Chapter 9

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SANDY TOLAN'S BOOK *THE LEMON TREE* AND ERAN RIKLIS' FILM *LEMON TREE*: PULLING THROUGH THE TRAUMA OF EXILE[1]

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1. Introduction

In multicultural societies, people are inclined to protect their local identities against "the Other". From both sides, the usage of the term "the Other" and negative attitudes towards each other are inescapable as most nations feel that their culture and identity are under the threat of "the Other". In the Palestinian diaspora, Palestinians, as natives of the land forming most of the population, have been turned into the minority by the arrival of Jews. The leading postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha (1996) indicates that: "The partial minority culture emphasizes the internal differentiations, the 'foreign bodies', in the midst of the nation" (p. 57). In the Palestinian and Israeli cases, the suppressed group is the Palestinians turned into "the Other" by the Jews that was once the undesirable "the Other" in another land.

Jews and Palestinians' experiences of exile are interestingly interconnected, another prominent postcolonial theorist Edward Said (2000) states that: "Perhaps this is the most extraordinary of exile's fates: to have been exiled by exiles – to relive the actual process of up-rooting at the hands of exiles" (p. 178). Being exiled by the former exiles is the worst of all in this conflict. Mishra (2005) contends that the Jewish diaspora is a distinctive one as many of them returned to Israel, which is recognized as their homeland bestowed by God, as believed in Zionism. On the contrary, the Palestinian diaspora is a typical one because they did not return as in the usual diasporas (Mishra, 2005, p. 2). Palestinians have not been completely removed from their homeland; many of them continue living in a limited area

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permitted to them. Mishra raises the concern about the question frequently asked by the oppressors, which may cause terrible consequences: "What shall we do with them?" (p. 18). Ironically, some other nations asked the same question for Jews in the past, and now Jews ask it for Palestinians. This conflict drives both Palestinians and Israelis to construct their own identities based on their current experiences. Hall (1996) cogently describes what creates their identities:

> Identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the 'positive' meaning of any term – and thus its 'identity' – can be constructed. (pp. 4-5)

This difference is known as "hybridity" in Bhabha's (1994) terms, and he describes it as "a difference 'within', a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality." (p. 19). Being in-between individuals conveys the undesirable reality of neither possessing nor dispossessing a place entirely. They live a restless life full of transitions: "And the inscription of this borderline existence inhabits a stillness of time and a strangeness of framing that creates the discursive 'image' at the crossroads of history and literature, bridging the home and the world" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 19). Both Palestinians and Israelis grow up in the shadow of "the Other", who desires to invade their lands, who wants to push them away, and who is evil. They also act as "we" who represent their nations, who have been suffering, who are miserable and legitimate to take any actions for self-defend. Living between these dilemmas drives the two nations apart and blocks the dialogue to be friends in the same land. Nevertheless, this study observes the cooperation on the desire for a more peaceful coexistence.

This paper analyses the physical and psychological outcomes of being an exile, which is a multifaceted experience interpreted in a variety of ways according to the diasporas of cultures. The study confirms that the severity of the condition depends on where the culture stands; in the Jewish and Palestinian case, both nations have experienced exile, but at different times and for different reasons, nevertheless, their fate meets at one point. In the analysis of the Palestinian diaspora, the suffering part is not only related to Palestinians because Jews also carry "the ghosts" of their own diaspora. Together with the unpleasant memories of exile, past and present diasporas of these two nations come together in a land where Palestinians are being exiled by the stronger one, Israelis. This study demonstrates that the settlement of Jews in Palestine has caused the exile of Palestinians and has resulted in both real and psychological displacements by affecting the lives

of many Palestinians. They were either forced to leave their homelands or had to live as strangers on the lands once they were natives. The research reveals how the characters in the two nations, Palestinians and Israelis, reflect the trauma of real and imagined exile in their interdependent lives through the analysis of the book *The Lemon Tree* by Sandy Tolan (2008) and the film *Lemon Tree* by Eran Riklis (2008) in the light of the postcolonial theory. It is observed in both works that the traumatic exile experiences of the two nations hinder the dialogues between them due to the nostalgic memories of their lost past by causing their alienation from their own lives, creating illusions, and carrying the tragic and joyous memories of displacement with symbols.

2. TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES OF EXILE: REAL AND IMAGINARY DISPLACEMENT

> But I am the exile.
> Seal me with your eyes.
> Take me wherever you are —
> Take me whatever you are.
> Restore to me the color of face
> And the warmth of body,
> The light of heart and eye,
> The salt of bread and rhythm,
> The taste of earth... the Motherland.
> Shield me with your eyes.
> Take me as a relic from the mansion of sorrow;
> Take me as a verse from my tragedy;
> Take me as a toy, a brick from the house
> So that our children will remember to return. (Darwish, 1974, p. 32)

Darwish's lines perfectly reveal the sorrow of being an exile. Peters (1999) describes exile as a tragedy due to the painful separation from the homeland, which "generally implies a fact of trauma, an imminent danger, usually political, that makes the home no longer safely habitable" (p. 19). Exiles carry the burden of their trauma, which gives clues to identify these people's lives, their sufferings, and the national hopes of the homelands they have lost:

> Exile and diaspora are the antithesis of home and homeland. The traumatic loss of the homeland strengthens the connection of refugees and exiles to the homeland, and it continues to play an important role in their individual and

> collective imagination, constituting a central aspect of their self-definition. (Hammer, 2005, p. 50)

The strong ties exiles have with their homelands increase the intensity of traumatic influence on them for the loss of their homeland. In the Palestinian and Israeli cases, both nations carry this traumatic loss of exile interdependently. Jews have no other choice but to own the land offered to them after escaping from the holocaust. Upon their arrival in Palestine, some Palestinian families were forced to leave their homes whereas some were allowed to stay in Palestine, or some parts of the land mapped within the borders of future Israel. Even the people who stayed at their homes had to live a psychological exile in their own land. The unique agony is being separated from their past as Bill Ashcroft (2008) elucidates:

> Exile does not mean the total separation from your place of origin but is rather a condition where one never abandons the old nor completely accepts the new. It is not a state in which one can become complacent, comfortable, and secure. Rather, it is a state that hones your skill for survival. (pp. 182-183)

Palestinians and Israelis bear their individual anguish from distinct perspectives because "All diasporas are unhappy, but every diaspora is unhappy in its own way" (Mishra, 2005, p. 189). In Sandy Tolan's (2008) book *The Lemon Tree*, the main characters reflect on this agony; Ahmad, Bashir's father, haunted by the ghosts of his past could not make a new start as his mind was troubled with the memories and the sufferings of the exile. Mishra (2005) reveals that: "They are precariously lodged within an episteme of real or imagined displacements, self-imposed sense of exile; they are haunted by spectres, by ghosts arising from within that encourage irredentist or separatist movements" (p. 190). Ahmad carries the real displacement in every step of his life, and he cannot carry on his new life in a different location. Thanks to the efforts of his son Bashir and the sympathetic character Dalia in the Israeli side, relieving messages for such traumas are provided in the book. Dalia exemplifies such a sensitive woman that at many instants she seems to agree more with Palestinians than the Israeli expectations. Dalia is evidently distinct from prevalent other Israelis that Bashir has met, from Bashir's own words: "It seemed she was someone different. I would say, 'She is open-minded, she's different compared with other Israelis that I met.' I hope, she is not a lonely candle in a darkened room" (Tolan, 2008, p. 282). The book presents such peacekeeper characters to emphasise the only way to recover from the trauma of exile.

In Eran Riklis's (2008) film, *Lemon Tree*, Salma Zidane is a lonely woman who clings to her memories with her family as a survival impulse. Her life changed

after Israeli Defence Minister Israel Navon and his wife Mira Navon moved next to her house. Their attitudes reveal that they assume to possess every right on this land violating her personal property rights. For instance, they pick up lemons out of Salma's grove needless of getting permission from her while giving a party. In a multicultural society of unequally distributed powers, like in the Israeli and Palestinian situation, the dominant community tends to breach over "the Other's" private life as observed in the film.

The characters both in the book and the film share the agony of displacement, Nico Israel (2000) notes: "Displacement begs the question of emplacement. It demands as sense of place" (p. 15). They never quit for their demand on their stolen past. They idealize their past like a lost paradise that might never have existed or is never going to exist because it exists only in their memories and fantasies. Bashir's and Salma's happiness with their families is undeniable, furthermore, losing the possibility of having alike moments creates the illusion of its being much greater than the reality. The unreachability of this paradise-like life makes it invaluable. Even though most of the Jews had never lived in or seen Israel, they also had a similar dream of going to this imagined paradise-like homeland. That is the point where both nations' desires conflict with each other as they fight for an unreal world thought to be their home.

In the film *Lemon Tree*, although Salma lives in her homeland, the external conditions push her to live like an alien there as she is turned into "the Other" by Israelis, in accordance with the term Susan Pattie (1994) coined, she is "at home in diaspora" (p. 186). Therefore, she misses her past and wants to return to those times when she used to live in comfort as the only owner of her land. Mishra (2005) evaluates this discourse: "Diasporic discourse of the homeland thus represents a return of the repressed for the nation-state itself, its pre-symbolic (imaginary) narrative, in which the nation sees its own primitive past" (p. 9). In her imaginary world, Salma's lemon grove represents her past, and she can keep her memories alive only through it. As if her life in solitude after the departure of everyone in her family from her life is not miserable enough, she is forced to be separated from the last bond to her past: the lemon grove. Morse (1999) argues that "It is hard to imagine a life capable of imagination and sympathy that is not anchored by sense of memories" (p. 69), hence she cannot have a life without her memories, and she struggles for not only losing her land but also her last ties connecting to her past, the only reason of her holding on to life.

