
**THE RESILIENCE AND ANTICIPATION IN THE POEMS OF
MAHMUD DARWISH, NAZIM HIKMET AND EMILY DICKENSON:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRISON LITERATURE**

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Article Received: 06/12/2024

Article Accepted: 08/01/2025

Published Online: 09/01/2025

DOI:10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.01.93

Abstract

Prison Literature is a genre of literature that represents the writings of those writers who have been incarcerated, imprisoned or have chosen self-seclusion. This genre also encompasses themes such as suffering, consolation, victims of injustice, death, repression, revolution etc. Traditionally, this genre has been approached through pessimistic senses, assuming that while incarceration the writers must be experiencing hardships, lacking daily necessities, and enduring sleepless nights. However, recent research has highlighted the optimistic view of Prison Literature. It is now recognized that prison literature not only deals with gloomy, dull, dark, negativity but also is a sphere of endless hope, resilience, and anticipation. Prison poetry plays a crucial role in expressing these optimistic themes. Poets such as Richard Lovelace, Maya Angelou, Judith Wright, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Boethius, Nazim Hikmet, Mahmud Darwish, and Emily Dickenson explore the themes of resilience and anticipation in their poems.

Keywords: Literature, themes, resilience, Comparative Study, poems.

This research will be a comparatively analyze the poems of Nazim Hikmet, Mahmud Darwish, and Emily Dickinson and is focused to find the elements of resilience and anticipation in them. The purpose of this research is to discover that how these writers were able to cultivate hope, positivity and an undying ability to work through emotional pain and suffering, despite adverse and fast-paced circumstances. Although these writers come from different cultures, regions, and ideologies but the themes of resilience and anticipation are prevalent in their works. Through their clever and poignant verses, they challenge their opponents and leave them unable to recover their damage. The key point to consider is that these writers have proven that nothing can defeat them because they have been armed with hope, patience, and perseverance.

This research will also examine that how, through their resistance poetry, they changed the entire scenario by connecting directly with their country and people. They

always appeal for not losing hope in adverse conditions. The poems motivate readers to rise from their difficult situations and face life's challenges enduring hope for a better world. During imprisonment, these writers transformed their environment positive by asserting their intellectual voices, demolishing the oppressive voices that exist beyond the prison walls.

These writers are true examples of the human spirit who provide their readers an unbeatable hope. Their poems, through resilience and anticipation, breathe new life into its readers. Through proactive and rebellious poems, they have broken the limitations of their confinement and stood strong against challenges. At some point, even the oppressors became confused about these writers that how even they can remain so calm, comfortable and content within their confinement making their prison cell the most secured place in the world. The research will attempt to discover that how their writings are one of the finest in theme of resilience and anticipation in Prison literature.

Literature Review

Nazim Hikmet is regarded as one of the significant Turkish poets of the 20th century. His poetic genius reflects an unwavering commitment to social justice and resonates with those who have been oppressed for many years. In poems such as "Some advice to those who will serve time in prison" and "On Living," his words convey a sense of everlasting hope and an extraordinary level of resilience. Several studies have been carried out to examine the optimistic nature of prison poetry through selected poems of Mahmud Darwish, Nazim Hikmet, and Emily Dickenson. Research focusing various aspects, including "The Study of Dramatic Structure," "Exile Poetry: A Voice Against Anger and Alienation," "The Sensation of Losing Land and Identity," "The Aspects of Intertextuality," and "The Zeal of Brotherhood in the Poems of Mahmud Darwish" had been conducted already.

These poems urge readers not to succumb to cowardice and to remain steadfast in the face of adversity. Mahmud Darwish, on the other hand, consistently posed a threat to political narratives and maintained a rebellious voice through his poems during social hardships. His poem "Identity Card," written during forceful displacement of poet and his people from their homeland. This poem embodies the spirit of resilience and freedom. While reading, this poem evokes a feeling of collective despair and hope. His verses are rebellious in tone, covered with the soft cotton of wit and irony causing his enemies to experience the worst kind of defeat and kept on highlighting the triumph of the human spirit. In anticipation and resilience the poems of Emily Dickinson holds a strong position. Being a prominent figure in American literature, she immersed herself deeply in the realms of resilience and anticipation, uncovering the enigmatic interconnection of the human psyche and social sufferings. Through her introspective poems such as "Hope is the thing with feathers" and "I dwell in Possibility," Dickinson invites readers to view life from a holistic perspective. She argues that readers should not lose hope during difficult situations and suggests them to remain calm, collected, and anticipative in nature to overcome the challenges of daily life.

