

The Aspects of Conflict in the Poetry in Fadwa Tuqan's Poet

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Abstract

Fadwa Tuqan, a Palestinian poet born in Nablus in 1917 and deceased in 2003, is recognized as one of the foremost voices in modern Arabic literature. As the seventh of ten children in her family, she experienced a childhood characterized by oppression and rejection, deprived of parental affection, a theme she articulated in her autobiography, "Mountainous Journey." Her birth was unwelcome; her mother had attempted to terminate the pregnancy, and Fadwa only learned of her birthdate through the death of a cousin during her mother's seventh month of pregnancy. Following her birth, her care was entrusted to a housemaid, who imposed strict limitations, such as forbidding her from playing with dolls at the age of eight. Fadwa's upbringing was dominated by rigid societal traditions and patriarchal control. After the death of her brother Ibrahim, her father encouraged her to compose political poetry to fill the void left by his absence. Nevertheless, she began writing patriotic poetry of her own accord, driven by internal conviction rather than external pressure. A significant transformation in her literary trajectory occurred after the Naksa (the 1967 Arab Israeli War). This period marked her transition from introspective romanticism to a realist engagement with Palestinian political and social realities. Her works became deeply rooted in the Palestinian cause, reflecting her dedication to her homeland and its people through both poetry and prose.

Keywords: Poetry, Fadwa Touqan, Literature, Palestine, History.

Introduction

The poetry of Fadwa Tuqan served as a powerful medium for expressing the challenges faced by her homeland, addressing the essence of the Palestinian Israeli conflict while portraying it in its historical and political dimensions. During this phase, she reached the pinnacle of her literary creativity, starting with her poetry collection "The Night and the Knights." Her poetry was characterized by an interplay of internal and external struggles, reflecting both her personal and national concerns.

Belonging to a culturally gifted family, Tuqan grew up under harsh familial and societal circumstances. She briefly attended school but was later prevented from continuing her education due to the traditional values of her conservative Arab family. Instead, she was mentored by her brother, the poet Ibrahim Tuqan, who supported her development and provided the special care she lacked from other family members, particularly during his absences in Lebanon. (Khaleel, Saida Salama, 1978, p. 37).

Upon Ibrahim's return to Nablus, he began mentoring Fadwa, exposing her to high-quality literary works, including the Quran, classical Arabic poetry, and modern literary texts. This guidance quickly awakened Fadwa's poetic talent, and she began writing poetry at an early age (Tuqan, Fadwa, n.d., p.). Her works were published in literary magazines and newspapers in Nablus, Cairo, and Jordan before World War II. It is widely believed that she began writing poetry at the age of twelve, coinciding with the rise of Arabic Romanticism. Her autobiography provides insights into her early development (Khaleel, Saida Salama, 1978, p. 41; Al-Naqqash, Raja, 1975, p. 101).

Fadwa Tuqan's growth was deeply intertwined with Palestine's cultural and social environment. Witnessing significant events and upheavals fostered her self-awareness, cultivating a strong sense of individuality. Her literary achievements became her primary means of transcending personal struggles, connecting with society, and engaging with politics as a means of addressing personal concerns.

In her autobiography, Tuqan's narrative style reflects a blend of literary and historical expression, often engaging in debates over its classification as storytelling or discourse. Scholars have extensively explored

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the aesthetics of her poetry, particularly her patriotic and resistance poetry, as well as the internal, national, and political conflicts she navigated. However, her autobiographical works have received comparatively little attention, highlighting the need for more in-depth studies of Fadwa Tuqan as a poet and a person.

The significance of this subject lies in the work of the contemporary poet Fadwa Tuqan, one of the prominent voices who articulated the emotions and struggles affecting society during her time. Through her poetry, she addressed the psyche and the spirit, blending the words and themes of her poems with expressions that inspire the soul and engage the intellect. This unique fusion elevated her to the pinnacle of creative excellence, producing poems that explore a wide array of themes. The importance of this topic emerges from its focus on a literary subject influenced by psychological insights, presented through the lens of a contemporary poet who profoundly articulated the pains and challenges of her era.

