

**The Confluence of Culture,
Conflict and Commitment in Selected Modern Palestinian
Poetry 1948 to 1993: a Postcolonial Perspective**



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Submitted to the University of Limerick, date February 2010

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Conflict and Commitment in Modern Palestinian Poetry
1948 to 1993: a Postcolonial Perspective

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted, in whole or part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other qualification.

Signed: _____

Date: February 2010

Dedication

To my wonderful daughters Gillian and Aileen,
my delightful granddaughter
Eva-Marie Bridghid Wallace King

And in memory of my beloved father

Francis Lawrence O Halloran

Who, after 99 years on this earth, passed away on 14th December 2008

Acknowledgements

Dr Eugene O'Brien, for his belief in the viability of this project, my ability to achieve it, and for his profound academic influence throughout my voyage of self-discovery, Professor Kamal Abu Deeb, for his academic generosity and trust and his agreement to co-supervise this project, Professor Rashid el-Enany, who kindly agreed to act as external examiner, Professor James Anthony McKernan, for his friendship and inspiration, Christopher Barr for his loving support and encouragement, Bashir Dahmani, Rashida Oudina for their support in respect of the Arabic language and culture, Elaine Daly, who made my trip to Palestine feasible and also a safe and informative one. Tom O Grady, who has long supported my efforts, both academic and artistic, and who has checked up on me from time to time to make sure my nose was to the grindstone, the Limerick Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, for keeping me up to date on events concerning Palestine, Oscail, the Irish Open University, and a special thanks to Mary Immaculate College for the award of a studentship which enabled me to undertake this project.

Portions of this thesis have been disseminated at the following conferences and in the following publications:

'In Dark Times: Palestinian Poetry as a Weapon of Mass Instruction' presented at Institute of Technology Tallaght and Institute of Art and Design, Dublin, Joint Postgraduate Conference February 8th 2008.

'Rites and Rights: intertextual 'passages' in Tawfiq Sayigh's 'Poem No.6.' presented at Mary Immaculate College Department of English Language and Literature Conference, 22nd May 2008, Passages: Movements and Moments in Text and Theory

Wallace, Bridget, 2008, 'Rites and Rights: intertextual passages in Tawfiq Sayigh's Poem No.6.' in *Passages: Movements and Moments in Text and Theory*
Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press

Thesis Abstract

This thesis locates Palestinian poetry (in English translation) in the context of postcolonial literature, a perspective from which Arabic literature is not generally viewed. The valence of this perspective will be demonstrated by reading the poetry in the context of the confluence of three particular forces, namely: culture, conflict and commitment. This nexus of politico-historical forces is manifest in the tropes, themes and trajectories of modern Palestinian poetry from between the years 1948-1993. The thesis will demonstrate that Palestinian poetry exhibits many of the features of postcolonial literature; it will be argued therefore, that the poetry can be better understood and appreciated from this vantage point.

The introduction locates the study in the socio-cultural context, both Irish and Palestinian, briefly outlines the Arabic literary heritage from which Palestinian poetry emerges, and provides a synopsis of the politico-historical conditions associated with the chosen timeline. Drawing upon writers such as Edward Said and Franz Fanon, among others, it documents the role of culture as an important component of resistance and as a locus of identity and community cohesion for the Palestinian people.

Chapter I examines a selection of Palestinian poetry from the approximate period 1917 to 1948. This was a seminal period in Palestinian history, and attitudes to the Palestinian question externally. The chapter establishes the fact of discursive resistance to the partition of their country on the part of Palestinian poets, politicians and intellectuals of that period, and underscores the context of this resistance within Arab nationalism generally.

Chapter II examines the poetry from the period immediately after the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 and the establishment of the new Israeli state. The tropes of refugee and return and the problematic of Palestinian identity, permeate the poetry of this period. These were not mere aesthetic developments or postures, but rather they were/are indices of historical facts on the ground, a confluence of culture (poetry) and the conflict (the 1948 war) which resulted in large-scale Palestinian expulsion and dispossession and obliteration of the vestiges of Palestinian existence, such as destruction of villages or the re-naming (in Hebrew) of villages, towns and rivers.

Chapter III begins with the so-called Six Day War of 1967 in which the combined Arab armies were defeated and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip began. This was also a period during which Palestinian poets, male and female, were re-united across the land of Palestine and also the period in which the notion of ‘commitment’ to a literature of resistance was inspired by the Palestinian poets who had remained inside the new state of Israel after partition in 1948.

Chapter IV covers the period between the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 and the first Palestinian *Intifadāh* of 1987. As in previous chapters, this chapter continues to trace the trajectory of Palestinian poetry within the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment and the new range of tropes and images elicited by the nexus of forces impacting on Palestinian life and art.

Chapter V examines the poetry from the period of the *intifadah*, a further seminal period in the history of Israeli-Palestinian relations. By this time Palestinian poetry had developed an aesthetic sophistication of metaphor and structure in response to the fluctuations within the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment, forces, which this thesis will establish, reside at the core of Palestinian poetry to the present.

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A Note on Transliteration

Although the works discussed in this thesis are works of Arabic literature in English translation, many of them utilise a system of transliteration devised by scholars in order to render Arabic titles, proper names, and other words, in the English language. This system will be utilised throughout this document, except in the case of writers who utilise an English form of their Arabic name, without the use of diacritics, all other names will be rendered in transliteration.

The system of transliteration widely used in English scholarly discourse is that of the Library of Congress in the United States, and with minor adjustments in the British Library System. Thus any reader familiar with the Arabic language will be able to identify words from their transliterated spelling. The Library of Congress uses a written symbol from the English alphabet in order to replicate an equivalent written symbol in Arabic. It is not intended to reproduce exactly the pronunciation of such words. The Arabic names and titles transliterated will provide some idea of how the written symbols will sound, but any equivalence will not necessarily be complete. Apart from the usual English alphabet set, additional symbols and a set of diacritical marks are used in this system. For example: a left-facing quotation mark indicates the glottal stop *hamzah* ('). The superscript c (ˆ) represents a sound in Arabic (ayn) for which there is no English equivalent. Other symbols and sounds exist in the Arabic language, for which there are no equivalents in the English language. These sounds are represented in transliteration by a set of diacritical marks. Dots under certain consonants are used to indicate that these consonants are emphatic, for example Ṭ or ṭ while el

vowels, for example, Ā, or ā, indicate that their pronunciation time is longer.

The Library of Congress system of transliteration can be found at:

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/area/Near.east/lcromanization.pdf>

also at:

<http://archimedes.fas.harvard.edu/mdh/cromanization.pdf>

or by following the links from the Arab Gateway website at:

<http://www.al-bab.com/arab/language/roman.htm>

Introduction

Why a Postcolonial Perspective in a Study of Palestinian Poetry

Although Arabic literature does not immediately spring to mind in the context of the postcolonial paradigm, the Arab world has not been exempted from western colonial incursion and postcolonial hegemony. This research therefore, will examine modern Palestinian poetry (1948-1993), in English translations (a topic which will be discussed more fully later), from the viewpoint of Postcolonial literary theory. Although it may be a criticism of Postcolonial theory that it privileges the local, nevertheless, the local often informs and reflects the alliances, hegemonies and agendas of global politics. Exploring the local context of the postcolonial paradigm further highlights the local and historical variations that occur in the experience of colonialism. Furthermore, as Ankie Hoogvelt (2001) suggests, the designation 'post' in the term postcolonial does not necessarily imply the condition of post-independence, and the occupied Palestinian Territories fall neatly into this category. Rather than offering a retrograde perspective then, the study of Palestinian poetry as postcolonial literature is pertinent to a study of the dynamics of colonialism and colonial resistance, which in this instance can be observed in situ. This thesis will demonstrate that a postcolonial perspective in the study of Palestinian poetry, which is part of the corpus of Arabic literature, is both utilitarian and apposite.

Postcolonial critique, as Eoin Flannery observes: 'is founded on an ethical explication of the dynamics of colonialism and of postcolonial societies (Flannery 2006, 86). With such a position in mind, this thesis will elucidate the socio-historical conditions of Palestinian literary production. As Terry Eagleton suggests, literary works 'are not

mysteriously inspired or explicable in terms of their author's psychology, rather they are forms of perception, particular ways of seeing the world' (Eagleton 1976, 6). This thesis suggests that a world view evolves in accordance with a confluence of the internal and external forces, be they social, political, cultural or religious, which are dominant at any given period of a community's development. Such forces constitute the 'dynamics' of colonialism and the postcolonial 'Palestinian' experience.

The idea of a confluence of forces is metaphorically modelled on the geophysical feature which is a point of juncture, usually of two or more rivers. Confluence therefore, is a place (where things merge or flow together) and a process (the convergence of forces), and the newly combined poetic consciousness formed at this juncture. Poetry is the place where this confluence occurs and where the result of this process emerges. Furthermore, as a metaphor, confluence underscores the trope 'primacy of the geographical' described by Edward Said (1990), a feature associated with postcolonial literature generally and with much of the Palestinian poetry to be discussed in this thesis.

The thesis will trace the development and trajectory of political consciousness among Palestinian poets, in terms of their response to socio-political conflict and resistance, and how this consciousness has in turn influenced the trends and themes, literary structures and devices, which modern Palestinian poetry exhibits. It will trace the development of themes and imagery as they respond to the changing conditions of Palestinian existence, together with the 'local' interpretation of tropes, themes and imagery associated with postcolonial literature in general. Palestinian existence has been significantly shaped by the forces of culture, conflict and commitment since the early 20th century. The impact of the confluence of these individual variables will emerge under

qualitative analysis of the poetry in the main body of the thesis.

Culture, Conflict and Commitment: an Overview

Culture

At this juncture it would be constructive to delineate what is to be understood by the terms culture, conflict and commitment. Culture is a set of accepted rules and conditions, which regulate interaction within and between groups, and rather than being transmitted genetically these rules and regulations are learned both orally and by modelling, and passed on to each successive generation. Culture is that system of information that encodes the manner and means whereby a people, society or nation interacts with their social and physical environment, but more importantly, keeps itself in existence as a people or society. Culture therefore comprises the language, literature, religion, folklore, tradition and dress for example, associated with a particular people. Cultural determinism posits the view that human behaviour is to a large extent shaped by cultural and social factors, a view that perhaps sees culture as a reified concept that transcends the lives of individual members of that culture. Culture is also a process as well as a fixed entity that can accommodate human individual differences as well as changes in environment, political structures and technological advances.

The importance of literature (and poetry is a significant component of literature) as cultural production was underscored by Vincent Leitch (1988) who observed that: 'literary texts are increasingly regarded as communal documents or as events with social, historical, and political dimensions rather than simply as autonomous artefacts within an exclusively aesthetic domain'

(Leitch, <http://www.adfl.org/ade/bulletin/n090/090046.htm>). In respect of the importance of literature with the designation postcolonial, one might usefully turn to Terry Eagleton. In his book *The Idea of Culture*, Eagleton remarks that culture begins to matter at particular times during a society's history: 'when it becomes the only alternative to a degraded society, when it provides the terms in which a group or a people seeks its political emancipation, and when the imperial power is forced to come to terms with the way of life of its subjugates' (Eagleton 2000, 25). Just as the role of the Arab poet was that of register of his tribe's history, so culture has been an essential component of many liberation movements across the globe. Amilcar Cabral for example, remarks: 'Whatever may be the ideology or idealist characteristics of cultural expression, culture is an essential element of the history of a people' (Cabral 1973, 42).

Although ruptures in terms of cultural transmission can also occur, in times of conflict, or other forms of discontinuity, culture can be a touchstone, a readily available constant often transposable across religious, political and geographical divides. Poetry, as a component of human culture and consciousness, can be used as a means of improving consciousness and sensibility, by subjecting social ills to critical analysis, or by offering resistance to enculturation, particularly of a colonial nature. But cultural transmission can also operate in a bi-directional manner; it can provide a neutral space in which antagonistic communities can recognise the humanity and creative spirit of the 'other', a space wherein 'consciousness and sensibility' of the 'other' might be both formed and informed. Although they may be antagonists, human beings share emotions and a desire for intellectual pleasure that distinguishes humanity from the animal world. This can be a

vital element in respect of psychological equilibrium and in finding a space for 'empathy' with the culture of the 'other'.

Eagleton makes this further observation that: 'all readers are socially and historically positioned and how they interpret literary works will be deeply shaped by this fact' (Eagleton 1983, 83). For the culture-bound reader or critic, the recovery of the poetry's codes, symbols and allusions might always only be partial; therefore when evaluating poetry or literature (particularly in the comparative context) for its contribution to the formation of a national identity or nationalist consciousness or to anti-colonial momentum, it would be quite easy to either neglect or fallaciously negate any aesthetic value it may have. Likewise to highlight its lack of an aesthetic appeal to western sensibilities would be to 'misjudge' it according to an alien system of poetics.

Traditional Marxist theory as outlined by Marx and Engels, in *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848, posits material existence and physical environment as prime factors that determine the course of human consciousness and it also posits the idea that if humans strive to better these material conditions their consciousness will also improve. What this means in socio-cultural terms is that in order for a human aesthetic, and indeed ethical sensibility to develop, primary goals such as food, shelter, and in some instances a homeland, must first be met. This prioritising of material conditions in the formation of consciousness may be true up to a point, albeit modified by human individual differences, for much valuable literature, particularly poetry, has been produced in prisons, refugee camps and indeed from the condition of statelessness, all material conditions which might be considered less than ideal. Because of the nature of human individual differences, the psychological effects of material conditions may be more difficult to measure on a

general scale, nevertheless, those conditions are also bound to have a significant impact on the development of political consciousness, which in turn will influence the thematic content, sign systems and diction utilised by the writers of creative literature.

Conflict

In psychological parlance, conflict is a broad term that refers to any situation where there are mutually antagonistic events, motives, purposes, behaviours or impulses. Violent physical conflict can result in respect of attempts at colonisation, or in opposition to oppression and displacement, rebellion and the struggle for political independence, or indeed from post-colonial internecine power struggles. In this context, conflict can be a powerful trigger of political consciousness. However, political consciousness in literature does not necessarily involve the use of anarchic symbolism or overt political references, rather it often forms part of the subtext of the literature, which can be uncovered by close attention to its structure, themes, sign systems and cultural codes, for consciousness must also be understood in terms of the aesthetic sensibility and sensitivity displayed by writers. In times of conflict, poetry can be an act of defiance that asserts the significance of culture in the form of human creativity.

Many (if not all) of the poets to be discussed in this thesis will no doubt have their thematic content informed by their own material existence (as refugees, in menial employment inside Israel for example), or by such circumstances as they impact on the communities they represent. One example is the strident political consciousness and resistance to the representation of Arabs as inferior, exhibited by Mah □m ũ Darw šh i
his poem 'Identity Card' when the speaker insists:

‘write down, I am an Arab’,
my identity card number is fifty thousand,
I have eight children, And a ninth will come after a summer,
will you be angry? (Darwīsh circa 1964)

he is making a statement dedicated to keeping the project of Palestinian identity and steadfastness to the forefront of an aesthetics of commitment. Furthermore the poem challenges the subaltern status assigned to the Palestinian Arab population of Israel and his people’s broader condition of statelessness and exclusion within which the poet himself participates.

But conflict also occurs in a subjective psychological sense, between the self and the other for example, between conscious and unconscious internal opposing forces such as guilt, or a sense of personal or communal powerlessness. Much postcolonial literature demonstrates approach-avoidance conflict, the condition of being both drawn towards, and repelled by, the same goal, often in terms of the adoption of western values and aesthetics, and in psychological terms, this can be a particularly difficult type of conflict to resolve, particularly for the Diaspora poet. This idea resonates with Fanon’s (1995) explication of the psycho-affective disorder of the subjugated native, what he describes as: ‘the anxiety shared by the native intellectuals to shrink away from that Western culture in which they all risk being swamped’ while at the same time as native intellectual, he/she extols the merits of an indigenous culture and history, in order to attest to the native’s right to political and cultural independence. ‘This claim to a national culture in the past’, says Fanon, ‘does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture. In the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium he continues: ‘it is responsible for an important change in the native’ (Fanon

1995, 154). In the Palestinian poetry of the period in question, 1948-1993, the root conflict could be seen as that of dispossession and exile, and it is their commitment to sustaining their cultural identity and cohesion as a people, a position which draws Palestinians into conflict with the forces that might work to extinguish that culture.

Commitment

Commitment, in modern Arabic literature, usually refers to the writer's level of engagement with 'Arabness', the sense that despite western encroachment, there is a distinct Arab identity, shared with other Arab communities, together with a shared Arab literary heritage and cultural values as contributing factors to the ongoing Arab cultural re-awakening known as *al-nahḍa*. ~~Ḥamās~~ collected essays *Exiles* Said (2001) remarks that after 1948: 'Arabs who wrote undertook a fundamentally heroic enterprise, a project of self-definition and autodidactic struggle' (Said 2001a, 45). Since the defeat of the Arab armies and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the call to commitment in Arabic literature has been a powerful one, involving not just a commitment to 'Arabness' as outlined above, but also recognition of the continued plight of the Palestinians. After decades of internal struggle and foreign domination Said states: 'no Arab could say that in 1948 he was in any way detached or apart from events in Palestine' (Said, 2000 46). The idea of commitment evolved to encompass the idea of resistance in literature. The constitutive elements of a literature of resistance were defined by Ghāssan Kanafānī in 1966, when he brought the Palestinian poets of the resistance to the attention of a wider audience. The commitment they demonstrated to the opposition of military rule inside Israel in the years after partition, inspired future generations of Palestinian poets.

Why Palestinian Poetry

Political consciousness as a form of discursive resistance and its role in the shaping of an aesthetic, will be highlighted in this project, not only in the service of the study of comparative literature, but also in order to facilitate (particularly in Irish academic institutions), the serious attention that Palestinian poetry as cultural production deserves. This brings one to the inevitable question, why does Palestinian poetry deserve this close attention? One reason has been suggested above, in terms of the uniqueness of the Palestinian condition as a locus of the ‘dynamics’ of colonialism in action.

Palestinian poetry is also deserving of study as part of the corpus of Arabic literature and the rich and long heritage from which it derives, it has therefore, intrinsic value as comparative literature. The traditional Arab poet has long been the register of his tribe, and played a vital role as news reporter as well as entertainer and keeper of the tribe’s history and lineage, proclaiming its allegiances, extolling and defending its honour. The importance of the poet to Arabic culture and community has been described as a ‘call and response’ between poet and people. It was the poet’s duty and role to: ‘give to the collective ... a unique image of itself in a unique poetic language’ thus the aims of poetic composition and its reception ‘coincide by prior agreement’ (Adūnis 1990, 30).

Many Palestinian poets have been politically active, and in light of this ‘prior agreement’ are perhaps expected to be so. And not just active in the discursive sense, but also as public representatives and even as fighters, and the views and emotions expressed in their poetry can therefore be regarded as alternative ‘news bulletins’ and as sources of their community’s history. Furthermore, Palestinian poets remain in the vanguard of

resistance to colonial incursion, partition, expulsion and occupation of their homeland. Palestinian poetry therefore, can be considered as a cogent distillation of the history of the struggle for an independent Palestinian homeland, as it is experienced and remembered by the register of the Palestinians people, their poets.

As a form of cultural dialogue, poetry is non-hierarchical in the sense that it is the sharing of emotional responses between poets and other poets, between poets and critical theorists, and between poets and readers. It can thus be regarded as having the potential to ‘foster cross-periphery solidarity’ in a variety of ways (Flannery 2006, 84). If this appears to be a too overtly partisan position, then one might usefully return to Flannery’s foundational explication of postcolonial critique above. Then any such committed critique can be regarded as analysis which is balanced between benefit to the postcolonial community, concomitant with, rather than exclusively mired in, the ‘partisan’ service of postcolonial theory *per se*. In the absence of such a balance, academic analysis may be in danger of re-inscribing a hierarchical, western ethno-centric viewpoint. As Leitch (1988) remarked in his discussion of literary criticism and ethics: ‘the task of literary study is not simply aesthetic scrutiny in the pursuit of appreciation and refinement but cultural analysis in the interest of social understanding and human emancipation’

(Leitch, <http://www.adfl.org/ade/bulletin/n090/090046.htm>). What Leitch appears to focus on here is the ‘commitment’ of the analyst, not just to the pursuit and explication of aesthetic excellence, but also in respect of ‘cross periphery solidarity’, the kind that fosters understanding of the causes of conflict and can help emancipate individuals and societies from negative stereotypical representations, which is a goal of this thesis.

It can also be argued that the agenda of postcolonial critique is similar to that of cultural studies as outlined by Hoogvert, who states that: ‘the emancipatory promise and purpose of cultural studies is to discover resistance and subversive creativity in the cultural relationship between dominant and subordinated groups’, and help reverse it’ (Hoogvert 2001, 169). In the sense postcolonial critique should interrogate and help reverse the relationship between dominant and subordinate groups. Furthermore, Hoogvert's analysis implies a tacit acceptance of ‘commitment’ on the part of critical theorists working in this domain.

Further Exploratory Questions

Like the convergence of culture, conflict and commitment, several strands of investigation converge in this thesis, one of those strands is the idea that Palestinian resistance, discursive and actual, derives from love of their lost homeland. This idea of ‘love’ that often underlies nationalist projects has been explored by Benedict Anderson, who remarks that despite the often negative connotations associated with the term nationalism: ‘nations [and by association nationalism] inspire love and often profoundly self-sacrificing love’ (Anderson 2006, 141). Therefore it can be argued that love fuels Palestinian commitment to resist their cultural extinction. Such commitment is a vital component in consolidating that culture and identity, the existence of which is challenged by the often invisible quotidian conflict associated with military occupation.

While much poetry from the period immediately after 1948 is rife with emotional anger and the desire for revenge, rather than in any sense an ‘action’, this is viewed as a normal reaction (such as occurs in extreme grief) to the shock of defeat, displacement and

loss in 1948. It can be regarded as concomitant with the first phase in Franz Fanon's (1961) 'three-phase' explication of the development of postcolonial literature as a literature written to either 'charm or denounce' the colonial oppressor. Palestinian poetry develops a temperate tenor and sophistication of metaphor which is noticeable from the 1950s, particularly in the work of Tawfiq S[□]ayigh, but especially so from the early 1970s. Furthermore, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, in many instances of Palestinian poetics, telling history and experience 'like it is' requires no elaborately contrived metaphorical dramatisation, very often the drama is inherent in the everyday experience of individuals and their community.

The Stereotypical interpretation of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

There is no doubt that postcolonial theory challenges the stereotypical colonial representations of subject peoples, and central to this thesis, is the deconstruction of the Palestinian 'stereotype'. In respect of imperialist discourse Abdul Janmohammed observes: 'colonialist discourse commodifies the native subject into a stereotyped object and uses him as a resource for colonialist fiction' (Janmohammed 1986, 80). Janmohammed's idea here can easily be transposed onto the political cyclorama upon which the native is stereotyped as 'terrorist' and can then become a resource in the rhetoric of 'security' that often underwrites the necessity of oppressive tactics.

In the psychological context, human attitudes are extremely difficult to alter and a key component of negative attitude formation is the 'stereotype', a heuristic which is often utilised in the absence of any real (or perhaps suppressed) empirical knowledge of the 'other'. In terms of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there has undoubtedly been

established in the western purview, a stereotypical interpretation of the conflict based on a view of Israel as a small and vulnerable nation surrounded by hostile Arab neighbours and plagued by Palestinian ‘terrorists’ whose motives are driven by innate hatred of Jews.

Through examination of Palestinian poetry, this thesis will deconstruct what John Berger has described as the ‘monstrous stereotype’ of the Palestinian as ‘Terrorist’, and in so doing it will assert the ‘human-beingness’ of the Palestinian people (Berger 2008, 68). This underscores the question, why in the 21st century should a piece of academic research feel the need to assert the ‘human-beingness’ of an Arab people. Edward Said observes that in the west Arabs are almost exclusively looked upon as a political problem, to be dealt with rather than engaged with. And Palestinians are after all, Arabs, often seen as part of a homogenous group with the same goals and motivations. This thesis will show that both Jewish and Palestinian poets, have in many poetic instances, overcome the stereotypes they hold of each other, and in so doing acknowledge the humanity of the other.

The Deconstruction of the Arab Stereotype

In the *Collins School Dictionary*, (1996) the word ‘dichotomy’ is explained as ‘a division into sharply divided or opposed parts’. There is nothing unusual in this explanation but what makes this particular instance so interesting is that the said dictionary cites this example: ‘the dichotomy between Eastern and Western cultures’. It appears from this example, that as late as the mid-1990s (in fact, just three years after the publication of Samuel Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilisations’) within Western discourse (including educational discourse), the dichotomy of East and West has been viewed as a

deterministic given that supports the notion of irreconcilable difference. This is an important point in the temporal context of the period under discussion, which culminates in the period immediately after the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993.

While Said (2001) has claimed that much revision has taken place in the field of cultural discussion, revision that involves a ‘critique of Eurocentrism’, thereby negating the theoretical position of ascribing a priority to one tradition (usually western) over others, it may still be true that in general our knowledge and perception of Middle Eastern societies is defined largely by the media, by available stereotypes, and as can be determined from the semantic example above, is very often based on the premise that the east and west form naturally antagonistic binary opposites (Said 2001a, xv).

In his book, *Covering Islam* (1997) Said points out that not only does the media give shape to our perception of the Middle East, but it also shapes the response of the academic world to both Islamic and Middle Eastern studies in general. For example, he points out that Middle Eastern studies generally and in the United States particularly, centre on the socio-political context of Islamic law and conflict in the Middle East such as the Arab/Israeli conflict, to the extent that Middle Eastern literature is often a neglected area of the scholarly curriculum, despite the range and depth of Arabic literature now available in scholarly translations in English and other languages. These factors underscore what Said describes as: ‘the western obsession with Arabs almost exclusively as a political problem’ (Said 2001a, 45).

As Berger (2008) remarks: ‘across the world those who have sophisticated military superiority, usually have considerable, if not total, control of the media. And with the help of the media they impose denigrating stereotypes on those they are

oppressing'. Palestinians, says Berger, are repeatedly described as 'Terrorists'. In addition he suggests they are perceived as 'Small-minded', 'Indolent', 'Backward', 'Obsolete'. Indeed, Chapter One of this thesis documents the existence of such stereotypes. The possibility that the rest of the world may continue to judge Palestinians according to such 'monstrous stereotypes', says Berger, 'makes their struggle to assert their true identity harder' (Berger 2008, 68). And no doubt particularly harder for a people who, Israeli Premier Golda Meir once remarked, did not exist.

This thesis locates the 'human-beingness' of the Palestinian people in the work of their poets, and in a form (poetry) that encompasses their historical, political and cultural struggle. Commitment in Palestinian poetry is an effort to sustain the continuity of their identity, which is known in their hearts and expressed in their attempts to elicit recognition (through cultural engagement) in the hearts of an often hostile and indifferent world. Poetry as an act of resistance can offer an alternative view of history, culture and conflict, which challenges the often stereotypical representations of both victor and vanquished. The following extract from the foreword written by former CIA analysts Kathleen and Bill Christison, for Ramzy Baroud's book *The Second Palestinian Intifada* (2006), deftly points the stereotypical representations which have accrued to this particular conflict:

A predominant, and perhaps salient, feature of the history of Zionism and the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state has been the Zionist effort to ignore – and therefore ultimately erase from the political landscape – the Palestinian people who were native to the land that became Israel ... it has become ever easier for people the world over, as well as for politicians and policymakers, to forget the Palestinians because they do not constitute a state (or an effective political lobby), and, in a cruel vicious circle, the longer Palestinian national

aspirations are ignored, the less their claim to any kind of national sovereignty is seen as legitimate. A body of assumptions has grown up, centering on the notions that Israel is the victim, that Palestinians have no rational basis for their hostility towards Israel, and that the only real issue is Palestinian hatred of Jews and refusal to accept Israel's existence. (Kathleen and Bill Christison in Baroud 2006, ix)

Since the mid 1970s, and particularly in the United States of America, Said argues that there has been a certain level of bias against the Palestinians in terms of their representation as the 'stereotypical' aggressors. He contends that none of the Palestinian positions in respect of a 'two-state solution' or on the issue of 'mutual recognition' or indeed, 'imperatives for peaceful negotiation has ever been reported with requisite care or accuracy' (Said 1995, xxiv). On the contrary, Said suggests that the United States media has stressed the inherently 'terrorist' nature of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as a factor which made peace impossible and that the Palestinian people are regarded as a threat to the continued security and existence of Israel. Said opines: 'in the aftermath of the Holocaust we [Palestinians] have been cast as the Hitlerain legacy' (Said 1995, xx). It is not surprising, therefore, that in some western quarters Palestinians should continue be seen not as a people who were forcibly and unjustly evicted from their homeland in 1948 and a considerable number of them again in 1967, but rather as aggressors who refuse to accept that eviction, a refractory people who 'unreasonably, demanded self-determination and full human rights' (Said 1995, xxvi). This is a process of representation that Said (2001a) has described as 'blaming the victims' and consequently: 'to keep up a national existence' was, for Palestinians, 'an extremely tough proposition' (Said 1995, xix). The poetry examined throughout this thesis explicates the injustice of such a legacy in respect of the Palestinian people and as previously stated,

will work to undermine the stereotypical representations delineated by Kathleen and Bill Christison above.

As previously observed, despite the perceived contamination of nationalism: ‘its roots in fear and hatred of the other and association with racism’, Anderson observes that ‘nations [and by association nationalism] inspire love and often profoundly self-sacrificing love’ (Anderson 2006, 141). This idea of love that Anderson invokes is clearly shown in cultural production such as literature. Yet it is truly rare he argues, to find analogous products expressing fear and loathing. Even in colonised communities: ‘who have every reason to feel hatred for their imperialist rulers it is astonishing how insignificant the element of hatred is in these expressions of national feeling’ (Anderson 2006 142). While closely examining the relational field that exists between oppression and resistance, and its expression through poetry, this thesis will demonstrate that much of the Palestinian poetry to be discussed expresses regret rather than hatred, a deep sense of loss and longing for return prevails over any desire for revenge.

The poetry examined in this thesis establishes that Palestinians had indeed a rational basis for any hostility they expressed toward the new Israeli state. This basis includes: forced dispossession, exile, second class citizenship, economic and cultural privation, occupation, arbitrary punishments and expropriation of their remaining land, together with a halt on the trajectory of Palestinian nationalism. Furthermore, it will highlight that the resort to violent confrontation with that state, has a direct relational basis to this list of grievances, but also that Palestinians have, at least since the early 1970s, been both open to, and have at times initiated, a negotiated settlement with Israel.

The Poets and the Works Chosen for Study

Who are the Poets?

A range of significant and respected Palestinian poets (both male and female) will be examined in the political/historical context of their creative production. Some of these poets are well-known and acknowledged outside of the Middle East, undoubtedly due to the fact that they have been widely translated. Many of these poets emerged in the 1950s and their work ranges through the entire period under discussion. Any study of this nature must rely largely on the works of those poets who have in fact been translated into western languages. However, the writers and works in question are undoubtedly among the finest exemplars of Palestinian poetry, such that the focus of this thesis might easily have been on any one of a number of poets. Nevertheless, a broad range of poets, from a variety of backgrounds and experiences have been drawn upon in order to offset any misconception that only a relatively small number of Palestinian poets have achieved a high level of aesthetic sophistication. Furthermore, drawing on a wide range of poets also qualifies the range of emotional and physical travail experienced by the Palestinian people as a whole. It documents the role of poets in the forging of a socio-political cohesion, while at the same time, being forced to forage for, not just a viable and sustainable political identity, but in many cases a viable and sustainable economic livelihood.

In any study such as this one, it will not be possible to cover the full range of poets available in English translation. The criteria for selection and study utilised in this thesis considered firstly, who were the exemplars of Palestinian poetry and secondly,

which poets were available in English translation? Availability therefore was both a necessity, and a limitation, in terms of the present study. Furthermore, many worthy Palestinian poets were of necessity omitted in order to comply with the demands of document length, and in order to permit an in depth analysis of the poetic works chosen. Many of the Palestinian poets reviewed (but not necessarily selected) for consideration in terms of this study are anthologised in English, or bilingual Arabic/English, translations. Having examined these, it appeared that at least from 1948 onwards, many, if not all Palestinian poets, appear to have their thematic content either determined by, or infused with commitment to, the Palestinian experience, including those poets who have been omitted. A selection of the work of those poets who came to prominence during the period under discussion will be examined, including: Ibrāhīm T al-Rahīm Mah chapters the poets that emerged after 1948 including: T Jabrā, Sālim Jubrān, Laila °Allūsh, Mai S Samīh al-Qāsim and Fadwā T Fawaz Turki, Salma al-Khadra al-Jayussi, Hanan Ashrawi, Naomi Shihab Nye, Rāsīm al-Madhūn, Tāhā Muh examined. The poets chosen for inclusion in this study appear in a wide variety of English language anthologies. Some write in English, Hanah Ashrawi, Naomi Shihab Nye, Ibtisam Barakat, Fawaz Turki and Sharif el-Musa for example, while Mah Darwīsh has been widely translated in English and other languages. It can be safely assumed therefore, that they are among the Palestinian exemplars of the genre. It is arguably true of most societies that produce poetry that the foremost among them will be

□uq ān, Ab ūSalma

□m ūd, from the

□ ayigh, Jabr āIbr

□ ayigh, Kam ā M

□Bsciso, Rash d H

□ ānmed Al ī Ibt

□m ūd

those who are frequently anthologised. Furthermore, the work of many of these poets stretches across the timeline of this thesis and provides therefore, a parallel history of the period as it impacts on individuals as well as on the collective Palestinian experience. For a selection of their works in both Arabic and in English translation see appendix 2.

Palestinian women poets will not be discussed as a discrete category in this document. The fact that the struggle for recognition on the part of women poets may have been fraught, on a personal as well as at an artistic level, has been discussed by many writers not least by T ~~Ami Elad Bouskila~~ *(Journey, 1990)*. Neither will it elide the differences that arose between (in thematic approach, style etc.) what Ami Elad Bouskila (1999) describes as the insider/outsider experience of Palestinian poets, those on the ‘inside’ who, until 1966 remained inside Israel and were more or less cut off from their fellow Palestinians ‘outside’ of the state of Israel, in refugee camps in neighbouring Arab countries or under Jordanian rule in the West Bank, or Egyptian rule in the Ghāzā Strip. In terms of cultural identity, these poets are unquestionably Palestinian Arab but religiously they are Christian and Muslim, while Samīh al-Qasīm is a Druze. Politically they may belong to a broad base of Arab nationalism, Ba’āth Party members or supporters, or they may adhere to the political Left, as members of the Israeli Communist Party for example and later the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and many of these political categories also interconnect.

The poets covered come from a range of backgrounds and experiences. In terms of social status, these poets range from urban to village dwellers; some come from the refugee camps, are sometimes self-taught, while others hail from the educated ranks of the Palestinian notable families. Nevertheless their poetry speaks of their unflinching

unity as spokesmen/women for the cultural integrity and political aspirations of their people. This sense of unity and commitment across the religious, gender divide and political divides is expressed by Fadwā Tūqān in her poem dedicated to the ‘Poets of the Resistance’, those who had remained inside Israel after partition, whom she addresses as ‘brothers in the wound’ (Tuqan 1990, 211).

The Works Chosen for Study

As already stated, Palestinian poetry is part of the corpus of Arabic literature, a literature generally composed in the Arabic language by Arab writers, for a largely Arabic speaking/reading audience, but for the purposes of this thesis it will also include literature written in English by Palestinian poets. Several Palestinian poets compose in languages other than Arabic, Anton Shammās for example writes in Hebrew and Hanan Ashrawi composes poetry in English. The poetry to be discussed in this thesis covers a wide range of poetic exemplars of the work of both men and women poets. The poetry they have produced has undoubtedly contributed to our understanding of the Palestinian experience.

The poetry of the Palestinian Mahmūd Darwīsh, a cogent and aesthetically satisfying source of insight, into *al-nakbah*, the Palestinian disaster of 1948 and its ongoing consequences, the continuing Arab/Israeli conflict and the struggle for Palestinian statehood. Darwīsh, a winner of the Lenin Peace Prize in 1983, and the Dutch, Prince Claus Prize in 2004, is an internationally known poet whose work is widely available in English translation. Other exemplary Palestinian poets covered by this study include Samīh al’Qāsim and Fadwā Tūqān whose work with Darwīsh, has been a continuous and towering presence throughout the period. It will

also examine the work of the next generation of poets such as Mourid Barghouti, Tāhā Muh ~~Alī and~~ the younger generation of Diaspora including: Naomi Shihab Nye, Ibtisam Barakat.

The works included in this thesis have been chosen in an endeavour to determine their contribution to the corpus of resistance literature, and to the development of a Palestinian national consciousness and culture. Inevitably, no single project of the present type can cover the full extent of literature available therefore many equally valid and praiseworthy works will necessarily be omitted. In many ways, the poetry discussed in this thesis is reflective of present day problems in the Arab world, problems which to a considerable extent are related to the western world's attitude to the east in general and to the Palestinian question in particular. Issues such as: how best to assert a Palestinian national identity, whether that identity should be secular or religious, and how to deal with personal as well as political aspirations, also emerge. Ideological and aesthetic freedom is a concern of literature everywhere and is a manifestation of political consciousness, which in this thesis, will be considered as a confluence of culture, conflict and commitment that exists at the core of modern Palestinian poetry.

The Timeline of this Study

The timeline of this thesis, 1948-1993, is significant for several reasons. Firstly the Zionist movement for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, a movement that this thesis argues can be seen as a colonialist one, had its cause substantially advanced in 1917 by Britain's Balfour Declaration (which demonstrated support for such a homeland), followed in 1922 by Britain's Mandate for Palestine after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The year

1948 marks a seminal point in Palestinian history, indeed Arab history, the *nakbah*, the expulsion of a large segment of the indigenous Arab population from the land that was to become the new state of Israel. Secondly, the period saw the creation of a substantial Palestinian refugee population who to date, have no homeland and are scattered in refugee camps across the Arab world, or herded together in the tiny Ghāzā Strip, or under military occupation in the Palestinian West Bank.

The period also witnessed the development of a more organised political consciousness among Palestinians, culminating in the emergence of the *al-Fatah* movement in the 1950s. The so-called ‘Six Day War’ (1967) wherein the combined Arab armies were defeated by Israel and the rest of the Palestinian territory occupied. As a consequence of the occupation, all sectors of the Palestinian community found themselves united psychologically (the Palestinian Arabs inside the new state of Israel had lived under military rule until 1966) and now physically across the land of Palestine. It was during this period that the Palestinian Diaspora poets discovered and drew inspiration from the so-called ‘poets of the resistance’ who had carried on the tradition (established prior to 1948) of a strong discursive resistance to colonisation and the partition of their homeland. The war of 1967 was followed by another Arab-Israeli war in 1973 which saw a modicum of reversal in the Palestinian condition, in the sense that the Palestinian question once again emerged onto the world stage. However little changed on the ground for Palestinians and in 1987, the discontent and disaffection that persisted in the face of economic deprivation and oppressive occupation erupted in the populist first Palestinian *intifādah*, a decidedly significant period of the Palestinian struggle, which only came to an end with the Oslo Agreements of 1993.

As previously discussed, the period covered by this thesis 1948 to 1993 marks a significant phase (indeed phases) of Palestinian political and cultural indeterminacy, but also of Palestinian political and cultural determination. Beginning in 1948, and prefaced with a chapter which examines the poetry that emerged prior to the partition of Palestine, the thesis closes with the period immediately after 1993. Much has happened to affect the socio-cultural landscape of Palestine during the intervening sixteen years since 1993; many of the same issues continue to fuel the tensions between Israel and the Palestinians and among Palestinians themselves. It could be argued that the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 is the closest the region has come to a semblance of peace, the closest Palestinians have come to a state of their own, and indeed after Oslo, it appeared to some sections of Palestinian society, that this is the closest it might ever come. Palestinian poets and critics therefore must be permitted the intellectual space wherein to assess the trajectory of Palestinian poetry post-Oslo.

In an essay for *Foreign Affairs* in 1993 titled 'The Clash of Civilisations', Huntington warns that an inevitable 'clash between cultures' is likely to inform future confrontations between 'the west and the rest'. While Huntington's observations do not provide an explicit reason for ending this discussion in 1993, in respect of the 1990s and beyond, it does underscore the value of engaging with the history of communities in conflict, through the non-hierarchical route of cultural exchange (particularly through poetry), rather than through the hegemonic imposition of, the values and mores which constitute western progressiveness.

Much has occurred since Oslo which requires to be objectively evaluated from an academic perspective, particularly in respect of literary and artistic production. Firstly,

the sixteen years since the Oslo Accords is not a long time in historical terms and much has occurred in the interim, not least of which is the dissection of the West Bank into a kind of Bantustan system as a result of Oslo. Palestinian poets and intellectuals must also be afforded the time and space to come to terms with the second *intifādah* in the year 2000, with the terrible and desolate phenomenon of the suicide bomber, the rise of *Hamas*, a religious-based force, in contrast to the secular *al-Fatah* and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, and the continuing military occupation and illegal settlement of Palestinian land. These conditions entail daily hardship and travail for the Palestinian population, together with what appears to be the increasing unwillingness of the Israeli state (and its western backers) to come to terms with the ideal and indeed the justice of Palestinian statehood. As the poet John Berger observes, ‘the fact that the outside world fails time and again to check Israel’s actions ... even when those actions have been repeatedly condemned by international law – [for Palestinians] makes that struggle [to continue to exist] at times desperate’ (Berger 2008, 69).

Neither has there has been time yet to fully evaluate or come to terms with the most recent incursion into the Ghāzā Strip (2008) for example, or the impact of the fall of the Iraqi regime (which at least discursively supported the Palestinian cause) or to the outcome or potential repercussions of the recent Goldstone Report on the events in the Ghāzā Strip in 2008. The political fall-out for Palestinians post-Oslo is only one aspect of these events, and this is captured by Mahḡmūd Darwīsh in his poem ‘Eleven Planets in the Last Andalusian Sky’, to be discussed in Chapter V, but Darwīsh also underscores the potential negative impact on Palestinian artistic production when in his poem ‘A State of

Siege' he remarked on: 'the structural defect that will afflict the poem and the play and the incomplete painting' (Darwish 2002, 137).

The Importance of Translation

Postcolonial literature is generally thought of as literature written in the language of the colonial master, English or French for example. Writers in Arabic therefore, may be judged to fall beyond the usual parameters of the postcolonial. However, some Palestinian poets/novelists also write in languages other than Arabic, Hebrew for instance, the language of the Israeli oppressor, and indeed as previously stated, several Palestinian poets also write in English. Nevertheless, Arabic is the preeminent language of Palestinian poetry. This factor must inevitably raise the question, and the problematic, of receiving and analysing Palestinian poetry in translation.

'Anyone who has ever translated a poem', Vivian Eden (2008) remarks, 'knows that it is nearly impossible to reproduce the whole of the original in the target language' (Eden 2008, 89). Translation, Eden continues: 'involves a kind of intimacy with the poet. You get to know him, enter his private places and emotions, and come to an understanding of how he sees things' (Eden 2002, 91). In the context of Palestinian poetry this is an important observation for two reasons in particular. Although Eden is referring here to the relationship that develops between the translator and writer that he/she translates, the situation underscored here is one that can be extrapolated to the relationship between the poet and the reader of that translation. The availability of sensitive translations permits the development of potential 'intimacy' between poets and readers who might otherwise never encounter each other, nor come to appreciate the

creative capacity and ‘humanness’ of the cultural other. Poetry by its nature can communicate those emotions with a terseness of content, and an immediacy which is over and above that of other genres such as the novel. Eden makes this further observation on the significance of translation, which is particularly pertinent in the Israeli-Palestinian context:

Where language groups exist uneasily side by side, translating poetry leads to better understanding, the dispelling of misunderstandings, and a justified sense of mutual accomplishment. (Eden 2008, 92)

The understanding of the ‘other’ through engagement with the art of poetry from the comparative academic context is only one aspect of the value of such cultural exchange. As Eden rightly points out, bi-directional translations are vital where inter-communal conflict exists.

