

Postcolonial Dimensions in Iqbal's the Bird's Complaint and Darwish's I Belong There: A Comparative Analysis.

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Abstract:

The study aims to explore the Postcolonial elements in the Selected poems of Iqbal and Darwish. Specifically, it intends to analyze the postcolonial themes of exile, displacement, belonging, homelessness, and the consequences of the sub-themes of sadness, loss, and Identity crises in the Selected poems of two national poets of Pakistan and Palestine. Both poems show the longing of the colonized for Home and belonging in their scenarios. The study highlights the quest of the oppressed Muslims of the subcontinent and Palestine for home and identity. Edward Said's concepts are used as a theoretical framework and methodology for the analysis of the poems. The research is qualitative in nature, moreover, textual analysis is used as a method of analysis.

Keywords: Post colonialism, Exile, Homelessness, Displacement, Iqbal, Darwish.

Introduction:

The present study aims to critically analyze the postcolonial dimensions in the selected poems of Darwish and Iqbal. The paper mainly underlines the common attitudes, themes, and issues of exile, home nostalgia, displacement, identity, separation, and loss in the poetry of both poets. It is usually said that poetry has universal appeal for the global audience as it is evocative of the emotions and feelings common to all humans. While the poetry of national poets usually documents the achievements, conflicts, struggles, sacrifices, destruction, emotions, and feelings related to the national identity of the people. These struggles, sacrifices, and losses of identity and families in the wake of colonial experience can be traced in the poetry of the national poets of Palestine and Pakistan. Darwish is the most conspicuous figure in Palestinian literature and mostly devoted his poetry to his homeland Palestine. Being himself, an exiled poet Darwish expresses his feeling of being lost and his existential crises that lead to a sense of dissolution and dislocation. Exile, home nostalgia, and the pains and sufferings of being in exile are the major themes of his poetry as he spent most of his childhood under Israeli occupation. Darwish wrote almost twenty-six anthologies of poetry and eleven of prose and all these anthologies of poetry and prose are replete with the themes of Home, Identity, Exile, belonging, displacement, loss, and dislocation. His works have

been translated into twentytwo languages and spread the voice of the predicament of the colonized and the oppressed people of the Palestinians to the world.

Iqbal is not only the most renowned poet of Urdu and Persian literature but also a philosopher, scholar, thinker, and barrister. He is the visionary poet who originated Pakistan's plan, hence considered the national poet of Pakistan. His poetry has a number of social, political, religious, and philosophical themes. His poetry depicts the adverse effects of colonialism and imperialism and as a counter-discourse yearns for belonging, Homeland, and Identity. His poetry shows hope and enthusiasm for gaining an independent homeland and national identity yet shows nostalgia for the lost homeland and identity of the Muslims. His poetry not only spread political awareness among Muslims of India but also inspired them and mobilized them to achieve their identity.

Humans have a deep-rooted history of exile which can be traced back to the exile of Adam and Eve from their homeland paradise. In this regard, Ian Buruma, in an article entitled, 'Real Wounds, Unreal Wounds: The Romance of Exile' asserts the first story of exile did not actually start from the Jewish diaspora rather its practice can be traced in the biblical story of Adam and Eve. "No matter how we interpret the story of their expulsion from the Garden of Eden — original sin or not —we may be certain of one thing: There is no way back to paradise." The eating of the apple marks the being of their maturity and the end of their childlike innocence and from their story of exile stems a great deal of literature. (3) Exile is experienced by many writers and poets irrespective of their cultural and regional differences. Leaving one's home or homelessness can be a traumatic experience for people, it not only indicates physical displacement but also psychological displacement. In this study comparison is made between Indian and Palestinian poetry concerning exile, homelessness, and displacement along with its consequences on the human psyche.

1.2) Research Objectives:

The objectives of the study are:

- To find out the postcolonial themes of exile, homelessness, memory, nostalgia and identity in the selected poems of Iqbal and Darwish.
- To find out the similar experiences of the Muslims of India and Palestine in the time of colonialism and imperialism.

