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The Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic:

Analysis of Saadi Yousef's Selected Poems in Light of Lacan's Concepts

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The Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic: Analysis of Saadi Yousef's Selected Poems in Light of Lacan's Concepts

الحقيقة، الصورية، والرمزية
تحليل القصائد المختارة لسعدى يوسف حسب مفاهيم لاكان

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Abstract

This article examines the insightful interaction amid the demesnes of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic in Saadi Yousef's chosen poems in light of Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theories. Yousef, a significant person in contemporary Arabic poetry, tortuously links together themes of banishment, war, and the human condition, and by doing so, he encourages his readers

to investigate the complications of life through his redolent poetry. Benefitting from Lacan's theories, this study means to analyze how Yousef's poetic imagery and themes agree with or defy Lacan's theoretical framework. Through a close reading of chosen poems, this research is going to examine how Yousef's poetry functions as a mirror to social disturbances and

achievements. By revealing the veiled meanings and fundamental rigidities in Yousef's poems, I intend to unveil the ways in which language acts as a conduit for desire, resistance, and assertiveness in spite of socio-political truths. Furthermore, by connecting the realms of poetry and psychoanalysis, this paper results in a profounder comprehension of the worldwide themes and existential questions that

permeate Yousef's work. Eventually, this examination of Saadi Yousef's poetry in light of Lacan's theories works as a witness to the persistent significance of both creative expression and psychoanalytic inquest in unscrambling the paradoxes of human existence and the complex interaction of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic.

Key Words: Exiled, Imaginary, Real, Repression, Symbolic

الملخص:

هذه المقالة تتفحص التفاعل الصوري التي تهدف الى محيط الحقيقة، الصورية، والرمزية في قصائد سعدي يوسف المختارة حسب نظريات لاكان للتحليل النفسي. يوسف هو شخص مهم في الشعر العربي المعاصر، ربط مواضيع العقوبة بشكل ملتوي، الحرب، وضع الانسان، وما الى ذلك، هو شجع قراءه للتحقيق في تعقيدات الحياة من خلال عبقة الشعري. مستقيداً من نظريات لاكان. هذه الدراسة التحليلية تعني كيف تتوافق او تحدّ الصورة الشعرية والمواضع مع الإطار النظري للاكان. من خلال قراءة القصائد المختارة، هذا البحث سيتفحص كيف وظائف لاكان الشعرية كانعكاس لاضطرابات وانجازات المجتمع. من خلال الكشف عن

المعنى المحجوب وصلابة الأساسيات في قصائد يوسف، انا انوي كشف طرق دور اللغة كقناة للربغة، المقاومة، والمقاومة بالرغم من حقائق المجتمع السياسي. علاوة على ذلك من خلال ربط عوالم الشعر مع التحليل النفسي، هذه الدراسة تنتج عمق استيعاب المواضيع في كل نطاق العالم والاسئلة الوجودية التي تخللت اعمال يوسف. في النهاية هذا التفحص لشعر سعدي يوسف في ضوء نظريات لاكان تعمل كشاهد مهم لكلا من التعبير الإبداعي وتحقيق التحليل النفسي في حل التناقضات في وجود الانسان والعقد التفاعلية في الحقيقة، الصورية، والرمزية.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: النفي، التصور، الحقيقة، القمع، الرمزية

1. Background of the Study

Saadi Yousef (1934-2021), a very famous and important person in contemporary Arabic poetry, convolutedly links together the realms of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic in his poems, inviting his readers to reflect upon the intricacies of human life and the subtleties of power and meaning. This article aims to depict the deep relations between Yousef's poetic pieces and the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan, chiefly concentrating on the interaction of these three symbolic indexes in his work. Yousef's poetry revolves around his own experiences and the socio-political backgrounds of Iraq, where he was born in 1934.

