

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Signpost

This chapter provides a general overview that outlines the imperative of studying duties and ethics in the poetry of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. The chapter establishes the background of the study and its niche. Then, it lays the rationale of the study, as well as the research objectives and questions, states the problem that the research is set to address, discusses the contribution of the study to the broader field of environmental ethics, and delineates the scope, the limitations and the significance of the study. It then situates the research within the theoretical framework. Finally, it provides a summary of the layout of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Mahmoud Darwish

The Palestinian adage that "poetry of Mahmoud Darwish is food for the soul" may have validity to it. From an early age, we came to know Darwish as the most inspiring poet— from those easily-recited poems for elementary and secondary students to high-profile ones that uncover the intellectual production of a figure who, for many, is probably one of the most prominent authors in the 20th century. Each of the poetry books by Darwish tapped veins deeper than one can imagine.

Edward Said, Professor of literature at Columbia University, wrote in the *Grand Street* that the "poetry of Darwish provides not simply an access of unusual insight or a distant realm of fashioned order, but a harassing amalgam of poetry and collective

memory, each pressing on the other. The conventional and the ethereal, the historical and the transcendently aesthetic combine to provide an astonishingly concrete sense of going beyond what anyone has ever lived through in reality.”

American poet Naomi Nye says "Mahmoud Darwish is 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 in an utterly necessary voice, unforgettable once discovered" (Academy of American Poets).

Mahmoud Darwish was one of the most celebrated Arab poets in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. His poetry portrayed the love for homeland and lamentation of the lost Eden (Palestine). In some accounts, he was the most renowned contemporary Arab poet (Jaggi 2002). Darwish is credited with being a major contributor to the development of modern Arabic poetry, particularly in terms of the use of symbolism. His early poems were in the classical Arabic style. In the early 1970s, however, he turned to free-verse techniques that did not follow classical Arabic poetic norms. The diction of his early works came to be replaced by a language fraught with symbols and indirect, figurative political statements.

The sheer story of Darwish's rise from narrower national literary circles to the world stage has transformed not only our understanding of Darwish the poet, but also of an intellectual who successfully managed to make his way in the universal realm of literature. Darwish's poetry, according to critics, has contributed to transforming modern Arabic poetry in terms of language, style and themes. Poetry of Darwish doesn't merely enrich the rational intuition, but also provides intrinsic and peculiar forms of insight. Since its meanings are neither measurable nor unwittingly perceptible, his figurative use of language offers nuances subtler than we initially expect.

The appreciation of his poetics has even rung bells at the universal level. Here is Breyten Breytenbach (2011) opining that Darwish's poetry has shifted human understanding of what poetry can do. Elias Sanbar (2017) maintains that the poetry of Darwish has created a cultural renaissance through language— one that draws boundaries between defeat and loss, with the latter serving as a driver for action, a powerful means for helping the oppressed people rise again and fight for freedom. That is why, Sanbar says, Darwish has always talked of loss, not defeat, in his poems.

Criticism of Darwish's poetry ranged from reflections on his life and poetic style, through the ways the poet related to the world around, through particular themes (such as home, mother, father, self, siege, exile), to symbols, images and metaphors. Yet all critical works saw a relationship between his writing and grand national themes of a homeland that is lost in 1948.

Apart from national belongings in his poetry, Mahmoud Darwish has won a reputation for being a nature poet— with hundreds of poems featuring the elements of the natural environment in the poet's homeland, Palestine. Yet, in our effort to read environmental ethics awareness in Darwish's poetry, we should make a distinction between the physical/abstract description of nature and ethical awareness as expressed in poetry. For example, a poem that describes how beautiful a landscape is without relating that landscape to the larger ecosystem around cannot be described as an ecological literary work. Without such distinction, most of the poems produced by Romantic poets, for example, would be considered ecological literature (Romantic poets viewed nature as a source of beauty and aesthetic experience— consider, for example, William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"). Whereas a rose is but a beautiful perennial flowering plant for some poets, it can be awe-inspiring for a poet with ecological awareness.

One can read in Darwish's poetry a sizable part that features an uncompromising nature— one that says "No" to the violations of the occupier, one that protests and even refuses to succumb to human cataclysmic will. This shows that we should treat nature as persona to emphasis environmental subtlety and a strong relationship with environment. The concerns of Darwish poems (human rights, human duties, people and their relationships) inform the need to appropriate Traer's framework as the tool of analysis. For this, I argue that reading Darwish's poetry using an environmental ethics framework breaks a novel ground and contributes to the understanding of morality issues in his works. An environmental ethics framework is used to understand moral duties and ethics of environment in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry.

1.2.1.1 Darwish's Model of Nature

An astute critic should not turn a blind eye to the model that Darwish created by his nature-featuring poems. A sensitive reading of Darwish's poetry will more likely produce a model of an unswerving nature, one that says "No" to human violations, protesting and even refusing to succumb to human cataclysmic will. Shreds of such a strong-willed, resolute nature can easily be found in many poems by Darwish. Unlike many nature poets, Darwish does not portray a reciprocal relationship between man and nature. The poet has provided a model of a nature which, in a sense, repudiates the colonizer and its deleterious actions against the elements of nature: the plants, the animals and the physical nature. We hear in Darwish's poetry a voice— often of an animal, a bird, a tree, a mountain, an orchard, a spring, a stone, a plot of land— soliloquizing or engaging in a dialogue with the colonizer. The voice, priding itself on a heritage that spans thousands of years, is holding out and withstanding the occupier's atrocities, even refusing its de facto presence in a given place. Throughout many of his

works, Darwish describes not only elements of nature, but also nature itself (through animals, plants, seas, stars, the sun, the moon) engaging in a dialogue with the occupier or utters soliloquies simulating a dialogue or speaking thoughts. While ecocriticism maintains that "literature cannot be approached in a way that sets man and nature in opposition to each other" (Klue, 2008), in Darwish's poetry there are two kinds of humans: one that lives in harmony with nature (the natives) and one that stands in opposition to nature (the occupier).

