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The Elements of Drama in the Poetry of Farouk Gouida

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Abstract
This research aims to explore how the Egyptian poet Farouk Gouida employs dramatic elements in his poetry, through the analysis of poetic texts that include both internal and external conflicts, dynamic and evolving characters, as well as insights into the role of time and place in shaping events and developing characters. Gouida's poetry reflects the embodiment of psychological, intellectual, and existential struggles, which are expressed in his verse in a dramatic style intertwined with contemporary life situations. The analytical framework is applied to a selection of Gouida's poems where these elements are clearly evident. The research findings show that Farouk Gouida has creatively integrated dramatic elements into his poetry, making his style unique in reflecting the complexities of human life, surpassing the traditional form of Arabic poetry. The research concludes by clarifying the role that dramatic poetry plays in enhancing and understanding the human experience.

Keywords: Dramatic elements, conflict, Farouk Gouida

Introduction:

Dramatic poetry is a type of poetry that focuses on expressing events, situations, and both internal and external conflicts of the characters. This genre primarily employs dramatic elements such as dialogue, conflict, and events within specific time and place settings.

Drama, as a literary form, relies on dialogue, the development of events, and conflict, requiring dynamic interaction between characters. Dramatic poetry, on the other hand, incorporates narrative and dramatic elements, where characters, events, and conflict take center stage. One essential element of drama is the conflict, which can be internal (a struggle between the individual and their thoughts) or external (a conflict between characters).

In Farouk Gouida's poetry, the characters are often depicted as influenced by internal conflicts and psychological contradictions. In some of his poems, the poet engages in dialogue with himself or with symbols representing different facets of the human soul. For example, in his poem "Returning to God," the character takes on multiple forms, symbolizing the internal struggle between the self, God, and

identity. Conflict is one of the central themes in Gouida's poetry, where he alternates between the psychological conflict of the character and their struggle with the surrounding world. The poet addresses themes such as loneliness, alienation, and the search for the meaning of life.

In his poem "The Sorrows of Egypt," Gouida expresses Egypt's struggle against the forces of occupation and social injustice, making his poetry resemble dramatic scenes where tensions rise. This research will explore the dramatic elements in the poetry of the Egyptian poet Farouk Gouida, one of the most prominent contemporary poets who have successfully absorbed dramatic techniques into their poetry.

The Importance of the Study

This research discusses how the poet Farouk Gouida employs dramatic concepts within his poetry. It aims to clarify the relationship between dramatic elements and Gouida's poetic writing style. Additionally, the study seeks to explore how his poems intertwine with the structures of dramatic literature, whether at the level of dialogue, psychological conflict, or the temporal and spatial framework.

Research Questions

1. How does the poet incorporate dramatic influences in his poetry?
2. What is the relationship between the characters and the events of conflict in Gouida’s poems?
3. What literary techniques represent the dramatic element in his poetry (such as symbolism, metaphor, repetition, internal and external dialogue)?

Methodology of the Study

The methodology of this research will rely on literary analysis of the poetic texts of Farouk Gouida. A selection of his poems will be chosen for analysis from a dramatic perspective. The study will focus on examining how the poet uses dialogue within his poems, whether internal dialogue or dialogue between characters. Additionally, the research will interpret the symbolic meanings in the texts and analyze the literary style that enhances the dramatic character of the poems.

Chapter One: Dramatic Elements

Conflict

Conflict is a central issue in the writer's society that he transforms into a text. Majdi Wahba defines it as "the clash between characters or impulses that leads to the event in the play or story. This clash can be internal within one of the characters, or between a character and external forces such as fate or the environment, or between two characters, each attempting to impose their will on the other[1]. Without conflict, there is no value to the event, as it arises from the collision between two wills. This does not mean that the conflict is spontaneous; rather, it is an inevitable struggle resulting from specific circumstances[2]. The existence of conflict implies the presence of opposing forces, meaning there are voices other than that of the protagonist. Conflict is a defining feature of modern poetry, as it infuses the poetry with movement and tension, prompting the reader's imagination to anticipate unfolding events. This conflict can manifest as a struggle with fate, moral values, or external characters with differing ideologies and beliefs, referred to as **external conflict**. Upon reviewing the poetic output of our poet, Farouk Gouida, we find that he addresses several significant issues, most notably national struggle. Gouida skillfully utilizes dramatic form and dialogue structure to portray the Arab-Israeli conflict. For example, in his poem *"Some Love...Is Death...*[3]*"* he discusses the Lebanese-Israeli conflict, using the figure of *Sanaa Mahaydi* [4]as a symbol to present the long-standing repercussions of this struggle. Gouida writes:

She knew
That death is the price of loving one's homeland,
That love will someday become the most beautiful tattoo on shrouds,
That death will become a wedding,
Making us forget all sorrows.
From this clay, we began our journey,
And to the same clay, we shall return.

