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Mahmoud Darwish and Tanure Ojaide: Poets of exilic consciousness and representatives of oppressed nations

1 Introduction

Darwish¹, the national poet of Palestine, and Ojaide², the voice of Nigeria, are both poets that belong to countries that witnessed different types of political, economic, and social upheavals. The purpose of this study is thus to examine Darwish and Ojaide as poets of exile by studying their exilic experiences and exploring particular poems that consider their external and internal sense of displacement.

It is devastating both for the individual and community to have the experience of living in an area that is ruled by foreigners, ones who have changed its familiar characteristics in order to create their own homeland and turn that place into one of exile, where people are treated as refugees rather than native inhabitants. This notion of internal as well as external exile occupies a great deal of Darwish's poetry.

Using his national pride and attachment to the land, Darwish strongly believes that the Palestinian sense of belonging cannot be erased by exile, marginalization, and an apartheid colonial state. As such, he uses his poetry to create a new identity by instilling Palestine "in the hearts of Palestinians in order to keep it alive in their memory" (Zid, 2014, 55). Darwish adopts the traditional role of the poet as the voice and representative of his people. Simultaneously, what makes Darwish closer to the masses is his adoption of certain modern developments in Arabic poetry, such as the use of shorter lines, everyday images, and common objects as symbols, "along with the influence of international revolutionary literature's emphasis on collective representation of the experiences of ordinary working people" (Mattawa, 2009, 225). In this way, he is considered the spokesperson and consciousness of the Palestinians.

Similarly, the feeling of exile is inevitable in the African poet's imagination. It was nurtured in the postcolonial era, which witnessed the rise of dictatorial regimes that bred social insecurity and economic corruption. The African citizens, particularly the Nigerians, live in a state of alienation and marginalization within the boundaries of

1 Mahmoud Darwish (1941-2008) was a Palestinian poet and author, who is regarded as the national poet of Palestine. He wrote poetry and prose and earned numerous prizes for his work. Many of his poems speak about exile and the loss of homeland.

2 Tanure Ojaide (born 1948) is a Nigerian poet and professor. He has won numerous awards for his literary work. He is known for his criticism of imperialism, religion and environmental destruction.



their own country, where they are destined to live an internal and psychological exile. The loss of the citizens' rights to the country's natural resources, which are controlled by foreign companies and the ruling class, affects the well-being of the inhabitants, who are treated as strangers. Such loss of one's homeland and its fortune reveals the reality of exile, which induces Ojaide to lament that loss in terms of dirges.

2 Darwish and exile

Darwish's life as an exile had a great effect on his identity and career. Being a poet and an activist, exilic life "brought me into houses, /into hearts,/ into ears of wheat [and]/ has given me an identity" (Darwish, 1980, 41-43). He became an emblem of exile that incarnated the trauma of a nation of exiled people. The colonization of his homeland made exile his sole identity, by which he defined himself. Therefore, being a symbol of exile means being a symbol of sorrow, and so the poet's verse serves as the expression of the collective Palestinian predicament. The poet's experience in exile includes searching for his homeland, which demands a search for the shattered self and a lost identity. As an identity-seeker, some of Darwish's poems are presented in the dialogue form where the interlocutor speaks to or about the "other", who is mostly Darwish himself. In his poem "I am only him", for example, the poet describes an absent "other", or himself, as "melt[ing] away" out of fatigue and "swallowed" by darkness, because of the long journey he has been on;

Therefore he walks and walks and walks
until he melts away
and the shadows swallow him up at the end of this journey
I am only him
And he is only me
In different images. (Darwish, 2009a, 27)

Darwish draws the image of the exile and the collapse of identity. Now he belongs to the dead realm of shadows and darkness.

3 Homeland vs. homelessness

The concept of homeland can refer to the native country, fatherland, the nation, an attachment to a time and place, and the feeling of or longing for being at home. It is a place of shelter, dreams, and stability that gives the feeling of safety. The displacement from one's home means the exiled person is "always out of place" (Said, 2000, 180).