During his productive livelihood, he has courageously written about themes of exile, war, repression, and the human condition. By examining the complexities of the human psyche and the communal unconscious, Yousef's poetry mirrors society's conquests and problems, leading the readers to question and consider the complications of existence. Using the theoretical agenda of Jacques Lacan as a ground-breaking intellectual in

psychoanalysis, this article aims to explore Yousef's selected poems in light of Lacanian notions such as the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic. Lacan's theories provide an exclusive standpoint on the construction of subjectivity, the interchange of language and desire, and the construction of identity within the symbolic order.

Using Lacanian viewpoint in analyzing Yousef's poetry, this research will reveal the concealed meanings and fundamental strains pervading his poems. Via a comprehensive inspection of selected poems by Saadi Yousef, I intend to discover how his poetic imagery, language, and themes echo Lacan's conceptual outline, revealing the complicated interaction of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic within his poetic cosmos.

2. Statement of the Problem

The association of Yousef's verses with Jacques Lacan's theories concerning the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic offers an absorbing and multilayered inspection. The problem this paper seeks to approach is the interpretation of the intricate layers of meaning, symbolism, and subjectivity engrained in Yousef's

poetic verse and the comprehension of how these factors intersect with Lacan's psychoanalytic framework. Significant questions arise regarding how Yousef's poetic imagery, language, and themes reflect or confront Lacan's conceptualizations of the unconscious, desire, and identity production. How are the real-world experiences of banishment, war, and repression portrayed in Yousef's poetry in accordance with Lacanian ideas? Also, how do the poetic approaches used by Yousef induce the dominions of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic, and how do these dominions interrelate and interlace within his poems? In what ways does Yousef's use of language and symbolism reflect or undermine the psychoanalytic ideas of the mirror stage, the Other, and the unconscious?

By looking into these questions, this study seeks to disclose the intricacies of meaning-making, representation, and power relations inside Yousef's poetic works through a Lacanian perspective. The problem at the heart of this investigation is to explain how the relationship between poetry and analysis can present new

understandings of the human spirit, social structures, and the production of meaning in Yousef's philosophical and suggestive poetry.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Lacanian Theory: Overview

"Fetishism: The Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real" (1956) by Lacan and Granoff analyzes the idea of fetishism through the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis. It probes how fetishism interrelates with three key scopes of human experience as defined by Lacan. The symbolic dimension refers to language, societal structures, and regulations. This research has discussed how fetish matters or practices can signify more profound implications or indicate something in the social setting, echoing longings that are arbitrated by language and cultural standards.

The imaginary dimension is also linked with images, illusions, and the construction of the self. This analysis focuses on how fetishism can generate an ideal discernment or an impression that influences one's identity and relations, scrutinizing how human beings hypnotize heir

yearnings and objects of fascination in their imagination. The real dimension finally denotes what is outside symbolization and cannot be completely uttered or assumed. The article addresses the idea that fetishism can tap into the real, signifying a sort of jouissance (pleasure) that challenges direct understanding or enunciation, and how this is linked with human yearning and sexuality (pp. 265-276).

Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud: The Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary (1995) by Julien studies the theories of Jacques Lacan as a significant 20th-century psychoanalyst, and his reinterpretation of Sigmund Freud's work. The book probes Lacan's tripartite outline of the real, the symbolic, and the imaginary, indispensable notions in his psychoanalytic theory. As mentioned, the real signifies what is outside of language and cannot be copiously expressed or embodied. It includes experiences and facets of reality that repel symbolization.

Also, the symbolic aspect is about language, social structures, and the system of signs that establish human

experience. It is where meaning is made and relations are organized. Moreover, the imaginary copes with images, illusions, and the perfect self. It comprises the way individuals produce pictures of themselves and others that do not essentially relate to reality. In fact, Julien's book studies how Lacan's thought epitomizes a withdrawal from customary Freudian psychoanalysis while still upholding a connection to Freud's initial theories. It inspects the intricacies of human subjectivity, yearning, and the relationship between these three territories of experience (pp. 87-96).

