

***Almond Blossoms and Beyond: Metaphors of Exile in
Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry*****Eldho Thankachan**
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“What am I to do, then?
What am I to do without exile,
Without a long night staring at the water?
Tied up to your name by water ”(Darwish 30).

This is an excerpt from the poem titled “Exile” which has been included in “*Mural*”, the seminal work of Mahmoud Darwish. Darwish is recognized as the national poet of Palestine whose poems mirror the terrible experiences of internal exile and up rootedness as well. They reflect the loss of the homeland, Palestine and the frustrations of being under siege, of being occupied (Behar 189). The perennial conflict between Israel and Palestine is still a burning issue for which a proper solution has not been found even after the formation of newly divided states.

This research tries to engage with Mahmoud Darwish's work *Almond blossoms and Beyond*. The researcher has chosen to do the study in the area of various manifestations of Exile as he believes he can contribute to the existing studies on the influence of the subaltern and the various postcolonial life experiences. *Almond Blossoms and beyond* is an anthology of poems which is translated by Mohammad Shaheen. His work is based on the Israel-Palestine conflict which is still a burning issue. The theoretical framework used in this study is derived from the subaltern theory proposed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The quest for identity is directly linked to the loss of land and this is central to eco resistance as a new and a non-western perspective to resistance studies in Arabic literature (Saith 1).

The researcher has chosen to focus his research on metaphors of exile in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry. The researcher attempts to answer the question- How the notion of identity crisis and exile is reflected through the metaphors used in Mahmoud Darwish poetry. Internal exile and identity crisis are the main problems faced by the refugees of Palestine. They live without an entity; probably they have a paltry existence in their homeland. Darwish's poetry throws light on these issues. His poems lament over the great loss and vividly portray the psychological tumult of the natives. But all of his poems are featured by resistance which does not stamp on the humanitarian values and ideals. Though he seems to be pessimistic in some instances, sanguinity still shines in his poems. It is his poetic technique to employ such devices of creating various feelings to convey his idea.

When exile becomes an important subject for his poetry, it is more alive in a sense that it speaks of the trauma of the natives who are forced to live as refugees in their land. Darwish put down his feelings in the form of poetry as a part of making the world aware of the

circumstances in which Palestinians try to thrive and their sufferings. The theme of exile is also described by Ernest Hemmingway in his novel *The Sun also Rises*. He talks about self-imposed exile from the respective homelands. “Listen, Robert, going to another country doesn’t make any difference. I’ve tried all that. You can’t get away from yourself by moving from one place to another. There’s nothing to that” (Hemmingway 6).

Mahmoud Darwish’s poetry uses identity, myth and history to emblemize a collective Palestinian voice. He resists separatist discourses through his poetry but at the same time resists the hegemonic structures of Israel and the West. Darwish’s poetic speaker always identifies with the voiceless subaltern population and expresses the horrors and beauties of everyday life, this sensitivity is nowhere more apparent than in the poems that addresses the issues of exile. His poems reveal multiple valences to Palestinian identity. The subaltern perspective provided by Darwish is not only rooted in resistance, but it can be understood as an alternative form of history. Victor Hugo was also on exile due to the vehement opposition to Napoleon III empire. He was then banished in succession from both Belgium and the Island of Jersey. In a letter written 26 miles from his native country, Hugo wrote “Exile has not only detached me from France, it has almost detached me from the Earth” (Hugo 205).

Darwish’s poetry contains many more that also express the suffering of everyday life. Perhaps this is best displayed in his poems regarding exile; in them he catches the longing to return home. Also by humanizing Israelis, Darwish gives new meaning to his title, the “poet of resistance” by resisting and subverting separatist nationalist discourses. The thing is his works go beyond the subaltern; he is the poet of the people. Darwish, who dedicated himself for his homeland defined his poetic work as one of writing home. He once wrote “I learned all the words and how to take them apart so I can form one word, Homeland.” (Darwish 377)

The researcher has chosen *Almond Blossoms and Beyond* by Mahmoud Darwish, edited by Mohammad Shaheen, as the primary texts for his research to get a deeper insight into the mind of the poet in exile, and in the process, explore the circumstances leading to the origin of his famous works. Six poems are selected for further analysis. This helps the readers to know how the invasion changed the mind-set of people especially the youth and children. Also it portrays the changes in lives of refugees who left the country and the internal victims of the conflict.

The researcher intends to contribute some insights into the notion of identity crisis and the various manifestations of exile in Darwish’s poetry, through an ideological analysis of selected poems and also on the poet. The following is the main objective of the researcher: -

- To investigate the plight of Palestinians who were uprooted from their home land and also to examine the efficacy in using various metaphors to express complex human emotions.

