



Collective Identity in the Early Poetry of William Butler Yeats and Mahmoud Darwish: A Comparative Study

Dr. Mohammad Badr AlDeen Al-Hussini Hasan Mansour
Professor of English and American Literature
Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Banha University

Abstract

This paper attempts to compare the theme of collective identity in the early poetry of the youthful nationalistic phase of resistance of the Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) and the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008). It intends to examine the articulation of “identity” in the two poets; the identity which they wished would create for their nations, Ireland and Palestine, respectively, against oppressive imperialist/Zionist forces of erasure.

The similarity between Yeats and Darwish is not only in the composition of poetry which enacts their attitudes towards their nations and identity, but also in the subjugation of their nations by hostile oppressive forces: the English in the case of Ireland and the Israeli in the case of Palestine. Additionally, these oppressive forces have adopted similar policies, focusing on “collective dispossession” and identity erasure of the oppressed.

The paper shows how a poet can embody the nation and how poetry can indeed remind people of their identity and emphasize to them the importance of holding on the tradition of their country. In this manner, both Yeats and Darwish can mobilize their fellow men around a national heritage, and encourage them not to surrender to their oppressors.

It shows that Yeats’s early poetry reveals his earlier nationalist aspirations for finding a “Unity of Culture” for the Irish people that could create a common culture, or a sense of collective identity, which would unify the Irish people against the oppressive English regime. Hence, Yeats’s early poetry is deeply rooted in the past, mythology, occultism, mortality and immortality, and vacillation between extremes. Besides, his belief in the eternal idea of beauty, symbolized in the rose, as a symbol of Ireland, moves him to say that men fight and die for the beauty of women; and since he loves Maud Gonne, he feels that the Irish could fight and die for women if they stand for Ireland. On the other hand, Darwish’s early poetry reveals his ability in forging a collective identity for the Palestinian people by communicating their suffering and loss, portraying their resistance to the Israeli oppression, and emphasizing their solid bond with the land, in poetic lines. Thus, Darwish’s early poetry rejects clinging to the past in its empty sterile qualities, revolts against romanticism, obsolete traditions, history, and mythology. Additionally, Darwish rejects Yeats’s Platonic idealism, symbolized in the rose, and associates the rose with the real world of the Palestinian struggle. As he cannot be in love with a girl and his country at one time, Darwish falls in love with his single beauty, Palestine, and dedicates his poetry to imprinting the stereoscopic picture of Palestine in the memories of his fellow countrymen.

The paper thus acknowledges that the early verse of Darwish is more realistic than that of Yeats in its articulation of identity since Darwish finds his theme in the realm of the real whereas Yeats finds his theme in the vacillation between extremes, or rather between the real and the ideal.

Key Words: William Butler Yeats, Mahmoud Darwish, Collective Identity, Homeland, Resistance, Mythology



Introduction

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said maintains that one of the meanings of “culture” is that it “is a source of identity” which “includes . . . each society’s reservoir of the best that has been known and thought . . . to . . . see yourself, your people, society, and tradition in their best lights.” “In time,” Said adds, “culture comes to be associated . . . with the nation or the state” that has its own past, history, tradition, and allegiances (xiii). Said explains that while some cultures attempt to dominate and obliterate other nations’ cultures, some cultures are forced to resist such domination that endangers their traditions and permanence. Drawing on England as a striking example, he says that the British Empire’s quest, as a settler and colonizer, is to erase other cultures history. The quest of “The native” in Frantz Fanon’s words, as quoted by Saied, “is to imagine all possible methods for destroying the settler” (271).¹ Thus, the struggle of the settler can take many shapes; it creates what Said calls a “culture of resistance” (212). Provided that the “colonial enterprise” (164) exposes the landscape to “innumerable metamorphoses,” Said writes, “[o]ne of the first tasks of the culture of resistance was to reclaim, rename, and reinhabit the land (226). The Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) and the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008) have taken upon themselves the task of reclaiming both the Irish and the Palestinian lands as well as documenting the history, suffering, and struggle of their nations, in their poetry. Though they come from two different cultures, generations, and backgrounds, they share similar experiences: colonialism in the case of Ireland and Zionism in the case of Palestine. They also share the same traumas of the colonized, such as pain, tolerance, anger, and dissatisfaction against the colonizer. In fact, both poets can safely be said to have participated considerably in cultivating collective national consciousnesses and shaping collective voices for their nations against the colonial forces that oppress them and endeavor to erase their identity and continuance. In the two nations, then, the issue of identity is the main concern of the rebellious poets; an identity which, according to Said, is expressed in “culture” and literature. Thus, in their collective endeavors, literature, or rather poetry of resistance, is an incentive and a powerful tool for these poets to act out change, preserve culture, and maintain the identity of their fellowmen.

In his essay “Yeats and Decolonization,” Said makes comparisons of Yeats’s early work with other poets of national liberation, such as Tagore, Senghor, Neruda, Vallejo, Cesaire, Faiz, and Darwish, in their resistance to imperialism (232). Said notes that Yeats “does present another fascinating aspect: that of the indisputably great *national* poet who during a period of anti-imperialist resistance articulates the experiences, the aspirations, and the restorative vision of a people suffering under the domination of an offshore power” (220; emphasis in original). Likewise, in his essay “On Mahmoud Darwish,” Said praises Darwish and designates him as “Palestine’s unofficial *national* poet” (112; emphasis added). He remarks that “In Darwish, the personal and the public are always in an uneasy relationship” (113). In Said’s view, “Only a few Western poets—Yeats, Walcott, Ginsberg—possess that irresistibly rare combination of incantatory public style with deep and often hermetic personal sentiments” (113). Said concludes that “Poetry for Darwish [is] a harassing amalgam of poetry and collective memory, each pressing on the other” (115).² The basis of Said’s argument is that the “collective memory,” as he maintains in *Culture and Imperialism*, is the common characteristic of “all the poets and men of letters of decolonization.” It groups them together and makes them “[rise] out of [their] national environment and [gain] universal significance” (232-33).

In this regard, the evolution of the “collective memory” of any society is essential in shaping its national identity. Emphasizing the connection between collective memory and collective



identity, Victoria Semenova argues that “memory, as something experienced collectively in the past, truly lies at the heart of identity, when ‘identity’ is understood as the unification of all the stretches of temporal experience, including, as a foundation, the past” (126). Similarly, Maurice Halbwachs, whose theory of “collective memory” laid the foundation for later works on memory studies, writes, “We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated” (47). In a similar vein, Meir Litvak explains that “No group identity exists without memory as its core meaning; the sense of continuity over time and space is sustained by remembering, and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity. Every group develops the memory of its own past and so highlights its unique identity” (1). Litvak adds “while collective memory is the basis of every national identity, it seems to play a . . . substantial role in shaping the self-perception and culture of peoples that have suffered historical defeats (such as the [Irish] . . . and the Palestinians)” (1). Thus, if “scholars examining collective memory contend that groups of people gain a sense of unity through the interactional construction of collective memories,” Timothy Gongaware relates that “The very notion of a collective identity implies a unity of individuals, events and ideas through time and space” (485-86). In short, the formation of collective identity, as Verta Taylor argues, is “the shared definition of a group that derives from its members common interests and solidarity” (771). As a result, as collective identity is one’s awareness of being part of a social structure, the poetry of both Yeats and Darwish shows how a poet can embody the nation to provide its struggle with a universal dimension and how poetry can indeed remind people of their identity and emphasize to them the value and importance of holding on their roots and the tradition of their country.

This paper attempts to compare the theme of collective identity in the early poetry of the youthful nationalistic phase of resistance of William Butler Yeats and Mahmoud Darwish. It intends to examine the articulation of “identity” in the two poets; the identity which they wished would create for their nations, Ireland and Palestine, respectively, against oppressive imperialist/Zionist forces of erasure.

The main reason behind this choice is the fact that Yeats and Darwish are poets who compose poetry to enact their attitudes, which are largely controlled by shifts of emphases and transitional periods in their own lives, towards their nations and identity. Though Yeats and Darwish, throughout their oeuvres, probed deep into their nations at times, which happened to be critical eras of their nations-building, during which the modern identities of Ireland and Palestine were being formed, their later poetry consciously marks a move away from their earlier interests. Yeats’s later poetry consciously marks a move away from his earlier indulgence in the legendary Ireland in search of identity to his latter adherence to the traditional Ireland in search of images of human excellence and values of order, balance, and continuity. Likewise, Darwish’s later poetry willfully indicates a departure from his earlier representations of identity, home, and poetry to the exploration of the intricate relations between poetry, identity, myth, and history.

As Yeats and Darwish differ in their struggle for the articulation of the Irish and the Palestinian identities, respectively, the paper only focuses on the early poetry, which they wrote in their twentieth, when they were struggling to establish their literary careers. It concentrates on Yeats’s early verse of the 1890s, which includes *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889) and *The Rose* (1893), and on Darwish’s early poetry of the 1960s, before leaving Palestine at the beginning of the 1970s—including *Awraq al-zaytun* [*Olive Branches*, 1964]; *Ashiq min Filastin* [*Lover from Palestine*, 1966]; *Akhir al-layl* [*The End of Night*, 1967]; *Al-Asafir tamut fi al-Jalil* [*Birds Die in*



Gallilee, 1970]; *Habibati tanhad min nawmiha* [*My Beloved Wakes Up*, 1970]; and *Uhibbuki aw la uhibbuk* [*Love You, Love You Not*, 1972].

The paper shows that Yeats's early poetry reveals his earlier nationalist aspirations for finding a "Unity of Culture" for the Irish people through literature. It argues that his noble and heroic aim was to create a distinct Irish literature, having its own identity and divested of the English literary tradition. It discusses his belief that the "Unity of Culture" could create a common culture, or a sense of collective identity, among the Irish people, which would unify the nation against the oppressive English regime.

It indicates that the poems, he wrote during this period, were highly passionate, enthusiastic, romantic, and optimistic. He intentionally linked the Irish places with the legendary and mythical figures to sing the grandeur of ancient Ireland, arouse patriotic feelings, and, by implication, revive the latent heroic identity in the Irish people. Moreover, he resurrected the Irish myth by weaving his own interests in theosophism, occultism, and Rosicrucianism, and presenting his own desires and defeats, such as his vacillation between a dormant present and a heroic past, youth and old age, and mortality and immortality, within the fabric of his Irish verse, aiming at creating heroes representing the identity of Ireland and its poet. It reveals that this commitment to tradition helped Yeats to create ideal forms and clear symbols which would invoke the collective identity of the Irish by linking them with the past, to an inherited body of literature.

The paper shows that though Yeats's passionate heroic dream of reviving the "unity of culture" was not fully realized in his youthful sentimental attempts, it did succeed in liberating Irish literature from the impact of the English tradition and sustaining a sense of collective identity in the Irish people, which is clearly manifest in his later poetry. In Yeats's later mature poetry, though not relevant here, we have a man of experience instead of the early dreamer. In January 1903, he states, in a letter to Lady Gregory, collected in *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, that, "My work has got far more masculine. It has more salt in it" (397). This new determined pose, which adheres more to the values of order and reality, is reaffirmed in his letter to AE, in 1904, in which he rejects his earlier "sentiment, sentimental sadness, womanish introspection," and demands "no emotions, however, abstract, in which there is not an athletic joy" (434-35).

On the other hand, the paper shows that, during the early phase of Darwish's writing, he has skillfully acted as a poet and spokesman for the Palestinian people by his ability to communicate their experiences and suffering in poetic lines. He has used poetry as a critical tool to create a new homeland and forge a collective voice for his people through words. It shows that Darwish's early poems are characterized by anger and loss in attacking Israel for its occupation of the Palestinian ancestral land. They are also fierce and defiant in their insistence on the unification of the Palestinian identity and the seized land to resist Israeli oppression and denial of Palestinian nationhood and Palestinian collective identity. The paper shows that the Palestinian collective identity, for Darwish, is deeply rooted in the long-standing bond between the people of Palestine and the land of Palestine. Hence, Darwish, in his early verse, stresses that solid interrelatedness of Palestinian identity and land through his portrayal of the collective despair and painful life experiences of the refugees in the exile camps, which has also resulted in a state of spiritual alienation.

The paper expounds that the fragmentation of the Arab countries coupled with an immersion in their internal and external disputes, after the 1948 defeat, or Nakba, resulted in the absence of a solid Arab unity to regain Palestine, and led to Darwish's early rejection of clinging to the past in its empty sterile qualities. In "The Rose and the Dictionary," for example, Darwish draws history as



something of the past, an outdated thing. He sees history “in the form of an old man / Playing backgammon and sucking in the stars” (8-9). Instead of recounting the glories of the past, as Yeats does, Darwish believes that the Palestinians should be realistic, hold the present moment and look for the future. The paper illuminates that Darwish’s early vision characterizes his revolt against romanticism, obsolete tradition, and mythology, as he does when he emphasizes the Palestinians’ relationship to the land in identification, and “neither in mythical dreams nor in the illustrated pages of an old book,” as he maintains in *Shai'on 'an al-wattan [Something about Homeland]* (8).

In this manner, the paper explains that Darwish frees himself of the Platonic idealism, which fascinates Yeats. Unlike Yeats, who believes in the eternal idea of beauty, symbolized in the rose, Darwish rejects these Platonic tenets and associates the rose with the world of experience, or rather, with the real world of the Palestinian struggle. Unlike Yeats, who, in "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time," associates the rose with either beauty or eternal beauty, Darwish, in “The Rose and the Dictionary,” associates it with the world of experience, where the rose does not typically sprout from earth, but from symbols of toughness and firmness, such as a peasant, a worker, and a warrior. Also, unlike Yeats, who maintains, in “The Rose of the World,” that men, since the Trojan war, fight and die for beauty, in his association of the beauty of Maud Gonne with that of Helen and Deidre, Darwish falls in love with the beauty of his stolen homeland, Palestine, when he claims in *Shai'on 'an al-wattan [Something about Homeland]*, that when he was young, he could not “combine [his] love for a girl and [his] association with the public cause?” (250).

