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# The Implicit Place in the Poem "*She Has Not Come*" by Mahmoud Darwish

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**Abstract:** *'Place' is one of the pillars that cannot be neglected or overtaken in any study of any literary text that tries to be characterized as inclusive and methodological. Studies about place in literary works have abounded, and the terms that are specific to the study of place have become numerous, such as narrative space, literary space, geo-space, textual space and many other terms. In contrast, studies have shown that place is not limited to geographical space and geometric dimension, but includes abstract relationships, feelings and emotions as well as the poet's own mental stock. This study focuses on showing the special particularity of the element of place in Mahmoud Darwish's poem "She Has Not Come"<sup>1</sup> from his collection of poetry, *Ka-Zahr al-Lawz aw Aba'ad / almond blossom or beyond*<sup>2</sup>. It is a poem that is devoid of any word that expresses a geographical, physical or geometric place. What we find in it, instead, are phrases of placement whose connotations reflect the implicit place and the intersecting, polarized binaries, representing the inner self, such as identifying directions and employing spatial attributes. The study reveals how these connotations are key to the contents of the poem and the fluctuations in the lyrical*

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Mohammad Shaheen. Published by Interlink Books: Northampton, Massachusetts, 2009, p. 49. Print.

<sup>2</sup> *Ka-Zahr al-Lawz aw Ab'ad* was first published by Riyāḍ al-Rayyis lil-Kutub wa-al-Nashr, Beirut in 2005. It is the last collection of poetry by Mahmoud Darwish, and one that has been translated into more than twenty languages. Darwish divided the collection into five parts entitled: You, He, I, She – Exile.

*speaker's reactions to the absence or absenteeism of the beloved. Thus, we find it a way to forget; an outlet to unload anger; and a way to punish the beloved.*

**Keywords:** Mahmoud Darwish, "Ka-Zahr al-Lawz aw Aba'ad", implicit place, spatial space, spatial attributes, place indications.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Mahmoud Darwish: A Short Biography

The poet Mahmoud Darwish was born in March 1941 in the village of Al-Birwa, which is located in the east of Acre. Al-Birwa was destroyed by the occupying forces in 1948 when Darwish was six years old. Then, he and his family were displaced to Lebanon and returned to Palestine, precisely to the village of Deir al-Asad. Darwish's movements in his lifetime were between Lebanon, Cairo, Tunisia, Amman and Ramallah. But he finally moved to Paris "after he was forced to leave Beirut during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. After that, Darwish lived in Tunis and then in Paris<sup>3</sup> "where he had an open-heart surgery in the United States and died there in 2008.

Darwish was imprisoned more than once in the Israeli occupation jails between the years 1961-1969 for his poems, which contradicted the occupation's interests. Since Darwish "used his poetry to look for and express his sense of identity at different stages as a Palestinian, as an Arab and as a human being"<sup>4</sup>; which made the occupying military authorities limit his movements, with no success.

Darwish is one of the poets of resistance "whose names were associated with the poetry of revolution, resistance and homeland."<sup>5</sup> Darwish wrote his poems to serve and support the Palestinian cause. "He dedicated his works to discuss the story of his people at the two levels- the

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<sup>3</sup> Alhuman, Anas. (2019). *A Study of the Dramatic Structure in the Poetry of Mahmud Darwish from 1967 to 1987*. University of Manchester: Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, p. 21 -22.

<sup>4</sup> Sheergorji, Mukhtar. Kuman, Nisar (2022). *Philosophy of Exile, Identity and 'Alienation: A Study of Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry*. India: Lecturer Contractual: Department of Higher Education. Vol.2, Issue 1, March 2022. 346 – 349. P. 348

<sup>5</sup> Qa'dan, Rasmiyeh; al-Dik, Ihsan (2024). *Tajalliyat al-Riwaya al-Tawratiya fi Shi'r Mahmoud Darwish*. Palestine: Al-Qasimi Academy. Vol 3, Issue 2, p. 32-42, p. 33.

societal level and individual level of all those who have faced various harsh experiences of displacement, diaspora, and opposition, especially in refugee camps."<sup>6</sup> This appeared in his poetry by employing nature "in two main forms: nature as beautiful landscapes, and nature as a symbol of homeland and national identity."<sup>7</sup> Thus, Darwish's poetry was distinguished by semantic and symbolic dimensions that he employed to reflect the full experience of the Palestinians under occupation and their constant struggle to recover their lost land."<sup>8</sup> The emptiness caused by Darwish's forced 'Alienation from his village, his homeland, was reflected in his poems, as "his poetry often speaks of his nostalgia of the lost homeland, the longing for a sense of belonging, and the sweet and bitter memories of a place to which he can never return."<sup>9</sup>

The second axis that appeared in his poetry was the axis of love; he devoted a number of his poems to the Jewish adorable sweetheart whom he called in his poems "Rita". However, "in terms of poetry and style, Darwish borrowed from classical Arab literature, Arab-Islamic history, the Old and New Testaments, and Greek and Roman mythology to build his metaphors."<sup>10</sup> Darwish's works have been translated into many languages, and he has received many honors and awards.

### **Place in the Literary Work: Place, its Conception and Significance**

Researchers have sought to determine the relationship between a place and a human being in literary works, starting with determining its identity and ending with its apparent and implicit indications in the literary work. They were able to confirm that 'place' had the same importance that man monopolized over the years -in the literary works. As human beings project their civilization, history and culture on the place, the place grants the human beings living in it its civilization, culture and history. The place is "inhabited by man, and man is present in the place,

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<sup>6</sup> Alhumam, Anas (2020). A Study of the Dramatic Structure in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish from 1967 to 1987, p. 22. A Ph.D. Thesis. King Faisal University. Saudi Arabia.

