

Reconsidering Dabashi's View in Anglophone Iraqi Poetry

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ABSTRACT

In *Brown Skin, White Masks*, Hamid Dabashi critically examines the relationship between race and colonialism re-questioning Edward Said's concept of the 'intellectual exile'. Said stood in defense of Arab intellectuals who lived in the West and wrote anti-colonialist literature. On the other hand, decades later, Hamid Dabashi saw the situation of post-colonialism from a different angle and took his own stance from those Arab writers of post-colonialism. He reverses the positive image of some exilic intellectuals in order to shed light on the negative role which they can play. Dabashi calls them 'native informers' since they denigrate their cultures in a way that serves the Western ideology. This paper explores Dabashi's concept of native informers in selected texts of Iraqi poetry. It argues that the Anglophone Iraqi poets, who paraded as 'voices of dissent', employ their poetry, unintentionally, to propagandize the American strategy which needs to assure the world that they are the superior nation. It concludes that the three poets under discussion, Sinan Antoon, Hashim Shafiq, and Dunya Mikhail have an apocalyptic point of view toward what is happening in Iraq; therefore, they cannot be accused of being disloyal or conspiracies against their homeland since they criticize in the hope of reforming the political system. The paper implements an analytical approach to apply Dabashi's theory on the selected texts.

Keywords: Anglophone; Apocalypse; Iraqi poets; Native Informer; Subjugated knowledge.

Introduction

In the whirl of the clash of civilizations, some intellectual Iraqi immigrants play a carpetbagger role in an endeavor to disseminate the Western empire falsified accounts of democracy, freedom and antiterrorism. They facilitate and sustain the domination of imperialism through misrepresenting their home nations and cultures for the sake of justifying the Western sense of superiority. These intellectual immigrants, who form the "voices of the dissent", as Hamid Dabashi refers to them, legalize the imperial prejudice and stance of otherness (2011). Dabashi, a professor of comparative studies, claims that such servile intellectuals identify with the white colonizer, thereby help to propagandize the imperial project of invasion. The voices of such denomination of writers became particularly clear in the period following the 9/11 attacks. They consciously or unconsciously deformed the image of the Orient and Islam with their writings which represented collective experiences haunted by fear and condemnation. Their works have led, in one way or another, to rationalize the Western occupation of countries including Iraq and Afghanistan so as to control the demonic and dehumanizing practices of its people and governments.

Dabashi's theory of the comprador intellectuals, who provoke "a frenzied atmosphere of fear and domination that is conducive to atomization of individuals" (Dabashi, 2011), is antithetical to Edward Said's perspective of the exilic intellectuals whose collective identity is shaped by factors of cultural immigration and notions of belonging. Said believes that the exiled intellectuals have a positive and defiant role as they seek to transcend the confines of cultural peripheralization. In *Representations of the intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*, he states that the intellectual "is an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude [who] represent[s] all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug" (1994). Their awareness of the demarcation line that the imperial mindset

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draws between truth and illusion, incites them to question the deformed image of the “Other”.

The discourse in Dabashi's book *Brown Skin White Masks* (2011) and in Frantz Fanon's book *Black Skin White Masks* (1952) serve as two faces for the same coin; one serves the colonizer and the other defies him. The relationship between racism and colonialism which Fanon explores in his pioneering book discloses the sense of inferiority that the colonized feels. Fanon focuses on the “inferiority complex”, which he believes is a psycho-existential complex resulted from the “juxtaposition of the black and white races”, and is derived from colonialism (2008). He refers to psychological formations as a way of emphasizing the 'identity trauma' of blackness in the colonial context and as another way of expressing the persistence of the psychological components of racism. In chapter “Colonial War and Mental Disorders” from *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon discusses that since colonialism denies that the colonized are fully human, it forces the colonized to ask: “Who am I in reality” (2004). From this, different psychological disturbances follow. Fanon concludes that colonized people are obsessed with violence, and that this is part of the division of the world into good and evil, or white and black.