Literature Review.

In this literature review, scholarly research articles were selected to contextualise the present paper. Many articles have been proposed to explain the poetical work of Mohmoud Darwish. Although the literature covers a wide variety of such theories, this review will focus on the major themes which emerge repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed. For convenience, the paper has been organized on the basis of their methodologies and themes.

In the article “subaltern perspectives in Mohamoud Darwish poetry”, Balaraj Dhillon examines the complex use of poetry, identity, myth, and history as a subaltern method of resistance (Dhillon 45). The writer refers to the view of Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism*, that the culture of postcolonial resistance manifests itself in literature by pulling away from separatist nationalism and moves toward a literature that is liberating for humans a more integrative view of society. By doing this, Darwish becomes the epitome of Said’s discussion he resists separatist discourses through this poetry but at the same time resists the hegemonic structures of Israel and the West. The present paper tries to delve into this topic by adopting a blend of postcolonial and subaltern theory.

Dr. Abir Najami and Hussain Ahmed Ajjawl using a postcolonial and textual analysis have researched on the article “Mahmoud Darwish, A poet who attempted to be” to explore the attempts in Mahmoud Darwish’s poems to realize his existence. For this purpose, the analysis is based on Darwish’s poems and does not rely on other studies about the poet. The study of his poems, which are a representation for his reality, shows the development of the concept of “being” since his early works until his final poems. The paper finally explains how Mahmoud Darwish used imagery and symbolism to guide Palestinians to the path of reconciliation with the world through his calls of action (Najami, Ajjawal 276). The present paper focuses on how the metaphors of exile are used in Mahmoud Darwish poetry and also talks about the resistance of the Palestine in Israel Palestine Issue.

Saddik M. Gohar in his paper “Narratives of Diaspora and Exile in Arabic and Palestinian Poetry” underlines the attitudes of Palestinian poets toward the issues of exile and identity integral to their traumatic experience of Diaspora and displacement. From a historical context and within the parameters of colonial / postcolonial theory, the paper advocates a new critical perspective exploring the dialectics of exile and identity in Palestinian poetry in order to argue that exile, in contemporary world literature, becomes a signifier not only of living outside one’s homeland but also of the condition caused by such physical absence (Gohar 228). Aiming to reach a state of reconciliation rather than conflict, the poetic voices, analyzed in the paper, reflect a sense of nostalgia and emotional attachment toward their homeland. The paper argues that Palestine, for the Palestinian poets, is not a paradise or an idealistic utopia that only exists in their poetry and imagination but a geographical reality caught up in national and religious limbos and rooted in the trajectories of colonial history and diabolical power politics.

The semiolinguistic approach consists of an interaction of semiotics and linguistics. Khader Tawfiq Khader in the article “A Semiolinguistic Analysis of Mahmoud Darwish Fakkerebhayrika” aims to explore the semiolinguistic approach of analyzing a poetic text. This approach has been applied here to study Mahmoud Darwish’ Poem “Fakkerebhayrika (Think of Others)” at the proposed levels of sentence symbol, symbols in art, and art symbol (Khader 78). It is shown at the level of art symbol the poem is realized as an artistic potential. The article analyzes the work of Darwish on the basis of semiolinguistic approach on the basis of the nature of language as a poetic sign. 2. The dynamic and organic nature of a poetic text. 3. The different linguistic levels posited for textual analysis.

“Memory for Forgetfulness” is a collection of prose poems written in exile by the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. This paper examines the manifestations of nature in Darwish’s memories of the homeland he left behind. The premise of this paper is based on the

view that Darwish utilizes nature as a form of resistance in his poetry; poignantly, it becomes a means of recollecting and illuminating the various aspects of the Palestinian condition.

Using ecocriticism as a lens, two authors Hamoud Yahya Ahmed and Ruzy Suliza Hashim attempt to provide an ecocritical interpretation of Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness* which comprises the poet's homeward memories of the fauna and flora that speak of their under siege conditions but whose spirits remain unbroken. The analysis highlights the different facets of the eco-memories through varied human-nature interplay in the poems and the aspects through which these interactions in return present images of a once-free Palestine and how it will liberate itself again. (Ahmed, Hashim 64) The focus on green memories in this paper provides insights into a deeper understanding of the human condition via the environment that has shaped Darwish's poetry and his struggle to raise consciousness of the Palestinian plight.