<sup>7</sup> Masood, Khaled (2022). Manifestation of Nature and Politics in Mahmoud Darwish's Metaphors. *Jericho: Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics*. Vol. 66, 2022. P. 53 – 66. P. 55.

<sup>8</sup> 'Abdullah, Mohamed (2023). Post-colonial Transformation as a Mode of Resistance in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish. *Majallat Kulliyat al-Adab*. Fayoum University: Department of English. Vol. 15. 1. 1269 – 1338. P. 1331.

<sup>9</sup> Singh, Shaleen (2023). *Exploring the Exile Poetry of Mahmud Darwish: A Voice of angst, anger, and 'Alienation*. *Knowledgeable Research* Vol. 1, No.7, 2583 – 6633. P. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Ghazlane, Nour. (2021). Translation and Collaboration: The Case of a Mahmoud Darwish Poem. Utrecht University. P.9.

so the existence of man is achieved only through the place, and any place that is devoid of man remains rigid, empty, and bereft of history, values and meanings."<sup>11</sup> From this, we feel the close connection between man and place and the mutual relationship and effect between them.

"The place in its origin is the geographical space in which man discovers himself and through which he builds his system of relationships in their living sense." <sup>12</sup> Thus, it is not just geometric coordinates based on tangible micro-spaces but a space in which person'Alities wander down with feelings, attitudes and ideas, creating a deep, close and multidimensional relationship, evolving the role of the place in literature from a mere constructive element to one that influences and is influenced by events. It may even be the hero of the literary work, and consequently, the place occupies a wide and even unlimited space, because it becomes like a character in its significance, indications, dimensions and weight in the literary work.

"In the view of Padis Vog'Ali, the place in literature is not an engineering field whose boundaries are regulated by exact dimensions and measurements, as in the case of geographical places with topographic specifications. It is formed in the creative experience in response to what has been experienced by the author, whether at the level of the present moment in its details and features, or at the level of imagination arriving with its features and shadows."<sup>13</sup>

The author introduces places not according to their geographical characteristics or the specifications of their furniture and decor, but rather according to the weight of their indications, meanings, and the emotional intellectual and psychological sensations that are formed or may be formed in the characters in the work. Not only does the place "contribute to clarifying the artistic vision of the writer"<sup>14</sup> but it also "expresses the intellectual and psychological consciousness of the writer, and relates to his memory and life experience, and thus, adopts the role of an exchange

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<sup>11</sup> Al-Qasim, 'Alia (2001). *Khususiyat al-Makan fi al-Qissa al-Arabiya al-Qasira fi Israel*. Dar al-Huda, p.7

<sup>12</sup> See Al-Ghadhami, 'Abdullah (2022). Tahawulat al-Makan min al-Ayniy ila al-Dhihniy. *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Arabiya*. Vol. 30, Issue 3, p.3.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Zahra Barakat, Fatima (2015). *al-Makan fi Shir Ahmad al-Maki al-Hijazi: Mukhtarat Shi'riya Unmozajan*. Thesis submitted for M.A. degree. Mohamed Boudiaf University, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Shu'aib, Manar (2023). Tashkil al-Fadha' al-Makani fi Riwayat *Thaman al-Tadhiya* by Hamid Damanhuri. *Majallat Kulliyat al-Dirasat al-Islamiya wa al-Arabiya li al-Banat bi al-Iskandariya*. Issue 39. December 4<sup>th</sup>, p. 2520-2568.

relationship, both emotional and intellectual"<sup>15</sup>. The writer gives the place a broader description of the specific spatial coordinates and reinforces it with attitudes derived from the past to recount it as he has lived them in sense and feeling. From here, we find that the place in literature acquired many indications and dimensions that are far from the geometric and geographical boundaries, but accompany the existence of an entity of the characters and detail them. The place may have moral, social, political, psychological and other indications. So, the place is "an imaginative real extension in which objects and creatures live, and have interrelations."<sup>16</sup>

The literary place was characterized by the laxity and leniency rather than stagnation and frigidity, and the language participates in the task of communicating the content to the recipient with the required accuracy and depth. So, the embodiment of the place in a literary work started to be achieved and to span over two axes: the concrete literal exterior axis. This is achieved through the employment of clear geometric qualities and spatial words, and the implicit inner axis, where then the words and spatial attributes have implicit veiled implications that seek to describe attitudes, feelings and thoughts that take place inside the mind of the characters.

Accordingly, place started serving the content and the cause, and the language started serving man. Place in literature "is not only understood by its abstract material description, because the writer deals with it with his broad imagination, his sensibilities and his own spatial vision."<sup>17</sup> The writer employs the place to present and describe his social relationships, issues, thoughts, feelings, volatility and disturbances to the recipient, as "the place has a cultural dimension that expresses the human subjects and visions of the human self through its societal systems."<sup>18</sup> It is only an indirect disclosure of the cultural, political, social and psychological dimensions of the characters

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<sup>15</sup> Fakhuri, Heba (2023). Al-Makan fi Shi'r Nizar Qabbani: Beirut Unmuzajan. *Majallat Jami'at al-Ba'th. Silsilat al-Adab wa al-Ulum al-Insaniya*. Vol. 45, Issue 3, p. 117.

