



The Desire of a War Child: A Systematic Literature Review of Mahmoud Darwish's Poem "Ilā Ummī"

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Abstract

This systematic literature review examines existing scholarship on Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Ilā Ummī" (To My Mother), a poignant expression of a war child's longing for maternal affection, childhood innocence, and the symbolic homeland of Palestine. Drawing from 10 selected articles published in national and international journals, the study synthesizes analyses employing semiotic approaches, semantic interpretation, stylistic examination, and thematic exploration of nationalism and resistance. Key findings reveal that the word "mother" carries dual significance: a literal reference to the poet's biological mother and a powerful metaphor for Palestine as the nurturing birthplace stripped away by conflict and exile. The poem, written in 1965 during Darwish's imprisonment, conveys profound sadness, nostalgia, and grief, amplified by intertextual echoes (e.g., from Abdullah Al-Baradouni's work) and figurative devices such as personification, metaphor, and symbolism (e.g., bread, coffee, olive trees, and birds representing Palestinian youth and homeland). These elements transform personal yearning into a collective call for resistance against colonial occupation, embodying Darwish's role as a voice of Palestinian identity and *Adab al-Muqawamah* (literature of resistance). The review underscores the poem's enduring relevance in depicting how war deprives children of joyful pasts, replacing them with aspirations for return and liberation. Implications highlight the need for further interdisciplinary studies that integrate cultural, political, and psychological dimensions to deepen the understanding of Darwish's contributions to postcolonial and exile literature.

Keywords:

Mahmoud Darwish,
Palestinian Poetry,
Motherland Symbolism,
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Introduction

Mahmoud Salim Husain Darwish is known as a revolutionary poet whose works loudly voiced the Palestinian cause for independence. He emerged in the midst of the decline of his nation in social, economic, and educational aspects, and often criticized the looting of Palestinian territories through his literature.¹ Darwish envisioned the future of Palestine under Zionist imperialism and used poetry as a tool of resistance as well as patriotism.² Darwish began writing poetry at school, with the first collection of poems published in 1960. His poems focus on the fate of his homeland, influenced by the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict. The war between Palestinians and Israelis has taken a toll on the childhoods of children who have been victimized, lost their families and futures, and lived with hunger. The expression of social phenomena gives rise to literary works that reflect empirical conditions. Poetry is one of the literary works that possesses high literary value and can touch the human heart.³ The darkness of the war that occurred sparked the author's interest in exploring poetry to uncover the contents of a person's heart who was deprived of the beautiful memories of childhood and the affection of a mother due to the war's darkness. As a prolific poet, Darwish wrote from 1960 to 2009, demonstrating the role of poetry in arousing the spirit of struggle. Considered one of the most important contemporary poets, Darwish became part of the generation of contemporary Arabic poets of the fifties. Through his poems, Darwish encourages the Palestinian people to fight against the Israeli occupation.⁴ His influence was significant in the rise and struggle of the Palestinian population. Darwish's poems played an essential role in inspiring resistance to Israel and fighting for the homeland that had been captured.⁵

The anthology of Darwish's poems, *Asyiq min Falistin*, consists of 28 poems published in 1966. In this study, the researcher focuses on the poetry of Ila Ummi. The selection of this poem as the object of research is based on several factors.⁶ First, the researcher argues that the poem reflects the thoughts of Mahmoud Darwish. Second,

¹ Muhammad Ardiansyah Raden Kurniawan et al., "Analisis Semiotika Riffaterre dalam Puisi 'Hiya fil Masāi Wahīdatin' Karya Mahmoud Darwish," *Kajian Linguistik dan Sastra* 9, no. 1 (2024): 43–61, <https://doi.org/10.23917/kls.v9i1.3233>.

² Hamoud Yahya Ahmed and Ruzy Suliza Hashim, "Resistance from a Distance: Mahmoud Darwish's Selected Poems of Exile in English," *AWEJ: Arab World English Journal*, Special Issue on Literature, no. 2 (2014): 158–66, <https://awej.org/images/AllIssues/SpecialIssues/Literature2/13.pdf>.

³ Widya Amalia Putri, Indrya Mulyaningsih, and Itaristanti, "Hubungan Kebiasaan Membaca Karya Sastra," *KABASTRA* 3, no. 1 (2023): 152–65, <https://journal.untidar.ac.id/index.php/kabastara/article/view/437>.

⁴ Khaled M S Masood, "Manifestations of Nature and Politics in Mahmoud Darwish's Metaphors," *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics* 66 (2020): 53–66, <https://doi.org/10.7176/jll/66-08>.

⁵ Mukhotob Hamzah, "Perbandingan Konsep Linguistik Ferdinand de Saussure Dan Abdul Qāhir Al-Jurjānī: Kajian Konseptual," *Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 9, no. 2 (2021): 139–49, <https://doi.org/10.24036/jbs.v9i2.111960>; Nawal Al-Sheikh, "Metaphors Stemming from Nature in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish," *International Journal of English and Literature* 7, no. 2 (2021): 80–91, <https://doi.org/10.5897/ijel2021.1440>.