In the book *The Lemon Tree*, Dalia's family escapes from their homes in Europe where they used to live for a long time to a place they have never lived, but they

acknowledge this new place as their historical motherland and perceive their arrival as a return to their origins. Their idealized homeland in their imagination functions as an escape from their chaotic life by granting them hope or reason to live, otherwise, all their miseries would be meaningless without a purpose. They do not return to the real memories of the past like in Salma's dreams because they do not have such vivid experiences on the land, they just assume to belong to the history of Israel in their imagination. Notwithstanding, the diasporization of Palestinians on this historically imagined land destroys Jews' justifiability, Mishra (2005) notes: "the model of the Jewish diaspora is now contaminated by the diasporization of the Palestinians in Israel and by the Zionist belief that a homeland can be artificially reconstructed without adequate regard to intervening history" (p. 11). The creation of the Palestinian diaspora paved the way for the idea that Jews did not end their lives in the diaspora, but they migrated from one in-between-land to another, not to a new place of their own (Mishra, 2005, p. 17). Jews carry the original trauma of displacement to the new place they move; two nations diasporas encounter by creating a double misery.

The homeland is observed in postcolonial criticism as a fantasy scenario causing a national illusion, which is intimately linked to the trauma of leaving the motherland. Ahmad is also one of the characters in the book who has similar alluring memoirs and hopes to have more of such experiences. The trauma for Palestinians caused by the removal from their lands whilst the trauma for Jews means the fear of death they escape from, and for both, "the moment of 'rapture' is transformed into a trauma around an absence that, because it cannot be fully symbolized, becomes part of the fantasy itself" (Mishra, 2005, p.7). The loss and the fear carry some symbolic representations in trauma as well.

The history as the source of the traumatic symbols is extremely significant for the exiles as the following past and the shaper of their future. The convergence of the past and the present in the characters' lives integrates the main argument in Tolan's (2008) book, which "therefore, operates through the dimensions of time and history, and space, both geographical and "the Other", third space of cultural reconceptualization, the reordering of the world through forms of knowledge reworked from their entanglement in longstanding coercive power relations" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 66). Most of the characters carry their past like an imminent burden, which further shapes their actions through its eternal shadowing. The Arabs in the book live in exile and the Jews have the fear of exile, consequently, their history symbolizes misery and happiness at the same time for both nations.

Bashir's family never forgets their past and the house has been taken away from them, and similarly, Dalia's family always recalls the dreadful phase of their breakout and newly found contentment in their recent house in Palestine. Even though Bashir and Dalia were youngsters on that occasion, their past was engraved in their minds through the stories told by their families.

In the film, Salma is blissful with the past in her house with her lemon grove as well and is indebted to her father who bequeathed this grove to her. She has lost everything she used to possess; her father, her husband, and her children, still, she is alive with their memories. She has children; however, they live far away from her both physically and emotionally, who have abandoned her in despair. The lemon trees are the last witnesses of her lamented past; thus, she is determined to do everything she is capable of to preserve her splendid memories. Salma accuses the Israeli Minister and the other Israelis of her miseries; notwithstanding, her idealized past is not ruined by the enemy at first as she convinces herself. She just does not want to acknowledge that her loneliness is primarily caused by the absence of her own family and her children's abandoning her.

Exiles are strongly connected to their memories of their homeland as this image is a tool for keeping the dreams of return alive. Naficy (1999) concedes that "Exile is inexorably tied to homeland and the possibility of return. However, the frustrating elusiveness of return makes it magically potent" (p. 3). In this sense, exiles try to keep some symbols for themselves as a connection to their illusions of the homeland. The most prominent symbol besides the history of Palestinians and Israelis is the lemon tree as evident in the title of both works. Lemon trees are significant as reminders of the idealized homeland. There is a close relationship between trees and diaspora as they represent nature with roots on the land: "trees are central to bridging the perceived physical and emotional distance between diaspora and the homeland" (Long, 2008, 65). Trees carry the emotional and cultural ties to the land as well as the national codes exemplified in the religious sources: "the physical characteristics of trees evoke imagery of family, relatedness, and global/ national Jewish community. The Book of Isaiah, for example, sets up the tree as a symbol of the Jewish people: 'for as the days of a tree shall be the days of My people'" (Long, 2008, pp. 71-72). Long notes on the Jewish case, but most nations have similar associations with trees and land.

There are a variety of reasons for planting a tree, for instance, according to a tree planting project for the Jews in the land of Palestine, Jews try to dispose of their memories of living in exile, and they try to start a new life by creating

new things of their own on their land like planting new trees. The sorrow and vulnerability of exiles can be associated with the weakness caused by staying away from nature. Correspondingly, building strong connections with nature is associated with the power of the nation. Jews' planting new trees is a symbol of getting rid of the "diaspora's dust" and starting a new energetic life in their recent homeland like the newly growing trees; therefore, this process is "simultaneously the transformation of the diasporic Jewish Other into a new Zionist national Self" (Long, 2008, p. 70). Israelis build houses and plant trees to establish a nation in Israel because houses, trees, and families are all representatives of a nation. Family ties are vital for the construction of a strong relationship within the house, likewise, the connection of people with the land and with each other is crucial for the state. Strong relationships between families and states require the roots connecting the members to the state firmly. Trees are the representations of nations' roots on the land that they own, as they are indicators of possession.