Though, in Darwish’s early poetry, the formation of a distinct Palestinian national identity was the outcome of a series of developments, which, as Sabry Hafez notes, “celebrated the simple fact of being Palestinian in an atmosphere hostile to everything Palestinian” (138), beginning with the 1948 defeat, the loss of the land, and the life of the refugees, in his later poetry, he became “knowledgeable of and sensitive to not only Arabic poetry but also the poetry of other nations, with a penchant for symbol and myth” (*Psalms* 18). In his later poetry of growth and maturity, which is not the aim of this paper—such as *Ma'sat alnarjis wa-malhat al-Fiddha [The Tragedy of Narcissus and The Comedy of Silver]*, 1989], *Li-Madha Tarakta al-Hisan Wahidan [Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone?]*, 1995], *The Adam of Two Edens* (2000), *Jidariya [Mural]*, 2000], *Halat hisar [State of Siege]*, 2002], *La ta'Tadhir 'amma fa'alt [Don't Apologize for What You Did]*, 2004], and *Athar al-farashah: yawmiyat [A River Dies of Thirst: Journals]*, 2008]—Darwish blends history with mythology, and, as Balraj Dhillon argues, “provides accounts of Arabic mythology and historical events, subverting the convention of national identities by offering alternative mythologies and histories to resist the hegemonic Western and Israeli historical discourses” (46). Accordingly, “by deconstructing the hegemonic homogeneities in canonical myth,” as Ipek Azime Celik claims, Darwish, in his later poetry, “expands identity, homeland, and memory beyond nationalist constraints” (275).

Paper

In *Inventing Ireland*, Declan Kiberd emphasizes the relation between nationality and literature when he maintains that Yeats “based his doctrine on the conviction that there is no great literature without nationality and no nationality without literature” (162). The relationship between Irish literature and the formation of a national idea and identity is evident in Yeats’s early poetry, which not only represents his desire to create an autonomous Irish nation but also discloses his hope of finding a “Unity of Culture” for the Irish people. “The national unity that Yeats desires for Ireland,” as Sean Donnell relates, “is that cultural representation of the ‘Unity of Being’ for which the poet has been striving in his personal life.” This “Unity of Culture” can unify the nation and



make the Irish people, in Thomas Carlyle's view, "animated by one great Idea" (qtd. in Whitaker 326). It can "define a homogeneous Ireland," as Sean Donnell points out, "structured in opposition to an oppressive English regime."

In 1885, in his twentieth, Yeats became involved in Irish politics through the Contemporary Club in Dublin. There, he met the Fenian leader John O'Leary, admiring the latter's condemnation of senseless violence and his belief in the importance of Irish culture and the need to free it from English effect. Yeats, who alienated himself politically with his continued research into the occult arts, refused to condone the exploitation of Irish art for political ends. His early youthful dream vision was to improve Ireland's cultural life by using national literary themes which elevate the Irish people, point out their heroic past maintained in its myths and folklore, and liberate them, he writes in *Uncollected Prose 1*, from Ireland's "ignorance and bigotry and fanaticism, the eternal foes of the human race which may not be abolished in any way by Acts of Parliament" (206). Instead of political verse, Yeats wanted a verse articulating the Celtic that "delights in unbounded and immortal things," and convey its love with "a passion whose like is not in modern literature and music and art, except where it has come by some straight or crooked way out of ancient times" (*Essays and Introductions* 180). So, "by delving into Celtic pre-history," as Eugene O'Brien argues, "the political and historical divisions that had come to define the Irish situation could be elided and annealed into a mythic and heroic cultural archive which would allow people to take pride in their own culture" (128).

In an early review of Samuel Ferguson's poetry, in *Uncollected Prose 1*, Yeats declared his own belief in an Irish literature that revealed a "world of selfless passion in which heroic deeds are possible and heroic poetry credible" (104). Moreover, Yeats called Ferguson "the greatest Irish poet, because in his poems and the legends, they embody more completely than in any man's writings, the Irish character. Its unflinching devotion to some single aim. Its passion And this faithfulness to things tragic and bitter, to thoughts that wear one's life out and scatter one's joy, the Celt has above all others" (87). Yeats, who had a very strong sense of national identity, felt that it was this Celtic element that made Ferguson worthy of a great cause. Yeats's exploration into the heroic past of ancient Celtic Irish legends was to remind people of their identity and emphasize to them the importance of holding on to the tradition of their country.

With the help of others, Yeats collected information about old Irish legends, and raised them into the heroic ideal represented in Oisín, Fergus, and Cúchulain. He, thus, resurrected the Irish myth by presenting his own desires and defeats, embodied in his vacillation between a dormant present and a glorious heroic past, between youth and old age, between mortality and immortality, within his Irish verse, aiming at creating heroes representing the identity of Ireland and its poet. This commitment to tradition helped Yeats to create ideal forms and clear symbols which would invoke the collective identity of the Irish by linking them with the past, to an inherited body of literature. Further, Yeats' personal system of symbols reflected his belief in the subjective nature of art: "The great poets," he argued, "employed always 'personal utterance,' dramatizing—sometimes overtly—their own lives" (qtd. in Unterecker 7).

Thus, as much as the object of a united Ireland establishes Yeats's nationalist aspirations for Ireland and the Irish people, his early poetry represents his deeply rooted indulgence in Celtic mythology, the conflict between the ideal and the real, his attraction to old age and death, possibly predicted in Oisín's fate, and his interest in theosophy, occultism, and Rosicrucianism.³ These are the themes which disclose Yeats's hope of finding a "Unity of Culture" for the Irish people. Though the attraction to old age and death is odd, it is comprehensible in a young poet looking for an escape



from his own unsatisfied passions. Such “Unity of Culture,” which Yeats later explains, in his great philosophical work *A Vision* (1926), depends in large part on the symbol of the sphere. For Yeats, the sphere represents the unity of being, or a unified “truth” beyond the chaos of opposition. The sphere symbol is comprised of pairs of interpenetrating gyres, and these are in a state of continual conflict with one another while simultaneously emerging from one another. The gyres stand for the continual opposition between the basic elements of existence; e.g. the sun and the moon, day and night, life and death, man and woman, permanence and change. Unity of being is a state of enlightenment that is simultaneously involved with the turmoil of the mundane; in other words, unity of being is paradoxically both transcendent and manifest in the world. In this sense, Yeats believes that the “Unity of Culture” could create a common culture—both transcendent and manifest in the world—or a sense of collective identity, among the Irish people, which would unify the nation against the oppressive English regime.

Yeats’s *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889), a long narrative poem, represents, according to John Unterecker, one of his “first important poetic contributions to that Unity of Culture which he hoped to impose on Ireland by making her familiar with her own legends” (78).⁴ The poem not only abounds with references to Celtic mythology, but also presents, within its Irish mythical verse, one of Yeats’s obsessive themes—the amalgamation of opposites and the vacillation between extremes—which Norman Jeffares refers to, in the poem, as “old age versus perpetual youth” (14), thereby creating heroes representing the identity of Ireland and its poet. The poem shows that though Oisín—the poet and the wanderer who conveys the essential vision of his creator—is made immortally young by a faery’s spell, he still longs for his old human surroundings, which lack heroic action. The poem thus moves between the personal imaginative identity of the poet and the universal heroic identity of the Irish heroic figures of the past, recalling T. S. Eliot’s statement, in “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” that the poet “is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past” (53). As the poet, in Eliot’s view, is appropriately appreciated in “his relation to the dead poets and artists” (44), so, Yeats’s identity is recognized within the collective heroic Irish identity. The poem finds its analogue in one of Yeats’s later poems, “The Circus Animals’ Desertion”:

First that sea-rider Oisín led by the nose
Through three enchanted islands, allegorical dreams,
Vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose,
Themes of the embittered heart, or so it seems, (2-5)⁵

The Wanderings of Oisín is in the form of a dialogue between the Fenian hero, Oisín, and saint Patrick, “the patron saint of Ireland,” who, according to *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, “[a]fter six years of bondage, . . . and, feeling a supernatural call to preach to the heathen Irish, landed in Wicklow . . . [and] converted all the Ulstermen” (623). The three enchanted islands, of “The Circus Animals’ Desertion,” are reiterated in Sir Patrick’s opening lines where he refers to Oisín’s having “known three centuries, . . . / of dalliance with a dream thing” (1.3-4). Oisín’s answer, from the very beginning, attracts the reader’s attention to his heroic past represented in the nation’s Irish heroes. Oisín, the hero of the poem, is seen hunting with his father, Finn, and his friends, “Caoilte and Conan, and Finn,” accompanied by their “baying hounds,” “Bran, Sceolan, and Lomair” (1.13-15). Finn, “the principal hero of the . . . cycle of Irish legends,” as stated in *OCEL*, “is the son of the giant Comhal, and king of Morven, the land of the north-west Caledonians” (300, 299). Robinson and Wilson relate that he “had a great reputation for being gentle to women and generous to men. He was an excellent swimmer, runner, and hunter. [He] was



the leader of a band of warriors, known as the Fenians, who wandered about enjoying themselves at hunting, but responding when necessary to the call to defend Ireland against invaders. [He] had two sons, Fergus and Ossian. As a youth Finn gained foreknowledge and magic counsel from having eaten the Salmon of Knowledge” (147-48).

Interestingly enough, the analogy among St. Patrick, Oisín, Finn, and Yeats is sound and palpable. St. Patrick, “after six years of bondage,” as quoted above, returns to convert all the Irishmen of Ulster (*OCEL* 623), and Oisín, after three hundred years, during which he has attained immortal youth, still longs for his old human surroundings, and prefers his mundane world to the supernatural one, which he has been led to by a woman called Niamh. Likewise, Yeats, like Finn, is a lover of the female sex—his relationship with Maud Gonne, whom he met in January 1889 and became the love of his life and his personal symbol of feminine perfection, is very complex—and tries to gain knowledge through theosophism, Occultism, and Rosicrucianism. The setting of the poem also evokes memories associated with the legendary past of the Irish. When Oisín and his band pass through the “Firbolgs’ burial-motms” (1.16), the reference, as Robinson and Wilson report, is to the Firbolgs or to the third divine race which inhabited Ireland—after the Partholans and the Nemed— and to their battle with the people of Dana, the fourth race which inhabited Ireland (139).⁶ Also, the reference to “Gabhra’s raven-covered plain” (1.43) is to the same area of burial. The same occurs in his reference to “Oscar’s pencilled urn” (1.41). Oscar, as Robinson and Wilson recount, is Oisín’s son, and the reference is to his death (186). Hence, it is the heroic figures of the past that Yeats seeks to imprint in the memories of the Irish people.

The action of the poem progresses through three stages. In succession, they are the Ireland of Dancing, the Ireland of Victories, and the Ireland of Forgetfulness. Oisín, after being trapped in the supernatural world by Niamh, is reminded of his past, and the poem ends in his return to his native land. This commitment to tradition helps Yeats to create, through these characters, ideal forms which would invoke the collective identity of the Irish by linking them with the inherited literature of the past. It is an aim which Yeats recalls in his essay, “Poetry and Tradition,” written in 1907, when he says that poets “were to forge in Ireland a new sword on our traditional anvil for that great battle that must in the end re-establish the old, confident joyous world” (*Essays and Introductions* 249).

In the poem, Niamh, the daughter of “Aengus and Edain”—a supernatural and immortal maiden—falls in love with Oisín (1.47). She explains to Finn, Oisín’s father, that she has ridden far from the Danaan land—the legendary land of the Danaans⁷—to seek the love of Oisín, for his “heroic exploits are known throughout the world” (Simmons 15). She tells Finn that she is innocent of men but she has been captivated by his son’s heroism and eloquence. Oisín’s stories are “like coloured Asian birds/ At evening in their rainless lands” (1.69-70). Niamh appears to be a devout lover, as her father, according to Robinson and Wilson, is “Aengus, the Celtic god of love, [who] played sweet music on his golden harp, and [whose] kisses became birds which hovered protectingly over lovers” (139). Niamh entices Oisín to accompany her and her dowry lures the Fenian hero. Her dowry includes, among other things, the armament of a warrior, such as “a hundred hounds” and “a hundred spears and a hundred bows” (1.86, 91). With her, he would know the Danaan leisure, live in perpetual bliss, and be nourished on “oil and wine and honey and milk” (1.92). When she sighs telling him that “it grows late / Music and love and sleep await,” he mounts by her and she binds him “with her triumphing arms” (1.102-3, 107). Accordingly, Oisín gets trapped in the world of the supernatural. Even there, he still remembers “The floor of Almuin’s



hosting hall” and compares “Aengus dreams” to those of a “Druid,” a priest leader of the Celts (1.155, 218-19).

This early dream state, or rather the emotional phase of adolescence and spontaneous joy, brims with supernatural and mythical characters who project both the desires and beliefs of the poet's imagination and the Irish heroic past through the life of the peasantry. Though Oisín and Niamh are superhuman and allegorical characters and lack the authentic realistic aspect of the characters who appear in Yeats's later poems, they are drawn from the traditional Celtic legends and myths. Thus, in his early poetry, Yeats stresses the indecisive relationship between his own desires and beliefs and the clash between wisdom and power, in his growing ambitious dream of a unified Irish culture, which could create a common culture, or a sense of collective identity, among the Irish people. These eternal conflicts of Yeats's early phase of poetry would become the central theme of Yeats's art, setting it in motion to the unifying concept of his mature art, emerging first in *Responsibilities* (1914).

In the three stages which cover a period of three centuries, Yeats, through Oisín, Niamh, and the imagery of the bird-tree, stresses specific recurrent themes, which, he believes, could fulfill his hope of forging a “Unity of Culture,” or a sense of collective identity, for the Irish people. These themes include the mythological lore of Ireland, the fear of old age, the joy of ever-living youth, and the faith in a conclusive victory.

In the second stage, the emotional phase of adulthood and heroic assertiveness, Yeats asserts his heroic dreams and his endeavors for a revival of Irish culture in the legendary Ireland of his youth—which is different from the traditional Ireland of his maturity—through Oisín, the embodiment of heroic ideals, and the projection of the poet's own inquisitive mind. Therefore, it is only through myth that Yeats is able to form his youthful heroic dream of a “Unity of Culture.” By miming for himself the myth of the dying and reviving god, Yeats resurrects himself and the Irish people in what he feels to be greater power and revives the heroic identity of the past in the minds of the Irish people, by making Oisín immortal and endowed with perpetual youth. And like the gods of Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, Yeats's Oisín, at his revival, is heralded by signs of fertility and the exercise of sexual power. By so doing, Yeats creates the pattern of the generation of archetypes out of specific individual characters. Concerning the continual recurrence of the themes and their development, it is observed that the dominant theme in this stage is that of life and revival and that fertility is the basic element in the process of revival.