⁶ Mukhotob Hamzah and Muhammad Barrunnawa, "Representasi Keresahan Mahmoud Darwish dalam Puisi al-Sijn: Kajian Semiotik Riffaterre," *Al-Ma'Rifah* 18, no. 1 (2021): 27–38, <https://doi.org/10.21009/almakrifah.18.01.03>.

these three poems contain figurative language and signs that are interesting to analyze more deeply. *Asyiq min Falistin*'s anthology of poems describes a poet's longing and love for Palestine, the country of his birth. The poet in this poem expresses his profound longing for Palestine, a memory that is deeply ingrained.⁷ This longing is reflected in every word and sentence in the poem. The poet realized that his love for Palestine was so great that he wanted to return and live there permanently.

One of Darwish's poems, "Ilā Ummī," exhibits emotional depth and rich symbolism, reflecting the personal and universal bond between a child and the mother. Through meaningful yet straightforward language, Darwish effectively conveys the longing, love, and respect he feels for his mother. These sentiments also represent those of many individuals who are separated from their families and homeland. The poem not only describes personal relationships but also contains social criticism and reflection on the identity and experiences of the Palestinian diaspora. This poem is remarkably insightful about how literature can be used to express a nation's collective experiences, struggles, and hopes, making it a great source of research in literary, cultural, and political studies.

This research method employs a systematic literature review, which involves identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting all previous research results obtained by the researcher.⁸ The results of previous studies were systematically reviewed and identified in the selected research articles. When collecting data, the researcher used 10 articles related to the semiotic analysis of Ila Ummi's poetry, his language style, political elements of poetry, and Mahmoud Darwish's language style. Articles are obtained from national or international journals. The articles were then analyzed and tabulated in a table, which included the researcher's name, the year of publication, the journal, and the research results. The content of this article presents a discussion of several articles that have been reviewed and compared to draw a subsequent conclusion. The results of this literature study provide a foundation for understanding the depth of meaning in the poem "Ila Ummi".

Result and Discussion

Research related to the analysis of the linguistic elements of Ilā Ummī 's poetry and other Darwish poetry works. The articles reviewed employ a variety of research methods. Darwish's poetry, which draws from a Palestinian background, is the scope of these studies.

⁷ Ayelet Even-Nur, "The Poem is What Lies between a Between': Mahmoud Darwish and the Prosody of Displacement," *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 22, no. 1 (2020): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.3697>.

⁸ Shabana Nazar, "Mahmoud Salim Darwish: An Arab Poet of National Identity," *Journal Usooluddin* 4, no. 1 (2020): 45–56, <https://journalusooluddin.com/index.php/irjdu/article/view/98>.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of the Literature

No	Journal	Heading	Writer
1	Diwan: Journal of Arabic Language and Literature, Vol. 9 No. 2, December 2023, page 225-241.	Michael Riffaterre's Semiotic Analysis of the Poem ' Ilā Ummī by Mahmoud Darwish	Mochammad Faizun dan Andrew Dedita Dwiki Kawa
2	An-Nahdah Al-'Arabiyah; Journal of Arabic Language and Literature, Vol. 2 No. 1, September 2022, Page 247-267	Representasi Semiotika Roland Barthes Dalam Syair "Ahinnu Ila Khubzi Ummi" Karya Mahmoud Darwish	Maulana Ihsan Ahmad
3	Rumpun Journal of Malay Literature, Vol. 9 No. 2, June 2022, Page 87 –102.	Analysis of Mahmoud Darwish and Taufiq Ismail Poems Based on Genetic Structuralism	Jumadil dan Nazri Atoh
4	Al-Ma'rifah; Journal of Arabic Culture, Language and Literature. Vol 19 No. 1, April 2022, page 83-92	Gaya Bahasa dalam Puisi Ahinnu ilā Khubzi Ummī Karya Mahmoud Darwis	Rahma Sabiah
5	Tadris Al-'Arabiyyah; Journal of Arabic Language and Language Education, Vol. 2 No. 2, October 2023, page 140-155	The Representative Meaning of Longing in Mahmoud Darwish's "Ila Ummi" Poem Viewed from a Semantic Approach	Nurul Ma'rifah dan Dewi Intan Sari
6	Iraqi; Journal of Language Studies, Vol. 3 No. 2, January 2020, page 26-51	The Poet and Identity: A Critical Reading of Identity and Belonging in Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry	Mahmood Ayed Atiya
7	Knowledgeable Research, Vol. 1 No. 7, February 2023, Page 18-25	Exploring the Exile Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish: A voice of angst, anger, and alienation	Shaleen Kumar Singh
8	Scientific Journal, University of Batanghari Jambi, Vol. 23 No. 1, February 2023, Page 1-13	Kerinduan pada Tanah Air dalam Antologi Puisi 'Āsyiq Min Falistīn Karya Mahmoud Darwish (Analisis Semiotika Riffaterre)	Suharsono, Ivan Adilla, and Syofyan Hadi
9	Proceedings of the National Conference on Arabic, No. 6, October 2020, Page 807- 829	Resistensi terhadap Kolonialisme dalam Puisi `Āsyiq Min Falisthin Karya Mahmoud Darwish	Hanik Mahliatussikah
10	Kitabina; Journal of Arabic Language and Literature, Vol. 4 No. 2, December 2023, Page 57- 65	Representasi Nasionalisme dalam Puisi Mahmoud Darwis (Tinjauan Semiotika Roland Barthes)	Muhammad Asykari Muslim

