

SEARCHING THE IDENTITY IN THE MINDS OF SOME
ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN AUTHORS

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the current struggle of the past 100 years or more between the Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish peoples in the previous Ottoman Empire territory of Palestine. The current research analyzes memoirs by four authors- Oz, Nusseibeh, Karmi, and Berghash with the aid of the New Historicism theory to establish the factors that caused the conflict's emergence and the reasons that it has extended over the decades. The analysis of these memoirs allows for a thorough investigation into the minds of these Israeli and Palestinian authors that can be extended to their populations. It is established that both parties perceive themselves as victims regardless of the initiator of the attack. However, there are similarities and differences in the authors' perspectives of the conflict. They engage one another in their discourses, thereby providing a peaceful avenue for presenting grievances and suggesting a way forward for ending the war.

My current research highlights three main factors that contribute to the perspectives concerning the Israeli- Palestinian conflict :1) identity 2) religion and 3) individual experiences. It is evident from the discussions of Oz, Nusseibeh, Berghash, and Karmi that both the Israelis and Palestinians have played a role in extending the conflict over the years. These authors prove that research is an important tool in formulating peace strategies, and they provide a foundation for understanding the circumstances of both parties from a largely view, thereby providing subjectivity and factual accuracy, which is an important step in the peace process.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the current struggle between the Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish peoples in the previous Ottoman Empire territory of Palestine. The region includes the state of Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, also referred to as Gaza. From the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, politicians, diplomats, and other relevant personalities have tried several times to form a two-state nation and subsequently create an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel (Haushofer et al. 17927). Unfortunately, these efforts have not been successful because the many disputes over such matters as borders, security, and control of Jerusalem city have made it impossible to arrive at a mutual solution. This explains the persistent conflict to the present day (Haushofer et al. 17928).

One way to resolve conflicts is through communication. However, the conflict has many variables that interact to give it shape and determine its duration of existence. It has been suggested that, among other aspects, culture stands out as a main factor in causing the persistent conflicts between the Israelis and Palestinians. Culture is a way of life; it's a system of operation that is largely rigid and guides all areas of an individual's life. Subsequently, the way we talk, react, respond, think, and ultimately make decisions is largely determined by our culture (Jandt 60). Given the differences across cultures, conflict among people of different cultures becomes difficult to handle. Culture is an aspect of conflict management. The two are inseparable. When both parties operate by the same guidelines, actions appear comprehensible and foreseen. But when rules are different, the actions may be viewed as unreasonable or irrational (Jandt 96).

Culture can be categorized as individualist or collectivist, each of which has distinct values and belief systems. In collectivist cultures, the interest of the group prevails over the interest of the individual. In this type of culture, people are tightly integrated into strong, cohesive groups that last a lifetime and that offer protection in exchange for submission. For these cultures, building relationships is a crucial element in resolving conflicts. Individual objectives are suppressed for the benefit of the group's welfare (Jandt 99). Conflicts are viewed as shameful. In individualist cultures, on the other hand, conflict is viewed as a normal part of human interaction. People focus on individual objectives rather than on benefitting the entire group. Rather than emphasizing the building of healthy relationships that will ease the process of conflict resolution, individuals focus on reaching a solution regardless of the harm that it may cause some members (Jandt 100).

These assertions are applicable in helping us understand the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians and the reason why it has extended for a long duration with diminishing hope of a lasting solution. The Israeli culture is largely individualistic, whereas the Palestinian culture is largely collectivist (Triandis 53). This difference poses a great obstacle because of the divergent values and belief systems of these two types of cultures. For instance, mediation is an essential aspect of conflict resolution but is approached differently by the two cultures. Individualist cultures prefer to involve a mediator who is trained, impartial, and with no relationship to the respective parties. Collectivist cultures, on the other hand, find the inclusion of a mediator an unwelcome experience and also believe that the involvement may negatively impact the relationship between the two conflicting parties (Jandt 101).

In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the involvement of secondary parties, including the United Nation (UN), Britain, and other stakeholders, who have played a role in the attempt to solve the conflict is not necessarily welcome by both parties (Van Hoorn 270). Although the Israelis may not find it problematic, the Palestinians, on the other hand, would prefer to work with someone who is close to the conflict and probably has a stake in the issues. Subsequently, the moment that the secondary parties got involved in the conflict, the perception changed as well as the willingness to end the conflict. When either of the conflicting parties' views that the environment to some extent does not favor their interests and goes against some of their beliefs or values, they develop a mental barrier that makes it much harder to solve the conflict (Jandt 75). Additionally, such an environment threatens their identity because it appears to be trying to modify a part of them that defines who they are as a population (Shapiro 10).

1.2 History of both parties:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has lasted over an extended duration, mainly because of the struggle over territory. Constant wars over time caused shifts of territory, further intensifying conflicts (Bickerton and Klausner 116). It started with the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. That conflict was a result of the inter-communal dispute between Israelis and Palestinians beginning in 1920 and turned into full-scale violence in the 1947_48 civil wars (Peters and Newman 5). The conflict is one of the globe's longest-running and most complicated. At the core is the dispute between two movements: the Jewish Zionist project and the Palestinian nationalist project. Both movements demand ownership of the same territory. A neutral ground has been hard to find. The conflict is centered on ownership and control (Cohn-Sherbok and Dawoud 10).

Jews fleeing persecution in Europe desired to create a national homeland in the then Arab and Muslim majority region in the Ottoman and subsequent British Empire. However, the Palestinians resisted the Jews of the land as their rightful property. Efforts by the UN to allocate a section of the land to each side failed. The newly settled Jews and neighboring Arab nations engaged in many wars over the land. The current lines largely display the results of two of the wars, one fought in 1948 and the other in 1967. The 1967 war is especially important in understanding the ongoing conflict because it resulted in Israel gaining control of the West Bank and Gaza (also referred to as the Gaza Strip), two regions that are home to huge Palestinian populations (Fabian 43). Gaza, also referred to as the Gaza Strip, is under the control of Hamas, which is an Islamist-based party.

It has been suggested that the only peaceful resolution to this conflict over land is a two-state solution, in which an independent Palestinian State would include Gaza and a large part of the West Bank, and the remainder of the land would be left to Israel. Although this solution is theoretically clear, it is difficult to put into practice. Although a one-state solution has also been suggested, meaning a one large Israeli or Palestinian nation, many politicians are opposed, stating that it will cause more challenges than it will solve. Regardless, this option is becoming more likely over time for various political and demographic reasons.

1.2.1 Israel

Israel is a nation in the Middle East situated at the eastern point of the Mediterranean Sea. It is bordered by Lebanon to the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan to the southeast, and Egypt to the south-west (Liverani 104). The Negev Desert is in the southern part of Israel (Sachar 30). The capital of Israel is Jerusalem. Jews, Christians,

and Muslims all consider it to be their Holy Land. Ben Gurion established the state of Israel on May 14th 1948 making it the first Jewish state in 2000 years. It officially came into existence upon the end of the British rule in Palestine. The founding of the modern term state of Israel during this time was the result of the success of the Zionist movement. Since the late 1880's, there was the drive to found a Jewish state in the homeland of the Jewish people in the land of Israel (Eyal 900).

1.2.2 Origin

Israelites; is the term used for the Jews who inhabited Israel in ancient times, whereas "Israeli" is the modern term, were members of the 12 tribes of Israel until 930 B.C., at which time two independent Hebrew states in Palestine were formed; the 10 northern tribes constituting the kingdom of Israel were referred to as Israelites to differentiate them from the southern part of Judah (Sachar 20). The Assyrians eventually conquered the northern kingdom in 721 B.C., and that population was ultimately absorbed by other populations (Sher 18). According to the religious story of the Hebrew Bible, the origin of the Israelites dates back to the Biblical patriarchs and matriarchs beginning with Abraham and his wife Sarah, their son Isaac and his wife Rebecca, and then Isaac and Rebecca's son Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel, which gave the nation its name as mentioned in (Genesis 32:28 and 35:10).

The founding of the modern term state of Israel on May 14th 1948 as a result of the success of the Zionist movement was a great step in the establishment of the Jewish identity. That marked a significant milestone from the era of the 1880's when Jews struggled to establish a Jewish state in the homeland of the Jewish people in the land of Israel (Cohn-Sherbok and Dawoud 50). Following that, the Jews established an identity

that united all of them both from a religious and political front. Zionism congregated numerous Jews from all over the globe back to their ancient habitation in the Middle East. Further, Israel was re-established as the hub locality for the Jewish identity (Eyal 905). Contrary to the perception of some critics that Zionism was a violent and discriminatory ideology, it is a movement whose main objective was to re-establish the Jewish presence and identity in Israel.

1.2.3 Religion

Israel was established to be the state of the Jewish people; that is, a Jewish state whose religion and culture is essentially Jewish. The declaration of independence of May 14th 1948 clearly highlighted the purpose of the Jewish state. The main objective was to re-establish the Jewish identity and presence in Israel. That made Israel the center for all Jewish people giving them a sense of identity and belonging (Cohn-Sherbok and Dawoud 40). All Jews regardless of their location across the world would identify with Israel as their ancestral home (Ottley 30). Ultimately, the Jews established a permanent thumbprint that united them as one; something that had been looked forward to for many years without success had finally been achieved.

On the other hand, Judaism is the religion established by the Jews after the biblical period. The religion of the Jews came along in history after the Biblical period. The Bible was the basis, but the post-Biblical period is when Judaism developed into the faith we know today. Judaism is a monotheistic religion established among the ancient Hebrews (Deshen 30). It involves the belief in the existence of one God or the oneness of God. It is not just the oneness but the uniqueness of God that is seen and held as very

important in monotheism. This one God is not comparable to other religions' alleged existing gods; the one God is the embodiment of all divine might and power.

The basic monotheistic belief is that the one true God exists in solitude and must be acknowledged as such (Shelef 50). This new, monotheistic understanding of God is differed from the beliefs of all other societies of the time, and God was seen by the Israelites to be the creator of the universe and humanity. In their view, he is both the creator of the natural world and the ethical system to which human beings must follow. Everything is in His hands. He is holy, that is, He is sacred and at the center of existence, subsequently having an impact on the lives and destinies of people (Albertz & Schmitt 30).

1.2.4 Parties involved in the conflict

The Bayit Yehudi is a religious and, to some extent, an extremist party that does not believe in a Palestinian state anywhere, whether in east Jerusalem or the West Bank. The party is against the return of Palestinian refugees from other nations to the west of the Jordan River (Lazaroff). Naftali Bennett heads the party; whose platform suggests the giving of Israeli citizenship to about 50,000 Palestinians living in the same area of the West Bank (Area C) with about 350,000 Israelis. The general feeling is that many of the Palestinians who live in other areas (Areas A and B) should be given freedom. Additionally, it is stated that Gaza should remain part of the West Bank and linked to Egypt (Lazaroff). The party believes that God promised the land to the people of Israel. The eternal connection between the Israelis and their land is thus not a topic of discussion (Hermann 363).

The United Torah Judaism Party concerns itself with religion and socioeconomic issues. The party does not have a formal stand on the conflict or on the West Bank. Instead, its position is decided on by a council of rabbinical elders.

The Zionist Union Party is headed by Isaac Herzog. It is a liberal party and suggests the creation of two states. The final borders of Israel would include the settlement bloc. The Palestinian refugees, on the other hand, would not be allowed to return anywhere within Israel's borders. Instead, they would return to the future nation of Palestine. Jerusalem would be given more prominence as the eternal capital of Israel in line with the platform of the party. The party is not clear on whether Jerusalem should be united or divided (Saunders 15). Also, restoration for Israeli refugees for Palestinian lands would be included in such a pact.

The Yisrael Beytenu Party, headed by Avigdor Liberman, believes in the creation of two states to solve the conflict that should be agreed upon by both the Palestinians and the moderate Arab arena (Flamhaft 444). The party is in support of redesigning Israel's borders to include the maximum number of Israel citizens in Israel and the maximum number of Palestinians in Palestine. Also, Israeli Arabs would be given the freedom to decide whether they want to retain their Israeli citizenship (Karsh 25).

The Kulanu Party, headed by Moshe Kahlon, is largely a religious party aligned with the interests of the Israelis. The party has a centrist platform that supports the settlement blocs and Jewish settlements in Jerusalem to be included in Israel's final borders in any ultimate-status pact with the Arabs. The party also opposes the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel (Saunders 15).

The Yesh Atid Party, to some extent, is extremist in its belief that Israel should have the right to preserve the security interests of the state but that the Palestinian state should be stripped of this power. The party is also against the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel. Additionally, there should be an immediate stop to settlement construction outside of the settlement blocs during the negotiations with the Arabs. The ultimate solution according to the party is a two-state solution (Krebs 14).

1.2.5 Palestine identity and origin

Palestine is the region of the eastern Mediterranean area consisting of sections of modern Israel and the Palestinian regions of the Gaza Strip within the area of the Jordan River. The term Palestine has been argued to include Jordan (Pappe 63). The geographic area indicated by the name and the political position of it has changed over time. The territory is also called the Holy Land and is seen as sacred. Since the 20th century, it has been the issue of conflicting claims of Israeli and Palestinian movements. Often, the conflict has resulted in extended violence and many instances of open warfare (Kaplan 128).

The term Palestine is believed to originate from the name “Philistia,” which identifies the Philistines, who were inhabitants of the area in the 12th century B.C. Palestinians have been under the rule of Persians, Babylonians, and Assyrians among others. After the end of World War I, the British took control of the territory. The UN suggested a partitioning plan for Palestine in 1947 that would establish two independent states_ a Jewish state and an Arab state. Jerusalem would then become a global territory. Most Palestinians were against the plan, arguing that they were the majority and therefore deserved a larger section of the land (Kaplan 50).

1.2.6 Religion

Approximately 93% of Palestinians are Sunni Muslims, whereas approximately 6% are Christian. A negligible percentage are Samaritans, a population that follows an early version of Judaism. This population is located in the West Bank around the Nablus area. The origin of the term Islam is Arabic and means submission, commitment, and surrender. It is considered a way of getting complete peace by voluntarily submitting to the divine purpose. Islam is a monotheistic faith with a belief in one God (Allah). It shares some beliefs with Christianity and Judaism because of the same history that goes back to the patriarch Abraham and the first prophet Adam (Grehan 20). All three of these religions believe in the existence of one God, who is kind to the human race. Muslims believe that the last prophet was Muhammad, who was born in Mecca around 570 C.E. He was a shepherd and a merchant and disregarded superstitions and social and economic unfairness. He was disturbed by the fact that people were worshipping many gods. They had forgotten about Abraham's message that they should worship only one God.

1.2.7 Palestinian factions involved in the conflict

Hamas and Fatah are the two most popular parties involved in the conflict and directing the political scene in Palestine. The two parties have from time to time tried to achieve reconciliation the extended conflict that drove them to fight each other in 2007 (Bhasin and Hallward 80). Hamas has always ruled and appeared to dominate Fatah since 2007 after defeating Fatah in parliamentary elections. Fatah was then pushed out of Gaza when they disputed the outcome of the vote (Brown 35). Regardless of the differences in their ideologies, both parties have the same objective of creating a Palestinian state.

However, Hamas is largely an extremist party, whereas Fatah is largely liberal (Lovlie 105).

Hamas. The term “Hamas” means zeal. The Muslim Brotherhood created it at the end of the first uprising in late 1987. The objective was to provide a platform for the party’s engagement in the violent conflict with the Israelis while protecting the Brotherhood as well as its broad network of social welfare and religious organizations (Satloff 13). The mission of Hamas is to confront Israel over their encroachment of sacred Muslim land (Brown 35). The mission is to be achieved through armed struggle or evolutionary Islamization of Palestinian society. The party has three circles of leadership local, external, and international _ each with distinct areas of responsibility, although they all play an important function in deciding on Hamas strategy when dealing with terrorist operations against Israel (Bhasin and Hallward 80). Hamas is willing to negotiate to reach an agreement with the Israelis, but such an agreement does not necessarily translate to peace. From their perspective, cooperation is essential in life but does not really warrant diplomatic or official publicity (Sayigh 4).

The leaders of the party are adamant on not compromising their main principles, even if international aid is cut off (Burton 530). Simply put, there is no trading their political framework for money. Hamas rejects the idea of a two states as the solution to the unending conflict (Milton-Edwards and Farrell 30). Their decision derives from three main considerations, the first of which is the Islamic ideology that any section of the Muslim land has been gifted to them (Waqf). Therefore, no Muslim can give up land ownership (Berti 15). Second, there is a religious link to the land that is connected with the function of the broader Muslim Brotherhood movement. The movement values the

importance of developing Islamic rules in the entire region in preparation for the liberation of Palestine (Satloff 18). Therefore, allowing Israel to occupy the land would negatively impact the Islamic identity of Hamas as well as its place within the Muslim Brotherhood (Burton 535). Third, the concept of “hudna,” derived from the Muslim tradition, allows Muslims to seek a truce with their enemies (Bhasin and Hallward 85), but a breach of this truce validates Palestinians going to war with Israel (Klein 885). The general idea is that the party is willing to create and respect agreements reached between the two nations, but this approach is constrained only to resolving daily life issues instead of establishing a long-term peace agreement. It is clear from this that Hamas is largely an extremist party.

Fatah. Fatah, also called the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), was formed by Yasser Arafat in 1959. It was a political movement that aimed at searching for a way forward in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Brown 40). It is a part of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and forms the largest faction of the organization (Amour 622). The party seeks to create a state through nonviolent ways, negotiations, global diplomacy, and civil disobedience. This is contrary to their rival party Hamas that emphasizes sustaining violence as an alternative (Zanotti 8). Moreover, Fatah supports a secular framework of rule. Subsequently, the party allows more room for negotiations and flexibility as opposed to sticking aggressively to their traditions without considering the effect on the Israelis (Klein 886). This flexibility makes the party a liberal movement compared with Hamas, whose focus is on creating a society controlled largely by Islamic laws and customs (Zanotti 8).

Fatah is guided by a number of principles that focus mainly on the needs of the Palestinians. First, the party believes that Palestine is independent and should thus control its own future (B. Smith 15). Second, the party is opposed to Zionism, exploitation, and imperialism. Third, the acknowledgment of Israel's right to land ownership is viewed as expansionist imperialism and violent Zionist occupation (Abusada 15). In any case, Fatah views Zionism as a natural friend of exploitation and international imperialism (Abusada 8). Fourth, all Arabs are seen as having a duty to participate in the efforts to liberate Palestine as well as defend its holiness. This is regarded as both a religious and humanitarian role (AbuZayyad and Johannsen 6). Also, the party holds that it is an independent revolutionary movement that is representative of the entire Palestinian population. Fatah is against the idea that external forces, such as the British and the UN, can make decisions concerning the sovereignty of Palestine (AbuZayyad and Johannsen 7). In this way they concur with Hamas' main ideology.

1.2.8 Characteristics of and factors that add to the conflict

Hamas and Fatah drifted in their political ideologies beginning in June 2007 after Hamas militias conquered and controlled the Gaza Strip. That followed after the attack of the Palestinian Authority forces led by Fatah (AbuZayyad and Johannsen 1). The outcome of the war caused the two parties to form a monopoly of force in Gaza and the West Bank respectively Gaza controlled by Hamas and the West Bank by Fatah. The implication is that it is impossible to talk about peace with the Israelis when the Palestinians themselves are in two camps. Any hope of ever attaining peace in the region has to begin with the reconciliation of the two parties if peace and security are to be realized in the region (AbuZayyad and Johannsen 1). It has also been argued that the

weapons targeted at Israel also represented the power conflict within the intra-Palestinian environment. Thus, the rockets and grenades also targeted the Palestinian Authority with the intention of demonstrating its incapability to provide the item sought after dearly by Israel, that is, security (Abusada 14). The situation crippled the Palestinian Authority, who became incapable of progressing with peace negotiations. As a result, the increased conflict between the Israelis and Hamas formed the internal rivalry between distinct institutions targeted by Israel apart from the two competitors: Hamas and Fatah (B. Smith 10).

1.3 Identity in the Israel-Palestinian conflict

The relationship between identity and conflict has been argued to be mutual and complicated (Oren et al. 133). Aspects connected to identity can clash, resulting in escalation and development of a conflict. Also, the intense extended conflict has a significant impact on identity. The connections are circular because the elements cause the conflict, which ultimately, as a result of the conflict duration, affect the identity of a population (Oren et al. 133). In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both groups-at the extremes- hold that there can only be one nation in existence, either Israeli or Palestinian. This demonstrates the rigidity in their denial of each other's identity as a national group that has a rightful claim to the land (Namli 1), regardless of the fact that it is clear to all involved that the desire to maintain all elements of who they are as a people has largely been responsible for the lack of reaching a consensus concerning the conflicting issues.

Rabbi Dr. Ronald Kronish, the Founding Director of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI), asserts that the element of identity is a crucial factor in the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He emphasizes the aspect of Palestinian Arab identity in Israel because it is usually avoided or not given the required attention. He learned from his encounters that Palestinian Arabs hold their religious identity as a very important factor regardless of whether they are strictly or moderately religious or even secular in their perspective. This seems to be more striking with Muslims than Christians (Kronish 50). Nonetheless, it is not possible to comprehend either the Jews or Arabs by just analyzing them in terms of their ethnic or national status. Yet Kronish is surprised that Palestinian Arabs in Israel are only looked at in terms of their ethnicity while their religious identity is ignored. He argues that it is not possible to understand Palestinians in terms of their national identity alone. By doing so, an incomplete picture is derived. He argues that the observers of the Arab fraternity in Israel keep missing this important point. On the contrary, they may be looking at their religion as part of the problem and hence not a part of the solution in Israel. Following that, the aspect continues to be ignored and its importance undermined (Kronish 50).

Moreover, even though Palestinians live as citizens in Israel and desire to do so in the future, they will always identify with the struggle and objectives of the Palestinian people in their hope that one day they will have a Palestinian state alongside the Israeli one. They desire that they be viewed as not just Arabs but also Palestinian in terms of art, dance, history, literature, food and dialect among others (Kronish 55). This revelation demonstrates that the idea of a one-state solution is largely unattractive and impossible because of the aspect of identity. The fact that Palestinians desire to identify with their people regardless of the fact that they are brought up and educated in Israel and spend most of their lifetime in Israel is proof enough that identity is a very important aspect in

the lives of people. It is largely ineffective to force people to assume an identity that causes them to feel inadequate, incomplete, and misplaced (Shelef, 30). This means that it is time that the two communities and all other relevant stakeholders acknowledge that identity is a key factor in the conflict and as such has played an essential role in causing the escalation of the conflict over the decades.

The Israeli and Palestinian identities affect and are affected by the present conflict (Namli 2). In the Israeli view, Jerusalem is regarded as a historical connection between its Jewish identity and homeland. This is a reflection of their religious-cultural and national differentiation of Israel. In other words, it is what makes Israelis stand out as a unique entity (Namli 2). The Holocaust experience is rooted in their memory and is now being replaced by the Palestinian threat. As a result, any threat to their existence is not handled lightly. On the other hand, for the Palestinians, the land is a holy site and is a symbol of their Islamic history and heritage (Namli 2). The 1948 war (also known as Nakba) caused suffering to the Palestinians who lost their homes, property, and way of life. The situation impacted negatively on their identity as a population. Subsequently, their identity has been formed by their historical engagement with Israel and through opposition to the Israeli identity (Namli 2).

Both camps, therefore, have constructed their identities by interacting with one another while viewing the other as a threat. The outcome is the creation of obstacles to resolution (Oren et al. 140). Conflict because of identity is about one or more parties looking at the identity of the other as a threat (Namli 5). In instances in which identities are constructed through engagement and interpretation of that engagement, the outcome could be the denial of the identity of the other. Ultimately, a vicious circle is perpetuated

(Namli 5). The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a conflict over identity, given that the two sides are colliding because of empowering the “self” while dominating the “other”

(Namli 5). Over the decades, the denial from Arab states and Palestine regarding the state of Israel reflects similar beliefs held by the Israeli regarding denial of existence of a Palestinian side.

