

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

3.1 Signpost

This chapter starts with the general historical and sociopolitical backgrounds surrounding Darwish's works, so that the reader can understand the context in which the research sits. It then provide a summary of the state of the conflict between the Palestinian and the colonial narratives. Later, it discusses the 1948 Nakba and the way it has informed, or even shaped, Palestinian contemporary literature. Finally, the chapter sheds light on the literary position of Darwish and his contribution to the Palestinian intellectual landscape.

3.2 Geopolitical Context Surrounding Darwish's Poetry

Many Jewish-Zionist allegations and historical myths have always talked about the land of Palestine and the alleged historical right of the Jews to it, starting from Rabbi Zeevi Hirsch at the end of the 18th century to the German philosopher Moses Hess and the Russian physician Leo Pinsker in the 19th century, to dozens of philosophers and politicians, Jews and non-Jews (Garaudy, 2000) whose propositions about Palestine had remained general ideas (for example, that God has given the land of Canaan– Palestine– to the ancient Israelis and their progeny) that had not translated into real action.

Zionism started to take shape in the late nineteenth century, specifically after the publication of Herzl's biography *The Jewish State* in 1896. Herzl, a Zionist fervent leader, believed that the nations among whom the Jews lived at the time were generally anti-Semitic, that the Jews formed one people, and that their European enemies have

made them so without their consent (p.92). As a matter of fact, the Zionist leaders capitalized on this idea (which later came to be known as anti-Semitism) and considered it a catalyst in achieving their future agendas based on Herzl's statement that the enemies of the Jews were the ones who made them one unified people.

Zionist leadership, however, had found it difficult to reach all of the Jews in Western Europe and persuade them to help in realizing the goals of Zionism. Frustrated by the fact that he couldn't mobilize Europe's Jews under one strong, unified Zionist leadership, Herzl called for a meeting which later came to be known as the First Zionist Congress, which took place in Basel, Switzerland, on August 29, 1897 (*Epstein, 1989*). The participants (most of whom were Jews) agreed unanimously that the main goal of Zionism should be the establishment of a state for the Jews in the land of Palestine. For this purpose the Zionist Congress identified the following means (*Singer & Adler, 1964, 571*):

1. The promotion of the settlement of Jewish agriculturists, artisans, and tradesmen in Palestine.
2. The federation of all Jews into local or general groups, according to the laws of the various countries.
3. The strengthening of the Jewish feeling and consciousness.
4. Preparatory steps for the attainment of those governmental grants which are necessary to the achievement of the Zionist purpose.

Herzl's biography detailed the process of building the Jewish state and the embodiment of Zionist ideology, starting with the establishment of the Jewish Agency (the official governmental body in charge of Palestine's Jewish community during the British Mandate), which would supervise the building of the Zionist enterprise, the

Jewish Company, which would implement the project economically and attend to the issues of immigration, the organization of cities in the future state, and the enactment of a constitution (Sokolow, 1919, p. 371).

The Zionist-Jewish enterprise remained dead ink, as the land of Palestine then was entirely inhabited by Palestinians, who had remained there for a long time, beginning with Canaanites' immigration from the Arabian Peninsula to Palestine some six thousand years ago (Weiss, 1993). These are two opposing accounts: a Zionist one that is based on myths, and a Palestinian one that is based on history. The Zionist allegations remain mere theories until the spiritual father of the Zionist movement, Theodore Herzl, entered the scene. Zionism started to take shape in the late nineteenth century, specifically after the publication of Herzl's biography *The Jewish State* in 1896. Herzl, a Zionist fervent leader, believed that the nations among whom the Jews lived at the time were generally anti-Semitic, that the Jews formed one people, and that their European enemies have made them so, i.e., united them (Herzl, 1896, p. 92). As a matter of fact, the Zionist leaders capitalized on this idea— the European enmity toward the Jews (which later came to be known as anti-Semitism) and considered it a catalyst in achieving their future agendas based on Herzl's statement that the enemies of the Jews were the ones who made them one unified people, who need a land to build their national state. This has created a notion of belongingness among the European Jews to Palestine, who started to dream of Palestine as their own homeland.

The Zionist Agency called for settlement in Palestine as the embodiment of the Zionist national entity, and made great efforts to attract the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe. However, The Jewish communities were at variance when World War I erupted, and their hopes of settling Palestine almost dissipated, as they were divided into nationalities. Their loyalty was divided between the warring factions: Britain,

France, and Tsarist Russia on the one hand, and Germany, Austria, Hungary and Turkey, on the other (Lipson, 2017).

If anything, these details on the Jewish enterprise— which started in late 19th century and has continued to the present in the form of colonial settlement— tell stories about the notion of Jewish disengagement from Palestine, and the declarations by Herzl and Jewish associations meant mobilizing resources needed to raise questions concerning the Jews relationships to Palestine.

3.2.1 Sykes-Picot Agreement and Balfour Declaration

In 1915, a secret memorandum was submitted to the British Cabinet entitled *The Future of Palestine*, written by the first Zionist Jew to become a British minister, the notorious Herbert Samuel. The memo advised that incorporating Palestine into the British Empire would be the first step in establishing the Jewish state. Meanwhile, Britain and France were indeed busy vying over the legacy of the collapsing Ottoman empire. The conflict between the two powers led to the negotiations that ended with the signing of the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916. Under this agreement, France took control of Lebanon and Syria, while Britain's share extended over Palestine and Iraq (Russell & Cohn, 2012).

In 1917, during the course of World War I, the British army invaded Palestine and seized it from the Ottomans. That year, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote a letter to the British banker and one of the leaders of the Jews in Britain, Baron Rothschild, promising him, on behalf of the British government, of assisting in establishing a homeland for the Jews on the land of Palestine. The letter, which is now known as the "Balfour Declaration", was the clearest expression of Britain's sympathy

with the efforts of the Zionist movement to establish a homeland for the Jews in Palestine (Regan, 2018).

In 1920, the notorious Herbert Samuel was appointed the first High Commissioner for Mandatory Palestine. He began exercising his powers by issuing a series of decisions/decrees in support of the Zionist project, foremost among which was the recognition of Zionist institutions, the publicity of Jewish activities in Palestine, and the recognition of the Hebrew language as an official language together with Arabic (United Nations, 1990). In 1920, he issued an order to establish a new department of land and appointed the Zionist Norman Bentwich as its head. Soon, the department issued the Land Transfer Ordinance of 1920, which included a provision that prohibited the transfer of lands except to those residing in Palestine (Stein, 1987). Its aim was to reduce the demand and competition for land, thus reducing the price of land, allowing Zionist institutions to buy land at the lowest prices without competition from abroad.

