

**Cultural Memory and Exilic Perspective on Home and Identity:
A Historico-Literary Analysis of Mahmoud Darwish's Works**



By

Muhammad Ajmal Khan
62-FLL/PHDENG/S12

Supervisor

Dr. Muhammad Safer Awan
Professor

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

2018

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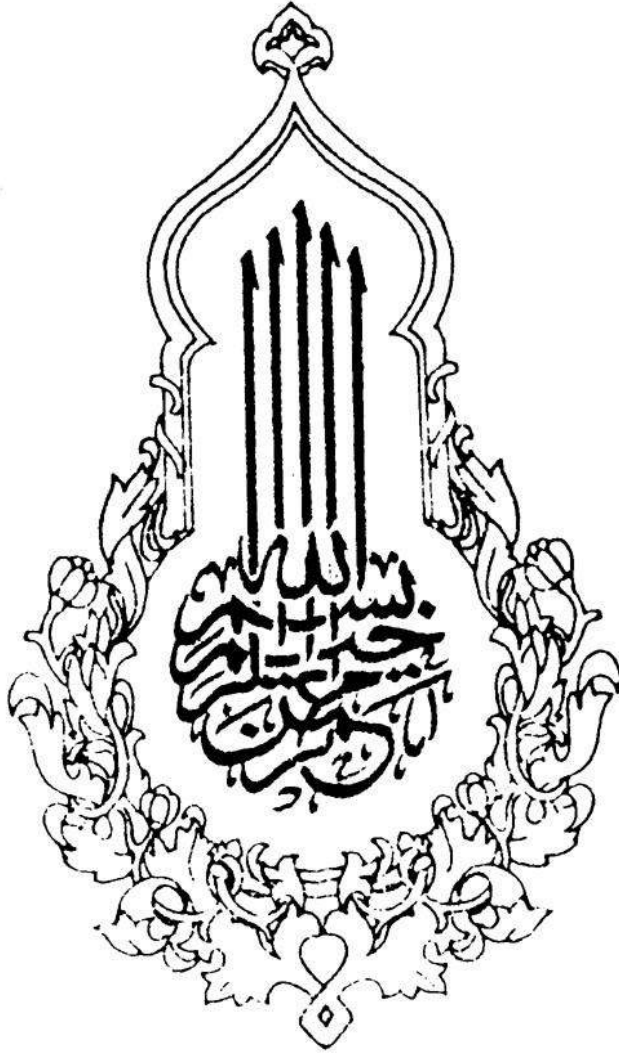
Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan
Professor

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Acceptance by the *Viva Voce* Committee

Title of the thesis: *Cultural Memory and Exilic Perspective on Home and Identity: A Historico-Literary Analysis of Mahmoud Darwish's Works*

Name of student: Muhammad Ajmal Khan

Registration No: 62-FLL/PHDENG/S12

Accepted by the Department of English, Faculty of Languages & Literature, International Islamic University, Islamabad, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English with specialization in Literature.

Viva Voce Committee

External Examiner

Dr. Shaheena Ayub Bhatti

Director Women Research and Resource
Centre, Fatima Jinnah Women University,
Rawalpindi

Dr. Munawar Iqbal Ahmad

Dean

Faculty of Languages & Literature, IIU

External Examiner

Dr. Sarwet Rasul

Associate Professor/Chairperson,
Department of English, Fatima Jinnah
Women University, Rawalpindi

Dr. Muhammad Sheeraz

Incharge

Department of English, FLL, IIU

Internal Examiner

Dr. Munawar Iqbal Ahmad

Dean

Faculty of Languages & Literature, IIU

Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan

Dean

Faculty of Languages, NUML,
Islamabad

December 27, 2018

ABSTRACT

The thesis deals with the history of the last seventy years of Palestinian struggle for the establishment of their identity as a sovereign nation-state as it is reflected through the poetic and prose works of Mahmoud Darwish. Owing to his persistent role as the mouthpiece of the Palestinian sentiments, Darwish has come to be known as the Palestinian national poet. In the present study, Darwish's literary outpour is seen in the context of a long history where different claimants have contended to establish their entitlement to the sacred land of Palestine.

The historical dimension is an important part of the Arab literature in general and Palestinian literature in particular where the struggle for independence and democratic rights has consistently been nabbed by the colonial masters in the past and the neo-colonial regimes of the present time. In the context of Palestinian/Israeli conflict, the UN-sanctioned 'two-state' solution is being systematically undermined by the ultra-orthodox, US-supported Israeli government that openly refuses to admit the legal and historical rights of the Palestinians.

While history is being documented by the resourceful western academia and other institutions with more or less ulterior motives, it becomes ever more pertinent to highlight the Palestinian cause as reflected through various modes of their own cultural production. Indigenous literary and non-literary voices must be heeded to for a holistic understanding of the human condition in Palestine. Analysing Mahmoud Darwish's writings in their historical backdrop is thus an attempt to understand the history of Palestinian national identity through the focal lens of a representative poet.

The present research is interdisciplinary in nature using a historico-literary framework of study that takes its lead from intertextuality as well as new-historicism. The purpose of investigation is a deeper understanding of Palestinian struggle through Darwish's works as he tackles the challenges of exile and cultural memory to realize the ideals of *home* and identity. It is hoped that the present treatise would encourage further interdisciplinary researches where other literary texts are explored in their historical and political contexts.

DECLARATION

I, Muhammad Ajmal Khan son of Muhammad Anwar Khan, Registration No. 62-FLL/ PHDENG/ S12, student of PhD, in the discipline of English Literature, do hereby declare that the matter printed in the thesis **“Cultural Memory and Exilic Perspective on Home and Identity: A Historico-Literary Analysis of Mahmoud Darwish’s Works”** submitted by me in partial fulfilment of PhD degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

This work was carried out and completed at International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan.

Signatures of Deponent

Dated: December, 2018

MUHAMMAD AJMAL KHAN

DEDICATION

To the heroes and martyrs of Palestinian struggle, to their spirit of *intifada* (resistance) and *sumud* (perseverance), and the paragon of the two, their national poet Mahmoud Darwish.

&

To Edward Said who kept the torch of Palestinian struggle well-lit throughout the academic world and from whose dauntless writings the western world had a rare chance to see the real picture of Palestinian lives.

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*alhamdulillah rabbil aalameen wassalaatu wassalaamu alaa syeedil ambiyya'i wal mursaleen
nabiyyina wa shafiyina Muhammad Mustafa sallallahu elaihi wa alaa aalehi wasallam*

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I have reasons to remember my grandparents Abdul Ghafoor Khan, Razia Begum, Muhammad Yusuf Khan, Noor Fatima, my teachers: respected Mian Anwar ul Haq Sahib, Professor Dr. Jahangir Tamimi, Professor Shamim Tahira Yusuf and Dr. Saeed ur Rehman.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The event of the creation of Israel (May 15, 1948) and the corresponding Palestinian *Nakba* (great destruction) have completed seven decades. The Zionist initiation of a settler colonial process at the cost of a vast ethnic cleansing of Palestine continues to the present day. Recurring images of horror are telecast or reported round the globe every day and have therefore become a matter of expected news on global media. Talks about peace and settlement of disputes between Israeli and Palestinian representatives often encourage the hopes of a lasting solution. But each time, hostilities allegedly carried out by one community or the other surface and jeopardize the peace process. The subliminal notion of *the balance of power* is asserted by the occupiers and with the vital support of their international fraternity, they strike back with an unproportioned scale of cruelty and the decades old phenomenon of Palestinian/Israeli “conflict” is renewed.

In this equation of historical belligerency, themes of colonialism, Semitism/anti-Semitism, racism as well as liberation and mutual coexistence keep surfacing. These give way to endless rounds of discussions, international conferences and researches regarding territorial jurisdictions, rights of the communities on ground, rehabilitation of refugees and reassertion of their political identity. Every year new literature appears from both sides of the argument and the writers assert their points of view and win readership and criticism from their own side as well as the other. Any literary study in this backdrop has to be historically informed and factually aware, with a full view of the international relations, comparative literature, exclusivist religious stances as well as ever changing facts-on-ground. According to Dr. Joseph Massad (2006), the ‘Palestinian Question’ cannot be de-linked from the ‘Israeli Question’ and the mutuality of the communities must be counterbalanced with the acknowledgement of the differences between their cultures and their politics. He quotes Israeli clinical psychologist Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi who

analyzed the colonialist movement of Zionism and summarized it as an act of repatriation where the Zionist settlers tried to convince themselves as well as the international community that they were not moving to a new country, but ‘simply coming home after an extended stay abroad; the apparent (Palestinian) natives were actually the real foreigners (Massad, 2006, p. 26). Looking at the phenomenon psychologically, it is plausible to conclude that there has been a continuous referencing to the historical memory on both sides to establish, or counter, effective hegemony. Professor Rashid Khalidi (2007) believes that other indices to study the troubled history of the region include the respective levels of economic development, the growth of cultural and political institutions, ideological cohesion and military capabilities that amount to ‘comparing the incomparable (Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*, 2007, p. 9).’ The only comparable thing in this geo-political and historical enigma is therefore the cultural memories of the two communities. Looking back at the memory, of what the Palestinian writer Sari Nusseibeh calls ‘*Once upon a Country*’, from the exilic perspective can be a good starting point for any serious study of the literature that emanates from this troubled region (Nusseibeh, 2009). In the state of exile, one’s past is always a living present:

I am in the presence of memory
The echo of things pronounces through me
Then I pronounce ...
Whenever I listen to the stone I hear
The cooing of a white pigeon / Gasp in me:
My brother! I am your little sister,
So I cry in her name the tears of speech ... (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 179).

Memory preserves the past in an indiscernible fashion and the poetic expression gives it a visible shape. On the collective level, when the visible structures of identity and culture are threatened, a nation conserves these through the agency of collective memory. The more complex the history, the more vistas of the memory would open and hence more complex would be the ways in which a poet perceives, analyses and synthesizes his experience in words. The complexity of human situation gives rise to the density of expression which paves the way for multiplicity of interpretations. Meir Litvak (2009) has analyzed the evolution of modern Palestinian collective

memory and its role in shaping Palestinian national identity. In his view: “No group identity exists without memory as its core meaning; the sense of continuity over time and space is sustained by remembering, and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity. (Litvak, 2009, p. 1).” The same holds true concerning the distinctiveness of cultures that develop sideways with memory and identity. In Palestinian context, this memory had been taken into account on revolutionary basis as early as in 1950s by Palestinian intellectuals and writers like Jamal Qa’awar, Najwa Qa’awar, Rashid Husayn, Fadwa Tuqan and Mahmud Darwish where *Nakba* (the great catastrophe), constituted a crossroad in the history of Palestinian literature. In this literature, the emotional roots of the Palestinians in exile and those who became Israeli citizens were realized through themes of yearning and longing. This type of literature was called *Adab-al-Nakba* (Literature of Catastrophe) or *Adab-al Ishtiqaq* (Literature of Yearning). Both of these flourished into another genre that has persisted to the day i.e. *Adab-al-Maqawamma* (Literature of Struggle). Examples of this may include Ghassan Kanafani’s *Return to Haifa, Land of Sad Oranges* and *Men in the Sun* and Mahmoud Darwish’s *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, and Nassar al-Din al-Nashashibi’s *Return Ticket* etc. (Milshtein, 2009, p. 80). Commenting on this literary genre, Webman refers to Palestinian People’s Appeal officially issued by Palestinian National Identity and read out aloud by Mahmoud Darwish on the fiftieth anniversary of Nakba on May 14, 1998: “We do not seek to be captives of history or victims of the past. The Palestinian people have launched a redemptive journey to the future. From ashes of our sorrow and loss, we are resurrecting a nation celebrating life and hope (Webman, 2009).” Apparently a regional phenomenon, this intellectual revival in Palestine, becoming exceedingly evident in their literature, has a universal appeal and a tremendous potential for redefining human thought and thus changing the course of civilization.

The Palestinian issue is perhaps one of the most incredible political issues of the twentieth century that has already foreshadowed one and half decades of the twenty-first century as well

with its complexity and conceivable peril at a global scale. The intricacy of the situation demands digging up the annals of history and memory and to see the present situation in the framework of all possible intellectual resources. This framework includes poetry and other genres of literary expression as well as relevant theoretical explications, particularly those which deal with historical dimensions of literature. The persecution of Jews in Europe gave rise to Jewish nationalism which under Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionist Movement (1897) decided to focus, with all sources of diplomacy and militancy, on forging their way back to Palestine after almost two thousand years of '*homelessness*' which the Jews prefer to call Diaspora i.e. mass exodus from the land as a result of the destruction of the Second Temple by the Roman army in 70 A.D. (Encarta, 2007). According to Lord Gilmour (2009), Herzl's plan of 1896-97 that aimed at establishing an "outpost of civilization, stemming the tide of barbarism" found a voice of complicity in Britain's Balfour Declaration of 1917 that inexcusably agreed to give to the Zionist Jews what did not actually belong to United Kingdom i.e. Palestine. It followed a grand plan of relentless appropriation of Palestinian lands at the expense of its rightful inhabitants, ruthlessly destroying an almost defenseless Palestinian nation. By 1943, David Ben-Gurion successfully created a parallel between Zionism and Semitism and therefore anything against the Zionist ideology was to be taken as anti-Semitic and therefore representative of Nazi Germany which would not be acceptable to the civilized world. Thus began a relentless land-grab by the legates of Zionist ideology that culminated in the creation of Israel in 1948 (Gilmour L. , 2009, pp. v-vii). The most apt one-word substitution for the Israel-Palestine correlation is 'occupation' and as Ahron Bregman suggests, "occupation ... is a much more complex and multidimensional phenomenon than it may at first seem." He describes the phenomenon through the analogy of two concentric circles that are geopolitically placed. The inner circle deals with the shoulder-rubbing lives of the occupiers and the occupied population on daily basis. The outer circle is at the level where the occupation is argued over at some distance from the scene (Bregman, Cursed Victory

: A History of Israel and the Occupied Territories, 2015, p. xxviii). The places where the international bodies (UN and its subsidiaries) meet to discuss the issues of Israeli-Palestinian stalemate are spatially distant from the scene of conflict but unfortunately there are intellectual distances mutually dictated by variegated philosophies, motley of historical accounts and divergent religious beliefs. These hinder the holistic understanding of what actually went by historically and how it has been at the 'ground-zero' over the decades. With the onslaught of grand media narratives, an almost complete Jewish control of propaganda machinery, diplomatic and financial western support, and one-sided military supremacy of the Zionists, only those Palestinian intellectuals who are capacitated with higher philosophical understanding or poetic acumen can discern the situation and express it with a desire to preserve national history and thus resist becoming antiquity. Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish are two such names. For a major part of their lives they remained at the *colonial center* but did not remain out of touch with the *periphery* of their origin to which they persistently belonged. They turned to Palestine every now and then and reported what they saw with the lenses of philosophical discernment and literary insight respectively. The latter's life and works are the focus of the present study to analyze how cultural memory and exilic perspective define the vital aspects of Palestinian *home* and *identity* specifically for the poet and generally for the entire Palestinian nation within whatever is left of the original country, its refugee camps and the world wide Palestinian diaspora.

1.1 Darwish's intellectual and biographical profile: a life of conviction and struggle

Mahmoud Darwish (March 13, 1941--August 9, 2008) is a poet of Palestinian origin. He was born in a Palestinian village *al Birwah* in the district of Western Galilee. He belonged to a moderately well off farmer family of Salim Darwish and Huriyya Darwish. He was the second of the eight children, five sons (Ahmad, Mahmoud, Zaki, Nasuhi and Ramzi) and three daughters (Ramziyya, Salwa and Siham). On June 11, 1948, Zionists demolished their village for new settlements and the inhabitants of *al Birwah* (also called Kafr al Barwah) were driven off. It was

not just a threat that made them leave their hot dinner and everything that belonged to them that night; it was an armed attack that the neighbourly villagers tried to resist with guns purchased by selling their wives' gold but who lacked the regular supply and concerted action of the IDF who reconquered the resisting villages and destroyed them 'without leaving a single stone in place' (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 16). Darwish recounts meeting a Jew during his visit of the place twenty years later and since his proficiency in Hebrew hid his identity, they got engaged in a dialogue concerning a place once known as al-Birwa: "Have you heard of a village called al-Birwa?" "No," I answered. "Where is it?" "You won't find it on this earth," he said. "We blew it up, raked the stones out of its earth, then plowed it until it disappeared under the trees." "To cover up the crime?" I asked. He corrected me, protesting, "No, it was to cover up its crime, that damned place!" "And what was its crime?" I asked. "It resisted us," he answered. "They fought back, costing us many casualties, and we had to occupy it twice (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, pp. 12-13)."

It is related that since Darwish's family went out of al-Birwa when it was occupied and razed, they missed the eventual official Israeli census and when they returned and asserted their presence, they were categorized as 'internal refugees' for which another term 'present-absent aliens' was later introduced (Poetry Foundation, 2016). Nur Masalha tells us about Absentee Property Law promulgated in 1948 to legalize land expropriation, and its requisite legal term that Israeli government coined in 1950 with Kafkaesque irony: *nifkadim nokhahim* in Hebrew, and Present-Absentees in English: "Although the internally displaced Palestinians were eventually accorded Israeli citizenship under the 1952 Israeli Nationality Law, as 'present absentees' they have always been systematically prevented from returning to their homes and lands or regaining their property (Masalha, The Politics of Denial. Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 2003, p. 9). The office responsible to watch these affairs was originally known as Custodian of Enemy Property and was later replaced with the title of Custodian of the Absentees' Property from which

a Jew could establish ownership of a Palestinian's land by making payment to the Custodian office, thereby establishing the legal right of purchase of the given land rather than its acquisition through confiscation. (Ibid. p.138, 134). The truth of the matter is brought home by Darwish quoted in translation by Jenni Fagan:

They fettered his mouth with chains,
And tied his hands to the rock of the dead.
They said: You're a murderer.
They took his food, his clothes and his banners,
And threw him into the well of the dead.
They said: You're a thief.
They threw him out of every port,
And took away his young beloved.
And then they said: You're a refugee (Fagan, 2012).

Fagan also quotes Darwish's words from his 'acceptance speech' when he received his principal literary prize at Prince Claus Fund in Amsterdam in 2004:

A person can only be born in one place. However, he may die several times elsewhere: in the exiles and prisons, and in a homeland transformed by the occupation and oppression into a nightmare. Poetry is perhaps what teaches us to nurture the charming illusion: how to be reborn out of ourselves over and over again (Ibid.).

Darwish is not alone in undergoing such a 'fit of passion'; his feelings have other corresponding attestations as well. For example, Tamara Nassar describes in her essay "My Family's Nakba Story" how her paternal grandparents Fawzi Nassar and Violet Nassar were expelled from their homeland during the 1948 Palestinian Nakba and how their citrus plantations were uprooted to be replaced by military camps and how the water wells were dumped close and the houses stood demolished. According to Nassar: "Absence has since been embroidered in the fabric of what came to be a family born in a memory of an unattainable land. The distance between home and homeland translated itself in a tense displacement." He believes that the Palestinian tragedy of 1948 eternally duplicates for every child who is born in a refugee camp and it can only be inverted with the return of the Palestinians to their land. Until it is attained the children of the exiles would remain 'walking embodiments of abandonment (Nassar, 2016).' When this abandonment overarched, Darwish's family took shelter in Lebanon. From there began the saga

of the life of a genius poet, philosopher, national hero and above all, a representative voice of the displaced people of Palestine. He with his father and uncle sneaked back to their land after spending one year in a refugee camp in Lebanon. They insisted on being recognised as “returnees” but the Jews branded them as “infiltrators”. In 1950, just at the age of nine, he is reported to have stood before the mike during a school function in the then occupied Palestine and to everyone’s surprise, he read out a poem of his own making addressed to a fellow Israeli boy:

You can play in the sun as you please, and have your toys,
But I cannot.
You have a house, while I have none.
You have celebrations, while I have none.
Why can’t we play together (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, pp. 11-12)?

Next day he was summoned by the Israeli military governor who insulted and threatened him and his family. Darwish recalls that he was shaken with fear for himself and for his family and kept wondering how a poem could upset the military governor so much. This was the voice that had to continue singing the praise of his homeland for the next fifty eight years, both through his absent-present status, life in the refugee camps and the eventual exile abroad. Speaking about the earliest experiences of exile, he recalls:

You weren’t able to hold back your anger in exile when your classmates reminded you that you were Palestinian and had no right to excel. Those insults were the first clues to an awareness that would take hold of you in a few years, when you realized that your situation was not simply a matter of asking for equal rights (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 10).

The Palestinian communities of refugees are called “communities of memories” in which “people take part in activities that reflect a strong commitment to both the memory of the past and dreams of return in the future.” People of such communities develop a highly specialized sense of remorse and forbearance while they refuse to come to terms with the harsh reality of their present existence and thus “perpetuate the past as an open wound.” Michael Milshtein speaks on the authority of Mahmud Darwish, how his mother refused to attend wedding occasions and how she would only take part in funerals after their village of al-Birwa in Galilee was destroyed (Milshtein, 2009, p. 73). Mahmoud Darwish completed his education in difficult circumstances,

obtaining a General Secondary Certificate in 1960 while he lived in the village of al-Djaydeh to which his family had moved. Later, he moved to Haifa where in confrontation with blatant infringement of basic human rights carried out by the Zionist government, he decided to become politically active and joined the Israeli Communist party. Darwish's initial poetry symbolized the Palestinian resistance to Israeli rule. His earlier volumes of poetry, *Leaves of the Olive Tree* (1964), *A Lover from Palestine* (1966) and *End of the Night* (1967), were published in Israel. During this time Darwish was a member of the Israeli Communist Party, *Rakah*, and made his sustenance possible by editing the Arabic edition of the party's Arabic newspaper, *Al-Ittihad* and the magazine *Al-Jadid*.

1.2 Imprisonment, exile, death and recognition

Israeli Palestinians were restricted in any expression of nationalist feelings. Due to his discernible free expression inclined towards the Palestinian cause, Darwish was repeatedly arrested and sent to the prison or kept under house-arrest (Clark, 2008). His first imprisonment came in 1961 in Haifa, and then in 1965 when he was imprisoned in a jail in Ramla, because he had traveled from Haifa to Jerusalem (to take part in an evening of poetry, organized by Arab students of Hebrew University in Jerusalem) without a permit from the Israeli authorities. He was jailed a third time in 1967, charged with engaging in "activities hostile to Israel." On the night of the Israeli aggression against neighboring Arab countries in June 1967, he was imprisoned in al-Damun jail. In his own words, "Ten years trapped in Haifa, of which three I spent imprisoned in my house. Every year one or two times in prison (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 34)." Imprisonment must have been a blessing in disguise at that time. He was so much full of pain and sorrow that his lacerated feelings found a very impressive and striking expression in poetry. He regretted the silence of the neighbouring Islamic countries who exhibited the mask of silence over other masks of political expediency and indifference that they wore. Darwish the poet saw the masks falling and the real faces getting revealed till he was convinced that within the realm of analogy, he was

comparable with Yusuf (A.S.) the son of Ya'qub (A.S.) surrounded by his step-brothers who had decided to do away with him. In one of his poems that expresses his incisive poetic vision, he says:

Fallen, the mask covering the mask
That covers the mask
Has fallen, and there's no one
None but you in this stretch of space
Open to enemies and forgetfulness ...
The mask has fallen (Darwish M. , Memory for Forgetfulness, 2013, p. 59).

By this time, Darwish had almost decided to go away in exile. According to Dan Rabinowitz and Khawla Abu Baker, the Palestinian youngsters felt beleaguered by the Israeli 'censo-democracy' and its heavy handed treatment of the natives and decided to leave the place till they could harbor resources to either come back in unison or to remain in exile and look for other opportunities of life. The young Palestinian men and women knew that once they embark upon the journey of exile, they would not be able to return. That prospect would be completely jeopardized but despite their love of the land that they celebrated for the rest of their lives in exile, several reached the breaking point and opted it: "none more conspicuously than the poet Mahmoud Darwish, who exchanged Haifa for life in exile in the late 1960s (Rabinowitz & Abu-Baker, 2005)." The fifth occasion of imprisonment was in 1969 when Darwish was detained once again in Ramallah. Disenchanted and embittered, at the beginning of 1970, he went to Moscow to study, thanks to the Israeli Communist Party. He stayed there for over a year but saw with exceeding dismay the great gulf between the tenets of Marxism and its practical implementation even in the USSR. He then went to Cairo in February 1971, having decided never to go back to Israel. In the preface to his book of poetry *Birds Are Dying in Galili* (1970), he said,

The important step that I have taken stems from considerations of service to the cause: there are places where, it seems to me, there is more freedom and more liberty and which may allow me greater scope to express myself and to work than I could find in my own country. I am advancing from a place of restriction and imprisonment to a place of work... my ability to tolerate, to be patient, is now exhausted, especially since I no longer belong to a people that asks for mercy, that begs for alms, but to a people that fights.

Muna Abu Eid refers to his press conference on February 11, 1971 in which he cited the reasons that made him resign from Rakah. Apart from repeated bouts of incarceration during ten years at Haifa, he had discovered that instead of following its professed claim of Jewish-Arab fraternity, Rakah had proven to be the party of only Israeli patriots: “I did not understand that. What does it mean to be an Israeli Patriot? I was not Israeli and I could not be an Israeli patriot (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 34).” Darwish had come to understand that the Jews are all necessarily Jews: Ashkenazi or Sephardic, orthodox or liberal, Zionists or otherwise, European or Israelis, all Jews. They could be critical of each other at times, very critical in fact but their common identity has always held them together and that is why they have survived the odds of holocaust and exile and have gone through hazardous task of empire building in Palestine through land usurpation, repatriation, colossal development, colonial enterprise, massive control of information and high-tech industry. The Palestinians on the other hand, have been divided along the geographical and political lines to the extent that there is no way they can affect a concerted effort. In connection with this issue of identity-crisis, Dr. Abu Eid also gives the translation of one of Darwish’s poems “The Curtain Falls” from the book *Birds are Dying in Galili* in which Darwish speaks to an imaginary audience like a tired actor who has performed his role to its minutest details as the producer of the play had demanded and then begs his leave by announcing a resignation:

Ladies and gentlemen!
I entertained you for twenty years
And today the time has come for me to leave
To run away from this asphyxiation
And to sing in the Galilee
To the birds who live in the nest of absurdity
And for this I am resigning (Ibid. p. 35).

Darwish then moved between a number of Arab and non-Arab capitals, finally settling in Beirut, which he left only after the Israeli military incursion in 1982. In exile, he became editor-in-chief of the magazine *Shu'un Filastiniyyah* (Palestinian Affairs), published by the Center for Palestinian Research and Studies based in Beirut. He also joined PLO and was later elected to be a member of the executive committee of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization founded in

1964), and was made chairman of the Supreme Council for Culture, Education and Heritage. Subsequently, he lived in Tunis and Cyprus. He took the post of editor-in-chief of the magazine *Al Karmel* and was long resident in Paris, which gave him the opportunity to explore the various cultures from around the world that co-existed there. In 1984, he was elected President of the Union of the Palestinian Writers and Journalists, and re-elected in 1987. He lived afterwards partly in the Jordanian capital, Amman, and partly in Ramallah, in the West Bank. In addition to writing *Memory for Forgetfulness* (1986), he composed several poetic works during this period like *It's a Song* (1985), *Fewer Roses* (1986), *Eleven Planets* (1992), *I See what I Want* (1993) and *Stranger's Bed* (1999). In these works he rose above the reductive label of a "poet of resistance" and combined with a unique flexibility, elements of epic, mythology and history along with unique experimentation with meter and form.

In 1998, Darwish had his heart surgery and a close encounter with death in Paris which led him to write *Mural* (2000), an epic that celebrates the triumph of creativity over mortality. He lived through another Israeli siege in Ramallah in 2002 (during the second intifada which Darwish saw in all its shades of pain from very close quarters) and wrote his *State of Siege* (2002) followed by *Do Not Apologize For What You Have Done* (2004), *Almond Blossoms and Beyond* (2005), *The Butterfly's Trace* (2008) and his posthumously published book of poetry *I don't Want This Poem to End* (2012) (Antoon, 2013, p. xvii). Darwish died after a brief state of coma on August 9, 2008 following an open heart surgery at the Memorial Hermann Texas Medical Center in Houston without a written will or anything to say in his last moments. Three days of national mourning was ordained by the PA President Mahmoud Abbas who called him 'the leader of modern Palestinian cultural project, a bright national leader and a lover from Palestine'. There were worldwide series of obituaries and memorial services in Darwish's honour. He was buried in the city of Ramallah on August 13, 2008 just close to Ramallah Cultural Palace after receiving the honour of a state funeral.

The tribute his compatriot Naomi Shihab Nye offers to him ranks Darwish not only among the most representative of the Palestinian poets but also among the unique international voices for peace and understanding. She calls him “the Essential Breath of the Palestinian people, the eloquent witness of exile and belonging, exquisitely tuned singer of images that invoke, link, and shine a brilliant light into the world’s whole heart. What he speaks has been embraced by readers around the world – his is an utterly necessary voice, unforgettable once discovered (Shihab, 2012).” Darwish's poetry has been translated into English, French, Russian, Swedish, German, Spanish, Dutch, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Urdu, Polish, Italian, Persian, and Hebrew. He was honored with the Lotus Prize by the Union of Afro-Asian Writers, the Ibn Sina Prize, the Lenin Peace Prize, the Mediterranean, the Shield of the Palestinian Revolution, the Spanish Library Award, France's Knight of Arts and Belles Lettres Medal, the Officer Medal, a special prize from the International Cavafy Committee, the Lannan Prize for Cultural Freedom, the Dutch Prince Klaus Reward, the Sultan Bin Ali Al 'Uwais Cultural Foundation prize, and the Arab Poetry Prize of the Supreme Council of Culture (Cairo) established by Naguib Mahfouz (Shaheen M. , 2009).

Within the Israeli-Palestinian audience, his reputation is comparable with the 1966 Nobel Laureate German Jewish immigrant poet S. Y. Agnon despite the ironic difference that Darwish is known all over the world and Agnon is virtually unknown outside Israel. Translatability of emotiveness is far more a greater possibility with Darwish’s poems when these are relegated into another language due to their universal motifs and themes and recognizable idiom. But Agnon’s works cannot withstand translation owing to intricate Hebrew wordplay and echoes of biblical and historical texts which do not always have their counterparts in other languages. Despite the noise and the rush of international travels, dearth of identity and rest, Darwish remained intellectually poised, busy in writing poetry, reflective journals and political treatises, and reading his poetry to large international audiences. He underwent all the psychological, political and financial troubles associated with the condition of being in exile. On the other hand Darwish’s

Israeli counterpart (Agnon) would sometimes lodge a complaint with the city council of Tel Aviv about traffic noise on his street and the municipality would close the streets to cars with a sign hanging: *No cars are to enter. Agnon is writing* (Hacht, 2009, p. 24). While western literary encyclopedias like *Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of World Literature* chronicle the works of Jewish canon as a part of world literature like the literary outpour of Yehuda Amichai (1924-2000), A. M. Klein (1909-1972), Primo Levi (1919-1987), Dahlia Ravikovitch (1936-2005), A. B. Yehoshua (b. 1936), Amos Oz (b. 1939) etc., Darwish has been poignantly left out along with many other literary voices from Palestine. Does this have to do with their national identity crisis or consistent international denial of identity? A. B. Yehoshua himself eulogizes Darwish and claims that Darwish had taken upon himself a literary duty to “make the Arabs flesh and blood, to make them real (Freedland, 2016).

1.3 International representation of the Palestinian sentiment

Darwish is considered one of the representative voices of modern Arab poetry in general and Palestinian literature in particular. Modern Arab poetry is unique in the sense that it has originated from a time and space marked by political turmoil. While there are regions within the Arab world where internal radicalism and political awareness has created a demand for constitutional rights and electoral system, there are certain political entities that are marked by an increasing absence of identity. Palestine is its most conspicuous as well as contentious example not only in the region but also in the time and space of the present world. Its inhabitants have suffered an unusual and tragic fate spanning almost over an entire century now. People who are engaged in writing and hearing about them, do not fully understand the true picture of the ordeal. Newer scholarship tries to decipher newer dimensions of Palestinian issue but with each apparent discovery, a new layer of constructed truths is spread over the story. That is why, Darwish says, “I am not embarrassed about my identity because it is still in the process of being invented (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 148).”

While Darwish's identity as an independent citizen of a sovereign Palestine was still in the making, he was hailed as an international citizen among free writers sans boundaries. A good example of this fraternity was Darwish's joint effort in developing International Parliament of Writers (IPW) in France with Jacques Derrida, Helene Cixous, Bei Dao, Salman Rushdie, Wole Soyinka, Pierre Bourdieu and other writers. On February 3, 1994, the IPW issued its Declaration of Independence which is a milestone in the achievement of the ideal of academic and literary freedom of expression. The declaration was unanimously composed and delivered but the text has clear Darwishian overtone as it vows to fight for the oppressed writers and against those who not only oppress the personal existence of these writers or their works. They also promised to keep working for 'the freedom of writing and dreaming' (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 240). While IPW members helped in winning about thirty cities around the world that were ready to accord asylum to the refugee writers who might have been under immediate threat of persecution for their daring critique of life represented in their works, the organization underwent a revolutionary step when in March 2002, Mahmoud Darwish was denied permission by the Israeli authorities to travel to United States to receive a literary prize that an American university had accorded to him. IPW undertook to travel to Israel to show solidarity with their wronged community member. It was the time when Israeli army, under Ariel Sharon had already started a military operation in West Bank. While IPW sought to establish liaison with the Palestinian writers and artists who had been badly discouraged and isolated by the occupation forces of Israel, Darwish took this opportunity by the forelock and described the visit as a symbolic way of inscribing Palestine in the body of international culture. He highlighted the need of the political role of writers and the importance of literature as representation of life, particularly during political and military repression. Darwish's words addressed to the members of IPW are inscribed in the struggle of the Palestinians who have been living in what he calls 'a *closed world*': 'a world without exits, a world where ravages of war have affected the very syntax of the language'. He first compared their visit to the

act of breaking the siege and isolation imposed upon Palestinians. He praised them for taking the side of justice and standing against the imperial racism that is still manifest in that region to the level of a constant war:

War has brought sclerosis to our language. Our poems have been more pulverized than our streets. We are constantly driven to dramatize our poetry. Yet we must resist military meter and find a cadence which is not that of drum rolls. ... When we gaze at the stars we see helicopters. The only postmodern thing here is the Israeli army (Ibid. p. 242).

Seeking literary and political freedom may be taken as the summarized title of Darwish's life-long struggle. His representational role is geopolitically that of a Palestinian but in essence he embodies all those who have been deprived of identity or whose identity is rejected or disavowed. He lived the life of an itinerant, travelling through the Arab metropolitans to the Western cosmopolitans, carrying the tragedy of his country on his shoulders through his poetry. While he felt and described his multifarious experiences of living the life of an exile, he constructed a systemic thought, a slowly burgeoning ideological framework which may be called *home*. In the wake of a colonized and dispossesses national experience, this is an important intellectual achievement. An acknowledgement for Darwish's contribution to Palestinian liberty came as early as 1990 when Terry Eagleton recognized his anti-colonial social consciousness and admitted him among the greatest strivers for the betterment of the downtrodden and for the cause of liberty, and civic and political rights. Referring to the cumulative power of the revolutionary voice by the end of 20th century, he admits Darwish's place only among the best:

What enables us to say all of those things retrospectively is the perspective provided for us in the twentieth century by theoreticians, militants, and insurgent analysts of imperialism like Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, C.L.R. James, Aime Cesaire, Walter Rodney, plus many others like them, on the one hand, and on the other hand, by the great nationalist artists of decolonization and revolutionary nationalism, like Tagore, Senghor, Neruda, Vellejo, Cesaire, Faiz, Darwish ... and Yeats (Eagleton, 1990, pp. 72-73).

Darwish had written during a time when Palestinians were both historically and physically present but their history as well as identity was consistently being compromised leading to a slow effacement, obviously aimed at complete political obliteration and physical annihilation.

According to Alice Roth, the process has very rapidly moved on in the face of the Israeli empire building aspiration i.e. the creation of *Eretz Yisrael*, 'the land of Israel' or Greater Israel. The researcher Roza El-Elini asserts Derek J. Gregory's phrase that all geography is historical geography which means that the concepts like 'time', 'space', 'period' and 'society' all are a part of ideological landscape. Thus a study carried out in its new-historicist context must take into account the fact that there is no such thing as an absolute landscape without its history and ideology. According to Dr. Roza El- Eini, the Jewish claims to Eretz Ysrael or 'the land of Israel' try to create a geographical personality and through it authority is asserted with an attempt at totalization. This is based upon abstract religious claims that try to redefine the relationship that exists between man, God and land. If this goes unchecked, the landscape would be in a constant state of historical flux (El-Eini, 2006, p. 2). Such a geographical personality or historical geography can best be understood through the study of poetics and politics that should include, according to Greenblatt, material evidences like official and journalistic papers discursively interwoven till these become what he calls 'aesthetic property'. He claims that it would not be a unidirectional phenomenon in which things move from the social discourse to aesthetic discourse as within the former lies the energizing charge of the latter. He quotes Michael Baxandall's argument that suggests that society and art appear to be two different systematic constructions arising from two different categorization of human experience but at the same time, these are two contiguous analytical concepts whose subject matters interpenetrate (Greenblatt S. , Towards a Poetics of Culture, 1989, p. 11). For all socio-political and psycho-social situations and locations, *identity* and *culture* are considered contentious issues. The memory preserves culture both at the individual and collective level and turns into historical memory as a cementing force. Through his poetry, Mahmoud Darwish has preserved the cultural capital and identity of the Palestinian people, giving universal dimensions to their tragedy. His poetry has kept the message of Palestinian self-determination alive throughout the second half of the 20th century and still

continues to inspire the Palestinians living within the occupied territories, refugee camps in the neighbourly countries and the international diaspora even in the 21st century.

1.4 Thesis statement:

Darwish's work has been one of the crucial intellectual forces that has provided inspiration to the Palestinians to preserve their history, identity, cultural legacy and right to a homeland which would save them from a complete political erasure as a sovereign nation. An exhaustive historico-literary study of his work tracing the interlink of Palestinian history and corresponding literary expression is envisioned to highlight the poetics and the politics of Darwish's exilic experience along with its distinctive cultural nuances towards a continued quest for *identity* and *home*.

1.5 Research questions:

1. What are the historical, cultural and sociological processes which signify mutations in Palestinian identity over the years?
2. To what extent is Darwish a representative of Palestinian culture and collective memory of his people?
3. What is the range and scope of Darwish's work in transmitting exilic perspective on *home* and *identity* in the Palestinian context?

1.6 Theoretical framework and research design

The research is qualitative in nature with detailed *ex post facto* descriptions and explanations that apply retroactively to events in Palestinian history that have already occurred as well as to their gradually unfolding corollaries that are reflected in Palestinian literature in general and in Darwish's work in particular. The research seeks to trace politico-historical equivalents and parallels of Darwish's literary output in the wider context of Palestinian history as well as its present. According to Denzin and Lincoln, qualitative research is necessarily

explorative in nature and takes into account the perception of the social world. It thus explores a dynamic and negotiated reality and is therefore endlessly creative and interpretative in nature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Since the research is analytical in nature, it aims at an extensive critical understanding of diverse historical accounts in order to develop a comparative and competitive understanding of the issues involved in Israeli-Palestinian problem. This eventually serves as a context in which Darwish's texts are to be placed for a better understanding. However, the objective is not to provide merely the historical background of his individual poems as Darwish's poetical and prose works are not merely journalistic in outlook. The spirit of Palestinian identity permeates throughout his work and any focused historical, political or cultural study necessitates a holistic view. As Louis A. Montrose has noted under the heading of "The Poetics and Politics of Culture", there is a recently emerging need and concern for analyzing literary productions and reproductions in the context of historical, social and political conditions. The texts, Montrose believes, are being re-construed not only as historically determined but also, in turn, effectively determining their respective cultures. He believes that aesthetic issues are inextricably and complexly related with other discourses and practices constituting intricate social networks in which 'individual subjectivities and collective structures are mutually and continuously shaped.' Tracing the development in the field of New Historicism, he refers to J. Hillis Miller's Presidential Address to 1986 session of MLA in which it was asserted that in addition to the issues of language, the literary study has taken a turn "toward history, culture, society, politics, institutions, class and gender conditions, the social context, (and) the material base (Montrose, 1989, pp. 15-25)."

Montrose believes that all texts are ideologically marked and that ideology resides in cultural formation including the literary texts that emanate from that plane. It is not a simplistic phenomenon as within the culture, there are so many codes that converge and interact. This interaction registers its effects within the ideological apparatuses and the consequent text

discourse is produced and appropriated within a history that is shaped by other productions and appropriations: ‘literary criticism rearticulates itself as a site of intellectually and socially significant work in the historical present.’ The crucial task for the professor of new historicist criticism must be to disabuse students of the notion that history is what’s over and done with. His task is to bring them to appreciate that they themselves live *in* history (Ibid.).

The principles of New Historicism that are influenced by poststructuralist concepts like *textuality* are popularly based on Friedrich Nietzsche’s particular concept of historicism that challenges its own assumptions as he has proclaimed in his essay “On the uses and disadvantages of history for life”. He prefers to call this approach as *critical history*, a stance that balances out the *unhistorical* approach (where one is full of forgetfulness in the wake of a single and bounded horizon) and the *supra-historical* approach (that envisions an eternal and stable existence). This is like branching out the traditional historicism and finding out newer horizons of understanding the domain of history (Castle, 2007, p. 129). According to Mats Alvesson and Kaj Skoldberg, a research should not begin with a priory assumption of harmony. In order to accommodate the contradictions and variations down the lane, a uniform framework may not be enforced (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2004, p. 103). The writers make a demand that there should be a sincere ‘reflection’ in research in conjunction with interpretation at several levels. While there should be contact with empirical material, there should be awareness of the interpretative act, depiction of political-ideological contexts as well as a careful handling of representation and authority (Ibid. p.238).

The need and the signification of this kind of research is evident from Jimmy Carter’s series of questions that he poses to the readers in the preface of his book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*: “What are the prime requisites for peace? What possibilities does the future hold? What common ground already exists ...? Must the situation steadily deteriorate until another crisis causes the interested parties to act?” He continues to admit that Israel enjoys an absolute American support but he wonders if Israeli enormity of military power would be able to subdue

the Palestinian/Arab sentiment of resentment. He expresses fear that desperation or adventurism could precipitate the situation into a massive casualty. One is surprised to read Mr. Carter's conclusion of the first chapter of his book when he says: "The spilled blood in the Holy Land still cries out to God – an anguished cry for peace (Carter, *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid*, 2006, p. 24)." It is thus the uniqueness of this land and the inimitability of its religious and cultural signification that any literary response emanating from this place must be put to newer interpretative literary and critical frameworks to bring out its implied textual importance. The present research is one such effort.

1.7 Parallelism between Historico-Literary and New Historicist studies

The research is archival, intertextual and new historicist. The term 'historico-literary' is variously employed by reliable authorships like in Webster's Dictionary (Neufeldt, 1997, p. 640) and Microsoft Encarta 2007 CD ROM (Cohen M. J., 2007). In latter, it has been defined as an adjective concerning history and literature. Henry Adams (1838-1918) the famous American philosopher of history and cultural critic used this *historico-literary* technique in his autobiographical history *The Education of Henry Adams* written in the detached third person narrative. One of the recent use of this term was the title of a chapter "Critical After-thoughts and Alternative Historico-Literary Theories" by D. Cameron Watt in the Book: *Spy Fiction, Spy Films and Real Intelligence* (Wesley 2013: 212). 'Historico-Literary', besides being closest to New Historicist paradigm, is an all-inclusive expression that brings historical criticism (unlike historicism which is concerned with historical validation of the texts) and literary criticism within the same domain. One good example of this amalgamation of concepts is the Encyclopedia Britannica entry under the heading of Historical Criticism:

Literary criticism in the light of historical evidence or based on the context in which a work was written, including facts about the author's life and the historical and social circumstances of the time. This is in contrast to other types of criticism, such as textual and formal, in which emphasis is placed on examining the text itself while outside influences on the text are disregarded. New Historicism is a particular form of historical criticism (Britannica Online 2014a).

This slight divergence between Historical Criticism and New Historicism needs further elaboration in order to elucidate the tenets that the present research has undertaken to follow. While Historical Criticism takes into account the social and biographical background of the author, and deals with the ideas current in a specific era of time, New Historicism focuses on the political function of literature outlined by the concept of power and sees the production of literature within the mesh of intricate means by which cultures produce and reproduce themselves. “New historicists conceive of a literary text as situated within the totality of the institutions, social practices, and discourses that constitute the culture of a particular time and place, and with which the literary text interacts as both a product and a producer of cultural energies and codes (M. H. Abrams, 2009, p. 219).”

New Historicism is an extension of the post-structuralist, deconstructive way of thinking and is thus a heterocosmic presentation of life (Seturaman, 2009, p. 575). The focus of the new historicist study in the past has been Renaissance literature due to its transitional status between the eras of medieval collective thought and Renaissance individualism coupled with the rise of science and modern economic structures. Since the present research is concerned with understanding of the meanings of the given text both aesthetically as well as politically, the term Historico-Literary analysis is more comprehensive and it aptly encompasses the multi-disciplinary dimensions that it entails. History and literature thus seen and analyzed becomes a multifaceted description of human reality. Literary works may or may not tell us about numerous verifiable dimensions of the geographical regions from which they emerge, but they may reveal to us the thought patterns of the time. New Historicism is more "socio-historical" and is therefore concerned with ideological products or cultural constructs which are formations of any era. Michael Delahoyde gives a pertinent example of the historico literary aspect of New Historicism: “It's not just where Keats would have seen a Grecian urn in England, but from where he may have absorbed the definitions of art and beauty (Delahoyde, New Historicism, 2014).” According to

Doctor Roza I. M. El Eini of the Royal Historical Society, a study involving research in Palestinian history has to use multi-dimensional theoretical approaches:

... ideological, cultural, and geographical theories, together with empire theories in historical, landscape and political geography, as well as social theories... Also applied are theories on policy-making, planning and plan implementation and on periodisation, as these provide the structure for the study. Following Alan R.H. Baker's discussion on ideological landscapes, a holistic and broad-based theoretical approach (should) be used so that both the general and specific may be analysed within the context and framework of world, empire and local events... (El-Eini, 2006, p. 1).

El Eini's idea entails a broadly-based spectrum of vision in which various interdisciplinary approaches can be simultaneously incorporated for a holistic interpretation. It is in line with Heidegger's argument that all description is always already interpretation. Every form of human understanding is interpretive (Given, 2008, p. 614). These interpretations overlap, intersect and augment each other. Every theoretical and literary approach is subject to the general principle that 'its epistemological credentials and its ethos of collaboration for the human good' should be observed (Waugh, *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 2007, p. 29). While '*theory*' oscillates constantly between hermeneutic and the more scientific modes of criticism, the proponents of deconstruction and New Historicism insist on the principles of *undecidability* and *contingency*. This leaves the texts open to newer readings, re-readings, and construal interpretations. Even way far back as Greek philosophy, Plato used to evaluate the literary texts by looking at the ways in which these reflected and endorsed particular ideologies. The verbosity and the ornate language did not hold much interest for him. Thus for Plato, as for the contemporary theoretical frame work of New Historicism, the literary texts must be seen as socio-political discourses rather than as timeless aesthetic objects. At the same time the postmodernist theorists believe that apart from the mere socio-political aspect, history and culture must also be taken into account which opens the gate for Marxist literary approach as well (ibid). Michel Foucault extends this approach to include the tenets of cultural materialism while understanding a given literary text. In his view the works of art or literature should be taken as emanations of a cultural response rather than of individual making and thus the nuances of a writer must be understood in relation to the codes

that operate to create meaning within a cultural system. Thus a study of ‘power’ and ‘totalities’ would expose an otherwise ‘subjugated’ or ‘buried’ form of knowledge (Newton, 1997, p. 113).

1.8 The intertextual aspect of the historico-literary study

Intertexture is a Latin phrase. It is the past participle of *intertextere* which means ‘to interweave’ (Neufeldt, 1997, p. 707). It would thus mean that different designs or substances are interwoven to achieve new and more useful, more conducive and more enduring patterns. The simplest definition of Intertextuality comes from Encyclopedia Encarta where it is described as, “the relationship that exists between different texts, especially literary texts, or the reference in one text to others (Weinberg, 2007).” A further elaboration is provided by M.H. Abrams, ‘...one literary text echoes, or is inescapably linked to other texts, whether by open or covert citations and allusions, or by the assimilation of the features of an earlier text by a later text, or simply by participation in a common stock of literary codes and conventions’ (Abrams M. H., 1987, p. 200). Intertextuality has to do with the links between one piece of literature and another or several others that have a mutual bearing upon each other. These links may be direct or indirect in nature and may carry clear references or vague allusions. It denotes the perception by a reader of the relationships that exist between a given text and others preceding or following it (Waugh, *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 2006, p. 277).

Intertextuality embodies an all-encompassing literary experience. The term was originally proposed by Julia Kristeva (1966) to denote the inter-dependency of the literary texts. For her, intertextuality denotes the way discourses or sign systems are transposed into one another so that meanings in different discourses are mutually interspersed or overlapped (Cuddon, 1992, p. 454). In her essay of 1969, translated as “Word, Dialogue and Novel”, Kristeva describes the underlying concept of intertextuality. It implies that no text, much as it might like to appear so, is original and unique-in-itself. It is rather a tissue of inevitable references to, and quotations from other texts. These in turn condition its meaning (Kristeva, 1986, pp. 36-60). In her book *Desire in*

Language (1974), she uses this term in two of her essays: ‘*The Bounded Text*’ and ‘*Word Dialogue and Novel*’ written in late 1960s with a focus on narrative textuality. In these she writes of ‘Text’ as comprising ‘a permutation of texts, an intertextuality’, and of how ‘in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one other (Raman Seldon, 2007, p. 171). She suggests the intersection of a given textual arrangement with a broader set of ‘exterior texts’, or what she terms the ‘text of society and history’. The term was later supported and adopted by Roland Barthes (1977) for whom the term generally implies the perception by a reader of the relationship existing between a given text and others preceding or following it either by means of direct quotations or indirect allusions. In order to accommodate this perpetual cross referencing, I had to go through a comprehensive reading schedule. I pursued an in-depth study of literary and critical theory to ascertain the existing parameters of intertextual studies. It followed eclectic interpretation juxtaposing the microcosmic literary cues and macrocosmic historico-political universals to establish the poet’s position within the literary canon of Palestinian literature. The scheme of intertext is in fact an effort to provide a context to any subject at hand. Kristeva’s work is in line with the work of many other significant poststructuralist philosophers such as Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Louis Althusser. These writers and theorists always wrote in the context of political and social crises in France culminating in the radical events of 1968. The magazine *Tel Quel* provided them an opportunity to use the intricate literary theory to solve the political and philosophical challenges of the time. Kristeva, the central theorist of textuality, was declared ‘*l’etranger*’ or a foreigner on the charges that she displaces the instance of the signifieds and thus subverts the authority of the monologic science of filiation (Allen, 2000, p. 31).

For Kristeva, the signifiers were plural and were full of the historical significance. She was thus working in the ‘hidden spaces’ of the texts rather than those lucid ones that concern with stable signifiers (Allen, 2000, p. 32). Kristeva describes two axes of the texts: *horizontal* and the

vertical connecting the author and reader of a text and the text to other texts (Kristeva, 1986, p. 66). There are mutually shared codes. Kristeva declared that 'every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it'. According to Professor Adolphe Haberer, an analysis of Julia Kristeva's notion of intertextuality must be judged with reference to the socio-political context as well as the rise of the 'problematics of the linguistic sign, subject and the concept of enunciation (Haberer, 2007, p. 56).' Another feature of intertextuality reveals itself when a text is read in the light of another text and in this case all of the assumptions and implications surrounding the other text shed light on the way a text is interpreted. We cannot underestimate the cultural impact of the constant process of decontextualizing signifieds, turning them into signifiers, and redirecting them toward other signifieds (Goldman, 2010). Thus anything happening in Palestine has its repercussions in the international media, literature, politics, policies drafted and redrafted by the international bodies and then its direct or indirect impact on Palestinian life and its literature. Culler builds upon Kristeva's "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," and criticizes the traditional notions of the author's "influences" and the text's "sources", positing that all signifying systems are constituted by the manner in which they transform earlier signifying systems. A literary work, then, is not simply the product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts and to the structures of language itself. "Any text," it is argued, "is constructed of a mosaic of quotations...absorption and transformation of another" (Culler, 1976). Intertextuality continually refers to the impossibility of singularity and unity of a text and reminds us that all texts are potentially plural, reversible and open to the readers' own presuppositions as well as dialogic voices of the human society with increasingly fluid boundaries (Allen, 2000, p. 209). T.S. Eliot refers to this textual pluralism by suggesting that a poet or a critic ought to undergo a gradual increase of knowledge in order to have a holistic view not only of 'the pastness of the past as well as its present' (Eliot T. S., Selected Prose, 1965, p. 24). And without this formative 'historical sense' of the traditions of the past, he

argues, the individual ramblings are baseless and deprived of the possibility of future existence. According to Eliot whenever a new piece of literary writing is added to the canon, the whole body of literature changes and mutually readjusts (Ibid). Given the fact that the question of Palestinian is one of the most volatile and capricious issues of international politics today, Darwish's works need to be read and interpreted this way. Kate McGowan argues that the texts should be considered in their historical and contextual sense and not just as a pure humanistic sense, otherwise, she argues that even '9/11' "dehistoricized and decontextualized would sound like a senseless act of malevolence against an innocent world power. She believes that history, in the sense of a record, does not exist in any pure or original moment of presence. It never did and it never will. That does not mean that we don't have a writing of history, just that we can no longer conceive of it as the mark either of a presence or of an absence.

History, in these terms, is the structural repeatability of writing as a movement through time conceived not as a linear sequence, but rather as an ongoing process radically dependent on what has been written before as well as what will be written next ... the context is as textual as the text is contextual, even in the very moment of its inscription. Just like the writing pad, memory is nothing other than the trace of all writings which, while constituting it, also remain within it to shape what it is possible to signify (McGowan, 2007, p. 23).

This quality of archetypal totality and plurality is probably the reason why Darwish has been so widely read, translated and appreciated poet in recent times. His changing position as a modest love poet and as a revolutionary resistance poet can also be compared with Faiz Ahmed Faiz of Pakistan where the humanist and the radical-activist spirits lie closely knit in poetry and it becomes difficult to assign a singular role to the poet. This peculiar universality, ideological distinctiveness and historical involvement are hallmarks of the poets from troubled political backgrounds. All texts, therefore, contain within them the ideological structures and struggles expressed in society through discourse. This means, for Kristeva, that the intertextual dimensions of a text cannot be studied as mere 'sources' or 'influences' stemming from what traditionally has been styled 'background' or 'context' (Haberer, 2007, p. 36). There is thus no text that has

the characteristics of hermetic totality. Intertextuality is the general condition by which it is possible for a text to be a *text*: the whole network of relations, conventions, and expectations by which the text is defined. All texts thus become related by language or by context and that there is no such thing as an absolute or isolated text. This is of particular significance with reference to the present research where side by side with Darwish, there is a host of other Palestinian writers who have passed through the same cultural traditions, social ostracism, estrangement, exile and existential apprehensions. The present research incorporates the tenets of intertextuality because ideals like preservation of Palestinian culture as well as continuation of Palestinian Resistance Movement are '*textured*' into Mahmoud Darwish's poetry. His poetic essence cannot be extricated from it without leaving a void. In case of the present research there are clear references to the historical facts and the present day geopolitical scenario in Israeli-Palestinian context that help in a better appreciation of Darwish's work that includes the text of Palestinian Declaration of Independence proclaimed by Yasser Arafat on November 15, 1988. If only some of his poems are studied for their individual metaphors and other literary devices and techniques without the circumstantial background that inspired such a reading, this would amount to what Edward Said calls (and condemns) as a study of "technical formalism" which "kills your sense of excitement and discovery" and causes "laziness", "end(ing) up doing what others tell you" and reduces a person into a tame follower of a certain set of principles. In Edward Said's view, formal analysis of literature and especially poetry at the cost of its historicity is not a fair bargain. He even insists that along with historical dimension, political and other artistic expressions of life should be incorporated in the exegesis of a poet's work. '*Specialization*' in Said's view should not mean an increasing technical formalism and less of a historical sense "of what real experiences actually went into the making of a work of literature":

Specialization means losing sight of the raw effort of constructing either art or knowledge; as a result you cannot view knowledge and art as choices and decisions, commitments and alignments, but only in terms of impersonal theories or methodologies. To be a specialist in literature too often means shutting out history or music, or politics. In the end as a fully

specialized literary intellectual you become tame and accepting of whatever the so-called leaders in the field will allow (Said E. , *Representation of the Intellectual*, 1993, pp. 76-77).

What Said employs here is, for example, if we read a prose piece “Silence for the Sake of Gaza” by Darwish (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 122) that describes a Gazan girl wrapping explosives on her body for taking *revenge*, we should also have a good understanding of why Israel has implemented an illegal policy of collectively punishing the civilian population of Gaza, and how it’s been able to do so with impunity and what really happened during Operation Cast Lead and Operation Pillar of Defense, two of Israel’s large-scale military assaults on the defenseless Gaza Strip. Research scholars should know retrospectively why Israel attacked the humanitarian shipment of life-support commodities to the people of Gaza through *Mavi Marmara* in international waters (May 31, 2010), and why the US defended the killing of nine international peace activists on board the ship. And then the broad questions may be explained about how Israel has maintained its blockade of Gaza, general occupation of the West Bank and its gradual effacement through consistent settlement works? How do the Palestinians view this development and how has the international community reacted to it? What legal frameworks and principles of international law may be invoked for the solution? All these become relevant in the wake of intertextual interpretation.

1.9 Two types of analyses in the present research:

The research has entailed extensive library research, close reading and content analysis of the relevant materials including Darwish’s works and relative literature of literary, historical and political nature. Two aspects of analysis in this area have been consistently taken into account:

1.9.1 Historical and contextual analysis

Darwish’s poetry and prose has been seen in its historical context and the intertextual connections between his narrative and authentic history would be traced for a holistic understanding of his works. Poetry must be seen in the context of the poet’s intellectual response

to his surroundings. Exilic literature is systematically marked by the defining features of geopolitical aggression, homelessness, exile and reinterpretation of identity leading to a renewed spirit of nationalism. The researcher proposes to carry out this by carefully placing the historical events and their cultural implications both at the level of the poet's individuality as well as national sentiment. For this a correlation between the chronological events and the ensuing literary response would be traced to see their complex interdependence. Contextuality would thus be of two types:

- a. New Historicist context
- b. Historico-poetic context

Louis Montrose described the new historicism as “a reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history.” That is, history is conceived to be not a set of fixed, objective facts but, like the literature with which it interacts, a text that itself needs to be interpreted (M. H. Abrams, 2009, p. 219). New Historicism thus emphasizes “the historical nature of literary texts and at the same time, the textual nature of history. As part of a wider reaction against purely formal or linguistic critical approaches such as New Criticism and Deconstruction, the New Historicists, led by Stephen Greenblatt, drew new connections between literary and nonliterary texts, breaking down the familiar distinctions between a text and its historical background as conceived in historical forms of criticism (Baldick, 2001, p. 171).” In Greenblatt's own words, it is not only the new connections between the texts but also the indispensable connections between the ‘worlds’ of social (and political) presence and the literary texts that must be taken into account:

Social actions are themselves always embedded in systems of public signification, always grasped, even by their makers, in acts of interpretation. . . . Language, like other sign systems, is a collective construction; our interpretive task must be to grasp more sensitively the consequences of this fact by investigating both the social presence to the world of the literary text and the social presence of the world in the literary text (Greenblatt S. , *The Greenblatt Reader*, 2005, p. 4).

While New Historicism stands guard against the anti-historical precepts of New Criticism, Structuralism and Deconstruction, its exponents seek to study literature as a part of a wider cultural history and thus validate Marxist critical assertions concerning the relationship that always exists between literature and society (Gray, 2008, p. 137). In their joint *Introduction* to the book *Practicing New Criticism* (2000), Gallahar and Greenblatt suggest:

If an entire culture is regarded as a text, then everything is at least potentially in play both at the level of representation and at the level of event. Indeed, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a clear, unambiguous boundary between what is representation and what is event (Gallahar & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 12).

Here the word ‘representation’ stands for the literature that is produced in response to the ‘event’ that may be any emotional, social, political, or even militaristic incidence. Understanding the text would thus mean extracting an abstract set of principles with less and less involvement of a specific theoretical model. Much of this resonates in powerful ways with the impulses and perceptions, the fascination with the particular, the wide-ranging curiosity, the refusal of universal aesthetic norms, and the resistance to formulating an overarching theoretical program. Gallahar and Greenblatt quote from Johann Gottfried von Herder who even earlier found a similar way to justify and to integrate the new historicist’s simultaneous obsession with history and art in his book *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* that the political and military history are often myopic in vision and misleading whereas in poetry of a specific region, there is such diversity of thought and desire that we get to know how people thought and acted while they were alive or when they underwent destructive influences. Poetry, in this account, is not a path to a transhistorical truth, whether psychoanalytic, deconstructive or purely formal, but the key to particular, historically embedded social and psychological formations (Ibid. pp. 6-7). It is here that New Historicist approach again becomes relevant. New historicism provides a paradigmatic framework in which such an intricate analysis is possible. It is not only the placement of the literary text in the historical context but it is also related to:

A Foucauldian concern with the discourses of power and knowledge in a culture; New Historicism also employs current Marxist theory about the *production* of a text from particular political and socio-economic forces in the culture. (...) The consequence of this approach is a perception of the literary text as actually replicating in its own dynamics and structure those of the culture at large (Buchbinder, 1991, p. 114).

To judge the historical authenticity of the given texts is thus not the aim or purpose of the present research, as doing so clearly falls in the domain of historical criticism. On the other hand the research is primarily orientated towards a profounder comprehension of Darwish's writings within an inclusive literary framework where theories of culture and identity may coexist with the poet's intellectual and national history. Identity, in the words of Catherine Belsey, can be conceived of as a set of psychological characteristics, or as a social role, as recognition of the appropriateness to oneself of a classification, or as membership of a group (Belsey, *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*, 2002, p. 51). To understand this curious relationship that exists between identity, culture and history, the new historicists, inspired by Michel Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt, attempt to show how literary works are implicated in the power-relations of their time, not in the form of any prescribed world-view but as a continuous process of remaking of meanings (Baldick, 2001, p. 171). Since literature best depicts this 'neo historical' moment and all its details, the comparative study of the history-in-the-making and literature-thus-produced would promise a profound understanding. Thus instead of assigning a singular and bald meaning to a text, the process of remaking the meaning continues. Without an eye on this historical perspective along with its socio-political implications and the emergence of new philosophical patterns of thought, a deeper and clearer understanding of any given text is not possible. The present research is one humble effort to fill up this gap of providing a context to the text in the given area of study i.e. Darwish's poetical and prose works. Since, despite narrowing down to the works of a single author, the area is multifaceted, four core issues of exile, memory, home and identity have been chosen. Looking at it structurally, it is evident that this research starts with the end of an identity (exile) and reaches back to the realization of this important human attribute.

The angle of vision in new historicism, or historico-literary as this research proposes, has its parallels even before the advent of modern critical theory. For example, Johnson writes in his *Preface to Shakespeare* that in order to be rightly estimated, a man's performance must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived (Sherbo, 1968, p. 81). New historicism is less a system of interpretation than a set of shared assumptions about the relationship between literature and history, and develops general reflections. Its insistence on 'undecidability' and 'contingency' makes it uneasy with the designation of 'theory' (Waugh, *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 2007, p. 29). Waugh believes that Plato's critical approach is comparable with the theoretical method of New Historicism, "which analyzes literary texts as socio-political discourses rather than timeless aesthetic objects (Waugh, *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 2007, p. 41)." Greenblatt's books *Renaissance Self-Reflectioning* (1980) *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988) and *Will in the World* are its exemplary models in which he illustrates the "mutual permeability of the literary and the historical (Greenblatt S. , *The Greenblatt Reader*, 2005, p. 3)." The relationship of literature and history and the importance of the historico-literary study and analysis is best summed up by Edward Said who believed that

...the study of literature is not abstract but is set irrecusably and unarguably within a culture whose historical situation influences, if it does not determine, a great deal of what we say and do. I have been using the phrase "historical experience" throughout because the words are neither technical nor esoteric but suggest an opening away from the formal and technical toward the lived, the contested, and the immediate ... (Said E. W., *Reflections on Exile*, 2001, pp. xxxi-xxxii).

Reading intertextually within the time-and-space continuum of a culture as well as New Historicist paradigm promises a fuller understanding of any given text. Culture being a very wide term includes a shared sensibility of a people. In case of a piece of literature, it also includes the triangular sensibility that the writer and the readers share through the text despite their differences of time and space. When they interpret a text, the new historicists or cultural materialists foreground those obscure elements in its production that show us the context of exploitation in which the text is historically produced. For this purpose the literary texts are sometimes placed in

the framework of apparently non-literary texts as well. The present research is not purely archival but as Peter Barry has phrased, it is in the 'archival continuum'. It is not historical where the word of the past replaces the world of the past making a text irredeemable. Its historicist nature concerns with history as reflected in the literary text and not as history of the text alone. According to Peter Barry, the (literary) textual record of history owes to the tenets of Derrida's *deconstruction* in the sense that everything about the past (and even present) is available to us in 'textualised form' and is therefore 'thrice processed' by ideology and discursive practices of the past, our own times, and the inherent web of language devices. Representation of anything in the text is thus remade and must be re-placed in the framework of the three processes mentioned above. The repressive/colonizing empire-building states (like Israel itself), always try to develop the Panopticon, a legendary all-seeing prison system conceived by Jeremy Bentham with what Michel Foucault calls 'panoptic surveillance' not only by physical force and intimidation but also by discursive practices which circulate the oppressive state's ideology throughout the body politic (Barry, 1995, p. 176). Israel has established this panopticon in the most practical terms through the construction of the separation wall a.k.a. the Apartheid wall that has reduced the Palestinians into small cell-like enclosures that are supervised from top turrets and towers. The populace is surrounded, contained and controlled by barbed wires and electronic surveillance gates all the time. More than that, in the present context of research, even the written words of resistance and insurrectionary messages posted on social media have become cognizable offences and no literature is allowed to permeate the Palestinian society that may tarnish the Israeli highhandedness. Israeli citizens are rather well placed as they have access to all literature but the literature across the barbed wire is strictly controlled. Expression is only possible in the free-world outside Israel and it was this space that Mahmoud Darwish fully utilized in creating his *text*. When research is undertaken in the context of new historicism or historico-literary criticism, there may be an unconscious juxtaposition of the text and its context till a new entity of framework

is formed. Since it allows for taking note of various *differences* and *deviances* not available under the strict control of the overarching repressive regime, such an approach serves as an intellectual counterbalance to the postcolonial panopticon where the *power* itself is adjudged in its various shades and dimensions from the colonial standpoint. The present research has entailed the study of multitudinous texts of various disciplines (literature, history, international affairs, UN resolutions, political science, literary and critical theory with special stress on New Historicism etc.) and has thus provided a blueprint for a more coherent understanding of a writer who has composed most of his works in *halatil hisaar* or a ‘state of siege’ (the title of one of Darwish’s books). A praxis based critical and analytical study that cares less for the formal and technical, and more for the lived and the immediate context is closer to the real human condition. Unless such an insight is developed, a free qualitative research cannot be initiated. This may be in contravention to the canonical theoretical approach to literature that observes texts as closed systems that must fit the given theoretical frameworks for evaluation. No doubt the theoretical frameworks are humanistic and try to find meaning while solving the enigma of life with various economic, social, psychoanalytic and other structural and deconstructive methods, but without recourse to the historical and political dimensions, Said believes, mere humanistic critical approaches will not serve serious issues that modern academia must address. Thus, it is the responsibility of the critics, analysts and researchers of literature, as much as it is the responsibility of the writers themselves to be realistic as well as reflective in their works. The traditional study of literature that looks upon the poetic devices, prosodic structures and postmodern strategies of reading, understanding and explication must be aided with the study of what Said calls, *the historical experience*: “in particular the experience of dislocation, exile, migration, and empire, therefore opens both of these approaches to the invigorating presence of a banished or forgotten reality which in the past two hundred years has dominated human existence (Said E. W., *Reflections on Exile*, 2001, p. xxxii).”

1.9.2 Analysis of literary nuances, symbols and implications

Here on a hill slope facing the sunset and the wide –gaping
Gun barrel of time
Near orchards of severed shadows
We do as prisoners and the unemployed do:
We nurse hope.
(Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 3).

Darwish's work is necessarily pure poetry and poetic prose. The very titles of his books read together give one the feeling of reading a poem. All his translations have maintained the same idiom of the Arabic language and therefore symbolic analysis is possible. Since the works under reference deal with political realities, the deep poetic allusions with their implications and connotations can be studied and connected both with the reality on ground at home and its memory in exile. It is hoped that Darwish's symbolism understood in this contextual setting would explicate a workable theoretical framework. Darwish's cultural symbols are very satisfying but intricate. Their representational aspect is more sustaining than their conventional characteristics. The archetypal cultural object, the one that promises gratification, Lacan argues, is the work of the potter, who creates a space by making a vase to surround it (Lacan, 1992, pp. 120-121). A similar analogy has been suggested by Heidegger with reference to the holding of the liquid in a jug. He believes that it is not the sides and the floor of the jug that perform the act of containment. On the contrary, the indispensable element is the hole or the emptiness at the center: "The emptiness, the void, is what does the vessel's holding. The empty space, this nothing of the jug, is what the jug is as the holding vessel (Heidegger, 1971, p. 169)." Thus a good potter only supplies a shape to the void. Darwish's poetry can best be seen as the chronicle of this *emptiness* or *nothingness* that is actually the time-and-space of the possible Palestinian existence. In order to appreciate Darwish's literary significance, we have to see what lies at the center of his symbolic order. Palestine is everywhere: sometimes implied and sometimes personified.

1.10 Brief Chapter Overview

Chapter I: Introduction constitutes the research requisites of introduction, methodology and framework of the study along with its scope and delimitations. **Chapter II: Literature Review** concerns with Literature Review related with various aspects of the Poet's works, works about the poet and the literary and nonliterary works indispensably related with the enigma of Palestinian existence. Owing to the intertextual nature of the study, some analytical aspects of Darwish's work as well as relevant poetic quotes already start appearing in this part. **Chapter III: Palestinian National Identity: History, Challenges and Prospects** is about Palestinian History with New Historicist overtones. The historical, social and cultural milieu described in this chapter are supported by literary responses from Darwish, Edward Said and other analysts and critics from both sides of the argument. **Chapter IV: Poetics of Exile and Cultural Memory in Darwish's Work** deals with issues related with the key research items like Darwish's poetics of exile and cultural memory. It deals with the thematic analysis of Darwish's poetry related with Palestinian identity in general. **Chapter V: Darwish's Politics of Home and Identity** The word 'politics' in the heading of the chapter denotes the interrelationship between the people, groups, or organizations in a particular area of life especially insofar as they involve power and influence or conflict. In this chapter therefore more practical and specific aspects of Palestinian struggle have been explored as they manifest in Darwish's works. The interdisciplinary approach in these five chapters necessitates the mention of national struggle and the international political debacle that critically underscores the Palestinian Issue. **Chapter VI: Conclusion** is the recap of the previous chapters in the light of the basic research questions along with the mention of limitations and scope for further research.

1.11 Significance of the study

The present research joins hands with some of the pioneering detailed treatises on the works of Mahmoud Darwish that are more or less purely exegetic or biographical in nature. The Historico-Literary analysis with its corollary New Historicist approach entails more than just developing a system of interpretations; it is orientated to develop “a set of shared assumptions about the relationship between literature and history ...[it uses] an essayistic style that often develops general reflections from a startling historical or anthropological anecdote (Baldick, 2001, p. 171). Though focused mainly on Darwish’s poetics, the research is multidimensional and interdisciplinary in nature and is thus in consonance with the postmodern spirit of inquiry that eschews delimiting borders of academic compartmentalization. The research would thus touch the borders of anthropology, cultural studies, history, sociology and psychology. The study of the poetic process through which a diasporic writer develops cultural identity for posterity while he is displaced and forced to live in a distant cosmopolitan is a very intricate phenomenon. Such a study cannot be successfully carried out with the help of specific literary and critical theories alone that develop their premise on relative values. Looking only for stylistic devices to understand such literature is also expected to fall short of a holistic insight. The complicated phenomenon of diasporic literature particularly when it deals with poetry ‘the most concentrated and delicate form of human utterance’ (Richards 2009: 207), should not be studied only for its narrative appeal. There is more to it. It sometimes carries those deep rooted verities that mainstream media portrays as only sporadic events. Foucault’s concepts of *discourse* and *power* provide a new insight into the realm of literature and we find how “literary works are implicated in the power-relations of their time, not as secondary ‘reflections’ of any coherent world view but as active participants in continual remaking of meanings (Baldick, 2001, p. 171).”

The present research is thus timely placed and is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge by providing a general framework (Historico-Literary) in which literature of diaspora

in general and Darwish's works in particular can be satisfactorily studied to explore the underlying multi-layered meanings of 'history-as-text' i.e. history as recorded and represented in different documents (here Darwish's Works), which form its texts. History is often thought to be factual and literature is generally thought to be fictional. New Historicism deconstructs this traditional distinction and thus paves the way for historico-literary study in which literature can tell us about the social life of the times when a particular literary work was produced. A parallel reading of the literary and the non-literary texts both of which belong roughly to the same historical period is the basis of this kind of study which is a generalized analytical practice rather than an exclusively imposed Western theoretical concept (Nagarajan, 2007, p. 179).

The researcher hopes that the syncretization achieved by incorporating the tenets of *Home and Identity* in the perspective of *Exile* and *Cultural Memory* with the touchstone of relevant modern literary, critical theories, an original contribution would be made towards a comprehensive analytical study of Darwish's work. It is sincerely hoped that while this research helps in developing a holistic world view of Darwish in the context of Palestinian exile, memory, home and identity, other works of other writers in similar situations can also be researched on these lines in future. Thus poetical or other literary works taken from Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq, Libya, and Syria etc. may be analyzed in the light of historical records to see this unique side of the picture as well.

The international affairs have not and will not cease from seeing the conventional rise of disputes and their solution as this is an inalienable precondition of human life and its evolution. While the historian's work and the poet's work in the same given political actuality develops separately and variously, the most objective view can be attained through seeing the literature in the framework of diverse political interpretation and vice versa. The knowledge of the truth thus reached may not be absolutely reliable but it will give the researchers and the general readers both, a subjective/objective, poetic/historian and philosophical vision that would clarify some of

the nuances of ongoing political struggle the vision of which is always under the threat of opinionated and propagandist obfuscation. It is also hoped that the unconventional, interdisciplinary and multifaceted aspect of the research will open up profounder ways of looking at the international issues of which the relevant literature makes a very significant part.

1.12 Delimitations of the study

- a. With only a working knowledge of Arabic language, the researcher is able to approach Darwish's work through its authentic English translations. Since Arabic is inherently a very metaphoric language, there is always a possibility of embedded significances and shades of meanings that add up to make a unique artistic oeuvre. There is always a probability that a certain translator might overlook these aspects and cause a misunderstanding for the readers of the target text. However, through a comparative study of the original work in Arabic and its English translation which is often published side by side in Darwish's books, the researcher has benefited from the original aura of Arabic expression as well.
- b. The major aspect of Darwish's poetry that has been explored and analyzed in the present study is more of an objective and political nature. The poetic nuances are thus more lucidly understood in the context of typical international events. Since this is *not* a research of comparative translations, only English rendering of Darwish's works has been incorporated in the draft. Most of the requisite historical and political resources, consulted during the study were either already in English or in authentic English translations e.g. Professor Jean – Pierre Filiu's book *Gaza: A History* (2015) was available to the researcher, not in the original French but in its English translation by John King etc.

- c. For the present research, although an extensive reading of almost all of his works available in English was undertaken, most of those poems and prose curios were focused upon that are somehow directly related with exile, its pain and the subsequent emotional resolution that builds, or aims to build, a homeland in imagination as a matter of emotional and political strategy. Thus only a carefully sifted and chosen part of his literary work has actually been incorporated as direct quotations or indirect citations.
- d. Since the research deals with the works of a distinctive poet in relatively unique circumstances, numerous quotations of relevant extracts from his writings as well as other international scholars have indispensably been provided. While this adds to the volume of the work, it may be seen as a sincere attempt to make the dissertation more inclusive and exhaustive.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Darwish's works consulted for the present research

The first requisite of the study has been an in-depth reading of all the available works by Mahmoud Darwish. In this context, apart from several of his poems and journals (English translations) published in international journals and magazines, the following full-length works (available in authentic English translation and arranged below in the order of publication) were thoroughly read along with extensive notes-taking, discussions and reflections:

- **Memory of Forgetfulness (1995): translated by Ibrahim Muhawi**

This is an extended poems-in-prose reflection on the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Alongside reflection on the political and historical dimensions of the invasion, it is also a journey into personal and collective memory, a usual national service with Darwish continued throughout his career as a writer.

- **The Adam of Two Edens (2001) translated by Hussain Haddawi, Sinan Antoon et al.**

Carrying such strong expressions as “Stranger, hang your weapons in our palm tree and let me plant my wheat in Canaan’s sacred soil”, this book is a collection of poems that not only have deep lyrical feelings of a literary writer but also a *fighter* who, in the words of Carolyn Forché, performs a meticulous and spiritual excavation of (his) land and (his) language, diaspora and exile. In the book there are selected poems invoking the spirit of those times when Palestine had historical links with Canaan, Dead Sea, Tatars, Anat, Greece, poets of Jahiliyya like Imri’ Al-Qays, Andalus etc.

- **Unfortunately, It Was Paradise (2003) translated by Munir Akash and Carolyn Forche**

It is a kaleidoscopic book with poetic works chosen from several published works like *Fewer Roses* (1986), *I See What I Want to See* (1993), *Why Have You Left the Horse Alone* (1995), *A Bed for the Stranger* (1999), *Mural* (2000), *Three Poems (before 1986)*, and *Four Personal Addresses*. Several of these poems were written after his visit to Israel after twenty six years of exile. It recollects memories and restructures a life in Palestine as once it was and what it will become one day. Thus the book is replete with history of the past and the mystery of the undetermined future. “Like a small jar of water”, he writes, “The absence breaks in me.”

- **Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone (2006) translated by Mohammad Shaheen**

This book is an attempt to explore the deeper meanings of life through an intertwining poetic narrative exploring the impact of exile and the consequent quest for identity. He divides it into sections labelled Icons of Local Crystal, Abel’s Space, Chaos at the Entrance of Judgment Day, A Room for Talking to the Self, Rain over the Church Tower, Ring the Curtain Down.

- **The Butterfly’s Burden (2007) translated by Fady Joudah**

The book carries full texts of three important poetic works by Darwish including *The Stranger’s Bed* (1998), *A State of Siege* (2002), *Don’t Apologize for What You have Done* (2003).

- **If I Were Another (2009) translated by Fady Joudah**

This is a book of selections once again from various books by Darwish and thus provides an opportunity of comparative study of translations by other writers. The poems in this collection have been taken from the following books: *I See What I Want* (1990), *Eleven Planets* (1992), *Mural* (2000), *Exile* (2005).

- **Mural (2009) translated by Rema Hammami and John Berger**

The book consists of the two longer *qasida* style poems: Mural and The Dice Player, the latter being one of Darwish's very last ruminations. These poems reflect his deep philosophical mind with thoughts ranging from the local colours to the cosmic realities of time and space. These two poems seem to make the poet feel an out of body spiritual existence while the ephemeral vanities fizzle out and a greater and stronger psyche is born. The books enthralls the reader with an equally corresponding impact.

- **A River Dies of Thirst (2009) translated by Catherine Cobham**

This is a book of Darwish's short journals with 150 deep-thinking meditations on various topics ranging from 'If I were a Stone', 'A Talent for Hope', Empty Boxes, 'The Roar of Silence', 'A Longing to Forget' etc. The prose style as well as content is comparable to his compatriot Kahlil Gibran. Reading both side by side gives a feeling that the Palestinian origin does have a peculiar impact on a writer's imagination.

- **State of Siege (2010) translated by Munir Akash and Daniel Abdal-hayy Moore**

It is a book written in seemingly hasty but actually very well felt snatches which Munir Akash calls 'the icons of pain'. The book consists of about 183 icons each expressing a descriptive picture of its own without a title. It seems the lack of identity has crept into the work in which all these short poetic expressions of various lengths (but not exceeding half a page) have found place. There is a deep sense of pain which clearly arises from an exercise of collective memory that represents an entire uprooted nation.

- **Journal of an Ordinary Grief (2010) translated by Ibrahim Muhawi**

Pierre Joris calls this book as an essential primer for the gradual understanding of Palestine and its people. Due to the force of expression and the way the words land in the emotional deep of the reader, Joris has chosen to call these prose journals 'poems with justified margins'. There are some of the most touching and historically very well

placed stories in this book with intermittent self-reflection that gives a true picture of what it means to be a Palestinian through the last seven decades of struggle and dispossession. Reading this volume of journals provides several clues to his difficult poetic references and thus provides a kind of stage setting for the poetic revelations.

- **Almond Blossoms and Beyond (2010) translated by Mohammad Shaheen**

This is a uniquely designed book of poetry with nine sections that constitute an artistic pen picture of a typical exile who undergoes so much. The title has probably been inspired by a group of several paintings by Vincent Von Gogh in southern France that represented spiritual awakening and hope. In this book, there is a mention of weddings, seasons, café's, love, women, fog and remembrance. But the sense of exile permeates through each section and gets hold of the reader unawares. The sections of the book include: You, He, I, She, Exile I, Exile II, Exile III and Exile IV.

- **Absent Presence (2010) translated by Mohammad Shaheen.**

A book that recalls and laments the loss of identity and provides an initiation into the Presence of Absence indicating that during exile, a person only has a partial existence, a partial recognition and is therefore capable of only a partial sadness and a partial joy. It is an autobiographical prose book about Darwish himself and it was rendered into a TV series in summer 2012.

- **In the Presence of Absence (2011) translated by Sinan Antoon**

Another book of twenty journals but unlike *A River Dies of Thirst*, every topic is dealt with in details gradually unfolding the sequence of thought till he surprises the reader of a sudden end. He leaves the poetic thought continue to reverberate in the reader's mind. The lyric prose smacks of the love and the loss of homeland and Identity and no study of Darwish can be accomplished without repeated recourse to this book.

On the back flap of the book is an important and very true expression by Wole Soyinka: “A poet at ease with, because attuned to, his own people.” That is an apt description of a poet who remained in exile but always came back to his people in sentiment and its expression and was therefore hailed as their national poet. The book is a hybrid of verse and prose though the form remains almost entirely that of prose. Marilyn Hacker believes that it is a biography of exile and return. But he also invokes sensation of a life fully lived while he crosses and re-crosses the borders of what is and what is not!

- **I Don’t Want This Poem to End (2016) edited and translated by Mohammad Shaheen**

The book comprises thirty of his important poems, some of them posthumously published and other prose essays and unpublished letters.

According to Mahmoud Darwish’s translator and friend from University of Cambridge, Mohammad Shaheen, “all great poetry travels ... it travels in a finer tone to help it survive freely in exile instead of finding shelter in asylum. For Mahmoud, poetry is a global project which aspires to transcend local limitations ... any translations whatever its limitations, is in itself a good gesture and it can probably help in widening the circle of his readership (Darwish M. , *Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone*, 2014, p. x).

2.2 Non-Literary texts for in-depth view of the Palestinian issue

Palestinian literature, like the Arab literature in general is deeply rooted in the history of the region and cannot be read and understood fully without recourse to history. In order to be acquainted in detail with the vital historical background and other contextual information on Palestine, the researcher has consulted, in part or in full, several books. Since the list is extensive, it would be expedient to enlist the five most important nonliterary/political treatises that were found indispensable for any serious study of the Palestinian issue:

- *The Palestine Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction* by Gregory Harms
- *The Israel-Palestinian Conflict: A People's War* by Beverly Milton Edwards
- *Dictionary of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Macmillan Reference)
- *The Question of Palestine* by Edward Said
- *Might Over Right: How the Zionists took over Palestine* by Adel Safty

2.3 Comparative literary voices of other Palestinian/ Israeli writers

Side by side with the understanding of Palestinian-Israeli Ethos, the historical and political knowledge needs to be augmented with reading other literary expressions of the same vein so that the *historico-literary* insight could be developed. Therefore along with nucleus-study of all available works of Mahmoud Darwish in English, other poetic and literary voices from Palestine have also been studied for a holistic understanding of Palestinian issue. It has provided a comparative understanding necessary to bring about a finer analysis. Obtaining a working knowledge of some of the representative literary pieces by Palestinian writers at home or in the diaspora has therefore been a matter of importance in developing necessary background to the topic of research. While several of these books were studied to develop appropriate understanding of Palestinian Literature, the following five recent literary texts were found of special value:

- *The Blue Between Sky and Water* by Susan Abulhawa
- *Once Upon A Country* by Sari Nusseibeh
- *In Search of Fatima* by Ghada Karmi
- *This is not a Border* by Ahdaf Soueif
- *Out of It* by Selma Dabbagh

2.4 Scholarly articles, interviews and reviews

Scholarly Articles and reviews always provide a unique insight into a writer's work. Particularly during the present research, these often provided the researcher with a cue to further inquiry and the range of bibliography of different writers gives an idea about how they make selections in order to support their arguments. Although the range of analysis is always different, reading these research articles and reviews added not only to the required knowledge but also

gave an idea of how logical deductions and intellectual bridging of ideas takes place among different writers and researchers. As far as Interviews are concerned, they are reflective of a writer's most immediate and therefore the most intimate thoughts and sometimes leads a person into an understanding over and above the written words. The researcher took all the available articles on HEC digital libraries till September 2016 into account to evaluate the extent to which Darwish has been researched and elaborated.

2.5 Critical / Analytical works on Darwish and the need of further research

By the time this research was initiated i.e. in January 2015, apart from the sporadic research articles in various journals, there had been four published works of critical significance on the subject:

1. *Mahmoud Darwish: The Poet's Art and His Nation* (2014) by Khaled Mattawa (New York: Syracuse University Press).
2. *Literary Disinheritance: The Writing of Home in the work of Mahmoud Darwish and Assia Djebar* (2008) by Najat Rahman (Lanham: Lexington Books).
3. *Mahmoud Darwish: Exile's Poet* (2008) by Hala Khamis Nassar and Najat Rahman (Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press).
4. *The Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish: A study of the Three Developmental Phases of his Poetic Career* by Yusuf Brahmeh (LAP).

Later, towards the accomplishment of this research in September 2016, one more work of note was added to the list of publications in the line of critical material:

5. *Mahmoud Darwish: Literature and the Politics of Palestinian Identity* (2016) by Muna Abu Eid (London: I. B. Tauris).

All of these books deal with Darwish's life and work in the Palestinian territories and in the diaspora. The works are thus more of political biographies bedecked here and there with snatches of his poetry and interviews or articles but these fall short of serving as an extensive survey of his poetry in terms of historico-literary reflexivity. In Khaled Mattawa's book *Mahmoud Darwish: The Poet's Art and His Nation* (2014), the writer contextualizes Darwish's

language and aesthetics and brings forth the poet's role in the political and cultural spheres which is very important in the wake of modern propagandist media regimes where journalists and historians have enmeshed themselves in a symbiotic relationship with the power structures and the poets and the artists are the only hope to bring forth the true picture of humanity through engaging themselves in the preservation of fundamental human truths and feelings. Mattawa reports that Darwish believed that the greatest evidence that the Palestinians belonged to Palestine and vice versa was that they did not have to excavate their belonging and their identity. Their presence asserts itself through their peasant traditions on the ground and not through dreams or mythologies quoted in ancient books. Darwish asserts that whatever the Israelis perpetrate is due to the lack of belonging that weighs heavily upon their hearts (Mattawa, 2014, p. 106). Mattawa suggests that during the period of 1971 to 1986, Darwish's poetry remained preoccupied with Palestinian life in the diaspora. Palestinians, as the poet dealt with them during this period were more than a banished nation, they were shown as awakening, though still confused, to the new demands of the time to preserve their identity. In his poem "Sirhan Drinks Coffee in the Cafeteria", there is the following suggestive dialogue between a Palestinian youth and his interlocutor:

--- What's your name? --- I forgot.
---What's your father's name? --- I forgot.
---Your mother's? --- I forgot.
--- Did you sleep well last night? --- I slept a lifetime.
--- Did you dream? --- A lot.
--- Of What? --- Of things I never saw in my life.

And then the Palestinian shouts out :

Why did you eat vegetables smuggled from the fields of Jericho?
Why did you drink olive oil stolen from Christ's wounds (Mattawa, 2014, p. 74)?

Mattawa also quotes another poem by Darwish that instead of the Palestinians at large, deals with the poet's own specific psychological condition as he is forced to establish his identity

away from the center of his affection. In this effort, rather than being able to build his world of identity in exile, he is overcome by nostalgia as he moves from café to café:

From Café to Café, I seek another language.
I seek the difference between memory and fire.
I seek the first frontier of my own limbs.
Give me my arms to embrace others.
Give me some wind so that I can walk.
From café to café,
Why does poetry escape my heart the further I travel from Jaffa?
Why does Jaffa disappear when I embrace her?
This time is not my time ...
No, this country is not my country.
No, this body is not my body (Ibid. p. 75).

The collection of extensive critical essays edited by Hala Khamis Nassar and Najat Rahman: *Mahmoud Darwish: Exile's Poet* focuses on certain images in Darwish's individual poems with commentaries for better understanding of certain poetic passages. The book helps in exploring newer vistas of understanding and appreciating Darwish. For example, it deals with his continuous struggle to fight the pessimism of the intellect while holding fast to the optimism of the will power in the wake of occupation and dispossession. The editors believe that every poet is an exile to some extent in relation with a language, tradition, place or the demands of everyday life but Darwish is distinguished with reference to his exile which relates with displacement, dispossession and siege and this reflects in the 'limits' of his poetry the way it is inhabited with a bygone temporality and a space of loss. They quote his own words: "Poetry ... remains incomplete if it does not resonate of echoes of the far past (Nassar & Rahman, 2008, p. 3). The editors believe that absence is a crucial thematic structure in Darwish's writings. He is wary of further displacing the absent subject by writing about its absence – by absenting it again through his writing – something done unawares by Palestinian writers as they have made it strangely invisible – absented and displaced – by a fixed discourse of patriotism and nostalgia (Ibid.).

The foreword is by the acclaimed Palestinian writer and critic Salma Khadra Jayyusi who has written about Darwish's life mission and place in Arabic literary history along with his

‘humanizing capacity’ and ‘pure poetic instinct. She speaks of the Palestinian collective identity in which the personal identity of the poet is rooted: “This collective identity forms an integral part of the national narrative, and plays a major part in the ongoing resistance in its countless aspects, it represents a unifying factor, one that speaks of a similarity of experience, of a common memory that warms the heart (p. viii). The book consists of thirteen critical essays:

- Modern Arabic Poetry: Vision and Reality by Bassam Frangieh

This essay deals with the political and military adventures undertaken both by the colonizers and the colonized in the Middle East as portrayed in Arabic and particularly Palestinian poetry that constitute resistance ideology, exile and continual displacement.

Darwish stands unique:

A dark night will come,
When there will be fewer roses.
But even then,
I shall continue my song
With the same force (Ibid. p. 23).

- Threatened Longing and Perpetual Search: The Writing of Home in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish by Najat Rahman

The essay quotes Darwish’s idea that poetry is a quest for what has not yet been said. The Arabic word for poem-song is ‘*nashid*’ which as a verb means ‘the search for a lost object’. Thus, Darwish’s poems or *nashids* are his double effort to sing and to search for what is absent. Najat Rahman believes that both poetry and history are concerned with a certain beginning: “(Darwish’s) proclaimed project then is a rewriting of the originary myths that allude to contemporary defeats upon which the narrative of the victor is predicated. For the homeland has already been written and enacted by a narrative that dispossesses (p. 45).”

- Transfigurations in the Image of Palestine in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish by Faysal Darraj translated by Hala Khamis Nassar and Areeg Ibrahim

The essay refers to Darwish's optimistic self that has a tragic sense due to the discrepancy between the daily sufferings it endures and the human idealism that it cherishes. He refers to his poem "And in the month of March come the silken shadows (and without shadows the invaders)": Of shackles I dream, to see my freedom, and count the ages of the years (p. 65). Darraj infers that Darwish is of the view that the Zionist invaders have their own sense of spring but it overturns the innocent Spring of Palestine: "There are seasons and countries in my corpse."

