

Comparison of Sylvia Plath and Nazik Al Malaika with Special Reference to their Selected Poems in Feminist Perspective

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Abstract: *This paper examines some poems of American English poet Sylvia Plath and Iraqi Arabic poet Nazik Al Malaika: two great female poets of twentieth century in the context of feminism. It explores their social, cultural, and religious diversity and the stunning commonalities between them under the patriarchal forces in their specific context. This study discusses the biographies and compares them to explore the analogies and disparities. The eight poems by each poet from their major poetry collections: "Ariel" by Sylvia Plath and "The night Lover" by Nazik Al Malaika were selected for analysis. First, the each poem was analyzed individually and then the common and different themes, characteristics, and poetic style were deducted and compared. All the comparative and analytical strategies used in any comparative, analytical, and systematic studies are applied here. The study explores the elements of interests in the form of analogy between the biographies of two poets and the selected poems in Arabic from Nazik Al Malaika s 'The night lover ' have been translated into English by the researcher of this study.*

Keywords: Sylvia Plath, Nazik Al Malaika , Twentieth Century Female Poets, Characteristics of modern poetry, Comparison between two poets

1. Introduction

The American English poet Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) and Iraqi Arabic poet (1923- 2007), both are renowned poets of Twentieth century. The focus for comparison lies on the themes, characteristics, and poetic style to the references of the selected poems from the major poetic work "Ariel" and from "The night lover". Eight poems from "Ariel" (1965) by Sylvia Plath and eight from "The night lover" (1947) by Nazik Al Malaika including poems in free verse the researcher selects to analyze under the light of which both poets will be compared in the respect of analogies and disparities in their poetic art. Despite the fact both belong to two different countries and cultures, are relative in the matter of gender.

We analyze various aspects of Sylvia Plath and Nazik Al Malaika's life and poetry in the context of feminist theory. Both the poets, Sylvia Plath and Nazik Al Malaika occupy a prominent position in the field of literature. Both have exercised a perpetual influence upon literature. The first half of the century occupies the poetic voice of Sylvia Plath and Nazik Al Malaika occupies the second half of the century. Most of the critics and scholars evaluate their poetic work and abilities in the perspective of feminism. Nazik Al Malaika and Sylvia Plath opened their eyes in the age when the feminist movement was on the way to flourish. Both the poets seem to be influenced by this movement. Feminism is in fact a movement, which was launched to protect the rights of women worldwide.

Feminism is the voice against women subjugation
To give rights, to eliminate gender discrimination
Feminism is as the ship, sailed from the harbor
That is to take women to their right destination.
(Researcher)

These tendencies are visible in the writings of both Sylvia

Plath and Nazik Al Malaika. They both reveal the male-dominant culture and describe the victimization in many of their poems.

Themes used by Sylvia Plath and Nazik Al Malaika

Plath's poem 'Daddy' is on the theme of women subjugation and presents the patriarchal culture. The poem also

reveals the urge of liberation.
You do not do, you do not do
Any more, black shoe
In which I have lived like a foot
For thirty years, poor and white,
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo

Another famous poem of Plath 'Tulips' contains the theme of nature and body. The human body undergoes surgical state. Plath aptly uses words in her poetry and "words come to her as easily as the chosen tools come to an expert surgeon" (Debata-2013) In Cut the thrill is felt in her body when her thumb is cut off. In "Morning Song" Plath describes the realistic picture of gradual love and alienation of a mother for/towards her child. "Edge" is the poem in which the persona desires heavenly position and desires escape from earthly existence.

Almost all the themes mentioned in Plath's poetry are present in Nazik Al Malaika's poetry. In her poetry, the dominant theme is love and other sub-themes related to love are infidelity, sacrifice, beauty, romance, separation, wait etc. Nature, patriarchy, victimization, and self-exploration are some of the themes exist in the poetry of both poets. In her poem "Childhood memories" the Iraqi poet expresses a woman's imprisonment and her desire to escape from social and cultural convictions.

My seat is still on Rum Hill
Who listens to the songs of my evening

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I am still a child, but I have...
 I have increased my ignorance about my life and myself
 I wish I was still the same heart
 There is nothing in it except age and purity
 Every day I build my life better
 I won't forget when the evening comes
 In the shade of palm trees I build castles
 And palaces built in the sand
 Sorry, life, where is my sand?
 And my shortcomings? How did I lose my shadows?