Darwish's profound connection with the land qualifies him as the "poet of the homeland" (Rahman, 2008, xiv). His name is associated with Palestine and cannot

be separated from its ordeals. Darwish devoted his poetry to the expression of his love and attachment to his homeland. In his poem "I belong here" (Darwish, 2000, 39), for example, the poet asserts his belonging to his native place. He presents home as a centring place that embraces his birth, family, and friends. This home shapes his memories and life, pleasures and sorrows, even "the prison cell/ with a chilly window" of a usurped homeland seems to be worthy, it is "a panorama of my own". At the heart of the condition of exile is the state of homelessness, which implies both the loss of a home and the need for one. Thus, though he lives in exile, the poet's verse, "[i]n the deep horizon of my word" revives him and provides "an immortal olive tree" and a home. The olive tree is a symbol of Palestine, its perpetual green emblemizes the eternity of the poet's homeland. Darwish's attachment to his lost home becomes a stimuli to regain or to keep the memory of that home by poetry: "I have learned and dismantled all the words in order to draw from them a single word: Home" (qtd. in Bowman, 1994, 149).

Darwish adopted history as a raw material to revive Palestinian history, which had been obliterated by the occupiers. Thus Darwish states that "we should defend not only the legitimacy of our existence in the present, but also the legitimacy of our existence in the past (Hadidi, 1999, 347). In "Take Care of the Stags, Father" (Darwish, 2009b, 9-13), Darwish embraces the history of his land as the substance on which he builds his argument and proves the legitimacy of his existence in the past and the present. The stag was sacred in ancient times, when it became a symbol of the gods of fertility as Tammuz, Ba'al, Adonis and Attis (Sawah, 1996, 276). Darwish uses the stag, the sacrifice of Ba'al, the Canaanite god, in his poem, in order to return to the shining, ancient past. The poet asks his father not for love because love is innate in their hearts; he rather asks for the father's knowledge to spur in him the power and strength that enables him "to give the land/ a gazelle", to regain the Canaanite land, the land of gazelle and daisy: "Don't give me love, I whispered, I want to give the land a gazelle instead/ Explain your distant beginning for me, Father, to see you as I do,/ a teacher of the book of earth, from Aleph to Ya', and plant me there." The speaker asks his father, who can be a representation of ancient Palestinian history, to be "a teacher of the book of earth", of the beginnings of Palestine. He wants to learn from his father about his land as he aspires to be part of his book, he wants his father to "plant me there" to be the inheritor of this land as well as a tool that aids in teaching the love of the land to the next generation.

The death of the father, "You were hanging from your hands on the cactus in the plains", symbolizes the hanging of the present that is dominated by "the sunset" with its oppression and darkness. However, the moment of death explodes the legitimacy of the present, and hence the poet evokes Canaanite history to create a sacred, realistic legend, which depends on man's first biography: "We were here before time and we

shall remain here for the fields to become green.” The Palestinians’ birthright in possessing the land is defended here to reveal the occupation’s forgery of truth.

4 The battle of returning home

The call for return is one of the most urgent aspects of Palestinian exilic experience. Home-coming is part of the Palestinian consciousness and being. The dream of returning home becomes a means of resistance and a kind of faith and credo, upon which modern Palestinian history and identity depend. In his poem “The Bridge” (Darwish, 2000, 171-173), Darwish narrates the tragedy of three Palestinians: “an old man, his daughter, and an ancient soldier”. The three challenge all the dangers on their way home: “We walked on feet/ and crawling on hands we return.” Their insistence on returning home is stronger than that of the rock itself, which is a symbol of strength and persistence, thus “the rock was atrophying” before the strength of their will. The road of return is risky as they “don’t know that the way is/ blood, trap, and extermination”. Returning home, then, is viewed as ultimate death and the challenges are immense. Everyone who has tried to cross the bridge is doomed, “the river was spitting its banks/ chunks of meat crumbled/ in the faces of returners”. The heroes must face a violent, frenzied river, which is a symbol of the fake borders of Israeli soldiers. The old man, who is presented as a trope of history, tradition, the old generation, and religion, is full of hope that he will be at home soon, he “touches the key” of his house. Yet his daughter, who is the symbol of the young generation, says desperately: “but the houses, oh, father, are relics!” In this sense, the father’s houseless key becomes a state of exile. Then, the ancient soldier and the old man are killed by the bullets of “the guards of the borders”, who “protect the borders from yearning”. Moreover, the daughter is raped just as the land was earlier raped. The occupation conjures up death in different ways: death in exile or under the rain in a humiliating way, and whoever rejects this and insists on returning home must die on the bridge. The poem reveals not only the confusion, apprehensiveness and eternity of torture that accompany the dreamers of return, but also envisions the possibility of the homeland vanishing.