While the research sits within the broader philosophical framework addressing issues of morality, I narrow its scope to especially contextualize environmental ethics to suggest the various fragmentation at human/non-human levels. As we deliberate over the issue at hand, we should, however, be cognizant of the fact that environmental ethics does not, per se, deal with literary texts, as it "focuses more directly on human behavior" (Platz, 65). Environmental ethics focuses on the problems humans bring to the natural world, and leaves the door open for different fields that can help identify and tackle such problems. It is this interdisciplinary, open-ended nature of environmental ethics that has allowed literary criticism to step forward. That said, I draw on a work by Robert Traer, whose discussion is established within the larger domain of environmental ethics. Traer built his work around four concepts: *rights*, *duties*, *characters*, and *relationships*. I demonstrate that Poems by Mahmoud Darwish are juxtaposed against this quadrant system of environmental ethics, which enable an excavation of an unstable alliance between activism and states. I also argue that the implication of reading Mahmoud Darwish from an environmental ethics perspective is pertinent to set the stage for ecological ethics regarding the assumptions about people and the new combat fields to which environmental activists can turn their attention. An example of such fields is the

Palestinian–Israeli conflict and its continuities and discontinuities in morality and identity.

An astute critic should not turn a blind eye to the model that Darwish created through his nature-featuring poems . The new challenge that presents itself here concerns the new arena where the environmentalists have to fight– it is one where activists should equate an occupying state, Israel, with major air, land and water pollutants as well as with malicious destructive urbanization, and behave accordingly.

But there is also an impulse of the state of moral characters to Darwish's poetry, a system of responsible behavior that characterizes the relationship between the indigenous people (Palestinians) and their natural world. Darwish's non-human personas– birds, horses, stones, mountains, meadows, wind, the sun, the moon, stars– not only squabble with the occupier (and at once reminding the oppressors of their moral duties), but also narrate experiences of mutual identification with the indigenous people.

It is a system of identification, but also of reciprocity and mutual experience. David Bohm (1976) argues that nature reciprocates human action toward it: "experience with nature is very much like experience with human beings. If one approaches another man with a fixed 'theory' about him as an 'enemy' against whom one must defend himself, he will respond similarly and thus one's 'theory' will apparently be confirmed by experience. Similarly, nature will respond in accordance with the theory with which it is approached" (p. 6). A relaxed version of this reciprocity is evinced by Grenier (2019), who opines that although humans, by nature, might not be able to reach a level that allows them to accept reciprocity with nature, they can still change their position– thus acknowledging that nature is the source of their life, and behaving accordingly.

But whether this assumption is true or not is often questionable. Environmental ethicists, when they try to address the issue of destruction humans have brought to

nature, assume that their arguments can still be heard and that campaigning for initiatives that reduce human assault on nature will somehow pay off. This could be true for, say, a state depleting its own natural resources, and believing simultaneously that what it does is environmentally deleterious (Barrow 2014). Yet this is not the case for a colonizing state, which deliberately destroys anything that has vestiges of Palestinian identity, for instance, a natural resource, a forest, a river, a field, a meadow, or even an archeological site. Every day, it is said that the occupier burns and cuts down trees, focusing on olives, which have for thousands of years remained a Palestinian national symbol. The destructions reached unheard of levels that made it legitimate for the United Nations to make Israel the most condemned state ever. In 2018, the United Nations issued 27 condemnations, 21 of which were against Israel (UN Archive, 2018a).

So far, the Palestinian question has triggered unprecedented political debate at the international level. The United Nations and most of the international community have voiced their concerns over Israel's transgression of human rights in the Palestinian occupied territories. The discourse has been political in nature, and as such politics has always led the debate on Palestine (a mere reference to the resolutions by the United Nations would tell how this problem has been central to the UN debate for more than 70 years).

Darwish brings those issues into the stage to ask questions about human moral responsibility. Certainly, when nature is treated as a persona, the message communicated can readily be understood within a framework of human moral duties—which humans have toward the physical landscape. And when the discussion is about the challenging realities of activism, we need to bear in mind that the questions raised so far by environmentalists exclusively lie at the heart of concerns related to social, cultural and economic activities, which result in detrimental impacts that transpire as

climate change, deforestation, greenhouse effect, release of chemicals into nature, as well as expanding urbanization and industrialization.

Yet, in Palestine, the picture is gloomier, and it is more challenging to those engaged in ecological debate. A further dimension (one beyond the urban, social and economic aspects) comes into play— one which directly results from the Israeli occupation's assault on both the Palestinians and their environment (Brunnstrom 2018). This is a challenge that needs to be addressed by environmentalists, but also by human rights organizations as well as the international community at large.

It is the case that moral ecologists and environmentalists have yet to be adequately aware of this dilemma, which should require collective, collaborative efforts by environmental groups around the globe to mobilize action that would stop Israel's ravaging of what has remained from the Palestinian landscape. Some international movements have recently become aware of the ongoing crisis in the occupied territories. In early 2003, American human rights activist Rachel Aliene Corrie (together with a group from the United States and the United Kingdom) arrived in Palestine to protest the Israeli bloodshed in the occupied Palestinian territories. On March 16 that year, seeing the Israeli military bulldozers demolishing Palestinian houses and water wells and leveling cultivated fields, she stood in front of an armored bulldozer, which ran over her and crushed her to death. This incidence later inspired individuals affiliated with environment movements and other international activists, who now come regularly, though in few numbers, to demonstrate against the occupier's atrocities in the occupied territories. Such defiance can be heartened not only by environmental movements, but also by literary texts.

