



Environment and home in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry: An ecological perspective

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Abstract

Throughout the fifty years of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's writing life, home is a predominant theme in his poetry. In the authors' reading of his work, the environment is closely linked to the notion of home and that is central to the field of ecocriticism that highlights the significance of environment to the study of literature. The discussion in this paper focuses on how Darwish represents ecology of home through the waves of his employment of environment in his homeland in his poetic production. His poems, which he writes from within his country and more keenly so when he is exiled from it, could be used to illustrate how an ecopostcolonial perspective might contribute to an understanding of the poet's depiction of home through environment. To do this, the authors combined two theories -ecocriticism and postcolonial theory . by linking the marginality of environment in postcolonial theorizing with the centrism of environment in ecocriticism. The blending of the two theories illuminates how the ecological elements in his poems formulate the poet's conception of home in the crisis-ridden modern world. As it has been shown, the poems of Darwish are populated with a continuous and unique development in the interaction between environment and home from the early poems to the poems of exile and the poems written upon returning home. In addition, Darwish definitely contributes to the facets of Palestinian environment and stirs up a sense of changing ecological notion of home in the Palestinian context. Thus Darwish's use of nature becomes the basis of his agenda as a literary activist and shows how his identity is inseparable from the physical environment.

Keywords: ecocriticism, ecopostcolonial theory, environment, home, Mahmoud Darwish, poetry

Introduction

Home remains at the heart of the poetry of the Arab poet laureate Mahmoud Darwish. Spanning his writing life of fifty years, his poems are marked by a distinctive voice that draws much attention to the environmental perception of home primarily as it is closely attached to Palestinian identity, land and environment. Following this trajectory, the idea of home is directly linked to environment in Darwish's work and this is central to the field of ecocriticism that is a new and growing field and quite a recent phenomenon in the world of literature. It focuses on the study of the interactions between humans and their physical environment and the application of ecology and the ecological concepts to the study of literary works. Darwish's poetry, in its entirety, reflects largely his interest to globalize the environmental perception of home through the employment of nature in his poems. She asserts that the poetry of Darwish is long preoccupied with a reflection of home expressed through natural elements that abound in his poems. This is because he experiences the sense of loss of the environment of his homeland from the very beginning of his life. Alshaer (2010) asserts that in 1948, Darwish was six years old when he encountered his first exile due to the occupation of his homeland. He became a refugee from his place and the birth location had just started to imprint itself on his imagination. However, such separation from

home formed the seeds of his poetry that speaks of the natural aspects of the place that constitute the ecological elements of home in his poetry. It also shows how Darwish utilizes poetry as a means for representing ecology of home among homeless people in the world in general, and in Palestine in particular, through his utilization of environment in his homeland that becomes the basis of his literary activism against the occupiers of the homeland.

Darwish was born in the village of Al-Birwah in the heart of Palestine in 1941. He became a refugee in 1948, when his family was forced to flee from his homeland. In 1949, Darwish and his family came back from Lebanon to live as “internally displaced” refugees in another village in his homeland. With the emergence of Darwish’s poetry in 1958, a rich voice is added to Arabic poetry as well as the Palestinian poetry. He started to compose poems when he was still in school aged seventeen. His poetry prospered during his early poetic stage that spanned twelve years. In the 1970s, Darwish joined the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and he became an active member of PLO outside Palestine. His activism in exile remained dynamic not only politically but also poetically. In fact, he lived outside Palestine for about twenty-six years during which his poetry burgeoned noticeably. Indeed, writing from within one’s country and outside of it in Darwish’s circumstance of being displaced and expelled requires further scrutiny. Khalidi (2010:1) echoes Darwish’s insights when he asserts that

The quintessential Palestinian experience, which illustrate some of the most basic issues raised by Palestinian identity, takes place at a border, an airport , a checkpoint: in short, at any one of those many modern barriers where identities are checked and verified. What happens to Palestinians at these crossing points brings home to them how much they share in common as people. For it is at these borders and barriers that the six million Palestinians are singled out as for “special treatment”, and are forcefully reminded of their identity: of whom they are, and why they are different from others.

By focusing on these three stages of Darwish’s writing life, the authors hope to demonstrate the ways in which he implements the images of nature of his motherland to illuminate new environmental awareness of the notion of home based on the premise that home is fundamental in meeting the needs of those who believe in the context of global village. Many recent environmental studies recommend constructing appropriate homes with attractive human-based and natural reliefs (Kermani, 2010). Considering this environmental route, this paper is an attempt to reflect the recent environmental echoes in literary works such as that of the poetry of Darwish.