By creating memories for the owners of the land, trees are like landmarks; they tell stories about their owners. In Tolan's (2008) book, the tree in the garden of the house that Bashir's family owned but now Dalia lives in, is at the center of the conflict between the two families like a witness to their happiness and sadness. The lemon tree is a tie connecting them to each other. Ahmad has a strong attachment to this tree as he planted it in the garden of his family house because "the tree as a symbol evolved as a central feature in the Palestinian collective memory of an idealized past" (Hammer, 2005, p. 65). His past was based on the saying that every man should build a house, plant a tree, and father a son. This belief is substantial in the construction of his nation because they know the necessity for a nation to have strong ties among its members and to put territorial traces. Houses, trees, and sons are signs of the success of the father and family, which is the same for the country that having roots on the land is necessary to have a complete power on it. Therefore, trees keep a substantial place for the strength of the family and the nation. The lack of this significant sign touches on the separation from the homeland and reminds the trauma to the members of each group as well. That is why the characters feel a deep sorrow of losing the cheerful old days they used to have in their former homes. Ahmad built the house to live together with joy for a long time, but those merry memories were left in the past. He lives an exile life and misses those days by hoping to catch some similar moments one day described in Ali Al-Khalili's lines:

Departure, eternal departure
when will exiles sit
around one table
and a family rejoice
knowing
that despite sorrow
it is our homeland. (as cited in Jayyusi, 1992, p. 196)

The dinner scene in which the family members gather has a crucial role in picturizing the family union. The lemon tree reminds Ahmad of the old happy days; that is why he even keeps one lemon that Dalia gives him during his visit to the house: "whenever [Ahmad] felt troubled at night and could not sleep, he would pace up and down [his] rented apartment in Ramallah, holding a shrivelled lemon in his hand" (Tolan, 2008, p. 201). It is a physical connection to the homeland he longs to go back to. Mishra (2005) evaluates that "homeland may be presented as the desirable norm" (p. 8) and in the book, this "desirable place" is for Bashir and his family symbolized by an old lemon. When Dalia visits Bashir and his family in their exiled home, Bashir has the opportunity to express their suffering, but he prefers to show the lemon that Dalia gave them four months ago during his visit to her house in Ramla. Keeping this lemon explains how it reminds Bashir's father of the tree of his house as it still locates in the garden:

> "To us this lemon is more than fruit, Dalia," Bashir said slowly. "It is land and history. It is the window that we open to look at our history. A few days after we brought the lemons home, it was night, and I heard a movement in the house. I was asleep. I got up, and I was listening…Do you know what I saw? My father who is nearly blind… Dalia, I saw him holding the lemon with both hands. And he was pacing back and forth in the room, and the tears were running down his cheeks." (Tolan, 2008, p. 243).

A lemon evokes the suppressed desires inside exiled people as homeland lives in their souls. The homeland turns out to be a place flowing in their blood living with them until death, and they carry it wherever they go in the world notwithstanding the distance (Schulz & Hammer, 2003, p. 184). The land is a living entity, and it has a strong relationship with the people living on it: "The land is never neutral. Whatever it is deviled by aggressors or yearned for by the native, it has a meaning and an impact on the lives of others" (Al-Musawi, 2003, p. 35). Exiled people imagine that their land, trees, or any other properties mourn for the owners' sadness as depicted in Abu Salma's (1992) poem:

> Has the lemon tree been nurtured by our tears?
> No more do birds flutter among the high pines,
> or stars gaze vigilantly over Mt. Carmel.
> The little orchards weep for us, gardens grow desolate,
> the vines are forever saddened. (p. 97)

The lemon tree is one of the connections for exiles both holding the happiness of the past and accompanying the owners in their present trauma. Trees are witnesses to the lives of people on the land they share; they keep memories and remind the people of their properties on this land. Trees are like guards for the land, helping the owners to feel safe. Moreover, they are the signs of the owners showing that this place is their territory. In terms of exile, sometimes tiny things may have vigorous nuance as this old lemon embodies the memories of the whole family, Naficy (1999) observes: "Sometimes a small, insignificant object taken into exile (such as a key to the house) becomes a powerful synecdoche for the lost house and unreachable home, feeding the memories of the past and the narratives of exile" (p. 6). As a "powerful synecdoche", the little lemon reminds Ahmad of the lemon tree providing shadow, refreshment for them in their happy days in their house, and it represents the attachment to that peaceful ground. Ahmad and his family share almost the same happy family memories with the lemon tree in their garden. As the whole family has an exile life for years, they consider any details belonging to their home as reminders of their past and memories. Mason (2007) asserts:

> In the re-creation of Palestine through such "acts of memory", Palestine was made tangible to an almost sensory level where children born in the diaspora could describe their family's house down to the texture of the bricks, the position of an olive tree in the yard or the scent from a decades-old lemon tree. (p. 273)

Children's imaginings and memoirs of early years are filled with sensory details and sentimental moments; therefore, children of diaspora hold onto objects akin to their childhood in the lost homeland.