An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis (1997) by Evans is an inclusive guide to Lacan psychoanalysis's fundamental notions and terminology. Jacques Lacan was a substantial person in the field of psychoanalysis, recognized for his groundbreaking and often provocative philosophies about the nature of the unconscious mind and the importance of language in determining our comprehension of ourselves. Evans' dictionary presents strong and understandable descriptions of Lacan's intricate theories, making them more

explicable for readers who may be new to this school of thought. The book includes various subjects, such as the mirror stage, the symbolic order, the phallus, the objet petit a, and the notion of the other (pp. 12-16).

3.2. On Saadi Yousef's Poetry

Antoon (2018) examines the complex and provocative themes of Youssef's poetry, and is primarily obsessed with the idea of "impossible returns." It is specified that Youssef recognized for his reflection on themes associated with banishment, dislocation, and yearning, has been discussed in light of "impossible returns." The notion of returning to a fatherland or a feeling of belonging that has been irreversibly altered or missing is a central emphasis of the analysis.

Similarly, Antoon investigate the impediment of identity formation in Youssef's poetry, considering how the notion of "impossible returns" reflects how people grapple with their past, heritage, an sense of self, facing perpetual variation. Antoon's examination of Youssef's work highlights the subjects of loss, homesickness, and reminiscence that permeate the poet's verses. The

concept of "impossible returns" is supposed to be linked with the distressing desire for a past that can never be entirely recovered (pp. 199-211).

Youssef's poetry often encompasses political and social features, which turn around the socio-political circumstances of Iraq and the Middle East. The concept of "impossible returns" is accordingly inspected in the context of political uproar, combat, and the ongoing impact of historical actions on personal and communal recollection. Antoon's study discussed the literary measures, symbolism, and imagery used by Youssef to portray the theme of "impossible returns" (pp. 199-211).

Assadi and Naamneh (2018) also discussed the concept of intertextuality in Arabic literary criticism, using Youssef's "Mobile Model" as a specific case study to inspect this literary subject. They deliver a summary of this notion in Arabic literary practices, and discuss how texts are correlated through such tools as references, allusions, and resonances of other works. The inference of intertextuality in uplifting the layers of meaning and

producing a dialogue among diverse texts is systematically debated (p. 49).

This article has actually analyzed Youssef's precise approach to intertextuality in his "Mobile Model." This model signifies Youssef's special practice of incorporating diverse sources, practices, or voices into his poetry, generating a vivacious interface amid miscellaneous texts and discourses. Also, Assadi and Naamneh have both investigated thorough examples from Youssef's works to demonstrate how he takes advantage of intertextuality. This comprises analyzing how Youssef alludes to historical texts, cultural codes, or literary works in his verses in order to cultivate the meaning and surpass traditional boundaries of writing.

They also review hypothetical outlines of intertextuality suggested by scholars such as Roland Barthes, Kristeva, or Mikhail Bakhtin, and how these theories can be employed in inspecting Arabic literature, specifically focusing on Youssef's works. Assadi and Naamneh have explored how Saadi Youssef's usage of the "Mobile Model" and

intertextuality impacts Arabic literary criticism and the larger realization of literary texts in the Arabic literary tradition. The argument has extended to how intertextuality determines the description of Youssef's poetry (pp. 50-56).

Besides, Najafi and Bahri (2022) have examined the titles of Saadi Youssef's Layali-e- Kolha anthology from a semiotic standpoint in light of Ferdinand de Saussure's theories. They outline semiotics and its practice in literary analysis, primarily concentrating on Saussure's structuralist approach to semiotics. They discuss how signs and signifiers in the form of titles are used to transport meaning and provoke understanding in Youssef's collection (p. 91).

