

## ECORESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM IN THE POEM "FAKKIR BIGHAYRIKA" BY MAHMOED DARWISH (POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES)

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Received:	Abstract: This article addresses how Mahmoud Darwish's poetry expresses symbolic resistance through a synthesis of ecological, empathic, and spiritual narratives, all grounded in the collective suffering of the Palestinian people. The purpose of this research is to unpack the ideological and rhetorical meanings of colonialism and ecoresistance as they emerge. Using a contextual qualitative analysis approach, this study employs triangulation of sources and theories, drawing on documentation and a comprehensive literature review. The results show that natural symbols such as water, trees, and light function as markers of spiritual and ecological attachment to the homeland as well as a form of resistance to colonialism. Religious elements strengthen the legitimacy of transcendent and collective resistance. This poem conveys that resistance can take the form of empathy, solidarity, and existential awareness. This article contributes to a new reading of Darwish's poetry by combining ecological, spiritual and postcolonial dimensions. The findings are relevant for Middle Eastern literary studies and cultural conflict studies.
12-07-2025	
Revised:	
05-08-2025	
Accepted:	
14-08-2025	

**Keywords:** Ecoresistence; Colonialism; Poetry; Mahmoud Darwish

### INTRODUCTION

Colonialism and the occupation of Palestine since the Nakba Incident (1948) have caused a collective trauma that continues to this day. This historical condition has cultivated a robust Palestinian literary tradition as a tool of cultural resistance in which poetry flourishes as a medium of expression of identity and resistance to colonialism (Talukder & Ali, 2025). Consequently, poetry is often used as a counter-discourse to the colonial narrative, serving not only as an aesthetic but also as a form of political narrative. Darwish emerged as a central figure in this literary tradition; his works responded to Israeli occupation and presented the voice of the Palestinian people (Altabaa & Azmi, 2024).

Mahmoud Darwish is widely known as the poet of the nation, whose poems depict the suffering, hope, and identity of the Palestinian people. While Darwish's work has been the subject of extensive analysis, his specific poem, *Fakkir Bighayrika*, remains underexamined within postcolonial studies

(Absor, 2024). Postcolonial theories with names such as Said, Bhabha, and Spivak highlight the struggles in the realm of postcolonial discourse and identity. These approaches are appropriate for reading *Fakkir Bighayrika* because it reveals the way poetry reaffirms the subjectivity of the Palestinian people (Nudin et al., 2021).

The ecopostcolonial approach, also known as eco-resistance, integrates both ecological and postcolonial dimensions. This analysis found that Darwish used natural expressions as a way of challenging colonial narratives including perceptions of confiscated land (Nasrullah et al., 2025). Darwish represents nature to emphasize attachment to the homeland as a strategy of resistance. Environmental metaphors such as trees, soil, and the sun become symbols of ecological resistance (Novianti et al., 2024).

Darwish's poems also draw on Islamic traditions and scripture to provide moral and spiritual foundations for resistance. Religious representation strengthens the foundation of resistance that is not only political but also

sacred (Muslim, 2023). The trauma studies approach in Darwish's study shows poetry as a means of transforming collective pain into aesthetic and political force a strategy to bring global recognition to Palestinian suffering (Al-Sakkaf & Tayeb, 2022). A critical discourse study of Darwish's poetry, such as *Speech of the Red Indian*, reveals narrative structures and language choices that implicitly reject colonial hegemony through rhetorical and semantic techniques (Johar et al., 2023).

In the context of the history of modern Arabic literature, Palestinian poetry holds a unique and prominent position because it is functional and ideological. Poetry is not only a tool of expression of the beauty of language, but also a symbolic weapon in the struggle against oppression (Shiddiq & Rofiuddin, 2024). Mahmoud Darwish, along with a number of other poets such as Samih al-Qasim and Fadwa Tuqan, pioneered the use of poetry a medium of resistance. However, Darwish is distinguished by its unique artistic depth, as it blends personal lyricism and collective narrative. His poetry not only speaks for himself, but also echoes the voice of the Palestinian people (Hamzah & Barrunnawa, 2021).

In the context of political ecology, the use of natural symbols in Darwish's poetry is not just a rhetorical ornament, but a form of politicization of space and landscape. The depiction of natural elements like the sun, olive trees, water, and rocks is a marker of the existential attachment between humans and the homeland (Masood, 2020). In many ecopostcolonial studies, land grabbing and ecological dislocation are new forms of colonialism that receive little attention. Darwish, through his poetry, re-presents the spiritual and historical relationship of the Palestinian people with the seized land. This representation shows that the struggle against colonialism also includes the struggle to reclaim the sacred and holistic ecological relationship between humans and nature (Ahmed & Hashim, 2018).

