



The Myth of Palestine and Exile in Darwish's Poem "Tadihiqu Bina Al-Ardh": Barthes' Semiotic Studies

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Abstract: This article discusses the poem *Tadhīqu Binā al-Ard* by Mahmoud Darwish. This poem describes Palestinian myths and life in dreams. Its meaning consists of three layers: direct meaning (denotative), figurative meaning (connotative), and mythological meaning. The problem raised is the fact that only a small amount of research has actually linked the symbols found in Darwish's poems to the ideology of a lost homeland and a constant struggle. Roland Barthes' theory of semiotics was used in this study to read the signs in poetry. While symbols such as the land, wheat, mother, stone, and olive tree look beautiful, they also serve as ideological symbols that shape the story of Palestinian identity. According to Barthes, this poem is understood as a text that arranges meaning through two layers of significance thanks to the use of a descriptive qualitative approach and content analysis. The results of the study show that Darwish's poem conveys the shared experience of the Palestinian people through two main myths: Palestine as a lost holy land and Exile as a place where steadfastness and resistance emerge. This shows that Darwish not only wrote about the suffering of others, but also created a cultural archive that preserved the collective memory and Palestinian identity. This poem concludes that literature is not just an expression of art; It is also a symbolic tool to display the history and identity of the nation.

Keywords: Mahmoud Darwish, *Tadhīqu Binā al-Ard*, semiotics Roland Barthes, myths, exile, Palestine

Introduction

Literature is an important part of human life because through it, people can channel their feelings and ideas. Literature reflects or even imitates the reality of life, so it can be said that the content of literary works is a variety of human life experiences (Setiawati & Rohanda, 2020). Literature has long been used by humans as a means of communication that has many meanings, symbols, and a complex sign system behind it (Nadeak & Wulandari, 2024). Poetry is a type of literary art that is able to express feelings and provoke reflection. It can communicate complex and

meaning-laden messages through the use of beautiful language styles and careful diction selection (Rusna et al., 2024). In sya'ir or poetry. Often, it has no explicit meaning. This poem is a type of literature that uses distinctive language to express the poet's inner experience and reality. The role of poetry not only serves as a way to channel emotions but also serves as a tool to communicate with others in daily life (Arsa et al., 2024). Poetry is a type of literary work in which the author conveys their concerns, imaginations, criticisms, thoughts, experiences, pleasures, and messages. Everything is connected through elements such as rhythm, matra, rhyme, array, and verse (Mawaddah & Supena, 2024). In poetry, some meanings are formed through wordplay, symbols, and structures that form the relationship between markers and markers (Annisa et al., 2018). Therefore, the semiotics approach is one of the useful approaches to analyzing literary works, especially poetry, as it allows the reader to discover the hidden meanings behind the text. Roland Barthes was an important figure in modern semiotic research as he expanded and developed Saussure's theory from linguistic studies to cultural and ideological criticism (Taufiq, 2016).

Barthes distinguishes the meaning of signs into two levels: denotative and connotative (Hidayati, 2021). Denotative meanings are the literal or surface meanings of signs, while connotative meanings have additional meanings that come from cultural, emotional, or ideological relationships (Fatimah, 2020). Roland Barthes introduced myth as a second-class sign. He assessed Saussure's semiotic system as the first level, namely the semiological system (Nofia & Bustam, 2022). Barthes's goal in developing Saussure's theory was to conduct an ideological critique of existing cultures. Therefore, before looking for what is behind the myth, the myth reader must first look for the ideology. One of the things that can help this ideological quest is to explore history (Barthes, 2006). Therefore, literary works can be seen as part of a cultural structure that shows identity, values, and power, rather than just a series of words. An example of this ideological case can be seen in Surah Al-Qur'an Ash-shaf verse 10, يَأَيُّهَا أَلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا هَلْ أَدْلُكُمْ عَلَى تِجْرِيَةٍ تُنْجِيْكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ("O you who believe! Will I show you a trade that can save you from a painful punishment?")

In the verse, the word تِجْرِيَةٍ is used as a symbol of something that brings profit and salvation, in the form of faith in Allah and His Messenger. But why is the word a symbol of profit? Isn't there another job better than that? If you look at their history, the Arabs, since ancient times, have worked as traders in addition to farmers and herders. In the history of the Arabs, the rich at that time worked as merchants. The Qur'an was created in the socio-economic environment of trade at that time, and the Arabs lived from it. Mecca is a strategic center of domestic and international trade, and it has a significant historical role (Hasibuan et al., 2024). Therefore, if people at that time wanted to become rich, the best solution was to become an entrepreneur or trader. When Islam was brought by the Prophet, the Qur'an used the word for what was initially considered a symbol of transactions and profits that made him rich, turning into a spiritual transaction to Allah that promised and generated profits, namely heaven.

