

## **Voices of Freedom: Fadwa Tuqan's Contribution to Palestinian Literature and Feminist Discourse**

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### **Abstract**

*This study seeks to assess both the literary and cultural implications of Fadwa Tuqan. She is among the poets and memoirists in Palestine who have had the most impact on communicating the notions of national consciousness and feminist perspectives. It is guided by the following question: In what ways do her poetry and autobiographical writings reflect and resist the synergetic forces of colonial occupation and patriarchal limitations? It also seeks to understand the broader picture that Tuqan's personal narrative and cultural symbolisms create regarding Palestinian identity, resilience, and emotional truths.*

*The methodology includes qualitative textual analysis of selected poems, excerpts from Tuqan's autobiography *A Mountainous Journey*, and contextual framing through postcolonial and feminist literary theories. The results reveal that Tuqan's writing is not simply translatable into any political or subject position. Instead, Tuqan weaves her personal experience with a national traumatic experience, and in so doing, she can speak for herself as a woman and for her people as a poet of resistance. Tuqan's natural imagery, lyrical contemplation, and autobiographical directness help expand the types of Palestinian literature. It also helps counter dominant masculine narratives. This research also explores the ecological and spiritual themes in Tuqan's later poetry, manifested as bridges under the umbrella of relationships between land, identity, and survival.*

*This research contributes to the scholarship and adds an integrated reading of Tuqan's prose and poetry. More generally, it adds to contemporary knowledge of how women writers are drawn into national narratives and the preservation of culture, opening up new lines of inquiry into the relationship of literature to memory and gender among Palestinians.*

**Keywords:** *Fadwa Tuqan, Feminism, Palestinian Identity, National Narrative, Cultural Preservation.*

# أصوات الحرية: إسهامات فدوى طوقان في الأدب الفلسطيني والخطاب النسووي

## الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم الدلالات الأدبية والثقافية لفدوى طوقان، وهي واحدة من أكثر الشاعرات وكتابات السيرة الذاتية تأثيراً في فلسطين، لما لها من دور بارز في التعبير عن الوعي الوطني والروى النسوية. تتطرق الدراسة من السؤال التالي: كيف تعكس كتاباتها الشعرية والسريرية وتقاوم في الوقت ذاته القوى المتضادة للاحتلال الاستعماري والقيود الأبوية؟ وتسعى كذلك إلى فهم الصورة الأشمل التي ترسمها السردية الشخصية والرموز الثقافية لدى طوقان فيما يتعلق بالهوية الفلسطينية، والصلابة، والحقائق العاطفية. تعتمد المنهجية على تحليل نصوص سيرة ذاتية مختارة، هي «رحلة جبلية... رحلة صعبة» وبعض قصائدها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يتم تقديم إطار نظري يسند إلى ما بعد الاستعمار والنظريّة النسوية. تدل النتائج على أن كتابات طوقان لا يمكن اختزالها بموقف سياسي أو ذاتي واحد؛ بل تتواجد ضمن تجربتها الشخصية العميقية سرد وطني وفاعل مثقل بالصدمات يعبر عن ذاته الجمعي. تعالج هذه الدراسة الموضوعات البيئية، إضافة إلى الروحانية في أعمال شعر طوقان التي تبدو كجسر تواصل بين الأرض والهوية والوجود. بينما تقدم هذه الدراسة قراءة متكاملة لتراث طوقان وشعرها، فهي تدفع بسّد فجوة بحثية معاصرة عبر تلميحاتي حول مشاركة الكاتبات في بناء السردية الوطنية مع الحفاظ على عدسات تحول الثقافة لاستكشاف العلاقة بين الأدب والذاكرة والجنس في السياق الفلسطيني.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** فدوى طوقان، النسوية، الهوية الفلسطينية، السردية الوطنية، الحفاظ على الثقافة.

## Introduction

Fadwa Tuqan (1917-2003) was one of the leading voices of 20th-century Palestinian literature, exploring complex ideas of feminism and national identity in her moving poetic verses. Born into a traditional Palestinian family in Nablus, she defied traditional roles to become not only a dominant voice in Arabic poetry but also a tireless advocate for women's rights and the Palestinian cause (Nassar, 2002; Antoniou, 2017; Tolan, 2014). Tuqan writes from the battlefield, combining poetic beauty with political urgency (Majaj, 2006; Al-Maleh, 1999). In doing so, she transforms poetry into a site of resistance and a site of Palestinian life (Amireh, 2003; Walsh, 2018). This study is crucial in the present day because it examines Tuqan's influence, her central themes, and her lasting impact on the West as a cultural figure who challenged established gender roles and the traumatic consequences of colonial diaspora.

Tuqan's work subverted gender norms of the patriarchal society that confines the role and voice of women (Jarrar, 2019; Hammad, 1996). She sought literature to be subversive and to say more and more about what she sensed was part of what she could do (Brown, 2020). Her first poetry is a projection of the internalized silence among women, while her latter work is a narrative of resistance, rebellion, and blatant awareness of the atrocities to which her gender is subjected (Darraj, 2003; Barakat, 2006). Through her poetry and prose, she became part of a developing feminist discourse in the Arab world (Hijab, 1988; Jayyusi, 1992; Al-Sarraj, 2025). Her life and work make two kinds of resistance: first, against foreign occupation; second, against the ways in which that oppression is kept at home (Amireh & Majaj, 2000; Shaaban, 2022).