A case in point is the way Darwish's poetry is approached from an environmental ethics standpoint. An engaging reading should not turn a blind eye to the model that

Darwish has created by his poems that feature nature as a persona. A sensitive look into Darwish's poetry will more likely identify a framework of an unswerving nature that protests and refuses to succumb to human's violent will. Shreds of such a strong-willed, resolute nature can easily be found in many poems by Darwish. Unlike many poets who discuss nature, Darwish does not portray a direct, reciprocal relationship between man and nature. While ecocriticism, for example, maintains that literature cannot be approached in a way that sets man and nature in opposition to each other (Klue, 2008), in Darwish's poetry there are two kinds of humans (and, as a result, two forms of relationships): the Palestinians who live in harmony with nature and the Israeli occupier who stands in opposition to nature. Therefore, setting Darwish's poetry in opposition to the occupier's assault on both nature and humans is a quite rational assumption. By focusing on his poems, Darwish wants to communicate to the world that literature could help the dynamics for change, for the better future. The poet wants his poetry to reach to the world, believing it has the power to mobilize people toward action that helps thwart violations of the right of the other. In a manner, poetry functions like media platforms that expose distorted socio-cultural realities and help transpose them.

1.2.2 Statement of the Problem

Critics of Mahmoud Darwish have dwelt on the poet's artistic performance as well as specific themes found in the body of works he produced; some accounts of his works do also exist. Such scholarship assumes that in his works there lies a range of social, philosophical and political views, a speculation about which would lend insights to the sociopolitical context in which he composed his poetry, as well as the universal themes he might have intended to convey. The works produced so far are prolific and fruitful—

helping the readers grasp the ideas and meanings and better identify the themes of one of the most prominent literary figures of the Arab region in modern times.

Existing criticisms of Darwish's poetry comprises reflections on the ways the poet related to the world around, through particular themes— such as home, mother, father, self, siege, exile (Arequi 2014), to symbols, images and metaphors. All critical works nonetheless saw a relationship between his writing and grand national themes of a homeland that was lost to Zionism in 1948 (Khan 2018).

Apart from the questions related to the homeland and national belongings in his poetry, Darwish has won a reputation for being a poet whose works have dealt, in part, with nature— with hundreds of poems featuring the elements of the natural environment in the poet's homeland, Palestine (Celik 2008). However, those who studied nature in Darwish have either focused on this poetry as it pertains to resistance against the occupier or approached it from an ecocritical perspective (see, for example, Ahmed, et al. 2012; Ahmed and Hashim 2014; Ahmed and Hashim 2015).

As is the long-standing tradition in literary criticism, analyzing poetry usually draws on one (or more) of the theories found to be productive and relevant. For Darwish's poetry, this is a range of traditional and critical approaches— thematic analysis; formalist analysis; psychoanalytical criticism; historical and/or postcolonial criticism; literary biography; close reading and social psychology; and poststructuralist (Madi, 2020; Obeid, 2012).

The large amount of critical accounts of Darwish's poetry would at first seem to frustrate new scholarly attempts. However, critical initiatives are never exhaustive— as the ambiguities in Darwish's works would always allow for new contributions. In his oeuvre, many poems might entice a reader because of their elevated or simple language on the one hand and their subject matters on the other. But these are not the only aspects

that make people obsessed with his poetry. In many poems, Darwish seems as though he was giving lessons of morality. So far, criticisms have fallen short of exploring this vein, specifically ethical chaos (the disruptions and unstabbling nature of life in occupied Palestine and uncertainties surrounding life in Palestine) and identity across Darwish's poems.

Darwish's oeuvre is condensed, and the themes and motifs can always be read from different perspectives. Questions abound in this regard: Could Darwish's poetry be read as an act of debunking the occupier's counter-indicators of principles enshrined in religious teachings, philosophical arguments and international law? Has Darwish managed to expose the system of inhuman, cruel conditions the occupier has created in occupied Palestine? Has Darwish contemplated the insecurities the Palestinians have been subject to?

A survey of literary accounts on Darwish revealed that analysing his works within a framework of environmental ethics has yet to be taken up. To date, and as the review of the state of the art showed, this is a gap the present thesis tried to bridge. The fact is that Darwish's poetry has not often regarded as a call for ethics. This dissertation thus conducted an in-depth analysis of his poetry to elaborate how he portrayed the challenging realities of environmental activism and moral characters and their relationships with the environment. One can read in Darwish's poetry a sizable part that features an uncompromising, but rational, nature— one that says "No" to the violations of the occupier, one that protests and even refuses to succumb to human cataclysmic will. In several poems, we hear many voices— a stone wondering what is happening, a bird confused, an animal baffled by faces it cannot recognize (those of the Israeli soldiers and settlers), grass rejecting the feet it is not habituated to (Darraj 2008).

Nevertheless, in all these voices, we read one persona— that of the poet himself, for "the

persona in Darwish's poetry is not only about a man expelled from his homeland, but also a poet who records the feelings and aspirations of his community. The personal and public voices are always co-mingled and the persona-poet's distress is the synecdoche for that of an entire people" (Snir 2008: p. 127). Darwish's poetry addresses broader issues of ecological ethics, namely the environmental defiance of human centeredness, with the latter being firmly established in western ethical thinking (Routley & Routley, 1980). There exist fascinating potentials in terms of how Darwish's poetry articulates and grapples with the trauma the land of Palestine has suffered because of the Zionist occupier. The main function of this thesis is exploring Darwish's peculiar portrayal of how the relationship between humans and humans, on the one hand, and humans and the natural world, on the other, should be. It is a lesson on how being good and virtuous is primarily based on relationships of mutual respect. In conversing with the Zionist occupier, Darwish's personas evoke such principles of healthy relationships and the moral duties of people.