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[1] **Dictionary of Arabic Terminology in Language and Literature**, by Majdi Wahba and Kamal Al-Mohandes, Lebanon Library, Beirut, 2nd edition, 1984, p. 224.

[2] **The Poetics of Al-Jawahiri's Text: Rhythm, Content, and Language**, by Dr. Ali Aziz, p. 171.

[3] **Farouk Gouida, The Collected Poems, Volume II**, p.

[4] **The First Martyr in the History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict**, who was only nineteen years old when she detonated herself in a gathering of Israeli vehicles at the Bater-Jezin crossing. See: pal48.ps/ar/article.

The expository sentences are the most prominent feature in presenting the events of the conflict, as if the poet intends for the rhythm of affirmation through "that" to emphasize the continuity of the struggle for the restoration of rights, even unto death. By doing so, he elevates the love of one's homeland to the level of a profound, sacrificial passion. His treatment of the Arab-Israeli conflict does not negate the poet's cultural identity or his adherence to his literary roots, yet the literary text inevitably reflects the poet's revolutionary inclinations, his expression of resistance to occupation, and his desire to reclaim Lebanese and Palestinian lands from Israeli occupation. The poet reminds us that it is the stances we take that endure, and that humanity's journey in this life begins with creation from clay, returning to it as dust in the end. In this way, Gouida uses the figure of *Sanaa Mahaydi* as a symbol of sacrifice, love, and loyalty, transitioning into a dramatic scene in which he reflects on existence itself.[5]

And you seem like something... like things
A card of life in which we write:
The color of the eyes...
The pallor of the face,
And the height... and the names,
The date of birth,
The name of the mother... and the name of the father...
And the name of the wife... and the children.
We write the blood type...
For we may need, while we dive
In the sea of blood,
Some blood.
We wait for the arrival of death...
As we gaze calmly.
And will we die on the streets?
At the bars...
In front of the mosque...
Upon the pulpit... in the desert?

The scene embodies the national struggle experienced by the poet and his rejection of the Israeli occupier. He paints a dual image of despair creeping into his being, using collective phrases to speak on behalf of an entire group—the Arabs—who suffer under Zionist oppression. He makes the national identification card the "card

[5] Farouk Gouida, The Collected Poems, Volume II, p. 225.

of life," in which the details of his life are written, using a mocking tone to express his anger. This anger, which has extended its effects into the intellectual, psychological, and social dimensions, is vividly reflected in his words[6]. The poet reminds us that we have become things of no value, recorded in the descriptions of our names, our families, and even our blood types. He notes that the blood types written down may one day be needed to dive into the depths of our blood, reflecting the harsh reality of our existence under occupation. Yet, no matter what happens, death is the inevitable fate that follows every individual in the occupied lands. The poet questions where he will meet his death, concluding this series of inquiries and reflections by invoking the martyrdom of Sanaa. He emphasizes that, regardless of the trials and hardships, from death will emerge generations imbued with the desire for freedom and the dream of living in a free homeland.

The ideological conflict is embodied in the poet's concern with evaluating the political and moral behavior in his society. Ideological awareness is integral to literary life, and current events must inevitably influence the poet. Literary life, at its core, is based on reacting to intellectual, social, and political movements. This conflict is reflected in several of the poet's works, and we will take the poem *"One Day I Sang for You, O Homeland"* as an example.[7]

And I returned to shake hands with my jailer,
And kiss the silence of the bars,
I knelt alone, in my silence,
And the chains shake my soul,
And the noisy night devours me,
Driving me behind the walls,
And the storm of fear slaps me,
And hopeless hope greets me.

A political poem in which the poet critiques the 1980s era, battling the submission and fear that consume the country as a result of dictatorship, oppression, and ideological and political differences. He describes the state of the protagonist, who has grown accustomed to injustice and has "shaken hands with his jailer," using silence as a means of survival. The poet describes the night as "noisy," contrary to

[6] **The Impact of the Emotional Rational Imagery Style on Reducing Inappropriate Anger Responses**, A. M. D. Azhar Majid Kazem, Al-Mustansiriya University - College of Education, *Al-Ustaz Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume 61, Issue 1, 2022, p. 4.

[7] **Farouk Gouida, The Collected Poems, Volume II**, p. 60.

the usual expectation, as night is typically associated with calm. By doing this, the poet breaks with convention to illustrate the abnormality of the situation. He then places contradictions in a single verse, describing hope as "hopeless," using the active participle form to reinforce the connection between despair and hope. Through this, the poet assesses the political and intellectual environment around him, realizing that fear has taken over, and there is no space for expressing differing opinions. He notes that one could lose their life if they challenge society. The poem ends with the poet's statement:

In your prison, my life is ruins,
Gathered by the garment of humanity.
And I became a prisoner, O my homeland,
And I renounced all homelands.