Historical and Personal Background of Fadwa Touqan

In this chapter, we will explore the historical and personal background of the Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan, who played a pivotal role in shaping her unique poetic experience. We will examine her upbringing and the impact of the social and political environment in which she lived on her life and poetry, as well as the historical events that influenced her literary journey.

During her formative years, Tuqan's childhood was neither happy nor nurturing. She longed for love and attention (Abu Jibeen, Atta Mohammed, 2004, p. 176). Coming from a prominent family in the Nablus society provided her with a culturally rich environment, but one fraught with social challenges related to the role of women. She lived under strict traditions that limited her freedom of expression and movement, fostering a critical awareness of social and internal conflicts from an early age.

It is well understood that childhood significantly shapes an individual's character. Often, one can discern a person's personality through their early experiences. In Tuqan's case, her childhood, filled with deprivation, sorrow, and loneliness, cultivated a melancholic and somber disposition, which is reflected in her poetry.

Interestingly, some sources attribute Tuqan's birthdate to an unknown year. Despite the hardships of her childhood, the poet refrained from condemning her mother, believing that motherhood is not merely defined by giving birth but by nurturing and sacrificing for the well-being of a child. Tuqan's mother, however, did not fulfil the role of a nurturing figure.

This section will be divided into the following subsections:

First: The Conflict of Personal Experience in The Poet's Poetry

Fadwa Tuqan is considered one of the most prominent poets in contemporary Arabic literature. Her poetry serves as a mirror reflecting her personal experiences, filled with pain, joy, love, and loss. Tuqan lived a life full of hardships and challenges, which are vividly reflected in her poetic works. Her poems capture her emotions, feelings, and stances, turning them into powerful verses.

Her brother, the poet Ibrahim Tuqan, played a significant role in her literary life, providing her with support and guidance. She learned much about poetry and literature from him, and his influence is clearly evident in her poetic style and approach.

Fadwa Tuqan lived through a period marked by political and social turmoil. She endured the British occupation of Palestine and the Nakba (the Palestinian exodus), and faced personal challenges related to freedom, education, and participation in public life. She once said:

*"O voice calling from beyond the veils,
 Do you see my life's spring running dry?
 I still wander in barren existence,
 Desolate as a wasteland, linked to sorrow,
 Since his star faded among the vanishing.
 Where is Ibrahim to me, where, oh where?
 The heart's cherished pearl, the light of my eyes.
 I dwell between life and death, in limbo.
 Perhaps the time draws near
 When longing will soothe the wound and its pain."
 (Tuqan, Fadwa, 1990, pp. 100-101)*

Therefore, personal experience formed an essential part of Fadwa Tuqan's poetry, as her poems were considered with honesty and deep feeling about her feelings and personal experiences through her simple language and strong poetic images, and she was able to touch the hearts of her readers and make them feel the depth of her human and national experience. We see her poetic works as a witness to the power of poetry in expressing personal experiences and standing up to challenges.

Second: The Struggle for Women's Rights

Fadwa Tuqan, the prominent Palestinian poet, eloquently captured profound social, national, and human issues in her poetry, including the critical subject of women's rights. Her work stands as a powerful voice advocating for justice and equality, reflecting her personal experiences and struggles within a conservative society. Through her poetry, Tuqan expressed the aspirations and hardships of women, shedding light on their challenges in a culture that restricts personal freedoms.

Tuqan emphasized the importance of women's autonomy in decision-making and self-expression. She addressed women's social rights, including their right to work and participate in public life, and called for gender equality in various fields. Her poetry also underscored a woman's right to choose her partner and live in a relationship grounded in love and mutual respect. She firmly rejected societal constraints that forced women into marriage against their will.

