

## Defiance theory in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish: An Analysis

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### Abstract

*Poetry can echo in people's hearts and create intensive feelings in their minds that help and inspire them for a revolution. It is considered as the best weapon that lives and stays forever. During the political clash and conflict between two states that sought recognition of their independence. Mahmoud Darwish, a courageous Palestinian poet emerged against colonialism in order to strengthen mental power of Palestinian people by his fervent poetry. He stood as a representative and speaker for the Palestinians. His poetry is so strong and effective that touched the heart of Palestinians people. For this, he became a symbol of heroic resistance and his poems have been recited across the Arab countries with a great sense of pride and prestige. The sense of defiance is main focus of this paper, of his four selected poems. He has applied poetry as a powerful and collective effort against Israel to release Palestinian people from a critical situation.*

**Keywords:** Mahmoud Darwish, poetry, defiance, nature, culture and heritage

### Introduction

Darwish was born at Birwa in 1941. He is a famous Palestinian poet. He offered his whole life to protect Palestinian people from colonizers through his political activism and his writings. He writes about his country and its people who have suffered for a long time. He knows well that the defense of a country does not depend only on armed forces. But it requires writing. When he was just seven years old and his family was bound to leave their village Birwa due to Israeli soldiers to establish the state of Israel. After a year, when he came back with his family in his village, he found his home completely destroyed and he also came to know that his village has become the part of the state of Israel. He was shocked and became hurt. He felt to stand against colonizer for saving his country. He preferred literary work to unite Palestinians raising voice

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against Israel. He wrote more than twenty collections of poetry, most of them translated in different languages. His writings touched the hearts of Arab People. Hala Nassar 2011, considers Darwish as the pioneer of Arab resistance whose resistance has transcended all limits of space and time<sup>2</sup>. He thought that powerful words would have positive influence in the minds of Palestinian people in creating rage and bitterness towards colonizers. So, he raised his voice against the state of Israel and its oppression boldly. He knew and believed that poetry is the only powerful instrument to struggle against colonialism to redeem dignity and identity. Hourani says: poet should be creator of a new world”<sup>3</sup> In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, many Palestinian poets stood against Israeli Govt. with their fervent poetry to awaken people for fighting to redeem their people. The main object of literary writings of that time, therefore, had been defiance, dignity and the continuous faith in the victory for the Palestinians. Literature, especially poetry, made an important role in inviting people to come forward to a defiance movement after 1948. The armed movement (national movement) was mostly ruined after catastrophe (*nakaba*). As a result, there was no way to discuss and focus the national issues. Very few newspapers that operated before the establishment of the state of Israel were ruined and banned. The Palestinians in the new society were unorganized and unable to represent their national problems and affairs. In this context, poetry and spoken words were considered as only way to lead the Palestinian issues and activities. “Poetry should play an active role in rebuilding and revitalizing Arab society and bringing about revolutionary change”<sup>4</sup>. The defiance literature was created as the reaction for the missing of Palestinian`s motherland and identity. It was advanced by many Palestinian poets. Their writings were full of anger and bitterness on the colonizers. So, the emerging out of Mahmoud Darwish and developing the structural literary movement whose main object to encourage his people to generate defiance towards the colonizers. Poets are the source of inspiration. They can make a new situation according to the society`s need. They also can easily make impact on people`s heart for positive change. So, about the role of poet “In the later part of the twentieth century, as challenges and crises intensified, the poet became even more involved and his role became increasingly critical”<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> .Hala Nassar. , Darwish and the need for a new poetry of resistance for the Arab spring. Near East Quarterly: Issue1V May 2011. P 1-7

<sup>3</sup> History of the Arab Peoples, Albert Hourani,(New York: Oxford University Press,1990), 396-397.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, page -224