The target audience of this thesis is an English-speaking audience; therefore it will concern itself with some of the most significant and representative works of Palestinian poets that are readily available in English translation. The discussion will remain cognisant of the possible pitfalls of translation, in terms of the misinterpretation of cultural codes for example, as discussed earlier. However, there is no readily available western audience for poetry in the Arabic language but this should not preclude cultural engagement, albeit in translation, thus the work of translators is of paramount importance to the potential for ‘peripheral solidarity’ with the cultural other. The importance of translations of Arabic literature, to comparative studies generally, has recently been highlighted by the Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti:

Arabic literature, both classical and modern, is almost absent from the world stage. The dominant culture of our times, western culture, has not seen other languages, discourses and civilisations as equally worthy approaches to the world. We'll reach nowhere if the concept of "universality" is not re-examined. No western writer questions his or her universality; it is the Arabs, the Africans and the Asians who should aspire to reach it, through translation. Translation being a chance, a favour, a medal, a stamp of recognition and a password to open the space for the lucky newcomers [sic]. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/apr/12/publishing.society>)

Palestinian/Arabic literary heritage has been extensively documented by literary critics and historians both Arab and non-Arab and furthermore, a wide range of this critical material is also available in translation. Some notable non-Arab critics and historians include A.J. Arberry and Roger Allen while Arab critics include Alī Ah imed S ā (Anonis), Edward Said, Albert Hourani, Salma Khadra al-Jayussi and Mostafa M. Badawi, Kamal Abu Deeb and Issa Boullata.

Translation will probably always be culture-bound in the sense that the translator may be influenced by cultural and aesthetic trends associated with the time and place of the target language; nevertheless it is a task that must be undertaken to enable both an adequate understanding and appreciation of comparative literatures, and the cultural milieu wherein they are produced. The problem for the translator then is whether to cater to the aesthetic expectations of the target language audience or to remain as close as possible to the form and language of the source text, a question which qualifies Eden's remarks above.

The translation of poetry poses specific problems and comes with its own set of limitations. As Susan Bassnett (1998) observes, is not so much to produce a direct translation, but rather the task of the translator of poetry is to 'determine and locate the

seed' of the poem and 'set about it transplantation', its 'literary transfer' into the target language (TL). In order for such a cultural transmission to take place, for the translation to have impact, for the seed or essence of the poem to 'transfer' to the TL, Bassnett observes that 'the skills of the translator have to be such that the end product is more than merely acceptable' in the TL (Bassnett 1998, 57). In terms of this latter point in particular, this problem has been addressed by PROTA (see below). Translators, as Bassnett rightly observes, must be cognizant of both 'textual and the extra textual factors' including the 'time, place and technique of translation' (Bassnett 1998, 57). A poem's cultural location, range of reference, intertextuality and cultural coding are factors which contribute to its 'organic structure' in the ST, therefore it is not just the skills of the translator, but also the fact that 'all kinds of different criteria come into play during the translation process and all necessarily involve shifts of expression, as the translator struggles to combine his own pragmatic reading with the dictates of the TL cultural system' (Bassnett 2002, 109). In terms of poetic form such as metre, Bassnett makes this further important point, that a translation solely determined by the metrical or some other sole criteria, can be a limitation, particularly in terms of the poem's reception in the TL, and failure to consider the poem as an 'organic structure' may result in an unbalanced interpretation.

The function of the source text will also determine to certain extent, which of these options is chosen by the translator, whether the work in question is translated to function as a form of literary entertainment or for the purpose of scientific or academic inquiry. Translation also has the task of interpreting the codes, signs and aesthetics of another culture, the recovery of which may sometimes only be partial in the target language. Failure to reflect cultural connotations could work to reduce the aesthetic

strength and appeal of poetry, but nevertheless the task of translation itself is one that must be undertaken in order to make the literature of other cultures available to a wider audience.

As Kamal Abu Deeb recently observed translation is: ‘entangled with ideology and power as well as aesthetics and the quest for knowledge. Cultures translate each other within a context of power and political interaction. It is not only what we translate, but also when we translate and how we translate that are sources of significance’ (see Abu Deeb <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/mellon-program/seminars/2006-2007/abstracts/deeb.shtml>). The translation process, therefore, should preferably be undertaken in consultation with Arab writers and academics, but it is also important to produce a translation that will be appealing to a western audience, particularly a non-academic audience or one that is not conversant with the Arabic literary heritage, so that the full aesthetic potential of the source text can to be realised in the mind of the non-Arab reader.

This problem has to a certain extent been addressed by the Project for the Translation of Arabic (PROTA), in the use of a first translator fully conversant with the both the source text and the target language and also of a second translator whose task is to put the final shape as it were to the translation, for example this secondary translator might be a poet if the source text is poetry. The work of PROTA is particularly relevant to academic institutions that do not have a department of Arabic language and literature, something which precludes students and researchers from reading the literature in the source language, and also therefore from studying it. Some editions published under the auspices of PROTA include *Modern Palestinian Literature* and *Modern Arabic Literature*, both titles which are widely referred to in this thesis. The availability of

scholarly translations such as those undertaken by PROTA as well as those undertaken by other individual academics, means that there is no excuse to exclude the study of Arabic literature, since certain works have always been available to the general reading public in the west. Richard Burton's *One Thousand and One Nights* (1885), is one example, which in the minds of many non-Arab readers, has come to be representative of the form and content of Arabic literature and mistakenly perhaps, its primary aesthetic exemplar.

The Socio-Cultural Context of the Project

The Irish Context

Early Irish nationalists may have had a monistic outlook when it came to what constituted Irish culture; nevertheless Ireland today is rapidly becoming a multicultural society. This is partly due to membership of the European Union but also to the influx of asylum seekers, many of whom are of Middle Eastern origin of which Palestine is a part. We now have increasing business and economic connections with the Middle East, through various organizations, for example the EU-Arab States and the Arab European Foundation. In such circumstances, literature can be a useful mediator of the experience of comparative cultures and of cultural diversity, particularly in a burgeoning multicultural society such as Ireland. In light of this the question must be asked, particularly by Irish academic institutions, does this point a lacuna in our current knowledge of, and indeed teaching of, world literatures generally, and more specifically of the literary heritage and diversity of thought that exists in the Middle East, many of whose former citizens now form part of Irish society and either are, or intend to become, Irish citizens? The fact that we might also be subscribing to the western obsession with

the Middle East as a political entity, has not only the potential to limit our literary knowledge in the comparative context, but also to limit the possibility of making our own value judgements based on the study of the literature for its intrinsic value as a manifestation of Arab cultural production and as a valuable contribution to the body of world literatures. Literature can highlight the socio-cultural problems faced by Diaspora communities in terms of assimilation and accommodation of the host community's socio-political values. While it is important that immigrant groups be made aware of the cultural heritage and value systems of their host country, it is of equal importance that the host country appreciates the literary and philosophical richness and diversity of its immigrant communities. In the Irish academic context the study of Arabic literature would enable us to produce our own estimation of its intrinsic value as cultural production and facilitate our discovery of the humanity and creativity behind the media images of the Arab world. Ireland is probably one of the few countries in the developed world that does not have an academic department at university level for the exclusive study of Arabic literature and language. Furthermore, Ireland, as a postcolonial society itself, may be uniquely placed in the western world, to generate postcolonial studies that offer unique insights into the intersection of nationalism, decolonisation, partition, culture and literature, as the work of Joe Cleary (2002) demonstrates. Irish nationalism produced its own unique confluence of culture and resistance and many instances of the poet/warrior in the context of Irish anti-colonial resistance and decolonisation. However, while analogies with Irish nationalist (resistance) poetry may occasionally be drawn for illustrative purposes only, this thesis is not a comparative study. Although this is not a comparative study, Rey Chow's (1995) astute observation proves interesting when

applied to the Irish context. Ireland may be uniquely placed in having no established tradition of Arabic studies and therefore it is not: ‘fully mired in practices, habits and biases’ neither is it ‘fully peopled with intentions’ as other countries may be (Chow 1995, 108). Therefore Irish academia might be considered a *tabula rasa* free of any prior political agenda in respect of Arabic studies. Furthermore, although Ireland is a small island that exists, as the poet Desmond O Grady puts it: ‘out on the dark edge of Europe’, it is also a postcolonial country that exists at the centre of political Europe, where it may be involved in decisions which influence policy toward the Middle East, for instance. This thesis will endeavour to stimulate new thinking towards the region, in respect of how global theory and praxis might impact on the lives of individuals and communities, and conversely, how the nature of any such impact might be readily discernable in the literary productions of such communities. While Arab poets may not be widely known in Irish Academic circles, or indeed among the Irish poetry-reading public, the Palestinian poets Zakariā Muhāmmad and Mahmoud Darwish among others whose work will be discussed later, have appeared in several Western publications. Muhāmmad for example, has appeared in the anthology, *101 Poets Against War* (2003) published by the Linen Hall Press in Belfast. Their poetry often underscores the contribution of culture, conflict and commitment to the shaping of a modern Arabic aesthetic, but while we might perceive that such writers will be concerned only with the conflict itself, they remain very much engaged with the consequences of conflict both for art, the individual and society as a whole. This concern is clearly illustrated by Mahmoud Darwish in *A State of Siege* (2002) he said:

Our losses: from two martyrs to eight
Every day,
and ten wounded.
And twenty homes
Fifty olive groves

in addition to the structural defect
that will afflict the poem and the play and the incomplete painting
(Darwish 2007, 137)

What Darwish underscores in this passage is that fact that under the present conditions of Palestinian existence, not only is the physical environment being destroyed in terms of house demolitions and other forms of collective punishment, but also that the cultural fabric of Palestinian society is under threat. In a society under occupation as Palestine is, the struggle to preserve its national identity and territorial claims is necessarily of paramount importance therefore art itself may be constrained in some way by its utility in terms of the resistance. This primacy of the struggle must inevitably have consequences for artistic production, not simply in terms of technical and thematic innovation but also in terms of its psychological valence and indeed its general accessibility.

Palestinian poetry and the Arabic Literary Heritage

In his essay *Modern Arabic Poetry: Vision and Reality*, Bassam Frangieh makes the point that the Arab tribal poet/hero was never entirely free of social and political responsibility, for not only was the poet the representative and defender of his people but he was also its 'provocative force' (Frangieh 2000, 1). Undoubtedly the Arab literary heritage provided a fitting exemplar for the growth of a poetics of resistance inspired by the exploits of

warrior-poets such as ʿAntara ibn Shaddād and Imru al-Qays, and later neo-classical nationalist poets such as the Egyptians Mah ʿArūfī (poet and politician) and a poet well known and revered throughout the Arab world, Ah ʿShawqī. According to the Syrian poet and critic Alī Ah ʿImās known as Adonis, it was the duty of the poet to: ‘give to the collective, to the everyday moral and ethical existence of the group, a unique image of itself in a unique poetic language’... the poem itself, he continues ‘was perceived as call and response, the dialectic of a mutual invitation between the poet and the group; it was as if the aim of the poet in composing his poem, and that of the group or tribe in listening to it, coincided by prior agreement’ (Adonis 1990, 30).

Through poetic dialogue, poet and people could externalise their mutual hopes, fears and aspirations, locating the poet as the representative of his people and in times of crisis, their ‘provocative force’. No doubt this ‘prior agreement’, an accepted cultural feature of the Arab literary heritage, meant that poets and writers could very often fill a leadership vacuum, or provide a voice for the voiceless as well as a source of news and information. This facet of poetry is not peculiar to Arab poets. In her book *Resistance Literature*, Barbara Harlow reiterates this aspect of poetry in general when she states that in the modern world, ‘poetry is capable of not only serving as a means for the expression of personal identity or even nationalist sentiment’; poetry says Harlow: ‘as part of the cultural institutions and historical existence of a people is itself an arena of struggle’ (Harlow 1987, 33). What this statement underscores is not only the psychological valence of poetry itself, but also the psychological importance of the community cohesion that the poetry reiterates, especially the sense of belonging to a wider social group which is a

significant component of self-definition and identity formation both for the individual member of the group and as a part of his/her wider community.

In modern Arabic poetry, the internal impetus to open up the poetic structure facilitated the shift away from the classical form such as the *qas* ~~with~~ its somewhat rigid rhyme scheme and the line as the unit of meaning, beyond the neo-classical style and towards a more integrated poetic structure and broader thematic and symbolic engagement. Poets such as the Syrian poet known as Adonis, and Iraqi woman poet Nāzik al-Malā'ika, were both innovators in this structural shift advocated through magazines such as *al-majallah* and *al-sh'ir*. The introduction of that Romantic element into Arabic poetry, the legitimacy of the subjective emotions, was in part influenced by European poetry but more importantly perhaps by the poets of the *mahjar*, those poets of the Arab Diaspora who had emigrated to the Americas. Expressed in the Arabic writings of the *mahjar* poets was a feeling of romantic sorrow and yearning for the unattainable. The *mahjar* poets, says Bādawī 'turned away from rhetoric and declamation [which was associated with the neo-classical style] concentrating instead on more subjective experience' (Badawi 1970, xv). They also developed a spiritual dimension that deeply influenced the emerging Arab Romantics, and the positive appraisal of literary critics such as 'Abbās Mah ~~Amr~~ in Egypt further facilitated the acceptance of Romantic poetry. Furthermore as Mounah Khoury (1971) has pointed out, the expansion of social and intellectual interests that arose from the impact of western colonialism highlighted the inadequacy of the neoclassical poetic form to effectively express this new range of complex material issuing from both the colonial centres well as the poets of the *mahjar*. Such influences lent new potential to the use of the Arabic language and the

exploration of the possibilities of the language enabled a new form for the articulation of personal as well as national, conflicts and crises for the poet, which in turn drove him/her to create a new poetic style by which to express this.

However, despite the innovations that occurred in Arabic poetic practice, it would not be helpful to subject Arabic literature to the same kind of periodisation as that of western literature. While on the surface the changes advocated by poets such as Adonis might seem to provide evidence of the continuing cultural influence of the coloniser and a kind of ‘cultural imperialism’, it would not be entirely accurate to view the changes that occurred in form and content of Arabic literary production as being exactly coterminous with the aesthetic development of literature in the west. The advocacy of change and innovation in Arabic poetry was not based on any idea of the superiority of a western aesthetic, but rather on the need for a new form and style to revitalise Arabic literary creativity, a ‘committed’ literature in a style that could best express and respond to the changing conditions arising both within Arab societies and from external sources. These changing conditions included the experience of colonisation, de-colonisation, the socio-philosophical influence of Islamic Modernism and a growing Arab national self-awareness. Therefore literary innovation was not simply a blind imitation or arbitrary adoption of western modes and aesthetic practices but rather an internally impelled impetus towards both modernism and the modernisation of Arabic cultural production that the neo-classical form seemed no longer able to adequately communicate.

Poetry and History

Eagleton has pointed out that: ‘all readers are socially and historically positioned and how they interpret literary works will be deeply shaped by this fact’ (Eagleton 1983, 83). As western readers, our first introduction to history will inevitably be from within a viewpoint in which we are already implicated, thus the western perspective must inevitably shape our thinking, but need not over-determine it. Poetry is not an historical mode of writing in the way that a novel might be deemed to be so. The novel is in general a linear narrative of events over time (although this can vary particularly in postmodern literature), whereas the poem is both a highly concentrated and symbolically immediate form. However, as forms of intervention, neither poetry nor narrative can alter history or change the world, what they can do is propose alternative perspectives on history or postulate an alternative worldview, and poetry can do this with a freshness and immediacy not available to us through the novel. Rather than the general history of specific events, the tragedy of the individual will always have more dramatic import. Consequently, the experience of an individual poet’s imaginary of a specific event such as might have occurred during the Palestinian *nakbah* for example, is a purview that can bring the reader uncomfortably close to the real lives, and psychological experience of individuals. Poetry provides an unrivalled access to emotional content and this psychological intimacy between poet/reader can also perhaps, effect a change in the conscience and consciousness of individual readers in respect of appreciation of the experiences of other cultures, and in the deconstruction of ‘monstrous stereotypes’ as discussed earlier.

Furthermore, the mnemonic properties of poetry readily facilitate its oral

transference, a facet of poetry that makes it invaluable in societies with less than full literacy, or where the material conditions of life might inhibit the flourishing of a print culture, for example, in the refugee camp, the prison, or under the conditions of occupation and statelessness. These properties of poetry underscore its capacity to quickly make individual lives available to the reader/hearer, and as already stated the tragedy of the individual will always have greater and more dramatic import. When Stalin reputedly said that one man's death is a tragedy, one million a statistic, he was correct, for it is one thing to read of the displacement of several hundred thousand Palestinian people but it is quite another to experience our own mental reconstruction of that event through the eyes of an individual writer, poet or participant. For example, one might read the historical fact that approximately 750,000 Palestinians were displaced and became refugees after the setting up of the State of Israel in 1948. However, when presented in a poetic form that statistic becomes a different kind of knowledge, a knowledge that can readily elicit empathy in its readers/hearers, it is the kind of knowledge that marks the difference between story and information.

In his poem 'Refugee' for example, the Palestinian poet Salem Jubrān allows us immediate access to an individual experience of displacement and exile in a world of checkpoints and border crossings where movement is circumscribed. In this poem the natural order of things is inverted in terms of the freedom of movement accorded to beasts as opposed to man:

The sun crosses borders
Without any soldier shooting at it
The nightingale sings in Tulkarem
Of an evening,

Eats and roosts peacefully
With kibbutzim birds.
A stray donkey grazes
Across the firing line
In peace
And no one aims.
But I, your son made refugee
Oh my native land
Between me and your horizons
The frontier wall stands. (al-Jayussi 1992, 190)

The poem speaks of the past when Tulkarem was a peaceful agricultural town but it also speaks to the present as Tulkarem is still a major checkpoint close to the ‘Green Line’ (the 1949 armistice line) and now located behind Israel’s security fence popularly known as the ‘separation’ wall which neither man nor beast can cross except at the behest of the occupiers. Furthermore, the lack of accessibility for the ‘native’ son underscores the terms of the conflict that this poem articulates.

An Overview of the Chapter Structure

Chapter I of this thesis explores the kind of 19th century literature that may have contributed to the image of Palestine as an empty or neglected land. It documents the impact of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 (in respect of a Jewish homeland in Palestine), and will demonstrate that the poets, intellectuals and politicians of the period before 1948, understood the threat implied in this declaration as being a colonial one. Poets were often in the vanguard of opposition and were willing and able to criticise practices that compromised the integrity of Palestine as an Arab country and vigorously protested the

proposed division of their homeland. Ibrāhīm T ānu was one of the foremost Palestinian poets of the pre-1948 period. His poem below castigates absentee landlords and others who sold land to the Jewish immigrants:

those who sell the land have drenched it with their tears,
but the plains and hills still curse them
the brokers who hawk my homeland. (Jayussi 1992, 318)

In one sense this thesis is the recognition of the cultural resistance proffered by the Palestinian people and the contribution of their poets, not only to the art of poetry, but to our understanding of a discourse of resistance. It locates the poetry within the discourse of Arab nationalism and indeed a valuable reminder of the origins of the continuing, Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Chapter II explores the idea of culture as a weapon of mass instruction, particularly in colonial societies where the possibilities of more regular forms of political intervention or the dissemination of information might be seriously circumscribed. This thesis will show that in such cases culture can be both formative and informative, can work to undermine negative stereotypes externally, and work against ineffective strategies and agendas internal to the colonised society. The year 1948 was a seminal year for the Palestinian people. This was the year in which they lost the struggle to prevent the sundering of their homeland by the United Nations Partition Plan. Several antecedent factors had a bearing on this outcome: the almost unabated persecution of the Jews of Europe in their European host countries and the Zionist colonial dream of a Jewish homeland in Palestine advanced by the Balfour Declaration in 1917. World War One was

followed by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, followed by the granting of the British Mandate for Palestine in 1922, increasing immigration to Palestine of European Jews, the Arab revolt of 1936, the outbreak of World War Two and the atrocities of the Holocaust perpetrated on the Jews of Europe (and many other minority groups) and finally, the defeat of the Arab armies in the war of April 1948. The poetry of this period depicts the shock and dismay wrought by partition, and also the continued hope of the Palestinians refugees' that they would eventual return. The postcolonial context of the poetry is extrapolated from the features associated with postcolonial literature: a sense of alienation, displacement, both physical and psychological and an anxious concern with both cultural and political identity. The discussion will further demonstrate the ways in which poetic metaphor and theme evolved under the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment.

Chapter III will explore the changing conditions in the Palestinian context. The Palestinian saga took a significant turn 1967 which saw the defeat of the Arab armies in the war of that year, followed by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Ghāzā Strip. Nevertheless, as the poetry of the period demonstrates, there were some positive outcomes. In 1966, the Palestinian writer and political activist Ghāssan Kanāfanī drew attention to the 'poets of resistance', those such as Samih al-Qāsim who had remained inside Israel after partition and who had sustained a discursive resistance against military rule. The Palestinian Diaspora poets drew profound inspiration and renewed enthusiasm from their spirit of resistance. Fadwā T [unclear] for example paid the resistance:

now I am here to borrow fire from you
to borrow from your lit lamps...
a drop of oil for my own. (Tuqan 1990, 225)

This chapter will also clarify the development of a strong thematic engagement with the 'land' as poetic metaphor, and as the locus of Palestinian history and rootedness. As we shall see, this offered a powerful counter-discourse to the idea that the Israeli newcomers 'made the desert bloom' and the trope of Palestinian 'rootedness' further undermined the notion that the 'land' rather than being empty, had actually been 'emptied' of a significant proportion of its inhabitants. This chapter will also explore the rupture that occurs in terms of cultural transmission, as a result of displacement and exile, a particular concern of Diaspora poets. But it will also highlight the ways in which poetry can provide a space wherein writers can explore and ultimately recognise the humanity and creativity of the other. Examples of such moments will be discussed in Fadwa Tuqān's poem 'To Etan' and also in Fawaz Turki's poem, 'In Search of Yacove Eved'.

Chapter IV covers the period 1973-1987. In this chapter the tropic transition 'from rubble to stones' which will be considered as an adumbration of the first Palestinian *intifādah*. This is the rubble of Palestinian exile and displacement as it evolves into the stone of a more concerted resistance together with the emergence of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) onto the world's political stage. The expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon in 1982 fits Eagleton's definition of a period when 'culture matters'. The removal of the PLO to Tunisia undoubtedly necessitated a re-evaluation of commitment to the consolidation of Palestinian culture and nationalist aspiration, in its conflict with a politically, economically, militarily and ideologically superior power. However, just when it seemed that the future of the Palestinian struggle had forever

slipped below the horizon of history, the outbreak of the first *intifādah* in 1987, once again thrust the Palestinian question to a central place in the media and in the west's perception of Middle Eastern politics. This chapter will demonstrate that although ruptures in terms of cultural transmission can also occur, in times of conflict, or other forms of discontinuity, culture can be a touchstone, an available constant which is readily transposable across religious, political and geographical divides. It will also trace the increasing involvement of woman poets, of women and children generally, and their place in the struggle as combatants and casualties.

Chapter V covers the period of the first Palestinian *intifādah*. It will further explore the idea that the civil rights of subaltern societies are generally subjugated to the political and economic requirements of the colonial centre. The focus on economic deprivation of the Palestinian people as a component of poetry, and also in other forms of literature, demonstrates that it is an undoubted factor in the generation of hostility to the perceived source of deprivation, the Israeli regime, culminating in the outbreak of the uprising in 1987. The Palestinian poetry of the period covered by this chapter, will also demonstrate the absence of any innate hatred of Jews; rather it provides the reader with a deft deconstruction of the military occupation and documents Palestinian forms, and consequences of, resistance. The Palestinian poetry of this period will be explored in the context of the relational field between violence and oppression, yet it will be seen to exhibit no overt hatred or desire for revenge, but rather the almost poignant banishment of fear, it is said that during the *intifadah* 'fear was forbidden', an idea which demonstrates the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the face of a militarily superior force. Indeed in this chapter, Israeli Jewish poets such as Dan Almagor provide the reader

with a far more acerbic deconstruction of the *intifādah* and its suppression. This chapter concludes with the Oslo Accords of 1993 and their immediate aftermath.

The poetry of the period, most notably that of Mah

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emblematic poem ‘Eleven Planets’, underscores the unchanging conditions of Palestinian life on the ground, and that Palestinian independence was far from achieved, despite the rhetoric of peace and security that immediately followed Oslo. Once again, this demonstrates the valence of poetry as an alternative source of politico-historical actualities, amidst the obfuscation of political rhetoric and sound-bite.

This introduction has outlined the terms of the postcolonial approach, together with the question (indeed set of questions) central to this thesis. It provided a detailed explanation of the terms of reference: postcolonial, culture, conflict and commitment, and provided an overview of the chapter breakdown and timeline in respect of the poetry in question. It examined both the importance and the problematic, of studying comparative literature in translation. It underscored the ‘stereotypical’ interpretations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that may inform the western response to both Palestinian culture and politics. The introduction also highlighted the revered position and social role of poets in Arab societies, together with the illustrious literature heritage from which Palestinian poetry springs. This drew attention to the valence of poetry as cultural production, as a tool in the deconstruction of stereotypes, and as an instrument in the development of political consciousness and social instruction. It is with these questions in mind that we now turn to analysis of Palestinian poetry not, as stated at the outset, just in the service of the expansion of comparative literature in Irish academic institutions, but also in order to underscore the serious attention that Palestinian poetry as cultural production deserves.

Chapter I

Anti-Colonial Resistance in Palestinian Poetry before 1948

A Postcolonial Perspective Revisited

In temporal terms, the modern period in world history is generally characterised by the proliferation of nation-states, the growth of political democracy, urbanisation, the spread of literacy and the growth of mass media, progress in the sciences, anti-traditionalism and increasing secularisation. Various combinations of these characteristics are particularly associated with the 19th and early 20th century, but also stretching back to the values of the 18th century European Enlightenment. This was also the era of imperialism through which colonial subject peoples had come into contact with western modernity, many of them for the first time, and under the strained circumstances of the western colonial enterprise. In respect of the continuing valence of postcolonial theory, K. N. Panikkar (2007) suggests that revision has also occurred in respect of critiques of colonialism, particularly in the contexts of nationalism and Marxism:

The well-known thesis that imperialism is good for the human race, and especially good for its victims, has resurfaced recently' and with it the idea that colonialism is an agent of social change and technological advancement, bringing with it a level of development that colonies might not otherwise have experienced. (Pannikar 2007, 25)

It is not surprising perhaps that such a thesis should begin to re-surface in the current age of globalisation, which sometimes sees the export of cultural values (democracy for instance) as a kind of 'one size fits all' commodity of modernity and advanced development. However, this view of colonialism (and neo-colonialism) elides the implicit violence of forced modernity and the fact that not all societies are capable of, or want to, develop apace. It ignores the often explicit cultural, political and military violence whereby such 'development' might have been brought about by colonialism or neo-colonial hegemonies.

The designation of 'postcolonial' originally referred to those areas such as Africa and Asia that achieved independence from Western powers in the second half of the 20th century. From the 1960s onward, as a theory, it has gained increasing currency within literary and cultural studies in the West, especially in the light of seminal works such as Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1994). As a discipline, postcolonial theory is cognisant of the historical power relationships between colonial centres and their subject peoples. It acknowledges the successful struggles for independence on the part of the colonised and has now expanded to encompass examination of the conditions of the marginalized and oppressed generally.

As previously stated, the term 'postcolonial' is not one immediately associated with Arabic literature but colonialism was a project from which Arab societies were not exempted. Initially, the Arab world came under the control of the Ottoman Empire and after World War One, a new kind of threat presented in the form western interest in, and competition for, influence in Arab lands. This included the interest of Britain and France

and also the European Zionist movement for a national homeland for world Jewry. The British Mandate for Palestine which followed the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, aroused the political consciousness of the Palestinian notable families, intellectuals, poets (and peasants) to the potential threat to their cultural integrity and political independence that the fall of the Ottoman Empire appeared to herald.

Postcolonial literature is not just defined in temporal terms but also in terms of the type of literature, and any impact that literature might have on the society within which it is produced. Fanon underscores the value of literature for example, in the ‘construction of a self-image through which they [colonial subjects] could act to liberate themselves’ (Fanon 1995, 151). Postcolonial theory has continued to gain currency as an appropriate tool for such interrogation because of the implication that the experience of colonisation persists (in some cases due to continued occupation) even after the withdrawal of the colonial centre. This experience is thought to persist due in part to what Dennis Walder describes as the: ‘continuing strategic and economic power of the former colonisers and the new global dispositions which keep groups of poorer states in thrall’ (Walder 1999, 3).

As a critical tool postcolonial theory works by re-instating the *fait accompli* of the colonial experience. Furthermore, as a theory, it calls into question the ideology that lies beneath the modes of colonial and neo-colonial representation of subject peoples and underscores the notion that such representations, often consolidated by ‘stereotypes’, lend credence to the discourse of ‘dichotomy’ for example, that views east and west as antagonistic binary opposites. In response, postcolonial literature often demonstrates

awareness of, and challenges to, the stereotypical images of subject peoples created and perpetuated in the discourse of the dominant powers.

In many cases, native intellectuals also addressed aspects of native tradition and belief that may have contributed to the propagation of such stereotypes, or behaviour and attitudes that were detrimental to national progress. Often it fell to the poet to combat complacency by appealing to or arousing the latent political consciousness of the general population in the service of anti-colonial resistance and nascent nationalism. This is true of the Palestinian nationalist poet Ibrāhīm Tūqān, who in his poem *Jerusalem and the Hour*, written during the British Mandate and during the rebellion against it (1936-39), warned against complacency on the part of the Palestinian leading families and also Palestine's Ottoman rulers, particularly in relation to the selling of land to Zionists:

‘those who sell the land have drenched it with their tears,
but the plains and hills still curse them
the brokers who hawk my homeland’. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 318)

A similar (but later) example can be found in the Palestinian poet Rashīd Haddad's poem *Jerusalem and the Hour*, wherein he too accuses the Palestinian and Ottoman leaders of complacency and political inertia, but where Tūqān stops short at accusation, Haddad concludes with a prophetic vision of that loss and its rectification through political awakening:

The hour struck...it struck
But the people's protector was in a bar
Suppliant to his mistress.....

The hour struck its final chimes
then died.
Jerusalem had no more need of clocks.
Her age a hundred million victims,
A nation which despite
Sedation and stupor
Will one day rise in wrath. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 271)

The poem points the importance of Jerusalem to Palestinian Arabs, Christian, Muslims and Jews. It is a gesture toward what Said (1990) describes as the ‘primacy of the geographical’ a tropic and thematic tendency exhibited by many postcolonial literatures. More importantly perhaps it prefigures the city of Jerusalem as a continuing bone of contention, particularly after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The rhetoric of resistance ‘rise in wrath’ cautions that frustration leads to anger and that anger very often leads to violence. It foreshadows therefore, the inevitable result of years of frustrated national aspirations and the humiliation of subjection, which erupted in the form of the first Palestinian *intifādah* in 1987. The language of resistance linguistically counters political inertia with action ‘rise in wrath’ and thus it locates the poem as a kind of intervention. It instils hope, and hope is very often all that subjugated people have, of an inevitable day of reckoning. That day may be in the distant future or it may be tomorrow.

Postcolonial literature is often characterised by a heightened sense of place and displacement as well as a response to the perceived erosion of identity and cultural denigration of the colonial subject. These characteristics result from awareness of both the physical dislocation of the colonised, and the psychological displacement resulting from cultural denigration (and the resulting psycho-affective disorder of the native

described by Fanon), accomplished through the imposition on the colonised of an alien and supposedly superior culture. Such issues are true of Palestine as they are of any colonised society. In light of the ongoing Israeli occupation and the existence and expansion of Jewish 'settler' enclaves in the Palestinian Territories, which continues to the present, postcolonial theory would appear to be a particularly cogent approach to the study of Palestinian literature.

That Palestinians continued to see themselves as a colonised community after the setting up of the State of Israel in 1948 is evidenced in the wording of 'Point Number Five' of 'The National Unity Programme' adopted by the Palestine National Council at a meeting held in Syria in 1979. Point Five of this programme states that the resolve to 'reject and confront the self-rule plan in the occupied homeland, which consolidates Zionist settler colonialism in our land, denies the rights of our people, and denies our people's goal of national independence'. This point underscores the utility and validity of a postcolonial approach to the study of Palestinian literature (Hadawi 1991, 199).

Representation and resistance are key concepts in a postcolonial approach to literature. One form of representation is that which emanates from a colonial centre, comprising the often negative literary descriptions, or stereotypes, of a colonised people. These representations consciously or subconsciously contribute to the formulation of the terms of subjugation of that people. Representation also occurs in the literary production of the colonised subject, on the part of the writer as a representative of his/her community. Postcolonial literary theory examines those literary mechanisms, and the devices employed by writers which serve as symbols of resistance against oppressive forces, be they colonial or in the form of postcolonial hegemonies. It examines the form

in which the writer represents the emerging nation, particularly in terms of its viability and the legitimacy of its claims to self-determination. It explores the manner and mode in which the postcolonial writer depicts the oppression of the coloniser and the duplicity of the colonial power's claims, and how the writer continues to maintain the aesthetic integrity of the work. The study of literature through a postcolonial perspective historically contextualises that literature which can therefore be further defined by its historical context as well as style, and by the socio-political impact of the literature on the writer's community. It also analyses whether or not the literary and other cultural forms available to the writer are capable of awakening the political consciousness of his community and thereby of inspiring resistance through the re-presentation of a unified, although not always totalising, national culture. This chapter will examine a specific example of the kind of representation described by Edward Said (1978) as a 'discourse of imperialism'. It will examine the Reverend Michael Russell's book *Palestine or the Holy Land* (1837) in the context of 19th century representations of Palestine and Arabs, in terms of the type of writing which postulated a negative stereotypical image of the indigenous Arab population. Such views undoubtedly helped to prepare the way for the British colonial project and through it, the Zionist one, which culminated in the setting up of the state of Israel in 1948.

In order to historically contextualise the discussion, a range of modern historians and intellectuals including Edward Said, Ilan Pappé, Rashid Khalidi, Joel Kovel, Norman Finkelstein and Yosef Gorney, will be drawn upon. This historical contextualisation will augment the examination of Palestinian resistance to the British Mandate, and to the Zionist project of a homeland for world Jewry in Palestine. It will examine the works of

several prominent Palestinian poets of the period in terms of their relationship to the neo-classical tradition of Arabic poetry. More importantly, it will analyse their discursive resistance to the colonial occupation of their country from 1917 onwards and culminating in its partition in 1948. The most prominent among these poets were Ibrāhīm T uq ān, Abd al-Rah m Mah mechanisms, structure, imagery, symbolism, tropes etc. employed by these poets in their aesthetic (re)presentation of that struggle, and how resistance to it, might have been formed in varying degrees by the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment.

As this chapter will show, the poets of Palestine were more than aware of the danger posed by the Zionist project. Just like their poetic ancestors before them, they inspired leadership and both reported, and commented on events, the executions of those who took part in revolt for example, and were especially vocal in condemning land agents and land sales, as well as Jewish immigration to Palestine. This chapter will analyse the degree to which the cultural form and style available (in this instance, poetry), to Palestinian writers, was capable of awakening the political consciousness of their community which they endeavoured to achieve through the re-presentation of a strong, unified, national culture, ready to oppose the colonial threat posed by the Zionist project.

Literary Representations of Palestine in 19th Century Europe.

The humanist ethos that arose out of the 18th century European enlightenment, with its insistence on rational inquiry brought many received beliefs, pseudo-scientific, superstitious and religious, under scrutiny, and this was also true of the Bible. Defenders of the Bible looked to exploration of Palestine (the Holy Land) as the historical source of

the Bible as a means of bolstering long-held religious tenets. Archaeological documentation of the 'Holy Land' served to increase European Christian interest but as Barbara Parmenter points out, it also eventually helped to bolster European Zionist claims: 'by linking the Bible and the contemporary landscape' so that when the time was right 'they [Zionists] were better prepared than the Palestinians to articulate their claims' (Parmenter 1994, 9).

In his book *A History of Modern Palestine*, Israeli historian Ilan Pappé (2004) informs us that from the early 19th century onwards western interest in the Middle East began to grow, partly as a result of increased political and strategic interest in the area which had become more accessible after the Crimea War (1854), but also as a result of the 'growing appetite for land' among the great European powers. This foreign interest in Palestine, Pappé continues: 'was at best oblivious and at worst condescending'...and at times infused with the notion that the 'indigenous population would either be modernized for its own good or make way for newcomers and their ideas'. Like colonialism elsewhere, Pappé suggests, the European settlement of Palestine was determined by the: 'interest of Europeans and not the local population' (Pappé 2004, 33). Many 19th century European Orientalists and missionaries, situated in the vanguard of the colonial project, articulated and lent credence to the emerging colonial discourse of domination. This process has been described by Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism* first published in 1978. Orientalism, according to Said, was a style of thought based on the psychological and cultural differences between the Orient and the Occident. This perceived difference, Said argues, has been a starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people,

customs, mind, destiny and thus it became a 'western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient' (Said 2003, 2).

In 1837 the Reverend Michael Russell published his guidebook for the Holy Land, one of many such publications that appeared around the same time. Publications such as these says Pappé: 'presented Europeans as modern people discovering the old land of Palestine and transforming it into a new entity' ... more than three thousand books and travelogues on Palestine were written by Europeans throughout the 19th century, all painting a picture of a primitive Palestine waiting to be redeemed by Europeans' (Pappé 2004, 35). Russell does not proffer his book *Palestine or the Holy Land* (1837) as a work of scholarship; however many of Russell's observations form what could be seen as the exemplary of an institutionalised view in Europe of Eastern and Arab culture, what Said described as Orientalism, which often depicted such cultures as degraded and uncivilised and thus a legitimate target of the 'civilising mission' of imperialist expansion. In his book for example, Russell attributes [what he sees as] the present neglected condition of Palestine being due to the 'malignant genius of Turkish despotism' (Russell 1837, chap 1).

In respect of future Palestinian governance Russell opines, 'it is hoped that a milder administration will soon change the aspect of affairs, and bestow upon the Syrian provinces at large some of the benefits which the more liberal policy of Mohammed Ali has conferred upon the pashalic of Egypt' (Russell 1837, Chap 1). An implicit meaning cannot be definitively taken from Russell's statement here, but from a 21st century vantage point, the vaticinate nature of his declaration will not be lost, appearing as it

does, to inadvertently predict that the fate of the Middle East was shortly (in historical terms at least) to be decided in Europe.

Said has remarked that the consolidation of empire is preceded by ‘the charting of cultural territory’ and such charting enables the exploitation of the weaknesses of the geopolitical space (Said, 1994, 252). Throughout his book, Russell draws on a range of travellers and writers that preceded him including Napoleon Bonaparte, Fredrick Hasselquist, Thomas Shaw and the Vicomte de Chateaubriand among others. Not only do their comments and observations support Russell’s writing but they are a useful indication of the range of authors and material written before and during the period. One of many such references that Russell makes is to the writing of Chateaubriand and this particular example is from that writer’s description of the Galilee:

Galilee...would be a paradise were it inhabited by an industrious people under an enlightened government. Vine stocks are to be seen here a foot and a half in diameter...a cluster of grapes, two or three feet in length, will give an abundant supper to a whole family. (Chateaubriand cited in Russell 1837, 10)

The desirability of the land is implicit in this statement and yet the description is hardly one of a neglected land but rather of a land which appears to be judiciously cultivated by its indigenous inhabitants. Much of the travel writing of the period was devoted to depiction of the land in terms of biblical history; therefore in the minds of Europeans, and particularly Zionist Jews, says Beshara Doumani (1999), Palestine was considered empty before the first immigrations of European Jews in the 1880s, empty that is of ‘civilised’ peoples. The famous Zionist slogan: ‘a land without people for a people without land’ was, Doumani continues, ‘part of a wider European intellectual

network characterised by chauvinistic nationalism’, a sense of ‘racial superiority and imperialistic ambition’ (Doumani 1999, 14). In 1898 Theodor Hertzl, one of the main driving forces behind the Zionist ‘dream’ visited Palestine and a particular episode from his visit resonates with the above point. According to Yosef Gorny (1987), a member of Hertzl’s entourage remarked to an Arab who was accompanying them: ‘we Jews have brought culture here’ to which the latter, named by Gorny as Rashid Bey replied: ‘Forgive me my friend! This culture was already here before, in any event its early indications. My own father planted large numbers of oranges here’ (Gorny 1987, 30). The importance of both above points lies in their strong indication that before the arrival of the Zionists, the land of Palestine had already been made to bloom by its indigenous inhabitants. Consequently ‘trees’ and ‘roots’ would become powerful tropes of rootedness and belonging in much of the Palestinian poetry to be discussed.

The central focus of Russell’s book is on the Hebrew character of these lands and their biblical association with Christianity, so it should not be surprising then that Russell’s mapping of the biblical topography is largely conducted in terms of its ancient Hebrew inhabitants. The indigenous Arabs receive only a cursory mention as either desperately poor farmers or nomadic herdsman. For example, in chapter six, Russell describes the village of Bethany in the following prescriptive manner: ‘this village is now both small and poor, the cultivation of the soil around it being very much neglected by the indolent Arabs into whose hands it has fallen’ (Russell 1837, Chap 6). What this statement does not tell us of course is what the said village might have been like in biblical times (only what it is like ‘now’) and indeed the ‘indolent’ Arabs he describes seem descriptive of the kind of people to whom Jesus Christ directed his ministry. It does

not tell us the type of cultivation or lifestyle typical of the area: the ‘indolent’ Arabs may have been shepherds for example. The adjective ‘indolent’ works to make them appear undeserving and is qualified by the final phrase which suggests that their residency is predicated on their somehow being ‘accidental’ inhabitants of these lands. The importance attached to the historical value of the countryside is made evident in his description of Jericho, which Russell describes as: ‘at present a miserable village inhabited by half-naked Arabs, derives all its importance from history’ and from this it can be inferred that the local inhabitants *per se*, were considered to be of little or no consequence or should be ‘modernised’ for their own good. In a similar way he describes Bethlehem as ‘a large village promiscuously inhabited by Christians and Mussulmans, who agree in nothing but their detestation of the tyranny by which they are both unmercifully oppressed’ (Russell 1837, Chap.1). This is the kind of representation described by Said, which could work to underwrite and justify the civilising, modernising and liberating agenda of the western colonial project in Arab lands and later, the Zionist project in Palestine.

By the late 19th century, two strands of European Zionism had already emerged, one in central Europe as an: ‘intellectual conceptualization of European Jewry’s predicament and a second in eastern Europe as a practical solution to this predicament’ (Pappe 2004, 36). No doubt this ‘predicament’ resulted from centuries of intermittent persecution of European Jewry by its Christian European neighbours and host countries. Theodore Hertzl, who created political Zionism, says Joel Kovel (2007) ‘took the necessary steps, [for example, raising capital from wealthy Jews for land purchase in Palestine] beyond the speculations and dreams of the 19th century, for the ultimate goal of

building the Jewish state...and he also ‘forged the link between Zionism and Great Power imperialism’ through his friendship with English politicians (Kovel 2007, 45). Both strands of Zionist philosophy, of western origin, were to be put into practice in a colonial setting, namely Palestine. This ‘practical solution’ amounted to what Pappé describes as ‘territorial Zionism’ comprised of a group: ‘inspired by a mixture of romantic nationalism and socialist revolutionary ideology to be enacted in the land of Palestine’ (Pappé, 2004, 39). This corresponds with Benedict Anderson’s idea of nationalism as a cultural artefact which is ‘capable of being transplanted ...to a great variety of social terrains...to merge and be merged with a...variety of political and ideological constellations’ (Anderson 2006, 4). Palestine was to become the experimental and experiential ‘space off’ where its development or failure in terms of fulfilling the dream of a national Jewish homeland could be played out and where the costs to the indigenous population were ultimately determined to be inconsequential to the Zionists ‘imagined community’. Kovel cites a significant entry from 1895 in the diary of Hertzl:

We must expropriate gently the private property of the state assigned to us. We shall try to spirit the penniless [Arab] population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it employment in our country. The property owners will come over to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discretely and circumspectly. (Hertzl cited in Kovel 2007, 49)

Hertzl’s diary, says Norman Finkelstein ‘would become his most important and lasting literary contribution to the world’ (Finkelstein 1991, 35).