Herbert's unjust, discriminatory policies doubled the rates of acquisition and possession of land by the Jewish immigrants, who formed a quite well-off community. According to Avneri (1982), at the end of Herbert Samuel's term (in 1925), the total Jewish ownership of lands increased to about 12% of Palestine, while the rate of Jewish immigration to Palestine more than doubled.

The land acquisition by the Jews had left severe social and economic impacts on the Palestinian society. The British authorities started a campaign of driving Palestinian farmers out of their farmland and villages (Hijazi, 2014). Thousands of families became homeless and stranded, with little space to make a livelihood. In early 1930s, following the dramatic rise of the Nazis to power in Germany, the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine increased, and the areas of Palestinian land expropriated by the British

authorities hiked. These lands were later transferred to the immigrant Jews (Hijazi, 2014).

The British role was not only about facilitating Jewish immigration and recognition of Zionist institutions. From time to time, the British Mandate authorities would offer shares of state-owned land for sale at auction, which was difficult for Arabs to compete in, and was one of the reasons for the increase in the Jews' possession of land (Forman and Kedar, 2003). The British colonizers enabled the Zionist Jews to possess important holdings, by obtaining major concessions and bids in the country, especially for carrying out and administering infrastructure projects (including, the concession of the Palestinian Electricity Company and the concession of the Palestinian Potash Company, south of the Dead Sea).

According to Smith (1993), the British Mandate considered Palestine as more of a foster child than a conventional imperial possession. For this the British authorities had facilitated the economic success of the Zionist endeavor by supporting Jewish economic development and industrialization at the expense of the traditional Arab agricultural sector (p. 16). For example, the British occupier administered a regime of "protectionist tariffs in favor of local industries, undermining the competitiveness of agrarian exports; moreover, it employed a disproportionately high number of Jews within the public sector (p. 9). At the expenditure level, the British authorities appropriated "only 12% of their mandate budget to welfare and development programs, while the Zionist leadership spent 40% of its considerable funds on schooling and welfare within the Jewish communities" (Owen, 1988, p. 27).

This blatant bias in favor of the Jewish settlers at the expense of the Palestinians was exposed by colonel Ronald Storrs, the first British military governor of Jerusalem at the time. Storrs (1937) wrote:

The Military Administration notably contravened the Status Quo, in the matter of Zionism. Palestine had been (and in 1918 half Palestine still was) a province of the Moslem Ottoman Empire, and the vast majority of its inhabitants were Arabs. Under the Status Quo we were entitled (and instructed) to impress upon those desiring immediate reforms that we were here merely as a Military Government and not as Civil Reorganizes. Our logical procedure would therefore have been to administer the territory as if it had been Egypt or any other country with important minorities; making English the official language, and providing Arabic translations and interpreters, and treating the resident Jews, Europeans, Armenians and others as they would have been treated in Egypt. Far different from this conception was the attitude of O.E.T.A. General Allenby's very first proclamation and all that issued from me were in Hebrew, as well as in English and Arabic. 11 Departmental and public notices were in Hebrew and, as soon as possible, official and Municipal receipts also. We had Jewish officers on our staffs, Jewish clerks and interpreters in our offices. For these deliberate and vital infractions of military practice O.E.T.A. was criticized both within and without Palestine. They were surely justified by the announcement by Great Britain and the almost universal endorsement of the Balfour Declaration on 2 November 1917, which gave any occupying Power the right to assume, though the League of Nations was then unborn and Mandates hardly conceived, that the ultimate Government would have to reckon with Zion. (p. 316-317)

3.2.2 Establishing a Jewish Majority in the Land of Palestine

Backed by the British Mandate authorities, the Zionist Agency had made great strides in achieving its malicious goals. From the onset, the Zionist Agency's eyes were set on making the Jews a majority in Palestine and later establishing a Jewish state in the largest possible areas of the Palestinian land. To achieve these goals, many methods had been used, including supporting Jewish immigration and, helped by the British occupier, confiscating the largest possible areas of the Palestinian land. Zionists, however, realized that for this policy to succeed, the Palestinians had to be displaced from their land. That is why the Zionist Agency strongly opposed the British attempts to establish a Palestinian Legislative Council in 1923, 1930, and 1936. The Zionists were fully aware that the Palestinians' demands for creating a Palestinian Legislative Council would put them (the Zionists) at a disadvantage because the Palestinians

formed a majority at that time, and therefore they (the Zionists) demanded the British Mandate authorities to postpone the formation of representative bodies until a time when the Jewish community became larger.

To support these positions, the Zionist Agency formed a military force called Haganah (lit. the defense) which in 1936 numbered 10,000 in-service personnel in addition to 40,000 in reserve. During the Palestinian 1936 revolution against the British occupation, the Haganah militants fought side by side with the Britons, Van Creveld, 1998). When Ben-Gurion became Minister of Defense of the World Zionist Agency in June 1947, he announced the general mobilization of Haganah and started feverishly buying weapons from the United States and Europe. As a result, the number of the Haganah militants had jumped to 30,000 by May 1948, and then doubled its strength to 60,000 by mid-July of the same year, which was twice the number of the Arab armies present in Palestine at that time (Van Creveld, 1998).

The Zionist strategy to expel the Palestinians from their homeland did not come overnight; rather it was planned in advance. Israeli leftist historian IlanPappe (2007) confirms that the Zionist leaders held periodic meetings for a whole year, specifically from March 1947 to March 1948, to plan and agree on how to carry out an ethnic cleansing operation against the Palestinians.

With the escalation of the Zionist terrorist attacks against the people of Palestine, the British Mandate authorities decided to hand over responsibility for the Palestine question to the newly formed United Nations organization at that time. In November 1947, the United Nations General Assembly proposed a plan to divide Palestine into two states: Jewish and Arab (Resolution 181— The Partition Plan). The Jews in Palestine at that time constituted a third of the population, most of whom came from Europe, and they controlled an area that amounted to less than six percent of the historic

land of Palestine. The plan proposed by the United Nations (known as the Partition Plan) allocated fifty-five percent of the area of the historic Palestine to the Jewish community, (Morris, 2008). The Palestinians and their Arab allies rejected the proposed plan, while the Zionist Agency welcomed the plan, especially as it legitimized the idea of building a Jewish state in the land of Palestine (Morris, 2008).