The desperate stance that Gouida adopts at the end of the poem, in the face of the lost hopes of a homeland that could embrace him and his ideas, reflects his sense of helplessness in confronting life. He speaks with bitterness, feeling that his life has been wasted, as if each piece of it has shattered, one after another, to become ruins embraced by the walls of a great prison called "the homeland." These ruins are gathered by the "garment of humanity," separating them from the stones and land of the homeland. These ruins are no longer ambitions or hopes, but shattered dreams behind the walls of the homeland. The noisy night and hopeless hope come together to form the ruins of humanity within the prison walls of the homeland, rendering the protagonist filled with disappointment and despair in this unequal struggle. He resorts to silence and submission as a means of survival in his homeland, ultimately reaching the point of renouncing all homelands—those that cannot preserve the dreams, dignity, and security of those who live in them.

The second type of dramatic conflict is called *internal conflict*. According to Majdi Wahba, it is the struggle of the self. Farouk Gouida's complete poetic works provide fertile ground for this kind of conflict. Often, this internal struggle manifests as the poet grappling with his own self, experiencing regret at times and frustration at others. The poet frequently leans toward the duality of love and departure, paying a heavy price in terms of his dignity to preserve his beloved. He uses a technique of reminiscence and returning to the past in his depiction of events within his poems. The poem *"There Was a Night Between Us"* is an example of this internal conflict.[8]

And the tremor of the lantern...
In sorrow, it watches us,
And sometimes hides the tears.

[8] Farouk Gouida, *Complete Poetry Works*, Volume 3, p. 168.

And the night was like a sniper, watching us,
Mocking our tales.
We were startled by the train of dawn,
When it appeared, intoxicated, behind the horizon.
It staggered in our beds,
So it woke us... kept us awake... and called us.

The poet reminisces about his past love, as if it were a love that has long since passed, using a departure from the conventional as a way to express his inner struggle. He turns the night into a source of fear, and the dawn, which was supposed to unite them, becomes a symbol of terror and dread. The dawn, typically seen as a symbol of hope and renewal, is now portrayed as a source of anxiety and restlessness. Through this imagery, Gouida portrays the tremor of the lantern, which represents fear and disturbance, the lurking night, and the terrifying dawn, as poetic images that embody the poet's internal conflict. This turmoil has shattered the very foundation of hope and tranquility, reducing his longing to see his beloved to nothing but scattered ashes in his words[9]

And it is thrown into the ashes of light...
O my life, our remnants,
And a memory remains between us,
We see it as a white star...
That fades when we remember it,
And escapes when it meets us,
It drifts through life in shyness,
And tells of all that has passed...
And it was between us... one night.

After he clarifies by narrating the difficult events he faced, we find that the poet has chosen time as the best means to express the depth and duration of the struggle, using retrospection as a way to recall the moments he shared with the beloved. Undoubtedly, love and the woman originate from an eternal source and cannot be compared to earthly love[10]. His use of retrospection seems to be a form of expression that emphasizes the depth of the experience and its resistance to

[9] Farouk Gouida, *Complete Poetry Works*, Volume 3, p. 169.

[10] **Hussein Mohtadi**, "Study and Analysis of the Status of Women in the Poetry of Contemporary Kuwaiti Poet Fahd Al-Askar," Associate Professor, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Khaleej Fars University, Iran, *Volume 60, Issue 4, 2021*, p. 187.

being forgotten. He links the past to the present, making the extension of his suffering a sentimental and artistic means to express the depth of the internal conflict that is tied to the character of the hero or the poet.
We find the duality of love and departure in the poem *'If Only We Hadn't Parted*[11]*'* and the poem *'If You Return...?*[12]*'* and many other poems.
The conflict can take the form of the writer's self-reconciliation with his decisions. Although he endures suffering and pain, he finds the result fair and satisfying to his principles and ideas. We find the poem *'Mask'* as a model for this conflict. The duality of love and departure is present, but the poet is content with this departure; in fact, he wants to rid himself of this false love that has caused him pain and agony. He opens the poem with the conclusion he has reached, saying:[13]
On a night, the mask fell from the faces,
A faint apparition appeared,
And the brilliance of dawn faded.
An arrow extends, dwelling in the innocent heart,
Groaning within the wound.
My veins boil, and a flood of blood pours out.
A black hand in my wound,
Pressing in salt.
A wound... and salt from your hands, my beloved.
After all this, do you ask for forgiveness?!
The mask has fallen

The poet opens the poem with a sense of disappointment and pain, using expressions that convey suffering, such as the fading of light and the concealment of dawn. He speaks of the arrow of betrayal that has lodged in his chest, causing him to groan in pain, suffering from the wound without any help from his beloved. In this poem, the poet reveals the internal struggle between the desire for forgiveness and the refusal to grant it. He uses symbols like the arrow embedded in his heart, the dark hand, and the salt that intensifies the pain of his wound, all as representations of his decision not to forgive. He finds no reason to forgive her and cannot recall anything but the pain. He is appalled by his beloved's request for forgiveness, pointing out that it was she who gave him the wound and poured salt

[11] **Farouk Gouida**, *Collected Poetry Works*, Volume 3, p. 239.