Riklis' (2008) *Lemon Tree* likewise embraces the symbolic lemon tree grove separating the protagonist Salma's border from the Israeli minister's house. In the film, the lemon grove symbolizes Salma's roots, and her memoirs on this land with her father are similar to the past of Bashir and his family in Tolan's (2008) book, they all recognize that "memories help us make sense of the world we live in" (Hammer, 2005, p. 40). Salma feels extremely attached to the ground with the

roots of lemon trees because of her past she is still lamenting. The reason of her resistance to not letting her lemon trees be chopped down is the representation of these trees as her past. She takes the case to the Supreme Court to claim her legal right on her own land. She stands as a courageous woman defending what belongs to her against the comparative man of power, the defence minister Navon, knowing the high possibility that the judge would be on the Israeli politician's side. Such a strong attachment to a place is not simply defined as the connection between nation and region, on the contrary, it refers to more elaborate implications, as Said (1983) explains:

> But this idea of place does not cover the nuances, principally of reassurance, fitness, belonging, association, and community, entailed in the phrase at home or in place […] It is in culture that we can seek out the range of meanings and ideas conveyed by the phrases belonging to or in a place, being at home in a place. (p. 8)

The imagery of lemon trees perfectly signifies the sour-sweet co-existence of the two nations, Palestinians and Israelis, on the same land in both works, which is emphasized with a song in the film as well. The film opens with the images of cutting lemons accompanied with a song whose lyrics encapsulate the whole case between the two nations:

> Lemon tree very pretty
> And the lemon flower is sweet
> But the fruit of the poor lemon
> Is impossible to eat. (Riklis, 2008)

The lyrics of this stanza refer to the present dilemma simultaneously carried by Palestinians and Israelis. The two nations have been trying to live together for more than half of a century because they have no other option.

Besides lemon trees connecting people to their homeland, the house also provides shelter to people by providing the satisfaction of belonging to a place. People feel safe when they live in their own shelter. Most people accept their homes as a part of their identity, and they do not want to be separated from that part of themselves. Family ties together with the issue of identity are the main reasons for feeling attached to a place, which means you belong somewhere, and you are rooted with certain bonds as fundamental necessities of being human:

> [T]he importance of belonging of feeling "part of something", that you are secure and there is a sense of possibility for the future is intimately tied to ideas of "home". In an emotional sense, home is a "safe place" where subtle nuances

> are understood and "where there is no need to explain oneself to outsiders". (Mason, 2007, p. 274)

A house is a safe place carrying the comfort of belonging and being separated from this comfort causes people in exile to have traumatic experiences of separation. House, home, and homeland all have unique connotations:

> [M]oving from the literal to the abstract. House is the literal object, the material place in which one lives, and it involves legal categories of rights, property, and possession and their opposites. Home is anyplace; it is temporary, and it is moveable; it can be built, rebuilt, and carried in memory and by acts of imagination […] Homeland has been the most absolute, abstract, mythical, and fought for of the three notions. (Naficy, 1999, p. 6)

Naficy (1999) concedes that all these three terms, house, home, and homeland, are "in crisis" due to the unique chaotic aspects of exiles. Nevertheless, as far as the experiences of Palestinians and Israelis in the book and the film, as a literal object, the family house has a critical function for exiled people as their past and hopes are left in their homeland. In *The Lemon Tree*, this attachment is given with one of the major symbols: a house that both families share: "This home involved two families, two peoples, two histories" (Tolan, 2008, p. 287). Bashir and Dalia live in the same house in different periods and share similar memories. After Bashir and his family's exile, Dalia and her family move to this house as the new owners, and Dalia spends her childhood in the same house. Both families feel safe in this house, and they perceive themselves belonging to this house. Their house is a substantial attachment for them to this land:

> The house itself becomes a metaphor for the conflict. Two families, one Palestinian, and one Israeli, both claim the same house, but it remains in the possession of the Israeli one. Dalia and Bashir, the central characters, even had the same bedroom. At the book's conclusion, when the house serves a community purpose as the Open House, the competing Khairi and Eshkenazi personal claims to the house have not been reconciled. (Pressman, 2008, p. 435)

