



Geographical Exile: The Dispossessed Place Between Diaspora and Loss of Land in *The Inheritance* by Sahar Khalifeh

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Abstract— This study examines representations of geographical exile in Sahar Khalifeh's novel *The Inheritance*, employing the theory of settler colonialism. The study demonstrates that exile in the novel is not presented as an individual experience or a fleeting historical event, but rather as a continuous structure reproduced generation after generation by the logic of elimination that characterizes the settler project. Through the character of Zayna, the text reveals that the homeland itself has been transformed into a strange and isolated space, no longer an extension of memory and belonging, but rather a place reshaped according to the representations of the settler. The study reveals that settler colonialism is not limited to the colonization of land but expands to encompass language, identity, family relationships, and cultural symbols. These elements become tools of obliteration, producing a sense of internal exile. It also becomes clear that return, which is supposed to be a moment of reclaiming self and homeland, turns into an experience of loss and disappointment, as the Palestinian discovers that the meaning and symbolism of the place has changed. The study reveals that Palestinians remain displaced both within the homeland and in the diaspora, and they confront a homeland devoid of authentic features. The study concludes that *The Inheritance* offers a profound literary representation of the structural and permanent nature of settler colonialism, demonstrating how exile becomes an ongoing existential condition that transcends space and time.



Keywords— Sahar Khalifeh, *The inheritance*, exile, settler colonialism, identity, place.

I. INTRODUCTION

Exile is one of the most brutal existential experiences in human history. Its meaning goes beyond mere geographical displacement to include uprooting, the dismantling of memory, and the alienation of identity. As Edward Said describes it, "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (Said 173).

In the Palestinian context, exile has acquired a double dimension: it is not the result of a temporary war or border dispute, but rather the product of a long-term

settlement project that seeks to obliterate the Palestinian people's presence in both their land and their memory.

Since the Nakba in 1948, Palestinians have been experiencing a continuous forced expulsion from their homes and driven into exile, with camps and neighboring countries becoming alternative spaces for the fragmented Palestinian existence. The Israeli occupation continues to practice policies of forced displacement, settlement, and the separation wall, forcing Palestinians to live in a state of "renewed exile," even on their own land, transforming their original place into an alienated space that bears no resemblance to their history or memory (Pappe 21).

In this context, Sahar Khalifeh's novel *The Inheritance* stands out as a literary text that reshapes the

experience of Palestinian exile. Through the character of Zayna and her family, it reveals the geographical, symbolic, and psychological dimensions of exile, demonstrating how the homeland itself has become a land of exile.

Geographical exile in *The Inheritance* goes beyond its literal meaning; it represents more than just forcible expulsion and spatial alienation between the occupied land and the diaspora. In the framework of the settler colonialism experience, it is an ideological and narrative framework that exposes the fractures in memory, identity, and belonging.

The novel centers on the heroine, Zayna, who was born in Brooklyn, a county in New York, to a Palestinian father and an American mother. She returns to her homeland, Palestine, to explore her heritage. This homecoming does not manifest as an act of restoration; instead, it evolves into a novel sensation of estrangement. This indicates that the homeland has been altered, specifically molded by settler colonialism, rendering it irretrievable and irrelevant.

In this setting, "exile" is perceived not merely as a geographical exile but as a profound crisis of identity, culture, and story. Return is perceived not as self-realization but as a "shock of consciousness" that reveals the disparity between idealized recollection and a fragmented reality. The geographical exile within the novel interacts with the ideas of settler colonialism, in which the goal of colonialism transcends simple control to include the transformation of place, language, and the individual, so rendering the returnee a stranger to their homeland.

Through the lens of settler colonial theory, as formulated by Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, it becomes clear that exile is not a passing event, but rather a permanent structure constantly reproduced through exclusion, reconfiguration of space, and erasure of memory.

This study aims to analyze representations of geographical exile in *The Inheritance*, as a reflection of the structure of settler colonialism by answering the question: How does Sahar Khalifeh's novel *The Inheritance* reveal geographical and symbolic exile as a permanent structure of settler colonialism that reshapes Palestinian place, identity, and memory? The study seeks to highlight how the individual experiences of the characters (Zayna and her family) are transformed into a testament to ongoing exile across borders, and to demonstrate how exclusion is reproduced in spatial, symbolic, psychological, and linguistic dimensions.

