

Dark Humor in the Poetry of Sherman Alexie and Ahmed Matar: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Dark humor is a form of comedy that explores taboo topics such as death, disease, and tragedy. While it is often controversial and can be offensive to some, it is also a means of coping with difficult or uncomfortable topics and offering a fresh perspective on societal norms. Just as stated by Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature, dark humor or black humor is a kind of humor that is marked by the use of morbid, ironic, or grotesquely comic episodes that ridicule human folly. However, this paper examines the concept of dark humor by tackling some of the significant poems of the English poet "Sherman Alexie" and the Iraqi poet "Ahmed Matar." Those two poets discuss subjects and problems of real-life experiences. The purpose of this research is to shed light on Native Americans' daily lives on reservations and demonstrate their pain as well as the poet's personal experience there, which is discussed by Sherman Alexie in his poems, "Futures", "Traveling", "Translated from the American", "Giving Blood", "War all the time", "Reservation cap driver", "The mice war". While the Iraqi poet tended to criticize Arab rules, the lack of freedom they force, their use of torture, the government, and their persuasion of authority at all costs. Here are some of his notable poems that this research are going to explain and make critique in details. "They put a watchdog on my mouth", "وَضَعُوا فَوْقَ فَمِي كَلْبَ حِرَاسِهِ", "My awful silence", "صممتي الرهيب", "The lost Caravan", "قافلة تائهة". Ultimately, this paper aims to offer a fair viewpoint on the usage of dark humor and to stimulate additional investigation into its psychological and social significance. It can be hypothesized that Dark humor has been used heavenly by Ahmed Matar and Sherman Alexie in their poetry, and the researcher is going to show the importance of using humor is to attack the capitalist system, as in Sherman Alexie country, and the ruthless hegemonic government as in Ahmed Matar' country. It is used to show vulgarity of governments and to amuse the audience to certain extent.

KEYWORDS

Ahmed Matar; black humor; dark humor; sarcasm; Sherman Alexie.

INTRODUCTION

Dark humor is a some kind of comedy where the expressions are used to make light of some issues usually taboo or banned matters, which are serious matters of hidden layer of suffering and injustice. Dark humor is a sweet bitterness. It is a pleasure accompanied by pain and anguish. Dark humor involves irony or sarcasm, the metaphors in which we say one thing and mean another, and sometimes the opposite of what is said. Simon stated "In humor, we orbit eccentrically around a black sun." (Bloom 57). After knowing that the real purpose behind "Black humor is to evoke sarcasm, we can define it as A modernist literary genre that emerged in America in the 1960s.

The name comes from American writer Friedman's collection of "Black Humor", which became a popular literary genre and influenced the development of American literature. (Huang 2015: 615). Another definition is that Dark Humour represents a distorted view of life, which is the direct result of the brutality, destructiveness, and outlook-shattering scenes of World War II (Alice 1974: 18).

We can see some authors who had fascinating comments on the concept of dark humor in which they described its use and importance in a sense for Literature. Hauck believes "The exploration of meaninglessness is a grim and hilarious game: the explorer wins when he can laugh and loses when he cannot." (Hauck, R. A Cheerful Nihilism). We can agree that all humor involves paradox, absurdity, insensitivity, and dark truths about our lives, such as our inability to overcome death and our contradictory ways of coping with this dark reality. (Bloom 2010: 57). They can even insert the abuse into humor where it becomes what we call cruelty, at the same time, we can't deny that laughter is like a treatment for human psychological well-being. Besides, humor illustrates that people can laugh despite all the chaos of this world including death and war (Alice 1974: 6).

Humor can help people not to take the pointlessness of this world seriously, because through laughing, people would be able to receive life's situations or what is happening around them as hopeless, pointless, meaningless, and depressing but also unimportant. (Alice 1974: 6). Dark humour is a reasonable term for this philosophical perspective because "dark" refers to depression, darkness, and despair, and shows the world as dark, meaningless, without any light; whereas the word "Humour" indicates a different kind of defence, for humour is the hinting sign that the darkness will survive through this works. Furthermore, humour suggests that there's a sense of hope in this life despite all the absurdity in the world. In this research, the researcher is trying to shed light on the most important element as used by Ahmed Matar (1954-) and Sherman Alexie (1966-) which is "Dark Humor".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sherman Alexie's Biography