Dabashi points out that in contemporary times “the color line can no longer claim to be the defining moment of the twentieth century” (2011). Therefore, Blacks are substituted by Browns who are labeled as neither black nor white, Africans by Arabs, and Jews by Muslims. This transition “exposes the fictive white man who stands at the center of racialized imagination” (2011). What really matters is not being Brown or Black, Muslim or Jew but marketing the ideas and the interests of America and its allies through “native informers”, to use Dabashi's terminology in *Brown Skin, White Masks*. The native informer is an indigenous person who belongs to, for instance, Iran, Pakistan, Palestine and Lebanon. After having moved to America, seldom had he a stable life or job; therefore, he stands on the margins of the new society, and serves its interests (2011). Predicament is that these native informers smooth the path for white racism and perpetuate imperialism unintentionally through the criticism they provide about the political regime of their home country. Paralleled to Fanon, Dabashi urges in *Brown Skin, White Mask* the brown man to remove the white mask that he covers himself with and to be conscious of his reality.

Dabashi extends Fanon's vision through Said's notion of intellectual exile. Accordingly, his concept of the native informer is originally based on Said's intellectual exile. Said views the intellectual role is “to speak the truth to power”, even at the risk of rejection. This intellectual advocates the voice of integrity. Exile, for Said, is metaphorical, which means that it is not necessary to leave home, but to leave conventions and accept the community's truths; therefore the intellectual must be an outsider. Contrary to Said, Dabashi underscores the adversity of intellectual migration which advantageously serves the imperial employer by telling him what he wants to believe in order to fabricate “communal consensus” (2011).

The paper argues that the native informer is not always a disloyal subject, who is actively serving imperialist agenda for his personal gain; rather the paper nuances the notion of the native informer by advancing the proposition that, in the case of the poems in question, the poet is a revolutionary intellectual, who uses his/her voice of dissent, suppressed as “subjugated knowledge”, to call for change and reformation in the homeland.

The intellectual cannot be accused of being disloyal to his country; instead, his aim is to resist and bring an end to war and occupation. Therefore, the study shows that the three poets under discussion have an apocalyptic point of view. Apocalypses are usually written from a context of suppression, expulsion, and persecution. This requires a shift toward a coming age of hope for change from the present that is dominated by evil. In *Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric*, Barry Brummett explains the idea of apocalypse:

Apocalypse is often used in the sense of a transition from this world, era, or state of being to another one. Lewicki argues that the true apocalyptic must maintain a tension between fear of this world and hope for deliverance in a new world, a contention echoed by Wilder's claim that the apocalyptic must entail both yea-saying to a new order and no-saying to an old one. Hodder insists that apocalyptic is essentially about “the passing of the old order and the creation of the new” and similarly, David Ketterer argues that “an apocalyptic transformation results from the creation of a new condition”. (1991)

Apocalypse is employed to refer to a “disaster” or “loss” that generates fear and chaos. Therefore, the apocalyptic is related to historical events, especially those which remind people of grief.

There is a relationship between apocalyptic literature and traumatic experience. The three poets bring to light the Iraqi's traumatized history that started from the years of war against Iran in 1980, the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the sectarian war that affects the Iraqi society, and the consequences of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. They depict the recurrent theme of death and trauma inflicted upon Iraq.

This study associates the emergence of native informer with what Michel Foucault calls “subjugated knowledge”. In his lecture in the college of France in 1976, Foucault introduced the expression:

I am referring to the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemization [...] a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it- that it is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work. (1980)

Foucault, in *Power/Knowledge*, demonstrates the ability of power to recreate its own channels of knowledge through discourse. He refers to sorts of knowledge which are marginalized or excluded from the dominant discourse by the dominant powers of the majority culture. Foucault focuses on examining silenced people who create conditions for resistance. He does not identify a specific textual definition of knowledge; however, he believes that it is dynamic and changeable throughout history. He refers to forms of historical knowledge which have been masked or treated insufficient by the ruling powers as medium for upholding their authority.

