

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Letters and English Language



Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Master's Degree in field of
English Language and Literature

Specialty: **Literature and Civilisation** /

Voices of resistance:

Stylistics Approach to Refaat Alareer Poetry

Presented and publicly defended by

Abd el Mouiz Baadi /Fatima Limane

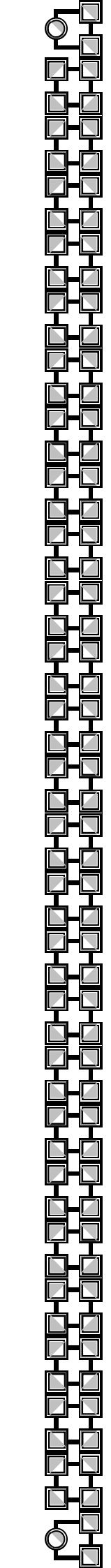
Supervised by

Dr.Amina Badidja

Jury

Pr.Djamel Goui	Kasdi Merbah University	Chairperson
Dr.Amina Badidja	Kasdi Merbah University	Supervisor
Dr.Walid Messaoudi	Kasdi Merbah University	Examiner
Members of The Jury	Institution	Examiner

Academic Year : 2025 / 2026



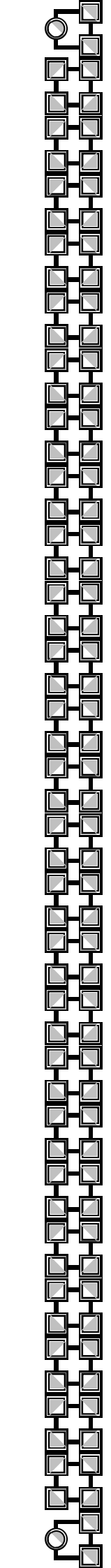
Dedication

I DEDICATE THIS WORK TO

MY FAMILY

MY FRIENDS

MY TEACHERS



Acknowledgements

I humbly express my gratitude to Allah for His abundant blessings
And for granting me the strength to complete this journey .without

His guidance, none of this would be possible. I extend my deep
Appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Amina Badidja, for her support
.guidance ,and patience throughout the preparation of this

Dissertation .her valuable advice, constructive feedback ,and
Provision of resources have been instrumental in shaping this work .

Am also indebted to all my teachers who have generously imparted
Their knowledge ,with special recognition to Dr.Amina Badidja for
Her dedicated guidance and support . My heartfelt thanks go to my

Mother for her tireless care and encouragement, and to my dear
Father for his continuous support and reassurance .I am grateful to

My brothers and sisters ,and my dear friends lastly i extend my

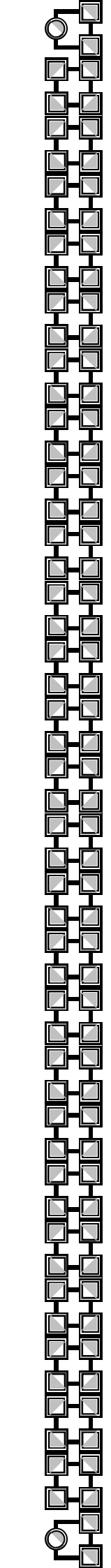
Appreciation to the university of Kasdi Merbah, Ouargla.

Contents

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	III
Contents	IV
Abstract	VIII
General Introduction	11
1. Background of the Study.....	12
2. Statement of the Problem.....	12
3. Aims and Objectives of the Study.....	12
4. Research Questions	13
5. Significance of the Study	13
6. Methodology	13
7. Structure of the Study	13
Chapter I.theoretical background	15
I.postcolonial literature and resistance.....	16
I.1 the concept of resistance literature.....	16
I.2. writing under occupation and conflict	17
II. Palestinian literature and the discourse of resistance	18
II .1. Palestinian resistance literature.....	18
II.1.1 Major themes in Palestinian writing	18
II.1.2 Voices from Gaza in contemporary Palestinian literature.....	19
III. Refaat Alareer and his literary contribution.....	19
III .1 biographical background	19
III.2.major works.....	19
IV. stylistics and literary interpretation.....	20
IV.1.definitions and scope of stylistics.....	20
IV.2.levels of stylistics	21
IV.3.stylistics as a tool in resistance literature.....	22
Chapter II. a stylistic analysis of Rifaat Alareer poetry	24

I. Introduction.....	25
II. Resisting the Occupation in If I Must Die: A Stylistic Approach	26
II.1 If I Must Die: Corpus Summary	26
II.2 Lexical Analysis: From Death to Freedom	27
II.2.1 Semantic Field of Death and Violence.....	28
II.2.2 Semantic Fields of Life and Continuity	29
II.2.3 Homeland and Memory	29
II.2.4 Struggle and Sacrifice	30
II.2.5 Lexical Contrast: Death versus Hope.....	30
II.2.6 Symbolism.....	31
II.2.7 Concrete vs Abstract Vocabulary.....	31
II.3 Syntactic Analysis.....	31
II.3.1 Sentence Length	32
II.3.2 Parallelism.....	32
II.3.3 Imperative Structures.....	32
II.3.4 Deviation from Normal Syntax	32
II.4 Phonological Analysis	32
II.4.1 Alliteration	33
II.4.2 Assonance and Consonance	33
II.4.3 Rhythm and Musicality	33
II.5 Metrical Scansion	33
II.6 Figurative and Rhetorical Devices	36
II.6.1 Metaphor	36
II.6.2 Symbolism.....	36
II.6.3 Imagery.....	37
II.6.4 Personification.....	37
II.6.5 Irony	37
II.7 Ideological Messages.....	38
II.7.1 Collective Identity	38
II.7.2 Resistance as Personal and National.....	38
II.7.3 Resistance Discourse.....	38
III. Resisting the Occupation in Drenched: A Stylistic Approach	39
III.1 Drenched: Corpus Summary	39
III.2 Lexical Analysis	40
III.2.1 Semantic Field of Suffering and Violence	40
III.2.2 Semantic Field of Emotional and Existential Pressure	41

III.2.3 Semantic Field survival.....	41
III.2.4 Symbolism	42
III.2.5 Repetition.....	42
III.2.6 Concrete and Abstract Vocabulary.....	43
III.3 Syntactic Analysis	44
III.3.1 Sentence Structure	44
III.3.2 Parallelism	45
III.3.3 Deviation from Normal Syntax.....	45
III.4 phonological Analysis	45
III.4.1 Alliteration and Assonance.....	45
III.4.2 Rhythm	45
III.4.3 Sound Repetition	45
III.5 Metrical Scansion.....	46
III.6 Rhyme Scheme Analysis.....	46
III.7 Figurative and Rhetorical Devices.....	47
III.7.1 Metaphor	47
III.7.2 Symbolism	47
III.7.3 Imagery	47
III.7.4 Personification	48
III.7.5 Irony.....	48
III.8 Ideological Messages	48
III.8.1 Collective Identity	48
III.8.2 Resistance as a National Experience	48
III.8.3 Resistance Discourse	48
Conclusion	50
Bibliographical / References	53



Abstract

ABSTRACT

This study explores Rifaat Alareer's Poetry ,a Palestinian poet and Activist from GAZA ,exploring stylistic devises function as a tool of Resistance in two poems “if i must die “and” drowned “. This research

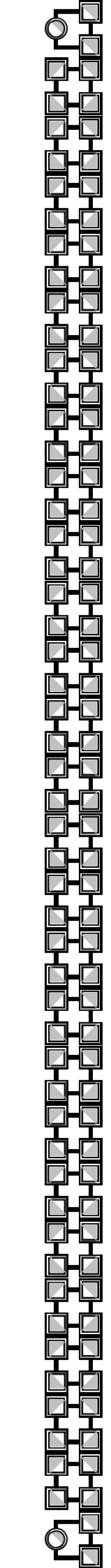
Adopts a qualitative descriptive method. It conducts a stylistics Analysis of literary devices, including imagery, repetition, Symbolism ,diction and figurative language through a post colonial Theoretical background. The findings show that Alareer uses simple Language, convey profound political meanings ,transforming personal loss into Collective resistance emphasizing Palestinian identity in the face of The occupation. The study concludes that his poetry represent a Powerful act of resistance with the use of stylistic devises affirming That language itself is a form of resistance .

