RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Evolution of Resistance in English-Palestinian Poetry: Voices of Darwish and Abu Toha

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ABSTRACT

Palestinian poetry is a testimony of resistance that adapts itself to mirror the changing reality of its people. By investigating the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish (1948-2008), a poetic voice of the post-Nakba resistance period, and Mosab Abu Toha (b.1992), a contemporary poetic voice of the siege era, this research explores the evolution of the Palestinian poetry of resistance. It asserts that the transition from Darwish to Abu Toha stands as an essential adaptation in the Palestinian poetry of resistance. It signals a shift from a lyrical, symbolic, and collective representation of identity into a report-like, minimalist and private witness of Palestinian struggle. The research activates thematic, tonal, stylistic, and functional perspectives to highlight the significant transformations Palestinian poetry has gone through. Thematically, it has shifted from collective myth-making into trauma recitation. Tonally, it has moved from defiant assertion to burdened survival. Stylistically, particularly its images, it has departed lyrical construction in preference of visceral and sensory images. Functionally, the role of the poet has evolved from a national myth-creator into an eyewitness documentarian. Finally, the research indicates that, despite the shift in its poetic strategies, Palestinian poetry preserves its role as a site of resistance and consistency.

Keywords: Darwish, Abu Toha, Nakaba, Gaza, Palestinian, Poetry, siege.

مقالة بحثية

تطور المقاومة في الشعر الفلسطيني الإنجليزي: أصوات درويش و أبو توهه

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الملخص:

الشعر الفلسطيني شهادةٌ على المقاومة تتكيف لتعكس الواقع المتغير لشعبها. يستكشف هذا البحث تطور شعر المقاومة الفلسطيني من خلال دراسة شعر محمود درويش (1948-2008)، الصوت الشعري لعصر المقاومة ما بعد النكبة، ومصعب أبو طه (مواليد 1992)، الصوت الشعري المعاصر لفترة حصار غزة. يؤكد البحث أن الانتقال من درويش إلى أبو طه يعكس تحولاً جوهرياً في شعر المقاومة الفلسطيني، إذ يُشير إلى انتقال من التعبير الغنائي والرمزي والجماعي عن الهوية إلى شهادةٍ موجزةٍ وشخصيةٍ تُشبه التقرير عن المحنة الفلسطينية. يستخدم البحث منظوراتٍ موضوعيةً ونغميةً وأسلوبيةً ووظيفيةً لتسليط الضوء على التحولات الهامة التي مر بها الشعر الفلسطيني. فمن الناحية الموضوعية، انتقل من بناء الأساطير الجماعية إلى توثيق الصدمات. ومن الناحية النغمية، انتقل من التأكيد على التحدي إلى معاناة البقاء. من الناحية الأسلوبية، ولا سيما في صورها، فقد انحرفت عن البناء الشعري لصالح صور بصرية مقلقة وحسية. ومن الناحية الوظيفية، تحول دور الشاعر من صانع أسطورة وطنية إلى موثق شاهد عيان. وخلص البحث إلى أنه على الرغم من تطور استراتيجياتها الشعرية، فإن الشعر الفلسطيني يحتفظ بدوره الجوهري كموقع للمقاومة والاستمرارية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : درويش، أبو توهة، النكبة، غزة، الفلسطيني، الشعر، الحصار.

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1. Introduction

Over time, poetry functions as a vital medium for depreciated voices. It serves as a platform where in the thoughts, experiences and, mostly, emotions of marginalized communities can be openly articulated and amplified. This distinct art form also facilitates rights advancement. It instigates marginalized people to demand justice and equality. In times of war and disasters, this lyrical form is consulted as an influential tool of asserting identity, protecting cultural memory, and opposing prevailing narrative structures. It succeeds, to a large extent, to do so when other strives of defiance are blocked. Even so, this role of poetry as an active tool for political resistance and cultural revitalization is not merely a contemporary phenomenon. Rather, it is an ongoing design recognized across varied historical eras and communities. It gives voice to “the oppressed and perishing people” [12, p.115].

The systematic exploration of this literary validity led to the formal concept of "resistance literature". In his book *Resistance Literature* (2023), Harlow and Carter define this kind of literature as a "particular category of literature that emerged significantly as part of the organized national liberation struggles and resistance movements in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East" [26, p.2]. This definition represents the literature of resistance as a direct reaction to the trial of subjection, functioning as both an instrument for activating a collective response against colonialism and a site for consciousness and cultural memory.

From a Palestinian historical perspective, resistance literature was coined by the activist, critic and writer Ghassan Kanafani “in reference to the early Palestinian responses to the establishment of Israel after 1948” (31,p.164). In his book, *Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine 1948–1966* (1966), Kanafani applies the Arabic term ‘*adab al-muqawama’* to describe the body of literary production composed under the conditions of invasion, dispossession, and systematic oppression following the 1948 Nakba [31,p.1]. Therefore, this corpus of literary work can be comprehended as a form of writing that “resists the dominant power structures and challenges the hegemonic discourse of the colonizer,” working as “a literary counter-discourse that aims at deconstructing the colonial narrative and reclaiming the cultural identity of the colonized” [10, p. 3].

Put it differently, Palestinian poetry serves as an archetypal and specifically vital form of defiance against the ongoing oppression, fragmentation, and the systematic denial of their identity and culture. Sari and Handayani (2025) assert that Palestinian writers manipulate history to “subvert the colonial archive that denies Palestinian existence” [49, p. 417]. This act affirms a collective identity while countering the threats of erasure.

They deeply comprehended that the aggression directed against their country does not merely "involve physical acts such as the destruction of Palestinian villages and towns, but also encompassed a broader effort to erase Palestinian identity and culture from the newly created state” [13, p.39]. It is not only targeted to destroy “physical property such as religious buildings, schools, houses, graveyards, statues", but also targeted, in Drury’s words, to erase “cultural heritage of the land's rightful owners” [20, p.113]. Drury goes further to assert that “Israel believes wiping out the heritage of the people of Palestine would make the idea of 'return' - something it has always refused to countenance for Palestinians”[20, p.113]. In reaction, Palestinian poetry appears as a potent testimony of memory, a mean to "resist erasure" and "document the continued oppression of colonial settlements," powerfully defying the “forced amnesia” constructed to illuminate national Palestinian heritage [46, p. 115].

Palestinian resistance poetry is not a static phenomenon. Rather, it is an adaptive and dynamic phenomena that has developed constantly over history to mirror the alternating realities of the Palestinian struggle. This historical catastrophic trial culminated with the Nakba of 1948 and the mass loss and displacement of Palestinians was not a fixed occurrence, but an originating catastrophe of an ongoing strife. In this vein, the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (2023) records:

The Nakba was resulting in a series of crucial calamities: the Six-Day War in June 1967, which resulted in the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; the First and Second Intifadas of 1987-1993 and 2000-2005; and the crippling siege of Gaza imposed in 2007 . [45, p. 13]

Each of these happenings deepened the burden on Palestinian culture and life. Nevertheless, this descent of escalating crises reached a devastating culmination with the events of October 7, 2023, and the subsequent genocidal attack on the Gaza Strip. As Khader (2024) observes, this latest struggle represents "a perfect example of structural asymmetry between the powerful State of Israel and a population that has been driven out of its land or is living under siege and occupation," with Israel's reaction creating "the world's 'biggest urban wasteland'" in Gaza [32].

