



Arab American University – Palestine

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Writing Back Against Erasure in Harb's *Remains* and

Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks*

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this research is authentic, and it is my own work and is not extracted from any published work. I confirm that this research has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification. I also bear all legal consequences and the university has the right to take the necessary and consequential actions.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my parents whom without I wouldn't be the person I am today. I also dedicate this dissertation to my teacher Dr. Odeh Odeh who has been always the reason behind my passion for literature.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. GENERAL BACKGROUND	1
1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	4
1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	7
1.5. QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY	7
1.6. METHODOLOGY	8
1.7. RESEARCH TOOLS	8
1.8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	8
1.9. THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY	9
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
2.2. RELATED LITERATURE.....	14
2.2.1. <i>Colonization by the Name of Civilization</i>	14
2.2.2. <i>Attempts to Erase Palestine and to Build Israel</i>	15
2.2.3. <i>Memory and Re-shaping History</i>	17
2.2.4. <i>The Role of the Palestinian Collective Memory</i>	19
2.2.5. <i>Writing Back Against Erasure</i>	22
CHAPTER 3 ANALYSIS.....	25
3.1. ERASING THE PALESTINIAN MEMORY FROM SPACE AND HISTORY	25
3.1.1. <i>The Memory of Space and Landscape</i>	26
3.1.2. <i>The Memory of the Lost Home</i>	32
3.1.3. <i>The Memory of Martyrs</i>	34
3.1.4. <i>The Memory of Destruction</i>	36

3.2.	WRITING BACK AGAINST ERASURE	38
3.3.	PRESERVING MEMORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.....	43
3.4.	REACHING THE WESTERN AUDIENCE AND SCHOLARS	49
	CONCLUSION	52
	REFERENCES.....	55

Abstract

By drawing on recent contributions to post-colonial and memory studies, this study examines narratives by two Palestinian authors, Ahmad Harb and Raja Shehadeh. It aims to show how both texts document the attempts of the Israeli colonialism to erase and alienate the existence of Palestinian people from the physical space and memory. It also highlights how each writer relies on collective memory to write back against this erasure. The study shows the importance of preserving and transmitting the Palestinian memory from one generation to another. Finally, it emphasizes the potentials of the two texts and their ability to reach the Western audience. Harb and Shehadeh have succeeded in employing memory as a tool of fighting against erasure and maintaining the Palestinian historical presence. This emphasis on memory in Palestinian writing is meant to counter the attempts of the Israeli settler-colonialism to erase the memory of the place and time from the minds of the Palestinian people to, easily, dominate the land.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. General Background

“Perhaps the greatest battle Palestinians have waged as a people has been over the right to a remembered presence, and with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality.” (Said, 1999:12)

The relationship between the Palestinian people and their land is sacred, despite the religious and cultural variations. The concept of belonging to the land is what distinguishes them as 'Palestinians'. They lived and propagated naturally on that land which maintained their identity. In the introduction to his book *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said clarifies that the orientalist ideology has often been used as a justification for the role that Europe played in its colonization of Palestine. Before the British Mandate of Palestine, Balfour justified occupying

Egypt by the means of knowledge and power. Said explains that "Balfour nowhere denies British superiority and Egyptian inferiority; he takes them for granted as he describes the consequences of knowledge." (Said, 1978: 40) Balfour believed that white Europeans are privileged by being 'more rational', 'more logical', and 'more knowledgeable' than Oriental people. Speaking of orientalist's travels to the Middle East, Qabaha argues that Shehadeh through his book *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape* writes a counter-narrative to the western claims, which underpin their travelogues, that Palestinian land is desolate and its people are not civilized. Qabaha explains that "While Palestinians were underestimated and their culture and traditions undermined – foreign occupation looks to be the very basis of civilization." (Qabaha, 2019: 8) Thus, the Palestinian culture was measured through the scale of European civilization. The absence of complicated systems that 'organize' and 'prove' their ownership of the land, made it easier for Europe to legalize establishing a 'National Jewish Homeland' in Palestine. And that was on the top of the Zionist's strategic priorities. This illegal legalization of the 'Jewish Homeland' over the land of Palestine was also accompanied by religious eligibility. Zionism took the re-establishment and the protection of the 'Jewish State' upon itself that served both nationalism and religion. During that time Palestinian society contained Muslim, Christian, and Jewish people; they lived all in harmony as one single people. Balfour's Declaration that promised to establish a 'national homeland' for Jewish people in Palestine is by no means an outcome of an orientalist ideology. Said referred to that saying:

Thus, in another context, Balfour could regard the native inhabitants of Palestine as having priority on the land, but nowhere near the subsequent authority to keep it; the mere wishes of 700,000 Arabs, he said, were of no moment compared to the destiny of an essentially European colonial movement. (Said, 1979: 251)

The population of Palestinian inhabitants at that time was never taken into consideration. Said, who is a Palestinian-American writer, situates the Palestinian cause at the heart of his oeuvre. For him, both Britain and America treated the Palestinian and the Israeli communities differently. (Said, 2000: 192) British people granted a land they do not own to the Zionist community, while the US-supported the Israeli laws that deprived Palestinian people of maintaining their ownership of the land. Oslo agreement was one of the most distinguished 'peace' attempts that the US-supported. It brought the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) with it and it was given limited control of some parts of the West Bank and Gaza, whereas issues like sovereignty, the Palestinian refugees, and Jerusalem were not discussed or included. After Oslo, the Palestinian people were divided into 4 parts: the first stayed in what is now Israel, the second in the West Bank, the third in Gaza and the fourth in the diaspora. This division destroyed the Palestinian unity. (Fox and Qabaha, 2021: 15) So, Oslo Accords were not taken as peace negotiations by contemporary Palestinian writers such as Said. As Abu-Manneh argues, "The last quarter of a century in Palestinian history will be remembered in a manner closer to how it is articulated by contemporary Palestinian writers and poets: as an attack on Palestinian life and limb; a negation by force of ordinary existence." (Fox and Qabaha, 2021: 1) Many Palestinian writers followed in Said's footsteps; they have authored counter-narratives against Israeli settler-colonialism and its attempts of erasing Palestine. The two works examined in this study belong to different genres, since *Remains* is a novel, and *Palestinian Walks* is an autobiography whereas both of them are parts of the Palestinian collective memory. Both texts introduce imaginative but nationalist historiography of Palestine. They document a story of a country that was replaced by another. These counter-narratives, regardless of their genre, would not be effective without addressing memory and without analyzing history. That is because sustaining memory is substantial to maintain the Palestinian existence over space and time. Furthermore, both Shehadeh and Harb use the

autobiographical memory system which is used by writers and historians to refer to the person's lifetime memories and life experiences. While Harb, in *Remains*, reflects his experience of the Intifada, Shehadeh records his memories in the transformed Ramallah hills. These memories "are time capsules, records of an unrepeatable past." (Robinson, 1988: 19) Said argues that memory studies, over the past decade, has started to include such "increasingly prevalent forms of writing as personal memoirs and autobiography, which nearly every fiction writer of note has attempted, to say nothing of the outpourings of academics, scientists, public figures, and so forth." (Said, 2000: 175) Memory is embedded in academic, autobiographical, and fictional narratives that form the Palestinian meta-narrative. In any case, memory/ collective memory does not lose its vitality in shaping the Palestinian national identity. This study examines how memory is used in the two books *Remains* and *Palestinian Walks* to criticize the Israeli settler-colonialism and to establish a counter-narrative against colonialist narratives. *Remains* is a modern Palestinian novel that was written in 1997. It connects between the past and the present of the Palestinian experience. This novel is one of three books within a trilogy written by Ahmad Harb, who is a Palestinian writer and professor at Birzeit University. It was originally written in Arabic and later translated into English. Harb, in his novel, addresses the historical, cultural, sociological, and political aspects of Palestinian life and he highlights the impact of the Israeli settler-colonialism on it. As for *Palestinian Walks*, it was written by Raja Shehdaeh in 2008. In his book Shehadeh explains the dramatic transformation of the Palestinian landscape. He describes the land before and after the change through his walks in Ramallah hills. Both writers come from Ramallah and experienced similar circumstances but reflected them differently. Although the two narratives were written in different time periods, both of them reflect a detailed post-war experience.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In 1948, the 'National Jewish Homeland' was called 'The State of Israel'. Starting from the British Mandate, passing by Balfour's declaration of establishing a 'Jewish National Homeland' in Palestine, and reaching the creation of the 'State of Israel', the real aim has been always to dominate and to colonize by the means of power. And that would not have happened if it were allowed for the Palestinian people to maintain their historical presence. Therefore, a whole people should have been removed from the way. Since then, Palestinian people have been facing all kinds of ethnic erasure. Starting from Al-Nakba, in 1948, and even before, Palestinian people have been abused, controlled, dominated, displaced, uprooted, imprisoned, and even killed. The Zionists and the Israeli military took six months to complete their plan to dominate the Palestinian land. Over half of Palestine's native population, more than 750,000 people, had been displaced, 531 villages had been demolished, and 11 urban neighborhoods had been evacuated. The plan mirrors what is known as an ethnic cleansing operation. (Pappé, 2014: 7) The frames and strategies differ, but the aim is one, which is to erase the historical and the physical existence of the Palestinian people, so the 'Israeli narrative' would appear as the ultimate truth. However, the question here is not only about who has the right to narrate; it is also about which narrative is the dominant and which narrative is believed. It is all about power. The more powerful the nation, the more articulate it is. Israeli settler-colonialism is not a mere occupation; nor a two-state conflict over a piece of land as many historians and lawyers claim, like Benny Morris, Alan Dershowitz, and others. Not only they defend Israel's crimes, but they also do not accept counterarguments. Morris, for example, described Pappé as "one of the world's sloppiest historians" (Morris, 2011) for his opinion on Zionism. Israeli settler-colonialism is a structural system that was created to erase the historical existence of Palestine, uproot its people, and take over the land. Not to mention that erasure means to weaken the memory of the place which leads to forgetfulness, detachment, and loss. Consequently, the debility of memory will adversely affect the national identity.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study analyzes *Remains* and *Palestinian Walks* to figure out the significant role memory plays in fighting against erasure and defending the Palestinian existence. Zionists attest to a biblical claim that entitles them to a land granted to them by God. Their Biblical claims are of little value to the scientific and empirical realities of the present. However, their persecution in modern history by the Europeans led to their Diaspora in which they utilized the memory of displacement in gaining the sympathy of the people who persecuted them. Jewish people utilized memory to enlist support from their people and the rest of the world. Palestinian people found themselves helpless in defending their rights against the hegemony and the arrogance of the imperial powers. In their struggle against the obliteration of the memory of their land and the attempts to compromise their rights and identity, Palestinian people are invited to preserve, revive and disseminate the memory of their land so that the struggle continues. Shehadeh and Harb are two examples of Palestinian writers whose works in preserving the memory of Palestinian people are exemplary. The significance of this discussion comes from the necessity of sustaining the Palestinian identity and narrative. Furthermore, bringing what has passed back to the present is important to create a better understanding of complicated situations such as the Palestinian cause. Everything has a starting point and all the changing events were born as ideas that were applied later. Creating a Jewish state was a Zionist idea that now has become a reality that has always been based on uprooting the native people of Palestine. The 1948 war is a non-ending situation. One of the major consequences of this situation is the gap of knowledge in the mind of the new Palestinian generations due to the suppression of their history and national identity. The Israelis are trying to weaken the Palestinian narrative to make Palestinians lose their historical relationship with the land. Therefore, it is a must to recreate a strong Palestinian narrative and pass it from one generation to another. Tahrir Hamdi (2011) argues that Palestinian writers and artists like Ghassan

Kanafani, Naji Al-Ali, and Mahmoud Darwish use the concept of bearing witness not only as a means of documenting a past tragedy but also to create other complex strategies including "interrogating the past, recreating it and, most importantly, forging resistance against the assassination of liberation itself." (Hamdi, 2011: 1) The Palestinian literary narrative reflects a major part of the Palestinian meta-narrative. It also documents the harsh experience that the Palestinian people have passed through. In addition to that, it writes back against the intentional erasure that is practiced by the Israeli settler-colonialism against Palestine.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

In this study, the two texts are analyzed to show how each text contributes to conveying the Palestinians' experience of being uprooted from their land and estranged from their home. This thesis investigates how these books attempt to unveil the attempts of Israel-settler colonial practices to erase and alienate the existence of Palestinian people from their physical space and memory. The two texts criticize these practices intercommunally. Through their writings, they reconstruct the Palestinian existence and identity. Each of them tries to document and preserve the memory before the 1948 and 1967 wars to recreate Palestine and redefine what is called a 'homeland'. The two works also actively utilize a Palestinian public reaction to resist and revolt against this erasure. Said's, Halbwachs's, and Ricoeur's theories on memory/ collective memory and post-colonial studies are applied to anatomize the two texts, to discuss how Harb and Shehadeh use the memory of place and time to trace this ethnic erasure. And that is to write back against it and to reclaim Palestine's right of existence in the physical space and memory.

