

Aesthetic Values in the Poetry of Anas Al-Dagheim in Light of the Islāmīc Perspective

İslami perspektif ışığında Enes ed-Duğaym'ın Şiirinde Estetik Değerler

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Abstract: Modern literary criticism is founded upon several important aesthetic values resulting from the interaction of aesthetic qualities with the literary work's etheric (artistic) quality, structure and aesthetic appeal, intellectual and ethical elements. Beauty, for example, is not restricted to formal (linguistic) attributes; it includes a system of signification that creates consciousness, informs perception, shapes an ethical relationship of mankind to the world, and so on. Within an Islāmīc context, Aesthetic Values have a unique character: they are connected to both the Divine; therefore they have a foundation of justice, purity, transcendence, and represent a path toward moral/soul/ethical development rather than simply an avenue for pleasure and/or aesthetic appreciation.

Building on this theoretical framework, this study will examine Aesthetic Values in the Poetry of Anas al-Dagheim from an Islāmīc perspective and as a poet representative of a contemporary voice that reflects the historical, political and social changes that have occurred in the Contemporary Arab World (Especially the Syrian Revolution, etc). This study operates under the premise that al-Dagheim's Poetic Experience holds a strong combination of Beauty and Value and Creative and Ethical Artistry, so that the poem cannot be separated from its humanistic and mission-oriented dimension.

The study is structured into a theoretical introduction that examines the concept of aesthetic values and the development of its meanings in philosophical and critical thought, highlighting the role of beauty within the Islāmīc framework, which is based on a monotheistic vision and an ethical

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purpose. It is followed by three applied chapters investigating the most prominent aesthetic values manifested in al-Dagheim's poetry: the aesthetic, the heroic, and the tragic. These chapters analyze representative poetic examples that reveal the mechanisms of aesthetic formation and highlight their semantic and symbolic dimensions. The research adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology supported by interpretive analysis, based on a close reading of the poetic text, while employing Islâmic references as an interpretive framework and considering the historical and social context in which the poetic experience was formed. The analysis seeks to transcend the conventional separation between form and content, uncovering the integration of aesthetic and ethical dimensions within the poetic text.

The study concludes with several key findings. Most notably, the aesthetic values in al-Dagheim's poetry do not appear as isolated artistic features but are interwoven within a unified vision that connects beauty to value and art to moral purpose. The aesthetic value is reflected in the poet's celebration of homeland, its spaces, and humanity as a bearer of purity and dignity, particularly through the representation of religious figures, foremost among them the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), in two complementary dimensions: a sensory dimension associated with scene and place, and a spiritual dimension centered on purity and transcendence. The heroic value is expressed collectively through resilience, rejection of humiliation, and self-sacrifice, rather than through the glorification of isolated individual heroism. The tragic value emerges as a conscious aesthetic response to the nation's suffering, reinterpreted within a faith-based horizon that transforms pain and loss into ethical awareness and resistance. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that Anas al-Dagheim's poetry presents a contemporary model for embodying aesthetic values within the Islmic perspective, integrating artistic, intellectual, and human dimensions, and rendering the poem both a cultural practice and an aesthetic testimony to freedom, dignity, and identity.

Keywords: Arabic literatüre, Poetry, Aesthetic values, Heroic, Tragic, Anas al-Dagheim.

Öz: Estetik değerler, modern edebiyat eleştirisinde merkezi kavramlar arasında yer almakta olup, sanatsal duyarlılık, üslupsal yapı ve edebî metnin etik ve entelektüel boyutları arasındaki karmaşık etkileşim çerçevesinde ele alınmaktadır. Bu eleştirel bağlamda güzellik, yalnızca dilsel biçim, ritim ya da uyumlu sınırlı bir olgu değildir; aksine algıyı şekillendiren, bilinci yönlendiren ve insanın dünya karşısındaki etik duruşunu oluşturan anlamlar ve göstergeler sistemi olarak işlev görür. İslami perspektifte güzellik, hak ve iyilikle doğrudan ilişkili olarak kendine özgü bir konum kazanır. Safılık, Adalet ve Yücelik ilkeleri temelinde şekillenir ve bireyin ahlaki ve manevi yükselişine hizmet eden bir araç olarak değerlendirilir. Bu yönüyle güzellik, yalnızca duyuşal hazza ya da geçici estetik etkiye indirgenmez. Dolayısıyla estetik, hem bireysel hem de toplumsal düzeyde bir bilinçlenme ve değer üretme aracı olarak ele alınabilir.

Bu çalışma, söz konusu kuramsal çerçeveden hareketle Enes ed-Duğaym'ın şiirinde öne çıkan estetik değerleri İslami bakış açısı yönünde ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Şair, çağdaş Arap şiirinin önemli seslerinden biri olarak şiirsel üretimini tarihsel, politik ve toplumsal dönüşümlerle güçlü biçimde ilişkilendirmiştir. Bu ilişki özellikle Suriye devrimi bağlamında belirginlik kazanmaktadır. Araştırma, Enes ed-Duğaym'ın şiirinde güzellik ile değer, sanatsal yaratıcılık ile etik bağlılık arasında sıkı bir ilişkinin bulunduğu düşüncesine dayanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda şiir, insani ve mesaj odaklı boyutundan bağımsız düşünülemez.

Çalışmada; teorik bir giriş bölümünde estetik değerler kavramı ele alınmış, kavramın felsefi ve eleştirel düşüncedeki anlam gelişimi ile İslami çerçevede güzelliğin rolü tartışılmıştır. İslami görüşü, tevhidî bir bakış açısı ve etik amaç temeli üzerinden güzelliği değerlendiren bütüncül bir yaklaşım sunmaktadır. Bu teorik çerçevenin ardından, Enes ed-Duğaym'ın şiirinde belirginleşen üç temel estetik değer üzerinde durulmuştur: estetik değer, kahramanlık değeri ve trajik değer. Bu değerler; temsili şiir örnekleri üzerinden analiz edilerek estetik oluşum mekanizmaları, anlamsal derinlik ve sembolik boyutlar ayrıntılı biçimde incelenmiştir.

Araştırma, betimsel-analitik bir yöntemi benimsemiş ve yorumlayıcı çözümlemelerle desteklenmiştir. Şiirsel metinlerin analiz edilmesi, İslami referansların yorumlayıcı bir çerçeve olarak kullanılması ve şiirsel deneyimin olduğu tarihsel ve toplumsal bağlamın dikkate alınması, yöntemin temel dayanaklarını oluşturmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, biçim ile içerik arasındaki geleneksel ayrımı aşmayı ve şiirsel metinde estetik ile etik boyutların kaynaşmasını ortaya koymayı hedeflemektedir.

Araştırmanın bulguları, estetik değerlerin Enes ed-Duğaym'ın şiirinde yalıtılmış sanatsal unsurlar olarak değil; güzellik ile değer, sanat ile etik amacı birleştiren bütünsel bir vizyon içinde ortaya çıktığını göstermektedir. Estetik değer, şairin vatani, mekânları ve insanı saflık ve onurun taşıyıcısı olarak yüceltmesinde ve dinî şahsiyetlerin temsili aracılığıyla, özellikle Hz. Muhammed (s.a.v.)'in figürü üzerinden iki düzeyde tezahür etmektedir: sahne ve mekânla ilişkili duysal bir boyut ile saflık ve yücelik merkezli ruhsal bir boyut şeklindedir. Kahramanlık değeri, bireysel kahramanlığı yüceltmekten ziyade, toplu direniş, aşağılanmayı reddetme ve fedakârlık ekseninde kolektif bir bilinç olarak ifade edilmiştir. Trajik değer ise ulusun yaşadığı acıya yönelik bilinçli bir estetik tepki olarak ortaya çıkmış; inanç temelli bir ufuk içinde acı ve kaybı etik farkındalık ve direniş bilincine dönüştürmüştür. Sonuç olarak Enes ed-Duğaym'ın şiiri, estetik değerlerin İslami perspektif içinde somutlaştırılmasına yönelik çağdaş bir model sunmakta; sanatsal, entelektüel ve insani boyutları bütünlleştirerek şiiri hem kültürel bir pratik hem de özgürlük, onur ve kimliğe ilişkin estetik bir tanıklık düzeyine taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap edebiyatı, Şiir, Estetik Değerler, Kahramanlık, Trajik, Enes ed-Duğaym.