The importance of this study lies in its illumination of how Palestinian literature represents exile as a collective experience and a testament to an ongoing colonial structure, rather than merely an individual tragedy. It also reveals the

literary text's ability to question settler narratives and offer an alternative reading that restores Palestinian memory. The study comes at a particularly sensitive time, as displacement and land confiscation continue in Palestine, making it relevant and of utmost necessity in the context of literary and postcolonial studies.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Inheritance has received widespread attention from critics and researchers, as it represents a central text in contemporary Palestinian literature. It embodies the social and political transformations following the Oslo Accords and raises profound questions about exile, identity, place, and return. Critical approaches have varied from postcolonial studies, identity analyses, feminist readings, and studies of memory and place. The following is a review of the most prominent of these studies and their findings.

Mona Elnamoury conducted a study entitled "Unjust Identity Quest: Khalife's *The Inheritance*: A Post-Colonial Study," to examine the novel from a postcolonial perspective, focusing on Zayna's identity conflict between Brooklyn and Nablus. The study concluded that Palestinian identity in the text is not a fixed identity, but rather a fragile and fragmented project, as Palestinians face difficulty in achieving belonging, whether in the diaspora or in their dispossessed homeland (2-4).

The study "The Concept of Identity in Sahar Khalifeh's Novel *The Inheritance*," conducted by Iman Neamah Jasim and Lajiman Jaanoori, discusses the concept of identity in the light of postcolonial theorists. Their study demonstrates that characters in the novel attempt to reconstruct their identities through language and memory. However, this identity remains constantly threatened by erosion due to the settlement structure and the Oslo Accords, making Palestinian identity in the novel a daily struggle against erasure and exclusion rather than a firm sense of belonging (13-15).

In another study, "To Go, or Not to Go: The Palestinian Realities of Exile in the Works of Khalifeh," conducted by Priyanka and Shashikantha Koudur, analyzed the novel through the theme of exile. The results showed that the absence of men due to diaspora renders women in the novel the primary bearers of national memory, preserving the survival of home and family. The study also revealed that return is not a restoration of the homeland as much as it is a shock that shows the transformation of the place due to colonialism, transforming it into a space alien to its inhabitants (442).

Similarly, Priyanka and Shashikantha Koudur conducted another study entitled "The Multiple Resistance

Strategies for Survival under Israeli Occupation in the Novels of Sahar Khalifeh," to examine the multiple resistance strategies adopted by both Palestinian men and women on a land that is under prolonged Israeli occupation. The study concluded that resistance in *The Inheritance* is not only a military confrontation, but also manifests in the details of daily life, such as clinging to language and memory, making Palestinian resistance multi-layered: political, cultural, and symbolic (18-20).

Together, these studies demonstrate that *The Inheritance* presents exile, identity, and place as central issues that transcend the individual to encompass the collective Palestinian experience. They agree that identity in the text is fractured, exile is a permanent state, and place is alienated and reshaped by settler colonialism. However, most of these studies have focused on identity or exile in isolation from the broader structural framework, highlighting the need for a new study based on settler colonialism theory to understand how the Palestinian homeland itself is transformed into a space of permanent exile.

The Concept of Settler Colonialism and Exile

In his seminal article, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," Patrick Wolfe argues that settler colonialism is not a passing event linked to a specific historical phase, but rather a permanent structure that continually reproduces itself.

This structure is characterized by what Wolfe calls the "logic of elimination" (388). The settlers attempt to eliminate the presence of the indigenous population, not necessarily through direct extermination, but also through policies of expulsion, dispossession, cultural assimilation, or the reshaping of the place so that it becomes alien to its original inhabitants. Wolfe adds his famous phrase: "settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event," a phrase that sums up the essence of the settler project (388).

In light of this analysis, exile becomes not merely a side effect of war or conflict, but an inevitable consequence of the settlement structure. Elimination not only displaces people from their land but also renders them permanently "displaceable," whether within or outside their homeland. In this sense, Palestinians experience a state of "renewed exile," as camps and diaspora become an extension of the same logic that drove them from their villages in 1948. Exile here is not a temporary experience, but an existential state that is reproduced across generations.

Lorenzo Veracini completes this analysis in his book "Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview," where he asserts that settler colonialism is not limited to the

physical control of the land but also seeks to reconstruct spatial narratives. That is, space is redefined according to the settler's representations, while the indigenous person is forced to confront a homeland devoid of its original characteristics. Hence, space intersects with exile: returning to the homeland does not mean regaining presence, but instead facing a symbolic void that reveals the absence of indigenous history and memory.