Ecoresistance can be understood as a form of resistance to ecological damage through the medium of literature. In the

context of poetry, ecoresistance serves as a tool to raise environmental awareness through powerful poetic language, criticize environmentally destructive practices, and encourage action for nature conservation (Sahoo, 2025). Ecocriticism or ecocriticism is a critical approach in literary studies that explores the interaction between humans and the natural environment in literary works. This approach combines ecological principles with literary criticism to understand how literary texts represent and respond to environmental issues (Lestari et al., 2025). Greg Garrard defines ecocriticism as a literary or cultural analysis of environmental issues, which are generally related to moral and political agendas (Garrard, 2018).

Postcolonialism examines how colonial legacies continue to affect former colonial societies in various aspects of life, including politics, economics, culture, and identity. It also analyzes how the process of decolonization occurs not only at the political level but also at the epistemological and cultural levels (Said, 2023). The concept of Homi Bhabha mimicry describes the conflicting relationship between the colonizer and the colonized that creates complex dynamics in the formation of postcolonial identity. This concept shows the contradiction of colonial feelings towards the colonizers which is reflected in the desire to resemble and reject the dominant culture (Bhabha, 2021).

Many studies have shown that Darwish's poetry remains relevant in the current Palestinian-Israeli conflict, serving as a form of cultural resistance and a reminder of the sustainability of the Palestinian people's struggle. Although many studies cover aspects of identity, ecology, and religion in Darwish's work, an analysis focused on *Fakkir Bighayrika* through an ecoresistance and postcolonial lens offers little opportunity for original contributions. The poem specifically demands empathy and social awareness, provoking the reader's moral reflection on the condition of others who are oppressed by a kind of resistance that is subtle, but deeply political and human. This research, therefore, not only

affirms the importance of poetry as a medium of liberation, but also presents a new discourse about unarmed resistance that grows from the roots of language, land, and spirituality. These findings are expected to serve as a reference for further studies in struggle literature, Middle Eastern literature, and postagonal theory more broadly.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the contextual analysis method, namely by reading literary texts as part of the social, political, and cultural constructions in which they were born. This approach emphasizes the relationship between Mahmoud Darwish's poem *Fakkir Bighayrika* and the context of colonialism that overlies it, as well as how symbolic, rhetorical, and ideological meanings are constructed in the text. The main source of data in this study is the text of the poem "*Fakkir Bighayrika*" written by Mahmoud Darwish. Secondary data were obtained from various scientific articles, postcolonial literary theory books, literary criticism essays, and historical documents relevant to the context of Palestinian colonialism and the thought of Mahmoud Darwish.

Data was collected through documentation and literature studies. The analysis was carried out with a context analysis approach that included the historical background of Palestinian colonialism, national identity, and poetic ideology. To ensure the validity of the data, source triangulation and theoretical triangulation are used. Triangulation of sources is carried out by comparing different translations of poetry translations and scientific studies from other researchers to enrich the meaning. Meanwhile, theoretical triangulation is carried out by combining a postcolonial approach and an ecoresistance approach in order to obtain a more complex and layered point of view.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Representation of the Meaning of Colonialism in the Poem "*Fakkir Bighayrika*" by Mahmoed Darwish

#### The First Verse of the Poem "*Fakkir Bighayrika*"

وأنت تعدّ فطورك، فكر بغريك

*When you prepare your breakfast, think of other people*

لا تنس قوت الحمام

*Don't forget pigeon food*

The verse in this poem has a meaning that is contained thinking about others is a form of harmony that is carried out in a life. The opening line, "while you prepare breakfast, think outside of you" means that there are other people in this life who need a good source of life, they want to enjoy life just like everyone else. So the existence of the word "Think other than you" supports that selfishness is eliminated. Then the next line "don't forget pigeon food", pigeons here as a meaning of peace. In Islam the pigeon is symbolized as peace, and in this verse the author hints that feeding the pigeons is expected to bring peace to the war-torn Palestinian state by Israel.