5 Homeland of words

The lack of home led Darwish to create an imaginary homeland, “we have a country of words” (qtd. in Udhari, 2005, 14). To Darwish, “a people without poetry are a conquered people” (qtd. in Rahman, 2008, 3). He also argues, “I renew myself by acknowledging defeat, and I resist through poetry and language because this area is not defeat-able” (qtd. in Mattawa, 2009, 322). Accordingly, poetry becomes a significant weapon that may contribute to restoring the land, and in keeping with the spirit of resistance.

Moreover, as Darwish states in an interview: "Poems can't establish a state, but can establish a metaphorical homeland in the minds of the people. I think my poems have built some houses in this landscape" (qtd. in Rahman, 2008, 3). The poet employs his poetry to construct homes for the homeless. Darwish, the muse of the Palestinians, needs compensation for his geographical homeland that can be a haven to his exiled self. He seeks not only a return to a geographical or emotional place, but also a recreation of the self within the exilic condition.

Darwish's victorious return to his own self is embodied in his masterpiece, "Mural" (Darwish, 2009b, 102-145), which was written after surviving cardiovascular death during open-heart surgery. The poem shows through various visions the poet's insistence on challenging death by proving his own existence as a man of thought: "One day I will become what I want/ One day I will become an idea. No sword will carry it/ to the wasteland and no book." The poet is aware that "an idea" cannot be defeated, for it is unlike a man and cannot be imprisoned, exiled or killed (Coates, 2008, 68). His idea that lies in his poetry becomes a fundamental source of fertility, "like a rain on a mountain that has cracked/ from a single sprout/ so neither force/ nor fugitive justice can win." Such productive power stands against the futility of violence that leads to the wandering of justice which emblemizes the Palestinians' exilic right in possessing the land. Darwish uses his mortal sense of void to create his immortal being which is incarnated in his literary work: "my poem's land is green." The poet's language is the essential material in reconstructing his creative self and in restoring the occupied country.

Darwish, who has "a heroic wakeful night at the gates of exile", bears his reader on the wings of his vision to declare his urgent need for his language as a form of asylum:

My nurse says: You used to hallucinate
Often and scream at me:
I don't want to return to anyone,
I don't want to return to any country
After this long absence....
I want only to return
To my language in the distances of cooing. (Darwish, 2009b, 102-145)

The poet's language is the essential material in reconstructing his creative self and restoring the occupied country. In "Mural", Darwish shows his powerful belief in his visions, "And as Christ walked on the lake,/ I walked in my vision", and their truthfulness is compared to Christ's miracles. By these visions that form a significant part of his poetry, Darwish interprets, draws, and recreates the map of Palestine from which he is alienated and to which he yearns to return.