Introduction

Aesthetic values constitute one of the most prominent elements that confer uniqueness and depth upon a poetic text, as they express the poet's vision of the world, reveal his emotional experience, and contribute to shaping the artistic structure of the text while defining its stance toward humanity and existence. Poetry, as a human creative record, reflects an aesthetic consciousness connected to the culture of society and its intellectual and spiritual references, and embodies the system of values prevailing within its temporal and spatial environment.

Each poet's aesthetic awareness is grounded in the cultural context to which he belongs and is influenced by the prevailing intellectual and doctrinal conceptions of his society.⁸⁶ When a poet belongs to an Islāmic community, the Islāmic conception of beauty based on the balance between spirit and matter and its connection to ethical and human values leaves a clear impact on the formation of this awareness and is reflected in the poetic text through its sensory and intellectual manifestations, poetic imagery, and mechanisms of suggestion and meaning. Within this framework, Islām advocates a qualitative shift in the concept of beauty, focusing on the elevation of spiritual and moral values within a holistic vision of human aesthetic components in interpersonal relations and in the practice of reflection and contemplation on creation and the universe.⁸⁷

The poetry of Anas al-Dagheim represents a contemporary model of the manifestation of aesthetic values in Arabic poetry in light of the Islāmic perspective. In his texts, pure aesthetic values intertwine with heroic and tragic values within a poetic vision imbued with humanistic and civilizational concerns. al-Dagheim combines the beauty of imagery and sincerity of expression on the one hand with the evocation of history and glorification of acts of resistance on the other, while highlighting the tragic dimension emerging from the crisis-ridden Arab reality, which imparts a heightened emotional intensity to his poetry.

The poetry of Anas al-Dagheim has attracted the attention of several critical and linguistic studies that have examined various dimensions of his poetic experience. In the linguistic domain, the study "Linguistic Structures and Their Semantics in the Poetry Collection of Anas Ibrahim al-Dagheim: Selected

⁸⁶ Muhammad Salim, *al Qiyam al Jamaliyyah* (Cairo: Dar al Maarif, n.d), 35.

⁸⁷ Abd al Qadir Faydouh, "al Bahth al Aqli fi al Jamaliyyah al Arabiyyah", *Majallat al Turath al Arabi* 63 (Nisan, 1996), 66.

Samples" explored linguistic, Sufi, and syntactic features in selected examples of his poetry.⁸⁸ Similarly, the study "The Semantic Impact of Linguistic Sound in Contemporary Poetry: Anas al-Dagheim, Selected Samples" investigated the relationship between phonetic structures and meaning in a number of selected poetic texts.⁸⁹ The study "The sound level in the poem Al-Ghar by the poet Anas al-Dagheim" also examined the interaction between sound and meaning in the poem Al-Ghar⁹⁰, while the study "Cohesion and Coherence in the Poem I Am Still Waiting by Anas al-Dagheim" focused on textual cohesion and the linguistic devices that ensure the unity of the poetic structure.⁹¹

In the field of stylistics, the study "A Stylistic Study of the Poetry of Anas Ibrahim al-Dagheim – The Poem Al-Ghar as a Model" addressed the musical and rhetorical dimensions of the poem Al-Ghar.⁹² Likewise, the study "An Analytical Stylistic Study of the Poem You Adorned It with Gold by the Poet Anas al-Dagheim" analyzed the poem at the phonological, syntactic, and semantic levels.⁹³ Furthermore, the study "The Stylistics of the Repetitive Structure in the Diwan of Exile - by Anas Ibrahim al-Dagheim - Selected Examples" examined the phenomenon of repetition and its semantic implications in selected poetic texts.⁹⁴

A number of studies have also focused on the use of heritage and intertextuality in al-Dagheim's poetry. The study "Speeches in the poem exiled by poet Anas al-Dagheim Read the semantic" analyzed the poet's use of heritage and cultural discourses in the poem Exile.⁹⁵ The study "The Aesthetics of Intertextuality in the Poem Sugar from Hijaz by Anas al-Dagheim" explored religious, literary, and historical intertextuality and its role

⁸⁸ Madasim Rachida, *Linguistic Structures and Their Semantics in the Poetry Collection of Anas Ibrahim al-Dagheim: Selected Samples* (Ain Témouchent: University of Belhadj Bouchaib, PhD dissertation, 2023), 177–247, 292–361.

⁸⁹ Madasim Rachida, "The Semantic Impact of Linguistic Sound in Contemporary Poetry: Anas al-Dagheim, Selected Samples", *Journal of Functional Language* 9/2 (December 2022), 245–259.

⁹⁰ Zain al-Abidin al-Miyahi, "The sound level in the poem Al-Ghar by the poet Anas al-Dagheim", *Ur Journal of Humanities* 6 (December 2025), 671–691.

⁹¹ Sour Rabab – Si Bouaara Wiame, *Cohesion and Coherence in the Poem I Am Still Waiting by Anas al-Dagheim* (Ain Temouchent: University of Ain Temouchent Belhadj Bouchaib, Master's thesis, 2024), 7–74.

⁹² Atika Arioua – Loubna Belouaer, *A Stylistic Study of the Poetry of Anas Ibrahim al-Dagheim – The Poem Al-Ghar as a Model* (M'Sila: University of Mohamed Boudiaf, Master's thesis, 2024), 34–77.

⁹³ Muhammed Abu Sha'ala, "An Analytical Stylistic Study of the Poem You Adorned It with Gold by the Poet Anas al-Dagheim", *SUJH Journal* 13/2 (November, 2023), 361–370.

⁹⁴ Adel Lakhdar, "The Stylistics of the Repetitive Structure in the Diwan of Exile - by Anas Ibrahim al-Dagheim - Selected Examples", *Journal of Functional Language* 10/1 (June 2023), 271–282.

⁹⁵ Bousghadi Habib, "Speeches in the poem exiled by poet Anas al-Dagheim Read the semantic", *Abhath Journal* 6/2 (July 2020), 60–71.

in enriching poetic meaning.⁹⁶ Additionally, the study “The Islāmic Trend in the Poetry of Anas al-Dagheim” highlighted manifestations of Islāmic orientation in selected poems.⁹⁷ Moreover, the study “The Influence of the Holy Qur’ān on Modern Syrian Poetry: The Poetry of Anas al-Dagheim and Muhammad Diya al-Din al-Sabbagh as a Model” examined Qur’anic intertextuality and narrative influence in his poetic production.⁹⁸

Despite the value of these contributions, they remain limited in scope with regard to treating aesthetic values as an integrated conceptual and analytical system. Most of the aforementioned studies are either stylistic in orientation, focusing on phonological, syntactic, or rhetorical levels, or they are thematic, addressing intertextuality, cohesion, or Islāmic influence in isolation. Even studies that approach the Islāmic dimension tend to emphasize textual manifestation rather than constructing a comprehensive theoretical model of aesthetic value systems. Accordingly, there is still a noticeable gap in scholarship concerning the systematic study of aesthetic values in Anas al-Dagheim’s poetry as an integrated structure governed by an Islāmic epistemological and aesthetic framework.

Building upon this research gap, the present study seeks to provide a comprehensive and systematically grounded analysis of aesthetic values in the poetry of Anas al-Dagheim. It moves beyond fragmented readings that isolate individual stylistic or thematic features, proposing instead an integrated analytical framework that conceptualizes aesthetic values as an interconnected system within poetic discourse. Within this framework, Islāmic aesthetics is employed as a critical lens that enables the interpretation of poetic meaning through the interaction of aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual dimensions, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of the poetic text.

