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Loss of Identity and Nostalgia as Two Post-Impacts of Exile in Arabic and Spanish Poetry: Darwish and Cernuda as a Case Study

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Abstract. This comparative study aims at highlighting loss of identity and nostalgia as two exile's post-impacts in Arabic and Spanish poetry. As exile is one of the recurrent themes in both cultures, the study has exclusively dedicated itself to investigate the loss of identity and nostalgia. In order to conduct the study, Darwish and Cernuda are selected to build the study on, as they have heavily referred to the above two post-impacts. The political situation which Palestine and Spain suffered from was the main motivation for the presence of exile in their poetry, respectively the external colonization in Darwish's case and the Civil War in Cernuda's. In order to practically conduct this comparative study, the author has selected a number of poems that share the same themes.

Keywords. Darwish, Cernuda, Exile, Nostalgia, Loss of Identity

1. Introduction

Exile is one of the themes that are very present in poetry; it is a universal experience that many humans undergo including poets, regardless of their backgrounds or cultures. Exile and displacement from the homeland can be very traumatic experience that deeply affect human emotions of identity and belonging. Writing about such experiences is a common activity, where humans express their feelings of nostalgia, longing, and estrangement. Poetics of exile has universally appeared as one of the main types of literature. Throughout history, the theme of exile has motivated many writers who have come across such an experience to compose their literature. Exile has been found as a consequence of many factors such as politics and nature of their society in which they live. Chakraborty and Das (2017, 30) maintain:

“The theme of exile has always been of great interest and enchantment to many writers in the course of literary history and piqued their imagination and triggered their fantastical interests. The reason behind the enduring appeal of exile and its consequent circumstances and ordeals is two-fold – either because their own experiences involved their desertion under compulsion of their native country for political reasons, or because, unhappy with their society and its ways, they consciously decided to live elsewhere”.

Exiled intellectuals live in a median state; though living in a new land, they remain attached to their homelands. They can't free themselves from their old memories and this

prevents them from being fully involved in their new destination, being dominated by nostalgic and longing emotions. Said (1994, 49) maintains that,

“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. Being skilled at survival becomes the main imperative, with the dangers of getting too comfortable and secure constituting a threat that is constantly to be guarded against”

Poetry of exile is employed as a way of expressing political and social issues. In most cases, exile emerges as a result of political upheaval, war, and conflict. Poets use their verse to address these issues and advocate that for social justice and human rights. They write about exile to confirm their cultural identity and resistance against colonialism, occupation, civil war, or dictatorship. Homeland in the poetry of exile is not just a physical place, but also a symbol of cultural heritage and struggle for self-determination.

In this study a comparison is made between Arabic and Spanish poetry concerning exile. For representation, Mahmoud Darwish and Luis Cernuda are selected to make the comparison between Arabic and Spanish poetry. There are many common aspects between the Arabic and the Spanish cultures. The causes of exile are different between the two poets. While the main cause of Darwish’s exile is external, resulted from colonialism, and is collective at the same time., the cause of Cernuda’s exile is internal led by the civil war and dictatorship of Francisco Franco.

2. Exile in Spanish and Arabic Poetry

Many Arabic poets have written about exile throughout history. It has been a very recurrent theme in Arabic literature in general and poetry in particular. It has been used by poets as a way to manifest the political and social realities of the Arab World over centuries. In the old Arabic poetry, Imru’ al-Qais wrote about his exile from his tribe in the 6th century, and such considered one of the most important poets in Arabic poetry (Musawi 2006, 64).

In modern Arabic poetry, the Palestinian poet, Darwish, is considered one of the most famous Arab poets to compose abundantly about exile. In his poetry, he manifests the pain, longing, and sense of loss as emotions of displaced people from their homelands. Al-Karmi, is another Palestinian poet whose poetry is featured as nostalgic to homeland, Palestine. For him, it is the lost paradise (Gelvin 2017, 157). Other Arab modern poets who wrote about exile are the Syrians Adonis and Nizar Qabbani. They have both lived in exile for many years and written about the struggle for freedom and justice in the Arab World.