Environment and home

The notion of home is regarded as a very complicated conception and many scholars argue that it cannot be discussed in isolation from the context of environment. Palmer (2011: 345) argues that

The rise of arguments that particular places are significant to communal and individual identities has triggered the development of a literature in geography and environmental studies that is critical of the possible implications of such arguments.

This remark is meaningful and becomes insightful in the advent of ecocriticism that emerged as a new aspect of literary theory and a lens through which “literature is viewed in terms of place, setting and/or environment”. Therefore, home is directly related to the conception of place in postcolonial theory and, on the other hand, to the perception of environment in the recent theory of ecocriticism. However, it is also common that one can experience the sense of the loss of home at home. The concept of home is essential to an individual’s identity. To lose it to another, for any reason, can cause suffering; for it to happen to a child as a consequence of war and violence is an experience that is distressing. In addition, home is perceived as a significant core of the human heritage in the psyche of people in the Arab world.

As Ali R, Majid and Panahi, S (2009: 89) state such “heritage is highly valued.” In this regard, Ruzy Suliza Hashim and Faridah Abdul Manaf (2009: 545) remark that “traditionally, a home is conceptualized as a stable, physical centre of a person’s private space, a place where one feels belonged and loved. Yet, both the garment that keeps the body private and the home that keeps one safe no longer protect the individual”. This can be applicable in the Palestinian context.

Differences exist between people who leave home voluntarily and those who leave involuntarily. In Darwish’s case and for other Palestinians, they are strangers in their own homeland. His articulation of his loss of home through images of nature is symptomatic of the ecology of home through the ecopostcolonial perspective employed as a new analytical lens for reading Darwish’s poems ecologically. Commenting on the significance of the ecological perspective in the ridden-crisis modern world, Franco (2008: 49) observes in the study of the ecological elements in songs in the postcolonial context that

Natural happenings are also used to illustrate human activities. Everything is understood in its proper relation to the one natural element or the other. However, this relationship may be a linear one or complex.

This argument tends to take a broad view that nature is a useful agent in human ecology. The various aspects of nature can be used to illustrate any kind of human activities. In the conclusion to this study, the writer asserts that nature can play a significant role in the culture of any society and the activities of people living in close proximity with it. Considering their remark, the current study is an attempt to discover the potentiality of environment and its influences on human perceptions of home as can be traced in the poetry of Darwish who mourns its loss through his poetry.

Darwish’s environmental elements of the conception of home can be highlighted in three distinctive phases that traversed fifty years of his writing life. The initial phase covers the first twelve years of his poetic career while he was in Palestine. He experiences the sense of the loss of home even within his homeland. He expresses the ecological echo of home when he declares (as cited in (Rahman, 2008: 51) “home, for we have no home”. The second phase, which is the twenty-six years of his exile, marks his ecological perspective of home and exile. Home is no longer constituted by land or people but by the poetic gathering of voices from a distance. The search for Palestinian identity, displacement and the sense of homelessness were the vital aspects of Darwish’s poems of exile. Due to the character of his loss, he utilizes the environment in his homeland and makes it the basis of the connection between the exiled identity and the lost home. In the final phase that covered the last twelve years of his life, the notion of home became a process of the ecological articulation constructed through the dialogue with an environmental heritage. In summary, Darwish, who dedicated himself for his homeland defined his poetic work as one of writing home. He once wrote “I learned all the words and how to take them apart so I can form one word, homeland” (Darwish, 2000: 3).

His poems illustrate his sense of inseparability with the environment of his homeland. They portray the aspects of Palestinian scenery where Palestinian environment and home are intermingled. Darwish himself declared once (as cited in Celik, 2008: 273) that his poems do not deliver mere images and metaphors of Palestinian home but convey landscapes, villages, fields and even communicate a place. He added, “I find myself looking at an olive tree, and as I am looking at it, it transforms itself before my eyes into a symbol of our home” (Darwish, 2000:3). This statement of Darwish testifies his ecological perception of home that stems from his consideration of his interconnectedness with the environment of his lost home. By evoking the concept of environmental association between Palestinians and their homes in Palestine, Darwish articulates his perception of ecology of home in the Arab world, the place where he was born, the place he loves and the place he has lost. In this paper, the authors attempt to explore how Darwish’s poems portray many ecological motifs of home, embodying symbols of interconnectedness of the poet and his environment.

