The Trauma of Partition in Michael Longley's Poetry of the Irish Troubles and Murīd al-Barghūthī's Palestinian Exilic Poetry

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Abstract:

Violence, migration, and displacement shape postcolonial societies; they help in dividing colonised countries into geographical partitions. The political and communal aspects of the partition have individual and collective influences, particularly when it comes to the splitting of both Ireland and Palestine. The colonial partitions in Ireland in the wake of World War I and Palestine at the end of World War II offer an extensive study of the social and cultural heritage of state divisions, where the trauma of partition constitutes political events until today. This paper concentrates on the political and cultural legacies of partition in Ireland and Palestine in the poetry of both the Irish and Palestinian poets, Michael Longley and Murīd al-Barghūthī. Both poets specify the issue of the partition to their countries, yet their poetry works on a wider level that spreads to all nations. Partition becomes a universal crisis, not just for Irish people or Palestinians. Their poetry also involves national voices and entails cultural struggles. While al-Barghūthī refuses the partition of Palestine and sees it as a kind of colonisation, Longley sees that the conflict in Ireland is not explained as a story of partition, but rather a problem of sectarianism and communal border. He tries to find ways of reconciliation and acceptance of this problematic issue. Partition reflects a problematic solution to a complex problem that had existed for a long time between the Anglo-Irish minority and Catholic

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majority in Ireland, and Muslim Palestinians and Jewish Israelis in the occupied Palestine. This paper will illustrate how the nature of the colonial and postcolonial states form the construction of those minorities and majorities and the relationship between culture and the state. This paper also examines the impact of partition on poetry and analyses poetic representations of and responses to the Irish troubles in Longley's poetry and the creation of Israel in the Middle East in al-Barghūthī's exilic poetry.

الملخص العربى

يشكل العنف والهجرة والنزوح مجتمعات ما بعد الاستعمار و يساعدوا في تقسيم البلدان المستعمرة إلى أقسام جغرافية. والجوانب السياسية والمجتمعية للتقسيم لهم تأثيرات فردية وجماعية ، لا سيما عندما يتعلق الأمر بتقسيم أيرلندا وفلسطين. فتقدم التقسيمات الاستعمارية في أيرلندا في أعقاب الحرب العالمية الأولى وفلسطين في نهاية الحرب العالمية الثانية دراسة مستفيضة للتراث الاجتماعي والثقافي لانقسامات الدولة ، حيث تشكل صدمة التقسيم أحداثًا سياسية كبيره حتى اليوم. وتركز هذه الورقة على الموروثات السياسية والثقافية للتقسيم في أيرلندا وفلسطين في شعر كل من الشعراء الأيرلندي والفلسطيني مايكل لونجلي ومراد البرغوثي. وكلا الشاعرين يناقشان مسألة التقسيم لبلديهما ، والتي تعمل على مستوى أوسع فيمتد إلى جميع الأمم. ومن ثم يصبح التقسيم أزمة عالمية ، ليس فقط للشعب الأيرلندي أو للفلسطينيين. يشمل شعرهم أيضًا أصواتًا وطنية وينطوي على صراعات ثقافية. بينما يرفض البرغوثي تقسيم فلسطين ويرى أنه نوع من الاستعمار ، يرى لونجلي أن الصراع في أيرلندا لا يفسر على أنه قصة تقسيم ، بل مشكلة طائفية وحدود مجتمعية. يعكس التقسيم حلاً صعبًا وإشكاليًا لمشكلة معقدة كانت موجودة لفترة طويلة بين الأقلية الأنجلو-إيرلندية والأغلبية الكاثوليكية والفلسطينيين المسلمين واليهود الإسرائيليين.

Introduction:

The topic of the trauma of partition raises many questions, such as what are the circumstances that result in a partition collapse or remain permanent? Why does a division become either a matter of dispute or a kind of agreement? Nation-state building takes years of forming not only a political basis, but also educational and literary standards, and involves cultural struggle because each society has its own political, religious, and social background. Nation-building also provides an understanding of the nature of the society, its limits and abilities. Cultural and literary texts introduce history, memories, and trauma of partition. These narratives can also assent or oppose the process of partition. This division involves universal massacre and rape, exodus of terrorised populations across borders of their states, creation of minorities and majorities, ethnic cleansing, refugees, and homogeneous national states.

Partition or Occupation:

The colonial partition shows extensive social and cultural legacies of state division, where the trauma of partition continues to shape political events to this day. Dominick LaCapra describes the founding trauma as "the trauma that paradoxically becomes the basis for collective and/or personal identity" (p.724). Individuals and members of society become influenced by the impact of partition. Joe Cleary says that "Partitions are most likely to occur where – as a consequence of colonial rule or of total military collapse in times of war – societies have lost control over their own political destinies and are vulnerable to the wills of external superpowers" (p.3). Partitions did not happen during the imperial period itself, but rather during historical upheavals. The major imperial power became weakened after the world wars. Ireland was divided after WWI and Palestine and India after WWII. The partition of Ireland and Palestine is due to the fact that these territories were under colonisation before division (Schaeffer, p.5). Minority communities- Protestant Unionists in

Ireland and Zionist Jews in Palestine- were afraid that major anti-colonial communities would endanger their identities and interests.