For Dabashi, instead of insurrecting the hegemonic power that has resulted from “subjugated knowledge”, native informers resurrect this knowledge in the country they settle in. The suppressed poets and writers who are prevented from freely expressing their political convictions encourage external forces to invade their homelands under the name of protecting humanity and freedom.

In *Thaqafat al Fun Fil Iraq* (The Cultures of Violence in Iraq), Salam Abbud introduces an embodiment of Foucault's concept of the subjugated knowledge in the Iraqi context. He condemns the way that the free voices of Iraqi poets and writers are silenced for the sake of the Ba'athist propaganda and considers it a kind of enslavement, especially during the times of the Iraqi wars. Iraqi writers are caught between “the calamity of war and the calamity of culture that gives expression to it” (2002). Postmodernist Iraqi literature witnesses the emergence of new generations of Iraqi writers who have experienced the traumas of war and exile as a result of fleeing the preceding Iraqi regimes. Some of these authors have been subjects to unbearable conditions stemming from physical and psychological pain. They have been attacked or marginalized because they dared to condemn openly the “Ba'athification” of Iraqi culture rejecting the atmosphere of censorship it has engendered.

Sinan Antoon:

Sinan Antoon is an Iraqi-born novelist, poet, scholar and translator who leaves to the United States shortly after the Gulf War which was waged in 1990 by alliance forces from 35 nations led by the United States against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. In response to Saddam Hussein's regime, he writes his poems from an exilic vantage point. However, he returns to Baghdad with a group of activists. In an interview with Dina Omar (2010), he divulges that it is suffocating to live under Saddam's regime. When the interviewer asked him:

What do you think your role is as a writer and a poet, now transplanted to America surrounded by English? Has your position changed from when you wrote in the Arab world?

He replied:

Well, I try to be aware of the privileges I have. I don't live in dictatorship and thus, in theory, I can say and write whatever I want to, but we know that there are other institutions and powers here that also constrain what can be published. Here it's corporate hegemony. The role of the writer is to write well and to write beautifully, but also to be responsible and write what is relevant to his or her society and the world.

He expounds that he believes himself to be a global citizen whose mission is to criticize his country in the hope of reforming its political system. “ Arab writers in diaspora cross borders and barriers and employ their artistic skills to explicate their home cultures to an international audience”(Awad, 2016, p. 298). Antoon writes as a resistant openly expressing his ideology toward his native country. The question is that does Antoon serve the American interests through his writings and political criticism unintentionally as Dabashi points out?

Antoon publishes his collection of poems *The Baghdad Blues* in which the narrator reveals the emptiness of those who are exhausted by war, and at the same time there is an unconscious call for the enemy. In his poem *A Prism: Wet with Wars*, he writes:

We will baptize our infants with smoke
Plough their tongues
With flagrant war songs
Teach them the bray of slogans
And leave them beside burning nipples
In an imminent wreckage and applaud
Before we weave an autumn for tyrants (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.15)

He focuses on the tremendous impact of war upon mothers and children who feel oppressed and are in need of help and support. Antoon's thinking echoes Gayatri Spivak's idea expressed in her essay '*Can the Subaltern Speak?*' in which she describes the hegemonic power and the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. She states that: "White men are saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak, 1998). The fact that the British colonizer protects the Indian woman from the Indian man can be likened to the American power which purportedly protects the Iraqi citizens who are fighting against each other. Analogous to Spivak, Antoon describes life in Iraq as insufferable for its citizens; however, in the case of Iraq, it is not only the war between the president Saddam and the citizens but also between the religious sects, the Shi'ite and Sunni. This can be considered as a call for an outside force to intervene and protect the citizens from themselves. Antoon expresses this in his poem *When I Was Torn by War*, saying:

I took a brush
Immersed in death
And drew a window
On war's wall
I opened it
Searching
For something
But
I saw another war
And a mother
Weaving a shroud
For the dead man
Still in her womb (Antton, 2007, p.7)

Antoon substantially refers to two wars. The first one is between Iraq and Iran in 1980, and the second one is the Gulf War in 1990. The Iranian revolution results in a conflict between Shi'ite and Ba'athist government. Antoon writes in "Wrinkles: on the Wind's forehead": "How narrow is this strait which sleeps between two wars but I must cross it" (Charara. 2008, p. 49). For Antoon, it is not easy to describe his country as it drowns in flames; yet, he is always haunted by bad memories as he says in an interview: "So when I went back to Baghdad, all of my relatives had left to various countries, and many of the friends of my generation had left" (Inskeep, 2019).

Compatible with Foucault's concept of "subjugated knowledge" which represses the free voices, Antoon describes the silenced prisoner in "A Prisoner's Song": "his silence an umbrella under our ululation he passed by us" (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.16). This prisoner, although he is set free, is silenced and traumatized at the same time because he will continue his life afraid of speaking his mind; yet, who will speak for him? Antoon answers this in his poem "A Prism: Wet with Wars", when he writes: "a people is being slaughtered across short waves but local radio vomits raw statements and urges us to applaud" (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.15). Fabricated media publishes what should be published, speaks on behalf of the others and urges people to approve.

Since many poets and writers lost the right to express their opinions, some of them started writing by using a metaphorical language. Antoon uses a metaphorical language in his poems "A Prism: Wet With Wars", he employs the marked metaphor of "a prism" which portrays how "tyrants" have created an atmosphere where it is not possible to resist and where people are forced to be obedient" (Alsaden, 2013). Prism also reflects the frequency of wars in Iraq when he resumes: "wet with wars". He represents Iraq before the fall of Saddam Hussein when tyrants silence people and present them as they agree on the situation "applause". Concomitantly, the poet depicts the way people are "slaughtered". No one has the right to complain or criticize, and reality is distorted when broadcasted in radio and news. This is what leads intellectuals to express themselves outside their homelands. Antoon ends his poem saying that victims in his country applaud "and keep on repeating HAPPY NEW WAR" (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.16). They applaud for dictatorship by repeating the slogan "Happy New War" as celebrating it. The idea is manifested in "A Letter" when he says: "Silently I address them/The dead Iraqis/where do we stand now/give or take a few hundred thousand?" (Charara, 2008, p.54), and because he is not coerced to address them silently, he and others "could have flown en masse over a metropolis" (Charara, 2008, p.54). He explains how the war survivors flow in masses like birds and are still watched and censored.

Antoon's words, according to Dabashi, are used as weapons by the Americans to sell and spread their ideology as superiors and saviors of the world. As a result, it is considered an unconscious call for a foreign assistance and at that, they "serve the interest of America and its allies" (Dabashi, 2011). This native informer, as Dabashi assumes, is humiliated and defeated since the fictive white man abuses and uses him to extend his ideology throughout the world. The white man's objective is to convince the targeted population such as Palestinians, Afghans, and Iraqis that the invasion of their homelands is for their welfare. It is to rescue them and liberate Muslim women (Dabashi, 2011).

However, Antoon is against the American invasion as he explains in his article "Fifteen Years Ago, America Destroyed My Country" published in "The New York Times": "No to war on Iraq. No to dictatorship" (2018). He adds "In American media, Iraqis had been reduced to either victims of Saddam who longed for occupation or supporters and defenders of dictatorship who opposed the war. We wanted Iraqis to speak for themselves" (2019). He seeks reforms in his country not invasion; yet, the outside forces translate his words as an excuse for invasion. He declares that he is against Saddam Hussein's reign of terror as well as the American invasion. Antoon explains in the same article how he and intellectuals in diaspora are against the war that has caused death for innocent Iraqis. "our voices were not welcomed in mainstream media in the United States, which preferred the pro-war Iraqi-American who promised cheering crowds that would welcome invaders with "sweets and flowers." There were none"(2018). Evidently, this supports Dabashi's idea of the native informer who through his criticism of the political regime fosters unconsciously the Western imperialist.