In western poetry, the first poet to compose about exile was Ovid. He was banished from his homeland in Rome to a remote town in the Black Sea. His political opposition to the Emperor Augustus caused his exile as a punishment (McGowan, 2009, 3). In modern Spanish Poetry, Cernuda can be said as one of the most prominent poets to write about exile. Cernuda was forced to leave his homeland during the Spanish Civil War. His poetry is dominated by the sense of displacement and longing for his homeland; he was haunted by these emotions during his years of exile. In his verse, he describes the human sad emotions because of displacement of homeland. Other well-known Spanish poets include Lorca, who was assassinated during the Spanish Civil War, Miguel Hernandez whose poetry often reflects the violence and political chaos of that period, and Antonio Machado, who was exiled during the war and wrote about his homesickness and the need to rebuild Spain after the end of the civil war (Aguirre-Oteiza 2020, 228).

As public intellectuals, the Arabic and Spanish poets document the suffer of their people. In their exile, they try to highlight the suffer of their nation, despite distance from their homelands, playing a key role in political movements and circumstances of their countries.

3. Darwish and Cernuda, life and exilic experience

Darwish was born in 1941 in Al-Birwa, east of Acre, in northern British Mandate Palestine. He was from a lower-middle class Palestinian family, and his family escaped from his village to Lebanon in 1948 to live his first experience of exile. As a child of seven years old, this year as a refugee marked deeply his personality and has an impact influence in his poetry. In 1949, Darwish with his family returned to Palestine, to shockingly found that their village disappeared and demolished by Israeli government, and a kibbutz for Israeli settlers has been built instead.

During this year of refuge in Lebanon, Israel made a census where the poet's family was not counted and not given an Israeli identity card as citizens. This meant that they did not have an ID and could be deported at any time. Darwish lived for three years as an internal exiled person in his homeland, living in another village and not his home village, till his family obtained the necessary documents (Cohen-Mor 2019, 3). Abu Eid (2016, 44) maintains that Darwish, since a very young age, suffered an external exile and the loss of homeland. This has obstructed the flow of his childhood which later marked his whole life. The return to his homeland has become utmost dream for which he has struggled all his life. This is clear in the quotation below taken from Abu Eid (Ibid)

“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, the return from the unusual to the natural, the return from tin boxes to a house of stone. Thus, Palestine became the opposite of everything else, and became a lost paradise”

After his return in 1949, the poet felt like a present absentee, a half-citizen, and a penniless refugee. His mobility was narrowed and he had to check in at an Israeli police station every day; then he lived like an infiltrator in Israel. Abu Eid confirms that “under these circumstances, his identity encountered a crisis of exile and return” (Ibid). In the 1960s, Darwish was arrested and imprisoned for converting into a "resistance poet". Later, he was placed under house arrest when his poem *Identity Card* turned into a protest song for Palestinian people. From 1971 to 1995, Darwish spent much of his life in external exile, living in Egypt, Lebanon, and France, before eventually returning to Palestine in 1995. After his return in 1995, he experienced a new internal exile in the Palestinian territory, where he didn't find the maturity of the Palestinian government.

Although Palestine was divided into two states, the Palestinian territory and Israel, the Palestinian was under the Israeli control. This made the poet feel the same sensation of internal exile that he lived before in Israel. During this time, he lived an exile within the homeland. He was disappointed, living what is called a national exile. From 1995 till his death in the United States in 2008, he was living between Ramallah and Amman.

As mentioned above, Darwish experienced three types of exile. The external exile at two phases: in Lebanon when he was seven years old; and in Egypt, Lebanon, and France from 1971 to 1995. The second type is the internal exile which extended from 1949 to 1960 in the Israeli territory. The third type is national and is exceptional in the sense that he was living in Ramallah, a Palestinian territory apparently under the domination of PLO (Palestinian

Liberation Organization), but he lived exiled because of his disappointment with the Palestinian political situation.