In 1989, Northern Ireland was starting the third decade of a long-running war, the sources of which lay in a partition settlement established in the 1920s, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the subsequent reunification of Germany, which provoked a whole series of questions about nation and state formation, state division and the significance of partition. Nation and state-building processes are never just political events in the narrow sense; they also entail the construction of national education systems and national literature. They always involve cultural struggles to define how national societies understand themselves and their place in the wider world system. The Irish experience of partition has similarities and differences with other partitioned countries like Palestine, Cyprus, and India (Cleary, p.vii). The Unionists in Northern Ireland and Zionists in Palestine were influenced by the British imperial ideology. These minority groups opposed the majority of the Republic Irish people and the Arab Palestinians. At the beginning, the Zionists tried to persuade the Ottomans and then the British leaders that they would serve the interests of Britain if they settled in Palestine. The unionists did the same in the North. Both Irish people and Palestinians have a sense of diaspora which is associated with historical traumas– the Great Irish Famine in the 1840s, the Jewish Holocaust during World War II, and the Palestinian *nakbh* (catastrophe) in 1948 (Anderson, p.56). The close social and political relationships between the Ulster Unionist leadership and the pro-imperialist wings in both the British Conservative and Liberal parties secured Unionism invaluable political support in the British government (Patke, 23). The Declaration in 1917 promised that the Jews would have a national home in Palestine (Fraser, p.15). Both Ireland and Palestine are colonies of settlements; they are controlled by a long history of British Imperial hegemony. The Irish Protestants or the Zionists refused to share their state with the Irish Catholic or the Palestinian Arab majority. The British hoped that Palestine would accept the partition the way India and Pakistan did. Zionists also decolonised the land and

displaced the Palestinians by building Jewish settlements. All subsequent generations will carry the traumatic burden and consequences of the partition. In Palestine, the relationship is not between a native majority and immigrant minority, but rather a struggle between a coloniser and a colonised.

In Ireland, the partition of 1922 did not end peacefully for those who were free from the British control. Partition represents a problematic solution to a controversial issue that had been held for a long time between an Anglo-Irish minority and a Catholic majority. It also represented the end of the Union of Ireland with Britain in 1801. The international partitions would lead to more conflicts, violence, and massacres. The differences between ethnic and religious factions have led to that division. Anna Bernard, in her description of a university course on partitions, notes:

> The partitions of India, Palestine, and Ireland are linked by the fact that each of them was intended to prepare the former British colonies for self-rule in the postcolonial period by separating their religious minorities (Muslim, Jewish, or Protestant) from the religious majority (*The Idea of Partition*, p.20).

The persecution of Jews in Europe and their migration to Palestine and faith that it is the promised land have led to the creation of Israel after WWI. Then the fierce war of 1948 took place. Edward Said noted in 1996: "Palestine/Israel is no ordinary bit of geography: […] the place where two peoples, whether they like it or not, live inextricably linked lives, tied together by history, war, daily contact and suffering" (*The Selected Works of Edward Said,* pp.163–64).Two different peoples live on the same land with different religions and histories. The Jews's occupation of the land resulted in the

displacement of the Palestinian people and the expansion of the Jewish territories at the expense of the Palestine lands.

The situation is different in Ireland. Longley sees the problem as that of a story of state border, not of partition, and a "new phase of relationship" (Edwards, p.204) between Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland. Joe Cleary notes, "The conflict in the North is generally not conceived as a story of state borders (of partition) at all, but as one of sectarianism and communal borders" (Cleary, p.108). Rajeev Patke says, "The creation of nations through partitions has led to lasting forms of disruption and violence; these nations desperately need what is endlessly deferred: a lasting solution" (Patke, p.21). This approach leads to order, peace, and freedom of speech, politics, and religion. Longley's poetry seeks reconciliation with the self and the other. The Irish situation differs in kind and degree from the Palestinian-Israeli situation. This is due to many reasons; for example, the long history of the Anglo-Irish settlements and colonisation in Ireland. Irish people become familiar with the imperial impact of Britain in terms of geography, ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic influence rather than the Palestinian people in the Middle East. The geographical and political division of the island into north and south (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) led to ethnic, religious, and cultural differences. The troubles of Northern Ireland started in the late 1960s and ended with the Belfast Agreement in 1998. The conflict happened mainly in Northern Ireland, but violence spread to other parts. The troubles were political, national and historical, with ethnic and sectarian dimensions. The main conflict was between unionists/ loyalists (mostly Protestants), and Irish nationalists/ Republicans (mostly Catholics). While the first considered themselves British and wanted to belong to the United Kingdom, the second were Irish and wanted to join a united Ireland.