Keywords:Palestinian literature ,resistance poetry , Rifaat Alareer

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة شعر رفعت العرعير، الشاعر والناشط الفلسطيني من غزة، إذ تستكشف الأساليب الأسلوبية بوصفها أداةً للمقاومة في قصيدتين هما "إذا كان لا بد أن أموت" و"مُبلَّل". تعتمد هذه الدراسة المنهج الوصفي النوعي، وتُجري تحليلاً أسلوبياً للأدوات الأدبية، شاملاً: الصور الشعرية، والتكرار، والرمزية، والمفردات، واللغة المجازية، وذلك في ضوء الإطار النظري لما بعد الاستعمار. وقد كشفت النتائج أن العرعير يوظف لغةً بسيطة لنقل مضامين سياسية عميقة، محوِّلاً الخسارة الفردية إلى مقاومة جماعية، ومؤكداً الهوية الفلسطينية في مواجهة الاحتلال. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن شعره يمثل فعلاً مقاومياً بامتياز، إذ تُرسخ الأساليب الأسلوبية المُستخدمة فيه أن اللغة ذاتها ضرب من ضروب المقاومة.

الأدب الفلسطيني، شعر المقاومة، رفعت العرعير: الكلمات المفتاحية



General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Postcolonial literature is theory in which people who have experienced the colonization ,occupation and displacement from an outsider power , it challenges colonial narratives by foregrounding the cultures and identities of the colonized making the language the main act of resistance ,within this Palestinian literature takes a significant place with it ,Palestinian poetry explored a form of collective memory and a political overview some poets such as Mahmoud Darwish proved that Palestinian poetry as one of the most powerful act of resistance in the postcolonial world the main themes of this poetry is resistance ,identity ,exile and struggle ,Refaat Alareer, a contemporary Palestinian poet gave voice to the reality of life in Gaza through his poetry. His use of language is simple, yet effective. Through his poems, the poet talks about death, memory, dignity, and resistance.

This study is centered on two poems of Refaat Alareer .*If I Must Die ,Drenched.*

The study shows how resistance is expressed through language by using a stylistic approach.

2. Statement of the Problem

Several studies explored Palestinian resistance poetry's themes; however, there are few studies that analyses how language and style create the meaning of resistance, especially in the poetry of Refaat Alareer.

That is why, the current study attempts to demonstrate how stylistic features help in the expression of resistance. These include imagery, repetition, choice of words, and tone. Despite growing interest in Palestinian resistance literature ,limited stylistic studies have been devoted to Alareer poetic work therefore ,we need to explore how his linguistic and stylistic devises construct “voice of resistance “that blends personal grief with collective struggle

3. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is:

This study attempts to see the portrayal of resistance through Refaat Alareer's poetry.

- 1.To identify the main stylistic features in the selected poems.
- 2.To explain how poetic language is used to express resistance.

- **3.**To show the relation between style and Palestinian identity and struggle.
- **4.**To contribute to the study of Palestinian resistance literature from a stylistic perspective.

4. Research Questions

This study tries to answer the following questions:

- 1.**How is resistance expressed through language in Refaat Alareer's poetry?
- 2.**What are the main stylistic features used in *If I Must Die* and *Drenched*?
- 3.**How do these stylistic features reflect the Palestinian experience?

5. Significance of the Study

This study is important because it contributes to the literary criticism and Palestinian resistance literature by showing a stylistic analysis of contemporary Palestinian poet, many previous works have focused on historical political and thematic analysis, this study demonstrates how resistance is contracted through poetic language in its simple form.

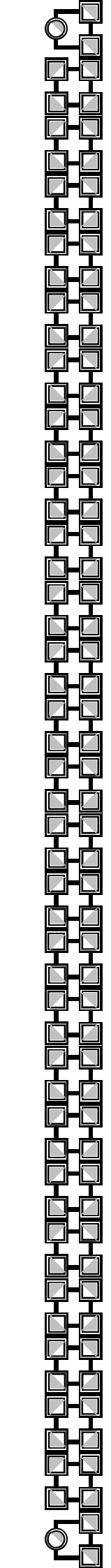
Furthermore, this study enhances our understanding of how Palestinian poets talk about resistance, identity, and collective memory through language, by a stylistic analysis of Palestinian poetry it will provide students and researchers with an analytical work for reading poetry as an act of resistance.

6. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method based on textual analysis, examining the two poems by the Palestinian poet Rifaat Alareer (*if I must die* and *drenched*), which serves as the primary data of the study, to analyse these poems using a stylistic approach focusing on key literary features, including imagery, repetition, symbolism, word choice (diction), tone and figurative language, as these elements are considered the main tools in which political consciousness is used in the text, moreover postcolonial theory is used to contextualize the stylistic findings within resistance literature, linking to the poet's linguistic choices to themes of identity, occupation and the struggle, with this stylistic method and the postcolonial perspective it provides a closer analytical lens.

7. Structure of the Study

This dissertation is divided into a general introduction ,and a general conclusion, first chapter entitled (theoretical background of post colonial literature) which is about introducing the post colonial theory along with Palestinian resistance poetry and mentioning some Palestinian poets eventually introducing the author with the chosen corps for this desertion ,and the second chapter entitled (practical chapter :a stylistic analysis of the poetry of Rifaat Alareer) which is about stylistically analysis the two poems of Rifaat Alareer if I must die and drenched) with the stylistic devises used in the poem(metaphor , symbolism and personification) exploring how it a voice of resistance.



Chapter I. Theoretical Background of Post Colonial Literature

I. Postcolonial Literature and Resistance

I.1. The Concept of Resistance Literature

Postcolonial literature refers to a body of literary works produced by authors from countries and regions that were once colonized by European powers. It emerged as a response to the historical and cultural impact of colonialism, seeking to reclaim and redefine the identities of formerly colonized peoples (Loomba). As Ania Loomba argued, colonialism wasn't just about land; it was about the mind, so reclaiming identity was essential.

It encompasses a wide range of genres, including novels, poems, plays, and essays, and is characterized by its exploration of themes related to colonial history, cultural hybridity, resistance, and identity. (Anitha Lakshmi 614).

It also holds immense significance in the global literary landscape as it challenges the dominance of Eurocentric narratives and amplifies the voices of marginalized and silenced communities (Said, 1978). By presenting alternative perspectives and histories, postcolonial literature offers a critical examination of the legacy of colonialism and its enduring impact on societies and cultures worldwide. Moreover, it serves as a platform for fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding, bridging the gaps between the West and the Rest (Bhabha).

Dating back to pre-Islamic Arabia peninsula, poetry has been a vehicle for political expression, inspiring and mobilizing communities across regions. In the face of political repression and authoritarian rule, poetry emerges as a powerful tool for solidarity building, generating emotional bonds and reinforcing the centuries-old tradition of Islamic *ate verse*. (07).

Postcolonial theory focuses on the relationship between the metropolis and its colonial subjects; it focuses on colonial oppression, resistance to colonization, the respective identities of colonizer and colonized and interaction between them, on postcolonial migration to the metropolis, and on cultural exchanges and hybridity of both cultures between the colonizer and the colonized. (Said 03)

These theoretical concerns do not remain abstract but find an exact expression in postcolonial literature, the political and cultural conditions that postcolonial

theory describes the struggling of resistance ,the oppression ,experiencing migration translate directly into literally themes

so postcolonial literature is known for the following themes

exile, resistance, identity and displacement each one illustrate the outcome of the colonial experience.

Mourid Barghouti is considered as one of the most influential Palestinian writers of the 21th century with his definition of exile, belonging and displacement with his work *i saw Ramallah* :

I saw Ramallah is a lyrical self narrative that takes stock of Barghouti's life time in the ghourba (exile) and pitches it in relation to his visit to the occupied Palestinian territories in 1996 .Barghouti relates his return to Deir ghassanah and the city of Ramallah ,and the narrative is structured around regular temporal shifts between his return visit the here and now of his account and a series of incidents or patches of time ,as he calls them ,from his life in the diaspora (Bugeja).

The theme of belonging in "*i saw Ramallah*" is also closely tied to the concept of identity. the protagonist does not simply experience a physical journey but also goes through a mix of emotional states that affect him psychologically. to highlight the struggle with identity, Barghouti claims that one does "not rejoice immediately when life presses a button that turns the wheel of events in [their] favor" (75). (Barghouti,. *I saw Ramallah*)

I.2. Writing Under Occupation and Conflict

Postcolonial literature is replete with narratives of resistance against colonial oppression and exploitation. writers vividly depict the experiences of colonized peoples who challenge the oppressive systems imposed by colonial rulers. these narratives often highlight acts of defiance, rebellions, and revolutionary movements that aimed to reclaim agency and sovereignty. for instance, in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's "petals of blood," the characters resist the exploitative practices of neocolonial powers, advocating for social justice and land rights(Anitha Lakshmi k. h.616).

