convey desire, confusion, and entrapment. Conjunctions such as *wa* function as markers of simultaneity, binding ongoing states of suffering without opening a path toward resolution and reinforcing the continuity of affliction.

Metaphor operates centrally in the poem's iconic configuration. Healing represents unattainable desire, illness represents psychic estrangement and exile, and images of birds and children depict fragility, freedom, unpredictability, and societal cruelty. These images situate the lover in a world of absurdity and non-rationality, where social forces are arbitrary and often violent. Nature, by contrast, is associated with innocence, clarity, and rationality, highlighting the tension between human and natural worlds.

At the grammatical level, the poem destabilizes norms, such as by making the subject indefinite. This mirrors the poet's social marginalization. What society imposes on the lover is reenacted syntactically, transforming the poem itself into a living icon of reality. The tremor animating the poem is not pleasure but a compensatory shudder, the shudder of pain substituting for impossible delight. Oscillation, fluctuation, and internal unrest dominate, reflecting the lover's resistance to social norms. Personal pronouns, *I* and *you*, articulate absolute negation, establishing rupture and impossibility rather than intimacy.

The interplay of negation, opposition, and repetition emphasizes the extremity of the 'Udhri poetic experience. These poets do not confine themselves to socially sanctioned expression but push to the outermost limits of experience, where language intersects with the unconscious and the unbounded. The poem, in this sense, unifies the sensory, bodily, and mystical dimensions of the lover's experience, functioning as a line or channel through which the intensity of 'Udhri affective, physical, and aesthetic experience flows.

From a narrative perspective, the poem operates within a minimal frame. A dominant narrator governs an imagined character, shifting focalization internally to depict affective states. The imagined imagery guides the reader into a human world dominated by play, chance, and absurdity, while nature embodies reason and tenderness. The opposition of the playing child and the suffering lover mirrors signifier and signified alike, structuring the imagined world in which the lover's condition is perceptible.

Ultimately, the poem concludes in aporia and disorientation, articulated through questions like where shall I go and reinforced through systematic negation. These devices function as markers of rupture, separation, and existential severance. Viewed through the lens of Freeman's aesthetic cognition, madness in 'Udhri poetry emerges not as pathology but as an iconic, cognitive-aesthetic device that embodies the lover's total experience: absence, loss of control, and the tension between desire and death. In this way, the poem remains an icon, condensing longing and death, freedom and fragility, human violence, and natural clarity, all unified in a single imagined and affective world.

#### D. Conclusion

Building on the insights developed in the discussion and returning to the questions raised about how madness is constructed and perceived in Qays ibn al-Mulawwah's poetry, this study demonstrates that his poetic expression transcends conventional understandings of psychological or narrative states. Madness in Qays's work is not merely a disorder or anecdotal condition; it is a fully embodied, cognitive, and linguistic phenomenon in which mind, body, and language intersect. Through the poet's verse, emotional and cognitive pressures are externalized into a tangible, shared experience, allowing readers to engage with the oscillations of longing, constraint, and desire as if inhabiting his inner world. Language functions not merely as a tool for description but as the instrument through which lived experience is shaped, stabilized, and communicated, creating a complex interplay between cognition, embodiment, and poetic imagination.

The significance of Qays's work lies in its capacity to translate deeply personal suffering into universal poetic insight. By employing conceptual metaphors, force-dynamic schemas, and embodied grammatical structures, the poetry conveys the tension between personal desire and social expectation, freedom and limitation, hope and despair. Imagery such as the desert, with its expanses of dispersal and exposure, becomes a cognitive and metaphorical arena in which



emotional extremities are explored, structured, and rendered accessible to readers. The madness expressed in the poems is thus not an isolated phenomenon; it functions as a lens for examining the human condition, encompassing love, loss, alienation, and the struggle for identity and autonomy.

Moreover, the study highlights how Qays's poetry demonstrates the porous boundaries between individual experience and collective understanding. His work enacts a dynamic interplay between social, cognitive, and emotional forces, transforming the turbulence of the heart into a profound, enduring poetic vision. The oscillations between contraction and expansion, desire and repression, or tenderness and harm, are not only linguistic and cognitive patterns but also embodied experiences that resonate across time and culture. By engaging with these oscillations, readers are invited to inhabit the poet's inner world, to perceive and feel the pressures, constraints, and longings that define his emotional reality.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce the relevance of cognitive linguistic frameworks, including conceptual metaphor theory, force dynamics, and embodied cognition, in the analysis of classical Arabic poetry. The study demonstrates that poetic meaning emerges not only through narrative content or symbolic motifs but also through the architecture of language itself, where grammatical structures, lexical choices, and sound patterns collectively shape the experience of madness and longing. This approach provides a model for examining other poetic traditions, showing how language functions as a medium for expressing complex emotional, cognitive, and social realities.

Finally, the enduring value of Qays ibn al-Mulawwah's poetry lies in its ability to bridge the personal and the universal. By transforming intimate suffering into shared poetic insight, the poetry illuminates the human capacity for resilience, reflection, and imaginative engagement with intense emotional states. The work thus affirms that linguistic form, metaphorical imagination, and embodied cognition are inseparable in shaping the lived reality of human emotion, offering readers an intimate, immersive, and intellectually resonant encounter with one of the most affecting voices in classical Arabic literature.

In conclusion, Qays's poetry stands as a testament to the transformative power of language, where madness, love, and longing are not merely depicted but enacted, allowing poetry to function as both a mirror of the self and a bridge to universal human experience.

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