The conflict is largely a social construction of reality (Oren et al. 145). For instance, the Palestinian identity came about because of the settlement of Jewish immigrants in Palestine as well as the believed threat which played an important role in the development of the conflict. This applies in both the Israeli and Palestinian cases (Namli 6). A clear symbol of the power of identity in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was also visible in the Second Intifada. Even though that was not the only cause, the rebellion was triggered by Ariel Sharon’s tour of the Temple Mount in 2000. That action was not taken lightly by the Palestinians who saw the action as a direct insult to their religious and social identity (Namli 15). On the other hand, the Israelis reacted violently to the uprisings, which further worsened the situation.

Subsequently, the use of extra force by the Israelis caused the Palestinians to further justify their stand and encouraged them to seek revenge (Namli 15). This gave rise to the emergence of Arab suicide bombers, who were viewed as heroes and a reflection of their might in war. For the Israelis, the situation presented a threat to their existence. The perception of Arab terrorists out to destroy them acquired great importance (Namli 15). The narrative at this time emphasized Israel's security and its Jewishness. The mass fear that gripped the Israeli nation during this period was a factor that led to the escalation of the conflict. This discussion makes clear the fact that the events of the conflict were

designed in a way that made each side give a contradictory meaning to the reasons for the conflict. Both camps, through intersubjective experiences, formed two different stories, identities, and histories. These played the main role in developing the cohesive identity of each camp (Namli 16).

As advanced by Shapiro, identity has a broad scope because it is not just a matter of an individual but the relation between the individual and the other. In other words, identity is about the individual and also the space between the individual and the other party (Shapiro 20). It is this emotional space that determines the relationship between parties as either friends or enemies. Shapiro's arguments shed light on why the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has extended over time especially because of the aspect of identity. What suitably applies in this context is the argument on the fixed-identity fallacy in which a party immediately resorts to self-defense when members feel that their identity has been threatened (Shapiro 15). Occurrences such as the 1948 catastrophe for the Palestinians and the Holocaust for the Israelis impact greatly on identity. Identity is an internal factor contributing to conflict. It includes beliefs, rituals, allegiances, values, and emotionally meaningful experiences.

Emotionally charged conflicts are challenging for individuals because in the instance that people feel threatened for what they believe their identity is or for what they stand for, a set of emotional forces stream in and encourages conflict (Shapiro 10). Both camps have found it hard to compromise on their identities to reach a long-term peace agreement because their identities are largely connected to their religious system, which is unchangeable. Shapiro talks of the phenomenon of dual identity as a way of helping solving conflicts especially those that involve emotions. However, for that to work,

populations have to embrace the notion of the dual nature of identity, implying that they can be flexible and change some aspects of their identity that will not largely affect their overall identity (Shapiro 20). In the Israeli-Palestinian case, this has not been possible.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 New Historicism Theory

A theory provides a framework that enables researchers to provide the best interpretation of phenomena. It facilitates understanding and also enables the revealing of elements that may have seemed insignificant but which are important in understanding texts (Wodak 625). The New Historicism attempts to give an objective view of reality by allowing the possibility of various interpretations. It is based on the argument that it is impossible to alienate meaning from the context and history of both the author and the environment (Brannigan 30). The theory focuses on the influence of time as well as the reaction of the critic to the complete meaning of the text. Hence, literary works are the result of the interaction of time, situations, surrounding, beliefs, and prejudices (Fox-Genovese 234).

New Historicism aims at interpreting a text by analyzing it within the context of the present ideas and social assumptions of the historical period of text production. Greenblatt is the founder of the New Historicism Theory in the late of 1970s, focuses on the political roles of literature as well as the idea of power. He also studies the complex way in which cultures produce and recreate themselves. In other words, he attempts to give meaning to literature from a historic outlook, an aspect that the New Criticism failed to do (Parvini 100). Interpretation is comprehensive and includes consideration of the time and context of text production (Hickling 55). He looks at history not as an

explanation of events that happened in the past, but instead as a complex description of human reality. That is regarded as a characteristic by the society in context. Even if a literary work fails to inform on the factual elements of the area of origin, it will enlighten on the prevailing ways of thinking at that specific period. Hence, a literary work should be regarded as an outcome of its duration, its location, and the circumstances of its formation instead of an isolated development of genius (Sharma 5).

The political and cultural angle that the theory provides in the interpretation of any literary work encourages literary studies to re-establish a link with the political and social world that gave rise to it. The rise of New Historicism was encouraged by the developments of Poststructuralism that opposed the idea that history is just about narration (Sharma 8). That means that it is possible to give meaning to current events by studying past happenings, including the upbringing of the author and the contextual changes among other aspects. Earlier theories argued that the past was to be largely viewed as myths passed down through generations by specific population categories such as the elite because of their own interests (Hickling 56). New Historicism is not about the activists of a few elites but instead is formulated out of the abundance of probable acts and how they are given meaning. In this case, it is possible to present the past in the form of representations that can be evaluated as a network of material practices.

The theory further advances that it is hard to generalize a population from the activities of their political or cultural system. On the contrary, it is the ordinary activities and circumstances of daily life that inform the belief system of a duration. The argument is that each distinct discourse of a culture should be revealed and scrutinized to demonstrate how all discourses engage with each other and with institutions as well as

people and other aspects of culture (Parvini 20). New Historicism presents an approach that changed closed systems with rigid meanings to open systems with clear meaning, thereby creating importance. Consequently, the dominant discourses were done away with while varied-meaning interpretations were encouraged. The instability and competing discourses in place create a platform where an engagement between the varied discourses is established. That engagement among the different discourses is what molds a culture and interlinks all the human operations including the writing of, reading of, and giving meaning to a text (Hickling 56). That is what New Historicism emphasizes.

Generally, New Historicism enables one to display a broad historical context for analyzing literature and as a result allows for the examination of how the work is a reflection of the times in which the author wrote it. In this way, it becomes possible to understand how present cultural contexts influence the conclusions made by the critic (Wodak 630). The theory holds that there is never a simple yes or any response in the analysis of a text. On the contrary, it is imperative that the work is examined in the context in which it was created, particularly, for example, by assessing the use and distribution of power and the seclusion of social strata within a piece of work. Examining the history unveils more regarding the text while studying the text unravels more concerning history. Notably, the New Historicism theory holds that every pursuit of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the instruments it condemns. Subsequently, there is a risk of falling prey to the ideologies or practices it aims at unmasking (King 23).

Also, there is the influence of an author's culture and the environment when evaluating literature. The implication is that evaluating the identity of an author when

analyzing his text is essential to arriving at a near-accurate interpretation. The Homo Identicus Model, as advanced by Shapiro, advocates that we have to look beyond reason and emotion to the realm of identity. In other words, individuals seek meaning in their existence at any time, including during conflicts. As such, a conflict that has an emotional element escalates because it implicates fundamental aspects of one's identity, including who you are, what you hold as important, and how you conceive meaning in your life. In other words, it threatens an individual's existence. The model focuses not just on individual identity but on the space between an individual/party and the other side. Space can either be cold, warm, welcoming or clogged and thus defines whether groups of people are friends or enemies (Shapiro 58). The nature of this relationship as controlled by emotional dynamics is what determines whether a conflict will end or escalate. Ultimately, such parameters influence our interpretation of texts.

1.4.2 Benefit of the theory in criticizing the memoirs

New Historicism is suitable in the analysis of the memoirs in several ways. The theory facilitates an in-depth comprehension of intellectual history through literature that is relayed in a cultural context (King 19). The detailed understanding not only helps in clear understanding but also creates an opening for the development of different meanings and their subsequent explanations. That also allows interaction with other aspects that contribute to the general meaning of a text, including the cultural elements as well as specific information concerning the author. The theory does not look at a text as an independent entity but rather as a product of several things (Brannigan 40). It eliminates the perspective that literature is just about the narration of past events that are not important in the present environment. Instead, it focuses on how the past events

influence the present happenings and how this can be used to provide a new interpretation of an existing text.

The theory also introduces the phenomenon of intertextuality, which enables a rich interpretation of texts. Apart from intertextuality and the historical reading, the contention created is that no reading of a text is definite. These theoretical assumptions eliminate the possibility of a single reaction to the complication presented in a text (Sharma 6). The theory provides multiple readings and possibilities to a text instead of proposing a conclusive idea to the text. It is through this provision of multiple interpretations that the New Historicists agree that work is not an independent system of fixed meanings and instead represents a diversity of unresolved voices and conflicts in a particular culture. To reveal meaning in a text, the theory is based on the poststructuralist assumption that a text can only be understood by including the ideology of the age and the doctrine of textuality (Hickling 54). A text's meaning is situated within the cultural system that consists of interlocking author discourses that include the author's life, social rules, and reflection.

Additionally, it also insists on the interconnection of the literary with the nonliterary texts showing that a literary work is not an outcome of a single author. On the contrary, it is a product of its relationship to other texts, that is, extra literal (Fox-Genovese 233). Given that literature cannot be timeless because it is situated within historical time, the systems of power at the time of text production are reflected and strengthened in both literary and cultural texts. Thus, the structural analysis of a literary text attaches equal importance to both literary and nonliterary texts of the same time in history. Both function as sources of information and discourse with each other (Wodak 628). The

practice of parallel reading introduced the aspect of intertextuality, which is very important in enhancing the interpretation of memoirs. The intertextuality concept is also reinforced by Julia Kristeva, the Bulgarian-French philosopher and a literary critic, who explained that a literary text is not an isolated element. In any case, the product of any text includes input from others. The general idea is that the engagement of texts with each other in their different discourses is what gives a great diversified interpretation and also opens avenues for further differing interpretations (Sharma 3)

The major method that I will use for this research is thoroughly analyzing primary sources, specifically memoirs. I have selected four memoirs for this dissertation, and I will analyze them to get the perspective of these authors on the concerned conflict between Palestine and Israel. I will review these memoirs by getting the perspectives of Israeli writers- one local and one from abroad and summarize how their views differ and interpret the conflict and its effects on each side. Subsequently, I will take one memoir from a local Palestinian and another from a Palestine in the Diaspora and examine their experiences on the dispute as well. Thus, guided by my thesis I will divide the dissertation into five chapters each focused on the different memoirs chosen for analysis.

In the **first chapter**, I will choose a writer of a memoir from Israel. I will examine and analyze the views of this author and how he feels regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the identity of the Israeli people. I will review this memoir to find out whether the people of Israel, especially the Jews, are interested in ending the conflict and how they will go about resolving the conflict. I will also want to understand the grievances of this author and consider it as a representative sample of the views of the Israeli people.

In the **second chapter**, I will select a memoir of an individual from Jerusalem from the Palestinian side who lives in the conflict. I will review the issues that the people on this side encounter in their struggle in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and what they perceive should be the identity of Palestine. I will use the memoir to find out the sufferings and effects of this conflict on the individuals living on the Palestinian side of the dispute. I will also utilize the memoir to discover what people from the Palestinian side expect from the conflict and the terms that they are willing to consider to end the confrontation.

In the **third chapter**, I will be evaluating a memoir by a Palestinian author from the Diaspora. I will scrutinize this source to find whether the Diaspora individuals are supporting the identity views of the local people or whether they are suggesting an alternative way of ending the conflict. I will also investigate how the conflict is affecting the people that had to leave their home and seek safety as refugees in a different country. I would want to understand how they feel about being separated from families and relatives and the take on the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In the **fourth chapter**, I intend to pick a memoir written by an Israeli author who lives in the Diaspora. This will be undertaken with the view that the people in the Diaspora tend to provide an international view of identity with minimal bias, unlike the local authors. I think this source will be instrumental because it would offer me a more objective view regarding the dispute. I will select the memoir from a person living abroad to ensure that I cover different sides of the conflict. This is because the people living abroad hailing from Israel and Palestine are concerned with the prolonged conflict and are trying to use their voice to offer a solution to the dispute. Thus, I will review the

memoir to find out what the writers from abroad are proposing on how to end the conflict.

In the **fifth chapter**, I seek to highlight how the selected memoirs compare and contrast. The chapter will discuss comparisons regarding identity and differences based on religious beliefs. I will present an exposition of the stories and experiences of these memoirs' authors from the conflicting area on their take concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which will help me to answer my research questions and hence advance my research. The works also help me comprehend the background cause of the conflict and how people from both sides view the conflict.

1.5 Summary of the authors

All of the above four authors witnessed and lived in the conflict. Their memoirs were chosen for the current research because they provide actual experiences of the war as they were published during the conflict. Even though some, like Karmi and Berghash lived away from the conflict, their narration provides useful insights for understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Also, the presentation from both the Israeli perspective (Oz and Berghash) and the Palestinian perspective (Karmi and Nusseibeh) enriches the discussions of the study.

1.6 Research overview

The current study will have a chapter for each of the four memoirs. The last chapter will show how the different authors speak to each other and what their identity is regarding the conflict.

1.7 Literature review

This section reviews several accounts presented by different authors concerning the Israeli- Palestinian conflict. Their views have points of similarity and difference as they argue on the cause of the conflict and the reasons why it has extended over a long duration. Tessler begins his propositions by acknowledging that from the period of the Second World War, the violence between the two nations has been the most tragic and outstanding. According to him, the conflict can be viewed as a complicated web of happenings but also as a simple dispute over territory. He agrees that the roots of the conflict can be traced back to Biblical times (Tessler 20). He does not emphasize what either camp has done or is still doing as an obstacle to achieving peace. Instead, he asserts that the only way that peace can be attained between the two warring nations is through the acknowledgment of each party's role in causing the conflict. However, he notes that given that religion is a major factor in the way, the conflict may be a long while from ending. Both the Israeli and Palestinian populations have connected ownership of the land to religion. Given the diversity of the two religions, it is clear that there is a need for both groups to exercise patience, as must the external stakeholders who are interested in creating peace in the Middle East.

Tessler's argument can be linked up with Shapiro's argument regarding the element of religion as an important part of forming the identity of a population. Religion forms the part of an identity that is fixed (Fixed-identity Fallacy), in which a population relentlessly defends their perspectives, sense of right and wrong, and values instead of trying to reach a central point (Shapiro 20). Beliefs, rituals, allegiances, and values are embedded in religion. That means that the Israelis and Palestinians have specific ideas

that they hold as true and thus discourage discussion over the same. Additionally, individually meaningful customs, including holidays, rites of passage, and regular prayer, are distinct, and none of the parties is willing to let go or adjust for the sake of peace. An analysis of all of these aspects therefore emphasizes the difficulty of solving the conflict between the two groups.

However, other authors, such as Kronish, offer a more optimistic view regarding the conflict. Kronish argues that it is possible for either of the parties to be parallel with each other but still peacefully interact and live with the other. That is because it is possible for either party to adhere to religious beliefs, rituals, and values but still include some aspects of the other. For instance, he gives the example of the Muslims who have become moderate in their practices and beliefs because of living in Israel. Kronish compares the moderately religious Muslims to Modern Orthodox Jews in Israel. The group practices most of the rituals and observe the Muslim Sabbath on Friday by observing it as well as the major Muslim holidays. They make prayers and fast for 30 days during Ramadhan and eat festive meals with family and friends (Kronish 60). Even though they observe these Muslim ways, however, they dress and think in contemporary ways and are largely part of the modern world when it comes to fashion, education, and political opinion among other aspects of everyday life. Approximately 40% to 50% of Muslims in Israel follow Muslim standards in some ways and western standards in other ways. For instance, women and children enjoy more freedom. They also watch movies, visit the beach, and attend university.

Kronish gives the example of Kadi Zahalka, a Muslim judge who works at the Sharia court of the Israel state in Jerusalem as an excellent demonstration of the beauty of

exercising moderateness. Zahalka is a prominent lecturer in Islamic thought and Israeli Arab society at the University of Tel Aviv and also Emek Yizrael College. He is the first religious Muslim in Israel to get a doctorate in modern Muslim thought from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Kronish 61). This scenario underscores the importance of encouraging tolerance. In any case, it disapproves the popular notion that it is impossible for either group to be flexible in their practices. Moreover, it proves that not all Muslims are members of extremist or terrorist groups whose objective is to destroy all those who do not subscribe to their faith.

Kronish explains how the religious faculty members of the Islamic Seminary were all tolerant and open concerning their humanistic religious beliefs. Subsequently, they requested the Hebrew University professors to help them get recognized and established as a Higher Education Institution in Israel (Kronish 62). Thus, it is clear that despite their Palestinian and Muslim identities, the local Arabs desired to be more integrated into Israeli society. That is an idea that is not known among the Jewish majority who are largely pessimistic when it comes to their relationship with Arabs. Most Jews appear to view them only through the avenue of the negative mainstream media. The media presents them as violent anti-Israel fundamentalists. Kronish also points out that contrary to the popularly held wisdom in Israel, not all Palestinian Muslim Arabs in Israel are extremists or fundamentalists or even members of the Islamic movement. Surprisingly, the majority are either moderately religious or traditional while others are actually secular (Kronish 63).

Kimmerling provides an account of the history of the Israeli and the Palestinian conflict, in which he addressed the territorial dispute that these two nations were fighting

over. He also identified the great effort of the Israelis to reshape the Middle East region and their perspectives. Moreover, he considers himself as an element of change and also demonstrated how Sharon won support from the American administration. Abunimah refers to this conflict as one of the most intractable conflicts in the world because both of these nations have failed to reach peaceful agreements because of some key issues. I also reviewed a poem entitled *Mural* by Mahmoud Darwish (a Palestinian poet). The poem accounts for the loss of his homeland and the suffering that comes with exile. The poem focuses on the pain of dispossession. Israeli authors like Piterberg have identified government commitment in realizing a future nonviolent recognition of Israel as a state. The majority of the authors believe that the two conflicting nations are ready and willing to solve this crisis.

In *Letter to the Palestinian Neighbor* written by Yossi Klein Halevi, the author discusses the issues concerning modern Zionism and the invasion of the West Bank and Gaza. According to him, there was shared citizenship between the Arabs and the Jewish Israelis and for this to be realized, the two communities had to be identified, hence the issue of identity. He criticizes the aspect of Israeli law that, describes Israel as a Jewish state and not a democratic nation. He also states that although Israel defines itself as a Jewish state, it does not mean that it is a racist nation. Both the Arabs and Palestinians view themselves as minority groups and so they live in Israel with fear of the Israelis and hence the fear of being identified as part of Israel's nation (Klein Halevi 2). The fear that the two minority groups live within Israel can only be solved by embracing their differences; also, this conflict can be solved by embracing shared citizenship by Palestine and Arabs.

A book entitled *A Time to Speak Out* was written by authors and contributors with strong Jewish connections. Contributors to this book are of different professions; some are journalists, activists, professors, and lawyers. Most of the writers naturally have a strong Jewish identity but only a few engage in active Jewish communal life. They originate from different cultural backgrounds and so offered varied ideas concerning this conflict. A contributor by the name Ann Karpf elaborates her horror on the misuse and misinterpretation of the Holocaust and criticizes the manner in which the Israeli groups apply the analogies of the Holocaust to portray themselves as victims of the war between Palestine and Israel (Karpf et al. 15). One of the writers accused the government of engaging in racist practices. These writers generally are advocating for fair treatment of individuals, the end of human rights abuses, and social justice not only in Israel and Palestine but also in the entire Middle East. Also, the writers talk about the issue of Jewish identities and their influence on the origin of the Jewish state.

Material edited by Mateo Hoke and Cate Malek provides a better understanding of the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It offers an overview of what it takes to live in Gaza and the West Bank through the voice of the people who are facing different challenges in the area. The Palestinians encounter very many difficulties due to military attacks from Israeli forces in the form of bombing whenever the military feels threatened by the Palestinians. Writers took more than 4 years interviewing inhabitants of the area and came out with heartbreaking findings concerning how Palestinian people are suffering. The Israelis controls the lives of the people living in this area. Some have spent their lives in prison, and some have given up and have decided to live according to the restrictions of the Israel government while hoping that one day the conflicting

communities will be at peace with one another, enabling them to reclaim their freedom and hence enjoying their peace and identity in the crisis dominated regions (Darwish 199). People living in this conflict dominated area face numerous challenges, including limited traveling and lack of proper health care, education, clothing, and food due to the destruction from continuous bombings. A good example of a victim of this bombing is Nadia, who explains how his dream of becoming a marathon runner never came to fruition because of travel restrictions and the lack of proper training facilities.

CHAPTER 2: *A TALE OF LOVE AND DARKNESS* BY AMOS OZ

2.1 Author's biography

Amos Oz, born Amos Klausner, was born on May 4, 1939, in Jerusalem. He was an Israeli novelist, short-story writer, and essay writer. His works unapologetically scrutinize Israeli society. Oz studied at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Oxford. He also served his country as an army officer in 1957–1960, 1967, and 1973 (Kaplan 50). After the 1967 war, he became active in the Israeli peace movement. He also engaged with establishments that suggested a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In addition to writing, Oz was also a part-time schoolteacher and laborer.

Oz's works are symbolic and show the splits and strains in his culture. Intertwined in conflict are the traditions of intellect coupled with the demands of the flesh, reality, and fantasy that pushes individuals to do unimaginable things. Oz also explores rural Zionism and the desire for European urbanity, including the values of the founding settlers and the views of their unbelieving offspring (Kaplan 50). Oz was always honest in his works and was incapable of presenting an optimistic outlook and ideological certainties of the founding fathers. He felt the need to present his own opinions rather than those of popular ideologies that would win him fame and acceptance (Kaplan 128). In any case, he flourished in controversy to the point that his fellow Israelis viewed him as a traitor. Oz's works present an ironic perspective of Israel's life.

Oz was obsessed with the Jewish culture. He championed that idea that the Jewish culture was founded on humanism. Humanism on the other hand is linked to pluralism (Miller and Daniel 14). The basis of pluralism is that everyone has an equal right of

opinion. That means that disagreement is not a bad thing but a reflection of the freedom of thought and expression. Subsequently, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be viewed from this perspective. The extended conflict is evidence of the most important trait of humanity; different opinions. According to the Jewish culture, the variations of opinion among people are a blessing rather than a curse. The reason why we are different is because there are ‘many different lights’ in different parts of the world (Fry et al. 15). This is contrary to the popular perception that there are those “who have not yet seen the light” (Miller and Daniel 15).

Oz was a celebrated author as people acknowledged his struggle to offer hope in a political climate that was largely hostile and unpredictable. He was respected as an influential speaker who advocated for peace with the Palestinians while creating a just society within Israel. He bravely scrutinized both populations, explaining not only their contribution to the escalated conflict but also their role in ensuring peace. Oz was an icon whose writings and life stories have provided a foundation for the understanding and development of Israeli intellectualism and moderation (Almog 45). His career progressed over half a century and he published over 35 books, including 13 novels numerous articles on literary and political topics. He also wrote children’s books as well as short-story collections. His Israeli works have been translated into over 40 languages, superseding any of the other Israeli authors. He represented Israel’s peace camp at a local and global level, earning him many honorary doctorates. Oz died on December 28, 2018.

2.2 Introduction

A Tale of Love and Darkness is a memoir that takes the reader through the author’s childhood and adolescence in Jerusalem, where he later departs after the suicide of his

mother. It is through this memoir that we experience the 120 years of Oz's family history, beginning with his grandparents (Oz 294). The personal history of Oz is presented against the background of the British authority, the UN vote to divide Palestine, and the development of a Jewish state (C. Smith 466). The war to gain independence and Israel's constant struggle with its Arab neighbors also provides an effective backdrop for the memoir presentation. Both internal and external factors contributed to the escalation of the conflict. The internal factors included aspects of identity that differentiated the Israelis from the Palestinians, including their beliefs, rituals, allegiances, values, and emotionally meaningful experiences. According to Harvard professor of conflict resolution, Daniel Shapiro, emotionally charged conflicts are challenging for individuals because in the instance that people feel threatened for what they believe their identity is or what they stand for, a set of emotional forces streams in and encourages conflict (Shapiro 10).