In the subsequent months and years, the Zionists launched intense virulent campaigns to seize more lands from the Palestinians. In early 1948, they managed to take control of dozens of Palestinian cities, towns, and villages and expelled Palestinian residents from their homes by force. All of that was done under the watchful eyes of the British mandate authorities in the territory. In most cases, the Zionists committed organized mass massacres against the Palestinian people (Pappe, 2007). The message from the Zionists to the Palestinian people was clear and brief: either you leave Palestine, or you get killed. Zionist militias attacked Palestinian cities and towns, demolished and destroyed hundreds of villages and killed tens of thousands of Palestinians. More than 750,000 Palestinians (roughly half the population of Palestine at the time) were expelled from their homes and became refugees (today their descendants number around 7 million people) in neighboring countries (Karmi & Cotran, 1999).

3.2.3 The 1948 Nakba (Lit. the Palestinian Catastrophe or Exodus)

Seeing that the Zionist had become strong enough to establish, the British authorities decided to end its mandate for Palestine on May 14, 1948. As this date approached, the Zionist Jews intensified their efforts to control as much of the Palestinian territories as possible. In April 1948, they took control of Haifa, one of the largest Palestinian cities, and their next target was Jaffa (then the biggest Palestinian

city). On May 14, 1948 the British Mandate forces officially withdrew from Palestine. Straight away, David Ben-Gurion, then the head of the Zionist Agency, declared the establishment of "the state of Israel". Overnight, the Palestinians found themselves stateless. Within a few minutes, the two greatest powers of the world—the United States of America and the Soviet Union—recognized the newly declared state (Emling, 2019).

Responding to the Zionists' continued ethnic cleansing campaigns against the Palestinians, the United Nations appointed Swedish diplomat Folke Bernadotte as its mediator in Palestine. Bernadotte recognized the tragedy of the Palestinians and showed sympathy with them. His relentless efforts to find a peaceful solution to stop the ongoing Zionist ethnic cleansing campaigns against the Palestinians came to an end when he was assassinated by agents working for the Zionist Agency in September 1948 (Emling, 2019).

The United Nations continued its efforts to reach a truce agreement between the newly established Israel and the neighboring Arab countries. After Bernadotte's assassination, the United Nations appointed an American mediator named Ralph Bunche. He presided over the negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, with the latter ceding more Palestinian lands to the modern Zionist state. One day after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli armistice agreement in May 1949, Israel joined the United Nations as a member state, and strengthened its control over more than seventy eight percent of the land of Palestine, and the remaining twenty two percent was named "the West Bank and the Gaza Strip." (Emling, 2019).

Only 150,000 Palestinians remained in the newly established state (Israel). The remaining Palestinians either became refugees in countries outside Palestine (750,000) or lived in the West Bank— including East Jerusalem— and the Gaza Strip (around 800,000). Immediately after Israel had captured the rest of Palestine (the West Bank,

including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip) following the 1967 war, it began building colonial settlements for Zionist Jews in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and allowed settlers to carry weapons in these settlements under the protection of the Israeli army. (Emling, 2019).

3.2.4 The Aftermath of the Plight

The Zionists had for a long time planned to cleanse the land of Palestine of its inhabitants, and made every effort to efface the Palestinian heritage and culture from existence (Pappe, 2007). The main goal of the Zionist agenda was to wipe Palestine off the map of the world. The establishment of the Zionist entity (what is now known as the State of Israel) has inaugurated a new era of horrific atrocities, violations and wicked villainies committed against the Palestine people in an unprecedented manner in the history of humankind. Even the Nazis would be stunned by Israel's horrific war crimes that are perpetrated day and night. The list is very long: oppression, abuse, mass cleansing, destroying farm crops, demolishing houses, incarcerating children, old people and women, economic strangulation, Zionization of Palestinian identity, let alone the perpetration of collective and individual bloody massacres. You only need to name a crime, and you will find it in the record of Israel.

In the face of this brutality, Palestinians had been left unarmed, desperate and helpless. With international response to this Zionist unheard-of sadism would at best be expressed in condemnation and calls to stop violence— even when Zionists committed beatings, shootings, killings, house demolitions, uprooting of trees, deportations, extended imprisonments, and detentions without trial, and even burning infants to death— the Palestinians had nothing to do but to desperately rebel (Ackerman & DuVall, 2000).

In 1987 they started what later came to be known as the "Stone Uprising" or the "Intifada", in which most of the Palestinians in the occupied territories were engaged in resisting the occupier by throwing stones on soldiers and armed settlers. They demanded establishing an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, the right to self-determination, dismantling of colonial settlements from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the unconditional return of refugees, and the release of Palestinian prisoners (Salem, 2008). The Zionist military authorities responded violently and disproportionately, killing thousands including children and women (López-Ibor et al, 2005), demolishing thousands of homes (López-Ibor et al. 2005), uprooting hundreds of thousands of trees (Ackerman & DuVall, 2000), and arresting around 120,000 Palestinians including women, children and elderly (Cronin, 2012).

Though the Intifada was marked as an event where the Palestinians acted consistently and independently of neighboring Arab states and even the Palestine Liberation Organization (McDowall, 1989), their political leadership seized the opportunity—backed by the majority of Arab states and the United Nations (whose Security Council adopted Resolution 672 that condemned Israel's violence in the Palestinian occupied territories), and entered into negotiations with Israel. In 1993, the two parties signed what later came to be known as "The Oslo Accords", which promised peace in Palestine.

Yet the course of events proved that Israel was not serious to reach a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. The disappointments of the whole process had persisted and intensified; feelings of frustration and despair among the people in the occupied territories had built up; the occupying state had remained the same; the occupational racist mentality had even further consolidated; and the policies of

confiscation, settlement, Zionization and collective punishment had continued in a frenzied manner, even more than before.

The Oslo Accords, with their numerous flaws and loopholes, constituted a major crime against the Palestinians. They stipulated that a Palestinian Authority would be established for an interim stage of five years (from 1994 to 1999) in part of the territories captured in 1967 by Israel. Article V of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (a supplement of the Oslo Accords) expressly states that the "five-year transitional period will begin upon the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area. The Permanent status negotiations will commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period, between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian people's representatives. It is understood that these negotiations shall cover remaining issues, including Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors, and other issues of common interest" (United Nations, 1997).