Moreover, Tuqan's demands extended beyond social and personal rights to encompass political and national rights for women. She passionately advocated for women's participation in national and political struggles, urging their involvement in the fight for freedom and independence.

In her poem *The Struggle of Women*, Tuqan poignantly states:

*"O women of the nation,
 Rise for the struggle,*

For we have rights to life,

To freedom and equality."

(Tuqan, Fadwa, 1990, pp. 100-101.)

Also, the poem "Love and Freedom" by Fadwa Touqan, where she says:

"I want to live my love,

In freedom and happiness,

Away from restraints,

And from injustice and suffering."

(Tuqan, Fadwa, 1990).

Third: The Conflict of Identity and Belonging to It:

In her poem "Oh My Homeland", Fadwa Tuqan expresses her deep love and attachment to her homeland, Palestine:

"Oh, my beloved homeland,

Your love fills my heart,

I long for your soil,

For your sun and moon,

I will continue to love you until my last breath."

(Abdul Majid, Youssef, n.d., p. 33).

In her poem "Identity", Fadwa Tuqan emphasizes the depth of her Palestinian identity, expressing pride in her roots, land, and people:

"My identity is not a card,

But history, land, and people... I am Palestinian

And I will remain here, no matter how long time lasts."

Fadwa Touqan expressed her belonging to the Palestinian cause in her poetry, as she saw herself as a defender of the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, and she used her poetry as a means of expressing and defending her cause. Touqan says:

"Our cause is not words,

But blood and tears,

We fight for it

And dream of freedom and peace."

(Majalat al-Adab al-Arabi, n.d., p 24).

The Conflict of Emotional Impact in The Poetry of The Poet Fadwa Touqan, And It Is Divided Into:

First: The Struggle of Sadness and Loss

Fadwa Tuqan, the prominent Palestinian poet, extensively explored themes of sorrow and loss in her poetry. Her life was filled with personal and national hardships, which deeply impacted her literary works. Her brother, the poet Ibrahim Tuqan, played a significant role in her literary development. His untimely death left a profound impact on Fadwa, intensifying the emotions of grief and loss in her poetry. Fadwa expressed

the pain and sense of isolation she felt after losing her mother and brother Ibrahim, which deeply influenced her poetic output. She says:

*"Brother Ibrahim, I still remember our days
And the sorrow chokes me,
Separation hurts me,
Where are you now?
You left me alone in this world,
And our dreams remain suspended in the air."
(Al-Sheikh, Gharid, p. 7.)*

Touqan expressed feelings of sadness and loss resulting from national events such as the Nakba and the occupation of Palestine and embodied in her poetry the deep sadness of the loss of the homeland, displacement, and suffering experienced by the Palestinian people. Touqan says in "The Gates of Paradise":

*" Oh, my wounded homeland,
Your tears fill my eyes,
And the wound is in my heart,
One day we will return
And build our dreams upon the ruins of the past."
(Kanfani, Ghassan, 1974).*

Fadwa Tuqan's poetry deeply explores existential sorrow, where she reflects on life, death, and human suffering. These themes are evident in her work, which grapples with concepts of mortality, time, and change. Grief and loss are central to her poetry, as her verses honestly and profoundly convey the pain and sorrow stemming from both personal and national loss. Through her simple language and powerful poetic imagery, she touches the hearts of her readers, allowing them to connect with the depth of her human experience. Her poetic works stand as a testament to the power of poetry in expressing grief, loss, and the resilience to face challenges.

Second: The Conflict of Love and Longing

In her poetry, Fadwa Tuqan addressed a wide range of human and emotional themes, with love and longing being central subjects. Through these themes, she expressed her personal feelings and life experiences with sincerity and deep emotion. Tuqan's romantic poetry stands out for its profound portrayal of love and passion, using emotional language and rich poetic imagery to convey her feelings. She also expressed her deep love for her family, particularly her mother and her brother, the poet Ibrahim Tuqan, with whom she shared a strong bond. Ibrahim's influence on her life and poetry was significant, and she often honoured his memory and their relationship through her verses.