The external factors, on the other hand, include the influence of Britain, the UN, and other nations that attempted to end the conflict. The main problem with external interferences is their already formed perceptions regarding the conflict. For instance, to some extent, the British already had a rigid idea of the side that was the main cause for the continuity of the conflict. Subsequently, they were biased in their processes, which caused further drift among the Israelis and Palestinians. The intersection of both factors lies in the fact that they played a significant role in the escalation of the conflict. In other words, with the right approach, the Israelis and the Palestinians would not have become stuck in an adversarial mindset. On the contrary, they would have counteracted the situation to motivate the opening up of emotional space for both teams to heal their

grievances and rebuild connections. Shapiro argues that such an approach is effective in helping opposing groups reach an amicable consensus without either side feeling that their identity has been threatened, particularly because of the great power that identity has on all people (Shapiro 20). The New Historicism theory can be used to analyze the memoir. This theory facilitates an in-depth comprehension of intellectual history through literature that is relayed in a cultural context (King 19).

2.3 The New Historicism Theory

New Historicism is a literary theory that regards the feasibility of an unbiased perspective of reality. The theory is grounded in the notion that literature should be analyzed and given meaning within the context of both the history of the author and the respective critic (Brannigan 30). It acknowledges both the influence of time and the critic's response to the overall meaning of the text. According to the theory, a work of literature is the outcome of the engagement of time, circumstances, environment, beliefs, and prejudices (Fox-Genovese 234). The theory provides a broad historical context for studying literature that enables the evaluation of how the work is a reflection of the times in which the author wrote. Subsequently, this enables the acknowledgment of how present cultural contexts influence the conclusions made by the critic.

Greenblatt who established the New Historicism theory acknowledges that no issue can be completely dealt with through a yes or no response by simply deriving it from the analysis of a text. Instead, it is imperative that the work be examined in the context in which it was created, particularly, for example, by assessing the use and distribution of power and the seclusion of social strata within a piece of work. Examining the history unveils more regarding the text, while studying the text unravels more concerning

history. Notably, the New Historicism theory holds that every pursuit of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the instruments it condemns. Subsequently, there is a risk of falling prey to the ideologies or practices that it aims to unmask (King 23).

Also, there is the influence of an author's culture and the environment when evaluating literature. The implication is that evaluating the identity of an author when analyzing his text is essential to arrive at a near-accurate interpretation. The Homo Identicus model, as advanced by Shapiro, advocates that we have to look beyond reason and emotion to the realm of identity. In other words, individuals seek meaning in their existence at any time, including during conflicts. As such, a conflict that has an emotional element escalates because it implicates fundamental aspects of one's identity; that which you are, what you hold as important, and how you conceive meaning in your life. In other words, it threatens an individual's existence. The model focuses not just on individual identity but on the space between an individual/party and the other side. Space can either be cold, warm, welcoming, or clogged and thus defines whether groups of people are friends or enemies (Veaser 58). The nature of this relationship as controlled by emotional dynamics is what determines whether a conflict will end or escalate. Ultimately, such parameters influence our interpretation of texts.

Hence, New Historicism emphasizes the fluidity of literary criticism. As such, current literary criticism is influenced by and unveils the beliefs of our current circumstances in a similar manner in that literature is both a reflection of and is reflected by its historical environment. The overall argument is that as periods change, so does the understanding of literature.

2.4 The History of Zionism

The memoir attempts to present a solid argument about the history of Zionism. Zionism developed as a symbol of hope for Jewish soon-to-be Israelis given their imminent destruction. That threat somehow explains their approach in handling the conflict. When a population is threatened, they adopt the fixed-identity fallacy to prevent extinction (Shapiro 8). The threatening of identity compels people to get fixated in self-defense and perceive it as a single unchangeable whole. As a result, one side demands of the other to agree to their perspectives, sense of right and wrong, and values. In this scenario, the other side holds this same egoistic assumption, which is often the case; the conflict never ends. *A Tale of Love and Darkness* creates a historical requisite for people undergoing the threat of extinction.

The message communicated is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict began because of the partitioning of the nation, which caused displacement and suffering of the Palestine population (Haushofer et al. 17928). Given that the idea of partitioning emerged from an external source—the UN mandate—then the blame is largely on the UN rather than the Israelis and Palestinians. Oz seems to be advancing the argument that it could have been possible for the conflict to be handled by the locals rather than other people who believed they could end the conflict. Thus, according to the arguments of the memoir, it is reasonable to argue that the extended conflict period is largely a result of external and not internal factors. At this point, the writer seems to entirely blame the UN and other nations that have attempted to end the war.

2.5 The alleged role of refugees in the conflict

On the other hand, the description that Oz gives regarding the refugees seems to contradict his stance while simultaneously creating irony. He is not pleased with the presence of the refugees and the fact that they are required to help them. That is paradoxical given the presence of Jewish refugees, over half a million from Arab lands in the years following the end of World War II. Similar to the blame that Oz accords to the UN because of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Palestinians can also be blamed for not helping their cause before the overseas nations could interfere with their affairs. Oz laments that the refugees had waited for too long before organizing and fighting back (Oz 19). One wonders why the Israeli community had not done the same.

Hence, in trying to expose the ills of others, the ills of Israel are also exposed. This is an expected occurrence as elaborated by the New Historicism theory. During this era, there was a lot of shifting of blame rather than acknowledging the role that the nations played in causing the problem (Haushofer et al. 17927). That would have helped them to deal with the problem quickly or, rather, devise innovative strategies that would have helped deal with the predicament before it transformed into a global predicament.

2.6 Cultural phenomena

The memoir reveals several cultural aspects that were significant during the time that Oz lived. What is strikingly obvious is the issue of class prestige (Almog 40). This class prestige was directly tied to cultural heritage. Oz clearly describes the classes that existed at the time as well as the prestige that they commanded. The boundaries of relation were also obvious because every member knew his or her place in society beginning from the pioneers to the working class. Oz classifies his family as belonging to the middle class,

because both parents had some level of education that earned them employment. Notably, the Israelis had a formed opinion regarding their position in society. This could be due to the position that they had been forced to occupy by their Arab neighbors.

For instance, Oz explains that his father could not be a lecturer in spite of his qualifications because he graduated from the Jerusalem universities, which were considered low in rank as compared to anyone graduate from the German universities. Oz alludes to this by stating, "...many of the lecturers had real degrees" (Oz 21). Following that, employers preferred graduates from the German universities. That explains why Oz's father becomes a librarian even though he is qualified to lecture in the university. The situation of Oz's father is a representation of what the other educated Israelis went through at the time. The dominance and prestige associated with the German universities was a challenge to all those who did not school there.

Following that, majority of the educated Israelis would not find good employment. The Israelis were forced to accept lower positions than their counterparts who undertook their studies in German universities. This constant discrimination convinced the Israelis that their education was not as significant as that of other overseas universities. That is why Oz laments, "... we didn't have any intellectual heavyweights either" (Oz 22). This perception could have been because the wealthy Germans had access to the greatest training and education provided by German universities. That gave them the advantage both in training and the prestige that comes with it.

Subsequently, it is important to note the negative perception of the writer regarding the quality of education of Israelis. Is it largely influenced by external or internal factors? To some extent, this can be explained by the aspect of prestige associated with the class

set-up upheld at the time (Kaplan 125). In line with this argument, it is rational to argue that to a large extent, the disillusionment that Jews faced at the time because it was impossible to attain one's full potential regardless of their abilities is what could have caused Oz's mother to take her own life. The awareness that one cannot get what he or she wants because of cultural origin is hard to live with. Besides, it is hard to sustain a life of pretense for a long time. Oz explains how his parents had to entirely abandon their Israeli pursuits to earn favor with Arabs (Oz 20). The description of this life reveals the writer's desire to experience a "normal" life.

To most Jews, justice is more essential rather than the simple obedience of rules (Barkan and Karen 25). This justice should be all and not a selected few. Oz suggests that the Jewish culture has always handled the issue of authority through partial consensus rather than unanimously. The Jewish culture history has documented tough and stormy conflicts but interestingly most of them have been resolved successfully (Rabkin 40). According to Oz, the Jewish culture can best be described as a "give and take" relation of thorough persuasion and friendly confrontations (Ent and Roy 580). The spiritual basis is considerably in line with polyphonic democracy; one that allows and encourages the presentation of varied opinions but governed by a framework of authoritative guidelines (Doymaz 33). Lightly stated, the Jewish culture does not advocate for blind obedience as that cannot be perceived as moral (Barkan and Karen 28).

The culture at the time forced them to lead lives that did not reflect their identity. That was a hard life because it is identity that gives meaning to an individual's existence. Shapiro argues that identity should be negotiable because it has a dual nature, thereby

providing it with a unique role in giving a way out during intense conflict situations (Shapiro 25). Thus, the memoir can be viewed as Oz's pursuit to find his real identity and, by extension, the Israelis' pursuit to find and preserve their identity. That is a hard task due to the desire to cling to Jewish practices regardless of a lack of explanation of this fixation on upholding Jewish practices "to maintain some vestige of Jewishness" (Oz 22). Such a situation gives rise to a purge of emotions that adds 'charge' to a conflict, making it hard to resolve. Rather than clinging to their practices, Shapiro advocates for the conflicting parties to direct their attention toward those aspects of identity that they can change rather than those that appear unchangeable (Shapiro 15). Probably by doing so, the conflict between the Israeli and the Palestinian would have ultimately ended. Focusing on the compromise that both parties can make without threatening the fundamental pillars of either of their identities is an essential step in navigating any conflict situation, especially one that is emotionally charged. In that way, the blame game by either party is eliminated.

Subsequently, the fact that Oz attributes all of their suffering to the treatment by Arabs, not the Palestinian but the other Arabic countries, presents a major hindrance to finding a solution to the conflict. He presents his people as living under the mercy of the Arabs not the Palestinian exactly. That caused them to live hypocritical lives to ensure their existence. Aligning with the principles of the New Historicism theory, the mindset of Oz can be translated to include the mindset of the rest of his population (Valkova 1664). They view themselves as innocent victims of war and are thus reluctant to make any adjustments to help end the war. The trauma that Oz goes through after his mother's suicide can be viewed as symbolic of the pain that the Israeli population underwent in the

hands of their oppressors. The pain of a twelve-year-old losing his mother at puberty, a stage at which children are in dire need of their parent's guidance, is unimaginable. The interpretation of this scenario reflects the pain that the Israeli had to undergo.

Additionally, conflicts over pride and the cultural soul of the land extend even to the food choices. Oz presents us with an outstanding experience that facilitates our understanding of the history between the Israelis and Arabs through the narration of the dilemma on what type of cheese to purchase. They deliberated on whether to buy the kibbutz cheese or Arab cheese because either selection had undesirable consequences: "How could we turn our backs on her and buy alien cheese? ... If we boycotted the produce of our Arab neighbors, we would be deepening and perpetuating the hatred between our two peoples" (Oz 24). This situation is almost impossible to handle peacefully. It is also apparent that the writer attributes this animosity to external factors as he explains that the two peoples had been pitched against each other by the British. Once again, the writer places all the blame on external factors. It is as if he is stating that external interference is the sole cause of the growing rift between the two peoples. It is only when this interference is absent that peace can be realized.

Thus, according to Oz, life at the time involved making tough decisions in which "either way, shame and disgrace" resulted (Oz 25). The discussion on aspects of humanity, brotherhood, finance, and religious affiliations present a myriad of connections that caused constant pressure on the populations. The audience of this memoir begins adopting a different mindset regarding the Israeli-Palestine conflict. One almost feels, in spite of one's nationality, that one's predecessors played a role in propagating this conflict. Therefore, we wonder whether it is possible for the war ever to end given that

people's mindsets are fixed concerning the state of their nations (Haushofer et al. 17927). The reluctance to adjust the aspects that have minimal impact on identity by both parties can be said to be the greatest internal factor in fueling the conflict (Shapiro 8). To some extent, Oz blames the Arabs for their predicament. However, the greatest portion of the blame is attributed to the British and other overseas nations who have been accused of pitching the Israelis and Palestinians against each other.

2.7 Overall interpretation

The memoir can be read as the Israeli attempt to start over. Even though Oz presents the Israeli as victims, he does not entirely view the Palestinians as the main enemies. The narration of his childhood in Jerusalem at the end of the British Mandate seems like a call for the reading audience to understand that the Israeli-Palestine predicament should be viewed from several perspectives and not just from that presented by other nations such as Britain. The memoir is an attempt at establishing an objective view of reality.

As such, it facilitates a more exhaustive investigation of literature. Consequently, we acknowledge and appreciate Oz's experiences in helping us probe and understand his perceptions of the Palestinian community as well as his encounters in the early years in the State of Israel. The teenage periods on a kibbutz that provided him with an escape route helps us understand the zeal that Oz had in trying to find the honest Zionist ideals (Kaplan 135). We acknowledge the essence of being a stranger in an entirely new place that introduced new values to the writer. Oz's writing implies a fresh start. In this way, it is possible for the audience to understand the popular culture at the time that the memoir was written. Especially within the confines of literary constraints, we can relate the cultural location of Oz and, by extension, his entire community, to the narrations. Hence,

the New Historicism theory enables us to identify and appreciate the cultural inclinations of the memoir as compared with other theories such as Postmodernism (King 32). The emphasis on New Historicism enables researchers to work with a broader vision of modern popular literature (King 28).

The presentation of the narration in a nonlinear way helps us interrogate the identity of Oz amidst all happenings of the entire conflict period. The writer does not seem to fit completely and is thus alienated whether in Europe or Palestine. This presents a dilemma regarding identity not only for the author but also for the entire Israeli community. The narration is intertwined with tales of Oz's family's Eastern European background. The family's name was originally Klausner. It was an act of rebellion against their European background when the name was changed to a Hebrew one (Valkova 1665). On the contrary, this change verified loyalty to the land of his birth. Unfortunately, the Jews were not welcome in Europe or Palestine. This situation caused them to lack a sense of not belonging to any of these worlds completely. This explains why a good number attempted to distance from Jewish consciousness. This is understandable to a great extent as they felt alienated from the world. They face opposition on all fronts and lack a location that they can fully refer to as their home.

They want to live real and relaxed lives like Americans and have no stress selecting what to eat or how to behave, given that these aspects affect the Jews tremendously (Oz 294). Every act by the Israeli is judged harshly by their enemies, who seem to be eager to attack. This is the reason for the dilemma regarding the type of cheese to eat or whether to give each other a flower for birthdays. The writer seems to admire the reckless lives that people other than the Israeli could lead. Living recklessly or leading a life of

wastefulness was an abomination to the Israeli. As Oz explains, activities such as the lighting of their house, flashing of the cistern, and eating habits had to adhere to strict regulations. His father would have rather destroyed his eyesight than use a bright light and face the wrath of his neighbor's opinions (Oz 28). Oz explains the simultaneous switching on and off of lights in the attempt to save light as well as clearing food on his plate as a way of showing empathy to others with less privilege in other parts of the world.

This description reveals the cultural practices and the nature of the society during the writing of the memoir around 2004. The analysis from a New Historicism approach enables us to highlight and focus on these practices to give meaning to the entire memoir (King 40). We are enlightened through an exploration of culture in causing the war extension. This causes the audience to wonder why the war persisted, yet the Israelis appear almost harmless. Their level of discipline is quite high as well as their determination to empathize with the situations of other people. Hence, to some extent, we tend to agree with Oz that external rather than internal factors have a greater role to play in propagating the fight. Also, the narration strengthens the argument that partitioning the state to have two states would be an effective solution as it appears that Israelis are largely peaceful. Notwithstanding, we also begin to deliberate on the weaknesses of the cultural practices that the Israelis faithfully followed.

Another instance in the memoir that helped strengthen the fact that Israeli were victims of war was the disappointment that Oz's father showed when Oz arranged his books according to height. The disgrace that his father associated with this arrangement was overwhelming not only to the six-year-old Oz but also to the reader. His father's look

made one feel like one had killed someone: “He hissed at me, ‘Have you gone completely crazy? Arranging them by height?’” (Oz 30). This contempt could be interpreted as reflecting the disdain Jews had towards war. The arrangement depending on height seemed to signify soldiers of war and such defiled the purity of the books. This revelation again causes the reader to wonder about how people with such a character could be involved in the war for a long time. To some extent, a reader might even feel irritated that people of this nature should undergo suffering. Nonetheless, the new Israeli often projects a rather different image of strength and power.

Subsequently, it becomes necessary to generate a hypothesis regarding historical happenings such as the Holocaust. Even though the Jews were not as powerful as other states such as Britain, a little modification would have made a significant difference. That would have resulted in a fast ending to the slaughter of the Jews. Oz does not state it, but from his descriptions, the audience is agitated with the fact that Jews seemed to have suffered the most and thus deserved to have their independent state. They cared too much for the welfare of others who did not seem to reciprocate the same. Following this, he presents Jews as victims of a war they seem to have little control over (Haushofer et al. 17930). That is ironic as the war is between the Israelis and Palestinians, but none of them seems to have the power to end it. The narration seems to imply that one of the best ways to end the war would be the elimination of external forces. Incitement for the external factors comes out clearly as a fundamental factor causing the conflict.

2.8 Suggested way forward

Oz seems to agree that the two-state resolution might be an effective solution. As the audience, we are also persuaded that this will be the best solution given that the Israelis

have been victims for too long. Besides, their good conduct and desire to empathize with others has not prompted other nations to do the same. It is therefore justified to reward the struggles of the Israelis concerning the geopolitical landscape. They should be helped to restructure the Middle East regions (Valkova 1666). The creation of two separate states will help put an end to this fight that has caused untold suffering to innocent civilians. His perspective regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that it is a war that can come to an end. He does not negatively view the Palestinian population but rather is willing to give them a second chance at doing the right thing (Oz 32).

This view reflects the general feeling of the Israelis. The analysis of a work from the New Historicism approach does not view it as an individual but rather as reflecting a broader perspective of the community being discussed (King 18). One way of ending the war is advocating for the fair treatment of individuals regardless of their race. Human rights should apply to all to bring an end to the abuses. The practice of social justice in Israel and Palestine will transfer to the entire Middle East area, making it a peaceful environment. Failure to achieve this is what will fuel the war for years to come. The description of the destruction that Arabs caused to the property in Talpiot is agonizing, in that it was “was looted and burned” (Oz 70).

2.9 Literary strategies

The author’s desire to reconstruct the state of affairs can be deduced from his use of the strategy of estrangement, which is evidenced by the narrator as well as by his characters and could reflect the state of the Jews at the time. They were disconnected from the rest of the world, such that it was almost as if they were strangers even to themselves. They seem so lost in their thoughts and cannot have the will to fight. The

description of Oz's uncle and aunt is a perfect example: "Both very tender, like a pair of teddy bears, arm in arm" (Oz 71). The de-familiarization, in this instance, is linked with estrangement in a psychological rethinking of the destination. The objective is to reconsider the life path through the recall of the relatives and attribute to them the author's immediate thoughts (Valkova 1667). That is similar to the way in which the aunt and uncle seem distanced from the real world and are allowed to voice their thoughts.

Moreover, the character of the grandmother enables us to access the isolated narrator's consciousness. That is evident in the description of a hot bath at the grandmother's house. It demonstrates how the speech of the narrator intermingles with the humming and becomes her voice (Valkova 1667). This soliloquizing extends for a long time without any pause. The direct speech begins after "then Grandma told you to close your eyes as tight" (Oz 73–75). This speech causes the narrator to stop thinking and creates an avenue for the reader to listen to the voice of the grandmother until the end of the bathing session. This technique is applied to allow the characters to reveal their perspectives on life. In any case, it is only through this avenue that they can become their real selves and resultantly reveal their honest identity. The Jewish identity is problematic as it is unwanted during this period in history as revealed by the graffiti in both the European and Palestinian context.

Subsequently, Oz generously allows his characters to voice their perspectives. The memories of Aunt Sonia regarding some relatives further provide proof of the significance of the use of this strategy. It is intriguing how the story ends with the unveiling of the alienation of the narrator: "And you were such a serious little boy... Today I am not so sure" (Oz 150–158). In this instance, Oz appears as a precocious child.

He seems estranged between two families. The objective of this presentation is to enable the reader to perceive the family story in a distinct light. The alienation of the narrator can somehow be explained through observation of the disconnectedness of the parents who preferred to lead a solitary life.

There was, therefore, avoidance that resulted in the foreignness in their lives as they were not only separated from religious affairs but also politics and interactions with other people. Thus, the alienation was both physical and emotional (Valkova 1664). This alienation can be viewed as how the Jewish population coped with the stress that characterized their entire life during this period in history. The disconnectedness emerges from a defensive operation targeted at dealing with stress. Oz makes a deliberate effort to reveal this alienation with the hope that it will create awareness to prevent the Jewish population from self-alienating in the future. Throughout the memoir, the reader observes how all the major characters are immersed in an ideal world where they can reveal their true identity without fear of victimization or threat to their lives. Following that, they give meaning to their existence that gives them a reason to keep living hopeful lives with the belief that the situation will eventually change.

On the other hand, this alienation can be linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Given the fact that the Jews choose alienation as a way of coping with stress implies that they are tired of war and would wish to exist in a peaceful environment. As readers, we cannot help but think that if only the Palestinians would partake of this experience, then maybe the conflict would finally come to an end. However, the estrangements could also be viewed as a consequence of the constant wars that had destroyed the physical landscape as well as impacted negatively on the emotions of Jews to the extent that

nothing in their actual lives was normal. To experience some kind of normality, they had to retreat to their fantasy world. That was only possible through estrangement.

Additionally, the personal alienation experiences follow from the title of the memoir itself. The conceptual and combative contrast of love and darkness is also disconnected. The darkness could be due to the saddening memory of the past that can be tied to suicide, exile, and wars among other predicaments that Jews experienced at the time. This recall of the past, which is largely absent memory inherited from the previous generations or individual recollections of the past miseries, is significant in unraveling the culture and society of the memoir (Oz 294). It is the consequence of shared and transgenerational trauma. Such trauma has been postulated to connect a group of people very strongly, giving them more reason to defend their identity rather than compromising for the greater good of all (Kleinot 103). It is like the trauma connects them like glue to each other. The scenario causes them to find greater fault with their conflicting party, resulting in more reluctance to solve the present problems. A good example is when Aunt Sonia remembers the mother's rage.

This anger may be interpreted as the spark that revealed the imminent tragedy—the suicide. It was as if it was the struggle by Oz's mother to free herself from the looming darkness that was determined to consume her life. It acts as a premonition to warn on the impending danger to her life. Oz explains the knowledge of the world that the mother had and had tried to impart on him regarding the apparent danger regardless of the supposed security that the curtained windows offered to them as children. The only difference the curtains made is that they gave an option for people not to notice the tragedies, "But all these things happened on the other side ...None of them could break in and seriously

harm the pleasantness of my mother's childhood...but merely colored and sweetened it" (Oz 207).

These descriptions reveal the identity of Oz as an optimistic person who believed that there would be peace in the real world someday. The disconnectedness acted as a premonition of the creation of a peaceful world. Similar to the peace that characters experienced when they were estranged, resolving the conflict would create similar proximity. This anticipation of peace further provides evidence that the Jews are victims of a circumstance that is beyond their control. The juxtaposition of love and darkness by the narrator even though the two are opposites demonstrates the fact that it is possible for the Jews and Palestinians to coexist peacefully. Putting it differently, opposites do not necessarily translate to conflict but can be exploited to create a unique circumstance that benefits both parties.

