

Samih Al-Qasim's Conception of Land as Manifested in His Eco-Resistance Poetry: An Ecopostcolonial Perspective

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze Samih Al-Qasim's conceptions of land as manifested in his poetic discourse of eco-resistance from an ecopostcolonial perspective by drawing heavily on Huggan and Tiffin's postcolonial, ecocritical theory and Banerjee's conception of land witnessing. The paper also attempts to show which of Al-Qasim's conceptions of land is given prominence in his poetry. Through the analysis of Al-Qasim's poetic treatment of the Palestinian land, four conceptions of land prominently emerge: land as a source of belonging, land as a witness to the scenes of devastation and the suffering of the Palestinian people, land as a form of resistance and land as a target of colonial exploitation. Al-Qasim gives the first priority to his illustration of the land as a source of belonging. The second priority goes to his conception of the land as a witness to the Palestinian suffering and the scenes of destruction. By focusing on these two priorities, Al-Qasim reveals how the land is approached differently by the colonized Palestinians and the Israeli occupiers.

Keywords: Samih Al-Qasim, eco-resistance poetry, conception of land, ecopostcolonial theory.

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Introduction:

The concept of land has always been prominent in the poetic discourses of Arab poets especially the Palestinians. The Palestinian land, in particular, has received the poetic attention of such poets as the Syrian poets Omar Abu Risha and Nizar Qabbani, the Egyptian Ali Mahmoud Taha, the Iraqi Nazik al-Malaika in addition to the Palestinian poets Ibrahim Touqan, Fadwa Touqan, Abdul Rahim Mahmoud, Mahmoud Darwish, Tawfik Zayyad, Samih Al-Qasim, Ibrahim Nasrallah, Rashid Hussein and Salma al-Khadra al-Jayyusi. The Palestinian land has acquired such poetic interest due to its multifaceted values. More prominently, the land of Palestine enjoys great religious significance in relation to the three sacred religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. It has the Holy Land of the first Qibla for Muslims, the sacred land of the Nativity for Christians and the Promised Land for Jews. Historically, the Palestinian land, Jericho in particular, was the cradle of one of the earliest civilizations in human history known as the Canaanite Civilization. It has also been the focus of colonial enterprises from prehistoric times till the Israeli occupation.

From the political perspective, the land of Palestine has always been the land of political strives and imperial domination. Consequently, it has witnessed the suffering and agony as well as the resistance of its people. The latest political turmoil in Palestine has started since the catastrophic defeat of the Arabs in 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel. Furthermore, the cultural value of the Palestinian land stands out prominently among the other values. Palestinian culture is primarily based on the Palestinians' relations to their land. The cultural heritage and social traditions of the Palestinian people are originally derived from their settlement in rural areas where agricultural land represents their main source of livelihood. This justifies why the Palestinian people appreciate all the aspects of their rural setting

including orange, fig and olive groves. They also appreciate the small stones of their hills and rocky areas and use them in building their houses. Such natural elements of the land stand for survival, sustenance and belonging. It is logical, then, to find that the Palestinian's identity basically rests on his land. This is why the Palestinians remain closely attached to their land regardless of their being dispersed in exile and refugee camps or displaced in occupied territories. The concept of land, in this sense, represents a unified, cultural heritage and a common destiny for all the Palestinians.

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to analyze Samih Al-Qasim's different conceptions of land as manifested in his poetic discourse of eco-resistance from a postcolonial, ecocritical perspective by drawing heavily on Huggan and Tiffin's postcolonial, ecocritical theory and Banerjee's conception of land witnessing. Such analysis serves to show how the Palestinian land assumes various roles and has different manifestations in Al-Qasim's eco-resistance poetry. The paper also attempts to show which of A-Qasim's conceptions of land is given prominence in his poetic discourse of eco-resistance.

Literature Review:

The poetry of Samih Al-Qasim has always been much investigated by numerous critics and scholars. A number of critics have approached Al-Qasim's poetry from a postcolonial perspective. In her book titled *Brothers Apart: Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Arab World*, Nasser (2017), for instance, demonstrates how Palestinian intellectuals and writers such as Samih Al-Qasim, Mahmoud Darwish, Rashid Husayn and Emile Habibi have experienced living in their homeland under Israeli occupation. She also systematically examines how such writers are able to resist the occupation of their homeland and convey their experience of resistance through writing and publishing their works. Nasser specifically focuses here on

Darwish's and Al-Qasim's anti-colonial poetic discourses of resistance. She shows how their poetry turns out to be a real act of cultural resistance against the occupation's endeavors to isolate and marginalize all the Palestinian residents and to falsify the real history of their occupied homeland. Nasser's book, in this sense, places the literary production of the Palestinian writers and poets who have endured living and writing under occupation in the context of cultural struggle and resistance to the Israeli occupation.

Likewise, in his article titled "A Struggling Voice from Palestine: Samih Al-Qasim and Resistance poetry," Masood (2022a) studies the poetry of Samih Al-Qasim as an anti-colonial, poetic discourse of struggle and resistance. He sheds light on the personal suffering of Al-Qasim and his imprisonment as a result of his poetry which is wholly devoted to resisting the illegitimate occupation of his homeland. In his article, Masood specifically analyzes Al-Qasim's poetic volumes *Sadder Than Water* (2006) and *All Faces but Mine* (1984) as representative of Al-Qasim's poetry of resistance. He clearly shows how the poems of these two volumes portray the deplorable tragic situation of the Palestinian people who suffer the hardships of life under occupation. He also illustrates how Al-Qasim's poems depict the Palestinians' ability to endure and persist in their adversity and how these poems address the Palestinians' sense of unity and solidarity in facing their oppressive occupiers. Masood concludes his article with the contention that Al-Qasim manages to globalize his poetic experience of resistance through verses which express the Palestinians' longing for living peacefully in a homeland free of occupation.

Similarly, in an article entitled "Liberation, Reconciliation and Peace: Reading Samih-al-Qasim as a Palestinian Resistance Poet", Zikrah et al. (2021) attempt an insightful discussion of the

resistance poetry of Samih Al-Qasim and examine how far it is effective in countering the Israeli colonial discourse of hegemony. Through their analysis of a selection of poems from *Sadder than Water* (2006) and *All Faces but Mine* (1984), they make it clear that Al-Qasim condemns the Israeli occupiers' cruelty and savagery against the innocent Palestinians who are terrorized, tortured and marginalized. It is also obvious that Al-Qasim, in his resistance poetry, addresses such topics as the Palestinians' loss of identity as a result of losing their land. Yet, he simultaneously celebrates the Palestinians' national attitude of belonging to their homeland, the feeling of pride in their ancestral history since the Canaanites and their readiness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their land. Samih Al-Qasim himself is presented here as a poet who takes from his verse a form of cultural resistance to occupation. He urges the Palestinians to remain steadfast and strongly persist in their resistance. In the article's conclusion, Al-Qasim is shown to be optimistic about the future of his homeland. He is quite hopeful about the restoration of the Palestinians' peaceful life and the return of their lost land.

In the same vein, Yattoo (2017), in her article "Reimagining Palestine Through the Poetry of Defiance: A Select Study of Fadwa Tuqan, Tawfiq Zayyad and Samih Al-Qasim," studies the resistance poetry of the three Palestinian poets: Fadwa Tuqan, Tawfiq Zayyad and Samih Al-Qasim. First, she provides some biographical details about each poet. Then, she embarks on the analysis of a short selection of their poetry. Yattoo, for instance, examines how Fadwa Tuqan's first-hand experience of the occupation's atrocities gives her the ability to render a realistic depiction of the horrible scenes of violence and genocides and to impart the atmosphere of tragedy and loss. She also reveals Tuqan's celebration of the young children's resistance to occupation, her sympathetic identification with the Palestinian

refugees and her hope for their return to their homeland. Yattoo also explores Tawfiq Zayyad's anti-colonial poetic discourse against the Israeli occupation in which he displays the Palestinians' strategies of defiance and resistance against an oppressive occupation. Likewise, she deals with Samih Al-Qasim's poetry from a postcolonial perspective stressing his poetry's defiant appeal. Yattoo finally clarifies how the three poets counter the occupation's colonial discourse of exploitation by producing forceful poems which are conspicuously charged with the Palestinians' emotional enthusiasm for resistance and consistent struggle to remain attached to their ancestral roots.

On the other hand, some critics have attempted an analysis of linguistic and technical aspects of Al-Qasim's poetry. Boayrid (2019), for instance, in her article "Resistance through the Language of Palestinian Poets", attempts a linguistic analysis of the poetic discourse of Mahmoud Darwish, Samih Al-Qasim and Tawfiq Zayyad as three of the most representative poets of Palestinian resistance. By employing the political discourse analysis approach of Teun A. van Dijk, Boayrid analyzes the language of selected poems of each of the three poets. Her aim is to illustrate how their idea of resistance is obviously reflected in the language of their poetry. Accordingly, the features of their poetic language are analyzed according to van Dijk's and Mark L. Johnson's models of discourse analysis. The result of Boayrid's linguistic analysis indicates that Samih Al-Qasim is mainly concerned in his poetry with the portrayal of the Israeli other who is the usurper of the Palestinian land. On the other hand, the analysis shows that Tawfiq Zayyad's poetry focuses on the Palestinians themselves who are the innocent victims of an oppressive, colonial regime, whereas Darwish, in his resistance poetry, pays attention to the description of both the Israeli colonizers and the colonized Palestinians.

In a similar vein, Igbaria and Abu Jaber (2017), in an article entitled "Religious Intertextuality Throughout Samih Al-Qasim's Poetry", attempt a technical study of Al-Qasim's employment of religious intertextuality in his poetry. They explain that Al-Qasim relies on the Holy Qur'an and the Bible as the main sources from which he derives his religious references and intertextualities. They also explore the various types of religious intertextuality in Al-Qasim's poetry. These types include the use of partial quotations, allusions and symbols. According to Igbaria and Abu Jaber, the poet derives his religious quotations from the Holy Qur'an as in his metaphorical comparison of his homeland to the city of Erum to reflect the magnificence and religious significance of Palestine. There are also allusions to names of prophets and other religious figures. The poet, for instance, alludes to such prophets as Jesus, Joseph and Jacob in order to urge the Palestinians to follow their model by enduring their suffering and by being able to sacrifice for the sake of liberating their homeland from the grip of the Israeli occupation. Furthermore, there are allusions to religious narratives such as the religious story of Cain's violent murder of Abel. The poet's purpose for alluding to such a story is to show the similarity between Cain's crime and the criminal practices of the Israeli occupation. In addition, Igbaria and Abu Jaber discuss Al-Qasim's use of religious symbols in his poetry such as the Christian symbol of the cross to evoke the tragic suffering and sacrifices of the Palestinian people who are slaughtered in massacres at the hands of aggressive occupiers. After exploring all the different types of religious intertextuality in Al-Qasim's poetry, Igbaria and Abu Jaber conclude that Al-Qasim's poetry is religiously oriented in the sense that it relies heavily on religious sources in conveying the gruesome reality of the Palestinian people under occupation.

Other critics, however, such as Kassis (2015) in his article "Samih Al-Qasim: Equal Parts Poetry and Resistance" and Hoffman (2014) in her article "Houdini al-Falastini: Samih Al-Qasim, 1939-2014", attempt a biographical study of Al-Qasim's personal life and the development of his poetry. Kassis (2015), for instance, introduces a biographical sketch of Al-Qasim's life and his poetic works. He gives a chronological account of the major stages of Al-Qasim's development as a man and poet. Kassis starts with the hardships the poet experienced with his family in his early childhood and how they were marginalized in their own country under occupation. He also comments on the poet's adulthood when he started publishing his revolutionary poetry in which he reveals the Palestinians' enthusiasm for defending their homeland against the Israeli illegitimate occupation. Furthermore, Kassis divides Al-Qasim's poetry of resistance into two parts. The first part includes the poet's early poetic production which is generally characterized by the prevalence of his utopian vision of a peaceful world and a prosperous, safe Palestine with no wars or occupation. The second part includes the poetry written after the Arab's defeat in the catastrophic war of 1967. His poetry here is concerned with such ideas as resistance, devastation, suffering, death and desolation. Yet, Al-Qasim's poetry during this period reveals the Palestinians' optimistic attitude and their strong attachment to their homeland.

Furthermore, studying the concepts of space and place in the poetry of Samih Al-Qasim is the focus of interest in Abu Jaber and Igbaria's (2017) article entitled "Spatial Poetic Text Throughout Samih al-Qasim's Poetry." In this article, they examine how Al-Qasim employs the elements of space and place in his revolutionary poetry. They shed light on how the Palestinians' national identity is defined in relation to these two concepts of space and place as suggested in Al-Qasim's poetry.

They also investigate how Al-Qasim utilizes the two concepts in his poems by analyzing some of his selected poems. They observe that in a number of poem Al-Qasim directly refers to the names of specific places in his homeland. By so doing, Al-Qasim attempts to show how the Palestinians are closely attached to specific locations in their homeland. Furthermore, specific physical spaces, such as the prisons erected by the Israeli occupiers on the Palestinian occupied territories, are hinted at. This is simply to reveal the Palestinians' sense of suffering and agony as a result of their imprisonment, displacement and dispossession. In addition, capitals of Arab and western countries, where Palestinians live as refugees or exiles, are hinted at throughout his poetry. Moreover, names of Arabic countries are referred to in some of the poems to celebrate the notions of Arab unity and solidarity. In the article's conclusion, Abu Jaber and Igbaria assert that Palestine, both in its physical space and specific places, bears witness to the human tragedy that all the Palestinian people experience as a result of the Israeli occupation.