- **The Image of the Father in the Poetry of Mahmoud Darwish by Sulaiman Jubran**
Jubran refers to Darwish's declarative tone of voice, particularly at the heyday of his career when he considered poetry and all other genres of literature as tools of revolution. He quotes from Darwish's "Olive Leaves" (*awraq al Zaitun*): Our poetry shall be without colour/ without taste ... and without sound/ if it will not carry the lamp from house to house!/ And if the simple (People) will not understand its meanings, it should rather be scattered to the wind/ and we ... should stick to silence (p. 80). Jubran believes that Darwish possesses an outwardly simple mode of expression in which a 'tremendously broad cultural background is reflected by means of a sophisticated intertextuality.
- **Mahmoud Darwish's Love Poem: History, Exile, and the Epic Call by Subhi Hadidi translated by Najat Rahman and Rim Bejaoui**
Hadidi believes that when external political reality puts pressure on his poetry, it leads him to make the national question a priority and sometimes he does this at the expense of his aesthetics: "he is the lyre of Palestine that heals as it wounds, that animates the soul when the body is without breath. The voice of Darwish seems clear even when obscure, optimistic even when pessimistic, and alluding to the collective even when openly proclaiming itself as that of the individual (p. 96).

- “Other Barbarians Will Come”: Intertextuality, Meta-Poetry and Meta-Myth in Mahmoud Darwish’s Poetry by Reuven Snir

Snir traces the use of ‘al-Andalus theme’ in Darwish’s post 1982 poetry which is a long series of an emotional equation: al-Andalus = Palestine = Paradise Lost. End of the Andalusian Muslim grandeur is reflective of the end of Palestinian Identity 500 years later. He quotes the oft-repeated Darwishian question in Palestinian context related with the normal human existence on the face of the earth: “Where to go? Where to give birth? Where to sleep? Where to work? Where to learn? Where to love? Where to write poems? And where to be buried (p. 131)?” Snir also traces moments of despair and self-flagellation in Darwish’s writings that recall how there were times when any blow to Palestine would fill the Arab streets with gloom, turmoil and rage and they would overthrow the rulers for any injury to this ‘collective heart’. But since the sentiments have inverted, in Darwish’s words, “Palestine has been transformed from a homeland into an empty slogan, a commentary on events, adorning the rhetoric of revolutions ... (Ibid. p. 133).”

- Hebrew Bible and Arabic Poetry: Mahmoud Darwish’s Palestine – From Paradise Lost to a Homeland Made of Words by Angelika Neuwirth

This article is a deconstruction of Darwish’s Biblical references, Neuwirth explores Darwish’s themes of Genesis story which is the beginning of Palestinian exile and the Exodus drama in the context of Palestinian identity with the hopes of return to the land. Writing in terms of Darwish’s Rita poems, Neuwirth suggests, “With the Poet’s entrance into definite exile and the disappearance of the ‘strange part’ of his identity that was represented by the ‘strange beloved’, only the lonely “I” of freedom and silence remains”: The poet thereon plans to leave Sodom which he uses as a symbolic description of Israel.

- Exile and the City: The Arab City in the Writing of Mahmoud Darwish by Hala Khamis Nassar

In this essay, Nassar traces Darwish's search for his 'double', his alter-ego, his shadow that has run away from him, leaving him wonder-stricken and desolate. Wherever he turns, he meets his 'losses': Nassar quotes from his poem "Tuesday and the Weather is Clear":

I walk lightly, lightly. I look around me/ So that I might see a resemblance between my descriptions/ And the willow of this horizon I observe nothing/ That identifies me." The poem further develops and the fear for an exile to lose the track back to his home increases with every turn of the street and every mile that is travelled. An eternal exile is eternally lost. Using whatever language he is left with, he can only build his homeland in his memory.

- Returning to the Wind: On Darwish's *Do Not be Afraid of what You have Done* (la ta'tadhir amma fa'alta) by Sinan Antoon

The crux of this article is a line from the poem under reference: "Can poetry save us from what time has done to us?" There is the poet and his 'personal other' and poetry that hold the dialogue. The 'other' may be the split-self or the alter-ego, but one thing is clear, there is a dichotomy or bipolarity that the poet has come to suffer. The only company that he has is his own self in twain. But ultimately all recognition melts down and Darwish cries out: "Our country/ has the map of absence." Antoon considers this poem as Darwish's effort to find an antidote to the trauma of encountering the reality of what has become of the obliterated homeland.

- Language Places by Jeffrey Sacks

This article deals mostly with Darwish's *State of Siege* that refers to the 2002 Israeli siege of the occupied Ramallah. Among other themes, Sacks refers to the special treatment that Darwish has given to pain: "Here at the rising smoke, at the steps of the house/ there is

no time for time/ We do what those ascending to God do/ We forget the pain.” Whether he plans to celebrate the pain or to forget it, Sacks believes that without pain there would not have been any poetry from Darwish. It is so deeply inscribed in his language and poetic expression. He goes on describing the definitions and relationships of the bodies and places at a deep philosophical level where “Bodies are places of existence. And there is no existence without place, without *there*, without ‘here’ ... the poetic text always already involves relation to a body and this is one of the lessons which Darwish’s writing imparts. The body is always departing, within the immanence of a movement, a fall, agap, a dislocation (p. 257).

- Alternative History, Expanding Identity: Myths Reconsidered in Mahmoud Darwish’s Poetry by Ipek Azime Celik

Celik refers to the institutionalized colonial endeavours to de-mythify the legends of the colonized nation. The colonial historiographies insist on a fixed, eternal and clean past. Such a past actuates colonial identities and divisions like ethnic, religious, racial divisions that help the colonial legacy of ‘divide and rule’. It is therefore important that the colonized should rewrite the past. “Darwish’s poems provide alternative Palestinian histories and mythologies and suggest the multiplicity of meanings to “Palestinian” identity becoming Anat, the goddess of moon and fertility in “the Phases of Anat”, and Indian in “The Last Speech of the Red Indian”, a wandering Granadan in “Elven Planets”, Lot exiled from his city in “On a Canaanite Stone at the Dead Sea”, or the daughter of a Yemenite Jew in “A Horse for the Stranger” etc. Such innovations in myths confirm a heterogeneous past. Otherwise, Celik believes that Israeli myths of nationhood would monopolize not only both history and geography but also all roles available in the conflict, the roles of the criminals and the judge, of the murderer and the mourner, of the perpetrator and the victim (p. 284).

- The Art of Repetition: The Poetic Prose of Mahmoud Darwish and Mourid Barghouti by Stuart Reigeluth

The article points out Darwish's selection of certain fragments of his life that intersperse intertextual passages according to the image he wants to transmit. The most notable example is the smell of coffee that prompts a host of memories. Reigeluth believes that such olfactory triggers open what Walter Benjamin calls "the fans of memory". In such a state, memory that is imbedded against forgetting, "succumbs to the whims of imagination which in turn satisfy the hope of recovering pieces of memory (p. 300)." Reigeluth quotes Edward Said: "... there seem nothing to be in the world which sustains the story; unless you go on telling it, it will just drop and disappear." This is exactly what Darwish has been wary of. For him repetition of the theme of identity helps his Palestinian cause to survive the obliterating efforts of media and counter-literature. Edward Said had said, "Memory is a powerful collective instrument for preserving identity. ... it is one of the main bulwarks against historical erasure. It is a means of resistance (p. 306)." The writer believes that the repetition of the memory-residue is the best way to counter Israeli strategy of forced application of Israeli version of history, interpretation of justice as well as meanings of words (Ibid.).

- Interview with Mahmoud Darwish: On the Possibility of Poetry at a time of Siege by Najat Rahman

This interview deals with the responsibility of a conscientious poet in times of adversity. Darwish believes that poetry has the capacity of transforming a poet's relation to his environment because the aesthetic experience can save the world from ugliness because the idea of beauty leads to the idea of peace between the individual and his surroundings.

As is evident from the titles of all these chapters/contributions by different writers, they have focused on certain finer aspects of Darwish's poetry particularly on the underlying

metaphors, myths and structural issues with some deliberations on the importance of constructing feelings of home during extended periods of exile. They fall short of extensive historico literary perspective that has been the aim of the present study.

2.6 Authenticity of Darwish's works in their English rendition

As far as the translations of Darwish's work and their veracity including the linguistic authenticity and denotative and connotative reliability are concerned, he himself saw and approved most of these translated works and thus these bear his attestation. A few of the works published posthumously were rendered into English mostly by those friends of Darwish whose reliability as scholars is established. More so, all of his works have been brought out into print by publishers of international repute with strict academic reviews and editorial checks. An academic thesis titled: *The Translatability of Emotiveness in Mahmoud Darwish Poetry: A New Reading* by Anjad Mahasneh comparatively analyses both the Arabic texts of Darwish and its English translations side by side. Despite the particularity of emotiveness in the Arabic language, the book argues that Darwish's poetry was successfully translated into English due to the universal topics tackled by him such as exile, nostalgia and resistance (Mahasneh, 2013).

In her preface to Darwish's book *A River Dies of Thirst* Ruth Padel declares almost in a confessional tone that the non-Arabic speaking readers have to stand on the delicate ice-bridge of translation and they need help of the native-speakers to impart to them the meaning and the appeal of the original words. Only the original speakers of the Arabic language can fully comprehend how and why there would be hordes of people belonging to all walks of life crowding big event halls and sometimes even stadiums to come and hear Darwish recite his poems. While Padel's Libyan friend Hisham Matar tells her that Darwish 'lifted the (Arabic) language', the Syrian poetry critic Subhi Hadidi believe that Darwish is the savior of the Arabic language. She concludes that his words have helped the Palestinians as well as other victims of Arab Spring feel

more of themselves. Perhaps that is a miracle of poetic language. “One thing that occupation does is threaten a sense of self: Darwish’s language did the opposite – it fortified that self.”

Faced with the brutality of the historical onslaught,’ says Heaney, ‘poems are practically useless. Yet they verify our singularity, they stake out the ore of self which lies at the base of every individuated life.’ From his first volume of poems in 1964 to his death in 2008, Darwish was the poetry voice of Palestine. His lyrics were quoted, not only by exiled professionals and schoolchildren but also by field-workers in such furrows, and under such olive trees, as have been left them (Padel, 2012).

Commenting upon the translation of Darwish’s book of poetry *The Butterfly’s Burden* in English, John Balaban comments that Darwish’s poetry stamps the American Passports to visit places that they would otherwise never get a chance to explore. He refers to ancient tradition of inviting poets from foreign lands to make populations aware of the people who lived beyond their lands. Balaban believes that with Darwish’s translations “...the border gate goes up and another world is opened to us (Balaban, 2007).

2.7 A comparative view of Darwish’s translations

These translations of Darwish’s works thus span roughly 15 years of production and the chief translators include experts like Catherine Cobham, Carolyn Forche, Daniel Abdal-hayy Moore, Amira El-Zein, Rema Hammami, John Berger, Clarissa Burt, Sargon Boulos, Sinan Antoon, Mona Asali van Engen, Hussain Haddawi, Ferial Ghazoul, Noel Abdulahad, Ibrahim Muhawi, Munir Akash, Tahia Khaled Abdunnasser, Fady Joudah, Adib S. Kawar, Ramsis Amun, etc. Majority of these translators were known to Darwish and a major part of this translated work had his own approval. Thus there is very slight chance left towards inaccuracy in translatability of literary meaning as well as the original emotiveness. There are instances where the same poem or poems were translated by very different people but the comparability bore so much similitude that Darwish would not object to either of these and all got published. An example in this regard is Darwish’s long philosophical epic *Mural* which was translated by three authorities and a comparison of the translations of a single excerpt is given below:

- a. Translation by Munir Akash and Carolyn Forche (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, pp. 119-120):

At the gate of Judgment I feel no pain: neither time nor emotions.
I cannot sense the lightness of objects nor the weight of obsessions.
No one is there to ask: *Where is "my whereness" now?*
Where is the city of the dead? Where am I?
Here, in this no-where, in this no-time,
there is no nothingness and no being.
As if I have died before I know this vision,
I know that I am breaking through to the unknown,
that it is likely I am still alive somewhere
and know what I want.
One day, I will be what I want to be.

- b. Translation by Fady Joudah (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, pp. 101-102):

Nothing hurts me at Resurrection's door.
Not time or emotion. I don't feel
the lightness of things or the heaviness
of obsession. I found no one to ask:
Where is my "where" now? Where is the city
of the dead, and where am I? There is no void
in non-place, in non-time,
or in non-being
It's as if I had died before now . . .
I know this vision and know that I
am heading to an unknown. Maybe
I'm still alive in some place, where
I still know what I want . . .
One day I will become what I want

- c. Translation by Rema Hammami and John Berger (Darwish M. , Mural, 2009, p. 10):

At the gate of resurrection nothing hurts
Neither time past nor any feeling
I don't sense the lightness of things nor the weight of apprehension
There's no one to ask:
Where now is my where?
Where is the city of death
Where am I?
In this no-here ...
No-time
And nothingness
As if I had died already
I know this story
I know that I go towards what I don't know
Perhaps I'm still alive somewhere
Aware of what I want ...
One day I'll become what I want.

Darwish's prose pieces, he being a thorough poet, sound like poems in their poetic quality, depth of meaning and in their emotional appeal. There have been a few attempts by the translators to render his flowing prose pieces into a poetic form in English. One such instance, the opening paragraphs of the chapter "Silence for Gaza" from *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*:

The prose translation by Ibrahim Muhawi:

For four years the enemy had been delighted with his dreams, fascinated by his dalliance with time, except in Gaza because Gaza is far from her kin and sits right up against the enemy. Because Gaza is an island: every time she erupts – and she is always erupting – she lacerates the face of the enemy, breaks up his dreams, and obstructs his contentment with time. Because time in Gaza is something else: time in Gaza is not a neutral element. Gaza does not propel people to cool contemplation; rather she propels them to erupt and collide with the truth. Time there does not lead children directly from childhood to old age, but it does make men of them upon the first encounter with the enemy. Time in Gaza does not allow you to let go; rather it is an attack upon a blistering noon because values in Gaza are different. Different. Different (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 122).

The poetic translation of the same by Adib S. Kavar:

For four years and Gaza's flesh burst around... bomb's shrapnel...
Neither magic nor miracle...
It is Gaza's weapons and arms for her continued existence...
And the enemy's detritions it is...
For four years the enemy with its dreams rejoicing it had been...
For flirting with time it was fascinated...
Except for in Gaza...
For Gaza far away it is from her relatives...
And with the enemy it is stuck...
For Gaza is a bomb...
Whenever it explodes...
Never she stops from exploding...
The enemy's face she scared...
And from satisfaction with time she repelled them...
Another thing is time in Gaza...
For time in Gaza not a neutral factor it is...
The people it doesn't drive to cold contemplation...
But to the freedom of explosion...
And to collusion with truth...
Time there children it doesn't take
from babyhood to old age...
But men it makes of them...
With their first confrontation with the enemy...
In Gaza time is not relaxation ...
But storming into the blazing noon...
Values in Gaza differ...differ and differ... (Darwish M. , INTAL).

As it is evident from all these different translations, the spirit and the philosophy as well as the flow of thought and emotion remains intact. It is partly because the context in which the poem has been written is the same and also because the poet has long been exposed to the western canon where, although he writes in his native Arabic language, yet the culture of the surrounding land has trickled down into his linguistic structures and it becomes more evident through the ease and consistency in English translations. This is just a proposition and not a conclusion. All of these translated books have been published by very reputed and authentic American publishing houses with strict editorial and review standards like Syracuse University Press, Archipelago Books, University of California Press, Interlink Books, Verso Books, Farrar Strauss & Giroux which is also one way of deeming these translations as authentic.

2.8 The Biblical context of Palestinian issue

The historical aspect of this research has been nourished by the detailed reading of several authoritative books on the subject. In the book *Might over Right: How the Zionists Took over Palestine* Adel Safty describes what Chomsky declares, “A shameful record of betrayal and tragedy”. Chomsky’s assertion has been made a part of the very cover of the book. The book starts from the very formation of the Zionist Plan from 1864 to 1917 and then moves through the Balfour Declaration and the Paris Peace Conference from 1917 to 1919. Shifting of the balance of power in Palestine in the wake of the decline of the British Empire and the rise of American hegemony and the consequent displacement of Palestinian Arabs and the Zionist Expansionism that continues unchecked even into the twenty first century are the focus of this book (Safty, 2009). According to Mukesh Williams, Greenblatt’s new historicist propounding can be best understood by assuming that literature has a historical base and literary works are not the products of a single sentence but many social, political and cultural forces that must be studied together. Secondly, literature should not be taken as an isolated and distinctive human activity but another image of history. Thirdly, since literature and human beings are both shaped by social and

political forces, it is not possible to talk of an intrinsic human nature that can transcend history. Since history is not a continuous series of events but ruptures, there is no link between one age and another or between men belonging to different ages. This being the case, a Renaissance man is rooted in his Renaissance idiosyncrasies just as a modern man is rooted in his. A modern reading of a Renaissance text cannot be the same as a Renaissance reading. Therefore a literary interpretation can try to reconstruct the ideology of a given age through a given text. These suppositions imply that new historicism does not try to retrieve the original meaning of a text but tries to locate the original ideology that gave rise to a certain text (Williams, 2003)

A literary example in this regard may be quoted here: In the book *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs* Martin Buber the existentialist Jewish philosopher tries to cross the barriers between ages and wants to locate the Jews as simultaneously present for millennia and therefore over and above the ‘*event*’ i.e. the sociopolitical reality of the present, “ You must set before you that Jews are not a people like others ... they are a unique phenomenon, unlike any other: a society in which peoplehood, on the one hand, and faith, on the other, have been melted down together and refined into a unity that cannot be sundered (Mendes-Flohr, 2005, pp. 195-96).” On the other hand, for an incisive critique of this ahistorical blending of religion, ethnos and the land of Palestine, we have equally compelling treatises like *The Invention of the Jewish People* by Shlomo Sand and *The Invention of Ancient Israel: the Silencing of the Palestinian History* by Keith W. Whitelam who see that ancient historical tradition cannot be used to justify the taking away of a land from a people in the present. In other words the history has to be adjudged and criticized while it is in the making and this is what Darwish has boldly done. He has recorded it both poetically, in its wishful manner and politically with ruthless clarity:

... in all the villages they occupied afterward they gathered the inhabitants in the main square and made them stand in the sun for several hours. Then they chose the handsomest young men and shot them dead in front of the other villagers in order to force them to leave, in order to let news of the massacre spread to villages not yet occupied, and to purge their repressed historical resentment. (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, pp. 18-19).

Darwish declares that through these tactics, the Zionists found legal justification in the claim that the Arabs sold their land. He agrees that it is possible to find certain Arab groups that have believed this Israeli lie while making no effort to learn that until 1948 the Jews owned no more than six percent of the total land of Palestine. Darwish's words are a precise description of the ruthless ethnic cleansing of whose small-scale parallel in post-World War II era may be found in the annals of Bosnian history of 1990s. The Zionist guerilla forces like Irgun announced to the general masses of 'a departure for a few days' which was though an implausible idea but the oppressed are always gullible to believe whatever there is to believe because the way catastrophes come, the same way come the miracles. And it is the same trusting and credulous beings among the international community as well as among the Palestinian ranks who believe that Israel would provide a democratic space to its Arab citizens in a single state 'from sea to the river' meaning to say from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River obliterating the traditional Gaza and the West Bank that constitute the State of Palestine to the point of this research.

The other important aspect of Darwish's deliberation is the reference that he quotes from the Old Testament narrative of Joshua, the military leader and hero chosen by Moses to be his successor and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. The Book of Joshua concludes the accounts begun in Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy of the origin and early history of the Jews. It begins (Chapters: 1-6) with an account of the Hebrews' entry into the Promised Land, Canaan, and the sack of the ancient Palestinian walled city of Jericho. It describes in detail the establishment of Hebrew sultanate in different parts of the land of Canaan (believed to be modern Palestine) by bloody routing of several local tribes and those who came to their aid. Much of the latter half of the book (Chapters: 13-24) describes how Joshua distributed the conquered land among the 12 tribes of Israel. The words of Bible regarding the most critical moments in that history are indispensably given follows:

So Joshua took all that land, the hills and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, ... and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them... For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the lord commanded Moses... There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. So Joshua took the whole land ... and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes (The British & Foreign Bible Society, 1954, p. 174).

The historical parallel presented here is not the first time mention of the story in this context. In fact, Darwish gives this parallel to divert our attention to a vast scholarship devoted to the creation of the Israeli historical myth in the form of books ... a whole series of books created by biblical scholars and rabbis to give this lie to the world that the injunctions of Bible must stand true for all times and the scourge of God that once fell upon this land must keep falling with every turn of history, the Jewish State of Israel under the Likud and Netanyahu being its latest manifestations. In an emotional outburst, Darwish speaks out in *To Our Land*:

To our land, / And it is the one near the word of God, a ceiling of clouds.
To our land, / And it is one far from the adjectives of nouns, the map of absence
To our land, and it is the one tiny as a sesame seed,
A heavenly horizon ... and a hidden chasm.
To our land, / And it is the one poor as a grouse's wings,
Holy books ... and an identity wound.
To our land, / And it is the one surrounded by torn hills,
The ambush of a new past (Darwish M. , *To Our Land*, 2005).

Professor Keith Whitelam has written a very well researched book that analyses this vast literature aimed at and meant to give this historical and biblical license to Israel to continue its empire building with impunity and American supported immunity from the discourse of International Law. Whitelam suggests that the biblical discourse has been used to support the invention of Israeli 'empire' which has led to the creation of Israel in modern times: "If 'politics is everywhere', as Edward Said claims, then the discourse of biblical studies has steadfastly refused to acknowledge that the construction of the past is a political act (Whitelam, 2009, p. 128)." In this context, David Ben-Gurion's confession may be the best criticism of the Zionist policies. Back in 1956, Ben-Gurion, possibly struggling with his conscience, confessed:

If I were an Arab leader, I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural, we have taken their country. Sure God promised it to us, but what does that matter to them? Our God is not theirs. We came from Israel, it's true, but that was two thousand years ago, and what is that to them? There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They only see one thing: we have come and stolen their country. Why should they accept that (Wagner & Davis, 2014, p. 21)?

The statement is not a regret of any kind, it just shows the human side and political acumen of a leader. A matter of special interest in this statement of Ben-Gurion is his mention of God, the God of the Israelites who is *not* the God of Palestinians and Arabs! As far as this historical biblical claim-narrative is concerned, there is modern research that questions the very existence of Canaan in this part of the world. For example, Teresa Watanbe describes how Rabbi David Wolpe has expressed his serious doubt over the myth of forty years of Jewish wandering in Sinai and conquering the land of Canaan under Joshua's leadership. The archeological consensus based on scientific inquiry does not match with the dimensions of exodus as the religio-political claims go. Thus Said's idea of the political dimension of history is augmented by Watanabe's account who further informs: "Scholars have known these things for a long time, but we've broken the news very gently," said William Dever, a professor of Near Eastern archeology and anthropology at the University of Arizona and one of America's preeminent archeologists. (Watanbe, 2001).

In his book *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History*, Professor Keith Whitelam of Sheffield University talks about the historiography of how European nation states started constructing their national histories more or less since the Industrial revolution, using biblical and other ancient resources, national symbols, myths and archaeological finding and even such claims thereof, to justify their position in the world and to legitimize their imperial ambitions. In Whitelam's words, the dominant ethos of Israeli history has been "that of a *unified national identity* in search of *national territory* struggling to maintain its national identity and land through the *crises of history*. Zionism ... has invariably presented its 'historic mission' in terms of a return to an empty, deserted wasteland awaiting European technology in order to make it habitable and prosperous (Whitelam, 2009, p. 21)."

Referring to the concept that nations themselves are narratives, he concludes that nations are imagined communities and this imagination is projected back into the past to provide the legitimation of the present. Thus Palestine ironically ceases to be a land for the Palestinians because it was promised to an absent nation. Facts-on-ground (i.e. an established history and culture of Palestinians spread over centuries) to which all Zionist Israeli leaders bear their claims, does not have a chance here. Thus Palestine is silenced as only the setting of the scene of the history of Israel which becomes inhabited and bears significance with the fulfilment of the promise given so generously to ‘the chosen seed’. George Orwell, himself a supporter of Zionism once, stated in his novel 1984: “Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present, controls the past (Orwell, 1949, p. 88).”

According to Ben Soetendorp, Ben-Gurion had convinced the Jewish Agency Executive for the partitioning of Palestine but Zeev Jabotinsky and Menachem Begin were more dogmatic and had an uncompromising attitude towards the *holy pastness* of the Eretz-Israel territorial integrity which included both banks of the River Jordan. Thus Menachem Begin used his leadership of the revisionist underground terrorist organization called the Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL) to preserve the sacredness of the historical borders and went to all lengths and measures of militant nature to ensure a purely Jewish state (Soetendorp, 2007, p. 78). An appropriate and comparative study of the past, therefore, a rediscovery so to speak, through unconventional sources like literature may be a good starting point in understanding the present and thereby seeing a good and reliable picture of the future. Without such past-oriented futuristic worldview, a strong understanding of the subject may not be possible. Palestinians despite their centuries of established historical culture are sacrificed on the altar of a myth. Professor Keith points out an important linguistic anomaly in modernistic and propagandist use of the word “Palestinian” as this is not admissible in Israeli political dictionary when it comes to denote the indigenous population. But it is frequently used to register ‘The Palestinian terrorism’, ‘the Palestinian

problem' and other inanimate objects like 'Palestinian economy' etc. But a matter of very great importance, apart from this linguistic anomaly, is the Jewish scheme of looking at Palestine as a land with 'temporary inhabitants', no matter how long their length of residency, on the condition that from the biblical narrative to modern realization of the Jewish right to the land, there are no western historical claims that might declare that Palestine belonged to another race. The Palestinians are thus deemed inherently incapable of making history because modern history does not record them. Time and the reality of their existence is thus being denied to them: 'the past is either the domain of Israel or is claimed by Israel as its own prehistory or protohistory' (Whitelam, 2009, p. 64). While this sounds preposterous, large areas of the world, till they were *discovered* by the modern western scholarship, would be delegated as prehistoric. And since Bible does not carry a hint about them, they remain sans history. Mahmoud Darwish as a person, as a poet and as an indigenous historian is a very important academic source and approaching the Palestinian issue through his poetic and philosophic perception can be a very good opportunity of initiation into the complexity of life experienced in that part of the world where belligerent powers claim to be the defenders of tradition as well as beacon lights of civilization. According to Professor Fred Halliday, Zionists have tried an orchestrated campaign of labelling Israel as a "Light unto the Nations"- a borrowed Biblical term; but the country has proven to be "in comparative terms, just another corrupt southern Mediterranean country" which, until the rise and the firm hold of the right-wing Likud party under the fascist Benjamin Netanyahu, had nine prime ministers out of which one (Yitzhak Rabin) was a conventional military figure and not less than four others had outright history of active terrorism (Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon). In Halliday's words:

In the international domain, Israel became a garrison state, reliant on armed force to preserve itself and, after 1967, to hold down and brutalise the Palestinians under its control, all of this accompanied by a cacophony of accusation and defamation of those who criticized its policies and values, gentile and Jew alike (Halliday, 100 Myths about the Middle East, 2005, p. 138).

There are so many versions of Palestine-Israeli history that it becomes extremely important to read various versions and put the pieces together for the truth to shape up. In Said's words, "Anyone who has tried seriously to examine the contemporary Near East is frequently tempted to conclude that the project is unmanageable. Every sort of distraction gets in the way after a time... (Said E. , *The Edward Said Reader*, 2000, p. 15)." One of Darwish's last poems "The Dice Player" describes his story of belonging to the sacred climes of Palestine that are so ruthlessly being devastated. Midway its epic length, the narrator registers an enigma:

Luckily I live next to divinities

Unluckily

The cross is the only ladder to our tomorrow (Darwish M. , *Mural*, 2009, p. 60).

The world renowned Bible expert Walter Brueggemann suggests that reading the Bible for the justification of any contemporary issue can at its best be tricky and hazardous as any issue can win a corresponding perspective in this book owing to its rich and multi-voiced offering which usually gets for the reader an echo of his own thought. The example that he quotes in this regard, as per the objective of the book is the appeal of the contemporary state of Israel to the Bible concerning the land of Palestine whereas original it is a contemporary dispute of land and the human rights along with issues of security. Brueggemann suggests that before the land was promised to 'Judah' albeit conditioned with obedience to Torah, it was promised to Abraham as well (Brueggemann, 2015, pp. 1-3).

The writer explicates that Jacob carries the biblical title of Israel and he had twelve sons and one of them was Judah. These twelve sons branched off into the 'twelve tribes of Israel.' After King David's reign who had chosen Jerusalem as his capital (also called Sion or Zion), the kingdom split into two major nations the tribe of Israel and the tribe of Judah, it is from the latter that the term *Ju-da-ism* was derived which gave rise to the word *Jew* and later *Jewish*. The crux of the book remains that the land was losable like any other land in the Kingdom of God and that the promise made to Moses was revocable if certain conditions were not fulfilled. The book also

asserts that Bible has nothing to do with *Zion-ist* claims of the land's incontrovertible ownership. The Palestinians are also the Semitic people and treading over their rights amounts to anti-Semitism. Rabbi Michael Lerner, the editor of Tikkun magazine and the writer of the book *Embracing Israel/Palestine: A Strategy for Middle East Peace* has his words inscribed on the back cover of the book which he thus concludes: "There is no straight line between these ancient holy texts and the oppression of the Palestinian people by an expansionist Zionist government in modern Israel."

2.9 Historicity of the ownership of Palestine

In his essay "On Libertarianism and Land Ownership in Historic Palestine" The Israeli-Palestinian historian Jeremy R. Hammond quotes the former Israeli Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan who himself admitted:

Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you, because these geography books no longer exist; not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahalal arose in the place of Mahalul, Gevat—in the place of Jibta, Sarid—in the place of Haneifs, and Kefar Yehoshua—in the place of Tell Shaman. There is not one place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population (Hammond, 2016).

Hammond believes that the Jews mostly exploited the feudalistic Ottoman land laws by annulling the Arab ownership of uncultivable lands and purchasing land from absentee landlords without regard to the rights of Arab peasants who actually homesteaded the land and were thus its rightful owners. Hammond also provides the statistics from *Survey of Palestine* prepared for the 1946 Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry that reveals that the Jews owned only 5.8 percent of the Palestinian land in 1943 (Ibid.). According to Mahmoud Darwish, after the Nakba of 1948 that followed severe bouts of dislocation and dispossession, the remaining Arab population was forced to live in abject economic and social condition conditions:

Israel itself cannot hide the exorbitant price that the Arab community has paid, which in fact it was forced to pay, in return for being allowed to live and grow. The Arab fellah who lost his land, which to him was homeland as well as source of livelihood, cannot glorify Israel because under its rule he has been able to earn a loaf of bread only through hard labor in construction, road building, and other menial jobs that Jewish workers find demeaning (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010).

The historical demographic superiority of the Arab Muslim inhabitants in Palestine is supported by the old texts like 1865 book *Domestic Life in Palestine* by Mary Eliza Rogers where she quotes the total population of Haifa in 1854 as only two thousand and twelve out of which twelve hundred were Muslims, four hundred Greek Catholics, fifty Latins, thirty Maronites, three hundred Orthodox Greeks and only thirty two Jews. She describes the beauty of the Haram or the Great Mosque El Aqsa and the adjoining Kubbet-as-Sakhara (Dome of the Rock) and gives us conspicuous details of different communities that inhabit far and wide in Palestine which historically cannot be taken as a no man's land. Focusing on the surrounding areas of El Aqsa Mosque, she describes:

The extreme southern quarter is the most desolate, and is inhabited by the Jews. The south-west portion is chiefly thronged by Armenians, where their convent stands, white and conspicuous, and marks their quarter distinctly. The north-west quarter - the highest- is more frequented by Franks; and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Latin convent, the Protestant church, and various consulates, proclaim it. The northeast is the Moslem quarter (Ibid. 51-52).

Michel Eddeh writes in his essay "The Zionist Claims to al-Haram al-Sharif and al-Aqsa Mosque: A Biblical View" that the myth of the Temple of Solomon has been inculcated in the western mind through Zionist potential influence on media and its sturdy lobbies at the centers of western colonial powers. They refer to the Biblical story that when King David dominated Jerusalem, he brought with him "Ark of the Covenant" that contained the two plates of the Ten Commandments that had been carried by the Hebrew Masters in the previous times. In the book of Samuel (7:1-7) there is an instruction to King David to structure a temple for the Lord but he refrained from doing that which indicates that the words quoted there do not carry a divine command. His son King Solomon did construct a temple there but it was given to such abominable rites that the Jewish Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah criticized it very much on the authority of God, for example in Book of the Prophet Isaiah Chapter 1 Verses 11-14 and Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapter 7 Verses 3-6 and Verses 21-23. Michel Eddeh suggests that the contortion of the Jewish faith has been affected amid complete silence of the so called 'moderates' in Israel and

of the overwhelming majority ... of the diaspora Jews. The same silence has also blurred the vision of the countries that have been subjected to the undeterred and unchallenged intellectual nature of the propaganda disseminated by the Zionist controlled media ...toward the grave and fatal dangers of the Zionist usurpation of Arab Jerusalem with a view of committing the most audacious plan of all, i.e., the reconstruction of the temple, God forbid, on the ruins of al-Haram al-Sharif (Eddeh, 2011, pp. 293-299).

Professor Fred Halliday of London School of Economics confirms in his book *100 Myths about the Middle East* that the causes of the contemporary Arab-Israeli conflict must be sought in the formation of two rival social and ethnic communities in Mandate Palestine in the period from 1920. These have nothing to do with supposedly sacred texts written 2000 or 3000 years ago. He strongly suggests that Israeli symbols of “*menorah*” the seven pronged candelabra and “*magen david*” which is literally “Shield of David”, popularly known as Star of David adopted arbitrarily by the Zionist movement got their political significance only at the end of the nineteenth century. Otherwise this star in particular has long been used in both Christian and Islamic architecture as a mystical symbol of the oneness of humanity (Halliday, *100 Myths about the Middle East*, 2005, pp. 12-13).

The right symbols are probably what Moshe Dayan referred to as “steel helmet” and the “gun’s muzzle” which define the historical dynamics of Israeli-Palestine relations. According to Dayan, the brunt of hate lies on the head of Palestinians. He recalls the terrible hate that he feels emanating from Gaza, a hate which is justified on the grounds that the Israeli establishment has deprived the Palestinians of the centuries old traditions and lands. He claims with impunity that these lands now constitute the Israeli *home*:

Beyond the border surges a sea of hatred and revenge; revenge that looks toward the day when the calm will blunt our alertness, the day when we shall listen to the envoys of malign hypocrisy who call upon us to lay down our arms. . . . We are a generation of settlements, and without the steel helmet and the gun’s muzzle we will not be able to plant a tree or build a house (Soetendorp, 2007, pp. 139-140).

In her epic book *Jerusalem: Thrice Beloved land* the editor Salma Khadra Jayyusi has included the poem titled “Jerusalem” by Naomi Shihab Nye that opens with words of reconciliation rather than confrontation. And then the poem follows:

I'm not interested in
Who suffered the most.
I'm interested in
People getting over it. ... (Jayyusi, *Jerusalem: The Thrice Loved Land*, 2001, p. 19).

Writers and statesmen of the highest intellectual worth and international acclaim have started questioning the validity of the idea that by using a historical, in fact pre-historical narrative, a nation state can be deprived of its rights of existing as normal human beings, their lands confiscated, their generations doomed to live in makeshift tent-camps and with no basic human rights or civic facilities even in the wake of the twenty first century that claims supersonic technological facilities along with enlightened and informed international consciousness that is going out to safeguard the welfare of humanity and international institutional maturity so that all nations of the world live in peace and harmony under the principles of democracy. Or is this twenty first century too, a hoax of claims?

2.10 Violations of International Law

Israel claims that whatever they do is under the provisions of *laws*. But they fail to remember that they themselves make and interpret these laws over a huge population of human beings that they treat as insects. In this regard, one may like to refer to some of their laws that openly allowed land confiscation and dispossession of Palestinians that continues to this day. Only the short titles of the laws would give a good picture of what these entail: Abandoned Property Ordinance (1948), Emergency Land Requisition Law (1949), Absentee's Property Law (1950), State Property Law (1951), Land Acquisition Law (1953), Prevention of Infiltration Law (1954), Plant Protection Law: that could destroy any Palestinian crops not deemed important (1956), Prescription Law (1958) and so on (Kishawi, *Sixteen Minutes to Palestine*, 2015). Paul

Findley, US Congressman from Illinois tells his own story of how his years-long support for Israel started to dwindle when he noticed the regime's brutal treatment of the Palestinians. His book *They Dare to Speak Out* enlists accounts of brave souls who have broken the sheet of fear and persecution that envelops any American citizen who chooses to speak in terms of American integrity in contravention of the principles that the Israeli lobby stands for. Apart from the institutional control that this lobby has over the affairs of the American governments, one after the other, the most horrendous details are those related with challenges to academic freedom where the thought process of the American students is tailored to fit the designs of the Zionist thought. On every occasion that the student bodies or the teachers try to hold an independent view or call upon a scholar who might have an alternative view, there is an organized protest and threat-mongering with fund maneuverings and publication grindings. Findley specially notes the impact of ADL (Anti-Defamation League), JDL (Jewish Defense League), HJLSA and AIPAC etc.

Findley quotes two poignant examples from Harvard University environs where threat to academic freedom becomes most intense when any Palestinian voice gets a chance to speak. In this regard. In the first, a law students association called Deena Abu Lughod, an American of Palestinian origin working as a researcher at the PLO mission to the UN to speak on the topic of the rights of the indigenous people in domestic and international law. And the second instance deals with the invitation that was extended to Director PLO Information Office in Washington Hassan Abdul Rahman to come and speak on the topic of Palestine: Road to Peace in the Middle East. On both occasions there was absolute disruption of the decorum, life-threats, political pressure and bullying (Findley, 1989, p. 183). More recently the writer and statesman Dr. Paul Craig Roberts of Institute for Political Economy stated in an analysis of the Palestinian land confiscation titled "The Genocide of a Land":

Washington's 21st century wars in the Middle East were initiated by neoconservative regimes whose principal policymakers are tightly allied with Israel. The wars focused on Arab nations—Iraq, Libya, and Syria—that were supportive of the Palestinians and had

foreign policies independent of Washington. Washington succeeded in destroying two of the countries and has not given up on destroying Syria despite the risk of confrontation with Russia. The risks that Washington is imposing on Americans and Europeans in order to advance Israeli expansion in the Middle East are horrific. Zionists claim a “greater Israel” from the Nile to the Euphrates. Washington’s wars in the Middle East are designed to remove obstacles to “greater Israel (Roberts, 2016).

Like all men and women of conscience who care about international peace, such tendencies are very alarming and when it comes to the land of Palestine which is the center of modern civilization and where the fountains of the three grand religions come to meet, we see Darwish pronouncing this to the world:

To our land, and it is a prize of war,
The freedom to die from longing and burning
And our land in its bloodiest night,
Is a jewel that glimmers for the far upon the far
And illuminates what is outside it ...
As for us, inside, we suffocate more (Darwish M. , To Our Land, 2005)!

Another aspect highlighted by Dr. Nurit Peled-Elhanan is the crisis of misunderstood identity among both the Palestinians and the Israelites:

The occupation has raised two generations of Palestinians as prisoners jailed between military checkpoints and walls and two generations of Israelis who believe that they are the lords of the land, nurtured by the illusion that the oppression of 4.5 million Palestinians gives them security and peace, and that such an oppressive society is capable of raising compassionate children. They are shocked when their boys become ruthless killers, as is revealed by current events (Peled-Elhanan, 2014).

Focusing more on the development of political circumstances, another book *Law and Identity in Mandate Palestine* by Assaf Likhovski is also very important, particularly the formation of the Mandate structure, its jurisdiction and representation of identity which has continued to effect the lives of Palestinians for whom all national and international laws have tried to craft laws to fit a certain notion of identity which is inherently an attempt to delimit the Palestinian Identity (Likhovski, 2006). Bassam Abu Sharif’s book *Arafat and the Dream of Palestine* gives ‘an insider’s account’ of how both the international community as well as the Palestinian leaders have tangled the fate of the Palestinians in a long chain of assault-apology-assault followed by negotiations and their ultimate failure. The time has been willfully wasted to

establish the Israeli regime by virtue of their long stay and gradual empowerment in the region. The book also highlights the fundamentalist stance of the Israeli forces equating the gradual conquest of Palestine with historical and allegorical contexts (Sahrif, 2009). An invasion, conquest and the presence of the foreign forces, particularly those who wish to turn a land into a permanent settlement, always causes deep psychological scars on the minds of the local inhabitants. Darwish's poetry is through and through a proof of this. Reading his poems in the context of the theoretical treatises on the subjects like *Psychoanalysis, Identity and Ideology: Critical Essays on Israel/Palestine Case* edited by John Bunzle and Benjamin Beit Hallahmi, though slightly tilted in the favour of the occupation, nevertheless provides a good reading of the comparative identity related sentiment. Colonial encounter, identity trauma and the rise of the self-and-the other have been analyzed in the context of psychological analysis. In the essay titled "On Marginal People: The Case of the Palestinians in Israel" Ramzi Suleiman of University of Haifa speaks of the painful marginality imposed on Palestinians who by chance or by force are doomed to live within the defined borders of Israel. He attributes this condition of subalternity and marginalization to Zionist hegemonic control which is both their ideology and praxis. Referring to mass destruction and genocide in the wake of *Nakba*, he suggests that the Zionists successfully conveyed to the Palestinians that the new state

considers them as potential enemies. Subsequent practices by the State, mainly the military rule imposed until 1966 on this torn minority, the ongoing expropriation of Palestinian land and the severe official and nonofficial discriminatory measures, have all enhanced the message of animosity and exclusion. ... What psychological consequences could this imposed marginality have, except anger and frustration? Identity is tied to collective memory ... (John Bunzle, 2002, pp. 71-73).

Another book *Exiled in the Homeland: Zionism and the Return to Mandate Palestine* that claims to study the end of Jewish/Zionist diaspora, takes the conquest of Palestine as a natural corollary of historical events (as the Zionists were being exiled out of Europe and they ended up in a homeland i.e. Palestine. Its writer Donna Robinson declares the British support for a Jewish national home not only legitimate but also an 'inevitable' burden of responsibility to develop

Palestine not through the demographic ‘quantity’ (much larger Arab population) but through the ‘quality’ (i.e. Zionists) (Divine, 2009, pp. 20-21). She speaks of the ‘moral authority’ of WZO (World Zionist Organization) that was ‘framed around the notion that Jews had a historic right to create a homeland (Ibid, p. 98)’. It is a very curious reading in so far as the innocence of the writer, who claims to have earned an insight of political science, in negating the very presence of the native Arab land-holders and their claim to exist in the wake of the establishment of the nation-state of Israel. Sami Hadawi, one of the important names in Palestinian national movement and the Director of the Institute of Palestine Studies in 1965, commented in his book *Bitter Harvest* that Zionism was purely an ideological movement that used Jews as pawns to develop a Jewish dominant population in Palestine and it would ultimately recede and leave the land back to attain its peace as a tolerant pluralist country (Strawson, 2010, p. 158). Speaking of this enforced concept of the ‘historic right’, Morani Kornberg Weiss, a modern Israeli poetess, addresses Darwish in an epistle in her book *Dear Darwish*:

Dear Mahmoud, I often feel like a hostage
Confined to my own history.
The world is a dark room and
I am chained to the wall (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, p. 21).

This is an apt recognition/confession of a poetic soul from the enemy ranks who albeit is a prisoner of conscience. Elsewhere she quotes Robert Duncon’s words as an epigraph to one of her poems: “We cannot rid ourselves of the form/ To which we now belong (Ibid p. 35).” Palestinian history cannot be extricated even from its fiction. And without a clear and unbiased understanding of history, Palestinian literature cannot be comprehended. According to Salma Khadra Jayyusi, it is only the suggestive poetic art of Mahmoud Darwish through which he has offered only a general picture of life under oppression:

... the broad story of the modern Palestinian experience, albeit in shorter poems whose cumulative power reaches epic dimensions. The cumulative effect of Darwish’s oeuvre has now ended in a trend toward an apocalyptic vision of destiny concordant with a deep sense of crisis and blocked horizons. The post-2001 Arab society in Palestine has begun to harbor “a sense of an ending” that ...creates the opposing sense of being born again, a

revocation of death through death, a noncompliant acceptance of doom but with a vision of resurrection through doom (Jayyusi, *Modern Arabic Fiction: An Anthology*, 2005, p. 30).

The Palestinian tragedy in its colossal originality has not yet found way into literature. But some minor aspects of it, like the way personalities of the protagonists undergo change as a result of the background tragedies is the only thing we see so far. For example, in the context of *Gate of the Sun* while narrating the death of an important refugee camp member Umme Hassan Nabilah, the daughter of Fatima, the wife of Mahmoud al Qasemi, known as the mother of Shatila Camp, Elias Khoury gives us the following detail: “No one would question Umme Hassan because she always told the truth. Hadn’t she been the only one to weep on the morning of June 5, 1967? Everyone was dancing in the streets, anticipating going home to Palestine, but she wept ... Throughout the six long days of the war, she never opened the windows of her house; on the seventh, out she came to wipe away everyone’s tears. She said she knew Palestine would not come back until all of us had died (Khoury, 1998, p. 5).”

2.11 Palestinian narratives of pain

In a 2004 televised talk under the title ‘Peace, Propaganda and Promised Land’, Hanan Ashrawi described the media coverage given to the death of an Israeli soldier who was killed while he, as an intruder on the Palestinian land, was killing innocent Palestinians. He was immediately shown as a hero whose humanity must be confirmed, whose funeral must be attended and shown on television along with his name, his hopes, his dreams, his grieving mother and wife. On the other hand the second clip of news in the same biased media told the world that four hundred Palestinians were killed in raids. The second news item went without any show of empathy or even superficial sympathy (Ashrawi, Media Education Foundation, 2004). These missing human feelings become more poignant in the face of the longest military occupation in modern history. There are oppressive regime measures like lording over the population with impunity while usurping their lands and properties, demolishing every vestige of the structured

institutions and declaring them terrorists. The Palestinians have only been trying to throw off the yoke of oppression that wants them to go without education, without adequate food and other commonalities of human life.

Palestinian history and its tragedy needs to be very clearly defined with spatial and temporal dimensions. Palestinian literature has consistently tried to fill up this gap. Elias Khouri's *Gate of the Sun* is a novel that concentrates on the lives of rooted exiles and trapped refugees along with events of 1948 and 1967 including the story of an aging Palestinian freedom fighter Yunis who is lying in a state of coma. Dr. Khalil, his friend sits by him and reminisces a whole web of events that has gone into the making of the Palestinian tragedy. The novel asserts that Palestine is more than a traumatic memory or the fugitive state of a local mind. It is a reality that must be admitted as humanity's own business. Another novel, whose title brings fresh to mind the inhumanity that IDF observed when it ruthlessly attacked Jenin Refugee Camp in West Bank (April 1-11, 2002) that lay within the territorial administration of the Palestinian Authority. Israeli army bulldozed the camp and while opening heavy infantry fire, sprayed its favourite weapon against the Palestinians i.e. White phosphorus. The novel is titled *Mornings in Jenin*. In the novel Susan Abulhawa has given an insider's account of how life has been so very different as well as difficult in Jenin, the part of Palestine, now annexed mostly by Israel, and which has seen some of the most crucial pogroms in the history of Palestinian resistance. She begins the first chapter of the first part of the narrative titled El Nakba (The Catastrophe) thus: 1941: "In a distant time, before history marched over the hills and shattered present and future, before wind grabbed the land at one corner and shook it of its name and character, before Amal was born, a small village east of Haifa lived quietly on figs and olives, open frontiers and sunshine (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 11)." It is a narrative of four generations of a Palestinian family from the 40s to the present as they pass through a series of never ending wars. Intertextually and historico-literarily speaking, the setting of the scene for this novel is the same Haifa where the poetess Dureen Tatour is under

arrest for several months now, her imprisonment having started from October 2015 when in the early hours of dawn, their usual time for such raids, the IDF soldiers broke open their door and dragged her out in her pajamas for posting a poem of national resistance on You Tube. After a hectic search of three months, while four interrogations of Tatour had taken place, her family was able to trace her whereabouts (Jewish Voice for Peace, 2016). The reason Dareen Tatour wrote this poem despite the possible and even evident threat is the undying spirit of resistance that surprises even the Israeli observers. What they cannot do in factual life, they do that in their imagination to keep at least the tradition of their culture and life. And their imagination emanates from their collective memory. Should it come as a surprise that on the wall of her room, bedecked with quotations and decorative patterns and pasted cards, hangs a picture of Mahmoud Darwish? He stands a good chance of being remembered by the posterity. His own generation bore a heavy loss, heavier than losing just one life. This spirit travels with the Palestinians even when they become a part of the diaspora and when one generation is replaced by their successors. It is under the same influence that Susan Abulhawa chose to write *Mornings in Jenin* and *The Blue Between Sky and Water* i.e. to commemorate the Palestinian struggle for maintaining their culture and identity. All Palestinian narratives invoke history e.g. giving words to the frozen thoughts of a character Yehya (*Mornings in Jenin*), in the wake of Israeli declaration of independence, Abulhawa narrates how forty generations with all their share of memories were carried away by the forced entilement of another people:

who would settle in the vacancy and proclaim it all—all that was left in the way of architecture, orchards, wells, flowers, and charm—as the heritage of Jewish foreigners arriving from Europe, Russia, the United States, and other corners of the globe. In the story of a history buried alive, the year 1948 in Palestine fell from the calendar into exile, ceasing to reckon the marching of days, months, and years, instead becoming an infinite mist of one moment in history. (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 35).

A critical reading of modern Arab poetry in general and of Palestine in particular reveals that the writers of this region believe in both the aesthetic and the political roles of literature. The

idea that poetry has its uses beyond pleasure is not new. Denys Thompson writes about these uses of poetry under the chapter heading “Patriotism and Politics” in his book *The Uses of Poetry*:

When poetry was *maid* of all work, the making of history came to be one of her duties. The myths acted as a kind of history, in giving people a sense of the past, of order in the universe, and of man’s place in it. ... Poetry also strengthened the Greek city states in their resistance to the expansion of the Persian Empire in the fifth century B.C., and it contributed to the cultural efflorescence of Athens in the same era. And later ‘the national propaganda’ of the small nations of Europe has been largely in the anthologies of poetry as the media best designed to protect them (Thompson D. , 1978, p. 105).

While there are ample references to this historico-political function of poetry, there are other critics who discuss experimental poetics of cultural displacement and diasporic avant-gardes in modern times (Carry Noland, 2011). Reading postcolonial writers who have indulged in identity-related literary works including novelists, social chroniclers, historiographers, experts of diasporic literature and the writers of postcolonial counter-discourse like Frantz Fanon and Edward Said, and observations derived thereof has also been of much importance towards the development of this treatise. In Emile Habiby’s *The Pessoptimist* for example, which in Edward Said’s words is “a carnivalesque explosion of parody and theatrical farce, continuously surprising, shocking and unpredictable (Said 2001: p. 321), we see the land of Palestine albeit dispossessed by the natives confirming its presence like a fully developed character. The character has no language but it is strangely present. The refugees have fled but there are returnees (like Darwish’s family members too). They play hide and seek with the Zionists who push them out only to see them returned the next day:

Some of them hid in the ruins, others amongst the trees, and did not cross over to Jordan. They moved while it was dark and slept by day, returning whence they had come, only to be expelled again, to return, to be expelled, and then to return once more, right up to the present time (Habiby, 2001, p. 63).

Referring to Cornel West’s Book *Democracy Matters*, in which he legitimizes Israel’s creation and expansion while “the Palestinians exist to corrupt Jewish purity” and where “Jews experience an unprecedented moral crisis in their encounter with Palestinians, who perform incomprehensible levels of violence (the Heart of Darkness motif)”, Steven Salaita believes that

the Palestine-Israeli conflict has nothing to do with the alleged cultural intolerance. It is the direct outcome of foreign settlement and ethnic cleansing:

By emphasizing these phenomena rather than Jewish ethnonationalism, West decontextualizes the Israel-Palestine conflict from its proper origin in Zionist colonization and reifies Israel's placement in proper multicultural discourse as a legitimate exemplar of Jewish culture, worth celebration and indispensable to the adoration of diversity (Salaita, 2011, p. 72).

Salaita sees the result of this mincing political situation and the silences international community and asks if Israel is guilty of causing a humanitarian crisis that has caused illegal

...garrison settlement, the murder of civilians, religious chauvinism, home demolition, diplomatic malfeasance, the suppression of dissent, legal segregation, torture, widespread violation of international law, ethnonationalism, and chemical warfare. Verdict: Yes (Ibid. p. 67).

Arab independence was not so much earned but granted in forms that suited the former colonizers. Their traditional class structure took a long time to undergo revolutionary change. The Arabs have yet to develop their living unitary nationalism out of their subsidiary ideologies. In the aftermath of the war of 1967, the Arabs always considered Israel as an '*other*' and left it to '*others*' i.e. other agencies within their *Arabism* to take care of Israel the *other* on behalf of the *us*. They hoped that Zionism could be treated as an interruption to be ignored. They thought they would be able to down it out by a general concert of voices and plans of action but the actions taken in the interest of Arab Nationalism have not served the Palestinians. A *rupture* cannot be dealt with by not dealing with it. But there is one *rupture* which the Israeli government has persistently worked to mend. It is what Jonathan Cook calls "The Battle of Numbers" in his book *Blood and Religion*. Cook informs that 'Demography Council' established in the office of the Israeli Prime Minister since 1967 has the sole goal of increasing Jewish women's reproduction where child bearing is taken as "crucial for the future of the Jewish people" and under Fund for Encouraging Birth, there are special allowances for Jewish families with more than three children. The 1983 law on families brought more benefits to the parents with children.

On the other hand, the birth rate among the Arab families has been tactically controlled by introducing family planning clinics in their areas of concentration and other health care measures. The collapse of Soviet Union in 1990s brought tens of thousands of Russian Jews to Israel and in 2001 Ariel Sharon vowed to bring one million more Jews to Israel to increase the demographic pressure. Ben-Gurion had promised the title of “Heroine Mother” along a monetary prize to any Jewish woman who brought ten children to the world. Darwish keeps a track of this *rupture* in his works as well! Under the title “If only people envied us” in his book *A River Dies of Thirst*, he shows us a kaleidoscopic view of the unacknowledged generations of Palestinian heroines:

That hurrying woman, crowned with a wool blanket and a pitcher of water, dragging a boy in her right hand and his sister in her left, followed by a herd of frightened goats, that woman fleeing from a cramped war zone to a non-existent refuge - I have known her for sixty years. She is my mother ... The woman I'm seeing now in the same image on a colour TV screen, I have known well for forty years. She is my sister, following in the footsteps of our mother journeying in the wilderness: fleeing from a cramped war zone to a non-existent refuge. ... (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 144).

In the book *Palestine Speaks* (2015), there are several eloquent stories of those who are valiantly trying to survive in very difficult times. Cate Malek and Mateo Hoke interviewed these people on the very sites of their lives, the sites of suffering. One of the stories is from Laith Al-Hlou who lives in a house under demolition threat for the last three years always under pressure that anytime the bulldozers would arrive. Theirs is a life without electricity and despite acquiring a gas electricity generator but they can afford to operate it only for one hour in a week to run a washing machine. In winters they remain in bed all day to survive the cold. Water is extremely scanty and since the nearby Jewish settlement needs water to run their swimming pools, water is granted to their locality after a weeklong begging and even that is for a couple of hours. They save the water that they bathe in to flush the toilets. All children wash one by one standing bin the same bucket. Laith Al Hlou’s dreams of university education for his kids are too big to be realized and he knows it (Malek & Hoke, 2015, pp. 66-68). Towards the end of the book we have

the story of Fadi Shihab who used to live with his wife Houda in the US but came to visit his only surviving family member, his mother in Gaza. Among other notes of pain that he witnesses after an absence of so many years, he notices that he is getting old at an alarming speed over an extended stay in Gaza: “Man, a year in Gaza is like five years in the US”, he tells his brothers in the States. He feels guilty for bringing his wife and children to Gaza where they are under a consistent fear for safety but his idea of doing that is great as he wants his kids to learn their culture and practice their own language. This is the spirit that has helped Palestinians to survive. In Fadi Shihab’s words, “There is a lot of pressure on men here to be strong. Like the kids in the street, when you’re driving a car, you might honk the horn to get them to move out of the street, and they are like, “No, you move!” Little kids have the mentality that they are grown men, and that can’t be healthy (Ibid. pp. 195-196).” Fadi Shihab never knew, just like Darwish never lived to know that these children of Gaza would not be allowed to become ‘grown men’ as hundreds of them (509 to be precise) perished during Israeli invasion and bombardment of Gaza that was launched on July 8, 2014. This is only one of the several such occasions meant to maintain the colonial demographics. A Rafah born Palestinian poet Khaled Juma who lived in Gaza wrote the following poem in August 2014:

Oh rascal children of Gaza,
You who constantly disturbed me with your screams under my window,
You who filled every morning with rush and chaos,
You who broke my vase and stole the lonely flower on my balcony, / Come back –
And scream as you want,
And break all the vases,
Steal all the flowers, / Come back, / Just come back... (Kishawi, SMPalestine, 2014).

2.12 Palestine in the context of human rights

The psychological aspect of the children’s behavior under occupation is a very critical topic and a lot has been written about it. But writing is by far the only means to express the worldwide indignation at US backed Israeli anti-Palestinian policies. According to the official UNICEF report of February 2013 titled *Children in Israeli Military Detention: Observations and*

Recommendations, oftentimes, Israeli soldiers arrested Palestinian children (below the age of 18 as per the universal definition) are often subjected to violent and abusive arrests and interrogations in the middle of the night, tying their hands painfully and are later tortured, sleep deprived, and blindfolded during interrogations while they suffer from lack of water, food, or access to a toilet while being denied the right to have a lawyer or family member present during interrogation (UNICEF, 2013). Israel’s famous human rights NGO *Addameer* in its legal analysis report titled “Administrative Detention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory” describes that Palestinians have been subjected to administrative detention since the beginning of the Israeli Occupation in 1967 and before that time, under the British Mandate and it ranges from six months to six years without a charge of criminal activity or trial and only an arbitrary term of detention is prescribed. The report explains that

Administrative detention has been commonly used by repressive regimes to circumvent the legal process and to hinder access by political dissidents to the protection that they should be entitled to under the law. Places where it has been used to a particular extent include the North of Ireland, South Africa (under apartheid), the United States (Guantanamo Bay) and Israel (Addameer, 2010, p. 6).

The harrowing statistics that this Jewish organization gives from year to year tells us that During the period of March 2002 to October 2002, Israeli occupying forces arrested over 15,000 Palestinians males in cities and villages between the ages of 15 to 45 and were all put under various terms of administrative detention (Ibid p. 7). In an internal dialogue with himself at different ages, Mahmoud Darwish holds a dialogue enlarging upon this aspect of the Palestinian life:

- Was that possible?
- Within the limited number of choices available to us then.
- Where did hope come from?
- From the outside, always from the outside. Prisoners can resist within the means available to them. But the complete destruction of the prison cannot come about except through the window. The window was bigger at the beginning because our Arab brothers were closer to us.
- Where does your grief come from?
- From the pores of my skin (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 23).

According to Mats Svensson, the Swedish diplomat and author of *Crimes, Victims and Witnesses: Apartheid in Palestine*,

“When I first came to Palestine in 2003, I was naïve in many ways and had to start from the beginning. My previous work in South Africa helped to open up my eyes and see the deepening of apartheid in the Middle East ... the vacuous diplomacy that continues while the colonization and theft does not stop and the apartheid is manifested (Svensson, 2016).”

The general Arab worldview is based on the idea of simultaneity of experience. They have become incapable of thinking that something ‘unconscious’, latent and not immediately accessible to the vision is also possible. They believe that their belief, tradition and language can encompass everything. But they sadly overlooked the inception and growth of Zionism through 1948. The Arab version had been studied and restudied through works like George Antonious’s *The Arab Awakening*, Albert Hourani’s *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by T. E. Lawrence etc. The Arab world kept a sedentary mode of life and they knew it too late that while their projection got gradually attenuated by 1967, the Jews had realized their ideal projections. None of them had any charitable stance towards each other. The Arab belief that absolute right was on their side was ill founded. They elevated a political conflict into the framework of a cosmic morality. It isolated the Israelis and insulated the Arabs from the essentially political nature of the conflict. Although emotion and rhetoric cannot be taken away from the political dimension of a crisis but when these are employed as a substitute for politics, they do harm rather than benefit. Worst still, they are put to political use without proper understanding of the requisite historical scenario.

It may be remembered that Zionism is an extreme form of Jewish nationalism. It is a logical extension of Judaism with its creed of secular exclusion and non-assimilation. But every Jew is not another Herzle. There has to be some sort of dilution of the extremist view. The Arabs have worked on the dialectic of polar opposition. Similarly the Jews have made claims of a timeless attachment with a place with the use of a tangible military force at the cost of rejecting

all such claims by the Palestinian Arabs. But there are several dissenting voices in the Jewish world. Morani Kornberg-Weiss is a famous poetess of Israeli origin and she has published a book of poetry along postmodern lines especially addressed to Mahmoud Darwish. She speaks of the unsolvable equation of the present day reality where the life in Palestinian-Israeli time and space is like a poem without a clear syntax but which still resolves to be written. She uses mathematical symbols to resolve the political enigma (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, pp. 35-36):

There. I put you in this poem: <
Now / You and I we together / In this poem.
You might think it strange
Might not want to be here
But it is now a fact:
We are now in this poem.

The *poem* referred to in these lines is Palestine, now bifurcated into Israel and whatever is left of the original Palestine. However may this be denied, as Kornberg-Weiss seems to suggest, the fact of a de facto dual national identity both on the parts of Palestinians as well as Israelites has been established. She continues to trace this intricate pattern in other poems too. In her poem 'Plan D' she refers to a symbolic military-Likud plan of gradual Palestinian erasure ranging from the annihilation of an individual to the extermination and denial of a whole nation and gives a poetic rebuttal:

To erase / Is to acknowledge / That one is / And must no longer be.
To erase / An individual / Is to efface / And dispossess.
To erase a village / Is a futile attempt / To relocate.
The remains cannot be moved / Even with the strongest force.
To erase a people / Is to ignore / That demolition / Can never cleanse history (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, p. 47).

The languages that the two groups use in Palestine-Israel world belong to the same family and the cultural and religious nuances are also very familiar among them. The same air, water, rocks and temples are dear to them though for different reasons and thus out of historico-political differences, comes the emotional linkage where semantics of language give way to a silence that connects. This is a mystical experience where the present moment of existence matters alone:

You and I meet on the borders / Of language where words / Encounter the objects
They are designed to signify.
I cannot locate you anywhere.
You are the place / Where language fails / And I am the translator / Of no language.
I must internalize you / So we become nothing other.
You and I cannot / Demand the future /
But only our presence (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, p. 34).

She writes to decipher the complexity of this dual relationship of ambivalence where the Israeli Kornberg-Weiss discovers the Palestinian Darwish's talent in America, a country that supplanted him indirectly through its support of Israeli colonization and then housed him till his death: "We must speak counter-histories 'or equivocation would undo us.'" But equivocation is unavoidable both in the realm of poetry as well as in the realm of politics. Darwish confirms it in his poem "And We Have a Land". He finds that he has a land but it does not have any defined name or borders. It expands and narrows without a design. Its geography is like a holy book. Its spatial and temporal reality is only possible in imagination, or belief. The poet undergoes an out of body experience when at the end of the poem, he recognises it from a distance that it is filled up with several of his likes: "That's our land over there pregnant with us ... When was it that we were born? Did Adam get married twice? Or will we be born a second time to forget sin (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 205)?" In the face of the political stalemate, it is the literary voices with which we can attach good hopes of a resolve because literature wins the hearts more easily than the political sermons. It appeals to emotions and gradually trains the minds to look for possibilities where the politics and wars fail. The comparative parables used both by Darwish and Morani Kornberg-Weiss make one think over the entire phenomenon of Palestinian/Israeli conflict in a newer way. Their words are a proof that the literatures of the belligerent nations grow simultaneously and unexpectedly faster than the foreign office talks or the third party international interventions. Darwish often refers to the situation of the Palestinians as if they are in a theatre where they are watching the three dimensional drama of their own exile and thus they see their own mirror image wherever they look around. There is no way out for them. No apparent meaning but to be endlessly in a state of exile:

Didn't you tell me on the way to the wind
We'd soon be filling our history with meaning?
That the war would soon be over,
That we would build Sumer in song again,
Soon open the theatre doors to everyone
And to every kind of bird?
That soon we'd return to where the wind first found us (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p. 106).

There is hope and belonging and a prophecy in these words, a warning too, just akin to what Faiz Ahmed Faiz had predicted:

Again lit bright with lightning, the *Valley of Sinai*,
Here again reward and punishment will take place,
Here Divine wrath shall be unleashed, and mercy granted
Here the Sirens of Apocalypse shall be sounded
Here the day of Reckoning shall take place (Kashfi & Akif, 2001, p. 182).

The tone of imminence is evident in this poem of Faiz which means that he is not referring to a very distant time. The miracle is just at hand as he depicts. And then he provides an anthem for the Palestinian freedom fighters as well as if his cause knows no national boundaries and is one for the oppressed wherever they may be, and particularly if they are in the thrice loved and the thrice sacred land of Palestine:

We shall win / Truly one day, we shall win
Finally, one day, we shall win
We shall win / Truth has prevailed, and Falsehood defeated,
'Tis the promise of the Great Sustainer
Paradise lies beneath our feet
And Mercy shadows our heads
Why then, should we fear (Ibid.)?

Palestinian literature in general is revolutionary and progressive in nature for the obvious reason that it evolves out of an intricate struggle to preserve life.

This time of profound self-questioning gave birth to some of the best literature in the Middle East, what Said termed the "early years of the Palestinian Renaissance"—the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and Samih al-Qassim; novels and short stories by Ghassan Kanafani, later murdered by the Israelis; and essays by Marxists such as Mohammed Sid-Ahmed and free-marketeers such as Ghassan Tueini (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 65).

Writing a prolegomena to Gershon Shafir's article titled "Zionism and Colonialism: A Comparative Approach", Ilan Pappé writes in his book *The Israel Palestine Question* that it was pre-1948 Zionism that gave rise to post-1967 Israeli colonialism. He claims that the modes of

colonial activity might have changed over the years but the spirit of empire building has always remained the same:

This is another example of how Israeli historians come closer to the Palestinian narrative on the one hand, and how the historiographical research touches upon the raw nerves of Israeli society, on the other. Any reference to Zionism as colonialism is tantamount in the Israeli political discourse to treason and self-hatred (Pappe, 2005, p. 72).

Most of the other writers contributing to this book are also of the opinion that the Israeli occupation and the Arab exodus have common roots. It challenges the vastly propagated conceptions and paradigms in the historiography dealing with Palestine and its inhabitants both past and the present. The writers, mostly Jewish professors themselves believe that the Palestine conflict is between a strong ex-colonial party-Israel and a weaker one –a colonized party, the Palestinians. Compared to this, there is another book by Rashid Khalidi: *The Iron Cage* that relates ‘The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood. In this book, Khalidi traces the enigma of Palestinian history from the start of the WW I to the turn of the century and he refers to the most apt question, which Darwish has tried to address throughout his writing career i.e. identity and viability of the Palestinians. There are a number of books that deal with the possible ways to neutralize the tensions in the Middle East and reach a political solution through negotiations under the auspices of International Law like *Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Primer* by Phyllis Bennis of Institute for Policy Studies, Washington; *The Struggle for Sovereignty: Palestine and Israel* edited by Joel Benin and Rebecca Stein; *Palestinians and the International Law* by Francis Boyle; *Image and Reality of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict* by Norman Finkelstein etc.

Within Palestine, Gaza is the most important flashpoint of tragedy as well as shock. The books on Gaza form a literature of its own. In this regard, *Gaza: A History* by Jean-Pierre Filiu dedicated “To the memory of thousands anonymous who died in Gaza before their time though they had to live *en famille* and in peace (Filiu, 2015) is a very important book. The book is very divided into chapters that denote ‘*generations*’ into which the history is divided starting from the

generation of mourning (1947-1967), the generation of dispossession (1967-1987), the generation of the Intifadas (1987-2007) and last but not the least, the generation of impasses i.e. the present generation since 2007 where there are repeated Israeli incursions in Palestinian territories, systematic cancellation of citizenry of the Palestinian-Arabs living in Israel, and the spirit of reawakening leading to the third intifada in which the intellectual and academic front of Palestinians is already proactive around the world.

This phase is also important in the sense that international support for the Palestinian cause is mustering up. It is because the Palestinians have stopped waiting for the alien narratives defining their struggle and condition and have taken upon their own shoulders the responsibility of making the world know of their situation while they take practical, slow and yet steady, steps to bring about a positive change in their outlook as well. Noam Chomsky's words of introduction which also form the epigraph of the book *Palestine Speaks, Narratives of Life under Occupation* by Cate Malek and Mateo Hoke read: "Nothing is more eloquent than the voices of those who endure and try valiantly to survive. Nothing is more important for us than to listen to them carefully, to grasp their suffering, to learn from their testimonies about them and about ourselves and to use this understanding to bring their tragedy to an end (Malek & Hoke, 2015)." Story after story in this book, accounts of physical torture and psychological stress all narrate what worst possibly human beings can do to each other. The story of Abdelrahman al-Ahmer for example tells us of the humiliation he used to suffer at the hands of the settlers who would throw his UNRWA distributed books and bags into gutters forcing him to turn into a stone thrower at the age of 10. By 15, he had learnt how to make Molotov cocktails and even before he had used one, he was arrested along a number of other young boys and what followed was a three month long battering spree openly carried out to make these young boys physically maimed, chronic psychiatric patients (Ibid. pp. 75-79). It was under these circumstances during the assault, that Refaat R. Alareer a lecturer at the Islamic University of Gaza got the idea of building a Palestinian

narrative and therefore he asked his fellows and students to write about their situation themselves so that the world should not wait for the second hand information of the Israeli apartheid settler-colonial atrocities. The ball had already started to roll through Darwish and this time it was in the form of *Gaza Writes Back: Narrating Palestine*. In the introduction to the book, Alareer writes that if Israel's apartheid has to be fought, Israel's narratives have to be challenged, and exposed. He believes that as a Palestinian, he has been brought up on stories and storytelling. It would be both selfish and treacherous to keep a story to himself—stories are meant to be told and retold:

If I allowed a story to stop, I would be betraying my legacy, my mother, my grandmother, and my homeland. To me, storytelling is one of the ingredients of Palestinian *sumud*—steadfastness. Stories teach life even if the hero suffers or dies at the end. For Palestinians, stories whet the much-needed talent for life. ...It was high time to break the intellectual embargo Israel has been enforcing for decades, and similarly, it was high time to break with psychological shackles and talk to non-Arabs in the language and discourse they understand. (Alareer, Spring 2014, pp. 526-527).

Darwish recollects the visible, tangible and audible, even resounding sense of pain that falls to the lot of everyone known as Palestinian. But in his book of journal entries *In the Presence of Absence*, he advises his countrymen:

...do not look for yourself in what is written about you. Do not search for the Canaanite in you to prove that you exist. Grasp your own reality and grasp your name and learn how to write your own proof. You, you and not your ghost, were the one driven out into this night (Darwish M. , *In the Presence of Absence*, 2011, p. 35).

Speaking at the eve of International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in November 2011, the President of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People Mr. Abdou Salam Diallo of Senegal said, "Sixty-four years after the Partition Plan was adopted on 29 November 1947, history is once again knocking at the door of the United Nations... Despite their historical oppression, the Palestinian people have never given up their identity and their attachment to their land, nor have they lost sight of their goal of regaining their rights to freedom and independence (Diallo, 2011)." The history of the world is remarkable in so far as the rise and fall of the civilizations continues. At the time this thesis is undergoing its final draft i.e. 2016, there are several important personalities in literature, world politics and academia who

belong to multifarious western cultural backgrounds who have chosen to speak fearlessly about the need of justice for the Palestinian Arabs. They have noticed that evenhandedness in this regard has long been delayed and therefore consistently being denied. These include, among several others, Commissioner General United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Mr. Pierre Krahenbuhl, American author and journalist Max Blumenthal, Edward W. Said Chair of American Studies at American University of Beirut Mr. Steven Salaita, the famous American philosopher, cognitive scientist and social critic Mr. Noam Chomsky, American Professor Emeritus of International Law Mr. Richard Falk, the Australian and American journalist Mr. John Pilger, British politician and broadcaster Mr. George Galloway, former US Marine Mr. Kenneth Nicols O'Keefe, Jewish American doctor and filmmaker Ms. Alice Rothchild, the historian Michel Prior, Director Public relations at Birzeit University Dr. Albert Aghzarian, former US ambassador to Saudi Arabia Mr. James E. Akins, theologian Dr. William Baker, Phyllis Bennis of Institute for Policy Studies, Peter Boukaert of Human Rights Watch, US congressman Paul Findley, Thomas Getman of World Vision International, Neta Golan of International Solidarity Movement, Israeli Ha'aretz journalist Amira Hass, Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, Yael Stein of Israeli human rights group B'Tselem, Ms. Gila Svirsky of the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace, former US ambassador to Israel Edward Walker, Ms. Alison Weir founder of NGO: If American Knew, etc.

Apart from this academic and social awakening, Edward Said points out the importance of the contribution of the writers and poets of twentieth century like Darwish who have not only provided an intellectual insight into the dark fabric of colonialism and other forms of 'bloodthirsty' imperialism which sometimes seeks a brutal, senseless and even profitless dominance over what it regards as *niggers* and *bog dwellers*.

What enables us to say all of those things retrospectively is the perspective provided for us in the twentieth century by theoreticians, militants, and insurgent analysts of imperialism like Frantz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral, C. L. R. James, Aimé Césaire, Walter Rodney, plus many others like them, on the one hand, and on the other hand, by the great

nationalist artists of decolonization and revolutionary nationalism, like Tagore, Senghor, Neruda, Vellejo, Césaire, Faiz, Darwish . . . and Yeats (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 80).

Michel Prior starts his book *Zionism and the State of Israel* with the epigraph of a poem “Cats” by Maurice Harmon which very aptly and aesthetically depicts the ground facts in the land shared by the present day Israelites and Palestinians. Through the symbolism of the birds and cats, a resonance of the lived experience of life shared by the two communities has been depicted (Prior, 2005, p. iv). Prior criticizes the western fundamentalist Christian Zionism which in its espousal of Jewish political Zionism “ignores the cries of the poor, and legitimizes their oppression in the name of the Gospel. It displaces the universal appeal of the Gospel, with its emphasis on the equality and dignity of all, substituting for it a moral recklessness that posits the Christian God as an avenger worse than any the world has seen (Ibid. p. 148).” He also refers to LaGrange Declaration of 1979 signed by over five thousand US evangelical Christians that states:

Forthrightly, we declare our conviction that in the process of establishing the state of Israel, a deep injustice was done to the Palestinian people, confiscating their land and driving many into exile and even death.... We confess our silence, our indifference, our hardheartedness and our cowardice, all too often, in the face of these dehumanising realities (Sojourners Magazine, 1979, p. 24).

Indifferent to this silence, indifference and hardheartedness of the world, Darwish is to be seen busy, alone as he always was, in the sacramental art of a nationalistic poetic expression. It is an expression that he himself believes to support the intensity of isolation and to maintain the degree of suffering. It is talking to one’s own self, an internal rumination that informs a person about his own self, his own surroundings so that one’s own voice helps one to “reduce the totality of isolation (Darwish M. , *Absent Presence*, 2010, p. 39)”.

Darwish celebrates his struggle of life with little albeit consistent effort:

The battles do not end, and the language remains on edge. These pages do not tell the whole story. They only set down the beginnings of a small voice that shook the rock a little. The homeland is distant and near, and in this everyday grief and everyday death the writing gets written, or tries to get written, so that this ordinary grief may stop accepting being acceptable (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. xv).

The most important background study that may be undertaken to understand Darwish is Edward Said's writing on the subject of Palestine as he incorporates the literary and the historical, almost the same grounds on which the present research has been undertaken. For Said, literature is not pure fiction and it surely has a political role, even when it explicitly denies to have one at the surface, there are deep ideological structures that cannot and therefore, may not be denied. Said wants us to break from what Mustapha Marrouchi calls "our nasty linear habits" and for this Said has included expressions of estrangement when he nurtures his narratives of exile and homelessness on the same lines as Darwish has done (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 141).

These linear habits of thought and conviction have been put off by other writers of even Israeli origin, for example, Gershom Gorenberg who quotes in his book titled *The Unmaking of Israel* the instance of Sholem Asch's Yiddish play titled *God of Vengeance* in which the protagonist manages a brothel in the basement of his house and at the same time tries to maintain the holiness of his house by keeping the sacred scripts of Torah and giving lessons of chastity to his Jewish daughter for whom he keeps searching for a very pious Jew husband. But the frail wooden floor of the house proves insufficient to keep the proximity of the two worlds mutually exclusive. The play is thus a severe criticism of the fact that the sacred texts lose all significance when people disregard the teachings in letter and spirit. By implication, the rape of the Palestinian land and the rights of its citizens is sure to have consequences in Israel and the latter's holier-than-thou stance cannot remain unblemished despite the efforts of extracting both divine and mundane support for the birthright of Israelites to the land of Palestine. Gorenberg concludes "the occupation is just one factor in the inequality of Israel's Palestinian citizens, which dates to the beginning of the state." He gives a reference to Avigdor Lieberman's Israeli political party called *Israel is Our Home* where the word *Our* implies that there are other people in the country who should be considered alien (Gorenberg, 2011, pp. 203,211).

Ahron Bregman believes that Israeli unilateralism is doomed to see the ultimate failure despite the consistent up gradation of its military might and elitist regional stance. He believes that for each decade since its inception, Israel has had a certain policy towards Palestinians. Sticking to the status quo of the first decade was followed by land-swallowing settlement project, rejectionism and unilateralism followed by peace negotiations and then ethnic cleansing aggression. Bregman believes that the strategies followed in the first four decades and some part of the fifth decade would ultimately be taken as a black mark in the Jewish history. “This was the period”, he writes, “in which Israel, helped by the Jewish diaspora, particularly in America, proved that even nations which have suffered unspeakable tragedies of their own can act in similarly cruel ways when in power themselves (Bregman, *Cursed Victory: A History of Israel and the Occupied Territories* , 2015, pp. 307-308)”.

2.13 Understanding the Zionist agenda

Alan Hart argues that there has been a consistent compromise on the integrity of Security Council by the major powers led by the U.S. who allow Israel to violate the international law and continue with its occupation of the Palestinian territories. Thus there have been effectively created ‘two sets of rules for the power behaviour of nations- one for all the nations of the world minus Israel and the other exclusively for it.’ He makes a very emotional appeal to the Americans at the end of his book *Conflict without End* which is the third volume of his trilogy *Zionism, The Real Enemy of the Jews*: “ If, Dear Americans, you continue to allow your government to support Israel, right or wrong, you’ll not only be betraying your own most cherished values and ideals, you’ll be inviting more and more people of the world, not just 1.4 billion Muslims, to see you as complicit in the Zionist state’s crimes. (Hart, 2010, p. 377).”

Despite all odds, the far cry of struggle and sacrifice by the Palestinian population and the diaspora in general and their political, social and artistic representatives over seven decades finally made the people of the world at least commemorate the International Day of solidarity

with the Palestinian People on November 29, 1977. Every year under UNGA Resolution 32/40 B the day is celebrated to remember in turn UNGA Resolution 181 (II) calling for the partition of Palestine into two states on the same day in 1947 (UN GA, 1977). Under these circumstances, there are so many indigenous voices pouring out resistance literature, historians and political philosophers trying to decipher the complicated chapters in the history of its development standing shoulder to shoulder with experts of international law and occasional instances where political governments issue statements of concern for this most volatile region of the world, there are also dedicated university centers that try to provide academic understanding to the novices and undertake research into its enigmatic maze of circumstances. The Center for Palestinian Studies in University of London works under the umbrella of London Middle East Institute at SOAS and its introductory web page acknowledges that ‘the academic study of Palestine and Palestinians generates a large and ever-growing body of knowledge across every disciplinary field (Centre for Palestine Studies, 2016).’ On the other side, there is much lobbying trying to justify the creation and extension of Zionist agenda which portrays Palestinian Arabs as a mere desert outgrowth. In the presence of so many conflicting views and biases that have surrounded the Palestine-Israeli conflict, the idea of an objectively correct political condition is difficult to trace. According to Gregory Harms, “Objectivity is a word that has almost lost its meaning, and has frequently come to suggest imposing symmetry where things aren’t necessarily symmetrical, thus distorting the actual situation (Harms, 2008, p. XV)”. On the other hand, the historical descriptions that are at variance from each other range from slight differences to diametrically opposed ideas. Under such circumstances, while there is no external position of certainty, Michel Foucault’s method of new historicism suggests that no universal understanding is possible beyond history and society (Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, 1984, p. 4). Among his favourite topics is the analysis of power and its politics through which human subjectivity is achieved, silently and securely. “My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in

our culture, human beings are made subjects (Foucault, *The Subject and Power*, 1982, p. 208).”

In an era of mind control by the media tycoons, an extremely biased application of international law and a marked failure of conscientious response on the part of international community to acknowledge their rights, some Palestinian writers, most notably Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish have successfully asserted a literary presence that compensates for the pains of the people that, in Darwish’s words, have been hurt, ‘beyond identification’ (Darwish M. , 2009, p.

7). Professor Richard Falk speaks of this biased role of media concerning Palestine/Israel:

the strong side, while being insistent on retaining most of its unlawful advantages resulting from military and diplomatic dominance, as well as its successful reliance as occupier on state terror and political violence, is applauded for its peace initiatives and its reasonableness, whereas the weak side is scorned for its imprudent and defiant rejectionism and its supposedly addictive reliance on terrorism. In this manner the rights of power consistently overwhelmed the power of rights in public space (Falk R. , *Achieving Human Rights*, 2009, p. 30).

In these circumstances, the words of a poet who has lived through the foreign aggression and occupation of Palestine, along with an identity consistently preserved in exile with an unswerving desire to return home, must be taken as plausible towards a greater understanding of the Palestinian/Israeli imbroglio. This is where Edward said calls Mahmoud Darwish as an ‘amateur poet’ whereas he explicates this word in the “Introduction” of his book *Representation of the Intellectual* (1993) by first defining the relationship of an intellectual with his society that entails a certain national, linguistic, traditional, institutional and historical duty. He believes that such an intellectual should be free from all pressures: “Hence my characterizations of the intellectual as exile and marginal, as amateur, and as the author of a language that tries to speak the truth to power (Said E. , *Representation of the Intellectual*, 1993, pp. xv-xvi).” He further elaborates these *pressures* which pose a threat to a writer’s originality and creativity and can only be overcome by being an *amateur*;

Despite their (*pressures*’) pervasiveness, each of them can be countered by what I shall call amateurism, the desire to be moved not by profit or reward but by love for and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and

barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a specialty, in caring for ideas and values despite the restrictions of a profession (Ibid. p. 76).

Rehnuma Sazzad believes that Darwish's amateurism in Saidian sense combines Gramscian organic intellectualism with Benda's idealistic predisposition through which his technique of counter-hegemony resists Israeli-American nullification of his usurped land. He thus presents the Palestine issue through universal principles of truth and justice (Sazzad, Fall 2013, pp. 115-126). The demonstration of this issue is vital for the Palestinians. Otherwise, the chief victory of the Zionists is their capability of occupying the space from which they may represent and explain 'Oriental Arabs' to the West. Edward Said quotes relevant maxims by Karl Marx and Benjamin Disraeli in the epigraph of his book *Orientalism*, "they cannot represent themselves; they must be represented" and "The East is a career" respectively (Said E. , *Orientalism*, 1979, p. xii). And thus Zionists have, in Said's words, assumed the responsibility of portraying the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians, as less human and therefore less valuable. Their propaganda machines both through the controlled media as well as academia have proven them to be treacherous and unregenerate 'Orientals'. The most recent example of this is the claim of Israeli media on behalf of the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas cannot be trusted or held talks with because he has "preconditions for the talk" (Ravid & Reuters, Haaretz, 2016) and "worked as a KGB agent undercover 'Krotov' in 1980" i.e. 36 years ago (Haaretz & Khoury, 2016). And this media maligning of President Abbas has come right at the time when the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has invited both of these leaders to hold peace-talks at Moscow on September 9, 2016. Netanyahu's own disposition remains unquestioned. Edward Said had predicted this state of affairs also back in 1980 when he said:

Israel was a device for holding Islam—and later the Soviet Union, or communism—at bay. Zionism and Israel were associated with liberalism, with freedom and democracy, with knowledge and light, with what 'we' understand and fight for. By contrast, Zionism's enemies were simply a twentieth-century version of the alien spirit of Oriental despotism, sensuality, ignorance, and similar forms of backwardness (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 120).

Side by side this another Zionist motif has continued and that is the gradual erasure of the land and the memory of Palestine so that a new civilization could be invoked in the name of ancient history. It was Herzle who proposed this ideology and later Israeli leaders especially Moshe Dayan, Golda Meir and Benjamin Netanyahu have put this into practice. John Randolph quotes Moshe Dayan's statement of 1969:

“We came to this country which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is a Jewish state here. ... Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because these geography books no longer exist; not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either (LeBlanc, 2013, p. 44).”

John Randolph suggests that this denial of a space to the Palestinians runs deeper. Depriving them of a free space that they may call home marks the denial of a place to be human. And through the gradual but sure displacement of the existing population, the Zionists are making an attempt to silence the claims of the Palestinians by rendering them invisible, through strategies of dispossession and of dispersal, and finally, through denial of their very existence (Ibid. p. 46). In the above statement Dayan speaks in absolute terms of power. He proposes an idea and multiplies it with the tactical nullification of facts-on-ground because he knows that the economic and military superiority would help him stand his claim. His matter-of-factness is based on the facts on ground “in terms that assume the consequent erasure of those formerly present while silencing any narrative or other justification of that indigenous presence (Ibid.).” The only way to a future mutual recognition would come if a counter discourse is established. It cannot limit itself only to the fields of politics and geography, but it has to develop a new paradigm at the philosophical and epistemological levels. The literary development of the dispossessed and dislocated as the eternally present “Us” is thus the first ideal to be achieved. There has to be an undeniable presence and leaves unforgettable impression on all those who are there to witness. Since Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish are both the sons of Palestine, they hold a very similar approach towards the reconstruction of the *homeland* that has continuously been deconstructed

by the Zionist governments. They share this rebellion against Israeli colonialism through their counter-hegemonic writings in reaction to the colonizer's non-recognition. This is what Nadia Abu El-Haj has also insisted in her book *Facts on the Ground: Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (2002). But the problem is even deeper than just dispossession and non-recognition. The Zionist Israel foreshadows the complete annihilation of the Palestinian identity, history and future. Symbolically they have done so through the construction of a security wall (that said calls 'a wall of denial') that began in 1994 but Darwish's poetic vision had envisaged it long before when he wrote:

The beloved sun never rose
In spite of the day's insistence...
How long eyes have searched for it and are still waiting...
And thousands of eyes stare skywards without direction.
Beyond the eyes they have thrown up walls with high foreheads
To keep the sun from them... (Sazzad, Fall 2013, p. 117).

According to Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia, Palestine is much more than only a set of occupied territories: "There is also a larger Palestine that exists in the Palestinian diaspora, living in exile, dispossessed from its homeland, which has been marginalised. Ultimately Said sees his role as one of connection rather than alienation. For him to be critical of Zionism is not to criticise 'an idea or a theory but rather a wall of denials (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 121)." The same holds true in case of Darwish. In his journal entry, Darwish describes a dialogue between an American newsman and himself: "What are you writing in this war, Poet?" --- "I am writing my silence." --- "And will you win this war?" --- "No. The important thing is to hold on. Holding on is a victory in itself (Darwish M. , 2009, pp. 61-62) ."

'Holding on' implies a resolute decision to suffer and to undergo sacrifice. The repression that the poet and his nation go through lead them to the crucible of political reality that is meant to reduce them into an unidentifiable mass of ashes but every time 'the Phoenix, or the Green Bird—as it is called in the Palestinian folk song never ceases to be reborn out of his ashes (Darwish M. , The Madness of Being a Palestinian, Autumn 1985).' Commenting about the

Palestinian-Israeli conflict which is 'so profoundly inhuman, cynical, and deliberately cruel to the Palestinian people', Edward said comments: Witnessing such a sorry state of affairs is by no means a monotonous, monochromatic activity. It involves what Foucault once called "a relentless erudition," scouring alternative sources, exhuming buried documents, reviving forgotten (or abandoned) histories (Said E. W., Foreward, 1999, p. 13). One way of reviving the forgotten history is to read the autobiographical writings of those who have witnessed the moments of change in the general course of history. Everybody who actually undergoes the historical moment cannot write and those who sit before their television screens and amass a working knowledge of a historical situation cannot be trusted to have contributed immaculate truths to the body of knowledge. According to Mattawa, even the sense of their entitlement to the land of Palestine that the Israelis have is not out of a deeply felt experience of lithe land and the life that it sprouts, it is rather based on the narratives of Hebrew Bible and the requisite Zionist propaganda based on invented history and folk myths (Mattawa, 2014, p. 108).

2.14 Darwish and the *re-writing* of the Palestinian history

It is only the few who live the experience and then restore it to their writings so that others might revisit, or re-collect and thereby re-live the truth of a situation as it developed, reached its prime, and the way it eventually dissolved or turned into yet another current of human existence. Thus the *self* of the poet undergoes a historical experience and he comes out triumphant, changed and mature. The idea is that we have to approach the narrative of a writer (prose or poetry) which is the description of this *self*, with all its complications, fears, beliefs, ideologies, political consciousness, experiences of life and their recollection which in turn are recorded in his writings. In Darwish's words: "the meaning needs more time to ripen in the salt of the earth ... let us make for a meaning with a wave of the hand from afar (Darwish M. , Absent Presence, 2010)." Darwish consistently builds his poetic imagination along these lines and he speaks the sentiment of his people with a holistic understanding of their sociopolitical history. His poetry is an elegant

autobiography but at the same time it is the biography of Palestine the land, Palestine the people, the exile and the diaspora. Given his representational role, Darwish's *I* is us and his *mine* is *ours*. In his poem "A State of Siege", he says that he breathes pure air but his olfactory sense registers the bloodshed that took place decades ago. His body becomes the place and longs for his 'displaced self' (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 161). Back in the land of his desire, the sky has become unreal because it is deprived of the serenity and silence associated with the sky of the free lands:

When the fighter planes disappear, the doves fly
White, white. Washing the sky's cheek
With free wings, reclaiming splendor and sovereignty
Of air and play. Higher and higher the doves fly, white, white. I wish the sky
Were real (a man passing between two bombs told me) (Ibid. p. 129).

Reading Darwish cannot be done in isolation. Such a reading may give poetic pleasure as it is an inseparable part of the poetic craft but here we have to see what lies behind the narrative. There is a personal memory and a national history. Darwish writes for understanding himself as well as for the commemoration of a collective national memory. Mark Freeman elaborates this idea in his book *Rewriting Self: History, Memory and Narrative*: 'Memory, therefore, which often has to do not merely with recounting the past but with making sense of it — from 'above', as it were — is an interpretive act the end of which is an enlarged understanding of the self (Freeman, 1993, p. 30).' Freeman also quotes from Georges Gusdorf's 1980 book *Conditions and Limits of Autobiography* in which he lays down the principle of reading the account of the present moment in consonance with history i.e. historico-literary continuum. He says that the depiction of only the present moment of consciousness is so fragmentary and limited that it does not guarantee a future:

In recounting my history, however, I take the longest path, but, this path that goes round my life leads me the more surely from me to myself. The recapitulation of ages of existence, of landscapes and encounters, obliges me to situate *what I am* in the perspective of *what I have been*... This is the law of gathering and of understanding in all the acts that have been mine, all the faces and all the places where I have recognized signs and witness of my destiny' (Ibid.).

Darwish refers to this recapitulation of the past in several of his poems. In this particular manner, he is the poet of nostalgia lamenting the absence of history and the presence of death:

We walk to our tomorrow certain
Of the sun in our yesterday.
Eternity and we
Inhabit this place (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 107).

The present treatise with its polychrome dimensions of history, politics and the spontaneous literary response, aims to achieve an assiduous understanding of the Palestinian issue. Mahmoud Darwish's poetry and prose work has won world-wide recognition not only for its aesthetic appeal but also for the elaborate message of identity and nationhood for Palestinians that naturally demands for a safe home. His poetry is both culturally and historically rich and carries the spirit of identity both while at home, as well as in exile. In exile a man is reborn. The ordinary would seek a solitary renewal of livelihood, whereas the reformer and the prescient would not only look for the personal survival but also for his or her nation or the group of identity. With every literary contribution, he believed that he entered 'another phase of his ongoing birth (Darwish M. , 2011, p. 5).' The New Historicist paradigm implies that such poetic content must be understood along with the complex implications of the requisite history. The present research is therefore an attempt to study the way memory keeps the Palestinian identity intact and flourishing even when hundreds and thousands of them have been subjected to both indigenous, regional and overseas exile. In his own words:

The exile looks around to see which way to go
And words-memories escape him
In front is not in front of him
Behind is not behind (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 135).