In this stage, Oisín and Niamh ride to “the Isle of Many Fears” (2.26), where they enter a great door marred and disfigured by the blows of fighting giants and gods. Hearing a weak sigh, they find a strange lady chained to “two old eagles” (2.76), an allegorical embodiment of Ireland. Freeing her from her shackles and pledging to kill her enemy, Oisín, his “king-remembering” soul aroused (2.98), fights a “demon,” an allegorical embodiment of England. During the fight, Oisín, carrying “the sword of Manannan,” the “sea-god,” terrifies the “demon,” who keeps changing shapes from being “great eel” to “fir-tree” to “drowned dripping body” (2.134, 135, 179, 182, 185). Yeats's purpose is to encourage the Irish people to stand against the English. His reference to “Manannan” evokes supernatural endowments into the mind of the Irish people as “Manannan,” according to Robinson and Wilson, was known to have “a sword which never failed to slay, a boat which propelled itself wherever its owner wished, a horse which was swifter than the wind, and magic power which no weapon could pierce. He endowed the gods with a mantle which made them invisible and fed them from pigs which renewed themselves as soon as they were eaten. Those gods who ate at his Feast of Age never grew old” (139). Thus, in the image of the Manannan, Yeats



combines supernatural endowments, which would support him, as well as the Irish people, in their struggle against the English, with a desire for perpetual youth and immortality.

Fertility is a principal factor in the process of revival and immortality. The theme of immortality is reflected in the image of the chained girl to “two old eagles.” These eagles with “Few feathers . . . on their dishevelled wings, / For their dim minds were with the ancient things” (2.78-79) evoke the theme of rejuvenation into the reader’s mind through its association with “The Voyage of Maoldun,” as Unterecker notes (54). In this voyage, some sailors are wrecked on an island, which has a lake on one of its sides that contains “the waters of life” (Unterecker 54). One day, an old eagle appears carrying in one claw a branch of a tree which is full of fruits. The sailors approach the old eagle which is busy feathering itself. When they steal some of the red fruit, the eagle neglects them completely because its mind is centered only on its own rejuvenation. This old eagle is later joined by two younger eagles, who aid him in the process of feathering and grooming. This act lasts for three days, and during this period, the old eagle and his friends eat from the fruits and throw the skin and the pulp in the lake until the water becomes bloodshot. On the third day, the oldest eagle plunges in the lake and emerges as young as it has been. Thus Oisín, as well as the Irish, can approach the chained girl and free her since the “two eagles” are anticipating an act of rejuvenation or rebirth with the old eagle.

Perpetual youth and immortality is echoed in the song of the birds at the end of the first stage, which ends with the lovers leaving the island of eternal song, while the Immortals sing warningly of the contrast between the joy of ever-living youth and the regret of old age. The birds’ song condemns old age; the immortal “birds in the Asian trees” gaze gloomily at the symbols of mortal life such as “old man,” “hare,” “mouse,” and earthly “bird,” and forebodingly “murmur at last, ‘Unjust, unjust’ ” (1.437, 441).

As we have seen, it is fertility in all its forms that occupies Yeats's notion of revival. It is no wonder that sexuality, as a form of fertility, plays a principal role in the process of revival. So, related to the theme of immortality is that of sexual imagery. This theme reflects Yeats’s fear of old age with its concomitant deterioration of the sexual powers. Oisín’s attitude to both the first and second islands is similarly phallic; in the first, his progression is through “many a tree” which “Rose ever out of the warm sea” “like sooty fingers” (1.170-71), and in the second, his progression is through the “dark towers” (2.23) which bear the same striking sexual resemblance to that of the trees. Furthermore, both are enlivened; the trees of the first island have been throbbing with birds, and the towers of the second island have confined a mysterious lady, whose “fluttering” sigh, bird-like sound, has brought Oisín to her (2.59). However, the trees of the third island—the last immortal island of a sleeping group of giants with bird-like claws and feathered ears—are birdless, a symbol of impotence in old age. The singing of the birds in the first island and the fluttering sigh, bird-like sound, of the second island, are lowered to the “owls ruffling” in the third island (3.47). Though the immortal birds, on the third island, do not sing in the trees any more, soft music is heard. It springs rightly from a bell-branch of the tree itself. Oisín finds out that it comes from the chief of the sleeping bird-like men, who, after being awakened by the lovers, waves a musical, magical, and supernatural tree bell-branch in the air. This soft music puts Oisín under its spell and lulls him into a deep sleep. But a fallen starling, a real bird, awakens Oisín and drives him to remember his glorious past and return to the heroic world of the Fenians. After a while, Oisín falls to the earth, the world of mortals, and quickly, tormented by his three-hundred-year adventure, becomes an old man.

Within such dualism between opposites—between a dormant present and a heroic past, between youth and old age, between mortality and immortality, between singing and silence—it



should be noted that the sleeping giants, in the third island, amalgamate the opposites of the feathery kingdom with that of the supernatural. Added to that, “the demon,” in the second island, also amalgamates the opposites of being “at once an enemy and beloved,” as Unterecker notes (58). “[H]is song,” Unterecker observes, “is sung ‘in a sad revelry’; he is both ‘bacchant and mournful’; he caresses the runnel’s rim ‘as though / The flowers still grew there’ ” (58).

In the third stage, the emotional phase of old age and final calm, though Oisín is made immortally young by a faery’s spell, he still yearns for his old human environs, which lack heroic action. The poem thus moves between the personal imaginative identity of the poet and the universal heroic Irish identity of the past. It tries to resolve the dualities of action and dream, desire and belief, and mortality and immortality. Believing that Irish legend would enable him to reach out to the universe and that symbolic writing would provide him with the power to create an identity for his people, Yeats presents the dreams and doubts of the artist-hero in Oisín, whose actions, at times, seem heroic, at other times, strangely elusive. Curiously enough, such vacillation dramatizes Yeats’s imagination caught between eternal conflicts of a past heroic Irish identity and a present evasive one.

The Wanderings of Oisín not only reflects Yeats’s interest in the world of Irish mythology but also reveals his desire of occupying an intersecting point between eternal dream and bitter reality, or a point of poise between opposites. This dualism continues in the collection entitled “The Rose” (1893), which also provides an early example of Yeats’ interest in occultism and Irish mythology, and is part of an initial attempt to create a “Unity of Culture,” or a “Unity of Being,” which is a state of enlightenment that is simultaneously involved with the turmoil of the mundane. In his search for “Unity of Being,” or a unified “truth” beyond the chaos of opposition, this early collection is more capable of achieving a unity of dream and desire, or a clearer expression of Yeats’s nationalistic identity between the two Irelands: the legendary and the traditional. For Yeats, the rose is a symbol of unity and perfection that is alien to the real world of conflict and opposition. In later poems, he will use other symbols to explore and develop this same idea.

The Rose begins with “To the Rose upon the Rood of Time,” which articulates Yeats’s early poetic ambition to sing as a poet of the Irish people to achieve the “Unity of Culture” implied in the Rosicrucian symbol of the mystical rose that blossoms on the cross of time, suggesting an intersection between the real and the ideal as the word “rood” carries among its many connotations the idea of an intersection or a point of contact between the earthly and spiritual (the place where two pieces of wood are joined to form a cross). Then, heroic legend poems, such as “Cuchulain’s Fight with the Sea,” follow to make Ireland, as Unterecker claims, “familiar with her legends” (78). These poems, which go back to the world of Irish mythology and predict the conflict between eternal dream and bitter reality, are followed by rose poems—written originally for Maud Gonne—on beauty, peace, conflict, and sadness, attempting to indicate the poet’s vision of the rose. *The Rose* then ends with identifying the rose with Ireland and personifying it as a lover, in “To Ireland in the Coming Times,” which is an embodiment of his desire to be counted with the three great Irish poets, Davis, Mangan, and Ferguson, thereby defending his right, at the end of the collection, that he is an Irish poet who wishes to make his country achieve “Unity of Culture” through literature.

One need only recognize that for Yeats, as for many poets, since ancient times, the rose in Western literature is the most traditional symbol of beauty. It symbolizes “spiritual perfection [and] aesthetic perfection, worship of imagination and beauty” (Genet 63), “ideal beauty, eternal love, perfection, incorruptibility and the realm of the mysterious mythical and magical” (Billigheimer 276), and “a muse of transcendence” (Ross 222). Yet, in reality, the rose—as poets from Sappho



and Horace have logically deplored—must die; its perfection is fleeting. Thus, Yeats includes in “The Rose” a dimension of poignant irony arising from the conflict between the real and the ideal. Coupled with this theme is his hopeless “love for Maud Gonne,” who, according to Joseph Ronsley, “inspired the love poems of *The Rose*” (131). Indeed, just as the rose symbolizes the abstract idea of beauty, Maud Gonne comes eventually to symbolize beauty’s human embodiment.⁸ Moreover, Yeats’s efforts for cultural unity are immediately deepened with his desire of winning Maud Gonne’s heart through heroic action.

“To the Rose Upon the Rood of Time” is the first poem in the collection. It explores the symbolism of the rose; for Yeats, the rose signifies beauty, ancient Celtic Irish legends, and religion (“rood,” as Christopher Daniell relates, is an “Old English for ‘cross’ ” (7), on which Christ was crucified). By addressing this poem to the “Rood of Time,” Yeats takes a physical symbol and provides it with a metaphysical dimension (time), suggesting an intersection between the real and the ideal. In the process of meditating on these associations, the speaker ponders the disparity between the eternal and the temporal.

The poem opens with invoking the muse and addressing the rose directly. The poet implores the rose to “Come near me, while I sing the ancient ways” (line 2). The first stanza not only sets up the symbolism of the rose as a symbol of unity and perfection that is alien to the real world of conflict and opposition but also stresses Irish mythology as an element of the “Unity of Culture,” which Yeats has formerly referred to in *The Wanderings of Oisín*. Yeats addresses the “Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all [his] days!” imploring it to support him while he sings the stories of the great ancient Celtic heroes: “Cuchulain battling with the bitter tide; / The Druid, grey, wood-nurtured, quiet-eyed, / Who cast round Fergus dreams, and ruin untold” (lines 3-5). Yeats, then, shows how the rose, as a symbol of eternity, is saddened by aging stars, which, by human standards, are nevertheless ancient: “And thine own sadness, whereof stars, grown old / In dancing silver-sandalled on the sea, / Sing in their high and lonely melody” (6-8).

By the end of the stanza, the rose is implored to “Come near” so that the speaker may “no more be blinded by man’s fate” (9) but will instead find “Eternal beauty wandering on her way” (12). The “fate” mentioned here seems to refer to the mundane conditions of existence, or perhaps the suffering (and eventual death) implied by the image of the “Rood.” The speaker expresses a desire to escape this fate, replacing it with an experience of “Eternal beauty wandering on her way.” The speaker also describes finding “[e]ternal beauty” in “poor foolish things that live a day” (11).

Simultaneously, the speaker realizes the paradox that eternal beauty can be found in everyday life (and not just on a metaphysical level). On the one hand, he is drawn to the idealism of the rose and ancient myths of perfection, and on the other he finds that there is actually a connection between the ideal and the mundane. Thus, the last two lines of the first stanza express the desire to find truth and eternity in the ordinary and “foolish things that live a day” (11). Again, the rose embodies this dualism: as a flower, it is a beautiful example of one of these “poor foolish things,” while as a symbol it is timeless: “Eternal beauty wandering on her way” (11-12). This desire for perfection in imperfection explains the apparent contradiction of the rose, which grows “under the boughs of love and hate” (10).

The second stanza begins with a sudden exclamation: “Come near, come near, come near—Ah, leave me still / A little space for the rose-breath to fill!” (13-14). These lines show the tension between the physical (mundane) and the metaphysical worlds. The speaker wishes to coexist in the two worlds at the same time. This tension is reinforced by his language; note that he follows his insistent request (“Come near”) with the words “leave me still” (12)—a reversal that happens in the



space of a line. It seems that only within the framework of the poem is the poet realizing the importance of an intimate knowledge of the ideal while preserving the “distance” necessary to appreciate it. This seemingly ambivalent stance allows the poet not to become absorbed in an ultimately uncommunicative mystical reverie.

Yeats, then, refers to the importance of continuing to hear “common things that crave” (15). The description of such ordinary humble animals of the earth as “weak worm” and “field-mouse” demonstrates the speaker’s sensitivity to the mundane world, and his awareness of the vulnerability of the ordinary. Importantly, he connects such unassuming creatures to the “heavy mortal hopes” of human beings in the very next line (18). The speaker then compares such a connection to the mundane with his need to hear “the strange things said / By God” (19-20). In the remainder of the poem, he attempts to negotiate these competing desires.

By returning to his pursuit of the ideal (and indeed by concluding with it), Yeats demonstrates its appeal. He seems to be expressing a fear of falling into a language that has no relevance for everyday people [the “strange things said by God” (20) and the “tongue men do not know” (21)]; yet he ends the poem by referring to his goal of singing “of old Eire [Ireland] and the ancient ways” (23). (As we have seen, for Yeats, Irish mythology is equated with the ideal.) The tension between these realms seems to justify Yeats’s final characterization of the rose as “sad” (24), which explains that the search for a resolution to the conflict between the ideal and the real is left unresolved at this early stage.