The life of Darwish marked deeply his exilic experience. In his poetry, Darwish depicts the pain and longing that he and his fellow Palestinians felt due to the colonization of their homeland. Nostalgic longing for the homeland became one of the key themes of the poetry of Darwish. He was exiled from his homeland forcefully and this made the pain and the melancholic longing deeply noticed in his literature (Darwish 2013, 17).

Exile from his homeland created a feeling and sense of resilience and resistance. Despite the pain caused by the loss of his homeland, he continued writing and expressing himself to confirm his identity as a Palestinian. This bitter experience converted him into a resolute person to resist colonization and face adversity. His poetry inspired many Palestinians inside Palestine to resist colonization (Nassar & Rahman 2008, 11).

Luis Cernuda was born in 1902, in Seville, Spain. He is considered one of the Generations of '27, a modernist and avant-garde style group of Spanish poets who were known worldwide. Cernuda was homosexual, and his sexuality played a significant role in his personal life and consequently in his poetry. He lived in internal exile and isolation because of his sexual tendency. The Spanish society in Cernuda's life was very conservative and repressive toward homosexuality, so Cernuda lived periods of loneliness and isolation for this reason. According to Harris (1973, 2), Cernuda in his work *La Realidad y el Deseo* maintains "expresses his tragic view of life where personal aspiration is engaged in an unequal conflict with objective reality". And according to him too, Cernuda's poetic career was interrupted (1970, 74) in 1936,

"the violent intrusion of reality in the form of the Spanish civil War, although, unlike many of his contemporaries, he avoided direct political commitment in his attitude towards the war. He was able to absorb his reactions to the war (...) while sympathizing with the Republic, he could stand above the partisan struggle to lament the violation of Spain by her sons".

Cernuda was deeply affected by the Civil War in Spain and the regime of Franco, so he was forced to flee from his homeland in 1938 after his poetry was banned by the government. He publicly expressed his support to the Republicans, and this was the cause of his exile. To quote Ifode's words (2014, 107) "he was categorized with other poets as the "First generation" of Spanish Republican exiles in Mexico". He spent many years out of his homeland, firstly in England and later in Mexico, where he struggled with emotions of longing and nostalgia.

As Darwish, the exilic experience marked deeply Cernuda's personality and his poetry. He was a very sensitive, kind, and generous person. He was willing to help other poets and artists. He always struggled outside Spain and always lived the sensation of self-doubt about his poetry and the expectations of his peers. Thus, his poetry is emotional and exile occupies a huge space in his poetry, since he spent all his life out of Spain. His poetry reflects his emotions of estrangement and displacement shaping his personality with a deep nostalgic identity. As DiGiovanni confirms (2019, 29)

"Nostalgia becomes a personal and collective lens through which to interpret the lost Spanish Civil War in juxtaposition with the retrograde here and now of the Franco dictatorship. Cernuda uses the two-Spains trope to explain how a nation with vast progressive vision could become a site of stagnation"

Cernuda lived the experience of the full external exile in England and USA for fourteen years. In Mexico, which was his final destination, the poet recovered partially because living in a hispanohablante country. In Mexico, he lived a partial exile because of the similarities and the

common cultures that Mexico shares with their colonizer Spain. Cernuda idealized Mexico as an exile destination. Rojas (2008, 94) largely agrees with him when saying,

“He expressed this difference by idealizing Mexico, “a land made to the measure of dreams,” “a quiet corner of Andalucía” whose “delicate” language “without vulgar idioms or plebeian intonations” was closer to him than the English of Glasgow or South Hadley, the Spanish of Mexico was still not entirely his own. Felling like an outsider when you are in a family or neighborhood setting can seem of the strangeness of the familiar is what leads, in exile discourse, to the theme of the impossibility of return or inheritance that are seen as irretrievable or unattainable”.