1.3) Research Questions:

The present study addresses the following questions:

- 1) How do the two national poets of different regions deal with similar experiences of exile, nostalgia for homeland, memory, and belonging in their poems?
- 2) How far is the poetry of Iqbal and Darwish indicative of Said's ideas of exile?
- 3) How far does the poetic expression of Iqbal and Darwish reveal the predicaments of Indian and Palestinian Muslims at the time of colonialism and imperialism?

1.4) Significance of the study

The study is significant in the sense that it contributes to the literary canon of world literature. It also shares through the experiences of two poets from different regions, the universal desire of people for having a home. The desire for belonging and having a home is prominent in the literature written by people who are either refugees or have lived in exile. The study highlights the dilemmas of people who lived in exile or experienced exile and consequently lost their families, friends, relatives, and homes.

1.5) Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The study is quantitative in nature and postcolonial theory is used as a theory in general as a theoretical framework of the research. Moreover, the concept of Said presented in his essay *Reflections on Exile* is used for the textual analysis of the selected poems of Iqbal and Darwish. Close reading is used as a method for analyzing the meanings, symbols, and metaphors in the text of the poems. Edward Said was a Palestinian-born American political activist and a renowned theorist of postcolonial literature mostly famous for his work *Orientalism*. This work mainly deals with the representations and misrepresentations of the East and West. This study mainly deals with his ideas on exile that resulted in a longing for a home and consequently, presents the traumatic experiences of the margins. The main ideas are taken from his essay titled *Reflections on Exile* which is a part of an anthology of essays of the same title. He starts his essay by saying, "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place" amid a person and its true home and its despair is unfathomable. And though exile is depicted as romantic, splendid, and heroic in history and literature when achievements and stories are formed of exiles the sadness of alienation and separation is difficult to overcome. (Said 180). He further states that the modern culture represents the estrangement and alienation of man and a critic George Steiner is of the view that the whole literature of the twentieth century is "extraterritorial literature" which is the literature by and about exiles and represents the age of the refugees. (180) According to said exile is the major phenomenon of the modern age owing to imperialism and it inflicts pain and suffering on the colonized by the colonizer. Said observes that exile is created by one group for another group and that, "it has torn millions of people from the nourishment of tradition, family, and geography?" (181). Said states that one cannot really understand what exile actually means without having firsthand experience of the exile. He says in his essay "Exiles look at non-exiles with resentment. They belong in their surroundings, you feel, whereas an exile is always out of place. What is it like to be born in a place, to stay and live there, to know that you are of it, more or less forever?" (186). Said also made distinctions between the terms exile, refugees, and expatriates. The word exile has its roots in ancient times which designates the practice of banishment and once banished the exile becomes an outsider. While refugee is the term of the twentieth century which represents the large scale of innocent and helpless people depending on international assistance. Then he mentions that "Expatriates voluntarily live in an alien country, usually for personal or social reasons" (187). They suffer the pain of estrangement, yet their case is different from exiles. Sometimes choice of leaving a country is possible as in the case of Colonial officials, missionaries, technical experts, mercenaries, and military advisers "They lived in exile though not in banishment. Likewise, white settlers in different parts of the world may once have been exiled but as considered pioneer lost their labels of being in exile. (187). He further states in this essay that exile writers use their writings to give voice to their issues related to exile and usually appear they be very unpleasant and stubborn writers. The paper in this manner explores the manner in which Iqbal And Darwish have portrayed the exiles in their poems.

2.1) Literature Review

This section deals with the existing literature on the poets Darwish and Iqbal as well as on the postcolonial theory presented in their works. It also deals with the theoretical perspective of the paper.

Yousef and Al-Rub in their article *The Subaltern in Some Selected Poems by Mahmoud Darwish* discuss how the subaltern people of Palestine are presented in the poems of Darwish, through the lens of Spivak's ideas. Being himself in the position of a subaltern, his poems which

have been translated into more than thirty languages serve to spread the voice of the subaltern group of Palestine around the globe. According to Yousef and AlRub, the imagery, symbols, metaphors, and other figures of speech are employed by Darwish in his poetry to reinforce the issues of exile, Identity, martyrdom, freedom, resistance, and Arabism connected with subaltern. Therefore, Darwish's voice is, subsequently, perceived locally and globally to demonstrate that the subalterns are aware of their conditions and are capable of speaking and defending themselves and defending themselves.