After Antoon's first return to Iraq for a documentary film called *About Baghdad*, about post-Saddam Iraq, he represents the binary opposition between Saddam and the United States. This film pays attention "to the destruction caused by the invasion and the serious problems under the occupation, already evident after only three months [...] Another important sentiment often expressed in the film, even by Iraqis who support the invasion, is the humiliation of being occupied, a sentiment that, as Thomas Ricks shows in his superb book *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (Turvey, 2008).

Antoon's care for his homeland makes him refute its autocratic regime imposed on his compatriots. He roundly

condemns it in his poems complaining about the oppression his society lives in. Although he seems pessimistic about the status quo as he writes in "Wrinkles: On the Wind's Forehead": "when will I grow up and be like my father...dead" (Charara. 2008, p. 49), he looks for reformation in his poem "Spring": "I don't know the name of that tree under my balcony/ but I do know that it has become a peacock/ parading its colors flapping its wings whenever the wind whispers a message from its siblings into its ears" (lines 1-4) and he ends it : "But the tree will stay standing dreaming of the Peacock trough winter nights". This shows his apocalyptic view; apocalypse "must maintain a tension between fear of this world and hope for deliverance in a new world [and] an apocalyptic transformation results from the creation of a new condition" (Brummett, 1991). There is a tension between two worlds of fear and hope, yet hope lies in reformation. Spring in his poems symbolizes hope. Despite his gloomy description of misery, death, and victims in Iraq and the presence of an external invader, there should be a glimmer light at the end of the tunnel

Hashim Shafiq:

Another Iraqi poet and novelist to be discussed in this paper is Hashim Shafiq. Shafiq (1950) is an Iraqi poet, novelist and critic who chooses to settle in London after a long journey in exile. He considers London as his second home where he can freely think and write without restrictions. He accuses Iraq for being a sectarian country; and that the Iraqi people live a life of slavery in which they have to say "yes". Shafiq reveals this in the poem "Picture of a Tyrant". He asks:

Why have the landscapes of imagination that used to fly with our
kites disappeared?
Tell me, how did you consume even the space,
And how did you spy on our souls with those huge telescopic lenses?
who gave you permission to build all these fences around our mouths
And these dungeons in our depths?

...

Why do you always search my poems for weapons?

Why do you always mutilate the feathers of my four-winged bird? (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.230-231)

He describes dictatorship in Iraq wondering why his words and opinion are regarded as weapons. This signifies the limitation of freedom of expression; fences around his mouth prevent him from criticizing the pitiful conditions his people live in. Through the several questions he poses, he principally accuses and blames the leader of his homeland, namely Saddam. He asks whether this is his home country or the country of enemies; thus, what is the difference between the external and the internal enemy? And his questions: "who widowed femininity", "is this a homeland or a guillotine" (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.230-231), are translated and used negatively by the invaders as a way to rescue their homeland and their women. Dabashi points out that the intellectual elites serve the Western ideology by making the case for moral revenge in terms of human rights including women's rights (2011). Shafiq also finds himself a pretext to live outside his homeland which is no longer a homeland since he cannot speak and is furtively spied on. He reveals these facts in his poem. "Mirage": "Nobody told me when I was a youth that my homeland was not a homeland and that my enemy and friend are aligned against me" (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.232). In "Picture of a Tyrant", he writes:

Tell me about your guard and watchman
And the secret armies of your spies that invade our throats
And watch our lips and our hearing
Tell me about your mastery in inflicting pain
About your cunning and your shrewdness in polluting women (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.230)

On this account, he suffers from censorship. Referring to Dabashi's line of thought about the native informers, this means that America and its allies would find it logical to interfere and invade their homeland since Shafiq lives in