The article "When the Poet Is a Stranger: Poetry and Agency in Tagore, Walcott, and Darwish" by Khaled Mattawa is concerned with the process of the making of a postcolonial poet persona where the poet is addressing multiple audiences and is trying to speak for, and speak to, multiple constituencies through poetry. The poets examined here, Rabindranath Tagore, Derek Walcott, and Mahmoud Darwish—arguably among the best-known poets of the modern world—sought to be heard by various sensibilities and succeeded in reaching them. Outside the fold of the Western Metropolitan world, they as a trio have much to teach us about how poets living under three different phases of colonial hegemony (colonial India, postcolonial West Indies, and neocolonial Palestine/Israel) manage to speak. Their presence in their poetry, or the pressure their life stories and their poet personae, becomes an essential part of reading their work. An examination of the genre of poetry and postcolonial agency, this article addresses these and other related questions as it looks at the emergence and evolution of Tagore, Walcott, and Darwish as postcolonial world poets. (Mattawa 14)

In the article "Eco Resistance in the Poetry of the Arab Poet Mahmoud Darwish" Three authors Hamoud Yahya Zalina, Mohd Lazim, Ravichandran Vengadasamy has analysed three poems of the Arab poet Mahmoud Darwish using selected concepts from eco-criticism as a way of opening up this field to Arab world academics. The premise of this research was impelled by the generally agreed view that every society and culture has their own way of interacting with nature; which in turn can illuminate a culture's worldviews, norms and values. It can also provide insights as to how nature has been used by certain poets to further their agendas. The study mainly dwells on selected poems that have natural objects as their main focus and which show how Darwish utilized nature as a form of resistance to colonialism. Such poems of Darwish could be used to illustrate how eco-criticism might contribute to an understanding of Arab resistance during the colonialist period (Zalina, Lazim, Vengadasamy 75).

In the article "Environment, resistance and home in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry: An ecological perspective" Dr Hamoud Yahya Ahmed and Dr Ruzy Suliza Hashim has researched about Environment and resistance in mahmood darwish poetry. In the authors' reading of his work, the environment is closely linked to the notion of home and that is central to the field of ecocriticism that highlights the significance of environment to the study of literature. Ruzy Suliza Hashim, Hamoud Yahya Ahmed in their paper focuses on how Darwish represents ecology of home through the waves of his employment of environment in his homeland in his poetic production. To do this, the authors combined two theories -ecocriticism and postcolonial

theory. The blending of the two theories illuminates how the ecological elements in his poems formulate the poet's conception of home in the crisis-ridden modern world. This paper explores how Darwish employs nature as a new way for resisting the occupation of his homeland (Hashim, Ahmed 10). His poems, throughout his writing life that spans fifty years, can be used to demonstrate how an ecopostcolonial perspective might contribute to an understanding of the poet's resistance through nature to the colonizers in his homeland.

The theoretical framework used in this study is derived from both the ecocritical and postcolonial theories of reading literature. It is termed as ecoresistance as a new perspective of analyzing resistance in the Arab literary studies, a non-western viewpoint and an original analytical lens for reading Darwish's work. The analysis reveals that Darwish uses the various forms of nature that range from the forms of the pure nature to the forms that have been cultivated. Through the ecopostcolonial perspective of the study, the employment of nature for resistance and the indication of Darwish as an ecopostcolonial poet of the Arab world are played out. The paper further proposes new insights into man's connection to land and is a step towards opening up the field of ecocriticism as a way of reading Arab poetry of resistance.

The researcher intends to closely examine the text itself and tools like metaphors in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry to unveil the different circumstances and experiences that influenced the development of his poetry, metaphors of exile and the critical appreciation of the same.

The poems are analyzed by the means of Subaltern theory proposed by Gayatri Spivak. Spivak's subaltern theory primarily deals with the oppression of the colonized peoples by the colonizer or the occupier. The researcher tries to apply this theory to throw more light on the humanitarian crisis in Palestine that gets reflected in the primary text.

The aim of the paper is to investigate the notion of identity crisis and the various manifestations of exile reflected in selected poems of Darwish. This paper gives insights into the current happenings related to the problems of refugees across the globe. Thus, it serves as a tool to understand the perils that humanity is faced with during political crisis.

Darwish writes from the perspective of "the ground" or "the people," a word that is synonymous with "subaltern" according to Gayatri Spivak. The subaltern population consists of social groups that represent a demographic difference between the total population and the elite. They become displaced from not only their homeland, but also their native cultures and lifestyles. Spivak's theory on the lack of agency of the subaltern can be extended to this context (Spivak 308). Darwish engages in a dialogue different from the official Palestinian or Israeli nationalist discourse and represents the voiceless population. He writes from the perspective of the subaltern. Spivak borrows the term subaltern" from Gramsci, to refer to the unrepresented group of people in the society (Gramsci 55). In the Indian cultural context, the term subaltern" acquires more significance as the people have struggled hard for Indian independence. She prefers the term subaltern" as it encompasses the exact picture of the lower class people.