Edward said [4]'s "orientalism" unveils the west's systematic representation of the east as inferior, exotic, and backward. this "colonial discourse" enables imperial domination by constructing the colonized subject as 'other.' Said's work is pivotal in revealing how literature has been complicit in colonial ideologies, and how postcolonial literature contests these narratives

Resistance is an essential theme in postcolonial literature as it replete with narratives of resistance against colonial oppression and exploitation. writers vividly depict the experiences of colonized peoples who challenge the oppressive systems imposed by colonial rulers. these narratives often highlight acts of defiance, rebellions, and revolutionary movements that aimed to reclaim agency and sovereignty. for instance, in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's "petals of blood," the characters resist the exploitative practices of neocolonial powers, advocating for social justice and land rights. (Lakshmi .615)

II. Palestinian Literature and the discourse of Resistance

II .1. Palestinian Resistance Literature

Edward said would define Palestinian literature as writing that expresses the Palestinian experience of exile, dispossession, memory, and the struggle for identity under colonial and nationalist pressure., it is not just literature about Palestine as a place, but a political and cultural act that resists erasure and insists on Palestinian self representation(said).

II.1.1 Major themes in Palestinian Writings

After the 1948 Nakba the Palestinian resistance poetry emerged many major names such as Mahmoud Darwish ,Fadwa tuqan ,Palestinian poetry is deeply connected to notions of identity and belonging. through vivid imagery, symbolism, and metaphor, poets evoke the landscapes of Palestine, the pain of exile, displacement and extermination, and the longing for return. by weaving together personal experiences with collective struggles, Palestinian poets forge a sense of unity and solidarity among their people.(adell,05).

language and literature serve as potent tools of resistance, offering ways for reclaiming narratives, challenging oppressive structures, and fostering solidarity among marginalized communities.(Adell 06), within the Palestinian and Arab world context, poetry emerges as a particularly powerful form of resistance. poetry has served as a potent form of resistance in the Islamic ate world4 , evolving from praising the virtues of the ruling classes to embodying anti-colonial and antistatic sentiments(ply's 1-2).

II.1.2 Voices from Gaza in contemporary Palestinian literature

one of the Palestinian poets is Mahmoud Darwish, he was born in al-Birwa in the western galilee, a village that was occupied and subsequently razed by the Israeli army. because they had missed the official Israeli census, Darwish and his family were considered as “internal refugees” or “present absent aliens.” living for many years in exile in Beirut and Paris, Darwish is the author of over 30 books of poetry and eight books of prose, and gained the Lannan cultural freedom prize from the Lannan foundation, the Lenin peace prize, and the knight of arts and belles letters medal from France.(Asharani 02).

III. Refaat Alareer and his Literary Contribution

III .1 Biographical Background

Rifaat Alareer was born in Gaza city, the capital of the Gaza governorate in Palestine, on September 23, 1979, during the Israeli occupation of Gaza.

He received his ma in comparative literature from university college London and completed his PhD in English literature at the university Putra Malaysia.

Alareer authored *if i must die: poetry and prose* (or books, 2024), Alareer is the editor of *Gaza writes back* (just world books, 2014) and coeditor, alongside Laila El Haddad, of *Gaza unsilenced* (just world books, 2015). he was a contributor to “life in occupied Palestine,” .

Alareer is interested in emerging Palestinian writers and works very closely with many of them to help them develop their creative writing skills. his book [*Gaza writes back*](#) is a compilation of short stories written in English by young Palestinian writers living in the Gaza strip. it shows a different side of the struggle to create a free Palestine, since it includes fictional work and was written by young people as part of Gaza’s creative reaction to Israel’s repeated acts of aggression against Gaza.(afsc.org).

III.2.Major Works

Rifaat Alareer explored the same themes of exile displacement identity and resistance that define the work of Palestinian poets such as Mahmoud Darwish and Ghassan Kanafani.

since 2007, Alareer had taught world literature, comparative literature, and both fiction and nonfiction creative writing at the Islamic university of Gaza. he is the founder of we are not numbers, an organization dedicated to sharing stories by Palestinian writers.

Storytelling served as both a personal imperative and a collective resistance throughout Rifaat Alareer's life (1979– 2023). over and above, the storytelling projects of his life, career, art, and activism were all catalyzed and fueled by deaths – inflicted by military operations in Gaza. this fundamental connection between storytelling and death manifested prominently in his co- founding of the we are not numbers (Wann) initiative, a role frequently highlighted in tributes

on December 6, 2023, an Israeli airstrike killed Alareer, his sister, brother, and four of his nephews and nieces.(poets.org).

IV. Stylistics And Literary Interpretation

IV.1.definitions and scope of stylistics

Stylistics is an area of study within the field of linguistics, or the scientific study of language. stylistics focuses on analysis and interpretation of the style of written language, typically in literature. it also may be referred to as "literary linguistics." a number of sub-disciplines exist in the study of stylistics, such as interpretive stylistics, empirical stylistics, evaluative stylistics, gender and feminist stylistics, computational stylistics, and cognitive stylistics. a researcher working in the field of stylistics is called a stylistician. a stylistician is an individual who has expert knowledge of rhetoric and grammar and its components. these components include phonology, or the relationships among the sounds of speech, and syntax, or the arrangements of words or phrases in sentences. a stylistician uses the language in a literary text to collect evidence that either supports or denies literary critics' individual interpretations. a primary goal of stylistics is to conduct analysis of literary texts through a scientific method that is free of personal opinion and interpretation. (Keene 01)

To understand the history of stylistics, it is necessary to understand rhetoric. rhetoric is a method of persuasive speaking that is usually intended to have a

specific effect on the audience through its use of language. the origins of stylistics may be traced back to the classical rhetoric of Aristotle and the ancient Greeks and romans, who first defined the five canons of rhetoric. the canons of rhetoric were the steps one followed to develop clear and persuasive communication. they included discovering or gathering material, organizing, writing, memorizing, and finally delivering a speech. (Keene 01)

It is a specialized branch of linguistics that focuses on the analysis and interpretation of style in written language, particularly within literature. it encompasses various sub-disciplines, including interpretive, empirical, evaluative, gender and feminist, computational, and cognitive stylistics. scholars in this field, known as stylisticians, use a scientific approach to examine how grammatical, rhetorical, and literary devices shape readers' perceptions and interpretations of texts. the history of stylistics is rooted in classical rhetoric, evolving through movements such as Russian formalism ,post colonialism and structuralism, before integrating contemporary approaches that consider linguistic structures alongside cognitive processes. . (Keene 02).

IV.2.Levels of Stylistics

Levels of stylistic are used in texts to interrupt meaning as explained : . (manqoush and al-Wadha 21-22).

- 1.Phonological Level

Phonology is a branch of linguistics that is concerned with the structure of sounds or sound systems in any human language and how these sounds are produced. there is a difference between phonology and phonetics. according to roger lass (1998: 1), phonology deals with "sounds of language" i.e. it focuses on "the function, behavior and organization of sounds as linguistics items,"

- 2. Graphological Level

The graphological of stylistics has been originated from level graphology which refers to the writing system. it deals with the punctuation that include capitalization, italicization, bolding, hyphenation, semicolon, apostrophe, comma, full stop, dotting, omission marks, quotation marks, question marks, exclamation marks, dash, brackets, paragraphing, spacing ... etc. however, analyzing graphology in the text must be connected with other levels of the language.

- 3.Lexicological Level

Lexicology is a branch of linguistics that is concerned with the lexicon of the language including the words and their meanings. in linguistics, the word is the

smallest meaningful unit of the language that can stand on its own. the word consists of small components called morphemes and phonemes. lexicology studies the relationship between words. a lexeme is a unit of lexicology that refers to the other meanings of a word. in stylistic studies the lexicological level examines the words' formation, diction, spelling, origin ... etc. in brief, awareness of lexicology assists scholars of literature to analyze the authors' use of connotations, allusions, metaphors, personifications, symbols, paradoxes and ironies. . (manqoush and al-wadhaf 21).

- 4.Syntactic Level

Syntax is a branch of linguistics that studies the combination of words and morphemes to form larger units such as phrases and sentences. in other words, it deals with the internal structure of sentences and the interrelationships among the internal parts. it is concerned with grammar and how words are arranged to form sentences. when analyzing the syntax, readers must focus on the devices below:

1. position of the words in the sentence through the use of inversion and detachment.
2. absence of some elements of the sentence through the use of elliptical construction (ellipsis), nominative sentences, apokoinou and aposiopesis ... etc. . (manqoush and al-wadhaf 21).
3. repetition by using anaphora, epiphora, framing, anadiplosis, parallelism, chiasmus, synonymic repetition, tautology ... etc.
4. different types of connection between words, clauses or sentences as shown through asyndeton, polysyndeton. (manqoush and al-wadhaf 21).

- Semantic Level

semantics is the study of the meaning of the language such as the sentence or phrase. unlike the lexicological and syntactic levels that focus merely on the diction and syntax of the comprised words, phrases and sentence, the semantic level examines the meaning of the text in general i.e. it goes beyond the words, phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs towards an entire ideas. (manqoush and al-wadhaf 21-22).