But Hertzl’s dream of a Jewish homeland was not entirely new, ‘the German Jew, Moses Hess had published a pamphlet in 1862 which both argued for a Jewish homeland

and proffered the idea that the Jews were a separate nation' (Finkelstein 1991, 64). The conceptualisation of Zionism's 'practical solution' began to become a reality towards the end of the 19th century. The early 1880s saw the first major wave of European Jewish immigration (from Russia) to Palestine followed by the purchase of Palestinian land (much of it from absentee landlords) and the setting up of Jewish agricultural communities. By the turn of the century, says Parmenter, many had become colonial style plantations employing large numbers of Arab workers (Parmenter 1994, 16). In 1898 the First Zionist Congress was convened at Basel, Switzerland and the goal of the movement was declared: 'the establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured by international law and recognition', and the cry raised at the closing of this congress was 'next year in Jerusalem' (Finkelstein 1991, 84). The first *aliya* was followed by a second distinct wave of largely eastern European Jews in the period 1904-14. The Jewish National Fund (1901) was established for the purchase of land in Palestine and as Parmenter points out, once land was purchased 'No settler could dispose of his lease to a non-Jew and any tenants who employed Arab labour were fined and threatened with eviction' (Parmenter 1994, 18).

Eastern Europeanism, says Ilan Pappé, was at the heart of the construction of a new culture for the settlers, which from the 1920s had been formulating the: 'cultural code, canons, ambitions and pretension of the Jewish community in Palestine, a community which aspired to be an integral part of western culture and looked for ways of eliminating any Middle Eastern or Arab characteristics in their society' (Pappé, 2004, 88). Thus, the consequences of what was in effect the beginning of the Zionist project for the settlement of Palestine began to be acutely felt by the native peasants and agricultural

workers, those whose daily lives were conducted in close proximity to and dependence on the 'land' of Palestine. Inherent in this project appears to be the seeds of a form of apartheid. In order to consolidate their hold over the land, says Pappé, the Zionists: 'adopted a policy of forbidding the employment of Palestinians. To circumvent this some began to employ Arab Jews.' This says Pappé, was: 'a racist solution, the workers were Jews but also Arabs who could be employed cheaply' (Pappé 1994, 55).

The Response of Palestinian Poets to the Threat of Colonialism

The dangers inherent in this process of what was to become the Zionisation of Palestine did not go unnoticed inside or outside of Palestine. Both before and since the Balfour Declaration (1917), which supported the idea of a homeland for European Jews in Palestine, a considerable amount of discursive opposition to land sale and settlement had appeared in the area of print journalism and in the poetry of the period before 1948. In conjunction with print journalism, Palestinian poetry continued to be a significant (and at times alternative) source of information particularly in the countryside. The opinion expressed by Herzl's in his diary 'the property owners will come over to our side' proved true to a certain extent but those who sold land to the Zionist newcomers were often singled out by poets for public rebuke, as were the land brokers in this poem by Ibrāhīm T □uq ā:

My country's brokers are a band
Who shamefully survive ...
They lead an easy, splendid life
But the bliss is the prize of the country's misery.
They pretend to be its saviours,
Whatever you say, they claim to be its leaders

And protectors! But they are its ruin
 It is bought and sold through their hands
 Even the newspapers
 Shield them, though we know the truth. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 319)

The message of the poem is of twofold importance; firstly the poet as native intellectual speaks to his people directly and establishes his own and their right to challenge the *status quo* ‘whatever you say’. Secondly, it is important as an alternative oral ‘news bulletin’, particularly in areas where the level of literacy might have been low or to where access to newspapers was limited or indeed, as the last line of the above poem suggests, where they (the newspapers) might at times be complicit in concealing the truth. Not only did poetry assume a leading role as a form of cultural resistance to land sale, but at times it deeply concurred with other forms of cultural expression, the socio-religious for example. In his article on the role of the peasantry in the 1936 Revolt against the Mandate, Ted Swedenburg (1999) says that by the 1930s ‘Jewish immigration into Palestine increased the pace of land purchase’ (Swedenburg 1999, 146). It should not be surprising then that in 1935 Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Muslim community leader, issued a *fatwa* (legal opinion) which forbade the trafficking of land with the Zionists and, continues Swedenburg, branded the *simsars*, the real estate brokers, as heretics, those who were described by Taha Husayn in the poem ‘*Uqān* in the poem who shamefully survive’. Where castigation by the poets alone might have gone unheeded, the religious one might have made some inroads where Muslim landowners were concerned. It also shows that the views of the intellectual and religious elites coincided on matters of such acute national importance.

Rashid Khalidi observes that many Palestinians feared the territorial ambitions of the foreign powers. Opposition in the form of appeals to the Ottoman government (to curb the scale of immigration and land sale) on the part of Palestinian notable families and political representatives also occurred when the Ottoman parliament re-opened in 1908. During speeches made by Palestinian representatives in the Ottoman parliament in 1911, Khalidi says that these fears (although derided by the Ottomans) were expressed in terms of a warning that the Zionists' aim was: 'the creation of an Israeli kingdom'...and that 'after taking possession of the land they will expel the inhabitants either by force or through the use of wealth' (Khalidi 1997, 32). This latter point, once more reflecting Hertzl's view above, was also expressed again and again in the poetry of Tūqan, in this poem for example in which he addresses absentee landlords:

In Beirut they say: You live affluently
You sell them land, they give you gold.
Neighbour, relent: since when is it bliss
That thousands die to make one rich?
Those who give this gold know well that
One gives with the right hand, receives with the left.
But it is our country! What are their treasures
Or gold that can equal it? (Al-Jayussi 1992, 319)

In the anthology from which this poem is taken there is a footnote to the poem which explains the tenor of this poem encapsulated in the second line: 'you sell the land to the Jews and they make you rich' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 319). One such example was the sale of land at al-Fulā (1910) and the subsequent eviction of the indigenous population, an episode which provided a harsh foretaste of what was to come. But it was not just native

owners who sold the land to the Zionist newcomers. Another example was the sale to Zionists of Mt Scopus in Jerusalem by Lord Grey-Hill, himself an English colonial settler since the 1850s.

This realisation of the danger to the homeland no doubt fuelled the emerging Arab nationalist spirit, which it should be pointed out, was not simply a response to the threat of Zionism. As early as the 1830s, the Egyptian Rifā‘ah al-Tahāwī travelled extensively in France, had called for a sense of Egyptian unity that was not solely based on language, race or religious affiliation but on the concept of *ḥubb al-waṭan*, of country or nation, wherein such differences might be elided. From approximately the 1870s Arab intellectuals from various Arab countries including Palestine had begun to assert a measure of nationalist spirit as a challenge to Ottoman rule. This no doubt concurred with the *nahḍah* Arab cultural reawakening, a renaissance in terms of Arabic culture, which began around this time. This was partly an effort to re-assert the primacy of Arabic culture and propagate the idea of the return of the Caliphate to Arabia, both of which had been subsumed under Ottoman rule. Nevertheless the Palestinian notable families in the main remained loyal until after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Palestine was a country whose demographic make-up before the advent of western Zionism consisted of Jews, Christians and Muslims who undoubtedly thought of themselves and were thought of, as Arab and to which writing such as Russell’s will inadvertently attest. If the Arab character of Palestine of the period was in any doubt, it was clearly asserted by the Palestinian poet Abū Sālma in his poem ‘My Country on Partition Day’ wherein he declares: ‘My country! Live in safety, an Arab country’ (Al-

Jayussi 1992, 9). The poem links the fate of Palestine to that of the Arab world as a whole and to the cultural ideology to which 'Arabness' was aligned.

The emergence of Arab nationalism was not a unique event of the 19th century. The concept of nationalism had begun to emerge in Europe following the French revolution of 1789, which proffered the idea that the state consisted of the people, exemplified by the loyalty of the citizen whatever his or her ethnicity. By the mid-19th century the beginnings of the modern nation state as we know it had been laid down in Europe, most notably in the unification of Germany under Bismarck, which had a more ethno-cultural basis. In France, the regime of Napoleon III consolidated the nation state and implemented universal suffrage for adult men. Ireland also attempted to establish its own brand of nationalism in opposition to British rule through the unsuccessful Young Ireland (1848) and Fenian rebellions (1867), and afterward by political means through the Home Rule movement which began in the 1870s, agitation for which continued until the 1916 rebellion.

It should not be surprising that a nationalistic spirit of resistance should have been awakened in response to western (including Zionist) colonial encroachment in Palestine as well as in other parts of the Arabic speaking world prior to 1948. Peasant resistance says Khalidi (1997) was: 'the first harbinger of a conflict which throughout has focused on control of land' it was the peasants he continues, 'who first understood the nature of the process of colonization affecting Palestine' (Khalidi 1997, 7). Bottom-up resistance, the expulsion of *felāhīn* and ensuing clashes such as happened over al-fulā, following land sales brought the realisation to the urban elite the full import of Zionism, not just in terms of land sales but also the expulsion of its Arab cultivators who were being replaced

by foreigners whose ultimate political objective was the domination of Palestine (see Khalidi, 1997, 110).

Although it may have its own unique literary characteristics, Palestinian literature is nevertheless an Arabic literature and as such, has direct literary antecedents in the classical Arabic poetry and literature and to the revival of Arabic culture since the middle of 19th century. As Arabic literature Palestinian poetry can therefore trace its roots from approximately the 6th century and since this time poetry has been an important component of Arab life. The poet was the voice of his tribe and poetry was meant for public recitation. From its early form of short incantation, it evolved into the formal structure of the now familiar Arabic *qas* ~~with~~ specific divisions, rhyme schemes and the line as a single unit of meaning. However, this does not necessarily imply that there is an absence of unity in the poetry, as Kamal Abu Deeb (1975) has argued. Although the novel was a new genre in Arabic literature, there was a well-developed tradition of narrative, most famously *Alf Layla wa Layla* and *al-Hikayat al-Gharibah* for example (See Abu-Deeb 1975). There was also a traditional form of short story writing, in the *khavar* genre, prose writing in Arabic; well known fables such as that of *Kalīlah wa Dimnah* and *Kitāb al-Haywān* (The Book of Animals). There was also a range of monographic works such as Ibn Sinā's *Epistle on Passion*, as well as treatises on philosophy, sociology, religion and history by a variety of Arab authors.

In term of poetry itself, the neo-classical style in Arabic poetry was the dominant form during the period prior to 1948 and it continued thereafter but to a lesser degree as new forms such as free verse began to be adopted. The neo-classical style of poetry consciously drew on the Arabic literary heritage for its poetic principles and inspiration

and on the set of ideals, standards and poetic structures to be found in the oral and literary works of its predecessors. Sometimes moralistic and didactic, the neo-classical *qasida* was largely endorsed as the ideal form. The neo-classical poetry generally adhered to the classical metre and rhyme scheme and it was an ‘occasional’ poetry in the sense that it often appeared to address a particular audience or was written to commemorate a particular occasion or event (Allen 2000, 72). A prime example of this kind of occasional writing can be found in the Egyptian poet Ahmed Shawqi written on the occasion of Cromer’s departure from his office as Proconsul of Egypt. This poem also responds to a speech made by Cromer on the ‘occasion’ of his departure in which he expressed what were perceived by Egyptians as negative views of their country. In this poem Shawqi declaims against Cromer and accordingly, says Hussein Kadhim (2004) colonialism itself functioned as an ‘occasion’ for poetic response.

Neo-classical poets such as Shawqi were revered throughout the Arab world as poets dedicated to the project of Arab renaissance. This dedication to the cause of ‘Arabness’ proffered the idea that there was a distinct Arab cultural identity shared with other Arab communities various religious and geographical backgrounds. By the 1920s Shawqi had ceased to be a court poet and perhaps as a consequence of this, a propensity for literary opposition to the colonial project can be ascertained from Shawqi’s anti-colonial poetry in the Egyptian context. This aspect of his poetry was not confined to the Egyptian context as can be seen from poems such as ‘Elegy for Damascus’, written following the bombing of that city by the French in 1925, in an attempt to suppress rebellion in Jabal al Duruz which was led by the nationalist People’s Party against French

colonial rule in Syria. Shawqī's elegy begins self-reflexively on the inadequacy even of poetry to describe the horrific scenes:

The pen and the rhymes entreat [your] forgiveness,
the enormity of the affliction eludes a [proper] description' ... (Kadhim 2004, 95)

He goes on to evoke the past glories of Arab civilisation to attest to the validity of the Syrian revolt, and addresses the city of Damascus in tones that reflect a pan-Arabic approach:

Every civilisation that ever flourished on earth
Had a root from your lofty tree.
Your sky a book [full] of ornaments of the past;
Your land a parchment full of the ornaments of history.
You built the mighty state and a dominion,
The dust of whose twain civilisations is impenetrable. (Kadhim 2004, 95)

Poetry such as Shawqī's was a public literature capable of exposing the machinations of the western imperial project in the Arab world and thus it underscores the psychological valence of Arabic poetry as a form of discursive resistance which is rooted in Arab culture. Therefore not only did it serve to arouse the national consciousness of Arab peoples generally, but Shawqī's poetry also provided a model for literary resistance to colonial encroachment that pre-dated (but no doubt continued to inspire) the 'literature of commitment' which would arise particularly in Palestine, after 1948. But his 'Elegy for Damascus' is particularly significant in the Palestinian context.

Fawzī al-Qawuqjī, who had taken part in the Syrian rebellion entered Palestine in 1936 with a contingent of pan-Arab volunteers to bolster the Palestinian revolt of that year.

The lesson of Shawqī's anti-colonial poetry (poetry's potential as a weapon of resistance) was not lost on other Arab nationalist movements of the period. The poetry of resistance that developed in Palestine did not emerge overnight in 1948 but evolved in the natural way of things from its own cultural heritage but newly charged with a deep sense of commitment in a time of conflict. Perhaps the most important Palestinian neo-classical poet of the period before 1948 was Ibrāhīm T

landowning family from the city of Nablus in the area of Palestine now known as the West Bank. This was a politically conscious family and T

on two occasions for his engagement in political activity against the British Mandate. In the anti-colonial tradition of poets such as Ah

Thulātha al Hamrā' (1930) translated by Issa J. Boullata (1997) as 'Red Tuesday', was an occasional poem written in response to the execution by hanging of three Palestinian men for their part in the 1929 riots, in which both Jews and Arabs died, during the British Mandate and British military rule in Palestine. The importance of this poem stems from the fact that not only is it a skilfully crafted example of an 'occasional' poem in which the three men are eulogised, but also from the fact that this poem expresses a range of cultural connotations that both underscore and offer resistance to the causes of the conflict. For example, in a dialogue between past and present 'it was a day that looked back on past ages', the poem deftly points the disingenuousness of the British colonial mission and what appeared to be its commitment to Zionism: 'time has gone backwards as far as I can see, and those who forbade the purchase and sale of slaves are now

hawking the free' (Boullata 1997, 94). The three men with whom the poem is concerned are interpolated into Palestinian nationalist history and the *qas* ~~is~~ deftly laced with irony and anti-colonial sentiment throughout:

Everyone hoped for [the High Commissioner's] early pardon,
And we prayed that he would never be distressed.
If this was the extent of his tenderness and kindness,
Long live his Majesty and long live His Excellency! (Boullata 1997, 95)

The widespread violence of 1929 was sparked by a Zionist demonstration at the Western wall of the *H* ~~Sharaḥ~~ in Jerusalem which the Muslims considered to be an act of aggression against the sanctity of their Islamic Holy places, the al'Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. However, while this may have been the spark that ignited the revolt, the underlying causes, according to Issa Boullata, included:

The expansion of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem to represent world Jewry...objection to the Balfour Declaration of 1917...the continuing rejection by the Palestinians of the Zionist plans for Palestine and their resistance to the British policy bent on implementing this declaration and on creating in Palestine a national home for the Jews at the expense of the Palestinians and their historic rights to the land of their ancestors. (Boullata 1997, 88)

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(British) policy in Palestine prior to 1948 and an attempt to evoke or channel national feelings into an expression of the spirit of that resistance. In this poem, the contexts of culture, conflict and commitment are fused into a highly organised and aesthetically incisive manifestation of Palestinian national consciousness and consciousness of culture

at a time of civil and political indeterminacy. This indeterminacy is captured in Tūqān's lines from his poem 'Red Tuesday': 'you see what's happening, and yet ask what's next? Deception, like madness is of many kinds' (Boullata 1997, 95).

According to Boullata (1997), this innovative poem 'Red Tuesday' marks a departure from the neo-classical style of Tūqān's earlier work. Boullata (1997) 'Tūqān frees himself of the classical form by adopting a dramatic mask and abandoning the lyrical and emotional rhetoric of declamatory oratorical verse' (Boullata 1997 92). The context of Tūqān's poem is a conflict, manifested in the form of serious rioting and confrontation that arose between Palestinians and Zionists on the one hand and both groups with the British Mandate authorities. In terms of Arab literary culture the 'occasion' of the poem is the hanging of three Palestinian men who took part in those riots.

While it may be technically innovative in some ways Boullata (1997), makes the point that structurally the poem is in the form of the *muwashshah* style that developed in 9th century Spain. This is an important point to note since it securely locates the poem 'Red Tuesday' certainly at the level of its form, within the Arabic cultural heritage from which it stems. But this poetic form also gestures toward the golden age of Muslim Spain, considered to have been the high period of Arab Islamic culture when Muslims and Jews lived and flourished together under Muslim rule in *al-Andalus* (southern Spain) until its conquest and their respective expulsion by Christian conquerors. If this was Tūqān's parallel would not have been difficult to ascertain. This was an era often recalled by Arab poets and intellectuals in a bid to reassert it as the paradigmatic high point of Arab/Islamic civilisation and a time of

all embracing cultural achievements. The *muwashshah* is a strophic style and T □uq ā's

poem is divided into nine stanzas with a strophe in three sections (representing the three 'Hours') after the eighth stanza which provides a turning point in the poem. In his study of modern Arabic poetry, S. Moreh (1976) outlines the use by Christian missionaries of the *muwashshah* form in the writing of hymns in Arabic. If this style was a calculated choice on T □uq ā's part (and

the interaction between form and content when composing) then T □uq ā, as nātiv

intellectual' speaking to the colonial centre on behalf of his community (a community of which Christians are an integral part) and also speaking to his community, was also attempting 'to renew contact with [one of] the oldest and most pre-colonial [cultural] springs of life of his people' (Fanon 1995, 154). He thereby promulgates the prior existence of an indigenous culture which attests to the inviolability of the Arab character of Palestine and Palestinians and one that encompasses the spirit of al-Andalūs.

The poem 'Red Tuesday' is structured so as to present three distinct voices, of the narrator, of history and of time, all of which provide the successive vehicles for the various moods of the poem. The narrator appears as a single voice which addresses the 'day' of the executions thus: 'when your ill-fated star rose and heads swayed in the nooses' (Boullata 1974, 94). History then speaks through the voice of three personified days, to be followed by time, which speaks in the voice of the three successive hours in which the executions were carried out. In the opening section the poem's narrator comments on the *Zeitgeist* of the times, dramatically encapsulated in a particular day which is the addressee of the poem:

When your ill-fated star rose
And heads swayed in the nooses,
Minaret calls and church bells lamented,
Night was grim and day was gloomy.
Storms and emotions began to rage
And death roamed about... (Boullata 1997, 94)

This background information is provided by the single voice of a narrator who sets the opening scene, that of a land united in conflict and sorrow, across religious divides: ‘minaret calls and church bells’, and which no doubt alludes to the united front presented by the different religious traditions in Palestine at the time. By the early 1920s, Muslim-Christian Societies (including women’s associations) had sprung up in many cities throughout Palestine: ‘in response to the British occupation and the boost it gave to the Zionist movement’ (Khalidi 1997, 169). It also adverts to the *Qurānic* precept of *ahl al-kitāb* or ‘people of the book’, those who profess a revealed religion whether Jewish, Christian or Muslim and have prophets and patriarchs in common. This oblique allusion, if grasped by the reader, is a powerful cultural marker which gestures toward the diverse demographic make-up of Palestine at the time and towards the capacity of Palestinian Arab culture to accommodate religious diversity under the aegis of *hubb al-wat* □ ā

The adoption of a dramatic mask as a distancing device can create a sense of objectivity for the poet or speaker of a poem. By transcending the subjective limitations of lyricism, the poet frees the poem to develop along more or less independent lines, independent that is from the expediency of the ‘occasion’ and the psycho-social involvement of the poet himself and thereby also frees it from either excessive romanticism or stridency. The mask also permits the adoption of an objective irony which

will become clearer in close reading of the various ‘voices’ of the poem ‘Red Tuesday’. Furthermore, the traditional declamatory and oratorical nature of most classical and neo-classical Arabic poetry was to a greater degree, designed to emphasize the oratorical and compositional skills of the poet, whereas the impetus of Tūqān’s poem, v full vent to his compositional skills, may also be indicative of the poet’s desire to dramatise the events, context and historical implications of the poem.

Tūqān’s poem to those poems described by Hussein Kadhim (1997) as the anti-colonial *qas* of the Egyptian poet Ah and Kadhim thereby establishes a precedent for the discussion of Arabic poetry in terms of anti-colonial resistance. The above lines from Tūqān’s poem echo the following lines from the poem ‘The Anniversary of Dinshaway’ by Ah linking Shawqī the day whose glory caused feet to tremble’ (Kadhim 1997, 19).

This line is from one of Shawqī’s anti-colonial *qas* which to commemorate a similar occasion, namely, the hanging of Egyptian villagers by the British colonial authority in 1905. As a concept, the ‘days’ invokes the passing of time but in Arabic culture the concept may also allude to fate, or indeed to the times in which the occasion took place, the era of western colonialism and expansion in the Middle East which it thereby calls into question. In the second stanza of Tūqān’s poem th ‘looks back upon past ages’ and asks ‘has the world seen a day like me?’ The voice of history replies, indicting the days of the ‘inquisition’ with all its connotations, which is also an ironic indictment of a western Christian institution. Shawqī also ironically underscored despotic episodes of western civilisation in another of his anti-colonial

qas ~~□□□□~~ Farewell to Lord Cromer' in which he compared Lord Cromer, Consul General of Egypt at the time, to the Roman Emperor Nero.

A significant stylistic difference between both poems arises from the fact that in Shawqī's neo-classical poem 'The Anniversary of Dinshaway' for example, the concept of the 'days' provides the vehicle for the opening *atlāl* motif 'O Dinshaway, peace be upon your hills, the days have taken away the bliss of your abodes' (Kadhim 19, 2004).

In T ~~□□□□~~ the opening is dramatic rather than nostalgic and declamatory as in the neo-classical style and in sharp contrast to Shawqī's use of the days as merely a vehicle, in T □□□□'s poem th

poem. In the third stanza of T

□□□□'s poem another day fr

Look at slaves, white and black
Owned by anyone who had the money.
They were humans bought and sold, but are now free
Yet time has gone backwards...
And those who forbade the purchase and sale of slaves
Are now hawking the free. (Boullata 1997, 94)

The above verse ironically undermines the western ideal of national and individual freedom and democracy which it would seem in this instance, is not to be extended to the Arab population of Palestine; rather the Palestinian perception is that their homeland is being 'sold' into bondage to the Zionist project by those who had once advocated the abolition of slavery. According to Francis Boyle (2003), a League of Nations Mandate (which Britain held over Palestine) 'typically included extensive protections for the indigenous peoples of mandated territories' (Boyle 2003, 27). In this translation the

phrase 'hawking the free' also has certain connotations, of peddling goods (and people) an occupation unfit for the government of a free and democratic nation such as Britain and certainly not a defensible role-model for any emerging nation currently in its charge.

The historical context pointed by T

□uq ā here in te

not that 'time has actually gone backwards' but rather that outdated and ethically circumscribed (in western terms) colonial practices such as slavery have been updated and converted into a system of modern manipulative hegemonic practices, namely 'hawking the free'.

In the broader cultural context, the concept of slavery has its own set of connotations in Arab/Islamic history. Slaves in the Islamic world were very often educated and elevated to high rank, the Turkish Jannissaries for example, and could even rise to become rulers as did the manumitted slaves, the Mamlukes, who had once ruled Egypt. Of further cultural significance in the Arab/Islamic context is the figure of Bilal, a black slave who was chosen by the Prophet to be the first *muadhan* to call the Muslim faithful to prayer. Taken together, these connotations provide an astute contrast between the historic development of both eastern Islamic and western Christian civilisations, of which the latter had not been without its own fair share of despotic rulers and questionable practices, and this further undermines the western imperialist and indeed the Zionist self-representation as an aspect of the colonial 'civilising mission'.

In his poem 'Red Tuesday' T

□uq ā also recou

for Arab independence, this time from the Ottoman Empire during WW1 when Arab nationalists were hanged on the orders of Jamāl Pasha. This is captured in another

personified day which is ‘wrapped in a dark-coloured robe’, a day that exceeds even the vileness of the days of slavery:

No, yours is a much lesser pain than mine
For I lost my young men on the hills of Aley
And witnessed the butcher’s deeds, inducing bloody tears.
Woe to him, how unjust! But ...
I’ve never met as terrible a day as you are. (Boullata 1997, 95)

There is a further irony at work in the poem here in terms of the Arab nationalist desire to substitute an Arab culture for an Ottoman one. What the poem does not say is that this gesture toward independence (from a more or less legitimate Ottoman ruler) was to a certain extent encouraged and exploited by the British, in terms of a promise of Arab independence from the Ottoman Empire under Faisal as king of a Greater Syria, in return for fighting against the Turks in World War One. It is the British, who in the present of the poem, are actively discouraging, and indeed are drastically punishing, resistance to the Mandate and the urge to independence they have partly engendered. Thus the poem once again ironically underscores the disingenuousness of the western colonial project and what in the Palestinian viewpoint is its complicity in Jewish immigration, and Zionism which was seen as an integral part of that project.

The verse following contains the first explicit mention of the homeland which from this point on becomes a keyword in the in the poem and a trope that unites the three verses assigned to the three ‘Hours’. It also brings the focus of the poem to what is the root conflict of the situation, the imminent loss of the homeland:

How unfair the decisions of the courts have been
The least of which are proverbial in injustice.
The homeland is going to perdition, without hope. (Boullata 1997, 95)

The delay in introducing the idea that the homeland is in peril has allowed the speaker of the poem to consolidate his use and development of the dramatic masks and allowed time for their acceptance by the poem's auditors. If indeed the concept of the 'days' in terms of fate is foregrounded in the minds of the poem's reader/hearers then this day in the present of the poem should be perceived by them as a warning of the 'fate' that could befall the homeland. In this way the concept of the 'days' acts as a pervasive cultural code at work throughout the poem. The ambiguity of the concept of 'days' also allows the poet to underscore 'the days' as an allusion to the 'times' which the poem is in the process of recording. Thus through the personification of these successive days from history, the narrator brings us to the present of the poem, to a day like nothing seen before, a more 'fateful' day than any other, a day: 'that is considered abominable by all past ages'. The days from history having spoken, the narrator now brings the focus back to the present, to the initial addressee of the poem's opening lines (the day of the hangings) and to the context of the poem, a day characterised by the injustice visited upon those who would defend the homeland from its usurpers:

Everyone hoped for the early pardon...
The mail carried details of what had been put in a nutshell.
Please, stop supplicating and begging...
The mail was overloaded with pleading,
but nothing changed.
We humbled ourselves and wrote in various forms. (Boullata 1997, 95)

In the above stanzas the narrator repeats key tropes, for example, 'mail' is mentioned twice, as is the notion of 'hope' and 'dignity'. These tropes serve to emphasise the repeated supplications for mercy to the British which have resulted in failure. The act of writing itself in this instance fails to fulfil any hope of a successful outcome and consequently the narrator declares 'our dignity is – alas – in rags'. Dignified pride, says the speaker in the previous verse, is the only thing 'that renders one immune' from the disease which is about to overtake the homeland. Dignity and pride must be preserved because the subaltern status is not the normal condition of a free people. This stanza and also the one following, gestures toward the general climate of cultural denigration perpetrated by colonial authorities on subject peoples, a policy designed to keep the native colonial subject subordinate. Colonialism, says Fanon, degraded native culture and: 'attempted to plant deep in the minds of the native population, the idea that before the advent of colonialism their history was one which was dominated by barbarism' (Fanon, 1967, 171). Consequently, the native's capacity to develop political consciousness, and thereby any viable form of resistance is seriously circumscribed, not just in terms of physical resistance, but in psychological terms also. The stanza following points this very effectively:

A humiliated soul, even if created to be all eyes,
Will not be able to see – far from it...

But their hearts are like graves, with no feeling.
Don't ever seek favours from someone
You tried and found to be heartless. (Boullata 1997, 96)

If the hearts of the oppressors are judged to be cold as graves, then in contrast the hearts of the Palestinian young men are pulsing with life and inspired by ‘steadfast faithfulness’ an idea that is reiterated in the verses that follow. This concept of ‘steadfastness’ is one which would be reiterated again not just in this poem but time and time again in the work of future Palestinian writers and poets. Once again T □uq ā’s lines ab
the following lines from Shawqī’s poem ‘Elegy for Damascus’:

Is there a difference between his heart and a rock?
The colonizers – although they feign tenderness –
Have hearts like stone that feel no pity. (Kadhim 2004, 45)

In the final section of T □uq ā’s poem, th
be hanged in succession, are personified and permitted to speak. In the following stanza ‘The First Hour’, the mournful tone of the language is moderated as this section of the poem begins to assume an air of dignified defiance:

I am the firstborn of three Hours
All of which symbolise ardent zeal.
I am the daughter of the [Palestinian] cause
And have a significant effect on it:
That of sharp swords
And light lances.
In the hearts of young men I’ve inspired
The spirit of steadfast faithfulness. (Boullata 1997, 96)

The symbolic inversion of birth/death here marks the transition from political consciousness to political commitment and the necessity for action in the form of physical resistance. The realisation that words of supplication have been inadequate to the

cause, that the ‘sharp words’ of political commitment are needed (and for T □uq ā a new
system of poetics to express them) but also bolstered by a willingness to act: ‘light
lances’. The symbolism of the lances echoes the words of the 9th century poet Abū
Tammām as he commemorated a Muslim victory over the Byzantines:

Swords tell more truth than books
In gleaming blades not lines of dusty tomes are texts to repel
uncertainty and doubt.
Knowledge is found in the sparkle of lances... (Irwin 2000, 132)

But it also echoes a more recent past, the warrior-poet in the form of the 19th century
Egyptian poet/politician Māh □ārūdī Saḥrī reflected on the mood of a
another Arab country (Egypt) anticipating revolt against its impending colonisation by
the British:

My soul, do not despair, for good is expected and the
Will of a man of patience does not weaken.
Perhaps a gleam of light will illuminate the way, after
A night in which darkness has prevailed.
I see souls no longer able to bear their burdens; I see
Swordbearers ready to unsheath their swords. (Khoury 1971, 22)

Once again this is also echoed by Shawqī in his ‘Elegy for Damascus’, in which he
ironically proffers an astute inversion of the French ideals of revolutionary freedom
which are now being emulated by Arab young men:

The blood of the revolutionaries is known in France...
A land whose youth died that it may live...

And peoples were set free by [French] lances
How then can they be enslaved by [the same] lances? (Kadhim 2004, 45)

A typical neo-classical *qasida* (Sā'īd/Badawi), is 'a succession of inter-textual references, constantly and deliberately alluding to the language of specific medieval texts (poetic, religious, historical)' (Badawi 1992, 67). Intertextuality, with or without authorial intention, provides a space in language where the present can engage in a kind of retrospective discourse with the past. In order for the lessons of history to be effective in the present the language of this discourse must coincide with the experiential perception of real time in the poem. In 'Red Tuesday' language, in the form of poetic metaphor, locates and resuscitates history in terms of an immediate experience of time, personified as 'days and 'hours' and initiates a process whereby, at least at the level of rhetoric, history becomes capable of impacting on the present. In his poem 'Red Tuesday', Tūqān admits the futility of using words alone to move the hearts of the oppressors, rather the poem proposes the idea that words, in order to be effective, must be backed up with a willingness to act. The intertextual lesson that could be drawn from the Arabic literary heritage, and poets such as Abū Tammām and al-Bārūdī, is that a message delivered at the point of a sword/lance is an unambiguous one. An inversion of this lesson is that peace delivered at the point of a sword will be fraught with ambiguity.

The closing two lines of this stanza introduce the concept of martyrdom, uniting a religious trope (the Arabic word used to describe a martyr is *shahīd*), the root of which is in the word *shahādah*, the Muslim affirmation of faith which bears witness that there is no God but God and thereby conflating the religious and cultural code with the idea of self-sacrifice in the cause of independence for the homeland:

No rank of eternity is reached
 Without an acceptable sacrifice.
 Long live the souls that die
 In sacrifice for their homeland. (Boullata 1997, 97)

A rhetoric of 'blood sacrifice' in the struggle for national independence was not new to Arab nationalist discourse, as the following lines from Shawqī's poem 'Elegy for Damascus' will demonstrate:

Nothing can build dominions like blood sacrifices
 Or bring rights nearer [to fulfilment] and do justice
 For in the slain [there is] life for generations [to come]. (Kadhim 2004, 45)

The rhetoric of 'blood sacrifice' was also employed by the Irish nationalist poet Patrick Pearse and like Pearse's invocation of Irish patriots of the recent past. T □uq ān had a similar tradition of martyrdom which he invoked in 'Red Tuesday' in the persons of those Arab nationalists who were executed by Jamāl Pasha. Similarly both Pearse and T □uq ān could draw on their respective traditions, Pearse on the physical force tradition of previous generations of Irish poet/revolutionaries such as Thomas Davis, and T □uq ān poet and soldier/politicians such as al-Bārūdī.

In T □uq ān the three successive stanzas which give voice to the three hours remaining to the martyrs reinforce the various themes of the poem, dignity, courage and patience, three human traits which permit transcendence of the subaltern status of the individuals concerned and by implication, the community they represent. More importantly perhaps, through the turn of the strophe at this point, the three voices serve to

'I am the Hour of the patient man
 I am the Hour of the big heart.
 I am the symbol of resolve to the end
 In all important matters'...
 I swear by your soul, O 'Atā...(Boullata 1997, 97)

The voices of the three 'Hours' (and three heroes) serve in the 'construction of a self-image through which they [Palestinians] could act to liberate themselves' (Fanon, 1995, 151). The self-image re-presented through the poem is grounded in the culture, religion and traditions of a dignified, courageous and resolute people. The poem's narrator/hour tells us that his hero: 'meets God with dyed palms on the Day of Resurrection'. According to Boullata (1997) on the eve of their execution, the 'heroes' Jamjūm and al-Zīr symbolically celebrated their own death by dyeing their palms with henna as though for a wedding, a custom associated with Hebron where both men were from. Through this symbolic act, the two heroes appear to be marrying the Palestinian cause named by

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[Palestinian] cause and have a significant effect on it' (Boullata 1997, 96). This gesture may be interpreted as an early, albeit implicit, identification of Palestine with the female, the bride, the motherland. It also symbolically legitimates, through the concept of marriage, the relationship between the heroes and the cause of martyrdom. As an Arab cultural practice (whether Christian or Muslim), marriage was the only accepted state for the pursuance of an intimate relationship between the sexes, thus they will meet God on the 'Day of Resurrection' with dyed palms as a symbol of the legitimacy of their sacrifice, wedded as it were, to the cause of defending the homeland. Beyond the connotations associated with the cultural code of marriage, this symbolic celebration in

the face of tragedy also marks the site where the locus of power begins to blur, not just textually but psychologically and physically. The power to oppress is somehow transposed or becomes formative of the power to resist, symbolised in the psychological sense by the celebration of self-sacrifice and in the physical sense by the breaking of fetters.

Each of the three strophes representing the three hours end on the same note which reinforces the notion of the heroes as *shuhadā* or martyrs in the cause of saving the homeland:

He who serves the homeland receives
 No nobler reward than that of martyrdom...
 No one saves the dear homeland
 But a brave, patient man. (Boullata 1997, 98)

The final stanza reiterates the warning (articulated in an earlier stanza) of an impending day of reckoning for the ‘enemies of the homeland’. This also alludes to the ‘day of resurrection’, a fateful day when mankind will face judgement for his actions in the earthly life and a cultural trope recognisable by all *ahl al-kitāb*.

In the traditional *muwashshah* ~~the~~ closing lines (*kharjah*) often took the form of a direct quotation and Roger Allen makes the point that some scholars believe the *kharjah* was often ‘a deliberate attempt to imitate and surpass another poem or song’ (Allen 2000 83). In the final stanza ‘The Three Heroes’, T □uq ā delivers h
 shot as he invokes the absolute power of God, (as did Shawqī in many of his anti-colonial *qas* ~~which~~ □uq ā for believers, be they Muslim, Christian or Jew, transcends the temporal power of earthly rulers, including the colonial might of the British Empire. T □uq ā

the totality of the poem achieves the conflation of the religious and cultural codes into a new significant totality of culture, conflict and commitment in a new form of expression for the Palestinian predicament:

Don't hope for forgiveness from anyone but God.
He it is whose hands possess all glory.
His power is above those deceived
By their own power on land and sea. (Boullata 1997, 98)

In his poem 'Red Tuesday' T

□uq ā deftly use

which the questions, responses and events of the poem are articulated. Time, or rather the measurement of time, is a human-construct, a way for mankind to feel in control, and this poem orders the experience of the passage of 'time' into days and hours etc. History is also a mode of organising time, a means of recording the passage of time (at a global level) and the changes wrought on human environment and consciousness by the events associated with that passage. The transitory nature of time can affect how history is perceived and cause it to be revised at a later stage and at localised levels. This is perhaps what Abū Salmā meant when, in his poem 'My Country on Partition Day', he declared: 'history marches behind our footsteps' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 95). At a more structurally poetic level, the progression through history, days, and finally hours, elegantly evokes a sense of time shortening, of something approaching which is suffused with an atmosphere of doom created by the semic codes used throughout the poem. A sense of urgency is created by the paradoxical situation of not having control over time, which is rapidly running for the three heroes. The internal time of the poem corresponds to that which is

experienced by the external community and this heightens the tension and urges action as a solution to the analogous problem, the imminent loss of the homeland.

Before 1948, says Al-Jayussi (1992) Palestinian poetry: 'tended to react spontaneously to events, drifting along with the semantic intention of the poem, and satisfying itself with the expression of a specific message that seemed crucial and held absolute priority' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 7). Committed to political verse then, poets demonstrated a similarity in theme and content often expressed within a terseness of form, the message was the medium and the message had priority. In a style in keeping with the emotional rhetoric and declamatory tones of neo-classical poetry Ibrāhīm T
Commando' cap
personal sacrifice of the idealistic Palestinian fighter. It is both descriptive of the self-sacrifice and personal honour of the fighter and prescriptive of these qualities, which the fighter was expected to possess:

Do not consider his safety
He bears his life on the palms of his hands.
Worries have substituted
A pillow for his shroud
As he waits for the hour
That ushers in the terrible hour of his death. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 317)

The poet plays with our sense of expectancy, in the image of the pillow for his head/shroud for example. The 'worries' are the anxieties he feels about loss of the homeland. There is a further difference in the treatment of the 'hour' as a trope in this poem. As in the previous poem 'Red Tuesday' the symbol of the 'hour' connotes the dual concepts of time and fate. In this poem it is used in the context of an appointed time

which ushers in another ‘appointed’ time (the time of death) knowledge of which would be impossible under the ordinary conditions of life. Neither would it be deemed proper to speculate upon this hour, since in the religious and cultural context, this ‘time’ is known only to God. Like the ‘days’ from history evoked by T. S. Eliot in ‘Red Tuesday’, these are not ordinary times and the hero unlike the ordinary man, is not culture-bound. Unlike T. S. Eliot’s earlier poem

time experienced by the community. Time in this poem is an act of waiting and time is fraught because it is also at a standstill. This temporal paradox further works to distance the heroic individual from the condition of ordinary life and historical experience.

T. S. Eliot’s ‘Commando’ adverts to a time when revolt was more orchestrated (as in 1936) rather than the somewhat spontaneous rioting of 1929, the consequences of which the poem ‘Red Tuesday’ commemorates. The armed commandos of the towns, together with the organised *felahīn*, assumed a prominent role in the revolt of 1936. The title ‘Commando’ is suggestive of a trained and disciplined individual divested of all but a single purpose. Therefore consciously or otherwise the poem looks to the future and the ‘appointed’ hour of organised revolt and to the hour of his country’s ‘partition’ perhaps, when the commando would once again assume central importance. The repetition of key words/tropes ‘fire’ in this instance continues to reinforce the characterisation of the totally committed commando:

within his breast there is
 A throbbing heart afire with its purpose.
 Who has not seen nights charcoal blackness
 Set on fire by his spark?
 Hell itself has touched
 His message with its fire. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 317)

This pattern of repetition continues in the second stanza: ‘silent’, ‘silence’, ‘mute’, the idea being that actions can and do speak more loudly than words or that on particular occasions the sword is mightier than a pen. The commando is set apart by his silence in a time of political clamour and rhetorical bravado, against which it provides a somewhat self-reflexive counterpoint:

silent he is, but should he speak
He would unite fire with blood.
tell whoever faults with his silence
resolution was born mute
and in the man of resolution
the hand is quicker than the word. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 318)

Once again tension is created for the reader as the poet plays with our sense of expectancy in terms of hand (eye) word. This impulse to silence sets the commando apart from other forms of protest, even from the poem itself, since he will be known by his deeds, and the poet, in his attempt at rhetorical resistance, can merely record them:

rebuke him not for he has seen
The path of righteousness darkened
the foundations of a country
he loves demolished
and enemies at whose injustice
heaven and earth cry out. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 318)

The above lines present the crux of the situation, the reason he is what he is and the reason he is summoned into being, a mythical figure of whom even death is afraid ‘there

he stands at the door: death is afraid of him' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 316). It answers the implicit questions elicited by the first stanza, who/what is this man who transcends the ordinary? It elicits the question, who are the enemies? This is what the poem does not say, does not need to say, the injustice of the British, the Mandatory power who should have the interests of the indigenous people at heart. What was undoubtedly felt on the ground by the Palestinian population is corroborated by Pappé when he makes the point that 'for the British authorities in Palestine the Jews were not a typical group of natives, but rather acted as a competing colonial movement' (Pappé, 2004, 94). Nevertheless, the British authorities had, according to Pappé, permitted the Zionists to gain some advantages, for example, the authorization of Zionist [economic] protectionist policy which allowed Jewish labour, industry and agriculture to grow at the expense of the Palestinian population. This was tantamount to the violation of the Mandate charter, as the British government had promised to work for the well-being of the population of Palestine as a whole. The poem also alludes to the strangulation of nascent Palestinian nationalism and the religious connotation 'path of righteousness' underscores the idea that Palestinians are being forced to deviate from the desired path (to national independence) which in the poem is tangentially associated with deviation from the 'straight path' of Islam. This allusion would certainly act to further strengthen the poem's impact on the people and firmly locates it within a discourse of resistance to which the ordinary people, of whatever religion, could semantically relate.