The poems such as “Identity Card”, “the Passport”, “To My Mother”, “To My Father”, “A Lover from Palestine” and “On Perseverance”, “A letter from Home”, “A Diary of A Palestinian Wound”, “The Land” and “Why did You Leave the Horse Alone” are regarded as the home in Darwish’s viewpoint. That is, the

creation of homeland becomes the work of Darwish who once asserted, “The countries between my hands are the work of my hands” (Darwish, 2000: 4). His words articulate that the environment of his homeland is indispensable to Darwish’s thoughts and emotions and they serve as catalyst that inspires him to produce poems.

Theoretical framework

Postcolonial theory, on the one hand, is a well-established model that addresses issues such as the quest for identity, the search for the loss of land, displacement, homelessness, resistance and encounter between the colonized and the colonizers. Ecocriticism as a literary theory, on the other hand, is really quite young. It has been developing rapidly since the 1990s, focusing mainly on, as stated by Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) “the study of the relationship between humans and the natural world”. The first use of the term ecocriticism dated back to 1974 when Joseph Meeker used the term “literary ecology” in his essay entitled “The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology”, sowing an ecological seed in the field of literary studies (Meeker, 1974). Four years later, based on J. Meeker’s ecological kernel of the term, William Rueckert (1996: 107) provided the first and foremost rough definition of ecocriticism as the application of ecology and ecological concepts in literature. He argues that

Specifically I am going to experiment with the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature; because ecology, as a science, as a discipline, as the basis for a human vision, has the greatest relevance to the present and future of the world, we live in of anything that I have studied in recent years.

Rueckertian’s perception of ecocriticism focuses on how ecology and ecological concepts can be utilized to showcase how literature functions, paving the way for a more engaging and current reading of literature. However, the term ecocriticism remained passive in the critical literary vocabulary until the early nineties when Glotfelty and Fromm (1996: xviii) developed the idea of Meeker and Rueckert and proposed a key definition of ecocriticism as a new way of studying the relationship between literature and environment when they remark that

What is ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies.

This means that ecocriticism examines literary works from an ecological perspective. The term ‘earth-centred approach’ clearly signals the move of examining literary texts from an anthropocentric perspective which “considers humans to be the most important life forms and other forms of life to be important only to the extent that they affect humans or can be useful to humans,” to a more “biocentric” perspective that holds the standpoint that “all life has intrinsic value” (Kortenkamp & Moore, 2000). Ecocriticism considers the entire ecosystem to be part of a community, not just the human inhabitants. Most forms of mainstream criticism analyze only human relations and the social sphere. Ecocritics look at human relationships, of course, but in a larger context, in the context of their relationships with other living things and natural systems on land. Estok (2010: 75) expands the scope of ecocriticism and asserts

Ecocriticism is more than simply the study of nature or natural things in literature, rather, it is any approach that is committed to make change by analyzing the function (thematic, artistic, social, historical, ideological, theoretical, or otherwise) of the natural environment in relation to humans, or aspects of it, represented in documents that contribute to material practices in material worlds.

Considering the significance of ecocriticism in directing human perceptions towards better and appreciative attitudes towards the natural world around them, Frederick (2006: 83) states that

Ecocriticism gives human beings a better understanding of nature. For a very long time nature is not given its due consideration and man's voracious urge to conquer nature is a known fact. Man also feels that he is superior to other forms that inhabit this biosphere. Now, we come to understand that nature is also co-inhabitant and not a subordinate. Ecocriticism is not just studying nature as represented in literature. This kind of studying existed very early even before William Rueckert coined the word ecocriticism. Ecocriticism helps human beings have a broader view of nature.

Frederick's argument above reveals the great leap forward of ecocriticism to the human world as it helps widen people's perception of their interactions with the physical world. In addition, Johnson (2009: 7) remarks that, "over the last three decades, ecocriticism has emerged as a field of literary study that addresses how human relate to nonhuman world in literature". Hamoud Y and Ruzy S (2012: 16) illuminate that ecocriticism can help reveal how the relationships between people and their physical world are echoed in literary works.