The conflict between Palestine and Israel is often a matter of public concern. In addition to being widely discussed in the media, this issue is also found in literature, especially contemporary Arabic poetry. Social, political, and religious dynamics in society greatly influenced the development of modern Arabic poetry. In addition, the spirit of Arab nationalism is seen in these poems (Suharsono et al., 2023). Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish is considered a symbol of struggle through literary works. His poems use collective voices to convey the stories and suffering of his people (Novianti et al., 2024). Mahmoud Darwish is one of the central figures in modern Arabic poetry who uses his poetic language to represent a symbolic resistance to oppression in his own land, Palestine. Darwish was born in Birwa on March 13, 1941. The village of Birwa, about nine kilometers from the city of Akko, is one of the areas in Palestine that is directly affected by the situation there. Like many other Arab villages, Birwa was destroyed by Jewish attacks. Strong nationalism and patriotism were instilled in Mahmoud Darwish as he grew up in this conflict environment (Faizun & Kawa, 2023). He not only wrote poems, he also made a series of signs that showed the spirit of struggle, longing for the homeland, and historical wounds. The results from 1960 to 2009 are shown by his tendency to use poetry as a tool to convey Palestinian identity and to oppose the dominance of colonial discourse (Muslim, 2023).

Through his strong involvement in political issues surrounding Arab identity, Mahmoud Darwish made a significant contribution to the development of contemporary Arabic poetry. For more than fifty years, Darwish was an important voice in the struggle, with a voice heard throughout the Arab world and in Palestine (Talukder & Ali, 2025). Poetry, as a type of literature, can be a way for a group of people facing oppression to express their disapproval. Not a few writers appeared during the colonial period or when their country faced difficulties in various fields, including poverty, economy, social, and education. Mahmoud Darwish's poems are expressions of love and resistance to colonialism (Jumadil & Atoh, 2022). One of his works, *Tadhib Bina al-Ardh*, is a work that depicts the bitter experience of a Palestinian poet living a life in exile. As a result of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Darwish has long been separated from his homeland, so in his poems, he expresses a deep longing through strong language and full of symbolism (Fadhlul & Fajri, 2024.). In this poem, Darwish uses various symbols to represent the condition of alienation and the struggle of the Palestinian people in maintaining their identity. This work not only reflects the poet's longing but also becomes a collective voice for a nation that longs for its lost homeland.

One of the most impressive things in this poem is the way Mahmoud Darwish presents the symbolism of homeland and exile through the depiction of land, nature, and identity. He describes everything with a mixture of despair and hope. For many people, homeland is the place of origin that shapes identity. However, in Darwish's poem, homeland is something that feels very far away, something that can only be remembered and honored without actually being achieved. Meanwhile, the exile he felt was not only a matter of physical separation, but also a mental and emotional separation from the cultural roots and the spirit of Palestinian nationalism that was an integral part of his identity.

To understand more deeply the meaning contained in this poem, a semiotic approach is essential. Because as a discipline that investigates signs and meanings, semiotics is essential for interpreting the content of texts and understanding what is contained in them (Alandira et al., 2024). Roland Barthes's semiotic theory provides a solid basis for examining how signs in a text contribute to the construction of more complex meanings, especially through the concepts of denotation and connotation. In Barthes' perspective, the meaning of a text is not only limited to literal or direct (denotative) meanings, but also includes hidden meanings (connotatives) that can form myths, i.e. ideologies or cultural narratives that go beyond just ordinary textual meanings (Yulia et al., 2024). In *Tadhiiqu Bina al-Ardh*, Mahmoud Darwish brings together the myth of the lost homeland as part of the collective narrative that shapes Palestinian identity. Through symbols such as nature, land, and the figure of the mother, he depicts a homeland that has been snatched away, so that his poems not only speak of the experience of exile, but also create myths that reinforce the consciousness and sense of nationality of the Palestinian people.

Through Barthes' semiotic approach, this study aims to uncover how the poem *Tadhiiqu Bina al-Ardh* establishes a deep meaning about homeland and exile, as well as how these myths are reinforced by the symbols present in this poem. An understanding of the signs used by Darwish can provide new insights into how literature functions as a tool to resonate with collective experiences and strengthen national identity, even in conditions of exile

Method

Methodology is a discipline that discusses various methods and approaches in research. Research itself is an in-depth process of understanding, analyzing, discussing, and tracing an object. One of the main goals of research in academia is to test or prove existing theories. If the theory proves to be valid, then research serves to reinforce it. Therefore, the use of appropriate methods and a systematic approach is an important factor in the success of the research. (Rohanda, 2016) This research applies a descriptive qualitative approach to uncover and explain the deep meaning hidden in poetry *Tadhiiqu Bina al-Ardh* by Mahmoud Darwish. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research lies on the analysis of literary texts, rather than on quantitative data such as numbers or statistics. In this case, the researcher seeks to understand how ideological, historical, and cultural elements are reflected in the poetic language used by poets.

In line with the thinking of Adhi Kusumastuti and Ahmad Mustamil Khoiron, the qualitative approach is considered very effective to explore the phenomenon thoroughly through an in-depth description of the analyzed data.. This study uses content analysis techniques with Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, especially on the second-level significance that produces myths. Barthes identified two levels of meaning in signs, namely denotation and connotation. At the connotation stage, myth is formed as a secondary sign system that is ideological in nature. Therefore, this research does not only interpret words, lines, or verses in poetry *Tadhiiqu Bina al-Ardh* based on its literal (denotative) meaning, but also explores possible

connotative meanings that reflect mythical values in the Palestinian social, political, and cultural context.

