

From Trail of Tears in *Pushing the Bear* to Nakba in *Minor Detail*

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Abstract

Writing is an excellent means of exorcism, especially for the marginalized. However, more importantly, it is a form of resistance by the word. Both Adania Shibli and Diane Glancy, Palestinian and Native American writers, feel the urge to narrate the story of their people. This research delves into dramatic themes of cultural tragedy and resilience as represented in literature. Diane Glancy's *Pushing the Bear* (1996), sheds insight into Native Americans' horrific experiences and removal from their homeland. Adania Shibli's *Minor Detail* (2017/2020) provides a profound analysis of the repeated challenges that occur in the face of constant peril. The comparative analysis suggests connections between the catastrophes experienced by Palestinians and Native Americans. It reveals the shared experiences of displacement, dispossession, and cultural resilience through juxtaposition, emphasizing the universality of human suffering.

Keywords: Colonization, Culture, Displacement, Erasure, Marginalization, Resilience.

1. Introduction

Both *Minor Detail* by Adania Shibli and *Pushing the Bear* by Diane Glancy explore themes of resistance, erasure, and the profound human cost of colonization and oppression. These works are significant testaments to the oppressed people's perseverance, as well as to how writing may be utilized to oppose and safeguard cultural traditions (Al-Ghammaz 2023). Through these accounts, readers gain greater insight into the complexities of the enduring power of narrative that can promote change and foster empathy. In essence, literature transcends time and geography, immortalizing the voices of those who have been suppressed and giving a window into the human experience that will live on long after its writers are gone (Abushihab et al. 2021; Alkam 2023).

There are some similarities in the suffering and discrimination experienced by Palestinian people and Native Americans, as both groups have faced significant injustices and challenges throughout history. Both groups have faced forced removal from their ancestral lands, violence, abuse at the hands of those in

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power, exploitation, discrimination in various aspects of life, and annihilation. The specific historical and political contexts in which Palestinian people and Native Americans have experienced suffering and discrimination are similar.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, scholarly debates over colonialism, occupation, othering, and resistance among indigenous groups have received more attention and scrutiny (Abu Keshk and Farman 2022; Al-Ghammaz 2023). Scholarly contributions have shed light on the diverse experiences of pain and resilience across oppressed populations, with a particular emphasis on Palestine's Indigenous people and Native Americans.

According to Smallwood et al. (2021), colonialism has had a significant influence on indigenous people on a variety of levels, including health, social, spiritual, economic, and cultural. Scholars believe that colonization was a kind of ethnic and cultural genocide that did great harm in the past and present. Conflict, massacres, forced labor, forced child separation, residential schools, environmental damage, disease transmission, and the eradication of Indigenous social, cultural, and spiritual traditions left Indigenous populations with long-lasting scars.

The debate over the definition of genocide in relation to Native American treatment in the United States is examined by Madley (2015). She contends that a lack of definition of what constitutes genocide and a disregard for the nuanced aspects of Native American history are impeding the discussion. She proposes a more nuanced approach to studying Native Americans' history, utilizing comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of American government policies on their lives.

Heise (2017) addresses the limits put on Native American autonomy and cultural expression as a result of the American empire's growth since the early nineteenth century. Native American history is intertwined with stories of brutal land confiscation, language restriction, and cultural upheaval. U.S. colonialism applied enormous efforts to eradicate Native cultures through assimilation strategies developed in the nineteenth century and beyond. Despite these attempts, Native Americans resisted US colonialism, utilizing a variety of techniques to maintain communal survival within the complicated colonial framework. Native American reactions to colonialism fall along a spectrum of resistance, including tolerance and militancy as connected drives. Native Americans were able to reduce the disastrous effects of White supremacy through the selective deployment of resistance strategies.

Rai (2014) reviews Glancy's declaration that culture is an essential component of any Indigenous society, serving as a source of identity, tradition, and resilience. However, Glancy claims that European settlers' power has disrupted and fragmented this cultural fabric. Glancy uses the figure of Luthy, a character in the novel, to shed light on this tremendous societal change, demonstrating how the natural environment, which is inextricably linked to Native American existence, represents a deep connection to ancestral lands and customs. The term nature therefore arises as a symbolic depiction of Native American people's collective awareness and innate tie, particularly those like the Cherokee, whose historical

experiences are inextricably linked to the natural world. Glancy's narrative emphasizes colonialism's long-term influence on Indigenous cultures while simultaneously highlighting Native American societies' resilience.

Shafir (2017) poses a basic question: how can it be maintained that Israel's lengthy occupation of Palestine is legal? Shafir claims that the occupation has exceeded the legal threshold into illegitimacy by consistently and systemically violating legislative rules. Shafir believes that the emphasis should now be on acknowledging and resolving the fundamental illegality of Israel's occupation, as well as its corresponding responsibility under international law. This involves looking into other approaches to resolving the situation in Palestine, which may require a departure from the negotiation-centric paradigm that has so far dominated the discourse on the Zionist colonization of Palestine.