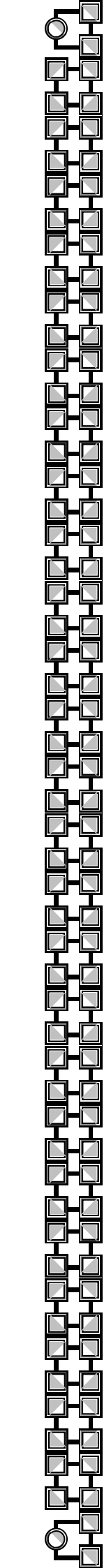
IV.3.Stylistics as a Tool in Resistance Literature

In this section we will see how language can more than a communication tool , language ideology refers to the sets of beliefs, attitudes, and conceptualizations that speakers hold about language in relation to their social, political, and cultural

worlds. these beliefs are not neutral; they are deeply influenced by power structures, linking language use to broader social and political interests, often validating or challenging social inequalities. as Norman Fairclough argued "all of this necessarily leads to the fact that language (any language) is not neutral in terms of the ideas it carries. as long as it is an embodiment of reality, the activities and activities of language are at the heart of life, and not just a mirror that reflects life. so there is no neutral language of discourse, but rather it is necessarily biased in one way or another, as it is immersed in the daily life of society as a scientific awareness of it, and it is inevitable that this awareness will be biased in some way. this awareness can be called 'ideology' if we define ideology as an organized structure of ideas."(Fairclough, 03).

In this modern era language is seen as a powerful and functional way for resistance as demonstrated in the poems of this dissertation (if i must die/drenched),especially in the Palestinian resistance ,the poet mourid Barghouti said that “poetry is not a civil servant ,it’s in nobody employ” , similarly Ghassan Kanafani argued “Palestine resistance literature ,similar to armed resistance ,shapes a new circle in the historical series which practically ,has not been cut throughout the last half century in the Palestinian life “ (Barbra Harlow).

Foucault argues that discourse is never neutral , but it is controlled by a system that serves the interests of dominant power structures (the order of discourse).language in this view is a site of political contestation .on this foundation said demonstrates in *orientalism* (1978)that the colonial power does not work through force alone it supports it self through narrative and linguistic domination making the colonized as voiceless and inferior .in the Palestinian context therefore ,resistance poetry functions as counter discourse :a deliberate reclaiming of language as a space of agency ,identity and defiance against colonial erasure .



Chapter II. A Stylistic Analysis of Rifaat Alareer Poetry

I. Introduction

This chapter presents a stylistic analysis of two poems written by Alareer: *If I Must Die* and *Drenched*. The aim of this practical chapter is to study how the poet uses language and stylistic devices to express important themes such as resistance, identity, suffering, hope, loss, and survival under occupation. This analysis focuses on different stylistic levels, including lexical analysis, syntactic analysis, phonological analysis, metrical scansion, rhyme scheme analysis, figurative language, and ideological messages. Through these elements, the chapter explains how poetry can become a powerful form of resistance and how language can be used to defend identity, memory, and homeland.

Stylistics is important because it helps readers understand not only what the poet says, but also how meaning is created through language. In these poems, words, sentence structures, sounds, meter, rhyme, symbols, and images all work together to create emotional and political meanings. Alareer uses simple but powerful language to describe the difficult reality of Palestinian life under occupation. His poems show pain and suffering, but they also express strength, hope, and the refusal to surrender. The stylistic analysis of these poems reveals how literary language can carry both artistic beauty and political resistance at the same time.

The two selected poems were chosen because they clearly represent the Palestinian experience under occupation and reflect the collective voice of Palestinians who live under violence, displacement, destruction, and oppression. These poems are not only personal expressions of emotion, but also national expressions of resistance and survival. In *if i must die*, the poet speaks about death, sacrifice, and hope for future generations. Even while facing death, the speaker encourages life, memory, and continuity. In *drenched*, the poet describes suffering, emotional pain, and the heavy effects of occupation, while also showing endurance and resilience. Both poems present Palestinians as people who continue resisting despite death, fear, loss, and destruction. Another reason for choosing these poems is that they contain rich stylistic features that strongly support the theme of resistance. The poet carefully chooses words related to war, homeland, memory, hope, and identity. He also uses repetition, symbolism, imagery, metaphor, rhythm, meter, rhyme, and sound patterns to create

emotional impact and strengthen the message of the poems. These stylistic devices help the reader feel the pain of Palestinians while also understanding their courage and determination. The poems combine personal feelings with collective national experience, making them strong examples of Palestinian resistance literature. Furthermore, Alareer is considered one of the important contemporary Palestinian voices because his poetry reflects the realities of Palestinian life in a direct and emotional way. His writing connects literature with politics and human experience. Through his poems, he gives voice to people who suffer from occupation and injustice. His poetry preserves Palestinian memory and identity while challenging oppression and silence. For this reason, studying his poetry stylistically helps reveal how language itself becomes an act of resistance.

This chapter therefore aims to demonstrate that the stylistic choices used in *if i must die and drenched* are not random artistic elements, but meaningful tools that communicate Palestinian suffering, resilience, and national identity. The analysis will show that the poems stylistically represent the Palestinian voice and transform poetry into a form of cultural and political resistance.

II. Resisting the Occupation in *If I Must Die*: A Stylistic Approach

II.1 *If I Must Die*: Corpus Summary

The poem *if i must die* presents resistance through death, sacrifice, hope, and continuity. The speaker accepts the possibility of death but transforms it into a message of survival and collective struggle. Alareer employs different stylistic devices such as repetition, symbolism, imperative structures, imagery, meter, rhyme, and sound patterns to communicate resilience and Palestinian identity. The poem reflects how Palestinians continue resisting despite destruction and death. The speaker's voice becomes symbolic of the entire Palestinian people. Although the poem speaks from a personal point of view, it represents the suffering and hopes of a whole nation living under occupation. The speaker does not focus only on fear or sadness;

instead, he turns pain into strength and transforms death into a symbol of continuity and hope.

The poem also highlights the importance of memory and future generations. Even if the speaker dies, he wants his story and his people's struggle to continue. This idea shows that resistance is not limited to one person but belongs to all Palestinians. The poem sends a message that the occupation may destroy homes and lives, but it cannot destroy hope, identity, or the desire for freedom.

Another important aspect of the poem is its emotional simplicity. The language is clear and direct, which makes the message powerful and easy to understand. The poet uses ordinary words to express deep emotions such as grief, love, sacrifice, and determination. This simplicity allows readers from different backgrounds to connect emotionally with the Palestinian experience. In addition, the poem creates a strong connection between personal sacrifice and national resistance. The speaker's death becomes meaningful because it serves the continuation of life and hope for others. Through symbols like the kite, the poet shows that Palestinians continue dreaming of freedom despite violence and oppression. The poem therefore becomes both a personal farewell and a national call for resistance and survival. Through its stylistic features and emotional tone, *If I Must Die* stands as a powerful example of Palestinian resistance literature. It gives voice to suffering of people while also expressing courage, dignity, and hope for freedom.

II.2 Lexical Analysis: From Death to Freedom

The lexical structure of the poem is organized around two opposing semantic fields: death/violence and life/continuity. This opposition creates what Mick Short describes as semantic tension, where meaning emerges through contrast rather than statement (Short,). The word "die" appears in the opening line "If I must die," immediately establishing the field of mortality, while "kite" and "child" in later lines construct the opposing field of life and continuity. This tension forces the reader to actively negotiate between destruction and hope, rather than receiving a single, stable message. Alareer employs foregrounding through the re-categorization of mundane objects. The "white cloth" and "strings" are pulled from the lexical

field of burial (the shroud) and moved into the lexical field of "childhood" and "play" (the kite). This shift is a stylistic deviation that forces the reader to prioritize legacy over mourning. The transformation is complete in the line "make it a kite" _ the imperative command re-categorizes funeral materials into toys, deviating from expected semantic associations.

Additionally, the use of the "Expo marker" functions as a synecdoche, where a small tool of education represents the entire intellectual resistance project. The marker, an ordinary writing instrument, stands for the poet's role as educator and the broader Palestinian commitment to knowledge as resistance. This connects to the argument in resistance discourse that cultural survival depends on intellectual continuity (Harlow).

As it highlights his mission as a poet who sees in writing/who uses his pen to resist and revive the Palestinian story.