While Wolfe focuses on the logic of structural elimination, Veracini illuminates the impact of this logic on identity and memory. In the settler context, the indigenous people experience what can be called "internal exile," becoming a stranger even within their own homeland, due to the replacement of language, symbols, and social structure. This is also what Edward Said referred to when he described exile as "It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place," emphasizing that alienation is not only geographical but also existential and cultural (Said 173).

For his part, Ilan Pappé documented in "The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine" how the 1948 ethnic cleansing project was a practical embodiment of the logic of settler colonialism. Palestinian exile was not an accident, but rather a political plan aimed at reshaping Palestine as a settler space devoid of its indigenous population. Edward Said, meanwhile, emphasized that Palestinian exile cannot be separated from the settler project, as it leaves Palestinians in a state of permanent division between a lost past and an unstable present.

Connecting the concepts of Wolfe, Veracini, Said, and Pappé reveals that settler colonialism and Palestinian exile are two sides of the one coin: the former seeks to eliminate indigenous presence, and the latter represents the ongoing consequence of this elimination. Exile here is not a historical event that ended with the Nakba, but rather an ongoing structure that reproduces itself through space, language, memory, and identity. Thus, the homeland itself becomes a space of exile, and return becomes merely a confrontation with the absence of the original presence.

III. METHOD

This study will apply the two methods. First, textual analysis. It is one of the most common methods in literary studies, focusing on the text as a space rich in meaning and connotations. Textual analysis allows the reader to uncover how meanings are formed in literary texts by examining language, narrative structure, symbols, and textual space (Mackey 42-45). This approach has been applied to *The Inheritance* novel to trace representations of exile and its manifestations in the narrative. The text shows how the homeland is transformed into an alien space, and how the

colonial experience is reflected in the disintegration of identity and the dispersion of belonging. Adopting this approach allows for a deeper understanding of the text's relationship with the reader, as meanings are generated through the reading interaction and not solely by the author's intention ([Krippendorff 24–29](#)).

Second, theoretical analysis: The study draws on theoretical analysis through the framework of settler colonialism. Wolfe explains that settler colonialism is "not an event but a structure" ([388](#)), and is based on what he calls a "logic of elimination" that seeks to eliminate not only through annihilation but also through continuous displacement, dispossession, and the reconfiguration of space. For his part, Veracini distinguishes between traditional colonialism and settler colonialism, emphasizing that the latter seeks to establish an alternative homeland for settlers through the reproduction of space and memory ([3–5](#)). Furthermore, Veracini asserts that settler colonialism rewrites spatial narratives, transforming the original homeland into a space alien to its inhabitants, rendering Palestinians internally exiled even within their own land. This framework helps us understand that the experience of exile in inheritance is not an individual case, but a direct result of a permanent settlement structure ([63–70](#)).

IV. ANALYSIS

The novel opens with the following narration: "I went to the West Bank looking for him, looking for them, searching for my own face in the land of exile" ([Khalifeh 3](#)).

Beginning the novel with a meaningful and emotionally charged quote embodies a complex state of exile in which geography, identity, and existentialism are intertwined. In this context, ironically, the "West Bank," meant to be the 'homeland,' is called the "land of exile." This is a significant and dramatic reversal: Zayna no longer finds herself in her homeland, which has become an exile. As Veracini explains, settler colonialism reshapes the homeland itself as a "foreign" place for the indigenous, whereby the homeland is no longer a space of belonging but an alienated space redefined according to the logic of the settler. Veracini notes:

"The settler thus has a filiative and an affiliative connection with "home", but "home" is alternatively (or simultaneously) both the "old" and the "new" place. The settler collective can thus be seen as occupying an indigenous/exogenous sector in

the top section of the population system. ([Veracini 25](#))

This can only be comprehended within the concepts of settler colonialism theory, where the homeland is no longer yours but belongs to a colonial structure that has reshaped it, transforming it into a repellent space. Wolfe described this stage of colonialism as "Settler colonisers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event" ([Wolfe 388](#)). This is what makes Zayna's experience more than just a personal narrative; it is a reflection of an ongoing structure of "elimination" where the place becomes a living witness to the absence of the indigenous and the normalization of the settler presence.

This quote is not just a poetic metaphor. It's a full-blown existential tragedy, as Zayna searches for her mirror in a place supposedly her origin. However, settler colonialism eliminates the origin from memory and geography alike. It renders even familiar places strange and obscures the features of the self in the mirrors of a distorted homeland. Zayna continues her suffering and explains that settler colonialism does not just prevent a person from returning; it makes them not want to return.

