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## The Use of Homeland Voice in Warsan Shire's "Home" Poem: Analytical Study

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### Abstract

This study deals with the diasporic poet Warsan Shire from the point of view of her use of country voice in her poem "Home", to address the horrible situation of refugees. Diasporic literary writers' depictions of home and its complexities are influenced by Africa's painful historical experience with slavery and racial oppression. Despite the host nation's influences on African migrants, the sordid effects of ethnic conflicts lead to writers' disillusionment, which leads them to indulge in sentimental nostalgia for their home of origin.

Through studying Shire's "Home" poem, to examine the country voice in the feelings of refugees' poets, there is a hidden voice of home in the lines of Shire's poem. This study aims to argue for the voice of home through the analysis of Shire's poem "Home". Also, it will focus on similar situations when home is also running with the people, as if he senses their problem and farewells them to a safer place.

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In addition, this study looked at how diasporic poets identify with the voice of their nation by using Foucauldian theory of power and the qualitative method of analysis to shed light on how diasporic immigrants behave. Warsan shire argues that nostalgia is an internal feeling of hearing the voice of home and yearning for the native place. The study concludes that there is some hidden relationship between the refugees and their native home, both as an internal relationship and as a feeling of belonging to their native country.

**Key Word** : Warsan Shire, diasporic, refugees, home voice, nostalgia .

## استخدام صوت الوطن في قصيدة "الوطن" لوارسان شاير: دراسة تحليلية

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جامعة تكريت كلية التربية للبنات

### المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة الإشارة الى الصوت الحنون للوطن والقادم من بين سطور قصيدة "الوطن" للشاعرة الصومالية المهاجرة والتي تحاكي وتفصح بها عن معانات اللاجئين بعد هروبهم من بطش الحروب في اوطانهم ، محاولة معالجة هذه المعانات من وجهة نظرها . يتأثر خيال الأدباء المهاجرين عن اوطانهم وتعقيداته بالتجربة التاريخية المؤلمة لأفريقيا مع العبودية والقمع العنصري . على الرغم من تأثير الدولة المضيفة على المهاجرين الأفارقة ، إلا أن الآثار المؤلمة للصراعات العرقية تؤدي إلى خيبة أمل الكتاب والمفكرين ، مما يدفعهم إلى الانغماس في الحنين العاطفي إلى موطنهم الأصلي . من خلال دراسة قصيدة "الوطن" لوارسان شاير، بحثت هذه الدراسة صوت الوطن في مشاعر الشعراء اللاجئين، حيث هناك صوت خفي للوطن بين سطور هذه القصيدة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مناقشة صوت الوطن من خلال تحليل قصيدة شاير "الوطن". أيضًا، سيركز على مواقف مماثلة عندما يكون المنزل أيضًا يركض مع الناس، كما لو أنه يشعر بمشاكلهم ويودعهم الى مكان أكثر أمانًا . بالإضافة إلى ذلك، نظرت هذه الدراسة في كيفية تماهي شعراء الشتات مع صوت أمتهم باستخدام نظرية فوكولديان للقوة وطريقة التحليل النوعي لتسليط الضوء على سلوك المهاجرين المغتربين. يناقش وارسان شاير بأن الحنين إلى الماضي هو شعور داخلي بسماع صوت الوطن والتوق إلى الموطن الأصلي. ثم خلصت الدراسة إلى أن هناك علاقة خفية بين اللاجئين ووطنهم الأصلي، كعلاقة داخلية وشعور بالانتماء إلى وطنهم الأم.

**الكلمات الدالة:** وارسان شاير، الشتات، اللاجئين، صوت الوطن، الحنين إلى الماضي.

## **Introduction**

An in-depth analysis of the poem "Home" by Warsan Shire, which makes use of the "homeland voice." This research looks at the diasporic poet Warsan Shire through the lens of her use of country voice in her poem "Home" to emphasize the horrifying plight of refugees. "Home" is an eight-stanza poem that gives an unfiltered look into the lives and problems of asylum-seekers who leave their war-torn "home" countries. Chandra (2020) said that Shire employs imagery in "Home" that highlights the dangers associated with an asylum seekers journey and how they are far from their "Homeland". This poem explains the circumstances that force one to abandon one's beloved country, residence, and possessions. People have no choice but to leave their country when big people who look like sharks' chase and kill their fellow citizens over and over again. An analysis of Warsan Shire's "Home" using the "Homeland Voice" as a reflection of the sentimental nostalgia of refugees towards their native countries.

