

EXILE AND DISPLACEMENT IN *KHIRBET KHIZEH*, *JOURNAL OF AN ORDINARY GRIEF* AND *I SAW RAMALLAH*

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Abstract

The West has always had a negative discourse over the East due to the power relationships between the developed countries and others that are exploited by them. Although Khirbet Khizeh is clearly seen as a story of confession of a Western agent who commits war crimes, it is indeed a portrait of how Palestinians are depicted in an oriental way and how the confessor serves the never-ending biased discourse about the East. Along with the historical background of the Exile and the abuse of power that Israel uses against Palestine, how Palestinians are victimized via systematic displacement will be brought to light. A comprehensive analysis of Khirbet Khizeh by S. Yizhar, Journal of an Ordinary Grief by Mahmoud Darwish, and I Saw Ramallah by Murid Barghouti will be conducted to display different perspectives on the exile and therefore on the Palestinian matter.

Keywords: Abuse of power, displacement, exile, orientalism, post-colonial discourse

1. Introduction

Just as women writers and/or African writers have struggled to exist in the literature for decades against the efforts by the superstructure (hegemony) and discriminative approaches, stories set in and around Palestine seem to be despised or not given satisfactory focus. However, these stories show a mirror to universal readers, facts that they have not learned or chosen to ignore. They are otherwise left by misleading information, biased and fictitious realities about the events, deliberate misrepresentations of people. For instance, the conflict that happened between Israel and Palestine early in 2021 will again be remembered with false information although the world witnessed war crimes and killing children. Attempts have

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been and will be made to justify the injustice that the powerful side applies. *Khirbet Khizeh* is a story that includes the same common approach and it can easily be misleading. It tells a young Israeli officer S. Yizhar's experiences under the Israeli army which was displacing Arabs from their own villages in the Arab-Israeli War in 1948. Although the expectance of *Khirbet Khizeh* would be a defensive text accusing the other side, Yizhar's approach to the matter is self-accusatory which makes it polemical in Israel. In the story, the narrator confesses that what they do is forcing Arabs to leave their homes and flee to unknown places which is the simple definition of exile. Just as some of the old canonical works by Conrad, Flaubert, Thomas Hope and many others were considered as fiction or travel stories about the exotic East, *Khirbet Khizeh* has been approached from a simple literary perspective. After reading Foucault, Fanon and Said, the world saw those early works which in fact have other issues in common such as fixed and political discourses, racial discrimination and Orientalism. As Achebe accuses Conrad of racism in the following century after *Heart of Darkness* was published, S. Yizhar's book deserves a similar critical approach as it draws too much parallelism with other Orientalist works.

Journal of an Ordinary Grief is a memoir written by Mahmoud Darwish, a famous Palestinian poet who was a victim of exile and was forced to leave his hometown. In his memoir, Darwish displays to the world the inhumane actions that Palestinians suffered. His book functions as the very anti-thesis of *Khirbet Khizeh*. Darwish presents us the same world that Yizhar shows us, but in a different perspective as a victim. Beyond this very simple act of exile, Darwish contextualizes the chaotic atmosphere from the children's side as the Israeli side never hesitates to use brutal force against civilians regardless of their age. Darwish exemplifies illegal applications with poignant evidence showing violations of human rights and he compares the current status of the state with Nazis. A partial court system forces Palestinians to be outside the system in which they cannot even have graves to be buried. Along with these feelings of alienation and estrangement, Darwish's text is a good source to be associated with Said's theories about the Orient and Western efforts to (re)design it until the locals have no language, no common history, present nor future.

I Saw Ramallah is another memoir about Palestine written by Mourid Barghouti and it includes exile in the present. Barghouti's work depicts a post-Palestine after thirty years of exile and his observations on changes and relocations are conveyed clearly to the contemporary reader. It also provides vivid illustrations and figures of the current status of

Palestinian refugees with the fact that they are unable to go back to their homeland due to instability. Changes in Palestinian lands lead immigrants like Barghouti to fall into despair as they cannot find the homeland that they have dreamt of. Their home becomes abstract as a result of constant attacks and fear, along with everything that has become deficient. Barghouti manages to display the psychological effects of being a foreigner in one's own homeland.

In these three texts, Yizhar and Darwish show us the exile on the action in the first war between Israel and Palestine, provide us examples of violent acts; whereas Barghouti takes us to present when the situation is even more intense because being a Palestinian in Palestine is still arduous. While this study analyses *Khirbet Khizeh* via referring to modern Orientalist discourses and post-colonial theories, it also compares it with two other texts *Journal of an Ordinary Grief* and *I Saw Ramallah* from the perspective of exile and displacement.