The father's forced migration to New Jersey does not represent an 'economic fleeing,' but reflects the structure of settler exclusion that displaces Palestinians and replaces them with settlers. Wolfe points out that the logic of settler colonialism is as follows: "Settler colonialism destroys to replace... It is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal" ([387](#)).

The Palestinian in exile remains subject to the same logic of colonialism because settler colonialism is not limited to Palestinian land but reproduces exclusion across borders, such that the Palestinian remains "displaceable" anywhere. Wolfe explained that "As the logic of elimination has taken on a variety of forms in other settler-colonial situations, so, in Israel, the continuing tendency to Palestinian expulsion has not been limited to the unelaborated exercise of force" ([401](#)).

Her father was convinced that America as an alternative option is more realistic than the dream itself, and the dream is just a burden that changes nothing in life. He opened a new grocery store because he understood better late than never. He concludes that memory alone is not enough to build a life: "My father didn't return home, however. He opened another grocery in New Jersey" ([Khalifeh 8](#)).

Zayna reveals that settler colonialism is not limited to a specific geographical context; it extends as a transnational power structure. Even in the supposedly safe 'exile,' Palestinians are not secure. The police, as an extension of state authority, do not act to enforce the law;

they act as a tool of ongoing exclusion: “By this time dawn had come and the police officers would have returned to the apartment to escort our relatives out of the building and possibly out of New York” (Khalifeh 10).

This quotation demonstrates the strange duality of geographical exile. Even in the land of exile (New York), the Palestinian is not granted a sense of security. There is always the possibility of expulsion. The potential expulsion from New York reproduces the experience of expulsion from the homeland. This reflects the continuity of the logic of settler colonialism. It is not enough to expel Indigenous people from their land; they must be prevented from resettling permanently in any space.

Veracini interprets this as a continuation of the structure of colonialism: the colonized are not given the possibility of stability, but rather live in a state of “renewed exile,” where displacement is reproduced as an existential condition. Veracini added that “The settler colonial situation is thus a circumstance where the tension between contradictory impulses produces long-lasting psychic conflicts and a number of associated psychopathologies” (Veracini 87).

Wolfe describes settler colonialism as not an event but a 'structure' manifested in policies of deportation, surveillance, and denial of the right to stable residence (388). This dynamic resembles the logic of a settler who seeks to displace the land's inhabitants to establish a new regime.

The theory sheds light on the harsh logic of displacement that renders Palestinians 'displaceable' in any context, even within the diaspora. Veracini explains Wolfe's perspective, "For Wolfe, settler colonialism is not a relationship primarily characterised by the indispensability of colonised peoples. On the contrary, Wolfe emphasised the dispensability of the Indigenous person in a settler colonial context" (10). This quote reveals the structural framework of settler colonialism by shedding light on Palestinians who are not only exiled from their land but are threatened even in an unstable exile.

Zaina, through her fragmented consciousness, started by exposing her geographical exile by identifying her unknown identity; she does not consider herself American despite her documents nor Palestinian despite her roots. She is not here or there. Her assertion clearly illustrates this fragmentation: “My father's birthplace was Wadi al-Rihan and mine was Brooklyn. As Zayna I was caught between two languages and two cultures” (Khalifeh 11).

This situation aligned with what Veracini described as “absent presence,” where the Palestinian remains present in memory and roots but is absent from the

prevailing structure that imposes a hybrid and fragmented identity.

This conflict is not only spatial but also linguistic, cultural and identity specific. Zaina finds herself stuck between two languages and two cultures, which causes her to belong to everything and nothing simultaneously. Zaina represents this legal exile between the 'father's language' (Arabic, mixed with nostalgia and loss) and 'the language of cultural settlement' (American English). The language raised on it is a means of adaptation, but it is a tool for its original identity, which makes it feel like it does not belong.

The settler colonialism theory as an analytical tool makes it apparent that colonialism excludes the Palestinians and recreates people who are half-memory, half-being, and identity monsters. Name, place, and language—are all semantic ruptures that express a profound dis-belonging of the Indigenous population to their land and their collective and symbolic consciousness. Zayna was born in the diaspora, not as a choice, but as a direct result of a settler structure that uprooted her father before uprooting her.

This is consistent with what is called “cultural colonization,” where the settler not only does not confine himself to spatial domination, but also seeks to reshape language and identity into tools of obliteration, rendering the Palestinian an “internal exile” even within his own language. Dolakshoria described cultural colonization as "it has deeper roots as it not only controls but also affects the psyche of the people." She further added, "cultural colonization penetrates deeply into a human's psyche" (64-65).