Research Methodology

This research will be an empirical study which will investigate using qualitative, observational, and close reading methods. The employed data collection techniques are documentation, close reading, identification, classification; note-taking, online catalogs, bibliographies and the worldwide web were used to identify relevant information. To conduct this comparative study, we will analyze the themes of resilience and anticipation in selected poems of Nazim Hikmet, Mahmud Darwish, and Emily Dickinson. Previous research on topics such as "The study of dramatic structure," "Exile poetry: A voice against anger and alienation," "The sense of losing land and identity," and "The theme of death and time" has already been carried out. Furthermore, this research will examine that how these writers, through their poems, created a narrative of hope, positivity, and perseverance. Additionally, this research will explore how these writers maintained an optimistic outlook while enduring harsh conditions in prison. The data was collected from secondary sources such as bibliographies, databases, biographical resources, reference resources, monographs, journals, and web resources. This research is important because it will fill the gaps in existing literature and will be valuable for future research.

Objectives

Defining the themes of Resilience and anticipation in prison poetry.

The Resilience in the poems of Mahmud Darwish.

The Resilience and anticipation occurring together and its impacts.

The Resilience and Anticipation in the works of Mahmud Darwish, Nazim Hikmet and Emily Dickenson.

The outcome and impact of Resilience and Anticipation in general life.

Findings And Analysis

The themes of resilience and anticipation and prison poetry cannot be separated as they hold a strong interconnection between them. The writers were imprisoned for their ideas of resistance and for opposing anti-government rules, false laws and regulations. The motive behind incarcerating the writers was to suppress their intellectual voices and render their pens inactive, but these attempts were futile because these writers possessed an independence of mind that could not be captured behind the iron bars and stoned walls. Their self-determination and interconnectedness shaped them to remain self-reliant in times of adversity. Resilience is the ability to work through emotional pain and suffering, leading them to look towards the future through a broader perspective. The prison poetry is filled with themes of resilience and anticipation. If we examine poems of these writers, we would discover that some writers were expressing love for their families and children while they were in prison, demonstrating the acceptance of the least challenging form of writing. However, there were also writers such as Mahmud Darwish, Nazim Hikmet, Emily Dickinson, Martin Luther King Jr., Richard Lovelace, and Maya Angelou who broke the limitations of prison and wrote verses filled with resilience and infinite hope. Actually, these themes constitute the core of the positive aspects of prison. When we hear the word "prison," we typically envision something clumsy, dark, dull and enclosed by thick walls with only a small window. However, these writers have transformed the environment from negative to positive through their resilience and anticipation. By refusing to lose hope, they have

thwarted the plans of their enemies. With their clear vision, they have chosen not to surrender their will to the adversaries, thus showcasing a perfect example of resilience and anticipation through their writings.

The themes of resilience and anticipation are intertwined in the works of these writers as they have written against oppression, repression, anti-government narratives etc. Their poems, being light in language but harsh in tone can transform their adversities into valuable assets. Their poems are infused with cultural spirit and anyone can easily relate to the significant emotions expressed in them. Despite being sentenced to 28 years of imprisonment, Nazim Hikmet never abandoned his rebellious and anticipative nature. In one of his poems, he declares that it is acceptable for him to be imprisoned for giving up the characteristic of hope. Through his poems, he creates an energetic rhythm among his people, encouraging them to resist oppressive voices and remain stagnant. He gained popularity as an influential poet and fearless intellectual by challenging the corrupt system of his country and raising awareness regarding adversities caused by those who possess power. Emily Dickinson through her poems portrays her self-imposed confinement within her home and choice to remain in solitude until her death. She sees herself as different from others choosing self-isolation for herself. However, despite staying within her self-declared boundaries, her writings were renowned worldwide. Despite being placed under house arrest for many years, she managed to preserve herself in her own world in order to become self-reliant. She was a sharp-witted, fierce, yet calm and intelligent woman. She possessed a deep inner world where she lives alone, challenging those who labeled her as insane. Her poems connect instantly with her readers and instilled an infinite sense of hope in them. She maintained a state of calmness, composure, and contentment within the confines of prison. Through resilience and anticipation, she shattered the limitations of her confinement teaching readers to embrace rebellion and to not lose hope.

Discussion

While discussing prison literature, the poems of Nazim Hikmet, Mahmud Darwish, and Emily Dickinson are considered to be the finest examples in the themes of resilience and anticipation. These poets have developed their own unique style of writing poetry that resists oppression, touching the depths of human emotions through their poetic voices. They offer their readers a sympathetic tone and teach them how to stay positive in difficult circumstances. In this comparative study, we will explore how these writers, despite being from different countries, share common themes in their writings. Mahmud Darwish, Nazim Hikmet, and Emily Dickinson may appear distinct at first glance, but upon closer examination we can find an interconnection of voices which they share. Despite their disparate backgrounds and circumstances, these poets explore themes of oppression, resilience and present the power of the human spirit in front of us. Their poems demonstrate a strong interconnection in the themes of resilience and anticipation which they share among them. Imprisonment, whether physical or self-imposed, acted as a catalyst for their creativity and gave rise to timeless poetry that continues to resonate with readers to this day. Through their poems, these writers showcase the strength of human perseverance and holds the

transformative power of words even in the most chaotic and challenging situations.