This latest event stands as the most severe manifestation of what many scholars identify as an "ongoing Nakba" and systematic "memoricide". In this relation, As Qabaha and Hamamra (2021) insist that this continuous memoricide, “the annihilation of memory and history" includes "destroying Palestinian villages and renaming them with Hebrew names, demoting the Arabic language in Israel, referring to Palestinians only as Arabs, criminalizing the commemoration of the Nakba, banning any reference to the Nakba in education and textbooks," and "keeping historical documents and archives off limits" [47,p.35]. This strategy of deliberate cultural erasure is an essential component of Israel's identity as a settler-colonial state whose practices "since the Nakba until now aim to eliminate Palestinians and take over their land" [47, p.41]. As a result, in reaction to this "ongoing colonial condition," which remains a central 'site of memory' ever present in the everyday experience of Palestinians, Palestinian poetry of resistance cannot remain static. Instead, it permanently evolves itself in terms of form, tone, style and even poetic mission to uncover the raw fact of such persistent and profound catastrophe.

This research argues that, in response to the changing realities of Palestinian life, Palestinian poetry has undergone a critical metamorphosis particularly because "memory is not a dead archive, but something active and productive in shaping awareness of identity," advocating poetic form and style to accommodate to each new era of oppression [49,p.417]. To systematically examine this evolution, this research explores two prominent poets: Mahmoud Darwish, whose originally Arabic poems articulated the trauma of the Nakba, and Mosab Abu Toha, a contemporary poet whose poetic production is an immediate reaction to the most recent and severe phase of this struggle. Writing from within the besieged Gaza Strip, Abu Toha’s, documentary and minimalist style is a direct response to the "terrifying urgency" of the 2023 genocidal attack on Gaza. The comparative exploration of the poetic corpus of these two poetic figures functions as a vital lens through which the broader evolution of the Palestinian resistance poetry and its thematic, tonal, stylistic and functional strategies can be comprehended.

2. The Aim

The aim of this research is to trace the evolution of Palestinian resistance poetry by comparing the poetic corpus of Mahmoud Darwish and Mosab Abu Toha. It asserts that Palestinian poetry has dynamically evolved over history, converting from Darwish’s collective, symbolic articulation of identity to Abu Toha’s private, report-like witness of war and siege. This adaption manifested the deep advancement in the Palestinian experience, from the trauma of the 1948 Nakba to the increased genocide and memoricide in present-day Gaza. To fulfill its aim, this research attempts to answer four basic question:

1. How does the thematic concern of Palestinian poetry of resistance evolve from Darwish's national myth-making to Abu Toha's trauma documentation in reaction to the alternating Palestinian realities from the Nakba to the Gaza siege?
2. In what ways does the poetic tone convert from Darwish's defiant confirmation to Abu Toha's obsessed survival, and what does this convey about the psychological consequences of the prolonged siege in Gaza?

3. How does Abu Toha's minimalist style work as a vehicle to advocate mental archives and confront memoricide, in opposition to Darwish's symbolic style?
4. How does the conception of the poet's role change from Darwish's communal voice and myth-making to Abu Toha's eye-witness and documentation, and how does this manifest the dynamic requirements of resistance in the digital age?"

3.Literature Review

Scholarship on Palestinian literature of resistance has evolved powerfully since Ghassan Kanafani's foundational 1966 work of "adab al-muqawama." Generally, the existing corpus of researches in this relation follows two distinct tracks. The first involves extensive exploration of established, prominent figures like Mahmoud Darwish, where as an increasing field of analysis dwells upon contemporary writers whose works respond directly to the contemporary realities of the Gaza siege. However, a serious gap persists because these two tracks are rarely interrelated, allowing a lack of comprehensive research that bridges the literary production of past and present artists to frame the evolution of Palestinian poetic resistance over generations and their distinct political contexts.

Existing research on Darwish has constantly explored his mythic and symbolic approach to resistance. For example, Nada Al-Sheikh (2021), in her article "Metaphors stemming from nature in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish," asserts how he positioned natural imagery into domains that function as mobile archives advocating cultural memory. This symbolic strategy is more assisted by Dhillon (2010), who confesses that Darwish's poetry was a site of cultural revitalization, creating “alternative mythologies and histories to resist the hegemonic Western and Israeli historical discourses” [19,p. 46]. Furthermore, Alkahlan (2023) adds more to this discussion, asserting that Darwish’s poetry serves as a rebellion tool of cultural resistance, aiming at recreating Palestinians’ truthful image as a nation at present and associating it to Palestine as a historical native land. Similarly, Alkhatib (2024) categorizes Darwish’s writing as a collective enterprise, declaring that "Darwish considered himself the voice of Palestine, and he was concerned with his nation; his mission as a poet was part of his resistance to the occupation of his homeland"[7, p.1732]. Despite the fact that scholarship supplies critical observations into Darwish's tacit, yet it remains rooted in the historical happening of the Nakba and displacement. This leaves a critical gap for perceiving how this poetic convention evolves to profoundly multiple shapes of contemporary obliteration, as in the sophisticated trial of siege.

In opposition, a more recent scholarship has started to frame Mosab Abu Toha's work as a direct response to the nightmarish and oppressive reality of Gaza. In his (2023) work, "Surviving physical violence and oppression: Poetry for resistance in Mosab Abu Toha’s *Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear*", Muhammad Ubaidullah argues that Abu Toha’s unadorned yet impactful language turns poetry into a silent battle where words struggle against injustice and tyranny. This is deeply rooted in an earlier research by Hamdan (2016), who articulated in "Language as Power Discourse in Palestinian Resistance Poetry" the validity of such language as a discourse of power that directly catalyzes and sustains real-world struggle [25].

More recently, Riaz et al. (2024) have employed the lens of cognitive poetics in "Cognitive Poetics and Traumatic Witnessing in Contemporary War Poetry" to maintain that Abu Toha utilizes "defamiliarized graphic images". In their research, Riaz et al, conceptualizes “de familiarization” as an artistic vehicle of visualizing the familiar in an unfamiliar way. For them “de familiarization” in the poetic images is a tacit to distract traditional perception and instigate the reader to perceive reality with fresh, yet shocking, clarity. By employing this poetic tool, Abu Toha activates his readers’ perception and urges them to be involved with Gaza's traumatic reality.

In his 2024 research, in "Resistance in Mahmoud Darwish’s “I Come From There”: A discourse analysis", Alkhatib has identified this as an evolution from Darwish’s emblematic observation to Abu

Toha's embodied witnessing. Thus, Alkhatib's work utilizes Abu Toha's role as a distinct phenomenon. However, Alkhatib investigation explicates Abu Toha's artistic production in isolation, establishing gaps in understanding how his strategies represent a sudden evolution, or an abrupt break, from the Darwish's traditional poetic designed.

Building upon these pre-mentioned research gaps, this research attempts to fill these critical gaps. Whereas scholars have constantly dwelt upon Darwish's contribution and have started to deal with Abu Toha's poetic output as a discrete phenomenon, few have undergone a systematic, a thorough comparative analysis to outline this transformation. Moreover, while the notion of memoricide is employed to the Palestinian condition by scholars like Qabaha and Hamamra (2021) in "Memoricide and the Politics of Forgetting in Palestine," its employment to apprehend the stylistic tacit of poetic resistance retains under dynamic adaption. Particularly, the application of cognitive poetics to explore how Abu Toha's use of graphic images and sensory cataloging potently evoke mental archives, bridging the gap between resistance literature and cognitive theory [49]. This research attempts to bridge that gap by accumulating the theoretical frameworks of resistance literature and cognitive poetics, categorizing Abu Toha's poetic corpus as a fundamental evolution of the tradition Darwish created, and thereby illustrating the continuous adaption of Palestinian poetics in the face of intensifying memoricide.