This house is problematic from the beginning to the end since it incorporates separation and union interdependently for both families. The loss of this house does not only mean a kind of physical absence, but all notions of attachment related to it are completely lost, as Said (2000) identifies: "Exile is predicated on the existence of, love for, and bond with, one's native place; what is true of all exile is not that home and love of home are lost, but that loss is inherent in the

very existence of both" (p. 185). Due to both material and spiritual loss, exiles feel twice as much displaced. Exiles' concern is more than an inaccessible place here, the predicament turns into not only being far away from the motherland but also feeling homeless: "Exile locates the home in a homeland that is distant and for the time being unapproachable. Home becomes an impossible object, always receding with the horizon. In claiming a permanent residence on earth, to be away from the homeland is always to be homeless" (Peters, 1999, p. 31). This attachment and at the same time displacement to a place is denounced as restlessness by Bhabha (1994): "In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (p. 13). The necessity of feeling of secure in coping with life forces exiled people to create their homes in their imaginations as they are away from the real union to their house (Schulz & Hammer, 2003, p. 187). Nevertheless, the images in their minds do not heal their sufferings but damage them more. They all wish to have a fresh start on the land they call as homeland. This desire mostly results in disappointment: "The shock, disruption, or loss accompanying exile, together with the distance from the home's mundane realities, can invite the project of restoring the 'original' – the original home, the original state of being. Idealization often goes with mourning" (Peters, 1999, p. 19). By the misery caused by being away from the idealized home, the world turns into chaos in which the places and objects are not distinguishable enough. No other place than the idealized homeland is satisfactory for exiled people as asserted by Mahmud al-Hut:

> Lost Paradise! You were never too small for us,
> But now vast countries are indeed too small.
> Torn asunder your people,
> Wandering under every star. (as cited in Schulz & Hammer, 2003, p. 85)

Exiled people are not only unhomed, but they also feel homeless. Bhabha (1994) highlights the distinction between being unhomed or homeless: "To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres" (p. 13). Being unhomed means removing somebody from his/her own house regardless of that person's choice and the being deprived of it due to an external power. Being unhomed does not mean to be homeless. Even though it is not the desirable one, that person might still have a second home. On the other hand, being homeless is having no home neither the idealized one nor any kind to live in. In the case of Palestinians, they possess new houses but they do not feel at home, that is, they are

not complete homeless regardless their unwillingness to live in it or their desire to live somewhere else. They feel homeless because of the dramatic consequences of being an exile. Bashir and his family feel this displacement of both being unhomed and homeless by carrying their homes in their minds as Palestinians, Shalhat asserts: "Usually a man lives in a certain place in the world, but for the Palestinian the place lives in the man" (as cited in Schulz & Hammer, 2003, p. 97). The homeland does not just convey the physical entities like the house or the trees, it is a mental affair, therefore, exiled people feel at home through their imaginings when they are not. These illusionary images make it more complicated for exiled people to adjust to their new home because an exile would say that "home is within me. I carry everyone and everything I am with me wherever I go" (Hammad, as cited in Schulz & Hammer, 2003, p. 184) The images of the homeland haunt exiles till the end of their lives no matter where they are.

In the film, the characters are not psychically distant from their homelands, but there is an imaginary separation from their roots, which creates a kind of barrier preventing the two nations' dialogues. As well as the lemon trees between Salma and Mira, some other restrictions cause their lack of communication. They cannot communicate face-to-face, so they cannot express their true opinions clearly to solve the conflict. They cannot reach out to each other independently, one instant, Mira comes to knock on Salma's door, but a security guard comes and stops her in this critical moment. Her attitude reflects her actual desire for communication with her, but the ironic impossibility of sharing her hidden feelings echoes the obstacle between them caused by the political conflicts towards having harmonious relationships. The impracticability of the dialogue between Salma and Mira provokes them to believe what others say or think, therefore their belief is fed by prejudices.

Salma and Mira look at each other from their own window which turns out to be another symbol of psychological exile rather than having an intimate connection. Being neighbours does not seem to be troublesome initially, in fact, they fancy each other because of their akin lives. The analogy is provided through the lonely female imagery: Salma is on one side of the wall, and Mira is on the other. Both women do not have many friends and relatives around them. Salma only has an old companion, a family friend, and her children live at a distance from her. Mira has a daughter, but she lives far away as well. Salma and Mira are mirrors to each other as they have similar worlds in solitude. Mira demonstrates sympathy towards Salma, still, there are limitations, Mira utters: "I wish, I could be a better neighbour to her…but I suppose it is a bit too much hope for. There

is too much blood, too much politics, and there is a lemon grove between us" (Riklis, 2008). They cannot come together because of the socio-political obstacles hindering the dialogue between them in their lives, nonetheless, they are accepted as hope-promising characters like Bashir and Dalia. Overall, Salma, Mira, Bashir, and Dalia are distinctive from the rest of the society because they do not simply obey the restrictions imposed upon them, but they question, and search for alternatives for the continuation of the dialogue between the two nations. Even though Bashir and Dalia is capable of building a healthy relationship to some extent, Salma and Mira prefers to follow their destiny's rotating their lives by delivering hope for their future.

