

**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MAHMOUD
DARWISH POETRY**

Afsal Ahammed Kizhakkayil

Research Scholar

Department of Arabic, Persian & Urdu

University of Madras, Chennai

Abstract

Mahmoud Darwish (1941-2008) a great poet, and he is a prominent figure in the world of literature and particularly in the genre of modern Arabic poetry. Who in his writing life that spans fifty years, He is also known as a prose writer and a journalist. He is the author of more than 30 volumes of poetry and eight volumes prose in his first language, Arabic. Many of his volumes have been translated into more than 22 languages. He writes about his lost homeland from within his country and more keenly so when he is exiled from it. We can to consider his poetry was a central part of what is to be a Palestinian and to be an Arab. By spinning the personal and the political, Darwish gave a voice to the Palestinian struggle for self determination, as much as to the human inner quest for love and survival. The discussion in this paper focuses on characteristics of his poetry and to analyze four content of Darwish's Poems that simplicity, modernity, symbolism, and the use of myth. The Selected poems will be analyzed to probe deeply into the simplicity, modernity, symbolism, and the use of myth in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry.

Keywords:- writer, Darwish, symbolism, Palestinian..

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The power of myth is widely noticeable in Darwish's works. Darwish views myth as an imaginative space for our deepest emotional experiences and consequently uses the dimension of myth as a field to indicate life's unlimited possibilities.

Keywords: Mahmoud Darwish, simplicity, modernity, symbolism, and the use of myth, Palestinian poem

Darwish's biography:

Darwish was born on 13 March 1941 in al-Birwa, a village east of Palestine to a farming family. He grew up there in a large family of eight children (five sons, and three daughters) and his grandfather taught him to read and write as his father, a farmer, was killed by Israeli troops in 1948 and his mother was illiterate.

He was imprisoned many times during the 1960s and put under extended house arrest several times. His crimes were always the same: not having a travel permit and that his poetry was deemed to be seditious and detrimental to the Israeli authorities.

An account of Darwish's life is in fact dramatized in a number of his works, both poetry and prose, He started writing poetry at an early stage, and his first collection "Wingless Birds" was published in 1960 when he was less than 19 years old. And During the sixties, as mentioned above, he was imprisoned several times. Nevertheless, he was able to publish his second collection "Olive Leaves" in 1964, Darwish subsequently lost the innate sense of childhood and had to coexist with a hostile world. He forgot how to play with rug balls in the neighborhood, look for birds in nests, or chase homeless cats. He later expressed his wish to be a child again after he grew old in his poem "To My Mother":

I became old,
So return the stars of childhood
That I along with swallows
Can chart the path
Back to your waiting nest.
(Adab, 2005)

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During the 1950s, Darwish lived and studied in difficult circumstances in Deir al-Asad and graduated from high school in 1960. Immediately he moved to Haifa to make a living and worked as an editor for al-Ittiḥād "The Union" daily newspaper and al-Jadīd "The New" weekly magazine, published by the Rakah communist party. He became politically active and a year later joined the party (Mahmoud Darwish: The Poet's Art and His Nation- Khaled Mattawa,P 12).

The Characteristics of the Mahmoud Darwish poetry:

Darwish's poetry is exclusively free verse, his poetry is characterized by the use of simple and everyday words, and He was in search of modernity and used modern subjects in his poetry. Common themes of modernity in poetry include fragmentation, alienation, and pessimism.

Bennani argues that his poetry refuses categorization and describes it as "at once classical and modern, formal and colloquial, universal and personal, experiential as well as experimental" (Darwish 1994: 23). However, there are a number of characteristics that distinguish his poetic style.

Simplicity:

Darwish's early poetry is characterized by the use of simple and everyday words (bread, grass, birds, oven, and clothesline) and language that makes it, especially the short poems, lyrical ballads that can be understood by ordinary people, and consequently sung by school children, peasants, travelers, and lovers. This is clear in his poem "To My Mother":

Bind us together...
With a lock of hair ~
With a thread that trails from the back of your dress...
Use me as wood to feed your fire
As the clothesline on the roof of your house
(Adab, 2005)

Rhyme is not necessary for free verse, but he pays attention to rhythm as a verse necessity and value. However, a number of his poems rhyme spontaneously and without affectation within the one stanza and musicality is heard through rhyme and assonance throughout the poem, making him a real song-maker whose vocabulary is accessible and whose writing can turn into oral performance. Unfortunately, only a few poems have been set to music and songs although a considerable number of them can be deemed to be anthems or hymns. This direct style derives in the main from Darwish's focusing on the subject matter rather than the poetic style itself. He always adopts an aesthetic, attractive and magnetic, but simple, language "that evolves out of a sometimes startling lexicon" (Arabic Poetry: Trajectories of Modernity and Tradition By Muhsin J. al-Musawi). In addition, the structure of the short sentences he chooses makes his poems clear and easy to follow, especially in the early phases of his writing, where

most of his subject matter is limited or, more accurately, confined to exile, identity, and the loss of the Palestinian homeland.