Result and Discussion

Mahmoud Darwish's poem *Tadhiiqu Binā al-Ardh* is the subject of research. The poem consists of lines describing the suffering, exile, and struggle of the Palestinian people in the face of occupation and deportation. The purpose of content analysis is to uncover the meaning of the text in three levels: denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and mythical meaning. Roland Barthes' semiotic approach is used in this analysis.

Roland Barthes (1915–1980) was a poststructural semiotheist who developed the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure. After reading the General Linguistics Course, he wrote *Elements de Semiologie* (1964), which was a critique and development of Saussure's ideas. He saw that language was constantly changing, creating new sign systems such as in movies, comics, and commercials that combined visual and verbal elements. Therefore, sign theory must be expanded to understand various meanings in modern culture (Urfan, 2019). With reference to Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of signs, Roland Barthes built a two-level theory of semiotics. He expands on this idea by taking into account that signs not only serve as a link between markers and markers, but also serve as a tool to disseminate ideologies disguised as if they were "natural" in everyday life. Myth, according to Barthes, is a system of second-level meaning in which denotative level signs are used to generate ideological meaning. In other words, myth takes the hallmarks of everyday language, relinquishes its original meaning, and then replaces it with a new meaning full of ideological significance (Al-Kadi & Alzoubi, 2023).

According to Barthes, the denotation system or denotative system is a sign system. The initial level consists of a series of markers and signs, namely the relationship of materialistic markers or abstract concepts behind them (Wibisono, 2021). Meanwhile, the connotation or meaning of the second level. identify the meaning contained in signs (Kusuma & Nurhayati, 2019)At the final level there are myths, In his book *Mythology*, Barthes said that myth is a system of communication, messages, and means of marking. Barthes argued that anything can be a myth as long as it contains a message. One of the other properties of myth is that myths are not determined by their material, but by what is conveyed (Yelly, 2019). Barthes' theory evolved into a critique of cultural richness by emphasizing that readers should investigate the ideology hidden behind myths, especially when they read a particular literature or context. The historical method is essential to unravel that meaning. Myth requires synchronous and diachronic analysis, looking at language in its time trajectory and history, in contrast to linguistics which can be done synchronously at the present time (Noor, 2021).

Number	Text Sentences	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Myth
1.	<p>تَضَيِّقُ بِنَا الْأَرْضُ.</p> <p>تَحْشِرُنَا فِي الْمَرْأَةِ الْأُخْرَى، فَنَخْلُعُ أَعْضَاءَنَا كَيْ نَمُرَّ</p>	<p>The ground became narrow, forcing them into the last passage until We released their limbs so that they could pass</p>	<p>There are no more safe spaces or shelters. And extreme sacrifices to survive</p>	<p>The world has closed access to life for Palestinians; The last part is a symbol of the boundary between life and death, safe and threatened. So that the Palestinian people have to sacrifice themselves and their identity to continue their lives</p>
2.	<p>وَتَغْصُرُنَا الْأَرْضُ. يَا لَيْتَنَا قَمْحُهَا كَيْ نَمُوتَ وَنَحْيَا. وَيَا لَيْتَهَا أُمْنَا لَتَرْحَمَنَا أُمْنَا</p>	<p>If we are His wheat, that we may die and live again and if the land is our mother, that He will love us</p>	<p>Hoping to reunite with the land through death and The homeland is personified as a loving mother.</p>	<p>The myth of fertility and regeneration: dying for the land means living again as part of the homeland, and Palestine is not just a geographical location, but a holy and life-giving mother figure</p>
3.	<p>لَيْتَنَا صُورَ لِلصُّخُورِ الَّتِي سَوْفَ يَحْمِلُهَا حُلْمُنَا مَرَايَا</p>	<p>If we are the image of a stone that our dreams carry as a mirror</p>	<p>An identity engraved in stone and carried by dreams</p>	<p>The myth of constancy and hope; Even though they were destroyed, the dreams of the Palestinian people still carry their memories and determination</p>

4.	<p>رَأَيْنَا وُجُوهَ الَّذِينَ سَيَقْتُلُهُمْ فِي الْدِفاعِ الْأُخْرِ عَنِ الرُّوحِ آخِرُنَا</p>	<p>We see the faces of those who will be killed by the last person</p>	<p>Tragic awareness of impending death</p>	<p>The myth of sacrifice; Resistance means death readiness for the people</p>
5.	<p>كَيْنَا عَلَى عِيدٍ أَطْفَالِهِمْ. وَرَأَيْنَا وُجُوهَ الَّذِينَ سَيَرْمُونَ أَطْفَالَنَا مِنْ نَوَافِذِ هَذَا الْفَضَاءِ الْأُخْرِ</p>	<p>We cried for their children's party. And we saw the faces of those who would throw our children out of the window of this last room.</p>	<p>This expression shows universal empathy for children, both victims and perpetrators of conflict.</p>	<p>Palestine not only suffers, but still has a high level of humanity, even towards the children of their enemies. This reinforces the myth of the moral glory of the Palestinian people in their suffering.</p>
6.	<p>إِلَى أَيْنَ نَدْهَبُ بَعْدَ الْحُدُودِ الْأَخِيرَةِ؟</p>	<p>Where will we go after the last limit?</p>	<p>A rhetorical question that suggests absolute alienation and a loss of place</p>	<p>The myth of exile and the loss of the homeland reaches its peak here. Palestine no longer has a place, even metaphorically. This is the central narrative of Palestinian exile: no home, no sky, no end of suffering.</p>