While it may be impossible to discern whether life imitated art (or the reverse), under the circumstances of the conflict, by the 1930s a new kind of hero had begun to emerge from within the Palestinian population, together with a new generation of leaders

from the Palestinian notable families. This fighter was exemplified by newly emerging local leaders like the Syrian born Izz al-Dīn al-Qassam, whose ideological conflation of nationalism and Islam into a newfound resistance (manifested in a kind of guerrilla war) drew many fighters to his side. Al-Qassam was killed by British forces in 1935 but not before he had ‘invoked the tradition of the *fidā’īn*, the notion of struggle that involved sacrifice’ (Swedenburg 1999, 152). The year 1936 was to see a general strike, widespread demonstrations and revolt against the Mandate government and on the eve of World War II, says Pappé: ‘British policy makers had no scruples in quelling the rebellion’...which was ‘documented in the press and included horrific stories of abuse, hanging, torture and callousness, mostly between 1936-39’ (Pappé, 2004, 107).

Although it may have been the most distinctive, Ibrāhīm Tūqān’s was not only poetic voice of resistance in Palestine before 1948. ‘The sword and the pen are our symbols’ says Tūqān and his marriage of pen and sword links the poet Abd al-Rahmān Maḥmūd to the warrior-poets of the *jāhillyah* such as Antarā Ibn Shaddād and Imru' Ibn al-Qays, whose exploits would be well known through familiarity with their poetry. In his poem ‘The Martyr’, Maḥmūd closely echoes the tone and sentiment expressed in that written by his teacher but with certain key differences. Maḥmūd, who was both a fighter and poet, was killed in action during the 1948 war, thus he physically embodied the marriage of pen and sword. Rather than the adoption of a ‘dramatic mask’, this poem depicts the dramatic personal commitment of the man of action and his personal transmutation of words into deeds, of discursive resistance into active resistance. In the form of a dramatic lyric, that which Tūqān describes

transcribed into action and personally embodied by Mahīd both in terms of the poem and in terms of his own personal willingness to self-sacrifice:

I shall carry my soul on the palm of hand
Tossing it into the cavern of death! (Al-Jayussi 1992, 209)

Like that of T ~~the dramatic opening~~ of Mahīd's poem abounds with religious and mystical connotation. That which is normally hidden, the soul or the mystical and divine essence, is outwardly borne, as though he, the *fidā'ī*, or one who gives himself in sacrifice, would speed it towards that mystical union yearned for by the *sūfī*. But the intention of this speaker is not remembrance of God, as in the *ḥadīth* tradition but, in a time of conflict, rather the intention is to harness the intensity of the mystical experience and convert it into an honourable action in defence of the homeland:

an honourable man's spirit has two aims:
to die fighting, or to achieve victory... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 209)

While the mystical idea of self-sacrifice is evoked in the opening lines, the importance of the cultural encounter between opposing forces is adumbrated in the lines following:

I want no life
If we're not respected in our land;
If our response is not feared,
If our words are not heard
Echoing in the world! (Al-Jayussi 1992, 209)

Said (1994) has remarked that a debased representation of the culture to be dominated prepared imperialist societies for overseas domination, but culture can also, he claims,

prepare the dominant society to relinquish or modify the idea of domination. What both of these poems are concerned with is in encouraging the willingness, as Said puts it: 'to resist the pressure of colonial rule, to take up arms, to project ideas of liberation and to imagine...a new national community.' Poetry therefore is not simply a contestation of the geopolitical space on the part of 'rebellious natives' but is an assertion of the: 'independence and integrity of their own culture' as a response to attempts at foreign colonial enculturation (Said 1994, 241).

Mah

□m al's mythopo

terms; a confluence of cultures is enacted in the imaginary of an Arab Promethean hero:

Behold the martyr's body
Sprawled on sands, attacked by vultures,
His blood tinting the earth crimson
Haunting northern breezes with its scent...
The smile on his lips
Mocks this earthly life... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 210)

Having drawn the character of the mythical hero who achieves transcendence of death by self-sacrifice, the poet now casts himself into that role; or rather he re-animates this hero who is not dead, but who only 'dreams of eternity' in a continual cycle of renewal which will 'haunt northern breezes' until his aims are achieved. For Mah □m al this was n role in the poetic sense, rather he was the embodiment of the hero he so vividly characterised. The need to convince others of the imperative of this, his adopted way of life/death is underscored as he moves from the declarative to the subjective interrogative:

I swear this is how men *should* die
For how can I tolerate the harm of my enemy's malice?

How can I endure his aggression?
 Would fear stop me if it is easy to sacrifice my life?
 Am I humble? I simply can endure no scorn!
 I will stalk my land with the blade of this sword
 So my people know I am their defender (italics in original Al-Jayussi 1992, 210)

What were only symbols for T ألأساا were the tools
 well as literary, a marriage of pen and sword as embodied in the warrior-poet who fought
 against injustice and oppression. For Mah الم ال duty to the
 the inspiration of his people, but also through his transformation of words into action, the
 obligation to lead them by example, thereby: ‘reaffirming the continuing involvement of
 Arab poets in their societies’ (Frangieh 2000, 222).

Unlike much nationalist poetry (Irish for example), where the land was often
 feminised, in Palestinian poetry of the period before 1948 the land is not explicitly
 depicted as feminine. Nevertheless Mah الم ال’s poem
 acknowledges the familial relationship as a call and response between mother and
 children when in that poem he states: ‘the slain motherland called for our struggle and my
 heart leapt with joy’ (Al-Jayussi, 1992, 211). It also underscores the call and response
 between poet and people, which in turn legitimates the poet as both the voice and
 defender of the motherland: ‘isn’t it my simple duty to redeem my country?’ This is
 followed by the familiar symbolism of self-sacrifice: ‘I carried my soul in my hands’ but
 in this poem it has been allocated a secondary role, it is no longer in the position of
 dramatic opening. In comparison to his previous poem ‘The Martyr’, the speaker in ‘Call
 of the Motherland’ shifts from the ‘first person’ half way through the first stanza and
 thereafter the emphasis switches to the collective:

Redeemed by *our* young men too proud
To endure oppression,
What can *we* do but fight bravely... (italics added, Al-Jayussi 1992, 211)

In this translation, both the title and theme of the motherland are introduced in the poem's opening lines, establishing the significance of the familial relationship. This appears to mark a shift in the rhetorical role of the homeland as a contested space and in the representation of the homeland as a source of emotional and familial attachment. It could be seen as an early attempt to appropriate womanhood through feminisation of the land in order to assert and nourish this familial relationship between the land and its people, vital when the native's relationship with the land is compromised, threatened or negated in some way. What the concept of *mas* ~~al-dunya~~ ^{al-dunya} 'Egypt the mother of the world' could do for the poetics of resistance in that country was a readily available symbolic literary model for Palestinian poets.

Like his Irish counterparts whose vision of Ireland as female 'Mother Ireland' for example, or Ireland in the more romantic female persona of 'Dark Rosaleen', images which were utilised to fuel Irish national fervour, in the Palestinian cultural context, the question of honour, indirectly located in the female figure of the motherland, is channelled by the poet to fuel national fervour and extract commitment to physical force. It is not defeat that will bring dishonour but rather the unwillingness to struggle in the first place:

Would you back away from facing the enemy?
If so, then go hide in your mother's bedroom!
May your hesitation humiliate you!
The motherland needs mighty defenders... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 210)

Somewhat paradoxically, in this poem the location of dishonour (a kind of inverted liminal space where men go to become boys), is also the mother's personal space, the bedroom, the cultural connotations of which underscore a pattern of antithesis in the poem. This is also an inviolate space, the *harām* or women's quarters, and therefore the duality of the female image, mother/motherland and bedroom/homeland, creates a tension in the poem and a level of binary complexity which at first reading might easily go unnoticed. However, it should be noted that over-emphasis on the 'feminine' may be suspect as the possible (mis)translation of homeland as 'motherland' is adduced from 'watan' which in the Arabic language has masculine rather than feminine connotations.

In the second stanza, Mah □m ū opens with
of my country', and ends with another oblique challenge to the people's honour, 'nothing's humbler than a people who shun the fight'. In the final stanza, the addressees are 'neighbours' and 'brethren', tropes which may have been calculated to transcend the religious diversity in terms of the poem's 'call to unity'. Here too, the poet seems cognisant of the possibility that the integrity of Palestinian independence will not be upheld on the wider world stage:

Don't give up even if the world should face you
With weapons from every direction
unite, unite everywhere!
If Palestine should be lost while you live,
I'll say: our people have
abandoned the path. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 211)

In conclusion, the foregoing chapter has established that Palestinian poets, politicians and intellectuals have from at least the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, appealed, petitioned and resisted the settlement, occupation and partition of their country. As discussed in the introduction, Palestinian literature is part of the corpus of Arabic literature, with a distinctive literary heritage. It is not surprising therefore, that Palestinian writers and poets were often careful not to distance Palestinian nationalism from the rest of the Arab world, as in the poetry of Abū Salmā for example, in the foregoing chapter, but rather situated it within the cause of ‘Arabness’ and Arab nationalism and independence generally. Furthermore, until partition in 1948, Palestine had always been part of Greater Syria and the Syrian National party called for the restoration of Syrian nationalism, including Palestine from the 1930s, and opposed the Jewish settlements. It must have seemed to Palestinians in the years running up to 1948 that they could expect no help from the western world as some of the poets foretold, that justice and western colonial modernity did not go hand in hand when exported to the Arab Middle East. No doubt, the stereotypical representations of Arabs in western literature, such as Russell’s for example, contributed to this.

The analysis of Palestinian poetry in this chapter (and throughout) works to undermine the validity of any such stereotype as explained in the introduction. The Palestinians and the Arabs generally, contested the Partition Plan (1947) for their country: ‘for perfectly sound reasons’ remarks Said (1995), ‘Palestine in 1948 was still only thirty percent Jewish and seventy percent Arab’, yet the Partition plan would ‘allot fifty percent of the of Palestine to a Jewish state comprising a third of the total Arab population’ (Said 1995, 139). This chapter situated the poetry of Palestine in the postcolonial context and

demonstrated the capacity of that poetry to publicise and transmit its anti-colonial struggle within a textual, indeed cultural, framework, namely, poetry. Furthermore, locating Palestinian poetry of this period within the Arabic nationalist tradition, demonstrates that Palestinian nationalism was not simply mobilised as an adverse response to Zionism, that literary works, as stated in the introduction, are not ‘mysteriously inspired’, but are ways of seeing and describing the socio-historical location of their production. Thus it was possible to determine that Palestinian culture was not (and is not) necessarily anti-Jewish in character, but rather, like any culture at the risk of having its independence compromised by a colonial settlement, it did become anti-colonial and anti-Zionist in its outlook.

A fitting conclusion to this chapter is provided by ‘Abū Salmā in his poem ‘My Country on Partition Day’, within which he undercuts the Mandatory principles of government and in words which echo T □uq ā’s in Red
the purchase and sale of slaves are now hawking the free’, he denounces what Palestinians saw as both the disingenuousness and culpability of Britain in this process and urges struggle against this in the cause of restoring Palestinian ‘honour’:

My country live in safety, an Arab country...
 Though they’ve partitioned your radiant heart
 Our honour denies partition...
 They’ve prohibited oppression among themselves
 But for us they have legalized all prohibition.
 They proclaim, ‘trading with slaves is unlawful’
 But isn’t the trading of free people more of a crime?
 Justice screams loudly protecting western lands
 But grows silent when it visits us! ... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 96)

As this chapter has demonstrated, an Arab stereotype did in fact exist in western discourse prior to the creation of the Israeli state. It was argued that this, together with descriptions of a neglected landscape, contributed to negation of the rights of the indigenous inhabitants, the Palestinian Arabs. It has shown that the poets of Palestine were more than aware of the danger posed by the Zionist project. They were also capable of showing leadership especially in condemning land sales, and together with native intellectuals and politicians, were capable of challenging the intransigence of the Ottoman government, in respect of land sales and Jewish immigration to Palestine. By the 1930s poets such as Ibrāhīm T

poetry and thereby harnessed the political consciousness of the people. The poetic innovation achieved by T

associated with the form of the classical *qas* *Ma*deft stylistic innovation ‘the dramatic mask’, T

authorities for their part in the 1929 riots which culminated in deaths of Jews and Arabs, transforming them into heroes, and extolling their deeds through the medium of the poem. The poet, as register of their steadfastness and courage in the face of execution, showed himself to be the ‘provocative force’ of that courage, particularly in his presentation of the character Jamūm, who broke his fetters in order to give an extra hour of life to another, an example which provides his people with a paradigm of courage and steadfastness which would sustain the cultural and national aspirations of the Palestinian people even to the present. That he could do this through a sophistication of metaphor and poignancy of tenor, and in the Fanonian sense, with recourse to a native structure and

□uq ān demonstra

□uq ān in Red T

□uq ān provided

form, namely, the *muwashshah*□, raised the bar for future Palestinian poets, underscores the serious attention that Palestinian poetry as cultural practice deserves.

Chapter II

Palestinian Literature of Resistance 1948 – 1967:

Al-Nakbah and After

When in his poem ‘In Dark Times’, the German poet Berthold Brecht posed the question ‘why were their poets silent’, he was perhaps pointing out the poet’s duty to forge poetry into a weapon of mass instruction. Brecht understood that in dark times, such as those experienced in Germany in the 1930s and 40s, it is appropriate, indeed imperative, for art to demonstrate political commitment and provide an alternative socio-historical critique of ‘dark times’ whenever and wherever they occur. Of course Brecht’s question may also imply that the poets were not silent, but rather other voices – capitalism, materialism, militarism, and in the case of Germany, National Socialism – simply drowned them out. For this reason it often falls to literary historians and critical theorists to restore these often marginalised voices to their ‘proper dark’ (Yeats 1991, 215).

Ever since the ‘dark times’ of the Balfour Declaration (1917) in support of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and throughout the British Mandate period which followed it in 1922, Palestinian poets, in concert with Palestinian politicians, intellectuals and notable families, appealed, petitioned and resisted the partition of their country. Ninety

years after the Balfour Declaration, sixty years after *al-nakbah* and the partition of their homeland and forty years into the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the voices of Palestinian poets remain a powerful expression of the culture, conflict and commitment of their people and as such are a weapon of mass instruction not just for their people but for all who are disposed to listen.

The term *al-Nakbah* denotes the catastrophe that befell Palestine in 1948, the partition of the country and the uprooting and exile of a considerable percentage of the indigenous population (who were either expelled or fled) and the containment of others within prescribed borders not of their choosing, the massacre of civilian populations, the destruction of some four hundred villages) and the subsequent disruption of Palestinian economic and cultural life (see Walid Khaldi, 2006). Said (2001) discusses the root meaning of the word *nakbah*, a word which connotes a disaster brought about by: ‘a deviation, a veering out of course, a serious deflection away from a forward path’, which Said explains as possibly a deviation from the path of national identity. This deviation increased the susceptibility to western imperialism that threatened the Arab sense of historical continuity, a feeling that was intensified by the loss of Palestine and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 (Said 2001a, 47). After 1948 says Said, Arab writers:

took on a fundamentally heroic enterprise, a project of self-definition and auto-didactic struggle...in which politico-national identity was still at its most precarious initial stage, with religion, demography, modernity, language enmeshed confusingly with each other – Arabs everywhere were forced additionally to confront as their own problem, taking an especially provocative form, one of the greatest and still unsolved problems of Western civilisation, the Jewish question. (Said 2001a, 46)

To approach literature (poetry) in terms of resistance is to assume a particular position *vis a vis* that literature, namely, that under certain conditions, literature (and more specifically poetry), can indeed be considered as a weapon of mass instruction, in terms of Said's 'project of self-definition and autodidactic struggle' for example, but with wider implications which will also be discussed. The importance of culture in respect of anti-colonial resistance, decolonisation, and the role of the poet, particularly in Arabic culture, was outlined in the introduction. The role of the Arab poet, as both news bulletin and 'provocative force' of his people, was explored in Chapter I. Chapter II will examine the ways in which that role expanded to encompass idea of culture as a weapon in the 'project of self-definition and auto-didactic struggle' described by Said.

Just as medicine is a weapon against disease and education is a weapon against ignorance, so culture, in terms of a literature which proffers a positive representation of a people of society, can inoculate that society against cultural denigration and the concomitant development of negative self-perception. Where this latter has already taken hold, poetry can provide a space wherein a 'talking cure', to borrow a phrase from Patricia Waugh (1992) might be effected. In her discussion of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Waugh sees Marlowe's tale in terms of a 'talking cure'. Poetry too might easily fit this role of a 'talking cure' which in terms of Marlowe's narrative Waugh sees as: 'a confessional narrative which struggles to resolve and name his experience in a way which will make past and present cohere ... an attempt to contain an experience which has torn apart the foundations of his sense of identity' (Waugh 1992, 91). This assessment of the 'talking cure' could aptly be applied to the Palestinian experience. The cathartic value of discourse underscores the efficacy of words as a salve to psychological

wounds, and poetry, as a central component of Arabic culture, is more than adequate to that role. As well as being a weapon of mass instruction, in terms of the ordinary dispossessed Palestinians, and those under military rule inside Israel, poetry could also be regarded as a means of crossing the class divide and strengthening national unity in the process, by informing various cohorts of the Palestinian Diaspora for example, of the plight of their fellows. Thus it could become a dialogue of sorts between the refugees for instance, and those better off classes who were able to adapt to the bourgeois Arab lifestyles in Beirut or Amman for example. As Fawaz Turki (1995) observed, in the case of the better-off classes, their only contact with less fortunate Palestinians was that with their servants from the refugee camps.

Literature has long been used as a weapon of mass instruction in the dissemination of ideologies, and as a strategy for instructing and inducting the masses into a particular political mode or system of behaviours. But it is perhaps only in the context of its production that literature appreciably demonstrates this mass effect. In societies with less than full literacy for example, or where the possibilities of more regular forms of political intervention or the dissemination of information are seriously circumscribed, poetry can indeed become a weapon of mass instruction. In her book *Resistance Literature* Barbara Harlow recalls the poetry of the Chilean Victor Jara who died in Santiago National Stadium in 1973 following the mass arrests after the overthrow of Salvador Allende's government. Jara's final poem was smuggled out of the stadium (by word of mouth) by some of his fellow prisoners and thus it survived as an alternative news bulletin and a record of his personal experience and that of fellow prisoners during his country's 'dark times':

how hard it is to sing
when I must sing of the horror
horror which I am living
horror which I am dying. (Harlow 1987, 118)

This propensity of poetry to survive, particularly by virtue of its mnemonic properties, underscores its utility as a weapon of resistance, and of mass instruction in the tactics that resistance might employ. The Lebanese poet Khalīl Mutrān also cautioned oppressors that a writer's words can continue to live on as a weapon; the writer might be obliterated but the words themselves cannot be killed:

Smash the pens: does that prevent hands
From inscribing words on stone?
Extinguish the breath; that is the utmost you can do.
By this we are saved from you, and we thank you. (Khoury 1971, 166)

While Jara's lines are explicitly descriptive, in the case of more formal methods of publication, particularly where there is censorship of the press, much poetry adopts a more allusive strategy. In Arab societies for example poetry forms a significant (if not definitive) part of the cultural heritage and continues to retain its esteemed position as an art form. Arabic poets, past masters of political allusion, have a mass Arab audience which is highly competent in the art of extracting the political message from between the aesthetic lines. Furthermore, as well as in respect of their own circumstances, poetry has been used by a wide range of Arab poets on behalf of Palestine. Poetry has also been utilised as a means of highlighting (for the Arab masses) the implications of western colonialism on the Arab world in general. For example the Egyptian poet Ah mad

Shawqī in his anti-colonial *qas* ~~‘Nakhat~~ *‘Nakhat Dimashq’* (see Chapter 1). Poetry has, and continues to be, a weapon to instruct the Arab masses in the course, range and implications of the Palestinian predicament. In respect of Palestine, many Arab poets have taken up the pen, for example the Iraqī poet Abd al-Wahāb al-Bayātī in his ‘Odes to Jaffa’ of which these lines are an extract:

Oh Jaffa, your Jesus is in bonds,
Naked, daggers tearing at him, beyond the crosses of borders ...
O Comrade ...
The door has been slammed shut by Judas and the road
Deserted, and your dead children
Without graves ... (Kadhim 2004, 185).

Resistance is a key component of postcolonial literature, transforming that literature into a weapon in the service of decolonisation, one which counters colonial enculturation and externalises the native struggle, a struggle which is both cultural as well as political. In a situation where writing back constitutes ‘fighting back’, when it provides a cogent anti-colonial narrative for example, one that re-asserts a national culture as a prophylactic against colonial enculturation and domination, indeed, against a community’s extinction, then a national literature of resistance, to paraphrase Fanon (1961), must result in an important [positive] change in the native psyche, in terms of self-perception and the viability of cultural identity. The claim to a national culture in the past Fanon opines: ‘does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of future national culture’ but also ‘in the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium, it is responsible for an important change in the native’ (Fanon 1995, 154). In the Arab world as elsewhere Fanon (1961) observes: ‘colonialism has made the same effort in these regions to plant

deep in the minds of the native population the idea that before the advent of colonialism, their history was one which was dominated by barbarism' (Fanon 1961, 171). Therefore it became imperative that Arab poets and intellectuals foster a cultural awareness and a re-affirmation of the Arab identity of their societies as a weapon of resistance against colonialism's negative representation. In his poem 'After the Apocalypse', Samīh al-Qāssim, in what could be regarded as a didactic mode which points the importance of learning the lessons of history, states that in order to 'see the future we must consult the past' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 383). The space of poetry then is a space in which the past (in terms of both and victories and defeats) can be analyzed and critiqued, or transformed into allegorical representations of the present, brought up to date in the Fanonian sense.

In terms of resistance, anti-authoritarianism, as Bruce Levine (2005) observes, has on occasion been both criminalised and deemed a pathological condition. He cites by way of example Dr. Benjamin Rush's classification (during the United States Presidency of John Adams) of those who resisted the US policy of a centralised federal authority as having an: 'excess of passion for liberty that constituted a form of insanity' (<http://zmagsite.zmag.org/Oct2005/levinepr1005.html>). And this 'excess passion for liberty' can rightly be regarded as pathological when it results in behaviours that have negative repercussions for both individuals and societies, but if this kind of pathological diagnosis is held as an absolute, then any and all forms of resistance could be deemed pathological, for example the rejection of a colonial 'civilising mission', or antipathy to the fragmentation imposed on ones family and community, or the desire to repel invading forces. The concept of resistance, particularly when it is related to armed struggle, can undoubtedly arouse a hostile response from a variety of quarters. A literature which

informs, motivates and inspires resistance can arouse hostility because it might be seen as somehow contaminated by its proximity to violence. While this thesis does not propose to analyse the psycho-pathology of violence *per se*, it will highlight the colonial violence which much of the literature discussed depicts, a violence enacted upon the Palestinian community, to which (sometimes violent) resistance, it will be argued, is the response and not the primary cause. The language of resistance can of course become ‘infected by violence’ as Slavoj Žižek (2008) observes, creating a language which is perhaps over-determined by violent imagery (Žižek 2008, 61). According to Žižek, this ‘infection’ occurs: ‘under the influence of contingent pathological circumstances’ and this in turn can of course render it unpalatable. In the light of this the question might be asked, can the poetic structure enable both the concept and language of resistance, to transcend any such pathological taxonomy.

In ‘A State of Siege’ (2002) Mah □m ũ Darw šh a
 says: ‘this siege will extend until we teach our enemies paradigms of our jahili poetry’ (Darwish 2007, 121). Darwīsh underscores the capacity of poetry to instruct, not just in the narrowly didactic sense but also in the sense of culture as a space within which understanding and accommodation of the ‘other’ can take place. In a sense then, it can be argued that Darwīsh, while politically engaged, privileges textuality, rather than actual violence, as a mode as of resistance. When in the same poem Darwīsh opines: ‘writing is a small puppy biting void/writing wounds without drawing blood’, he locates writing as a defensive weapon, a non-violent response (regardless of the language of violence) to the threat of cultural negation or extinction (Darwish 2007, 167). But he also challenges hostility to resistance in the sense that writing, and poetry in particular as a facet of

cultural production, has an immanent valence over and above the political. For example, while there may be hostility to the provision of a political platform to an oppositional culture or polity for example, poetry (as a wound that draws no blood) might be a more acceptable site of engagement in the sense that it can situate any associative violence at a safe remove. Culture, as opposed to politics, might therefore be a more suitable weapon of mass instruction since its 'rules of engagement' are ostensibly aesthetic. Thus poetry can provide a safe space within which to engage with, and be engaged by, the 'other' as has been the case between Israeli/Palestinian poets. It has a further utilitarian function in this respect, as a society's cultural (re)presentation of itself, it is an artefact which asserts the humanity of its producers, particularly on the world stage where justification in terms of that society's espousal of 'resistance' might be obfuscated or obscured, by international political alignments or security considerations for instance, or indeed by the existence of 'contingent pathological circumstances', or a set of bi-directional 'monstrous stereotypes' as outlined in the introduction.

The creation of poetry involves the modification of information which is reorganised or encoded so as to appeal aesthetically to its target audience. The concentrated poetic structure also tends to conceal meaning but in such a way that it can be de-coded by a politically aware audience. Harlow points out that 'poetry is capable of not only serving as a means for the expression of personal identity or even nationalist sentiment', in short, a cultural weapon, but poetry, she argues, 'as part of the cultural institutions and historical existence of a people is itself an arena of struggle' (Harlow 1987, 33). Perhaps Darwīsh in his poem 'On Poetry' best sums up the position of poetry as an arena of struggle, a poetics which must be fluid enough to adapt to changing

historical circumstances of its production, Žižek's pathological contingencies for example, while at the same time continuing to be an authentic and unambiguous cultural signifier:

Yesterday we sang to the stars ...
My fellow poets! Today we live
In a new world ...
And he who writes a poem
Becomes a prophet.

Our poems have no colour
No sound, no taste!
If they don't carry the light
From house to house.

If people can't understand them
Then let's bequeath them to the wind
So that we may live eternally
In silence.

Once I heard a poet say:
Since my poems please
My friends and spite my enemies
Then I must be a poet!
But I say, I say:
If only these poems were a chisel
Or a plough, or a roof! (Darwish in Bennani 1982, 42)

For Darwish, it could be argued, poetry is a tool (or a weapon) but only in the hands of those who know how to use it productively. Good poetry, by which is meant poetry that has aesthetic value over and above any political message, poetry which is politically

committed but not over-determined by the political, is such a tool. Poetry, if it is politically or ideologically over-determined to the degree that this comes at the expense of aesthetic valence, or when its language is ‘infected by violence’, serves no valid cultural purpose and by implication perhaps, no national purpose.

To preface a chapter on Palestinian poetry with a reference to a European poet might at first glance seem to denote a pervasive sense of that ‘Eurocentric universality’ spoken of by Barghouti (see Introduction). But Brecht was a poet committed to both documenting and implementing social change and his work reminds us that although poetry in the west may no longer have any or very little real socio-political import, this is not necessarily true of other societies and at other times. Brecht is also significant in terms of the period of German history, as the ‘dark times’ of which he speaks that culminated in the systematic persecution of the Jews of Europe particularly from the 1930s onward, and no doubt accelerated the Zionist drive to create the state of Israel.

To take a postcolonial perspective is of necessity to take a Eurocentric (or western ethnocentric one), since all writers, including academics, are historically and culturally situated. Nevertheless, the comparative aspect and socio-historical contextualisation advanced by postcolonial theory can punctuate our value judgements with an awareness of how we arrive at those judgements. A postcolonial perspective reminds us that such judgments should be based on the study of literature and poetry (in this instance Palestinian) as a valuable contribution to the body of world literatures, in order to avoid the temptation to judge them, as Said puts it: ‘as native literature written by native informants rather than coeval contributions to [cultural and socio-historical] knowledge’ (Said 1994, 312).

A postcolonial perspective in the study of literature involves the socio-historical contextualisation of that literature in terms of the social, political, psychological and historical forces that impact on its development, the ‘contingent circumstances’ of its production; consequently, the interconnection of the concepts: culture, conflict and commitment, as outlined in the introduction, are centred by this theoretical position. Postcolonial theory examines the mechanisms through which literature acts as a representation of its people, their culture and identity. Furthermore, it examines how the literature acts as a symbol of their resistance and how it can act as an externalised imaginary of their nation, how it challenges the dominant ideologies (of the coloniser) and acts a counter discursive strategy. Postcolonial literature is not simply a body of work produced by a society that has undergone colonisation and decolonisation, it is not simply a temporal and political designation, but rather the term connotes a style of writing and its socio-political impact. When the machinery of a nation state is absent, as in the case of Palestinian Arab refugees after 1948, literature can fill the void and contribute to the propagation of national identity and cohesion. This potential of postcolonial literature to raise the political consciousness of the people in terms of nationalism is encapsulated in Mahḥūd Darwīsh’s poem ‘A Lover from Palestine’, when he says: ‘so long as our songs are swords when we draw them/ so long as our songs fertilise the land when we plant them’ (Almessiri 1970, 7). Literature, as Eugene O’Brien argues, is the: ‘most sausive of cultural practices’ as it can ‘synthesise the different constituents of nationalism in terms of archetypes which posit a teleological history’ (O’Brien 2002, 29). For Palestinians, both before and after 1948, that ‘sausive’ role was largely fulfilled by poetry and while the novel and the short story have also gained considerable ground since at

least the second half of the 20th century, poetry continues to hold fast to its revered status. While initially the emergent counter-discourse may exist only as a reaction to or resistance against the dominant (colonial) ideology, or indeed may be read in this way by critical theorists, literature designated as postcolonial also deserves to be considered in terms of its aesthetic valence, for the contextualisation of literature as a site of resistance need not mean that it is valueless as artistic production. An understanding of the socio-historic conditions of a particular society's literary production therefore, can enhance and enlighten our understanding, and ultimately our appreciation, of cultural production in general. As stated in the introduction, Arabic literature is not usually viewed as belonging to the postcolonial category. Nevertheless this chapter will show that much Palestinian literature exhibits many of the tropes, metaphors and tactics associated with the body of literature designated as postcolonial. These metaphors and tactics include concern with exile (actual and metaphorical), with displacement (actual and psychological), contested borders and spaces, a pervasive atmosphere of containment and exclusion and finally with the discursive tactics of resistance which include the struggle against subaltern status by revisiting and revitalising the native's literary and historical past. Furthermore, it advances the consolidation of the national culture by expounding the integrity of the native cultural identity and thereby fosters the development of political and national consciousness within the native society.

Postcolonial theory considers what it might mean for a writer to act as a voice or a representative of his society, in terms of shared cultural identity and experience and his commitment to his people's urge for liberation, for as Fanon (1961) points out, all the efforts of a people are important in (re)producing the national consciousness and

consciousness of culture. Palestinian writers may or may not see themselves as postcolonial writers or indeed may not consciously produce works which bear the hallmarks of postcoloniality. However, Sami Hadawi (1991) cites a spokesman of the Palestine Arabs at the First Palestine Arab National Congress held at Jerusalem in 1964, who stated that the Palestine problem was: ‘an example of colonialism in its ugliest form and a case of genocide in the era of the United Nations’ (Hadawi 1991, 141). This was at a time (1960s) when postcolonial theory was gaining academic ground in the west and many societies were in the process of, or had already, shaken off the colonial yoke, for example: Ireland, Egypt, India and Algeria. As Maxime Rodinson (1980) puts it: ‘the conscience of the world had developed, and no longer accepted right of conquest, or accepted it more reluctantly’ (Rodinson, <http://www.marxists.de/middleeast/israrab/>).

Paradoxically however, at this time, the state of Israel was consolidating its hold on Palestine by advancing Jewish settlement and land appropriation, and in failing to accede to United Nations (UN) Resolution 194, by their intransigence on the issue of the Palestinian refugees and their right of return. At the same time they were permitting a ‘right of return’ to the state of Israel to world Jewry, thereby perpetuating a source of conflict in terms of contested space, a conflict further advanced by placing Palestinians in the state of Israel under military rule, and finally by the occupation of the West Bank and Ghāzā Strip after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Rodinson (1980) further argues that by this time peoples were ‘no longer willing to accept conquest’ and were willing to fight ‘to preserve their identity and to keep or win back their independence’. It should not seem surprising therefore, that Palestinians should have desired to preserve their ‘Arabness’, and in the age of nationalism, desire an Arab state of their own. In view of the

decolonisation occurring in many other parts of the world at this time, Rodinson (1980) points out that: 'it seemed to the Palestinians a flagrant injustice that an exception should be made of them on the sole grounds that the colonists were Jews' (Rodinson <http://www.marxists.de/middleeast/israrab/>).

The current chapter will examine, from a postcolonial perspective, the Palestinian poetry that emerged between the years 1948-1967. For the purposes of discussion, the poetry of this period can, albeit loosely, be divided into three categories, that which is principally concerned with either 'Refugees', 'Return' or 'Identity', and these specific concerns are very often made explicit in the poems' titles. However, within these three categories lie a range of tropes which cross over and intersect with the other categories. For example, the set of poems focused on 'return' will contain tropes such as home, land, borders, exile. Similarly, the category of 'refugees' will also demonstrate a significant engagement with borders, exile, memory and remembering. This is because the three categories have a similar connotative range which encompasses the experience of expulsion, exclusion and alienation. For this reason, the categorical division reflects by and large, the central tenor of a particular set of poems around which a range of these literary *topoi* revolve.

Refugees, Return, Identity: A Poetics of Resistance

Section 1: Refugees

During the period 1948-1967, Palestinians were forced to come to terms with the loss of a significant section of their homeland which now comprised the state of Israel, and had to cope with the expulsion, exile, and consequent refugee status of a significant number

(750,000 approximately) of the population, while those remaining inside the new state were subjected to military rule and second class citizenship in an increasingly de-familiarized homeland. In this period, says Hadawi: 'Palestinians' political activity was minimal and resistance was unorganised' and they were looked on simply as refugees rather than a significant party to the problem and its resolution (Hadawi 1991, 193). Conditions in the refugee camps were severe: lacking basic infrastructure they were the poorest dwellings in the entire Arab world, and consequently by the 1950s camp populations became increasingly politicised, and despair began to be channelled into resistance activities centred on the almost mythical figure of the *fidā'ī*. This figure of the Palestinian fighter willing to sacrifice his life appears in much of the pre-1948 poetry discussed in Chapter One.

After 1948, the field of operations of the *fidā'īn* generally lay along the borders between Israel and the rest of Palestine, and often consisted of spontaneous forays to retrieve Palestinian property. Pappé points out that the Israeli Government implemented a law (1950) that allowed the government to continue confiscating Palestinian property 'a legislative campaign that provided for the continued depopulation of Palestinian villages in the name of security' (Pappé 2004, 146). In many cases, refugee camps were near the new borders and within sight of the land lost to the Palestinian refugees who could only watch helplessly as their property and lands were appropriated for Jewish use. As Hadawi observes, the events of 1948 and after demonstrate that peace for the new Israeli state involved the condition that: 'the Palestine Arabs shall not be there to enjoy the promised peace but watch it from neighbouring Arab territories as refugees' thus ensuring the continuation of the conflict (Hadawi 1991, 217).

In the years immediately after partition and expulsion, economic survival became a priority and only a few thousand of the refugee population, says Pappé, engaged in armed struggle or ‘attempted to effect Palestinian liberation through writing or diplomacy’ (Pappé, 2004, 152). Nevertheless, as the Palestinian poet Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā points out, and much of the poetry to be discussed will demonstrate:

The Israelis had made a grim miscalculation when they thought that the refugees, who were mostly at the time illiterate or semi-literate villagers, would boggle up their own issue into one of mere survival at any cost. (Jabra 1979, 85)

However, the contrary would seem to be the case, in the words of Mah Darw
 late poem ‘A State of Siege’ (2002) for example, Palestinians have ‘one goal /to be’
 (Darwish, 2007, 145). Be that as it may, with their lands appropriated and properties
 destroyed, economic survival became paramount. In the camps the material conditions
 which enable a print culture to flourish were undoubtedly absent, and thus poetry
 assumed an even greater cultural significance in the propagation of new ideologies of
 resistance. By this time many Palestinian leaders, political and intellectual, including
 poets such as Ibrāhīm T Abd al and politic
 Amīn al-H Abd al-Qadr al-H usayn ī were e
 exile and diplomacy cannot be effective without an effective leadership. Although
 representatives of the Arab states continued to press the UN to assume responsibility for
 the ‘rights, property and interests of the refugees’ (see Hadawi 1991, 172), for the exile
 and the refugee without a homeland, without a national centre or executive, diplomacy
 was hardly a viable option. Thus the Palestinian poet T awf ā S
 after 1948, would point the liminal existence of the stateless, when in the 1950s he asks

in poem number '24': 'what is my embassy', the answer, 'there are no embassies on the sea' (Boullata 1976, 147).

The poets of Palestine certainly cannot be accused of silence in the 'dark times' since 1948; on the contrary, their poetry gives voice to an alternative repository of the history and long travail of their people. It vociferously signals a confluence of forces wherein cultural production, poetry, under the pens of committed poets, becomes an expositor of the experience of conflict. The position of the refugee excluded from his land is poignantly described by Palestinian poet Salīm Jubrān, a politically committed poet, and like other poets such as Mah ~~idn~~ Darwīsh, was a member of the Israeli Communist Party 'Rakah'. The following short poem 'Refugee' allows the reader to access an imaginary of the experience of displacement and exclusion in a world circumscribed by checkpoints and border crossings. In this poem the natural order of things is inverted as precedence is given to beast over man in the absurd world of military rule:

The sun crosses borders
without any soldier shooting at it
The nightingale sings in Tulkarem
of an evening
Eats and roosts peacefully
with kibbutzim birds
A stray donkey grazes
across the firing-line in peace
and no one aims. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 190)

The poet builds an imaginary scenario, a peaceful rustic scene, but the tranquillity is deceptive and the scene is about to be undermined by what Rashid Khalidi (1997) has described as the: 'quintessential Palestinian experience', the anxiety experienced

particularly by Palestinians, at the border crossing and the checkpoint where freedom of movement, of entry and exit, is significantly circumscribed. Whereas the dumb beasts can cross unhindered, the native son is denied access to what was his homeland. Thus Jubrān underscores the terms of the conflict and the border becomes the synecdoche of a fractured world, of forbidden entry or exit, a site of conscious conflict between the individual and the object of his desire:

But I your son made refugee
between me and your horizons
the frontier wall stands. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 190)

The poem adverts to the Israeli response to infiltrations by refugees after 1948, the adoption of a shoot to kill policy as a result of which thousands of Palestinians lost their lives. Many of these so-called infiltrators had simply sought to retrieve their property or surreptitiously harvest their fields (see Pappé 2004, 149). The poem also recalls a past when Tulkarem was a peaceful agricultural town but it also articulates the terms of the conflict which extends into the present time. Tulkarem is still a major checkpoint close to the ‘Green Line’ (the 1949 armistice line) and now located behind Israel’s security fence popularly known as the ‘separation’ wall which the native son or daughter still may not cross, often to gather the harvest of his fields, orchards or olive groves on his own land, except at the behest of the occupying power. This aspect of the Palestinian tragedy, the plight of refugees excluded from their lands, is deftly explored by the female Palestinian poet Fadwā T

□uq ān, sister of t

highly acclaimed nationalist poet in her own right. Although she was raised in a rather conservative household wherein the roles of women were circumscribed (see T

□uq ān

1990, 'A Mountainous Journey'), early in her poetic career she was urged by her father to write nationalist poetry.

The act of remembering in T الموتيفات evocative of the
classical Arabic poetry wherein the poet recalls past exploits, family, nomadic wanderings, triggered when he stops at a familiar (but now deserted) campsite. The narrator of Fadwā T قائد's poem Call

He recalled a land which had raised him...
He nostalgically recalled the sight of the soil trembling in spring
and saw the field of wheat...
treasuring wealth for him. (Sulaiman 1984, 124)

The emphasis here in the first two lines falls on the land as a source of livelihood and sustenance of which the refugee has been deprived. We then realise that what he is seeing actually exists, 'he saw'; we realise that his longing is not merely a nostalgic memory but a longing for land which is actually within his sight but now part of Israel. The poet provides the reader with an insight into the refugee's personal emotional turmoil 'then a stormy idea flared up in his mind'. By allowing him to speak in his own voice: 'how can I see my land, my rights usurped', the poet admits the refugee's subjective experience into the sphere of the aesthetic. At this point in time, the disenfranchised Palestinian refugees, as Hadawi (1991) points out, were not seen as part of the solution but rather simply as a by-product of the conflict. However, through the medium of the poem, his deeply emotional and in one sense, private experience, acquires a space for audible (public) narration. Not only is this 'space' cathartic in psychological terms but it is integral to the evocation of political consciousness in the wider community. Political consciousness

underwrites the individual's, and by extension his community's, will to action, his desire to regain his 'usurped rights' at whatever cost to himself. It is at this point that the refugee, in the knowledge that 'he who has no country has no grave on earth' (as

Mah

□mud Darw sh would later put it),

He fell passionately on his land, smelling the soil,
kissing the trees and grasping
the precious pebbles...
he listened to her heart whispering tender reproof:
you have come back?
I have, here is my hand.
Here I will remain, here I will die, so prepare my grave.
(Sulaiman 1984, 125)

In this section of the poem, the role of the land is extended to encompass a more proactive emotional relationship between land and native. Not only does he re-claim his land in this way but the personified land responds, re-claims him, while 'tenderly reproving' him for leaving in the first place. In this way the speaker transcends any mere lococentric relationship with place and instead advances an organic relationship like that of the olive tree, albeit one which is enacted through the merging in the grave of man (clay) and the earth of the homeland. As in the case of so many other so-called infiltrators, it is a decision which would cost him his life: 'then two shots ripped the silence of the night' (Sulaiman 1984, 125). Where the poem ends we can assume actual history to begin, we can draw the conclusion that the infiltrator has been (and here Pappé ironically calls attention to the sanitised language of Israeli intelligence reports) 'successfully shot at' (Pappé 2007, 189).

This aspect of the refugee predicament is also adroitly exposed by Samīh al-Qāsim in his poem ‘Watan’, a masculine term which however, is translated in this anthology as ‘A Motherland’. The translation here may to some degree reflect the unity of Palestinian poets (in terms of resistance) across the gender divide. This issue will be more fully explored in Chapter III, in terms of the renewed contact between poets from inside Israel and the poets of the Diaspora after 1967. Al-Qāsim was one of those poets of the resistance who remained inside the new state of Israel after partition. Like Mah □m ūl
Darwīsh, a member of the Israeli Communist party ‘Rakah’, al-Qāsim has been imprisoned by the Israeli authorities for his political activity.

This poem is lent considerable veracity by the historical detail as recounted by Pappé (2007) in terms of land appropriation and the looting of food supplies (as in the case of Jaffa) and the theft of harvests. But while the material sources of sustenance, home, land, food, water, might easily be taken from the Palestinians their culture continues to provide them with a source of spiritual nourishment. As a cultural artefact, the poem attests to the persistence of that culture and as a record of their protests, an alternative version of their story, thus the poem is invested with significant political and cultural gravitas.