1.5. Questions of the Study

This thesis tries to answer these questions: In what ways do the books under study reflect the strategies and the laws that the Israeli settler-colonial system has implemented to eliminate

the historical and the physical existence of the Palestinian people? How do *Palestinian Walks* and *Remains* utilize memory as a means of resistance against this elimination? Why, according to the authors, is it important to have a consistent, transgenerational Palestinian narrative?

1.6. Methodology

In order to answer these questions, this qualitative study takes descriptive and analytical approaches to analyze the texts in the light of memory and -disciplinary speaking- post-colonial theories. First, it will describe the style and the attitude that Harb and Shehadeh use to compose their narratives. Afterward, it will examine how the two Palestinian texts *Remains* and *Palestinian Walks* use the concept of memory to show erasure and fight against it. Textual examples are going to be extracted from each work to show how they illustrate the claims of the established theoretical framework. Furthermore, the discussion will include a few examples from other secondary, literary, and autobiographical works that resemble the two main texts to support the basic claim.

1.7. Research Tools

This discussion is rooted in the field of literature. It includes two Palestinian narratives *Remains* (1997) written by Ahmad Harb and *Palestinian Walks* (2008) written by Raja Shehadeh. Since the content of the study comes from literary narratives, the only tools that are going to be used are Said's notions of memory, space and place, Halbwachs' theory on collective memory and Ricoeur's theory of *rémemoration*.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

This study has a few limitations. First of all, memory studies are now a multidisciplinary field that is still evolving. So, using memory as a theory leads to place the

discussion within various frames. (Roediger and Wertsch, 2008: 1) Memory can be taken from different angles. For this research, the concentration is on the political and anthropological part of memory studies. Lastly, it is not a gender-focused study.

1.9. The Scope of the Study

In addition to the introduction in chapter 1, the theoretical framework, and the literature review in chapter 2, this research will also include a third chapter and a conclusion. Chapter 3 addresses how each text presents the Israeli strategies of erasing and uprooting Palestinian people physically and historically from space and memory. It will also discuss in which ways Palestinian memory contributes to the reconstruction of the historical past of Palestine. Moreover, this study shows how each writer depends on the memory to write back against the erasure and to maintain the legitimate existence of Palestinian people on their land.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Memory study is a multidisciplinary field. It interferes with various areas of study like sociology, history, psychology, anthropology, and literature. This study takes the collective memory from an anthropological angle that is presented in literary texts. Maurice Halbwachs is the sociologist who introduced the theory of collective memory. Halbwachs perceived history as "a dead memory, a way of preserving pasts to which we no longer have an 'organic' experiential relation" (Olick and Robbins, 2004: 110) So, "Collective memory is not history", but it is a way to preserve the history of a nation. (Kansteiner, 2002: 180) The core of this research is to show how the Palestinian collective memory is used as a tool to save Palestinian history from being completely wiped out.

Edward Said, in his article "Invention, Memory, and Place", says that memory and its representations are significant to the questions of identity, nationalism, power, and authority. He does that by using the Palestinian issue as a concrete example. He goes on with the notion that "Israelis and Palestinians are now so intertwined through history, geography, and political actuality." (Said, 2000: 191) The problem lies in the "American-sponsored" Oslo Peace Accord that differentiates between the two communities making them unequal. According to Said, most Israelis refuse to recognize that Israel is built on the destruction of the Palestinians, and for them, the exodus of 1948 continues to the present. "Yet there can be no possible reconciliation, no possible solution unless these two communities confront each's experience in the light of the other." (Said, 2000: 192)

Halbwachs explains that "the individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory. In other words, the various groups that compose society are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past." (Halbwachs, 1992: 46) He adds that "the mind reconstructs its memories under the pressure of society" (Halbwachs, 1992: 51) The reality of the alienated Palestinian society and the consequences of the Israeli settler-colonialism push intellectuals such as Harb and Shehadeh to reconstruct the memories of the pre-1948 period and after, until the 1967 and the results of each. The two writers rely on memory to recover what has been erased. While Harb concentrates more on historical events and culture, Shehadeh focuses on the physical spaces. However, they both place their narratives within a social, historical framework. The individual's memory cannot be detached from its surroundings. Therefore, it contributes to the collective memory which is considered more articulated. According to Halbwachs, collective memory is a reconstruction of the past depending on the present. And this process of reconstructing relies on the collective memory of the nation. (Halbwachs, 1992: 34) Shehadeh in his memorial work *Palestinian Walks* writes

about 7 Palestinian walks (*Sarha*) in Ramallah hills. Through his book, he relies on his memory to walk through a vanishing landscape where he used to live. In his specific words:

As I stood in the ruins of one of my favorite places in the valley, this valley near where I was born and have always lived, I felt the hills were not mine anymore. I am no longer free to come and walk. They have become a dangerous place where I do not feel safe." (Shehadeh, 2008: 157)

Yet in his introduction, Shehadeh discusses the Western travel writings, in which Palestine was described as an ugly land and he tries to show the connection between the Westerns' oriental thought and the creation of the Israeli settler-colonialism. He argues that the earlier facilitated the latter. In *Palestinian Walks*, Shehadeh keeps returning to what he has heard from his family members about the land and he gives the reader an imaginative representation of the events and the vanishing landscape. Mourid Barghouti, similarly, in his book *I Saw Ramallah*, describes his experience of going back to his homeland and the gap that emerged between his memories of Ramallah and the current Ramallah. He says:

I tried to put the displacement between parenthesis, to put a last period in a long sentence of the sadness of history, personal and public history. But I see nothing except commas. I want to sew the times together. I want to attach one moment to another, to attach childhood to age, to attach the present to the absent and all the presents to all absences, attach exiles to the homeland and to attach what I have imagined to what I see now. (Barghouti, 2005: 163)

These words explain the inevitable effect of the displacement on the lives of the Palestinian people. They do not have a continuum record of their memories. Leaving Palestine as a child and living in different places cause dispersion in the person's timeline.

As for *Remains*, it is a modern novel that reflects the bitter reality that the Palestinians experienced before and after the first intifada.¹ The plot circles around Waheed, the main character, who is a conscientious Palestinian lecturer. He is always pulled back to his past by his mother's *Kinf*². Harb introduces a distinctive image of the Palestinians suffering under the Israeli settler-colonialism. This reflected experience is all based on the memory of Waheed. Harb, through Waheed, reconstructs the time and the place before and after the first intifada to reclaim the agency of the Palestinian people over their land. Waheed recalls memorial events that happened before and after Al-Nakba, as well, by referring to his family members and friends and what has happened to each. Furthermore, each character in the novel is given a chance by the writer to narrate his/ her own story which gives the reader a complete image of the Palestinian experience. The memory here is the vehicle that carries the reader to the past historical events.

The reality of any society is attached to its past and the experiences that it went through. However, the past is not a recoverable phase, therefore the narratives of memory play a crucial role in the construction of the 'imaginative geographies' that are more than a material space (Gregory, 1994 as cited in Schindel and Colombo, 2014: 7). Recovering a vanishing landscape cannot occur without a recreated, imaginative space that is transmitted via the narratives of memory. Halbwachs explains that there are certain places of memories, in which certain rituals or events happened. These places are real in the past and present; therefore, they imply a sense of sacredness to the social or religious groups. (Halbwachs, 1992: 202) What if these places

¹The Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation

²A colored sack, hand-woven from sheep wool and is usually offered as a wedding present by a mother/ father to a son/ daughter. (According to the novel)

are no longer the same? Here comes the significance of memory to recreate the historical, social, and national identity of these groups. And the role of memory is not restricted to that. Recalling the past can always lead to justice. Paul Ricoeur, in his book, *Memory, History, Forgetting* explains that as memory can be abused and manipulated, it also can be exercised as a leading project towards a future justice. He says, “extracting the exemplary value from traumatic memories, it is justice what turns memory into a project; it is this same project of justice that gives the form of the future and of the imperative to the duty of memory.” (Ricoeur, 2004: 88) According to the theorist, memory can maintain the feeling of obligation to others, especially to the victims of wounded memories. They, as he assures, deserve moral priority. Memory raises a high sense of social bond that shall be transmitted from one generation to another. (Ricoeur, 2004: 439) As Halbwachs confirms, collective memory is usually restored to track the social process and to preserve the past and present in the collective consciousness of later generations. (Halbwachs, 1992: 3) Halbwachs in his book *On Collective Memory* focuses on the Christian society, but this research relies on his basic, theoretical thoughts on collective memory to support my discussion. It also illustrates how the two authors preserve memory for the coming generations. The term ‘postmemory’ will be used to show how Palestinian people are influenced by their traumatic past. Marianne Hirsch (2012) explains that:

"Postmemory" describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before-to experiences they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right.

The new Palestinian generations did not witness Al-Nakba but the trauma was passed to them through the stories of their ancestors. This made them overwhelmed by

inherited memories to be dominated by narratives that preceded their birth. These inherited memories and traumas will also affect their behavior. (Hirsch, 1993: 5)

2.2. Related Literature

2.2.1. Colonization by the Name of Civilization

According to Edward Said, the Palestinian loss and the establishment of Israel is a strategy that follows the concept of imaginative geographies. What has happened was a European style of reconstructing the land depending on what is familiar and what is not, which is a pure colonial strategy that carries within it cultural and ideological changes. (Said, 1994:54) Israel claims that they have restored their historical creation upon the land that their great grandparents had left, but the truth is that many civilizations claimed the land afterward and the problem is that they dealt with the land of Palestine as a total empty desert. So, what they have done is that they replaced the ancient history of Palestine with a “fabricated image of ancient Israel” and they applied that image to the physical space. (Said, 2000:186) When Israel took over the land of Palestine, they claimed that it was a ‘deserted wasteland’ and they have changed it to a ‘natural heaven’, which is colonization by the name of civilization. Ilan Pappé who is an Israeli historian, in his book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* explains how Israel has cemented its narrative. He argues that the most important part of the ethnic cleansing policy is re-shaping, re-creating, and re-writing the history of the targeted country. Israel has erased many Palestinian villages and they did not stop there; they also aimed to erase them from memory. So, they recreated parks and natural resorts, like the Canada Park which was built on the ruins of the city of Emwas that the Israeli bulldozers leveled after the 1967 war. This exercise of planting over the destroyed is the base of the ethnic cleansing process that is, in the Israeli-Palestinian case, followed by a replacement.

