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## A SEMIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MAHMOUD DARWISH'S "FAKKERBEGHAYRIKA"

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### ABSTRACT

The semiolinguistic approach consists of an interaction of semiotics and linguistics. The aim of this paper is to explore the semiolinguistic approach of analyzing a poetic text. This approach has been applied here to study Mahmoud Darwish' Poem " Fakkerbeghayrika (Think of Others) at the proposed levels of sentence symbol, symbols in art, and art symbol (Srivastava, 1981 and Gargesh, 1990). It is shown at the level of art symbol the poem is realized as an artistic potential.

Keywords: semiotics, semiolinguistics, discourse, poetic analysis, stylistics, Darwish

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Semiolinguistics is a term refers to the semiotic study of (literary) text/discourse with language as the primary modeling system. This implies that semiotics is the larger discipline of the science of signs and semiolinguistics is part thereof, that any discussion of the latter will presuppose a knowledge of the basic principle of the former. Any discussion semiolinguistics necessarily implies a review of the field of semiotics whose arguments are basically linguistics and which revolve around the relation of abstract signifying systems to concrete utterances, and that of signifiers to signified.

#### 1.1 The Semiolinguistic Perspective

The semiolinguistic perspective for the study of literary works can be considered a broadening up of linguistics, and at the same time a narrowing down of other semiotic systems to the pattern of the linguistic signs. This is possible because semiotics is an outcome of human cognitive processes and languages is central to it. Semiolinguistics can be viewed as an area of convergence of linguistics and semiotics. Along with the

semiolinguistics approach, some other semiotically oriented approaches to the study verbal art can also be discerned at the present time.

The semiotic perspectives to the study of literary works can be said to have evolved out of the linguistics and the lingua-aesthetic approaches. These three approaches can be viewed in terms of a hierarchy where the higher "semiotic" level includes the "lingua-aesthetic" and the "linguistic", and the "lingua-aesthetic" includes "the linguistic" perspectives. However, the reverse case is not possible.

In the context of semiolinguistics approach to poetic analysis, three facts are to be emphasized:

1. The nature of language as a poetic sign.
2. The dynamic and organic nature of a poetic text.
3. The different linguistic levels posited for textual analysis.

In the semiolinguistic framework, it may be pointed out that a stylistic study is based on the conceptual apparatus supplied by semiotics in relation to verbal communications. All semioticians agree that the sign system of language, like any other system of communication, needs a human agency and system finds its manifestation in written or spoken forms, each form neutralizes its own mechanism to generate cognition. However, language is a poetic sign, written or spoken; it differs in function from the ordinary language forms. The contexts of ordinary language are referential and the meanings generated are denotative while the contexts of literary language are fictive, and the meanings generated are connotative in the Barthean sense. (Barthes 1967). Using Guiraud's (1975:10) distinctions, it may be said that ordinary denotative language is "a logical sign" which is "arbitrary", "homological", "objective", "rational", and "abstract".

On the other hand, poetic language is "an expressive sign which is motivated, analogical, subjective, effective and concrete". (Gargesh 1990: 84, 85).

Briefly, it can be stated that while ordinary language refers to objective facts of life, the poetic language is emotive in nature.

The second point needs to be emphasized is that the poetic text is fairly autonomous. Therefore, poetic texts need to be analyzed as significant semiolinguistics signs. The semiolinguistic method of analysis of a poetic text needs to be elaborated. The method here is essentially of Srivastava (1980) and modified by Gargesh (1990). Both scholars have analyzed the stylistic facts in terms of linguistic "semiology" by defining the nature and function of signs, signifier, signified and the process of signification at different levels of language organization. They promote the view that any reflection on language used in literary or unliterary discourse is a reflection on signs, and further, that language, more specifically grammar serves as sense-making system for all other sign systems. They point out that language as a semiotic system has the unique capacity for observing and expressing the communicational intent of all other codes, a capacity that is not inherently present in any other non-linguistic code used by humans. They developed their semiolinguistics level by demonstrating how a verbal constitute with a hierarchical setup of interlocking levels or layers of different kinds of signs systems express the multilevel nature of a poem's signification. This development involves the poetic construction as a smiosis process involving the transformation of one level into another namely the transformation of the first material level of the sentence symbol into the second level of symbol in art, and further, into the third level of the art symbol and the aesthetic symbol. The fact that is stressed is that all the levels and their corresponding units are inherently verbal in nature.