Methodologically, the study adopts a descriptive–analytical approach supported by close reading as its primary tool of textual analysis. This is complemented by a contextual interpretive perspective that situates the poetic text within its broader intellectual, cultural, and doctrinal environment. At the textual level, selected poems are analyzed to identify the manifestations of aesthetic, heroic, and tragic values, as well as the linguistic, rhetorical, and symbolic mechanisms through which these values are constructed. At the

⁹⁶ A group of female students, *The Aesthetics of Intertextuality in the Poem Sugar from Hijaz by Anas al-Dagheim* (El Oued: University of El oued, Master’s thesis, 2025), 20-28.

⁹⁷ International League of Islāmic Literature, “The Islāmic Trend in the Poetry of Anas al-Dagheim,” *Electronic Journal* 134 (2023), available at: <https://adabislami.org/magazine/2023/03/5557/403> (accessed 6 June 2026).

⁹⁸ Muhammed Al-Najjar, *The Influence of the Holy Qur’an on Modern Syrian Poetry: The Poetry of Anas al-Dagheim – Muhammad Diya Al-Din Al-Sabbagh as a Model* (Special Edition, 2024), 38–83.

contextual level, these findings are interpreted in relation to the Islāmic worldview, which provides the underlying epistemological and aesthetic framework shaping the poet's vision. This dual methodological orientation enables a movement from surface-level description to deeper structural and interpretive analysis.

The study is primarily aimed at identifying and analyzing the system of aesthetic values in Anas al-Dagheim's poetry and examining how these values interact with heroic and tragic dimensions within a unified poetic vision. It further seeks to elucidate the role of Islāmic aesthetics in shaping both the production of meaning and the construction of artistic form, thereby demonstrating that aesthetic value in al-Dagheim's poetry functions as a structural principle rather than a decorative feature.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to filling a clear gap in contemporary Arabic literary studies, as it offers the first comprehensive attempt to analyze aesthetic values in the poetry of Anas al-Dagheim within an explicitly Islāmic interpretive framework. Unlike previous studies that focused on isolated linguistic, stylistic, or thematic aspects, this research integrates these dimensions into a unified conceptual model, thereby contributing to the development of a more coherent approach to contemporary Arabic poetic criticism.

Accordingly, the study argues that the aesthetic dimension in Anas al-Dagheim's poetry cannot be adequately understood through partial or purely formalist approaches, but rather requires an integrated analytical perspective that combines textual analysis with value-based interpretation. Within this perspective, Islāmic aesthetics operates as a foundational critical framework that connects artistic form with ethical and spiritual meaning.

On this basis, the study proceeds in the following sections to conduct a close reading of selected poetic texts by Anas al-Dagheim, with the aim of identifying the principal aesthetic value systems and analyzing the mechanisms through which they are articulated and structurally organized within the poetic discourse in relation to the Islāmic worldview.

1. The Concept of Aesthetic Values

The concept of "value" is one of the central notions in intellectual and social studies, due to its normative significance in regulating the behavior of individuals and groups. Values, as a shared intellectual system, represent a set of principles and conceptions through which human behavior is assessed and serve as a measure of the individual's alignment with the cultural and civilizational identity of their society. Scholars have preferred to use the term "values" because of its normative and ethical dimension, which is closely

linked to the intellectual and religious principles guiding human choice. In this context, some have defined values as ideas or conceptions embraced by an individual or a community, which render free choice or behavior consistent with what is accepted by the group, while deviation from them produces a sense of departing from a standard of commitment.⁹⁹

As for "beauty," it has occupied a prominent place in linguistic, philosophical, and humanistic thought. In language, beauty (al-jamal) refers to excellence and splendor, manifesting in creation, action, and meaning, as indicated in the Qur'ānic verse: "And for you is beauty in them when you rest and when you set out" (al-Nahl: 6). The Arab world has expanded our understanding of Beauty to include both visual and conceptual; this is reinforced by the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) saying, "Allah is Beautiful and He loves beauty."¹⁰⁰ Therefore, beauty is not limited to physical appearance, but also encompasses how well we do things and how good our character is.

How different philosophers and theorists define Beauty has differed somewhat based on their "orientation" or "standpoint." For example, Lalande defines aesthetics, from where he collects definitions of Beauty, as the "Science of evaluative judgments that distinguishes between the Beautiful and the Ugly." Webster defines Aesthetics as the study of "Descriptive, Interpretive and Analytical" records of artistic phenomena, along with our perception or experience of their beauty/aesthetics.¹⁰¹ Jamil Saliba defines aesthetics as the science that investigates the conditions, measures, and theories of beauty, artistic taste, and value judgments related to artistic works, integrating both general theoretical and specific applied dimensions.¹⁰² In general, aesthetics can be defined as the study of beauty in its origins, manifestations, and effects on human life and experience.

By combining the meaning of the words Value and Beauty, we can find the term "Aesthetic Values" - This is a means of assessing how we view the aesthetic conduct of other human beings and determining how we view Beauty/ Ugliness in their Artistic Productions and Receptions. Aesthetic values are not merely fleeting sensory responses; rather, they constitute a system of intellectual and cultural standards that guide taste and regulate aesthetic judgment positively or negatively. Some aestheticians have classified these values into evaluative dichotomies, such as beautiful and

⁹⁹ Salim, *al Qiyam al Jamaliyyah*, 41.

¹⁰⁰ Muhammad b. Mukarram b. Ali b. Manzur, *Lisan al Arab* (Beirut: Dar Sader, 3rd ed, 1414 AH), "jml", 126.

¹⁰¹ Izzat Al Sayyid Ahmad, *al Jamal wa Ilm al Jamal* (Amman: Huduth wa Ishraqat lil Nashr, 3rd ed, 2013), 93-94.

¹⁰² Jamil Saliba, *al Mujam al Falsafi* (Beirut: Dar al Kitab al Lubnani, 1982), 408.

ugly, sublime and base, heroic and trivial, or tragic and comic. Benedetto Croce's framework groups aesthetic values based on positive versus negative value. Aesthetic values are based on the following positive values: The Beautiful, The Sublime, and The Noble versus the following negative values: The Ugly, The Deformed, and The Trivial.¹⁰³

Thus, aesthetic values represent a norm for artists (poets) and for their audience's perceptions of beauty within a particular period of history and in the context of the culture from which they emerged.

2. An Introduction to the Poet Anas al-Dagheim

Anas Ibrahim al-Dagheim was born in Jarjanaz, Syria, in 1979. He began his formal education at an early age, completing his elementary school education in Jarjanaz. He later studied civil engineering at Damascus University before he moved to Jordan where he studied pharmacology at Philadelphia University and graduated with a bachelor degree in 2008. From 2008-2010, while in Syria, he worked as a pharmacist. In 2011, he began his required service in the military. He defected from the army in October of the same year, influenced by the events of the Syrian revolution and its political and humanitarian implications.

al-Dagheim began composing poetry during high school, leaning from the outset toward poetry with political and humanistic dimensions. He has published his poems and articles on several Arabic platforms and has participated in both local and international literary festivals. One of his earliest notable achievements was winning first place (Third Generation category) at the First Literary Meeting of Generations Festival for Poetry and Short Story in Aleppo in 2011 for his poem "Anas Nama". He has also been involved in the organisation of several literary events, served as a judge on poetry competitions and has been a member, of the International Islāmic Literature Association.