4. Exile in Darwish and Cernuda Poetry

Exile is a theme that has been explored in Spanish and Arabic literatures. Darwish and Cernuda are two poets who have extensively written about exile in their native languages. In this comparative study, the researcher examines the exile as depicted by both poets. The study mainly focuses on three post-impacts of the exile, namely loss of identity, nostalgia, and estrangement.

Exile is elemental in the two poets' identity. Darwish dedicated a good number of poems for this theme. The most representative poem of this theme is *Who am I, without exile*, where he expresses his incapability to imagine his life without exile. In this poem, he talks about his suffering from losing identity and his attempt to search for a “country that understands him when he talks”. He expresses the isolation and dislocation he lived and presents himself as a stranger who is searching for his homeland in a new country.

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Darwish in his interview with Helit Yeshurun (2012, 49) answers the question about his relation with exile saying,

“It is possible to describe everything that I’ve written as the poetry of an exile. I was born an exile. Exile is a very broad concept and very relative. There is exile in society, exile in family, exile in love, exile within yourself. All poetry is an expression of exile or otherness. And when it parallels experience in reality, then it is a concentrated, compressed exile. I find it in every word that I search for in my dictionary. I am not complaining. Despite everything, exile has contributed greatly to the development of my writing. It allowed me to manage a journey between cultures, between peoples, between cities, between colors.”

Like Darwish, Cernuda dedicates many of his literature to talk about exile. According to many critics, he lived the experience of exile since an early age, before being exiled for his political beliefs in the Spanish Civil War. He read many works of French exiled poets during his childhood, a reason that made him accustomed with this type of poetry before composing about this theme. The personality and the homosexuality made him experience a social exile before his political one. As quoted in Oteiza (2020, 115) words:

“Numerous critics have claimed that Cernuda saw himself as an exiled poet long before his political exile. In his 2003 introduction to *Poesia del exilio*, an anthology of Cernuda’s poetry after 1937, Antonio Carreira contended that the poet felt exile (...) (not from a country, but from his family, his Sevillian environment, from all society,

because he was a homosexual and a poet, and also because of his incorruptible personality. The literary topos of exile shapes much of Cernuda's poetry before and after the war"

In his poem *Un español habla de su tierra* (A Spaniard Tells of his Land), Cernuda laments the loss of his homeland, Spain, and the impossibility to return to live in it. Confirming that Spain is no longer his homeland, because of being exiled, he states this in the following stanza

My land is not mine,
nor that of the people who inhabit it.
My land is only one
that exile has made mine. (Cernuda 1974, 168)

Exile is not only present in his poetry, but is also present in his collection of essays titled *Ocnos*, where he writes extensively about this theme making a reflection about the psychological effects of exile and the sense of segregation and estrangement that it can produce in one's personality. In addition to these essays, he wrote many letters to his friends in Spain, where he expresses his bitter feelings in the exile. All his works: poetry, essays, and personal letters are a personal reflection of the Spanish poet of his personal experience of exile and the emotional intensity he lived (De Revenga, 2005, 29).

4.1 Loss of Identity

Exile is a condition or a state, where a person is forced to leave his homeland and live in another land or a country. Political, social, or economic conditions are normally the main reasons of exile. Loss of identity is one of the first post-impacts of exile that people experience in the exile, due to the historical, cultural and social segregation. Identity is the main component of our humanity, and it includes; language, culture, religion and traditions of one's place of birth. The Spanish term *desterrado* (unearthed) can be one of the most expressive terms that defines exile. According to Ugarte (1989, 10) it means literally "to have lost the essential link between land and soul".

Darwish wrote extensively about the loss of his Palestinian identity. During his displacement and diaspora in many countries, the poet reflects in his verses the pain and traumatic effects of exiled persons in general and his compatriots of Palestinians in particular. One of the exilic themes exposed widely in his poetry is the loss of identity. In his poem *Identity Card*, dislocation and alienation from the Palestinian identity is a central theme. This poem was written when Darwish was living inside Israel, experiencing an internal exile. This poem is a manifestation of his identity which the colonizer tries to erase.