Writing about Fadwa Tuqan is not merely a critical gesture; it is a gesture at the very heart of how art functions in conditions of conflict and dispossession. Her poems enable us to map the lines connecting expressions of nationalism and feminism in Palestinian culture (Jayyusi, 1992; Alkhouri, 2022; Tuffaha, 2017). Her literary productions demonstrate how narratives can be constructed to witness and envisage the act of liberation (Rabab'ah, 2021; Halabi, 2015). By looking at Tuqan's work, we can see how women writing about values of resistance have been shaped. This is very important now because modern studies on decolonization and gender equality have many themes that she boldly explored.

People still pay attention to what Tuqan says. Her poems show that poetry can name wrongs, affirm identity, and bring about real change (Khalidi, 2007). By honoring her as a writer and a feminist, we honor not only her own story but also the stories of everyone else who is still fighting for freedom and dignity, which is the essence of her writings.

This study contends that Fadwa Tuqan's poetics represent a unique kind of literary resistance, in which the melding of nationalism, feminism, and ecological awareness reveals a complex discourse of identity and survival in for the Palestinian landscape. By understanding her writing to be read in light of both postcolonialism and ecofeminism, this article adds a unique contribution to the field of Palestinian literature studies as well as feminist scholarship.

## **Literature Review**

### **— Postcolonial and Feminist Lenses**

Resistance in Tuqan's poetry is not merely about freeing oneself from colonial structures. It also opposes traditional gender roles and norms whose import is woven into nationalist ideology. Using ideas from postcolonial feminist thinkers like Spivak (1988) and Mohanty (1988), it is possible to view her poetry as a form that resists both the colonial narrative and the silencing of women in her society. Viewing her work through a dual lens allows us to see it as a strong representation of stance, both as an act of national pride and gender consciousness. Tuqan's resistance isn't just about breaking free from colonial structures, she also challenges the traditional gender roles and norms that are woven into nationalist ideas. Using ideas from postcolonial feminist thinkers like Spivak (1988) and Mohanty (1988), her poetry can be seen as a form of resisting both the colonial story and the silence around women's voices in her society. Looking at it through this dual perspective helps us see her work as a powerful act of both national pride and gender advocacy.

### **— The Critical Legacy of Fadwa Tuqan**

Fadwa has drawn steady attention from scholars who see her as both a national poet and an early voice of Arab feminism (Taha, 2016). Her lines are pulled into classrooms of postcolonial studies, gender studies, comparative literature, and plain cultural critique (Al-Musawi, 2017). Again and again, critics turn to her pages to debate how she weaves together nationalism, private identity, and the fierce resistance that gender demands of her.

In the book of Harlow (1996), *Barred: Women, Writing, and Political Detention* the author puts Fadwa Tuqan at the heart of resistance literature, showing how her work refuses silence. Harlow reads Tuqan's verse as a reply to Israeli rule and to the patriarchy that shapes Arab life, showing her double fight for land and women. In doing so, she claims Tuqan's voice breaches both colonial authority and the cultural quiet that usually sidelines women.

In the research article “Fadwa Tuqan and the Poetry of Resistance,” Nassar (2002) discusses the poet’s art through literary and cultural lenses. She traces the metaphors and images where love, longing, and defiance swirl together like smoke after tear gas bombs. Although loss is frequent on the page, Nassar points out that the poems lift toward shared strength, tying Tuqan to the wider song of Palestinian resilience.

In her Ph.D. dissertation, Barakat (2006) further elaborates on Tuqan’s resistance poetics and poetic language as an instrument of cultural preservation. Barakat claims that Tuqan plays with the classical Arabic forms, giving them a contemporary urgency, literary extending a bridge between the classical past and confounded present. This stylistic hybrid necessarily roots her poetry in Arab culture while allowing her to push against patriarchal literary conventions.

### — Tuqan’s Feminist Discourse

Majaj (2006), in her essay “Feminism and Postcolonialism: Palestinian Women’s Discourse,” reads Tuqan alongside other Palestinian women writers like Khalifeh. Majaj elucidates how Tuqan’s poetic narration of womanhood becomes a metaphor for national loss as well as a direct criticism of gender conventions. Tuqan’s feminist themes, she contends, were not independent of her political allegiances; on the contrary, they were an “irremovable aspect” of what she describes as her subject’s ‘double resistance’ to colonialism and patriarchy.

Feminism discourse is illustrated in Amirah’s (2000) study, “Framing the Nation and the Female Body: Fadwa Tuqan’s Autobiography”, where she treats Tuqan’s memoir, *A Mountainous Journey*, as a feminist act of self-definition. Amirah argues that by retaking her own story, Tuqan loosens the patriarchy in a nationalist talk that frames women as crowns of the movement instead of active players. Her reading shows that Tuqan’s pen works at once as a private testimony and public allegory for a nation in struggle.