The study surveys primary and secondary sources, and, using Traer's tripartite of religious teachings, philosophical principles and international laws, it analyzes poetic elements where Darwish has presented to us models of teleological ethics in which the moral duties and the fundamental principles of environmentalism are being challenged. This reading of Darwish can be taken as a model and driver for mobilizing international environmental organizations and sensitizing them to the hazards the Israeli occupation is inflicting on the land of Palestine. The poems to be discussed characterize a situation that poses a testing problem, a real challenge for such organizations, given the restrictions Israel imposes on access to the occupied Palestinian territories, with international initiatives always thwarted and stifled by Israeli imprudence

The thread of rights and duties will illuminate into Darwish's characterization of morality and human responsibilities. An astute reading of Darwish's poetry (from *State of Siege*— first published in 1982, all the way through his later works) would be able to unearth a heightened awareness of what the nature of relationships between humans should be. It is not uncommon to see the poet asking questions about characters, rights, duties and relationships. All the same, it is pointless to see in many of Darwish's poems anything but dehumanization of the occupier for violating this quadruple system .

By focusing on poems written by Darwish, the integral precepts of what it means being Palestinian under the Israeli occupation can be revealed. This is a body of statements showing episodes of suffering, of rights violated, of duties not observed, of healthy and unhealthy relationships, and of good as well as bad characters.

The thesis argues that in many of his works, Mahmoud Darwish frequently refers to the doctrines of teleological ethics, moral philosophy, human past experiences and religious scriptures/books (The Holy Quran, the Old Testament and the New Testament)— the tripartite system of analysis proposed by Traer— to illuminate issues pertaining to the Palestine-Israel's conflict, namely the rights of the occupied people to decent life and clean environment and the duties of the occupier not to assault on those rights.

The thesis explores how literature can expose the disruptions of ethical systems and the questions that environmentalists have to address within the context of socio-politic instability.

Environmental ethicists, when addressing the issue of human's destruction of nature, assume that their arguments are heard and that campaigning for initiatives that reduce those destructions will somehow pay off. This may be true for, say, a state that depletes its own natural resources while believing simultaneously that this action is

environmentally harmful (Barrow, 2014). Yet this is not the case for a colonizing state, which deliberately destroys anything that has vestiges of Palestinian identity, for instance, a natural resource, a forest, a river, a field, a meadow, or even an archeological site.

The basic argument in this thesis, therefore, is that drawing on environmental ethics when reading Darwish's poetry breaks a novel ground and illuminates well into the morality issues as perceived by the poet. The novel reading not only lays bare the state of moral chaos in occupied Palestine, but also questions and gives insights into the spaces of ethical identity with respect to rights, duties, characters and relationships.

1.2.3 Questions of the Study

The present study answers the following questions:

1. How do Mahmoud Darwish's poems show manifestations of ethical chaos?
2. How does Mahmoud Darwish's poetry exemplify Environmental subtlety?
3. How do Darwish's poems interrogate spaces of ethical identity in terms of rights, duties, moral characters, and relationships with the environment?

1.2.4 Objectives of the Study

The research aims to:

1. Examine the ways in which Darwish's poetry show manifestations of ethical chaos;
2. Investigate the ways in which Darwish's poetry exemplifies Environmental subtlety; and

3. Explain the ways in which Darwish's poems interrogate spaces of ethical identity in terms of rights, duties, moral characters and relationships with the environment.

1.2.5 Scope of the Study

Darwish wrote 10 books of prose and 30 volumes of poetry, 14 of which have been translated to English. This corpus adequately accounts for the themes to be discussed in this thesis. Therefore, in this study, I only considered the English translations. Most critical works on Darwish's texts are in Arabic, while some are in French. To reach English-speaking readers, I restricted my review to critical and biographical works written in English. While this means overlooking some engaging accounts written in Arabic and French (e.g., Deib, 2006), the English works are sufficient for our present analysis.

In addition, my analysis focuses on works Darwish produced beginning in the 1980s. Since Darwish's poems in the 1960s and 1970s are somehow irrelevant as they concern his childhood (his mother, his detention in Israeli prisons, and his love), with little philosophical content, they are altogether excluded from the analysis. As such, I study Darwish's poems that were written between 1980 and 2008. It is during this phase that his poems touch on issues of morality. These are texts in which the poet can be said to have exposed the detrimental impact of the Israeli colonizer on the Palestinians and their natural world. His texts raise issues pertaining to human systems of relationships and mutual respect, as well as transgressions against such systems.

1.2.6 Significance of the Study

As is the long-standing tradition in literary criticism, analyzing poetry usually draws on one (or more) of the theories found to be productive and relevant. For Darwish's poetry, this is a range of traditional and critical approaches— thematic analysis; formalist analysis; psychoanalytical criticism; historical and/or postcolonial criticism; literary biography; close reading and social psychology; and poststructuralist. The study offers a new perspective in approaching Palestinian literature in general, and the works of Darwish in particular. The extensive examination of literary texts on the Palestine–Israel conflict through the lens of moral philosophy may be disentangled, underscored and scrutinized. The reading may result in awareness regarding the ways such a new perspective might illuminate into different approaches to the conflict in a region that has been the scene for violence for around a century, which may, in turn, urge for contemplating new paradigms for debates/discussions on the Palestinian cause. The results of the research could destabilize and challenge the current landscape of environmental ethics (is a branch of philosophy that examines the ethical questions and moral relationships between humans and the natural world (Palmer et al., 2014). Equally, the research might give Darwish's poetry a reading that is unique, one that has never been tried before. The quite large volume of Darwish's criticism has touched on many poetic, political, social and philosophical aspects in his works. Ecocritical readings of Darwish also exist. This study adds to that repository— a new theme of moral duties as well as moral responsibilities— and presents an avant-garde reading that could further our understanding of Darwish's works, and as well allow the same approach to be used to study other Palestinian writers, and even writers from other parts of the world

So far the existing literature has provided readings in Palestinian literature that have engaged questions in fields as diverse as politics, culture, resistance, ecocriticism, exile, diaspora, human spaces, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. To date, as the case may be, research on Palestinian literature has fallen short of bringing environmental ethics into central investigation.

