

Greening of Resistance in Arabic Poetry: An Ecocritical Interpretation of Selected Arabic Poems

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ABSTRACT

In varying degrees, Arabic poetry is rich with natural images but they are employed differently by Arab poets. This article analyses some selected Arabic poems through the lens of ecocriticism to explore how the natural environment is always a shaping force of individuals and contribute to the greening of resistance through parts of the biotic community in the Arab world. The premise of this article has its roots in the recent ecocritical arguments on the elastic and permeable boundaries of the field and its applicability as a lens through which to read any literary text. The discussion is focused on some selected Arabic poems which lend themselves well to the ecocritical interpretation and show how the Arab poets such as Mahmoud Darwish, Tawfiq Zayyad, Fadwa Tuqan, and Salem Jubran engage the natural environment in their poems. The analysis of the selected poems, which represent the other Arabic poems of their genre, advocates the ecocritical way of expressing resistance in Arabic poetry to signify the profound presence and engagement of the natural world in exhibiting the human resistance to the occupation of the land. It also reveals that the Arab poets have highlighted the interconnectedness between the human and nonhuman world in their poetry. By incorporating the Arab viewpoints and voices such as the ones we presented in this article, ecocriticism is instrumental in meeting its targeted scope as a multinational, multi vocal, multicultural area of scholarship.

Keywords: ecocriticism; natural environment; resistance; Arabic poetry; Arab poets

INTRODUCTION

The advent of ecocriticism is regarded as one of the most significant developments in literary studies and criticism worldwide. Soper & Bradley (2013) remark that “it has been hailed as one of the most timely and provocative developments in literary and cultural studies in recent decades” (p. xiii). Glotfelty (1996) in her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* argues that “ecocriticism has been predominately a white movement. It will become a multi-ethnic movement when stronger connections are made between the environment and issues of social justice and when a diversity of voices are encouraged to contribute to the discussion” (p. xxv). This argument highlights the significance of opening up the field of ecocriticism to incorporate more ethnic texts and writers all over the globe. Likewise, Slovic (2000) considers ecocriticism as “the study of explicit environmental texts by way of any scholarly approach, or conversely, the scrutiny of ecological implications and human- nature relationship in any literary text even texts that seem, at first glance, obvious of the nonhuman world” (p. 160). Slovic’s insight widens the scope for the field as a lens that can be applied for interpreting any literary text and no text resists ecocritical interpretations. Advancing Slovic’s idea, Wallace and Armbruster (2001), in their introduction to *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, wonder about “how productive can an ecocritical approach be when used with texts as far

‘beyond nature writing’ as the works of Henry James would seem?...We believe that issues of human relationships to nature and environment are still quite relevant to James’ fiction” (p. 7). Furthering the argument in the recent decade, Estok (2013) asserts that “while ecocriticism began as an American academic pursuit, it is now a multinational, multi vocal, multicultural area of scholarship” (p. 1).

The above-mentioned arguments of ecocritics enlighten the pathways for non-Western readers of ecocriticism like us to employ an ecocritical lens and read our literary texts to see how different contexts of utilisation of the natural environment can reveal other insights related to literature and the environment. We have chosen poems as our main corpus, to quote William Rueckert (1996), “poems are part of the energy pathways which sustain life” (p. 108). He adds, “some poems seem to be, in themselves, ever-living, inexhaustible source of stored energy, whose relevance does not derive solely from their meaning, but from their capacity to remain active in any language and go on with the work of energy transfer, to continue to function as an energy pathway that sustains life and the human community” (p. 108). Rueckert goes further to affirm that “the first law of ecology – everything is connected to everything else- applies to poems as well as nature. The concept of interactive field was operative in nature, ecology and poetry long before it ever appeared in criticism” (p. 110). This observation has encouraged us to focus on Arabic poetry and investigate the potential of ecocriticism as a lens through which to read Arabic poems and examine how the Arab poets utilise nature to further their agendas in the light of Estok’s argument that “changes in how we think about nature are also long overdue, as are changes in how we think about doing ecocriticism” (p.1).

We have selected some Arabic poems in English that lend themselves well to the ecocritical interpretations because the poets make vivid interconnections between the human and nonhuman world by utilising nature as a form of human resistance to the occupation of the land. Both land, in its collective meaning, and people are sums of the greater whole that Laurence Coupe (2000) describes as “the biotic community” which are governed by the concerns of “land ethic”:

The appeal to ecology is ultimately a matter of ethics. As Aldo Leopold long ago reminded us: ‘All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts ... the land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals ,collectively, the land’. Green studies may not want always to invoke a ‘land ethic’, but it will actually concur with Leopold’s conclusion: ‘[A] thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and the beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong tends to do otherwise’ (p. 4).