According to Nazar et al. (2022), Tuqan’s work lies at the crossroads of feminist, environmental, and cultural discourses. They claim that her poetry is a deeply intertwined critique of patriarchal and colonial oppression through nature symbols and references to the Islamic tradition. Her verses appear to form an ecofeminist resistance in which land, body, and identity are linked. This research aims to join the growing recognition of Tuqan as not only a national poet but also an early ecofeminist voice in Arabic literature.

Hijab (1988) also points to some of Tuqan’s contributions in *Womanpower: The Arab Debate on Women at Work*. Although not exclusively devoted to Tuqan, the book cites her as instrumental in re-conceptualizing the terms of Arab discourse on women’s

intellectual and creative authority in the introduction. Hijab credits Tuqan with shattering gendered barriers within the Arab literary canon and being among the first to confront, through art, the cultural silencing of women's public voices.

Istanbulli (2023) also examines Tuqan's most celebrated collection *The Night and Knights* which was written after the Naksa 1967. Istanbulli follows Tuqan from a cautious entry into resistance poetry to a confident voice negotiating the tension between personal femininity and national struggle. This article underlines the poet's negotiation of two identities: as a writer in a male-dominated literary tradition and as someone who negotiates gendered expectations within the tribe.

### — Voice of a Nation and the Poetics of Identity

Tuqan is considered the voice of the Palestinian people. The key text of Jayyusi's Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature (1992), lays out Tuqan's place in the story of Arabic letters. Jayyusi (1992) shows how Tuqan moved Palestinian poetry away from gentle romance toward hard-edged political realism. She affirms Tuqan's ability to give voice to both loss and resolve, marking her rise as one of the loudest chroniclers of Palestinian life after the Nakba.

In *Teaching Arabic Literature in Translation: Pedagogy, Politics, Practice* (2017), edited by Al-Musawi, the scholars consider Tuqan's work a means to teach Arabic poetry and feminist resistance. Her poems are considered accessible but profound, providing deep insights into the political and emotional aspects of the Palestinian human condition.

The notion of nationalism is reflected in Jadallah's paper (2023), *The Reciprocal Effect Between Musical and Poetic Compositions*. Jadallah looks at the way Fadwa Tuqan's words have slid into Palestinian songs. His findings show that the bittersweet rise and fall of her lines which are full of grief but still reaching for hope. This grows louder when wrapped in music, turning each performance into a small act of defiance.

Al-Sarraj's study (2025) traces the use of poetry using an approach of close reading and biography. From his point of view, there was an almost cliché narrative: years spent behind high walls with a burdensome father figure while the drum of national loss went on, all forced her craft outward, into the public. Therefore, the quiet thinker became a spokesperson for Palestine.

Taken together, these studies sketch a broad yet detailed picture of Tuqan's cultural footprint. Whether scholars read her through verse, life story, or political banner, she stands at the crossroads of gender, nation, and identity in the Arab world. Yet, even with this groundwork, we still do not know how her words speak to today's youth or how her feminism fits into worldwide feminist debates. This gap motivated the researcher to undertake this study.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study follows a qualitative interpretive design rooted in both literary and feminist readings. It aims to place Fadwa Tuqan's poetry and memoirs against the shifting political and gendered backdrop of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Palestine. By doing so, the researcher aims to unravel the meaning of her words alongside the ideological, cultural, and emotional currents that both motivated her writing and echoed throughout this study. The literary writings of Tuqan that the researcher will focus on are *Unfortunately, It Was Paradise: Selected Poems* (2003), *A Mountainous Journey* (1990), *Wajadtuha* (1957), and, *The Deluge and the Tree*. In *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature* (1999).

The researcher turns to feminist lenses to see how Tuqan's verse confronts patriarchal structures, redefines femininity, and insists on women's voices inside literary culture and the idea of nation. To meet this end, the researcher refers to Postcolonial ideas that frame readings of struggle, identity, exile, and cultural endurance under occupation. Terms such as writing back, hybridity and cultural agency are the bases for this study. Ecofeminist theory is also used to understand Tuqan's connection of the feminine and the natural, positioning land and body as sites for resisting, re-traumatizing, and regenerating. This allows the analysis to remain sensitive to the symbolic and political weight of nature in Tuqan's work, particularly at the intersection of landscape and gender, as both are violated and resilient spaces.

### Autobiographical Narrative Analysis

The researcher examines the intersections of personal trauma and collective national memory through Tuqan's prose which is a guiding line of self-narration and resistance. The framework for this analysis comes from feminist and postcolonial autobiographical theory, centering on the notion that life writing is a politics of agency, where the act of telling one's story recasts suffering into a national narrative of strength and dignity.