On the other hand, the reader is taken through the torture that Oz's mother goes through that leads to her death. This torture can be symbolically linked to the conflict between the two camps. It is when people are pushed beyond what they can take or when there seems to be no other alternative that they decide to engage in destructive things such as war and suicide. The mother personifies death in the refraction of Oz's narration as a lover, youthful prince, and crafty hunter among other alluring descriptions. Hence, the mother is alienated from reality and ends up finding inspiration and comfort in death. The pathological helplessness had its results in the alienation of the mother from the world of material doers. The narrator explains this through the recollection "The very first memory is a shoe" (Oz 209). After that, Oz creates his relations regarding his feelings and changes to the way his parents perceived this picture of smell. In other

words, the narration proceeds in the third person as the narrator is not referred to as I, but he: "The infant was also frightened...that he was too small to contain" (Oz 210).

Furthermore, the memory like this also consists of re-experiencing the production of perceptions that were not ordinary. The comparison that the narrator made when he informed us of the experience when his mother helped him put on his shoes reveals the intense desire that he has in experiencing peace and harmony in his life. This circumstance can be used to describe the general feeling of the Jewish population. Interestingly, Oz admits that even now, when he tightens the shoe, he experiences a similar sensual pleasure even though it happens only in resuscitating memories (Valkova 1669). Thus, the memoir is a reinvention given that it cannot be anything else. Even though the queries about reality are tempting, the narrator and other characters are displayed as being in the state of some denial of reflection and estrangement accompanied by uneasiness and insecurity. Oz attempts to suggest adaptation and assimilation as solutions to this state that is largely caused by the war environment. Putting it differently, the only way to help people overcome alienation is to create a similar environment to the one that they experience when they are disconnected from the real world.

It is apparent from the narrator's exposition that it was impossible to reveal their true identity when dealing with the Palestinians. The revelation of true identity only resulted in rejection. Thus, Jews chose to adopt an identity that was accepted by their enemies. Oz explains that it is because of embarrassment that he had to polish his speech when relating to Arabs, especially the girls "Somehow, out of embarrassment or arrogance, I was talking to her not in my Hebrew but in that of Father and his visitors: formal,

polished. Like a donkey dressed up in a ballgown and high-heeled shoes: convinced for some reason that this was the only proper way to speak to Arabs and girls” (Amos 325). The metaphor of the donkey can be interpreted in many ways to demonstrate the treatment of the Jews, who had to appear to appease their enemies as was expected of them. In this instance, the theatrics and wearing of varied masks aided the author to place Jews against Arabs while opposing political unions. The contrasts are brought to light particularly from the perspective of children as displayed in the above quotation. The strangeness that the characters occasionally feel is a consequence of the conflict. Moreover, it enhances the level of tragedy in the story and foresees further distress to society.

Furthermore, the memoir reveals some artistic peculiarities that make Oz’s works outstanding regarding the identity he strives to present to the readers. One of them is alienation. Oz uses alienation to reveal the culture and state of society at the time of his writing. Through this strategy, he demonstrates the ambiguity of his child’s perspective, displaying the life from varied outlooks and particularly from the viewpoint of people around him (Valkova 1668). In this way, we perceive the world as re-experienced and re-invented. The alienation of the characters can be directly tied to the feeling that the constant war had caused in the population. The disconnection from the real world is what greatly contributed to people like Oz’s mother, who committed suicide. Her regular disconnection with the real world caused her to perceive death as a better state than living. The people only experienced complete peace when they were disconnected from the real world.

Oz's memoir is essential as it highlights the feelings and perspectives of the Jews regarding the conflict. The feelings and opinions of the characters can be objectively used as a foundation to begin the structuring of a permanent solution to the conflict. It provides opinions from the Jewish side regarding their perception of the Israeli-Palestine war. It informs our understanding of factors that either hinder or help Israeli capacity to desire or want peace. Thus, it provides an effective backdrop that can be used to create a balanced and objective study. The discussions can be implemented to identify suitable ways that will be productive in uniting both sides.

The analysis of Oz's memoir leads us to affirm what previous researchers have concluded regarding the Palestinian and Israelis authors. Both blame the other party for being the major factor propagating the war. Oz, just like other Jewish writers, believes that they are the victims of a war that they have little control over. They lie in wait for Arabs to realize that they are the reason for the conflict. Notwithstanding, for a solution to be found, there is a need for both sides to acknowledge their role in the war. This will require sober minds that are disconnected from emotional connections to their race. It is obvious that the Jews feel that they are the ones who are greatly offended and thus reluctant to be the initiators of peace. However, it is crucial for both groups to recall that they were once citizens of the same nation who accommodated each other regardless of the differences in their religion and land ownership.

Oz's description concerning the suffering of the Jews reveals the unrealistic nature that the Jews have regarding the situation. It can be argued that Oz is self-aware and that he is in denial just like the other Israelis regarding their role in the conflict. Unfortunately, this attitude will continue to impact negatively on the lives of their

population, as well as the scarce resources. This analysis has provided information that has made it evident that there is indeed a need to reconcile the perspective that Jews have with that of the Palestinians. It is only through this way that suitable decisions can be made regarding the way forward. There are no irreconcilable differences. In any case, before the onset of the conflict, both the Jews and Palestinians existed peacefully. That means that it is possible to trace back on what changed and, as such, develop a lasting solution to the predicament.

3.1 Author's biography

Sari Nusseibeh was born in Damascus, Syria, on February 12, 1949. He is a Palestinian diplomat who has also excelled in academics. Currently, he serves as the president of Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. Nusseibeh obtained a doctorate in Islamic philosophy from Harvard in 1978. He relocated to the West Bank the same year to lecture at Birzeit University. Simultaneously, he taught Islamic philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In the early 1980s, he was part of the organizing team of the teachers' union at Birzeit, where he served three terms as president of the union of faculty and staff. He was also part of the team that founded the Federation of Employees in the Education Sector in the West Bank region (Hagopian 549). He is also the founder and leader of the Palestinian Consultancy Group. Nusseibeh was the first known Palestinian to engage in talks with Moshe Amirav, a senior Likud politician, in 1987.

Nusseibeh was also part of the Palestinian steering committee in the Madrid talks of 1991. He has also written dozens of articles on Jerusalem and the propositions for the possible peace agreement with Israel. The author is also known for his close ties to Israeli leftists, especially within the Meretz party. Nusseibeh also served as the PLO's representative in East Jerusalem in 2001. That was after the unanticipated demise of Faisal Hussein (Hagopian 549). His courage saw him publish together with Ami Ayalon *The People's Voice* in 2002. The publication was a civil initiative whose objective was to propel a draft peace pact that would follow the peace process. The agreements proposed for a Palestinian state based on Israel's 1967 borders. It also suggested a compromise on the Palestinian Right of Return (Frisch 87). This move did not go well with other

members of the Palestinian Authority. Consequently, after the publication, he was relieved of his duties as the representative of the PLO.

3.2 Introduction

Once Upon a Country is a political memoir by Sari Nusseibeh. His early years were divided between Damascus and East Jerusalem. He was born in a well-off family with a loving irony of things around them. Subsequently, there is a noblesse in his book because of his upbringing that has informed the nobility of his rise and his outlook on global existence, but there is no self-righteousness. That is based on the knowledge that the past may cause great pain upon the present. His life involves the conflict by which it has been denoted. His birth, being in the first year of the formation of the State of Israel, provides an adequate basis for his arguments. His childhood was spent in a family home that bordered Jerusalem (Frisch 87). In fact, by peeping through his bedroom window, he was capable of observing at fairly close range the activities of the ultra-Orthodox denizens. This geographical/experiential proximity lends credibility to his arguments because they are based on actual, physical observation from a tender age. In fact, in 1967, during his late teens, he finally managed to enter Israel after the removal of the green line that had obstructed accessibility to Israel. Subsequently, he was empowered to view and observe the place from a closer scope.

3.3 Role of the father in forming Nusseibeh's prospective

Nusseibeh's father is a politically active lawyer who held many significant roles in the Jordanian government and who sustained a tolerant and open atmosphere in the home. Thus, the exposure to the political ideas and interests that his father exposed him to largely influenced the ideologies that he developed and defended (Tachau 184).

Nusseibeh's book triggers such uncertainty but, more accurately, a double-mindedness ideology regarding the flexibility of history, but not an uncertainty concerning itself.

Nusseibeh's narrations cause us to admire not only his style of a presentation but also his character as a Palestinian living in an environment denoted by war. Nusseibeh attempts to bring politics to his people hindered by the elements of occupation, religion, and terrorism, which influence the very viability of politics.

3.4 Theory

New Historicist Theory can be used to scrutinize the memoir. This theory enables a thorough understanding of intellectual history through literature that is presented in a cultural context (King 19). This memoir presents a local Palestinian author's outlook toward the conflict that he is living with.

3.5 General memoir overview

Nusseibeh's memoir is the result of refreshingly frank enlightenment, at least from his point of view, of the miserable state of the Palestinians. He seems to be asserting that they are underprivileged to change their state. He succeeds in portraying this situation without necessarily presenting the Israelis as being in a privileged position, as is expected of Palestinian authors. He argues that the reasons for the perseverance of the Palestinians in their stateless misery are diverse and intricate. It is accurate to state that unlike his fellow authors, Nusseibeh does not strive to justify the flaws of the Palestinians and by extension their supposed neutral role in being a factor in the prolonged warring state of the two nations (Tachau 185). According to him, the rights and the wrongs are evenly distributed across both states in the evident unending conflict. He seems to be aware of the greatest principle of the New Historicism theory that asserts that every venture of

revealing, criticism, and opposition employs the tools it condemns. As a result, there is a risk of falling prey to the philosophies or practices that it aims at revealing (King 23).

Largely, Nusseibeh is ordinarily a reasonable man, but he does not accord attention to the reason's neighborhood. On the contrary, in terms of al-Ghazali's deliberation of miracles, he understands that things may transform because of the manipulation of their aspects to reflect ends and integrated into novel forms. In this way, hatred is converted into comprehension.

In his attempt to convince his audience of the fact that both parties have a role to play in ending the conflict, he deliberates on the thought that it was only through persuading his family of the feasibility of the end of the war between them and Israel. Nusseibeh believes that it is possible for the war to end as evidenced by his thoughts: "Convince them about the possibility of a future in Israel... that our conflict in Israel could be solved" (Nusseibeh 6). He seems to present the proposition that the best way to solve the conflicts between the two parties is by changing the overriding perception that any one of them is to blame more for the unending conflict. The implication is that the best way to end the conflict is for both parties to cease blaming each other and focus on more solid resolutions such as the formation of two independent nations. He does not shy away from displaying the roles of both teams in steering the conflict: "The country had been ruined by armed conflict; suicide bombers had invaded the Israeli cities... the Israelis have responded by reoccupying the West Bank."

3.6 Author's perspective toward the conflict

Indeed, Nusseibeh remains unbiased as he reports on the warring state of the nations. He chooses to narrate the story while providing all of the facts of the causes and repercussions of every action. We would expect that being a Palestinian, he would leave out the part of the suicide bombers and only narrate on how the Israelis decided to occupy the West Bank. Instead, he explains the behavior of each of the sides. Therefore, it is rational to argue that his memoir is the most evident democratic book to have emanated out of Palestinian nationalism. It is this direction that will help in designing productive strategies that will help in ending the war that has persisted for decades (C. Smith. 120). Not even the so-called superpowers have managed to put an end to the fight. In any case, they also have an essential role in fueling the fight because they are perceived to be supporting one of the sides—either the Palestinians or the Israelis.

It is this mindset that all authors, both Israeli and Palestinian, should adopt if there is ever hope of ending the war. Study findings have established that one fundamental way of ending the conflict is through the establishment of a common ground where both parties will feel that the ground is fair for all of them rather than being biased on one side. In any case, one causal factor is the mindset held by both teams and particularly the authors, who have transferred the same to their audiences. These authors have attempted to provide their viewpoints regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Palestinian authors relay their view on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict grounded in their sufferings, victimhood, and sense of injustice in addition to dispossession (Al-Krenawi 30). Israeli writers, on the other hand, underscore the legitimacy provided by the UN partition plan,

sustainable historical attachments, rejection of their peace offers, and consistent threats from the hostile Palestinians.

Nusseibeh is the rare author who attempts to strike a balance between these two extreme perspectives. Contrary to other Palestinian writers who employ their experience of suffering from mobility restriction in addition to other Israeli constraints to elicit readers' sympathy with their situation as we read the mentioned memoirs in this dissertation, he also relays the role that the Palestinians play in causing the war in the image of a highly tormented spectator. However, he still acknowledges the fact that there are different perspectives of viewing issues in stating that "depending on your point of view, Arafat was a freedom fighter, a terrorist, or both" (7). Interestingly, he adds that the fact that people would want him to choose one of the two alternatives, which made the situation complicated. In other words, Nusseibeh argues that one of the main reasons that the conflict is unending is this rigid outlook on issues that force people to behave in particular ways or situations to be solved in certain criteria.

3.7 Nusseibeh's way forward

The author suggests that it would be more productive if autonomy would be provided to allow people to make decisions without judgment. For instance, the choice of having two states instead of forcing people to live in war with each other is an alternative that should be embraced rather than opposed. In any case, the attempt to encourage the two nations to coexist in peace has not succeeded over the years. Thus, it is only rational that another strategy (such as the creation of two states) should be advocated in the spirit of trying a new way of solving problems.

Nusseibeh remembers his political activity in clear, clever, and thorough detail. He holds that the only ethical and productive way to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the sharing of land (C. Smith. 466). By doing so, there will be the creation of two autonomous and sovereign states, that is, Israel and Palestine. In other words, what has continuously been referred to as partition of nations is presently referred to as the two-state solution.

Nusseibeh believes that political violence will not achieve this objective and is an evil model. He agrees with authors such as Amos Oz as he asserts that the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews are natural friends. He maintains that they are not enemies, which is what other external states who have tried to end the conflict argue. Thus, like Oz, Nusseibeh argues that the extended conflict period is fundamentally the outcome of external and not internal aspects. At this point, both writers seem to agree that the warring nations can reach a consensus, unlike the pervasive ideology that such a scenario is not feasible. However, unlike Oz, Nusseibeh does not seem to believe that the notion of partitioning is an external pursuit (Haushofer et al. 17932). Oz, on the other hand, appears to argue that the notion of partitioning is as a result of external influence. Hence, he entirely blames the UN and other nations that have attempted to end the war. As a result, Nusseibeh has differentiated himself by aggressively denouncing the decision to choose violence in the conflict among the two nations. Subsequently, this position has earned him the standing innovation of the Israeli peace camp.

Nonetheless, he experiences resistance from both teams by being attacked by the Israeli and radical Palestinian individuals who view him as a traitor as he tended to lean too much on the Israeli side according to them. In other words, these Palestinians prefer

engaging in a war to display their might rather than seek reconciliation. This is why he finds himself imprisoned and in trouble with his fellow tribesmen. Regardless of assuming the form of an autobiography, with suitable emphasis on individual experience, the memoir also provides operational commentaries on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in addition to many references to the works of earlier Arab philosophers (Tachau 184). Unlike them, Nusseibeh develops a robust belief in the unity of civilizations rather than the clash of civilizations, as advanced by neo-conservatives including Lewis and Huntington. He goes against the popular wave of Palestinian authors as he appreciated that in blaming one party, the faults of the other became apparent. Moreover, Nusseibeh distances himself from his youthful fascination with the idea of one secular democratic state with equal rights for both teams. On the contrary, he advances the concept of a two-state solution which would result in a separate independent Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel.

According to Nusseibeh, the unity of civilizations is the bold thing to do because of the state of the environment. In this way, he is different from other authors such as Oz, who argued that the partitioning was an external idea meant to divide and rule them. Largely, Nusseibeh seems to be arguing that any solution that will result in peace between the two nations should be adopted regardless of whoever suggests it. He stands out as an author who vehemently advocated for peace, not just between the two nations but also with external nations such as Britain and the United States. Nusseibeh was not interested in displaying the might of one nation against the other or proving that the misery of Palestinians was solely because of the Israelis. On the contrary, he strived to demonstrate how both nations contributed in a significant way in fueling the fight over

the years. The implication is that as much as external forces were instrumental in forging peace, the main people who would end this fight are the Jews and Arabs. That is the position Nusseibeh has continuously sustained, assuming that contrary to the public perception of most people across the world, the Israelis and Palestinians are natural allies rather than mortal enemies.

3.8 Nusseibeh's presentation strategy

Nusseibeh presents the history of the Palestinian nationalist struggle as well as its failure over the years from an individual account. His major function in that struggle had been to design principles and found committees. He was particularly interested in constructing the infrastructure and the sense of a state. Similar to other Palestinian authors, he presents his view on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in terms of their sufferings, victimhood, and sense of injustice as well as dispossession (Frisch 88). Nevertheless, the main difference of his presentation is that he does not entirely blame their situation on the Israelis. From his presentation, any audience can agree that the Israeli-Palestinian war is not a predicament that can never end. On the contrary, it is a scenario whose intensity has been aggravated mainly because of the different perceptions of the Jews and Israelis who have never been ready to admit the great role they play in the war. Instead, they have focused on blaming the other party and on external influences.

The implication is that it is viable for the fight to end; there is a need for a change of perception. Nusseibeh succeeds in explicitly presenting his argument that what is needed is people who can withstand the pressure and incitement from their people and the others and stand out as a negotiator of peace. It is only in this way that the fight will end; otherwise, it will always be the same situation repeated forever. In other words, it is only

when populations will be ready to sacrifice their comfort and do away with their prejudices that a ray of hope will emerge, which is the most highly prized resource in our world. Who are those brave few who may be willing to relinquish it?

3.9 The role of religion in the conflict

Nusseibeh also adopts another angle that is quite beneficial for persuading both camps on the possibility of peace. He deduces that God does not accomplish the ideal rule or his prophet (given the sharp religious differences between the Jews and Arabs). Instead, it is effectively undertaken by a wise and highly educated ruler. Subsequently, he instructs the secular Muslim idea to the zealous Islamists at his university. Religion is one of the essential pillars that form people's identity, as proposed by Shapiro. As a result, it can either help in the ending or propagation of conflict. In this case, the sharp contrast in the religious beliefs of the Jews and Arabs fueled the conflict, given that both camps felt the need to protect their belief system from probable extinction. Unfortunately, that pursuit becomes more important than the overall mission of attaining peace.

3.10 Nusseibeh's philosophy

Borrowing, then, from Avicenna's theory of the will, Nusseibeh outlines that personal knowledge is a representation of the will. This implies that knowledge is highly individual and biased, and hence, it cannot be held as the absolute truth or best way of carrying out operations. Instead, it is important for collaboration between different parties to complement the biases inherent in the knowledge foundations of individuals. Through this assumption, Nusseibeh rejects inherent identities and prefers a theory of identity as a fluid role of the will, that is, regardless of whether it is associated with the individual or the nation as a whole. The advancement of such an ideology encourages the development

of tolerance among populations rather than intolerance that causes conflicts and triggers warring activities. Nusseibeh attempts to persuade people that because knowledge is a construct of the will, mistakes are inevitable, hence people should learn to accommodate each other's flaws. Besides, people should not be timid about expressing their thoughts as they are suitable just like those already presented. Nusseibeh seems to disapprove of the notion of standard while encouraging relativity. In this realm, every concept, representation, or notion is acceptable. It is only in such an environment that deliberations of peace are possible.

Further, Nusseibeh's Islamic assumption regarding the accountability of the individual motivates the creation of the aspect of liberty. He argues that revolutionary leaders from both camps should advocate for liberty, and not just physical but also psychological. He elaborates that this is an organized way in which the liberty aspect can be enhanced over the years in a manner that is comprehensible by all. This comprehension is what will facilitate acceptance of the developing ideologies, and as a result it will be possible to establish a common ground for Arabs and Jews particularly in the most controversial areas that the two do not meet eye to eye (C. Smith 466). The objective was to raise issues that were problematic for Jews and Arabs to prove that life's experiences were not determinant by race but by the fact that we are all human. The quality of being human therefore meant that we experienced similar issues as well as desiring similar things. In this way, Nusseibeh argues that it is possible to agree on many aspects. He focused on elements that made us one rather than what distinguished us. He did this by eliciting empathy and sympathy.

New Historicist theory holds that every that each pursuit of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the very instruments it condemns to find a rich interpretation of the text. Subsequently, there is a risk of falling prey to the ideologies or practices it aims at unmasking (King 30). The memoir attempts to present a solid argument about the essence of tolerance. All individuals, whether Israelis or Palestinians, had a role to play in ending the conflict as they had the first-hand experience of the devastating consequences of constant war, more so than external parties who attempted to promote peace between them. In other words, they had a taste of the actual pressures of existing in an environment that was characterized by war and lack of honesty. In instances in which one's world is categorized into sides and one has selected among the sides, the surest indications of the desire to create peace are expressions of sympathy for others and antipathy for an individual. This assertion then makes the political memoir an intense criticism rather than a celebration of Palestinian nationalism. That is what makes Nusseibeh stand out from his fellow Palestinian authors.

3.11 Marxist ideology

The influence of Marxism is also evident in Nusseibeh's narrations. It is apparent that he mocks the maximalist propositions and prefers to insist on the freeing of the human being in line with the present needs rather than dependence on the state to do the same. According to him, the state will always have a hidden agenda even though they are expected to ensure that everyone is treated fairly. That is one of the reasons why he would not sustain a friendly relationship with Arafat. Nusseibeh respected Arafat but was against the ideals he stood for especially, when he was at the forefront in the Palestinian struggle. He blamed Arafat for causing people to depend on him rather than empowering

them to think independently. Nusseibeh seems to be suggesting that leaders are supposed to lead by transforming the minds of those they lead rather than molding them to be slaves in terms of thought. That is all in the attempt of solidifying the argument that the Palestinians were creating a reputation as corrupted people.

It is through liberation that people will feel obliged to behave in the best way possible and in a way that does not impinge on the rights of others. Moreover, when people are liberal, the level of uncertainty is greatly reduced because people trust each other instead of being suspicious and constantly calculating the next move. As Nusseibeh narrates, the predicament begins locally and then extends to neighbors. The Arabs do not trust their fellow countrymen, and that is why after the demise of Arafat there is tension regarding who would be the next person to take authority: “With the father gone... would Hamas and the other Islamist extremist take over?” (Nusseibeh 10). These thoughts reflect an unstable nation that has plenty of local peace problems to deal with before adventuring beyond the borders. Contrary to the presentations of other Palestinian authors, Nusseibeh is not afraid of unmasking the real state of affairs of the nation. He presents it openly even though this would cause the audience to view Palestinians as the source of the problem.

The reason why he advances though this way is because he is genuinely interested in identifying and designing a permanent solution to the unending conflict between Arabs and Jews. He allows us to be critical in examining the situation between the two nations in a largely objective way as he presents arguments from both sides. He explains what has seemed like common knowledge over the years, but he utilizes a style that does not elicit opposition or the desire to defend one’s stand, yet this is the general feeling that is

sparkled by the writings of most authors. Contrary to fellow authors, Nusseibeh does not focus on the obsession about being right and the other part being wrong. He continuously attempts to create a neutral ground for negotiations.

3.12 Probable neutral ground motivating peace

Nusseibeh also voices his beliefs on the political-religious movement in an organized manner to facilitate rational thinking. He laments the system of violence, the ideology of the martyr, and the false beliefs of really getting back at the Israelis (Tachau 186). He emphasizes the wrongdoings of his fellow countrymen. By doing so, he proves his outstanding intelligence and courage. Meanwhile, he risks himself with his attempts to convince his people to accept a two-state solution and to reject Hamas. Overall, what makes Nusseibeh unique is the fact that he can differentiate the attributes of Israel in terms of occupation, territorial settlements, security fences, and military harshness from the people. He does not despise the Israeli population, but their actions. That is why he is confident that Jews and Arabs are natural friends rather than enemies as is the widespread notion. From his presentations, inevitably, he does not abhor Israel as is openly brought out by other Palestinian authors. On the contrary, his respect, curiosity, and twists are evident in almost every page.