Characteristics of the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Nazik Al Malaika

Nazik Al Malaika and Sylvia Plath both belong to the modern era of literature. The characteristics of the poetry of the era are wonderful. Confessional poetry, modernity, realism, pessimism, humanitarianism, mysticism, emotionalism, and freedom of thought are some of the characteristics of 20th century poetry. Musicality, lyricism, liberty in thoughts and innovations are also some of the characteristics of the poetry of this era. "Each poet of this era has written according to his own mode and temper, produced poems of merit. Nazik Al Malaika and Sylvia Plath provided to their poetry all those characteristics to which the poetry of other poets is deprived of."

Nazik Al Malaika and Sylvia Plath born in the era that took a turn to carry the label of modernity. This modern turn we found not only in the field of science but also in literature too. Sylvia Plath and Nazik Al Malaika are modern poets and employ new techniques, themes, and style in their poetry. Nazik Al Malaika in her famous poem 'cholera' adopts new theme and style. She writes in free verse without caring for the old poetic convictions. This newness generates liberalism. Modern age does not confine intellectual thinking. Almost every poet of this era finds herself / himself free in choosing the themes and writing independently. Thus, "Nazik Al Malaika's verse", according to Laurent Gayer (2014) "belongs to another social world and literary traditions"

Style in the Poetry of Both Poets

A style is a very vast subject and there are no fix and set rules for writing poetry. Our research concentrates the figurative language group in which, the imagery, symbolism, metaphors, similes, allusions, and personification techniques are used by Sylvia Plath and Nazik Al Malaika particularly to the references of their selected poems and generally to all poetry by each poet.

Nazik Al Malaika is a progressive poet and the progressive steps taken by her are utterly bold. Her voice is bold, her messages and style of reciting and writing is bold. Her poetry is embellished with the use of figurative language. She is rich in delineating metaphors, similes, and personification. In the poetry of both poets, repetition of sounds creates musicality. Plath and Nazik both are modern poets and handle modern poetic techniques. Plath and Nazik are akin in handling the rich imagery in their poetry.

Similarly, not only the themes but also the poetic techniques are modern and free in Plath's poetry. There is

no enforcement upon her about subject matter and style. She writes in free style without confining herself in restrictions of length and rhyme scheme. The critics often quote Nazik Al Malaika's poem "Cholera, written in free verse as an example of her innovated technique.

It is night.
 Listen to the echoing wails
 rising above the silence in the dark
 ...
 the agonized, overflowing grief
 clashing with the wails.
 In every heart there is fire,
 in every silent hut, sorrow,
 and everywhere, a soul crying in the dark.

In the same way, Sylvia Plath for the freedom of thought and speech rejected the old techniques and introduced a new form of poetry, free from rhyme and meter. Her poetry is termed as blank verse poetry even nursery-rhymed. 'Daddy' is her famous poem written in nursery-rhyme-like sound.

You do not do, you do not do
 Any more, black shoe
 In which I have looked like a foot
 For thirty years, poor and white
 Barely daring to breath or Achoo

Plath independently writes without following the previous poetic rules of rhyme and meter. Her poems, Daddy, Lady Lazarus, Edge, Ariel and Tulip are long, while The Rival and Morning Songs have been composed in short length.

To shed light on the style, it is admitted fact that Sylvia Plath and Nazik Al Malaika both do not let anyone to share their peculiar style. They have thematic similarity with other poets but in the matter of style, both are analogous but different from other poets.

2. Conclusion

By analysis and comparing both poets, so many characteristics we deducted. Many aspects of their life and poetry including, poetic themes, style, and characteristics of poetry with modern trends excluded in detail. This paper found; as the world and life without female existence is drab and dull similarly the world of poetry without feminine voice is dull and colorless. For providing color and beauty to poetry, it is necessary to provide more and more opportunities to women poets to produce more and more beautiful verse. The patriarchal forces should develop an unbiased attitude towards women's intellectual creativity. In the form of findings this research offers many discoveries such as the importance of poetry, Plath and Nazik

Al Malaika as the great poet of 20th century, the method of comparison, a wide range of themes and poetic characteristics and innovative poetic style adopted by both poets.

Briefly, by their common poetic voice both the poets denounce all the illegal and inhuman patriarchal conventions that tend to alleviate the intellectual

cultivation of female writers and particularly of women poets. Being modern poets of 20th century both of them proved themselves as the legendary poets by their artistic talent and created a beautiful poetry out of frustration, sufferings, and pain by pushing male dominance back. By their common endeavors, Plath and Nazik Al Malaika constructed the edifice of poetry in its perfection.

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