II.2.1 Semantic Field of Death and Violence:

The lexical items associated with death include:

- die
- bombing
- martyr
- killed

The recurrence of "die" in the conditional clause foregrounds mortality as an unavoidable reality. However, the term "martyr" introduces a culturally loaded semantic shift. In this context, the word does not simply denote death, but rather constructs it as ideologically meaningful sacrifice. This is an example of semantic recontextualization, where meaning is shaped by cultural context. In Palestinian resistance discourse, "martyr" transforms biological death into political testimony, aligning with the argument that "the body of the martyr becomes a site of political signification" (Khalili 12).

II.2.2 Semantic Fields of Life and Continuity:

Opposed to death-related vocabulary, the poem includes:

- hope
- live
- kite
- child

The lexical item “kite” is particularly significant. It functions as a symbolic lexical node, linking abstract ideas (freedom, memory) to concrete imagery. The phrase “make it a kite” in line (.14.) is an example of lexical transformation, where an object becomes a carrier of ideology. The kite is not described directly as freedom; instead, freedom is constructed through association. The kite rises “above” destruction, its flight path creating a spatial metaphor for transcendence. This illustrates the argument that in resistance poetry, “material objects acquire transcendental significance through contextual reframing” (Jayyusi. 245).

II.2.3 Homeland and Memory:

A crucial semantic field in the poem is that of homeland and collective memory. Although not always explicit, it is constructed through references such as "Gaza," "child," and implied generational continuity. The reference to Gaza is not merely geographical; it functions as a discursive marker of identity and belonging, anchoring the poem in a specific spatial reality. In stylistic terms, this is an example of referential anchoring, where place names carry ideological weight. "Gaza" appears not as background setting but as the embodied location of suffering and resistance, connecting to the argument that "place in Palestinian poetry is never neutral but always already political" (Said p.68).

The presence of "child" also contributes to this field, representing future generations who inherit both suffering and identity. This lexical choice constructs memory as intergenerational continuity rather than static recollection. The child who receives the kite inherits not merely a

toy but a "living cause," illustrating the argument that Palestinian resistance operates through "generational transmission of traumatic memory" (Sa'di & Abu-Lughod,,19).

II.2.4 Struggle and Sacrifice :

This semantic field includes words and expressions associated with endurance, patience, survival, and perseverance.

Such vocabulary highlights the strength and determination of the Palestinian people. Resistance is presented as a continuous effort that requires courage and resilience. The emphasis is not only on heroic acts, but also on the daily struggle to remain steadfast and maintain dignity under difficult conditions. This field reinforces the idea that resistance is a long-term commitment rather than a temporary reaction.

II.2.5 Lexical Contrast: Death versus Hope

One of the most striking aspects of the poem is the contrast between two opposing lexical fields:

Negative vocabulary

Positive vocabulary

die, bombing, martyr, killed

life, hope, children, kite

This contrast creates a strong emotional tension. The reader is constantly reminded of the violence faced by the Palestinian people, but at the same time, the poem insists that hope and life are stronger than death. Although words related to death appear throughout the poem, the final message is dominated by the vocabulary of hope. This suggests that resistance is ultimately an affirmation of life. The enemy may cause suffering, but cannot destroy the people's dreams, memory, or identity.

The repetition of "If I must die" emphasizes inevitability and sacrifice. It reflects the repetitive reality of Palestinian suffering under occupation. Repetition also strengthens emotional intensity and highlights resistance as an ongoing struggle.

II.2.6 Symbolism:

The "kite" symbolizes freedom, innocence, and continuity. Although the speaker may die, the kite remains flying, representing the survival of the Palestinian cause. The child symbolizes future generations who continue resistance.

II.2.7 Concrete vs Abstract Vocabulary:

Alareer uses concrete vocabulary such as "kite," "cloth," and "string," making the suffering realistic and accessible. Abstract ideas like hope and freedom are expressed through physical objects. This technique strengthens emotional engagement and makes resistance visible and tangible. "hope" is never abstractly defined; it is materialized in the kite's strings, the Expo marker's ink, the child's hands-demonstrating the argument that "Palestinian resistance poetry grounds transcendence in material specificity" (Alshaer, p. 87).

II.3 Syntactic Analysis:

The syntax of the poem intensifies emotional impact and reinforces resistance. The poem relies heavily on enjambment (run-on lines) and a lack of punctuation. This creates a "breathless" syntactic pace, mirroring the urgency of a message delivered under siege. There is a significant shift in transitivity and modality: the poem begins with a passive condition ("If I must die") but transitions into a series of imperative moods ("you must live," "buy a piece of cloth"). This transforms the speaker from a passive victim into an active agent of resistance. The modal shift from "must die" (passive acceptance that shows the certainty of death) to "you must live" (active command that shows the insistence on living) enacts the very transformation from death to life that the poem thematizes, illustrating the argument that "grammatical agency in resistance literature redistributes power from oppressor to oppressed" (Fowler, 1996, p. 51).

II.3.1 Sentence Length :

The poem combines short and long sentences. Short structures such as “If I must die” create dramatic emphasis and reflect the harsh reality of death. Longer sentences express continuity and determination. (Sees the kite ,my kite you made flying up above.)

II.3.2 Parallelism :

Parallel structures reinforce rhythm and determination. The repeated grammatical pattern creates unity and gives the poem a chant-like quality associated with collective struggle. The parallel imperatives "sell my things," "buy a piece of white cloth," "make it a kite" create a procedural, step-by-step momentum that transforms grief into productive action.

II.3.3 Imperative Structures :

Commands such as “live,” “sell my things,” and “make it a kite” transform the poem from passive suffering into active resistance. The speaker directs others to continue the struggle after his death. These imperatives function as what speech act theory calls “directive performatives”-utterances that aim to change the world rather than merely describe it (Austin, 1962). This connects to the argument that “resistance poetry performs rather than reports resistance” (Barakat, 156).

II.3.4 Deviation from Normal Syntax :

Some sentences appear fragmented or simplified. This syntactic deviation reflects emotional urgency and the instability of life under occupation. The absence of punctuation and the run-on lines ("If I must die you must live") mirror the disrupted temporality of siege, where past, present, and future collapse into continuous emergency.

II.4 Phonological Analysis:

Sound patterns contribute to emotional tension and meaning. The poem's closing stanza is defined by sibilance (repetition of 's' sounds). The words "succession," "strings," "stories," and "souls" create a whispering, ethereal quality. This provides a phonological contrast to the harsh plosive sounds ('b' and 'z') in words like "blaze," suggesting that while the destruction is loud

and violent, the legacy of the story is quiet and persistent. Unlike the rigid iambic pentameter of Claude McKay's poem of the same name, Alareer uses a loose meter, representing a stylistic liberation from formal constraints.(claude)

II.4.1 Alliteration :

The repetition of consonant sounds creates musicality and emotional force. Soft sounds often accompany hope, while harder consonants reflect violence and destruction. The sibilance of "strings," "stories," "souls" creates a that contrasts with the explosive plosives of "bombing," "blaze," illustrating how "sound symbolism enacts thematic conflict" (, 1969. Leech97).

II.4.2 Assonance and Consonance :

Repeated vowel sounds produce sadness and mourning, while consonance strengthens rhythm and determination. (Not even to him self ,not even to his flesh).

II.4.3 Rhythm and Musicality :

The poem has a flowing rhythm that resembles oral speech. This simplicity makes the message universal and emotionally direct.

Rhyme scheme:

A b c d e d f g a d f h I b j b a k f: irregular rhyme scheme

Highlights resistance against imposed structures.

II.5 Metrical Scansion :

Line

Prosodic Reading

Pattern

Notes

“If I must die”

/ x / x /

iambic trimeter with substitution

Short, declarative; three stresses create finality

“you must live and tell my story”

x / x / x / x /

iambic tetrameter

Imperative momentum; four beats propel forward

“make it a kite”

/ x / x

trochaic dimeter

Commanding, childlike simplicity

While Alareer writes primarily in free verse, the poem exhibits traces of Arabic metrical influence that merit prosodic analysis. The lines do not conform strictly to classical Arabic meters, but they demonstrate what modern Arab poets call *al-shi'r al-hurr al-muwazzan* (free verse with metrical awareness)-a deliberate departure from classical constraints that retains rhythmic consciousness.

|

Line

Prosodic Reading

Pattern

Notes

“If I must die”

/ x / x /

iambic trimeter with substitution

Short, declarative; three stresses create finality

“you must live and tell my story”

x / x / x / x /

iambic tetrameter

Imperative momentum; four beats propel forward

“make it a kite”

/ x / x

trochaic dimeter

Commanding, childlike simplicity

The poem’s metrical looseness-its resistance to strict iambic pentameter-constitutes a stylistic liberation parallel to its thematic resistance. Where McKay’s “If We Must Die” (1919) employs rigid iambic pentameter to contain rage within formal dignity, Alareer’s variable meter refuses such containment, enacting the argument that “metrical freedom in postcolonial poetry signifies political freedom” (Ramazani, 45)

The ABAC pattern also appears in the kite-making instructions:

| “sell my things” | /ɪŋz/ | A |

| “piece of cloth” | /pθ/ | B |

| “make it a kite” | /aɪt/ | A (vowel) |

| “so a child... will read” | /i:d/ | C |

Here the A-position vowel /a/ is maintained across “things/kite” through assonance rather than full rhyme, creating what we might call ABAC variation-the scheme adapts to semantic content, with the kite’s flight (“kite”/”read”) generating new rhyming possibilities. This illustrates the argument that “organic form in resistance poetry makes technique serve ideology” (Brecht, 1964, p. 189).