However, the Israeli occupying authorities did not respect these agreements and kept stalling. As a response, the Palestinians in the occupied territories set off their second Intifada (also known as Al-Aqsa Intifada) in September 2000. From the outset, the occupying power had officially declared war on the Palestinians. It deployed its in-service and reserve army and its heavy war machine (artillery, tanks and aircraft) to counter armless, defenseless civilians. In the brutal attacks against the civilians, Israel killed 4,412 Palestinians and injured 48,322 (Cypel, 2006). The Israeli attacks culminated with a total destruction of the infrastructure (thousands of houses, schools, hospitals, mosques, churches, roads, ministries, banks, public foundations) in the West Bank. On September 24, 2002, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution Number 1435, which called on the occupying power to withdraw its military to positions of

September 2000 and to end its military activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the destruction of civilian infrastructure (UN Security Council, Resolution Number 1435, 2002). However, as usual, Israel did not comply and even escalated the war, which continued until 2005. In the course of the Second Intifada, and beyond, Israel built a racial segregation wall in the West Bank (which the International Court of Justice castigated as a violation of international law (ICJ, 2004). This separation wall has rendered the territory a real apartheid (Wannous, 2012; Karam, 2017).

The Zionist history that harks back to the early twentieth century has nothing to offer but terror and oppression against the Palestinians and neighboring countries. The occupying power considers itself above all international laws, and it spares nothing to undermine the Palestinian morale and steadfastness and their legitimate rights to the land. The occupation's war crimes are continuous, growing, and entrenched; they are perpetrated with premeditated intent and planning and with great preparation, determination and surveillance to drive out the non-Jewish population and take over their property (Suárez, 2016). In 2018, Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, decried Israel's excessive use of force towards unarmed Palestinians, saying such use of force is "a grave breach of the *Fourth Geneva Convention*, as well as a war crime" (UN Human Rights, May 15, 2018).

This continued bloodshed perpetrated by the Israeli successive governments has often been accompanied by demolishing houses, razing land and uprooting trees. The Documentation Unit in the Palestinian Authority's Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission reported that in the last decade, the occupation authorities had demolished more than 25 thousand Palestinian houses— 6,114 in the West Bank and more than 19 thousand in the Gaza Strip (Sadeq, 2019). Trees pulled down since 1948 number in

millions. International Middle East Media Center (2018) reports that between 1967 and 2018, Israel pulled down at least 800,000 olive trees and probably more in other fruit and forest trees.

The most recent chapter of the tragedy has been co-administered by the government of Israel (led by the Zionist fundamentalist Benjamin Netanyahu), the US President, Donald Trump, and several Arab countries. Only two years into his tenure, Trump and his administration had made six decisions that terrorize the aspirations of a nation that has suffered for more than a century. The decisions came as a response to the Palestinians' rejection of the US peace plan (Black, 2020), known in the media as the Deal of the Century. The plan further removes Palestinian rights, keeps Jerusalem under Israel's full control (and also the eternal Capital of Israel), approves the Jewish colonial settlements in the West Bank (including those in East Jerusalem), and denies seven million Palestinian refugees their legitimate right to return to their homeland (Black, 2020).

On December 6, 2017, Donald Trump officially announced his administration's recognition of occupied Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and as well the transfer of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to East Jerusalem, in a move that met with condemnation and criticism from Arab and Muslim countries, as well as from the international community. Trump's decision sparked massive Palestinian anger, as protests erupted in the occupied Palestinian territories, leading to the death and injury of many Palestinians. (Black, 2020).

On January 16, 2018, The US administration began to reduce its aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), freezing about \$ 300 million of its aid (which then amounted to about \$ 365 million a year). In August of the same year, Trump's administration totally eliminated US funding for UNRWA.

In a statement, Spokesperson for the United States Department of State, Heather Nauert, said that the United States has decided not to make further contributions to UNRWA any longer. This unjust action has exacerbated the existing financial crisis of UNRWA, forcing it to take several austerity decisions that led to fewer health services in the Palestinian refugee camps. According to Lynch and Gramer (2018), the Trump administration—with the support of Trump's son-in-law and advisor Jared Kushner (a committed Zionist) and members of the Congress—"has quietly been trying to do away with the U.N. relief agency that has provided food and essential services to millions of Palestinian refugees for decades."

On May 14, or around five months after Washington's first decision to recognize the city of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, it relocated its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (Halbfinger et al., 2018). By this, Trump's administration wanted to remove the Jerusalem file from any Palestinian-Israeli future negotiations. That decision triggered a wave of protests in Palestine, during which Israel committed a massacre that killed 62 Palestinians, including children and women, and injured around 1400 people in a single day (Halbfinger et al., 2018).

In August 2018, the Trump administration cut more than USD 200 million in aid to the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A month later, the US administration stopped supporting hospitals providing tertiary healthcare services to Palestinians in East Jerusalem (David Brunnstrom, 2018; Lubell and Mughrabi, 2018). And in January 2019, it stopped all aid to the Palestinians (Knell, 2019). The decision has put an end to funding basic health services, development projects, urban infrastructure and NGOs programs (Krauss, 2019).

Finally, on September 10, 2018, Trump administration ordered a closure of Palestine Liberation Organization's office (which functions like an embassy) in

Washington DC (DeYoung & Morris, 2018). The PLO "has not taken steps to advance the start of direct and meaningful negotiations with Israel," the US State Department claimed in a brief statement. The decision, as declared by John Bolton, White House national security adviser, is a punishment to entities "that cooperate with the International Criminal Court, where the Palestinians have lodged complaints against Israel" (DeYoung & Morris, 2018).

These successive decisions by the United States have unleashed the monstrous right-wing Israeli government, a coalition of colonial settlers and fundamentalists that are bloodthirsty by nature. The Israeli occupier has stepped up its policies to destroy the Palestinian political, social and economic infrastructure in order to create a new reality: a status quo that allows only the existence of one state and one people on the land of Palestine. The Israeli colonial state has capitalized on the influence of the global Zionist lobby, the close alliance relations with the United States and some European countries, in addition to the miserable sociopolitical conditions in the Arab countries, and their lack of real deterrent– or even soft– power. The occupier is using the United States to move forward in Zionizing Palestine through gradual expanding of colonial settlements, confiscating land for building wide and modern parallel roads to connect these settlements, dismembering the Palestinian territories, and thwarting Palestinian efforts for building their economy and developing their physical and constitutional infrastructure.

From time to time, US staff releases statements in support of Israel's intent to annex large parts of the West Bank, considering this a right that Israel declares whenever it wants. The Trump administration decisions seemed to suggest dangerous allusions about the future of the occupied Palestine. The Israeli occupier has not missed a beat, and thus escalated its measures to impose a tightened siege on the West Bank

(and making it like an enclave), separate East Jerusalem from its Palestinian surroundings, turn the Gaza Strip into a big prison, and build Jewish colonial settlements in the heart of Palestinian communities in preparation for the “expulsion and replacement,” stage (displacing Palestinians and handing their property over to settlers). Almost 72 years after the capture of Palestine, Palestinians are not only still being denied the right to return to their homeland, but are practically being forced out of their homes, so that Jewish settlers can move and settle in their place (Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Department, 2017).