This early eternal conflict between the ideal and the real was deepened by Yeats’s interest in occultism. In retrospect, Yeats, as a young man, enrolled at the Metropolitan School of Art, where he studied from 1884 to 1886. Influenced by A. P. Sinnett’s *The Occult World* and *Esoteric Buddhism*, Yeats turned to theosophy, a spiritual system dedicated to the search for mystical knowledge and truth outside the boundaries of the Judeo-Christian tradition (in many cultures it is referred to as the “wisdom tradition”). In 1888, he joined the Theosophical Society, headed by the famous Madame Blavatsky. Then, he joined a secret society organized by MacGregor Mathers, The Order of the Golden Dawn. “To Some I have Talked with By the Fire” reveals the influence of Yeats’s participation in occultism through his involvement with the Golden Dawn. Drawing on a conversation with Mrs. Dorothea Hunter, a member of the Golden Dawn, had supplied him with imagery for the poem by telling him that the “music of heaven” is “the continuous clashing of earth’s swords” (qtd. in Gould 89-90). Likewise, Yeats’s imagery in other poems, in this collection, is based, as Unterecker notes, on “his occult studies and Madame Blavatsky’s commentaries on comparative mythology” (83). In “The Two Trees,” for example, Unterecker points out that the principle imagery is drawn from:

the passage he has read in Mathers’ *The Kabbalah Unveiled* about the birds. Mathers identified them as souls and angels which “lodge and build their nests” in the Tree of the Knowledge of God and of Evil. And shortly before he had read Mathers’ account he had watched a young Catholic girl who, in a trance, had claimed to see “the Tree of Life with ever-sighing souls moving in its branches instead of sap, and among its leaves all the fowl of the air.” Impressed by the similar imagery assigned by the girl and Mathers to the precisely opposed trees, Yeats put together his poem. (85)

As the central dichotomy, here, is between the real and the ideal, it is pertinent to quote Richard Ellmann’s explanation of the double-natured Kabbalistic Tree of Life, where he remarks, the “Sephiroic tree has two aspects, one benign, the reverse side malign. On one side are the Sephiroth, on the other the dread Qliphoth. Since the Kabbalists consider man to be a microcosm, the double-



natured tree is a picture both of the universe and the human mind, whose faculties, even the lowest, can work for good or ill" (76).

The poem adopts the same theme, and further stresses it as the conflict between inward and outward beauty, in its appeal that the "beloved gaze [into her] own heart" (1) to the spirit of her nature rather than "the bitter glass" of outward reflection. With her inward gaze, she will find the holy tree of peace, joy, and inspiration rather than the "fatal image" of the "Broken boughs and blackened leaves" (28) of "unrest," "barrenness," and "cruelty." To put it differently, the poem is an appeal to the Irish to look deep inside their deep-rooted tradition to know who they are and recognize their own ideal identity rather than the present elusive one. The poem, with its intense suggestion of the double-natured Kabbalistic Tree of Life and the scriptural and Blakean Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge, is a remarkable example of Yeats's penchant for dreaming wisdom over action and ambition.⁹ Only when Yeats knows to sing "a wizard song" (12) that challenges time and charms his beloved can peace and perfect joy be found and worrying sadness be forgotten.

This theme also resonates in "To Ireland in The Coming Times," where Yeats defends himself against the claims of some of the members of the Rhymer's club that he does not "talk like a poet" but "like a man of letters" (*Autobiographies* 166), and that his poetry is obscure. Likewise, if we consider George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer's note, in their edition of Yeats's *Letters to the New Island*, that "Irish writers whose subject matter is not Irish are condemned and sentenced to obscurity" (163), then Yeats is right in expressing his desire, in "To Ireland in The Coming Times," to be counted with the three great Irish poets, "Davis, Mangan, and Ferguson" (18) who "sang, to sweeten Ireland's wrong" (3).¹⁰ In the poem, Yeats argues that he is no less patriotic than any of these Irish writers, and that his art is even better because it tells "Of things discovered in the deep / Where only body's laid asleep" (21-22). He is a true Irish man because he not only sings of Ireland's ancient past, but also of the eternal truth, symbolized in the "red-rose-bordered hem," which is repeated in three stanzas (6, 30, 48). Julie white declares that "[t]hese songs are important, for they not only articulate Irishness in terms of its landscape and scenery, but also in terms of the eternal truths and timeless, mystical beauty associated with that landscape" (97). This "timeless mystical beauty," set in time, as Unterecker also asserts (77), "Made Ireland's heart begin to beat" (12).

It is essential to note here that Yeats keeps moving in the poem between the pronouns, I and you; in other words, he keeps moving between the personal and the whole, or rather between the personal and the collective identity. He sings of his own personal love for Maud Gonne who owns the "red-rose-bordered hem," and also sings of his Irish nation: "While still I may, I write for you / The love I lived, the dream I knew" (33-34). Yeats believes that such poetry, which equates the personal with the collective identity, and which merges the past, "lived" and "knew," with the present, "write," could create a country, unified in culture, in the future:

I cast my heart into my rhymes,
That you, in the dim coming times,
May know how my heart went with them
After the red-rose-bordered hem. (45-48)

This "Unity of Culture," in Unterecker's words, is what Yeats "hoped to impose on Ireland by making her familiar with her own legends" (78). The numerous references to old Irish legends indicate the store of Irish mythology that Yeats uses as a source for much of his poetry. It is no accident that Yeats, who used to collect information about old Irish legends, does not do this for purely nationalistic reasons; his underlying purpose is to use this information in the imaginative



constructions of his own poetry (Simmons 7). This is evidenced by the way he alters names and pronunciations to make them suitable for his work. In fact, he often uses Irish myth not for its own sake but to compare with what he sees as the shortcomings of the modern world.

In “Cuchulain’s Fight with the Sea,” Yeats changes the original legend, in which both Cuchulain and his loving wife, Emer, are faithful to each other and when the husband dies, the wife dies of grief. In the poem, Yeats characterizes Cuchulain as infidel to his wife. The wife learns from a swineherd that her husband is back to king Conchubar’s camp—Cuchulain’s uncle—with a young beautiful woman who “is one sweet-throated like a bird” (16). Infuriated, she goes to her son, who has been herding the cattle, and tells him that he is too strong “[t]o idle life away, a common herd” (21). When the son asks his mother what she wants him to do for her, she tells him to go to “Red Branch camp,” where the army is celebrating its victory, to find his father, Cuchulain, “Among those feasting men” (41). She tells her son that his father was bound by an oath to her and asks him to reveal his name only at the point of sword. The son goes with his men to the place of the feast, and lights up a fire. When Cuchulain sees the fire, he sends one of the men to “Seek out what man he is” (47). When the man returns, he says, “[h]e bade me let all know he gives his name / At the sword-point, and waits till we have found / Some feasting man that the same oath has bound” (49-51). At that moment, “Cuchulain cried,” and said, “I am the only man / Of all this host so bound from childhood on” (52-3). So, the destined father-son fight begins and ends in killing the son. Before the son dies, Cuchulain asks him to reveal his name and the son answers: “Cuchulain I, mighty Cuchulain’s son” (67), and dies.

Fearing that the grief-stricken father would rage and slay them all, Conchubar asks the Druids to put Cuchulain under ancient spells. The Druids conform and sing ancient spells into his ears. This soft chanting puts Cuchulain under its spell and lulls him into a deep sleep, in a way which recalls Oisín’s falling asleep by the soft music in the third island of *The Wanderings of Oisín*. When Cuchulain arises, he stares at “the horses of the sea,” and hears the battle wagons. When “his own name cried,” he fights “with the invulnerable tide” (84-86).

It seems that Yeats’s plan, behind structuring Cuchulain’s fight with the waves, is to express man’s plight when, torn between two sparring emotions no violence can undo; hence, man wages war not only against a sea of woes but against the sea itself, as a symbolic image of fecund damaging life. In this poem, Unterecker notes that “Yeats, who found of compelling interest the archetypal tales of father-son conflict, saw in Cuchulain a Mask for himself and for his nation.” “If he could make the virile lineaments of the ancient hero sharp enough,” Unterecker adds, “he and Ireland might be able to put on necessary Masks of courageous, reckless gaiety” (78).

It is not coincidental, then, that the adjacent poem, “The Rose of the World,” refers to Helen in its first stanza. The reference to Helen most probably associates her with Cuchulain, whom Yeats characterizes as her male counterpart because he is also bird-gotten, half-mortal, and half-god.¹¹ Helen, the woman whose beauty triggered the eventual destruction of Troy and early Greek civilization, is an Ideal Woman, and Cuchulain, the tough Irish hero who fought the “invulnerable tide,” is an Ideal Man. Intriguingly enough, Yeats alludes to both in a poem which deals with the eternity of beauty.

“The Rose of the World” represents the rose (and, by implication, Ireland) as Beauty that is coexistent with God. In the poem, Yeats challenges the conventional poetic concept of “fleeting beauty.” Yeats clarifies that human beings are subject to change and they die; beauty itself is constant. In writing the poem to Maud Gonne, and comparing her to Helen of Troy, Yeats argues



that not only have men since the Trojans, who died for Helen, died for beauty (and thus by implication, Ireland), but “we and the labouring world are passing by” (6).

Yeats derives another symbol from Celtic folklore in which “Usna’s [three] children died” (5) because one of them had kidnapped the beautiful Deirdre, an Irish heroine who was doomed to cause misery on Ulster.¹² Yeats links Maud Gonne’s “red lips” (2) with Helen, in “Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam” (4), and Deirdre, who is like Helen of Troy, not only to immortalize beauty, but to maintain that men fight and die for the beauty of women. Since Yeats loves Maud Gonne, he feels that the Irish could fight and die for women if they stand for Ireland.¹³

Unequivocally, Yeats wants to say that beauty endures when we do not. God initially created the world as a place for beauty to exist. Beauty, Yeats notes, had even existed prior to man, even before angels, “[b]efore you were, or any hearts to beat” (12). Yeats “insists that the first principle is not a single Godhead,” as Vicki Mahaffey points out, “but a couple, with the Rose in the role of God’s beloved, wandering female consort.” In “He made the world to be a grassy road / Before her wandering feet” (14-15), Mahaffey expounds that, “[b]efore God created the angels, he lived with the Rose, weary and kind” (105).

It is worth noting here that Yeats’s aim behind such implication and mythic synthesis is to emphasize the constancy and primacy of beauty (and, by implication, Ireland) and to arouse the new generations of Irish people from their slumber by retrieving some of the ancient Celtic myths and legends. In an 1892 essay, called “The De-Anglicising of Ireland,” and collected in *his Uncollected Prose I*, Yeats emphasizes the significance of a spiritual attitude for Irish “national tradition” and “national literature” (255).¹⁴ He writes, “When we remember the majesty of Cuchullin and the beauty of sorrowing Deirdre we should not forget that it is that majesty and that beauty which is immortal, and not the perishing tongue that first told of them” (256). Hence, “an artist actually becomes more national rather than less,” as George Cusack puts it, “by seeking the most perfect expression of his individuality, for only then can he shed the influences of the present and connect with the ‘immortal’ spirit of his nation” (46).

In a nutshell, Yeats’s early poetry exemplifies his hope of finding a “Unity of Culture” for the Irish people, which could create a common culture, or a sense of collective identity, among the Irish people that would unify the nation against the oppressive English regime. It is worth noting that in his early life, before and in the 1890s, Yeats was full of expectations and was sure that under the leadership of Charles Parnell, Ireland would gain freedom and he would be able to make his country achieve “unity of culture” by means of literature. Aiming to create a distinct Irish literature, he wrote poems, which both sing the grandeur of ancient Ireland and invoke the spirit of the Irish legendary and mythical figures to arouse patriotic feelings, and revive the heroic identity in the Irish people. Though his dream vision of reviving the “unity of culture” was not fully realized in his early attempts, it notably succeeded in liberating Irish literature from the impact of the English tradition, and forging a shared sense of belonging to Ireland, and hence, creating a collective identity among the Irish people. However, Irish politics and the grim realities and frustrations of the period after Parnell’s fall changed his attitude. Instead of deriving the Irish identity from the legendary Ireland, Yeats shifted his allegiance to the traditional Ireland of 18th-century heroes, Swift, Burke, and Berkeley.

On the other hand, the value which Mahmoud Darwish attaches to collective identity differs a great deal from that of Yeats. Although both the Irish and the Palestinians are overpowered by alien forces, there is a lag of culture between them due to the difference and years which separate the Irish and the Palestinian revolutions, and also to the situation of Palestine. In 1948, Palestine



was swept by Zionism, and Israel emerged as a state. The declaration of the State of Israel, on May 14, 1948, led to “military confrontation between the Arabs and Jews, which drove more than 700,000” peaceful “Palestinians from their homes and homeland” (“Men in the Sun”), “due to Zionist or Israeli military actions, psychological campaigns aimed at frightening Arabs into leaving, and direct expulsions,” writes Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar (5). Evicted from their homeland—the newly established Jewish State—the Palestinians have lived, ever since, as refugees in the bordering Arab countries.

In accordance with Franz Fanon’s statement, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, that “[f]or a colonized people the most essential value . . . is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity” (44), Mahmoud Darwish, at the age of six, was uprooted from the land which basically provides one not only with the physical needs of nourishment, shelter, and place, but also with the abstract needs of dignity, culture, and identity. In an interview with Adam Shatz, in *New York Times*, in 2001, Darwish admits his own suffering, from his early childhood, when he says, “[w]e were defined, and rejected, as refugees.” Then, he confesses that “[t]his gave me a very strong bitterness, and I don’t know that I’m free of it today” (19). This bitterness against the occupier, which, according to Helena Schultz, was the “result of land confiscation, discrimination, exclusion, lower education, higher unemployment and lower income” (75), has unquestionably given birth to Darwish’s interest in poetry. He acknowledges, in *Shai’on ‘an al-wattan [Something about Homeland]*, that, “My early interest in poetry developed with my realization that I am a victim of some form of military and political aggression” (244). As such, Darwish has used poetry to express his countrymen’s consciousness by creating a new understanding of homeland. In 2000, he confides to Rees and Klaidman, *Newsweek International* interviewers, that he does not “think there is any role for poetry. Poems can’t establish a state. But they can establish a metaphorical homeland in the minds of the people. I think my poems have built some houses in this landscape” (62). Therefore, while Darwish does not believe that poetry has the power to enact political demands, he does see it as an opening for Palestinians to shape their collective identity and experience around something other than just the land. He reaffirms his position in the 2001 interview with Adam Shatz, when he says, “I’ve built my homeland, I’ve even founded my state—in my language” (19). Moreover, in *Absent Presence*, Darwish further emphasizes the constructive power of words in supporting their struggle for the Palestinian cause. He writes, “Only words are qualified in this sunset to repair the breakages of Time and place, . . . Words are the raw materials for building a house. Words are a country” (61). As has been noted, Darwish has used poetry as a critical tool to create a new homeland and craft a collective voice for his people through words. In *Literary Disinheritance*, Najat Rahman relates that Darwish asserts that “a people without poetry are a conquered people” (47), and thus, Darwish emphasizes the significance of poetry to the Palestinians; in other words, he argues that it is essential for the Palestinians to adopt poetry. Embracing poetry will provide them with a tool whereby they can shape their collective identity by realizing their place in a collective tradition, and build a sense of “home,” as Rahman puts it (64).