II.6 Figurative and Rhetorical Devices

II.6.1 Metaphor :

Alareer's *If I Must Die* utilizes death as a profound metaphor that transcends personal loss to represent a defiant national struggle. Rather than viewing mortality as a biological end, Alareer conceptualizes it as a "testimony" that outlives physical destruction, effectively becoming the "afterlife of the tale". This metaphorical framework aligns with Saidian late style, where artistic expression becomes most potent when confronting imminent obliteration. In this context, Alareer's death symbolizes the "intransigent spirit" of Palestine-a refusal to be silenced by the "war machine" or "indefinite numbers". By centering his personal end within a collective narrative, he transforms his own sacrifice into a "weaponization" of storytelling, where the act of dying becomes a final, legitimate mode of resistance against systematic oppression and erasure. (Hussein, 90)

The metaphor "afterlife of the tale" transforms biological death into narrative survival, demonstrating what Said (2006) calls "late style"-artistic production under the shadow of death that achieves "a new idiom" of defiance (7). This connects to the argument that "the martyr's death produces not silence but amplified speech" (Khalili, 2007, 15).

II.6.2 Symbolism

The kite serves as the poem's central symbol, acting as a transformative vessel for freedom, memory, and generational continuity. Alareer purposefully subverts traditional symbols of mourning; the "white cloth" and "strings," which the reader initially expects to form a funeral shroud, are instead repurposed into a kite. This shift from a passive symbol of death to an

active symbol of flight represents a "late-style spirit" that refuses defeat, opting instead for a "joyous" and "stubborn" assertion of existence. Rising "above" the destruction in Gaza, the kite symbolizes a bridge between the deceased and future generations, appearing to a child as an "angel" that brings back "love" and "hope". Ultimately, the kite symbolizes the immortality of the Palestinian cause, ensuring that even if the author dies, the tale remains a "living cause" that continues to fly in the collective memory.

The kite's transformation from shroud to toy enacts what Freud called "the work of mourning"- converting loss into livable memory (Freud, 1917). The white cloth, culturally coded as burial garment, is re-coded as play material, illustrating the argument that "resistance symbolism reclaims death's materials for life's purposes" (Barakat, 1993, 203).

II.6.3 Imagery :

Visual imagery related to children, sky, and flying creates emotional contrast between innocence and violence. These images humanize Palestinians and emphasize their right to freedom. The image of the kite "rising above" creates vertical counterpoint to the horizontal destruction, illustrating how "spatial imagery in Palestinian poetry constructs alternative geographies of hope" (Said,177).

II.6.4 Personification :

Hope and memory are given life-like qualities, making resistance appear alive and active. (If i must die ,let it bring hope)

II.6.5 Irony :

There is irony in transforming death into hope. The occupier seeks destruction, yet the speaker turns martyrdom into continuity and survival.

Irony functions as a core structural and thematic device, particularly through what Edward Said identifies as the "refracted mode" of late-style resistance. There is a poignant situational irony in Alareer's choice of the English language; while he writes to anchor his poem in the specific geography of Gaza, it is the use of the "occupier's" global tongue that facilitated its

"instant and direct reception" and translocation across over 70 languages. Furthermore, the poem exhibits a deep irony in its "braving" of the enemy's design: the very act of killing the storyteller, intended to silence the story, instead serves as the catalyst that amplifies the tale's "afterlife" to a global audience of millions. Finally, Alareer employs a tonal irony by meeting a "catastrophic" and "imminent" death not with defeatism, but with an "upbeat" and "joyous" focus on "love" and "hope," effectively using the materials of his own burial to construct a toy that signifies life.

The English language, instrument of colonial power, becomes vehicle of anti-colonial testimony demonstrating what Bhabha (1994) calls "hybridity," where the colonizer's tools are turned against colonialism (112). This illustrates the argument that "writing in the oppressor's language is itself an act of appropriation and subversion" (Ngũgĩ, 1986, 28).

II.7 Ideological Messages

II.7.1 Collective Identity :

Although the speaker uses the first person singular, the voice represents all Palestinians facing occupation. Individual suffering becomes collective struggle. The shift from "I" (singular) to "you" (addressed other) to "a child" (generational) constructs what Anderson (1983) calls an "imagined community" the nation as horizontal comradeship across time (. 7).

II.7.2 Resistance as Personal and National :

Resistance is presented both as personal sacrifice and national duty. The poem connects private grief with the broader Palestinian struggle for freedom. The speaker's individual death is framed as "so that a child... will read about us"-the personal pronoun "us" absorbing individual into collective, illustrating the argument that "Palestinian resistance poetry constructs the nation through personal martyrdom" (Alshaer, 2019,92).

II.7.3 Resistance Discourse:

The poem rejects victimhood. Instead of surrendering to death, the speaker transforms it into an act of resistance and hope. Illustration: The conditional "If I must die" is not resignation

but strategic acceptance-what Sartre (1948) called "engaged literature" the writer accepting risk to speak truth to power (22).

III. Resisting The Occupation in Drenched: A Stylistic Approach

III.1 Drenched: Corpus Summary

In *Drenched*, Alareer portrays Palestinian suffering through images of pain, destruction, and emotional exhaustion. However, beneath this suffering lies resistance and determination. The poem reflects how Palestinians endure violence while maintaining identity and memory.

The poem presents the difficult reality of life under occupation, where fear, loss, and sadness are part of everyday experience. The speaker describes emotional pain in a powerful and direct way, allowing the reader to feel the heaviness of suffering faced by Palestinians. Images related to water, tears, and hope create an atmosphere of grief and oppression. These images symbolize both physical suffering and emotional trauma caused by war and occupation. Despite this painful atmosphere, the poem is not only about weakness or despair. The poet also expresses endurance and survival. Palestinians in the poem continue living and resisting even when surrounded by destruction. This contrast between suffering and strength is one of the central ideas of the poem. It shows that resistance can exist not only through fighting, but also through patience, survival, and preserving identity.

The language of the poem is simple but deeply emotional. Alareer uses ordinary words to express complex feelings such as fear, grief, loneliness, and hope. This simplicity makes the poem more realistic and allows readers to connect emotionally with the Palestinian experience.

The poet avoids complicated language and instead focuses on clear images and strong feelings.

The poem also emphasizes collective suffering. Although the speaker may appear alone, the experience described represents the condition of many Palestinians living under occupation. The personal voice becomes a national voice that speaks for a whole people facing violence and injustice. In this way, the poem becomes both an emotional expression and a form of resistance literature. Another important idea in the poem is the connection between memory and identity. Even under suffering and destruction, Palestinians continue holding onto their culture, memories, and sense of belonging. The occupation may attempt to silence or erase them, but the poem shows that identity remains alive through memory and language.

Through its stylistic features, emotional tone, and symbolic imagery, *Drenched* presents Palestinian suffering while also expressing resilience and determination. The poem transforms pain into a voice of resistance and shows that hope can continue even in moments of darkness and loss.

III.2 Lexical Analysis

The lexical structure of the poem is built around three dominant semantic fields: suffering, oppression, and resistance.

The lexical landscape is dominated by the semantic field of "Water" and "Purification." Words like "drenched," "the sea" and "salt " contrast sharply with the lexical items associated with the "the struggle." Here, the vocabulary suggests a total immersion in the Palestinian collective experience, where the struggle is as natural and unavoidable as the rain. The title "Drenched" immediately establishes saturation-there is no dry space, no refuge from suffering. This illustrates the argument that "totalizing imagery in occupation poetry represents the absence of exteriority" (Fanon, , 52).

III.2.1 Semantic Field of Suffering and Violence :

This semantic field includes words such as blood, salt and soaked, and . These items create what stylisticians call a lexical words of suffering, where meaning is reinforced through repetition of related concepts (Riffaterre,). The recurrence of water-words ("drenched," "the sea ," "wash," "soaked," "trembling") creates a network where each term activates the others,

producing what Riffaterre calls “overdetermination”-meaning generated through systematic lexical redundancy (34).

