

RESEARCH ARTICLE	Ahmed Matar and Satirical Language: Political Poems as a Model	
Khaldoune Abderrahmane	Mohamed Khider University, Biskra, Algeria	
	Algeria	
	Email: Kaldonk01@gmail.com	
	Doi Serial	https://doi.org/10.56334/sei/8.6.32
Keywords	Satirical literature, politic, Ahmed Matar, criticism, sarcasm, rebuke.	
Abstract Satirical literature is no less important than other forms of serious literary writing. It can sometimes replace an essay or poem. Satirical literature is the most refined form of humor, especially when tinged with political slant. Thus, poet Ahmed Matar found it to be a powerful force in constructing his satirical political poetry, a suitable tool and a suitable means for criticism, sarcasm, and rebuke. His poetry appears comical in its appearance, but its effect is as laughable as reality itself. For those who care about it, it is more painful than a cruel death. It is a form of conscious criticism, blended with an innate sense rooted in the depths of a troubled and oppressed people. This political poet was shaped by the reality he lived, a people submissive to an oppressive authority devoid of sound thinking. He took it upon himself to confront this injustice, to take up the cause of the nation, and to express it in a unique style, using satire as his tool and politics as his medium.		
Citation Khaldoune A. (2025). Ahmed Matar and Satirical Language: Political Poems as a Model. <i>Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems</i> , 8(6), 310-315; doi:10.56352/sei/8.6.32. https://imcra-az.org/archive/364-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-6-volviii-2025.html		
Licensed © 2025 The Author(s). Published by Science, Education and Innovations in the context of modern problems (SEI) by IMCRA - International Meetings and Journals Research Association (Azerbaijan). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).		
Received: 04.05.2025	Accepted: 12.05.2025	Published: 21.05.2025 (available online)

Introduction

Sarcasm in literature is an art that expresses deep pain and heals hidden distress. One seeks to resort to it to treat his pain with the opposite, and heal his distress with the opposite. Hence, the pain felt by the writer or poet, and his inability to eliminate the causes of this pain, is the motive behind this sarcasm that he creates.

However, the motives for resorting to this method differ from one era to another, as the ultimate goal of sarcasm in one era was individualistic and in another era collective, and the aim of a writer in writing these texts was political and other social, or he had other reasons, and for this we say that sarcasm is a type of satire, or debauchery, or sarcasm, or humor, or joke, or playfulness, or..., but with a difference.

Satirical literature is no less important than other forms of serious literary writing, and may sometimes replace an article or a poem. It is the most refined form of humor,

especially when it is politically tinged. Many names and pens have emerged in this field, including the Iraqi poet Ahmed Matar, who made his poetry a platform for rejecting Arab reality, in a sarcastic way that made it his own style in addressing the nation's issues, and a fertile material in building his satirical political poetry, a suitable tool, and a valid means for criticism, sarcasm, and rebuke. It is a form of conscious criticism mixed with an innate sense rooted in the depths of the worried and oppressed people.

The language of mockery and its methods in Ahmed Matar

When we browse the poet's collection, we see that sarcasm occupied a large space in most of his poems, forming the reality of his distinction, as he painted in his poems clear pictures of the suffering of the Arab man, and the enormity of the pain that he suffered, and he was able to use the colors of sarcasm abundantly in his poetry, especially in the political field, so it was his stinging weapon that was considered a weapon more powerful than the weapon of war.

His language was characterized by the obsessions of despair and extreme sadness, and it appeared clearly in his poems and banners, without embellishment or falsification. We find him pouring out his anger and sarcastic criticism of any negative phenomenon, and mocking and ridiculing the faces of kings and princes.⁹.

Ahmed Matar was classified as a political poet and a poet of resistance, as he was distinguished by a special style that aimed to show the calamities present in his society, and in doing so he used sarcasm as a weapon to expose the conspiracies of the government, informants, and secret forces...etc.⁹.

He had many collections of poetry, which enriched the Arabic library and deeply touched upon the issues of the oppressed Arab people, including: Signs 1984:1.

Signs 1987:2 AD.

Signs 1989:3 AD.

I am the one who was hanged above 1989 AD.

