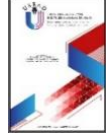




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## FROM VICTIM TO VICTOR: THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT IN *THE LEMON TREE*

MAĞDURDAN MUZAFFERE: *LİMON AĞACI'NDA İSRAİLLİ-  
FİLİSTİNLİ ÇATIŞMASI*

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**Abstract:** The Palestinians are one of the nations experiencing the most aggrieved fates with regard to national or religious discrimination in contemporary world. The main reason of the miseries reveals the stunning point as the Israelis, the nation exposed to similar discrimination and hurt, is the cause and the committer of the current conflict. The Israelis have overdone the atrocities they have faced regardless of the relatively welcoming treatment of Palestinians or their common cultural or historical backgrounds. *The Lemon Tree* (2006), by Sandy Tolan, mirrors the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, their daily lives, and both of the nation's sufferings, experiences and hopes. The reflections of the conflicts experienced by both the Jews in Europe and the Arabs in Palestine are skillfully portrayed. The binary oppositions and Orientalism's concept of otherness are underscored. In this study, the multicultural structure of Europe and Palestine, the processes of social formations along with framing deliberate discrimination and prejudice, human rights abuse are revealed and exemplified in the light of the non-fiction narrative. The study displays how the Jews were victimized beforehand, how they make use of this case, and how they carry out their role as victor.

**Key Words:** Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Atrocity, Exile, Victim, Victor

**Öz:** Filistinliler, modern dünyada milliyetçi veya dinsel ayrımcılığa maruz kalmış, en kötü kaderleri yaşayan uluslardan biridir. Yaşanan felaketlerin temel nedeni, çarpıcı bir noktayı ortaya çıkarır; benzer ayrımcılığa ve mağduriyetlere maruz kalan millet olarak İsraililer, mevcut çatışmanın nedeni ve faili olarak karşımıza çıkar. İsraililer, Filistinlilere yönelik nispeten olumlu muameleyi veya ortak kültürel veya tarihi geçmişlerini dikkate almaksızın, maruz kaldıkları zulümlerin çok daha fazlasını Filistinlilere karşı uygulamıştır. Sandy Tolan'ın *Limon Ağacı* (2006), İsrail ve Filistin çatışmasını, onların günlük yaşamlarını ve her iki ulusun acılarını, deneyimlerini ve umutlarını yansıtır. Hem Avrupa'daki Yahudilerin hem de Filistin'deki Arapların yaşadığı çatışmaların yansımaları ustalıkla işlenmektedir. İkili karşıtlıklar ve Oryantalizm'in ötekilik kavramı vurgulanmıştır. Bu çalışmada, Avrupa ve Filistin'in çok kültürlü yapısı, toplumsal oluşum süreçleri, kasıtlı ayrımcılık ve önyargıların çerçevelenmesi, insan hakları ihlalleri kurgusal olmayan anlatı ışığında ortaya çıkarılıp örneklendirilmektedir. Bu çalışma, Yahudilerin önceden nasıl mağdur edildiğini, sonra bu durumdan nasıl yararlandıklarını ve zalim rollerini nasıl yerine getirdiklerini açığa çıkarır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İsrail-Filistin çatışması, Vahşet, Sürgün, Kurban, Galip

## INTRODUCTION

*Evil never presents itself naked on the stage of history; it always appears dressed up as itself the victim, the defender, the perhaps misunderstood struggler for survival. — Daniel Koffman*

*The Lemon Tree* narrates the tale of the Eshkenazis, a Bulgarian Jewish family, who came to Palestine from Europe, and the Khairis, a Palestinian Arab family, who once inhabited in the same residence in Al-Ramla, at different time experiencing similar feelings such as the sense of occupation, estrangement, grief, unexpected realities along with longing and hope. Dalia Eshkenazi and Bashir Khairi, children of these families, take leading roles in the narrative non-fiction regarding their engagement in the survival and history of their countries and people. Ahmad Khairi, the first owner of the house in Al-Ramla, was exiled with the majority of Arab residents by Israeli military forces over the War of Israel for

land and independence. The Khairi family was sent to Ramallah, located in the West Bank, and left their properties behind, hoping to return soon. However, the Khairi family with nine children did not get the opportunity to return and, by necessity, became refugees in Ramallah. By the way, after the World War II, the Eshkenazi family with their baby Dalia, who was one-year-old, were relegated to Israel, to recently establishing State of the Jews, from Bulgaria owing to the Nazi trouble pervaded through Europe. On their arrival, they were offered Khairi's empty house, which was claimed to have been left by the Arabs voluntarily. The non-fiction book presents a clear portrayal of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples sharing common emotions, experiences, and fates resulting in catastrophes.