This sense of loss and disorientation continues to haunt Darwish just like it has haunted the countless displaced and dispossessed Palestinians over the last one century. Is it of some importance that the pain of the people of this region as well as the events of this saga should still be explored and understood in this era of information technology where everything is apparently

being documented and telecast? Jean- Pierre Filiu, a professor at Sciences Po (Center for International Studies, Paris), stresses that Palestinian history and more particularly the chronicles of Gaza should be re-examined ‘as part of the world’s destiny is unfolding in symbolic terms within this small scrape of land’ (Filiu, 2015, p. xii). Darwish understood these *symbolic terms* very well and recorded these in his journals and poetic deliberations while he ‘incarnated the peculiar and surreal ongoing odyssey of the Palestinian people’ and in the diverse imagery that he employs, there is an underlying historico-political schema which needs careful examination.

All Darwish’s poetry embodies at multiple levels the themes of identity and exile, reflecting not only his personal itinerary (which took him from Galilee to Moscow, Cairo, Beirut, Tunis, Paris, Amman, and Ramallah) but also—and especially—a state of mind (Palestine Studies, 2015).

According to Edward Said, the literature of a period should have an objective appeal and should be related with the form and content of life as it unfolds. It should address the problems related with the injustice visited on Palestine in the wake of unconditional American support of Israel and the impotence of the surrounding Arab states: “We need odes not to blood and mythology or uprooted, mourned or dead plants but to living creatures and actual situations (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 6).” Reading Darwish’s work under the tenets of New Historicism propounded by Greenblatt and Foucault would thus bring about a profounder understanding of the latency of the Palestinian condition in the backdrop of what is politically evident. In the words of the poet himself, “You travel in a bus and you hold your tongue. You are not called upon to declare your identity. Your silence says everything. This is the only stance that you can take when you hear this Israeli love talk. The age of sweet words is now over (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, p. 59).” Palestinians have been doubly agonized to suffer and yet to remain silent.

2.15 Judaism and the Zionist interpolation

It is important to note that throughout this treatise, wherever Jews or Israelites are referred to, it is the Zionist Jews that the reference goes to as there are several off-shoots of the main body of Jewry in the world who do not stand shoulder to shoulder with the Zionist Israeli agenda of repression towards the Palestinians. For example, Neturei Karta International (www.nkusa.org) and International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, IJAN (www.ijan.org) are among a host of other organizations that advocate the traditional legendary role of the Jews that is devoid of geopolitical role, militarism, colonialism and the eventual territorial nationalism. For example IJAN has catalogued “the role of Israel’s government, its military, and related corporations and organisations in a global industry of violence and repression”. One prominent reference is to late Hebrew University Professor Israel Shahak’s book, *Israel’s Global Role: Weapons for Repression*, which illustrates how “from Rhodesia to apartheid South Africa to the Gulf monarchies, Israel ties its interests not with the masses fighting for freedom, but with their jailers (Fernandez, 2013).”

Similarly, in their pamphlet titled ‘The Palestinian Issue: The Orthodox Jewish anti-Zionist Position’, the representatives have explained their position with reference to the Palestinians in very suggestive and supportive words that not only admit the fault but also try to correct it:

They are the victims of the Zionist movement's moral blindness and obstinate refusal to take into account the existence of peoples other than themselves. The Palestinian people have a right to their homeland. And they have a right to financial restitution for property loss and damages inflicted upon them over the past decades (Neturei Karta, 2016).

2.16 Teleological reading of history and literature

In her book *The Human Condition*, Hanna Arendt asserts that more and more philosophers need to engage in everyday political action and devote their energies, among other things, for participatory democracy. In addition to this involvement with the present political reality, she stresses the need of speculative philosophy of history with an eventual teleological significance

of human history. In other words a true historian is not the one who only digs up the past events but the one who involves with the present reality and on the basis of his observation and intuition, can foretell the shape of things to come. “If the world is to contain a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the life-span of mortal men” (Arendt, 1998, p. 55). This requires an active use of intellect, consciousness, a sharp sense of imagination and the conviction of a metaphysical sense of reality. The Israeli philosopher Gershom Sholem has worked on these lines futuristically incorporating the Kabbalistic metaphysics with history giving rise to a new branch of historical scholarship called “historiosophy” (Stanford 2008). While the intellectual zeal worldwide travels into such uncharted areas of inquiry, a historico-literary analysis based on the established principles of new historicism is an appropriate and well-timed endeavor to look into the diasporic sentiment of a person who has become symbolic of the Palestinian resistance. A majority of the experts on Palestinian or Arab affairs always care to refer to Darwish as depictive of the peculiar sentiment that rests in Palestine and the centering Arab world. Robert Fisk writes his personal observation of an Israeli shooting into a mass of 400 protesting Gazan youths without any accountable reason. He says the westerners would never understand how ‘A single live round fired into the pack of people did the trick’:

The Television crews were standing there in their spaceman blue flak jackets and helmets, along with ambulance crews and truck-drivers and families from the concrete hovels across the highway. Anyone can turn up in Gaza to watch tragedy and farce. This is Shakespeare, Scott Fitzgerald and pantomime rolled into one, revenge and vaudeville. No wonder, I think as I drive back to Jerusalem, that Palestinian poetry is so bitter. ‘All I possess in the presence of death/ Is pride and fury,’ wrote Mahmoud Darwish (Fisk R. , 2006, p. 553).

Since Darwish’s poetry is set out in a context which is universally known, historically recognized and politically alive both due to consistent empire building maneuvers of Israel and the academic response that it generates, it seemed quite plausible that the research should be directed towards such a voice that has registered a mark in the universal audience. The present study explores this voice in depth and brings to the surface those first hand observations related

with Palestinian identity that the poet wants to communicate to the world. His writings including his poetry and journals (diaries) are classical examples of the resistance literature which is always a byproduct of the colonial enterprise. There is a visible and sustained cultural reference in his writings to the collective memory that is hallmark of diasporic literature. Culture is a nation's stored wisdom that supports diverse patterns of existence. With direct exposure to two very closely put but differently interpreted cultures, his vision becomes saturated with images as he says:

In free travel between cultures, the researchers
Of human essence might find enough seats
For everyone (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 186).

Darwish's writings serve the purpose of keeping the uniqueness as well as the pain of being a Palestinian and yet alive. Being a poet in exile, he looks back in anger at the way things have turned out in his land between the inception of Israel and its present status of being the most poignant colonial empire in the modern world. At a time when politically loaded storylines deprive access to the actuality of Palestinian experience, the present research is expected to foster a new literary hermeneutic dimension to the lived experience of Palestinians. The research has achieved this end by placing Darwish's work within the framework of history and theory at the same time and through this a profounder understanding of the literary, cultural and historical paradigms that surround the Palestine narrative has been initiated. To quote Darwish, "They'd love to see me dead so they can say: he was one of us, he belonged to us. For twenty years I've heard those very steps banging on the night's wall. They came but did not open the door. They have entered now. Then three of them went out: a poet, a killer and a reader. "Will you have a drink of wine?" I asked. "We'll have a drink", they said. "When will you shoot me?" I asked. They answered: "Take your time." They prepared the glasses and went on singing for the people. I said: "When will you start killing me?" They said: "We have started (Darwish M. , *Victims of a Map: A Bilingual Anthology of Arabic Poetry*, 2005, p. 39)." On Tuesday, 9 June, 2015 Irish lawmaker

Richard Boyd Barrett read out some of the more shocking, violent and racist statements recently made by Israeli ministers and military officials. He read these aloud in Irish Parliament while asserting “if we are defining terrorism, that is the language and thinking of terrorists”. He recalls that in recent past Israeli Minister of Defence, Moshe Ya'alon, their military chief of staff, Benny Gantz, who headed up the last two military assaults on Gaza and others have spoken against Palestinians in an outrageous racist manner alluding to the idea of ethnic cleansing. He quotes the minister of education in the Netanyahu Government: "There will never be a peace plan with the Palestinians... I will do everything in my power to make sure they never get a state...if you catch terrorists, you have to simply kill them ... I've killed lots of Arabs in my life and there's no problem with that". Barrett quotes Israeli minister of justice who has called all Palestinians to be enemy combatants:

[Palestinians] are all enemy combatants... this also includes the mothers of the martyrs... they should follow their sons, nothing would be more just. They should go, as should the physical homes in which they raised the snakes. Otherwise, more little snakes will be raised there (Barrett, 2015).

While New Historicism and its linked theories of historicism and neocolonialism bear an intertextual significance, we have to see that the present research is taking place as the history is being written. Palestine with its history is ‘present’; its poetry is also ‘present’. Darwish himself seems to know this complication and theorizes about it in his verse (Darwish 2007: 259):

Don't write poetry as history,
Because the weapon is the historian.
And history is the dailiness
Of weapons prescribed upon our bodies. [...]
Aimlessly we make it and it makes us...
Perhaps history wasn't born as we desired,
Because the Human Being never existed? [...]

However, he does not reject the bond between History and Literature. What he is referring to is the idea or the tendency of making poetry an instrument or the carrier of history as it happens among the so called ‘national poets’ who write to incite a purely political response. It is they who stand by a doctrine as its perpetrators or supporters. For Darwish, poetry a parallel to the history

written by the victors who get it written in the light of their own agenda. Only a poet of higher critical mind and national zeal can understand or confront it through his own revolutionary and alternative response. One can see Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the revolutionary poet from Pakistan standing shoulder to shoulder with Darwish in poetic rendition of the Palestinian trauma in his poem “*Falasteen Shuhadaa jo Pardes main kaam ayay*” (Palestinian Martyrs in Exile):

Dur pardes ki bay-mehr guzargahon main / Ajnabi sheher ki bay-naam-o-nishaan rahon mai / Jiss zameen par bhi khula meray lahoon ka parcham / Leh-lahata hai wahan arz-e Falasteen ka Alam / Teray aa'da ne kiya aik Falasteen barbaad / Meray zakhmon ne kiye kitnay falasteen aabaad (Faiz, Nuskha Haey Wafa, 1986, p. 657)

Translation: Faraway in the unnamed lanes of unfamiliar lands / At the unnamed streets of a stranger city / Wherever I had opened the flag made of my blood / The flag of my homeland Palestine waved there / Your opponents destroyed one Palestine: / But my wounds have given birth to many Palestines now (Ravi Magazine, 2014).

Whenever one hears the word Palestine, the perception goes into the mode of watching a historical tragic drama of struggle and ideological conflict, attack, news of arsenal, the consequent atrocities, accounts of loss and pain and thereafter, relative disinterestedness of the West as Edward Said has said about his own book *The Question of Palestine* which “provides a case history of the struggle between the native Arab, largely Muslim inhabitants of Palestine and the Zionist movement (later Israel), whose provenance and method of coming to grips with the ‘Oriental’ realities of Palestine are largely Western ... my study of Palestine attempts also to describe what has been hidden beneath the surface of Western views of the Orient – in this case, the Palestinian national struggle for self-determination (Said E. W., *Covering Islam*, 1997, p. xlix).” While pure historical scholarship entailed in Historicism shifts the attention to factors that determine the making of the text and while its adversary Formalism declares text to be a self-sufficient entity, New Historicism presents a post-structuralist tendency to ‘rehistoricize’ literary texts (Seturaman 2009: 574). Literature, and above all poetry, reflects historical reality one way or the other and a reference to the historical present can help us develop not only a contextual insight into the given texts but also what T. S. Eliot calls, the ‘historical sense’ which involves,

“a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence (Eliot T. S., Selected Prose, 1963, p. 22)”. This is where the futuristic interpretation of a situation becomes possible because it is from the study of the past and the present that we can predict about the shape of things to come. Referring to this possibility through the study of the historical content, Ahron Bregman deduces the idea with a good conviction that at some point in future, a sovereign Palestinian state will emerge on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip:

But states are not given to people on silver platters and the Palestinians will have to keep fighting for one; more importantly, they must be helped in their struggle by the international community which must not stand idly by as the Israeli occupation – one of the cruelest and brutal in modern history – continues (Bregman, Cursed Victory : A History of Israel and the Occupied Territories, 2015, p. 315).

The same conclusion and hope is reported at various places in Darwish’s works where his poetic intellect based on imagination adds to his historical sense to see into the same future despite all odds of the present political fixture, “The imagination is the vertical jet of form, bursting out of a glance, pregnant with knowledge which the unconscious directs at what is known. Imagination is the secret companion of what is, which helps it to correct misprints in the Book of Existence (Darwish M. , Absent Presence, 2010, p. 111).” The pain of a shrinking Palestinian existence is the persistent theme that Darwish has explored at several places. For example, while he remembers the various cities that his exile has led him to, he declares that all cities have their peculiar olfactory associations without which those places cannot be truly remembered. While these smells are numerous, one common smell is “the smell of longing for something else, a smell that remembers other smells, a smell of interrupted breathing, an emotion that leads you like a much used tourist map to the smell of the *first* place (Ibid. pp. 60-61).” This deep sense of nostalgia is reflective of the strangeness that only a homeless exile can feel. It is a situation in which the not only is the land under one’s feet not his, but also is the air that one breathes and the sky one has overhead. More excruciatingly, the very soul of man seems a stranger to his own

existence as the true self seems to have been left behind in a distant land. Mattawa quotes Darwish's own words in this regard:

Exile is this soul that distances us away from our land, asking us to be our beloved.
Exile is this land that distances us from our souls pushing toward strangers (Mattawa, 2014, p. 117).

Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge, published a special edition (Volume VII: 2009) titled "If I touch the depth of your heart... The human promise of poetry in memories of Mahmoud Darwish" to commemorate "Darwish's work and the historical context that embraced him." According to the editor of the journal, "The Palestinian challenge and cause, in their essence, is about not only telling, but also listening to oneself and to the other." The special edition has focused on understanding a dimension of Darwish's life and work that could perhaps be lost in the attention given to his immediate struggle for Palestinian rights to national self-determination. The contributor Erica Mena speaks about "the paradoxical consideration that what made Darwish so influential worldwide was his ability to speak not only critically about his people's immediate tasks, but also the broader post-national sensibilities that are historically long-delayed." Winston Langley of University of Massachusetts believes that despite his globe-trotting, Darwish always "uses Palestine as his place of reference, a site of intense toil and travail, of doubt and loss, and of frustration and promise ... teaching us that the light in which we see ... and regulates (our) seeing ... finding and exposing the truth of things." Langley is of the view that despite the international climate of moral and socio-economic indifference, Darwish's struggle for identity is an instance of overall human development. In his key note introduction, Fady Joudah declares Darwish's poetry to be overwhelmingly a lyric-epic, elegiac and historical in nature with a vision which is both Sufi and Sophoclean (Joudah, Keynote Introduction , 2009).

CHAPTER III

PALESTINIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY: HISTORY, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

We treat our wounds with salt
We live near our memories
We try out our ordinary death
We wait for Judgement day, right here, in its house
In the act after the last (Darwish M. , No Banner In the Wind, 2004, p. 234).

3.1 Zionism and the foundation of Israel

The challenge to Palestinian identity simmered in a remoter time and space where the local Palestinian thought had no approach. The Jews had been in consistent state of exile which they had accepted as a part of their orthodox belief (Neturei Karta, 2016) since 6th century BC following captivity in Babylon with promise of a homeland to be granted by God. In 18th century, under the influence of European Enlightenment, understood as the Hebrew *Haskalah* among the Jewish circles, a German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn initiated a radical nationalist movement to replace religion as a unifying force among the Jews (Cohen M. J., 2007). In the wake of 1791 revolutionary zeal in France, the European Jews started rising for political equality and recognition. The term ‘Zionism’ was first applied to this movement in 1890 by the Austrian Jewish philosopher Nathan Birnbaum referring to ‘Zion’ or ‘Sion’ hill in Palestine where King Solomon had erected the legendary Solomon Temple for the Jews. In 1896, Theodore Herzle wrote a book *The Jewish state* and met the German emperor William II and Sultan Abd al-Hamid II of Turkey to win their political support in this regard (Ibid.). Failing the above two attempts, Herzle called for the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland and the political aim of establishing a Jewish National home in Palestine was finalized. Jewish National Fund was established in 1901 followed by Jewish Territorial Fund in 1905 and Jewish Agency for Palestine

in 1929 encouraging *Aliya*, migration to strengthen and establish *Yishuv*, the Jewish community in Palestine (The Macmillan Encyclopedia, 1986).

The end of the Ottoman Empire marked the beginning of the Palestinian tragedy. Initially, a well-planned demographic shift of population was affected. Focusing on the British and Zionist policy of transformation of the local landscape, Ellsworth Huntington says that any minor structural readjustment sends shockwaves all over the place in Palestine. The smallness of the landscape makes the things more complicated and explicit: Palestine has rightly been called the “least of all lands.” Had it been larger, its influence might have been less (Huntington, *Palestine And Its Transformation*, 1923, p. 20). Huntington also points out a crucial equation between Israeli colonialism in Palestine and the British colonialism in India. He sees a parallel between the two: “The future of Palestine is one of the world's important problems for two chief reasons. The first is the position of the country in respect to India and the British Empire; the second is its historic interest as the Holy Land of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism (Huntington, *The Future of Palestine*, 1919).” The onslaught of the Zionist agenda had become very poignant by the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century and the two most important statesmen of the Muslim world at that time i.e. Iqbal and Jinnah observed these developments with concern. They both had received their formal education from the finest universities in European cosmopolitans and therefore had a firsthand knowledge of the international system and its intricacies. For example, in his poem *Shaam-o-Falasteen* (Syria and Palestine) in his book of verse *Zarb-i-Kaleem* (The Strike of Moses), Iqbal refers to the French colonization of Syria and the British Mandate over Palestine as continuity of the same European imperialistic system where all local semblance of development was meant to perpetuate the colonial empire:

Hai Khak-e-Falasteen Pe Yahoodi Ka Agar Haq / Haspania Pe Haq Nahin Kyun Ahl-e-Arab Ka

Translation: If the Zionists claim their birthright over the land of Palestine, it would be equally logical for the Arabs to lay claim over Spain for once having owned that land. (Iqbal A. , *Zarb-i-Kaleem*, 1975, p. 156).

The Palestinian struggle for preserving their national identity got fiercely activated in 1917 when British General Allenby attacked the Ottoman Government in Palestine and captured Jerusalem in December. At that time the rich Jews of Europe promised to help Britain in the World War I, in exchange for a Jewish National Home which the British affected through Balfour Declaration the same year (Cohen M. J., 2007). Chaim Weizmann, the most notable proponent of World Zionist Organization had secured British support for the Jewish state through his friend Lord Arthur James Balfour who was the British Foreign Secretary at that time through a public letter (dated November 2, 1917) addressed to Lord Rothschild, a prominent British Zionist and the member of a powerful banking family. The letter read that

His Majesty's government viewed "with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." It went on to say that the British government would use its "best endeavours" to achieve that goal and that nothing should be done to prejudice "the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews" in other nations. (Marsha E. Ackermann, 2008, p. 37)

Professor Rashid Khalidi gives a special focus to the words "civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities". The tacit collusion that the British and the Zionists exhibit here is that there is a clear segregation of the major regional players: Jews and non-Jews, an exclusionary political bias, and more importantly, the non-Jews only had, if at all, the civil and religious rights and not the national and political rights, or any other rights that the free human beings are supposed to enjoy (Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and the American Dominance in the Middle East*, 2009, p. 85). Weizmann pressed the participants of the Paris Peace Conference (1919) for the Zionist case for a British Mandate over a Palestine extending north to the Litani River in Lebanon, and to the Hijaz Rail Line well east of the Jordan River and called for a Palestine which would be as Jewish as England is English. He designated the indigenous populace as the rocks of Judea, impediments that had to be cleared on a difficult path (Prior, 2005, p. 182). British author Israel Zangwill who stood at the vanguard of cultural Zionism wrote about the local Arab population: "There is no particular reason for the Arabs to cling to these few

kilometers. ‘To fold their tents’ and ‘silently steal away’ is their proverbial habit: let them exemplify it now (Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 1920, p. 93). The same Anglo-Jewish propagandist had suggested back in 1919 that the Jews must possess Palestine as the Arabs are to possess Arabia or the Poles Poland (Zangwill, *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 1937, p. 342). Israeli historians Benny Morris in his book *1948* and Ari Shavit in his book *My Promised Land* both assert that from August 1937, the removal of the Arab population became the focus of mainstream thinking of Zionist leaders. In June, 1938, Ben Gurion said to the Jewish Agency Executive: “My approach to the solution of the question of the Arabs in Jewish state is their transfer to Arab countries. I am for compulsory transfer. I do not see anything immoral in it (Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace*, 2016, p. 317).” In the 1930s, the British used ruthless repression to disperse the Palestinian Arabs from their native lands in order to prepare the ground for the eventual sanctuary for the Jews. In July 1937, the Royal Commission under Lord Peel recommended partition and further Jewish immigration. Miss Farguharson of the National League of England requested Muhammad Iqbal to express his views on these shocking recommendations. Writing to her on 20 July 1937, he insisted that it should not be forgotten that, by all international standards, Palestine does not belong to England as the latter was only holding it under the mandate of League of Nations. He also criticised the League as an Anglo-French institution for dividing the territories of weaker Muslim countries. He also equated the Zionist movement as a continuity of western imperialism on the Mediterranean littoral (Iqbal A. M., Letter dated 20th July 1937 to Miss Ferguharson, 1973, pp. 218-219). Iqbal juristically analyzed the Peel Report that had proposed Palestinian partition and declared it illegal from the point of international law and declared it an open hostility to the Arabs (Iqbal A. M., *Statement on the Report Recommending Partition Of Palestine*, 1992). In a further statement issued on 27 July 1937 to the press, Iqbal declares that the Palestinian problem, when studied in its historical perspective is necessarily and purely a Muslim problem. He speaks of the authority of Professor Hockings that the Jews had

voluntarily dispersed long before Caliph Umar's entry into Jerusalem more than thirteen hundred years back and all their scriptures were written outside Palestine. He also said that the Crusade tried to make it a Christian land but the attempt was foiled by Salah-ud-Din making it a Muslim concern as before. Iqbal's words, based on historical reason and the logic of continuity, are no doubt open to criticism as he gives the modern Palestinian issue a unicolour of 'purely Muslim problem'. His bold words nevertheless echo the much needed, oft-claimed and practically nonchalant Islamic solidarity that had failed to raise a combined and effective voice in the favour of Palestinians' rights. It may not be forgotten that the target of the colonial enterprise was predominantly the disunited and technologically weak Muslim nations. It is equally plausible in comparison with the present international scenario i.e. various Muslim nation-states, particularly of the Arabian origin, are being existentially compromised one after another in the wake of the neocolonial World Order. Iqbal attributed the sale of the holy land to the Jews and corresponding cash to the Arabs as an example of 'bankruptcy of statesmanship', rather than its achievement. He calls it a 'low transaction' by a great people (the British) who had made definite promises to the Arabs (Iqbal A. M., *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, 1992, p. 370). Darwish also confirms this far reaching effect of British policies on the future of Palestine:

Because the aim of partitioning the land into coast and mountain between Arab and Frank was not, under prevailing conditions, to guarantee for the Arabs whatever forts and terrain had remained in their hands but to grant the enemy a respite that enabled him to establish a pattern that sanctioned his transition from exception to rule (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 48).

Muhammad Ali Jinnah also asserted that "if the English refused to honour their promise to Indian Muslims of preserving the holy land of Palestine, it would be the turning point in the history of the British Empire (Allana, 1969, pp. 140-151). Under Jinnah's leadership, Muslim League organized an International Conference on the Question of Palestine at Calcutta in 1937. On 15 October 1937, in the course of his presidential address to the All-India Muslim League Session at Lucknow, Jinnah referred to the betrayal of the Arabs at the hands of the British: "and

now we are asked to-look at the realities! But who created this situation (Iqbal and Jinnah on Palestine, 2016)? In his presidential address to the All-India Muslim League at Patna on 26 December 1938 he applauded the Arab martyrs who resisted the usurper Zionist regime “propped up by British Imperialism with the ulterior motive of placating the international Jewry which commands the money-bags (Pirzada, 1970, p. 307). In this address, Jinnah summed up the entire saga of collaboration between neocolonialism and the Zionist ideals, the influence of Jewish lobby and the socio-political phases of al-Nakba that turned a whole peaceful populace of Palestinians into perennial aliens. Jinnah’s words also iterate the political need of rejecting the usurpation of one’s land and resources, not in statements and speeches but through active and armed struggle. A few years later, when mass exodus of Jews from Europe and America was in full view, Jinnah took cognizance of the situation and while addressing a mass meeting in Bombay on November 8, 1945, he stressed the basic principles of justice and national prestige. He referred to the Jewish conquest of Palestine after losing it two thousand years ago “with the help of British bayonets and American money.” He iterated that he was rather sympathetic towards the Jews for the mistreatment that they had met in certain parts of civilized Europe but its brunt should not have been on the Palestinian Arabs (Khawaja, 2016). He challenged President Truman who had pressured the British to allow one million Jews into Palestine by asking if Truman would even allow 100 Indians to migrate to USA. Stanley Walport quotes Jinnah’s words that he wired to Lord Attlee: “It is my duty to inform you that any surrender to appease Jewry at the sacrifice of Arabs would be deeply resented and vehemently resisted by Muslim world and Muslim India and its consequences will be most disastrous (Wolpert, 2000, pp. 250-251). The elucidation that Iqbal had suggested to the Palestinian Arabs is recorded in his poem: *Falasteeni Arab Se* (To a Palestinian Arab):

Zamana Ab Bhi Nahin Jis Ke Souz Se Farig / Mein Janta Hun Woh Atish Tere Wujood Mein Hai
Teri Dawa Na Geneva Mein Hai, Na London Mein / Farang Ki Rag-e-Jaan Panja-e-Yahood Mein Hai
Suna Hai Main Ne, Ghulami Se Ummaton Ki Nijat / Khudi Ki Parwarish-o-Lazzat-e-Namood Mein Hai

Translation: I have a firm faith that there lies an enthusiasm in you that has stood the test of time. The cure of the malady that has afflicted you is neither available in Geneva nor in London as the very jugular vein of the western economy is in the clutches of the Jews. Remember, the freedom of the nations is restored to them only when they nourish their self-identity and exhibit their innate potential (Iqbal A. , Zarb-i-Kaleem, 1975, pp. 159,160)!

That the Jewish lobby sought American support for their wider and vested interests even at the cost of American national interest, echoes in the statements of several American intellectuals e.g. Alison Weir has explored “The hidden history of how the U.S. was used to create Israel” in the book *Against Our Better Judgment*. The book starts with US statesman Dean Acheson’s words of 1947: “Creating Israel on land already inhabited by Palestinians would imperil not only American but all Western interests in the Near East. In the words of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff who reported in late 1947, “A decision to partition Palestine, if the decision were supported by the United States, would prejudice United States strategic interests in the Near and Middle East” to the point that “United States influence in the area would be curtailed to that which could be maintained by military force (Weir, *Against Our Better Judgement*, 2014, p. 38).” Similarly, Henderson, the director of the State Department’s Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs consistently recommended against supporting a Jewish state in Palestine. Henderson emphasized that the U.S. would lose moral prestige in the world if it supported Zionism. The present times are a clear fulfilment of that prophecy as America had to sacrifice her sons and daughters in the series of badly scripted Gulf War only to serve the cause of Israeli colonial aspirations (Ibid. p. 37). In the international scenario, even morality is politically motivated and defined. In his book *Necessary Illusions*, Noam Chomsky confirms the western/American stance of consistent *rejectionism* i.e. rejecting all rights and preferences of the Palestinians including the right of self-determination (Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*, 1989, p. 447). Chomsky is professedly against the tacit assumptions of a conventional racist Israeli doctrine that the Palestinians have no rights and therefore as a ‘stateless-population’ they should be content with Israeli control over the occupied territories and resources. The option of a non-rejectionist settlement that distributes equitable rights among the Palestinians and Israelis

does not exist because Israel and United States oppose it. Chomsky compares it with the attitude of a stubborn three-year-old who doesn't like something and therefore denies its existence (Ibid. p. 450).

3.2 World War II and the creation of Israel

World War II left Britain beleaguered and British Mandate over Palestine was about to end, the Zionist leadership under David Ben Gurion who was to become the first Prime Minister of Israel used the terrorist militant groups like LEHI and Irgun to massacre and force-exile the Palestinians in large numbers and began systematic appropriation of all their lands. This violence did not go without protest. Janet M. Powers reports: "Women attending a second Arab feminist conference in Cairo (1944) demanded an end to Jewish immigration and also publicized the Palestinian issue by calling on Arab countries, organizations, and individuals to offer financial support to Palestinians in order to buy back land acquired by Jews (Powers, 2006). In February 1947, the British handed Palestine to the United Nations which set up 11 member UNSCOP (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine) to determine a quick solution to the Palestinian issue. Two reports emerged: The majority Report that proposed clear partition and the Minority Report suggested a single federate state with two wings. On November 29, 1947, despite Arab doctrine of total exclusion of Zionists, the Majority Report was upheld by UN Resolution 181. Regardless of the fact that according to the census of 1946, there were 600,000 Jews and 1.3 Million Arabs, the land allocated to the Zionists was 56 percent. A civil war broke out eventually turning into a regional war, and with years of amassed arsenal, the Zionists held the sway followed by wide range of pogroms. The worst of these massacres occurred at Deir Yassin and soon all Palestinian population of Haifa and Tiberias were pushed out. On May 14, 1948, the last of the British soldiers departed from Haifa and the same day at 4 p.m. David Be-Gurion announced in his radio address from Tel Aviv Museum to the world 'establishment to the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called *Medinath Yisrael* (the State of Israel) (Harms, 2008, p. 94).

The pogrom at Deir Yassin marks the appalling foundation of the State of Israel: On April 9, 1948 this village was attacked by joint forces of Irgun-LEHI and Haganah despite a prior non-aggression pact and more than 200 men women and children were brutally killed, their bodies were mutilated and thrown down the wells. The wounded and survivors put into the back of the trucks and paraded in the streets as showpieces while using loud speakers, warnings were issued to the neighbouring communities of the like treatment if they persisted to stay (Ibid.). Fred Halliday points out an important issue of historical culpability that somehow lies on the British shoulders:

... formal European colonialism in the Middle East was short-lived: the former Ottoman territories appropriated after World War I were given independence within a decade or two – Iraq in 1932, Egypt in 1936, Syria and Lebanon in 1943 and 1946, Jordan in 1946. In Palestine the British announced in 1947 that they had abandoned the attempt to reconcile Jews and Arabs and in May 1948, in an act of extraordinary culpability, one that had consequences for many decades (Halliday, *The Middle East in International relations: Power, Politics and Ideology*, 2005, p. 82).

The USA and USSR recognized Israel within twenty four hours. Among the comity of nations, the decisions are never made at the spur of the moment and there is always a deeply rooted political motivation or philosophy that slowly leads to what apparently looks like a sudden decision. The respective reasons for this unprecedented post haste recognition is twofold as Professor Rashid Khalidi describes in his book *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East*. Khalidi believes that Harry S. Truman the 33rd President of America (1945-1953) who initiated the containment of Communism and thus started what later came to be known as the cold war was under the domestic pressure by the wealthy Zionists (bankers and business tycoons) who controlled American policies, as well as personally inclined, to establish a strong proxy state that would ensure and safeguard American national interests in the Middle East. But more than that Truman as an individual was more concerned (like all the later presidents) about his second term in the White House which could not be assured without the Zionist support. When he was advised by the State Department to be cautious in the recognition of Israel, he replied to his advisors: “I’m sorry, gentlemen, but I have to answer to

hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism; I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents.”

The Zionist dream of de-Arabizing Palestine and creating a clear Jewish majority finally came about during the 1948–9 war, when 750,000 Palestinians took up the road of exile. The events that led to the Palestinian exodus began on 29 November 1947, when the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 191 endorsing the partition of Palestine into two states, Palestinian Arab and Jewish, with Jerusalem and Bethlehem consisting an international zone (Masalha, *The Politics of Denial. Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 2003, p. 26). By the end of 1948, more than 300,000 Palestinians had already been permanently displaced (a number that would rise to more than 750,000 in the coming months) and they went seeking refuge in Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. While thousands were brutally killed, the majority of Palestinians were pushed into areas that are popularly known as West Bank and Gaza Strip. This war and its outcome is known as the war of independence in Israel and is called *al-Nakba*, meaning ‘disaster’ by the Palestinians as it set on exile 80 percent of the majority non-Jew Palestinian population for repatriation of the Jews self-or-forced-exiled by Europe. There are archival records that account for the forced and bloody exodus of the Palestinian Arabs from their towns. To take one instance, more than 60 thousand inhabitants of the twin towns of Lydda and Ramle were forced into exile in the very hot desert summer of July 1948 who went forth with their goods and food and utensils, their destination was set as Beit Nabala. When they reached there, they were reduced to only diseased living human bodies with hundreds of elderly and children dead on the way (Masalha, *The Politics of Denial. Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 2003, p. 35). Benny Morris refers to other such operations like the Operation Hiram which are marked with cold blooded massacres to intimidate the neighbouring towns to evacuate (Morris, 1999, p. 70).

3.3 Darwish and the Palestinian holocaust

Darwish was himself one of the victims of the Palestinian holocaust and the way he underwent its different phases gave him an undeniable force of conviction and truth. He tells us how the Zionist forces offered the Palestinian Arabs two options: Death or departure:

They carried out this strategy violently with their weapons, and justified it on religious grounds from the example of Joshua Son of Nun and the text “The Day of the Lord is a day of terror.” And they justified it on secular grounds from their own practices. It was Menachem Begin who said, “If it weren’t for Deir Yassin, there would be no state of Israel.” They proclaimed the aim of the Deir Yassin Massacre from loudspeakers mounted on cars that went around blaring out, “Leave, or suffer the fate of Deir Yassin (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 18).

Referring to frequent land confiscations undertaken by the Jewish authorities, Jonathan Cook gives one particular example in the chapter “The Road to Dispossession” in his book *Disappearing Palestine: Israel’s Experiments in Human Despair* that in 1950s half of the 160,000 Bedouins of Negev were evicted from their ancestral lands and were forced to live in fenced-in areas called *siag*; the other half were declared ‘unrecognized’ which deprived them of all public services from electricity to water, their houses were frequently demolished, their crops sprayed by herbicides and finally declared criminals, squatters and trespassers to be brushed away (Cook, *Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiment in Human Despair*, 2008, pp. 36-37). The words of Shlomo Sand are also very poignant on this issue of historical narrative and its inventiveness as he concludes in his book *The Invention of the Jewish People* by declaring the popular Zionist slogan of “the people without a land to the land without a people” as the product of an amginary history grown around a spurious and mythological idea of Jewish exile and return (Sand, 2009, p. 188). While the Israeli state was politically and militarily gaining ground in the area, the academic scholarship was inventing a corresponding mythology of history to augment the sentiments of racial superiority. Shlomo Sand piquantly calls this “Mythistory” (Ibid. p. 107).

Darwish, a representative voice of the Palestinians, is one of the first people who took the task of setting the historical record straight. He equates Begin with Nebuchadnezzar and mixes up the mythologies of the past and present to start a new historical epistemology to understand Israel-Palestine standoff.

Manhunt by jet fighter. Vanquished remnants of the Nazi army in Berlin. A flaring up of the personal conflict between Begin and Nebuchadnezzar. Headlines that jumble past with present, urging the present to hurry on. A future sold in a lottery. A Greek fate lying in wait for young heroes. A public history with no owners, open to whoever wishes to inherit (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 84).

Referring to his visit to Hiroshima, Darwish says that in the museum of the crime, no one points to the name of the killer. They just say ‘the plane came this way from a base in the Pacific.’ But Darwish is not ready to spare the name and blames Menachem Begin and his crew who justify the atrocities in the name of Biblical narratives. He takes them to task for the political abuse of Palestinians through an inhuman racial vituperation:

He thought his soldiers ... were out on a hunting safari..... "Who really is the animal?" The ghosts of those he annihilated at Dayr Yasin, all those whom he made disappear from time and place, so that through that absence he could impose the conditions of his own presence on the time and the place ... (Ibid. p. 77-78).

In 1956 occurred the so called Suez Crisis. On July 26, 1956 Egyptian President seized the ownership of the Suez Canal to obtain its toll revenue for funding the construction of the Aswan Dam. Rather than turning to passive settlement of the dispute, Britain and France immediately attacked Egypt and on October 29, 1956, Israel also penetrated the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula. UN brokered ceasefire between the parties and UK and France withdrew, Egypt reopened the canal for international safe passage of ships but Israel lingered on in Sinai and left five months later after effectively destroying the entire physical infrastructure of Sinai. Israeli viciousness that continued month after month throughout Palestine may be adjudged through the events of November 1956. The place is UNRWA run refugee camps of Gaza. Professor Jean-Pierre Filiu gives some details of the Israeli massacres in this time and space with particular focus on Khan Yunis and Rafah Camp where all men roughly above the age of 15 were forcibly rounded

up and killed with machine-gun fire on the plea that they were among the *fedayin*. Smaller refugee camps like those at Deir al-Balah and Maghazi were also combed in the same way. Thousands were killed while their children were used as human shields by the Israeli Army and mass graves divulged those who were taken into custody blindfolded. According to the head of the UN observer mission, such killings “were consistent with Israel’s intention to get rid of the major part of the refugee population of the Gaza Strip (Filiu, 2015, pp. 96-100).” Things have never changed there. Even fifty years later, Mahmoud Darwish records the sorriest human vulnerability rampant within Gaza. In his last book *A River Dies of Thirst*, Darwish wrote a diary entry under the heading “Routine” in which he describes in a very neutral and disinterested way, the weather feel of Gaza as if from a news studio which would shake the conscience of anyone half-way down the description. He first speaks of the low pressure area, direction of winds, prospects of rain and its effects upon the sea and the trees and then proceeds with the details of human weather in the area where thirty martyrs fall in Gaza including two women demanding their share of ‘hope’:

But the autumn clouds - the symbolic name for killing- wipe out an entire family, made up of seventeen lives. The news searches for their names under the rubble. Apart from that, abnormal life appears to be running its normal course. ... encircled by bulldozers and tanks and smashed cypress trees (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 40).

3.4 Six-Day War (1967) and the new dimensions of Palestinian geopolitics

In June 1967 the *Six-Day War* was fought between Israel on one side and Syria, Jordan and Egypt on the other. Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Till that time (from 1948 to 1967) Gaza was controlled by Egypt constitutionally regarding it a part of Palestine. Similarly Jordan controlled West Bank till 1967. More than being a war, it was an act of aggression just like the invasion of Egypt in October 1956, the start of the Suez Crisis. The war began on June 5, 1967 when Israel, pursuing a war of conquest, launched a surprise attack on Egypt in what we now hear as a pre-emptive strike (but which, according to the definition developed at Nuremberg, amounts to ‘the supreme international crime’) and destroyed almost its entire air force.

Darwish laments that while his people believed that Gamal Abdel Nasser's rise to power would prove the last gasp of the Israeli swan, a sudden setback pushed them deeper into the pit of despair. He calls out to the Arabs who first used a bellicose rhetoric against the Israeli expansion and threatened war to liberate Palestine but lacked the timely accomplishment of unity and concerted effort (King Hussein fell apart from Nasser) and who, according to Darwish, "took me toward my humanity and left me halfway there." He reports as he hears the news:

Then an item of news arrives from the Israeli parliament. They have been raising their glasses from the first hours of the battle. Are they crazy? Celebrating! How can this be? They say they have abolished the legend of Abdel Nasser's army. At midnight, the army chief of staff announces on the radio the fruit of the battles: the Egyptian air force was destroyed at dawn, and the Israeli forces are already on the outskirts of Rafah (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 110).

The hope of a *home* for Darwish, and the end of *exile* as well lay in Arab Unity. In 1967, it ended and completed the tragic scene of this drama. Darwish speaks of the ineffectualness of own words, 'a small voice that shook the rock a little (Ibid. p. xv).' Egypt retaliated with what was left and so did Syria and Jordan but they fought a defensive war and within a week Israel was able to defeat their combined armies and established control over Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem, an occupation that the Palestinian recall as *Naksa* or 'a great setback' (commemorated on June 5 every year). It added another 300,000 refugees to the already displaced hundreds and thousands of refugees that had stemmed from the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Had it been only a war at the borders as the mainstream media and history books depict, there would not be a massive refugee movement. Darwish has his own poetic mode of mentioning this overlooked historical aspect of the Palestinian-turned-refugee phenomenon:

They tore us to pieces, and we multiplied as refugees, some on the outside and some on the inside. On the outside the children grow up on the milk of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, and in their veins it becomes Palestinian blood. And on the inside, you eat the wheat of Marj Ibn Amer, and you become a "citizen of Israel." You spend half your life looking for a single acknowledgment that you are a Palestinian citizen, and you do not find one. And on the very day that a human being landed on the moon, you were busy writing an emotional letter to the Israeli police appealing for permission to travel to the village where your people live (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 106).

Jonathan Cook reports in his book *Disappearing Palestine* that during the night of June 19, 1967, a demolition squad came along the Muslim Quarter of the Noble Sanctuary (Haram al-Sharif) where the ancient al-Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques are located and starting from the Maghrabi Quarter, they bulldozed Muslim houses with the families inside making at least 1000 others run for their lives.

As the first Israeli troops entered the Old City, the army's chief rabbi, Shlomo Goren, rushed towards the Temple Mount clutching a Torah scroll and blowing a ram's horn – in a foretaste of the new religious nationalism about to be unleashed (Cook, *Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiment in Human Despair*, 2008, p. 52).

The popular historic fiction says that Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser had threatened war and had ordered military mobilization along the borders, but that myth has now been busted. For example, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin himself had acknowledged that “In June 1967, we again had a choice. The Egyptian army concentrations in the Sinai approaches do not prove that Nasser was really about to attack us. We must be honest with ourselves. We decided to attack him.” Yitzhak Rabin, who would also later become Prime Minister of Israel, admitted in 1968 that “I do not think Nasser wanted war. The two divisions he sent to the Sinai would not have been sufficient to launch an offensive war. He knew it and we knew it (Hammond, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 2016, p. 11).” United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 242 calling on Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territories. Egypt and Jordan accepted the resolution. Israel agreed on some conditions of concessions from the Arab states. Syria rejected it on the plea that the Arab interests were relegated to the secondary level while Israel's benefit was secured. PLO severely criticized as the Palestinian issue was drastically reduced to only a refugee problem (United Nations, 1967). Historian Arthur Goldschmidt remarked that this resolution joined “the gallery of ambiguous documents complicating the Arab-Israeli conflict (Harms, 2008, p. 115).” To sum up the UN resolutions till 1967, among others, the most noted ones related with Israel-Palestine conflict are as follows:

- General Assembly Resolution 181 (September 3, 1947): *Partition plan be implemented.*
- General Assembly Resolution 194 (December 11, 1948): *Refugees' right to return be assured.*
- Security Council Resolution 242 (November 22, 1967): *Withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories during the Six Day War*

It is pertinent to remove a myth of interpretation with reference to the last of these resolutions i.e. SCR # 242. It is a fallacy that the resolution declared the Green Line or the 1967-line which is originally the 1949 armistice line as the international border between the two countries. Gaza and the West Bank areas were taken out of the Egyptian and Jordanian control to avoid any territorial claims so that Palestinian integrity as a nation-state could be ensured. PLO agreed to the provisions of Resolution 242 in 1988 and agreed to develop their state on only the 22 % area of the former Palestine. This was an enormous territorial concession to Israel towards the establishment of two-state solution. Israel rejects this clear bargain and is busy constructing “facts-on-ground” through its settlement project in contravention of the international law but it has full support of the US who is consistently legitimizing Israel’s occupation regime. About this *facts-on-ground* ‘settlement’ agenda, political debates have long been raving and in his typical poetic mood of concerned-unconcern, Darwish states:

Longing is the groaning of right when incapable of providing proof of the might of right before the might of oppression. The groaning of homes buried beneath settlements that the absent bequeathed to the absent, and the present to the absent, with the first drop of milk in exile and in refugee camps (Darwish M. , In the Presence of Absence, 2011).

According to Hanan Ashrawi, there is another aspect to the 1967 war not much reported in the western media. This pertains to Israeli plan of taking the remaining Palestinian territories, removal of the UN troops, closure of the straits of Tiran, preemptive destruction of the Egyptian air force on ground: “Israel again defeated the Arab armies, occupied the rest of Palestine, also occupied Sinai and the Golan Heights and South Lebanon. So it was a war of expansion (Ashrawi, BookNotes, 1995). While America left no stones unturned in facilitating this expansionist Israeli regime, the attitude of the American civil society at that time is noteworthy as the American

general public did not have a very clear view of Palestinian plight and some of them even asked where that place was or that if it even existed! Ashrawi speaks of total stereotyping whenever she would introduce herself to be a Palestinian, she would often be taken either as a terrorist or an exotic person, a princess of the Arabian Nights or someone about to hijack a plane and kill innocent persons. It was hard for her to convince the foreigners that the Palestinians were common people like everyone else and that they had a long history, ancient culture and a deep humanity (Ashrawi, BookNotes, 1995).

3.5 The vicissitudes inherent in the conflict of 1973

Israel under Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan was self-assured and placid that the Arabs would not dare rally against her but dramatically enough, on October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israeli forces in Sinai and the Golan Heights, respectively. They called it Operation Badr reminiscent of the first Muslim victory against the infidels in classical Islamic history and since the day coincided with Jewish Day of Atonement called Yom Kippur, it became the nomenclature for the war. Despite the popular perception, Gregory Harms believes that “it should remain clear that this war had nothing to do with religion (Harms, 2008, p. 124).” But human factor cannot be fully sequestered from the deep rooted ideological structures. The US and the USSR threatened active direct involvement if the hostilities would not be immediately stopped. The ceasefire became effective on October 22, 1973 with Security Council resolution 338. All the parties involved were strictly directed to affect full implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) in letter and spirit. The new resolutions ended with the usual rhetoric of “establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East”. This was followed by the so called ‘shuttle diplomacy’ in which Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State US side stepped the UN and the USSR and directly negotiated with regional leaders: Anwar Sadat of Egypt, Golda Meir of Israel, Hafiz al Assad of Syria, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and King Hussain of Jordan. Under land-for-peace agreements, Israel withdrew from Sinai and Golan Heights in exchange for pacts of non-

belligerency (Harms, 2008, p. 126). Israel once again proved to be the victor. That time onwards, the Arab world more or less gradually desisted from pushing for the rights of return for the Palestinian refugees or the indispensable need of establishing their independent and recognized state, except in general statements of support here and there. The circumstances of the time cannot only be realized through the mention of treaties and accords alone. The historico-literary angle of the present research demands that *life of the ordinary man* must be accounted for. What was happening to the Palestinians in the meantime? US Congressman Paul Findley visited the Middle East in the spring of 1974 and reported his observations of the hovels of Sabra and Shatila which had not improved an iota in the previous 20 years. It was here where, nine years later, the massacre of hundreds of Palestinian civilians shocked the world. He reports to have visited Tel Zaatar refugee camp which a year later was besieged for 45 days by rightist "Christian" militias, armed and advised by Israel's Labor government. "Fifteen thousand Palestinians died, many of them after the camp surrendered. Virtually every adult male survivor was executed. That slaughter was little noted by the world press. Hardly anyone, save the Palestinians, remembers it (Findley, 1989, p. 5)." It was under these circumstances that September 1978 Camp David I accords were signed between American President Jimmy Carter, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. At the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland, USA, Anwar Sadat was almost like a hostage rather than a royal guest as President Carter made it clear that certain agreements had to be finalized. Two agreements emerged: a framework for peace between Israel and Egypt and a general framework for the resolution of the Palestinian question through a five-year interim autonomy to Gaza and West Bank. In 1979 the first part of the agreement was rationalized through a peace treaty soon after which, Israel broke all other commitments and started a very rapid and systematic settlement spree (Beinin & Hajjar, 2015).

3.6 1982 Invasion of Lebanon and the ‘drama of pain’ thereafter

In June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon with full destructive impact on Beirut. Referring to the atrocities perpetrated by the Israeli army, Michael Prior states that the event marked a turning point in evangelical Christian view of Israel. This resulted when in rejecting the media coverage, prominent evangelical leaders went on a series of fact-finding missions to have a contact with realities on ground (Prior, 2005, p. 149). The realities on ground concerning this invasion of Lebanon have found some way in Noam Chomsky’s book *Fateful Triangle* which records under the Orwellian heading “War is Peace” the ironic title of the massive Israeli expeditionary Operation “Peace for Galilee.” The atrocities that ensued proved that Israel could not have used a more ironically perverted and inhuman title for this operation. Chomsky asserts on the authority of Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi that “Only in the language of 1984 is war-peace, and warfare-humane. One may mention, of course, that only in the Orwellian language of 1984 can occupation be liberal, and there is indeed a connection between the “liberal occupation” [the Labor Party boast] and a ‘war’ which equals ‘peace’ (Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle*, 1999, p. 381).” Continuing on Israeli aggression of 1982, Chomsky further quotes Dan Connell, a journalist with wartime experience and Lebanon project officer for Oxfam, who described Israel’s strategy as hitting a broad belt and pushing the people in front pushing them into smaller spaces to maximize casualties with minimum specialized arsenal aimed at collapsing large buildings and reducing everyone inside into unrecognizable mass. Those who flew were showered upon by phosphorus bombs that caused fires and untreatable burns. The epigraph of Darwish’s book *State of Siege* reads: “Is there a sword that hasn’t yet been sheathed in our flesh (Darwish M. , *State of Siege*, 2010, p. xii)?”

The horrendous details that Connell has gathered are on the authority of people like press correspondent Tom Segev of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Henry Kamm of the New York Times, Arch Bishop of Lebanon Georges Haddad, Canadian surgeon Chris Giannou, Norwegian

social workers, Dr. Shafiqul Islam from Bangladesh and dozens of survivors of both the attack and later of the brutality of the concentration camps in Israel where thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners were subjected to tortures beyond description (though Chomsky has dared to describe some!). More than 20,000 known and recorded human beings were killed, more than 30,000 were severely wounded, vast refugee camps that had sprawled like towns by that time (1948-1982) were wiped out and there even the number of casualties could not be estimated. While in places like Beirut and Sidon there was not a structure left standing, An Oxfam appeal in March 1983 states that “No one will ever know how many dead are buried beneath the twisted steel of apartment buildings or the broken stone of the cities and villages of Lebanon (Ibid. p. 388).” This much revealing book knits together information, irony and political vision. It sees Israeli aggression against Palestinians as a cyclic historical process where each time only the cast of characters is changed, events more macabre than the past and the future prospects even more gruesome. Chomsky quotes Olof Rudbeck of Sweden the head of UNRWA, the UN Agency responsible for Palestinian refugees to have said that his 32 years of work had been wiped out “Israeli bombardment had left “practically all the schools, clinics and installations of the agency in ruins (Ibid. p. 391). Chomsky ironically asks what reaction would there be in the US if an Arab army were to conquer half of Israel leaving a trail of irreparable destruction (Ibid. p. 409). The Israeli offensive against Beirut was one of the most gruesome events of recent history. Gilmour gives graphic details of this uncanny aggression during which Israeli gunners lobbed thousands of shells into densely populated apartment blocks, the navy fired into the coastal region, F-16s razed the buildings into rubble and terrorized the population:

There were some half million Lebanese and Palestinian civilians, and every day of the bombardment about two hundred or three hundred of them were killed. Many of them were burned to death by phosphorus bombs. The Canadian ambassador, Theodore Arcand, said [*Sunday Times*, 8 August 1982] that the destruction was so comprehensive it "would make Berlin of 1945 look like a tea party (Gilmour D. , 1982, pp. 223-224).

Darwish, who was a witness to the tragedy of the 'Peace for Galilee' noted with disdain the pogrom carried out to satisfy a fanatical whim of the Israelites who have undertaken the holy project of cleansing the 'land of Israel' of all heathenness despite the inherent inhumanity of the project: "Arab blood was flowing in the streets of Beirut, and was turning into oil that satisfied the thirst of the ancient cedars presented to King Solomon for building the Temple (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010)." Darwish reacted to this unnecessary invasion and the resultant carnage so deeply that he dedicated to it an entire book of poetic reflections in prose titled *Memory for Forgetfulness August, Beirut, 1982*. The emotion is so varied and tuned to life that flipping through the pages, it feels like one is reading a treatise by a classical romantic poet.

The sky sinks like a sagging concrete roof. The sea approaches, changing into dry land. Sky and sea are one substance, making it hard to breathe. I switch on the radio. Nothing. Time has frozen. It sits on me, choking me. The jets pass between my fingers. They pierce my lungs. ... Their rockets dug wells for us, and the language of their killing tempted us to sing, "We will not leave!" We saw our faces on foreign screens boiling with great promise and breaking through the siege with unwavering victory signs. From now on, we have nothing to lose... (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 10)?

There are three important aspects to these words: Firstly, the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees in Beirut is likened to a universal phenomenon, a situation in which the sky and the earth and the sea, everything colludes with them. Secondly, the barbarity carried out by Israeli army proves an opportunity for them (rockets digging wells for them) to come up with their best and say a big no to the idea of exclusion. Thirdly, the war thus started leads to a future where beyond losing everything already, there can only be hope for victory. This is the essence of almost the entire book: *Memory for Forgetfulness*. There is no cohesive sequence between the untitled chapters and poetic passages jotted down in rich prose, like the flow of memory with occasional interludes of a profound sense of pain.

Having overthrown the Lebanese Government during the siege of Beirut which caused, according to official count, deaths of 18000 people with over 30,000 people injured, international condemnation started pouring in. As if it was not enough, Israeli army planted pro-Israeli

president Bashir Gemayel while Yasser Arafat along his PLO leadership exiled himself to Tunis. Gemayel who was the leader of Israel-allied Maronites did not have the popular support and his frail status of a stool pigeon “President supported by Israeli bayonets caused the rival militant factions to stand against him and he was assassinated on 14 September 1982. Israel’s policy of collective punishment got invoked and the IDF along with Lebanese Christian Phalange militia attacked the UN run refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla. The tragedy took place on 16-18 September 1982 when they torched the completely unarmed and innocent camp from all sides and began an orgy of killing. Only those who were killed were 3500. No count of the bruised and maimed and fractured inmates of the camp is possible (Rose, 2011, p. 164). Mounting international criticism made Israel set a commission of inquiry (Kahan Commission) which charged IDF with indirect involvement and passed a note of caution. To this the writer Jean Genet retorted: “To my mind, Israel’s investigation is a part and parcel of the massacre. ... Let me explain. There was a massacre that tarnished an image, and then there is the investigation that wipes out the massacre. Have I made myself clear (Ibid. p. 163)?” David Hirst gives a terrifying description of the Israel led Maronite militia’s carnage in these camps in his book *Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East*:

They broke into houses and killed their occupants. Sometimes they tortured before they killed, gouging out eyes, skinning alive, disemboweling. Women and small girls were raped, sometimes half a dozen times, before, breasts severed, they were finished off with axes. Babies were torn limb from limb and their heads smashed against walls (Hardigan, Mondoweiss, 2016).

Commemorating the Palestinian resolve even in the face of such dire calamities, Mahmoud

Darwish comes up with an undying national resolve:

We store our misery in jars hidden away from
Soldiers who fancy the siege a cause for celebration ...
We store our misery for future seasons
As mementos
In case something takes us by surprise in the streets.
Only when life gets back to normal again
Can we grieve like everyone else over personal matters
Now pushed on the back pages so we’ll
Forget our minor wounds.

Tomorrow we'll feel the side effects
When this place gets its health back (Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 63).

Darwish wrote this epic poem over the siege of Beirut that culminated into this pogrom.

There are very poignant simultaneous expressions of the fears of death and a resolve to die:

To measure the distance between being and nothingness,
Soldiers use the scopes mounted on their tanks.
We use our sixth sense to measure the distance
Between our bodies and flying shells (Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 19)!

In both these cases, whether the aiming telescopes show this or the sixth sense, the end result would be the drowning of the celebration of innocence (Yeats' expression in *The Second Coming 1921*) i.e. death of the innocent people. The eyes that look through the 'scopes' intend to kill and destroy. Those who have died or are dying in the Palestinian drama, know that such an end is imminent and so they die with the expectation to die. Both are resolved to live their destiny.

Palestinian enigma can best be understood through Emily Dickinson's words when she says:

What harm? Men die - externally-
It is a truth-of Blood-
But we - are dying in Drama - And
Drama - is never dead- (Dickinson, 1960, p. 259)

This drama of pain is rehearsed every day throughout the fifty nine refugee camps scattered throughout the Middle East including places such as Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza. The original number of refugees that is estimated above seven hundred and fifty thousand has now multiplied, despite Israeli attempts to wipe them out of existence and memory to 2.5 million who are forced to live a life far below the poverty line and have been made to be known by the insulting term "problem" in international forums (Hardigan, Mondoweiss, 2016). This existential pain is consistent in Darwish's work. It is universal and holds his world together, his imagination alive, his determination intact,

In war none of us feels that he is dead if he feels pain. Death pre-empts pain, pain is the one blessing in war. It moves from quarter to quarter bringing a stay of execution. And if someone is befriended by luck he forgets his long-term plans and waits for the non-existent which already exists circling in a flight of doves. I see many doves in the skies of Lebanon playing with the smoke which rises from the nothingness (Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 11).

Darwish uses iconic expressions like ‘legend’ for IDF, ‘guardian of the legend’ for Menachem Begin, ‘prophet of doom’ for Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, ‘the shepherds of oppression’ for the Arab leaders who just watched all the misgiving. Thus the implications become eternal, the names and the persons would always change, but their roles would be clearly assigned.

3.7 Darwish and the Palestinian Declaration of Independence

Following is an extract from the Palestinian National Anthem written by Said Al Muzayin and composed by Ali Ismael adopted by the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1996 in accordance with Article 31 of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence 1988.

“With my determination, my fire and the volcano of my vendetta
With the longing in my blood for my land and my home
I have climbed the mountains and fought the wars
I have conquered the impossible, and crossed the frontiers
With the resolve of the winds and the fire of the weapons
And the determination of my nation in the land of struggle
Palestine is my home... (Muzayin, 2015).

It is significant that this *Declaration of Independence* was a statement written by Mahmoud Darwish and was proclaimed while Palestinian National Council (PNC) was in exile in Algiers by Yasser Arafat on November 15, 1988. Darwish had already claimed: “We have triumphed over the plan to expel us from history (Nagler, 2014).” The Declaration sets out its major claim thus:

By virtue of the natural, historical and legal right of the Palestinian Arab people to its homeland, Palestine, and of the sacrifices of its succeeding generations in defence of the freedom and independence of that homeland, Pursuant to the resolutions of the Arab Summit Conferences and on the basis of the international legitimacy embodied in the resolutions of the United Nations since 1947, and through the exercise by the Palestinian Arab people of its right to self-determination, political independence and sovereignty over its territory: The Palestine National Council hereby declares, in the Name of God and on behalf of the Palestinian Arab people, the establishment of the State of Palestine in the land of Palestine with its capital at Jerusalem (Darwish M. , WIKISOURCE, 1988).

Darwish includes in this Declaration the most important aspect of Palestinian existence and that is the factual claim that despite its sacredness to all the monotheistic faiths, the Palestinian Arabs (of any religion) who were born in the land of Palestine were the most important rightful owners of the place. Along with this Declaration, the PNC also officially accepted UN Security Council resolution 242 through which Israel's right to exist was acknowledged and the Palestinians indirectly agreed to let go of 78 percent of the Palestinian land to Israel and wanted to self-rule only the remaining 22 percent in the form of Gaza and the West Bank to be known as one independent country (Bregman, *Cursed Victory : A History of Israel and the Occupied Territories*, 2015, p. 159). The declaration was based on United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181(II) of 29 November 1947, which provided for the termination and partition of the British Mandate into two states. Despite the proclamation of the State of Palestine, PLO could not exercise control over any territory between 1988 and 1994. At this point it is important to understand that the statehood thus declared by the Palestinian National Council was not of a new statehood. It was the declaration of an existing one as Palestine had become an international entity upon the demise of Ottoman Empire in the wake of World War I followed by Britain administering it as a mandate which is an open recognition of its independent nature as during the course of Mandate under the auspices of League of Nations, Palestine entered into international treaties with Egypt, Switzerland, Italy, Greece and France and even Britain which is a proof that all the while, it was under the mandate, Sovereignty resided with Palestine. (Quigley, 2009, p. 8). According to Chomsky, the PNC declaration of November 1988 of 'a Palestinian state on our Palestinian territory' along with due modalities of political settlement was a very important turn of affairs and promised bright vistas of international peace in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338 but since it was not in accordance with the Israeli-US policy of non-settling the issue for good, it was relegated to the very margins of media (Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*, 1989, p. 136). The very next

month, i.e. December, 1988, Israel launched its 26th raid of the year on Lebanon “not in the hot pursuit of terrorists”, the London *Guardian* reported, “nor did they have their usual excuse of instant vengeance.” They just wanted to prove the presence of their iron fist through a spectacular display of strength which was ‘politically motivated’ and ‘militarily unjustifiable’ (Ibid. pp. 86-87).

3.8 The First Intifada and the Madrid Talks

One year prior to the PNC Declaration and subsequent atrocities, on December 8, 1987, an Israeli military truck rammed into a car that carried workers from Gaza. The same night the funerals turned into a violent mob and the first Intifada (1987-1991) began (Schanzer, 2008, pp. 23-24). Hamas, literally meaning “zeal” in Arabic (Acronym of Harakat al Muqawamma al-Islamiyya or Islamic Resistance Movement) was founded in 1988. It had its origin in Sheikh Ahmad Yassin’s erstwhile social-service network called Islamic Centre. Darwish’s *I See What I Want* and *Eleven Planets* both are linked to a larger historical milieu as these were written during the first Palestinian Intifada, a major defining event in the identity and hopes of a dispossessed people, and in response to the spectacle of the peace accords Darwish knew would follow (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 9). In October 1991, Madrid talks began between Palestine and Israel at the initiative of USA and USSR. The dialogue thus beginning went through fits and starts till the Declaration of Principles in 1993 on the basis of which in September 1993, Oslo Accord was signed. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin recognised the PLO as representative of Palestinian People and demanded a like reciprocation to which Yasser Arafat asserted that only states can recognise each other. Israel was clearly dealing with Palestine as a state (Quigley, 2009, p. 7). As a result of these accords, Palestinian National Authority, PNA was created (also referred to as Palestinian Authority or PA to run parts of Gaza and the West Bank but not East Jerusalem and to represent Palestinians at international bodies. It was to be led by a president and a prime minister and a Legislative Council-led government to have a civilian and

security writ in Urban Areas identified as Area A and only a civil but not security control of the rural areas demarcated as Area B (BBC, 2016). During these years, Mahmoud Darwish moved on from his status of the poet of the diaspora to the new status of the poet of armed struggle. Writer of Yasser Arafat's 1976 address to the UN General Assembly, he had now become what Mattawa calls him *al-shai'ir al-ramz* or the "the poet symbol" of Palestine (Mattawa, 2014, p. 76).

3.9 Darwish's reaction to the inherent setbacks in Oslo Accords

Exactly two years later, in September 1995 Oslo Accords II were signed but apart from promising some indefinite municipal control to Arafat and his friends, no fruitful outcome for Palestinians could be seen. Israel dramatically escalated settlement building and land confiscation through a widely and radically planned network of bypass roads to allow the numerous settlement dwellers to reach Israel without having to pass from the Palestinian-inhabited areas which automatically get defined, restricted and eventually curtailed by these high roads that cut through their fields, water reservoirs and segments of population so that the entire West Bank is no more than a mesh of Israeli roads connecting hundreds of settlements, turning the Palestinians into large scale 'cages' of which the greatest example in human history is already there: Gaza!

In my solitude, I scream out aloud ---
Not to wake everybody from their deep sleep,
But to shake myself from my own captive imagination (Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 55).

Describing the reality of the Oslo Accords, which he nick-names as '*the end of the peace process*' Edward Said warned as back as 1996,

... to all intents and purposes, the United States has made no secret of the fact that their conception of the peace process grants the Palestinians extremely limited rights, no sovereignty, and little self-determination. Why are we to accept that? Every careful reading of the Oslo and Taba agreements has shown that they were designed to defuse Palestinian energies, maintain overall Israeli control, and keep Arafat in power (Said E. W., The End of the Peace Process, 2002, p. 68).

Criticizing Yasser Arafat's myopic vision of the Israeli-American collusion, and his being happy as a state guest of President Clinton (whom Said calls perforce 'the most unreliable person'), Edward Said regrets that during and after the Oslo Accords, Yasser Arafat did not even mention the sufferings of his people and claimed to have full democracy in Palestinian territories which in fact had been under a great political and social pressure by the Israelites. 'In the American context he was only a local enforcer of the peace that Israel and the United States had imposed on him, a peace which, as Raja Shehadeh's work very clearly shows, is a consolidation of Israel's territorial gains in Gaza and the West Bank (Ibid. p.154).' The American context hinted here, Jonathan Schanzer suggests, refers to the major US foreign policy concern dealing with Palestinian self-destruction while Palestine Liberation Organization only 'hoped against hope' about the western backing of their struggle for freedom and sovereignty. The dual support policy carried out under the auspices of American and Israeli intelligence, played Fatah and Hamas against each other several times (Schanzer, 2008, p. xiv). After 10 years of exile in Tunisia, PLO signed the Oslo Accords in 1993 and came back to take the control of the West Bank and Gaza. They had left the area after the destruction of their roots in Lebanon in early 1980s. Said believes that Oslo Accords put an end to the idealism and vision that related with the past and present of the Palestinian existence and on which their future depended. He also recommends that the model of Nelson Mandela's anti-apartheid movement needs to be replicated in Palestine depending on the consistency of the inner strife with yet more of a sequence of sacrifices. It is a cause that needs to be instilled with life and hope from within rather than from without (Ibid. p.68). According to Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, when Egypt and the PLO finally recognized Israel, it happened out of expediency and necessity, not because it confirmed the moral legitimacy of the Jewish state. Agreeing to Israel's existence was conceding defeat. The continuing war of words at least relieved the painful terms of surrender in the reality of a lost struggle. Oslo was a historic compromise that conceded 78 % of mandatory Palestine to Israel but

while Palestine (through PLO) offered land and generously made concessions, it was, by implication affirming Israel's historic right at the cost of Palestinians' (Adam & Moodley, 2005, p. 108). This is why Darwish had decided to part ways with the PLO despite Yasser Arafat's great confidence in his political insight which he always regarded as an asset. Arafat is reported to have said to Darwish, "I can smell the fragrance of the homeland on you (Smith, 2015)." But when the flower of the homeland was shared through Oslo Accords, Darwish whisked his fragrance away. It is believed that more than any other single figure perhaps apart from Yasser Arafat, Darwish represents a unifying figurehead for Palestinian national aspirations. A few months after the second Oslo Accords, Darwish used a very intricate myth-history-politics pattern of utterance which is his special trait and created "A non-linguistic Dispute with Imru' el-Qyss." Imru' el-Qyss (500-540), prince of Kinda, the great pre-Islamic (Jahili) Arab poet, whose poems were suspended on the walls of Ka'ba before the advent of Islam had led a life of princely comforts. On his father's death, he travelled to Constantinople to seek the Byzantine emperor for help to avenge his father's murder. Ironically, he was granted a nominal governance of Palestine but was killed by an ulcerative skin disease caused by the poison inside his new royal robe. Darwish uses this analogy for Arafat and the way he sought help from the symbolic descendants of Caesar and thus warns Arafat of the consequences of his actions. He mixes the thought then with Sophocles, who rejected and mocked political authority and power. This coincides with the looming failure of the 1993-95 Oslo peace accords. Darwish even quotes the relevant lines of the Greek dramatist: "He who makes the journey to one in power is his slave even if when he set out he was free." This is a haunting similitude with the proceedings of Oslo on which Darwish asserted:

We will choose Sophocles over Imru' el-Qyss, no matter how the fogs
Of the shepherds change, or if our previous brothers pray to Caesar
Alongside our previous enemies in the banquet of darkness . . . (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 85).

Darwish's rejection of the apparent peace process is both firm and politically apt:

Our blood wasn't speaking in microphones on
That day, the day we leaned on a language that dispersed
Its heart when it changed its path. No one
Asked Imru' el-Qyss: What have you done I to us and to yourself? Go now on Caesar's
Path, after a smoke that looks out through
Time, black. Go on Caesar's path, alone, alone, alone... (Ibid. p. xv).

Muna Abu Eid quotes on the authority of Hayim Hanegby an excerpt from a conversation between Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Darwish when the latter thought that he should stay away from politics even as back as in 1987 era:

Darwish: It is easier to find politicians than poets who serve their people. So, why should I be wasted?
Arafat: Well there was Andre Malraux, a minister of state in De Gaulle's government...
Darwish: Still there are three differences that we should pay attention to. First, you aren't De Gaulle; second, I am not Malraux; third, Palestine is not France (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 114).

The Oslo Peace Accords of 1993 (Oslo I) and 1995 (Oslo II) left Darwish ambivalent and pessimistic about the prospects of full independence and a sovereign Palestinian state and he resigned from the Executive Committee of the PLO. He later recorded his feelings about the Oslo initiative in *in the Presence of Absence*:

You felt that the gate through which the returnees were stepping led neither to independence nor a state. It is true that the occupation has left the bedroom, but is still sitting comfortably in the living room and in all the other rooms. It controls the water faucet, the electricity switch, and the blueness of the sea. (Darwish M. , *In the Presence of Absence*, 2011, p. 125).

A similar reaction was registered by Edward Said in several of his essays and statements particularly when in a speech to the Knesset on October 5, 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin clearly enlisted the post-Oslo scenario which was dangerously anti-emancipatory for the Palestinians as it promised a permanent non-state status for Palestine and clearly established Eretz Yisrael, not an idea any more but an established reality:

In our view, the permanent solution lies in the territory of the State of Israel made up of Eretz Yisrael as it was under the British Mandate ... and alongside it, a Palestinian entity that will be the home of the majority of the Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip and

West Bank. We want the entity to be less than a state and we want it to independently manage the lives of the Palestinians under its jurisdiction. The borders of the State of Israel under the permanent agreement will exceed the borders that existed prior to the Six-Day War. We will not return to the lines of 4 June 1967 (Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace*, 2016, p. 92).

Normally, the talks would have stood annulled by these rabid presumptions as the British Mandate was never directed to anything known as *Eretz Yisrael* and even if the Mandate Palestine was what Rabin had been trying to rename, the establishment of Palestinian *entity* would have to be outside the former Palestine which would naturally mean displacing the Gazans as well as the West Bankers outside these geographical entities. The idea of not returning to the borders of June 4, 1967 was also an absolute denial of the clear UN resolutions and the general as well as the customary international law. But PLO leaders could not read this deceit. To add insult to injury, and to cap it forever afterwards, Wye River Memorandum was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on October 23, 1998 which besides calling for steps towards negotiations towards permanent status, clearly mentioned that “neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in accordance with the Interim Agreement.” Since, Israeli position was already clear as per the above quoted declaration that Yitzhak Rabin had given eighteen days earlier, the hopes of negotiation-settled independent Palestinian State were doomed forever. Since the roots of Israel’s successful and conclusive strategic deliberations lay strong through the Oslo Peace Process, Said’s criticism, in consonance with Darwish’s conclusions can best be summed up through a paragraph of his *Foreword* to Noam Chomsky’s book *Fateful Triangle* in which he criticizes the Oslo and the Wye accords as:

... an unnecessary line of Arab capitulation by which Israel has achieved all of its tactical and strategic objectives at the expense of every proclaimed principle of Arab and Palestinian nationalism and struggle. For the first time in the twentieth century, an anti-colonial liberation movement has not only discarded its own considerable achievements but has made an agreement to cooperate with a military occupation before that occupation has ended (Said E. , *Foreword*, 1999, p. 13).

Darwish and Edward Said were hurt by Oslo beyond repair. It was because both of them had that internal eye of a seer and statesman and they knew that Oslo was inherently a compromise on history and historical legacy. The mutuality of agreement did not shine in any prospect beyond shaking of hands. It was a citadel constructed upon the falling foundations of the past and had no prospects of surviving, however the rubble was sure to fall back upon the Palestinian heads. Said went on writing what was ultimately combined into one book: *End of the Peace Process*. Darwish also wrote his essays later published as *The Perplexity of the Returnee* (2007). Recalling the pain of the day of Oslo agreement, Darwish is explicitly nostalgic:

The two sworn enemies approach and shake hands: one reluctantly, the other with cheerful confidence. ... Where are the voices of those murdered, old and recent, demanding an apology, not only from the murderer, but from history's well? Where will meaning go when opposites meet? Where is the scream from a surgical procedure where the past is severed from the present in the adventurous march toward an uncertain tomorrow? And where is my language (Darwish M. , In the Presence of Absence, 2011, p. 126)?

Darwish's next piece of poetry *Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone* (1995) was all about individual and collective memory. In 1996, Darwish decided to return to Palestine carrying a tradition of twenty five years of wandering in exile back to the prospects of *home* that he *carried in his suitcase* all this while. He landed in Ramallah but was only allowed just short visits to his earlier hometown in Haifa and his childhood city Galilee. Munir Akash reminisces that while dining at a restaurant in Washington D.C. in June 1997 Mahmoud Darwish recalled that Palestinian folk history had to its credit the first Golgotha, Job's trial which are the symbols of patience and long suffering. And then he said, "That sharpens my memory and arms me with a great moral power to tame pain. Man always holds the power to rise above himself. By so doing, he finds meaning even in pain. Like love, pain belongs to the most basic human experiences that make me what I am (Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. xiii)." Five years later, in July 2000 the world saw another political fiasco at Camp David where American President Bill Clinton invited Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat to negotiate on the 'final status agreement. This time Ehud Barak came up with 'red lines': Israel would not return to pre-1967 borders, East Jerusalem would

remain under Israeli sovereignty, Israel and Jewish settlers would accept no legal or moral responsibility for the creation of refugee problem. With these conditions, despite Arafat's compliant nature, the result was evident: The talks failed (Beinin & Hajjar, 2015, p. 11). Richard Falk notes that Dennis Ross, the chief diplomatic advisor to President Bill Clinton made sure that any proposal that Israeli public opinion would not swallow would be avoided and the Palestinians would be cornered to the level that they would be content to ask for the exercise of their right of self-determination over only 22 percent of the original Palestine mandate. This demand would automatically concede 78 percent Palestinian land that Israel already had before 1967 (Falk R. , *Achieving Human Rights*, 2009, p. 210). It was just like handing over one's principle money to another party and then being content over his offer of a small charity. If Israel was a nation-state, so was Palestine. But recognizing one's identity at the expense of another is unacceptable morally as well as legally. The force of public opinion during this Camp David Summit, as it was called, was enormous. Even the self-assured Arafat spoke out directly to Clinton: "The Palestinian leader who will give up Jerusalem has not yet been born. I will not betray my people or the trust they have placed in me. Don't look to me to legitimize the occupation (Hanieh, 2001)." According to Jeremy R. Hammond, the Israeli side presented future maps to the Palestinian leadership showing Israeli annexation ranging from 10 to 13.5 percent of West Bank which were connected in such a way as to control Palestinian water resources in the area. The biased western and specially the US media put the blame of the Summit's failure once again on the poor shoulders of Palestinians forgetting that they were the party who needed the most lifesaving and expedited solution to the problem. Hammond reports the journalistic somersault quotes from Seth Ackerman's research article in FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting: July/August 2002) titled "The Myth of the Generous Offer: Distorting the Camp David Negotiations":

The standard narrative in the US media has been that Israel offered "extraordinary concessions" (*Washington Post*) to the Palestinians but that "Arafat's recalcitrance" (*Los angeles Times*) and "Palestinian rejectionism" (*US News and World Report*) led to the

failure of the talks and Arafat's rejection of Israel's "generous peace terms" (*Los Angeles Times*) (Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace*, 2016, p. 95).

This is what goes down in the annals of history which the *strong* and the *occupying powers* fearlessly and shamelessly write. They get this opportunity because their counterparts, the *others* so to speak, are kept busy in celebrating their own fears and the sense of defeat which is no doubt also the sense of shame. Darwish knew this tradition of inverted rhetoric and deciphered it in his own poetic way throughout his poetry. For example,

...the historian doesn't get fever
Chills when he names his victims... And history
Is the dailiness of weapons prescribed upon our bodies. ... And history
Has no compassion that we can long for our
Beginning, and no intention that we can know what's ahead
And what's behind ...and it has no rest stops
By the railroad tracks for us to bury the dead, for us to look
Towards what time has done to us over there ... (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 259).

3.10 Camp David Summit: another achievement of Zionism

Camp David Summit proved a failure and was followed by another act of provocative aggression by Israel the Knesset Member (later the Prime Minister) Ariel Sharon who marched on the Temple Mount (Haram al Sharif) in Jerusalem, the location of Al Aqsa Mosque along with heavily armed one thousand Israeli assault police. Palestinians gathered in large bodies to protest and resist and the police opened fire, 'killing several and wounding hundreds (Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace*, 2016, p. 96).' The conciliatory efforts were thwarted by Sharon's call for maintaining Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem followed by Palestinian rock-throwing at Jews close to the Western Wall and Israeli police's killing of Palestinians at Temple Mount, the Second Intifada (also called al-Aqsa Intifada) was launched that lasted for three years. Its gravity was much more than the first Intifada. During the first three weeks of the uprising, Israeli forces shot one million live bullets at unarmed Palestinian demonstrators (Beinin & Hajjar, 2015). Jan Selby writes on the authority of Amnesty International's report "Israel and the Occupied Territories: The Heavy Price of Israeli Incursions (April 14, 2002) that the March 2002 Operation Defensive

Shield ended the Oslo peace process with Arafat's compound in Ramallah besieged, Jenin and Nablus declared closed military zones and life in the West Bank brought to complete halt (Selby, 2003, p. 1). Without any military necessity, the IDF caused a massive destruction of property, water supplies and institutional buildings. They seized all government records that they could lay their hands on including hard disks, roads were ripped up, incapacitating the health and medical facilities and thus caused, besides killing thousands at random, a systematic deinstitutionalization (Ibid. pp. 1, 2). The international community responded with an unprecedented censure of Israeli policies and as a result, in April 2003 "Road Map" for the solution of Israel-Palestine conflict was given which matured into the famous and all-referred to Geneva Accords in October 2003. Under the heading "Unilateralism in, Road Map out", John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt have quoted in their groundbreaking book *The Israel Lobby*, how the carefully drafted public statements of the US presidents can undergo a 180 degree change under the influence of the Israeli Lobby. On July 25, 2003 President Bush held a joint press conference with the PA Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas at the White House and stated: "I think the wall is a problem, and I discussed this with Ariel Sharon. It is very difficult to develop confidence between the Palestinians and Israel with a wall snaking through the West Bank." Only four days later, at the same White House press conference, Ariel Sharon declared his intention of building the fence/wall saying that Israel would try to minimize the hardships that the wall would cause to the Palestinians. President Bush not only agreed with him but declared that the "fundamental obstacle to peace" was Palestinian terrorism (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 216)!

Criticizing Israeli *hasbarah* (propaganda) about what he calls the Great Wall, Richard Ben Cramer explains the Israeli "policy of closure" under which the wall is actually meant to turn the West Bank into as abysmal a ghetto as Gaza by slicing through the West bank and then completely encircling the West Bank territory. The wall is creeping in by a few kilometers everyday cutting through the villages, Palestinian roads, mainland populated areas etc. Cramer further elaborates:

And even that is not the end of the policy of closure. For the ghettos of Gaza and the West Bank are also sliced by closures *inside* – with a fligree of checkpoints, barricades and roadblocks that can prevent a Palestinian (any Palestinian) from moving between, say, Nablus and Hebron, or proceeding unmolested from Bethlehem to Ramallah, from Khan Yunis to Gaza City, or ... well, they can't go anywhere (Cramer, 2005, p. 68).

It may be remembered that Richard Ben Cramer wrote this book in 2004 and after twelve years now in September, 2016 while the present research is culminating, Ariel Sharon's architectural containment of the West Bank through the apartheid wall has almost reached its final phase. On November 11, 2004 PLO chairman Yasser Arafat died and on January 9, 2005 Mahmoud Abbas was elected the president of Palestinian Authority with hopes that Palestine would soon receive the status of an independent state under the UN.

3.11 Israeli aggression against Gaza 2006

On June 2006, Israel attacked Gaza once again on the plea that Hamas had captured one of its soldiers, Gilad Shalit. The offensive continued throughout the summer. The count of heads and other wounds is irrelevant but the state of misery, and untold pain and loss can easily be understood as on the one hand there were untrained young angry men of Gaza fighting with smuggled assault rifles and limited arsenal, an internecine war between Fatah and Hamas as well as a full scale military aggression (operation Summer Rains) of Israel with the world's most sophisticated weaponry and intelligence systems. Occasional incursions on the part of Israel continued into a good part of the year 2007, and so did the mutual skirmishes between groups loyal to Hamas and Fatah, the latter perhaps a greater tragedy. Israel tried to broker the move of structuring a *Hamastan* in Gaza and a *Fatahstan* in the West Bank. Professor Filiu calls this phase *descent into hell* (Filiu, 2015, pp. 301-307). One may like to reflect on the major reason why Fatah and Hamas, despite the common cause of freedom and the right to return, fell into belligerency. The western media would like to trace the cause back and down to sectarian differences but this is not the reality as the common goals are far stronger than these formal issues. There is good reason to believe that politicians sitting at the helm of affairs in PA (Palestinian

Authority) understand that reconciliation with Hamas would be punished by both the US and Israel through cutting off the aid and withholding Palestinian tax funds that Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. Finally, after signing truce accords in Makkah on February 8, 2007 under the good offices of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, Hamas under their leader Khaled Meshal took over Gaza in June 2007 and Fatah along with its patron Mahmoud Abbas took care of the Israel-infiltrated West Bank. The classical imperialist principle was thus successfully applied again: *Divide and rule!* On June 23, 2007 Ismail Haniya of Hamas asked for an unconditional inter-Palestinian dialogue but it elicited no positive response from Mahmoud Abbas (who, despite being the President of Palestinian Authority, has never visited Gaza in his official capacity). In July, the same year, a major chunk of Mahmoud Darwish's work was translated into Hebrew and as Darwish returned to Israel on a visit, he gave a poetry reading session to a large and mixed gathering in Haifa. About Hamas' take over in Gaza he remarked bitterly, "We have triumphed. Gaza has won its independence from the West bank. One people now have two states, two prisons who don't greet each other. We are dressed in executioners' clothes (Clark, The Guardian, 2008)."

3.12 Operation Cast Lead 2008

Hostilities broke out again in December, 2008 and Israel started *Operation Cast Lead* under the plea that Hamas had plans of firing home-made rockets into Israel where the nearest Jewish population area was well off the range of these rockets. Among the lethal weaponry, air strikes, ultramodern missiles and other incendiary materials used was the most notorious white phosphorus which was shelled over the densely populated Gaza City and the UNRWA headquarters (completely destroyed along with its humanitarian support including medicines, flour sacks, mattresses and blankets etc. all burnt to ashes) knowing well that only innocent civilians took refuge there (Human Rights Watch, 2009). White phosphorus, on contact starts singeing the object as long as oxygen is available and completely burns out the objects. When

brought into contact with human body, it causes third degree skin-burns which go down to the bones and often destroy the vital organs, causing death to the victims in a very painful and protracted way (Ibid.). Dr. Vacy Vlanza reports about the three onslaughts of 'systematic genocide' in six years that the Palestinian families have suffered. She calls these 'unnatural, stressful and traumatic waiting for the next Israeli weapons testing' spree: "Gaza is a cemetery for over a thousand war-slaughtered children, a sealed death camp for 800,000 maimed and traumatised surviving children waiting, waiting, waiting for the next inevitable Israeli pestilence of bombs and sheer terror (Vlanza, 2015)."

Israeli journalist Amira Hass has reported an elicited admission published in *Haaretz* that the Israeli soldiers are required to make sure that the Palestinians they kill appear to be 12 or above. Distinguished American journalist Chris Hedges has recorded his personal observation where he saw much younger boys and girls being shot during the Second Intifada. In his book *Might is Right*, Adel Safty quotes from Chris McGreal's article "A schoolgirl riddled with bullets. And no one is to blame", the reported case (October 2004) of the cold-blood killing of a ten years old Iman al-Hams who was hiding and the watchtower soldier cautioned the commander, "Don't shoot. It's a little girl. But the company commander, the soldiers testified: "approached her, shot two bullets into her head, walked back towards the force, turned back to her switched his weapon to automatic and emptied his entire magazine into her." McGreal reports that the officer was charged with "minor infraction" (Safty, 2009, p. 267). This is one example among the countless others that go unreported. But more than bullets and bombs, Israeli forces regularly shower the powerless Palestinians with chemical weaponry. An Australian health supporter and researcher, Dr. Vacy Vlanza has researched these victims and has specially presented the representative case of the three-year old Hamza Mus'ab Almadani of Khan Younis in Gaza, one of the hundreds of white-phosphorus victims from Gaza who is suffering from a lifelong trauma of skin burning and perpetual, undying pain. She terms these actions of Israeli army not only as 'war crimes' but also

as ‘crimes against humanity’. She has pleaded her Australian government to impose arms sanctions against Israel for using white phosphorus that continues to burn till oxygen is blocked and thus in most cases it burns down to the bones: “Hamza can no longer speak, a common symptom of trauma among Gaza’s children terrified by Israel’s relentless and tumultuous bombardments watched on distant hillsides by cheering Israelis in front-row seats (Vlanza, 2015).” According to Israeli ‘official’ record, the result of this 22-day Israeli aggression, in terms of death toll is 1300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis (BBC, 2016). The ground realities reported by several other resources who base their calculation on local claims evidenced through the level of destruction given in international media are much more haunting. The death toll of Palestinians is estimated to be in thousands. Palestinian Authority took the case to the ICC (International Criminal Court). Rather than measuring the level of human suffering, developing the precedence for international accountability, the experts got mired in legalese. The first question was of course related with the jurisdiction of the court:

Only states can give consent to ICC jurisdiction over acts committed in their territory. The consent of the territorial state is the primary means by which the ICC gains jurisdiction. If Palestine is not a state, then there is no state that has the capacity to grant the ICC jurisdiction in Gaza. Gaza would be a virtual dead zone from the perspective of the ICC (Quigley, 2009, pp. 9-10).

Efforts of reconciliation went forth under the UN missions but Israel took an unbending stance when it came to its ‘national interests’. In his essay “Silence for the Sake of Gaza” Darwish refers to a very specific time and space equation that the Gazans are exposed to. He claims that it is a place where, upon the first encounter with the enemy, one’s childhood leaps into a sudden manhood. The only set of values that they live by is resistance to occupation and they have learnt these values over generations of struggle for identity. While Gaza does not have any weapons, “She offers her bitter flesh, follows her own will and pours out her blood. Gaza has not mastered the orator’s art. She does not have a throat. The pores of her skin speak in sweat, blood and fire.” Darwish believes that the historical rupture of Palestine is fast reducing the *homeland* into a *memory*:

The declaration of the birth of Israel is at the same time the declaration of the death of Palestine. This moment, then, is the historical rupture that separates two states of being. But you are forbidden to remember or to call upon your memory. The assault on this memory, then, has become a Zionist goal and a national demand of the first order. No. It is not Arab Zionism to remember the assassination of your homeland. At this rupture/paradox in history the tears of the opposites converge. You cry over a lost homeland, and they cry over those who were lost in search of a “homeland” just born (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 37).

The ‘*homeland just born*’ that Darwish refers to is Palestine which the Jews would take as Eretz Yisrael and those who were lost in its search are the dead of the holocaust. Their narrative of the holocaust is supposed to be holy and inalienably true and therefore remembered through museums and memorials and books and documentaries whereas the Palestinian holocaust must be down-played and made to be forgotten under the alleged stories of Palestinian *kamikazes*, the suicide bombers and organizations like *Qassam Brigades* that do not have a straight barrel gun to fire a shot! Darwish takes this double standard to task everywhere in his poetry and prose. Refaat R. Alareer’s article in *Gaza Writes Back: Narrating Palestine* titled “Operation Cast Lead: Who Created the Jews” in which he narrates how during the Cast Lead devastation, his five years old daughter Shymaa asked in her horror stricken shaky voice, “Who created the Jews?” as she was unable to grasp how the same Benevolent God, the Merciful and Loving God who always saved the good guys in her kindergarten stories, could ever create those killing machines that for days brought terror and death to the Palestinians (Alareer, Spring 2014, p. 524). On September 2011, the Palestinian Prime Minister addressed the General Assembly and iterated the need for the international community to take necessary steps to ensure the stoppage of the breach of international law by Israel through its intensification of its settlement buildings:

Reports by United Nations missions, other institutions and civil society groups showed a “horrific” picture of the systematic confiscation of Palestinian land, construction of thousands of new settlements in the West Bank, particularly in East Jerusalem, and building of the annexation wall. Israel also continued to refuse permits to Palestinians to build in East Jerusalem, while issuing orders to deport elected Palestinian representatives from Jerusalem (Abbas, UN General Assembly, 2011).

In his review of Jeremy R. Hammond’s book *Obstacle to Peace*, Jim Miles writes in The Palestine Chronicle that stopping Mahmoud Abbas from seeking statehood recognition within the

UN is American top priority as this would create obstacles in the path of colonial continuation. On the technical level, such a statehood status would allow Palestine to have a recourse to International Court of Justice ICC where both US and Israel could be tried for gross violation of human rights and international law. Miles quotes from the book (p. 407) the example of the neocon John Bolton who considers a case launched in ICC under full statehood position of Palestine would amount putting a loaded pistol to Israel's head and ultimately to the head of US itself? Miles also refers to another critical point in the book where Secretary of State Ms. Hillary Clinton cautions the world against recognizing a state (Palestine) "without determining what the state will look like, what its borders are, how it will deal with myriad issues that states must address." Miles supports Hammond's conclusion that asks a counter question as to why did America recognize the unilateral declaration of Israeli independence within minutes when none of the above conditions could be fulfilled. They did not even have any borders and they were on a land where they had no right to be (Miles, *The Palestine Chronicle*, 2016). While there remains silence on the western border, Darwish draws a very sober picture of his own resolution:

I will slog over this endless road to its end.
Until my heart stops, I will slog over this endless, endless road
With nothing to lose but the dust, what has died in me, and a row of palms
Pointing toward what vanishes. I will pass the row of palms.
The wound does not need its poet to paint the blood of death like a pomegranate (Darwish M. ,
Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. 3)!

The much needed movement of solidarity between the Palestinian ranks of Fatah and Hamas united the national spirit and on March 14, 2011, tens of thousands of Palestinians came out on the streets of West Bank and Gaza City where instead of partisan flags, only the Palestinian flags were waved and hoisted. This brought a strength of purpose and a renewed zeal among the ranks and masses (Filiu, 2015, p. 337). Mahmoud Abbas addressed the UN General Assembly again in 2012 and cautioned the advent of a new Nakba against the Palestinian People through the establishment of a free and Independent State of Palestine. Due to the usual use of the Veto power, USA stopped this from happening and although it caused international uproar and

condemnation, yet the perpetrators of injustice commandeered delay. The result was Israeli ruthless attack on the densely populated and unspeakably poor Gaza deprived of all civic amenities, food and medicines. It was the third and the bloodiest assault against the unguarded Gaza within a span of five years. He addressed the 69th General assembly once again, two months later on September 26, 2014 and most forcibly demanded parity in acceptance of Palestinian statehood but as usual, there were deaf ears and the usual Veto! Abbas pointed out the magnitude and horror of Israeli war crimes that had been carried out in the name of Israel's right of self-defense forgetting the simple humanitarian principle that 'the life of a Palestinian was as precious as the life of any other human being (Abbas, UN General assembly, 2014).' Although Hamas and Hizbullah have reservations regarding the capability of Mahmud Abbas (Fatah founder and leader) in safeguard the Palestinian existence, yet the legal and central command lies with PLO as the Arab League in its Rabat Session of 1974 recognized Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian People and therefore its central position with reference to international recognition cannot be downgraded (Madfai, 1993, p. 21). Palestine was upgraded to the status of "non-member observer state" in the UN on November 29, 2012. Under this status, Palestine had an access to International Criminal Court ICC and International Court of Justice ICJ at The Hague though it lacked enough political leverage to exercise this right. This historic resolution is known as 67/19. It was denounced both by Israel and the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called it "unfortunate and counterproductive" resolution that "places further obstacles in the path to peace." Israel's response to the passing of this vote was the announcement of confiscation of 100 million dollars that it had collected from the Palestinian tax payers on the behalf of Palestinian authority and a new round of settlement construction in East Jerusalem including 3000 new housing units in the area E1 to complete the separation of Greater Jerusalem from remaining Palestinian cantons (Chomsky, Chomski Information, 2013). UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon condemned the plan as "illegal under

international law” and “an almost fatal blow to remaining chances of securing a two-state solution” (Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace*, 2016, p. 409). On the other hand, the internal differences between Fatah and Hamas went through a vicissitude till April 2014, when after about seven years of intermittent clashes, their leaders agreed to the formation of a national unity government and thus ending a mutually destructive spree in the favour of a single consolidated Palestine. On September 30, 2015 the Palestinian flag was raised at the United Nations Headquarters and Offices under UN Resolution A/RES/69/320 confirming the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People under resolution 60/37 of December 1, 2005. On the ceremony of raising the flag of the State of Palestine, the Secretary General of UNGA Mr. Ban Ki-moon hailed that 136 out of 193 countries had recognized the State of Palestine and its flag was being hoisted along with other countries but “these advances are not felt by children in Gaza, or by the residents of Nablus, Hebron and East Jerusalem [...] let us reaffirm our commitment to bring about the just peace that the peoples of Israel and Palestine deserve (Ki-Moon, 2015).”