3.SEEKING WAYS OUT OF THE TRAUMA

Hope is an indispensable phenomenon for exiled people as they have an eternal longing to return. Seed (1999) narrates a story of a key to a house that a Palestinian man preserves as inherited from his ancestors who left their homelands in Spain five hundred years ago, the allusion to this story in the Palestinian narrative is that: "Palestinians cannot be expected to hand over the keys to houses they abandoned only two generations ago when they still retain the keys to a homeland from which they were exiled at an even more distant time" (p. 86). The argument is not only the key or Palestinians, but without doubt, many other emblems represent hope for Israelis as well by keeping both nations stronger in their struggle for return.

The fundamental concern is that the dispossession from the motherland keeps the hope of returning alive for both nations. Motherland signifies a vivid caring image like a mother who waits for her children to arrive home for dinner as depicted in Darwish's (1974) poem:

What have you cooked for us,
Mother, for we will return?
They have looted the oil jars,
Mother, and the flour sacks.
So bring us grain from the fields!
Bring in greens,
We are hungry. (p. 37)

Noticeably, motherland represents comfort, peace, and care, which is a warming mother's attitude towards her children. Although exiles have disastrous experiences, they struggle to keep their hopes alive for a better future. Palestinians and Israelis have similar traumas of exile reflected in different ways.

Both families in the book *The Lemon Tree* share similar experiences of displacement in the same house. In terms of the uniqueness of this house, they agree that it should not be only one nation's property, but they decide to use it for a common purpose for both nations. Bashir comes up with an idea for both families to turn it into a kindergarten and Dalia agrees with him as well:

> For Bashir, the solution had to be consistent with his rights and his lifelong struggle as a Palestinian. "This house is my homeland," he told Dalia. "I lost my childhood there. I would like the house to provide a very nice time for the Arab children of al-Ramla. I want them to have joy there. I want them to have the childhood that never had. What I lost there, I want to give them". (Tolan, 2008, p. 287)

This peace-giving message is obvious in the solution for the problematic house between the original owners, Bashir's family, and the settlers', Dalia's family. The main characters of the story, Bashir and Dalia, crave something they could hold on to for a healing remedy for their miseries in the same house, and this outcome serves as a relief.

Dalia, as the legal owner of the house, searches for a convenient way to please both families because she is also uncomfortable with the current situation and her attitude is truly ethical, as Theodor Adorno (1974) illustrates it: "It is a part of morality not to be at home in one's home" (p. 39). Even though Dalia feels this house to be her own, she acknowledges by heart that it also belongs to another family. Driven by this discomfort, the foundation of Open House, as comprehendible in its name, is a uniting image of possible Arab–Jewish co-existence. Eventually, Arab and Jewish children have the opportunity to live in the same house and play around the same lemon tree:

> In October 1991, the first four Arab kindergarten children walked through the doors Ahmad Khairi had framed and secured fifty-five years earlier. This was the beginning of Bashir's dream: to bring joy to the Arab children of al-Ramla. Soon the mission would expand, incorporating the vision of Dalia, Yehezkel, and Michail: to be a place of encounter between Arabs and Jews.
>
> They would call it Open House (Tolan, 2008, p. 333).

The promise of hope is given through this decision, Tolan (2008) names one of the last chapters as hope in *The Lemon Tree*. In the book, Arab and Jewish children plant a new lemon tree together with Dalia: "Dalia's hands and the hands of the Arabs and Jews lowered the sapling into a hole beside the old stump. They all went to the kitchen and brought a pail of water, and everyone gently tamped down the

soil" (Tolan, 2008, p. 392). Dalia expresses her sorrow for the absence of the Khairi family here with her to witness this miraculous incident. The newly planted lemon tree marks the positive ending of the book with the hope for a new life and a more peaceful atmosphere in this multicultural land. The solution for a better life rests in the hands of children:

> This dedication is without obliterating the memories. Something is growing out of the old history. Out of the pain, something new is growing [...] it's the next generation now that's going to create a reality. That we are entrusting something in their hands. We are entrusting both the old and the new. (Tolan, 2008, p. 392)

The book signifies imposing optimistic images in the minds of children like the fresh leaves of the tree. The story emphasises that it is vital not to repeat the same mistakes of Bashir and Dalia's families by imbuing the clean minds with negative thoughts. The prejudices just damage the bond in children's friendship and cause harbouring ill thoughts toward each other.