7.	هُنَا سَنَمُوتُ. هُنَا فِي الْمَرِّ الْآخِيرِ هُنَا أَوْ هُنَا سَوْفَ يَغْرِسُ رَيْتُونَهُ... دَمُنَا	Here we will die. Here on the last track. Here and there, he would plant his olive trees... with our blood.	The olive tree Blood became the symbolizes the seed of life, and the land of Palestine, land was again constancy, and life. blessed with Blood is a symbol of sacrifice. The olive tree that grows from blood becomes a mythological narrative that unites sacrifice with the survival of the homeland.
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Further analysis of the excerpts from the poem *Tadhiiqu Binā al-Ardh* by Mahmoud Darwish is given here, using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. Each quote is evaluated by considering three views of meaning, namely, Denotative, Connotative, and Myth

Quote 1

تَضِيقُ بِنَا الْأَرْضُ. تَحْشِرُنَا فِي الْمَرِّ الْآخِيرِ، فَنَخْلُعُ أَعْضَاءَنَا كَيْ نَمُرَ

Mahmoud Darwish's verse quote "تَضِيقُ بِنَا الْأَرْضُ. تَحْشِرُنَا فِي الْمَرِّ الْآخِيرِ، فَنَخْلُعُ" means narrowing or narrowing, "بِنَا" means with us, and "الْأَرْضُ" means the earth, so this sentence can be interpreted as "the earth narrows with us." Furthermore, "تَحْشِرُنَا" means to compact or gather us, "فِي الْمَرِّ الْآخِيرِ" means in the last section, and "فَنَخْلُعُ" means that we pull our limbs to pass through it. Overall, the *denotative meaning* of this quote describes the earth becoming narrower and more urgent, forcing humans to be on the last track and even having to give up parts of their bodies to be crossed.

On the other hand, at the second level, which is *connotative*, this quote contains a deeper and broader symbolic meaning. The narrowed earth symbolizes the oppression and oppression experienced by the Palestinian people as a result of the prolonged occupation and conflict. The last part reflects a critical and desperate situation, where there is no longer room to retreat or hide. The act of letting go of one's limbs is a symbol of enormous sacrifice, even to the point of losing one's identity or part of oneself in order to survive and fight. Through these images, Darwish conveyed a message about the suffering, fortitude, and sacrifice of the Palestinian people in the face of oppression, while affirming that their struggle is an inevitable form of resistance in the midst of extreme limitations and pressures.

The meaning of myth, according to Roland Barthes in a quote from Mahmoud Darwish's poem "تَضِيقُ بِنَا الْأَرْضُ. تَحْشِرُنَا فِي الْمَرِّ الْآخِيرِ، فَنَخْلُعُ أَعْضَاءَنَا كَيْ نَمُرَ" lies in

the way this poem not only reflects the suffering of individuals or groups, but also builds a larger narrative about the identity and struggle of the Palestinian nation. In Barthes's semiotic framework, myth serves as a second-level sign system that transforms connotative meanings into broader, collectively accepted ideological messages.

In this quote, the earth is getting narrower and forcing humans to pass through the final passage at the expense of limbs rather than just physical imagery or metaphors for sacrifice. This has become a myth about the eternal suffering and resistance of the Palestinian people. Earth is personified as an actively oppressive entity, so the struggle to survive and maintain identity becomes something sacred and inevitable. The act of "dismantling the limbs" forms the myth of sacred sacrifice, in which the Palestinian people are positioned as heroic figures who are willing to lose part of themselves for the survival of the nation and homeland.

Quote 2

وَتَعْصِرُنَا الْأَرْضُ. يَا لَيْتَنَا قَمْحًا كَيْ نَمُوتَ وَنَحْيَا. وَيَا لَيْتَهَا أُمْنًا لِتَرْحَمَنَا أُمْنًا

Denotatively, every word and phrase in this quote has a clear literal meaning. For example, "وَتَعْصِرُنَا الْأَرْضُ" means "the earth oppresses us," which describes the physical stress or suffering experienced. Then, "يَا لَيْتَنَا قَمْحًا كَيْ نَمُوتَ وَنَحْيَا" means "if only we were wheat, so that we could die and come back to life", which reflects the desire to be part of the earth, to be able to experience the cycle of life and death like plants. Furthermore, "وَيَا لَيْتَهَا أُمْنًا لِتَرْحَمَنَا أُمْنًا" means "and if only the earth were our mother, our mother would have mercy on us", implying the hope that the earth would act like a loving mother.

However, if we look at it from *a connotative point of view*, this quote has a deeper symbolic meaning. The "pinched" earth is not only physical oppression, but also symbolizes the oppression, suffering, and heavy burden of life as a result of the conflict and occupation experienced by the Palestinian people. The desire to be a grain of land reflects a longing to connect with the homeland, to be able to experience the natural cycle of life, even if it means dying and being reborn. It is a symbol of hope for new birth, deliverance, or resurrection from suffering. The hope that the earth will be a loving mother illustrates the longing for protection, warmth, and affection that has been snatched away by violence and alienation. Through this expression, Darwish not only expresses personal and collective suffering but also builds a symbol of longing, hope, and struggle to regain affection and peace in the homeland. This analysis is in line with Barthes's approach that distinguishes between literal (denotative) and symbolic (connotative) meanings, and asserts that poetry has a social, emotional, and philosophical message hidden behind the word choices and imagery of contemporary Arabic poetry.