Darwish came to be known as the Palestinian "Poet of Resistance." Yet this label, however honorable, can over-determine readings of his poetry since the title implies an angry militancy that resists any hint of Zionist oppression (Hijjawl 5). In fact, Darwish's poetry resists separatist nationalist discourses by frequently humanizing both Israelis and Palestinians humanizing the enemy for each. Darwish's poetic speaker always identifies with the voiceless

subaltern population and expresses the horrors and beauties of everyday life; this sensitivity is nowhere more apparent than in the poems that addresses the issues of exile. The poetry also provides accounts of Arabic mythology and historical events, subverting the convention of national identities by offering alternative mythologies and histories to resist the hegemonic Western and Israeli historical discourses (Darwish78). Darwish's poems reveal multiple valences to Palestinian identity, and thus emblemize a collective voice of the subaltern Palestinians.

Darwish's poetry finds room for the people who are exiled in their homeland. He gives the realistic picture of their life and the miseries which ensued. Darwish himself was a victim of internal exile. So his verses became capable of divulging the mental trauma which smothered him throughout his life. His use of wide variety of imagery, the choice of words, expression of emotions in a balanced proportion and other language tools like metaphors add beauty to his poems. The frequent appearance of metaphors of exile in his poetry is a remarkable feature which helps the readers to understand the holocaust which struck them. An analysis of six selected poems of Darwish from his *Almond Blossoms and Beyond* is a tool to understand the way in which he employs different metaphors to unveil the exact face of exile.

'*Think of Others*' is a very short poem written by Darwish in which he captures the attention of the readers by associating his identity with the Palestinians who are subjected to internal exile. He tries to make a comparison between the life of the people who can exercise their right to freedom of doing certain things and the natives of Palestine who are denied their basic needs. Throughout the poem, the poet persona reminds us of the facilities which are available to us, even the ordinary things and on the other side it tells us about the pitiable juncture of the Palestinians who dream of having a normal life. He points out the pigeon who is hungry and the fellow human beings who seek peace amidst the blight which caused massive destruction in their land (Darwish 14).

It means that both man and animal are affected. Most of the natives live in refugee camps without proper food or shelter. Darwish uses beautiful images to draw the picture of the life of the refugees under shadows like people who are nursed by clouds, those who have no shelter while others count the stars after laying in their soft beds, the pitiable situation of the victims who have lost their right to speak while others can express themselves in the best way using the language which suits them and so on. The poet adds that one needs to think of the self while pondering over the life of others who are far away (15). Here the idea is of the existence of the poet himself which he is not sure about. He doesn't know whether he can have a life ahead in a country where the natives toil day and night under the brutal regime of Israelites. The poem holds a somber tone where the poet directly tells what he has in his mind to the readers and it serves as an eye opener. It is an outburst of the poet against the unjust laws which are imposed upon the Palestinians. The theme is internal exile and its consequences. It is further characterized by resistance and a call to the outer world.

"*If You Walk on a Street*" is yet another poem of Darwish in which he explores the life of the refugees under constant fear. Freedom is denied for such people and they are ill-treated. Those who are spared are the lucky ones. He speaks about the people who managed to make an evasion from the threat posed by the intruders, i.e. Israelites, in their homeland and reminds them to be thankful for not being caught. He says that you can be grateful to the garbage collector as well as to the kindness of the destiny which allowed you to reach home alive without leading you

to abyss. If you expected something terrible would happen and you would never see a day, say thank you as you are very much alive now and be grateful if you find your identity not being veiled. If you can hear yourself speaking without any falter, you are lucky. If you are able to rejoice in what you like, unharmed, say thank you to your heart which is still capable of appreciating beauty and invoking feelings in you. If you are blessed with a morning without anyone around you to get you to something horrible, like in camps, you should be grateful. If you can have your name and a life in your mother country, then you have to be a good child. Because you can assert yourself where you are born and brought up. Then lord will say thank you to you. Darwish says that even God has not revealed a proper solution for the burning issue.

To be more precise, this poem is essentially satirical in its very sense and tone. Darwish brings out the problems of identity crisis and marginalization in the home country in this poem. The main idea conveyed through the poem is internal exile. The very use of the word “thank you” contains the complete sarcasm. The people who are not forced to abide by the rules as set up by the Israel government are less in number, but they do not have a normal life. They also compromise with their entity as well as with their life. This poem may be stands for the decision taken by Darwish during his twilight years to stay back to home which is often remarked as a compromise. The people who live outside the camps cannot enjoy their rights fully, yet they have a solace that their basic rights are not infringed. Moreover, they are given a chance to live in their country. But they have each day without peace. What a human basically needs is liberty and this is enshrined in the poem (Darwish 17).