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, page- 223

No one has described the literature of defiance clearer than Moshe Dyyan (1915-1981), Israeli defiance minister during the six day war in 1967, who said in an interview with *Ma`rref* (Israeli daily newspaper) that “only one poem of Fadwa Taqwan, is enough to create ten Palestinian fighters”<sup>6</sup>. Darwish was regarded in his poetry as *al- munadil*(*The freedom fighter*)<sup>7</sup>. Palestinian people addressed him as the source of inspiration. He was able to touch the pulse the nation. He guided his people for struggling against colonizers. He also played a vital role as the spokesperson. Bassam K Frangieh comments on him:”Mahmoud Darwish, serving as a representative and spokesperson for Palestinians.”<sup>8</sup> In this article, the researcher analyzes four poems by Mahmoud Darwish that elucidate and explore the defiance against the colonizers through nature, culture and heritage.

### Israeli approaches towards Palestinians

Before establishing the state of Israel, The Palestinians were considered as the second-class citizens in Israel. There was no association or union for the Palestinian people to run their activities. They had no right to work in different offices and educational institutions. Israeli authority had limited the work area of Palestinian people. So, the Palestinians were bound to work in stark areas like handy work, mainly building and construction. Israeli govt. was always alert and conscious about the literary production of the Palestinian writers. When any writing was published from Palestine, it went through Israeli censorship channels. This was not only done through close watching of publications but also through creating an uneducated Palestinian population by preventing the establishment of any Arabic school; even in Jewish schools, the number of Arab students was restricted. “Before 1955 and 1965 the number of Arab students in secondary schools was three percent. There were only one hundred Palestinian students who completed their higher education at that time.”<sup>9</sup> After the establishment of the Israeli state, Palestinians were not able to enjoy civil rights. They lived like immigrants in their own country. Israeli soldiers oppressed Palestinians and they were bound to leave their country through deportation. Israeli govt. worked on ethnically cleansing on the rest of the people who were remaining in their motherland.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, page- 232

<sup>7</sup> Shairu Ardil Muhtallat , Al Nakash, Beirut; Dar al Hilal, p.59

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, page-59

<sup>9</sup> Interview. The politics of poetry. Mahmoud Darwish. News week International, 20 March. Page- 62



Moreover, those who remained after cleansing, were delayed for registration them as the citizens of the new state and did not grant them residency permits that eventually led to their deportation. In this regard, Bassam K. Frangieh says:

“During the second world war, the Arab countries suffered a series of tragic events and faced increasingly stark realities in different sectors like political, social, national, and cultural spheres. Arabs were faced with complicated outdoor conspiracies and foreign interventions, harsh economic conditions and internal and external threats especially the most devastating blow that came to the Palestine in 1948 with the creation of the state of Israel through deportation the Palestinian people towards the neighboring Arab countries. Palestine became a helpless nation of refugees; its citizens were not only deprived of their motherland but also of their dignity”.<sup>10</sup>

### **Emerging of Palestinian poets**

The Arab defeat in 1948 was pathetic and tragic for the Arab leaders especially for the Palestinians in the history. It carried disappointing despair and demoralization in their hearts. Its intensive affection made them shocked and hopeless. Because their armed forces could not give them any benefit. So the people felt an initiative work like literature that would become a key element to address the situation. Among the various options of literature, poetry is regarded as the best weapon to cope with the situation. It is the only way to describe the human feelings. It can effect easier on people to raise any revolt against oppressor. Moreover, it is more powerful than any other printed literature. As a result, a group of modern Palestinian Arabic poets emerged out with their fervent writings to awake the Palestinians about their rights and identity. Bassam K. Frangieh remarks: “Arab poets confronted these tragic events with a new attitude of defiance and challenge against this humiliating reality”<sup>11</sup>. So, firstly, the poet who stood beside the Palestinians to continue the issue, is Abd al- Rahim Mahmoud (1913-1948) that bore his soul in his hand and fought against colonizers through his poetry. He says:

I shall carry my soul in the palm of my hand  
And threw it into the cavern of death;  
A life must bring joy to the hearts of friends

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<sup>10</sup> Tradition, Modernity ,and Post Modernity In Arabic Literature(Essays in honor of professor Issa J. Boullata) Edited by Kamal abdel Malek and Weal Halak.Brill. Leiden-Boston.2000. Page-223