Diwan Al Sa'a 1989 AD.

Signs 1993:4 AD.

Signs 1994:5 AD.

Signs 1997:6 AD.

Signs 1999:7 AD.

Miscellaneous banners not yet published in Diwan⁹.

Samples of his poetry

The literature of satire is a message that can do a lot. It can bring the distant closer if it wants, and distance the close if it wants. We have taken part of his satirical poetry, in which we show his resentment against injustice and the oppressors, and the tyranny that has lasted so long and spread, destroying everything, green and dry.

The cell

The poet, in the first person, tells the story of a friend who was studying medicine. The informant arrested him because of his partisan leanings and then killed him. When the poet examined his body, he saw signs of torture, while the regime announced that he had died of a heart attack. He says:

I have a friend

He studies at the medical college

The informant confirmed his partisan leanings.

And he arrested him

When he saw him once

He reads about the formation of the "cell"!

And after one day

His body was released

In a safe condition:

He got a gunshot wound to his head!

In his chest a gun kiss!

On his back is a picture of a gun!

But I

When I asked the parish guard

About his command

Tell me

My friend's death has happened

By heart attack!⁹.

The student's sin was that he studied about the cell in the medical college, so his punishment was death in prison after being tortured. The poet used the method of metaphor instead of explicitness in presenting this story, which is a method mixed with sarcasm (the kick of the gun; a metaphor for hitting, with its butt and its kiss; a metaphor for the bullet, and its image; a metaphor for hitting), where he revealed the ignorance and backwardness of the rulers, when the informant of the authority, who is a secret security man, proceeds to arrest a student studying in the medical college, who reads about (the cell); The cell in the body of a living being, so this informant thought he was reading about (the party cell), so he believed that he had an opposition party, so he proceeded to arrest him until he died in prison, but he told his friend that he died of a heart attack, knowing that there were traces in his body that confirmed that he died under torture.

The righteous ruler

In this poem, the poet describes the rulers of the present era, with the negative qualities that are found in rulers, qualities in which honesty and loyalty are not known, and he says:

They described a ruler to me

He has not realized, for a long time,

Sedition or massacre!

He didn't lie!

He did not betray!

He did not fire at those who criticized him!

He did not squander money on those who praised him!

He didn't put a tank over his mouth!

He did not submit to the crushing conscience!

It didn't happen!

He was not disturbed!

He did not hide from his people

Behind the mountains of weapons!

He is popular

And his shelter is simple

Like a shelter for the working classes!⁷.

The poet asks his interlocutors to describe to him a ruler who is not a criminal, a liar, a traitor, who does not oppress his people, who does not kill them, and who does not spend money on poets of power who praise the rulers and gain favor with them. He does not benefit from a war machine against his countrymen. He is brave and popular, and strives to do hard work. Therefore, his house is simple, like the houses of workers and farmers. In other words, the poet hopes that a ruler who has these qualities exists, but in reality, he does not exist.

People's favorite

In this poem, the poet criticizes the unjust Arab rulers who claim to love the people, but do not care about their lives and suffering. The ruler in the poet's country is on one side, while all the Arab people are in front of him on the other side. The poet points to the injustice, oppression, and lack of freedom in his country, so we find him saying:

The image of the ruler in every direction

on behalf of

In a country that cries from oppression!

bright

In a country where nights play in its morning!

smooth

In a country with its own troubles

We are afflicted with all kinds of calamities!

loud

In a country where the voice is imprisoned

And the one with no lips!⁸.

The poet describes the face of the Arab ruler as smiling, bright, and smooth, while the people in the society besieged by oppression and injustice have blackened faces, afflicted with plagues and calamities. Thus we see the states of the ruler as the opposite of the states of the people; he smiles while the people cry from oppression, and he shines while the people stumble in the night of oppression and ignorance.

House and Twenty Banners

In the poem "A House and Twenty Banners," the poet mocks the Arab League, which seeks to restore the usurped rights of the Arabs through the United Nations, saying:

Our family is faithful

She prolongs her bowing

She prolongs her prostration

And she seeks victory over her enemy

From the United Nations!⁷.