Ahmad Qabaha (2019) argues that Shehadeh writes back against the European and US travel writing who made it easier for the Israeli settler-colonial system to take over the land of Palestine. Qabaha focuses on the idea of the vanishing landscape that Shehadeh expresses in his book. He deals with *Palestinian Walks* as a counter-argument between the hegemony of the colonizers and the real history and geography of Palestine. Qabaha perceives the author's text as a "witness to the dispossession and loss of the (home)land which lay at the root of the bitter tragedy that has blighted all Palestinian lives" (2019: 11) Qabaha explains:

Shehadeh criticizes the politicization of Palestinian landscape by settler-colonial narratives. While Israeli settler-colonialism claimed it had modernized the Palestinian landscape and made it inhabitable, Shehadeh argues it is instead a destruction of the landscape. For Shehadeh, the *wadi* was truly natural before the intervention of Israeli settler colonialism. (2019:10)

Shehadeh shows how the Israeli settler-colonial forces destroyed the naturalness of the Palestinian land to impose their settlements and laws on it.

2.2.2. Attempts to Erase Palestine and to Build Israel

According to Pappé, "the most formative event in the modern history of the land of Palestine, has been almost entirely eradicated from the collective global memory and erased from the world's conscience." (Pappé, 2014: 8) The Zionist agendas have been always trying to erase the trace of Palestine from landscape and memory, and that is to establish the roots of Jewish identity and memory. They have created a tree-planting symbol and implanted it on the land of Palestine. The aim of this process was not only to eliminate the traces of Palestine but to replace it with a Jewish creation. The tree that its roots hit deep in the ground symbolizes the "people's social and cultural roots". This so-called "ecological" policy meant to "uproot one people in order to plant another". These strategies affected the landscape in two ways:

“destroying the Palestinian farmland, and the reinforcing of Israeli land. Israelis were able to sanctify their ownership of the land by dominating space and claiming that “only they could make the desert bloom”. (Pirinoli, 2005: 13) The Jewish movements around the world, especially the Zionists invested their money and efforts to fulfill this goal. “All the National Jewish Fund literature depicts Zionists as the legitimate owners of the land, in contrast to inhabitants who were present only temporarily, neglected the land, and caused its desertification.” (Pirinoli, 2005: 61)

Walter Lehne is a Canadian scholar who went to the West Bank and stayed there on an invitation to teach at An-Najah National University. Then he goes to Jerusalem and he documents his sojourn there. In his article, he writes about the erasure of the Palestinian landscape. Lehne specifically describes the destruction of the Palestinian city of Emwas where the Canadian Park took its place. He says that next to the new, Israeli-European facilities there are traces that emphasize a Palestinian pre-existence like old trees, a cactus, a well, and stones with Arabic scripts on them. He meets a person named Ali, an inhabitant of Emwas. Lehne narrates:

Ali told of how the Israeli troops on June 6, 1967, took the village and the surrounding area in the so-called Latrun bulge, that all the inhabitants had been ordered out of their homes - with no time or opportunity to remove anything from them - and that explosive charges were then laid and the village destroyed. There are reports, he said, of some elderly and ill people refusing to leave; the house was simply dynamited with them inside. (Lehne, 1980:15)

Lehne then realizes that this transformation of the place costed the Palestinian people their lands, homes, and even their lives. He finally declares that after this all, he felt ashamed of being Canadian, simply, because he recognized that the Canadian donation was a tool of destruction in the hand of the Israeli people. He then wonders if the stone is “a silent witness

to the fact that the site of the park was that of a Palestinian village totally destroyed beginning on June 6, 1967.” (Lehne, 1980: 14-15)

As the Palestinian space has changed, the Palestinian narrative was also manipulated and reshaped by Zionists. “After 1967, when the whole of Palestine was occupied by Israel, it became *de rigueur* to replace the historical term Palestine with the nationalist and expansionist Hebrew phrase *Eretz Israel*.” This term connected between the Jewish, biblical roots of the land and the current colonial occupation. (Bresheeth, 2007:161) There are even certain places that were not included in the Israeli-UN plans, yet they have been destroyed and bombed. Moreover, the Israeli forces and many other Zionist gangs threatened and, psychologically, terrorized Palestinian people to leave their homes. (Abu-Lughod, 2007:89) During the two wars 1948 and 1967, the erasure was not only confined to the geographical spaces but also many Palestinian people were massacred by the Israeli forces. *Deir Yassin's* massacre is one tragedy of many in 1948. People then were terrified and were not allowed to move from one place to another. They met death face to face. So, they chose to remain silent to sustain their dignity after being defeated. After being the original inhabitants of the land, they have become a minority in ‘the land of Israel’. These dreadful events were suppressed as memories in their heads and they make it impossible for Israel to deny its violence against Palestinian people. (Esmeir, 2007:243) By the end of the 1948 war, Israel claimed the land of Palestine as a Jewish homeland they ‘deserve’ after a “2000-years-old diaspora”. And they want for Palestinians to ignore being erased and displaced. Mahmoud Darwish concludes the question of erasing the Palestinian people in his poem “In Jerusalem” in which he says:

Then what? A woman soldier shouted:

Is that you again? Didn't I kill you?

I said: You killed me ... and I forgot, like you, to die. (Darwish, 2008)

2.2.3. Memory and Re-shaping History

In highlighting the importance of memory, Edward Said says: “Memory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority.” (Said, 2000:176) Shehadeh does not only rely on the landscape to reconstruct the history of the place but also on his memories in that place; so, does Harb in his novel *Remains*. It is worth mentioning that to recall a memory, one has to remember the geographical place where the event happened. It is also important to mention that maintaining the sense of location and the landscape maintains the memory and gives it its validity. However, an idealized, imaginative landscape accompanied with religious relativity might also indicate how geography can be “manipulated, invented, characterized quite apart from a site's merely physical reality.” (Said, 2000: 180) Basically, both authors reflect the Palestinian experience as a collective memory, which “is a collective phenomenon but only manifests itself in the actions and statements of individuals... It often privileges the interests of the contemporary” (Kansteiner, 2002: 180) Since this phenomenon is manifested in statements within certain narratives, the writer has to be selective when extracting the historical events that are addressed by him or her.

Harb and Shehadeh, provide a materialist conception of history through their works. They offer a new reading of the Palestinian history that counters the Israeli one. Israel is ignoring the fact that their ‘state’ was built upon the destruction, killing, and erasure of the ‘other’. They replaced the Palestinian memory with the memory of their creation. The historical pre-existence of Palestine is denied, which means that they are trying to detach the past from the present. Oppositely, Harb and Shehadeh break down the structure of the Israeli colonial system to bring out the Israeli strategies of erasing Palestine from space and memory. At the same time, both of them use their memories to create a Palestinian, materialist, historical narrative that connects between the present and the past. Walter Benjamin in his *Thesis on the Philosophy of History* illustrates that:

A historical materialist cannot do without the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time stands still and has come to a stop. For this notion defines the present in which he himself is writing history. Historicism gives the "eternal" image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past. The historical materialist leaves it to others to be drained by the whore called "Once upon a time" in historicism's bordello. He remains in control of his powers, man enough to blast open the continuum of history. (Benjamin, 1969: 262)

Harb and Shehadeh do not bring past to present through their memories arbitrarily. They are completely aware of the significant connection between them. Without digesting the past comprehending the present would be difficult and changing the future might also be unreachable. Following Benjamin's notion, both writers are brushing history "against the grain" towards creating a better understanding of the Israeli settler-colonial plan to reshape the Palestinian historical identity. (Benjamin, 1969: 257)

2.2.4. The Role of the Palestinian Collective Memory

There is an established historical past behind the contemporary image of Palestine. It is important to note here that this act of replacement indicates that the Israeli occupation over Palestine is not just an occupation; it is an advanced form of colonialism. Barbara Harlow who agrees with that, quotes in her book *Resistance Literature* (1987: 18) Franz Fanon:

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today. (Fanon 1963 :210-11)

A Palestinian writer cannot address the reality of Palestine without going back in history and bringing out the empirical colonial practices and the major events that happened before. After 1948, the Palestinian space was completely restructured to fulfill two objectives: “territorial control, and the obliteration of all places representing the region’s Arab history. With the land now wiped clear, a new identity could be planted.” (Pirinoli, 2005: 75) Since then Palestinians have faced practices of uprooting, expelling, alienating and erasing. The unfolding track of persistence on dispossession, and traumas exercised by the Israeli state were to reshape the “space of the collective narrative over time.” (Jayyusi, 2007: 107) The experience of dispossession, negations, and erasure allowed Palestinians to relate and reconnect into a living narrative, that continues to connect the past with the present. “Palestinian memory and its narratives, then, have to be located relationally in this unfolding context where the cumulativeness of the experiences which re-present the intent, vision, objective, and valency of the original one, come to be reconnected to it.” (Jayyusi, 2007: 108) Nur Masalha writes “Collective memory and commemoration have played an important role in counter-hegemonic discourses, cultural resistance, decolonization, liberation.” He adds that for Palestinians, Al-Nakba is the heart of the Palestinian collective memory and history. (2012:205) It is the disastrous turning point that has changed the lives of many Palestinian people. The memory of Al-Nakba plays an important role in reconstructing the Palestinian national identity. This concludes that the memory itself resists the illegal, colonial displacement that is imposed on the Palestinian people. It attempts to reproduce the past by connecting it with the present and it shows the importance of the two to each other. John Collins (2004: 22) in his study of the Intifada generation, distinguishes between oral history, which might be problematic due to its accuracy and validity, and the popular memory research approach that focuses on the profound explanatory value of Palestinian personal narratives. In his research, Collins emphasizes the relationship between the memories of the Intifada and the reaction of this generation towards

the “Palestinian state of emergency”. The memories of the Intifada have been always the fuel of the continuous Palestinian struggle, just as the memories of Al-Nakba are always present in the Palestinian mind. Palestinian memory, in general, maybe “the only tangible trace” of a past that Israel cannot eliminate. (Collins, 2004: 22) Palestinians nowadays use narratives and customs to create and re-imagine their land, landscape, and identity. It is their way to reclaim their past, present and build their future. (Pirinoli, 2005: 8) One of the individual attempts in building a historical Palestinian creation that is worthy to mention is what Dima Abo Ghosh did. She created a model of her village Emwas and she produced a short film that narrates the whole story. In her film *Emwas*, she says that she is, now, confused about her cultural identity and it is because of her fragmented childhood memories in Emwas village and the memories that she developed after the displacement, in the places where she and her family had to stay. Emwas as mentioned before is one of the Palestinian towns that were completely evacuated and demolished by the Israeli army in 1967 because of its strategic location. Abo Ghosh and her family were forced to leave Emwas when she was only 2 years old. Abo Ghosh in her film mentions the fact that the people of Emwas walked the whole way to Ramallah and stayed there while some of them moved to Jordan. It is not an easy job to bring back all the scattered pieces and put them in one comprehensive narrative. However, it is not impossible and that is what Dima Abo Ghosh proved by making a model of Emwas using the collective memory of its people around the world and with the help of her children. Abo Ghosh mentions that the memories of childhood demonstrate a significant part of a human’s life. She talks about the deaths, the destructions, fear, and terror that the people of Emwas faced during the 6-day excavation. But she also clarifies that the memories and the relationship with the land were stronger than everything. Abo Gosh talks about her father who was able to bring out Turkish certificates of ownership from under the debris of their house. She also talks about her uncle who has always thought of Emwas as his cause that he has to fight for. In addition to that, she

mentions the annual trips that the people of Emwas carry out to what is now called Canada Park. After the excavation Palestinian people were prevented from entering the land of Emwas because it was then considered a restrictive military area. But after a while, Israel got a donation from the Canadian Jews and transformed the whole place into a natural park. Abo Ghosh emphasizes the role of the collective memory in bringing Emwas to presence. However, after the shift and the replacement, the relationship between the Palestinian and his land is distorted, so is the narrative. She says that her family and relatives never stop talking about their memories in Emwas after the displacement. This makes Emwas present in their life, but does it, physically, exist for real? Emwas as a physical place is out of existence now. The stories that people of Emwas narrate might sound a little bit unreal and non-credible to an outsider because when narrating them they cannot relate to a physical place. So here comes the importance of creating something physical that represents Emwas. And that is exactly what Dima Abo Ghosh did; she created a model of Emwas by restoring the memories of its people. Halbwachs suggests that people depend on their collective awareness and an imaginary localization to recreate places that are significant to them. (Halbwachs, 1992: 234) In the very same way, Abo Ghosh was able to reconstruct Emwas village and change the narrative to something tangible. Creating a model of a demolished Palestinian village through the narratives of its people was something essential to maintain the sense of Palestinian nationalism. Her children who helped her in building this detailed, solid model are now aware of the pre-existence of that village. And finally, by filming her project Abo Ghosh was also able to disseminate the story of her village.