### Thematic and stylistic analyses

The researcher examines Tuqan's works to identify patterns such as recurring themes (e.g., exile, gendered silences, resistance, nature, and voice) or stylistic choices (e.g., imagery, metaphor, intertextuality) to show her literary progression and ideological position and stance. Special focus is given to eco-symbolism, including olive trees, earth, and seasons, which are interpreted through ecofeminism in order to understand how Tuqan poetically recuperates nature as a maternal force and a record of national and gendered pain. The close reading methods deployed in this chapter highlight the

depth of reading available at the intersection of literary form and ideology and allow for meaningful analyses of multiple poems within each section of Tuqan's oeuvre.

### **Thematic Discussion and Scholarly Reflections**

This section provides an analytical discussion of the main findings from the analysis, placing them within wider academic discourses. Fadwa Tuqan's poetry expresses the quiet struggles of Palestinian women and explores bigger issues like national identity and shared memory. Her work turns personal feelings into acts of resistance, giving women a voice within the political and cultural stories of her time. To understand these better, selected poems will be analyzed, showing how Tuqan mixes themes of gender, loss, and homeland into a powerful message of defiance and remembrance. While some aspects of Tuqan's work manifest more clearly or appeal to more recent theoretical frameworks than others, this discussion of these key themes is oriented toward an understanding of various aspects of Tuqan's poetry and prose. The discussion is highlighted under the followings:

#### **— Poetry as Resistance: National Identity and Collective Memory**

Fadwa Tuqan's poetry emerged as a leading voice in the arena of Palestinian struggle. Her poetry moved from personal experience into nationalist utterance, more so after the 1948 Nakba. In her poetry, she very often speaks about the matters of occupation, exile, and shared trauma linked with the loss of her country.

- “The homeland passed through my veins like blood,
- And in my eyes, the dream of return shone bright.”
- “My Country, the Wound”

In this poem, Tuqan attaches her identity to land. Her homeland is represented as a living aspect of the body and is inseparable from it. It has long been acknowledged that poetry produced by Palestinians acts as a means of retaining culture and resisting politics, particularly in the wake of the Nakba (Jayyusi, 1992; Harlow, 1996). This is a function that the work of Tuqan powerfully fulfills; her personal struggles become intermingled with those of the nation to create a unified voice that perseveres.

Fadwa Tuqan's early poems peeled back her own heart before gradually hardening into a bold cry for national dignity. After Israel's 1967 defeat of Arab forces, her lines gained new weight, mixing personal loss with the shared ache of a broken people. In the poem most often quoted today, “Martyrs of the Intifada,” she declares:

- “They died standing, blazing on the road...
- Opening the gates of hope for all the people” (Tuqan, 1990)

These upright martyrs do not slip away quietly; their flames turn grief into a banner of endurance. Istanbulli (2023) calls this moment in Tuqan's work a pivot when verse becomes a tool for cultural survival and national renewal.

Resistance is grounded in the land itself through the symbolic use of natural imagery, including olive trees, roots, and stones. In her poem, *The Deluge and the Tree*, she writes:

- “The roots are deep...
- They hold on beneath the rock” (Tuqan, 1994).

The image mirrors Palestinian life: hidden strength gripping hard, even when the surface cracks under violence. The stone recurs again and again, standing for Intifada youth one instant and for the land's stubborn spirit the next. As Harlow (1996) notes, Tuqan does far more than record the occupation; she bends it into an act of poetic defiance.

Tuqan wrote from the heart of sorrow, while the voice of defiance carried her words through the long fight she articulated in her poetry. Tuqan wrote poetry, and it became much more than poetry; it became a homeland inscribed in language, a home for the displaced spirit, and a cry that would not die away. Each poem held the breath of a people and the shadow of a lost land, weaving sorrow into the collective recollection.

For Tuqan, poetry is a container of truth. It collects what history attempts to erase. It remembers the names of villages that no longer exist on the maps. It listens to the weeping of olive trees and carries the sound of footsteps that still echo in occupied valleys. Her words keep the essence of the place and the pulse of resistance alive, even as they disappear.

She does not write from the edges but from the center of a wound that sings. Her poems are of earth and salt, fire, and prayer. In her poetry, identity is a living thing, flexible but strong. Identity is not only an idea; it is life. Tuqan represents the idea that resistance can be subtle. It can take the form of a glassy whisper in the dark, a flower breaking through the stones, or the sight of a woman writing words while the rest of the world wants her to be silenced. Her words travel through generations carried by breath on the lips of those longing to be free. These lines refer to a land still dreaming, and people who hope to return through poetry. Thus, after having looked at power in resistance in Tuqan's poetry, the focus will now be on the autobiographical writings, which further portray her feminist trajectory and personal suffering in a patriarchal society.

### — Rewriting the Female Self: Autobiography as Feminist Assertion

As one of the first Arab women poets, Tuqan wrote openly about female subjectivity, confinement, and the search for self-identity. Her early poetry deals with her struggles in a society that suffocates women. In the poem “Silence,” she writes:

- “They said: ‘Be a woman.
- And I was confined
- Behind walls,
- Imprisoned in silence” (Tuqan, 1990)

In these lines, Tuqan talks about the patriarchal restrictions imposed on her and, by extension, on many Arab women. The prison metaphor summarizes societal constraints on women’s voices and desires. Tuqan’s autobiographical texts have been examined within the framework of feminist literary scholarship, which positions life writing as a reclamation of subjectivity and an act of defiance against gendered repression. This interpretation is supported by feminist autobiographical theorists like Amireh (2000).