America where they can be safe and free. Demonstrably, Dabashi compares “the Native Informers” to “collaborators”. While the former tells the empire what it needs to know “to better sell its wars to its domestic audience”, the latter informs them what they need to know in order “to better dominate” (2011). Thereupon, the native informers” inform the subjugators what they want to hear. They become “voices of dissent”, especially those who are of a Muslim origin when encountering Islamophobic conditions in the new home; this instigates them to deny their religion and embrace the other’s accent. These “voices of dissent” allege to be against “barbarity of Islam” (2011). The reason lying beneath this allegation is that the only people who feel unsafe in the West are those who “criticize the criminal atrocities of American empire and European racism” (2011); thus, they have to champion them to be praised.

Paralleled to Antoon, Shafiq believes that as long as he lives in his homeland, he is silenced and does not have the right to protest. Again, this leads to Dabashi’s explanation in his book *Brown Skin, White Masks*. For him, Americans turn to expatriate intellectuals to tell targeted populations that they intend to invade their homeland for their sake and to rescue them from evil. Moreover, Muslim women should be liberated and protected (2011). Dabashi’s concern is that the native informer would “assassinate his character” by becoming the collective unconscious of race and faith (2011). Therefore, Dabashi asserts that this brings shame, defeat, and humiliation. In this case, the white man exploits the native informer and makes him feel ashamed.

Shafiq has an apocalyptic point of view since apocalypses are usually written from a context of desperation; thus, the apocalypse involves pessimism concerning the present age and optimism concerning the coming one. In his poem “The Mountain”, Sahafiq shows his pessimism toward this age mingled with hope for the future: “I have lit the caves and the stairs and the hideouts in the folds of the mountain./..... so that my loved ones might pass” (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.228)

After an apocalyptic event, traumatic symptoms survive. The bad incidents are remembered and affect the psyche of the traumatized person. Eric Wertheimer Monica Casper and explain that although it appears that apocalyptic trauma should be recalled to help people “regain a sense of identity” (2016), many resist such actions bearing in mind disaster that is “according to Maurice Blanchot is related to forgetfulness” (qtd. in Wertheimer& Casper, p.2016). In his poem “Destinies”, Hashim Shafiq, describes how he tells his daughter stories about Iraq, but when she asks him about his story, he slips and try not to talk or remember that past: “I tell her about everything/ But when she asks for my story/ I slip around this corner and that/ until she drowns on my knee and falls asleep” (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.229). Shafiq concentrates on surviving throughout forgetting.

Dunya Mikhail: Marginalized Voices

After facing threats and persecution from the Iraqi authorities for her writings throughout Saddam Hussein’s regime, the Iraqi poet Dunya Mikhail flees to Jordan and then settles in America. In diaspora, Arab women Writers “straddle two cultures and express their thoughts and opinions on various issues in a democratic manner” (Awad,2016, p. 299). As a result of being subjugated in her home country as a female poet who expresses her political ideology freely outside her native country, she is seen as the female native informer in the United States.

Demonstrating the traumatic experience of the Iraqi Yazidi men and women who have been killed and captured by the terrorist gangs of ISIS, Mikhail publishes her book *The Beekeeper* (2018) which is a collection of stories wherein she portrays her personal experience. She points out: “I learned that men have been killed and women have been stolen and sold in what ISIS called the “sabaya market”.

Dabashi’s idea of the native informers is manifested in Mikhail’s poem “America”, especially when she says:

Stop your questioning, America
And offer your hand to the tired on the other shore
Offer it without questions
Or waiting lists (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.132)

She facilitates the Americans’ mission to convince the world that they can liberate them from despotism and persecution.