#### Second Verse of the Poem "*Fakkir Bighayrika*"

وأنت تخوض حروبك، فكر بغريك

*When you fight, think of others*

لا تنس من يطلبون السلام

*Don't forget those who want peace*

Furthermore, the line "while you go into battles, think of others" appeals to fighters on the battlefield, urging them to remember the destitute who suffer from the war. Their persistence and determination can bring good news to their brothers. In this sentence, the author hints at the attitude of patriotism towards the nation. "Do not forget those who yearn for peace". Every person, country and nation must want peace in their lives. A form of care and compassion can generate a sense of sympathy for each other. In this sentence the author represents the feelings of everyone who was hit by war at that time. The turmoil of wars that did not subside, took many casualties, lived in poverty, had no food and drink were common to them. That's why this poem is present as a form of resistance to fight colonialism against Israel.

### The Third Verse of the Poem "Fakkir Bighayrika"

وأنت تسد فاتورة الماء، فكر بغيرك

*When you pay your water bill, think of others*

من يرضعون الغمام

*The sucker from the clouds*

This verse from Mahmoud Darwish's poem describes the inequality of life and social injustice that occurs in modern society, especially in terms of access to basic necessities such as water. Through the contrast between someone who pays a water bill and another person who "sucks in the clouds", Darwish voices the harsh reality of the existence of a group that lives in comfort and sufficiency, while another group depends only on nature in its most primitive and erratic form.

This is not just a description of the social condition, but also a moral call for human beings not to dissolve in egocentrism and personal comfort, but to develop empathy for the fate of those who live in deprivation. This poem invites the reader to reflect and realize that behind the privileges they have, there are many people who are still struggling to survive. In a broader context, this verse is a critique of the socio-political and economic systems that create the abyss of inequality, as well as a call to build a collective awareness of the importance of justice and solidarity among people.

### Fourth Verse of the Poem "Fakkir Bighayrika"

وأنت تعود إلى البيت، بيتك، فكر بغيرك

*When you return to your home, think of others,*

لا تنس شعب الخيام

*Don't forget the people of the tents*

The poem in this verse is the main idea suffered by the Palestinian poet for the destruction of his country, the poet's disappointment because of his extinct country, where the colonizers did not think about the fate suffered by their country (Palestine). The you are an invader who returns to their homes comfortably. While you go back home, think of your other,

emphasizing that the occupiers thought more about the fate suffered by the Palestinians, they went home with their families with comfort, peace and family, which was a dozen soft beds, a clean, warm and shady house. while they are, don't forget that they live in tents, as a refugee with tent roofs, cold, dirty, and only on what they are. In fact, they only thought of being careful of the riots and rebellions that would come to them again. The fate of those who lost part of their families and property, which even for now they are as foreign refugees in their own country.

### The Fifth Verse of the Poem "Fakkir Bighayrika"

وأنت تنام وتحصي الكواكب، فكر بغيرك

*As you sleep and count the stars, think of others*

ثمة من لم يجد حيرا للمنام

*Some can't find a place to sleep*

In this verse, you are a colonizer, where they sleep without thinking about the fate of Palestine, and count the stars, meaning that they only enjoy pleasure and comfort, which is like sleeping by counting the stars, they can sleep in a calm, comfortable, and restful state until the morning comes. "There are people who can't find a place to turn their backs, the person is a Palestinian who is being colonized, where they just flee to be able to live and be able to live, there is no comfort, tranquility, and just sleep in a place where they can stay, even if it's an uncomfortable place, sometimes they don't even find a place to live, which protects them from the cold, pain, and the worry they are suffering. This verse also describes the bitter reality experienced by the occupied Palestinian people. They are forced to flee and have no decent place to live, do not enjoy comfort and tranquility, and often do not even find a place to shelter from the cold, sickness, and worries that continue to loom.

### Sixth Verse of the Poem "Fakkir Bighayrika"

وأنت تحرر نفسك بالاستعارات، فكر بغيرك

*When you free yourself with figurativeness,  
think of others*

من فقلدوا حقهم في الكلام

*Those who lose their right to speak*

The above verse illustrates the contrast between freedom of expression and silence of voices, and is an ethical call not to forget those who are oppressed and silenced. Darwish uses poetic language to convey that while one can express oneself freely through metaphors, poetry, or art there are many others who do not have that privilege. Those "who have lost the right to speak" are symbols of the oppressed: political prisoners, people under authoritarian regimes, victims of colonialism, or anyone else who lives in fear and forced silence.