The United States administration's decisions have not only unleashed feverish settlement expansion activities, but have also given the Zionist state a thrust and unconditional support to impose its own narrative of the conflict, claiming its legitimate sovereignty over everything, even over Islamic and Christian sites in the West Bank and Jerusalem. It stepped up its policies to take control of the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem (the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of the holiest places for Muslims), the ancient walls of Jerusalem (turning them into what the Zionists call the “Holy Basin”, and allowing settlers to live in the old city gardens) as well as the Christian sites (the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, respectively the first and second holiest places for Christians).

At the political level, the United States and Israel do not cease to dismantle the people of Palestine, featuring the Palestinians as separate groups in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, the Galilee, the Negev, the Triangle and the Diaspora, and, therefore, they have no right to overthrow the occupation and establish their own statehood. For this, the United States has worked hard to make Israel look like a peaceful country that has the right to establish its position as a Jewish state. These efforts have of late been officially backed by some Arab dictatorial regimes—but definitely not the

people under those regimes (Wilkinson, 2020). The wave of normalization with the Zionist entity has risen, and the idea of coexistence with the Israeli enemy is subject to discussion on Arab channels. The Palestinians have become enemies that are attacked in some Arab television programs and dramatic series.

The train of normalization started in 1979, when Egypt's president Anwar Sadat visited Jerusalem and struck a "peace deal" with the occupying state. This was followed in 1994 with a peace treaty between the Zionist state and Jordan. Egypt and Jordan countries have borders with the Zionist state and might reason that they have the right to protect their countries—and thus they construe such agreements within a framework of protecting their national interests. However, there are voices that call for normalization from countries that do not have borders with the Zionist state, and they have never engaged in military action with the Israeli military. On August 13, 2020, the regime in the United Arab Emirates and Israel announced that they have established full political, economic, cultural, scientific and intelligence relationships.

The thrust of normalization by the Zionist enemy is to make the Jewish presence in Palestine a matter of normalcy. Trump announced later in the day that other Arab states will soon follow and catch up with the train. Bahrain, another Arab dictatorship in the Persian Gulf, declared on September 10, 2020 that it will officially follow the steps of the United Arab Emirates and fully normalize its relations with Israel. If anything, this means a recognition on the part of those Arab regimes of Israel's occupation of the land of Palestine, a surrender of dignity and rights.

Through a review of the stages of the Arab-Zionist conflict, one finds out that it is the Zionist state that always strived toward normalizing relationships with Arabs, and that its policy towards either war or peace has always focused mainly on normalization, as it is the main and basic guarantee for Israel's survival in the region. Israel has always

wanted to establish normal relationships in the region so that neither its existence nor its right to the land would be questioned by the international community. Certainly, recognizing Israel and acknowledging its right to exist as a pure Jewish state will spare it the obsession of demise and reassure it that Arabs will not evoke history to formulate their current behavior, that the past will turn into mere memories that have no way to shape the present or the future.

3.2.5 The Last Chapters of the Tragedy have yet to Unravel

For more than seventy two years now, the Israeli occupation continues to practice the most heinous crimes, terrorism and cleansing against the people of Palestine: in East Jerusalem, which is undergoing persistent Zionization policies; in the Gaza Strip, which is under permanent siege and constant attacks by Israel; in the West Bank, whose lands are plundered day and night by colonial settlements and annexation policies; and in the Diaspora, in which the Palestinians are racked by exodus and tribulation. Steven Cook (2020) expects the Palestinian situation to remain miserable and under the grip of the Israeli occupation, similar to that of the black majority in South Africa in the second half of the twentieth century. He also foresees Palestinian towns and villages in a situation similar to that of the Bantustans in South Africa under the apartheid regime.

Now only 6.5 million Palestinians live in historic Palestine, while more than 7 million languish in the exile (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020). While tourists from all over the globe (except from countries that do not have normal relationships with the Zionist entity) are allowed to come and visit Palestine, these 7 million Palestinians are not allowed even to think of such an idea. Worse, those who live in Palestine are not allowed to move freely between their towns; they cannot visit

Jerusalem, or the towns of their ancestors. And as it appears now, the chapters of the tragedy have yet to unravel.

3.3 Palestinian Memories

"There is no greater sorrow than to recall in misery the time when we were happy" – Dante Alighieri

There are plenty of bitter memories which Palestinian thought and consciousness have kept in the hearts of those who first lived the 1948 Nakba, and those who inherited it and lived with it in the refugee camps and the exile— memories of misery and injustice inflicted by an immoral racist state. Alshaer (2019) argues that all Palestinian contemporary writers have been moved by the Nakba, a plight that turned the life of the Palestinians upside down, but ironically at the same time helped maintain the collective memory of the people, and till today it remains a benchmark for the contemporary Palestinian history. Thus, the more we read the Palestinian literature, the more we find Nakba-produced burning questions that lay down the intellectual patterns pertaining specifically to identity, belonging, the idea of the homeland and nostalgic consciousness.

The grief in the hearts of those who have kept their memories of Palestine alive is extreme and cruel. The homeland is still engraved with unforgettable letters in literature and poetry, fine art and music, and theater and popular songs that reminisce of the happy old days. The Palestinian memories see the land as a holy possession. The people of Palestine believe that their homeland is sacred for two reasons: first because God blessed it exclusively in the Holy Quran and the Bible (He made it the landing place of His messengers and the gateway from the earth to heaven); and second because its soil is married with the blood of the martyrs who fell defending it against invaders

from the Hebrews before the birth of Christ, to the Greeks, to the Crusaders, to the Britons, the Romans, and finally the Zionists.

What remains in Palestine is only the memories of a homeland that had fallen long before. For the generations that lived before the 1948 Nakba, the memories are beautiful: those of an affluent land where people from neighboring countries would come to work and settle, blessed by the bountiful resources and the wonderful weather. For the generation that lived under the occupation after the capture of all Palestine, the memories are grievous, overshadowed by the ongoing crimes of the Israeli occupation and its frantic plans aimed at liquidating the Palestinian identity, with direct support from the American administration, which turned from a biased player to a shameless partner to the terror state of Israel.