The meaning of myth in the quote of Mahmoud Darwish's poem "وَتَعْصِرُنَا الْأَرْضُ. يَا لَيْتَنَا قَمْحًا كَيْ نَمُوتَ وَنَحْيَا. وَيَا لَيْتَهَا أُمْنًا لِتَرْحَمَنَا أُمْنًا" according to semiotics Roland Barthes lies in how this poem constructs a grand narrative about the

Palestinian people's relationship with their homeland, as well as about the ever-repeating cycle of suffering and hope. In Barthes' framework, myth is a second-level sign system that transforms connotative meanings into ideological messages that are collectively accepted by society. In this quote, the "squeezed" earth and the desire to make the earth "wheat" symbolize the myth of eternal sacrifice and resurrection.

Wheat that dies to then come back to life becomes a metaphor for the cycle of suffering and hope of the Palestinian people: despite their oppression and death, there is always hope for rebirth, liberation, and new life. The hope that the earth will become a loving "mother" gives birth to the myth of the homeland as a source of affection, protection, and identity. The earth is not only a physical space, but a holy mother figure, a place of return and refuge for its people.

With this, the myth that is awakened in this quote is that suffering, sacrifice, and hope are not just individual experiences, but part of the collective destiny and enduring narrative of the Palestinian nation. This poem reinforces the belief that the homeland is a mother to be fought for and loved, and that the cycle of suffering will always be followed by hope and awakening. This is Barthes's way of seeing poetry as a production of meaning that is not only personal but also ideological and social, shaping collective identity and solidarity through symbolic and mythical language.

Quote 3

لَيَتَنَا صُورٌ لِلصُّخُورِ الَّتِي سَوْفَ يَحْمِلُهَا حُلُمُنَا مَرَايَا

Denotatively, the quote from Mahmoud Darwish's poem "لَيَتَنَا صُورٌ لِلصُّخُورِ" has a literal meaning that we can describe as follows. The word "لَيَتَنَا" means "if we exist" or "if we exist", which reflects unfulfilled hopes or desires. "صُورٌ" means "picture" or "shadow", referring to something seen or painted. "لِلصُّخُورِ" means "for stone", referring to hard and sturdy objects that exist in nature. Furthermore, "الَّتِي سَوْفَ يَحْمِلُهَا" means "to carry", where "سَوْفَ" indicates the future time and "يَحْمِلُهَا" means "will bring". "حُلُمُنَا" means "our dreams" or "our dreams", while "مَرَايَا" means "mirror", i.e. objects that reflect shadows. If we say it literally, this verse conveys the poet's desire for himself and his people to become an image engraved in stone, which their dreams will later bring to them as a mirror.

At the *connotative level*, these quotes retain a deeper symbolic meaning. The "image for stone" symbolizes the traces or identities left behind in the harsh and sturdy homeland, Palestine. The stone here becomes a symbol of steadfastness, resistance, and eternal identity. "Our dream is to carry a stone as a mirror" means that the hopes and struggles of the Palestinian people will always reflect the identity and history inherent in their homeland. The mirror here is a symbol of self-reflection, hope, and ideals that never go out. Thus, these quotes express their

longing for identity and their struggle to remain surviving, reflected, and remembered in history, albeit in a form as simple as a picture on a stone.

In this sentence "لَيَّنَا صُورَ لِلصُّخُورِ الَّتِي سَوْفَ يَخْلِمُهَا حُلْمُنَا مَرَّاً" through the semiotic lens of Roland Barthes. Here, we see how this verse builds an ideological narrative that transcends its superficial meaning. In Barthes's view, *myth* serves as a second-level sign system, in which connotative meanings are elevated into ideological messages that are accepted and inherited collectively by society.

In this quote, the hope of "becoming the image of the stone that our dreams will carry as a mirror" creates a myth about the eternity of the Palestinian nation's identity and struggle. These hard, timeless stones become a powerful and unshakable symbol of the homeland, while the "image" on the stone serves as a metaphor for the traces of history, identity, and existence that future generations want to perpetuate. When dreaming of carrying a stone as a mirror, the myth arises that the hopes and struggles of the Palestinian people will always reflect and reflect their collective identity and history, even in the simplest form.

Thus, the myth that Darwish builds in this verse affirms that the existence and struggle of the Palestinian nation will never fade, because it has been imprinted on the "stone of history" and will continue to be reflected in the dreams and hopes of the next generation. This poem is not just a personal or symbolic expression, but also serves as a tool to generate and reproduce ideological meanings about immortality, resistance, and national identity. This is in line with the concept of myth in Barthes' semiotics, which uses literary language as a means to shape social and cultural reality.