Tuqan’s autobiographical work, especially *A Mountainous Journey*, is a self-definition. In this text, she tells us about her childhood in “a house like a prison” and how she was confined as a young girl in Nablus:

- “I grew up in a world where a girl’s voice was not meant to be heard. Silence was our inheritance” (Tuqan, 1990)

Amireh (2000) interprets this as a deliberate resistance to a patriarchal act of silencing. Her decision to write her memoir is an act of liberation that transforms her silence into speech and her marginality into visibility. Tuqan meditates on writing as both her sanctuary and her act of rebellion. She says: “Poetry became the cry of my soul—the means by which I could breathe, survive, and one day, speak.”

This was yet another demonstration of what Alkhouri (2022) said about the exile that Tuqan talked about the Palestinian exiled person is nothing more than the exiled Palestinian condition; it is the exile on the move. The personal is not separate in her writing; it unspools together with the political as a part of a larger battle for voice and identity.

### — Nature, Spirituality, and Eco-Feminist Themes

Tuqan’s verse echoes, in multilayered correspondence with nature, not simply as a setting or symbol but as a spiritual and political force. Her conjuring of the natural world frequently encodes a deep ecological consciousness implicitly linked to

feminist injunctions and the demands of Palestinian identity. Her poems often focus on landscapes such as olive trees, hills, flowers, and rivers that serve as tropes for rootedness, survival, and cultural memory. These images resist erasure and occupation. Tuqan's poetry explicitly connects land with female identity, portraying nature as both a place of spirituality and refuge and a site for resistance given gendered experience. In the poem, she remarks:

- The olive tree rooted in stones,
- Bears witness to time's trials" (Tuqan, 1999).

Beyond simply representing the flora, this olive tree also represents Palestinian tenacity, particularly the courage of women in the face of oppressive and imperial patriarchy. As conveyed by Tuqan, nature is not external; it is a mirror of the self and a conduit for spiritual reflection. Her poetic voice frequently dissolves the boundaries between body and earth, grief and landscape. She asserts saying:

- "My soul wandered the valleys,
- Drinking silence from the trees" (Tuqan, 1999).

This demonstrates how nature moves into the role of a spiritual retreat, a place of healing, stillness, and listening to what is beyond the human. This mystical connection suggests a Sufi-like quality to her work.

Tuqan's literary heritage is her conflation of the personal and political, feminine and national. In the process, she carved out a place for Palestinian women in the Arabic literary tradition and chronicled them by navigating the emotional geography of dispossessed people. Tuqan's literary production is crucial for recognizing the personal and cultural dimensions of Palestinian womanhood and resistance.

Tuqan's verse emerged as a resounding voice of resistance in Palestine. Her writing turned private agony into nationalist fervor, particularly with the fall of the Nakba of 1948. In her poems, she often wrestles with the realities of occupation, exile, and mass trauma. In *My Country, the Wound*, she affirms:

- "The homeland passed through my veins like blood, and in my eyes, the dream of return shone bright" (Tuqan, 1999).

In this context, Tuqan links personal identity with the land and metaphorizes the homeland as a visceral part of the body, indivisible from one's self.

Tuqan developed a richly multi-layered use of nature as a personal and political metaphor. In "I Found It," she writes:

“I found the homeland on the face of a flower.

In a drop of water

In the warmth of a tree” (Tuqan, 1957).

This spiritual and environmental framing resonates and interfaces femaleness with the natural and the divine. According to Nazar et al. (2022), this imagery presents an ecofeminist awareness that connects the exploitation of land to the subjugation of women. Specifically, while Tuqan did not use the term “eco-feminism,” her thinking in many of her poems strongly aligns with ecofeminist ideas. She interrogates the relationship between the oppression of women and the exploitation of land, questioning both patriarchal and colonial rule in the process. In numerous poems, whether she talks about a devastated landscape or a wounded land, the land is always gendered female; it is occupied, but also fierce and a giver of life. Tuqan states:

- “The hill’s bosom is torn.
- But still, it cradles the seed” (Tuqan, 1990)

In these lines, the Earth is depicted as a maternal being who is impacted but still obviously capable of growing new life. It invokes ideas of subversion and regeneration.

Tuqan often uses natural imagery in conjunction with the female body, reclaiming it from a place of absence and passive silence. Flowers, rivers, and wind represent female desire, pain, and strength, respectively. For example, Tuqan wrote:

- “In the garden of my heart
- Roses bled with each cry” (Tuqan, 1957)

These metaphors are front and center in women’s experiences of emotionality and bodily actions as a source of poetic possibilities.

Following the post-1967 occupation era, Tuqan’s responses to her world tended toward darker and more defiant tones. She wrote about dispossession, exile, and loss of place. However, her poetry includes remembrances of return and the continued act of remembering.