Water imagery, especially the sea and salt, functions here as a double-coded lexical item: it is both natural and symbolic of emotional overwhelm., it refers meteorologically to precipitation and metaphorically to tears, creating what Leech calls “contextual synonymy”-two senses activated simultaneously (286).

III.2.2 Semantic Field of Emotional and Existential Pressure

The poem does not explicitly use lexical items directly referring to occupation or political oppression such as destruction or loss only in the ending . Instead, meaning is constructed indirectly through metaphorical displacement, where emotional distress is expressed through environmental imagery. The “sea” that drenches is never identified as bombing, the “drowning” never as siege-yet the displacement is recognizable to Palestinian readers, illustrating the argument that “occupation poetry develops coded lexicons for shared traumatic experience” (Khalili, 89). The dominance of drenched , water, and drowning related imagery suggests overwhelming emotional pressure. These lexical choices function as symbolic representations of lived experience, where physical saturation reflects psychological and existential overwhelm.

From a stylistic perspective, this absence of direct political vocabulary is significant. It can be interpreted as foregrounding by omission, where meaning is created through what is not explicitly stated, as discussed in stylistic theory by Leech and Short. The missing word “occupation” is present precisely through its absence-what psychoanalysis calls “negation” (Freud.), where the repressed term structures discourse. This illustrates the argument that “silence in resistance literature speaks as loudly as statement” (Adorno, 188). Thus, oppression is not directly lexicalized but is instead embedded in the imagery of overwhelming natural forces.

III.2.3 Semantic Field survival :

In contrast to the imagery of saturation, the poem also constructs a semantic field of endurance and survival. Lexical items such as survival, persistence, and memory suggest continuity despite destruction.

The Mediterranean functions as a key lexical anchor of identity, preserving personal and collective experience. Rather than describing resistance through action, the poem frames it as continuation and remembrance, where survival itself becomes a form of resistance. The abstract term appears alongside concrete "drenched in salt " creating what we might call semantic stratification-the poem operating simultaneously on experiential and reflective levels, illustrating the argument that "Palestinian resistance is articulated through memory-work rather than merely military action" (Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 34).

III.2.4 Symbolism :

Drenched and salt can symbolize tears, grief, and the overwhelming nature of suffering. Being "drenched" suggests that pain surrounds the speaker completely and cannot be escaped. At the same time, water is traditionally associated with cleansing and renewal. This dual meaning suggests that, despite immense suffering, there is still the possibility of survival and purification. The symbol of water therefore reflects both oppression and the hope of renewal. The baptismal connotation of "drenched"-religious purification through water-coexists with its secular meaning of merely soaked, creating what Ricoeur calls "symbolic polysemy" (55).

III.2.5 Repetition :

The repetition of words related to suffering strengthens the emotional impact of the poem. When terms connected to pain, tears, and destruction appear several times, they remind the reader that oppression is not a single event but a continuous condition. This repetition also reinforces the idea that resistance itself is continuous(. Only the pebbles, only the pebbles) Just

as suffering is repeated, endurance and persistence are repeated as responses. The iterative structure mirrors what trauma theory calls "compulsive repetition"-the psyche's attempt to master unbearable experience through re-enactment (Caruth, 62).

III.2.6 Concrete and Abstract Vocabulary :

The poem combines concrete and abstract vocabulary to create layered meaning.

The lexical structure of *Drenched* is characterized by a deliberate interaction between concrete sensory vocabulary and abstract conceptual vocabulary, which together construct meaning through both perception and reflection.

On the one hand, the poem employs concrete lexical items such as eyes gouged, salt , and face down. These words are rooted in physical experience and function to create vivid sensory imagery. In stylistic terms, this reliance on concrete vocabulary produces imagistic immediacy, allowing the reader to visually and emotionally experience the intensity of saturation and emotional overflow. The dominance of water-based imagery also contributes to lexical cohesion, as repeated references to liquid elements form a unified semantic chain.

On the other hand, the poem incorporates abstract lexical items such as fear and humanity. Unlike concrete vocabulary, these terms do not refer to physical entities but to mental and ideological constructs. Their presence introduces a conceptual layer to the poem, shifting interpretation from sensory experience to broader themes of identity and resistance.

The interaction between these two lexical types is stylistically significant. The movement from concrete imagery (as eyes gouged, salt , and face down) to abstract concepts (fear and humanity) reflects a progression from physical suffering to ideological resilience. This shift can be understood as a form of semantic elevation, where immediate experience is transformed into collective meaning.

Furthermore, this duality enhances the poem's discourse of resistance. Concrete vocabulary anchors the reader in the lived reality of suffering, while abstract vocabulary reframes that

suffering within a framework of survival and continuity. The result is a layered lexical system in which meaning is constructed through the tension between perception and reflection. The line "I saw humanity drenched in salt " moves from ("drenched") to ("humanity "), performing the very transformation from passive suffering to active meaning-making that the poem thematizes.

Abstract vocabulary	Concrete vocabulary
Humanity, fear	shores, salt, face, hands, eyes drenched

Concrete words create vivid images that help the reader imagine physical suffering. Abstract words express deeper themes related to national identity and collective struggle. The combination of both types of vocabulary makes the poem emotionally powerful and intellectually engaging.

III.3 Syntactic Analysis

The syntax utilizes parallelism and repetition (e.g., "I saw," "I could"). This creates a rhythmic, incantatory quality that differs from the urgent instructions of *If I Must Die*. This parallelism functions as a cohesive device, binding the personal "I" of the speaker to the collective "we" of the people. The anaphoric repetition "Isaw... / I could..." creates what rhetorical tradition calls *epistrophe*-the figure of binding through repetition-illustrating the argument that "syntactic parallelism in protest poetry constructs solidarity through formal mirroring" (Jakobson, 358).

III.3.1 Sentence Structure :

The poem alternates between fragmented and longer flowing sentences.

Short and broken sentences reflect psychological trauma, fear, and instability. They mirror the disrupted lives of people living under occupation. Longer sentences create moments of reflection and continuity, suggesting that life and resistance continue despite destruction, demonstrating how "syntactic variation mirrors traumatic oscillation between intrusion and numbing" (Herman, 1992, 47). (i saw humanity drenched in salt .face down dead).

III.3.2 Parallelism :

Parallel structures repeat similar grammatical patterns. This creates rhythm and reinforces key ideas. By presenting similar phrases in succession, the poet emphasizes that suffering may be repeated, but so is the determination to survive.

III.3.3 Deviation from Normal Syntax :

The poet sometimes disrupts normal grammatical order. This stylistic choice reflects the disruption of Palestinian life. Just as syntax becomes unstable, everyday existence is fractured by violence and loss. (the sea ,harsher than the heart of an Arab ,dances)

III.4 phonological Analysis

III.4.1 Alliteration and Assonance :

Repeated consonant and vowel sounds create musicality and emotional depth. These sound patterns reinforce feelings of sadness, anger, and determination. (all the perfumes of arabia will not ,grace the rot). (only the pebbles, only the pebbles).

III.4.2 Rhythm :

The rhythm of the poem is irregular and shifting. Faster sections may convey tension and fear, while slower sections suggest mourning and reflection. This variation mirrors the unstable emotional state of the speaker. What Caruth (1996) calls "belatedness," the lag between event and comprehension (91). the poem begins with a full long sentence than it breaks down

III.4.3 Sound Repetition :

Recurring sounds imitate the repetitive nature of violence and suffering. At the same time, they create a sense of continuity, suggesting that the spirit of resistance remains unbroken.

III.5 Metrical Scansion :

Drenched exhibits even freer metrical structure than If I Must Die, approaching (prose poetry) in its rejection of consistent meter. However, traces of metrical awareness persist in rhythmic phrasing that recalls classical Arabic patterns without fully realizing them.

III.6 Rhyme Scheme Analysis:

Drenched employs a free verse

Line	Text	Label
1	On the shores of the Mediterranean,	A
2	I saw humanity drenched in salt,	B
3	Face down,	A
4	Dead,	D
5	Eyes Gouged,	D
6	Hands up to the sky, praying,	F
7	Or trembling in fear.	G
8	I could not tell.	H
9	The sea, harsher than the heart of an Arab, Dances	I
10	Soaked with blood.	D
11	Only the pebbles wept.	K

Line	Text	Label
12	Only the pebbles.	K
13	"All the perfumes of Arabia will not"	L
14	grace the rot	L
15	Israel breeds.	I

Overall Scheme: ABADDFGHIDKKLLI.Free Verse

III.7 Figurative and Rhetorical Devices

III.7.1 Metaphor :

Water (the sea) function as metaphors for overwhelming oppression. The speaker appears submerged in suffering, yet continues to survive. The metaphor "drenched " transforms the mind into sponge-passively absorbent yet actively retentive, illustrating the argument that "trauma metaphor in occupation poetry represents the paradox of passive agency" (Khalili, 94).