4. Methodology

This research activates a comparative methodological strategy to explore the shift of Palestinian resistance poetry. Designed around a four-dimensional analytical axes that are constructed to methodologically plan the evolution from the foundational poetry of Mahmoud Darwish to the present-day poetry of Mosab Abu Toha. These four analytical specific, yet, interconnected axes are: the thematic axe, the tonal axe, the stylistic axe and the functional axe. The first dwells upon the evolution in the thematic concentration of Palestinian resistance poetry. It detects a poetic departure from Darwish's prime concern with myth-making and national identity into Abu Toha's documentation of personal trauma of the siege. The second investigates the how it feels, establishing a further and vital psychological depth. It denotes the evolution of the Palestinian emotional scene. It contrasts Darwish's defiant affirmation with Abu Toha's anguish and over-loaded testimony. The third uncovers the how it is built by focusing on poetic imagery as the essential articulation of each poet's distinct style. It supplies an organized comparison of Darwish's symbolic imagery with Abu Toha's graphic, documentary images. This allows the reader to understand how these distancing aesthetic elections are vital tools that help the poets' distinct desires: one to create a national myth, the other to bear witness to violent reality. The fourth, and the last axe, dwells upon the why, perceiving the changing conception of the poet's role. It uncovers the evolution from Darwish as a national voice and myth-maker to Abu Toha as an eye-witnessed, or a documentarian, and hence conveying the evolving ethical imperatives or philosophical conception of their poetry.

By cautiously activating these four analytical lenses to selected poems of both poets, this research ensures a comprehensive and multi-dimensional exploration into the evolving and adaptive nature of Palestinian poetry of resistance.

5. Discussion and Analysis

5.1. Mahmoud Darwish's and the conception of Resistance

Mahmoud Darwish is a Palestinian writer and poet. He is considered as the Palestinian national poet. His work investigates themes of identity, exile and resistance. He is regarded, as Korbel and Strobl asserted, as one of the most influential cultural writers in the Arab world [34, p.35]. He was also evaluated as a poet of Palestinian cultural resistance, a popularity which was "intimately linked to his life story" [40, p.160]. To clarify, Darwish's early childhood contemporizes the Palestinian trauma of the 1948 Nakba, one of the most influential happenings in Palestinian history. At that time,

Darwish was six years old. He and his family left Palestine to Lebanon. After that, they return back to their village to find it all ruins and collapsed. In their article “Mahmoud Darwish, A Poet who attempted to be”, Najami and Ajjawi asserted that:

When the “Nakbah” of 1948 occurred, Darwish was six years old; he left Palestine with his family to Lebanon. Later they infiltrated back to his village, al-Birwa, to find it all ruins. Darwish came upon the experience of being displaced in his country. He witnessed the brutal actions of the authoritarian Jewish policy that murders, imprisons, and destroys homes. He, himself, was subject to prison and was sentenced to house arrest several times in his life. He also witnessed the 1967 “Nakbah” and wrote five books of collected poems from within the Palestinian land. Those books granted him vast public recognition that the Palestinian poetry became associated with three Palestinian poets on top of whom was Mahmoud Darwish. [43, p. 276]

Darwish carried those intrinsic traumatic events throughout his writings. They, as Lush and Robertson (2025) asserted, “shaped his poetry” (36, p.45). Darwish portrays the 1948 Nakba as a great turning point in his life saying:

In 1948, when this great rupture of ours took place, I jumped from the bed of childhood onto the path of exile... finding the child Mahmoud Darwish who once was is possible only in the poem. Not in life. [Darwish as cited in 15, p.257]

Consequently, Darwish's writing is highly rooted in the Nakba and demonstrates a lyrical, symbolic, and collective declaration of displacement and national identity. During the 1960s, Darwish got “the reputation of a poet of resistance and the voice of the Palestinian people” [25, p. 259]. However, this reputation fulfills a multidimensional and intricate strategies of resistance that can be comprehended through four key ingredients. On the thematic level, Darwish’s primary target was the reconfiguration of a shattered national identity. While recurrently entitled the "Poet of Resistance," this title can maintain an overly simplified fierceness that confute the obsessed nature of his writing. As Dhillon (2010) denotes, Darwish’s poetry denies protester discourses by regularly humanizing both sides and offering voice to the "voiceless subaltern population," highlighting the "horrors and beauties of everyday life" [19, p.46]. Thus, Darwish’s resistance was not a mere political cry, but an act of cultural revitalization, building "alternative mythologies and histories to resist the hegemonic Western and Israeli historical discourses" [19, p.46]. This thematic emphasis, advocating a unified narrative from the sites of memory, worked as a fortress in opposition to the memoricide of the Nakba, transferring his poetry into what Hamdan (2016) views a "repository for popular memory and consciousness" [24, p. 34]. Thus, Darwish’s poetry serves as a vital and defiant confirmation with a profound humanistic awareness. It is utilized, in Harlow and Carter word’s as an “aesthetic and tactical weapon” written to “incite, mass motivation and instigation” in the face of the brutal invaders [26, p. 63].

This is wholly evident in the informative capacity of his poems which celebrate musicality to “provoke the human sense and invigorate people’s spirit of resistance and endurance” [26, p.63]. However, this defiance is persistently impaired by a lyrical sorrow and a profound affinity. Dhillon (2010) asserts that Darwish’s poetic sympathy is “nowhere more apparent than in the poems that addresses the issues of exile,” conveying a resistance that is as much about protecting humanity and beauty in opposition of loss as it is about political contest [19, p. 46]. This tonal dualism enabled his poetry to resonate as both a radical melody and a vital elegy for exiled individuals.

In relation to poetic style, Darwish employed a powerful, lyrical symbolism grounded in Arabic poetic conventions. His poetic language, as Hamdan has pointed “utilizes expressions and diction that expose and condemn the injustices of all kinds committed by the occupiers” [24, p.175]. His poetics is “pregnant with juxtaposed codes and homeland-nature images to sustain the language of resistance and rebellion against the occupation” [24, p.175].

Similarly, Al-Sakkaf and Tayeb (2022) argue, Darwish employed natural images like wheat, olives, birds, and the sun not merely as descriptions of a landscape, but as "mobile archives and mythic symbols of rootedness, resilience, and collective belonging" [8, p.4]. His natural image of "immortal olive tree," for instance, was not simply a plant, but a mythic image of deep-rootedness and cultural endurance. This stylistic elect was not solely aesthetic. Rather, it was a powerful medium for nation flourishing and continuity.

Furthermore, Hamdan maintains that the "musical poetics of resistance" in Darwish's poems "transcends geographical, cultural, and even temporal boundaries," categorizing his writing an effective and enduring tool for the Palestinian purpose [26, p.63]. This supreme, allegorical style was prime for Darwish's strategy of "rewriting the world" and evoking an everlasting, universal legend from the pressure of the Nakba [as cited in 9, p. 67]. For Darwish, nature was a foundational element in the construction of a collective Palestinian identity, a symbolic anchor for a scattered people facing erasure.