3.13 A contemporary glimpse of occupied Palestinian territories (OPT)

Palestine still has to win the significance of a completely recognized sovereign state under the auspices of the UN as US continues to veto this status by absenting itself from the concurrent vote of recognition. It does not have an army to protect its borders. There are no permanent borders actually. There are only two small masses of land, Gaza and West Bank which have multitude of Israeli infiltrations. This is the political and geographical picture which Zionist Jews have long desired to portray in the historical perspective i.e. the vast emptiness of Palestinian lands has finally been studded with the promised return of the Jews. In due course of time, rest of the Palestinians would like to go and Israeli population would fill up the gap. Israeli intellectual tactic has been to create certain ground facts per force and then record these as history. Originally, Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952) is supposed to have pointed out the fallacious analogical necessity

of fitting the gem (the Jewish people without a country) into the ring (the country without a people). “It is clear from other comments of Zangwill and Weizmann that ‘without a people’ meant ‘without a people worth considering’: ‘a kind of civilisational barrenness’ (Masalha, *A Land Without a People. Israel, Transfer and the Palestinians 1949-96*, 1997, p. 62). Israeli historiography is replete with this myth of ‘Empty Land’ with *Palestine* denoting only a historical reference to the land of Israel defiled and held hostage by the nomad tribes of Arabia. Nur Masalha quotes Israeli novelist Amos Oz who describes the deep seated psychological indoctrination of even the Israeli children who are told that their Temple was destroyed and while they were in banishment, strangers walked into their country and defiled their heritage: “The desert-born Arabs laid the land waste and let the terraces on the hillsides go to ruin (Masalha, *The Politics of Denial. Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 2003, p. 9).” The same reverberates in the famous Israeli national song *Jerusalem of Gold* written by Na’omi Shemer (Ibid. p. 10):

Jerusalem of Gold ...

We have returned to the water cisterns, to the market-place and the square.

A shofar sounds on the Holy Mount in the Old City.

And in the caves within the rock a thousand suns do glow,

We shall again descend to the Dead Sea en route for Jericho.

The myth of ‘empty land’ runs through state education in Israel and finds strong expression in children’s literature. One such work for children contains the story of Joseph and his men who went to Palestine until they reached Galilee. There were beautiful but empty mountains and valleys and Joseph decided to establish a kibbutz to conquer the emptiness (Gurvitz, 1953). Such is the guiding spirit among the present day descendants of Weizmann, Ben Gurion, Golda Meir and others. This primer is necessary to understand the mindset that goes with expansionist and settlement policies of the occupying force in the region. The scope of research is always endless and sometimes we are able to turn a page that brings before us an entirely new vista. In his essay “On Jewishness and Criticism of Israel’ Joseph Grim Feinberg gives us a few lines from the 1901 poem *In Zaltsikn Yam* “In Salty Seas” by the great Yiddish writer S. An-sky:

The children of the wealthy, the enlightened, the rabbis—
They call the Hebrews to Zion.
We've heard this old story before, from our enemies:
“A ghetto for the eternal Jew!”

An-sky and his fellow scholars of General Jewish Labour Bund were trying to direct the Jewish potential for a strong place in Europe and universal emancipation for Jews in cooperation with non-Jews wherever in the world they might have been and the Zionist call for an exclusivist, nonpluralistic national concentration was against the vision of Labour Bund (Feinberg, 2016). Anyone capable of thinking beyond the newspaper headlines can easily see how the gradual engulfment of land coupled with a few mortalities every day, a few hundred more refugees every week and occasional escalations of atrocities leaving dozens of homes razed over the heads of respective families while killing and maiming and psychologically shocking the population both in the cities and the camps is fitting the gem into the ring while the rocks and stones of Judea are being shoed-off. While the refugee camps in these areas are frequently invaded and bombarded, and while the Palestinian homes and farmlands are systematically being erased to accommodate Israeli settlers, there are two different road systems for the Israelis and the Palestinians which constitute a permanent impediment to the social and economic development of the latter. Referring to the enforcement of oppression (instead of the proclaimed law enforcement) in the West Bank village Bil'in, where Israeli barricading has crippled the social life of the inhabitants for years now, and where the protesters voice their concern frequently, Harry Gunkel, a retired American pediatrician who lived in Jerusalem and Ramallah from 2007-2012, and who had witnessed and participated in protest marches of Bil'in reports about the appalling viciousness of IDF soldiers who regularly tear-gas and shoot the non-violent protesters every day, puts forward a strong political demand to the American people and their government to end the *othering* of Palestinians and recognize the real threat behind the curtain: “Our uncritical enabling and extravagant financial support of Israel’s continuous violation of international law has blackened the soul of our republic (Gunkel, 2016). The struggle and the plight of the people of Bil'in has also been portrayed in an award winning

documentary *Five Broken Cameras* (the story of Emad Burnat) available at the social media websites like You Tube. This is just one small instance of how the Palestinians have resisted obliteration and the worst kind of slavery all these years. There is an unending chain of instances where the possibility of a clearly demarcated national home for the Palestinians lies in shreds. Mahmoud Darwish was too conscious of this enigma:

No one said to me,
This place is called a country,
Around the country are borders,
And beyond the borders is another place,
Called diaspora and exile for us.
I did not yet need an identity,
But they, men who came to us on tanks,
Are carrying off our place on trucks (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 75).

We can look at the ground reality in this regard through a macrocosmic and a microcosmic view of any city in the OPT (Occupied Palestinian Territories), for example let us look at the city of Nablus. At the macrocosmic level, Nablus is a city of 130,000 Palestinians and the hub of regional socioeconomic activity for over 350,000 Palestinians. There are fourteen Israeli settlements and twenty six military outposts connected through a network of unimpeded special all-Israeli roads used by the settlers and these stretch around the Nablus city and through its governorate. All Palestinians going in or out of the city have to pass through ten checkpoints. And only 10 % of Nablus buses (22 out of the total 220), 7 % of Nablus taxis (150 out of 2250) and a total number of fifty private cars (for a population of 130,000) have the permit to use these roads to go to other cities or come back. There are about seventy road obstacles that these vehicles have to cross to access the main roads. The result is a stunted economic activity and a continuous psychological pressure (Human Sciences Research Council, 2009, p. 258). In his book *Once Upon a Country*, Sari Nusseibeh, the president of Al Quds university, who is otherwise a critic of Darwish, tells us that back in 1983, Israeli General Rafael Eitan had drawn up complete maps for one hundred Jewish settlements between Jerusalem and Nablus. “When we have settled the land, all the Arabs will be able to do about it will be to scurry around like drugged roaches in a bottle

(Nusseibeh, 2009, p. 235).” For the microcosmic view of the situation, here is an extract from the transcript of a documentary “Life in Occupied Palestine” by an American Jewish lady Anna Baltzer that gives an insider’s view on the subject of roadblocks, surveillance and humiliation that the Palestinians undergo as a matter of routine within the West Bank which is theoretically an independent entity of the Palestinian Territory. She gives an instance of the Huwwara checkpoint outside the city of Nablus where after initial search, the IDF soldiers allowed the women to pass but detained all their menfolk between the age of 15 and 40 (Baltzer A. , Life in Occupied Palestine, 2013). Further on she tells us that every day there are literally hundreds of Palestinian men and women gathered at the checkpoints in hopes that the rules would change at some point. She reports of having seen two of men go off to the side with trash bags frantically trying to fill them up. When she asked them what they were doing, they told her that the soldiers had told them that if they were able to fill up their trash bags, then they would be allowed through checkpoint. This constrictive atmosphere is doomed to breathe a spirit of destitution and revolt in the hearts of the Palestinians who are watching their slow effacement at the powerful hands of Israel’s neocolonialism. The noose round the neck of their freedom is getting tighter and tighter and while an American woman of Jewish origin feels it to the level of giving this injustice a loud voice, the Muslim world, its intellectuals and leaders included, have turned a cold shoulder to this cause. Even the Arab world who should have felt this agony by virtue of their proximity and close observation, are so lost in their ‘*Spring*’ that they no more see the eternal *autumn* taking its toll on the Palestinians. In Darwish’s words, the Arab neighbours have ‘*memory only for forgetfulness*’. In an outburst that leaves the borderline of prose at the mention of *madness* and slips into poetry:

I don’t know what is happening on the outskirts of the city because the roar of metal has put a barrier between us and the deafening silence of our Arab brothers. A barrier between us and the silence of kings, presidents, and ministers of defense, who are busy not reading what they read. Nothing is left for us except the weapon of madness. To be, or not to be. To be, or to be. Not to be, or not to be. Nothing is left except madness. (Darwish M. , Memory for Forgetfulness, 2013, p. 118).

While Darwish responds to this sense of blockade with an equal sense of *madness*, Bradt Tourism Guide to Palestine warns any potential visitor to this part of the world about this stigmatic blockading which equates a visit of Palestine by an outsider as a political act even if he or she has an original or professional interest in archaeology, theology, hiking or the natural world. When they pass through the checkpoints and walk through the metal turnstiles, they cannot remain in denial of the persistent cruelty (Irving, 2011, p. viii). Darwish gives frequent references to the problems of social life under the Kibbutzim (an Israeli collective, i.e. a system of communal farm or factory run collectively and dedicated to the principle that production work and domestic work are of equal value) and criticizes its delimiting impact on the Palestinian life. In his *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, he notes the examples where the Israeli communal life forces the individuation of the Palestinians and where the latter are frequently punished because they are accused of trespassing the kibbutz expansionism. According to Darwish, an Arab woman who works in a kibbutz carries a permit that forbids her to get off the bus at any station on the road. One time she had no choice but to leave the bus, and they arrested her. Some young men took a side road, and they arrested them. No one is ever judged to be innocent in this court. The accused are sentenced to prison terms or made to pay fines.

... Then you remember the death permits the farmers had to sign making them responsible for their own death, should a bomb happen to explode while they were in a military zone used for maneuvers. This permit exempts the state from responsibility for their death (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 65).

Referring to this culture of Kibbutzim, Edward Said writes in his book *The Question of Palestine* that the Zionism and Israel for Jews and that for the non-Jews is different as the latter are ruled by a separate government “premised on the impossibility of isonomic rule for both Jews and non-Jews. Out of this radical notion it became natural for the Arab Gulag Archipelago to develop its own life.” The comparison of Palestinian life under Israeli occupation with the Russian secret community prison system of Siberia described in Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s novel *One Day in the Life Ivan Denisovich* is very telling (Said E. , *The Question of Palestine*, 1992, p. 107).

Jewish kibbutzim and the Israeli refugee camps represent two vastly divergent pictures of human existence. Never has there been so closely placed communities so widely different in their outlook and standards of life. Despite physical proximity, there is an impermeable political and cultural wall between them that the Separation Wall (a.k.a. Apartheid Wall) seems but a miniature. Janet M. Powers who has worked on the Palestinian issue for years from the feminist point of view is of the opinion that the things would probably improve if women had the lead in the two communities. It is because the women bring life to the world through their capacity of procreation. They undergo stress and extreme pain to bear human offspring. As home-makers, they can probably better understand each other's pain:

Best of all, they can imagine things being different. And because women from the time of Eve have had to be ingenious in meeting daily needs of families while men were somewhere else, the Israeli and Palestinian women have figured out ways around old barriers, ways to make new spaces for community building. And new patterns of community (Powers, 2006, p. xxi).

She happily describes that the inevitable differences that have arisen among the various national identities over the past thousands of years may have a moment of resolution in the most unexpected way and at the most unexpected time-and-space i.e. in Palestine as there are evidences that despite the bloody conflicts between Israeli army and Palestinian militants, the women have been reaching out to each other. Their networking may be a source of doing the impossible i.e. continuing and respecting each other's families. Despite 'frightening intensity of hatred' that exists among the Israelis and Palestinians, she refers to the peace initiatives that have been building among women organizations of the two neighbouring groups e.g. Bat Shalom and JCW: The Jerusalem Center for Women. (Ibid. 9-12). Darwish refers to this possibility of reaching out to the Israeli women who might understand the plight that their men have wrought to their ancestral landscape that was once as cozy and comfortable as any other semblance of homeland.

In his poem "The Kindhearted Villagers", he says:

We have things to tell the woman stranger
About the land she embroiders on her scarf
With the pinions of our returning sparrows!

When the ships came in from the sea,
This place was held together only by trees.
We were feeding our cows in their enclosures
And organizing our days in closets made by our own hands (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. 11).

On September 28, 2000 Ariel Sharon's illegal and yet choreographed march on Haram al-Sharif a.k.a. Temple Mount ignited Palestinian protests the Second Intifada also called Al-Aqsa Intifada. While it took its toll on Palestinian life and property, Israeli military restrictions made Palestine a difficult and, to some extent, dangerous place to visit. While the occupation remains very much a fact of life for Palestinians, for international visitors getting around safely and finding places to stay, eat and visit is much easier. Gaza is still a very different proposition, although not one that should be dismissed out of hand by the adventurous and politically sympathetic travelers. Those expecting Palestine to be a grim land of religious and political structures would be surprised to find instead a vibrant culture and a warm welcome (Ibid.).

Ray Filar reports that with blackened concrete towers and enclaves of barbed wire the Israeli military checkpoints convey a message to all Palestinians that they are criminals (Filer, 2016). Filer goes on to describe the indignities that the Palestinians have to undergo while they travel from one place to another. His description of the check post search that the Arab community has to undergo shows a perpetual war atmosphere. People get late for their school and college classes as well as examinations; they cannot keep their medical appointments both as doctors and patients. In short, like justice meted out to them, everything is delayed. Darwish describes the situation through half narrative, half real account:

Because nobody ever arrives on time, and because waiting is like sitting on a hot tin roof, he put his watch back twenty minutes. In this way he made the torment of waiting easier to bear, and forgot about it. But since he cheated time he hasn't been on time for anything... When death knocks on his door, asking permission to enter, he reproaches it, saying: 'Why are you twenty minutes early (Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 44)?

Other conscientious writers of Jewish origin have joined hands in analyzing the situation beyond the propaganda lines. Here is an evidence from the book *Dear Darwish* by Morani

Kornberg Weiss:

I am here because
My freedom
Is terrifying and
When people do not
Want to see something
They get mad at
The one who shows them.
They kill the messenger (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, p. 23).

History, despite its different interpretations, has a force and a course of its own. Even when the messengers are killed, the message remains intact. The message of history is to accept the changes that come with the ravishing currents of time. The Qur'an states, "It is by turns that We apportion unto men such days (of fortune and misfortune) and this to the end that God might mark out those who have attained to have faith and choose from among you such as bear witness to the truth, and God does not love evildoers (Quran 3:140)." The nations thus rise and they fall, both in material and cultural terms but the most important thing is to keep their identity intact. The identity of an individual as well as a nation depends on self-perception (subjective identity) and recognition by others (objective identity). This is the reason we make friends: they make us realize what we are through a process of recognition and reciprocity. Merlieu-Ponty calls this 'embodiment' and believes that it is always shared or reciprocated. Ricoeur believes that through our reciprocity to and with reciprocity with others that we actualize our own potential (Atkins, 2008, p. 93). This leads one to the idea of mutual peaceful coexistence which is such a far off possibility in the context of Israeli-Palestinian context where the level of mutual distrust is already at the optimal level. But was it always like that? The writer of *Mornings in Jenin* says while describing the bond of friendship between Hassan bin Yehya of Ein Hod, the Palestinian young man and his counterpart Ari Perlstein, the German Jew Immigrant when they meet at the death of former's mother Basima:

It's very bad, Hasan," Ari said. "Zionists have hordes of guns. They've recruited an army from shiploads of Jews arriving every day. You don't know all of it, Hasan. They have armored cars and planes, even." "Hasan, they're going to take land. They've launched a campaign across the world calling Palestine 'a land without a people.' They're going to make it a Jewish homeland" (Abulhawa, 2010, p. 25).

Abulhawa calls 1948 an 'endless year'. What is described in the novelistic discourse proved true in the decades to come and now in the year 2016 when the present thesis is being composed, every day there is enough journalistic evidence to support the facts. For example, on May 27, 2016 the body of Aba al-Fattah al-Sharif, a young Palestinian who was killed execution-style in Hebron by an Israeli soldier within the range of a shooting camera in March was handed over to his family by the Israeli authorities after two months of protests by his family and the international outrage. The family buried the man and two days later, the defense attorneys of Sgt. Elor Azaria demanded the body back on the plea that the pathologist examination was due and without it, the case could not be proceeded (The Jerusalem Post, 2016). The Israeli Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan ordered a halt to the return of bodies of Palestinians killed while carrying out alleged attacks in view of the fact that a large number of funeral-attendees posed a threat to civic rest (Ibid). According to the defense lawyers, the soldier acted in self-defense fearing that the Palestinian had a hidden bomb! Another report jointly published by Mondoweiss and International Middle East Media Center (IMEMC) about Israeli invasion of Kufur Qaddoum town in the northern West Bank District of Qalqilia to suppress unarmed peaceful protest march against 49th anniversary of Naksa, when Israel occupied the rest of Palestine in 1967 asserts: "The soldiers shot a young man, Hikmat, 19, and his brother, Omran, 20, with live rounds in their thighs, before local medics moved them to Rafidia governmental hospital. Eshteiwy added that clashes took place between the soldiers and local youths after many army vehicles, including a large armored bulldozer, invaded the town and sprayed several homes with wastewater mixed with chemicals, a substance frequently used against the residents and their homes as an act of collective punishment (Bannoura, 2016). In the wake of such horrendous acts of manifest ferocity, Western

European and Others Group (WEOG) have nominated Israel for the chairmanship of the UN General Assembly Sixth Committee (IMEMC, 2016), a decision which Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, condemned and likened it to asking the wolf to guard the sheep! We have to remember that the Sixth Committee of UNGA is the primary forum for the consideration of the legal questions raised in the General Assembly and its upcoming seventy first session (2016) is very crucial as the illegal settlements and violence of Israel is one of the main center of focus. The letter of Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the State of Palestine requesting formal membership as a recognized state submitted to UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon has not yielded any positive results so far. The application had the following words:

I have the profound honor, on behalf of the Palestinian people, to submit this application of the state of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations. This application for membership is being submitted on the Palestinian people's natural, legal and historic rights and based on United Nations General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 as well as the Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine of 15 November 1988 and the acknowledgement by the General Assembly of this declaration in resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988 (Abbas, The Telegraph, 2011).

There are hundreds of such news reports in reliable media, both print and electronic and there are supporting evidences that important scholars and analysts condemn such acts of violence but when it comes to the arena of international bodies like the UN, lobbying and vetoes denounce the Palestinian rights of identity as a nation-state, and even their rights as humans are confiscated while Israel receives financial and political support. A poet like Darwish is alive to this enigma, this pain and he writes under the heading "Beyond Identification":

I sit in front of the television, since I can't do anything else. ... Smoke is rising from me and I reach out my severed hand to pick up my scattered limbs from many bodies, and I don't find them but I don't run away from them either because pain has such an attraction. I am besieged by land and air and sea and language. The last aircraft has taken off from Beirut airport and put me in front of the television to witness the rest of my death with millions of other viewers. Nothing proves that I exist when I think, as Descartes says, but rather when I am offered up in sacrifice... (Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 7).

A short documentary video (7:13 minutes) prepared and issued by International Solidarity Movement (ISM) on their official webpage www.palsolidarity.org titled *Wilful Killing* shows how

Israel continues with its policy of violence and untethered state support for its expansionist cause (International Solidarity Movement, 2015). The IDF soldiers and police units are given a complete freedom by Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon to 'neutralise' i.e. *shoot to kill* anyone who protests, slings a stone even on an armed vehicle or resists in any possible way: "Respond quickly to any local attack ... eliminate the terrorist, stabber, or the perpetrator, stone thrower, and the like immediately on the spot. This is the answer... (Ibid. at 1:36/7:13)." According to Gadi Eisenkot, IDF chief-of-staff, "Our policy of use of force is very clear. The IDF has complete freedom of action in order to fulfil the mission to restore security." In the next scene with the media caption Occupied East Jerusalem dated October 14, 2015, a young man runs across the Israeli military personnel and is shot with several live rounds (2:31/7:13).

There is nothing new in this documentary video except explicit declarations that all forms of Palestinian resistance must be taken as acts of terrorism. According to Gilan Erdan, Israeli Minister of Public Security, "Today the police forces shoot also throwers of stones and Molotov cocktail." On October 9, 2015 a girl Esraa Abed was shot with six bullets by Israeli soldiers who surrounded her at Afula Central Bus Station and later Moshe Ya'alone criticized with impunity the security personnel to have waited those few seconds between suspecting and shooting the Palestinian girl. The documentary ends with declaration of Naftali Bennet, Knesset Member and Head of the Jewish Home Party during a televised address: "Whoever lifts his hand against the State of Israel must die (Ibid.)." Israeli attack on Gaza Flotilla (2010), a humanitarian group of ships from NGOs world over who wanted to deliver basic necessities of life to the inhabitants of Gaza indicates that Israel is not ready to admit even the lifting of a supporting hand towards Palestinians. Two years after the Flotilla incident, there was another attack on Gaza called Operation Pillar of Defence on 14 November 2012 that lasted for eight days and resulted in killing of major Hamas leaders including Ahmad Jabari, the chief of Hamas militant wings. It caused heavy of civilian casualties and the loss of property. It followed Operation Protective Edge that

lasted from July 8 to August 26 and in reaction to the alleged abduction of three Palestinian youths, Israel bombarded the Strip for almost two months and killed 2500 Palestinians including more than 500 minor children and wounded and maimed more than ten thousand people in the region. The worst aspect of this attack is the direct military hitting of schools, hospitals and mosques and other cultural centers in the Strip. By the time of the present draft (September 2016), United States of America has given a military support of 38 billion dollars to strengthen its security against the demilitarized and disarmed West Bank and Gaza Strip and other threats to its security. The world public opinion remained silent over this massive arms deal in view of the events of Syria. Among other myths of modernity, Darwish repeatedly busts the concept of 'world public opinion' which is nothing more than the Israeli political tool of *Hasbara* i.e. continuous propaganda. In his *Journal of Ordinary Grief*, he clearly suggests that the world public opinion is manufactured by media tycoons who want the Palestinians to enjoy their bondage and even seek means to prolong it. If they refuse to do so, this media starts its campaign of criminal framing and defamation of the Palestinian community:

When we shun suicide, they say we are cowards. And when we embrace it, they say we are barbarians. When we call for peace, they say we are lying hypocrites. And when we prepare for battle, they say we are savages. But are we the killers? Who killed whom? Did they ask this question? It is not true that the world has lost its memory. And it is also not true that we can make the world remember by pleasing it (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 133).

Edward Said's own compulsive disowning of his identity as an Arab had its roots in the vulgar media demotion and the general anti-Arabism which made him move in search of another identity from place to place: Jerusalem-Nazareth-Egypt-Jordan-Lebanon-USA. He recovered from the identity crisis when he was able to write *The Arab Portrayed*. The Palestinian struggle has never been accurately reported by the mainstream media. They are usually shown as two equal powers fighting over a piece of land but the fact is that Israel's apartheid regime consistently challenges Palestinians' right to exist by denying them civic amenities, freedom of movement, urban development, access to farmland, family, education and employment, civilian liberties and

normal human rights, while cutting them off from each other and from rest of the world. Howard Cohen is of the view that the world needs to take cognizance of the ‘madness’ being spread around by the nationalist Zionist inventiveness that has brought about misery and injustice in Palestine. He refers to the Israeli Jews as the brainwashed civilians beguiled by a supremacist messianic government that is busy erecting an empire over the lands and dreams of another nation (Cohen H. , 2016). While Cohen appreciates BDS, the eternal friend and facilitator of Israel, USA turns a new leg when state after state it starts demonizing the supporters of BDS. For example, the Governor of New York Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order requiring state agencies to divest from any company or institution that supports the Boycotts, divestment and Sanctions movement that targets the apartheid policies of Israel and has proven a successful financial tool to register peaceful protest against the dehumanizing colonial expansionism perpetrated by Israel despite serious condemnation from the entire civilized world (McCormack, 2016). New York Civil Liberties Union has taken a firm stance against this order particularly when the governor pronounced, “It’s very simple: If you boycott against Israel, New York will boycott you!” This is just one small scale example of how much is American interest involved in whatever Israel stands for. The symbiotic relationship between the two countries is one of the most evident milestones in the study of international affairs, and the parties involved have not kept any secret of it.

It is common knowledge that Israel stands for more than what it is at present and seeks to be transformed into Greater Israel, a project amounting to endless land grab, conquest and atrocious control of the colonized population. According to the founding father of Zionism Theodore Herzl, “the area of the Jewish State stretches: “From the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates.” According to Rabbi Fischmann, “The Promised Land extends from the River of Egypt up to the Euphrates, it includes parts of Syria and Lebanon.” With this context in view, the 2002 war on Iraq, the 2006 war on Lebanon, the 2011 war on Libya, the ongoing war on Syria and Iraq, the war in Yemen, the process of regime change in Egypt, everything seems a part of the Israeli expansionist project

(Shahak, 2016). Alison Weir, the President of the Council for the National Interest (CNI) reports, based on her thirteen years of experience with how the Israel-centric American media distorts ground facts while reporting on Palestinian issue. She has discovered and uncovered a system of reporting in which virtually all news reports that reach the American audiences are manufactured and engineered in Israel. She has reported that the Associated Press that disseminates news to all news channels throughout America has its headquarters in Israel with majority staff of Zionist inclination. She also alleges that the son of New York Times bureau chief was serving in Israeli military while his father was reporting on the conflict (Weir, *If American Knew*, 2013). This naturally calls for alternative sources of knowledge including the local voices of the trauma hit OPT and their links in the diaspora. Since truth embeds deep into the literature of a people, historico literary analysis is of vital intellectual importance. Israel's ultranationalist Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman who is famous for calling for beheading and drowning of Palestinian political opponents, compared Mahmoud Darwish's poetry to the writings of Hitler, the most hated person for Jews in entire world history. He expressed his ideas about a recently aired radio programme commemorating Darwish and the story became New York Times headline story on July 21, 2016 by James Glenz. Lieberman excoriated the programme on Darwish's poetic genius aired by Israeli Army radio to be as bad as glorifying Hitler's autobiography *Mein Kampf*. Lieberman compared Darwish to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini who resisted the Zionist onslaught in Palestine and who, according to the present Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had allegedly given Hitler the idea of annihilating European Jews, an idea that has no academic or historical base. Mr. Netanyahu later retracted his assertion (Glenz, 2016). What Lieberman and Netanyahu and all other Zionist Jews would hate most in the heart of their hearts is the name Hitler and the book *Mein Kampf* (1925; *My Struggle*, 1939), a book in two volumes that mentions Hitler's two major philosophical ideas videlicet the history is the record of struggles among races and that the superior Aryan German race should come out as the final

victor in this tussle and rule the world while compromising the lesser races like Jews. The other major idea discussed in the book is the concept of *Lebensraum* (living space) for which the Germans must acquire large amounts of territory from which the local populations must be expelled or annihilated so that German settlers should populate these settlements and raise large populations (Weinberg, 2007). Even a cursory look at the Jewish/Zionist complacency and sanctimoniousness would establish a parallel to Hitler's *holier-than-thou* ideal. A further glance would confirm that the consistent and relentless policy of expansion both in geography as well as in population at the cost of local population also bears a similarly corresponding philosophy among the Jews who have traversed all the way from being persecuted to the most persecuting race in the modern postcolonial era. This is the background in which Darwish has tried to preserve his *identity* through his poetry. Manash Firaq Bhattacharjee comments on the mistaken perception of Lieberman and suggests that he should attend some elementary classes where the difference between the literal and the literary meaning is taught. He criticises the banality of the Minister's interpretation as a dismissive far right mindset in Israel:

The last lines of the poem, making a self-declaration against hate and issuing a warning against his enforced state of depravity, echo an ancient language of appeal. It is an appeal to fraternity and not war. The Jewish ethical thinkers, from Martin Buber to Emanuel Levinas, would have understood that language. It is the language of the *Other* seeking (and demanding) redemption from a violent, oppressive and exploitative relationship (Bhattacharjee, 2016).

While Lieberman has anachronistically reopened the holocaust discourse, the former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had read Darwish's 1988 poem "Those Who Pass between Fleeting Words" in Knesset to prove that the Palestinians did not want to live in harmony with the Jews. This establishes the fact that the Israeli intelligentsia believes quite clearly that Mahmoud Darwish is the representative voice of the dispossessed and dislocated Palestinians. According to Ramallah based analyst Diana Buttu:

Darwish continued to give voice as millions languished in refugee camps, stateless and longing to come home; he did so when those Palestinians who remained in Palestine were transformed into second-class citizens in their own homeland and Darwish continued to

give voice when the world's silence at Israel's repeated atrocities became deafening for Palestinians (Buttu, 2016).

Giving a voice to the millions is not an easy task. Fadwa Tuqan, Palestinian poetess suggests that the expression of the struggle of her compatriots calls for a unique and new literary form capacious enough to accommodate 'the riches of *intifada*. She believes that the oblique references that the genre of poetry is capable of offering, are not enough under the given circumstances, to absorb the energy of being inside the struggle for survival and freedom and at the same time giving a literary expression to it. She believes that she should aim at writing in a more accommodating genre i.e. novel. In 1982, Mahmud Darwish also acknowledged that he wanted to write in the novelistic discourse as it could be expanded in multiple ways to include everything like poetry, prose and even ideas (Cleary, 2004, p. 190). Samer Abdelnour et al relate that for the Palestinians there is almost a spiritual significance of land which is written deep in their culture and it is here that the Israeli administration strikes. They wish to break the bond between the Palestinian farmers and their crops. According to these writers, farming is a productive, meaningful and multidimensional form of popular resistance. The value of the land is not in the per acre yield alone, it signifies a living triangular connection between the individuals, their livelihood and their freedom. They quote Darwish's powerful words in this regard:

And on our eyelashes the grass of Galilee,
This land absorbs the skins of martyrs,
This land promises wheat and stars.

What supports this is Oxfam's 2010 report titled *The Road to Olive Farming* that describes the importance of olives to Palestinians. The findings relate that not only is the economy related with the olives but also Palestinian identity and their psychological wellbeing. For them olive trees are like a sacred trust to be transferred across generations and their loss, which is quite rampant at the hands of Israeli soldiers and settlers, proves to be both economically and emotionally devastating. The olive tree is culturally taken as a symbol of Palestine and home and Palestinian women in exile wear necklaces to commemorate homeland particularly when they are

in refugee camps and in exile (Abdelnour, Tartir, & Zurayk, 2012). This equation of national belonging also includes other staples of Palestinian life like za'atar, date palm, figs and thyme etc. Israeli forces are too well aware of this native sense of belonging with the land and they confiscate these plant-saplings at the checkpoints apparently under the plea of protecting their ecological health. Thus in addition to widespread arrest and torture, land confiscation and annexation, settlement construction at the cost of home demolition and destruction of water cisterns, this economic and food-cultural aspect is also under occupation. With the cattle driven inside Israel, West Bank depends heavily on Israeli milk. Henry Kissinger is reported to have said, "Control food and you control the people (Kissinger)."

We have been on the bridge twenty years.

We have eaten canned food for twenty years.

We have dressed in and out of season.

We have listened to new songs, excellently made,

From the troops barracks.

Our children have married exiled princesses who change their names (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 68).

After the Oslo Accords, Area C that constitutes 62 % of the West Bank and contains the most fertile land, went under the Israeli military control. 46% of Gaza's agricultural land is out of production owing to Israeli repeated bombardment as phosphorus and poisonous artillery shells increase the salinity of the soil and causes serious health hazard to those who consume vegetables or cereals cultivated on these lands. Bedouin Arabs with their animal husbandry traditions have been wiped out of Negev desert and one of their last remaining resort El Araqib has been demolished 35 times. Jewish national Fund wants to raze this out of memory only to develop a "Peace Forest" there! According to Abdelnour (et al.), "The ability of Palestinian Bedouin to freely practice their lifestyles is the litmus test of Palestinian freedom as a nation (Abdelnour, Tartir, & Zurayk, 2012)." These pernicious food-control policies and imprisoned lands have reduced the morale of the whole Palestinian nation and the greatest loss is the fact that the present generation has the least or nothing of the farming traditions to pass on to posterity which is a great national and historical loss. Edward Said refers to these measures as "terrible transformation of

what was a secular, critical, and hopeful movement for liberation and change into a miserably confined, sordidly run West Bank/ Gaza entity as a result of the “peace process” (Said E. W., *Reflections on Exile*, 2001, p. xxxv). ” Remembering one of the greatest Palestinian resistance poets, Rashed Hussein (1936-1977) in his poem “As Fate would Have it”, Darwish seems to sum up the above discussion related with the philosophical and psychological relationship between Palestinian identity and their land and food:

He could see more sharply than a thesis on art:
He could see a cloud in a soldier's helmet.
He could see us, and also our food ration cards.
His were the simplest words.
Easy, like water,
And simple, like a poor man's dinner.
He was a field of potatoes and corn.
He never liked school,
But he liked poetry and prose.
Perhaps the plains were his prose,
And the wheat his poetry (Darwish M. , *Unfortunately it was Paradise*, 2013, p. 171).

This word/water, plains/prose, wheat/poetry, cloud helmet, us/food ration cards and the person/field of potato and corn combination is a clear example of the way the poet sees the lives of his people kneaded deeply into the earth. In his book of journals (diaries) *In the Presence of Absence*, Darwish declares the view of Palestine as confined to the vantage point of either the victor or the prisoner. What remains is the exilic perspective:

A rhetoric shaped by exile to better the living conditions of limbo, and to announce the good tidings protecting the collective heart from harm. Whenever the returnee approaches the land of great dreams, his eyes well up and his stride becomes halting, lest he stumble on his path of sand. He looks back and bids farewell to a heroism whose rituals he obeyed with a soldier's discipline. A heroism now eclipsed by his desire for a nap under a grapevine (Darwish M. , *In the Presence of Absence*, 2011, p. 124).

Diana Buttu, under the article heading “Some More Equal than Others”, refers to an Israeli television channel that conducted a survey in which two Israeli Citizens, one Jew and one Palestinian were asked to update their Facebook status each calling for the extermination of the other group. The Israeli man got hundreds of likes and supporting comments but the Palestinian young man was asked by friends if his account was hacked, and if he was all right. No one shared

his post. He was contacted by the Palestinian MKs (Member Knesset) to ask why he would say such a thing and was also interrogated by the Israeli Police. The Israeli Jew, on the other hand fared well with his likes and posts of encouragement without any questioning (Ibid.). On July 1, 2016, the Middle East Diplomatic *Quartet* i.e. USA, EU, UN and Russia issued an eight page report on the impediments between Israel and Palestine as far as achieving the peace is concerned. The Quartet had started working on this report on February 12, 2016. Unfortunately the same rhetoric of observing restraint “on both sides” followed by an affirmation of Israel’s security needs and Palestinian aspirations has been referred to. The choice of words in such documents is always very crucial. Israel has security needs and all that the Palestinians do is to aspire. But what are the Palestinian security needs and what are the aspirations of Israel is always left out of discussion. The Quartet claims to pave way for the implementation of Security Council’s Resolutions 242 (1967), and 338 (1973) but is cowed down so much with the pressure of Israeli lobby in the US that it uses a passive voice when it comes to Israel’s share in destroying the peace process... for example, it speaks about ‘ending the occupation that began in 1967’ without accounting for who carried out that occupation (United Nations, 2016). According to Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Israel lobbied US to soften the tone of the Quartet report on the issue of settlements and to prevent it from mentioning future possible steps by the UN Security Council on Israeli-Palestinian issue (Ravid, HAARETZ, 2016). As expected, the report has mentioned a two state solution to be worked out bilaterally which almost amounts to ask an unarmed small child and an angry Arnold Schwarzenegger to settle a dispute *bilaterally* as Palestinians are virtually unarmed and absolutely dispersed with no reliable central and sovereign cohesive government and Israel possesses one of the world’s most sophisticated military, surveillance and intelligence structures. As far as the auspices of the UN Security Council are concerned, the hollow words of concern that they pass over the illegal settlements in West Bank (What West Bank? And why not Palestine?), particularly Area C of the West Bank which is under full Israeli military control amount to naught

(Ibid.). The above mentioned report is the most recent set of *words* while the present thesis is being written. Darwish's most politically charged book that he wrote in response to Israeli aggression against Beirut, Lebanon in August 1982 is *Memory for Forgetfulness* and on a blank page, at the very start, he has quoted a very expressive and evocative line from Roland Barthes, "C'est précisément parce que j'oublie que je lis." Which means: It is precisely because I forget what I read! This is probably addressed to the international community that has turned a deaf ear to the plight of Palestinians and who have their eyes wide shut to the easily available video footage, thanks to the modern media revolution, of the acts of violence and barbarism perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces alias IDF, Israeli Defence Force. But the greatest prop of the IDF is unconditional US support. William Blum, for example, calls America, *The Rogue State* in his book with the same title because it is America that supports and protects Israeli rowdiness in the Middle East. Only with reference to the General Assembly resolutions to which America has said an explicit "no" apart from several willful absentees have been provided in Chapter 20 of this book. William Blum gives us an analysis of 9 years (1978-1987) in which America gave an explicit "no-vote" towards life-saving UN resolutions related with the women rights, child protection, weapons of mass destruction, Apartheid regimes, human rights violations and biological and chemical warfare etc. and thus jeopardized the possibility of actions for the betterment of humanity. The book suggests how the "only super power" in the world has cast its eternal vote in the favour of Israeli colonial aspirations. Anything that goes against Israeli expansionist and exterminatory interest is vetoed by America causing the severest of the blows to International Law. The writer explicitly describes the removal of Peter Hanson as head of UN Relief And Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in January 2005 when he openly criticised Israeli military's widespread destruction of Palestinian homes, which he described as a grave breach of international humanitarian law he also spoke against the indiscriminate killing of Palestinian children in UNRWA schools and Israeli policies causing "economic collapse and

growing hunger among about a million refugees in Gaza.” UN Secretary General removed his reappointment as UNRWA head saying, “I don’t have the political capital with the Americans to keep you (Blum, 2006).” Apart from political expediency, the shared values between the founders of America and the Israel is evident from the comparison between the declarations of independence of both the countries. The Israeli draft of Declaration of Independence has heavily borrowed from the American draft. While New York Times correspondent Jodi Rudoren takes this as a proof of the shared values of the Americans and the Israeli Zionists, Donald Johnson believes:

... the hook is the claim ... that the US and Israel share values. But it’s a truism that early America was a society whose leaders believed in democracy while holding an almost messianic belief in the right of white men to take the land from Native Americans. And a very similar belief was held by Israelis, who had to get rid of enough Palestinians in order to establish a majority Jewish state. And this belief is still held (Weiss & Johnson, 2016).

In their book *The Israel Lobby* two top American academicians John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt have investigated the deep roots of Israeli influence that has, in the long run, jeopardized not only American security but also of the rest of the world. For example, according to the book, American decision to attack Iraq in March 2003 was mainly motivated by a desire to make Israel more secure. Despite the fact that the UN/US weapons inspectors absolved Iraq of the charges of the alleged WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction) and declared it to be safe country, the Israeli leaders like Shimon Peres, Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu, while they stood on a moral pedestal, gave an incessant go-ahead to America to attack and destroy Iraq. Just prior to the attack while this lobby had cast its ultimate pressure, Shimon Peres told CNN in very suggestive words, “the problem today is not ‘if’ but ‘when’ (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, pp. 234-235).”

3.14 Is the pen still mightier than the sword?

While the possibility of a militaristic aggression against Israel by any of the hostile neighbours has been minimized, the only threat to the State of Israel, at least as far as the Palestinians are concerned, is that of the *words*. The Palestinians have not let their words die. The

most note-worthy and influential Palestinian *words* in the western world of today have been that of Edward Said. The words have also found way into countless essays, novels, dramas, film scripts, short stories, memoirs, newspaper articles, journal articles and above all, poetry by various writers. Poetry of Samih al Qasim, Tawfiq Zayyad and Mahmoud Darwish, among others, has made Israeli establishment lose self-control so many times. The latest victim in this regard is Dareen Tatour who is facing up to four years imprisonment for writing one poem titled “Resist My People, Resist Them (Jewish Voice for Peace, 2016)”. One might wonder what exactly is to be resisted now. A more recent example might help. On August 26, 2016 Iyad Hamid, a resident of Silwad, a town north of Ramallah was shot to death in cold blood as he walked to a nearby mosque. The shooter is Elor Azaria, a soldier of the ultra –Orthodox Netzah Yehuda battalion while the man posed no threat to the so called security. The military defence has defended the soldier by saying he performed an ‘involuntary manslaughter’ under the performance of routine military orders to neutralize suspected terrorists. Israeli newspaper Haaretz correspondent Avigdor Feldman reports and comments that the meaning of neutralizing in IDF’s language is simply to put a bullet to a Palestinian’s head (Feldman A. , 2016). In his journal entry “Routine”, Darwish says about the present life in Palestine:

Life is so indifferent it seems to be no more than a rough draft of some stubborn urge to have one's presence registered: equal rights with jackals to enjoy a safe cave. But we have a difficult mission to perform: mediation between God and the Devil to get them to call a brief truce so that we can bury our martyrs (Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 40).

The helplessness of situation registered in these words conveys a silent message to the world which still tries to persuade the Palestinians to stop all resistance and focus on a happy coexistence with the colonizing Zionist empire. The Palestinians and their national poet are left with no arsenal to affect an armed resistance as the world has taken special care to disarm them to minimize casualty on the other side of the argument. But they have words to utter their situation and Darwish does this beautifully and defiantly when he says,

--Good Bye, sir.

--Where to?

--Madness.

--Which madness?

--Any madness, for I have turned into words (Darwish M. , Memory for Forgetfulness, 2013, p. 49).

When it comes to the oppressive power of colonialism, madness of words becomes the best defense against ideological state apparatuses. Ahron Bregman suggests that while boycotts on products and services emanating from Jewish settlements on occupied Palestinian territories should come from the international community, Palestinians themselves should embark on a non-violent-Gandhi-style third intifada against occupation (Bregman, Cursed Victory : A History of Israel and the Occupied Territories, 2015, p. 315). As far as the principle of containment of the academic freedom is concerned, it is an open secret that even in the greatest self-proclaimed democracy i.e. USA, there is a consistent discouragement of academic freedom in matters concerned with Holocaust or *Yishuv*, the Jewish settlements prior to the Nakba is a taboo and is discouraged to the extent that Professor Steven Salaita of the University of Illinois at Urbana Campaign, USA who lost his career job after he tweeted allegedly incendiary statements about Israel during Israeli aggression against Gaza in the Summer of 2014. “Trustees at the University of Illinois agreed to pay Steven Salaita \$600,000 after the professor’s job offer was revoked for anti-Israel statements made on social media (The Atlantic, 2015). While the University is adamant about its decision and has readily paid a hefty amount as damages to the professor, it remains crucial to investigate what brought him to say such prophetic and painful words on the Twitter (#Gaza 7:24 AM -20 Jul 2014): “At this point, if Netanyahu appeared on TV with a necklace made from the teeth of Palestinian children, would anybody be surprised? (Ibid.)” The treatment meted out to Professor Salaita is not an isolated example of political victimization in US academia. Several others have suffered. For example, Dr. Terri Ginsberg was denied tenure at North Carolina State University under the pressure of Israeli lobby groups in 2008 and was blacklisted subsequently for other faculty positions, later to be embroiled in legal proceedings in

her fight against censorship and intimidation. Dr. Lisa Rofel, who taught cultural anthropology had to undergo harassment for ‘breaking the rules of academic freedom’ when she spoke about Israeli politics on campus. Dr. David Klein of California State University came under fire for supporting the BDS movement. It seems that the pro-Israeli lobby groups have had the best of American university policies already (Barrows-Friedman, 2012). In his book *Israel’s Dead Soul*, published three years earlier, Salaita most defiantly speaks out against the USA-Israel power nexus:

There is a specific archetype of colonization that attends Israel’s existence and its current practices that is best analyzed in the framework of the United States as an expansionist power rather than as a multiethnic agglomeration. And there is a standard of courage around Palestine that West and Dyson have yet to exhibit: if Zionists are going to conceal Israel’s ethnic cleansing behind quaint discourses of multicultural decorum, then we must confront that decorum with proud indecency (Salaita, 2011).

Salaita is not alone in making such a vehement appeal to human conscience. Referring to Operation Protective Edge that started in July 2014 and in which more than 2000 Palestinians were killed and more than 10,000 were badly injured, Ray Filer, an ‘anti-Zionist Jew writer, described that it was, “just the most recent, inevitable consequence of a brutal, militaristically-advanced settler-colonial occupation encroaching on the lives and lands of a subjugated people – using a 30-foot wall, settlements, missiles, tanks and the withholding of basic human necessities to perpetrate continued domination (Filer, 2016). With reference to the ‘Right to Educate Campaign’, Nada Elia reports in her article in Mondoweiss on September 15, 2016 that two senior American faculty members, Professors Rabab Abdulhadi of San Francisco State University, who directs the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities Diaspora program and has just successfully negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding between SFSU and An-Najah University in her hometown of Nablus, in the occupied West Bank, and Simona Sharoni, of SUNY Plattsburgh, have also come under renewed attack for their activism to expose Israel’s violations of Palestinian rights. Additionally, the AMCHA initiative, a Zionist campus watch group, has requested that a one-credit course scheduled to be taught at the University of California at Berkeley, “Palestine: A

Settler Colonial Analysis” designed by Paul Hadweh be cancelled. However, it is encouraging to know that upon the written application of request and protest by the registered participants of the course, Carla Hesse, the Dean of the College of Letters and Science at U.C. Berkeley issued a reprieve on September 20, 2016 after initially cancelling the course a week earlier on the Zionist pressure headed by Israeli minister Gilad Erdan who is the incharge of combating the boycotting protests against Israel. Taking a cue from this incident, Hadweh concludes: “... it is a topic that departments and faculty are too scared to touch. And you can see why with what happened with this course.” Hadweh believes that in the American academia, there is “... no place ... to critically explore the question of Palestine.” Delineating the academic dimension of the course, Paul Hadweh elaborates the difference between colonialism and settler-colonialism that while the former only exploits the local population and its various resources, the latter seeks to eliminate the native population to uproot resistance. North America and Australia are two such models for study (Dizard, MONDOWEISS). Professor Rabab Abdulhadi describes that the 2014 campaign against her “seeks to whip up hysteria, Islamophobia, racism and xenophobia to divert attention from Israeli criminality against Palestinian education and cover up the complicity of the Israeli academy in furthering violations of Palestinian rights.” She calls such attempts perpetrated by the groups like Campus Watch and Middle East Forum led by Daniel Pipes and David Horowitz to carry out the witch hunt of the McCarthy era which is aimed to bring to a halt the academic tradition of “commitment to justice-centered knowledge production.” Similarly, Simona Sharoni believes the attack against her is an attempt at intimidating all faculty who teach about Palestine: “The fact that a senior scholar like myself - a tenured full professor with international reputation - is being subjected to such requests has a chilling effect on junior scholars (Elia, 2016).” Referring to the policy of policing academia and academicians, as these form the nursery for future policy makers and implementers, Mearsheimer and Walt refer to the development of Campus Watch programme run under the auspices of AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs

Committee) to pin-point the professors that spoke or wrote against the Israeli national interest. Wealthy Jewish donors would then influence the universities to silence such dissident voices or remove them from their career posts. The book quotes several isolated examples that form a unified whole when taken together. The cases of Professor Juan Cole of Michigan University and Pete McCloskey at Stanford University who held conservative views of American unconditional support towards Israel were snubbed as far as being forced to change the content of the syllabi the latter had to teach. The organized Jewish campaign to keep Americans away from reading or hearing critical views about Israel has tried to tarnish the images of academicians like Edward Said and Rashid Khalidi as well while systematic nationwide high school programmes ‘to train high school student to be more effective advocates for Israel’ thrives comfortably (Ibid. pp.183-185). While the *academic cleansing* of the western academia goes on, Jeremy R. Hammond has researched and brought to surface several instances where New York Times journalists have given heavily loaded descriptions of Israeli operations against Gaza and the West Bank settlement and control activities. The most noted journalists in this regard are Ethan Bronner and Isabel Kershner who have been taking information for their articles from Israeli think tanks like INSS. Both are married to Israeli nationals. Kershner’s husband is in the business of conducting *hasbara* for the IDF and Bronner has his son in IDF! Two headings of their articles published in this great newspaper during the Operation Cast Lead are provided here: “Israel Reminds Foes That It Has Teeth” by Ethan Bronner; and, “Despite Strikes, Israelis Vow to Soldier On” by Isabel Kershner (Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace*, 2016, p. 315). In the last of his journals written two years before his death i.e. 2006, Darwish expresses his disdain on hearing the abstruse and highbrow jargon of international law and politics and exclaims:

You grow up quickly hearing big words, you grow up at the edge of a world falling apart behind you, and yet to form before you, a world tossed like a stray stone in the game of fates. You ask yourself: Who am I? You do not know how to define yourself. You are still too young for a question that perplexes philosophers. But the weighty question of identity halts the butterfly’s flight (Darwish M. , *In the Presence of Absence*, 2011, p. 38).

The question of personal and national identity in Darwish's work runs very deep. It deals with the common human need of belonging to a definable nation and state. The entire Palestinian history of resistance and struggle runs around this point but in order to establish this identity, various diaspora communities, refugee-camp dwellers, Arab-Israeli population, and other scattered Palestinian groups must put forward their academic share to claim a collective identity. Darwish wants his compatriots to leave the ordinary struggle of protestation that does not have a long lasting or profound effect. The Palestinian energies are wasted away without any palpable effect. Referring to the June-July 2014 Israeli aggression against Hebron and Ramallah code named Operation Brother's Keep, Ramallah based café owner Morgan Cooper gives a glimpse to what life under occupation means. He speaks of the daily routine of several Palestinian youths who drink coffee, go for the demonstration, raise slogans and chants, throw rock stones, get killed by IDF, rowdy funerals follow and then the relatives gather and drink *ahwe sada*, the drink of death (Franklin, Cooper, & Aoude, Spring 2014, p. xv).

Palestinians have thus lived through very odd times but now they are struggling in the form of small groups and various organizations doing commendable work through coordinated web-based activity, sharing relevant intellectual and legal material, planning for united actions of Fatah and Hamas with dissolution of their clannish identities. Merging into one Islamic Republic of Palestine is the only way to transfer the legacy of freedom to the next generation whose morale and intellect have already suffered so much that another generation within the same framework of violence and insecurity would leave them utterly crippled. Referring to the alleged action of a bug/virus in Google services on July 25, 2016 which caused a sudden dramatic deletion of the terms "West Bank" and "Gaza" from its map (Google Maps) of Israel and occupied Palestinian territory, and thus showing the entire geographic entity to be a part of Israel, Wilson Dizard concludes that while Google team strives to fix this bug, the erasure inadvertently reflects a growing reality given to the unimpeded amount of Israeli control over these areas: "The fact of

military domination renders talk of a “two-state solution” divorced from the fact that Israel and its Occupied Palestinian Territories operate as an effectively single but deeply dysfunctional and unequal political entity (Dizard, Mondoweiss, 2016). The Palestinian Journalists Forum (PJF) has also issued a widely circulated denouncement of the removal of these place-tags from the Google Maps. “The move is also designed to falsify history, and geography as well as the Palestinian people’s right to their homeland, and a failed attempt to tamper with the memory of Palestinians and Arabs as well as the world,” the PJF said, according to Turkish Radio Television TRT (Ibid.). While this opens a new area of focus for the resistance movement, the Palestinian Authority, duped by raising of the Palestinian flag at the UN, should open its eyes and settle all scores with Gaza leadership very quickly. At present there is stagnation in the process of building Palestine as a sovereign and independent nation-state. There are rifts within and crushing pressures from the outside. It is a situation where Resolution 67/19 of the General assembly dated November 29, 2012 calling for the full membership of Palestine to the UN has been challenged. Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of state has called that resolution as “unfortunate and counterproductive” which “places further obstacles in the path to peace”, Israeli Ambassador to the UN Ron Prosor calls this demand of full membership for Palestine as Palestinians march of folly while turning their back on peace (Hammond, Obstacle to Peace, 2016, p. 409). Despite the postmodern era, the ordinary human reason has very often given way to formalities, and humanity is being sacrificed on the altar of legality and expediency. Might has been accepted as right and International Law has been reserved for an unequitable application for the weaker economies worldwide. The powerful countries of the world and their allies and alliances are clearly above all laws and regulations, accountability and even the moral obligations. The destruction of country after country in the Arab world through direct aggression and foreign support of insurgency has been labelled as Arab Spring! It is not the rise but the fall, not the *spring* but the *autumn*. The human reason has been compromised already, and it is common knowledge that the UN protects only the

interests of the superpowers. Darwish has identified the deepest shades of autumnal hue. He advises his compatriots in Palestine, Israel and in the diaspora to hold fast and stay united in the given unseemly circumstances:

This is your autumn, emerging from a hot summer, from a season of cosmic exertion, from a war that seems endless. An autumn which brings to ripeness the forgotten grapes of the high mountains. An autumn given over to important meetings at which the Council of the Eternal Gods is reviewing the drafts of destinies which are still being written; they disagree and agree about a truce between summer and winter (Darwish M. , *Absent Presence*, 2010, pp. 57-58).

CHAPTER IV:
POETICS OF EXILE AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN DARWISH'S
WORK

We will become a people when the Palestinian only remembers his flag
On the football pitch, at camel races, and on the day of the Nakba
(Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 42).

For Darwish exile does not mean essentially leaving his homeland and moving out of its spatial and temporal boundaries. For him it is an everlasting quest for home. Since the concept of home is set in the backdrop of a recognizable neighbourhood, which in turn is set within a cultural experience, he constructs a special poetics of exile which keeps him close to the idea of return to the homeland. It sets an immediate cultural vicinity within the framework of imagination. In Edward Said's words, "Darwish's poetry is an epic effort to transform the lyrics of loss into the indefinitely postponed drama of return (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010)."

Due to specific postcolonial experience of the Arab world, turn-of-the-century so called 'Arab Spring', destruction of Middle East, country after country, and the active colonial empire building of Israel with its related canon of torture, murder, dispossession and exile, the modern Arabic tradition of poetry is replete with instances of a deep rooted nostalgia. For poets like Darwish, poetry is a means of establishing their literary identity, a front not yet open to war! Several of the poems written in this context have the formalism of "openings and thresholds that are loaded with accumulated nostalgia for the past, along with convincing pronouncements of desires and agonies ...making compelling demands on sensibility and temper (al-Musawi, 2006, p. 246)." Muhsin al-Musawai takes these as instances of what he calls *romantic agony* where there is an endless journey with no signs of settlement: "The act of writing itself becomes on (act of) displacement; for only in textual domains can the poet ensure a culmination of desire." He compares Darwish's style with the writers of *mu'allaaqaat* or the pre-Islamic classical odes that

were written in gold and suspended upon the walls of Ka'ba. Darwish's poetry, he believes is also the writing on the wall. He quotes a poem from his book *Eleven Planets* which follows the modernistic romantic agony set in the sequence of the *mu'allaqaat* i.e. rupture, loss, devastation and challenge, a typical instance of reversal poetics that works within the tradition of nostalgic prelude for example as in Darwish's compatriot Fadwa Tuqan's poem "I Won't Cry" which begins with paratextual dedication to the poets of Palestinian resistance through which she establishes a dedicatory relationship with her "contextual and textual terrain where connections are established and poetic transposition is sustained (Ibid. p. 253)." Fadwa Tuqan's poem *Lan Abki* deals with the ruined landscape of Jaffa, the deserted dwellings where she begs to stop to cry:

At Jaffa's gates, O beloved ones,
 Among the chaotic wreckage of houses,
 Among the debris and the thorns
 I stood, addressing my eyes: You eyes!
 "Stop and we will weep."

But mere shedding of the tears and recapitulation of the times gone by and the inhabitants exiled or killed is not enough. The emotional sequence of 'rupture-loss-devastation-challenge' in resistance poetry must be followed and therefore she comes to a quick resolve:

Here I am, O beloved ones, extending my hand to yours . . .
 Raising my forehead to the sun, with you,
 Here you are as hard and powerful as our mountains
 As the roses of our homeland . . .
 I go forward on the same route of yours,
 Planting my steps into my homeland
 Into my land like you (Tuqan, 2000, pp. 511-517).

In the same poetic tradition, Darwish becomes nostalgic and hopeful almost at the same time. He also laments the situation of the loss for a few moments but then he develops a counter-memory instead of a nostalgic continuation. For these Palestinian poets, the cities and the places do not die and have a life of their own. The exile must retain his or her *identity* and return and reciprocate with *home* that lies waiting for him.

Revoking the nostalgic mood as one of loss, the poet uses rhetorical affirmation to displace whatever that betrays: weakness and frailty. Yet, rhetoric cannot sustain a position for long, and Mahmud Darwish will soon search for other strategies to enforce a textual homeland (al-Musawi, 2006, p. 255).

Darwish does not want that the flag of his country should only be used to wrap up the martyrs and the dead. He does not want it to be daily raised as a slogan of resistance through the streets. He wants that his people should be so comfortable with life that like other free people of the world, they may have a sentimental feeling of remembrance of their national flag when they win in some regional cultural event or an international contest, or on the day of importance in the national political history. Edward Said believes that there is a deep rooted relationship between memory and exile:

Exile can produce rancor and regret, as well as a sharpened vision. What has been left behind may either be mourned, or it can be used to provide a different set of lenses. Since almost by definition exile and memory go together, it is what one remembers of the past and how one remembers it that determine how one sees the future ... no return to the past is without irony, or without a sense that a full return, or repatriation, is impossible (Said E. W., *Reflections on Exile*, 2001, p. xxxv).

4.1 The interchangeability of home and exile

For Palestinians in general and for Darwish in particular, the conception of home and exile are intermittent feelings and these travel down the soul to such an extent that one's own body becomes the home and the soul in it lives in exile. At other times the soul feel at home and the body is made to go in exile. Darwish recognizes these brainwaves as *haal al hisaar* i.e. State of Siege. In an outstanding journal entry under the title *A Longing to Forget*, he narrates an incredible experience where the poet is disorientated and searches for his body while the body searches for the poet. In this journal entry, he flounders to have a clue of himself till he hits his own clothes and he is compelled to smell them to establish an olfactory recognition of himself. Forgetfulness follows recognition and vice versa. War puts everything in disarray. Darwish experienced this all through his life and saw his people going through the same trauma. More than personal, it was the national sentiment that kept him unrestful. In his epic poem "Truce with the Mongols", he

comments freely upon the ravages of the war and following his poetic cadence-braking rhythm of thought, his apparently peaceful nostalgia gradually shoots into a volley of painful reflections:

Wars teach us to love detail: the shape of our door keys,
How to comb our wheat with eyelashes and walk lightly on our land, ...
And wars teach us to see God's image in everything ...
We will have a hearty laugh with the worms in our bread, and the worms
In the waters of war. We will hang up our black flags, if we win, on the laundry line
Then knit them into socks . . . and as for song, it must be raised
In the funerals of our immortal heroes . . . (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 19).

This image of worms eating up the flesh of a dead body has its metonymic connotations. The mushroom growth of Israeli settlements and the raiding detachments of Israeli soldiers to knock at the doors in the dead of the night and their street patrolling and frequent interception of the Palestinian life is akin to so many worm. At a stage in *Memory of Forgetfulness* while Darwish cries out that he does not want to die under the rubble but out there in the street, he is overtaken by the image of these consuming worms again in one of his political treatises while he describes his exilic life in Lebanon:

It is West Beirut. He who dies here does not die by chance. Rather he who lives, lives by chance, because not one span of earth has been spared the rockets and not one spot where you can take a step has been saved from an explosion. But I don't want to die under the rubble. I want to die in the open street. Suddenly, worms ... spread before me. Worms arranging themselves in rigid order into rows according to color and type to consume a corpse, stripping flesh off bone in a few minutes. Surely, it's a picture that empties a man of heroism and flesh, thrusting him into the nakedness of absurd destiny, into absolute absurdity, into total nothingness ... (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 27).

With death comes the feeling of emptiness. The same comes with the feeling of exile. A space is created by the demise of an entity and in Darwish's case, when the homeland is gone, there is a cold hollow space all around the exile which he interprets as an absentness that stands symbolic of the coldness of death. In the journal entry "He sees himself as absent", he concludes the diary with the following words: "This is what the text demands: someone has to be absent to lighten the burden of the place (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 31)

Later in the journal, he records his visit to Ramallah in Palestine after years of absence and longing. But once there, he still ‘*thinks*’ that he is ‘*dreaming*’ to be ‘*there*’, a place that has only one mark of recognition: Darkness. He then turns to the less psychic and more physical and tactile senses and washes his face, flicks through his passport entries and finally discovers that there had been a ‘gap’ opened up in his memory. Then he dials to one of his friends who dined with him a while ago and asks him about his own whereabouts, and that if he is really ‘ill’: “Had my mental existence split off from my physical one? I was scared and called a friend... There is something wrong with my memory. Where am I? ... When did I get here? ... Why don’t I remember?” His friend assures him that he is back in Ramallah and then tersely identifies his trouble for him saying, “Today. We were together this afternoon. ... It’s not the illness that you are thinking of: it’s the longing to forget (Ibid. p. 35). But it’s not just what happens to the exile when he has chance to return home. His nostalgia is much more complicated and takes him to the verge of even madness. His journal entry “In Cordoba” concludes in pathos: “In Cordoba I stood before a wooden front door and searched in my pocket for the keys to my old house, as Nizar Qabbani once did. I shed no tears, because the new wound covers the scar of the old. But Derek Walcott surprised me with a hurtful question: “Who does Jerusalem belong to? You or them (Ibid. p. 55-56)?” Stuart Reigeluth has pointed out that the nostalgic reminiscences and cyclic argumentations are quite common in Darwish’s work and form a kind of strain in his poetry as well as his poetic prose and that he uses repetition as a rhythmical technique which reflects the enigma of seemingly impenetrable complication: Palestinian-Israeli conflict. There are repeated images of the lover and the beloved, of executioner and the executed, of the colonizer and the colonized, the sinner and the sinned-against all over the fabric of his literary work. Darwish’s *Memory of Forgetfulness* and Mourid Barghouti’s *I Saw Ramallah* follow the same fashion of repetitious occurrences which is not without a reason. In *Memory of Forgetfulness* there is a streetcar that goes round and round the streets that epitomizes the cyclical motion of time.

Similarly, Barghouti's account comes full circle when both his journey home and back commemorate crossing the same bridge, another way of recording nostalgia. In Barghouti's own words: "nostalgia is replaced by this feeling that your will is broken ... by the Occupation, by the Arab regimes, by the existing laws, by not having the passport, by being threatened to be arrested at the borders...this generates anger not nostalgia (Reigeluth, 2008, p. 340)."

At times, Darwish experiences the entire Palestine to have turned into one body, his own or his beloved's, his vision expands to the fullest as if he can not only see but also feel everything about his land. The sap of its vegetation and his own blood mix freely and he is elated. His poetics begins with the language that he must employ for a very special purpose as an entire nation speaks through him. In his poem "Tuesday and the Weather is Clear", he addresses his very language as a means to connect with the universe:

O my language,
Help me to adapt and embrace the universe. ...
My language, will I become what you'll become, or are you
What becomes of me? Teach me the wedding parade
That merges the alphabet with my body parts ...
Give birth to me and I will give birth to you,
Sometimes I'm your son, and other times your father and mother.
If you are, I am. If I am, you are.
For who, if I utter what isn't poetry,
Will understand me? Who will speak to me of a hidden
Longing for a lost time if I utter what isn't poetry
(Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, pp. 158-159)?

This linguistic interference with the mess that the foreign occupation has made for the Palestinians is the most poignant contribution that Darwish has extended toward the recognition of Palestine and the Palestinians. Language is not just the use of words. In the choice of the words and in the cadence in which these words are employed, there lies an ideology. In prose, it may be evident in the first go but in poetry and poetic prose, every reading unfolds a new layer of meanings. The language does not let the reader or the listener *see* through the words. According to Catherine Belsey:

Ideology is *inscribed in* language in the sense that it is literally written or spoken *in it*. Rather than a separate element which exists independently in some free-floating realm of 'ideas' and is subsequently embodied in words, ideology is a way of thinking, speaking, experiencing (Belsey, *Critical Practice*, 2001, p. 4).

What she is hinting at is the opacity of language. It is not merely a transparent medium to communicate the ideas, it is rather the language itself which offers the possibility of fashioning a world of meanings. The clarity and familiarity of the words is a hoax. Unless we analyze the intratextual and intertextual *connections* that the text holds with other texts and edge off the overlapping concepts, the meaning cannot be reached. Darwish is a wizard of words and here and there, while he talks about foreign lands and experiences of new discoveries and friendships, and even history, he beautifully interweaves the Palestinian cause of which the reader suddenly becomes aware of but by that time his poetics involves the reader and enfolds him or her in its swerve. In his book *Reflections on Exile* Edward Said acknowledges the poetic and political contribution that Mahmoud Darwish had rendered in the cultural wing of PLO and he refers to the pathos of diaspora in his work, the loss of contact with *home* and the dissatisfaction of not belonging to a particular spot of earth, a condition in which homecoming is out of question except through poetry. Quoting from Darwish's poem, 'A Lover from Palestine', he writes, "Darwish's work amounts to an epic effort to transform the lyrics of loss into the indefinitely postponed drama of return. Thus he depicts his sense of homelessness in the form of a list of unfinished and incomplete things:

But I am the exile ...
Shield me with your eyes.
Take me as a relic from the mention of sorrow.
Take me as a verse from my tragedy;
Take me as a toy, a brick from the house
So that our children will remember to return (Said E. W., *Reflections on Exile*, 2001, p. 179)."

Darwish's work is poetic in nature but it has deep roots in the politics, history and the culture of Palestine. Darwish helped in establishing a distinct Palestinian identity after the war of 1967 that decidedly established Israel as the dominant power in the Arab world pushing Palestinian existence into a sinking background.

4.2 The exile caused by those who were exiled

It is one of the saddest ironies of twentieth century history that the Palestinian displacement has been caused by Israeli aggression and occupation since the Jews themselves have been suffering from the pangs of exile and alienation due to various intrigues. Thus one national identity is achieved at the cost of obliterating another. It thus becomes pertinent to read some of the Jewish writers in terms of their assertion of cultural identity in poetry. In this connection, the poetic response titled *Dear Darwish* by the Israeli poetess and academician Morani Kornberg Weiss is worth quoting:

The sparks that ignited the essence of this project were set in late 2008 after Israel's attack in the Gaza Strip (Operation Cast Lead). Signs were erected on street corners blaring, "Israel has a right to protect itself." ... When I moved back to the US in the summer of 2009, the seams of the blindfolds I was forced to wear in Israel loosened. My growing feeling of discomfort gradually manifested into a new political reality (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, p. 105).

In his book of journal entries, *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, Darwish catechizes about the Jewish/Palestinian refugee/exile glitch (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 38):

These are refugees that bring an end to the state of being refugees by creating other refugees. So, my friend the painter, what does your statement that similarity in refugee status brings us together mean? It means nothing – nothing except robbery. The refugees scattered by Nazism found a homeland for themselves in Palestine, and the refugees driven out by Zionism, where are they to live? Where?

Exile is *absence* and the one in the state of exile is within the perimeter of *absence* where he or she is *present*. The personal identity with reference to one's land or nation state is replaced by Exile is thus related with memory which is instrumental in preserving the cultural identity through a shared intellectual discourse. For a man who is dead, the cultural implications have no value as his voice as well as his pain suddenly end but for a man in exile, the pain and its discourse not only perpetuates but also increases. The feelings reflected into words survive as long as the language remains alive. Exile thus is instrumental in preserving identity which is not only being a political entity but also an emotional existence. Poet and novelist Jenni Fagan reports that when

Darwish was awarded the Prince Claus Fund of principal prize in Amsterdam in 2004 his acceptance speech explained how he felt about exile, and identity:

A person can only be born in one place. However, he may die several times elsewhere: in the exiles and prisons, and in a homeland transformed by occupation and oppression into a nightmare. Poetry is perhaps what teaches us to nurture the charming illusion: how to be reborn out of ourselves over and over again, and use words to construct a better world, a fictitious world that enables us to sign a pact for a permanent and comprehensive peace with life (Fagan, 2012).

Exile brings man into a state of perpetual ordeal which is somehow a 'privileged critical category' in which psychological, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic questions along with the necessary historicity give rise to a model of traumatic subjectivity which accounts for the effects of shock on the memory (Waugh, *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 2007, p. 497).

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever (Said E. W., *Reflections on Exile*, 2001, p. 173).

While political history tends to silence the oppressed and while there is a long standing fashion of writing whitewashed histories (usually by the oppressors), a holistic understanding can only be reached when the other part of the story is narrated and understood. It is quite ironic that the Palestinian voice that has always been suppressed by Israel and its greatest ally America, became loud and fast within the American continent. Despite all political repression and delimiting social curtailment, Darwish could not be hushed:

O those who pass between fleeting words
As bitter dust, go where you wish, but
Do not pass between us like flying insects
For we have work to do in our land:
We have wheat to grow which we water with our bodies' dew ...
We have that which does not please you: we have the future
And we have things to do in our land.
O those who pass between fleeting words
Pile your illusions in a deserted pit, and be gone
Return the hand of time to the law of the golden calf
Or to the time of the revolver's music!
For we have that which does not please you here, so be gone

And we have what you lack: a bleeding homeland of a bleeding people
A homeland fit for oblivion or memory (Darwish M. , 2015).

While the portrayal of Palestinian issue remained marred by the ideological omissions and repressions of true historical narratives, Darwish developed a dissident or countervailing recovery of what had been silenced or misinterpreted. He has proved that the state of exile is directly related with memory and in the place of the familiar home-environment, the perception builds a world of memory which is capable of reinventing identity in various art forms or political movements. It is an energy which is not to be exhausted. Darwish writes in *The Cunning of the Metaphor*:

Metaphorically I say: 'I won'
Metaphorically I say: 'I lost'
And a bottomless valley stretches in front of me... (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 13).

4.3 The sham peace-processes and the language of paradox

The titles as well as the contents of all Darwish's works are very idiomatic, paradoxical and suggestive e.g. *Absent Presence*, *Presence of Absence*, *Memory for Forgetfulness* etc. The extract above is indicative of the fact that the very body of his poetry and prose carries the paradox of existence. The circumstances in one's surrounding and the corresponding feelings determine how existential truths are perceived. Despite the international majority UN votes against Israeli expansionism, the US backed ultra-orthodox regime is insistent on winning the entire Palestinian land 'between the river and the sea' to itself. On the other hand, having suffered the colonial atrocity for seven decades or more the empty handed Palestinians still stick to their claim of land and identity. Over and above the political facts, there are traditional historical beliefs and religious doctrines that teach men and women to develop a certain outlook upon life. In Darwish's words, the mutuality of the Israelis and Palestinians could have been reversed in a different set of circumstances:

Their history would have been ours,
Our history would have been theirs,
Were it not for the dispute over the exact date of Doomsday
(Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p. 188)!

For an exile, the perspective of life is very different from those who live in his homestead. One rests and the other becomes a globe-trotter. But despite homelessness, the exile stops at every turn of the road and looks back with awe, envy and sometimes hate:

O those who pass between fleeting words
It is time for you to be gone
Live wherever you like, but do not live among us
It is time for you to be gone!
Die wherever you like, but do not die among us
For we have work to do in our land (Darwish M. , 2015).

It is almost a scandalous fact that all efforts to resolve the Palestinian issue themselves turn into hindrances as an unending debate of interpretations follows each dialogue and the ‘peace process’ goes on and on without a tangible solution. If the stigmatic ‘peace’ starts giving way to a solution, the Zionist propaganda machinery starts the historical debate. Fred Halliday writes that Israel has consistently refused to yield to the UN demand of allowing the refugees to return and settle for 50 years: resorting to ludicrous ancient quotations, recycled tribal bigotry from 700 BC, or denial of the Palestinians’ nationhood on arguments that applied equally to itself (Halliday, *The Middle East in International relations: Power, Politics and Ideology*, 2005, p. 76).

Diplomacy has sagged down to nothingness in this scenario. In his Foreword to *Obstacles to Peace* by Jeremy R. Hammond, the UN special envoy on Palestine Professor Richard Falk declares that Israel has been using the tactics of stealth and defiance to follow the dream of a greater Israel under the tutelage and protection of the USA consistently worsening Palestinian territorial position (Falk R. , Foreword, 2016, p. ix). While the world has witnessed the super-power-supported Israeli politics of silencing the Palestinian cause and history, Darwish has evoked in his poetry the voice of the voiceless and the loud sound of silence that permeates the international perception. In his journal entry *The Roar of Silence*:

I listen to the silence. Is there such a thing as silence? If we were to forget its name and listen intently to what is in it, we would hear the sound of the winds roaming in space and the cries that have found their way back to the earliest caves (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 33).

A vigorous change can only be brought about in the realm of poetry or through a miracle. While the *silence* of the Palestinians is being heard with all its deafening dimensions, and while people, individuals as well as nations are boycotting Israel for its continued human rights abuses as well as its flourishing colonial enterprise with Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS) has a worldwide impact, Israel has managed to commandeer the UN General Assembly as a forum, against all valid international conventions and laws to arrange a gathering of pro-Israeli speakers and corporate heads along with general masses to condemn the BDS flouting the idea that UN General Assembly is meant to discuss matters of international concern in connection with the UN Charter and is not to be used by any country for a power showdown. The United Nations is usually a venue for criticism of Israeli human rights abuses. But on May 3, 2016, the Israeli Mission to the UN used the forum of the General Assembly for a full day of sloganeering against the BDS movement. The official attendees that belonged to pro-Israel countries joined in by waving Israeli flags, sing *Hatikvah*. Danny Danon, the Israeli Ambassador to the UN, called the gathering “historic” and said “BDS is the new face of modern anti-Semitism (Kane, 2016). While this showdown has very negative implications with reference to the working of the UN, which is clearly inclined in Israel’s favour along with the blatant patronage of US and the general Western support. The tangled horns of the United States, Israel and the Palestinians have served to provide us with a very intrepid piece of writing *Fateful Triangle* by Noam Chomsky who believes that since 1970s, American led ‘peace processes’ are in fact a matter of rejectionist sequencer gaining unilateral control and superiority for Israel: “moving to implement a variant of South Africa’s homeland policies, though without many of the advantages that South Africa conferred on the Bantustans (Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle*, 1999, p. 26). Back in 2002 when Jenin massacre was carried out, Darwish had noticed that this policy would be furthered through the 21st century:

In our horoscopes we read that in the year 2002
The camera will smile for people born
Under the Zodiac Sign of the Siege (Darwish M. , *State of Siege*, 2010, p. 23).

The camera represents the presence of media. It smiles perhaps because it has a ready story to narrate to the world and the zodiac sign of the siege is the fixed fate of the Palestinians affirmed at the hands of the international community that is unwilling to acknowledge the pains of a people gradually undergoing the project of complete obliteration. The evidence of this project comes from Chomsky who refers to the signing of Wye Memorandum on 23 October 1998, one of the sham stages of the so called 'peace process' under which 'security roads' for Jews were to be constructed throughout Palestinian territories (Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle*, 1999, p. 26) and through which, eventually, the West Bank has now been turned into a mesh of Israeli occupation and the Palestinian people have been restricted into small cages around which there is free movement of Israeli security and trade (Baltzer A. , *Life in Occupied Palestine*, 2013).

Through this memorandum, preservation of Israeli national interest was to be guaranteed in 'security areas, the areas around Jerusalem, the areas of Jewish settlement, infrastructure interest, water sources, military and security locations, the areas around north-south and west-east transportation arteries, and historic sites of the Jewish people (Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle*, 1999, p. 26).' But immediately after the signing of this Memorandum Israelis went on a spree of grabbing land and within three months established 12 new settlements in the area of the West Bank, razed Palestinian housing projects in the search of Jewish archaeological sites! To add insult to injury, the Memorandum emphasized that Palestinian security forces must act to ensure the security of Israelis and criminalize incitement against bilateral peace agreements. In his poetic exuberance, Darwish calls these mutual settlements "the treaties of despair" and while he equates exile with 'wandering' and seeks to find its special discourse, he laments in 'Truth has two faces and the snow is black in our city' (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 62) :

Everything has been previously prepared for us, so who will tear our names
From our identities: you, or they? And who will plant in us
The speech of wandering: "We could not undo the siege
So let's hand our paradise keys to the messenger of peace and be saved..."
Truth has two faces, the sacred symbol was a sword for us
And against us, what have you done with our fortress to this day?

Looking at the extract from historico-political aspect, it is an open complaint against leaders like Yasser Arafat who frantically fell for the idea of forming a government of their own within the Israeli occupied precincts at the cost of losing decades old stance of resistance. The result is harrowing. According to Dina Matar, creation of the state of Israel meant that the Palestinians did not only lose their land but “most importantly, their commonality with other human beings.” As a result, out of the ten million Palestinians alive today, almost half of the number lives either in the miserable conditions of refugee camps or the diaspora across the Middle East and beyond. The other half i.e. five million odd live in the place once known as Historic Palestine which is thus beleaguered: Citizens of self-proclaimed state of the Jewish people with no political influence, permanent residents of East Jerusalem who cannot be the citizens of Israel, West Bankers and Gazans who continue to live under occupation and stringent movement restriction imposed by Israel (Matar, 2011, p. xii).

4.4 Disabling restrictions on Palestinians

The movement restrictions are being carried out even today under the direct observation of the UN and other democracies of the free world. In her video lecture about life in occupied Palestine, Anna Baltzer reports how Israeli passenger vehicles get precedence over Palestinian ambulances which are always held for hours at checkpoints to aggravate their misery: “... remember that this Palestinian ambulance is traveling from a Palestinian village to a Palestinian city. It’s not travelling from the West Bank into Israel (Baltzer A. , Mediaed, 2015).” Baltzer gives us other examples where a pregnant woman could not be taken to the hospital because of the *orders* and she had to deliver the baby on the side road (Ibid). While there are parallel road-systems, there are also parallel laws as pointed out by the Israeli novelist Avraham Bulli Yehoshua: “The occupation is poisoning us, poisoning us! The problem is not only for the Palestinians. It’s poisoning Israel, poisoning the DNA of the Israeli people. The two systems of law, of judges, this is penetrating Israel. It’s corrupting Israel (Freedland, 2016).” How can a

sizeable and tangible human population be exposed to such apartheid and inhuman attitude for such a long time even through the twenty first century? Is it the time for a new sensibility to develop? Is there going to be another alternative of the UN in the times of NATO supremacy and the US hegemonic interests along with Israeli preeminence despite its consistent violation of human rights? Is another new world order emerging with a newer interpretation of how existence is to be defined!

The true homeland is that which cannot be known or proved. As for the country that emerges from a chemical formula or from a theory in an institute, it is not a homeland. Your awareness of the need for proof of the history of a rock and your ability to manufacture proof does not give you priority of belonging vis-à-vis someone who can tell when the rains will come from the smell of that rock. For you that rock is an intellectual exercise, but for its owner it is a roof and a wall. And a rock is not a rock when it can change into a totem that you carry in your bag and bring out as a demonstration in your lectures (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, p. 39).

The international community and particularly the super powers like UK and the US have predominantly shown bias towards the situation in the Middle East particularly when it comes down to Israel to stand by the international law, security council's resolutions and general ethics. Let us take an example, the Preamble of the draft resolution refers to the 'inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war' and the Operative Paragraph One of the Security Council Resolution 242 requires:

- (i) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
- (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force (United Nations, 1967).

Although the words are self-explanatory, the interpretations have not allowed to solve this otherwise simplistic decision so far even after 49 years now. After the resolution (drafted by five members including two from Britain), the British Foreign Secretary George Brown said, "It calls for "withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories occupied during the recent conflict." It does not call for Israeli withdrawal from "the" territories recently occupied, nor does it use the word "all".

It would have been impossible to get the resolution through if either of these words had been included, but it does set out the lines on which negotiations for a settlement must take place (Wikipedia, n.d.). Lord Caradon of UK, the chief author of the resolution asserts that the settlers must withdraw to secure and recognized boundaries so that the map of Palestine may also be drawn secure and recognized (Ibid.). The editor of Christian Science Monitor asks, “Does resolution 242 as unanimously adopted by the un security council require the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from all of the territories occupied by Israel during the 1967 war?” The answer is no. In the draft of the resolution, the words *the* and *all* are omitted. Resolution 242 calls for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict, without specifying the extent of the withdrawal. The resolution, therefore, neither commands nor prohibits total withdrawal (Middle East Peace Prospects, 1985). Thus, the question of Palestinian territorial integrity is skillfully overlooked both in the resolution as well as its interpretations, both past and present. The same remained the fate of Resolution 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and so on and so forth! The western intelligentsia, particularly the political elite is so heavily impressed by the Jewish and Zionist economic domination that their political vision is almost dwarfish as well as unjust. An example of this may be found in the American President Jimmy Carter’s acclaimed book *Palestine-Peace, Not Apartheid*, a book heavily tilted, akin to American foreign policy, in the favour of Israel. In this book he proposes that any hope of enduring peace in Palestine is subject to the following basic premises:

- Israel’s right to exist within recognized borders-and to live in peace-must be accepted by Palestinians and all other neighbours.
- Palestinians must live in peace and dignity in their own land as specified by international law unless modified by good-faith negotiations with Israel (Carter, *Palestine- Peace not Apartheid*, 2006, pp. 20-21).

The premises are farcical in so much as he himself suggests that in 2001, Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister committed himself to reject the Oslo Peace Agreement and got the Gaza Airport runway bulldozed, cordoning off the Gazan population from rest of the world and later confined their elected President Yasser Arafat to his office premises in Ramallah (Ibid. p. 11). Sharon is reported to have said:

The Palestinians should be hit very hard, because if they don't feel they have been defeated, it will be impossible to return to the negotiating table.”⁴⁸ This perspective implies that the opponent may only negotiate on terms dictated by the victor (Adam & Moodley, 2005, p. 89).

How can the Palestinians live in ‘peace and dignity’ while their civil liberties have come to an absolute zero, Jimmy Carter does not have an answer. Israel’s ‘recognized borders’ are undergoing a consistent evolution through demolishing Palestinian villages, uprooting their olive plantations and the installments of settler regime all over the West Bank. According to Ma’an News Agency, Israel has demolished 44,480 Palestinian homes and structures in the area of West Bank alone since 1967 (Ma'an News Agency, 2016). The Israeli historian Uri Avnery writes in his book *Truth against Truth*:

From the beginning of the conflict up to the present day, the Zionist/Israel leadership has acted in total disregard of the Palestinian narrative. Even when it wished to reach the solution, such efforts were doomed to failure because of the ignorance of the national aspirations, traumas, fears and hopes of the Palestinian people (Avnery, *Truth against Truth*, 2010, p. 3).

This points out a very important omission at the deep structural level of the political concept of mutual coexistence i.e. recognition of each other as equally sensitive and respectable human beings who have the same needs of life, security and resource development. Darwish describes this deep-rooted willful ignorance of the Israeli leaders and its allies in the first world and believes that unless the mighty start observing what is truly right, no change will occur in the fate of the downtrodden Palestinians and their artistic impression will always carry a tinge of protest:

Our losses: from two martyrs to eight
Every day,
And ten wounded
And twenty homes
And fifty olive trees, in addition to the structural defect
That will afflict the poem and the play and the incomplete painting (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 137).

Palestine is the *poem*, international affairs is the *play* and the *incomplete painting* is the world peace the preservation of which was promised in the UN charter. Hypocrisy, manipulative word-play at the cost of human loss and double standards have always defeated the UN efforts. On the one hand Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu surprises the whole world (and perhaps himself as well) by claiming: “I’m going to say something now that some of you will not believe. But I’m going to say it anyway because it’s true. I, the prime minister of Israel, care more about Palestinians than their own leaders do (Netanyahu, 2016). In a recorded talk with some young Israeli students, the same ‘caring more’ prime minister is shown denouncing the very existence of the Palestinians. His video-recorded words insist that the Palestinians should not only be hit but they should be hit hard: “Not just one blow, but blows that are so painful that the price will be too heavy to be borne, the price is not too heavy to be borne, now. A broad attack on the Palestinian Authority: to bring them to the point of being afraid that everything is collapsing ...The world won’t say a thing, the world will say we’re defending... (You Tube, 2012).” In a world where consent is manufactured by the manipulative investments of the big military powers and where the nations build their grand infrastructures by selling weapons of mass destruction, where the might has somehow proven right for longer periods of time, Darwish finds solace in turning to the historico-religious poetics:

Here, histories gather in us red,
Black. If it weren’t for the sins the holy book would’ve been
Smaller. If it weren’t for the mirage
The prophet’s footsteps on the sand would have been stronger, and
The road to go shorter
So let endlessness complete its infinite chores (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 137).

The political somersaults are not isolated examples in the modern world where media discourse suddenly changes or at least tends to change the ground realities of existential nature. For example, on September 9, 2016 Israeli Prime Minister once again surprised the world by his televised address available through both Facebook and Twitter that the international efforts (like supporting BDS worldwide and media condemnation) to force Israel to remove settlements from the Palestinian West Bank amounted to “ethnic cleansing” of Jews. The video is ironically titled as “No Jews” which puts the historical argument of Palestinian ethnic cleansing completely upside down (Latuf, 2016). Referring to the same propagandist tendency among the Jewish media, the famous Israeli writer Uri Avnery states in his article titled “The Cancer Cells” that while describing the deaths of Israeli combat soldiers during Israeli motivated Six-Day War and Yom-Kippur War and the Lebanon War of occupation etc., the media always uses the word “Israeli soldiers were murdered”. Avnery considers this terminology as not only a semantic novelty but also an outright insult to those who laid their lives for the national interest of Israel. Avnery argues that whenever it comes to Israeli open aggression against the Palestinians or the neighbouring countries, it is shown as an act of self-defense and when there is a natural response or reprisal from the other side, “... we are back in the ghetto. Again we are poor, fearful Jews. Even when we are in uniform. Even when we are armed to the teeth. Even when we have tanks, airplanes, missiles and the nuclear option. Alas we are murdered (Avnery, The Cancer Cells, 2003)!”

To stress that this linguistic twist exists in the media, he refers to two incidents of Sharon era i.e. during the second Intifada, where Palestinian fighters killed the patrolling IDF soldiers in Orfa Jewish settlement near Ramallah and the Netzarim Jewish settlement in Gaza (both illegal settlements and being used by IDF for the purposes of military observation and control). In both cases, the dominant colonial media correspondents spoke about “terrorists”, “murdered”, “terrorist action” etc. Avnery insists that these were examples of “classic guerilla engagement. Not terrorism. Not an attack on civilians. The action of guerilla fighters against armed soldiers in

an occupied area. If it had involved German soldiers in France or French soldiers in Algeria, nobody would have dreamed of saying that they were "murdered" (Ibid.). It is quite understandable that while Israel institutes conditions of apartheid, occupation and dispossession on the Palestinians, there would be a reaction, individual or collective, to cross these border-like conditions in order to secure the normal equilibrium of life and satisfy the natural instinct of home-and-land which Israel has been trying to dislocate and fragment. Palestinians are thus trying, consciously and unconsciously to reconstruct their homes and identity through what Nadra Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Sara Ihmoud term as "a radical praxis of love that engenders new forms of resistance (Franklin, Cooper, & Aoude, Spring 2014).

4.5 Resistance, Apartheid, and Crusade

In November 1974, speaking to the General Assembly of the UN, Yasser Arafat said, "Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom-fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand." A little over a week after Arafat's address the General Assembly passed two resolutions, 3236 and 3237. The first affirmed the Palestinian "right to self-determination without external interference" and "the right to national independence and sovereignty." It also stated the "right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted..." The second resolution conferred "observer status" (within the UN) upon the PLO. The General Assembly the next year passed Resolution 3379 (November 1975). This resolution determined that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination," equating it with *apartheid* South Africa (Gregory Harms, 2008, p. 130). Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley have quotes several scholastic instances that support the same idea. On authority of the South African political scientist Na'eem Jeenah they declare Israel to be an apartheid state like South Africa with similar problems and solutions. They refer to the British social scientist Daryl Glaser who supports the exactitude that exists between Zionism and Apartheid. He is not the only authority to establish this conclusion:

Noam Chomsky compares apartheid favorably by asserting that the separation wall is “helping turn Palestinian communities into dungeons, next to which the Bantustans of South Africa look like symbols of freedom, sovereignty and self-determination.” Since the 1980s, Uri Davis, focusing on legal arrangements, has argued the case for “Apartheid Israel” (Adam & Moodley, 2005, p. 20).

Despite these political warnings, Israel and the United States have remained steadfast to the settlement policies and they kept suggesting ambiguous statements that addressed the people and not the land! “The Palestinian cause in the late 1970s and 1980s appeared to be marking time or even going backward (Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*, 2007, p. 156). As a result, the Palestinian people were divided into three major components i.e. the refugees in exile, Palestinians under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the discriminated Palestinian citizens of the Israeli state (BDS Movement, 2016). Darwish looks at this shift in the ongoing identity-crisis where once-the-victims are the victimizers and once-the-displaced are the displacers and the foreigners for centuries have claimed nativity and the aborigines for centuries have been relegated to the status of refugees sans rights. He laments the propagandist historicity of the dissipated facts. He feels that he and his compatriots have been reduced to a video documentary with an improvised speech:

They folded the scene. They triumphed.
They photographed what they wanted in our skies: Star by star.
They photographed what they wanted from our days: Cloud by cloud.
They changed time's bell
And triumphed (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p. 124).

While the words are self-explanatory, the representational anomaly that underscores the Palestinian side of the story where the attacked and the massacred underlings are consoled by giving them secure poignant coverage in the hyper-world of media and thereby, while the facts are swiftly distorted, the real people are supposed to be available only on the television screens. Laleh Khalili believes that neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis can be expected to drop their history or national identity. One cannot expect them to go into a history-transcending universal rationalism and abandon their history of suffering and the need of survival: “To recognize these imperatives, as components of national identity, and to try to reconcile them, rather than dismiss

them as so much non-factual ideology, strikes me as the task in hand (Khalili, 2007, p. 1).” It is nationalism that holds Palestinian resistance movements together. Edward Said has aptly summed it up by proposing that dispossession and estrangement ultimately give rise to resistance and nationalism through the assertion of belonging to a place and a heritage: “It affirms the home created by a community of language, culture, and customs; and, by so doing, it fends off exile, fights to prevent its ravages. Indeed, the interplay between nationalism and exile is like Hegel’s dialectic of servant and master, opposites informing and constituting each other. (Said E. W., *Reflections on Exile*, 2001, p. 176).”

Philip C. Winslow writes in his 2007 book *Victory for Us is to See You Suffer* his experience of reporting on the troubles of Northern Ireland as well as in West Bank and Jerusalem, which was of course a few years later. He concludes that by chance, two men that he met in West Belfast and later in Jerusalem spoke of the wrongs of the respective dominant colonial powers and gave vent to their anger with reference to the events that had taken place more than half a century earlier. One referred to the ruthless British culling of the revolt of 1916 in Northern Ireland and the other spoke of the 1917 letter of British foreign secretary Arthur James Balfour’s 1917 letter to Lord Rothschild affirming support for “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” *The Jerusalem Palestinian* likened that letter with the April 2004 letter of George W. Bush to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in which the president declared that a return to 1949 armistice lines in accordance with the UN resolutions was unrealistic and “existing major population centers” needed to be taken into account, thus giving an approval albeit tacitly for the Israeli Policy of continuing to build facts-on-ground through newer and bigger settlement projects alienating more and more Palestinians every day (Winslow, 2007, p. ix). The rate of this land theft undertaken by the Israeli authorities per year is also on the rise. Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ) has revealed that in the first six months of the year 2016, 7,773 acres of Palestinian own lands have been seized under the escalated policy of

Judaization in the occupied West Bank. This rate of land grab is 439 % more in comparison with the last year land seizure that amounted to 1,442 acres (International Middle East Media Center, 2016). According to the same institute (ARIJ), there are about 766,000 Israeli Jews settled illegally across West Bank and Jerusalem in absolute contravention of International Law (IMEMC News, 2016). Darwish describes this plight in such words:

I come from the apex of defeat. This land seems like a wounded bull that fell from the pinnacle of hope to the lowest depths of hereditary defeat and was connected to the world only by a sharp horn that still hovers over the surface of the earth, overflowing with oil, lethargy, and people forbidden any role except filling out ballots whose results always come out YES (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010).