In their critique of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, Dana and Jarbawi (2017) contend that the Zionist movement constructed a sophisticated settler-colonial project that culminated in the violent founding of Israel in 1948 and the colonization of the entire region in 1967. The ultimate goal of Jewish exclusivity, however, has been prevented by the Palestinian presence and resistance to the colonial project by the Israeli state. Although the Israeli government has effectively taken control of the region and encircled its citizens, the writers believe that the Palestinian people's unwavering determination and defiance of injustices have impeded Israel's advancement.

Abdulla (2016) presents a critical perspective on the Israeli occupation of Palestine, arguing that the dominant legal and political discourse narrows the issues at stake to the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and fails to consider the wider context of settler colonialism, apartheid, and state-sponsored discrimination in occupied Palestine. The author suggests that Israeli policies and practices have been used to fragment land and people to maintain the dominance of an immigrant Jewish population over the Palestinian population and that Palestinians are subject to various forms of apartheid and colonialism depending on their location.

Huang (2020) states that Shibli's story depicts a reality concealed by political and historical forces, making it revolutionary. Despite her failure to retrieve the victim's tale from historical erasure, the protagonist of the second narrative successfully testifies to its actuality. Shibli's unusual double narrative structure shows that the Palestinian people's marginalization continues, with their lives and history as precarious as ever, threatened by violence and erasure. Her superb, terrifying work exemplifies this comatose state by having the past repeat itself in the present. And perhaps it is only when one knows one has been in a coma that one can regain awareness and begin moving ahead in time.

3. From Trail of Tears in *Pushing the Bear* to Nakba in *Minor Detail*

The writers of *Minor Detail* and *Pushing the Bear* explore the consequences of two historical tragedies: The Trail of Tears and the Nakba (Arabic for 'catastrophe/plight'). Despite taking place in distinct geographic and chronological contexts, these events have remarkable parallels in their severe effects on the impacted populations and the long-lasting legacies of trauma and displacement they engendered. While both the Nakba and Trail of Tears signify egregious injustices wrought by colonialism

and imperialism, an examination of their historical contexts, causes, and consequences also unveils significant differences between them.

The Nakba and Trail of Tears are two bitter incidents that demonstrate the brutality of settler colonialism. The Nakba is the forcible displacement of Palestinian communities during Israel's creation in 1948, whereas the Trail of Tears is the forced removal of Native American tribes, especially the Cherokee, from their ancestral lands to Indian Territory in the 1830s. While both tragedies epitomize the brutal consequences of settler colonialism, they exhibit distinctive features regarding their historical antecedents, geographical landscapes, and cultural contexts. Despite their variations, all tragedies arise from the same causes and struggles: territorial expansion, hegemonic ideology, structural dispossession, and Indigenous people's marginalization. The Palestinian and Native American communities' comparable experiences with removals, dispossession, and cultural erasure illustrate the long-term impacts of colonial cruelty, as well as the universality of the struggle for liberty and justice.

According to the 2024 article "On the 65th Anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba" published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), there were 1,300 towns and villages in Palestine in 1948, home to 1.4 million Palestinians. More than 800,000 were forced to leave their country and scatter over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Thousands were evicted from their homes in territories controlled by Israel. Documentary archives suggest that Israeli forces occupied 774 villages and towns, demolishing 531 Palestinian communities throughout the Nakba. Israeli military operations during this period also included over 70 massacres leading to the deaths of around 15,000 Palestinians. Similarly, the 2024 article "1838: Cherokee die on Trail of Tears" published by the National Library of Medicine documents that the Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole tribes were pushed from their ancestral grounds in the southeastern United States to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma in the 1830s. The Trail of Tears is a historical event that refers to the forcible removal of approximately 17,000 Cherokee people by the U.S. Department of War. An estimated 6,000 Cherokee, including men, women, and children, perished on this difficult 1,200-mile march. A few Cherokee people were able to avoid being detained and moved. Both incidents were orchestrated by colonial powers, Britain and the United States respectively, to establish supremacy over Indigenous resources and territories.

Gohar (2005) notes that the hardships endured by Native Americans carry a stark analogy to the contemporary suffering of Palestinians. Native Americans are restricted to reservations within their ancestral lands. Palestinians are forced to reside in refugee camps and Arab enclaves within the confines of historic Palestine. In *Minor Detail*, Shibli analyzes how Palestinian identity and struggle continue to be molded by the memory of the Nakba. Similarly, in *Pushing the Bear*, Glancy investigates how the Cherokee people faced the tragedies of the Trail of Tears by relying on their spiritual beliefs and cultural heritage. The importance of storytelling in maintaining communal memory and testifying against past injustices is emphasized in both works.

Strong portrayals of the Nakba and the Trail of Tears are found in both novels. The novels stress the impact of historical trauma on marginalized populations and the significance of highlighting their viewpoints. They draw parallels between colonial violence and the resilience of oppressed people

(Qutami 2022). The novels' realism portrays regular people's daily lives as well as the social, political, and cultural forces that shape them, pushing readers to examine the long-term consequences of their experiences.

