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Exile in the Poetry of Adeeb Kamal Al-Din as a Space of Forced Alienation: A Socio-Cultural Study

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ABSTRACT: Exile is a form of forced alienation brought about by socio-cultural factors that affect the individual and place him or her in complete isolation, making it impossible to confront reality or adapt to it. The social conditions in exile differ greatly from those before it, and the cultural circumstances and their various outcomes are entirely unlike the culture of the East. Every country has phenomena that distinguish it from others, especially between the West and the East. For this reason, exile, despite its cultural offerings, proved far harsher than years of deprivation and need in the poet's homeland. The poet therefore attempted to escape into the refuge of religion as an objective correlative, but this too proved to be merely another form of exile. The religious narrative remains in the realm of the unknown, which is yet another form of disorientation and a new kind of alienation.

INTRODUCTION

Place is bound up with the existence, familiarity, and interaction of the self. Place, with its socio-cultural factors, has the capacity to reveal a negative impact or the absence of one; it "does not appear except through the personal perspective of whoever lives in it or passes through it, and has no independence from the person who inhabits it." Accordingly, the relationship between people and their places has become an existential and complementary one, resembling a soul's discourse about the body that represents our share of existence. No sooner does existence take root in a place than it becomes entangled in the dialectic of their relationship, forming the true beginning of a chain of multiplying and ever-renewing interactions between them. Place thus becomes a center of dialectic, a field of vitality, movement, action, and transformation within the body of the world and the body of language — and it is therefore problematic, always subject to questioning, suspicion, and astonishment. For it is through this entanglement and dialectic that one can identify the boundaries of relationships and intersections concerning what is, what should be, and what cannot be, giving rise to the process of existence or alienation, bound to the self through the spatial effect that acquires its new nature in the artistic work as "a cohesive character, a distance measured in words, and a narrative of matters deeply embedded in the social self — it thus becomes neither an outer shell nor something secondary, but the vessel whose value increases the more it is interwoven with the artistic work," influencing it and revealing itself in a way that keeps its effect present.

This bond is an interactive one, governed by a set of social and cultural factors capable of directing discourse with a vision commensurate with the existence and physical presence of the self. The cultural conflict is fundamentally grounded in the point of the body's independence and liberation from the harshness and oppression of place; whenever it manages to declare its freedom, this means the absence of impact and the presence of freedom — which permits the idea of the body's independence in existence. This is a highly complex matter, because the physical dimension is a reading of the outputs produced by civilization, a culture that projects it as a sign among the signs of the socio-cultural awareness of the present self, and at the same time a declaration of the origin of existence and its impact produced by the imagination and drawn toward it. For the place "toward which the imagination is drawn cannot remain an indifferent place of purely geometric dimensions; it is a place in which human beings have lived not merely objectively, but with all the bias inherent in the imagination, especially as it most often possesses

an attraction — because it concentrates existence within boundaries characterized by protection. In the domain of images, the reciprocal relations between the exterior and intimacy are not parallel," but rather hostile in many respects, because the problem of "the human being in place is a problem of the self's awareness of its existence, its potentials, and its rights — it is an existential problem" that interacts with the dimensions bound to it. This in many instances represents the self's vision of its existence, the angles from which it views these places, and the places' effect upon it — along with a clarification of its relationship with society and the degree of its presence and familiarity therein. The relationship is expansive when the horizons of looking upon it are open, and narrow when those angles are narrow; yet in the end it remains a space governed by the angles of looking upon it, to the point where existence has become a spatial dimension in which characters and events are manifest according to factors connected to the philosophical vision, the nature of the literary genre, the sender's point of view, and their sensitivity toward and representation of place. When integration and interaction are absent, the self feels its estrangement.

FIRST: EXILE AS THE SPACE OF THE SELF AND ITS ESTRANGEMENT

The self inhabits new places with their various dimensions and diverse influences, especially the socio-cultural influence, given its direct connection to the new reality and its varied manifestations, which compel the self to engage with them and achieve a degree of harmony and familiarity. This coexistence may generate a conflict between two different realities in two different environments, causing the network of relationships, visions, and viewpoints that support one another to become dismantled within the person, who feels their instability due to the displacement of settled ideas about a world that represents their lived experience and memories, and which differs greatly from another world that has arrived with new visions, relationships, and angles appropriate to its own civilization and socio-cultural orientations. Exile thus carries a fierce conflict between existence and non-existence:

*The exile sat behind bars
And saw rows upon rows of bars
That never end.
Ever.*

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 5, p. 33)