In an article titled *Home, Homeliness and Search for Identity in Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry* the researcher Al Areqil maintains that Darwish shares the anguish of exile with the people of his community and expresses the themes of home, homelessness, and homesickness throughout his poetic career. This researcher particularly investigated the concept of home and homelessness in some selected poems like his most famous poems *Identity Card*, *I am Yousef O father*, *To My Mother* and *Who Am I without Exile*. In all of these poems, Darwish aspires for a homeland or motherland and a desire to return home. His writings are a source of his postcolonial resistance. Homelessness leads to the pain of personal and national Identity crises. M. Gohar in his article entitled *Narratives of Diaspora and Exile in Arabic and Palestinian Poetry* presents the problems of exile, dislocation, and homelessness and the traumatic experiences of Palestinian people as highlighted by Palestinian poets. He states that exile serves as a signifier not only for separation from one's homeland but also for the pain that it causes. Gohar discusses many Palestinian poets in this particular paper who have composed their poetry on the topic of exile and divides these poets into two different categories. The first group comprises poets who remained associated with ethnic and religious marginalities residing in many Arab countries or representatives of politically hostile groups. The second group is of those poets, who are either under Israeli occupation or those who have been forced to leave their country. This group can be divided into two sub-groups. The first comprises poets such as Mahmud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim, and Tawfiq Zayyad who have survived under Israeli occupation and who establish the core of Palestinian poetry of exile and revolt. This group's poetry is considered the resistance poetry of Palestine and they endured the violence, torture, assassination, jailing, and banning of books for writing such poetry. The second sub-group comprises Palestinian poets such as "Kamal Nasir, Tawfiq Sayigh, Izz-al-Din-al-Manasira, Fadwa Tuqan, and others who left their homeland after the second exodus following the Arab- Israeli war in 1967". All these poets have a collective mission of returning their home. (228-230). In his political essay *The Edward Said Raeder*, says that the demand for Palestinian people to have their own culture, identity, history, and politics as a separate group from Israeli people. In this particular essay. Said discusses the conditions of the post-war people of 1948, those who stayed in Palestine as well as those who were in exile as refugees in different Arab countries. He asserts "The main characteristics of the Arab Palestinian's life since 1948 had been his peripherality, his isolation, and his silence—all of those are conditions of displacement and loss." (Said, 2000, p. 32)

Yahya in his article *Traditions of Patriotism in Urdu Poetry: A Critical Study with Special Reference to the Poet of the East Allama Iqbal and His Poetry* asserts that Urdu poetry is the embodiment of the nationalist and patriotic sentiments and become a tool in the freedom struggle of India. The progressive movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Indian literature provided an impetus for the modern themes of patriotism, freedom, equality, humanity, etc. Young amateur poets started passionately composing their notions of national identity in their lucid poetry. Their compositions evidently describe how nationalist beliefs can utilize literature to seek lofty ends, turning nationalistic emotions and affection for the homeland into a constructive force.

Even Iqbal was one of such poets whose fiery poetry depicted the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. Iqbal was a nationalist whose poetry evolved from nationalism to pan-Islamism.

2.2) Research Gap:

There is extensive research available on the works of Darwish in Palestinian or Arab literature as well as on the works of Iqbal in Persian and Urdu literature. Different scholars have discussed different themes including existential, psychological, ecocritical, and postcolonial themes of self, otherness, suffering, deaths, etc. in their poetry as they are the representatives of their nations. However, the present study bridges the gap by finding similar themes of separation, exile, loss, and identity in the poets of two national poets of different regions. Their poetry becomes a kind of catharsis for them in the time of colonialism and imperialism.