Longley's Experience of Irish Troubles:

Michael Longley's poetry, emerging from deeply rooted conflicts, addresses the legacy of human rights violations during the

years of Irish troubles (1967-1998). Patak and Norman Vance believe that Northern poets have marginalised the politics of partition through evasion and alienation, avoiding to negotiate the history of its time (Vance, p.3). Nevertheless, Longley does not follow this oblique strategy, but rather focuses on violence, seeking a new perspective of the problematic situation. He introduces different forms of violence in contemporary Ireland– familial, religious, geographical, political, and environmental– and ways of reconciliation within the self, Irish society and nature. The concept of violence reflects corruption, sectarianism, misrepresentations, and discriminations in politics, society and nature. In "Wounds" (*An Exploded View,* p.16), Longley describes the Ulster Protestants's feelings and behaviour during the Battle of the Somme in the First World War. The poem sheds light on victims of political and domestic violence in the late 1960s and 1970s. The poet says, "Here are two pictures from my father's head—/ I have kept them like secrets until now:/ First, the Ulster Division at the Somme" (ll.1-2). Readers listen to protestors' screaming voices,

> '… the Pope!'
> 'No Surrender!': a boy about to die,
> …'Give 'em one for the Shankill!' (ll.3-5).

Then the father cries out enthusiastically, "'Wilder than Gurkhas'" (l.6). These words and phrases are in the dialect of the Ulster men of Northern Ireland. Shankill is a suburb of Dublin; the word means "old church". These voices and cries give readers a real picture of the turmoil. They also reflect oppression and violence within the contemporary Irish society. The Poem, "Wounds," is a public response to the Irish troubles. The title itself reflects agony and pain of the Irish people. Longley presents a public voice and a reaction to the atrocities of the 1970s. The combination of his simple poetic rhythm and diction with various layers of images sheds light on horrors of politics. The poem reflects physical, social, psychological, and historical wounds. For ordinary people, the poem ends with the image,

"I am dying for King and Country, slowly" (l.16) reflects a patriotic claim. Yet the repeated "k" sound in "King and Country" (l.16) suggests a painful irony concerning the Irish people's sacrifice. In a letter of 23 Nov. 1973, Brendan Kennelly wrote to Longley that this poem stood as a universal image of war and its consequences.

> "Wounds" [...] is a stunningly good piece of work, the best poem I know written about the troubles in Belfast…Wounds knows no frontiers and its pity is unconfined (p.134).

The poem is an example of demonstrating the horror and consequences of war, works as a reminder of Irish history and war, and connects the past with the present. Through narration and storytelling techniques, Longley captures the spirit of the troubles, and registers horrible details of war, violence, and reconciliation in his poetry. He believes that poetry must reflect reality.

Al-Barghūthī's Traumatic Experience of Exile and Occupation:

Al-Barghūthī (1944-2021) depicts the traumatic experience of occupation, not partition. While Longley chooses to stay in Northern Ireland of his free will, al-Barghūthī is exposed to exile and dislocation. Yet both poets see war and occupation as nihilism and alienation. This concept of alienation occupies an essential role in al-Barghūthī's poetry, and works as an approach to transformation and raising awareness of Palestinians' rights. This kind of exile is seen in the poetry of poets who abandoned their homelands and homes and moved to an unfamiliar land, living as strangers and suffering the pain of separation and nostalgia for their homeland. According to Said, "Exile is irremediably secular and unbearably historical… It has torn millions of people from the nourishment of tradition, family, and geography." (p. 174). Exile or alienation is ultimately part of the mental-emotional experience of the whole nation. Alienation or exile poetry plays an active role in confronting dangers and challenges, and represents opposition and rejection of all forms of domination. Spatial exile reflects the feeling of a person when he is far from his homeland. Richard van Leeuwen

analyses Murīd al-Barghūthī's autobiography *I Saw Ramallah* (2003), claiming that this is "The relationship to a place, which had defined his relationship to reality, is transformed from a real, material point in space, to an imaginary space, existing only in memories, fantasies, and stories" (p.201). Being in exile is an individual choice for the Irish people, who are involved voluntarily in self-exilic status while Palestinian people generate a kind of forced exilic life (Gevlin 156). Palestinian poets, like al-Barghūthī, write exilic poetry that depicts their homeland from the place of exile and becomes a weapon in the battle for freedom and independence (Gohar, p.232). When Israel occupied the remaining land of Palestine during the six-day War in 1967, al-Barghūthī was not allowed to return to his homeland because he was in senior year at Cairo university. He says, "Every Palestinian who was outside his village or place, for tourism, for education, for medication, for any reason, was considered as Not- Palestinian" (al-Barghūthī, *Midnight* 11). The poet was deprived of his home, and the motif of exile was dominant in his poetry. He writes resistance and/or exile poetry, releasing feelings and thoughts out of the chaos. Barghūthī's poetry describes the situation after the *nakbh,* the catastrophe of 1948, when the majority of Palestinians were displaced from homes and land, and ancestral lands were erased. In "Desire" (*Complete Poems* ١٦٤), there are various degrees of exile:

> His leather belt
>
> hangs on the wall,
>
> the pair of shoes he left behind has turned brittle,
>
> his white summer shirts
>
> still sleep on their shelf,
>
> his scattered papers
>
> tell her that he will be gone a long time
>
> but she is there still waiting
>
> and his leather belt
>
> is still hanging there
>
> and each time the day ends
>
> she reaches out to touch a naked waist

and leans back against the wall (*CP* 164)