The spark of resilience that emerged in Mahmud Darwish during his early life was not by chance it is rather a result of long torments and sufferings caused by the subjugation of his people and his country. This spark transforms into fire when readers begin to recognize their own personal sufferings in poems of these writers. His poems create a complete narrative and establish an unbreakable relationship between him and his people. The poem "To Our Land" discusses the struggles faced by Darwish and his fellow Palestinians after they were expelled from their homeland when it had been occupied by Israeli forces. The lines "The one near the words of God, a ceiling of clouds" and "Tiny as a sesame seed, a heavenly horizon and a hidden chasm" [Darwish, Mahmoud. *Prison Poems*. Translated by Fawwaz Tuqan.] illustrate the poet's rebellious nature as he defends the rights of his country, striving to make it superior to all others. These lines clearly demonstrate Darwish's depth of the inter-connection with their country and their people. By stating, "Near the word of God, a ceiling of clouds," Darwish presents an optimistic perspective for Palestinians, who have suffered greatly resulted by military clash. Here, Darwish confronts his homeland and his people by criticizing Israel forces for creating a tense and chaotic environment in his country. Through these lines, he emphasizes that there was a time when his country and his people were living happy and prosperous life, but these war atrocities have dampened their progressive spirit.

Mahmud Darwish is an exceptional poet who epitomizes the Palestinian identity and suffering of the Palestinian people. Undoubtedly, the Palestinian inclination, both on a personal and national level, serves as the fundamental ideology behind Darwish's poetry. "To Our Land": "Our Land, in its bloodied night, is a jewel that gleams far and wide, illuminating what lies beyond it". His voice is neutral, populist, and straightforward, but his ability to navigate through emotional pain and suffering was exceptional. He constantly fought for the rights of his people and his country, resulting in multiple incarcerations. As a poet with immense sensitivity and a resilient spirit, he found himself imprisoned numerous times for composing anti-government statements, resistance poetry, and participating in anti- government gatherings. According to Haneen Tartir, a resident of Ramallah city in the central West Bank, Mahmud Darwish holds as much cultural importance to the Palestinian people as the olive tree does to Palestinian agriculture, as stated to Andolu agency (AA). During his youthful, nationalistic phase of resistance, this poem discusses his optimistic, progressive, and rebellious qualities that remained undefeated in times of adversity. In "The Prison Cell," Darwish asserts that even within the confines of imprisonment, it is still possible to escape and transcend from these stone walls. He emphasizes that his oppressors cannot hinder his vision and creativity, despite their attempts to confine him with iron bars and stone walls. Through this poem, he satirizes his opponents by highlighting their inability to make him feel pessimistic, dull, or hopeless, as he has transformed the iron chain into a pencil. For many years, his poems stood as a symbol against his enemies due to their capacity for infinite hope. Through resilience and anticipation, Darwish has forged a path that keeps him untouched by his enemies and poses a threat to the leadership.

The resilience and anticipation in Nazim Hikmet's poems were developed after his

long experiences of imprisonment due to his political activism. In his poems, Hikmet reflects on the challenges and hardships he faced during his time in prison. As a Palestinian national poet, he received widespread recognition around the world for writing poems that ignite a sense of positivity in its readers. In his poem "Identity Card," Darwish discusses the suffering and torments his people endured when they were forced out of their homeland. Emily Dickinson, an American poet known for her introspective and culminating style of writing, offers a unique perspective to consider during adverse conditions. In her poem "Hope is the Thing with Feathers," Dickinson explores the power of hope as a driving force for resilience. The line "And never stops—at all" [Dickinson, Emily. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Reading Edition*.] shows an anticipative nature that refuses to give up hope for a better world. While Nazim Hikmet, Mahmud Darwish, and Emily Dickinson share different cultural backgrounds and poetic styles, the theme of resilience and anticipation is common among them. By comparing their poems, we can clearly see the universal human experience of longing for freedom and hope during times of adversity. In terms of anticipation, all three poets employ vivid imagery and symbolism to evoke a sense of yearning. Hikmet's use of the phrase "before it's too late" presents the nature of resilience, while Darwish's poem "identity card" reveals a longing for recognition. Being a resistance poet, his poem remained rebellious and satirical in nature. He remained optimistic even during incarceration, when he was asked by prison guards where he had obtained the water and trees mentioned in his poem. He replied, "From the lands of Egypt and Syria." It is a question of concern how he managed to maintain composure and resistive in times of adversity. His poems have been taught in schools because they embody the spirit of resilience and the freedom of expression in the face of repression. When Darwish was asked by a prison guard where he had obtained this freedom, he replied, "From the chain you tied me with last night." Through this poem, he dismantles the confines of prison cell by asserting that his enemies may think they can now rest for few moments, as they have tied their enemy in chains, but here Darwish presents an unbreakable mindset by constantly arguing for freedom. "The prison cell": "The prison guard grew so sad, he begged me to give his freedom back. Being gentle in language, Dickinson through her poems presents vivid imagery that captures the innermost emotions of humans, taking readers on a journey of self-realization and a better understanding of their inner selves. Her poems delve deeply in the theme of resilience, portraying the inherent strength and unwavering determination of the human spirit. By personifying the bird as a symbol of hope, she represents that the bird will persist against all odds, as she was born to surpass the limitations of the sky.