The present article, therefore, is to contribute to the greening of resistance as a new way for expressing human resistance via nature, through the parts of the biotic community in a particular place of the Arab world to concur with Coupe’s green studies which “makes no sense unless its formulation of theory contributes to the struggle to preserve the ‘biotic community’” (p. 4). The interconnectedness between the human and nonhuman world in the context of resistance seems to be the pivotal theme of the selected poems. We argue that an ecocritical reading is of immense value if applied to Arabic poetry since it is targeted to scrutinise how “the natural environment is always a shaping force of individual and group psychology and identity” (Wallace and Armbruster 2001, p. 7). Using ecocriticism as a lens through which to read the selected Arabic poems, which are representative of other poems in their genre, we hope to incorporate new insights into approaching modern Arabic literature from an ecocritical perspective. Such a way is, as Sinno (2013) concludes, “a legitimate project, worthy of further investigation and integration into the growing ecocriticism scholarship in the USA and the world” (p. 142-143).

ECOCRITICISM AND ARABIC LITERATURE

Ecocriticism, an interdisciplinary lens for scrutinising the relationship between literature and environment, has been growing dramatically in the scene of literary studies and criticism since 1990 (Johnson, 2009). It has travelled beyond American and British shores to Africa, India, South East Asia and many other countries all over the world. In Africa, for instance, ecocriticism, as Mwangi (2004) observes, “was practiced consciously in the African Academy although the expressions like ‘man’s struggle ‘with the environment’ is often heard in literary essays” (p.1). In India, there is an increasing body of works that apply ecocriticism for analysing the texts that depict a range of engagements with the environment and that complicates and extend the notion of place-connectedness (Shikha 2011). In South Asia, notable ecocritical studies have been conducted recently particularly in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and China. The recent edited book entitled *East Asian Ecocriticisms: A Critical Reader* (2013) is a vital guide to the East Asian ecocriticism in the recent decade.

In Arabic literature, however, ecocriticism is still in its infancy (Hamoud et al. 2012). In other words, it is still quite unknown and opening up the field in Arab academia is immensely valuable for incorporating Arab voices in the recent ecocritical arguments. Such a project is, as Sinno (2013) remarks, “a two-way street. It requires a genuine cooperation between Arab scholars and writers who are interested in environmental scholarship and existing ecocriticism scholars, writers, and editors in the West” (p. 125). We further argue that it could become more appropriate in Arabic literary context because most Arabic literature dwells in the natural environment. We hold the view that the ecocritical imprints of the Arab poets can add to the largely Western studies of ecocriticism. This is because, as Hamoud et al. (2012) state

Most of the Arabic literary works written during the postcolonial period express the intense relationship between the Arab writers and their homeland from which they get the spirit and inspiration to resist the colonizers. Among these Arab literary works, poetry and poets were present and took a central role in resistance during the period of the western colonialism of the Arab world. This kind of resistance was depicted in a number of poems in which the poets engage their environment in terms of nature (p. 76).

This kind of resistance proliferates in the Arabic poetry of the late twenty century particularly by Arab poets such as Mahmoud Darwish (1941-2008), Fadwa Tuqan (1917-2003), Tawfiq Zayyad (1929-1924) and Salem Jubran (1947-2014). The poems being analysed in this article include Darwish’s *A Lover from Palestine*, and *A Diary of A Palestinian Wound*, Salem Jubran’s *The Exile*, Fadwa Tuqqan’s *Ever Alive*, and Twafiq Zayyad’s *Impossible*. These poems are representative of other Arabic poems of their genre that have engaged the natural world as main focus in revealing the condition of the human world.

RESISTANCE AND ARABIC LITERATURE

Resistance, in general, is viewed as any kind of political, public and literary organised struggle to resist the colonisers of other countries. Cudjoe (1980) defines resistance as:

Any act of or complex of acts designed to rid a people of their oppressors He further categorizes resistance into three categories, namely, cultural, socioeconomic and political. The cultural resistance is defined as the motive of resistance from the beliefs, mores or indigenous ways of life and is expressed in religion or the arts. The social economic resistance is expressed by suicide, abortion, and work sabotage and withholding. The political resistance is expressed in revolts, rebellions or revolutions. However, he asserts that these three categories of resistance are dynamic and they can occur at the same time and one may precede the other (p.19).