2.2.5. Writing Back Against Erasure

The consequences of the historical and physical erasure have never stopped. The Israeli state nowadays has reshaped a solid history that is based on a biblical state and Palestinians are

out of the frame. Not only historians but also a lot of Israeli intellectuals shape their writings in the notions of their religion. The term “Nakba” was never mentioned in the Israeli curriculum. And the Palestinian people who live in the Israeli ‘state’ now are considered as a ‘demographic threat’ and threatened with ethnic cleansing. (Masalha, 1988: 229) It is important for the Palestinian people to reclaim their presence and to be aware of their history, otherwise, they might lose their connection with the lost land. As Mahmoud Darwish said once: “We who are able to remember are able to liberate.” (Darwish, 2000) There has to be a sense of agency to fight back against this erasure. Lena Jayyusi explains that:

For Palestinians, the acceleration of history means that they know exactly where they come from, but not necessarily where they will end up. Memory/ history is a preparation for that future, a mode of selection, an activism of agency—it is oriented, in part, to telling the outside world where, what, and to where. (Jayyusi, 2007: 130)

As Fatma Kassem (2011: 236) argues in her gendered research, Palestinian women fight against the methodical erasure of their history and memory while the “State of Israel” literally eliminates them through its continued policies of demolishing the Palestinian physical territories. Kassem goes on, “they also challenge Zionist delegitimization of their homeland, constituting a home at home, by insisting on their rights of entitlement to land, both on an individual basis and at the collective level.” (2011: 236) Taking an agency to write and document whether the writing is historical, biographical or fictional, as long as it narrates the Palestinian story, provokes the continuity of the resistance against the elimination of Palestine. It also allows for a future vision of the situation. Joseph R. Farag (2017: 1) in his research on politics and Palestinian literature in exile, addresses different Palestinian short stories to show how the Palestinian literary production “has often demonstrated remarkable prescience, sometimes presaging key political and historical turning points and always making them more

comprehensible within their socio-cultural context in retrospect.” (Farag, 2017: 1) The Palestinian literary production has played a vital role in articulating the Palestinian experience and it provokes the act of remembering Palestine as a native community. (Farag, 2017: 23)

Palestinian literature whether it is fictional or nonfictional is considered a perfect tool of advocacy and it is also “an offshoot of postcolonial literature in general.” (Ramadan, 2020:26) So, it does not only reflect a real experience but it also defends the Palestinian right of claiming their existence. Tahrir Hamdi (2011,23) writes about a sub-genre of literature that is called ‘bearing witness’. Speaking of the Palestinian cause, this kind of literature sheds the light on the suppressed narrative that is overwhelmed by the dominant narrative. This occurs by recalling a tragic event that happened in the past to highlight its impact on the present. The witness writer documents the suffering of his people then presents it, which makes him/ her as a guardian of the historical past of his people and its memory. This kind of documentation is vital to keep on the collective memory in the light of the Israeli suppression against the Palestinian narrative. The witness writer must not allow for these attempts of erasure and suppression -of the Palestinian story- to happen. (Hamdi, 2011:40) As an extra emphasis on the role of literature in testifying and documenting historical experiences, a new literary genre has emerged in the Latin American Literature that is called “Testimonial literature”. It refers to “an authentic narrative, told by a witness who is moved to narrate by the urgency of war, oppression, revolution. Emphasizing popular oral discourse, the witness portrays his or her experience as a representative of a collective memory and identity” (Walker, 2011 as cited in Ramadan, 2020: 11). However, literature in general and resistance literature in specific can do much more than that. It draws attention to itself as a politicized activity or like a “battlefield” as described by Kanafani in his book *Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine 1948 -1966*. Resistance literature perceives itself as an integral part of the collective struggle against

colonization and its hegemonic domination. (Harlow, 1987: 28-29) Palestinian literature documents this act of fighting against the Israeli settler-colonialism.

Chapter 3 Analysis

3.1. Erasing the Palestinian Memory from Space and History

“Collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present.” (Halbwachs, 1992: 34) The Israeli settler-colonialism aims to separate Palestinians from their history. It also tries to erase the Palestinian memory. It is important to note here that the Palestinian collective memory is divided into two parts. The first contains heritage, traditions, and the way the Palestinian people used to live on their land before the occupation. This memory includes Abu Ameen who made sure to maintain and cultivate his land, as Shehadeh mentions in his book. It also includes Waheed’s *kinf* that is loaded with other memories. The second part contains the different ways that Palestinian people took to resist the Israeli settler-colonialism and its strategies, including literature like *Remains* and *Palestinian Walks* even if they are on a textual level. Both writers attach the two parts of the Palestinian collective memory to create a continuous history and a surviving identity.

The Israelis refuse to recognize their crimes against the Palestinian people. They act as if nothing wrong happened. What distinguishes this Israeli settler-colonialism from any other past European colonization is that it works on a larger scale. It suffocates the Palestinian existence and puts the whole community on hold. It has a long-term plan that aims to, completely erase the historical existence of Palestine and its people. Halbwachs explains that memory is essential to connect between past and present, therefore it is important to proclaim a historical existence. He adds that “memory needs continuous feeding from collective sources.” (Halbwachs, 1992: 34) By applying this to the Palestinian cause, one discovers that this erasure has long-lasting consequences, especially for the Palestinians who were driven out

of Palestine. Their memories are fragmented and have no consistency. So, if there is nothing to refer to, it would be difficult for Palestinians to sustain their historical existence.

3.1.1. The Memory of Space and Landscape

Edward Said clarifies the difference between the Palestinian and the Zionist narratives. Whereas the second is strong and steady, the Palestinian narrative is scattered and politically ineffective. The narrative of the re-establishment and the recovery of the 'land of Israel' is taken into account throughout the Western world. However, the Palestinian people are, collectively, unable to create a convincing narrative that has a beginning, middle, and end because their leaders were always busy maintaining their power rather than sustaining a concrete narrative. (Said, 2000: 185) However, Shehadeh and Harb, through their literature, attempt to connect between past and present to reflect a coherent image of the Palestinian struggle and to give Palestinian people a starting point to shape their future depending on that. It is important here to note that the past of the Palestinian people is stored as the base of the Palestinian collective memory. At the same time, collective memory is used as an instrument to reconstruct the past of the nation, then to create a future and that is what Jews have done to claim 'the land of Israel'. The Jewish interest in Masada³ increased with the rise of Zionism. Masada has become the basic part of the Jewish history and it represents Jewish resistance. However, Masada had no importance in Jewish consciousness before Zionism, which means

³Masada is an ancient stone fortress in Israel, located high above the Dead Sea on a high, rocky mesa. Now an Israeli national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the 840-acre complex holds well-preserved ruins attesting to the history of the ancient kingdom of Israel and the courage of its people in the face of a Roman siege. It was named after the battle of Masada between Jewish defenders and Roman conquerors that took place in 73 A.D.

that the Israelis were selective while reconstructing their past in favor of claiming the land of Palestine as their historical and religious legacy. (Halbwachs, 1992: 40) Many Israeli and Western-sponsored strategies have been undertaken to maintain the Jewish narrative, starting with the illegal land-control. Israel claims that they have won a battle against the Arab world and they have restored their historical right. But the fact is that they took someone else's right and someone else's land. *Remains* and *Palestinian Walks* illustrate the illegal strategies that Israel has taken to dominate the land of Palestine and how that was implanted in the heads of Jewish settlers. Not only Jewish settlers, but Israelis are also able to convince the Western people that this land 'belongs' to them. This reality is, basically, the center of the Palestinian-Israeli case. Israelis depend on a million-years-narrative to transform the Palestinian landscape. Shehadeh explains how the Palestinian space is shrinking and the Israeli one is expanding. He adds that there is a big transformation that is happening there with more settlements taking place on the top of the Palestinian hills. Shehadeh himself witnessed this transformation that is destroying the Palestinian land forever, in a way that many Palestinians will not recognize. "Beautiful *wadis*, springs, cliffs and ancient ruins were destroyed, by those who claim a superior love of the land." (Shehadeh, 2007: 16) As for *Remains*, the name itself suggests the main idea of the novel, since it talks about what has been left for the Palestinians after all the relapses and the disasters which they have been through; the distorted land is one of them. Harb explains how the land has become dominated and controlled by Israeli laws and restrictions.

Shehadeh is a lawyer himself and he worked upon several land cases in Palestine. In *Palestinian Walks* the author calls the Palestinian landscape 'a vanishing landscape' and that is to show how the land is transforming into a Jewish creation. Shehadeh highlights this process of transformation in a detailed way as his literature testifies against this illegal change. For instance, he illustrates how the Israelis took advantage of the ambiguity in the ownership certificates of the lands and used it against the Palestinian farmers. As the boundaries of these

lands were described by their physical features, like the words “*sha’b, a’rsa, sabeel* and *bydar*.” (Shehadeh, 2007: 21) These simple names have no meaning in the Israeli, Zionist dictionary. The Israeli settler-colonialism does not understand the natural relationship between the Palestinian farmer and his land. Such a relationship is nothing compared with their implemented plans of taking over the land. One of Shehadeh’s walks was with a black colleague who is called Jonathan. They both share the same under-colonial background. They were aware of the main Israeli argument that declares the non-registered lands in the West Bank as public lands. This law was created to afford a place for the Israeli, Jewish settlers to live in. “According to this interpretation of the land law, the only non-registered land that truly belonged to Palestinians was that over which they could prove use either by living on it or continuously cultivating it for a period of not less than ten years.” (Shehadeh, 2007: 56) All other lands were considered public. This would prevent Palestinians who are living in the West Bank to be rightful owners. “The only rightful owners, according to the Israeli government’s version of law and history, were the Jews, who could trace their entitlement to the land from time immemorial, just after the dinosaurs became extinct.” (Shehadeh, 2007: 56) Shehadeh also mentions that the Palestinian land-owners who live near an Israeli settlement are, harmed, threatened, and prevented from cultivating their lands. Moreover, some people and family members of Shehadeh who were not living in the West Bank and especially after 1967, were considered absentees, and their property outside the town has been taken from them. Only those who were residents in their land had the right to their property and only as long as they stay there. (Shehadeh, 2007: 27) As any other colonial system Israelis manifested their twisted plans to control the Palestinian geography. Shehadeh stands many times on top of Ramallah hills and contemplates the change that has occurred with a devastated heart. He expresses his deep sorrow towards his stolen land. The hills that he used to consider his backyard and the memories of his childhood are now different. His language and attitude refer to the state of

being alienated in a land he used to live in. It is no longer safe to be around these hills which have been changed into settlements and natural reserves. As he recalls his walks, Shehadeh documents all the Israeli practices against Palestinians. He explains to the reader how Ramallah hills were replaced by Israeli, Jewish settlements under the cover of the unjust Israeli laws. Knowing that Shehadeh is a lawyer reflects his deep understanding of the Israeli manipulations. What is dangerous is that the Israeli settlers impose settlements on the Palestinian landscape that anomalously stimulates the surrounding nature. The Palestinian village is indigenously harmonious within its landscape. The settlers and the Zionists behind them are constantly trying to obliterate the memory of the Palestinian existence and replace it with their new imposed reality.