Analysis and Discussions

This part analyses the postcolonial elements in the poetry of Iqbal and Darwish, especially the research that investigates the themes of exile, displacement, and belonging in their poetry. As the national poets of their region, they become the voice of their respective region and give vent to their emotions of sufferings and hardships faced by them in the crucial time of colonialism and imperialism. They are not only the poets of any particular town, village, or area rather of their whole nation. Said notions on exile, displacement, and belonging are used for analyzing the text of the poems. Exile is the prominent theme of contemporary poetry, it is a common phenomenon that many people have experienced in the twentieth century including poets, irrespective of their traditions, culture, and region. Exile and dislocation from the homeland can be a very distressing experience that can deeply affect humans' mental and emotional health. Writing about such traumatic episodes of life is a general practice, where people give vent to their feelings of nostalgia, yearning, and estrangement as presented by Darwish and Iqbal in their poems. Exile could occur because of the social and political circumstances of the society in which one lives. As Chakraborty and Das uphold Exile as a theme has always been of great attention to many authors in literary history intrigued their thoughts and provoked their fantastical interests. The reason behind the compelling theme of exile and its resultant circumstances and torments is two-fold – either because of their personal experiences including their forced abandonment of their native country for political reasons, or because of the unsatisfaction with one's society and its conduct, or because of their deliberate decision to reside elsewhere. (30)

Darwish, who is one of the exiled poets beautifully portrays the state of being an exile in his poems. He talks about his tragic plight of exile through his poem *I Belong There*. He says: *I belong there. I have many memories. I was born as everyone is born. I have a mother, a house with many windows, brothers, friends, and a prison cell with a chilly window!*

I have a wave snatched by seagulls, a panorama of my own. I have a saturated meadow. (7) In these lines, the word “there” denotes his homeland Palestine, and also denotes his sense of identity related to his home when he says “belong”. Then he refers how his world, his home was just like any happy home he has memories of his beloved mother, brothers, and friends. He has a house like any common person then, he talks about a “prison cell with chilly widows” which denotes his exile like the exile of Adam and Eve from his paradise. Seagulls metaphorically refer to the treachery of Israelis who have snatched Palestinians' garden of Eden which includes birds, olive trees, and moon. Birds, trees, and the moon signify mother nature which symbolizes the loss of motherland. He then tells the readers “I have lived on the land long before swords turned man into prey/ I belong there”. (7) This line indicates the poets' happy days before the genocide started. Israelis became Satan's allies and they had to live in exile. and Being devastated in exile he remembers his golden days at his homeland. He is torn between past memories and resent predicament. Exiled individuals always remain in the state of in-betweenness, they remain in their

memories and are unable to accept the new reality as Said maintains “The exile exists in a median state, neither completely at one with the new setting, nor fully disencumbered of the old; beset with half-involvements and half-detachments; nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another”(49). The last lines of the poem *I belong There* mark the catastrophe when Darwish says: To break the rules, I have learned all the words needed for a trial by blood/I have learned and dismantled all the words in order to draw from them a single word: Home (7) Darwish as a poet suffered from exile at a very young age and till the end, his life is a tale of a man who wanted to return home. As Abu Eid says: “Return became his daily bread: the return to the place, the return to time, the return from the temporary to the permanent, the return from the present to both the past and the future. Thus, Palestine became the opposite of everything else, and became a lost paradise”.

Said in his essay *Reflections on Exile* says in the state of exile nothing is secure, he calls it a jealous state as it gives rise to the emotions of solidarity. In the situation of exile, one group separates themselves from the other which creates an exaggerated sense of unity among the same group and a passionate hostility for the other group, even if they are facing the same predicaments as them. He then mentions the conflict between Zionist Jews and Arab Palestinians. He maintains “Palestinians feel that they have been turned into exiles by the proverbial people of exile, the Jews.” (180) Though, Palestinians themselves are aware of the fact that their own sense of national identity is created in the condition of exile, where every person except blood brother or sister is considered an enemy or unfriendly. Said further says: “Perhaps this is the most extraordinary of exile’s fates: to have been exiled by exiles—to relive the actual process of up-rooting at the hands of exiles.” (180) In the summer of 1982, Palestinians were forced to think that what urged Israel to expel them from their exiled homes even displaced once in 1948. They were again displaced even though they had already struggled for forty-six years for a national identity. (180)