Shire was born in Kenya in 1988 to Somali parents, and when she was a year old, her Somali parents brought her to England from Kenya. She was raised in London's diverse Brent neighborhood. Shire's first poem, written when she was just eleven years old, was set in Africa and marked the beginning of her career as a writer. At the age of sixteen, Shire attended a poetry slam and won, which marked the beginning of her public reading career. Shire created poetry therapy classes for those who have experienced trauma. She was moved to write after realizing how much it had helped her through her own recovery (Campbell, 2021).

Warsan Shire's poetry explores the complexities of home and departure with lines like "no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark" (Obi, Onyejizu, 2021). Warsan Shire's poetry explores the complicated relationship between home and exile. Shire uses poetic language, symbols, and images of Somalian women in the deportation center to paint a sobering picture of the plight of the Somalian immigrant who had to leave her country because of a violent conflict there (Stewart, Jadhav, 2022). Warsan Shire's "Home" recounts the harrowing journey of refugees fleeing the unrest in their home country in search of safety, shelter, and comfort from the tumultuous circumstances there.

According to Obi and Onyejizu (2021) stated: the harrowing historical experience of Africa with slavery and racial persecution has had an impact on the depictions of home and all of its intricacies in literary works written by diasporic authors. This is because, even though the host country has an effect on African immigrants, the ugly results of ethnic conflicts make writers lose hope, which makes them long for their home country for sentimental reasons. This article analyzes Warsan Shire's poem "Home" to probe the function of the national voice in the poets' accounts of exile. Shire's poems, however, include a hidden, domestic voice within their lines. This study, by analyzing Shire's poem "Home," aims to argue for the significance of the home voice, which is shown in the poem's nostalgic regret for the people who abandoned him. It will also be made clear when he appears to sense his family's pain and bids them farewell before sending them to a safer location.

The aim of this study is to argue that nostalgia is an internal desire to hear the voice of the home, which tries to guide them out of danger and demonstrates his love for them. So, this study will fill the gap, which is the voice of "home" when he was running with his people to reach them in a safe place. This research will show that refugees maintain an

unspoken connection to their homeland on an emotional and psychological level and that they have a strong sense of national identity.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the poem "Home" for Warsan Shire. These studies dealt with the poem's criticism and analysis. Moreover, there is a large volume of published studies describing the lives of refugees and asylum seekers. Also, describing the motherland as a mouth of sharks. These studies also illustrate the feeling of nostalgia. The country's situation was described as horrible, killing, dead, and messy in the first serious discussions and analyses. Also, it expressed that Shire is always writing her poetry in the style of refugee poets and referring to the situation of deportation centers, because she regards it as the best way to represent the struggle of immigrants and asylum seekers. As Chandra (2020) noted, "In Home, Shire evokes imagery which brings to light the risk associated with the journey an asylum seeker undertakes".

According to Stewart and Jadhav (2021), explain that Warsan Shire describes the reasons why people leave their Homeland and the psycho-emotional labor of the refugee crisis and how the refugee crisis affects their psycho-emotional. Moreover, Shire's poem "Home" is a famous poem that refers to forced migration and the forum related to refugees. Through this poem, Shire tries to reveal the suffering of refugees and asylum seekers at a Deportation Center.

By the use poetic language, symbols and imageries of female Somalian refugees in the deportation center, Shire depicts the worrisome state of the Somalian immigrant who was forced into exile because of the turbulent war situation in Somalia (Obi & Onyejizum, 2021).

Warsan Shire succeeded in juxtaposing the sufferings at home and the hardships in the host, which explores the resistance to oppression befalling the refugees. "That poems provide a symbol of resistance towards refugees' given fate" (Rahayu, 2020). Home's voice appears clearly in Shire's poem "Home" to represent their feelings of nostalgia in deportation centers. Also, Shire translated through her poem the difficulties and reductions that face asylum seekers, when they leave their home country. Moreover, African refugees may challenge three water places with all their difficulties to reach safer places. Sometimes these oceans are considered saviors. According to Leetsch (2019, pp. 80-95) claims that: "Shire's poetry constitutes the ocean not only as a deathly space, but also as generative: it offers up the possibilities of passage and movement, however dangerous they may be". Asylum seekers' perilous Journey forces them to escape home for safety.

Shire's poetry explores the complexities of home and departure, with lines like "No one leaves home until home is the mouth of a shark" (Obi & Onyejizu, 2021). The authors argue that there is a contrasting relationship between the nation of origin and the host country in their desire to save the refugees and keep them as people. Despite the conflict of migration and the passing of borders, diasporas are faced with cultural problems. According to Rahayu (2020), said: "this notion of home is ambivalent because it tends to be closed tight with the idea of 'returning'". As a result, these issues cause refugees to reflect on and remember their origin home, as well as to compare the homeland of origin and the host. This conflict gives them a sense of nostalgia and makes them want to return home, but they are unable to do so because their country is quite dangerous.