Sherman Joseph Alexie Jr (1966-) was a multi-talented poet who excelled in various forms of creative expression such as poetry, fiction writing, essay writing, comedy, scriptwriting, and filmmaking. (born October 7, 1966, at WellPoint, Spokane Indian Reservation, near Spokane, Washington, U.S.). Alexie was born to Salish Indian parents from Coeur d'Alene and Spokane. Alexie received surgery for congenital hydrocephalus when he was six years old. Although the operation had no effect on his capacity to study, he endured significant side effects, such as seizures, throughout his infancy. His grandmother, a Spokane spiritual leader who passed away when he was eight years old, had a significant impact on him when he was a little boy (Kathleen 2022: 58).

He developed a passion for reading as a result of his inability to participate physically due to his poor health. His experiences there eventually served as the inspiration for His book for young adults, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007), won the National Book Award for Young Fiction. After departing from the reservation, he enrolled in an all-white school where he excelled academically and became the president of his class. Subsequently, he secured a scholarship at Gonzaga, a Spokane-based college, and pursued his studies for a duration of two years. (1985–87) and started binge drinking. He later earned a bachelor's degree from Washington State University, where he thinks the poetry lessons he took there helped him develop his unique writing style. (Kathleen 2022: 64)

During the 1990s, a fresh wave of Native American writers emerged, and among them was Alexie. The majority of Alexie's poetic works concern Native Americans. The

Business of Fancy-Dancing (1992), I would Steal Horses (1992), First Indian on the Moon (1993), Old Shirts & New Skins (1993), Water Flowing Home (1995), The Sumer of Black Widows (1996), The Man Who loves Salmon (1998), One Stick Song (2000), and Face (2009) (Al-Jibouri 2021: 337).

One of the most prominent characteristics that Alexie uses in his delicate poetry is irony or a sense of dark humor. As he defined Black humor is "an effective strategy for exposing and expressing the historical conditions of inequality created by white supremacy and for mediating conflicts arising from assimilation."²⁰ Alexie's poetry denounces the various aspects of Native American life that are linked to their social, political, economic, and cultural milieu, specifically those living on reservations.(Al-Jibouri 2021: 338).

Additionally, the challenges that Native Americans encountered on a daily basis caused them to become extremely angry. If someone can't find a way to let their anger out, it can be quite damaging to themselves. Alexie thus expressed his rage through humor while writing. His definition of humor includes elements like parody, satire, burlesque, hyperbole, and farce. Paula Gunn Allen declares that "Humor soothes Native American anger and celebrates their survival and concludes that "humor is a primary means of reconciling traditions of survival, connection, and celebration with the hard facts of racial destruction "on." (Kathleen 2022: 37).

Humor has evolved into a survival strategy for contemporary American writers as they face difficult circumstances. The common thread binding Native American tribes together is their ability to find humor in challenging circumstances, ultimately aiding in their survival. According to Erdrich, who also demonstrates this point: "I think that almost the most serious things have to be jokes in order to be able to live with what you have to live with." It's how we handle the most challenging situations in our life. (Al-Jibouri 2021: 338).

Alexie herself says, "Humor is a lesbian's self-defense. It makes people laugh and it disarms them. "Additionally, Native American scholar Jane Hafen claims to love Alexie's writing because she As he claims, "They make me laugh." About urban crises of self, community, and identity, he often makes me laugh with flipping images and inside jokes. Helps make pain bearable." (qtd in Al-Jibouri 2021: 338).

In an interview, Alexie said: Most Native American literature is so obsessed with nature that I don't see it serving any meaningful purpose." Alexie's poetry is all about the Native Americans on the reservation and the struggles that they confronted in their life including Alexie as he grew up on the reservation, his upbringing on the reservation affected him and that's the reason why his poetry concerns his life and the Native Americans on the reservation. Therefore, Lynn Cline demonstrates that Alexie's work "bears the weight of five centuries of colonization, tells the story of the Indian struggle for survival, and paints a clear, compelling, and often painful portrait of modern Indian life."

Ahmed Matar's Biography

Ahmed Matar (1954-) is a revolutionary Iraqi poet born in 1954 in Tanoma, a small town in southern Basra province.