<sup>16</sup> Mizyani, Akram (2021). *Simya' al-Makan fi al-Majmu'ah al-Shi'riya "Gardaya"* by Othman Loussif. Faculty of Arts and Languages, Mohamed Kheidar University, Biskra, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup>Javadi, Haniyeh (2013) *The image of place and its significance in Wasini al-Araj's novels*. Doctoral Dissertation, Mohamed Khider Biskra University, p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> Yasin, Mo'taz (2020). Dalalat al-Makan fi Shi'r Hamid 'Abd al-Samad al-Basri. Iraq: University of Basra – Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies. *Majallat al-Funun wa al-Adab wa al-Ulum al-Insaniyat wa al-Ijtima*. Issue 58. p. 523.

of any literary work and it is not just a rigid physical space that has no role or indication. One spatial attribute, such as "bottom/low" or "top/high", may constitute and draw a social cultural background to the character, which invokes attitudes and issues that we recognize through that single spatial term. Emotional psychological indications are likely to stick to spatial terms that reflect the character's hidden veiled feelings and their implicit attributes, as "the place has psychological dimensions, as well as artistic functions and social, historical and conventional dimensions that relate to it and do not depart from it. We even retrieve these contexts and dimensions when we retrieve the place or what is related to it. The place penetrates deep into the human soul to dig its paths into different levels of the self to become an integral core part of the soul."<sup>19</sup>

As in the literary works of prose stories "the place is an important component of poetry, and it is one of the most important elements in the aesthetic formation of poetry text, through which we can highlight the nature of the interaction between the place and the poet's experience and analyze his poetry texts in the light of that".<sup>20</sup> The place not only poses in the poetry geographical background, or highlights a psychosocial, intellectual and serious indication, but also creates a world, surroundings and a space that bear a poetic and romantic image and experience. "If the human being is, in general terms, deeply connected to the place, there is no doubt that poetry will be more deeply connected to the place and aware of its indications and data, as he will ensure that the place interacts with the recipient by employing it for certain indications, and imparts to it aesthetic images."<sup>21</sup>

Besides, "the place has been considered extremely connected to poetry since antiquity to modern times. For the poet, it constitutes a factor to move his poetic creativity through a relationship of interconnectedness that contributes to the recollection of memories"<sup>22</sup> and to recall attitudes that

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<sup>19</sup> Al-Sa'doun, Nabhan (2015). *Shi'riyat Tashkil al-Fadhaa al-Sardi. Qira'at fi Riwayat al-Armala al-Sawda' li Sobhi Fahmawi*. Dar Ghayda li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'. Amman: Jordan, p. 87.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Najjar, Hassan; Abu 'Ali, 'Abd al-Rahman (2023). *Al-Makan fi al-Shi'r al-Emarati*. Ibrahim Mohammad Ibrahim Unmuzajan. *Makjallat Jami'at al-Sharija li al-Ulum al-Insaniya wa al-Ijtima'iya*. Vol. 20, p. 250.

<sup>21</sup> Eid, 'Abd al-Fattah (2023). *Anmat al-Makan wa Dalalatuhu ala Ta'sil al-Hawiya fi al-Shi'r al-Yamani al-Hadith*. *Majallat Kulliyat Dar al-Ulum*. Issue 146, p. 974.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Hammouda Mohammad & Razzaq Amal (2021). *Simya'iyat al-Makan fi al-Shi'r al-'Arabi*.

University of Ibn Khaldun: Department of Arabic Language and Literature, p. 11

would shape the full poetic image. The "contemporary poet has paid special attention to the place"<sup>23</sup> considering it "his starting point and his end in forming his spatial poetry text, as the relationship between poetry and place is a deeply rooted multidimensional relationship,"<sup>24</sup> as "the place for the Arab poet is not just words, but the pot that included its existence and entity to express him and his vision of nature through poetry"<sup>25</sup>, and so, "the place has a direct effect on the soul of the poet."<sup>26</sup> The effect of time goes beyond the fact that the place "remains lofty, personal and tangible, and represents to the poet all the memories."<sup>27</sup> In order to intern'Alize the poet's intentions more broadly and comprehensively, "we should view the poetic image not as the measured place but as the psychological place. All that is associated with the image from the measured place is the specific vocabulary with its authentic or added sensory attributes."<sup>28</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the first and foremost place to be highlighted by the Arab poet is homeland; Palestine, from which most of the Arab homeland was deprived and occupied. The presence of "homeland in the modern poem was accompanied by a wealthier presence of the mother-Arabic poem that has devoted itself since its ancient history to the place".<sup>29</sup> This gives the place and the spatial words in the Arabic poems a different dimension and countless explicit or implicit indications in various aspects.

This study focuses on highlighting the indications of words and spatial attributes, explicitly and implicitly, especially in Mahmoud Darwish's poem "She Has Not Come".

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<sup>23</sup> Fakhuri, *Al-Makan fi Shi'r Nizar Qabbani*, 3, p. 128.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Qarni, Saeed (2024). *Jam'Aliyat al-Makan fi Shi'r Hamza Shehata. Majallat Kulliyat al-Lugha al-Arabiya bi Asyut*. Bisha University: Department of Arabic. Issue 4, Issue 43, p. 3394.

<sup>25</sup> Ammouri, N., Baharound, W. and Salmi, S. (2021). *Al-Fadaa' al-Makani fi Ash'ar Abi Ma'tuq al-Huwaiziy. Majallat al-Athar*. University of Shahid Tishmeran. Iran. Vol. 18, Issue 1, p. 161.

<sup>26</sup> Abu Jaber Baransi, Rima (2019). The Palestinian city between the real, the imaginary, the static and the changing in Abu Hanna's poetry. *International Journal of Language and Literature*. 7 (1), p. 1

<sup>27</sup> Khammas, Nebras (2017). *Al-Zaman wa al-Makan fi As'ilat al-Shu'ara. Majallat Jami'at Takrit li al-Ulum al-Insaniya*. Vol. 24, p. 258.

<sup>28</sup> Ismail, Izz al-Din (1990). *Al-Tafsir al-Nafsi li al-Adab*. Cairo: Dar Gharib li al-Nashr, p.59.