- “O Jerusalem, I shall return
- With the song of olive trees
- And dust of the ancestors on my robe” (Fadwa, 1969).

It is important to visualize how Tuqan combines historical remembering with a dimension of hope. Jerusalem embodies both the experience of loss and the place of return.

Much of Tuqan's poetry embodies an expectation of transcendence, healing that occurs through not only acts of resistance but also examples of nature and faith. She asserts:

- “I stretch my arms
- to embrace a country, I carry *in my bones*” (Tuqan, 1999).

This line combines the geography of the land and the anatomy of the body to indicate that Palestine is more than simply textured land for Tuqan; it is part of selfhood.

Tuqan often employs nature as a metaphor for perseverance, hope, and renewal, which is a journey of interconnected cycles and forms. Some of her more frequently used symbols include olive trees, mountains, and flowers. In the following poem, she remarks:

- “The olive tree rooted in stones
- Bears witness to time’s trials
- Yet stretches its arms to the sun” (Tuqan, 1999).

Tuqan’s metaphors use the olive tree to represent Palestinian perseverance, a tree that is rooted, tested, and survived, and yet an olive tree that has not been broken.

#### — The Female Voice in the National Narrative

Fadwa Tuqan’s poetry perhaps remains one of the most impactful expressions of the female voice as part of the national Palestinian story. From the beginning of her journey as a poet, Tuqan wrote from a deep awareness of the place of women in a society where female voices were marginalized and the experiences of the suffering of the colonized were minoritized. The poems in Tuqan’s earlier collections, for example, the poems in “My Brother Ibrahim” (1946), reveal deeply personal experiences of loss and longing and show how familial relations and personal inner life were entangled in the broader historical trauma of colonialism and occupation. In *Alone With the Days* (1953), she began to articulate her understanding of who she was not only as a woman but also as a witness encountering a national period of crisis for Palestinians. (Jayyusi, 1992). Tuqan’s poetry inserts the female sensibility into national dialogue, which disrupts the male-centered nationalist discourse. This interpretation aligns with Massad’s (1995) reading of gender exclusions in nationalist representation, as well as the feminist potential of the poetic voice.

Tuqan’s strength lies in her ability to represent the nation through women’s suffering and perseverance. In the poem “Longing: Inspired by the Law of Gravity,” she writes,

- “Your land is your being
- and your soul is the soul of your land”
- (Tuqan, trans. In Khalidi, 1990).



Thus, the land is a part of the self, and the self is ingrained in the national identity of the female self. Tuqan's voice is creative rather than merely representative. It produces a collective memory of loss, resiliency, and displacement. This creates a collective memory of displacement, loss, and resilience. This view counteracts the typical form of nationalist literature, which elevates male representations of heroism and military forms of resistance and can begin to create a shared awareness of the emotional and private spaces of resistance as equally important.

For Tuqan, the potential of her poetry is to redefine notions of heroism and struggle by focusing on domesticity and emotionality. While she remains critical of violence and martyrdom, she instead elevates the ideas of endurance, memory, and moral clarity associated with bearing witness. Her poetic subject is at times the mother, the sister, and the woman in mourning, who bears the weight of memory and loss but also commands strength. In this way, Tuqan extends the idea of the scope of the national hero by positioning women's suffering, silence, and endurance as an integral part of the Palestinian narrative (Harlow, 1987).

As seen in her later poems *Night and Horsemen* (1994), Tuqan's voice grows increasingly political; however, she remains personal. In her poetry, the stance of resistance is rooted in emotional truth. She describes exile, the occupation of Nablus, and deceased family and friends, but she constantly does so with a distinctly female voice. In this way, she serves as a counter-narrative to primary nationalist narratives which have excluded women from historical narratives that are used to tell stories about a collective Palestinian identity.

Moreover, Tuqan is conversant with the larger feminist consciousness. By refusing to dissociate her identity as a woman from her identity as a Palestinian, she claims the right of women to write about their pain but also to describe the fate of the nation. As Massad (1995) argues, Tuqan's poetry is, "emblematic of the interconnectivity of the national and the gendered self," and provides a model for understanding how female subjectivity could be implicated in the political.

In "Enough for Me," Tuqan reads from a profoundly feminist place. The speaker stakes a claim on space for her voice and her poetry. She asserts her right to speak and to be alone:

- Enough for me
- to die on her soil,
- be buried in her
- to melt and vanish into her dust...

- to plant myself in her,
- and become a fertile source
- for a newborn resurrection.

This vision of unity with the land as a woman and poet anticipates the ecofeminist resonances in the writings of later Palestinian authors such as Tuffaha, who associates the female form with the land's suffering and strength, and health. Tuqan's poetry challenges both the loss of her identity under occupation and her voice's marginalization in a patriarchal society.

Feminist scholars such as Amireh (2000) have noted how Tuqan's poetry "incribes a feminine subjectivity into a nationalist discourse that often renders women symbolic rather than vocal." This shift—from being a symbol of the nation to a speaker of the nation—has greatly influenced contemporary Palestinian women writers who now write confidently from the intersections of gender, homeland, and history.