All such critical concern with Al-Qasim's poetry, it seems obvious, is generally categorized into four critical areas of study: the postcolonial approach, the spatial approach, the biographical approach and the linguistic, technical approach. Yet, Al-Qasim's revolutionary poetry of the land has never before been discussed from an ecopostcolonial perspective.

Theoretical Framework:

The present paper draws heavily on Huggan and Tiffin's ecopostcolonial theory as propounded in their seminal book entitled *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (2015) and as discussed in their illuminating article entitled "Green Postcolonialism" (2007). The paper also draws upon Banerjee's (2016) insightful discussion of the postcolonial

ecocritical theory in her influential chapter entitled "Ecocriticism and Postcolonial Studies."

In their book *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. Huggan and Tiffin (2015) discuss how postcolonialism and ecocriticism as two divergent fields of study can merge together into an ecopostcolonial approach. This newly emerging approach mainly focuses on the different reactions of the colonizer and colonized toward the environment of the colonized communities. Huggan and Tiffin show how this approach is pertinent to the cultural, social, historical and political identity of the colonized communities. They also study the negative impacts of colonization on the indigenous people, their lands and their flora and fauna.

Huggan and Tiffin's postcolonial, ecocritical approach is, therefore, a comprehensive study which is divided into two main parts. The first concentrates on the environmental impact of colonization on the indigenous people, their lands and natural habitats as being parts of the colonized environment. The second part, on the other hand, is devoted to exposing the imperial endeavors to endanger and get rid of the wild animals in colonized communities. In its first part, Huggan and Tiffin's (2015, 29-97) theory, thus, presents an anti-colonial, ecological discourse to counter the imperial discourse of development which is regarded as one of the newly emerging faces of colonization. The western process of development, in this context, is seen as a new form of imperial expansion through which the colonial powers attempt to dominate the marginalized, indigenous peoples and exploit their natural resources including forests, lands and water resources under the pretext of supporting the local indigenes and preserving their environment. The colonial regimes, thus, hide their capitalistic, imperial enterprises claiming that their aim is to modernize the developing countries by offering them technical and economic support to achieve

progress and prosperity. Their real aim, however, is to dominate these third world countries through propagating the false claim that their western economic and political systems and ethical values are the ideal ones and, thus, should prevail in these developing countries.

The inevitable result of such western dominance is the emergence of a new style of colonization which causes people's lack of freedom and justice and the degradation of their environment. Hence, Huggan and Tiffin's ecopostcolonial discourse resists such colonial expansion and advocates the indigenous people's rights of having control over their own natural and ecological resources. It also exposes the flagrant, abusive measures practiced by the colonial powers under the name of development against both the indigenous, colonized peoples and their natural environment. In addition, the ecopostcolonial discourse examines the imperial process of the so-called development from the perspective of the colonizers themselves and analyzes their justification for adopting such an imperially oriented discourse. It, then, proceeds with a reasonable refutation to this imperial discourse of development by clarifying its devastating impact on the environment of colonized communities.

Moreover, Huggan and Tiffin's (2015, 98-148) ecopostcolonial theory introduces a thorough investigation of the colonial discourse of land entitlement. According to such a discourse, the imperial powers claim their legal right to possess a colonized land on the grounds that they impose a fait accompli policy of imperial expansion. To refute these imperial claims of land entitlement, Huggan and Tiffin advocate the emotional sense of belonging and close attachment to land as an appropriate anti-colonial discourse which is more powerful and more plausible than merely claiming the legal possession of the indigenes' land. They make it clear that the colonizer's

entitlement to a place does not necessarily mean that he has a real sense of belonging or a feeling of attachment to it. This is simply because inhabiting a place and acquiring a sense of place is not just a matter of legal entitlement or ownership. This is why the colonial powers often create a false historical narrative of belonging to justify their colonization of the indigenous people's land. However, their narrative fails them due to the fact that they absolutely lack the sense of familiarity with their natural environment. Such familiarity is gained through a sense of deep rootedness and strong, emotional attachment to a specific place. Thus, according to Huggan and Tiffin's theory, land as an environmental concept is approached within the colonial discourse as a material commodity and physical space to be possessed and occupied. Within the postcolonial, ecocritical discourse, on the other hand, the concept of land is emotionally and ethically approached as an intimate source of rootedness and belonging. These emotional feelings of belonging and attachment reveal the sort of intimate relationship there should be between the indigenous people and their natural environment.

The second part of Huggan and Tiffin's (2015, 149-223) theory is wholly devoted to the analysis of the imperial powers' exploitation and slaughter of animals in colonized countries and, as a result, distort the imbalance of the ecosystem. Huggan and Tiffin use here the zoo-critical, postcolonial approach to discuss such concepts as cannibalism and carnivorousness. The discussion of such concepts obviously reflects the flagrant violations and degradation of the animal kingdom in colonized communities. Huggan and Tiffin, in this sense, adopt a dual approach to their postcolonial, ecocritical theory in which a postcolonial, zoo-critical discourse runs parallel to a postcolonial, environmental discourse. This duality of approach effectively produces a unified ecopostcolonial discourse which forcefully manages to reflect the intricate web of mutual

interactions between the environment and its local, indigenous inhabitants.

In their article "Green Postcolonialism," Huggan and Tiffin (2007, 1-11) discuss the concept of 'greening' the postcolonial approach. According to Huggan and Tiffin (2007, 9-10), the term 'green postcolonialism' does not have a clear-cut, consistent definition. This is simply because it engages different forms which are continually adapted to face the emerging threats of the colonial regimes against the indigenes' environments whether economically, socially, politically or ethically. Huggan and Tiffin, in this sense, discuss green postcolonialism in terms of producing an anti-colonial, ecocritical discourse which advocates an ethically non-transgressive treatment of the indigenous environment with all its ecological entities.

Moreover, Huggan and Tiffin show how the western colonization of third world countries badly affects not only the indigenous people who are dispossessed, displaced and marginalized, but their environment as well. The indigenous people's environment is badly damaged in such a way that their natural resources are consumed and exhausted, their rich cultivated lands are transformed into barren moors and deserts, and their dense woodlands are deforested. All these negative environmental changes are part of a western imperial policy of hegemony and domination. According to this policy, the imperial powers colonize the lands of the indigenous people and exploit their natural resources and raw materials for the capitalist purpose of economic gains under the false promise of achieving progress and implementing global economic development programs in these colonized countries. Such an imperial policy results in the marginalization of indigenous people, who experience severe deprivation and starvation. It also leads to the destruction of their flora, fauna and lands which are ravaged and deliberately impoverished.

After the exploitation and depletion of the indigenes' natural resources, the imperial regimes resort to a different method of domination which takes the form of environmental preservation. What is distinctly remarkable about this new method of western hegemony is the shift of focus from the human world of the helpless, colonized indigenes to the non-human world of animals, plants and land, or from the anthropocentric attitude to the ecocentric approach. The alleged western campaigns of preserving the indigenous environment are targeted at the most productive areas, the richest territories and the most fertile lands. The aim is to capture these natural treasures in addition to the marginalization and exclusion of the poor indigenes whose problems of poverty and dispossession are further aggravated. These imperial measures reveal the colonizers' brutality and antagonism towards the indigenous peoples and their uncaring attitude towards their environment. They, in consequence, make a chasm in the harmonious relationship between the indigenes and the whole local environment including lands, forests, plants and animals.

The main reason for the indigenes' suffering, Huggan and Tiffin (2007, 6-7) argue, is the imperial, philosophical principle of categorizing environmental entities. According to this principle, the imperial powers categorize all the elements of the colonized environment in terms of priority. From the perspective of these imperial powers, there are basically two categories: the human and the non-human. The human species refer to the civilized people of the western world, whereas the non-human species include all that is uncivilized and primitive in the colonized countries including wild animals and the primitive, indigenous people themselves who are destined to fall victims of this severe prioritizing process. The indigenous people, in this sense, are displaced or murdered to save the other more needed aspects of the environment, including land, flora and fauna, from

the grip of primitive, uncivilized species, and to facilitate their management by a more civilized, imperial regime. Hence, it is the main task of the green postcolonial approach to address such crucial issues and raise awareness about these imperial transgressions which clearly disclose the injustice of the imperial powers towards the colonized environments and which will certainly create ecological crises.

In her article "Ecocriticism and Postcolonial Studies," Banerjee (2016, 194-207) investigates the colonial, hegemonic discourse which regards the colonized land as the key target of imperial enterprises. By using the ecopostcolonial approach, Banerjee discloses the imperial powers' policy of colonial expansion, exploitation and occupation of the indigenes' lands under the pretext of developing, modernizing and improving the conditions of primitive, nomadic life on these lands. The postcolonial, ecocritical approach, in this respect, advocates the ethical value of the indigenes' land, not as a commodity to be exploited or consumed, but as a cultural, historical, social and political entity with whom the indigenous people are identified.

Furthermore, in her exploration of the areas where postcolonialism and ecocriticism converge, Banerjee (2016, 196) introduces the ecopostcolonial concept of land-as-witness. According to this concept, indigenous lands bear witness to the colonizers' cruelty and the desolation and destruction of the colonized communities socially, economically, environmentally and culturally. This concept of land-as-witness serves to shift the focus of postcolonialism from being only concerned with the anthropocentric world of humans to a balanced focus on the ecocentric world of both humans and non-humans. By analyzing this unique conception of land-as-witness and by showing its relevance to the ecopostcolonial context, Banerjee distinctly manages to produce a postcolonial, ecocritical discourse of rejection which denounces the material exploitation of

indigenous lands and the exhaustion of native natural resources. It is, simultaneously, a discourse of condemnation of the new forms of colonization, such as biopiracy, which negatively affect indigenous environments and destroy them entirely.

Samih Al-Qasim as a Poet of the Palestinian Land:

The concept of land, both as a physical reality and metaphorical icon, finds its perfect poetic expression in the poetry of Samih Al-Qasim. Al-Qasim, as a Palestinian poet of resistance, is well aware of the reciprocal relationship between the Palestinians and their land and how they regard their land literally and metaphorically as the basic source of their survival and sustenance. His poetry, therefore, is shaped by the ecopostcolonial discourse of land resistance to occupation. In other words, Al-Qasim in his poetry aptly articulates the Palestinian national feeling of attachment to the land with its fig, olive and orange trees as well as their celebration of the cultural and historical heritage of their land and, consequently, their adamant resistance to its occupation and exploitation. Significantly, Al-Qasim, as Mir (2013, 110) asserts, employs the concept of land to address his poetic major concerns including national identity formation, imperial oppression and Palestinian resistance.

Unlike Palestinian poets in the diaspora, Al-Qasim, throughout his poetic career, remained in Palestine particularly after the catastrophe of 1948 and the fall of the Palestinian land under Israeli occupation. Hence, he directly experienced the suffering of his people and the oppressive measures imposed upon them including living under house arrests, land confiscation, dispossession and expulsion in addition to the ravaging and destruction of the land and the uprooting of trees. Accordingly, Al-Qasim's poetry is an actual reflection of the sociopolitical realities of the Palestinian colonial experience. Furthermore, his poetry comes as a direct poetic response to his

unwavering commitment to the Palestinian cause and his inner desire for resisting the occupation's crimes of violence, marginalization and repression. It also comes as a result of his realization of the need to stress the Arab identity of the Palestinian homeland and disclose the occupation's attempts to erase the map of Palestine and falsify its history for the sake of Judaizing its land. What follows, then, is an exploration of Al-Qasim's different conceptions of land as manifested in his eco-resistance poetry. The poet's conceptions of his Palestinian land unquestionably form an essential part of his poetic discourse which, by implication, counters the occupiers' colonial discourse of land entitlement.

The Conception of Land as a Source of Belonging:

The Palestinian homeland is well known for its deeply rooted, Arabic heritage and its ancient civilization since the Canaanites. It is the land of religions and prophets. It, thus, acquires special significance as it is regarded as an important religious, cultural and historical center. Part of the uniqueness of the Palestinian homeland are the Palestinians themselves who have a national and Arab identity. They acquire such identity from their attachment to the land.

Samih Al-Qasim imparts this sense of belonging to the land in his poetry. His poems explore the Palestinians' celebration of their identification with the land by relying on its soil in their life. The poems also depict how the Palestinians enjoy its distinctive fruits especially the olives, oranges, almonds and figs and how they also enjoy its Arabic coffee and Palestinian bread. In addition, they describe how they are fond of wandering its streets and working in its orchards. Al-Qasim, as Abu Jaber and Igbaria (2017, 2337) rightly observe, is always referring in his poems to the Palestinian land with all its fields, villages, cities and even prisons to show that such elements are not merely physical spaces. Rather, they are significantly engraved in the

minds of all Palestinians who are devoted in their belonging to their homeland. The poems' focus on the common details of the Palestinians' daily life, therefore, increasingly intensifies their sense of belonging and attachment to their homeland.

Samih Al-Qasim, as a Palestinian citizen who continues to live in Palestine even under occupation, skillfully articulates this sense of belonging in a number of poems (see Appendix). In his short poem "Upright I walk," for instance, Al-Qasim explores how the Palestinian's identity is formed in relation to his land:

Upright I walk . . .

Head high I walk

An olive branch in my hand (Al-Qasim 2015a, 44).