<sup>29</sup> Dahami, Yahya (2022). Home in the Poetry of Saudi Arabia Poets: 'Abd al-Salam Hafeth an Example of a Distinguished Arab (1). *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences*, Vil. 4, Issue 4, p. 150.

The study is also concerned with highlighting the impact of the spatial words on the analysis of the text in all its aspects and dimensions. The study also stresses the fact that any poem by an Arab poet is likely to carry political dimensions that take him back to his homeland, even if it deals with a love story at first glance.

### Location, Place, and Space in Literature<sup>30</sup>

Critics' views differ about the use of the Arabic terms *hayyez* (حَيِّز), *makan* (مكان) and *fadha'a* (فضاء) in the studies of literary works. The first term *hayyez* (حَيِّز) was left out in literary studies, despite its unequivocal support and employment by critic 'Abdul M'Alík Murtadh in his various studies. He says: "hayyez/حَيِّز for me, is not only a vacuum, but it includes stretches and lines, sizes and weights, and shadows and directions in which travel movement takes place."<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the literal meaning of the word overshadowed the terminological meaning, and therefore, its use was scarce. As far as the terms, "place" and "space,"<sup>32</sup> are concerned, the

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<sup>30</sup> See: Al-Qasim, Siza (1984). *Bina al-Riwaya: Dirasa Muqarina fi Thulathiyat Najib Mahfouz*.

Manshurat al-Hay'ah al-Amma al-Misriya li al-Kitab, p.105-106

<sup>31</sup>Murtadh, 'Abd al-M'Alík (1990). *Al-Qissa al-Jaza'iriya al-Mu'assera*. Algeria. Al-Mu'asasa al-Wataniya li al-Kitab. Dar al-Gharb li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi.

<sup>32</sup> Classic critics disagreed on the limiting and identifying of the spatial words used in criticism. Some of them have overestimated their definition of spatial spots; others have shown an exaggerated expansion. In her book *Building the Novel* (p. 105-106), critic Siza Al-Qasim states that classical critics in the three languages -- English, French and Arabic -- used the word "Place-liue" to denote the place in the literary work. However, the French critics narrowed down the word "liue", i.e., into site. They came to employ the word "Espace", which means emptiness or vacuum, but the English were not satisfied with its breadth and thus, added to this spatial vocabulary the word "Location" to express the specific location. With this, modern critics felt that they would follow spatial words according to the connotations of the place in the literary works. The modernist critics pointed out the various places then according to the depth of their connotations in literary works. They remembered the multiple names given by some contemporary Western critics to the place to differentiate between the different levels of the place. al-Qasim deals with some of them such as: "Espace" in French, which is met in English by the terms "Space" and "Place".

The word "liue" in French parallels "Location" in English. In the Arabic language, the equivalent terms to these terms are: "space/location". al-Qasim elaborates and says that, after questioning the exact meaning of



"narrative space", in the words of critic Siza al-Qasim, emphasizing what Murtadh said, is a term that has leaked into contemporary Arab criticism like other terms due to the translation process of French and English criticism<sup>33</sup>.

However, critics preferred to use it instead of the "narrative place". Critics resorted to the word "space" to refer to the different dimensions of the geographical location identified in the literary work and to draw its indications that would constitute with the other literary elements the issue posed by the work. The place is not limited to modernist literary works in geographic and geometric coordinates only, but has acquired a political, social, moral, psychological and existential dimension. Therefore, "Space is a place, but it is indefinite in its features of breadth, emptiness and vacuum, but place is a specific thing, and its concept does not go beyond the subject. 'Hayez/ Location" is the facilities and amenities of the house.<sup>34</sup>

The relationship that connects the narrative place with spatial space is a relation between the specific with general, or the part with the whole. The place with its known borders and measured clear coordinates occupies an essential part of space as a whole. Besides time, characters, and their mutual relationships form a structure that encompasses the tangible - the place - with the intangible - the interrelationships between the place and the rest of the literary elements - and this structure is the spatial space. "The narrative place; is a particular place where the events of the novel take place, while the narrative space refers to the entire narrative theatre, and the place is inside it and

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all these equivalents, the modernist critics adopted the two words (place/space) and distinguished them semantically. The former refers to the 'specific place', whereas the word "space" is more comprehensive and widespread. It is concerned with the space that contains the events of the novel. The Arab critics adhered to the word "place" in Arabic criticism and did not attribute the importance of research into the literal and terminological meaning and distinction between Place and Space.

<sup>33</sup> Javadi, Haniyya (2012). *Surat al-Makan wa Dalalatuhi fi Riwayat Wasim al-Araj*, p. 65.

<sup>34</sup> Qasimhi, Laila (20013). *Al-Fadha al-Riwa'I fi Riwayat Mohammad Zafzaf*. Ph.D. Dissertation.

University of Algeria: Kulliyat al-Adab wa al-Lughat, p. 19.

part of it. "<sup>35</sup>. Besides, "the concept of 'space' benefits the spatial dimensions of the narrative text."<sup>36</sup>

Thus, we find that the spatial space has a spatial indication that is not associated with physics, geography, or geometry, and it has no specific spatial coordinates, but it contains the narrative space, characters and all the fluctuations, shifts and developments that take place between them. That is, it is "linked to characters, event and time with the requirement that there is a relationship between the narrator and the narrated to, or between the poet and the other ego."<sup>37</sup>

In other words, place is confined by borders, measurements and spaces that make it a spatial location, whose value is not affected by a human existence or absence, while spatial space goes beyond boundaries and crosses spatial coordinates to create an interchangeable relationship with man. The human being projects on the place feelings and attitudes that occur, and the place absorbs all mankind's feelings successively in order to accommodate him and form with him a full literary theatre, and thus each one completes the other. Consequently, the limited place gains political, social, psychological, intellectual, existential and even philosophical dimensions to become a space that contains the specific space and location. Thus, space is more general and wider than place, not only because it encompasses all places of literary work, but because it refers to "what is beyond geographical determination, and though it is essential, it allows us to search for spaces

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<sup>35</sup> Husni, Mahmoud (1999). Al-Makan fi Riwayat Zainab: al-Waqi wa al-Dalalat. *Majallat al-Mawqif al-Adabi. Manshurat Ittihad al-Kuttab al-Arab*. Issue 343, p. 37.