Overview of Reviewed Studies on Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry

The topics discussed in this study include Mahmoud Darwish's poems related to Palestine, particularly the poem "Ila Ummi," as well as the language style used by Mahmoud Darwish, semiotic analysis, and the background of the poem. After the research was successfully reviewed, it was found that the poem "Ilā Ummī" by Mahmoud Darwish is a profound expression of sadness, longing, and depression. The word "mother" in this poem has both a biological meaning, referring to the poet's biological mother who gave birth to them, and a symbolic meaning, referring to the homeland or state of Palestine as the birthplace and origin of the poet.

The study also found that the poem was written in 1965 while Darwish was in prison in Israel, which added an emotional subtext layer to the poem. The hypogram is evident in Abdullah Al-Baradouni's poem "My Mother," which hints at intertextual

influences and shares similar themes of longing for the mother and homeland. Research written by Mochammad Faizun confirms that "Ila Ummi" not only expresses Darwish's longing for his mother but also for his homeland.⁹

The analysis of the internal and external elements of Darwish's poetry encompasses both physical structures (diction, imagery, and *balagah*) and inner structures (themes, emotions, mandates, and tones). The research written by Jumadil understands the relationship between the aspects of the poem and the reality of society and the critical events of his time.¹⁰ A child who longs for his mother, who is far away from him, is told in the poem "Ahinnu ila Khubzi Ummi." The research written by Rahma Salbiah focuses on the language style in poetry, particularly the use of figurative language to describe longing for mothers in a beautiful and meaningful way.¹¹

The semantic meaning of the poem "Ilā Ummī" encompasses lexical, grammatical, and referential aspects. Through a semantic approach, Ma'rifah's research analyzes the words in the poem, from the most basic to the most complex, to elucidate the meaning of each line. Additionally, this study examines the role of figurative language, including metaphor and symbolism, in conveying the emotional depth of longing in the poem. The use of metaphors, such as likening the land to a mother, and symbols, like the olive tree, is explored to uncover the layers of meaning that contribute to the poem's overall semantic structure.¹²

Research conducted by Suharsono revealed that, through the analysis of Riffaterre's semiotics, the anthology of *Asyiq min Falistin's* poems demonstrated that the form of indirect expression includes changes in meaning, deviations from meaning, and the creation of meaning. The change in meaning occurs through the use of metaphors and symbols that describe Palestine as a place rich in meaning and emotion for poets.¹³ The deviation in meaning is found in paradoxes and ironies that highlight the internal and external conflicts that poets experience. The creation of meaning is achieved through the use of figurative language and allegories, which enrich the reader's understanding of the poet's longing and struggle. Through heuristic readings, these poems explicitly describe the poet's longing and love for Palestine. Meanwhile, hermeneutic readings reveal deeper

⁹ Mochammad Faizun and Andrew Dedita Dwiki Kawa, "Michael Riffaterre's Semiotic Analysis of the Poem 'Ila Ummi' by Mahmoud Darwish," *Diwan: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 9, no. 2 (2023): 224–41, <https://doi.org/10.24252/diwan.v9i2.29399>.

¹⁰ Jumadil and Nazri Atoh, "Analisis Puisi Mahmud Darwish Dan Taufiq Ismail Berdasarkan Pendekatan Strukturalisme Genetik Analysis of Mahmud Darwish And Taufiq Ismail Poems Based on Genetic Structuralism," *Budiman Writers Association of Malaysia (BUDIMAN) Rumpun Jurnal Persuratan Melayu* 9, no. 2 (2022): 87–101, <http://rumpunjurnal.com/jurnal/index.php/rumpun/article/view/156>.

¹¹ Rahma Salbiah, "Gaya Bahasa Dalam Puisi Ahinnu Ilā Khubzi Ummī Karya Mahmoud Darwish," *Al-Ma'Rifah* 19, no. 1 (2022): 83–94, <https://doi.org/10.21009/almakrifah.19.01.07>.

¹² Nurul Ma'rifah and Dewi Intan Sari, "The Representative Meaning of Longing in Mahmoud Darwish's 'Ila Ummi' Poem Viewed from a Semantic Approach," *Tadris Al-'Arabiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban* 2, no. 2 (2023): 140–55, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ta.v2i2.26114>.