The poet's extensive knowledge of both classical and contemporary Arabic poetry has enabled him to draw inspiration from several poets, including Abu Tammam (d.354 AH) and Al-Mutanabbi. (d. 231 AH), as well as modern figures including Ahmed Shawqi (d. 1932), Abu al-Qasim Al-Shabi (d. 1934), Muhammad Mahdi Al-Jawahiri (d. 1997), Badawi Al-Jabal (d. 1981) and Al-Fituri (d. 2015). al-Dagheim states that the revolutionary experience has been a major source of his poetic awareness. He has also been significantly influenced by the poet and thinker Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938), particularly in his collection *Al-Manfa* (The Exile), where this influence manifests in the

¹⁰³ Benedetto Croce, *Ilm al Jamal*. Trans. Nazih al Hakim (Amman: al Matbaa al Hashimiyyah, 1963), 115-116.

integration of humanistic and spiritual dimensions, the portrayal of the suffering of Syrian refugees in Turkey, and the linking of the experience of migration with pain, alienation, and a sense of civilizational responsibility.

al-Dagheim has published several poetry collections, the most prominent of which are:

- Huroof Amam al-Nar (Letters Before the Fire, 2002)
- Al-Manfa (The Exile, 2017)
- Al-Joudi (2021)

He has also authored prose and intellectual works, including:

- 100 Signs of Freedom (Dar Itqan for Publishing and Distribution, 2020)
- Sukar min al-Hijaz (Sugar from Hijaz, Dar al-Asala, 2020)
- Al-Majaliss (The Councils, Dar al-Asala, 2021).¹⁰⁴

3. The Beautiful in Anas al-Dagheim's Poetry

The concept of the beautiful constitutes one of the central positive aesthetic values in poetic experience.¹⁰⁵ It encompasses everything that evokes a sense of pleasure and comfort in the soul and awakens the emotions through the interaction of sensory perception with meaning. The appreciation of beauty is not incidental to humans; rather, it is an innate tendency that forms one of the modes of perceiving existence and serves as a means for self-realization and human interaction with the world.

Throughout the entire history of aesthetic philosophy, beauty has played an important role; however, there have been different philosophies on beauty over time, though most philosophies see beauty as a composite of sensory, psychological, intellectual and functional values. Philosophers from classical times (e.g., Socrates, Plato and Aristotle) believed that there is a connection between beauty and how people perceive harmony and perfection in things. Among other ideas, Plato differentiated between Deficient Sensory Beauty (anything that people perceive through their senses) with Absolute Spiritual Beauty (what people understand to be true beauty beyond their senses).¹⁰⁶ In modern philosophy, the concept of beauty was rearticulated primarily in terms of emotional response and disinterested pleasure. Alexander Baumgarten (d. 1762), who first introduced the term "aesthetics," emphasized completeness

¹⁰⁴ Wikipedia. "Anas al-Dagheim", (Accessed 12 January 2025).

¹⁰⁵ Nayef Ballouz, *Ilm al Jamal* (Damascus: Manshurat Jamiat Dimashq, 6th ed, 2003), 9.

¹⁰⁶ M. Ovsyannikov– Z. Smirnova, *Mujaz Tarikh al Nazariyyat al Jamaliyyah*. Trans. Bassem al Saqqa. Beirut: Dar al Farabi, 2nd ed, 1979), 17, 20, 23, 133.

and harmonious proportion among parts as fundamental characteristics of beauty.¹⁰⁷ Edmund Burke (d. 1797) subsequently defined the beautiful as that which produces delight and pleasure in the perceiving subject.¹⁰⁸ This line of thought was further developed by Immanuel Kant (d. 1804), who argued that aesthetic judgment is grounded in taste, and that beauty is experienced as a form of pleasure independent of any practical or utilitarian purpose.¹⁰⁹

In Arab-Islāmic thought, the concept of beauty is closely associated with higher values and acquires a clear moral and spiritual dimension. Ibn Tabataba (d. 322 AH) emphasized balance and harmony as essential conditions for realizing beauty.¹¹⁰ Al-Farabi (d. 339 AH) argued that beauty and adornment in every existent are realized through the attainment of the best possible existence and ultimate perfection.¹¹¹ Al-Ghazali (d. 505 AH) noted that beauty motivates love, yet love linked to beauty seeks no material benefit, establishing that the perception of beauty is purified from utilitarian purposes.¹¹² This Islāmic perspective on beauty thus attains distinctiveness, as it is emancipated from purely sensory pleasure and is tied to ethical and human values, serving as a tool for the spiritual and behavioral development of the individual.

From this perspective, beauty in Anas al-Dagheim's poetry emerges as a functional aesthetic value. It extends beyond mere description or delight to encompass the expression of stance, belonging, sanctification, and resistance to ugliness and destruction. In his poetry, beauty is not a form isolated from meaning, nor is it purely sensory as in classical love poetry; rather, it is a composite beauty in which the sensory intertwines with the spiritual, the personal with the collective, and the artistic with the ethical.

The homeland occupies a central place in manifestations of the beautiful in al-Dagheim's poetry. Space transforms from a mere geographical setting into a living entity onto which human beauty is projected. The poet often feminizes the homeland, attributing the traits of a beautiful woman not in a sensual sense, but as a symbol of grandeur, sanctity, and pride. This conception is evident in the poem "Sham", where the feminine imagery transcends conventional descriptions of beauty to evoke awe and submission:

¹⁰⁷ Rawiya Abbas, *al Qiyam al Jamaliyyah* (Alexandria: Dar al Maarifah al Jamiyyah, 1987), 122.

¹⁰⁸ Ovsyannikov– Smirnova, *Mujaz Tarikh al Nazariyyat al Jamaliyyah*, 136.

¹⁰⁹ Ballouz, *Ilm al Jamal*, 99.

¹¹⁰ Ahmad b. Ahmad b. Tabataba, *Iyar al Shi'r*. ed. Abbas Abd al Satter (Beirut: Dar al Kutub al Ilmiyyah, 2nd ed, 2005), 20.

¹¹¹ Muhammad b. Muhammad Al Farabi, *Ara Ahl al Madinah al Fadilah*. ed. Albert Nasri Nader (Beirut: Dar al Mashriq, 2nd ed, n.d), 52.

¹¹² Muhammad b. Muhammad Al Ghazali, *Ihya Ulum al Din*. ed. Badawi Tabbana (Indonesia: Maktabat wa Matbaat Kriyata Putra Semarang, n.d), 290-291.

ما قبلها بحقيقة ويزيد/ لا شعر يولد/ لا كلام يُجيد/ قروية... / والكحل في أهدابها/ نارٌ ولونٌ رموشها نمرود/
فكانما كيدُ النساء جميعه/ في رمشةٍ منها/ فكيف أكيد؟/ مستسلمٌ حتى النخاع لحسنها/ فأمامها كلُّ الملوك عبيد/
وأمام حُسن الشام كبرك صاعز/ فاسجد/ فكلُّ العاشقين سجد

*"Before it, in truth and increase / No poem is born / No speech is perfected / Rural ... / And the kohl in her eyelashes / Fire, and the color of her lashes Nimrod / As if all women's schemes / In a single blink of hers / How then certain? / Completely surrendered to her beauty / Before her, all kings are servants / And before Sham's beauty, your pride kneels / Bow, for all lovers bow."*¹¹³

Here, the beautiful becomes a symbolic value expressing elevation, majesty, and belonging. The act of prostration is directed not toward the aesthetic of the homeland but to God, the Creator of such beauty, linking beauty with faith and freeing it from any purely sensual or idolatrous connotation.

This dimension also appears in other poems, notably "When I Saw My Country", where the Islāmic conception of beauty is reflected in the poet's love for his homeland and admiration of its land as a source of serenity, belonging, and sanctity. This sentiment finds roots in Islāmic consciousness, exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) words upon leaving Mecca as a migrant: "By God, you are the best land of God, and the most beloved land of God to me, and were it not that your people expelled me, I would not have left,"¹¹⁴ establishing the legitimacy of loving one's homeland as both a humanistic and religious value.

al-Dagheim expresses this love poetically through personification of the homeland, employing the lexicon of love not for sensual allure but as a symbolic means to intensify the sense of beauty and attachment. For instance:

"The poet uses many different sensory images that evoke beauty (roses, fragrances, kisses) to describe the homeland figuratively. The way in which these images are interpreted draws from nostalgia and intimacy and conveys the idea that a person's homeland is a part of himself/herself. Hence, the poet expresses love and closeness to the homeland through his poetic imagery."