3.1 From Pen to Page: Harnessing the Dynamic Force of Narrative Styles

Comparative literature is of high stance, as it opens new venues for discussing rationale and criteria for cross-cultural or cross-temporal comparisons. Of the well-known critics and figures in the comparative literature are René Wellek. Wellek, a Czech American comparative critic asserted that the tendency of literary critical thought to cut across several research areas in the humanities has of late led to the ever-increasing significance of the cross- and interdisciplinary research with a strong emphasis on key concepts such as interaction and comparison between cultures, across national and cultural boundaries (Daskalova 2018). Accordingly, as argued by Wellek, comparison is no longer an issue of intentional choice, but it is now an unconscious and inevitable perspective. The narrative style has a tremendous impact on the reader's experience and comprehension of a novel. Adania Shibli and Diane Glancy use different narrative methods in *Minor Detail* and *Pushing the Bear*, revealing rich stories of tragedy, resilience, and cultural survival while underlining their similarities.

Minor Detail and *Pushing the Bear* are both novels with non-linear narrative structures. Shibli alternates between two timelines, one set in the present and the other during Israel's conquest of Palestine in 1949. Similarly, *Pushing the Bear* is told through a series of narratives that provide insight into the lives of numerous individuals along the Trail of Tears. Glancy's fragmentary narration expands on the Cherokee people's feelings of displacement and fragmentation.

Both novels feature a variety of viewpoints. These multiple perspectives enable readers to enter the minds of multiple characters and obtain an understanding of their inner worlds. In *Minor Detail*, Shibli alters between a third-person narrative describing the Palestinian Bedouin girl in 1949 and the first-person perspectives of an unnamed protagonist in the present day. Through this narrative structure, Shibli emphasizes the persistent nature of trauma across generations and stresses the lasting impacts of colonial brutality by juxtaposing these two points of view. Shibli's *Minor Detail* has two parts, first recalling a true story of a 1949 gang rape and murder of a young Arab Bedouin Palestinian girl by Israeli soldiers, and in the second part, telling of a fictional modern-day account of life of a Palestinian woman who tries to investigate this incident. Equally, In *Pushing the Bear*, a key focus lies in providing a voice to the Cherokee people who struggled to survive the Trail of Tears after being forcibly removed from their homes. Glancy embodies their resilience and utilizes traditional Cherokee legends as well as the Cherokee language. In a similar vein, *Pushing the Bear* presents a polyphonic narrative in which every character adds to the collective history of the Cherokee removal. Glancy effectively conveys the range of experiences within the Cherokee community along with the complexity of their responses to loss and displacement by utilizing a variety of points of view.

3.2 Confronting Cruelty: The Portrayal of Violence

Diane Glancy's *Pushing the Bear* demonstrates excessive violence characterizing the treatment of Indigenous communities by the dominant colonial authority. The White soldiers use force to drive the Cherokee people from their lands and silence any opposition. They also use violence to murder, injure, and intimidate them. Bartrop (2007) describes that numerous Indigenous groups were entirely or nearly exterminated. Colonization is marked by violent conflicts, intentional massacres, widespread destruction, and, in some cases, genocide. The destructive nature of physical violence is portrayed through the lens of the character Kee-un-e-ca. He narrates how the White soldiers "burned our cabins" (Diane Glancy, 65).

Moreover, the soldiers complain that the Trial of Tears is not an easy march because they need to use violence against not only Cherokee people but horses as well to maintain control. They wonder "Why don't we just kill 'em all right here?" (70), displaying a heartless disregard for human life and a belief in their right to exercise violence. Another incident of violence is depicted in the novel with Tsali's requests for a stretcher to assist his sick wife. The troops cruelly disregard his demands. The soldiers show no mercy, poking her with a bayonet and forcing her to march to the stockade. Tragically, Tsali's wife passes away because of the troops' cruel treatment.

Psychological violence includes treaties and legislation. According to Dunbar- Ortiz and Gilio-Whitaker (2016), structural violence encompasses the ways in which economic, political, legal, religious, and cultural systems perpetuate inequality and social injustice. These systems create conditions that prevent individuals and groups from meeting their basic needs and achieving their full potential. Structural violence against Native Americans often encompasses a wide array of legislation, court cases, executive decisions, and municipal and state actions that directly influence their lives. Cherokee communities are constantly deceived by the United States government, which violates agreements and treaties, resulting in displacement and loss of land. The main character's brother, Tanner, explains, "Their broken treaties broke us" (76). He stresses the emotional toll of shattered trust and broken promises. Visions of psychological violence are also depicted in Glancy's use of Maritole's, the protagonist, existential struggles. Maritole raises a profound question about the Cherokee people's suffering and the reasons for their hatred. She illustrates the collective sorrow of the Cherokees.

