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The American University in Cairo

2003/15

A Thesis Submitted
To

The Department of English and Comparative Literature
Spring 2003

Memory and Literary Retrieval of Disappearing Worlds

By

Heba Ibrahim Meshaal

2003/15


The American University in Cairo


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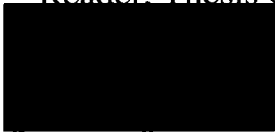
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Introduction

In the *Amnesty International Report* for the year 2001, Pierre Sane, Secretary General of Amnesty International writes in the forward to the report that AI fights battles:

The first battle is the battle to preserve the individual identity of the victim . . . The second battle is the battle against forgetting. The suffering of victims must be acknowledged and given its due importance. There can be no justice while the perpetrators are allowed to ignore or deny what they have done. (10)

The above quotation underscores the importance of acknowledging the wrong done to individuals and the need to prosecute the perpetrators, if not legally at least morally. Applying this rule to nations, it becomes all the more important to appreciate the struggle of any group aiming at preserving its genuine rights of freedom and authentic identity. Amnesty International sets as its goal: preserving the memory of noble struggle as well as the memory of the victim. In doing so, it has set the rule to the whole world to assume its responsibility to redress the balance of injustice. Life has taught one that many heroic experiences go by unnoticed or even unknown; mostly they are of great men who sacrificed their life advocating a cause or defending a certain right. Since history is often written by victors and those allowed by authority to register the deeds and highlight an official perspective, many great and human experiences are forgotten in the annals of history. Personally, I have been touched by the sufferings of many freedom fighters in our world. The fact that defining a freedom fighter is not unanimously agreed on indicates how bewildered and confused the common man in a remote area from the one witnessing the conflict may be. Such may result in forming wrong concepts surrounding a certain cause. So if Plato believes that poets should be chased out of his Utopia, literature has to fight back and prove that it is not the voice of the mighty that only records, but that of poets and writers who portray the hopes and suffering of the victimized.

Since literature is a product of the general taste and has its influence on people, one cannot expect that the common reader would be interested in a kind of literature that does not reflect his dilemmas or isolate him from what goes around him. Invariably, realist literature came as a shock to people who were long accustomed to fairy tales and happy endings. The role of literature was transformed from being a leisure activity enjoyed by the elite and cultured to an eye-opener to the atrocities of modern life. It also played a great role in shaping the mentality of people as to accept certain views relative to some political orientations and ideologies. Official literature could not be called objective or expected to be neutral. Its counter literature plays the role of waking the consciousness of people through providing counter views to those disseminated by the dominant forces. In most cases, circumstantial literature that tends to celebrate a certain line of thought, either by siding with the ruling powers or its counter powers, dies and loses much of its importance by losing the ground that made it relevant, for it is mostly didactic or heavy-handed. Literature that aims at awakening the consciousness of a group carries more weight when it is associated with an autobiographical element, for it gives the reader a sense of lived experience as it is marked by the personal tone of the writer.

In the Arab world and previously colonized countries, resistance takes different forms. It varies from armed resistance to that of the contesting word. However, one must differentiate between literature that endorses hatred and violence and one that defends a cause and awakens people to their genuine rights. The importance imparted to the second lies in its making people question the existing norms and sometimes motivates them to change a narrow state of mind to become involved in a larger circle encompassing the whole of man-kind. As such, literature acquires a double significance for it both defends a right and allows a person to

express freely opinions concerning a certain issue. This corresponds to the declaration of human rights that stipulates:

Every one has the right to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. . . of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and import information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
(Larson 12)

However, if some writers are forbidden from expressing their opinions because it allegedly threatens a certain party or advocates a different reality, it becomes not a violation of the common man's right but a violation to the whole of human rights and freedom.

This thesis is to tackle three different genres all of which share in resisting: a prose work, *Memory for Forgetfulness* by Mahmoud Darwish, a dramatic work, *Translations* by Brian Friel, and three poems by the native American poet Joy Harjo "New Orleans", "For Alva Benson and for those who Have Learned to Speak" and "I give you Back." The cause in these works is not the same, yet they choose to challenge the status quo culturally through appealing to the memory of their peoples by awakening their inherited common legacy and history. Seemingly, these works belong to three different cultural environments that should have produced different kinds of literature. However, the messages of these works have similar functions. Their aim is political or social awareness through addressing the present while evoking the past.

The three writers showed the importance of writing their testimonies down on paper. Writing means that truth would not be forgotten; it becomes a history that tells the pain and suffering of the common man as to show the opposite of what is normally underscored. As such, these writers create a balance between what is usually told and what is often kept untold. Their writing registers their own experience and

dreams. It points to the responsibility of the world that allowed such inhumane acts to go unquestioned.

Besides, the three works express a sense of alienation and isolation felt by the characters of the works. The protagonists endure a sense of exile, and an estrangement from time and place. Darwish is the constant traveler who has no fixed residence; the community in Friel's play is going against an overwhelming power, while Harjo's persona is often at odds with the society that encompasses her. They also share a sense of loss and aspire for a different world that is based on memory and testimony. The writers are also fully aware of whom they represent and what their mission is. They seek to reveal their real identity and the strongest ties that attach them to a certain place or issue. The writers want to win their battle, for this reason they are engaged in it and try to monopolize all potential forces by being fully equipped through knowing the importance of their past and what they expect of the future.

Remarkably enough, the authors do not feel superior to the sensibilities of the people and they commit themselves to reflecting collective concerns. The central question in these works becomes how to revive the memory of their people and recreate a vivid image of the past, the forgotten truths that would help in their present struggle. They also show how difficult it is to create a mutual understanding between the races without acknowledging the right of the "Other." Each of the works manifests a certain kind of expectation. Darwish expects the world to awake from its slumber and acknowledge its responsibility towards the tragedy of the Palestinians. On the other hand, Friel expects his people to acknowledge their own role in revitalizing their language to avoid its dying out. As for Harjo, she is somehow different in her expectation for she calls for normalizing the cultural relations within her community.

Chapter One

Mahmoud Darwish and the Dream of Return

In the aftermath of World War I, T.S. Eliot surprised the literary scene with his unprecedented attempt to reflect the impact of the Great War on the way he perceived the world as shown in his poem "The Waste Land." Eliot wrote in a review of Joyce's *Ulysses* that "...The inherited mode of ordering a literary work, which assumed a relatively coherent and stable social order, could not accord with 'the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history'" (Abrams 119). This line of thought was evident in the methodology Eliot followed in writing his poem: his choice of the title, the characters, and the sense of morbidity, death, and failure that loom over the poem. Likewise, Darwish's long memoir *Memory for Forgetfulness*, triggered by the brutal experience of the Israeli invasion to Lebanon in 1982,¹ is regarded by many critics as a long poem in prose. Such a new form was necessary to reflect the fragmentation and shock the Palestinians experienced in the aftermath of an invasion supported by the indifference of the world and the silence of Arab states. Darwish's resentment and contempt of the callous Arab reaction to the invasion, his pain resulting from the suffering and fear experienced then, his full awareness of the grave situation, its background, current development and future consequences, as well as the various attitudes and reactions that stemmed from it contributed to his recall of the facts relevant to the event. The significance of remembering challenges the views adopted by many during the battle, namely of blaming the Palestinian victims, considering them the cause of all the trouble. His position as a Palestinian intellectual and political activist bears a great deal on the method he used in writing the memoir. Though it is a well-known saying that history is linear, Darwish's memoir leaves one with the impression that it revolves in circles. Today is very similar to yesterday which is Man's misfortune; Man seems not to learn from the mistakes of the past.

Darwish makes it clear that the 'then' present situation is a natural outcome of forgetting the lessons of the past. His memoir is thus an attempt to revive the past so that readers everywhere become aware of other views and perspectives, which they dismissed or ignored completely. It is by learning what and how to remember, and by acquiring a comprehensive view of their past, that the Palestinians may gain access to their present. As such, the main concern of the memoir is to foreground different themes of remembering: the past and history in general -- Palestinian history, martyrs, and mechanisms used by the enemy to hide facts and create a new collective memory of new imposed realities. Running parallel to this process of remembering lies another one of forgetting as adopted by Arab regimes and the powers ruling the world. This chapter is interested in showing the notion of remembering as perceived by Darwish, as well as the consequences resulting from previous forgetfulness of the past. Darwish laments a past that is no longer there, and juxtaposes it with the present as an indirect comment on it. He also probes upon the deterioration and degeneration of the present. The chapter is divided into sections, each dealing with an aspect of memory as used in the memoir.

The Title

In a nutshell, the impression the memoir leaves on the reader is one of a fragmented human life living under abnormal surroundings which affect it immensely. The only way that may prevent the human soul from succumbing to its fits of madness is to cling to a deeply-rooted past. Memory is Darwish's last means of resistance to avoid madness and losing identity. Instead of escaping the past, the writer always delves deep into it to give himself the feeling of belonging to something. Being deprived of a homeland, the writer is willing to create it in his imagination and dreams.² The captivating title *Memory for Forgetfulness* is

provocative to the mind of the reader. It is a memory not in the usual sense of the word, a memory to recollect the past, but rather a memory to forget! The reader is left to wonder at the paradox subverting the common association of memory with remembering. In Darwish's case, it becomes a national task to remember whatever events happened in the course of the history of his nation to be able to register them in a literary form, so as to help preserving the national identity of his people. Besides, as the memoir unfolds, the reader becomes involved in the poet's inner thoughts, memories, reactions, and anger when recalled. By remembering his past feelings in tranquility, Darwish gives himself the chance of getting rid of them as a means of pacifying the pain connected with them. Thus, the process of writing involves the attempt of making the world ever present before the crime committed by the invasion. Besides, his writing is a sort of admission of weakness, fear and anger he felt then and which troubled his life later. By confessing such sentiments, in a process very similar to catholic confession, he is enabled to transcend them. So both processes are important to him, one on the national level, and the other on the personal one. Moreover, citing history books is another sign indicating that the aim of the memoir is not forgetting, but addresses an anxiety about forgetting. The reader is left to wonder what could be the message of so seemingly unrelated events and ideas. However, by the last page of the memoir that ends with an ambiguous note of "No one understands", the title becomes Darwish's bitter comment on what the world expects the Palestinians to do (*Memory* 182, *Dhakira* 228). They are expected to evacuate their minds of memories about Palestine and who they really are to confer new identities upon themselves. The title using the word "memory" which by its nature can never correspond to "forgetfulness" hints at the impossibility of such an expectation.

The 1982 invasion of Lebanon converted the long accepted idea of the Arabs being one nation into the Arabs as fragmented and disunited. The Palestinians were taken as the scapegoat of some Lebanese factions to secure gains with the Israelis. Such new realities had their immense effect on Darwish's mind, as reflected in his articles before he finally turned them into this memoir. As such, the memoir becomes his attempt at helping his people create a new collective memory, which must be conscious of new conditions and realities other than those it used to know. Darwish expresses his bitter shock at the turn of some Lebanese militia against his people and the loss of the Palestinians' new haven:

How did the tears of farewell dry, and memory was replaced by a set of forgetfulness [and] How could your arm comrades leap upon your people there. [He keeps wondering] How [one] used to think that the ladies of carnations poured over the tanks of the invaders -- in Ashrafiya -- would provoke the inner anger of the Nation.
(Darwish, *Fi Wasf* 165)

He referred to the same incident in his memoir as follows:

Don't look at the mountain spitting masses of fire in the direction of your hand. But alas, you can't forget that over there, in Ashrafiya, they 're dancing in ecstasy. Yesterday's papers showed the carnation ladies throwing themselves at the invaders' tank.
(*Memory* 18, *Dhakira* 24)

Referring to the same incident twice once in an article and a second in the memoir underscores the importance of that incident and its effect on him. A faction in Lebanon welcomed the invaders as their future allies instead of standing up to them. They forgot that the Israelis are the real enemies. Darwish knows that "[One] can't forget" what happened even if one tried to for it is documented in the papers and thus archived (*Memory* 18, *Dhakira* 24). Forgetfulness here is self-imposed by the Lebanese factions to secure present gains, disregarding that Israel is the Arab's common and historic enemy. In this case, his remembering is contrasted with the self-imposed forgetfulness of such faction. At the same time, Darwish puts the reader

among both choices, showing him/her the meaning of each. To remember means to go against the tide, but to forget means to stab back a dispossessed people. The reader as part of a group is helped thus to judge both the official stance of his/her government as well as his/her personal stance. In contrast to the forgetful nature of the Arabs, and their pinning all their problems and shortcomings on the Palestinian cause, Darwish is not blind to the reasons behind this blame or the consequences of present choices that would bear on the future. Some Arabs forgot their past wars with the Israelis and called for normalization signing a peace treaty with them. However, the nature of the enemy did not change as evident in pouring its anger on its eternal victims, the Palestinians. For this reason, Darwish blames Sadat for the Camp David Peace Treaty and calls him "Pharaoh" and his treaty as the "mirage" (*Memory* 99, *Dhakira* 124). Sadat in Darwish's view was on the wrong side, and he had to pay for his mistake. He was assassinated by army dissenters on the day celebrating his victory of 1973 war. Following the track of subverting accepted orders, Darwish puts the Egyptian leadership on the same par with his enemies: they are no longer friends but Pharaohs. As for the Israelis, they can by no means be considered victims as the old notion held. Now, they are the ones who kill and victimize others. They are not driven out of the land of Egypt, but they are expelling the Palestinians out of their homes. In short, Darwish draws the attention to the acceptance of entrenched ideas, which time has reserved. The past must always be questioned in terms of the present actions:

[The Zionist] who is awarded for his good memory -- in this referential frame -- has to produce a forgetting counterpart [regarding the Palestinians] . . . The condition of equilibrium in this discourse is not in its being universal . . . The "Other" [Palestinians] should forget as a condition of maintaining the memory of the [Zionist] discourse . . . Western media would conceal Kafr Kasim, Sabra and Shateila . . . To let the Jewish memory thrive, it needs the forgetfulness of the Arabs. The Arabs have to give up the land, rights, and memory. Hadn't Sadat been awarded the prize for his forgetfulness: a Noble Prize for forgetfulness. (Darwish, *Rasa'il* 119-120)

The Palestinians have to forget about their past friends and learn to accept new realities. In this case, the collective memory of the Palestinians has to acquire new facts. The collective memory of the world has to respect and pay tribute to the memory of those massacred in the camps as the new real victims. The past is now juxtaposed with the present as to make the Israelis bear the responsibilities of their own deeds. As the Israelis refused to let anyone suspected of anti-semitism escape, they should not be allowed to escape the blame of their crimes against civilians. At this point, Darwish makes memory equal to one's conscience and consciousness. What one chooses to remember dictates his future reactions and his moral stances. Besides, the collective memory of the Arab world that shared the experiences of previous wars against Israel cannot be spared the blame of such a turn against the victimized Palestinians.

While the Palestinians are being shelled, the rest of the Arabs call upon them to stop showing resistance for their "Heroism . . . invites boredom" (*Memory* 99, *Dhakira* 125). The Arabs seem to forget that the victims have to defend themselves, supported by other Arabs. The Arabs have forgotten their expected stance and have gone along with notions adopted by the rest of the world. Forgetfulness at the time of the battle, as Darwish believes, is the outcome of the long history of oppression of the Arab people by their governments. This in turn weakened their wise and responsible interaction in whatever happens on the Arabs' political arena. It also made Arab peoples lack awareness, and could easily be deceived by the propaganda sponsored by the enemy. The most telling example given in the memoir is when the Arabs displaced their anger at the predicament of the Palestinians during the invasion with angry feelings of " . . . a biased referee decision in a soccer match" (*Memory* 102, *Dhakira* 128). The discrepancy between the act and the reaction is a sign of the

unwise political psyche of the Arab masses. Their anger is not channeled and is wasted on trivial matters. Demonstrations -- a usual sign of collective expression -- have changed target in the Arab world! As facing the "Other" is not allowed politically, it has been substituted with a confrontation in matter of less importance such as sports:

The spectators take on the roles denied them in politics, giving them shape and projecting them onto the intelligence of muscles and the maneuvers of the players in the movement towards one ending--scoring a goal. (*Memory* 103, *Dhakira* 129)

As defeat is ignored on the political level, the main cause retreats to the remote memory. At this point, Darwish regards one of his poems -- a poem that made him renowned as the poet of the Palestinian resistance -- "Register I'm an Arab" -- suitable now for addressing the Arabs themselves. The Palestinians, now slaughtered by both the Israelis and their Lebanese allies,³ are their fellow Arabs -- a fact they dismissed and need to be reminded of. In contrast to these demonstrations in Algeria are the ones in Tel Aviv to condemn the massacres in Lebanon. Though these demonstrations rallied to express refusal of the war in Lebanon, Darwish is disheartened by them, for they highlight how someone else voiced the resentment expected from the Arabs. He thinks that: "The victor was afraid to lose his identity as victim . . . For our sake they shouted, for our sake they cried; but they won wars for their own worth's sake" (*Memory* 110, *Dhakira* 137). Darwish takes these demonstrations as an attempt of the Israelis to keep the memory of their being victimized at the hands of the Nazis alive; they have created the image of themselves as the victims of the century. It is a right they preserve by preventing the creation of a counter memory of other victims. This is another war that they won, partly because of the absence of Arab active expression against the invasion, not only because they were better equipped or have right on their side.

During the invasion, the Sabra and Shatila massacre took place -- another massacre added to the file of Zionist brutality towards the Palestinians -- however, no one seems ready to remember those massacred.⁴ Remembering means condemning the silence of the world at the time of the crime. It may also demand justice which none is ready to accept or to acknowledge, for the world identifies peace in a biased way as "defending a holy cause; defending the soundness of the Jewish memory from a phony or real danger, forgetfulness" (*Rasa'il* 118). Preserving the memory of the alleged massacres committed against the Jews has come to mean forgetting their present ferocity or excusing them due to past injuries done them. Indirectly, that would confiscate the present forever for the sake of some past events. The Arabs, themselves, seem ready to forget and are prepared to submit to colonization of their memory in the same manner that their land was colonized. Both are interrelated: the loss of memory would lead to an eternal loss of the land, for no one would be ready to support those fighting for it. Moreover, the memory of future generations would acquire new realities, especially that whole generations of Palestinians were born in the Diaspora, and have adapted to different societies. Darwish's memoir becomes a reminder offered to these generations of the Diaspora of what the Western media often ignores, including the suffering of the common man. He has recreated past worlds -- life in Beirut during the invasion is an example -- to give the new generation a sense of what it means not to have a homeland and the quest for a home and a place to resort to.

In one of his correspondences with the Palestinian poet, Samih al-Qasim, Darwish enhances this concept of remembering as the spur of struggle to gain what one believes to be one's right by countering "the attempt to colonize the memory" (*Rasa'il* 44). The whole world accepted the yearning of the Jews for what they called

the unforgotten homeland of Palestine. The Jews insisted on presenting themselves as victims who are not ready to give up their right. They disseminated this image in the whole world in such a way that is not questioned. Darwish contrasts the memory of the Jews, who popularized this image of their victimization and passed it on to successive generations, with that of the Arab regimes who forgot to defend their right in favor of surviving. It is through remembering a right that one can preserve it and work to regain it.

In a very important passage in one of his articles, Darwish speculates on the concept of forgetfulness and who is the one who can forget:

We will not forget, we will not forgive . . . no forgiveness and no forgetting . . . forgetting is the blessing of the victorious and forgiving is the mercy of the mighty. As for now; no forgiving and no forgetting . . . Being away from a scene and the detachment from emotion provide the process of writing with one of its factors; memory which selects the past as a reference . . . does not this remembering contain something of its counterpart . . . I do not speak about the collective memory, but the individual's memory seeking a selection of its past to grasp its history in the moment of the crucial question of destiny . . . As for me, I finished the first draft of a very mad memoir, prose and madness, poetry and madness. I'll start writing the memoir that haunted me for four years. (*Rasa'il* 101-102)

This is the first reference in *Rasa'il* to the memoir in question. It shows that the title is not one of random choice or of light importance. On the other hand, it is a part of a larger scheme of binary opposition, of remembering and forgetting. Remembering the injustice done to them, the Palestinians cannot forgive and thus they refuse accepting any call of normalization with their enemy. On the contrary, it is to their credit that at the time they were let down by everyone, they clinged to resistance, each according to his/her available means. It is only then when they achieve victory, can they grant forgiveness out of a position of strength. As a writer whose vocation is to register his people's dreams and aspirations, Darwish writes this

memoir in detachment from the events that triggered it. The memoir is thus a mixture of selected events and emotional registration of feeling during the invasion. This mental selection implies that Darwish chooses to remember some events, highlighting them to the world, as well as putting away other events. Being "haunted" by the memoir for four years means that he must have given each and every word profound thought. Darwish's memoir has also stressed the importance of the individual memory in comparison to the collective memory as reflected in history books. The former is the one a person can control. However, the individual memory cannot work in isolation from the collective one for the cumulative number of individual memories makes for a pressure that cannot be ignored. This places responsibility on the individual as well as on governments, for one has to question what one already knows in terms of justice. It is one's choice of a certain "destiny" that dictates the kind of memories that overwhelms one.⁵ Darwish refused the choice of considering himself a victim of others' forgetful nature, and thus accepting the role of meekness. Rather, he chose to be a fighter armed with historic knowledge. To him, the idea of remembering and forgetting becomes a political weapon used by the Occident to create a new memory of Occident-created myths to ensure maintaining a Jewish identity at the expense of the Palestinians. In contrast to the choice of Darwish and most Palestinians, he shows that the Arab regimes are part of those who disseminate falsehood and mythic history. In this light, the title may be seen as an allusion to the Arab's forgetfulness which led to more humiliation and massacres.

The second part of the title "August, Beirut, 1982" is highly suggestive and complex. According to Ahmed, "The connotation of place inside this essay turned into a moveable/mobile interwoven literary time, time becomes Beirut while the place becomes a date in August" (163). This bears on the concept of cultural resistance and

the mingling of time and place in one entity. The place and time (of shelling and resistance) are linked to the concept of the timeless inheritance of a land. Thus, emerges the concept of land as symbolic of a timeless possession. In turn, as time symbolizes land, it becomes an extension of man in place and the consciousness of this man becomes an extension of this land in time (Ahmed 164-165). This is the reason behind his giving

Names of places . . . and the interaction of time . . . rebellion and infinite detachment [to] lead to the intervention of multiple times into the literary time of the essay and to a trial for reality through the essay and through the history of this reality before departing from Beirut. (Ahmed 163-164)

Time past leads to the events of time present and time present would make the future. The influence of Eliot is also felt on Darwish when he describes the month of August, the time of the memoir, as "August is the cruelest month. August is the longest of months" (*Memory* 118, *Dhakira* 147). This recalls Eliot's line in '*The Waste Land*' "April is the cruelest month". Cruelty is due to the failure to realize one's dreams as well as remembering the beautiful past which is no longer there and can never be retrieved. As time is symbolic of the land, so is August. It stands for the suffering they go through at the time of the memoir due to the loss of the land. August brings forth different memories experienced in his homeland. Darwish keeps going back and forward in time but the only date he refers to is one of his childhood memories connected with his departure to Lebanon. In the year 1948, like other Palestinians, Darwish fled with his grandfather to escape the terror of massacres. They left only to return as refugees in their own land. Time and the choice of incidents are clear examples of how far Darwish has manipulated his memories so as to create a certain image of loss and bewilderment.

The Question of Identity and Recall of Massacres

To Darwish, the process of remembering and forgetting acquires a wider meaning when put within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel secured its gains through massacring the Palestinians either in the land of Palestine or in the Diaspora. Those born outside Palestine still bear the stamp of their homeland, a fact that contradicts what the world expected them to do. They "... [Palestinians in the Diaspora] studied her [Palestine] constantly, without fatigue or boredom; and from overpowering memory and constant pursuit, they learned what it means to belong to her" (*Memory* 13, *Dhakira* 18). The sense of belonging to the homeland was enhanced by the memories parents told their children. Such a chain of remembrance threatens the existence of the state of Israel itself, for it paves the way for the refugees to demand the right of return. The resistance they show is the answer to the massacres committed in the land of Palestine. The refugee camps did not kill their will of resistance or pursuit of their rights. On the contrary, life in the camps made them always aware of a different world to which they belong, and acted as the instigator of memory to create a country in the mind to which end they have to work. One critic comments on this point:

Palestinian children in the Diaspora sit around the winter fires, demanding from the grown-ups, from those who preserve the memory, more descriptions of the country they have never seen as they grow, they are nourished by these memories. (Jayyusi 69)

As such, the younger generations of the Palestinians are after memories of the past. A memory of a narrated experience that belonged to someone else is assimilated as their own, an extension of the collective consciousness which brings a "collective value" (Jayyusi 67). In a correspondence entitled "Harvest Them," Darwish refers to the "massacre of Kafr Qasim"⁶ that is forgotten, for the barracks are there to "guard

forgetfulness," but he raises the banner of: "We will not forget or forgive" (Darwish, *Rasa'il* 117). This is another level of remembrance, remembering those massacred at the hands of the Zionists:

At Dayr Yassin, all those whom he made disappear from time and place, so that through that absence he could impose the conditions of his own presence . . . they have now pounced on his dreams and his day dreams. These very ghosts, having heroically gained back flesh, bone and spirit, . . . the ghost who was a victim had come back a hero. (Darwish, *Memory* 77-78, *Dhakira* 99-100)

This complex image of the victim becoming a hero shows that the whole Palestinian people is unified. It is as if the souls of those massacred at Dayr Yassin were incarnated in the bodies of the younger generations in Beirut. Their disappearance from the world is expected to place them in the forgotten spots of the mind, but their absence from life did not prevent their existence in the memory of those who shared their destiny. The current resistance at Beirut draws the attention to the massacred and endows them with life. Those in the Diaspora have not forgotten that concept of a homeland though many of them were born in the camps. What the enemy has to fight is the memories of parents who were made to flee their homeland to secure their life. Their children did not inherit that spirit, but inherited the memories that would give them the right to fight. As such, the massacred and the refugees share the same fate; both are forgotten by the world for it cannot retaliate for the massacres or make up for the refugees. Darwish as an exile does not forget what happened to his people in their once-upon-a-time land. The shelling makes his stream of consciousness fly to a different massacre when innocent victims were slaughtered. The destinies of the Palestinian people is made into one that transcends the borders of time and place. Their history becomes synonymous with their identity; whatever happens to them at home or in the Diaspora is the result of their identity as

Palestinians. The massacres are committed against them in Lebanon and at home because they are Palestinians. In the indifferent Arab states, they are not treated as fellow Arabs but as Palestinians who should be always pitied or distrusted. As humans, they do not count into the world, and so their disappearance from life would not disturb the slumber of the world.

Since Palestinians were denied the identity of their nation, they were given the choice of either being second class Israeli citizens or suffer being stateless. As Said in his interview with *Alif* describes the Palestinian people: "We were a coherent society with a collective memory, a language -- Arabic of course, which is like the language of other Arab people in other Arab countries" (Said 182). Every Palestinian knows and believes in the existence of Palestine as part of the Arab world, yet the current existence of Israel negates this knowledge. The "choice" they are given is to confer new identity on themselves as citizens of their new residences. However, this collective memory of life in former Palestinian cities, history, regional flavor, and peculiarities of a community, customs and traditions make them identify with each other in different places and countries as members of the same experience.

In a nutshell, the two concepts of forgetting and remembering are contrasted: the world heads towards remembering but expects the Palestinians in the Diaspora to forget. Their mere existence of deprivation from any trace of human respectability reminds them of their own suffering and brings forth the memory of a distant past in which they or their parents enjoyed a normal human life. Their remembrance is a kind of resistance against the conditions imposed upon them:

Who is going to help them forget in the midst of this anguish, which never stops reminding them of their alienation from place and society? Who will accept them as citizens? Who will protect them against the whips of discrimination and pursuit . . . You do not belong here!
(*Memory* 15, *Dhakira* 21)

Thus, Darwish summarizes the dilemma of the Palestinians: they are not accepted anywhere and thus the injustice done them reminds them of the cause of their anguish. In a continuous process of pain and remembering, their lives go on in an attempt to revive history by standing up to the invaders. Their remembering becomes a synonym of their dignity and humanity.

The Siege

Siege is the backbone of the memoir and the background against which Darwish's thoughts originates. Darwish refers to it as a war turning into a siege (*Memory* 5, *Dhakira* 8), however this siege is a repetition of past sieges "from the siege of Acre in the Middle Ages to the present siege of Beirut whose aim is revenge for all medieval history" (*Memory* 11, *Dhakira* 17). Intelligently, Darwish has drawn a line between the past and the present to show that the lessons of the past were never fully grasped. Siege as the means of breaking the will of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon is encountered by the resistance of the refugee camps. Contrasted with the silence in the Arab world, it becomes symbolic of the humiliation of the Arabs in general. Besides, the siege was the testing ground that brought out clearly and loudly the diverse opinions Arabs held about the Palestinians. The siege becomes also symbolic of the ironies in the Arabs' stance towards the Palestinians. The formal attitude supports the Palestinians but it makes it even harder to get integrated in their new residences. Instead of being absorbed in the Arab communities, these communities regard them as aliens and refugees denying them affiliations to the new place in which they live. Ironically, this "here" becomes the "there", for they do not belong where they reside but belong to Palestine, which they were made to leave.

This situation is similar to the one imposed on the Jews before announcing the state of Israel. They were often mistreated and mistrusted, and considered as aliens left with a dream of a homeland. Exchanging places with the Jews, now the Palestinians are the ones in the Diaspora and the ones to cherish a dream of returning. However, unlike the Jews, the world does not acknowledge this right but asks the Palestinians to forget it. The fragmentation the reader feels when reading the memoir is given another significance; it is not only the fragmentation of a human soul, but that of a whole nation.

The attempt to make the Palestinians forget that they have a place to return to often backfires. They are angry, and anger provokes them to find a means to quench it. Since they are not allowed integration in any society, the stories their parents tell them of their once owned land remind them of their "alienation from place and society" and "the whips of discrimination and pursuit: you don't belong here!" (*Memory* 15, *Dhakira* 21). Darwish thus makes it clear that the catastrophe is not the result of fate, but is the direct result of the blindness of the Arab regimes who never prepared themselves to meet that day. In an indirect comment on the situation, Darwish uses the element of music; the songs that are supposed to register the feelings of a nation become themselves ironies of the situation. The song of Muhammad Abd al-Wahab "Brother, the oppressor have all limits dared to Break" (*Memory* 13, *Dhakira* 19) is evacuated of its meaning, for instead of fighting and resisting the enemy, the Arabs now support and make peace with the enemy. Listening to it, Darwish cannot but lament the current situation of the Arabs who are defeated and humiliated by the same enemy they threatened to crash.

Ironically, the siege made it clear that the Palestinians become the "other" of their fellow Arab: "these forgotten ones, disconnected from the social fabric, these

outcasts, deprived of work and equal rights, are . . . expected to applaud their oppression because it provides them with the blessing of memory" (*Memory* 16, *Dhakira* 21). Darwish alludes to the Arabic concept of ever making the Palestinian feel that he is a refugee so that he would never forget that he has another place to go to. Therefore, the only memory of his childhood mentioned in the memoir has to do with his returning home as a refugee on his homeland.

The boy went back to his family there, in the distance, in a distance he did not find there in the distance . . . my grandfather died with his gaze fixed on a land imprisoned behind a fence . . . They destroyed his heart . . . he wearied of waiting here, in Damour . . . A war went by. (*Memory* 88, *Dhakira* 112-113).

The tragedy of his grandfather is that of thousands, whom no one is even ready to sympathize with. An owner becomes dispossessed, homeless, and stateless. Ironically, the Palestinians were made into refugees in their homeland as well as away from it, for they live in camps both in and out of Palestine. They became dispossessed and dislocated, and the land became like its inhabitants "imprisoned behind a fence" (*Memory* 88, *Dhakira* 112-113). This image makes the land and its owners into one. The land is not free for it is controlled by others who do not have any right to it, and the people are denied access to it. The fence separated each from the other. Without shedding tears or telling directly that they are victims, Darwish leaves it to the sensibilities of the reader to imagine the bitterness of a people who within days lost their whole nation.

Darwish does not allow the reader for a single moment to forget the cause behind writing the memoir. By using this methodology, Darwish revives the memory of the reader to events that he might have ignored or forgotten. They are made all the more impressive as they are mingled with the feelings of a common man. As such,

Darwish writes that "The history of the bottom" is always forgotten and considered of minor importance (*Memory* 118, *Dhakira* 147).

In a very early stage in the memoir, he refers to the siege of Acre in comparison to the present siege and resistance of the camps:

But do they realize, these youths armed to the teeth with a creative ignorance of the balance of forces . . . -- do they realize that with their wounds and inventive recklessness they are correcting the ink of a language that (from the siege of Acre in the Middle ages to the present siege of Beirut whose aim is revenge for all medieval history). (*Memory* 11, *Dhakira* 17)

The crusaders siege of Acre "lasted more than two years, and became severer after the French and English joined the siege on 1191. In vain attempted al-Ayubi to save Acre but it gave in . . . Richard, the-lion-heart, slaughtered more than 2000 hostages, because al-Ayubi was late in paying the money agreed upon when Acre fell" (al-Yusuf 136). Since the siege of Acre is known to be one of the longest in history, it is all the more fitting for this longest day of the longest month, August. It also gives him a chance to compare and juxtapose two different attitudes towards the besieged civilians to draw the conclusion of the brutality of the present situation.

Darwish also contrasts the attitudes of Salah al Din al-Ayubi who "used to send ice and fruits to the enemy" to what happened in Tel Zaatar "when women filling their pots with water were shot dead" (*Memory* 34, *Dhakira* 44). Life as symbolized by water is always threatened by the mighty. History did not change much and the mercy al-Ayubi shown in the land of Palestine to its invaders is contrasted with the cruelty shown by the Israelis to women. The women were not fighting, but were simple folks resuming a daily routine. These women were not different from the women massacred in the camps; they were all victims of the same might. Darwish draws a line of continuity through time: the dead and the living are under the same dilemma. Time goes in circles; it does not progress or leap forward. Rather, each new

massacre is a reminder of a previous one; the younger generations are not spared time to try to forget as present cruelty reminds them of that of the past. Besides, quoting history as in the incident of al-Ayubi and contrasting it to the present is meant to show the cruelty of the Franks in Jerusalem, thus linking past to present.

The Martyrs

Darwish also brings one character that he had once known back to life through his memoir. The reader comes to know about Samir, his growing up, his suffering, his dreams and his tragic end. Samir can never stand as a solitary figure, but he is symbolic of his comrades and brothers in arms. He starts the story from the end: "Because I had known Samir from childhood, I didn't go to the hospital when he was in coma. The jets had mangled his legs and one of his arms" (*Memory 28, Dhakira 37*). The backward technique captures the senses of the reader from the very start to sympathize with the symbolic figure, who was jetted "when he was evacuating the wounded from the square of the Sports City" (*Memory 28, Dhakira 37*). Darwish and Samir knew each other in "Kufur Yasif." Darwish mentions the Arabic name of the town, not its Jewish one; to him Israel is an occupier whose acts should never be legitimized. Besides, Darwish aims at preserving the national identity and collective memory of his people. Thus, it falls on him to remind his people of who they are and what they once shared. Samir was tortured because he was accused of being a *fedayee* (freedom fighter). He was "pampered . . . elegant . . . raised in comfort and plenty" yet, he left all this behind and vested himself with a new role (*Memory 28, Dhakira 37*). Darwish goes on telling the story of Samir and how his mother "turned her sadness into pride" after his injury (*Memory 29, Dhakira 38*). The story of Samir gave Darwish the chance to introduce more than one element; a pampered and handsome, seemingly non-activist young man turning into a *fedayee*, a mother who feels the

pride of having a heroic son. The cruelty of the enemy in torturing Samir in the past is juxtaposed to the cruel shelling. In this, Samir subverts the widely held concept of an activist as a vagabond. Besides, his mother's pride in him shows her strong convictions in the brave deeds of her son, for no sane mother would proudly sacrifice her son for absurdity. In this, Samir and his mother stand as symbols of future *fedayees*.⁷

Sentenced to life, Samir condemned to three life imprisonment after attempting to escape three times, "he would have to live three times to gain his freedom" (*Memory 29, Dhakira 38*). Being freed following a prisoner exchange, he could not overcome his disillusionment; "he could not accept the contradiction between the dream and vehicle . . . model." (*Memory 29, Dhakira 39*). Samir becomes a victim of Arab regimes instead of Israeli occupation. Darwish thus draws attention to the discrepancy between dream and reality. He also draws a distinction between people like Samir who resort to armed resistance and the Arab regimes who fall short at meeting the heroism of such men: "can this really be the way it is? It wasn't for this that I went in, and not for this that I came out!" Even the Organization and national institutions did not reflect their enthusiasm and so he compromised: "Let me then consider myself a servant to the idea of Palestine" (*Memory 30, Dhakira 40*). Samir thus becomes the victim of his own remembrance; he could not forget who he is or abandon his right. One can never help admiring the likes of Samir, who are loyal to an idea to the extent of forgetting about their personal dreams in their way to achieve it. "It was difficult for Samir, and others like him who had come out of Israeli prisons" (*Memory 31, Dhakira 41*) to understand the difference between the idea and its application. Maturity in this sense, namely to compromise between one's dream and reality, means forgetting the dream if it does not conform to reality.

Citations From Sacred Books

Darwish also quotes the Old Testament "Joshua 6:16-22":

The seventh time the priests blew the trumpets and Joshua said . . . The city shall be under solemn ban . . . under the ban they destroyed everything in the city, they put everyone to the sword, men and women, young and old, and also cattle, sheep and asses . . . They then set fire to the city. (*Memory* 79, *Dhakira* 101)

By this long quotation from the Old Testament, Darwish enhances the concept of the past bearing upon the future. This wild shelling is not new to the Jewish faith; it is integral to its doctrines. Ahmed believes that this part being introduced out of context is the more effective than if Darwish went on telling more details about the savagery of the Zionist invasion to Lebanon. Darwish brings out to the world the collective memory of the Jewish people as they learn it from their sacred books (Ahmed 156). As his methodology of contrasting two parallel situations, Darwish quotes the Quran "we made from water everything" (*Memory* 33, *Dhakira* 43-44). The Jewish faith is proud of the destruction it set to the city, while the Islamic one calls for life made possible by water. This verse of the Quran is pertinent to two situations: making Beirut die out of thirst -- the present of the memoir, and killing women at Tel Zatar while filling in their pots -- a remembered massacre of the 1970s.

Ironically, whenever the Lady of Lebanon, the Virgin, is mentioned, she is associated with a murder. It is as if Darwish is mocking the masks people use to sugar coat their deeds: "Since she'd been brought up to feel hostile to anything outside her Maronite sect . . . O Lady of Lebanon protect him for us" (*Memory* 38-39, *Dhakira* 49-50). Darwish indirectly criticizes the intolerance and misunderstanding people show in terms of religion. Christianity, is a religion that calls for love not murder, the prayer to the Virgin is to save the life of a political leader at the cost of thousands of lives. Darwish cites the New Testament, and contrasts the story of the Canaanite

woman whom Jesus praised as "O woman, great is your faith!" with the Maronite one (*Memory* 61, *Dhakira* 78). Both women are juxtaposed to show that presently people do not really understand the essence of faith and make others pay for their lack of human consideration. The woman is confined to her sect and cannot feel any sympathy to those outside it; her limited perspective is not different from that of the Arab leaders and the rest of the world.

Memory and love

Memory takes another shape: it is something that protects Darwish from the atrocities of the present. He goes back in time to his love of the Israeli girl and wonders whether memory will

Protect [him] from this threat? Will the lily of the past be able to break this bomb-studded sword? . . . A body made for forgiveness; a body made for desires . . . If only one of us would forget the other so that forgetfulness itself might be stricken with memory! And may one of us die before the other so that madness might be stricken with madness. (*Memory* 119-121, *Dhakira* 148-149)

This aborted love story reminds one of the aborted love stories in the "Waste Land" where love is never fulfilled and people are driven by desires. Love in *Memory For Forgetfulness* is as painful as the love stories of the "Waste Land." The love story between Darwish and the Jewish girl is doomed to failure for none of them can forget the reality of the other. Each feels for an enemy in the disguise of a love. Common human feelings in the time of permanent war are impossible; one has to empty his mind of memories relative to his real identity, yet nobody can do so. Love has provided him with some kind of attachment, but he cannot secure it for long. This peaceful love relation with the enemy is symbolic of peace that can never be fully achieved in reality. It is a vicious circle of lack of trust and lack of mutual understanding; their failure to forget their being enemies is related to the failure of both nations to forget their animosity. The dominant question she asks him is "Do

you hate Jews?" for the girl cannot separate herself from her people (*Memory* 124, *Dhakira* 154). The answer would include her as well; remembering makes her sure that her happiness is transient for there are some facts about life that one cannot ignore. Remembrance invades her happiness and plays the role played by the officials in politics. The solution she provides to go to Australia symbolizes her uprootedness and hence that of her people. Such a feeling is linked to the land, which they live on; she asks him to immigrate, thinking that by ignoring the element of place they would forget the inherited hatred between the two groups. The answer Darwish gives to her question: ("I love you now") confines the love to this moment of time for after that other forces would impose themselves on him and make him remember who he is and what he is doing (*Memory* 124, *Dhakira* 154). Their sense of belonging to the land is different: she is rootless and her bond to the land is weaker than his, while he speaks about the right of his ancestors to the land, and thus they can never agree on a notion of a co-existence. He cannot be so absolute about his feeling towards her as he puts it: "I didn't say 'I love you' because I didn't know if I loved you so long as I kept hiding my blood under your skin and shedding the honey of bees gone crazy" (*Memory* 120, *Dhakira* 149). Darwish wonders why he had remembered (*Memory* 121, *Dhakira* 150), but he knows "Each would kill the other outside the window" (*Memory* 122, *Dhakira* 151), and with this, he chooses to end the exchange of conversation with her. In a sense, this love story draws an image of Israel as a replica of the wasted city in the "Waste Land," where love relations are always doomed to failure.

This love story makes the "Other" a soul mate, a dilemma that many have to face: how to love your enemy to the extent of making him/her the source of your joy? In order to achieve this, one has to empty one's memory of all past animosity. In such cases, the one becomes the symbol of all, and this love/ hate relationship can only add

to the suffering and madness in the memoir. The lover becomes the antagonist of the beloved; each is afraid of the other and admits that they are different: "There's no time except for quick love and a longing for a transient eternity. No time for love in a war from which we can't steal anything beyond sucking up the sources of life itself" (*Memory* 129, *Dhakira* 161). He loves "this love which leaves no pain in our memories or scars in our spirit" (*Memory* 130, *Dhakira* 161). Their love cannot be complete; she is only a means of taking what he can out of life. Love that gives pain is not what he wants, for his love for the homeland has given him enough pain.

Though, at the time of the shelling the love relation is over, Darwish could not but remember it. The feeling of losing somebody he loves invades him as he is undergoing the loss of his beloved Beirut. This stream of consciousness technique is relevant to the theme of this research. Life is not linear or a chain of irrelevant events but each can remind one of a similar experience.

In contrast to the aborted love with the Jewish girl, a love that leaves no scars, figures his love of Beirut. Beirut, as a heroic symbol, is the love that gave him identity and attachment. Leaving her would cause him the scars he was afraid to get from any love affair. Beirut has provided the Palestinian refugees with a new homeland:

It was the place where Palestinian political information and expression flourished. Beirut was the birthplace for thousands of Palestinians who knew no other cradle . . . it was the foster mother of a heroic mythology that could offer the Arabs a promise other than that born of the June War . . . Beirut thus became the property of anyone who dreamed of a different political order elsewhere. (*Memory* 134, *Dhakira* 167)

Darwish has substituted his love to women with that of Beirut that gave him all he needed. Having to leave it was like getting out of himself. Leaving it reminds him of the year 1948, as the international authorities are willing to help them by putting them into tents: "To them, [the Palestinians] are still refugees who inspire pity

and fear. And America still needs [them] to concede the legitimacy of [their] killing Meanwhile, the Arab tribes offer [them] silent prayer instead of swords" (*Memory* 159, *Dhakira* 198). Darwish does not romanticize the stance of the Arabs, instead he is fully aware that they share the blame for the making of Palestinian refugees. They are silent and lack the courage of the old tribes expressed in their use of the swords to defend a brother against an enemy. The Palestinian becomes the victim of both international and regional indifference. At such a moment, the need of the concept of the dream that tries to alter reality becomes all the more important.

Dreams

Dreams acquire a special importance in *Memory for Forgetfulness* because they are variants on the theme of retrieving the past; dream is anti-forgetfulness. The memoir starts with an absurd dream that the reader cannot grasp or figure out the importance of its being positioned in the opening. However, since the whole situation of the shelling is tragic and dreadful, no other way could be more effective to put the reader in the middle of the experience. The dream is an interior monologue about life and death by a person who cannot tell whether he is alive or dead. The book, in the form of a memoir, is not directed at Darwish himself, rather to the whole world. Darwish has established the idea of reality ignoring dreadful memories as a means of escaping unpleasant present. As such, whatever is painful in reality makes its escape in dreams, in the area where Darwish loses control. For example, Izzeddine, one of his martyr companions makes his appearance in a dream: "We forgot he'd left us forever ten years ago, that the dead don't visit the living except to raise doubts" (*Memory* 160, *Dhakira* 199). The dead seem to be the only ones capable of solving this dilemma and their world seems to be the haven of the living. Izzeddine becomes symbolic of resistance and sacrificial death as well as Darwish's belief that the solution to the

Palestinian cause cannot materialize short of a miracle. The PLO's absurd situation during the invasion makes the mingling of the two worlds, dream and reality, symbolic of death in life. If the borders between the two worlds were not clear, all rules of sanity would be converted. Darwish keeps asking his dead companion about his life in the world of the dead, to which the answer is that it is like life here. There is no great change or signs of heaven and hell. Darwish is skeptical about the notions of religion though they may encourage others to take the same path as Izzeddine. They might also be a way to encourage Darwish himself against his fear of the continuous shelling. Since no one saw Izzeddine but him, he concludes that this must be a dream: "Can a man dream while sitting with others? Can he dream and carry on a conversation at the same time?" (*Memory* 163, *Dhakira* 203). Symbolically,

The Palestinian essay deals with the concept of martyrdom revealing the human dimension of the cause. The Palestinian offers himself to death; as a solution to the contradiction between life and death; death is denied by martyrdom and through martyrdom life is prolonged and the Homeland survives. (Ahmed 168)

It is important to note that this view of martyrdom is peculiar to the Palestinian cause; it is integral to its concept of freedom and liberation. Thus, it becomes one of the characteristics of Palestinian literature in general. In this memoir, there are at least two references to such martyrdom: Samir and Izzeddine. The death of the first was met with the pride and dignity of his parents. The second was incarnated in the memoir as living in a different peaceful world.

Darwish tells the story of Kamal, a man like Darwish himself who dreamt of a dove, a symbol of his homeland, Haifa. Kamal is of an imaginative nature, and his likes are the ones often crashed by reality. His dream of return to the homeland consumes him and is symbolized in his song of the rose: "In this Camp/ A rose is born. /If it lives, too long/ The Dove will be lost" (*Memory* 167, *Dhakira* 209). Kamal

is the persona of the refugees. If they forget their right of return, the homeland would be lost. As such, Darwish establishes the idea of fighting forgetfulness poetically. For him, Kamal was "Like a dreamer waking up at just the right moment to put the whole dream down on paper . . . He wanted to inflict the most severe punishment on an age that had broken him" (*Memory* 168-169, *Dhakira* 211).

Kamal headed for Haifa to remember all that shaped his personality, including places that witnessed his smoking for the first time and saluting the people he knew before leaving Haifa. In short, he wanted to recreate the world he lost years ago. His long dream could only end in an eternal sleep. Kamal is made into a Christ-like figure as the coast guards "nailed his hands, feet, and shoulders to the wood of the boat" (*Memory* 172, *Dhakira* 215). This striking image brings the world before its responsibility in acknowledging the suffering of the Palestinians. Besides, he indirectly reminds the world of the fate Christ met at the hands of the Jews centuries ago. Kamal did not forget and accept the status quo of a refugee and he paid the price of remembering. Unlike Kamal, Darwish settled ten years in Lebanon and wonders "Did I forget to return, or did I forget to remember?" (*Memory* 172, *Dhakira* 216). The calm life Darwish experienced in Lebanon made him forget about the need to go home. In this part of the memoir, one can feel that he blames himself for ever forgetting about his past life. He had the life of the common man and enjoyed the feeling of being safe; he had work, friends, residence and love affairs. It is only now when the PLO members have to leave that he wonders where to go. At this stage, Darwish cannot know exactly what is in store for him. Ironically, Kamal learns too late that "the bird and the lights are the gunfire that will kill him. In short, he is betrayed by an idea, the idea of home" (Jaffrey 3). His dream is the epitome of his existence. Likewise, Darwish has been possessed by the idea of Palestine and later by

the idea of finding a land to settle in. Though Darwish gives more than one example of those who sacrificed their life to return home or help in freeing Palestine, he is not one of them. His resistance to this occupation is given in the attempt to document his experience under the occupation in his poetry and current memoir. However, the writing of the book itself may be considered an act of will and a means of refusing to succumb to frustration and disappointment. His attempt shows a will to fight and stand up to the amnesia of the world, an attempt that shows persistence which may explain the unbroken resistance of the Palestinians everywhere and their sticking to the idea of Palestine -- their ancestral homeland -- regardless of the seemingly bleak situation. Jayyusi believes that:

Many . . . writers . . . have born witness to the Palestinian experience . . . for Palestinians know well enough that if they do not announce their experience to the world, the world will be ready to forget them. Quite apart from the external benefit it can achieve by forging links with the "other," personal account literature is a comfort and support to the Palestinians themselves and a source of healing for those who read it. (Jayyusi 69)

Cultural Struggle

During the siege, the conflict over the importance of intellectual reaction to the invasion resulted in cultural disputes and mutual accusations of betrayal. Archive is another source of enriching and preserving collective memory. Newspapers, magazines, and periodicals covering the siege are no less important than memoirs that would be written later to tackle the same period. In most cases, these are sources for the latter. Beirut as the homeland for the intellectuals before the siege was expected to saturate the Arab world with writing about the crisis. This memoir as Ahmed believes is by "a writer who witnessed the siege and tackled most of the problems aroused by it realistically, mingled with soft poetic tone that proves a total

awareness of the situation and its dimensions” (56) which “makes the text a resistance memoir through the form” (42).

Media has a very important role in shaping the future memory by covering events, unveiling the truth or explaining a situation, which helps in creating a public opinion. If people are told what really happens, they cannot dismiss it easily. The collective memory of the world is biased towards the Jews, which is the cause behind the Palestinian tragedy. Arab intellectuals were supposed to help countering the wide spread lies taken as truths. On the other hand, Darwish sees that this role is not needed during the battle; a dying man is in need of medicine. Intellectuals cannot change the course of war, but they can do their job, as he did it, later. Language as shared by the Arabs falls short of expressing the heroism shown during the battle. A new writing “needs time enough for leisure . . . and how can traditional verse -- and all verse is traditional at this moment -- [be] fitting . . . traditional poetry should know how to hold its humble silence in the presence of this newborn” (*Memory* 65, *Dhakira* 83). The Arabs are reminded to give the future a chance to defend the past by providing enough materials to support the cause.

Expectations

Early in the memoir, Darwish makes it clear that the PLO members are expected to depart from Lebanon by sea, but they are not given enough time to prepare for departure. The cruelty of the situation makes Darwish ready to conquer fear by the will of life and its simplest pleasures: “we won’t be leaving. I ‘ll go and make coffee” (*Memory* 9, *Dhakira* 13). At the end of the work, Darwish does not miss the chance to express his hope of a new beginning regardless of the oddities of the present: “I’m innocent, I’m merely defending my right, my father’s memory . . . But the sea . . . is the sea . . . And to it we shall be going in a short while, in Noah’s

modern arks" (*Memory* 180- 181, *Dhakira* 226). On such a point Jayyusi points out that:

The story of Palestine is one of initial innocence encountering a global strategy which, in the early decades of the twentieth century, took plain advantage of this innocence to implement a policy of aggression and fear, from which many thousands of personal tragedies have sprung . . . [which are] the food for literature. (Jayyusi 71)

Darwish establishes himself and his companions as believers in ultimate victory despite the chaotic world in which they are tortured, exiled, and belittled. They are going to avoid the flood in arks, not one ark as in Noah's story. As such, Darwish predicts that their struggle is to stop for a short while,⁸ until the present circumstances of a sea "that shows no shore", change and they could resume their sacred mission. Ironically, some Arabs claimed that they would throw the state of Israel into the sea, but it is now the Palestinian resistance that is being thrown into unknown seas. Departure was not to the homeland but to a further exile and, further struggle.

In the introduction to the anthology of Palestinian poetry, Elmessiri believes that certain themes keep appearing in Palestinian literature due to the crisis they went through in 1948. Some of these themes are "Shadows of Paradise Lost; Exile from the Land; Refugees in Hostile Cities . . . Death in Life; Life in Death; and Dreams of Paradise Redeemed" (4). Such themes were all evident in the memoir in question. Throughout, Darwish kept lamenting the loss of two homelands; Palestine and Lebanon, though his idea of the latter as a paradise is stronger than the former "the idea of leaving Beirut is like that of leaving Paradise" (*Memory* 157, *Dhakira* 196). The force of the siege pushing the Palestinians towards exile looms over the memoir. Their being unwelcome in Arab states is frequently mentioned. They live death in life for they are forbidden to enjoy the simplest of human feelings. At the same time, their

dead are alive in their death given their concept of martyrdom. As such, the memoir may be taken as an anthology of Palestinian themes. One thing remains: the loss of meaning in many sections of the memoir is meaningful for the whole situation is absurd and frustrating and can only be reflected in this manner. The question at the end of the memoir as where to go is that of all the dispossessed people, but it remains to Darwish's credit his attempt to show his yearning and resilience for even under shelling: "Life [has] to go on as usual; such is the subtle nature of the form of resistance to which the reader is made to bear witness with" (Elmessiri 18).

The memoir also shows elements of Resistance Literature as reflected in the realistic mood of the memoir. The hero is not a superman but rather a simple man who feels afraid and at the same time aware of the whole situation. Finally, it is worth noting that the Israeli state was about to include five of Darwish's poems in what it called "curriculum of inclusion," but refrained from doing so, as the poems were deemed as lethal as weapons. Israeli public opinion thought it murderous that "the prevailing sentiment seemed to be that after bombs and guns and stones, the natives now had the audacity to attack 'us' with words" (Alcalay 2). Ironically, their use of the word "native" is an unconscious admittance of the Palestinians right to the land.

Chapter Two

Friel and the Death of a Civilization

The Irish dramatist Friel has always been skeptical of the capabilities of language to convey truth. As,

A citizen of post-Gaelic Ireland, his suspicion is both political and philosophical: he finds himself in the ironic situation of writing about native Irish culture in the language of Ireland's colonizer . . . While Friel simply has no choice but to write in English if he is to reach a broad audience, he does so ironically and in order to point out the enforced nature of his choice. (Devinney 1)

Being a post-Gaelic artist means that Friel recreates disappearing Irish worlds to the modern audience. In the modern world, North Ireland is portrayed as a place where many armed actions take place¹. Friel, undertaking the responsibility intellectuals often bear to reveal the truth surrounding a situation, tried to show the world the kind of life Ireland enjoyed before its complete defeat before the British civilization. Being a member of the group known as the 'Field Day Group,' which includes other well known artists²-- his concern has been "... to reinvigorate the political consciousness of Irish literary arts with a respect for traditions of nation, self, and language" (*Culturevulture* 1). Being one of this group highlights the line of thought expected to be found in his plays. As indicated by the quotation, Irish literary arts suffered a severe setback in reflecting the inner spirit of the nation, which in many cases is completely unknown to modern generations. However, the aim of the group shows that nation, self, and language are important inseparable factors in the making of the Irish man and the forming of his identity. A nation is the cumulative outcome of unified history and aspirations, which constitute the self that expresses and reveals itself through the media of language. Therefore, any defect in conceptualizing any of these factors would affect the others. For example, if the language of a people fails to cope with their development, a gap in the collective consciousness would rise and they would resort to a second language. As such, a new

definition of the self would arise leading to a new concept of the nation. *Translations*, discusses questions of:

The potency of language as a way of communication meaning, accommodating experience, and expressing cultural identity and values. [It] uses and explores the richness of language and history to achieve its end . . . the play tells the story of a small community at the brink of irrevocable change. (*Culturevulture* 1)

Change, as the main factor behind the events in the drama, is caused by two elements: the introduction of new English schools to replace hedge-schools, and the changing of Irish place names into English names. These two elements are two interrelated ways to shape the community's collective consciousness. For example, changing the system of education is going to create a new mentality whose loyalty would be directed to the source of its education. Besides, changing place names would create new realities for the future generations; through time these places would lose their connotations in the collective memory in favor of the new-imposed ones. This chapter will tackle the importance of place names as signs of a shared collective memory. It will also stress the importance of the element of language as an element in resistance to a colonizer that aims at subduing a civilization. Friel has incarnated an Irish community that may be taken to symbolize the Irish nation at large at the time of the mapping and place-renaming.

Changing Place Names

The crucial event of the play is that of changing place names and the introduction of a map of the Irish landscape. Changing place names is another form of cultural colonization aiming at stealing the collective national identity of a people.

The relation between place names and language may be summed in the following:

Place and language merge because place means who you are and where you come from, and language is the facility by which you express that identity and provenance. A place requires a name, and a tongue to pronounce it . . . [As such] the name of place is [united] with

the function of place. This encompasses both the affection . . . inherent in affiliation, and the exercise of will, which makes a place live. Language itself is the factor, which unifies these two aspects of the human spirit. (Pine 46,145)

In *Translations*, both notions referred to by Pine are clear. Those who love this small community, like Manus, feel a certain sense of belonging to Baile Beag and not Ballybeg -- its new English name. Changing the name of the village has deprived the inhabitants of what Pine calls "the exercise of will." Though they were not asked about this change, they were expected to accept it. Accompanying this change of the community's name, arises a feeling of humiliation and estrangement. The change gives way for a new power to rise, which they would have either to succumb to or resist. However, succumbing is not mainly due to meekness; in some cases, it becomes a means to progress in life. Maire, for example, has seen in the new schools a window open to a new world -- a dream she cherished to immigrate to America.

Any community shares some peculiarities that can only be understood by the inhabitants and later by their offspring through cultural heritage. So, simply by changing place names, a new reality that has nothing to do with the past, would take place creating a new collective memory, which would break the continuity of the communal chain of consciousness running through the generations. As one critic noticed:

To be given another name is to be given a new identity, something of which we may be justifiably afraid. It affects us superficially, but it also questions our deeper understanding of our identity. It makes that identity provisional, turns 'who we are' into which 'who we may be.' It interferes quintessentially with our ability to decide on courses of action. (Pine 28)

Names in general are signs referring to something or someone. A name becomes synonymous with the existence of a place, a thing, or a person. By simply changing it, one is introducing new signs to refer to an existing entity. Place names

are signs of the history of a place as Hugh puts it, "We like to think we endure around truths immemorially posited" (Friel 42). A place name runs through time as long as the community accepts it and uses it. It may not be archived and the origin of a place name may not be historically justified, but it is a sign of a community-shared specificity. Maps made centuries ago, and in different nations, keep referring to the same place with the same name chosen by its inhabitants. It is also a sign of the sovereignty and authority of a government, for the official name must be approved by the ruling powers. The process of changing place names by the colonizer is the sign of its being the ultimate ruler of the country. Friel has explained how it happened that Irish place names are now replaced by English ones:

Yolland's official task, which Owen is now doing, is to take each of the Gaelic names -- every hill, stream, rock, even every patch of ground which possessed its own distinctive Irish name -- and Anglicize it, either by changing it into its approximate English sound or by translating it into English words . . . These new standardized names were entered into the Name-Book, and when the new maps appeared they contained all these new Anglicized names. (Friel 34)

Friel gives this historical explanation in a matter-of-fact tone that leaves the reader to wonder how oversimplified the process was done. For example, when they come to name a little beach, Owen pronounces it as "Bun na hAbhann". Yolland who is listening pronounces it differently, though the letters are the same. This is Friel's indirect comment on the whole process, it is not enough to pronounce a word but one should pronounce it rightly. Thus, if the official responsible for changing place names cannot pronounce it rightly, how could he do the job honestly? Yolland gives up "[for] there's no English equivalent for a sound like that" (Friel 35). Trying to give the English word the same sound as the Irish one does not give the correct meaning of the word, and the attempt to give it the same meaning would not include the same sound. In both cases, the place name would be distorted. "Bun na hAbhann" means

the mouth of the river; trying to give it an English name such as "Bunowen" is not accurate, for in this way it would mean neither "fish nor flesh" (Friel 35). As such the whole process becomes absurd and a clear attempt at distorting the local history of the community. Consistency in such a process cannot be maintained, for every name involves its own special process of renaming. The attempt to be consistent would make it difficult to name a place rightly. "Druim Dubh" is called in the jury list "Dramduff" which is "wrong as usual" (Friel 37). Owen shows that the official registering of a place name may be different from what people call it, making it alien to the community. Standardizing place names into English would make it even more alien to the spirit of the community. Friel has described Irish places as having their "own distinctive Irish name [s]" (Friel 34), in contrast to the new imposed names that lack either the distinctiveness of the English or Irish languages. They show affiliation to none of the two cultures but are colored by the superficial use of the English language. The new map of the place as known today, has distorted the local history of the community. Friel has intelligently reminded the people living today, through recreating the vanishing world of Baile Beag, that these names are evacuated from the Irish spirit, which the community once enjoyed for generations. If they are gone now, it is the result of colonial force and the weakness of the people to oppose a cultural colonization and assimilation.

The discrepancy between the process and its repercussions is given in examples of the story of different place names. Owen the translator gives the story behind naming more than one place, though he seems to be among the very few who know why a certain place is called, so the story itself is symbolic of belonging. These names indicate the sacred origins of a place and the untold secrets of a community. The accuracy of the place name fitting the place loses importance when put in a

postcolonial context. No logic or theory can explain why people agree to call a place a certain name. The fact that a name lives through the ages is a sign of continuity between past and present generations. Under occupation, place names acquire symbolic charge and play a role in mobilizing resistance and shaping people's minds. The very attempt to replace the names is meant to show the power of the colonizer's success in erasing centuries of continuous heritage. Owen gives the example behind naming "The Murren," it is "A corruption of Saint Muranus . . . Over the years the name became shortened to the Murren" (Friel 54). Though the story behind every place name may not be known to the community, still it bears witness to an ancient fact or legend. Owen refers to the place as "we call it", which unites people in one shared oral history that is not chronicled, but narrated.

Therefore, changing place names would not only affect the geography of a place, but it combines a change of the element of place through the element of time. This concept is very much like the concept of land in Darwish's memoir. Time affects geography and becomes a truth in itself. This fact may be clarified by the following quotation:

Dominating the play is the 1833 Survey of Ireland. Objectively, and within the fabric of the play, this renaming of every single part of Ireland, every little stream and hillock, is seen as a curiously significant turning point in the history of Ireland's colonization by Britain: the moment when the English virtually climbed into the minds of the Irish peasantry and broke their independent culture. The potato famine which followed confirmed in the material world what had already taken place in the people's culture. Once, the renaming was completed, mass emigration was inevitable in the wake of the famine. The countryside no longer existed as something that Irish could name. (Etherton 203)

Etherton draws a line between the change of place name, as an aspect of culture, and the collapse of this culture in the people's mind. Irish place names were signs of the independence of the Irish culture from that of its colonizer. Being

replaced by English names creates an affiliation to the Empire's culture. People started referring to themselves and where they come from in the colonizer's tongue. Overseas, the Irish landscape became known as chronicled in the colonizer's maps. The image that the British wanted to create of Ireland has survived. The extinction of the culture of the small community was the inevitable result of its being out of touch with reality.

The name of this small community of Baile Beag changes into Ballybeg, as a critic points out:

Naming becomes the exercise of naked power in *Translations*. The difference in that play between the Gaelic 'Baile Baeg' and the English 'Ballybeg' is important precisely because it transcends mere language. The eventual dominance of 'Ballybeg' represents the political dominance of the English. It is a meaningful sign simply because it is the sign of the powerful. [And in] *Translations*, these words will be made into literal signs: road signs (Devinney 2)

Naming becomes an action showing the domineering power and its mechanisms. People did not show resistance to this act of colonialism; their simplicity prevented them from understanding the full implications of the change and its effect on their culture. It becomes a way of exercising power over the land upon which people live.

Tobair Vree is another name that has to be changed to standardized English. The name is a corruption of Brain who one hundred and fifty years before tried to cure his disfigured face by the waters of a well near the crossroad. He was found drowned one day without being cured and the name became the well of Brain (Friel 44). Though no one knows the story behind the name but Owen, yet everybody calls it Tobair Vree. Owen poses a question of whether they should keep the name of a place relative to a man long dead and nobody remembers or should they change the name to what fits it more? The question is like that of the culture that still links itself

to the past and fails to cope with the needs of its people. The example given by Owen to the source of Tobair Vree is stressing:

How misleading it is to assume a surrogationalist 'fit' of words to things. The example also demonstrates both the unpredictable workings of reference, and how language meaning is not uniform through a speech community. It is also a repression, one that in its elaboration can endanger psychosis . . . language is community memory . . . it is also, like any act of naming, an assertion of particular identities, allegiances, values, of both the namer and the named. (Toolan 145- 148)

When Owen mentions the change of place names, Manus asks him what is wrong with the current place names, Owen answers that they should be standardized. Yolland wondering about his role in this process, is told that place names "that are riddled with confusion," are being changed. He asks, "Who's confused? Are the people confused?" (Friel 43). The people are satisfied with their long accustomed place names, a fact that the colonizer does not stop much to consider. As such, they deprive the people of one of their rights of deciding the map of their homeland. The crucial point here is that "standard" is set by the colonizer, who does not know or appreciate the Irish language and history. Behind such a process is an attempt to bury the old local identity and allegiances to one's history. The process would be one of conferring new names that may have nothing to do with the connotations of the original names. What this process targets is creating a new world that would fit into the empire as an authentic part of it, not an alien part that has its own culture and peculiarities.³

One cannot ignore the fact that this change of place names is parallel to the military occupation. The former is an occupation of the mind, which would lead to the replacement of cultural consciousness with a new cultural ethos that reflects the world of the colonizer. However, this process of renaming is more effective than land colonizing. It is difficult to resist it, especially if the alternative is not provided.

Stamping people's mind with a new identity penetrates them through time creating generations that would stop sharing in the chain of collective memory, causing a rupture with the past. This process is similar to the one the English used in the New World when they replaced the various tribal languages with the English language. On the other hand, the process of military occupation, including the use of force, would lead to the use of a counter force that would eventually subvert colonialization. However, even if the colonized is freed, cultural affiliation to the colonizer would keep the community somewhat under the charge of its previous colonizer⁴.

Parallel to this process of changing place names is that of interpretation conducted by Owen. Owen, engaged with the imperial process, is not ready to come back to where he once belonged. Since he is the one who could speak both languages and is trusted by the colonizer, he is commissioned to help in the process of renaming. His first comment, "It's such a delight to be back here with you all again 'civilized' people" (Friel 28), betrays his already-taken stance. He is sardonic about the community as he introduces his job as to translate "This quaint, archaic, tongue . . . people persist in speaking in the King's good English" (Friel 29). The tone Owen used from the very start sets the audience ready to the bizarre interpretation he offers to the words exchanged between the two groups. The community is thus not totally free of guilt, for it falls short of equipping itself to defend its identity. Therefore, if force is countered by force, cultural colonization needs cultural resistance, which in this case is not provided.

Though Irish culture is supposed to be a part of the United Kingdom in the play, yet Lancey feels it is one of the "foreign civilizations" (Friel 29). Lancey refuses every sign of hospitality shown him by Hugh and starts his mission at once. Since the language is alien to him, he addresses the people in a patronizing manner and attempts

to explain the idea of a map to them. Lancey at the beginning does not believe that Owen interpreted his words rightly, but since he in turn does not understand the target language, he has to accept his reassurance.

Though Manus understands what Owen did, yet he did not step to make his people understand what he calls "a bloody military operation" (Friel 32). He does not contradict Owen or tell his people of the misinterpretation, or try to explain the gravity of the situation. Rather, he indulges in his aborted love and attempts to take care of his father. Friel makes it clear that the population is either ignorant of this process or aware of it but does not resist it. As such, the disappearance of this world becomes inevitable. It is as one critic puts it:

Place-names are sometimes important, sometimes immaterial, and can be subjected to ruthless action, which shatters much more than the management of everyday life, . . . place names lie deep, like some script indelibly written into the nervous system. (Pine 23)

Mapping in *Translations* is used in two ways. It is the means the English system used to colonize the mind of the community. At the same time, Friel used it to subvert the arrogant image Lancey holds of his homeland. When Yolland is missing, Maire is left with the map that shows where he came from. Where he comes from, is an alien place to Maire and all English place names are completely new to her. She does not know how to read English words on the map, but her interest helped her to memorize the places he pronounced to her:

And there's two other wee villages right beside it; one of them called Barton Bendish . . . and the other's called Saxingham Nethergate . . . that's his mother's townland. Aren't they odd names? Sure they make no sense to me at all . . . He drew a map for me . . . and wrote the names on it. I have it all in my head now . . . strange sounds, aren't they? But nice sounds; like Jimmy Jack reciting his Homer. (Friel 60)

Maire out of love has shown interest in places that she thinks are pronounced in a funny manner. She subverts Lancey's look to her culture by taking the same stance

seeing the weird in the English language and laughing at the way it is pronounced. She wants to learn it as a means to escape her difficult conditions but she failed to love it. On the other hand, Yolland, whose official task was to change place names, falls in love with their sound. Friel shows that the strong, English language is not necessarily beautiful or close to the heart. While the weak -- the language of the community -- may be sublime. In the real world, survival seems to be for the fittest and not for the sublime.

Setting

The play starts by giving the main location of the play: "The hedge-school is held in a disused barn or byre . . . where cows were once milked and bedded" (Friel 11). The first words of the play open with "the hedge-school" indicating the importance of the place in the sequence of the coming events:

The setting is Hugh's hedge-school in, again, Ballybeg, where a contingent of sappers (two of their horses reported missing as the play opens) is at work on the survey; and where all the Irish speak Irish and are expected to do so on stage. They have in various degrees, from their schooling, knowledge of Latin and Greek. Generally, they have no English. (Maxwell 209)

The hedge-school, the education center in this area, is fitting for the idea of the play. Like the village name that is to be replaced by another one, the whole system of education is to be replaced by another one -- the new English school is to replace the hedge-school. This change expected to affect the setting where the young generation of the community meet to learn. It is symbolic of the fact that is stressed later in the play, namely the change of place names. Life in this community will have little to do with its past. Land and places upon it are quickly changing into a distorted image of the Empire. The intimacy the population feels at this school where they meet and gossip about the last events in town will disappear in the new official English schools.

All Brian Friel's plays are "unmistakably Irish in setting" (Maxwell 200). The setting is considered peculiarly Irish, where "most of the classes took place (at hedges)" among the landscape, (Maxwell 200). This brings one closer to the ordinary life led by the people in this community. They are not totally involved in an academic life, but rather in a simplified way of education and thus, one is not to face philosophical ideas or impractical thoughts. What the reader gets is the simple truth about life, aspirations and ideas of the people there told simply and frankly. As the people have known each other for all their lives, their comments on, and attitude towards, each other act as a characterizing indication in the play. As the action starts,

[The] school has lost at least two of its pupils to brewing political unrest as British troops and engineers have begun to conduct an ordinance survey intended to map the landscape for military intelligence and standardize the Gaelic placenames in the King's English. (*Culturevulture* 2)

So the reader is taken immediately to the core of the play, the old way of life has given way before a new force. Friel has also portrayed the peculiarities of life in the Gaelic societies before it was overwhelmed by British culture, where in Baile Beag "the sweet smell was everywhere" and "Every year at this time somebody comes back with stories of sweet smell . . . did the potatoes ever fail in Baile Beag? . . . There was never blight here" (Friel 21). The harvest that has never failed the people is going to fail them directly after the process of change takes place. The change has been the threshold of the collapse of the old way of life. People were left with nothing to stick to, to help them through the hard times of the famine. As such, a million immigrated fulfilling the dream of Maire. Even when Owen comes back he stresses the fact that the smell of this place, a smell it always had, had not changed, but lingers in the air. Doalty says that the hot weather has its effect on the cattle, "the cattle's going mad in that heat" (Friel 39). Maire is ashamed of her rough hand "blistered

from the hay" (Friel 60). Friel laments the simple rural culture of the landscape of a society that could not resent change. The change though modernized the Irish communities wasted away its quintessence of rural life.

Characters

The characters of Manus and Owen reflect the theme of collective memory. Manus who sticks to the old Irish way of living is contrasted with Owen who voluntarily embraces the new identity of the Englishman. To start with, Manus is physically "lame" which is symbolic of the weakness and lack of strength of his ideas when confronted with Owen's who is "a handsome attractive young man" (Friel 26).

Even Manus's dream of marrying Marie is aborted for her feelings seem to go for the romantic English man. In this way, the union of two Irish people does not seem to fulfil the needs of both of them. Manus is also lame in fulfilling his dream; he as Maire criticizes him, has nothing that would establish a home "neither a roof over [his] head nor a sod of ground under [his] foot," and he is even ready to leave the job he is seeking for his father (Friel 29). If such a union is impossible, for one of the partners aspires for another way of life, it symbolizes that at least half the population is for another way of life.

Owen is more involved with the colonial power than Manus, who resents it but does not resist it. The first sign of his involvement with the colonial powers is changing his Irish name -- the one passed on to him from his grandfather -- into an English one. This, as Roche believes, is an attempt "to deny part of himself, his memory of the name and what it connotes" (Roche 250). This is the first change of names taking place in the play -- a voluntary change by a person who is supposed to be the mediator between the two civilizations: "They call [you] Roland" (Friel 33). Changing his name is a sign of the way of life he chooses to live. Owen is a

representative of a type of people who are found everywhere and are willing to help the colonizer. The excuses provided by this type are often the same: their culture does not fulfil their needs or consume their ambition. Besides, it is for the good of their nation to get whatever help it may get from the colonizer's culture.

Lancey also reveals a feature common to the colonizer everywhere and at all times. Once, Yolland cannot be found, he resorts to collective punishment that reminds one of the shelling in Darwish's book. He gives the community an ultimatum to tell him where Yolland has disappeared: "Commencing twenty four hours from now we will shoot all livestock in Balleybeg . . . if it doesn't bear results, . . . we will start a series of evictions and levelling of every abode " (Friel 61). Remarkably, Lancey has used the new name of Baile Beg, giving the new name the official stamp. In response to this violence, his "whole camp [was put] on fire" (Friel 62). This is a collective punishment shared by different communities, where force is used against an entire people and the sources of their livelihood. People needed to know, as Doalty puts it, how to stick together even against a trained army (Friel 64). As for Hugh, the old school master, he is

Instinctively ill-disposed towards English (as his son Manus perhaps is). With a nod to the forces of history, he reminds [the readers] that words are 'not immortal' and 'that it can happen that a civilization can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of . . . fact. (Toolan 144)

No doubt, Hugh is loyal to his language without being blind to its shortcomings. The image he uses to describe the language is geographical. This shortcoming of the language became an element in the loss of land. Hugh draws a distinction between the facts of history and those related to the literary heritage. One is shaped by the former, which is expressed through the latter (Friel 66). The Irish culture has done the opposite; it imprisoned itself in a dying-out world and was cut off

from the real one. As such, both Jimmy and Hugh are contrasted; they represent different elements of the culture. Jimmy is fossilized in the literary world, which affected his appearance: "a bachelor . . . lives alone . . . He never washes. His clothes are . . . filthy and he lives in them summer and winter, day and night" (Friel 11). He represents the poor landscape, while Hugh who is after a new job and a place in life is representative of the wish of survival inherent in the old way of life. He is aware of the facts leading to the collapse of his own Old World, the one he attempted to free but failed. What is left him is to try to fit himself into the new coming one. Memory and loyalty to a remote past did this culture no good. A balance should be achieved between loyalty to the past and the present by learning from past lessons:

Most of the people in Friel's drama are experts in the maintenance of a persona, or of an illusion upon which the persona depends. But their expertise, which most often takes the form of eloquence and wit, and which is a mode of defense against the oppressions of false authority, has no power to alter reality. So they become articulators of a problem to such a degree that the problem becomes insoluble, so perfectly etched are all its numbing complexities . . . Friel's drama is concerned with the nervous collapse of a culture which has had to bear pressures beyond its capacity to sustain. (Deane 166)

This may be seen in the portrayal of Jimmy whose world is absolutely imagined and has nothing to do with reality. Though he may be regarded as highly cultured, yet he is pathetic and out of place. The only English word he knows is relative to his knowledge of the Greek culture, "I know one English word . . . Bo-som . . . (He illustrates with his hands.) . . . Diana the huntress she has two powerful bosom" (Friel 16). Even Yolland may be regarded as having such a persona, for he is an outsider who sees the beauty within this culture, yet he is victimized twice: once by authority at home that ignored such a romantic trend in his character and by the freedom-fighters in the culture. Both, Jimmy and Yolland have personalities that do not fit in the community, yet they are both aware of signs of

beauty in this culture, which many inhabitants dismiss. However, they are not characters to be admired for they lack strength to defend what they believe in. They are rather to be pitied as somehow they are out of touch with reality.

Hugh's dream is aborted as another takes the office he dreamed of. This is symbolic in itself. Hugh who represents the older generation cannot be trusted to educate the younger generation whom the colonizer tries to tantalize. His final comment in Latin that he is barbarian because he cannot be understood here is relevant to the whole situation. He has foreseen all this before when he said that a language may be imprisoned in a contour, yet no one was ready to listen to his warning. For this reason, he sees the necessity of learning the new names (Friel 66). Whether people accepted it or not, they will end using it so the better it is to do so out of their own accord. They have to appropriate it to be theirs, "We must learn where we live. We must learn to make them our own" (Friel 66). His comment is a direct call to his people to avoid being fossils of a dead language. Civilizations flourish and then fall, and Ireland has to find a means to face the tides of a different and indifferent world. As one critic puts it "Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history" (Pine 8).

In the case of Maire, language becomes the weapon of imperialism. Friel draws the attention to the inspirations of the younger generations which cannot be fulfilled at home. One of the tools to achieve these dreams is to learn the language of the country of their dreams, English. As such, if people feel that they are imprisoned in poverty because of the conditions of their country, they would welcome any change for the better. Maire wants to learn English as Etherton believes "not . . . to acquire a new language for the sake of the knowledge, but as a means of moving out of her culture completely, to embrace the new materialism" (203). Her knowledge of

English is confined to few words acquired through her aunt and are relative to the way of life in this far off area. Maire lacks the wisdom that goes with learning, and can thus fall as an easy prey to colonialism. Etherton goes further to contrast her attitude with Manus,

who intends to marry her . . . and even before the arrival of Yolland there is a political tension between [them] . . . It centers upon an entanglement of language and speaking, knowledge and materialism: faithfulness. (203)

Language is more than spoken words; it is the medium people use to reflect their inner thoughts and aspirations and one of the uniting elements of a community. Immigration, the dream of Maire, would mean giving up this language for the sake of another resulting in giving up national identity. That was the fate of the Irish culture when many immigrated after the famine. As such, Friel equates loyalty to the homeland with that of its language, the medium of transferring a nation's history.

Sarah the mute girl is symbolic of the process of learning a language. She is not as dumb as she seems to be but had "secrets . . . in (her) head . . . all these years" (Friel 12). Manus's attempt to make her learn to speak and voice out what she feels is in a sense a means given to the Irish language to survive. As Roche states: "[this] testifies to language as the key to memory, the means by which identity is not only formulated in the present but accumulates through time" (Roche 246).

Language and Education

Finding a means for a better living is a universal preoccupation, so education in the play is given an important role. The play starts in a hedge-school where Latin and the Classics are taught. However, this kind of education does not provide the students with qualified chances in life. Therefore, Maire is for learning English to be able to go and live in America. The kind of education provided in this school prepares its students for estrangement and a sense of alienation. If one's education does not

prepare one for a better place in the world or goes with the trend prevalent in the world, one's education becomes a sort of a chain that drags one backwards. In the play, all the characters assume an air of local knowledge if placed in contrast with that of the world, putting them in an awkward position. Their education prepares them to be looked down upon by other cultures. Moreover, lacking a qualified system of education makes them an easy prey to the new introduced system that promises them good chances. In this, they are prepared for cultural colonialism that paves the way for a military occupation.

In this hedge-school, time goes backwards and students learn things that cannot help them improve. As the play begins, the British aim at another kind of colonialism achieved through education. The new system of national schools targeting the replacement of old hedge-schools aims at the new generation: "At the age of six and [one has] to stick at it until [one] is twelve at least"(Friel 22). This process is elaborated by Bridget who explains that no Irish word would be spoken in this school and all subjects would be in English. This indicates a process of re-shaping the mentality of people by cutting their links with the collective consciousness of their community (Friel 22). Besides, this community itself is not aware of the importance of education in the hedge-school; Nora Dan who can only write her name leaves the hedge-school (Friel 24).

The language of the mighty is sought and appreciated while that of the colonized is often underestimated: "Language is also used as a metaphor for the colonial penetration of people's minds" (Etherton 201). For instance, officers in the military occupation do not bother to learn the language of the community they invade and penetrate. Lancey does not speak either Irish or Latin and he is for a change of place names. This alludes to the impossibility of the honesty of this process. Since this

process is at its start and the small community of Bail Baeg has never been subjected to the winds of change, Lancey is looked down upon for lacking the knowledge that constitutes their collective character. Hugh is surprised when he asks Lancey and knows that he does not speak Irish, Latin, or Greek; he only knows his mother tongue. On the other hand, Lancey expresses his surprise that the community does not speak his language and if some do, it is outside the parish and for the sake of commerce (Friel 25). English does not exist in this society and though its educated inhabitants are more familiar with different dead languages than the common English man, yet this kind of knowledge did them no good. The question that Friel raises is that what matters is not what you know, but how relevant this knowledge fits into the world. Besides, each of the two groups contrasts itself to the other. Lancey thinks that this is a dull community because it does not know English, expressing the sense of superiority felt by most of Imperial servants. On the other hand, Hugh, who is the head of the hedge-school is surprised that Lancey speaks only one language and attempts to explain the nature of the Irish language in which the "culture and the classical tongues made a happier conjugation" (Friel 25).

Though this process of the new system of education would take longer time to be achieved, yet its results are sure and with the minimum losses, especially if some Irish politician, Dan O'Connell, whom Maire quotes, sees the necessity of the whole Irish community speaking the language of the colonizer. He believes that "the sooner [they] all speak English the better", though it is Irish that he uses during his election campaign (Friel 25). Therefore, if people who are supposed to represent the community are not faithful to its heritage one can expect the destiny of this language. On the other hand, the older generation represented by Hugo thinks that English is not their language and therefore cannot represent them (Friel 25). Language in this case

becomes synonymous with national identity and self-image. Language becomes more than gestures and channel of communication; it becomes the reflection of what people share through generations. It is the archive of the social and historical change occurring to a community. The use of certain expressions, is meaningful if shared by the whole community and many outsiders would not easily understand it, even if they speak the language. Every language keeps some of its secrets to its native speakers, acquired through time and daily communication.

One point remains in terms of education related to literature, the culmination of the superiority of a language. Irish literature is "enormously rich and ornate." It is written in a language that is "full of mythologies of fantasy and hope and self-deception -- a syntax opulent with tomorrows . . . [their] own method of replying to . . . inevitabilities" (Friel 42). The dilemma becomes that "a civilization can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of fact" (Friel 43). Maps represent the land and thus they are used as an image reflecting language. Land is imprisoned in a map that has to match the contour of reality, but language used by people of this land does not match reality.

It is remarkable that the whole play is written in English, yet counting on the audience's imagination to believe that it is in Irish. The play, as a whole becomes symbolic of Friel's scheme of adopting English to express the point of view of the small community. *Translations* is in fact a paradox in that it represents us with a neo-colonial project: to regain its cultural integrity, Ballybeg must not reject, but embrace, the dominant, incursive language in order to make it identifiably our own language" (Pine 46).

Communication

Basic human communication could be hindered by the lack of one common language. Yolland who does not know Irish, is grateful to Doalty who helped him avoid the wet grass, but he has "No words to thank him," Doalty in turn asks him not to waste his time for he will not understand him (Friel 39). Communication is not just through language, but also through a collective consciousness that differs from one civilization to the other. Yolland is aware that the Irish civilization is different from his, and that his move is to "a consciousness that wasn't striving or agitated, but at its ease and with its own conviction and assurance" (Friel 40). It is a process of decoding a language, its core and essence or the language would always be "hermetic" (Friel 40). He feels so "cut off from the people here [Which he thinks is] a remarkable community" (Friel 42).

True communication is provided through the honest will of Yolland to understand the nature of the community. Hugh feels proud to explain to Yolland the reason behind the lack of communication between the two groups; it is the spiritual element versus the practical one. The attempt to communicate with the people in the community Yolland strives for made him identify with the people and feels guilty about his role in destroying a vital element in the Irish culture. Maire in turn seeks to know the colonizer to fulfil her dream of going to America, "I don't know a word they are saying, nor they me; but sure that doesn't matter" (Friel 17). It is only when she feels for Yolland that she likes the sounds of his language (Friel 50). The colonizer-colonized relation is confined to mere awkward understanding without real communication, as symbolized by Maire studying the Atlas and the "Map of America," (Friel 20).

Friel comments on the existence of the colonizer among the colonized: if the former does not use the language of the latter, how could he rule or expect fairness? Yolland explains that he was supposed to be in Bombay instead of Ballybeg, a hint at the process of shaping the culture of the colonized people everywhere. It is for this reason that Manus who knows English refuses to use it in the presence of Yolland preferring his own language, for he refuses to do it "for the benefit of the colonizer" who "are all the same at some level" (Friel 46). Manus refuses to hold any kind of direct communication with Yolland though he has shown his good intention so far.

The first love scene to take place between Maire and Yolland is with

Owen as the go-between or translator, they respond to each other's native-tongue declarations of incomprehension with further cries of 'what?' . . . [The famous scene] . . . is not quite communication without language, for their words here have clearly played a part; it may be more like an extreme case of what in fact occurs in most everyday interaction, where final and unresolvable uncertainty about others' meanings does not prevent us understanding one another. (Toolan 143)

Maire and Yolland do not understand each other and the only word they seem to repeat is "sorry." It is Owen who knows the language of both and does the whole job:

Maire : What's he saying?
Owen : (To Yolland) Who would object?
Maire : (To Owen) Did you tell him?
Yolland : (To Maire) sorry sorry?
Owen : (To Maire) He says may he come? (Friel 48).

The scene is pathetic for these two human beings who feel attached to one another are at odds for lacking a means of mutual communication. Language becomes more than signs of mutual understanding, it becomes a means of fulfillment. Yolland who falls in love with the landscape is in love with Maire, but in both cases, he cannot fulfil his dream of extending his love more. At one point in the play, he is sure that he cannot settle among the people in this community. And this aborted love scene, is a further sign of this failure. It is not enough to feel for something or somebody, what is

more important is the medium through which you can develop this sense and extend it to the object of love. At a later scene when both Yolland and Maire are alone, they do not understand each other. Ironically, the only words that Yolland understands of her language is the place names:

Maire : May be over the road. May be at Tobair Vree
Yolland : Tobair Vree! Tobair Vree! (Friel 48).

The scene has a further importance for though they each do not understand the language of each other yet "In a beautiful hesitant scene the obstacle of language dissolves, the place-names became their entrance to communion." (Maxwell 209).

Maire : Carraig an Phoill
Yolland : Carraig na Ri
Loch na nEan
Maire : Loch an Iubhair
Machaire Buidhe (Friel 48).

It depends on the will shown by both of them to understand each other and communicate. The barrier of language dissolves when Yolland repeats a single word he understands of her speech. In this scene, Friel has subverted the common relation between the two races. The relation between them could change, when the colonizer shows willingness to understand the land he is colonizing. Yolland did not ask Maire to learn his language in order to understand him, rather he is the one who tries to exert the effort to do so. Even when Manus insults Yolland for being with Maire, Yolland kept saying "sorry, sorry" which he takes to be "the wrong gesture in the wrong language" (Friel 55). The simple and innocent sentiments Yolland tries to show to the community he loved are often ridiculed for being unfitting for the situation.

The End

The finale of the play is telling;

Though by the close of the action the story has not been resolved, the audience is made painfully aware of the threads of change which have begun to unravel the lines of communication between peoples, countries and languages. (*Culturevulture 2*)

Jimmy announces his intention to marry the mythological Athene, a hint at the persistence of the people of Beal Baeg to seek the same line of life they had followed so far. Sarah who managed in the first scenes to identify herself and demonstrates some of her mental abilities is now silent, which is another sort of submission to the status quo.

There are two worlds at conflict in *Translations*: the memory of a life the community had lived up to that moment and a life that is to replace the living memory and makes it retreat as something of the past:

In *Translations*, there are two Irelands, two languages, two kinds of violence, and Owen, who has migrated to the new Ireland, is nevertheless pulled by his sentimental loyalties towards the one he has helped to bury . . . Ireland is, of course, a metaphor in these contexts as well as a place. It is the country of the young, of hope, a perfect coincidence between fact and desire. It is also the country of the disillusioned, where everything is permanently out of joint, violent, broken. (Deane 170)

Time has proved Hugh's speculations to be true, no one was prepared to understand the source behind the change. Mere force has not brought conditions back to their previous state. Friel has created a simple image of a life before the change of place names took place. The defect of the culture could have been cured, had the people been aware of it. However, Friel does not hold any solutions or expectations for the future. He has analyzed the problem and traced it back to its origins, however late it is. This helps in providing the world with a simple and true testimony to what happened 150 years ago. Ireland was not a land of ignorant uncultivated people, it had its own culture, but it did not prepare itself to face the change culturally. People were overwhelmed by the culture of the colonizer without even noticing it and they did little to keep their culture alive. Friel holds both sides responsible for this decay. It is left for the younger generations and the intellectuals to look into their heritage and bring to the world its signs of beauty and strength.

Chapter Three

Joy Harjo and The Ancient Spirit Born from the Ashes

The surrendering speech of William Weatherfield, the head of the Creeks delivered at the occasion of giving himself up to General Jackson is a famous and adequate example of how far the Indians of North America were both civilized and eloquent:

I am in your power: do with me whatever you please. I am a soldier. I have done the white people all the harm I could. I have fought them, and fought them bravely. If I had an army, I would yet fight, and attended to the last. But I have done -- my people are all gone -- I can do no more than weep over the misfortunes of my nation. Once I could animate my warriors to battle: but I could not animate the dead. My warriors can no longer hear my voice -- their bones are at Tallaataga, Tallaschatchee, Emuckfaw, and Tohopeka. I have not surrendered myself thoughtlessly. Whilst there were chances of success, I never left my post, nor supplicated peace. But my people are gone, and now I ask it for my nation, and for myself.

On the miseries and misfortunes brought upon my country, I look back with the deepest sorrow, and wish to avert still greater calamities. If I had been left to contend with the Georgian army [militia of Georgia], I would have raised my corn on one bank of the river, and have fought them on the other. But your people have destroyed my nation. You are a brave man. I rely upon your generosity. You will exact no terms of a conquered people, but such as they should accede to. Whatever they may be, it would now be madness and folly to oppose them. If they are opposed, you shall find me among sternest enforcers of obedience. Those who would still hold out, can be influenced only by a mean spirit of revenge; and, to this, they must not, and shall not, sacrifice the last remnant of their country. (Hamilton 162-163)

Contrary to the widely held view of the North American Indian as primitive and wicked, the speech shows a morally sophisticated position.

However, the stereotyping of the Native Indian as a savage who is ready to pounce on the white victim, leaves very little space for us today to see him in a different light. It is even impossible to imagine a movie or a series that would draw the character of a Native Indian neutrally or in a favorable light. On the other hand, the Indian has always been the "Other" who refused to help the white man to fulfill his mission.¹ Therefore,

what is crucially needed is the fullest and most accurate portrait of the Indians . . . from the remains of the past and the realities of the present . . . Something the reader should always have at the back of his mind as he encounters other sorts of records and to which he can turn to remind himself of primary orientations and modes of perception of the difference between the Indian's image of himself and the ways others have seen him. (Turner 1-2)

If this what is really needed, no one is better equipped for this job than the descendants of the old tribes. These have inherited some of the old Indian modes of living as well as the identity of a modern American; they are the living examples of cultural contact. The tension they feel for having to lead two different ways of living is best expressed in their creative works considered as their attempt to teach both their people and the white man the importance of accepting and respecting the difference between the two cultures. Being different does not mean that one has to compromise for less or to accept being inferior. Their means to achieve this goal has been to refresh the collective memory of the Native Indian to be able to see the greatness in his long forgotten culture. Learning to estimate and respect one's own roots is the first step to unveil the ignorance of the world, which revels in its bias against one's culture. As Fanon believes cultural resistance in any colonized place goes through three phases:

In the first phase, the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power . . . In the second phase we find that the native is disturbed; he decides to remember what he is . . . Finally . . . the fighting phase, the native, after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will on the contrary shake the people . . . he turns himself into an awakener of the people; hence comes a . . . national literature. (Fanon 222)

As such the main target is not essentially the white man per se, but the Native Indian as a first step towards achieving self recognition. Applying Fanon's view to the present day Indian culture, one would find that the English language and culture have replaced the old tribal ones. As such, the Native Indian becomes totally absorbed by

main stream culture. However, most Native writers attempt to revive their past recreating it in their works. In so doing, these works raise questions of the uniqueness of the native culture and its essence. The Indian has to feel proud of what s/he really is and to learn to avoid being intimidated or feeling inferior. If this mission is fulfilled, not only creative people would hold the banner but the whole Native people as well. Such a voice, strongly convinced, of the greatness of its culture cannot be denied.² This became the holy task of modern American creative writers of indigenous origins. One of them is the poet Joy Harjo whose mission in her own words is retrieving the past:

I claim the past . . . when you are able to articulate something that is terrible that is inside you, that lives in you, and you no longer deny it, you are able to bring regeneration. (Coltelli 139)

So the aim of her writing can be induced from her themes: to draw the attention of her community at large to the essence and points of strength of her culture -- Native Indian culture. Besides, she is willing to admit things she considers "terrible," to give a chance to herself and her people at large, to escape feelings of inferiority and victimization that are always inherent in every suppressed native culture. Harjo is thus seen as a typical example of native intellectual resistance as defined by Fanon. Her choice to speak for her people exemplifies his three-phase development of national consciousness.

Harjo is not totally a Native American and did not live on a reservation. She has multiple identities and selects faces of herself when writing. She is "a mixture of Creek, Cherokee, African American, Irish, and French nationalists" (Hussein 7). Though Harjo could have been identified as a white American, she chooses to speak for the other side. Her choice makes her words all the more credible, for she has not been prevented from access to the main stream culture -- though with obstacles and

difficulties -- rather she was recognized and offered chances rarely offered to people of her likes. As she does not reject the culture or the concepts of the main stream, she tried to mould them to meet her objectives. As such she has avoided the destiny of many "Indians' efforts [that tried] to halt white intrusions and to reject all Euro-American ideas [and] were doomed to failure" (Oswalt 527). Following such a path has been an example of the attempt to mix both cultures in one that would take from each an aspect convenient to reflect the inner spirit of modern tribal descendents. This attempt proves to the white man that the old concept of the inherited animosity towards the Natives is disappearing. At the same time, the Natives would start learning new ways to make their voice reach the world. Instead of feeling victimized, they take the initiative to speak about themselves in an inviting way to explore their identity.

Harjo advocates something different "from the tribal resistance [similar] to assimilation" (Oswalt 527). From such attempts the movement of what came to be known as "the Pan-Indian movement, and in it Indianism and Indianness have crystallized" (Oswalt 527). As many Indians resorted to violence to resist the white man's intervention in their continent, the efforts of

many whites have long felt that their pervasive control of Indians eventually would lead to total Indian assimilation. Past experience and present trends indicate a great deal more vitality in Indian culture than was recognized by those predicting its doom. By now Indian resistance to white dominance, as manifested primarily in political and religious movements, has become a part of their heritage. (Oswalt 527)

One can thus conclude that the attempts of both cultures to avoid each other or ignore the points of strength in one another have only resulted in a wide gap between both without each suppressing the other. Therefore, Harjo's work is underscored for it draws the attention to the turmoil of her people in a mixture of both Indian and western styles, making it comprehensible to both groups. To put it in Harjo's own

words: "Native American written literature is a postcontact phenomenon adapting Western literary forms to Native American models and intentions" (Harjo, "Ordinary Spirit" 271). For example, Harjo writes about things that interest her people but she does them in writing -- a tradition different from the Indian oral tradition. To quote a Native Woman:

When you write things down you don't have to remember them. But for us . . . it is different . . . all that we are, all that we have ever been, all the great names of our heroes and their songs and deeds are alive within each of us . . . living in our blood. (Highwater 3)

The woman draws the attention to the importance of memory to the Native Indian in which everything belonging to the past is stored. This becomes the first part of Harjo's task, reminding her people of their past, and reclaiming it. In this, she resumes the task that the white man has assumed before her for "Indians did not immediately seize upon literature as a vehicle of expression. To the contrary, it was primarily white people who tried to preserve Indian traditions in writing" (Turner 7).

A further example combining both literary elements of the mainstream and tribal culture is Harjo's use of the English language to reflect tribal interests. As she has not learned a tribal language, English becomes her media to transfer her ideas to the world:

Harjo is quick to point out that English is the language of the colonizer or the language of the enemy . . . She . . . struggles to reinvent English in order to enact a challenging . . . language . . . she has learned the language from the colonizer, but she knows how to talk back in that very language. (Hussein 7)

This chapter is going to focus on three poems by Harjo that have been deemed good examples of the importance of memory as a form of retrieving identity. Her poetry manages to "make the Americans see their country and those who inhabit it in a bright light of illumination, not as some shadowy mythical construct that obscures or glorifies vast segments of [their] history" (Ullestad 5). In so doing, she has been

guided by the example of the African American, Toni Morrison whose *Beloved* gives information about the history of slavery in America more than any of history book has done (Coltelli 139).

"I Give You Back"

The main theme of this poem is fear and its effect on hindering the progress of a people. As mentioned before, Harjo attempts to revive the memory of her people to become aware of their own past as a means of resisting the erosion of their original identity. This attempt is mingled with an analysis of the psyche of her people. In other words, Harjo mingles both past events and present sentiments to pave the way for a sound future, or in Fanon's words, she tries to create "an authentic work of art" through acknowledging that the realities of her nation are the "the seething pot out of which the learning of the future will emerge" (Fanon 225). However, this poem is not one that glorifies the past per se, but it shows the importance of reviving past-inherited memories, which prevent the Native Indians from achieving any progress in modern life. Instead of remembering the past, Harjo analyzes the psyche of the modern Native Indian who cannot escape an inherited sense of fear. Significantly, this poem is given another title "Fear Poem." Its purpose, as Harjo states, is "to get rid of fear" (Coltelli 44). Having two titles to refer to one poem shows that at least two strong forces were acting upon her while writing the poem. The first is her attempt to get rid of this fear by initiating it in those who caused it, and hence the title "I give you Back". Secondly, the feelings which she endorses in the poem, which are similar to that of catharsis, arouse the feeling of fear at the deeds of the white man and pity towards the Native Indian, and hence the title "Fear poem." She "attempted to convey both the humanity of Native peoples and the pain that they have suffered over hundreds of years due to colonialization, forced assimilation, and acculturation"

(Andrews 2). The feeling of fear felt by the Native Indians brings them closer to the white man, giving the whites the chance to identify with the Natives and their humanity:

Soon after the discovery of the New World, a great debate raged in Spain about the humanness of Indians. Regardless of the manner in which the conquistadors were received, they argued that Indians were irrational, heretical, and tainted with mortal sin. This attitude served to justify the inhumane treatment of Indians and the seizure of their land or property. (Oswalt 511)

The Indians were denied human attributes to give their colonizer the right to colonize them and to erase their alleged barbaric culture. Brilliantly, Harjo has refuted history through playing on the sentiments of the receiver of the poem. Sardonicly, the alleged white civilization and humanity are put into question, for the alleged barbarity of the colonized was met by brutality and violence.

This poem in particular is a mixture of both modern American and ancient Indian elements. The individual experience around which the poem revolves is that of individual hate and fear. These two elements belong to the modern tradition that reflects the tension exercised by modern external forces on the individual. However, Harjo manages to link her experience to that of the whole nation, which is a feature of the Indian tradition, where communal interests are celebrated above the individual ones;

Sometimes [she] feels that it is a fear linked up to generations and that [they] all carry it . . . [she understands] what's been passed on to [her] . . . fear engendered in many of us. What [she] touches on in this poem is a fear or a force that includes generations of warfare, slaughter, and massacres. (Coltelli 44)

So the fear expressed in this poem is believed to be that of most of the natives that was transferred to them through their ancestors. To start with the title, "I Give You Back," is ambiguous for she is supposed to return this fear to someone who is not identified. It is not clear whether this person is the one who caused her fear

or a person from whom she inherited this fear through the collective memory. She starts by personifying fear in a powerful image addressing the anonymous reader. Her use of the word "release" along with "fear" is ambiguous, for in order to release fear she must have the upper hand over it. However, reading the poem shows that this fear was caused by somebody stronger than her. Her use of "beautiful" to describe fear shows that she does not resent it but is ready to accept it as part of her paradoxical self or in her own words, "I have to learn it so to make fear an ally instead of just an enemy" (Coltelli 44). As such, she goes on describing fear using contradictory words "my beloved / and hated twin," for it is the same as she is, a part of her. The phrase "but now" introduces the element of change that led to sensing the difference and thus no more knowing fear in herself. The reason of change is not explained for it may be either a change in the perspective through which she regards the world or in the world that caused her fear in the first place. However, this process of releasing is not that easy for she compares it to an imaginary situation "the death of (her) daughters" as indicated by the word "would". The use of the image of fear being in her "blood" emphasizes the presupposition of inheriting it from her ancestors. It also gives an example of Harjo's preoccupation with the body and its participation in the process of the Indian history.

In the following stanza, she mentions the one who caused her fear: the white soldiers who colonized the continent thinking it's Man's last chance on earth to have a paradise, but committed atrocities. She elaborates on their atrocities as a refusal: "to let readers forget a terrible history of racism and sexism that has radically influenced Harjo's own life" (Andrews 12). She evokes history and thus refreshes the memory of both her people and the white man's. She brings the white man right in front of the actions committed by his ancestors. If the Native Indian is made to feel ashamed

because of his ancestors' alleged savagery, the white man is to feel ashamed because of the cruelty of his own ancestors. Harjo cites historic events and gives examples of the atrocities committed by the white colonizers against the original inhabitants of the Promised Land.³ They "burned down [her] house, beheaded [her] children, raped and sodomized [her] brothers and sisters, stole the food from [their] plates when [they] were starving." Carrie House shows that the different perspectives dictate our view of the world for example:

It is considered a battle when the U.S. Cavalry obliterated millions of indigenous Native children, women, and men, yet it is considered a massacre when a couple of hundred soldiers die at the hands of a few 'guerrilla' indigenous Native warriors. (225)

Therefore, by using these incidents of the white man's history in America, Harjo provides the reader with a chance to alter his perspective and start questioning the already existing ideas. These incidents are similar to those described in Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*.⁴ As such, this poem acquires a universal significance for it encompasses a common human experience whose perpetrators are always similar, the colonizers everywhere.

Harjo attempts to release her fear, which is a living memory: "because you hold these scenes in front of me/and I was born with eyes that can never close." Though the time of the poem is not clearly set, yet if the "I" of the poem is assumed to be Harjo herself, the memory of these scenes ever present before her prevents her from leading a normal life. If the persona is taken to be someone who really experienced these feelings, that fear would provide the reason for his/her retirement from society. Fear prevents natural feelings from developing and creates barriers blocking human contact. Harjo did not go through the actual experience that aroused these feelings, but as she inherited her fear, she expects the white man to have inherited the cruelty of his ancestors. Her eyes can never close for she is ever

watching in fear of being hurt by white man's cruelty. As such the link of this generation to past ones is established making the experience one of a whole nation not of a mere individual.

Harjo draws an image of a society that existed and had its own rules before the coming of the white man. It is a society that knew human communities represented in a family, knew how to build "houses," and had "plates". Such an image contradicts the widely held view by the white man that "Nothing in America had actuality before their own intrusions [or that there] is any real sense of people with equal rights to existence and self-determination" (Turner 2).

The following stanza stands for contradictions for it combines "angry/rejoice, black/white, hungry/full, hated/loved." Harjo combines contradicting elements of life to show that she does not fear being different. This stanza shows that Harjo blames the Indians partly for what happened to them. She does not excuse them completely for the abuse done to them. The poem reveals:

Another aspect of political identity formation and historical reflection, a self-consciousness that has little in common with mainstream delusions and fantasy. There's no angry, aggressive "you did me wrong!" Rather, these musicians [Harjo is a member of a musical band] tend to accept personal responsibility. (Ullestad 10)

Such a mature stance should be met with an equal admission of responsibility by the mainstream culture to make up Indians for centuries of ill-treatment. If the European "choked, gutted, devoured, raped" the Indian, the latter gave them "the leash, the knife, laid [himself] across the fire, the heated thing," as if the Indians did not show enough resistance. Harjo refuses to nourish the fear she inherited which refuses to die; her fear is one of the paradoxes she bears in her blood. In her blood is a sea of such paradoxes, only bridged through poetry. Poetry becomes her means of survival, she gives vent to her passive inner feelings in the form of a poem (Coltelli 134). By the end of the poem, the reader is forced to acknowledge the atrocities

committed by the European conquerors, and at the same time recognize the courage which Harjo arms herself with to face her fear. A courage that needs an understanding of the reasons behind the fear. For remembering who they were would be the weapon used by the modern Native Americans to find a place for themselves. Harjo has taken the initiative to analyze her people's psyche; instead of being talked about, the chance is now given the natives to articulate a better understanding of their specificity. Someone is keen on showing the world how a Native American feels. On this point House comments:

For many years, research had been conducted among and about my people by non-Indian people and for the most part, they lacked the context for proper interpretation. They have misunderstood or failed to grasp many meanings in our lives. (224)

The "context" House speaks about is the collective memory shared by one community in which their attitudes and reactions, even varied, stem from the same event. Lacking the reasons behind certain acquired meanings makes it difficult for non-Natives to imagine or simulate their feelings. The irony at the end of the poem is meant to remind "readers of the legacy of oppression that has shaped the lives of Native North Americans for centuries" (Andrews 2). Harjo has called for a new value through this poem: to forgive your oppressor is the only means to purge yourself of negative feelings (Coltelli 136). She does not stop much before the reasons that caused her fear. As such this new value, new to many native cultures, is a means of co-existence with a power that cannot be subverted.

"New Orleans"

When this poem is closely examined, one realizes that the time of the poem is overlapping. Present time versus past time becomes an overarching theme in this poem. Throughout the whole poem, Harjo attempts to juxtapose the two layers of time to show the impact of the modern civilization on the culture and way of life of her ancestors. Harjo speaks about the present time as she searches "for remnants of voices." At the same time, her mind goes back into the past to speak about historical events as in her poem, "It wasn't just a horse." Such a shift between the present and the past shows that the definite break between them is not clearly felt by her. To her, the past does somehow exist and imposes itself upon her, even if some would consider that only she feels this past. She herself comments on her shift between the tenses: "I always change a tense within a poem and do so knowing what I am doing. It isn't by accident that it happens. Time doesn't realistically work in a linear fashion" (Harjo, "Ordinary Spirit" 269). As such, time in her poem is an essential element of the structure; it is completely employed to reflect her idea of the undying past. The past is recalled through a stream of consciousness; the reader follows her line of thought as she moves from one realm to the other. Such a shift may not be easily accomplished by the reader who may confuse time and events.

Harjo starts the poem by identifying the place as "This is the South" and the objective of her being there is to "look for evidence of other Creeks." Harjo in an interview mentions that she once went to visit a little town where there was a settlement of Creeks who survived the destruction of Andrew Jackson, just to say hello (Coltelli 62). This may be taken as the instigator to write this poem. As such, the objective of the poem may be understood. Firstly, it identifies the persona of the poem

as someone of Creek origins, probably Harjo herself. Secondly, she once spoke about her process of writing and the dignity she feels regarding the line she descends from:

In the middle of working, the world gives way and I see the old, old Creek one who comes in here and watches over me. He tries to make a sense of this world in which his granddaughter has come to live. (Harjo, "Ordinary Spirit" 266)

The quotation shows that Harjo has never lost her link with the far past. On the contrary, the link is made by both the young generation (Harjo) and the old one (old Creek) who tries to fathom the place of the Native American in modern life (that of his granddaughter). Bearing in mind the conditions of the Natives and the injustice done them as described in the previous poem, one may see the impact of the described brutality that erased every trace of the Creeks, making her look for an "evidence." Besides, her taking the initiative of attempting to revive the past shows that she has abandoned the passive attitude of the Indians, which she described in her poem "I Give You Back." Her manipulation of the element of time by giving two layers of time -- present as indicated by the present tense "I look" and the past as in "other Creeks, remnants of voices" -- creates this link between the present and the past making it difficult to locate the present of the poem. For example, she says: "I see a blue horse caught frozen in stone," though the incident belongs to the past, yet she uses the present tense to refer to what she sees as if it were present before her. Such an overlapping of time enhances the choice of Harjo indicated in the previous poem, that is identifying herself with her Creek ancestors. As such, Harjo seems to be totally absorbed by the past that imposes itself upon her voluntarily.

Before the Whites came, the land enjoyed its own peace. After the Whites, civilization with its own turmoil overwhelmed the land and its people. The contrast shows the impact of civilization on the land and Harjo's strong nostalgia for a once-upon-a-time world. However, she does not mention their names as they were referred

to by the Creeks, but as they were called by the Whites. In this, she does the opposite to what Darwish does when he mentions the Arab names instead of newly-imposed Israeli names. This concept of place name is also different from that of Friel who thinks that original place names have their connotation in the memory of the people. By changing the old place names to that of the colonizer's, new realities would take the place of old historic ones. This may be a contradiction in Harjo's attempt to revive the memory of her people, for she was expected to mention the old place names. However, this may indicate that Harjo is not seeking to change preset realities, but rather to introduce new elements to them as to encompass both past and present. The difference is also because Harjo calls for respecting her culture and unique identity without denying what the Whites have done to this continent or call for liberating her country from the colonizer. On the other hand, Darwish and his people do not accept the Israeli invasion of their lands. The Palestinians are for their free homeland and original identity, indicated by the insistence on the old names of places as called by the original inhabitants of the land.

Harjo also resorts to supernatural powers when she looks for "remnants of voices" that she may hear or speak to. To her both worlds exist; the "mythical and the alive," which she feels in the same manner (Coltelli 136). They both act on her equally. So, if the voices of a past life may be found, this means that such a life is not completely lost, which is the leitmotif of the poem and its dominant theme. Then she introduces the element of the horse, "a blue horse caught frozen in stone." Harjo says that this horse was brought by "the Spanish on an endless ocean voyage (and) he became mad and crazy." Being captured in a small place and removed from its natural place to another, the Whites lost control over the horse that went crazy. The color "blue" of the horse is juxtaposed with the one of the "endless ocean." The first one is

the color of death and motionless while the other is the color of immense life and motion. The image shows the impact of attempting to capture a wild soul, that of the horse which turns into stone. This is an artificial horse against natural elements. The horse may stand for the Indians who were asked to leave their original place and settle in reservations. The order given the horse "don't speak" is similar to the one expected from the Indians, never to object, which is intensified by using the element of suspense: "I know it wasn't just a horse that went crazy." This is probably a reference to Crazy Horse, the Sioux leader who resisted the whites. However, it may be guessed from the rest of the poem. It may be DeSoto who did not find what he rode the ocean for. In this, the horse may be symbolic of the Indians in being captured in small places after enjoying the games. It also stands for the Spanish traveler whose dreams failed. Being descendant of the Creeks, Harjo knows more than she tells. This element of the omniscient narrator of the poem is intensified when she refers to the man "behind the counter [who] has no idea that he is inside magic stones." Again Harjo seems to know more than the Whites; such knowledge she inherited from her ancestors, whom she believes are "behind what [she does]," which again shows that both worlds exist for her (Coltelli 37-38). She manages to communicate with the spirits of the Creeks looming over the place as if they were alive telling her things of the past. The plural pronoun in "they destroy him" refers to these supernatural powers which man knows nothing about:

Harjo examines what constitutes historical truth, raises questions about western conceptions of time and space, and depicts her own complex status as a Native American poet who is a part of many different communities and is continually crossing various kinds of borders and boundaries -- both literal and figurative in her writing. (Andrews 2)

Harjo uses the word "memory" to refer to both things and to herself. She draws a line of continuity between the things around her that the old Creeks enjoyed and she herself as their granddaughter. This bears upon a previously mentioned point: the past never dies but runs through time in circles. The power of memory hidden in the atmosphere is always hindered by the intervention of the white man in the surroundings. Definitely, the shop is a white man invention, which the Natives knew nothing about; in it things taken from nature around are sold. The "red rocks" means nothing to the man except things to be sold, but to the natives they are "magic stones." The word "memory" is important for it is a variation on the nostalgic mood prevalent throughout the poem. The memory she speaks about is not an acquired one of the current civilization she lives in, but it is inherited from her ancestors as the image: "It swims deep in the blood." This again takes one to the image of fear being in her blood. Both are integral to her being for it is not something rational, but it "swims deep in blood," which means she cannot rid herself of them. They also act as a reminder of the inner conflict of someone who lives both worlds. She does not control her feet but she is sort of hypnotized that her feet are carried to these places. The "sun is behind thick and moist clouds" for the atmosphere is not totally clear. This pathetic fallacy is typical of someone who suffers inner conflict. Her soul is for the vanishing world and for this reason it is her "spirit that [comes] here to drink." She draws a map to where this memory runs: "It swims out of Oklahoma, deep the Mississippi River."

Then she follows a certain scheme in the following stanzas making the poem into one whole. In the first part she speaks about the voices, which is the answer to the "remnant of voices" she was looking for. These voices are buried in the "Mississippi mud" which means they are eternal as the river is. The voices are personified as

someone buried and becoming symbolic of her ancestors, "There are ancestors and future children," whose existence is interrelated. Harjo believes that memory:

Is not linear for it puts responsibility on one. Memory is not associated with past history, past events, past stories, but non-linear as in future and ongoing history events and stories. (Coltelli 61)

Future children have to bear the responsibility of being the descendents of the Creeks. They have to acknowledge the greatness in their culture and seek its knowledge to be able to forward it to the world. As such, the natives cannot ignore who they are, which is the first step towards gaining self-confidence and respectability.

In a very significant line, Harjo refers to the art of their storytelling: "There are stories here made of memory." Indians did not resort to writing to document their literature but it was all remembered and told out of memory. Hussein comments on a poem by Harjo entitled "Remember" that this word itself

emphasizes the . . . praxis of remembrance in ways which the poem itself becomes a call for waging a total war on the violent technologies of colonialism -- technologies characteristically deployed to destroy national and collective memory . . . Indeed colonialism . . . attempts to destroy indigenous people's myths, folklore, stories, tales, histories, sagas and languages. (Hussein 14)

Applying this quotation to the words "memory," "remember," and the variations of the theme of remembering, one can safely conclude that this has been her target in "New Orleans". She has celebrated the Natives' knowledge over that of the Whites. She has linked herself to the past and her ancestors taking pride in sharing them their memory. She believes in her ancestors' myths and folktales: "There are stories here made of memory."

Harjo takes DeSoto's historical story as an example revealing the power of the supernatural world in which the natives lived in harmony. However, she does not stick to the historical facts but she modifies them: "The Creeks knew it . . . and

drowned him . . . so that he wouldn't have to drown himself." This element of the Creeks knowing what the new comers do not know is very much like the element of Harjo knowing what the Whites do not know. She speaks about "DeSoto"²⁵ using the pronoun "I remember" as if she has met him herself. In this, she makes herself and her ancestors into one. This part reflects a feature of Indian literature as Lesley points out:

The enduring values in contemporary Native American literature [is] respect for the land and tribal elders, a sense of history and tradition, awareness of the powers inherent in storytelling, and a closeness to the spiritual world. (Lesley xviii.)

This is a postcolonial feature seen in much third world literature. The once colonized takes the initiative to speak about himself to reflect the complex reality ignored by the colonizer. As such Harjo does not only employ features of modern American literature, but she turns to the wide world inspired by whatever serves her aim.

DeSoto was not "drowned" by the Creeks, rather he was dead first and then his body sank to the river by his aide. Harjo claims that his "bones sunk like the golden treasure he traveled half the earth to find." Again, she knows something that the Whites do not know, the place of the gold. She refers to the colonial legacy that aimed at using the Natives for the sake of the Westerners, he was looking for gold "to dance on with silk ladies." Then she takes the tone of the know-all-person: "He should have stayed home" as if the warning came too late. She uses parentheses to highlight the importance of what she is going to say. The Creeks knew about him before his arrival; they knew his end before he came for he was "one of the ones." She gives a contrary image to what DeSoto thought; the Creeks lived in "earth towns not gold" and "spun children not gold." The repetition of the word gold shows the obsession DeSoto had and it explains his frustration in finding his dream a phony one. Again, the knowledge of the Creeks is contrasted to the ignorance of the new comers.

The reason of this supreme knowledge is not given but it may be a sign of their union with the surroundings to which the Whites are aliens.

Harjo had followed a scheme in writing this poem. She locates herself as a member of the Creeks who live in modern America. Throughout the poem, the conflict between the two worlds is more than clear. Her struggle to cling to her ancestor roots and knowledge is always hindered by the intervention of the modern world. Such may be the struggle of the Natives in America today, who know that they belong to a world that is no more. The struggle undergone by Harjo herself made her nostalgic about the past. The word "memory" for example is mentioned about three times in the poem. The choice of Mississippi is symbolic of the flow of memories and prepares the scene for the burial of DeSoto.

Harjo has also employed elements peculiar to the Indian world as her ancestors knew more than the new comers to make the

readers recall the importance of the Native American oral tradition. the storyteller in Indian tradition understands that he is dealing with something that is timeless. He has a sense of its projection into the past . . . unlimited kind of projection. I am speaking, i am telling a story, i am doing something that my father's father's father's father's father's father's father's did . . . [an] understanding of the past and of the continuity in the human voice is a real element in the oral tradition, and it goes forward in the same way. (Lesely xxv)

"For Alva Benson, and for Those Who Have Learned to Speak"

This poem is an example of what may be called "a cultural autobiography in which there is no central narrator or character whose time and life we follow through a series of adventures" (Highwater10). The heroine of the poem, who may be assumed as some one called "Alva," is a part of a cycle in the poem that starts with her mother and ends with her daughter. Her life is not the interest of the poem but rather what this life represents. So instead of having a domineering character, the reader is faced with a domineering theme; celebrating women's role in preserving the

Native Indian's culture as symbolized by Alva's. The poem thus becomes about women of Navajo origin in general and their role in keeping the legacy of their tribal language. This is clarified by the title "Who Have Learned to Speak" indicating that the poem emphasizes the role of speech in preserving culture. This may intensify the importance of the oral tradition in the Native Indian culture as explained in the introduction to this chapter. Speech is an important element in daily life for it is the essential means of expression.

This poem recalls another one entitled "Rainy Dawn" written on Harjo's daughter's thirteenth birthday. "Rainy Dawn" recalls the memory of the child's birth at the hospital; likewise, "Alva" is taken to be born in the hospital. The idea of birth bears on the form of the prose poem, a new form not known to the ancient Natives: "The moment of birth balances traditions against desires, for the ancestors present themselves spiritually" (Johnson 3).

Harjo assigns women an important role in this task excluding any male participation in it. Contrary to the previous two poems where the persona was not identified in terms of gender, the omniscient narrator makes it clear that it is about a girl. As one critic puts it:

In this poem Harjo begins by enunciating and enacting a dialectic of the land and language, suggesting that language emanates from the land and that to reclaim the land is to reclaim the language itself. . . . Harjo therefore explores -- as a mode of resistance to territorial colonialism and territorial capitalism -- what she herself calls "land-based" language in consonance with the Native perspective that the Navajo language remains profoundly linked to the earth or to the land in the very act of giving birth itself. (Hussein 11)

In the light of the above the "Alva Benson" poem may be regarded as a new form of resistance that has to do with learning the language of the colonized by drawing the attention of the collective conscious to the language of her ancestors. In turn, this would entitle the creation of a new cultural atmosphere in which the

Natives' culture would exist. Her aim here is similar to that of Friel when he draws the attention to the inherited myths and culture of his people that would be forgotten by the loss of their language. So instead of the norm that goes for learning the language of the powerful, Harjo advocates and endorses a new kind of learning. In this, she establishes the familiar link explored in "New Orleans" between the Natives and the natural surroundings. The link in this poem is drawn to mother earth, the source of all creations.

In the first stanza, the earth is personified as someone who speaks: "And the ground spoke when she was born." The "She" is probably Harjo herself who is of Navajo origin on her mother's side. The immediacy of the earth speaking as the girl was born is a sign of the intimate relation between them, especially because the mother "heard it." It seems that the sound of the ground is the first thing that the girl hears and that the mother approves of. In this, the younger generation, the newborn ones cannot fulfil the task expected from them if they are not guided or aided by the older generation. This may reflect the continuous relation of mother-earth and daughter-human relation in a cycle in which every newly born girl is included. Women giving birth are taken to be the symbol of life. Likewise, the earth, the source of every living thing, is the fundamental element behind the cycle of life. As mothers give advice to their daughters, the earth tells her secrets to her daughters. The answer to what the ground said was given by the mother and in the same language of the "Navajo" land. At this moment, the land is reborn as the child is born. For every born baby who learns to speak the native language means that this land has renewed its vitality and kept its identity. Andrews points out that "By writing in English Harjo reclaims the language and traditions of those who have historically oppressed Native Americans to fashion her own distinctive voice" (4). This may seem

contradictory, for how could Harjo advocate the importance of learning her own language at the same time that she uses the language of the oppressor! She considers English "very materialistic and . . . very subject oriented," it is the opposite of the tribal language "central [to which there is] . . . a more spiritual sense of the world" (Coltelli 24). However, Harjo does not isolate herself in a concept of the adequacy of her language to reflect her idea because this is not the case. Many Native Indians of Navajo origin do not know their original language and so they would not be able to understand her poetry if it were written in Navajo. The case is also applicable to the rest of the American nation. In this way by using the English language, Harjo has secured a large reading audience and thus can guarantee that her message will reach those it targets, those who do not know their tribal language. Though Harjo speaks about learning the tribal language, pointing out that

English is the language of the colonizer or the language of the 'enemy' . . . however, Harjo does not make a decisive move in the direction of abandoning English once and for all. She rather struggles to reinvent English in order to enact a challenging, interventionist Calibanesque language. Like Caliban of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Harjo seems to be saying that she has learned the language from the colonizer, but she knows how to talk back in that very language. (Hussein 7)

The labor changes from the "ground" to "the Indian Hospital in Gallup." However, the ground "still spoke under mortar and concrete" as a sign of resisting change. It may also reflect that the change that occurred to the life of the tribe is only superficial, for deep inside they inherited the traditions of their ancestors. As such the image of the know-more-than-the-White Indian seen in "New Orleans" is intensified. Instead of imposing their ways on the Natives, one of which is hospital labor, the link with nature is still going on even in the hospital. The attempt to silence the mother is symbolic of the attempt to replace the Navajo language with their own. However, the continuity of the ground speaking while the whites do not hear it symbolizes the

survival of this language due to the special bond that links its speakers to the land. As long as this land exists, which is eternal, the language will. Hussein believes that:

Harjo's image of the ground that continues to speak stages the return of the notion of the land-based language . . . Then this image suggests that land itself is language and that language in turn is the land. However, the land does not talk alone; the land alone is not language. The body talks too. This unrelenting speaking body . . . seems to suggest that the site of both labor and language is the body itself. (Hussein 13)

However, the secret bond between mother and the ground impels the ground to keep speaking to the girl at the time her mother was "muffled". The speech of the ground counters the effect of the language spoken in the hospital. This help, offered by the ground, is the direct cause behind the girl speaking both languages. In the second part of the poem, Harjo speaks about the process of growing up. The girl is now bilingual and bicultural like many of the Natives. However, she has been able to see the change that occurred to the world around her, for people started to ignore the speech of the ground. So it became the girl's task "to speak for the ground," this is now Harjo's task to speak of the value inherited in her inheritance.

The image following this part shows the ignorance of many people of the importance of having some one to speak for the earth. Her words are linked to water that nourishes the soul and gives it life. Even the voice is not hers but "it comes through her." Now it is full cycle, and another chain is added to it; a new baby girl is born to the now grown up woman, undergoing the same process of listening to the ground. The voice she hears is like water in its being essential for the continuity of life.

The last section of the poem stresses this idea of the cycle: the child that was born in the first stanza "hears names in her sleep, They change into other names, and into others . . . and Mt. St. Helens erupts as the harmonic motion of a child turning

inside her mother's belly waiting to be born to begin another time." It is an eternal movement of the earth and childbirth. A prophecy made by Harjo that as long as the ground remains it will give its legacy to every newborn girl. The poem ends with a universal truth that we "keep giving birth and watch ourselves die . . . and the ground goes on talking." Life is an eternal cycle that no one can stop or resist; the language of her tribe becomes linked to this circle.

The personality that evolves is that of one who is the outcome of two cultures like the persona in "New Orleans." Harjo asserts that life goes on stopping for no one. The Indians are left no choice if they want to keep their identity but to do as the girl did. They have to join the cycle of life to "go on, . . . giving birth and watch [themselves] die," and at the same time listen to the ground "beneath . . . goes on talking." The ground in this poem is the keeper of the collective memory. It is the one who is eternal and has the secrets of the stories that went on it. Memory becomes a part of the existence of the land itself. However, the process is not an involuntary one but it includes the awareness of the participants. The poem is a factor in such awareness. This is an optimistic poem: it gives hope for the future existence of the language and thus the culture of the Navajo tribe. Besides, the structure resembles Harjo's inner struggle between two worlds.

Women are empowered in this poem and given a fair portrayal of their importance in sharing in the cultural struggle of their nation: "Women such as . . . Harjo have challenged stereotypes of Indians as savages and illiterates and used their language in ways that tend to cross or transcend boundaries and borders, not reinforce them" (Ullested 13). Believing in her task, Harjo tries to share it with other women as well.

Harjo has used a certain technique in the three examined poems, that of the endless cycle. The poems show her preference of certain themes, symbols, and diction. She is aware of the conflict most Native Americans go through of trying to embrace the American civilization as well as sticking to their roots. She shows two different worlds coming into contact. The three poems under review have given the world a sense of what it means to be a Native American in a world that ignores the other. Though the poems of Harjo may seem less Indian than one expects them to be, yet this form of the prose poem is a brilliant choice for her. It is as Johnson believes "For whatever the relationship of prose poetry with Native American traditions -- to which most of her contemporary readers will have not been exposed -- the form's effects on the reader appear to be precisely supportive of Harjo's artistic philosophies" (6). The meaning intended by Harjo can never be grasped at once. The reader has to follow her line of thought and at times look for associations in her images. As such the reader cannot ignore that the history of the Native American is not what comes to be written about by the Whites. Rather, an important part of this history is missing; that is how this people reacted to the forces of history and how the present generations feel about the past. The poetry of Harjo incorporates her own native poetics by emphasizing the oral aspect. Her poetry seems to relate to North American speech patterns rather than the more formal written stylistics of lyrics.

Conclusion

In the end, every situation has at least two different points of view and the final judgement on a situation can never be a unanimous one. Most people accept the general trend sponsored by a mighty party. Currently, people are swept away by wrong concepts that mushroom and challenge truths and in many ways overpower them. Besides, one can never ignore the role played by the media, especially if it is biased towards a certain party in shaping realities and truths to be embraced by the public. As such, it becomes important to create a place for truth by providing counter argument and counter reality. Besides, history is often manipulated and twisted to meet one's end and often provides the context for conflicts without consideration for the value of human life. Therefore, it becomes important for a victimized party to understand the mechanisms of discourse. This can be achieved by knowing exactly what one's full rights are and how to convey them to the public by shaking the public's consciousness to start questioning the existing truths.

What is unique about these works is that the victim is now seen trying to speak out, which proves his full understanding of his dilemma. Darwish, Friel, and Harjo all pose the problem as a means of revealing it to the world. Darwish does not believe in miracles; miracles are created and not waited for. He is not against armed resistance but at the same time, this can never be fulfilled if the coming generations are swept by the winds of forgetfulness. Friel foretells the extinction of the culture of his people, and explains how it died out. The language used dictates the way we think and hence the way we behave. If such a culture, which is synonymous with the collective identity, is allowed the destiny of classical culture, the Irish nation and people are to be assimilated as British, a destiny Friel refuses to accept. On the other hand, Harjo is the only one among the three that allows and excuses this assimilation on the condition of keeping her ethnic identity as well.

Notes

Notes to Chapter One

- ¹ In 1982, an aborted assassination attempt on the life of the Israeli ambassador to London was taken as an excuse for the Israeli invasion to Lebanon. Israel shelled West Beirut to provoke a reaction of firing northern Israel and thus justify the invasion (Smith 378).
- ² In 1948, the historic land of Arab Palestine was lost to make the new Israeli state. The occupants of this land were made to flee it at the hands of Israeli armed gangs. Such gangs massacred the disarmed people. Whole villages were erased from the map such as the village of Deir Yassin. Rumors that Arab media encouraged the people to leave their homes on the promise of returning to it after few days, a promise never fulfilled because of defeat in the war, might have caused some to flee their homes. At the end, thousand hundreds were made into refugees who lost their homes and lands, others were hosted in camps in Lebanon, Jordan and other Arab states. They never returned and their right to go back is denied by Israel. Among these refugees is Darwish.
- ³ Prominent among Israeli allies was Bashir Gemayel, referred to more than once in the memoir. He was assassinated on 14/9/1982. His assassination gave excuses to his Maronites Sect aided by Israeli forces to kill Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps, most of the killed were women and children and not PLO members as the forces claimed (Smith 380-381).
- ⁴ The history of Zionism in Palestine is one of long chain of massacres. One of the means through which the Zionist state was established was through terrorizing the disarmed inhabitants and frightening them by massacres committed against the Palestinians. The latest of which is the one of Jenin Camp (2002).
- ⁵ One has to comment that Darwish is an Arab Israeli who made his choice a long time ago to defend his right to his homeland, Palestine. Darwish and his likes, though educated in Jewish schools and has grown up in an Israeli state, has inherited the collective memory of his forefathers which impels him to resist its loss. This brings to mind Kanafani's novel, *Coming Back To Haifa*. In the novel, the concept of homeland is discussed as a notion, so one may love it and die for it without even living on it. At the same time, one may grow in his own country but among different circumstances that make his sentiments morbid towards it. Homeland is a concept you inherit and then you come to cherish through time.
- ⁶ In October 1956, a curfew was announced by the Israeli forces at the village of Kafr Qasim as of 5.00 p.m., giving notice only thirty minutes before its being effective. Many were working outside the village and did not know about the curfew. Between five to six p.m. (one hour after the curfew) 49 Palestinians who were coming back from their fields were shot dead. (Kanafani 57).
- ⁷ Currently, many Palestinians vest themselves with bombs and explode themselves in Israeli crowds. Their mothers are proud of them for they sacrificed themselves for the sake of their country.
- ⁸ Five years after the departure from Beirut, the first Intifada, the Uprising, started in the occupied territories to stop only when the Oslo Agreement was signed in 1993.

Notes to Chapter Two

- ¹ Under the rule of Henry the Eighth, Ireland fell under the rule of the British who colonized it in the name of planting the island. Plantations spread everywhere and later came as a means to conquer the already existing Gaelic civilization.
- ² It included other well-known names such as: actor Stephen Rea, poets Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin, and academic Seamus Deane (*Culturevulture* 1).
- ³ A famous example is that of Bobby Sands who claimed the freedom of his country. He was sentenced to prison. After years of ill-treatment, he went on a hunger-strike that caused his death. In his diary, he often referred to "the desire for freedom, which [the British] won't break." This desire is still evident in the armed resistance in Northern Ireland. This desire is a common feature evident in both Darwish's and Friel's books.
- ⁴ English is among the prominent languages in many ex-British colonized countries, like India, Egypt, Pakistan, etc. The younger generations in these countries still feel the importance of learning it as a means of partaking in the elite.

Notes to Chapter Three

- ¹ The cartoon "Pocahontas" is a very famous example of how the Native Indian has always been portrayed. The bad Native who was considered an enemy is the one who refused to accept the colonization of his homeland. On the other hand, the good Native is the one who acknowledged the importance of having the white man among the Natives to make up for the missed train of civilization. Such an image inherited through the ages has deprived people from even questioning the ethics of the white man's behavior in the new found world. The image was inverted and resistance was considered riots.
- ² History has taught one that persistence and conviction can do miracles. No body could ever imagine that the black man would ever be recognized as an equal human being in racist USA, but thanks to the civil rights movement, African-Americans occupy now prominent positions in academia and government.
- ³ The new-found continent was considered by the Europeans as Man's last chance on earth. After polluting the old world with disease and sins, America was considered the new paradise in which Man can make up for all the wrongs he committed. Ironically, all the dreams the white man dreamed were fulfilled at the expense of the original inhabitants of the land.

4 Conrad's novel *Heart Of Darkness* unveils the deterioration of the alleged idealism of the white man in Africa.

5 The real story of DeSoto goes as follows:

The king of Spain named DeSoto governor of Cuba and Florida . . . a meaningless title unless DeSoto could colonize part of the largely unknown land of Florida. He had authority to explore and conquer it for Spain. He expected it to be rich in gold and other minerals . . . he became the first European to see the Mississippi River . . . [he] made enemies of the indigenous people by seizing grain, burning villages, and enslaving villagers . . . DeSoto died of a fever. His aide . . . sank DeSoto's body in the river to keep his death a secret. [He] did not want the local people to find out that DeSoto was not immortal, as he had claimed to be . . . They had found no gold or treasure except a chest of poor-quality pearls, and even that they lost. (*DeSoto* 1-3)

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