In the light of the above discussion, the present paper attempts to study semiolinguistically the Arabic poem "Fakker be ghayrika" [Think of Others] composed by the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (2005).

Mahmoud Darwish, a distinguished Palestinian poet and journalist, is an interpreter of the exile and hopes of the Palestinian people. Darwish's major theme in his poems is the fate of his homeland. He uses simple vocabulary and plain, recurrent images: an open wound ('wound that fights'), blood ('we will write our names crimson vapor'), mirrors ('shape of the soul in a mirror'), stones ('my words were stone'), and weddings. Darwish often addresses the reader arguing fiercely, defending, and pleading, as a prophetic voice from a large supporting choir.

Here is the text of the poem and its word-for-word translation that follows:

### Fakker bi Ghayrika

Wa anta tu'edfuturika ,fakker bi ghayrika  
 La tansaqoot al hamaam  
 Wa anta takhooduhuroobuka , fakker bi ghayrika  
 La tansa man yatluboonaassalaam  
 Wa anta tusadedfatoorat al ma'a, fakker bi ghayrika  
 Man yardha'oon al ghamaam  
 Wa anta ta'ouduila al beit ,beituka, fakker bi ghayrika  
 La tansasha'aba al khiyaam  
 Wa anta tanamuwatuhsi al kawakeb , fakker bi ghayrika  
 Thamata man lam yajedhayizanlilmanaam  
 Wa anta tuharernafsakabilisti'araat , fakker bi ghayrika  
 Man faqaduhaqahum fi al kalaam  
 Wa anta tufakker bi al aakhareen , fakker bi ghayrika  
 Qul : leytanishama'tun fi al zalaam

**Gloss**

**Think of Others**  
 As you prepare your breakfast, think of others  
 do not forget the pigeon's food.  
 As you conduct your wars, think of others  
 do not forget those who seek peace.  
 As you pay your water bill, think of others  
 those who are nursed by clouds.  
 As you return home, to your home, think of others  
 do not forget the people of the camps.  
 As you sleep and count the stars, think of others  
 those who have nowhere to sleep.  
 As you liberate yourself in metaphor, think of others  
 those who have lost the right to speak.  
 As you think of others far away, think of yourself  
 say: "If only I were a candle in the dark".

**2. Analysis at the level of the sentence symbol ( $L_1$ )**

At the level of the "sentence symbol", the poem reveals some significant linguistic structures which involve the linguistic patterns written and across sentences. The linguistic patterns can be studied by analyzing the poem from the perspective of phonology, lexicon and syntax.

The semantics at this level is purely denotative, but the loaded non-denotative can be identified.

**2.1 The Phonological Level**

The analysis at the phonological level is mainly conducted to study the patterns of poetic rhythm and rhyme. While the study of the rhythm involves the analysis of the metrical structure of the poem, the study of rhyme involves the study of the external and the internal rhyme schemes in the poem.

Rhyme-scheme is one of the most outstanding features of poetic language. It is the repetition of the final sound of different lines of a piece of poetry.

According to Katie Wale (2001),' rhyme is a kind of poetic echo found in verse: more precisely, phonemic matching'.

Short (1996) states that rhyme is usually reserved to refer to the final syllables of different lines of poetry when the vowel and syllable-final Consonants (if any) of the words in question are identical.