These few instances speak out the fact that whatever have the circumstances been in occupied Palestine, Darwish has always got a word that sits square with the feelings of his people. His words are not journalistic in appeal viz. They are not written on the spur of the moment like a news flash. His poetic mind absorbs all the images, reports, pains and visuals related with his country and makes elaborate combinations, of emotions and feelings, and words and meanings till he speaks out a language that expresses, with miraculous accuracy, beyond time and space, the true feelings of his likes, the exiles caught in memories, hence his widespread poetic appeal. In his poem “Remember after us, only Life”, he sums up the exilic pain in these words:

They don't look behind them to bid exile farewell,
Since ahead of them is exile, and they have intimated the circular
Road, so there is no ahead and no behind,
And no north and no south.

The poem continues with the rhythm of exile in which the travelers “*they*” depart, sketch out, get out of the story (become a part of the diaspora), dream, ascend and descend (vicissitudes of life), leap to the stars but ultimately, before they die, and in order to die peacefully:

... They return to the story ...endless is the beginning.
They escape from sleepiness to the angel of sleep,
Who is white, red eyed from contemplating
The shed blood:

“Remember after us
Only life” ... (Darwish M. , Don't Apologise for What You've Done , 2007).

While the Palestinians seek refuge, after their villages are razed and their farms bulldozed or generally, amenities of life denied, they become both *homeless* and *landless*. Without this collective home-land-less-ness, one can imagine that the Palestine's borders are shrinking as without doubt these are, then it is not wrong to assume that they are living without any borders. While this imports a sense of deep insecurity, it also makes their fate rush out of borders. This simple complication forms the crux of Darwish's poetry and its form where repetition and logical argument is woven so intricately that it exudes the sentiment of the moment while the temporal and the spatial dimensions seem to freeze:

And we have a land without borders, like our idea
Of the unknown, narrow and wide. A land ...
When we walk in its map, it becomes narrow with us,
And take us to an ashen tunnel, so we shout
In its labyrinth: “And we still love you, our love
Is a hereditary illness” (Darwish M. , The Butterfly's Burden, 2007, p. 205).

The history and the politics of the land of Palestine has made its past and the present roll into one. Whether the future holds a different equation or not is difficult to say. While the love of the land of Palestine throbs in the hearts of Muslims or Christian Palestinians, the Jewish Israelites also claim the same love. While both sides hold divergent views and claims on both land and its history, Uri Avnery reports that on the 70th birthday of the First Zionist Conference in Basel in September 1967, General Yitzhak Rabin the victor of the Six-Day War gave a landmark speech in which he compared Israel to the Kingdom established by the Crusaders and insisted that one mistake that the Crusaders did was not to be repeated this time i.e. immigration should not be allowed to dwindle (Avnery, *Israel Without Zionists*, 1970, p. 68). While it was an important strategic decision, the analogy that the general gave was not without a deeper level of meaning. The Crusaders fought for eight consecutive generations and then suffered a lasting defeat. This time the old mistakes were to be recognized in order for them not to be repeated. The stay had to

be ensured, expansion had to be endless and consistent waves of immigrants must be affected to aid the existing population growth, the fervor was not to be allowed to die and the way Israeli government has managed to keep the 1948 spirit alive is to make military service compulsory for all young men and women before they are to continue that service or initiated into other professions. They must first encounter the local population in full military gear and assert their status as eternal colonizers, the better seed, the supreme 'us'. Darwish is not unaware of these parallels. When his people call him their national poet, and when they bedeck his mausoleum with the title *From Palestine to Mahmoud Darwish*, they acknowledge how in his poetic art, he kept their history and their traditions alive:

I do not want to retreat now, as
The Crusaders retreated from me, I am
All this silence between the two sides ...
In the land of my siege and your siege (Darwish M. , 2014, p. 46).

The Crusade motif finds its most apt reference in the book of political memoir *Conflicts and Contradictions* (1986) by Meron Benvenisti, former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem who is described as 'one of the most controversial scholars and political figures (who) reflects on Israel, the Arabs and the West Bank' on the title page of the Villard Books edition of this treatise. He is the son of a geographer/cartographer who devoted all his life in the sacred project of creating a Hebrew map of Eretz Israel by changing place names. He mentions how old Arabic names became his second nature while he developed a consciousness of an old vanquished world. He refutes the idea that the present day Israeli Jews can be compared with Crusaders whom he labels as "rootless drifters." Darwish believes the subjugation of Palestine to be a clash between Israel and Palestine with the understanding, "We knew that had they won they would have destroyed our work. But we won, so we became the destroyers. Who is the victim? Who is the culprit? Who is the judge?" Marrouchi believes that what we consider to be our world is only a construct of our identity. Referring to Darwish's *construct* of identity, he asserts that being a Palestinian means that your

identity is at stake. He says that Darwish has brought a correct answer to the myth that Palestinians were merely nomad groups who could live anywhere without a sense of grounding. He quotes Darwish: “There is nothing more apparent than the Palestinian truth and the Palestinian right: this is our country, and this small part is a part of our homeland, of real not mythical homeland. This occupation is a foreign occupation, no matter how many titles of divine right it enlists (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 212).”

Morani Kornberg Weiss, an eminent Jewish poetess presents an unconditional and most profound apology to Darwish. She also speaks in both personal and representational roles. Referring to Yom Kippur War, she has written a poetic epistle to Darwish, listing her sense of guilt and an alphabetic accountability of all Israeli crusade against Palestinians. She says that when one sees the truth and keeps quiet, one begins to die:

We Abominated. Beat.
Captivated. Cleansed. Demolished.
Displaced. Effaced. Exiled. Fought.
Gated. Hated. Isolated. Jeopardized.
Killed. Labored. Murdered. Neglected.
Occupied. Oppressed. Policed.
Quarreled. Raped. Sentenced.
Silenced. Suppressed.
Tortured. Uprooted. Violated.
Wronged. X-ed. Yanked. Zoned. ... (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, pp. 50-51).

Darwish was alive to the criticism that a similar kind of apologetic and self-recriminating phenomenon of guilt is absent among Palestinian writers. But he declares such criticism is “a desire to treat victim and the killer as equals, (it) demands that the victim cry together with his killer over a shared misery” of a victor who won a homeland and of the oppressed whose country and psyche are both *occupied* (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, p. 43). Darwish qualifies his claim of Crusader/Saracen comparison not on the basis of the tenets of political science or the niceties of a historian but purely on the basis of a poetic response and in this he is successful in making that much needed apologetic claim as well but not without a patriotic

presupposition: “Our water has been cut by those acting on behalf of leftover Crusaders, yet Saladin used to send ice and fruits to the enemy in the hope that "their hearts would melt," as he used to say (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 34).” Overall, this crusade imagery is widely distributed in Darwish’s works who equates it with the Israeli politics. For his people, though he is a poet and has to be on the back foot, Darwish becomes vocal with his poetics and takes the argument in the arena of history where he fights like a gladiator with his weapons of argument and nationalist zeal:

And I saw an abyss, a war after the war, a tribe whose day
Has come and gone, and a tribe that has told the modern Hulagu:
We are yours! But I say: We aren't a slave nation
And I send Ibn Khaldun my admiration.
And I am I, even if I broke on the metal air . . . even if I were handed
Over by the new Crusader's war to the god of vengeance (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 82).

4.6 Darwish against the legitimization of occupation

Israeli scholar and Amira Hass refers to the Israeli practice of bypass roads, land expropriations, settlement expansion, uprooting Palestinian trees and closures in contrast with their plighted concessions for the future only if the Palestinians start behaving well! She calls it ‘absurd’. During the years of negotiations that lasted almost for ten years i.e. Madrid talks of 1991 to the turn of the century, the ‘solution’ was always the catch-phrase in the international talks about Palestine: “But at the same time, the Palestinian lands earmarked for that state shrank, and were carved up and divided. . . . (Hass, *Haaretz*, 2003).” Explaining how this ‘shrinking’ of Palestine is brought about, Uri Avnery has vividly described fifteen phases of the ever-widening circle of colonization and settlement expansion. His description is both a bird’s eye view and pure narrative literature that registers the dramatic construction of one or more mobile Zionist homes on a hilltop that serve as an outpost. While Israeli government agrees that these are illegal, it sends out army to protect them and divert water resources, electricity and telephone network to assure their well-being. The settlement thus begins to flourish till it is admitted as a legal settlement that

cannot be reversed. This is not just in the West Bank where new land expropriations are being carried out but also in East Jerusalem where the earlier house building sanctions issued to Palestinians are gradually being revoked by the Israeli government and reportedly the Palestinians are supposed to destroy their own built houses to save themselves from the heavy demolition charges that are multifold than self-destruction. Similarly, there are occasions where the fellahin have been asked to sign papers that they would be responsible for their own deaths if they happen to step into contiguous areas of military nature including army patrolled settlements! Avnery's account of the construction of a bypass road as an instrument of political incision deserves attention. Such a road is constructed, in theory, to safeguard the movement of the settlers and soldiers. For this purpose, the army swiftly expropriates strategic stretches of the cultivated lands of contiguous Palestinian villages. He gives a very graphic picture of what ensues: The road with its "security area" is 60–80 meters wide. Palestinians try to attack the settlement that stands on their land. To prevent attacks on the settlement, an area 400 meters wide around the settlement is declared a "security zone" closed to Palestinians. The olive groves and fields in this area are lost to their owners. This provides the motivation for more attacks. For security reasons, the army uproots all trees that might afford cover for an attack on the settlement or the road leading to it. The army has even invented a new Hebrew word for it, something like "exposuring." The army destroys all buildings from which the settlement or the road could be attacked. For good measure, all buildings from which the settlement can be observed are demolished, too. Anyone who comes near the settlement is shot, on suspicion that he has come to spy or attack (Avnery, *The Cancer Cells*, 2003). Under these annihilating circumstances, in order to maintain the identity and the cultural memory, Darwish speaks against the slow effacement that appears to be a matter of Israeli policy of expansionism. He declares the *hasbara* idea that Palestine was an empty desert as a misnomer:

If my country was like that, it would not have tempted you to occupy me, burn me, and expel me. And to this day, we have not yet arrived at the stage of facing the chalk circle

because we have not come to judgment. And who is to be the judge? You! How could you be enemy and judge at once, unless you were my lover, and yet my relationship to you is not one of love (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 39)?

According to Darwish, Zionist philosophy gives violence an emotional legitimacy instrumental in creating and preserving Israel. He calls it the terrorist principle of “I fight therefore I exist.” The Zionists have a continuous liaison with those religious fundamentalist texts where the violence is heavenly sanctioned against non-Jewish people as in the case of the Old Testament stories of Joshua Son of Nun. They also take the support of Talmudic logic that “a crime becomes legal and justified as long as it helps to realize Zionist aims (Ibid. p. 90-91).” These crimes are least reported in the press and media as both have a negligible approach to the facts on ground as Halsell reports about Terre Fleener, an American woman who was held in an Israeli Jail for two years for having taken some photos though she captured nothing of their military installations. In Darwish’s poetry there is an unknown, nameless hero, perhaps the poet himself, who suffers the crimes of the Zionists and then puts in all his force of the body, mind and soul to fight back. Darwish thus touches the themes of the general pain and registers the conventional response on behalf of the entire nation by way of litotes rather than taking a few isolated straightforward instances. His poetry is thus universal though free of time and space. He writes in his poem *The Faces of Truth* (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 66):

Truth is plain as day
When the victim walks
With amputated legs
Slowly
And truth is a character
In the poem
It is not what it is
Or its opposite
It is what falls in drops from its shadow.

4.7 Darwish on the dimensions of exilic presence

The state of exile and the resolute bitterness with which Darwish has accepted it, continuously define his identity and haunt his life wherever he goes. He is the greatest exile-poet of Palestine as well as the entire Middle East. As an exile he looks around and to his dismay, he usually discovers that he has neither the recognition of a sovereign Palestine nor that of the Middle East brotherhood. His existence is held hanging in the limbo. He loses definition and feels that the very surroundings in the foreign lands wherever he wanders mock his existence. The situation of aloofness and ostracism of such an exile is beautifully described by Karen Armstrong in her book *The Spiral Staircase* where reflecting on her own example, she asserts that the state of exile is not just the change of street address, but rather a spiritual dislocation. She speaks with reference to anthropological and psychological tenets that for the exiles there is a crucial lack of orientation as they feel lost in a universe that suddenly becomes alien. With the fixed point of home vanishing and with roots of their culture and identity cut off, they feel that they are ‘withering away and becoming insubstantial’ in a cosmos where their essential uniqueness of place that defines their individuality has been robbed and forgotten (Armstrong, *The Spiral Staircase*, p. 41). In her book *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*, she includes exile among some of the most deeply rooted “psychic scars” like persecution, exploitation, marginalization, occupation, humiliation, enslavement, impoverishment, and defamation (Armstrong, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*, 2010, p. 115). Along with Darwish, this agony of exilic existence is felt by hundreds and thousands of other Palestinians as well. He is their spokesperson, their representative and therefore their idealized national poet. In his poem “Athens Airport”, he presents an irremediable situation which the exiles must face all their lives. It is being there and yet nowhere. The soul has the body but the latter has no home. It is not just helplessness that one feels but also a great deal of fear. All they have for home is the little bag that houses their bare necessities and which the

needs must keep light because they have to travel a lot and they have to stand in queues for interrogation:

Where did you come from? Asks the customs' official.

And we answer: *Form the sea!*

Where are you going?

To the sea, we answer.

What is your address?

A woman of our group says: *My village is the bundle on my back*

(Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. 12).

Muhammad Hanif, the Anglophone Pakistani writer refers to another issue that the Palestinian international travelers come across: They are taken and therefore treated as Pakistanis! During his visit to Palestine to attend Palestine Festival of Literature, he met a young man who spoke about his travel to Europe and reported this stimulating phonetic parallel. Having reported the extra checks in such cases, Muhammad Hanif poses a rhetorical question: “I wasn’t sure if I should be pleased that in the crazed-out world of airport security Pakistanis have beaten Palestinians. Or was there something deeper going on?” He has in his mind the post 9/11 trauma of growing Islamophobia. Muhammad Hanif himself had an opportunity of feeling the alienation normally falling to the lot of exiles, both internal and external. It was when during a walk near the Jordan River crossing, a teenager uniformed Israeli soldier took away Hanif’s glasses and made him look up to see the scorching haze of the sun while being questioned about his whereabouts. They wanted to know where he was from. What did he do? What kind of stories did he write? He reports that the questions continued till he was convinced of the Israeli soldier’s literary critical bent of mind (Soueif, 2017, p. 225). Edward Said believes that exile is “irremediably secular” and “unbearably historical” as it is perpetrated by one group of humanity against another. Exile is a phenomenon of reduction comparable with death ‘but without death’s ultimate mercy” as it tears apart the human factor from three indispensable human assets: nourishment of tradition, family and geography. He believes that these deprivations and their impact can best be witnessed not only through the words of a poet in exile but also through his

person which is an embodiment of exilic antimonies endured with a unique intensity. He recalls his meeting with the Pakistani exilic poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz whom he declares to be the greatest contemporary Urdu poet and who was exiled from Pakistan by Zia's military regime and had found home among Palestinian writers in Beirut despite the difference of language, life-history and poetic conventions: "...What I watched required no translation: it was an enactment of a homecoming expressed through defiance and loss (Said E. W., *Reflections on Exile*, 2001, p. 174)."

Darwish also wanted such an enactment of homecoming and he tried his luck with defiance and loss but he did not want total exclusion upon his return i.e. he was sane enough to understand that Israel was an established political reality out of which he wanted to carve out *his* identity very delicately without causing any damage that would invite reprisals and cause him to be permanently shut out. In his poetry such a situation was possible. In his 1992 poem "On the last evening on this earth", he writes:

Here on the last evening
We contemplate mountains surrounding clouds: a conquest and a counter conquest
And an ancient time handing over our door keys to the new time ...
In a little while
We will search for what was our history around your history in the distant lands
And ask ourselves in the end: Was the Andalus
Right here or over there? On earth . . . or in the poem ... (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 57).

The explanation came four years later in 1996 when he was asked about these lines in an interview he gave to Helit Yeshurun. Darwish remarked quite philosophically that both for the Israelites and the Palestinians, a time of investigation had arrived. Ironically, he called both nations as "the stupidest people in history" and "Josephs hated by their brothers". He expressed a hope that when the two communities would finally strike a deal of peace, they would be able to laugh at themselves:

But there is a question that worries me: Are we ourselves? Are we free enough to make independent wars and an independent peace, or are we pawns in a game of chess? Once you wanted to be Jews. Now you want to be Palestinians. What is it with you and the

Palestinians? You have obtained the whole universe, why suddenly do you want to be Palestinians?

In this political and racial equation of parity, Darwish moves from ‘we’ to ‘you’ while his audience remains the same. When he is further asked what he meant by the line “Are we ourselves?”, he said:

Poetry must always ask the question without answering it. This poem is about people returning and not finding themselves. Is the *I-that-was* the *I-that-returned*? Even Ulysses didn’t return as the same man. The sea changed him. The sea and the years. He didn’t find the same house. He didn’t find the same Penelope. You don’t find yourself twice. Every day you are a different man (Palestine Studies, 2012).

When a poet’s imagination grows beyond the apparent and the political, it is then that the doors of metaphysical dimensions start opening. The exploration of this metaphysical dimension may not be considered a part of the present research but it can help in holistic understanding of Darwish’s *text* that has multiple intertextual aspects. And no true poet can stay without this spiritual and metaphysical mood for long. For Darwish, this is impossible as he says in *Mural*:

One day I will become what I want
One day I will become a thought
That no sword or book can dispatch to the wasteland
A though equal to rain on the mountain split open by a blade of grass
Where power will not triumph
And justice is not fugitive (Darwish M. , Mural, 2009, p. 10).

When he speaks in terms of becoming a *thought*, one naturally wonders what his thought predominantly is. To be in exile is to be in a condition without definition. Darwish died in Houston, Texas in USA but he did not belong there. He had to be flown to where he belonged i.e. Palestine, a place which would not have him before as his belonging was long ago challenged and razed. Death changed the exilic perspective and restored him to the homeland. This is what he had predicted in *Mural*:

Where now is my where?
Where is the city of death
Where am I?
In this no-here ... No-time ... And nothingness
As if I had died already
I know this story
I know that I go towards what I don’t know

Perhaps I'm still alive somewhere
Aware of what I want ...
One day I'll become what I want (Ibid.)

Lesley Hazleton sums up the feelings of an exile (a person in exile) in very elaborate poetic terms. The context of her words is specific but it speak equitably for all those who have experienced homelessness by way of self-or-forced exile. She speaks of the exilic dreams of return which do not mean simply going back but being received in a wanted and welcome manner, by way of a 'public righting of a great wrong': "The place you return to will be the same --- the landscape, the people, everything that constitutes the feeling of home --- and yet transformed, and your return will itself be a sign of that transformation, a signal of hope for a new start, a better future. This is the vision that sustains you through the years of exile (Hazleton, 2013, p. 239)." The trauma of eviction, the pain of being reduced to a refugee status for a year and then sneaking back with an uncle and a guide to find that his village was gone must have been traumatic for Darwish. Settling there and even going to school under subterfuge and still being called to hide for the fear of the school authorities, and even at home running into hiding in cupboards was what gave Darwish his first glimpses of racialism, arrogance and 'flagrant infringement of basic human rights'. All this made Darwish to feel that he was travelling upon the road of life with the lantern of exile (*ba qindeel i manfi*) in his hands:

On this road lit by the lantern of Exile,
I see a tent open to all directions:
The South stands firm in defiance of the wind,
The East becomes a mystical West,
The West a treaty by the dead who mint coins of peace.
And as for the North, the far North, it's neither
A Geography nor a direction ---
It's a pantheon for the gods (Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 65).

The road here signifies the routine of life that goes on regardless of the major or minor tragedies of human life. People may be the 'victims of a map' but life is not. The lantern of exile is in Darwish's hands which may even be the hand of any other Palestinian (or even non-Palestinian exile. Dalia Karpel speaks of Darwish as the symbol of the Palestinian national ethos

while she asserts: “If there is no hope, it is to be created by force. That is what the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish tries to do in his works (Karpel, 2007).” In his journal entry titled “A Talent for Hope” he notes that hope is not the opposite of despair. At the philosophical level, for Darwish, hope is rather a talent than an idea: Perhaps it is the faith that springs from divine indifference which has left us dependent on our own special talents to make sense of the fog surrounding us.’ (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 26). He knows that in exile, what holds a man steadfast is hope. But it must be remembered that hope is not born with exile. It comes by and by. The first instance of exile is full of despair and desperation. The earth does not seem the same friendly earth, nor does the sky a benign presence, strangeness spreads over everything. The definitions of the present take their root from the past, from the moment of first signs of transformation. Like Iqbal called the catastrophic Europeans who colonized India as *farang* (Franks), Darwish calls the British as Romans who took the land of Palestine as a trust and then handed it over to another alien people (Jews), to appropriate. While the freedom is compromised, the poet is not free to speak his frenzied words freely. Under colonial enterprise, besides physical checks and barriers, there are intellectual checkpoints as well. The poems become a criminal activity as well as the evidence against the poet in OPT. The poems are censored. The poets are arrested. The Hebrew Court in Tel Aviv then decided whether to subject them to the grinding machine of incarceration, or leave them free but essentially defeated. In his poem *A Horse for the Stranger*, he declares that in the occupied lands, the freedom that poetry professes cannot exist:

. . . There is no room left in the land for the poem, my friend
But is there room left, in the poem, for the land after Iraq?
Rome besieges the rain of our world, and drubs its moons
Like copper for jazz. Rome brings time back to the cave. Rome
Lunges at the earth, so open another exile for your exile . . . (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, pp. 94-95).

In her book *Overcoming Speechlessness*, Alice Walker who put herself into a short exile to Gaza, as she travelled all the way from America to witness and report firsthand the scenes of

horror in the aftermath of 2008 Israeli bombardment of Gaza where apartment buildings, hospitals, factories, schools, police stations, ministries everything just went down in rubble and dust: “ I waited to hear some word of regret, of grief, of compassion from our leaders in Washington, who had sent the money, the earnings of American taxpayers, to buy the bombs destroying the world ... overshadowed by an indifference to the value of Palestinian life that has corrupted our children’s sense of right and wrong for generations (Walker, 2010, pp. 21-22).” Alice Walker has used a quotation of Buddha as the epigraph of this book: “Three things cannot be hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth.” So one can hope that some good day the people of the first world would wake up to the truth of Palestinian life and her tragedy. “There is actual puzzlement in most people’s minds about why “the state of Israel” consumes far more funding, and news coverage that, say my own former state, Georgia, or the state where I live now, California. Americans are generally uninformed about the reality of this never-ending conflict that has puzzled us for decades and of which so many of us, if we are honest, are heartily sick (Ibid. p. 23).” The puzzling poetics of Palestinian situation runs deep in Darwish’s works. In a paradoxical existential condition the poet lets his feelings spread uninhibited and addresses his own self in a monologue to rediscover the fading identity:

Who my me will I be after you?
 Is my body behind me or before you?
 Who am I you tell me?
 Make me as I make you ...
 And transport me from the valley to a white eternity
 Teach me life on the way
 Test me like an atom in the heavens
 Come to my aid against the boredom of the eternal
 And be lenient when the roses pierce from my veins and wound me ... (Darwish M. , Mural, 2009, p. 25).

The multiple crises of *identity* ranges from ‘*My me who are you?*’ to ‘*Who am I you tell me?*’ and it starts from a journey on a familiar road and then leads on to resurrection and eternity till the ‘*boredom of the eternal*’ brings him back to the phenomenal world. Both the *self* and the *other* in him are undergoing a mutuality of presence. The identity is not completely established, nor is perhaps desirable. In an interview given to Helit Yeshurun in 1996, Darwish remarked that

he felt that he was not himself anymore. His identity felt to him the identity of a stranger which he himself could not recognize. There was a dialectical relationship between what he was and how he experienced himself to be:

If I were alone, without my fellow man, what would I understand? I would be filled with myself, my entire truth, without dualism. Ever since I left Andalusia I have been searching for the answer, ever since I left the history of the other, of my fellow man. Ever since and up until today I have been searching for a place in history and am far from finding it. I am outside the history of my fellow man and outside the history of myself (Palestine Studies, 2012).

Later when he is asked if his exile has become a mask for him, he answered, “No. I am now being tested: I can choose between an external exile or an internal one, an external or internal homeland—I don’t know what I want. Exile is so strong within me, I may bring it to the land (Ibid.)” The interviewer referred to his 11-poem series called *Eleven Planets* (also translated as ‘*Eleven Stars*’) and asked him about the first lines of the fourth poem titled “And I am not one of the Kings of the End” in which he says: And I am one of the kings of the end . . . I leap off / my horse in the final winter, I am the Arab's last exhalation.” Darwish first explained the historical connotation in his lines which are related with Abu Abdullah al Saghir, the last Arab king of Granada who had to surrender and when he looked back at the sky line of the city that he was leaving behind, he cried. The Spanish people engraved this on a stone nearby: *Here was the Arab’s last sigh*. He then proceeds to explain that poetry is basically a reactionary form of writing and it builds upon the voices from the past that are not recognizable anymore:

There is no modernism that comes from the present. The past is the most inflexible time. You need to be on the oldest street in Paris for the tone of the poem to be modern. Poetry that is cut off from the ancient past is an echo that cannot return. In every poem it’s possible to read the history of poetry. A poet is the first man. Every poem must say that man is currently arriving, currently being expelled, and returning to his true paradise. The balance between the past and the future in poetry is that, however far in the past it may be, that is how close it is to the future. No poetry comes from an “American way of life (Ibid.).

The *American way of life* hinted in the above quotation is widely known and criticised by the best minds in America. In the context of Palestinian freedom, this American way has caused havoc since 1948. In shortest terms, this way of life is based on the principle of double standards.

Noam Chomsky quotes the example of Darwish being denied a visa by the State Department of the US to participate in a poetry reading session under the auspices of UNICEF under the immigration laws that bar people of certain ideological backgrounds to have a US visa: If an Israeli poet were denied entry to the United States for “ideological reasons”—assuming this to be possible—there would be no limits to the outrage and indignation, the charges of a return of Nazism, etc. In this case, there is no response at all (Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle*, 1999, p. 254). Apart from the contents, the very titles of his books are paradoxical and denote the enigma of Palestinian existence: *In the Presence of Absence*, *Absent Presence*, *Sparrows without Wings*, *Memory for Forgetfulness*, *Unfortunately it was Paradise*, *A River Dies of Thirst* etc. A cursory glance on these titles in a library shelf denotes an emotional aura that the statistical language of journalistic discourse cannot initiate. In his book *Journal of an Ordinary Grief* Mahmoud Darwish personifies Gaza as a young lady who is averse to the idea of being depicted: “It does not matter to her very much whether or not we know her name, or recognize her image or oratorical skills. She does not believe she is photogenic or a media event. She does not make ready for the camera with a smile plastered on her face (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010).”

Syed Farid Alatas describes in his book *Covering Islam: Challenges & Opportunities for Media in the Global Village* that Prominent Arab American scholars like Edmund Ghareeb, Jack Shaheen and Michael Suleiman have found a consistent pattern of stereotypical images of the Arabs and the Palestinians that American media culture has projected into mainstream television broadcast that writes them off as “backward savages (who cannot understand that colonization is really in their own best interests) or violent terrorists (who deserve, by definition, to be exterminated) (Alatas, 2005). This distorted media picture has not always worked and in the present day scenario, alternate media has opened newer possibilities of knowing the real stories as well as unique human responsiveness. One of the recent evidences of this is the exclusive

women's Freedom Flotilla to break the siege of Gaza, despite Israeli high handed rejection of any such attempt including military intervention and killing of relief workers making such attempts in the past. On September 21, 2016 Madeleine Habib from Tasmania, Australia who is the captain of the *Amal-Hope* one of the ships of the Women's Boat to Gaza flotilla, on its way to the besieged Gaza Strip gave an interview to the correspondent of Israel Social TV. When asked about the objective of her travel to Gaza, she replied that she thought that the voice of the Gazans need to be heard. She declared that the violation of human rights in that region amounted to strangling of an entire people through an 'insidious' warfare:

This kind of warfare does not make the headlines and (it is) really important that we keep the Palestinian story in focus and that we keep people's attention on this issue. ... I have a strong sisterhood in Israel which I'm very proud of...But not just to Israeli women but to all Israeli people, I just ask you to look into your hearts and open your hearts and offer everybody the respect and the dignity that you like to be offered to yourself (Israel Social TV, 2016).

While the world somehow feels the otherwise carefully covered up cries of the Palestinians, the American people and like them the people of the western world might take long to wake up to the humanitarian crisis that is being created throughout the Middle East but whose origin is within the land of Palestine and the political philosophy of Zionism. The world at large still needs to be told that over and above being a Muslim tragedy, the Zionists are creating an international turmoil in which all followers of all faiths and otherwise will eventually suffer. Darwish compares Israeli atrocities with the notorious historical figure Nero and develops the negative into a very vivid picture:

And what goes on in Nero's mind as he watches the world burn? I am master of the Day of Judgement. Then he orders the camera to stop rolling, because he doesn't want anyone to see that his fingers are on fire at the end of this long American movie (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 9)!

In *Memory for Forgetfulness* he relates how the humanitarian NGOs, and world governments portray Palestinian refugees to meet the standard of their charities. They regularly plan and provide them with tents rather than attempting a shift of international policy towards their rehabilitation in their lands. He criticizes that such governments and organizations have

come to believe that their status as refugees is for all times. It inspires in them a tragic feeling of pity and fear. His criticism becomes scathing when it comes to the United States:

And America still needs us a little. Needs us to concede the legitimacy of our killing. Needs us to commit suicide for her, in front of her, for her sake. Meanwhile, the Arab tribes offer us silent prayers instead of swords. Some capitals glorify their heroism in us but deny our sacrifice, for the fighter holding the line at Beirut airport is nameless. And some capitals have already prepared our funeral orations. (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, pp. 158-159).

The role of international media has been sabotaged by the Zionist fed broadcasting channels and newspapers. The world opinion is professedly changed in the favour of Israel overnight particularly due to America's patronization which in turn owes to the Zionist control of key media organizations. Among other examples, Edwards Said points out the deep rooted cooperation between Israel and pre-revolution Iran, as revealed by the Israeli writer Uri Lubrani, which has remained absent from the mainstream media (Said E. W., *Covering Islam*, 1997, p. 120). Darwish refers to the news-hype that is created when one of the Palestinians would kill an Israeli civilian or a soldier and the way the killing of hundreds of innocent Palestinians would be just a meagre part of regular media coverage that quickly fizzles out:

Murder is always a crime. So, why should killing become one of the pillars of the temple of civilization when practiced by the powerful? Was Israel established by any other means than killing and terrorism? Such is the world, always: most admiring of collective killing and most critical of individual killing. The state has a right to kill its own people and those belonging to other nations, but the individual does not have a right to fight for the sake of freedom (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010).

This double standard is what Jeremy R. Hammond has called the greatest obstacle to peace: American biased support in terms of media, weaponry and intelligence. He concludes his book: "While difficult problems would remain to be worked out, it is self-evident that to achieve a way forward, the primary obstacle to peace must be removed ... the US government's support for Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people must end. Israel's violation against international law could not continue without this US support (Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace*, 2016, p. 416)." One of the major tools in the hands of US led media campaign is the concept of 'world public

opinion' which is actually the opinion that the media tycoons spread around the world. Darwish was able to take account of this:

Who is this "world public opinion"? When we ask for justice from killers, then "world public opinion" must be understood metaphorically as long as the expression refers to media owned by individuals whose ideology and interests are linked. Why then should we accord it all this reverence? As for the true public opinion – human conscience – we do not see it or hear its voice because the official institution of "world public opinion" in the West has stifled and falsified it (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010).

4.8 Darwish and the poetics of revolution

There is the beginning of the poetics of revolution, of breaking open the fabric of existence, a spirit of rebellion, mutinous world of thought and a recalcitrant call for sedition throughout his poetry that registers an excruciating pain of being torn away from the object of desire, the source of the life-blood, the essence of freedom that marks the core of human existence. Referring to the *norms* of the infamous administrative detention of Palestinians by the Israeli occupying army, Israeli human rights NGO Addameer's director Sahar Francis suggests:

Usually, if you argue the case and you lose, the sentence will be higher. The court will say, 'You had an opportunity not to waste our time.' They do this even though it contradicts the basic right for any person to prove he's innocent (Addameer, 2010, p. 32).

This stoical way out, the resignation to suffer without complaining and to accept every hardship as the writing of an unchangeable fate is what the world, even the neighbourly Arab countries have been telling Palestinians to do: Stay quiet and suffer unconditionally. They teach it through their own behaviour and example when one Arab state after another is being toppled to facilitate Israel's proclaimed status of Greater Israel. But Darwish has his poetics of resistance intact. He rejects the idea of keeping quiet and staying safe. For him it is an effort to shake off the soil of homeland from one's own hand. The earth from under the Palestinian feet, he says, has already been pulled away and the men and women that once roamed about freely, are now hiding within their skins. He believes that his people have been brutally tortured and at the same time they are expected to express gratitude for the continuity of torture. There are threats from within the occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) to erase any sense of belonging and then there are false

promises from the outside that are meant only to win time for further annihilation of the Palestinian cause. Either way, there is no safety:

You take your cross and carry it to your appointment with suicide. And you do not surrender. ... Fighting back is the answer: when you fight back you belong. And the homeland is this struggle. Between memory and the suitcase there is no solution but resistance. Justice, freedom, belonging, and worthiness are only proclaimed through resistance (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, p. 44).

Academically speaking, this awakening has actually been brought about by some Palestinian intellectuals, both in home and abroad, through regular publication of well researched and anti-propaganda books and reports by the Palestinian scholars, establishment of Palestinian research and outreach centers with regular seminars, conferences and symposia round the globe and especially in the cosmopolitan cities of the western world. Last but not the least, a host of reliable Palestinian websites and internet based news journals like Electronic Intifada and Mondoweiss run by serious and committed researchers and reporters have also contributed a lot to international recognition of the Palestinian tribulations. The publication of Mahmoud Darwish's authentic and dependable translations in all of the major languages of the world have contributed a lot in this area. The present research is a humble acknowledgement of all these efforts mainly by the Palestinians themselves and to some part indeed, by the international supporters of the Palestinian cause. For Darwish, Palestine is more than just a land or a political cause. For him it is the beloved and he has infused this love in the hearts of all the Palestinians. They are suffering but clad in their "*sumud*", they stand fast and long. The features of the beloved are more evident from a distance, just like the outline of a mountain is unmistakably manifest from a necessary distance:

When I gaze at you
I see lost cities
And a crimson time.
I see the reason for death and pride.
I see a new language yet to be recorded ...
My country is nothing but these eyes
That turn the land into a body (Darwish M. , 2014, p. 48).

The poet's eyes look through the veils of history and the politics of the present world to find a semblance of identity and his words become pregnant with a meaningful resolve to let the world know that the Palestinians exist. This is the hallmark of any resistance poet. In a recent campaign in the US (July 2016), the public awareness towards the Palestinian cause is being brought about through Darwish's poetry showcased in transit bus-advertisements in San Francisco, California. It has been done through a series of posters in SFMTA buses and trains by the Palestinians who see through Darwish's eyes and find his words the best expression of their love of this treasured land (Darwish M. , Palestine Advocacy, 2016). The selected excerpts of poetry for this awareness campaign have been taken from Darwish's poems like Passport, Earth Poem, To My Mother, Think of Others, I Belong There, Under Siege and A Lover from Palestine. The effort and its acceptance shows two things: The international recognition of Darwish as Palestinian national poet and the growing understanding and exposure of the Palestinian issue.

Despite the fact that the Palestinians are living in a social, economic and cultural ghetto, their struggle is fabulous and incredible. In the wake of extensive restrictions on human or commodity movement in or outside Gaza, a 22 years old Palestinian artist Walaa Abu Al Eish from Rafah, has started using unconventional alternatives to paint by mixing spices and fruit juices to obtain the colours that she needs. Among her latest works, the product of cinnamon, cumin and pomegranate, are the portraits of Yasser Arafat, Sheikh Ahmed Yaseen and Mahmoud Darwish. Her goal, like her favourite poet Darwish, is to promote the Palestinian cause to the world while not allowing the scarcity of means to impede her (Hussein, 2016). Both artistically and poetically speaking, the idea of colour in the overall descriptive picture of Palestine is scarce. Colour represents joy and hope. Where the inaptitude of their leaders and the silence of the world has caused a bleak life for the Palestinian people, it is the poets and artists that have taken this responsibility of sharing the geopolitical facts and their social implication with the world upon their shoulders. The Palestinian artists, players, singers and writers, especially poets have started

a sort of artistic revolution that reminds one of the Art-for-life revolution in Northern Ireland.

Darwish is both a poet and an artist. He utilizes the colour tones in his poetry so beautifully that it sometimes becomes difficult to decide whether he is an artist of words or a poet of colours:

The sky is not blue or white or grey, because the colours are points of view agreeing and disagreeing. The small clouds are towels drying the drizzle off the mountain tops, and the mountains grow higher as the sky comes to meet them. The trees are females, who have just come out of a bath of clouds to dress in birds that are not emigrating today, because autumn does not signal a faded, sad time, but is a festive fashion show put on to derive colour from no colour (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 111).

But there is one colour that most Palestinians are quite familiar with, and that is red: Blood! There is no side stepping to avoid it. It is as true and as imminent in their lives as their very shadow. They cannot cut it away as narrated in the fabulous *Fisherman and His Soul* by Oscar Wilde. Here in Palestine, the colourless grey shadows persist, and the only relief is the sanguineous colour which is a part of rainbow somehow. Let us hear it in Darwish's own words:

I amuse myself by dodging my shadow and thinking cheerfully about where a rainbow ends, and this distracts me suddenly from my shadow, which has become entangled in a thorn bush and is injured but not bleeding. I bend down to help free it and get pricked by a thorn. I imagine, to begin with, that the drop of blood on my hand is a reflection of one of the colours of the rainbow (Ibid. p. 57).

In his poem "Wide Space" he plays with colours to denote the deep sadness that has invaded his land to the level that no more destruction is possible:

No green grass, no yellow grass.
No color in the sickness of color.
Everywhere the color of ashes.
No waiting, then, for the barbarians
on their way to us, on the eve
of the celebration honoring our country (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 16)!

At another place, in his poem "I Love Autumn and the Shades of Meanings", the autumn is not the season of colours or mellow fruitfulness because it is the autumn surrounding *home* and perhaps, a season that does not expect a change:

In autumn I delight to see the commonness of colors,
No throne holds the humble gold in the leaves of humble trees
Who are equal in the thirst for love (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 23).

After the mention of autumn, he turns immediately to the concept of a wishful spring. For Darwish poetry is less of what might have been and more of what there is in the reality of things. His ontological argument is acutely *a priori* in the sense that it is not the logical sequencing or sense perceptions that brings him to deductive conclusions, but sudden emotional bursts of quantum experience which indicate a superlative degree of knowledge that *recognizes* the essence of existence even though a certain aspect of it has been banned to the poet in perpetual exile. Here Darwish almost touches the boundaries of mystical experience where there is self-revelation as well as the Buddha-like realization that sorrow is imminent. In his poem “So Why did They Blow Up my Little House”, he expresses the typical Palestinian way of suffering pain and undergoing the resolution for forbearance from childhood to adulthood:

They have banished me from the day's swings
They have kneaded my bread with mud ... and my eyelashes with dust ...
We are well acquainted with the demons that turn a child into a prophet
Say yourself with him who also said it ... I have not asked of you a light burden
O God! Give me a strong back (Darwish M. , I Don't Want This Poem to End, pp. 56-57)...!

In his piece of poetic prose “Green Flies”, he presents an entire spectrum of colours that is replete with groans and excruciating pain. In the absence of all the human rights in his land, he speaks about a strange human right that no international convention has yet realized but which is very much the need of the Palestinians who have suffered the indifference of the entire world for almost an entire century. By the end of his descriptive exclamation, there is the dullness of grey colour contrasted with the crimson red, a combination of colours that is a familiar sight in Palestine:

'It's the victim's right to defend his right to scream.' The call to prayer rises to accompany the indistinguishable funerals: coffins hastily raised in the air, hastily buried - no time to carry out the rites, more dead are arriving at speed from other raids, individually or in groups, or a whole family with no orphans or grieving parents left behind. The sky is leaden grey and the sea blue grey, but the colour of blood is hidden from the camera by swarms of green flies (Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 4).

In exile, the *home* continues to haunt. This may be a common experience for so many thousands of people or are internally or externally displaced around the world but when it comes

to the representational poetics, the experience of the poet as well as his expression needs must be sharp and bold. In his poem “The Rest of Life”, he describes the heavy burden of boredom and nothingness that engulfs the poet all the time. He considers his waking hours as a ‘nap between two dreams’ and in this pensive mood he makes a resolution to write something. But that ends with the mention of white colour, the colour of death and silence as we see it occurring in modern poetry especially in the poems of the American poetess Sylvia Plath:

One should look nice to write
So I'll wear something blue
I will sit until noon, alive, at my desk
Not seeing a trace of colour in the words
White, white, white (Ibid. p. 19).

Thus, poem after poem and book after book, the meaningful, evocative and suggestive use of colours is employed to insinuate the Palestinian condition of both *home* and *exile*. There are numerous shades of yellow flowers, yellow cheeks of that speak of fear and yellow clouds that denote the Palestinian skyscape. The sickness of rainbow is suggested and the delicate silvery-greenness of the olive trees (his poem “The Second Olive Tree”) that has the capacity to speak to the Israeli soldiers and settlers but in vain: “Return to your homes, and use my oil to light your lamps.” But these soldiers, these new soldiers, surround her with bulldozers and uproot her (Ibid. p. 107). ‘Dodging one’s own shadow’, a recurring theme in Darwish’s works may be the subterfuge expression for the internal struggle within Palestine that has taken up the shape of repeated *Intifada*. In an interview to Hilit Yeshurun, Darwish translates this title as an internal political protest about the helplessness of PLO! In his words:

“I felt that the Intifada is the simple, just and true response that returned the cause to the spotlight. ... It shook the Palestinian people free of the complacency that the PLO allowed them. I saw in the Intifada revenge for laziness and revenge for a long sleep (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 133).

What he stresses for the world to notice is the naturalness of this Palestinian response. One cannot continue to catnap for a very long time. The first Intifada saw little children pelting the tanks with small rock stones and women frequently involved in building or removing road blocks

and actually coming into physical confrontation with the occupying forces. It was thus not only a massive unrest but also military training to strengthen the mental muscles for the decades of strife to come. In Darwish's words,

I am a leaf, being carried by the breeze to a
Wintry sleep from which I will awake in blossom (Ibid. p. 111).

Here both Shelley's tone and diction are evident. Is Darwish actually echoing Shelley or is it that sometimes the poets share an exclusive sentiment for which the same range of words becomes possible within the framework of different languages. But Darwish's sleep is *romantic* in an altogether different way. Owing to his special circumstances, both personal and national, even if he embraces his ideals and shuts his eyes to the momentary lullaby of an alien culture (USA) that has accepted him one way or the other, his sleep is disturbed by the thought that out there in the realm of time and space, his countrymen, women and children are in the danger of an imminent death:

I see what I want of peace . . . I see
A gazelle, grass, and a rivulet . . . I close my eyes:
This gazelle sleeps on my arms
And its hunter sleeps near the gazelle's children in a distant place (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 5).

This metaphor of sleep is very poignant particularly when it is used in the context of an armed struggle in the Islamic sense. Those who are killed in such a struggle are not deemed as mortals who die but as martyrs who live. The Holy Quran describes these individuals in the following verse (3:169-171) "Do not think of those who have been killed in God's way as dead. They are alive with their Lord, well provided for, happy with what God has given them of His favour; rejoicing that for those they have left behind who have yet to join them there is no fear, nor will they grieve; rejoicing in God's blessing and favour and that God will not let the reward of the believers be lost (The Qur'an, p. 47). The same reverberates in Darwish's poem *When the Martyrs Go to Sleep*:

When the martyrs go to sleep, I wake to protect them from professional mourners.
I say: Have a good mourning at home, a home of clouds and trees, a mirage of water.
I congratulate them on their safety from injury, and the generosity of the slaughterhouse.
I take time so they can take me from time. Are we all martyrs? ...
When you go to sleep tonight, be a song for those who have no songs (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013).

And sometimes, he addresses his people directly into their face with the vehemence of a military leader: “You have been long asleep. So rouse yourself and your dream and tell us what you have seen. ‘Is death a long sleep, or is sleep a brief death?’ You have slept too long; wake up (Darwish M. , Absent Presence, 2010, p. 73)!” He has the confidence that his voice carries the ability to rouse his people from the sleep of indifference. Every time a nation loses its morale, one or another of its heroes come to restore the confidence of the masses. In the case of Palestine, the most reassuring voice, like in case of the history of Indian Muslims, fell to the lot of a poet. The Palestinians also admitted Darwish as their national poet, most capable of preserving and voicing the sentiment of eternal liberty for his nation like Iqbal. Darwish has a similar poetic capacity for prophecy:

I see what I want of dawn in the dawn . . . I see
Nations looking for their bread in other nations' bread. It is bread
That ravel us from the silk of sleepiness, and from the cotton of our dreams.
So is it from a grain of wheat that the dawn of life bursts . . . and also the
Dawn of war (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 8)?

In a bid to vindicate Israeli occupation and hostility towards Palestine and Palestinians, and absolve her of all actions against morality and humanity, the rightist propaganda writers like Michel Warschawski believes that Ehud Barak was right when he compared Israel with a lone villa in a jungle implying that anything related with the so called “peace” was in fact only a trap and a means to an endless war. This is a typical example where the perpetrator of a crime poses as the most innocent person to win more support and more sympathies. This is evident from a typical political anecdote in which a few months after launching 50-day long military crackdown dubbed as Operation Protective Edge against the inhabitants of Gaza, Israeli Prime Minister spoke to the UN General Assembly with reference to Iranian threat signals and claimed that no one in

the entire UN stood with Israel to retaliate against that perceived threat. In an unprecedented way Prime Minister Netanyahu maintained silence stared angrily for several instants at the representatives of the world (Mashable, 2015). According to Michel Warschawski, it is not the Palestinians who are the victims of the occupation, colonization or repression but in the context of the clash of civilization, it is the Islamic world that is using Palestinians as an immediate tool to wipe out Israel from the face of earth (Warschawski, 2007, p. 98).

However spurious this conclusion may be, the fact remains that in order for the exile and dispossession of Palestinians to end, and their home be redefined, there are two discourses to help: the rights-discourse and the discourse of the realpolitik. The rights-discourse which is supported by the world opinion as well as the sanctioned laws of the international bodies like the UN. Even a neutral third party arbitration would support it. Palestinian claim and rightful aspirations can best be summed up in Professor Richard Falk's words who suggests that the UN must require from Israel to immediately withdraw its forces from the OPT restoring the pre-1967 borders, determining the legal status of Israeli settlements under 4th Geneva Convention, adjudging the legality of the security fence, restoration of the demographics and boundaries of Jerusalem and invalidation of Israel's intended sovereign rights over that city, upholding the legal entitlement of Palestinian refugees to return to their lands and determining an equitable right of access and use of water aquifers beneath Palestinian territories (Falk R. , *Achieving Human Rights*, 2009, p. 28). On the other hand the discourse of realpolitik, all implementations pertaining to the rightful existence and return of the Palestinian citizenry depends upon economic and political will of Israel. An example of this is the annulment of Palestinian President's residence permit in his own hometown of Safad (Barclay & Quddumi, 2012). In case of a single state with rampant ethnocracy, the Jews would always outnumber and out-resource the Palestinians with the ground realities as bleak of more than what we have now. Palestine, whatever its status be in the international fora, would always remain divided into two poles-apart neighborhoods of the West

Bank and the Gaza. The above two choices of discourse i.e. *rights and realpolitik*, are not mutually exclusive and therefore a good amount of homework needs to be done. In order for this to be realized, a quick synthesis of ideals and priorities need to be reached among the various Palestinian groups with strict monitoring for the black sheep. Darwish would want his people to compromise on their idealistic demands in the real world and think like ordinary men and women. Nobody is perfect and one should learn to live and progress through the realization of these inherent imperfections. In Darwish's own words,

“I dream of us no longer being heroes or victims; we want to be ordinary human beings. When a man becomes an ordinary being and pursues his normal activities, he can love his country or hate it, he can emigrate or stay. However, for this to apply there are objective conditions that are not in place. As long as the Palestinian person is deprived of his homeland, he is obliged to be a slave [to] that homeland (Darwish M. , Al Shabaka, 2012).”

This is why Darwish supported the two state solution and not the ideal one i.e. returning to the pre-Nakba period. That may be desirable but its practicality is apparently out of question. Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank's illegal settlements, its officially sanctioned special roads (corridor) connectivity with Gaza and the overall official declaration as the free and independent Palestine. The idealism that Ibrahim G. Aoude looks forward to seems a bit of impossibility: ‘One hopes that a time will come in which narrations captured by Mahmoud Darwish's poem, “Record! I am an Arab . . .” will be transformed to “Record! I have entered Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Peace be upon all regardless of race, ethnicity or religious belief (Franklin, Cooper, & Aoude, Spring 2014, p. xxxii).’ Maron Benvenisti points out in *Conflicts and Contradictions* that there are two persistent themes in the Palestinian drama: Jewish single-minded power building with the desperate force behind the Zionist roller coaster and Palestinian uncompromising resistance through the weak forum of PLO despite its failure to deliver the destined aims of nationhood. Its biggest mistake is the exclusionist negativism that stops any chances for the local democratic and political change.

4.9 Darwish and the aesthetics of Palestinian identity

In Darwish's poetics as well as his politics, the greatest stress is on the complicated matter of identity. In his poem "Tuesday, a Bright Day", he describes it in a nutshell:

And your visions
Are your exile in a world where a shadow has
No identity, no gravity.
You walk as if you were someone else (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 50).

No identity is equal to having no gravity which implies an ever wandering experience in the dimensionless space. It is easily said or read than actually experience. In his diary entry titled "The Right to Return to Paradise", Darwish gives a cosmic attribute to the enigma of exile by declaring: "If God has punished Adam by driving him out of eternal life into time, then the earth is exile and history a tragedy (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 109)." The last four chapters of his book of poetry *Almond Blossoms and Beyond* are catechistically titled: Exile I, Exile II, Exile III, and Exile IV. Darwish records in his diary of 1988, the return of the month of June for the fortieth time after the establishment of Israel in 1948. He expresses his own doubts if any divine help is on the way. He sees Jewish lorries running here and there carrying food and fruits for the Zionist settlers across his land and he also notices tanks that point their cannons to him and his countrymen to keep them at bay. The poet feels as if the earth is shrinking, while the inhabitants (Jews) are multiplying. He is unable to identify any of his own nation as there is a growing masquerade all around. A dialogue continues between the poet and an unknown voice that finally transpires to this effect: This is our land, and the sky is real not a metaphor, and high as our hopes. He says to me: 'Is June a memory?' and I say: 'It is a wound bleeding acutely still, even though its victim says: "I have forgotten the pain (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 142)."'

In his essay "A Quest for Normalcy" Hassan Khader describes how a Japanese artist said that if everything was right with human life, the Palestinians would triumph. Hassan Khader accepts this accolade but at the same time posits the Palestinian ideals of life like rational choices,

freedom and justice in the context of an existentialist question: ‘What if something really is wrong in life?’ Hassan believes that the Palestinian mothers send their children to schools, friends gather in tea shops, taxi drivers ride people to their destinations, people read newspapers and labourers go their jobs but their tranquility is artificial and they know that their situation is very fragile. They are not the music makers, they are only the dreamers of the dreams. In the words of Hassan Khader, for a Palestinian, Palestine is everything from a ‘profession’ to a metaphor and a reality that defies categorization. Due to checkpoints and mobility restrictions, the place has been turned into an Orwellian regime of uncertainty and nightmare:

Looking from inside, the nightmare is like a disease with which one can live, not only as a *fait accompli* but as a tactic of survival. Tactics of survival bring out the best as well as the worst of human behaviour. The Palestinians are locked somewhere in the middle. Not an easy position for people who strive just to be ‘normal’ like others. Normalcy is not to be taken for granted, it has to be imagined and invented (Khader, 2007).

Mahmoud Darwish tries to invent normalcy but finds it to be an impossible task. The inside and outside of Palestine offers two very different states of identity till he believes that he is ‘*The Adam*’ of ‘*Two Edens*’. Two Edens count for a double exile. He has very keenly observed this political duality and systematic erasure of even a theoretical peace leading to a pungent political question:

Into what abyss
Is this robot bristling with aircraft carriers and jets
Consigning the earth?
To what bottomless pit
Will you descend (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p. 143)?

The pit to which Israeli leadership can descend is well indicated by the event that when Nelson Mandela died, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not go to attend the funeral because of ‘soaring costs’ of the trip and their President said that he had flu. But stretched budget and the sick note could hardly shroud the strained relationship between the two countries since the end of the apartheid in South Africa. There is no doubt that the friendships and the wars are both contracted when similar or opposed philosophies come in closer contact and then the principle of ‘survival of the fittest’ takes over. Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley still look

forward to look at the situation in broader human terms rather than in Netanyahu's myopic way of looking at things:

In ethnic terms, we are neither Jewish nor Arab/Palestinian by birth, but we identify with each for different reasons: We identify with Jews as a long-standing persecuted minority, whose survivors had nowhere to go in the 1940s; and we identify with Palestinians as a displaced, dispossessed, and discriminated against minority as a consequence of Jewish settlements (Adam & Moodley, 2005, p. xi).

This is because, while he fully endorsed Israel's right to exist, Mandela was critical of occupation and in a speech in Pretoria in 1997 to commemorate International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, he refers to the observation of UN International Day of Solidarity with Palestinians:

"When in 1977, the United Nations passed the resolution inaugurating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, it was asserting the recognition that injustice and gross human rights violations were being perpetrated in Palestine. In the same period, the UN took a strong stand against apartheid; and over the years, an international consensus was built, which helped to bring an end to this iniquitous system. ... We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians (Prusher, 2013)."

One would have expected such bold words of solidarity from one of the leaders of the Islamic world but they are too busy in their obsequious compliance with 'the end of terrorism' campaign handed over to them by their ex-colonial masters, the western overlords. Here Mandela does not only speak of the need of consistent Palestinian identity, he has actually *identified* himself with these people. In Darwish's poetry, there is are frequent parallels to this sentiment: "Identity is what we bequeath, not what we inherit, what we invent, not what we remember. Identity is the distorted image in the mirror that we must break the minute we grow fond of it (Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 149)." This brings forth another shade of the meaning. Working for the recognition of a people's identity requires that we identify ourselves with them. In *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, Darwish gives an explicit expression to this sentiment: 'Your cause and your life are one. And before all this - and beyond it – it is your

identity (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. ix).’ In an interview Darwish refers to the ambivalence of interpretation that his poetry can be subjected to:

I don't know why my poetry has to be killed on the altar of misunderstanding or the fallacy of ready-made intent. I am not solely a citizen of Palestine, though I am proud of this affiliation and ready to sacrifice my life in defending the radiance of the Palestinian fact, but I also want to take up the history of my people and their struggle from an aesthetic angle that differs from the prevalent and repeatable meanings readily available from an unmediated political reading (Darwish M. , *Al-Qods Al-Arabi*, 1993).

But the aesthetic angle that Darwish wants to raise is marred time and again by the consistent acts of brutality not only against people in Palestinian lands but also those 6.3 million Palestinian Arabs who are living side by side with an almost equal number of Israelites within Israel in a state that Ruchama Marton aptly calls “forced existence”. Reportedly, Avraham Shalom, former Israeli security chief likens the Israeli occupation to Nazi occupation (Marton, 2016). Darwish describes the aesthetics of destruction caused by a vacuum bomb during an aerial attack of IDF “that pierces through the walls of the buildings before bursting and then “creates an immense emptiness that annihilates the base under the target, the resulting vacuum sucking the building down and turning it into a buried graveyard”. He recalls the scene near Sanaya Gardens with hundreds of terrified people turned to stone, lost in silence, making a sorrowful and yet angry human fence around the crime-site where a ‘cosmic monster’ ambushes the human world:

... pushing humanity into a bottomless pit in peering over whose edge we realize we didn't learn to walk, read, or use our hands except to reach an end that we forget, only to carry on our search for something that can justify this comedy and cut the thread connecting the beginning with the end, letting us imagine we are an exception to the only truth (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 76).

Understanding Darwish’s nuances requires deep commitment as a reader as there are frequent symbolic and intertwined equations between different aspects of his own personality (the adult poet talking to himself as a child) or between two imaginary partners sometimes in close proximity and understanding with each other and at other times, separated by time or space, or both in time and space. But most often the dialogue runs between the poet himself and Palestine as a sentient character. This Palestine sometimes takes up the subjective position and through the

words of the poet we hear the story of Palestinian struggle or her aspirations or desperation or even an outright despair. At such moments, the “I” is Palestine, otherwise, it is Darwish:

As Christ walked on the lake,
I walked in my vision. But I came down
From the cross because I have a fear of heights and don't
Promise resurrection. I only changed
My cadence to hear my heart clearly... (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 139).

At other places Palestine is “you” e.g. it is to Palestine in the second person that the poet addresses on the nineteenth anniversary of the *Nakba*:

Every night of every year on this date is the day of your suicide, which no one else feels. Often suicide is undertaken just for show. But your suicide takes place in secret. A day descends upon you that pierces your flesh and slowly spreads through your bones like a small continuous earthquake that does not expand or erupt (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 97).

The cadence changes but since it is the Palestinian environ, death or the symbols of death, sacred or mundane has to be there. Whether it is the site of Christ's crucifixion at Golgotha on the Jerusalem's hill of Calvary, or an ordinary street in the refugee camp of Jenin, the shadow of death is lurking and the celebration of the innocence is about to be drowned.

If I could speak to the ghost of death
Behind the dahlia fence, I would say: We were born
Together as twins, my brother, my murderer,
My road engineer on this earth . . . this earth
Is my mother and yours, so drop your weapon (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 150).

But does it not call for the Second Coming of the Jesus Christ upon whom may be Peace?
Does Darwish stand in the footsteps of Jesus, a tradition that the Palestinians are bound to follow?
To be Christ-like is not only to suffer with patience (*Sumud*) but also to recreate, to revive, to bring around from the nothingness of death to ontological confirmation of being. The contrast of suffering and patience becomes deeper while mystery and clarity lose demarcation (Yousuf & Al-Rub, 1984, p. 294).

Extreme clarity is a mystery.
How can we realize what we have forgotten?
Christ returned to supper, as we had wished, and Mary returned to him

On her long braids to blanket the Roman theater within us.
Was there enough meaning in the olives . . . to fill Christ's palms
With serenity, his wounds with basil, and pour our souls over him as radiance (Ibid. p. 30)?

The same similitude persists page after page: Christ walked to Galilee and the wounds in us clapped (Ibid. p. 51). The clapping spirit of wounds that bubble up to see the paragon of suffering come their way has a spatial relationship with the Palestinians in a temporality that has mysteriously frozen. With or without Christ's instruction, the "epic anthem of the place" asserts its presence:

The earth is the festival of losers (and we belong to them).
We come from the traces of the epic anthem of the place,
and our tents in the wind are an elderly falcon's feather.
We were kind here, austere without Christ's instructions (Ibid. p. 114).

Darwish often refers to the image of willow tree as the embodiment of suffering and patience standing on an open road while 'time' and 'history' make strange alliances (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 149). Loneliness and endless identity crisis make all dimensions hollow. There is a wide world out there that keeps fixing opinions about someone's existence but does not care to identify the person in a situation where he cannot identify himself either. In his journal entry "From now on you are you" Darwish refers to this bipolarity: "Everything that was in exile apologises, on my behalf, to everything that wasn't in exile (Ibid.)." Edward Said also registers the same paradoxical poetics when he says that since 1948 the Arab Palestinians have endured a 'political living death' which only saw a bout of vitality during the *naksa* of 1967 through which their total extinction has been avoided. He believes that despite losing so much of the land, the Palestinians have at least been pushed out of their state of 'peripherality', isolation and silence which were "conditions of displacement and loss (Said E. , *The Edward Said Reader*, 2000, p. 32)."

In an article titled "Poetry's State of Siege", Almog Behar of the Department of Literature, Tel Aviv University finds the impression of siege on Darwish's persona and on his poetry. He

traces that apart from turning into a refugee to Lebanon at the age of six and later in his own hometown of Galilee where his home village had been razed by the Zionist forces, he was restrained from going away from Haifa without informing the military authorities but he did go to read some poems at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and was imprisoned. This followed 1982 siege of Beirut and IDF's incursion in his new home at Ramallah in 2002. Behar writes that Darwish represented the Palestinian State wherever he went. From being in exile to being under siege, from the status of a present absentee to and absent presence, he lived from city to city: His broad personal experience and its connection to so many of his people's experiences have established him as a national poet (Behar, 2011, p. 189). Behar believes that Darwish tried to break this omniscient siege with his poetry believing that poetry could stand before armies and reality. This is partly true. The present research bears witness to the fact that his words have outlived him and in the most intense years of Palestinian struggle, his picture and his words are the strongest arsenal with his people because he stood by them and recorded all the stages of their struggle in his poetry which is like a national memory reservoir, an entity that lives longer than the historical records or newspaper reports. A poem may not feel as strong as a war plane, as Darwish writes to Samih al-Qasim, another Palestinian poet, yet while the victor forces obliterate houses and groves, they also seek to annihilate the memory of these structures, and it is Poetry that preserves the spirit of the moment and does not let the national emblems die. An apt example is the power of a few warlike songs composed during the 1965 war between India and Pakistan, when despite being squat and low-slung in military resources, Pakistan was able to keep its integrity intact through the force of these few national songs that made the entire nation step out and stand behind Pakistan army. One may remember a single popular song that even today makes people cry and feel spiritually charged into sacrifice for Pakistan:

aye raah-i-haq ke shaheedo wafa ki tasweero, / Tumhain watan ki hawaaen salaam kehti hain

Translation: O the martyrs in the path of truth! O paragons of steadfastness! / The very winds that blow in the country, greet you with respect! Of the same intensity and purpose are dozens of poems by Darwish, for example, “The Eternity of the Prickly Pear” in which a father reminds his little son of the local history while he takes him out on the open trail to show him some signs of the bygone days:

My son, remember: here is where the British crucified
Your father on a hedge of prickly pear for two nights,
But never did he confess. You will grow up
My son, and will tell to those who inherit their rifles
The account of blood inscribed over iron... (Darwish M. , *Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone*, 2014, p. 12).

While the father safely hands over this cultural or autobiographical legacy to his son, the boy also repays the tribute to his father and when it is the right time to fall in love in youth, the poem tells us, he falls in love with his land and his people. Commenting on this aspect of his art, one of Darwish’s translators Muhammad Shaheen says that his poetry is both national and human. He refers to Darwish’s equation of the lost land with an estranged beloved which frees his love poems from their narrower associations and imbues them with universal human values. His poems simultaneously celebrate the love of the land, the human love and the anguish of exile. These would oscillate between the national and the human and the political, making himself and his audience aware of the fact that “that the meaning of poetry lies in the contemplation of what is eternal and universal: love, death, and the boundless mystery of existence (Shaheen M. , 2009, p. x). The complex situation of the Palestinians in Israel calls for continuous upfront resistance. This resistance is the cost of maintaining Arab/Palestinian identity which is intricately existential in nature. There is an inherent ambiguity of their identity as an ‘Israeli Palestinian’ is unthinkable in Israel – an ambiguity that becomes a major theme in Darwish’s work. The extent of this complexity can be ascertained from Fouad Ajami report that there are ethnic blood banks separately established for the Israelis and the Palestinians (Ajami, 1986). Referring to the fanaticism and a sense of exclusive possessiveness inherent in both communities, Ajami quotes

from Meron Benvenisti's book *Conflicts and Contradictions* (1982): My City nurtures absolute truths. My people believe that their struggle involves absolute justice and so do my neighbors and enemies, the Palestinians. I see everywhere the contrasts, the incongruities, and they reinforce my internal landscape (Ibid.)." In this landscape of contrasts and incongruities, *Memory* is Darwish's tactic of survival, a memory that keeps the wounds of the past alive and gives rise to the hopes of a future solution. Memory freezes the past and according to T.S. Eliot, the pastness of the past and its future is very much related (Eliot T. S., *Selected Prose*, 1963, p. 22). Speaking of the imminence of time and its multidimensionality and spontaneity, Eliot affirms in the beginning lines of *Burnt Norton* that both the past and the present help in shaping the future events. He concludes that in this equation future of an event can best be adjudged from the extent to which its past has been realized. Accordingly, Palestinian state of affairs that include peace initiatives, mutual recognition, the UN brokered regional settlements, two states or one-state solution, whatever has to be done, must be accomplished before the unredeemable time fixes its stamp. Darwish is mindful of this complexity and wants certain definitive measures to be taken:

We have the past here
We have the first cry of life
We have the present, the present and the future
We have this world here, and the hereafter
So leave our country
Our land, our sea
Our wheat, our salt, our wounds
Everything, and leave the memories of memory (Darwish M. , MERIP).

The use of the singular 'memory' seems to relate with the pre-Nakba days and the plural 'memories' refer to the various reminiscences of the Palestinians owing to their diverse statuses as Israeli citizens, West Bankers, Gazans, refugees, internally displaced, unrecognized, present-absent aliens as well as the worldwide diaspora. An instance of these memories and the present state of affairs may be demonstrated through the story of Darwish's ancestral village Birwe in Galilee which was erased both from the land and the map of the State of Israel, but remained intact in Darwish's memory, like the image of a lost paradise. In 1997, the Israeli-French

filmmaker, Simone Bitton, went there to film Darwish's childhood landscape, but there only a weed-choked cemetery. On April 16, 2001, Israeli bulldozers built a road through it unearthing and then burying the human remains. For Darwish this was a shocking situation. Even after death Palestinians could not be at peace. They could simply not belong to their own land. Darwish decided that the only way left was to secure himself in the folds of language, the only place from where his identity and his homeland would not be erased:

Who am I? This is a question that others ask, but has no answer.
I am my language, I am an ode, two odes, ten. This is my language.
I am my language. .. ("A Rhyme for the Odes,")
We travel like everyone else, but we return to nothing ...
Ours is a country of words: Talk. Talk. ("We Travel Like All People,")

This is exactly what so many of the Palestinians in the diaspora have now turned to. They are writing, arranging literary festivals, painting exhibitions, poetry reading sessions, conferences etc. They seem to stand shoulder to shoulder with Darwish who, when he visited Palestine in 1996 after twenty six years of exile, said: "As long as my soul is alive no one can smother my feeling of nostalgia for my country which I still consider as Palestine (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. xvii)." While he tried to reclaim space, his Jewish counterpart Ms. Kornberg-Weiss brings forward another concern:

I want you to recognize me.
Say it.
Say that you recognize me.
Confirm my legitimacy.
I am not legitimate without
Your confirmation and without
Your confirmation
I cannot confirm you.

Further on, she agrees in the same poem that Darwish's people were: Torn from their beautiful homes and displaced to refugee camps in "one of the most dreadful campaigns of ethnic cleansing and dispossession in modern history." But at the same time she suggests that things have declined so fast that only negotiations and mutual recognition would ensure peace. This requires the recognition of bilateral national interests:

I wait for you to admit that peace
Must also address my security needs
And end the conflict once and for all. (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, p. 65).

Kornberg-Weiss has a judicious approach in these lines but mutual recognition is not always the first point to begin. If a lamb and a lion were to have a treaty of peaceful coexistence, it is but natural to assume that it is the lion who must recognize the lamb and not the vice versa. The water has to flow from the heights to the lower strata. There is a matter of natural principle or natural law. On the one hand is the Palestinian minority with virtually no access to even the basic needs of life, no security of their own, no institutions left that mark the working of independent societies and no weaponry of any kind save the kitchen knives and scissors for their defence and on the other hand we see a heavily tilted balance of power, the world's fourth strongest army with all amenities of life for their nationals, some of the greatest universities with the top most centers of research and inventions and what not. Where should the recognition come from? From those who control all their life sustaining elements ranging from food to medicines, from text books to water and every inch of their movement or the other way round? Morani Kornberg-Weiss has yet to answer that. However, in another place in her book she has given some quotes from Palestinian Authority's President Mahmoud Abbas's speech that he gave to the UN General Assembly on November 29, 2012 in which 138 countries approved resolution 67/19 that granted Palestine a non-member observer status in the UN, nine countries rejected it, including Israel and the U.S.: "I did not come here seeking to delegitimize a state established years ago; rather I came to affirm the legitimacy of the state that must now achieve its independence (Ibid. p. 69)." In his poem "The Return of June" Darwish exclaims that his land i.e. Palestine is shrinking while the population is on the rise. He remembers the scars left by the Six Days War of June 1967 and describes the frailty of the Palestinian condition. He believes that they have been deprived of every recognition except in terms of consistent violence against them through which the peoples

of the world bedeck their newspaper headlines. His people, he believes, are just wearing masks of their old-selves whereas they do not have an iota of identity left to them:

Forty Junes: a tank on the road to
The house. A military control tower to watch the birds
Lorries pass / Transporting goods with Hebrew names
Crates of water. Fruit. Wheat and wine. He says:
'It's as if we've forgotten our springs, our vines, our names,
And a mask is our identity...(Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 142) ."

After a lapse of 40 years (since 1967), while the world has undergone several new revolutionary changes and has entered a new phase of technology in fields ranging from agriculture to medicine and newer ways of civic and political life, nothing has changed for the Palestinians. They are only expected to comply with the demands of Israeli national interests. In his poem "From now on you are you", Darwish turns to this Israeli demand of unconditional recognition of Israel as a Jewish state. With tongue in cheek, he voices an ironic apology under a historical protest: "Everything that was in exile apologizes, on my behalf, to everything that wasn't in exile (Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 149) ." A poet cannot be expected to be a magician who would run his wand over a situation of chaos and bring out the doves of peace holding the olive branches of harmony and security for the community. The poet can only feel and help others feel with him for themselves. Darwish's words cannot be taken at their face value. His mind works like a great cement mixer. There are so many objective materials and subjective emotions being churned along with the realization of historical necessity that at times, his themes range from national to mythological. But the sense of a great journey prevails: an exile followed by a search for the homeland, a search in which sometimes the travelers themselves become the path whereupon the rains fall and the reeds and flowers sprout out of their graves as memories:

We are the strangers and we, the people of the deserted temple,
Have been abandoned on our white horses searching for our last station,
Reeds sprouting from our bodies and comets crisscrossing over our heads.
There is no place on earth where we haven't pitched our tent of exile.
Are we the skin of this earth (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. 38)?

Recognizing the exile in himself, a representative kind of exile, he takes upon himself the responsibility of “laying the eggs of memory”, a process of poetic ruminations through which the homeland is kept alive, memory being the *shell* that preserves it: There must be an exile to lay the eggs of memory and abridge eternity / In a moment that encompasses time . . . (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 32). The word ‘memory’ in its singular use in Darwish’s works refers to Palestinian collective memory, a memory that is the carrier of their culture, values and ethos. Darwish often speaks of a situation where the exile destined to seek out a new prospect of future, seems to be orientated by the memories of a past with all its traditions. This gives rise to the demand of distinct expressions:

Exile has set up for us two Languages:
A spoken... so that the dove can understand it and preserve the memory
And a formal language... so that I can interpret her shadow to the
Shadows (Darwish M. , *Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone*, 2014, p. 37)!

In the introduction to his book *World Famous Exiles*, Charles Connell writes about the three types of exiles viz. banished by a sovereign power, compelled by the circumstances and those who voluntarily change their ‘homes and pleasant thresholds to seek what their own lands could not provide. He gives an example of the first type of exiles: “The Greeks decreed that ... anyone, for example, who failed to treat with proper respect the sacred olives at Athens could expect to be exiled for life (Connell, 1969, p. 9).” Had this disdain for the olive trees been the standard crime in the modern world, it is not difficult to find that it would have been the Israelites who would suffer the sentence of exile for rampant uprooting of the Palestinian olive orchards. Apart from this historical curio, Charles Connell finds ‘the most interesting exiles’ from among the writers who (unlike Darwish) adopted this mode of life because they believed that it was best for their artistic development. In this context, Connell cites several examples from among the literati who gave up their homelands for the foreign lands solely for the enrichment of their genius and the healthy nourishment of an alien air or simply due to the vague desire of spreading their

wings which sometimes results from or into an energizing discontent which puts them into action.

In Darwish's words:

... Away

From writers jealous of the exile's eloquence, and close to the squirrels,

Rabbits, deer and foxes that greet him through the window, and run

Away and play while he conducts his linguistic exercises (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 133).

In the same vein, when we analyze the lives of other 'literary exiles', we see that Pablo Picasso cut himself away from Spain, James Joyce relinquished Dublin (both for Paris) and Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and Isadora Duncan left the American scene. Connell infers that whatever may the circumstances be, every exile undergoes pangs of homesickness wistfully remembering the once familiar scenes and feelings. Their unutterable woe can only be appreciated by those who have experienced exile. He quotes Horace: "We are all compelled by the same force; the lot is cast into the urn, sooner or later to be drawn forth, to send us to the boat of Charon for our eternal exile (Connell, 1969, pp. 10-12)." Darwish's case is once again unique as the Zionist assault upon his land, childhood trauma, physical dispossession, mass hysteria, the resulting political circumstances and his own rebellious nature all forced him into exile. Homesickness and nostalgia brought him several times back to the land of Palestine, now to be identified by an alien state. He became the representative voice of all his likes:

The exile finds his way

The exile looks around to see which way to go

And words-memories escape him

In front is not in front of him

Behind is not behind ...

And he says: 'The free man is he who chooses his exile

For some reason or other (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 135).

At different time when he returned *home*, a different scene would wait for him and he saw the dissolution of their freedom and the effacement of the familiar environs at different stages. There would be bulldozers of all sizes, the precast walls and roofs for quick settlements projects

and tanks and soldiers and armoured cars and shelling and firing and what not that would make his homeland bleed.

No one said to me,
This place is called a country,
Around the country are borders,
And beyond the borders is another place,
Called diaspora and exile for us.
I did not yet need an identity,
But they, men who came to us on tanks,
Are carrying off our place on trucks (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 75).

While the memory keeps the exilic perspective alive, and whether Darwish wants it or not, the antagonistic forces make him have an identity. On his passport his identity remains perpetually *undetermined*, but the poetics of his personal history mixes up with the politics that define him. Every scrupulous and fastidious person would live an intellectual life this way. This force of personality makes one look beyond the apparent, even the apparent definition of identity, so that the soul is redeemed through a Buddha-like *nirvana*. In order to reach this state of mind, one needs to be skeptical enough of the coined media (un)truths and ideological state apparatuses. Only then the true picture may be revealed. A famous critic and analyst of the Palestinian-Israeli relations, Dr. Alice Rothchild relates how she had learnt to doubt the official media narratives and the governmental spin of the US but after the war of 1967, despite being a Jew, she started mistrusting the mainstream Jewish explanation as well “because my relationship to Israel remained an important piece of my identity, this sense of unbalance and discomfort was not sustainable. I needed an historical memory and a context that merged my own personal history with the politics of the person I had become (Rothchild, *Broken Promises, Broken Dreams*, 2010, pp. 9-10). For Darwish too, this identity-history equation is very crucial, particularly with reference to memory that Alice Rothchild calls historical memory. What about a situation where the history has been looted and destroyed beyond identity. Where new cartography has laid down new names to places whose possessors have become ghosts to their homeland and where they can return like Darwish, to live in peace, when they are dead. Darwish writes in “The Homeland: Between Memory and History” that

homeland i.e. being at home, is not a question of maps and birth certificates or ancestral houses or graves. It does not even mean that you have to be at *home* at a particular time or for a specific time-span. Leaving home for one reason or the other, he believes, does not count as the negation of the homeland. He stops his countrymen from writing the history that would register them as *absent* or slipped into the past. He reasserts the present moment of their *presence*:

Do not write a history now. When you do that, you leave the past behind, and what is required is to call the past to account. Do not write a history except that of your wounds. Do not write a history except that of your exile. You are here – here, where you were born. And where longing will lead you to death. So, what is a homeland? You are part of a whole, and the whole is absent and subject to annihilation (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, p. 26).

In Darwish's works, there is a deep psychological appeal. Events that take place in the outer world register their corresponding features inside his psyche as well and several times his feeling of the external physical exile makes him wonder if it is actually an outward happening or a profounder, more intimate internalized experience.

Exile is the outside world.
Exile is the inner world.
Who are you between them?
I do not quite identify myself, lest I ruin it.
I am in a duality, which sings something between words and gesture.

Marrouchi points out that rather than opting pure history as recourse, Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish and Hoda Barakat have all explored the transcendent issues like identity, memory and exile at various levels of existence like randomness of suffering and human endurance and have thus provided a 'writerly brotherliness' which in his view is the finest and the most humane form of resistance against evils of colonialism that history sometimes brings to yoke us with. When a nation undergoes times of defeat, the map of the state undergoes changes at the political, moral and artistic levels. Here is where the generations of writers are required to return and take up the struggle for a linguistic meaning of that defeat (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 167). Laleh Khalili places Darwish's poetry in consonance with Liyana Badr's *The Eye of the Mirror* (1994) and Elias Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* (2005) as both these novels deal with Palestinian

memories through which the homeland is constructed in exile. While both novelists describe the lived experiences of the protagonists and the quotidian experiences in tragic hit refugee camps particularly the stories of Sabra, Shatila and Tal al-Za'tar massacres (1975), Darwish portrays the tragedy in his verses:

Didn't you tell me on the way to the wind: Soon
We will load our history with meaning, the war will be extinguished soon
And soon we will build Sumer in the songs ...
And we will return to where the wind brought us from ...
There is no room left in the land for the poem, my friend
But is there room left, in the poem, for the land after Iraq?
Rome besieges the rain of our world ... (Darwish M. , A Horse for the Stranger, 2009, p. 1150).

Darwish kept loading the Palestinian history with meaning through his pen pictures of the home and the exile. After the destruction of Iraq, while the Christian world under George Bush and George W. Bush ready to run down the Muslim countries of the Middle East, Darwish ponders if he can save his homeland in his poem. While he chooses to remain a poet, alive to the traditions and limitations of the poetic craft, he nevertheless has all the freedoms and licenses of poetry at his disposal. He can build like Coleridge, his ideal Xanadu. But before that, he has to cross a very difficult path of self-actualization through a desert of existence where "time has broken and language has broken" and therefore there is: 'A desert for sound, a desert for silence, a desert for the eternal absurdity': "And for the tablets of scriptures, for school books, for prophets, scientists and for Shakespeare a desert, for those searching for god in the human. ... (Ibid. p. 1152)." This condition is further elaborated in his epic poem, one of the later part of the poet's career "Mural" where he describes this journey that must start from darkness, inaction, stasis and indecision. The important thing is to hold on and persist, a typical Palestinian sentiment that has kept that nation alive despite so many heart rending tragedies:

I don't hear the chorus of the righteous or wailing of sinners / I'm alone in whiteness, alone ...
At the gate of resurrection nothing hurts
Neither time past nor any feeling
I don't sense the lightness of things nor the weight of apprehension
There is no one to ask: Where now is my where?
Where is the city of death? Where am I?
In this no-here ... No-time ... And nothingness (Darwish M. , Mural, 2009, p. 10).

This heritage where the time goes out of joint and one has to set it right echoes not only in Darwish but also other exiles like him. They have to consistently build and rebuild their various identities but their souls cannot rest. When Darwish's compatriot Liyana Badr was allowed to return to Jerusalem after twenty seven years of exile, her impressions was that before returning, she had lived a life of destitution in various exiles: "Since that time I have seen all other cities as mirrors returning me, in one way or another, to my own city ... In 1994 I returned and, it was as though I had never left (Badr, 2001, p. 91)." The Zionists, when they planned and executed their statehood in Palestine, were quite well aware that the local population would have to be displaced and they were ready to do that. Dispossession was the principle that they used at all costs in order to establish their possession. Salma Khadra Jayyusi believes that "the folds of future history" will tell that the present military occupation of Jerusalem and its environs will not be able to stand the test of time. Jerusalem, the seat of the three monotheistic religions will re-assume its identity (Jayyusi, Jerusalem: The Thrice Loved Land, 2001, pp. 1-2). Darwish's poetry has a complex aesthetic setting. The freedom that he could not see around him in reality had its links in the memories of the past and in the hopes of the future. In his poem "A Solo Performance", he identifies his loneliness stretched along these two temporal poles: "Were I one day to return to what was, would I find / Anything that was or anything that will be (Darwish M. , A Solo Performance, p. 90)?" In view of the prevailing hopelessness and the inherent cruelty meted out to his people through every action of Israeli politics, he calls this to be an unnatural world without any semblance of recognizable structures. Only aesthetics can work:

In a world without sky, land becomes
 An abyss. And the poem, one of condolence's gifts.
 ... Invent a wish
 For speech, devise a direction or a mirage
 To prolong the hope, and sing.
 Aesthetic is a freedom (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 191).

As a young man, Darwish went through a very varied and uniquely diverse assortment of circumstances: Nakba led him to exile which led to homecoming in disguise, several

imprisonments and restrictions of mobility, availability and then the disavowal of identity, falling in love with an Israeli girl, political activism, statesmanship, politics, poetic publications and public reading of his poetry, worldwide recognition and finally, death in exile. Consistent exile helped him to transcend his personal experiences and group consciousness and thus he was able to transform the personal example into a universal message of everlasting human toil. For Darwish the issue of Palestine became a prism through which he would look at the world at large. For him, the Palestinian identity was not just related with a piece of land; it was a summation of epochs, with influences from Canaanites, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Ottoman Turks and the British. This gave Mahmoud Darwish an inherent capacity of empathy growing to the level that he could even relate with an Israeli soldier as an equal victim of circumstances like himself. He expresses the unbending officious absurdities of an oppressive military occupation that both sides suffer. The truth, Darwish always believed, comes out. Facts of the so called ‘fact-finding missions’ of the UN may be strong and legally valid but the *truth* is stronger than these. In his poem “Truth has Two Faces and the Snow is Black”, he writes:

Truth has two faces and the snow is black over our city.
We are no longer capable of despairing more than we have already,
And the end walks toward the fence confident of its footsteps
On this court that is wet with tears, confident of its footsteps.
Who will lower our flags: we, or they? And who
Will dictate to us "the treaty of despair," O king of dying?
Everything has been previously prepared for us, so who will tear our names
From our identities: you, or they (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 62)?

What reverberates in Darwish’s intricately packed poems is hope which is not the opposite of despair. It is a unique talent. Suffering is the test of this talent and the poetic indifference that becomes apparent at several places in his writings is a secreted aspect of hope. Darwish has a talent for what Keats describes as ‘negative capability’ as he can completely transform into the object that he describes. For example, in his 2002 poem “A State of Siege” that he wrote while he stayed at Ramallah in Palestine, Darwish addresses the Israeli soldiers shelling his homestead:

You, standing at our thresholds, come in,
Sip some Arab coffee with us!
You may feel that you're as human as we are (Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 21).

He has the art of complete transformation of the perspective and his faculty of empathy is capable of becoming what the Arabs call *nafs-i-lawwama*, the scolding self. For example, in the following extract, it is a representative subjective voice that speaks to an IDF soldier:

To a killer:
If you had looked into the face of your victim
And thought carefully,
You might have remembered your mother in the Gas Chamber,
And freed yourself from the rifle's prejudice
And changed your mind.
Come now, this is no way to restore an identity (Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 43)!

This sentimentality and the style of direct-engagement with the adversary appears every now and then in his poetry. For Darwish, there was no escape from 'the rifle's prejudice', and he landed into the world as a rootless exile. His journey took him from al-Birwa in Upper Galilee, to Lebanon, Haifa, Moscow, Cairo, Beirut, Syria, Cyprus, Cairo again, Tunis, Paris, Jordan and finally USA. But travelling does not heal the wound. He turns back to the IDF killers with a renewed poetic frenzy and narrates to them the possibility of a very different life. His imagination speaks of the probabilities, the new ways erstwhile hidden from the human eye:

To another killer:
If you had given the embryo thirty more days,
Probabilities might have changed,
The occupation might have ended,
The infant wouldn't recall this time of siege
But would grow up healthy, enter school
With one of your daughters,
Study the history of ancient Asia,
Fall in love, have a baby girl... Jewish by birth.

This theme of mixed fraternities and its complications has also been taken up by the Palestinian diaspora writer Susan Abulhawa in her novel *Mornings in Jenin*. Darwish hints about such a remote and fictional possibility with while he takes the argument of the poem to its logical end:

Instead what have you done?
Your daughter is a widow,
Your granddaughter an orphan.
And what have you done to your own displaced family?
How did you manage to shoot
Three doves with a single shot (Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 45)?

The universal ethos that Darwish has observed in his poetry is an example for other conscientious writers of both Israel and Palestine who like to see the ongoing crisis as a matter of human suffering and try to wake up to the need of the hour and do something about it. As a result of Darwish's presence on this front, there has been a stirring on both sides. In his epic poem "Forest of Holm Oak", he refers to the two imaginary belligerent groups and tries to find something in common between the two communities that may lead to some reconciliation despite the unnatural political relationships:

Beyond this evening we see what remains of the night. Soon
the free moon will drink the warrior's tea under the trees.
One moon for all, for both sides of the trench, for us-and them,
(Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 19).

4.10 Darwish and the poetics of *survivance*

Darwish has dedicated his intellect to find an ultimate and unwavering definition for his people as a nation with a clear and recognized geopolitical definition that may ensure survival rather than eventual extinction. His poetry has been the record of Palestinian plight, a manifesto of their struggle, and is destined to be the celebration of their history when they realize their dream of freedom and ultimate statehood guaranteeing sovereignty. For the nonce, it is a means of their *survivance*. The term 'survivance', coined in the field of Native American Studies (used by Gerald Vizenor in *Manifest Manners*, 1999), denotes an active presence and continued dignity of native peoples, despite the ethnocidal policies of a settler colonial state. Survivance is more than a reactionary struggle for existence. Irene Calis, an anthropologist from Rhodes University, South Africa believes that Palestinian ideological erasure is intrinsic to the Zionist narrative on which the Israeli state was founded and continues to be administered. "The Palestinian survivance

continues to be subverted at the most fundamental levels, as Palestinians have in the 21st century yet to be recognized and treated as fully human (Calis, 2015).” A further proof of it is reported by Chomsky that when in the wake of blindness and hatred towards Palestinian Arabs, Shimon Peres suggested that Israel should preserve its moral stand, Moshe Dayan replied to him: “Ben-Gurion said that anyone who approaches the Zionist problem in a moral aspect is not a Zionist.” This clearly shows the deep rooted contempt for the Arab population ingrained in the Zionist philosophy whose main proponents, according to Chomsky, have variously labeled the Arabs and Palestinians as “uncivilized race”, “savages”, “Red Indians” , “squatters for thirteen centuries”, “liars from birth”, “a cancer in Israel’s body” etc. The Palestinian issue has been taken as “a conflict between culture and wild men”. And as Irving Howe would put, there is an “underpopulated Galilee” meaning that the place has too few Jews and too many Arab citizens, of course who have pointless and valueless existence (Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle*, 1999, pp. 804-805). Under these circumstances, Raja Shehadeh, founder of *Law in the Service of Man* observes:

The failure of all peace initiatives made everybody here think that, ‘We are absolutely desperate, we are exploited, we are harassed, our houses demolished and nothing is working to change our situation. There is no political solution, nobody [to help] from the outside, and unless we do it ourselves, nobody is going to care’ (Ibid.).

While the world has stopped caring, the words of the poet keeps the concern alive.

Darwish sums up the indomitable spirit of the Palestinians aptly in a short poem in *State of Siege*:

We offer our condolences
To a father for the loss of his son:
“May God generously reward his martyrdom!”
Then right away we congratulate him
On the birth of a new son (Darwish M. , *State of Siege*, 2010, p. 73).

Here *we* is all Palestinians and the *father* is all Palestinian fathers and the son who is lost already and the one that has completed gestation is to be lost in due course of time. All gain is loss in an occupied land. Palestinian survivance requires more voices like Darwish and in more languages than Arabic and in more genres than plain texts of history books. Darwish has set the

pattern and now it has to be followed to its natural end. According to Maan News (September 22, 2016), the military operation in the refugee camp *al- Duheisha* in Bethlehem, (the birthplace of Jesus Christ) has aimed at firing the young Palestinians in both legs and thus willfully maiming them into lifelong infirmity. The military commander of the operation known to the locals as Captain Nidal has openly vowed, “I will make half of you disabled, and let the other half push the wheel chairs.” While the operation has no legal base, the project of Palestinian annihilation continues unabated all over the place (Maan News, 2016). Side by side these news, runs the consistent Darwishian poetic narrative replete with memory and the homeland. In his posthumously published poem “The Prisoner has Aged”, he describes his state of exile as that of a prisoner. It seems that Palestine is the free world and rest of the earth’s geography is a vast prison where the poet is confined and becoming old:

Memory launches ...
Can you see how all these mountains and my people’s orange-groves
Become, all of them ... become imprisoned?
I have aged, aged my old love with the wall
The prisoner has aged, and you set a flame
In the desert nights a song and fire
And you die, alone, homeless (I Don't Want This Poem to End, p. 48).

On one front Palestinians have to resist ideological erasure and on the other they have to explore and exploit all the available means of justice for their cause. They have to knock at all the doors with the force of an organized assemblage. This means excelling in terms of political science, international law and the knowledge of how the international institutions work favorably towards a people. To delay this project would be delaying the justice as to deny even the dream of it. And to defer a dream is known well to the black American poet Langstone Hughes (1902-1967), the writer of *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927) who pictured it in his poem Harlem:

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up / like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore-- / And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode (Hughes, 1995, p. 426)?

Palestinian dream has *exploded*. Its shrapnel are *words* and some of the most potent ones that have the capability of surviving the forgetfulness that exudes UN resolutions and journalistic onslaught are embodied in Darwish's writings. In *Memory for Forgetfulness* he hails all those who have stood fast to the ideals of freedom and the love of land:

Hallowed be your hands, you who clutch the last stone and the last ember. Hallowed be your hands, which, all by themselves, raise mountains from the ruins of the orphaned sea. And may your scorched shadows turn into the ashes of a phoenix from which a new life will rise, that you may create from these ashes and yourselves a manger for a child to be born.... All alone! Behind you, the sea; in front of you, the sea; to your right, the sea; and to your left, the sea, with no solid earth except this hand clutching a rock that is the earth itself. All alone (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 49)!

Darwish's words have the quality of inspiration characteristic of the ancient religious texts like Vedas and Nag Hammadi that use the repetitive linguistic utterances with frequent use of binaries to assert the emotional appeal. And that is true about the titles of his prose, poetry and even the titles of his books as well: Repetitions and binaries that are there to register the endless cycle of pain that constitutes the experience of being a Palestinian e.g. *The Adam of Two Edens*, *Memory for Forgetfulness*, *In the Presence of Absence*, *Absent Presence* etc. These binaries correspond to the unequal and opposite binaries set by the originators of Palestinian apartheid. An example of this is Noam Chomsky's assertion in which he traces the origin of Israel's blatant and racist acts of cruelty that have continued to the day, from their philosophy of 'the removal of people who are inferior to Jews in their essential nature; thus, in the words of the revered Rav Kook, Chief Ashkenazic Rabbi from 1921 to 1935, "the difference between the Israelite soul...and the soul of all non-Jews, at any level, is greater and deeper than the difference between the soul of a human and the soul of an animal, for between the latter [two categories] there is only a quantitative difference but between the former two there is a qualitative one"' (Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*, 1989, p. 335).' This differentiation of the animalistic from the humanistic element is a clear example of chauvinistic religious

ideology that governs the Zionist agenda from day one. Darwish shows us the effects of this hate-philosophy on those who suffer it as refugees and exiles. And those who have died in the process of resisting the waves of neocolonialism are also accounted for in Darwish's words. While he invokes his favourite 'Joseph' simile, he refers to the destruction of Iraq at the turn of the twenty first century:

There's no room for the poem on this earth
Is there any room for this earth in the poem, after Iraq? ...
The dead won't forgive those who stood
Perplexed like us at the edge of the well.
Is beautiful Joseph the Sumerian our brother
So we can steal
The beauty of the evening stars from him?
If he must be killed
Then let Caesar be the sun
Setting on slaughtered Iraq (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p. 113).