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, page- 223

And a death brings fear to hearts of foes;  
The spirit of a man is two aims:  
To achieve victory, or to die fighting.<sup>12</sup>

Basam K. Fringieh comments on him: “Abd al – Rahim Mahmoud, a courageous poet and a man of purpose who changed his vision into reality and the reality of his life into a myth and he shall remain a symbol of heroism and pride for his people<sup>13</sup>. Another poet Samih al- qasim(b.1939) came out to deal the Palestinian objects through his writing. His poetry plays a constructive role to revolt against Israeli Army. His compositions also helped Palestinians to encourage fighting against colonizers. Bassam K. fringieh says on him: “Samih al- Qasim (b.1939) emerged out in the Arab defeat as the strongest poets in the Arab world in their unwavering determination to continue the struggle”<sup>14</sup>. Fadwa Taqwanis is another poet whose writings have been deeply related to her national case. She raised her powerful voice of defiance through political poetry is only for Palestinian freedom and dignity. Israeli defense minister remarked her political poetry “Taqwan`s poems is enough to create ten fighters for the Palestinian defiance”<sup>15</sup>. Another famous poet Tawfiq Zayyad stood against Israeli govt. and its invasion. Most of his defiance poems were set up for music and became national emblems for Palestinian struggle. His verses were so effective and enchanting that considered as the source of inspiration and spiritual strength for Palestinian people. Bassam K. Fringieh says: “Zayyad`s songs became an integral part of Palestinian defiance ideology”<sup>16</sup>.

Arab poets emerged out to be defender for their people and their rights even though to die for them and their country. They have at no time in the history been entirely free from political and social commitment. “Since pre-Islamic times, the Arab poet has played a critical role in his society: as the voice of his tribe, its defender and has always been embodied in the warrior poet who fought against injustice and oppression”<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Shairu Ardil Muhtallat , Al Nakash, Beirut; Dar al Hilal, p.60

<sup>13</sup> Tradition, Modernity ,and Post Modernity In Arabic Literature(Essays in honor of professor Issa J. Boullata) Edited by Kamal abdel Malek and Weal Halak.Brill. Leiden-Boston.2000. Page-223

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, page- 223

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, page- 223

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, page- 223

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, page- 222

## Short history of Arab Defiance

Defiance was also started in the Arab countries through two types. One is armed defiance and the other is literary defiance. If we look behind, it is seen that three wars occurred between two states Palestine and Israel in different times especially in 1948, 1967 and 1973. Moreover, Arab defiance (both armed and literary) was deeply connected to the Palestinian movement of resistance dated back to 1936. The literary defiance activity had started a little bit before the armed struggle. It is begun on the hand of Abd al- Rahim Mahmoud (1903-1948). The first struggle had started in 1936. It was totally armed related in deed.

1948 is the tragic and painful year in the history of Arab world especially Palestine. Arab armies were defeated in this year and this year, so called Israeli state was founded by the naked support of the United Kingdoms on the occupied land of Palestine. Arab defiance was continuing in low speed for several years while the Arab people especially Palestinians suffered a lot.<sup>18</sup>

Though the armed defiance was basically muted and inactive but the literary defiance was remained active. It became more active and got energy after muting armed resistance. Literary defiance is indeed dormant fire that acts slowly but reacts deeply. It finds out a platform to use public sentiment against any injustice, oppression and maltreatment. It also helps people to stand legal rights. A lot of poets emerged out in the sky of poetry who narrated their sorrows and pains in their poetry. They focus their national issue in their poems. Bassam K. Firingieh comments: “As for Palestinian poets, they focused their anger and bitterness on the Israelis, the Arab states, and the West, they have long described their countrymen as victims of history, but also courageous heroes fighting to redeem their people. The underlying tenets of Palestinian poetry have been resistance and defiance, determination in their struggle, and continuing faith in their ultimate victory”<sup>19</sup>. Among these Palestinian poets, Mahmoud Darwish came out as a harbinger of Palestinian people and he is said as a defiance revival and is regarded as the father of Arab resistance poetry.