Metaphors became a symbol of the poet's inner freedom, but Darwish reminded that freedom does not belong to everyone. In a broader context, this verse is a call for intellectual and moral solidarity: that freedom of thought and work must be accompanied by an awareness of the fate of others who are still imprisoned by the system. It also reflects Darwish's commitment as a poet who does not see poetry as a personal escape, but rather as a medium of resistance and a reminder that true freedom is collective, not individual.

### **The Seventh Verse of the Poem "Fakkir Bighayrika"**

وأنت تفكّر بالآخرين البعيدين، ففكّر بنفسك

*And when you think of others who are far away, think of yourself*

قل: ليتني شمعة في الظلام

*Say: If I were a candle in the darkness*

The above verse illustrates the tension between caring for others and the need to take care of oneself, while also voicing the desire to be a light of hope in the midst of suffering. Darwish recognizes the importance of solidarity and empathy for the "distant" both geographically and socially, but he also emphasizes that true care must begin with self-awareness. The call to "think of thyself" is not a selfish invitation, but an invitation to reflect on the personal role of

change: that everyone can be a source of light, no matter how small their contribution.

The phrase in the above verse reflects humility, sacrifice, and a spirit of passive resistance. Candles are a simple but meaningful symbol of illumination that gives light by burning itself. This reflects Darwish's ideals of humanity: to be a lamp to others, even in limitations. Overall, this verse is a poetic meditation on moral responsibility, that concern for the world must be accompanied by existential awareness and a commitment to give meaning to the slightest part of our role in the darkness of the world.

### **Ecoresistance to Colonialism in the Poem "Fakkir Bighayrika" by Mahmoud Darwish**

The poem Fakkir Bighayrika by Mahmoud Darwish is a form of symbolic resistance to Israeli colonialism in Palestine. Through this poem, Darwish not only voices the collective suffering of the Palestinian people, but also instills an empathetic awareness and universal humanitarian values as a strategy of non-military resistance. From the perspective of postcolonial theory, this poem can be understood as a form of counter-hegemonic discourse that challenges the dominant colonial narrative (Agustina, 2023). If colonialism seeks to control the body, land, and even language of the colonial people, then Darwish reverses that power through the aesthetics of language, he makes poetry a tool of cultural resistance. Utilizing metaphorical styles, ecological symbolism, and empathetic spirituality, Darwish builds an alternative space where silenced voices can be revived in the beauty of language. Even the use of natural elements such as water, clouds, and light, is not only an aesthetic element, but as a symbol of resistance to systems that commodify and control resources.

The first verse, "while you prepare breakfast, think outside of yourself," contains a message to put off selfishness and cultivate empathy for the suffering of others. In the context of postcolonialism, this is part of Darwish's attempt to dismantle the individualistic and hegemonic construction

of colonial identity. Edward Said in Orientalism 1978 emphasized that colonialism does not only work through military force, but also through discourses that negate the existence of "the other" (Cipta & Kurniawan, 2025). Darwish flips that logic on by elevating the "other" as the center of empathy, making them subjects worth thinking about and fighting for. Through this poem, Darwish creates a reflective space in which the reader is invited to transcend the boundaries of his or her own identity, break down the fictitious boundaries between "me" and "the other", and place solidarity at the core of human existence. Thus, this verse is the first step in symbolic resistance to colonial narratives and the reaffirmation of inclusive human values.

The word "don't forget the food of the pigeons" in the same verse contains a symbol of peace and ecology.

The dove in Islamic tradition and Arabic culture is a symbol of peace, and in this poem it is a representation of the hope for peace in the midst of the destruction caused by war. This is where the ecoresistance approach works (Nasrullah et al., 2025). Darwish inserts images of nature as a subtle form of resistance to colonial political domination, feeding pigeons is a small but meaningful, spiritual and symbolic act that rejects the violence and ecological destruction caused by war. Thus, Darwish not only rejects the physical violence of colonialism, but also rejects the ecological violence that accompanies the destruction of nature, the extinction of living things, and the collapse of ecological harmony. In presenting pigeons and invitations to feed them, Darwish builds an ethical and aesthetic space that makes empathy for nature an integral part of humanity's struggle. It is a resistance that does not scream, but is profound and touches the moral consciousness of its readers.

The verse "When you pay the water bill, think of others" reflects the postcolonial resistance to the structural inequality experienced by the Palestinian people. In the context of modern colonialism, water is not only a source of life, but also a tool of

political control (Cipta & Kurniawan, 2025). Those who "pay the water bill" represent a class that has access to resources legally and economically, while "those who suck on the clouds" symbolize the colonized people who do not even have access to basic necessities. Darwish cleverly raised the water issue as a metaphor for colonial power. He voiced that colonialism not only took land and deprived it of freedom, but also manipulated the basic elements of life to maintain control. The resistance offered in this verse is symbolic as well as ethical, it invites the reader to realize that the comfort we enjoy is inseparable from the structure of global inequality.