Dalia and Bashir allude to the possibility of common interest and dialogue, but are forced to maintain their lives getting into chaotic conditions. Their experiences confirm that "No one seemed to be free from the opposition between 'us' and 'them,' resulting in a sense of reinforced, deepened, hardened identity that has not been particularly edifying" (Said, 2003, p. 335). However, Tolan writes in a relatively humanist perspective, mirroring sensibility to grievances of both nations by helping to enable a wider understanding and awareness of the matter, along with a wish for dialogue and toleration. The book tries to present the misery of the two nations neutrally, on the whole voicing the emotions and judgements of each community. Tolan writes in a manner that favors the suffering victim nation, the Jews, and indicates how they come out as victors.

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The study delves into how the processes of social formations, namely political, legal, educational, and religious ideologies and institutions in Palestine and Israel change, promote, or create each other. It engages in Edward Said's Orientalism, which deals with Western depictions and othering of the East, focusing on "absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior" (2003, p. 300). Both cases underscore the Western self and Eastern other. The similarities of the experiences of the Palestinian and Israeli nations are narrated in the book in association with atrocities disguised by nationalism on the way to constructing new nation states and destroying a multicultural form of society. These painful and challenging processes are reflected in narration, which defines history into a story. Having a journalist background, the writer can engage with weighty personal accounts using documentary pieces of evidence, through observations and interviews, paying attention to oral history, emphasizing various ethical dilemmas. The comparable conditions of the Israelis and the Palestinians are interpreted through the presentation of sympathetic characters in the book. If questioned, their association, within the common cultural and historical backgrounds, mirrors a contradiction; they were both friends and enemies. Dalia stresses the absurdity of such discrimination, stating their interdependence as they "share a common destiny" (Tolan, 2006, p. 387). The book focuses on the sufferings of both nations, particularly the cases of Dalia and Bashir, who have been displaced and left to cruelty by a relatively objective perspective equalizing the two nations. Tolan, in the Author's note, clarifies the conflicts grounded in

reality, claiming that the depiction of the circumstances that encircle both families relies on the interviews, newspaper clippings, and diaries. Thus, the compelling narrative of real historical and political episodes regarding moral issues enables effective and convincing discussion.

The lemon tree that Ahmad Khairi planted represents the Khairis' natural connection to and rootedness in their own land. Khairi family members' misery, the psychological problems that they face, the outcomes of nationalism and exile, their feeling of displacement, human rights violations, and the unfair attitudes of other nations or states' apathy are revealed through newspaper articles and documentaries. Benefitting from both primary and secondary narrative forms that provide a rich source for historical information and context, I have analyzed historical cases and reflections of the Palestinian and the Israeli nations in *The Lemon Tree* because the teaching of history deals with the traditional opposition between history and literature; between factual and fictional (Tyson, 2006, p. 286). In addition to the deconstruction of the traditional concept of history, I aim to focus on the comprehension, representation, and practice of reality since culture, as an interactive fact rejecting fixed definitions, refers to the process rather than the product. So, the study enables comprehension of the era, ideological conflicts, and political orders of culture carrying contact with the real context.

### **From Multiculturalism to nationalism**

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The conflicts arise in the lands that inherently stand for multicultural and hybrid structures of society. It is such a point that "in most instances the conflicting communities have been so intermixed, however, that partition could not finally deliver the 'clean cut' it was supposed to do" (Cleary, 2002, p. 22). It is a known fact that, in Bulgaria, once the Jews and the Bulgarians lived and worked side by side, struggled together for the independence of Bulgaria to shed the Ottoman domination, and protested against the same power against the Nation's Defense Law (Tolan, 2006, p. 60-61). Similarly, with the high degree of interaction between the Jews and the Arabs, their mutual participation in any part of daily life, both nations served to figure the multicultural face of Palestine. Even after the chaos started, some did not cut off contact and pursued communication, furthermore informed their neighbors in case of threat and danger (Tolan, 2006, p. 95-96). As Homi Bhabha asserts, "the partial minority culture emphasizes internal differentiations, the 'foreign bodies' in the midst of the nation" (1996, p. 57). In this context, it was the deliberate attempts by superior minds that caused conflicts, not the local communities. Even though "pioneers of civilizations wear the loveliest and the most humanist mask; this won't change the reality not a bit: The oppressed people would be exposed to complete destruction" (Fanon, 2008, p. 77).