Ahmed Matar says, "Our family members," meaning by "family" all Arab countries, are believers who pray, and prolong their bowing and prostration, but they want help from the United Nations against their enemies. The latter does not include only Arabs, so the balance does not tip completely in favor of the Arabs. He mocks the Arab countries, which claim to be committed to Islam but do not trust in God. That is why we see them linking their fate to the resolutions of the United Nations, to take back their usurped rights, but it is impossible.

Plan

The poet depicts a caricature of extreme repression, loss of freedom, and the presence of comprehensive injustice at the hands of the rulers and their police in his society. He cries out that freedom does not exist in the current society, and the government does not allow the Arab person to be free:

When I die

And the authority mourns me

The police escort my body

Do not think that the tyrant

He has honored me

Rather, he surrounded me with tyranny

And he followed me until the last point

So that I don't feel free

Even when I'm in the coffin!⁸.

The poet says in the current Arab society, wherever a person dies, the government carries out his funeral, but this action does not mean honoring the dead at the hands of the government, rather the rulers with overwhelming power surround him, and do not even release him in the coffin. The poet depicts in a dramatic way that freedom is taken away in a person's world, until his funeral and the confirmation of his placement in the grave.⁹.

famous actor

Interrogative sentences accumulate in the poem, giving the text a convincing semantic dimension, because it is a recipient of space for interpretation, discussion, and argumentation about the state of its situation. Perhaps this is what the poet sought when he made the questioning continue until its end:

How long will we walk around our graves?

How long will we turn?

The hair must break

And you break the jar with the jar

And the hidden is revealed

He lived a long life that made us hungry

In the deserted theater

And the famous actor falls

And the majority falls¹⁰.

The poet asks about the time the Arab needs to get rid of the dark grave that has weakened him. The poet rebukes this citizen and demands that he work to achieve what he aspires to and stay away from the play that the ruler is creating, the gist of which is that eternal rule is mine and no one else's. It began with me and will not end. The country's situation is fixed and its rule does not change. All of this makes the recipient acknowledge the validity of the matter and share his position..

The beginning

The poet gives power to others, indicating his own courage, as he seeks to inflame the feelings of others, and compel them to change their situations. Therefore, we find that the poet has invested in this style, because of its argumentative power and ability to move people's feelings, so he says:

Here I am, breathing the universe

I wore the earth's shoes

And the heavens as a shirt

And I put the sun in the loop of my garment
lily!

I am the Sultan of Sultans

You are servants to servants

So ask my feet for forgiveness

And kiss my feet

O sultans of the narrow lands!⁽¹¹⁾

Here, the poet is proud of himself and elevates his status when he orders the rulers to ask forgiveness from his feet and kiss them. He used the imperative form.(Ask, kiss) is an explicit formula, its accomplishments are implicit, and it indicates the elevation and loftiness of the poet and the degradation and degradation of the rulers.

From this sense of high status_superiority_, the poet began to issue his orders, which included a lot of advice and guidance for the inhabitants of (the Arab world), through which he tried to increase awareness and inform that goodness remains an eternal and indelible trace, and remains a witness to the heroic stance that guaranteed its owner immortality. As for the one who sows corruption in the land, no matter how much strength he is given or how long he lives, and no matter how many traces he leaves, they will inevitably disappear, with the disappearance and end of his rule.¹².

Insect worms

In this poem, there are two voices opposing each other: the voice that takes a positive side, and the voice of the speaker who takes a negative side, the negation of everything negative, as if he wants to make himself a role model for everyone who wants to walk the path of struggle, so he says:

My people are unknown and known

They have no concept of what I mean

Adopts the nightingale's song

But he sings with the owl

He screams from the pain of fever

And the cry of the dead is blamed

He sharpens a sword for the oppressor in the morning

And he howls at an oppressed night⁽¹³⁾.

The poet denounces the duality that his people have come to follow. On the one hand, he finds them singing poems that call for freedom and revolution against the oppressor, but on the other hand, they follow the dictates of the oppressive ruler and implement them, without rejection or denial.

The denial presents two positions or two images: the position of the rulers who outwardly adopt jealousy and love of the homeland, but inwardly they are hypocritical and cooperate with the colonizer; and the position of the poet who rejects all forms of evasion, and the shackling and restriction of freedom, by denying all these methods used by the ruling regimes, which are constant in them.