¹¹⁵

The concept of beauty reaches its zenith in relation to religious symbols, particularly the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In devotional

¹¹³ Anas al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Joudi* (Istanbul: Dar al Asalah, 2021), 23.

¹¹⁴ Muhammad b. Isa Al Tirmidhi, *Sunan al Tirmidhi*. ed. Ahmad Shakir and Muhammad Fuad Abd al Baqi (Cairo: Matbaat Mustafa al Babi al Halabi, 2nd ed. 1975), 5: 722.

¹¹⁵ Anas al-Dagheim, *Diwan Ibrahim* (Istanbul: Dar al Asalah, 2022), 81.

poems such as “Two Suns” and “My Heart is in Love”, beauty manifests as light, purity, and spiritual elevation, concentrating imagery of light, fragrance, and clarity, consistent with Islāmic aesthetic heritage that sees the Prophet (peace be upon him) as the embodiment of universal beauty and the highest ethical and human values. Beauty becomes a pathway to sanctification and pure love, transforming from an aesthetic artistic value into a doctrinal and emotional value that transcends mere description and moves toward veneration and emulation. This is vividly illustrated in the following excerpt from “Two Suns”:

بين لم يترك الكلام كلاما	حده كان حين كانوا نياما
هَزَّ الشَّمْسَ كي تَشْغَ غراما	حده كان فوق طور التجلي
نَهَجَ من العطور الختام	انت الأرض قابَ شمسين، كانت
اصطفى الله للجمال إماما	قرى ملامح الطهر فيها
ان من فرط ما رأى يتعالمى	س أعمى من لم يز النور لكن

*“He alone was awake while they slept, leaving no word unspoken. / He alone was upon the mount of manifestation, shaking the sun to radiate affection. / The earth was as two suns, articulating its fragrance in conclusion. / Its features of purity were recognized, and God appointed beauty as its guide. / Not blind is he who did not see the light, yet from excess of seeing, he feigns blindness.”*¹¹⁶

Anas al-Dagheim presents a contemporary style of poetry while retaining a connection to the Islāmic aesthetic tradition by presenting his poetic work as an expression of the Divine Beauty through the reverence that accompanies our remembrance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In his use of the Prophetic Praises, we can see that the values linked to beauty and the values associated with doctrine are interwoven, thereby producing a harmonious relationship between the two, consistent with the teachings of Islām that associate beauty with the perfection of the spirit and elevate one's love for the Prophet to the highest levels of both aesthetic and emotional valuation.

This same theme is illustrated in Anas al-Dagheim's depiction of Khadijah (RA) (Mother of the Believers), whose beauty is understood mostly within a framework of morality, that is, Khadijah's beauty arises from her being a pure, kind, compassionate, and truthful individual and does not stem from any reference to Khadijah's physical appearance. The values associated with Khadijah's moral character reflect the principles of Islām that place equal

¹¹⁶ al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Joudi*, 51.

emphasis on the emotions and moral values of the person experiencing beauty.¹¹⁷

The beauty exhibited in Anas al-Dagheim's representation of Jerusalem reflects the important spiritual and symbolic place held by this city in the minds of Muslims everywhere, representing both religious sanctity and civilizational identity. The beauty of the city of Jerusalem is not simply about the physical aspects of the city but is made possible through the faith people have in God and the faith they have in God's Messenger Muhammad (PBUH). The Holy City of Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque are the first qiblah and the third holiest place for Muslims; therefore, their significance continues to play a major role within the minds of Muslims; they represent places of worship, memory, and identity. This is clearly reflected in al-Dagheim's aesthetic vision, which is rooted in an Islāmic conception that perceives beauty as a manifestation of holiness and divine selection. In his poem "May You Remain, Jerusalem", the poet constructs a complex aesthetic image of the city, where sensory elements intertwine with spiritual meanings, rendering Jerusalem a living entity radiating generosity, light, and nobility. This is evident in the following excerpt:

ك أن تكوني حيث لم يتعلموا	شفاً يَظُلُّ وفكرةً تَنكَلُمُ
حقيقةً تُبْنِي فُيُونِي للندى	رِشٌّ وللنحل المُسافر مَبِيسَمُ
بدايةً للحب تأتي كلما	بل انتهى والطارئون توهموا
كأن تكوني حيث تَنتهَرُ الرؤى	ذا الفضاء العامري وترسمُ
أ شاء محراب وشاءت قُبَّةُ	سفراء تقروها العيون وتفهمُ
ن القناديل التي أشعلتها	أزال زيت جلالها يتضرَّمُ
ن اسمك المكتوب في رقم الهوى الـ	نسي فرد والمدى لك مُعْجَمُ
قدس أجمل ما قرأتُ، حروفها	نُنعَت على عين الإله وأقسمُ
ي حرة أبداً وباطن قيدها	سوء وظاهرهم طليق مظلمُ
سناء لم يؤذن لغير جمالها	ذا المدى يداً وربك يَحْتَمُ

"You may be where they have not learned love to shade, and where an idea speaks. / And where truth builds, an edifice for the dew, and for the traveling bees a mark. / The beginning of love comes whenever it is said to have ended, yet intruders imagined it. / You may be where visions seize this expansive domain and draw. / Whatever the mihrab wills and whatever the yellow dome wills, the eyes read and understand. The lanterns you lit, their oil of majesty still burns. / Your name inscribed in the sacred script of love stands alone, and the horizon is your lexicon. / Jerusalem is the most beautiful I have read; its letters made by the eye of God, I swear. / It is forever free; its inner

¹¹⁷ al-Dagheim, *Diwan Ibrahim*, 36

*restraint is light, its outer freedom dark. / Beautiful, no hand was allowed this expanse except for its beauty, and your Lord seals it.*¹¹⁸

The beauty that is depicted through al-Dagheim's work comes from many different aspects, with sanctity being one of the most important. The many symbols found in al-Dagheim's poetry, such as the mihrab, the yellow dome (which are connected to Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock), point to the holiness of that city. In addition, Jerusalem also has an inherent beauty by virtue of its name, which signifies being pure, blessed, and under God's care. Each of those qualities bestows a unique sense of election to the city. Further, the light and radiance associated with the city, and the ability of the city to inspire love and emotional attachment to people who are suffering from oppression, add to its aesthetic value. Likewise, the poet's use of the pronoun in the expression "She is free" contributes to the construction of Jerusalem's aesthetic image through a tone of pride and veneration. The pronoun singles out the city as a unique and distinguished entity, while the attribute of freedom becomes an aesthetic marker that enhances its beauty and symbolizes its elevated status and enduring greatness.¹¹⁹

From all this information presented in al-Dagheim's work, we can conclude that Jerusalem is a dual beauty, sensory as well as spiritual. Sensory beauty is beauty seen and felt, and spiritual beauty is beauty perceived through the heart and through faith. Jerusalem is an example of a singular aesthetic form that expresses the poet's admiration for the city and is reflective of the Islāmic perspective that connects beauty with holiness and makes the place an expression of meaning and identity.

In the many examples provided, we have seen that the beauty depicted in Anas al-Dagheim's work is not a separate aesthetic goal, but is closely tied to a moral and humanistic framework that is consistent with the Islāmic view of beauty. Furthermore, it includes the beauty of the land and the beauty of the people.

4. The Heroic in His Poetry

Heroism is a composite aesthetic value that arises from the union of beauty and sublimity.¹²⁰ Heroism is not mere brute strength or violence, but rather it is an ethical beauty that is expressed in stance and action; it also has a moral sublimity that generates awe and admiration. The essence of heroic value as an aesthetic is defined by the proportional relationship between moral elevation and the ability to take action; this is in line with the Islāmic

¹¹⁸ Anas al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Manfa* (Istanbul: Dar al Asalah, 2021), 92.

¹¹⁹ Rachida, *Linguistic Structures and Their Semantics in the Poetry Collection of Anas Ibrahim al-Dagheim: Selected Samples*, 225.

¹²⁰ Ballouz, *Ilm al Jamal*, 92.

perspective, which considers strength to be a mechanism to establish truth rather than an end worthy of boasting or violence.

Philosophers have long distinguished between the beautiful and the sublime, considering the latter a source of astonishment, awe, and elevation. Kant viewed the sublime as generating within the human soul a sense of greatness that transcends sensory perception, lifting the individual to a higher moral and rational horizon. It reveals human physical limitation before overwhelming forces, while simultaneously awakening awareness of inner moral worth.¹²¹ This notion resonates with the Islāmic worldview, yet Islām extends it beyond the psychological dimension into a clear doctrinal one. In Islāmic thought, sublimity (*jalāl*) is intrinsically associated with the Divine Essence and Its attributes, as stated in the Qur'ānic verse: "And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Possessor of Majesty and Honor" (*al-Rahmān*: 27). Absolute sublimity belongs to God alone, while all other forms of sublimity are relative, derived from proximity to truth, justice, and human dignity.

Within this framework, Muslim philosophers and mystics understood sublimity as manifesting when the human being confronts the greatness of divine truth, dissolving the sense of limited selfhood before the sovereignty of divine power. Ibn al-Dabbāgh (d. 699 AH) articulates this meaning by linking sublimity to the manifestation of attributes such as might, dominion, and grandeur, and to the state of awe that effaces self-awareness. This spiritual dimension grants sublimity a pedagogical and ethical function, rather than reducing it to a mere emotional effect.¹²²

From the fusion of beauty and sublimity emerges the concept of the heroic. In the Islāmic conception, the hero combines majestic qualities strength, courage, steadfastness with beautiful moral traits such as justice, generosity, chastity, and support for the oppressed. The Qur'ān presents this integrated model in several passages, including: "Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause in ranks as though they are a solid structure" (*al-Şaff*: 4), and in the Prophetic saying: "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, though in each there is good."¹²³

Heroism has occupied a central place in the Arab collective consciousness; however, within Arab-Islāmic thought it differs markedly from the Western

¹²¹ Fuad Al Mar'i, *al Jamal wa al Jalal Dirasah fi al Maqulat al Jamaliyyah* (Damascus: Dar Tlass, 1991), 195.

¹²² Abd al Rahman b. Muhammad al Ansari b. al Dabbagh, *Mashariq Anwar al Qulub wa Mafatih Asrar al Ghuyub*, ed. H. Ritter (Beirut: Dar Sader, 1959), 69.

¹²³ Muslim b. al Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, ed. Muhammad Fuad Abd al Baqi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al Turath, 1995), 4: 2052.

mythological model.¹²⁴ It is an ethical and realistic heroism, not one belonging to the realm of demigods, but arising from the ordinary human being when elevated by faith and moral stance. Historically and in modern times, Arab heroism has not been confined to martial action alone, but has encompassed inner heroism embodied in patience, forbearance, steadfastness, loyalty, and endurance in the face of hardship—values affirmed by Islām as among the highest forms of struggle, as expressed in the Prophetic saying: “Strength is not in overpowering others, but in controlling oneself when angry.”¹²⁵

Against this value-based backdrop, heroism in Anas al-Dagheim's poetry emerges as an aesthetic value with an ethical and messianic function, inseparable from the broader Islāmic context. The historical and political events experienced by the poet most notably the Syrian revolution constitute a major background for the crystallization of this value in his poetry, where heroism is transformed into resistance against injustice and an alignment with freedom and dignity rather than a celebration of sheer power.

In the poem “The Scepter”, heroism is embodied as an ethical stance grounded in the rejection of humiliation and the prioritization of freedom over a life of comfort. This meaning accords with the Islāmic conception that regards dignity (‘izza) as a supreme value, as stated in the Qur’anic verse: “And to Allah belongs honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers” (al-Munafiqun: 8). The poet articulates this vision of heroism in the following lines:

لونا وفي القاع الحضيض تَرَاخَمَتْ	طامحُ أقزامٍ لثامٍ المطامع
أ. وَرَنَتْ بِالْمَالِ نَاسٌ فَإِنَّا	رُزْنَا بِغَايَاتِ النُّفُوسِ الرُّوَاعِ
إِنَّا نَعَاثُ الْخَيْرَ إِنْ شَابَ قَمَحُهُ	سَخَاوُ وَعَاقَتْ زَادَنَا كَفُّ قَانِعِ
مَا لِهَوَى فِي النَّفْسِ كَانَ انْبِعَاثُهَا	لَكِنْ لِمَا يَخْفَى عَلَى كُلِّ خَاصِعِ
حَرِيَّةٌ تُفْدَى بِمَالٍ وَأَنْفُسِ	تُشْرَى بِأَرْوَاحِ كِرَامِ النُّوَازِعِ
أَجَلُ بِلَادٍ قَسَمَتَهَا عَصَابَةُ	أُرْخَصَتْهَا لِلْبَيْعِ مَلِیُونَ بَائِعِ
أ. قَامَ هَذَا الصُّولُجَانُ عَلَى دَمِ	لَا خَيْرَ فِي عَيْشٍ هَنِيءٍ وَوَادِعِ
إِنَّ الزَّانِزِينَ الَّتِي أُغْلِقَتْ عَلَى	رَائِدِنَا تَكْفِي لِسَنِّ الْقَوَاطِعِ
أَجْمَلُ مَا فِي الْعَيْشِ عَيْشَةُ وَاقِفِ	أَسْوَأُ مَا فِي الْمَوْتِ مَيِّتَةُ رَاكِعِ

“We rose, while in the abysmal depths below crowded the ambitions of dwarfs masked by greed. / If some are measured by wealth, we are measured by the splendid aims of noble souls. / We spurn bread when its wheat is tainted by pettiness, and our provision rejects the hand of the complacent. / Desire was not the impulse of our uprising, but that which remains hidden from every submissive soul. / For a freedom ransomed by wealth and lives, purchased

¹²⁴ Nimet Yıldırım, “Kahramanlık Anlatıları, Efsane Ve Mitoloji”, *Doğu Araştırmaları* 7 (Ocak, 2011), 50.

¹²⁵ Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*. 4: 2014.

with the spirits of the nobly driven. / For a homeland divided by a gang and cheapened for sale by a million sellers. / If this scepter rises upon blood, then there is no good in a life of ease and comfort. / And the prisons locked upon our free women suffice to sharpen the blades. / For the most beautiful life is a life lived standing, and the ugliest death is a death lived kneeling. / Here, heroism is not the achievement of an isolated individual, but a collective heroism belonging to a people who refuse submission and willingly offer life and wealth in the pursuit of truth."¹²⁶

Here, heroism is not the heroism of an isolated individual, but a collective heroism of a people who reject submission and offer their lives and wealth in the cause of truth.

