

## Thesis Abstract

### Grand Metaphors and Their Connotations in the Legacy of Mahmoud Darwish

This study examines the use of three of the most prominent grand metaphors of religion, history and mythology by Mahmoud Darwish in his poetry and prose as well as in other forms of his narrative work including interviews, articles, and commentaries. The thesis addresses the implications of these metaphors in Darwish's literary work and interrogates the evolution of his symbolic use of semantics from one stage to another in his career. Although the grand metaphors may include subjects such as: home, land, mother, freedom and folklore, this study specifically highlights the metaphors that had a major occurrence in the work of Darwish with a particular focus on the presence of certain metaphors from ancient texts and the absence of other ancient texts in Darwish's contemporary texts

This study is based on more than one research approach and methodology. The thesis relies on the historical method to track the work of Mahmoud Darwish and trace the semantics of his symbols and metaphors according to the historical phase of the struggle for Palestine as experienced by the poet on both the individual and the collective levels. The study also employs curriculum content analysis in trying to access the semantics of Darwish's texts and the implications of his use of historical, religious and mythological symbols and metaphors. This study attempts to take advantage of a genealogical approach to track the implications of Darwish's frequent use of symbols that express more than one meaning over the course of his work starting from his first collection (*Olive Leaf*, 1964) to his last book (*I Do Not Want This Poem to Be Completed*, 2009), which was published after his death, in order to investigate the changes in the meanings of these symbols over time.

This study reveals the interconnectedness of Darwish's texts with religious texts from the books of the three major Abrahamic religions: the Torah, the Bible and the Qur'an, and also highlights Darwish's use of other mythological symbols including: Gilgamesh, the phoenix, the myth of Tammuz, and Narcissus, tracing their meanings and connotations as employed by Darwish. In addition to exploring the use of symbols, this study also reveals the importance of Darwish's use of mythological events such as: the siege of Troy, the Babylonian captivity, Salah al-Din's military prowess, the extermination of the indigenous populations in the Americas and Andalusia; not forgetting, of course, the most important symbols in the history of Arabic literature which Darwish also employed including al-Mutanabi, Emra'at al-Qays, Jamil Buthina and others.

The study attempts to answer questions regarding the use of the most common and important grand metaphors employed by Darwish in the realm of the religious, the historical and the mythological, tracing the semantics of these symbols, as well as the developments and implications involved in their repeated use over time which highlights the openness of Darwish's texts on the Abrahamic faiths and other historical legacies including ancient Greek, Sumerian, Canaanite and Egyptian mythologies and historical icons, as a poetic survey of the history of the ancient Greece, the Americas, the Iberian Peninsula and the Arab world.

This study also represents the first attempt to systemically track the use of the most prominent grand metaphors in the work of Mahmoud Darwish's poetry, prose and parallel texts, where it is the first study based on an intense investigation of the *Darwishian* evolution of the meanings of symbols to de-code the progression of their meaning in all the acts of Darwish.

This study is divided into five chapters:

**Chapter One - Introduction:** This chapter addresses the theoretical framework for the study, which includes a detailed explanation of the methodological plan for the study focusing on the central question that revolves around the prominent use of grand metaphors as employed by Mahmoud Darwish over the course of his intellectual career. The study presents the hypothesis that Darwish employed symbols of religious, historical and mythological value in his literary works to achieve many connotations, tracing the evolution of the meaning of these symbols in the literature of Mahmoud Darwish according to a reading of the subjective and objective developments surrounding the poet, the national cause and his humanitarian concerns. Chapter One, therefore, includes an introduction to the study, its importance and objectives, the research questions and hypotheses, the research methodology and tools, difficulties in research, and a review of the major literature about Darwish's work.

**Chapter Two - Metaphors and their Religious Implications in the Work of Mahmoud Darwish.** This chapter highlights the most important religious metaphors employed by Mahmoud Darwish in his poetry, prose and parallel texts. These metaphors include major religious prophets and divine figures such as the Virgin Mary, mother of the prophet Jesus; Khadija, the wife of the prophet Muhammad; Hajjar, the wife of the prophet Abraham and the mother of the prophet Ismail. This chapter addresses the connotations of these symbols in the work of Mahmoud Darwish and how the evolution of the use of these metaphors changed over the course of his literary career.

**Chapter Three – Metaphors and their Historical Implications in the Work of Mahmoud Darwish.** This chapter deals with the most important symbols and historical references as used by Darwish including: the siege of Troy, the Babylonian captivity, the victories of Salah al-Din, the loss of Andalusia from the hands of its Arab rulers, the extermination of the indigenous native populations of the Americas at the hands of European settlers. This chapter follows the implications of Darwish's use of these historic icons over the course of his career creating a record of the repeated use of these symbols by Darwish in his literary oeuvre in an attempt to understand the extent of the changes of their meanings over time.

**Chapter Four – The Metaphors of Legends and their Implications in the work of Mahmoud Darwish.** This chapter covers the most important legendary symbols as addressed by Mahmoud Darwish in his poetry, prose and parallel texts, including: the myth of Gilgamesh the Sumerian; the legend of the ancient Greek god Narcissus, the myth of the phoenix of the Phoenicians, and the myth of Tammuz or Ishtar of the Babylonians. This chapter traces the semantics of these symbols and investigates the changing nature of these semantics over the course of Darwish's literary evolution.

**Chapter Five – Conclusion: Findings, Observations and Most Prominent Results of this Study.** In addition to a critical survey of the most important references and sources about Darwish's literary contributions, as well as a special annex to the thesis prepared by the researcher, this chapter includes genealogical tables that show the evolution and change in the meanings of symbols in Darwish's work based on Darwish's experiences and struggles in the various historical phases of the question of Palestine for the poet and his homeland, or depending on the different technical phases of the poet's career.