Over the years, Darwish has skillfully acted as a poet and spokesman for the Palestinian people by his ability to communicate their experiences and suffering in poetic lines. Darwish’s early poetry is characterized by anger and loss, in attacking Israel for its occupation of their Palestinian ancestral land. It is also fierce, defiant, and, according to Sabry Hafez, “charged with the power to evoke tremendous resistance, which enabled it to capture and even inflame the imagination of its



readers throughout the Arab world” (138). In “On Man,” Darwish draws attention to Israel’s aggression against the Palestinian people. He writes,

They gagged his mouth,
Bound his hands to the rock of the dead
And said: Murderer!

They took his food, clothes, and banners,
Cast him into the condemned cell
And said: Thief!

They drove him away from every port,
Took his young sweetheart,
Then said: Refugee! (1-9)¹⁵

These lines serve as a cry for the oppression that the Palestinian people have suffered. What attracts the attention here is the inversion of the connotative values of the words; the murdered becomes the murderer, the dispossessed becomes the thief, and the real owner of the land becomes the refugee. That is not all; atrocities of all kinds were committed against the Palestinians. The significance of such atrocities is to stop the Palestinians from procreating. In other words, to condemn them to death as a people.¹⁶ Therefore, Tahrir Hamdi is right in his emphasis that “Darwish, as a poet, has attempted to reach deep inside the Palestinian psyche . . . to capture the essence of the Palestinian experience” (31), in his attempt to create, what Munir Akash claims, “a Palestinian genesis, as a challenge to the erasure of the memory of an entire nation” (32). So, for Darwish, the Palestinian experience is deeply rooted in the long-standing bond between the people of Palestine and the land of Palestine. In “Identity Card,” Darwish stresses that solid interrelatedness of Palestinian identity and land in the following lines:

My father is from the family of the plough
Not from a noble line &
My grandfather was a peasant
Without nobility genealogy
My house is a crop-warden’s shack

These lines portray the speaker as a member of a humble united family, deeply rooted in land. The words, “plough,” “peasant,” and “crop” not only emphasize the speaker's farming family background but also reflect his endless bond with the land; it is a legacy which passes on from grandfather to father to son. The speaker further broadens that strong thematic connection with the land when he recalls the history of the Palestinian people. He metaphorically depicts the eternal tie of the humble, hardworking, deep-rooted family background, that is still growing, in the form of a family tree, whose roots are deep in this country’s land, which goes back a very long time, before history: “My roots / Took hold before the birth of time” (23-24).¹⁷ These haunting lines maintain that these people deserve respect.

The speaker, then, bemoans the present situation in which the temporary Israeli occupation has stolen the farmland that supported his ancestors, severed the family from its home, and broke the eternal tie with the land, that he would have worked with his children, and left him and the Palestinians absolutely nothing with which to sustain themselves but rocks:

You have stolen the orchards of my ancestors
And the land which I cultivated



Along with my children
And you left nothing for us
Except for these rocks . . . (52-56)

In the lines above, the land of his ancestors and children, Palestine, is intensely embraced. Darwish is angered because the Israelis have stolen the Palestinians fertile land, which, in Barbara Parmenter's view, "is necessary for maintaining self-identity, and for opposing Israel's efforts to deny Palestinians a place" (87). So, Darwish's insistence on the unification of the Palestinian identity and the confiscated land is significant as it cultivates hope in the dispirited Palestinians to remain hopeful that the occupation of their land would dismantle and terminate if they keep their unyielding resistance to the occupant of their homeland. As "a witness writer or truth bearer," Tahrir Hamdi explains, Darwish "is not only *writing himself* but also *writing his people*" (24; emphasis in original). "Identity Card," is, thus, an articulation of Darwish's and the Palestinians' spirit of resistance in defiance of dispossession and exile. The memorable "refrain" of the poem, "Write down, I'm an Arab," according to Sinan Antoon, "crystallize[s] Palestinian resistance against Israeli attempts to erase Palestinian identity and history." "This kind of resistance," as Yahya, Lazim, and Vengadasamy note, is "depicted in a number of poems in which the poets employ their environment in terms of nature and its various aspects such as the rocks, the stones, the sun, the sea, the birds, and the hills and so on to express their deep outburst of resistance" (76). In other words, they claim that the Palestinian people and nature are interconnected in the context of resistance to the "western colonialism" of their homeland. In a similar vein, David J. Wasserstein maintains that Darwish "builds his subjects and images out of the simplest elements—clouds, sky, the color white, birds, wings, butterflies . . ." (111).

Similarly, in his play, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, Yeats deals with the issue of the theft of indigenous land and the uprooting of the native people. In the play, Cathleen, the symbol of the colonized, Ireland, states her hope of getting her "four beautiful green fields" back from the "too many strangers in the house" (7), the symbol of the colonizer, England. In like manner, resistance to the colonizer, England, is adumbrated in the woman's need for strong young men to fight for her, and symbolically for Ireland.

Cut off from their homeland, the Palestinians undergo emotionally painful life experiences in the refugee camps. In "A Plain Song about the Red Cross," Darwish expresses the emotional trauma of a generation deprived of the happy memories of infancy and childhood: "They took from me my wooden horse, / They made me carry the burdens from my father's back, / They made me carry the night like a year" (29-31). Similarly, in "Diary of a Palestinian Wound," Darwish depicts the despair and sorrow surrounding the Palestinians' dispossession and departure. He refers to the Israeli's confiscation of the Arab lands and houses, which had been occupied by the Israelis, instead of their legal Palestinian owners: "The loved ones' house is deserted / & Jaffa has been translated to its very marrow" (74-75). It is a painful traumatic experience, which, in Syrine Hout's view, does not express "a feeling of longing for something absent, but a feeling of brute dispossession" (198). The uprooted Palestinians experience a state of living death away from their houses and land.

As refugees, who lost both their homes and homeland, and denied their basic rights of resettlement and secure livelihoods, they face many difficult challenges and suffer the deepest forms of debasement, "the stifling and humiliating characteristics of which are difficult to convey unless experienced firsthand," as Karen AbuZayd's writes. This is felt in the pangs of impoverishment and hunger, which the Palestinian refugee experiences in such challenging living conditions: "I have a loaf of dark brown bread / And a small basket of vegetables ("Letter from



Exile” 53-54). In a figurative sense, Darwish superbly inverts the connotative value of the moon, as a source of beauty, and associates it with the pangs of hunger: “When the sacks of flour are empty / The full moon becomes a loaf in my eyes” (“A Plain Song about the Red Cross” 8-9). This life of hunger and vagrancy resonates in the refugee’s embittered query:

What, Mother, have we done wrong?
That we must twice die,
Dying once in life itself
And then again in Death! (“Letter from Exile” 89-92)

In exile, the refugee experiences a poignant nostalgic feeling for his lost homeland. The contrast between the past and the present is vivid in: “And the smell of the earth: Perfume / And the taste of nature: Sugar / It is as though I am on the roof of my old house” (“Prison” 8-10). Darwish reflects the powerful attachment of the Palestinian to his lost homeland; he writes that the olive grove shelters him “when it rains” and the cold winter drives the motherless child—a symbol of a victimized Palestine—to ask his father, “Will the trees make up for fires, . . .” (“A Plain Song about the Red Cross” 13-14). Unquestionably, the missing counterpart of the child’s question hints at the native land—the child should have added (as it had been there, in Palestine). This state of misery leads the child to question his own identity whether he is the son of his father or the Red Cross: “. . . Are you my father / Or do you consider I’ve become a son of the Red Cross?” (18-19).

This terrible and oppressive state of life has resulted in a state of spiritual alienation, which finds its forceful expression in the narrator of Ghassan Kanafani’s novella, “The Land of Sad Oranges”:

I ... doubted whether this God really wanted to make men happy. I also doubted whether this God could hear and see everything. The colored pictures ... showing the Lord having compassion on children and smiling in their faces seemed like another of the lies made up ... I was sure that the God we had known in Palestine had left it too, and was a refugee in some place that I did not know, unable to find a solution to his own problems. And we, human refugees, sitting on the pavement waiting for a new Fate to bring some solution, were responsible for providing a roof under which to spend the night. Pain had begun to undermine the child’s simple mind. (Kanafani 58-59).

The narrator, a young boy, questions the existence of a compassionate God. He doubts, against his religious instruction at school, whether God is compassionate or not. According to Muhammad Siddiq, the idea of disbelief in the existence of a God “becomes a crucial thematic feature of [Kanafani’s] oeuvre” (6). This idea becomes clearer in the case of the Palestinian refugee, who experiences intense feelings of indignation to the extent that he doubts his religious dogmas. Though religion is one of the forces that are blamed for the distress that befell the Palestinians, and even the existence of God is sometimes questioned, the reader is drawn into sympathy with the Palestinian refugees because of their severe circumstances.

Equally important, the evaporation of the Arab dream to unite for the liberation of Palestine deepened the refugees’ feeling of spiritual alienation. Instead of grouping their efforts to regain Palestine, the Arabs were completely fragmented and immersed in internal as well as external disputes. Moreover, enthusiastic slogans and songs, military coups d’état, and conspiracies replaced military action. In “Psalm 2,” Darwish bemoans the state of his lost homeland that is repeated in “songs and massacres” (12, 25, 42, 58). The reference here most likely is to the massacre of Black September (“Aylūl al-aswad”) in Jordan and to the fiery songs of the Arab broadcasting stations, such as “Voice of the Arabs” (“Sawt el Arab”). In these songs, emotional and fanciful expressions



of the Arabic dream, such as “We are returning” and “we had returned,” used to be heard all the time. The poem also stresses another sharp irony in, “All the cover names have been booked / In the air-conditioned recruiting offices” (50-51). The irony derives from the complete incongruity between the toughness of the military life and the laxity evoked in the air-conditioned offices. It simply shows that the military leaders are either men of words not men of action or that they do not believe in their work. The brave ironic opinion referred to, here, indicates that the Arabs, including Palestinians, are complicit in the Palestinians’ plight.

In “Psalm 10,” Darwish says that they have buried his “corpse in files and coups d’état” (12, 26). In retrospect, it seems stunningly obvious that Darwish was right in his statement. According to Edward Luttwak, thirteen coups d’état took place in the Arab states, which have borders with Israel, from 1949 to 1970: eight in Syria, three in Iraq, one in Lebanon, and one in Egypt (248-264).¹⁸ Though the Arab leaders, of the new regimes, bemoaned the mass expulsion of the Palestinians from their homeland, and promised to unite into one entity to regain the stolen homeland, the battle of Arab Nationalism and Palestine was lost due to, Barry Rubin emphasizes, “the conflicts between Arab states (and with the Palestinian Arab nationalist movement) over the proper aims and strategies to pursue” (xvii). However, the concerted Arabic effort to revive the Palestinian identity has ultimately resulted in the emergence of the Palestinians as a power, which Darwish reflects in “Psalm 10”:

The lengthy state of dying
Has taken me back to a street in the suburbs of childhood
Has brought me into houses, into hearts, into ears of wheat
Has made me into a cause
Has given me an identity
And a legacy of chains. (41-46)

Hence, a new stage in the Palestinian revolution begins. It is a stage of identification wherein the Palestinians identify themselves with their stolen homeland. Darwish dramatizes the situation in “Diary of a Palestinian Wound”:

& I shook myself loose of complaints at the Caliph’s door
All those who died
And those who will die at the day’s gate
Embraced me, made a bomb of me! (70-73)

These lines show that the Palestinian has started to defend his cause. As a result, his sense of spiritual alienation becomes entangled with politics and poetry.

Unlike Yeats, who was immersed in the history of Ireland and, especially, the mythical history, Darwish rejects clinging to the past in its empty sterile qualities. In “The Rose and the Dictionary,” which Edward Said believes it resembles “Yeats’s early work . . . in its renderings of . . . the overwhelming suddenness and surprises of historical events, of politics and poetry as opposed to violence and guns” (*Culture and Imperialism* 232), Darwish sees history “in the form of an old man / Playing backgammon and sucking in the stars” (8-9). This image considers history as something of the past, an outdated thing. Instead of recounting the glories of the past, the Palestinians should be realistic and look for the future. Darwish writes that since it is essential for every Palestinian to “reject death,” he must fight courageously, and do not stick to the legendary lore, which “is dying” (11-12). In neglecting both obsolete traditions and mythology, he also discards the traditional connotative and denotative values of the words, “That comes from a dictionary or a volume of poetry” (22).



In “Psalm 2,” Darwish compares himself to a dry tree “growing out of books” (2-3), and in “Oh, Abdullah,” he asserts that “There is no colour, no form to the flowers” (6) that are transitory. In this manner, Darwish frees himself of the Platonic idealism, which fascinates Yeats. In Platonic idealism, beauty is an absolute perfection, which is permanent, unchangeable, imperishable, and never realized completely on earth. Unlike Yeats, who believes in the eternal idea of beauty, and of beauty itself, symbolized in the rose, Darwish rejects these Platonic and Romantic tenets. For Darwish, the world has changed, and justice has gone wrong. The Israeli acts of violence and terrorism have been legalized and the international laws have been violated. So, Darwish must cope with change and must unshackle himself of traditionalism. He is neither idealist nor romanticist but a realist who recognizes that the Palestinians have already started their sacred war to regain their stolen homeland. As a poet, he believes that he must grapple with his poetic words to find out new meanings and connotations. His project is to write realistic poetry, which would convince the Palestinians to shake off the Romantic dreams that led them to believe that the Arabs—divided as they are and as they will be—will fight the battle of regaining Palestine. In “Oh, Abdullah,” for instance, Darwish projects his own feelings of distrust in political authority and Arab romanticism:

Abdullah knows only

The language of the *mawwal*, and the *mawwal* is mad about Laila.

Where is Laila?

He did not find her in the heat of midday. (58-61; italics are added)

The *mawwal* races at Laila’s heels,

The *mawwal* leaps from the small circles of shade,

Then stretches forth to Sanaa in the east,

To Homs in the north,

And calls out in the Peninsula:

Where is Laila?