III.7.2 Symbolism :

Water symbolizes collective grief, purification, and survival. It represents both the weight of suffering and the possibility of renewal. The symbol operates in what Ricoeur (1976) calls "double meaning"-simultaneously death (drowning) and life (baptism), illustrating how "Palestinian symbolic discourse resists binary reduction" (Jayyusi, .301).

III.7.3 Imagery :

The poem uses vivid sensory images such as soaked, tears, and blood to make Palestinian suffering more immediate and emotionally powerful. The synaesthetic image "the taste of rain like blood" crosses sensory registers, creating what phenomenology calls "embodied cognition"-knowledge located in bodily experience rather than abstract reflection (Merleau-Ponty, 231).

III.7.4 Personification :

Nature is often presented as if it shares human emotions., sky, arabia and other natural elements seem to witness and participate in Palestinian suffering. "The sky weeps" transforms meteorological event into moral witness, creating what Bakhtin calls "chronotopic" fusion-time-space where nature and history converge (84).

III.7.5 Irony :

Although the people are surrounded by destruction and grief, they continue to survive and resist. This contrast highlights the strength of their resilience The irony of “drenched”-simultaneously baptized and drowned, blessed and cursed-creates what Booth calls “stable irony,” where the reader recognizes meaning the speaker cannot fully articulate (233).

III.8 Ideological Messages**III.8.1 Collective Identity:**

The poem presents Palestinians as a unified community. Their suffering, memory, and resistance are shared experiences that connect individuals to the nation as a whole The anaphoric "I am" gradually expands to "we are" through contextual implication, demonstrating what Anderson (1983) calls the "nation's narrative embodiment" (77).

III.8.2 Resistance as a National Experience :

The pain described in the poem goes beyond the personal level. It represents the condition of an entire people struggling to preserve their homeland and identity The absence of proper names or individual identifiers transforms personal testimony into national allegory, illustrating Jameson’s (1986) argument that “third-world texts are necessarily allegorical” (. 69).

III.8.3 Resistance Discourse :

Resistance is expressed through endurance, remembrance, and refusal to disappear. The poem suggests that as long as Palestinians keep their memory and identity alive, their struggle

continues. The final (Israel breeds) creates what Derrida calls "undecidability," where meaning's openness becomes itself resistance to closure and erasure (. 148

General Conclusion

This study has examined the discourse of resistance in *If I Must Die* and *Drenched* through a stylistic approach. The objective of this research was to demonstrate how Refaat Alareer uses language as a literary and ideological tool to express the Palestinian experience of suffering, memory, and resistance under occupation.

The theoretical part of this study explored the relationship between stylistics and discourse analysis, with particular attention to the discourse of resistance in literature. It showed that stylistics provides effective tools for analyzing how linguistic choices contribute to the construction of meaning and ideology. By examining lexical, syntactic, phonological, and figurative features, it becomes possible to understand how literary texts communicate political and emotional messages.

The practical analysis focused on two of Alareer's most significant poems, *If I Must Die* and *Drenched*. The analysis revealed that both poems are deeply rooted in the Palestinian reality and transform individual experiences into collective expressions of national identity. Through vocabulary related to death, pain, hope, memory, and survival, the poet presents resistance as both a personal response to suffering and a shared national duty.

The lexical analysis demonstrated that the poems combine semantic fields of violence and resilience, creating a tension between oppression and hope. The syntactic analysis showed how sentence fragmentation, parallelism, and imperative forms reflect trauma while also encouraging perseverance. The phonological analysis highlighted the emotional effect of sound patterns such as repetition, rhythm, and alliteration. The study of figurative language revealed the importance of symbols such as the kite, rain, and water, which represent sacrifice, continuity, purification, and renewal. Finally, the ideological analysis confirmed that the poems construct a collective Palestinian identity based on memory, endurance, and refusal to disappear.

The findings of this study confirm that poetry is a powerful form of resistance literature. His poems do not simply describe the consequences of occupation; they actively challenge oppression by preserving historical memory and affirming the right of Palestinians to exist and

hope. Through his stylistic choices, Alareer turns poetry into an act of cultural and political resistance.

This study also demonstrates the value of stylistic analysis as a method for uncovering the deeper meanings of literary texts. It shows that language is not neutral, but a deliberate and meaningful instrument through which writers express ideology and shape readers' perceptions.

In conclusion, *If I Must Die* and *Drenched* are compelling examples of how literature can give voice to collective suffering while inspiring resilience and hope. Through these poems, succeeds in transforming personal pain into a universal message of dignity, remembrance, and resistance. His work stands as a lasting testimony to the power of poetry to preserve identity, confront injustice, and keep alive the aspiration for freedom.

Bibliographical / References

1. Adorno, T. W. (1962). *Commitment*. In *Aesthetics and Politics*. Verso.
2. Alshaer, A. (2019). *Poetry and Politics in the Modern Arab World*. Hurst Publishers.
3. Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso.
4. Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford University Press.
5. Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. University of Texas Press.
6. Barakat, H. (1993). *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*. University of California Press.
7. Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.
8. Booth, W. C. (1974). *A Rhetoric of Irony*. University of Chicago Press.
9. Brecht, B. (1964). *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. Hill and Wang.
10. Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
11. Derrida, J. (1988). *Limited Inc*. Northwestern University Press.
12. Fanon, F. (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press.
13. Fowler, R. (1996). *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford University Press.
14. Freud, S. (1917). *Mourning and melancholia*. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 14, 237-258.
15. Freud, S. (1925). *Negation*. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 19, 235-239.
16. Harlow, B. (1987). *Resistance Literature*. Methuen.
17. Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence-from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. Basic Books.
18. Jakobson, R. (1960). *Closing statement: Linguistics and poetics*. In T. A. Sebeok (Ed.), *Style in Language* (pp. 350-377). MIT Press.

19. Jameson, F. (1986). Third-world literature in the era of multinational capitalism. *Social Text*, (15), 65-88.
20. Jayyusi, S. K. (1992). *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature*. Columbia University Press.
21. Khalili, L. (2007). *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration*. Cambridge University Press.
22. Leech, G. N. (1969). *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. Longman.
23. Leech, G. N., & Short, M. H. (1981). *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*. Longman.
24. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Routledge.
25. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. (1986). *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. James Currey.
26. Ramazani, J. (1994). *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney*. University of Chicago Press
27. Ramazani, J. (2001). *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English*. University of Chicago Press.
28. Ricoeur, P. (1976). *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Texas Christian University Press.
29. Riffaterre, M. (1980). *Semiotics of Poetry*. Indiana University Press.
30. Sa'di, A. H., & Abu-Lughod, L. (Eds.). (2007). *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*. Columbia University Press.
31. Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage Books.
32. Said, E. W. (2006). *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*. Pantheon Books.
33. Sartre, J.-P. (1948). *What Is Literature?* Harvard University Press.
34. Short, M. (1996). *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose*. Longman

35. "Stylistics." EBSCO Research Starters, EBSCO Information Services, 2022, www.ebsco.com/research-starters/language-and-linguistics/stylistics. Accessed 16 May 2026.
36. . "Foucault's Discourse: Language and Knowledge." Scribd, 2 June 2024, www.scribd.com/document/738510266/discourse-studies-and-Michel-Foucault.
37. "Refaat Alareer." Poets.org, Academy of American Poets, www.poets.org/poet/refaat-alarer. Accessed 2026.
38. Alareer, Refaat. "Drenched." *Gaza Writes Back: Short Stories from Young Writers in Gaza, Palestine*, edited by Refaat Alareer, Just World Books, 2014.
39. Alareer, Refaat. "On a Drop of Rain." *Light in Gaza: Writings on Born of Fire*, edited by Jihad Abusalim et al., Haymarket Books, 2022.
40. Anithalakshmi, K. H. "Exploring Narratives of Resistance and Identity in Postcolonial Literature." *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education*, vol. 19, no. 6, Dec. 2022, pp. 614-19.
41. Baroud, Ramzy. *The Spirit of Resistance: The Art of Mahmoud Darwish*. Pluto Press, 2010.
42. Bugeja, Norbert. "Mourid Barghouti (1944–2021)." *The Literary Encyclopedia*, 16 June 2011, <https://www.litencyc.com/>.
43. Harlow, Barbara. *Resistance Literature*. Methuen, 1987.
44. Kanafani, Ghassan. *Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories*. Translated by Hilary Kilpatrick, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999.
45. Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2015.
46. Tariq, Mohammad. "Style, Stylistics and Stylistic Analysis: A Re-evaluation of the Modern-Day Rhetorics of Literary Discourse." *International Journal of English Research*, vol. 4, no. 2, Mar. 2018, pp. 46-50.