Like this, in *Minor Detail*, the Israeli military uses force to establish authority and keep the Palestinian populace under control. According to (Giacaman et al. 2010), violence permeates every aspect of life in the 1967-occupied Palestine. Individuals encounter daily instances of violence, brutality, and upheaval in their lives. In the opening chapter, the Israeli commander along with his soldiers repeatedly sexually assaulted the girl. Violence does not stop here; it climaxes with the murder of the Bedouin girl and her family. An Israeli soldier aiming his rifle at the unnamed protagonist, in the second chapter, conveys another example of the clear threat of violence. The implied threat provided by the gun represents the perpetual state of danger and intimidation that Palestinians suffer under occupation. The ramifications of violence are highlighted by the existence of "the soldier, or the checkpoint, or when I reveal that we are living under occupation here. Gunshots and military vehicle sirens, and sometimes the sound of helicopters, warplanes, and shelling, the subsequent wail of ambulances" (Adania Shibli, .60). The reader witnesses several acts of cruelty, including the destruction of property and livelihoods as well

as the arbitrary imprisonment and interrogation of individuals. The protagonist's co-worker informs her that "The army had informed the residents in the area that it was going to bomb one of the neighboring buildings where three young men had barricaded themselves" (61). Incidents of demolishing buildings and bombing are effective examples of physical violence. The pinnacle of brutality is epitomized in the unnamed protagonist's tragic demise. She meets a tragic end as she describes, "And suddenly, something like a sharp flame pierces my hand, then my chest, followed by the distant sound of gunshots" (112).

According to (Faddoul et al. 2024), continued Israeli violence, along with a lack of prompt and independent humanitarian aid, will worsen mental disease and mortality rates. The unnamed protagonist accentuates the trauma's lingering psychological effects with her reflective commentary on her vulnerability and inability to move on. She cannot escape the horrifying story of the Bedouin girl's murder; it haunts her. In addition, the uneven distribution of resources and the misery resulting from it demonstrate the emotional impact of violence. The protagonist, who is temporarily living in an Israeli settlement, erases her memory of the bathroom in Ramallah to escape the despair of Palestinian life. This highlights the notion that Israeli settlement residents have a privilege over Palestinians living under occupation.

3.3 *Language of Control: Analyzing Linguistic Hegemony*

Both novels show ingrained biases and supremacy structures in the language used to refer to Indigenous people, pointing out how language operates to marginalize, stereotype, ridicule, and stigmatize these populations. This section examines the parallels between the two works.

Gramsci's term of hegemony focuses on the power of language in exhibiting control and power, as well as the ways prevailing groups handle their authority. This idea is evident in the colonization and marginalization of Palestinians and Native Americans by European authority, who labeled them as savage or barbaric, justifying land seizures, forced assimilation, and other types of exploitation. The study's focus on the lack of clear distinctions between these cultural stages matches with the experiences of Palestinians and Native Americans, whose cultures and traditions were rich and diverse before colonialism. The oversimplification and portrayal of their customs and practices as untamed or uncivilized disregard the minute details and contributions of these societies.

The language employed by American colonists to justify the removal of Native American tribes from their lands is scrutinized in Diane Glancy's work *Pushing the Bear*. White soldiers disrespect Cherokee beliefs by calling them "superstitions" (80), a wording that demonstrates their disdain for Cherokees. The negative expressions and stereotypes used to describe Indigenous people, such as "savage" (112) and "uncivilized" (p.64), reflect White supremacist colonialism and the manifest destiny ideology. Their derogatory remarks about the conjurers as "Spooks" (42) and the Indigenous people as "Greasy Indians" (43) reflect deeply rooted racist beliefs common at the period. The settlers rationalize their acts of murder and expulsion by depicting Native Americans as primitive and backward. Furthermore, a soldier describes a Cherokee man along the Trail saying, "Look at that old bastard who can hardly stand" (70). The use of derogatory language serves as a manifestation of the broader dehumanization and marginalization of Indigenous people.

In *Minor Detail*, Adania Shibli investigates the dehumanizing terminology that Israeli soldiers use to describe Palestinians, especially Bedouins. The person in charge of the Nirim archive mocks the Bedouin Arabs' traditions in *Minor Detail*, calling them a "shame" (p.93). By referring to Palestinians as "Arabs and infiltrators" (8) or "fiercest and most destructive enemies" (p. 38), among other racial insults and derogatory terms, the Israeli soldiers obliterate the humanity and individuality of Palestinians, turning them into objects of suspicion and animosity. The commander's order to "cleanse" (8) the area of all remaining Arabs demonstrates this colonial mindset, which views Indigenous people as threats to be exterminated.

Bourdieu (1991) investigates the complex link between language and power, demonstrating how language acts as a mechanism for the maintenance of social hierarchies and inequalities. Integrating Bourdieu's framework into both novels suggests the nuanced ways in which language operates as a power dynamic in both novels. In *Pushing the Bear*, Tanner asserts, "They don't want us to be able to talk. They know our language gives us power" (137). Glancy, through Tanner's character, comprehends the value of language as a source of empowerment in the face of colonial tyranny. By conceding that native language has power, she implicitly accepts Bourdieu's claim that language is not neutral but rather infused with social and symbolic meaning. The preservation of Cherokee language and oral storytelling traditions throughout the novel embodies acts of resistance against language assimilation. Bourdieu's method can be also used in *Minor Detail*, language plays a key part in the construction of power within the Israeli military occupation of Palestine. The Israeli soldiers and authorities exhibit how language is wielded as an instrument of control and domination. Through the implementation of Hebrew signage and the replacement of Arabic Streets' names with Hebrew names, the Israeli authorities assert their authority over Palestine and the Palestinian people.