Rhyme is an important style feature of any verse. In this poem the rhythmic pattern can be classified as alternate rhyming "cross rhyming" i.e. the lines alternate between two rhyming words as in ABAB. The rhyme scheme of the poem appears in two sounds/ka/ and /ām/ at the end of the 14 lines.

However, there are plenty of instances of internal rhymes in the form of alliteration, assonance and consonance. Some instances of alliteration in the poem are: (faker, fffaqadoo; tu'ed.., tansa, tkhood, tsadded, ta'ood, tanaam, tuhsi, tuharer, tfaker), assonance (fqoot, takhood, yatluboon, ta'ood, hamaaam .., salaam, ghamaaam, khiyaaam, manaaam, kalaaam, zalaaam); and consonants (hamaaam, ghamaaam, lilmanaam; salaam, kalaaam, zalaaam).

## 2.2 The Lexical Level

At the level of lexicon, it is the noun (ghayrika) that is repeated eight times in the poem including the title. The other nouns are either abstract or concrete nouns. The number of concrete nouns is more than of the abstract ones.

### The abstract nouns are as follows:

Horoob (wars), salaam (peace), manaam (sleep), esti'araat (metaphors), haq (right), kalaam (speech); zalaam (darkness). The rest of the nouns that come into the class of concrete nouns are as follows: futoor (breakfast), qoot (food), hamaam (pigeons), fatoora (bill), ma'a (water), ghamaam (clouds), beit (house), sha'ab (people), khiyaam (tents), kawakeb (planets), aakhareen (others), shama'a (candle). In the use of verbs, they can be subdivided into action verbs and stative verbs.

The action (dynamic) verbs are faker (think), takhood (conduct), tusadid (pay), yardh'oон (have to drink), yajed (find), toharrer (liberate), faqadoo (lost); qul (say).

In addition to the above patterns, only two words (faker beghayrika) are repeated in the entire poem – such words stand as the title of poem.

## 2.3 The Syntactic Level

The analysis of the poem at the level of syntax reveals some significant feature. The use of verbs in the present continuous indicates continuation and firmness. Therefore, some verbs occur in the singular (present) form like (tu'ed, takhood, tussaded, ta'ood, tanaam, tuhsı, tuharrer, tufakker, yajed). The other present (plural) verbs: (yatloboon, yaradha'oон). The use of imperative verbs as qul (say), faker (think) are to imply continuation.

The repetition of la tansa (do not forget) three times in the poem indicates the assertion of strength and self-confidence.

In addition, the use of the pronoun anta (addressee), which is repeated seven times, gives the text freedom and delivers a message for all individuals without exceptions. By so, he differentiated between people and divided them into two completely different classes. In other words, all people are not equal.

The phrase faker be ghayrika (think of others) is used as the title of the poem and carries the whole idea of it. It is a complete verbal sentence consists of verb, subject, and object. Such repetition is to wake up the people conscience.

## 2.4 The semantic level

The significant semantic features of style are the meaning of the words which are flexible and dynamic words. Such words as fotoor (breakfast), qoot (food), ma'a (water) are live words full of activity. There are certain words, which are symbolic as kawakeb (stars) that refers to high rank, and hamaam (pigeons) indicates the symbol of peace and purity.

The use of oppositeness as sham'a (candle) X zalaam (darkness) and albeit (house) X Alkhiyam (tents); salam (peace) and horoob (wars).

Another point is the symbolic representation of the words of nature throughout the poem, for example: fotoor, qoot, ma'a, ghamaam. Such nouns are in fact picturing the life. Moreover, there are words which represent the rise and elevation for example kawakeb (stars) and hamaam (pigeons).

## 3 Analysis at the level of the Symbols in Art

At the level of symbols in art, we can view the significant features in the stylistically marked structure identified at the level of sentence symbol. This level may be considered a cluster of significations.

At the phonological level, the poem is marked for the use of rhythmic pattern that preserves its unity. Secondly, the phonological echoes, such as alliteration, assonance, and consonance function to add to the poem some more quality of musicality to focus on the message itself.