¹³ Khaled Ahmed Ali Al-Swmaeai, "Mahmoud Darwish: The Voice of the Voiceless Palestinians," *Literary Endeavour* 13, no. 1 (2022): 1–10, <https://literaryendeavour.org/archives/2022/46..>

layers of meaning, showing how the poet feels alienation, loss, and hope in the face of difficult situations. The structure of the poems in this anthology is identified using the concepts of matrices, models, and variants. The central theme of longing for the homeland, which is consistent throughout the work, is the matrix of this poem. The representative pattern becomes the capital that appears in each stanza, describing the condition of the poet, who is imprisoned and alienated.¹⁴

The meaning of Darwish's poem "Ahinnu Ila Khubzi Umami" can be revealed through the meanings of denotation, connotation, and myth. Semiotic analysis based on the meaning of denotation shows that the meaning of denotation is a meaning that is in accordance with what it is, conceptual, has not been overshadowed by certain feelings, values, and feelings, and is objective because it is generally applicable. Research written by Maulana Ihsan Ahmad reveals the existence of semiotic diction in poetry, which can be discerned through the meanings of denotation, connotation, and myth. In the context of denotation, the poet aims to convey a profound sense of longing and deep affection for the mother who has given her life.¹⁵

The presentation of Darwish's sense of nationalism is evident in his poems. Research conducted by Muhammad Asykari Muslim, analyzing the meanings of denotation and connotation based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, revealed that understanding denotation is based on the actual meaning of a word, which can be determined from its lexical meaning. In contrast, the meaning of a sign that has interacted with the reader's feelings, values, and culture is referred to as connotative meaning. Connotative meaning evolves into figurative meaning and becomes more subjective. In addition, the meaning of myths in Darwish's poems is derived from the operation of ideological connotations that serve to justify the dominant values prevailing in a particular period.¹⁶

Resistance to colonialism is depicted in *Asyiq Min Falisthin*, as is the consciousness of being part of colonized societies, which influenced his literary works. Research analysis conducted by Mahliatussikah, examining various layers of meaning in texts, as well as a qualitative descriptive study. Mahmoud Darwish's expertise in using symbolism and a deep storytelling style in his poems. By engaging in direct dialogue with the reader through the use of second-person pronouns, Darwish creates a strong emotional connection. It allows the reader to feel and engage directly with the stories and events told in

¹⁴ Suharsono Suharsono, Ivan Adilla, and Syofyan Hadi, "Kerinduan Pada Tanah Air Dalam Antologi Puisi 'Āsyiq Min Falistīn Karya Mahmoud Darwish (Analisis Semiotika Riffaterre)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Universitas Batanghari Jambi* 23, no. 1 (2023): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.33087/jiubj.v23i1.3226>.

¹⁵ Maulana Ihsan Ahmad, "Representasi Semiotika Roland Barthes dalam Syair 'Ahinnu ila Khubzi Umami' Karya Mahmoud Darwish," *An-Nahdah Al-'Arabiyyah* 2, no. 1 (2022): 247–67, <https://doi.org/10.22373/nahdah.v1i2.1232>.

¹⁶ M Asykari Muslim, "Representasi Nasionalisme Dalam Puisi Mahmud Darwisy (Tinjauan Semiotika Roland Barthes)," *Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 4, no. 02 (2023): 57–65, 10.22146/jpsi.7086.

the poem, thus evoking deep emotions such as love for the homeland and the desire to free oneself from colonialism.¹⁷

Ayed Atiya explained in the results of his research that one of Darwish's poems, "Identity Card," reflects Arab identity (specifically, that of Arabs in Palestine) through the use of distinctive language and symbols, as well as expressions of resistance and defiance against oppression. Israel's identity is revealed through the contrast with Arab identity, showing the tension and conflict between the two identities. The poem "Identity Card" describes the complex identity conflict between Arabs (Palestinians) and Israelis, as well as how individuals seek to maintain their identities in the context of such conflicts.¹⁸

Shaleen Kumar Singh found in her research that Darwish's poems "Identity Card," "Under Siege," and "The Earth is Closing on Us" are also filled with deep emotions that reflect the suffering and resilience of the Palestinian people. His poems offer insight into the experiences of exile, loss, and longing for one's homeland. Darwish also uses language as a tool to fight oppression and maintain cultural identity.¹⁹

Table 2. Analysis Literature

Researchers	Research Variables	Research Methods	Research Results
Mochammad Faizun and Andrew Dedita Dwiki Kawa	The symbolic meaning of the word "mother" in the poem "Ila Ummi" by Mahmoud Darwish. This research seeks to unravel this meaning using the semiotic theory of Michael Riffaterre.	The desk research approach uses qualitative descriptive techniques for data analysis. This research employs Riffaterre's semiotic theory.	The word "mother" in this poem has two primary meanings: Biological Meaning: Refers to the biological mother who gave birth to the poet. Symbolic Meaning: Refers to the homeland or state of Palestine as the birthplace and origin of the poet.
Maulana Ihsan Ahmad	This research uses data in the form of facts, information, verses, and descriptions contained in the poem "Ahinnu Ila Khubzi Ummi" by Mahmoud Darwish.	Qualitative descriptive research that focuses on notes that are complemented by detailed, complete, and in-depth sentence descriptions to describe the actual situation to support the presentation of data.	Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis shows that there is semiotic diction in the verse that can be expressed in these three meanings. Denotatively, the poet conveys feelings of longing and deep love for his mother.