The present research is an attempt to bridge this lacuna. I reckon that using environmental ethics as an approach to Darwish's poetry breaks a novel ground and contributes to the understanding of morality issues and human's (ir)responsible behavior toward the other and the environment. The basic premise is that Darwish's poetry does not only challenge the realities of activism, but also describes moral characters and relationships with environment (which is an investigation of the ethics of tumultuous circumstances). It also calls for repudiating human centeredness and the superiority of the white man (and the inferiority of others). The tenets of such thinking are firmly established in Western ethical thinking (Routley and Routley 1980). Because the Israeli occupation is, in the first place, an enterprise engineered and established by the West (Karatas 2020), the way this occupation deals with the native Palestinians is based on prejudice, putting them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their Jewish counterparts (B'Tselem 2021). Palestinians, seeing that such prejudice is touching on their very existence—apart from the fact that the establishment of the state of Israel has already made more than half of the Palestinians refugees in the neighboring countries, they have had no choice but to resist, and in different forms.

One form of Palestinian resistance is through writing. This is a line of literature taken by writers such as Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Ghassan Kanafani, Mahmoud Darwish, Fawaz Turki, Sahar Khalifeh, Samih al Qasim and Fadwa Tuqan. These authors have chosen "imaginative forms to reconstruct their history and voice their identity" (Mir

2013: p. 110). It is quite relevant, for the purpose of this analysis, to look specifically at Darwish's poetry, which seems to address questions of ethical concerns when it comes to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

I argue that there exist fascinating potentials in terms of how Darwish's poetry articulates and grapples with the trauma the land of Palestine has suffered because of the Zionist occupier. Darwish's conceptualization of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a statement of environmental ethics. The main purpose of this thesis is to explore Darwish's extraordinary portrayal of how the relationship among humans on the one hand, and between humans and the natural world on the other, ought to be. It can be understood as an ethical reflection on how being good and virtuous is primarily based on relationships of mutual respect. In conversing with the Zionist occupier, Darwish's personas evoke such principles of healthy relationships and the moral duties of people.

The study surveys primary and secondary sources, and by using Traer's tripartite system of religious teachings, philosophical principles and international laws, it analyzes the poetic elements where Darwish's works present models of teleological ethics in which the moral duties and the fundamental principles of environmentalism are being challenged. This reading of Darwish is a model and a medium for mobilizing international environmental organizations and sensitizing them to the hazards the Israeli occupation is inflicting upon the Palestinian land. The poems to be analyzed feature a situation that poses a testing problem, a real challenge for such organizations, given the restrictions Israel imposes on access to the occupied Palestinian territories, with international initiatives occasionally thwarted and stifled by Israeli imprudence. The thread of rights and duties in Darwish's texts will illuminate into the poet's characterization of morality and human responsibilities. Analyzing Darwish's poetry (from *State of Siege*— first published in 1982, all the way through his later works) is

expected to unearth a heightened awareness of what the nature of relationships between humans should be. Indeed, it is not uncommon to see the poet raising questions about characters, rights, duties and relationships. All the same, it is pointless not to see in many of Darwish's poems a form of dehumanization of the occupier for violating this quadruple system.

The findings of this study might rebound to the advantage of the people engaged in research related to building and developing ecological ethics—a domain that is still in its infancy. The study analyzed the vibrancy of environmental ethics across Darwish's poems, as the dimensions explored— particularly regarding the challenges that environmental ethics are still grappling with—may help the field expand its scope so as to address the ever-increasing pressures on the environment (Svedin, 2015). Simultaneously, the findings might raise suspicion against human rights conundrums concerning the Palestine socio-politics that has been suffering for more than seventy-two years under the yoke of the occupation, and is still racked by this occupier that has spared neither the lives of the indigenous people, nor their natural world (United Nations, 2018b). This means that environmental activists are calling people to save and protect nature. This doesn't go in parallel to what is happening in the Palestinian – Israeli conflict. What happens in Palestine is against what environmental activists are calling and inviting people to do. There is a lot of destruction, terror, fear, so all these circumstances lead to the violation of all the standards of environmental ethics philosophy.

1.3 Research Theoretical Framework

In this section, I look at the theoretical framework on which the study was based.

First, I present several readings on ecocriticism and then environmental ethics as a

branch of philosophy that focuses on studying the relationship of humans with their non-human surroundings. Next, I discuss deep ecology, a domain that seeks to promote and advocate the inalienable intrinsic value of all living things, regardless of their instrumental value. The principles of deep ecology are then tied to the ethics of tumultuous circumstances and the ethical identity in Darwish's poetry using Traer's model.

1.3.1 Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is a natural result of the literature on nature, which has been a recurrent theme in the West during the past decades. According to Greg Garrard (2004), the early works of ecocriticism were very much preoccupied by "Romantic poetry, wilderness narrative and nature writing" (5). Recently, however, the attention of ecocritics has been turned to a more general cultural ecocriticism, which focuses on "popular scientific writing, film, TV, art, architecture and other cultural artifacts such as theme parks, zoos and shopping malls" (5).

Human beings have always thought about and contemplated the physical nature around. As a concept, therefore, nature has always been there. However, it was only in the late 20th century that people started to look into ways by which literature can tell us about our relationship to nature and the hazards it suffers. In their quest to unveil such a relationship, many literary critics (such as Keith Thomas, Leo Marx and Carolyn Merchant— to name some) produced works in the 1960s and 1970s that set the stage for ecocriticism, a term coined by William Rueckert in his 1978 essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." Today, the field is one of the most important areas of literary studies. Many academic institutions around the globe have incorporated ecocriticism studies within their literature programs. Today, ecocriticism has become a

full-fledged interdisciplinary field of study. When William Rueckert first introduced the concept of ecocriticism in 1978, he provided no definition of the term; rather, he described his effort as an attempt to "discover something about the ecology of literature, or to develop an ecological poetics by applying ecological concepts to the reading, teaching and writing about literature" (Glottfelty and Fromm 107). Rueckert based his argument on the belief that literature can contribute to, and even guide, the emerging movements aiming to save nature and its resources. His attempt was the first step toward answering questions regarding the relationship between nature and literature. Rueckert was able to identify such methods in some literary works across all fiction and non-fiction genres. In ecocentrism, ecology and literary criticism are brought together to restore the health of nature, which has been undermined by the irresponsible activities of humans. Ecocentrism, therefore, calls for changes in decisions regarding the human–nature relationship (Porritt & Winner, 1988).

