

A study of alienation in Taslima Nasrin's select poems

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Abstract

The theme of Alienation is discussed in literature by various forms. Alienation forms the subject of many psychological, sociological, literary and philosophical studies. It plays a major role in human condition in the contemporary epoch. This paper is focused on the psychological alienation of Taslima Nasrin's select poems in 'BURNING ROSES IN MY GARDEN'. This research paper explores Nasrin's exile experience, particularly her journey to the United States and later to UK, as portrayed in chapter 93-97 of "BURNING ROSES IN MY GARDEN". It delves into her decision to leave her homeland, the mode of communication through letters to her mother, her departure, the loneliness what she experienced in post-emigration, and the subsequent self-discovery. The narrative also touches upon a pivotal moment of the patriarchal society and its people come to terms with the reality of her situation. Throughout the collection, Nasrin uses her poems to uncover the truth and depict society's reaction to her words and works. Some poems are written during her forced confinement in Delhi from November 22-2007 to March 19, 2008. It is to examine the insights of the select poems of poetry collection of "BURNING ROSES IN MY GARDEN" and try to illuminate Nasrin's exile and the societal responses to her provocative expressions.

Keywords

Madwoman, Barred, Sharpened knife, Overcrowded

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1. Introduction

South Asia has produced a number of literary works both in the English language and other language that are remarkable for their treatment of contemporary south Asian realities, their experiments with the English language and their treatment of themes of history, identity, displacement and social and political divisions.

Taslma Nasrin, a renowned female writer hailing from Bangladesh, is widely recognized for her poignant exploration of women's oppression and suffering. Most of her works have faced the patriarchal society's norms in Bangladesh and the Bengal regions of India. Notable contributions to English literature include "Lajja" (Shame), published in 1993, and her autobiography "Amar Meyebela" (My Girlhood, 2002), which incurred a ban from the Bangladeshi government in 1999 due to perceived inflammatory remarks against Islam and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Recently, "Burning Roses in My Garden" is a collection of poems authored by the esteemed Bangladeshi writer and physician, Taslima Nasrin. Throughout her career, Nasrin has courageously tackled themes of women's oppression and societal struggles, drawing from her own experiences growing up in the patriarchal family. Facing significant challenges from her family and society, Nasrin eventually turned to atheism. Her writings often challenge the orthodox Muslim's sentiments, leading to her exile from Bangladesh and subsequent protests aimed at banning her works.

Originally written in Bengali, the poems in this collection have been skillfully translated into English by Jesse Waters,

enabling broader access to Nasrin's reflections on her exile period and the struggles of women.

Taslma Nasrin endured profound oppression stemming from her upbringing in a Muslim family, exacerbated by her writings, which often challenged prevailing Muslim ideologies. Consequently, she was exiled from her homeland and faced bans on her works. "Burning Roses in My Garden" reflects on her life in exile, with many poems crafted during her confinement in Delhi.

From poem 93-97, Nasrin recounts her journey to the UK, informing her mother of her exile through a poignant letter. These verses capture her subsequent departure and the solitude she encountered, as well as her belief in eventual recognition.

The initial poem, "Am I Not to Have a Country of My Own?" portrays the harsh reality of forced exile, stemming from the publication of "Lajja," which depicted the persecution of a Hindu family during the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition. Threatened with death, Nasrin sought refuge in Sweden, forsaking her Bangladeshi citizenship.

The poem "Am I Not to Have a Country of My Own?" delves into the author's forced displacement from her homeland and her poignant realization of being without a country. She portrays herself as a stateless wanderer, seeking acceptance for her beliefs and refuge for her works, yet finding no solace. Despite her readiness to champion women's rights, she faces accusations of treason from her compatriots, losing her sense of belonging as a consequence.

In "A Letter to My Mother," Nasrin laments her decision to leave Bangladesh, expressing sorrow at leaving her mother and acknowledging her inability to reciprocate it. When her

mother played the role of a magician in her life, in return she even can't do the least one also.

"Departure, Departure" details Nasrin's preparations to leave, describing her journey through Sweden, Germany, France, and the US without regret, yet leaving her motherland behind. This passage talks about someone leaving without any hesitation or looking back. The person who stays behind won't show any emotion about the departure and will remain cold. They expected the person to leave and aren't trying to salvage any relationship or dreams left behind. Instead, they prepare the way for others who might also want to leave

It describes Taslima's decision to leave slowly, step by step, implying a deliberate and calm departure. The lines suggest that the person leaving won't have any intention of coming back. There's a fixed gaze on the path ahead, indicating determination and focus on moving forward. The use of imagery of a "sharpened knife" implies a swift and decisive departure without any hesitation. And no intention to return which indicates the clean break without lingering attachments or promises and also affiliation.

"A Passion for Solitude" explores Nasrin's acceptance of loneliness in Sweden, contrasting societal sympathy with her desire for solitude, which she views as essential to her well-being. Even though people think that she suffers a lot of being living alone, but she really loves the way being lonely and that's the way she to live. And being alone is the way she enjoys the life. And she feels alone when people came to help out of sympathy towards her, when the well-wishers sit on her lap, when a friend stands near her, and the people who loves her stand besides she feels suffocated. So she would like to free from these people to enjoy the solitude.

In the final poem titled "Surely One Day," the author reflects on the eventual realization that people will have about her true identity and the reasons behind her actions. She illustrates this with a metaphor, likening it to the return of her divorced husband. The poem describes her meticulous care and attention to detail in preparing for his arrival, highlighting her deep sense of care and commitment. Through this analogy, she conveys her belief that one day, those who opposed her exile will understand her motives and the importance of her advocacy. Despite the potential for reconciliation, she asserts her focus on moving forward and enjoying life, indifferent to the opinions of those who once opposed her.

2. Conclusion

In the collection of poems, "Burning Roses in My Garden," Taslima Nasrin endeavors to depict her personal struggles while also shedding light on the broader societal challenges. Through her work, Nasrin not only articulates her own hardships but also amplifies the plight of an entire community stifled by male chauvinism. She serves as a beacon of inspiration for women who remain suppressed and unable to advocate for their rights, embodying the courage and resilience that empower others to speak out. The title reveals the challenges of her life and how she is able to overcome those hurdles.

While roses traditionally symbolize love, romance, and hope in literature, the title suggests she is burning those symbolic roses from her garden, implying a loss of love and hope in her life. To many observers, this signifies her transformation into a loveless or hopeless individual. This paper positively ends with the solitude of her life and not the loneliness of her life

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