As he deliberates on his upbringing, he makes it clear that the Jews and Arabs have their issues that could be a significant factor in the consistent war “Weren’t both sides of the conflict immersed in their tragedies? ...Is each one unmindful to the narrative of the other? Isn’t this inability to imagine the lives of the “other” at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?” (Nusseibeh 11). Statements such as these are common throughout the memoir and keep the mind of the audience focused on the real issue rather than on

blame. Nusseibeh manages to make the audience deliberate on the complex nature of the conflict. We begin to empathize with the situation of both parties and ultimately realize that the situation is not as easy as it may appear. Nonetheless, contrary to the beliefs of external influences, both Jews and Arabs are capable and have an essential role to play in ending the war.

Nusseibeh is fascinated by his first visit to the Jewish state as he confirms that the Jews are ordinary people, contrary to the dominant perception that paints them as enemies. He studied Hebrew and was an employee on a kibbutz in the Galilee (Frisch 88). He explicitly remarks on the innovativeness of Israeli idealism. It is interesting how he unravels the metaphor of light and darkness about both parties. It is common knowledge that light and darkness cannot operate together as they are two realms with distinct principles. The use of this metaphor is very effective in helping to paint a mental picture in the mind of the audience regarding the perspective of the war from the two parties' points of view. Nusseibeh enthusiastically declares the great aspect that differentiates what Jews and Arabs are fighting for in an interesting sentence in his memoir that summarizes this whole metaphor; "The Jew seeks space to continue living, while the Arab defends his space to the death" (Nusseibeh 50). This observation is fair but causes mild fear on the future state of the nations.

The above statement reveals that the only way that will make it possible for both nations to begin the process of reconciliation is by convincing them to pursue the same objective, that is, fight for the same course, either heading toward light or darkness. The objective is to pursue objectives that lead to a similar destination. There is nothing intentional or mean in his writing concerning Israel that makes us believe that he is

biased or has a negative attitude toward Israel. On the contrary, there are plenty of explanations regarding Israel's policies of occupation that should cause the Israelis and their supporters to squirm. Nusseibeh presents his assertion based on solid facts in a way that does not raise questions. Instead, he causes the audience to constantly navigate through his descriptions of the unimportant and of the brutal nature of some of Israel's actions beyond its borders.

On the other hand, regardless of the shared destiny, there are specific examples of violence that prove the need for more reconciliatory efforts in both camps. For instance, the fence is indeed effective as an issue of safety. Nevertheless, almost the whole of the Israeli settlement of the West Bank has been a moral and technical mistake of historical ratios, and while it is challenging to refute the employment of force against terrorists, the planting of southern Lebanon with group bombs in the ultimate hours of last summer's war was an act of honest monstrosity (C. Smith 100). Nonetheless, even more, unsuitable than Nusseibeh's mental creation of the Israelis is his image of the Palestinians. The civil war in Palestine will largely influence the outcome of the external conflict. This increases the degree of anxiety, given that it seems that the confrontation with external forces is a projection of the internal factors that the external have no control over. Subsequently, there are no grounds for any good outcomes. Furthermore, there is no foundation for any confidence that secularity and modernity as well as diplomacy will be predominant. Notably, even Israel, with all its capability, has minimal influence on it apart from the rear areas.

It is only the Palestinians who can shape the character of Palestine, and this is what is problematic as it is viewed as an insult to them when the Israelis and others claim to

know them better. In any case, the Israeli would feel the same. Consequently, discontentment against the composition of their rule of authority results in an internal rebellion that ultimately extends to the external environments. Nusseibeh strives to attain admirable achievement due to his pursuit of liberal nationalism. Despite being a Palestinian, he equally presents Israeli affairs from a relatively objective perspective even when he is describing their violent acts. Throughout his memoir, he champions for nonviolence amid the brutal behaviors of people during that epoch in history. Nusseibeh goes against the current of that time, which was denoted by violence by advocating for peace, and that is why he agrees with the idea of the creation of two independent states. He goes against all the odds by portraying humane comprehension of an inhumane unfortunate position.

The memoir can more broadly be interpreted as a call for both the Israeli and Palestinian populations to start over. That is clear since Nusseibeh does not lean on either side and, as such, both parties are perceived as victims at different levels. The implication is that the two warring nations are not actual enemies but instead lack proper guidance on how to conduct their relations. This scenario is evident because unlike Oz, who presents the Jews as victims, Nusseibeh does not present the Israelis as enemies. On the contrary, both nations are presented as struggling with internal pressures that cause them to become intolerant to external influences. The narration of his work experience in a kibbutz in the Galilee seems like an appeal for understanding from the audience to comprehend that the Israeli-Palestine problem should be perceived from several angles and not just from that presented by external influences such as Britain.

Thus, the memoir strives to form an objective view of reality. Nusseibeh acknowledges the fact that both camps have a role to play in fueling the conflict and that is why it has never ended. By apportioning blame to both camps, a suitable environment is created, which is a great step in the attempt to establish a common ground where all participants can forge a way forward. Each party owns its contribution to the conflict easing the process of attaining peace because the blame game is avoided (Rahim 66). The contribution model advances that this is the best strategy when dealing with conflicting parties, especially those that have been involved in the intense conflict for a long time, as explained by the contribution. This scenario parallels one of the principles of New Historicism that regards the possibility of an unbiased outlook of reality. New historicists normally relate the works of the authors whom they scrutinize back to congruence among cultures and nations (King 36). However, this is not an absolute rejection of the postmodern movement of its philosophies. Rather, the theory facilitates the introduction of the historical context of the literary conversation in a manner that Postmodernism cannot.

As such, it empowers the reader to undertake a more thorough probe of the literature. As a result, we acknowledge and appreciate the happenings of Nusseibeh for Palestine and the early years of the State of Israel. The teenage periods on a kibbutz provided him with a perfect experience for helping us comprehend the zeal that Nusseibeh had in his attempt to identify the most honest ideals that would help terminate the negative perceptions towards each other and consequently the war. We observe the value of being a stranger in an entirely new location that introduced new values to the writer. Nusseibeh's writing implies a fresh start for the style of writing of authors and ultimately

a new attitude for both parties toward each other. By doing so, he helps audiences comprehend the popular culture at the time that the memoir was written. Particularly within the limits of literary constraints, we can link the cultural place of Nusseibeh and, by extension, his whole community, to the descriptions. Thus, the New Historicism theory facilitates the identification and appreciation of the cultural focus of the memoir concerning other theories, such as Postmodernism (King 40). The focus on New Historicism empowers researchers to operate with a broadened vision of contemporary popular literature (King 45).

The term “key” as used by Nusseibeh can be symbolically interpreted as implying the actual key to opening a new phase of life in which there would no longer be a war between the Jews and Palestinians. He bases this argument on the fact that their lineage has strong traces in Jerusalem. Notably, there is a very interesting connection that his family members are the fabled keepers of the keys to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The implication is that the human race is intertwined; all of us are cut from a single fabric and thus have the ability to tolerate and even love one another. Subsequently, peace in such an environment will be inevitable. Contrary to other Palestinian and Israeli authors who focus on the outstanding differences between the two parties beginning from their religion, Nusseibeh chooses to advance his arguments on the fact that there are more similarities between the Jews and Palestinians than there are differences, hence the popular assertion he keeps presenting throughout his narration that the two are natural allies and not mortal enemies.

Nusseibeh’s positive and hopeful attitude is drawn from his father: “His sense of hope was his greatest legacy” (Nusseibeh 14). Nusseibeh’s ideologies are firmly founded on

his father's. After his father's death, the author was determined to continue his pursuits of ensuring that one day the war will end, thereby making peace inevitable. Regardless of the hope lost among the two nations and others' intent on helping end the war, Nusseibeh still strongly believes, just as his father did, that there is hope. Like his father, he is aware of the possibility of pitfalls, but that to him should be viewed as healthy obstacles in the pursuit of peace. The narration of Omar's conquest of Jerusalem further corroborates his arguments on the possibility of ending conflicts among nations regardless of the degree of hatred between them. Besides, the power that peace can have among fighting populations is explicitly presented.

It is interesting to note from Nusseibeh's narrations that it is possible for Christians and Muslims to get along contrary to the popular proposition that often compares the two religions to a mixture of oil and water, that is, as something entirely impossible to mix. It is insinuated that the prophets Abraham, Moses, and Jesus had prayed together "near the Rock of Ascension" (Nusseibeh 17). Nusseibeh is attempting to build an argument of the viability of peace between the two nations if only they would change their approach strategies. The way Omar allegedly conquers Jerusalem is different from the way he conquers other cities because of the history of the Christian and Muslim leaders' fellowshipping together. The implication is that it is possible for a neutral ground to be established, which will be a great start in the process of finding a solution for the unending war.

Further, Nusseibeh seems to present the Jews as a harmless population to some extent as compared to their Palestinian counterparts. This is evident through the presentation of the Zionist movement and the Holocaust. The ideals of the movement caused Jews to

choose peace over war: “The Jews have no belligerent power behind them... neither are they of a warlike nature” (Nusseibeh 22). Such a statement is reiterated by a Palestinian author pointing to the outstanding difference between Nusseibeh and his fellow authors. Also, the scenario makes it requisite to develop a hypothesis concerning historical occurrences, including the Holocaust. Even though the Jews were not as powerful as external states such as Britain, a little adjustment would have made an essential variation. The outcome could have probably hastened the end of the Holocaust, thereby saving the lives of many Jews. This fact is not stated explicitly by Nusseibeh through his descriptions, yet Nusseibeh’s readers are agitated with the fact that Jews seemed to have suffered the most and thus deserved a right to have their independent state.

As evidenced by the happenings, the Jews cared too much for the welfare of others, but unfortunately this sentiment was not reciprocated. Following this, the mental picture that the audience paints is that of Jews as victims of a war that they had little control over (Haushofer et al. 17930). Inevitably, this is an interesting situation as the war is between the Israeli and Palestinian, but neither side appears to have the capability to terminate it. The implication is that there is a need for the creation of space for the two nations to strategize on how to end the war on their own rather than dependence on external forces. In any case, incitement from external forces is a core factor encouraging the war. That is the reason why the creation of two independent states seems to be the best feasible solution. Nonetheless, the suggestion should be viewed as coming from either of the two nations rather than from outside nations such as Britain. We could argue that this could probably be the reason why Nusseibeh champions this solution.

From Nusseibeh's presentations and arguments, it is rational to assert that the struggles of the Israelis and the Palestinians regarding the geopolitical landscape should be rewarded with peace. The two should be aided to redesign the Middle East regions (Valkova 1668). The development of two separate states will fuel the termination of the fight that has caused unimaginable suffering to innocent civilians. Nusseibeh is confident that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a war that can actually come to an end. He is not biased regarding either of the populations. On the contrary, he believes that they all deserve a second chance at doing the right thing. The scrutiny of work from the New Historicism perspective does not perceive it as a person but rather as reflecting a wider outlook of the community being discussed (King 10). Subsequently, advocating for fair treatment of individuals despite their race is one effective way of ending the war.

Simply put, human rights should apply to all to halt the abuses. The propagation of the ideology of fair social justice in Israel and Palestine will transfer to the entire Middle East, creating and sustaining peace in the region. Failure to attain this is what will fuel the war for decades to come. Similar to Oz's descriptions, the Jews seem to end up as victims in most cases and not the other way around. Thus, Palestinians seem to be the troublemakers, making the establishment of two states a great solution. In general, Nusseibeh presents a strong case for the rights of his population, whose intelligence, culture, and sense of dignity he praises. Notably, he also writes favorably about the Israelis. To some extent, Nusseibeh argues that all three faiths make claims to Jerusalem, and all should be heard and validated. He elaborates on the Palestinian existential connections to Jerusalem, which are explicit and apparent to Palestinians but are conveniently ignored in the Christian world. Regardless of the inevitable ties between the

Muslims and Christians, little is known regarding this in the broader context, thereby making it harder to identify common ground. As presented in the text, “in the city’s architecture, its climate ... all of these formed us as a people” (Nusseibeh 53).

Therefore, we can argue that this is one of the areas that authors need to focus on and more willingly lend their attention to motivate the end of the war rather than emphasizing on defending their populations; even their faults are evident. Through this analysis, it is possible to reconcile the view that Jews have with that of the Palestinians. By doing so, appropriate decisions can be forged regarding the way forward. As Nusseibeh consistently reiterates, there exist no irreconcilable differences. This argument is supported by the fact that before the beginning of the conflict, there was in fact peace in both nations. The implication is that it is viable to trace back on what transformed, and subsequently develop a *sustainable* solution to the challenge.

The current essay’s arguments align with those of other writers who have analyzed Nusseibeh’s writings. For instance, Gearty acknowledges Nusseibeh’s effective strategy of viewing the war from the perspective of both parties. He asserts that the inability of each of the parties to accept their role in the escalation of the conflict is the core reason for the unending Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Gearty 240). His imaginative capability, coupled with his commitment to the struggle of his people is what makes him an outstanding author. He applies the same process in exposing the audience to the experiences of both parties, thereby helping us understand better the significant variables of the war (Khawaja 15).

Additionally, (Khawaja 15) also agrees with the current essay’s argument that Nusseibeh is an author who provides hope against illusion. Though he appears as an

unrepresentative man, he exhibits the honor of an anomaly, causing his book to evoke a contradiction that compels the audience to have multiple perspectives when analyzing the happenings of the conflict.

On the other hand, another author, Perez, seems to disagree with the current essay's argument that Nusseibeh largely succeeds in handling the conflict issues as compared to the other authors. He argues that the conflict is not effectively handled in the context of the Pan-Arab and later Islamist narrative of aiming to destroy the Israeli population. Perez argues that it could be impossible for Palestine to approximate the impact of that existential threat, reiterated among a people who have survived mass murder of their population at some time in history (66).

CHAPTER 4: *RETURN: A PALESTINIAN MEMOIR* BY GHADA KARMI

4.1 Author's biography

Ghada Karmi was born in 1939 in Jerusalem. Her family was forced to leave their home because of Israel's creation in 1948. Following that, they relocated to England in 1949, where she spent her childhood and undertook her studies (Karmi, "Interview" 84). Karmi served as a doctor for many years, where she worked as a specialist for migrant health and refugees. She was in several research leadership positions in Middle Eastern politics as well as in the culture at the School of Oriental and African Studies. She also served in the Universities of Durham and Leeds (Karmi, "The one-state solution" 65). Karmi also served as an Associate Fellow of the Royal Institute of International Affairs from 1999 to 2001 (Karmi, "Interview" 85). During this time, she led the main project on Israel-Palestinian reconciliation. Ultimately, she became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 2009.

Ghada Karmi is a prominent Palestinian activist, academic, and writer and a research fellow at the Institute of Arab and Islamic studies at the University of Exeter. She is also the vice-chair of the Council for Arab-British Understanding. Karmi's main work area has been on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and she has released many publications on the subject.

4.2 Introduction

Return: A Palestinian Memoir by Ghada Karmi presents the frustrations, disappointments, and disillusionments of exiled Palestinians who desired to build their nation to achieve a state that they once had. Through the experiences of Karmi, who was born in Palestine and raised in London, the reader agonizes over the fate of the nation to

the point that the pain almost becomes a reality. The memoir is an explicit representation of the continuous account of the loss and struggles that Karmi and her team go through as they attempt to achieve their goal of a united front (Mattar 55). Even though her livelihood was in Britain, Karmi was committed to the Palestinian cause. She seemed to be a full-time activist committed to explaining to the world the conflict from the perspective of a Palestinian. Given that she lived away from the actual conflict, the audience is tempted to view her presentation as more objective compared with writers who had a personal experience with the war. New Historicist theory is an effective tool for undertaking an analysis of the memoir. It aids in an exhaustive understanding of intellectual narrations through literature presented in a cultural context.

4.3 General memoir overview

Karmi's memoir is an exemplary narrative that describes her exile as well as the impossibility of ever reclaiming the homey feeling she once felt before the war. Her descriptions are so vivid and portray a feeling of longingness to remain behind searching for ways to help her Palestinian people despite the war: "The journey filled me with bitterness and grief... And it won't be reversed" (Karmi 150). Her love for her country is imminent as well as the desire to identify ways that would help end the war. It is this love that drives her to return to her homeland with the hope of finding solace in a place she once called home. Karmi begins work with the Palestinian Authority, where she experiences a firsthand understanding of its strangely unconventional bureaucracy under the authority of the Israelis (Sela and Kadish 10). Accompanied by the passion of reuniting with her country, Karmi creates a highly expectant attitude among the readers

that experiences a natural death on arrival. In her pursuit, she takes the reader on an intriguing journey into the center of one of the hottest conflict zones.

4.4 Historicism theory/Foucault ideology

Therefore, New Historicism is a theory whose fundamental principle is that literature should be scrutinized and understood within two main contexts: the history of both the author and the critic (Colebrook 200). In other words, there will always be two perspectives to the study of phenomena from a New Historicism perspective. In the current memoir, the narrations of Karimi have to be assessed based on her history concerning her upbringing in both Britain and Palestine. Also, the discussions presented by this study have to be considered to produce a product that can be considered created from a New Historicist viewpoint. Karimi presents a personal view toward the conflict that she wants the audience to perceive as the general feeling of all Palestinians at that time, specifically the females (Bernard 20). She attempts to demonstrate the significant contribution of women to the conflict. The theory enables us to appreciate her different understandings of the conflict as well as whom to blame for the fate of her nation (Fox-Genovese 232).

Founded on the literary scrutiny of Greenblatt while simultaneously being influenced by the ideology of Foucault, the theory holds that there are many variables that influence a piece of art, including the time in history and circumstances. However, a critic's response to the piece of art is also influenced by the surroundings, beliefs, and adverse opinions (Veaser 57). The New Historicism observes literature in a broader historical scope, assessing how the writer's times influenced the work and vice versa. The objective is to unravel the fact that present cultural contexts impact the conclusions of a critic

(Newton 175). Karmi's narrations are influenced by several variables. First, having fled the country when she was very young denied her the firsthand experience of the war, especially at a stage at which she would easily form opinions. By doing so, her interpretations and outlook are largely different from that of others, such as Oz. Second, the longing desire to call the country her home blinds her rationality as at that instance she is led by her emotions (Ball 10). Third, her enthusiasm and determination are driven by the desire to attempt to recreate and live a life that has already been lived, thereby adding to the dilemma.

Addressing the above emerging issues is impossible without providing a response situated within the reading of the memoir itself. The New Historicism theory holds that there is no phenomenon that can be effectively dealt with through a simple yes/no response (Veaser 58). On the contrary, it is imperative that the work be evaluated in the context in which it was written. It is only in this way that cultural history can be exposed through the analysis of the work. The audience thinks about how hard it must have been for a little girl to live in exile away from her roots regardless of the contributing circumstance. The theory allows the audience to expose the use and distribution of power in addition to the marginalization of classes within the work (Colebrook 222). Subsequently, the study informs more concerning the text; at the same time, analyzing the text reveals more about the history.

New Historicism also focuses on the notion that the evaluation of a text is influenced by the cultures and environments that surround individuals. Growing up in Britain but with Palestinian roots enables Karmi to describe and engage an extraordinary experience. The narration and interpretation would have been different if she had grown up in

Palestine (Newton 170). Additionally, her narrations capture her opinions, given the position of women in those days. The issues that she raises cause the audience to be informed and think about the significant issues at the time not just directly related to the war between the Israelis and Palestinians, such as the aspect of gender (Hamilton 100). A good example is this statement: “Many of the women wore expensive jewelry, even the ones in hijab” (Karmi 93). The statement can be interpreted in varied ways borrowing from the main principle of New Historicism. One interpretation is that most women in Hijab, a dress worn by Muslims women to cover their heads are not wealthy, and another could be that they wear inconspicuous jewelry to avoid attention. Also, their dressing could be a way of differentiating them from those not of their kind.

4.5 The role of women in the conflict

By so doing, they played an essential role in propagating the conflict as they related to those like them. Karmi gives attention to such details that were not deemed important by other authors because of her objective of highlighting the role of women in the conflict and the extent to which their participation fueled it. She gives a clear description of the behavior of the women in the offices who, as the audience would expect, provide a helping hand to their fellow women (Newton 173). Unfortunately, that is not the case. The cooperation of the women with their male counterparts is what increased the frustration and disappointment levels of Karmi and her team, thereby contributing as one of the fundamental issues at the time. Subsequently, the experience felt like that of visiting an entirely new place with diverse cultural values that make it difficult to relate with the residents. The place becomes barely recognizable, and she is thus still an exile just like she was in Britain, yet she is home (Moore-Gilbert 60). These encounters caused

her to question the function of people like her in contributing to the development of their nation and whether their return is essential at all. Additionally, the effort to restore the homey feeling seemed impossible. The nostalgic feeling that her family escaped the war was still present and growing worse by the reception of the people she expected to help as much as they could. The level of disillusionment was higher than she expected.

4.6 Karmi's dual identity

The predicament of the battling of dual identity is evident throughout her memoir. Despite leaving Palestine as a young girl, Karmi was determined to preserve the few memories she had of her country as captured by the statement "fairly integrated and at ease in my adopted country... who still retained a memory of the homeland and knew it as their real country" (Karmi 18). This is the reason why it is disheartening witnessing the reception she gets, as it appears that she had made a mistake to return as this had tainted the good memory she had of the place. Some critics like Irfan have argued that the memoir does not necessarily contribute to the vast history regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Irfan 284). On the contrary, it takes a varied approach from the other writers such as the feminist one toward the conflict. Nonetheless, New Historicists emphasize the fact that there is no permanent interpretation of literary criticism.

4.7 Karmi's argument

Karmi's encounter in the Palestinian Authority causes us to feel haunted and remorseful. She presents herself as a victim of circumstances and operating in an environment where there are powerful forces over which she has no control. Unlike Nusseibeh, who is somehow objective as he reports on the warring state of the nations,

Karmi seems to lay the blame on one side—the stubborn Israelis who are adamant about frustrating any efforts to attaining peace. It is as if the country thrives because of war and thus is determined to sustain it. Karmi does not narrate the experiences while providing all of the causes and repercussions of every action, yet this is what we would expect of a Palestinian. For instance, she underplays the idea of making minimal effort with the office of media and communication to ensure that the objectives are met. In other words, she expected no resistance because she believed that the course was obvious and thus needed no persuasion. She emphasizes so much on the behavior of the other side, presenting them as victims. To a great degree, her memoir is not as democratic as Nusseibeh's, who was not biased.

Karmi presents herself as capable of doing many things competently, is all-inclusive, and is very bright. The memoir reveals her as dedicated and highly committed to the course for the attainment of Palestinian rights. Her perspective is impacted by the fact that she grew up in the Diaspora. She demonstrates great zeal when she returns to her homeland as a consultant (Mattar 55). She desires to be at the core of all happenings, to be an essential contributor to the building of her state. Unfortunately, her experiences depict disappointment and disillusionment (Mattar 56). By extension, her experiences reflect those of fellow Palestinians who lived in the Diaspora. The memoir qualifies as both a sequel and a stand-alone. The accurate writing manner, the psychological discernment, and the prominent expertise for integrating the individual with the political somehow matches her skill with that of Oz regardless of the different approaches to the war that the two adopt.