Al-Qāsim structures this particular poem in a series of questions and through this interrogative mode he emphasises the validity of Palestinian resistance, without which, memory will undoubtedly be all that remains. But he also points memory as a source of nourishment in terms of the resistance effort:

What,
When the yellow fields
Yield to their tillers

Nothing except their weary memories
While their rich harvest pours
Into the granaries of their usurpers? (Al-messiri 1970, 41)

But the poem also underscores the means by which the Zionist project made the desert bloom; it explodes the myth so to speak and any contention that theirs was a civilising/modernising mission. The image of cement-choked springs in the lines following is no mere metaphor. Noam Chomsky for instance discusses this aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in his introduction to *Middle East Illusions* (2003) wherein he states that in 1953 the American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles suspended economic aid to Israel in an effort to compel it to end the unilateral diversion of the water of the River Jordan:

What,
When cement has choked
The ancient springs
And caused them to forget
Their courses,
they cry in the face
of their creator, “who are you?” (al-messiri 1970, 41)

The speaker recounts the further defamiliarisation wrought on the landscape. The trees that once provided sustenance have become dead wood, and sacrilegiously desecrated, they have become mere artefacts:

what,
when the olive and almond
have become timber

decoration on the doorway of inns,
idols,
whose nudity charms halls and bars
and souvenirs for tourists. (al-messiri 1970, 41)

The poet astutely draws attention to the fact that as a people, the Palestinians too, unless their cause is kept to the forefront of both Arab and world politics were in danger of becoming 'souvenirs for tourists' mere artefacts, curiosities of history, geography and archaeology:

What,
When my people's tragedy
Had become a farce for other people,
And my face a worthless bargain
Which the slave-trader proudly distains? (al-messiri 1970, 43)

Al-Qāsim recounts the political machinations which have brought about Palestine's predicament and the changed political conditions through the specular relationship between the poem and the landscape.

The allusion in the lines following is very likely to the 'man-made' satellite of Israel, seen as barren since being cleared of its indigenous population, a European satellite in what was essentially an Arab landscape. Or indeed the barrenness indeed may also allude to the creation of Transjordan after the absorption of the West Bank, which no doubt it was hoped would absorb the refugee problem in time. This was a harsher environment physically compared to the cultivated countryside the refugees left behind:

What,
When the barren space is

A man-made satellite
And in the streets
There's nothing but a beggar, a hat,
And an autumnal song? (Al Messeri 1970, 43)

But at this point in time the idea of pan-Arabism is still decidedly relevant in terms of the Palestinian cause. The speaker enjoins the Arab world to support the resistance: 'blow eastern wind! Our roots are still alive' (Al Messeri 1970, 43). The poem is an example of the inspirational aspect of the resistance poetry that developed under military rule within the Israel and after 1967 provided the proof that even under occupation resistance was still possible, indeed imperative.

The repetition of the interrogative 'what' (*mād* ~~rein~~) reinforces the accusatory tenor of the poem. There is an internal logic (reinforced by the interrogative) to the manner in which the poem unfolds. It reads as an accusatory documentation of the Palestinian losses beginning with the theft of harvests, followed by the theft of water, the destruction of culture and finally the obliteration of the people to whom all this originally belonged. However, this answer must be gleaned from the poem by politically conscious auditors, whether they are Palestinians themselves or the wider Arab community. By withholding information, by refusing to explicitly provide an answer, the poem maintains an aesthetic valence but it also forces one kind of reader at least, to construct an imaginary of hunger, thirst, de-familiarisation, environmental destruction and cultural denigration, in a subjective manner, while for the 'masses' upon whom these events were inflicted, it simply reflects the facts on the ground. The question can also be addressed to those who have committed, and permitted 'other people' to perpetrate these offences against the Palestinian people. In this way the poem constructs and intersection between various sets

of audiences; it can therefore elicit the same set of questions and a unified response from these diverse groups: ‘what’? What next? What can be done? What should be done, when all that remains of a community’s lives, homes and identity is a poet’s commemorative song, an ‘autumnal song’?

Resistance literature (poetry) reinstates the experience of the individual or society so often elided in the statistical presentation of history. It resists this elision in two ways, firstly what T

□this area and other such poets

desire’ (to quote the poet Abū Salmā) on the part of the refugee to re-possess his land, is not the compulsion of the fanatic but rather the passionate determination of the colonized subject to regain autonomy over that which is essentially, his homeland. Secondly, the poetry records an act which challenges the terms of his exclusion, records his self-identification with the land and through the process of *prosopopeia*, that of the land with him. For both Israeli Jew and Palestinian Arab: ‘the act of inhabiting [the contested] piece of land becomes an ideological statement of self-identification’ (O’Brien 2002, 29). In the context of T

□uq ā’s poem, t

graves it holds, becomes the ‘ultimate nationalistic signifier’ not just in a moment of ideological signification, but as an indication of the deep commitment to return, to re-possess it (grasp its pebbles) even to the point of self-immolation. This is not the extraordinary self-sacrifice of the *fidā’ī*, it is rather, the spontaneous sacrifice, the love of nation or homeland described by Anderson (see Introduction). This concept of love for the nation (*hubb al-wat* □has been expressed in Arabic literature and politics since at least the mid-19th century. It is the ‘stormy idea’ of the ordinary individual, which in one sense can be seen as an adumbration of the first Palestinian *intifād* □of 1987. It is, in

the Fanonian sense, the concerted efforts of a people: poet, peasant, worker and intellectual, to ‘shake off’ (the meaning of *intifād* h) the colonial yoke and thereby eliminate the distance between the self and the object of desire, the homeland, to acquire the autonomic re-possession of the occupied land, the geographical space which can: ‘accommodate the cultural ideology which is the unifying force of a people’ (O’Brien 2002, 29).

A poem which particularly intersects with the three concepts of refugees, exile and return is Salma al-Khadra al-Jayussi’s ‘Without Roots’ (1960). In this poem, al-Jayussi explores the experience of the exile (and his/her response to the refugee crisis in the homeland) in the Diaspora and the fraught nature of an existence without rootedness, without that deep sense of belonging and self-esteem that only a homeland, the source of one’s cultural heritage, can provide. This is something that affects subsequent generations of the displaced and underlies their particular sense of alienation and helplessness:

The ringing burst load and frightening
Then the voice persistent and sad:
“send your aid eastwards
All your uncles have become refugees.” (Boullata 1976, 149)

The collective ‘all’ here (in this translation) encompasses the shared experience and united response of all Palestinians and indeed other Arabs, to the plight of their people and not just to ones immediate relatives, for under such straitened circumstances all are relatives:

Then I sent my uncles clothes
Which I had piled up for beggars

Raisins which we had but would not eat
Sticky piasters with no bright sheen or ringing jingle...(Boullata 1976, 149)

At least since the early 20th century many Arabs had emigrated to the Americas and elsewhere and like many Irish families whose loved ones had emigrated to the colonial centre, England or indeed to the Americas, the longing for letter home, hopefully with money inside (a source of hope and joy) has been a trope in much Irish literature. Al-Jayussi's poem gestures toward that source of hope and joy, 'no bright sheen and ringing jingle'. But this source of joy is undercut in the poem's context, for the refugee status of her 'uncles' is not the result of uncontrollable economic forces *per se*, but the expulsion (forced emigration) of the Palestinian population and the reduction of their status to refugees dependent on aid, in effect 'beggars'. This is a source of bitter irony for their homes are destroyed and their harvests either garnered by others or left to rot in the fields from which they themselves are excluded.

The speaker proclaims her solidarity with her people in no uncertain terms, in a sense making her refusal to aid others a point of resistance: 'Since that day I gave my piasters to no beggar/for my cousins had become refugees':

My uncle hungered and we lamented his hunger
Then fed him for a month as a guest
And rested from the pangs of conscience
Then we gave him up to the great wide world
And got absorbed in our own worlds. (Boullata 1976, 149)

The 'pangs of conscience' experienced by the speaker is perhaps a kind of survivors guilt which invades consciousness from time to time and impedes the psychological healing

process, the will to move on, to ‘get absorbed in our own worlds’. This latter phenomenon of course is part of the human condition and by implication therefore, the world will also forget the Palestinian predicament unless it is kept to the forefront of the socio-political agenda. By this time movements such as *al-fateh* were endeavouring to raise political consciousness and this is difficult to achieve without a viable national executive to provide direction. Consequently, it behoves artists and writers to demonstrate a unified political commitment and it behoves poets in particular (and this is especially important in Arab societies) to employ poetry as a weapon of mass instruction, particularly in the interests of a nascent Palestinian state.

A trope familiar in much Arabic poetry past and present is that of the ‘dove’. The dove is often a symbol of mourning in Arab literature and in this poem the cooing of the dove acts as a memory cue which produces a mournful response in the hearer:

Many a dove calling in the forenoon’ stirred our sadness
 And we remembered him and plunged in tears
 And rested from the pangs of conscience. (Boullata 1976, 149)

As a literary trope, the ‘dove’ furnishes the poem with an elegiac tone but also with a sense of continuity as it links it to Arab cultural motifs and poetic antecedents, for example, the anti-colonial Egyptian poet Ahmed Shawq ^{is v} ‘doves’ of in his commemorative poem ‘Dinshawī. As a female poet, the trope of the dove links al-Jayussi to the female poets both of the *jāhīllī* and later post-Islamic periods. Women poets were known in particular for the *rithā*, or lament, for example, Fat ^{im ā} bint Muh ^{ānmed, daughter} that recalls its loss on a branch at night triggers my daily grief’ (al-Udhari 1999, 70). It

also points towards the cathartic value of poetry in the expression of individual, and by association, of collective psychological pain and trauma.

The importance of memory, especially for those of the Diaspora, is underscored as the speaker of al-Jayussi's poem addresses her cousin: 'I am still loyal to the fond memories' (Boullata 1976, 149). The family, and the wider concept of family in terms of the Arab peoples, has been fractured by exile and the communal space, the homeland, has been dismembered. The poem, in the sense of culture therefore, provides a metaphorical space for familial re-grouping. She recalls the blissful ignorance of a childhood spent on the 'green summits' and 'in the fertile meadow'. She recalls the fecundity of the land, and ironically, the innocence of the notion that it might be envied by others 'we had no idea how fertile it was'. It also adverts to the inspiration that the land can now provide to its poets. The familial comradeship that exists between the speaker and her cousin is conflated with their personal comradeship in resistance, but also with their communal comradeship with the masses 'large crowds', their shared acts of protest 'shouted' against the Mandate and the subsequent partition of their homeland. It further warns 'retrospectively' of the conflict to come (as a result of British duplicity) in the 1936 revolt against the Mandate and again in 1948:

we grew up knowing the bitter hatred as of custom...
we demonstrated with the large crowds
and shouted with the fullness of the heart's faith...
"O Britain, do not overdo it
Do not say conquest is pleasant
Nights will come to you
Whose lights are shining spears." (Boullata 1976, 150)

In a manner which recalls the poetry of Ibrāhīm T

Ṣāḥib al

discussed in Chapter One, the concept of words and weapons (shining spears) converges in the space of this poem. This is appropriate in the sense that the retrospective view of the speaker acknowledges the contribution of these poets to the inspiration of the masses before *al-nakbah*, while it also underscores the current situation.

The lines addressed to the Mandate authority: ‘O Britain, do not overdo it/ do not say conquest in pleasant’ marks the employment of cultural production (the poem) as an instance of openly anti-colonial discourse. Through this explicit address the speaker lays both the blame and the consequences of partition: ‘night will come to you/whose lights are shining spears’ squarely at the door of the Mandate. But the speaker also suggests that this is not a conflict which the Palestinian people sought: ‘O Britain, those who died are dead/lie down O spears’, but rather one which was forced upon them by Britain’s colonial power brokering and complicity in the creation of a Jewish state.

Al-Jayussi turns again to the predicament of the people, hints at the destruction wrought by the conflict on villages and the countryside: ‘Olive trees did not bear oil and fire/the colour of their leaves faded’, but more deliberately perhaps, she addresses the causes of this destruction and answers the charge that her people may have abandoned their homes and fields of their own volition:

I asked the land and the sea about them...
A star with an extinguished eye led me to them
And the traces of boxthorn carried from the valleys
For they feared to die in their homeland
In order to live as refugees. (Boullata 1976, 151)

But however much the speaker might sorrow, it can never be adequate to the 'meaning' of the loss, that meaning only becomes comprehensible through the dialogue between past and present, and between the present and the absent (between the exile and those who remained). This meaning is epitomised by the conversation between the speaker and the grandfather:

He used to cherish me...sing to me as a child
"My town is high ... on the top of a hill"
He taught me old poetry...
The principles of religion
A little girl and her grandfather can never have enough of his love.
(Boullata 1976, 151)

The meaning is different for both, for the exile in the Diaspora it is the meaning of 'rootlessness', the condition of the exile 'without roots', expressed through the inversion of past and present, the opposition between rootlessness and rootedness, between the acquisition of a cultural legacy and disinheritance. To those who remained behind, either within the new state of Israel, or under Jordanian rule in the West Bank, the meaning of loss may have involved a sense of abandonment, an 'echo' that serves only to remind them of their loss. In another sense, the meaning of loss is the actual acclimatisation to loss, the 'scar of the wound' experienced by those who are in exile, a loss which is perhaps a deeper wound for both. For those who remain, this separation from those in exile signifies a rupture in the process of cultural transmission, a process so often the preserve of a society's elders:

I said, "Grandfather, don't you know my voice?
Has it not made an echo while remembering you?"

My grandfather said, “get up and leave us.
Our ears are heavy with deafness
the echo is a wound in the depths of the heart
I would have returned your bitter call
If I could speak. Get up and leave us
You do not understand the meaning of silence in a broken heart.”
(Boullata 1976, 151)

Kanafānī (1968), as translated by Barbara Harlow, would later point out that: ‘the wound opened in a dead body causes no agitation’, but that of a ‘living body increases its potential for resistance’ (Kanafānī 1990, 157). The speaker endeavours to re-awaken political consciousness, to reconnect with the cultural source by re-opening the wound thereby converting the ‘wound into a weapon:

O sons of the dead, are you dead like them
Or are you orphans? Or the scar of the wound in a sad people?
We are all that
A word of a hoarse discordant tone united us
“refugees”. (Boullata 1976, 152)

The closing lines of Al-Jayussi’s poem also echo Jabra’s poem ‘In the Deserts of Exile’ when he asks: ‘what are we doing with our love’? It is a call to commitment; the living must not behave as though they are dead, the role of the dead should be as inspiration to the living. The role of poetry should not simply be the evocation of the past, and it should not merely be used to underscore the disjuncture between the (heroic) past and the (debased) present but rather its role is to bridge the literary and historical lacunae between them, an act of deep commitment which aims to re-connect and revitalise an ‘orphaned’ culture cut off from its source.

Permission to narrate, the right to tell our story, says Said in his introduction to *The Politics of Dispossession* (1995) has been a major goal of Palestinian writing, particularly on the world stage and that the 'world stage' of power politics, systems of alignments and détente, may be hostile to a 'story' of injustice which calls that very system into question. What Said underscores here is the position that many poets such as Tawfiq S

□ ayigh appear t

victimhood in the so-called Israeli-Palestinian conflict, had, and would continue to be, obscured by the terrible narratives of the Holocaust. The poem therefore, provides not so much permission to narrate, but rather a space wherein such a narration is more likely be heard, literature (poetry) in its 'sausive' role, provides a narrative space wherein the 'politically' silenced might become audible culturally and where the 'story' as culture, can become a non-violent weapon of mass instruction for all who are disposed to listen.

Storytelling is an important aspect of many cultures and can be a means of passing on cultural identity, traditions and practices. 'I would have liked to tell you/the story of nightingale that died' says the speaker of Samih al-Qasim's short poem 'Slit Lips' (circa 1969) but under military occupation the conditions and possibilities of narration are circumscribed 'I would have liked to tell you the story... had they not slit my lips' (al-Qasim 1984, 53). When political voices are silenced poetic voices are forced to become political but this confluence of culture and commitment immediately finds itself in a state of conflict, in a situation where telling a story is tantamount to 'speaking out', a form of resistance which must be silenced, signified by the slitting of the poets lips. The image which the poet uses to depict his 'silencing' is a dramatic and violent image and when enacted on the body of the poet, it becomes a signifier of the oppressor's

determination to inflict that violent ‘silencing’, not only on the body politic, but also on the cultural identity of a subjugated but politically conscious people.

Poetry (re)presents the narrative oppositions that may exist between story and information, between historical statistics and actual lived experience. In a poem which overtly intersects with the categories of refugee and return, the Palestinian poet Kamāl Nās ~~poem~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~story~~ ~~’~~ with a statement of intent: ‘I will tell you a story’ (of the refugees) albeit in a specific cultural form, the poem. The confluence of poem and story is analogous with the confluence of culture and commitment, the poet’s commitment to imbue that aspect of culture (storytelling) with a newly charged aesthetic valence by presenting it in the form of the poem.

The poet subsequently unfolds a story which directly relates to the condition of the refugees in the camps ‘the world of tents’, a world far removed from the traditional poems and stories of cyclical nomadic wanderings and return to old camp sites, although ironically, it too is a story that arises from a ‘world of tents’:

A story that lived in the dreams of people
That comes out of the world of tents
Was made by hunger,
And decorated by the dark nights
In my country, and my country
Is a handful of refugees.
(<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/kamal/qissah.asp>)

The locus of the poem/story, ‘a word of tents’, once again gestures toward the *atlāl* motif of traditional Arabic poetry. In this instance it underscores the disjuncture between present and past, between the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Arab desert dwellers

inspiration in terms of commitment to the Palestinian right of return, a people the poet proclaims who:

Went to light, from the tents,
The revolution of return in the
World of darkness.

(<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/kamal/qissah.asp>)

The power of Nāsīr's discursive response to the Palestinian predicament is encapsulated in the opening lines of Fadwā Turki's poem 'The Imprisoned' dedicated to Nāsīr Singer'. 'Your singing soars to us/despite the narrowness of the sky' ... 'the iron bars that shape/ the sky before your face/ will not keep your singing from our ears', the poet may be imprisoned or otherwise silenced, denied permission to narrate, but his words nevertheless remain free (Tūqān 1990, 210) Tūqān also highlights the constitutive role of poetry, particularly through a poetic voice such as Nāsīr's, as a weapon of mass instruction in the re-visioning of Palestinian society and re-invigoration of resistance after the setback of the 1967 war: 'you sang the poetry of hope and pride and strength ... and we felt as green and fresh as our pastures' (Tūqān 1990, 210). The potential of literature to act as a method of disseminating the ideology of resistance, as a means of instructing and inducting the masses, which is one of the central objectives of resistance literature, is pointedly inverted in this poem, in which the masses themselves are converted into a weapon of re-construction 'the light of revolution'. To deny Palestinians the right to be heard, Fawāz Turki opines: 'is to leave them with nothing except violence', it is, in Nāsīr's words, to leave them no choice except revolution' (Tukri 1975, 89).

Like many others before him Nāsīr was himself was politically active in the struggle, not just as a poet but also as a member of the Communist Party ‘Rakah’ and later as director of information for the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and editor of the publication *Filist* ~~and in this capacity~~ and in this capacity he was a significant contributor to discursive resistance, a weapon of mass instruction in terms of the Palestinian resistance. He also personally experienced imprisonment, and exile in Lebanon after he was expelled from the West Bank in 1967, and paid the ultimate price for his discursive resistance when he was assassinated by Israelis in his home in Beirut in 1973 (see Said 1995, xv). The circumstances of Nāsīr’s death confirm the idea that discourse can indeed become a powerful weapon of the politically disenfranchised. Nasīr, among other leaders, died during an Israeli raid into Beirut, as Rima Nasir Tarazi explains in the following commemorative piece on the anniversary of Nāsīr’s death which appears in the online journal, *This Week in Palestine*:

On the 10th of April 1973, Israel was to demonstrate, once again, its commitment to destroying any embodiment of Palestinian identity and any resistance to its attempts at establishing facts on the ground. Thinkers and writers were viewed as a threat. None other than Ehud Barak [former Israeli prime minister] headed the assassination squad which took the lives of Nasir and his friends while in the sanctuary of their bedrooms. Nasir was writing an elegy to a friend. His body was found with hands outstretched, his mouth and right hand riddled with bullets (Tarazi 2004, June).
(<http://www.thisweekinpalestine.com/details.php?id=986&ed=91&edid=91>)

‘The paradox of the power of literature’ remarked Italo Calvino, is that it is ‘only when it is persecuted does it show its true powers’ (Calvino 1990, 99). For this reason, one may assume, permission to narrate, to speak out politically and poetically, and to inspire

resistance by the quality of his narration, was denied to Kamāl Nās ^[11] in such a way that unites the actual with the metaphorical ‘slitting of lips’. This denial of permission to narrate underscores the political gravity acquired by a literature which is contextualised in the dynamic confluence of culture, conflict and commitment. Such a literature becomes a powerful weapon of mass instruction in the hands of a skilful and politically committed writer, one which requires an extreme response from those whose oppressive political machinations he threatens to disparage and expose.

Section 2: Return

The international lawyer Francis Boyle (inter alia) points out that UN Resolution 194 (111) acknowledges the right of return of Palestinian refugees (Boyle 2003, 153). Furthermore, Article 13 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) gives everyone the right to leave his/her country and to return to it (Hadawi 1991, 185). Israeli claims that the Palestinians left or abandoned their land and homes of their own accord, or at the urging of Arab leaders, have been refuted by several writers and historians, such as Walid Khalidi (1988) and the Irish journalist Erskine Childers (1961).

The heroic tone of the following poem ‘We Will Return’ (1951) by Abd al-Karīm al Karmī, also known as Abū Salmā and also by the appellation ‘olive tree of Palestine,’ captures the refugee’s desire for return as he addresses his ‘Beloved Palestine’, his homeland, whose ‘weeping shores are calling me/ the escaping streams are calling me/they are becoming foreign in their land’. It also reflects the belief in the possibility of return, if not in fact the reversal of Palestine’s fate, to be achieved by the ‘shining swords and spears’ of the *fidā’ī*:

My friends ask me, "will we meet again?"
 "Will we return?"
 Yes! We will kiss the bedewed soil
 And the red desires are on our lips
 Tomorrow we will return.....
 Along with the bleeding flags
 And along with the shining swords and spears.
 (<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/abusalma/na3ood.asp>)

It is not surprising that 'return' should still seem feasible at this time. Until 1967 'all five members of the United Nations Security Council were officially committed to the Palestinian right of return to Israel on the basis of UN Resolution 194' (Walid Khalidi 1988, 5). In 1949 the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was established to deal with the Palestinian refugee crisis, and to support the refugees in their transition to repatriation. This is another reason why 'return' was still believed possible and why it should continue to be a powerful literary trope. The UNRWA was also meant to 'protect the refugees and the rights they had under international law' both of which remits it remained powerless to fulfil (Pappe 2004, 143). Consequently, the period under discussion also saw the mobilisation of Palestinians on their own behalf, the formation of the *al-Ārd* (the land) and *al-Fateh* (victory) movements in the mid-1950s for example, and with the emergence of *al-Fateh's* military wing, *al-ʿas* (the storm) in the 1960s (see Khalidi 1997, 253 n12) a new resurgence of hope begins to emerge in the poetry, a factor which underscores the specular relationship between Palestinian poetry and its socio-historical context.

The hope of return is also evident in the work of those poets of the next generation such as Mah and the belief in the possibility of

return is expressed in Darwīsh's poem 'Waiting for the Return', what will you cook for us, Mother/we are coming back' (Al Messiri 1970, 15). It also echoes that of Abū Salmā, but Darwīsh's poem also gestures toward Ibrāhīm Tūqān's castigation of those who sold the land, discussed in Chapter One. The speaker in the same poem asserts his deep attachment to the land and his determination to remain: 'I will not sell you ... nor will I ever leave'. When the speaker poses the rhetorical question: 'They have looted the oil jars/and the flour sacks too?' he adverts to the historical (as opposed to metaphorical) episodes of looting which Pappe informs us was common practice both as a private act, but which was also a systematic official looting policy by Israeli forces which occurred (particularly in Jaffa during 1948/49), and which resulted in the theft of provisions such as flour, rice etc. which the British government had kept for the Arab population (Pappe 2006, 204). Once again, in times of conflict, culture is invested with greater significance, when a poem becomes an act of remembering and by inference, an act of resistance, an act of commitment to preserving an alternative source of the homeland's history.

In his poem 'Promises from the Storm' (circa 1964), Mah □m ūl Darw ṣh
embodies the attributes of the traditional warrior-poets of the past and thus evinces a sense of the continuity of Arab culture in a time of conflict. Politically committed, Darwīsh was a member of the Communist Party, Rakah and later a member of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) executive. Capitalised in this particular translation, the 'Storm' here alludes to *al-ʿas* ~~the~~ *al-fateh* military wing of *al-fateh* the movement which came to dominate the PLO around this time (see Al Messiri 1970). In the following poem, Darwīsh re-enacts that role of the poet as a provocative force of his

people. He locates himself as the advocate of change both in rhetorical as well as political terms when he states:

Be that as it may,
I must reject death
and dry the tears of sentimental songs
and rid the olive trees
of all false branches. (almessiri 1970, 27)

In his introduction to the anthology *A Lover from Palestine* (1970) Abdul Wāhab Al-Messīrī reminds us that although all Arabs share in the humiliation of the Palestinian *nakbah*, it is the Palestinian alone who has lost everything. In the face of this loss, for Darwīsh it is the role of the Palestinian poet to lead his/her people into a period of new action, not just as dependent refugees but as actors in the resolution of the conflict to which it could be argued, they have been subjected. In this way, the poet mobilises the people in readiness for the change which is promised by the ‘Storm’, a change which will lead them out of the inertia of nostalgia ‘sentimental songs’ and out of the political *cul de sac* of outmoded ideologies ‘false branches’. Though his personal commitment: ‘I must reject death’, and the didactic tone of the poem, the poet enjoins the people to reject the consignment of their legitimate cause to the ‘death’ of political and historical obscurity.

The olive tree was to become one of a familiar set of *topoi* in much Palestinian poetry after 1948. It provides a cogent symbol of the Palestinian’s rootedness in the land, a living symbol of a land that had been cultivated by its Arab inhabitants long before the advent of the Zionist project ‘to make the desert bloom’. In his description of the village of al-Birwa, Walid Khalidi informs of us of the productivity of this and other villages

whose agrarian inhabitants cultivated, in addition to olive trees, ‘wheat, barley, corn and watermelons and operated three olive presses’ (Khalidi 2006, 9).

In Darwīsh’s hands, the olive tree becomes a symbol of the new hope, a tree of resolution that has been swept clean of all redundant ideas and fruitless political machinations by the advancing storm:

If I sing the song of joy
Behind the lids of frightened eyes,
It is because the Storm
has promised me wine...
and because the Storm
Has swept the standing trees
Clean
Of all dull sparrows
And false branches. (Almessiri 1970, 27)

Another poetic trope which would become familiar in Palestinian poetry is that of the ‘wound’. The ‘wound’ can be read in several ways, for example, it can be read as the collective wound of the *nakbah* but it can also be read as the wound of exile and of de-familiarisation, in this case the de-familiarisation (through the Hebraisation) of the Palestinian city: ‘wound of the city, you are a light in our sad nights’ (Almassiri 1970, 27). It becomes easy to imagine the lights of Jaffa in the distance within sight of the refugees trapped in the misery of the camps. Like the streams described by the poet Abū Salmā’s as ‘becoming foreign in their own land’ after 1948, the city may also have become an alien place, inhabited by strangers, a city that ‘frowns’ on the poet ‘the streets frown in my face’. But there is hope, for it is also a city that remembers him and recognises him as a native son: ‘you shield me from ... the looks of hatred’, a city whose

streets only a native son or daughter would know how to negotiate surreptitiously, as an infiltrator, and despite its unification with Tel Aviv in 1950, the city retains its Arab heart.

The 'wound' of the city is never more present than in Rāshid H ~~ṣ~~ein's short poem 'Jaffa', in which the speaker returns to the city in the aftermath of conflict.

H ~~ṣ~~ein is one of the organisers of the *Al-Ard* (The land)

movement. H

~~ṣ~~ein War, but not chose exile after t

before he had personally experienced prison, on one occasion as a result of reading his poetry in an Arab village which he was forbidden to enter by the Israeli authorities (Almessiri 1970, 70). This can be construed as another episode where permission to narrate (to recite) has been denied to a Palestinian poet, undoubtedly because of his political commitment which finds itself in conflict with the military rule imposed on Palestinians within the state of Israel, and after 1967 in the occupied territories of the West Bank and The Ghāzā Strip. That this confluence of conflict and commitment must impact on culture, on the practice of culture, is axiomatic. This double dissociation of political disenfranchisement for the villagers that constitute H ~~ṣ~~ein's audience, coupled with the obstruction of cultural custom reinforces the notion that 'culture' (poetry) can indeed be regarded a weapon of mass instruction that must be taken from the people.

Jaffa itself, apart from other cities, Al-Jayussi informs us, was to become 'a central symbol of great potency' in Palestinian poetry, not least because so many Arab orange groves had flourished there prior to 1948 (Al-Jayussi 1987, 35). Khalidi (1997) further outlines the extent of orange cultivation in the region as early as the 1850s, as

being mostly Arab-owned. The orange tree is a similar trope to that of the olive tree, a symbol of rootedness which is specific in terms of Jaffa. This coastal city 'whose waves watered the rain', is recalled by the speaker as a city that suckled him 'with the milk of orange'; a city that now ironically, 'thirsts'. Apart from their emotive power in terms of rootedness, trees have a broader geographic import, their capacity to cleanse the air of carbon dioxide, their propensity to prevent erosion of the soil and after their death form a significant component of decaying humus which eventually provides fossil fuels. With these properties of trees in mind, the poet's use of trees as a poetic trope, as a signifier of rootedness, achieves an adequation of trees and people such that the trees provide not just a trope of belonging but also symbolise the idea that any change in the geographic equilibrium of Palestine such as the removal of its trees/inhabitants, must have disastrous consequences. In the metaphorical sense then the people are the lungs of the land, they hold it together in a polity and after death their graves assign to it a kind of sacredness. Thus the trees of Palestine are invested with a deeper political and spiritual significance.

After a three week long siege in 1948, Jaffa, 'her back broken' as Hussein puts it in this poem, fell into the hands of the Jewish forces. Amid scenes reminiscent of the flight from Haifa, the entire Arab population of 50,000 of Jaffa were expelled, mostly in small fishing boats that would take them to the Ghāzā Strip 'while Jewish troops shot over their heads to hasten their expulsion' (Pappe 2006, 103). In the aftermath of the siege, the poet imagines himself in the ruins of this city which was 'once was a garden', and which is now 'an opium den dulling our senses' (Almessiri 1979, 73). Images of nurture and industry 'milk of orange' are contrasted with a drug induced lethargy and

hopelessness. This contrast intensifies the sense of de-familiarisation the speaker feels as he moves through the city's ruins.

H □ussein's poem
in an 'opiate cloud', without hope 'without a moon'. Emptied of its Arab inhabitants, Jaffa's streets are described as 'pregnant with flies and boredom' (Almessiri 1979, 73). In an effort to restore the city's dignity, the speaker imagines himself:

removing the rats' from her forehead
raising the rubble, uncovering corpses without knees,
burying the stars in the sands and fences
I took the bullets from her bones and sipped anger.
(almessiri 1970, 73)

Pappe makes the point that when members of the Red Cross organisation entered Jaffa two months after it was occupied by the Israelis they discovered a 'pile of dead bodies' whom the Israeli military governor admitted were probably shot by Israeli soldiers (Pappe 2006, 204). The poem adverts to 'uncovering corpses' and provides an occasion where history lends veracity and authority to the poetic art. At this point in time, long after the actual weapons of conflict have ceased, words, like bullets, have a trajectory and will continue to reverberate and ricochet. But unlike bullets, words are not spent at the moment of impact they can continue to resonate long after their first utterance.

In Palestinian poetry, the de-familiarisation associated with the image of the 'city' diverges from that image of the city in western literary modernism or indeed in much other Arabic modernist poetry. In western modernism, the alienation the individual experiences in the city provides an aesthetic trope for the writer, in a sense it is an

adopted purview. In much Modernist Arab poetry however, the city can be a locus of victimisation for Arabs, and a place of alienation that arises from the oppressive and sometimes authoritative atmosphere of city life. Jaffa however, is the victim of external forces (colonial forces), thus it is a city alienated from without by an overwhelming external force, rather than from the inhabitants or the conditions of life within. Jaffa is already lost, a victim of military conflict, it is the skeletal remains, the 'bones' of an Arab city. 'I got myself a dry brush, smoked it and rested' the speaker states, conjuring an image of purification with makeshift incense which suffuses the scene with a funereal atmosphere (Almessiri 1970, 73). Thus the city of Jaffa becomes another 'wound' of the conflict which duly enters the familiar *topoi* of Palestinian literary resistance.

The imposition of an alien, supposedly superior (colonial) culture, the destruction of villages, the re-naming, which involves de-signification in terms of ownership, of streets, villages, towns and surrounding lands, constitutes an assault on the memory and remembering of the indigenous population. In the case of Palestine, it could be seen as violence enacted through representation, the re-mapping of the land as a Jewish land. In many instances Jewish settlements or parks were built on top of the villages destroyed during the 1948 war (see Khalidi 2006). In 1949 says Pappé, David Ben-Gurion personally supervised a large project to give Hebrew names to all the places, mountains, valleys, springs and roads in the country (Pappé 2006, 147). This action is described by Pappé in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006) as memoricide. But conversely, in the face of this 'memoricide', the act of remembering itself becomes an act of resistance assisted by the poetry as a weapon of inoculation against forgetting. In his poem 'We

Will Return' Abū Salmā's adverts to this assault on memory: 'the escaping streams are calling me; they are becoming foreign in their land' (Abu Salma, <http://www.barghouti.com/poets/abusalma/na3ood.asp>).

On one level the 'escaping streams' can be read in a literal way and on another level as a metaphor for the refugees who either fled or were expelled, and those who remained within the state of Israel who are no longer named as Palestinians but as Israeli Arabs and thus had become 'foreign' in their own land. This is not simply the adoption of a metaphorical device on Abū Salmā's part, but rather it is an astute observation which has an historical basis in the actual re-naming process carried out by the Israeli state. Albeit in rather more oblique way, the poem could be seen to advert to water diversion by the Israeli state as part of its project to 'make the desert bloom' because, as pointed out by Chomsky, Dulles threatened to cut off aid to Israel because of its unilateral diversion of the waters of the Jordan River.

In postcolonial literature the response to this kind of 'memoricide' often results in a heightened atmosphere of place and displacement, actual as well as psychological, affected in the literary context through the de-familiarization of the native's landscape. This development of a strong sense of place and or displacement in postcolonial literature has been described by Said as the 'primacy of geographical' (Said in Walder 1990, 36). The mnemonic properties of poetry, particularly in the absence of a print culture, make it invaluable to the act of remembering (particularly geographical displacement and de-familiarisation) and thereby empowering poetry as an alternative repository of cultural history. As a literary device, the primacy of the geographical is enacted through various tropes, whether it is the rubble of a ruined city or village, the pebbles in the soil, uprooted

olive trees or the de-familiarised rivers and streams. In Palestinian literature such tropes expose the emotional fragmentation wrought by defamiliarisation on the Palestinian consciousness. This consciousness must however, be re-worked into a new semiotic system, a revived political and aesthetic consciousness, as Darwīsh puts it in his poem ‘The Roses and the Dictionary’: ‘the poet must have a new toast and new songs, even though my legends die, in the rubble I look for new light and new poetry’ (Almessri 1970, 21). In terms of poetry, the practice of a cultural tradition, poetry, can become a newly charged locus of metaphorical ‘possession’ of the land, a proactive expression of the poet’s archetypal role as a provocative force of his/her people.

If the resistance tactics of much Palestinian poetry were usually thematically overt, another tendency, towards a more oblique approach to the Palestinian predicament had also begun to emerge. The Palestinian Tawfīq S̄ayigh was one of those avant-garde Arab poets that arose in the 1950s and who uses a more oblique approach (compared to that of Darwīsh and others poets of the period discussed above) in his treatment of the Palestinian predicament. Al-Jayussi says of his work that it: ‘exhibits extreme precision and a great ability to express anguish and conflict, which his occasional recourse to humour reflects the [absurdity] flip side of an extreme situation’ that the Palestinians found themselves in (Al-Jayussi 1987, 14). It may be fair to say that the ‘extreme precision’ that al-Jayussi discerns in S̄ayigh’s poetry, permits it to stand alone, without the need for a title with which to guide the politically conscious reader. The first of Tawfīq S̄ayigh’s poems (from his collection *Thirty Poems*) to be discussed is poem ‘Number 6’, a poem which embodies the stunned helplessness and changed political reality of Palestinian existence after 1948. Through the poem’s intertextual relationship

with the ‘Tale of the Fisherman and the Genie’, from the Persian/Arabic collection of folk tales known the *1001 Nights*, Tawfīq S Ḥayyīgh’s poem ‘Number 6’ imparts a new sophistication to a folkloric icon (the genie), the magical realism of which has long been used in the west to conjure an (exotic and other) image of the Arab east. The protagonist of the tale is a fisherman who casts his net one day and pulls in a brass jug within which a genie had been sealed by order of King Solomon whom the genie had disobeyed. When the genie learns that Solomon is dead, he realizes he is no longer bound by his commands, therefore the only wish he is willing to offer his liberator is to right to choose the manner of his death. However, in the source tale the fisherman eventually tricks the genie into going back into the jug.

Al-Jayussi points out that a ‘witty irony pervades S Ḥayyīgh’s poetry’, an irony which she states ‘saves his often anguished poetry from gloom’ (Al-Jayussi in Badawi 1992, 152). In poem ‘Number 6,’ the tenor is that of containment and escape but the intertextual markers and situational irony expand the poem’s connotative range. The poem is structured as a series of self-reflexive questions, the irony of which invites the reader to consider what might be the response of someone who awoke to find himself in the genie’s predicament: that he lament, curse, but ultimately accept his situation? This ironic aspect of the poem points the relationship between the immediate historical context of the poem and that of human psychology. In this poem, S Ḥayyīgh articulates the psychological stages often associated with bereavement: denial, anger and acceptance. Thus the character of the genie can be read as a signifier of the range of human emotions that underlie the Palestinian experience:

Tomorrow if I find myself a giant genie in brass jug

which the waves kick sometimes
and which sometimes the waking fish try in vain to open
shall I lament the world I lost?
shall I curse destiny that summarized and disfigured the genie...?
shall I smash the jug and set myself free?
or shall I sit in it satisfied as if I were in a palace? (Boullata 1976, 137)

The connotative range of this poem is extended beyond the frame story through the use of intertextual religious allusion. Solomon is recognized as a Prophet of God by the Islamic, Jewish and Christian faiths. Although a Christian, Sā'īgh's intertextual allusion is also interesting in terms of Islam. In Islamic teaching, the *Jinn* are considered to be a race of beings created by God before mankind, parallel to humans, but their substance is fire rather than clay. According to the *Qurān*, Solomon was granted by God the power to command the '*jinn*' to do as bidding but they were to be released from this servitude after Solomon's death (see Surāh *Sabā* xxxiv, 12-14).

But what might be the postcolonial implications of this particular intertextual passage? In the frame story, the genie's containment within the jug is a *fait accompli*. By the time this poem was written (1954), the partition of Palestine and creation of the state of Israel was also a *fait accompli*. The intertextual analogy between Solomon and Israel on the one hand, and Palestine and the genie on the other, does not require a huge leap of the imagination, and neither does the asymmetrical power relationship that obtains between them. Furthermore, if the literary analogy between the *jinn* and Palestinians is a tenable one, then the *jinn*/Palestinians, ironically, being somewhat less material than the sons of Adam, might easily be 'spirited away', as Theodore Hertzl wrote in his diary (see Chapter One), out of sight of the Zionist project if not entirely out of existence.

Just as the genie is consigned to a fate hermetically sealed by Solomon's magic, after 1948, Palestine is consigned to fate sealed by the creation of the new Israeli state, hence the speaker ironically asks:

Shall I cry out for help and pardon to Solomon?
or shall I shout, my God, send the fisherman?
will not my God say, "why do you want to be free?"
What shall I answer my God? (Boullata 1976, 137)

The religious intertextuality continues as the speaker avers to God as the supreme authority who can reverse the genie's fate by sending the fisherman. In Christian parlance of course, the 'fisherman' has its own set of connotations: Simon/Peter the 'fisher of men' who was called by Jesus. Furthermore, Jesus is recognized as a Prophet of Islam whose return, awaited by Muslims as well as Christians, is believed will inaugurate a new era of peace and justice in the world. This intertextual (and religiously intercultural) aspect of the poem highlights the socio-religious amity, the shared fate and unity of resistance on the part of the Palestinian people, Christians and Muslims alike. It also recalls the lamentation of minaret and church bell in Ibrāhīm Tūqān's poem 'Tuesday' which also underscored the Palestinian determination to unite across the religious divide.

In addition it points out the complexity and conflict that might underlie the religious intertextuality, for Sūwaygh's irony challenges the kind of naiveté (if not indeed magical thinking) that counsels reliance solely on divine intervention without also analyzing and addressing the immediate socio-political fault-lines, a notion which adverts to the conflict between human reason and a divinely ordained fate. In answering his own

question 'what shall I answer my God', the speaker, like a modernist anti-hero, gestures toward the moment of *anagnorisis* when ignorance (of these fault lines) gives way to knowledge, as the speaker enunciates his personal flaws:

Shall I tell Him, "boredom made me sick "(...)
Shall I tell Him I am longing for company?
for company whose hugging arm I bit?
who granted me what I asked and whom I denied thrice,
who embraced me but I was not of it though I was in it.
Shall I tell Him, "I want to proclaim my message"? (Boullata 1976, 137)

The *nakbah* may in some sense have been viewed by Palestinians as a punishment for their failure to save the homeland from partition, represented in the poem as a failure of articulation. 'I want to proclaim my message' the speaker of the poem declares (Boullata 1976, 137). This allusion to the poet as a prophet, as a man with a message, furthers the impact of the religious intertextuality, but the speaker sees himself rather as a failed or misguided prophet, a mumbling anti-hero who nevertheless speaks a kind of truth:

To whom do I want to proclaim my message?
while my concern was not to do but to speak
and not to speak but to mumble,
Why should I not mumble in my jug? (Boullata 1976, 137)

But it also underscores both the destructive and re-constructive power of language as a tool of representation. The success or failure of linguistic representation is weighted by what Said describes as mastery of the 'intellectual and enunciative techniques' of power (Said 1994, 312). Like Solomon before them, the Zionists appeared to possess the

magical powers of modernity: the power to summarize and disfigure the indigenous population, the power to make the desert bloom, but particularly, the rhetorical prowess that enabled them to harness religion and history to western-style colonialism in order to create a new geo-political reality in the land of Palestine. The success of Zionist rhetoric, says Barbara McKean Parmenter, ‘contributed to the creation of the Palestinian dispossessed, and they in turn learned the value of words in presenting their case’ (Parmenter 1994, 4). In the face of this success of Zionist rhetoric, disarticulation or ‘mumbling’ on the Palestinian part would be woefully inadequate. But of course the value of words was already well appreciated and utilised by Palestinians as we have seen in Chapter One, so what really needed to change was perhaps the register of the poetic language and the form in which it was delivered, together with what Kamal Abu Deeb sees as the use of ‘a new semiotic system of cultural forms which belong to national culture’ not simply used as a form of continuity with the past, but rather cast in: ‘a new world view in opposition to the hegemony of the invading [colonial] cultural forms’ (Abu Deeb 1988, 171). The formal re-working of the oral tradition (the tale) suffuses poem ‘Number 6’ with cultural authenticity but the shift in focus from the stock character of the fisherman to that of the subjective experience of the genie imbues it with new semiotic significance.

As discussed in Chapter One, in much Palestinian poetry before 1948, the message had priority, therefore the language of the colonizer and colonized may have been of unequal weight. After 1948, when Palestinian intellectuals and politicians began to awaken from the nightmare of loss and exclusion, the form of the message began to assume greater importance and as previously discussed, many poets began to develop the

language and style of an Arabic literary modernism. Interestingly, in terms of free verse, Sadeq Al-Jayussi's poem 'Number 6' is a significant moment in this poem. The Arabic word for house *bayt* is often used to mean a verse of poetry, 'I changed my house' says the speaker, 'but I did not change my town', thus marking the new style of poetry as both a site of rupture and at the same time a site of continuity with the literary past.