After Iraq, Syria has begun to be the target of the neocolonial empire building process that wants the entire Middle East to be maintained as a perpetual colony under the monitoring of Israel. The process now begun may continue to the complete destruction of the Syrian regime and its population the large chunk of which has already been internally and externally displaced for decades just like the Palestinian saga of mass-migration. Darwish has registered the alienating and the excruciating pain of dispossession in his poetry. For example in his poem "He and None Other", the poet corresponds with a man exiled from another star. The poet intercepts him and convinces him to run back to his native land lest memory should be the only possession that he would be left with and the time might seem to come to a halt:

I said to him: If you appear, you will be broken
Do not let that happen.
His prophetic pain said to me: Where am I going?
I said: To an invisible star, or to the cave.
He said: I am obsessed by a reality I cannot decipher.
I said: Then record your memories of the distant star,
Of a tomorrow slow in coming (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 11).

Darwish, like any other man of letters, does not have a statistical solution to the problems of Palestinian identity but he has the capacity of making both the domestic and the international audiences wake up to the need of the hour in Palestinian context. Amelia Smith, the writer of the

book *The Arab Spring* hails Darwish's poetry as a combination of nature, pain and anger while he describes the olive groves, orchards, rocks and plants of Palestine. His emotions are coupled with the pain of being forced away from his homeland and he is angry because he cannot come and go to his motherland freely and be treated as her equal son. She eulogizes him thus:

The great poet once said: "I thought poetry could change everything, could change history and could humanise... but now I think that poetry changes only the poet." They were fitting words for such a solitary man whose poems often read as deeply personal journeys of discovery into the state of exile. Whether or not these words changed listeners may be questionable, that they moved millions is indisputable (Smith, 2015).

On a closer look one discovers that having spent all hope in the given geopolitical scenario, Darwish started experiencing bouts of disillusionment as well, but rather than losing himself in the mesh of pessimistic inaction, he decided to escape into the world of self-created myths. Since he remained a secularist in the Romantic tradition of poetry, he was never bothered that his myth-making drew from pagan or even *jahiliyya* sources. His imagination is swift and poetic rendition is full of private imagery which is not difficult to decipher as he, being an exile, always leaves some geographical and historical clues like the mention of *Gilgamesh* and *Andalusia* in several of his poems. The state of exile helps an individual in exploring that he "is an outsider in every aspect of the word. He does not belong anywhere but to the place of his first memory. The memory becomes a homeland and identity (Darwish M. , On Exile, p. 218)." Commenting on Darwish's *A River Died of Thirst*, Fady Joudah asserts that for Darwish extreme individuation as an exile dissolves into its otherness. His long journey into the self, with the stranger, the humanized enemy, and the collective "we", is a Sufi's "I", metaphysical and existential, simultaneously interior and exterior (Joudah, 2009). Darwish's is a deeply felt Palestinian tale in which he registers the pain of eviction and lack of all subsequent rights as a normal human being including the right to a safe living and the right to return to the homeland. He compares the living generation of Palestinians with "modern native Americans – watching on as other people lead what are supposed to be their lives, and their past is within reach but they are

unable to visit it and shed a tear, or sing a sad song. This is where the homeland is at its harshest (Darwish M. , On Exile, p. 219).” In the wake of an ongoing Palestinian tragedy, Darwish disseminates life and courage to the youth for the struggle of a lifetime. After his exile, he was left on his own and he did all what he could do in his special way as a sensitive poet and writer. At places in his later writings, he seems to have become tired and that is why he wants to hand over the struggle to his compatriots, the coming generation of Palestinians. He expresses this emotion in his poem that recalls the myth of Gilgamesh:

So do with yourself what you want. I did by myself what
I want. I grew up by night in the tale between the sides
Of the triangle: Egypt, Syria, and Babylon. ...
I found none to complete but my ghost (Darwish M. , Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone, 2014, p. 34)!

In the poem, the history and the present have been combined. There are hints of a paradise that is lost and he, like hundreds and thousands of his countrymen, is left on his own. He and his ghost are the only companions for each other, the only mutual props to support the tradition of a place that has thrown them out. He feels that he has turned into an echo of his past just like the echo from the horseshoes of a departing caravan. Every poem of Darwish deserves a reflective reading as it possesses an endless series of interrogative nuances. But once the reader gets the knack of it i.e. when his paradigm is understood, it is impossible to leave his world. The narrative structure of his poems becomes dramatic with the frequent use of internal and external dialogue. Most of the time he is talking to a ‘*you*’ that has various interpretations. For this quality, his words must actually be read, not to be just heard in reported speech. His poetry is narrative in nature but its tone is dialogically nuanced. At times, he establishes a dialogue with the reader and appeals to his or her finer intellectual perceptions. His objective is to register his presence as a representative voice of a people who have been rendered voiceless through an incessantly negative media campaign. Darwish’s words go into making an alternative chronicle. An example of this is his poem “The Red Indian’s Penultimate Speech to the Whiteman.” The popular history cannot fully

sustain the truth. It tends to be whitewashed by the new waves of intellectual pursuit where the desire to be different and more enlightened sometimes makes people compromise on the actual reported happenings. This is even true in the Biblical sense. Thomas L. Thompson, concludes his essay “Jerusalem as the City of God’s Kingdom: Common Tropes in the Bible and the Ancient Near East” by saying that “Out of a desert of exilic suffering comes new life and resurrection, creating a myth of hope and expectation”:

... The restless theme of wandering that dominates the Gilgamesh story is expressed in the Bible through the exile motif, where Israel’s humanity is scattered over the face of the earth to search for the way back to an eternal Jerusalem to find the tree of life. This restless search has serenity as its goal (Thompson T. L., 2011, p. 290).

The above quoted verses from Darwish and the explicatory evidence from Thomson’s essay, related with the endless possibility of interpretation vis-à-vis Gilgamesh, brings us to the modern enigma of Israel-Palestine conflict which is also a controversy of the opposing philosophical standpoints consistently fueled by the dominant Zionist propaganda. The idea that there has been a persistent distortion of historical facts and consequent amalgamation of fiction within the Palestinian tragedy has been one of the chief findings of the present research. The *truth* cannot only be found from journalistic treatises, conference proceedings or paid UN reports alone, there is so much that only goes down in human society and thereafter in poetry. Here is the benign political role of literature when it becomes a social chronicle and stands for *life* and asserts its necessary continuity. The study of poetry merely on aesthetic grounds cannot explain or rectify the human condition and therefore cannot bring about a *change* in the general perception of the world. The postmodern world is an intricate maze with layers of information and enigmatic interpretations. Only a politically conscious and conscientious poet can attempt to trace the reality of life in occupied territories absent from adequate presentation in media. The ideal stance may be adopted by a person who has experienced a particular home and the consequent homelessness, a person who has undergone the pangs of memory and has seen his homeland from the vantage point of a distant land where the conditions of life are very different, democracy intact and

freedom of expression allowed. Darwish found such a vantage point several times while he moved from one cosmopolitan center to another. On a wider plane of experience, he is not alone. In its Advisory Opinion of July 2004 (“Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”), the International Court of Justice in The Hague also unanimously reaffirmed the applicability of the Geneva Conventions to the Israeli-occupied territories and added that all of the agreements (notably the Oslo Accords) entered into by the Israelis and Palestinians since 1993 “have done nothing to alter” the fact that “all these territories (including East Jerusalem) remain occupied territories and Israel has continued to have the status of an occupying power (Ibid.).

Despite all evidence of the unjust subjugation of Palestinian lands, there are several countries in the world who back out of all support when it comes to stand for the universally acknowledged rights of the Palestinians. Poetry with its long tradition of both sentimentality and vigor cannot survive or give meaning in this state of affairs. At such a point, Darwish also becomes metaphysically prosaic: “Meaning beckons from afar, with a heavenly hand whose fingers have been mutilated by hard tilling of an earth without crops, without happiness (Darwish M. , *Absent Presence*, 2010, p. 119).” Edward Said had envisioned clearly that ‘it always falls to the victim, not the oppressor, to show new paths for resistance and the signs are that Palestinian civil society is beginning to take the initiative.... in a time of despondency and instinctual retrogression (Said E. W., *The End of the Peace Process*, 2002, p. 397).’ Darwish takes the challenge of reconfirming his identity and his home despite living in the alien environs of United States which by chance happens to be the greatest supporter of Israeli empire building project. USA proved a place where he could relax and give full vent to his emotions. It was here that he confirmed his existence through prolific writing and authenticated publications in English, the internationally understood language. It was here that his memory got shaped up in concrete words

and living phonemes. He compares its music with the ringing of an old gold dinar on the edge of a well:

I hear ancestral desolation
Like an abode of ruin
Between the calling of my name's "mah"
And the "mood" of its second syllable. ...
I am sure I will return in a matter of hours alive
From the well where I met neither Joseph
Nor his brothers' fears of ricocheting echoes (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p.

58).

The Joseph-motif is very common in Darwish's work. It refers to the paradoxical narratives of what actually happened to Joseph and what was given out to Jacob by his sons who sought to white wash the truth. Noushin Framke is of the view that Israel is 'pinkwashing' its human-rights record which, according to CUNY Professor Sarah Schulman, means "winning the battle of the narrative." This is in addition to the well-funded Israeli public-relations efforts known as 'whitewashing' the history and 'greenwashing' the proliferation of deadly arsenal not only through its production but its frequent live-test use on Palestinian population (Framke, 2017). Writing in the context of the activist lexicon she iterates that the counter narrative must be highlighted. Darwish has contributed enormously towards this project both poetically as well as through recourse to political philosophy, evident in his prose works, that leave no area of human activity and national consolidation untouched. Darwish's poetics of the homeland and the politics of identity are reflective of his exceptional exilic experience coupled with his conviction of collective memory. According to Milan Kundera, "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting (Kundera, 1981)."

CHAPTER V

DARWISH'S POLITICS OF HOME AND IDENTITY

Where should we go after the last frontiers?
Where should the birds fly after the last sky?

(Darwish M. , Victims of a Map: A Bilingual Anthology of Arabic Poetry, 2005, p. 13)



Source: www.ifamericansknew.org (5694 Mission Center Rd, Suite 602-710 San Diego, CA 92108)

Darwish's politics of home and identity correspond to the slow effacement of the geography as well as demography of Palestine which is continuing unabated over the decades. He not only takes cognizance of the changing cartography being affected in the region, but also its human and psychological consequences. Darwish's poetic vision ranges from imaginative

romanticism to the poetry of resistance. He has written on all topics that reflect various facets of human life from birth to death but Palestine remains interwoven in all that he imagines and says. The continuous assertion of home and a distinct identity are the themes that keep recurring in his works. Unlike other poets of resistance, he does not call for a bloody revolution or a war. His contribution is more toward the preservation of the basic motifs that define Palestinian resistance in the face of an impending annihilation. He has been a persistent witness to the gradual dispossession that the Palestinian Arabs suffered in recent history when the Zionists, in collaboration with the British, occupied the Palestinian land and expropriated it as a settlement colony proclaiming it as the State of Israel. He is not alone in this great effort and his other fellow nationals from other parts of Palestinian territories have all raised a concerted poetic, literary and artistic voice in order to keep the Palestinian history of sentiments alive. From Beit Jala near Bethlehem rose Ghassan Zaqtan, from Deir Ghassaneh near Ramallah: Murid al-Barghouti, from Deir al-Ghusoon near Tulkarm: Khairi Mansour and Ghazi al-Theeba, from Beit Inan near Jerusalem: Youssef Abd al-Aziz, from Gaza: Walid Khazendar, from Khan Yunis, Gaza, Khaled Abdallah, from al-Maghar, Galilee: Salman Masalha, from Baqa El-Gharbiya in the Mashlash area: Mohammad H Ghanaiem, from Qalqiliya: Anas al Ayla, from Haifa: Ahmad Dahbour, from Jaffa (but growing up in al-Nuwaima reugee camp): Sharif S Elmusa, from Hebron: Izzidin al-Manasrah, from Galilee: Saud el-Asadi, from diaspora Palestinians, such names as Sammer Abu Hawwash and Naomi Shihab Nye are important names that have created a web of Palestinian expression that may someday evolve into an unique genre.

Darwish somehow stands tall and distinct among all these due to his true to life and intimate writing that follows the music of the soul in a very natural way and does not care if his words make sense not in the first contact but in the echo. He leaves his reader in awe and only gradually does he realize that an interrogative piece of writing has left him intellectually

electrified. But when it comes to the national *identity* and *home*, Darwish has the capacity to take a sharp turn into the fast lane where his words become scathing and sometimes too incisive.

5.1 “Identity Card”

Darwish believes that a poet’s task is limited and fragile but nevertheless of exceeding personal and political significance as he must be the guardian and preserver of national identity. He refers to the seeming helplessness of a poet before ‘history’s bulldozer’ and then expresses his resolve to preserve and ‘guard’ the memory of the spring and the trees, ‘visible or invisible by the old roads’:

... And protect language from receding from metaphorical precision and from being emptied of the voices of victims calling for their share of tomorrow’s memory on that land over which a struggle is being waged. A struggle for what lies beyond the power of weapons: the power of words (Darwish M. , In the Presence of Absence, 2011, p. 126).

An instance of this ‘power of words’ may be found in his 1964 poem “*Bitaqat Hawiyah*” or “Identity Card” that closes his volume of poetry *Awraq al Zeitoun (Olive Leaves)* and which has become his primary introduction, he writes with an unprecedented stress at the end of every turn of thought: “Register me. I am an Arab.” He answers an imaginary immigration officer who subjects him to an investigation related with his card number, the number of his children, his vocation, the colour of his hair and eyes, distinguishing remarks, favourite food and address. Darwish’s answers are suggestive and charged with an emotion of defiance:

--Vocation? / Stone cutter.
I must cut bread / And clothes and books / For eight children./ I'll never beg at your door.
I'm an Arab. --Are you angry?
Address: a forgotten quiet village
Where streets have no names
And men work in fields and quarries.

He starts the first three stanzas with a domineering imperative “Register me!” variously translated as “Write it down!” and as he gradually unfolds his identity, he undergoes a deep psychological transformation because he is not just registering his individual self but also the

story of his entire nation. The fame that the poem has won is a witness to the power of literary expression. In the initial two stanzas, he wraps up the dialogue with “Are you angry?” because he knows that his very identity would assert a nationhood and that would raise the question of the homeland which his Zionist counterparts are not ready to sanction. He almost enjoys the anger of his adversary after every new prompting about himself as if tackling the opponent into a psychological fix. Then comes another commanding note: “Register me!” Three times he makes his request and all the three times, because he is an Arab, he very elusively avoids telling his name. This is a clear sign that Darwish did believe in pan-Arab identity, which could, and still can be the surest and perhaps the only way to survive in the wake of Israel’s physical and political expansionism. Since his Zionist counterpart in the dialogue insists on demanding his individual identity, apart from his collective-self, Darwish rejects the demand by asserting that he is without a name:

I'm nameless
And patient despite my anger.
I struck roots here
Long before the olive trees and poplars.
I'm a descendant of the plow pushers;
My ancestor was a peasant;
My home is a hut of mud.

Then he lets a little vent to his latent anger which he justifies on the basis of his strong roots with the land of his dispossession. He believes that the given visible topography is not as old as the human ecology of the land and then he identifies himself with the earliest of the crofters that inhabited this land. It is a journey deep down the memory lane where the poet’s mind shows a remarkable capacity of recollection in order to assert his claim to the land and to qualify his anger. After this he gives a volley of accusations which may not be of any practical or national value, given the tough ideological stance of the Zionist usurpers of this land supported by the technological superiority of the US but then it may cause an onset of compunction in any heart in the present or in the future and there may be a realization that forcibly snatching the land from its rightful owners was a crime that can only partially be redeemed through restoring it to the original

owners or their progeny. The restoration may be in a much smaller ratio to what was originally taken but nothing less than that would settle the score.

You've stolen all my vineyards
And the land I used to till.
You've left me nothing for my children
Except the rocks.
But I've heard
You'll take away
Even the rocks.

This is very prophetic and speaks volumes for his understanding of the Zionist plot. All peace initiatives on the part of the US or Israel are just the pretexts of further dispossession and appropriation of Palestinian lands. All such accords and talks and conventions are tools to snatch more time to fulfil the Greater Israel project which has considerably advanced now and the Palestinian territories are slowly being eaten away through artificial acquisition of land which is shown to the world to be an honest brokerage. Here the poet demands that he must be registered and written down as a nameless, all-representing, erstwhile Arab owner of the land who despite his dislocation, belongs to the land of Palestine. Both he and his Zionist counterpart may be angry with each other but the poet issues a unilateral moratorium against hate and plunder, something that his Jewish addressee may not be able to claim. In the end Darwish asks a very important question of existential nature. He has every right to survive and live here in Palestine with as much or more of the claim than any other human being with his historiographical assertion.

Then register me first:
I hate nobody
And I don't steal.
But if I'm made to starve
I'll eat the flesh of my oppressor.
Beware of my hunger and anger (Darwish M. , Barghouti)!

The poem ends with a threat which might seem harsh in the first reading of the words but which later sounds as too benign a statement against the ruthless ethnic cleansing and massacres that have been perpetrated against the Palestinians over the last seven decades. In another poem

in his collection *The End of the Night* (1967), Darwish reinforces the sufferings of the Palestinian intellectuals and their determination to defend their country and the rights of their countrymen:

My homeland!
I knew not that under my skin
A Storm is being born.
They locked me in a dark cell,
But the Sun burnt in my heart (Boullata, 1980, p. 253).

5.2 Darwish on dehumanization of the Palestinian lands

Darwish preserves in his poetry the trauma of dehumanizing the earlier denizens of this land in an effort to obliterate their historical identity and render them as subhuman species sans human rights or human needs. These natives were reduced to the status of refugees disposed to live in camps where the raiding terror of Israeli forces continues. Darwish registers this pain along with the hope and joy of a free futurity in which the normal human life with all its various colours would thrive in Palestine:

The earth is closing on us, pushing us through the last passage, and
We tear off our limbs to pass through.
The earth is squeezing us. I wish we were its wheat so we could die and live again...
We will die here, here in the last passage. Here and here our blood
Will plant its olive tree (Darwish M. , *Victims of a Map: A Bilingual Anthology of Arabic Poetry*, 2005, p. 13).

In practical terms, almost all of the Palestinian poets have held strong to the concept of a unified and coherent nationhood before and after Nakba. Darwish's response is very different from these charged assumptions and tries to set the record straight. Here is the poet whose *home* had been depopulated and razed by Israel's war machine and the policy makers who have both bulldozed history and geography with "a culture of impunity that exists in Israeli Army (Baroud, 2016)." Darwish was displaced geographically, emotionally and politically so many times that he was convinced that "My homeland is a suitcase" in his poem *In Praise of the Lofty Shadow* (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. xiv). The suitcase can be carried along without

a trace, it can be opened and shut close. This ‘suitcase’ imagery continues in his several other poems e.g. in his poem “The Tragedy of Narcissus”, he says: “Do you remember our estrangement's days over there? They used to dance on the suitcases mocking the narrative of exile and the countries longing will abandon (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 35). At another place however, he negates the earlier claim:

My homeland isn't a suitcase ...
And I am not going.
I am a lover and the land is the beloved (Hoffman, 2009, p. 316).

Darwish is called the ‘national poet of Palestine’, Palestine’s poet laureate etc. He is the second poet to have won this title after Ibrahim Tuqan. In 1971, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said of him: I can smell the fragrance of the homeland on you (Smith, 2015). The diaspora Palestinian sentiment that acknowledges him as the centripetal voice that best expresses the complex identity related sentiment experienced in a state of exile. His major themes when he writes about Palestine are nostalgia and wistfulness on the one hand, and on the other, anxiety leading to angst. For Darwish, *home* is not the name of four walls. It is a feeling of security and belonging. It is also an indicator and preserver of identity. In his book of journals *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, there is a chapter titled “The Homeland: Between Memory and History.” It starts with a simple question: What is homeland? And this follows an answer that takes the reader through an iconic world of poetic expression and historical precision. The first terse answer to the question of what a homeland is, we have: “The map is not the answer. And the birth certificate is no longer the same.” He refers to the simple concept that homeland may be a place where one is born but the places of the poet’s birth as well as his thousands of compatriots are undergoing “*Israelization*” to the extent of toponymy as well as cartographical “*adaptations*”. And therefore defining one’s home on the basis of birth is no longer possible. Darwish therefore suggests: “It would be the simplest thing to say, my homeland is where I will die. But you could die anywhere,

or on the border between two places.” He continues to suggest that the Palestinian history must not be recorded yet as this tends to push them further down the past:

Do not write a history except that of your wounds. Do not write a history except that of your exile. You are here – here, where you were born. And where longing will lead you to death. So, what is a homeland? You are part of a whole, and the whole is absent and subject to annihilation. And why are you now afraid of saying “homeland is where my ancestors lived”? (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 26).

An example of this ‘pretext’ can be found in an article published in the Israeli Newspaper Haaretz titled “A Surprising Process of ‘Israelization’ is Taking Place among Palestinians in East Jerusalem” by Nir Hasson. Taking the case of the town of Isawiyah as a microcosm of latent changes which are referred to as “Israelization”, “normalization”, or just plain “adaptation”, the writer relates a legion of sociological indicators of change. For example, Arab applications for an Israeli ID card, Arab students taking Israeli matriculation examination, decline in Arab birthrate, rising number of applications for national service and building permits “showing that in a final settlement more East Jerusalem Palestinians would prefer to remain under Israeli rule, and so on (Hasson, 2012) .” Hasson calls all this a tectonic shift “the likes of which has not been known since the city came under Israeli rule in 1967. Opinion is divided about the source of the change. Some believe it sprang from below, propelled by the Palestinians’ feelings of despair and their belief that an independent state is not likely to come into being (Ibid.)” The Palestinian youth has already started coming to terms with this hard fact. The following poem titled *Stolen Joys* by Nour El-Borno, a graduate of Islamic University of Gaza corresponds to Darwish’s view of nostalgia which he believes “is the mingling of fire with water (Darwish M. , *Absent Presence*, 2010, p. 82)”:

Gaza Moons shine through her eyes
As she walks past her house:
Here, she once laughed;
There, she once cried.
“I remember,” she whispers. ...
“My soul still lingers, though; / I lived here” (El-Borno, 2016).

While the joys have been stolen from the Palestinian children in a systematic and persistent way, Alice Rothchild refers to Dr. Nurit Peled-Elhanan of the Hebrew University School of Education who has noticed the cartographic *change* that is being affected in the Israeli books and maps where the Green Line that demarcates Israeli and Palestinian borders is gradually being blurred. Rothchild quotes Dr. Nurit: “When the Palestinians write ‘Palestine’ on the maps in their textbooks, it is considered incitement,” she says. “If that is the case, what should we call Israeli textbooks that call the West Bank ‘Judea and Samaria,’ even on maps that describe the Mandatory borders, when the official name was ‘Palestine-Eretz Israel (Rothchild, Broken Promises, Broken Dreams, 2010, p. 62)?” Rothchild gives us another instance where Professor Yoram Bar-Gal, head of Geography and Environmental Studies at University of Haifa talks about the general academic principle regarding the interpretation of maps: “My map is educational – your map is propaganda.” The professor believes that the maps are a credible tool for political messaging: “The government’s cartographic department does not mark the Green Line as an official border of the State of Israel ... so long as the Palestinian Authority has not been recognized as a sovereign state, it should not be represented as a state on maps (Ibid. p.63).” According to the Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tzipi Hotovely: “My position is that between the sea and the Jordan River, there needs to be one state only – the state of Israel... There is no place for an agreement of any kind that discusses the concession of Israeli sovereignty over lands conquered [in 1967] (Citizen action Monitor, 2015). Thus we see that the Nakba is not a single event of the past but a consistently ongoing process of ethnic cleansing and dispossession. To counter the Israeli hasbara propaganda and settler-colonization of Palestine, it is important that the resistance narrative or the revolutionary literary praxis should be highlighted. The present research has been an effort to trace this praxis through the representative memoirs of Darwish regarding the concepts of home and identity in an environment where both these necessary principles of a free and respectable life seem to have been compromised.

5.3 Darwish and the enigma of the separation wall

The creation of Israel has had the inbuilt design of expansion and since the land mass of the earth is not expanding like the universe itself, it is natural that the creation of each Israeli settlement and farmstead is the annihilation of a Palestinian estate. In order to secure the present land of Israel and to expand it uninhibited, Israeli policy makers struck a very unique note when they decided to wall themselves in and wall the Palestinians out. For this purpose, Israel began constructing the Separation wall in 2002. It has expanded ever since like a steady pseudopodia first from Salem to Alkana and between Ramallah and Bethlehem annexing large areas of Jerusalem and Qalqiliyah. Its next phases are not known but by the time of the present research i.e. Fall -2016, the wall has spread over more than seven hundred kilometers cutting through the Palestinian lands, destroying the water channels and separating the contiguous villages. It has led to protests ending in arresting, shelling and killing of the protesters and engulfing more and more of the Palestinian *home* to accommodate the ever increasing number of the Jewish settlers who claim the entire place to be their motherland.

Darwish believes that the walls do not hold for a very long time. Fissures are likely to appear indispensably, and from within the fissures, roses of a new birth sprout:

In his poem “The Backgammon Player”, he expresses this belief:

When the sky looks ashen
And I see a rose pushes its way suddenly
Out of the cracks in the wall
I do not say the sky is ashen
Rather, I look long and hard at a rose
And I say to it: What a day this is (Darwish M. , I Don't Want This Poem to End, p. 164)!

The construction of an eight meter high concrete wall with a strong impenetrable deep base, despite Israeli claim of providing ‘mutual security’, indicates Israeli distrust, rejection and hate for the Palestinian population. Hate has been expressed in several other ways but the wall is a permanent impediment towards any future compromise. The policies, unlike walls, have an inherent flexibility and can therefore be expected to be accommodative after a successful round

of talks. Withdrawal of troops may be possible from areas that are temporarily occupied but the seven hundred kilometers wall with two million Euros per kilometer eating up the irrigated land of the West Bank along with the Western Aquifer which provides the only possibility of pumping water for the Palestinians, does not show any flexibility or compromise (Messerschmid, 2007).

For Darwish, the only thing that remains undivided is hope:

The wall that overlooks our defeat,
The heavy scent of incense, all bear witness:
We will still be here,
We are still here.
Perhaps we never took leave of each other (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. 157).

The best way that the partition wall could work towards a lasting peace would have been the construction of a corridor between the two estranged parts of Palestine i.e. the construction of a 50 kilometers “road-corridor” between the two areas. But peace and restoration of normalcy have never been Israeli preferences. This huge structure which is two times higher than the Berlin Wall and more than four times longer is going to be a permanent scar in the history of the region. One is reminded of Robert Frost’s poem ‘Mending Walls’ in which he states:

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence (Frost, 1942, p. 47).

While there has been an international condemnation of this apartheid wall dubbed as ‘security fence’, the world opinion on the construction of this wall has been rejected by Israel. According to Michel Warschawski, the wall is Israel’s defense against extinction. He also likens the building of this wall with American global war strategy for its survival!

Israel has no credible partner and that the Arab world, indeed the Muslim world, is all ready to destroy the Hebrew state, so that it is necessary to shut themselves up (or, rather, shut up the Palestinians) behind a wall and carry out preventive wars. This conception fits in perfectly with the North American strategy of global, endless war, and indeed it was elaborated by the neoconservatives of the two countries from the end of the 1980s (Warschawski, 2007, p. 99).

5.4 Darwish's cognizance of Palestinian water

German hydrologist Clemens Messerschmid has studied the impact of the wall on irrigation land as well as on the water management of the Israel-Palestine geography since 1997 and he tells us that the two are related. According to the 2004 ruling of the ICJ (Resolution ES-10/15), the wall is a violation of international law and Israel must pay for the damage caused to all the natural and legal persons. But Israeli High Court rejected the illegality of the 'Barrier' holding that "the Barrier may be built within the occupied Palestinian territory to protect Israeli settlements (Messerschmid, 2007)." This barrier wall is not simplistic. It is surrounding and engulfing the parts of the West Bank that are of most strategic and fertile nature. Maintaining superiority of water control is one of the aims. According to Clemens Messerschmid, Israel's Military Order No. 158 the Palestinians are strictly forbidden to drill the ground, install water-work motor, build pumping stations, lay underground water pipes, construct irrigation pools or even mount rainwater harvesting cisterns which collect the rain falling on one's roof! Clemens calls this "hydro-apartheid" (Silver, 2016). Commenting on this dichotomy of situation, Dr. Nurit Peled-Elhanan comments:

While water flows in the settlements without limitation, Palestinian villages live under a cruel water regime, as was recently pointed out by the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schultz, during a speech he made before the Israeli Parliament. Many roads are closed to Palestinians and the restriction of movement is unbearable. To this day, the international community has not done enough to stop Israeli settlements. European countries have profoundly criticised them while continuing to cooperate fully with Israel, economically, politically and militarily. As a result, Israel does not pay any price for seriously violating international law (Peled-Elhanan, 2014).

Water, the most important life sustaining factor has also its tragic history in Palestine. Water is the beginning of life and it is upon water that life has sustained over the millennia. All ancient civilizations were nourished around the river banks and when and if the water bodies would dry up, either the civilization dissipated or moved to mingle with other fortunate populations. Water is so important to the life in Palestine that it almost becomes a theme in their national history because it is through the control of this vital element that Israel looks forward to

control the Palestinian population towards further containment and further dislocation. Darwish suggests a poetic escapism which looks facetious in the first instance:

Stand on the sidewalk and turn into a dried-up tree. When you see them satisfying the thirst of the earth with water, the joy sent by rain flows in abundance. The important thing is that the land should not remain thirsty, even if you yourself die of thirst (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 107).

Palestinians recognize this water-control-maneuver and this theme occurs in all literature political or poetical e.g. in the poetry and prose deliberations of Mahmoud Darwish. While he is conscious of its vital and political importance, water is a symbol to denote life and the profoundest feelings that the experience of life imbues in Darwish, “Like a small jar of water, absence breaks in me. ... The heart is abandoned like a dry well, as beastly echo expands... (Darwish M. , *Unfortunately it was Paradise*, 2013, p. 152). In his book *Water, Power and Politics in the Middle East*, Jan Selby refers to 2002 Israeli invasion of Palestinian West Bank that is remembered for its massacres, deinstitutionalization of Palestine and general destruction. Water remained the crucial factor as rooftop tanks were fired at, pumping stations had no diesel to run, water pipes were destroyed by bulldozers and tanks. Children screamed for water and had to drink sewage: “Oxfam estimated that, as of 4 April, 400,000 people in Ramallah, Nablus, Qalqilya, Bethlehem and Tulkarm (for 11 days) were without access to running water (Selby, 2003, p. 2). Darwish at that time was in exile experiencing extreme psychological pain and nostalgia and he remembered the like episode of full 20 years earlier when Beirut was devastated in the same way:

I bring my search for meaning to a complete stop because the essence of war is to degrade symbols and bring human relations, space, time, and the elements back to a state of nature, making us rejoice over water gushing on the road from a broken pipe. Water under these conditions comes to us like a miracle. Who says water has no color, flavor, or smell? Water does have a color that reveals itself in the unfolding of thirst. Water has the color of bird sounds ... And water has the flavor of water, and a fragrance that is the scent of the afternoon breeze ... (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, pp. 9,10)?

Water continues to hold symbolic significance in his other poems, sometimes taking a mystical turn:

Water has a throne that rises beneath the drought, and the holm oaks rise also.
Water has the color of the field when the zephyr of dawn lifts it on the horses' backs.

Water has the taste of the gift of song lunging from memory's garden.
Water has the scent of the beloved on the marble, increasing our thirst and stupor.
Water has the shape of sunrise brevity when it splits us in two: human and bird (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 52).

Sarah Irving describes the present status of water which she calls an eternal issue in Palestine. She tells us that due to scanty rains, people of Gaza extract all water from the underlying aquifer that used to support the population in earlier times but now that the place is densely packed with more than 1.5 million people, the sea water is encroaching upon the aquifer causing unhealthy salt levels. The situation in the West Bank is becoming dire:

The limestone aquifers here should ensure an ample supply, but Israel extracts around 70% for domestic, industrial and agricultural use whilst denying Palestinian residents and farmers access (private wells in the West Bank, sometimes in use for centuries, are capped with cut-off meters by the Israeli water authority) (Irving, 2011, p. 3).

In fact, water has remained a very crucial element throughout the story of Palestinian struggle. Despite the possibility of a frequent supply of this natural wealth, Israel has virtually full control over the distribution of water in areas where Palestinians live. Up to two hours of water supply in every 24 hours, makes these people go for a series of water storage tanks on their rooftops. Even Darwish notices it. In his diary entry titled “My Imagination ... a faithful hunting dog” he share this vision: “I stared up at the clouds and saw tufts of cotton wool driven northwards by the wind, away from the water tanks crouched on the roofs of the buildings (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 49).” If Israel lets the West Bank’s plentiful water supplies only by 17 percent of the total underground supply, the people of West Bank can experience a much better life style but this is only wishful for the last thirty years. Stephen C. Lonergan and David B. Brooks have studied the role of fresh water in the Israeli Palestinian conflict in their book *Watershed* and they conclude with evidence that draining the West bank water resources has nothing to do with the taps running in Tel Aviv. The local Jewish settlements can have an equitable share with the Palestinians but the lack of political will and humanitarian feeling on the part of the Zionists does not feel charitable. In 1991 University of Tel Aviv’s Centre for Strategic Studies, prepared a report that indicates how Israel could withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian

Territories without jeopardizing its security of water supply (Lonergan & Brooks, 1994, p. 132). But this rationality is consistently avoided by Israel and the quantity of water utilized by the settlements is many times more than the entire Palestinian population. In a deep philosophic rumination that befits the soul of a Palestinian poet, Darwish quotes the universal feeling that goes with the mention of water, its healing and cleansing capability and its charitable and equitable use. Water should not be used as a weapon of mass destruction he argues. It is an insult to nature. Since water is essential to life, there is a superordinate status that is granted to it even in prehistoric riparian societies that made its availability possible even in the face of political or even wartime circumstances. Human history has had its own crumbling moments but the basic human tenets hold the water sacred. Darwish elaborates that water does have a colour, a flavour and an odour. Its nationalistic properties are different from its chemical properties

Chemically, it's H₂O. But is it only that? What, then, is the fragrance that opens out the skin, to bring us to a feast there, in the vastness of the body and its quarters, until we almost take on the nature of butterflies? Water is the *joy* of the senses and the air that surrounds them. Water is that very air, distilled, tangible, perceptible, saturated with light. For this reason, prophets have urged their people to love water: "We made from water every living thing (Qur'an 23:30)."

He goes on developing this water imagery with reference to Palestinian history and culture that are centered on the availability of this precious element. The desert environment gives water both a romantic and a tragic significance.

In Tel Zaatar, the killers used to hunt Palestinian women at the spring, at the broken water pipe, as if hunting thirsty gazelles. Killer water. Water mixed with the blood of the thirsty who risked their lives for a cup of it. Water that lit the fires of war among the Bedouins in times gone by. Water good for improving the negotiating position of those whose dried-up humanity hasn't been melted by water. Water that got Arab kings moving, saddling them with the burden of getting in touch with the American president by phone to make a profitable deal: Take the oil, give us water. Take us, but give us water (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, pp. 33-34)!

He then carries the argument to its ultimate music, ultimate sentiment, a sentiment which made people of Palestine fall in love with him for so generously and so eloquently expressing their pent up emotions with reference to this vital element that the Israeli government is using as a potential weapon to subdue the Palestinians:

The sound of water is a wedding celebration louder, much louder, than the roar of these jets. The sound of water is a mirror for the living roots of the earth. The sound of water is freedom. The sound of water is humanity itself (Ibid.).

Darwish cautions the careless human agencies in general, while he appeals to the conscience of Israelis in particular:

As you pay your water bill, think of others
(Those who are nursed by clouds).
As you return home, to your home, think of others
(Do not forget the people of the camps).
As you sleep and count the stars, think of others
(Those who have nowhere to sleep).
As you express yourself in metaphor, think of others
(Those who have lost the right to speak) (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 3).

The concept of draught and dryness owing to this dearth of water gives Darwish additional inspiration to write with the ink of poetry on the parched pages of history:

Summer yawning like a dog
in the dry shade of an olive tree. Sweat on the rock,
Vertical sun. No life, no death hereabouts.
Dryness, like the smell of light in the wheat.
No water in the well or the heart. ...
No green grass, no yellow grass.
No color in the sickness of color.
Everywhere the color of ashes (Ibid.)!

According to UN estimate, the population of Gaza was 650,000 (Filiu, 2015, p. 195) inhabitants in 1987 and in 2012, it had risen to 1600,000 (Ibid. p. xi) but the amount of water released to them by the Israeli authorities has remained the same. In 1993, Amira Hass, an Israeli reporter went to the Gaza despite the Israeli local idiom of ‘go to Gaza’ when they have to say, ‘go to hell’ and she stayed there for some time and reported in an agonizing detail the hardships and deprivations experienced by the people of Gaza. Her book *Drinking the Sea at Gaza: Days and Nights in a Land under Siege* records moving testimonials and stories of the people of Gaza and thereby giving a more palpable human dimension to Palestinian tragedy. The condition of water shortage that she witnessed in Gaza back in 1993 is the same even today. In her article that appeared in Ha’aretz, on June 21, 2016, after 23 years of her earlier experience, she notices that tens and thousands of Palestinians have suffered at the hands of Israel’s Mekorot Water Company

whose officers have declined to allow water supply to a large population throughout this summer (of 2016):

In the Salfit region of the West Bank and in three villages east of Nablus, homes have had no running water for more than two weeks. Factories there have been shut down, gardens and plant nurseries have been ruined and animals have died of thirst or been sold to farmers outside the affected areas (Hass, Ha'aretz, 2016).

Although there have been agreements about the issues of water supply and sewage between Israel and Palestine e.g. the structuring of JWC (Joint Water Committee) under Article 40 of Israeli Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip on September 28, 1995 but the delegation of rights and responsibilities is clearly tilted in Israel's favour and the implementation of all agreements is subjected to the second round of talks when the final status of the occupied territories is fixed. Legal status of water in Israel has been made clear that all the water of Israel (albeit constantly expanding borders through the partition wall and settlements) belongs to the State. And, "Legally, all agreed-upon permits are temporary and can be revoked at any time by the Water Commissioner, with no provision for alternative sources of water (Supplies, 2003, p. 205)." The quality of water thus provided remains quite compromised and the incidences where the settlers have thrown filth and dead animals into the Palestinian wells are not uncommon. At times the aquifers supplying water to West Bank population have been filled with boiling hot water by the Israelis to cause burns and other losses to the users (Nassar, 2016). Darwish does not account for individual cases as this is not his domain. He must strike back at the level of the poet, the national poet and then the universal poet. The national poet of Palestine speaks:

Water, be a string to my guitar. The new conquerors have arrived
And the old ones have gone. It's difficult to remember my face
In mirrors. Be my memory that I may see what I lost . . .
Who am I after this exodus (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 64)?

Earlier there were the British Mandate administrators, and later the Zionist usurpers. The poet wonders what became of Palestinians, their diaspora referred to as exodus in these verses,

the presence of the foreign potentates one after another that causes a serious blow to their sense of sovereignty, and his personal and national loss of identity, so much so that the mirrors are unable to deliver a recognizable picture. Under these circumstances the poet turns to the most benign and malleable of all creations, *water*, and he requests it to be a means of life for him and his nation. A string in his guitar refers to the possibility of creating ripples in the otherwise symbolic dead sea of Palestinian national existence. The poet's life line, his poetry and his physical existence all need the support of this *water* in both, symbolic and somatic sense of the word.

My Father used to
Draw water from his well and say
To it, 'Do not run dry'. And he would take me by the hand
To see how I grow like purslane
I walk on the brink of the well: I have two moons,
One on high
And another swimming in the water... (Darwish M. , Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone, 2014, p. 6).

While most of the independent wells have been capped, more digging strictly prohibited, all Palestinian kids have lost both their moons. This indicates the loss of childhood innocence as well as hope of a sustainable life. With the land and the water gone, *motherland* is but a dream. In his poem "Hoopoe", Darwish's imagination spreads the idea of the homeland/motherland beyond the curtailment of the immediate spatiality and temporality. He speaks of the motherland that can neither be held back nor pulled down by the restrictive colonial rules. The motherland is the representative of the cosmic mother-earth who herself belongs to a cosmic fraternity:

Salaam upon the earth, salaam unto it . . .
Here an apple body swims in the galaxy.
And water is that body's belt as it flows along eternity,
Embodied in our eulogies, and then returns to itself
Like a mother who covers us with her naked fur of longing, hides what we've done
To the lung and the fire of her rose, hides our journey's war, and what the sword
Has done to the map of grass around the shores of the sacred feathers.
(Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 51).

5.5 Darwish's paradigm of universal resistance

By locating all religions and philosophies upon the earth whom he repeatedly calls *Mother*, Darwish tries to assert the universal presence, the universal brotherhood sans borders and political bickering, but soon he realizes that he is the prisoner of a certain time and space, a time over which he has no control, a space from which he has been forcibly evicted. His song continues elsewhere:

If it were not for the descent to earth ...
If it were not for the longing for a lost paradise
There would be no poetry
Nor memory
And eternity would be no consolation (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 110).

But this composed and philosophical mood is not always there. The poet has his impulsive moods as well. When he undergoes frustrated hope, he bursts forth:

Take my motherland by the sword!
I refuse to sign a treaty between victim and killer.
I refuse to sign a bill of sale
That takes possession
Of so much as one inch of my weed patch ...
Erect your brutal statues of liberty over my corpse.
Engrave your icon crosses on my stony shadow,
For soon I will rise to the height of the song
Sung by those multitudes suicide by their
Dispersion through history... (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, pp. 140-141).

Darwish has a very firm faith in the power of his verse. Like Keats, he also believes that the cozy comfort of being '*Charioted by Bacchus and his Pards*' does not do the miracle of transformation, as the magical power of spontaneity and higher existence rests in '*the viewless wings of poesy*'. Like Keats, Darwish also started his literary career with '*Birds without Wings*' (*Asafir bila Ajniha*). Wings of the birds signify their capacity to fly and enjoy their freedom. They can fly off to distances using these wings. They are the mark of a potentiality which their will can put into action. For a poet the bird is the symbol of freedom of imagination. At the symbolic level this bird does not even require the physical wings with feathers and down. Here is what Keats has so beautifully incorporated in his *Ode to Nightingale* (Ricks, 1999, p. 403):

Away! Away! for I will fly to thee,

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee!

While Keats is called back to the phenomenal world at the end of his Ode to a Nightingale, Darwish also slides back to the world of hard facts and harsh realities and recognises that the death and barrenness of his world has gone to a point much beyond repair:

Here is where strangers won over us
Leaving us nothing for the New Age.
Here our bodies evaporate, cloud by cloud, into space.
Here our spirits glow, star by star, in the sky of song (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p. 142).

But unlike Keats, Darwish's resolution to resist and to live out the dark night of colonial expansion and to start a new saga of life persists despite the critical odds that are treasured in Palestinian history, one of them being the question pertaining to their aboriginal status which the Zionists wish to deplete from the annals of history as well as from the geographical ontology. Using the patois imagery of the camp through unique symbols used to develop commemorative semiotics, Darwish develops a catechism of causation that can be read in both the ascending as well as the descending sequence. Either way, the wheel comes to the full circle:

Because my voice is barren as a flagpole
And my hand empty as a national anthem
And because my shadow is vast as a festival
And the lines of my face go for a ride in an ambulance
Because of all of this
I am a citizen of an unborn kingdom (Khalili, 2007, p. 65).

Darwish admits that a big chunk of his Palestinian existence has already been compromised. Palestinians have been reduced to something less than themselves and yet greater than themselves as well. In his poem titled "Earth Poem", he uses a minimalist chain of argument to describe this strange lose-win situation:

And they searched his chest
But could only find his heart
And they searched his heart
But could only find his people
And they searched his voice
But could only find his grief

And they searched his grief
But could only find his prison
And they searched his prison
But could only see themselves in chains (Darwish M. , Freedom Archives, 2004).

Through such fragments of expression, Darwish successfully registers a series of pictures which is a hall mark of imagist poetry. What the reader perceives is an aura of totality of Palestinian existence depicted in a fine-artistic sense. In the following verses taken from his 1992 book *Eleven Planets* (translated by Sargon Boulos) featuring in the collection *The Adam of Two Edens*, the poet refers to the shadows of death that hover on all aspects of the Palestinian life. The tedious repetition successfully conveys the monotony of pain in the backdrop of their national history:

There are dead and there are colonies.
There are dead and there are bulldozers.
There are dead and there are hospitals.
There are dead and there are radar screens
To observe the dead / As they die more than once in this life,
In rooms you build, / The dead are already asleep.
Over bridges you construct, / The dead are already passing
(Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, pp. 143-145).

Fadwa Tuqan, the famous Nablusi poetess, the writer of *A Mountainous Journey*, calls Darwish and other poets who lived and experienced this *dead* aspect of life under the Israeli suzerainty in post 1967 era as “brothers in the wound” which is a contextual neologism for “brothers in faith”. Adina Hoffman quotes from a public address of Darwish that he delivered in Cairo in 1971 that he belonged not to a “people who plead for mercy or beg for charity, but to a fighting people ... The homeland for me isn’t a suitcase ... the homeland is a cause I defend wherever I am. I am not the first citizen or poet to travel far from his country in order to draw close to it (Hoffman, 2009, pp. 319-320). His voice would travel across the world to educate the international audiences and then to come back much louder to his own people who must be vary of the delimiting factors of colonial enterprise that watches over their ideology as well as their daily calorie intake. Hoffman believes that Darwish’s exit from Israel was his best opportunity to develop a more radical politics and a more abstract poetics. Wandering the globe in search of

what he had left behind, sharpened his exilic perspective and deepened his cultural memory to the extent that his struggle of national consolidation became universal and his exile took up cosmic dimensions: “We have a country of words”, he wrote in 1986, “speak, speak so that we may know the end of this journey.” Hoffman also refers to Darwish’s poem “Letter from Exile” written in response to Israeli radio Voice of Israel that would telecast the messages from the exiled families to their beleaguered family members: On the radio I heard/ the greetings of the homeless ... to the homeless. / They all said: We’re fine. / No one is sad (Ibid. p. 219). Darwish tells us the story of his Arab teacher in occupied Palestine who dared to teach a song of love for the homeland to the students and lost his job while he was accused of anti-Semitism and incitement against the state of Israel (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 27). Anything that a Palestinian thinks or says or acts as a thinking individual is taken amiss ‘against the Israeli national interest’ as goes the catchword in everyday media. For example, Andrew Marr of BBC interviewed Mark Ragev, the Ambassador of Israel to the United Kingdom and asked a very charged and poignant question in his Andrew Marr Show on Sunday May 1, 2016 (Marr, 2016):

“I guess the essence of the problem here is that there are a lot of very, very principled people who are very, very angry about the actions of the Israeli government. You may disagree with it, but they are legitimately very, very angry about what’s happened to the Palestinian people, and when they say they are anti-Zionists then the accusation comes back they are anti-Semites. Is there a distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism?”

Mark Ragev had no other answer than to plead for the sovereignty and independence of Israel, something they already have in ample measure. While the just demand of a homeland for the millions of Palestinians despite their huge sacrifices of lives and property, coherent democratic struggle, protest efforts and movements like BDS have falling flat on the deaf ears and myopic eyes of the western world, there are fourteen countries including Canada, Germany, Austria and France that criminalize ‘Holocaust denial’. In the most recent example, a German court convicted 87 years old Ursula Haverbeck of ‘Holocaust denial and sentenced her to ten months of imprisonment. The list looks quite bleak when we see German publisher Ernst Zundel, British

and academic historian David Irving, French academician Robert Faurisson, pro-Palestine Jew writer Paul Eisen etc. had to suffer various prison terms in addition to vilification, ostracism and physical assault for trying to have a revisionist stance towards the revered Holocaust myth (McKenzie, 2016).

Palestinian history is also characterized by irony in the encounter with Israel: "Here, then, is another complex irony: how the classic victims of years of anti-semitic persecution and Holocaust have in their nation become the victimizers of another people, who have become therefore the victims of the victims (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. xxxiii).

The same is voices by Darwish's compatriot Palestinian ex-mayor, Bassam Shaka as reported by Grace Halsell:

The Israelis want us all to leave. They say, 'You should go to Kuwait or Arabia. They speak your language.' Or, 'Go to Jordan. Go to Libya.' That is like telling an American, 'Get out. Go to Australia. They speak your language.' They forget we are Palestinians and not like the Jewish leaders, immigrants from Europe. We insist, we are none other than Palestinians. We have our own personality. We are not from another land. We have always lived in Palestine (Halsell, 1981, p. 140).

The search for identity and nostalgia for the lost land along with his connection with his motherland which has to undergo a new undefined feeling beyond spatial and temporal dimensions is critical in Darwish's poetry. "Spanning a writing life of fifty years, his early poetry of resistance is marked by a declarative and definitive voice that draws attention to the symbolic land and formulates Palestinian identity primarily as it is closely attached to Palestinian land which has been occupied since 1948 (Ahmed, 2012)." Soetendorp believes that the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian relations involve swaying between the logic of Hobbesian anarchy that follows the principle of kill or be killed and a Lockean anarchical logic of live and let live. Although a final peace settlement has not yet been achieved, mutual recognition of Israelis and Palestinians is well established and they have started recognizing each other's right to exist while they live in two separate states that marks both separation and disengagement (Soetendorp, 2007, p. 153).

Dennis Ross believes that despite bouts of explicit mutual hate, and there has been no return to the mutual rejection and denial of the past. There has been what he calls “one step forward, two steps back” and “La-Na’m (No-Yes)” manoeuvres on both sides but there are clear indications of a new consensus among Israelis and Palestinians and the international comity of nations that the essential requirement for peace is the two-state solution with Israelis and Palestinians coexisting and living in secure and recognized borders (Ross, 2005, pp. 759-760).

This historical essential is evident in the basic structure of education and training that the Israeli and Palestinian children receive at the schools. According to Dr. Gershon Baskin and Hanna Siniora of Israel/Palestine Centre for Peace Education and Information (IPCRI), “Textbooks currently used in Palestinian and Israelis schools do not create a culture of peace.” They started working on a Peace Education Curricula called Pathways into Reconciliation (PIR) in Israeli schools and Education for Peace (EFP) in the Palestinian schools. Their working and its positive outcomes have been reported in Judy Kuriansky’s book *Beyond Bullets and Bombs* under the essay-heading “No Mission-Impossible” which itself is a very emotionally charged heading (Baskin & Siniora, 2007, pp. 268-269). The writers are convinced that such an education is possible only when the social sciences and humanities particularly history and literature are jointly taught while they are infused with new concepts, activities and texts. Thus the cognitive components are aided with emotional experiential activities like peace negotiations. In the same book Neil Ryan Walsh et al. have reported the power of literature and its transformational role in building the bridges between the two communities when political bridges of negotiations and accords have so frequently given way in the past. They refer to the May 20, 2005 kite-flying campaign in a bid to show solidarity for peace in Israel/Palestinian territories under the auspices of Association for Arts in the Community and Cross-Cultural dialogue which is cofounded by Israeli artist Adi Yekutieli and the Palestinian artist George Nustas along with Liberty Hill Foundation. The project was known as 10,000-Kites (www.10000kites.org/mission) but to

everyone's good surprise, the kites that were flown inside Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) were 45,000 which shows the willingness to cooperate. Such instances show that the *enemy* hearts have a latent desire to reach out to the others despite the threats and missiles that reach out across the wall (Walsh, Kuiuansky, & Toppano, 2007, p. 184). The writers have stressed the importance of literature in bringing a slow but sure understanding between the two dissenting nations i.e. Palestinians and Israelites through the influence of reading each other's poetry, mutual storytelling and watching theatrical dramas like Karen Sunde's *How His Bride Came to Abraham* in which Abe in which an Israeli soldier is wounded by a roadside bomb and is nursed by a keffiyeh-clad Lebanese woman Sabra. Both spend an evening in intense political talk and reach a mutual understanding. Another reference that the writers give is to the story (a musical) titled *The First Kite Flyer* by Lorenzo Toppano in which the characters Moishe, a Jew farmer and Abdullah al Gazhi, a fruits-and-grains vendor are friends and the latter's son Shadi returns from England with a Jewish friend Ben who falls in love with Shadi's sister Layli but then a military security fence is erected that separates the friends and the lovers. There are other references that go to Palestinian actor and playwright Saleem's play *Salam, Shalom; A Tale of Passion* and another Palestinian Playwright Muhammad Ahmad Zaher' *Six Actors in Search of Plot*. In this play three Palestinian and three Jewish Israeli actors try desperately to find a neutral story they can agree to tell, but each attempt gets mired by political views of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Ibid. p. 188). Over and above all this is Palestinian and Israeli poetry and a supreme example of this is Darwish who may be read in comparison with his Israeli counterparts to see if a balanced synthesis may be recommended to the school and college students of both communities as curriculum in order to inculcate literary values along with a historical perspective. Most of the Palestinian poetry is rooted in human-ecology. 'It is generally difficult to separate writing from geography and history, but in the case of Jordan and Palestine, it is impossible (Ashour, 2008, p. 204).'

Jacqueline Rose counts Darwish among the great figures of literary thought in her book *Proust Among the Nations: From Dreyfus to the Middle East* (2008). She compares Mahmoud Darwish and Heaney in terms of their common practice of seeing poetry and politics as inseparable: In *The Redress of Poetry*, Seamus Heaney talks of those poets for whom the struggle of an individual consciousness toward affirmation merges with a collective straining for self-definition. Mahmoud Darwish is the very model of such a poet whose poetry yearns toward an identity that is never achieved or complete. Rose goes on to quote Darwish: ‘No Palestinian poet or writer,’ he stated in an interview in 2000, ‘can enjoy the luxury of severing ties with this level of national work, which is politics.’ Categorical in his political vision, Darwish’s fashioning of a homeland in language has been one of the strongest responses to dispossession. To use the postcolonial term, Mahmoud Darwish “writes back” and asserts that any identity based on excluding a portion of its citizens is more of a threat to the state itself than to its individual citizens. His poetry at times becomes an Israeli voice and he starts speaking the sentiment of the Jewish settlers and even IDF soldiers in their intimate moods of self-reflection e.g. in his poem *A Soldier Dreams of the White Lilies*, Darwish performs an act of extraordinary poetic insight by granting this one soldier an unusual, unprecedented knowledge of the grave damage that his nation, in the throes of victory, was doing and would go on doing, both to the Palestinians and to itself. Darwish is reported to have been one of the greatest modern proponents of the human rights, of freedom of imagination, inquiry and expression

Let me get used to you, my freedom!
 Lead me beyond ideas and conceptions—
Let’s become two in one!
 How can I bear her burnt? How can she tolerate me?
 Since I am her slave, how can I become her master?
 How can I free my freedom
 Without being split in two (Darwish M. , *State of Siege*, 2010, pp. 92-93)?

But the split was inherent in his fate as the member of a nation that had lost its freedom. The title of his first book of 1960 is *Asafir bila ajniha* (Birds without wings) which is symbolically representative of the Palestinians who had been reduced to the status of migratory birds but did

not have means to sustain a flight. His wonderment as a young man over the suffering of his own family and other Palestinians never subsided but with the passage of time, he realized that his nation was facing an indubitable racial erasure despite their willingness to recognize Israel as a political and material reality. In his *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, he speaks of the lot of his fellow Palestinians who would just walk in the streets, sit in the coffee-house, travel in a bus and so on with tongue strictly within the cheeks. Nobody would call them to prove their identity as their silence would be their best recognizing feature. The greatest enemy of the Palestinian identity is *silence*. This is exactly what the Israelis and their international supporters desire to impose not only upon their future but also, and more dangerously, upon their past. A series of history books have been drafted with all the accepted modern day parameters of research that have the capacity of convincing the closet-researchers of their veracity that until Israel was established, the geographic area called Palestine was without an established civilization for example *In Defense of Israel* by John Hagee, *My Promised Land* by Ari Shavit etc. Haitian historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot describes how the Western accounts of history are supposed to win and the others are *silenced* because the narratives of the Western global domination makes the defeat of the native people look inevitable and therefore, expected and is therefore finally accepted when it comes to pass. In his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, he suggests that the only way out of this situation is that the native people take up the cudgels and affect, what he calls, ‘ a fundamental rewriting of world history. Referring to the message of this book, Edward Said suggests as an Arab-Palestinian:

“Our history is written by outsiders, and we have conceded the battle in advance. Our leaders negotiate as if from a tabula rasa. The agenda is America’s and Israel’s. ... Collective memory is a people’s heritage and also its energy: it does not merely sit there inertly, but it must be activated as part of a people’s identity and sense of its own prerogative... not to dwell on past disasters, but to understand who we are and where we are going. Without it we are simply lost, as indeed it seems we really are (Said E. W., *The End of the Peace Process*, 2002, pp. 158-159).”

This relationship of *collective memory* and *identity* holds a very special position in Darwish's works. Here if the memory works, the identity is alive; otherwise it is dead and forgotten. In his book *Mural*, for example, he establishes this intricate mutuality:

I suppose I am I suppose I'm not ...
I won't dream of repairing
The axle of the wind's chariot
Or of healing the wounds of the soul
Myths are traps along the course of the real
And in the poem there is no room to alter the passing of the past that won't pass
Or to stop the earthquake
I will dream in the hope that countries expand to make room for me as I am
An orphan cut off from the people of this sea ... (Darwish M. , *Mural*, 2009, pp. 38-40).

With his predilection for the past that does not pass, and does not even slip into the traps of myth, the historico-literary framework of the present research brings together the parallel history that is emerging despite the great media camouflage of the Zionist lobby's delaying-the-justice/ denying-the-justice technique. The Jew reporter Anna Baltzer, a critic of her own people, says that every time she thinks that she has understood the Israeli/ Palestinian conflict, something would remind her that there was much more there to learn. She believes that there has to be an intellectual break-through to gauge the real dimensions of this discord. Her breakthrough came when she actually visited Palestine in late 2003 as a volunteer with IWPS (International Women's Peace Service), an organization that is dedicated to document and nonviolently intervene in human rights abuses in the West bank and to support the nonviolent resistance to the Israeli Occupation. Her first eye-opening observation was that of what she calls 'the Apartheid Wall' that separates hundreds and thousands of Palestinians from each other and from the amenities of life, till they are huddled into prison-like ghettos. In her article "Witness for the Defenseless" she recalls meeting the Palestinians who have spent a major part of their lives in Israeli prisons without ever being told about the crimes that they have been guilty of. Most of these had been whisked away during routine searches and then incarcerated without an access to a lawyer. There are other painful accounts of sensitive nature too. She narrates how barley seeds boiled in rat

poison are spread near the settlements to deter the Palestinian shepherds from grazing their sheep near them. Collective punishments are heaped upon villagers by uprooting the olive trees that provide sustenance to particularly targeted villages. This is in addition to extrajudicial murders and other forms of tyranny (Baltzer A. , 2007).

5.6 ‘The occasional episode in the general drama of pain’

The militaristic zeal with which the Israeli soldiers dress up and act all the time shows as if they are in the state of an active war. Darwish ridicules it in one of his prose pieces where an imaginary dialogue between a Jewish couple goes thus: “---Darling, on my birthday, I want my present to be a tank or a cannon, or any weapon of Russian make. / ---I’ll give you a tank where we can sleep together, my dear...” By the end of their talk, they laugh out loud and then Darwish turns to the audience with an epilogue:

“And what are you thinking about? About how they sleep together in tanks! And how they give birth to children in tanks? And how they have good time in their tanks. Go easy now! This is the secure Israeli house. This is the love nest. And it is the future.”

The Palestinian daily discourse as Darwish portrays in other imaginary dialogues is pregnant with layers of poetic connotations. For example two young people from Gaza and Haifa correspond about throwing explosives into the *conqueror’s* cars. One did this with a grenade and the other with a *poem*. They exchange how they were apprehended for the crimes which they actually did not commit. Chaos subsists and culminates into uncertainty of existence (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 49). Darwish’s stance of identity is not that of an exclusionist abolitionist, racially charged fanatic. He understands the concept of identity in a world where black masquerades go round all the time causing havoc to the lives of millions in the name of preemptive peace maneuvers and claiming democratic values at the cost of complete cultural disruption. For Palestinians the greatest threat is to preserve their status as meaningful human species. With reference to this ‘human’ recognition, an Israeli writer Howard Cohen states:

‘It is this acknowledgement that allows me to focus my condemnation most pointedly at its cause – which is most decidedly the occupation in all its inhuman brutality. An occupation that has all too conveniently allowed the supremacists to see the downtrodden other, not as humans but as some utterly indefinable and invisible subspecies that deserves no rights, no recognition and no compassion (Cohen H. , 2016).’

Anna Baltzer reports, among several other observations that she has reported in her book, that a Palestinian patient Jaber suffering from meningitis was stopped at Huwwara checkpoint as he travelled back from the hospital in Nablus under strict medical instruction for rest but he was stopped at the checkpoint without a reason and despite his medical prescription, he was held by the soldiers for ten hours in the sun without food or water. Here the Israeli sense of humanity itself becomes questionable and inherently anti-Semitic as the Palestinians themselves are Semites! In one of the poems of his last days titled “Counterpoint” addressed to his soul-mate Edward W. Said, Darwish wrote:

This land is too small for the blood of its children,
Who stand on the threshold
Of the Resurrection in masses.
Is this land really blessed or baptized
In blood / And blood / And blood,
Which neither prayer nor sand dries (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 93).

For Darwish as for the Palestinians since the Nakba it has been a joyless career. For them, happiness is, as Hardy remarks in very last line of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, “but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain (Hardy, 1998, p. 335).” Once put into exile, their fate has been to either live in refugee camps or to wander in the world of diaspora as exiles. Their return sanctioned by the international institutions has consistently been thwarted by Israeli high-handedness under the patronage of America which is controlled by the Jewish Lobby with Zionist inclination. The Palestinians have answered the existential riddle by consistent struggle to keep the message of freedom and return alive despite the third generation of their refugee/exilic status. Above all, they have let the hope remain intact. In the recent times, the social media has come to their aid despite absolute Zionist control over conventional media. Their problems and needs as

refugees have become known to a larger public all over the world. Even the Jewish right wing groups have formed alliances to downgrade the Zionist ideals and they are even supporting the cause of Palestinian freedom through regular political campaigns and activism. Freedom of press and academic research has also come in for support and some of the international regimes are supporting the Palestinian cause as well. But the process of actual international political mobilization is bound to be slow. What to do in the interim time? The best and the foremost thing is to keep the message alive and here it is Darwish who, as a poet, has accomplished his task and has shown this path to his fellow countrymen:

Carry your country wherever you go
And be a narcissist if occasion demands. ...
If I wrote poetry I would say,
I am two in one,
Like the wings of a swallow.
If spring is late,
I am content to be the bearer of good news (Ibid. p.89).

Thus the poet declares his identity to be a term of the interregnum between the realization of the worlds of the 'outside' and 'inside'. He is afraid that the full realization of his identity may be impossible in the given situation of Palestinian time and space but he seems to be quite content with just being the harbinger of good hope. In a 2004 interview with Mohammad Shaheen, Darwish answered to the question of the continuing theme of an enduring cultural identity. When asked how conscious he was about its presence in his writings, he replied that if he had not been the product of a specific historical condition, he would probably not have been anywhere. The journey of self-realization, he says, is from the understanding of one's identity and its instinctive preservation to a state of liberation where one comes in wider human interaction. But when this natural order is disturbed, "Poetry is a way of defending humanity, which is our first identity, and a defence of national identity when we are exposed to threats ... Identity is a mixture of what we inherit and what we make ourselves (Darwish M. , I Don't Want This Poem to End, p. 226).

5.7 Darwish on the atrocities of Israeli prison system

Reading the book *Journey to Jerusalem* by Grace Halsell, a journalist and White House speech-writer under Lyndon Johnson reveals horrific details about the discriminatory and racist attitude of Israeli regime with reference to the Arab population. Halsell traces histories of Palestinians who have been held in their notorious prison systems without charge, trial, basic human considerations or any ethical norm. He has met with these people and their families and presents instances where Palestinian men and women are captured on spurious charges, kept in jails and exposed to all sorts of torture ranging from psychological pressure to the dehumanizing physical and sexual brutalization that can scarcely be expected to come from normal human beings with even the least ethical standards. They are strung up on walls with hooks dangling like slabs of beef, sleepless and stripped naked only to be taken down for torture and enforced confessions. They are forced to undergo continued sleeplessness, stay in kennels naked and forced to bark like a dog, electric shocks to the sensitive body parts, alternate exposure to very hot and very cold water, atrocious mishandling of the genitalia, being put in boxes with razor sharp nails on the base and general with blows and kicks and club beatings to break the bones and cause deep tissue injuries with very unhealthy and scant food. Halsell records the way healthy and happy Palestinian young men and women are reduced to 'less skin and more bones' when they are taken to these intricate prison systems located in Beersheba, Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron, Jerusalem, Ramla, Kefar Yonah, Tel-Mond, Haifa and Nafha in the Negev Desert of which the Israeli Physician Mordechai Shermom has admitted that "the conditions (are) unfit for human beings (Halsell, 1981, pp. 179-191). These prison and torture modules have their parallel only in excesses carried out in the name of interrogation by the American soldiers at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq and at the Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp (GTMO), Cuba. The common factor in all these cases is that all the detainees are professed Muslims and the interrogators are Israelis or pro-Israeli Americans. The purpose of torture seems less to draw information and more to humiliate, to the

level of challenging the prisoners' basic humanity. In one of the cases that Halsell has recorded the erstwhile prisoner reports by way of an eye-witness account:

Over a period of time I began to believe that I was born to the wrong race of people, that the Jews-those in charge- are right. I have difficulty understanding this, but all around me for five years are those who are powerful, who have voices, who make decisions. They are the Jews. I begin to see myself as they see me, as they identify me. They call me 'ant' and say I am excrement...(Ibid. p. 190).

Through all these measures of torture, Israel is trying to create a cultural effacement of the Palestinians who have two major options before them: Mass exodus into neighbourly countries or to stay and suffer. The latter option is not without a lot of psychological torture and humiliation which has almost transformed the Palestinian outlook towards their own existence.

Darwish is cognizant of this situation when he writes:

I shall state this / In the detention room / In the bath-house In the stable
Under the whip / Under handcuffs / Undergoing the torture of chains:
One million swallows / On my heart's branches / Compose the war song (Darwish M. , Selected Poems, 1973, p. 70).

The history of this viciousness is quite old. Darwish quotes Ahad Ha'am the Jewish Zionist thinker who criticised the growing trend of belligerency among the Jewish ranks regarding their claims of Palestinian lands. In 1891, he wrote to remind his people that once they were slaves in the state of Jewish Diaspora and suddenly, they started celebrating an unbridled freedom. Darwish believes that this sudden transformation has caused a certain tendency of tyranny in them. It is like slaves becoming the masters and causing unbridled, unreasonable and therefore inexcusable humiliation to their adversaries, which in the Palestinian context are the Arabs (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, p. 89). Darwish also tells us that Moshe Smilansky said that Jewish nationalism in Palestine was built on a military egotism that believes in violence and is as far away from human considerations as it can be (Ibid. p.92). In his poem "And We Have a Land", Darwish refers to the land that he and his people have in principle even if the politics and military superiority has held it away from them. He also refers to the chronic

love that his people have with this land who is the *motherland* and who grants them all sustenance and recognition. Even when they are discriminated against and thrown into prisons, it is this mother that receives them in her secret cradles and when the prison wardens unleash atrocities, it is again this mother that gives them a terrestrial massage or accepts them back into its lap as martyred children. Whether they live as subordinate citizens, refugees, prisoners or exiles, they are deeply related and incorporated with this phenomenal land. In Darwish's exilic perspective, when a land banishes its sons and daughters to the unknown, it 'grows':

The willows and adjectives grow. And its grass grows
And its blue mountains. The lake widens
In the soul's north. Wheat rises in the soul's
South. The lemon fruit gleams like a lantern
In the emigrant's night. Geography glistens
Like a holy book (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 205).

Here we see how the vegetable world, the human factor with its body, mind and soul, the landscape and topography, the geographic directions and the holy messages of God on high, everything looks connected and synchronized, held in a beautiful balance that only a pure poet can strike, and while these miracles of poetics are actualized, the nationalist objective is not forgotten even for a moment. He claims a present presence, a river that can quench its thirst, a freedom without siege, a grief which is not taken as *ordinary* grief which is extraordinary by all means and standards.

That's our land over there pregnant with us ... When was it
That we were born? Did Adam get married twice? Or will we
Be born a second time to forget sin (Ibid.)?

Israeli brutalities are unleashed upon the Palestinians on the basis of a fanatical the Zionist mantra: "Maximum Jews on maximum land with maximum security and with minimum Palestinians" as the Knesset Member Yair Lapid puts it (Ofir, 2016). Any day the newspaper both from Palestine and Israel may be read through, there are stories of new violence and newer ways of individual and collective punishments. With the passage of time they are becoming more and

more heinous. For example on September 16, 2016 as the Israeli newspaper Haaretz reports: “Four rounds of sniper fire hit Mohammed Amassi, a young Palestinian baker standing on the roof of his home in the Al-Fawwar refugee camp. As he tries now to recover from his wounds, he still remembers the mocking words of the soldier who shot him. Before firing at a Palestinian, the Israeli sniper asked: Where do you want to be shot (Levy & Levac., 2016)?”

5.8 Darwish’s ‘Silence for the sake of Gaza’

In the chapter titled ‘Silence for the Sake of Gaza’ in *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, Darwish blurts out: “She wraps explosives around her waist and blows herself up. It is not a death, and not a suicide. It is Gaza’s way of declaring she is worthy of life. For four years Gaza’s flesh has been torn into shrapnel flying in all directions... (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 122).” This book has been declared by Edward Said as an epic effort to transform the lyrics of loss into the indefinitely postponed drama of return (Ibid. Back-cover). The book also recalls in glaring terms the sad story of the village Kufr Qasem where in 1956, Israeli Colonel Shadmi ordered Major Malinki to observe total curfew. After the orders were passed, more than fifty farmers including young women and children who even returned home from their work in distant places like Jaffa and Lydda unawares, were ruthlessly shot dead and when inquiries were launched, Israeli military court found that Colonel Issachar Shadmi had committed a “technical error” and he was ordered to pay the symbolic fine of one Israeli piaster equal to one penny (Ibid. p.89)! Darwish even presents one tragedy in its graphic details under the heading “He Who Kills Fifty Arabs Loses One Piaster”, the first line being: “Here they lie. Their names were many, and their death was one (Ibid. p. 75).” He quotes one particular instance of the day:

The goat of Talal Shaker Issa, a child of eight, had run away from the courtyard into the street. Neither the child nor the goat understood that the curfew order had just gone into effect in the village a few hours before. The child ran after the goat, and the bullets fell upon him like rain and killed him. His father followed, and the rifle carried on with its mission. The wife ran toward her husband and her son, and the rifle continued with its

mission. Their daughter, Noura, followed her parents and her brother, and the rifle still continued with its mission. Now what was the mission of that rifle (Ibid. p. 78)?

An entire family was thus eradicated in cold blood, not being an isolated example of the Israeli tyranny. Darwish's question about the mission of the rifle is an attempt to invite the readers' attention to the Zionist aim of Greater Israel. It is surprising that the poet and the philosopher Darwish turns to journalistic certitude when Talal Shaker Issa dies in his innocence. Jonathan Cook informs that all officers involved in the massacre received a 50 percent increase in their salaries and were not treated as criminals but as heroes. Cook believes that despite the phasing out of the military government in 1966, acute persecution of the Arabs (since calling them Palestinians was not officially allowed) continued (Cook, *Blood and Religion*, 2006, p. 8). Deaths of the Palestinian Talals are as meaningful and as meaningless as the falling down of *The Cypress Broke*, a poem that Darwish wrote to commemorate the death of a tree that fell apparently without a cause. Like all his poems, this is not without symbolic overtones. The last lines of the poem read (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 227):

... And a girl said: The sky today
Is incomplete because the cypress broke.
And a young man said: But the sky today is complete
Because the cypress broke. And I said
To myself: Neither mystery nor clarity,
The cypress broke, and that is all
There is to it: the cypress broke...

The Cypress Broke is the biography of so many Palestinian lives that are wasted every day. This wastage includes the lives of humans as well as trees as even the olive trees are not spared by the Israeli Army and the illegal settlers. A former Staff Sergeant of IDF (Israeli Defense Force) *breaks the silence* on the website www.breakingthesilence.org about his experience in Mechanized Infantry in the area of Deir al-Balah during Operation Protective Edge and notes: "Uprooted olive trees everywhere. The houses themselves were broken, scattered about, a mound where a building once stood, houses simply scattered around. We didn't actually get an operational order stating that that was the objective – but ultimately, no house was supposed to

be left standing. A 500-meter radius where not a single house is left standing (Testimony-849459, 2014).” Like the working of the Iron Dome anti-missile capability of Israel, every voice, political or otherwise, in print or electronic source, if it proves against Israel, is *silently* busted. We might refer to Alison Weir’s book *Against Our Better Judgement* in which Alison Weir describes that for the Partition Plan that was initiated originally through Peel Commission of 1937, the general Assembly resolution 181 was passed on November 29, 1947. Before the vote on the plan was taken, the delegate representing Philippines spoke very passionately about the “primordial rights” of Palestinians to determine their political future and preserve their territorial integrity. He criticised the Israeli principle of racial exclusiveness to take affect through the General Assembly. Twenty four hours later the Philippines’ delegate succumbed to the Zionist pressure and voted in the favour of partition. This is only one example among hundreds of others where equitable application of justice and the principle of free thought is unilaterally exploited to uplift the Zionist Israeli progress at the cost of Palestinian rights (Weir, *Against Our Better Judgement*, 2014, p. 47).

5.9 Darwish on the attempts of silencing the resistance

In an interview of Lakhdar Brahimi, the leading representative of the UN in international negotiations in September 2014 conducted by Barbara Crossette, Brahimi referred to the Israeli lobby in the US and elsewhere as a formidable machine that commands corrosive, unconditional American support for Israel despite its unending land grabs and military assaults on Palestinians with special reference to the summer 2014 aggression against Gaza in which more than two thousand Palestinian civilians were killed. The tragedy included the destruction of about 90 such families that were completely obliterated from the time and space of Gaza. The counter attacks killed only sixty eight Israeli soldiers with the reaction of the Congress and Obama prefaced with the time worn expression, “Israel has the right to defend itself (Weiss P. , Mondoweiss, 2014).” While *silence* has been the fashion of the day and the *survival of the fittest* the philosophy of the

present Darwinian epoch in international politics, the rights of the mighty are the only ones that are safeguarded and granted, Darwish does not fail to chronicle the existential philosophy of Zionist terrorists i.e. “I fight therefore I exist” which according to Menachem Begin, “satisfied a repressed but overwhelming need for vengeance among the Jews.” Darwish reports that Begin believed that a Zionist Israeli who bears that psychologically repressed desire for revenge needs to renew his existence through war and killing. Referring to Begin, Darwish elucidates: ““Be my brother, or else I’ll kill you,” thus adds the philosopher of crime. And since it is impossible for the Arab who lives under Israeli bondage to think of his killer as his brother, the circle of killing never closes. There is no end in Zionist thought to making excuses for armed violence that finds inspiration in religion. For this reason, Joshua Son of Nun has become a contemporary Israeli hero due to the savagery of the methods he used in dealing with non-Jewish peoples (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, pp. 91-92).’ Referring to a girl whose house and parents have been obliterated by Israeli coast guards, Darwish writes (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 3):

Her father doesn't answer, laid out on his shadow
Windward of the sunset
Blood in the palm trees, blood in the clouds
Her voice carries her higher and further than
The seashore. She screams at night over the land
The echo has no echo
So she becomes the endless scream in the breaking news
Which was no longer breaking news
When the aircraft returned to bomb a house with two windows and a door.

Forty years down the lane, when Darwish published his twentieth book of poetry titled *Mural* and was the bestselling author in several countries, New York Times reported on March 7, 2000 that the Israeli education minister had declared that Darwish’s poetry would be included in the multicultural literary curriculum for Israeli high school children. Despite the eventual change of the idea under the pressure of the ultraorthodox Jewish leadership, it was a moment of moral victory for Darwish as well as one more step towards being *home*. While his political and radical beliefs sounded like a perpetual threat to the Israeli empire building aspirations both at the

intellectual and political levels, Darwish remained successful in communicating his ideals to his fellow nationals as well as to the world. His deep desire of getting his works see the light of the day in other languages, particularly English, helped his political activism stay alive. Like hundreds and thousands of other Palestinians, he was rendered homeless but he did not accept it and built a home out of the ashes of hope and fashioned it in his poetry and poetic prose. The Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1988 was also his brainchild. In Darwish's poetry, *home* is not the desire to possess a piece of land alone, it is the name of a reassuring presence and he cries out when this *presence* is snatched from him. For him any natural object of Palestine is *Palestine*. If he is weaned away from it, he feels the pain of a child weaned off from its mother. The motherland is in everything, even in an olive tree he finds this motherly presence. In his journal *The Second Olive Tree*, he beautifully describes in poetic prose the story of an olive tree that stands tongue in cheek, neither crying nor laughing. In her silvery green trunk is a store of luminous oil that she is ready to present as its gift to any soldier. Armies upon armies of men have passed by and she has been generous for centuries. But then suddenly the times of the *Nakba* (1948) and *Naksa* (1967) dawn and Darwish laments the loss of olive trees that are beloved to the Palestinians like family elders. He gives a graphic scene in which the soldiers surround an olive tree with bulldozers and try to uproot her:

They crush our grandmother, so that now her branches are in the earth and her roots in the air. She did not weep or shout, but one of her grandsons, who witnessed the execution, threw a stone at a soldier and was martyred alongside her. When the soldiers left triumphantly, we buried him there, in the deep hole, our grandmother's cradle. For some reason we were convinced that after a while he would become an olive tree, spiky and – green (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 107)!

Saree Makdisi points out in her book *Palestine Inside Out* that the living conditions in Palestine are quite precarious and unwarrantable. She gives a detailed referenced case where Sam Bahour, a Palestinian businessman with an American passport and Palestinian identity card had been stopped from entering Palestine where his wife Abeer and two daughters Areen and Nadine live. The family did not have the American passport and hence they were stranded in different

polarities forever as it seemed. Similarly Amal al Amleh, West Bank resident, crossed River Jordan to visit her terminally ill father and on her return she was told at the Allenby Bridge, that she could not make it back to her family with small kids, the youngest being 10 months old. The book is replete with so many other stories of family disintegration. The Pulitzer Prize winner writer of *The Colour Purple* Alice Walker has suggested that the book may be read on a day when the reader is feeling strong as she herself was reminded of the American condition of fifties when any white man could ask his black counterpart to go off the sidewalk to let him pass (Walker, 2010, p. 74). *Palestine Inside Out* reveals that according to referenced record, there have been more than 120,000 family re-union applications of registered Palestinians pending to be decided by the Israeli authorities. Such people, estranged by their families, can only talk to them on telephones. The writer Sari Makdisi reports that Israel's hyper-regulation of the Palestinian lives in Gaza and West Bank have so many other effects which even the international bodies like the World Bank has pointed out. But while the financial and physical aspect of the crisis becomes partly evident to the world, the psychological aspect of these *wretched of the world* remains hidden from the public scrutiny. One example is the public report issued by the international charity organization *Save the Children* that has highlighted that one million children in Gaza are subsisting in unlivable conditions where ninety percent of water resources are too contaminated for human consumption.

Given the circumstances, it is hardly any wonder that two-thirds of the Palestinian population had, by mid-2006, been reduced to absolute poverty (with incomes of less than \$2 a day), or that a third of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, and 80 percent of those in Gaza, have been made dependent for their day-to-day survival on aid handouts from international relief agencies (Makdisi, 2010, p. 29).

Makdisi lays full bare the international legal status of the Israeli control of the Palestinian life by quoting the relevant clauses of *The Geneva Convention* that expressly prohibit the “destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, or the state, or to any other public authorities, or to social or co-operative organizations.” It also forbids “individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of

protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country,” and stipulates that “the Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.” Israel has tried to claim that the Geneva Conventions do not apply to the Palestinian territories it occupies, but this claim has been dismissed not only by international legal scholars but also by a series of U.N. Security Council Resolution 465 of 1980 that reiterates that “all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof have no legal validity and that Israel’s policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and also constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East (Makdisi, 2010, p. 41).”

5.10 Darwish on the unilateral custody of Palestine

In his quest for home, Darwish refers to the land of Palestine as a beloved and a love-begot entity over which two claimants have come to set their respective conflicting petitions. He is mindful of the intensity of desire on both sides. The two communities (Palestinians and Israelites) never tire of making a claim of homeland out of the place that was only Palestine till 1948. He compares the claim with its narrative parallel in Bertolt Brecht’s *The Augsburg Chalk Circle* which in its turn is based on the Biblical story (1 Kings 3:16-28) known as *Judgment of Solomon* in which two women claimed to be the mothers of a living son. King Solomon asked for a sword to be brought so that the child may be cut into two, each receiving a part of it but the true mother lets go of her claim and is eventually given the custody of the child (Stirling, 1959, p. 271). In Brecht’s story, Ignatz Dollinger the judge cannot determine whether Anna or Frau Zingli is the true mother of the child brought before him and therefore he puts the child on the floor inside a chalk circle with two ropes tied around him while the two claimants are supposed to pull.

This time Anna the true mother lets go of the child and the judge hands over the child to Anna as she has shown the greater love and is therefore more worthy to be the rightful mother (Great Short Stories of the World, 1972). Darwish interprets this in the Palestinian context:

Your claim used to be blood and kinship, and now you claim worthiness to win the case at the chalk circle court. You draw the circle when you wish, and erase it as you see fit. You do not recognize my existence, and you nullify my link to this country, claiming it to be nothing more than a passing courtship and will disappear in time. And how did you prove this? By violence and force alone (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, p. 39).

In order to contrast the idea of Palestinian homeland with that of the Israeli idea, Darwish refers to a proposition of the Jewish existential philosopher Martin Buber who believes that human beings are connected with what is around them in one of the two possible ways:

- a. The I-It relationship that exists in a particular space and time and is subject to causality and with no freedom, only necessity, and
- b. The I-Thou relationship that exists beyond time and space and over and above causality with no necessity but absolute freedom.

Buber then goes on to assert an even more complicated idea: He says that the I-It relationship is less authentic than the I-Thou relationship and since the Jews as the chosen beings racially belong to the latter relationship division with reference to Palestine, it is they who are more fit to indigenize this place. On the other hand, Buber continues to conclude it has way, The Arabs exist in Palestine in an I-It relationship and therefore they can afford to sever this relationship and be transferred somewhere else (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, p. 40)! While the logic itself is dubious, Darwish has found a way of retaliation in his poem 'Take Care of the Stags, Father!' in his book *If I were Another* (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 13) :

I saw my memory counting the seeds of this field and the martyrs within it.
I am from here. I am right here . . . I comb the olives in this autumn.
I am from here. And here I am. That's what my father shouted: I am from here.
And here I am. I am I. And here is here. I am I. And I am here. Here

I am. And I am I. Here I am. I am here. And here I am. I am I . . .
Then echo approached. Broke the vastness. Its resurrection rose. An echo
finding an echo. And echo resounded: Forever here forever here . . .
I am / from / here / and here / is here / and I / am I / and here / I am / and I / am here.

A like catechism is to be found in the Jewish poetess Morani Kornberg-Weiss in her long poem titled ‘After November 29’ that appeared in her book *Dear Darwish*. A small extract of this lengthy concrete poststructuralist piece of poetry that run in several pages is given below:

You can’t visit nearly half the territory of
The state you claim to represent because I
Have placed laws roadblocks entire cities
Schools homes municipalities parks army
Bases security cameras shopping malls
Surveillance watch towers pavements
Concrete metal detectors checkpoints
Turnstiles segregated roads military
Patrols settler militia checkpoints ... (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, pp. 73-75).

The poem is like the chanting of a typical colonial mantra in which she incessantly repeats the words ‘walls and settlements’ tens of times while she enumerated the various enigmas that the Palestinians are exposed to year after year and generation after generation with the obvious object of breaking the bone of their resolution. The poem also reflects Israeli strategy of permanently altering the facts on ground in Occupied Palestinian Territories:

Walls and settlements and walls and
Settlements and walls and settlements and
Checkpoints and walls and settlements
Between you and the territory of the state
You claim to represent. So you can’t even
Visit nearly half the territory of the state you claim to represent ...

While the possibility of preserving any democratic values in such a setting is scant, Kornberg-Weiss rules out the possibility that Darwish can even visit the land that he claims to be his own. While her tone is half mocking and half sympathetic, her repetitive “checkpoints-and-settlement” sequence indicates the perpetual dispossession and ultimate dislocation that the staunch Israeli modernistic imperial/colonial enterprise has caused. It is both domestic alienation and international isolation leading to perpetual sequestration for those who are or have been Palestinians. This is what Edward Said has so deeply felt with Darwish and in his staunch prose

just short of the poetic form, he describes this pain of the loss of identity, the forfeiture of a national uniqueness that was once there and is now only possible in imagination or the dreams of a distant future. In his book *After the Last Sky*, he says that as Palestinians he and his compatriots have been reduced to disrupters of Middle East peace and since the Israeli suzerainty would not admit any possibility of academic excellence to the Palestinians, they have not been able to claim any scientific achievement that registers a nation among the peaceful and respectable comity of nations. He regrets the likes of Einstein, Chagall, Freud, Rubenstein etc. who have sustained Israeli scholarship worldwide through original contribution to the body of knowledge whereas Palestinians have been reduced to learn the mere tactics of survival. He recalls that in exile, it is very difficult to maintain *identity*. The Palestinians are required to consistently answer this existential question wherever they are and whatever they do:

... our existence as native Arab inhabitants of Palestine, with primordial rights there (and not elsewhere), is either denied or challenged. And there is more. Such as it is, our existence is linked negatively to encomiums about Israel's democracy, achievements, excitement; in much Western rhetoric we have slipped into the place occupied by Nazis and anti-Semites ... We are "other," and opposite, a flaw in the geometry of resettlement and exodus (Said E. , *After the Last Sky*, 1986, pp. 16-17).

While there is pain and a note of hopelessness in these lines, both of these sons of Palestine: Darwish and Said have done a great miracle of memorable national service to Palestine and the coming generations can rightfully claim that such robust minds and their legacy both written and spoken, thanks to the print and social media, will keep shining like a beacon light in the dark night of political misadventure that befell Palestine at the turn of the twentieth century. Stressing the importance of such voices, Mustapha Marrouchi quotes Lady Wilde, a revolutionary member of Young Ireland, "The utterances of a people, though always vehement, are often incoherent; and it is then that men of education and culture are needed to interpret and formulate the vague longings and ambitions of the passionate hearts around them." He adds Gramsci's idea that "A human mass does not 'distinguish' itself, does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organizing itself; and there is no organization without intellectuals

... ‘specialized’ in conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas.” He then refers to the fulfilment of this vital intellectual need that any nation in the making would indispensably require, through the Palestinian nationalist intelligentsia comprising, to name the top two, Darwish and Said: “They represent a classic example of Gramsci’s ‘national-popular’ intellectuals, linking ideas and the common people, popular consciousness and the political state.” Marrouchi is focusing on the extraordinary ability of such intellectuals who turn the “fragmentary consciousness of those he represents into coherent, intellectually articulate form, equipping them with a “world view” definitive enough to match that of their political oppressors. (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 8).” The Palestinian sacrifices are flowering into what the academia has already grasped as Palestinian Holocaust. It is not possible to imagine the recent recognition of Palestinian cause in the West without the Darwish-Said rejoinder. But there is no doubt that more Palestinian intellect must become available for the international community to rescind the deniability of the Palestinian national aspirations. Only the Palestinians can do it most effectively. In the words of Iqbal: *Khareedain na ham jis ko apnay lohu se / Musalmaan ko hay nang wo paadshaaee*

Translation: It’s a matter of utter shame that we ask for a sovereignty that we do not buy through our blood-spilling struggle (Iqbal A. , Baang-i-Dara, 1975, p. 254).

With their blindfolded Arab neighbours and their hollow slogans of solidarity on the one hand, and a modest international community on the other, the issue of Palestinian liberty has been sidelined. In this situation, the native sentiments of belonging and the desire for political emancipation and deliverance are the only succor available to the Palestinians. Apparently, there is little choice. The reality is harsh but the complete realization of the situation is the first step toward an internal rallying and change:

Shall we fight?
 What matter,
 Since the Arab revolution
 Remains preserved in anthems,
 In flags and at the bank.
 In your wounds’ name they speak their speech (Darwish M. , Sirhan Drinks his Coffee, 2007, p. 21).

5.11 Ambivalence inherent in the Palestinian enigma

One of the aspects of Palestinian tragedy is their growing helplessness in even expressing their resistance. Earlier, at least they could go out in rallies, raise slogans, throw rock stones at the tanks or write about the occupation and its various pains in the form of graffiti or through social media campaigns without fearing severe reprisals from the establishment but now freedom of speech has largely been curtailed. The expression of protest on the media is met with such blatant and disproportionate response that any individual effort would lead to trouble for the entire family or neighbourhood. Unless there is a charismatic indigenous leadership that can rally a collective move, it seems Morani Kornberg-Weiss's words hold true:

There are no shortcuts.
No quick fixes.
No instant solutions. You see,
There are walls and settlements
And imprisonments and laws
And soldiers and roadblocks
And cities and checkpoints /And walls and settlements ...
And more settlements. That's right (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, pp. 73-75).

Aesthetically speaking the expression 'that's right' comes as an announcement to the world that a tragedy has already taken place and there is no going back upon it. Poetically, she may just be lamenting the excessive construction of the separation-wall (that already runs into more than seven hundred kilometers) and the settlements that this wall claims to protect, but politically speaking, she has pointed out an unresolvable conundrum in the local scene. While she recognises the stalemate to which the Palestinian existence has reached as Israel insists on an absolute exclusionist stance, she tries to settle down some of the issues from her poetic stand point:

You see, peace fills my art and poetry.
Peace is a central value of my society. The bible calls on us:
"seek peace and pursue it."
I want you to recognize me.
Because I seek peace. I pursue peace.
I always look for peace
Reach out for peace
Extend my hand for peace (Ibid.).

While the international community looks away from the vestiges of the lost history to the horizons of futuristic possibilities, this Israeli poetess is trying to transform the regional politics under religious sentiment. But as Doctor Vacy Vlazna has concluded in an open letter to Ms. Kornberg Weiss that her poem shows that she is undergoing a good moral ‘transformation’. At the same time she advises her not to address her humanitarian words ‘for’ or ‘to’ Palestinians but ‘with’ them if she actually means to fulfil her duty against injustice:

You have yet to shift from ‘a form of contact’ to an authentic belonging which will occur when you have sublimated your incessant I, I, I, and embraced the living, breathing, suffering Other, and when you have freed yourself from the inherent theft and victim mentality that is Israel along with the *hasbara* (propaganda) hype of similarity and balance between the Palestinian and Israeli experiences (Dr. Vlazna, 2016).

Darwish also believes that the balloon of this *Hasbara* must be busted and the exaggerated commodification of the Holocaust must be accounted for, though he never warrants, like Nelson Mandela, that the Jews have any lesser right to exist as a nation or as a country. He just criticizes the businesslike, utilitarian usage of Jewish tragic history in 20th century Europe which has gone at lengths to dispossess other dwellers of a place that they have targeted as a new-found-land at the behest of their imperialistic elders. Darwish has traced similarities between the Israeli Zionist behaviour toward the Palestinian population and the German Nazis’ behaviour toward European Jews. He traces a new dimension of collective psychology from this instance entailing that the Zionists are using their victim-status to victimize another people:

... the methods Israel uses to commemorate the victims of Nazism may be characterized as forms of blackmail, given that the basic aim behind saturating the Israeli people with the consciousness of catastrophe is to saturate them at the same time with feelings of vengeance, not on their killers but on another people – the Palestinian people, who are themselves victims (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 34) .