The new reality is a narrow and ever-renewing prison; the more the poet attempts to escape it, the more confined and burdened he becomes, as though he is in permanent imprisonment and continuous alienation. The new place, despite its socio-cultural offerings, is constricted by the narrowness of his vision of existence in exile, as though he has lost the warmth of place and of being. Dreaming of the environment in which he grew up gives him a sense of ease; he is absorbed into a reality he knows — the original climate he searches for. For the familiar place is body and soul, the human being's first world before being cast into another place. The human being believes he knows himself and his existence through the efficacy of time, when in fact all we know is a succession of fixations in places where human beings settle and refuse to dissolve — when even in the past, when beginning to search for earlier events, one wishes to grasp the movement of time. Place, in its countless closed compartments, contains time condensed, and this is the function of place in crystallizing time in a given moment. Place works to draw time in ways suited to the new reality, in order to verify its existence; its value lies in its first existence, and its alienation within a reality that cannot be made familiar or lived with is a struggle for survival. Thus the sadness is eternal no matter how places change and multiply, because they all adhere to a single condition.

Exile is bound to the poet's existence and his permanent estrangement, as though his true reality is to live far from his homeland, his family and friends, and the memories of his childhood and youth:

*Exile remains and expands.
This is the title of the last myth
I wrote and cast into the sea of darkness.*

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 6, p. 249)

The text pauses over the poet's innermost feelings that have accompanied him since he decided to depart and leave his homeland for the new place. Exile has become his permanent dwelling — indeed, his very myth that has clung to him and will remain

with him, as implied by his expression "cast into the sea of darkness" — that is, the presence of eternal inseparability, which he conveyed through linguistic condensation. The signifiers accumulate with rich fertility and coalesce into a network of values, meanings, signs, and symbols related to socio-cultural dimensions that interweave in a vitally generative manner, attempting to express the state of the text in the present moment — which is in reality an expression of the creator's state and what he wished to say about his alienation and the point to which he has arrived. These signifiers gather in layers, focal points, levels, and channels that require a readerly excavation guided by a creative mind trained to understand the implicit dimensions of the text and the necessity of revealing them, just as it must possess sufficient experience and skill in the linguistic poetic sensibility of the language of poetry that reveals the features of the text and discloses it to the recipient — a disclosure that necessitates familiarity with the socio-cultural dimensions, enabling deep contemplation, concentrated attention, and the penetration of the layers of the signifier to uncover its internal undulations, with their immense capacity to produce meanings and elevate the poetic quality of discourse to the level of disclosing existence and what it engenders from the impulses of alienation — an alienation that has become mythological, inhabiting his depths and unable to leave him no matter how hard he tries to flee from it.

Exile represents for the poet a nihilistic space that places him in constant conflict between two different realities — one representing the place of exile, whether voluntary or forced, and the other representing the previous existence tied to the socio-cultural dimension he knows:

I am the banished mortal whose ashes you scattered

In the river,

And in the sea,

And in the desert —

That you might capture his secrets?

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 7, p. 174)

The text explicitly draws a comparison between existence and non-existence, for both coexist: existence in exile is non-existence. Exile for the poet adheres to the principle of existential nihilism as the other face of existence — indeed, its very end, through which the truth of reality is known, away from the ideal, surface-level view and its generally negative character. It is "the process by which, in the end, there is no longer anything as regards existence" — the condition in which "the human being rolls outside the center toward the unknown." This can only be so if the origin of existence has been lost. His reality is thus nihilistic, with no existence; the place associated with exile has itself become nihilistic and will scatter its remaining ashes into the river, the sea, and the desert — that is, into all of existence, because the poet has portrayed the new place as perishable ash that will lose its trace and its existence. This portrayal of exile is the ultimate existential alienation, where estrangement and alienation intertwine to create a nihilistic existence, because exile is the window through which he sees his existence in a different way.

The exiled poet became bound to the new place and its social, cultural, and civilizational dimensions; the environment is entirely different from his previous one, yet he was unable to interact with it:

In exile I said to them:

I want a homeland.

They apologized.

I said: I want a woman who never tires of kisses.

They apologized again.

I said: I want a wondrous solitude.

They said: Take it — a wondrous solitude for eternity.