Their research analyzes Youssef's particular anthology, Layali-e- Kolha (which means "Nights of All"), as an example for title investigation. The anthology's titles are actually examined for their verbal, cultural, and symbolic insinuation in the broader outline of Youssef's poetry. Najafi and Bahri have studied the chief ideas of Saussure's semiotic theory, such as the signified and the

signifier, signification, and the arbitrariness of the sign, to discover how titles are employed as linguistic signs in Saadi Yousef's anthology. They have moreover discussed how the relationship between the signifier (the title) and the signified (the meaning or concept) brings about the overall comprehension of Yousef's work.

This article scrutinizes the symbolic features of the titles in Layali-e-Kolha, and highlights how they depict the existing themes, motifs, and feelings in Yousef's poems. The inspection focuses on how the titles act as entry topics into the collection, determining the readers' outlooks and interpretations of the poems. Najafi and Bahri also discuss how language and culture interconnect in the titles of Saadi Yousef's anthology, replicating wider cultural motifs and historical circumstances that enlighten the poet's thematic distresses (pp. 92-117).

4. Significance of the Study

The significance of examining Saadi Yousef's selected poems through the perspective of Jacques Lacan's theories is in the insightful understandings provides regarding the intricacies of human life,

language, and subjectivity. By exploring the interaction of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic in Yousef's poetry, this study aims to disclose the clandestine meanings and basic tensions that infuse his work.

Through this interdisciplinary examination, the readers are provided with a profound comprehension of the complicated associates between poetry and psychoanalysis and will know how Yousef's redolent imagery and themes are in harmony with Lacan's conceptual outline. By scrutinizing the construction of subjectivity, the importance of language in determining identity, and the subtleties of desire in the symbolic order, this study not only improves our appreciation of Yousef's poetic work but also presents a lens through which to know about the socio-political authenticities and existential quandaries portrayed in his work.

5. Methodology

Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic ideas are regarded as exclusive and perceive__viewpoints that help understand and examine literary works, such as Saadi Yousef's poems. Lacan, a well-known French

psychoanalyst and theorist, was intensely affected by the works of Sigmund Freud but deviated from traditional psychoanalytic methods so as to concentrate on the connections amid language, desire, and the formation of subjectivity.

Lacan's theoretical outline is fundamental to the notion of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic which present a rich agenda for comprehending human consciousness and producing meaning. Lacan and Granoff (1956) state that in Lacan's theory, the real signifies the unmediated, pre-linguistic realm of raw, unfiltered experience that evades symbolic representation. The sphere of the indescribable, the traumatic, and the disjoint facet of existence resist denotation. The real is known by a sense of deficiency and disagreement, defying our insights and challenging the limits of language and understanding. In Yousef's poetry, features that arouse a sense of disorientation, raw emotion, or existential angst align with Lacan's concept of the real (Lacan & Granoff, 1956, pp. 266-267).

As Lacan said, the imaginary arises

as the realm of images, illusions, and identifications that form our sense of self and others. It is the sphere of the mirror stage, where the ego is shaped through identification with images and reflections. The imaginary is known by a twofold association between the self and its reflection, stimulating both identification and disaffection. Yousef's examination of themes linked with identity, self-perception, and the gaze of the other interconnects with Lacan's concept of the imaginary (Lacan & Granoff, 1956, pp. 268-269). Homer (2004) has also said that:

The mirror stage has always been viewed by Lacan as a solid piece of theorizing, a paradigm retaining its value to explain human self-consciousness, aggressivity, rivalry, narcissism, jealousy and fascination with images in general. In a sense, this does not come as a surprise when it is appreciated that the 1949 Mirror Stage article was not something Lacan had concocted at a moment's notice, but a pearl which he had carefully cultured for some thirteen odd years. (p. 18)

In Lacan's theory, the symbolic order is also the realm of language, culture, and societal standards that

form our realization of reality and facilitate our cravings. As a symbolic system, language forms our subjectivity and constructs the basis through which we deal with the world. The symbolic is characterized by the interaction of signifiers and signified, making a system of meanings and associations that manage our experiences. Yousef's use of language, symbolism, and cultural references in his poetry is in harmony with Lacan's concept of the symbolic due to emphasizing how words and symbols determine our insights and intercede our associations with the world (Lacan & Granoff, 1956, pp. 270-272). Here, Lacan does not mean that everything is limited to the symbolic, but that, when symbols have appeared, everything will be systematic, or organized, in line with those symbols and the regulations of the symbolic, such as the insensible and human subjectivity (Homer, 2004, pp. 43-44).