In the epilogue of his book *Seventh Million* the Jewish writer Tom Segev suggests that an insular chauvinism has been sown in the psyches of the Israeli Jews due to the Zionist ideological apparatus resulting in the idea that Nazi extermination of the Jews justifies any act, political or military, ethical or unethical that may seem to contribute to the security of Israel. It may include

oppression of the population of the territories directly or indirectly under Israeli control (Segev, 2000, p. 517). While there are deep psychological patterns traceable in this statement, Segev refers to a 1992 study in which 80% of Israeli college students identified themselves as “holocaust survivors”. The same kind of identity is growing among the Palestinian youth as well with a fervor that can be traced back particularly to the events of the last two decades. They have started measuring out their lives with reference to the Israeli atrocities, attacks and their indigenous responses speaking like “in the days of *intifada*”, “after the *nakba*” etc. A good example of this linguistic turn can be traced from a short story by a high school girl Yara Eid from Alburajj refugee camp, Gaza. The title of the story is “I am Three Wars and Two Intifadas Old (Eid Y. , 2016)” Professor Thomas S. Harrington believes that the mainstream media which is largely controlled by the Zionist Jews poses a consistent existential threat to the Palestinian rights while their identity is made to lose its way in a semantic mystery due to the invention and use of a special linguistic warfare terminology, like, “Palestinian terrorists” who “embrace terrorism” in order to “throw Israel into the sea”. The professor suggests that one should play a game of hardball and use such expressions to identify Palestinians as “resisters”, “lovers of freedom” etc. so as to register a counter discourse. Hence a correctional dialogue instead of just listening to the idea of a “democratic Israel” which it is not. Professor Harrington writes in the article “*Democracy and terrorism and the parameters of thinkable thought*”:

The Zionist establishment and its legion of paid and unpaid hasbarists (propagandists) have very seldom shown any reticence about playing dialectical hardball with those they perceive as their enemies, nor of using any and all linguistic tropes at their disposal to keep those inclined to criticize Israel’s consistently atrocious behavior toward the Palestinians back on their heels in a defensive posture (Harrington, 2016).

This is exactly what Dr. Frank Luntz, a Zionist communication research expert explored in his 2005 report “America 2020: How the Next Generation Views Israel” which was sponsored by big Zionist organizations like The Israel Project etc. to find out how to maintain a better international face for Israeli politics. In the report he suggests that the “Apartheid Wall” that Israel is constructing (while eating away Palestinian West Bank) should be more emphatically called

“Security Fence” so that it should look more of a defensive measure rather than something offensive and aggressive. Luntz deplores what he calls “Palestinian public relations advantage” that “makes little distinction between the violence inflicted by Arab terrorists and the preventive efforts and/or retaliation of the Israeli Army (Rothchild, *Broken Promises, Broken Dreams*, 2010, p. 232).” This opens a linguistic warfare where terminologies and taxonomies take the better of what the ground facts are. Darwish, however, succeeds in portraying the true picture of the situation through his technique of paradox where a Palestinian young man suddenly discovers that he is alive and doing well:

He woke up all at once. He opened the window onto a faint light, a clear sky and a refreshing breeze. He felt his body, limb by limb, and found it was intact. ... He switched on the radio and there were no reports of new killings in Iraq or Gaza or Afghanistan. He thought he was asleep. He rubbed his eyes in the mirror and recognised his face easily. He shouted: 'I'm alive (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 67).

Soon after IDF’s Gaza offensive Operation Protective Edge in 2014, the former IDF head of the Northern Command General Amiram Levin openly said that it was Israeli vision to attack and completely occupy Gaza and Lebanon in near future in order to maintain a geopolitical equilibrium through the strategy of punishment:

In punishment you have room to maneuver. You decide whether you slap them once or twice, in front or from behind, whether you strike property or leaders, but the main objective of units in the field is to kill the enemy: Before he makes contact, while he makes contact, and then when he retreats. ... One mistake the army makes, is judging each case individually whether the person deserves to die or not. Most of these people were born to die, we just have to help them (Feldman Y. , 2013).

This belittling mindset and disparaging words are enough to show the deep-rooted hate that ranges among the top brass Israeli officers as well as political and intellectual elite. In her book *The International Self: Psychoanalysis and the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace*, Mira M. Sucharov details this mindset further while loquaciously arguing about the ‘security ethics’ of the IDF that includes endorsing the Arab adversaries as ‘terrorists’. She narrates how during the Intifada, right-wing Knesset Member Raphael Eitan would say that Israel should seal off the

occupied territories to make the Palestinians akin to “cockroaches in a jar (M.Sucharov, 2005, p. 78).”

The conditions in which this ‘ethical’ IDF enters the Palestinian population, dehumanizes them, and systematically subjects them to beatings and indefinite detentions without trial, despite the fact that they are not gun-brandishing terrorists, are meant to break them emotionally. In a letter from the prison published in the book *Subjective Atlas of Palestine*, an actual letter of a young Palestinian boy is printed that he sent from Majido Prison in Al-Khalil to his parents at home. In the first paragraph, he describes his helplessness and pain for not even being able to touch his parents’ fingers when they last visited him and in the second paragraph he narrates his friendship with two cockroaches that he spends time with in his cell. They are the only company and solace in that terrible and humiliating subhuman incarceration (Vet, 2007, p. 129). While Mira M. Sucharov very politely claims: “To humiliate is to deny the Other’s humanity, something which the IDF, with all its defensive-warfare mentality, took pains not to do (M.Sucharov, 2005, p. 134). Dr. Vacy Vlanza asserts that the success of Israel’s 7 billion dollar military juggernaut owes to “testing of weaponry on the Palestinian population in the Israeli military ‘labs’ of Gaza and the West Bank (Vlazna, 2013). The fear under which the Palestinian population is doomed to live from day to day and the uncertainty that stands at the margins of their life, makes a havoc of their nerves all the time. There have been instances where repeated constructions of the same cite are allowed to take place only to be demolished next time. With international borders locked, the only option is to reconstruct. The wretchedness that they feel after each destruction goes unreported and unmeasured though it makes a good case to study the impact of the hostile colonial empire upon the human psyche. The moment a person undergoes a slightly changed behaviour under the stresses, that is to say, he or she reacts, the person is identified as a *suspect* and is *neutralized*. Rolnik reports the case of the village of Arakib where a special rapporteur of the UN

General Assembly was sent to gather the facts concerning reports of a wide scale illegal demolition of Palestinian buildings by Israel:

The village leader presented evidence of the longstanding presence of his community in the area, including copies of documentation on land ownership dating from the Ottoman period. However, despite legal action taken by various civil society actors, demolitions are reportedly continuing (Rolnik, 2012).

Despite the report of the special rapporteur, Israeli bulldozers razed this village for 97th time in June 2016 demanding millions of Shekels for the expenses incurred for the current and previous demolitions as per the Israeli court orders that imposed a penalty of fifty thousand Shekels per day they spend on this land from June 27, 2010 (The Palestinian Information Center, 2016). While Israeli politics and military siege of the Palestinians at home and the incessant use of Israeli propaganda potential abroad is used to eternally deprive the Palestinians of an appropriately demarcated homeland and respectable political identity with all the rights and responsibilities of a free people, Darwish's words are a consistent support for the Palestinian masses both at home and abroad. His books, translations and critical material have all been made available to the world through the auspices of American publishers of repute. The offices of the most dynamic centers of action for Palestinian rights and awareness campaigns like Institute for Palestine Studies, Electronic Intifada etc. are mostly operating from within America. Darwish himself lived and became known to the world from this country. This is a constructive sign and entails a living hope that the Palestine issue would not die out unnoticed. A little more awareness leading to concerted international effort is required. The case should be kept open and the hopes, alive. This is what Darwish has preached:

Here, at the mercy of time,
on these foothills at sunset
near ripped-up orchards stripped of their shadows,
we do what prisoners do,
we do what the unemployed do:
we cultivate hope (Darwish M. , Palestine Advocacy, 2016).

Under the influence of Darwish, other Palestinians who have kept up this home-and-identity continuum flourishing, apart from the political struggle, include a host of writers like

Mourid Barghouti, Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Elias Khoury,; poets like Samih al-Qasim, Fadwa Tuqan, Taha Muhammad Ali, Ibrahim Nasrallah ; artists like Jumana Manna, Emily Jecir, Dia Batal; musicians and singers like Adnan Joubran, Reem Kelani, Haider Eid etc. These Palestinians have helped in structuring a soft image of the Palestine legacy and have thus quite successfully used art and literature to register deep impressions on hundreds and thousands of people who have experienced their contribution. The art and literature that these intellectuals are producing may also be regarded as threat by the Israelis, a threat as big as their producing non Jewish babies in the land and thus trampling on rights of the Jews by breathing more of the Israeli air. This refers to the routine use of the term “demographic threat” by Israeli politicians and media to describe the growing population of Palestinian Arabs. “The most pungent expression of this fear,” David Hirst reminds us, came from Golda Meir, who was Israeli prime minister in the 1970s. “The Palestinians’ birth-rate was so much higher than the Jews’ that her sleep was often disturbed, she would say, at the thought of how many Arab babies had been born in the night (Hirst, 2003, p. 369).” These Arab babies were therefore subjected to a systematic exodus to the neighbouring deserts, brainwashing through the curricula, and ultimate annihilation of their property, identity and life so that the Zionist colonial expansion and the demographic reduction of the colonized could be mutually balanced. Darwish narrates the case of a Palestinian girl killed by the IDF and reported only as an isolated individual, not as a relatable human entity who should have a home and a name. By the IDF standards, her identity must not open, her house must be destroyed and her village must be razed. She should be expelled from history and there should be left no trace of her in both time and space:

Her voice carries her higher and further than
The seashore. She screams at night over the land
The echo has no echo
So she becomes the endless scream in the breaking news
Which was no longer breaking news
When the aircraft returned to bomb a house with two windows and a door (Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 3).

This Palestinian girl is not 13-year old Hillel Yaffe Ariel in her Kiryat Arba, the illegal Israeli settlement in the West Bank who was killed on June 30, 2016 by a 19-year old Palestinian youth Mohammad Tra'ayra who jumped over the settlement's perimeter fence with a knife to take revenge of a murdered cousin by attacking whoever came his way. He found this lonely girl who shouted to see him and was killed. The security guard killed the Palestinian instantly but it followed the usual series of instant collective punishment for the entire community. The girl immediately became an international hero. Her room and its furniture as well as her teddy bear that had a stain of blood became the icons heroism with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promising an exemplary collective revenge in a special televised address on international media. The official representatives of US government, European Union and other international bodies openly condemned the death of this 'innocent girl with an adorable face (Levinson, 2016).' But there was no mention or accountability for the Palestinian Arab girl Majad Alhadur from the village of Bani Na'im near Hebron who drove past the same village of Kiryat Arba, and was shot dead as she was feared to have veered close to an Israeli car only six days earlier i.e. June 24, 2016 (Cohen G. , 2016). Nobody in the international media thought about the 27-year-old Sarah Hajuj from Bani Na'im, Hebron who was shot dead by Israeli guards on July 1, 2016 at a Hebron check-point only because 'she appeared suspect'. Investigation carried out by B'Tselem: Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories belies the police claims (B'Tselem, 2016). The Israeli led world media fails to account for the pain of one community and highlights the agony of another. The Jewish dead seem to leave behind a greater vacuum than the one a departed Palestinian leaves behind. One is a part of the colonial enterprise and therefore holier and more easily visible and the other one is just *the other* and therefore less poignant. But the daily murders, assault, beatings and thefts of property, among other atrocities that Israeli soldiers and settlers enact towards virtually unarmed Palestinians must be accounted for. It is the truth of their existence that the Israeli propaganda machines are consistently trying

to turn into a *relative truth*. Darwish has an eye for his less perceptible Palestinian sisters. He has no word of threat for the murderers. His only *revenge* is a vow to remember the necessary human identity of a Palestinian martyred girl, who is almost sure to have lost relatives before or after her own martyrdom (Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 159):

The martyr is daughter of the father-martyr,
Daughter of the mother-martyr / Sister of the brother-martyr,
Sister of the sister-martyr / Sister-in-law of the martyr's mother
Granddaughter of the martyr's grandfather,
Neighbour of the martyr's uncle, etcetera, etcetera ...
Nevertheless, the civilized world (*al-alim ul mutamaddin*) has hardened itself
With indifferent ice / And the Barbaric Age is passing us by,
While the victim doesn't even get a name, ... Etcetera, etcetera ...

He goes on to say that just as truth has become irrelevant or at least 'relative' in the Palestinian / Israeli conundrum, so are the victims of the situation which is heavily inclined in Israeli favour. There are irrefutable video records where young Palestinian boys of 10 and 11 years old with their school bags on, have been grabbed by Israeli soldiers and then whisked away to the interrogation centers where they can be held under administrative detainment even without framing a charge for years while being subjected to unspeakable incivility because these kids, in reaction to the consistent occupation, sometimes throw rock stones at the heavily armoured Israeli military vehicles (Makkawi, 2014). According to Alison Weir, the findings of a detailed statistical survey reveal that US media covers the Israeli deaths in far greater details than their Palestinian counterparts:

New York Times was reporting on Israeli children's deaths at a rate seven times greater than they were covering Palestinian children's deaths; this didn't even include the far larger number of words and amount of personal information given about Israeli victims compared to Palestinians. In 2004 our organisation conducted a statistical study of the Chronicle's coverage during the first six months of the Second Intifada and discovered that the Chronicle had covered 150 per cent of Israeli children's deaths and only 5 per cent of Palestinian children's deaths (Weir, If American Knew, 2013).

The statistics and the pattern of reporting remains very much the same today. With the distortion of facts in media under the influential international press and information technology, only a fraction of the ground facts would actually be known to the world. UNRWA and other

relief agencies simply record the refugees' plight and publish their pitiable findings while everyone makes an appeal to the UN for timely action. The UN acts in accordance with the political will of USA which in turn is sustained by the Zionist Jewish lobby. It is an inexorable Catch 22 situation. In his poem "On the Last Evening on this Earth", Darwish presents the saga of his countrymen's dispossession and the inevitable foreign occupation. He resigns to the situation with a mystical resolve and accepts the fate while he renounces everything that once defined his existence:

. . . here on the last evening
We contemplate mountains surrounding clouds: a conquest and a counter-conquest
And an ancient time handing over our door keys to the new time
So enter, you conquerors, our homes and drink our wine . . .
Our tea is hot and green so drink it, our pistachio fresh so eat it,
And our beds are cedar green, so surrender to sleepiness
After this long siege, sleep on our dreams' feathers,
The sheets are ready, the perfume by the door is ready, and the mirrors are many
For you to enter them so we can leave them entire (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 57) .

5.12 Darwish and the *Yusuf* motif:

In his poem 'On This Earth', Darwish universalizes the homeland and Palestine expands to fill all corners of the earth. Wherever the poet is, he is in Palestine.

We have on this earth what makes life worth living:
On this earth, the Lady of Earth, mother of all beginnings and ends.
She was called Palestine. Her name later became Palestine.
My lady, because you are my lady, I deserve life (Darwish M. , On This Earth, 2007).

Jacqueline Rose refers to the frequent reference in Darwish's poems to the birds who have the luxury of flying over the frontiers, barriers and checkpoints, and compares it with the Palestinian pair of lovers who sit holding each other's hands in Elia Suleiman's 2002 film *Divine Intervention*.

Uncompromising in his political vision, Darwish's crafting of a homeland in language has been one of the strongest rejoinders to dispossession. He is also at every level a poet who crosses borders. This was true literally in that originary flight and return that left his status so eloquent of a people's predicament: *Absence piling up its chosen objects / And pitching its eternal tent around us* ('The Owl's Night') (Rose, 2011, pp. 103-105).

This is not just the absence of refugees from their erstwhile lands and not even the absence of the diaspora from the camps, it is rather a complicated phenomenon where the fellow Arab

nations are absent from the scene of Palestinian tragedy both in letter and spirit. They watch and hear of the daily murders, occasional massacres and continuous dispossession meted out to their Palestinian brothers and sisters and while they sit in their cozy meeting halls and sip *qehwe*, they just pass a note of condemnation or a vote of condolence. One of the poetic traditions that have made Darwish unpalatable for the right wing Arab audience is his self-comparison in several of his poems with Joseph *Hazrat Yusuf* (peace be upon him) who as per the Qur'anic story was thrown into the well in Kan'an (ancient Palestine) by his step brothers who did not like him as he drew all the attention and appreciation of his father Prophet Jacob *Hazrat Yaqub* (peace be upon him). The poem moves with a deep note of pathos with a strain as sensitive and effective as 'Oh my father' after every few lines (Darwish M. , *Fewer Roses*, 1985):

Oh my father, I am Yusuf
 Oh father, my brothers neither love me nor want me in their midst
 They assault me and cast stones and words at me
 They want me to die so they can eulogize me
 They closed the door of your house and left me outside ...
 They accused the wolf / The wolf is more merciful than my brothers Oh, my father
 Did I wrong anyone when I said that
 I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon
 Saw them kneeling before me?

This symbol persists in other poems as well where instead of falling into the grave of water, Darwish undergoes a strange spiritual union with one who has fallen into the well but who needs the poet to let the world hear his voice and thus be remembered. Symbolically this is Palestine:

... I broke the myth and I broke.
 And I walked around the well until I flew from myself
 To what isn't of it. A deep voice shouted at me:
 This grave isn't your grave, so I apologized.
 I read verses from the wise Holy Book, and I said
 To the unknown one in the well: Salaam upon you the day
 You were killed in the land of peace, and the day you rise
 From the darkness of the well alive (I Didn't Apologize to the Well, 2005, p. 26)!

Darwish's concept of religion is secularist i.e. he would take the mystical truths from all religions and bedeck his poetry. He is not against any text. He can take the cue from the Qur'an and the Bible with the same ease and guiltlessness.

5.13 Hindrances in the path of a lasting peace

The issue of Palestinian freedom and integrity cannot be resolved by referring to it as *The Palestinian Question* alone? The idea of a ‘question’ invites ambiguities whereas there are none.

According to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon:

The Palestinian people still yearn for the freedom and dignity denied them for decades. ... The United Nations will continue to support international efforts aimed at bringing an end to the occupation that began forty years ago, and achieving a two-state solution. A viable and independent Palestine and a safe and secure Israel would not only be a blessing to the two peoples, but would also help promote peace and stability in the wider region (United Nations, 2008, p. 54).

The equation that the secretary general is developing here has two basic premises without which the final conclusion of peace and stability cannot be worked out. If one of the participating entities is obliterated and annulled which is evident in the case of Palestine, the whole equation would dwindle. If freedom and peace is not granted to the Palestinians, as the world has seen before, the mess of human rights erupts like a volcano and turn into another Intifada. Darwish saw the Palestinian part of struggle as pure fight for freedom and saw Israel as an executioner state that continued with occupation while expropriating even the image of the victim in the international community. Muna Abu Eid quotes Mahmoud Darwish to have pointed this out in an interview that he gave to Aqil al-Awit. While referring to the long forgotten natural right of the Palestinians to live in freedom, he declared intifada an important stage in their political evolution: “Out of the depths of this oblivion, came a thundering voice to remind of a spontaneous or conscious collusion to forget; there, on this small piece of the earth, is a people that is deprived of all rights because it lacks the basic condition for human life: ‘self-determination’. She also refers to another interview given to Hilit Yeshurun in which he defended the rising of his nation from a complacency in which the politics of PLO had long immured them (Eid M. A., 2016, pp. 132-133). In his lecture “Speaking Truth to Power”, Edward Said strongly advocates a principled and yet open expression of solidarity with *the right* wherever it is and whatever it entails. Without a bold stance, the world cannot be a better place particularly when it comes to the representation

of truth by the intellectuals. He criticizes the intellectual habit that induces avoidance of taking a principled position where the statement of truth or criticism might help highlight a matter of human concern. He believes that permanent internalization of the habit of keeping silent over the misuse of power and exploitation of another's interest starts slowly 'denaturing' a person. He is emotionally 'neutralized' and finally his passionate intellectual life come to an end. He then goes on identifying this problem concerning those who are in a position to speak out and have their words attended to but who just fall prey to the expediency of situation and let silence prevail. He counts them among 'hobbled, blinkered, muzzled' intellectual criminals for the fear of speaking against the greatest injustice in modern history. The truth, he asserts, 'deserves to be spoken represented by an unafraid and compassionate intellectual (Said E. , Representaions of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures, 1996, pp. 100-101). Darwish is one such intellectual and he dares to speak the truth: My legend will not survive long, / nor my image in the people's imagination. / So let the truth test me (Darwish M. , Almond Blossoms and Beyond, 2009, p. 11).

Darwish's truth constitutes freedom from occupation and rehabilitation of those who have languished in camps for at least three generations now but the Israeli propaganda machinery has long and repeatedly asserted that Israeli occupation is an irreversible phenomenon and that Palestinian identity as one contiguous state cannot be achieved anymore. But the pattern of history suggests that there are forces, *historical forces*, which act unlike the calculated and logical human thought. In his poem "Passport" Darwish is ready to let go of his present identity in the name of his natural identity that might assert itself beyond the argument of political expediency or militaristic realism:

Don't ask the trees for their names
Don't ask the valleys who their mother is
From my forehead bursts the sword of light
And from my hand springs the water of the river
All the hearts of the people are my identity
So take away my passport (Darwish M. , Palestine Advocacy, 2016)!

Darwish never forgot his true identity and chose to give the expression to the disadvantaged, voiceless, unrepresented and powerless Palestinians who could not or did not leave the land whose borders had become obscure for them. He shared their experience of life in body, mind and soul, and this is what earned him an unprecedented love, fame and acceptance from his people. He calls the shared love of the Palestinian lands as a 'hereditary illness' for which there is no known cure:

When it banishes us to the unknown ... it grows. And
The willows and the adjectives grow. And its grass grows
And its blue mountains. The lake widens
In the soul's north. Wheat rises in the soul's
South. The lemon fruit gleams like a lantern
In the emigrant's night. Geography glistens
As a holy book (Darwish M. , *And We Have a Land*, 2005).

According to the Jewish American Journalist Sasha Polakow Suransky, the hope of the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is fading out as Israel has been allowed to continue its apartheid politics "as a fortress state mired in war" as a latter-day South Africa with a legally and politically questionable historical legitimacy. Suransky questions Israel's domestic racist policies as well as its strong foreign relations with the most reviled regimes all over the world: Just as expanding settlements in the West Bank and Gaza eroded Israel's democratic Values at home, arms sales to South Africa in the early 1970s marked the beginning of an era in which expediency trumped morality in Israeli foreign policy and sympathy for the conquered gave war to cooperation with the conqueror (Polakow-Suransky, 2010, p. 12). Suransky refers to an article by former education minister of Israel Ms. Shulamit Aloni titled 'Yes, there is apartheid in Israel' that reads: "...through its army, the government of Israel practices a brutal form of apartheid in the territory it occupies ...oppressing an indigenous people which is entitled to a sovereign and independent existence while living in peace with us." Suransky consistently compares the measures taken by the Israeli government with the forced removals of the black neighbourhood to swaths of unproductive scattered lands called Bantustans to accommodate white settlers and thus growing destitute urban townships while the white police through its

regime of pass-laws and flux control, restricted the movement of blacks wishing to enter white areas (Ibid. p. 236). Suransky quotes Leila Farsakh of University of Massachusetts that South African apartheid wanted the land and the people, albeit with segregation; the Israeli leadership tried to take the land without the people (Ibid. p. 236) It is due to comparative political situations and emotional parallelism that Adam and Moodley of South African academia predicted that the way their nation had declined the nine *Bantustans* or “homelands”, so would Palestinians never agree to a rump-state in the West Bank and Gaza with fenced-in ghettos of noncontiguous territory (Adam & Moodley, 2005, p. 108).

If an acceptable and lasting identity is finally established, it would lead all the paths that took them to exile, back to Palestine in body, mind or soul. And this will be the feeling of home that the Palestinians have missed for over six decades now. Home for the Palestinians and an identity as well? The answer to this odd question may be found on the page of dedication at the start of Jonathan Cook’s book *Blood and Religion*: “For ... all the “Israeli Arabs” who fight for the right to identify themselves as Palestinians (Cook, Blood and Religion, 2006).” Cook suggests that the apartheid wall that Israel is constructing, is not only a means of keeping the Palestinians out of sight but also out of the Israeli Mind as the other side of the wall is *not a wall*. On the Palestinian side it is eight meters high with gun-towers through which Israeli snipers with their powerful telescopes keep a strict panoptical watch on every movement of every Palestinian. On the Israeli side it is a gradual projection of land aesthetically running along the four-lane Trans-Israel Highway and the tourists and drivers only see a landscaped embankment planted with grasses and flowery bushes or sections of a wall painted with murals that reimage the true picture across the concrete structure (Ibid. p. 2). While Israel is thus pursuing this self-delusional feat of *construction*, its image as a respectable democracy is being tarnished and *deconstructed* with every passing day. No doubt the maneuver would bring a temporary sense of relief but it might produce an unfathomable sense of perpetual danger and containment. The idea of what lies

beyond the walls is a commonly shared human sentiment and one wants to know and relate with what is beyond the appearance. This is the intellectual quest and the emotional pain that made the Israeli educationist Dr. Nurit Peled-Elhanan to appeal to the European Union leaders in these strong words:

As a laureate of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Human Rights, and as a mother and a human being, I call on the EU to use all the diplomatic and economic tools at its disposal to help save my country from the abyss of eternal occupation and injustice (Peled-Elhanan, 2014).

This occupation and injustice has no end in view. With PLO and PA's failure to safeguard the Palestinian residents and refugees and with Fatah's and Hamas's mutual distrust and rescinding policies, and more so, with the callous indifference of the world towards the inestimable suffering that the Palestinians in refugee camps are suffering, the choices left for the sufferers are far and few. Sari Nusseibeh writes in his biography *Once Upon a Country*: "Humiliation has always been Israel's most powerful weapon against us. From the Palestinian perspective, this can either lead to a stronger will and greater sense of autonomy, or destroy a person's self-worth, tilling the soil for the nihilism of terrorists (Nusseibeh, 2009, p. 460)."

While Fatah and Hamas have tried to take the lead in affecting suicide bombers against Israel since 1996 to give a vent to their frustrations and self-effacing reciprocated hatred, Israel has responded with even more aggravations resulting in what Nusseibeh calls "a bizarre schizophrenia" that has steadily built up since 2002, a year when all pacts and hopes of peace were virtually turned to ashes. Not only have the instances of embarrassing the Palestinians increased at checkpoints and in prisons to the level of breaking them down to lose their sense of honour and mental integrity but little by little their movement as citizens is being brought to an absolute halt by erecting a maze of road-blocks and building the separation wall. Darwish has been a witness to this madness in his poem "The Kindhearted Villagers":

We, too, cry when we fall to the earth's rim. ...
Our dreams do not gaze upon other people's grapevines.
They don't break the rule (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. 61).

Nusseibeh notes that those Palestinians who chose to be kamikaze were all at one point or another subjected to some kind of humiliation or hurt by the Israeli soldiers. They were not motivated by religion but by anger, depression and revenge. They may be accused of breaking the rules but they never started it. Linda Spalding writes about her experience of passing through the Qalandia Checkpoint in order to enter Jerusalem where the Palestinians have to wait for ‘savage lengths of time’ and are interrogated and harassed before being allowed to go on to their work places:

This is where ...Jawher and Adam were shot in the feet by Israeli soldiers ... because they were going to play for Palestine in the World Cup. We were surrounded by turrets and guns and razor-wire fences very like the Nazi death camps, and that is not the image Israel wants to project. A people walled in, without rights, without freedom to move, without protection of the law, are prisoners. The guns and turrets belong to the jailors as usual (Spalding, 2017, p. 274).

Darwish and most of the other *dislocated* Palestinians have a profounder sentiment. They believe that they are already there! The absence has not absented them because they would not let go of the memory of their homeland which in turn comes forward to meet them and to greet them:

Now, in exile ... yes, at home...

So celebrate with your friends and break the glass ...

Say to those who are distant: You have reduced me.

I am here to complete you (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 4)!

5.14 Identity, representation and survival

Palestinian quest for identity and their corresponding homeward thoughts are meant to ensure their ultimate survival. Otherwise the Palestinians would be utterly lost in the chaotic conundrums of propaganda and rewriting of history that the ultra-rightist, self-righteous western writers like Efraim Karsh, Michael Eric Dyson, Benny Morris and Cornel West have attempted. They seek to justify Israeli occupation of Palestine on the basis of modern critical theoretical frameworks that make the Israeli presence a justifiable sociohistorical phenomenon. Morris speaks in terms of geographical constraints that do not allow for the two-state solution and Dyson refers to the power politics and moral philosophies of Foucault, and Max Weber, as well as

Thomas Kuhn's conception of incommensurable vocabularies while answering the questions related with Palestine-Israeli relationship. What remains to be told is the impact of Israeli colonization and the resultant Palestinian resistance, issues that are carefully avoided (Salaita, 2011, p. 85). As far as documented accounts of Israeli-Palestinian 'relationship' are concerned, it is quite evident that it is a master-slave relationship only with the exception that masters do not always humiliate their subjects and the slaves do not always resist. Gaza has been termed as the biggest open air prison system in the world (Filiu, 2015, p. 323) and the West Bank too is an intricate network of virtual walls where even the roads are designed to separate the Palestinians and to connect the Jews (Makdisi, 2010, p. 52). In her book, Saree Makdisi describes heart rending and incredible but properly documented stories of extreme pain, tremendous humiliation and inhuman violence that the Palestinian way farers suffer at the hands of fixed and moving Israeli checkpoints and road patrols. It is quite common for the soldiers of the IDF to suddenly disallow one member of a group or a family to proceed. Without assigning a credible reason, such a person would be detained at a checkpoint and then asked to come to the same place from another gate 10 feet away to join his or her family after taking a detour of 12 to 15 miles. Questioning is not allowed. And if someone tries to reason with them, the soldiers can go to any extent. Makdisi quotes the World Health Organization Report of 2005 that registered sixty one cases where women had to give birth in roadside dirt and rubble due to inordinate willful delays caused by the checkpoint managers who would not even express any sadness or distress at the situation. In majority of such cases the children were born alive but died soon after, due to postnatal complications. The problem is ever on the rise. According to a report published by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) in July 2007, almost 40 percent of the West Bank is now taken up by Israeli infrastructure, including roads, settlements, and military outposts (Ibid. p. 41). The separation wall, Makdisi reports, has cut off Palestinian quarters from Jerusalem at several points. In West Bank the wall has created such complicated circuits that

thousands of Palestinians have been virtually stranded in a way that the members of the same village and sometimes of the same family may not be able to see each other ever again. Israeli General Moshe Ya'alon's words are reported in the international media when he said: "The Palestinians must be made to understand in the deepest recesses of their consciousness that they are a defeated people (Ibid. p. 95)." The Palestinian lands have been occupied and confiscated in contravention of all rules of engagement in international law. Such an apartheid and discriminatory social system is not to be found anywhere in recent history of the world. The walled Palestinian enclaves and refugee camps are present day specimens of German concentration camps during the holocaust. According to Professor Richard Falk, Palestinian identity has been crushed to the level of a second-class, discriminated and alienated minority:

In every material, political, and psychological sense conditions are grossly unequal to the disadvantage of the Palestinians, which is particularly true given the unlawful character of an occupation that has gone on since 1967, entailing severe encroachment on fundamental human rights that increases with the passage of time, especially due to settlement expansion (Falk R. , *Re-imagining Humane Governanace*, 2014).

He concludes the chapter titled "How to Live Together Well on Planet Earth" by framing a clear charge against Israel's 'prolonged coercive occupation'. He believes that this crime against humanity must be dealt with in the Nuremberg-way. Unless this is done, global collective consciousness would remain guilty. Darwish has played a very important role in shaping up this consciousness. In his poem "Tuesday and the Weather is Clear", Darwish speaks about his exilic sense of identity which, in the absence of home, is reduced to a pot of roses that the poet notices lying on his side. He feels that it has been reduced to the size of a book that he holds on the palm of his hand. It loses its pull of gravity:

There is no land as narrow as a pot for roses
Like your land . . . and no land as wide
As a book like your land . . . and your vision
Is your exile in a world where shadow
Has no identity or gravity (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 149).

In another poem “Like a Hand Tattoo” he brings the same theme into action once again and develops the theme of a gradually losing Identity in the state of Exile where the very borders of the country one feels so secured in, give way to other identities.

No one
told me this place is called a country,
and that behind the country there were borders, and behind
the borders a place called wandering and exile
for us. I wasn't yet in need of identity . . .
but those who reached us aboard
their combat tanks were transferring the place
in truckloads swiftly away (Ibid. p.173).

In order to understand Darwish's politics of 'home and identity' the *counter-politics* that the Israeli intelligence employs to secure these issues must be understood. The accomplishment starts from the root of all national action: Education. Nurid Peled-Elhanan, Professor of Language and Education at Hebrew University is an expert in this area of research. In 1997 her 13 years old daughter died in a suicide bombing and she gave herself up to trace the root causes that lead up to such an event. Her findings are with reference to representation and marginalization of Palestinians in Israeli school books particularly in the subjects of history, geography and civic studies. She has summed these up in her book *Palestine in Israeli School Books: Ideology and Propaganda in Education* (2011). Elhanan believes that through the use of images, colours, maps, layout and language, these text-books that ought to be studied by all and sundry whether they like it or not are a major source of marginalizing Palestinians and to prepare Israeli children for future military service. She believes that through the reading of these books Israeli boys and girls who learn “supposedly enlightened humanistic values end up being such horrible monsters in the army” (Elhanan's own words) when they use that absorbed knowledge in their practical life as they never or hardly ever come in humanistic contact with the Palestinians because they have to keep (they are taught thus) a distance of fifty to hundred meters from them. Massacres committed against Palestinian citizens and refugees during the last seventy years are never accounted for in these books. In Israel, military service is always idealized. High school students are given regular

military lessons and training making a combatant lifestyle as the ideal. The philosophy of Zionism as ‘redemption of the Jewish people’ is a qualifying feature for a book to be authorized for publication while all books are supposed to portray Arab-Jewish conflict and not the Zionist Palestinian conflict. The situation never improved even after the partial mutual recognition in Oslo (Ibid.).

In March 2004, an Israeli NGO called *Breaking the Silence* (on the Occupation of Palestine) was constituted by the dissenting Israeli soldiers who served in the area of Hebron during the peak of the second Intifada. When they felt that there was a huge gap between what they were ordered to do during the battle-like engagement in this area and what they could tell their people who would naturally look forward to them for information of what actually was going on in Palestine, these young soldiers used some crude photographs taken during their field duties and later arranged exhibitions in the public and were even able to make one presentation before the Knesset, the Israeli parliament (Gvaryahu, 2012). On their website (www.breakingthesilence.org.il), so far, several hundred soldiers who could manage their moral compass have given testimony about the gross injustices against the Palestinian people during the social unrest incited by Israeli intelligence agencies. Of particular importance is the book of testimonies recorded by one hundred and forty five soldiers (veteran combatants) over a decade i.e. 2000-2010. The book is titled *Our Harsh Logic: Israeli Soldiers' Testimonies from the Occupied Territories, 2000-2010*. *Breaking the Silence* team reports how they were suddenly ordered to go and set up a surprise checkpoint at a busy Friday market in Tubas (which according to Washington Agreement of 1995, lies purely under the control of the Palestinian Authority). What they achieved out of it was a rally of young children who gathered to abuse them and threw rock stones at them. Similarly throwing stun-grenades into the Palestinian streets in the middle of the night to wake people up and to terrorize them and thus to let them know that IDF is there, all around and everywhere, is a method in the modern ‘Psyops’ or the operations of the psychological

warfare. In IDF's terminology, these actions are called "doing a Happy Purim to them." These entail going to an innocent village randomly chosen for an operation without any intelligence tip with a complete battalion movement (440 soldiers under one colonel) in the middle of the night, breaking open the school and destroying the classrooms while setting it as an interrogation center for Shin Bet (or Shabak, the intelligence wing of IDF: *Sherut Bitachon Clali*). It also includes sudden breaking open the doors of Palestinian homes and locking the entire family into one room under gunpoint, ransacking the entire houses while the elderly go into epileptic seizure or heart attacks, young ones frightened to their bones, peeing in their pants etc. Those who make noises including the mentally retarded persons are butted and smashed into silence while the soldiers continuously shout at them to create a more panicking scene while they arrest all the young men between sixteen and twenty nine, bringing them to the school courtyards blindfolded and handcuffed while all their valuable are looted. Finally with arrest orders '*for suspicion of disturbing peace*' already kept ready and printed with only one area left to fill in: the name of the culprit, they would remain handcuffed and suffering till the following evening and then either released or detained for further 'breaking'. The testimony provided by one of the soldiers speaks volumes about the level of atrocity that IDF is capable of:

There was one house that they just demolished ... they smash the floors, turn over sofas, throw plants and pictures, turn over beds, smash the closets, the tiles ... The mother watched from the side and cried, the kids sat with her and stroked her. I see how my mom puts so much effort into every corner of our house, and suddenly they come and destroy it (Ibid. p. 16-19).

Here the military account turns into a poetic byroad letting us know that despite intellectual brainwashing of the colonizing mind, the original human passion wakes up at a certain time. The availability of poetic expression in the language of the oppressor is quite promising as it can expedite the emotional transformation. This emotive makeover is one of the hopes to the solution of the *Palestinian Question*. Reviewing the book *Our Harsh Logic*, Professor Ira Chernus of University of Colorado, himself a Jew writes that the occupation of Palestinian land and resources continues under the pretext of providing safe life to all Jews everywhere. The

underlying idea of Jewish safety makes them eternal victims of Palestinian aggression which is the opposite of actuality and robs every new Israeli generation of the right to know the truth (Chernus, 2012). Thus the doctrinal inculcation at the academic level described above by Dr. Nurit Paled-Elhanan and its practical demonstration by the targeted audience as mentioned in *Our Harsh Logic* have a clear relationship and it tells us about the continued colonial activity whose primary objective is to create a submissive populace that is unable to register protest and thus suffers without complaining as its soul is made to shrink. Darwish gives us a phantasmagorical dialogue which may be identified to have taken place between the souls of the two fighters who are the representatives of the Holocaust and al Nakba, both claiming to be the rightful heirs of the land of Palestine. They trace their names on the stones there where the end of one's exile is the beginning of the other. The only difference between the two is "the cunning of the rhetoric":

I said: Are we not making peace?

He said: If a live man and a dead man sign a truce in one body.

I said: Here am I, both dead and alive.

He said: I have forgotten you . . . Who are you?

I said: I am a copy of your *I*, who becomes aware of what the moth said to me: O, my brother in frailty!

He said: But she was burned.

I said: Don't get burned like her (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, pp. 82-83)!

The poem ends when the victim of the holocaust tells the victim of al-Nakba that he has come to Palestine to marry a daughter of Enat. Enat is a mythological reference that goes to the Canaanite goddess of fertility, war and marriage. The reference becomes more alive when we consider the epigraph of Ghada Karmi's book *Married to Another Man* where she describes the details of the first Zionist Congress in Basel (1897) where the idea of the establishment of a purely Jewish state in the land of Palestine was first mooted and two experts were sent to calculate the feasibility of the project by the Rabbis of Vienna. The men completed their survey and sent back the following cable-message: "*The bride is beautiful, but she is married to another man.*" This was to denote that unlike what Israel-Zangwill had reported, it was not a land without people for a people without a land. It was historically populated and internationally spoken about as a place where Palestinians had been living for centuries (Karmi, *Married to Another Man*, 2007).

In an analogical poem “A Ready Script”, Darwish uses his intellectual dexterity to take up another challenging and dramatic situation where he as a nameless representative of Palestine and another equally nameless representative of Jewish community happen to fall into a deep hole within the earth which is symbolic of the enigma of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He imagines that they both wait for a lucky rescue as equal partners in a probability-game but they remain silent and distant. He then imagines the sudden appearance of a deadly snake that threatens their existence and they both utilize the energy of togetherness and despite their various ideologies, combine in one instinctive round of survival. When they kill the snake, they even undergo a bout of mutual thanksgiving and congratulations. Then they relax and remember their worlds before their fall into the hole and he says:

What has become mine is mine and what is yours is yours and mine.” He said: Will you negotiate with me now? I said: Over what now in this hole, this grave? He said: Over your share and mine of our void and our mutual grave. I said: What's the use? Time has run away from us, and destiny doesn't follow the rule, the murdered and his murderer sleep in this hole, and another poet must see this script through to its end (Darwish M. , A Ready Script, 2008)!

Darwish thus provides a catharsis not only of his own displaced people but also for the newer settlers of Palestine i.e. Jews. The words are prophetic as well as representative of seven bloody decades in which a saga of power and resistance has undergone mass exodus of refugees who have been subjected to abstract boundaries with abstract notions of identity as well as socio-spatial segregation within the physical bounds of Israel and Palestine. Both communities consistently reclaim space because the identity and the culture both require clear demarcations of time and space. Several more decades might go wasteful and destructive and unpredictable if the parties involved do not pay heed to the solid political and historical facts. In Darwish’s words: “Whenever my prison becomes narrow I spread into everything, and my language widens as a pearl that lights up each time night is on patrol (Darwish M. , The Butterfly's Burden, 2007, p. 309).” Being a poet, his objective is adjustment and accommodation of the contraries aiming at a

synthesis that has not become available politically so far. Home remains a focus of the exilic perspective.

5.15 Darwish and the question of existence

In an effort to understand the pain of his own people more profoundly, Darwish undergoes a self-induced hypnosis where he imagines himself to have been hit by a lethal weapon from the pantheon of IDF arsenal. He feels that splinters from his glasses lodged into his eyes, a metal rod has pierced his side and he is ‘forgotten in the crush of mangled flesh left behind in the rubble’:

I feel the pain of the animal crushed inside me. I cry out in pain but no one hears me. This is a phantom pain, coming from an opposite direction-out of what might happen. Some of those hit in the leg continue to feel pain there for several years after amputation. They reach out to feel the pain in a place where there is no longer a limb. This phantom, imaginary pain may pursue them to the end of their days. As for me, I feel the pain of an injury that hasn't happened. (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, pp. 24-25).

Pain has been the most important theme in the saga of Palestinian struggle. The methods used to inflict this pain vary from case to case and so does its dimension change from being physical to psychic or to emotional pain but the crux remains the same. The tragedy of the situation is that the world conscience has become so much indifferent and unresponsive that even if a sudden apocalypse is caused to fall upon the entire population of Palestinians, there may be still be a lukewarm response from the international community, a few conferences, a couple of dissenting votes in the arenas of international organizations, a series of articles in newspapers and that is all. Palestinians are almost aware of the fact that they have been left on their own and they have to preserve not only their name but also their honour. What constitutes Palestinian resistance in the present regional and international scenario is almost existential. As a nation and as individuals, they are resisting the idea of total annihilation. On the other hand if their right of freedom and the return of refugees is not granted, it would be a failure of the UN's proclaimed role of ‘the passive settlement of disputes’ and would call for the legitimization of the principle of ‘might is right’ if sufficiently used. Elizabeth May, the leader of Green Party of Canada recently commented, “We need a two-state solution, and the way things are going, there will be no

Palestine for a two-state solution (Kattenburg, 2016).” The reason she speaks in such terms is evident. There is a systematic, unhampered Palestinian deinstitutionalization, target killing or deportation of important Palestinian leaders, the psychological repression through threat and intimidation, physical torture and expulsion and above all, destruction of housing units that, in each case, eventually destroys the scope of an entire family-system which either has to move away as a part of consistent trickle into refugee camps and if internally displaced, it becomes an economic burden on the already straightened families of the relatives. In his journal entry “The House as Casualty” in his book *A River Dies of Thirst*, Darwish alleges that the houses that are razed are not dead rubble alone, they signify the death of so many things including groceries, medicines and documents of various significance:

Rent agreements, marriage documents, birth certificates, water and electricity bills, identity cards, passports, love letters are torn to shreds like their owners' hearts. Photographs, toothbrushes, combs, cosmetics, shoes, underwear, sheets, towels fly in every direction like family secrets broadcast aloud in the devastation. All these things are a memory of the people who no longer have them and of the objects that no longer have the people - destroyed in a minute. Our things die like us, but they aren't buried with us (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 12).

But for these, there are no news, no accountability, no insight present, a house is just taken as an insignificant totality with no minuteness, no details and no emotionality. It is not even an even in itself because the international audience is habitual of hearing about the destruction of twenty, thirty, forty houses in a single sentence. Even the description of razing an entire village or two is common news. Hearing about a village that is evacuated and later bulldozed, Darwish observes that even one home is a microcosmic representation of the life of a human community. Numbers and the physical dimensions are less important when the essential principles of humanity are compromised. He brings to light a new element of tragedy before us when he says

The house as casualty is also mass murder, even if it is empty of its inhabitants. A mass grave of raw materials intended to build a structure with meaning, or a poem with no importance in time of war. The house as casualty is the severance of things from their relationships and from the names of feelings, and from the need of tragedy to direct its eloquence at seeing into the life of the object. In every object there is a being in pain ... And houses are killed just like their inhabitants (Ibid.).

5.16 Darwish's alienated *homeland*

Darwish chose to tag his famous collection of poetry *Unfortunately it was Paradise* with the epigraph of Federico Garcia Lorca's verse: "But now I am no longer I, / Nor is my house any longer my house (Darwish M. , *Unfortunately it was Paradise*, 2013, p. vii)." This is an apt description of the gradual compromise or transformation of identity that the Palestinians are being coerced into. They have their homesteads eliminated, their freedom of movement almost halted to a standstill and put into an unending stasis of endless wait. Darwish refers to the problem of identity that makes them debate over whether they are homeless Arabs (in Mathew Arnold words) 'wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born' or simply erstwhile independent citizens of a well-defined and integrated country, Palestine. As hundreds and thousands of refugees now, they do not have a place or a name. The remaining vestiges of both these defining entities are politically and physically being eroded every day while they are still alive and struggling. Darwish presents them as wandering butterflies:

Butterflies fluttered out of sleep, as if they were
The spirits of a swift peace, giving us two stars,
But killing us in the struggle over a name (Darwish M. , *Unfortunately it was Paradise*, 2013, pp. 102,103)

Richard Ben Cramer seems to understand a very crucial aspect of the Palestinian experience of life which he calls "the highest imperative" i.e. honour. He believes that the Palestinian sense of honour is both old-fashioned and charming, even "exotically foreign". He believes that when a force as superior as the law or the army comes to conflict with their sense of honour, then "honour will win. Honour is trump. That's one reason there is no peace. Any peace deal that does not accord with honour cannot be accepted – and if it is imposed, or accepted perforce, it cannot endure. In fact, without an awareness of honour, nothing can be made to stick – and nothing can be understood (Cramer, 2005, p. 83)." For the Palestinians, every international peace accord or peace process or conference under the title of peace has been but an interlude between the seasons of extreme pain and agony. It is because there is no sincere and concerted

effort to resolve the issue once for all. Each time a resolution is passed, it aims to settle the dust of any particular event or incident in the region. It seems none of the countries that matter have the Palestinian agenda on their lists of foreign policy priorities. A sensitive soul like Darwish would watch all this in a state of helplessness, wonder and dismay. All aggressive or punitive actions of the colonial enterprise become news headlines, a subject matter of a few talk shows, a few commemorative seminars, some articles or a book here and there and then given over to what Darwish calls *Memory for Forgetfulness*: ‘The news searches for their names under the rubble. Apart from that, abnormal life appears to be running its normal course (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 40). Darwish compares Israel with Nero, the fifth Roman Emperor (AD 37-68) who burned two thirds of Rome in July 64 AD and was eventually declared a public enemy by the state (Encarta, 2007), and declares that whatever is going around in the land of Palestine is comparable to this Nero as the lead cast in the Hollywood movie of Palestine/Israel conflict under the directions of Uncle Sam (the United Nations):

And what goes on in Nero's mind as he watches the world burn I am master of the Day of Judgement. Then he orders the camera to stop rolling, because he doesn't want anyone to see that his fingers are on fire at the end of this long American movie (Darwish M. , *A River Dies of Thirst*, 2009, p. 9)!

In a state whose short history is full of dark episodes of exploitation and abuse of physical and human resources, the genocide has not been restricted only to Palestinians. In July 2016, Tzachi Hanegbi, Israeli minister for national security admitted that following Israel’s creation, hundreds, if not thousands of babies were stolen from tens of thousands of Arab Jewish immigrants from Yemen, Iraq, Morocco and Tunisia, and were relocated to childless couples and families coming from Europe or were sold to Jewish families abroad. Hanegbi has told that the classified material in this regard will remain a state secret till 2071. The logic was to have the pure Jewish workers to serve the European Jewish population and to fill up the demographic vacuum while ethnic cleansing of Palestine was in process, and at the same time de-Arabizing their children by taking them away and put into the process of ‘reform’ in order to curtail their

primitiveness and to cultivate in them a hate for everything that sounded *Arab*. For this, detachment from their biological families was deemed necessary. David ben Gurion believed that these children would corrupt his Jewish state by bringing in what he called “spirit of the Levant” (Cook, Mondoweiss, 2016). As discussed above, according to the UN definition, forcible transfer of children from one ethnic group to another amounts to genocide (OSAPG, p. 1). Poetry is part revelation and sometimes the meditated words of a seer-poet get connected at such junctures of thought that were hitherto unknown. Here Darwish’s words become very much related:

No matter how near you come, you will remain distant. No matter how often you are killed, you will live. So do not think that you are dead there, and alive here. Nothing proves this or that but metaphor. Metaphors that teach beings the play of words. Metaphors that form a geography from a shadow. Metaphors that will gather you and your name (Darwish M. , In the Presence of Absence, 2011, pp. 19-20).

Jonathan Cook believes that despite Israeli government’s admission of this past crime, Israeli European superiority complex, with a severe right wing Likud government would not give way. But it is a moment of self-reflection especially for the conscientious Jews everywhere especially Israel’s Arab Jews (Sephardims) that they face the same enemy as the Palestinians. This enemy is a European Jewish establishment that is inherently against all that is Arab in outlook or origin (Cook, Mondoweiss, 2016). As far as the Palestinians are concerned, they are relegated to a thrice inferior position by the racially superiority complexed Ashkenazi Jews who have no regard for the severe crisis of lack of identity that the camp-dweller Palestinian refugees are exposed for the last seventy years. Every successive generation of Refugees is promised that the life in the camps is temporary but the temporariness becomes indefinite, breeding in them a sense of utter loss. Whatever they have done and continue to do, the result is always the same: no place to belong to.

If you say, metaphorically, that you are from no place, you are told: There is no place for no place. If you tell the passport official: No place is exile; he answers: We have no time for rhetoric, so if you like rhetoric, go to another no place. You see yourself at a third, fourth, and tenth airport explaining to disinterested employees a lesson in contemporary history about the people of the Nakba, scattered between exile and military occupation, without them understanding or granting you permission to enter. (Darwish M. , In the Presence of Absence, 2011, p. 52).

5.17 Recreating Palestinian human rights

Page after page in the book *Gaza Beneath the Bombs* the writers Sharyn Lock and Sarah Irving have given gruesome details of individuals and families on ground who have stood up to protest against what the writers refer to as Israeli killing machine (p. 132). Their experiences and eye witness accounts relate how direly the Palestinians are exposed to human rights desecration on daily basis. For just the crime of standing there to watch these excesses of the Israeli administration from close quarters, these touring western writers were not only expelled from Israel but given punitive lessons to remember for a life-time:

In the middle of the night, I find myself sobbing into my sleeping bag, trying not to wake Theresa. I'm a privileged white Westerner, and nobody ever before has stopped me from going where I need to go. God knows what it is like to be a Palestinian for whom freedom of movement, or being with all your family, is just something to dream about. ... But if there's one thing I've tried to learn from Palestinians, it's never to give up. (Lock & Irving, 2010, p. 9).

Writing the afterword of this book Professor Richard Falk invokes the idea of 'Universal Jurisdiction' that International Criminal Court must adopt to 'end the regime of impunity for politically powerful leaders of sovereign states. Falk wants that the UN's fact finding mission's 452 pages report of September 2009 known as the Goldstone Report that details some of the Israeli atrocities during Operation Cast Lead should provide ICC and the UNGA an opportunity to take Israel to task. But then he adds skeptically:

It is clear that the United States will continue brazenly to use its geopolitical muscle to ensure Israeli impunity, standing irresponsibly ready to wield the veto in the Security Council if any effort is made to *enforce* Goldstone. My own skeptical view is that the UN will fail the Goldstone test, and that its call for accountability will not be heeded, and the peoples of the world will be again reminded that international criminal law is only meant for the weak and defeated (Falk R. , Afterword, 2010, p. 213).

The above cited report, despite all its obvious lapses of recording the human suffering, adds another mark of shame on the collective human conscience of the 21st century as it describes the statistics not only of the thousands of those who were killed or maimed but also of those who suffered acute psychological disorders as the entire operation amounts to a cold blooded and brutal massacre in a densely populated civil area. Apart from 1500 direct fatalities whose record

is available, it was found that more than 20 percent children in Gaza suffered from post-traumatic stress disorders (with no facility for appropriate psychiatric services) (Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace*, 2016, p. 145). Israeli President Shimon Peres declared this report to be “a mockery of history” that failed “to distinguish between the aggressor and a state exercising its right of self-defense” and thus “granted legitimacy to terrorism.” Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Minister Danny Ayalon similarly denounced it as a “dangerous attempt to harm the principle of self-defense by democratic states and provides legitimacy to terror (Ibid. pp. 155-156). While the unarmed and innocent Palestinians in Gaza and the Israeli forces personnel died in the ratio of more than three hundred to one, Israeli writer Larry Derfner came out with scathing criticism in the *Jerusalem Post*:

“We can blockade Gaza, we can answer Qassams with F-16s and Apaches, we can take 100 eyes for an eye. We can deliberately destroy thousands of Gazan homes, the Gazan parliament, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, courthouses, the only Gazan flour plant, the main poultry farm, a sewage treatment plant, water wells and God knows what else. *Deliberately*. After all we are acting in self-defense. By definition. And what right do the Palestinians have to defend themselves against this? None. Why? Because we are better than them ... Because ours is a culture of life and theirs is a culture of death (Derfner, 2009).”

While Israel refused to accept any responsibility, Richard Goldstone took an about-turn and condemned the Fact Finding Mission’s own report that was prepared and published under his own authority. He declared that Israel’s self-investigations were more credible. Israel’s Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman proclaimed, “... the truth is clear, and cannot be questioned ... today it is clear to everyone that the IDF is the most moral army.” Their Defense Minister Barak expressed concern that Goldstone should not have taken such a long time to change his mind. Prime Minister Netanyahu responded that Goldstone’s backtracking should lead to shelving of the report once for all. But the most poignant and lethal remark came from Gabriela Shalev who is Israel’s former ambassador to the UN that Goldstone’s volte-face proved that whenever Israel needed to *defend* itself again, it would “be able to say there is no way to deal with this terror other than the same way we did in Cast Lead (Hammond, *Obstacle to Peace*, 2016, pp. 273-275).

While one clearly sees the Israeli potential to mould, reform or dismiss any investigation report that goes against its national interest, Israel used the above quoted license to kill when they launched a fifty day long military operation against Gaza on July 8, 2014 destroying the very fabric of life in the Strip, leaving a society that was already physically and emotionally damaged, beyond repair. In one sense, it is not the lack of identity that is killing Palestinians, it is rather an overwhelming sense of identity that has been instilled upon them by the atrocities specifically aimed at the bearers of this identity. The neighbourly countries do not admit them as their own citizens, the UN does not grant them independent status and Israel relishes the idea of experimenting the slow and steady policy of the annihilation of an entire civilization which is resisting to the last atom of their physical and intellectual energy. The way Palestinian *identity* has been compromised over the decades with impunity and opportunism has well been captured by Darwish in his poem “At the End of Things”:

Nothing remains for the dead save the final excuses.
There is no place here for us
To sit long in front of the sea. So let us clear a way for flowers
And for the feet of children so that they may learn to walk quickly to the graves.
Our experience has grown and our words have shrunk
So let us be extinguished / And let us hide
In the story of ancestors and travel leading to travel
(Darwish M. , I Don't Want This Poem to End, p. 106).

To die every day or to be at the verge of dying has been delegated as their culture. The way US media misrepresents them to the world is no secret. Darwish, in his philosophical lore refers to another shift in the paradigm of identity. This time he meets an Israeli soldier and asks him about his identity beyond the uniform fatigue and beyond the official Israeli identity. The soldier who himself is disillusioned about an identity tailored for him through a state of war under the pretext of undertaking a great mission believed to be very holy by the state speaks out that he only loves this usurped land with his gun:

And by unearthing feasts in the garbage of the past
And a deaf-mute idol whose age and meaning are unknown. ...
All my attachment to the land is no more than a story or a fiery speech!
They taught me to love it, but I never felt it in my heart.

I never knew its roots and branches, or the scent of its grass. ...
I dream of white tulips, streets of song, a house of light.
I need a kind heart, not a bullet. ...
I need a bright day, not a mad fascist moment of triumph.
I need a child to cherish a day of laughter not a weapon of war (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. 168).

Darwish has tried to ingrain mutuality and a reciprocity in the hearts of both Palestinians and the Israelis at the emotional level in an effort to seek a *via-media* in case the two merge into a single state. But he is not ready to compromise his own tradition of life and the history of suffering. In his *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, under the subject heading of “Home between Memory and History” he presents an extract from *Khirbet Khizeh* (2007) a writing by the Jewish writer S. Yizhar, [first published in Hebrew in 1949]: “Who, then, would imagine that once there had been some Khirbet Khizeh that we emptied out and took for ourselves? We came, we shot, we burned; we blew up, we expelled, drove out, and sent into exile.” Darwish claims that such confessions are rarely heeded to and the din of propaganda lets this slip into silence. Logical inquiry may lead one to relatively more plausible truths but then the Israeli counterparts would wind up the discussion by claiming that there was no other choice: “They are waiting for time to transform aggression into a right that will become accepted in due course (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 31).”

According to Juliane Hammer, there are three ways that the problems of Palestinian refugees can be addressed: Firstly, repatriation i.e. going back to their villages, homes and towns but this is not practically possible as their population has increased manifolds and there is no welcome back home as their lands are completely and irrevocably assimilated by Israel. Secondly, permanent settlement in the (Arab) countries of asylum where they are presently living. But this becomes very difficult due to the reason that the neighbouring Arab countries, despite the commonality of language and religion believe that full citizenship rights would jeopardize the Palestinian political claims of their land confiscated and usurped by Israel. Besides, the host governments have their financial, social and security issues and are unwilling to absorb hundreds

and thousands of new nationals in their mainstream population. But humanitarian concerns and change of public opinion may necessitate this in future because unlike the Afghan refugees that were sent back to an empty war-torn Afghanistan under post-Taliban American suzerainty by Pakistan, there is no possibility of a welcome for the Palestinian refugees under the American emboldened Zionist right wing Likud regime which is ready to do away with the remaining population of Palestine as and whenever they can get an opportunity to do that. Thirdly, resettlement in a third country who might be willing to absorb the refugees. This may become possible if post Arab-Spring regimes in Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia make a concerted effort. The OIC can use its platform to encourage other brotherly Muslim countries like Iran and Pakistan to extend such help (Hammer, 2005, p. 29). The Palestinians cannot be ignored anymore and even the UN should make an appeal to the international community to absorb these homeless people who are living in abject, below the poverty-line circumstances in which their biological existence continues but their chances of free development and recourse to life's abundance is considerably circumscribed. It is true that the majority of the present Palestinian population regards the camps as their temporary homes and in the light of UN resolution 194, longs for the realization of their rights of return but since the only viable institution capable of doing this i.e. UN itself yields to the dictates of the Zionist friendly world powers, these three options stand redundant.

The Palestinians can count either on the diaspora writers and academicians to break through the propaganda-blinded media and bring the stark truths of Palestinian identity to the world or the conscientious westerners to use their passports and visit and record the ground facts which are otherwise distorted to the level of blatant lies as Professor Chomsky and Professor Falk have noted and reported. One of the miracles that happened to the people of Palestine in this context was the visit of Rachel Corrie (1979-2003), a 23 year old American human rights worker who was crushed to death by an Israeli military bulldozer. She was trying to prevent the Israeli army from destroying the home of a physician and his family with all the members inside in the

Gaza Strip. Here is what she wrote to her parents back in America a couple of days before she became a part of the Nakba history. She begins her letter by narrating an eye-witness account of a man who forcibly led his two kids out of the house which was in an imminent danger of being bulldozed. There was not only the machinery to tear down the house but also tanks and the soldiers in the sniper tower nearby. She only hoped that her status of a charity worker and the American citizenship would save her and tried to stand between the Palestinian family and the tank. That day she lived but her next effort of humanitarian intervention killed her. She was bulldozed saving a home. Her last letter ends with these words:

When I come back from Palestine, I probably will have nightmares and constantly feel guilty for not being here, but I can channel that into more work. Coming here is one of the better things I've ever done. So when I sound crazy, or if the Israeli military should break with their racist tendency not to injure white people, please pin the reason squarely on the fact that I am in the midst of a genocide which I am also indirectly supporting, and for which my government is largely responsible. (Weir, Alison, p. 1).

It does not come as a surprise that despite Rachel's parents' earnest demand, George Bush did not even condemn this tragedy and the vote of condemnation was never allowed to be presented in the American Congress. Rachel Corrie's death did not bring down an iota of the American ten million dollars per day worth of aid for Israel that has continued year in and year out. However, most ironically, Israel blamed Rachel for the Israeli soldier's decision to kill her (Ibid. p. 4). Muna Abu Eid translates from an Arabic article that Mahmoud Darwish wrote in his book *Passers between Passing Words*: "The consciousness of the global spectator needs more time – and more killing – to reshape a new concept of terrorism ... who is a terrorist? Is it the child who stands facing a tank or the state that kills the child with a tank? Who is a terrorist? Is it the people protecting its right to live in the face of a war of destruction, or the state that assassinates (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 132)?" One might tend to think that in distant future, the human conscience would demand to recapitulate the Israeli atrocities and there may be museums and commemoration halls that might tell the details of the Palestinian holocaust the way such places tell the stories of the Jewish holocaust in Europe.

The Jewish poetess and professor Morani Kornberg-Weiss believes that not only would Israel not allow a two-state solution, it would rather not even allow a *Nakba Museum* in the one-state, when and if it is achieved (Peak, 2012). Her words are simple but they sort of open a new vista. The subliminal thought albeit an innocent one is that a separate identity, a separate marker of identity i.e. a homeland is not possible for the Palestinians and while the present status quo does not seem to yield another possibility, the refugees would continue to be refugees till they scatter or die and the diaspora will sooner or later be dissolved into the mainstream national identities of which these men and women of Palestine have become a part of. On pages 86 and 87 of her book *Dear Darwish* (2014), Kornberg-Weiss gives a detailed list (with names and cities) of the 126 museums and centers of holocaust commemoration worldwide arranged in the form of a long poem and then presents a wishful thought of seeing the museum of the Palestinian holocaust. In her volley of wonder-stricken repetition she asks question after question about the possibility of seeing a single Nakba-Museum. She knows it very well that even an attempt of constructing such an edifice would be thwarted in all possible ways, no matter where in the world some person or organization or even a country would try to build it to preserve the Palestinian tragedy:

I am curious about the opening hours and admission fees of a Nakba museum
I wonder if I can get a student discount at a Nakba museum
I am interested in seeing new exhibitions at a Nakba museum
I would really like to take a guided tour at a Nakba museum
I am curious about volunteering at a Nakba museum
I wonder if they need someone to translate texts from Hebrew to English at a Nakba museum
I also love gift shops and hope there's one at a Nakba museum (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, pp. 86-87)

The poem continues incessantly till three pages later, she returns with the same quest:

I am still searching for a Nakba Museum ... I find nothing at all (Ibid. p. 91).

While she thus builds a museum of Palestinian struggle in her imagination, an important filling of the gap, she knows very well that under the given circumstances, apart from Darwish's words or the words of other diaspora Palestinian writers, any such material commemoration is not possible anywhere in the world. The Zionists who even raze the cemeteries that keep the count

of martyrs in this war of annihilation would never stand the existence of such a museum. Their intelligence and military operations are meant to make sure that Palestinian history should not be remembered, their present should remain absent and in the presence of absence there should remain a memory for forgetfulness with its journal of ordinary grief. This is how the suggestive titles of Darwish's books tell a tale of their own. The irony in Kornberg-Weiss's demand is that the Jewish holocaust ended a long time ago but the Palestinian holocaust is still in the making. It was during the most trying of the years in Palestinian history i.e. second year of the second intifada that Mahmoud Darwish said in an interview to Giselle Khuri:

It is our obligation not to give upon the idea of peace. Israel's turning right or left does not absolve the Palestinians of the obligation to keep a channel of communication open with every Israeli movement, and with every Israeli who tends to understand the rights of the Palestinians. These two societies have been sentenced to live together. It is impossible to see any sort of future for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict without there being some kind of coexistence and dialogue between the two societies (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 153).

5.18 Naming a thing in the poetics of nothing

The Zionists base their claim on sacredness of history and seek their license to evacuate the indigenous population on religious account and at the same time they quote Chaim Weizmann's ambiguous claims that he made at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 that the land of Israel must be as Jewish as England is English and that the Zionists would not come to Palestine as conquerors and would not force anyone to leave (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 28). Darwish recalls the historic legacy of the place denied to him and his compatriots with an ironic expression as he quotes from al-Mutanabbi: "The enmity is in you, and you are the enemy and you are the judge (Ibid. p. 27)." In a piece of poetic prose from his book *Absent Presence*, he declares memory to be one's personal museum that admits one to the remains of what is lost. He believes in the sanctity and significance of words that he believes "are qualified in this sunset to repair the breakages of Time and Place, to name gods who have ignored you and plunged into their wars with primitive weapons. Words are the raw materials for building a house. Words are a country (Darwish M. , *Absent Presence*, 2010, p. 61)." While there is talk of

forgetting even the memory of Palestinians, Darwish turns from his usual philosophical mode to the mystical and starts seeing the homeland in everything i.e. the esoteric domain of pantheism or *wahdat al wujud*:

What is the name of this thing in the poetics of nothing?
I must break out of gravity and words,
In order to feel their lightness when they turn
Into whispering ghosts, and I make them as they make me,
A white translucence.
Neither homeland nor exile are words,
But passions of whiteness in a
Description of the almond blossom. ...

These are the words of our national anthem (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 20).

During an imaginary journey through the dark lanes of homeland, the sighting of an almond blossom promises hope. From the realm of nothingness comes the news of a thing that finally has a name! As the poem moves on from these lines, Darwish asserts that the whiteness of the almond flower is not comparable with other materials like snow or cotton as the given flower is symbolic of a much more beautiful shining hope. This is the hope of freedom and it is quite clear that once the ripe moment comes, every individual will come out rallying in recognition of this omen: "This is it!" They would know when it is time to sing out their national anthem. The major reason why Israel has successfully established a homeland and the requisite identity for themselves is their commitment to a certain philosophy deeply linked at the emotional level with an ancient religious tradition. The technical superiority has aided them in this project, no doubt, but it is not the only reason. They have consistently focused on the fundamental question of survival. For Palestinians too, the best opportunity is to assert their collective existence as a nation till it culminates into a complete geopolitical freedom. Unless this is done now, both communities will have to wait for a very long time till the means of a lasting peace appear. Whatever shape this may take, peace would always be conditional with respect for mutual coexistence. History has to be invoked and the present has to be built on the basis of historical gains and losses. It is not possible that one community loses its sense of history while the other owes everything to it. In his poem "On a Railway Which Has Fallen off the Map", Darwish adopts an extremely ironical

tone questions his own past identity of whether he even existed. He counts his age not in terms of the years but in count of wounds:

Was I, once-upon-a-time
Mine? Will memory, like me, become sick with fever? ...
Another trance, and I destroy my memories as I stand / At the station.
Writing the tale of forgetting in this mercurial place. ...
I want nothing except
To return to my life, so that my end may be a narrative of my beginning ...
On the sixtieth year of my wound. ... Is this
All this due to absence? What is left to me of the scraps of absence?
Did my ghost walk past me, did it beckon from a distance and disappear.

Ray Filer takes up the same thread of remembering-and-forgetting that seems to have been woven in the fabric of Palestine-Israel relationship where each group, especially the dominant one, tends to remember its past at the cost of the other. Filer is reminded that whenever they would celebrate 1948 Declaration of Independence, there would be no mention of the seven hundred thousand ethnically cleansed Palestinians. They were subliminally taught that anyone who questioned Zionist ideals would be taken as one who wanted to destroy Israel and evict Jewish people: “In this way Israel is characterized by the twin paranoias of security and ethnicity. The government pretends that ever increasing policing of Palestinian identities is what will eventually lead to Jewish safety – but the continual violent suppression of another group will only cause violent resistance (Filer, 2016).”

5.19 Thwarted peace and legacy of optimism:

As far as resolutions of endurable peace and the end of hostilities are concerned, an important and feasible policy was initiated by the late King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and was presented by the Arab League in its meeting in Beirut in March 2002. The Arab League Council declared that they would leave all hostile options and called upon Israel to take the similar position as “the just peace is a strategic option”. It asked Israel to accept:

(a) Full Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights to the lines of June 4 1967 as well as the remaining territories in the south of Lebanon.

(b) Achieve a just solution to the Palestinian Refugee problem to be agreed upon in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194.

(c) The acceptance of the establishment of a Sovereign Independent Palestinian State on the Palestinian Territories occupied since 206 partitioning Palestine 4th of June 1967 in the West Bank and the Gaza strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In exchange for Israel meeting these obligations, Arab countries would:

(a) Consider the Conflict ended, and enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and provide security for all the states of the region.

(b) Establish normal relations with Israel in the context of this comprehensive peace.

Soon after the presentment of these proposals, the totalitarian Israeli government rejected these proposals on technical legal grounds and there was another political hush on the horizon. John Strawson on the other hand, emphatically endorses these proposals as an important historical compromise offered by the Arabs and laments that the myopic view of Israeli right wing leaders bent upon the empire building was responsible for losing this golden opportunity that could have brought about minimum damage to Israel-Palestine phenomenon in the wake of second intifada and could also pave way for a long lasting future peace. Strawson believes that the Arab League's acceptance of partition in 2002 was less favourable to Palestinians than the UN proposition 55 years earlier. The plan had an "end of conflict clause" as well but Sharon's government sidestepped this possible resolve (Strawson, 2010, pp. 205-206). Then came the American aggression against Iraq under the plea of regime-change a.k.a. Iraq War. The peace process silently drifted to a byroad. Israeli lobby and the neocons won their years-old desire to destabilize as many Arab countries as possible. Iraq was reduced to ashes and anarchy. The pattern was followed by Libya and Egypt and more recently Syria. Israel's indirect warmongering through US and its allies in NATO have brought the belligerents of the Cold War in hot contact once again. One can clearly see the possibility of a conventional or nuclear clash between the USA and Russia while the former would do anything to actualize the Israeli desire of expansion. In an address to the United Nations on October 14, 2014, Noam Chomsky had pointed out the small

steps of land-grab that Israel has consistently and unnoticeably been taking over the last several decades that her allies and the international bodies pretend not to notice. Chomsky iterated that before the open eyes of the civilized world, Israel, with US support, would go on doing what it has been doing i.e. winning over the land for a greater Jerusalem and a greater Israel by way of bringing in more and more settlers causing dispossession to the Palestinians. He corrects the misconception hidden in equating Israeli policies with South African model of the apartheid in which the latter never disowned its black population and even sought support for the bantustans whereas Israel has no such intentions towards Palestinians: “They don’t want to have anything to do with them. If they leave, that’s fine. If they die, that’s fine (Ibid. pp. 202-203).”

It is unfortunate that Israeli humanitarian sociology does not reflect through its political agenda where there is no room or concern to rehabilitate a large part of humanity that was turned out into refugee camps in 1948 and 1967 (their number being 750,000 and 500,000 respectively according to the UN), a human population that has multiplied into millions. Expropriation of land continues and thus the world is heading toward a major humanitarian crisis in the coming years. Forty percent of the total West Bank area has already been taken up by the Israeli infrastructure with 85 major checkpoints, 460 militarized roadblocks and an Israeli highway system that has reduced the West Bank into small and segregated enclaves for Palestinians who just cannot connect! According to the report of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) published in July 2007 titled “The Humanitarian Impact on Palestinians of Israeli Settlements and Other Infrastructure in the West Bank”:

Each Palestinian enclave is geographically separated from the other by some form of Israeli infrastructure including settlements, outposts, military areas, nature reserves and the Barrier. However, the Israeli road network is the key delineator in marking the boundaries of the enclaves. The road network functions to provide corridors for travel from Israel, and between settlements in the West Bank, and barriers for Palestinian movement (Human Sciences Research Council, 2009, p. 258).

Darwish notices how he and his fellow nationals are viewed by the Israelis. He knows that they are looked down upon, never to have a feeling of equality or respect but as unnecessary appendages to the dream of greater Israel:

Divine hands trained us to carve our names
Into the indices of a willow tree;
We were neither clear nor obscure.
But our style in crossing streets from one time to another
Provoked speculation:
Who are these who, when they see a palm tree,
Stand silent and prostrate themselves on its shadow?
Who are these who, when they laugh, disturb others (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 63)?

Darwish still seems hopeful that at least some Israelis would understand the Palestinian situation and try to find a mutually conducive answer to the *Question of Palestine* as it has come to be called in the UN corridors and conferences over more than half a century. Coexistence and dialogue calls for a scheme of give and take and Darwish seems still inclined to do so. But the poets do not speak in absolute terms. There are moments when Darwish loses hope in the *system* both at home and in the sphere of international law:

‘Then you realize that philosophically you exist but legally you do not. You consider the law. How innocent we were to think the law is a vessel for rights and justice! The law here is a vessel for what the ruler wants, or a suit that he orders to his own measure. I have been in this country even before the state that negates my existence came into being. You realize once again that justice is a hope that resembles an illusion if it is not supported by power and that power transforms the illusion into a reality, and then you smile at the law that grants every Jew in the world the right of citizenship (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 66).’

Here is when disappointment and grief take roots and the concepts of identity and homeland undergo a very different meaning. This time, he has to expand his *politics* to take into its fold the mystical dimensions. In his welcome speech that he composed for the Palestine Festival of Literature dated May 8, 2008, Mahmoud Darwish noted that the literary image of Palestine was more beautiful than its present reality. He referred to the participating writers from around the globe that they represented the living human conscience that has to confront lies and usurpation clearly meant to erase Palestinians from both history and the place where they once thrived. He tells them that the sixty years old Nakba (now seventy) was not a one-time calamity but an

ongoing phenomenon just like the ongoing occupation is an ongoing war not to defend Israeli existence but to ensure Palestinian annihilation. The apartheid that ended in South Africa and the separation wall that fell in Berlin are to be seen rising again and with full force of racist ingenuity in the land of Palestine. He declares that leaving a place under whatever duress, does not mean the negation of the homeland. He warns that the history should be recorded from an earlier time, unlike poetry that tries to capture the cadence of the present moment:

Do not write a history now. When you do that, you leave the past behind, and what is required is to call the past to account. Do not write a history except that of your wounds. Do not write a history except that of your exile. You are here – here, where you were born. And where longing will lead you to death. So, what is a homeland? You are part of a whole, and the whole is absent and subject to annihilation. And why are you now afraid of saying “homeland is where my ancestors lived”? You reject the pretext of your enemies, for that is what they say ... Salaam to you / Land of my ancestors / In you it’s good to dwell / And for you it’s good to sing (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 26).”

With the third generation of Palestinians born under Israeli occupation with no semblance of freedom and justice to ensure a normal peaceful life, the only thing that can still be done is to save the fragments of this entire saga of struggle for freedom in literary texts despite the fact that the literariness of literature cannot not be fully preserved. Only variegated expression of the gruesome reality may be conserved and out of this an identity may be obtained and a homeland may be structured when the exilic and refugee statuses start reversing. He insists that Palestinians must be recognised at the level of humanity as complete normal human beings with fully blossomed souls rather than mere slogans or numbers. He believes that a literature that is based on faithful depiction of their sentiments will give rise to a perception of reality that might transcend the given present reality. The literature that Palestinian scenario demands is the one which should: “transform us from victims of history into partners in humanizing history (Darwish M. , *Welcome*, 2008).” Darwish’s message is not of a militant nature. He does not propagate the relocation of home and re-establishment of identity by following the example of those who caused this deprivation. As a statesman and as a poet, his hope rests in waking up the larger heart of the world. The process of recognition is slow in the given circumstances of the world but the voice

of the diasporic Palestinians, above all, that of Mahmoud Darwish, is working its miracle already. While he was denied a citizenship and other proofs of legal existence, he turned to proving his philosophic existence. On ground, we have on the authority of Adina Hoffman, the example of a lady named Radia who stuck to her land in Reina, hired the services of three lawyers for five years, physically fighting the idea of dispossession, throwing herself in front of an Israeli bulldozer that wanted to take her home down etc. till she won back her citizenship, her home and her identity (Hoffman, 2009, p. 180). Persistence is therefore the rule. Darwish's assertion is both philosophical as well as legal:

I have been in this country even before the state that negates my existence came into being. You realize once again that justice is a hope that resembles an illusion if it is not supported by power and that power transforms the illusion into a reality, and then you smile at the law that grants every Jew in the world the right of citizenship (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 66).

According to Max Blumenthal, eighty percent of Gaza's residents are refugees from the state of Israel. They are among more than 750,000 indigenous Palestinians who were forcibly expelled from their native lands from November, 1947 to late 1948. Those who were squeezed toward the West Bank and beyond did not pose much threat and have acquiesced in to Israeli pressures every now and then. But those trapped in Gaza described as "superfluous young men" by Israeli scholar Martin Kramer are a "warehouse of surplus population". Since January 2008, Israel has monitored the bare necessary daily calorie intake of the Gazans "to maintain the basic fabric of life" under a military study called Food Consumption in the Gaza Strip – The Red Lines. These people can both just idle around in a rubble struck landscape and lead their lives in the biggest open-air prison system in the world as they are completely cordoned off from Israel with automatic machine guns that would fire at any moving object within 300 meters from the concrete wall that separates Gaza from Israel (Blumenthal, 2015, p. 6). Unique living conditions always give rise to unique innovations for the purpose of survival. The time and space of a particular place fashion newer values with every turn of events. When there is war or a state of occupation, mere survival becomes an important norm. According to Darwish, "Time in Gaza is

not a neutral element ... Time in Gaza does not allow you to let go; values in Gaza are different. Different. Different. The only values that an occupied person can espouse are those of resistance to occupation (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 123). Palestinian resistance poet Remi Kanazi, like Darwish, believes that neither poetry nor political treatises can bring hope to Palestinians. In his poem “This poem will not end Apartheid”, he insists:

To the academics / And pseudo leftists
I appreciate your books / On Israeli massacres
But you refuse to take / Bullets out of Israeli guns
With your stances ...
We don't need another book / Explaining the situation
We need a lesson plan / To stop next bomb
From dropping / Silence is complicity (Kanazi, 2017, pp. 128-129).

5.20 In the era of power-politics

This is an era of power-politics where the wealthy nations can get their names in or out of the UN non-grata lists by threatening to de-fund this international body or one of its subsidiaries. Because of the huge funding that it offers to the UN, America has gone scot free in dozens of cases where otherwise crimes against humanity could be easily leveled against her. The US and her various allies have committed genocides dating as far back as 1945 to the present day. While the terrible campaigns against Syria and Yemen are underway, some Arab governments have got themselves delisted from an annex of countries that have violated children's right by using financial pressure on United Nations (Keleman, 2016). The secretary general Mr. Ban Ki-moon said that he had made the decision because a valued UN funding was at stake and he “had to consider the very real prospect that millions of other children would suffer grievously if, as was suggested to me, countries would de-fund many U.N. programs.” Kelemen asserts, “This isn't the first time the U.N. has caved to pressure on its annual report on children in armed conflict. Last year, according to human rights activists, the U.S. lobbied to make sure Israel wasn't put on the list for its 2014 battle with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.” Philip Weiss adds that Hillary Clinton brags about deep-sixing the Goldstone Report that clearly established the criminal blockading of Gaza and willful civilian targeting (Weiss P. , *Mondoweiss*, 2016). Reading about the fate of the people

who prayed at Maqadma Mosque and Zeitoun massacre and the destruction of UN-run Al Fakhura School all stand as recorded evidence by the UN Facts Finding Mission under UNHRC headed by Richard Goldstone which were recanted under Israeli pressure. Such are the circumstances in which Darwish cries out: But now I don't know where I am: / In front of the television or inside it. Whereas I can see my heart, rolling / Like a pine cone from a Lebanese mountain to Rafah (Darwish M. , A River Dies of Thirst, 2009, p. 7)! The rule of *might is right* is very valid in the international affairs despite the lengthy and laborious legal documentations and statements-counter-statements to prove that we live in a world where rule of law holds supreme. Richard Hardigan reports that while Israel is expanding through the West Bank, the hopes of the Palestinians ever returning to the land of Palestine are shrinking very fast. Since the Palestinian tragedy has almost completed its seventh decade, the international community is also losing interest in furthering rehabilitation to the level that in 2015 the UNRWA budget fell so short that all schools in the fifty nine refugee camps came close to be shut down. Saudi Arabia and a few more countries poured in some support to allay the situation for the time being. This was only one manifestation of the multilayered existential problems. The refugee camps are choking with population that cannot horizontally expand due to geographic and spatial limitations. The Shatila camp originally designed to harbor four thousand inmates, for example, has to carry the load of a population gone beyond twenty five thousand (Hardigan, Mondoweiss, 2016). As far as religious morality is concerned, political doctrines have defeated the best in them and what remains is more of an opportunistic dialectical materialism with Machiavellian religious interpretations. For example, Morani Kornberg-Weiss aptly describes the fact that the bible dictates one thing and the colonial “P” interpret it in another way:

Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it / I mean:
Seek peace and pursue it, / (or more eloquently:)
Seek peace and chase it; / Seek peace and haunt it;
Seek peace and trouble it; / Seek peace and oppress it;
Seek peace and persecute it (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, p. 61).

As Israeli historian Tom Segev writes, “Israel was born of terror, war, and revolution, and its creation required a measure of fanaticism and cruelty (Segev, 2000, p. 63).” The problem is quite complicated in the sense that after the creation of the state of Israel and its quick recognition by the superpowers of the time, Palestine disappeared from their political registers. United States has always acted in a way as if Palestinians do not exist politically or historically. Apart from some conscious and conscientious professors and members of intelligentsia, there is “an entire generation of policy makers came of age not knowing and not thinking it necessary to learn the *Palestinian* story (Milton-Edwards, 2009, p. 168).” The writer believes that in the 1970s and 1980s the issue was brought forth afresh when Palestinian *terrorist activities* including hijackings and stone-throwing violence grabbed the international headlines after a long hush and even then it was Israel and the Jews that got the sympathy of the world and not the Palestinians. During the 1990s, there was a series of suicide bombings under the auspices of Hamas and other Palestinian resistance organizations that surfaced the sinking ship of Palestinian existence. The retaliation of Israeli defense forces was so much unproportioned during these thirty years that a corresponding sentiment for the solution of this problem arose both at the regional and international levels. The events of September 11, 2001 disturbed the balance of power once again and using the propaganda machines of mass media, the presumed goals of *al-Qaeda* were shown to converge and collaborate with the Palestinian *terror*. The Palestinian resistance that had taken up the shape of *Intifadas* followed by US brokered series of accords and conventions in 1990s remained suppressed during the early years of the 21st century but both the empire building strategies of Israel including massive military assaults on Palestinian cities especially Operation Cast Lead in December 2008 and Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012 that destroyed the entire infrastructure in Gaza and left 1.5 million people there in life-threatening physical and psychological damage. The latest in the series was the fifty-day operation dubbed as “Protective Edge” that began on July 8, 2014. About 3000 Palestinians were killed and more than 10,000

were badly injured. The targeted destruction and collateral damage gave Gaza an irreparable loss that under the given pace of reconstruction, would take decades to recover. It sparked up international condemnation and renewed desire to resolve the issue. In such a militaristic situation, softer emotions and poetry usually cannot exist but, till his death on August 9, 2008, Mahmoud Darwish remained self-possessed and constrained his sentiments, staying away from the mob and using his intellectual and aesthetic resources to address the ideological and humanistic aspects of this international tragedy. But with his death, a very important intellectual shield for the Palestinians was lost. Edward Said had already died in 2003 and these two sons of Palestine and defendants of the Palestinian rights have not been adequately replaced.

Together with Edward Said and Nelson Mandela, Darwish shared a universal ethos which is a common property of several intellectuals who have suffered dispossession in any form. These people came of age during the heyday of the mid-century anti-colonial struggle that went common across the globe. The common factor in their writings, especially of their mature years, is the hope for the start of a new era. With a touch of pathos, they speak of the opportunities missed and the roads not taken. Their various writings are therefore marked by a certain melancholy of feeling that sits uncomfortably alongside a larger optimism about the possibilities of collective struggle and, through it, collective existence. Their writings constitute the most accomplished literary form ever given to that history of dispossession and dislocation. Referring to the free alliance of Mahmoud Darwish and Edward Said with Palestine National Council in the pre-intifada years of which both were members from early 70s to early 90s, Mustapha Marrouchi suggests that they were the ‘founding consciousness of the Council’ who used their ‘revolutionary virtue’ and intellectual activity to retain a feeling of ‘undiminished freedom’ (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 61).

Hundreds of Palestinians undergo various turmoils throughout the course of a day ranging from long wait in queues at the road blocks, strip searches, raids, home demolitions, physical and psychological harassment and even firing and killing etc. Looking at the news headings of only

one day (any day) in the lives of Palestinians as reported in reliable news reporting channels is enough to open the eyes of humanity. American news portal *Mondoweiss* and *Electronic Intifada* are dedicated to expose the true lived experience of Palestinians under Israeli occupation and the tactics that the latter uses to continuously change the facts-on-ground. Most of these documented news are successfully hindered from appearing in the Zionist-controlled mainstream media or are moulded to suit the needs of colonial expansion. These are eye opening sources to see the account of one day in the life of the Palestinians. One is reminded of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962). Compared with the tragic events of one day in Palestine, the details of Russian atrocities under Stalinist repression seem diminutive. The kind of life that the Palestinians have been living under one of the cruelest occupations in recent human history has no parallel in recent human history. Despite these facts, the international media has been portraying the victims of Israeli colonization as nameless terrorists reduced to numbers as far as their existence is concerned. Owing to excessive lobbying and growing control of media and academia, Israel has maintained its international value as an extension of the West into the East. It is a threat implicitly approved and sanctioned by the western world, particularly by the countries that constitute NATO against a possible unity of the Middle Eastern nations. Israel acts as a western monitor in the oil rich Middle Eastern block of nations. This racial civilizational rift is one of the reasons why the West, despite its claims of humanitarian orientation, remains only lukewarm toward the breach of human values in Palestine. Referring to the reaction of her English friends at the news of Israeli triumph in the Six Day War of 1967, Ghada Karmi reports in her biography *In Search of Fatima*: "I looked at their rapt faces as they stared at the screen. Many of them were friends of mine, yet not one was on my side. All gawped with admiration at what Israel had done and an equal contempt, as it seemed to me, for its Arab adversaries (Karmi, *In Search of Fatima*, 2009, p. 369)." Diaspora individuals often come across this kind of prejudiced behaviour. And when they finally succeed in coming back to their erstwhile homeland, they

discover, to their utter shock, that their roots are either severed or too weak to support them. In his posthumously published essay “On Exile”, Darwish asserts: “External exile is severing of a person from his origin and his emotive geography. It is a sharp division from the continuity and rhythm of life. Exile here applies to every aspect of a person’s being: his childhood, his memories, his reminiscences, his language identity, and the protection of his individuality (Darwish M. , On Exile, p. 217).”

Displacement and exile are two of the most intricate outcomes of occupation. An exile’s life is reduced to an item of information that is devoid of personal signature. Ghada Karmi describes her experience, akin to Mahmoud Darwish’s ‘*absent presence*’, that when she went *home* after a lapse of thirty years in exile, she felt that she did not fit any category of existence that her people back home would recognize. She was home and yet not at home. Her language was compromised and her culture was lost. She felt the pain of male gaze objectifying her as a foreigner and therefore an outsider who had crept inside their social circle unawares. And thus she found herself searching in vain even in Palestine what she could not find anywhere else i.e. *her identity* (Ibid. p. 415). The viability of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state and the normalization of its relationship with the belligerent neighbour is gradually becoming a matter of far-fetched ideal. Any effort to reach a fair and stable solution has continuously been marred by the American veto. There are fears that America might give in to the Israeli pressure of declaring Jerusalem as its capital. If this should happen, there would be another *intifada* which may escalate into a crisis of global magnitude. Such a decision would be an utter failure of political imagination and would be taken, as is apparent, to the exclusion of religious and spiritual dimensions inherent in this unique crisis. The status of Jerusalem must be decided on the basis of what Richard Falk calls ‘an ethos of solidarity’, an inclusive view of world politics where the sharp boundaries of political community engendered by nationalism dissolve (Falk R. A., 2004, p. 149). Richard Falk suggests that in the context of global peace, the security of Palestine is not an iota less significant

and hazardous than that of Israel. He suggests that in the administration of Jerusalem, there must be an ‘abandonment of a sovereignty-oriented approach’. He says: “The best solution for all concerned is internationalization of this much contested holy city under the auspices of the United Nations, or perhaps under another independent, supranational entity.” He declares with full emphasis that Jerusalem belongs to the peoples of the world (Ibid. p. 124). Falk deems that if an impartial international legal assessment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict including Israeli occupation of territories, the status of Jerusalem, the Israeli settlements, Palestinian refugees, the construction of the security wall etc. is undertaken, it would be clearly seen that the expedient political realities are on the side of Israel but 90 to 95 percent provisions of the international law support the cause of Palestinians. Thus they are politically weak but legally strong which opens that gate of hope for them (Richard Falk, 2008, p. 42). From his research on documents available in the records of United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP), Michael R. Fishbach concludes in his book *Records of Dispossession* that after the 1948 war and the eventual refugee exodus, Israel established itself on “a full 77 percent of the surface area of Palestine even though Jews had owned only some 6.59 percent of that surface area prior to 1948 (Fishbach, 2003, p. xxii).” According to Richard A. Falk, the prevailing discourse relating to the unresolved Israel/Palestine conflict tries to avoid both recourse to history and the future mapping. The Israeli contention backed by Washington is to accept the unilaterally created facts on ground that violate all international humanitarian laws. Falk asserts that Britain failed in its mandatory role of preserving Palestinian integrity as ‘a sacred trust of civilization’ and handed over an important polity Zionist control sustained by the colonial geopolitics of the US government that poses to resolve the issue through tilted bargains with the exclusion of international law over years. Professor Falk believes that the long evolution of this conflict requires in-depth multidisciplinary approach and quotes from the poetic wisdom of T. S. Eliot’s ‘Burnt Norton’:

Time present and time past

Are both present in time future,
And time future contained in time past (Kattan, 2009, pp. ix-xii).

In their books *Re-imagining Humane Governance* and *How Israel Lost* the Princeton University's Professor Richard Falk and the Time correspondent Richard Ben Cramer have respectively reminded the very citizens of Israel that an amicable settlement and respect for the Palestinian rights is the best way for them to be respected among the international community. They had been reminded of this important need in the past as well. For example, Daniel Berrigan, poet, priest and antiwar activist, declared in a public speech in 1973 that Israel was 'becoming the tomb of the Jewish soul' as Jewish compassion and 'peaceableness' has given way to Israeli armament, legislated evictions, imprisonment of the subjugated albeit innocent Palestinians and a law of expanding violence: "That in place of Jewish prophetic wisdom, Israel should launch an Orwellian nightmare of double talk, racism, fifth-rate sociological jargon, aimed at proving its racial superiority to the people it has crushed (Mondoweiss, 2016)." After a passage of 43 years, Berrigan's words sound just taken out of the current affairs. While their land and lives are so persistently undergoing erasure, the only hope for the Palestinians lies in keeping the remembrance and the resolve intact. One is historical in nature and the other is futuristic and both are interdependent and necessary for any future development. Mahmoud Darwish and underwent a perpetual intellectual struggle has left a good legacy of writings in this regard. It is up to his readers, particularly the generations of Palestinians to carry it further towards the fulfilment of their national dreams. Marrouchi believes that Darwish's greatest contribution is 'the act of remembering':

Memory of an ancient homeland where the suffering of the people is embedded in the depth of memory, affects the imagination - memory where the idiom is not the burden of defeat, but the value of constant struggle. ... writing is an act of remembering, a faculty of "memory for forgetfulness," in Mahmoud Darwish's celebrated phrase, for retaining mental and physical impressions in, and for recalling them to, the mind. For the reader, the writer's act of remembering is transformed into a text, and his recollection becomes an act of memory, a remembrance *against* forgetfulness (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 169).

On the one hand, the world has turned a deaf ear to the Palestinian cries and the whole nation and its state is fast becoming a memory, several of its own leaders including the PLO ex-chairman Yasser Arafat as well as the present president Mahmoud Abbas are full of forgetfulness of how they have progressed so far and what needs must be done to keep the keel of the national cause steady in the turbulent international political waters. As Professor Richard Falk observes, “The Palestinians are not blessed with a Mandela, although there are important nonviolent leaders and tactics that slip below the radar of the global media (Falk R. , *Re-imagining Humane Governanace*, 2014, p. 177).” Falk is of the view that despite Geneva Proposals and Oslo Accords, the peace process has remained sterile and ineffective. In his view, the genuine peace between the two nations is impossible due to high handedness and the super-power led strong Israeli unwillingness to affect it but a sustainable peace may be possible. In the book, otherwise on pure politics, Professor Falk speaks about ‘lifeworld politics’ and ‘the art of the possible’ that have failed again and again to bring sustainable peace to the region. He turns to the world of critical theory and quotes Jacques Derrida’s admonition that peace cannot be brought about through bargaining and calculating relative advantages by the two belligerent governments of Israel and Palestine. Derrida believes that the cultivation of an altered international will is indispensable. For this, Darwish’s voice from the diaspora is of a very crucial nature.