This definition of Cudjoe shows that the natives might be able to oppose the colonisation in various ways and they are not passive towards the colonisers. The postcolonial theorists following Cudjoe expand this perception of resistance. Harlow (1987) further asserts that “much of Kanafani’s research and work is thus concerned with documenting the existence and material conditions of production of Palestinian literature under Israeli occupation, in the face of what he designates as a cultural siege” (p.2). According to Kanafani, the reasonable portrayal of resistance cannot be accomplished in a distance from the occupied land arguing that “No research of this kind can be completed unless the researcher is located within the resistance movement itself inside the occupied land, taking his testimony from the place in which he is born, lives and is propagated” (as cited in Barbara 1987, p. 3). Thus, the necessity of bearing witness on the actual situation inside the occupied land must be taken into consideration by any researcher on resistance literature in Kanafani’s point of view. Yahya Hassan and Noritah Omar (2011) highlight the position of Kanafani in the context of Palestinian literature. They state that Kanafani himself is a political activist of the occupied Palestine who has coined the term (*Adab Al-Muqawamah*) which is translated as literature of resistance. Among the postcolonialists who pay great attention to the colonial resistance is Slemon (1995) who attempts to develop what Cudjoe and Barbara discussed regarding the colonial resistance. He argues that:

The first concept of resistance is most clearly put forward by Cudjoe in his *Resistance and Caribbean Literature* and by Harlow Barbara in her book *Resistance Literature*. For Cudjoe and Harlow, resistance is an act or a set of acts that is designed to rid a people of its oppressors, and it so thoroughly infuses the experience of living under oppression that it becomes an almost autonomous aesthetic principle. Literary resistance, under these considerations, can be seen as a form of contractual understanding between the text and the reader, one that is embedded in an experiential dimension and buttressed by a political and cultural aesthetic at work in culture (Slemon 1995, p. 7).

Slemon’s argument above reveals that they focus on the literary form of resistance, which does rather than the armed resistance on the part of the colonialists. In this vein, Barbara (1987) argues that the Palestinian writer and critic Kanafani, in his study of *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine: 1948-1966*, is the first Arab critic who applied the term ‘resistance’ (*Muqawamah*) in connection to the Palestinian literature whose main concerns are resistance of colonisers of the land of Palestine since 1984. Throughout the Arab land, as Hamoud et al.(2012), describes, “Palestine has an exceptionally attractive and fascinating nature that has enthralled the hearts and minds of the Arab poets. The Arab poets have approached this uniqueness of nature of the occupied Palestinian differently”(p. 78). It, as the Arab writer and critic Raja Naqash, remarks, “has a unique natural beauty and there is a famous poem on nature and resistance by the Arab poet Ali Mahamoud Taha which cannot be traced in any other place in the Arab world except in that of Palestine” (p.167). The opening lines of such a poem are:

*Do not say a green land here
Here is a green stone too*

This indicates that the Palestinian stone is a symbol of resistance in its green sense. It is not a mere stone but a stone which is productive (Hamoud et al. 2012). It is also a stone that is supportive to people and on which the olives trees and other plants can grow. Such unique nature of the occupied Palestine has inspired the poets to utilise it for resisting the occupation of their homeland. The Arab poets such Mahmoud Darwish, Twafiq Zayyad, Fadwa Tuqqa and Salem Jubran are among the Arabs who grew up surrounded and were influenced by the natural beauty of their homeland and, therefore, Palestinian nature is strongly reflected in their poems. That is, they engage the natural world and utilise nature as a form of resistance

to the occupation of Palestine. Commenting on the theme of resistance in modern Arabic poetry, Najat Rahman (2008) states that poetry for Arab poets was primarily a reflection of their homeland. Faysal Darraj (2008) describes the ideal Arab poet in Darwish's words as someone who is "like an earthquake and a hurricane" (p.59). In essence, the Arab poets have a close interconnection with the natural world and, therefore, they tend to feature it prominently in their poetry.

Having summarised briefly some of the critical works that discuss the theme of resistance in Arabic poetry, there were many scholars who previously studied the issue in Arabic poetry, however, we hold the view that interpreting the selected Arabic poems, which represent other Arabic poems, through an ecocritical lens in this article is timely and promising in the increasingly growing field of ecocriticism.

OVERVIEW OF SELECTED ARABIC POEMS

Engaging the natural world in the context of resistance in the poets' homeland is the central theme of the poems selected in this article. Mahmoud Darwish's poems, *A Lover from Palestine* and *A Diary of a Palestinian Wound*, are two poetic voices of resistance that recount the suffering of Palestinians in their homeland of Palestine via the surrounding natural environment. These poems highlight the interconnectedness between human and nonhuman world by depicting the symbiosis between humans and the elements of nature and animals in resisting the occupation of the homeland. Tawfiq Zayyad's poem entitled *The Impossible* illustrates the poet's views for negotiating the impossibility of the imposed parting between people and their land and highlights the human-land inseparability by involving the organic images of human and nonhuman world. Fadwa Tuqan's poem, *Ever Alive* presents pathways of the interrelations between the human and natural world. It also offers both Palestinians and their land a hope of regaining as long as they remain steady and patient in their struggle. The last poem to be considered in this article is Salem Jubran's *The Exile*. The poem in its entirety demonstrates a momentum through the engagement of the world of nature to represent the human situation and suffering. It also shows a profound presence of the natural world in the poet's eco-consciousness which in turn helps shape the ecocritical sense of human resistance targeted to be played out in this article.

THE ANALYSIS

The first poem we would like to consider in this article is Mahmoud Darwish's *A Lover from Palestine* in which the poet engages the natural world to portray the human condition in his homeland as can be traced in the following lines of the poem:

*Your eyes are a thorn in my heart
Painful yet adorable
I shield it from the wind
And stab it deep through the night
Through pain
Its wound illuminates the darkness
Transforms my present into future*

Although the poem does not appear to have explicitly ecocritical concerns, we argue that there is a green subtext to it which highlights the interconnectedness between human and nonhuman world. The poem strikes the reader as being a direct address to the poet's homeland where he was born and grew up. The title of the poem suggests a lover addressing his beloved, Palestine, which is occupied. At a deeper level, this love indicates that the poet

and the land, which he symbolically addresses as his beloved, are in sync. The image of “a thorn in the heart” shows the engagement of the natural world represented by a thorn to evoke many meanings of human suffering and pain. Further, it has an ecocritical implication of being in a symbiotic relationship –both people and land – since they are parts of, what Coupe describes, the ‘biotic community’ of Palestine. Further, images of “a thorn” and “the wind” transform symbolically human resistance to the occupation of the land to the surrounding natural world which seems to be responsive to human suffering and pain. The image of “once we were together behind the gate” indicates such symbiosis between them and which is validated by using of the second person plural pronoun “we”. The poem further exhibits how humans and nature are depicted in an image of association to show resistance in the occupied land:

*I saw you on thorny hills
As sheepless shepherd-chased
I saw you on the ruins and once
You were a green orchard
I stood a stranger knocking at your door
The doors, the windows, the cemented stone
Vibrated*

In these lines, a variety of the aspects of the natural world and the vital organs of human body are placed together to expose the poet’s sense of resistance to the occupation of his homeland. Darwish uses the first singular pronoun “I” for the poet who, collectively, represents the people of his country and their resistance and the second person pronoun “you” to address his lost land. The images depicted by the poet in these lines such as “thorny hills”, “a sheepless shepherd”, and “the ruins” emphasise the barrenness of the land that was previously a “green orchard”. This barrenness of land is due to the effects of the occupation of the land. However, the vibrating “doors, the windows and the cemented stones”, represent the sense of the lively protest of the poet’s surrounding environment. Here, “vibration” demonstrates the sense of non-human resistance evoked within the poet by his surroundings which itself seems to presage and support the Palestinian struggle. The “vibrating objects” depicted show that nature foreshadows the human resistance that would rock the Arab world when the colonised people rise outraged against the colonisers. The image implies that the poet wants to come into the house but it is vibrating in protest and he is not allowed to enter. Furthermore, the poem is a remarkable portrayal of the poet’s sense of being in sync with the land as, what McDowell (1996) describes, “writers dealing with landscape tend to emphasise their sense of place and to create narratives that are so geographically rooted, that so link narrative and landscape, that environment plays a role as important as the role of the characters and the narrator” (p.387).

Accordingly, we find that Darwish identifies himself with flora in an intimate relation that shape human resistance in its green garment as can be traced in the following lines when he proclaims that:

*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*

In these lines, the poet depicts influential images that portray a kind of struggle expressed through the aspects of the natural world in the poet’s homeland. The types of flora used here such as “the wheat” and “the palm tree” are meaningful in the context of Palestinian resistance in its ecocritical sense. The image of the “virgin garden as faithful as the wheat”

evokes the symbiotic relationship between the poet and the land. The faithfulness of the land to him makes him ready to die for it. This implies that Darwish promises the land to implant his sincerity in the souls of Palestinians who will resist the occupation up to dregs. “The Palm tree” is a symbol of the Palestinian perseverance because the palm tree is strong and deeply rooted in the land and it cannot be shaken by the wind and the storm. Thus, the images imply that like the palm trees that do not bend to the storm and like the wheat that help people survive, Darwish’s protest will never cease against the occupation forces in his homeland. The images of ‘my virgin garden’ and ‘as faithful as the wheat’ convey the faithfulness of the Palestinian nature to Palestinians in remaining as virgin garden. Nature even supports the continuing Palestinian resistance by providing people with food to pursue struggle. The image of the unbending “palm tree” symbolises the strength of resistance to the coloniser who is symbolised by “the storm”. These likenesses show the strength of the engagement between Palestinians and nature in the context of resistance.

In the poem *The Impossible*, Twafiq Zayyad seems to engage the human world with the natural world to mirror the sense of steadiness of resistance in its natural form when he declares:

*It is much easier for you
To push an elephant through a needle’s eye,
Catch fish in galaxy,
Blow out the sun,
Imprison the wind,
Or make a crocodile speak,
Than to destroy by persecution
The shimmering glow of a belief
Or check out our march
Towards our cause
One single step*

Unlike the traditional Arab poets who used to apply the natural images and the images of animals to depict glowing pictures of the setting of the poems or as symbols for conveying certain ideas of their own, Zayyad appropriates animals and the natural world such as elephants, fish, crocodiles, the sun, the galaxy and the wind in a situation of resistance which is very crucial in the human world. Albeit the tone of the poem seems to be quite political as it involves themes of resistance, destruction and suffering, the use of the elements of nature and animals make it a vivid engagement for the greening of resistance. The poet, exceptionally, draws a parallel between the strength of animals in the surrounding world for any imposed deed and the steadiness of humans in their resistance against the occupation of their land. The impossibility of imposing power on animals and natural world, like passing an elephant through the needle’s eye, putting out the sun, capturing the wind and making a crocodile speak out, has been transcended into human world to illuminate the steadiness of the Palestinian resistance. The transmission of the readers from the world of animals and nature into the human world lends the poem to ecocritical implications. Throughout Zayyad’s poem, it seems that the poet means to emphasise that the human world is in tune with the natural world in Palestine. However, it seems to be less concerned with the organic interconnectedness of Darwish’s poems than it is with conveying the sense of stability, strength and steadiness of resistance to the occupation by the whole biotic community of Palestine expressed through the images of the powerful animals and elements of the surrounding world such as the elephant, the galaxy, the wind, the sun and the crocodile.

Similarly, in Fadwa Tuqqan’s poem *And Nothing Remains*, we can find another facet of the greening of resistance in Arabic poetry. Such a facet lies behind the poetic portrayal of the human-nature sensuous interconnection clearly addressed in the poem when the poetess proclaims that:

*Tomorrow at sunrise you'll leave, like a ghost,
Turning into a delicate cloud, passing
Quickly in the summer noon.
Your scent, your scent has the essence of life
In my heart,
As the earth gulps up the gift of rain
And the fragrance of the trees.
I will miss it when you leave tomorrow,
And nothing remains,
Just as everything beautiful, all that's dear to us,
Is lost, lost, and nothing remains.*

The poem demonstrates that the poetess, who is well known for her representations of resistance to the homeland occupation in Arabic poetry, is tremendously attentive to the natural atmosphere of her homeland. From the beginning to the end, the poem highlights the sensuous interconnection between the parts of the biotic community of the poetess's homeland, Palestinians and the land in its collective meaning. That is, the poem strongly presents that the people and natural world around them are in sync as evoked in the images when she says "Your scent, your scent has the essence of life". However, once they lose the association with the natural world around them, they lose everything in the Tuqqan's viewpoint. Though the poem fluctuates between the poetess's present and future, the vivid ecocritical imprints remains ineradicable throughout the poem as can be traced in the natural images of the cloud, the rain and the trees in the homeland she left behind. Unlike other Arabic poems in which nature is always used as a source of beauty, the beauty of nature in this poem is promising and sensuous, yet smelling loss and nothingness as a result of the unending resistance, occupation and the warfare consequences. Tuqqan succeeds in representing the interconnections between the human and nonhuman world where the trace of nature remains the vein of life in the human hearts and the fragrance of the trees and natural scenes remain adorable. However, the loss of such connections between the parts of the biotic community in that place of the world leads to the sense of nothingness on the human part in the poet's viewpoint.

Likewise, Darwish's poem *Diary of a Palestinian Wound* extends such interconnection presented in Tuqqan's poem into a kind of an organic interconnectedness between humans and nonhumans through the natural images. It also presents us with humans who are in tune with natural environment and highly conscious of it in both in peaceful and resisting circumstances. The poem, as its title suggests, depicts Palestinian nature as a body that is wounded by the presence of the occupation, and the poet and people of Palestine are parts of that bleeding body. This organic image of nature reflects interconnectedness in the sense of the pain evoked when the body is wounded and accordingly, it indicates the idea of resistance when the germs are resisted by the blood-system and, similarly, the occupied land reveals a kind of resistance to its occupiers.

*And on our eyelashes the grass of Galilee,
This land absorbs the skins of martyrs,
This land promises wheat and stars.*

The images and symbols depicted in these lines of the poem evoke the ecocritical sense in the Palestinian resistance. For him, nature is not only the center for providing instrumental values to people but as the center of supporting human resistance. The poet even makes use of its various aspects, as they seem to be the inexhaustible source of inspiration and sympathy to him. Therefore, the whole poem can be regarded as an ecocentric poem as nature is seen at the center to which people are willing to be in its company and friendship throughout their struggle. The poet describes the on-going resistance of the Palestinians and their suffering. As the title of the poem suggests, *Diary of the Palestinian Wound*, he depicts the Palestinian land

as a wounded body of which the poet is an active part of the resistance. This organic image represents symbolically the human resistance to the occupation in its natural face. This kind of resistance goes further when the poet proclaims:

We are its wound but a wound that fights

This image conveys the meaning of interconnectedness between the human and nonhuman world in the sense that, like the wounded body, the occupied land echoes a kind of resistance to its occupier through its inhabitants. Such a resistance is human in its essence and nonhuman in its sense. In other words, the poet has given human resistance its green garment by engaging the natural world in human condition.

Similarly, Salem Jubran, in his poem entitled *The Exile* celebrates a momentum through the engagement of the human and nonhuman world and extends the aspects of such engagement in the context of resistance.

*The sun walks through the border
Guns keep silent
A skylark starts its morning song
In Tulkarem
And flies away to sup
With the birds of a Kibbutz
A lonely donkey strolls
Across the firing line
Unheeded by the watching squad
But for me, your ousted son, my native land,
Between your skies and my eyes,
A stretch of border walls
Blackens the view!*

The sequence of the natural images in the poem indicates a profound presence of the natural world in the poet's eco-consciousness. Jubran transports the readers to the natural world in which the sun, the birds and animals seem to be interactive with the human world and incorporating in their resistance of the occupation. The natural images of "The sun walks", "A skylark sings and flies with the birds" and "the donkey strolls across the firing line" represent the dynamic reactions of the natural world to the human condition in Palestine. The last four lines of the poem present the history of the poet's attachment to his native place which has been disturbed with the imposed walls of separation. Indeed, the poem presents a pulsing natural interaction with the human world amidst the occupied land. It also highlights the extent to which the poet replicates ecological awareness in poetry akin to what Slovic (2000) describes as "a sense of deep respect for the place and an awareness of the simultaneous fragility and power of the landscape and its inhabitants" (p.365).

CONCLUSION

We have shown that the Arab poets engage the natural environment in their poetry as a powerful means for shaping human force and resistance to regain their lost homeland. The analysis of the selected poems, which represent the other Arabic poems of their genre, advocates the greening of resistance as a new way of expressing human resistance via nature in Arabic poetry to signify the profound presence and powerful engagement of the natural world in exhibiting the human resistance to the occupation of the land. It also highlights the interconnectedness between the human and nonhuman world by presenting natural environment as an interactive form of resistance in the poets' homeland. Advocating the idea of expressing human resistance through the green images and symbols in Arabic poems

provides evidence that the ecocritical reading of Arabic literature in general and Arabic poetry in particular is timely and encouraging. Further, an Arab ecocriticism adds value to the Western appropriation of ecocritical lens because it is politically charged and adds poignancy to the land-identity dichotomy. By incorporating the Arab viewpoints and voices we have shown how ecocriticism is instrumental in meeting its targeted scope as a multinational, multi vocal, multicultural area of scholarship.

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