6 Ojaide and the Niger Delta

Like Darwish, Ojaide treats the dilemma of his country from which he is alienated in his work. In "No Longer Our Country" (Ojaide, 1991, 8), for example, the poet illuminates the transformation of his country into exile: "Our own country was a dream/ so beautiful while it lasted,/ and now we are exiles in a country that was once ours." The Niger Delta lost its golden past and prosperity to become a mere dream. Oil exploration results in a topographical, as well as ethical changes in the poet's homeland and its population, which intensifies the sense of loss. According to Africans, the land is "sacred and dedicated to the ancestors" (Ojaide, 2009, 7). It is a significant endowment from deities, the eternal mother earth and the water goddess, and thus this spiritual gift must be preserved. In this poem, Ojaide weeps for the lost heritage represented by the warriors "who kept us from savage violations" and "the healers/ who offering themselves as ritual beasts saved/ their neighbors from scourges?" These are the revered ancestors, the protectors and defenders of the land. Therefore, in "Elegy for Nostalgia" (Ojaide, 2010, 124) the poet expresses the nation's need for these lost spirits, that are removed by the present leadership, in order to restore the wasted history. Ojaide insists on "sing[ing] of ancestors, heroes, gods, and chroniclers" in an attempt to regain an obliterated cultural identity.

Imperialism pollutes and destroys not only the Nigerian environmental landscape but also its cultural and traditional icons, represented by "the sacred tree" and "totem eagle", as Ojaide states in "No Longer Our Country" (Ojaide, 1981, 8) "Our sacred trees have been cut down/to make armchairs for the rich and titled:/ our own totem eagle, that bird of great heights,/ has been shot at by thoughtless guardian." Many African cultures believe in "intimate ontological relationships between humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects" (Vest, 2009, 20), which can be considered a mystical connection between folk and particular factors and nature. This is shown in Ojaide's recurrent references to trees as a symbol of growth and belonging, and the totem eagle that is symbolic of freedom, power, and spiritual energy. The poet associates the environmental disaster represented by the killing of these sacred creatures with the loss of land, as well as vision. The absence of the trees and the totem eagle points to both the physical and spiritual desecration of the homeland. Moreover, the corrupt Nigerian politicians who lack the right vision appear as "thoughtless" guardians who collaborate with the imperialists to make their people suffer cultural and ideological uprooting.

The invasion of these exploiters is challenged by Ojaide, who believes in the power of literature and words as "a weapon against the denial of basic human rights", fighting corruption and authoritarianism. Ojaide's poetics of resistance came as a kind of commitment to defy the imperialistic oppression (Nwagbara, 2012, 77-78). Ojaide struggles for resource control and to reconstruct the homeland's ecology. The poet needs a solid ground that inspires him to produce powerful poetry. By rejuvenating the African

ancestral heritage, Ojaide resists imperialist ideology. He envisions the past as a path that will save the Niger Delta from its dire present and lead to its self-recognition and pride.

For Ojaide, the past can serve as a model to reconstruct the crumbling structures of the present. In "We Keep Watch Over Them" (Ojaide, 1989, 5), the poet exposes the annihilation of the horrendous present by employing painful and deplorable images, such as "the scaffold of pain,/ the perilous precipice misery", "lowliness, cold and clammy" and "the slums of existence". For the poet, this miserable condition must be defeated, because "[their] experience over the ages helps [them]". They know the policy of stoicism in dealing with their persecutors. Their endurance is the outcome of their strong determination, which is compared to the solidity of the iroko tree, the native deep-rooted tree, and a recurrent symbol that the poet uses to show his belonging and to assert his native identity, "[our] will is the iroko tree rooted in our hearts." The strong, collective African will to get rid of tyranny and achieve liberation becomes an immortal god. The imagery of fortitude and determination in the poem highlights the culture of resistance against persecution among the African masses, who are armed with an iron will: "There's metal in our will, it shows/ when we meet hardships."

7 An unavoidable exilic present

The irresistible feeling of internal exile and the disastrous economic, social and political exclusion of the masses led many Africans to choose external exile as a resource and liberator from the perils of homeland. In his "Home Song III" (Ojaide, 1998, 5), the poet observes that poverty and despair induce further movements of citizens across borders of the nation. Ojaide conceives a vision of his own exile as a "reluctant flight from persecution at home" (Oguibe, 2005, 4). Life at home is disastrous and unbearable, because everything is falling apart.