The visual imagery of the hanging leather belt on the wall and the dryish shoes reflect the man's physical exile. The image in "scattered papers" (164) echoes the woman's devastating psychology. The poet compares exile to constant departure. The state of dislocation is manifested by the adjective in "a naked waist" (164). The dramatic element of the story spreads frustration and grief. In "The Porter" (*CP* 188), the heavy burden of leaving a person's homeland makes him like a porter. The speaker says,

> The exiled person said:
> My yearnings are for you
> The jewels of my memory
> I carry like a porter
> And walk
> On the world's roads (*CP* 188)

The speaker deprives himself of everything except "the jewels of my memory" (188) which he feels. The metonymy in "On the world's roads" (188) symbolises the speaker's sense of diaspora. The image of the porter conveys the internal pain of the speaker. Al-Barghūthī describes the journey of exile and separation by the use of words and expressions like "stranger," "hammers of time," "strait," "searing wind," "riotous shouting," and "vanish from sight" in his poem "Places of Exile" (*CP* 725).

> The caravan of day passes on without waiting for the stranger
> The hammers of distant time appear to me across the strait
> And the searing wind laden with dust

>Riotous shouting: There is no escape
>
>And the caravan of day vanishes from sight (*CP* 725)

In a conversation with Tahrir Hamdy, Al-Barghūthī says, "The importance of the brave intellectual minority in every society cannot be underestimated" (p.1). He sees that even if the Palestinians are minorities and cololnised, they still have powerful voices to resist their colonisers.

The Poets' Idiosyncratic Forms of Poetry:

Al-Barghūthī poetry is an act of protest, and comes from anger and despair, seeking eventual justice. His volume *Midnight and Other Poems* (2008) consists of short related poems, and represents a rich montage of images of his homeland, and presents a trial to preserve a threatened Palestinian identity (Mir, p.321). With the density of the poems, both Longley and al-Barghūthī use everyday language and simple vocabulary, paying attention to the small things and events. Al-Barghūthī says, "I write in concrete, physical language. He writes about Palestinian life that appears in in every detail, such as the coffee people, the minute olives and their appearance, smell, and colors. These details have cultural, socio-economic, and medicinal significance. He says, "I choose physical language, concrete language, no hallucinations, no hyperboles" (*Arab Studies Quarterly,* p.660). Al-Barghūthī defamiliarises the objects, language, and poetry.

>You should defamiliarise it first. And through your own coinage of new words, you can make, you can create surprise out of the normal… This is estrangement and poetry in itself is an estrangement from the normal talk. A novel is estrangement; a dialogue in the novel is estrangement from the dialogue in life (p.664).

While Longley writes individual poems with specific titles, al-Barghūthī writes small epics in a whole book-sized poem, such as "Midnight and Other Poems." While the traditional epic represents a lengthy narrative poem about extraordinary events of heroic characters, al-Barghūthī's epics are epigrams, consisting of two, three, or four lines. These epics arouse strong emotional responses like anger, frustration, and despair that reflect the state of occupation, violence, and oppression in Palestine. The shorter poems in the second half of the book are dramatic, contemplative, and reflective, presenting a powerful and visual imagery of the poet's homeland. Al-Barghūthī also writes about the atrocities of war and occupation, but unlike Longley, he writes from an exilic perspective.

> The scene is choked with smoke.
> Bodies coloured with fiery red,
> sudden stains upon the windows of the ambulance…
>
> War itself,
> leaning on its cane,
> strolls occasionally
> down the corridor of peace (*Midnight and Other Poems* p.22)

The poem envisions a shared Palestinian experience; it incorporates the circumstances of 1948 *Nakbh* and the establishment of Israel. More than 750,000 Palestinians became homeless. In "Servants of War, and Their Language" (2003), al-Barghūthī says,

> It interferes in every aspect of life and death; it interferes with longing and anger and desire and walking in the street. It interferes with going anywhere and coming back, with going to the market, the emergency hospital, the school, the beach, the bedroom, or a distant capital (p.47).

War has a great influence on every aspect of life. Hospitals, schools, markets, and homes were destroyed. All people feel the same pains and fears.

Besides, Al-Barghūthī's visual and olfactory images reposition the Palestinian exile alongside other distinctive worldwide voices within memory studies. Al-Barghūthī speaks about the consequences of the Israeli prolonged occupation, which prevents Palestinians from managing their affairs in your own way. He condemns killing and destruction in

> without thinking
> without mercy,
> without doubt,
> they will resume the killing!
> Why do bullets abound
> In sleazy clothes? (*Midnight* 29)

The imagery of the shape and sound of bullets are horrifying. This devastating situation is illustrated by the use of a question and exclamation mark. The situation is unbearable either the speaker roars or kept silent, "The roaring troubles me,/silence troubles me./This silence does not bring good tidings" (126). The object pronoun, "me" shows the speaker's subservient position. Then the poet adds,

> It is a scorpion near the pillow
> Does not dodge. Does not explain.
> Confident of the nobility of its profession
> Ignore our hearts, but it pursues us
> It expresses its opinion about us
> It splits us by its blows