Part of what ecocriticism promises is a contribution to illuminating explicit and implicit meanings in a literary work. The premise is that understanding our relationship to the elements of nature— and the mutual or one-sided influence— can provide new insights into the efforts we exert to analyze a piece of literature. This is one facet (with the other being an insight literature can, in turn, furnish for interpreting such a relationship) that has garnered much attention from critics. Many of the postmodern literary works produced so far have depicted the adverse impact humans have had on nature. In these works, humans are the major players, and the other elements (physical nature, plants and animals) are always the affected sides— often helpless and acquiescing to the will of humans. Ecocritics taking up such works usually look at the parts of a text where the author features a natural element that has been violated, an animal killed or abused for unjustifiable reasons, a forest cut down for the benefit of, say,

industrialization, or a beautiful landscape ruined to create additional space for more buildings.

Poetry is one literary genre that has always provided us with cultural models where nature is featured in its relation to humans. When the main concern of poets is communicating messages on an ecosystem suffering imbalances brought by humans, they produce what is now known as ecopoetry, a poetic form which offers us a response to the destruction that industrialization, civilization and wars have inflicted on our planet—evidence of which can readily be found in the works of postmodern nature poets (for example, Ted Hughes, Forrest Gander, Jack Collom). Now what a poet does is providing insights into new ways of relating with the physical nature and its species. In a sense, ecopoetry investigates the complex web of relationships between human and nonhuman worlds. Once it such relationships— which are usually unhealthy— it sometimes proceeds to offer solutions, often through messages stated or implied.

There are two major approaches to nature in poetry. The Romantic model is there to praise and celebrate nature, while ecopoetry focuses on the destruction humans inflict on nature. The idea of destruction brought by humans to nature has been a recurring theme in works by many poets (see, for example, T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land*, Philip Larkin's *Going, Going*). In the latter, humans are active, and nature is always the affected side, the passive recipient.

Early attempts to establish the field coexisted with postmodern efforts to correct a set of established concepts that prevailed in the West, in general, and the Anglo-Saxon culture, in particular. This has resulted in calls for reconsidering and redefining the ways people should relate to race, sex, class, history, author, context and place. It was within this context that environmental criticism came to emphasize the importance of the more-

than-human world and to protest against human activities that have caused massive destruction on the planet.

Ecocritics have taken many literary forms and genres as they analyzed texts with ecological concerns. However, the ecocritical approach to analyzing poetry is still nascent and has yet to garner proper attention from ecocritics. Several postmodern poets addressed issues of ecological dimensions; their works meant to raise a hue and cry about the damage humans bring to the environment. Some poets, on the other hand, have unintentionally addressed ecological themes. Writing about topics such as religion, metaphysics and new technologies, these poets might not have had the intention to depict issues of environmental significance, which made it legitimate to call a literary work with ecological vein an "ecotext". The term has recently proliferated in literary criticism— at large describing literature addressing issues related to the environment. The emergence of environmental political parties and Green organizations, and the resulting ecological awareness have given rise to categories focusing on nature and place in literary texts. Literary works often emphasize the idea that Man and the more-than-human world belong to an existential chain where an individual element cannot be discussed without integrating it within the larger context. Since the late 20th century, humans have started to understand the size of the destruction they have inflicted on the natural environment.

Man has destroyed forests, hunted animals, polluted the air and the sea, and plundered the planet. Eco-texts came as a response to this large scale of destruction. Poetry did not fall behind. Poetry, as a literary genre, has always provided us with cultural models where nature is featured in its relation to humans. (Porritt and Winner 1988) . When the main concern of poets is communicating messages on an ecosystem suffering imbalances brought by humans, they produce what is now known as

ecopoetry, a poetic form which offers us a response to the destruction that industrialization, civilization and wars have inflicted on our planet– evidence of which can readily be found in the works of postmodern nature poets (for example, Ted Hughes, Forrest Gander, Jack Collom). Now what a poet does is providing insights into new ways of relating with the physical nature and its species. This means that the poet sheds lights on the parts of his poetry where an animal is abused, a forest destroyed ...etc. In a sense, ecopoetry investigates the complex web of relationships between human and nonhuman worlds. Once it examines such relationships– which are usually unhealthy– it sometimes proceeds to offer solutions, often through messages stated or implied. Interestingly, this didactic function of literature has its roots in moral philosophy, as demonstrated below.

1.3.2 Moral Philosophy

Principles of moral philosophy, originated in the West, came to define a system of opposites which involves, among other things, what is right and what is wrong in human behavior and relationships. In its delineation of human values, moral philosophy looks particularly at human relationships as expressed in a set of dichotomies (or binary opposites) such as "good" versus "evil", as well as what an individual is obliged to do or refrain from doing in a specific situation in the real world (Fieser, 2006).

Up to the second half of the 20th century, issues of inquiry within moral philosophy had focused exclusively on moral issues as they manifest themselves in human relationships, to the exclusion of other entities (living or inanimate) sharing the planet with us. Questions of human relationship to the non-human world would at that time be considered only in as much as the issues in question affected human beings. As Brennan and Lo (2011) put it, traditional western perspectives "either assign intrinsic

value only to human beings alone (strong anthropocentrism) or they assign a significantly greater amount of intrinsic value to human beings than to any non-human things" (p. 18). In the strictest sense, such anthropocentrism thinking would fall short of setting definite boundaries between what is wrong and what is right in treating the non-human world, "except to the extent that such treatment may lead to bad consequences for human beings" (p. 19).