The poem starts with the poetic persona celebrating his sense of belonging to the Palestinian land. As a Palestinian Arab, the persona's rootedness in this holy land brings him not only feelings of delight and glamour but, more importantly, a glorious sense of sublimity. All these positively intensified feelings are foregrounded in the opening two lines by using words which carry the Arabic connotations of pride and celebration of national identity. The persona communicates this meaning by referring to walking "upright" which is meant to signify his feelings of pride and dignity due to belonging to the holy land of his ancestors. He reiterates these feelings by emphasizing his manner of walking this time with "head high" (Al-Qasim 2015a, 44). This expression imparts a sense of elevation, loftiness and honour thanks to his strong attachment to his land and his kinship with its people. The persona's assertion of this real sense of belonging is increasingly reinforced by the use of the refrain "I walk" (Al-Qasim 2015a, 44) in addition to the use of the possessive adjective 'my' as in "my shoulders," "my coffin," "my heart" and "my lips" (Al-Qasim 2015a, 44). The persona reveals his deep emotional attachment to his ancestral land by accentuating his willingness to sacrifice himself and die for the sake of his homeland. His

description of how he is carrying his "coffin on his shoulder" (Al-Qasim 2015a, 44) and the comparison of his heart to a red, blood moon evoke his readiness to defend his land and die for its sake.

The persona's strong determination to remain entirely devoted to his land is articulated through the use of such definitive statements as "Head high I walk" which use the simple present tense to indicate his unwavering steadfastness toward his homeland. Part of his devotion to land is a sense of commitment to secure peace and prosperity for the land as indicated in his description of holding "an olive branch" (Al-Qasim 2015a, 44) in his hand. This implies that he is ready to serve his country both in time of peace and in time of adversity. This meaning is augmented by comparing his heart to a garden full of "box thorns" and "basils" (Al-Qasim 2015a, 44). Such a comparison signifies that the persona reaches full identification with his land by implicitly declaring his ability to protect the land and resist its occupation and his determination to restore its security and prosperity. This powerful sense of dedication and resolution is derived from his deep rootedness in the land.

Furthermore, the persona's sense of devotion is ultimately stressed by using a metaphor: "My lips a sky raining / Fire at times, love always" (Al-Qasim 2015a, 44). The persona compares his own lips to a stormy sky which is found to be firing in time of war and loving in time of peace. This metaphor refers to the poet's production of poems of resistance and poems of celebration of belonging to land. What is discernable about the land throughout the lines is the idea that it provides its people with a sense of peacefulness and serenity through its olive orchards, fragrant plants and beautiful gardens of colorful flowers. What is more remarkable throughout the lines is the persona's emphatic use of his body parts including "hand," "shoulders," "heart" and "lips" (Al-Qasim 2015a, 44). These body parts are positively associated with his sense of pride,

sacrifice, devotion, love and commitment, both in body and soul, to his land. The positiveness and integrity of the persona's attitude toward his land assert his full identification with the land and impart a real sense of belonging.

Likewise, the concept of land as a source of belonging is foregrounded in Al-Qasim's poem entitled "The Eternal Fire." The poem thematically consists of two parts. The first part introduces a speaker who refers to himself using the third person singular subject pronoun 'he':

He wandered through eternity.
One land casting him into another
He mingled with all people.

Became intimate with their women (Al-Qasim 1982b, 39). The speaker here narrates how he wandered around the world for so many years and travelled to various places and countries either by land, air or sea. The purpose of describing this initial scene of wandering is to introduce the idea of the speaker's quest for freedom, serenity and peace of mind. The speaker also narrates how he met with various people of different nationalities, interacted with them and made various love relationships with many of their women. After gaining all this profitable experience in different countries, the speaker ultimately reaches the conclusion that intimate attachment to land is exactly the same as intimate relationships with all women and all mothers. To his mind, the land-as-mother and the other mothers in the world "are all women" (Al-Qasim 1982b, 39). This definite recognition is employed as a refrain to initiate and conclude the poem's first part.

Why?
Your youth is one thing, my youth quite another
.....
You are a swallow
Bringing spring to me (Al-Qasim 1982b, 341).

In this second part, the speaker starts to explain why his land of origin represents all the women in the world. The land's association with woman is logically presented in the poem. According to Moral (2020, 276), both land and woman are equally represented as a source of fertility, productivity, sustenance, power, dignity and the continuity of life. The poem's persona, thus, immediately shifts to the first person point of view while referring to the numerous merits of his land. He addresses it directly describing the significant role it plays in his life. It represents, for him, a source of hope, power, beauty, vitality and life. He describes the emotional support and sustenance he receives from the land due to its generosity, kindness and gracefulness. He also praises the land's persistence in time of trouble and adversity.

As a result of all the physical and emotional support the persona receives from the land, he declares his close attachment to his land and his full identification with it. He is able to merge his identity with its soil. In other words, he has an indispensable relationship with his land to the extent that he has no separate identity apart from his homeland. In this sense, it is such a strong type of emotional attachment to his land that he can never betray or abandon it. Such a strong attachment to the land is aptly expressed throughout the poem through a number of rhetorical questions: "Are you the miracle? / Am I your two hands? / Can it be that I am nothing but your hands?" (Al-Qasim 1982b, 41-43). These rhetorical questions serve to highlight such a powerful bond between the land and the poem's persona that he regards himself as the hands of the land-as-mother figure. This implies the persona's commitment to free his land from the grip of occupation.

Between your hands I was born, between them I grew and
between
them I was killed, returned, was resurrected

.....
I am the everlasting fuel

And you are my eternal fire! (Al-Qasim 1982b, 41-43).

In these concluding lines, the speaker articulates his appreciation of the land's endless favors in his life. He gives a detailed account of the permanent impact of the land on his life since his birth and early childhood. He elaborately describes what his land represents for him. It represents the figure of the mother who sustains her child through the movements of his life cycle from life to death and back to life by being resurrected. More specifically, the land-as-mother figure aids him in his movement from weakness to powerfulness, from ignorance to enlightenment, from doubt to certitude, from absence to presence, from failure to success, from sadness to happiness, and from adversity to prosperity. In her company, he is able to experience all such transformations during the journey of his life. He ultimately gains experience and develops his identity thanks to her help, guidance, care and moral and physical support without which he becomes utterly nothing.

Hence, the speaker finally concludes the poem by metaphorically comparing his land to an eternal fire and compares himself to the fire's fuel. Comparing land to fire, Muhammad (2021, 107) explains, symbolically represents the speaker's homeland as a life-giving force, a revival of hope, optimism, patriotic fervor and the power of emotional and physical attachment. The poem's speaker, thus, implicitly reveals his full commitment to remain attached to his homeland and defend it against usurpation or confiscation. Moreover, such a metaphorical comparison obviously reflects the reciprocal relationship between the land and its real owner. The comparison also states explicitly the undeniable fact that the speaker's identity is derived from his rootedness in the land and that they both share a common destiny.

Moreover, the poet's sense of belonging to the Palestinian land is evidently articulated in his poem "Clarity":

A simple Arab am I,
And love all nations,
Despite all the pain.

.....
Despite what they heaped on my shoulders (Al-Qasim 2015c, 240).

After recounting the suffering and agony of the Palestinian people as a result of an oppressive colonizing regime, the poem's persona proceeds to focus on his national identity as a Palestinian Arab. The repetition of the word "Arab" (Al-Qasim 2015c, 240) in association with the speaker's identity reinforces the unity and solidarity of the Arab world. The speaker's outright declaration that he is simply an Arab reveals a sense of pride in his Arab and national background. He defiantly shows that the Palestinians have an identity and a distinctive history of their own.

This certainly negates the Israeli narrative, revealed by Shutek (2013, 22), which regards the Palestinian land as a land without people and, simultaneously, allows the Israeli colonizers to claim entitlement to the land. The speaker also depicts the Palestinian personality as being modest, loving and peace seeker. Such qualities provide enough evidence that the Palestinians are a civilized nation. Yet, they are suffering the terrible shackles of occupation. More specifically, they suffer the loss of freedom and justice. They also suffer marginalization, exploitation, oppression and deprivation. As a result of the occupation's coercive practices, the Palestinians are violently attacked and victimized by occupation forces. Their houses are always ruined, their lands confiscated, and their resources usurped. In addition, they suffer isolation, detention, imprisonment, house arrests and expulsion. They, ultimately, realize that, under occupation, their prosperous life is tragically transformed into an intolerable nightmare.

Regardless of all such oppression and adversity, the Palestinians have one common target for which they defiantly struggle. Their target is to remain attached to their land. They struggle to defend their right of living and dying on their land. This is their life-long struggle for achieving self-determination. Nothing can dissuade them from seeking their freedom and living independently. The speaker's attitude of defiance is obviously imparted through the use of declarative statements such as "My homeland is my own / My residence is here" (Al-Qasim 2015c, 241). Such statements imply the Palestinians' commitment to remain attached to the land and their strong determination to resist any colonial attempt of uprooting them. They, thus, set a global model of steadfastness, solidarity and resourcefulness in defending their land.

In a similar vein, Al-Qasim's poem "End of a Talk with a Jailer" introduces an imprisoned speaker who, in spite of his confinement, feels emotionally empowered to stand the hard conditions of his imprisonment:

From the narrow window of my small cell,
I see trees that are smiling at me

.....
I can see your big cell! (Al-Qasim 2006a, 145)

The speaker here describes how the prison's cell, through its small window, allows him to identify not only with the prison's surrounding area including the wilderness, the bushes and the rooftops and windows of houses but the whole country as well. All such physical aspects of the environment certainly contribute to the speaker's emotional empowerment and close attachment to his homeland. The bushes outside his cell particularly give him a charming sense of delight and hope for the future. The houses' rooftops significantly represent a powerful source of emotional support and encouragement to persist in resisting the horrible reality of his imprisonment. Even the windows of the houses are

passionately longing for the speaker's release from jail to liberate his homeland from the shackles of occupation.

In this one-stanza poem, the poet uses a vigorous visual image to reveal his intimate sense of oneness with the land and its surrounding landscape. He visualizes the whole landscape outside his prison cell including trees, houses and people themselves. What intensifies the poet's sense of unification with all such items of the landscape is his use of personification. He personifies trees as "smiling" people and windows as women who are "weeping and praying" (Al-Qasim 2006a, 145) for the release of the speaker. The overall impression the poet effectively manages to impart throughout the lines is the image of the land as a mother tending the speaker and kindly supporting him in his adversity.

Furthermore, the elements of the poem's setting both inside and outside the speaker's cell are symbolically employed to evoke his yearning for the liberation of his homeland. More specifically, the houses' rooftops and the windows, as Masood (2022c, 16) puts it, are symbols of freedom, optimism and hope for creating a bright future for the speaker's homeland. The speaker, thus, fully identifies with the land and all its surrounding landscape including both the inside and outside of the prison cell. In addition, he imparts a nostalgic sense in the articulation of identification with and belonging to his ancestral land. In his relationship to his homeland, the speaker is assigned the role of a victimized hero who metaphorically represents the symbol of liberation for whom the windows cry. He also plays the role of the savior who is supposed to come and restore his occupied homeland from the grip of the colonizers.

Throughout the lines, the poem's persona is exploring the nature of his identification with the small details of his native setting while he is in jail. He is physically imprisoned by being confined within the limited space of a "small cell" (Al-Qasim

2006a, 145). Yet, he is spiritually and emotionally free. This gives him the delightful feeling of being emotionally nourished and hopefully enthusiastic when he comes into union with the elements of his native landscape. What is surprisingly ironic here, as Palattella (2007, 33) argues, is the fact that the speaker's homeland as a whole is metaphorically turned, under occupation, into a large prison cell and all the Palestinians become prisoners. This is simply because all are deprived of their freedom and all are violently exposed to torture, repression and displacement.

In the poem's last two lines, in particular, the speaker, as Thomas (2015, 245) comments, compares the emotional and intellectual freedom he enjoys in his prison to the other Palestinians' seemingly physical release from the confinement of prison cells. He, thus, ironically possesses in his real prison what others miserably lack in their metaphorical prison, i.e. emotional and mental freedom. In this sense, the poem's persona, as Hoffman (2014, 167) rightly observes, is able to transcend the limited space of his prison cell and he emotionally identifies with the harsh life of his people. The other Palestinians, though free from the confinement of a prison cell, similarly suffer the same pains and agony of the repressive treatment they all receive at the hands of their oppressive occupiers. Consequently, their homeland is transformed, under the impact of an aggressive occupation, into a large prison cell. Their situation is, thus, more pathetic and more deplorable than the speaker's. The speaker himself, who is locked up inside a prison cell, sympathizes with them and feels pity for their plight.

Similarly, in a short poem entitled "The Clock," Al-Qasim illustrates how the Palestinians' emotional attachment to their land invigorates their power of resistance to occupation. He also reveals how the Palestinians are totally identified with their land and how their sublime feelings of unification with the land is deeply rooted and can never be changed. The poet imparts these

elevated feelings of emotional attachment to the land by describing a horrible scene of devastation, desolation and bleakness.

This poem, which consists of one stanza, gives a very concise, but accurate, account of the aftermath of one of the occupation's aggressive air raids on the speaker's city:

Our own neighborhood was demolished,
The street fell,

.....
My house crumbled to ruins,

Even the wall fell (Al-Qasim 1992, 254).

The poem's concise image of the city's total destruction discloses how savage and barbarous the Israeli occupiers are when resorting to violent attacks in order to subjugate and terrorize the innocent Palestinians. Throughout the lines, the poem's persona reveals his complete identification with his land and his people by the repeated use of the personal possessive adjectives 'my' and 'our' as is clearly seen in "My city," "my house" and "our own neighborhood" (Al-Qasim 1992, 254). This sense of total identification increasingly reinforces the poem's idea of solidarity and unification that is prevalent throughout.