A further example from the text is the Albina case story which is one of the cases that Shehadeh worked on. The Albina land belonged to a Palestinian man and it happened to be in the Occupied Territories, but was not registered at the Land Registration Department in Ramallah. So, Israel considered it as an Israeli property, and years later a settlement was built there. Shehadeh says: “Not only had the court found a way to justify the takeover of my client's land – it did not even order that my client be paid any compensation.” (Shehadeh, 2007: 72) No alternative that can compensate this person for his stolen land. However, Shehadeh here expresses how bad the situation is. The court did not even give his client the chance to refuse the compensation. So, the man's land was taken by no right and there was nothing in return which indicates that they have no feeling of guilt about what they have done to him. This case is not the only one of its kind. Many Palestinian lands were stolen from their owners, and a lot of Israeli settlements were built on the top of the Palestinian hills. Shehadeh described this replacement saying:

This long-running drama has not ended. The stage, however, has relocated to the hills of the West Bank, where Israeli planners place Jewish settlements on

hilltops and plan them such that they can only see other settlements while strategically dominating the valleys in which most Palestinian villages are located. It is not unusual to find the names of Arab villages on road signs deleted with black paint by over-active settlers. (2007: 13,14)

This act was meant to dominate and subjugate the Palestinian land and people and to restrict their transportation. They Judaized the land to claim the land and to cut the connection between the Palestinians and their history. If the land no longer looks the same, it will be difficult for the Palestinian people to claim their pre-existence, only through memory and narrative. A constant restriction followed this Palestinian-Israeli replacement. Using the 'security' justifications and after the withdrew of the Israeli army from Ramallah, many entrances of cities and villages were shut which made it extra difficult for Palestinians to move from place to another. Moreover, there were certain roads in the West Bank that are prohibited for Palestinian people to use forcing them to use unpaved, rocky roads that caused the damage to their cars. (Shehadeh, 2007: 138) "All entrances to the city were controlled by the Israeli army. At the Beitunia exit south-west of Ramallah on the road leading to Beit 'Ur, ... a prison that began as a temporary tent facility for incarcerating juvenile offenders had now become a permanent, ever-expanding fortress." (Shehadeh, 2007: 138). This all draws back to the European orientalist narratives that facilitated colonialism. What happened in Ramallah as Shehadeh describes is a live definition of colonialism as it includes controlling and dominating the land and its people. The checkpoints and the restrictions do not indicate any kind of coexistence as Israel claims; they rather reflect a hegemonic power over the Palestinian people that aims to alienate them from their own land. Until these days, the creation of random, illegal Israeli settlements over Palestinian land has not stopped; they are working on legalizing it. The Palestinian landscape is vanishing, whereas the Israeli is expanding as if it happened by chance to have scattered Arab groups here and there on the 'land of Israel'.

The colonizers do not understand the lifestyle of the indigenous people and they do not get the traditional way that they define their relationship with the land. Therefore, if the life pattern of those people does not fit with the colonizer's scale, they consider them an obstacle. Colonization uses legislative and juridical means to feed upon the oppressed nations. They aim to satisfy their military and economic needs, regardless the existence of other nations. In *Remains*, when Waheed is asked about his place of birth, he says "Under the lotus tree" (Harb, 1997: 38) referring to his father's land that is called Um Sidra. The Israeli judge was unable to understand him. Then he brings him a map to mark that place. The map is a re-defined map where everything is written in Hebrew and the land is no longer recognized. Despite that, Waheed circles the whole map. In a way or another he protests against this distorted truth; as if he says this land-all of it- belongs to me/us. Even when Waheed travels to Jordan and to Turkey in order to get a proof that the land belongs to him, the judge would say "not enough". After all, the judge declares that the ownership of the land of Um Sidra goes to the Israeli authorities and it is going to be a natural reservation. However, according to the papers that Waheed presents, the court gives him only 1000 sq.m. around the lotus tree. (Harb, 1997: 40 - 42) The Israelis here try to capture Waheed in complex, manipulated laws that he has no idea about and although he tries, he gets almost nothing. Harb refers to the parts of Palestine that the Israelis took over in order to leave specific strips for Palestinians to live in.

Harb, in *Remains*, mentions a conversation between the mayor of Al-Ein village (Waheed's village) and an Israeli military governor. The governor talks about Abraham's story who asked the people of Canaan to give him a piece of land as large as a bull's skin and they did so. To them, a small piece of land is not a big deal. But the Israeli military governor interpreted the story differently and said to the mayor if you did not know that the bull's skin is striped, then that is your problem. He meant that the agreement entails a land that is bigger than what the indigenous people of the land think. And this land was meant to belong ('by the

decree of God') to Abraham and his people. (Harb, 1997: 34) Harb here refers to the manipulations of the Israeli people to 'prove' that the land belongs to them. This false interpretation has been always accompanied by force to drive people out of their homes. "The logic of interpretation depends on the power of the interpreter." (Harb, 1997: 36) By these words, the Israeli military governor explained that their narrative is dominant and no matter what Palestinian people do, they will not be able to defeat that. As a result, a land that belonged to Abu Ismael (who is one of Al-Ein townspeople) was declared to be the 'Ertz Israel' (land of Israel) settlement. The settlement expanded and "the fields were transformed into flower nurseries for export to Europe." (Harb, 1997: 37) This shows to what extent the land of Palestine is being transformed into an Israeli one; not only the land but also what grows from its depth is taken over and is now considered as an Israeli product.

3.1.2. The Memory of the Lost Home

Both texts call for the necessity of having a steady, strong Palestinian narrative that memorizes and documents the illegal Israeli practices to control the land of Palestine; for that exact reason Harb, Shehadeh, and every single Palestinian writer writes. They also write to remind Palestinians of their stolen right to resist the Israeli manipulated narrative, for which the act of remembering itself is a form of resistance. Whether the text is autobiographical or fictional, they illustrate and explain step by step the well-crafted and power-supported Israeli colonial system to claim the Palestinian space. Furthermore, evacuating the Palestinian space is not enough. They are reshaping it into an Israeli one in order to cut the historical relationship between the Palestinian people and their land, to make it almost impossible for Palestinian people to restore their homeland. So, they are even ready to erase and replace not only history but also anyone who tries to stand against their plans. Both writers dive into their memories to reflect all the mentioned above. The use of memory here is what strengthens Shehadeh's and

Harb's arguments. Harb's memory-centered novel *Remains* and Shehadeh's memorial book will always stand in the face of the Israeli denials.

Harb and Shehadeh restore the collective Palestinian memory to document this historical and memorial erasure against Palestinians as well. Shehadeh expresses his own experience and Harb reflects the experience in his literature, whereas this erasure is being experienced everywhere in Palestine and in various ways. Shehadeh in his book refers to his memories of Ramallah hills and he keeps mentioning the transformation that occurred to the land. The feeling of strangeness overwhelms his narrative. "The Palestine I knew, the land I had thought of as mine, was quickly being transformed before my eyes". (Shehadeh, 2007: 133) This transformation entails a fragmented memory that might die with the person who witnessed this change. And Shehadeh himself explained that there might come a day when Palestinians will not be able to recognize their own homeland. (Shehadeh, 2007: 16) Shehadeh also expresses his fear and the danger that surrounded him in every single walk on Ramallah hills. This fear has also stood in his way of visiting the hills again. This tragic result shows that Israelis are succeeding in detaching the Palestinian person from his own land and his memory of the land. This applies not only to these hills and not only to Shehadeh, but to all Palestinians, especially those who were expelled from their lands and homes. The land that they call Israel now has been stripped of any Palestinian character which leads to a huge gap in the Palestinian history and memory. Consequently, not only the land that was replaced but also the names of places, valleys, hills, towns and cities. Shehadeh mentions a significant piece of information about the difficulty of remembering the historic names of the Palestinian *wadis*, springs and hillocks. He says, "I grew up in total ignorance of any of these names. In this I was not unique. With hardly anyone now walking in the hills those with this sort of local knowledge are few and far between." (Shehadeh, 2007: 16) This gap of the historical knowledge among the Palestinians is a tool of destruction in the hands of Israel. It facilitates the process of erasing

the Palestinian memory and history to make sure that the Jewish history is the only one to survive. Shehadeh emphasizes that noting that Israel searched its Jewish roots in the process of silencing the Palestinian history. When the history of Palestine is abandoned and forgotten, how possible would it be for the fresh Palestinian generations to connect with the land and maintain their presence? The matter is not about what they have now but it is about how they ended up with it. Unfortunately, and here I recall Said's notions, the Palestinian narrative needs to be empowered because it is, politically, weak. (Said, 2000: 185) This weakness extends to the Palestinian history and it is important to mention that most parts of the Palestinian historical traces were sold and destructed making it difficult for the Palestinians to revive their story. Therefore, the Palestinian collective memory could be very useful in this situation.

3.1.3. The Memory of Martyrs

Speaking of memory, Harb in his novel uses Waheed to reflect the acts of erasure that were carried out against Palestinian people. Waheed recalls what he has witnessed during the Intifada. The incidents that Harb mentions in his novel may seem fictional to a foreign reader but to a Palestinian person they would be real and relevant. This applies to the Palestinian literature in general, since it mainly reflects the harsh reality that Palestinians have been through. In *Remains* a young man called Majid loses his life in the charge of being a part of an armed revolution. When the Israelis give back his bones, Waheed decides to take Majid's remains in order to bury them. There is nobody else to do that because "The Israelis did not find anybody who could meet the requirements of receiving the corpse. Being very depressed, Majid's father passed away ... Weeping sadly for a long time, his mother's eyesight grew weak." (Harb, 1997: 3) This indicates that Majid's terrible death affected his family badly. This is an extra aim for the Israelis because by this way they succeed in uprooting him and devastating his family. In order to allow Waheed to bury the remains of Majid, the Israelis

demand strict conditions. “Only he and the mayor could attend the funeral. They had to come to Kfar Asyoun crossroad at 8 p.m., and the burial had to take place after midnight without any official ceremonies.” (Harb, 1997: 4) The Israelis would never ask for such conditions arbitrarily. They do this on purpose because to them Majid is a ‘terrorist’ and they want him to die in vain and they try to erase his memory. If Majid or any Palestinian martyr had the chance to have a ceremony while being buried, his people would never forget about him. According to the Palestinians’ ideology, they would rather consider him a hero for fighting against the occupation and many of them might follow his path. Majid was not the only one who had a silent death, there are hundreds of Palestinians who died as numbers. Not only the memory of the martyrs is being erased but also the memory of the Palestinians who are still alive. Their physical existence -to the Israeli settler-colonialism- is not as important as the history. Colonial systems do not want for the indigenous people to be present nor to disappear completely because this might cause them to lose their control over those people. “American Indians and other indigenous peoples have often been evoked in such theorizations as past tense presences” (Byrd, 2011: 20) So, Palestinian people are there but their historical existence is being ignored. Waheed keeps wondering how to find life in a place full of death. Despite that he tries his best to celebrate his daughter’s birthday, who keeps insisting on him to bring her flowers. However, when Waheed goes to the flowers shop, he finds out that a confrontation has started between Palestinians and the Israeli military forces. A young man falls wounded on the street. Yet when Waheed rushes with a group of women to pull him out of the battlefield the Israeli soldiers order them to let him go. The women shout at the soldiers: “He is dead. What do you want from him?” (Harb,1997:18) The soldiers reply saying: “Plant him in the asphalt.” (Harb,1997:18) Because of the Israeli settler-colonialism Palestinians do not have the chance to live their daily life peacefully and even when they die, they are not allowed to rest in peace! As if the Israelis are the ones to decide for the Palestinian people the way they live and the way

they die. That awful incident that contains shooting an unarmed man in the street explains two things. First, Israelis are concerned about the physical erasure of the Palestinian people as much as they are concerned about eliminating their historical existence. The second thing is that when the Israelis shoot a Palestinian dead, it is not the end. Usually, they arrest his family members and they demolish his house. They intentionally do that in order to make people hesitate to act against their tyranny. A memory of a martyr will always remind his people of the case that the person fought for. But when there is no memory for the person who dies fighting for his country, by time, he would be just a number and it would be difficult for his community to remember him, especially the fresh generations.