In poem 'Number 6', the magical realism of the 'tale' and the declamatory style and structural limitations of traditional Arabic poetry (and much neo-classical poetry) are downplayed and a sense of modernity is achieved through the language Sadeq Al-Jayussi uses, which is ironic and acerbic, together with a more deeply subjective narrative technique and a new poetic form 'free verse' that could better express the changed and changing reality of Palestinian life. Al-Jayussi (1992) says of Sadeq Al-Jayussi's poem 'Number 6' that in it he recognizes himself as a victim rather than a hero. In view of the enormity of the victimization perpetrated on European Jews by the Nazi regime, it became imperative that Palestinian poets foreground the fact that they in turn had become the victims of that very victimization.

Pain and humiliation may be passed on from victim to victim in a process akin to psychological 'transference'. In respect of representation of the Palestinians, this process is described by Edward Said as 'blaming the victims', the legitimacy of which depends on the successful representation of the victims as aggressors. Sadeq Al-Jayussi's poem 'Number 6' acknowledges the new socio-cultural reality; consequently the speaker of the poem recognizes that victimhood must be tempered by resistance. In choosing to neither accept nor lament his fate, the speaker converts his victimization into a site of resistance as he

patiently and steadfastly awaits the reversal of fortune heralded by the arrival of the fisherman:

Tomorrow if I find myself a giant genie in a brass jug
I shall not kick my grave
and I shall not incline my cheek over it joyfully:
I changed my house but I did not change my town.
I shall sit in it bored and dumb,
waves will kick me but I shall not be moved...
I shall remain in it, deprived even of withering,
until the net will sink
and the fisherman will rejoice then tremble –

Shall I tell him, “Choose the throne you like”?
or shall I say, “Choose the death you like”? (Boullata 1976, 138)

In poem ‘Number 6’, the genie/Palestine undergoes a transformation (in political terms) by enduring a kind of historical liminality until the arrival of the fisherman, and his arrival is inevitable if the intertextual relationship between tale and poem is to be realized. The fisherman in question may be an organisation such as *al-fateh* which will re-awaken the political consciousness of Palestine. As discussed above, this also parallels the idea that return, if not in fact the reversal of Palestine’s fate, was still possible. But the overall message that emerges from Sāghīh’s poem is, that before that can be achieved, the genie/Palestine’s naiveté must give way to political astuteness and the development of self-reliance and once emerged, he will not then be tricked back into the jug but will return, sufficiently equipped to take his place on the political stage. Thus the parallel with the frame story ends as the genie carefully contemplates his emergence from captivity, enjoining the poem’s auditors to ‘think outside of the jug’ as it were and indeed outside

of traditional language, politics and poetics, for an answer to the genie/Palestine's predicament.

Section 3: Identity

On a practical level, without proof of identity, we cannot travel, cannot cross certain borders or frontiers, or access the benefits of citizenship such as health and welfare. Without proof of belonging we cannot access the protection of the law, or exercise our franchise, without proof of belonging we cannot definitively claim a geographical space as our homeland. At a more abstract or psychological level, identity defines who we are in relation to those around us, it is part of the mechanism through which we know and understand ourselves internally, and externally in relation to other groups through the process of identification. This comfort zone of belonging is central to the perception of a subjective, stable, un-fragmented and continuous self. Culture therefore, as a mode of identification, whether national, ethnic or religious, can provide an important constant; particularly under conditions of flux or discontinuity such as arise in times of conflict, when it provides a touchstone for national identity, identification and social cohesion. Language and literature are central to the process of identification because as cultural production, literature in the hands of committed individuals can provide a people with a cogent imaginary of a national community in times of political and ethnographic discontinuity and change.

In his introduction to *Palestinian Identity* (1997), Rashid Khalidi describes ‘the quintessential Palestinian experience’ as an experience which is clarified at the border, airport, checkpoint or other ‘barriers where identities are checked and verified’, places where Khalidi points out, Palestinians are: ‘singled out for special treatment’ and are ‘forcefully reminded of their identity’ a situation which results in ‘profound anxiety’ (Khalidi 1997, 1). This acute sense of place and displacement, both physical and psychological, is a characteristic feature of much postcolonial literature. In the second of S. Ayyash’s poems, poem ‘Number 24’ (1960) the ‘profound anxiety’ of a life of exile and statelessness are deftly explored. A sense of the stultifying capacity of approach-avoidance conflict permeates this poem; a sense of chronic psychological conflict that is epitomised by the poem’s opening lines:

Approaching, but no entry
travelling, but no arrival:
without it there is no entry
and you don’t carry it
therefore no entry. (Boullata 1976, 146)

The absent object of the poem is ‘identity’ (and the piece of paper which is a signifier of identity), the loss of which as the source of acute anxiety, but for the time being this information is withheld from the reader. In this way the poet builds an atmosphere of suspense and anxiety and the psychosomatic effect of this anxiety results in motion sickness described in a context of opposition or inversion, ‘stomach and mouth exchanged roles’. The sea is anthropomorphised, the water is perceived as ‘chuckling’,

thus the sea itself seems actively complicit in the act of opposition, both in creating the sickness and in mocking the effect on the traveller.

In his discussion of fragmentation in Arabic poetry since the 1950s Abu Deeb (1997) describes the resulting change in style and diction as a process whereby ‘the beholding eye sees things afresh’, and where the ‘Eye has taken over from the ‘I’ (Abu Deeb in Boullata and De Young 1997, 115). In one sense this underscores the idea that literary works, as outlined in the introduction, are not ‘mysteriously inspired’, but are ways of seeing and describing the socio-historical conditions of their production. In poem number ‘24’ this ‘exchange of roles’ between the ‘Eye’ and the ‘I’, where the observer becomes the observed, is illustrated by the lines in which the speaker contrasts his position (exile) with that of his fellow travellers:

who will sleep tomorrow while *you* turn in bed
they will feast on banquets while *you* vomit
they will tell stories and adventures
while *you* speak to the obscure fishes,
speak to them also from afar. (italics added, Boullata 1976, 146)

Intertextuality in a literary work can be both site of rupture and a site of continuity with a culture’s literary past, and in this poem, in a metaphorical sense, the sea also is such a site. At first reading of poem ‘Number 24’ the intertextual patterning (particularly when compared to poem ‘Number 6’) is hardly discernible, but upon closer reading, the intertextual richness begins to emerge through a series of allusive oppositions. For example, not only has the eye been exchanged for the ‘I’, wherein the observer becomes the observed, but secure attachment to the land has been exchanged for the nightmarish

insecurity of the sea. While Roger Allen (2000) among others has observed that the topographical focus of Arabic literature has generally been on the land as opposed to the sea, the sea as a literary *topos* will nonetheless be familiar to an Arab audience (Allen 2000, 9). The sea provides a kind of metonymic presence to the lost land. The Arab's nomadic migration over land (so familiar in the *raḥīl* section of traditional Arabic poetry) has been exchanged for the enforced sea voyage where every point of arrival is not only a temporary station but rather a point at which arrival is perpetually postponed.

Poem 'Number 24' exhibits a similar, if rather more oblique allusion (in comparison to the previous poem) to another folkloric icon familiar to western audiences, Sinbad the Sailor (in Arabic *Sindbād al-bāh* سندباد), who, upon his return to the land, 'will tell stories and adventures' of his many sea voyages. In terms of 'oppositions', unlike *Sindbād*, the speaker of the poem remains a victim of the sea, a narrator who has no auditors except 'the obscure fishes' from whom he is doubly dissociated 'speak to them also from afar'. Perhaps this is why the speaker relies on an internal narrator, an almost schizophrenic voice that provides a running commentary on his approach-avoidance conflict: 'You approach salvation but salvation slips away' (Boullata 1976, 146). This fragmented self also appears in S Sā'iq's poem 'Phantom', wherein he is perpetually haunted by an alternative existence and identity 'I tore my passport when I saw his name in it/ when he claimed my name was his I took another' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 425).

In poem 'Number 24', S Sā'iq builds a familiar psychological schema of homecoming, the sailor's return from the sea, and for a brief moment the speaker's (and the reader's) anxiety is alleviated:

girls wave their handkerchiefs to you,
shouts and songs move you in the forenoon,
so you collect your two bundles but they are scattered,
you throw your wallet to the pocket of nearby sailors. (Boullata 1976, 146)

However, the scattered bundles and bribes to sailors prepare us for the opposition or inversion of this ‘homecoming’ as it pertains to Palestinian refugees and this opposition reminds us once again of ‘the other exodus’ from Haifa and Jaffa. In this poem, the folkloric icon appears as a ‘handsome fearful giant’, but under the ‘new semiotic system’ he is no longer a fairytale archetype, but instead is a sinister figure, the uniformed archetype of modern officialdom who defines people in terms of their number, whether it be the number of their passport or identity card, a figure with ‘buttons and stick’ who controls borders and other points of entry and whose appearance elicits ‘the quintessential Palestinian experience’ a resurgence of anxiety and foreboding for the speaker:

But in your face stands
in the evening
A handsome fearful giant
whom you have seen and at whose sight you have shivered
in a thousand ports of a thousand countries,
the mountains darken
the buttons and the stick shine
the exultation is choked. (Boullata 1976, 146)

It is at this point that the absent object is named, the passport, the synecdoche for identity, the proof of citizenship, identity and belonging:

The book in his right hand he yells:
“ Your passport? ”
Without it there is no entry
And you don't carry it
Therefore no entry. (Boullata 1976, 146)

The speaker joins a new set of companions, the displaced, and a further set of oppositions begin to emerge, oppositions which signify the passage of time: ‘a group descends, a group ascends, the employees change, salaries and ranks progress’, but the speaker remains in stasis, he is overlooked while the right of passage is afforded to others who seem less deserving, but whose identity nevertheless remains unchallenged, uncompromised. In this respect he offers an astute questioning of morality:

even criminals hasten
traitors and spies
and those carrying a green pass in one hand
and a black one in a briefcase. (Boullata 1976, 147)

And his new travelling companions are drawn from the ranks of those uprooted from the homeland, who made their ‘small trip’, perhaps by sea from Haifa and Jaffa to The Ghāzā Strip and those ‘who begin the greater one’, the future generations of dispossessed and Diaspora, some of whom who are as yet unaware of their inheritance, namely ‘the quintessential Palestinian experience’:

On the shaky stairs lean
Some who ended their small trip
To begin the greater one,

Some are carried
Not yet knowing a meaning
For homeland and travel. (Boullata 1976, 147)

The 'special treatment' the speaker receives elicits the symptoms of paranoia, but while paranoia suggests delusions of persecution, for the stateless Palestinians this paranoid condition derives its external validity from the 'quintessential Palestinian experience' described by Khalidi. But in the midst of this paranoia, a moment of lucidity erupts as the narrative voice shifts back to the 'I', to the subjective experience. Without the safety net of his 'affective dissociation', the speaker suddenly acknowledges this predicament, the loss of identity, as his personal lived experience, rather than that of some split self which possibly represents the fraught existence of a cultural milieu cut off from its origins:

My papers are correct
Why did they not issue me a pass?
What did he inform on me? Who informed on me?
What is my charge
So that I may defend myself?
But there are no embassies on the sea. (Boullata 1976, 147)

The final line here demonstrates the reality of loss of identity. The deleterious effect on perpetrated on the individual by the acute anxiety state is voiced by the speaker in terms of a failure of memory: 'I forgot I forgot what my embassy is' (Boullata 1976, 147). The effect of acute anxiety is epitomised by the conflict between remembering and forgetfulness, a psychological conflict that makes him complicit in his own subjugation, in much the same way that the criminally-accused individual might, under torture, become complicit in the construction of his own guilt. The liminality of an existence

without a homeland, without representation and without recourse to a legal system to defend him (or access only to an impotent one such as UNRWA), is underscored here. Denied even the right to know for what crime he was deprived of citizenship, in this moment of lucidity that absent knowledge enters the discourse, his crime is one of identification (with the homeland) and perhaps the more offensive crime of endeavouring to return (to infiltrate) or re-possess it without having the concomitant proof, the passport, the synecdoche of identity and belonging.

After this interlude of subjectivity, the 'I' again reverts to the 'Eye'; the observer becomes once again the observed. The repetition of key words and tropes provide the poem with a sense of unity and also reflects the monotony of the interminable voyage:

The ship sails heavily with you
The chuckles slap you again
You try to guess near what land she will dock
Whether you will be met with shouts
or demonstrations or silence
you expect, you do not guess,
a handsome fearful giant standing
and those who greet singing of a law
stronger than you than the sea (Boullata 1976, 148)

Hadawi points out that the Palestinians were: 'forcibly expelled and dispossessed by an alien people who established themselves as government', and of course in order to consolidate a newly established regime, governance is usually accompanied by law-making (Hadawi 1991, 134). After the setting up of the Israeli state Hadawi continues, the Israelis enacted legislation for a further extension of 'memoricide', the: 'liquidation of the identity of Arab lands and the confiscation of their ownership' (Hadawi 1991, 165).

Examples of such legislation includes: ‘The Abandoned Areas Ordinance’ and ‘The Absentee Property Regulations’ of 1948. The crucial provision of this legislation says , is the definition of an ‘absentee’ which included any person who was, on or after November 29th 1947:

- A citizen of any of the Arab states
- In any of these states for any length of time
- In any part of Palestine outside of the Israeli-occupied areas
- In any place other than his habitual residence, even if such place as well as his habitual abode were within Israeli-occupied territory. (Hadawi 1991, 166)

As a result of this kind of legislature, a weapon of words used against the Palestinian hope of return, this handsome fearful giant who guards the borders can sophistically declaim:

our yearning is like yours but
law is law:
Without it there is no entry and you don't carry it
Therefore no, no entry. (Boullata 1976, 148)

But the absent conflict is made present, the mechanism whereby the displacement and dispossession of Palestinians was engineered, namely armed conflict, is framed by S ayigh in the idiom of military conflict: ‘fire shines in the heights/and smoke draws above it’, the speaker observes (Boullata 1976, 148) . The image also recalls the exodus of Palestinians from Haifa and Jaffa and Israeli soldiers firing over their heads to ‘hasten their expulsion’ (Pappe 2006, 103).

somewhat ironically underscores the victimisation of Palestinians, Darwīsh loudly proclaims it. The issue of identity, which in Sā'īgh's poem remains a source of acute anxiety, in Darwīsh's poem becomes an opportunity for a more direct rhetorical resistance. The poem achieves this in two ways, firstly by its direct affirmation of Arab cultural identity as a source of pride, and secondly, through the cultural practice of poetry, 'a form most intimate to his people' (Abu Deeb 1988, 170). Perhaps it is in this poem that culture, conflict and commitment truly begin to overtly converge and coalesce, a poem wherein the practice of culture is an affirmation of a received and indeed lived, cultural heritage and also a logocentric embodiment of resistance. The absent conflict over identity (who is and is not entitled to have it) is made present by this resistance, therefore the poem itself becomes a proactive site of resistance, the: 'form itself becomes a weapon; it becomes [literally] a statement of identity' (Abu Deeb 1988, 170). This new semiotic weapon 'Arabness as a source of pride', delivered in an accessible form, a form which can be broadcast by word of mouth if necessary, can work to inoculate Palestinian society against cultural denigration and the concomitant development of negative self-perception. Darwīsh's poem constitutes a space wherein writing back is 'fighting back' with a semiotic weapon (of words) that re-asserts the cultural identity 'Arabness' as a prophylactic against colonial enculturation and domination.

Darwīsh was himself for a time classed as an infiltrator and a refugee therefore when he speaks he speaks it is not just metaphorically, but from direct personal experience. Darwīsh became an 'absentee' not included in the first Israeli census when his family fled the fighting and his village was destroyed in 1948. He returned surreptitiously and lived for a time 'illegally' in Palestine until he eventually acquired an

identity card. Pappé points out that after 1948 failure to possess one of the newly-issued 'identity cards' could result in a prison term and consignment to the ranks of 'unauthorised' and 'suspicious persons' (Pappé 2007, 201). Darwīsh's poetry from this period is a repository of his personal experience and by extension, furnishes the reader with an alternative source of his community's history.

That this poem's central statement is one of commitment to 'Arabness' is axiomatic, for as Jabrā (1979) points out:

Right from the start Palestinians had declared that their fate and the fate of the Arab nation were interlocked, were in fact one. Palestinians could not fail, except by the failure of the whole Arab nation. But they also knew that so much depended on themselves: on their efficacy as a leavening force for a meaningful future for Arabs everywhere. (Jabra 1979, 85)

For many Palestinians says Khalidi their 'devotion to the pan-Arabism in the 1950s and 1960s' was, to a certain extent fuelled by the rise of Gamāl abd al-Nās □ir and the Syria Ba'āth Party but it was also considered 'instrumental as regards their [Palestinians'] larger objective of return to Palestine', which would be brought about by the liberation of Palestine undoubtedly with the help of other Arab states (Khalidi 1997, 182). Until the defeat of the Arab armies in 1967, this devotion to Arabism was seen as imperative if the Palestinian question was not to be consigned to historical obscurity and their claims in respect of return and reparation, put in danger of becoming attenuated with the passage of time.

The poem opens with the statement: '*Sajil*' which means 'record' or 'register', a verbal command to 'write down' as in a document 'I am an Arab'. The speaker takes the

initiative with a statement of identity and a statement of commitment to the unified field that is 'Arabism'. But it is also a statement which identifies him by what he is not, that is 'Jewish'. This statement is reiterated throughout and reinforces the tenor of the poem. The lines following allude to the fluid nature of demographics, to the fact that his very (Arab) existence is viewed as a threat to the demographic *status quo* within Israel. With these 'words' the poet re-inscribes demography as possibly another kind of weapon:

'I have eight children/and a ninth will come after a summer' (Darwish, <http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/>).

The idea that the demographic threat of a burgeoning native population could inspire fear in colonial authorities is not new. In the Irish colonial context, Declan Kiberd observes that Eamon de Valera, in his speech to the Friends of India in New York (1920) could justifiably undercut the myth that England went into Ireland and other countries for the purposes of bringing prosperity and civilisation. De Valera, says Kiberd, posed the question: 'when or where had the British Empire shown such altruism? Rather those colonies were drained of wealth and food:

the famines which plagued India in consequence might be unimaginable to Americans but were well understood in Ireland; and the massacres of unarmed civilians by General Dyer at Amritsar in 1919 is nothing new to us. 'No Irishman, de Valera declared, needed a book to tell him what went on in India ... to know that famine was the weapon used to kill off a people whose burgeoning population struck fear into the hearts of imperial administrators' (Kiberd 1996, 254).

The priority of economic survival and not only survival but population increase is a very survival which will provoke the anger of the Israeli authorities, and thus can become an act of resistance:

Employed with fellow workers at the quarry
I have eight children
I get them bread
garments and books
from the rocks
so will you be angry?
(<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/>)

During the first phase of the evolution of a national literature, Fanon (1961) remarked that the native intellectual at first addresses the colonial centre, which in this poem Darwīsh overtly does. But the poem also locates Darwīsh as being ‘of the people’ one of the masses of ordinary Palestinians struggling to survive, thus reinforcing the dialectic between poet and people as he voices their shared goals and aspirations. Although he is reduced in circumstances he is sustained by his untrammelled pride in his Arabness: ‘I do not supplicate charity at your doors...nor at the footsteps of your chamber’ (<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/>). Yet he is without identity, nameless and faceless ‘I have a name without a title’, a mere number in demographic terms ‘my number is fifty thousand’ (<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/>). In this instance the poem strikes a subversive note, his absent title is Palestinian as opposed to Israeli Arab. But the speaker, by recounting the number of his identity card, also gestures toward the fluid nature of demographics and the ‘demographic problem’, the balance

between Arab and Jew within the Israeli state, which may one day tip in favour of the Palestinians (see for example Leon, 2001).

As previously stated the olive tree was to become a potent symbol of the Palestinians' rootedness in the land, so much so that a poet such as Abū Salmā for example, might be conferred with the appellation 'the olive tree of Palestine'. Compared to those newcomers who claim an historic link with the land of Palestine in the distant past, the speaker of the poem declares:

My roots were entrenched before the birth of time
Before the opening of the eras
Before the pines and the olive trees.
(<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/>)

Like many postcolonial writers (the Egyptian nationalist poet al- Bārūdī and the Irish poet Patrick Pearse for example) the speaker contrasts his right to the land with that of the newcomers; the speaker of the poem has a history in the land which is immediate, a history in this land which was cultivated literally by his immediate forefathers as well as his more distant ancestors before the coming of 'other' civilisations 'opening of the eras', including perhaps the Muslim one:

My father descends from the family of the plough
Not from a privileged class
And my grandfather was a farmer...
teaches me the pride of the sun
Before teaching me how to read.
(<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/>)

As in much of the poetry to be discussed in this thesis, the speaker, in the space of this poem, acquires the ‘freedom to [linguistically] engage in a series of ‘territorial disputes’, in this instance, framed in the context of his own history in land (Huggan 1995, 411).

It has been noted in the previous chapter that it was perhaps the peasants (evicted from their land) who were often the first to bear the brunt, indeed the first to perceive the full implication of the Zionist colonial project, and that protest against it was often a bottom up process (see Khalidi 1997, 110). Thus Darwīsh’s declaration in the poem becomes a definitive expression of his rootedness and belonging, of identity and identification with his and his ancestors’ custodianship of the land to be held for future generations. However reduced his political and economic circumstances the speaker emphatically declares that will remain steadfast in his custodianship of his usurped land:

My house is like a watchman’s hut
made of branches and cane.
Are you satisfied with my status?
I have a name without a title...
(<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/>)

His custodianship extends to the ‘watchman’s’ duty of guardianship, to watch for and record further episodes of land appropriation ‘will the state take them’, and perhaps to monitor its cultivation and fecundity. In a moment which recalls the conversation regarding orange groves that took place between a Palestinian Arab and a Jewish visitor prior to 1948, when the native remarked that the orange groves in question had been planted by his grandfather (see Chapter One), Darwīsh reinforces the idea that the land

was in fact cultivated by Palestinian Arabs (and Arab Jews too no doubt) long before the advent of the European Zionist ‘civilising’ mission to ‘make the desert bloom’:

You have stolen the orchards of my ancestors
And the land which I cultivated
Along with my children
And you left nothing for us
Except for these rocks
So will the state take them
As it has been said?

[\(http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/\)](http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/)

This lococentric identification with the land is imperative in view of the continuing land appropriation by the state of Israel. The 1960 law enacted by the Israeli parliament relating to Israel lands for example extended the principle of the Jewish National Fund. As a consequence of this law, says Chomsky, 92 percent of the state lands of Israel were restricted in perpetuity to Jewish only use. In effect this meant that Israeli Arabs [Palestinians] were: ‘excluded by law from 92 percent of the territory of the state’ (Chomsky 2003, 15). In view of this legal consolidation of ownership and control of the geographic space the ‘primacy of the geographical’ as a tactic of postcolonial literature is utilised by Darwish to offer a counterclaim and assert his own history in the land. Just as the land is a repository of his identity, his poetry is a repository of his history in the land, it both posits and records his presence in absence.

In the declamatory style of much Irish nationalist poetry, Patrick Pearse warned the English usurper of the conflict to come (the 1916 uprising), when in his poem ‘The Rebel’ he declaimed: ‘beware of the risen people, who shall take what ye would not give’

(Pearse collected works, 1917, 337). In a similar fashion Darwīsh, in the face of continuing land appropriation by the state of Israel in the name of security, warns the usurper of his land (who has left him only the rocks) to beware of his hunger (for the land) 'if I become hungry the usurper's flesh will be my food', beware of my hunger and my anger' (<http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/>). Both poems warn of the conflict which must inevitably ensue whenever the same geographical space and resources are contested by opposing cultures, but particularly when the one culture is dominant and the other is systematically expelled, oppressed and culturally undermined, for as Said has pointed out:

Since 1948, Israel's policy has been to eliminate all traces of Palestinian national life, to treat the Palestinians not as a people but as a bunch of inconsequential nomads who could be driven out, killed, or ignored...and whose property and national rights could be trampled underfoot. (Said 1995, 140)

In is not surprising that under such straitened circumstances, poetry, as a significant component of national culture, should become a weapon of mass reconstruction for Palestinians in terms of memory, identity, selfhood and belonging. As Said has argued, in order that colonial representations of subject peoples begin to lose their legitimacy... 'rebellious natives' must assert: 'the independence and integrity of their own culture, free from colonial encroachment' (Said 1994, 241).

The Palestinian Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā, born in the town of Bethlehem in what is now the West Bank was another of those innovative poets who wrote from the 1950s onward. After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Jabrā left for Iraq. His

poem 'In the Deserts of Exile' reflects that modernist aspect of self-confrontation in Arabic poetry described by Boullata (1976). The interrogative 'what are we doing with our love', is both reflective of the situation and is also somewhat (self) confrontational, a warning that while refugees' faces are covered with the dust of mourning, time is passing 'spring after spring'. The more time that elapses between expulsion and return, the more attenuated their claim, however legitimate, may become in the eyes of history. It is not enough to love, that love must be bolstered with willingness to action therefore Jabrā asks: 'spring after spring in the deserts of exile/what are we doing with our love?' (<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=210>). Although Jabrā's poem is earlier than Samih al-Qāsim's, the interrogative 'what are we doing with our love' coincides with that used by al-Qāsim which prefaces each stanza of his poem previously discussed.

In this poem, Jabrā describes a fertile land, a land in bloom 'its flowers as if embroidered on women's gowns' (<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=210>). In so doing, he interweaves two strands of Palestinian national culture: poetry and the Palestinian craft of embroidery (see for example Ankori, 2006). This is in general a female craft, a craft of the home and hearth, which in this instance is woven into the craft of the poet. In this way he achieves an adequation of poet and people (including women), as he annexes the craft of the 'people', custodians of folklore and folk art, to that of the poet as the chronicler of their culture, a process which in turn identifies them with the land. It espouses the Fanonian idea of a national culture in which all participate, one which and is comprised of all the efforts and works of the people and their various forms of cultural productivity. This aspect of Jabrā's poem, the idea of female productivity as a means of politico-geographic representation, achieves an adumbration in respect of the next generation of

Palestinian men and women, both as poets and as activists, as fully brothers and sisters in the Palestinian 'wound'. When the poet chooses to embroider the landscape onto the page with words he confronts the loss of material possessions including works of embroidery (see Ankori 2006), he manages to embroider the lost land, and the craft, back into the annals of Palestinian cultural history.

In terms of the 'primacy of the geographical' as a trope of postcolonial literature, the land itself is interwoven with the folk art; for it is the familiarity with the land in its various seasonal hues that inspire the embroiderers' craft: 'March adorns its hills/April bursts open in its plains' and in turn provides the metaphor of rootedness for the poet. Through these images of fecundity, the notion that the newcomers made the desert bloom is pointedly challenged, as it was in respect of the orange trees (see Chapter I), and the natives own history in the land is re-asserted 'Our Palestine, green land of ours'. The olive tree appears in this poem too as a symbol of rootedness in the land. But it also serves as a reminder not just of the land's productivity but of the comfort that productivity might have afforded to those in distress (excluded from their lands and unable to gather their harvests) and existing on UNRWA handouts. This latter aspect is described in terms of the provision of shade 'blue shadows', a comfort for those who are out of home and exposed to an inhospitable sun, those who can only wait in the hope of return to:

the blue shadows
Among the olive trees in the valleys
And in the ripeness of the fields
We wait for the promise of July
And the joyous dance amid the harvest.
(<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=210>)

The speaker recalls an idyllic childhood spent in the ‘shade of the orange-grove/among the almond-trees in the valleys’. The idealised land, adorned with ‘jewel-like peony and narcissus/with flowers and bride-like blossoms’ stands in sharp contrast to ‘the deserts of exile’ (<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=210>). The desert has long been lococentric trope in traditional Arabic poetry but for the exile it is not a romantic setting for the poet’s exploits, it is rather an expression of the subjective experience of exclusion and displacement a place of ‘frost and dust’. But it is also perhaps symbolic of the physical environment of refugee camps and of the less arable landscapes of Transjordan and the Ghāzā Strip for example. The poet enjoins the land to remember its exiles, to remember a pastoral people forced into a nomadic existence in a desert of ‘thorns’ and existential alienation in the urban deserts of foreign cities:

Remember us now wandering
Among the thorns of the desert,
Wandering in rocky mountains;
Remember us now
In the tumult of cities beyond deserts and seas.
(<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=210>)

By charging the land with anthropomorphic properties, the poem enacts a bi-directional, collaborative process of identification between the land and its people, a process in which the land itself is made complicit as it re-possesses the native inhabitants. This positive opposition is in contrast to the negative opposition in respect of the anthropomorphisation of the sea in Sāyigh’s poem discussed earlier.

Once again, the traditional nomadic wanderings have been inverted, as forced exile is in no way comparable to a traditional nomadic lifestyle, consequently, those who are exiled will continue to mourn what has been lost and long for return to it. In this section of the poem the land is the addressee to which the speaker remarks: ‘Remember us with our eyes full of dust/that never clears in our ceaseless wandering’ (<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=210>). The implication here is that conflict over the contested space will continue. But while poets and intellectuals such as Jabrā and S

□ ayigh may have

refugee camps only a semblance of life was possible. Furthermore, for many refugees, the pastoral poetic was not simply a memory idealised by trauma, but an actual existence from which they were separated, perhaps forever, which is not to claim that they never experienced poverty or need, indeed Darwīsh’s poem would indicate otherwise, but rather that the psychological poverty of displacement and alienation from one’s homeland and way of life, is immeasurable by comparison. Nevertheless, Jabrā’s idyllic description of the land serves to resist the extinction of its memory, and memory, a beloved thorn in the wound of loss, becomes itself a site of resistance.

The poet goes on to extrapolate the measures through which the exilic condition of he and his people came into existence and why it is that their mourning will be incessant, a ‘dust that never clears’. The poem explains how it is that a once idyllic existence, calm and cool in the ‘blue shadows’ created by a cultivated landscape that sustained them, could become the ‘red thorns’ of an anguished longing:

They...destroyed the houses over our heads
Scattered our torn remains,
Then unfolded the deserts before us

With valleys writhing in hunger
And blue shadows shattered into red thorns...
(<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=210>)

Of deeper ironic import perhaps, is the fact that fifty years after Jabrā's poem, Palestinian houses continue to be demolished in the Palestinian territories and particularly within Israel in East Jerusalem (see for example, *No Place like Home*, 2007 Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions <http://www.icahd.org>). Palestinian poets continue to engage with familiar themes, a factor which points the importance of the socio-historical contextualisation (evinced by a postcolonial approach) of cultural production in terms of comparative criticism. For example, at this point in time, before 1967, Palestinian poets continue to engage with a familiar range of themes and tropes, not because they are incapable of developing new ones, but rather because the familiar ones 'refugees' 'return' and 'identity', continue to reflect the terms of their actual existence.

The closing stanza of the poem takes an overtly ironic turn: 'is it from your hills that the angels sang to the shepherds/ of peace on earth and goodwill among men?' (<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=210>). This is a reminder that it was here, in Palestine, that the main religion of the west, Christianity, was born, but also that its precepts are not so readily applied to Palestinians, whether Muslim or Christian. It is a tragic irony therefore, that in 'the dark times' of violent conflict death is the only real victor:

only death laughed when it saw
among the entrails of beasts
the ribs of men
and through the guffaw of bullets
it went dancing a joyous dance. (<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=210>)

Finally, the land is once again recalled: 'Our land is an emerald' which stands in the starkest contrast to the 'deserts of exile'. Jabra himself describes (from personal experience) the sense of fragmentation and loss which is the inimitable experience of the (Palestinian) exile, the experience of a cultural milieu cut off from its source:

The sense of loss in an exile is unlike any other sense of loss. It is a sense of having lost a part of an inner self, a part of an inner essence. An exile feels incomplete even though everything he could want physically were at his fingertips. He is obsessed by the thought that only a return home could do away with such a feeling, end the loss, reintegrate the inner self. (Jabra 1979, 83)

The metaphor of the city is pervasive in the following poem 'The Diary of the Epidemic Year' also written by Jabrā in the mid-1960s. The title of the poem immediately resonates with Daniel Defoe's pseudo-historical *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722). But while Defoe's novel was fiction purporting to be history, and indeed was accepted as such early in its reception, Jabrā's poem can be read inversely (in light of his personal experience) as history structured as art. When the speaker states: 'and thus the news spread', he underscores poetry as both an immediately accessible and politically valid medium for alternative socio-historical comment. Furthermore, he draws an immediately obvious analogy with the traditional role of Arabic poetry as news bulletin and as register of the Arabs, thereby bolstering the connection with the literary past, a literary history which pre-dates the colonial era, a tactic typical of much postcolonial literature. If an intertextual connection is intended (and of course author intention cannot be definitively asserted), between these two titles, two possibilities in terms of interpretation emerge.

The use of the diary as an armature for what is essentially in Defoe's case, a work of fiction, imbues that story with a kind of truth, or at least the perception that it is truthful. The immanently didactic nature of Defoe's novel, proffered as an historical documentation of the plague, endowed it with significant status as a kind of weapon (knowledge) to be used against the plague. It could be argued then that the concept of a 'diary' in the poem's title foregrounds the veracity of Jabrā's poem and enhances its didactic qualities, making it a weapon (an alternative source of knowledge), and a prophylactic against 'forgetting' in terms of the Palestinian predicament.

The poem opens with a contrast between two kinds of citizen 'barefooted people laughing', and an unnamed citizenry whose 'good luck has split the rock.' In contrast, the speaker seems to number his own losses counting in Farsi (contributes to the sense of estrangement), '*panj, chahar* (five, four) 'while my pocket is emptily screaming to God' (Boullata 1976, 127). When the historical contextualisation of this poem is accommodated, the metaphor of 'splitting the rock' easily lends itself to the idea of 'partition' and to the concomitant gains and losses to both communities. The city the speaker describes is supine yet it is paradoxically somehow, resisting 'spitting hate':

my city lying on its back
spitting hate to its lovers
for love in it does not fall on the road
like seeds in a ploughed earth:
love in it is a passion of a hater...
(Boullata 1976, 127)

Those who love the city are described as mourners; others however, as though to a plague city, come to it like thinly disguised carrion eaters ‘black birds with perfumed beaks’ (Boullata 1976, 127). The image of naked people who ‘exult’ evokes the tale of the emperor with no clothes, who exults in the shame of his own nakedness. But the poem also evokes T.S. Eliot’s poem ‘The Waste Land’, a poem which had by this time begun to exert a degree of influence in Arab poetry (see for example Al-Jayussi 1987). Eliot’s images of an ‘unreal city’, a city of ‘maternal lamentations’ peopled by anonymous nonentities ‘hooded hordes’ is recalled by the description of the citizens in Jabrā’s poem:

Its lovers are its mourners
While its naked people on the sidewalk hasten
Exultingly,
Its mourners mourn, while its naked
Come to it like black birds with perfumed beaks.
(Boullata 1976, 127)

The First Palestine Arab National Congress was held in Jerusalem in 1964. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) a coalescence of several groups such as *al-fateh* and the ‘Movement of Arab Nationalists’, came into existence in 1964 and was recognised as: ‘the representative and spokesman of the Palestinian people and was accepted as a member of the League of Arab States’ (Hadawi 1991, 195). This undoubtedly re-awaked the hopes of Palestinians and: ‘afforded them an opportunity to renew the struggle for their homeland, their strong and genuine attachment to which could not be shaken by the lapse of time’ (Hadawi 1991, 141). The city in this instance may well be an allusion to Jerusalem, and this is important in terms of the socio-historical contextualisation of the

poem since Jerusalem, as a contested space, which would also enter the *topoi* of Palestinian literature.

The first three lines here form a confluence of different styles of discourses (news, romance, technology) and read like a deliberately inserted piece of reportage, or perhaps a diary entry which recalls a specific occasion:

The city wires shook with the news
On the air between the moaning love songs
The whizzing of satellites and conferences

The lines following revert to a more poetic, if somewhat melancholic tone:

Let the voice of the muezzin rise in the ruins
Let the lute shed a dead tune
to a city whose walls and stone ooze of hatred.
(Boullata 1976, 128)

In a distinct change of tenor, the speaker recalls a different kind of city, a city once flourishing with life, a city recalled through a more romantic mode, a comforting vision in face of the bleak actuality:

But I was dreaming of green streets
And children running in them
And faces like laughing suns
Like lovers faces wet with rain. (Boullata 1976, 128)

And that memory stirs something else, the failure of romanticism and nostalgia in poetry and thus it marks the shift from romantic to committed poetry. Ironically, the often-

assumed desolate spirit of the Arab romantic poets has become, for Palestinians poets certainly, a deeply felt, indeed a lived experience, and after the Palestinian disaster, for Arabs writers generally:

here I am who did not weep except for the beautiful
am weeping for the lost roads now
with no child running in them
deserted by the suns rays. (Boullata 1976, 128)

It also points the disjuncture between romance and reality and while the Egyptian Romantics for example, often displayed a reified concept of love in their poetry, a type of romantic imaginary of a love affair they may or may not have experienced; however for the Palestinian poet, there was no sentimental yearning for the beloved but rather a deeply felt and tortuous longing. This is demonstrated in Darwīsh's poem 'A Lover from Palestine' for example, wherein the experienced pain of loss is a thorn that he willingly plunges into his flesh.

In the final section of Jabrā's poem there is a distinct change of tone, it becomes exclamatory: 'I am fed up by God I am fed up/I am exasperated at my strength' (Boullata 1976, 129). The tone gradually grows more defiant and the tempo increases as the poet depicts a steadfast, proud and resolute people:

Where is my pickaxe
The pickaxe of my free forefathers who would walk barefooted ...
Singing to the begrudging sun and the howling wind
Singing even to the rains showering their tatters
Which the rocks under their feet lamented ... (Boullata 1976, 129)

It reiterates his people's history in the land including his 'forefathers' both immediate and distant, their tenacity and steadfastness, their ability to eke out a living despite the best efforts of those who would exclude them from the land's bounty: 'my forefathers did not fear hunger ever/because they and hunger were companions' (Boullata 1976,129). Neither do they fear being made homeless in spite of the destruction of their villages and the de-familiarisation of the homeland, nor do they fear the painful experience of becoming foreign in their own homeland 'nor estrangement in roofless abodes'. The speaker continues:

I shall carry my pickaxe
And raise my head up to the haughty heights
And hit the beloved rock
Which fills the foot of the hill with palaces... (Boullata 1976, 129)

The speaker's resolute determination also resonates with Darwīsh's poem 'Identity Card', there will be no death from hunger so long as he is able to get 'bread, clothes and books from the rocks'. Here, the also the poet points the legitimacy of prayer as a cultural signifier: 'Give us this day our daily bread'. The religious trope offers another kind of instruction to the masses; it suggests another weapon with which the usurpers might be overcome, namely that of steadfastness and survival as a people. In the poetic idiom, the pickaxe becomes a weapon of survival and survival itself is transformed into a weapon. The lesson here is that they must earn their 'daily bread' for it will not be given to them, that there is no loss of pride in continuing to live, in earning one's 'daily bread' however humble the circumstances. Like the *fidā'ī* who sacrifices his life for the sake of the homeland, survival for the sake of the homeland can also constitute an act of resistance:

I shall make water and fruit burst
And shall say to my children:
“ there is no death from hunger...
Drink water free and do not breathe
Except the air of haughty heights.” (Boullata 1976, 129)

A further intertextual relationship can be extracted from the poem in the context of the biblical story of the Prophet Moses leading the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt. Moses split the rock which provided water to the Israelites during their wanderings in the desert and this cleavage is ironically replicated by the partition of the land of Palestine in 1948. The speaker's willingness to 'get bread', by splitting the rocks if necessary, re-enacts both narratives, and in a sense, it offers an act of resistance to the cleavage of Palestine which is couched in the terminology and cultural mythopoeia of the oppressors.

If one accepts that literature (whether poem, novel or short story) is not simply a product of author psychology, but rather a confluence of the author's internal and external environment contextualised by his/her socio-historical experience, as outlined in the introduction, then we can legitimately view poetry as an alternative (which is not to say a definitive) repository of socio-political history. In terms of the experience of history, at both individual and societal levels, poetry provides a cogent and immediate imaginary of events. Many such 'events' can be apprehended through reading the intrinsic intertextual relationship between literature and other texts, including meta-texts such as history, and indeed through postcolonial theory which focuses on the extrinsic relationships of literary production, for example, the metaphorical and actual episodes of looting, land appropriation and extra judicial killing alluded to in much of the poetry discussed in this chapter, is also documented historically.

Poetry continues to re-enter the socio-historical arena in different forms and styles and contextualised by specific conflict situations, whether it be the poetry of WW1 or the Gulf War, poetry interpolates the effects of military conflict, it forces us to interpret these effects in a particular way, which is not however, to claim that it is a completely discrete modularisation of verbal cognition. But poetry acts on the mind in a way which is intrinsically different to the way in which we perceive images: we must extract the story from the information provided by a poem. Unlike an image to which we can become desensitised over time, poetry withholds at least some of the information which constitutes the complete image. Therefore it forces us to personally conjure up the imaginary of an event of which we may or may not have specific experience, and in the process making it (in a sense) a product of our individual psychology, a product akin to a cognitive jigsaw, a problem-solving exercise which makes the reader complicit in (re)creating the poem's meaning.

This chapter has demonstrated that poetry, as an act of aesthetic and discursive resistance, can acquire considerable valence when it is read against the backdrop of historical contextualisation. Considering the production of Palestinian poetry during the period 1948-1967, in the absence of a political platform and of a polity, poetry provides an important discursive space, to paraphrase Italo Calvino (1990), wherein it can name [Palestine] what the language of politics [of the dominant power] excludes, or attempts to exclude. The idea that the pen is mightier than a sword is not new; it is an idea that sees the pen 'the word' as a defensive weapon, indeed an offensive one. Ideologies are propagated by the pen for example and in certain circumstances the 'word' is a weapon that must be taken from the writer and in turn the writer (as a weapon) taken from the

‘community’ he/she serves. The killing of writers such as Kamāl Nās ¹⁷ and Ghāssan Kanafānī (who died when a bomb exploded under his car in 1972) are clear examples of this, as is the exclusion of Rāshid H ¹⁸ from his audience of villagers, and in turn depriving them of his poetry, an important touchstone of their culture. The denial of ‘permission to narrate’ in these cases can only signify the danger to the status quo of domination and defeat, that committed Palestinian poetry poses. As stated in the introduction, once again this underscores the valence of poetry, and culture in general, as a site of resistance and of the cultural theorist’s endeavour to ‘discover resistance and subversive creativity’, as Hoogvert (2001) observes, in relationships of dominance and subordination.

This chapter examined Palestinian poetry as resistance literature and resistance literature often appears to de-centre the colonialist (Zionist) characters, who became nameless representatives of the dominating power. Some examples of this literary tactic include the nameless official with ‘buttons and stick’ in S ¹⁹ ²⁰ while in the poetry of al-Qāsim discussed they appear as ‘usurpers’ or ‘other people, a ‘soldier’, or in Jubrān’s poem ‘Refugee’, it is simply ‘they’, as in Jabrā’s poem ‘In the Deserts of Exile’. To a certain extent, what this achieves is a shifting of the locus of power, at least at the level of the text, from the dominated to the subjected, signalling the possibility of a shift which might eventually occur in the real world. The text (poem) becomes a parallel space where the political and psychological corollary of such a shift can be considered and anticipated. There is a further significance in this un-naming, to the effect that it dissociates the action from the perpetrator in such a way that no explicit hatred of the ‘other’ is expressed in the poetry. This dissociation can work in a bi-

directional manner, in al-Jayussi's poem for example, which suggests that weapons, 'spears' can be put down as well as raised, 'lie down O spears'. In this way poetry becomes a far more resilient and self-affirming weapon of mass instruction, indeed a weapon of re-construction in terms of Palestinian cultural integrity, and a weapon in the pursuit of justice rather than the pursuit of revenge.