Quote 4

رَأَيْنَا وُجُوهَ الَّذِينَ سَيَقْتُلُهُمْ فِي الدِّفَاعِ الْأَخِيرِ عَنِ الرُّوحِ آخِرَنَا

Denotatively, an excerpt from Mahmoud Darwish's poem "رَأَيْنَا وُجُوهَ الَّذِينَ"

"سيقتلهم في الدفاع الأخير عن الروح آخرنا" can be interpreted as "We have seen the faces of those who will be killed by the last of us in the last defense for souls." In its literal sense, this verse describes a situation in which a group of people witness the faces of those who will be victims in the final battle or struggle for the preservation of soul or existence, and the person who will commit murder is the last person left of their group. Every word in this verse refers to physical reality: there are people whose faces are visible, there are acts of murder, and there is the context of a final defense made for the sake of the soul or life.

However, *connotatively*, this verse has a deeper and broader symbolic meaning. Seeing the faces of those who would be killed by "The Last of Us" is not only a depiction of physical death in war, but also a symbol of sacrifice, pain, and a never-ending cycle of resistance in the history of the Palestinian nation. The "last defense for the soul" represents the extreme situation in which a group or nation must survive to the end to maintain their collective identity, honor, and existence. This verse also highlights the irony and tragedy of the struggle: to maintain existence, even the last person must be willing to sacrifice his fellow human beings or face the harsh reality of who survives and who falls. Thus, this verse implies

collective pain, resignation, and determination to continue surviving despite having to face loss and death alternately.

The meaning of the myth in a quote from Mahmoud Darwish's poem "رَأَيْنَا" according to Roland Barthes' semiotics lies in the way this poem constructs an ideological and collective narrative about sacrifice, defense, and the never-ending cycle of struggle in the history of the Palestinian nation. In Barthes's view, myth serves as a second-level sign system that transforms connotative meanings into ideological messages that are collectively accepted and inherited by society. In this temple, the image of "seeing the faces of those whom we will kill last in the last defense of the soul" not only depicts the tragedy of battle or physical death, but also becomes a myth about the sacred sacrifice and heroism inherent in the identity of the Palestinian nation.

This poem reproduces the narrative that in the struggle to preserve the existence, honor, and soul of the nation, each individual must be ready to be a victim, even with his own hands, for the survival of the group. The myth that is built is that sacrifice and loss are an inevitable price and have become part of the collective destiny of the nation, where the last defense always demands sacrifice from generation to generation. Thus, this poem not only becomes an expression of personal sadness and pain but also serves as a tool to generate and reproduce an ideological meaning about the heroism, solidarity, and eternity of struggle.

Quote 5

كَيْنَا عَلَى عِيدِ أَطْفَالِهِمْ. وَرَأَيْنَا وُجُوهَ الَّذِينَ سَيَرْمُونَ أَطْفَالَنَا مِنْ نَوَافِذِ هَذَا الْفَضَاءِ الْآخِرِ

Denotatively, an excerpt from Mahmoud Darwish's poem "كَيْنَا عَلَى عِيدِ أَطْفَالِهِمْ. وَرَأَيْنَا وُجُوهَ الَّذِينَ سَيَرْمُونَ أَطْفَالَنَا مِنْ نَوَافِذِ هَذَا الْفَضَاءِ الْآخِرِ" means "We are above their children's party. And we saw the faces of the people who were going to throw our children out of the last window of this room." In its literal sense, this verse describes a situation in which the group of "us" is in the midst of a festive atmosphere enjoyed by the children from the other side, while at the same time they witness the faces of those who are going to commit violence against their children, that is, throw them out the window in the last remaining room. Every word in this verse refers to a real event: there is a celebration, there are children, there is an act of throwing out the window, and there is a last room as a last refuge.

Although connotative, this verse contains a very strong symbolic meaning of irony, suffering, and injustice. "We are on top of their children's vacation" means that in the midst of the joy and happiness felt by the other party, the group of "our" is in a situation of sadness and threat. The phrase "look at the faces of those who will throw our children out the window of the last room" became a symbol of violence, expulsion and loss of hope for the next generation. The last window of the room symbolizes the end of protection and a sense of security that is already very thin, even children no longer have a place to take shelter. This verse reveals the collective

trauma, helplessness, and deep wounds of conflict that are taking away children's futures.

In an excerpt from Mahmoud Darwish's poem which reads "كُنَّا عَلَى عِيدٍ أَطْفَالِهِمْ. وَرَأَيْنَا وُجُوهَ النِّيَنَ سَيِّمُونَ أَطْفَالَنَا مِنْ نَوَافِذِ هَذَا الْفَضَاءِ الْأَخِيرِ", we can see a very strong construction of myth if we analyze it with Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. On a mythical level, Darwish not only portrays the reality of violence and oppression firsthand, but also constructs a grand narrative that normalizes and naturalizes the Palestinian conflict as if it were the law of nature. By distinguishing between "their children's party" and "our children were thrown out of the window of the last room", Darwish refuted the myth of superiority and purity of the colonists who celebrated happiness over the suffering of others. In this context, the children of the occupiers are positioned as symbols of purity and hope, while Palestinian children are portrayed as victims who must be sacrificed for the survival of the myth of power. In addition, the use of the phrase "last space" further reinforces the myth of the increasingly narrow Palestinian living space, as if destruction and expulsion were inevitable fates. In this way, Darwish not only represents political reality but also criticizes and dismantles the social myths that justify violence, while at the same time building a counter-myth of constancy and resistance through the existence of Palestinian children who survive even on the verge of destruction. This is the power of Darwish's poetry: it transforms the collective experience of the Palestinian people into a mythological narrative that challenges the ideological dominance of the occupiers, as Barthes elaborates on the function of myth in shaping and maintaining power structures in society