3.4 A Battle of Narratives

There is only one Palestinian culture that unifies all Palestinians in the homeland and the exile. The evidence for this is that Palestinian writers at home and in exodus have presented a single narrative. Yet this narrative takes into account spatial specificity as a guarantee to preserve the national character that continues to struggle, defy and provide daily answers to questions of the present and the future. On the other hand, there is the Zionist narrative (which is fundamentally based on an enterprise grounded in the policies of expulsion and replacement) that always tries to impose its account with myths, iron power, force, fire, misrepresentation of events and falsification of history.

Now that the Arab neighboring countries have abandoned the people of Palestine (this is not a pessimistic view), the battle has turned to be one of conflicting narratives: the mythical claims of the Zionist state versus a genuine narrative of the Palestinians

whose ancestors, the Canaanites, continued uninterruptedly to settle in the land for more than seven thousand years. To face the Zionist counter-narrative, historians, researchers, artists, academics and writers need to collect, document and disseminate the Palestinian national narrative and keep it alive, focusing on two dimensions: a historical narrative that chronicles a history of a people that continued to live for thousands of years; and simultaneously recording and exposing the massacres of expulsion and the horrific crimes perpetrated by the Zionists.

Almost all Palestinian pre-Nakba narratives— whether in fiction, nonfiction or poetry— are engaged in portraying a stable life— the life before the storm— a Palestinian paradise. However, since the occupation of Palestine and the establishment of the Zionist state in 1948, the Palestinian narrative came to depict the horrible genocides, the premeditated ethnic cleansing, the forced displacement and the resulting exodus. Regardless of the genre, the Palestinian works have been able to produce and present a different story from the Zionist narrative regarding the capture of Palestine and the establishment of the Hebrew state. It is true that literature is not history, but in its core it seeks to present a chronicle capable of telling the true story of the Zionist colonialism. Literature can act on its own as a counter-narrative that pushes the reader to discover what the Zionist narrative sought to establish in unaware minds in Europe and North America. The role of literature should, thus, be no less important than what has been brought to us by the Palestinian and Arab historical writings about how the events that led to the creation of the Zionist state, and the resulting Palestinian plight, had played out.

The Nakba narratives focused on portraying the moment of the fall of the homeland by reconstructing the scene of the conflict that preceded the year 1948. For this part, each writer seeks to furnish the last moments of the scene before the fall with

characters and events, taken from the historical narrative and the memories of people who lived that moment, including the writers themselves and their imagination in order to present a coherent narrative about the Palestinian exodus towards Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, or Iraq, delineating the boundaries of the disintegration of Palestinians, who were pushed into refugee camps, forced to live in tents begging for their livelihood from the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA), and the aid provided by philanthropists, donor countries and charities.

To support their narrative, the Zionist invaders have consolidated the most persisting, most prolonged policy: Zionizing Palestine (in its every meaning). In an attempt to fake the historical facts and erase the national identity of the land, the Zionist state has worked frenziedly on changing the names of villages, towns, religious places, archaeological sites, streets, neighborhoods, historical buildings, mountains, plains and other geographical features to look more Israeli-like. This is an organized, inexorable quest to erase every single trace of the Arab-Muslim identity of the country and the Palestinian's association with it, especially the holy city of Jerusalem. The Zionist occupation authorities have given these places Hebrew and biblical names, or names of Israeli modern leaders (Amara, 2017). This poses a very serious challenge, not only to the Palestinian presence in the country, but also to Palestinian culture and memories. Place names are symbols of the historical and cultural identity of the place— a representation of the cultural heritage and attachment to the land throughout history.

3.5 The Nakba and Palestinian Literature

Before going into the contextualization of the study (sociopolitical and geopolitical contexts), it is important to situate the present research within its literary

context, being part of the larger Arabic literature, but also the narrower, more specific post-Nakba Palestinian literature.

3.5.1 A Brief History of Palestinian Literature

Arabic modern literature started to take shape during colonialism prime time, when most Arab countries were under Western colonial powers in the early 20th century. Literary experience then developed in a postcolonial atmosphere where the destructive relics of the long years of being under occupation were still present. It is within this troubled context that Palestinian literature was born. Palestinian modern literature refers to works of poetry, fiction and nonfiction written in Arabic— and often other languages— by Palestinians during the British Mandate of Palestine and later after the 1948 Nakba (literally "Catastrophe" or "Exodus"). The Arabic texts of this literature belong to the broader genre of Arabic literature. According to Sulieman and Muhawi (2006), modern Palestinian literature has a heightened sense of irony and an examination of themes related to questions of existentialism and national/cultural identity.

The year 1948 marked a transformation of the Palestinian literature both in terms of scope and themes. To identify with the new realities that emerged after the capture of Palestine by the Zionists, writers saw the necessity for new literary sub-genres (Mir, 2013). These sprang out of the necessity to "counterbalance the colonial threat" (Mir, 2013, p. 110), resulting in what later came to be known as the "Poetry of Resistance" (Kanafani, 1968), whose aim is to devise "a conscious identity out of the oppression that they have experienced since 1948" (Mir, 2013, p. 110).

This Palestinian poetry addresses notions of history, nationalism, and the role of literature in the liberation movement as a response to the displacement of the Palestinians, the capture of their homeland, and the establishment of a foreign state on

two-thirds of the historical land of Palestine. This form of poetry continued in subsequent years, reaching its peak following the capture of what remained of Palestine in 1967 in the aftermath of the Six-Day War between Arab states and Israel. A new generation of poets came to lament the lost land while instilling in the Palestinian people the spirit of unswerving quest for freedom. Poets from the occupied land, such as Fadwa Tuqan and Emil Habibi, and others from the Diaspora, such as Darwish and Kanafani have helped shape the boundaries of a collective identity.

“The Palestinians may disagree on many things, but they all agree to call what happened to them in 1948 as Nakba”, Edward Said. This is a brief, but articulate, description of the extent to which the Nakba has formed Palestinian consciousness and contributed to building a collective memory, which the Palestinian writers chronicled in different ways.

“If Palestinians poured their memories, the sea would flood,” the Palestinian saying goes. Palestinian writers wield their memories in the face of oblivion, holding fast to the map of the land that has been literally vandalized by the Zionist occupier. Regardless of the different depictions of the fall of Palestine and the resulting exodus in literature, the representation of the Nakba is the other side of the image that symbolizes and helps maintain the Palestinian identity. The Nakba, as seen in literature, is a birth of another Palestine—not Ottoman nor Mandate, but Palestine as a resisting national identity. This is the crossroads where all modern Palestinian literary works meet.

The contemporary Palestinian literature is not only a chronicle of the tragedy that befell the people of Palestine, but also a representation of life and memories since the first British soldier set foot in the land of Palestine more than a hundred years ago, until

today— so much so that such literature has become a major source for studying the Palestine question as well as issues related to the conflict in the Middle East.