The prevailing phenomenon of displacement becomes the focus of many African poets, including Ojaide, whose poetry articulates the "structures of exclusion against immigrants" along race, class, and gender lines in the First World (Olaoluwa, 2008, 232). The African identity is marginalized in a multicultural community, such as the United States. Africans live in a perpetual state of "ghettoization and displacement", and in order to justify this status quo the social equation of American institutions declared certain African-American neighbourhoods "as inherently pathological" (Hoberek, 2005, 379). Thus to live in diaspora means to breathe the traumatic reality of discrimination and segregation embodied by the terrible double-standard policy of the American and western establishment. However, the postcolonial African exiles could not escape the glamour of the promised wealth and ease of life in the host country.

However, migrants' and exiles' utopian dreams of a good and comfortable life must be confronted by the host country's constitutive "closure [...] exclusion and inversion"

(Jamson, 2005, 3) that shackle and undermine these dreams. The utopian United States is the creation and projection of a media that idealizes and glorifies it. The deception of media and its illusive propaganda is revealed by Ojaide in "Immigrant Voice" (Ojaide, 1998, 105). Hollywood introduces an imaginary world and fabricates the myth of the United States to fortify its dominative power. There is unrealistic presentation of life in American cities, which results in "the blurred vision of those subordinated groups of the Third World, who seek salvation and migration to [US and] the West" (Olaoluwa, 2009, 188). The media provides a kind of mirage that misleads the migrants and puts them in perpetual confrontation with "wilderness". However, the use of pidgin language, a common medium of communication in the Niger Delta, shows a collective problem of people who are culturally and linguistically integrated under the umbrella of exile. The use of pidgin English formed a privilege in postcolonial Niger Delta, it was used to drive people to collective resistance (Okunoye, 2008, 416). However, the employment of this language in the poem aims at mobilizing the African masses, in general, and the Niger Delta people, in particular, to fight the obsession with migration and encourage them to stay at home. Ojaide thinks that pidgin English is a "comic medium [used] to undermine and ridicule accepted but unethical values of society" (Ojaide, 2009, 9). Ojaide thus defies the artificiality of exile embodied in the United States, which has millions of homeless people who live in squalor and misery.

As an exile living and working in the United States, Ojaide, in his poem "A Question of Wholeness" (Ojaide, 1998, 101), gives a description of his new exilic identity as a persecuted and disadvantaged outcast: "I am fifty percent oppressed,/ sixty percent robbed of rights,/ seventy percent hungry for love,/ eighty percent a dog or drake." Racism is one of the lethal weapons used by Americans to show contempt and humiliation to ethnic groups. This racial tendency led to the genocide of the native Americans, and thus the poet presents himself as "ninety percent native American" to show the marginalization and oppression he suffers from. The poem displays the poet's position in exile; he is out of place and cannot capture the wholeness of his identity as a human being, and hence he wonders "what percentage/ of yellow, black, or white/ I carry in my brown face".

However, despite all his sense of loss, Ojaide presents the United States as a lavish home in his "American Fred" (Ojaide, 1998, 102): "I will never escape Africa's fate/ from my American home." The lines show the poet's adjustment to the new social atmosphere and his satisfaction with the new generous environment. His sense of mirth in the new world is accompanied by a remembrance of the Africans' hardships. Exile appears to give Ojaide certain opportunities and a life that he would never have known in Nigeria. Thus he declares "how lucky I was to be American", and prays "God bless America", which shows his belonging to the new environment. Ojaide's ambivalent emotions toward exile are encapsulated in the last line of the poem, when he states his

“gratitude for this new and bittersweet love”. However, adaptation and culture shock are inescapable binaries in the exile’s realm, as the poet cannot escape the paradox of exile when he articulates the exiles’ and immigrants’ crisis in many other poems.

8 A comparison between Darwish and Ojaide’s poetry

Darwish and Ojaide are both engaged with the crises of their homelands in their poetry. Both poets have a strong feeling of belonging to the land and present exile as a monster, and as an exilic space of threat and seduction, whereas their homelands are idealized and their politicians condemned. They elevate their homelands to claim the dignities and identities which are denied in their adopted countries. Both poets embrace history as both a means and a target. They adopt the history of their lands as the basis on which they can form their argument and justify their existence in the past and present. This message is clearly expressed in Darwish’s poem “Take Care of the Stags, Father” (Darwish, 2009b, 9-13) and in Ojaide’s “We Keep Watch Over Them” (Ojaide, 1989, 5).

