

Diaspora Literature and Its Reflection in Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry

Abdollah Hosseini, (corresponding author): Associate Professor in Arabic Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran. Email: dr.abd.hoseini@khu.ac.ir

Soudabeh Mozaffari, Associate Professor in Arabic Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran.

Afsaneh Kosari Jafarabad, PhD student of Arabic language and literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran.

Introduction

Diaspora, or a transnational community, refers to a group of individuals who have left their homeland for various reasons such as political issues, war, or exile and have settled in other countries. Although they are considered part of the host society, they continuously hold onto the civilizational, cultural, and value-based characteristics of their native land. These elements, whether in their minds or behaviors, are intertwined with the diasporic individual, preventing their complete assimilation into a new environment. This is because the hope of returning home is always alive within them, making the primary goal of the diaspora the preservation and development of this cultural and identity heritage.

Despite their emphasis on roots and identity, individuals living in exile often experience feelings of homesickness, loneliness, detachment from their homeland, rootlessness, identity conflict, and self-alienation. The concept of diaspora, displacement, and the struggle to overcome its hardships are recurring themes in the poetry of contemporary Palestinian poets like Mahmoud Darwish.

In this context, the use of the word "diaspora" instead of "migration" is significant because diaspora is a more comprehensive concept, of which migration is only a part. While diaspora means "scattering," migration represents only one dimension of this dispersion. However, not every population scattering necessarily leads to migration. Sometimes, the dispersion of individuals occurs within their own homeland, a situation that can arise in response to prevailing social or political conditions that make the continuation of a normal life difficult for people with different ideologies.

Methodology

This article was conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach, drawing on the theoretical foundations and literature of the diaspora. Its theoretical framework was established through library-based data collection.

Results and Discussion

In the analysis of the discussed poems, one of the central components is the poet's understanding of exile and alienation, which is never seen as having an end, but rather as an unending period. In this profound experience of displacement, the poet is not only physically distant from his land, but also feels that his vital power and connection to his roots and cultural heritage have been lost. Nevertheless, the exiled poet does not surrender in the face of this loss. By proclaiming his identity in his poetry, he insists on highlighting his core identity against the foreign society and strives stubbornly to preserve his individual and collective identity in these difficult circumstances. This representation of identity becomes a primary and dynamic theme in exile literature, where words are transformed into a tool for cultural resistance.

At the peak of his feeling of rootlessness and non-belonging, the poet powerfully connects this deep pain to the hope of returning home with the declaration, "We will return." This phrase is not merely a political slogan, but a testament to his profound sense of belonging; a fiery desire to be a part of the simple, daily life of his homeland, even as an inanimate object. This longing stems from the vivid memories of his childhood in exile and leads to the poet's insistence on the fundamental principle that he is not willing to compromise his homeland for anything else. This demonstrates that in an oppressed society, even basic needs have been plundered, and the homeland is his only sanctuary. However, in a dramatic paradox, the poet considers even seeing the homeland again a form of exile because the idealized image he has nurtured in his mind is far removed from its bitter and changed current reality. Therefore, his emotions upon confronting the homeland are a contradictory mix of yearning for return and renewed alienation. He is unwilling to change his identity or geography for the sake of the struggle, as he believes that true action and influence stem only from one's authentic identity and native place. For this reason, fighting within the context of his original identity is his priority and has a genuine significance for him.

A dual sense of belonging is one of the most prominent characteristics of the exiled individual. He is in a constant state of oscillation between the desire for liberation from his current situation and the fear of severing past ties. Despite his weariness of bitter memories, he looks to the future with a mixture of hope and fear, and ultimately remains undecided in the purgatory of staying or leaving. The diasporic individual has a complex relationship with the past and the future; he neither wishes to be stuck in a longing for a distant past nor merely hopes for a better future, but rather seeks to find a place in the present and build a different future. In this journey, time for him is not only a factor that intensifies his longing and nostalgia, but also a symbol of a deep rupture in his identity. In the midst of this, forced silence replaces truth, and the experience of alienation from the homeland leads to a painful self-alienation. Nevertheless, within the tragedy of displacement and

the loss of a homeland, the poet struggles with all his might to preserve his voice, a symbol of resistance against the destruction of identity and humanity. This struggle is his final bastion against absolute silence.

Conclusion

Upon review, it is clear that diaspora literature constitutes the core of Mahmoud Darwish's poetic thought and expression. Darwish portrays exile not merely as a geographical displacement, but as an existential and unending state in which the poet ceaselessly strives to preserve his identity against the threat of erasure and assimilation into a foreign culture. In this battle for identity, he is unwilling to compromise his homeland, viewing it as a fundamental and non-negotiable principle, even if returning to it becomes a form of internal exile due to the conflict between his idealized vision and the bitter reality.

This internal struggle places the poet in the purgatory of a dual identity, where past and present oscillate, leaving him adrift between a nostalgia for what has been lost and a fierce struggle to live in the present. In this process, the experience of alienation from his homeland leads to a painful self-alienation, where forced silence replaces truth. However, Darwish ultimately leverages this painful situation as a foundation for resistance. He strives with all his might to preserve his voice, utilizing it as the final bastion against the silence and the annihilation of identity and humanity. Thus, in Darwish's poetry, diaspora literature transcends a mere theme, becoming a symbol of steadfastness, the re-creation of identity, and cultural resistance in the face of absolute displacement.

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