> And formulates the distribution of justice among us.
>
> Its eyes are free from the disease of insight (*Midnight* 38)

The personified scorpion controls people's present and future. It stings all human plans, melodies, laughter, and hearts. For al-Barghouti, he does not represent poetry of a unified shared identity, but diverse and complex poems due to the historical events that Palestinians' experiences of exile of 1948 and the continuing occupation after 1967. This is illustrated by the short negative phrases, "Does not dodge. Does not explain" (38). The poet does not mention Israel as the cause of exile, but rather he uses the metaphor of the "Scorpion Enemy" to describe it. The imagery in "It splits us by its blows" (38) asserts the idea of partition. The irony is obvious in "And formulates the distribution of justice among us" (38). Al-Barghūthī was exiled because of his views, writings, and speeches against the occupation of Israel. Edward Said sheds light on the experience of exile as a partition between "a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (*Reflections on Exile*, p.173). The exiled writer writes stories and poems about the miserable feeling of loneliness away from his people and land. He seeks to recall and recover the distorted history and geography of his homeland. Al-Barghūthī writes exile poetry to assert his belonging to his homeland, Palestine, Palestinian people, and their heritage. As for Longley, he has chosen to stay behind and proved the most resilient, even if staying behind has been no easy matter. His "Letter to Derek Mahon" alludes to a sense of isolation shared by many:

> We were tongue-tied
> Companions of the island's dead
> In the graveyard among the dunes,
> Eavesdroppers on conversations

> With a Jesus who spoke Irish –
> We were strangers in that parish…
> (*Selected Poems* 32)

The sense of seclusion and solitude is supported by the use of consonance of 't' sound in "tongue-tied" (32) and 'd' sound in "island's dead" (32). Longley does not have the feeling of being exiled or displaced. The Unlike Seamus Heaney and W. B. Yeats, it was his own choice to stay in Ireland. He sees that exile degrades people and denies their identities. Nevertheless, he writes about the agonies and hardships he faces inside. In Al-Barghūthī's *Midnight and Other Poems*, the poet seeks refuge from God.

> Lord, if you do not listen to me,
> my shadow on earth will be effaced…
> I no longer possess a name
> to be called or designated by;
> my glass has been filled with poison,
> and I have been reduced to a mere trace in my grave,
> accustomed to perils.
> (*Midnight* 31-32)

The poet's lack of identity threatens his existence, "I no longer possess a name" (p.32); his shadow will be erased. The visual imagery in "I have been reduced to a mere trace in my grave, accustomed to perils" (p.32) reflects the dangers of displacement, killing, and occupation that the poet encounters. The metonymy in "my glass has been filled with poison" (32) suggests the coloniser's violent occupation that demolishes the speaker's psyche.

> But you,/with your wrist tied to a curse,/you are forced to follow up

> what the swine of history/has done to your day,
>
> as though you had a sun of your own,/a sun that will not give you light
>
> unless you kick it with your foot/or whip it with a lash!
>
> From your cold stove,/you take a piece of coal/and, with a firm hand,
>
> you write upon the wall:/I must have a day that calls me by my name.
>
> I must have a home that is not this page. (*Midnight* 36-37)

Al-Barghūthī describes exile as a restriction that ties his body and soul. This is illustrated by the verbs, "tied" and "forced" (36). The metonymy in "you had a sun of your own" reflects the power of the exiled or the colonised. He gives hope that he will return back, "I must have a day that calls me by my name," He will have an authentic name and develop his identity.

The Memory of the Past:

Both Longley and al-Barghūthī see the present through the lens of the past as a witness of the era, and try to overcome the difficulties of the present. Longley resorts to classical, historical, mythical references, and allusions in order to shed light on the twentieth-century history of Ireland. In "The Butchers" (*CP* 194), the poet introduces the historical story of Homer, the purging of the suitors at the end of *The Odyssey* along with the later retrieval by Hermes of their souls. The poem refers to the Protestant murder gang the Shankill Butchers in the mid-1970s (Goodby, 2000). They stabbed nineteen Catholic men, then dismembered them. The poem is written in free verse as one unit, with no stanzas. It is like a shot, describing the slaughter of Catholics in Northern Ireland. The household women are hanged, "So none touched the ground with her toes" (l. 11) with

"Their heads bobbing in a row, their feet twitching but not for long" (l.12). Melanthios's body is damaged; his "nose and ears and cock and balls" (l.14) are cut off to make a "dog's dinner" (l.14). As Peter McDonald writes,

> If Homer acts as a way to approach the most painful, private, and tender things elsewhere in the volume, here at the book's conclusion [Homer] is a means of b ringing into focus the most appalling things, without commentary or overt interpretation (P.43).

Odysseus cleanses the house from both the suitors's bodies and their vulgar desires toward Penelope. He sees the need for "whitewash and disinfectant" (l.15). By the end of the poem, Longley finds home in Irish landscape. Hermes, the "deliverer" (l.23), leads the souls of the murdered suitors and housemaids through the Irish lands, "Along the clammy sheughs" (l.24). He passes the oceanic streams until finally coming to "a bog-meadow full of bog-asphodels" (l.26). The Irish home and nature give Odysseus and the new Irish generation a sense of identity and peace. The objective correlative between the Irish bog and the Elysian flowers brings hope and tranquility to the critical circumstances.