[12] **Farouk Gouida**, *Same Source*, p. 245

[13] **Farouk Gouida**, *Same Source*, Volume 2.

on it. How could she now expect him to forgive her, especially after the mask has fallen and the truth has been revealed? In this poem, the poet has reconciled with himself. The inner conflict, though painful, is ultimately positive, as he is at peace with his decision to part ways. He accepts the departure from someone he once believed to be his beloved.

This conflict can be found in several poems, including the poems "A Stingy Woman[14]" and "The Wave Slept[15]."

Chapter Two

The event

The event is considered one of the most important and most ambiguous elements of drama. The term "event" itself is a controversial term. In its general sense, the event refers to a significant occurrence that deviates from the usual. To build a dramatic event, we need a series of interconnected events within a plot, which is contained within a cohesive story. The dramatic action relies on the story, which is the material of the dramatic work and the framework through which the poet presents the dramatic event. The poet's method in crafting the story in a poetic text is what distinguishes one poet from another[16]. The story provides effective techniques in creating the fabric of both[17] prose and poetic texts. Upon examining the poetic collection of the poet Farouk Jouida, we find that it contains elements of Todorov's narrative structures. These elements can either follow a sequential construction, which is the unfolding of events over time and is known as the traditional structure. In this structure, the text follows a straight, conventional line toward a logical ending without any deviation within the temporal framework. Here, the events are narrated in a linear, historical sequence, which does not differ

[14] Farouk Jouida, *Complete Poetical Works*, Volume 3, p. 473.

[15] See: *Same source*, Volume 2, p. 290.

[16] **See**: *Introduction to Literary Criticism*, Ali Jawad Al-Taher, pp. 187–191

[17] **See**: *The Narrative in Arabic Syntax, Effective Petrification, An Analytical Study*, Hussam Qadouri Abdul, University of Baghdad / College of Education Ibn Rushd / Department of Arabic Language, *Al-Ustaz Journal for Islamic and Social Sciences*, Volume 63, Issue 4, 2024.

from their storytelling order[18]. An example of the sequential construction can be found in the poem *"Cursed Be the Sword of My Brother.[19]"*

I have not eaten anything
Since the beginning of this year
The deadly hunger consumes me
It stealthily seeps poison... into my insides
It divides me in every direction
I watch my limbs in silence
And I see the limbs... without limbs.

The poet begins the poem with a present tense verb followed by a shift to the past tense, explaining the state of the protagonist. In this poem, there is a single narrator who speaks in a continuous style, describing what has happened to him, using both past and present tense verbs. This creates a sense of fixed time, as if it is not moving. The situation remains static, only worsening. The poem depicts a real-life incident where besieged Palestinians in Lebanon requested a fatwa (religious ruling) from Muslim scholars, allowing them to eat the bodies of the dead to avoid dying from hunger[20].

In the eighth line of the poem, the poet portrays this grim request with the following lines[21]:

"Who among you will grant me a fatwa in the name of Islam?
To eat my son...

The poet uses a sarcastic a mocking rhetorical question to raise the main issue of the poem, asking for permission to eat his son as the events intensify. He begins recounting the story of his son's death, whose blood watered the streets, but his

[18] **See**: *Narrative Techniques from the Perspective of Novelistic Criticism*, p. 124.

[19] **See**: *Farouk Gouida's Complete Works*, Volume II, p. 264.

[20] **Source: Article on the internet: "In Memory of the Siege and Massacre of Tal al-Zaatar... The People Asked for a Religious Fatwa to Eat Their Martyr Children!!"**

factjo.com.

See: *Siege of Tal al-Zaatar: Testimonies and Analysis*, Ali Hussein Khalaf, 2nd Edition, Dar Ibn Rushd for Publishing and Distribution, 1986, p. 44.