In his essay 'The Blind Language', Ghāssan Kanfānī warned of the detrimental effects of a language of 'lamentation' and a rhetoric that appealed only to emotionality while occluding real issues and actual conditions. The space of poetry is not, to quote Edna Longley, the space for: 'escape into the consolation of commemoration' rather, in Kanfānī's terms, it should be a space for the confrontation of contemporary socio-political and cultural fault-lines wherever they exist (Longley 1994, 85). This no doubt, is a concept with which Mah □ in the Dea sh would concu
extracted from his poem 'On Poetry' that words are tools (or weapons) only in the hands of those who know, or are willing to learn, how to use them productively:

Yesterday we sang to the stars ...
My fellow poets! Today we live
In a new world ...

Our poems have no colour
No sound, no taste!
If they don't carry the light
From house to house.

If people don't understand them
Then let's bequeath them to the wind. (Bennani 1982, 41)

The production of poetry involves the control of a number of linguistic variables, a degree of control which necessitates sufficient mastery of language. The capability of the resistance writer (or poet) entails his/her capacity to frame an argument or oppositional stance without compromising the aesthetic equilibrium of the poem, while at the same time, ensuring that any political message remains cognitively comprehensible. The creation of a poem is the creation of a transcendent form, an art work, which paradoxically perhaps, when it is grounded in political commitment, requires the poet to perform a delicate balancing act. Nevertheless, in terms of poetry as an aesthetic response to disenfranchisement, Theodor Adorno points out that, 'commitment remains politically polyvalent so long as it is not reduced to propaganda' (Adorno cited in Walder 1990, 89).

This chapter examined the potential of poetry as a weapon of instruction. The poetry was read as a cultural weapon aimed at educating the Palestinian population and at the breakdown of stereotypes externally (a project which is still pertinent today) and a weapon aimed at outworn rhetoric internally, poetically described as the 'false branches' of the olive tree. An analysis of Sālim Jubrān's 'Refugee' for example, among others, demonstrated that poetry can be and an alternative source of both story and information, a cultural source which is educational, but which can be enjoyed also for its intrinsic aesthetic merit. The confluence of culture (poetry) and commitment (to instruction), while delivering intellectual pleasure for reader, also provides the reader with an intimate emotional experience of conflict, and what it means to be a refugee.

But poetry also provides its auditors with a distinct paradigm of resistance, of identity, and as stated in the introduction, a means of tracing the trajectory of political consciousness. As previously outlined, the poetry discussed in this chapter locates the

shift from the extraordinary self-sacrifice of the *fidā'ī*, to the ordinary citizen's self-sacrificing love of homeland (nation) described by Anderson. Culture, in the form of poetry, registers the legitimacy of that love, when that love is in danger of being obfuscated by official (dominant) history. Poetry, as this chapter has established, can be a powerful weapon of inoculation against forgetting in a situation where 'narration' of that love is circumscribed.

Thus the poetry of this chapter demonstrates a transition from the trope of exile, in

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Roots'. This would be addressed by later poets through the trope 'rootedness' the olive tree for example, which depicts a more visceral connection with the actual 'land' of Palestine which in turn, consolidates and anchors that consciousness, to the land. This is not to suggest that the trope of exile disappeared however, certainly it did not, particularly in respect of the Diaspora poets. In the Arab world, poetry is an aesthetic form which is inherently cultural and indeed topically so. In the wider world, resistance poetry, along with anti-war poetry, continues to be used as a weapon of the powerless against the powerful, in order to disparage and challenge the political machinations of governments and assert the right of protest and opposition on behalf of individuals and communities. Poetry is, as the English poet Tony Harrison described it, the stillness [the silence and dignity perhaps] of the candle-light vigil. Thus poetry continues to be a weapon of mass instruction, it asserts the fact of a people's humanity over and above their political aspirations, poetic words assert the fact of an individual's or a community's life, even in the face of its extinction.

Chapter III

Palestinian Literature of Resistance 1967 – 73: Al-Naksah and After

Historical Context

The timeline covered in the following chapter, 1967 to 1973 approximately, was a period in Palestinian history which saw many changes in Arab social and political structures and which also saw two major conflicts take place in the Middle East. The first of these conflicts was the so-called Six Day War of June 1967 which culminated in the defeat of the combined Arab armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan by Israel, an event remembered in Arabic as *al-naksah*. This defeat was followed by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Ghāzā Strip. As a result of this war and subsequent occupation many thousands of Palestinians from refugee camps and villages were either expelled or fled, and thus many were made refugees for the second time.

In respect of competing narratives of ‘truth’, it appeared to Palestinians that the Zionist intention was not simply to consolidate the security of Israel, particularly in light of the rapid military success on Israel’s part, but instead was focused on territorial expansion. Furthermore, Jerusalem was also now occupied and, with the demolition of the Arab Quarter close to the Wailing Wall, Israeli jurisdictional control of Jerusalem was

expanded after 1967 (see for example Pappé 2004, 196). Chomsky remarks, that after 1967 it became possible to simply ‘take over territories without annexing them and without granting their Arab inhabitants the rights of citizens in Israel’ (Chomsky 2003 16).

The consequences of this war and defeat for the Arab world were underscored by the Jewish intellectual Issac Deutscher, when in an interview for the journal *New Left Review* in 1967, he remarked that it was the Arabs ‘who were made to pay for the crimes the west committed against the Jews’ and it was the Arabs who were still being made to pay ‘for the guilty conscience of the west’ (Deutscher cited in Ali 2002, 402). Deutscher’s comments suggest that this was not simply a war of Arab aggression conducted against the Jews; rather his comments infer western complicity in the cause, the conduct and the outcomes associated with this war. It could be argued that the west had much to gain from the creation of the Jewish state as a western style outpost of democracy and progress. The existence of such a state would accommodate western hegemonic interests in the Arab hinterlands, while at the same time, facilitate the assuagement of western guilt (particularly post Holocaust) for its historical culpability in the persecution of the Jews of Europe. The defeat of the combined Arab armies by Israel surely helped to propagate an aura of western style military superiority and technological modernity which would be available to the west in the region, with the effect, perhaps, that it would keep Arab minds in thrall to the west and work to circumscribe any combined action on their part such as the temporary use of the oil export embargo in 1973. Fuelling such western hegemonic interests (or perhaps obfuscating them) is perhaps the ‘civilising mission’ or what is referred to by Tariq Ali as the west’s

‘affection for democracy’ which it often fails to foster in its client states abroad (Ali 2002, 107).

As already stated, among the immediate physical and psychological consequences for Palestinians in the wake of the defeat, included Israel’s annexation and occupation of the West Bank of Jordan and the Ghāzā Strip, the exclusion of Palestinians by Israel from any input into the terms of settlement, the expulsion of anyone deemed to be a ‘security risk’, which was used against political activists both within Israel and the Occupied Territories, or punishments such as house demolition and arrest without trial. This Israeli campaign against political activity began in 1967 with the expulsion from East Jerusalem of four (unnamed) Palestinian notables when they called on the population to adopt Gandhi’s tactic of civil disobedience. When Mubarak Awad, a Palestinian American, tried to introduce ‘a more sophisticated version of non-violent resistance he was treated as an “arch terrorist” and expelled (see Pappé 2004, 197-199). If this kind of passive resistance was proscribed then it is not surprising that a violent response seemed the most likely means of gaining world attention for the Palestinian cause.

Unlike the term *nakbah* (disaster or catastrophe) associated with 1948, the term *al-Naksah* when used in relation to 1967 is a word which according to Said ‘suggests nothing more radical than a temporary setback’ (Said 2001a, 47). This semantic interpretation concurs with at least some of the poetry of the period, for example Khalid Sulaiman (1984) cites the Palestinian poet Tawfīq Zayyād who sees the 1967 defeat of the Arab armies as: ‘Merely a tumble/ That could happen to any gallant knight/It is one step backwards/For ten steps forward’ (Sulaiman 1984, 137).

In her poem 'Dearest Love –1', a similar response in respect of the 1967 defeat is expressed by Salmā al-Jayūssi. Despite the terror of conflict and the humiliation of defeat the speaker of this poem declares:

After terror,
After my heart was torn out,
After the knock-out
We woke up to live again. (Boullata 1981, 125)

For Palestinians, 1967 was a seminal year for two reasons in particular which might account for this rather more positive semantic representation of the event. On the political level, despite the early success associated with the war, the defeat of the Arab armies dashed Palestinian hopes of liberating the homeland but it also led to the development of a more Palestinian-centred approach to the problem. Chomsky observes, 'in the aftermath of 1967 Palestinian nationalism became a substantial part of the conflict' between the Arab states and the western superpowers (Chomsky 2003, 15). More positively however, in respect of Palestinian culture, this was a time of renewed contact between the poets and intellectuals of the now occupied territories (and through them the wider Palestinian Diaspora) and those who after 1948, had managed to remain inside the state of Israel and were under military rule until 1966. These were the poets of the resistance, addressed by Fadwā T

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1990, 225). Due to the political situation outlined above, there had been little contact between the two Palestinian communities since partition and accordingly, their respective literature had developed more or less along independent lines. Not only were Palestinian poets now united in their discursive resistance across the religious and the gender divide

but after 1967 they were also united in the physical sense, under Israeli domination across the 'land' of Palestine. 1967 can be regarded as a seminal year in terms of the confluence of the forces outlined in the introduction, in Arabic literature in general and Palestinian literature in particular. As Kamal Abu Deeb points out, until approximately the mid-nineteen seventies, Arab political and cultural life had been motivated by a collective project, a collective vision and consequently: 'cultural creation derived its vitality, its importance and relevance from immersion in this collective project, this *consensus*'. In terms of this 'consensus', Abu Deeb continues, the defeat of 1967 was a tragedy on all levels, except this one, in the sense that it: 'still embodied a collective event...collective disillusionment' and cultural production 'embodied powerfully the collective nature of the tragedy in lamentations, elegies, satires, self-torturing, criticism, characters, and voices' (Abu Deeb 1988,162).

As discussed in the previous chapter, for many Palestinians (see Khalidi 1997), their devotion to the pan-Arabism in the 1950s and 1960s, a devotion which was seen as integral to their larger objective of return to Palestine, had, to a certain extent, been fuelled by developments in the Arab world such as the Free Officers revolt (1952) and rise of Gamāl abd al-Nās and the Syrian Ba^cath Party. These developments embodied a new sense of confidence that the Arab world was capable of change and advancement and fuelled the idea that the liberation of Palestine could be brought about with the help of the Arab armies (see Khalidi 1997, 182). After the defeat of 1967, however, among Palestinians themselves, the Palestinian dimension came to the fore, although not necessarily in opposition to pan-Arabism. However, Pan-Arabism had begun to lose momentum and Palestinians began increasingly to turn to the Palestinian

‘particularism’ of groups such as *al-Fatah* and also the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) which had emerged by this time (see for example see Bouskila 1999 and Khalidi 1997, 253 n12). In terms of this particularism, the defeat of 1967, Chomsky argues, may have brought about the consolidation of the Palestinians: ‘for the first time as, as a serious political and paramilitary force’ (Chomsky 2003, 47). In respect of Arabic poetry however, despite the 1967 defeat and the slackening momentum of pan-Arabism inside Palestine, as Abu Deeb points out above, the Palestinian question continued as a lococentric trope in much Arabic poetry both inside and outside of Palestine, it continued to be felt as a ‘wound’ in the Arab psyche which inspired a range of Arab poets including Nizār Qabbānī’s ‘Children of the Stones’ (see also Sulaiman 1984). Palestine, as Huessein Kadhim (2004) concurs, was for many Arab poets, very often the ‘central cause’.

The Confluence of Culture, Conflict and Commitment Revisited

Involvement in a conflict, whether it bring victory or defeat is undoubtedly a significant moment in the history of any community, and when that conflict ends in defeat and occupation by a foreign force, the repercussions in terms of the communal psyche must be hugely significant. However, the confrontation a year later (1968) when the Palestinian *fida’īn* stood their ground in the face of superior military Israeli forces, was hailed as an actual military victory at the town of al-Karamah, which Khalidi (1997) points out means dignity, and a moral victory which helped to restore the ‘dignity’ of Palestinians and that of their cause. The ‘victory’ in both senses of the term seemed to confirm that the defeat of 1967 was indeed ‘merely a tumble’. The writer, critic and

political activist Ghassān Kanafānī (1966) elaborates on the meaning of defeat in his paper ‘Thoughts on Change and The Blind Language’. In order to offset the effects of defeat Kanafānī points the importance for Palestinians of developing a [self] ‘critical spirit’ which can then be channelled into constructive action:

Periods of defeat in a people’s history are witness to a rapid growth in critical spirit that can often develop into resentment and anger. Yet this critical spirit, even in the form of resentment and anger, remains an indispensable constructive capacity... Thus the people’s period of defeat takes on... an internal sort of self-punishment, its basic aim being to increase the capacity for self-defense... feelings that double the capacity for both self-awareness and confrontation. (Kanafani, 1990, 138)

The development of such a critical spirit meant that that defeat need not be seen as entirely destructive, but could be productive also and hence it may rightly be seen as merely a ‘setback’ rather than a disaster. What appears to be Kanafānī’s point here is that before a viable confrontation of the opposing forces can be effected, self-confrontation is first necessary, then the causes as well as the effects of the defeat can be objectively analysed and critiqued and a viable response formulated.

The importance of the confluence of culture and conflict was also underscored in 1967 by the English poet Ted Hughes when at the opening of Poetry International of that year he remarked:

We now give more serious weight to the words of a country’s poets than to the words of its politicians... the revival of an appetite for poetry is like a revival of an appetite for all man’s saner possibilities, and a revulsion from the materialist cataclysms of recent years and the worse ones which the difference of nations threatens for the years ahead’. (Hughes cited in Weissbort 2005, 187)

The situation of war and occupation in one part of the world may appear to bear no direct relationship to the words expressed by a poet in another part of the world, nor is either situation comparable in terms of historical and political gravity. But what Hughes points out above is that during times of conflict, poetry is a cultural manifestation of humanity and human achievement of both the self and also the 'other'. By forcing each of us to recognise the humanity of the 'other', poetry stands in opposition to the idea that diverse cultures must inevitably be antagonistic forces. Therefore the development of an appetite for 'comparative' poetry might stimulate a re-evaluation of politico-historical events, or at very least, contribute to the development of an alternative interpretation and critique of such events in light of the current cataclysms afflicting humanity.

The question must be asked therefore as to how poetry might work to achieve this aim. Poetry, because of its linguistic concentration and symbolic connotation, forces the reader to mentally re-construct an imaginary reading of the situation or events it depicts, the horrors of conflict for example. In the process of reading then, this type of mental reconstruction in respect of imagery and metaphor requires a rather more extensive mental effort than simply viewing an image, which may have already be mediated for us, by the cameras and sound bites of militarily 'embedded' journalism for instance. The very structure of a poem, constructed as it is of metaphor and image, facilitates, indeed necessitates, a much deeper processing of its meaning and this too is a significant component of the intellectual pleasure that the reader of poetry experiences.

While it may often be politically directed in terms of theme, poetry does not have at its core the vested interest of politics or politicians, military or arms manufacturers. In the main it could be argued that the concern of poetry (and the poet) is chiefly the

achievement and delivery of aesthetic and intellectual pleasure with a ‘message’. What politically ‘committed’ poetry can also do however, is to allow the reader a space wherein to contemplate the meaning of these worldly forces and to comprehend, albeit indirectly through the poet’s use of allusion, analogy, irony and satire for example, the cause and effect of their application in the real world. In short, poetry has the capacity to show us what we cannot always see or fully comprehend (our own degree of complicity for example) in poetry, the ‘I’, the observer, very often becomes the observed. Poetry therefore, as Abu Deeb observes, facilitates the exchange of the ‘I’ for the ‘eye’; it permits the beholding eye ‘to see things afresh’ (Abu Deeb 1997, 115).

Much of the poetry of Berthold Brecht, for example, demonstrates the satirical possibilities of poetry as a vehicle of socio-political criticism, a typical example of which is his poem ‘War has been Given a Bad Name’ (see Hollis and Keegan 2003). But in more recent times poems such as that of the *Irāqī* Sādi Yūsif’s ‘Chemical Weapons’, or that of the English poet Toni Harrison ‘A Cold Coming’, enable us to see these events afresh and remind us that the lessons of the historical past have not inoculated us against their repetition. They also force us to ‘see’ that clinical appellations such as ‘surgical strikes’ and ‘collateral damage’, while they may serve to cushion the impact of conflict on our sensibilities, simply serve to obfuscate the actual horrors of modern warfare.

The question might also be asked: if poetry, as a significant facet of culture, is not politically committed during periods of political indeterminacy, conflict and oppression, is it then politically implicated, or culpable in some way? This is particularly cogent in light of the question posed by Brecht as discussed in Chapter II, ‘why were their poets silent?’ Yūsif’s poem raises searching questions in respect of an Iraqi regime which

emulates the excesses of the western military machine, namely, the use of chemical weapons such as napalm in Vietnam: ‘The clouds that descended like black mustard in the lungs’ (Yusif 1998). A poem such as Harrison’s for example underscores (for a western readership) the asymmetrical power relationships: cultural, political and economic, that may obtain between opposing forces when he gives voice to (and reveals the humanity of) a dead Iraqi soldier:

On Saddam’s pay we can’t afford/to go and get our semen stored.
Sad to say that such high tech’s uncommon here. We’re stuck with sex.
(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2003/feb/14/features11.g2>).

But while Harrison is a second hand observer (and of course it could be argued, therefore more objective) Mah

□m ul Darw sh is

his late poem ‘A State of Siege’ (2002), Darwīsh underscores the disproportionate relationship between the Palestinian resistance and the Israeli war machine when he states:

The soldiers measure the distance between being
And nonbeing
With a tank’s scope ...
We measure the distance between our bodies
And mortar shells ... with the sixth sense. (Darwish 2007, 125)

Poetry, as Harrison opines has the dignity of the ‘silent vigil’ of the masses and through poetry, the masses and the silent (or silenced) majority can find its political voice. This is especially important for those who may be oppressed, silenced, too politically quiescent or too deeply implicated to voice opposition. In the confluence of conflict and culture

which is embodied in Harrison's poem, the charred Iraqi soldier is granted his 'permission to narrate' 'So press RECORD! I want to reach the warring nations with my speech'. As Patrick Leech observes in his commentary on Harrison's poem, it is the poet's job to reach the 'warring nations' with the testimony of the soldier, who is after all, to borrow a phrase from the poet Samīh al-Qāsim only a 'little citizen' in the scheme of things (see Leech, <http://www.home.sslmit.unibo.it/guerra/testi/leech.pdf>). In this way poetry, and the poet's role as a 'provocative force', can fulfil a valuable social role by voicing what many ordinary citizens (and soldiers) from both sides of the confrontational divide, might privately think but may be afraid to publicly feel. This underscores the potential of poetry as an ethical discourse, and a discourse which challenges the status quo on behalf of the 'little citizen'.

Palestinian resistance poetry can reveal the basic human concerns and the quotidian struggles of the Palestinian people 'that bigger headlines had kept hidden' (Darwish 2007, 137). Many Palestinian poets are themselves embedded in the conflict and live on the receiving end of occupation and the machinery of its enforcement. Therefore in the act of narration, they are well equipped (provided we afford them a space in which to narrate) to provide a counterpoint to the western media or to the embedded or circumscribed journalism of the politically and militarily dominant forces. In the wake of the political and military cataclysms of recent history, the cultivation of an appetite for Arabic poetry in general, and Palestinian poetry in particular, might awaken what Hughes describes as our 'saner possibilities' and provide us with a fresh eye with which to search for an alternative route to comprehension of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

When we speak of Palestinian literature says Salma al-Jayussi (1992), we must bear in mind the two strands of Palestinians writers, those still living on the soil of the historical land of Palestine after 1948, and those writers of the Palestinian Diaspora, between whom there had been little or no direct contact during the period 1948 to 1967. Ami Elad Bouskila (1999) proposes a tripartite division, between those Diaspora writers of the Arab, European and American worlds, those of the West Bank and the Ghāzā and those who lived and wrote within the state of Israel. In his discussion of the three strands of Palestinian literature Bouskila (1999) remarks that Israeli Arab writers produce a literature which has a homeland but no state, those writers of the occupied territories have no state and only a partial homeland, while Palestinian Diaspora writers have neither. After 1967 it becomes possible to discuss the work of Palestinian poets in terms of two strands, however, where Bouskila's division proves significant, where the poets' location appears to be of particular import, this will be duly noted. After the 1967 defeat, the latter group of writers found a new sense of legitimacy for their literary works together with a wider audience. These poets were brought to the attention of the rest of the Arab world by Kanafānī (1966) who accorded to their work the title 'literature of resistance' (Bouskila 1999, 11). These were indeed the poets of the resistance whose inspirational literature, together with the newly emerging *fīda'īn* movement, would help to advance the Palestinian cause by those vital 'ten steps forward' as envisioned by the poet Tawfiq Zayyād.

New Developments

As well as deriving a new sense of commitment and vigour from the resistance poets after 1967, it will be argued that to a certain extent the poetry of this period began to display (albeit tentatively) a more humanising tendency in respect of its images of the 'other'. The Israeli 'other' began to be seen not simply as oppressor and usurper, but as human counterparts, indeed some poetry even went so far as naming, thereby humanising the 'other'. This poetic development stands in contrast to the many demonising images of the Israeli 'other' for example as 'locusts', 'storm bulls' or 'barbarians', or simply a metonymic presence such as 'they', 'them'. This factor may be a result of an increased self-awareness after the 1967 defeat or it could also be argued that it is a reflection of Abu Deeb's notion of the 'I' exchanged the 'eye', the ability to see afresh the nature and complexity of the conflict. Either way, it would seem that to recognise the human qualities of the other with whom one is deeply entrenched in conflict, requires not only a high degree of positive self-awareness but also of confidence in the timeliness and justice of one's 'cause'. This development might also be significant in light of Franz Fanon's three phase idea of the development of postcolonial literature. Fanon observed that initially the native intellectual tended to: 'produce his work to be read exclusively by the oppressor, whether to charm or denounce [but later he/she] progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people' (Fanon 1995, 155). It is only at this point Fanon argues, when the writer himself becomes self-aware, that a national literature and a 'national culture' truly begin to emerge.

The period after 1967 was one in which a new generation of Palestinians began to emerge, a generation who questioned the submission to the humiliation of expulsion on

the part of their parents. No doubt the victory of Palestinian fighters over the Israeli forces at Karamah (1968) also lent new significance to the use of the trope of the Palestinian *fidā'ī* in the poetry of the period, a renewed (and sometimes more complex), image of the Palestinian *fidā'īn*, their personal self-esteem and that of their cause.

As will be discussed in this chapter, the unity across the gender divide is expressed in the familial relationship between poets as 'brothers' and 'sisters' in the wound. The role of Palestinian women in the struggle is often centred, particularly in the works of women poets themselves, as a more feminised image of the land. For example, this is seen, not only is the woman poet's role as nurturer and progenitor of resistance in their society but more importantly, in the role of women as cultural producers themselves, as the 'provocative force' of their people and even as participants in the direct action of the nationalist struggle. Poetic tropes such as the 'wound' and 'rubble' come to the fore, and also Christian imagery (regardless of the religion of the poet) and other imagery associated with resurrection and renewal. There is also a continuing engagement with the 'primacy of the geographical' and the 'rubble' of Palestinian history in the land becomes a prime feature of that particular engagement in much of the poetry to be discussed.

This chapter will continue to examine the later work of those poets discussed in Chapter II with the addition of some of the next generation of both male and female poets. This was a period during which the work of Palestinian women poets was gaining increasing recognition hence the more extensive range of Palestinian women poets discussed in this chapter. In addition to Fadwā T Sālma and Jayussi discussed previously, this chapter will also examine the work of the next generation of Palestinian women poets including Laila ^cAllūsh, Mai S an Mikh'ān, and an Mikh'ān, known as

Hanan Ashrawi. As in Chapter II, the poetry of this period will be categorised for discussion according to what can be usefully regarded as the poem's central trope or tenor. The first of these categories is 'Brothers and Sisters in the Wound' followed by a second category 'Naming the Victims', which links this chapter to the previous one, in the sense that the poets had already begun exploration of the colonial 're-naming' process, of villages, streams for example. As an aspect of colonial enculturation, they are its geographical victims; the following chapter will explore the psychological, cultural and economic cost to the human victims. These headings reflect a concentration in particular works, of many of the new poetic developments discussed above. As in the previous chapter, within these categories are a range of poetic tropes – 'wound' and 'rubble' for example – which cross over and intersect with the other categories, therefore, the categorical division reflects by and large, the central tenor of a particular set of poems around which a range of these new (and old) literary *topoi* revolve and evolve.

Section 1: Brothers and Sisters in the Wound

The loss of Palestine in 1948 as explained by Abu Deeb (1988) was considered to be a 'wound' in the Arab psyche and it was also a wound in the map of the Arab world. The loss of Palestine, a part of greater Syria, is a constant reminder of the thwarted aspirations of Arab nationalism and the re-drawing of the map of the Arab world in the early part of the 20th century, a re-drawing that is, in accordance with western precepts, hegemonies and rivalries, between Great Britain and France for example. This re-drawing included the creation of modern Iraq, Lebanon as well as smaller Gulf States such as Kuwait and

latterly the creation of Transjordan and the state of Israel. The loss of Palestine therefore, was a wound in terms of the burgeoning Arab nationalism and independence from the Ottoman Empire, a nationalist spirit which had been widespread in the region since at least the late 19th and on into the early 20th century.

But more importantly this loss was, and continues to be, a ‘wound’ in the Palestinian psyche. 1948 was, as Al Jayussi points out was: ‘the only fixed date which can be regarded as ‘a catalyst for poetic change’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 14). As a poetic trope in Palestinian poetry, the ‘wound’ underscores a feature of heritability in terms of Palestinian identity as discussed in Chapter II, the psychological wound experienced by Palestinians in the form of ‘profound anxiety’ an anxiety that permeates much of the poetry previously discussed (see Khalidi 1997). After the defeat of 1967, the Palestinian wound expanded to encompass the bigger ‘wound’ of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Ghāzā Strip, which united Palestinians, in the land of Palestine, in a common experienced. The ‘wound’ as a poetic trope is both a poignant reminder of this loss to the Palestinian people (their homeland) and their continued victimisation under the Israeli occupation.

One of the exigencies of a nationalist struggle is that the achievement of independence be prioritised and this often necessitates the suspension of other struggles and differences: political, class, feminist or religious for example. This salient factor of the independence struggle continues to be explicated by poets such as Mah □m ūl
Darwīsh, in his poem ‘A State of Siege’ (2002) when he states that ‘we have one goal, to be ... after that one finds room to choose other goals’ (Darwīsh 2007, 145). In the struggle against colonial domination, Egypt had learned this lesson early on, that the best

protection against the colonial onslaught was a unity based on *ḥubb al-ḥalq* sense of brotherhood which would work to elide any such goal oriented, religious or socio-cultural differences where they existed. David Ben-Gurion, says Pappe, tried to effect co-optation through representation of the Palestinian Christians as being more loyal to the Jewish state, however: ‘religious identity never became an influential factor in either pro- or anti-Israeli attitudes among Palestinians’ (Pappe 2004, 156). Indeed, many Palestinian Christians have been in the vanguard of resistance (political and intellectual), to partition and occupation of Palestinian land

Palestinian women poets have been at the forefront of the nationalist struggle at least since the 1950s. After the June 1967 War, Palestinian women poets such as Fadwā Tuqān came into close contact with the ‘poets of resistance’ and was deeply moved by their work. By this time her early romanticism had given way to a honed political consciousness and a deep commitment to the Palestinian cause (Al-Jayussi 1992, 20). In her autobiography *A Mountainous Journey*, Tuqān’s herself is faced by the woman poet bound by the social structures of her culture. Early in her career, when her father urged her to write political poetry, but Tuqān muses as since she herself was not socially emancipated, could she ‘fight with her pen for political, ideological or national freedom’, cut off from the world of men and therefore from the arena of political dissention and debate (see Tuqan, ‘A Mountainous Journey’ 1990). It is a moment in which socio-political conflict underscores the limitations of rigid cultural systems, for while it might be acceptable for Tuqān to write nationalist poetry she claims, is constructed around an imaginary of nationalist agitation and aspiration, rather than on her own direct experience. It also foregrounds the complexities

which can underlie the entry of the poetic into the political: if poetry is not committed (including the poetry of women) is it then somehow culpable? It raises questions such as how to depict the desire for freedom when one is not free (as a woman or man) of social and communal restraints? This perhaps is the personal struggle of the female (poet) in society that ‘the bigger headlines had kept hidden’. However, much had changed by the mid-1960s and the gender divide in Palestinian society that on the surface at least appeared to begin to breakdown, may well have been breached first (or at least supported) by the expediencies of the poetic.

The poem ‘I Shall not Weep’ is dedicated to the poets of the resistance. In the opening line of this poem, she addresses her fellow poets in familial terms ‘my loved ones, and in words evocative of Rāshid Husain’s poem meeting place ‘at the gate of Jaffa/a chaos of rubble and thorns’ (Tuqan, 1990 225). In the first section of this poem, the tone is elegiac and thus it adverts to the *rithā*, the poetry of lamentation and commemoration of a deceased relative, a genre which was traditionally the preserve of Arab women poets. In a moment of self-confrontation, the speaker declares ‘I stood and spoke to my own eyes’ (Tuqan 1990, 225). Although the speaker perceives with her eyes, vision alone is not an adequate percept with which to apprehend the full meaning of the scene. There is a history beneath this rubble which the eye alone cannot perceive. And it is her heart which speaks to the abandoned homes in a manner reminiscent of the *atlāl* section of the traditional *qasida* where in the (male) poet addresses the remains of the effaced campsite. This motif aids the speaker in formulating her expression of grief and coupled with the atmosphere of *rithā*, suffuses the poem with a cultural authenticity which will resonate with its Arab auditors:

The heart said:
What have the troubles done to you, homes
And where are your inhabitants –
Have you received any news of them? (Tuqan 1990, 225)

When the speaker asks: ‘where are the dream and the future now? And where have they gone?’, it could be argued that she alludes to the rise of Arab nationalism before 1948 and to the bright future that an independent Palestine should have had as a Mandated territory under the aegis of Great Britain. This, perhaps, is one hidden meaning of the scene that vision alone cannot fully convey, for although the rubble itself is silent, there are ‘sermons in stones’ and in poems, if like the practiced archaeologist, we but know how to hear or read them. The rubble of the homes, an archaeological trope, provides a metonymic presence to the city’s dispersed Arab population; it is a silent witness to the community that had formerly existed here. By this time Jaffa itself had been absorbed into the suburbs of Haifa:

the rubble stayed silent
nothing spoke but the absence,
I shall not weep
And the silence of silences...
Strange flocks of phantom owls
Hovered over the place,
Becoming the new masters.
Oh, how the heart was wrung with grief (Tuqan 1990, 225)

The speaker questions the homes as to the whereabouts of their former inhabitants but this is not a poet’s musings or the nostalgic recollection of the traditional nomadic lifestyle for there is a disturbing sense of defamiliarisation as the place is now occupied

by 'strange flocks of phantom owls' that have become the 'new masters'. And although the 'heart is wrung' the speaker's grief remains silent, there is no call to 'weeping' as in the *atlāl* section of traditional Arabic poetry such as that in the *qas* ٱلْهَيْوَانُ *al-Qays* which begins: 'tarry my two companions and let us weep for the memory of a beloved and a place' (Allen 2000, 103). The absence of weeping points the speaker's departure from the traditional mode when she declares 'I shall not weep' while at the same time it is also recalling that mode, indicating both a transition to new poetic modes while maintaining a sense of continuity with the literary past.

The next section of the poem assumes a rather different tone; the speaker appears to question the elegiac as a poetic form or theme, a position which is understandable when faced with the defiant stance adopted by the poets of the resistance. It may also suggest that in such circumstances, the female poet cannot continue to be confined within the parameters of the *rithā* but must, and is in fact entitled to, embrace the aspirations of resistance in unison with the voices of her brother poets. And it is not surprising that she should speak of a system of gendered oppression at this time in order to challenge the political oppression. In his essay 'The Blind Language', Kanafānī (1966) warned of the tendency to 'lamentation', and the use of words with no consensual meaning, the use of 'ringing words' Kanafānī explains, that may satisfy emotionality but which occlude any real goal or vision (Kanafani 1990, 146). Kanafānī also advocated disestablishment of the traditional Palestinian patriarchal system, not just in the sense of male dominion over female, but as a system within which in Kanafānī's estimation, the young must yield to the views of the older generation at whatever cost. Thus it is a system which obstructs the emergence of the younger generation of thinkers and leaders. This too is an aspect of

the confluence of culture (in terms of social mores and values) and commitment to challenging certain aspects of culture in times of conflict. It is a commitment to challenge the kind of rhetoric that perhaps too readily reinforces these traditional social values when it should be enabling them to adapt to the changing conditions of Palestinian life.

The speaker addresses her fellow poets in familial terms, stressing once again their unity as poets, across the gender and political divide. There is a distinct impression that the speaker is also apologetic for the elegiac tenor of her poem:

Dear ones!
I wiped the grey cloud of tears off my eyelids
To meet you, eyes shining with love and faith
In you, in the land, in man
What shame it would be to meet you
With trembling eyelids
A dampened heart full of despair. (Tuqan 1990, 225)

Resistance literature (poetry) reinstates the experience of the individual or society which is so often elided in the statistical presentation of history, and in this instance, it is the experience of those poets who continued to write and protest despite being under military rule inside the state of Israel after 1948. It is to these poets, the speaker declares, that all Palestinian poets must look now for renewed inspiration and derive renewed strength and vigour from their example:

now I am here to borrow fire from you
to borrow from your lit lamps...
a drop of oil for my own. (Tuqan 1990, 225)

The speaker resolves to emulate their discursive resistance which will in turn strengthen their combined voices and enable their community to transcend the humiliation of defeat ‘our nation’s steed has transcended yesterday’s fall’ (Tuqan 1990, 226). In order to set the ‘steed’ back on the correct track, a willingness to employ Kanafānī’s concept of a ‘critical spirit’ is imperative to the critical re-evaluation of events which can both serve to strengthen their resolve and help to undo any damage incurred by the Palestinian cause as a result of the defeat:

how can a wound destroy me?
and how could I ever cry in front of you?
I make my pledge:
From this day forward I shall not cry! (Tuqan 1990, 226)

After 1967, the very existence of the resistance poetry provided the proof that even in the ‘dark times’ of military rule (and now under occupation), discursive resistance was still possible, indeed imperative, as a means of keeping the Palestinian nationalist spirit alive. The adoption of the ‘critical spirit’ advocated by Kanafānī would enable the recognition that self-reliance was a viable option, for it was only Palestinians themselves who could fully comprehend the real meaning of the loss of their homeland. The poets of the resistance could not only infuse the poets of exile with new vigour but infuse a new spirit of hope at grass roots level, the hope that they would soon hear: ‘the confident neigh of the risen stallion’ (Tuqan 1990, 226). Finally the speaker declares her personal commitment to emulate the poets of the resistance:

Lamps of the dark night
Brothers in the wound...

On your road shall I walk.
 In the light of your eyes
 I collect yesterday's tears
 And wipe them away.
 Like you, I plant my feet on the land,
 My country,
 And fix my eyes, like yours,
 On the road of light and sun. (Tuqan 1990, 227)

In her decision to replicate their political commitment in her own work, Tuqan steps out of the role of the traditional woman poet, not so much abandoning the *rithā* but rather, in a time of conflict, she expands that role to encompass another important Arabic cultural figure, the poet, and this time including the woman poet, as a 'provocative force' of her people.

In his poem 'Against', Rāshid H. Tuqan constructs the idea that Palestinians universally glorify the making of martyrs or the idea that in times of conflict children and women should become either weapons or fighters. The speaker of the poem states this emphatically 'against a child - any child - bearing a bomb/against my sister studying a rifle's components', and thus he speaks of a culture and a society the members of which are normally expected to be non-combatants, women and children. But his concern in this poem would seem to indicate that the role of women and children in society, and in the struggle, was indeed beginning to change and be changed, not least by the effects of modern warfare on civilian populations. The role of sisters in lamenting their fathers/brothers was enlarging, as in Fadwā Tuqan's poetry, to embrace the Palestinian 'wound', the loss of the homeland, and lamenting their fallen brothers and increasingly, their fallen sisters. In 1948, the action undertaken by women probably amounted only to

a rearguard action such as that of water bearers and tending of the wounded (see Khalidi 2007). However, by the 1960s, as some of the poetry to be discussed would suggest, women were increasingly becoming involved in ‘direct action’ in terms of the resistance.

Although the speaker of Hāshim’s poem is ‘against’ changing the cultural status quo in terms of the role of women in combat, he appears to recognise the necessary restructuring of culture and society, especially in the face of occupation by a militarily superior force. At such a time the speaker opines:

even a prophet becomes powerless
When his vision takes in
The murderers’ horses. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 175)

Despite all that the speaker stands against, the times are fraught and in the face of the military might of the occupation, words are exhausted and vision is nightmare. The changing conditions of life for Palestinians are reflected by the poet’s inversion of the values normally associated with Palestinian culture and family life, the poet argues:

Against a child becoming a hero at ten
Against a tree’s heart sprouting mines
Against my orchard’s branches becoming gallows
But after my country, my comrades, and my youth were burnt,
how can my poems not turn into guns. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 175)

There is a sense that this conflict was not sought by Palestinians, nor do they sanction the death of a child, ‘any child’. However, in closing, the speaker issues a call to commitment, a call to convert culture into a weapon of resistance to what is in effect, their virtual imprisonment. In terms of the occupation, Pappé observes that from the

outset the Israeli's had declared the West Bank and the Ghāzā Strip as 'territories under custody', implying that the land was imprisoned (Pappe 2004, 198). Consequently for the Israeli authorities, says Pappe, Palestinian resistance included: 'any show of opposition such as a rally, a strike, or the distribution of petitions or waving of the Palestinian flag', and consequently any such acts therefore were 'met with severe brutality' (Pappe 2004, 197). This curtailment and punishment of nationalist and cultural expression facilitates the conditions that make a child a hero at ten, and those that force a woman to take up arms, since they must also give rise to extreme frustration which ultimately fuels violence. It serves to expand the role of both in terms of service to their community, not only because he/she has been born into such a situation and grown up with the concomitant humiliation of defeat, but also because he/she has been deprived of a childhood 'my youth is burnt'. As a consequence of this, his/her vision of the 'other' will undoubtedly be one-directional and the humanity of the other is diminished in the child's eyes.

Poetry opened a space wherein the increasing political consciousness of women, and the role of women in the struggle, could be debated, whether as poets or mothers of martyrs and also, from approximately the late 1960s onward, as fighters in all senses of the term. In Fadwā T T *and her comrades in resistance*, the private female concern (personal honour and the prospect of sexual violation) and the political concerns of resistance are conflated with dramatic results. The female protagonist of this poem represents the need for resistance on both levels, and for resistance to two aspects of torture, the physical element of pain and the fear of sexual dishonour. Rape has long been used as a weapon of war against women (see for example French, 1992) so it is not

surprising that the threat of rape should be used as a weapon against female resistance fighters. Sexual abuse of women continues to be used as a weapon of war, most shocking for the west perhaps, was reports of the systematic rape of Muslim women by Serbian military forces during the Bosnian war in 1990s.

The sense of immediacy in the opening lines of Tūqān's poem locates it in the here and now of a prisoner's lived experience, as the speaker admits: 'at last, I conceded/ as the beast wanted/under the savagery of the investigation' (Boullata 1981, 154). The poem has a confessional atmosphere; it is a painful disclosure for a woman to make, even between women who are sisters in the 'wound' 'Sister, my beloved forgive me/I said yes' (Boullata 1981, 154). Both the speaker and the hearer/reader are united in the narration of the traumatic event but the explanation is delayed as to why the speaker succumbed:

Not because I could not bear
the gnawing pain
neither because one of the barbarians
kept banging my bleeding head
against the wall,
then tossing me
numb
like a morsel between his jaws. (Tuqan 1981, 154)

The defencelessness of women in such a situation is expressed through the animalistic trait attributed by the speaker to her interrogator. This image acutely underscores the sexual dimorphism between male and female, the speaker is tossed effortlessly and she describes herself as merely 'a morsel between his jaws'. But 'if that were all', she continues, she could have held out against the interrogation, sustained by her

‘determination, patience and pride/and unwavering faith’ (Boullata 1981, 154). At this point in the poem, the reader is required to fill in absent information, the moment that the perceived threat to her sexual integrity appears, her resolve weakens. In respect of the threat to her honour, she denies herself permission to narrate ‘spare me the words’ as though the utterance would make it unbearably present and somehow tantamount to the act’s having occurred:

But one of them
Wanted to –
Sister
Spare me the words
I am choking
every time that wracking scene
passes through my memory
I shudder. (Tuqan 1981, 154)

Sexual assault during incarceration or interrogation is perhaps part of a double jeopardy for women caught up in conflict whether as civilian victims or as resistance fighters. But for Arab women, it could be argued that this constitutes a triple jeopardy, in the sense that female honour (and the honour of the family) has traditionally been grounded in female sexuality, or rather female sexual innocence. The threat of sexual violation then could be considered tantamount to an assault on Palestinian culture. The poem therefore not only opens a channel of resistance against the barbarity of the occupying forces but it also provides a safe space in which this particular danger to female combatants and non-combatants alike can be articulated and where its significance in cultural terms (the location of honour) can be debated. T

□uq ā herself ex

belief that literature has the power to effect social change: ‘the future enterprises in any nation are directed and outlined first and foremost by its literature ... through literature ... pride is awakened, ambitions are enhanced, and psychological boost given to the morale of the citizens of a nation’ (Tuqan 1990, 183).

Although the speaker has not surrendered her personal honour, she surrenders her freedom in order to preserve her honour by the utterance of a single word ‘yes’, which condemns her:

Now ten years of my life
Will be spent here
An atonement for the moment
Of my surrender. (Tuqan 1981, 154)

The prison sentence is punishment for her preservation of her honour but what might have been the social repercussion of her sexual dishonour? Furthermore the poem underscores the crime of (dis)honour against women committed by the interrogator. That the subject of female honour should be broached (albeit metonymically) in this way, in something as public as a poem, indicates perhaps that a ‘critical spirit’ had to be employed in respect of all aspects of society. When a community is embroiled in this kind of conflict, one in which the military might of a regular army is ranged against the combined resistance of ‘little citizens’, then culture must be a process rather than a fixed and rigid entity.

The inspirational nature and incisive quality of the resistance poetry that developed under military rule within Israel is expressed in a poetic address by Mah

Darwīsh to Fadwā T

□m ũl

□uq ā. Darw sh’

acknowledges their shared community, transcending gendered and societal mores though the familial bond of their shared ‘wound’. The speaker, and in this case it can be safely assumed that it is the poet who speaks, reminds T □uq ā that she/th
 one. Like the trope of the olive tree in much of the poetry previously discussed, this concatenation of people and land constitutes a powerful trope of (re)possession and belonging:

do not say: if we could run to her like a river
 do not say it
 on our eyelashes the grass of Galilee
 we and our country are one flesh and bone. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 200)

The defeat of the Arab armies in June 1967 is explicitly addressed by Darwīsh in this poem: ‘before June we were not fledgling doves’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 200). The poem provides a sense that *al-naksah* was indeed only a temporary ‘setback’, but also that these poets were ‘mature’ doves, that they have already known defeat, have already experienced and sung of the wound of *al-nakbah* therefore she should not be surprised at their spirit of resistance or that their love for the land did not cease: ‘our love did not die in bondage’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 200). The implication of the above lines is, that like S□ ghīgh’s ‘genie’ in poem ‘Number 6’ (discussed in Chapter II), while enduring their own form of captivity the poets of the resistance had been patiently perfecting the ‘enunciative techniques of power’ (Said 1994, 312).