In the realm of prison literature, there has always been a fertile ground for the germination of themes such as oppression, resilience, and the unbreakable human spirit. Through their poems, these literary giants offer profound insights into the human condition and the transformative power of art. Nazim Hikmet, a celebrated Turkish poet, was imprisoned several times for holding anti-political beliefs. By spending most of his time in jail and seclusion, he was able to delve deep into human experiences. Hikmet's poems, composed while he was incarcerated, connect with the essence of humanity and promote brotherhood among people. In "Letters from Prison," he shows the grief, struggle for freedom, and longing for connection with his loved ones who are outside of the prison. His

words transcend the prison walls, reaching its readers to evoke a universal desire for liberty and serves as upliftment of the human spirit amidst adversity. His poems have proven to be a powerful weapon against injustice. Over time, his sharp and ironic poetry has become a support for silenced voices, and a tool for resistance against oppressors. While Emily Dickinson was not confined behind bars, she chose to isolate herself. Her lifestyle shaped her to live in a world she created. Her poems contain a profound philosophy of existence and delve into the depths of the human psyche. Despite her physical confinement, she possesses boundless quality of imagination. She reminds us that even in a state of isolation, the human mind can remain resilient and anticipatory. Through imagery and personification, she presents the never-ending nature of hope and demonstrates survival in the darkest moments of life. Additionally, she also explores resilience and anticipation as she delves into the potential and optimal view of the future while facing adverse conditions. Her poems reveal the extent to which she embodies resilience and anticipation, and shows her ability to connect with readers. Dickinson suggests that harsh conditions and strains of suffering are perpetual, and implies that the best course of action in such situations is to remain steadfast and firm. Through her expert use of language, she suggests that unfiltered truth can be overwhelming and isolating. In her poems, she acknowledges the power of language in conveying complex emotions and perceptions. Dickinson's portrayal of hope as a bird with hope in its wings signifies an indomitable drive for anticipation.

Despite their imprisonment, these writers continued to endure hope and happiness. Their poems can be regarded as advice and are, enough anticipatory to show us ways to remain hopeful during difficult circumstances. Not only do their poems address the struggles and emotions experienced during imprisonment, but they also demonstrate the utmost resilience and anticipation in them. Their poems invite readers to connect with the universal longing for brotherhood. By exploring the works of these writers, readers are able to connect and gain a deeper understanding of the capacity of the human soul to anticipate a brighter future.

Conclusion

The themes of resilience and anticipation are highly valuable in our daily lives as they cultivate a strong sense of self-recognition enabling us to confront our everyday challenges. These themes have proven to be fundamental in the realm of resistance poetry. By challenging the monarchy and defying the current social order, these writers were imprisoned several times and forced to isolate from the outside world. The oppressors believed that by confining these writers behind bars they would break their spirits and drive them to insanity, but instead of going insane these writers met with resilience and anticipation in the journey which leads them to self-discovery. These writers exemplified unwavering commitment, resistance, freedom, and the importance of existence. They demonstrated that a solitary and rich inner world is indomitable. Their poetry delved into themes of solitude, love, and unity, while also highlighting the interconnectedness between land and identity. The implications of their writings in everyday life are truly challenging and valuable. These writers show us how to navigate difficult times teaching us to maintain a positive, well-

balanced life during isolation. Their poems create a cohesive narrative and serve as a powerful opposition to adversity. They have the ability to instill hope and positivity in a world that feels increasingly hopeless. These poems connect emotionally with their readers and strengthen their inner selves during moments of despair. With an optimistic outlook, these writers steadfastly support their communities, fighting for their rights and raising their poetic voices against the bleakness that exists beyond the iron bars. The sense of interconnectedness and brotherhood cultivates resilience and anticipation in their communities, motivating them to fight for their rights. Their powerful ideological positions enable them to foster a spirit of rebellion even while confined within jails. Their writings have the ability to evoke emotions ranging from despair and astonishment to hope, commitment, and resistance in the current scenario.

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