It is not only a question of language usage, but also of knowledge control. In the context of harmful wording, it is critical to question not just what was said, but also how and why it was stated. What is the significance of derogatory words? What signals do they provide about the oppressed people and the people who created them, the oppressors? Whose knowledge is respected and documented, and whose is erased and scorned? Foucault's (2013) studies speech as a source of power. In *Archaeology of Knowledge*, he explains how settlers and authorities utilize language to sustain colonial hierarchies and justify acts of violence and dispossession against marginalized populations. The prejudices and stereotypes of language can cause emotional pain and the perpetuation of violence motivated by race. While history continues to be unmodified, readers need to keep in mind that people's lives and livelihoods are impacted typically with tragic and fatal penalties mainly by stereotypes and language.

3.4 Weaponizing Faith: Colonizers' Exploitation of Religion

In the United States, the doctrine of Manifest Destiny fostered the belief in Euro-American settlers' divine right to expand westward and displace Native American tribes from their territories. These beliefs supported the brutal removal and dispossession of Indigenous people, causing significant loss and agony.

Similarly, in Palestine, the Zionist movement aimed to establish a Jewish state in historic Palestine, displacing the Indigenous Palestinian population.

According to Fisher (2018), the idea that Native people are viewed as potential Christians by colonists emphasizes the missionary determination that characterizes European efforts to convert Indigenous people to Christianity. Missionaries aimed to modify Indigenous people's religious beliefs and revolutionize their entire way of life by imposing European practices, values, and institutions. This method was part of a wider colonial agenda that sought to eradicate Indigenous traditions and replace them with European ones. In *Pushing the Bear*, Diane Glancy provides several instances of Christianity being the main reason for colonization. Biblical verses like "The land shall not be sold forever: for the land is mine" (134) are cited by Glancy to highlight the absurdity of using religious language to justify seizures of land and acts of tyranny.

Various characters in *Pushing the Bear* express their discontent and dissatisfaction with the Christian faith imposed on them by the colonizers, emphasizing the weaponization of religion as a means of colonial exploitation. The basket maker questions, "Haven't you felt your religion in something other than the Christian minister who send our wagons into the rivers to drown us?" (152). This reflects a deep skepticism towards the religious authority wielded by the colonizers, particularly considering their role in perpetrating violence and destruction. Knobowtee's desire to "pull the Christian God out of his sky" exemplifies a rejection of the repressive religious narratives imposed by colonizers. Likewise, O-ga-na-ya's unwillingness to embrace the divinity adopted by the White man is a rejection of religious hegemony and a reaffirmation of indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices.

Comparably, in *Minor Detail*, religious narratives are frequently used to support Israel's occupation of Palestine. Hurewitz (2022) highlights how the Zionist movement sought to create a Jewish National Home in Palestine. This initiative was viewed as a political solution to the Jewish problem, aiming to grant Jews sovereignty and self-determination on Palestinian land. Beyond economic and social considerations, the establishment of a Jewish state was envisioned as a central hub for Jewish life, culture, and influence globally. In the context of Palestine, the weaponization of religion is evident in the account of the man in charge of the Nirim archive, who describes his immigration from Australia to Palestine. The creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine is presented as a religious obligation, reflecting a European colonialist project. This religious excitement spurred the flood of Jewish immigrants from all over the world, who believed in their divine right to live in Palestine.

Zionist ideology, which asserts a divine right to the land, appears in the commander's speech. In *Minor Detail*, the acts of the Israeli military in the Negev desert are described as part of a divine plan to cleanse the region of Arabs. The commander's intense speech emphasizes the weaponization of religion, as he uses religious discourse to justify the removal of Indigenous Palestinians from their homes. Accordingly, Shibli points out the interwoven themes of immigration and identity of the Jews, along with their divine right to move to the land of Palestine. The protagonist discusses with the man in charge of the Nirim archive, who moved from Australia to Palestine in the 1950s, as his journey reflects the history of Jewish immigration and right to the land of Palestine to establish a Jewish homeland in the arid land of Palestine, describing "the Negev desert, a part of Palestine, as completely arid" (38).

3.5 Civilizing the Wild: Colonization and Oppression

The novels provide a deep understanding of the intricate processes of colonization. According to Liebersohn (2016), civilizing missions are attempts to impose exterior order or interior ideals on Indigenous populations that began in the nineteenth century and continue to be discussed in contemporary scholarly discourse. This section examines the parallels between how settlers use the rhetoric of bringing civilization to justify their colonization efforts and the Indigenous responses to that claim.

In *Pushing the Bear*, White settlers occupying Cherokee lands use the narrative of a mission to civilize the Native population as an excuse for their colonization, ironically, through seizing farms and land and killing Native people. They regard themselves as superior and believe they are enlightening them. Tanner critiques, "We farmed to prove to them we were civilized then they took our farms" (75). This remark shows the Cherokees' efforts to show the settlers that they had adopted agricultural methods as a hallmark of civilization. Despite their attempts to adhere to White civilizational ideals, they suffered dispossession and loss of their lands. This demonstrates the conflicting character of Europeans' civilizing mission towards Native Americans, in which efforts to integrate and exhibit their way of civilization are met with exploitation and displacement.