¹⁷ Hanik Mahliatussikah, "Resistensi Terhadap Kolonialisme Dalam Puisi `Âsyiq Min Falisthin Karya Mahmud Darwish," *Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Bahasa Arab* 6, no. 6 (2020): 807–29, <http://prosiding.arab-um.com/index.php/konasbara/article/view/706>.

¹⁸ Mahmood Ayed Atiya, "The Poet and Identity: A Critical Reading of Identity and Belonging in Mahmud Darwish's Poetry," *Journal of Language Studies* 3, no. 2 (2023): 194–204, <https://doi.org/10.25130/jls.3.2.12>.

¹⁹ Shaleen Kumar Singh, "Exploring the Exile Poetry of Mahmud Darwish: A Voice of Angst, Anger, and Alienation," *Knowledgeable Research: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 1, no. 07 (2023): 18–25, <https://doi.org/10.57067/pprt.2023.1.07.18-25>.

Jumadil and Nazri Atoh	This study analyzes the internal elements and their relationship with the external aspects contained in the poems of Darwish and Taufiq Ismail. The research variables include the physical structure (diction, image, and balagah) and the inner structure (theme, taste, mandate, and tone) of the two poems.	This research employs the qualitative approach of genetic structuralism, which examines literary works from two angles: intrinsic and external.	This study analyzes the internal and external elements of Darwish and Taufiq Ismail's poetry, including physical structures (diction, image, and balagah) and inner structures (themes, feelings, mandates, and tones).
Rahma Sabiah	The language style is contained in the poem "Ahinnu ila Khubzi Umami" by Mahmoud Darwish. The researcher focused on analyzing the language style used.	Content analysis method. Data collection technique use the note-taking technique and stylistic analysis techniques.	The language style in the poem "Ahinnu ila Khubzi Umami" employs figurative words that convey longing for mothers beautifully and poetically.
Nurul Ma'rifah and Dewi Intan Sari	Lexical, grammatical, and referential meanings in the poem "Ila Umami" by Mahmoud Darwish. Lexical meaning refers to the definition of a word according to a dictionary or its true meaning.	Qualitative-descriptive method. This research also serves as a literature review, where data are collected through studies of relevant books, notes, and reports on the topic being studied.	The results of the study indicate that the poem "Ila Umami" possesses a semantic meaning that encompasses lexical, grammatical, and referential aspects.
Mahmoud Ayed Atiya	The poem "بطاقة هوية" serves as the primary object for analyzing both Arab and Israeli identities as they are expressed and defended in the poem.	Critical analysis method of poetry texts using a qualitative approach	The poem reflects Arabic identity through the use of distinctive language and symbols, as well as through expressions of resistance to oppression. And the opposite Israeli identity.
Shaleen Kumar Singh	Exile poems by Mahmoud Darwish. These poems explore themes such as exile, loss, the struggle for justice, nostalgia, longing, and displacement.	Qualitative method with a text analysis approach. This method involves an in-depth analysis of Darwish's poems, identifying key themes and how they are expressed through the use of language, symbols, and metaphors.	Poems "On This Land," "Identity Card," and "State of Siege". These poems are used to explore themes such as the political situation in the Middle East, the impact of politics on individual lives, and the role of language in shaping identity and resisting oppression.

Suharsono, Ivan Adilla, and Syofyan Hadi	Anthology of Asyiq Min Falistin Poems by Mahmoud Darwish. Primary data are presented in the form of an anthology text, while secondary data consist of studies relevant to the research.	A qualitative method to find a deep meaning about the sign system contained in the anthology of poetry Asyiq Min Falistin by Mahmoud Darwish.	Meaning in the Anthology of Asyiq Min Falistin's Poems by Mahmoud Darwish: Expressionlessness in the poem.
Hanik Mahliatussikah	Resistance to colonialism in Arabic literature and poetry (Asyiq Min Falisthin)	Qualitative descriptive, postcolonial with poststructural methods and postmodernism perspectives.	Resistance to colonialism in Asyiq Min Falisthin's poems. The use of symbolism and a deep storytelling style in his poems seems to invite a direct dialogue with the reader through the use of second-person pronouns.
Muhammad Asykari Muslim	Darwish's poems are entitled 'Āsyiq Min Falistīn, Aḥinnu Ila Khubzi Ummī, and Yaumiyyāt Jarḥ Falistīnī (Ilā Fadwā Ṭuqān).	Qualitative-descriptive method of literature research. Data were collected through documentation techniques and an in-depth literature review. Data analysis was carried out using content analysis and Roland Barthes' semiotic approach.	The meaning of myth in Darwish's poems is derived from the operation of ideological connotations that serve to justify the dominant values prevailing in a particular period.