Lastly, Darwish's concept of his own job was mostly related to this collective role. He conceived himself not as an individual artist; rather, as the voice of a people, saying, "I am the poet of a people who are searching for their identity" [as cited in 21, p. 145]. He was a myth producer whose writing was national matter of confrontation, a medium for creating a mutual narrative of root and association. Darwish, according to Alkhatib (2024), was "the voice of Palestine," and his poetry was "inherently linked to his resistance to the occupation of his homeland" [7, p. 1732]. This involved his bearing the suffering of his people and transforming it into a universal lyrical motto. Throughout the years, his poetry served as a strategic mediation, a fortification against cultural erasure and the foundation of Palestinian identity in exile. However, there are hints of intimacy in his later poetry that indicate the separation between the collective and the personal was not complete, opening the path to the poetic examination of the body as a site of memory and survival.

5.2. Mosab Abu Toha and Poetic Resistance

The poetic voice of Mosab Abu Toha, who was born in Gaza's Al-Shati refugee camp in 1992, stands as a clear evolution in Palestinian poetry of resistance. His poetry stems from a bitter reality that is far removed from the reality of exile that framed Darwish's poems. For Abu Toha, the essential occurrence is not a mere Nakba, but the magnified and increasing brutality of Gaza confinement, a truth he has never admitted. As he remarks, his background is one of continuous migration: "I was born in a refugee camp... My father and mother were born in refugee camps. My grandfather was born in a refugee camp" [5]. His writings are direct reactions to this condition of repression, and his notion of resistance is primarily distinct from his ancestor. It is not entrenched in the establishment of glorious collective myths, but in the violent, direct action of bearing witness. As he says obviously, "I write what I see. I write what I hear. I write what I feel" [5]. This plain admission instigates a poetic function relies on documentation as a shape of resistance.

This function is an immediate opposition to the deliberate elimination faced by Palestinians in Gaza, a reality scholars name "epistemicide", a term which stands for the killing of knowledge systems. It is aligned with Israel's direct act of collapsing Palestinian libraries, universities and cultural institutions, maintaining Edward Said Library which Abu Toha himself established before war. These happenings elevates Abu Toha's poetry from a mere poetic documentation into a poignant act of cultural continuity and endurance. In an interview with Hilden in 2024, Abu Toha supplied a vital renew on this cultural deletion, highlighting that since the outset of war on 7 October 2023, "air strikes have levelled two of the library's three branches– including the original location in his own home... with the remaining branch in Beit Lahiya taking heavy damage" [22]. Thus, Abu Toha compses his poetry as an archive or a site of memory constructed to oppose the "slow death of siege" [1, p.45]. In this relation,

Mosab's resistance is a conflict to hold onto reality in confrontation of its organized eradication, asserting his poetry a "silent battle where words fight against oppression" [44, p.214].

Abu Toha's poetic for obtaining this resistance are unique and can be comprehended via four powerful dimensions that denote his evolution from the Darwishian exemplary. On the level of poetic themes, Abu Toha's poetry neglects the extensive telling of national identity in choice of the direct, fragmented documentation of personal trauma. His emphasis is not on creating a national past but on protecting exact, contemporary memories in the face of continuous devastation. This thematic favour is an immediate tool of resistance in opposition of memoricide, as it insists on the specificity and value of individual lives being eradicate. He records the intergenerational trauma with severe clarity, saying:

His youngest son – who is four years old – knows what war means ... He knows what an aircraft means... Knows what a bomb means. An air strike. An explosion. What a drone means. What an F-16 means. [as cited 29]

This insistence on the individual's experience is a vital confirmation that Palestinians "are not numbers" or mere "statistics". Rather, they "are people with stories, with memories, with dreams". Then, Abu Toha goes further to say that if he could "save even one of these stories," then his "poetry has served its purpose" (as cited 29).

Tonally, Abu Toha's poems strike a vivid opposition to Darwish's defiant confirmation. Abu Toha's tone is one of clinical disengagement, mournful investigation, and deep exhaustion. This is not the voice of a leader strengthening people, but of an eye witness holding insufferable evidence. This kind of tonal strategy is immediately stemmed from the psychological reality of the Palestinians' living condition under siege, which Abu Toha describes as "living to death" [29]. He says:

If you live in Gaza, you die several times... You sleep and you are sure, 'Maybe this time it's my time to die with my family'. So you die several times, because you count yourself amongst the dead every night. [29]

This clear and despairing image of "anticipatory grief" wherein the distinction between the living and the dead is obscured by fear is precisely the tone that dominates Abu Toha's narrative.

As for the style, Abu Toha manipulates a documentary and minimal, style that is an intended strategic choice. Where Darwish employed rich symbolism, Abu Toha activates simple, direct language, graphic images and recurrently fragmented details. This is not only an aesthetic but a vital cognitive tacit. As Riaz et al. (2024) assert that Abu Toha employs "defamiliarized graphic images" [48] and sensory grouping to disturb inactive reading and stir an incarnated indulgent with Gaza's traumatic situation. Abu Toha's stylistic target is vivid: "I want every single person who is living outside [Gaza] to imagine themselves being born in Palestine... Being born in a refugee camp and living all their lives under occupation and under siege... I want the world to understand Palestinian pain" [as cited in 29]. This aspiration to stir empathy via immediate, unfiltered suffering frames his documentary precision, establishing his poems as tools for reconfiguration international co-witnesses.

Lastly, Abu Toha's notion of the poet's job has transformed from Darwish's communal voice to that of an individual documentarian and witness. This role is intensified by the fact that he was writing in English directly. This makes his writings exceeds the filters of translation, as in the case of Abu Toha, and endows him with a direct accessibility on the part of global readers. In addition, Abu Toha's relies heavy on digital medias. He appears in many interviews, newsagents and international occasions. This enables him in to convey his poetry in real time that resonates with the evolution of Palestinian reality. This goes with his conception of poetry as "the most direct way of communicating the horrors of the war and the siege," and is conceivably "the only tool that emerges from under the rubble" of a bombed city [as cited in 29]. His poetic role is not only to detect but to enact. Abu Toha also believes that poetry can serve as a voice for those who "did not survive to tell us the rest

of the story". He believes that his role as a poet to write stories or complete them, saying: “my position as a poet is to either rewrite the story or to complete it” [as cited in 29]. This conception reconfigures the poet’s role from a distinct myth-maker to a direct documentarian who captures the readers to be a vital part of resistance. By manipulating these strategies, Mosab Abu Toha has advanced the role of Palestinian poet in the context of resistance in a way that powerfully resonates the brutal happening of the 21st century, evoking a poignant aesthetic of observation and continuity in the face of intended unmerciful genocide

6. A Comparative Poetic Analysis

As it is denoted previously, this research aspires to highlight the adaptive capacity of Palestinian resistance poetry. It attempts to clarify how it dynamically advances its focus, tone, style and the poetic role to prove Palestinian existence and confront the brutal forces which try to annihilate their physical and spiritual existence. Thus, the present section argues that the transition from the poetry of Darwish to that of Abu Toha stands as an excellent example of adaption in Palestinian poetry of resistance. This section activates an accurate comparative analysis of selected poems by these two poets. It attempts to uncover this evolution via dwelling upon four key dimensions in the poetry of both poets. The first examines the thematic shift from national myth-making at the hand of Darwish to trauma documentation at the hand of Abu Toha. The second ingredient draws upon the tonal shift from Darwish’s defiant confirmation to Abu Toha’s obsessed continuity. As for the third ingredient, the stylistic turning from lyrical symbolism in Darwish’s poems to the employment of graphic minimalism is examined. While the transforming conception of the poet's role from Darwish’s communal voice to Abu Toha’s personal witness is dealt with as the fourth axe of comparison between the two poets. By systematically comparing selected poetic texts of these two poets across these four axes, this section is designed to support the research’s main argument. It denotes that resistance in the Palestinian poetry is not a fixed convention. Rather, it is a progressive practice which dynamically reconfigure itself to fulfill the increasing challenges of tyranny and eradication.