Manifest destiny and civilizing mission are two concepts used by White settlers to argue for the removal of the Cherokee people and their land confiscation. Maritole affirms the Cherokees' commitment to uphold their constitution and laws on the Trail and in the new land, claiming that failing to do so would result in the settlers labeling them as uncivilized. She states, "Otherwise we'd become the uncivilized men they called us. Otherwise, we'd become like them" (64).

Knobowtee conveys his anger by saying, "But the civilized race should treat the heathens with magnanimity. Magnanimity. That had been the word. Therefore, the Cherokee should be removed to the West" (136). This assertion shows the patronizing attitude of the White settlers, who believe they are acting benevolently by displacing Native Americans to the West in the name of civilization. Maritole reveals the irony of the civilizing mission by describing it as "this favor from the white man" (44). This statement emphasizes the hypocrisy of European settlers' purported humanity, as they pushed their civilizational beliefs on Native Americans while oppressing and exploiting them.

Similarly, in *Minor Detail*, Israeli soldiers defend their takeover of Palestinian land by arguing that it advances the region's civilization. In the opening chapter, the commander's speech outlines his beliefs and supports them with claims of attempting to make the country prosperous. The commander's statement illustrates the colonial ethos of civilizing Indigenous territories to justify occupation and colonialism. The statement "turning the Negev into a flourishing, civilized region" (37) indicates a dichotomy between the apparent wilderness of the desert and the envisioned European norms of civilization. He continues "And our presence here is the first step towards fulfilling this vision" (38) This language echoes historical narratives of colonial expansion, in which Indigenous regions were portrayed as untamed and in need of European intervention to advance and flourish.

The inclusion of Canada Park in the context of destroyed and ethnically cleansed villages emphasizes the narrative's central subject of colonialism and oppression. Canada Park is built on the

rubble of Palestinian communities destroyed during the Nakba. The park's establishment signifies a way of civilizing the land, with the violent dispossession and removal of Indigenous tribes hidden behind the guise of recreational spaces and natural beauty. Ra'ad (2010) states how Jewish contractors bought old stones from Palestinian towns to adapt their traditions to new constructions elsewhere.

Colonial projects seek to legitimize the occupation of Indigenous lands under the guise of progress and development. The appearance of checkpoints such as Qalandiya, as well as those on the Yafa Road and near Rahat, emphasizes the narrative's theme of colonialism and tyranny. While these checkpoints are promoted as legislation intended to keep order, they indeed function as physical and emotional impediments to Palestinian movement and independence. Additionally, the protagonist's depiction of the desolate road flanked by factories and car repair facilities provides insight into Israelis' civilizing effort in Palestine. The description of the landscape as "bleak" (80) and industrial implies an intentional alteration of the environment under occupation, representing Israel's imposition of industry and modernization on Palestinian regions. This landscape may be understood as an indication of the effort to civilize, in which Israeli authorities attempt to impose authority and influence over Palestinian lands by imposing Western concepts of progress and development.

In the worldwide classification of nations, the concept of civilization, interwoven with the notion of progress, acts as a benchmark for identifying countries as civilized, barbarous, or savage. This framework provides a simple basis for European nations to expand their global presence (Heraclides and Dialla, 2015). When analyzing colonization, it is critical to recognize its inseparable relation to civilization which emerges, in the colonial context, in many forms of dominance, whether explicit or implicit. These novels offer insightful perspectives on the ongoing oppression and the struggles for justice and freedom experienced by Indigenous populations worldwide.

3.6 Fading Heritage: The Theme of Cultural Erasure

America and Zionism use similar tactics to drive Palestinians and Native Americans off their ancestral lands. Both entities first came to America and Palestine as refugees seeking sanctuary. Subsequently, they assisted extensive immigration, laying the foundations for land appropriation for creating lasting authority over Indigenous lands. They also tried to stifle any form of Indigenous expression to completely eradicate their cultural identity. More importantly, these entities recruited certain officials who utilized severe eradication strategies, resulting in significant calamities.

Orr et al. (2019) claim that several academics have investigated Indigenous erasure and the logic of eradication as essential elements of settler societies' political, social, and cultural structures, both philosophically and practically. American Indian people, cultures, and political systems are routinely marginalized and eradicated by settler societies. This erasure is part of a larger colonial effort to minimize American Indians' presence to make land and resources more accessible. As a result, in addition to being forcibly removed from their homes through reservations and experiencing genocide, Native Americans are also classified by colonists in ways that serve to further erase and eradicate their existence. The very fact that Native Americans exist deters settler colonization, which prompts a determined attempt to jeopardize their survival on a biological, geographical, political, and most importantly cultural level.