[21] Farouk Gouida, *Collected Poems*, Volume 2, p. 262.

people are trapped between hunger and murder. The poet sarcastically speaks about the betrayal of Arab nations and the world around him. He says to the religious scholars, "Give me a fatwa in the name of religion, so I may eat my son, lest the specter of death follows me." There is nothing left for him to consume. He justifies his request by explaining that he is neither a murderer nor a madman, but someone who fears God, prays, praises God, recites the Qur'an, and observes fasting and the other religious duties, and fears disobeying God. This scene depicts an internal struggle, with the verbs shifting between the present tense and the past, reflecting the poet's emotional turmoil and the psychological state he is experiencing as he describes the event and expresses the hero's character. Then, the poet enters into a dialogue with himself, as if explaining to the other party that this is the body of his only son, describing his eyes, his desires, and all of his ambitions. He explains that he feels pain for the birth of his son in such a cruel era. He fears that if he were to have another child, he would suffer the same oppression and injustice. How can he live in a country stripped of its will, a nation whose dignity has been violated, and a country where his honor has been trampled? He describes himself as a human being, saying[22]:

"I am a human
I carry the traits of humanity
I speak... I dream...
I walk... I cry
Or I write poetry...
When the face of sorrow appears in my eyes
But I do not have a homeland
No home, no address
Every door rejects me
Every threshold slaps me."

The scene here is undoubtedly tragic. The narrator is complaining about the condition of someone born in the refugee camps of Syria and Lebanon. He has no home or address, as his homeland is occupied, and the oppressor refuses to allow him to return or belong to it. The country in which he resides also treats him as a temporary refugee, living in camps. He has been displaced by the enemy and shown no mercy by his Arab brothers. He emphasizes that he is a human being entitled to own his destiny and his homeland. His children represent the future, but he sees no future for himself. "We notice that the presented discourse dominates the form

[22] Farouk Gouida, *Collected Poems*, Volume 2, p. 268.

of delivery, and the narrative is concealed within the presentation.[23]" The continuity of the forms creates a balance in terms of both qualitative and quantitative levels[24]. 'No house, no address' is a phrase that reflects the enormity of the tragedy of displacement and the loss suffered by the people of Palestine. It continues to describe this loss and the imposed siege that is inconsistent with human rights agreements. Yet, despite this, there is no outcry to save them. The poet protests the silence of the world regarding their suffering by saying: 'For I am counted among the people.' It is as if his words ask the whole world, 'Am I not human? Why I am not granted my rights as a human being living on this earth? Where are the human rights agreements in relation to my situation and what I am going through?' Then, with a mocking tone, he says: 'But I am something... other than people,' clarifying that he is 'something other than people.' This is the only reason he finds logical for the tragic situation he is enduring. The poet then expresses the core point of building the dramatic event, which is the escalation of events by describing his son. He loved him, and for him, the child represented the future. He saw his life and hopes for return reflected in his eyes. Living, to him, was a rise from disappointments. The child was the glimmer of hope that was taken away by the enemy's hand, and the poet expresses his pain by saying[25]:

He lived a time within my chest,
And now his eyes shroud him.
Let me eat my son
To save my life.
What should I eat from my son?
Which part of him should I begin with?

We reach the climax of the event (the **crisis**), where the poet describes his son, who lived in his heart and soul, and whom he carried in his being throughout his life, to protect him. His son was his hope, the faint light he saw in a future with uncertain features. He expresses his despair with the phrase (my eyes shroud him), feeling the death of hope and betrayal. He then shifts to the tragic dilemma of having to consider eating his son to save himself, expressing his revulsion toward this painful solution. He begins to ask repeated sarcastic questions. The repetition of the poet's phrases emphasizes his argumentative stance in response to what he is saying, and

[23] Analysis of Narrative Discourse (Time, Narrative, Focalization)", Saeed Yaqteen, p. 257

[24] See: the same source, p. 258.

[25] Farouk Gouida, "Collected Poems," Volume 2, p. 270.

he integrates this within his narrative, giving it a dialectical quality[26]. This serves to disdain the situation, expressing the poet's anger as he searches for a solution to the crisis. The hero starts an internal monologue with himself, reflecting on the horror of the situation. Every part of his son's body speaks to him, symbolizing hope and life he once dreamed of, and testifying to the dreams he had woven. He then rebels against the situation, welcoming death. He vows to resist until the last breath of his life, refusing to eat any part of his son, leaving the shame and disgrace for those who betrayed him—his Arab brothers, who sold their consciences for money, allowing the enemy to buy their silence and cowardice. He concludes the poem with curses.

The alternating or overlapping structure in narrative discourse is defined as a series of events that form effective units to create an image of the event. It is considered the simplest and most flexible approach for revealing the event, with the events arranged in a sequential and alternating manner[27], connected by a specific logic. This is clearly seen in the poem *What Happened to You, O Homeland* and *Thieves of the Era*.