Abdullah used to stretch out the *mawwal*—

And the *mawwal* is forbidden.

Mr. Executioner says:

Distance in the *mawwal* is a mine

Planted in the legends we worship (30-40; italics are added)

The *mawwal*, according to *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*, “is a traditional Arab improvisatory free-rhythm vocal genre . . . typically using colloquial poetic text on love themes . . . to entrench *saṭana* (an ecstatic state . . .)” (68-69). In other words, the *mawwal* is a popular song which records fabricated tales about fanciful lovers such as Qais and Laila. In the poem, Darwish skillfully associates the *mawwal* with the Arab capitals. In this way, he stigmatizes the Arab capitals as being romantic. Likewise, he identifies Abdullah, who used to go by and believe in the illusion of Arab fantasy, as romantic as well. The executioner in the poem is not the real, familiar executioner, but a symbolic one. He symbolizes the revolt against romanticism and the belief in myths and legends, for as soon as Abdullah is executed, he turns into another state: “God was born” (74). It is the miracle of creating the *fida’iyun*, who, in themselves, symbolize the miracle of trading immortality for mortality after having shaken off their beliefs in romanticism and traditionalism.¹⁹

Furthermore, in “A Song for Men,” as Jacqueline Ismael points out, “Darwish states the problem of the unreal in poetry” (51), when he sardonically asks, “Could words make a palace / out of a hut?”



(85-86). In advocating the real in poetry, Darwish does not contradict his other sayings such as “Words are a country” (*Absent Presence* 61) as it has been clear that Darwish’s strategy is to create a new homeland and shape a collective voice for the Palestinians through words, first, and, then, to bring them face-to-face with the stark reality of the physical world. Darwish’s poem, “The Rose and the Dictionary,” is a compelling evidence that supports this view. Unlike Yeats, who associates the rose with either beauty or eternal beauty, Darwish notably associates it with the world of experience, or rather, with the real world of the Palestinian struggle:

For me it is essential to reject the rose
That comes from a dictionary or a volume of poetry
Roses sprout from a peasant’s arm, a worker’s grip;
Roses sprout on a warrior’s wound,
On the forehead of a rock. (21-25)

The rose, in these lines, does not typically sprout from earth, but stunningly from figures, who symbolize beauty for Darwish, such as a peasant, a worker, and a warrior. Darwish associates these productive figures with his homeland as they all participate in the prosperity and welfare of his single beloved, Palestine. Unlike Yeats, who associates the rose with the beauty of women, i.e. Maud Gonne, Darwish rejects the delicacy of the rose and its association with the delicate sex. For instance, in “Victim Number 48,” a poem which commemorates the victims of the Kafr Qasim massacre in 1956, “a lamp of roses” is found in the “chest” of one of the Palestinian martyrs (1). Darwish, thus, negates the traditionally associated connotations of the rose and assumes new roles to it; it could sprout from the chest of a martyr, a symbol of fertility, life-in-death, and continuance, and “On the forehead of a rock,” a symbol of (warriors’) toughness and firmness. After victory, the rose can assume another role and get transformed into a date palm, a tall tree with pinnate leaves and clusters of dioecious flowers. The rose, which has sprouted on the forehead of the rock of toughness and firmness becomes a date palm, a symbol of pomp, power, rootedness, and Arabism:

When we return like the wind
To our house,
Look hard at my forehead
And you will find the rose a date palm (“Stranger in a Distant City” 9-12)

Unlike Yeats, who maintains, in “The Rose of the World,” that men, since the Trojan war, fight and die for beauty in his association of the beauty of Maud Gonne, with that of Helen, and Deidre, Darwish falls in love with the beauty of his stolen homeland, Palestine. In fact, Darwish emphasizes this idea, in *Shai’on ‘an al-wattan* [*Something about Homeland*], when he claims that when he was young, he wondered, “How can I combine my love for a girl and my association with the public cause?” (250).

Additionally, unlike Yeats, who has occupied an intersecting point between the real and the ideal, or a point of poise between opposites, to envision Ireland as an Irish poet, Darwish, adopts the real. He sees himself symbolized in his homeland. In “Apology,” Darwish dreams of the “olive tree” (4), an embodiment of the Palestinians’ persistent clinging desire to their homes, since the roots of an olive tree hold to the soil. In “Psalm 2,” addressing his homeland, he says:

How are you changed into a dream and steal wonderment
So that you leave me like a stone?
Perhaps you are more beautiful in the process of becoming a dream,
Perhaps you are more beautiful. (43-46)



And in “Psalm 10,” though the Arabs have buried his “corpse in files and coups d’état,” his homeland will continue to be “the country [he] was dreaming of” (12, 14). In “Diary of a Palestinian Wound,” Darwish openly states his love for his land, despite the “wound” of alienation from her: “I am the lover and the land is the beloved” (84). His identity is tied to the land; together, they form a single unity or a typical identity. In “Psalm 11,” he maintains that his homeland supports him: “And because my back is not supported against you with nails / I have become exceedingly bowed” (11-12). The image here stands for the readiness of every Palestinian to sacrifice himself, for the sake of his homeland, in a similar way to Jesus Christ, “whom God set forth as a propitiation” for mankind’s sins and a sacrifice of atonement, who died on the Cross (*Authorized King James Version*, Rom. 3:25). Moreover, if the Palestinian has to preserve his youth and power, he should always stick to his homeland and imprint it on his memory: “I want to draw your form / In order to find my form in you” (“Psalm 2” 38-39). Darwish supports this view, in *Shai’on ‘an al-wattan [Something about Homeland]*, when he emphasizes his and the Palestinians’ relationship to the land through identification. He maintains:

We excavated this land neither in mythical dreams nor in the illustrated pages of an old book, nor did we create it in the way companies and institutions are established. It is our father and mother. We did not, either, buy it through an agency or a shop, and no one had to convince us to love it. We identify ourselves as its pulse and marrow of its bone. It is therefore ours, and we belong to it. (8-9)

Darwish here explains that the Palestinians did not unearth Palestine through myth or literature; that their attachment to land is neither ideological, commercial, or political. The land for them is a living being; it has a beat, soul, and bone. In stating that the land “is our father and mother,” “ours, and we belong to it,” Darwish simply wants to link Palestine’s collective identity and cohesion with past, present, and future possession of the Palestinian land.

Before proceeding to explore the picture, the Palestinian draws of his homeland, and to have a stereoscopic or symbolic picture, from different angles, it is essential to explore the same picture, drawn from an Israeli perspective. In “A Soldier Dreams of White Lilies,” the speaker has a conversation with an Israeli soldier. The Israeli soldier confesses to the speaker that the land of Palestine is not his “very skin and heartbeat” (13). His love for Palestine is fabricated and artificial because the Israelis have taught him to be in love with a land, he has not grown up in its environment: “They taught me to love it / but I never felt it in my heart” (24-25). He further emphasizes to the speaker that that he has “not breathed in the scent of grass, of roots, of boughs” of this land (26). When the speaker asks him if he is ready to die for Palestine, the Israeli soldier answers in the negative, “Certainly not,” and emphasizes the artificial bond between him and the land (21).²⁰

Unlike the negative values of the Israeli soldier’s picture of Palestine, the B-side delineates the lineaments, the Palestinian draws of his homeland:

This land is mine and long ago,
.....
This land is the skin on my bones,
And my heart
Flies above its grasses like a bee. (“Homeland” 3, 13-15)

You spread along my body like sweat,
You spread into my body like lust.
Like invaders you occupy my memory,



And like light you occupy my brain. ("Psalm 8" 22-25)

Nothing remains for me
But to be a vagrant in your shadow that is my shadow
Nothing remains for me
But to inhabit your voice that is my voice. ("Psalm 11" 1-4)

These furrows carved into my forehead
Are not the fingerprints of years.
These blue lines under my eyes
Are not evidence of nights with women—
They are the frontiers that ramify throughout my body. ("Psalm 15" 9-13)

Here they killed you.
Here they killed me. ("As Though I Love You" 10-11)

Darwish stresses the positive values he and his fellow countrymen, the Palestinians, attach to their homeland. They identify themselves completely with their lost land. The land is the skin which covers and protects their bodies. The homeland is the heart which pumps the blood through their bodies. It is also the light which illuminates their brains and controls all their systems: the nervous, the digestive, the respiratory, the urogenital, and the cardiovascular. The homeland is a basic part of their constitution; it is their voice, their shadow, their instincts, and in short, it is their collective soul for, as Darwish maintains, when they killed it, "they killed [them]." Thus, Darwish, unlike the Israeli soldier, is willing to lay down his life for the sake of his homeland, which he describes, in "Psalm 8," as being "beautiful to the point of suicide" (9). Similarly, in "Diary of a Palestinian Wound," Darwish refers to his homeland as an epic, in which he has formerly been a musician or a warrior, but now he has become a chord since he sacrificed himself for her sake (130-31).

Darwish asserts the autonomy of the Palestinian identity in "On Wishes." He believes that every nation has its own distinctive characteristics. He disagrees with he, who wishes he were "a seller of bread in Algiers," or "a herdsman in the Yemen," or "a café waiter in Havana," or "a young labourer in Aswan" (2-11). He concludes the poem by saying that, "Each land has its time for being born, / Each dawn a date with a rebel" (17-18). In these lines, though Darwish refers to the revolutionary movements in these countries, he stresses the uniqueness of each country's identity. He argues that though revolution permeates these countries, they have various kinds of identities, for "The Nile will not flow into the Volga, / Nor the Congo or the Jordan into the Euphrates. / Each river has its source, its course, its life" (14-16). In "Identity Card," he confirms his rootedness in his homeland, "My roots / Took hold before the birth of time" (23-24), and, in "Psalm 2," he proclaims that his name is the outcome of the Israeli policy of repression: "As for my original name, / It has been torn from my flesh / By police whips and the pines of Caramel" (55-57). Likewise, in "Homeland," Darwish reiterates the same idea when he refers to the Israeli policy of persecution:

My homeland is the anger of the exile at being made to grieve,
A child wanting festivities and a kiss.

And winds confined within a prison cell,
An old man mourning his sons, his field. (9-12)



As has been noted, Darwish has succeeded in creating a convincing and realistic picture of the Palestinian identity which will always be imprinted on the mind/memory of the readers and the Palestinians. Whereas Yeats's oscillation between the real and the ideal, or his amalgamation of the opposites, results in creating the mystified image of the rose, Darwish's immersion in the real results in the emergence of the stereoscopic picture of his stolen homeland. Nevertheless, if Darwish groups opposites or contrasts them, it is only for the sake of echoing the real and creating the stereoscopic picture of Palestine. This is clearly illustrated in "Psalm 2":

In order to remember I had a roof that's lost
I should sit out in the open.
In order not to forget my country's pure air
I should breathe in consumption.
In order to remember the gazelle swimming in whiteness
I must be interned with memories.
In order not to forget my mountains are high
I should comb the storm from my brow.
In order to retain ownership over my distant sky
I must not own even my very skin. (15-14)

The reader feels that the poet is completely immersed in the tragedy of Palestine. Through the repetition of the phrases, "to remember," and "to forget not," and the poet's real descriptive phrases and clauses of "a roof that's hot," "my country's pure air," "the gazelle swimming in whiteness," "my mountains are high," and "my distant sky," the reader sympathizes with the poet and the Palestinians. The feeling of loss touches the reader deeply to the extent that it becomes imprinted on his/her mind/memory due to its intensity, vividness, and realism.

To demonstrate the difference between the real images of Darwish and the mystified images of Yeats, a comparison is drawn between Darwish's "Psalm 2," the preceding poem, and Yeats' "The Two Trees." Yeats' "The Two Trees" begins with, "Beloved gaze in thine own heart / The holy tree is growing there" (1-2). In fact, the "Beloved," here, is Maud Gonne and not Ireland. Here, we get the impression that Yeats loves Ireland for the sake of Maud Gonne and that his love is not as genuine and powerful as Darwish's love for Palestine, which is more direct, and unmediated by female figures. In the poem, Yeats describes, first, the Tree of Life—the "holy tree" growing in Maud Gonne's heart. He writes, the tree's branches, shaken by joy, stretch out across a sky that is made bright by the "merry lights" of its spirit. However, the gaze at the mirror reflects the reverse image of the tree, where the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and of Evil is seen, with its cold roots, ruined brushes, darkened leaves, and "barrenness." This duality represents the nature of the universe. In short, it represents the world of spirit against the world of flesh and blood. But what is the importance of those images? Do they help in creating the collective Irish identity? Each one is aware of the Blakean imagery of innocence and experience, but what is the importance of this enigmatic man-shaped cabalistic tree to an Irish warrior? It is worth noting, here, that Darwish's poetry does not reflect these mystified philosophies which occupy Yeats's mind.

The other essential element of comparison between Yeats and Darwish relates to their understanding and handling of the problem of old age and perpetual youth. In Yeats's poem, "The Lamentation of the Old Pensioner," the old man, or Yeats, laments that:

There's not a woman turns her face
Upon a broken tree,
And yet the beauties that I loved



Are in my memory;
I spit into the face of Time
That has transfigured me. (13-18)

Yeats should have been more realistic and should have accepted the truth of life, which decrees that life is not eternal and so is youth. The poem shows a lag, or rather a gap, between his mind and reality. He still retains the memories of the beauties he once loved though the reader is not certain if these women still love him. Instead of acquiescing to the law and reality of life, he thunders with anger. Unlike Yeats, who spits “into the face of Time / That has transfigured [him],” Darwish, in “Letter from Exile,” is justified in his spitting since it corresponds with the real,

The cycle of time is limitless
And all I have in my homelessness
Is a haversack containing a stale loaf, my yearning,
And a notebook which somewhat lightens my burdens. (4-7)

Similarly, in “Diary of A Palestinian Wound,” Darwish spits “in the wound which fails / to set fire to the night with forehead” (94-95) because the wound is dynamic. He constantly reiterates the need to preserve the wound and always draws the Palestinians’ attention to be aware of it all the time, as he does in the following lines,

I’m afraid our wounds
Will sleep in our hearts
I’m afraid they will sleep (“And He Returned in a Shroud” 15-17)

In vain the fractiousness of bottles
Freezes your Arab wound! (“Sadness and Anger” 12-13)

If Darwish displays his realism in neglecting the theme of old age and rejuvenation which worries Yeats, he, likewise, reveals it in the use of martyrdom imagery. In “Victim Number 48,” Darwish shows that the martyr has become one with his homeland, “Boxthorn sprouted in his eyes,” he writes (8).