Who do we complain to about our tragedies?

The interrogative poem is among the most prominent poems in his poetry, including the poem "To whom do we complain about our tragedies?", in which the poet poses many questions about the fate of his people and what they are suffering. He says:

Who do we complain to about our tragedies?

Who will listen to our complaints and save us?

Should we complain to our ruler about our humiliating death?

Will death bring us back to life?!

We are a flock...and the butcher is our shepherd

and exiles...we walk in our lands.

We carry our coffin by force...in our hands⁽¹⁴⁾.

He says that whoever loses his simplest rights is an exile, even if he is in his own land. The right of citizenship is violated, which showed in himself a feeling of alienation. He regretted this situation, in a tone full of sadness and condolences, not without sarcasm, as he announced from the beginning that...The "animalism" of humans in these

countries, as the citizens are likened to "herds", and the rulers to "butchers."

But the deadly alienation, loss, and fragmentation that befell the poet resulted in a literary revolution and a mockery that rejected the bitter reality; a backward Arab reality.¹⁵

The wall

In this poem, the poet expresses his astonishment at the condition of his country's prisoners, who are thrown behind bars without any charges to speak of. In fact, it is assumed that the jailer should be imprisoned instead of the prisoner. He says:

I stood in my cell

Flip the ideas:

I am the prisoner here

Or that guard nearby?

All that separates us is a wall

He said to me: The one you feel sorry for

He came by his own choice

I came by force

Before it collapses between us

Tell me about a lion

A donkey imprisoned him!¹⁶

The poet mocks the rulers and their followers by describing the jailer as a donkey. He is also a prisoner of the state, carrying out their orders without question. This is what made the poet wonder at his condition, because he differs from the prisoner in that he came of his own free will, to become a servile servant humiliated by the state just as a donkey is humiliated.

cold weapon

The poet addresses his call to every oppressed Arab, under the fangs of authority, and calls on him to rise up:

O human being

O you who are hungry, frightened, and humiliated

O you who were hanged by your eyelashes

Oh, you who dances slaughtered

On his nerves

O you who are exiled in the memory of time

I was full of death, so I revolted

It's time to publish now!¹⁷

The poet calls on the oppressed people in every Arab country where they are exploited by their state, and invites them to shake off the dust and stand up against the dictatorial authority that oppresses its people. In his lines,

he mocks the silence of the people and their submission to oppression and tyranny, such as (the starving, the frightened, the humiliated, the buried, in his clothes, the hanged, by his eyelashes...).

The reward

In this poem, Ahmed Matar compares freedom in non-Islamic (European) countries, which are far from the divine concepts that call for freedom, and Muslims who believe in divine concepts and the lack of freedom in their societies:

In the land of the polytheists

One spits in the face of the rulers

And he will be punished with a fine!

And we, the people of the right, have

One spits blood under the hands of informers

And he sees the Day of Resurrection

Rose water and cardamom are sprinkled here.

Without permission

On the face of the Commander of the Faithful¹⁸.

The poet says, "In the land of polytheists and oppressors, a person spits in the face of the rulers, and is sentenced to a fine for his deed. In our society, a person's spitting is blood due to the torture of his informants. However, if he throws rosewater and cardamom on the face of the ruler, the informants see it as a difficult day like the Day of Judgment." This poem represents the suffering and pain of the Arab person, and shows us the conflict between the ruler and his oppressive apparatus with the sons of the oppressed people. These oppressive practices point to the severe repression and bitter reality in his society.

The loyal friend

The poet says that oppression, injustice and tyranny are always with me, throughout my life, and at all times and in all situations; night and day, morning and evening, summer and winter:

All my life

Oppression runs in front of me and behind me

He is my shadow at noon

He is my companion in the evening

He is my summer heat

It is very cold for me in winter.

It is watery

And my antenna

.....

A thousand thanks, O oppression

For this loyalty!

I have never found such loyalty

To all friends!⁽¹⁹⁾.