In the poem *What Happened to You, O Homeland?*[28], the poet uses an interrogative sentence as the title, with the intention of mocking, thus opening the door for the reader to search for the reason behind this question. Upon reading the poem, we find it to be an example of a narrative structure that intertwines events, as the narrator adopts the role of a participating narrator (speaking in the first person, both as a character and as the narrator)[29]. The poet divides the poem into seven stanzas, in each of which the character "Uncle Faraj" is repeated, with the poet assigning a different symbolic role to him in each instance. In the first stanza, the poet takes time to outline the features of this character, describing him in simple, clear language that is easily understood by the reader, devoid of any complexity. By doing so, the poet transforms "Uncle Faraj" into a symbol of the ordinary Egyptian citizen, someone who struggles hard to attain a better life despite the

[26] **"The Rhetorical Function of Narrative Expression in the Diwan *In the Mirror of the Letter* by the Poet Adeb Kamal al-Din"** Bidaya Mohiuddin Miro Al-Doski, Assistant Professor, College of Basic Education, Al-Mustansiriya University, *Al-Usat* Journal for Humanities and Social Sciences, Volume 60, Issue 4, 2021, p. 134

[27] See: *Narrative Techniques from the Perspective of Novelistic Criticism*, Ashwaq Adnan Shaker Al-Naimi, p. 126.

[28] Farouk Gouida, *Collected Poetical Works*, Volume 3, p. 82.

[29] *Narrative Discourse Analysis*, Saeed Yaqteen, p. 63.

difficulties. The poet uses declarative sentences to express weakness and regret, saying:[30]

His eyes drowned in the sorrow of years...
And his white chin carries a thousand dreams
For the lost and bewildered.
How often he would clutch his white chin in pain

The poet uses the negation tool (meaning "did not" or "has not") in several places to convey a sense of certainty and finality, reinforcing the past tense and highlighting the sadness and grief that cloud the narrator's character. Through the repeated use of negation, the poet emphasizes the emptiness and loss felt by the speaker. Phrases like (I did not see him), (he knew nothing of the days), (nothing remained in the beautiful field), and (only the crows remain) all work to create a tone of hopelessness and despair. The mention of "the sad river banks" further deepens this sense of melancholy, as it evokes imagery of abandonment and stagnation. In the following stanza, the poet transitions to a new symbolic figure, "Uncle Faraj", who represents culture and civilization? The poet portrays Uncle Faraj as a person whose very features embody culture and civilization, making the Nile's blood flow through his veins. The poet uses artistic tools to symbolically represent the inner questions and contradictions that exist in his society. Through these symbols and metaphors, the poet is able to express the complexities of his inner thoughts and the societal contradictions he witnesses around him[31]. The poet expresses the pain he feels for his country and his regret over the deterioration of this ancient civilization, as well as the poverty and hardship that have led people to consider abandoning their land in search of sustenance. In the third stanza, the poet reintroduces "Uncle Faraj" in a new role: as an expatriate worker in the Gulf, seeking a livelihood to escape the hardships of life after all other options have failed him. In this section, the poet uses interrogative sentences to involve the reader in Uncle Faraj's confusion and struggle. Then, in the fifth and sixth stanzas, the poet

[30] Farouk Gouida, *Collected Poetical Works*, p. 83.

[31] *Analysis of Narrative Discourse*, Said Yaqtin, p. 63.

(*) The phrase "Salm Express" refers to a maritime tragedy that occurred on December 15, 1991, when the ship sank in the Red Sea off the coast of Safaga, Egypt, during a journey between Jeddah and Suez. It collided with a coral reef, resulting in the death of 476 people, of whom only 177 bodies were recovered. The remaining bodies were eaten by whales and fish. See: www.marefa.org/Salm_Express.

leads to the climax of the event, which the poem was created to address. These stanzas contain a real-life tragic event: the sinking of the *Salem Express* ferry, which sank in the coral reefs between Jeddah and Suez in 1991. The poet begins the scene of return with the line:[32]

Uncle Faraj
The time has come to return to the homeland
Homeland... Homeland
We have returned to the embrace of the homeland

Uncle Faraj calls out in this passage to the homeland, hopeful of meeting his family and loved ones. The poet uses these events to express his optimism about returning, which has been a dream throughout his years of exile. This is clearly evident in the repetition of the word 'Homeland... Homeland.' In these two stanzas, the narrator delivers an emotional speech, through which he reveals his emotions and feelings. The poet then shifts to describe the drowning incident, saying:[33]

Uncle Faraj
He put the shirt on his hands...
And shouted: Oh my beloved, do not be amazed
I can smell the scent of the Nile water above the ship.
Come, carry my eyes on my palms...
I can almost see every minaret
Circling the halls of Cairo.
Come, carry me...
So I can see the face of the homeland...
Come, carry me so I can see the face of the homeland.
A crackling sound echoed beyond the horizon,
Shattering the hearts of the peaceful ones.
The water opened a thousand doors,
And the darkness knocked on the ship's edges.
The masses of returnees sank, scattered,
In the night, cries of sadness were heard.
His eyes were fixed on the promised shore...
His longing overwhelmed him.