*The Lemon Tree* narrates the process of developing Jewish national identity in this relatively multicultural and welcoming country. The book examines how national identities of the Palestinian and Israeli people are constructed and

strengthened. Complicated issues such as state-building and state-dividing schemes necessitate complex systematic proposals and solutions. From a wide perspective, so as to develop the awareness of national memory, a wide range of literary works are produced, training program is intermingled with national history. Though they could pursue their lives in peace on the same land, each of the following steps of the Israeli forces exposed the Palestinian people to whatever the Israelis were exposed to in Europe. The narratives of Zionism, the significant deliberative theme, protect Jewish people jurally and ensure a native land for them in Palestine (Sharif, 1983, p. 1). Everything about the religion, the rules of the Old Testament, are glorified and overvalued. Even before the Journey to Palestine, that is, the holy emigration, is encouraged and exemplified in the narrative as "[H]e who makes four steps in Israel, all his sins will be forgiven" (Tolan, 2006, p. 133). Zionist expansionism is systematically encouraged regardless of the native population. 'Promised Land' or 'Holy Land' was even offered by Napoleon Bonaparte long before the Balfour Declaration. The major Western countries, such as America, Germany, France, Britain, and Canada, have been willing to defend even the usage of blood and iron to destroy the Palestinian nation to utilize the political and economic profits of the destruction. The reason is that as a political doctrine, "Orientalism has been successfully accommodated to the new imperialism, where its ruling paradigms do not contest, and even confirm, the continuing imperial design to dominate Asia" (Said, 2003, p. 322).

### From Victim to Victor

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Tolan narrates that the Legislation for the Defense of the Nation in Bulgaria imposed restrictions and discrimination against the Jewish people to protect their own nation (Tolan, 2006, p. 61). As is stated, the cruelty towards the Jews officially began, the symbol of "Jewish Residence" and wearing the yellow star became essential on any Jewish house, and they were exposed to intolerant curfews; by the way of being despised and discriminated by the Bulgarian, not being permitted to join professional and political associations and marrying Gentiles, owning shelters or their own cars, telephones or videos (Tolan, 2006, p. 58-59). Theodor Herzl, Jewish activist, and the father of modern political Zionism, stressed that the Jewish people were disliked and otherised for their red or black beards, hooked noses and baker-legged, longing for a life without being underrated and a peaceful life like the civilized people such as the Englishman, the German or the Frenchman (Tolan, 2006, p. 121). The situation is beyond endurance, both for those who prefer to stay and those who move. The people who stay feel inevitably alienated from the neighborhood and the state as the dominant force restores the environment and landscape, and alienation is consciously promoted in the way of nation construction. Their conditions present "being swept out of the current of their history into somebody else's history, becoming a footnote" (Lindfors, 1997, p. 157). The deliberate practices of social constructionism in Europe, especially Bulgaria, are not far different from those in Palestine. Instructing native inhabitants as desired, to construct political domination, along with military power, redefining, reformulating, and reshaping the environment in accordance with

imperialist plans, and disregarding the accounts of the indigenous inhabitants are common ways of reconstituting a district. Said defines this planned operation as reclaiming, renaming, and reinhabiting “the alienated landscape through the imagination” (qtd in Cleary, 2002, p. 93). When three cousins revisited the streets, they grew up, new names of the streets with unfamiliar and incomprehensible Hebrew lettering made them feel uncomfortable (Tolan, 2006, p. 28). The environment lost its roots and broad meaning and accordingly its significance. Life for the others who move, that is exile, is not easy either. To get rid of these discriminative and unfair treatments, a wide range of Arabs preferred to die in exile or be stateless and eventually became freedom fighters (Tolan, 2006, p. 290).

Simone Weil asserts that feeling rooted somewhere or something you rest with is a great need of human beings (Mason, 2007, p. 274). As a result of destroying the sense of security, the case of exile makes the people deeply feel the problems of deportation. While Bashir visits his motherland, his feelings are beyond the narration. “It was the breath, the currency, the bread of his family, of nearly every family he knew. It was what everyone talked about, all the time: return. In exile there was little else worth dreaming of” (Tolan, 2006, p. 21). Similarly, Ghiath, Bashir’s sister, expresses her desolation on their exile, confessing that she prefers to “sleep under a lamppost in al-Ramla than in a palace in Ramallah” (Tolan, 2006, p. 316). The Khairi family’s confusion arising from the case of exile is the focal point throughout the story. Primarily, Ahmad Khairi experiences identity and belonging conflicts. After the death of Ahmad Khairi, his wife, Zakia Khairi shares with Dalia that when he had troubles and could not sleep, he would walk back and forth in their flat in Ramallah with a lemon in his hands given to him by her father, Moshe Eshkenazi (Tolan, 2006, p. 302). For this sense, the concept of tree is used to provoke the imaginary of association between family and national community (Long, 2008, p. 63). This is of great concern to Palestinians as they know that they do not possess a homeland as they once had. The Palestinians left their properties and homes, assuming they would soon return, but in no case were they permitted to return. In addition to causing nostalgia, the Israelis violated human rights to such a degree that it caused unbearable pain and generated crimes against humanity. For the sake of national consciousness and self-definition, life becomes unsufferable, and ordinary humans become unlivable. The situation of the Eshkenazis is very similar to that of Khairis. Suffering from estrangement, lack of belonging, isolation and homesickness Moshe Eshkenazi maintains his national identity, face similar troubles the Khairi family experience in consequence of displacement, as a teenager, stressing her quietness, Dalia describes her mother, Solia, as “an uprooted tree that couldn’t take to new soil” (Tolan, 2006, p. 190). These civilized heroes “prone to anxiety, sleep, and day dreaming in many situations... [live] more in the mind and realm of fancy than in the actual world of everyday things, characters and events” (Babalola, 1986, p. 145). The people of both groups experience what Herman describes as trauma and its outcomes:



Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life... They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe. The common denominator of trauma is a feeling of intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation (1997, p. 13).

The conditions witnessed in Palestine allude that violence reproduces violence, as is seen in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Israel can be regarded as the representative of the guilty modernized states exposing the worst atrocities to the Palestinian people regardless of the Jewish massacre committed by the Nazi rule at the first half of the 20th century. The atrocities experienced by the Palestinians remind the familiar conflict between the Israelis. Contrary to the empathetic expectation, their experiences do not prevent the violence in Palestine; rather, they overdo the past cruelties. Koffman claims that the evils always doll themselves up as defenders, as victims, instead of naked presence, perhaps the mistaken fighter for survival (1996, p. 107). It is not unusual and surprising for the Israelis and their supporters to repeatedly verbalize the massacre and other atrocities or mass crimes they have faced.

*The Lemon Tree* reveals that the Jewish people were despised, otherised, exposed to severe restrictions, curfews, and sanctions, were slaughtered, and clearly weren't allowed to exercise the fundamental justice in Europe, especially in Bulgaria. As a result, the nation deeply felt a collective anxiety of extermination, which caused the parallel fears for the other nation. Said clarifies the astounding spot of this issue: "Perhaps this is the most extraordinary of exile's fates: to have been exiled by exiles—to relive the actual process of up-rooting at the hands of exiles" (2003, p. 361). For this sense, the Holocaust is used to construct the foundation of the legend of Israel since it simply serves to confirm the formation of an Israeli state on Palestinian land, stating a reason for inhuman practices and fear caused by the Holocaust (David, 2017, p. 8). Hereby, many scientific studies were conducted to prove definitive reasons for the Jews to get their basic rights and the possession of their promised land. Zionism, a reaction or compensation for anti-Semitism, serves as its counterpart, anti-Semitism. In other words, containing strong injustice, intolerance, and unsympathy, Zionism has worked along the same line with anti-Semitism. The myth of Zionism is far from being a national passion; it is the cornerstone of the foundation of the Jewish nation-state. Anti-Semitism serves as the visa to the Jewish passport into the modern nation-state with its definitive confirmation in the Nazi doctrine of racial supremacy (Boylu, 2019, p. 54).

As is known, the Jews in Europe and the Arabs in Palestine were not the ones who started the war, they were the ones who fought to survive and protect their homeland. Both conflicts do stand for a real case of war because a war is made between armed opponents; rather, they are intended deterritorialization and destruction of largely unarmed populations. Bulgaria is depicted as a devastated landscape with the relentless blitzes killing many and driving residents into the

countryside along with food shortages, hunger, and runaway inflation (Tolan, 2006, pp. 122-123). The self-evident right of Jews to be a nation comes out of the details of atrocities in Europe, the stateless Holocaust survivors, and results in the Arabs suffering heavy casualties and leaving most of Palestine in rubbish and carcass-filled streets without electricity, running water, food, and medical supplies. Moshe Eskhenazi in Bulgaria and Bashir's uncle, Rasem, exemplify two similar cases of working under increasingly crude conditions in diverse eras. Also, the desperate view of the Jews portrayed in freight wagons in the book with old and young, sick and well mothers with their nursing babies, pregnant women weak from standing, crying for pity, for help, for air, for water, for a scrap of humanity in despair, disallowing travel without special papers or the implication of the bars of soap made from the Jews reveals the terrible conditions that the Jews were exposed to. Similarly, the conditions told by the stories from Macedonia depict the Jews, including the old people and children, carrying their belongings as defeated, powerless, desperate people begging for help, exiled towards some unknown destinations (Tolan, 2006, p. 73). In and after the consecutive local wars, the Palestinians have experienced cold-blooded atrocities, tragic deaths, massacres, collective traumas, traumatic exiles, ruined lives, and everlasting spiritual and physical wounds in Palestine. Considering minorities' position as second-class citizens, ethnic cleansing, forcing movements of population, and exile exemplify the wild sanctions of the nationhood urge which demand ethnically and culturally homogeneous domains. Israel has overdone whatever they were exposed to in the past imitating or reworking cruelties generally surpassing the Nazis' practices.