Zayna was born and lives in the United States, where "everything is normal," but the meaning is lost: “I lived a normal life in her [grandma's] house; in other words, I had no life at all” (Khalifeh 12). This quotation expresses the state of self-alienation and the loss of meaning in life, which profoundly expresses the psychological and social impact of exile and uprooting on the Palestinian individual. Feeling that 'normal life' is rewarded with "no life" reflects an identity crisis related to living outside the original national cultural context and under an existing colonial structure.

In this context, the logic of settler colonialism as a psychological and social structure becomes clear: just as the homeland becomes a place of exile, so too does everyday life itself becomes a framework for alienation, reflecting Wolfe's idea that “The logic of elimination not only refers to the summary liquidation of Indigenous people, though it includes that... It strives for the dissolution of native societies... settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event” (Wolfe 388).

This is not merely an individual complaint of any character in the novel. It is suffering that represents all the Palestinian people. It is an accurate description of the outcome of the exile produced by the settlement structure. Their lives are perfect in appearance but empty in essence. The Palestinians who were "recognised" in the Oslo Accords are technically present, but they do not have sovereignty. This "life" is comparable to that of the Palestinians.

When she tries to return home to Palestine, she discovers that returning is impossible and fraught with disappointment. Her return is characterised by two symbols: her patriotism for Palestine and a desire to find her lost self. However, she was surprised that her home no longer exists. She says: "Everything was different, everything had changed, and our store was no longer a grocery, but a huge white building that looked like a palace" (Khalifeh 20-21).

Settler colonialism is not satisfied with colonising the land and places. Colonisers symbolically reconfigured everything around them. The transformation from a "shop," symbolising roots and memory, to a "palace," representing a colonial, authoritarian occupying structure, is a symbolic expression of the expropriation of the old place and its transformation into a symbol of power and alienation. This visual representation, a manifestation of spatial separation, demonstrates how settler colonialism occupies space and reproduces it with functions that are counterproductive to the memory of the Indigenous people. It is impossible to return to Palestine because it is no longer Palestine; instead, it has been transformed into an artificial image, soft in form but harsh in essence.

This scene can be read through as an example of "spatial narrative reconfiguration": the Palestinian place is reconstructed not as a continuity of history, but as a symbolic rupture that forces the indigenous to confront a homeland without indigenous features.

According to Wolfe, for settler colonialism, "the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilisation, etc.) but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element" (388). Therefore, Zayna's loss of her land is not only a personal tragedy but a direct embodiment of what Wolfe calls the territoriality of settler colonialism, where land is reduced to a resource to be taken from the indigenous people to be reproduced as a new settler space.

Khalifeh delves into the description of the 'father,' who represents a symbol of responsibilities, steadfastness, sacrifice, continuity, and leadership in Palestinian society. However, the novel exposes this figure when he appears exiled in himself, unable to find fulfilment anywhere. Even Zayna, when she attempts to restore a relationship with her

father, turns into an experience of loss, as in: "I compared my father in Brooklyn to the man I saw at the hospital and to the one in the photo. My father in Brooklyn was the father I knew, whereas here at the hospital he was only a corpse" (Khalifeh 41).

The character of the father in the context represents what Wolfe calls "elimination": even the generation that embodied resilience and resistance becomes, in exile, unable to continue, revealing that settler colonialism not only targets the land but also fragments the familial and symbolic structures of the indigenous people.

Zayna's description is not physical but symbolic. The Palestinian father, who is a symbol of identity in memory and reality, becomes a soulless body in the place that is supposed to be his homeland due to Israeli occupation. In Brooklyn, he was alive in memory despite his geographical exile, but in the homeland, he was physically and symbolically dead.

This reflects the failure of the return itself under the occupation. There is no place for the self in a homeland under a settler structure that continues to control land, language, and relationships. Settler colonialism does not slaughter souls but obliterates symbols and eliminates memories. This settler colonialism transforms the great father from a reference to a corpse, from a symbol to an erased trace.

As Wolfe emphasizes, the logic of settler colonialism is based on the "elimination" of the indigenous person not only as an individual but also as a collective symbol. The father, as a symbol of memory and resilience, is transformed into a meaningless body, reflecting the fact that the settlement project aims to erase the symbols that keep Palestinians rooted in their land and history.