<sup>18</sup> Raja Al- Naqash. Mahmoud Darwish: The Poet of occupied land. Beirut: Dar al Hilal, 1969. 14-16

<sup>19</sup> Tradition, Modernity, and Post Modernity In Arabic Literature (Essays in honor of professor Issa J. Boullata) Edited by Kamal abdel Malek and Weal Halak. Brill. Leiden-Boston. 2000. Page 232



## Defiance in Arabic literature

In Arabic Language, the word *Mukawama*(defiance) is composed of three Arabic alphabets (Kaf, waow and mim) and the compiled form of these letters is *Kawmun* (community) whose meaning stands for nation, tribe, public and community. From this origin, many words are formed like *Ikamatun* (establishment) that means to stand, to establish, to set up, to make, to build and other word from this origin *Taqviem* (struture) that refers to shape, to sketch, to form, to reform and to evaluate. So, the word *Mukawama* is created from this origin which indicates to resist, to defend, to fight, to protect and to prevent as well as so many words could be originated from this word (). Basically, the word *Mukawama* (defiance) is related to the nation and it's the linguistically significance. Defiance means public struggle of a nation or a community. Linguistic analysis is needed to understand its real and prime connectivity of a nation, because no word is formed without its historical background. So, the word *Mukawama* (defiance) is formed and originated in a nation on a situation or an age when they have faced a critical situation politically and culturally through national and international conspiracy. So, the word *Mukawama* (defiance) has its historical significance and political importance since its origination. Palestine is one of the oldest cities in the world that has faced many foreign occupations, oppressions from the ancient period.<sup>20</sup>

It is difficult to mention the exact time of using the word *Mukawama* (defiance) in Arabic literature. But it is seen that the using of the word *Mukawama* (defiance) at the end of April in 1936, to resist and protest the Jewish- English aggression on Palestinian people.<sup>21</sup> It was an extensive mass movement of Palestinian people. Farmers, Labors, Teachers and mass people took part widely in the movement. The main organizer of this movement was Iazuddin al- Kasem. Many literary persons and poets were participated in the movement through their organizational activities. During that time, there were two types of poets who joined the movement directly and some of them martyred in the battle like Abd al- Rahim Mahmoud and al- Kasem who were killed in the battle field. Both of them were poet. And another group of poets wrote revolutionary poetry against colonialism. These compositions entice and encourage Palestinians to struggle against the

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<sup>20</sup> Shairu Ardil Muhtallat, Raja al- Naqash. P. 59

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.p.59

Israeli oppression. They use poetry as a weapon to bring the nation in a platform for achieving ultimate goal.

### **Defiance through Nature**

Among the Arab lands, Palestine is a wonderful place. It has an extraordinary beauty and amazing nature which enchanted the Arab poets. They described this nature in their poems. A famous Arab critic Raja Al- Naqash says: “Palestine has a unique natural beauty and there is a famous poem on nature by the Arab poet Ali Mohammad Taha which cannot be traced in any other place in the Arab world except in that of Palestine”<sup>22</sup>. The inaugural lines of the poem are:

Do not say a green land here  
Here is a green stone too.<sup>23</sup>

These lines depict the Palestinian natural beauty. The land is very fertile. Though there are many stones but most of them are green, productive and fertile stones. The olive and other trees can easily grow on it. So, this land produces reputed poets like green trees. They played important role to prepare Palestinians to stand against colonizers by composing fervent poetry. They selected poetry as the main component to redeem their dignity. Among these poets, Mahmoud Darwish, is a Palestinian distinguished poet brought up in this land and charmed him its unique beauty. So, it is Darwish, a poet, who utilized nature as a form of defiance to the colonizers.

Foysal Darraj, an Arab Analyst and critic says: Darwish sketches the real image of defiance. He (Darraj) also goes on to tell that “ there are no differences between the land and the poet because he is its origin and part and everything is within the poet since he has appointed himself as an origin and truthful protector of what he creates; human, flowers, birds, and fruits.”<sup>24</sup> That`s why, the poet has a deep and close relation to nature.