Quote 6

إِلَى أَيْنَ نَذَهَبُ بَعْدَ الْحُدُودِ الْأَخِيرَةِ؟

Denotatively, this quote contains several important elements that make up its literal meaning. The word "إِلَى أَيْنَ" (ilā aina) means "where", a question that reflects the search for direction or destination. "نَذَهَبُ" (nadhabu) means "we go", which indicates the act of moving or moving from one place to another. While "بَعْدَ" (ba'da) means "after", it signifies the existence of a sequence of times or events, and "الْحُدُودُ الْأَخِيرَةُ" (al-ḥudūd al-akhīrah) means "final boundary", i.e., the final dividing line, either physically as a territorial boundary, or symbolically as an end point of journey or struggle. If we analyze it literally and verbatim, this verse describes a group of people who have reached or even exceeded the limits they can reach, and then question where else they can go after that. Physically, this can be interpreted as the question of where they should go when there is no longer a territory or space for them to enter a very concrete situation in the context of displacement or expulsion.

However, *connotatively*, this verse has a much deeper and broader meaning. The question of "where do we go after the last limit?" is not just a question of physical direction, but a symbol of the anxiety, despair, and loss of hope experienced

by the Palestinian people after their entire living space has been exhausted, both geographically, politically, and existentially. The "final boundary" here is not only a territorial line, but also a metaphor for the end of all possibilities, protections, and hopes. This verse represents the conditions of alienation, expulsion, and identity crises experienced by the Palestinian people, as well as the universal existential question of the fate of humanity when all space and opportunity have been closed.

In a mythical view, according to semiotics Roland Barthes, this quote creates a profound narrative of the alienation and loss of direction experienced by the Palestinian people throughout the long history of conflict and expulsion. The question "where do we go after the last limit?" is not only an expression of personal despair, but it also forms a collective myth of existence that is always threatened and living space that is constantly deprived until there is nothing left. Within the framework of Barthes's myth, the final boundary here is not just a physical line, but an ideological symbol of the end of all possibilities and hopes, so that the entire existence of the Palestinian nation seems destined to always be on the verge of expulsion and loss. The myth that has been formed is the myth of "eternal odyssey" – that the Palestinian people, despite having transcended all geographical and political boundaries, have still not found a definite place to build a foothold. These myths also naturalize conditions of isolation and identity crises as part of their historical destiny, so that suffering and the search for refuge become the main narratives passed down from generation to generation. Thus, Darwish, through this poem, not only depicts reality but also reproduces and criticizes the socio-ideological myth of a nation that is always a victim of expulsion and loss of the homeland, as explained in Barthes' theory that myths serve to mask reality and naturalize certain ideologies in society.

Quote 7

هُنَا سَنَمُوتُ. هُنَا فِي الْمَمَّرِ الْأَخِيرِ. هُنَا أَوْ هُنَا سَوْفَ يَغْرِسُ زَيْتُونَهُ... دَمُنَا

In this sentence, *Denotatively*, this quote consists of several direct statements that can be easily explained. The word "هُنَا" (here) is repeated several times, emphasizing a very specific location. "سَنَمُوتُ" means "we will die", a firm statement about the death that will occur in that place. The phrase "فِي الْمَمَّرِ الْأَخِيرِ" means "in the last part", which refers to the last remaining space or path, as if there was nowhere else to go. In addition, "هُنَا أَوْ هُنَا" (here or here) adds to the nuances of location uncertainty, but still insists that deaths will occur no matter where they are. The last part, "سَوْفَ يَغْرِسُ زَيْتُونَهُ... دَمُنَا" means "will plant His olive tree... our blood", which describes the actions of a person (or other party) who planted an olive tree with his blood as a medium.

Connotatively, this quote has a very deep symbolic and emotional meaning. The repetition of the word "here" confirms the determination and compulsion of the Palestinian people to defend their land, despite the threat of death everywhere. The "last part" is a metaphor for living spaces that have been narrowed by colonialism,

suggesting that they have been pushed to their limits. The statement "we will die here" is not only an expression of despair, but also a form of resistance and refusal to surrender or leave the homeland. Meanwhile, the olive tree planted with his blood became a symbol of eternal sacrifice: the blood of the Palestinian people became the fertilizer of the soil and new life, as well as a sign that every sacrifice would not, but would give birth to hope and continuity of identity. Thus, this verse represents a never-ending cycle of suffering, sacrifice, and hope in the struggle of the Palestinian nation.

In *the context of myths* according to Roland Barthes' semiotics, the quote of Mahmoud Darwish's poem "هُنَا سَنَمُوتُ. هُنَا أَوْ هُنَا سَوْفَ يَغْرِسُ زَيْنُونَهُ... هُنَا فِي الْمَرِّ الْأَخِيرِ. هُنَا دَمُنَا" creates a profound narrative of sacrifice, resilience, and the cycle of suffering that has become an integral part of the collective identity of the Palestinian nation. The repetition of the phrase "here" confirms the myth of deep attachment to the homeland, suggesting that even death would be accepted in one's land, not in a place of exile. The "last part" serves as a mythological symbol for the living space that has been further narrowed by the occupation, reinforcing the narrative that the Palestinian people have been pushed to the limits of their existence. On the other hand, the phrase "will plant his olive tree... Our blood" forms a myth about a land that continues to be fertilized by the blood of sacrifice, where the olive tree, which symbolizes peace and life, can only grow on the suffering and sacrifice of its people. Thus, this poem not only records political and historical reality, but also naturalizes the ideology of resistance and resistance through a myth that is constantly revived: that the existence, death, and sacrifice of the Palestinian people are the foundation for the survival of their nation's identity and hope. This is how Darwish, as described in Barthes' approach, transforms collective experience into a myth that not only reinforces but also critiques oppressive social and political realities.