On the other hand, the tragic scenes of the large-scale destruction and extermination shed light on the occupation's systematic campaigns of genocide and ethnic cleansing against the armless, innocent indigenes. The consequences of such terrible crimes are perfectly imparted through the use of a whole visual image. In this image the speaker's city collapse entirely. All the city's neighborhoods are completely destroyed. All the streets and houses are demolished. Even the speaker's house and its walls ultimately come to ruins. What only remains amid all this destruction is the speaker's clock which keeps ticking. This auditory image of the ticking clock gives a glimmer of hope amid all the darkness and desperation of the scene.

What is significantly noticeable about the description of devastation in this poem is the fact that Al-Qasim employs the concept of land in its broad sense to include all the aspects of the Palestinian setting. It, thus, includes cities, villages, districts, roads, streets, and houses. It also includes even the smallest physical particulars of the environment such as the walls of houses and the small items and gadgets found inside houses such as clocks. Such small items have great symbolic significance that serves the poet's own purpose in the poem. In other words, the small, particular details of the Palestinian setting, of which the clock is just an example, stand for the land's sustainability. They indicate that the land is able to stand all acts of ruin, destruction and devastation. The clock, in particular, as Masood (2022a, 556) points out, symbolizes the cultural and historical value of the Palestinian land. The Palestinian land, in this sense, is shown to be a land of resistance which implicitly provides an emotional support to the Palestinian people.

Regardless of the state of devastation and the entire collapse of houses, streets and neighborhoods, the clock, particularly in its continuous ticking, stands for survival and persistence in resisting the aggressive attacks of merciless occupiers. The clock is also a record of all the past and present crimes of occupation. Its non-stop movement with its continuous sound of ticking represents the continuity of Palestinian life regardless of what happens to the land and its real owners. The Palestinian people, who are the native inhabitants of the land, derive their inner power of resistance from the persistence of their land as symbolized by the ticking clock.

The Conception of Land as a Witness to Devastation, Desolation and Suffering:

The Palestinian land stands as a witness to the state of devastation and destruction that prevails throughout the Palestinian territories. It also bears witness to the harsh realities

of life the Palestinian people painfully experience under the Israeli illegitimate occupation. Those Palestinian who still inhabit the occupied cities and villages inside Palestine are leading a life of adversity. They daily experience ferocious military attacks and air strikes by their colonizers resulting in the collapse of their houses, schools and hospitals. They also experience the falling of entire villages, cities and neighborhoods into ruin. In addition to this, these innocent Palestinians suffer repeated imprisonments, and house arrests. Their territories are always surrounded by several checkpoints, fences and road blocks. Such barriers cause the painful separation of many Palestinians from their own lands, their relatives and regional utilities. What is more upsetting for them is the replacement of their ruined cities and villages with new Jewish settlements and military camps.

In his poetry, Samih Al-Qasim depicts the suffering and adversity of the Palestinian people whose hometowns and villages are ravaged and entirely destroyed. His poems clearly show how the Palestinians are marginalized and how the simplest of their human rights are neglected by an unjust military, imperial regime. His poems also depict how various Palestinian territories witness acts of violence and massacres committed by the Israeli soldiers such as the massacres in Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, Deir Yassin and Kafr Qasim. Moreover, Al-Qasim's poetry renders a full account of the degradation of the Palestinian land, its confiscation and entire destruction. It also sheds light on the criminal acts of looting and plundering committed by the aggressive occupiers.

Images of ruin and desolation are, thus, repeatedly evoked in Al-Qasim's poetry. These images explicitly reflect the deteriorating conditions of the Palestinians' life on their land as a result of an oppressive occupation. Such scenes of destruction and desolation are best illustrated in Al-Qasim's poem titled

"Rafah's Children." The poem, which consists of two stanzas, gives a historical account of the ferocious atrocities committed by the Israeli colonizers when they marched to occupy Gaza Strip including the city of Rafah in 1967. This scene of invasion is recurrently happening not only in Rafah but also in all the Palestinian territories causing devastation and massacres. By addressing the Israeli cruel invaders, the poem's persona denounces their violent aggression and discloses their brutal crimes against the people of Rafah, particularly the innocent children.

To the one who digs his path through the wounds of millions
To he whose tanks crush all the roses in the garden
Who breaks windows in the night
Who sets fire to a garden and museum and sings of freedom (Al-Qasim 2014, Sep. 2b).

In this opening stanza, the poet gives a detailed description of the invasion scene in Rafah. It depicts how the Israeli soldiers are marching with their military machines through the city streets. With their marching, escalation and violence increase and the inevitable result is the falling of more Palestinian martyrs and wounded victims. The peacefulness of the environment itself is sadly disrupted and the land with all its surroundings is damaged. An inevitable, tragic sense of desolateness is created by describing the horrible scene of the occupation tanks crushing all the roses in the garden. The aggressive occupiers not only allow themselves to usurp the land and displace or kill its people but kill the beauty of nature as well. It is obviously a fierce war of extermination against the natural setting and its inhabitants including humans and non-humans. Destruction and ruin prevail in such a horrible scene.

Furthermore, the crimes of the violent usurpers of Palestinian land are developed into deliberate acts of looting and plundering

throughout the cities they attack. They "break windows in the night" (Al-Qasim 2014, Sep. 2b). They disturb the Palestinians' peaceful life and cause panic and disorder among the innocent inhabitants. They follow a criminal plan of aggressive attacks against millions of innocent victims who stay peacefully at home. These horrible crimes are intensified by the darkness of the scene of breaking into Palestinian houses to kill, loot and destroy. Such a terrible scene reveals the severity and barbarity of the occupation. Additionally, the occupation's criminal acts of destruction are targeted at both the natural settings and the cultural heritage of all the Palestinian cities. This is clearly palpable through the scene of "setting fires to gardens and museums" (Al-Qasim 2014, Sep. 2b) throughout the cities. These are the heinous crimes of savage barbarians who deliberately attempt to erase all the tangible signs of civilization on the occupied land. These occupiers also attempt to obliterate the cultural history of Palestine to impose their own falsified historical narrative and force the colonized Palestinians to accept their painful reality.

What adds to the bitterness and darkness of the scene is the dropping of bombs by the occupation's warplanes on the millions of Palestinian victims. This war-like scene is completed by the planes "smashing rainbows in the sky" (Al-Qasim 2014, Sep. 2b). This scene of military invasion, as a whole, is carefully evoked throughout the lines by describing the sound of devastating "bombs," the sights of "gardens and museums" (Al-Qasim 2014, Sep. 2b) on fire and the sights of the wounded victims. It is finally evoked by describing the marching of the invaders who break into Palestinian houses and the marching of their tanks which smash everything in nature. The vividness of this military scene obviously reveals the fact that these criminal deeds committed by the occupation is not merely a defensive

attack to provide peace and security but a comprehensive war of extermination against the innocent Palestinian people.

What intensifies the persona's sense of bitterness is the ironic contrast between the occupiers' criminal acts of murder, destruction and looting on the one hand and their singing of peace and liberty on the other. What is more ironic still is the image of the Palestinian victims who are wounded and whose roses and gardens are crushed. Part of this horrible image are the Palestinians' houses and museums which are destroyed and the dreams of their innocent children which are turned into nightmares. Such a tragic image stands in sharp contrast to the image of the cruel invaders who storm the cities killing and wounding civilians, destroying houses, looting, throwing bombs, setting fires everywhere and impoverishing the land and its inhabitants. Such criminal deeds can never be peaceful acts of freedom as the occupiers claim.

What is specifically remarkable, indeed, throughout the lines of the first stanza, is the fact that the poet does not refer to the specific location of this military operation. This simply signifies that the poet is emotionally identifying with all the Palestinian victims in all the cities and villages of Palestine. It also implies that the brutality of the Israeli occupiers and their criminal acts are not restricted to one specific part in Palestine. The occupiers, rather, commit disastrous crimes and massacres everywhere on the land of Palestine and, thus, disrupt the peaceful lives of innocent people.

Likewise, Al-Qasim's "Sadder Than Water," as the title suggests, is a pathetically melancholic poem which explores the feelings of agony and distress of the Palestinian people. The poem in its entirety mainly depicts several disastrous scenes of the Palestinians' suffering under an oppressive occupation. Such catastrophic scenes attentively focus on how the Palestinians experience life hardships and adversity and how they are

helplessly exposed to mass torture, killings and collective punishment.

The poem's first five stanzas, in particular, describe scenes of the Palestinians' displacement, expulsion, dispossession and exile. In addition, they recount how Palestinian history and heritage are falsified and distorted and how the Palestinians' attachment to their land is replaced by the Israeli imperial narrative of legal entitlement to the land. Legal entitlement, however, according to Huggan and Tiffin's (2015, 98) ecopostcolonial theory, does not entail a sense of rootedness in the land or emotional belonging to it. The poem's opening scenes also show how the Palestinians are ultimately forced to lose touch with their national and Arab identities. The land, in such scenes, bears witness to all the violations and abusive practices committed by the brutal occupation forces against the Palestinian people, thus, depriving them of their freedom and worsening their tragic conditions.

The poem is addressed to the victimized Palestinians who feel melancholy over the destruction of their land and the absence of all the aspects of a civilized life on their land. Throughout the lines, the poet is primarily committed to reveal the tragic reality the innocent Palestinians experience on a daily basis. The poem is, thus, replete with scenes of suffering and despair. Unquestionably, these scenes excite the Palestinians' feelings of indignation, apprehension and depression due to the entire destruction of their homeland. The Palestinian people have nothing to sustain their life and are facing a real tragedy. The dark atmosphere of bareness, bleakness and desolation, in this sense, dominates throughout the lines.

From the very beginning of the poem, the poet creates an atmosphere of melancholy, darkness and utter despair:

Sadder than water,
in death's wonder

you've distanced yourself from this land.
Sadder than water
and stronger by far than the wind,
longing for a moment to drowse,
alone. And crowded by millions
behind their darkened windows (Al-Qasim 2006c, 111).

The poet skillfully manages to convey this gloomy atmosphere by using such words as "death," "longing", "drowse" and "darkened" in addition to the repetitive phrase "sadder than water" (Al-Qasim 2006c, 111) which is used as the poem's refrain. There is also a prevalent passive mood of frustration and total detachment which is revealed in his use of words such as "distanced yourself" (Al-Qasim 2006c, 111). Both the dark atmosphere and gloomy mood, thus, furnish the poem with tragic scenes that are sweeping throughout the lines. In the second stanza, the poet focuses on what makes the Palestinians' life irritatingly troubled and unstable. It is the sense of aloofness and isolation of the whole Palestinian nation that is most upsetting for the Palestinians. Though they are fully committed and devoted to defend their land, they are tragically faced with an inevitable sense of nothingness and uselessness of all the things around them including their land and their life itself. Their life, in this sense, becomes intolerable and unavoidably catastrophic.

You were born, your cradle the land of religions.
.....
.... Your soul will dwell, a bird
migrating in summer,
in winter returning to die a new death.
And the tear gas canisters exploding
will lend your coming dance its rhythm (Al-Qasim 2006c, 113).

In this third stanza, the speaker nostalgically recounts how the Palestinian land is originally the land of religions and the birthplace of Christ. Then he describes how this land is now

desolate and barren under occupation. He also describes how the Palestinian people, whose properties are entirely ravaged, remain helplessly prone to the Israeli occupiers' aggressive invasion and excessive violence. What increasingly intensifies the Palestinians' melancholy and frustration are the occupation's coercive measures such as confiscating their lands, demolishing their houses, ravaging their orchards and isolating them by setting up barriers, blockades and road closures. The Israeli occupation's practice of such oppression adds to the miserable suffering of the Palestinian people who realize that their inevitable destination is death and the grave. This is simply because they are leading a suffocating life of agony. They desperately experience death in life and their misery is deplorable. Their ordinary life immediately turns into a horrible nightmare under the impact of occupation.

The fourth stanza deals with the long history of Palestinian suffering and struggle:

You strove with stars and the art of gardens,
mastered the theology of conflagration,
toying with your death:

.....

.... The new cracks in the ceiling widen,
the walls of your home know
the faces of shells by heart (Al-Qasim 2006c, 113-115).

These lines portray how generations of the Palestinian people endure in their suffering and how they experience death as a commonly anticipated occurrence in their daily life. Surprisingly, death, for them, is a toy they play with. This metaphor reveals the horrible crimes committed against the Palestinian victims by an oppressive, imperial regime. The stanza is replete with scenes of devastation and destruction. The Palestinian houses' ceilings, for instance, are cracked as a result of Israeli missile attacks. The walls of their houses are targeted by Israeli shells. Palestinian

houses are also bombarded and entirely demolished. In addition, the terrifying sounds of bomb explosions are thunderously heard everywhere on the Palestinian land with the tragic falling of numerous innocent victims. These horrifying scenes of desolation obviously show that the Israeli occupation's heinous war crimes are so countless that they form an endless cycle of violence and bloodshed. These horrible war crimes logically lead to massacres and genocides.