6.1. Thematic Evolution: From National Myth to Trauma Documentation

The most prominent shift from Darwish to Abu Toha is admitted in their thematic concern. A comparative examination of their poetry asserts a prominent transformation from the national trauma of the Nakba to the personal trauma of the siege. Composing in the aftermath of 1948, Darwish devotes his poetic writing to affirm the shattered Palestinian identity. His poems work as a potent weapon in the face of the memoricide of ethnic purgative, a fact which he achieves via composing a shared narrative of belonging, origin and collective memory.

Commenting on his thematic concern Al-khatib (2024) articulates how Darwish “paid great attention to the issue of land ownership” and was “afraid that the deceiving history may change the facts about the ownership of Palestine” [7, p.1731]. In the same vein, Dhillon (2010) demonstrates that Darwish’s resistance was not a mere political cry, but an act of cultural revitalization, establishing “alternative mythologies and histories” to confront “the hegemonic Western and Israeli historical discourses” [19, p.46].

Darwish’s most cited poem, "Identity Card", written in 1964 when he was only 22 years old, is an obvious evidence of this. The poem’s validity is profoundly grounded in its real historical background. Mendelson-Maoz (2015) explains how Darwish was a “young Palestinian-Israeli who had grown up under a military government forced on Palestinian-Israeli citizens from 1948 to 1966,” decades when Darwish was forbidden many times for “writing political poetry” [39,p.53]. Aiding this view, Harrison(2015) maintains that Darwish’s “Identity Card” serves as “the most iconic example of Palestinian resistance literature,” where its moving refrain functions as “a rallying cry for the Palestinian cause” and “a manifesto for cultural resistance”[27, p.36]. This collective declaration turns legitimize strategies of systematic erasure into vehicles of defiance. The

poem opens with a strong confident confirmation of existence. Darwish writes:

Write down!
I am an Arab.
My ID card number is 50,000.
My children: eight
And the ninth is coming after the summer.
Are you angry? [17, p.55]

The theme, in the lines above, is the affirmation of a collective Palestinian existence. The early affirmation, "I am an Arab," was a revolutionary action of defiance. Mendelson-Maoz (2015) notices that to "admit 'I am an Arab' in an authoritative manner, is a way to reject being a silenced absentee" and to "undermine the Jewish state's attempt to suppress 'Arabness' from within" [39, p.54]. This provocation is not restricted to identity; it increases to an assertion of self-sufficiency and dignity, denying the role of a suppliant. The poem's persona goes on saying:

Write down:
I am an Arab.
I work with my toiling comrades in a quarry.
My children are eight,
And out of the rocks
I draw their bread,
Clothing and writing paper.
I do not beg for charity at your door
Nor do I grovel
At your doorstep tiles.
Does that anger you? [17, p.56]

The imperative command "Write down!" creates a sort of "textual warfare," advocating an "imperative refrain" that turns the poem into an vehicle of "reiterated self-affirmation" [28, p.36]. The colonizer is forced into an unavoidable confrontation by this accurate address. Moreover, the speaker's declaration is deepened by an appeal to a mythic past, building an affinity with an ancient legacy that exceeds the direct trauma of exile. In this manner, the poem reconfigures a sense of origin that is elemental and historical, rather than solely political:

Write down:
I am an Arab,
A name without a title,
Patient in a country where everything
Lives on flared-up anger.
My roots…
Took firm hold before the birth of time,
Before the beginning of the ages,
Before the cypress and olives,
Before the growth of pastures. [17, p.55]

As it is obvious, A key secrete to the poem's vitality is its turning from the personal into the national perspective. In his (2013) book, *Mahmoud Darwish's 'Palestine'*, Mazumdar asserts this perspective, maintaining that "the personal anxiety and nostalgia of the speaker in this poem becomes the collective nostalgia for all the people of Palestine"[38]. Toward its terminating lines, the poem's textual election is intensified. Darwish's assertion of identity is shifted into an explicit warning. This warning stems from a deep sense of desperation and loss. It exposes the conflict not as a philosophical political struggle, but as a fight for continuity. Darwish writes:

Write down:
I am an Arab
Robbed of my ancestors' vineyards
And of the land cultivated
By me and all my children.
Nothing is left for us and my grandchildren
Except these rocks…
Therefore,
Write at the top of page one:
I do not hate people,
I do not assault anyone,
But...if I get hungry,
I eat the flesh of my usurper.
Beware...beware...of my hunger,
And of my anger. [17, p.57]

In acting so, Darwish's poetry becomes, as Hamdan (2016) affirms, a "repository for popular memory and consciousness," a potent archive for people confronting deliberate erasure [25, p. 34].

Contrastively, Abu Toha's poetry overestimates the obsession with Palestinian myths in favour of the

immediate and fragmented recitation of personal suffering under siege. Abu Toha's thematic focus works as a direct response to a more severe and expanded face of memoricide. The thematic occupation of his poems is to document not only the slaughtering of individuals, but the devastation of knowledge and its institutions, as it is clear in the Israli destruction of the Edward Said Library, a library that Abu Toha has established in Gaza. Therefore, Abu Toha's theme is a daring trial to hold onto reality in the confrontation of its systematic erasure. In this vein, Woods (2026) asserts that his decision to publish Abu Toha's writing comes from the fact that Abu Toha's works resonates with his desire to publish "voices of dissent" and oppose systemic erasure. He, Wood, writes: "The decision to publish Toha [...] was a response to the escalation of the war in Gaza in 2021" [52, p.11]. Abu Toha himself asserts this ethical imperative in his writing saying: "I have to document what's happening... If I don't write it down, it's like it never happened" [3,sec:0.19]. His poem are perceived as incarnating, an urgent counter-narrative, viewed as "a moving collection of poetry that evokes the specific nature of suffering and resilience in the context of his homeland's everyday yet extraordinary violence" [52, p.11].

His poems become sites of witnesses, vehicles to engrave the presence of people and places onto the historical recitation before they are erased. This thematic emphasis is vitally explored in his short poem "Palestinian Streets," from his collection *Things You May Find Hidden in My Air* (2022), where Abu Toha conveys how the closeness of brutality frames every small detail in Gaza, from town streets to children's futures to Gazans' personal identity. He writes:

My city's streets are nameless.
If a Palestinian gets killed by a sniper or a drone,
we name the street after them.
Children learn their numbers best
When they can count how many homes or schools
Were destroyed, how many mothers and fathers
Were wounded or thrown into jail.
Grownups in Palestine only use their IDs
So as not to forget
Who they are [2, p.15]

Notably, Where Darwish establishes a collective identity through national symbols like "the cypress and olives", Abu Toha's poem creates identity in the violent, organizational catastrophes of the siege: children learning arithmetic via destruction, streets named after martyrs, and the furious clutching of an ID card as a site of memory in the face erasure. This is not glorious myth-making; it is the disputative documentation of a reality constructed not to be forgotten.