6. Discussion

In this study, I seek to deeply examine the complicated web of identity as portrayed in Saadi Youssef's poems. By using Lacan's theoretical agenda, the multifaceted

interaction between the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic dimensions in Yousef's poetic pieces will be explored. From a Lacanian standpoint, the perception of identity is not only an immobile and firm concept but a vibrant and often intangible entity continuously fluctuating. Analyzing Youssef's verses clarifies how the poet deals with the countless aspects of identity, wavering between the palpable realities of the real, the illusive dominions of the imaginary, and the symbolic structures that form our knowledge of selfhood.

Yousef's poetry mirrors the existential quandaries and struggles intrinsic to the human experience, making the readers defy their own intricacies and illogicalities. Lacan's theories also enable the readers to disclose the fundamental pressures and inconsistencies that are typical of the production of identity, depicting how Yousef's work is in accordance with the psychoanalytic notions of desire, alienation, and the search for wholeness. Through this examination, the readers can begin a journey through the maze of identity, where the boundaries between the self and the other vanish, and the

pursuit for meaning becomes a transformative and enlightening experience.

6.1. Saadi Yousef's Poetic Examination of the Real

In examining the real aspect of Yousef's picked verses in light of Lacanian theory, I mean to examine a critical side of human experience that struggles with signification and avoids thorough understanding. The concept of the real, as noted by Jacques Lacan, implies that which is exterior to language and the symbolic order, such as features of existence that are often excruciating, shocking, or fundamentally unintelligible. Yousef's poetry recurrently deals with themes of loss, dislocation, and existential suffering as experiences that align with the Lacanian real. In his works, moments of deep expressive passion often act as encounters with the real. Such moments are depicted as breaks that disturb the stream of the symbolic, disclosing the restrictions of what can be uttered. The real in Yousef's poetry is chiefly palpable in his references to banishment and the diasporic experience. The pain of dislocation exemplifies rudiments of

the real, as the feeling of uprootedness often confronts precise expression. Yousef's poems show the indescribable pain of leaving one's motherland, signifying that specific facet of this experience surpass linguistic exemplification. In doing so, his poetry makes the readers defy the melancholy occurrence of the real as the stark reality of deficiency, loss, and the profound withdrawal from the familiar.

In lots of Yousef's poems, visceral imagery induces the physical and emotional blemishes of trauma. These images prove the overwhelming features of his theme, demonstrating Lacan's idea that the real can only be faced indirectly through the scrappy hints left behind in language. For example, images of war, sorrow, and the outcome of conflict often inflame a visceral reaction, implying the tough realities that lie beyond the security of symbolic explanation. In this regard, Yousef's poetry plays a vital role in expressing the horrifying, drawing attention to how the real interferes with normal life.

Another significant aspect of the real in Yousef's poetry is its relationship with recollection and temporality. In

the Lacanian sense, recollection is often discrete by a tension between the symbolic and the real. The act of recollecting involves a process of re-representation that can never wholly capture the original experience. Yousef's concern with memory typifies this strain, as he mentions personal and shared histories that are both valued and painful. His poems show how the abrasions of the past continue in the present, not always controllable or representable, but still penetratingly felt within human thoughts.

Besides, the real also leads to a clank with humanity and the restrictions of human life. Yousef's mindfulness of life's passing nature and the predictability of death underlines the real's importance as a relentless token of brittleness. This mindfulness infuses his poetry, functioning as an emotional cue that specific experiences, mainly those linked with misery and loss, eventually fight against resolution and termination. In "Woman," he writes:

How will I drag my feet to her now?
In which land will I see her
and on which street of what city
should I ask about her?