“*A Café and You with the Newspaper*” is another poem written by Darwish which brings out the issues of identity crisis and the paltry existence of Palestinians. It begins with the image of a person sitting at a café with a newspaper in his hand who widely gazes upon the outside scenery. Before him, there is a half-filled cup whereas its other half is replenished by the rays of the sun. This description is evocative of a beautiful morning and a cup of tea which refreshes one’s body and mind. This person is able to watch everybody who passes through the window, but he is left unseen. He is like a hollow man in the café. The poet says that it is one of the attributes of invisibility. There is no one to care for him or to love him. He is like a free bird in the café who is not all being looked at. The way the musical strains from the violin affects him is not seen by anyone. Neither his presence nor his absence is taken into account. Whether he gapes at a girl or is broken before her, nothing is noticed. In the crowd, he is no one but is unsubstantial like smoke.

Whatever he does in the public space is not a concern of anybody. So he can do anything he likes. He may take off his shirt or leave his shoes. Who’s bothered? He may be forgotten soon from everywhere and he is free to fantasize according to his imagination. It’s all covered and nothing lets him to come out of the cloak. He has no friends, no enemies. So many ideas are knit together in this poem to illustrate the mental status of the protagonist. He is given an advice by the poet to forgive the girl who left him there and the man who planned to murder him. Luckily he did not die. Again he got a chance to live. He could express himself through the words he wrote. The person who is still sitting at the café is so forgotten. While the other people are frequently harassed or tormented, there is no one to disturb him. Just because he is invisible, he is saved from the peril which causes pain to others. The man at the café may possibly be the poet himself (Darwish18).

Even though Darwish was subjected to internal exile he was never curtailed of his freedom to speak against the injustice. But his poems created ripples only later. It gave a new life to the Arab poetry. After some years, his poems got great acclaim from the critics and they became a rallying point for the suppressed people to align themselves to fight against the oppressor. But he didn't have a happy life in his country. It was during his sunset years, he got the chance to come back to his nation. Until then, he was treated as an outsider. This is well portrayed in the poem. His poems were later prescribed for the students of both Israel and Palestine. He had to go through the status of absentee-present before his success. That's how his poems were blessed with the life like emotions and perfect words which were good enough to catch the attention of the readers from all over the world. This poem is also representative of the people who are not properly addressed in their home country. The poem doesn't intend to jump on one's throat, but the issue it presents is still relevant. The poem is created out of the bitterness caused by exile, but it is not defiled by cheap sentiments.

"He and None Other" is a wonderful poetic creation of Darwish about the incapability of taking a resolution for the ongoing issues of the refugees and the division of the land. This poem derives inspiration from the historical story of Prophet Muhammad who showed the righteous path to people and founded Islam religion. He is believed to be the courageous warrior of God who can walk through fire and find solution for the most puzzling problems. The poet imagines that he saw a prophet dismounting from the star with so much of lumen. He was very sad and said to the poet that sooner than later his generation would be wiped out of this world due to the current problems. His image itself will fade away from the memory of the people as well as from the pages of history.(Darwish 21).

The poet replied that if the prophet made his appearance he would be broken. The prophet is not sure about his destination even though the poet suggests him of an invisible star and a cave as the legends go. The prophet is struck hard by the truth which he cannot decipher effectively that may be harsh. The poet suggested him to translate his thought into appropriate words so that he would be able to understand the fate which has been destined for his country. He wants to know whether the prophet would stay long and find a way. But the prophet failed miserably to put his notions into words. The poet became dubious about the prophet and his revelations. The prophet talked about his way of looking upon the dreams to take a step forward like deriving inspiration from a divine source. So that he would have the power to hold the hand of the suffering people and lead them to the perfect place.

But suddenly the prophet disappeared leaving the poet in despair with a volley of questions unanswered. This is what usually happens with the legendary figures. To take the hands of the neglected people seemed to be an impossible task for the prophet because he couldn't find a single ray of hope. The stories of salvation which are orally transmitted didn't work out properly and the poet arrived at the conclusion that the coming of a savior in twentieth is not possible. The issue has gone beyond the easy resolve and now it needs great effort and support from the other people to solve it. The return of the prophet to the heavens is a good metaphor to show the intensity of the problem which has not been resolved yet by the so called "agreements and decrees of peace". The poem is characterized by helplessness and pessimism. The poet says that even the faith shakes when people find no light in the darkness which continues for ages. Even the prophecies do not give them temporary relief and they grope in

murk. The poet highlights the need to solve the issue. For that, co-operation from the other nations is essential. Probably this poem has a relation with the faith of the Jews who claim to have an immense help from 'Yahweh' (God) to rebuild their nation which was lost centuries back. On the contrary, the other section is left alone. The poet may be talking about the religious conflict among Israel and Palestine as well as the religious claims made by the Israelites to justify what they do.