Symbolism of Mother as Homeland and Implications for Resistance Literature

Twenty-eight poems that reflect the prospect of Palestine's emancipation from Israeli colonization are collected in the collection "Āshiq min Filaṣṭīn." Due to its lengthy history, the debate over the conflict between Israel and Palestine will never conclude. For some poets, this battle served as an inspiration for their poems. The poetry of "Ila Ummi" conveys a child's yearning for his mother, bread, and coffee. Some readers interpret the verse as expressing a longing for one's country, despite its structural emphasis on longing for one's mother.²⁰

Writers who gained fame during periods of social, economic, educational, and general decline in their countries are remarkable individuals. One such writer is Darwish, who stood out for his deep sense of patriotism towards his nation. He utilized poetry as a tool of resistance against colonialism, demonstrating that art can be a powerful weapon in the fight against oppression. Darwish, an internationally recognized Palestinian poet, created numerous poems that expressed his personal experiences as well as the events that befell his homeland. By combining cultural and emotional elements, he succeeded in crafting poetry that was both deeply personal and widely resonant. His poems encaps-

²⁰ Faizun and Kawa, "Michael Riffaterre's Semiotic Analysis of the Poem 'Ila Ummi' by Mahmoud Darwish."

sulated the concept of love for one's homeland, which evolved into a force that strengthened solidarity among the Palestinian people.²¹ This notion of love for the nation not only reflected Darwish's personal feelings but also became a source of mutual support for the Palestinian community as it faced its challenges.²²

In this nostalgic moment, Darwish expresses his longing to return to the land of his birth and depicts his persistent sorrow over leaving his home and life behind in the pengasingan. The poem "Ila Ummi" is one of Darwish's best-known works, depicting the intense love and loyalty of a young penyair to Palestine and its surrounding land. As a well-known luas penyair, she frequently writes about Palestinian identity and culture, a topic that is a recurring theme in many of her works. Darwish discusses his concerns about Palestine, a country that has consistently been overlooked since its decline began. Every word and number in this passage is matched with the underlying sense of kinship and loyalty. The hardships that these poets experienced stemmed from a deeper understanding of how much they feared for Palestine and their desire to prevent Israel's invasion of its territory. The purpose of this piece is not limited to exposing the private life of the Darwish family; rather, it also serves as a guide for the protection and interests of the Palestinian people.

This work reflects Darwish's nationalism, which steadfastly aimed to end colonial control in the Palestinian homeland—several intriguing hints in Darwish's poetry merit further investigation. For instance, the phrase "ummī," which in his writings originally meant "my mother," has taken on a new meaning and is now used to represent the Palestinian country. This demonstrates the depth of meaning that Darwish's poetry conveys, as it suggests a strong sense of national longing to free his native country from colonialism in addition to expressing a personal emotional connection.

Nationalism and Resistance in Darwish's Literature of Adab al-Muqawamah

The main goal of the poem's themes is to fill the homeland partially. After experiencing a tense relationship with Israel, Darwish gained recognition as one of the leaders of the Palestinian resistance. Due to this, Darwish was able to speak on a few occasions. Through his tears, Darwish offered the Palestinian people hope to end Israel's occupation. The impact of this is enormous in terms of hardening the Palestinian people's resolve and encouraging them to return to the land that Israel has taken from them. By providing clean water, Darwish enhances the well-being of the Palestinian people and may serve as a powerful motivator for them to participate in community projects. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, strong idealistic impulses and a wicked sense of humor are often missed indicators of weakness. Darwish persisted in advocating for Palestinian

²¹ Mohamed Saad Rateb Abdullah, "Post-Colonial Transformation as a Mode of Resistance in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish," *Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Fayoum University* 15, no. 1 (2023): 1269–1338, <https://doi.org/10.21608/jfafu.2023.194790.1867>.