[32] *Farouk Gouida's Collected Poems*, p. 86.

[33] *Farouk Gouida's Collected Poems*, Vol. 3, p. 87.

The waves carried a muffled scream,
Breathless... hidden in his groaning.

This passage describes the shift in narrative style, where the storytelling moves from a participatory narrator to the main character, "Uncle Faraj." The character begins speaking for himself, without any other narrator, describing his own condition. This transition occurs in the scene of drowning, with an intellectual allusion to the prophecy of Jacob (peace be upon him). The poet parallels the prophecy of the ship's sinking with Jacob's prophecy regarding the return of his son Joseph. This comparison is made through a reference to the Quranic verse: **"When the caravan had departed, their father said, 'Indeed, I find the smell of Joseph if you did not think me weak in mind.[34]"**The poet continues by describing his imagined vision of every minaret, before suddenly shifting to the beginning of the drowning incident with a loud crack heard from behind the horizon. He begins to describe the terror, fear, darkness, and the waves of water crashing against them from every direction. The poet evokes the image of the waves, bearing the cries of the distressed passengers. In these lines, we hear the call for help, as he depicts the drowning scene with the following lines:[35]

Uncle Faraj
He rose, screaming beneath the wreckage of the ship:
An old man...
In the autumn of his life - O children,
Who among you will help him?
An old man...
In the autumn of his life, who among you will help him?
An old man... Ah, my homeland,
I extend my hand toward you... then the darkness cuts it off,
And I continue to scream to you: Save us... it's forbidden,
By God, save us... it's forbidden,
By God, save us, it's forbidden...

He ends the poem with the tragedy of drowning and the embrace of the coral reefs, as he says:[36]

[34] The Holy Quran, (Surah Yusuf, verse 94).

[35] Farouk Goweida, *Collected Works of Poetry*, Volume 3, p. 90.

[36] Farouk Goweida, *Collected Works of Poetry*, Volume 3, p. 91.

The waves were kinder than your torment,
I returned to rest for a day in your embrace,
But you withheld, O homeland, even a grave...
To contain me in your soil,
You withheld a home one day,
And now you withhold even the shroud.
What has happened to you, O homeland?

The structure of these two stanzas is based on a narrative axis that alternates between the events of the shipwreck and the emotional turmoil of *Uncle Farag*, who feels deep regret. As the events unfold, there are cries and calls for help, and the phenomenon of repetition of certain phrases (*"an old man," "autumn of life," "save us, it's forbidden," "why did I suffer," "what has happened to you, oh country"*) becomes prominent. This repetition seems to be linked to the emotional state of the poet, who is affected by the deaths of Egyptian citizens devoured by whales and fish, as the homeland didn't even embrace their bodies after death. From the previous analysis, we can conclude that the poet adhered to *Freytag's Pyramid* structure in depicting the dramatic event and constructing the poem in a cohesive manner. He begins with a prologue or dramatic introduction to describe the character of the hero, then moves to the rising action, which is the hero's journey. This is followed by the climax — the return and drowning — and the falling action, marked by the cries and calls for help. The poem concludes with the death of the hero, symbolizing the many victims of the tragic incident.

In terms of the structure of *embedding*, it refers to the inclusion of an internal event within the main narrative that is not directly related to the original text. The narrator relies on embedding a story or a well-known factual text, ensuring that the embedded text precedes the event historically. The embedded story within the poem could either be a miniature version of the poem's main story or could serve as a framework through which different events are presented within the context of that story[37]. This structure is one of the least used in the poet's poems. We will take the poem *"Mādhā Tabqā Min Bilād al-Anbiyā" (What Is Left of the Land of the Prophets)* as an example. The poet frames the poem by referencing the passage of fifty years since the occupation of Palestine. Through this poem, he reflects on the fact that nothing remains of the land of the prophets, as it has been worn down by years of fighting. The poet draws upon the Battle of *Dahis and al-Ghabrāʾ* as a

[37] Narrative Techniques from the Perspective of Novelistic Criticism, p. 119.

symbol of the long years during which the Palestinian people have fought against the occupation, saying:[38]

Nothing but the swords of Dahis,
Which planted the arrows of death in the dust.

Dahis and al-Ghabra represent a fierce and intense war that lasted for many years, draining the lives of many people. This mirrors the same kind of exhaustion caused by the Zionist occupation of the Palestinian people and their suffering. The poet draws on his historical culture to shape the literary text and present the poetic image.

The poet transitions to mentioning the Battle of Karbala with the following lines:

"Nothing remains but the blood of the family of the Prophet,[39]
Still surrounding Karbala,
The universe is a coffin,
The sun's eye is a gallows,
And the history of Arabism...
A sword of oppression, or blood.