These backgrounds set the required readings on what it means growing up post-Balfour Declaration. These occasions through which Palestine and Israel (co)exist are presented as trivial as these are used by literary scholars and political scientists to find out about the past. The picture in Palestine is gloomy, and across the board. It is more challenging to those engaged in ecological debate. A further dimension (one beyond the urban, social and economic aspects) comes into play— one which directly results from the Israeli occupation's assault on both the Palestinians and their environment (Brunnstrom, 2018). This is a challenge that needs to be addressed by environmentalists, but also by human rights organizations as well as the international community at large.

It is the case that moral ecologists and environmentalists have yet to be adequately aware of this dilemma, which should require collective, collaborative efforts by environmental groups around the globe to mobilize action that would stop Israel's ravaging of what has remained from the Palestinian landscape.

Some international movements have recently become aware of the ongoing crisis in the occupied territories. In early 2003, American human rights activist Rachel Aliene Corrie (together with a group from the United States and the United Kingdom) arrived in Palestine to protest the Israeli bloodshed in the occupied Palestinian territories. On March 16 that year, seeing the Israeli military bulldozers demolishing Palestinian houses and water wells and leveling cultivated fields, she stood in front of an armored bulldozer, which ran over her and crushed her to death. This incidence later inspired individuals affiliated with environment movements and other international activists, who now come regularly, though in few numbers, to demonstrate against the occupier's

atrocities in the occupied territories. Such defiance can be heartened not only by environmental movements, but also by literary texts.

In the following pages, I hope to extend these dialogues. These readings (re)appeared themselves as I investigated moral duties and ethics concerning Darwish's poems. By focusing on these poems, I was able to explore the manner in which doing ethics and participating in socio-cultural interactions are revealed with those at the center of power.

3.6 Mahmoud Darwish

In the history of modern Palestine– from early 20th century to the present time– the calamitous events (the British colonization, the horrible massacres by Zionist gangs and the Israeli occupation of the land of Palestine) have been chronicled by– among other means of communication– novels, short stories, prose and poetry. The list of Palestinian poet names is very long, but one big name might continue to ring bells in the Arab region and even beyond. With a canon of ten books of prose and thirty volumes of poetry, Mahmoud Darwish came to be described as the most celebrated poet in Palestine and the Arab World. (Jaggi 2002).

Darwish was born in 1941 in Al-Birwa, a village in the upper Palestinian Galilee. He and his family were driven by force out of their village. Finding no place to take refuge in, they headed to Lebanon to escape the ongoing massacres by the Zionist gangs as they invaded the Palestinian towns. Two years later, Darwish's family returned to their village but found only ruins, destroyed by the Zionist as they did with hundreds of villages and towns. Darwish remained there for some time. When he became a young man, he was sent to jail under Israeli security pretexts. When he was released, he rejoined his high school and moved to Russia for his undergraduate studies. He then

moved to Cairo and then to Beirut, where he stayed for several years before moving to Syria following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. He stayed for a short time in Syria, and later moved to Tunisia, Cyprus and Paris, where he wrote many of his seminal texts. In late 1990's, he moved to Ramallah, a city in the occupied West Bank, and he stayed there until 2008. Following a heart attack, he was moved to the United States for medical treatment, but he passed away there at the age of 67. His body was transferred to Ramallah, his resting place.

3.6.1 Rationale for Choosing Darwish over other Writers

"Mahmoud Darwish is the Essential Breath of the Palestinian people, the eloquent witness of exile and belonging, exquisitely tuned singer of images that invoke, link, and shine a brilliant light into the world's whole heart. What he speaks has been embraced by readers around the world—his in an utterly necessary voice, unforgettable once discovered."(Naomi Nye, quoted in Mattawa, 2014)

Many Arab Palestinian contemporary writers have characterized the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupier and its atrocities, beginning from the Nakba of 1948, through the 1967 war, the Uprising (First Intifada in 1987), the Second Intifada in 2000, to the present time. However, from among all those writers (to name some: Samih Al-Qasimk, Ibrahim Tuqan, Tawfiq Zayyad, Fadwa Tuqan, Emil Habibi, Ghassan Kanafani, Sahar Khalifa, Moreed Barghouti, and Salem Jubran), Mahmoud Darwish may have been the most influential. Thinking about literature as a driver for socio-cultural and even political change, one has to think first of Darwish's poetry, and for good reasons. From among all Arab poets that have flourished in the 1970s and beyond, Darwish may have been the most prominent Palestinian writer of all modern time.

First, apart from being a Palestinian icon and a national symbol (one who could forge a collective identity for the displaced Palestinians), Darwish is the only Arab poet whose works were translated into some thirty-five languages (UNESCO, 2008), including English. If anything, this means that Darwish was a leading literary figure whose fame has gone beyond the borders of the Arab region toward global circles. With this, he eclipses not only other Palestinian poets, but also other literary figures in the Arab region. Probably because of this David Wasserstein (2012), professor of history at Vanderbilt University, has named him "the prince of poets" (111). And according to Storey (2016), Darwish was one of the greatest poets of modern time Middle East. In the entry "Mahmoud Darwish", *The Free Online Encyclopedia* cites Darwish as a literary figure who "will be remembered as the Palestinian poet laureate of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as well as one of most significant poets anywhere in the Arab world during that time period."

Second, Darwish could easily reach the audience and move their hearts; and his poems are recited as slogans for resistance, resilience and national identification. He could also touch on the Palestinian psyche, and more than any writer, he has "been able to capture the core of Palestinian identity and its closeness to the occupied land of Palestine" (Hamdi, 2011: p. 32). These attributes qualify Darwish as an ideal Arab poet who words are like "an earthquake" (Darraj, 2008: p. 59).

Third, Darwish had experienced the cruelty of exile, and he had seen what it means for the Palestinian to live in a refugee camp and how the life of refugees is exposed, is vulnerable. But unlike those who lived and still live in the Diaspora or those who lived and died away from Palestine, Darwish returned to Palestine in the late years of his life, and there he wrote many of the poems that came as a culmination of an experience that flew across the globe, but finally landed in the homeland.

Fourth, the writings of Darwish stem from a particular real-world individual experience. The texts are those of a poet who spent years in the Israeli jails, and who was under house arrest for many times. In fact, after writing this poem, Darwish was put by the Israelis under a house arrest and later was taken to jail, where he wrote many poems (Salem 2014). It is particularly interesting to know that Darwish wrote most poems of his first collection, *Lover from Palestine*, when he was a young prisoner in an Israeli jail (Abu Eid, 2016). One of Darwish's early poems, "Identity Card", is considered by many to be "the Palestinian national poem" (Mir, 2013: p. 120).