In Longley's poetry, politics, mythology, and poetry work effectively. The past has a great influence of the present. In "Ceasefire" (*The Ghost Orchid*, p.225), Longley mourns the Greek warrior Achilles and the Trojan king Priam in the midst of the Trojan War alongside the contemporary 1994 IRA ceasefire in Northern Ireland.

> When I was writing it, it was at the time w hen there were humours of an IRA ceasefire, and I wrote it partly because I do have some sense of

the magic of poetry in the world-hoping that it would make some tiny, tiny, miniscule, unimportant contribution to the drift towards a ceasefire. And I sent it to *The Irish Times* and hoped that they would print it, in the hope that if they did print it somebody might read it and it might change the mind of one ditherer on the IRA Council. And by coincidence the IRA did declare a ceasefire-I think it was a Thursday, and then on the Saturday the poem appeared, which was a coincidence. The coincidence struck people. (*Metre* p.23)

"Ceasefire" has been published just two days before the IRA's declaration of a ceasefire. Longley always asserts the role of a poet and the importance of poetry in expressing the inner voice of people and the outer one of society. The poem also captures a scene from Homer's *The Iliad*, where the old king Priam begs the great warrior Achilles for Hector's body. This sonnet is written in three quatrains and a couplet. This form gives Longley the freedom to translate the instant and emotional scene between Achilles and Priam.

get down on my knees and do what must be done

And kiss Achilles' hand, the killer of my son" (13-4)

The couplet consists of two rhyming and run-on lines. The verb "make sure" in "make sure it was washed and, for the old king's sake, / Laid out in uniform" (l.6) conveys the intended unity between the two sides. The dead body is put in a glamorous uniform in order to be prepared for a great funeral as was the customs of the Greek warriors. Upon Priam's request, Hector's body is "wrapped like a present home to Troy at daybreak" (l.8). The word "daybreak" shows a new beginning between two of the most hateful opposites. The phrase "what must be done" (l.13) asserts the necessity of compromise and agreement. The reason for writing this poem is to warn Irish people of

the consequences of war and to give them hope for their future. This story sheds light on conflicting characters, parties, sects, and armies within contemporary Northern Ireland. By remembering the traumas of the war in the past, Longley admits that there is a chance of reconciliation.

Memory has an important role in Longley's poetry; it brings all the horrors of the past into the present. In "Wounds," the first part concludes the father's words.

> At last, a belated casualty,
>
> He said— lead traces flaring till they hurt —
>
> 'I am dying for King and Country, slowly.'
>
> I touched his hand, his thin head I touched" (*An Exploded View* 62, 14-7).

This memory belongs to Longley's father. He, as an English outsider, looks at these events with some "bewilderment" (l.81). The use of flexible blank verse facilitates this conversational speech. The 'k' sounds in "Shankill," "Gurkhas," "kilts," "stick," "buttocks" may suggest the sound of bullets, and those in "King and Country" (l.10) express the father's patriotism. The image "Wilder than Gurkhas" (l.6) suggests the violent and determined behaviour of the protesters. The Gurkhs are a dominant race from Nepal that is known for fighting skills. The image of his father as a "belated casualty" (l.9) sheds light on his war injuries. In the second stanza, the crucial slaying of "[t]hree teenage soldiers" (l.22), whose bellies are "full of bullets and Irish beer, their flies undone" (l.22), reflects the undignified situation they faced. In an ironic voice, the speaker narrates randomly the killing of a bus conductor who is shot through the head.

> By a shivering boy who wandered in
>
> Before they could turn the television down
>
> Or tidy away the supper dishes.
>
> To the children, to a bewildered wife,
>
> I think 'Sorry Missus' was what he said. (30-4)

The harshness of killing and the fake polite apology, "Sorry Missus" (l.34), reflect the hypocrisy of the society and the fatality of the ideal concept of war. The reference to dirty supper dishes and the television shows the domestic atmosphere which is destroyed by the brutality of massacres.

Al-Barghūthī also resorts to memories to depict the atrocities of war crimes and occupation. It is a way to record history. In a conversation with Tahrir Hamdy, the poet says, "And I think we are awakeners for people. We, scholars, should understand, examine, evaluate, and respond to controversial political and social issues. We are witnesses of the history. And we should be aware of what happened and is happening around us" (p.1). Many poems give a plural and imaginary vision of Palestinian history out of memory regarding exile whereby al-Barghūthī examines the options available to him and to his people. *Midnight and Other Poems* expresses unwanted memories, truths, and experiences of the past. The volume becomes a means to resist the continuation of colonisation and occupation**.**

> There must be some other way!
> There must be some other captain!
> There must be a tougher sail!
> There must be ships that don't sink twice!
> There must be a way to live first and die second!
> (*Midnight* ٢٨)

The use of paralleled lines with exclamation marks redefines the awful memory with hope. The poet remembers his grandfather when he was only four years. This memory works as a witness to the destruction of the old house of the family and the displacement of all Palestinians. The imagery sheds light on the historical defeats of 1948 and 1967.