Thus, it is quite apparent that though the main concern of Yeats and Darwish is the question of collective identity, they are different in their articulation of it. Whereas Yeats tries to create it through the Irish awareness of their past legendary lore, Darwish rejects clinging to the obsolete tradition and mythology and creates it through the Palestinians involvement in the present situation. Whereas Yeats tries to occupy an interesting point, or a point of poise, between the real and the ideal, Darwish is completely immersed in the real. Whereas the duality in Yeats’s poetry aims at hovering between the opposites of the real and the ideal, Darwish’s duality aims at giving a picture of the real. Whereas in Yeats’s poetry, men are ready to fight and die for the beauty of women, and the examples he gives are deeply rooted in classical as well as Irish mythology, Darwish has a single beloved, for whom he is ready to die; that is his lost homeland, Palestine, and not a woman. Unlike Yeats, who dreams of the abstract idea of beauty as well as beauty itself, Darwish dreams of the concrete symbolized in his lost homeland.

In brief, unlike Yeats’s mystified poetry, Darwish’s is more realist. The inversion of values in the Palestinian background, such as the murdered becomes the murderer, the dispossessed becomes the thief, and the real owner of the land becomes the refugee, has driven Darwish to rebel, in his early verse, against traditionalism, and turn to the spiritual as well as the poetic alienation. His belief relies on the principle that poetry is valueless if it does not serve the Palestinian case and the Palestinian collective identity. As can be seen, it is Darwish who emerges to be more realist than



Yeats in the creation of collective identity since he occupies the realm of the real whereas Yeats hovers between the real and the ideal.

Notes

¹ Said takes this quotation from Frantz Fanon's book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 88, 93.

² In his essay "Edward Said and the Poetry of Decolonization," Jahan Ramazani points out that Said's reflections "on Darwish's . . . poetry . . . raise large questions" such as "What is the role of poetry in decolonization . . .?" and "How can poetry without subordinating personal independence and unresolved ambivalence to collective aspirations, aid and advance decolonization?" He also asks, "how can the transnational affinities and reach of poetry, linking Darwish's work with that of Yeats, Walcott, and Ginsberg, be reconciled with the culturally specific imperatives of decolonization?" (160). In Ramazani's perspective, "Said's work is helpful in engaging these questions, when we bring his ideas about 'decolonizing cultural resistance' into dialogue with poetry criticism (160).

³ "Rosicrucians," according to *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, are "members of an esoteric society or group of societies, who claim that their order has been in existence since the days of ancient Egypt and has over the course of time included many of the world's sages. Their secret learning deals with occult symbols—notably the rose and the cross, the swastika, and the pyramid—and with mystical writings containing kabbalistic, Hermetic, and other doctrines."

⁴ Being part of the nation's history, Yeats believed, the Irish legends could become a uniting force for the Irish people.

⁵ Unless stated differently, all textual references to Yeats's poems are to *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, Wordsworth Editions Ltd. They are indicated by the title of the poem and the line numbers; Pagination is not stated in the parenthetical reference.

⁶ Robinson and Wilson maintain that "When the Danaans landed in Ireland [the Firbolgs met them] at Leinster. A truce was declared so that each side could make for itself the weapons of the other. Then on Midsummer's Day the battle was fought . . . by groups of equal numbers, or by warriors in a single combat" (139), a symbol of honor and bravery. "The slaughter on both sides," they add, "was terrible. [and] the Firbolgs . . . suffered the greater loss and asked for a compromise which was granted. They asked for a fifth of the land of Ireland and chose Connaught as their dwelling place" (139).

⁷ Lester Conner writes that "The Danaan . . . [are] the folk of the goddess Danu. They are also called the Sidhe." He adds, "In his notes to the 1895 edition of Poems . . . Yeats says . . . Dana was the mother of all the ancient gods of Ireland" (43).

⁸ Maud Gonne was the second woman in Yeats's life. In *Memories*, Yeats writes, "I was twenty-three years old when . . . I had heard . . . of a beautiful girl . . . I had never thought to see in a living woman so great beauty. It belonged to famous pictures, to poetry, to some legendary past. A complexion like the blossom of apples, and yet face and body had the beauty of lineaments which Blake calls the highest beauty because it changes least from youth to age (40). Stan Smith indicates that "Yeats's meeting with Maud Gonne in 1889 was to be crucial in shaping the rest of his life. Almost at once he fell in love with her" (35). "Yeats's love for Maud," as William Brooks stresses, "is one of the great literary love stories: over the next two decades, he would propose—and be rejected—numerous times; and for, and to, Maud he would write some of his most famous poems and plays" (187). Similarly, George Steiner notes "that Yeats drew and fashioned some of the most powerful, coherent poetry in the language" from his correspondence with



Gonne (109). Theirs was a complex relationship, however, complicated by the political tensions and tragedies of their time. Their differences were highlighted by Yeats' refusal to condone the exploitation of Irish art for political ends; Gonne, a committed nationalist, found his position on this matter objectionable.

⁹ In his essay on Blake, Yeats enunciates the tree's importance. He writes, "The kingdom that was passing was, [Blake] held, the kingdom of the Tree of Knowledge; The kingdom that was coming was the Kingdom of the Tree of Life: men who ate from the tree of knowledge wasted their days in anger against one another, and in taking one another captive in great nets; men who sought their food among the green leaves of the Tree of Life condemned none but the unimaginative and the idle, and those who forget that even love and death and old age are an imaginative art" (130). For a comprehensive discussion of the sources for "The Two Trees," consult F. A. C. Wilson's *Yeats's Iconography*, pp. 247-54.

¹⁰ In *A Yeats Dictionary*, Lester Conner writes about "the three Irish poets Yeats admired for the contribution to the revival of interest in Irish literature" (63). Those whom he mentions are Thomas Osborne Davis (1814-45), who was "[a] poet and essayist. . . one of the founders of the influential newspaper, *The Nation*, leader of the Young Ireland Party, and always a great inspiration to Irish nationalist" (45); James Clarence Mangan (1803-49) who was a "Dublin-born Irish poet, much of whose poetry was based on translations from the Gaelic" (118); and Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810-86) who "was an Irish poet and scholar" (63). For a detailed discussion of the three poets, see Lester Conner's *A Yeats Dictionary*, and Sunil Sarker's "Forty-One Selected Poems," in *W. B. Yeats Poetry And Plays*, pp. 122-23.

¹¹ Cuchulain, as Robinson and Wilson report, "was the son of Dechtire, who was the sister of Conchubar, king of Ulster. Dechtire was to marry Sualtim, but at their wedding, she swallowed a fly which had flown into her cup of wine. The fly was, in reality, Lugh, the sun god, who spirited Dechtire and her maidens away to his palace. And putting on the shape of a giant hawk, Lugh slept with Dechtire and begot Cuchulain. A year later, the men of Conchubar were impelled to go to his palace, where they found Dechtire, who was about to give birth to a child by Lugh. After the child was born, Dechtire returned to . . . Sualtim and the boy Cuchulain was brought up as his son. At that time Dechtire's son was known as Setanta" (194).

¹² Robinson and Wilson relate that: "Deidre was the daughter of Fedlimid, the bard of Conchubar, king of Ulster. When she was born, Cathbad the druid predicted that she would grow up to be the most beautiful woman in the world and that her beauty would mean death and tragedy to heroes and to the kingdom of Ulster. In order to avoid these calamities, Conchubar, against the wishes of his warriors, who demanded that she be slain, ordered her to be taken to a secret cave and he planned to make her his future wife. . . . Years later, . . . Deidre told her teacher that she would love and marry a man whose cheeks were as red as blood, whose skin was as white as snow, and whose hair was as black as the plumage of a raven. Her teacher informed her that Naoise, one of the three sons of Conchubar's brother, Usna, met all those qualifications. Deidre persuaded the teacher to introduce Naoise to her. Dazzled by her beauty, Naoise, with the help of his brothers . . . carried Deidre to Alba (Scotland), where they led a more or less ideal existence. . . . when Conchubar . . . succeeded in inducing them, through his messengers to return to Ulster, under promise that they would not be harmed. This promise he violated and had all the brothers . . . killed. Deidre, in sorrow . . . killed herself" (147).

¹³ Yeats encourages this type of national love for country. He highlights the need of young men to fight for the country they love in *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, a one-act play, he wrote with Lady Gregory, in 1902. In the play, Cathleen Ni Houlihan, the symbol of a free Ireland, shows up as an old woman, who needs strong young men to fight for her, and symbolically for Ireland. When Michael follows her, and joins the French in the fight against England, she turns into a beautiful young woman who "had the walk of a queen" ("Cathleen Ni Houlihan" 11).

¹⁴ This essay was written on December 17, 1892.



¹⁵ All textual references to Darwish's poems are to the first six poetry collections produced before his departure from Israel in the early 1970s, which are collected in *Diwan Mahmoud Darwish [Selected Poems]*, Dar al-'Awdah ed., Beirut, 1977. The English version of the poems is to *Selected Poems*, translated by Ian Wedde and Fawwaz Tuqan, Carcanet P, 1973. The poems are indicated by the title of the poem and the line numbers; pagination is not stated in the parenthetical reference.

¹⁶ Abul Khaizuran, for example, the truck driver, in Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*, was wounded in the 1948 war, and "lost his manhood." In the novella, he keeps reminding himself of the following sentence: "He had lost his manhood and his country" (38).

¹⁷ Away from home, Darwish questions, in *Absent Presence*, whether life outside home can actually be life if it is deep-rooted in a concept which is non-existent: "We live, so far as we can live, in an infant past which is planted in fields which were ours for hundreds of years" (31).

¹⁸ Edward Luttwak asserts, in *Coup d'état: A Practical Handbook*, that in the Arab states which have borders with Israel Syria, the following coups d'état occurred in succession, from 1949 to 1970: In Syria, by Husni al-Za'im against Shukri al-Quwatli on March 29, 1949, by Sami al-Hinnawi against Husni al-Za'im on August 14, 1949, by Adib Shishakli against Hashim al-Atassi on December 3, 1951, by Maamun al-Kuzbari against Adib Shishakli on February 25, 1954, by Haydar al-Kuzbari and others against Gamal Abdel Nasser on September 29, 1961, by Lu'ayy al-Atasi against Nazim al-Kudsi on March 8, 1963, by Salah Jadid against Amin Hafiz on February 21–23, 1966, and by Hafez al-Assad against Salah Jadid on November 13, 1970. In Iraq, the following coups d'état occurred: by Abdul Karim Qassim against King Faisal II on July 14, 1958, by Abdul Salam Arif and Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr against Abdul Karim Qassim on February 8, 1963, and by Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr against Abdul Rahman Arif on July 17, 1968. In Lebanon, there was a single coup d'état led by Fouad Shihab on 31 July 1958, and in Egypt, there was the single coup d'état of 1952 (248-264).

¹⁹ There is a consensus among writers that fida'iyyun is a term used to refer to those who are willing to sacrifice themselves. Augustus Richard Norton states that "fida'i (pl., fida'iyyun, rendered often as fedayeen) is a common Arabic term for one who sacrifices himself, that is, a guerrilla fighter" (16). Similarly, Raphael Rothstein and Zeev Schiff use "Those Who Sacrifice Themselves" as a title for their report on the Palestinian fedayeen, in 1972. In the same way, John Amos maintains that it "means those who sacrifice themselves, originally in the defense of Islam, now in defense of their nation." He also adds, "it is a term of great honor" (xxi). Besides, Stuart Reigeluth notes they are " 'the ones who sacrifice themselves,' or 'the freedom fighters' " (299), while *Merriam Webster* defines it as "a member of an Arab commando group operating especially against Israel."

²⁰ In relevance to this poem, Darwish writes, in *Shai'on 'an al-wattan [Something about Homeland]*, that in an interview held with an Israeli magazine, in 1969, he says "I wish to express pride in my own humanity in that I am the first Arab poet to portray an Israeli soldier, even after the June War, in his full human essence" (231).

Works Cited

- AbuZayd, Karen Koning. "The Never-Ending Palestine Tragedy." *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, Spring 2013, <https://www.thecaireview.com/essays/the-never-ending-palestine-tragedy/>. Accessed 14 Apr. 2017.
- Akash, Munir. Introduction. *The Adam of Two Edens: Selected Poems* by Mahmoud Darwish, edited by Munir Akash and Daniel Moore, U of Syracuse P, 2000, pp. 17-46.
- Amos, John W. *Palestinian Resistance: Organization of a Nationalist Movement*. Pergamon P, 1980.