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal’s poetry shows the conflict between his personality and society. He is a genuine poet and his poetry is not only for one nation and society but can also expand to other societies. His notions outlived the times it was delivered. he is the visionary poet who showed the map to the Muslims of Asia to germinate, prosper, and grow. He is acknowledged as the “poet of the East”, hence struggled as an Eastern poet through his poetry against the it’s binary opponent of the West. As we see in Said’s *Orientalism* in which he says that Western people do not have a real image of the Eastern, they have their perception of an Eastern as presented by the Western intellectuals therefore west views the East through the eyes of Orientalists, who presented a conceptual view of the East that was made by the colonial authorities during colonialism. This paper analyses his poem “*The Bird's Complaint*” This poem like Darwish’s *I Belong There* talks about the feeling of estrangement while living in exile. On the surface level, the poem is about a caged bird who is separated from his homeland and longs to return home. But, on a deeper level, the bird symbolizes the Muslims of India at the time of Iqbal. He says:

I am constantly reminded of the bygone times

Those garden's springs, those chorus of chimes

Gone are the freedoms of our own nests

Where we could come and go at our own pleasure (22).

The bird who metaphorically represents Muslims of India is facing the situation of being in exile, being away from his home, and his national identity. Being nostalgic, he gives vivid descriptions of his beautiful home as a garden like the garden of paradise. Like Darwish, he also talks about his home, family, and friends with whom he has spent the golden days of his life. The memories of home give him solace and comfort in a displaced situation. He laments that he cannot move freely anywhere as he is in the cage it symbolizes the colonized situation of Indian Muslims under British

colonialism. After the victory of Britain in 1857 over India, India was treated as one of the provinces of Great Britain. In colonized India, any attempt in the form of nationalist, religious, and revivalist movements to gain solidarity was crushed by Britain. Britishers tried to completely wipe out the Muslims of India, firstly, because previously they were ruling in India and secondly, they were resisting the colonizers. The anguish and helplessness of Muslims are shown through the metaphor of a caged bird. He further says in this poem:

How unfortunate I am, tantalized for my abode I am
My companions are in the homeland, in prison I am
Spring has arrived, the flower buds are laughing
On my misfortune in this dark house, I am wailing O God,
To whom should I relate my tale of woe?
I fear lest I die in this cage with this woe!

Under colonialism, Muslim's homeland is like a cage, they have become others in their own country. The bird or Muslims feel unfortunate by seeing others who are enjoying the comforts of their homeland as Said in his essay *Reflections on Exile* asserts "Exiles look at non-exiles with resentment. They belong in their surroundings, you feel, whereas an exile is always out of place. What is it like to be born in a place, to stay and live there, to know that you are of it, more or less forever?" (186). This shows the dilemma of Muslims living under British rule. In the last lines of the poem, the poet shows the sorrow and pain of Muslims stem from their disposition and displacement. He says:

Since separation from the garden, the condition of my heart is such
My heart is waxing the grief, my grief is waxing the heart O
Listeners, considering this music do not be happy his call is the
wailing of my wounded heart O the one who confined me make
me free A silent prisoner I am, earn my blessings free.

These lines indicate the sense of grief of separation from one's home caused by colonialism and imperialism. The caged bird is desperately crying for his home and belongings. Said maintains no matter what or where one is "exiles are always eccentrics who feel their difference (even as they frequently exploit it) as a kind of orphanhood."

Conclusion

To conclude, the present study answers the question of how the themes of exile, homelessness, and consequently the sub-themes related to it like separation, loss, grief, and identity crises are presented in the poems of Iqbal and Darwish. Despite, being poets of different nationalities, their poems seem to highlight similar themes. Both the nations Palestine and India suffered from displacement, dislocation, homelessness, homesickness, exile, loss, and estrangement physically as well as mentally. Both the poets show the impact of colonialism and imperialism on themselves as well as on their nations. The present research traces the connections present in the poetry of both the poets. Said's ideas are used to analyze the two poems of these poets.

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