Oz promotes the argument that it would have been easier to end the war locally because the residents were capable. The interference from the outside world is what complicated the situation and should be blamed for the extended conflict. According to Oz, external, not internal, factors largely contributed to the escalation of the war. Oz seemed to entirely place the blame on the external forces, whereas Karmi seems to place the blame on locals rather than foreigners. She explains how the workers in the ministry had been instructed not to cooperate with them. She deliberately exposes her frustrations in a way that makes the audience see that it is the locals who were against the ending of the war.

4.8 Literary strategies utilized

From a stylistic perspective, contrary to Oz and Nusseibeh, Karmi adopts a very personal narration style that almost creates a feeling of warmth and accessibility. Karmi describes a life path that outlines the story of contemporary Palestine in the most outstanding and enlightened way. Through her memoir, we visualize the colonization process, occupation, and fragmentation of the actuality of the present-day Israel and Palestine (Veeser 58). We pass through a personal journey into the center of the darkness concerning the occupation. At such a time, rather than abstract notions are struggling with the impossibilities that life throws at them. In any case, at the moment, it is difficult to experience normality in any way. Leading a normal life or even any life at all is a luxury that cannot be afforded at that time in history. The focus on herself, which highlights her femininity, is one of the greatest strategies that Karmi uses. Her strength is imminent from the focus on her personal story. A good instance is the narration of her visit to her centenarian father. The visit reveals her determination to make every part of

the world a better place to live regardless of the present circumstances. She persistently searches for a way out and is ready and willing to compromise. It is this zeal that causes her to get very disappointed on arrival back to her nation when she realizes that her fellow nationals lost the urge to keep striving to change the situation.

Karmi's commitment to the womenfolk is evident throughout the text. She attempts to understand all their predicaments even when it seems they are the ones in the wrong. For instance, Karmi defends Hanan, a character in the memoir who works as an employee in the media center, when a male colleague instructs her not to because she is not to be trusted. She does not bother to investigate the truth of the matter and instead finds an explanation for the accusations in the instance that they could be confirmed. Karmi sympathizes with Hanan's financial troubles and explains that the circumstances could cause people to engage in unlawful practices (Colebrook 248). According to her, Hanan is not a criminal nor an individual who preyed on people for financial assistance, as was the opinion of several workers at the department. Karmi justifies the behavior by explaining that times were tough and everyone was only trying to survive in the best way they deemed possible as she explains, "it's difficult being here" (Karmi 1575). Her solidarity for the fate of women is as solid as it is for the fight of the Palestinian situation.

4.9 General propositions

Notably, we later agree with her propositions regarding the difficulty of life at that time through her encounters with the army officers. The Druze soldiers are unapologetically rude and outwardly racist. One of them harasses Karmi regarding her passport to the extent that the audience feels her agony. The description regarding that

encounter is very vivid and frightening. At some point, the audience feels as if the officer will harm Karmi and we are relieved when she finally surrenders her passport regardless of the embarrassment that accompanies it. The soldier says; “we decide what we need” (Karmi 108). The other soldier looks on as if to worsen her emotional state. The scenario is another excellent example of the predicament of Palestinians. Karmi’s experience proves that at checkpoints, harassment is a common occurrence to an extent that some Palestinians have actually become used to the situation and view it as the normal state of affairs. That is the reason why a number of them were grumbling that Karmi should yield to the instructions given rather than attempt to stamp her passport while communicating that she knows her rights.

The persistence she shows when dealing with the officers could be a reflection of the energy that Palestinians required at that time to live. Without persistence and determination, it would be impossible to survive in that environment. We observe how the Palestinians require permission to do everything, even those things that are supposed to be direct because of their positions. For instance, Karmi has to get permission to attend a forum where the entire media would be present, yet this is supposed to be obvious, especially due to her great media skills and expertise. Surprisingly, the boss prevents her from attending and instead suggests subordinate work for her to do automatically, demoting her in a way: “I will be there and we can’t both go” (Karmi 1915). Dr. Farida seems to be seriously guarding his boundaries as if his job were on the line. He views fellow workers as threats, yet they are supposed to be working together against a common enemy. This fight against one another is a major reason why the Palestinians remained under the mercy of the Israeli forces according to the author. Dr. Farida is very

reluctant to allow Karmi to make decisions regarding her office, causing her life to be very difficult. It is overwhelming to deal with both the stress of the Israelis occupying the land that was once theirs and acting as if they are the legal owners as well as with fellow Palestinians who are unwilling to help exiles such as Karmi.

For the most part, Karmi is biased toward the Palestinian perspective. Her point of departure appears to stem from the fact that the Palestinians are the victims. Throughout the memoir, she describes how Palestinians suffer under the rule of the Israelis. Rarely does she begin her narrations from the fact that the Palestinians also have a role to play in the conflict. According to her, the Israelis are entirely to blame because they snatched their land, and instead of being remorseful for their actions, the institutions have established systems aimed at frustrating the efforts of Palestinians (Newton 179). In so doing, we realize that the Palestinians are also guilty. The New Historicism theory holds that in presenting the flaws of one side, those of the other side becomes obvious. In other words, the same tools used to determine how innocent or guilty the Israelis are comprise the same ones that reveal that the Palestinians also have a role to play in the conflict. In any warring environment, it is the commitment of the warring parties that motivates the end of a fight. That means that ending the war is a mutual effort.

However, the fact that the Palestinians view themselves as victims fueled the war largely because they were not ready to accept their role in the conflict. The narrations of Karmi paint the Israelid as the worst offenders of human rights, yet a good number of the residents at the time were not directly tied to the war. The scenario strengthens the

literature already present regarding how authors view their camp as innocent while directing all the blame to the rival camp (Suleiman 120).

4.10 Distinction from other authors' writing style

Karmi's narration style differs from that of Nusseibeh. Nusseibeh is not inclined toward one side as he reports on the warring state of the nations. His narration provides all of the facts of the causes and repercussions of every action, even though he is a Palestinian. For instance, he does not leave out the part of the suicide bombers and instead speak only of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank (Moore-Gilbert 70). On the contrary, he narrates the happenings of all of the sides. That is the reason why some scholars have suggested that his memoir is the most obvious democratic book to have come out from Palestinian nationalism.

On the other hand, Karmi has a similar presentation style to Oz, who also blames either external or internal factors for their problems. Oz attributes all of their suffering to the treatment by Britain specifically, and Arabs present a major hindrance to finding a solution to the war. He presents his race as living under the mercy of those factors. That caused them to live hypocritical lives to ensure their existence. The inability to acknowledge the role that each party plays in causing the war has also posed a problem to the numerous governments and international institutions that have tried to help the two warring nations find peace. Aligning with the principles of New Historicism theory, the mindset of Oz can be translated to include the mindset of the rest of his population (Valkova 1664). They view themselves as innocent victims of war and are thus reluctant to make any adjustments to help end the war.

The one-sided narration in the memoir regarding the *New York Times* reporter Erlanger as he addresses Karmi's concerns is further evidence of the determination of Karmi to narrate her ordeal from the Arab perspective. The scenario is an excellent example of the explanation provided by the New Historicism theory regarding how it is difficult to establish the boundary between the aspect of right and wrong as well as dealing with the issue of historical reality (Veesser 58). In this incident, the flaws of the Palestinians of fueling the war become very clear through the conversation that Karmi has with the reporter. It can be deduced that she intended to cause the audience to view the heartlessness of the Israelis as they moved on with their lives while the Palestinians still suffered from the wounds of the past. Her main objective was to demonstrate their arrogance as they lived in houses that belonged to the Palestinians. Karmi does not succeed in this pursuit. She even says so herself by admitting that she failed to be grateful for being offered an opportunity to visit her homestead.

It is Erlanger, a *New York Times* reporter, who is presented as rational and ready to move on with life while embracing the Arabs. In any case, he is the one who extends the hand of friendship to Karmi and not the other way around. Additionally, he persistently prevents the conversation from focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is the topic that Karmi pushes for and is determined to engage him in. Unlike him, she is not ready to forget the past, forgive, and move on. Instead, she insists on how the Israelis are cruel as they live in houses that were once theirs without concern, which is a proposition that is not true given that it is the reporter who reached out first. Conflicts that give rise to wars usually begin from ill feelings toward each other when one party feels offended by the other (Jandt 108). The inability to move past an argument or a point of disagreement

is what has fueled many wars across the world. Such is the inability showed by Karmi, who is offended even much later when the reporter does not feature a story about their encounter. The ill feelings that she harbors are the greatest hindrance to ensuring a peaceful future.

She contradicts herself as being a champion for the Palestinian cause because she is stuck in the past. It is impossible to move ahead when people keep thinking about how their neighbors have offended them. Karmi's emotions are thus conflicted. She expresses the utmost desire to be a representative for her people in improving their lives but lacks the proper strategies to do so, mainly because of her constant focus on the past. She is very bitter about the fact that she cannot live in her family house. Even though we sympathize with her situation, it is obvious that it is impossible to meet her demands. She even fails to acknowledge those who extend a friendly hand, such as the families who allow the exiles to tour the houses that once belonged to them. Karmi is also nostalgic, and it is this nostalgia that blocks her rationality at times (Bernard 50). For instance, the desire to travel across the area without problems is what causes her the problem with the Druze soldiers in the first place. Although the soldiers are harsh and unreasonable, she is also not very different from them, particularly given her own reluctance to submit her passport.

To some extent, Karmi is also controlled by feelings of revenge as she desires that the Israelis be emotionally burdened because of their actions. The constant reminder of her people's lost land, suffering farmers, and stressful work environments are meant to achieve this aim, and she largely succeeds with her audience. That is the reason why she

fails to find fault with some characters like Hanan (Sela and Kadish 18). She justifies Hanan's behavior by saying that times were hard. In any case, Hanan's alleged accusation could not be compared with the suffering farmers who had to be bulldozed with fierce dogs, loud music, disturbing insults, and unfriendly gatherings (Karmi 119). Even though we understand the suffering and anguish of the Israelis, we would expect that she also focuses on some of the things that Palestinians did that were unacceptable to make her narrations objective to some extent. Like other authors, Karmi has attempted to present her opinion regarding the Israeli- Palestinian conflict.

As expected, she grounds her discussions on their sufferings, victimhood, sense of injustice, and dispossession (Suleiman 126). As revealed by her discussions, she advances her arguments based on her culture. For instance, the restriction on movement, as evidenced by the harsh soldiers and unreasonable laws among other Israeli obstacles, causes us to sympathize with the Palestinian situation. The entirely neutral and inclusive opinions concerning the dispute from Karmi are not forthcoming, yet it is only in this way that a solution to the crisis can be obtained. She works hard to establish good relations with her neighbors to enable them to live peacefully rather than as enemies, but her determination to present the Israelis as the enemies prevent the achievement of the objective.

As far as the reader can tell, her motive was good, but the approach was completely wrong. Karmi wants to change everything at the same time and without following the required channels that could help her achieve what she wanted. Instead, she chooses to engage with people like the Druze soldiers who are simply following orders and may fail

to understand the bigger picture that she had (Mattar 54). Her memoir moves our emotions, given that the manipulation of emotions is often the most effective strategy used to achieve objectives. Her memoir transports us to the center of a conflict that can only be remedied when both parties accept their role in it.

Karmi nonetheless provides us with an important view of the stalemate situation that her people find themselves in. After that, we are empowered to observe the dilemma and impossibility of their situation. The situation of the Abu Ibrahim family is one good example of the anomaly of the situation of the Palestinians. One wonders how it is possible to survive in such an environment and why the authorities would allow such inhumane actions to happen. The family, including their children, underwent suffering because of the settlers' behaviors. The settlers were determined to force them out of their land, which included harassing innocent children to achieve their goals (Moore-Gilbert 62). Karmi expresses the inhumane action in such a sad way that the reader is likely overwhelmed by a combination of emotions such as sadness, helplessness, anger, and vengeance. In reading this passage, one might feel that such people as these settlers do not deserve to live.

To worsen the experience, the authorities fail to handle the situation as expected. Instead of dealing with it in a suitable way, they use corruption to manage the ordeal. First, they delay coming to the rescue of the Abu Ibrahim family as if silently expecting that the family would yield to the pressure and leave their land. When they come, they give lengthy talks, the importance of which is not obvious, and give some money to the family as if bribing them to understand the situation. The message they communicate is

that the settlers are untouchable and should either learn to live with their taunting or surrender their land—a very sad scenario indeed. Our understanding of the conflict takes a new turn after this incident, especially because of the involvement of children (Fox-Genovese 233). Karmi strategically chooses this scenario and presents it vividly to the audience in a way that blinds us to the role of the Palestinians in the conflict. From that moment on, we view the Israelis as the perpetrators of the violence and agree with Karmi that the Palestinians are the victims of an impossible situation.

Karmi further describes the bureaucracy of the Israelis as one that is intended to harm anyone who is not of Israeli descent. She explains the alienation of the Palestinians in the attempt to psychically distance them under Israeli occupation. That was not ill-intended but was instead meant to spare them from the misery caused by the humiliation and intimidation to the extent that it seemed like a machine. This analogy flows throughout the memoir, establishing a thumbprint that is hard to ignore. It appeals to our emotions in an outstanding way that the other writers did not manage to trigger. Karmi ensures that regardless of her audience, the reality of Palestinian life is explicit. Meanwhile, the pain and reality of exile also come into play amid the occurrences (Newton 172). Ultimately, the blend makes the memoir a kind of writing that makes all of our senses come alive. We are empowered to feel every emotional, as is intended by Karmi in the most intense way possible.

Karmi offers an engaging meditation on the interpretation of living together as a people. The memoir advocates for the humane treatment of all because of the mere fact that we are all human and as such share certain universal traits and emotions. The

implication is that the scenario should compel us to care for one another because we belong to the same species before we are of either race. Engaging with this ideology, Karmi questions the essence of existentialism and causes us to rethink our beliefs and preferences. We begin to look at the bigger picture, that is, that we are all equal after all and that no one is superior or immune to the predicaments of the world. It is for this reason that it is important to help each other in our times of need. For a moment during her description, we forget the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians and see the importance of living in harmony because the gains outweigh the demerits.

Subsequently, Karmi achieves her objective through her appeal to the emotions of empathy and sympathy. In the process of reminiscing about the predicament of the Palestinians, we search ourselves regarding the unfair things that we often do to people and conclude that all of us are susceptible to suffering. Karmi presents a literary memoir that has utilized many strategies, including descriptive language, to exemplify the suffering, desolation, frustration, and disillusionment of the Palestinians. Another instance where the role of women in the conflict is highlighted is in her narration of the dilemma of the woman who was distanced from her family because of the wall of separation as well as the families whose habitations were threatened because of the Silwan demolitions in the pursuit of Israel to establish the so-called theme of “City of David.” One wonders whether the project is worth the separation of families. That is another scenario that empowers Karmi to present the inhumanity of the Israeli authorities. They are so indifferent to the harm that they cause in trying to achieve their largely irrelevant objectives.

The impression of the pain of losing a family, especially narrated from the perspective of a woman, is not an easy ordeal to deal with for us as readers. Karmi makes us agonize with the families in a way that differs from the strategies of Oz and Nusseibeh. Because of that, we decide on what is good or bad for both parties. Following that, the effort by the Israeli archaeologist who attempts to explain the need for the demolitions is not annoying but irritating and unreasonable. Karmi ensures that our focus is sustained in the deliberation of the nightmare that the affected families went through. Again, our senses are awakened to the reality of the impossible life that the Palestinians are subjected to. The notion of justifying the demolitions that are concerned with religion thereby seems vague and simply a way of causing untold suffering to the Palestinians.

On the other hand, as Karmi undertakes her duties at the ministry, she enhances our understanding of the workings of the Palestinian Authority. We observe the mystification and exasperation of the petty office engagements as well as the continuous wrangles because of the aspect of status. Karmi makes us wonder why people are not focused on the bigger problems of conflict and are instead focused on insignificant issues that only served to intensify the conflict. The fights over who should do what, or why something should be done on a certain day seem unimportant. At some point, we wonder why Karmi focuses on that, especially because it reveals the role of the Palestinians in the conflict. However, we finally appreciate the sense of the narrations as they highlight one of the best strategies that people use to deal with their impossible situations that do not have a solution. Karmi explains that the wrangles provide the people with a reason to keep living in “attempts at wresting some sense of purpose for their existence” (Karmi 314). This is a result of the suffocation caused by subordination to the Israelis in all areas of their lives.

Karmi presents the leadership style of President Abbas in a strategic way to cause us to despise it. The main reason for this is because of the effort of Abbas to persuade people to stop resisting. His main ideology is that of collaboration regardless of the effect that has on the affected people, yet that is exactly the main issue that Karmi was determined to fight. The idea of accepting to be mistreated is the sole reason for causing the Palestinians to lack purpose in their lives as well as making it hard for exiles like Karmi to pick up from where they left off before the war. The leadership style frustrates all efforts to helping people move forward with their lives with minimal effect on the scars of the past. That scenario is well presented at a conference that Karmi helped organize. President Abbas seems to justify the abandonment of all resistance, which ultimately shows his resignation toward the matter. He was not willing to keep up the fight that would finally see to it that their people lived freely and peacefully without any form of discrimination. Karmi is not satisfied with his suggestions and persuasions as evidenced by her comment, "I remembered the vigorous, creative young revolutionary that he had been" (311). Her choice of words is not only effective but presents the message in a humorous way when she expresses her disbelief concerning how she would not believe that Abbas had transformed to become a submissive creature (Moore-Gilbert 60).

Karmi is likewise deeply disappointed by the behavior of the Palestinian entrepreneurs. Some of them had been integrated into the ministry under the operations of the Palestinian Authority and subsequently led a luxurious life because of their dealings with Israel. Some of the profitable businesses that enabled them to lead such lives included providing building materials for illegal settlements. That is like people creating

a kind of “cancer” for their own, as Karmi puts it, given that it was a practice that caused more harm than good for a majority of the people. The business, just like that advanced by the Israelis, was meant to benefit only a few people but with devastating consequences on the majority. She is shocked when one of her people who had given her a lift stops to speak in what seemed like a friendly business conversation in one of the settlements along the way. The disillusionment she experiences causes us to largely believe that the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians will never end.

4.11 Comparison with other writers’ arguments

Similar to Azim’s arguments, Karmi seems to be stating that a nation whose people fail to observe the basic principles of integrity is doomed for destruction (Bazaluk 86). Karmi helps boost our understanding of Palestine’s political and social scene. Subsequently, through her memoir, she gets insight into her emotional and intellectual growth. That journey of self-realization is difficult, complicated, distressing, and painfully honest and is a direct representation of the predicament of the Palestinian situation.

My analysis concurs with Scharf’s elaboration on the determination that Karmi has in presenting the Palestinian cause to a Western audience. She is deeply committed to the cause of the Palestinian population as well as fighting for their rights (Scharf 231). Just like Nusseibeh, she also provides a unique outlook on the Palestinian situation.

Azim also acknowledges Karmi’s emphasis on Israeli power and how it is utilized to cause suffering to the Palestinian population (Bazaluk 86). Karmi uses a harsh lens to

analyze the happenings at her workplace, the way in which her fellow Palestinians generally behave, and their reaction to unfair scenarios. She also analyzes the behavior and general operations of the administration system. Given her situation of growing up in the Diaspora, she is very vibrant in assessing her situations as well as in presenting her opinions.

4.12 Conclusion

On the whole, it can be argued that Karmi's memoir does not bring us closer to resolving the Palestinian conflict. She understands the conflict as a predominantly one-sided affair, largely placing the blame on the Israeli population for causing great suffering to the Palestinians. The fact that she lived outside of the conflict has plays a large role in her approach. Women have a role to play in the conflict as outlined by their support of the system and following instructions from the male population. They also fail to voice their opinions for fear of losing their jobs or calling attention to themselves, which would negatively impact their families. Through her narrations, Karmi makes us understand that if given a fair opportunity, women could change things in a big way compared to their male counterparts because of their high level of tolerance and determination. This is evident through the experiences of Karmi, who unlike others such as President Abbas, is ready and willing to face whatever comes her way despite the consequences. Her resilience is evident throughout the memoir and perhaps nowhere more visible than in her interactions with the Druze soldiers. Her determination to fight for the course of her people knows no bounds.

CHAPTER 5: *HALF THE HOUSE: MY LIFE IN AND OUT OF JERUSALEM* BY

RACHEL BERGHASH

5.1 Author's biography

Rachel Berghash was born in Jerusalem under British authority, and her upbringing was founded on the ideologies of the Jewish orthodox. She is a great poet and has also been a nominee for the Pushcart Prize, an American prize given in the honors of poetry, short fiction and literary works. Her translations are also present in many literary magazines. Berghash has a master's degree in social work from Yeshiva University. She has also worked as a teacher of life seminars. She also served in the Israeli army and attended the Robin Academy of Music. Berghash is a secretary at the Israeli parliament and at *The Jerusalem Post*.

5.2 Introduction

Berghash effectively structures her memoir to narrate a story that is highly characterized by emotional connections that attract and sustain the interest of the reader from the beginning to the end. It is this trait that makes her work stand out from Oz and Nusseibeh. Berghash's emotive expressions result in the production of a lyrical and outstanding memoir that enables the audience to relate with her life relationship with both environments that she calls home (Stolorow 59). Hers is a lifelong journey that results in self-discovery, arguably the main reason for the development of an inclusive personality that she has at the end. The start is founded on her perspective of the mysteries of Jerusalem from the eyes of an innocent child. We also observe the strict adherence to the Jewish orthodox lifestyle, stemming from the background of her family, her father in

particular. The situation is also influenced by the basic kinship between Israelis and Palestinians (Sela and Kadish 15). New Historicism theory provides an effective tool for analyzing Berghash's memoir as well as improving our understanding of the nature of the war between the Israelis and Palestinians.

5.3 Theory

As discussed earlier in this text, the New Historicism perspective focuses on the cultural context of a text production instead of emphasizing completely the expected structure of a text (Colebrook 248). That is the reason why the background of Berghash is very important in helping us understand the way in which she approaches the Israeli-Palestinian War. With the knowledge that she was born in Jerusalem and later left for New York as well as her marriage to an American, we gain a sense of her tolerance toward the differences of other cultures (Newton 175). It also becomes clear why she firmly believes that peace is possible, given the diverse experiences that she has had in her stay in America. It is evident that a great deal of information is obtained from contextual factors rather than just the focus on the content of a text. The possibility of the right interpretation and arguments is enhanced when one has acquired this knowledge.

The New Historicism theory also suggests that it is impossible to obtain a single interpretation of a piece of art (Fox-Genovese 235). Besides, literary works cannot exist in solitude. Rather, it is the engagement that gives them the life that they have, subsequently creating a unique enthusiasm obtained from reading them. The engagement comes from elements in society and includes information on culture and other background aspects. Consequently, there will be several ways of viewing experiences without necessarily being biased or choosing one view as the most suitable one. As a

result, the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians can be explained from many angles. Thus Berghash decides to adopt many approaches to explaining the conflict, including her focus on the role of women in the conflict. She capitalizes on the capability of women in ending the conflict (Newton 178). Through her activities and those of her mother, we observe their input in positively influencing the end of the conflict. Also, their character traits are important as they reflect on what both populations need to focus on to help in the ending of the conflict.

5.4 Overview

Berghash's memoir is highly intimate and thought-provoking. One of the reasons for the achievement of this effect is the fact that she follows the principle of New Historicism that suggests that items should be viewed as outputs of varied networks of both social and material behaviors. Subsequently, the interpretation of literary works does not just focus on the universal themes or historical corpus (Hamilton 240). The utilization of the two strategies enables her to address several main themes, including emigration, exile, family, and the fundamental kinship between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. It demonstrates her ability to develop a new house of the spirit, borrowing from the background of her past while embracing the possibilities that her new life presents. The creation of a spiritual house is in her attempt to integrate the diverse cultural beliefs and practices of Jerusalem and abroad (Berghash and Jillson 50). Unlike the other authors, her exposition is rich in providing information from a fairground because she gets married to an American. The taking of sides would create problems in her relations with her family. One example of this is when Berghash goes sightseeing with her family. She is very fearful of making a mistake that would result in her death or that of her family members.