2. Postcolonialism, Orientalism and The Palestine Problem

Colonialism has been the act of exploitation and practice of imperialism since the beginning of history. The ones with power have always abused weaker counter ones and it goes without saying that literature is filled with numerous examples. We are exposed to colonial practices and oriental discourses in the *Iliad* in which one can see the representative of Greeks as noble heroes whereas the Trojans as filthy savages that need to be tamed. Shakespeare's plays, canonical novels by Austen, Balzac, and Conrad consist of a similar approach which provides the basis of the post-colonial discourse. This circle or discourse has not changed much since then. It is the natural instinct of humans to negate the other and label it as different. Homi Bhaba (1994) refers to this act of negation and otherization as they exist in all cultures, he also points out that their discriminatory effects do not "simply or singly refer to a 'person', or a dialectical power struggle between self and other, or to a discrimination between mother culture and alien cultures" (p.111). It is also another human urge to expand his area of practice and acquire land although it means the use of force. By stating "assimilating minorities to holistic and organic notions of cultural value does not exist anymore", Bhaba (1994) stresses that there exists a gamut of applications that function the same as colonization (p.175). Although Bhaba's views are rather critical and directly associated with the historical development of the problems that derived from colonial practices, we require directly related theories regarding issues between the Jews and Arabs as the same primitive practices remain controversial and unsolved.

Regarding the Palestinian matter, due to his heritage and personalization of the matter, the theoretical base is and always will be Edward Said. In *Orientalism*, Said analyses the power relations between the East and the West by referring to countless works written about non-Western nations. He was able to reveal the systematic and sided approach, beliefs and actions against the Orient. Said (2019) believes that what is achieved with all these representations that have no root in reality and are based on sheer imagination, is “fictional reality” (p.54). The West is “rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values”, whereas the East (Palestinians, or in Said’s terms “Arab-Orientals) is “none of these” and remains as the anti-thesis of the West (2019, p.49). They cannot be reasoned without force and violence is the only language they can speak. As long as this “unequal relationship of force between the outside Western ethnographer-observer and the primitive, or at least different, but a certainly weaker and less developed non-European, non-Western person” (Said, 1994, p.56) and binary opposition exist, the problem will never cease to exist in contemporary culture and the powerful side will always secure its hegemony with power and discourse.

Palestine is one of the few countries left on Earth that are still victimized by brutal military forces originating from powerful countries and the Palestinian cause remains visible to all humanity these days although they choose to be indifferent as the U.S. supports Israel politically and militarily. Yet, this does not mean that all people stay silent as many historians, theorists, civil organizations, writers, and poets make attempts to demonstrate the evilness of Israel against unarmed locals in Palestine to the world. Chomsky (in Pappé et al., 2013) describes these acts as “efforts to ensure that there will be no viable Palestine ever, always with decisive U.S. support” (p.12). In *Orientalism, Culture and Imperialism* and *The Question of Palestine*, Said identifies the West as being indifferent to the (Zionist) diaspora because they are highly affiliated with them; whereas some countries “support” and “understand” the Palestinian struggle with sympathy (2015, p.68).

Makdisi (2008) refers to international law The Declaration of Human Rights (in Article 13) since it includes the following statement that “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile,” and that “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.” (Introduction section, para.12). What he means here is that all countries do not do enough for the fact that most of the people in Palestine have been forced to leave their countries and are still not able to go back home until now.

Said (2015) directly prosecutes the West for everything happening in Palestine and he claims that “Zionism institutionally lives” in them, urging “Europeans to view non-Europeans as inferior, marginal, and irrelevant” (p.72). Ergo, there exists a well thought ideological foundation regarding the violence in Palestine. Said (2015) criticizes the West for seeing the authority and ability to use force to occupy foreign lands for themselves and it is a direct consequence of their colonial practices (p.77), and now the world sees the result of Israel’s actions that are by all means out of control. Césaire (1972) states that “the West has undermined civilizations, destroyed countries, ruined nationalities, extirpated the root of diversity” (p.23). The scheme is simple; they block the possible insurgents, form their own local anti-resistance units to battle against them, and the rest is passive as seen in *Khirbet Khizeh*. Due to the fact that the masses are quashed, there exists “illegal forces” (Gramsci, 2014, p.229), and in all three texts, we are faced with too much illegality with displacement and violence with no justification.