She does not want Americans, as she mentions at the very outset of the poem, to ask her about the number of people who came to America. She complains about America saying: "it has been a long time, America longer then the stories of my grandmother in the evening/ and w are waiting for the signal/to throw our shell in the river" (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.233). She reminds herself and America of the long period of wars that Iraq has suffered from. She, in flashbacks, recalls the moment when her father tells her: "One day, we will go to America," and "we will go and sing a song translated at the Statue of Liberty" (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.133). She deals with America as a savior who will rescue her and Iraqis in America and also in Iraq from torture and oppression. In truth, she is a poet haunted by harsh and dispiriting memories; although, she is in America now, she left her dead father who did not have the chance to rescue himself in Iraq. Affectingly, Mikhail ends her poem "America", by asking America in the last few lines:

Which of the colors was the most joyful
Tumultuous
Alienated
Or assimilated
Of them all?
How would I know, America Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.137)

Mickhail seems confused after leaving her homeland and getting the American citizenship. She represents the idea of alienation that results from feeling alone without her beloved ones, and the idea of assimilation that she tries to cope with in order to live a normal life as an American citizen. She fluctuates between nostalgia for homeland and integration into the new home which she refuses to call exile since she has already experienced exile in her homeland.

As a female poet, Mikhail perceives conflicts in Iraq in a way that is different from male poets. She explains how as a woman, she could see the war in the streets, in the tears of mothers, in the eyes of birds frightened by bullets, in the holes of the walls and of the helmets of those men returning from the battlefield. This is obvious in her poem "The Prisoner":

She waits at the prisoner's door
Until she sees him
To tell him "Take care"
As she used to remind him
When he was going to school
When he was going to work
[...]
The mother of the prisoner doesn't understand
Why should she leave him
Just because 'the visit has finished"! (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.131)

She demonstrates that many innocents are imprisoned; she also exposes the feeling of mothers when they see their children in prisons with strangers.

As a native Informer who makes it easy but unconsciously for the Americans to invade Iraq. She criticizes censorship in her homeland and says in an interview with Cathy LinchChe for the "New Directions" blog: "In Iraq, there was a department of censorship with actual employees whose job was to watch 'public morals' and decide what you should read and write"; she adds that this is why she should write by using metaphors. In other words, she is silenced and subjugated adding that in America: "a word does not cost a poet her life". This is a justified reason for her as a poet to depart for another home where she is protected and tranquil; she writes in "Another Planet":

I have a special ticket
to another planet
beyond this Earth.

A comfortable world, and beautiful:
 a world without much smoke,
 [...]
 have no secrets.
 The police are nonexistent:
 there are no problems
 and no fights.(Mikhail, 2014, p.70)

On the other hand, being a native informer does not mean that the intellectual is not loyal to his/her homeland. Mikhail regrets her departure from Iraq, she misses it. In "I Was in a Hurry", she writes: "Yesterday I lost my country [...] Please return it, sir. Please return it, madam. It is my country... I was in a hurry when I lost it yesterday" (Mikhail, 2014, p.70). Her poems oppose the political regime in Iraq blending some historical events with her individual experiences. She belongs to a generation of Iraqi writers who attempt to plow the exhausted atmosphere in Iraq as a result of two prolonged wars which generate collapse in the cultural institution. Although some people wonder why she has not returned to her country after the end of war, she explains in an interview: "A lot of people ask me this, and the way I feel towards this is really strange. I feel that I woke up from a dream, and going back to Iraq is like asking me will I see the same dream if I go back to sleep? Her previous answer reflects her traumatic experience.

Mikhail shows her apocalyptic point of view in "Snow Storm":
 We can't wait/ to have our feet.
 We want to go there.
 The celebration will start soon.
 We will point our fingers
 Which they are making now.
 We will soon point to the balloon
 Which is rising up to our voices (Weissbort & Simawe, 2003, p.131).

Mikhail has a hope that will become true soon; she waits to celebrate a new world free from terror. Her voice is her weapon that will bring the new age of hope.