Write down!
I am an Arab
And my identity card is number fifty thousand
(...)
I am an Arab
I have a name without a title
Patient in a country
Where people are enraged
My roots
Were entrenched before the birth of time
And before the opening of the eras

Before the pines, and the olive trees
And before the grass grew
My father.
descends from the family of the plow
Not from a privileged class
And my grandfather was a farmer
Neither well-bred, nor well-born!
Teaches me the pride of the sun
Before teaching me how to read
And my house is like a watchman's hut
Made of branches and cane
Are you satisfied with my status?

I have a name without a title! (Darwish 1973, 24-25)

In the above verses, Darwish writes about how one can be considered as a refugee in his own homeland. In this poem, the poet describes the suffer of Palestinians who live inside of Israel as infiltrators without an Israeli identity card; they are considered as refugees, and not Israeli citizens. The poet portrays a dialogue between an Israeli officer who detained him for not having an Israeli identity card, confirming that he doesn't need an identity card in his homeland. Palestinians, like Darwish, are exiled in their homeland, limiting their identity in a card or a number if given to them. This card erases their identity and their relation with cultural roots and history. Describing Darwish's internal exile, Williams (2009, 96) maintains that,

“after his return he and his family found themselves members of a category of profound contradictions, “the present absent” which means they were not part of the 1949 Israeli census, and therefore lacked proper status under the new dispensation and faced with the loss of home and land and the loss of the national identity and civil status”

This contradictory situation of loss of identity and internal exile makes such an exile a permanent component of Darwish's personality and part of his life. As quoted in Williams words (Ibid).

“A paradigmatic figure in terms of the problems and paradoxes of return from the diaspora has been Darwish, for whom the fact of return is in itself no guarantee of an end of exile. In addition to the state of internal colonization in the Occupied Territories as a form of exile, there is the possibility of a more literally internal state of exile, of remaining in exile in one's mind: “even if I return to Haifa and Acre and live there, the exile within me, which can be considered a large human exile, will be my overriding human condition”

Likewise, Cernuda expresses his loss of identity, in the internal social exile resulting from his homosexuality. This theme is central in his famous poem *La Realidad y el Deseo* (Reality and Desire), where he confirms the impossibility of concordance between the reality we live and the desired life that we dream to have. As homosexual, he desires to live in a society that accepts him. The Spanish society, however, refuses homosexuality which make homosexuals lose their self-identity when living as marginalized in the Spanish conservative society. Therefore, he lived in a conflict between his own identity and the surrounding reality. Costa (2014, 566) maintains that,

“Cernuda's poetry also speaks of a divided self. The conflict with society due to his homosexuality is translated into a conflict between the self and surrounding reality. Since ideal love is not to be found in another, but rather in the self, the search for love becomes a voyage of self-discovery. This search is particularly poignant for the

homosexual, whose love is denied open expression within society. Cernuda believes that physical love can help us overcome our sense of isolation and breach the division between reality and desire”

I am not myself,
I am not the one I see in the mirror
nor the one that remains on the page
after having written.

I am a stranger to myself,
an impostor seeking truth
in the reflection of others' eyes.

Reality denies me,
takes away my name
and throws me into the abyss
of loneliness and fear.

But desire is my ally,
my accomplice in the fight
against oblivion and death.
It is the flame that keeps me alive
in the midst of darkness. . (Cernuda 1974, 168)

In the verses above, Cernuda presents himself distanced and exiled socially from his society. He is not recognizing himself in the mirror, nor in the words he writes; he lost his identity. He is seeking the validation and the acceptance to his human being without losing his identity. He had two options to choose, either to lose his identity because of homosexuality or to be punished by the social exile and ostracism. The society's rejection of homosexuality has deprived him from his identity and thrown him into a dark and lonely place. Despite this rejection, he confronts the reality by his powerful desire and hope that strengthens him and allows him to live his homosexual identity.