And if I find her house (let's suppose
I do) will I ring the bell?

How should I answer back? And

how will I stare at her face as I touch
the light wine seeping between her
fingers.

How should I say hello...

and how will I take the pain of all
these years?

Once

twenty years ago

in an air-conditioned train

I kissed her all night through...

(Yousef, 2002, p. 32)

In the poem "Woman," the real dimension is strongly depicted through the perspective of raw emotion, palpable experiences, and the complications of human interactions. This wistful poem explores the complexities of desire, memory, and the moving actualities of love lost and desired. The real dimension in "Woman" is tangible in the poet's instinctive longing and sense of loss as he deals with the indescribable attendance of the supposed woman. The physicality of his desire is manifest in the imagery of dragging his feet, looking for her in different places and cities, and the sensual particulars of touching the light wine dribbling between her fingers. Via these bright imageries, Yousef submerges the reader in the proximity of his feelings, arousing a sense of yearning, homesickness, and guilt.

The poet's reference to past experiences, including the memory of kissing her all night through

twenty years ago on an air-conditioned train, adds sadness to the poem's consideration of the real dimension. These memories act as anchors to a perceptible past. The passage of time and the burden of memory combine to generate desire and replication that lie up with the intricacies of human associations. The hesitation and susceptibility articulated in the poet's questions about how to approach the woman, whether to ring the bell, say hello, and face the pain of all these years, emphasize the raw and accurate nature of his expressive chaos. In fact, these questions of self and others accentuate the reality of his feelings.

6.2. Yousef's Poetic Inspection of the Imaginary

In analyzing the imaginary dimension of Saadi Yousef's selected poems, we come across a vital domination for realizing the development of identity and the discernment of reality. The imaginary, as Lacan expresses, is chiefly about images, illusions, and the consistent sense of self that arises from associations with others. It exemplifies the pre-verbal phase of development, where the human being participates in the world through an outline of images that form one's cravings, ambitions, and sense of reality.

In Yousef's poetry, the imaginary

feature often surfaces as an apparatus through which the speaker hypothesizes individual and communal identities within the complications of cultural and political settings. His work regularly mirrors a wish for entirety and unity against disintegration and displacement. Through reminiscent imagery and metaphors, Yousef produces a visual and expressive feeling that captures the interior brawls of identity development, predominantly in the background of exile and dislodgment.

The issue of nostalgia is important in Yousef's poems, because of depicting the interaction between the imaginary and individual memory. Nostalgia, as an imaginary concept, represents a desire for an idealized past as a time or place where the self feels thorough and protected. In Yousef's references to his country, the imagery of lost places and times often makes a sense of desire that exceeds mere memory. These images function to induce memory and make sense of identity that is essentially associated with the place of origin, even in the absence of physical attendance.

The imaginary dimension in Youssef's work is also recognized by the examination of the 'mirror stage,' a notion proposed by Lacan that signifies the moment when a human being first identifies with their own

image. For Yousef, this procedure discloses via illustrations of the self with regard to the setting of his motherland, whereas the self is both present and absent. The romanticism of the homeland can be seen as a mirror echoing a disjointed self; the speaker deals with the dissension of the imagined identity linked with cultural backgrounds and the reality of dislocation. This issue exposes the tautness between the erected imagery of the birthplace and the often-strict experiences of banishment and estrangement.

Similarly, Yousef's use of metaphorical language creates an imaginative space that facilitates the exploration of desire. Desire is often perceived as a longing for relationship, acknowledgement, and respect. The imaginary generates a narrative where the poet seeks to recover a sense of action and belonging via the development of images that are in line with both personal and communal experiences. This desire is not only personal but signifies greater sociopolitical situations, where the imaginary turns into a place for handling cultural identity and communal reminiscence within the encounters of modern life. The interaction of the imaginary also brings about the matter of dichotomy and disintegration widespread in Yousef's poems. The disjointed self is often reflected in his motherland

disordered social and political truth, showing a site where multifaceted historical narrative form identities.