Such traditional western perspectives have led to disastrous consequences on both the human and the natural surroundings. In Palestine/Israel context, there are issues regarding the ethics of the tumultuous circumstances that stand between the Palestinians and decent life. There are also questions pertaining to the ethics of the occupying state: its obligations as a state controlling by force the citizens of another territory, the way it treats those citizens, its duties toward the land and the natural environment of that territory, and the rights it consistently violates – in short creating a chaotic geopolitical ambience.

1.3.3 Environmental Ethics

Against this backdrop of anthropocentrism and escalation of environmental destruction by humans, environmental ethics emerged as a discipline that extends beyond humans to the non-human world (McShane, 2009). Although moral philosophy had discussed questions about the relationship of humans with nature, environmental ethics only began to emerge as a subfield of philosophy in the 1970s (McShane, 2009). As a branch of moral philosophy, environmental ethics is motivated by the inclination to build "ethical theories that did a better job of accounting for our moral obligations to the nonhuman natural world" (McShane, 2009, p. 407).

Literary criticism in environmental ethics considers the different relations between a literary work and the natural world (Buell, 2001). Proponents of ecological ethics urge the literature to respond to today's ecological hazards and call for the active involvement of science and technology in mitigating the adverse effects of human's disruption of nature.

Many of the postmodern literary works produced so far have depicted the adverse impact of humans on the natural world. In these works, humans are the main players, while other elements (physical nature, plants and animals) are always the affected sides, often helpless and acquiescing to the will of humans. Critics of such works usually look at the parts of the text where the author features a natural element that has been violated; an animal killed or abused for an unjustifiable reason; a forest cut down for the benefit of, say, industrialization; or a beautiful landscape ruined to create additional space for more buildings. The tremendous level of disorganization caused by the state of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories has led to deleterious effects and spontaneous breakdown of the demography and the ecosystem. The occupying state has changed the stable into the unstable, the clean into the unclean, the citizen into the refugee, the farmer into the worker in the colonial settlements, and the landlord into the pathetic, ill-fated person.

1.3.4 The Moral Duties of a State

Usually viewed as integral to the tenets of moral philosophy, the moral duties of a state are not only toward its own citizens, but also toward other nations (Sorley, 2013). This has to do with the concept of rights, as enshrined in religious teachings, international law that regulates relations between nations and philosophical arguments

pertaining to ethical behavior (Traer, 2013). The set of duties has, just like the system that regulates relationships between individuals, indicators and counter-indicators.

One indicator of such duties would require a state to respect the integrity and the cohesion of the lands of other states, nations or communities. When one state occupies territories under the sovereignty of another nation, then this state breaches its commitment, under international law, not to assault on the integrity of other nations' lands (UN Charter, 1945). A number of duties and their corresponding rights can be derived from this principle. First, the land integrity is closely associated with the right of nations to enjoy political independence (Oppenheim, 1955). This general right of one nation is linked and maintained by a set of duties on the part of other nations. The Bible, for example, commands people not to kill others ("Thou shalt not kill"), nor to steal their property ("Thou shalt not steal").

Second, what is a right for a certain nation should also be understood as an inalienable right to another related nation and should be construed as a duty from that certain nation not to breach the right of that related nation. For example, the right to "self-preservation should be recognized as holding for all nations, so that, when different nations are brought into contact, their relation to one another should be determined by an equal regard for the rights of all" (Sorley, 2013: p. 446). The Israeli occupier extends this right to self-preservation to mean encroachment on Palestinians' own right to self-preservation (also self-determination), thus it has no problem killing Palestinian children and women—those who pose no threat to its security (Amnesty International, 2018). This is a flagrant breach of the UN Human Rights Council's Resolution 25/38, which has established that

everyone must be able to express their grievances or aspirations in a peaceful manner, including through public protests without fear of reprisals or of being intimidated, harassed, injured, sexually assaulted, beaten,

arbitrarily arrested and detained, tortured, killed or subjected to enforced disappearance. (UN Human Rights Council, 2014, p. 2)

Third, the duty of a state also involves refraining from invading, occupying, annexing, bombarding, and ruining the national possessions of other nations (UN, 1974). In the Middle East conflict— which following the signing of the Oslo Accords came to be known as the Palestine-Israeli conflict— the counter-indicators are multiple. These involve a wide range of Israeli violations, including a perpetual invasion of the Palestinian land, destroying the local infrastructure, wiping off farms, dismembering the territory, creating a complicated system of bypass roads, and imposing a siege that has been in place on Gaza for around 15 years now.

Therefore, the duties to respect others, appreciate their values, observe their personal and private life, and above all, maintain their safety have been countered by other indicators (abound in Israel's history). As mentioned earlier, Israel is the state most condemned by UN organizations. Gabon (2019) writes on the *Middle East Eye* that Israel has "become globally infamous for its relentless, illegal, supremacist, hyper-violent colonialism; its annexation of land at gunpoint; its terroristic military; and its armies of fanatic Jewish settlers, who are little more than international rogues and land thieves".

Fourth, the duty of maintaining the integrity of other nations' territory also means maintaining the status quo and refraining from making changes to the eco-system in that territory. In reality, however, is that the occupation authorities have ruined the soil and water. B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, reports that the Israeli colonial settlers in the West Bank have always assaulted on the Palestinian natural environment as well as on Palestinian property. The actions include

blocking roadways, so as to impede Palestinian life and commerce. The settlers also shoot solar panels on roofs of buildings, torch automobiles,

shatter windowpanes and windshields, destroy crops, uproot trees, abuse merchants and owners of stalls in the market. Some of these actions are intended to force Palestinians to leave their homes and farmland, and thereby enable the settlers to gain control of them. (B'Tselem, 2005)

The same organization cited some violations in 2020, including setting fire to mosques, stealing Palestinian farmers' property, beating cyclists, smashing vehicles, shooting at farmers, uprooting olive trees, torching fields, and destroying herders' property. All these occur, according to B'Tselem, under the protection of Israeli soldiers (B'Tselem, 2020).