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 7, p. 79)

It is evident that the poet is searching for his homeland in his exile, despite the temptations of the new environment — built on freedom, openness, and civilizational progress. Yet the existential struggle inclines toward the homeland, despite the new life and the vast space represented by Australia; his homeland remains the preoccupying concern from which he cannot be separated, and which he yearns for intensely. The self recognizes its inner features through its dialectic with external space, yet it could not harmonize with this new place, vast as it is. The text is the space of the self in which its visions, sufferings, and feelings take concrete form in its relationship with the universe and its beings; the text is the space of the self tied to the origin of its existence in its relationship with the universe and its beings; the text is the space of the self as it is positioned in language, finding its dwelling therein — just as it is positioned in the new place in an attempt to search for its identity. This identity, alongside the material, physical, and linguistic identity, consists of two identities moving in the body of the world and the spaces of place — an inevitable existential positioning, because the larger place (the land / the new place) possesses its new identity over another place that has its own settled identity, and it attempts to impose its social, cultural, and civilizational discourse in a relationship of domination and possession. But this does not align with another form of possession of another place not available to the poet, and so a conflict arises between two different worlds and two different identities, leaving the self searching for its true position within exile — a position never achieved, as the poet was unable to interact with the givens of his existence. The new place provided him with complete alienation and eternal wondrous solitude due to the loss of integration and familiarity on the socio-cultural level.

The poet's existence in exile had become a self-alienation he lived with every day, felt with every comparison to another existence. Exile is a phenomenon bound to socio-cultural alienation above all else:

*Today I met, by chance, the king of exile.
He was shabby, miserable, bankrupt —
Yet he never ceased firing jokes and nonsense
At his followers, who burst into false laughter.*

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 6, p. 53)

The text conveys a dramatic scene of dialogue woven by the poet to describe his condition and that of the exiles in a manner that provokes irony and sarcasm. The visual snapshot opens onto the atmosphere of a chance encounter between him and the king of exile, portraying their king as shabby, miserable, and bankrupt, yet trying to suppress his pain and alienation by showing the opposite of what he conceals — which is also contrary to reality. Exile is negative in all its dimensions, a true reflection of their existence, which will be even shabbier, more miserable, and more bankrupt compared to their king. The poet openly states their suffering and estrangement, placing the reader within their social and cultural existence. The pattern of implicit meaning represents an image of refuge in the cultural code that regards Western reality as fundamentally different in all its dimensions — a neutral space for cultural exchange that communication theorists may seek — and an attempt to highlight how linguistic exchange does not constitute a self-contained, self-sufficient process, because any linguistic exchange presupposes a degree of the implicit. Everything presents itself in a form different from what is intended; it is in reality an interaction for a larger set of recipients. Introducing the meaning of the lived world — the universe, the exile within which ordinary existence unfolds, the vast new space and its varied associations — is essentially a declaration of our bond with it, its circumstances, the chain of its relationships, and its existence; for this world is the beginning of that world that we implicitly carry, act within, agree with, and coexist with according to our socio-cultural circumstances, as expressed by the text through a concentrated pictorial signification of the king's signifier — beginning with his title ("king of exile") — to narrate the impact of estrangement and the narrowness of the space he inhabits, despite its vastness.

The poet's estrangement from the new reality — the vast place — had a profound effect, as he was unable to coexist with it despite its civilizational character and what distinguishes it:

*I and my exhausted body shall lie down
On exile's plush bed.
And before I fall asleep
I will knock on the door of dream seven times,*

In hope that it arranges my life — which fate has devastated

Seventy times —

With mythological success.

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 6, p. 92)

The poet makes fate the primary cause of his alienation and the suffering that has afflicted it, and the signs of this appear on his exhausted body. The socio-cultural consciousness formed about the West is one of freedom, openness, and civilization, but this did not materialize due to the bond with the primary place to which he is attached. The abundant bed and the new life in a new place that claims openness are, in reality, a form of physical enslavement of the human being; for alienation does not fulfill his needs and requirements — linked to his relationship with the previous place, simple as it was. The search for freedom is a search for eternal solitude and permanent alienation, because freedom cannot exist except in a place that the soul loves and feels safe in; the human being remains a stranger beyond its walls. For other civilizations that do not directly connect with him enslave him without his realizing it; they extend their authority over his thought, conscience, and body, making him submissive — as if submitting to the authority of evil in new clothing — encouraging everything considered flawed and reprehensible in personal morality to emerge and be unleashed. They encourage cruelty and physical torment, favor deception and treachery, and even murder, claiming that these authoritarian means are justified by the lofty goals they profess to pursue — goals that will never be achieved, and which are quickly forgotten upon collision with true reality. So long as he does not feel that he is in his true place suited to his cultural and social awareness, he cannot envision the world and the people living in it as objects reflecting his world and awareness; this world cannot be his means of escaping his prison and his alienation. He remains dreaming of returning to the place he is familiar with, the existence that fate — in which he believed and whose efficacy and lasting impact he trusted — has devastated.