Tuqan's poetry opened a space in Palestinian literature where women were seen as more than symbolic. They were able to act as contributors to their national history. Her legacy challenges how we think about acting in resistance. It is not just through the act of protest and revolution, but through the act of articulation, memory, and refusal to vanish.

### — Literary Legacy and Contemporary Resonance

Tuqan's legacy continues to inspire writers, musicians, and artists not only in the Arab world but also far beyond. Political speeches cite her poems; they lead protests in song. In Jadallah's (2024) examination of her poetics in Palestinian music, one sees how much of it remains highly performative. Indeed, Tuqan's poetry has not only become part of this cultural tradition of resistance, but it continues to inform Palestinian literature, visual arts, and performance today. Her words remain a living monument to poetry's ability to function on this level and to help reform the memories and identities of groups.

One of her last poetic reflections is a poem written in the months before she died that speaks to this legacy:

- "I shall plant my words
- in the heart of the earth
- so they may bloom long after I am gone" (Tuqan, 1999).

These lines are more than a farewell. They are a promise that the power of words can outlive captivity, trauma, and exile. Tuqan's words, like seeds in the ground of her people's memory keep growing in the minds of generations.



## Findings

This study reveals how the poetry of Fadwa Tuqan becomes a powerful site of expressing a yearning for nationhood, a personal quest, and a national memory. Her voice shuttles between the intimate and the political, transmuting personal experience into a mirror of her peoples' history. At its heart, the poetry refuses the congealing of national identity as it is worked into forms through loss, resistance, and the long-holding potential of return. At the same time, Tuqan's poems create a clearly feminist gaze here through acts of speaking back insisting on the female voice. Nature remains witness and companion, carrying both ecological and symbolic value to echo the emotional and national landscapes of the poet. These findings show how Tuqan's poetry becomes a living archive of identity, resistance, and renewal.

The next subsections will deal with the different themes, beginning with national identity and collective memory, then moving onto the feminist and ecofeminist dimensions of the poetic voice, and ending off with the contemporary Palestinian legacy of Fadwa Tuqan.

### National Identity and Collective Memory

One major result is how Tuqan's use of life stories works as self-thought and a wider action of fighting back. Though it has been credited to have feminist dimensions by scholars like Amireh, this paper demonstrates how the narrative structure and affective tone of *A Mountainous Journey* contradicts the very expectations of Arab autobiography and nationalist literature. By reading Tuqan's prose alongside her poetry, this study reveals an emblematic pattern wherein her life story comes to reflect the Palestinian experience in the form of individual memory reflecting collective trauma. It advances further than previous studies that generally dealt with her poetry only.

The study confirms and builds the criticism of Jayyusi and Harlow who flagged Tuqan's shift from lyrical to political poetry, but takes it further by tracing how that change also redefined the tone and role of femininity in Palestinian writing. Where before it was presumed that she only added a woman's voice to the resistance movement, this study asserts that Tuqan redefined the very essence of political poetry with her portrayal of struggle through intimate feelings, images of motherhood, and spiritual desire. This viewpoint defies earlier analyses that restricted Tuqan to the binary distinction between being a national poet and a feminist writer. In this article, Tuqan is adamantly against this type of categorization. What has had the most impact is the way she uses poetic language to connect the personal and the political.

Her famous poem “Hamza” powerfully combines themes of national resistance with human pain. It features Hamza, a young martyr, to honor the everyday struggles of Palestinians. Her voice, however, is more than just observational; it is personal, grieving, and full of political meaning. This style has influenced later poets like Suheir Hammad, who mixed emotion with politics. Hammad’s work also fights against external oppression and fights against internal gender oppression.

## **Feminist and Ecofeminist Dimensions in the Poetic Voice**

This study digs deep to explain Fadwa Tuqan’s contribution to Palestinian literature and feminist discourse. Previous studies have sufficient grounds to identify her as an important literary figure and the poetic voice of resistance, but this research highlights her narrative and symbolic choices, along with emotional depth, contribute to the multi-layered representation of Palestinian identity and female agency. This work offers a more integrated reading of her poetry and prose placing her work in national and feminist frameworks simultaneously.

This idea of being one with the land as a woman and poet hints at the ecofeminist themes found in later Palestinian writers like Tuffaha. She links the female body to the land’s pain, strength, and well-being. Tuqan’s poetry here challenges both the loss of her identity under occupation and her voice’s marginalization in a patriarchal society.

In her poem “My Brother Ibrahim,” Tuqan mourns her brother’s death. At the same time, she discovers her own voice as a poet. This moment signals the start of her true identity and her inner strength. The poem is marked by raw emotion and a quiet challenge to what is expected of her as a woman writer. She combines personal grief with the larger pain of her country, a theme often seen in Palestinian women’s poetry.