In this paper, the authors combine ecocriticism and postcolonial theory by linking between the marginality of nature in postcolonial theorizing and the centrism of nature in ecocriticism. The blending of the two theories illuminates the ecological elements of the conception of home in Darwish's poetry using the concept of ecological interconnectedness. Hamoud Y, Zalina L and Ravichandran V (2012: 79) argue that "ecological interconnectedness is among the most basic of ecocriticism tenets as ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between humans and nature". Therefore, this concept involves analyzing the interactions between people and their land and how they are linked reflects the ecological perspective of home in Darwish's poems.

The analysis

Since Darwish's ecological view of home has undergone three distinctive stages, the ecology of home can be analyzed in his poetry in three waves:

Wave 1: Darwish's ecological perspective of home at home

In the early poems, Darwish's ecological perception of home is closely connected to the Palestinian identity through the aspects of nature. He perceives home as an organic bond of both environment and people as can be traced clearly in his poems such as "Identity Card", "The Passport", "A Lover From Palestine", and "On Perseverance". For instance, in the poem "A Lover from Palestine", the ecological interrelationship between people and their environment is represented by land. The title suggests a love relationship between the poet and home, Palestine. This love shows that he and his motherland, which he metaphorically speaks to as his darling, are inseparable. This poem exemplifies his initial ecological perception of home by focusing on aspects of nature and organs of humans in co-existence and is interdependent:

*Your eyes are a thorn in my heart
Your words were my song
I saw your face in the walls.
And you are the words of my lips* (Darwish, 2000: 41)

In the lines above, Darwish transforms the whole environment of his homeland into an expression of love whose images shape the poet's ecological sense of home. The different forms of Palestinian nature such as water sources, stones, hills, fields of wheat, flora and fauna, winds, storms, are directly linked

with human organs to reveal interdependence. These images propose the ecological elements of the Palestinian land that are associated with man to mirror the notion of Darwish's home.

The poet expands the ecological elements of his perception of home from the local to the global context addressing the faithfulness of environment to him as can be traced in the following lines of the same poem:

*You are my virgin garden as
Faithful as the wheat
With our songs, we shall pierce the air
And plant fertility in the dormant earth
And like the braided palm tree
Unbending to the storm (Darwish, 2000: 42)*

The images of virgin garden, the faithful wheat, the air, plant fertility, the dormant earth reveal the poet's sense of attachment with the aspects of environment in his homeland. The use of contrast between "fertility" and infertility of the "dormant earth" highlights the speaker's desire to bring life back to his quiescent land. Despite being bound into captivity, his urge to regain his home remains undeterred. Similarly, in the poem entitled "The Passport", he says:

*Do not ask the trees about their names
Do not ask the valleys about their mother
All the heart of people
Are my nationality
So take away my passport (Darwish, 2000: 173)*

These lines show that the trees and valleys know their own origin, just as the speaker himself is assured and confident of his own connection to his home.

Wave 2: Reflecting ecology of home from a distance

Darwish's poems of exile further exemplify his tireless ecological perspective of home. His notion of home remains in its interconnected perception with the Palestinian identity through the various aspects of environment as can be illustrated in his poems of exile such as "A Diary of a Palestinian Wound," "The Land," "I Love You or I Do Not Love You," "Ode to Beirut," "The Bread" and "I See What I Want". For instance, the poem "A Diary of a Palestinian Wound" can be regarded as a representative of his poems of exile in which he writes:

*Our land and we are one flesh and bone
We are its salt and water
We are its wound, but a wound that fights (Darwish, 2000:165)*

The pronoun "we" refers to Palestinians inside and outside of Palestine. The reference to land as "our land" implies that the poet means to propose home in its ecological facet. He depicts the images ecologically when he presents the image "we are its salt and water" which evokes the sense of a deep ecological interconnection between Palestinians and their home because salt and water are two important ingredients of seawater that are impossible to separate. The image of "salt and water" conjures the sense of ecological rootedness that constitutes the poet's perception of home from a distance. Furthermore, the ecology of home is perceived in a close relation with human ecology through the organic image of "we are its wound, but a wound that fights". When salt water is applied to it, it becomes a healing agent. Darwish depicts this image of being "one flesh and bone" to highlight the aching situation when the flesh is removed from the bone that implicitly symbolizes his suffering for being away from home and his

sense of homelessness in exile. This organic image shows the biocentric elements that speak volumes of the poignancy of his loss.