### **Concept of Foucauldian theory**

This study used the concept of Foucauldian theory of power and qualitative analysis to examine the ways in which diasporic poets identify with the voice of their nation. The

discourse theory of Michel Foucault investigates how people express themselves through language and proposes that power structures shape how people communicate in society. The Power and Resistance Theory of Foucault can reveal the challenges and difficulties that refugees face, whether in their home country or in the host country. The poetry of refugees mostly refers to oppression, reduction, and discrimination. These difficulties lead to internal conflicts between the feeling of nostalgia and the nature of the host country, whether in social, cultural, or political situations. So, Foucault's Power and Resistance is relevant with Shire's poem "Home" to explore the homeland's voice through this poem. This theory can deal with how the voice of home was running with refugees to guide them to safer places as a resistance to the war.

Also, Foucauldian theory can be used to look at the qualitative method of analysis and how diasporic immigrants struggle to figure out how to live in a harsh environment. Foucault concentrated that his concepts of 'power' and 'resistance' are in many methods' variables for political engagement. In the context of Warsan Shire's poem "Home," this theory would examine how the poet uses her poem as a form of resistance against the controlling power structures that have oppressed diasporic poets. Foucault argues: "Where there is power, there is resistance (Foucault 1978: 95)". So, Shire's poem "Home" translates the crisis of refugees, when they conflict between the death in their home country and the discrimination in their host country. A Foucauldian theory will be applied throughout the study to analyze the ways in which power and resistance are intertwined in the poetry of refugees' poets, which is against colonialism and suppression.

The conceptual framework draws on the colonialism process and the methods by which it has affected refugees' peoples and cultures. This would involve an inspection of the ways in which colonial powers have attempted to out down or control African cultures and voices, as well as an analysis of the ongoing effects of colonialism on African communities. In this study, the conceptualization examines the relationship between power and the discourse of resistance, which are represented by refugees and their homeland's voice. The ways in which refugees have resisted colonialism, including the presentation of oral traditions, poems, and other shapes of cultural expression. The methods by which power and knowing are built and preserved in relation to refugees, cultures, and their poems. This would include an analysis of the methods in which imperialistic powers have shaped the performance and understanding of refugees' cultures, as well as an examination of the methods in which asylum seekers have used poems to challenge and break down these exemplifications.

### **Discussion**

According to Obi & Onyejizu (2021) estate: African poetry, in contrast to prose fiction, typically focuses on local political and social themes without any diasporic conditions or undertones. So, globalization, exile consciousness, and modernity have taken the place of cultural and political disillusionment as the main topics of modern African poetry. Warsan Shire's poem "Home" draws a graphic and harrowing picture of the suffering that refugees encounter. The Shire's poem is based on the real stories of immigrants and asylum seekers who, with no other option, were forced to leave the country they had always called "home." They do not connect the idea of home with any sort of solace or comfort. It's a gaping wound on the skin that time and endeavor have failed to remedy.

Warsan Shire wrote the "home" poem from "the womb of suffering" to describe the reasons for force, why the people leave their home country, and how they are faced with new problems and crises in other countries. In so doing, it first reveals the original reasons behind the immigration from the home country, which turned out to be inspiration for the poem. Shire's poem "home" mostly focuses on home as the mouth of a shark, and all people should leave this place very fast; that means the homeland is a danger to his people. "Refugees' perilous experiences force them to flee home for safety" (Rahayu, 2020). In the first lines of the poem, the poet describes "home" as a killer and monster who tries to kill his people. People quickly run towards the border to search for a safer country, and "the whole city running as well". The poet began his poem to describe the horrible situation of the people in their home country before they became refugees. Also, they want to forget these bad days, which makes them just run to save their lives.

"no one leaves home unless  
home is the mouth of a shark,  
you only run for the border,  
when you see the whole city running as well". (Shire, 2011)

In Home, Shire uses metaphor, which brings to light the danger connected with the journey an immigrant undertakes. The use of words like 'leave', 'stay', 'us, and 'other' indicates the creation of contradictory dualities. This poem has a lot of contrasts in its lines, whether verbal or thematic.