<sup>36</sup> Shu'aib, Manar (2003). Tashkil al-Fadha' al-Makani fi Riwayat: *Thaman al-Tadhiya* by Hamid Damanhuri. *Majallat Kulliyat al-Dirasat al-Islamiya wa al-Arabiya li al-Banat bi al-Iskandariya*. Issue 39, p. 2530.

<sup>37</sup> "Abd al-Dayim, Mariam (2022). Al-Fadha' al-Sardi fi al-Madih al-Nabawi: al-Majmu'ah al-Nabhaniya Namuzajan". *Al-Majalla al-Ilmiya bi Kulliyat al-Adab*. Issue 49, p. 4.

beyond the determinant and the materi'Alist, to embrace imaginative and intellectual and the various images that the statement of 'space' allows."<sup>38</sup>

### The Implicit Place in Mahmoud Darwish's Poem "She Has Not Come"

قصيدة "لم تأت" – محمود درويش

"لم تأتِ. قُلْتُ: ولن...إِذَا  
سأعيد ترتيب المساء بما يليق بخيبتني  
وغيابها:  
أطفأتُ نارَ شموعها،  
أشعلتُ نورَ الكهرباء،  
شربتُ كأسَ نبيذها وكسرتُها،  
أبدلتُ موسيقى الكمنجات السريعة  
بالأغاني الفارسية.  
قلت: لن تأتي. سأنضو رِبْطَةَ  
العنق الأنيقة [هكذا أرتاح أكثر]  
أرتدي بيجامة زرقاء. أمشي حافياً  
لو شئتُ. أجلس بارتخاءِ القُرْفُصَاءِ  
على أريكتها، فأنساها  
وأنسى كل أشياء الغياب/  
أعدتُ ما أعددتُ من أدوات حفلتنا  
إلى أدراجها. وفتحتُ كلَّ نوافذي وستائري.  
لا سرّ في جسدي أمام الليل إلا  
ما انتظرتُ وما خسرتُ...  
سخرتُ من هَوَسي بتنظيف الهواء لأجلها  
[عطرته برداً ماء الورد والليمون]  
لن تأتي... سأنقل نَبْتَةَ الأوركيدِ  
من جهة اليمين إلى اليسار لكي أعاقبها  
على نسيانها...  
عَطِيتُ مرآة الجدار بمعطفٍ كي لا أرى  
إشعاع صورتها... فأندم/  
قلتُ: أنسى ما اقتنستُ لها

<sup>38</sup> Yaqtin, Said (1997). *Qala al-Rawi: al-Bayanat al-Sada'iya fi al-Sira al-Sha'biya*. Manshurat al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-'Arabi. Beirut. Al-Dar al-Baydha, p. 140.

من العَزَل القديم، لأنها لا تستحقُّ  
قصيدةً حتى ولو مسروقةً...  
ونسيتها، وأكلتُ وجبتي السريعةً واقفاً  
وقرأتُ فصلاً من كتابِ مدرسيِّ  
عن كواكبنا البعيدة  
وكتبت، كي أنسى إساءتها، قصيدة  
هذي القصيدة!"<sup>39</sup>

### "She Has Not Come!" by Mahmoud Darwish

She has not come,  
I said, and will not come.  
So I will arrange my evening  
as befits my disappointment and  
her absence.  
I put out the flame of her candles,  
and turned on the electric light.  
I drank her glass of wine  
and smashed it.  
I changed the sound of frenetic violins  
to Persian songs.  
I said, *She will not come.*  
I will loosen my smart tie (that's much better)  
And put on blue pajamas.  
I will walk barefoot if I want.  
I will squat down at my ease on her sofa  
And forget her, and forget everything that is not here.  
I returned all the things that I got out for our party  
to their drawers.  
I opened all my windows and curtains.  
No secrets in my body as I face the night,  
except what I had expected and lost.  
I laughed at the way  
I freshened the air for her, like a fool.  
(I used to a rosewater and lemon spray.)  
She will not come.  
I will move her orchid plant

<sup>39</sup> Darwish, Mahmoud (2009). *The Complete Works: Diwan Ka-Zahr al-Lawz aw Ab'ad*. Algerian Ministry of Culture. 1<sup>st</sup>ed., p.245.

from right to left  
to punish her for her forgetfulness.  
I covered up the looking glass on the wall  
With a coat, so as not to see  
The radiance of her picture and regret it.  
I said: I better forget what I quoted for her  
from the old ghazal, because  
she does not deserve a poem,  
not even one that has been pirated.  
I have forgotten her,  
eaten a quick meal while standing,  
and I have read a chapter  
of a schoolbook about remote stars.  
And I wrote,  
So as to forget her offense,  
a poem. This poem!  
This poem!