Touqan Says:

*"What do I feel here, deep inside me,
My desires and yearnings tremble.*

A thousand feelings burn within me,
A surging current, torrential and flowing.
A thousand emotions, a thousand passions,
Burning feverishly in my blood, in my veins.
What do I feel? I feel an eagerness,
Wandering, flooding all my horizons.
My lips have dried, and their shadows quiver,
Thirsting in my longing eyes.
My soul is scattered, tormented,
By its yearning, by the enigma of its eagerness.
A longing for the unknown propels it,
Charring the walls of its isolation.
A longing for what I cannot comprehend,
Calling it in the silence of its solitude.
Is it nature whose voice awakens her?
Is it life summoning its daughter?
What do I feel? A feeling of being lost to herself,
Suffering in her bewilderment." (Tuqan, Fadwa, 1990, p. 31).

Third: The Struggle of Isolation and Loneliness

Fadwa Tuqan's poetry explores a wide range of complex human emotions, with isolation and solitude being among the most prominent themes. Her work reflects both her personal experiences and the social and political context in which she lived, capturing the deep sense of loneliness that permeates many of her poems.

In numerous works, Tuqan expresses feelings of self-imposed isolation, which mirror her internal struggles and personal suffering. Her poems delve into the concept of social isolation, highlighting her sense of detachment from both society and the world around her. Tuqan also embodies national isolation in her poetry, reflecting the sorrow and disconnection felt by Palestinians under occupation and in the aftermath of the Nakba.

Furthermore, Tuqan articulates emotional isolation in her poetry, revealing the pain and emptiness caused by the loss of loved ones and the inability to establish emotional connections. Her work also addresses existential loneliness, as she explores feelings of disorientation, emptiness, and the search for meaning in a world filled with challenges and suffering.

Touqan Says:

*"O my homeland, why does the essence of death,
The essence of nothingness overshadows your spirit.
Has the wound that betrayed its healers,
In the fierce dilemma, drained your strength?
How deep are the abysses of your wound,
How it festers beneath the fangs of pain.
Where are those you once begged for their aid,
Believing them to be your shelter and refuge?
What has come over them, that they are separated,
From your tragedy by a deafening apathy?
You sought them, pleading with your desperate gaze,
But found no resolute and daring support.
Their selfishness, how it has disgraced them,
Leaving them adrift in the stormy chaos.
They are the selfish ones who have closed,
Their hearts to your overwhelming calamity.
No spirit arises from their willpower,
No valor stirs them, no ambition drives them.
They have bowed their necks of disgrace—oh, their weakness!
And surrendered to the sovereign power of the oppressor."*

(Tuqan, Fadwa, 1990, p. 10).

Fadwa Touqan uses a symbolic language rich in meaning to express feelings of isolation and loneliness, which adds depth to her poems. Touqan relies on strong poetic images to embody feelings of isolation and loneliness, which makes the reader feel the depth of the personal experience she expresses. Isolation and loneliness form an essential part of Fadwa Touqan's poetry, as her poems express with honesty and deep feeling the feelings of pain and separation that she suffered in her personal and national life. Through her symbolic language and strong poetic images, she was able to touch the hearts of her readers and make them feel the depth of her human experience. Her poetic works remain a testament to the power of poetry in expressing feelings of isolation and loneliness and facing challenges.