Mataru is the fourth of ten brothers and sisters. He is also married and has three sons and one daughter. Mataru began writing poetry early in his life, only when he was 14 years old. Initially, most of his poems were romantic in nature, but later he began to write about politics as the main subject. Matar, who recited long poems on stage and openly criticized the current situation in Iraq, left Iraq in his mid-20s and moved to Kuwait, where he worked as the cultural editor of Al-Qabas newspaper. However, he continued to write his poems until all of them were published in the newspaper where he worked. Later, he became friends with the cartoonist Naji al-Ali, who was also working at the al-Qabas

newspaper. Because of his harsh criticism of Arabs, he had to leave Kuwait and travel to London, where he was joined by his close friend Najji al-Ali, who also had to leave the country because of the cartoon. London is the last destination where Matar settled with his family. One of the best poems that Matar wrote is “My Friend Hassan”. In addition to “The Hope”, “Abbas’s Story”, “To Whom Should We Complain?”, “The Right Man”, “Awakening” and other great poems that he wrote. (Interview)

Just like Alexie, Matar’s chief tool that he includes within his poetry is dark humor. He criticized Arab rules, the lack of freedom that they force, their use of torture, and how are they seeking to get power at all costs. Matar said commenting on his poetry that “When I started writing poetry, I had no intention of starting school. I just wanted to tell the truth...and I did. Now I can say with certainty that readers can retell my poems without naming me.”

Matar criticized Arab rules in general, he helped people to laugh about their pain. He criticized the mad rulers of the countries. Matar gave people a language for the mad reality that they live in. Furthermore, he made all the Arabs repeat the Arab saying *شُرُّ البلية ما يُضحك* “The worst disaster drives you to laughter”. Matar made the people react to what crazy mad rulers like Gaddafi said and others that are worse than him with laughter. Matar’s creative use of poetry in which he mixed it with dark humor is still remembered until now. He found people a window to release their sorrow by laughing. In addition, he criticized everything that he doesn’t like ironically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dark Humor in Sherman Alexie’s Poetry

Irony or sense of dark humor is one of Alexie's most notable literary devices in his magnificent poetry. Dark humor, according to him, is a style to expose and point out the conditions of inequality, injustice, and suffering created by white supremacy and convey conflicts generated by assimilation.” Alexie’s poetry offers a critical perspective on the social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of life for Native Americans residing on reservations. This section is dedicated to study and analyse Alexi's poems:

We lived in the HUD house
for fifty bucks a month. Those were the good times.
ANNIE GREEN SPRINGS WINE was a dollar a bottle.
My uncles always came over
to eat stew and fry bread
to get drunk in the sweatlodge
to spit and piss in the fire. (Futures, 35)

In his poem "Futures," Sherman Alexie uses dark comedy as an example. In this poem, Alexie condemned the Native Americans living on reservations for their endemic alcoholism and cycle of abject poverty. This poem suffering through generations who used living in dregs and get addicted to drugs. He discusses in details the hardships that he and his peers experienced while living on reservations, painting a true picture of life there.

Hunger is the first important issue Alexie raises in the Native American communities. In his poem "Traveling," the first prosaic poem in the collection, a young boy in a moving truck with his father so, he asks his father for food or water because he is starving (Al-Refi'I 2020: 142):

“What’s that?”

“You fair take two cuts of bread and stick them together.” Willie chuckled loudest and looked back at me. “You can have a wish sandwich, as well,” (Travelling, 13)

"A wish sandwich" is an illusion of water to the thirsty. The poem's title, "Traveling," the van where the incident took place, and other details all allude to the native Americans' in-between stage of realizing their worth and claiming their rights. The poem shares the aspirations of Native Americans with everyone on earth is likewise represented by the vehicle. That is therefore their most effective way to obtain justice (Al-Refi'I 2020: 143).

Alexie's debut collection's opening poem had humor, which is unquestionably the most important element of his writing. Alexie constructs a discussion that pushes the boundaries of humanity in order to confront the very real challenges that Indians, both on and off the reservation, face. Alexie "uses dark humor" to navigate the absurdities of cultural injustice, the breakdown of community, and the disappearance of myth and ritual (Al-Refi'I 2020: 143).

In a different poem called "Translated from The American," Alexie brings up the van again as a mother, her son, and the grandmother discuss the son's future and his blue eyes. The grandma then makes the claim that assimilation will obliterate Native Americans' identity. (Al-Refi'I 2020: 143).