How can you gather the dates of your dead
along the homeland's misty roads?
Or take into your arms
the body of your sleeping girl? (Al-Qasim 2006c, 115)

These concluding lines concisely describe the violent scene of a bloody massacre in which corpses of dead bodies are scattered everywhere along the roads. There is also the tragic scene of a helpless Palestinian father who is pathetically carrying his slaughtered daughter in his arms. This concluding scene distinctly embodies the barbarity and savagery of the inhumane occupation forces. The fifth stanza brings into focus the negative impact of the occupation's imperial practices on the Palestinian land and the Palestinians themselves. The Palestinian land becomes disastrously barren and its people pathetically suffer poverty. They tragically lack the real sources of sustenance and survival in their life. There is an appalling sense of tragedy due to the lack of safety, peace and hominess. What is only left for those victimized Palestinians are the feelings of loss, despair and utter dejection. Such negative feelings are desperately caused by the suppressive policy of a merciless regime. Within this bleak context of suppression and cruelty, Israeli occupation troops are eliminating the innocent Palestinians by following a starvation-to-death policy and by impoverishing their land, exploiting their resources and forcing them to live in refugee camps. In

consequence, the Palestinian people suffer oppression and injustice.

In "Story of a City" Al-Qasim is concerned with the tremendous change that has occurred in a city under occupation. He describes the negative impact of occupation on his hometown:

There was a blue city
That dreamt of foreigners
.....
It has become a black city
That despises foreigners (Al-Qasim 2006b, 55).

The poet uses juxtaposition throughout the lines to present two contrasted images of the same city: an earlier image of the free, prosperous city and a latter image of the city under occupation. There is a huge gap between the earlier image and the latter image of the city. Before the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian city is depicted as a peaceful, attractive city. Its charm, beautiful sceneries and sightseeing activities appealed much to tourists who came from all the corners of the world to visit it. It was, thus, a very important touristic and shopping center in the whole region where tourists and visitors came to spend their vacations, visit sacred places and spend their money in shopping. It was also a significant religious and cultural center which attracted people of the three main religions. This religious appeal is derived from its various sacred locations including, for instance, Al Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, the church of the Holy Sepulcher, the church of the Nativity, and the Temple Mount. It was, thus, a prosperous city whose religious and tourist sites became the main source of income for the Palestinians.

In contrast, since the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian land has lost its brightness and attractiveness and has immediately turned into darkness and bleakness. The beautiful sceneries have become tomb-like places where every spot of the land has been

smearred with blood and has witnessed daily violence and the fall of victims. The speaker's city has already lost its sense of touristic appeal and has no longer been visited by tourists or pilgrims. Instead of tourists who used to make tours around the city shopping and going sightseeing, there are horrible occupation soldiers who kill people, destroy properties and go looting, plundering and, thus, robbing the city of its charming beauty. They disturb the city's peacefulness and create an atmosphere of chaos and insecurity. In addition, they terrorize the people by invading cities and raiding Palestinian homes and cafes. The land, according to Banerjee's (2016, 196) postcolonial, ecocritical concept of land witnessing, plays the role of the unmuted witness to all the crimes and atrocities committed by the violent colonizers not only against the indigenous people but also against the environment itself. The horrible visual image of the merciless occupation troops pointing "their rifles' muzzles" (Al-Qasim 2006b, 55) at the peaceful, innocent Palestinians is quite enough to show how violent and repressive the occupation forces are. The Palestinian cities, as a result, have lost their peacefulness, security and prosperity. The Palestinians themselves deeply suffer starvation, homelessness, displacement and, after all, lack of freedom. This is simply why their life has turned into a nightmare.

In this short poem, Al-Qasim depicts two different time periods. The first refers to a glorious, memorable past of a happy, flourishing life. The second refers to a horrible present reality of a frustrating life lived under the shackles of occupation. The Palestinian land bears witness to such a miserable transformation from the glorious past to the shameful present. The land itself is damaged due to its transformation from a sacred land of religions and a natural landscape of beauty to an occupied land of massacres and bloodshed. The land, thus, falls a helpless victim in the hands of its merciless occupiers who burn its fields,

destroy its orchards, demolish its buildings and eradicate its people. Those inhumane occupiers are able to change the Palestinians' life from a peaceful, glamorous life to a real nightmare. They are also able to transform the people themselves from hopeful, promising young people to homeless, exiled victims. In a word, the Israeli occupation manages to make the Palestinians' life on such an occupied land intolerable and doomed to frustration and hopelessness.

In short, Al-Qasim, as can be seen throughout the lines, renders a realistic description of the tragic dilemma of his homeland. He also deplors the misery and agony that pervade the life of all the Palestinians who still remain inside their homeland. Additionally, the poet manages, in a very concise, one-stanza poem, to tell the accurate story of how the Palestinian city was like in the past and how it is like at present. The anonymous city described throughout does not refer to one specific city in Palestine. It is, rather, representative of the whole Palestinian occupied land which is still ravaged and destroyed, but is never deserted by its people who still resist the occupation and endure their suffering and pains. The land, hence, bears witness to all their suffering and distress and remains a reliable source of documenting the occupiers' violent crimes and transgressions.

Another illustration of the conception of land-as-witness is clearly shown in Al-Qasim's five-stanza poem entitled "A Homeland." The poem's speaker is an anonymous Palestinian who pathetically describes catastrophic scenes of the deteriorating conditions of his homeland and his people under occupation. Each of the five stanzas starts with the speaker's exclamation "So what!" (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59-61) to signify that the occupation's policy of eradicating the indigenous people and exploiting their land brings nothing but death and destruction. This exclamation is aptly used to reflect the poet's reaction to the

occupation's crimes and violent practices. The speaker's exclamation conveys the message that the occupation of his homeland is the most disastrous tragedy and that all the other ensuing catastrophes are expected consequences of the tragedy. Each stanza is devoted to describing a pathetic scene of the devastating conditions of the Palestinian land and the Palestinian people themselves.

The sparrow dies of starvation,
In exile, without a shroud,

While the earthworm is satiated (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59).

This deplorable scene of the first stanza describes how the land is deliberately impoverished and looted by the brutal occupation forces. Consequently, the Palestinian people suffer severe starvation and poverty. Their land is entirely ravaged and their properties are plundered. They, as a result, become homeless. They either live in refugee camps or in exile. They suffer displacement, dispossession and dispersion.

The Palestinian land and its people, thus, experience a state of total deprivation. The Palestinians themselves have nothing to sustain them in life, and in death they have no shrouds. As a result of the occupation, the Palestinian land suffers a perverse situation which causes the starvation and death of singing birds and allows "earthworms" to "devour God's food" and feel "satiated" (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59). The stanza's main scene of suffering and helplessness is concisely imparted through the juxtaposition of two metaphors. The first compares the Palestinian people who suffer starvation and adversity to dying sparrows. The second metaphor compares the Israeli occupiers who ravage the land to gluttonous earthworms. The poet's use of 'sparrows' to describe the Palestinian people symbolizes their sense of elevation and dignity even in their suffering and death. On the other hand, using an 'earthworm' to refer to the occupiers

is symbolic of their heinous actions, their meanness, disgrace and villainy.

In the second stanza, Al-Qasim continues to describe the disastrous impact of occupation on his homeland:

When the yellow fields
Yield no more to their tillers

.....
While their rich harvest pours

Into the granaries of the usurper! (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59)

The poem's persona introduces here a revealing scene of the occupiers' exploitation of his land. The Palestinian land with all its green fields and rich orchards is neither sustaining a prosperous life for the Palestinian farmers nor providing support and protection for their families. The farmers' diligent work in their land comes in vain since the land's "rich harvest" (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59) is looted by the mercenary soldiers of the Israeli occupation who invade the Palestinian cities and villages to plunder, usurp and exploit the land's products. The repercussions are really frustrating since the Palestinian farmers gain nothing but "memories of weariness" (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59) while the Israeli usurpers' granaries are filled with the land's "rich harvest." This reveals the injustice and oppression practiced by the occupation forces against the innocent Palestinians who are deprived of living freely on their land. The association of weariness with the helpless Palestinian farmers and the richness of the harvest with the occupiers significantly reflects how much suffering and agony the Palestinians experience under the occupation.

If the cement has diverted
The ancient springs
Causing them to forget their natural course (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59).

In this third stanza, the poet is mainly concerned with the occupation's negative impact on the Palestinian land and all its physical setting. One of the significant elements of this setting which are dominated by the occupation is the water springs. These water springs have no more water to sustain the Palestinians since the Israeli occupiers have changed their direction and exploited them for their own imperial purposes. The Palestinians become estranged from their own land and all their surrounding environment. They are no more entitled to use these water springs or any other aspects of the environment. This is simply because their land and all its utilities are occupied, their properties are usurped and their environment is ravaged. The stanza's closing question "who are you?" (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59) indicates the Palestinians' lack of touch with their land. Though they live inside their homeland, they become isolated, estranged and dispossessed. The ugly face of the Israeli occupiers is most obvious in this stanza particularly in their attempt to remove from the Palestinian land all signs of their owners' cultural touch. They endeavor to do this by using various methods of changing and disfiguring the environment. Such processes of defacement and change are vividly evoked here by using the word 'cement' which suggests the idea of isolating the Palestinians and breaking their physical attachment to their land.

The occupation's process of deforming the Palestinian land continues at a rapid pace with the uprooting of olive and almond trees as described in the fourth stanza. These specific types of trees are deliberately uprooted due to their symbolic and cultural significance for the Palestinian people. According to Hammer (2005, 65), olive trees stand for fertility, prosperity and immortality while almond trees symbolize beauty and immortality. Olive and almond trees are also two of the oldest kinds of trees grown in Palestine and, thus, represent the cultural heritage of Palestine. Accordingly, uprooting olive and almond

trees from the Palestinian land is unquestionably an Israeli heinous act mainly meant to humiliate the Palestinians and erase their sense of rootedness in their land. Part of this heinous plan of uprooting trees is the exploitation of their timber which is humiliatingly used to decorate "tavern doorways" (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59) and embellish nude statues inside nightclubs and bars. It is also used in making souvenirs bought by tourists who come from various countries. What is only left of these symbolic trees are their "dry leaves and tinder" (Al-Qasim 1982a, 59) which signify the complete destruction and death of the land and the degradation of the environment.

So what,

When in barren space the satellites spin

.....

Blow, East winds!

Our roots are still alive! (Al-Qasim 1982a, 61)

This concluding stanza presents the tragic scene of transforming the rich, profitable land into a bleak moorland after the uprooting of trees and the removal of orchards. There are spy satellites which are deployed into the Palestinian space. The streets of Palestinian cities and villages are replete with strange beggars who suffer severe poverty caused by an oppressive occupation whose imperial policy is to impoverish the land and marginalize its owners. Accordingly, a starvation plan is implemented everywhere in Palestine by establishing blockades around all cities and neighborhoods. The result of these coercive measures is the feeling of sadness and depression symbolized here by the song of autumn which is heard everywhere. The poet makes this literary allusion to Charles Baudelaire's lyric "Song of Autumn" to stress the severe hardships and deprivation the Palestinians pathetically suffer inside their homeland.

The poem concludes with the speaker's appeal to the east wind to blow on the occupied Palestinian land. The east wind is

evoked here because it symbolizes the power of change. This symbol evokes a final sense of hope of liberating the occupied land. This hope is basically derived from the speaker's conviction that the Palestinian "roots are still alive" (Al-Qasim 1982a, 61). The poem, thus, concludes on a note of optimism, and the poet believes in the power of resistance to regain the land and restore the Palestinians' prosperity and dignity.

The Conception of Land as a Form of Resistance:

In Al-Qasim's poetry, land represents people's refuge as it provides a sense of shelter and protection and as it gives feelings of security and safety to the Palestinians. Such places of support and protection as caves, trenches, yards and even the remains of old buildings can provide the innocent Palestinians with enough protection against the military attacks of an oppressive occupation. Land is also a source of power and support for the armless Palestinians. It provides them with various means of defense and resistance including stones, olive and cedar branches, banners and canes. The Palestinian land, thus, fights side by side with its people and resists its usurpers.

Land resistance is foregrounded in Al-Qasim's poems through the images of an old mother, symbolic of land, who is contented with the martyrdom of her son, an old man using his cane to show his resilience or a young boy carrying a small stone in his hand to express defiance. By utilizing such images of resistance, Al-Qasim, as Masood (2022b, 284) rightly remarks, implicitly celebrates the Palestinians' national identification with their land which fuels their zeal for resistance. The innocent Palestinians use such simple natural objects of resistance as stones, sticks and olive branches, and do not resort to using the same deadly weapons the colonizers use against them. Their non-militarized objects of resistance, Skare (2016, 150) observes, are symbolically used as an expression of defiance and rejection of the occupying regime. In this sense, the unarmed Palestinians

manage to attract the attention and sympathy of the world community and to be globally recognized as the epitome of perseverance and resistance. These simple acts of resistance, thus, as Kayali (2020, 35) argues, acquire symbolic significance and prove to be more effective than other violent means of protest.

The resistance of the Palestinian land is best illustrated in Al-Qasim's poem entitled "The Intifadah." In the opening lines, the poet starts addressing the Israeli invaders in a defiantly commanding tone by using the imperative verb "Advance" (Al-Qasim 2015b, 54). This commanding tone, which runs throughout the poem, creates a confrontational, challenging situation and reinforces the prevalent mode of resistance in the face of the invading troops. The poet uses the simple present tense throughout. He also uses declarative statements as in the poem's refrain: "Hell is every sky above you, / Hell is every land below you" (Al-Qasim 2015b, 55). The poet's aim here is to state the actual reality of resistance. The word 'Hell' is hyperbolically used to signify that resisting the Israeli invasion includes both the land and sky of Palestine.

The poem as a whole presents two main scenes that run parallel to each other throughout the lines. The first scene deals with the sense of victimization of the innocent Palestinians who are suffering the antagonistic attitude of Israeli occupation:

Our child and aged die

.....

The mother falls

On her murdered child (Al-Qasim 2015b, 54).