*Cultural And Social Influences in The Poetry of The Poet Fadwa Touqan, and It Is Divided Into:**First: The Conflict Between Education and Personal Freedom*

The prominent Palestinian poet Fadwa Touqan is known for her poetry, which reflects her personal experiences and worldview. In her works, she addresses various themes, including personal freedom and education. Learning played a significant role in Touqan's life, not only as a personal experience but also as a source of inspiration for her writings. After the death of her brother, the renowned poet Ibrahim Touqan, Fadwa took on the task of self-education, and her experiences at schools in Nablus and the American University in Beirut had a profound influence on her poetry. One of the most notable poems that reflects the value of education in Fadwa Touqan's life is "A Mountainous Journey, A Difficult Journey," where she discusses her journey of self-discovery and learning through reading and study. In her poetry, education is portrayed as a means of self-liberation and personal development. Personal freedom was another important theme in Fadwa Touqan's work. She expressed the struggles she faced as a woman in a conservative society and her dream of achieving freedom. In her poem "Alone with the Days," she describes her struggles with societal restrictions and how she seeks to free herself through poetry. In her poem "The Last Melody," she speaks of freedom as a comprehensive theme that goes beyond the personal to include the political and national, highlighting the relationship between individual freedom and national liberation. In "Alone with the Days," Touqan states:

Alone

I walk in the paths of life, alone.

Alone... no one

extends their hand to my little one... alone.

Like a flower in a barren desert,

Alone...

Like the moon on a starless night,

Alone,

Like a feather in the wind,

No one

opens their heart to me... no one,

Calls my name... no one,

Asks about me... alone,

With sorrows,

With illusions,

With dreams,

I carry them alone... but

Despite my solitude,

Despite my isolation,

I find strength in my heart,

I find light in my soul,

That lights my way,

*I will walk... I will continue,
 I will resist... for I am
 Alone... but I am strong,
 Strong... like hope,
 Like a dream, like light, like life.
 (Touqan, Fadwa, 1987).*

Second: The Struggle of the Suffering of the Palestinian People

Touqan is considered one of the most prominent Palestinian poets who reflected the suffering of the Palestinian people in her poetry. Her personal experience and the experience of her homeland under Israeli occupation had a significant impact on her writings. Her poems addressed themes of struggle, resistance, perseverance, and hope. Touqan focused on depicting the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation by highlighting the oppression and injustice they endure, encouraging them to persevere and fight for their rights. Therefore, we see hope and steadfastness despite the harsh conditions. Touqan carried hope in her poetry and urged her people to remain resilient and cling to their land and identity. In her poetry, she addressed the importance of Palestinian identity and attachment to the land, emphasizing the need to preserve Palestinian heritage and culture in the face of attempts to erase and eliminate them. Therefore, Touqan says:

*"My beloved, lamps of the dark, my brothers,
 In the wound...
 Oh secret of the dough, oh seed of wheat,
 It dies here to give us,
 And gives us... and gives us.
 On your paths I walk, and here I am among your eyes,
 I gather them and wipe them with the tears of yesterday,
 And I plant, like you, my feet in my homeland,
 And in my land,
 And I plant, like you, my eyes,
 In the path of the sun and the stars." (Touqan, Fadwa, 1990, p. 398.).*

Third: The Conflict of National Experiences

Fadwa Touqan, the prominent Palestinian poet, expressed in her poetry feelings of isolation and loneliness in a way that is both moving and reflective of her personal experiences as a woman in a conservative society, and her struggle as an individual in an occupied homeland. These themes played a significant role in shaping her emotions. Touqan addressed these topics through the portrayal of a self that is both contemplative and in pain. Her personal experience of isolation is clearly reflected in her poetry, as she lived in a traditional and conservative society, which made her feel detached and isolated. She was deeply affected by the loss of her brother, Ibrahim Touqan, who had a significant influence on her life and poetry.

Touqan depicted her feelings of loneliness and separation through self-reflection, expressing her sadness and longing for connection and understanding from others. Isolation and loneliness were part of her daily life, and she found solace in writing. Despite her feelings of isolation, Touqan also expressed her inner

strength and resilience in confronting these emotions. She saw isolation as an opportunity for reflection and thinking, helping her achieve inner balance. In her poetry, Touqan conveyed her feelings of isolation and loneliness in a profound and moving way. Through her personal experience, she provided a vivid depiction of human suffering in the search for connection and understanding in a world filled with challenges. Her poetry became a refuge and a source of strength for her to overcome these feelings and continue the struggle for both self and homeland.