Interestingly, even her children are not as scared as she is. Her husband finds it amusing that she is fearful and instructs her to sit next to him, thereby displacing the children. This scenario could be used to explain the extent to which Palestinians, Israelis, and even the British do not understand each other (Bernard 30). It is frustrating to be Berghash in the sightseeing adventure given the high degree of fear that she harbored, yet not even her husband understood her. The situation is strange but brings out the effect of religion on her. In this instance, she is identified more by her religion than nationality. Berghash confirms that her fear of doing the wrong thing that would result in punishment from God is what has caused her to develop a personality of fear. To some extent, Berghash attempts to show the degree of difference between the two cultures, suggesting that this is at the root for the extension of the conflict (Colebrook 248). It is possible to associate the fear that Berghash feels to the fear that the conflicting parties have when they think about losing the war to their opponents.

Furthermore, the great fear that Berghash has can be interpreted symbolically to mean the fear of the unknown that the population at large possesses. Given that the future is uncertain, both the Palestinians and Israelis cling to the present because that is what they are sure about. In other words, it seems better to deal with the present predicaments because of familiarity rather than hoping for an unknown future that seems very far away on the horizon. Regardless, Berghash still holds the opinion that it is possible for peace despite the killings of the Israelis through the symbolism of the city that she uses. In the city, all kinds of behaviors are tolerated, and people focus on the positive features rather than the negative ones: "In personal matters, the city tolerates all kinds of iniquities" ... "Tolerates uncommon behaviors such as homosexuality" (Berghash 56). The message

that Berghash could be attempting to communicate is that it is possible to coexist with people who are different from us.

Moreover, such people with what some might deem unorthodox behavior in society can also have good traits. Therefore, Israelis and Arabs can view each other as different but with the ability to complement each other's flaws. Rather than focusing on differences that consequently leads to conflicts, it is beneficial to concentrate on how to deal with the weaknesses in the best possible way without becoming an obstacle to the way of life of others. In this way, the chances of contradictions are greatly reduced while the opportunities for creating peaceful forums are increased. Also, New Historicists argue that the interpretation of texts should focus on the capability of texts as objects that are part of a particular sociohistorical setting. Therefore, to understand a literary text well and consequently provide the best possible interpretation, it is important to first become aware of and understand the background of the author's cultural context in which the work of art is created (Veesser 56).

5.5 Berghash's presentation of the conflict

Berghash understands and deals with conflict differently from Nusseibeh, Karmi, and Oz, mainly because of her religious background and her marriage to an American. Even though she explains the occurrences of the conflict in a way that demonstrates the cruelty of the Arabs and the British towards the Israelis, she avoids including personal biased remarks that would make us hate the attackers even more (Stolorow 60). Largely, she attempts to be as objective as possible in her narrations, complaining only when things get out of hand. Nonetheless, there is a clear similarity with the three authors, particularly with Karmi. This could be argued from a feminist point of view, because both authors are

women and, as such, we expect them to have a similar worldview compared with their male counterparts. Both authors utilize deep, vivid descriptions to explain the terrible state that they were in as they attempted to make a difference.

The description on page sixty-nine about the terror unleashed on the Israelis leaves the audience both angry and sad. The situation painted is an unfortunate one because not even the children are spared: “Suddenly, the sound of a mortar shell jolts us... and I pee on the bed” (Berghash 69). The parents are as helpless as their children. The bombings and killings greatly increase the mortality rate of the Israelis. One gets annoyed at the fact that people’s lives were pegged on whether they were Israelis or Palestinians. There is a similar description by Karmi on page 150 that explains her desire to get home and relive her experience of the place. She vividly explains the frustration and suffering that Palestinians go through in trying to fit in a society that they once called home. She exploits emotions to create a mental picture for the audience regarding the situation in which the Palestinians find themselves.

5.6 Comparison with the other authors

Karmi’s affection for her country is obvious in addition to her desire to find ways that would bring the conflict to an end. It is this affection that makes her return to her homeland with the hope of finding peace and comfort in a place that she once called her home. Despite the cold reception and lack of cooperation from the people she is supposed to work with, she begins to work with the Palestinian Authority (Sela and Kadish 10). Her zeal is similar to that of Berghash, who is determined to demonstrate that peace is possible despite the major differences in cultural beliefs and general lifestyle. Both authors are guided by their enthusiasm; for Karmi it is the ecstasy of reuniting with her

nation that drives her, whereas for Berghash it is the desire to witness peace in a nation wracked with war. Both have strong faith in the courses of action that they engage in, no matter how impossible they seem to the audience. The result is the creation of highly expectant attitudes among readers of both accounts. The emotional connection to the events of a memoir is strong to the extent that one feels like a participant in the memoir.

Berghash's presentation is also similar to that of Nusseibeh, who likewise attempts to present the happenings of the conflict objectively in order to avoid blaming either of the parties as completely responsible for causing the extended conflict. Both authors narrate in a way that causes them to appear distant from the war, thereby allowing the audience to make independent decisions regarding who is to blame or not to blame or the extent of blame allotted to each party. As a result, the audience develops trust in the authors, hence the authors achieve their intended objectives. Nusseibeh is effective in presenting the situation without necessarily painting the Israelis as being in a privileged position as we expect of Palestinian authors. Instead, he acknowledges the complexity of the situation between the two parties as the main reason for the extension of the conflict (Tachau 185). This is the attribute that makes his work largely similar to Berghash's. He argues that the reasons for the perseverance of the Palestinians in their stateless misery are diverse and intricate.

Subsequently, neither author aims at justifying his or her mistakes to paint either party as guiltier and deserving of blame. Therefore, the prolonged warring state of the two nations is presented as a difficult issue that cannot be explained simply by stating which nation is to receive more blame for the predicament (Colebrook 248). Both authors

acknowledge that the rights and the wrongs are evenly distributed and that all parties share responsibility in the apparent unending conflict.

5.7 The role of women in the conflict

Through the narration of the character traits of Berghash's mother, we observe that women play an important role in attempting to end the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. Berghash to some extent does not seem ready to compromise because of her religious beliefs. On the other hand, she has a willing spirit to help others. Berghash's mother is presented as a strict Jew who only believes in Jewish law. To her, Jewish law is the right one and supersedes all other laws. To a large extent, such a rigid attitude does not help promote peace because it causes others to feel inferior and also, unwilling to hear the other's point of view; creating a non-starter environment to imitate peace. Berghash laments on how she feared her mother's remarks regarding her religious status when she lived in New York: "I fear her imminent remarks... you probably have finished cooking for Sabbath...I feel like a little girl who must submit to her" (Berghash 10); "Judaism is the best religion; any Jew who thinks differently is a heretic" (Berghash, 41). From these proclamations, we can conclude that she is not an ambassador of peace.

Despite this, her acts demonstrate that she values peace and that it is possible to positively impact the lives of others and subsequently positively influence their opinions toward the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians. For instance, she participates in acts of charity by visiting the sick and helping the needy. The mother is very accepting and hospitable to others regardless of their contribution to her life. This is observed through her treatment of Razali, the household help who was always slow and did not do a good job: "Razali was heavy and slow; it did not matter to my mother whether she did a

good job or not” (Berghash 43). Berghash’s mother was guided by one philosophy, that all of us are equally humans and in need of care and affection: “Each one of us has a soul, a sacred core that ought to be respected, never violated” (Berghash 41). The general argument that can be formed from these observations is that women were part of the solution to ending the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Berghash and her mother are outstanding examples of women who play their part very well in attempting to show people that it is possible to peacefully coexist despite the different cultural beliefs and values.

The memoir emphasizes the strength and ability that women have in leading a campaign to persuade people to view their neighbors as equal human beings in need of care and not deserving of ill-treatment (Berghash and Aylon 128). Another way that Berghash demonstrates this ability is through the expression of her identity. As the audience, we expected that having been born in Jerusalem in the era of the British Mandate in an orthodox family, her strict adherence to religious laws would cause her to talk about the Jews favorably while completely blaming the Arabs for the conflict. Like Oz, Berghash believes that all parties have a crucial role to play in promoting peace. On the contrary, we observe that Berghash has a high degree of spiritual growth and development. Her intense spiritual practices as a result of her upbringing do not pose barriers to having a smooth relationship with her American husband. Instead, in an attempt to establish a cohesive union, she abandons her strict adherence to religious laws (for example, she cooks on the Sabbath) to accommodate the lifestyle of her husband.

5.8 Berghash's main proposition

Berghash has developed a free spirit that is more accommodating to different worldviews. It is such a free spirit that is required to encourage the Israelis and Palestinians to end the conflict and live in peace. Thus, Berghash seems to be saying that women played a big role in helping to enhance good relations. Their open mindset helped in creating the belief that it is possible to restore the previous Jerusalem with its prosperity as well as create a peaceful environment between the Israelis and Palestinians. To some extent, Berghash appears to be suggesting that the men were largely to blame for the extended time that the conflict took (Newton 172). If only they would have behaved like their women as well as supported them, then things would have turned out differently and perhaps ended the war at early stages before it caused the havoc that was witnessed.

Broadly speaking, the Western ideology has positively influenced Berghash's perception of the Palestinians regardless of the terror that they unleashed that she witnessed in her childhood. She does not look at them as enemies who are supposed to be destroyed because their differences are too many to be dealt with (Berghash and Aylon 129). On the contrary, she views them as human beings who have flaws that can be peacefully dealt with. In other words, Berghash views Palestinians more as estranged friends than enemies. It can be argued that her worldview has been greatly influenced by her travels to the United States, where her degree of exposure widened. Being married to an American artist caused her to begin viewing things differently, a scenario that Oz and Nusseibeh did not have. Karmi, on the other hand, also had an increased degree of

exposure because of living away from home and thus interacting with people from different cultures than her own.

5.9 The role of religion

It is reasonable to suggest that other than her marriage to Mark, who is an American, the aspect of religion also contributes greatly to Berghash's open mind (Stolorow 59). She gets very deep into religion, which enables her to become aware of the people around her as well as acknowledge the fact that they are also human beings just like her. We expect that this deep sailing into religion would make her more defensive towards the course of the Israelis while pointing fingers at the Palestinians. Interestingly, it does the opposite; it causes her to develop a greater understanding and affection toward the Palestinians and by extension all other cultures that are different from hers. As a result, her memoir focuses on the approach that can be adopted to bring peace rather than blaming their opponents for the harm that they have caused the Israelis (Berghash and Aylon 129). It is this attribute that makes her stand out from Oz, Nusseibeh, and Karmi.

Berghash says, "The study of other religions has evoked in me astonishment, wonder, and love for great personalities of all religions crystallized into a simple thirst for God (Berghash 161). The effort aimed at quenching this thirst for God pushes her to view all humans as equal as is taught in the scriptures. The insatiable appetite to know God more directly corresponds to the desire to learn the diversities of other cultures to live together peacefully. The implication is that instead of directing energy into engaging in warfare, it is used to create mechanisms of coexisting. People need to get busy at doing so, because finding such strategies is not an easy job. The journey is gradual but beneficial and is sustainable in its own independent and unique way.

Subsequently, through her studies, Karmi observed different cultures and their ability to live harmoniously. She concluded that differences in any aspect of life, be it religious or educational, should not be a cause for war. Instead, the differences could offer an important resource for developing solutions to societal problems (Sela and Kadish 18). Likewise, the way in which Israelis view their differences from Palestinians could be seen as a resource for peacemaking if the Israelis would only embrace and help them overcome as they also admit their flaws and are ready to be humble and to accept help from their counterparts. This is the reason that Berghash supports her husband in his photographic project (Berghash 182). The project involved young Israeli-Arabs and Jews photographing each other and their surroundings. The goal of the project was to reduce the prejudices and improve the attitudes of Jews and Arabs toward each other.

By extension, the older generation will acknowledge that it is possible to coexist peacefully with their neighbors regardless of their differences. The first step is to accept that both nations have ill feelings toward each other. The second step is to acknowledge that these negative attitudes toward each other are baseless and can be done away with because the history is largely irrelevant to the current generation. As a result, the focus should be on identifying ways that can help them work together and rebuild their nation rather than holding on to past occurrences that they largely have no control over (Bernard 35). Berghash demonstrates that the struggle to end the war should begin at an individual level before it is taken up by the relevant government authorities. A good example is a photographic project created by Berghash's husband, Mark. The idea is later supported by the government institution called the Israel Association of Community Centers. That

means that everyone has a responsibility in helping to end the conflict instead of complaining about what the government is or is not doing.

5.10 General presentation

Berghash identifies herself as an arbitrator of peace. She presents herself as a peacemaker and problem solver interested in ways that can be adopted to help find a remedy to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She takes the pursuit personally and burdens herself as if she is the only one who can find a resolution to the predicament. One way that she believes is suitable is through the reading of philosophy books (Berghash and Jillson 40). The argument is that reading presents fresh ideas that empower her to develop creative techniques to unite both parties: “I read philosophy books. Fresh ideas flood my mind” (Berghash 182). Berghash is focused on identifying ways that bring them together rather than drifting them apart. She aims to develop a good relationship with the Palestinians. To a large extent, she does not hate them or the British. Her focus is not on what the two collaborated to do given that they caused harm to the Israelis. It was rumored that the two collaborated to bring terror to the Israelis (Greenberg 95). Rather than focusing on the description of the wickedness of the two, she demonstrates how peace is more important. In other words, she acknowledges the flaws of both the British and Palestinians but is open-minded on structuring the way forward rather than dwelling on the past.

Sufficient textual evidence shows that Berghash is indeed seeking peace. The first scenario that provides this evidence is her appreciation of the diversity in cultures. She is not only intrigued by their lifestyles but also by their religious practices, something that we would not expect from a person whose religious upbringing was under strict

adherence to Judaism (Sela and Kadish 20). Besides, the fear and guilt that she struggles with because of the gradual abandonment of her religious values and doing the wrong thing are proof that it is impossible for her to become friendly to different religious practices. Nonetheless, this is not the case as she teaches in a seminar about religions other than Judaism. That is the second scenario. That is why she laments that “I fear that somebody will label me a heretic for studying and teaching religions not my own” (Berghash 152). Through this gesture, her high degree of tolerance and accommodation comes out. Berghash is ready to sacrifice her reputation that she has built and cared for all her life for the sake of peace. If the interest and actual interaction with other religions is important in the journey to finding peace, then she is ready to take the first step along that journey’s path.

5.11 The impact of her identity on the conflict perspective

Her mixed culture is also another reason why she persistently pushes for peace. Born in Jerusalem, having lived in America, and ultimately married to an American, she cannot entirely say that her roots are from one place or nationality. That means that when there are wars, she is left in a big dilemma on what side to lean on, and that is why she gives her all to ensure that there is peace. In any case, the mixed identity has provided her with an opportunity to appreciate diversity. She has learned that differences are not always a bad thing that should be fought. Working together with her husband on various projects has opened her mind to realize that great things can be achieved when people embrace their weaknesses and those of others (Stolorow 60). Instead of fighting, people should try to find ways of surviving together. Berghash has observed and then confirmed the fact that there is a great possibility of different cultures peacefully coexisting. Her family is a

perfect example of that ideology. She gradually lessened her rigidity to a religious adherence to accommodate the lifestyle of her husband. Failure to have done that would have resulted in a marriage filled with confusion and frustration. Interestingly, she found a way of balancing the preferences of her husband and children and her parents. Even though we see her struggle to maintain the status quo by calling her parents while caring for her husband and children and doing maintaining her household as well as advancing her career, she manages.

The implication is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can end if people will commit to going the extra mile and sacrificing their comfort for the good of the entire society. Berghash observes the possibility of different cultures peacefully coexisting with each other and presents the same to the audience. In the end, we understand that we are not as different from each other as we thought (Berghash and Jillson 25). On the contrary, we have more similarities than differences because we are all human beings. Berghash makes us see the growth and development associated with peace and concludes that the benefits of working together cannot be entirely understood. There are many opportunities in a peaceful environment, and all people have equal chances of making use of them regardless of race or religion. Ultimately, all people have strengths and weaknesses and should thus complement rather than fight one another.

Other evidence to support the fact that Berghash is a peacekeeper is when she cuts articles from newspapers that report on acts of kindness between Israelis and Palestinians. Rather than focusing on the negative reporting that the media thrives on, she chooses to highlight the good news as evidence that peace between the two nations that have been at war for such a long time is possible (Sela and Kadish 18). This is a noble gesture,

bearing in mind the terror that she witnessed in Jerusalem. Berghash is a strong believer in change as demonstrated in her narrations. She believes in the impossible regardless of the present situation and hence has a high tolerance that strengthens her will to press on. That trait is similar to the one demonstrated by Karmi. Despite the frustrations and lack of cooperation at her workplace, she still manages to work and realize her objectives with great difficulty. For instance, she carries out her duties at the Ministry and leads us to have a first-hand experience of the workings of the Palestinian Authority. We observe the unnecessary complications created by the staff as well as the petty office engagements. She also makes us view the office conflicts caused by the differences in status as unimportant.

5.12 Presentation strategies

Like the strategies used by Berghash, Karmi makes us wonder why people are not pursuing the bigger problems of conflict and are instead getting bothered about unimportant issues. It is this misinformed focus that acts as the fuel for the conflict. The petty office fights concerning who should do what or why a task should be carried out on a certain day appear insignificant. Karmi stresses this point by providing a clear description to the extent that we wonder why she is doing so. This is especially because it shows the role of the Palestinians in the conflict. Nonetheless, we realize that the objective is to cause us to appreciate the sense of the narrations as they provide one of the best techniques that people use to handle their impossible situations that often do not have a remedy (Stolorow 61). Both authors achieve their objective through their appeal to emotions of empathy and sympathy. In the process of recalling the predicament of their people, they cause the audience to search and judge themselves concerning the unfair

things that they often do to others with the belief that they are immune to suffering, yet that is not always the case. Karmi and Berghash present a literary memoir that uses many techniques, including feminine language, to show the suffering, loneliness, frustration, and disappointment of their people.

Berghash also searches for religious sources for suggestions about accepting defeat for the sake of peace. This act demonstrates the great passion that she has for seeking peace. It is an encouragement for the Israelis that despite the inhumane acts by the Palestinians, they should humble themselves for the sake of peace. This will be viewed as a noble action rather than a cowardly one as is the mindset of many people. Karmi also shows this practice when she encounters the arrogant racist policemen. The Druze soldiers are very rude and openly racist (Fox-Genovese 236). One of them takes pleasure in harassing Karmi concerning her passport. The harassment is so intense that it causes the audience to feel her agony. Karmi presents us with a detailed description of this to the extent that one feels frightened. At some point, it is obvious that the officer will harm Karmi, and we as the audience are afraid but are finally relieved when she finally surrenders her passport. At this point, we are not concerned with the embarrassment that accompanies this act when the soldier emphasizes that they are in control (Karmi 82).

Karmi's persistence in dealing with the officers is a reflection of the energy that was required of Palestinians to survive at that time. That can be equated to the same strength that the Israelis, as narrated by Berghash, required to survive the harsh environment (Newton 177). In both cases, without persistence and determination, it would be impossible for both populations to survive. It is as if permission has to be sought even to

breathe. Both authors succeed in showing their plight in a way that affects the emotions of the audience. The outcome is the creation and sustenance of attention.

Berghash is against the idea of the green line, also referred to as the wall, that is intended to separate the Israelis and Palestinians. According to her, a physical barrier is entirely inadequate in helping to reduce and finally end the war. The negative attitudes that the two nations have against each other require more than just the building of a wall. On the contrary, it requires the building of emotional connectors to help both nations realize that there is beauty in diversity. Berghash is advocating for the creation of a state that will contain both nations without either of them feeling discriminated against. The main task that the governments of both nations should be involved in is the development of initiatives to heal the wounds of war that the two have heaped upon each other (Colebrook 248). The building of a wall is a temporary solution that does not even attempt to cohesively solve the problem but rather attempts to bury it. In other words, Berghash is advocating for the uniting of the two nations and not separation, which is what the wall is aimed at doing.

The principle that leads Berghash's pursuit has its roots in the New Historicism theory, which explains that in presenting the flaws of one side, those of the other side becomes obvious (Fox-Genovese 235). This is the reason why she strongly resists the urge to present the Palestinians as the ones responsible for the unending conflict, because as she does so, the contribution of the Israelis also becomes very obvious. In other words, the same tools used to judge how innocent or guilty the Palestinians are, are the same ones that show that the Israelis also have a role to play in the conflict. In any environment characterized by frequent wars, it is the commitment of the involved parties that

encourages the end of a fight (Greenberg 95). As a result, for the conflict to end, it will take a mutual effort. Berghash's argument is that there is nothing independent about a conflict, as opposed to Karmi, who indirectly blame the happenings on one party.

It is possible for people to exploit one another's strengths and weaknesses to lead productive lives. A good illustration of this argument is the way in which Berghash's father engages with his Arab clients (Newton 173). The main reason for his learning Arabic was to facilitate friendly relations with them. This is the first step in building a relationship that can be trusted and that can last for many years. His knowledge of Arabic was essential because it enabled him to relate with his clients with minimal conflicts. Besides, it was possible for his businesses to grow and develop well with minimal obstacles because of the openness that characterized the relationships. Such a situation further demonstrates that the building of a wall will not only increase the negative feelings that the nations have towards one another but also destroy the good relations that already exist between them.

Nonetheless, despite the many similarities between Karmi's and Berghash's memoirs, Berghash brings us closer to resolving the conflict than does Karmi. To a significant extent, Karmi's memoir does not bring us a step closer to resolving the Palestinian conflict. For the most part, she views the conflict as a mainly one-sided affair and thus largely places the blame on the Israeli population for exerting discrimination toward and bringing suffering to the Palestinian people. The fact that she lived outside of the conflict has a great role to play in causing the approach she takes. On the contrary, even though Berghash demonstrates the extent of cruelty that the Arabs and the British practice on the Israelis, she struggles to show how peace is still possible (Newton 174). She works hard

to show us that peace is the only way out. The only way that it can be achieved is through the creation of positive perceptions toward each other while ignoring past stereotypes of the two nations. The attempt to use physical barriers such as the building of the wall will not do much in reducing the conflict.

5.13 Conclusion

Berghash plays a great role in positively changing the perceptions of the audience regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Several factors cause this scenario, including her living abroad during the conflict and her marriage to an American. Her traveling to the United States and studying exposed her to many cultures, and she witnessed the possibility of people from different cultures living in harmony and complementing one another's weaknesses rather than becoming a barrier to success. She also effectively demonstrates the important role that women play in positively influencing the end of the conflict.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Author's voice and responses to the research's guiding question

There are similarities and differences in regard to how the authors look at the conflict and speak to each other. For instance, Oz, Berghash, and Nusseibeh do not view their different camps as enemies and are largely optimistic that peace is possible and should be initiated by them rather than depending on external forces. Karmi is to some extent reserved in her opinions given her harsh criticism of the Israeli population. However, this perspective changes gradually when she goes back and interacts with them when she gets a job. Nonetheless, all of the authors attempt to present their nation as the one with the lesser blame when it comes to explaining the extension of the conflict over the decades. The current research has highlighted the role of several factors in contributing to the development of perspective concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including identity and religion.

Notably, each camp attempts to present their outlook while grounding their discussions on their sufferings, victimhood, and sense of injustice as well as dispossession in the case of the Palestinians as emphasized by Karmi. The Israelis on the other hand insist on legitimacy as outlined by the UN partition plan, long-term historic attachments, and rejection of their peace offers among other parameters. To a considerable extent, the Israeli authors, compared with the Palestinian authors, seem to be focused on the discussion of a way forward rather than focusing on past events that are not productive but instead reawaken memories that cause further drifts.