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<sup>22</sup> Raja Al- Naqash. Mahmoud Darwish: The Poet of occupied land. Beirut: Dar al Hilal, 1969. P.167

<sup>23</sup> Shairu Ardil Muhtallat, Raja al- Naqash. P. 60

<sup>24</sup> Transfiguration in the image of Palestine in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish. Faysal Darraj. In Hala Kamis and Najat Rahman(eds). Mahmoud Darwish, Exil`s poet: Critical Essays . Olive Branch Press. P. 59



The metaphors which are used in his poetry that comes from the nature. Ravichandran comments that “Mataphore always gives us a window into a writer’s ideas and thoughts”<sup>25</sup>. Darwish’s images, ideas and thoughts are originated from nature. Because nature is the central part from which the poet applies his images, shapes and symbols and it invokes explicitly and implicitly the defiance theory that dominates his poetry. Nature emerges in his poetry as the source of defiance against the colonizers. It helps armed struggle as well as condemns the colonial violence. The first poem “*A lover from Palestine*” is a natural centric source in which the poet collects his images, ideas and thoughts to react and express anger and anguish towards the colonizers. He also delineates fervent pictures and shadows of defiance. Here “*Lover*” is the symbol of Palestine who constantly represents the poet’s defiance. The natural components of Palestine like flowers, birds, animals, water, winds, storms and olive trees, other plants and so on – are the central instruments of his defiance which are seen in his poetry clearly. The poet says:

Your eyes are a thorn in my heart,  
Your words were my song,  
I saw you last at the port,  
I saw your face in the walls,  
And you are the words of my lips,  
You are the fire and the water  
Palestinian in life and Palestinian in death.<sup>26</sup>

In the lines above, Darwish delineated his country as the main source of inspiration. It is the central part. He mentioned his country’s ambiance and atmosphere wherein nature is seen at the central position and the poet regard it directly using the pronouns “you” and “your”. This direction and the narrating the images and symbols that are depicted from the poet’s environment evoke the anguish and rage of the Arab people to the colonizers. The image “you are the fire and the water” hints at the centralism of the poet’s nature that it is merely the centre of beautiful scenes but the centre of defiance to the oppressors.

I saw you in the thorny hills  
A sheep less shepherd- chased

<sup>25</sup> Metaphors as Ideological Constructs for identity In Malyasian Short Stories.3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies. 17(Special Issue) 2011, p. 116

<sup>26</sup> Mahmoud Darwish: The poet of occupied land. Raja al Naqash. Beirut: Dar al Hilal. p.61

I saw you on the ruins  
And once you were a green orchard  
I stood a stranger knocking at your door the doors,  
the windows, the connected stone vibrated <sup>27</sup>

These verses are also quoted from “*A lover from Palestine*”. The poet describes his country as the place of barren due to invasion of colonizers. Though, its beauty charms and enchants the visitors. Now it loses its beauty. So, the poet feels deep pain and sorrows. The indicator words are: “thorny hills”, “a sheep less shepherd”, and “the ruins” that indicates barrenness of the country. Once it was a “green orchard” and fertile produces different fruits and crops. In the last line of the poem, the word vibrating “doors” epitomizes the sense of defiance invoked within the poet by his surroundings that itself seems to foretell and support the armed struggle. The ‘vibrating objects’ delineated show that nature foreshadows the resistance that would rock the Arab world when the colonizers people rise outraged against the colonizers.

“Dairy of a Palestinian wound” is the second poem of Mahmud Darwish which is published in 1971. In this poem, the poet depicts Palestinian nature as a body which is wounded by the colonizers` oppression, repression, maltreatment, the poet and the Palestinians are the part of that wounded and bleeding body. This real image of nature conveys the pain and sorrows when the body is wounded and injured, it indicates the theme of defiance when the germs are resisted by the blood system and similarly the occupied land, expresses a kind of defiance to its occupier and colonizers. The poet says:

And on our eyelashes the grass of Galilee,  
This land absorbs the skins of martyrs<sup>28</sup>

The images and symbols delineated above the lines where nature represents the stark defiance of the Palestinian people towards the colonizers.