3. Memoirs of Palestine: Looking Back, Looking Now

Khirbet Khizeh depicts a planned displacement of indigenous people, which is a “systematic and comprehensive” act (Makdisi, 2008, Epilogue section, para.11) and “uninterrupted movement” in the “colonial territory” (Fanon, 1977, p.51). The army is searching for “infiltrators” and “terrorist cells”, yet they move local people “onto transports, and convey them across our lines; blow up the stone houses, and burn the huts; detain the youths and the suspects, and clear the area of ‘hostile forces’” (Yizhar, 2014, ch.1, para.3). They are “the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native” (Fanon, 1977, p. 38). Other than the protagonist, all characters seem indifferent about the crimes committed against Palestinians. For them reviving the Jews as a nation (Diaspora) “of decent upbringing... of the great Jewish soul” is quite pivotal (Yizhar, 2014, ch.1, para.3). Therefore, Jews admit their psychological and physical systematic act with huge ambition and perseverance by stating: “three days they’re here, three days they’re in the hills, and we’ll see who gets fed up with the game first” (Yizhar, 2014, ch.2, para.4). Even today, a similar strategy under the name of binationalism or two-state solution is conducted which actually empowers racial, ethnic and religious discrimination (Butler, 2014, p.216).

Israel’s occupations and colonial acts are supported by its own racial discrimination and the novella has numerous interpretations that can be linked with Orientalism. Derelict soldiers that we mentioned earlier are the embodiment of the Western partial thinking against the East

and the Orient, which describes local Arabs as “not even human”, “stinking”, “infuriatingly disgusting” adding that they reside in “flea-bitten desolate suffocating villages”, with a final justification that they “eat what they cooked” (Yizhar, 2014, ch.7, para.31). Césaire (1972) asserts that it is “the West alone knows how to think” and within their borders, there exists a “shadowy realm of primitive thinking... incapable of logic, is the very model of faulty thinking” (19). That is why the group of soldiers in *Khirbet Khizeh* think that when they have control of the territory, “it’s gonna be a thousand times better” (Yizhar, 2014, ch.2, para.4), and they say “immigrants of ours will come to this Khirbet what’s-its-name, you hear me, and they’ll take this land and work it and it’ll be beautiful here!” (Yizhar, 2014, ch.8, para.3). They also prejudicedly think that Arabs would do “the same” to them and “slaughter them just like that” (Yizhar, 2014 ch.4, para.9). Similar to “the colonialist Europe” that made “modern abuse onto ancient injustice” and “hateful racism onto old inequality (Césaire, 1972, p.8), Israel has the ultimate greed for power and they feed on racism. In the novella, the descriptions of Arabs are never neutral let alone positive, and they are also contemptuous. The group of soldiers that relocate Arabs do not consider them as “real men” as they lack the courage to battle and defend their country because “they see Jews and wet their pants”, in spite of the fact that they can “finish off Israelis just by spitting” (Yizhar, 2014, ch.5, para.14). Said (2015) draws attention to the lack of activity of the Arabs as they are “physically powerless to stop the growth or ‘thickening’ of this new Israeli colonization” (p.95). There exists a fixed and demeaning stereotype of Arabs which is consciously embedded in the text. What matters for the dominant side who has the natural right to shape the discourse over the Palestinian matter is that no matter how successful are the locals, they are always inferior regardless of their successes, talents or positive traits. For instance, for a Palestinian comedian, his race casts a shadow on his/her ludicrousness.

In the second half of the story, apart from colonialism and orientalism, the main character suddenly makes attempts to display a high rate of grief and in-betweenness and he desires to end this aggression towards indigenous people. Yizhar (2014) defines his experience as “everything turned dark and was collapsing” (ch.6, para.9). *Khirbet Khizeh* may seem and sound like a story of confession of the colonizers’ side, it includes direct associations with other colonial products such as Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Kurtz loses his humanity and becomes insane as he is surrounded by African people’s scalps on the sticks and he is “left with those two unworkable words the Horror, the Horror” (Bhaba, 1994, p.123). Similarly, Yizhar’s (2014) vocabulary is rather the same: “What could you do with them but spit in

disgust, and gag, and not look, and run from here—the horror! The horror!” (ch.4, para.16) or “like being forced into a nightmare and not being allowed to wake up from it” (ch.7 para.10).

For the West, this is the role of the colonized, as the reason for insaniating the Western agents although they bear gifts of “civilization and liberty”. Said (1994) stresses that the “hierarchical distinction” always exists between the occupier and occupied, no matter the latter is white (p.228). It is also clear today that the state of Israel restricts Palestinians in terms of mobility, employment, accommodation and education. It is everlasting as it goes beyond time and is passed through generations. Yizhar says,

I had never been in the Diaspora—I said to myself— I had never known what it was like ... but people had spoken to me, told me, taught me, and repeatedly recited to me, from every direction, in books and newspapers, everywhere: exile. They had played on all my nerves. Our nation’s protest to the world: exile! It had entered me, apparently, with my mother’s milk. (ch.7. para.35)

Through regular replacements and propaganda, the Jewish state (colonizers) succeed in their ultimate control over the region and supplement it with practices of media, law, and cultural elements to demonstrate that imperialism and colonization have always existed and thus it is vital that the “natives would remain in their “non-place,” Jews in theirs” (Said, 2015, p.82). Here, “non-place” means “al-manfa”, a coinage for “forced exile” either voluntarily or involuntarily, which results from “the diasporic status” of the nation that is “scattered” and any future unification is prevented (Butler, 2014, p.208)

Knowledge no longer requires application to reality; knowledge is what gets passed on silently, without comment, from one text to another. Ideas are propagated and disseminated anonymously, they are repeated without attribution; they have literally become ideas regues: what matters is that they are there, to be repeated, echoed, and re-echoed uncritically. (Said, 2019, p.116)

At the end of the novella, Yizhar (2014) describes an awakening moment for his hero since he confesses the obvious act of exile and “filthy war” that they have been committing (ch.8, para.1). Their intention to turn the province into “their own *Khirbet Khizeh*”, to remake it, to build a synagogue and change it as “Hebrew Khizeh”, and conclude with “we came, we shot, we burned; we blew up, expelled, drove out, and sent into exile. What in God’s name were we doing in this place!” (Yizhar, 2014, ch.8, para.5). As locals shout their names as “Colonizers!”, they feel the utmost guilt and come to the sense that it is not their land (ch.8, para.7). Yizhar ends his story with the idea of God watching these crimes and he points out this is a typical circle happening in the region. In the Afterword, the translator David

Shulman's ideas shed light on the issue and they are rather critical. Although he tries to be neutral for this controversial issue and provides some useful background knowledge regarding the details of the Arab-Israel war; in analogy to Yizhar, he is sided since he directly says "things happen in war" and if Arabs come across any Jews "you could be sure they would wipe them out" (Shulman qtd in Yizhar, 2014, Afterword section, para.9).

For the Palestine matter and the historical background, Mahmoud Darwish makes critical points and provides vivid descriptions of the exile. Due to the fact that he refers to *Khirbet Khizeh* in *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, his text is an invaluable source of comparison between the two texts. Darwish does not tell a story of fiction, but a story of exile in which he has been a victim and loses his homeland. Darwish in fact is a national poet of Palestine and one of the leading figures in literature along with being a symbol of resistance. Darwish drives forward his memory to unravel his and all Palestinians' traumas and sufferings so that they can be retold, reimagined, and excavated" (Odeh, 2021, p.100). In his biographical text, *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, Darwish (2011) tries to explain his and all Palestinians' "rightful belonging" (Ch. "The Moon Did Not Fall into the Well", para.31). In the same chapter, he refers to his homeland as "the paradise not lost" but it "remains occupied and subject to being regained" and Palestinians as a "historical community" (para.33). He also describes his own experience as a "departure" which was not "voluntary" and certainly "not a journey", but it was "expulsion and exile" (para.34). It starts when he is a little student and his classmates keep reminding him that he is an Arab, therefore he has "no right to excel" (para.35). According to them "resisting" or "fighting back" is enough cause to destroy cities and they tell stories of annihilation of places with words such as "we blew it up, raked the stones out of its earth, then plowed it until it disappeared under the trees" (para.42).

The post-imperial writers of the Third World, therefore, bear their past within them – as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending towards a postcolonial future, as urgently reinterpretable and redeployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory reclaimed as part of a general movement of resistance, from the colonist. (Said, 1994, p.256)

Therefore, *Journal of an Ordinary Grief* is not only an exile story of a Palestinian but a reflection of Palestinians' inner world along with the documentation of Israeli's true crimes against indigenous people. Darwish (2011) also asserts that Jews offered them death or departure and it was not a result of an emergency situation. Instead, it was "a part of an ongoing Zionist strategy" which started before the first war and they conducted this strategy

“by weapons and justified it on religious grounds” (ch.1, *“The Moon Did Not Fall into the Well”*, para.58). In the end, both sides are trapped with “too much history and too many prophets” (Rahman, 2008, p.323). Unlike Yizhar who describes the displacement of Arabs like a simple task, Darwish says they “gathered the inhabitants in the main square” of the towns they occupied and left them under the sun for several hours”; adding that they would randomly choose the most handsome men and shoot them for no reason in front of others to force them to leave and spread the news to other villages (ch.1, *“The Moon Did Not Fall into the Well”*, para.58).

Similar to Yizhar’s story, Darwish’s memoirs include the psychological side of the war and in addition to that the despair of exile. He says “war is a picnic” for Israel and it is because of that reason that they have been able to continue it for decades. If locals choose to stay or come back to their land, they are “taken to court and from there into exile outside the country” (2011, ch.2, *“The Homeland: Between Memory and History”*, section II, para.9). In the end, Jews become “citizens” and Arabs become “refugees”, and it does not matter if justice is on the side of indigenous as the land belongs to Jews (ch.2, section III, para.10). Although they take it by force, they speak of “acquired rights” and Darwish (2011) seems to be irritated by that. He admits that “without power, they have lost history, land, and rights” and it is clear also for him that they are no match to Israel in terms of violence and murder (ch.2, section II, para.9). And Israel’s main goal is to erase their history and build a justified Zionist history which for Darwish (2011) is a “constant reminder” to the people that they are always exposed to “annihilation” (ch.2 section III, para.4). Darwish (2011) critically mentions Nazis as well in his depiction of the other side. He believes that “Israeli Zionist behaviour toward the original inhabitants of Palestine is similar to the practices applied by the Nazis against the Jews themselves” (ch.2, section III, para.3). He asserts that Arabs “cry over a lost homeland”, but Jews “cry over those who were lost in search of a homeland” (ch.2, section IV, para.4).

For the incident in Kufr Qasem, Darwish (2011) seems to have grown a national consciousness as Israel killed forty-nine Arabs including seven boys and girls and nine women (ch.4, *“He Who Kills Fifty Arabs Loses One Piaster”*). They were regular people coming from work or children playing outside. Darwish (2011) rigorously criticizes the Israeli court system which sentenced the perpetrators to a small fine and victims to be paid a hundred thousand Israeli pounds for which he says “the cheapest price in history” (ch.4,

para.89). The killer later was awarded by the municipality with a civilian position in charge of “Arab affairs”. (ch.4, para. 96).

It would seem that the legality of killing Arabs, or indifference to their killing, has become ordinary and taken for granted in Israeli society, brought up on the instinct of hostility to these creatures who muddy the atmosphere of the “purity” of Jewish existence in Palestine. (Darwish, 2011, ch.4, para.69).

Darwish (2011) describes this killing as a crime that was “planned and executed for no essential reason”, for that it was the imitation of Nazi killings that Jewish victims learned in history (ch.4, para.102). Israel gives the message that they have the right to kill people; however, the individuals do not have the right to fight for their freedom. For Darwish (2011), the Zionist tendency which put military power and violence above all is “not centered in humanitarian values and cultural confrontation”. (ch.4, para.107) When each party claims that it is their country, the one that says “we are more powerful” wins the argument; however, Darwish (2011) claims that “might does not make right”, and they grow “stronger as time passes” (ch.5, “*Happiness – When It Betrays*”, section II, para.29). Should the situation continue, there can be no future without “repeated subjugation” (Butler, 2014).

All the injustice and incidents in Kufr Qasem convince Darwish to come up with four parties to blame. The press, religious leadership, academic leadership and literary and artistic leaders. Darwish (2011) says the press chooses to be misleading about the events and they put headlines as “misfortune,” or an “offense,” or “the regrettable incident” and other groups were “totally silent and completely indifferent”; and adds that they were all silent, are silent, and will maintain their silence (ch.4, para.82). Attempts to display Palestine as a “minority” becomes a political tool and the press with other organizations is manipulated to scaffold this goal which eventually will keep “restricting” the Palestine within the borders of Israel (Rahman, 2008).

Darwish (2011) states that it is saddening to see foreigners take control of their country and cultivate the land which breaks his heart. He says if they “cry out with pain and frustration”, they accuse them of anti-Semitism (ch.5, para.4). That is why in the country people are “deprived of their homes and their land”, and even the dead do not have graves (ch.5, para.7). They experience only cursing, beating, torture and terror. They are never enough to keep the idea of homeland away though, as Darwish (2011) explicitly argues “Palestine remains your

homeland, be it a map, a massacre, a land, or an idea. It is your homeland indeed. No dagger will convince you it belongs to them” (ch.5, para.21). He goes on with the same argument,

Homeland is not like the bond between shade and tree or blade and sheath. Homeland is not a relationship of blood and kinship. And homeland is not a religion or a god. Homeland is this alienation. This alienation. This alienation that preys upon you in Jerusalem. (2011, ch.6, “*Improvisations on the Sura of Jerusalem*”, para.14)

Here, Palestine becomes “an imagined construct” rather than simple geography or place, and “an imagined political community” instead of a nation (Anderson, 1991, p.6). Darwish (2011) is thought-provoking with his utterances of homeland in his work. He blatantly shows us and the world (his real audience) that their deprivation of their homeland is not just and it damages them more than the violence and torture that they have been suffering. Tahrir (2016) states that “geographical boundaries and spaces are ideas before they become reality” and he thinks that Darwish sees Palestine as a place that does not exist geographically and therefore must be “preserved, documented, negotiated and constructed, aesthetically and imaginatively” (Hamdi, 2011, p. 245).

...the official institution of “world public opinion” in the West has stifled and falsified it. If our actions are subject to the requirements of “world public opinion” as expressed in the official media, then it is time for us to realize that we enjoy our bondage and our loss, and should start looking for reasons to prolong them. (ch.8, “*Going to the World*”, para.39)

When they are deprived of their land, the only power Palestinians have is the power of language as the rest is taken by occupation. Ergo, Darwish uses it well and targets the institutions that do harm to them such as the UN or the media. Said (2019) also targets the Western consciousness and representations as they are shaped by a set of forces that aim to design the Orient (p.203). Besides, the language is always used as a tool for propaganda and for the victim of colonialism it is again the mother language that they take refuge in. It is for the very same reason that Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (a writer of exile) chooses to write in his mother tongue after the world recognized him with his English canonical texts. Similarly, Achebe (2017), though he chooses to use English in his renowned works, is critical about language especially when it is related to exile as he states that “...exiles, the deported, the expelled, the rootless, the stateless, lawless nomads, absolute foreigners, often continue to recognize the language, what is called the mother tongue, as their ultimate homeland, and even their last resting place (p.87-89).

Victims of exile generally feel the loss of meaning in the world and Said (2013) associates it with the loss of “roots”, which, thus, leads to the desire to “reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people. (ch.17, “*Reflections on Exile*”). Darwish (2011) does not state any difference as “Those who emerged from ancient books have not only taken their homeland”, they also took away the means of their belonging to the world (Appendix section, para.2). *In the Presence of Absence* (2012), Darwish points out “the homeland was born far away from its land” and he sees Palestine as his “lost paradise” which was “born from the hell of absence” (chapter XVI). Meanwhile, the world is indifferent even when Palestinians cry out their cause,

When we shun suicide, they say we are cowards. And when we embrace it, they say we are barbarians. When we call for peace, they say we are lying hypocrites. And when we prepare for battle, they say we are savages. But are we the killers? Who killed whom? (Darwish, 2011, ch.8, para.40)

Thus, the world cannot let them lead a regular life with everything happening around them. Rusdie (2010) argues that most of the time they are “brought up against a threat or an allusion to something which is deeply unpleasant” and they always “feel outside in some way” (p.172). At this point, Darwish (2011) is also rather critical as he points out that when his mother throws him to the street, Jews kick him out and say “Go back to your mother” and when he goes back, they “arrest him, torture him and call him a terrorist” (ch.8, para.62). What is more, they are “Palestinian, yet Palestine does not exist in the eyes of the world” (Darwish, 2011, Appendix section, para.3). Darwish says that traditionally “the powerful are civilized, and the weak are savage” and he has a legitimate ground for his claim (ch.8, para.34). He implies that colonizers rooted out the “Red Indians”, and adds that those who are proud of “being cultured and civilized” are often the killers (ch.8, para.34). Said (2019) asserts that the powerful one is “the stronger culture”, he can “penetrate...wrestle with... give shape and meaning” (p. 44).

Compared to *Khirbet Khizeh*, *Journal of an Ordinary Grief* does not include orientalist discourse so much except for the Jewish encounters of Darwish. One acquaintance of him says that he will keep his house in its original state because it is an old Arab house and “lovely décor” reminds him of the “Orient” (Darwish, 2011, section IV, para.3). Regarding *Khirbet Khizeh*, Darwish (2011) refers to Yizhar’s words “we came, we shot, we burned; we blew up, we expelled, drove out, and sent into exile” and adds that “these are not the words of an Arab” (ch.2, section III, para.1). At first, one can think that Darwish (2011) is criticizing

him or Arabs; however, he is in fact surprised to hear a Jew admitting that Arabs are victims. He seems rather delighted to have Yizhar on his side of the argument and for him what Yizhar writes is a “cry of conscience by an Israeli writer more than twenty years ago, which accurately defines the idea of the homeland” (Darwish, 2011, ch.2, section III, para.2). It is also “an answer to history and to the history teacher” as Israeli propaganda is enforced by history teachers and they keep telling lies and Darwish (2011) believes that “as the history becomes more remote, the lies become more innocent and less harmful (ch.2, section II, para.1). He implies that Israel keeps telling the world that Palestinians sold their land to them. He also says that it was Israel in the first place who declared to them that “staying in their homeland was treason” (ch.2, section II, para.1). That is why Darwish (2011) seems to like *Khirbet Khizeh* as he says “this cry is rarely heard in the clamour of propaganda and lies (ch.2, section III, para.2). When his fellow citizens and the whole world go silent, Darwish is left only with the sympathy of his enemy and sadly he is content with that.

So far, with *Khirbet Khizeh* and *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, we have analyzed exile in the past from Israel’s and Palestine’s sides. For the exile in the present, *I saw Ramallah* by Barghouti functions as the text covering recent experiences in exile within the Israel-Palestine context. In this striking memoir, he is detached from the “clichéd Palestinian form of national romanticism” and focuses more on the foundations of Palestine and resistance (Odeh, 2021, p.100). Its foreword, which was written by Edward Said, includes figures from the original war and the current day. Like Makdisi, Said (qtd in Barghouti, 2003) refers to the problem of 3.5 million refugees and the fact that they still cannot return to their homeland, and even if they do, they are exposed to “sudden death and unexplained disappearance” (Foreword section, para.4). Barghouti (2003) makes a point when he starts with what Palestinians are called by the world today which is *naziheen*, meaning the “displaced ones” (ch.1, para.10). After thirty years of exile, he returns to Ramallah, yet politically, it is not the Ramallah he was born in and he expresses his surprise as “I pass from my exile to their... homeland? My homeland?” and his confusion goes on, “here I am, entering Palestine at last. But what are all these Israeli flags?” (ch.1, para.158). He is faced with cruel reality and he says “I asked myself: what is so special about it except that we have lost it? It is a land, like any land (ch.1, para.33). The more time he spends in Ramallah, the more changes he realizes such as the lack of green sides and flowers compared to the past as he now sees “bare and chalky” hills (ch.1, para.195). He suddenly realizes that he has been giving a false description of his home country when strangers ask about it. Furthermore, he describes the current situation and

traumas of the Palestinians compared to the past when it was also “not a paradise” but they somehow “managed their affairs”; however, when it comes to now, they say “but the occupation...” and go “silent” (ch.2, para.67).

Barghouti provides the reader the technical hardships that as former natives they face these days. To start with, now a Palestinian can go to Jerusalem only with a Palestinian leader who carries a VIP card. Barghouti (2003) says he could not go there because he does not know such people (ch.1). Secondly, he mentions constant cursing and labeling that they now face such as “immigrants and refugees” even in small villages like Deir Ghassanah, a place from their childhood when it was full of indigenous people (ch.2, para.31). While walking on the streets he learns a new Hebrew word “mahsum” which means barrier and indicates that they are everywhere. He also claims that some people cannot even go to funerals due to restrictions. Barghouti helps us understand the Palestinians today who live as “second-class citizens” and who are victims of “socio-political discriminations and restrictions on their cultural and economic opportunities” (Saloul, 2012, p.1-2).

Regarding the psychological effects of the exile and displacement, Barghouti (2003), like his predecessor Darwish, states that this long occupation led Palestinian generations to be born in exile and therefore to be strange to Palestine, and to “know nothing of the homeland except stories and news” (ch.3, para.53). They do not know where to belong, even if they find a better place, they cannot go, and they cannot stay either. Barghouti (2003) asserts that “the Occupation” also led generations to “adore an unknown beloved: distant, difficult, surrounded by guards, by walls, by nuclear missiles, by sheer terror.” (ch.3, para.54). What is left in their mind of their distant imaginary homeland and which is now full of violence. That is why Barghouti (2003) says that it is this “occupation” that turned them from “children of Palestine to children of the idea of Palestine (ch.3, para.55).

When we were Palestine, we were not afraid of the Jews. We did not hate them, we did not make an enemy of them. Europe of the Middle Ages hated them, but not us. Ferdinand and Isabella hated them, but not us. Hitler hated them, but not us. But when they took our entire space and exiled us from it they put both us and themselves outside the law of equality. They became an enemy, they became strong; we became displaced and weak. They took the space with the power of the sacred and with the sacredness of power, with the imagination, and with geography. (Barghouti, 2003, ch.8, para.17)

Historically speaking, Jews have been the victim of a systematic exile by many powerful nations. Barghouti (2003) refers to the typical tendency of the powerful imperialist countries

and associates Israel with them. They obviously learned from their masters who practiced colonialism and the abuse of power onto weaker territories and now they have already proved to the world that they are the supreme masters of occupation and displacement. The power they have makes people see themselves as “other” and within the relationship of power and knowledge, Palestinian’s knowledge is both internal and external (Hall, 2018, p.225-226). Internally, they lose their heritage and hope for the future, and externally, they are displaced and forced to exile.

Displacement means one has to be away from all the attachments that one has with his homeland. It is rather overarching and it constantly reminds itself of the settlements and checkpoints of Israel. It is “semi-everything”, and the displaced person gets stranger to his memories and so he tries to attach to them (Barghouti, 2003, ch.4, para.18).

In exile, the lump in the throat never ends: it is always resumed. In exile, we do not get rid of terror: it transforms into a fear of terror. And because those who are thrown out of their countries are frustrated, and those who have escaped from their countries are frustrated, they cannot avoid tension and anger in their daily dealings among themselves. (Barghouti, 2003, ch.7, para.64)

Barghouti’s stress on the word “terror” and “fear” is the most natural and humane reaction within the tyrant/victim relationship. The discourse which mastered by Robinson Crusoe, continued by Conrad and many others in the literature, which includes the dark side of the “unknown” and to which the West as “civilized” takes light; is repeated by Yizhar who states the same “horror” though he brings violence and despair. Barghouti’s and Darwish’s words about terror have the actual meaning of horror and they have always been there. Yet the world has always chosen not to read or hear them. Like Darwish, Barghouti (2003) accuses the Palestinian and the world media of “covering reality with flowers” (ch.6, para.65). However, Achebe (2017) agrees that, in the future, there will exist a huge difference between the story told by the violence-bringers who “camouflage their doings” and people who fight to “reclaim their history”; their deeds will be remembered (p.60).

At the end of his memoir, Barghouti confesses that he is left with “scattered fragments” and feelings such as anger, deprivation and loss. He is a stranger in his homeland and it obviously hurt him “more than bullets of the invaders”. These displaced figures have suffered more than the average person on earth and unfortunately, all they can hold on is the possibility of a less problematic future in which they and their children can live in prosperity.

4. Conclusion

Although Jews today are strangling Palestinians with the occupation of their lands, it was Jews in history who were displaced from many countries and massacred by Nazis in WWII. Since 1948, when they took military control of the territory, they have been expanding their lands by displacing Palestinians and keeping the military blockade over them. With “ideological” supplementations, they fill these territories with “new inhabitants” (Said, 2015, p.101). The natural course of events is told by an Israeli writer S. Yizhar in his novella *Khirbet Khizeh*, which seems like a sincere confession of the Jewish side. Although Yizhar tries to show the world how they occupied territories that originally belonged to indigenous Arabs and how they forced them to leave their homeland, Yizhar as a military officer is not a reliable source of the sufferings of local people. That’s why in the end, he produces the discourse of the colonialists like Conrad by stating that the soldiers lose their humanity due to the sheer horror and terror they experience because of the war. Lack of information and self-accusation might be a good way to tell his side of the story with fancy words and crocodile tears; however, the truth is always beyond.

What Yizhar unconsciously does, not only empowers the traditional inhumane discourse on the Orient, but also legitimizes the abuse of power. Along with its false illustrations, the West is the supreme power, has the right to decide the trends in literature whereas the East with no authority in general is constantly ignored and silenced. *Journal of an Ordinary Grief* by Mahmoud Darwish depicts the original displacement of the Palestinians vividly and objectively in contrast to S. Yizhar’s partial truths in the matter. Darwish’s text revolutionizes the Palestine matter and functions as a counter-argument for Yizhar’s partial story. Yizhar’s attempts to show victimizers as an innocent party of soldiers that lose their humanity and grow “guilt” because of their act of annexation are refuted by Darwish’s words on the victims of exile and their true sufferings with blood and tears. And Barghouti (2003) demonstrates the current situation and exile experience of the contemporary age. He describes the degree of the occupation that Israel forces upon Palestine as he says “Israel, with the excuse of the sky, has occupied the land” (ch.7, para.39), adding that “they occupy our homes as victims and present us to the world as killers” (ch.8, para.100). However, through people like Darwish and himself, Barghouti believes that they may forget sometimes that they are occupied, but they bring children into the world who do not forget. Achebe (2017), another victim of exile, states that these traumas and sufferings started people to have “the process of re-storying”

(p.79). Yet, we need stories of all sides rather than being limited with authors such as Yizhar. When more people “re-tell” what happened or is happening to them, eventually future generations will overcome social and political injustice. Additionally, Butler (2014) states that it is through literature that the new generations can pay their debt to Said, Darwish and others as poems and stories “prompt the reader to act, to speak, to invent, and to will the impossible, which is not just a future other than perpetual catastrophe, but the break with catastrophe, which would be the very possibility of the future” (p.49).

Yizhar tries to show us that “what we did was wrong, but we lost our humanity because of them”, and Darwish tells us that “what we experienced was wrong and we were victims because of them”, whereas Barghouti says that “we did everything as we were supposed to, we are still victims because of them”. Barghouti (2003) also states that “Israelis may feel sympathy for us but they find enormous difficulty in feeling sympathy for our ‘cause’ and our story” (ch.8, para.16). When this sympathy that the world felt for the Jews under Nazi torture, is felt for Palestinians, humanity will take one closer step to actual “civilization” rather than the “hypocrisy”. Here is a crumb of sympathy for them,

But I am the exile.
Seal me with your eyes.
Take me wherever you are—
Take me whatever you are.
Restore to me the colour of face
And the warmth of body
The light of heart and eye,
The salt of bread and rhythm,
The taste of earth ... the Motherland.
Shield me with your eyes.
Take me as a relic from the mansion of sorrow.
Take me as a verse from my tragedy;
Take me as a toy, a brick from the house

So that our children will remember to return. (Darwish, qtd in Said, 2013, “*Reflections on Exile*” ch.17, para.16)

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