This same duty also requires the occupier not to manipulate the natural resources of the occupied territory, such as groundwater or the cultural estate (The Hague Conventions, Article 55). And in fact, the Israeli occupation has depleted the Palestinian natural resources and transferred groundwater to the illegal Israeli settlements. Worse, for decades, it has been disposing its waste in the occupied Palestinian territories (Ashly, 2017). To understand the significance of examining ethical chaos and identity as understood by Darwish, it is useful to observe how the occupying state has employed chaotic dynamics in the Palestinian territories. The facts on the ground present support to the argument that Israel has turned the Palestinian landscape into a disorganized background that is very difficult to reclaim.

1.3.5 Deep Ecology

Heated, extensive debates on ecological ethics have given rise to some sub-divisions (or streams) within the field, including *deep ecology*, *ecofeminism* and *social ecology*. All these sub-divisions emerged to show that everything in the earth should be protected (be human, non-human, male, femaleetc) Most of the questions environmentalists raise usually fall in one way or another within the broader philosophy

of ecological ethics— as some have blamed philosophy of being the culprit behind the ecological crisis (Kureethadam, 2018). The turn of philosophy to environmental issues has meant to sensitize people of the detrimental effects of the expansion of human activities on the natural world. This has required casting doubt on the alleged superiority of Man over the non-human world; hence the emergence of ecological movements, with deep ecology being one of the major components.

Deep ecology has set a paradigm of general principles, the most important of which is an acknowledgment that the intrinsic value of nature (as opposed or not necessarily associated with the instrumental value) is independent of human beings (Naess, 1995). Because restricting the debate on ecological issues to philosophical circles is not likely to nurture adequate awareness among people, proponents of deep ecology believe that awareness about environmental issues should also be raised through other human sciences, including literature. This has enabled critics to examine literary works through an environmental ethics framework, which in turn can benefit from and expand through literary criticism.

1.3.6 Making the Case for Moral Identity, Ethical Chaos and Almost Human

In this section, I discuss three closely related concepts that are fundamental to the foregoing discussion: moral identity, ethical chaos and almost human. Moral identity is a trend in moral philosophy. It can be defined as "the degree to which being a moral person is important to an individual's identity" (Hardy & Carlom, 2011). Scholars have long discussed the question on how a human can possess and live with a moral identity. In ancient Greek tradition, if a person knows good values, s/he would certainly have a moral identity and behave accordingly (Kohlberg, 1969). This is, however, an ideal

version of the concept, since the mere knowledge of moral values does not guarantee commitment to moral identity (Blasi, 1980).

With the internet revolution and the ease with which people can today have access to information, it is almost untenable to assume that some people are ignorant of moral identities and duties, and therefore, there is solid ground for one to believe that those who deny the fact that they inflict suffering on others are in fact doing this on purpose—with foreknowledge that their actions are morally ill. This situation would certainly create a state of moral chaos: knowing what is right and what is wrong, but insisting on doing the wrong, a supposition that the ideas of right and wrong are merely human constructs that can always be denied/defeated when they conflict with human needs (see e.g., MacIntyre, 2007). As far as the study of literature is concerned, it is the task of a literary critic to decipher the ideas and thoughts underlying moral issues/problems as they manifest/are represented in a literary work.

A case in point is the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, wherein the occupying force perpetrates heinous acts that are nothing short of genocides, thus perpetuating a state where the occupied Palestinians, while aware of the notion of being humans, are living in between. They cannot live, eat, sleep, or go to work in peace, and so they experience life as almost humans. How all this is depicted in Darwish's poems comprises the core of this research.

1.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the ways in which the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish depicts the challenging realities of activism, simultaneously describing moral characters and relationships. The first section in the chapter details the background of the study (the aim, the questions, the objectives, the scope, the rationale

and the significance). In this section, I also look at the model Darwish presents: one of a nature that does not yield, one that denounces the occupier, but identifies with the natives.

I then discuss how Darwish's numerous references to nature could be read as an attempt to highlight issues on human beings and their civic consciousness. This dissertation, I propose, is a call to the world's environmentalist organizations to consider their moral responsibility and contribute effectively to protecting the Palestinian natural world and deter Israel's sustained efforts to assault on the human rights of the people of Palestine via social media and other platforms.

In the second section, I provide an overview of the theoretical framework that informed the analysis in the thesis. I particularly look at the notion of moral duties; the moral responsibility of a state; and deep ecology– all to find a niche where the present research can fit well. This is a scrutiny of the status quo – one in which everything has been sent into a state of chaos: the duties avoided, the rights violated, and the relationships tarnished– all investigated through Darwish's poems. In the next chapter, I present a review and evaluation of the literature in the field. In the third chapter, I provide a historical contextualization of the study– which sets the stage for sociopolitical circumstances on which Darwish's poetry sits. In the fourth chapter, I detail the methodology used in collecting data (both primary and secondary), as well as the model used in the discussion. Chapter five centralizes the core of the study, poetry of Darwish was analyzed for the purpose of identifying patterns of ecological sense. The sixth chapter comprises conclusions and remarks for further research into the topic

1.5 The Organization of the Study

The present dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic and set the stage for the prospective work. The second chapter presents a review and evaluation of the literature in the field. The third chapter provides a general historical and sociopolitical background surrounding Darwish's works. The fourth chapter details the methodology used in collecting data (both primary and secondary), as well as the model used in the discussion. Chapter five is the core of the study: it analyzes Darwish's poetry to identify patterns of ecological sense. The sixth chapter concludes and provides suggestions for further research into the topic. In this concluding chapter, in which I reflect upon, summarize the key insights, and forecast the ways in which my analysis impacts literary studies, I justify the choice of the title, Ethical Chaos and Ethical Identity in Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry.