

CHAPTER 5

CHAOS IN THE LANDS, ETHICS ON THE HORIZON

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter elaborates on Robert Traer's model of Doing Environmental Ethics, which addresses issues related to ethical principles governing the ways people can live wisely and maintain the foundations of human rights, ecological ethics and civic duties. All of these, which are set against human encroachments, stem from and are shored up by philosophical principles, international laws and religious teachings. This chapter, however, presents the ways in which the late aesthetics of Mahmoud Darwish reflects on issues of rights, duties, characters and relationships in the context of Palestine-Israel conflict within a range of poems. In the following sections, the harrowing experience of the 1948 exodus, and what came out of it, appears time and again as I read Darwish's works. The chaos hinted at had taken shape first with the taking of Palestine, and later by the resulting eternal suffering in the multiple exiles and at home. Darwish, as he negotiates sociopolitical uncertainties, speaks in particular to the carnage inflicted by the Israeli occupier on the land of Palestine, the life of its people, and the fate of Palestinian refugees. Finally, I shall address the thesis questions, so each question is written down with its findings and answers.

5.2 Research Questions

5.2.1 How Do Mahmoud Darwish's Poems Show Manifestations of Ethical Chaos?

5.2.1.1 Almost Human, Chaotic Ambience

In her introduction to the May 2015 issue of *Words Without Borders*, poet Nathalie Handal wrote: "Wherever Palestinians are scattered, be it in Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, in refugee camps in the Arab world, or displaced around the globe, they are confined to the particularities of whatever boundaries — national or physical, psychological or emotional — they were dealt after the Nakba." This is the most salient characteristic of Palestinian experience following the fall of the homeland, a trial that has also bearing on sociocultural life as well as literary expression. The year 1948 was not, by any account, usual for the people of Palestine and the neighboring countries, as what happened that year was not only about the displacement of an entire people across the globe – and the ensuing trials that continue to delineate the destinies of the displaced, but also about uncertainties and pain that have prevailed and become a salient feature in the unsettling Palestine ever since- creating a state of chaos that has traversed beyond the borders of Palestine, and now with the entire Middle East sinking in an ambience of unpredictability.

When approaching a contemporary Palestinian literary work, it is very important, thus, to draw the reader's attention to the fact that most of the time Palestinian literary expression is very germane and counter-responsive to that massive exodus, and what resulted from it as forms of multiple and multilayered disposessions that have insisted for more than seven decades now.

The dispossession continues, and Darwish's major metaphors continue to delineate the Palestinian suffering, beginning from 1948, through the 1967 war and its

aftermath, up to the Stone Uprising (1987-1994), and later into the siege of the West Bank (2000-2005) and what followed of brutal attacks on the Gaza enclave, as well as the daily encroachments on Muslim and Christian sites within the holy city of Jerusalem. All these have put Darwish's awareness— and the entire occupied people— on the line.

As he contemplates the state of dispossession, Darwish's themes diversify, moving from the individual to the national to the human experience. In the process, the poet speaks not only to the realities surrounding the Palestine/Israel conflict, but also to methods by which the conflict can be managed. A system of ethics appears in Darwish's works, which the poet brings to the forth through an individual experience that also speaks to a collective identity and consciousness.

As will be shown, texts by Darwish question the unsettling realities constituted by the Israeli occupier, which has delivered brutal blows to the ecological system, assaulted on the rights of the people of Palestine, distorted the human-human relationships, compromised the duties of respect and recognition of the other, and established examples of villainous characters. All these measures have perpetuated a state of almost-human realities that continue to bring miser, pain and suffering to the holy land of Palestine. In the following sections, the harrowing experience of the 1948 exodus, and what came out of it, appears time and again as I read Darwish's works. The chaos hinted at had taken shape first with the taking of Palestine, and later by the resulting eternal suffering in the exile and at home. Darwish, as he negotiates sociopolitical uncertainties, speaks in particular to the carnage inflicted by the Israeli occupier on the land of Palestine, the life of its people, and the fate of Palestinian refugees.

In every corner, crimes are being committed. On every street lie the bodies of the murdered. On every wall is blood. The living are deprived of the basic right to life, and the martyrs are denied graves in which to rest in peace. Israeli forces, armed to the teeth with racist superstitions and military hardware, are besieging the Palestinians' right to live ordinary lives, albeit lives lived on a margin narrower than dreams, and wider than nightmares. This right is also under siege from a world under American control, a world set on the horns of a raging bull that has abolished the conjunction, the "and," that used to fall between America and Israel. The Palestinians are besieged by a condition of dependency that has robbed the Arab political establishment of the eloquence even to beg, and of the ability to placate a populace that is angry at everything. (Darwish, 2002)

During wars –or in conflict zones- morals disintegrate, and a state of chaos emerges and insists as long as the conflict continues. In the Palestinian context, the state of chaos results not only from whatever restrictions and miseries the Israeli occupation delivers to the Palestinians within the occupied land and what those in exile continue to suffer, but also from the relegation of what remains of Palestine into a network of disconnected cantons interspersed with colonial settlements. Helena Schulz (2003) observes that Palestinians' experience is but a manifest expression of chaos, for "their lives are defined by a diasporic condition" (p. 21). On the one hand, those outside the Palestinian soil are thrown out into multiple exiles, stranded specifically in unwelcoming neighbouring countries (Al Hussein, &Bocco, 2009, p. 261). On the other hand, the occupation authorities' restrictions on Palestinian movement, the fences, the roadblocks, hundreds of military checkpoints, and the Apartheid Wall that dismembers the land and the people have sent most of Palestinians into one or another form of diaspora, and, thus, a state of disruption. The Israeli occupier lives on power and subjugation, and this is something the Israelis are not shy of revealing. Moshe Dayan, former defense minister of Israel, delivering a speech in 1956, said "We are a generation of settlers, and without the steel helmet and the cannon we cannot plant a tree and build a home" (qtd. in Karmi, 2007: p. 3). When power and power possession

are taken as the only tools to resolve a conflict, then what one can imagine is but chaos, destruction, disintegration and distress.

The state of chaos, or what I shall call ‘almost-human state’, is evident throughout Darwish’s oeuvre, but had especially taken shape beginning from 1982, when Israel’s aggression extended beyond the land of Palestine to trail Palestinian refugees in neighboring countries. When he was in Beirut in early 1980s, he starts a string of poetics that laments what life has become and how the world is indifferent to the anguish the Palestinians are going through. He expresses this perfectly in an article he gave the *Al-Ahram Weekly Newspaper* under the title “A war for war’s sake” at the height of the Israeli invasion of the West Bank in 2002:

How many times must the Palestinians be besieged before the Arab world realizes that it, too, is under siege? How many times before it realizes that it too is a hostage, even though it does not resist? Television has made it unnecessary for us to explain ourselves: now our blood is shed in every home and is on every conscience. From this day on, he who does not become Palestinian in his heart will never understand his true moral identity. (Darwish, 2002)

During the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and in the few years before that, Darwish reflects with heartbreaking verse on the scenes of turmoil and the plight of his people. In his depiction of the realities, uncertainties and perils surrounding the ongoing Palestine-Israel conflict and the ensuing misers, Darwish evokes and poignantly questions the sounds of warplanes, shells, fire, blood, demolished houses, screaming of women, the smell of smoke, rotting corpses, and more. In the epic poem “State of Siege”— which he wrote while on his way to another exile (Tunisia this time), he captures reality in very keen images: “The siege is a waiting period / waiting on the tilted ladder / in the middle of the storm” (*The Butterfly’s Burden* p. 133). The state is captured in temporality, which does not cease to bring miser to the dispossessed. In *Memory for Forgetfulness*, which comprises both prose and verse and which he wrote

while still in Lebanon, the spring season fades, the sun sets and autumn carries what it carries for the wretched:

In autumn, the bells of the sea are still,
only the blood bells ring.
In autumn, the dove wilts.
In autumn, the heart becomes a ripe apple.
In autumn, memory shatters,
and wine flows from forgetfulness.
In autumn, the mute speaks:
“I wish I could scatter my footsteps over a path of foam!
I wish I could scatter my footsteps, and sleep on a bed of foam!
Haifa! Why don’t you fly like a dove?” (*Memory for Forgetfulness*,
p. 97)

As illustrated in the poem, the expressions “blood bells”, “dove wilts”, “the heart becomes a ripe apple”, “the mute speaks”, and “Haifa! Why don’t you fly like a dove?” are what Traer reprimands as “political corruption” and what transpires in the form of chaotic milieu. The poem, with Darwish elaborations, suggests that in hard times, everything beautiful diminishes: the bells stop ringing and blood permeates the scene. The doves, historically symbols of peace, stop humming, while the heart dies. In the state of chaos, the unfamiliar becomes familiar, making the “mute speak”, and the persona in the poem is baffled, seeking answers from the non-human, “Haifa”—a city by the sea in Palestine.

Particularly during the First Palestinian Intifada, Darwish’s poetic expression comes to depict the kind of life for Palestinians at home and abroad. In his reflection on the state of incarceration in the Palestinian context, Darwish writes:

They gagged his mouth,
Bound his hands to the rock of the dead,
And said: Murderer!
They drove him away from every port,
Took his young sweetheart,
Then said: Refugee! (“The Music of Human Flesh” p. 3).

The underlined words (gagged, drove, refugee) show that the text establishes an unstable link between what is right and what is wrong according to Traer's taxonomy, between life as it should be and the state of dispossession as it stands. Traer builds his argument on the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights framework, which expressly states in Article 9 that "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile". As the words "gagged", "drove", "port", and "refugee" imply, Darwish seems to speak first to the state of Palestinian political detainees who rise for the fight of Zionism and its revisionist racism, and second to the torments of the Palestinian refugees who were expelled from their homeland for the benefit of another ethnic group, which was in turn uprooted (by the Zionist movement) from its western milieu and planted in Palestine, all the way displacing its original people, who bear no responsibility for the suffering of the Jews fleeing from the hell of Europe and Nazi Germany.

In his testing and constructing ethical proposals, Traer, citing religious traditions of mutual identification ("Do to others as you would have them do to you")¹, reprimands human assault on others, which requires people to take action whenever justice is at stake. But as he argues, such religious traditions may not mirror how states behave in reality, since human greed and quest for power often go off limits.

The Palestinian Stone (or First) Intifada came in 1988 to expose Israel and its fascistic behavior, making many Jewish communities worldwide feel ashamed of Israel's behavior (Neumann, 1990: p. 29). The Israeli occupier's image as an "enlightened" state (the way Israel presents itself to the world) collapsed in front of the barefoot children who, with small stones, hit back at Israel's heavily armed military.

¹ This is a Christian text, but it has similar meanings in other religions: Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Daoism, Hinduism and Zoroastrianism (Traer pp. 78-79).

The Zionist awareness, when it could not defend that true image, tried to inaugurate a supra-historical sanctity for the Jewish executioners, who could no longer play the victim, a role the occupier monopolized for decades (ibid p. 30). Darwish's response to such monopoly is a rumination of the cost of the occupation on Israel not only through confrontation with Palestinian civilians, but also through revealing to the world the extent of the harm Israel has inflicted on the Jews of the world and their status as Nazi's victims.

After leaving Beirut, Darwish formulated his most radical stance on Zionism and the Israeli occupation, by mapping the borderlines between the Palestinian message-based on the desire for liberation, and the Israeli one- based on colonialism and closure towards the other, as it becomes manifest in Israel's endeavor toward a Jewish-only State, or as The Guardian- quoting from former Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu- puts is: "Israel is not a state of all its citizens" (10 March, 2019). For Darwish, Zionism has never been a victim; rather it is an ideology that committed the crime twice: once with its ethnic cleansing of Palestine; a second time with its moral killing of the spirit of the Jewish victim in the European context. Zionism and its criminal child (Israel) can no longer continue to steal and monopolize the role of the victim, neither from the Palestinians, nor from the Jews - the survivors whom it claims to speak for while betraying their human conscience and the ethics of sympathy with their past tragedies.

Although the struggle against anti-Semitism is a humanitarian front, Darwish sees this as a Palestinian affair, especially since Israel insists on confusing the Israeli, the Jew and the Zionist, to make the Palestinian victim's self-defense a crime against the bloodthirsty survivors in defense of their settler colonial enterprise in Palestine. In "State of Siege", Darwish's persona addresses an Israeli soldier:

If you had contemplated the victim's face
and thought it through,
you would have remembered your mother
in the gas chamber.
You would have been freed from
the reason for the rifle. (*The Butterfly's Burden* p. 131).

Here, "the gas chamber" invokes the victims of the Holocaust, suggesting that the poet is acknowledging the past tragedy of the oppressor, and he does this to make this oppressor be aware of what he inflicts on the vulnerable Palestinians. The history that is carved by Israeli heavy military machines is drawn on the other side by children throwing stones at heavy-footed soldiers. In this ongoing conflict, the poet triumphs, believing that the relationship between the Palestinians and Zionism is one of continuous confrontation, and that the search for coexistence and mutual recognition is nothing but vain, self-negation, and illusion, for the Zionist ideology cannot coexist with the Palestinians, nor with the world as long as it insists on dividing the world into Jews and non-Jews. He boldly states this in *Memory for Forgetfulness*: "Metal is time's master, / and nothing cuts one metal except another that carves a different history" (p. 118).

The history that is carved by Israeli heavy military machines is drawn on the other side by children throwing stones at heavy-footed soldiers. Darwish's diligently expressive and orchestral depiction of Palestinian ordeal of the time offers accounts of the kind of life in occupied Palestine. The state of moral chaos created by the Israeli occupation in Palestine is certainly against what one would expect from the religious teachings of Judaism, since the Bible, according to Traer, holds humans responsible for all creatures that share the earth. In "Poem of the Land", Darwish mourns five elementary school girls murdered heinously by the Israeli soldiers while walking back home:

In the month of March,
five girls at the door of a primary school
came past the violet,
came past the rifle,
burst into flame. (“Indiatimes”, n.d.)

The image of the state of utter disorder is scrutinized by bringing together both innocence, picked by “violet”, and death. As the case may be, Traer’s idea of nonviolence is being challenged by what happens in Palestine. Traer, informed by moral philosophy, argues that killing of humans is morally wrong. Darwish’s poem offers the state in Palestine as one that challenges moral virtues.

Darwish even takes his poetics to contemplate conditions beyond the land of Palestine. The disorder, miser and chaos surrounding the conflict are not restricted to the geography of historic Palestine, as the state of disorder extends to reach also any surrounding country hosting the Palestinian refugees, in what seems like a butterfly effect. In his poetry book *The Butterfly’s Burden*, Darwish seems inspired by American meteorologist, mathematician and chaos theory pioneer Edward Norton Lorenz in his article titled “Deterministic Nonperiodic Flow” (1963). The poet alludes to the concept of ‘butterfly effect’, which he contemplates through a poetic lens. Darwish reminds us that the butterfly effect does not follow a predictable pattern, and whether we like it or not, chaos is part of our lives. A small issue can generate big consequences. It is a mysterious attraction that draws meaning, pain, calamities and then leaves. The chaos surrounding the Palestine/Israel context extends beyond the historic borders of Palestine, and Darwish has it to contemplate the forms of chaos also in countries hosting Palestinians as refugees. His poem “I Have a Seat in the Abandoned Theater” in *The Butterfly’s Burden* bleeds regret over the pathetic, disorderly state of the leadership of Arab countries:

I have a seat in the abandoned theater
in Beirut.
I might forget, and I might recall
the final act without longing,
not because of anything
other than that the play was not written
skillfully,
Chaos. (*The Butterfly's Burden* p. 275).

The analogy is that of the situation of the Arab League of States and the conferences it regularly holds. According to Lobna Ben Salem (2021), “Palestinians were betrayed by Arab states before being manipulated by the British, and this makes their trauma more insidious and profound” (p. 5). The “abandoned seat” is that for Palestine. The irresolution surrounding Palestine sends every one into ignorance, or what Traer, in the context of environmental crisis – following Frank Knight – calls “pure uncertainty” (p. 139), whereby a state’s limited understanding of the results of its actions leads to crossing red lines set by ethical philosophy as regards systems that keep actions in line of what is right and what is wrong.

The chaos hinted at above had also some bearing on the ordinary people. In his *Memory for Forgetfulness*, Darwish reflects on a single day of the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982. His account questions different cultural perspectives, and it has little to do with the official politics of the parties involved in the conflict. In a dialogue between the poet and a Lebanese Maronite woman, the latter wishes that Bashir Jmayel² was elected as a president of Lebanon, so that he could collaborate with the Israelis to get rid of the ‘aliens’ (referring to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon). The poet speaks his mind regarding that dialogue: “I feel no rancor toward her; rather, pity at how deeply she has gone into mere fantasy and refusal of the Other. I don’t hold a grudge against

² Bashir Jmayel was the commander of the Lebanese Forces, a militia that was involved, and complicit with Israel, in killing thousands of Palestinian unarmed refugees during Israel’s invasion of Lebanon (Shahid, pp. 36-58).

her but bring her whatever bread and grapes I can find at the vendors” (p. 38). Darwish’s rumination speaks to the chaotic nature of life during war, which takes not only people’s lives, but also their morals, their sense of identification with victims. And yet, Darwish’s stance remains one that shows tolerance and love for life. Once the war in Lebanon was over, the Palestinian leadership and the resistance fighters- under pressure from Arab states- left Lebanon toward another exile, this time to Tunisia. And Darwish does not cease to contemplate the multiple displacements, an exile after another. His stance toward the Palestinian leadership’s decision to leave Beirut in 1982, following the Israeli invasion, is that of praise rather than condemnation, for victory was impossible; and a person of national conscience would have had to be highly humane by preferring withdrawal over mass death or turning Beirut into a ruined landscape.

The specters of exile, alienation and dispossession haunt the Palestinians wherever they are:

“You are aliens here,” they say to them there.

“You are aliens here,” they say to them here. (*The Butterfly's Burden* p. 6).

Palestinians are alienated there- in Palestine (Palestinians are told by the occupier: “You are aliens”), and here- in Lebanon (Palestinians are told by the Lebanese: “You are aliens”). The question “why this happens” remains resounding in Darwish’s later poetry. Especially with the turn of the twenty first century, Darwish bitterly contemplates what happened to the Palestinian national project, and the open war on Gaza and other territories of Palestine, as evidenced by his questions about what the occupier wants while watching the fire of Palestine. In his long poem *Eleven Planets Over Andalusia* (1991), he commemorates the fifth centenary of the fall of Granada, which coincided with the holding of the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and the

resulting Oslo Accords between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization³:

How do I write above the clouds my kin' will? And my
kin leave time behind as they leave their coats in the houses,
and my kin whenever they build a fortress,
they raze it to erect above it
a tent of longing for the early palm trees.
My kin betray my kin
in wars of defending salt.
But Granada is gold and silken words embroidered with almonds,
silver tears in the oud string. Granada is for the great ascension to herself...
and she can be however she desires to be: the longing for
anything that has passed or will pass: a swallow's wing scratches
a woman's breast in bed, and she screams: Granada is my body.
A man loses his gazelle in the wilderness and screams: Granada is my
country.
And I come from there. So sing for the sparrows to build from my ribs
a stairway to the proximal sky. Sing the gallantry of those ascending to their
fate
moon by moon in the lovers' alley. Sing the birds of the garden
stone by stone. How I love you, you, who tore me
string by string on her way to her hot night . . . sing!
There is no morning for coffee's scent after you, sing my departure
from the cooing of pigeons on your knees, and from my soul's nest
in the letters of your easy name, Granada is for song, so sing! (*The
Butterfly's Burden* p. 204).

The words “fortress” and “tent” are juxtaposed in what could be illustrated as pros and cons of an ethical hypothesis people assume as they conduct their life. In such a process of reasoning, people, according to Traer, rely on their intuition and their individual and collective experience (p. 158). The tension is between a “fortress”, something very precious, and a “tent”, something which denotes miserable conditions. According to Traer, people should always test the “relevant personal virtues and caring relationships” (p. 158), and, accordingly, weigh the positive and negative sides of an action; so if the negative sides outweigh the positive ones, then the constructed “ethical

³ The Agreement promised the Palestinians a state established on only 23 percent of the land of Palestine and recognized Israel's sovereignty on the rest. The promise has not been fulfilled.

proposals” (ibid) should be revisited. Indeed, the negative consequences of displacing people by demolishing their “fortress” far outweigh the positive ones. Darwish’s stance on Oslo is inspired by the vision of Prophet Joseph, who symbolizes an ability to see into the future. The poet moves from the present to the past, projecting the past experience onto the present day Palestine, bringing metaphors that draw links between the Qur’anic verses (of Joseph’s story) and the last scenes of the fallen Andalusia. Palestine’s experience is pitted against that of Andalusia, and Granada becomes Jerusalem, and the present is embodied as a mirror that sees the ancient Andalusian past on the one hand and the Palestinian future on the other.

5.2.2 How Does Mahmoud Darwish’s Poetry Exemplify Environmental Subtlety?

5.2.2.1 Environmental Subtlety and Relationships

Darwish’s depiction of the other-than-human world suggests an undertaking with ecological accountability for human actions and their repercussions for whatever lies under the heavens. In much of his poetry, Darwish’s imagining shows sensitivity to the elements of poetic complexity, the human ordeal and the environmental subtlety. The suffering is collective; it transcends the human beings and reaches the surroundings that humans live in and interact with. This means that the losses of Palestinian people due to the Israeli occupier are accounted with the losses of Palestinian natural environment. This is illustrated by the words (two, eight , forty olive trees) . This means that the Israeli occupier kills around two to three Palestinian people also he destroys around forty olive trees per day. On different occasions, the poetics of human suffering is juxtaposed by what is inflicted on the environment– the losses of Palestinian lives due

to the occupier's atrocities are counted alongside losses in the natural world, as he has it in "State of Siege":

Our losses are between two and eight a day.
And ten are wounded.
Twenty homes are gone.
Forty olive groves destroyed,
in addition to the structural damage
afflicting the veins of the poem,
the play, and the unfinished painting.
A woman said to a cloud: cover my dear one,
for my clothes are wet with his blood.
If you are not rain, o dear one,
then be a tree,
fertile and verdant.
Be a tree.
And if not a tree, o dear one be a stone
laden with dew.
Be a stone. And if not a stone, o dear one,
be the moon itself
in the dreams of she who loves you.
Be the moon itself.,
[thus a woman said to her son, in his funeral]. (*The Butterfly's Burden* p. 137).

In his teleological approach to ethics, Traer holds that nature, animals and the landscape have "intrinsic worth", which means that we should deal with nature as an end not as a mean to our end because it is like human beings and we shouldn't rely on nature to the extent that bring destruction upon it. and thus they should be protected and preserved. In the lines quoted above, which Darwish composed as an eye witness when the West Bank city of Ramallah was under inhuman siege by the Israeli tanks and warplane fighters during the Second Intifada (2000-2005) the dialogues Darwish creates with the self and the other self as well as with the self and the occupier constitute a stance of ethical responsibility, but also ones that bleed and bear much of grief toward the state of the non-human world. The verse suggests a kind of juxtaposing ethics and aesthetics by engaging dialogues with nature and living things affected by Israeli occupier's atrocities, and Darwish's exposition involves an integration of nature's and

human's subjectivity. The losses of human lives- "two to eight a day"- are collated with "twenty homes", "forty olive groves", and "structural damage". Darwish's take on such subjectivities encompasses very sophisticated connections in the form of metaphors. The bereaved mother addresses her fallen child and wishes if he could turn into rain, a tree, a stone, a moon, so that he could eternally inhabit her dreams.

Darwish's woman does not view nature as a material thing separate from her, but rather as an extension of her being, nourished by her experience, as Darwish expressly puts it in *Unfortunately, It Was Paradise*: "You will light up the tunnel of the unthinkable questions about this existence and about the brief wall of time. Nature is nothing but spirit" (p.44).

The mother trusts in what Traer calls "indomitable human spirit" and the ability of nature to resist human violations (p. 171).

The concept of treating nature as a spirit was perhaps inspiring for Darwish when he composed many of his late career poems. In "The Hoopoe" in 2003, the persona converses with birds: "O hoopoe of mysteries, take us to our endless tomorrow! / Hitch our time to the horizon of this vastness and soar with us" (*Unfortunately, It Was Paradise* p. 43). The poet ascribes to the hoopoe some human attributes: resistance, freedom and hope, and he lends to this bird all his hopes, dreams and aspirations for freedom and return to his mother land. He sees in this bird a faithful messenger, imbued with historical and religious symbolism. And such symbols form what can be described as a cluster of images drawn from nature: olives, oranges, wind, fire, rain, stones, oaks, the sea, the sand.

In the poem "Rubaiyat" (lit. quatrains) Darwish sees such things in an informational form and closes his eyes in order to see them dreamily as he wants, in imagined, symbolic mental images, turning himself into an oracle. He recalls the field,

the wheat, the water well, the green land, the sea, seagulls, and almonds. Images of night, war, prison, death and blood evoke in him the dispossession of his people; yet he marries in his dreams those images with those of peace:

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 his children in a faraway place.
I see what I want of lightning... I see
the vegetation of the fields crumbling the shackles. O joy. (*If I Were Another*
p.7).

There is much of recollection of the past, of the poet's birthplace, where the soul of the poet is restored by the fields that turn green and produce yields when lightning hits them, when almond trees become doves, which people, in turn, raise as they bring up their children. The narrator closes his eyes and sees the deer sleeping on his arms, while the hunter and his children are removed from the scene. Reality, nonetheless, is harsh—an absurd theater:

I see what I want of the theatre of the absurd:
beasts, court judges, the emperor's hat,
the masks of the era, the color of the ancient sky,
the palace dancer, the mayhem of armies.
Then I forget them all,
and remember only the victim behind the curtain. (*If I Were Another* p.7).

In Palestine's landscape, the beasts have become court judges, Napoleon has thrown his hat on Acre when he couldn't get through its walls, the leaders have worn masks, and the scene has turned chaotic by invaders. And yet, the images of the absurd theater are petted against what nature delivers of beauty and hope. The poet insists on intuitively looking at the field and sees whatever he wants to see:

I see what I want of the field... I see
braids of wheat combed by the wind, and I close my eyes:
This mirage leads to the Nahawand
and this serenity leads to lapis. (*If I Were Another* p.7).

Relying on moral philosophy and religious traditions, Traer suggests that all forms of life are identified with human life. This also seems to resonate in Darwish, who sees the ears of wheat swaying in the wind like a little girl lying in the arms of her mother, who is combing the girl's braids. The poet humanizes the scene, substituting "ears" with "braids" and what could be "blown by" with "combed by." And he enjoys this scene and closes his eyes to see mirage and stillness, both give way to "the Nahawand", a system of Arabic harmonious tones that suit melancholic lyrics, but it still has an elated character, as well as the deep-blue lapis lazuli, which is the finest types of metamorphic rocks. This analysis shows that sometimes we rely on nature to negotiate for something.

Traer, in his theorization of ecological ethics, asserts that the natural world "has intrinsic worth apart from any person's use of it" (p. 79). In the context of colonization, Traer holds that "the cruel political philosophy of the West easily rationalized both exploitation and expropriation of the commons, as well as the slaughter and bondage of native peoples" (p. 18).

In "Rubaiyat", the scenes are placed in proximity to a state of incarceration and tribulation the holy land of Palestine has been going through for decades:

I see what I want of prison: a flower's days
 passed through here to guide two strangers within me
 to a seat in the garden, and I close my eyes:
 Spacious is the land, beautiful through a needle's eye (*If I Were Another* p.7)

The metaphors employed by the poet are nonetheless capable of turning the "prison" into a garden of flowers. The poet looks at the prison and sees the days of a flower, a metaphor for prime time, as most prison inmates are young Palestinians, men and women, who rise to defend their homeland. They are incarcerated to bring their

fellow people “a seat in the garden”, an image of the ideal conditions outside the prison. They are paying by their youthful days to change Palestinian life for the better, to move the oppressed people from the prison to the garden. The poet closes his eyes in order to project his dreams of a world outside the prison, and he sees the beauty of the great world through the eye of a needle, the prison.

In the same poem, love of nature and appreciation of the non-human world are brought through contradictory images:

I see what I want of love... I see
horses making the meadow dance, fifty guitars sighing,
and a swarm of bees suckling the wild berries,
and I close my eyes until I see our shadow behind this dispossessed place
(*If I Were Another*, p. 8).

In the first image, it is natural for the horses to dance in the meadows, but these creatures are also able to make the meadows dance – inanimate objects, animals, and natural phenomena are humanized. The real image, on the other hand, is that of a “swarm of bees sucking the wild berries”. Yet, the narrator closes his eyes to see “our shadow behind this dispossessed place”, a metaphor of persistence, defiance, and escape from death and denial:

I see what I want of the night... I see
the end of this long corridor by some city's gates.
I'll toss my notebook on the sidewalk of cafés,
and place this absence on a chair aboard one of the ships. (*If I Were Another*, p.7).

The poet sees the night as he wants, an end to “a long corridor”. A sense of positivism walks into the scene, with the corridor likely leading to safety. Once there, he throws his notebook, which contains memories of his past, on a cafe sidewalk, thus putting an end to his absence and displacement. The metaphors Darwish employs are an artistic progress from the earth, through the trees, the soil and the animal world to the human heart, which appears more clearly as more of symbols emerge in his poetry.

This composite— of the poet’s soul, the homeland soil, the birds, the trees, the stones — is there to fight the occupier’s encroachments, and Darwish’s metonymies become “an empowering outlet for the powerless and a home for the homeless” (Simawe, 2001, p. 81). Darwish brings to his literary expression such elements from nature to create parallel worlds, through which he evinces his take on the real world. According to Traer, plants and animals can feel the changes that humans bring to nature, and these non-human worlds can also identify the level and source of disturbances to the system. (p. 14). Darwish takes these sensitivities to a symbolic level, where birds feel the changes around them and behave accordingly- in a militant conflict they only fly when war planes disappear:

When the planes disappear, the pigeons fly,
white, very white, washing the cheek of the sky
with free wings (*The Butterfly’s Burden*, p. 141).

The poet brings to his literary expression such elements from nature to create parallel worlds, through which he evinces his take on the real world. The pigeons for Darwish usher hope, as under siege they appear only during recess, as though they can feel the atmosphere and know exactly that the “planes” (Israel’s planes) are the source of disturbance and carnage.

This kind of symbolism recurs time and again in Darwish’s poetry, and perhaps this is one reason why many of his texts have an epic quality to them, and the myth in them is a major element. His epic poetics holds in one hand the myth and in the other history and socio-politics. According to T. S. Eliot, “[t]he only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked” (180). Darwish not only expresses

feelings, but also invents a parallel world that can help him bear all of those feelings. Then he leaves to the reader the task of linking the two worlds: the created and the original. The image that a poem initially creates symbolizes another image. And perhaps this is one reason why Darwish would bring much of mythology and history into his aesthetics. His poetry has an epic quality to it, and the myth in it is a major element that appears time and again. His epic poetics holds in one hand the myth and in the other history.

In his epic poem, “The Red Indian’s Penultimate Speech to the White Man”, Darwish- by summoning the image of the Red Indian (the captive of the white settler)- realizes that he creates in the collective imagination of his people a kind of association between two worlds: that of the Native Americans’ landscape and that of occupied Palestine, and yet it is no longer possible for a Palestinian to imagine that the poem speaks only to a Red Indian:

O white master, Lord of the horses,
what do you want from those making their way to the night woods? Our
pastures are sacred, our spirits inspired.
The stars are luminous words where our fable is legible from the beginning
to end
if only you'll lift up your eyes: born between water and fire, reborn in clouds
on an azure shore after Judgement day...
Don't kill the grass any more,
it possesses a soul in us that could shelter the soul of the earth.
Tamer of horses, teach your horse to ask forgiveness of nature's soul for the
way you've treated our trees.
O Sister tree,
look how they've tortured you the way they've tortured me; never ask
forgiveness for the woodcutter whose axe felled both your mother and mine.
The white man will never understand the ancient words here in spirits
roaming free between sky and trees. (*The Adam of Two Edens*, pp. 127-
128).

The question “what do you want from those making their way to the night woods?” interrogates in the first place the nature of human actions within a system of ethics. It is a kind of defense of the balance of nature against human violations: “Don't

kill the grass any more, / it possess a soul in us that could /shelter the soul of the earth". He takes on the mask of the Red Indian to defend the innocence of humanity and warn of the intensification of the military machinery whose destruction knows no limits, uprooting all inherited meanings and greedily consuming the natural landscape. This meaning resonates in later parts of the poem:

Our names are trees of the word of God
and a bird that flies higher than a gun.
Do not cut down the name-trees,
O you who come from the sea for war,
and do not blow your horses into flames on the plains.
You will need a treaty with our ghosts on those
sterile winter nights,
a less bright sun, a less full moon
for the crime to appear
less glamorous on the screen.
Take what you need of the sea but leave us a few waves in which to catch
our fish.
Take all the gold of the earth and sun
but leave the land of our names to us.
Then go back, stranger. (*The Adam of Two Edens* pp. 131-132).

The summon of "land" as a historical category versus "territory" as a political category, speaks to the essence of the struggle of the Palestinian people. Therefore, he asserts that his literary expression allows him to capture the message of the Red Indian, which depicts the Palestinians in a way that has yet to be trodden. He persists that he has the honor that his defense of the Palestinian rights relates well to the plight of Red Indians, for it is a defense of the balance of the universe and nature, which is being violated by the white man. This is because the Palestinian, according to Darwish, "finds himself in every tragedy", which is so devastating that it can identify with any saga since the time of the ancient Greeks.

The poet repositions the elements that he borrows from other people's stories, and then relates them with the story of his people, thus becoming a myth-maker – constructing a mythical world in which the stories and dreams of peoples mingle in his

aesthetics, such that it becomes difficult for the reader to separate the elements of the Palestinian story from those of other nations the poet evokes.

In this poem, Darwish brings an archetype that corresponds to the image of the uprooted Palestinians. The congruence between the image of the Red Indian, in its historical context, and the image of the contemporary Palestinian, seems quite sharp against the background of the Palestinian national project reaching a haunting historical turning point in 1993, with the signing of the Oslo Accords, which promised a lot but brought nothing to the Palestinians. Quite pertinent to this is Traer's criticism of the concept of "conquest and colonization" (p. 18), whereby endeavors by colonialists to exploit the land and its resources take no heed for "indigenous and non-Western people" (ibid). According to Traer, a big part of what the natural environment suffers is a result of expansion by industrial and commercial companies, but equally owing to loose regulations by governments. In Palestine, however, this big part comes almost exclusively from the Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights. Such violations target the human in the first place, but then they just spill to the natural surroundings. The Israeli oppressor will always be tormented by the souls of the victims – both of the human and the non-human:

Over bridges you construct,
the dead are already passing.
There are dead who light up the night
of butterflies,
and the dead who come at dawn
to drink your tea
as peaceful as on the day your
guns mowed them down.
O you, the guests in this place,
leave a few chairs empty
for your hosts to read out
the conditions for peace
in a treaty with the dead.
(*The Adam of Two Edens* p. 131).

The future appears bleak in this poem, and the presence of the elements of nature that store the ghosts of the defeated and dissolve them to become part of it restores Darwish's poetry to its legendary pivot, when the poem opens to a space of alienation and bitterness, lamenting the deterioration of the Palestinian landscape. The innocent people are mowed just like the grass is mowed by the mower's machine.

Darwish is aware of how important the natural landscape is, and his aesthetics speaks candidly to dismantled, ruined places, so as he can reconstruct their history and their geography through language:

We will face our death, but first
we'll defend the trees we wear.
We'll venerate the bell of night, the moon
hanging over our shacks.
We'll defend our leaping deer,
the clay of our jars, the feathers
in the wings of our last songs. (*The Adam of Two Edens*. p 131).

Here is a spiritual bond Darwish establishes between man and nature, which in itself becomes expressive of man's concerns. Nature is embedded in the blood of man, who should spare nothing to protect it from the strangers. So, if death is coming anyway, then let it come only after the people protect the trees which the poet and his people "wear".

Darwish presents Israel's colonial enterprise as a genocidal project that also marks the way the new international order is emerging: conquest, domination, and abolition. But the poet also asserts that the colonialist will not be able to live in peace, since he will always be tormented by the souls of the victims – both of the human and the non-human:

We'll emerge from the flower of the grave.
We'll lean out of the poplar's leaves of all that besieges you, O white man,
of all the dead who are still dying,
both those who live and those
who return to tell the tale.

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. (*The Adam of Two Edens*, p. 132).

The material metaphors (flowers, poplar's leaves, the earth), the moral position on the discovery / conquest, and the historical awareness of the root causes of the Palestinian- Israeli conflict are reminders of Traer's ideas about the obligation of rich countries (and Israel by extension) to put an end to injustices imposed on developing countries and native populations (p. 91). This also entails restraining immediate halt to activities that damage the ecosystem (ibid). This means that rich countries have more natural resources such as (flowers, poplar's leaves, the earth) than poor countries which suffer from violence destruction ..etc , so these natural resources give rich countries more power. From a moral perspective, rich countries will be able to be side by side with poor countries put an end to injustices imposed on developing countries and native populations

Darwish does not stop this act of contemplating and conversing with the natural world. In the poem "Earth Presses Against Us", he conceives of the human-nature relationship as one of identification and harmony. The earth becomes the container of all ecological constituents in his homeland. He belongs to it, and its bounties lend him life and protection:

Earth is pressing against us, trapping us in the final passage.
To pass through, we pull off our limbs.
Earth is squeezing us.
If only we were its wheat, we might die and yet live.
If only it were our mother so that she might temper us with mercy.
If only we were pictures of rocks held in our dreams like mirrors.
We glimpse faces in their final battle for the soul, of those who will be killed
by the last living among us.
We mourn their children's feast.
We saw the faces of those who would throw our children out of the windows
of this last space. A star to burnish our mirrors.
Where should we go after the last border?
Where should birds fly after the last sky?

Where should plants sleep after the last breath of air?
We write our names with crimson mist!
Vie end the hymn with our flesh.
Here we will die. Here, in the final passage.
Here or there, our blood will plant olive trees (*Unfortunately, it was Paradise* p. 9).

The string of “Where” questions in the poem has a climactic sense to it, motivated by contemplations of how hard the movement is for Palestinians; to move from one place into another, the Palestinian has to “pull off” his “limbs”. The metaphor is brought repulsively to tell those who are uninformed of the Palestinian plight to imagine somebody tearing off his limbs to be able to move. To understand the metaphor, one might flash back on Danny Boyle’s 2010 movie “127 Hours”, in which the protagonist, a mountaineer, gets his arm trapped by a boulder, and to survive he has to amputate his arm. But unlike Boyle’s protagonist- who has to face only one trial (represented by being trapped in the boulder), Palestinians have all the winds blowing against them, creating a pressing, ruthless earth, the escape from which is death: “Here we will die. Here, in the final passage. / Here or there, our blood will plant olive trees”. Yet the form of death hinted at is one that brings resurrection and breathes metaphorical life into nature. The human blood mingles with the soil, yielding olive trees and nurturing hope. This meaning is brought rather expressively in “Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone?": “I gaze upon trees guarding the night from the night” (*Unfortunately, It Was Paradise*, p. 55). The first “night”, the one in which the poet can rest and find peace of mind, is placed in contrast to the second “night”, which evokes darkness, oppression and gloom the occupier delivers to people and nature.

When in exile, the main concern of people is safety, which is sometimes lent through memories of the past. Darwish summons his language to recollect his past. The absurd sociopolitical landscape in occupied Palestine makes the poet evoke “the horse”,

making it a symbol of memories and noble meanings that remind him of his homeland. In “The Everlasting Indian Fig”, a son fleeing the 1948 massacres asks his father, “Where are you taking me, father?” (*Unfortunately, It Was Paradise*, p. 65). The answer comes very dry: “Where the wind blows, son.” It is the north, the direction which brings cold, making the sky overcast and people feel lonely. The son continues asking: “Why did you leave the horse alone?” The father replies resoundingly: “To keep the house company, O my son, / for houses perish if their inhabitants go away.” (ibid p. 66). With this kind of remembering, Darwish faces the harsh reality of exile, but also remembers those Palestinians who stayed there defending the homeland. The least we can do, therefore, is to live with hope, and the poet wishes that Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled, where “[t]he wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them” (Isaiah, 11:6).

The word “earth” here is not the natural world but one created by geopolitics and spoiled by human interference, and thus the level of suffering and distress linked to the earth is engendered by human action. There is here a kind of intimation regarding what Traer dubs “mystical love for nature” (p. 171), where he supports the deep ecologists’ spiritual approach to nature: that there is unity between humans, plants, animals, and the Earth (p. 128).

In the lines above, Darwish also seems to be alluding to the Quranic verse: “All living beings roaming the earth and winged birds soaring in the sky are communities like yourselves” (Surah 6:38).

Again, within morality claims, as elucidated by Traer, ignoring the ethical standards stipulated by international human rights laws is one major reason for the deterioration of the natural world. These standards are negotiated metaphorically by

Darwish as he contemplates the almost human state in occupied Palestine. And yet, he also offers a kind of harmony that is still there. The meaning of envisaged co-existence and harmony is echoed by the following lines from *The Butterfly's Burden*:

Tomorrow we will love life.

When tomorrow comes,

life will be something to adore

just as it is, ordinary, or tricky

gray, or colorful...

stripped of judgement day and purgatory...

and if joy is a necessity

let it be

light on the heart and the back

Once embittered by joy, twice shy. (*Unfortunately, It Was Paradise* p. 128).

Darwish's poetics advances to intensify a cumulative statement about the dichotomy of triumph and defeat that he had been preoccupied with since the 1967 setback. Darwish intensifies a cumulative statement about the dichotomy of triumph and defeat that he had been preoccupied with since the 1967 setback, which is for him a crude reminiscent of the great defeat of the 1948 Nakba. He never doubts that the defeat of the Israelis lies in their victory, which came without merit and in the process disgraced the collective mind of the Israeli Jews, due to excessive self-confidence, which eventually compromised their morality. The Israeli Zionists, who would choose myth over reality and took pride in restoring the spirit of 'Sparta' to achieve deterrence, did not learn the lesson that history has to teach people: that defeat lies in expansionism. For him, Zionism has compromised morality when it adopted and mimicked the European fascism that preceded it, and later built and administered a settler colonial project that identifies itself with European colonialism. Zionism has criminalized the Palestinians in a way that rendered them unable to forgive, but it has also criminalized the Jews, by involving them in the brutal settler-colonial project of the State of Israel.

Although Darwish would appear uncompromising in his position toward the Palestinian- Israeli conflict, he sometimes allows his poetics to look at a room for reconciliation , a recess, to say the least. In more than one text, Darwish humanizes the other – an endeavor to present a different image of the enemy – specifically the perpetrator, the Israeli soldier. Darwish reflects on the state of fear and anxiety the Israelis suffer, which is the result of feeling of distress of the ongoing conflict. By emphasizing the human predicament of this enemy, it is possible to bet on a moral stance that enhances the meaning of resistance as a condition for human liberation.

Traer allude to the idea of reconciliation when he states that people are “able to listen to reason” when it comes to settling conflicts (p. 104). In *A Soldier Dreaming of White Lilies*, Darwish converses with an Israeli soldier tired of war. The poem contemplates a question about the meaning of the homeland:

He dreams of white lilies,
 an olive branch, her breasts in evening blossom.
 He dreams of a bird, he tells me,
 of lemon flowers.
 He does not intellectualize about his dream.
 He understands things as he senses and smells them.
Homeland for him, he tells me,
 is to drink my mother's coffee,
 to return at nightfall.
 I asked him: and the land?
 I don't know it, he said.
 I don't feel it in my flesh and blood. (*Unfortunately, It Was Paradise*, p. 168).

In this poem, Darwish puts aside the revolutionary component of his poetry, relying instead on a low-pitched reading of the Palestinian reality, this time from the eyes of an Israeli soldier. He rationalizes the state of an Israeli soldier, since rationalizations may help people “attain a less self-serving point of view” (Traer, p. 131). A sharp transition from the human-victim to the human-soldier formula is not, however, attributable to the specificity of Palestine. Rather, Darwish seems to prefer

extending the meaning of the homeland in human terms stripped of the geography of the place, its moral significance and its special religious symbolism. The soldier, like the victim, dreams of and wants white lilies, and there is no need for him to kill the vulnerable, the weak, the unarmed. The Israeli soldier reduces the idea of the homeland to the limits of the individual, a non-ideological understanding, and he does not philosophize his dream, nor does he understand things except as he senses them. In the poem, the human is not frail, and his speech is born out of fatigue and often falls into simplicity. He is a human being who is nonconformist to his job, that is, to the foundations and the brutality of the state of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; he needs a corner to take refuge to, an asylum that is emotional rather than political.

The poem is a reading in the role of the Palestinian intellectual in managing the conflict as a moral duty in isolation from the real political conflict taking place on the ground. Darwish establishes this stage of engagement in the form of a question and an answer:

“I asked him: How many did you kill?”
He said: It is impossible to tell.
I only got one medal.
Did you feel sad? I asked.
Cutting me off, he said, Mahmoud, my friend,
Sadness is a white bird that does not come near a battlefield.
Soldiers commit a sin when they feel sad.
I was there like a machine spitting hellfire and death,
turning space into a black bird. (*Unfortunately, It Was Paradise*, p. 169).

The answers come in the form of open confessions and apparent surrender. The war has turned this soldier into a killing machine, and he admits that. But this is not to suggest that the soldier, by admitting his wrongdoing, has indeed stopped acting against morality standards, since sadness is a sin for soldiers. So, to unload pitiful emotions, rather than parting a confession, he only looks for relief in white lilies: “He said goodbye and went looking for white lilies” (p. 169). Traer reminds us of what he calls “acting”

on “conscience”. In ethical tradition, Traer argues, we should act on our conscience and test our action by trying to weigh it against established moral standards. The soldier admits killing innocent people, but he rationalizes his behavior—he is made to be a killing “machine”. Even worse, the soldier does not feel sad about what he did: “Soldiers commit a sin when they feel sad.” This farewell bid in the final line is the end of a sterile dialogue between the Palestinian and the other, for Darwish assumes in this stage of the dialogue that he can strip the other of the elements he clings to, and renders this other armless and exposed, thus turning the dialogue in the self’s favor. The relationship between the self and the other remains hypothetical and debatable. At the same time, though, negotiating the self is often at the expense, and to the exclusion, of the other. The dichotomy of the self and the other is entrenched in an assumed conflict between binary opposites: life and death, good and evil, right and wrong, masculinity and femininity, and other opposing relationships that govern human and cultural expression.

And yet, Darwish still sees in this soldier vestiges of a human being that permeate his wrongdoing. If this is the case, then there is no qualm for the poet to meet this other through a natural human relationship. In a poem titled “Rita’s Winter”, Darwish brings a Jewish woman, who may be real or imagined, to converse with his self, yet he cannot eliminate the difference between his self and that woman:

Rita arranges our room's night and says:
There isn't much wine,
and these flowers are larger than my bed.
Open the window for them
to perfume the beautiful night and place, right here.
[...]
Scratch my feet, scratch my blood for us to know
what storms and floods leave behind of you and me.
[...]
She broke the ceramic of the day against the iron windowpane,
placed her handgun on the poem's draft,

threw her stockings on the chair, and the cooing broke.
Then she went barefoot to the unknown,
and departure reached me. (*If I Were Another*, pp. 88-93).

At the first glance, the text might seem like a love poem; however, it is far from being so. In the lines quoted above, the other (a Jewish female) tries to turn the dialogue with the narrator into one of affinity by attempting to remove and transcend all the barriers that stand between them; it is a state of attempts for consolidation. She wants the Palestinian blood to mix with the Jewish blood, to see what results from a merger of opposing elements. The paradox is captured by the metaphor of the “foot”, representing the lowest part in the human being, and “blood”, being the most precious thing and the substance which distinguishes an individual from another. The paradox is thus between what is possible— and what is commanded by the individual— and that which an individual cannot control— as it is decided by nature. However, no matter how the poet and Rita try to construct two dreams that can meet together in this packed, small place, their dreams dwindle quickly at a passing intersection, before they come apart, for those of Rita rely on power (drawing a knife), and those of the poet sing into the flute, and neither one can understand the logic of the other:

I said: Rita, why should I depart anew
as long as I have grapes and memory, and the seasons still leave me
anxious between gesture and phrase?
-What are you saying?
-Nothing, I mimic a horseman in a song
about the curse of a love besieged by mirrors.
-About me?
-And about two dreams on the pillow, they intersect and escape so one
draws out a dagger and another entrusts the commandments to the flute
-I don't get the meaning
-Nor do I, my language is shrapnel
like a woman's absence from meaning, and the horses are in suicide
at the end of the field. (*If I Were Another* p. 89).

And if the dreams cut at a point but then go separate ways, the unification between the self and the other is doomed to breakdown, since the oppressed self can no more

identify with the aggressor other, when this other persists to see things only through power. Eventually, the dialogue becomes absurd, and the murdered cannot meet with the murderer.

When discussing how to construct and test ethical proposals, Traer argues that human beings “are uniquely capable of doing ethics, and this is a social reality—not simply an individual capability” (p. 104). Traer relies in this argument on the New Testament, especially the story of “the Good Samaritan”, where a man helps his injured enemy (p. 122).

Through dialoguing, Darwish is trying to construct a shared civilized meeting, and he wants this encounter to bring something new, more likely reconciliation. For this, he makes the other a beautiful woman and casts on her sensual, not abstract, colors. The answer from the other nonetheless brings a fatal end to the dialogue, and the inevitable result is the departure of each party to the world of the unknown.

And she broke the ceramic of the day against the iron windowpane,
placed her handgun on the poem's draft,
threw her stockings on the chair, and the cooing broke.
Then she went barefoot to the unknown, and departure reached me. (If I
Were Another p.93).

All at once, the pronoun shifts from the singular “I” and “You” into the plural “We”, as both the self and the other want to terminate this absurd encounter:

There is no land for two bodies in one, no exile for exile
in these small rooms, and exit is entry:
We sing between two chasms in vain.
We should depart and clarify the path. (*If I Were Another* p.93). .

In morality tradition, people tend to use “the word conscience to refer to a person’s integration of moral sentiments and principles” (Traer, p. 10). As people accumulate experience, they build and nurture a moral community. This starts from the family but should also grow to include “all the people of the world” (ibid). Darwish

wrote perfectly on defective relationships, yet he also philosophized and rationalized such relationships. For him, there is neither a conclusive victory nor a conclusive defeat, for these two concepts perfect the game of alternation and reciprocity so that history can complete its endless movement, and one important question the poet seems to ask is ‘What does the victor do with victory, and what does the defeated do with defeat?’ Perhaps humans need some defeats to achieve moral maturity, and perhaps some victories are more dangerous for some than defeat, as victories may forestall the need to listen to the voice of history. The consequences of Israel’s win over Palestinians could be more than the occupying state can bear, and its military mentality has overgrown its body, and it has become captive to an excess of greedy power.

The phrase “all the world” in Traer’s framework could have meant, for Darwish, even his own enemies. With this being the case, a pattern of moral discourse emerges within a moral community, and Darwish seems to be an exemplar member of that community. “The Rita’s Winter” poem introduces a narrative born not only of commitment to ethical values but also augmented by the fact that the poet turns the enemy into a female who converses with the narrator in a romantic encounter.

5.2.3 How do Darwish's Poems Interrogate Spaces of Ethical Identity with Respect to Rights, Duties, Moral Characters, and Relationships with the Environment?

5.2.3.1 Rights and Duties

One idea that recurs time and again in Darwish’s imagination throughout his poetic career is how to transform the struggle with the Israeli occupation into a form of rational conflict. At the center of this notion is that at a particular point, the warring

parties should see one another as human beings with inalienable rights that eventually govern the system of relationships.

If in “Rita’s Winter”, the meeting is willingly held between the Palestinian and the Israeli, fate also writes that the two meet again, but this time without preparation, and in a totally different ambiance. Darwish’s poem “Ready Scenario” (which appears in *I Don’t Want This Poem to End*, Darwish’s last collection) perfectly articulates this antagonistic dialectic. In the poem, the image of the last meeting between the poet and the enemy, the Israeli counterpart, is replicated by a hypothetical event in which the narrator and an Israeli Jew fall from a place far from the disputed land of Palestine. The hole– or the pit– that brings together the poet and the other in an almost fateful coincidence, requires both to think of a possible exit as well, and the scenarios are prepared and ready in the imagination of each one of them:

Let's presume now that we, the enemy and
I, fell from the air into a hole.
What might happen?
In the beginning we wait for luck.
The rescuers might find us here,
and toss a safety rope our way.
And he'd say: me first, and I'd say: me first.
And in vain we'd curse each other out
before the rope reaches us.
I, a selfish optimist, will
whisper to myself without wondering
what my enemy whispers to himself. (*I Don't Want This Poem to End*, p.
56).

In the first case scenario, the poet uses the word “enemy”, which does not emerge very much in his poetry, perhaps simply or intentionally to show the reader that solutions to conflicts are usually concluded between enemies, not friends. Fate here steps up as a key player in the poet’s conception of a way out of the dilemma, for the fall is in a pit rather than on the ground. This first possible scenario is but a game of

“luck”, and even when luck plays its role, bringing with it a sort of a lifeline, the conflict between the two enemies resurfaces.

This hypothetical rope that comes for the self and the other does not cancel - even in critical moments - the intensity of the conflict between them, as each one claims for himself what he denies the other, as evidenced by expressions like “me first”, “selfish”, “whisper to myself,” “whisper to himself.” In a later stage, the poet repeats the pronouns “I” and “he”, to draw the contours of the self against those of the other; each one is waiting for salvation only for himself. The two are not acting rationally, and they evade their duties. According to Traer, it is our duty to act rationally, even if this means transcending this duty to members of other nations, and by extension, to enemies. People of morality, Traer maintains, also uphold their duties not because they expect something in return, but “because it is intrinsically the right action, rather than because we predict that the result of the action will be beneficial” (p. 72). The characters in the poem are acting based on what could be called “instrumental reasoning” rather than on what Traer terms “intrinsic value” of human beings. This means that human beings by their nature tend to use nature as an instrument in a way that they use nature to the extent that bring destruction to it , but the fact is that we should deal with nature as an end not as a mean to our end because it has an intrinsic value by itself so we can rely and use nature to an extend that doesn’t bring destruction upon people and nature . Darwish is aware of the intensity of the conflict, too harsh to the point that even coming out of the pit does not, by any means, suggest an end to the conflict, which will erupt again once they are out of the woods, and each one of them has the desire to start another episode of the ongoing conflict:

He and I

are partners in one trap.

And in the probability game, we wait for the rescue rope, so we can part ways by the edge of the hole - the chasm, and go to what remains for us of life and war... if we

are able to survive. (*I Don't Want This Poem to End*, p. 57).

The hypothetical survival after falling into the pit does not lead to the desired peace but rather to a new cycle of hostility and a new round of conflict. The language of enemies is all over the dialogue. At this moment— of uncertainty, fear and disgust— comes the second scenario: a snake peeks its head to swallow both of them:

What might happen if a snake were to appear to us here out of one of the scenes and hiss before swallowing the two frightened ones, he and I?

We will partner up in killing the snake to survive together or alone. (*I Don't Want This Poem to End*, p. 57).

In the face of this shared enemy, they are more likely to unite to defend one another and become partners for survival. Nevertheless, once they get rid of this shared enemy, neither one will have the desire to thank the other, as each already prayed for the other's perdition, so killing the snake is driven by the desire to survive rather than for one's good intentions toward the other:

Yet we will share a phrase of gratitude and congratulations on what we have accomplished together

even if it was instinct, and not us, that defended itself,

and instinct has no ideology. . (*I Don't Want This Poem to End*, p. 57).

The survival "instinct" has no political framework; it is rather a purely subconscious act, and the phrase "instinct has no ideology" also echoes well with Traer's assumption that we, as human beings, "have an intuitive sense of what we believe is right" (p. 21). When it comes to uplifting duties, it is very essential, Traer posits, that we treat every person as an end, rather than as a means to our own ends, since the "capacity for moral action means we each have intrinsic worth" (p. 93). True.

But do we always behave accordingly? In a state of chaos, this is very unlikely. Darwish's scenario continues, with the exchange now turning to a halt at the background of a lot of hubris the enemy brings forward to the scene:

And we did not converse:
I remembered the law of communication over mutual frivolity,
when he once told me:
What has become mine is mine,
and what is yours is yours and mine. (*I Don't Want This Poem to End*, p. 57).

As the time wears on while they are still there in the pit, the poet urges for a quick response, since time becomes like the foam of soap that fades quickly. Time goes by so fast, and they have to think as quickly as a quicksand to escape this predicament. The other breaks the silence: "What now?" The answer comes: "Not much, let's drain the possibilities" (p. 58), as if the solution to the conflict depends only on possibilities or hidden surprises that fate grants the frustrated parties, as if the two do not have the key to the solution. This comes counter to the fact that escape could have been possible had the other (the Israeli) put aside his arrogance and egotism with the dialogue now taken to tight corners, the other makes a confession, unabashedly disclosing what is worse than silence: "Did you forget that I buried you in a hole like this?" (p. 58). The response from the narrator comes scrupulously: "I almost did, because an alluring worn out tomorrow pulled me by the hand.

At times of recess, human-human relationships stand on the threshold of forgiveness, and the poet seems to have forgiven, since he has recollections of "the law of communication", but the other (the oppressor) does not seem to nurture any constructive rapport. Tired in the pit, and in a state of weakness and refraction, the other restrains himself and approaches the narrator for a discussion, and the answers come in the form of a questioning:

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 Don't Want This Poem to End*, p. 59).

The narrator's expression "over what now in this hole, this grave?" is a reflection of the kind of life the Israeli occupation has created in occupied Palestine. with hope fading and man losing his sense of humanity, as the Israeli occupier wants to negotiate only shares, not rights: "Over your share and mine", with duties totally absent from his stock of vocabulary. For Traer, rights and duties are key words within a framework of morality values. At the heart of this ethical framework is our duty to act in congruence with, and based on, reason and mutual identification. As Traer argues, we also consider some situations to test the level of ethics that we possess, suggesting that we also have an "intuitive sense of what we believe is right" (p. 21). This is, however, not always the case. At the point where Darwish's narrator is willing to communicate with the other, the other shows that he understands communication only in terms of gain and loss rather than rights and duties.

The encounter between the narrator and the murderer then advances to an inevitable, predetermined result, now that the occupier is not ready to compromise, and hold his duties. Time escapes, and the scenario is still open for the unknown, for an act of searching for another poet who can proceed with the game of possibilities, which will once again become endless, since such possibilities are just hypotheses created by the poets' imagination:

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! (*I Don't Want This Poem to End*, p. 58).

Eventually Darwish takes a literary position in the dialogue; he conceals his rage and pain, and tries with his moral recognition to maintain a civilized dialogue. If dialogue is not possible in the real world, he creates an imaginary one which brings him together with the other, therefore setting a platform wherein literature becomes an expression of human concerns.

In the end, however, the poet concludes that the narrator and the other are only conducting a deaf dialogue. One important assumption in Traer's theorizing of doing ethics is that for every right, there is a duty to protect it. Darwish's narrator, however, is fully aware that the other is neither prepared for a civilized exchange nor ready to deliver rights or uplift duties.

The negotiation of the system of rights and duties recurs in Darwish's poetry. Especially in *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, the lyrical poems within come heavy with questions and contemplation of what it means living under the occupation and suffering multiple exiles and dispossessions. In the poem "Think of Others", which appears at the start of the collection, the poet addresses the human beings, saying that people work very hard to make a living, lead a happy life, and have limitless ambition, yet many of them are not ready to uphold their duties toward others, and they only care about themselves. The poet tells these people that there are other people who share the planet with them; there are those vulnerable who need attention and care:

As you prepare your breakfast, think of others,
(do not forget the pigeon's food).
As you conduct your wars, think of others,
(do not forget those who seek peace).
As you pay your water bill, think of others
(those who are nursed by clouds). (*Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, p. 11)

The poet tells the people indulging in desires—eating, drinking, waging wars and looking for bounties—that there are other people need and seek livelihood, but they do

so using peaceful means, without transgressing borderlines and while behaving in a humble manner. In ethical tradition, as Traer conceives of it, goodwill toward all humans is a pillar of ethical upbringing. This requires us to show “empathy for others as we take an action, and to sustain our caring relationships with other persons” (p. 116). Darwish, like a preacher, repeats the phrase “think of others”, a call for rapport, sympathy, respect for others, and tolerance. Darwish urges people to take the right action and extend help when needed, in line with what Traer refers to as ethical standards of justice, equality and good intention.

Yet the poet also feels sad of the indifference of the world towards the right to decent life for the poor (this is illustrated with words such as : think of others , pigeons food ...etc), and therefore he addresses decision-makers, urging them to carry out their moral duties:

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). (*Almond Blossoms and Beyond*, p. 11)

Traer's theorizing affirms that all forms of life (be it that of humans , plants or animals) have intrinsic worth for and by themselves, and that our duties to protect these forms is part of being ethical. In the lines above, the poet remembers the “people of the camps”, the misfortunate who became homeless because of wars, destruction and house demolitions, so that now they have no place to take as a shelter, a simple place where they can sit and watch the stars at night.

Later in the poem, Darwish moves the reader smoothly to the idea of self-expression. People who lead a good life, those who have the freedom to express themselves, own the language that enables them to be visible, while those silenced by power and subjugation remain invisible in the shadows:

As you liberate yourself in metaphor,
think of others (those who have lost the right to speak).
As you think of others far away, think of yourself.
Say: "If only I were a candle in the dark". (*Almond Blossoms and Beyond*,
p. 11)

Those who have the luxury to express themselves, to speak their mind (As you liberate yourself in metaphor, a candle in the dark) should also identify with the subaltern. But then these have also to think of themselves ("think of yourself") as an instrument that can bring light, hope, and change for the better. Moral virtues, Traer argues, entails that we should commit ourselves to freedom of expression, allowing the voices of even our opponents to be heard. There is nothing nobler than a person's identification of others, and nothing more humane than making oneself a candle that illuminates the dark paths of others. Interestingly, Darwish's allusion to language is a call for those who can write to speak for those who cannot represent themselves or convey their concerns and pain. Those who have the pen and can write should use their art in the service of humanity, for if art does not serve a human cause, then people no longer need it.

5.2.3.2 Characters

Although Darwish repeatedly emphasized his desire to liberate his poem from its documentary character (restricting it to a particular context and delineating it by his people's geopolitics), he still managed to develop a kind of consideration for the concept of political commitment and made it a companion to human commitment, which is linked to the individual and collective experience of the poet and his people. He wrote texts that made his poetry bear the cause of not only the people of tents ("the people of the camps"), but also of the forlorn, no matter where.

In the immediate context of post-apartheid⁴ South Africa, Jacques Derrida (2001) examined the practical and idealistic aspects of confronting historical tragedies, as well as the tension between mediated “reconciliation”, “conditional reconciliation”, and “unconditional pure forgiveness” (pp. 34-35). Conscious of the multiple dimensions of this process, including the secular versus the religious, and the national versus the global, Derrida argues that forgiveness must involve two parties: the victim and the guilty (p. 38).

On October 5, 2008, two months after Darwish's death, several cities in the world witnessed the launch of a massive project entitled: "The Identity of the Soul". The show was presented on five screens based on the Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen's poem "Terry Feigen" and Darwish's poem "A Soldier Dreaming of White Lilies", both of which have in common themes centered on revenge, but also on forgiveness. Not only in "A Soldier Dreaming of White Lilies"— as we saw earlier, but also in several other texts the reader sees Darwish taking the initiative, setting examples of good characters who find themselves face to face with bad characters. Darwish's writings constitute a manifestation of how the victim can provide moral aid to the guilty. The poet is perhaps an advocate of the idea that victims can provide moral aid to the guilty, only when the guilty admits what he has done to the victim. This only happens after recognizing the victim's right to exist and apologizing for the injustice that has befallen the victim.

Darwish denies the possibility of a natural existence in an unnatural reality, stressing that peace has yet to be brought to the disconsolate land of Palestine, since it is not one of the beautiful names of peace to strike a military siege on those who chose peace as an answer to the threats to their very existence and as a strategy for saving their

⁴ In a recent report, Amnesty International (2022) has identified the situation in occupied Palestine with the South African Apartheid. This came to give credence to a 2021 report by Human Rights Watch, which stipulated that what Israel has created in Palestine is nothing but an apartheid.

identity from fading on the one hand, and from the danger of being closed, on the other.

He expresses this scathingly in “A Gentle Rain in a Distant Autumn”:

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. (*Victims of a Map* p. 49).

Darwish depicts the occupier as one who, in the words of Traer, “lacks the moral character traits” (p. 130). Darwish’s take is a resolute statement against the military mindset that sees no limits to its field of vision, as it seeks to uproot all inherited meanings and devours, with greed and voraciousness, the globe. The poet only needs to know why he has become a victim, and, before he is murdered again, he asks the guilty to give reasons for “a new death”, the carnage that the occupier inflicted on Palestine and its people. In this context, Traer criticizes what it seems like restraints on access to justice and obtaining remedy for the victims of “intimidation, persecution, murder and environmental destruction” (p. 110).

Deliberating over the atrocities that particularly surrounded Palestine during the Second Intifada, as well as the pogroms, assaults and destruction of the Palestinian geography and urban landscape, Darwish declares, “Once again, we will prove that we occupy the moral high ground” (2002, n.p.). His poetry speaks to issues of hoping for peace, even with those who do not seek it, and he defends a liberated identity, free from the shackles of politics (Apter 6).