The feelings of disappointment take over the speaker in the poem. He resorts to words and descriptive attributes as well as directions to restore the hope that has disillusioned after waiting for the beloved to come, and after coordinating and arranging the physical geometric place in a way that befits her. The absence of the beloved from the implicit place is the focus of the poem, its issue and motif. This spatial absenteeism resulted in behaviors that aimed to unload anger and wrath at the absentee. It was not sufficient for the lyrical speaker to absorb the lack of attendance, but he decided to punish his beloved, to forget her, and even to seek his revenge. All of this was carried out through phrases and implicit spatial descriptive words. Darwish ceded the employment of explicit places and instead employed connotative words, adjectives, and even spatial verbs, turning the intangible places to explicit visible sentiments, behaviors and values.

### Place as Disappointment

"لم تأتِ. فُلْتُ: ولن...إدًا  
سأعيد ترتيب المساء بما يليق بخيبي  
وغيابها"

" She has not come,  
I said, and will not come.  
So I will arrange my evening  
as befits my disappointment and  
her absence."

The speaker shows, using concise language, the connection with the intended place as a relationship that is subject to the presence or absence of his beloved. The speaker's questioning and ascertaining that she was not there and would not come, highlights the proportionate relationship between the place and the situation: the less details the place has about the beloved, the greater the disappointment of the poet. As an initial response to absence or absenteeism of the beloved, the speaker decides to rearrange the evening in proportion to his disappointment. The beloved's lack of attendance shocks the speaker. Without any introductions, justifications or hints as to why she's not there, he cares only about the absence of his beloved, disregarding any description of the physical place.

The speaker excluded the use of spatial attributes from the beginning of the poem, and instead, he used temporal words with spatial connotations. In the lines "So I will arrange my evening / as befits my disappointment ..." the element of time, the "evening," is used to serve the undeclared physical place. Instead of mentioning the need to arrange a place, furniture, or décor, the speaker mentions the "evening" time, which is the most convenient time for the lovers to meet, projecting the element of time onto the element of place. The lexicon in this case creates a parallel between a time-word and an implicit place-word. The poem's beginning emphasizes the importance of the place despite the implicitness and lack of disclosure. The importance of the physical place here, then, stems from the presence or absence of the beloved.

Thus and from the first three lines, Darwish showcases how the spatial space is the literary work's setting in which the readers find the physical place, the feelings, and attitudes of the characters. Consequently, the physical place represents the speaker's disappointment.

### Places of Forgetting

"قلت: لن تأتي. سأنضو ربطة  
العنق الأنيقة [هكذا أرتاح أكثر]  
أرتدي بيجامة زرقاء. أمشي حافيًا  
لو شئت".

" I said, *She will not come.*  
I will loosen my smart tie (that's much better)  
And put on blue pajamas.  
I will walk barefoot if I want."

The speaker leaves the physical place implicit and does not specify it. After reasserting the disappointment, "I said, *She will not come.*", certain that his beloved is absent from the specific meeting place; the speaker insists to forget her. Every repetition of the absence of the speaker's beloved is followed by his behaviors that become more and more personal in an attempt to punish

her. The excerpt above refers to the setting for the first time, as it can be inferred that the speaker is waiting for the beloved at home – "and put on blue pajamas."

"أجلس بارتخاء القُرْفُصَاءِ  
على أريكتها، فأنساها  
وأنسى كل أشياء الغياب/"

" I will squat down at my ease on her sofa  
And forget her, and forget everything that is not here."

The emotional and spiritual dimension given by the speaker to the furniture in the place stands out here, giving depth to the spatial attributes in the poem. The speaker in the excerpt above declares his will to occupy the place of the beloved and claim it, motivated by revenge. Thus, he is able to forget her and all the feelings and hopes that disappeared with her absence. By harming this spatial spot, "... her sofa", the speakers necessarily means harming the absent beloved who did not even want to come. The place here means an identity; a soul; an entity and a conscience; means a human being. Because he deliberately forgot about the absent beloved, he allowed himself to name the place reserved for her his own; and by doing that, he declares giving up on her.

"أَعَدْتُ مَا أَعَدْتُ مِنْ أَدْوَاتِ حَفَلَتِنَا  
إِلَى أَدْرَاجِهَا. وَفَتَحْتُ كُلَّ نَوَافِذِي وَسْتَانِي.  
لَا سِرَّ فِي جَسَدِي أَمَامَ اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا  
مَا أَنْتَظَرْتُ وَمَا خَسَرْتُ..."

"I returned all the things that I got out for our party  
to their drawers.  
I opened all my windows and curtains.  
No secrets in my body as I face the night,  
except what I had expected and lost."

After comprehending the absence, the speaker decides to open the curtains and windows, exposing his loneliness and disappointment; thus, he reconciles with his disappointment and begins the process of acceptance by facing the night. When the beloved's absence became re'Ality, the speaker's resentment became most present. He declared his rebellion and appeared to declare his refusal to her coming by reve'Aling the private place – the home or the beloveds' meeting place. This behavior assigns the spatial actions and attributes profound and veiled indications. Permitting the private place to strangers indicates the grief that the speaker feels after experiencing disappointment. Thus far, spatial actions highlight the positions that the speaker takes seriously to fill the spatial space and give it psychological dimensions.

The speaker assigns the spatial space in the words "I opened my windows and curtains" a different dimension, intending to expose the concealed, by opening the windows and curtains. Darwish employs the spatial concept of "open/ closed", indicating ethical, social and psychological dimensions as well. In Yuri Lotman's book *Aesthetics of the Place* (1988), he presents spatial interactions and their indications, explaining how polarized spatial binary intersections have moral, social, or psychological indications.