The heroic connotation in the poem "We Are Not the Ants" expands through the evocation of prophetic figures from the Qur'ān, most notably Moses and Solomon, in a clear indication that true heroism derives its legitimacy from faith and is grounded in moral election rather than in sheer material power. The poet links the act of resistance to the biographies of the prophets, turning their stories into a symbolic frame of reference that endows heroic action with a doctrinal and messianic dimension. This vision accords with the Islāmic conception that associates victory with truth, as expressed in the Qur'ānic verse: "And it was incumbent upon Us to support the believers" (al-Rūm: 47). This is evident in the poet's words:

We are not the ants that fear their armies./ We are Solomon, O skies./ O rain./ And if they take our ship from us./ By force./ From our loins will emerge (al-Khidr)/ And we are Moses./ His staff today is greater than the magic of the tyrants./ They neither succeeded nor truly bewitched./ Tell Pharaoh that the sea is gathered./ It will not be split for a tyrant, nor cleft apart./ The sea will be parted by a free man./ In his fingernails is defiant fire./ In his veins, sparks./ We are the decree from which there is no escape./ There is no refuge from it./ Be it you, the universe, or destiny."¹²⁷

In this poetic passage, the poet projects onto his people extraordinary heroic attributes drawn from Qur'ānic memory, combining an outwardly sensory dimension with a profound spiritual depth. The staff, the splitting of the sea, and sovereignty are not merely rhetorical images; rather, they function as symbols of trust in God's promise and certainty in the collapse of tyranny. Heroism here is not founded on numerical or military superiority, but on faith, freedom, and will rendering it an ethical heroism before it becomes an act of confrontation.

¹²⁶ al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Joudi*, 41.

¹²⁷ al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Joudi*, 45-46.

The value of the heroic is manifested in the poem “The Cry” as a sublime aesthetic grounded in the meanings of martyrdom and sacrifice. The revolutionary who advances toward death after prayer and *takbīr* is not presented as a victim; rather, he appears as a hero who elevates the heroic act to a lofty aesthetic, in which physical death is transformed into a moral and spiritual climax. This vision accords with the Islāmic perspective, which denies annihilation in martyrdom and affirms instead the meaning of eternal life, as expressed in the Qur’anic verse: “Do not think of those who are killed in the way of God as dead” (Āl ‘Imrān: 169). The poet expresses this vision in the following lines:

لى مَدْنَحِ الإسْفِلَتِ صَلَّى وَكَبَّرَا	قال لعين الشمس قومي لنثأرا
ند أن للماء الذي ظلَّ عُمرُهُ	ميرًا وراء الغيم أن يتحررا
أن لهذا الشعب بَعْدَ انتكاسة	نَ الدُّلُّ أَنْ يَحْيَا وَأَنْ يَنْطَهَرَا
صار لزامًا بَعْدَ أَلْفِ هزيمة	لى دمنا المحيوس أن يتكوثرَا
ما عرفت هذي البلاد خلاصها	لم تَجِرْ صيحات الملايين أنهرَا

*“On the altar of asphalt he prayed and proclaimed the takbīr, / And said to the eye of the sun: Rise, and take revenge. / The time has come for the water that spent its life. / A captive behind the clouds to be set free. / And the time has come for this people, after a setback, / To live again, to cleanse itself of humiliation. / And after a thousand defeats it has become imperative. / That our imprisoned blood should gush forth in abundance. / This land has never known its deliverance, / Nor have the cries of millions flowed like rivers.”*¹²⁸

Here, death in the cause of freedom is transformed into a sublime aesthetic value, in which beauty is intertwined with noble human action, and sublimity with what it carries of awe, sanctity, and transcendence. Through this scene, Anas al-Dagheim reconstructs the concept of heroism in the light of the Islāmic worldview, such that martyrdom becomes a passage from bondage to liberation, from humiliation to purification, and from silence to a cosmic cry that causes blood to “overflow” and transforms it into a call for life.

Heroism reaches its most humane expression in the poem “A Death Greater”¹²⁹, where steadfastness and remaining on one’s land become heroic acts surpassing armed confrontation. Rootedness in the land and confrontation with fear are portrayed as forms of moral courage, while fear itself is depicted as “death before death” a representation consistent with the Islāmic principle that life devoid of dignity is a loss of meaning.

¹²⁸ al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Joudi*, 63.

¹²⁹ al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Joudi*, 73.

Heroism likewise appears in the homeland poems, such as “Between the Well and What Is Hidden,” “The Coming Ones,” and “To Gaza,” where the homeland is humanized and the land becomes a partner in heroism, producing heroes as it produces olives and lemons. This interweaving of nature and struggle reflects an Islāmic aesthetic vision that views the land as a trust and its defense as an act of worship, as articulated in the verse: “Were it not that Allah repels people by means of others, the earth would indeed be corrupted” (al-Baqarah: 251).

Thus, heroism in Anas al-Dagheim’s poetry emerges as an aesthetic value rooted in the Islāmic worldview, founded upon dignity, sacrifice, and steadfastness in the pursuit of truth. It is an ethical beauty manifested in stance, and a spiritual sublimity whose meaning is drawn from faith itself.

5. The Tragic Dimension in His Poetry

The tragic constitutes one of the central aesthetic values associated with profound human pain arising from conflict, loss, defeat, and death.¹³⁰ It is not based on mere abstract sorrow, but on a struggle in which higher values confront an oppressive reality; thus, the tragic sensibility emerges from the shattering of the ideal before ugliness and injustice.¹³¹ Philosophers have emphasized this meaning: Aristotle linked tragedy to the arousal of pity and fear, considering it a means of psychological catharsis¹³², while Kant viewed the tragic as inherent in the essence of human existence, grounded in the tension between freedom and necessity.¹³³

Within the Islāmic worldview, the tragic acquires a different dimension. It is inseparable from faith in divine decree and destiny, and it does not lead to absurdity or despair; rather, it is framed within a monotheistic vision that regards pain as part of the divine laws of trial. God Almighty says: “And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits” (al-Baqarah: 155). Death, moreover, is seen as a transition rather than annihilation: “Every soul shall taste death” (Āl ‘Imrān: 185). Hence, tragedy in the Islāmic vision does not negate meaning but deepens it; it does not abolish value but tests its authenticity.

¹³⁰ Asiye Çığrı Yıldırım, “Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil’in Kırık Hayatlar Romanında Trajik Durum”, *Tarih Ve Sanat Araştırmaları Dergisi E- Dergisi* 5/1 (Temmuz, 2018), 160.

¹³¹ Saad al Din Kulayb, *al Qiyam al Jamaliyyah fi al Shi'r al Arabi al Hadith 1950–1975* (Aleppo: University of Aleppo, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, PhD dissertation, 1989), 231.

¹³² A group of authors. *Mawsuat al Mustalah al Naqdi*, Trans. Abd al Wahid Luluah (Beirut: al Muassasah al Arabiyyah lil Dirasat wa al Nashr, 2nd ed. 1983), 1: 38.

¹³³ Ballouz, *Ilm al Jamal*, 102.

In light of this, the tragic manifests in the poetry of Anas al-Dagheim as an aesthetic value endowed with doctrinal and ethical dimensions, rather than a mere depiction of a horrific reality. The tragedies of Syria—killing, imprisonment, exile, and refuge—are transformed in his poetry into a meaningful aesthetic experience, wherein the poetic self intertwines with the collective, the present with history, and reality with symbol. In the poem “Qātil” (Killer), tragedy is condensed into images of prison cells and refugee tents, where collective pain is portrayed as fuel for resistance rather than a cause for surrender. This accords with the divine saying: “So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior” (Āl-‘Imrān: 139). The poet says:

المهلكات مع السُّمُوِّ خمائلٌ	عَن النِّعَمِ مع الهَوَانِ جهنَّمُ
على تراب الأرض يمشي قاتِلٌ	الله ما عيشٌ يطيبٌ لثائرٍ
رَمَقَ العنيدِ ولا يهونُ مناضِلٌ	يناضِلُ الأحرارَ حتى آخرِ
ي كل قلب ثائرٍ، سنقاتلُ	يقاتلونَ لأن ثارًا ساخنًا
فِرَّتْ على أرواحنا، تتواصلُ	لأن أهات الزنازين التي
لألف من أشباهها تتناسلُ	لأن ما قِيلَ الخيام وخَلَفَها
موتٌ موتٌ كاملٌ ستواصلُ	لأن نصِفُ الموتِ مثْلُ
نفتين ودعوة فقاءلوا	لأن نصر الله قاب

“Indeed, bliss with humiliation is a hell, and perils with nobility are verdant gardens. / By God, no life is sweet for a rebel while a killer walks upon the soil of the earth. / The free shall struggle to the last stubborn breath, and a fighter shall never be demeaned. / They will fight, for a blazing vengeance burns in every rebel heart we shall fight. / And because the groans of the cells, etched upon our souls continue. / And because before the tents and behind them, thousands of their like keep multiplying. / And because half of death, like death, is complete death we shall persist. / And because God’s victory is but two shells away and a supplication so be hopeful.”¹³⁴

Here, tragedy does not generate aesthetic despair; rather, it activates the value of steadfastness and transforms suffering into an ethical stance, embodying the convergence of beauty and pain within a faith-based framework that grants the tragic its moral and messianic dimension. Thus, the tragic becomes a fundamental component of al-Dagheim’s poetic aesthetics, contributing to the consolidation of an Islāmic vision of beauty that views pain as a test of meaning, struggle as a path to dignity, and poetry as an aesthetic testimony to truth in the face of oppression.