Fifth, having acquired a distinctive poetic character– which engages the mythical and the real, Darwish has helped form a genuine Palestinian collective consciousness as well as an imaginative homeland that once was real (Hamdi, 2014), not only because of the wide array of themes/subject matters he addressed, but also, and simply, because he was the only man of letters who produced twenty books of poetry and six books of prose (Wasserstein, 2012)– a body that no Palestinian (or even Arab) writer has ever produced.

3.6.2 Darwish's Contributions to Poetry

Syrian poetry critic Subhi Hadid once wrote that "Many people in the Arab world feel their language is in crisis; and it is no exaggeration to say that Mahmoud is considered a savior of the Arab language"(quoted in Saith 2005: p. 28).

Mahmoud Darwish is credited with being a major contributor to the development of modern Arabic poetry, particularly in terms of the use of symbolism and philosophical content. His early poems followed the standard classical Arabic style. In the early 1970s, however, he turned to free-verse techniques that did not follow classical Arabic poetic norms. Thus, the diction of his early works came to be replaced by a

language fraught with symbols and indirect, figurative political statements. Darwish was multilingual, speaking Arabic, English, French and Hebrew. However, he wrote poems in Arabic only.

His thirty volumes of poems include hundreds of poems, some of which are very long (e.g. the poem "In Praise of the High Shadow" is around one thousand lines). Hundreds of his poems were translated by Sabry Hafez (Professor of Comparative Literature at the SOAS University of London), Sarah Maguire (who published four highly-acclaimed collections of English poetry, and the only living English-language poet with a book in print in Arabic), John Berger (storyteller, essayist, poet, screenwriter and dramatist), Rema Hammami (professor of anthropology, Birzeit University, who collaborated with Berger in translating some of Darwish's poems), and Fady Joudah (a Palestinian American who translated *The Butterfly's Burden* volume and wrote *The Earth in the Attic*, which received the Yale Series for Younger Poets award in 2007). The translation by Joudah was directly supervised by Darwish, who, as mentioned above, was fluent in English. With these big names in translation from Arabic into English, the translated versions have managed to render the themes and meanings in the original poems.

The conscious choice of Darwish's poems has to transform not only our understanding of Darwish the man of letters, but also of an intellectual who successfully managed to make his way in the universal realm of literature. Darwish, according to critics, has contributed to transforming modern Arabic poetry in terms of language, style and themes (Joudah, 2009). His oeuvre does not merely enrich the rational intuition, but also provides intrinsic and peculiar forms of insight. Since its meanings are neither measurable nor unwittingly perceptible, his figurative use of language offers nuances subtler than we initially expect. The themes he addressed are numerous, and most of

them dwelt on national belongings, but a close reading of his large volume of poetry would result in a conviction that he was a universal poet who would always hint at issues regarding humans' assault on the natural world.

It is a social, cultural and universal imperative to understand and to find alternative readings to detrimental environmental changes caused by human agents. The socio-cultural nuances surrounding Darwish's poetry materialize inimical transformations and far-reaching damage that the Israeli occupation has inflicted on the Palestinian landscape— all the while polishing off its indigenous character and uprooting its cultural identity. One of the consistent themes in Darwish's works is the dissenting attitude towards moral-environmental psychology. His poetry re-ignites the complex, intertwined understanding about environment, ethics and literature, and accordingly uses that understanding to urge us to correct our relationship to the natural world. It is thus no surprise to find in dozens of Darwish's poems personas asking the occupier to stop its atrocities by appealing to religion, laws and how people should treat each other.

The appreciation of Darwish's poetics has always been conflated with the Palestinian national plight that started even before the 1948 Nakba. Elias Sanbar (2017) maintains that the poetry of Darwish has created a cultural renaissance through language— one that draws boundaries between defeat and loss, with the latter serving as a driver for action, a powerful method for helping the oppressed people rise again and fight for freedom and inalienable rights. According to Sanbar, in the 1948 Nakba, Palestine and its people disappeared, while Palestine came to be renamed Israel; "it was like a death by drowning" (Sanbar, 2017, p. 8). Darwish's poetry, he continues, can be seen as "an escape from the waters" (Sanbar, 2017, p.8). This rebirth, or renaissance brought about by language, "occurred at the same time as the renaissance brought about

by the combat of the national Palestinian movement" (Sanbar, 2017, p. 8). That is why, Sanbar says, Darwish has always talked of loss, not defeat, in his poems.

Critical works on the poet— though not as numerous as his works— have ranged from short analyses of individual poems, to collections of critical essays— which focused on different themes, including nature. Scholarship on Darwish has so far focused on the passion and the ensuing intimate relationships between the people of Palestine and their natural environment, as well as the trials of dispossession and exile, with Darwish taken as a "voice of a silenced people who are homeless at home and refugees in their own country" (Saith, 2005, p. 8).

3.7 Conclusion

In discussing Darwish's nature poetry, however, it is of paramount importance to make a distinction between the physical/abstract description of nature—the Romantic version (Oerlemans, 2020)—and a model in which nature is a persona by itself (Hashim & Ahmed, 2014). For example, a poem that describes how beautiful a landscape is without relating that landscape to the larger ecosystem around it cannot be described as an ecological literary work. Without such distinction, most of the poems produced by Romantic poets, for example, would be considered ecological literature (Romantic poets viewed nature as a source of beauty and aesthetic experience— consider, for example, William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"). Whereas a rose is but a beautiful perennial flowering plant for some poets, it can be awe-inspiring for a poet with ecological awareness. In Darwish, such natural elements are depicted as personas that engage in dialogues and/or monologues. Using landscape as one of the images in his poems, Darwish transpires activism and social morality as a way to reject the occupier's desecration of Palestine.

One basic premise in the present research is that poems by Darwish can help us theorize against the atrocities by the colonizers by appealing to concepts within environmental ethics concerning the duties of the colonizer, the rights of the colonized as expressed by the eco-philosophical framework that promotes characters' virtues and healthy relationships and attitudes towards both humans and the natural world. Thus, the dissertation departed from point the argument that while the idea of destruction brought by humans to nature has been a recurring theme in works by many poets, an alternative reading of poems by Darwish can be viewed from the perspectives of environmental ethics. By focusing on the personas of Darwish (humans, animals, plants and the physical nature), a narrative that lays bare the occupier's evasion of its moral duties and the violation of others' inalienable/basic rights can be provided.