²² Jumadil and Atoh, "Analisis Puisi Mahmud Darwish Dan Taufiq Ismail Berdasarkan Pendekatan Strukturalisme Genetik Analysis of Mahmud Darwish And Taufiq Ismail Poems Based on Genetic Structuralism."

independence and sovereignty until the end of the conflict. When he died in 2008, she was buried in Ramallah with dignity.²³

Table 3. Poem "Ila Ummi"

For my mother's	إلى أمي
I miss my mother's bread	أحن إلى خبز أمي
And my mother's coffee	وقهوة أمي
And my mother's touch	ولمسة أمي
And anguish in childhood	وتكرب في الطفولة
From day to day	يوما على صدر يوم
And I love my life because ...	وأعشق عمري لأني
If I die	إذا مت
I'm ashamed of my mother's tears	أخجل من دمع أمي
Take me, if I ever come back	خذي، إذا عدت يوما
A scarf for your fringe	وشاحا لهدبك
And cover my bones with grass	وغطي عظامي بعشب
Deliberately, who purified your heels	تعمد من طهر كعبك
And tighten my bonds	وشدي وثاقي
With a lock of hair	بخصلة شعر
With a string waving at the tail of your dress	بخيوط يلوح في ذيل ثوبك
I hope I become a god	عساي أصير إلها
If you touch your heart	إذا ما لمست قرارة قلبك
Put me down if I come back.	ضعيني، إذا ما رجعت
Fuel that lightens your fire	وقودا بتنور نارك
And a clothesline on the roof of your house	وحبل غسيل على سطح دارك
Because I lost standing	لأني فقدت الوقوف
Without praying your day	بدون صلاة نهارك
Now that I'm old, bring back my childhood	هرمت، فر دي نجوم الطفولة
So, I can participate	حتى أشارك
Childhood sparrows	صغار العصافير
Heading home	درب الرجوع
To live your waiting	لعش انتظارك

The primary purpose of the theme of his poem is to fill part of the country. After experiencing strained relations with Israel, Mahmoud Darwish was recognized as one of the leaders of the Palestinian resistance. Therefore, Mahmoud Darwish had spoken several times. Through his tears, Mahmoud Darwish offered hope to the Palestinian people to end the Israeli occupation. The impact is enormous in terms of hardening the Palestinian people's resolve and encouraging them to return to the land that Israel has

²³ Suharsono, Adilla, and Hadi, "Kerinduan Pada Tanah Air Dalam Antologi Puisi 'Āsyiq Min Falisṭīn Karya Mahmoud Darwish (Analisis Semiotika Riffaterre)."

seized. By providing clean water, Darwish enhances the well-being of the Palestinian people and can serve as a powerful motivator for them to participate in community projects. Especially in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, strong idealistic impulses and a poor sense of humor often escape the indicators of weakness. Darwish remained persistent in fighting for Palestinian independence and sovereignty until the conflict ended. His consistency in voicing the fate of his country, Palestine, made Darwish known as a poet of *Adab Al-Muqawamah*, or the literature of resistance. Not only that, in the hands of Darwish, poetry that was previously strict in its use of complicated Arabic was transformed by incorporating simpler yet richer everyday languages. Darwish is seen as the national poet of Palestine. "Ila Ummi" is one of his poems that describes the deep relationship between a child and their mother, nation, and homeland, expressing feelings of love, longing, and appreciation in a beautiful and emotional language.

The author's own presentation serves as the poem's primary character. This poetry is a manifestation of the author's dreams and wishes. Poetry writers' subliminal goals and aspirations:

ولمسة أمي وقهوة أمي أحن إلى خبز أمي

In this first stanza, based on the meaning of the denotation, the poet wants to explain for the first time his longing for his mother, who has given birth to him and provides him with food and drink every day, with his mother's affection and warmth. The words 'bread marks this' and 'coffee', which were dishes often served at that time. And this explains why all these things are not around the poet. And this can only be remembered because of the inadequate circumstances of being at war.²⁴

وتكرب في الطفولة

The verse suggests that childhood memories are like living beings that can continue to evolve. The poet describes childhood as a time that is personified as a living being, so that it seems that the memory exists and continues to develop. When we use the language of personification, we give quality characteristics, namely the personal qualities of people, to inanimate objects or ideas. In other words, personification is a type of metaphor that places human traits on inanimate objects and abstract ideas.²⁵

وأعشق عمري لأني إذا مت أخجل من دمع أمي

The word *عمري* means age, moving into a connotative meaning. The word *مت* no longer means to die, but to be silent. The poet demonstrates his love for his homeland by persevering in the face of adversity. That way, poets can continue to be dedicated to their

²⁴ Ahmad, "Representasi Semiotika Roland Barthes Dalam Syair 'Ahinnu Ila Khubzi Ummi' Karya Mahmoud Darwish."

²⁵ Salbiah, "Gaya Bahasa Dalam Puisi Ahinnu Ilá Khubzi Ummī Karya Mahmoud Darwish."

homeland and participate in efforts to improve their welfare. The poet feels ashamed if he is just silent without being able to contribute to the struggle of his homeland.²⁶

خذي، إذاعدت يوما وشاحا لهدبك وغطي عظامي بعشب

The word "if I come back someday" indicates that the poet is separated or distanced from his mother. This is coherent with the first line, which is longing. If the poet came, he wanted to be his mother's veil or eyelash cover. This has the meaning that the poet always wants to make his mother happy, because protecting the eyelashes can mean protecting from sadness, because the discharge of tears is the only sign of sadness (Faiz). Flesh is the meaning of the actual bone covering, but here the poet wants his bones to be covered with the grass that his mother's feet are endowed with. Bones support the body firmly, as does grass, a type of plant that grows easily and survives best. The word blessed means to be able to provide pleasure and goodness through the mother's feet. A mother's feet are the most sacred thing for every child. With this meaning, the poet wants to gain strength and ability from a mother.