This thematic evolution in Palestinian resistance poetry can be more openly uncovered via comparatively analyzing Darwish's "I Come From There" from *Unfortunately, It Was Not Paradise: Selected Poems* (2003), and Abu Toha's "Door on the Road" from his collection *Forest of Noise* (2024). In "I Come From There", Darwish again assumes the role of a myth-maker, integrating concrete yet potent sites of identity. His employment of the natural environment is vital to this, a strategy scholars have named as "eco-resistance". As Al-Sheikh (2021) illustrates, Darwish deliberately activated natural imagery as "mobile archives and mythic symbols of rootedness, resilience, and collective belonging" [8, p.4]. This is clearly advocated when Darwish creates a cosmic appeal to his homeland:

Mine is the wave, snatched by sea-gulls,
I have my own view,
And an extra blade of grass.
Mine is the moon at the far edge of the words,
And the bounty of birds,
And the immortal olive tree. [15, p.60]

The "olive tree", "the moon", and "the sea", these are not solely plants or celestial physical objects; they are a mythic cosmos, a plea to an everlasting belonging that overcome physical exile. However, Abu Toha's poem presents a theme of personal, traumatic continuity. The home is not a lyrical memory, rather, a pile of ruins, and the key is not a metaphor but a hopeless concrete site. The is clearly revealed in his poem, "In a Refugee Camp" from his collection,

Forest of Noise, where he writes:

In the Refugee Camp,
after the explosion, a door flies into a far street,
rests near a heap of rubble.
Clouds of dust settle on the coughing,
neighboring houses—
their noses swollen by the heat
of the scorched air.
A girl passes by, sees the bleeding door, opens it. A corpse
lies beneath it.
The earth weeps. Though some fingers got cut,
the dead young man still clutches in his hand
a very old key—the only thing he's inherited
from his father. The key to their house
in Yaffa. He was sure it's been destroyed, but a key
can be his passport to Yaffa when they return.
Now, neither he nor their knocked-down house in the Refugee
Camp can stand.
The girl closes the door. Windows of tears
open in her heart. [5, p.13]

The graphical documentation in the lines above clearly reveals the entire thematic transformation from the classical tradition established by Darwish to the contemporary immediacy evoked by Abu Toha. To clarify, in Abu Toha's verse, the “key” is no longer a site of return. It is a "passport" bugged by a severed hand, a testimonial to a restoration that is both aspired for and substantially hopeless in the current condition of brutality.

Similarly, the "bleeding door" that Abu Toha maintained in his poem is not a door to a mythic antiquity. Rather, it stands as a direct site of discovery and death. It, once again, demonstrates how Palestinian poetry of resistance has adapted its struggle against memoricide: shifting from Darwish's thematic scheme of establishing a collective memory to oppose political eradication, to Abu Toha’s focus on evoking specific, personal memories to defy the concrete and epistemic elimination. This adaption positions Abu Toha within a wider convention of tyrannical literature. His poetry becomes, as Woods (2026) portrays, “ongoing world-building, anti-authoritarian effort” and a "consistent pursuit of freedom” or a “challenge to accumulated power”[52, p.3].

Thus, Abu Toha’s poems, as they activate the personal and the specific, confront the dominating forces of the siege and insist on advocating possible futures by first conserving the raw fact of the Palestinians’ going living status.

6.2 Tonal Evolution: From Defiant Assertion to Haunted Survival

In relation to the poetic tone, the transformation from Darwish's defiant tone to Abu Toha's tone of haunted survival is not solely a shift in poetic sensation. Rather, it stands for an immediate measure of the increasing brutality and psychological strife, extorted upon Palestinians. This change in tone echoes the transcendence from Palestinian conflict against political eradication to their struggle for psychological continuity within the new reality of the brutal siege, especially that of Gaza Strip. In other words, Darwish’s poetic tone in the decades of the Nakba and its aftermath, demonstrates a tone of defiance and strategic opposition. His poems serve as amplifiers for the denied people voices, converting their suffering into tools of collective resistance.

This is obvious in the tone of his poem, "Identity Card", where the repeated refrain "Write down!" work not as an appeal but a vital tacit and tonal affirmation in the face of systematic erasure. This tone exemplifies what Kanafani (1968) portrays as the intrinsic “spirit of defiance in resistance literature” [31, p.4]. Additionally, Hever (2019) notices that this is a moving claim, or better said, an order for an “obverse, disillusioned type of 'identity card'" that falsifies the dominant narrative and revitalizes “agency through language itself” [28, p.177].

A further manifestation of Darwish’s tone of defiance is clear in his poem "A State of Siege". This poem was composed in 2002 when he was in Ramallah in the time of the Israeli siege. Later, The poem published in the 2007 collection of verse *The Butterfly's Burden*. However, the poem's tone is more intricate than mere resistance. Tom Langley (2012)

asserts that during the years of writing this poem "Palestinian exists as a kind of 'bare life' in the political sphere" [35, p. 74]. In reaction to this dehumanization, Darwish writes:

This siege will intensify
to convince us
to choose a harmless slavery,
but with total freedom of choice [14, p.80]

In the above lines, the tone is a precise psychological investigation. It creates the irrational brutality of a power that requires the prey's contribution in their own subjection. In reaction to this "harmful Slavery," Darwish's defiance increases more supreme. His most effective strategic declaration is not a demand to the enemy, but a directive to poetry itself, saying: "*To poetry: besiege your siege"* [14, p.80].

According to Langley (2012), the above quoted line is poignant as it enacts the actual action it demands. Originally, this line is an accurate cite from Darwish's 1983 poem, "Eulogy for the Tall Shadow," which was composed in reaction to the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and the Sabra and Shatila massacres.[35, p.74] By reusing this line in "A State of Siege," Darwish intendedly links the 2002 siege of Ramallah to that preceding catastrophe, rejecting to allow the current moment be perceived as an isolated occurrence. This tacit paints a historical sequence and is a vital dimension of "intertextual resistance" [35, p.77]. This strategic use of intertextual resilience stands as a complex tonal evolution from the direct request of "Write down!" in "Identity Card". It presents a poet who, while writing, comprehends that defiance needs maintaining the continuity of verse and memory, not solely engaging in a direct or concrete confrontation.

The poem also presents a an immediate plea for collective humanity. Langley explains this plea as an effort to create a distinct form of interaction, though it may appear useless or futile [35, p.78]. This intricate merge of exhaustion, defiance and humanity signifies the "meditative and lyrical" turn in Darwish's later writing. Ultimately, it is this very complexity that renders his tone so potent, permitting him to voice the intricate psychological strain of the siege.

In contrast, Abu Toha's poetry, motivated by the unremitting trauma of the Gaza siege, activates a notably distinct and more direct tone. It is a mournful, direct observation, revealing a deep exhaustion. It resonates with the evolution of conflict from the public stage to the restricted psychological sphere of the personal living under persistent risk. This is the slow death of siege that Abu-Remaileh (2021) depicts, a situation that destroys the body and the soul.[1, p.42] In "Sobbing Without A Sound," from *Things You Might Find Hidden in My Ear*, the tone is one of complete depression, a stark evolution from Darwish's national commands. Abu Toha writes:

wish I could wake up and find the electricity on all day long .
I wish I could hear the birds sing again, no shooting and no
buzzing drones.
I wish my desk would call me to hold my pen and write again ,
or at least plow through a novel, revisit a poem, or read a play.
All around me are nothing
but silent walls
and people sobbing
without sound [3, p.21]

This portrays what Ubaidullah (2023) utilizes as a "silent battle," where the words themselves incarnate the erect consumption and resilience needed for endurance [50, p. 214]. This obsessed, exhausted tone is also evident in the quiet devastation at the end of Abu Toha's "Door on the Road". After his reportative starting, *"In the Refugee Camp / after the explosion, a door flies into a far* street," [5, p.13] the poem terminates not with a call for equality, but with a profoundly internalized depiction of misery: *"The girl closes the door. Windows of tears / open in her heart"* [5,p.13]. This transformation from the surface brutality to the inward, distressing reaction is an obvious disparity to Darwish's rebellious collective commands. Abu Toha's tone is that of a personal sensitivity, documenting the private trial under

pressure of war and siege.