The Khairi family, like most of the Palestinians, are exiled, or left to die by the Jews who are exiled beforehand as a product of tendencies of nationalism. The practices in Europe and Palestine refer to "removing indigenous population" for the benefit of external people (David, 2017, p. 12). The attempts of other states to end the conflict have generally served to rationalize the legality of the victor's actions. The General Assembly of the United Nations, determining Zionism as an image "of racism and racial discrimination" can be seen as a transcription of Anti-Semitism, both of which are rationalizations of national liberation with justifications of the practices such as exiles, killing, jailing, etc. (Sharif, 1983, p. 1). Even when the news of mass atrocities, enforced ghettos, deportations, death camps, and ethnic cleansing smells to high heaven, the authorities do nothing but condemn the cruelty in both cases. The debates continued to find solutions to the conflicts have been mostly political rather than factual. The victims of both conflicts are equally blamed for the wars politically. The world has mostly closed its eyes to all the troubles in Europe and Palestine. The ones who interfere generally converge to prejudice by wishing to design the world in accordance with their own intentions. Tolan emphasizes the deliberate apathy of other states or organizations, stating their purpose of getting rid of the Jews in Europe and ruling the East by their political practices (Tolan, 2006, p. 244).

The insufferable experiences of the victims bring about dead-end issues, either exposed to survive under the domination of another state or flee to a different land



with a sense of doubt and homelessness. These conditions result from Orientalism's reliance on a "flexible positional superiority" that consistently provides the Westerner with a dominant position relative to the Orient (Said, 2003, p. 7). Population transfer addressing the practices like demographic manipulation, deportation, removals of Israelis to Palestine and later, of the Palestinians to somewhere else gives rise to the violation of definite human rights like the right to self-determination, the right to work, the right to property, the right to privacy, and the right to social security. The Jews in Europe were obliged to migrate, that is to exile, excruciatingly, and the Palestinians, who were obliged to maintain their lives in exile by other exiles, spent a long time looking for safe and peaceful places. Even if they get through, they are to experience more harrowing experiences. History witnesses a great human catastrophe, the disaster of miserable humanity in Europe by their way of genocide or exile, which would later be repeated in Palestine towards the Arabs by the Israelis. Families have been separated, and the individuals have been transformed from a peaceful life to a life liable to trauma and misery. The main deal, both for the Israelis and the Palestinians, is a long conflict bearing the wars' unequal and disputable legacies. Today's context exemplifies the attempt to commemorate previous human rights violations, bringing about the continuation of the conflict instead of the promotion of human rights and peace. The situation of the Palestinians similarly presented in the narrative beyond all bears with-terrible rumors of rape, the rise of malnutrition, and insufficient water which are significant attempts to pressure the natives and Jewish army to massacre a great number of women, children, and weaponless men in Deir Yassin, an Arab village (Tolan, 2006, p. 92-93). People are left standing without running water and electricity in dirty streets, and along with running out of medical supplies and treatments. Psychological operations, torture by electricity or sticks, beatings, dog attacks, humiliation, and murder are designed and practiced so systematically that the process shows undeniably determined designs of imprisonment in specially built cells (Tolan, 2006, pp. 254-255). Palestine's Arab inhabitants have been obliged to desert their homes. In the course of abandonment, a great number of people, especially children, perish from starvation and thirst. With no freedom of movement, both leaving and staying were risky, and whichever would be chosen, they would face great danger from shootings and explosions.

The uprooted people bear a mood of emptiness that overwhelms their personalities. The comedown of Khairis in *The Lemon Tree* as a relegated person is insufferable. The Khairi family has been forced to maintain their lives in diaspora, in exile, namely in unheal. The troubles Ahmad experiences at night due to the compulsory migration, the sufferings of the Khairi family, as a whole, from isolation, estrangement, homesickness, lack of belonging, in particular, Bashir's trying to sustain the Palestinian identity mirror the sufferings of the Eshkenazi family. The feelings of frustration, disappointment, and injustice have forged the sufferers as rebellious and irritable, and justified armed struggle as a way of struggle for most people like Bashir. The victimized individuals tend to justify their

belief that violence has caused their upheaval and displacement from their homeland, and they see it as the sole means to reclaim it. The protagonists of both nations inevitably experience a similar, even the same, sense of displacement and estrangement. In addition to the similar context of daily life or feelings, specific incidents remind of previous experiences. A young Palestinian musician's on his way to violin class being told "to take out his instrument and play something sad" by Israeli soldiers evokes the memories of Jewish violinists obliged to play for Nazi officers at concentration camps which reminds the old Jewish sufferings that light on the way for the new Arab sufferings (Tolan, 2006, p. 377).