He still has blue eyes. she said. "Only newborns are supposed to have blue eyes."

She studied my face for a reaction. I felt it darken by halves.

"When are they going to change?" she asked...

"They're always going to be blue," I said. "You know that. (Translated from the American, 20-21)

The mother is amazed by the irony of the question, "When are they going to change," given that it is virtually impossible for blue eyes to change to another color, and it leads her to the conclusion that "Indians are still nomadic, always halfway." And that's obviously an unpleasant fact to hear (translated from the American, 21). In this poetry, the van stands for the Native Americans' attempt to flee their identity. (Al-Refi'I, 143)

Alexie believes that Native Americans share some of the responsibility for alcohol abuse. Crazy Horse is portrayed in the humorous prose poem "Giving Blood," a legendary Native American figure. Crazy Horse gives blood to raise money to buy alcohol (Al-Jibouri 2021: 345).

I require cash for the taxi cab ride domestic to the reservation and I require a taxi since all the Indians cleared out this city final night whereas I was resting and overlooked to let me, know so I walk on down to the blood bank with a coupon that ensures me twenty bucks a half quart and I figure I can stand to lose three or four pints. (The Business of Fancydancing, 78)

In the end, the Crazy horse got rejected by the white nurse who tells him:

I'm too bad Mr. Insane Horse but we've as of now taken

As well much of your blood and you won't be qualified to give for another era or two. (The Business of Fancydancing,78)

Those lines would indicate that the Crazy Horse who represents the "Native Americans" is responsible for alcohol abuse too and through this poem, the poet tried to awaken his people to be aware of this real issue and deal with it before it destroys all of them:

Crazy Horse sells his medals

When he goes broke, buys a dozen beers

And drinks them all. (The Business of Fancydancing, 65).

The poet presents yet another illustration of destitution and alcoholism in "War All the Time," portraying a modern-day Crazy Horse as a jaded Vietnam War veteran who sells his medals and subtly criticizes the sacrifices that were wasted as a result of the injustice the Native Americans experienced from the American government. (Al-Refi'I 2020: 145):

When the Barkeep inquires him why

he's giving up everything he earned, Insane Horse tells him you can't halt a man from attempting to survive, no matter where he is. (War All the Time, 65)

The poet seems to defend drunkenness as a means of surviving and forgetting hopelessness. Such tragicomic laughter and caustic humor probe the depth of sadness and loss amid usually confounding and absurd settings, exposing the flawed cultural norms that prevail. Furthermore, Alexie handles the issue of alcoholism in a variety of amusing critical styles in an attempt to raise Native Americans' awareness of its horrible consequences. Due to the fact that enables individuals to confront problems, create coping strategies, and make changes, this type of treatment is vital for the survival of his people. As said by Vine Deloria: "The more desperate the problem, the more humor is directed to describe it (Al-Jibouri 2021: 346):

waits outside the Breakaway Bar
in the '65 Malibu with no windshield.
It's a beer a mile. No exceptions.
.....
When Congress raised the minimum wage
the reservation cab driver upped his rates
made it a beer and a cigarette each mile.
HUD evicted him
so he wrapped himself in old blankets
and slept in the front seat of his cab. (The Reservation Cap Driver, 1-12)

Another perfect example that illustrates clearly the poet's message is the poem by name "Reservation Cap Driver." In this poem, Sherman Alexie depicts life on reservations for Native Americans using symbolism, irony, and imagery. This poem is filled with irony and ridicule, especially when the author claims that "this is a hell of a pony." This poem is also a true masterpiece that portrays how society and the government feel about Native Americans. In addition, the government has committed crimes against Native people in the past, including genocide and eviction from their own territories. Alexie thus chastised the government for failing to assist the Native American tribes residing on the reservation. Native Americans experienced rape and sexual assault as well as violent crimes.

A stagnant minimum wage, the termination of Native Americans' benefits, and high eviction rates are probably contributing factors to the violence against Indian people. The cap driver known as "Crazy Horse" raised his prices to include beer and cigarettes for every mile when Congress raised the minimum wage, just as Alexie mentioned in the poem "Reservation Cap Driver."

Despite the fact that there have been many years since Americans and Native Americans were at war, this can be seen as a subtle shot at American consumerism, showing that Native People are not genuinely a part of American capitalism.