> Can oranges kill you?/Boy, what a disgrace!

He said to me, as if he had said to me:/Boy! you will learn how to love a woman

and, like Abdel Wahab, you will write poetry./Who's Abdel Wahab, Grandpa?

Why, he's the village madman,/he did nothing but write poetry

and poetry is all he left./He said to me, as if he had said to me:

I'll always worry about you…

I rubbed the leaf of the orange in my hands,/as I had been told to do,

So that I could smell its scent/but before my hand could reach my nose

I had lost my home and become a refugee! (*Midnight* 70-72)

Out of memory, al-Barghūthī forms aesthetic creativity and cultural background. He remembers the past, not lamenting or ignoring its incompetence and flaws. Through collective memory, the poet recalls the Palestinians' historical consciousness. Al-Barghūthī also refers to W.B.Yeats's "The Second Coming" in "the falcon cannot hear the falconer"/and "the centre cannot hold" (٣٠). The imagery reminds readers of the Irish resistance to the 700 years of English occupation. The figure of Christ, trying to be reborn, conveys cruelty and a lack of humane ethics and spirit. His po.etry counteracts the abuses of the Zionists against Palestinians (Harker, p.320). The painful visual image of the smashing bulldozer suggests the suppression and humiliation imposed on Palestinians.

My grandfather's cloak gets hooked/on the bulldozer's teeth…

The bulldozer retreats a few meters,/empties its load,

> Comes back to fill its huge shovel,/and never has its fill.
>
> Twenty times, the bulldozer/comes and goes,
>
> My grandfather's cloak still hooked on it. (*Midnight* 86)

The image of the grandfather's worn-out cloak resembles the Palestinian's historical existence. The visual imagery of the slow movement of the bulldozer is threatening to the Palestinian people. Verbs like "hooked," "retreats," and "empties" depict the process of the Israeli destruction of the Palestinian homes in the face of laws and history. In the article "Spacing Palestine through the Home" (2009), Christopher Harker says that the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories has informed the destruction of 4,353 Palestinian homes by the Israelis from 1987 to 2004. They destroyed Palestinian homes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories because of claimed military purposes or being built without Israeli permission (Harker, p.323). Memory protects the exiled person's self from becoming obliterated in his new exiled place.

Homeland and Spatial poetry:

While partition does not imply the demolish of houses and lands of the minorities or natives, occupation imposes destruction of any national, cultural, or even social marks or buildings of the natives in order to conceal any proof of the truth. Both Longley and al-Barghūthī are interested in spatial poetry which is concerned with places and natural lands. The poets focus on the landscape with reference to place and time as important aspects in their poetry, community, and culture. On the one hand, Barghūthī's poetry describes the situation after the *nakbh,* the catastrophe of 1948, when the majority of Palestinians were displaced from homes and land, and ancestral lands were erased. On the other hand, Longley tries to find a home in the natural environment (Donna, p.75). Natural and historical landscapes play an important role in forming the identity of Irish people in Northern

Ireland. The poet tries to unite north and south, and come to a kind of reconciliation. He cares much about nature and culture as in many poems, such as "On Slieve Gullio," "The Hebrides," "Landscape," and "The Waterfall." The first is about Co. Armagh which is one of six counties that form Northern Ireland. It is near the border with the Republic, and represents nature in its power and innocent and deformed form. There is a barrier/border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. The former has undergone historical and social changes more than the political ones of the second. In "The Hebrides" (*NCC* 32), the poet searches for authenticity and identity, and expresses a confrontation with the implications of the past and history.

Above the waves, The Hebrides -

Too long did I postpone

Presbyterian granite and the lack of trees,

This orphaned stone,

Day in, day out colliding with the sea.

Weather forecast,

Compass nor ordinance survey

Arranges my welcome

For, on my own, I have lost my way at last,

So far from home (3-11).

The poem with its images of Presbyterian granite and "the lack of trees" (l.11) describes the bleak north Antrim coast. The image of "orphaned stone" (l.12) suggests an unstable, distorted identity. The lines "I have lost my way at last,/ So far from home" (ll.17-8) reflect the speaker's sense of emptiness and loss. The phrase, "colliding with the sea" (l.13) reflects an irrational and insecure situation between Catholics and Protestants. Northern Protestants did not follow a Presbyterian ideology or the principles of the Northern state. They were not also socially or religiously accepted by the standard Irish

Catholic culture. In another poem, "Letters" (*Gorse Fires* 77). He says,

> Now that the distant islands rise
> Out of the corners of my eyes
> And the imagination fills
> Bog-meadow and surrounding hills,
> I find myself addressing you
> (19-24)