Modernity

Darwish was in search of modernity and used modern subjects in his poetry. Common themes of modernity in poetry include fragmentation, alienation, and pessimism. The effect of modernism which appeared in the second half of the twentieth century including that of Arabic modernist poetry manifests itself in a number of Darwish's works. An example of modernity in his poetry is the city. It represents modern life with its complexities. Among the cities he mentions are Paris, New York, and Madrid from the Occident and Jerusalem, Beirut, Damascus and Baghdad from the Orient. The late Iraqi poet al-Sayyab is widely known as the pioneer of Arab modernists and that Darwish voraciously read his poetry and wrote two poems about him.

At this stage of growth and maturity, Darwish became "knowledgeable of and sensitive to not only Arabic poetry but also the poetry of other nations" whose modernist influence he fell under, with a penchant for symbol and myth. In spite of that, he preserved the clarity of expression that he needed for "the universality of vision in his poetry, thereby insuring effective communication with his fellow countrymen" (Darwish 1994, p. 18).

Symbolism

The use of symbol enabled Darwish to write poetry beyond the control of the Israeli government. He had "to beat around the bush hiding the greatest part of his story, depending on the intelligence and comprehension of the reader" (Darwish 1994, p.19). He derives strength from natural symbols such as the rock, mountain, tree, and sea.

Recurring reference to religious symbols in particular is a remarkable feature of Darwish's work. He actually makes use of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism to achieve two goals: the motif of perseverance and the experience of migration. He was bilingual in Arabic and Hebrew and simultaneously an avid reader of both English and French. The migration of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) from Mecca to Medina is taken as a model for the Palestinian experience. The Prophet Mohammad suffered imprisonment in his native country and his people's expulsion. "He had the experience of having his voice taken away and of being threatened by silence. Leaving was the only option" (Arabic Poetry: Trajectories of Modernity and Tradition By Muhsin J. al-Musawi, p. 131).

Darwish and his fellows also suffered imprisonment and internal exile. He was stripped of his voice and similarly threatened by silence and ultimately forced into exile. In "A Song for Men", Darwish addresses the Prophet Mohammad in an imaginary phone call:

- I want Mohammad the Arab -
- Yes! Who are you?
- A prisoner in my country
Without earth
They have thrown my people in exile
They have come to buy the fire from my voice
So that I may depart from the shadows of prison... .

In fact, Darwish acquires endurance and patience from spiritual symbols such as Christ and the event of the crucifixion. Actually, Christ as a model for endurance is a popular motif in Palestinian resistance literature in particular, especially because Palestinian men of literature share a geographical connection with Christ who lived in Palestine. In "A Song for Men", Darwish imagines a phone call with Christ:

- I want Jesus -
- Yes! Who are you?
- I am speaking from 'Israel'
I have nails in my feet and
I carry a crown of thorns
Which way shall I choose, Son of God.... .?
Which way?

The use of myth:

The hegemony of myth is widely noticeable in Darwish's works. A prominent example is his poem *The Phases of Anat*. However, the employment of mythical material as a poetic technique in the texture of the poem is not exclusively for decorative effect, but also to invite the reader to explore more about hidden worlds. In fact, Darwish views myth as an imaginative space for our deepest emotional experiences and consequently uses the dimension of myth as a field to indicate life's unlimited possibilities (Darwish 2000 in Akash's introduction, pp. 33-34). In "The End of Night", he says:

I have no choice but to refuse death ,
And if the myths should die
I will search among the rubble for light,
And a new poem. .

Conclusion:

Darwish is one of the contemporary Arab poets who managed to reach a matchless position as a poet of Palestinian people. Darwish's early writings are in the classical Arabic style. He wrote monorhymed poems adhering to the metrics of traditional Arabic poetry. In the 1970s he began to stray from these precepts and adopted a "free-verse" technique that did not abide strictly by classical poetic norms. The quasi-Romantic diction of his early works gave way to a more personal, flexible language, and the slogans and declarative language that characterized his early poetry were replaced by indirect and ostensibly apolitical statements, although politics was never far away.

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