"Home" is a poem, represents the despair that leads people to be asylum seekers. The poet describes the violence, mess, and hardship that make people leave their homelands. And through such shocking details, the poem clarifies how the choice to escape from one's homeland is difficult and painful; nobody can reach this point unless the risk of leaving is less than the risk of staying. "The robust honesty to admit the grim past haunting the poet to flee home provides a merciless description of its changing role from protecting to threatening. The portrayal of hardship over hardship before the journey was taken, when it was done, and after it was executed was vividly told all through the poem" (Rahayu, 2020).

Warsan Shire criticizes through her poem "Home" the mistreatment of plain old racism, which is clear when recalling words like "they smell strange", "go home blacks, and "savage." The poet refers to the fact that most refugees are people of color, such as Africans, and they must often contend with solid ethnic bigotry. According to Chandra (2020), explains that:

"The very conditions of 'I', 'we' and 'you' necessitate boundaries. These boundaries are traversed by a variety of groups, some more vulnerable than others. While on the one hand, the category of 'refugee' is de-historicized, and seen without the context of post-colonial responsibility, the "signs of threat" that accompany those bodies are shaped by multiple histories".

As a reaction to this harshness, Shire displays the argument that the others should have understood, there is: "no one leaves home unless/ home is the mouth of a shark/ ... no one puts their children in a boat/ .... no one crawls under fences.... " (Shire poem). The poet tries to send a message to those who say asylum seekers fail to understand the real transformation of their circumstances, that the refugees deserve nothing but pity and

kindness. All these lines of "no one ..." are a justification for their leaving of their homeland and transection to another country.

Despite this, the poet focused on the situations and conditions of refugees and how their homeland has been like a shark and monsters have tried to kill them. Also, Shire depicts the home like Doomsday and the horrible situation throughout the whole poem. It looks like justification for the reason that makes refugees leave their country. This poem also examines the feeling of nostalgia for the homeland, when the refugees are at the deportation centers and face bad behaviors like discrimination, reduction, and disrespect.

"This is due to the sordid effect of racial conflicts culminating in disillusionment of writers, who engage in the nostalgic longing for their country of origin, notwithstanding the influences of the host country on African migrants" (Obi & Onyejizu, 2021,).

Warsan Shire examines the nostalgic voice through the memory, when the refugees encounter difficulties and deny them in their host countries, but in spite of that, they still continue in their resistance to pass the border to live in these strange countries. They consider these countries safer than their homeland. So, what does it mean to have the voice of home in their feelings when they describe the home as a killer and monster?

Warsan Shire used the personification in the last stanza, when she begins in the same sweat as the poem has begun. The poet indicates to the "sweaty voice" of "home". She embodies the notion of home, when the home is running with the people and advises them to come out to another place safer than here. As in this line:

"run away from me now I dont know  
what I have become  
but I know that.  
anywhere is safer than here" (Shire, 2011).

These lines explain the sweaty mother, when the home appears to be running with people to help them be in a safer place. The sweaty voice of home reveals how the home loves its people and is afraid of them. Home was running with people to farewell them at the border to keep them safe. The homeland voice appears to show how the home sacrifices for his people. So, shire appeared to attack the homeland more through the first six stanzas. She blamed the home and described him as having the mouth of a shark, and she called him monstrous. Then Shire refers to the sweaty voice and helps them by running with people to put them in a safer place. So, this is the voice of homeland that appears through Warsan Shire pom "Home".

Shire speaks of the "sweaty voice" of "home." It implies that the personified concept of home is likewise moving with the people. Her voice is hot, tired, and dejected. All she could say was to run away and leave her alone. She is unaware of who she has become. But she understands that anywhere on the planet is safer than where they dwell. This is not only the voice of the home; it is the voice of millions of refugees who are out on the streets, beneath railway carriages, flooded trucks, plastic-covered, and filthy. When they looked back for the last time, they had just one thought: "anywhere is safer than here (Shire, 2011)".

### **Conclusion**

This case study shows the significance of country native voice in Warsan Shire's "Home" poem to address the horrible situation of refugees. There is a hidden voice of home

that comes from the lines of Shire's poem. Warsan shire, through this poem of "Home" argued that nostalgia is an internal feeling to hear the voice of home. The study submitted, there is some hidden relation between the refugees and their native home as an internal connection, and as a feeling of belonging to their native country. There is a hidden voice of home that comes from the lines of Shire's poem. This study examined the voice of home through the analysis of Shire's poem "Home", and it submitted that there is homeland voice of home appeared as resistant and defender about his people. "Home" farewell his people with the hope of meeting again after the crisis. This is the voice of the homeland, the "sweaty voice", It is like the mother's voice. Refugees and asylum seekers should understand and make sense of that. If they sense a nostalgic feeling, the homeland also has a nostalgic voice.

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