The poem entitled “The Land,” is a reflection of the ecological elements that make up home through the imagery of the interconnections between humans, land and the aspects of the natural environments as can be traced clearly in the following lines in which the poet declares:

*I am the Land
And the land is you
I name my ribs trees
gently I pull a branch
From the fig tree of my land,
From our gardens of flowers
From the stones of our long road
From the air of Galeel (Darwish, 2000:488)*

The various aspects of the physical environment shape his identification with the land that represents home. The trees equate the ribs in his body. Ribs protect the heart and lungs; by extension, by associating his ribs to trees, he is showing how the figs and flowers are inseparable from his identity.

Further, the poet depicts deeply and yet specifically the ecological motifs of home in the poem entitled “The Old Beautiful City”, which is, as its title suggests, an ecological description of the poet’s home represented by the old beautiful city as can be traced in the following lines when the poet claims:

*We are the leaves of its trees
We are the wheat of its fields
We are the light of its moon
We are the sound of its water
Our land and we are one (Darwish, 2000: 408)*

These lines reflect the motifs of ecology of home in its sensuous shape. The leaves of trees, the wheat of field, the light of the moon and the sound of water embody the people of Palestine. Whether it is an element drawn from the air, the space, water or fauna and flora, each one makes up the totality of the person’s identity. The repetition of “We are” followed by binary aspects of each image of nature highlights the need to be ecologically in sync. Likewise, the poet presents another ecological element of home through the natural force of the wind as can be traced in the poem entitled “Ode to Bruit” which, in its entirety, reflects the poet’s nostalgia when he declares:

*The wind and we
Blow together on the land
The wind is the digger
Making home for us
In our homeland (Darwish, 2000: 339)*

In these lines, the image of the wind as a homemaker is another manifestation of the poet’s employment of nature. In cooperation with the force of the wind, the speaker will create a home. Similarly, in the poem entitled “An Eulogy of High Shadow”, Darwish portrays his home as a bag he is carrying in his exile when declares:

*My homeland is a bag
It is my bed at night
My homeland is a bag
I carry it on my shield (Darwish, 2000: 347)*

The bag metaphor shows the sum total of his whole ecological existence. On the one hand, the bag suggests that he carries the burden of representing the solitary human aspect of struggle in exile. On the other hand, the bag is symbolic of the imaginative ecology of home that accompanies him wherever he goes. The image of “I carry it on my shield” indicates his constant effort, the ecological impact of the land, and the mental influence of being alienated from his motherland. This stanza becomes more insightful when it is read together with his response to a question on the relationship between homeland and exile

As for me, I cannot praise exile as long as it is impossible to curse the homeland. However, the dreamed Palestine comes to my mind more readily when I write poems than the real Palestine. It is a problem that is at the same time personal and national and that prevents the Israelis from continuing to exile me. This is why I have to write better poems (Darwish, 2000: 356)

Moreover, the elements of the ecological interconnectedness that formulate the conception of the poet's home becomes more unrelenting when he describes himself in natural terms of Palestinian nature as can be traced in the poem entitled “The Sparrows Die in the Province of Galeel” when he notifies his ecological logos of home :

*I am the headstone
Of the grave in the homeland
I am the one into whose skin
The chains are digging
An outline of home (Darwish, 2000: 423)*

The stanza reveals the poet's ecological articulation of home through the image of the headstone and the chains. The logo of home that is dug within his skin is symbolic of his ecological sense of home. The metaphor of the headstone shows that his existence may be fleeting but his voice of resistance will forever be etched. His association with the environment of his homeland in the final phase of his writing life is highlighted in the following section.

Wave 3: Home as a process of ecological articulation

In the final phase of Darwish's poetic production, his notion of home is ultimately a process of ecological articulation constructed through the association with the environmental heritage. This shift in Darwish's notion of home can be traced in his poems upon returning home such as “Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone?”, “ At My Mother's House”, “ Do Not Apologize for What You Have Done”, “On the Day Like Today”, “ A State of Siege”, “ The Stranger's Picnic”, “Housework”, “Mural”, “ The Traveler” and “Nothing but Light”. For instance, Darwish writes in the poem “Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone?” which can be the representative poem of his final phase:

*I looked upon the trees that guard our nights
I looked upon the winds that
Protect their homeland
I look upon a procession of ancient prophets
As the climb barefoot toward Orshalim
And I ask: is there a new prophet for this new age? (Darwish, 2000: 595)*

These words reveal that Darwish's ecological conception of home is closely linked with a parental birthright through nature that he has employed to reflect his loss in the final phase of his poetic production. The ancient prophets whose departure constitutes the notion of home marks the early history

of the place. This implies that Darwish's notion of home is at the level of crisis that demands new prophets and, by extension, new messengers that will continue to fight for the return of the homeland.