I saw in the stalls, in the streets  
Warming yourself by the fire  
In blood dripping from the sun  
In the salt of the sea and the sand  
You are the fire

<sup>27</sup> Mahmoud Darwish: The poet of occupied land. Raja al Naqash. Beirut: Dar al Hilal. p.61

<sup>28</sup> Mahmoud Darwish: The poet of occupied land. Raja al Naqash. Beirut: Dar al Hilal. p.62

And the water<sup>29</sup>

Here the poet narrates the continuing defiance of the Palestinian people and their sufferings due to the repression and suppression of the colonizers. He delineates the Palestinian land as injured and bleeding body of which the poet is an active part of the defiance. This realistic and organic shadow of nature in the occupied land invokes a type of defiance to its colonizers and occupiers. The images and symbols of defiance delineated in the poem:

And on our eyelashes the grass of Galilee,  
If we could run to her like a river  
we and our country are one flesh and bone.  
we are its wound but a wound that fights.<sup>30</sup>

This picture bears the fervent meaning of defiance and resistance in the sense that the nature is depicted as a body which is the centre of defiance. The poet and Palestinian people are a part of that injured body, they are interconnected, and they are resisting against colonizers through drawing their spirit and power from the central source of defiance, and that is Palestinian nature.

**Defiance through heritage and culture:**

Culture and heritage are the main source of inspiration of a nation. It helps a nation to stand his enemy. It also provides mental and spiritual power for recovery previous. Arab culture is the most powerful and enriched culture in the world due to its ancient history. Darwish felt the fact and used it against colonizers as the principal source of defiance. The poet expressed his resistance through mentioning his origin, root, ancestor, culture and heritage. It is a unique way to express his anger, rage and bitterness towards the colonizers. The poet says in his poem *Identity Card*:

Write down!  
I am an Arab  
And my identity card number is fifty thousand  
I have eight children  
And the ninth will come after a summer  
Will you be angry?  
Write down!  
I am an Arab  
You have stolen the orchards of my ancestors

<sup>29</sup> Mahmoud Darwish: The poet of occupied land. Raja al Naqash. Beirut: Dar al Hilal. p.62

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.p.62



And the land which I cultivated  
 Along with my children  
 And you left nothing for us  
 Except for these rocks.<sup>31</sup>

Above these lines, the poet affirms his Arab Identity; he declares firmly and starkly that he is an Arab and his ancestor also Arab. So, they deserve that this land is only for them. By mentioning his identity card number fifty thousand, he mentions his depth root in this land. So, he not only declares himself as a Palestinian but also an Arab. He bears Arab's blood in his artery. He feels proud of being part of Arab World. He does not confine his origin to the restricted area of Palestine. Moreover, he covers his identity with the Arab frame where Palestine is a part of this big Arab world. He boldly declares his identity before the Israeli soldiers and colonizers. He blames the colonizers for having invaded of his landscape and destroyed his land that exists as barren and rocks. The thematic structure is the identity and dignity of Palestinian people. Bassam k. Fringieh says: "Darwish became a symbol of heroic defiance, and his verses have been recited throughout the Arab world with a great sense of pride."<sup>32</sup>

Therefore!  
 Write down on the top of the first page:  
 I do not hate people  
 Nor do I encroach  
 But if I become hungry  
 The usurper's flesh will be my food  
 Beware..  
 Beware..  
 Of my hunger  
 And my anger!<sup>33</sup>

These verses are also taken from *Identity card*. Here the poet clearly says that he is man of humanity. He loves all human being. He does not hate man. He believes that all are from one man. So, they are connected in the nexus of world brotherhood. He is free from racism. He mentions that he dislikes oppression and encroachment. But he alerts his foes don't treat me as timid and coward. I am always aware of my peoples' and countries' interests. I can do everything for my