Cernuda follows his desire and invades reality with natural elements that are pure and don't rule people with norms or conventionalisms. Cernuda wants to create his own artificial world away from his hostile society (Harris, 1973 52)

Cernuda lived in conflict between his homosexuality and his society taboos. He rejected the norms of his society, and this rejection made him adopt the rebel political role. This social exile made Cernuda dedicate himself to stand with the political republicans. Later, this stand was the main cause of his external political exile in England, United States, and lastly in Mexico where he died in 1963.

4.2 Nostalgia

The term nostalgia is connected with memories of places, times and persons. It was firstly used by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer, who coined this term in the last seventeenth century using it as a side effect of homesickness that Swiss mercenaries experienced (Wilson 2005, 21).

In 1863, Dr. De Witt defined nostalgia as “a type of melancholy, or mild type of insanity, caused by disappointments and a continuous longing for home”(Stratton 2020, 155).

Nostalgia is a powerful feeling that many people experience, longing to return again to their homelands, mainly where they were born and lived their childhood. It is a powerful emotion, which is accompanied with positive or negative feelings. It is primarily the longing to past times or places, which are no longer available. It is related to one’s identity and connectedness to his or her homeland or past experiences. When experiencing nostalgia, yearning is the main emotion that dominates our feelings. According to Gacioppo (2022, 309)

“The yearning had also to be bittersweet: sweet because in remembering and longing, the nostalgic recovers some of the pleasure of the original memory, bitter because the nostalgic recognizes that the pleasurable moments in the past and therefore irretrievable, but also because the memory of the moment is more pleasurable than the moment itself. In fact, it is perhaps more pleasurable precisely because it is irretrievable”

Darwish demonstrates the feeling of nostalgia in his poetry in a beautiful and poignant way. In his verse, he documents the nostalgia and longing of exiled Palestinians to their homeland. In most of his poems, he describes the beauty of the lands of Palestine, the good manners of their people, and their fascinating culture. For example, in the poem *In Jerusalem*, the poet describes the history and beauty of the capital of Palestine, Jerusalem. He portrays the city as a center of peace, coexistence, and the land of prophetic miracles, where people can live peacefully. In the following verses, Darwish imagines himself walking in Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, and I mean within the ancient walls,
I walk from one epoch to another without a memory
to guide me. The prophets over there are sharing
the history of the holy ... ascending to heaven
and returning less discouraged and melancholy, because love
and peace are holy and are coming to town. (Darwish 1994, 66)

In his poem *To My Mother*, homeland is presented by Darwish as the image of the mother. According to Massad (2005, 191)¹, this poem was converted in a folk song dedicated to mother and nostalgic feeling toward her. According to Massad, the poem is,

“a folk Palestinian deification of motherhood. This poem registers the personal as the political insofar as Darwish’s yearning for his mother, who lives inside Israel while he lives in exile separated from her, parallels that of many Palestinians split from their families by Israeli colonization of their country”

Darwish expresses nostalgia for the past times in his homeland. He longs for his home and family and expresses his painful nostalgia as an impossible emotion to forget. He is wondering if he will return one day from his internal exile in Israeli prison. He wants to live his past memories once again. Though he is old now, his nostalgia is very strong to his childhood. His homeland, Palestine, and his childhood are the two main elements that he seems most nostalgic to.

I long for my mother’s bread
My mother’s coffee
Her touch
Childhood memories grow up in me
Day after day

¹ Massad, Joseph. 2005.” Liberating Songs: Palestine Put to Music”. In *Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture* edited by Rebecca L. Stein and Ted Swedenburg. Duke University Press, Durham & London.

I must be worth my life
At the hour of my death
Worth the tears of my mother.

(...)