The analysis at the level of lexicon used in the poem signifies a humane setting. It can be seen that the choice of using great majority of the lexicon used signifies humans and thinking.

The repetition of 'fakker be ghayreka' as the title of the poem carries the main idea of the whole poem. The use of active words as fotoor (breakfast), qoot (food), takhod (conduct), maa' (water) and ghamaam (clouds) indicates a sort of activity in the daily life. The repetition of imperative verb faker (think) for continuation and urging the people to help and remember each other, where the poet looks for better society and bright future for all humans.

The analysis at the level of syntax signifies some significant observation. The use of the pronoun ant (you) seven times in seven different lines addresses a close singular addressee and delivered a message for all individuals without exceptions. He differentiates between people and divided them into completely different classes. In other words, all people are not equal to each other.

The repetition of the phrase faker be ghayrika as a verbal phrase six times in different lines in the poem as a result and answer of the repetition of the pronoun anta (you). It carries the main idea of the whole poem.

The present tense in the poem as ta'oood, tuffaker, tuharrer, tussaded, takhood for continuation, it is also to convey the message for all generations not only for specific ones.

At the semantic level, the semantic features signify the new semantic intended. The use of simple present tense verbs throughout the poem indicate the continuity and the case in the poem.

Choosing the vocabulary like fotoor, qoot, ma'a, ghamaam etc. indicate a vital life. Vocabulary like kawakeb, hamam refer to symbolic progress peace and high.

#### **4. Analysis at the level of Art Symbol (L<sub>3</sub>)**

In the third level L<sub>3</sub>, the text is to be seen in the light of the artistic code. It is arrived at after successive retroactive readings. The textual elements in the text add to the significant at this level.

The significant phonological patterns received at (L<sub>1</sub>) the element of musicality and the alternate rhyming "cross rhyming ABAB" namely (qafiya) beghayrika and hamaam. The rhyme of /meem/ /m/ in Arabic means silence. It is indicated in the whole poem as a sort of stability and settlement. The rhyme /kaf/ /k/ in Arabic for addressing all the people in the society not a particular person.

The significant lexical patterns are thinking and living which is related presence and awareness. Each vocabulary in the poem suggests something desired and required as peace and freedom for the Palestine people.

The significant patterns at the syntactic level are the present tense according to the case and reception. The doer is not known or specific (anta) that means the addressee is more than one person in the poem. The usage of negation and the questions (man) gives the poem open-ended questions without answers.

The use of imperative verb /faker/ many times in the poem to urge/support people to be good; the poet looks towards better society and future for all humans.

The choice of using the phrase 'faker beghayrika' as the title of the poem is not for nothing, but because it carries the main idea of the whole poem. It is a complete verbal sentence consists of verb, subject and object.

**The significant patterns at the semantic level are metaphor and simile.** The use of personified figure yardha'oon, ghamam (clouds) which barely holds rain. The use of the pronoun (ant) as a type of anaphora. It is repeated several times in the poem, yet it addresses different types of people in each time.

The use of simile like shama'a (candle) refers to sacrifice. The candle is burning for the sake of others. Life means shama'a (candle) and death means zalam (darkness).

#### **5. Conclusion**

In the light of the above facts, it is evident that the stylistic analysis of the poem takes into account the different levels of its organization and different kinds of sign systems which express multileveled of the poem's signification.

Such analysis comprises the principle of poetic construction as semiosis process, involving the transformation of one level into another i.e. the symbols in art and the sentence symbols, comprising the units of phonology, lexicon, syntax and semantics. All these levels are verbal in nature.

At the level of  $L_1$  sentence symbol, the poem is explicated at the level of the individual sentences. At the level of  $L_2$  symbol in art, the poetic figures like metaphor and simile, are explicated. At the level  $L_3$  the art symbol, the linguistic patterns with their meaning, give a new specificity to the entire poem.

The poem is considered open-ended space to the extent that every reader feels as an addressee.

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