Above all, the transformation of tone from Darwish's collective defiant tone to Abu Toha's personal haunted survival tone represents the intrinsic shift in the Palestinian struggle reality. It indicates that the Palestinian battle has evolved from the collective level of identity assertion into a deeper, yet personal and psychological level. In this light, Palestinian resistance becomes not merely restricted by the capacity to confront, but by the desire to remember, survive and feel when the world's dominating forces neglects Palestinians suffering.

6.3. Stylistic Evolution:

On the stylistic level, once again, the change from Darwish to Abu Toha is a natural manifestation of the evolving reality of the Palestinian truth in the face of increasing violence. It asserts an obvious turns from applying language to creating a national myth to employing it as a tool for direct documentation. Working on rich Arabic poetic conventions, Darwish produces a lyrical, symbolic style identified by dignified language, intricate metaphors, and mythic vibration, constructed to advocate a common identity from the fragments of exile. Unlike Darwish, Abu Toha, writes from a position within the violent and severe truth of the siege of Gaza. His poetry employs a minimalist and documentary style featured by blunt imagery, simple language, and increasingly distressing and material details. This stylistic preference is an ethical imperative, a rejection to aestheticize a truth that is extremely horrific. Abu Toha himself has asserted this stylistic strategy as a moral imperative, clarifying his refusal of complicated metaphor. In an online reading, Abu Toha declares: "I don't think I need to use a metaphor... The reality is so simple, so brutal, that I don't need to beautify it" [3].

While many stylistic ingredients via which Darwish and Abu Toha's poetry could be compared, yet the shift in the poetic images supplies one of the most outstanding strategies via which the stylistic evolution of the poetry of these two poets could be examined. Consequently, this section is going to examine the stylistic transformation from Darwish to Abu Toha in term of the images they both employed. This examination seeks to clarifies how Palestinian resistance poetry evolves from Darwish's symbolic assertion to Abu Toha's graphic witness.

To illustrate, Darwish's symbolic style is characterized by what critics describe as "eco-resistance". Darwish uses "eco-resistance" as a poetic tacit via which the natural world is rendered to signal national supremacy [8, p.21]. Rather than activating a sole description of it, the natural world, at Darwish's hands, become "mobile archives" that assert national identity. The recurrent motif of the "immortal olive tree", for instance, does not merely stand as an ecological site, but as a cosmic motto of firm connection to the homeland. Acting as such, Darwish's poetry transcends the material reality of war and exile [8, p.21].

This poetic tacit fulfills an almost cosmic level in many of his poems like "The Earth is Closing on Us". This poem actually appeared in the poet's collection of verse *Unfortunately, It Was Not Paradise: Selected Poems* (2003). In this poem, the apocalyptic imagery and repetition built a potent, incantatory influence that converts personal identity into national myth:

Where should we go after the last frontiers?
Where should the birds fly after the last sky?
Where should the plants sleep after the last breath of air?
We will write our names with scarlet steam.
We will cut the grass in the shadow of the walls.
We will write our names with scarlet steam.
We will hang our names on the light of the moon.
We will hang our names on the wind's breast . . . [16, p.35]

In the lines above, symbols such as the "scarlet steam" and "the last sky" evolves Palestinian identity beyond the mundane, turning it into collective, mortal ingredient. This symbolic style fulfills Darwish's desirable purpose of "rewriting the world" [9, p.67], employing nature as an essential component in the reconfiguration of an everlasting, national Palestinian identity in the face of political

eradication.

In stark contrast, Abu Toha's poetry employs a stripped-down style. This style featured by blunt imagery, immediate language, and an emphasis on physical, often distressing, explanations. This stylistic election is not solely aesthetic; it is a deliberate and cautious reaction to the increasing severity he witnesses in Gaza. Thus, in his style, Abu Toha refuses to aestheticize the Palestinian reality that is already and bluntly terrifying. In terms of images, Abu Toha moves away from natural images that assert what cannot be erased. He, Abu Toha, employs "defamiliarized graphic images" [48, p.207] to activate reader's perception and force him to be engaged in the traumatic reality of Gaza. These images are graphic in their portrayal of brutality. However, they are "defamiliarized" via unprecedented juxtapositions that obscure commonness and need dynamic cognitive processing. These documentary images are vitally articulated in Abu Toha's poems "Gas Mask," from his collection *Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear* (2022). The poem starkly represents the poet's use of graphic defamiliarized images which force the reader to encounter the unbearable horrors of everyday life. The poem portrays the gas mask not as an instrument, but as a burred new part of the physical body:

I have learned how to put on my gas mask.
I have become a mother to a newborn baby.
I have to check if it is okay
from time to time.
I have to make sure the filter is clean.
I have learned how to sleep with a second face
on my face,
a face that doesn't smile or cry.
A face that makes me a stranger
to myself. [2, p.21]

Thus, in the above lines, the defamiliarization is deep. A gas mask is a tool of war, however, Abu Toha presents it with the intimate language of identity and motherhood, as in his saying: a "newborn baby" and a "second face". This horrific contrast instigates the reader to face the psychological truth of the siege, where continuity needs the maintenance of a fabricated identity that eradicate individuals' humanity identity. In this relation, Riaz et al. (2024) admit that these "defamiliarized graphic images" disrupt reader comprehension and stir an incarnated indulgent with the traumatic mere truth of Gaza [48, p.207]. Moreover, the image of a "second face that doesn't smile or cry" is a blunt proof to the dehumanizing consequence of persisting risk. As Ubaidullah (2023) notices, this type of imagery "exposes dehumanization" by rendering tyranny intuitively tangible [41, p. 212].

All in all, where Darwish employs the "immortal olive tree" to affirm a cosmic, everlasting belonging grounded in nature, Abu Toha activates the "gas mask" to recite a modern identity violated by violence and technology. The first, Darwish's olive tree, is a manifestation of mortal being; the other, Abu Toha's's gas mask, is instance of deep un-becoming. This evolution from a natural symbol of life to a un common image of survival completely stirs the wider transcendent from Darwish's collective myth-making to Abu Toha's trauma recording. To a large extent, this reflects the changing nature of the threat faced by the Palestinians, ranging from political eradication of the Nakba which Darwish confronted via establishing national and mythical images to the bodily and psychological annihilation of the Gaza siege which Abu Toha wants to resist via creating defamalized images that reflects Palestinian reality as it is.

6.4. The Function of the Poet

The evolution of Palestinian poetry of resistance is obviously embodied in the changeable conception of the poet's function. This conception can be detected via tracing its adaption in the poetic corpus of Darwish and Abu Toha. In the poetry of these two figures where poet's role has evolved from acting as a myth-creator into a documentarian. This directly manifests the increasing political threat faced by the Palestinians, ranging from the catastrophe of Nakba into Gaza recent siege and genocide.

For Darwish, the poet's resistance role lies in his

ability to reconfigure the national Palestinian collective identity. He powerfully declares: “I am the poet of a people who are searching for their identity” [as cited in 21, p.145]. Supporting this conception, Mahfoodh (2021) maintains that because national memory is at the edge of loss, “the poetry of Darwish embodies his insistence on the poem to preserve memory” [37, p.71]. Thus, at his hand, poetry is converted into “a national narrative that safeguards the memory of the homeland, where the text becomes a poetic place for Darwish to create poetics of resistance" [37, p. 71].