The Palestinian victims, as described in these lines, are always living under the threat of the violent attacks of ferocious invaders. They are violently attacked and terrorized by the colonizers' excessive use of power as evinced by using heavy weapons, carriers of troops and airstrikes. The Israeli invaders

deliberately use colonial practices through which they exterminate and expel the innocent Palestinians, demolish their houses and displace them.

The Palestinians, consequently, fall victims of such crimes. Their children are orphaned and their women become widowed. They also fall victims of the occupation's unjust, tyrannical policy according to which the criminal invaders are not tried, charged or indicted for their horrible crimes, while the innocent Palestinians are charged with crimes they have not committed and, consequently, are jailed. The number of Palestinian prisoners, as a result, is so largely increasing that detention camps are erected and new prisons are opened while schools are closed. This clearly indicates that these oppressive occupiers deny the Palestinians' rights of living peacefully and independently on their own land. The poet alludes to the Bible in his reference to "The Lord of Hosts" (Al-Qasim 2015b, 55). This religious allusion, which is derived from the Bible (*King James Bible*, 1769/2017, Jeremiah 9:7), is associated with how the Jewish people perceive God as having armies of angels under His control and as being the absolute Ruler of the universe. This allusion reinforces the Palestinians' conviction that there is no ideal justice on earth and that they will be savagely mistreated as long as they live under occupation.

The occupation's intolerable crimes and excessive violations culminate in the invasion of Gaza as is obvious in the poet's statement "Gaza is crying for us" (Al-Qasim 2015b, 56). The people of Gaza are suffering the savagery and barbarity of merciless occupiers. The speaker here identifies with the people of Gaza as shown in his use of the plural object pronoun 'us'. The people of Gaza are described as living in pain and agony. Victims are falling every day. All the elements of the environment, including stones, fields and people, are literally

dying. The atmosphere of death, thus, tragically dominates the invasion scene in Gaza.

Advance!
From street to street,
From house to house,
From corpse to corpse.

.....
Here is the wounded and this slaughtered,
And the bereaved, and the orphaned (Al-Qasim 2015b, 56-57).

In these lines, the poet uses a terrifying visual image to describe how the corpses of victims are scattered everywhere, how the land is entirely destroyed and how the massacre is committed. What is being left are only the orphans, the helplessly wounded and the widows. The occupation's deliberate crimes of torture and genocide painfully reverberate through the poet's repetition of "corpse" and "death" (Al-Qasim 2015b, 56). The repetition of these words serves to disclose the savagery of the Israeli invaders in committing their horrifying massacres.

The poem's second scene presents the Palestinians' strong determination to resist their criminal occupiers. The spirit of resistance is well-established from the poem's opening lines through the use of a defiant, unyielding tone:

Hell is every land below you,
Not the soldier's helmet.
Not the policeman's club.
Not your tear gas (Al-Qasim 2015b, 56).

These lines shed light on the Palestinians' steadfastness and determination to persist in resisting the occupation despite their suffering and adversity. The poet asserts his view that the Palestinians' unwavering attitude of resistance will surely turn the oppressive occupation with all its crimes into memories of the

past. He also asserts the Palestinians' determination to end the occupation and stop the usurpation of their land.

Throughout the lines, the poet warns those bloodthirsty occupiers that they will face fierce resistance whenever they think of invading the Palestinian land. Their soldiers' helmets will not protect them against Palestinian stone-throwing. Their policemen's cudgels and teargas will not stop the Palestinian revolts or disperse their protests. The poet reflects the great sacrifices and heroism of the Palestinian fighters who, though bleeding, are still able to persist and endure all suffering for the sake of keeping their land as can be seen in the repetition of "Death, but not kneeling" (Al-Qasim 2015b, 56). Although death dominates the scene, yet there is still the living spirit of resistance represented by the crying and feeling of indignation and revolt even in moments of death.

The poem, thus, evokes a flicker of hope particularly in its concluding lines. It is mainly the hope of steadfast resistance represented by the Palestinian practice of stone-throwing. The Palestinian young people provide the fuel of resistance and all the other Palestinians are engaged in this struggle including children, old people and even women. Moreover, resistance is not only restricted to the people of Gaza. It also includes the people of other Palestinian cities such as Nablus, Jenin and Jerusalem. The land of Palestine with all its cities and all its people "advance to fight" (Al-Qasim 2015b, 57).

What is essentially distinctive about the poem is the permanent presence of the figure of the land-as-fighter which resonates throughout the lines. The Palestinian land supports its innocent people. It resists the oppressive occupation with its sharp stones, burning grass and street traps. Land resistance is so prominently palpable throughout the lines that it becomes a controlling motif. Resistance seeds are sown everywhere on the land of Palestine in its cities, streets and houses. The poet

employs various symbols of land resistance throughout the poem. There are, for instance, the stones that are thrown at the Israeli invaders. There is the grass which immediately turns into hell for the invading troops. There are the land traps that are well-designed to catch the enemy soldiers. There are the fields that remain steadfast against Israeli criminal acts of destruction and desolation. There are also the doors and windows of houses that are used for stone throwing. In addition, there are the streets and cities that explode with protests and demonstrations against occupation. It is, indeed, an all-inclusive type of resistance that prevails throughout the Palestinian land. It is an uprising, as the poem's title informs, which is mainly based on the resistance and sustenance of the land. The figure of the land-as-fighter, in this sense, perfectly embodies Palestinian solidarity and unification as it merges in the national spirit of resistance.

Likewise, in "A Report from the Battlefield" the poet vividly portrays a scene of resistance in which the Palestinian fighters bravely persist in resisting the violent occupiers:

From a demolished house
.....
From a booby-trapped schoolyard,
The raiders keep on marching
And reach their death (Al-Qasim 2015d, 6).

These opening lines show how the Palestinian environment itself is foregrounded in these acts of resistance. In such as a scene of resistance and confrontation with the repressive occupiers, even the large rocks of ruined houses and roads stand as a blockade against the Israeli invaders. They are placed at the front line of the confrontation field. They, thus, hinder the marching of the occupation troops with their tanks towards the Palestinian cities and villages. These stones are personified as heroic militants who encourage the Palestinian fighters to confront their invaders and resist them defiantly. The empty streets and schoolyards are also

involved in this resistance process by being filled with booby traps that are placed on the invaders' way. All these are parts of a defensive plan that results in the defeat and murder of those aggressive invaders.

The second stanza describes the scene of the occupiers' defeat. These enemy soldiers certainly pay the cost of their imperial greed and their bloodthirsty attitude. They are killed and mutilated as a result of the explosive traps placed on their way. The poem's persona introduces himself in the third stanza as a real witness to this Palestinian valiant resistance. He bears witness to the resistance of children especially a young boy whose legs are mutilated but he still persists by walking on his knees to resist the occupation's invasion of his hometown, Nazareth, and the attack on the camp of Jenin.

The persona in the next stanza reveals his adoration and close attachment to his own city by calling it "sweet heart" and "princess" (Al-Qasim 2015d, 6). He compares it to a pretty young woman who has attractive eyes, untouched lips and braided hair with a "red rose" (Al-Qasim 2015d, 6). This description signifies the land's purity since it resists the occupation and simultaneously emphasizes the spirit of enthusiasm, symbolized by the red color, in defending Palestinian properties.

Out of the camp remains,
They come,
Out of the trenches of defiance,
In a ruined street,

.....
... each of our arms

Is St. George with a sword of fire (Al-Qasim 2015d, 6-7).

In this last stanza, the poem's persona highlights the heroic resistance of the Palestinian fighters. They come out from everywhere to make a defensive shield against the occupiers'

military machine. They are defiantly creative and resourceful in their defense by hiding inside the remains of their camp and by being fortified inside trenches, caves and ruined houses. Suddenly they come out of their hiding places and bravely attack the enemy's tanks and destroy them. The poet repeats the clause "they come" (Al-Qasim 2015d, 6-7) to indicate their readiness to sacrifice and their ability to fearlessly resist their invaders. Yet, their only weapons are cedar, banners, walking sticks and olive branches. As Ahmed and Hashim (2014, 103) assert, the olive trees, which are deeply rooted in the Palestinian soil and vividly engraved into the Palestinian collective memory, are symbols of the Palestinians' firmness in their resistance against the Israeli invaders.

The Palestinians' simple weapons of resistance enumerated throughout the lines are all chosen from nature and belong to the land to give a message that the land has its own weapons of resistance and that those Palestinian resisters rely on non-violent methods of resistance. These unarmed fighters, including children and old people, are willing to resist out of love for their homeland and out of deep yearning for their freedom. They are ready to sacrifice themselves because they are certain of their right to resist and defend their land. They are also certain of their victory as Saint George who is sure of defeating a dragon. This mythic allusion to the legendary narrative of Saint George and the dragon appropriately concludes the poem. According to Good's (2009, 39) narration of the myth, Saint George, a Christian fighter, conquers a dragon which is offered a human victim annually to stop poisoning people. The last victim to be offered is a young princess but she is saved by Saint George who bravely fights the dragon and defeats it. This mythic narrative is alluded to in the poem's closing lines to stress the Palestinians' determination to defend their land fearlessly against the Israeli imperial attacks.

The Conception of Land as a Target of Exploitation:

The main purpose of occupying the land of Palestine is to establish an independent, recognized Jewish state for the Israeli occupiers. These illegitimate occupiers, thus, usurp the lands of the indigenous Arabs and destroy their houses and cities to establish Jewish settlements instead. They also create their own false narratives of the origin of this land to form a historical narrative, create a religious background and claim a cultural heritage on the Arab land. They introduce to the world a new geopolitical map of the land of Palestine and, hence, falsify the historical origin of its inhabitants. They thus, attribute to themselves a land and history which are not theirs. They also claim to start a modern, civilized life on the land which, according to their false narrative, is originally inhabited by few primitive nomads. Though the Palestinian people are the native, civilized inhabitants and the real owners of the land, as Masood (2022a, 548) explains, they are regarded as a barbaric mob who are in dire need for an organized authority to control them and give them a generous hand in the process of their development.

A good illustration of the occupation's exploitation of the Palestinian land and its inhabitants is Al-Qasim's poem entitled "Shalom":

Let someone else sing about peace,
.....
While over there, behind the barbed fences
In the heart of darkness,
Tent cities cower (Al-Qasim 2014, Sep. 2a).

The speaker, in these lines, frankly announces his rejection of the Israeli deceitful call for peace and coexistence. The speaker's view reflects the Palestinians' full awareness of the Zionists' ill intentions and imperial policies. Those Zionists come to settle in Palestine under the false claim that they have the right to establish a Jewish state on a barren land with no people.

Accordingly, they come to reclaim this barren land, develop a modern way of life and civilize the primitive, indigenous tribes who are leading a savage, barbarous life on this land. Hence, the Jewish invaders start establishing settlements, occupying all the cities and villages and expelling the Palestinians from their homeland. They demolish the Palestinians' houses, confiscate their lands and change the names of their streets, villages and cities. They also destroy entire villages and towns and establish Jewish settlements instead.

Most Palestinians, as a result, are forced to leave their native land and go as refugees to other neighboring countries. The few who remain inside Palestine are tortured, humiliated, imprisoned and put under house arrests. The Israeli occupiers attack, repress and terrorize them. Moreover, they establish barriers and checkpoints to isolate and marginalize them under the guise of providing security and peace. While committing all such oppressive and violent crimes against the Palestinians, the Israeli occupation claims to support peaceful coexistence and friendly relations between the Israeli settlers and the colonized Palestinians. Such Israeli claims of peace and friendship are in no sense truthful or convincing to the Palestinians who still pay their lives as the cost of such false peace.

The poem's persona, thus, reveals the fact that the Palestinians are never deceived by the colonizers' false narrative of spreading peace, development and civilization everywhere on this land. The person also discloses the real criminal acts committed by such a usurping regime. Thus, the persona represents the voices of all the Palestinians in stating that they will not support nor trust the Israeli false narrative of peace. The poem's persona states clearly: "Let someone else sing about peace" (Al-Qasim 2014, Sep. 2a). Furthermore, the speaker reveals the real identity of the Israeli colonizers. He describes them as merciless invaders who cause ruin and destruction to all

signs of civilization in Palestine. This is clearly indicated in his reference to them as "crows." He also depicts them as enemies of peace and humanity as can be traced in his reference to them as "dark owl" which "haunt(s) the debris of the pigeon towers" (Al-Qasim 2014, Sep. 2a). Such a description obviously shows that the Israeli occupiers are definitely not peacemakers nor civilization seekers. They are merely savage colonizers who come to exploit the Palestinian land and its indigenous people.

Similarly, in his poem "A Speech in the Unemployment Market," Al-Qasim tactfully refutes the Israeli claim of the peaceful establishment of a Jewish nation on the land of primitive Arabs whose lives need to be civilized and modernized. The poem shows these Israeli claims to be false. The Israeli colonizers are merely justifying their existence on the Arab land by using falsified narratives of religion, history and politics and by relying on the false umbrella of development and civilization. The poem's main purpose in its opening lines, thus, is to reveal the real, horrible image of the Israeli occupiers who are portrayed as "enemies of the sun." This description signifies the loss of sustenance and survival. The sun itself symbolizes life's energy, positivity and hope. Thus, with the Israeli merciless occupation of Palestine, there is always nothing but loss of sustenance and survival, and the negation of the Palestinians' rights of living respectfully and honorably on their land.