3.1.4. The Memory of Destruction

The erasure of the Palestinian memory is constant. Speaking of further erasures, “Israeli officials were well aware of the significance of memory and the need to erase it.” For instance, in 1948, a large village north of Tel Aviv called *Shaykh Mu’nis* was evacuated and completely vanished—“a disappearance confirmed three months later by IDF intelligence.” (Piterberg, 2001) Moreover, when Israelis seized Jaffa, they remodeled and transformed the whole city. Israel erased the city's Palestinian heritage. It destroyed whole neighborhoods. “The *Manshiyeh* Quarter, for instance, was razed and remade into Charles Clore Park. Arabic street signs and squares received Hebrew names, and one partially-standing Palestinian home was converted into a museum honoring the Irgun as “liberators” of Jaffa.” In 1954, the city was transformed into a district of Tel Aviv. (Bouarrouj,17) And the transformation of the Palestinian land never stopped until today.

Israel always tries to destroy the Palestinian narrative of destruction and anything that supports it, especially when the narrative includes true stories about Palestinians who suffered through any of the catastrophes that were carried out against them. The banning of the

Palestinian film “Jenin, Jenin” is a recent example of this. It is a documentary film that was directed by Mohammad Bakri in 2002. The film documents the Israeli soldiers’ crimes in Jenin Refugee Camp. In January 11, 2021, an Israeli district court, banned the film. “Israel also never paid compensation to any of the residents of the camp whose lives and homes it destroyed. It was only Bakri who is being required to pay compensation – to a soldier for his three seconds in the film.” (Gideon Levy, 2021) This discriminative act aims to hide the ugly truth of the Israeli army and the destruction of the camp. This crime is one of other crimes that Israel committed against Palestinian people. Literature like *Palestinian Walks* and *Remains* is another way of documenting these horrific crimes even if it was indirect or fictional.

The memories of the individuals merge into a collective memory and when they are weakened, memory would become fragile. Israeli settler-colonialism is aware of the significance of the collective memory; they even used it to re-create their own narrative. So, they are always worried and busy trying to make the Palestinian collective memory as shallow as possible because they know that its revival would be the starting point of regaining Palestinian rights. Palestinians are in desperate need of a collective memory that reconstructs their past and paves the way to a proclaimed existence. By analyzing *Remains* and *Palestinian Walks* one will notice that both Palestinian writers, clearly, document the Israeli hegemony. This documentation does not go for nothing. It is meant to remind the Israelis that the land they claim does not belong to them and that it was stolen by a set of manipulated laws. In addition to that, there are a lot of Palestinian youth who did not directly experience Al-Nakba, 1967 war or the Intifada, so it is a must for them to learn about their history in order to be able to fight against this historical erasure and its consequences that they are now experiencing. However, Israelis want for the new Palestinian generations to grow up knowing nothing about their history and unable to connect the past wars with the present Palestinian reality. This kind of Palestinian testimonial literature resists and fights against the oppressor. So, it always puts the

Palestinian writer under fear and danger. Kanafani's assassination is a harsh proof. Shehadeh in his book *The Third Way: A Journal of Life in The West Bank*, and under the title "Fear", expresses his understanding of the fear of being investigated and taken away by Israeli soldiers. He says: "I have heard so many stories of people who have this fear, but only now has it become mine as well. For they do it to writers too." (Shehadeh, 1982: 62) This danger attests to the power of the Palestinian literature and the ability of the Palestinian writer to make change.

3.2. Writing Back Against Erasure

Language is not innocent and narratives cannot be empty. They always entail something and have a purpose. After 1948, the Palestinian literature had a total shift. And that is natural because literature reflects what the society is going through. Both Palestinian writers, Harb and Shehadeh highlight how Palestinian people are estranged from their own land. The narrated Palestinian experience counters the Israeli fallacy and replies to the denial of their crimes against Palestinians. What distinguishes the two works of Shehadeh and Harb is that they are based on true stories. In *Remains*, the characters might not be true but they have real implications in reality. Harb mentions the Ibrahimi Mosque's massacre that happened in 1994, during the holy month of Ramadan, and between 50 and 70 of Palestinians were shot dead and 250 were injured inside the mosque. (Wiles, 2014) However, Shehadeh mentions real people who joined him in his walks in Ramallah hills like his friend Mustafa Barghouti who he thanks, alongside a list of walking companions, in the end of his book. When true stories are documented even through literature, they stand against the Israeli claims. That is why Shehadeh and Harb present their literary content in English which is a worldly language. By using memory both writers re-create events and places that have been denied, erased or replaced. So, basically, memory here is the sack that each writer pulls from to arm the Palestinian story against the Israeli erasure.

Halbwachs, in his thesis on collective memory, explains that collective memory is always selective. Spatial memories and events are what make certain places more sacred than others. The real obstacle that faces the Palestinian people here is that most of their homeland was destroyed by Israeli forces and the places that they relate to as home are no longer there. Halbwachs argues that the place carries a significant importance in the relation to collective memories, which means that the absence or the destruction of it makes the narrative problematic. (Halbwachs, 1992: 200, 201) Therefore, memory and the recreations of memory must have a strong presence in the Palestinian narrative to prove the Palestinian pre-existence and to condemn this destruction. People rely on their collective awareness and an imaginary localization to recreate places. Shehadeh through his book re-creates a map of Ramallah hills before the Israeli change. When reading the book thoroughly, one would be able to draw a clear image of the hills then. Shehadeh keeps narrating stories of Palestinian people who grew up near Ramallah hills. Abu Ameen's story is one of them. He is a farmer who spent his whole life taking care of his land, maintaining olive trees and his grapevines. In 1955, a disease hits the whole crop and Abu Ameen with his inability to save his grapevines falls in despair. (Shehadeh, 1982: 34, 35) Abu Ameen's story reflects the attachment of the Palestinian farmer to his land. The documentation of the 1955's disaster also gives the story a sense of credibility. Whether the land was green and fertile or wild and dry, it belongs to Abu Ameen and other Palestinian farmers. No one ever has the right to steal it. It is also important to mention that the bulk of the Palestinian historical narratives has been transmitted orally which means that they have to be recorded and documented in a way or another. Shehadeh in his book, when he mentions the ignoramus of the historical names of the Palestinian places, he also mentions that he got a help from the Palestinian geographer Kamal Abdul Fattah and his students, "who interviewed old men and women who could still remember them, some of these long-forgotten names came to be resurrected." (Shehadeh, 1982: 16) Here Shehadeh himself notes the

necessity of restricting the Palestinian history and he shows that it cannot happen without the help of the collective memory.

Shehadeh continues narrating his personal, familial and national memories in Ramallah hills. "I was born among hills that looked more or less as they did during the last years of Abu Ameen's life. But throughout my adult life I had the misfortune of witnessing their constant transformation." (Shehadeh, 1982: 39) Tracing and documenting the transformation of the land dominated his narratives. Almost at the end of each narrative, Shehadeh explains how the landscape has been changed forever and how Israeli settlements took a place on the top of Ramallah hills. Just like the Canadian scholar Lehn before them, the two writers describe the consequences of the transformation of the land, pointing out how clear and unlawful it is. It also contradicts the Israeli claim that Palestine was an empty land for a people without a land. For instance, one of the things that caught Lehn's attention that one of the stones he found in the Canadian Park has an Arabic inscription which says: "*Al-muklil-lah*" that means, "God is the owner." (Lehne, 1980: 14) This Arabic text indicates that this place is a private property and it is usually said as a sense of respect to God. (Ibid) So, this place belonged to Palestinian individuals and it was not an abandoned piece of land that the state could register as a public property. These memorial narratives of Shehadeh and Lehn counter the Israeli denial of the facts that their state was built on the destruction of another. Said also emphasizes this fact, saying that: "Hardly anything can mitigate the shattering historical truth that the creation of Israel meant the destruction of Palestine. The elevation of a new people to sovereignty in the Holy Land has meant the subjugation, dispossession, and oppression of another." (Said, 2011: 405) Shehadeh showed how it did exactly happen. As a result, this act of replacement has become a fact that Israel cannot skip. When great Palestinian writers like Shehadeh and Said throw facts in the face of Israeli people, this is what I would call a solid narrative that fights

the attempts of erasing Palestine. Truth might be covered and manipulated but it never goes away and Shehadeh's book *Palestinian Walks* testifies as a reminder of this truth.

Remains is a book of memory. Harb outlines different stories that are narrated by different people. Each from his angle but they all end in one comprehensive story that goes around Waheed. Waheed is confused between past and present surrounded by tragic memories that helped him to reach a distinctive understanding of the Palestinian case. Each narrative in the novel reflects a relative experience in the Palestinian reality. Harb starts his novel with deaths of several characters, each in a different, horrible way. Some of them were part of the revolution like Majed and Wadee'a, and some do not take a part in anything but death, like Abu Qais. He goes to pray in the Ibrahimi Mosque and comes back a lifeless corpse. Abu Qais gets killed in the Ibrahimi Mosque's massacre. (Harb, 1997: 6, 7) Harb here documents the ways that Israeli forces used to eliminate Palestinian people. And he documents their hatred and atrocities. When these crimes turn into a national collective memory, there is no way for this tragic history to be hidden away. The mentioning of the Ibrahimi Mosque's massacre increases the reality of the experience reversed in the novel. Harb describes this crime through Waheed's memory vividly:

Blood pools lined the hospital street and as one climbed up toward the gate, the pool increased and became wider and wider. One had to roll up his trousers or hold up his dress or walk on his toes to avoid the blood until he reached the emergency room. The situation was so terrible that one would not wish the experience on his worst enemy, not even to wish the scene to haunt their nightmares. (Harb, 1997: 7)

It is a harsh experience that every Palestinian who lived it can relate to. Afterall, Israel as a 'state' narrates stories of victory, achievements and restored rights, but they never admit their

crimes against Palestinians. Palestinian literature like *Remains* insists on reminding the whole world of these crimes. It writes back against the wiped-out, distorted history that Israel claims.