To illustrate, Darwish deliberately assumed the role of his people. He employs his poetic voice to articulate the trial of the whole national. His prime motivation was to establish a shared collective identity that could bring people together when they were displaced from their country physical. This was a vital resistance against those attempt to delete Palestinian history and culture. This notion is very clear in Darwish’s poem "A Lover from Palestine", a poem whose translated English version appeared in *Unfortunately, It Was Not Paradise: Selected Poems* (2003). In this poem, the nation of Palestine is treated by Darwish as a lover. In this poem, Darwish identifies the object of his poetic love, and by extension, his complete artistic function, as the accurate manifestation of the nation. The poet's mission is to be the one who sees, names, and celebrates this national identity, culminating in a potent litany that converts the nation into a single, revered individual. Darwish declares:

Her eyes and the tattoo on her hands are Palestinian,
Her name, Palestinian,
Her dreams, and sorrow, Palestinian,
Her Kerchief, her feet and body, Palestinian,
Her words and her silence, Palestinian,
Her voice, Palestinian,
Her birth and her death, Palestinian [18, p.5]

This role is established more explicitly in the poem's terminating litany, where Darwish confesses his poetic mission as an act of carrying and creating. He is not only in love with Palestine; he is her an architect and caretaker. Darwish says:

I have carried you in my old notebooks
As the fire of my verses,
The sustenance for my journeys.
In your name, my voice rang in the valleys [18, p.5]

As it is clear in the previous lines, Darwish’s "I" and the Palestinian’s "you" are merged. His poem become the "fire" and "sustenance" for the people, and his words become the mediums for their existence in the homeland. He is the architect of the national myth. He is the one who creates a national home in the imagination to confront physical exile, even promising to *"write a phrase more precious than honey and kisses: / ‘Palestinian she was and still is’"* [18, p.5]. From the ashes of war and exile, Darwish holds this moral commitment to invokes a the collective identity of his nation.

In the time of the Gaza siege, the poet’s responsibility as collective national representative voice grows insufficient. This is due to the increasing violence which results in the annihilation not only of Palestinians’ lives, but of their national legacy as well. As such, the need is no longer for a grand myth-maker but for a truthful first-hand documentarian of the ongoing reality. This role is a direct reaction to the "epistemicide" being exercised in Gaza, where cultural institutions and even libraries are systematically collapsed.

Abu Toha intentionally adopts this strategy, designing his writing as an ethical urgency. He deliberately equates the poet’s resisting role with his capacity to documents the actual condition of his people and the raw facts of the genocide with no aestheticism. In an interview, Abu Toha declares his view toward poetry and the poet’s role, he says:

When I think of poetry I don’t think Arabic poetry or English poetry or Spanish poetry. No, I just think of poetry as an idea, not as rigid form that I need to follow. The word for poetry in Arabic, [shiʿr] doesn’t refer to a particular form, it only has to do with feeling. […] When you are a poet, you need to be saying something that cannot be said by other people. Poets don’t necessarily need to be first-rate

readers of poetry, because when they start to write poems they already have what they need, they've been living it. [cited in 51, para. 48]

As such, Abu Toha openly hints at his poetic mission, saying, "I have to document what's happening... If I don't write it down, it's like it never happened" [3]. His function is not to advocate a symbol, but to bear witness to the raw truth that the symbol is designed to manifest.

These adaption from the communal to the incarnated is vitally voiced in the title poem of his collection, "Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear," where his physical body itself stands for the archive. The poem begins with a weak, surgical invitation that converts the poet's physicality into an actual library. Abu Toha writes:

When you open my ear, touch it
gently.
My mother's voice lingers somewhere inside.
...
You may encounter songs in Arabic,
poems in English I recite to myself,
...
When you stitch the cut, don't forget to put all these back in my ear.
Put them back in order as you would do with books on your shelf. [2, p.7]

In fact, the lines above represent a deep metaphor for resilience in the time of epistemicide. When libraries like the Edward Said Library, which Abu Toha established, are destroyed, the body comes to be the final remaining site for cultural memory. The direction to *"put them back in order as you would do with books on your shelf"* clearly reduces the physical body into a tool of continuity in the confrontation of deliberate erasure. Nevertheless, this body is not only an actual repository; it is also a container of deep trauma. The poem's coming part paradoxes these cultural monuments with the brutal soundscape of the siege:

The drone's buzzing sound,
the roar of an F-16,
the screams of bombs falling on houses,
on fields, and on bodies,
...
rid my small ear canal of them all. [2, p.7]

Abu Toha is not just a documentarian. He is a patient in desperate necessity of redeeming from the actual trauma he is obligated to recollect. This two incarnations, being both the Liberian and the injured patient, fully advocates Abu Toha's mission as an incarnated eyewitness.

To terminate, where Darwish assumed the role of a national myth-creator and the collective voice of his nation, Abu Toha's assumed the role of a documentarian. His poetry records the reality that is, in his own word's "so simple, so brutal, that I do not need to beautify it" [cited in 33,p 260].

7. Conclusion

Over history, Palestinian poetry has proven its self as an active tool of resistance and continuity. However, this resisting artistic form was not medium. Rather, it is a dynamic living platform which constantly adapts itself to survive. This research highlights this adaption. It realizes how Palestinian poetry of resistance has moved from being a powerful, national, collective voice into direct, personal, report-like documentation at the hand of Abu Toha. This transformation is proved through comparatively analyzing the selected poems of both Mahmoud Darwish and Mosab Abu Toha. Darwish is explored as a voice from the early classical resisting era of the Nakba catastrophes, while Abu Toha is elected as a representative voice from the contemporary resisting era of the recent war and siege of Gaza Strip.

The research, after employing four multi-faced analytical perspectives, asserts that the deep evolution of Palestinian resistance poetry can be admitted as a direct response to the changing reality of Palestinian situation. The first axe demonstrates that the thematic concern of Palestinian resistance poetry has moved from the national and mythical articulation of Darwish to the documentary and personal witness of Abu Toha. The second analytical axe has detected a clear moving in term of the tone of the Palestinian poetry of resistance. Darwish's strong, defiant and confident tone has been sacrificed

in preference of Abu Toha's direct, yet haunted tone of survival. Axe three delves into uncover the evolution of the Palestinian resistance poetry in relation to its style. The research specifies the distances between the poetic images of both poets as evidences of the stylistic adaption in the poetry of both poets, and hence the Palestinian resistance poetry in general. The research demonstrates that Darwish's images, especially those which glorify the national images of the homeland is replaced at the hand of Abu Toha with direct graphic images which reveal the raw facts of the Palestinian suffering without any kind of beautifying. As for the fourth and last axe of comparison, the evolution in poet's role in the context of resistance is dwelled upon. It obviously indicated that the classical role of a poet as national myth-maker is substituted with Abu Toha's conception of a poet as a documentarian who archive reality as it is with no aestheticism.

Above all, the changing capacity in Palestinian resistance poetry, whether it is thematic, tonal, stylistic or functional, asserts the innovative capacity of this artistic form, its resilience and vitality as a powerful tool of resistance. It demonstrates that poetry is not an inactive medium but a progressive platform which can repeatedly alter its content, tone, style and strategy to oppose the changing mechanisms of tyranny.

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