-
- Antoon, Sinan. "In the Presence of Darwish: A tribute to the premier Arab poet of the past half-century." *The Nation*, 26 Aug. 2008, <https://www.thenation.com/article/presence-darwish/>. Accessed 2 Mar. 2017.
- Beinin, Joel and Lisa Hajjar. "Palestine, Israel, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Primer." [https://web.stanford.edu/group/sper/images/Palestine-Israel Primer MERIP.pdf](https://web.stanford.edu/group/sper/images/Palestine-Israel%20Primer%20MERIP.pdf), pp. 1-12. Accessed 10 Jan. 2017.
- The Bible: Authorized King James Version*. Edited by Robert P Carroll and Stephen Prickett, Oxford UP, 1997.
- Billigheimer, Rachel V. "The Rose of Ireland in the Early Poems of W. B. Yeats: Eternity is in the Glitter on the Beetle's Wing." *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, vol. 91, no. 363, Autumn 2002, pp. 276-283.
- Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World, Volume 10: Genres: Africa And the Middle East*. Edited by David Horn and John Shepherd, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.
- Brooks, William. "Historical Precedents for Artistic Research in Music: The Case of William Butler Yeats." *Artistic Experimentation in Music: An Anthology*, edited by Darla Crispin and Bob Gilmore, Leuven UP, 2014, pp. 185-196.
- Celik, Ipek Azime. "Alternative History, Expanding Identity: Myth Reconsidered in Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry." *Mahmoud Darwish: Exile's Poet*, edited by Hala khamis and Najat Rahman, MA: Interlink, 2008, pp. 273-291.
- Conner, Lester I. *A Yeats Dictionary: Persons and Places in the Poetry of William Butler Yeats*. Syracuse UP, 1998.
- Cusack, George. *The Politics of Identity in Irish Drama: W. B. Yeats, Augusta Gregory and J. M. Synge*. Routledge, 2009.
- Daniell, Christopher. *Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066-1550*. Routledge, 1997.
- Darwish, Mahmoud. *Absent Presence*. Translated by Muhammad Shahin, Hesperus, 2010.
- . *The Adam of Two Edens: Selected Poems*. Edited by Munir Akash and Daniel Moore, U of Syracuse P, 2000.
- . *Diwan Mahmoud Darwish [Selected Poems]*. Dar al-'Awdah, 1977.
- . *Psalms*. Translated by Ben Bennani, Three Continents P, 1994.
- . *Selected Poems*. Translated by Ian Wedde and Fawwaz Tuqan, Carcanet P, 1973.
- . *Shai'on 'an al-wattan [Something about Homeland]*. Dar al-'Awdah, 1971.
- Dhillon, Balaraj. "Subaltern Perspectives in Mahmoud Darwish Poetry." *Illumine: Journal of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society Graduate Students Association*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2010, pp. 45-65.
- Donnell, Sean. "'Between the Upper and the Nether Millstone': W. B. Yeats, Oppositional Gyres, and the Founding of the Irish Nation State." [El Camino College, https://www.elcamino.edu/faculty/sdonnell/yeats & postcolonialism.htm](https://www.elcamino.edu/faculty/sdonnell/yeats_%20postcolonialism.htm). Accessed 27 Feb. 2017.
- Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1930, pp. 42-53.
- Ellmann, Richard. *The Identity of Yeats*. Oxford UP, 1964.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington, Grove, 1963.
- Frazer, Sir James G. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. The Macmillan Company, 1958.
- Genet, Jacqueline. "Villiers De L'Isle-Adam And Yeats." *Yeats the European*, edited by Alexander Norman Jeffares, Barnes & Noble, 1989, pp. 49-68.
-



-
- Gongaware, Timothy B. "Collective Memories and Collective Identities: Maintaining Unity in Native American Educational Social Movements." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, vol. 32, no. 5, Oct. 2003, pp. 483-520.
- Gould, Warwick. " 'The Music of Heaven': Dorothea Hunter." *Yeats and Women*, edited by Deidre Toomey, 2nd ed., Macmillan, 1997, pp. 73-134.
- Hafez, Sabry. "Mahmud Darwish." *Contemporary World Writers*, edited by Tracy Chevalier, 2nd ed., St James P, 1994, pp. 137-39.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Translated and edited by Lewis A. Coser, U of Chicago P, 1992.
- Hamdi, Tahrir. "Bearing Witness in Palestinian Resistance Literature." *Race and Class*, vol. 52, no. 3, 10 Jan. 2011, pp. 21-42.
- Hout, Syrine C. "The Predicament of In-Betweenness in the Contemporary Lebanese Exilic Novel in English." *Literature and Nation in the Middle East*, edited by Yasir Suleiman and Ibrahim Muhawi, Edinburgh UP, 2006, pp. 190-207.
- Ismael, Jacqueline S. "The Alienation of Palestine in Palestinian Poetry." *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 1, Winter 1981, pp. 43-55.
- Jeffares, Norman A. *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats*. Arnold, 1961.
- Kanafani, Ghassan. *Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories*. Translated by Hilary Kilpatrick, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 1997.
- Kiberd, Declan. *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. Vintage, 1996.
- Litvak, Meir, editor. "Introduction: Collective Memory and the Palestinian Experience." *Palestinian Collective Memory and National Identity*. Palgrave Macmillan US, 2009, pp. 1-26.
- Luttwak, Edward N. *Coup d'état: A Practical Handbook*. rev. ed., Harvard UP, 2016.
- Mahaffey, Vicki. *States of Desire: Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, and the Irish Experiment*. Oxford UP, 1998.
- "Men in the Sun." *World literature and its Times: Profiles of Notable Literary Works and the Historic Events That Influenced Them*, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/culture-magazines/men-sun>. Accessed 26 May 2016.
- Norton, Augustus Richard. *Hezbollah: A Short History*. Princeton UP, 2009.
- O'Brien, Eugene. *The Question of Irish Identity in the Writings of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce*. Edwin Mellen P, 1998.
- The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Edited by Sir Paul Harvey, 4th ed., Revised by Dorothy Eagle, Clarendon P, 1975.
- Parmenter, Barbara McKean. *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2004.
- Rahman, Najat. *Literary Disinheritance: The Writing of Home in the Work of Mahmoud Darwish and Assia Djebar*. Lexington, 2008.
- Ramazani, Jahan. "Edward Said and the Poetry of Decolonization." *Edward Said: A Legacy of Emancipation and Representation*, edited by Adel Iskander and Hakem Rustom, U of California P, 2010, pp. 159-169.
- Rees, Matt, and Daniel Klaidman. "The Politics of Poetry." *Newsweek*, vol. 135, no. 12, 20 Mar. 2000, p. 62.
- Reigeluth, Stuart. *Mahmoud Darwish Exile's Poet*. Edited by Hala Khamis Nassar and Najar Rahman, Olive Branch P, 2008.
-



- Robinson, Herbert Spencer, and Knox Wilson. *The Encyclopaedia of Myths and Legends of all Nations*. Kaye & Ward Ltd, 1972.
- Ronsley, Joseph. "Yeats as an Autobiographical Poet." *Myth and Reality in Irish Literature*, edited by Joseph Ronsley, Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1977, pp. 129-148.
- "Rosicrucians." *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia™*, Columbia UP, 2017. General Reference Center GOLD, go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=GPS&sw=w&u=gale15691&v=2.1&id=GALE%7CA69225117&it=r&asid=02fb2dc2fc5461156d29088c8d3f4c21. Accessed 13 Feb. 2017.
- Ross, David A. *Critical Companion to William Butler Yeats: A Literary Reference to His life and Work*. Facts on File, Inc., 2009.
- Rothstein, Raphael, and Zeev Schiff. "Those Who Sacrifice Themselves." *Chicago Tribune*, 11 Jun. 1972, p. 1A7. Available Online at: <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1972/06/11/page/39/article/those-who-sacrifice-themselves>.
- Rubin, Barry M. *The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict: Contemporary Issues in the Middle East*, Syracuse UP, 1981.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage Books, 1994.
- . "On Mahmoud Darwish," *Grand Street*, vol. 12, no. 48, Winter 1994, pp. 112-115.
- . "Yeats and Decolonization." *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage Books, 1994, pp. 220-238.
- Sarker, Sunil Kumar. "Forty-One Selected Poems." *W. B. Yeats Poetry And Plays*. Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2002, pp. 88-294.
- Schulz, Helena Lindholm, and Juliane Hammer. *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of the Homeland*. Routledge, 2003.
- Semenova, Victoria. "'Wounded' Memory and collective identity." *Collective Memories in War*, edited by Elena Rozhdestvenskaya, Victoria Semenova, Krzysztof Kosela, Irina Tartakovskaya, and Krzysztof Kosela, Routledge, 2016, pp. 125-138.
- Shatz, Adam. "A Poet's Palestine as a Metaphor." *New York Times*, 22 Dec. 2001, pp. A17, A19. Available Online at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/22/books/a-poet-s-palestine-as-a-metaphor.html>.
- Siddiq, Muhammad. *Man is a cause: Political Consciousness and the Fiction of Ghassan Kanafani*. U of Washington P, 1984.
- Simmons, M. *Yeats' Poetry: Notes*. Coles, 1979.
- Smith, Stan. *W. B. Yeats: A Critical Introduction*. Macmillan, 1990.
- Steiner, George. "Review of The Donne-Yeats Letters, 1893-1938." *The New Yorker*, 8 Feb. 1993, pp.109-112.
- Taylor, Verta. "Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 54, Oct.1989, pp. 761-775.
- Unterecker, John Eugene. *A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats*. Noonday P, 1959.
- Yahya, Hamoud, Zalina Mohd Lazim, and Ravichandran Vengadasamy. "Eco resistance in the poetry of the Arab poet Mahmoud Darwish." *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2012, pp. 75-85.
- Yeats, William Butler. *Autobiographies*. Macmillan, 1955.



- . *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*. Wordsworth Editions, 2000.
- . "The De-Anglicising of Ireland." *Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, vol. 1: First Reviews and Articles, 1886-1896*, edited by John P. Frayne, Columbia UP, 1970, pp. 254-256.
- . *Essays and Introductions*. Macmillan, 1961.
- . *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*. Edited by Allan Wade, Macmillan, 1955.
- . *Letters to the New Island: A New Edition*. Edited by George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer, Macmillan, 1989.
- . *Memoirs*. Edited by Denis Donoghue, Macmillan, 1972.
- . *Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, vol. 1: First Reviews and Articles, 1886-1896*, edited by John P. Frayne, Columbia UP, 1970.
- Yeats, William Butler, and Lady Gregory. "Cathleen Ni Houlihan." *Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama: Backgrounds and Criticism*, edited by John P. Harrington, 2nd ed., W. W. Norton & Co., 2009, pp. 3-11.
- Wasserstein, David J. "Prince of Poets: Mahmoud Darwish Was the Voice of the Palestinian People—Chronicling Not Just the Struggles and Political Injustices but Also the Rhythms of Daily Life." *American Scholar*, vol. 81, no. 4, Autumn 2012, pp. 111-117.
- Whitaker, Thomas R. "The Early Yeats and the Pattern of History." *PMLA*, vol. 75, no. 3, Jun. 1960, pp. 320-328. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 Oct. 2016.
- White, Julie. " 'Not just Tangle and Drift': Music as Metaphor in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats." *Music and Literary Modernism: Critical Essays and Comparative Studies*, edited by Robert P. McParland, 2nd ed., Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009, pp. 87-109.
- Wilson, Francis Alexander Charles Cauvin. *Yeats's Iconography*. Macmillan, 1960. 247-54.

الهوية الجماعية في الأعمال الشعرية الأولى لكل من ويليام بطر بيتس ومحمود درويش: دراسة مقارنة

إعداد

محمد بدر الدين الحسيني حسن منصور
قسم اللغة الإنجليزية
كلية الآداب - جامعة بنها

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى المقارنة بين فكرة الهوية الجماعية في الأعمال الشعرية الأولى في المرحلة القومية الشابة للمقاومة لدى كل من الشاعر الأيرلندي ويليام بطر بيتس (1865-1939م) والشاعر الفلسطيني محمود درويش (1941-2008م). كما تستهدف الدراسة تحييص تكوين "الهوية" لدى الشاعرين؛ وهي الهوية التي رغب كلاهما في تخليقها لوطنيتهما—أيرلندا وفلسطين—في مواجهة قوتين—استعمارية وصهيونية—تعمدان إلى طمس الهوية.

إن وجه التشابه بين بيتس ودرويش لا ينحصر فقط على سطر الشعر تعبيرًا عن مواقفهما تجاه وطنيهما وهويتهم، ولكنه يمتد إلى خضوع وطنيهما لقوتين غاشمتين عاتبتين - إنجليزية استعمارية في حالة أيرلندا وإسرائيلية صهيونية في حالة فلسطين. علاوة على ذلك، فقد مارست كلاهما نفس السياسات ارتكازًا على "التجريد الجماعي" وطمس هوية المصطهد.

كما تستعرض الورقة البحثية كيف يجسد الشاعر الأمة، وكيف يذكر الشعر الشعوب بهويتهم، وكيف يشدد لهم على أهمية الحفاظ على تراث بلادهم. وعلى هذا المنوال يجمع بيتس ودرويش قراءهما تحت راية التاريخ الوطني، ويشجعاهم على الزود دونه في مجابهة المصطهد.

تبرز الورقة البحثية أيضًا كيف رسمت أعمال بيتس الشعرية الأولى تطلعاته القومية الباكرة بحثًا عن "وحدة ثقافية" للأيرلنديين سعيًا وراء ثقافة مشتركة أو شعورٍ بالهوية الجماعية، الأمر الذي من شأنه أن يوحد صف الأيرلنديين في مجابهة النظام الإنجليزي الغاشم. وعليه، يتضح أن بيتس ما فتى غائصًا في الماضي والأسطورة والغيب، راسخًا في همّه الأبدى بين الهرم والديمومة. كما يُحسب له إيمانه بفكرة الجمال الخالدة التي رمز لها بالزهرة الحاضرة تعبيرًا عن أيرلندا، محافظًا على تصوّره بأن الرجال يقاثلون ويُقتلون لجمال المرأة، ولحبه لمود جون فإنه يرى أن الأيرلنديين قد يثورون ويفنون من أجل المرأة إذا فعلوا المثل من أجل أيرلندا.

وعلى الجانب الآخر، تكشف أعمال درويش الأولى قدرته على صياغة هوية جماعية للفلسطينيين من خلال مخاطبة معاناتهم وخسارتهم، وتصوير مقاومتهم للقمع الإسرائيلي، والتأكيد على ارتباطهم الوثيق ببلادهم، كل ذلك في صورة أبياتٍ شعرية. وعليه، فإن أعمال درويش الشعرية الأولى ترفض البقاء في الماضي بخصائصه العقيمة الفارغة، بل تثور ضد الرومانسية والتقاليد القديمة التي عفا عليها الزمن، والتاريخ والأسطورة. علاوة على ذلك، يرفض درويش مثالية بيتس الأفلاطونية المتمثلة في الزهرة، ويربط الزهرة بالعالم الواقعي للكفاح الفلسطيني. ولأن درويش لا يجمع بين جمال عشق المرأة وجمال الدفاع عن وطنه، فإنه، في بداياته القومية الباكرة، يعيش جمالًا واحدًا؛ فلسطين، ويكرس شعره لدمغ صورة فلسطين التجسيمية في ذاكرة قرائه من المواطنين. وعليه، فإن هذه الورقة البحثية تسلّم بأن أشعار درويش الأولى أكثر واقعية من أشعار بيتس في التعبير عن الهوية، حيث يجد درويش فكرته في عالم الواقع على عكس بيتس الذي يجيء ويروح بين أطرافٍ متطرفة أو بين الواقع والخيال.

كلمات داله: ويليام بطر بيتس ، محمود درويش ، هوية جماعية ، وطن ، مقاومه ، أسطوره