A reading of Mahmoud Darwish's semiotic poem "Tadhīqu Binā al-Ard" shows that the poem not only expresses the suffering caused by the occupation, but also forms a layer of meaning that, according to Roland Barthes, consists of three levels of meaning: denotative, connotative, and mythological. This study is different from previous studies that emphasized aspects of longing, nostalgia, and nationalism, such as those conducted by Suharsono (2023) and Faizun & Kawa (2023) who emphasized that these meanings are formed through an ideological sign system rather than just coming from emotions. Therefore, this study shows that the symbols in Darwish's poetry are not just aesthetic elements but also tools to form myths that affirm Palestinian identity.

This poem shows the real lives of the Palestinian people, such as the increasingly limited living space, the experience of displacement, death, and the loss of a place of return. These results are in line with Muslim research (2023) which interprets Darwish's work as a colonial representation. However, this study emphasizes that these concrete images are the basis for the connotative and mythological meanings that first emerged. Symbols such as the earth, mother, stone, and olive have cultural and emotional significance on a connotative level. In Tadhīqu Binā al-Ard, the mother is depicted as the center of ideology, representing the homeland as a figure

to be guarded and preserved. In contrast, in Riffaterre's research on Ila Ummi's poetry, the mother is considered an emotional center. This is in line with Barthes' idea that signs form the reader's cultural connection at the connotative stage.

On the analysis of the myth state, it is shown that Darwish created two main myths: Palestine as a lost but still sacred homeland, and illuminated as a place where steadfastness and resistance originated. This result is different from the research conducted by Suharsono who considers exile in Darwish's poem only as nostalgia. This research confirms through Barthes' framework that nostalgia actually functions as an ideological construct that normalizes the idea that lighting is not just a traumatic experience; it is a symbolic place where the collective Palestinian identity is preserved and strengthened. This is in line with Barthes's idea of myth as a second-level system of significance that hides ideology behind its seemingly natural form.

This study confirms that Darwish's poem places lighting at the heart of political myths. This is in contrast to previous research that emphasized the emotional tension that accompanies the lighting experience. Exile is not only considered a place of suffering; It is also considered a symbolic place that fosters hope, strengthens the nation's identity, and encourages struggle. This result is in line with Barthes' theory that poetry and other cultural texts are ideological containers created through the play of signs. By comparing the findings of this study with previous studies and Barthes's framework, it can be concluded that "Tadhīqu Binā al-Ard" is a sign system that creates an ideological narrative about Palestine in addition to an aesthetic work. This poem shows the function of literature as a tool to maintain collective memory, strengthen cultural identity, and convey resistance through symbols that are processed into a common myth.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the poem Tadhīqu Binā al-Ard by Mahmoud Darwish using semiotic theory and Roland Barthes' method of content analysis, it was found that this poem is loaded with layers of meaning that form two main myths: the myth of Palestine as a lost homeland, and the myth of exile and resistance as a cycle of eternal struggle. The denotative meaning in this poem reveals the concrete reality of the suffering, death, displacement, and limited living space experienced by the Palestinian people. The depiction of narrow space, the final part, and death is not just a physical situation, but a marker of the structural pressures that force the existence of the Palestinian human being to the brink of extinction.

Connotative meanings enrich the text with collective emotions and cultural values. The connotations that emerge from the symbols of the mother, olive, wheat, stone, and bird create an affective space that reinforces the attachment of identity between the Palestinian people and their homeland. These signs represent courage, loyalty, and a deep longing for space that has been taken. Sacrifice is depicted as part of the cycle of life, in which even blood becomes an olive seed, a symbol of life and peace.

At the mythical level, this poem builds an ideological and cultural narrative about Palestine being not only physically oppressed, but also an attempt to erase its

existence as a nation. The myth of a holy and irreplaceable homeland is built through Palestine's position as a mother, a giver of life who deserves to fight until the last drop of blood. On the other hand, the exile and death in the last part are not seen as the end, but rather the beginning of rebirth through dreams, stones, and blood.

Thus, this poem is not only a literary work of lyrics but also a forum for articulating identity and struggle. Mahmoud Darwish places his poetry as a cultural archive and a form of symbolic resistance that not only preserves the collective memory of the Palestinian people but also inspires an unquenchable spirit of resistance. The symbolism used in this poem creates a mythological space in which each suffering becomes part of a grand narrative of constancy, courage, and hope. Through this analysis, it can be concluded that literary texts have great potential in voicing collective ideology and identity. In this context, the poem *Tadhiiqu Binā al-Ard* is a form of resistance that does not use weapons, but rather the power of language to fight against the erasure of Palestinian identity and history.

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