In "*The New Baghdad*," he writes:

She comes to me with a bowl of
soup when I am besieged by
fumes

of cheap arak.

She comes to me in dusty noons.
And with each sunset night snatches
she comes to me with
an evening star.

In the cafes she sits to bitter tea. In
the market she sells cheese
and buffalo livers.

She dusts her used-clothing stores,
searching for bones in a bowl of
soup, for milk to the lips of a child
and a glimmer in a pair of eyes
and something a woman does not yet
know and streets where water never
greens.

At night
she roams among houses abandoned
by the poor and churches where a
muffled mass fades
and huts where poor girls faint.

At midnight
she returns to her enchanted shelter
behind muddy streets,
carrying the bread of the dead,
myrtle flowers,
slivers of buffalo liver
and two bones for a bowl of soup.

At dawn she stops by all her houses,
waking all her children,
dragging them to the street,
the thousands waiting to march on

Baghdad. (Yousef, 2002, p. 56-58)
In the poem "In the New Baghdad," the imaginary dimension develops as a rich textile of symbols, dreams, and cooperative objectives, making the readers enter a dominion where the borders between reality and imagination disappear. The imaginary dimension in "In the New Baghdad" is splendidly represented through the symbolic figure of the woman who exemplifies both conceivable presence and otherworldly characteristics. She arises as a fostering and strong epitome, offering nutrition in the form of soup, comfort in the middle of confusion, and control through the windy streets of the city. Her actions are filled with a sense of myth and mystery, as she moves between different characters and locations, muddling the lines between reality and imagination.

Yousef's description of the woman taking part in everyday activities like selling cheese, looking for bones in soup, and waking her children at dawn goes beyond the ordinary and ventures into the territory of the mythological and symbolic. Through her movements, the poet intertwines a narrative of elasticity, concern, and a bottomless association with Baghdad's communal reminiscences and spirit. The woman's attendance signifies the permanent power and spirit of the city, symbolizing both

the past and the future in her actions and movements.

The imagery of the woman carrying bread of the dead, myrtle flowers, and slivers of buffalo liver induces a sense of ritual and worship, accentuating the symbolic implication of her activities. Through her relations with the uninhibited houses, fading churches, and fainting girls, she becomes a protector of memory, a guardian of customs, and an example of optimism amongst difficulty and confusion. As the woman assembles her children to march on Baghdad at dawn, the poem ends in a potent solicitation of communal intervention. As a symbol of the imaginary, the woman exemplifies the transformative power of myth and communal realization, enabling the readers to imagine a new Baghdad evolving from the obscurities of the past.

6.3. Yousef's Poetic Investigation of the Symbolic

In examining the symbolic facet of Yousef's poems, grasping how symbolic order acts in this poet's work is indispensable. The symbolic dimension, as indicated by Lacan, denotes the domain of language, social structures, and the law, where identities are formed and meanings are shaped. This dimension is mainly significant in Yousef's poetry due to reflecting the deeper impediments of

identity, culture, and communal principles.

Yousef's poetry often struggles amidst the appreciable realities of individual and communal experiences and the tight social patterns forced by the symbolic order. His practice of language can be grasped as a means of articulating his birthplace historical and cultural conflicts, while directly demonstrating the superior human condition through the interface of symbolic structures. In this regard, the symbolic dimension is a device for scrutinizing themes of banishment, belonging, and the search for meaning.

One of the decisive aspects of the symbolic dimension in Yousef's work is the implication of language itself. Lacan claims that language carries views and forms our vision of reality. In Yousef's poetry, the symbolic act of naming, whether it be people, places, or feelings, can be observed as a declaration of identity in a world where such identities are often confronted. Through his fascination with language, Yousef clarifies the breaks and disjuncture of individual and cultural identity, representing how human beings exchange their status in a multifaceted societal setting.