Drawing a comparison between two worlds — one representing deprivation and need, the other representing permanent exile and eternal grief — is in reality a socio-cultural comparison between two different worlds:

He stopped me at the station of the house

And said: O my servant, is there no house?

You spent your life carrying a bundle of clothes,

Wandering aimlessly

From the house of the Euphrates to the house of ash,

To the house of the sea and beyond the sea.

And from the house of orphanhood to the house of the base,

And from the house of deprivation

To the house of weeping while the people slept,

And from the house of the cry to the house of estrangement,

While you search in vain for shelter

And the reassurance of a wall.

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 4, p. 101)

The poet employs the monologue style — inner self-address to God — to express a single-voiced inner dialogue with conscious, tangible awareness that reveals his spatial existence between two different worlds. He attempts to confess in language that bespeaks full awareness of the origin of his existence in past time and its various projections, and his current presence with its new spatial projections representing his spatial alienation and loss in a country different in all its societal and cultural dimensions. Place has become an obsession that troubles him from time to time, making him feel his isolation — just as it has become stances of anxiety from which he cannot separate himself.

The poet expressed his state of seeking refuge in God as a result of his alienation, pain, and spatial suffering, complaining in this dialogue about the impact of the alienation that has afflicted him, as though lamenting two intertwined matters representing the dynamics of his individual social awareness, with an expansion of his imaginary faculty to summon two different times. He drew a spatial comparison between the house of the Euphrates — the house of orphanhood, deprivation, and the cry — and the house of ash, the sea, and beyond the sea — the house of the base, weeping, and estrangement. In essence, this is a comparison between two realities: one representing his true homeland, the other the exile that was the source of his estrangement, despite its social circumstances so different from the past time and the previous existence. It appears clearly in the poet's discourse that the social aspect and cultural deprivation were the source of his emigration, but he collided with a new reality in the new place — one characterized by oppression, isolation, and loneliness, as he weeps while the people sleep. This generates a feeling of the loss of interaction on the socio-cultural level; the culture, customs, and character of the people of the Euphrates cannot be like the culture of the West and what is associated with it and derived from it, to the point where it surpasses his threshold of acceptability. For culture is a set of qualitative and unique variables tied to contexts and factors arising from psychological, spatial, and temporal differences, and so he attempts to reject their givens, veering toward the time of deprivation and its painful memory — which is, by nature, far less burdensome than his current spatial existence.

SECOND: COMPENSATING FOR THE EXILE OF PLACE THROUGH THE RELIGIOUS NARRATIVE

The religious narrative represents the core of the thought and existence of Eastern human beings, accompanying them in their settlement and their migration, inseparable from them and they from it. Whenever they feel the harshness of place, they seek another refuge in which to find tranquility and ease. This, in its essence, is a deepening of alienation and its manifestations, because fleeing to this grand narrative — with its real and unseen dimensions — corresponds perfectly to the stage of lostness they have reached in exile. It was the primary reason for the search for a means of protection or, at the very least, a spiritual means through which to seek refuge from material givens. Seeking refuge in God is the means of salvation — or the attempt at salvation — from the alienation that accompanied the poet in exile, far from his family and loved ones:

*My God,
My friends told me:
You are in exile!
So I laughed, for I know no homeland but You.
And You are with me in the night and in the dawn,
In war and in peace,
In the tear and in the laugh.
How then can I be in exile?*

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 4, p. 310)

Seeking refuge in the culture of faith and turning to it represents an entrenched thought among Muslims; whenever a person reaches the limit of alienation in the socio-cultural conflict of exile, he finds nothing but refuge in God as his means of salvation from this conflict and what it has led to. In the reality of true existence, however, it is merely an attempt to flee from that pressure and nothing more. The idea of turning to religious belief thus represented an existential vision aiming to protect him from the horizon of Western culture and its new and different social givens. For no textual structure "can be founded in isolation from these two dimensions, as they represent the fundamental truth in fertility and renewal — in order to attract moments of external tension, fathom their internal levels, deepen the efficacy of creativity in re-creating the world, and entrench the vision of the human self in the interaction of its being, its complete integration, and its fusion in the world of the absolute" — through various and diverse means that stir the factors of alienation to the point of rupture with existence and refuge in God, who represents the awareness of the existential experience and the concentrated dramatic presence linked to dramatic dialogue — with its conflict, movement, and emotional impact within the text or event — and the conscious feeling of the idea of alienation and its domination over the origin of thought in exile, despite attempts to flee from it.