The tragic also appears in poems of exile and displacement as an aesthetic value with an ethical dimension in Anas al-Dagheim’s poetry, in light of the

¹³⁴ al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Joudi*, 48.

Islāmic conception that condemns injustice and views forced uprooting as an assault on human dignity and the right to land and belonging. This significance emerges clearly in the poem “The Idol”, where the tragedy of exile and displacement is condensed. Dispersion is transformed into a piercing aesthetic image expressing the fragmentation of the Syrian human being between sea and exile, and the assassination of human beauty in Damascus—where beauty is either slaughtered or exiled. The poet says:

أَوَّلُ الْمَاءِ مَاذَا يَكْتُبُ الْمَرْفَأُ	بَنَ أَوَّلَ الْبَحْرِ أَوْ عَنِ آخِرِ الْمَنْفَى؟
بَنَ حَبَّتَيْنِ مِنَ الْقَمْحِ الَّذِي حَصَدُوا	مَ يَخْبِرُوهَ، لَكِي تُغْرَى، لَكِي تُخْفَى
بَنَ بَنْدُوقِيَّةَ صَيَادٍ فَرِيَسَتْهَا	لَامِيَّةٌ وَجَمَالُ الشَّامِ لَا يُخْفَى
بَنَ الَّذِينَ لَمَّا فِينَا مِنَ الْغَنَجِ	شَامِي لُذْنُوحٍ بِاسْمِ الْحُسَيْنِ أَوْ تُنْفَى
نَاسَمَتْنَا فَجَاجَ الْأَرْضِ، نَحْنُ هُنَا	أَرْضُ تُسْقِطُ عَنْ أَطْرَافِكَ الْخَوْفَا

“O first of water, what does the harbor write of the first of the sea or the end of exile? / Of two grains of wheat they reaped they did not tell him so that we might be stripped, so that we might go barefoot. / Of a hunter’s rifle whose prey is Damascene, and the beauty of Damascus is not hidden. / We are those who, for the Damascene allure within us, are slaughtered in the name of beauty or exiled. / The world’s vast paths have divided us; here we are, O land, casting fear from your edges.”¹³⁵

Exile here is not presented as a neutral spatial transition, but as a forced fall from the embrace of the homeland, resulting from a tyrannical reality that contradicts Islāmic values linking justice with stability and dignity with security, and that regard injustice as a direct cause of migration and fracture. Thus, the tragic in the text is transformed from a mere description of pain into a revelatory aesthetic instrument that condemns tyranny and keeps ethical consciousness alive, in clear harmony with the Islāmic vision upon which the value system of Anas al-Dagheim’s poetry is founded.

The poet also evokes the tragedy of Karbala in the poem “Yazid Said to Me”, linking the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn (may God be pleased with him) to the reality of martyrdom in Syria. In doing so, he affirms the continuity of the tragedy of tyranny throughout history and elevates ethical rejection of humiliation to a supreme value, consonant with the Prophetic tradition: “The best jihad is a word of truth before a tyrannical ruler.”¹³⁶ From this poem, he says:

¹³⁵ al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Joudi*, 103.

¹³⁶ Al Tirmidhi, *Sunan al Tirmidhi*, 4: 45.

أَكُنْ حِينَ صَاحَتِ الزَّهْرَاءُ	بَيْنَ نَادَى الْحُسَيْنِ أَيْنَ الْمَاءُ؟
نَتَّ سَوِيْثَ مَنْ ضَلَّوعِي إِنْاءُ	لَمْ أَنْ تَقْتُلِ الْمُنَى كَرِبَاءُ
نَ كَفَّ الْحُسَيْنَ كَفِّي وَقَلْبِي	نَدُّ ذَلِكَ التَّارِيخِ (عَاشُورَاءُ)
صَفَّ هَذَا الصُّمُودَ يَكْفِي لِنَحْيَا	أَبْنِ عَمِّي لَكُنْهَا الْكُبْرِيَاءُ
تَ مِنْ قَلَّتْ (لَا) وَلَوْ لَمْ تَقْلُهَا	بِمَنْ سَوَفَ يَقْتَدِي الشَّهْدَاءُ؟

"I was not there when al-Zahrā' cried, when al-Husayn called out: Where is the water? / I had fashioned from my ribs a vessel before Karbala killed all hopes. / The hand of al-Husayn has been my hand and my heart since that date 'Āshūrā'. / Half of this steadfastness suffices for us to live, O cousin, yet it is dignity. / You are the one who said "No"; had you not said it, whom would the martyrs follow?"¹³⁷

In sum, the tragic in the poetry of Anas al-Dagheim emerges as a central aesthetic value that transcends the mere depiction of pain to produce an ethical and spiritual awareness, grounded in an Islāmic vision that sees tragedy as a test of dignity rather than a justification for surrender. Pain, exile, martyrdom, and tyranny are transformed in his poetry into structural elements that expose the falsity of oppression and awaken human meaning in the face of injustice.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the aesthetic values in the poetry of Anas al-Dagheim are formed within an integrated system grounded in the Islāmic conception of beauty, in which artistic structure is inseparable from ethical and value-based reference points. The analysis demonstrates that the aesthetic, the heroic, and the tragic values interweave within his poetic experience as interacting semantic patterns rather than as isolated stylistic phenomena.

The aesthetic dimension in his poetry is linked to a vision founded on purity and elevation, manifested in the celebration of homeland, humanity, and religious figures, reflecting a conception of beauty that transcends the sensory level toward a spiritual horizon. Heroism, by contrast, emerges as a collective expression of steadfastness and resistance to tyranny, grounded in an ethical consciousness that renders heroic action a value-laden commitment rather than an individual achievement. As for the tragic, it constitutes an aesthetic dimension that lays bare the suffering of the homeland, rearticulated within a faith-based framework that transforms pain into resistant awareness and endows it with a significance that goes beyond lamentation toward principled stance.

¹³⁷ al-Dagheim, *Diwan al Joudi*, 46.

The study further affirms that the poetry of Anas al-Dagheim offers a contemporary model for embodying aesthetic values within an Islāmic framework, wherein artistic, intellectual, and human dimensions are integrated, and the poem becomes a medium of civilizational expression addressing issues of freedom, dignity, and identity. In this way, his poetry consolidates the presence of beauty as a value-based practice with ethical and cultural functions, rather than as a merely autonomous aesthetic construction.

From this perspective, it can be argued that the poetry of Anas al-Dagheim merits broader scholarly attention through more extensive studies of its aesthetic values. The present study has been limited to selected aspects of these values due to the constraints imposed by journal publication requirements. Therefore, it is recommended that future research pursue the investigation of aesthetic values in his poetry from additional perspectives, particularly focusing on the values of the sublime, the elevated, and the ugly. In this regard, this study is believed to make a valuable scholarly contribution to the field and to contribute to deepening the critical understanding of its enduring aesthetic and intellectual impact.

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