**Table (1)** clarifies the indicators of the spatial polarizations and their social, moral, or psychological dimensions.<sup>40</sup>

<b>Spatial Polarizations</b>	<b>Interior/ Exterior</b>	<b>Open/Closed</b>
Their cultural and symbolic polarizations	Private/ Public Intimate/ Hurtful Warmth/ Coolness Soft/ Hard	<b>Tolerance/ Intolerance</b> <b>Lit/ Darkened</b> <b>Breadth/ Narrowness</b> <b>Flexibility/ Strictness</b>

According to Lotman, we can translate the opening of windows and curtains and the permitting of the private place as an act that shows the speaker's extreme distress as well as his need to unload his feelings. Open windows can also be seen as an indication of the speaker's reconciliation with his disappointment and his tolerance with feelings of vengeance and m'Alice, or perhaps even uncertainty and self-confidence. The reader here can imagine the speaker with arms upward, freed of the waiting's constraints, and letting his being and conscience go, facing the night.

Darwish creates from the implicit place in the poem a space full of vivid and descriptive imagery.

<sup>40</sup> Lotman, Yuri (1988). "Mushkilat al-Makan al-Fanni" in: *Jam'Aliyat al-Makan*. Tr. Siza Al-Qasim. Al-Dar al-Baydha: Uyun al-Maqalat, p. 69.



## Place as Punishment and Revenge

" لن تأتي... سأنقل نبتة الأوركيد  
من جهة اليمين إلى اليسار لكي أعاقبها  
على نسيانها..."

"She will not come.  
I will move her orchid plant  
from right to left  
to punish her for her forgetfulness."

The poet has gone through the two stages of disappointment and the attempt to forget thus far. In the third and final time in which the poet mentions the beloved's failure to come, he decides to take a specific and clear position. After claiming her place and exposing her absence, he will punish her. It seems that the speaker is aware that she had not forgotten the meeting, but intended to miss it; and therefore, he doubts that her absence had occurred unintentionally, but rather intentionally, by choice. In this part, the psychological state that overcomes the speaker is the desire to avenge and punish the beloved, expressing this through the words "right" and "left." Thus, the implicit place in this poem is the focus and key to its analysis and understanding. The speaker says, "I will move the orchid plant / from right to left / to punish her ...". This phrase prominently represents the significance of the spatial attributes and directions, as if by moving the plant from the right to the left, the speaker's feelings are also misplaced from love to hatred and from caring to hostility. He did not hide the reason for this behavior; he only stressed his intention to punish the hated beloved with a vengeful action to punish her and restore his pride.

Darwish chose nothing but the orchid plant to symbolize punishment and revenge by changing its placement. "It is a symbol of love and happiness, as well as of femininity, innocence, emotion, desire, luck and enthusiasm. It has many indications according to its color. He mentions only the type of flower without mentioning its color, which indicates the speaker's emotional confusion and his veiled feelings. This epic clash between conflicted feelings is summarized by employing

the orchid flower."<sup>41</sup> We find Darwish here intensifying connotations and symbols to show us the psychological impact of absence.

In her book *Structure of the Novel*, Siza al-Qasim emphasizes what Yuri Lotman introduced about the subjection of human relationships to the coordinates of place, presenting the following table to show the spatial binaries and their social and moral indications.

**Table (2)** <sup>42</sup>

High/ low	Valuable/ cheap // polite/ vulgar
Right/left	Good/ bad
Near/ far	Family/ exile
Open/ closed	Easy/ complicated // clear/ ambiguous
Limited/ unlimited	Mortal/immortal

Siza al-Qasim emphasizes how the binary directions of "right/left" indicate the prominent reversal of the speaker's feelings as well as his psychological fluctuations caused by the absence of the beloved, requiring him to use spatial attributes and directions to restore his psychological fortitude. The speaker's choice of directions was not spontaneous, but thoughtful and intentional; and by moving the plant from the right to the left, he moved the place of the beloved in his heart and being. He gave up her kind being and highlighted her mean side. He's not rebuilding his relationship with her, but rather demolishing and crushing it. From being the night's moon and the meeting's candle, she became a killjoy, strangling his comfort and freedom.

### Place as Hope

"ونسيتها، وأكلتُ وجبتي السريعة واقفاً  
وقرأتُ فصلاً من كتابِ مدرسيّ  
عن كواكبنا البعيدة"

<sup>41</sup> Fattash, Taher; Ibn Said, Mohammad (2024). al-Taswir al-Mashhadi fi Qassidat "She Did Not Come" by Mahmoud Darwish. *Majallat Simya'iyat*. Vol. 19. Issue 1. March, p. 156-167.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Qasim, Siza (1978). *Bina al-Riwaya: Dirasa Muqarina fi Thulathiyat Najib Mahfouz*. Mahrajan al-Qira'ah li al-Jami, p. 104.

وكتبت، كي أنسى إساءتها، قصيدة  
هذي القصيدة!"

"I have forgotten her,  
eaten a quick meal while standing,  
and I have read a chapter  
of a schoolbook about remote stars.  
And I wrote,  
So as to forget her offense,  
a poem. This poem!"

Darwish concludes his poem with two spatial attributes, "our distant planets/"كواكبنا البعيدة"; the first (planets) is a cosmic spatial word, signifying the cosmic space, which in turn conveys meanings of freedom and infinity. Whereas the word "distant," which is a place attribute, provides the general atmosphere of the poem an indication of a new breakthrough. As "Table (2)" shows, the word "distant" means 'Alienation, and Darwish gave it the meaning of acceptance and accepting new beginnings in the same implicit place that he hid from us throughout the poem, directing our focus on his beloved's absenteeism.