I am old
Give me back the star maps of childhood
So that I
Along with the swallows
Can chart the path

Back to your waiting nest. (translated by Massad, 2005, 191)

Similarly, Cernuda expresses his nostalgia to his hometown, Seville, dedicating a poem titled *Seville* to this city. He describes the ambient of this city, where he raised and lived his first memories. He has a special nostalgic feeling and longing to this city, which remained living with him till death. In this poem, he recalls the lost paradise of his youth, Seville. According to Coleman (1964, 56)² Cernuda in this poem is “heedless of the past and of the destructive effects of memory and nostalgia”. The nostalgia for the homeland is a way to describe the aging process where “the dynamic impulse toward hope and expectation reverses itself irrevocably into contemplative remembrance and nostalgia” (Ibid). In the following verses, the Sevillian makes a contemplative and remembrance of the beauty of his homeland.

In Seville the nights are long:
Guitars and voices mingle,
Echoing through narrow streets,
The sound of water in the distance.
In Seville the nights are mine:
Memories of childhood, of youth,
Of love and laughter, pain and loss,
All mingle in my mind.

In Seville the nights are gone:
A distant dream, a vanished world,
A memory that haunts my heart,

A longing that will never die (Cernuda 2015, 217).

Both poets describe Jerusalem and Seville and express their nostalgic feelings toward them. They depicted these cities with a personal significance to them. The poems dedicated to these cities are filled with emotions and memories of their past, which resonate with them even after leaving them and living in a new land.

According to Cernuda, nostalgia is an evocative element which evokes his poetic talent. In his poem *Es Lastima que fuera mi Tierra* (it is a pity it was my homeland), a tone of regret is perceived. The nostalgic feelings are detonated to Spain as a place and not as a government that destroyed the country and forcibly expelled him from it.

When there say some
That my verses were born
Of separation and nostalgia
For what was my land,
Do only the remotest hear among my voices?

² Coleman, John Alexander. 1964. *The Meditative Poetry of Luis Cernuda*. Columbia University Proquest Dissertations Publishing.

Several voices speak in the poet:
Let us hear the concerted chorus of him,
Where the dominant belief

It is just one voice among others (Cernuda 2015, 118).

Cernuda expresses his nostalgic feelings toward his homeland differently in this poem. In the above poem, he is living a state of estrangement toward his homeland. He starts the poem by referring to his childhood home, which was demolished into ruins because of the civil war. He mentions the trees which were once the field of his childhood, and have now become “dead trunks”. In this poem, Cernuda’s expresses his despair of the return to his homeland and emphasizes the power of the passing time on his life. He shows his lamentation when he feels that he can no longer call Spain a homeland.

This sense of dislocation from the homeland is considered a complex emotion of nostalgia and displacement. Cernuda makes a distinction in this poem between two homelands, the real Spain which is now destroyed by the civil war, and the metaphorical, literary and cultural one which represents the beautiful the poet’s youth and childhood abode (Calvo Salgado, 2009, 16)³. He concludes the poem by expressing the inevitability of death, and confirming his nostalgia to his country which is now fading away from him. Nostalgia for Cernuda made him empty and disconnected from his new destination.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights exile as a poetic theme in Spanish and Palestinian poetry, with reference to two main post-impacts: loss of identity and nostalgia. This comparative study has shown that Darwish and Cernuda who belong to two different cultures, are sharing many common themes in their poetry such as exile. As revealed in the study, Darwish’s exile is collective and represents the whole Palestinians, while Cernuda’s is individual. They have both written extensively about the loss of identity, even when living inside their homeland. It has shown that while Darwish has lived the social internal exile because of colonization, Cernuda has expressed this exile because of his homosexuality. This loss of identity is manifest in their external exile which was caused by the external colonization in Darwish’s case and the Civil War in Cernuda’s. They exhibit the strong sense of nostalgia, which is filled with a vivid description of the homeland. The study has concluded that exile and its two main post-impacts have been highly considered as key themes in both poetries. Although exile, nostalgia and loss of identity are heavily investigated in Darwish’s and Cernuda’s poetry, the reasearcher has not found enough comparative studies about such themes in Arabic and Spanish. It is thus hoped that this study would be a threshold for future studies.

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