وشدي وثاقي بخصلة شعر بخيط يلوح في ذيل ثوبك

In the words شعر and خيط, meaning bond with thread and hair, Darwish represents it as a small support, although it does not seem to have an effect, but it is very valuable. The poet wants to get it, no matter how small, so that he gets the strength to protect his homeland, which needs his help. This desire is strengthened by the poet's line in the fifth stanza of the first line.²⁷

عساي أصير إلهًا

The above verse shows exaggerated language. The author hopes to be immortal, like God. The desire can be eternal to help his country, which is experiencing a war with the state of Israel. His love for the country is seen in his poems. In fact, he wants to be immortal, like God, so that he can help his country at any time, and hopes that his country will soon be at peace.²⁸

ضعيني، إذا ما رجعت وقودا بتنور نارك وحبل غسيل على سطح دارك

"When I come home" indicates that the poet is outside the house. In the following line, the poet wants total devotion to the mother, using the stove, fuel *majas*, and clothesline. The choice of words in the *majas* is prudent and has extraordinary power. Furnace fires and clotheslines are the two primary tools used by a mother in carrying out her duties to care for the family.

²⁶ Muslim, "Representasi Nasionalisme."

²⁷ Muslim.

²⁸ Salbiah, "Gaya Bahasa Dalam Puisi Ahinno Ilá Khubzi Ummī Karya Mahmoud Darwish."

هرمت، فر دي نجوم الطفولة

The poet admitted that he was old, so he wanted to be carried back to the memories of his childhood, which he likened to the stars of his youth.

حتى أشارك صغار العصفير درب الرجوع لعش انتظارك

In انتظارك, the word العصفير does not mean a bird in the true sense, but Palestinian youth who have a high fighting spirit. The word عش does not mean 'nest' in the true sense, but rather their homeland, Palestine. The poet wants to fight alongside Palestinian youth who wish to return home safely or restore Palestine as a safe and prosperous homeland. The diction in the verse shows a sense of longing and desire to fight for the independence of his homeland, Palestine.

Conclusion

The poem "Ilā Ummī" (To My Mother) by Mahmoud Darwish describes the longing of a child for their mother's affection and the pleasant atmosphere of childhood. A beautiful life in the form of maternal affection and a joyful childhood was so loved by the writer that it became the reason why he had to continue to fight to defend his country, which had been destroyed by war. No matter how small the struggle, even if it is as slight as a hair, it is needed for the land that has been destroyed. If the writer had extraordinary abilities like God, peace would undoubtedly be created immediately. For the sake of returning to a beautiful childhood, any struggle must be made so that Palestinian children can fly freely like birds.

Through a systematic literature review of ten relevant studies, the analysis consistently reveals the poem's dual-layered meaning: "ummi" (my mother) functions both denotatively (as the biological mother who nurtures with bread, coffee, and tender touch) and connotatively/mythically as the symbolic motherland, Palestine, the birthplace and eternal source of identity and sustenance. This duality transforms intimate domestic imagery (bread, coffee, eyelashes, grass, stove fuel, clothesline) into powerful national allegories of loss, resistance, and yearning for return. Key findings from the reviewed literature include that the poem articulates deep sadness, nostalgia, and depression rooted in separation caused by war and imprisonment. Figurative devices—such as personification of childhood memories that "grow" day by day, hyperbole in wishing to become eternal like God to protect the homeland, and symbols like birds representing Palestinian youth striving to return to their "nest"—amplify themes of endurance, shame in passivity, and unwavering commitment to liberation. Intertextual echoes (e.g., with Abdullah al-Baradouni's "My Mother") and semiotic approaches (Riffaterre, Roland Barthes) highlight indirect expression, meaning shifts via metaphor/symbolism, paradoxes of alienation, and the matrix of homeland longing that unifies the work.

Ultimately, "Ilā Ummī" transcends personal sentiment to embody the literature of resistance (adab al-muqawamah). The war child's desire is not merely for a lost past but

for a reclaimed future where Palestinian children can reclaim freedom and innocence "like birds flying to their waiting nest." Darwish's poem thus serves as both an emotional lament and a call to solidarity, motivating the struggle against colonialism so that beauty, warmth, and homeland may be restored. This SLR enriches understanding of how Darwish's poetry fuses individual memory with national narrative, offering valuable insights for further semiotic, stylistic, and socio-political studies of modern Arabic resistance literature.

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All authors discussed the results and contributed to the preparation of the final manuscript. All authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of this work.

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