Unquestionably, the Israeli colonizers shift the Palestinian life from peace to nightmare, from civilization to destruction and desolation and from dignified life to the tragic loss of life. Such miserable conditions are aptly foregrounded in the opening lines of the poem:

... I will forfeit my wages
and put up my clothes and bed for sale.
I'll work as a stonecutter, porter or street-sweeper (Al-Qasim 1993, 219-220).

These opening lines unarguably reflect how the occupiers follow a systematic plan and a deliberate process of humiliation, abuse and mistreatment of the colonized Palestinians. According to such a plan, the innocent Palestinians, as the poem's persona makes it clear, are liable to all kinds of humiliation including working in low-ranking jobs such as 'a stone cutter', 'a street sweeper', 'a porter' and a store cleaner. Such low-ranking jobs are socially embarrassing and are mainly meant to racially discriminate between the Israeli settlers and the marginalized Palestinians. These victimized Palestinians, thus, are either forced to work as slaves inside their own homeland or to leave the country and suffer exile and displacement. Those who remain inside their homeland are impoverished by the oppressive occupation. Consequently, they suffer poverty, illness, loss of jobs and loss of land. The poem's persona, thus, describes how the miserable Palestinians sell their clothes and furniture to provide food for their families. They may be forced to rummage the occupiers' garbage in search of food.

The Palestinian people, in this sense, pathetically suffer homelessness, hunger and poverty as a result of the imperial policy of an aggressive occupation. This is evoked by the poet's use of a successive list of negative verbs suggesting colonial savagery and devastation such as "steal," "feed," "seize," and "burn" (Al-Qasim 1993, 220). The poem's persona is introduced as a patriotic Palestinian who defiantly addresses the violent occupiers using a tone of accusation. He forcefully accuses them of stealing all his land and exhausting his power and vitality by always keeping him in jail.

Additionally, the Israeli colonizers are negatively represented as armed gangs who snatch the Palestinians' ancestral properties including furniture, "pots" and "dishes" (Al-Qasim 1993, 220). Such words signify all the elements sustaining Palestinian life on their land. Moreover, the Israeli invaders savagely remove all

signs of Palestinian civilization and attempt to erase the Palestinian real history by burning "poems" and "books" (Al-Qasim 1993, 220). Nonetheless, the speaker's dominant tone throughout the lines is one of utter defiance and steadfastness. The Palestinian people, though innocently victimized, can still endure the Israeli criminal practices and can defiantly resist their provocation acts by being loyal to their heritage and attached to their homeland. Part of their resistance process, as Boayrid (2019, 54) comments, is to disclose the occupation's transgressions and the details of its colonial exploitation policy as illustrated throughout the poem.

Unarguably, the occupation's crimes reach unexpected levels of inhumanity and barbarity by exploiting the innocent Palestinians in hard labor inside their detention camps and mistreating them as evoked in this revealing line: "throw (their) flesh to the dogs" (Al-Qasim 1993, 220). These words reveal the speaker's full awareness of the occupation's aggressive plan of dehumanizing and humiliating the Palestinians. The Israeli occupiers ultimately attempt to uproot the innocent Palestinians from their motherland. The Palestinian land, in this sense, bears witness not only to the criminal acts of such Israeli terrorists against the innocent Palestinians but also serves as a witness to the victimization of the Palestinian people who suffer the ferociousness and greed of such a terrible occupation.

Conclusion:

Through the analysis of Al-Qasim's poetic treatment of the Palestinian land from an ecopostcolonial perspective, four disparate conceptions of land eventually emerge in his poetic discourse. Firstly, Al-Qasim approaches the Palestinian land as an emotional source of intimate attachment and strong belonging. In such poems as "Upright I Walk," "The Eternal Fire," "Clarity," "End of a Talk with a Jailer" and "The clock", for instance, the conception of land-as-mother is foregrounded.

As evident from the analysis of these poems, Al-Qasim clearly illustrates how the Palestinians' national identity merges entirely with the soil of their land. He also shows how the Palestinians are deeply rooted in their land and, as a result, develop elevated feelings of pride in their Arab and Palestinian cultural heritage. This inseparable emotional bond generates the Palestinians' determination to defend their land and resist the occupation. The Palestinian land, in return, offers tranquility and peace of mind to its people particularly when they embrace its attractive olive and almond trees, smell its fragrant flowers and enjoy the sight of its beautiful gardens and natural scenery. The Palestinians' emotional connectedness to their land, thus, is a reciprocal one in the sense that they carefully tend their ancestral land and sacrifice for the sake of its liberation and they, in effect, gain the honour and glory of being the real owners of the land. They are worthy of receiving its sustenance and physical, moral and emotional support, in addition to having a powerful sense of unification with the land. Due to the intensity of their mutual, intimate relationship to their land, the Palestinians are passionately fueled by the power and enthusiasm necessary for resisting and getting rid of the invasive occupation.

Secondly, Al-Qasim's poetic discourse introduces the Palestinian land as a real witness to the occupation's criminal acts of devastation and desolation. The land is also portrayed as a witness to the suffering and agony of the Palestinian people who experience the hardships of life under occupation. This conception of the land-as-witness is palpably seen in such poems as "Rafah's Children," "Sadder Than Water," "Story of a City" and "A Homeland." In these poems, Al-Qasim is fully bent on describing bleak scenes of the Palestinian land's devastation and damage as a result of the occupation's cruel transgressions. These scenes particularly portray how the land is degraded and usurped, how its people are unjustly eradicated or displaced and how the

natural pastures, trees, orchards, and green fields are burnt and completely destroyed. Part of the bleakness of these scenes is the Palestinians' bitter sense of pain due to their homelessness, imprisonment, marginalization starvation to death and loss of land. There is, thus, an inevitable sense of land bareness, desolation and nothingness which prevails throughout the scenes. Furthermore, Al-Qasim, in these poems, draws heavily on the helplessness and frustration of the Palestinian victims. The land, in this sense, is regarded as a real witness to the occupation's heinous crimes and its aggressive violations which, ultimately, cause the deprivation of the Palestinians and the degradation of this environment.

Thirdly, Al-Qasim's poetic discourse deals with the concept of land as a form of resistance to occupation. Hence, the conception of the land-as-fighter is introduced in such poems as "The Intifadah" and "A Report from the Battlefield." In these poems, Al-Qasim demonstrates how the land remains defiant and steadfast in resisting the occupation's violent attacks. The Palestinian land, including its natural objects in both urban and rural areas, provides a means of support and backing to the Palestinian fighters. It defends its people by offering them shelters and protection. Al-Qasim specifically describes how the flora of the Palestinian territories is distinctly utilized as a form of resistance to occupation. The farms, pastures and valleys, for instance, are used as refugee camps for the homeless and the displaced. The trenches, groves, hills and bushes are used as shields against the occupation's military attacks. In addition, the orchards and fields provide sustenance while the large stones and tree branches are utilized as defensive weapons by the Palestinian warriors.

Finally, in his poetic discourse of resistance, Al-Qasim explores the ecopostcolonial conception of land as a target of colonial exploitation. He specifically creates the image of the

land as a victim of exploitation in such poems as "Shalom" and "A Discourse in the Unemployment Market." In these poems, Al-Qasim demonstrates how the Palestinian land stands out prominently in the Israeli false narrative as an uninhabited, barren land which is devoid of any traces of early civilized life. According to this false narrative, the Israeli colonizers inhabit this barren land to start a process of development in all aspects of life and to civilize the few primitive nomads living there. From a postcolonial perspective, such a false narrative justifies the occupation and exploitation of the Palestinian land and the expulsion of its people after seizing their properties. This imperial plan of exploitation is carried out by establishing Jewish settlements on the Palestinian land and capturing all its orchards, cities and villages. The Jewish settlers also exploit all the natural resources of the land. They even use the colonized Palestinians themselves as wage labourers in their previously owned farms. The occupation's alleged process of development and modernization, in this sense, is ultimately shown to be nothing more than a systematic plan of ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people and the destruction of their own ancient civilization.

What is quite remarkable about Al-Qasim's different poetic explorations of the conception of land is the fact that he specifically gives the first priority to his poetic illustration of the Palestinian land as a source of rootedness, belonging, attachment, support and survival for all the Palestinians. The second priority in Al-Qasim's poetic discourse goes to his conception of the land as a witness to the Palestinians' suffering and distress and as a witness to the tragic scenes of torture, devastation and destruction committed by the brutal forces of the Israeli occupation. By focusing on these two priorities, Al-Qasim, as evident in his poems, clearly reveals how the land, as an ecopostcolonial concept, is approached differently by the colonized Palestinians who regard it as a loving, caring mother

and by the Israeli occupiers who are bent on acts of looting, plundering and destruction. The poet's investigation of these two contrasting attitudes towards the land obviously reflects his interest in highlighting the significance of the land in his ecopostcolonial poetic discourse of resistance.

What is also peculiar about Al-Qasim's representation of the Palestinian land in his poetry is the idea that his exploration of the various conceptions of the land as an ecopostcolonial domain is basically meant to be his poetic counter discourse to the occupation's claims of land entitlement. According to such claims, the Israeli occupiers defend their right of having the Palestinian land in their own possession. Their entitlement to the Arab land is falsely based on the conviction that it has not been formerly inhabited by any organized or civilized community. Their land entitlement is also based on the imperial policy of imposing their existence as a *fait accompli* by erasing the map of Palestine, falsifying its history over time, establishing settlements and expanding these settlements. The Palestinian land, in this imperial sense, is regarded as a commodity to be bought, exchanged or even occupied whenever possible.

This imperial discourse of land entitlement disregards the Palestinians' emotional attachment to their land and their deep rootedness in its soil. This is exactly what Al-Qasim skillfully manages to reveal in his poetic discourse of the land. He specifically depicts poetic scenes which show how the Palestinian people are completely immersed in the social, religious, cultural and historical identification with their land, including cities, villages, streets and even jails as can be clearly seen in "Story of a City," "Upright I Walk," "End of a Talk with a Jailer" and "The Clock."

As a Palestinian poet, Samih Al-Qasim, as revealed in his poetry, is well aware of the significance of the Palestinian land as an essential constituent in the cultural process of identity

formation. His poems aptly explore the Palestinians' relationships to their land and crystalize the main tenets of these relationships in terms of mutual belonging, strong attachment and mutual protection. In short, Al-Qasim, as evident in his poems, makes it clear that the land, for the Palestinian people, definitely represents the elevation of their souls, the essence of their whole existence and the source of their past glories, present realities and future hopes.

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Appendix
Translated Texts of Samih Al-Qasim's Selected Poems
"Upright I walk"

Upright I walk . . .
Head high I walk
An olive branch in my hand,
My coffin on my shoulder
. . . . I walk and I walk
My heart is a red moon,
My heart is an orchard
With boxthorn and basil
My lips a sky raining
Fire at times, love always.

"The Eternal Fire"

You are all women!
For seventy years he roamed the earth
For another seventy he traveled through space,
Wandering in all the seas
For seventy years, day and night

Some lovers once told
Of a star forgotten by heaven.
So he reached out for it:
And one day he recalled a steam
Beyond the mountains of life.
And a spring of tears beyond the abyss of annihilation.

He wandered through eternity.
One land casting him into another
He mingled with all people.
Became intimate with their women.
He dwelt in some hearts

And passed through them all.
He became the preacher of certitude.
Spreading the word far and wide
That you are all women all women

Why?
Your youth is one thing, my youth quite another
Fearsome vipers have lodged within me;
My body remains a haven for birds,
An abode for strange beasts.
My voice is akin to that of the nightingales awhile,
And yet awhile is like the howl of wolves

You are the morn of deserts
In purity and goodness
You are a swallow
Bringing spring to me
When all I give in return is sterile wilderness

My torment weighs you down
Your youth is one thing, my youth quite another
To you I submit myself
Knowing that
I shall waste my form, voice and color
Casting to the winds my breath
In the fire, my own fire
In the water, my own water
I shall drown my grief in grief
I submit myself to you
Knowing that
I shall turn into mist between your palms

I submit myself to you
Why, oh why?
Are you the miracle?

Am I your two hands?

Between your hands I was born, between them I grew and between them I was killed, returned, was resurrected came and went was and became feared and rebelled and between your hands I've read and written was ignorant and knowledgeable and between your hands I questioned and between your hands I found the answer puzzled soared I was absent I stood and between your hands I dwelt and lost myself and between your hands I

Succeeded, and between-I failed- your hands- I touched and tasted ...your hands. I dreamt, and hungered and between your hands I wept and between- laughed- your hands- I owned and lost, and between- I fell- your hands- I rose again, fell once more, passed away came back, was resurrected once more, and I was and became.

Between your hands, I grew, matured brought back returned and became without your hands just mist and I returned to dust and became mere absence without your hands

Can it be that I am nothing but your hands?

The Eternal Fire

Conclusion?

There is none?

I tried but in vain

I am the everlasting fuel

And you are my eternal fire!

"Clarity"

A Flock Poem: Selections

Everything here is clear;
No dust or fog on a balcony
The dream predicament is clear,
With its undulations in the land of torment.

The ceremonies do not claim authority.
Clear . . . everything is clear,
As the clarity of mirage.
The alphabets are shining
In the elegies,
Shining in the songs,
In their double and triple tunes.
And I am clear above the earth,
And under the earth,
Between the parents' rue plant,
And the apple of knowledge.
Clear, everything here is clear,
Like the last line that will end the book
And there is no book.
Everything here is clear,
Like the obscurity of the homeland,
And the mingling of languages about an idea,
Scattered by madness winds,
And not saved by a reasonable site,
On the frontiers of time.
Clear. Everything here is clear.