<sup>31</sup> Mahmoud Darwish: The poet of occupied land. Raja al Naqash. Beirut: Dar al Hilal. p.63

<sup>32</sup> Tradition, Modernity, and Post Modernity In Arabic Literature (Essays in honor of professor Issa J. Boullata)  
 Edited by Kamal abdel Malek and Weal Halak.Brill. Leiden-Boston.2000. Page233

<sup>33</sup> Mahmoud Darwish: The poet of occupied land. Raja al Naqash. Beirut: Dar al Hilal. p.64

beloved people and country. I am suffering from identity crisis and my country is being destroyed due to the invasion of colonizers. He strongly says if I become hungry and homeless then you will be regarded as my main foe. I will apply my ability and power for the protection of my interest even I go ahead to kill and uproot my enemies. They have destroyed my country through bombing on it and has become desert and barren. The tone of this poem is the expression of anger, rage, enthusiasm and bravery. This voice seems strong and powerful and the words convincing and containing the power that is sufficient to shake the Palestinians. The words reflect the pains, sorrows and sufferings of the countrymen who are victims of the colonizers. The poet also repeats the words and phrases that reveal his situation strongly.

Darwish describes the sorrows, repressions and grieves of his countrymen through his great poem *I am Yusuf Oh father* perfectly. He depicts Palestinian lamentable situation and stark condition in this poem through Arab tradition and heritage before the world conscience. To express his complaint, he compares the story of colonizers with Palestine as the story of prophet Yusuf with his brothers addressed in the Holy Quran. He tells in this poem about the colonizers' aggressive expression, negligence, abhorrence and negative impressions towards the Palestinian people. Balraj Dhillon points out "Darwish's poetry resists separatist nationalists' discourses by frequently humanizing both Israelis and Palestinians- humanizing the enemy of each"<sup>34</sup>. He narrates here the colonizers' oppression, maltreatment, injustice and discrimination against his countrymen. The poet says:

I am Yusuf. oh father.  
O father, my brothers do not love me nor want me among them  
They assault me and throw stones and words at me.  
They want me to die so that they can eulogize me  
They closed the door of your home and left me outside.  
They expelled me from the field  
They poisoned my vineyards  
They destroyed my toys, o father.<sup>35</sup>

In these verses, the poet regarded 'Father' as the world conscience and the whole mankind as human family where Yusuf as a symbol human being. Hence, the poet addresses his father: *I am*

<sup>34</sup> Subaltern Voices and Perspective: The Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish. Journal of the Centre for studies in Religion and Society. Graduate Studies Association,9(1) , p.60

<sup>35</sup> Mahmoud Darwish: The poet of occupied land. Raja al Naqash. Beirut: Dar al Hilal. p.63

*Yusuf*. Here the poet wants to say that he is a member of the family. The poet complains that his brothers do not behave well but they desire his death and do not allow him to live among them. They make plot against him all types of bad deeds. They want his termination. He depicts in this poem Palestinian as a helpless, powerless and motionless innocent child expecting help from

others because he could not defend himself what belongs to him. Darwish asserts, “poems can’t establish a state, But can establish metaphorical homeland in the minds of the people. I think my poems have built some houses in this landscape”<sup>36</sup>

### Conclusion

Darwish is one of the greatest and contemporary Arab poets who was able to reach the unique position as a poet of Palestinian people. The main object of his poetry is to create awareness in the heart of Palestinian people. His poetry starkly focuses on Palestinian issues. He forcefully echoed against colonialism and its oppression. Most of his poems have indicated to search identity and redeem the dignity of Palestinians. His speeches and images appear in his poetry spontaneous and alive and reflect nationalist topics to the landscape of the place and hard living of the people. The four poems analyzed here approach the main theme of defiance and resistance by narrating nature and heritage and culture.

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<sup>36</sup> Interview. The politics of poetry. Mahmoud Darwish. News week International, 20 March. Page- 1