Darwish vehemently laments upon the loss of warmth and love among the natives due to the military rule of Israelites which is often featured by their high handedness in the everydayness of poor Palestinians in his poem titled "A Wedding over There". The poem looks like a humble request from the part of the poet to the rulers to not to create barricades in their common life. He talks about a wedding which is two doors away from his house. He is actually excited and happy about the event. But he is afraid of the unnecessary control over the normal yet beautiful things by the authority. He pleads them to not to interfere the occasion by putting screens betwixt them. It might hinder the joy it gives. Nature too has forgotten to react according to the changes happen in its eco system. The spring doesn't cry over the withered rose flower. Moreover, the canary lends the song of the nightingale if it fell sick. It makes no difference to the sky if a star dropped from it. An undesirable change has crept over the land and it ravished mercilessly not only the humans but also the nature. That's why everything lacks its originality. Again the poet brings the image of the wedding ceremony. It is further beautified by adding the olfactory elements like the odour of ginger and ripe peach which is carried by the gentle wind to his house. The bride weeps and laughs like water (Darwish 25).

The poet says that water is not wounded because it has already washed away the blood which was spilt the last night. It is ironical in a sense that all types of crime happen in their land and they are not all taken into account by the authority. It has become something very usual to the natives also. A celebration like a marriage is the only way to forget their sorrows and moreover it provides a platform to the natives to bask in amity. That is the reason why the poet wants to have the function uninterrupted. Then he suddenly leaps into another aspect of life, axioms, which help us to go ahead with certain principles. It is said that death can be overwhelmed with the power of love. But the poet has formed his own axiom after experiencing internal exile and its terrible consequences. The poet argues that the lust for life is more important than life and death in a country where no one has a proper existence. So he decides to stop performing the rituals and rites in private and to share both his grief and joy with his neighbours. He concludes that life is axiomatic and it is true as dust. The poet is well aware of the transitoriness of life. The thing is the poet is really sad about his life as well of the natives who live a meaningless life. There is dryness which pervades all their thoughts, words and deeds.

Everything has lost its naturality and the poet is deeply hurt by this. He finds people who live in isolation in their homeland being denied of their rights and liberty. Even a marriage ceremony does not go well. Peace has been wiped away and people become pessimistic. It forces them to replace their axioms with their undeniable urge to live. Life and future have gone beyond their grasp and now they have to look upon the leniency of the rulers to thrive. They try to combat the evil which crave for their blood, but they are subjected to callous oppression. In such a deadly atmosphere, the poet goes in search of peace and happiness. He thinks of jubilating by participating in some good events like marriage along with the fellow natives. He probably

knows that joy will increase and sorrow will be much less if they all are joined together for such a party. It will give a temporary relief to their throbbing hearts. There is not even a speck of regret or anger among the people while attending such a ceremony and all they want is the freedom to enjoy it properly.

The poet's voice is the echo of the 'whimper' of scores of Palestinians who are not allowed to express themselves through their words. This poem reflects the way in which the lives of the Palestinians are regimented. This poem resembles with the poem entitled "Listen to Me" by the Pakistani feminist writer Kishwar Naheed which sarcastically states the denial of freedom, especially of women. Even though it is written in a feminist perspective, the idea conveyed is the same. Basic rights are curtailed along with their dreams. Darwish has polished his poem with irony and satire in the form of a plea. Without using harsh words, he delivers his message to his readers. This poem can also be considered as a fragment which he deliberately dropped on the paper from the feeling of resistance in his mind.

These poems bring out the various linguistic devices which Darwish has employed in his poetry to explain the humiliation and trauma caused by the internal exile in his homeland. Darwish gave his poetry a special dynamic, which led him to experiment with a new type of poem that goes beyond the sort of love poem which was made popular by the old Arabic poetry. By identifying the lost land of Palestine with his beloved, he freed traditional love poem from its narrower associations with the lover and the beloved, and imbued it with universal human values, deriving from love of the land, the meaning of love as it should be, and from the anguish of exile, human exile in its existential significance. Yet another set of five selected poems from the same book, *Almond Blossoms and Beyond* are meticulously scrutinized to explore more into the linguistic techniques which Darwish resorted to, for elaborating the reality of exile without exaggerations.