### Conclusion

Ultimately, focusing on the binaries between self and other, both nations are ethnic groups that have strictly experienced historical injustice. The Israelis use their previous experiences and benefit from their tragic destiny to approve their domination of the other, territorial expansion, to justify even oppression and attack as a rightful act of self-defense (David, 2017, p. 9). Past experiences of Israelis and their unjust treatment are supposed to end up with human rights implementation; on the contrary, they serve to reveal ongoing tragedies. The historical wrongness of the Holocaust against the Israelis should have prevented the Al-Nakba catastrophe in Palestine, as it is expected. However, the wish to manage the policies, dominating the other, ruling the civil service and economy, provokes them to combat. Tzvetan Todorov asserts that although being a victim of genocide is not desired, the claim of being victimized is mostly beneficial (David, 2017, p. 12). Precisely, because of that, Israel assumingly strengthens the victim position in favor of justice for the victim nations.

The fate of European Jews that conjures up everyone's darkest fear passes on to the Palestinians and is still being witnessed even now. The atrocities in Palestine have been carried out in pursuance of the ones experienced in Europe; correspondingly, the mass killings in Palestine may have been inspired by the persecution of the Jews in gas chambers. Both the Jews and the Palestinians depict the same position of desperate people leaving their homes, all belongings, and their entire spirits in a place. Dalia sympathizes with Bashir "(w)e can see ourselves in you ... we can remember our history of exile ... I can understand your longing for home because of our experience of exile" (Tolan, 2006, p. 3). The Nazis have killed the Jews however the Palestinians pay for it and are exposed to the same cruelties. The dilemma reminds one to right one wrong with another wrong.

The Eshkezanis, as a sample of Jews, a community of rejects, of helpless and pathetic people, represent most of the other Jewish migrants living in Arab homes, not giving the past owners much thought, but rather, concentrating on the formation of a new society. The residents of al-Ramla are forced to leave their homes and hometowns like the Jews in Bulgaria. A large-scale human disaster gives rise to a human catastrophe first in Europe, then in Palestine. The Jewish strugglers create the Palestinian strugglers, Jewish freedom fighters create Palestinian freedom fighters, resistance, exile, etc. As is seen, the Jews in Europe

once lived in peace like the Arabs in Palestine before certain deliberate attempts were initiated in both lands. The narrative exemplifies the once multicultural, heavenlike lands that later turn into a hellish land. Overall, the most remarkable thing is that the first nation was exposed to the atrocities and later practiced all on the other opponent. Both of the nations experience great challenges from non-violent resistance to international warfare. Nationalism, with its destructive face, reworks in Palestine in a similar manner to the Jews, the victims of the past in Europe, but the victors of today in Palestine. Instead of operating the stereotype “never again”, the present but long-existing victor keeps wearing the victim mask and practicing the victor role.

After all, the fate that has been designed for the Palestinian nation would be refused by every Israeli. They would not prefer to live under similar conditions they once experienced, resulting in the desire for liberation of the Israeli nation, but causing bother and fierce outrage for the Palestinian nation. In the pursuit of achieving their nationalist goals, the Jews have been akin to neglecting and overruling the rights of the Palestinians and preserving nationalist-imperialist projects in their favor. Unfortunately, the collective fear of annihilation felt deeply by the Jews has not prevented the same sense of fear in Palestine. As seen, yesterday’s pain has become today’s power. Constant atrocities and ongoing wars have resolved that the Jews of Israel have engineered “a stunning reversal of their image across the world: from victim to victor, also to occupier” (Tolan, 2006, p. 238).