Exile has shaped a forced space for the poet's alienation and suffering, making his true existence a heavy burden that no one can shelter him from except God:

*My God,
The only sign that possesses a sun and a moon
Is the one that points to You.
And it is the one that has no existence and no presence
Except in the hearts of those who know:
In the hearts of those whom separation has caused to weep,
And whom exile has shaken.*

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 4, p. 243)

It appears that faith is the true counterpart to the poet's alienation, the greatest existential counterpart to all other existential narratives. Naturally, the spiritual narrative is one of those narratives that secures the true equation between alienation and its absence; the self works to go to the origin of existence as a flight from existence. The divine sign — the true signifier — is what has generated the signifieds of existential security, namely the sun and the moon, and these signifiers are what have oriented the spiritual vision as the sole security. The charged signifiers appear with diverse expressive capacities, inhabiting the hearts of those who know and of the exiles. The exiled person falls into the category of the separation of a thing from its condition, or the expulsion or elimination of a thing, and expression in all its states returns to a subjective experience being lived or of which one is a part; it must add to the formula of its artistic representation new intellectual and emotional structures connected to socio-cultural ties, and must include givens that contain, in their distant depths, possibilities for expressing the various dimensions comprised therein — differing in terms of their relation to the poetic composition — suited to his spatial existence and his psychological state. Exile is a social and cultural space carrying existence and familiarity, or their absence; and most often the past is its essence, inseparable from it, finding no means but to seek refuge from it and from his present existence. He thus moves to deconstruct worldly existence and its dissolution, to return to a reality he wishes to reach and be connected to. It appears that his movement in this direction was dictated by a grand narrative or a strange force — and this movement is a self-motivated movement tied to thought and its socio-cultural givens, which is the origin of thought and the self's distinctiveness; it is the comprehensive thought and the new becoming that imposed upon him this transformation toward reasonableness — which believes in the religious capacity and personal faith to transcend alienation and what it entails. This is a pure cultural thought based on the principle of faith as the nourishment of the soul and its objective correlative against the impact of place in exile, but it is a clear deepening of alienation.

The poet found nothing but religion as an outlet for him to escape his ordeal and his spatial estrangement in a land of estrangement, and so he attempts to confess that existence is permanent alienation:

*All of God's earth is exile.
The homeland is only my small prayer rug!*

(Complete Poetic Works, vol. 6, p. 250)

The text points to the poet's alienation and his belief in this alienation throughout all of existence — not limited to his present exile alone. This is an interpretation grounded in the origin of his lived experience in various and diverse places; he interprets his knowledge of place through the factor of self-acceptance, whatever the geographical expanse, because the view of the geographical expanse here is tied to spiritual dimensions above all else. This explains that the sociological phenomenon must be linked to a specific environment and to a specific pattern among societal patterns that carry individual dimensions as a societal pattern, and that this sociological knowledge must be linked, in one way or another and to a certain degree, to the cultural systems prevailing in the society in question — that is, to the patterns, principles, standards, customs, beliefs, and social symbols that may express an ideology attached to the visions, positionings, stances, and particular judgments of the self and the other regarding the world in specific spatial circumstances — and thereby a social consciousness, or general knowledge, or what is called in the sociology of cultural patterns "common sense" — based on awareness of places and their negative repercussions

in every time when the most basic requirements of social presence have not been met. He finds in fleeing from the earth to the sky a means of refuge from the origin of existence; religion has become a factor in rooting the human being and attempting to fix him in the earth and the sky, representing both an earthly and a heavenly life in the cycle of thought in nature. It is present in the heart and is spontaneously translated into actions and deeds — that is, dead, cold words stored by memory, preserved, and organized by the mind or understanding into a transcendent pattern — causing him to divert his gaze from the earth to the sky, toward the world of the metaphysical; that is, it becomes a factor in the alienation of the human being and his misery, without his realizing it.

CONCLUSIONS

At the conclusion of the research, a number of findings emerged representing the poet's alienation through the efficacy of exile and the impact of the new place upon his estrangement. These may be summarized as follows:

1. Exile, with its socio-cultural variables, constituted a forced alienation, as the poet was unable to keep pace with these variables and new circumstances.
2. The poet lived a conflict between two places: the first representing deprivation and need, and the second representing exile and alienation. Although he suffered from both, exile represented the forced space of the self and its estrangement.
3. The poet attempted to engage with the religious narrative to alleviate his suffering and estrangement — evidence of the impact of alienation, because fleeing to God is a flight from true existence toward the metaphysics of the universe.
4. The poet attempted to deconstruct worldly existence and its dissolution, to return to a reality he wished to reach and be connected to. It appears that his movement in this direction was dictated by a grand narrative or a strange force — a self-motivated movement tied to thought and its socio-cultural givens.

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