Even though the United States takes pride in being the "land of the freedom" and the "home of the unalienable rights of all individuals," not every person has access to all of those freedoms and rights. This fact makes the poem's message all the more important. Alexie represents the cap driver being evicted by HUD in an ironic turn of events. Despite the fact that HUD (Housing and Urban Development) was established with the goal of providing housing to those who cannot afford it rather than evicting them from the homes they already have. He ended up sleeping in the front seat of his taxi while wrapped in an old blanket that they provide them when they move out after the HUD forcibly removed them from their homes.

Another example of the Native Americans' sorrow is the picture of the blankets. It said that it reminds people of their humble beginnings before American materialism made everything big, expensive, and brilliant. The worn-out blankets might also be used as evidence that Americans are to blame for Native Americans' poor health, poverty, and need to drink alcohol to escape their reality rather than deal with their problems. Another

interpretation of the “old blankets” is that it’s an indication of illness and diseases that spread among the Native Americans while they were living on the reservations, and for that, they hold the government accountable for this affliction:

We dumped six trash cans and observed handfuls of mice race for their lives over the gray sand of the reservation landfill. With scoop and broom adhere, my cousin and I chased them down. I executed twenty-seven some time recently I essentially beat one mouse into a ruddy puddle. The reservation had instructed me to abhor, so it was simple to abhor the mice. I swung the scoop until my hands rankled. I slaughtered mice since they were mice. I swung the scoop until I seem scarcely raise my arms. I abhorred the reservation since it was the reservation. It was my reservation. (OSNS, 60).

“The Mice War” is another prose poem that sharpens the focus even further by illuminating the degree to which the external restrictions of the laws become internalized and produce a vicious cycle of violence, anger, and self-loathing. This way of thinking may be connected at psychological level, according to Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran, “overwhelmed and destroyed the world,” for Native Americans “at a very deep psychological level” within an individual or community. This “soul trauma” manifests for the Native American as a hostile view of the outer world. In “The Mice War,” it is claimed that he inflicted violence even on the mice out of his rage at the circumstances on the Reservation. This is evidently shown he cut out heads of the mice out of his anger towards the reservation.

Dark Humor in Ahmed Matar’s Poetry

Like Alexie, Matar uses dark humor as the main literary device in his poems. He condemned Arab laws, the forced lack of freedom, their use of torture, and their zealous pursuit of power at all costs. Matar commented on his poetry by saying, “I didn’t expected to create myself a school when I to begin with begun composing verse; I fair needed to say the truth... And I did. I presently can guarantee you that perusers can tell my verse without my title being joined to it”.

Matar opposed Arab laws generally and encouraged individuals to express their suffering through humor. He berated the insane leaders of the various nations. Matar offered people a language to express their insane world. The Arab proverb “شُرُّ البليّة ما يُضحِكُ” “The worst disaster drives you to laughter” was also repeated by all the Arabs. When wild, insane leaders like Gaddafi and those who are worse than him spoke, Matar made the populace laugh in response. Even today, people recall Matar's innovative use of poetry and the way he blended it with dark humor. He led them to a window where they might laugh their sorrows away. He also ironically critiqued anything that he dislikes. First of all, I am going to discuss some of Ahmed Matar’s collection of signposts or as they call it in Arabic “لافتات أحمد مطر”, the first poem of this collection is called “قطع علاقة”, “they put a watchdog on my mouth”:

They placed a watchdog above my mouth,
And built in my blood a market of humiliation for pride.
And upon the awakening of my mind,
They commanded anesthesia to be poured into its cup.
Then when I regained consciousness,
The flood of filth drowned me.
I was told: Do not interfere in politics.

وضعوا فوقّ فمي كلبَ حراسه
و بنوا للكبرياء في دمي سوقَ نخاسه
و على صحرة عقلي
أمرّوا التخدير أن يسكب كاسه
ثمّ لما صحّحت
قد أغرقني فيضُ النجاسه
قيل لي: لا تتدخل بالسياسه

Ahmed Matar criticized the government severely, and the absurd rules of his country, saying that they put a guard dog on people's mouths to prevent them from speaking out or protesting in favor of their own rights, stripped them of all their pride, treated them like

slaves who accepted everything without complaining, and even when some people are fully aware of what is happening, they are silenced with various forms of torture to ensure that they won't challenge the rules:

I was told: "Do not interfere in politics."
They built the structure... and said,
"Keep away from its foundation."
Oh, gentlemen, pardon me,
How can a body not tremble
When it loses its head?