The novel reaches its climax by saying, "He was only a corpse." The father, the homeland, the store, the memory—everything has become a symbolic corpse. The return reveals nothing; it reveals his death, not just the death of the father but the death of the image of the homeland as she dreamed of it. In this situation, the analysis converges with what Veracini describes as settler colonialism not only dominating space but also reshaping the symbols of everyday life into "symbolic corpses," that is, distorted traces that recall absence rather than presence.

Zayna continues her journey between memories and places. Her journey is characterised by the fragility of old ties and the lack of belonging in all places. Geographic exile is portrayed as a long-term psychological construct gradually created within a settler space that does not acknowledge, existentially rejects, the Palestinian return. This is what Wolfe described as settler colonialism, which is based on the elimination of the native, transforming

return from an individual hope into a structural impossibility, as settler colonialism is not a passing event but a long-term project that reproduces exile generation after generation.

Zayna shows her suffering and profound tension between memory and elimination. She realises that belonging is not achieved through the physical location but through peace of mind, which is an impossible peace in the shadow of settlements: "The smell of garbage and manure combined strangely with the scent of eucalyptus trees, filling me with sadness, oppression, and a captivating nostalgia" (Khalifeh 37). The smell of garbage and manure represents decay and neglect. In this way, Zayna symbolizes the destruction of the Palestinian social and cultural structure as well as the deprivation and oppression of the Palestinian people in their land. The scent of eucalyptus trees represents a symbol of memories that resists elimination. The combination of smell and scents symbolizes how the nostalgia for one's native land and settler violence are intertwined. The state of the uprooted Palestinian, who is living on his land but is witnessing the systematic elimination of his identity and vital space, is reflected in the feelings of grief, oppression, and "captivating" nostalgia. This scene can be read as a sensory symbol of what can be called "impossible coexistence," where the Palestinian lives in his homeland as an exile, in which the remnants of memory (the eucalyptus trees) coexist with the outputs of colonialism (garbage and manure), reflecting the fragility of belonging in a settler space designed to obliterate indigenous identity.

V. CONCLUSION

Sahar Khalifeh's novel, *The Inheritance*, reveals that Palestinian exile is not merely a fleeting historical experience or an individual tragedy specific to a generation of Palestinians. Rather, it is an ongoing structure reproduced by the settler colonial system in multiple and renewed forms. Through the character of Zayna and her family, we discover that the homeland itself has been transformed into an alien space, reshaped according to the settler's logic. It no longer constitutes a refuge or a place of belonging, but rather a new exile, added to the series of exiles experienced by Palestinians at home and abroad. Return, which is supposed to represent a moment of reclaiming identity and belonging, is transformed in the novel into an experience of loss and disappointment, as Palestinians find their homeland altered in meaning and symbolism, transformed into a confiscated space subject to new settler representations.

The novel demonstrates that settler colonialism is not limited to the physical control of land but extends to

language, identity, family relationships, and collective memory, where symbols of everyday life become "symbolic corpses" that recall absence rather than presence. The place is no longer alive with the memory of its original inhabitants. Rather, it has become framed by symbols of colonial power, reshaping its details to serve a new discourse that excludes the indigenous people and renders their presence an erased trace. Furthermore, exile takes on multiple dimensions: geographical, linguistic, and psychological. Language, which was supposed to be a vessel for identity, in turn becomes a tool for fragmentation and alienation. Family relationships that embodied resilience become fragile, and the father himself becomes a dead symbol, revealing the failure of return and the interruption of memory continuity.

By employing the theory of Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, it becomes clear that Palestinian exile in inheritance is neither an individual choice nor a circumstantial experience, but rather a permanent existential state that is constantly reproduced within and outside the homeland. Settler colonialism, as Wolfe asserts, is a structure, not an event, and this structure of exclusion renders Palestinians "displaceable" anywhere, whether within their own land or in exile in the diaspora. Here, the novel converges with Veracini's thesis that settlement not only seeks to dominate space but also seeks to reconstruct space, memory, and identity, making coexistence impossible and transforming belonging into a constantly threatened experience.

Thus, it can be said that *The Inheritance* does not merely present a literary narrative about the tragedy of a Palestinian family, but weaves a critical discourse that illuminates the structural and permanent nature of settler colonialism. It demonstrates that Palestinians, even when attempting to reclaim their homeland or build a new life in exile, face the same logic of exclusion in various forms. In doing so, the novel offers literary and intellectual testimony to how settler colonialism produces renewed exile across generations. It underscores the impossibility of coexistence in a space originally designed to obliterate indigenous identity and replace it with the settler.

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