The poet describes oppression and injustice as being constant companions of the Arab person. They are like a shadow in all places, like intense heat in the summer, and bitter cold in the winter. Oppression is also like water and air, and like a loyal friend. The irony of all this is his saying: Oppression is always with me, and therefore it deserves thanks for its loyalty, which surpasses the loyalty of all friends.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we conclude that contemporary satire, with its eloquent literary orientation, has changed in many aspects from what it may have appeared in previous eras, where its purpose was satire and laughter for the sake of

laughter only. However, the contemporary trend adopts satire as a style and a means of expressing many topics, most notably politics, but it is far removed from directness and clarity.

The poet Ahmed Matar has adopted sarcasm as a biting style, as he was able to use the colors of sarcasm abundantly in his poetry, especially in the political field. Sarcasm for him is an offensive weapon that does not violate customs, nor challenge laws. He believes that he cannot speak frankly in his society, so he must resort to sarcasm, and use it to clarify to us the flaws of his society and the corruption prevailing in it, and the violations of human rights at the hands of Arab rulers, colonialism and foreigners in his society, and the suppression of freedoms, in addition to using it to criticize dilemmas and social diseases such as ignorance, loss of justice, backwardness, and strife in society and so on.

Notes and references

⁽¹⁾ See: Hani Al-Khair, Ahmed Matar, Poet of Exile and the Burning Moment, Fleets Publishing House, Algeria-R, D T, D T, P:10,49.

⁽²⁾ Shaker Ameri, Ali Saydani, his friend Asadi, Ahmed Matar's political poetry style, vision Critical, Journal of the College of Basic Education for Educational and Human Sciences, University of Babylon, Iraq, Issue 21, June, 2015, p. 03.

⁽³⁾ Youssef Shanout Al-Zubaidi, Encyclopedia of Masterpieces of Arabic Poetry, Ahmed Matar, Dar Dijlah, Jordan, 1st ed. 2015, p. 8.

⁽⁴⁾ Ahmedrain, The complete poetry collection, Remarkable—AT2, S:13, 14.

⁽⁵⁾ Ahmedrain, The complete poetry collection, Signs 6, p.:134, 135.

⁽⁶⁾ Diwan:that—In the mission—Sign—No, no:24.

⁽⁷⁾ Ahmedrain, The complete poetry collection, Remarkable-AT1, S:113.

⁽⁸⁾ Ahmedrain, The complete poetry collection, Signs 3, p:80.

⁽⁹⁾ See: Mohsen Khaddami and Muhammad Jannati Far, Irony and its Semantic Fields in Contemporary Iraqi Poetry. Ahmed Matar as a model, Journal of Arabic Language and Literature, Scientific and Refereed, Year 12, Issue 04 1428 AH, p. 601.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ahmedrain, The complete poetry collection, Signs 1, p. 69.

⁽¹¹⁾ Ahmed Matar, The Complete Poetry Collection, p. 59.

⁽¹²⁾ Muslim Malik Baer Al-Asadi, The Language of Poetry in Ahmed Matar, Master's Degree in Arabic Language and Literature,

Supervised by: Thamer Samir Hassan Al-Shammari, University of Babylon, Iraq, 2007, p. 91.

⁽¹³⁾ AhmedM—Fly, The complete poetry collection, Banners 6, p. 252.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Youssef Shenout Al-Zubaidi, Encyclopedia of Masterpieces of Arabic Poetry, Ahmed Matar, p. 194.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Fatima Hussein Al-Afeef, The Psychological Aspect of Irony in Contemporary Arabic Poetry, Muhammad Al-Maghut, Mahmoud Darwish and Ahmed Matar, Models, Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Volume 43, Issue 10 3, 2016, p: 2245.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Ahmed Matar, The Poetry Collection, p. 56.

⁽¹⁷⁾ The same, p. 57.

⁽¹⁸⁾ God—did not-I am-h—pain-N al-Ram—For (the miracle)—M Al-Wasy—d).

⁽¹⁹⁾ Ahmedrain, The complete poetry collection, Signs 1, p.:55.

⁽²⁰⁾ Qayz: the period of intense heat in the summer (Al-Manj)-D in language—(a).

⁽²¹⁾ Ahmedrain, The complete poetry collection, Signs 3, p:69.