The poet here invokes the tragedy of Karbala to champion the cause of the oppressed, suggesting that Palestine is another Karbala. He seems to hope that by recalling it, people will be inspired to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people. However, he immediately notes that history is clear, and the historical characteristic has been one of oppression, bloodshed, and selfishness, without regard for justice and humanity. He continues by describing the weakness and betrayal, making use of the repeated phrase "fifty years", which appears five times in this passage, to draw attention and express disdain for the long time that has passed under the oppression of the occupation. It seems as though time has stopped in these moments as if the poet is writing in a fragmented space that demands a broken, disjointed time frame[40]. This pause is a result of the poet's digression into description, which disrupts the continuous flow of time and halts its

[38] Farouk Gouida, Collected Poems, Volume 3, p. 351.

[39] Farouk Gouida, Collected Poems, Volume 3, p. 352.

[40] See: The Structure of the Narrative Text from the Perspective of Literary Criticism, Hamid Al-Hamdani, 1st edition, p. 63.

movement[41]. Then, he transitions to describe the betrayal and conspiracy in the Oslo Agreement, stating:[42]

The sad Palestine has died,
So gather the children around her remains,
And weep as women weep.
They stripped the clothes of Jerusalem,
And cast her hidden secret into the heart of the wilderness.
They rose against her like a herd...
The frail body staggered...
And the land of the virgin paradise was stained with blood.

[41] See: The same source, p. 76.

[42] Farouk Gouida, Collected Poems, Volume 3, p. 355.

(*) The Oslo Accords, signed on September 13, 1993, represent the first official direct agreement between Israel, represented by its then-Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), represented by the Secretary-General of the Executive Committee, Yasser Arafat. The Declaration of Principles and the exchanged letters marked a turning point in the nature of the relationship between the PLO and Israel. Its key provisions include:

1. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) renounces terrorism and violence (prohibits armed resistance against Israel) and removes clauses related to these in its charter, such as armed struggle and the destruction of Israel (Exchanged letters – First Letter).
2. Israel recognizes the Palestine Liberation Organization as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people (Exchanged letters – Second Letter).
3. The Palestine Liberation Organization recognizes the State of Israel (on 78% of the land of Palestine – meaning all of Palestine except the West Bank and Gaza).
4. Within five years, Israel will withdraw from territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in stages, with the first withdrawals being from Jericho and Gaza, which together constitute 1.5% of the land of Palestine.
5. Israel acknowledges the right of Palestinians to establish self-rule (later known as the Palestinian National Authority) in the territories Israel withdraws from in the West Bank and Gaza (self-rule for Palestinians, not an independent sovereign state)

The poet here transitions to the story of the conspiracy against Yusuf (peace be upon him), highlighting how his brothers were the ones who sold him, stained his shirt, and wept over him. This mirrors the situation of Palestine in the *Oslo Accords*.*

That did not do them justice, and the Arabs' normalization with the Zionists serves as a direct commentary on the extent of the suffering of the Palestinian people. The text becomes a voice for the poet's inner feelings about what is happening in Palestine, moving through several stories that are embedded within the thematic unity of the poem. This approach intensifies the conflict to reach its peak. In his mention of 'the black star,' the poet refers to the symbol of Zionism, which has cast its fire and deceit upon the peoples of the Arab world. In the first verses, the poet expresses the conflict between the self and external colonization, then transitions to the inner conflict of the self in search of a solution, saying...[43]

O night of the Isra, return with light,
Shake the trunk of the virgin palm tree,
As the newborn hope falls,
Upon the lands of Jerusalem.
The minarets tremble, the martyrs rise.
And also:[44]
To see in Jerusalem one day,
A voice of sanctity embracing the night of the Isra,
The face of God shining amidst its lands,
And the land of the prophets returns

The poet concludes the poem with the conclusion he has drawn from fifty years of occupation, which is the hope for the return of the land of the prophets. He draws upon Quranic phrases that reflect hope, emphasizing that striving is the key to success. It is as though the poet’s voice emerges with the realization from the internal struggle, that the pursuit of restoring Jerusalem is the path to God's victory and the return of the land of the prophets.

[43] Farouk Gouida, *Poetic Works, Volume III*, p. 362.

[44] Same source, p. 362.

Conclusion

The poetry of Farouk Gouida appears as a blend of traditional poetry and modern dramatic techniques, reflecting the internal struggles of the human being in a complex world. The poet uses elements of drama in an innovative way to shed light on psychological, social, and political issues, making his poetry a fertile ground for studying the relationships between literature and human character. Gouida responds to dramatic challenges through diverse conflicts, complex characters, and deep dialogues that reflect the experiences of contemporary humanity. In this way, his poetry becomes a dramatic portrayal of the spiritual and intellectual struggle faced by the Arab individual in the modern era.

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