Apart from being a criticism of colonialism, this verse is also full of messages of eco-resistance. Darwish presents the dichotomy between water as a commodity and water as a right to life that comes directly from nature. "Breastfeeding in the clouds" describes a form of human dependence on nature in a state of alienation from a system that commercializes basic needs. He rejects the privatization of water and calls for a humanistic ecological consciousness, that our consumption should take into account the suffering of others who are excluded from the global distribution system (Ahmed & Hashim, 2018). In this case, Darwish's poem is a form of resistance to ecological capitalism and environmental colonialism, as well as calling for solidarity between humans in the face of the resource crisis. With a simple but meaningful language style, Darwish makes poetry an ethical space to awaken socio-ecological awareness and reject injustice in all its forms.

The next stanza, "While you are engaged in battles, think of others," describes how this poem does not condemn armed resistance directly, but balances the spirit of resistance with a sense of moral responsibility to others. It shows an attitude of ethical patriotism, where strength is not only measured by weapons, but also by the ability to remember those who are vulnerable and want peace. Within the framework of Homi Bhabha, this poem can be read as a postcolonial ambivalence practice acknowledging the need for resistance, but also denouncing forms of

violence that do not consider civilian casualties (Sultoni & Utomo, 2021). This ambivalence marks a dialectical space in which the struggle for independence is not considered black and white, but is fraught with ethical and moral tensions. Darwish carefully opens up a reflective space for the reader to question the ways in which resistance is conducted, and reminds us that defending humanity in the struggle is an important aspect that should not be overlooked. Thus, this verse is not only an expression of physical resistance, but also a call for social and ethical responsibility in the face of protracted conflicts.

The ecological context again appears in the verse "while you count the stars, think of other people who have no room to sleep." In the context of ecocriticism, the image of the sky and stars is not only an aesthetic metaphor, but also a symbol of the sharp difference between the comfort of the colonizers and the suffering of the refugees (Budiman et al., 2023). Sleeping under the stars is a romance for the occupiers, but it is a bitter reality for Palestinians who have no shelter. This poem rejects the false beauty of colonial narratives that hide real suffering through touching and contrasting symbolic representations. Through these contrasting and touching symbolic representations, Darwish dismantles the false beauty, inviting the reader to look further behind aesthetic illusions and confront the bitter reality that lurks. Thus, this verse is not only a social critique, but also an ecological critique that unites human suffering with the natural conditions around it, reinforcing the message that the struggle of the Palestinian people is inseparable from the struggle against ecological destruction and the injustice of living space.

This poem, as a whole, depicts the practice of cultural resistance typical of postcolonial literature. The resistance built was not in the form of violent agitation, but through the invocation of empathy, the dismantling of privilege, and the presentation of images that disturbed the comfort of colonial discourse. This is in line with Spivak's idea of the subaltern can speak, in which Darwish as a representation of

marginalized voices manages to present a counter-narrative to Israeli domination. Thus, *Fakkir Bighayrika* is not just a spiritual or social poem. It is an ideological text that contains political criticism, ecological appeals, and ethical reflections on colonial conflicts. The use of simple diction, the repetition of "think other than you," and everyday symbolism actually reinforce the message that resistance can start from the awareness and solidarity of values that have been stripped of by the colonial system. Darwish makes language a field of struggle, poetry a weapon, and empathy as the highest form of resistance

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of Mahmoud Darwish's poem *Fakkir Bighayrika* concludes that this work is a powerful representation of cultural, spiritual, and ecological resistance to colonialism. Through the approach of postcolonial theory and ecoresistance, the poem succeeds in dismantling the dominant colonial narrative by presenting empathy, collective suffering, and symbols of peace as a counterforce to the structural violence of colonialism. Darwish articulates a critical awareness that the struggle does not only belong to armed combatants, but also the rights of those who long for peace and a decent life. However, this research has limitations because it only focuses on one text and has not been more widely associated with Darwish's other works that also contain the theme of resistance. It is recommended for future researchers to conduct a comparative study between Darwish's poems or explore intertextuality with postcolonial literary works from other oppressed regions, so that the meaning of resistance built in the literary realm is richer and more contextual

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