Pushing the Bear investigates how the Cherokee people suffered cultural erasure during the Trail of Tears. Maritole, the protagonist, emphasizes the Cherokees' concerns over the erasure of their culture. She narrates, "And what of the booger mask dances? The green corn and new fire dances? What would become of our celebrations? The stickball games? Would we take them with us?" (16). She also alludes to the absence of their culture in the new territory describing how she sensed the dominance of the White man's influence in the landscape they traversed. It felt like a foreign world encroaching upon their own. They felt alienated. Further, she worries about their cherished language emphasizing, "Would we have language when we got to Fort Gibson in Indian Territory? Would we find our words hadn't migrated" (220). Tanner implies that their language encapsulates unique cultural concepts, nuances, and expressions that cannot be fully translated or conveyed in English. The White men's insidious efforts to eliminate Cherokee culture go beyond land seizure and include the suppression of their language. This oppressive approach is exemplified by Reverend Worcester's imprisonment for supporting the importance of the Cherokee language, which has nuances and expressions that contain distinctive meanings, sounds, and word relationships that express Cherokee concepts and sentiments. However, White men want to eradicate Cherokee voices and alter their way of life. This is depicted in Knobowtee's questioning over what they will plant. He reflects a broader fear within the Cherokee community about the potential loss of their agricultural practices and cultural heritage. The reference to the corn carries symbolic significance, as corn holds considerable cultural and spiritual importance in Cherokee society. Therefore, Knobowtee's question can be interpreted as an expression of anxiety regarding the encroachment of outside influences that seek to alter or eradicate Cherokee voices and their traditional way of life.

In a similar vein, there are numerous, varied instances of erasure in *Minor Detail*, which illustrate the systematic erasure of Palestinian history and geography. Signs of cultural eradication include the usage of Hebrew and English languages, the occupation of olive-tree-filled Palestinian villages, and the removal of anything Palestinian from the official Israeli map. Numerous road closures and flying checkpoints are two blatant examples of this eradication. Moreover, Road 443 is drastically changed from a tiny twisting path to a large straight road surrounded by high barriers, showcasing the Israeli settlements' invasion of Palestinian lands. The bittersweet nostalgia generated by the portrayal of the scenic route to al-Jib, juxtaposed with its later blockade, highlights the disruptive impact of occupation on the natural environment.

The construction of Canada Park atop Palestinian towns is a symbol of the continual erasure and appropriation of Palestinian heritage. The travel of the protagonist from Ramallah to Beitunia (Palestinian cities in the West Bank) stresses how the environment has changed because of the establishment of the Separation Wall and the renaming of Palestinian streets after flowers. The diminishing of Palestinian identity and culture is seen in the comparison of maps between Israel and Palestine. The journey of the protagonist serves as a reminder of the continuous struggle against the elimination of culture and territory due to settler's colonialism.

Both novels focus on the impact of colonization, occupation, and removal on memory and cultural identity as they explore the systematic attempts to marginalize, eliminate, and suppress Indigenous

cultures. Both force readers to consider the continuous battles that Indigenous people around the world endure to preserve their cultures.

3.7 Exposing the Fallacy of 'Land Without People, People Without a Land'

Both novels interrogate the colonial myths that constitute settler colonialism. They explain how the erasure of cultural legacy and communal memory is linked to land dispossession. They challenge the idea that Native and Palestinian lands are uninhabited areas ready to be colonized. The intricacies of colonial narratives that aim to eradicate Indigenous presence and establish authority over territory are explored by both writers.

The histories and realities of Native Americans and Palestinians revolve around the question of whether or not the land was inhabited. For Native Americans, the past embodies their rich cultural and historical legacy, deeply rooted in the lands they inhabited for centuries. Glancy investigates the Cherokee people's profound connection to their homeland as well as the terrible effects of their people's displacement. Glancy debunks the myth of the land without people propagated by the American government by mentioning the customs, oral stories, dances, language, songs, and ceremonies. She sheds light on the rich culture and heritage that the Cherokee people have.

Comparably, the history of the Palestinian people is defined by a long-standing relationship with the land, a rich cultural legacy, and ancestry. In *Minor Detail*, the Israeli commander describes a "completely arid" (38) desert that is devoid of people, echoing the colonial myth of terra nullius¹. However, in the second chapter, as the protagonist digs more into her investigation, Shibli deftly refutes the occupiers' false narrative of emptiness. She reveals the Palestinian people's deeply ingrained presence in the region. She portrays minor yet significantly major details of olive and cypress trees, the graffiti and the telephone number for a cooking gas cylinder seller covering the Separation Wall, the sight of clothes hanging out to dry, and the shepherds with their cattle that depict the Palestinian presence. Shibli not only stresses the continuous fight against erasure but also underlines the Palestinian connection to the land and their lasting existence despite attempts to erase it by uncovering layers of history and recovering narratives repressed by colonization.

Lamri (2016) states that both America and Israel spread the notion that Palestine and America were unpopulated lands ripe for progress. They went on to further undermine native communities by implying that they willingly gave up their land to colonizers for peaceful projects. Both countries also made an effort to defend the forcible removal of Indigenous people by presenting it as a strategy for avoiding conflict and arguing that it was essential for maintaining peace and stability. The claim by Zionists that they are making the desert prosper serves not only as part of the settlers' alleged civilizing effort but also as a strategy to alter the natural landscape by introducing non-native species into the soil. This achieves the dual goals of destabilizing the Indigenous population's customary way of life and hiding past injustices committed against them.