With such an end, and after a process of letdown and revenge, it seems that the speaker raises his eyes towards the horizon, rekindling his hopes and dreams. The phrase "our distant planets" may have an underlying meaning. We can also infer other hidden spatial attributes such as "Heaven/Earth." Therefore, we can infer from the phrase "our distant planets" that the speaker's sight is set to the "sky" rather than to "earth," with his reading of the space books as longing to cosmic space and eternal skies. Siza al-Kassem mentions the spatial indication and relationship between Heaven and Earth that represents the Sacred/Profane, Spiritual/Material, and Happiness/Misery<sup>43</sup>, applying to the speaker's projected feelings towards the spatial space in the poem. Ultimately, the speaker abandons his past hopes and directs his attention towards a newfound hope.

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<sup>43</sup> Abu Izz, Mohammad (2010). *Tahlil al-Nass al-Sardi: Taqaniyat wa Mafahim*. Algeria: Manshurat al-Ikhtilaf, p. 103

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The escalated transformations of the poet's psyche because of the beloved's absence from their encounter are prominently seen and represented in the use of verbs and spatial attributes throughout the poem. These phrases and attributes accompanied the speaker in his letdown and helped him take revenge and abandon what disrupts him psychologically to start again. Hence, Darwish has made the place the perfect means to represent this process. He also confirmed that place is "the setting of the actions according to the dialectical relationship between man and his place, whether by aversion, love or commitment."<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, the spatial attributes and place achieved several dimensions and endured the successive attitudes that were carried by the speaker due to the absence of his beloved. The first dimension was the place as disappointment: to absorb the beloved's absence and to act in line with this failure. The second dimension is in places of forgetting and letting go, occupying the place of the beloved, claiming her belongings, and permitting entrance to the private space, whose atmosphere the speaker was careful to keep clear, coordinating its décor in a way that suits the anticipated meeting. The third dimension is in the exposure to the place as punishment and vengeance, changing the décor, moving objects from one side to another when failures and anger rage. In this dimension, the spatial directions play a prominent role with psychological and social indications. Lastly, Darwish employed the place as hope, directing the speaker's attention to a distant space, to a sacred space, and to a hope that grows anew.

The spatial words of the poem "She Has Not Come" provide us with the moral, social, psychological and existential inclinations of the speaker and depict the turmoil he experiences in a very short period, not exceeding hours. The speaker does not mention the place where the events happen, and makes sure to keep it implicit, absented, and absent, which gives the place a deeper dimension. Darwish begins the poem by drawing the speaker's relationship with the space in which

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<sup>44</sup> Awadh, Jehan (2013). *Jam'Aliyat al-Makan fi Shi'r Tamim al-Barghuthi*. University of Qatar: M.A. Thesis, p. 4.

he is located. All that concerns the speaker is that the beloved is not there, as if her relationship with the speaker is the poet's own relationship with the place. Throughout the poem, the actions of the speaker to avenge this absenteeism. Consequently, using spatial attributes, verbs, and indications allowed the place in the poem to be means through which the speaker retrieves his composure.

We find several polarized spatial binaries in the poem such as open/closed; distant/close; right/left; space/earth. They truly depict the transformations and fluctuations that have occurred in the speaker's relationship with the beloved, formed exclusively by her absence from the geometric location of the place – the house.

In this poem, the difference between the *narrative place* and the *narrative space* are clearly displayed. Darwish forms from these geometric spatial attributes, and spatial verbs of action a spatial space that contains the psychiatric disorders that the speaker suffered from, and the situations he endured. Darwish proves that the place is not only a constructive element of literary works but a character in the work and even the work's main issue.

Diving deeper into the spatial space, we can discover, perhaps, that this adored beloved is Palestine, as Darwish has long used spatial words to indicate Palestine the homeland<sup>45</sup>, whether through clear placement words such as cities and villages or in implied words such as smells, place attributes, or non-spatial words like trees and valleys.<sup>46</sup>

Darwish is excellent and distinguished in composing protest poetry, which has formed a permanent weapon that does not die down. No matter how much he suffers from arrest, exile, and rejection,

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<sup>45</sup> See: Hashim, R.S. Lazim, Z.M. & Vengadasamy, R. (2012). Identity and Land in Mahmoud Darwish's selected poems. An eco-postcolonial reading. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 1 (6), 7-19.

<sup>46</sup> See: Nofal, Kh'Alil. (2017). National Identity in Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry. Canadian Center of Science and Education: Vol. 7, No. 3; 2017.

the "homeland remains at the heart of the poetry of the Arab poet Mahmoud Darwish"<sup>47</sup>; and due to the intensity of Darwish's connection with the image of his homeland of Palestine, he refers to it in many forms. He even "created a connection between the homeland and the woman in different person'Alities."that offers We find this clearly manifested in his poem "She Has Not Come" <sup>48</sup> two undeniable readings: the absent sweetheart and the occupied homeland.

Undoubtedly, the absent sweetheart might be Rita, the poet's Jewish beloved. The June 1967 setback was what divided between them because Darwish lost the hope he held in his heart after the Nakba. Surely, if we navigate the world of poetry more profoundly, many other readings can be offered with further analyses of this poem. For example, the absent beloved can be an idea for a poem that Darwish wanted to develop, but for some reason did not succeed as intended after writing the poem.

All these possible interpretations prove the genius of Mahmoud Darwish in selecting veiled spatial attributes that can deepen the literary work and give the reader a unique poetic experience. In Darwish's work, the reader finds the place not only as a structural element, but also as an idea and a subject matter.

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<sup>47</sup> Hashim, Ruzy. Mohsen, Mahmoud (2014). *Environment and home in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry: An ecological Perspective*. Malaysian Journal of Society and Space. Vol. 10, Issue 5. (9-19), p.9

<sup>48</sup> Yu, Liu. Alhartani, Nakhla (2018). The Image of Women in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish. *International Journal of Humanities, Philosophy and Language*. Vol. 1, Issue 3, September 2018. 1-10. P.3.

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