Both poets employ language as their means of resistance. In “Mural” (Darwish, 2009b, 102-145), Darwish uses language and poetry as raw materials for drawing an imaginary homeland to preserve it in the Palestinian memory. For him, poetry is an asylum and refuge. In his poems “Immigrant Voice” (Ojaide, 1998, 105) and “A Question of Wholeness” (Ojaide, 1998, 101), Ojaide questions his own identity, using poetry as a powerful instrument to combat corruption, racism and imperialism, but is ambivalent about the life enabled through exile. Darwish, on the other hand, condemns exile as a merciless state of torture and anguish. In his poem “The Earth is Closing on Us”, he depicts the Palestinians’ endless journey of exile and their agonizing homeless status: “Where should we go after the last frontier? Where should birds fly after the last sky” (qtd. in Udhari, 2005, 13). The poet conveys the most precise exilic feeling when the exile is astonished by his failure to find a homeland, and realizes that he is locked up by his enemy at the last frontier of the world that leaves no space to live on.

While Darwish fails to find comfort in exile, Ojaide’s ambivalent attitude towards displacement enables him to perceive exile as home and salvation. In his poem “Safe Journey” (Ojaide, 1998, 81), which is dedicated to Deborah Ortega, he tells the story of a Nicaraguan woman who escapes the political upheavals of her country to go to exile in the United States. Coming from a developing country, she has great expectations to find comfort and relief in exile, but she and her family suffer insult, disgrace and humiliation when they try to enter America. Ojaide finds certain parallels between himself and the heroine of the poem. Both share the same space of exile and the same home backgrounds. They both escape disasters in their countries and seek asylum in the United States. Hence, unlike Darwish, who describes the feeling of great affliction over returning home in “The Bridge” (Darwish, 2000, 171-173), Ojaide reveals the

hardship of leaving home to join exile in "Safe Journey". This is undoubtedly related to the nature of each poet's vision of his homeland and exile. Darwish's country is usurped, thus his return embodies the retaking of the land. The Palestinians are confined by their exilic status and there is no progress in their lives. Ojaide's homeland, on the other hand, suffers under the yoke of corrupt leadership, and therefore exile may provide the strength and self-realization whereby one can reconstruct a healthy land. In this context, exile can be an "enriching experience" (Said, 2000, 173).

9 Conclusion

Poetry should move within the community like a light that clarifies a poetic vision and provides intellectual enlightenment. As for Darwish and Ojaide, they are confined between two prisons, homeland and exile. In their poetry they establish a gateway to freedom and create their homelands. At the same time, they try to recreate themselves amidst accumulations of feelings of love, connection, and commitment to their countries, as if to fight back an overwhelming sense of loss. The poets' novel images and symbols shape new thoughts and visions of exile, and their visions transform their poetry into a kind of ideological resistance.

In the case of Darwish and Ojaide, who both address collective exiles, displacement becomes an identity preservation tool. Darwish's olive trees, Ojaide's iroko tree and his people's rituals and dances become anthems, flags, roots, and anchors. Darwish and Ojaide belong to oppressed nations, which is the reason why they reluctantly choose exile as a means of survival. They grasp the past to resist not only their present physical exile, but also the inner feeling of displacement from the self. Through their words and visions, they search for a healing power for the wounds inflicted upon exiles, immigrants, refugees, and all displaced people.

Besides his condemnation of exile, Ojaide also presents exile as the human desire for exploration, well-being and freedom. While for Darwish, exiled people are confined by their exilic status. There is no progress in their lives, each step leads to a similar one and fails to move forward. Nevertheless, the poets envision exile from a modern perspective as a catalyst for artistic creation.

Darwish and Ojaide both portray the culture of the contemporary age of refugees, which has left many homeless and helpless with no common ground. They fight through art by transforming their poetry into a distinctive voice of resistance against the oppressors.