Harb also outlines several attempts of erasing the Palestinian memory in his novel. And by that he highlights these significant historic memories to defy the Israeli claims. One of them is the story of the house that the Jewish Hanukh rented from the office of 'The Guardian of Absentees' Properties' in Jerusalem. He opens the door one morning for a tall, dark young man. He stops the man to ask him about what he is doing near 'his house'. He asks the man to leave and the second does not resist to stay. But heading to the front door, the man picks up a 'copper jug' and says: "We brought it from Afghanistan, ... sorry to disturb you. I am leaving for good" And it was the last time Hanukh saw the young man. After hearing that, Hanukh throws the jug away on his way to the bus station. (Harb, 1997: 96) That house belonged to Mahmoud Nashashibi "before it was in the 'no-man's-land' after the 1948 war." (Harb, 1997: 98) This short narrative indicates that the house was a Palestinian property and it was taken away from its absent owner by the Israeli state. The jug was a silent witness; that is why Hanukh got rid of it. He did not want to keep any proof that testifies his theft. That is what the Israelis did to many Palestinian traces. They erased, transferred or re-modeled them trying to conceal the Palestinian history and heritage. When Harb narrates a story like the Nashashibi's house, he restores the Palestinian memory because highlighting erasure itself is a recovery for what has been erased.

Waheed during the whole story keeps questioning his mother's *Kinf*. The memories that are attached to this piece of cloth exhausts both his mind and heart. "Take this *Kinf* and burn it. Rid us of its nightmares." (Harb, 1997: 116) By the end of his novel Harb explains the puzzling situation that Palestinian people are living. The Palestinian people are overwhelmed by various influential changes. There is the tragic past they lived, the uprising, the Western attempts of finding a common ground between two peoples, Oslo agreement and many other

layers that complicates the Palestinian narrative. However, amongst all, memory, despite its monstrosity stands still in the way of the Israeli attempts of distortion. As Hamdi suggests Harb and Shehadeh are witness writers who, through their literature, reflect the Palestinian struggle from different aspects and they do not allow the Israeli settler-colonialism to suppress and erase the Palestinian story. (Hamdi, 2011: 40) Both writers try to reconnect with the land in order to open the way for a historical presence. Unfolding all these stories and memories defies the suppression that the Israelis are imposing on Palestinian people. All the names and the events that are mentioned in the two books remind both Palestinians and Israelis of the truth. The replacement of the people and the re-designed land highlight the Israeli crimes. The old stones and the perennial trees testify against the theft of the land. If these two works with all their content constantly remind the Palestinians of what has been done to them, they will refuse and reject any other new attempts. As Ricoeur suggests, Harb and Shehadeh, through their memorial narratives and the memories of oppression that they contain, pave the way for Palestinian people to restore their historical rights.

3.3. Preserving Memory for Future Generations

It is quite important to transform memories for the coming generations since this allows the continuation and consolidation of the Palestinian historical existence on their land. Halbwachs argues that the point of saving culture is not to show how collective memory retrieves it, “but rather to trace the social process in which recognition in the present is being preserved or revived in the collective consciousness of later generations.” (Halbwachs, 1992: 3) Benjamin and Halbwachs both agree on the importance of preserving memory to recognize the present. What happens in the past never disappears because its traces live until present time. The problem then is in the methodology of restoring past events and the purpose that they are employed to serve. Harb and Shehadeh do not write only to restore a personal memory that is

exclusive to them. Their literature holds a cause of an entire people. Both writers preserve memory in their literature for the coming generations or at least they highlight this theme in their literature.

Shehadeh keeps repeating stories he heard from his father or other older people. One instance is when he mentions how his father told him about being forced to leave Jaffa and how he had to keep paying the rent for his apartment there. (Shehadeh, 2008: 95) Shehadeh here is affected by his father's embodied experience. When this postmemory hits as a reminder in the writer's mind, it also reminds him of why it is important to anchor the story of the Palestinian land in the mind of the new generation. Shehadeh himself narrates the story of a vanishing landscape in Ramallah hills, in details. That is all to feature the necessity of transferring memory through generations. The only difference here is that Shehadeh's narrative is more practical. It is put within a political, lawful framework. The most interesting parts of his stories emerge from real experiences that are connected to physical transformation. The noticeable change that appears in Ramallah hills gives Shehadeh's stories their authenticity. Shehadeh writes for the future Palestinian generations to make sure they learn about the history of their land. He writes for Palestinian students and scholars to give them the chance to speak a language that the western world understands. He writes for the young Palestinian generations, so when they see a settlement, they would know that it was built on a stolen Palestinian land. Moreover, they will understand the way it came there on the first place.

Remains also shows a continuum thread of history that is moving from generation to another. The whole narrative comes out of the *kinf* that was afforded to Waheed by his mother. Waheed at the beginning did not realize the significance of this *kinf*. He even got angry because he expected some of his mother's jewelry as a wedding gift, not a present made of sheep wool! "O, mother I'm the remains of the remains of your sons. How can you give me a *kinf* as a present on my wedding!" (Harb, 1997: 19, 20) Years later and after hanging the *kinf* as a

cultural heritage from the past, Waheed realizes that he can use it to keep letters and notes he wanted to put aside. Whenever Waheed looks at the *kinf*, he would remember his past. A piece of cloth is able to bring back all the sad memories and the nightmares that he lived through his life. Waheed's mother intentionally or unintentionally was able to keep the memory alive in her son's head. At the end, Waheed as a second generation realizes that he should not be engulfed by memories in a way they haunt him. He should rather think of them as the impulse that keeps him steadfast in his homeland. (Harb, 1997: 116)

Hadi, Waheed's friend has a different standpoint when it comes to memories. He always wants to forget all what happened, so he keeps repeatedly saying: "I don't want to remember the past" (Harb, 1997: 84) Hadi cares more about ranking up regardless to the price he pays. For Hadi, he prefers to preserve heritage and memory in exhibitions as something that is out of date, expired, and no longer exists. Tacitly, Waheed disagrees. His mother's *kinf* means a lot to him. He prefers to keep it and continue using it. It carries the past that he will die and still remembering it. Hadi explains to Waheed that they have lost Palestine and that he will not allow the loss of its heritage too. However, Hadi does not care about heritage. His interest lies in being remarkable in the eyes of those who are higher than him. When he notices the *kinf* in Waheed's hand, he says: "I'm commissioned by some high-ranking Palestinian officials to establish a center for Palestinian heritage and your *kinf* will be its first contents." (Harb, 1997: 20) Harb here presents two contrary ideas about preserving memory for the next generations. The first through Hadi which is to store the Palestinian heritage as monuments, forgetting about the past. The second through Waheed who wants to revive heritage by the continuous use of his mother's *kinf*. And not only this piece of cloth but also the memories that it carries. He believes that these memories are important to understand the current situation. Moreover, Waheed succeeds in bequeathing this thought to his daughter. He makes sure that Shrouq completely understands the importance of this piece of cloth and how much memories it carries

in its folds. He was able to pass the trauma as postmemories to his daughter. Waheed realizes the importance of making his daughter aware of the significance of these memories in maintaining the Palestinian right of existence. (Harb, 1997: 117) When Hadi and the Palestinian soldiers come to take the *kinf*, she refuses to give it to them, mentioning that it belongs to her father and he has the right to keep it. Waheed does not react because now his daughter, Shurouq has learnt the lesson. Although that the *kinf* is loaded with harsh memories, it no longer bothers her. She understands now that the story of Palestine has not ended yet. She has to recognize the past, to be able to comprehend the current reality and to open the way for a closure. Shurouq in the novel represents the new Palestinian generation. Harb uses her to confirm the necessity of transmitting the Palestinian story through generations to fight back against erasure and maintain the Palestinian right of a real presence.

Waheed is not the only one who learnt to maintain his heritage and identity. His grandmother Mahbouba was also able to teach everyone in Al Ein to resist and fight back against the occupation, especially Waheed's sister Wadee'a. Hajja Mahbouba was a brave spokeswoman who refuses to surrender. And Wadee'a learnt much from her grandmother. Wadee'a was involved in the revolution. She used to do what men cannot do. Although almost everyone in the organization tried to underestimate her efforts because she is a woman, starting from her beloved one Majid. She was able to prove them wrong. She was the only one who could smuggle weapons through the checkpoint. "It was a very easy job. If weapon smuggling is always like this, I'm ready to specialize in it. Nobody searched me at the checkpoint. Only a woman can do this job safely." (Harb, 1997: 66) Where does this bravery come from? Wadee'a used to feed on the memory of her grandmother. She learnt from her that a woman can always be a fighter to protect this homeland. "Here I am grandma. I am participating in the Intifada like a butterfly drawn around the light that it adores but will burn it" (Harb, 1997: 69) The preserved memory of her grandmother pushed her to be ready to die for the sake of Palestine.

Such a memory can never be empty. It is loaded with values that will eventually result in maintaining the right of the Palestinian people to preserve their existence. Mahbouba was able to influence everyone in Al-Ein town. When the Israeli Occupation Forces were trying to confiscate the land, Hajja Mahbouba asked Al-Ein townspeople to plant an olive tree in front of each house. She believed that this way the town will become a shrine and Israelis will not be able to claim it. (Harb, 1997: 36) Mahbouba this way was able to teach them to hold on the land. She succeeded in delivering a valuable message to the following generations. Through Waheed, Shurouq, Wadee'a, and Mahbouba Harb craftily depicts the idea of preserving memories for the coming generations in a way they can use to prove the ownership of their land and fight for it.

Both writers Shehadeh and Harb encode messages in their literature to the Palestinian new generations to recognize the Israeli attempts of misleading them and to learn about what has been stolen from them. They both illustrate the necessity of hanging on the agency of the Palestinian coming generations to stick to their heritage, national values and historical existence. However, Shehadeh draws the attention to how Israel is also working on providing its new generations with the idea that the land of Palestine is a Jewish land that God promised them. He says:

We were certain that we could not remain idle in the face of this threat. We had to do everything we could to resist it. If the plan should be implemented generations of young Jewish kids would grow up in our hills considering them their home and we would have another hundred years of struggle over this part of Palestine. (Shehadeh, 1982: 55, 56)

When Israeli children grow up knowing that this land belongs to them, they will always be a threat for the Palestinian people. Shehadeh embodies a vivid example in his book that reflects this Israeli-Palestinian struggle. In one of his walks, Shehadeh meets an Israeli settler in the

south-east of A'yn Qenya, near Ramallah. He lives in 'Dolev' (an Israeli settlement). When he asks the settler if he is afraid or not, the settler answers: "Afraid? Why should I be? I've done no evil to anyone." Hearing these words Shehadeh then thought of how the land of Palestine was stolen and all the destruction that was caused by the Israeli settler-colonialism. Then Shehadeh asks him if he was born in 'Dolev'. The settler answers 'no' and he adds that he moved there with his parents when he was 5 years old, in 1986. (Shehadeh, 1982: 143) Furthermore, he tells Shehadeh about his experience of getting hit with stones thrown by some Palestinian people. The settler asks his teacher about the reason behind this act. She answers "Because they are bad people." She never mentions that it is not an act and that it is a reaction to what they have done to Palestinians. This dialogue indicates two things. The first is that the Israeli settler reflects a Jewish group ideology towards the idea that this land is an Israeli one. He does not consider himself a bad person. He was a child when he moved there and he was raised on the idea that his parents and grandparents, finally restored their promised, holy land, yet that any Palestinian he meets is a threat. This applies to many Israeli settlers who were born or raised in settlements. The second thing is that this conversation proves that Israel has succeeded in creating a second army, which is the new generation and this is through transferring the collective memory of Israel's creation to their children. Growing up on an erased and distorted history will create another, more intense struggle. The absence of the fact that the land of Israel originally belongs to Palestinian people will raise the Jewish hatred against Palestinians. A brainwashed Jewish generation will never accept the idea of giving up the land. That is why Israeli settlers, especially the religious ones show deep hatred towards Palestinian people because they grew up on the fact that this land is Jewish. They do not even use the word 'Palestinian', they rather use the word 'Arabs'. The new Israeli generation does not realize that it is a right to be restored. They never learned that their state was built on the destruction of another. Therefore, Shehadeh suggests doing everything the Palestinian people

can do to resist this conviction because the deeper it gets, the more difficult the struggle would be. Furthermore, with texts like Harb's and Shehadeh's the new Jewish generations will have to deal with such details. No matter how long the truth is covered and ignored, it will always be there.