Additionally, the symbolic order is about the importance of the 'Other', a decisive concept in Lacanian theory.

The Other means the communal principles and morals that control a person's life. In Yousef's poetry, the presence of the Other is tangible, as he often condemns the socio-political structures that relegate voices and experiences. Yousef's usage of metaphor and imagery can also be scrutinized from a symbolic standpoint, as these features act to bridge the person's individual experiences with larger social narratives. The symbolic imagery in his work often arouses themes of loss and displacement, underlining the pressures between personal wishes and social beliefs. This strain reveals Lacan's notion of desire as formed by the laws and demands of the symbolic order, where the search for self-actualization is everlastingly delayed. For example, in the poem "*America America*," he writes:

God save America

My home sweet home!

The French general who raised his
tricolour

over Nagrat al-Salman where I was a
prisoner thirty years ago. . . in the
middle of that U-turn

that split the back of the Iraqi army,
the general who loved St Emilion
wines called Nagrat al-Salman a fort.

..

Of the surface of the earth, generals
know only two dimensions:

whatever rises is a fort

whatever spreads is a battlefield.

How ignorant the general was!

(Yousef, 2002, p. 18)

In the poem "*America America*", the symbolic dimension is vibrantly depicted via the combination of geopolitical power relations and the layers of symbolic meaning. The symbolic aspect in this poem is actually shown through the symbolic order that organizes the general's discernment of the world around him. The general's obligation of the tricolor flag over Nagrat al-Salman symbolizes the application of power and authority, signifying his invasion and demand land. This act of symbolic seizure echoes the general's devotion to recognized standards and pacts of military hierarchy and national identity, where symbols and rites form his realization of triumph and supremacy.

Yousef defies the general's restricted standpoint by emphasizing his unawareness of the real nature of Nagrat al-Salman. The general's discount of the place as a mere "fort" discloses his naïve and reductive perspective of the world, where symbols and labels command his understanding of reality. Through this assessment, Yousef shows the random nature of symbolic meanings and how they can be operated to achieve particular benefits and plans. The poet's solicitation of St Emilion wines as a symbol of the general's

cultural favorites additionally highlights the interaction between the symbolic and the personal, underlining how individual interests and prejudices determine one's explanation of the world. By opposing the general's incomplete symbolic understanding with the complications of human experience, Yousef wants his readers to doubt the rationality of proven symbols and the power relations they epitomize.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, examining Saadi Yousef's chosen poems through the theoretical outline of Jacques Lacan's notions of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic has revealed the complex interaction among language, desire, and subjectivity in Yousef's poetic vocation. By probing the depths of human experience and consciousness, Yousef's poetry surpasses the limitations of time and place, inviting readers to consider the intricacies of life and the power relations that form our recognition of reality.

Through this examination, it has been found that Yousef's poetry acts as a mirror society's successes and evils. In fact, by relating Lacanian perceptions to Yousef's work, I have shown the veiled meanings and rigidities that infiltrate his stanzas, which show how language serves as

a tool for craving, identity development, and resistance within the symbolic order. Also, this research has highlighted the implications of being involved in a dialogue between poetry and psychoanalysis, emphasizing the transformative aptitude of creative expression in revealing the complexities of the human consciousness and defying dominant discourses on power, meaning, and representation.

This research has expanded our understanding of the complex relation between art and theory by

critically investigating Youssef's poetic imagery, these themes, and language through a Lacanian perspective. As we deal with the intricacies of Youssef's poetic landscape, we are prompted by the continuing power of language to form our insights, induce our feelings, and inflame our imaginations. Finally, the investigation of Saadi Yousef's poetry in light of Lacan's theories acts as a witness to the persistent significance of both art and psychoanalysis in interpreting the paradoxes of human reality.

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