He avoids the conflict between British and Irish identities by accepting the other. He says, "Coming from Belfast, I felt Irish sometimes and I sometimes felt British" (*The Irish Review* 156). The hybridity of having two identities allows for a new way of thinking and accepting the other. The poet argues that both British and Irish cultures are mutually dependent on constructing a shared hybrid identity. He sees hybridity as a powerful tool for liberation from the domination imposed by restricted conventions of race and language. The poet accepts such hybridity because he cannot avoid the contradictory political situation in contemporary Ireland. Hybridity becomes a way to deconstruct the borders between coloniser and colonised. The search for identity is the first step in the process of reconciliation. He emphasises the idea that each person must find his way in life. In 1998, the Belfast Agreement (or Good Friday) was agreed by all political parties in Northern Ireland and the British and Irish governments. There was a need to end the political violence in Northern Ireland. The publication of Longley's "Ceasefire" in the *Irish Times* (1994) brought poetry and peace together after the announcement of a Peace Treaty between the British and the Irish Republic Army (IRA). Homer's warriors are presented in a courtly scene. King Priam asks for the body of his dead son Hector from Achilles. They look at each other's beauty "as lovers might" (*Selected Poems* 118).

As a consequence of the partition, Longley searches for identity in the natural landscape of Ireland in his poem "Letters" (*Gorse Fires* 77).

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> Out of the corners of my eyes
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Unlike Longley, al-Barghūthī refuses reconciliation or even negotiation with the coloniser in his poetry. In 1922, The League of Nations legitimised the British Mandate of Palestine (Walid, 41). The Mandate government supported the Jewish migration and settlements in Palestine, it oppressed and disarmed the majority of indigenous people. al-Barghūthī refuses Arab nationalism that was practiced by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and by Arab and Western leaders. The poet was detached from Palestinian Authority and Popular Liberation Organisation and Arab regimes because they accepted OSLO agreement and the normalisation with Israel, "He has chosen and you have chosen./He will not say what you want him to say" (23). He rejects the reaction of Arab governments toward the Palestine issue

and their cooperation with efforts of Western peace that exclude protesters.

> What can you do?/Face a consensus that you try hard to avoid
>
> and majorities that exclude you?/Can you oppose the muscles of this world
>
> with an army of metaphors?/Can you with the eloquence of porcelain,
>
> plead against their discourse of iron? (*Midnight* 16)

Al-Barghouti also rejects the Western progressive model that seeks unviable modernity. He says,

> Why then does the respected gentleman/from Westminster say
>
> that I made no contribution to the world?
>
> Sir, in your discomfort,/let me tell you one more thing:
>
> I will not send a spaceship/to discover life on planet Mars.
>
> I will try to discover life here/on this earth.
>
> Who knows, I might yet find proof/of the possibility of life here
>
> on this planet! (*Midnight* 138)

The poet refutes the superiority of the coloniser and the inferiority of the colonised. He sees colonialism as a kind of demolition and annihilation, not a process of civilisation as the West justifies.

Conclusion:

The poetry of Longley and al-Barghūthī revisits problematic issues concerning the relationship between the majority and minority in colonial and postcolonial societies, and shapes the connection between nation and culture. The topic of the trauma of partition is obvious in their poetry in different aspects Their poetry expresses a universal crisis, focusing on a specific nation and its cultural and social suffering. Unlike the sectarian civil war in Ireland, al-Barghūthī does not see the conflict in Palestine as racial or related to social class distinction, certain sect, or generation. But rather all classes and sects – Muslims, Christians, the working class, the aristocratic, the feudal, the proletariat, and the bourgeoise – are humiliated, occupied, and displaced. The situation in Palestine will be continually unsolved because Israel works against itself, by assuring its savagery and atrocities in every situation.

Al-Barghūthī's poetry focuses on the Palestinians' free will in the face of exile, occupation, and displacement. He does not see this as a civil war, but rather as a nation defending itself against a fascist government. He also refuses to call it a conflict, but a liberation movement for justice. Unlike the situation in Ireland, where there is no colonisation of the land, the Palestinians face settler colonisers who occupy their nation. Longley's poetry exposes the fact that the Irish people try to divide their country as a way of solving the problem between the North and South. In fact, the intensity of violence becomes much greater in the Middle East than in Ireland. Longley and al-Barghūthī tackle the trauma of partition from each one's ideology and historical, social, and political background. Their poetry raises many questions concerning the concept of partition and its various reasons, shapes, and perspectives in Ireland and Palestine. The poetry of both poets questions the language of the structure of loss, the method of paradox, as well as the rhetoric of intertextuality. On the one hand, al-Barghūthī's short epic poems violate the conventional form of the traditional epic as a way of resistance to the existing occupation in Palestine. His sense of trauma comes from the colonisation and genocide imposed on Palestinians by Israelis. It also

comes from the state of exile, displacement, and dislocation, which impose individual helplessness, social isolation, meaninglessness, withdrawal, rejection, and rebellion against tyranny and oppression. On the other hand, Longley presents poems with traditional form to depict the Irish troubles. The traumatic experience of partition results in violence, massacres, and ethnic and religious differences. Longley also reveals and faces the past with all its scars as a remedy for the self, and seeks acceptance of the other. His language of reconciliation with the past opens up a new approach of study and thought to new generations. His poetry provides an agreement with the existence of the other while al-Barghouti's is an objection to the geographical expansion and domination of the other.

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