And me. Who am I?
A simple Arab am I,
And love all nations,
Despite all the pain.
A simple Arab am I,

And want peace,
Despite what they heaped on my shoulders,
Provoked my wrist,
And inflamed my ankle.
A simple Arab am I, and love peace,
Despite the invaders' injustice,
The despots' tyranny,

The darkness's chaos.
A simple Arab am I.
My speech is the clarity of speech
A simple Arab am I,
My homeland is my own,
My residence is here,
My departure is here,
My resurrection is here.
And I
Have rocks on my back,
But it did not bow,
Did not bow, did not bow.
And I am clear.
Everything here is clear.

How can I touch any food
When millions are deprived of their bread,
Which they dip in their tears!
And millions sleep, on thorns,
In heat and cold.
Their tragedies are tents.
Their hopes are fasting!
How can I live calmly,
Enjoying prayer and a pure ablution,
And millions are subdued
By one refuge after another
How can I stand

All this madness, torment, burning!
All right
My body, burn,
And light the darkness of the roads,
And let everything here be clear,
Everything here is clear . . .

"End of a Talk with a Jailer"

From the narrow window of my small cell,
I see trees that are smiling at me
and rooftops crowded with my family.
And windows weeping and praying for me.
From the narrow window of my small cell—
I can see your big cell!

"The Clock"

My city fell to the enemy,
Yet the clock continued ticking on the wall
Our own neighborhood was demolished,
The street fell,
Yet the clock continued ticking on the wall.
My house crumbled to ruins,
Even the wall fell,
But the clock remained
ticking on and on

"Rafah's Children"

To the one who digs his path through the wounds of millions
To he whose tanks crush all the roses in the garden
Who breaks windows in the night
Who sets fire to a garden and museum and sings of freedom.
Who stomps on songbirds in the public square.
Whose planes drop bombs on childhood's dream.
Who smashes rainbows in the sky.

Tonight, the children of the impossible roots have an announcement for you,
Tonight, the children of Rafah say:
"We have never woven hair braids into coverlets.
We have never spat on corpses, nor yanked their gold teeth.

So why do you take our jewelry and give us bombs?
Why do you prepare orphanhood for Arab children?
Thank you, a thousand times over!
Our sadness has now grown up and become a man.
And now, we must fight.”

"Sadder Than Water"

From "Sadder Than Water"

Sadder than water,
in death's wonder
you've distanced yourself from this land.
Sadder than water
and stronger by far than the wind,
longing for a moment to drowse,
alone. And crowded by millions
behind their darkened windows.

You distanced yourself from yourself.
So that you might remain
on the land.
You will remain.
(People were useless ... the land was useless
but you'll dwell on.)
And in the land there is nothing,
nothing but you
and what remained of time's struggles
after the miserable seasons' removal ...

You were born, your cradle the land of religions.
The religions' cradle is your land.
Your cradle and grave, but you
remain in the land. The wind will scatter your pollen

across the tree of God. Your soul will dwell, a bird
migrating in summer,
in winter returning to die a new death.
And the tear gas canisters exploding
will lend your coming dance its rhythm
so at the critical moment you'll rise up,
sadder than water
and stronger than the end ...

The ancient singers are yours. The deserts.
The secret of conquests - they're for your name,
and the embers of apprehension
under the cinders.
You ushered new eras in with a dream.
You strove with stars and the art of gardens,
mastered the theology of conflagration,
toying with your death:
the respirator is free,
the blood's flow finds what it seeks,
and you were convinced
that you were a new beginning, which would not end,
which would not end ... and the grip around your
throat grows tight,
and does not end. The new cracks in the ceiling widen,
the walls of your home know
the faces of shells by heart.
And you stand in the doorway of the will,
your voice trickling, your silence bleeding,
extracting the bullets from the family portraits,
following the missiles' path
into the heart of your household things
counting the holes from bombs' shrapnel
within the body of the sleeping girl -
kissing the wax of her soft fingers
at the edge of the bier.

How can you mold the elegies' madness?
How can you gather the dates of your dead
along the homeland's misty roads?
Or take into your arms
the body of your sleeping girl?

Sadder than water
and clearer than the summer sun.
But the ripeness of the spikes of wheat
chooses its appointed time, after the barren seasons.
Therefore, plead for a loaf of bread
from your local relief agency -
forget the rest of your meal for a while.
Clear up your appraisal: day by day.
Month by month. And year by year.
Make clear the sudden atmosphere
before the explosion of your call.
You are the caller and you are the called.
You went up in flames. Were extinguished. Began.
You retreated. And discovered the land.
And then you lost it.
Sadder than water.

"Story of a City"

There was a blue city
That dreamt of foreigners
Lazing about its corners
and spending money day and night
It has become a black city
That despises foreigners
Rounding its cafes
With their rifles" muzzles.

"A homeland"

So what,
When in my homeland
The sparrow dies of starvation,
In exile, without a shroud,
While the earthworm is satiated.
Devouring God's food!

So what,
When the yellow fields
Yield no more to their tillers
Than memories of weariness,
While their rich harvest pours
Into the granaries of the usurper!

So what,
If the cement has diverted
The ancient springs
Causing them to forget their natural course,
When their owner calls,
They cry in his face: "Who are you?"

So what,
When the almond and the olive have turned to timber
Adorning tavern doorways,
And monuments
Whose nude loveliness beautifies halls and bars,
And is carried by tourists
To the farthest corners of the earth,
While nothing remains before my eyes
But dry leaves and tinder!

So what,
When my people's tragedy

Has turned to force in others eyes,
And my face is a poor bargain
That even the slave tragedy gleefully disdains!

So what,
When in barren space the satellites spin
And in the streets walks a beggar, holding a hat
And the song of autumn is heard!
Blow, East winds!
Our roots are still alive!

**"The Intifadah"
(Uprising)
(A Letter to Invaders Who Do Not Read)**

Advance, advance!
The sky above you all is Hell,
The land beneath you all is Hell,
Advance!
Our child and aged die
But will not surrender.
The mother falls
On her murdered child
But will not surrender.
Advance!
With your troop carriers,
With your malice launchers,
And threaten,
And displace,
And make orphans,
And pull down,
You won't disrupt our depths,
You won't defeat our desires,
We are decisive fate.
Advance!

Behind you is your way,
Behind you is your future,
Behind you is your sea,
Behind you is your land.
But still there is before us
Our way and our future,
Our land and sea.
Our good and evil.
What is it that sends you
From a corpse to a corpse?
And how can it lead you,
From idiocy to idiocy,
That book of madness?
Advance.
Behind this stone there is a palm.
Behind the grass there is your end.
After the corpse there is a trap,
So fair and well-designed.
If one leg could be saved,
Remain a forearm and a wrist.
Advance!
Hell is every sky above you.
Hell is every land below you.
Advance!
Your taboo is with us allowed,
And your allowed is here taboo.
Advance!
With your desire to kill,
Which is going to kill you.
And aim with merciless decision,
And level at the womb;
There is a drop of our blood,
And it is raging now.
Advance!
Whichever way you like

And kill.
Your killer is acquitted,
Our murdered is accused.
The Lord of Hosts is still awake, and up;
So is the criminal judges' judge.
Advance!
Do not open a school,
And do not close a prison,
Do not apologize,
And do not be wary,
And do not understand.
Your first is your last,
Your faithful is your unbeliever,
Your malady is chronic.
So do not restrain, and so indulge,
And push forward,
And rise and clash,
To the final stage that is left for you,
To the final rope that is left for you,
For every stage must have an end,
And every rope must have an end.
Do not listen nor understand.
Advance!
Hell is every sky above you,
Hell is every land below you,
Not the soldier's helmet.
Not the policeman's club.
Not your tear gas.
Gaza is crying for us
Because it is a part of us,
As the ferocity of the absent
In his bleeding yearning to return.
Advance!
From street to street,
From house to house,

From corpse to corpse.
Advance!
Every violated stone
Cries in anger
As does cry every field.
And every nerve is roaring:
Death, but not kneeling.
Death, and no kneeling.
Advance!
Here is the camp advancing,
Here is the wounded and this slaughtered,
And the bereaved, and the orphaned.
Houses' stones advanced,
And the youthful wheat stalks,
The suckling, aged, and the widows,
Doors of Nablus and Jenin,
They have also advanced,
With windows of Jerusalem,
The sun prayer,
With incense and with condiments,
They all advanced to fight,
Advanced to fight.
Do not listen, and do not understand,
And advance!
Hell is every sky above you,
Hell is every land below you. Advance!

"A Report from the Battlefield"

From a demolished house
To one where every stone in it
Shouts to every other stone,
To everything around,
"Advance"!
From a booby-trapped schoolyard,

The raiders keep on marching
And reach their death
With their debased banner.

Body without a head,
A head without a mouth,
Under a freezing sun,
Shouting in the void.

With my own eyes I saw
A ten-year-old fighter
Walking, but without legs,
With his face towards Nazareth.

With her stunning eyes
And her virgin lips,
With a red rose in her braid,
My sweetheart,
Princess of the seasons,
Resists the heavy cannons.

Out of the camp remains,
They come,
Out of the trenches of defiance,
In a ruined street,
They come,
Out of a cave, of a dilapidated house,
Raising the banner of resistance and defiance,
Spitting their blood on the tank's forehead.
They come with cedar and olives,
With banners,
With fires,
They come.
With the old man's cane,
From the longing of the unborn babe,

They come with love and yearning,
With death and certainty,
They come.
So, stretch out your arms of destruction,
O, you, dragon,
For each of our arms
Is St. George with a sword of fire.

“Shalom”

Let someone else sing about peace,
Sing of friendship, brotherhood and harmony.
Let someone else sing about crows
Someone who will shriek about the ruins in my verses
To the dark owl haunting the debris of the pigeon towers.
Let someone else sing about peace
While the grain in the field brays,
Longing for the echo of the reapers’ songs.
Let someone else sing for peace.
While over there, behind the barbed fences
In the heart of darkness,
Tent cities cower.
Their inhabitants,
Settlements of sadness and anger
And the tuberculosis of memory.
While over there, life is snuffed out,
In our people,
In innocents, who never did any harm to life!
And meanwhile, here,
So many have poured in ... so much abundance!
Their forefathers planted so much abundance for them,
And also, alas, for others.
This inheritance—the sorrows of years—belongs to them now!
So let the hungry eat their fill.
And let the orphans eat leftovers from the banquet of malice.

Let someone else sing peace.
For in my country, on its hills and in its valleys
Peace has been murdered.

"A Speech in the Unemployment Market"

If you like, I will forfeit my wages
and put up my clothes and bed for sale.
I'll work as a stonecutter, porter or street-sweeper,
search for grain in the dung of cattle
and languish, naked and hungry
but with you, the sun's enemy, I will not bargain.
With the last throb in my veins I will resist!

Though you steal the last foot of my land
and feed my youth to the prison,
seize my grandfather's inheritance
of furnishings, dishes and pots,
burn my poems and books,
throw my flesh to the dogs
and dwell as a dream of horror over my village
with you, the sun's enemy, I will not bargain.
With the last throb in my veins I will resist!

You may smother my flame in the night,
withhold my mother's kiss
and let children curse my kinfolk.
You may slip past the guardian of my sorrows
and settle my history between a coward and a senseless god.
You may deny my children holiday clothes
and fool my friends with a borrowed face,
hedge me round with all your walls
and sacrifice my days on some humble spot
but with you, the sun's enemy, I will not bargain.
With the last throb in my veins I will resist!

Enemy of the sun,
in the port there is feasting, a flood of good tidings,
shrills and shouts and a cry of joy;
heroic anthems burst from every throat!
On the horizon, a boat
challenges the wind and boundless sea, and passes out of danger.
It is Ulysses' return
from the lost seas—
the return of the sun, and of the exiled—
and by her eyes, and by his eyes, I swear I will not bargain!

I will resist.

رؤية سميح القاسم للأرض كما تتضح في أشعاره عن المقاومة البيئية من منظور النقد

البيئي ونظرية ما بعد الاستعمار

ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل الرؤى المختلفة لمفهوم الأرض عند سميح القاسم كما تتضح في خطابه الشعري عن مقاومة البيئة للاحتلال، وذلك من منظور يمزج النقد البيئي بنظرية ما بعد الاستعمار كما تناولها جرهام هوجن وهيلين تيفين، ووفقاً لتناول ميتا بانرجي لمفهوم شهادة الأرض، ويحاول البحث أيضاً استنتاج أي من تلك الرؤى لمفهوم الأرض تنال حظاً وافراً في أشعار سميح القاسم، حيث يتضح من خلال تحليل معالجته الشعرية أن هناك أربع رؤى مختلفة للأرض الفلسطينية يصورها لنا الشاعر وهي: الأرض مصدر الانتماء، والأرض شاهدة على الدمار وشاهدة على معاناة الشعب الفلسطيني، والأرض شكلاً من أشكال المقاومة، وأخيراً الأرض هدفاً لاستغلال المحتل، كما يتضح أيضاً أن القاسم يعطي الأولوية في أشعاره لرؤيته للأرض كونها مصدر الانتماء، ثم تأتي في المقام الثاني رؤيته للأرض وهي تقف شاهدة على المعاناة والدمار، على أن الشاعر في تركيزه على هاتين الرؤيتين استطاع أن يبين النهج الذي ينتهجه الفلسطينيون في تمسكهم بأرضهم والذي يختلف أختلافاً جذرياً عن النهج الذي ينتهجه الاحتلال الإسرائيلي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سميح القاسم، شعر المقاومة البيئية، مفهوم الأرض، النقد البيئي

ونظرية ما بعد الاستعمار.