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Key words: exile, poet of exile, oppression, homeland, displacement, loss

Darwish, the spokesman of Palestine, and Ojaide, the voice of Nigeria, are endowed with a faculty for articulating a message, a vision or an opinion for their nations. They are intellectuals essentially tied to the needs of their communities. Both poets belong to countries that witnessed different types of political, economic, and social turmoil. They inspire the oppressed nations to persist in their struggles against the regimes which deprive them of their right to live happily and peacefully.

Darwish experienced many displacements that turned him into an embodiment of exile, in both existential and metaphysical terms, beyond the external, and the metaphorical, in his interior relations with self and poetry. His poetry of exile mirrors the socio-political atmosphere under the Israeli occupation. He utilizes poetry as a weapon in his fight to achieve freedom and independence. Similarly, Ojaide's poetry is engaged with the crises of his homeland, the Niger Delta. He belongs to the generation of Nigerian writers who used their literary productions as a weapon against social injustice and an instrument in resisting imperialism. To him, there is a direct relationship between literature and social institutions. The principal function of literature is to criticize these institutions and eventually bring about desirable changes in society.

This study aims at examining Darwish and Ojaide as poets of exile by observing their exilic experiences and investigating certain poems that typically help dive into their external and internal sense of displacement. The study also highlights the concepts of home and homelessness. It brings to light the poets' deep yearning for a sense of belonging and their insistence on regaining the motherland toward which they show a profound attachment and permanent commitment. They use words as a therapeutic means to compensate for the lack of a physical homeland. A comparison between the two poets is also provided.

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Mahmoud Darwish in Tanure Ojaide: pesnika občutenja izgnanstva in predstavnika zatiranih narodov

Ključne besede: izgnanstvo, pesnik izgnanstva, zatiranje, domovina, razseljenost, izguba

Darwish, narodni pesnik Palestine, in Ojaide, glas Nigerije, imata sposobnost oblikovati sporočilo, vizijo in mnenje za svoj narod. Oba sta intelektualca, ki se odzivata na potrebe svoje skupnosti. Oba izhajata iz dežel, podvrženih različnim političnim, ekonomskim in družbenim prevratom. Zatiranim narodom sta navdih v njihovem boju proti režimom, ki jim odrekajo pravico do srečnega in mirnega življenja.

Darwish je doživel mnogo selitev, ki so ga spremenile v utelešenje izgnanstva, tako ekstenčnega kot metafizičnega, onkraj zunanjega in metaforičnega, v njegovem notranjem odnosu s samim seboj in pesništvom. Njegova poezija izgnanstva je odsevala družbeno-politično vzdušje pod izraelsko okupacijo. Njegova poezija je tako orožje v boju za svobodo in neodvisnost. Podobno se poezija, ki jo piše Ojaide, ukvarja s krizami njegove domovine, delte Nigra. Ojaide pripada generaciji nigerijskih pisateljev, ki so svoje književno delo pojmovali kot orožje proti družbeni nepravilnosti in kot način upora proti imperializmu. Zanj obstaja neposredna povezava med književnostjo in družbenimi ustanovami. Iz tega pojmovanja izhaja, da sta glavni nalogi književnosti kritičnost do teh ustanov in podpiranje družbenih sprememb.

Cilj tega prispevka je oba pesnika predstaviti kot pesnika izgnanstva s poudarkom na njih izkušnjah izgnanstva, in sicer na primeru pesmi, ki izražajo njun zunanji in notranji občutek razseljenosti. Prispevek osvetli tudi koncepte doma in brezdomstva. Pri tem se osredotoči na njuno globoko hrepenenje po pripadnosti in vztrajnost pri ponovnem pridobivanju domovine, do katere čutita globoko navezanost in zvestobo. Njune besede so terapevtsko sredstvo za premoščanje praznine ob odsotnosti fizične domovine. Prispevek opozori tudi na nekatere razlike v njunem odnosu do izgnanstva.

O avtoricah

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