3.8 Cultivating Identity: The Significance of Olive Groves and Corn Farms

The strong bond that exists between the Cherokee and Palestinian people and their homelands is a major subject in both novels. Both novels highlight the importance of agricultural settings, especially cornfields and olive groves, in forming the stories and demonstrating the characters' ties to their ancestral lands. These natural environments depict the effects of colonization and displacement on Indigenous people while also serving as symbols of identity, resiliency, and survival.

For the Cherokee people in *Pushing the Bear*, maize farms are very important both culturally and spiritually. Historically, corn has been the primary source of food for many Native tribes, providing nutrition and nourishment for their communities. Its cultivation and harvest are frequently marked by ceremonial rituals and customs that celebrate the interconnectedness between humans, nature, and the divine. According to Cojti et al. (2019, 3), "Corn is part of Indigenous creation stories, passage rituals to adolescence, the mingas (community gatherings), and deities in the spirit world. Oral tradition has been fundamental for the transmission of knowledge about corn from generation to generation". Corn holds significant cultural importance among Indigenous communities, with Native Americans ensuring its preservation across generations through oral traditions. This cultural reverence extends to the Cherokees' deep connection to their ancestral lands. It is vividly depicted through evocative descriptions of the surrounding landscape and sacred places. These descriptions not only highlight the land's spiritual and emotional significance but also underscore its pivotal role in shaping the Cherokee identity (Abd-Rabbo 2019).

Similarly, in *Minor Detail*, the olive groves signify Palestinians' sense of self and durability in the context of occupation. The protagonist's experience with the olive orchard emphasizes the strong bond Palestinians feel with their homeland. Olive trees represent perseverance and continuity despite efforts to eradicate them. Palestinian author Tahrir Hamdi (2022) notes in her book *Imagining Palestine* that olive trees are a painful reminder of the many massacres that the Palestinian people endured.

The winding olive trees surround the protagonist's trip through the Palestinian landscape, whispering stories of bygone generations and demonstrating the people's resilience. The scenery reflects the melodic patterns of Palestinian daily life, providing a vibrant image of collective recollections that tie the people to their homeland.

4. Conclusion

In a nutshell, the continuous fight for autonomy, identity, and cultural sovereignty in the face of colonialism and oppression is highlighted by the connections between themes in Indigenous history. A prime example of this is the Native Americans' support for the Palestinian liberation cause.

In *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine* by Steven Salaita the struggle for freedom transcends national boundaries and highlights that the cause of Palestinian liberation is not only an intellectual endeavor but also a lighthouse for Indigenous return and the removal of colonial chains. *Minor Detail* and *Pushing the Bear* are two novels that recognize the history of Palestinians and Native Americans, showcasing their shared struggles against colonial oppression. The stories emphasize the brutality of violence, the colonists' deceitful language of control, and the use of religion to justify

aggressive behavior. These books' thematic similarities draw attention to the struggles that Native American and Palestinian populations suffered under colonial oppression.

The lessons learned from previous suffering demonstrate how vulnerable and responsible humans are to ending the cycle of colonialism and bloodshed. Humanity must answer the call of history, rise above prejudices, and forge a path that will lead to a future characterized by justice, peace, and freedom for all. Humanity can break free from the cycles of history and usher in a new period of human dignity by embracing empathy, solidarity, and resilience. This helps ensure that the tragedies of the past will not be perpetuated in the future.

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الملخص

تعدّ الكتابة وسيلة ممتازة للتطهير، وبخاصة للمهمشين، والأهم من ذلك، أنها شكل من أشكال المقاومة بالكلمة. وتشعر كل من أدانيا شيبلي وديان جلانسي وهما الكاتبتان الفلسطينيتان والأمريكيتان بالحاجة الملحة لسرد قصة شعبيهما، إذ يتناول هذا البحث موضوعات درامية تتعلق بالمأساة الثقافية والقدرة على الصمود كما وردت ومثلت في الأدب. ويسلط كتاب ديان جلانسي (رفع الدب) (1996) الضوء على التجارب المروعة التي عاشها الهنود الحمر وإبعادهم عن وطنهم، وبالنسبة لعمل أدانيا شيبلي (تفاصيل بسيطة) (2020/2017)، فهو تحليل عميق للتحديات المتكررة التي تحدث في مواجهة الخطر المستمر، ويشير التحليل المقارن إلى وجود روابط بين الكوارث التي عانى منها الفلسطينيون والأمريكيون "السكان الأصليون"، ويكشف التحليل عن التجارب المشتركة للنزوح والحرمان والصمود الثقافي من خلال المقارنة، مع التركيز على عالمية المعاناة الإنسانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستعمار، الثقافة، التهجير، المحو، التهميش، الصمود.

Endnotes

¹ Terra nullius, a Latin term meaning "nobody's land" refers to uninhabited land that is legally available for colonization or appropriation by another group or nation.

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