قيل لي: لا تتدخل بالسياسة
شيدوا المبنى.. وقالوا
أبعدوا عنه أساسه
أيها السادة عفوا
كيف لا يهتز جسم
عندما يفقد رأسه

Matar is indicating that the government wants you to live like a serf to them, that you have no choice but to acquiesce in all of their regulations and norms. In this way, they would create a nation that had no understanding of politics or anything else; in other words, "ignorants" who had made no advancements or achievements. Matar said that a structure physically had no proper basis, so how can you expect it to stand firm:

The doctor said to me,
"Take a breath,
For I was almost suffocating,
With sorrow and oppression, I respond.
But I,
Feared that the watcher would hear me,
And when I puzzled him with my terrible silence,
He shed a brilliant light on my eyes,
He tried to raise my spirits,
But I released them,
And enjoyed lamenting.
I said to him, "Forgive me, my esteemed doctor,
I wish to hold my head high,
But I,
Fear that the watcher would erase it."

قال لي الطبيب
خذ نفساً
فكدت من فرط اختناقني
بالأسى و القهر أستجيب
لكنني
خشيت أن يسمعي الرقيب
و عندما حيرته بصمتي الرهيب
وجه ضوءاً باهراً لمقلتاني
حاول رفع هامتي
لكنني خلصتها
و لذت بالنعيب
قلت له معذرة ياسيدي الطبيب
أود أن ارفع رأسي عاليًا
لكنني
أخاف أن يحذفه الرقيب

The second poem in Matar's book, "My awful silence," or "صمتي الرهيب", talks about how those who are afraid of the government keep quiet. Matar wrote a conversation between himself and the doctor in which the doctor encouraged him to take a breath and discuss what was hurting him. Yet, the speaker remained silent despite being choked with anguish and despair because he was afraid of the government, which he knew would kill him if he spoke out against it or exposed it. The doctor questioned him, "What is the thing that causes you pain?" just like in the poem's opening line, "I wanted to talk but I am terrified of the watcher." Of course, that poem refers to the voiceless individuals who lack the guts to speak up against the causes of their suffering and continued to exist as followers:

I looked into the scroll of departure,
A lost caravan,
Its guide concealing the ugliness of its deeds,
With its beautiful patience.
I saw it drowning in its own blood,
With tears and lamentation.
Yet,
despite its loss and ruin,
It assembles a ship from its coffins,
Stitches sails from its shrouds,
To save the guide.

طالعتُ في صحيفة الرحيل
قافلةً تائهة
دليلها يسئُرُ قبح فعله
بصيرها الجميل
رأيتها تغرق في دماها
و الدمع و العويل
لكنها
رغم الضياع و الردى
تُعدُّ من نعوشها سفينة
تُخيطُ من أكفانها أشراعاً
كي تُنقذَ الدليل

And it was said that blood does not turn into water,
A jest it was,
For blood has become the Nile's water,
Drunk by the killer in the presence of the victim's actor.
So when the victims were asked,
By what sin were they killed?
Their limbs shook,
With the guilt of a loyal people,
To a treacherous leader.

و قيل أنّ الدم لا يصبح ماءً
هزلت
فالدّم قد أصبح ماء نيل
يشربه القاتل ما بين يدي ممثل القتيل
أذا الضحايا سُئلت
بأي ذنب قُتلت ؟
لانتفضت أشلاؤها
بذنب شعبٍ مخلصٍ
لقائدٍ عميلٍ

The third poem in his collection, "The Lost Caravan," or "قافلة تائهة" was written by Ahmed Matar to demonstrate that Iraq is a wealthy nation with good people who, despite their pain, suffering, and agony, are still friendly and helpful to one another and to everyone else. As a result, they don't deserve the suffering that is befalling them. They made such incredible pictures with their blood to depict the unethical behavior of their opponents that they eventually drowned in it. The caravan's guide, according to Matar, covers the ugliness of its conduct," including the evil acts committed by the government. Even though they are lost and miserable, they continue to build their coffins into ships and stitch their shrouds into sails in order to continue living this life, save their guide, and maintain their claim to their own rights. When he remarked, "They said that the blood can't turn into water, yet here it did," "it was a joke," and "the blood became a Nile River," Matar created another fantastic paradox. He said this because, despite the fact that everyone, including the government, repeats this proverb, it is not being applied to their behavior. Instead, they treat people's lives as a joke, murder the victim, and proceed to his funeral as if nothing happened. The speaker claims in the final lines that if those folks are ever asked, "Why were you killed?" They would yell out loud, "We were slaughtered because we were too devoted to a traitor leader who will always follow someone to betray his country," the speaker is implying that the passengers on this ship trusted their captain but got stabbed in the back from him in a very disappointed way:

If the hole fell from the needle!
If the pit tumbled into another pit!
If the wine bottle remained sealed!
If laughter perished from sorrow!
If the cloud trimmed its nails,
If the breeze gave birth to a rock!
Then, I shall have faith in the validity of this.

لو سقط الثقب من الإبرة!
لو هوت الحفرة في حفرة!
لو سكرت قنينة خمره!
لو مات الضحك من الحسرة!
لو قص الغيم أظافره
لو أنجبت النسمة صخرة!
فسأؤمن في صحة هذا

Within the confines of his poem titled "The Possible and the Impossible," or "الممكن والمستحيل" Ahmed Matar artfully conveys the notion that regardless of the circumstances, even in the hypothetical scenario of an implausible occurrence such as a void engulfing another void, the governance of his nation would remain bereft of a genuine human presence marked by conscientiousness and compassion. Moreover, the plausibility of the occurrence of these unattainable events is crucial for engendering confidence in the prospect of an equitable governing authority, a premise that unequivocally implies their perpetual unlikelihood.

Furthermore, the author delineates certain implausible occurrences, conveying the perpetual dominion of the country's dictatorial leaders. The populace inhabiting this territory has regrettably reached a state of ignorance wherein they fail to discern the distinction between permissible discourse and proscribed concepts. The governing body has effectively confined these individuals within a metaphorical enclosure, depriving them of freedom and inhibiting their capacity for unfettered self-expression. Ultimately, this poem serves as a striking testament to the extensive governmental control exerted over the entirety of the populace:

I testify and affirm through my allegiance,
Yet... I shall never truly believe,
That within my homeland lie homelands,
And that its ruler harbors a glimmer of humanity, someday
Nor that therein exists the slightest distinction,
Between the spoken word and the forbidden.
Nor that the people therein are free,
Or that freedom... is genuinely free!

وأقرُّ وأبصم بالعشرة.
لكن.. لن أؤمن بالمرة
أن بأوطاني أوطانا
وأن بحاكمها أملاً أن يصبح، يوماً، إنساناً
أو أن بها أدنى فرق
ما بين الكلمة والعورة
أو أن الشعب بها حر
أو أن الحرية.. حرة!

In the presented stanzas, Matar eloquently elucidates his unwavering skepticism towards the veracity of assertions concerning the governing bodies and authorities exercising dominion over his native land. He ascertains the absence of any semblance of optimism in relation to the rulers, insinuating a profound disillusionment. His state of impatience bespeaks a perceived lack of potential for transformative change, evoking a sense of resignation akin to a perceived inexorable affliction upon his homeland, perpetually subjected to the governance of the existing regime, with no foreseeable termination of this affliction.

CONCLUSION

In short, dark humor is a complex form of comedy that challenges societal norms and pushes the boundaries of what is acceptable to joke about. This research demonstrates that Sherman Alexie uses poetry to fight and condemn the severe and intense social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of life for Native Americans on reservations. Through dark humor, Alexie was able to expose the American policy of exclusion and marginalization of native Americans from the society. To ensure the continuation of their native identity and culture, he emphasizes the significance of revitalizing Native American traditions and heritage. Furthermore, Ahmed Matar opposed Arab laws generally and encouraged individuals to express their suffering through humor. He berated the insane leaders of the various nations. Matar offered people a language to express their insane world. He made every Arab repeat the Arabic proverb *شرُّ البلية ما يضحك* "The worst disaster drives you to laughter." Finally, whether or not to engage in dark humor is a personal choice that requires careful consideration of the potential consequences and the willingness to take responsibility for one's words and action. Through literary device of dark humor, both poets were successful in denigrating and attacking the ruthless dominating patriarchal structure, however it is touched with sense of humor to alleviate the miserable condition of people. It is sweet bitterness.

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