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**EXTENDED ABSTRACT:** *The Lemon Tree* is a sincere and non-fiction book presenting a great number of patterns in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. More than a story, it provides a clear historical picture of both Palestinian and Israeli nations, mirroring the miserable fates of both nations through the story of the Khairis, a Palestinian family, and the Eshkenazis, a Jewish family. Both of the families experience similar practices resulting from discrimination and racism, and are expelled from their homelands and live in the same house with the lemon tree in its backyard. The children of these families, Bashir Khairi and Dalia Eshkenazi, present the horrible experiences they and their families have had and the miserable results of these experiences, and the longing throughout their lives. Besides, they start an amazing friendship and explore the possibility of coexistence and dialogue, understanding between the nations, seeking hope and a home for their nations. This paper deals with the processes of political, legal, educational, and social formations of the Israeli state in the light of the non-fiction narrative, *The Lemon Tree*. The novel includes the ideologies and institutions that shape the states, promoting each other. Tolán deconstructs the traditional realm of history, associating historical facts with literature and using cultural patterns to reflect the face of the conflict. In addition to numerous common properties of the Palestinian and Israeli nations, the initial pictures of both societies are very similar to each other, with their hybrid and multicultural societies living in peace. The Arabs in Palestine and the Jews in Europe lived their lives in collaboration and ease. However, both get through similar sanctions so as to move from multiculturalism to nation states. The narrative reveals the process of developing national identities of these nations and shows how they are strengthened due to the deliberate and cruel external projects. The surprising point is that the Israeli nation, despite relatively welcoming attitudes of the Palestinians, the Israelis have made the Palestinians experience similar practices they were exposed to in Europe. The Jews have made use of their past expositions, the narratives of Zionism, and the rules of the Old Testament to ensure a homeland in Palestine. The emigration to Palestine, to the holy land, has been glorified and consecrated, and also justified by Western countries, regardless of the native inhabitants of that country. The study presents that the Jews have been exposed to restrictions and discrimination in Europe, especially exemplifying the conditions in Bulgaria. Also, the study mirrors very similar sanctions in Palestine. Both nations have been forced into exile, or if they insist on staying, they have been forced to survive under violent conditions. Some prefer to exile and become stateless, whereas others prefer to stay as freedom fighters, both of which cases give rise to new cruelties and wounded individuals. The conditions, in all aspects, destroy the sense of security, cause unbearable suffering, and generate crime against humanity. The book affirms that violence reproduces violence in the simplest meaning. Anti-Semitism and Zionism serve as keys to entering Palestine. However, it is clearly seen that two driving forces are not different from Nazi doctrine regarding their destructive and inhumane consequences. One common point of the two nations is the fact that they, as the victim, are not the ones who initiate the conflict; they start to fight for their basic rights and secure their homeland. To achieve an ethnically and culturally homogenous society and secure the land, the Israelis have practiced or even overdone what they have been exposed to in Europe. Far from a real sense of war, as the war is made between armed opponents, both conflicts are deterritorialization and destruction of largely unarmed opponents. Both the Khairi and the Eshkenazi families represent the removal of the indigenous population. The world has mostly closed its eyes to all the troubles seen in Europe and Palestine. The ones who interfere generally converge to prejudice by wishing to design the world in accordance with their own intentions. Sandy Tolán emphasizes the deliberate apathy of other states or organizations, stating their purpose of getting rid of the Jews in Europe and ruling the East in accordance with their political practices. Eventually, the insufferable experiences of the victims bring about dead-end issues, either exposed to survive under the domination

of another state or flee to a different land with a sense of doubt and homelessness. The Palestinians have been forced to maintain their lives in diaspora, in exile, namely, in unhealed by the Jews who experienced the same practices by European nations. Ultimately, both of the nations are ethnic groups that have strictly experienced historical injustice. However, the Jews assumingly strengthen their victim position in favor of justice for the victim nations. The past pain caused by Europe brings today's power for the Jews, creates new pain for the Palestinians, and sets the way for the Jews from victim to victor.

**GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET:** *Limon Ağacı* romanı, Filistin-İsrail çatışmasına dair çok sayıda örnek sunan, kurgusal olmayan, samimi bir hikayedir. Bir hikâyeden çok, Filistinli bir aile olan Khairi ve Yahudi asıllı bir aile olan Eşkenazilerin hikayesi aracılığıyla hem Filistin hem de İsrail uluslarının kötü kaderlerini yansıtan, net bir tarihsel resim sunan bir yapıttır. Her iki aile de ırkçı ideolojilerden kaynaklanan benzer uygulamalara maruz kalmış, ana vatanlarından sürülmüş ve bir zamanlar arka bahçesinde limon ağacı olan Filistin'deki aynı evde yaşamışlardır. Romanın ana kahramanları olan, bu ailelerin çocukları Bashir Khairi ve Dalia Eskhenazi, kendilerinin ve ailelerinin hayatları boyunca yaşadıkları korkunç deneyimleri ve bu deneyimlerin acı sonuçlarını yansıtır. Bunun yanı sıra, aralarında muhteşem bir dostluk başlar ve bu kahramanlar birlikte yaşama ve diyalog ihtimallerini, uluslararası karşılıklı anlayışı, kendi ulusları için umut ve vatan arayışını sorgularlar. Bu çalışmada *Limon Ağacı* romanı ışığında İsrail devletinin siyasi, hukuki, eğitimsel ve toplumsal oluşum süreçleri ele alınmaktadır. Roman devletlerin birbirlerini karşılıklı olarak şekillendiren ideoloji ve kurumları içermektedir. Sandy Tolan, tarihi gerçekleri edebiyatla ilişkilendirerek tarihin geleneksel alanını yapı söküne uğratar ve çatışmanın özünü yansıtmak için kültürel kalıpları kullanır. Filistin ve İsrail Milletlerin sayısız ortak noktalarının yanı sıra, her iki toplum da başlangıçtaki tabloları, çok kültürlü, barış içinde yaşayan toplumları ile birbirine çok benzemektedir. Filistin'deki Araplar ve Avrupa'daki Yahudiler iş birliği ve huzur içinde yaşamlarını sürdürmekteyken her iki millet de çokkültürlülüğten ulus devlete geçmek için benzer yaptırımlardan ve süreçlerden geçmektedir. Roman ve aynı zamanda bu çalışma, bu milletlerin ulusal kimliklerinin gelişme sürecini ortaya koymakta, aynı zamanda, kasıtlı ve acımasız dışsal tasarılar nedeniyle nasıl güçlendiklerini göstermektedir. Şaşırtıcı olan nokta, Filistinlilerin nispeten olumlu tutumlarına rağmen, Avrupa'da maruz kaldıkları uygulamaların benzerlerini İsraillilerin de Filistinlilere yaşatmasıdır. Yahudiler, Filistin ülkesinde bir vatan kurmak için geçmiş anlatımlarından, Siyonizm anlatılarından, Eski Ahit kurallarından yararlanmışlardır. Batılı ülkeler tarafından Filistin'e, yani kutsal topraklara göç, söz konusu ülkenin yerlileri dikkate alınmaksızın, yüceltilmiş, kutsanmış ve meşrulaştırılmıştır. Bu çalışma, Yahudilerin Avrupa'da kısıtlamalara ve ayrımcılığa maruz kaldıklarını, özellikle Bulgaristan'daki koşulları örneklendirir. Aynı zamanda bu çalışma, Filistin'de de bu yaptırımların çok benzerlerini analiz eder. Her iki halk da sürgüne zorlanmış ya da kalmakta ısrar ederlerse çok kötü koşullar altında hayatta kalmaya zorlanmıştır. Kimisi sürgüne gitmeyi ve vatansız kalmayı tercih ederken, kimisi özgürlük savaşçısı olarak hayatta kalmayı tercih etmiştir; her iki durum da yeni zulümlerin ve mağdurların ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Çünkü bu koşullar her yönüyle güvenlik duygusunu yok eder, dayanılmaz acılar yaşatır, insanlık suçu üretir. Roman, en basit anlamıyla şiddetin şiddeti yeniden ortaya çıkardığını doğrular. Antisemitizm ve Siyonizm Filistin'e girmenin anahtarı olarak kullanılır. Ancak bu iki büyük ideolojinin, yıkıcı ve insanlık dışı sonuçları açısından Nazi doktrininden farklı olmadığı açıkça görülür. Bu iki milletin bir diğer ortak noktası, mağdur olarak çatışmanın başlatıcısı değil, temel hakları için mücadele etmek ve vatanlarını güvence altına almak için savaşmaya başlamalarıdır. Gerçek bir savaş anlayışından uzak- çünkü savaş silahlı rakipler arasında yapılır- her iki çatışma da büyük ölçüde silahsız rakiplerin yersiz yurtsuzlaştırılması ve yok edilmesi eylemidir. Hem Khairi hem de Eşkenazi aileleri yerli nüfusun vatanlarından edilmesini temsil eder. Dünya, Avrupa'da ve Filistin'de yaşanan sıkıntılara çoğunlukla gözlerini yumar. Müdahale edenler genellikle dünyayı kendi amaçlarına göre tasarlamak isteyerek önyargıyla davranırlar. Tolan, Avrupa'daki Yahudilerden kurtulmak ve Doğu'yu kendi siyasi uygulamalarına göre yönetmek isteyen diğer devlet veya kuruluşların kasıtlı ilgisizliklerini vurgular. Sonuçta mağdurların yaşadıkları başa çıkılmaz deneyimler, ya başka bir devletin tahakkümü altında hayatta kalma ya da şüphe ve vatansızlık durumuyla farklı

bir ülkeye kaçma konusunda çıkmaza giren sorunları beraberinde getirir. Filistinliler, Avrupa uluslarının aynı uygulamalarına maruz kalan Yahudiler tarafından diasporada, sürgünde yaşamak, yani kaotik yaşamlarını sürdürmek zorunda bırakılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, her iki ulus da tarihsel adaletsizliği katı bir şekilde deneyimlemiş etnik gruplardır. Ancak Yahudilerin, mağdur uluslar için adalet adı altında, mağdur konumlarını güçlendirdikleri varsayılabilir. Avrupa'nın geçmişte sebep olduğu acılar, Yahudilere bugünün gücünü getirir, Filistinliler için yeni acılar yaratır ve Yahudilere kurban sıfatından galip sıfatına giden yolu açar.