Trauma is an issue of concern in apocalyptic literature; there is "a relation between apocalypse, trauma and the loss" (Watkins, 2020). Mikhail, for example, describes her journey from Iraq to the United States. The speaker in her poems is haunted by memories and struggles to express the oppression she has endured. Dunya's poetry "emerges from the very depths of traumatic memory, to provide an enduring testimonial narrative. This narrative gives visibility to the anonymous victims of war and the faceless casualties of history, who remain buried in mass graves, or are incarcerated in desolate prisons" (Mehta, 2010). Interestingly, she depicts the traumatic experience in her poem "Buzz". She mirrors the way her trauma threatens the speaker even when she is away from her country: "As the airplane takes off and puffs out a smoke of images" (Mikhail, 2005, p.25). "The buzz smells like gunpowder", and when the plane lands: "I don't want to say what I remember" (Mikhail, 2005, p.25). The speaker hears a buzzing of a plane when it takes off that does not leave her while she struggles to quell in her ears. Although it is over, the speaker suffers and this reminds her of the gunpowder.

Conclusion:

In the Iraqi poetic milieu, certain poets dedicate their oeuvre to expose the flaws of the existing political system, representing the dangers it causes to the human sense of liberty. Others privilege inward submission of their voice instead of an outward one through incorporating layers of meaning into their literary texts. The opposing attitude of these poets towards the Ba'ath regime and president Saddam Hussein impels them to flee the country in order to criticize its politics freely and outwardly. The attitude of controversy which these poets adopt, cause them to, unconsciously, become native informers; despite their love for their motherland, their voices serve the Western imperialist agenda of invading Iraq in the name of war against terror (2011).

Dabashi disagrees with Said who believes that the intellectual immigrants have a positive role in serving their people. Although such poets facilitate the Western invasion unintentionally, we believe that they have an apocalyptic point of view. Hence, the three poets, even though they represent native informers, they cannot be accused of being unfaithful to their homeland since their aim is to reform the political regime, and they refuse the American invasion to Iraq. Many Iraqi intellectuals employ their poets to propagandize Western interests and vindicate their invasion of Iraq unconsciously so as to exorcise the evil in its system.

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مراجعة وجهة نظر دباشي في الشعر العراقي الأنجلوفوني

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ملخص

في كتابه "البشرة الداكنة، الأقنعة البيضاء" يفحص حميد دباشي بشكل نقدي العلاقة بين العرق والاستعمار مستدعيًا مصطلح ادوارد سعيد "المنفى الفكري". دافع سعيد عن المثقفين العرب الذين عاشوا في الغرب والذين كتبوا عن الأدب المناهض للاستعمار. من ناحية أخرى، وبعد عقود رأى حميد دباشي حالة ما بعد الاستعمار من زاوية مختلفة، فقد قام بقلب الصورة الإيجابية لبعض المثقفين المنفيين من أجل تسليط الضوء على الدور السلبي الذي مارسوه، ويسميه دباشي "المخبرين المحليين" لأنهم يشوهون ثقافتهم بطريقة تخدم الأيديولوجية الغربية. تستكشف هذه الورقة مفهوم دباشي عن المخبرين المحليين في نصوص مختارة من الشعر العراقي. وتناقش بأن الشعراء العراقيين الناطقين بالإنجليزية يستخدمون شعرهم، عن غير قصد، للدعاية الإستراتيجية الأمريكية والتأكيد للعالم بأنهم الأمة المتفوقة. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الشعراء الثلاثة قيد المناقشة سنان أنطون، وهاشم شفيق، ودنيا ميخائيل، لديهم وجهة نظر رهيبية تجاه المستقبل "أبوكاليس" لذلك لا يمكن اتهامهم بالخيانة أو التآمر على وطنهم، لأنهم ينتقدون على أمل إصلاح النظام السياسي. تطبق الورقة منهجًا تحليليًا لتطبيق نظرية دباشي على النصوص المختارة.

الكلمات الدالة: اللغة الإنجليزية، نهاية العالم، الشعراء العراقيون، المخبر الأصلي، المعرفة الخاضعة.

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