3.4. Reaching the Western Audience and Scholars

Many Palestinian writers who were able to connect with the western audience and their literature have reached the whole world. For example, the Palestinian resistance literature took a great part in Harlow's book *Resistance Literature*. Moreover, many Palestinian literary works were translated and written in different European languages. For a start, Shehadeh wrote his book in English which means that he is, particularly, addressing the Western readers, explaining to them the illegality of the creation of Israel over the land of Palestine. *Remains* was also translated to English by Abdul-Fattah M. Jabr and edited by Elizabeth O'Reilly. Not to mention that both works have been used by European scholars in their researches which address the Israeli-Palestinian struggle, colonialism, resistance literature, and many other critical and political issues. However, not all European people are interested in these fields and not all of them get the chance to, closely, see what is really happening in Palestine. They are sometimes misled by media that shows two peoples killing each other and fighting over a piece of land. Lehne, as an example, had the chance to go to the West Bank, to meet Palestinians and hear from them. That is what made him realize the ugly truth of Canada Park and the Israeli state as a whole. There is always a chance for anyone who reads *Palestinian Walks* or *Remains* to re-think the Israeli Palestinian 'struggle' and might be able to establish a base understanding of the case.

Harb, as a professor of literature, was influenced by Western writers such as T.S. Eliot. In *Remains*, he shows the resemblance between Palestine after the Intifada and Eliot's "Waste

Land". Palestinian people suffered a lot during and after the Intifada. Waheed as a lecturer had to give his lectures in Ramiz and Kharraz Building in Ramallah. It is because the Israeli Occupation Forces closed universities and prevented students and teachers to get there. "T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, ... It's the poem of death by water and fire that makes night much darker and thunder that brings no rain and human bodies implanted amidst holes and rocks. It is the poem of land which the gods of fertility have deserted, that death has become the only god." (Harb, 1997: 16) His students, surprisingly, wonder about where Mahbouba is in the poem. This part of the novel indicates explicit similarity between Harb and his protagonist Waheed, since both of them are lecturers in English literature. He, carefully, uses *The Waste Land* to draw a comparison between the destruction after 1948 with the post-war scenes in the poem to show that Palestinian people were trying to hold on to what has been left for them to survive. The comparison and the mention of this poem in Harb's novel serve two purposes. It attracts the attention of the Western reader. It also causes them to think of the mutual themes between the poem and the novel, which will eventually lead them to understand the Israeli-Palestinian situation better. Lynne Rogers in his article "The Remains of 'The Waste Land': T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' and Ahmad Harb's *Remains*" he compares the poem and the novel. He says that both texts give the reader a group of stories from different periods. He argues that *Remains* brings the reader from the story of ancient Palestine to the Intifada and the puzzling situation that Palestinians are facing today. And that, similar to T. S. Eliot, "Harb's narrator struggles to salvage some remanent values of out of his surroundings and history. His narrative becomes a testimony to his success." (Rogers, 2003: 1) For sure Rogers writes specifically for the Western reader and generally for the whole world. She absolutely got Harb's point of view and now she is sharing it with her audience. This indicates that *Remains* can be a worldly novel that conveys a true message about Palestine.

Shehadeh's book *Palestinian Walks* won Orwell Prize in 2008. It was read and reviewed by many western scholars. Stephen Bennett, in reviewing *Palestinian Walks*, says that it is an effective memoir written by a Palestinian lawyer who has developed a rich historical background about the place. He adds that Shehadeh "vividly and effectively details landscapes and geographic features of Palestine. Many of these, the author notes, are gone forever, including the view of the Old City of Jerusalem, now obscured by modern Israeli structures." (Bennett, 2009: 69) Bennett also argues that Shehadeh writes straightforwardly facts about the Palestinian landscape. His book is a realistic take on the Israeli settlement that Palestinians, including Shehadeh, have been witnessing for so long. He finally declares that this memoir of misery was not without a purpose and Shehadeh's efforts had a point. In her article "Ruins, Rifts and the Remainder: Palestinian Memoirs by Edward Said and Raja Shehadeh", Lindsey Moore examines two Palestinian memoirs: Said's *Out of Place* and *Palestinian Walks* to highlight the memory in a colonial context. In her study she discusses "the movement in Shehadeh's West Bank writings toward a conception of *r m moration* - a term used by Paul Ricoeur to evoke an active exercise of memory oriented towards justice - as a future-oriented, ideally collaborative project." (Moore, 2013: 28) She also suggests that Said and Shehadeh provide models of ways in which 'what stays' can be conceptualized as a reminder that causes a disturbance, at least, textually, the Israeli-Palestinian situation. Moore is a British lecturer who is specialized in post-1948 literature of the Arab world and post-colonial studies. She writes for English speakers around the world to deliver a message. In her study she could clarify Shehadeh's aim of using memory in his book by applying Ricoeur's theory of *r m moration*. She showed that Shehadeh uses his memory to establish a way for salvation.

Anyone who reads any of the previously mentioned articles should at least start re-thinking of the Palestinian struggle. Shehadeh and Harb opened the way for western scholars to critically examine the Palestinian situation. They have both written purposefully to reach as

many people as it is possible. If what they wrote was not that effective, it would not resonate in the West. Furthermore, the Western writers that I mentioned above illustrated Harb and Shehadeh's thoughts in an encouraging way. Once reading any of these articles, the reader might go for the original text, if interested. After all, the echo of the Palestinian literature in the West benefits in disseminating the reality of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle. And this might cause Western people to 'brush against the grain' as Benjamin suggested. (Benjamin, 1969: 257) Eventually, the Palestinian people will gain more supporters and this should matter in fighting back against being erased.

Conclusion

Harb and Shehadeh crafted memory-based texts that are able to defy the Israeli attempts to obliterate the memory of the place. *Palestinian Walks* describes a factual vanishing Palestinian geography and how it was forced to disappear in order to plan for a Jewish Israeli existence. Shehadeh re-draws an imaginary map of Ramallah hills as they were and still transforming. *Remains* is considered a historical fiction story that reflects a Palestinian reality in different post-war periods. Both texts show the illegality of the Jewish creation and they call for Palestinian people to fight back against it. Transferring memory from one generation to another creates a tool of defense against this erasure. Israel is waiting for a day when Palestinians no longer remember their history. They are aware of the fact that an ignorant Palestinian generation serves their plans in claiming the historical presence on the land. That is why they always keep promoting their state. They are even trying to convince the new Palestinian generation of their rightfulness of having a Jewish state forgetting all their crimes against Palestinian people. The young Palestinian generation did not witness the wars and they do not even know how the land looked before the creation of the state of Israeli and this makes a huge problem for them to sustain their relationship with the land. It is dangerous when

Palestinian children do not know much about their history. It is a big problem when they call the checkpoint a 'crossing point' rather than calling it a barrier or when they use the term 'State of Israel' instead of the term 'occupied Palestine'. What makes the situation worse is that they are ignorant about the old and historical names of the Palestinian places. And Shehadeh declares this himself. They do not know the names of the Palestinian destroyed cities and villages. They almost know nothing about the Palestinian heritage and they no longer use it. There has to be a great source of awareness among the young generation. Of course, there are individual attempts but these are not enough to create a whole generation that is aware of the Palestinian cause.

There is an urgent need for a united, consistent, solid Palestinian narrative because a narrative is power and power lies in the ability to narrate. The control of the narrative decides what can be heard and what can be excluded. According to H. Porter Abbott, a narrative's powers lie in its rhetoric feature. He argues that a narrative has to provide a certain meaning and function. There has to be a reason behind narrating a memorial story. (Abbott, 2008) Despite the fact that the ability to narrate is something natural that everyone does, narratives can carry different motives and goals. Moreover, not all narratives find a place in the worldly view. Speaking of the Palestinian cause, the Palestinian narrative has been always marginalized and exploited. A coherent, meaningful narrative is important in relation to the sense of nationalism and national identity. David Wood in his introduction to his book *On Paul Ricoeur, Narrative and Interpretation* argues that a narrative is an experienced time and that represents the self. So, people depend on narratives to construct their cultural identity. (Wood, 2002) In the light of the absence of a rigid, Palestinian meta-narrative, Israel nowadays relies on the ignorance of today's generations which will result in the loss of the historical and cultural existence through time. The presence of people like Harb, Shehadeh, Abo Ghosh and Bakri in the Palestinian society, who have a sense of agency towards the land will help in keeping on

the Palestinian narrativity, and as mentioned before it is not impossible but it requires a great, constant effort. This kind of awareness is what the Palestinian young generation misses due to the absence of the role of the government in recreating a physical meaning of Palestine before 1967 and even before that. The works of the mentioned above have a hand in sustaining the Palestinian memory and right of claiming their historical presence. However, this has to be on a larger scale. There has to be a model of each destructed village and city and this should not come out of individual efforts. It should happen under the supervision of the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, the ignorance among the very young generation shows that the historical Palestinian material that is taught at schools is not enough nor sufficient. Spreading awareness among the coming generations needs a huge effort that comes out from a trustworthy source. Moreover, it has to be done in a more attractive way, especially, for the young Palestinian students. A physical and visual representation of historical Palestine can add much more to the knowledge of the young generation. There also could be tours that teach them more about Palestine. Creating a strong bond between the Palestinian children and their land is a priority the Palestinian Authority has to take upon itself.

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الكتابة ضد المحو في "بقايا" و "سرحات فلسطينية"

بالاعتماد على المساهمات الحديثة في دراسات ما بعد الاستعمار والذاكرة تبحث هذه الدراسة في نصين للمؤلفين الفلسطينيين ، أحمد حرب ورجا شحادة ، بحيث تهدف إلى إظهار كيف يوثق كلا النصين محاولات الاحتلال الاستعماري الإسرائيلي محو والغاء وجود الشعب الفلسطيني من المكان والذاكرة، كما تسلط الضوء على كيفية اعتماد كلا الكاتبين على الذاكرة الجماعية من أجل الكتابة ضد هذا المحو ، بالإضافة إلى أهمية الحفاظ على الذاكرة الفلسطينية ونقلها من جيل إلى آخر ، وتؤكد الدراسة على كفاءة النصين وقدرتهما على الوصول إلى الجمهور الغربي ، في النهاية تثبت هذه الدراسة أن حرب وشحادة نجحا في توظيف الذاكرة كأداة لمحاربة المحو والحفاظ على الوجود التاريخي للفلسطينيين. هذا التركيز على الذاكرة في الكتابة الفلسطينية يهدف إلى مواجهة محاولات الاستعمار الاستيطاني الإسرائيلي لمحو ذاكرة المكان والزمان من ادراك الشعب الفلسطيني للسيطرة على الأرض بسهولة.