6.2 Exposition of the authors' perspectives toward the conflict and their discourse engagement

The discourses presented by the four authors provide a ray of hope that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will one day end. Regardless of their differences in ideology because of their varied religious practices and ethnicity, the authors have similar opinions when it comes to the conflict, especially concerning why the conflict has been unending. Their arguments may appear different, but on closer scrutiny they have a similar view of the conflict. The analysis of these memoirs has underscored the importance of research and scholarship in handling societal predicaments and has proven that solutions can actually be found in intellectual discourses. It is through these discourses that the identity of the authors and by extension the population that they represent is revealed. An enlightened understanding of the different identities is important in assessing their impact in promoting or mitigating violent international conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian one.

To start with, Oz does not view the Palestinians as enemies. On the contrary, he views them as friends and loves them as revealed by the expression of his feelings in his discussions. His honesty in his discussions causes him to be at conflict with earlier Israeli writers who were keen on presenting their population as blameless. Oz feels the pressing need to present his individual opinions rather than following popular ideologies that would win him fame and acceptance (Kaplan 128). This viewpoint caused him to become controversial to the point that his fellow Israelis viewed him as a traitor. To a large extent, his works present an ironic perspective of Israel's life. It is this objectivity that allows him to see the good in the Palestinian population and cease from viewing them as enemies. Oz uses the same scrutinizing lens on both populations. He concludes that it is

possible for the society to achieve peace only if both camps accept their role in the escalation of the conflict and are willing to engage in the discussions of a way forward.

This perspective is shared by Nusseibeh. Nusseibeh argues that both populations have had an essential role to play in the extended conflict. Like Oz, he suggests that unless both populations acknowledge their role and are willing to reach a compromise, peace will remain only a dream for many generations to come. Stone, Patton and Heen in their book *Difficult Conversations* provide a model on how to handle difficult conversations by focusing on what matters the most. The scholars explain several major guidelines that conflicting parties should adopt if they are to reach at an amicable solution. They address the three conversations that involve stopping arguments concerning who is right, researching each party's stories to avoid assumptions of meaning. Research enables the separation of intent from outcome and helps to avoid blame.

Conflicting parties should structure the contribution model to handle feelings to prevent being by the emotions instead. The parties are expected to establish their identity by exploring what is at stake, the purpose and when to raise it as well as when to relent. Listening is a very important tool of conflict resolution. Participants are also encouraged to speak with clarity and have the power of problem-solving. It is also important to take the lead and attempt connecting all the issues together (30).

The initiative solely lies on the Israelis and Palestinians rather than external parties such as the UN and Britain. As such, it is their responsibility to forge a way forward. Guided by this ideology, both Oz and Nusseibeh present their narrations in a way that exposes the reader to the good and bad traits of both populations as well as how the traits impact the conflict. Oz advocates for peace with the Palestinians while creating a just

society within Israel. He does not intentionally favor the Israelis in his discussions but states issues as they should be; where his people are at fault, he is brave enough to say it and vice versa. He bravely scrutinizes both populations, explaining not only their contribution to the escalated conflict but also their role in ensuring peace.

Oz largely gives an objective presentation rather than a biased one, providing insights regarding the conflict. This is one of the reasons why Oz is considered an icon, whose writings and life stories have provided a foundation for the understanding and development of Israeli intellectualism and moderation. Rather than focusing on the role of the Palestinians in hindering peace, he explains the role of the external forces in causing frustration to the Israelis. For instance, his narration on the frustrations of the educated Jews at the time informs the reader of the role of the external parties in aggravating the conflict. Frustration causes populations to become agitated and defensive—traits that do not promote cooperation.

Nusseibeh presents the plight of the Palestinians and demonstrates that the external parties have a role to play in causing them problems. He does not focus on finding reasons to explain how the Israeli population was responsible for their predicaments. Nusseibeh voices the concern that they are underprivileged to change their state but succeeds in doing so without necessarily presenting the Israelis as being in a privileged position, as is expected of Palestinian authors. Nusseibeh argues that the reasons for the perseverance of the Palestinians in that their stateless misery are diverse and intricate. Like Oz, Nusseibeh does not strive to justify the flaws of the Palestinians and by extension their supposed neutral role in being a factor in the prolonged warring state of the two nations. On the contrary, he acknowledges their wrongs, proving that just like

their neighbors, they have had a role to play in the extension of the conflict. As such, they also have the capability of forging a way forward that will realize peace for their warring nations.

Berghash has a perspective similar to Oz and Nusseibeh. She comes from a different society that is more liberal. Her opinions and assessments are guided by a liberal approach that results in an objective discussion. Largely, she is the most liberal author of the three. She does not focus on the faults of one party at the expense of another or attempt to prove that the suffering of one is entirely caused by the other. Instead, she demonstrates how both the Israelis and Palestinians have played a role in the extension of the conflict over the years. As such, they are better placed in creating a pathway for peace more than the external parties. She is enthusiastic and very optimistic that the Israelis and Palestinians are capable of ending the conflict contrary to popular opinion. She focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of both parties and attempts to demonstrate that they can complement one another rather than focusing on the blame game. By doing so, the reader also becomes optimistic, and by the end of the memoir, he or she has a completely different perspective about the conflict, that is, that it can end. The two main parties that have always been looked at as the hindrances to their own peace are indeed the ones holding the solution.

It is evident that she is happy to encounter Palestinians and sees them as humans and not criminals or enemies. It is this approach that guides her discussions. Her starting point is effective as it guides her to be more objective than subjective. She is largely unbiased and presents her opinions bravely regardless of what party they dwell on. For instance, she describes that situation when terror was unleashed on the Israelis in clear detail:

“Suddenly, the sound of a mortar shell jolts us... and I pee on the bed...” (Berghash 69). The parents are as helpless as their children. The bombings and killings greatly increases the mortality rate of the Israelis. This scenario then informs the audience that contrary to the arguments of authors like Karmi, who mainly focused on the terror unleashed on the Palestinians, Berghash gives both sides of the story. Both the Israelis and Palestinians unleashed terror on one another. However, she acknowledges the role of the British in aiding the Arabs to unleash terror on the Israelis.

Nonetheless, Berghash disputes the popular ideology that has always viewed the Palestinians as enemies and criminals and the Israelis as the oppressors. She explains how to some extent both parties have done negative things on each other and as such are all to blame. But she does not focus on this; instead, she explores how both parties have played a role in making the present environment. Subsequently, she grounds her discussions on how both can play an important function in changing that situation. In any case, the conflict is between the two nations and not the external parties who will be compelled to align with one side.

One outstanding difference between Berghash’s approach and the other three writers is in the way she handles the conflict aspects. She understands and deals with conflict differently from Nusseibeh, Karmi, and Oz mainly because of her religious background and her marriage to an American. Even though she explains the occurrences of the conflict in a way that demonstrates the cruelty of the Palestinians and the British towards the Israelis, she avoids including personal biased remarks that would make us hate the attackers even more. Largely, Berghash attempts to be as objective as possible in her narration, emphasizing certain things only when they get out of hand.

Karmi's approach differs somewhat from the other three authors. She is openly hostile to the Israelis, as evidenced by her harsh criticisms. As such, from the beginning she causes the reader to have a negative picture of the Israelis and their role in the war to an extent that the reader largely blames the extended conflict on the Israelis. This feeling is created when one begins reading the memoir. To a large extent, unlike the other three authors, Karmi's memoir does not bring us a step closer to resolving the Palestinian conflict. She presents the conflict as a one-sided affair and hence blames the Israeli population for causing them great suffering. She places a lot of emphasis on the discrimination of the Palestinians while ignoring the state of the Israelis. The fact that she lived outside of the conflict has a great role to play in causing the approach she takes, although it is her stay outside of Palestine that changed her opinion to come back and try to make peace. On reaching the place that she once called home, she encounters a different scenario from what she had imagined. She gradually changes her mindset and adopts a more open worldview of looking at events and viewing the Israelis. This presents optimism that peace is indeed achievable. It also proves that a mindset is an important tool that can be used to either promote peace or hinder it. Thus, at the end of the memoir, the reader gets a different feeling. Even though Karmi's level of optimism is not as high as that of the other three authors, she attempts to create an optimistic feeling about the conflict situation.

6.3 Similarities and differences of the works by Palestinian and Israeli authors in their conflict analysis

6.3.1 Similarities

It is evident from the discussions of Oz, Nusseibeh, Berghash, and Karimi that both the Israelis and Palestinians have played a role in causing the extension of the conflict over the years. This is a very important perspective that the authors have introduced in an attempt to analyze the conflict and suggest a viable way forward in achieving peace. The acknowledgment that both parties are to blame for the past and present predicaments is a great step forward to achieving peace in the unending violent conflict. They have proven that scholarship is an important tool that can be used to formulate peace strategies. The authors provide a foundation for understanding the circumstances of both parties from different angles, thereby providing objectivity and factual accuracy. Unlike in the past, in which the focus was on the blaming the other side, with each party distancing itself by claiming that the other party take full responsibility, the current approach compels and motivates both nations to seek peace.

The fact that Oz and Nusseibeh can have similar opinions is positive because it proves that it is possible to get to neutral ground where all parties can make a necessary compromise for the good of all. Their consensus disapproves of the popular ideology that it is impossible for Israelis and Palestinians to think in the same way mainly because of their religion and ethnic orientation. On the contrary, it proves that both parties are first and foremost human. The fact that the Israelis and Palestinians are human means that they share similar traits because they belong to the same species. If their structure—biological and mental—is the same, then it would follow that they can peacefully devise

a workable solution for peaceful coexistence. Additionally, the authors by extension present the opinions of their people, meaning that it is possible to design strategies from their arguments that will largely be effective.

The discussions of all of the authors confirms the inability of both parties to listen to each other's side of the narrative; the Israeli people do not listen to the Palestinians, and the Palestinians do not listen to the Israelis. As a result, they talk *at* each other rather than *to* each other, resulting in violent exchanges that only intensify the war instead of creating a solution. The failure to listen to each other is what feeds the blame directed at both sides that has controlled the conflict over the years. The Israelis believe that they are not the problem and thus are not pressing to reach a workable compromise. The Palestinians on the other hand also fail to make an effort and instead focus on presenting the Israelis as the main cause of their sufferings. Both parties attempt to ignore each other. The authors try to present this scenario in their discussions.

By reading these memoirs, we find that the well-educated authors began writing them as a creative and harmless way of explaining their version as well as responding to each other's grievances. Instead of resorting to violence, they decided to engage in discourses that are beneficial. By doing so, they introduced an open-minded attitude to looking at the conflict. Ultimately, they started recognizing each other's abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. They were also free to present suggestions and opinions concerning the situations on both sides, thereby providing a safe avenue, which is a great sign in the peace process. The implication is that the relevant institutions interested in ending the long conflict could adjust their ways of trying to solve the conflict. They could objectively act on the issues presented in the discussions as well as implement the

suggestions advocated for to find out how far that will take them in the attainment of peace. In any case, the strategies they have applied so far have not been entirely successful, and so adopting a new style could be effective. The memoirs present a whole new optimistic platform of viewing the conflict.

6.3.2 Differences

Even though the authors share similarities in their perspectives of the conflict, they also have differences. The first outstanding difference is that to some extent, both camps present their neighbor as the oppressor; the Israeli authors paint the Palestinians as the oppressors, and the Palestinian authors do the same. Subsequently, the authors strategically select occurrences that depict the oppressive nature of the other party whether this is intentional or not.

Oz explains how his parents had to entirely abandon their Jewish pursuits to earn favor with Arabs (Oz 20). The description of this life reveals the writer's desire to experience a real "normal" life, which was impossible at the time because of the Arabs. He presents his people as living under the mercy of the Arabs. That caused the Israelis to live hypocritical lives to ensure their existence. Oz also vividly narrates about the trauma he had to go through after his mother's suicide. The narrative causes us to view the Palestinians as inhuman. We experience the pain of a twelve-year-old losing his mother at a stage where children are in dire need of their mother's guidance.

What makes Nusseibeh different is the fact that he can differentiate the attributes of Israel in terms of its occupation, the territorial settlements, the security fence, and its military harshness, from the people. He does not openly despise the Israeli population for their actions, as Karimi does. This is why he is confident that Israelis and Palestinians are

natural friends rather than enemies. Nusseibeh's respect, curiosity, and twist with it are evident in almost every page. He acknowledges that the Israelis and Palestinians have their issues that could be an important factor in the consistent war. He argues that the inability to imagine the lives of the "other" forms the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Nusseibeh 11). Statements such as these are common throughout the memoir and keep the mind of the audience focused on the real issue ailing both parties rather than who is largely to blame.

Karmi is strikingly different from the three authors. She appears to place the blame on locals rather than foreigners. For instance, she explains how the workers in the ministry had been instructed not to cooperate with them and deliberately exposes her frustrations in a way that makes the audience see that it is the locals who were against the ending of the conflict. She also presents the scenario of the Druze soldiers who are very rude and openly racist (Fox-Genovese 236). One of them takes pleasure in harassing Karmi concerning her passport. The harassment is so intense that it causes the audience to feel her agony, and her detailed description creates fear in the reader. Karmi largely blames the Israeli, whom she describes as stubborn and determined to frustrate any efforts to getting peace. Her argument is that war with the Israelis is what sustains the natural course and hence viewed as okay. Therefore, rather than looking for a way to end the conflict, the Israelis are more concerned with maintaining the state of affairs rather than catering to the welfare of all of the parties involved. This is a biased view. Karmi also deliberately leaves out essential facts concerning the causes and repercussions of every action, because her aim is to lay blame on the Israeli. Ultimately, her approach is largely ineffective.

To a large extent, Berghash is the one who is the most liberal of all of the authors. She confidently advocates for the creation of a state that will contain both nations without either of them feeling discriminated against. According to her, the main task that the governments of both nations should be involved in is the development of initiatives to heal the wounds of war that the two have caused each other. This means that the building of a wall is a temporary solution that will cause more harm than good. Berghash champions for the uniting of the two nations rather than separation, which is the objective of the wall. Even though Berghash demonstrates the extent of cruelty that the Arabs and the British cause the Israelis, she struggles to show how peace is still possible. She maintains that peace is the only solution and can only be achieved through the creation of positive perceptions toward each other while ignoring past stereotypes of the two nations. She strongly disagrees with the idea of building the wall because it is only a physical barrier that will do very little in reducing the conflict.

The four authors differ in their general presentations, their perspectives, and their opinion of what would probably work in the attainment of peace. To a large extent, Oz, Nusseibeh, and Berghash share more similarities than differences. They believe that peace is possible but can only be achieved when each party stops focusing on their sufferings while ignoring those of the other. That is an aspect that Karimi focuses on, making her approach largely ineffective in the creation of a way forward. The three authors in agreement also suggest that the lack of the will to compromise, especially when it comes to religion, is a great hindrance to peace. Also, despite Karimi's reservations at the beginning of the memoir, her interactions when she returns to her home are proof that it is possible for people to change their opinions and attitudes

regardless of how rigid they were at the beginning. This provides hope that it is possible to reach a neutral ground for achieving peace.

6.4 Factors that influence the authors' perceptions of the conflict

6.4.1 Religion

Religion has been established to be a crucial aspect that influences the mindset of individuals. Unlike other influential aspects, such as social status and education, religion is the most rigid element to change. Most people get very defensive when their religion is viewed as something that can be changed. Judaism, like Islam, is a monotheistic faith with the belief in one God (God/Allah). This is in line with Shapiro's discussion on the notion of fixed identity. Shapiro argues that identity is the singular most important thing in an individual's existence. According to him, people's sacred values are pillars of their identity and thus very important. There are some beliefs that both religions share the same history that goes back to the patriarch Abraham and the first prophet Adam (Grehan 20). All believe in the existence of one God and kindness to the human race.

Religion is a factor that has shaped the arguments of all of the authors. The biggest hurdle to the solving of the conflict is that both parties attach religious significance to the land and believe that it is their God-given gift that can never be traded for anything. This largely explains why the conflict has extended for a very long time. Both teams will have to answer to God, implying that the consequences are eternal. Thus, the reasoning could be that it is better to deal with human consequences, such as war, rather than risk the wrath of God. As a result, losing the land is a threat to their existence and hence a serious matter. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians view the land as a holy site and a symbol of their Jewish or Islamic history and heritage (Namli 2). The rigidity that often accompines

religion, explained by Shapiro as the “myth of fixed identity”, thus poses a major hindrance to the solving of the conflict. One way of designing a way forward to achieving peace is finding a way of making both teams flexible when it comes to matters of their religion. That seems like an uphill task, but with the right motivation and appropriate guidance, it is achievable.

6.4.2 Identity

The authors have also been influenced by identity in their presentations. Identity is formed as a result of the interaction of several elements, including religion, race, social status, educational level, and geographic location. It is a component in life that individuals hold with great importance and are very reluctant to let go of. The main reason for this is because the change of identity causes people to feel empty and without a purpose in life. Identity gives people the morale to keep living and handle their daily problems. After that, any slight change brings confusion and frustration. It has been argued that the relationship between identity and conflict is mutual and complicated and results in the formulation of different viewpoints (Oren et al. 133). There are two possible ways: the elements to identity can clash, causing escalation and development of a conflict. Also, the intense extended conflict has a significant impact on identity. The connections are interdependent because the elements cause the conflict, which ultimately, as a result of the conflict duration, affects the identity of a writer. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the authors have different opinions concerning the establishment of one or two states.

The element of identity is a crucial factor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Its in-depth scrutiny enables one to understand the reason for the different arguments presented

by Oz, Berghash, Nusseibeh, and Karmi. Even the authors on the same side have divergent opinions on several issues. For instance, Oz suggests the feasibility of a two-state nation, whereas Berghash favors a one-state solution. Karmi and Nusseibeh both favor the idea of a two-state solution, although Nusseibeh believes that it will benefit both nations, whereas Karmi views it as an escape route for the Palestinians, given their vulnerable state and the unfriendly Israeli administration. The aspect of the Palestinians identity is therefore a crucial factor in analyzing the conflict. However, despite their differences, all of the authors hold their religious identity as a very important factor regardless of whether they are strictly or moderately religious or even secular. Nevertheless, this seems to be more striking with Nusseibeh and Karmi than with Berghash and Oz. Evidently, it is not possible to understand either party by just analyzing them in terms of their ethnic or national status. One of the reasons why the conflict has never ended is because of the ignorance of the role that identity plays in both nations. It is not possible to understand either the Palestinians or Israelis in terms of their national identity alone because that image does not project a complete picture. It is time to look at religion as part of the solution rather than part of the problem in the conflict situation.

From the discussion of the authors, it seems that their identities have been constructed mainly based on fear and on perceiving the other party as a threat. The outcome is the creation of obstacles for resolution. This perspective only worsens the situation and creates obstacles that will be almost impossible to handle. Instead, the identities are constructed through engagement and a social happening of interpreting that engagement; the outcome could be the denial of the identity of the other. Ultimately, a vicious circle is created. It is rational to state that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a conflict over identity,

given that the two sides are colliding because of empowering the “self” while dominating the “other”. Over the decades, the Arab states have denied the existence of Israel and vice versa, as shown by the authors.

6.4.3 Individual experiences

The individual experiences of the authors also impact their attitude toward the conflict.

Having grown up in the conflict zone, Oz is not optimistic of the possibility of a one-state solution. He seems to suggest that the two-state solution might be effective, stemming from the fact that the Jews have been victims for too long. Oz argues that their good conduct and desire to empathize with others has not triggered the same reaction from the other nations. Thus, it is only fair to reward the struggles of the Israelis by giving them autonomy over their land. The restructuring of the Middle East regions is evident, and they should be helped in the process. The creation of two separate states is a more promising strategy to put an end to the long war that has caused great suffering to innocent people. By doing that, the war will definitely come to an end. Oz does not hold any negative feelings toward the Palestinian population but is convinced that a two-state solution is the best way forward.

Nusseibeh seems to agree with the idea of a two-state solution as well. He suggests that the war will likely come to an end when people are provided with the freedom to make decisions without judgment. In that case, the choice of having two states instead of forcing people to live in war with each other is an alternative that should be embraced rather than opposed. In any case, the attempt to encourage the two nations to coexist in peace has not succeeded over the years. Thus, it is only rational that another strategy

(such as the creation of two states) be adopted in the spirit of trying a new way of solving problems.

Karmi also suggests the creation of two states as the remedy to the extended conflict. However, unlike Oz and Nusseibeh, Karmi believes that the two-state solution is to rescue the Palestinians from the hostile Israelis. It is a final escape for her people given that it has proven impossible for the two to co-exist. The narration of her encounter with the Druze soldiers as well as her frustrations at work underscores the need to live away from the Israelis. Oz's and Nusseibeh's suggestion of a two-state is based on the argument that both nations will benefit from that solution. They do not view either party as the victim or oppressor, as Karmi does. The difference between the perspectives of Nusseibeh and Karmi stems from many factors but the main one could be the fact that one lived in the conflict and the other away from it.

Berghash seems to be the only author who believes in the viability of a one-state solution, perhaps because she is more accommodating to different world views because of the place of her upbringing and as her marriage to an American. It is in this light that she believes that Jews and Arabs should be encouraged to find a way of existing together. Unlike her fellow Israeli author, Oz, she is very optimistic about the success of a one-state solution and the ending of the war.

6.5 Conclusion

The analysis of Oz's memoir has provided information that has made it evident that there is indeed a need to reconcile the perspective that Israelis have with that of the Palestinians. It is only through this way that suitable decisions can be made regarding the way forward. There are no irreconcilable differences. In any case, before the onset of the

conflict, both the Israelis and Palestinians existed peacefully. That means that it is possible to trace back what changed, and as such, develop a lasting solution to the predicament.

Nusseibeh's presentations and arguments suggest that the struggles of the Israelis and the Palestinians regarding the geopolitical landscape should be rewarded. The two should be helped to reshape the Middle East regions. The creation of two separate states will fuel the termination of the fight that has caused unimaginable suffering to innocent civilians. Nusseibeh is confident that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a conflict that can actually come to an end. That is not based on either of the populations. On the contrary, he believes that both the Israelis and Palestinians deserve a second chance at doing the right thing.

Karmi on the other hand understands the conflict as a predominantly one-sided affair, placing the blame on the Israeli population for causing the Palestinians great suffering. The fact that she lived outside of the conflict plays a great role in her approach. Karmi also believes that women have a role to play in the conflict as outlined by their support of the system and following instructions from the male population.

Berghash plays the greatest role in positively changing the attitudes of the reader concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Her residence abroad during the conflict and her marriage to an American are the main factors that influence her opinions. Also, traveling to the United States and studying exposed her to many cultures, which made her see the possibility of people from different cultures living in harmony and complementing one another's weaknesses rather than becoming an obstacle to success.

Like Karmi, she highlights the important role that women play in positively influencing the end of the conflict.

6.6 Scope of further study

The current study has focused on searching identity in the minds of Israeli and Palestinian authors with the objective of shedding more light on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Specifically, the dissertation has focused on the ethno- religious aspect of identity in the analysis of this extended conflict. The principles of the New Historicism theory have been used to enhance understanding. Several suggestions have been proposed, including the provision of autonomy to create a two-state solution, focusing on internal aspects between the two nationalities. It is suggested for instance, that we explore how to deal with the religious differences instead of depending on external parties to solve the conflict, and inviting members of both populations to cooperate while acknowledging their role in the conflict rather than focusing on blame. A new study can be carried out to test these propositions. A similar study can also be conducted using a different theory to understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to determine similarity or dissimilarity of the findings of the current study. An explanation of the same can also be provided. Future memoirs can also be subjected to the same form of analysis.

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