The study reveals the eco-feminist themes in Tuqan’s later works, which have been otherwise neglected. While (Nazar et al., 2022) briefly mentions environmental elements in her writing, this work shows how those natural images are more directly connected with the political and spiritual symbols that run throughout her lines. For example, the lyrical poetry of Tuqan constantly marked trees, soil, and water as a political affirmation of belonging and survival. Such a theme gives an enriched understanding of how she responded to the fragmentation of homeland and identity in her late poetry; it is also one of the reflections of aging.

## Fadwa Tuqan's Enduring Legacy in Contemporary Palestinian Expression

The research also highlights Tuqan's literary legacy as an ongoing strong influence on modern Palestinian expression. Previous works have accounted for her influence, but this one reveals her resonance in newer feminist and artistic circles where her voice is not only remembered but also reinterpreted. Her ability to unite different generations with candor, cultural anchoring, and poetic creativity gives her work a living relevance that cannot be exhausted by historical analysis.

The research provides a comprehensive understanding of Tuqan's literary contributions as it emphasizes that she was documenting national resistance as she was making a name for herself within Arab feminist writing. Through an analysis of her poetry and autobiographical prose, the research delineates how Tuqan makes connections with her personal experience and collective memory. Tuqan creates a literary voice against occupation; negates all patriarchal myths, and reconstructs political expression through emotional levels and symbolic depth. The research offers new perspectives by illustrating how Tuqan's legacy remains alive in Palestinian culture today and by focusing on eco-feminist themes within her recent writing. The researcher expands the existing scholarly work by presenting Tuqan to her audience as a multidimensional writer. Tuqan's work continues to be a necessity for those who cherish their understanding of the Palestinian identity, cultural resilience, and feminist thought.

### Conclusion

This research has provided evidence for how Fadwa Tuqan's poetry interacts with feminist discourse by interrogating colonial power as well as patriarchal relations. While reading through a postcolonial lens, her poetry is a space for the female voice to advocate for itself against its silencing and exclusion. Tuqan reconfigures the position of women in the national struggle by incorporating women as active agents in the formation of collective memory and cultural identity, rather than mere symbols. Tuqan's poetic voice can demonstrably add value to feminist discourse in the Arab world, giving us a more nuanced understanding of resistance, as both gender and nation are implicated in her work. Tuqan creates a dynamic interplay between the personal and political in which she challenges hegemonic narratives and reclaims space for the marginalized female voice.

Tuqan's body of work centers on that intersection where Palestinian national identity takes shape alongside feminist literature that asserts itself. Her body of work which involves a mix of poetry and autobiography functions as a multifaceted dialogic terrain where personal subjectivity and collective memory intersect. Through textual analysis,

the article demonstrates how Tuqan's psyche manipulates the trauma, exile, and selfhood intersection to produce a fragile expression of Palestinian womanhood which complicates and subverts representations of the female in postcolonial literature.

Tuqan's poetry moves from self-reflective writing to political language, showing changes in society and politics. The use of personal stories, especially in *A Mountainous Journey*, shows how women fight to get their voice and power back in a culture where they are often not important. It helps us understand better how remembering the past works in making who we are.

Furthermore, the current study has highlighted consequential aspects of Tuqan's recently collected works, especially their ecological and spiritual thematic. This offers a site for interdisciplinary conversation with ecofeminist theory and trauma studies. Such thematic concerns complicate hegemonic frameworks by illustrating distinctly a poetics of place and belonging that transcends political immediacy. They offer insights into modes of resilience that remain important for reading Palestinian cultural production in its full complexity.

This research goes beyond textual analysis, Tuqan's impact on contemporary Palestinian literary and feminist practice is long-lasting. Her work has been a touchstone for scholars of gender, nationalism, and postcoloniality in the Arab world and beyond. Further reading could also juxtapose with other regional and global feminist writers and open up intercultural art dialogue about resistance and identity. Interdisciplinary work that draws from performance studies, visual culture, and/or, eco-critical approaches would also be useful to the project to show how her reception and interpretation is of a certain time, place, or generation.

Positioning Tuqan's literary voice at the confluence of postcolonial feminist and anti-colonial traditions, this project contributes to existing scholarship by demonstrating how Palestinian women's poetry can serve as a cultural witness and as a political intervention. By addressing the trauma of colonization as well as reliance on and power within the individual woman's life, Tuqan's poetry both decolonizes and genderizes the narrative of national identity and female subjectivity.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

The study contributes to the existing body of researchers through a more comprehensive reading of the contributions of Fadwa Tuqan. It emphasizes how Tuqan's literary voice encompasses gender, politics, nature, and spirituality. She is a writer who cannot be fully experienced unless her poetry is read together with her prose. Tuqan's legacy is more

than a particular moment or category contain the beginnings of an expansive legacy in the form of a living and evolving dynamic aspect of Palestinian cultural memory in thinking through feminist prisms.

The research sets the groundwork for future research into how the literary legacy of Tuqan is being revised and received by younger Palestinian poets, artists, and in their activist contexts, especially by women. This kind of work not only advances knowledge of the persistent impact of Tuqan, but also provides insight into how her voice continues to resonate, evolve, and inspire resistance.

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