The political leadership, unaided by intellectual support, as Derrida had predicted, was bound to fail. In the last chapter of his book *the End of the Peace Process* titled “The Screw Turns, Again”, written in January 2002, Edward Said refers to Yasser Arafat locked up in his Ramallah headquarters, all his political allies imprisoned, important Palestinian leaders systematically assassinated, innocent children starved, the sick dying and the life in the entire occupied Palestine completely paralyzed. Having described the situation in this journalistic tone, Edward said could not help indulging in a sarcastic riddle forecasting the potential of *hasbara* or Israeli propaganda that might give out the news that PLO has besieged Israel, blockading its citizens and instead of

the Israeli planes, Palestinian terrorists wearing wings may be reported to have been bombing Israeli towns (Said E. W., *The End of the Peace Process*, 2002, p. 394). In the same essay, Said refers to a dialogue between an American reporter and an Israeli defence official about the home demolitions in Rafah. The defence official declared that those were empty houses, erstwhile terrorist nests used for killing Israeli citizens (illegal settlers). Said laments that the several hundred poor homeless Palestinians who suffered these home destructions once appeared fleetingly on the media screens and were then 'gone from memory and awareness completely (Ibid. p.395).' But Darwish would not let this obliteration of memory to consummate. His words physicalize the story of his people and he makes it known to the whole world. His words are not the samples of political jargon that goes down with the regime-change. His words are literature whose appeal lives forever:

I move my hand in the lit darkness to chase the cloud of jets from my sight as a person might chase away flies. ... Enough! We said we were going to leave, so why this hellish racket? Enough! Let's not leave, as long as they carry on with their hellish racket. Enough, you sons of bitches, fascinated with muscles of metal, laser beams, cluster bombs, and vacuum bombs! Enough of this unbridled show of strength! Enough chomping of the city and our nerves (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 173)!

5.21 One-state vs. Two-state solution

Major John Strawson believes that before it is too late, the remaining Palestine must be secured as an independent and sovereign Palestine even if tough action needs to be taken against Israeli colonial settlements and state violence. He believes that partitioning of the entire Palestinian lands into clear cut demarcated states is the only viable solution for both peoples. International law should not be used to censor either side but peace and reconciliation cannot be affected without partitioning under the auspices of the UN: "All those who insist on recycling the old narratives will delay the decolonizing of Palestine and lay the basis for the next war. (Strawson, 2010, p. 216). Without timely securing the clear identity through a state of their own, which could only be possible under the two-state solution, the Palestinian leadership under Yasser Arafat had committed a grave political miscalculation. He and his trusted comrades were easily beaten in the

game of dialogues and accords. Professor Sari Nusseibeh, the once PLO representative to Jerusalem recalls in his book with a prophetic title *Once Upon a Country*, that he warned Arafat in 2001 about the Sharonian settlement of promising Palestinians “scattered bits of territory in the West Bank and Gaza, all under hermetic security scrutiny by Israel. In Jerusalem, Israel would employ its vast military superiority to cement its rule over hundreds and thousands of unwilling civilians. ... It is a certain kind of craziness not to recognize a pattern, especially a debilitating one like repeatedly shooting yourself in your own foot (Nusseibeh, 2009, pp. 475-476).” The sham representational status that Camp David Summit of 2000 promised to PLO and Arafat was just an eye-wash, a postponement of transfer of the rights of Palestinians to freedom and sovereignty under the auspices of a single state albeit with severely variegated economic and social differences. This is what Mahmoud Darwish could also foresee and that is why he, as the writer of the declaration of independence, parted his ways with Arafat. While promising Palestinians the grant of full or part autonomy, Israel would never tear down the separation wall, let go of the two-road system, and its control over the resources of Palestine. There is no scope for that. However through a concerted effort to win a Gaza-West Bank corridor model, something might still be saved. The international media and a heavy brunt of academic scholarship has already started calling the occupied territories as “disputed territories” as both parties have long standing claim over those areas. This may lead to the efforts of legitimizing the status quo. The conventional international law is thus rapidly going the way Israel wants it to. Darwish faithfully registered every turn of history of his people in his works and also kept the possibility of a resolve alive. Darwish never claimed to be a politician or a revolutionary with clear political motives and specific aims. He had that potential but he left this task for others to perform. For himself he took up the role of a poet, the voice of the hearts of his people. On the authority of Anton Chekov, Fouad Ajami observes that the business of a writer is not to offer a solution to a great dilemma. All he owes to his audience a truthful and honest description of a situation. He should do justice

to what he can express so that every willing reader perceives the underlying veracity (Ajami, 1986). For Darwish, the time of exile is a blessing in disguise as it helps the memory to become fully functional productive and truthful representative:

A place of exile must exist
Where pearls of memory
Reduce eternity
And all time shrinks to a moment (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p. 188).

While for Darwish the exile was a completely transforming experience, there are other writers who only partially live its potential. Referring to Emile Habiby, the writer of *The Pessimist*, Mahmoud Darwish declares that the text of a literary work must match the context in which it has been written and if the writer does not provide this combination then the reader must develop this sense of literature's truthfulness to life it for himself:

There exists a contradiction between his literary work and his public persona that can only be resolved by the reader with a bias toward literature's truthfulness and the priority of the text over its margins (Darwish M. , *In the Presence of Absence*, 2011, p. 136).

In the present research an effort has been made to study Darwish's *truthfulness and honesty of description* both through the study of his texts and the context in which these were written. The text has therefore been set within its political margins. The parameters of research set in the beginning of the dissertation were to adjudge Darwish's works from four vantage points: Exile, Memory (personal and collective), Home and Identity. And all these were to be put onto the relational framework of History and Literature. Through an exhaustive study of his prose and poetic writings and their relative placement along the history of Palestinian struggle over the past seven decades, this objective has largely been achieved. Mustapha Marrouchi declares such an effort to be supportive of an intellectual refiguring of the world that requires a hospitable community that allows peace for humanity through a 'serene, revelatory light that shows us not only the obligatory two sides to every question, but the often overlooked third dimension as well'. Like Russian writers of dissent, Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Varlam Shalamov, in the Palestinian backdrop, such an illumination has been brought about by Said and Darwish who have been 'able

to illuminate even the stormiest of human prospects with a (Marrouchi, 2004, p. 243).’ While the political and social ‘*refiguring*’ goes on, and while militaristic flashpoints are spread around us throughout the world, the present research may be taken as a proof that in every place of socio-political or militaristic change, a subliminal corresponding literature is always in the making. Only an interdisciplinary study can promise a better understanding of the world we are living in.

In Darwish’s own words:

Be my memory that I may see what I have lost . . .
Who am I after this exodus? I have a rock
That carries my name over hills that overlook what has come and gone...
And in vain time circles to save my past from a moment
That gives birth to the history of exile in me . . . (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 64)

The history of Darwish’s exile has been *located* and *recorded* in coded memory of his biographical accounts. He himself recommends that his work should be seen alongside the spatial and temporal claims of homeland in Palestine. He writes in one of his journal entries,

At this rupture/paradox in history the tears of the opposites converge. You cry over a lost homeland, and they cry over those who were lost in search of a “homeland” just born. You stand still in a street that devours you, just as you in turn devour your rage and defeat. What is homeland? To hold on to your memory – that is homeland (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 37).

The present study has accommodated both of his desires. His role from the time of the onset of exile to his discovery that homeland can be rebuilt or rediscovered through memory is what has given his compatriots both energy and hope of a contiguous peaceful coexistence in two clearly demarcated homelands. But before the lines are drawn, both of them will have to forego of the meaningless and wasteful hate. Israel had set the ball of exclusivism rolling because of an ideological and technological sense of superiority. It will have to take the initiative towards peace and good neighbourly relations because it still enjoys an internal socio-economic stability and afore-mentioned industrial preeminence. For this both parties and their world-wide allies will have to look for the areas of agreement rather than the areas of disagreement. Israeli poetess Morani Kornberg-Weiss also points out in her poem “Reclaiming Space” that unless there is a true realization of the gravity of situation, the one-state, two-state formulas would not work:

One state / Two states / Three states four.
Five states / Six states / Seven galore!
Eight states / Nine states ten / States too.
Aren't we tired, / Me and You (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, p. 56)?

What she means to suggest is that the technicalities of solution should be preceded by a strong will to resolve the outstanding issues between the two communities. In the aftermath of the Six-Day War of 1967, Ibtisam Barakat wrote: "When a war ends it does not go away," my mother says, "It hides inside us. Just forget!" But I do not want to do what Mother says . . . I want to remember (Barakat, 2007). This is the common fate for the exiles: they have to *remember*. Darwish's last poem, published a few weeks before his death, tells the fascinating tale of falling into one hole with one's enemy. Darwish explores the dynamics of enemies who face a common plight; how the past is remembered and yet forgotten when they cooperate to murder a snake. It depicts how instinct triumphs over ideology and how a common plight makes the concept of enmity absurd. It entails an accurate description of the current predicament faced by Palestinians and Israelis, (Ammous, 2008):

He said: Would you negotiate with me now?
I said: For what would you negotiate me now, in this grave-hole?
He said: On my share and your share of this common grave
I said: What use is it?
Time has passed us,
Our fate is an exception to the rule
Here lie a murderer and the murdered, sleeping in one hole
And it remains for another poet to take this scenario to its end!

In his essay "The Palestinian Experience" (1969), Edward Said takes up the same scenario by indicating an urgent political need for a purely Palestinian narrative testifying the existence of the Palestinians as a people and as *people*. He believes that in the aftermath of the 1967 war, there arose a movement of 'Palestinianism' that aimed at integrating the Arab Palestinians with the land and the political process from which they had been systematically excluded since 1948. It aims at repatriation of the refugees and their children. Said remarks that the Palestinians are in a state of *being exiled to become Palestinians* again in some distant future: "Life goes on because

there is some evidence that hope is not entirely baseless.” Said believes that after the Battle of Karameh in 1968 in which Palestinians fought the Israelis without any foreign support, history was no more at the *peripheries* as the Palestinians were ‘*becoming*’ i.e. beginning to connect and belong. Prior to this the Arabs in general and Palestinian Arabs in particular failed to recognize that the Zionists had been causing a disruption of their civilizational pattern. Their worldview was based on the plenitude of the present and simultaneity of experience that made them content with their beliefs, traditions and language. They had become incapable of perceiving that something unconscious, latent and not immediately accessible to the vision was also possible. They finally woke up in 1967 when the Jews had realized their ideal projection. Said believes that political reality must be seen as a different thing from cosmic morality and therefore the emotion and rhetoric must be counterbalanced by proper understanding of the historical scenario. Zionism, he believes must be understood as an extreme form of Jewish nationalism with its creed of secular exclusion and non-assimilation which is based on a timeless attachment with a place where they have a tangible military superiority. The Palestinians, Said believes need to wake up to the fact that they cannot wait for any change of events to take effect from the outside unless they keep their struggle going through indigenous cognizance (Said E. , *The Edward Said Reader*, 2000, pp. 14-37). It is their performance in the international forums that can save the Palestinians from forgetfulness and annihilation. Salma Khadra Jayyusi has very vehemently attests this need when she says that the apocalyptic Palestinian narrative where an entire people is undergoing a ‘momentous punishment’ before the eyes of the world has the capacity of turning into legendary dimensions. This is the moment when, as the last resort, history is translated into literature and arts to serve as a means of presentment to the outside world which is otherwise content with “contrived mythological rationalizations: “A sense of dark destiny hovers over the world of the Palestinian, a sense of an end that blocks the horizon but is counterbalanced by a sense of a beginning deeply ingrained in humanity’s awareness of the impossible. (Jayyusi, *Modern Arabic*

Fiction: An Anthology, 2005, p. 30). This human suffering has knocked at the hearts of the Israeli intelligentsia and its evidence comes from the Israeli preeminent peace movements like Shalom Achshav (Peace Now: www.peacenow.org) and “Decision at 50” that seeks to resolve and settle the fate of Israeli control over the Palestinian territories through national referendum in 2017 i.e. 50th year of Israeli military rule over whatever has been left of Palestine since 1967. While the founders of *Decision at 50* include former ministers, members of Knesset, retired military elite, famous rabbis and even the former Prime Minister and former Minister of Defence Ehud Barak etc. are working on the possibility of rallying support for this national referendum (www.mishal50.org.il), it is high time that the civil society of Palestine, refugee organizations and overseas diaspora brotherhoods should join hands with this opportunity and put forward their practical demands in collaboration with their Jewish neighbours. There is hope on the horizon once again. Ami Ayalon of the Israeli NGO *Blue White Future* has noted:

Every day in which our control over the Palestinian Territories persists brings us closer to the end of Israel as the democratic state of the Jewish people. Netanyahu sees the disaster ahead, but he is not courageous enough to act. Due to the lack of leadership, it is our duty as Israeli citizens to determine our future. Only a decision made through a referendum will express the will of the people and allow us to continue and build the state of Israel without violence between us (Peace Now, 2016).

In principle, this is not very much different from what Darwish had said while he advised his people to be more alive to the political realities of the present time rather than idealistic adherence to the possibilities that have been buried in the dead past. In a 2001 interview he said that the important things were complete declaration of freedom coupled with the right of return (*haq al awda*) which must be realized without talking about numbers i.e. whoever can be accommodated, may be accommodated. He thus leaves the idealistic approach in the favour of a conducive practical resolve. To a question about the demand of the entire historical Palestine, Darwish responded:

Who does not want all Palestine? The question is – is it possible? The problem is not my aspirations but the reality and balance of power. ... There is a plan for saving everything that can be salvaged of what is left of Palestine, and therefore I must be realistic, rational,

and wise and not ask for much – which might prevent me from getting even a little (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 154).

Fifteen years have passed since he prescribed this line of action. In his last published book of poetry in his life *Athar al Farasha* “The Butterfly Effect” (2008), he writes in a poem “The Road to Where?” (*al Tariq ila Ain*): “We are the residents of a long road to a destination, which still bears a single name: Where?” Would there be an end to Zionist apartheid in a single-state solution or would there be a recognition of geopolitically segregated two sovereign states in near future? As far as the possibilities are concerned, miracles still happen. In the postmodern age of today, Muna Abu Eid contends, where technology and globalization have gone into dimensions that were unthinkable in the recent past, anything can be expected (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 155). In his book *One State, Two States* Professor Benny Morris notes that the major Palestinian leaders are ready to recognize Israel as an independent state but not necessarily a Jewish state. He has quoted the 2007 statement by the President of Palestinian National Authority Mahmoud Abbas who said: “We say that Israel exists and in Israel there are Jews and there are those who are not Jews (Morris, *One State, Two States: Resolving The Israel/Palestine Conflict*, 2009, p. 174).” Professor Morris categorically concludes that the division of Palestine/Land of Israel into three states – Israel, the West bank, and the Gaza Strip makes very little practical sense as the shape and smallness of the area – about fifty miles from east (the Jordan River) to the west (the Mediterranean Sea) is only about fifty miles and with Galilee-Samaria-Judea water aquifers lying in Palestine and the only two natural ports of Haifa and Ashdod lying in Israel, would make matters worse under the given mutual hatred of the two peoples (Ibid. p. 177). These conclusions by a renowned Israeli academician are clear indications that Israel would neither agree to share its economic resources with Palestinians, nor admit them as free citizens in the one-state solution. The situation may force them into a gradual exodus amounting to extinction. The Oslo accords of 1993 confirmed this Israeli plan evidenced by regular bouts of militaristic interventions in West Bank and Gaza as well as continuous building of the apartheid wall and other settlement projects. Reacting to

Arafat's mistaken agreeing to implicit but complete Palestinian subservience to Israeli socio-economic dominance during the Oslo Accords in exchange for limited recognition not of a nation-state, but of a small political entity, Edward Said had reminded the world of the Palestinian national aspirations that included the right of self-determination, political freedom and the inalienable right to an independent state which were practically betrayed during the Oslo accords. In the wake of this political uncertainty, mistaken agreements by their own leaders and absence of all international support, instead of one-state or two-state solution for the Palestinians, there is a fear of an impending no-state prospect. Darwish is mindful of this and turns to a self-consuming stoicism:

The time has come for the rose to leave its thorn to burn
The time has come for the thorn to pierce my heart
So that I may see my heart, and hear my heart, and feel it
The time has come for the poet to kill himself,
For nothing, but only so as to kill himself (Darwish M. , I Don't Want This Poem to End, p. 117).

This is reminiscent of a verse by the Pakistani poet of revolution and resistance Faiz Ahmed Faiz whom Edward Said regarded as Darwish's Pakistani counterpart (Said & Barsamian, 2003, pp. 161-162):

*Ham parwarish i laoh o qalam kartay rahain gay Jo dil pe guzarti hay raqam kartay rahain gay
Haan talkhi-i-ayyam abhi aur barrhay gee Haan ahl-i-sitam aur sitam kartay rahain gay
Baaqi hay lohu dil main tu har ashk se paida Rang-i-lab-o-rukhsaar-i-sanam kartay rahain gay*

Translation: We shall keep tending the pen and the scroll and shall keep registering whatever passes within the heart. Yes! The pain of the present is yet going to aggravate. And yes, the cruel ones will continue their atrocities. As long as there is the last drop of blood to convert into a tear, we shall keep painting the features of the dear beloved (Faiz, Nuskha Haey Wafa, 1986, p. 119).

5.22 Darwish and the Palestinian tradition of *Sumud*

While the time unfolds various possibilities and perspectives, there is, a very rich literature both of the historical and the literary appeal that has emerged out of Palestinian context. With writers like Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish working at the borders where literature, history and politics all become one, a new multidimensional distinctive discipline of Palestine Studies has already started emerging. This discipline seeks to survive through the threesome participation

of historians, experts of political science and the literati. Darwish's participation is unique as he has contributed to all the three areas. He has responded to 'the fracturing of the past', as Najat Rahman suggests, in an attempt to reconstitute it from the perspective of the defeated and the silenced: "Darwish ... identifies poetry with history in its desire to write the beginning of things, but poetry remains even farther from myth or history. Darwish's poetry, which insists on interruptions, has the capacity to continue its tropic figuration of home endlessly (Literary Disinheritance, 2008, p. xx)." In other words, Darwish's concept of *home* entails all the civilizations that have passed his homeland of which he considers himself as the sole representational inheritor. In a verse in his *Diwan*, he says: "I learned all the words and how to take them apart so I can form one word, *homeland* (ibid. p. 43)." Home thus becomes a plurality of various voices beyond time and space. He would be talking here and there about Shakespeare and Lorca and at the same time about Gilgamesh and Andalusia but at the same time, consistently trying to secure a private space for himself where the "doves that lay the eggs of exile" may feel safe and happily perch. This is the characteristic of *Samidin* "the steadfast ones", those who observe *Sumud*, "steadfastness" a term that is widely used in terms of attitudinal refinement in Occupied Palestinian Territories. *Sumud* is the refusal to acquiesce when dispossession is imminent. This is a kind of resistance to maintain identity and not an active uprising like Intifada. So when one is not in the state of active resistance, one just has to maintain *Sumud* an infra-politics quietly mobilized. Raja Shehadeh describes it further: "*Samid* means 'the steadfast', 'the persevering' ... We, who had been living under occupation ..., were now called on to be *Samidin* and urged to adopt the stance of *Sumud*: to stay put, to cling to our homes and land by all means available. ... not submission. It was keeping open all options, enduring without giving up anything, and waiting to understand (Shehadeh, 1992, p. 6)." According to Laleh Khalili,

the *Sumud* narratives differ from tragic narratives in their inclusion of an explicit hopefulness:

A narrative of *sumud* recognizes and valorizes the teller's (and by extension the nation's) agency, ability, and capacity in dire circumstances, but it differs from the heroic narrative

in that it does not aspire to super-human audacity, and consciously values daily survival rather than glorious battles. The archetypal sumud narrative commemorates women's quiet work of holding the family together and providing sustenance and protection for the family, or remembers the collective defence of the camp (Khalili, 2007, p. 101).

Darwish's poem "In Jerusalem" translated by his friend Fady Joudah and published in Kenyon Review gives a glimpse of his understanding of *Sumud*:

In Jerusalem, and I mean within the ancient walls
I walk from one epoch to another without a memory
To guide me. The prophets over there are sharing
The history of the holy ascending to heaven
And returning less discouraged and melancholy...
All this light is for me. I walk. I become lighter. I fly
Then I become another. Transfigured. Words
Sprout like grass from Isaiah's messenger mouth:
"If you don't believe you won't believe (Darwish & Joudah, 2005)."

The spiritual journey is thus undertaken through time where centuries tick like moments and instead of the cumbersome steps, the poet feels a new vigour at every step. The journey affects an inner transmigration of the soul as well. Prophets of antiquity join hands with him and give him the lesson of belief. This is the spirit of *Sumud*: To stand steadfast through time and space and take strength from the fact that this ancient land with all its history is still alive and vibrant. This 'sense of *Presence*' gives a feeling of security and restores strength to bear the apparent losses with fortitude and hope. It is a matter of arbitrary belief and Darwish has chosen to go for positive emotions and energies. Despite all political probabilities, he desists from becoming a stoic and preaches to his people to take up the cudgels and fight back the odds without being destructive. Fear comes natural to those who live under life threatening circumstances. Darwish's way is to turn this fear into energy. From the moment of exile to the realization of identity, this is his principle of existence and resistance: to extend the moment of resistance and steadfastness into history, and to pay the price with their flesh in the battle against exploding metal (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 27). The best elaboration of this principle comes in the following dialogue of the poet with his own alter ego:

-I'm calling for steadfastness.
-And will you win this war?

-No. The important thing is to hold on. Holding on is a victory in itself.
-And when will you go back to writing poetry?
-When the guns quiet down a little. When I explode my silence, which is full of all these voices.
When I find the appropriate language.
-Is there no role for you then?
-No. No role for me in poetry now. My role is outside the poem.
My role is to be here ... (Ibid. p. 62).

To be here while being in exile is easy said than done. In his book *Absent Presence* Darwish elaborates this ‘eternal war’, this ‘eternal holding on’ where there is an external autumn that goes around while the poet in exile goes around with his personal autumn within himself. Winter may or may not be there to add or subtract anything from him. And while the exile goes around, he is not in a journey with requisite comings and goings. It is rather waiting for what *Time* choose to *do* with a person. To quote his own words: “In exile there is training in the contemplation of what is not yours, in marveling at what is not yours (Darwish M. , *Absent Presence*, 2010, p. 59).” The possession-dispossession equation of an exile is always complicated. It is like being consistently between the devil and the deep sea. On one side is the despair of a life time and on the other, imprisonment or death. Max Blumenthal, an authority on Israel/Palestine conflict writes in his book *Ruin and Resistance in Gaza: The 51 Day War* that in 2004 Arnon Soffer who is a professor of Geo-strategy and consultant to successive Zionist governments, became obsessed with Israel’s demographic trench war to the level that he proposed to Ariel Sharon that 2.5 million people in a closed off Gaza would turn into a “human catastrophe” as the majority of them are children and young adults who would grow up into “bigger animals” and put awful pressure on Israeli borders: “So if we want to remain alive, we will have to kill and kill and kill. All day, every day (Blumenthal, 2015, p. 5).” That Israel has always followed this policy is attested by the statement of Moshe Dayan, the Israeli Chief of Army Staff in 1956 in which he presented the principles of “steel helmet” and “cannon’s muzzle” to settle the land for future generations. He agreed about the tragedy his forces had caused to the Palestinians who “have been sitting in refugee camps ... and before their eyes we have been transforming the lands and the villages where they and their forefathers previously dwelled, into our home (Ibid. p. 3). This is what Darwish had also

perceived and commented about: “Zionists may feel they are capable of playing a role in history other than that of victim. Killing tastes delicious when it is done for such an aim. ‘Either be a killer, or be the one killed’ – this is the narrow choice they have set before themselves (Darwish M. , Journal of an Ordinary Grief, 2010, p. 76).” For Darwish, the definitions of a homeland ranging from the place of one’s birth to that of one’s death are not adequate. The definitions that speak of near and distant ancestral belonging also weigh doubtful in scale when it comes between the two diametrically opposed claimants. For him. The homeland is to be defined by steadfast zeal and an undying commitment to its perennial existence. In his poem ‘The Last Train has stopped’, he asks: “Where can I free myself of the homeland in my body?” It is like a divinity, or like an inescapable emotion within him. It is not at a distance, he asserts from where he is. This is the essence of his poetics of exile and his cultural memory. He speaks in terms of lighting up the ‘tunnel of the unthinkable questions’ pertaining to time and (Palestinian) existence:

Nature is nothing but spirit. And the body's last dance is spirit.
To fly, you should fly higher than flying ... above your sky,
Higher than the perennial love,
Than holiness and divinity and passion.
Free yourselves of questions about the beginning and destiny.
The universe is smaller than a butterfly's wing
In the boundless expanse of the heart (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. 44).

Mahmoud Darwish stands out among these writers owing to his great personal charisma and resolute Palestinian spirit of *sumud* (Arabic word denoting steadfast perseverance) that he and his compatriots adapted in the wake of Six-Day war (1967) and continue to hold on to. The ideological theme and personal/political strategy of *sumud* has helped him and his fellow Palestinians (*samidin*) to survive the dialectic of oppression and resistance in a steadfast manner. It is a battle for existence that they have to fight without the weapons of mass destruction, without even the basic necessary arsenal which is vigilantly denied to them. While they carefully maintain their tradition of ‘*Sumud*’ “the resignation to maintain patience in the face of odds”, they have to excel in modern sciences and political philosophy while remembering their history and keeping

their literary responses alive. Through his personal and poetic example, he has registered himself forever, an icon of static-*sumud* that sought to find a way between submission and exile, passivity and violence. It is a kind of resignation that they would not let go of their right to Palestinian land and the inherent cultural heritage. While political survival required resistance-*sumud* that deals with developing political and financial institutions and medical and educational facilities, the rule remains the same: Staying put, despite continuous assault. In *The Fateful Triangle*, Noam Chomsky quotes on the authority of Raja Shehadeh that the *samid* is the person who chooses to stay ‘within the prison’ because it is his *home*. Leaving the place would mean that the person would be eternally deprived of his land and culture (and therefore identity too) but staying put requires resisting the consuming hatred as well as numb despair. The Palestinians live a life that is unique in many ways. Nowhere else in the world today do people live under such precarious and unpredictable conditions of life under an outright nihilistic colonial enterprise. There is a continuous threat of life, dispossession, forced exiles, long-term arrests without trial, frequent harassments, protracted solitary confinements, break-bone beatings and arbitrary checking and detention. There are few days when there is not a news of ruthless destruction of Palestinian life and property. In a professedly civilized world any such empire building practice would be difficult to continue but the adamant nexus of Israel-USA continues to thrive and until a revolution in the world affairs surfaces newer possibilities of resolve, the Palestinians will have to continue with this *sumud* (Chomsky, *Fateful Triangle*, 1999, p. 250). Darwish has preached the episteme of growing knowledge and steadfastness. His psychological and ideological positioning for himself, his people and for the world at large is to preserve the lens of humanity and humane ethical standards through which an unbiased picture of history-in-making may be seen. In his poem “Cadence Chooses Me”, he says:

Cadence chooses me, it chokes on me
I am the violen’s regurgitant flow, and now its player
I am in the presence of memory
The echo of things pronounces through me

Then I pronounce ... (Darwish M. , *The Butterfly's Burden*, 2007, p. 179).

The thick description of the dominant discourses of UN officialese and the Zionist led international media propaganda could only be countered through a voice of Palestinian origin that would resonate in the heart of the western cosmopolitans. Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish committed themselves to this task variously employing their relevant expertise to sustain the Palestinian *identity* and *home*. Edward Said emphatically believes that the Palestinian writers must put together all possible resources to promote their works and the discourse of Arab culture in the West. He deplores the absence of Palestinian-Arab cultural intervention in the world debate (Said E. , *The Politics of Dispossession*, 1995). Said goes far to suggest prophetically that the American led campaigns in the Middle East with their potential of horrific violence and waste could be connected with the cultural abyss that exists between the Arabs and the West. Under these circumstances and with this shared conviction between Said and Darwish, it is not a surprise that both of them struggled to carve important academic and cultural positions for themselves in centers of highest learning in America and then produced such works of merit that the most prestigious publishing houses in the US competed to publish their works predominantly for the western audiences. Darwish has fulfilled his life's project and has become a legend in the field of Palestinian poetics, it remains to be seen how many more Palestinians fight their way through the odds and what support they receive from the compatriots in the diaspora who have already established themselves in respectable positions worldwide. In his poem "Reaction", Darwish writes about the possible poetic contribution that he could offer to the homeland:

My homeland! The iron of my chains is teaching me
The vulture's violence, and the optimist's fragility
I did not know that beneath our skin
Is the birth of a storm ...
With the teeth I dug out your shape bleeding
And I wrote a song of passing pain
And I sheathed in the flesh of darkness my defeat
And I grafted my fingers in the hair of suns (I Don't Want This Poem to End, p. 73).

The transformation of the Palestinian Arabs' *home* from without must be seen in the context of what has gone inside them. The inherent ambiguities of Palestinian issue must be brought forth for a full realization of what has happened to the culture and the mind of an entire populace over more than seven decades. In his journal entry 'A Common Enemy', Darwish suggests that it is time for the war to have a siesta. He points out that the casualties on both sides do not realize until it is too late that they both have a common enemy which is death. On the 50th anniversary of *Nakba*, Palestinian Legislative Council issued a statement that "the *Nakba* has a presence in our consciousness in all aspects of our daily lives and in every home in Palestine. To this, three years later, Darwish added:

We will not look at yesterday in order to bring before us facts about the crime taking place, because the present of the *Nakba* remains open and spreads to all the winds of time. We do not need anyone to remind us of our human tragedy that has continued for fifty-three years now, since we are still living it here and now . . . We have not forgotten the beginning, nor the keys to our house, nor the lanterns of our journey lit with our blood . . . We will never forget the yesterday, nor the tomorrow, because tomorrow begins now, out of our determination to continue following this path (Litvak, 2009, p. 54).

In his *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, Darwish refers to keep the "expectation" intact. His words might be dust and ashes but they are healing. The spirit of the poet in him moves along the seasons of human soul. There are ups and downs, tenderness and harshness, the morning of hope and the dark night of despair. But since there is nothing to lose, the poet wants his people to go on. The message of going on, despite all odds, is the most important feature of Darwish's work:

You will carry on with your work, with your feeling of being torn apart, and your ambivalence. And before everything else, you will carry on with your refusal. You will not say yes to anything. You emerged from the happiness with a defeat, and you emerged from the defeat with a new refusal, not only of the enemy. Has your homeland become only an idea? Hang on to the idea, then. The road from Haifa to Tel Aviv is the true aesthetic miracle. The Mediterranean to your right, and the chain of mountains to your left, and the chains of iron on your wrists. The homeland is at its most beautiful when it is on the other side of the barbed wire (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010).

The complexity of struggle for possession and dispossession of the land in Israel-Palestine rigmarole has gone to the extent that in a recent case a Palestinian lady Ms. Haifa Khalidi was defended in Israeli court by the Israeli historians Ammon Cohen and Dan Bahat. She won the

case and was saved from letting her house being commandeered for the *yeshiva* (Montefiore, 2011, p. 732). Hope and fear are thus the principles that keep the Palestinians go. When holding on to the land and its resources is not possible for them, Darwish prescribes the medicine of holding on to the idea because the facts on the ground can always be altered when the idea is intact. But at the same time, Darwish would not advise over-optimism or extreme pessimism. He speaks of *ambivalence* both as a principle as well as an attitude. This is the extent to which poetry can go. Beyond this lie the plains of political dialogue or militant struggle which Darwish clearly chose not to explore. Despite hundreds of international conferences, symposia, UN resolutions, academic and humanitarian statistical analyses of atrocities, protest and help of individual and collective governmental and non-governmental organizations, the local uprisings like *intifada* and million-marches worldwide, Israeli empire building continues to the day. Fed up of journalistic data and death-and-demolition counts, several writers of both Israeli and Palestinian origins and their general sympathizers worldwide, have turned to literature, an arena where resolution of issues is still possible. It is because the literary expression cannot be vetoed. Despite various trends in politics of publication, a genuine and consistent expression can still find its way into print and international circulation. The originality of emotion and ingenuity of representation can help such voices survive, win readership and thereby bring about a steady revolution in worldwide perception of significant issues like Palestine-Israel conflict. Through their poetic and novelistic discourses they are trying to preserve what otherwise seems to be at the brink of complete erasure i.e. Palestinian history and nationhood. Palestinian writers like Sari Nusseibeh, Samih al Qasim, Edward Said, Mourid Barghouti, Fadwa Tuqan, Huzama Habayab, Raymonda Hawa Tawil, Salma Jayyusi, Ibrahim Tuqan, Jabra Ibrhim Jabra, Kamal Nasser, Susan Abulhawa, Rosemary Said Zahlan, Rashid Khalidi, Ibtisam Barakat, Najwa Kavar Farah, Towfiq Ziad, Annemarie Jacir, Bashir Copti, May Ziade, Hanan Ashrawi, Hisham Zreiq, Ibrahim Nasrallah, Khalil al-Sakakini, Tawfiq Canaan, Anton Shammas, Khalil Beidas, Ghassan Zaqtan, Fady Joudah, Ghada

Karmi, Dana Dajani, Riah Abu El-Assal, Leila Khaled, Abu Salma, , Sami Hadawa, Afif Safieh, Riffat Odeh Kassis, Taha Muhammad Ali, Raja Shehadeh, Mohammad Bakri, Ahdaf Soueif, Selma Dabbagh, etc. have contributed valuable academic and fictional works to this project of Palestinian self-preservation and projection.

5.23 Darwish's intellectual Intifada

The discursive roadblocks of international law and national (Israeli) laws are there to impede any positive settlement of the dispute. The reality of American claims of initiating peace processes and being a neutral broker are known to the entire world. The situation has become so dense and intricate that China has been compelled to break its traditionally sworn silence when earlier this year Chinese President Xi Jinping declared that “China firmly supports the Middle East peace process and supports the establishment of a State of Palestine enjoying full sovereignty on the basis of the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital (MERIP, 2016).” His words have come at a point where Israel has shown complete disregard of the UN resolutions and has decided to continue with the empire building. The way out for the Palestinians is to remember the historical struggle and indulge in an intellectual intifada in a state of affairs where the political reality of the conflict is as much under a deliberate process of obscurantism as is the map of a possible future state of Palestine. This Palestine question is not simple to resolve as it entails several layers of historical claims, religious and political fanaticism and the vested interests of more than one superpowers of the world. In his poem “We were Without a Present”, Darwish speaks about this fact in a language that only becomes possible in the realm of poetry. His style of paradox continues. Butterflies flutter, spirits of peace hover around and at the end of the day, they is nothing but a mass murder:

Butterflies fluttered us out of sleep, as if they were
The spirits of a swift peace, giving us two stars,
But killing us in the struggle over a name ... (Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, pp. 102-103).

The sleep motif that Darwish has used here connotes the torpor that has engulfed the Palestinian people due to consistent lack of support from Muslim neighbours and international bodies like the UN. Due to the struggle of three generations, a tiredness has crept into their ranks. Peace and negotiation for peace has been relegated to mean only a word of the mouth. The sleep motif also represents the peace and composure which the Zionists have steadily achieved while they have torn apart the conventions of international law due to the support of consecutive American Governments, something which is not a secret for the rest of the world. Israeli settlements that have continued unabated have engulfed most part of the West Bank and the local population has been reduced to unarmed, poorly fed, increasingly sick and disconnected groups that remind one of the open-air prison system like Guantanamo Bay. All this is seen on daily basis while the world at large, blind to the proportions of this historical human tragedy, sleeps comfortable. In his poem “Take Care of the Stags, Father”, Darwish employs the sleep-and-wakefulness motif even more critically asking a question about the continuity of foreign occupation, war of resistance, internecine Palestinian feuds between Fatah and Hamas and rising number of martyrs.

They come, build citadels upon citadels, then go, and we remain who we are.
 This beast steals our skin and sleeps in it on our bedsheets, this beast
 Bites us then wails from the ache of longing for the eyes of chrysanthemum.
 Land! Why am I your strange visitor on the spears of those who come from smoke?
 Land, I've never asked you whether the place has already left the place behind ...
 There is one meter between my blond fields and me . . .
 A scissor-meter that cuts my heart (Darwish M. , *If I Were Another*, 2009, p. 12).

This intellectual uprising is not limited to Palestinian intelligentsia alone. Under the influence of Darwish’s continuous ‘resistance and identity’ oeuvre, several important Israeli names like Professor Ilan Pappé and Morani Kornberg Weiss, Amira Hass, Peretz Kidron etc. have turned to write and propagate a counter occupation narrative. Kornberg-Weiss speaks out moral courage and rejects the option of keeping quiet over massive injustices carried out in the name of nation-building and expresses the eagerness to start a dialogue with the aggrieved party through an unconditional personal admission of guilt. In doing so, she undergoes an emotional

upheaval and starts using the intimate first-name of her counterpart *Mahmoud* instead of the more conventional *Darwish*. She confesses her (nation's) sin against Darwish's people and seeks pardon with the hope of some kind of reciprocity:

Tonight I will repent for all my sins ...
Against other human beings ...
I will make amends before the book is sealed.
I will stand before you completely whole.
I will record my misdoings my crimes and confess ...
I will ask to be pardoned. (Kornberg-Weiss, 2014, pp. 50-51).

It is the sentiment of a poet-turned-activist and a prisoner of conscience like the Israeli intellectual, Amira Hass who also believes that the aesthetics of literature have an edge of social responsibility and also that the literary landscape must register a positive note towards moral human evolution. According to Susan Sontag, the courage to act or say something itself has no moral value unless we see it in the context of moral necessity that distinguishes it from something amoral (Sontag, 2004, p. xiii). Writing in the context of Israeli Jews who have spoken in Palestinians' favour, and comparing them with her own likes who are opposed to the United States' plans for global hegemony, Sontag believes that the dissenting voices in all such cases are in fact raised to safeguard the true interest of the respective nations. Systematic oppression and blatant 'hyper-power' hunger of both Israel and the USA can lead to consequences that may threaten international peace. Upholding the moral values, she declares, is like refusing to enter the space where illegitimate orders are given to oppress and humiliate Palestinian civilians while their houses are demolished, groves uprooted, markets bulldozed, cultural centers looted and nearly every day, civilians of all ages are fired on and killed (Ibid. p. xiv). The poems of confession in *Dear Darwish* are just like the testimonies of the *Refuseniks*, the hundreds of Israeli soldiers who became prisoners of conscience and refused to stand by and watch the atrocities that the Palestinians are subjected to. Such officers would be given prison terms by their own democratic government. The poems of Kornberg-Weiss are evidence of the presence of a higher morality that leads one to humanitarian activism like the members of Israeli organization *Yesh*

Gvul ('There is a Limit') founded at the time of Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (Kidron, 2004, p. 5). Mahmoud Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness* was also written in the context of the same invasion. Speaking about the refugees in and around Beirut whom Israeli soldiers ruthlessly exterminated during the invasion, Darwish traces their lives from birth to death. He starts by recalling that in camps they were born without a cradle and were placed on straw mats, banana leaves or in a bamboo basket. There was no feasting or joy, not even the formality of a birth certificate:

... They were a burden to their families and tent neighbours. In short, their births were surplus. They had no identity. ... Still being born without a reason, growing up for no reason, and being put under siege for no reason. ... Is there enough forgetfulness for them to forget? And who is going to help them forget in the midst of this anguish, which never stops reminding them of their alienation from place and society? Who will accept them as citizens? Who will protect them from the whips of discrimination and pursuit: "You don't belong here!" (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 14).

Presenting his findings to the Human Rights Commission of the Italian Parliament on the subject of "The One and the Only Path to Palestine / Israel Sustainable Peace", a UN specialist consultant on Palestinian affairs, Professor Richard Falk seems to answer the above questions raised by Mahmoud Darwish when he first equated the Palestinian problem to "a politics of impossibility" and later quoted from W. H. Auden, "We who are about to die demand a miracle." He called upon the members of the parliament and through them to the people of the world to accept their human responsibility to aid and abet the Palestinian struggle for rights, self-determination and a just peace. He insisted that this would in turn, and inevitably so, reshape the destiny of Israeli Jews toward a more humanistic and benevolent future (Falk R. , *Accepting our Human Responsibility*, 2017). A similar emotion may be seen in Darwish's poem "A Gentle Rain in a Distant Autumn":

You'd like to know my country?
And what's between us?
My country is the joy of being in chains,
A kiss sent in the post
All I want
From the country which slaughtered me

Is my mother's handkerchief

And reasons for a new death (Darwish M. , *Victims of a Map: A Bilingual Anthology of Arabic Poetry*, 2005, p. 49).

According to Jonathan Kuttab, the hopes of a genuine independent Palestinian state are fast collapsing and the one-state (a single two-nation state) solution also seems far away. The reason is that the occupation has been given a lot of time to strengthen its roots (which are still spreading). In the wake of a deadly Israeli force, the barehanded, deeply oppressed and justly provoked Palestinians cannot affect a legitimate armed resistance by aiming at 'soft-targets' which is sure to cause their further international isolation. He suggests that while a future solution is awaited, all *pro tem* provisions must be taken care of including the end of administrative detentions of Palestinians, free movement of goods between West Bank, Israel and Gaza, removal of all barriers and checkpoints in the West Bank, ending of the siege of Gaza, arranging for the legislative and constitutional provisions to give equality to the Arab population of Israel etc. (Kuttab, 2017). Said believes that after Darwish went into self-imposed exile, he became the representative voice of all the exiles from Palestine. He ranks Darwish among the great Arab poets of his time like the Syrian poets Nizar Qabbani and Adonis (Ali Ahmed Said Asbar).

Edward Said compares Darwish with the famous Pakistani poet of resistance Faiz Ahmed Faiz both in style and appeal. He appreciated his long epic poem *Under Siege* which Said believes to have been written in the format of Arabic *qasida*. He goes at length to praise him as one of the world's best poets of his time. Said also compares him with W. B. Yeats and draws a parallel between the struggle for liberation that both have contributed to, Darwish from the shackles of Israeli colonialism and Yeats from the British colonial enterprise. Both were poets, public figures and political representatives (Said & Barsamian, 2003, pp. 161-163).

In the Introduction to his book of poetry *Unfortunately It Was Paradise*, Munir Akash and Carolyn Forché compare his work with several other master poets of the exilic craft while they express hope that his readership through the English rendering of his works would enhance "in

this time of calamity in the poet's homeland". They believe that Darwish belongs to a very significant fraternity of poet-exiles of the past century and his works are comparable with Federico Garcia Lorca's *canto hondo* (deep song), Pablo Neruda's nationalistic epic range, Osip Mandelstam's elegiac poignancy, and Yehuda Amichai's sensitive lyric responsiveness to the contemporary history of the Palestinian-Israeli imbroglio. As a proponent on 'exilic being' and 'exilic condition' and existential nostalgia, Darwish may be compared with the Egyptian Greek poet Constantine Peter Cavafy (Akash & Forche, 2013, p. xix). All these poets, in turn, have compromised the traditional themes of poetry and have tried to bring out the hard facts of political instability and poetic resistance, for example "I am Explaining a Few Things" by Neruda may be read in consonance with Darwish's "Counterpoint". While Neruda answers the objection of the critics that why he does not write about the dreams and lilacs and great volcanoes of his country, he beckons his readers to come and witness the blood in the streets (Neruda, 1972, p. 155). And when Darwish looks at his land he feels the flowing of "Blood and blood and blood in your land" and asks if they can change the 'inevitability of the abyss' (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, pp. 92-93).

Such poetic intervention and support has vital repercussions for Palestine. The ultra-orthodox and far right Zionist led Israeli government with its overseas collaborators has simply overlooked the political and human identity of Palestinians in flagrant violation of the international law and the universal humanitarian principles. The things have gone so awry that even during a UN sanctioned ceasefire during the recent attacks on Gaza, the IDF announced a temporary humanitarian ceasefire, recuperated their weaponry and then fired back into the Palestinian homes and camps, schools and hospitals and even beaches with children playing. They did not even spare the UN run hospitals and refugee camps. Lately, their overseas caretaker, US government is even trying to stop the UN Relief and Works Agency UNRWA from operating in Palestinian camps which is almost about to cause a humanitarian crisis due to the spread of

epidemics, lack of food, closure of schools and hospitals etc. Almost two generations of these two belligerent nations have passed away in the process of colonization and resistance. The third generation is gearing up to take cognizance of the situation that has a direct effect on international politics: “though geographically tiny, the tensions between Israel and Palestinian Territories send shock waves around the globe (Harms, 2008, p. 10).” But these shock waves do not always reach the intended audiences in letter and spirit. Media is tame enough to publish only a few well calculated news articles and clips that carefully show one side of the picture. Alison Weir writes about her own experience of ignorance with reference to Palestine problem in her book *Against Our Better Judgement* and says that until the Second Intifada of 2000, like most Americans, her information about Palestinian issue was restricted to the one-sided media coverage and the prejudiced Hollywood movies (like Exodus) (Weir, *Against Our Better Judgement*, 2014, p. 8).

Edward Said believes that more than just being an overseas political supporter, under the influence of Israeli lobby, the United States had started a regime change in the Middle East with the clear aim of facilitating the expansionism of Israeli borders. Under the influence of the neocons especially Richard Perl, Paul Wolfowitz, and Rumsfeld they are ‘pushing this country into wars that are going to wreak havoc, not only on the region but on the economy of this country and indeed on the stability of the world itself (Said & Barsamian, 2003, pp. 141-142).’ Enlarging upon the influence of the Israeli lobby, Edward Said believes that neocons and Israel have been trying to neutralize any country that may prove to be of strategic importance to Palestine. He prophetically said that tailoring a map in accordance with the Zionist aspirations would involve removing several regimes in the region including complete destruction of several countries. While Said’s words proved true in the following decade, he left one important warning for Israel and its allies: “Sharon never seems to have learned his lesson. He still thinks that military power and United States support will enable him to redraw the map, in fact to play God. ... I think we are headed for really bad times (Ibid. pp. 143-144).” These bad times were already envisaged by

Darwish ten years earlier when he resigned from the PLO on April 21, 1993 following the signing of the Oslo Accord between the PLO and Israel. Darwish believed that through this accord the struggle for the liberation of Palestine was compromised. Muna Abu Eid quotes him saying that PLO had run its course and was now up for auction! Darwish questioned the practical dimensions of the issue rather than the idealism that Arafat was led into:

We are on the verge of a fateful decision regarding an agreement with the government of Israel regarding Gaza and Jericho but when will the debate on the matter be held? [...] And what kind of national resistance can we conduct against the Israeli occupation? [...] We are at the opening of a historic adventure and I can only hope that it will succeed. My conscience does not permit me to take part in this risky decision – so long as it is incapable of answering the pressing questions (Ibid. p. 103).

In all such international accords and declarations, the principle of the might is right is always visible particularly when such commitments are carried out between clearly defined state apparatus on the one hand and the leadership of a political faction on the other. On Arafat's death in 2004, Darwish wrote an article "Farewell Arafat" in *al Ahram Weekly* (November 18-24, 2004) and he criticized the lack of political maturity in Arafat and his cronies who knew in the heart of their hearts that Israel would stave off their identity. He accuses Arafat for remaining in illusions, something that a true Palestinian leader could ill afford: "when granted permission to go from his Ramallah prison to his Gaza Prison, his wardens would not object to a red carpet or a national anthem (Eid M. A., 2016, p. 104)." In his book *In the Presence of Absence*, published almost twelve years after the Oslo fiasco, he discussed his reason for dismissing the Oslo agreements.

Referring to his visit to Gaza, he says:

That night, chopped up by checkpoints, settlements, and watchtowers, one needed a new geographical method to recognize the borders between one footstep and the next and between what is prohibited and permitted, not unlike to the challenge of distinguishing between what is vague and what is clear in the Oslo Accords ... You wonder: What kind of a linguistic or legal wunderkind could formulate a peace treaty and good neighborliness between a palace and a shack, between a guard and a prisoner (Darwish M. , *In the Presence of Absence*, 2011, pp. 128-129).

Darwish's poetic forewarning and lamentation cannot compensate for the lack of political vision or the much wanted national cohesion between the administrative heads of Gaza and the

West Bank but his wake-up call is for all Palestinians of all times who ever rally to solve the national issues of identity and rehabilitation. Ever since the war of 1967, Darwish has incessantly written and spoken for the rights of his people. His expression has always been timely, subtle and refined in a way that it rarely misses the mark. Responding to an incident of stray firing at Gaza from the IDF gunboats in the Mediterranean, he writes:

On the sea shore is a girl, and the girl has a family
And the Family has a house. And the house has two windows and a door
And in the sea is a warship having fun
Catching the promenaders on the sea shore:
Four, five, seven
Fall on the sand.
And the girl is saved for a while
Because a hazy hand
A divine hand of some sort helps her, so she calls out: "Father!
Father! Let's go home, the sea is not for the people like us" (Darwish M. , 2009, p. 3)!

The movement seen in this one passage exists at several levels of interpretation: The girl on the sea shore has a home and with its architectural features described only as doors and windows, it is open to assault. It clearly leaves out the concept of walls and the roof that can and may protect. Then there is a mention of danger that suddenly becomes a reality when the warships start their corollary of blind shooting. Death dances all around and all are killed. Has the girl survived? There comes the father figure, the essential patriarchal support to haul her away. But is it her natural father leading her back to some Gaza neighbourhood or God as father that receives her soul from her erstwhile living body? There is a historico-political reality that gives rise to this kind of poetry and in order to establish a reliable explication the historical and political milieu needs to be taken into account. Palestinian holocaust has several dimensions as pointed out by Michael Prior who believes that the brutal conduct of the Third Reich towards the European Jews does not constitute a right for the Zionists to claim a state by wreaking havoc on an innocent indigenous population. Appealing to *Shoah* is a dubious ethical principle that gives rise to a moral problematic that Israel must respond to (Prior, 2005, p. 210).

According to M.H. Abrams, literature does not occupy a “trans-historical” *aesthetic* realm which is independent of the economic, social, and political conditions specific to an era (Abrams A. , 2009, p. 220). Here, an analytical study incorporating the simultaneity of literary and historical study like New Historicism seems pertinent. New Historicists insist that ideology manifests itself in literary productions and therefore they are involved in the ‘interpretive constructions’ which the members of a society or culture apply to their experience (Delahoyde, New Historicism, n.d.). In this new historicist perspective, Darwish is a literary curiosity. He is famed for being one of the most important poets in Arabic language, and for being the most intimate and beloved voice of his people. This linguistic and ethnographic status gives him a double recognition and requires more of the critical insight to be developed about him. This voice is to be dug out and seen in its historical and geopolitical context for a greater understanding of the Palestine issue that can be subsumed as the period between *Nakba* (1948) and *Intifada* (first in 1987 and the second in 2000), terms that internationally stand recognized or understood meaning ‘the menace’ and ‘the uprising’ respectively.

Standing or sitting, perpetually, eternally,
We have just one goal: to be!
Beyond that we disagree about everything--- (Darwish M. , 2010, p. 83).

We can see a clear representative political stance with nationalistic fervor at play in these simple yet forceful words. Does it suit a poet to be thus involved with the material reality or should he concern himself with the imaginary and fictitious narratives that are usually considered the realm of poetry. Darwish’s choices are quite clear on this. He believes in the power of literature both as aesthetics as well as politics. He seems to be in the same boat with Ahdaf Souief who believes that the aesthetics of fiction are less urgent and a conscientious writer cannot help but report the real tragedies as and when these happen (Yaqin 2013: ii). Souief reports that on the eve of the first Festival of Palestinian Literature, Darwish expressed the challenge of being a writer who “has to use the word to resist the military occupation, and has to resist – on behalf of

the word – the danger of the banal and the repetitive (Souief, 2012, p. 4).” The repetition of the Israeli *Hasbara* in the western political discourse as well as its literary expression has called for the alternative local response. This is to remind the world of the series of accords, talks and conventions under the auspices of the UN or outside it that constitute the International Law which has tried to restore the Palestinian identity by relating its refugees and the diaspora with the land and history. But this is in stark contrast with what President Obama spoke at his arrival in Tel Aviv after his second term into presidency. He admitted the 3000 years old Jewish link to Palestinian lands, their exile, suffering and their right to return. He called the creation of Israel a matter of ‘redemption’: “Today, the sons of Abraham and the daughters of Sarah are fulfilling the dream of the ages — to be “masters of their own fate” in “their own sovereign state.” And just as we have for these past 65 years, the United States is proud to stand with you as your strongest ally and your greatest friend (Times of Israel, 2013).” While the president of the most powerful country in the world speaks so forgetfully about the Palestinians and so tamely about Israel, Darwish’s words of a committed resistance and hope resonate again:

Let’s give the earth enough time to tell
The whole truth about you and us.
The Whole Truth about Us.
The Whole Truth about You
(Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p. 144).

But such a voice consistently threatens the existence of the mighty oppressive colonial powers and they use all possible ways to eradicate it. While time-bound political rhetoric may go down the drain of history, the word of literature is expected to survive the test of time and to keep knocking on human conscience. According to Ghassan Kanafani, the chief task before the Zionist occupants of Palestine is to eradicate every trace of the Arab personality and to implant the seeds of new trends which might grow and integrate within the Zionist political and literary life (Hijjawi, 1968). Under these circumstances, even Edward Said, despite all his optimism, says: “The question wasn’t how to live. But how, in the close to desperate morass of the Palestinian

situation, one could *be* at all (Hoffman, 2009, p. 279). To this, Darwish has an answer. When ‘being’ does not remain possible within the land, it continues across the borders, into the exile, where it roosts over the eggs of memory as Darwish says in his poem “Tragedy of the Narcissus”:
‘There must be an exile to lay the eggs of memory and abridge eternity in a moment that encompasses time . . . (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 32).’ Darwish’s poetry serves as a consistent reminder to the Palestinian youth that despite the occupied land and pirated historical claims, they have to stand steadfast to their political and historical right:

Our exile was not in vain at all, and we didn't go into exile in vain. Their dead will die without regretting a thing. And the living can bequeath the calm wind, learn to open the windows, see what the past makes of their present, and weep slowly and patiently lest the enemies hear the broken ceramics within them. Martyrs, you were right, the road to the house is more beautiful than the house, despite the flowers' betrayal, but the windows don't look out on the sky of the heart . . . (Darwish M. , If I Were Another, 2009, p. 33).

Darwish has thus set the pace and tone of the resistance paradigm: the effort is superior to what it is capable of generating; The means are more important than the ends; On the way to freedom and realization of identity and sovereignty, resistance is more important than life. The Palestinians loved Darwish because his words not only made them feel the loss to its ultimate depths but also a cheerful hope that if solemnity of determination persists, time would bring conducive solutions. Howard Cohen, an Israeli writer, expresses complete surprise when he looks at the equation of Palestinian condition and determination in his essay “A human in our midst”. He calculates the level of their resilience and fails to estimate its gravity and profundity as he notices that there is no ‘outside’ to the daily insults, physical harm, extrajudicial killing, maiming, uprooting of the olive groves, destruction of property, infrastructure and water resources that the Palestinians undergo on daily basis. He says that such treatment spread over years should cause an utter lack of identity and hope but then he exclaims in awe: “Who am I to judge the resilience and steadfastness of such broken and wretched spirits under the yoke of such an inhuman oppression (Cohen H. , 2016)?” While several such conscientious international writers across the globe see eye-to-eye with the Palestinians and sympathize with the cause that they stand for i.e.

establishing themselves as independent and sovereign members of a respectable nation with its own geopolitical structure, there are several Arab states who have fixed a blind-stare to the repercussions of the fast fading map of Palestine in which virtually a whole nation stands at the brink of physical and political annihilation. In his essay titled “Tragedy in the Making”, Edward W. Said notes that only mass mobilization of Palestinians everywhere in the world and a corresponding show of solidarity from the neighbouring Arab states, the present condition in the region would not be stabilized (Said E. W., *The End of the Peace Process*, 2002, p. 323). Over a span of more than fifty years and through an outpour of more than thirty five books of poetry and poetic prose and interviews, Darwish has used his poetic acumen to contribute to this *mass mobilization* of the Palestinians’ sentiments and has thus used his art for the sake of life. Such poetry brings home the political reality of a given time and place and jolts the potential audience out of the torpor that the colonial empire building produces in the target communities due to consistent emotional torture over protracted periods of time. Here is an example where through the dialogue of two imaginary characters, an imprisoned Palestinian poet and his gaoler relate the Palestinian tragedy as it grows beyond the pain of the present. A jailor on the ‘western shore’ tells him that he is the son of another jailor who died due’ to the boredom of guarding and bequeathed that the city should be guarded against the poet’s songs:

He left me his profession and told me to guard the town against your songs.
I said: how long have you been surveying me and imprisoning yourself?
He replied: Since you wrote your first one.
I said: But you weren’t born yet!
He said, I have time and eternity, I want to live to the rhythm of America within the walls of Jerusalem...
He said: You are an echo in a stone, nothing more
That’s why you never left nor stayed...
He said you’re a prisoner, prisoner of yourself and nostalgia (Darwish M. , *Mural*, 2009, p. 50).

Darwish’s words become more alive when he puts himself in the condition of a dialogue. During the process of a dialogue, he has to be present on both sides of the argument and thus he is capable of exploring the intricate dimensions of human consciousness:

I gave my picture to my beloved:
“If I die, hand it up on the wall.”
She asked: “Is there a wall for it?”
I answered, “We will build a wall.”
“Where, in what house?”
We will build a house.”
“Where, on which spot of exile?” (Literary Disinheritance, 2008, p. 24).

Kathleen Christison writes in her article “Who’s Afraid of Dialogue? Normalizing Oppression” that the real-time effect of the long-running US supported ad hoc reconciliatory efforts is simply to ‘normalize’ Israel’s domination over the Palestinians. She admits the dire need of an open exchange of narratives from each of the two involved perspectives to understand the mutual emotional pain that both communities have suffered over the last one century but at the same time. She declares the idea of political efforts of normalization as ‘myopic’, ‘feel-good projects’ of ‘self-congratulation’ but with little progress towards intranational harmony between the nations involved. She takes the verse 6:14 of Jeremiah from the Bible as the epigraph of her article: “They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace.” Christison exemplifies the idea of neutrality through the analogy of the kids of the slaves and the slave-holders who play together in the ground but then return to the normal master-slave relationship in normal course of life. She quotes a Palestinian Poet Remi Kanazi who rejects the idea of normalization through dialogues of reconciliation: “Nothing is normal about occupation ... apartheid, ethnic cleansing, siege, blockade, settler-only roads and bombing water wells, schools and mosques” (Christison, 2017). The book *Why Palestine Matters* has on the back of its front page, the following lines by Mahmoud Darwish printed on the picture of the barbed-wired Israeli separation wall:

Where do we go after the final border?
Where do birds fly past the final sky?
Where do the plants sleep after the final wind?
We will write our names with crimson vapor.
We will chop the ode’s palm
So it’s finished with our flesh.
Here we will die. Her in the final hallway.
Here we will plant an olive tree with our blood (Mahmoud Darwish, *Advances in Embroidery*).

While Darwish stands resolved to die in harness, one may recall Meron Benvenisti, Israeli political scientist who wrote in his article in *Ha'aretz* titled “Cry, the Beloved Two-State Solution” that Israeli establishment, like the South African Rulers, could never continue its hegemonic control of 3.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and the 1.2 million Palestinians who have become Israeli citizens. He declares that Zionism has become “the victim of its own victories, the victim of a terrible history of missed opportunities (Benvenisti, 2003).

CHAPTER: VI

CONCLUSION

“Standing or sitting, perpetually, eternally,
We have just one goal: to be!
Beyond that we disagree about everything ---
(Darwish M. , State of Siege, 2010, p. 83).”

The present study has been an effort to place Mahmud Darwish’s literary work in the context of Palestinian struggle for freedom and sovereignty through the past seven decades (1948-2016). These years correspond with Darwish’s own life (March 13, 1941 - August 9, 2008). Within his lifetime, Darwish’s reputation had been established worldwide. But during the last one decade, there has been an increasing trend of academic research on the literary legacy that he has left behind. The peculiarity of its context makes Darwish’s texts more intriguing and stimulating. Anthologies of Arabic literature always include his works as representative of modern Arabic literature and more specifically as a celebrated representative Palestinian voice. His posthumous translations and other critical appraisals of his work have also created a literary stir worldwide.

The researcher has tried to read Darwish’s works in the context of history, latest socio-political developments in the region and in the world at large. New Historicist dimensions of research demand that a street-smart approach should be adopted to cut through the partisan historical myths by reading literature in the context of diverse academic discourses including the poetics of culture. This also involves the study of the Foucauldian notion of power as it is a shaping force in the world affairs. Greenblatt draws upon all these in his research on Shakespeare’s *Othello* which, as a piece of literary text, he found to possess a self-fashioning cultural study entailing ‘the displacement and absorption of symbolic structures found in the culture at large and made possible by “the subversive perception of another’s truth as ideological construct (Castle, 2007, p. 131).”’

Greenblatt insists that Shakespearean plays, especially Othello and Hamlet exist within a socio-historical matrix in which the dramatic discourse emanates from the *determinations* imposed by the *institutions* (like Church and State) whose study would help in determining the meaning of the core theme and plot of these literary works. Similarly, Christopher Marlowe's plays like *Tamburlaine the Great* and *The Tragic History of Doctor Faustus* etc. can only be understood by analyzing the playwright's literary sources, power-hunger of Tudor absolutism as well as such removed factors as acquisitive energies of English merchants and entrepreneurs of trading and theatrical companies (Ibid.). It thus calls for an approach that is multidisciplinary and all encompassing. Such detailed *mapping* is the crux of the post-structuralist 'intertextual-new-historicist' research that explores various connections and relations between literary texts and the social and cultural contexts. Louis Montrose calls it "... a reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of histories." Tony Bennett supports this discursive approach as a 'reading formation' whereby the researcher would take into account a set of determinations that "mediate the relations between text and context (Ibid)." For example, the *text* of the book of short stories *Gaza Writes Back* compiled by Refaat Alareer cannot possibly be understood without fully grasping the plight of the Palestinian generations born stateless, under occupation, and growing to adulthood under siege in one of the most oppressive and dangerous military environments in the world. The textual notation of a terrible lived experience brings to light the dehumanizing occupation norms of Israel for which reliable nonfiction *contexts* are necessary. For example, reading a *Ghazan poem* by Darwish or Alareer would therefore become more significant in when we know that "Gazans are subsisting at a lower level ... they have fewer meals, no meat, not enough calories (beans and rice are the main diet). And no cash to buy what is necessary ... leading to ... "mass pauperization" (Said E. , *Peace and its Discontents*, 1996, p. 51).

Israel continues to deal with the Palestinian 'insurgents' in OPT (Occupied Palestinian Territories) with an iron hand with the double purpose of holding the Arab nations back by

showing them Israeli capacity for ruthlessness, and giving rise to nationalist resolve among the Zionist ranks. Through media, the Palestinians are shown undertaking daring but inefficient protests that give the message of their helpless and hopeless condition to the world so that the world leaders might pity them and offer partisan mediation. In these media narratives, Israel stands out unassailable and invincible under the tutelage of the most technologically and militarily strong power i.e. US. The apparent Palestinian defeatism that the mainstream media portrays seems to take away all hope from the Palestinians and their sympathizers worldwide. But the story on ground is different. The resistance has so intricately interwoven itself with occupation that these are inextricable. Despite the apparent geo-political success, the support of US and its allies, and a smooth conversion of the policy of *Eretz Yisrael* into a fact on ground, Israel is losing her soul by maintaining her unlawful occupation of the lands that it secured in 1948 and 1967. All UN resolutions in this context and the majority-vote support bears witness to the veracity of Palestinian claims of home and identity. Like their resistance, their literature has matured into a distinct entity where silently and steadily they are registering a narrative as well critical discourse concerning the latest empire-building aspirations of Israel at the cost of Palestinian lands, cultural heritage and life. The Palestinian literature of resistance has not let Israel's desired erasure of their identity take place. Since literature has a corresponding and reciprocal effect, there are several Israeli writers who have joined their voices with the resistance narrative. In his book *How Israel Lost*, Richard Ben Cramer asserts that Israel has become a victim of the occupation no less than the Palestinians, who must have an identity of their own. Emphatically enough, he reasserts the *humanity* of the enemy group by ironically saying: "If the Palestinians were not less than human (at least, less human than Jews), then how would the occupation make any sense? ... Give back the land – the West Bank and Gaza. East Jerusalem (and the Dome of the Rock) for the Arabs, West Jerusalem (and the Western Wall –let that be the triumph) for the Jews (Cramer, 2005, p. 237)." Darwish adds one more dimension to this scenario. He believes that such a solution cannot

be achieved only on the basis of political expediency, the long standing memory of struggle should become the moment in which the cure from the disease of forgetfulness is possible:

These forgotten ones, disconnected from the social fabric, these outcasts, deprived of work and equal rights, are at the same time expected to applaud their oppression because it provides them with the blessings of memory. Thus he who's expected to forget he's human is forced to accept the exclusion from human rights that will train him for freedom from the disease of forgetting the homeland (Darwish M. , *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 2013, p. 16).

It would not be possible to understand Darwish's poetic essence related with *identity* and *home* without recourse to such current and counter-current historico-political arguments secured home by the Palestinian and Israeli intelligentsia of various inclinations. The *text* of Darwish's works must be placed in this *context* to grasp the *meaning* which otherwise would be invisible through the fog of diplomatic doublespeak. Without the juxtaposition of cultural poetics and historical phenomenon, the textuality cannot be established because every expressive act is embedded in a mesh of material practices. The literary and non-literary texts circulate inseparably and thus no single discourse can promise to expose the meta-reality of the diverse human truths. It would be naïve to assume that Darwish may be understood in an isolated space when he gives vent to exilic pain in his poem "The Last Evening in This Land" in which there is an almost stoical resignation to accept the hard facts of political reality by welcoming the invaders as a matter of historical inevitability:

Enter, O invaders, come, enter our houses,
Drink the sweet wine of our Andalusian songs!
We are right at midnight,
No horseman galloping toward us
From the safety of the last call to prayer
To deliver the dawn
Our tea is hot and green – so drink!
Our pistachios are ripe and fresh –so eat!
The beds are green with new cedar wood – give in to your drowsiness!
After such a long siege sleep on the soft down of our dreams (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, pp. 149-150)!

Violent uprooting and exile have had deep psychological effects on Palestinians over the last seventy years of foreign occupation and dispossession which is now touching the bounds of

complete annihilation of land and national identity. Palestine is fast slipping out of the grips of the present and is at the verge of sinking into the folds of history. Darwish has tried to humanize this predicament by interweaving his art of poetry with the story of his life, his political struggle, Palestinian national sentiment and history. The task before him was so vast that he employed a hybridity of the available literary genres. His desire to write in a new genre of literature that bordered at the fronts of poetry and prose led him to compose *Absent Presence* which he admits to be a baffling text, not entirely verse or prose, between subjectivity and objectivity. He claims to have tried the very capacity of human language by crossing the interpretative borderlines between poetic and novelistic discourses, one reason being, as he asserts: “When I tell a part of my story, it intersects with the public story, because the public, here (in Palestine), is the personal, and the personal is the public (Darwish M. , *Absent Presence*, 2010). His delicate intranational concept of home and the international predicament of identity as an exile have resulted into a supranational question of existence and the requisite sentiments become evident in his poetry which have won him high praise and understanding worldwide. He is now being accepted as a universal poet like Rumi. The most poignant comparison between the two poets is the presence of chivalric love, a transcending experience that does not leave anything untouched by its presence:

At love’s beginning you are ready, like a musical instrument, to write whatever is dictated by the air: every breath is a tune, every silence a prayer of thanks. You are ready also to watch by night for every sound coming to you from the land of the star. So draw out this beginning, the beginning of love, so that imagination may submit to you as horse to rider, so that language may invade you, as you invade it ... (Ibid. p. 88).

It is in this mode of pure aesthetic feeling that Darwish crosses the traditional forms of material and historical textuality. From the narrativization of personal political consciousness, he successfully passes into a universal collective unconscious. In the backdrop of Palestinian origin, to which he continuously returns, he wakes up to the call of humanity like his Israeli counterpart Morani Kornberg Weiss and asserts the basic human right of a safe life on the principle of universal mutuality. But this balance is continuously frustrated by the media-fed partisan western

approach of unconditional support to Zionist ideals. Recently, certain scholars of western academic tradition like Fred Halliday, Ilan Pappé, Noam Chomsky, Stephen Salaita etc. have pointed out that the Zionist *hasbara* (propaganda) has brought the western world in confrontation with a generally restive east, and more particularly, ‘the fundamentalist-and-therefore-terrorist’ Middle East Muslims. In his poem “The Red Indian’s Penultimate Speech to the White Man” Darwish establishes a correspondence between the Palestinians and the usurping Zionists and freely makes use of anachronism as a symbolic literary device to stress that history may be white-washed many times but it cannot be wiped out. He takes it upon himself to give the Palestinian Penultimate speech to the Zionists who share with the Europeans an equal crime of colonial empire building:

A long time will pass for our present to become a past like us.
But first, we will march to our doom, we will defend the trees we wear
And defend the bell of the night, and a moon we desire over our huts. ...
To what abyss does this robot loaded with planes and plane carriers
Take the earth, to what spacious abyss do you ascend?
You have what you desire: the new Rome, the Sparta of technology and the ideology of madness,
But as for us, we will escape from an age we haven't yet prepared anxieties for (Darwish M. , *The Red Indian's Penultimate Speech to the White Man*, 2009, pp. 158-159)!

In the introduction of his book *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, which is first of the three major prose works (apart from the poetic-prose *Journals*), Darwish refers to the Palestinians’ own philosophical and academic *initiative* that Edward Said so vehemently desired to see among the Palestinian intellectuals at home as well as in the diaspora. Within the precincts of Gaza and the West Bank, where the Palestinians are unable to keep their normal existence intact for long and where they cannot even guarantee the very safety of themselves or their children beyond the next moment, and where the emblems and symbols of their culture are systematically being annihilated, the only way to contribute is to leave a legacy of words for the generations to come so that, in their time, they may read these chronicles and decipher the codes of pain and hope in order to rebuild their identity. Darwish considers Palestine to have converted into a large prison

for the original inhabitants of the land who must pass on the records of memory to the upcoming generations:

This book does not attempt to compose the life history of a generation of Palestinians who forged their language in facing the long occupation. It is only a small voice carving a shape in the rocks of Galilee, which have become a prison cell and a horizon, though the gateway to the world has now opened out to other wars and other places of exile. From the start, writing has shaped the other form of the homeland, not asking what lies beyond (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. xv).

In other words, Darwish calls for the simultaneity of the historical experience and the present prospects of Palestinian enigma. This is an intellectual, ideological and national project. Darwish hands it down to the present and the future generations of Palestinians. He is nostalgic and tired but quite hopeful at the same time. He hands down this hope and resolve to posterity in a fatherly manner:

Our places of exile have not been in vain,
We have not endured our exile in vain.
Our men will die without regret
And the living shall inherit calm breezes.
Get used to opening windows wide
To see what the past has done to the present.
And weep quietly, quietly,
Lest our enemies hear
Broken shards clattering within us (Darwish M. , *The Adam of Two Edens*, 2000, p. 191).

Palestine requires more likes of Mahmoud Darwish who can use language to its ultimate end of intercommunication not only between the Arabic and Hebrew speaking communities on ground in Israel and Palestine but also to carry the message of Palestinian struggle worldwide in order to keep the hope of international recognition alive. Darwish's friend and translator Sinan Antoon also suggests the same remedy. He sees that the while Israeli reconnaissance drones hover over the Palestinian lands, the ghost of the poet and the dead also linger in the Palestinian air and space demanding recognition and attention. He refers to the 'aestheticization of violence' and the 'valorization of war' in the literature of the present post-postmodern era and suggests that reading Darwish's works is like an antidote to both heart and mind against these intellectual poisons. In the present state of chaos, he says, "where there appears to be neither shore nor dove, there is a

language that speaks *for* and *of* life and celebrates it whenever possible. So we begin again “afflicted with hope (Antoon, 2013, p. xix).”

6.1 Incorporation of exilic memory and identity

Darwish’s sense of loss is always coupled with a deep longing of return which is the soul of *Adab al-Muqawamma* – ‘the literature of struggle’. In his poem *Ummi* (My Mother) he writes:

I long for mother’s bread ...
Restore to me my stars of childhood
So that I can take part with the little birds in the journey of return
To the nest where you await (Milshtein, 2009, p. 79).

Milshstein chooses to call Darwish one of the “poets of return” i.e. the poets who do not content themselves only by reminiscing but also have a resolute desire to return to their homelands, a concept more acute than the achievement of the statehood itself. He quotes from the Palestinian poet Mahmud al Tut: “O Lost Paradise, you were never too small for us, but now gigantic states are too small for us.” The same emotions, he asserts, have been propagated by other poets like Abd al-Karim al-Karmi, Muayn Basiso and Fadwa Tuqan, “but the most outstanding figure among the poets of return is Mahmud Darwish (Ibid.).” Darwish’s image of *home* is the search for a space to prove his identity to himself. With geographical dislocation and cultural displacement, it is his language that provides him with a means of escape and survival. He balances his personal philosophy, his inherited national ideology and his resolve of absolute *sumud* in his language to prove to himself and to his people that a strong ontological ethnos of struggle is more stable than the mere acquisition of land and national political institutions. His exilic perspective had gradually developed into *two-ness* (a term from Du Bois) and from there, through an extensive literary expression to come to terms with himself, he attained *at-homeness* (Bois, 2016). According to Du Bois, life sometimes brings one to a point where two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals have to be lived and adjusted with simultaneously. The way he speaks in terms of the Black American experience, one finds several parallels in Darwish’s works.

It is an arduous journey of re-establishing identity. In his poem “We Travel Like all People”, Darwish expresses the complications inherent in the realization of this task:

We travel like everyone else, but we return to nothing. As if travel *were*
A path of clouds. We buried our loved ones in the shade of clouds and
Between roots of trees.
We said to our wives: *Give birth for hundreds of years, so that we may end*
This journey within an hour of a country, within a meter of the impossible
(Darwish M. , Unfortunately it was Paradise, 2013, p. 11).

In his welcome speech of Palestine Festival of Literature shortly before his death in 2008, Darwish referred to a writer’s duties when it comes to the description of the precarious Palestinian situation, Darwish suggests that the first and foremost thing to be done is “to uncover and confront the lies and usurpation that have come to besiege Palestine’s contemporary history that are attempting to erase Palestinians both from the memory of history and the map of this place.” Referring to the catastrophe of Israel’s creation and the ensuing ethnic cleansing of Palestine, he says:

Nakba is not a memory; it is an ongoing uprooting, filling Palestinians with dread for their very existence. The Nakba continues because the occupation continues. And the continued occupation means a continued war. This war that Israel wages against us is not a war to defend its existence, but a war to obliterate ours (Darwish M. , Welcome, 2008, p. 7).

Almost ten years have passed since Darwish gave this philosophy of the continuity of *Nakba*. Today at the close of 2016, it still holds true. Locally speaking, the Palestinian society has almost come to a standstill where even international donations of medicines and books are not passed on to the intended Palestinian population, the majority of which is living below the poverty line. The Israeli government disallows even the remaining few offices of UNRWA to carry out humanitarian work. The West bank is being eaten away by the mushroom-growth of Jewish settlements and the engulfing separation wall. Regionally, the surrounding Arab states have neither the military muscle nor ideological vision to help out the Palestinian refugees or exiles in any way other than passing resolutions of condemnation. At the international level, UN has been relegated to a paralysis owing to USA’s consistent veto in the favour of Israel. With absolute support of America and other allies, Israel is capable of raising, to use Ehud Barak’s words, “a

diplomatic political tsunami” whenever they like. Under these circumstances, Mahmoud Darwish was able to use his forte of poetic expression to apprise the world about the colonial buildup, religious apartheid and policies of ethnic cleansing that Israel has perpetrated in its empire building project over the last seventy years. As an exile he knew that his *home* was forever preserved in his *memory* and he knew that Palestinian identity could best be reclaimed through an unswerving faith in the power of international law that only needs to be equitably laid down for all. He is one of the Palestinian front-runners who have timely understood the Israeli fabled propaganda of the development of its ‘Arab community’. In his *Journal of the Ordinary Grief*, he wakes up the Israeli Arab citizens to the fact that their collective national identity must not yield to the apparent high standard of life (within Israel) and the availability of an improved level of (Israeli) culture should not make them compromise on their historical and national aspirations. He refers to the sixty thousand Israeli-born Arab citizens who speak Hebrew as fluently as any Jew but who suffer the phenomenon of a wide spread Jewish fanaticism that resists equitable coexistence. He quotes Dr. Yohanan Peres that the social distance between the communities is immense and decisive where, according to Darwish, only the Jewish side has the power to express rejection for what they call “Palestinian citizens of Israel” (Darwish M. , *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 2010, p. 161). In his poem “Counterpoint” Darwish imagines a dialogue between himself and his friend and compatriot Edward Said:

I have two names, which meet and part,
And I have two languages.
I forget which of them I dream in.
I have English for writing, obedient in words.
I have also a language in which heaven speaks to Jerusalem ...
I said: And identity?
He said: ... I am manifold. But I belong to the question
Of the victim (Darwish M. , *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, 2009, p. 88).

It is Darwish’s greatest contribution that he has kept the ‘question of the victim’ alive. It is the answer to this question that ensures a hopeful future for the people of Palestine with a distinct identity, national culture, collective memory, a proud history of resistance and national

aspirations for a bright future. The word 'collective memory', according to both Mahmoud Darwish and Edward Said, "has a serious and even scientific meaning" and should not be taken as an emotional slogan. It is an integral tool to safeguard identity (Said E. , *The Politics of Dispossession*, 1995). Memory is a dispossessed exile's greatest asset that keeps him or her alive and active towards *home* which is a slow and steady movement, personal as well as on the national level. Resistance fueled by memory and hope, Kathleen Christison writes, is in fact the Palestinians' only weapon in the struggle. They have been able to keep their struggle alive and bring it to wider international attention through this one instrument. She stresses the uniqueness of the Palestinian character, ethnicity and history that makes their memory a key factor, 'a seed' and moral underpinning of their resistance and struggle (Christison, *Resisting Colonialism and Injustice*, 2017).

6.2 Value of intertextual and historico-literary interpretation

Darwish had always been convinced that literature or its interpretation could never exist in empty space. It always has an interrelationship of what has gone before and what is present. Literature and history both are inscribed with a beginning. Sulaiman Jubran quotes from an interview of Mahmoud Darwish in which he claims to have read fifty books about Muslim Spain before he wrote his poem "Eleven Stars" and another twenty books of the history and literature of American Indians before he wrote his poem 'The Indian' (Jubran, 2008, p. 81). Since, Darwish claimed to have been writing in a situation where "We are faced with a problem, since we live in a historical situation that presents us as if we did not possess a past. Therefore one of the strategic motives ... is an attempt to grasp at a past which is otherwise in danger of being entirely torn away from any historical process (Ibid. p. 91). Jubran refers to the broad cultural background that necessitated a sophisticated intertextuality which became a dominant artistic element in Darwish's poetry. He quotes Darwish's testimony on the authority of Palestinian writer and critic

Sami al-Qasim (from his book *Mahmoud Darwish: The real Difference: Studies and Testimonies* Published, Amman: Dar al Shuruq, 1999):

The matter of intertextuality, or allusions, which I use very consciously, is a major element in my work. For I assume that there cannot exist writing which begins now. There is no first writing or writing that begins with a clean slate. And poetry, by all means, has a history. Therefore it is appropriate, at a time of cultural mingling, multiple references and a tremendous development of poetic compositions, whether in classical Arabic or in the modern world, to use intertextuality. If you do not write about what has already been written you remove poetry from its historical essence, for poetry possesses first and foremost a cultural identity (Ibid. p. 82).

It is in consonance with what Greenblatt has opined that the greatest achievement of new historicism as a critical practice has been the discovery of the interrelationship of the literal foreground and the political background, a relationship between artistic production and socio-cultural production:

Such distinctions do in fact exist, but they are not intrinsic to the texts; rather they are made up and constantly redrawn by artists, audiences, and readers. These collective social constructions on the one hand define the range of aesthetic possibilities within a given representational mode and, on the other, link that mode to the complex network of institutions, practices, and beliefs that constitute the culture as a whole (Greenblatt S. , *The Greenblatt Reader*, 2005, p. 2).

To Greenblatt, new historicist study is akin to the study of cultural criticism in all its dimensions. He believes that the aesthetic possibilities that find their way in literature of a particular place, and thus become representational, are based on collective social constructions. Thus the complex network of institutions and practices is in direct relation with the representative literature and this provides a reason why the culture as a whole must be taken into account for a holistic understanding of a given text. Preservation of culture (or cultural memory) through literature is thus an important task before a 'traditional intellectual' who in Saidian terms must use language to speak of truth and justice while he stands as an outsider or marginalized individual so as to have an objective view of *power* and *institutions*. He must serve as an instrument of resurrecting "lost memory" (Said E. , *Peace and its Discontents*, 1996, pp. 183-184). Darwish fulfills this role as Said viewed him, among others, "trying to change the triumphant ambience of the moment into something more closely resembling the realities, mobilizing support and building

organization ... toward self-determination (Ibid. p. 54).” When asked about the significance of culture in maintaining identity in an era of foreign occupation, Said rejoined that when political identity becomes vulnerable, defining and maintaining cultural tradition is the best defense against ‘extinction and obliteration’. He declares that culture is the paramount form of memory against effacement and a defense against clichés and lies that the new authorities try to establish as realities. Memory is thus an integral part of the arsenal of cultural resistance (Said & Barsamian, 2003, p. 159) .

Barsamian puts this interview under the heading “At the Rendezvous of Victory” in the sense that the cultural resistance most often lasts longer than the political or militant forms of resistance because the arsenal can physically come to an end and the political leadership can be put behind the bars or it can die, but the culture survives and asserts itself till the last human trace of a population lives to tell the tale. ‘The questioning of history’ is an important aspect of the new historicist paradigm and it can best be affected by moving sequentially through the intricate details of history, balancing out the arguments with the counter arguments, with all their inclusive or exclusive evidences. In the mesh of this historical background, one can analyze the literary expression of any writer poised in any genre of literature with more confidence. The aim of all this scholarship would be a deeper and holistic understanding of the given text. It is because every text is historically placed and is generative of a new history through its potential hermeneutics. This is of particular importance when a torrential Israeli-Palestinian history is in view with its distinct past as well as a poignant present. In his book of poetic prose *Absent Presence* Darwish speaks of a mystical possibility of the freedom from identity and spatial associations in the wake of the impending inevitability of political annihilation that the Palestinians are being subjected to. He wakes up his people by warning them of an overwhelming nothingness that might ensue: “In this sleep of yours is the memory of another sleep ... you leave your body and swim as one of the particles of being; you leave your soul and you do not enter into a shape ... as if you were your

spirit empty of past, devoid of present, without time and emotion. You are nothing and you are not nothing ... there is no depth or height in this revolving nowhere (Darwish M. , *Absent Presence*, 2010, p. 75).”

While poetry transcends chronological arrangement of years and the cause-and-effect patterns of life, history lends a tangible framework where the literary evanescence can be structured and comprehended. Speaking about the structural interdependence of various historical modes, Ahron Bregman believes that the thematic and the chronological accounts should go hand in hand with the narrative history particularly when it is as consistent and turbulent as Israeli-Palestinian enigma. He concludes this on the authority of the historian James Joll who has opined, “ It is important to remind the reader of the sequence of events ... to provide him, so to speak, with a chart with which he can begin to navigate in these stormy seas (Bregman, *Cursed Victory : A History of Israel and the Occupied Territories*, 2015, p. xxviii).” Darwish’s poetry provides such a navigational chart to study the turbulent history and culture of Palestine from an aborigine’s point of view. Said recognizes him as one of the earliest resistance poets of Palestine to speak about nationalist themes while affirming the Palestinian identity. He particularly refers to his oft quoted, much debated and nationalistically charged poem “Record! I am an Arab!” which Darwish wrote despite the citizenship status offered to him by Israeli authorities.

6.3 Recapitulation of major findings

Darwish’s life-span (1941-2008) equates the most critical years in the history of Palestinian resistance. Owing to his consistent and unswerving commitment to the cause of Palestinian freedom, sovereignty and the right of the refugees to return to their homeland cost him six rounds of imprisonment from 1961 to 1971 the year when he chose to go into exile and live for the next 38 years in Russia, Tunis, Cyprus, France, Jordan, Lebanon and finally the United States. Darwish’s contribution to the politics and literature of Palestine is enormous. He is the writer of

more than 40 books of poetry, poetic prose and political essays that have kept the memory of the Palestinian Nakba (Tragedy) alive. He has preserved the Palestinian culture in his writing for the benefit of the future generations. In his poetry, the posterity can see the philosophical semblance of a Palestinian *home* which may or may not be physically present at a given time and space. He has also given a historical contextualization to the Palestinian *present*. Besides being a poet, Darwish was a political leader, the writer of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence (1988), a rallying factor for the Palestinian diaspora during 70s, 80s, and 90s and even during the first eight years of the 21st century. His pre-Oslo commitment with Palestinian Liberation Organization (1973-1993) and post-Oslo Said-like political transformation indicates that while he was a messenger of peace and harmony between the warring communities of Palestinian Arabs and the Zionist Jews, he was also a potential link between the belligerent factions of HAMAS and FATAH in Gaza and the West Bank respectively. His effort in consonance of Jacques Derrida and Vole Soyinka in formulating the International Parliament of Writers indicates his role as an international literary and cultural leader particularly when he was an expert of Hebrew, Arabic, English and French languages and literatures. His works are a testimony of literary resistance inherent in Palestinian tradition that has undergone the phases of armed resistance, literary and artistic resistance and the passive resistance of Sumud i.e. Perseverance and determination. This distinct contribution made his works the most related corpus that needed to be explored for a better understanding of Palestinian-Israeli conundrum which is the only instance of continued empire building that has persisted unabated even through the first two decades of the 21st century now. The study of the requisite history as well as present international scenario becomes indispensable when it comes to the reading of texts emanating from the occupied territories, refugee camps or the diaspora. Since Israeli empire building is continuing, the Palestinian literature is not only a form of political resistance but an impeccable part of history being written. This is unique in the history of postcolonial literature. Darwish's exilic perspective contained in

his poetry, prose journals and historical critiques constitute an essential intellectual resource to understand the intricacies of Palestinian identity. Darwish has bequeathed the concept of home for the generations of Palestinians to come whether they are able to restore a semblance of freedom for themselves or not. Darwish's idea of *home* does not only have physical dimensions. He has tried to preserve a vivid sense of a distinctive Palestinian culture that he calls *home*. It is a philosophical trajectory beyond the apparent spatial and temporal realities. The use of hybrid methodology and the development of a praxis-based historico-literary approach was found suitable for such interdisciplinary research undertakings. The present research format can lead to further inquiry regarding other poets of resistance in search of home and identity *particularly* in the Palestinian context and generally in the context of literature emanating from other oppressed societies.

6.4 Limitations of the present research and the scope of future investigation

Darwish is a universal poet capable of exhibiting different moods in various genres. He has written about various subjects both in prose and poetry ranging from mythology (Gilgamesh) to love poetry (To Rita), from celebration of natural beauty to nationalist themes of struggle for freedom and identity etc. Nationalist zeal is of course predominant in his works and the way he celebrates his Palestinian identity through recollection of sights and sounds familiar to the Palestinian diaspora is also unique. His exilic perspective has always been lightened up by the Palestinian sentimentality and its physical topography. All these aspects are unique and open to interpretation and further specific researches. Despite his towering persona and fame as Palestine's national poet, Darwish is only one of the several important Palestinian writers and poets. Choosing one as representative cannot tell the whole story. However, in the present research, narrowing down to a single though most influential voice has proven conducive to a befitting analysis apropos Palestinian issues of exile, memory, identity and homeland. There is ample room for more extensive, comparative and inclusive studies. In the presence of myriads of

historical narratives and the consequent interpretations and reinterpretations, it becomes difficult to maintain an unbiased stance but due care has been observed to stay culture-neutral in the light of the following suggestion by Greenblatt and Gallahar:

“Cultural historians have seldom reflected on the fact that their own activity is both stimulated by the exclusions that structure the works they study and in tension with these exclusions. Interpretive practice should, we believe, keep this paradoxical relationship to the work in mind, acknowledging the strange blend of identification and aggression, "reading with" and "reading against," that motivates historical analysis (Gallahar & Greenblatt, 2000, p. 81).”

Being one of the pioneering works on Palestinian literature in Pakistani academia, the present research is expected to initiate and encourage the detailed historico-literary studies of other voices from Palestine, exilic or otherwise, aiming at the issues of preservation of identity and consequent sovereignty through the invocation of collective memory and concerted national struggle. The exhaustive historico literary study of Darwish’s work has revealed that Palestinian literary expression is deeply interlinked with a corresponding set of intricate historical developments. The lynchpin of the entire Palestinian literature is the perpetuation of their unique concept of homeland and its professedly distinctive culture. In an area of research that is replete with tales of genocide, pain, loss of homes and hopes, coldblooded expansionism, dehumanizing colonial strategies and bloodshed, a slightly sentimental expression rather than a strict academic language may sometimes become indispensable. In the present study every argument has the support of corresponding scholarly and critical material, almost all of which comes from the western scholarship, the emotional content may not often be subjective.

The researcher has taken necessary care to maintain an objective approach and essential level of neutrality and has tried to take into account *the other side of the argument* as well. It is important to mention that in most of the references given throughout this dissertation, the critical analysis of Israeli atrocities giving rise to Palestinian tragedy comes from major western critics, analysts, academicians, scholars from both sides of the argument and western/Israeli newspapers. They speak on the basis of consistent first-hand knowledge of the Zionist colonial enterprise and

its implicit absolutism which cannot be academically played down. The framework of cultural poetics, particularly when applied to Palestinian literary pieces, shows that recorded history alone is not a complete background narrative. There are other socio-cultural dimensions that must be accounted for. History is not stable in its repetitive modes and therefore a linear narrative cannot be completely relied upon. Where multicultural discourses of life interact, a detailed intersection of cultural, social, political and anthropological forces at work must be taken into account and the voices as well as the counter-voices all must be heeded to as the traditional literary boundary lines cannot hold fast when there is so much overlapping at the historical, religious and sociological levels. Newer and complex realities demand neoteric and involved modes of critical thinking and explication. Hybridity of approach had thus been necessitated for a holistic understanding of the historico literary and socio political equation of Palestinian question as it is reflected in literature.

Presently, there is very little research and critical work done on Palestinian literature in Pakistan. The gravity of the situation can be judged from the scant library resources as well as from very negligible academic research in this rich area of study. The very texts of Darwish and of other Palestinian writers are not readily available in many of our university libraries and any of the reputable bookstores. Primarily, there is a need to encourage scholarship in this field of study. For this purpose the researcher humbly suggests the introduction of Palestinian literature as one of the optional subjects of study at the Masters' or MPhil level. This would enrich the study of comparative literature and create a demand for the requisite books and resources. Further research can be undertaken incorporating well defined psychoanalytical, postcolonial and Marxist tools to analyze particular aspects of Palestinian literature including poetry and novelistic discourses as well as short stories known as *hakawatis*. Several writers of these genres have been discussed in the second chapter of the present treatise under the heading of Literature Review. The genre of drama in Palestinian literature is of a more recent origin and is now gradually unravelling itself under the auspices of Palestinian National Theatre and The Freedom Theatre

which are nourishing the performances of both tragedies and comedies. Some of the modern playwrights include Valantina Abu Oqsa, Dana Dajani, Hanna Eady, Dalia Taha etc. Research can also be directed towards the themes, characterization and historicist undertones in these plays.

The Palestinian Literature is not merely territory-bound. It is due to severe limitations on freedom of expression in occupied Palestinian territories and due to the overall Israeli suzerainty and ruthless censorship, most of the Palestinian writers belong to the diaspora. It entails that while their identities are being redefined, they are exposed to various cultures that may have a reflection in their literary outpour. The rich tradition of literary expression, the unique historical backdrop and foreign cultural amalgamation thus makes this literature worth reading, exploring and researching. It is beyond the scope of literary researches to come out with clearly defined solutions for purely historical and political international problems. These studies can, at the best, scan a writer's works and trace out the way he or she has portrayed certain themes of occupation, colonialism, intersectionality, dispossession, displacement, remembrance, exile etc. Such studies can also further help in defining the ideal possibilities of reclaiming the homeland and eventual rehabilitation of identity as reflected in Palestinian literary texts set in their historico-political contexts.

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