Another ecological portrait of home in Darwish's poems of the final phase can be traced in the poem entitled "At My Mother's House" when he declares:

*In my mother's house
My photo gazes at me
And does not cease asking:
Are you, my dear guest, me?
Were you once twenty of my years (Darwish, 2000: 624)*

The image of the photo brings recollection of his youth and how long the years have been since his return. He is now a matured Palestinian whose notion of home has been transformed by the sequence and consequences of the crisis-ridden homeland. Therefore, as he gazes at his lost youth, the photo in turn regards Darwish as the "guest." This stanza reveals the state of being estranged. However, in the poem entitled "The Earth Squeezes Us", the poet, as the title suggests, depicts the human-land ecological attachment. He formulates a protective form of his connection to land as can be traced in the following lines when he says:

*I wish the earth were our mother
Therefore, she would be kind to us
We will die there
And there, our blood will irrigate its olive tree (Darwish, 2000: 626)*

These lines expose a new form of the ecological articulation of home in the poet's vision. He seems to be preoccupied with the imagery of his home that he describes in terms of mothering. The son-mother relationship is protective, caring and protective. Therefore, Darwish employs this kind of connection to convey his perception of ecology of home in his motherland. He announces his willingness to defend it until the last moments. The image "our blood will irrigate its olive tree" evokes the ecological interrelationship between the people and their environment in the sense that the poet's blood will water the olive tree that symbolizes the sustainability of home in the land of Palestine. The poet implicitly means to substantiate that their ecological attachment with the land will carry on. It will assist them and strengthen their struggle to regain their lost homes.

Furthermore, Darwish's ecological perception of home becomes inclusive of the whole country of Palestine as being in harmony with his identity. When he touches the land of Palestine:

*O' Palestine
You are the name of people
You are the name of the soil
You are the name of the sky
You will victorious (Darwish, 2000: 629)*

These lines provide a picture of the whole process of the poet's ecological articulation of home upon returning home. The people, the land and the sky are bonded together to construct the complete ecology of their mother home, Palestine.

Furthermore, in the poem entitled "Mural", Darwish utilizes the wheat of his homeland to show further his employment of environment to provide new ecological insights for the continuing Palestinian generations. The following stanza emphasizes this assertion:

*I am a grain of wheat
That has died to live again
My death makes a new life (Darwish, 2000: 732)*

The use of the metaphor “I am a grain of land” indicates clearly the intimate and deep ecological attachment with the homeland where he feels renewed and invigorated. Therefore, the ability of the wheat to regenerate is symptomatic of the Palestinian ecological will and awareness to remain in existence.

In summary, the analysis of the selected poems of Darwish discloses that he remains undeterred in his writing mission to show the symbiotic link between him and his land. Whether it is the olive tree, the winds, the moon or the sun, each element of nature is an extension of the persona in the poem who knows of his place even though he is displaced. It also reveals how Darwish utilized poetry as an ecological means for constituting home among homeless people in the world in general and in Palestine in particular. Further, it is shown that the poet’s employment of environment in his homeland becomes the basis of his agenda as a literary activist.

Conclusion

In this paper, the authors have attempted to explore Darwish’s application of environment in his homeland to reflect his perception of home in his poetry through an ecopostcolonial stance. The analysis of the representative poems displays that Darwish’s conception of home undergoes three influential ecological phases that traverse his writing life of fifty years. The authors have found that environment is closely linked to the concept of home through the poet’s utilization of nature in his homeland, which is, in turn, central to the field of postcolonial ecocriticism the authors adapted as a new analytical lens for reading the poetry of Darwish in this paper. As it has been shown, the poems of Darwish are populated with a continuous and unique development in the interaction between environment and home from the early poems to the poems of exile and the poems written upon returning home. In addition, Darwish definitely contributes to the facets of Palestinian environment and stirs up a sense of changing ecological notion of home in the Palestinian context. Undeniably, the ecopostcolonial lens used in this paper opens up new vistas of ecological reading the waves of Darwish’s use of environment in his homeland to reflect his ecological notion of home, extending what the authors know of his connection between home and environment in his poetic output.

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