Signifying the title of the book, Darwish has put into words what he intends to convey through the book in the poem titled "*To Describe an Almond Blossom*". The poet finds it hard to explain the exact meaning of an almond blossom even after making a wide search in the encyclopedia of flowers. The words baffle him and he metaphorically says that they carry him off to the rhetoric snares which would create wounds in him. It is compared to the situation of a man who tries to tell a woman her feelings. His word bank now runs deficit and he is unable to write what he has in his mind about his life. He is of the view that his verses are incomplete as he has compared his life with almond blossom which itself symbolizes the culture of the entire nation. Almond blossoms are the flowers of pale pink colour which is a perfect image of the haste of old age also. Throughout his life he has been trying to fight against the oppression. Now he is an old man who seeks a peaceful life in his homeland. He was living in Haifa as the result of internal exile. He could come back to his country during his last years, yet he had in him the feelings of resistance towards the Israel hegemony (Darwish 29).

He further says that almond blossom cannot glitter in his words because his language is just an echo which has no density to hold the passion the flower has. It is translucent and light as a white musical phrase. It is fragile like the glimpse of a thought that peeks out from his fingers which goes in vain. He describes the paucity of the language to express them. Like the words of a verse which are dislodged, these flowers are dense. To describe the flower, he needs to make visits to the unconscious where the truths lie hidden and he believes that they can guide

him to the affectionate names hanging on the trees. He talks about the identity of the natives which was stamped by the boots of Israelites. He thinks that poetry is not useful if it doesn't portray the picture of the society and its people honestly. He has to make a breakthrough with the words and their gravity in order to feel the lightness of the flowers when they turn into silhouettes. They make him as he makes the words, in white translucence. Almond blossom is all about the passions of whiteness where homeland and exile are no words to describe it. But its whiteness is not that of a cotton or snow. If a writer wrote a successful piece on almond blossom, the fog would rise and people would accept it hollering that it is their national anthem.

Darwish brings the image of almond blossom in his poem to symbolize the Arab culture and its deterioration in Palestine due to the intrusion from the other lands. The poet has spent the lion share of his youth to fight but he was put into internal exile. Now he is in his homeland in his sunset years. He is capable of doing nothing for his nation as he is not robust as once he was. What an old man feels and his forebodings may be identified with almond blossoms. It shows the helplessness of the poet. As the flower is a part of Palestinian culture, especially when it has references in religious texts, it holds the soul of the people as well as of the poet. If the flower has its brightness in the writings, the language is complete then for it will be blessed with the real voice of the natives. By choking heterogeneous ideas together, Darwish dexterously combines the unquenchable desire for freedom, the need for the recognition of the identity of the natives and the dreary life which old age brings.

In "*As If I Were Joyful*", the poet vehemently renders his poetic verses on identity crisis and his experiences after returning to homeland. The poem is highlighted with the autobiographical elements which help the readers to understand the intensity of internal exile. Most of the critics are of the view that Darwish stayed back to Palestine by "compromising" with the government. Of course he had a great desire to spend his last years in his homeland after the long struggle. Anyway he managed to come back and led a comparatively peaceful life. The poet begins his poem by saying about his return. Here Palestine is compared to his own home from where he had to flee. He rang the doorbell in a hope that someone would open it for him. As no one came and welcomed him, he assumed that he was late to reach. For his surprise, he found no trace of a living being there. Suddenly he remembered that he had the keys with him. He made an apology to himself and entered into the house.

The poet then makes a paradoxical statement. He was the host as well as the guest in his home. He painfully said to him, "I forgot you". "You" may be his "self" which was walled in due to the harsh policies adopted by the cruel dictators, for fighting against the injustice. He searched for himself and found nothing. It was empty there. The vacuum created by the absence of real him was so dense which tormented him. He couldn't see his image in the mirror. It is widely believed that mirrors cannot reflect the spirits which lack substance. The poet metaphorically says about his fragmented identity through the image of mirrors. He had no idea about the place where he was standing then. He wishfully thought that he was in a state of delirium and cried loud to wake himself from the bad dream. But it was of no use. He was totally broken and his voice made no difference. If he had no "self", then why did he come back? He had some expectations on his return. He might have dreamt of the love and care that would make his life beautiful once again in his homeland. But it all went in vain. When he walked into his bedroom, the dream came at him and asked him whether has changed. He was pretty sure that he

had already changed a lot. He knew that to die in his homeland was much better than to be crushed by a car in the street, in an empty square. These lines are poured down from his heart which was fully consumed by the forever yearning to return to his homeland. In such an instance, he did not think of the criticisms that he might welcome after his stay back. The poem is also reflective of the pain caused by the loss of his homeland. After all, exile had a great toll on him.