By this he gives value to exemplary character traits that sustain caring human relationships, which is an integral part of doing environmental ethics as stipulated by Traer. Darwish was fully aware of the epic nature of the Palestinian struggle against Zionism and its apologists, and his poetry came naturally to identify with the nature of the conflict, an existential and tragic struggle, just as epics and legends. It is not a

coincidence that epics and past events formed a basic element in Darwish's poetics. He is not modest in recording the horror of the exodus first from Palestine in 1948 and later from Beirut in 1982, and even later of the multiple tiers of exiles he and his people are traversing. His identification with stories from ancient times (The Andalusians, the Native Americans, the Ancient Israelites) emphasizes that the Palestinian saga adds more to those stories than quoting from them, because what afflicted the Palestinians is perfectly a capitulation of all tragedies of humans. However, Darwish engages with such epics with an eye on the moral lessons he can learn from them. In much of his poetry composed in the 1990s and later into the early twenty first century, Darwish speaks his mind from behind a mask. One interesting poem to read in this stage is "A Non-Linguistic Dispute with Imru' al-Qays"². Using masks, and speaking through them, clearly suggests a kind of dilemma for the poet and the politician in Palestinian literature:

They closed the scene
 allowing us space to go back to the others diminished.
 Smiling, we entered the movie screen,
 as we are supposed to be on a movie screen.
 We improvised a speech prepared for us beforehand, regretting the martyr's
 last option.
 We took a bow, surrendered our names to pedestrians walking on either
 side.
 And returned to our tomorrow diminished.
They closed the scene.
They triumphed.
They summed up our yesterday from beginning to end.
They forgave the victim her mistakes when she apologized
for words that were about to cross her mind.
They changed time's bell
and triumphed. (*The Adam of Two Edens* p. 123).

The reader might wonder the antecedent for the pronoun in "they closed" and about the scene that is "closed". But when the reader considers the time this poem was composed (right after the signing of the Oslo Accords between the Palestine Liberation

Organization and Israel in 1993), then the antecedents become very clear. The scene is being closed by the victorious, “the triumphed”, the Israelis who “summed up our yesterday from beginning to end”, control not only the Palestinian past but also the present and, by these Accords, the future. The triumphed conceal what Traer calls “exploitation, oppression, and distributive injustice” (p. 47) by using some “seemingly well-intended phrases” (ibid), thus building “relationships dominated by values of control and oppression” (p. 133).

The scene begins with the exiled poet looking at what he wants, holding a baggage of tragedies that has hit him hard since the displacement of 1948. The initial “They closed the scene” begins with the June 1967 war- in which Israel seized what remained of Palestine, and ends with the signing of the later-stalled peace deal and the poet referring to another time, returning to an incomplete tomorrow. The literary expression in the poem is centered on the dichotomy of the victor and the defeated; the former who took what he wanted and the latter who lost everything:

When they took us to the penultimate scene,
We looked back at our part in the technicolor movie.
We couldn't find a star for the north.
We couldn't find a tent for the south.
We couldn't recognize our voice at all. (*The Adam of Two Edens* p. 124).

The poem consists of five stanzas, three of which (1, 2 and 4) begin with the phrase “They closed the scene,” and the pronoun ‘they’ (the voice of the powerful, the victor) corresponds to the pronoun ‘we’ (the voice of the defeated who are allowed to return to their incomplete tomorrow). In the second stanza, the pronoun “they” refers to the ones who win: the ones who crossed our whole evening. The first stanza ends with the defeat of ‘us’, while the second stanza ends with the victory of ‘them’ after they changed “the bell of time”. The third stanza focuses on the apology of ‘we’ for the vocabulary that was worn out, such as the freedom that did not find its bread, or the

bread without salt. The fourth stanza says what ‘they’ have become: They have won what they wanted from the heavens. Again the fourth stanza intensifies the ‘our’ feeling of defeat, for ‘we’ have lost everything and ‘we’ are no longer what ‘we’ once were (we cannot recognize our voice). In the fifth stanza, the poet then goes on to say:

No one said to Imru’ al-Qays:
“What have you done to us and to yourself?
Take Caesar’s Path
through the black smoke that billows from time.
Take Caesar’s path alone, alone, alone.
And leave your language here for us” (*The Adam of Two Edens* p. 125).

The message is addressed to Imru’ al-Qays, who, on the day he fell, leaned on a language that scattered its heart when it changed its path from one of revolution to one of surrender. The poet knows perfectly the state of chaos surrounding Palestine/Israel, but what breaks his heart is how the Palestinian leadership has become part of this chaos when it chose to sign a deal which gives the people little and, ironically, perpetuates the occupation.

The poet writes in “State of Siege”:
Here, on the slopes of the hills,
before the sunset and the crater of time,
near shaded orchards,
we do what prisoners do. What do what the unemployed do.
We nurture hope. (*The Butterfly’s Burden* p. 127).

In ethical norms, as proposed by Traer, people should seek hope in their “hearts and in the religious and cultural values of our heritage” (p. 295). Perhaps the concept of “hope” is one of the most abundant meanings in the late poet's texts, through which he wanted to create a "common identity" that addresses the tragedy ensuing from the occupation. With clear insistence, he writes:

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” (*Unfortunately, It Was Paradise* p. 3).

In ethical tradition, there is the notion of “mutual respect” (Traer, 2013, p. 15), where each party shows respect to one another and takes the other party’s interests into consideration. This is shown by the use of many literary devices such as symbolism and metaphor, appearing in words such as “endless road” and “row of palm”. When there is no hope of such respect, people, Traer believes, should seek hope in their hearts and also in “the religious and cultural values” (p. 293). Then and only then, communities can live “with hope, courage, and compassion” (p. 295). Furthermore, Traer holds that good characters should always show respect to others, since “only good persons can create a good and just society” (p. 20). Darwish was fully aware of the epic nature of the Palestinian struggle against Zionism and its apologists, and his poetry came naturally to identify with the nature of the conflict, an existential and tragic struggle, just as epics and legends. It is not a coincidence that epics and past events formed a basic element in Darwish's poetics. He is not modest in recording the horror of the exodus first from Palestine in 1948 and later from Beirut in 1982, and even later of the multiple tiers of exiles he and his people are traversing. His identification with stories from ancient times (The Andalusians, the Native Americans, the Ancient Israelites) emphasizes that the Palestinian saga adds more to those stories than quoting from them, because what afflicted the Palestinians is perfectly a capitulation of all tragedies of humans.

Despite the ongoing pain, Darwish does not stop believing in peace, thus appealing to the conscience of the world to rise to moral standards and identify with the

victim. He calls for mutual respect, tolerance and forgiveness, even for the ones who assassinated his identity. Violence is bitingly castigated in Darwish's poetry, and he is rather confident that a state cannot sleep on spears, and that force does not bring right. In the year of the Nakba, the poet was only six years old when his childhood was taken away from him, and exile has become a pariah for his stolen childhood, and yet he continues to contemplate peace and reconciliation. The poet writes in "State of Siege":

Here, on the slopes of the hills,
before the sunset and the crater of time,
near shaded orchards,
we do what prisoners do.
What do the unemployed do?
We nurture hope. (*The Butterfly's Burden* p. 127).

Perhaps the concept of hope is one of the most abundant meanings in the late poet's texts, through which he wanted to create a "common identity" that addresses the tragedy ensuing from the occupation. With clear insistence, he writes: "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" (*Unfortunately, It Was Paradise* p. 3).

5.3 Conclusion

The uncertainties surrounding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have created an atmosphere that is fertile for questions that challenge theorizations and norms of environmental ethics. Among other things, how chaotic life in occupied Palestine is, how disruptive daily experience is, and how ambiguous the perspectives are, all call into question issues relating to Traer's system of rights, duties, characters and relationships. The geopolitics that the occupier has established in occupied Palestine is in place to intentionally harm what would otherwise create harmony and bring

prosperity. First, the rights of the people and the natural environment are being constantly violated, and the duties to preserve the natural resources and spare human lives are being evaded. Second, the characters lack the virtues enshrined in international law. Third, the relationships are strained and oftentimes disruptive and antagonistic.

The analysis has shown how Darwish has addressed these issues. Moral sense in Darwish began early in his career but had only taken shape and become very salient in his later poetry. Darwish's poetry contemplates an ambience where time and geography stop and the metaphor steps in. Enthralling as it is, Darwish's aesthetics is in all aspects muddling in that the way he plays with the "I" effects a switch in the cadence, so that he can reflect comfortably on the themes he brings to the forth. Darwish's generous literary expression is mediated through engagement with dialogues that bring the "I" to converse with the third person pronouns (he, she they), with the former being the self, and the latter being the other self, the occupier, or the human at large. He gives his personas his own voice in the form of an autobiographic genre to question a form of distress that persists and is unlikely to end any time soon, except by the wispy specters of the dogmas of the Israeli occupation, which Darwish contemplated and resisted throughout his entire life.

In several texts, the poet uses soliloquies or monologues that envisage a form of communication with the self and the other. These techniques emerge as Darwish imparts his poetic aesthetics and relates to issues of the chaotic experience surrounding Palestine and Palestinians across the globe. Darwish's exposure to the world, and his constant provision of love amid antagonism, as well as his commitment to moral obligation, echo well with the foundations of human morality and resonate with transcending calamities of war, loss and denial – suggesting a better understanding of what poetry can do in a context of moral chaos as well as cultural, political and social uncertainties. This system

of ethics emerges time and again in his poetry. It is there when the poet brings to his texts several strangers, including his own enemy “who drinks tea in our shack” (*Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone*, p. 192) as he draws away. It is also clearly expressed as he integrates the themes of passion, consideration, and broad-mindedness in order to profess the prodigious and yet unusually mundane experience of welcoming and tolerance, which persists in his texts despite the chaos in the land and the uncertainty on the horizon.