In the film *Lemon Tree*, there is no definite solution like Open House initiated in the book. Nevertheless, the underlying moral of the film is explicit that peace-seeker characters still exist regardless of the ones who create trouble. Salma and Mira take emphatic steps toward each other and bravely demonstrate their willingness to be good neighbours. Even though they cannot be intimate neighbours, they still promise hope for the future. The existence of barriers between them is expected to disappear for Israelis and Palestinians to look at the same blue sky as one unique state:

> I do think, however, that the settlements have to be dismantled and the populations have to face each other as not only neighbors but in fact in coexistence, in one basically homogenous state, which we call historical Palestine, whether you call it Israel or a Palestinian state. The economies and the histories are so intertwined that I still think that in the end a binational state is the only long-term solution. (Barsamian & Said, 2003, p. 63)

The survival of the lemon trees in the film possibly refers to two contrasting interpretations derived from the double-sided meaning of lemons. For Salma, it represents hope, because she still possesses her grove with the growing trees. Furthermore, the lemon grove that used to be like a wall between Salma and Mira no longer poses an obstacle for them to each other. The land turns out to be more convenient for the neighbours. Only if they get rid of other national conflicts, it would be possible to have a unique life. Knowing that they are not still ready for

that, Mira abandons her house without talking to Salma in person. The lemon trees are chopped down to a low level, but not uprooted completely. No matter how the two women understand and sympathize with each other, there remain sour-tasted social and political conflicts that they are not capable of solving on their own. Like the sweet and sour nature of lemon, optimism and unsolved conflicts come together in the end. The film tries to show that peace can only be achieved via the sensibility of feeling empathy to understand the hardship of people on the other side. Riklis tries to explain that it is the law of nature to build and tear down walls physically, but people should have the talent to tear down the walls of prejudices and disagreements between them to have a better and peaceful future in the same land. The lemon grove with the old roots but waiting for the new branches and leaves for the future is an exceptional symbolic gift for the future generations at the end.

CONCLUSION

The Lemon Tree by Sandy Tolan (2008) is a book about the experiences of exile in Palestinian and Israeli families as symbols of their nations' endeavour on the land where both sides are "the Other" to one another. They are the figures of hope due to their positive approaches toward each other regardless of abundant stereotypical beliefs. Ostensibly, the two main characters in the book, Dalia and Bashir, substitute for their own nations, on the other hand, they go beyond their people in terms of daring judgements and positive attitudes. The film *Lemon Tree* by Eran Riklis (2008) is also about the psychological displacements of Palestinians and Israelis caused by the political and social conflicts with "the Other". Nevertheless, Salma and Mira are presented as the symbols of hope for a peaceful future of the two nations like Dalia and Bashir in the book.

Both in the book and the film, the characters' memories are important in shaping their lives because those images are their unique hopes giving meaning to their lives. They have an idealized past, which they imagine having been happy with their families, and they cannot get used to their current estate by virtue of these recollections. The two basic types of exiles are demonstrated in the analysed works: those who have real experiences in the lost homeland individually like Ahmad and Salma and who have not had the opportunity to inhabit there but have been told stories about it like Bashir and Dalia. The first type of exiles, by having the chance to live there are distinctive from the second type in the way that they imagine the land with a cultural perspective with still alive moments in their

minds rather than national. On the other hand, for the second type of people who are born into exile without any authentic experiences, the country conveys an insubstantial and idealized national image decorated by the stories and memories of other people. The unique characteristic of all exiles is the glorification of the same perfect place image. They share similar desires of going back to the imaginary homeland created in their minds and the impossibility of return makes it more desirable. They all construct obstacles between Palestinians and Israelis because they tend to blame "the Other" for their lost happiness in their motherland. As in Said's metaphor, the condition of exiles is the coldest season, "a mind of winter", when people hold on to the alluring reflections of summer and autumn, whilst the spring seems to be near but unobtainable in the present circumstance (2000, p. 186). The harsh plights of winter prevent the imagination of the forthcoming springtime; thus, people just dream up the recent history. Correspondingly, it is not simple for exiles to envisage a bright new future as a result of the pain in their life.

The research reveals that any object can be a reminder of the homeland for exiles, the reason for their being stuck in their pasts. The lemon tree is the symbol of attachment to the ground and to the homeland for Bashir, his father, Dalia, her family, and Salma. Lemon trees are precious because they represent the idealized land that all of them desire to go back to as a witness to their glorified happiness in this place. Lemon trees are also symbols of the sour-sweet situation between Palestinians and Israelis. They have sweet dreams, but when they move forward in their relationship with "the Other", they turn out to be sour. A lemon tree in the garden is as valuable as a treasure chest keeping all the family secrets and being dragged away together with exiles. The more people are away from home, the more their suffering grows. For exiles, owning an ordinary house does not content; they only wish to have the old one as Bashir and Dalia's house. On the other hand, Salma lives in the same house in the film, she still yearns for the house which used to be full of joyful moments with her family members.

The study concludes that the more exiles stay away from their past and ties to their homeland, the more powerless they feel. They seek for assistance, but they do not have armies or any forces protecting them. They are alone, and they feel an immediate necessity to recover from their broken lives. The analysis on the works indicates that exiles are physically away from their homeland, so they try to heal the wounds of their traumas by inventing some solutions like the foundation of Open House in Tolan's (2008) book. The lamentation after the dispossession

of the idealized land is measureless, however, some spirited exiles like Dalia, Bashir, Salma, and Mira choose to establish an exceptional present moment and auspicious destiny for themselves and the peaceful co-existence of their nations.

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