The entire poem is characterized by the mental agony which the poet suffered during internal exile, alienation in his homeland after his return and the loss of his "self" which was the inevitable part of himself as well as the prime factor of his entity. Even though Darwish could die in his homeland, his short span of life there was not blissful. He was psychologically afflicted by this, but at the same time he was happy about his return. The poem portrays every Palestinian's intense desire to live in their homeland as its citizens and to die after having a normal, peaceful life. Darwish has successfully conveyed his idea to the readers which is also evocative of the love for his nation (Darwish 35).

The loss of the mother country, alienation in homeland, internal exile and the critical juncture of the poor Palestinians are the major themes of Darwish's poems. He describes Palestine as a metaphor for exile, for the human condition, for the grief of dislocation and dispossession. In "Eleven Planets in the Last Andalusian Sky," he writes:

I'm the Adam of two Edens lost to me twice:
Expel me slowly. Kill me slowly
With Garcia Lorca
Under my olive tree (Darwish 43).

Thus by identifying Palestine as his beloved as well as the metaphor of exile, Darwish brought into light what exactly was happening in his country. The way internal exile affected him and its aftermath which occupy a major portion in his poems are representative of the miserable life of the Palestinians who are still under siege in refugee camps.

CONCLUSION.

The major themes which Darwish's poetry deals with are exile, loss of homeland, isolation, identity crisis and the autocratic rule of Israel government. *Almond Blossoms and Beyond* focuses on the various dimensions of exile and its consequences. Darwish gives the picture of exile by using symbols, metaphors as well as other language tools and precise words which can pierce through the heart of the readers. The character of exile in each poem is different. Some of his poems are characterized by the bitterness caused by internal exile. Yet another group of poems invite the attention of the readers to his land and to the natives as well by invoking empathy in them.

Another set of his poems hold the complete passion of the poet and the love towards his nation. In his poems, he laments over the loss of his homeland. Identity crisis and marginalization also find room in his poems. But all of his poems are featured by resistance which does not stamp on the humanitarian values and ideals. Though he seems to be pessimistic in some instances, sanguinity still shines in his poems. It is his poetic technique to employ such devices of creating various feelings to convey his idea. When exile becomes an important subject for his poetry, it is more alive in a sense that it speaks of the trauma of the natives who are forced to live as refugees in their land. Darwish put down his feelings in the form of poetry as a part of

making the world aware of the circumstances in which Palestinians try to thrive and their sufferings.

Darwish's poetic speaker always identifies with the voiceless subaltern population and expresses the horrors and beauties of everyday life- this sensitivity is nowhere more apparent than in the poems that addresses the issues of exile. His poems reveal multiple valences to Palestinian identity. The subaltern perspective provided by Darwish is not only rooted in resistance, but it can be understood as an alternative form of history. Palestine, home, exile and identity crisis remain at the heart of the poetry of Darwish. Spanning his writing life of fifty years, his poems are marked by a declarative and definite voice that draws attention to the notions of home and exile as they are closely attached to the Palestinian identity. The search for Palestinian identity and the sense of homelessness are the vital aspects of his poetry. Due to the character of his loss, he utilizes nature in his homeland and made it the basis of the connection between the exiled identity and the lost home. Darwish, who dedicated his himself for his homeland defined his poetic work as one of writing home.

Darwish's poetry remains resolutely humanist and universalist in its message. He never succumbed to cheap nationalism or chauvinism. He was the voice for the voiceless Palestinians. His peerless poetry drew the attention of the world to the critical juncture of Palestinians, galvanizing Palestinian to their cause, and rallying millions of Arabs around the cause. After all, he did not resort to the vilification of his oppressors or the usual jingoism so common in political art and literature. The magnanimity, forgiveness and humanism he exhibited in his work remain the ultimate credit to this great author. Darwish says that real peace means being equal with the Israeli society and that the Palestinian people should have the right to return, the question of the refugees, of Jerusalem, the settlements should be resolved and of course, Palestinians must have the right to self-determination. He also insisted that terror is not a means to justice.

Thus Darwish became the spokesperson of Palestine which is still under oppression. His poems give us the exact picture of Palestine. It also evokes empathy in us. Through his works, he constantly pleads for finding an appropriate solution for the problem of exile and other issues. It gives a ray of hope to the poor refugees of Palestine and it calls for a "wide awake" and to put an end to their miseries as well. His poetry gains so much importance as the Palestinian tragedy which is still in vogue.

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