Touqan Says:

*"My wish is for silence, for calm, do not tell me
It was or will be
Do not speak to me of yesterday, nor
Go to tomorrow
This moment, for me
It has no past or future
The limited time no longer holds
Any meaning for me
Yesterday has faded, leaving echoes
And shadows... and the unknown tomorrow stretches far
It is not clear
Perhaps it was only what I painted
With the hands of my dreams and your dreams within it
Perhaps it was only what we wish for
This moment, nothing else
A flower that bloomed between our hands
No fruit, no roots
A fleeting flower of beauty, let us hold it before passing."
(Touqan, Fadwa, 1990, p. 360-361.)*

Conclusions

In conclusion, this research on the various conflicts in the poetry of Fadwa Touqan reveals that her poetic works reflect a life filled with complex psychological, social, and political experiences. Her poems portray multiple conflicts that express her deep emotions and personal and social suffering. Fadwa Touqan succeeded in using simple language, yet filled with emotion and powerful imagery, to depict her inner struggles. She expressed feelings of loneliness, isolation, and pain in a way that deeply resonates with readers. Her poetry highlights the challenges she faced as a woman in a conservative society, and she used symbolism and strong language to convey her struggle for freedom and liberation from social constraints. On the other hand, the national struggle in Fadwa Touqan's poetry reflects her deep love for her homeland and the suffering it endures under occupation.

Her poems serve as a call for resistance and perseverance in the face of injustice and aggression. These various forms of conflict illustrate how poetry can be a powerful means of expressing complex human experiences and confronting life's challenges. Fadwa Touqan's poetry emphasizes the significance of these different aspects of conflict in shaping her poetic experience, while also shedding light on the literary

techniques she employed to express these struggles. Her ability to capture the psychological, social, and national conflicts she faced with sincerity and heightened emotional sensitivity enhanced the understanding of the depth and impact of her poetic experience.

Touqan's poetry is a testament to how the environment, particularly the family setting, influenced her creative expression. Ultimately, Fadwa Touqan remains a symbol of Arabic poetry that comes from the heart, speaking of human suffering and hopes. Her literary works are considered a valuable heritage of Arabic literature and serve as a source of inspiration for future generations to express their emotions and experiences with sincerity and creativity.

The most prominent results of the aspects of conflict in Fadwa Touqan's poetry that the study reached.

Fadwa Touqan clearly expressed her internal psychological struggles, such as feelings of loneliness, isolation, and pain.

She used emotional language and powerful poetic imagery to reflect these emotions, particularly in the social struggle.

Her poems addressed the social challenges, and the restrictions imposed on women in a conservative society.

She focused on the struggle of women for freedom and liberation from social constraints.

Her poems served as a call for resistance and perseverance in the face of injustice and aggression, expressing hope and the strong will of the Palestinian people.

Fadwa Touqan heavily relied on symbols and poetic imagery to embody the different conflicts.

Fadwa Touqan heavily relied on symbols and poetic imagery to embody the different conflicts.

These images contributed to enhancing the expression of emotions and ideas with depth and clarity.

She used simple language, yet rich in emotion, making her poems close to the hearts of readers.

The simplicity of the language did not hinder deep and meaningful expression of her experiences.

The family environment and the conservative society in which Fadwa Touqan grew up played a significant role in shaping her struggles.

Fadwa Touqan was part of the resistance literature that expressed the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation.

Her poems were not just expressions of personal emotions, but also calls for struggle and resistance.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of the different aspects of conflict in shaping Fadwa Touqan's poetic experience.

These results confirm that Fadwa Touqan was a poet who expressed her emotions and experiences with sincerity and depth.

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