In the following lines, Darwīsh achieves an adequation of poet and warrior, and a strong signification of cultural continuity with the poets of the pre-1948 period discussed in Chapter One. In this new phase of commitment between them, he too addresses

particular environment under military occupation in Israel:

Sister, these twenty years
 Our work was not to write poetry
 But to be fighting. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 200)

He reminds her of the positive results that might be gleaned from this ‘demon of a God who came out of the mouth of June’, the renewed sense of unity of purpose between those in exile and those inside the new state of Israel who had for twenty years remained isolated (politically and culturally) from their fellow countrymen and the wider Arab community. This reunion has brought about the melding of their different experiences, his experience of military rule and second class citizenship inside Israel, and her experience of Jordanian rule in the West Bank, and after 1967, her experience of military occupation. It is this latter shared experience that truly makes them brothers and sisters in the wound:

The night that began in your eyes
 In my soul it was a long night’s end:
 Here and now we keep company
 On the road of our return
 From the age of drought. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 201)

He reminds her too of the power of words through the trope of the dove: ‘we are not fledgling doves’, which can become as weapons in the mouths of the otherwise powerless. The dove connotes romantic love: therefore as a trope of the poet’s mood, it works to fix the poet in the pose of an experienced, as opposed to ‘fledgling’ lover. If the

cooing of the dove traditionally signifies mourning and the language of lamentation in Arab poetry, in opposition perhaps, the voice of the nightingale signifies the newly resurrected voice of Palestine itself. She is now united with him in the song of the nightingale and their combined voices are raised in protest on behalf the beleaguered homeland:

And we came to know what makes the voice of the nightingale
A dagger shining in the face of the invaders. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 201)

While it might be impossible to tell the story of the nightingale through the ‘slit lips’ of their community’s fragmentation, or the censorship of the military governance, there is a greater possibility for protest in their combined voices, and in their mutual support of each other’s poetic veracity and sensibility. For example, the power of her imagery is acknowledged and re-formulated by Darwīsh into the imagery of his poem:

You sang your poems, I saw the balconies
Desert their walls
The city square extending to the midriff of the mountain.
(Al-Jayussi 1987, 201)

This is the imagery of their shared experience after 1967, an experience which included ‘the suppression of political voices, brutal treatments of dissent and the blowing up of homes’ (Turki 1976, 85).

The idea of words as both representing and becoming ‘heroes’ implies a poetics of commitment wherein the pen may indeed be mightier than the sword; here there is a sense that the pen, used with intelligence and courage, is a sword, which in turn,

underscores the confluence of culture and commitment. The pen of the poet (the purveyor of words) must be used as a weapon in the service of the homeland, 'we are it's [the land] wound', Darwīsh remarks, 'a wound which fights' therefore he declares:

It was not music we heard.

it was not the colour of words we saw:

A million heroes were in the room. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 201)

Over and above the aesthetics of poetry which was of course a concern, the concern of the resistance poet is also with poetry as a site of intervention. This idea of poetry as a site of political intervention, particularly in respect of nationalist poetry, a poetry of partisanship can, in the modern sense of how we view poetry (as a somewhat reified art form) arouse the antipathy of some literary critics. Conor Cruise O'Brien, for example, considers that the confluence of politics and literature may produce 'an unhealthy intersection'. Literature, but poetry in particular he maintains: 'when suffused with Romanticism breeds bad politics, fascism and nationalism. But it also breeds bad poetry, which in a vicious circle breeds bad politics' (cited in O'Brien 2003, 98). The argument here may be against 'political' poetry *per se*, it does nevertheless, acknowledge the potential of poetry to act as a site of political intervention and resistance.

Barbara Harlow refutes the reified concept of poetry, or the idea that poetry is simply a product of author-psychology without the explicit impact of any external determination, when she points out that: 'the insistence on the here and now of historical reality and its conditions of possibility, underwrites much of the project of resistance literature and the internal debate which surrounds that literature'. It likewise, she states, 'arouses the objections of first world critics generally to the literature of partisanship'

(Harlow 1987, 16). This objection in Harlow's estimate is tantamount to the unrealistic demand for a 'man without history', a position that a postcolonial perspective challenges in its endeavour to reinstate the importance of the historical conditions and contexts of literary production. This too was recognised by Fadwā Tūqān when, in respect of Darwīsh's poetry, she says: 'we can't take Mah ^{Shūpū Darwīsh} symbols in isolation from the personal problems in his real life and its experiences and conflict with his environment' (Tuqan 1990, 186). In this respect it will be useful to recall the fact that Darwīsh himself along with other poets and activists had personally experienced harassment, imprisonment and exile for his political/poetic activities. Therefore he is not a 'fledgling dove', nor is he is not a man without a history:

Sister, there are tears in my throat
 And there is fire in my eyes:
 I am free.
 No more shall I protest at the Sultan's Gate.
 All who have died, all who shall die at the Gate of Day
 Have embraced me, have made of me a weapon. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 202)

There is almost an atmosphere of regret in the last two lines here, regret that his subjective vision is somehow negated and that his poetry perhaps no longer belongs to him. It is almost an elegy for this loss which echoes the words of Rāshid Hūsain's poem 'Against' wherein the speaker asks 'How can my poems not turn into guns?' After twenty years of internal exile and the brutality of military rule, how can a poet produce anything other than 'poetry of partisanship'?

And again in this poem he reiterates the relationship between people and land through a motif which would become familiar in Palestinian poetry, the land as the

beloved: 'I am the lover and the land is the beloved'. The lines following link this poem to Chapter II and the discussion on the obliteration of 'Arab identity' through the hebraisation of the land of Palestine, and the concomitant cultural denigration and negation of native history:

The archaeologist is busy analysing stones.
In the rubble of legends he searches for his own eyes
To show
That I am a sightless vagrant on the road
With not one letter in civilisations alphabet.
Meanwhile I plant my trees.
I sing of my love. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 202)

The implication here is that the Israeli newcomer who 'searches for his own eyes' is blind to that fact that he too has long been a 'vagrant' in European history, and indeed has long been absent from the archaeological remains he now claims as his own. But for the Palestinian native, his husbandry of the land, 'I plant my trees', is an immediate and 'existing' trope of possession and belonging. But so also is the practice of his culture: 'I sing of my love' as the words of his poetry are the reconstructed rubble of his history in the land.

A further implication of the above lines is that the recovery of Jewish history in the land of Palestine was consolidated as much by linking the archaeology of the land to a biblical topography (as discussed in Chapter One), as by any other compelling trope of possession or ownership. As a consequence of this, the native Arab could be regarded as nothing more than a 'sightless vagrant' with no real roots. This representation insists that the Palestinian native will be incapable of identifying or asserting his own history in the

archaeology of the landscape, in opposition to the Zionist claim. Therefore he will be unable to offer a viable resistance. In terms of the articulation of these competing historiographies, Pappé makes this point:

Fortunately for the Israeli's, due to their closer identification with the West, their national historiography has until recently been more or less respected as academic research, more loyal to the 'truth' than ideology. Palestinian researchers were less fortunate. Without a state of their own, they lacked an appropriate academic infrastructure, and although their works adhered to the same scholarly rules as in the West, they were generally portrayed as mere propagandists. (Pappé 2004, 7)

This representation of Palestinian historiography as propaganda is tantamount to a denial of permission to narrate; consequently it becomes the poet's task to work against this, in order to re-assert his or her people's history in the land, this is how words can become 'heroes'. The poet's words are the rubble of consciousness and the fragments of memory which he/she must re-formulate in opposition to the rubble of archaeology which the usurper has restructured into confirmation of his own ownership. Paradoxically however, in order to interpolate his or her history into 'civilisation's alphabet' in an age when the word gives way to military might and the 'weapon devours the guitar', the Palestinian poet must be willing to exchange the word for deed. The currency of this exchange is of course the exchange of the poet's private subjectivity (associated with poetic Romanticism for example) for his public commitment, an exchange which also links him to the warrior-poets of his culture's literary past:

It is time for me to exchange the word for the deed
Time to prove my love for the land and for the nightingale:
For in this age the weapon devours the guitar

And in the mirror I have been fading more and more
Since at my back a tree began to grow. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 202)

The idea that the poet is ‘fading’ suggests that a negation of the self (to an extent) must take place in committed poetry, or rather a negation of the poet’s personal spirit of romanticism and subjective experience in order to forge poetry into a weapon of reconstruction, proof of the native’s history and rootedness in the land: ‘since at my back a tree began to grow’ a tree whose roots are a network of support and a site of personal anchorage and community-cohesion in the land (Al-Jayussi 1987, 202).

Although in much Arabic romantic poetry of the period, woman herself remained a more or less voiceless iconic figure, it did in a sense, allow the ‘woman question’ raised by Qāsim Amīn in *The Liberation of Women* and others at the turn of the 20th century, to re-enter the arena of social and cultural discourse. But the advent of the Romantic school (and the influence of the *mahjar* poets) also helped to expand the contextual range and scope of poetic engagement with the world, both subjectively and as it externally impacted on the poet and his/her society.

The effect of conflict on Palestinian women, particularly in terms of motherhood, has been documented in poems such as Salma al-Jayussi’s ‘In the Casbah’. When the speaker of this poem declares ‘I found my children’s broken bodies lying in the streets, and picked them up’, she conflates Palestine and motherhood. The effect of the struggle *per se* is considered: ‘here we died, Mai and I/flattened by armoured wheels’ but she also raises searching socio-political questions when at the close of the poem she accuses an apostrophized subject of ‘fooling around in the Casbah’(Boullata 1976, 130). The identity of the addressee is not made explicit by the speaker; the allusion may be to the absence of

real commitment to Palestinian nationalism, on the part of the Mandate government for example, or on the part of the Ottoman authorities with whom much Palestinian pleading for intervention in lands sales for example, were inadequately dealt with. There could be a reference to the absorption in petty, trivial or personal affairs on the part of many of the Palestinian Notable families. Alternatively it may be a comment on the absentee landlords; those who sold their land to Zionists, a group castigated by the poet Ibrāhīm Taysir in his poem '1948' (see Chapter 1). Thus the speaker declares with sincerity 'Salma ... Salma/They've bought and sold you' (Boullata 1976, 130).

But with more certainly perhaps, the charge is laid at the door of the Zionist 'dream' for a homeland in Palestine. The speaker remarks: 'I swam over my head in nightmare', this is the nightmare of conflict and 'once more', she declares, 'I almost drowned in their dream' (Boullata 1976, 130). This can undoubtedly be read as an allusion to the Zionist dream of a homeland in Palestine. The first time this dream succeeded in dashing Palestinian nationalist hopes was in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration, then with the 'wound' of partition in 1948 and recalling Deutscher's words above, once again Palestinians and the Arabs were made to suffer for that dream in 1967.

In the final section of the poem, the phrase 'fooling around in the Casbah' is repeated, when she declares: 'our nation became war's killing ground' (Boullata 1976, 130). There is a possible dual interpretation to the meaning here, in terms of Palestinian nationalist aspirations and personal sacrifice in the struggle for Palestinian independence, but also the Middle East and the Palestinian Question as the theatre of operations, the space where western (super)power struggles and rivalries were played out. In respect of the other Arab countries, perhaps the speaker sees the 1967 war as a war fought over, but

not for, the liberation of Palestine, and the defeat which resulted in the consolidation of Israel's hold over further Palestinian land.

The poem 'Gone are those we Love' (1973) was written by Fadwā Tūqān following the extra judicial killing of the poet Kamāl Nās together with Yūsef Nājjār and Kamāl Adwān in Lebanon during April 1973. The speaker describes the three men as eagles 'One eagle after another vanished into darkness/slain for having towered above the clouds' (Boullata 1981, 152). The sorrow evinced by this loss is imprisoned by emotional shock: 'sorrow had no voice' the speaker declares, therefore the poet must formulate a voice with which to express it:

Sorrow had no voice, behold
Sorrow flowers silence to my lips.
And words
Fall
Much as their bodies fell
Corpses
Distorted. (Boullata 1981, 152)

Tūqān's response is immediate; the poem was published in the month after the deaths. It is a public response at a time when the poet herself is deep in the throes of lamentation; therefore it is difficult to formulate words adequate to the trauma 'what else could I say?' 'Their blood is smearing my vision' (Boullata 1981, 152). But perhaps the structure of this particular section of poem can convey what her poetic vision cannot, visually, on the page. For added emphasis, the distorted structure of the poem on the page mirrors the distorted image of the corpses. The visually descriptive fragmentation of the poem on the page, through the offsetting of single words, exhibits a kind of dual encoding of the event

within the structure of the poem itself. It is a gesture toward the rhetorical device of ekphrasis, a linguistic description of the (absent) visual moment, used in the poem to enhance the impact of the words, such that the trope of ekphrasis itself becomes a criticism of the event. In psychiatric parlance, to 'ekphorize' is to bring back [to consciousness] the effect of a particular psychological experience, and in a similar way, the poem involves the cognitive process of reading in a process of double decoding, linguistic and visual, in an attempt it appears, to make the reader of the poem also the viewer of the mangled corpses.

This is a public lamentation for the death of her brothers in the 'wound' through which she draws attention to her Arab literary heritage, the *rithā* as a poetic form. The three men died in exile 'before their vessel ever anchored' and before 'before their eyes ever caught sight of the distant port' (Boullata 1981, 152). Now, without their guidance (and another major conflict in the area imminent) the homeland is seen as being ironically arid:

Palestine ... your thirst was unquenched
ours eternal.
waterless we shall remain
here at the mouth if this fountain
until the day of their return ... (Boullata 1981, 153)

And it was undoubtedly this 'guidance' of which the Israeli authorities sought to deprive the Palestinian cause, but killing the ideologue does not kill the idea or ideology he represents, and the 'day of his return' is therefore awaited. The extra-judicial killing of the three men (among several others assassinated in the same campaign), one of whom

was the nationalist poet and PLO spokesman Kamāl Nas ^{īr}(discussed in Chapter II) immortalised by Hollywood in the Steven Spielberg film ‘Munich’ (2006), a film which depicts the hunting down and assassination of Palestinian leaders, in jurisdictions other than Israel, as a calculated revenge for the ‘Black September’ movement’s attack and kidnapping and killing of Israeli Olympic athletes in 1972. This was an apparent attempt to draw attention to the Palestinian cause and secure the release of certain Palestinian prisoners, however, the action which resulted in the deaths of the hostages and hostage takers alike when German police opened fire on the Palestinian militants.

(See for example the BBC News programme ‘On This Day, September 6’ http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/6/newsid_2500000/2500769.stm).

But perhaps the final comment on this poem should go to al-Bitār (1974) as he underscores what T ^{īr} ^{īr} poem, ‘The Deluge and the Tree’, described as the ‘gloating of the western skies’ and the very different representations of Palestinian and Israeli violence in the western media:

When the Munich incident took place the Arab ambassadors [to Europe] came to help find a humane solution but the German government allowed the Israeli intelligence and other services to carry out a violent solution resulting in the deaths of almost all concerned, and a storm of outrage against the “Arab butchers” swept through Europe. But when the Beirut incident took place and the three resistance leaders were assassinated by Israeli agents in Beirut on April 10, 1973, the Western press was all praise for the audacity, courage, skill and precision of the Israeli intelligence and other services. (al-Bitar 1974, 41)

Section 2: Naming the Victims

The naming of a place or an object is a powerful trope of possession. In colonial settings the process of (re)naming lands in the language of the coloniser has been commonplace, for example the naming of part of the land which is now Australia as Victoria, or British Columbia which is now a province of Canada. During phases of decolonisation (re)naming has been equally important, the (re)naming of streets for example in memory of anti-colonial nationalists as occurred in Ireland following independence from Great Britain. Thus naming is an important component in terms of the reclamation of the native's history in the land and the dissipation of cognitive dissonance often associated with cultural denigration. In the colonial setting therefore, language expresses the dominant ideology of a society and this became important in terms of re-naming Palestinian lands in the language (Hebrew) of the new occupier.

The naming of a Palestinian who is a citizen of Israel as an Israeli Arab rather than a Palestinian serves to obfuscate his identity and history in the land. Apart from the taxonomy of identification in relation to identity cards or passports or colour coding, a name can be an immediate indication of one's religion or ethnic origins. Indeed a name itself can be construed as an act of cultural resistance in times of conflict, the giving to a child a forename such as, *'fidā'ī* (one who sacrifices) for example, which has been encountered by the present author. Naming (in terms of personal names) is also a process of identification in the sense that it can often indicate the religion of the referent and is the recognition of personhood as well as cultural norms in relation to lineage, status, or ideology. It is the recognition of identity which is both individual and communal. Naming can be used as a process of denigration the 'paddy' (a corruption of the popular Irish male

fore name Patrick) for example in respect of the subaltern Irish and Irish emigrants. But naming is also a fundamental aspect of cultural exchange, the first thing we do upon meeting strangers is to exchange names and together with a name is also encoded the gender as well as ethnic origin of the other. Naming therefore is an important part of the encoding and decoding processes of memory, a name is stored in the memory along with a range of physical attributes and emotional associations.

The process of naming can be regarded as marking a representation of reality, a significant process where one culture's definition of reality is obfuscated or negated by another. Naming involves the use of words which indicate something or expresses something of the character of the thing indicated/named, for example Palestine which, for many, will indicate the inherent unity of the land which now comprises Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Naming is also a potent symbol of the (occupier's) power to create a geographic and linguistic correspondence between the immediately perceptible reality and the (Zionist) ideology, a correspondence which can then work to both conceal and dominate the historical context. As stated in the introduction, the colonial experience may differ widely according to the local and historical contexts, many of the themes and tropes that manifest in postcolonial literature, as this thesis will demonstrate, can be observed across such divides, and one such trope is that of 'naming'. Pannikar opines: 'change of place names [that occurs under colonial regimes] deserves some attention. It denotes a loss of identity [for the subjugated] and the formation of a new one, a forced identity'. What Pannikar underscores here is a form of invisible colonial violence, the appropriation of a native identity and the construction of a colonial one by re-naming,

towards which the often ‘highly visible’ violent opposition on the part of the subjugated may be directed (Panikker 2007, 21).

In terms of poetry, as Margaret Higonet observes ‘encoded verbal practices can serve to shield [by unnamings] and unite [by namings] groups in the face of repression by dominant political, racial or sexual cultures’ (Higonet 1995, 162). Apart from naming within poetry, ‘naming the victims’ is also a method of commemoration which is important in situations where actual memorials are either forbidden or impractical, the naming of a hospital in the Ghāzā as ‘Kamal Adwan Hospital’ for example, an instance of ‘naming’ which commemorates one of the ‘eagles’ lamented by Fadwā T □uq ān in her
poem ‘Gone are those we Love’; gone they may be, but certainly ‘naming’ in this way ensures that they are not forgotten. The same is true of in terms of the ‘naming’ of militias and army regiments and this kind of naming can be used to commemorate the fallen hero or iconic figure of resistance as effectively as any physical memorial, the Izz ad-Dīn al-Qassam Brigades who operate in the Ghāzā Strip for example and the so-called ‘Qassam’ rocket which is their weapon of choice (see Swedenburg 1987).

Violent conflict frequently results in many nameless victims ‘the unknown soldier’ for instance is a trope familiar to many cultures as a symbol of all war dead. Where violent conflict occurs, memory, history and geography, along with many unidentified civilians, can also become victims. Palestinian villages and towns destroyed must also be named in order to record their destruction and to keep them alive in memory (encoded in memory with their Arab names): a form of presence in absence. The same is true of the location of atrocities such as Lidice in Poland during World War Two and Mai Lai during the Vietnam war; these are locations which have entered the *topoi* of history

and literature, as symbols of the inhumanity of military excess. Joining these *topoi* by way of Palestinian poetry, are tropes of Palestinian suffering such as Deir Yassin and Kafr Qassam. Resistance poets, to paraphrase Harlow (1987), are not ‘men or women without history’ therefore they must name the victims of that Hebraisation and negation of Arab history in the land, and it is words (the bedrock of any ideology) which are the heroes of this particular type of resistance. Thus Darwīsh can remark in his poem ‘Diary of a Palestinian Wound’, that ‘it was not the colour of words we saw/a million heroes were in the room’, it is not the aesthetic or edifying nature of the words that takes precedence; rather this must be co-equal with the efficacy of words in re-constructing a fractured and fragmented history and polity. It is in ‘words’, their context, arrangement and connotative range that the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment is to be discovered.

Not only were women incarcerated for their political activity, but they were equally exposed to the possibility of being killed. Mai S Elegy for Imm
 Ali’ commemorates just such an event. As an elegy it gestures towards the *rithā* but on this occasion it is a lament for a sister in the wound. The eponymous heroine Imm Ali was according to a note in this anthology, a Palestinian woman who worked in the resistance and was killed. The name of the protagonist denotes motherhood, the mother of Ali, which in Arabic culture connotes the status of maturity in female society with the added distinction of having borne a son. This kind of ‘naming’ is typical of much Arab culture for both men (Abū meaning father) and women (Imm meaning mother). The poem opens with a plea as though from a child to a mother:

Don't go away!
Across the distances you kindle our fire,
Deliver joy, ignite our dreams
leaving was never your style; you were always
about to arrive. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 280)

It is the plea of a loved one, to a loved one who inspires the emotions of motherhood 'kindle' and 'ignite'; to one who, like a mother, is committed to her cause/children 'leaving was never your style' (al-Jyussi 1992, 280). But Imm Ali is more than that. The poem is reflective of the newly-emerging image of women inhabiting the public space in terms of the Palestinian struggle, an image of women (mothers) which would be become widespread and consolidated in Palestinian poetry particularly with the eruption of the *intifād* 1987. But even now the times and indeed cultural climate, are changing as the city prepares for the conflict to come:

the flower vendors close their shops
Under the blitz, and
Darkness prepares to depart. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 280)

The city and the woman are conflated in the poem's imagery, the one becoming a synecdoche for the other as the image of one flows into that of the other:

this city you loved ...
braids her joy with fatigue
and threatens to fall into oblivion
She huddles over its newborn dawn
repressing her tears in the songs
how could you leave us
with no goodbyes? (Al-Jayussi 1992, 280)

This is a city that paradoxically laments at the birth of each new day, and like Imm Ali, who never showed her sadness to her offspring: ‘You, who always repressed your tears’, she does not reveal her tears to the occupiers. And like a good mother, Imm Ali teaches her children how to nurture growth from the land: ‘from you I learned how basil grows’ (a-Jayussi 1992, 280). This image of nurture is extended in the poem in order to encompass the idea that a woman is much more than this, in times of conflict a woman can step out of the confines of culture and can repress the emotions associated with femininity, a woman can be a paradigm of revolutionary fervour, ‘from you I learned how the heart can be a live coal’, and a woman can be the nurturer of commitment and resistance ‘a burning flower’ in the souls of both her children and her community and make the ultimate sacrifice if required and embody the iconic figure of the *fidā’ī*:

Now the dignity of your great death
Opens up wounds
That even trees bleed
And poems. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 280)

The significance of the death of a woman in such a manner is acknowledged in this poem in the sense that it is capable of opening ‘wounds’ in the socio-cultural context, in respect of the role and position of women, and of how, in times of conflict, this role can be adapted and transformed to meet socio-political requirements. The validity of Imm Ali’s death is upheld as a ‘natural’ act for a woman to perform and is reinforced by the image of nature ‘even trees bleed’. This image would suggest that it is not an unnatural thing for a woman to ‘bleed’, a menstrual trope of her ability to produce life and indeed, to die in

producing it. Therefore, neither is it unnatural to give her life in the way of a martyr and that her sacrifice, like that of her ‘brothers’ in the wound should be recorded for posterity as ‘poems’ that also bleed.

The Palestinian poet Rāshid H [Al-Fajr, The Dawn] the magazine
which was banned in 1962, is capable of demonstrating an acute awareness of the
significance of culture during times of conflict. H [usain demonstr
the transformative nature of culture and of the possibilities of mutual understanding
between communities in conflict. He personally translated selections from the work of the
Jewish poet Hayyim Bialik into Arabic, providing a space within which to engage with
the humanity of the ‘other’ and he also translated Palestinian folk songs into Hebrew.
This latter act could be regarded as his recognition of the importance of folklore in terms
of the authenticity and rootedness of Palestinian cultural history. Of course the
indigenous Jews and Palestinians were no doubt highly aware of each other’s culture
having existed together in relative harmony until the arrival of Zionism in the early 20th
century. H [usain’s acts of translation demonstrate the absence of any innate hostility
towards things Jewish *per se*, rather it enacts the desire to both communicate the self and
to understand the selfhood of the ‘other’ in a moment of ‘cross-periphery solidarity’ as
stated in the introduction. Furthermore the very fact of these bi-directional translations is
a physical record of this recognition on H [Given the ‘contingent
pathological circumstances’ that are associated with political conflict, as a component of
the research question stresses, any such bi-directional communication (apart from the
idea of knowledge as a locus of power) must underscore the translator’s inherent
recognition of the humanity of the ‘other’ which he or she translates.

In his poem 'Jerusalem and the Hour', H □usain reflects on
consequences in terms of the Palestinian question. Jerusalem itself was a victim, it was
now occupied by Israeli forces and a significant segment of the Arab quarter, which was
situated close to the Wailing Wall, was emptied of its inhabitants and their homes were
levelled in order to accommodate Jewish worshippers. Without noting the title of this
poem by H □ain, these opening
the Vietnam War, a war with which the use of napalm is particularly associated:

The hour was: a child's legs
Stolen from him by napalm
And when he went on walking
They even stole his road. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 271)

But as Said observes, while many western intellectuals criticised the use of napalm bombing by the United States in Vietnam, very few of them commented on the Israeli use of napalm against Arab civilian populations (see Said 1994, 89 and also Ali 2002, 123). As well as anticipating the victims of chemical weapons described by Tariq Ali (2002) in the camps of Jordan after the 1967 war, the poem also envisages the reported use of cluster bombs against the Lebanese in 2006 and in terms of the Israeli assault on the Ghāzā Strip in the year 2008/09. The descent of napalm resonates imagistically with what was claimed to be white phosphorous which could be seen in news reports, streaming down over what appeared to be populated areas.

Poetry as an act of culture interpolates this fact back into the history of the Arab/Israeli conflict. It can further be argued that the defeat, the zero score to the Arabs 'the hour was an Arab O', was also the hour at which the Israeli intentions toward

Palestinians were revealed 'the hour was the birth of truth'. This notion is especially cogent in terms of the general tone that had been set by Golda Meir in 1969, as Said (1994) remarks by her denial that: 'we [Palestinians] existed at all' (Said 1994, xvi). Culture therefore is an alternative space in which to reassert Palestinian existence as a people, and the poetics of commitment, in this case the building blocks of a national culture, lends considerable veracity to the truth of their existence. The Vietnam War was also significant in terms of the amount of reportage and images beamed into peoples' living rooms, images of the horror inflicted on Vietnamese civilians, together with the growing numbers of American casualties, evoked significant public anti-war demonstrations in the United States and elsewhere, and, it could be argued, hastened that war's end. How unlike the careful shepherding of international journalists (and the very few permitted to enter) who were kept at a safe remove from direct observation of the carnage being unleashed in the Ghāzā Strip in 2008/09 (see for example reports in for example reports in *The Guardian Newspaper* and also in *The New York Times* (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/30/israel-gaza-journalists>) and see also (<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/07/world/middleeast/07media.html>).

On the other hand, while the conduct of the Vietnam War may have provoked a public outcry in favour of its end, the outcome of the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 and the Israeli victory over the Arabs, appears to have given cause for much rejoicing in the Western media. During the first weeks after the June war for example, as Fadwā T □uq ā explains, from the Arab perspective foreign papers and radio stations slanted news in a way that appeared to gloat over the Arab misfortune (Tuqān 1990, 233). This is reflected

in T

□uq ā's poem fr

opines:

they gloated, the western skies
reverberated with joyous accounts
the Tree has Fallen
the great trunk is smashed! the hurricane
leaves no life in the Tree! (Tuqān 1990, 233)

Although in H

□usain's poem th

this too could be regarded as a moment of self-irony as the arithmetical 'zero' was given to the world by the Arabs (see for example al-Aqqad 1942).

It is not clear at whom or what the speaker of H □usain's poem ai
of the following words: 'The people's protector was in a bar/suppliant to his mistress' but it resonates strongly with al-Jayussi's poem 'In the Casbah', when the speaker of that poem declares 'but you were fooling around in the casbah/when our nation became war's killing ground' (Boullata 1976, 130). The 'you' referred to here may be the Ottoman rulers, the Mandate authorities, the Palestinian Notables or the Arab leaders in the war, while the people's blood he continues, became 'roses watered with humiliation' and only a 'minute gained'.

The terror wrought by the 'hour' is partly described through Christian symbolism, crucifixion, 'nails sprouting in trees' and this image are also a paradoxical image of nature, of trees bearing bullets instead of fruit. Through the Christian image, H □usain
adverts to the Islamic teaching that Jesus is a prophet of God and therefore a powerful symbol for both religions. The idea that the prophet is powerless at this 'hour' also

appears in H[usain's] poem 'Against', he is powerless 'when his vision takes in the murderers horses'. But the Christian belief in the death (and resurrection) of Jesus, of which the crucifixion is the central symbol, broadens the meaning of the 'hour'. The hour was the death of the prophet but it was also the birth of the sacrifice necessary to meet the onslaught:

That a million men might conceive
So a great idea might be born,
So a revolution might be born...
But the hour was
It was
The hour was sterile. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 271)

The turning point of the poem hinges on the speaker's realisation of this sterility and the recognition that the rapidity of the Israeli military success must be mirrored by the Palestinian response. The Palestinian cause must be able to 'give birth in seconds' or the 'hour' and perhaps Jerusalem itself, will be forever lost. The poem points perhaps the critical and confrontational attitude advocated by Kanafānī (1966) in terms of the need for re-evaluation (in the wake of defeat) of the socio-political and ideological fault lines, and his idea that the patriarchal system itself has become sterile.

The following lines of the poem can be read as an adumbration of the first intifada, the 'stone revolution' which would be born (in seconds) in 1987:

Then the hour in Jerusalem became
Virgins who got pregnant in seconds
Gave birth in seconds
And in seconds
The hour in Jerusalem turned into a struggle

Jerusalem, a powerful symbol of the defeat, was now in the hands of the victors. But a little girl challenges the perception of time and signifies again perhaps, the coming importance of women in the struggle, as mothers of fighters, as breeders of the demographic weapon, the next generation of resistance:

A little girl destroyed their clocks.
Her age – a hundred million victims
A nation which despite
Sedation and stupor
Will one day rise in wrath. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 271)

In an image which resonates with the Christian image of the Virgin crushing the head of a serpent underfoot, a little girl, a virgin not yet mature, holds the key to the reversal of Palestine's fortunes and 'those who occupy' are acutely aware of this demographic time-bomb, a weapon of mass reconstruction in terms of the Palestinian's cultural continuity and national cohesion as a people, a cohesion which transcends religious divisions among a people who refuse to be 'spirited away' by rhetoric or extinguished by oppression:

Whenever a child passes those
who occupy Jerusalem,
a child, a little girl,
their eyes and their devices
search in her breast, her womb, her mind
for weapons ...
and when they uncover nothing (O)
they insist: "This little girl was born here
and all those born in Jerusalem
shall be made into bombs"
and they are right
all born in the shadow of bombs

shall become bombs. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 271)

Because of the incongruity between words and their meaning, irony is often the unwitting instrument of truth and the irony here is that it is ‘they’ who insist that the breast, womb and mind of an Arab child constitute weapons: emotional, demographic and ideological therefore making her a legitimate target. This concept of the Jerusalemite child as a potential weapon of resistance fuels the kind of logic which sanctions her arrest, detention or the demolition of her home in Jerusalem, which is of course (ironically) tantamount to ‘their’ culpability in her (re)construction as a weapon.

In her poem ‘Hamza’, a man’s name, Fadwā Tūqān narrates the story of an ordinary man, a simple man like many others ‘who toil with their hands for their bread’. The name Hamza is sometimes taken to mean steadfast or strong, thus one must consider the importance of naming as an indication of the poem’s theme. Naming is also a trope of possession and in this instance it can be considered significant in terms of the possession of the qualities associated with the name. In much of the poetry previously discussed, the protagonist was simply designated refugee, martyr or commando for example. Naming the protagonist both humanises him and brings the individual experience closer to the reader. Hamza represents the experience of a real human figure under military occupation as opposed to the more generic collective term ‘refugee’. Furthermore, in terms of language ‘Hamza’, is a vowel in the Arabic language which has no English equivalent and is a vowel which is often a complicated subject in Arabic linguistics. It can be regarded therefore, as a synecdoche of a very distinct, ancient and articulate culture, thus the very title of the poem can be construed as an act of discursive resistance.

The speaker/poet recounts the signs that indicate a time of conflict; the fertility of the land is compromised, it yields only a 'harvest of flames' and it is 'sunk in a cloak of barren grief' (Boullata 1976, 150). It is a time of defeat (the aftermath of the 1967 war) and the speaker's personal response reflects the stunned helplessness of the general population 'I had been swept by the daze of defeat' (Boullata 1976, 150). Although the land is plunged in 'barren grief', excessive lamentation is non-productive and thus grief is provided with its consolatory counterpart, the inexorable fertility of the land. Hamza addresses the speaker of the poem in familial terms as 'sister', and the speaker is comforted by Hamza who appears to be close to the actual land, he knows its rhythms and its cycles of death and rebirth 'this land my sister, has a fertile heart, it throbs, doesn't wither', this land he assures her 'endures'. Hamza draws an analogy between the life-cycle of the land and the fertility of womanhood:

For the secret of hills and wombs
Is one
This earth ...
is the same that gives birth to a warrior.
This land, my sister, is a woman ... (Boullata 1981, 150)

And history perhaps, like the life-cycles of the land, also moves in cycles of victory and defeat, of supremacy and subjection of civilisations, societies and ideologies. It could be argued therefore, that the poem gestures, albeit obliquely, to the Tammuzian myths of death and re-birth, an indigenous Middle Eastern fertility myth utilised in much Modernist Arabic poetry from the 1950s onward, for example, in the work of the

‘Tammuzian’ poets such as Adūnis, Khalīl Hawī and Yūsif al-Khāl (see Al-Jayussi 1987).

Hamza is an ordinary man but one who has a visceral connection with the land and can predict its movements and responses, its cycles of death and re-birth. The speaker/poet is also conscious, self-aware perhaps, of the ways in which her womanhood and her class (a member of a notable Palestinian family) might conflict with her public role as a poet. In the following lines, the poet consolidates her own position as the ‘provocative force’ of her people and self-consciously asserts herself as the narrator of Hamza’s story, therefore the one who enables him to speak as it were. But in Hamza’s absence, ‘days passed I did not see Hamza’, she asserts herself as one who also has access to a similar form of innate knowledge. While in social terms she may be a member of the upper classes and consigned to a female role in that context, as a poet, she too has her finger on the pulse of society; she too has an equally elemental connection with the land:

However, I could feel
That the belly of the land was heaving
In travail. (Boullata 1981, 150)

The image of the land labouring in childbirth once again gestures toward the demographic weapon in the dual senses of birthing which swells the Palestinian population, a non-violent weapon of resistance, and the birthing of fighters, a process which will enhance the prospects of physical revolution and the ability to resist.

The following section of the poem returns to the narration of Hamza’s story. The speaker/poet sets up an antithesis between the opposing forces, beginning with this description of the old man which stands in sharp contrast to the military might of the

occupiers: 'Hamza was 65/a burden deaf like a rock/saddled on his back' (Boullata 1976, 150). This section also draws attention to the conditions that obtained after the occupation of the West Bank in 1967 and indeed since, in terms of house-demolition as a form of collective punishment of Palestinian resistance:

Demolish his house ...
And tie his son in a cell
The military ruler of our town later explained
The need for law and order
In the name of love and peace. (Boullata 1981, 151)

This need for 'law and order' and 'security' continues to underscore the asymmetrical power relationship between the opposing forces of Israel and the Palestinian Territories as exposed by the recent conflict in the Ghāzā Strip (2008/9) in terms of the demolition by Israeli artillery of homes and other civilian infrastructure. But apart from any open conflict, the invidious fact of house demolition as a form of collective punishment has been documented by a number of historical sources and organisations such as ICHAD (see Chapter II). The character Hamza therefore, very likely represents the family/father of a *fidā'i*, hence the statement 'tie his son in a cell' and a factor which gives cause for the demolition of his family's home. In the following lines the speaker asserts her own power; the 'power' to let the occupier articulate the mechanisms of his own oppression and thereby condemn himself as it were:

Armed soldiers rounded the courtyard of his home ...
the banging at the door reverberated
the order "evacuate"
and generous they were with time

“in an hour or so.” (Boullata 1981, 151)

Hamza voices his defiance, his home is Palestine, embodied in the stones of his house, and afterwards its rubble. But more importantly perhaps Palestine is embodied in his children and their ability to endure: ‘Hamza opened the window ... this house, my children and I/shall live and die for Palestine’ (Boullata 1981, 151).

As discussed in Chapter II, house demolition continues to be used by the Israeli authorities as a form of collective punishment and as a mechanism for facilitating the clearance of certain areas, East Jerusalem for example (see ICHAD <http://www.icahd.org>). Furthermore, Pappé recalls that Moshe Dayan, as Israeli minister for defence, ordered the destruction of Qalqilya in the West Bank when he was told of armed resistance in the town, an exercise in which half of the town’s houses there were demolished (Pappé 2004, 197). Pappé’s historical counterpart confirms the veracity of both the poem’s language and tenor: ‘In an hour the house burst apart/its rooms blew up to pieces in the sky/collapsed in a pile of stones burying past dreams’ (Boullata 1976, 151). As in poetry previously discussed (Jabrā for example), again this is not simply a poetic metaphor, rather it is a poetic imaginary of very real events, demonstrating once again, the valence of poetry as alternative source of history and lived reality.

Hamza, like a child becoming a hero at ten in Rāshid H □usain’s poem A
is transformed into a hero simply through his steadfastness, through his sheer ability to endure. He does not seek it, but in times such as these even an old man can be transformed, not just into a hero but into a synecdoche for both steadfast resolution and connectivity with the land. Thus in T □the act of rem
becomes an act of heroism which can be performed by any ‘little citizen’. And it should

not be forgotten that the poem was (and is) a useful didactic tool but especially so for a society under military occupation including censorship of publications, when the mnemonic properties of poetry become invaluable as news bulletins. The speaker leaves us with one final image of Hamza:

Yesterday I saw
Hamza
He was walking down a street in town
As ever simple he was and assured
As ever dignified. (Boullata 1981, 151)

The poem affords Hamza, an ordinary man, the space in which to offer the consolation of his innate knowledge. Hamza, like al-Qāsim's poetic speaker, the death insurance salesman (to be discussed later), is a 'little citizen' and in one sense this is the bedrock of Palestinian resistance (and that of many other societies) the combined steadfastness and resistance of 'little citizens' in their efforts to overcome their oppressors. Thus Hamza is a kind of everyman, a Palestinian everyman whose steadfastness in the face of oppression is not simply a trope of heroism, it is intrinsically heroic.

The poem 'The Search of Yacove Eved', composed in English by Fawaz Turki prompts the reader to question why a Palestinian poet would go in search of such a character, a character given a semblance of a real existence by the process of 'naming' (and why would he negate that existence at the end?). It could be argued that Yacove is a Jew, who never existed, a European Jew with no actual history in the land of Palestine, a position which is being increasingly explored by a variety of authors, most recently by the Israeli historian Shlomo Sand (2008). It could equally be argued that he is an

indigenous Jew; an Arab Jew whose history in the land is intertwined with that of the Christian and Muslim populations of Palestine. The poem searches for the human face of both the indigenous and the European Jewish newcomers. In any case, the character Yacove Eved is an ordinary Israeli Jew who ‘sits on the rocks in the park at Mount Carmel’ and like any ordinary citizen, he enjoys the simple pleasures of life ‘Yacove Eved loved the harbour and the boats’ (Al-Jayussi 1992, 366).

In his documentation of the Arab villages destroyed since 1948 (Walid Khalidi (2007) explains that the Israeli’s often constructed ‘parks’ on the site of such villages thereby enacting both an historical and archaeological obliteration of its existence. Consequently Yacove has never come to know the native speaker of this poem, nor his history in the land. But in an alternative world the two would have been friends. This points the significance of poetry as a meeting place, a cultural space, a space outside of conflict, in which awareness of the ‘other’ and their relationship to each other can be articulated and examined. This role of poetry in both culture and society is particularly important during and after a time of conflict between opposing forces, a time when ‘culture matters’ as Eagleton observes, when a history ‘written by the victor’ might so easily elide this relationship:

Whenever I saw Yacove Eved on the rocks
Whenever I passed him in the park
I always said
Salaams Yacove
And Yacove Eved
always waved both his arms
and said Shalom *Shaaer*. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 366)

The character Yacove recognises the speaker as a poet when he addresses him in Arabic as '*shaaer*', and the speaker in his turn recognises their shared humanity: 'Yacove Eved is like me/he knows all the stabbed dreams/all the ones who died' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 366). Yacove and the speaker of the poem greet and respond to each other in the language of the other, through the bi-directional exchange of the word 'peace' in both Arabic *salaam* and in Hebrew *shalom*:

Sometimes Yacove Eved
Sees me at the port
Fishing for the sunken images
And Yacove Eved says *Salaam Shaaer*
And I say *Shalom* Yacove. (italics in original Al-Jayussi 1992, 366)

If Yacove is an indigenous Arab Jew, then this exchange of language is not simply a metaphor of cultural crossing; rather it underscores the relationship and location of their shared ethnic and linguistic heritage. In the space provided by this poem an alternative 'brave new world' of common cause is constructed and played out by means of dialogue 'Yacove Eved and I/we sit and talk about this' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 336). Although their exchange of language is an indication of their shared awareness, at a time of conflict which can drive a wedge between them, their bi-directional cultural awareness assumes a particular significance in terms of keeping this space for cultural crossing open.

The speaker draws a parallel between the search for a poetic metaphor 'fishing for the sunken images', and the search for traces of their respective histories. It is this recognition that prompts the exchange of language which is tantamount to a bi-directional cultural recognition; an exchange which if allowed to develop, might have offset the

conflict that now separates them in real time. In the comparative context, the fact that this poem was originally written in the English language, heightens the similarity of the words '*salam*' and '*shalom*' for the western reader. In terms of the poem itself, the bi-directional transmission of culture in the form of language, the semantic similarity of which points their common Semitic heritage, is a mutual recognition which humanises them both and counters their ability to demonise, or to rely on 'monstrous stereotypes' of each other. But of course if Yacove is a European newcomer, it also underscores the conflict the lies between them, their mutual contestation of ownership of these 'rocks and shores' and in light of this conflict the speaker states:

And now I do not know where Yacove Eved is
And I do not know where to find him.
I have never known anyone by that name
But these verses are for him. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 366)

These verses for one who never existed are a kind of recompense for the sense of brotherhood that was lost to them both, a brotherhood that was perhaps shared by Palestinian Arab Jews, Muslims and Christians before the coming of the European Zionists. In such a scenario both are victims of the Palestinian 'wound' and the naming of Yacove Eved therefore gives this brotherhood a semblance of existence, re-inserts it back into history and thus makes them 'brothers in the wound'. The poem's political subtext underscores the possible transformative effect of culture, but especially in terms of literature and the arts, a space where alternatives world views and outcomes can be formulated and explored. Furthermore the poem challenges and refutes the idea that there is an immanent anti-Semitism or hatred of Jews on the part of Arabs. It also maps a

cultural space where mutual recognition can continue to take place in spite of the conflict between them, a space wherein they might continue to relate to each other as brothers in the 'word' despite any political ideology which may separate them.

The Jewish Israeli poet Ahron Shabtai provides evidence that a relationship does indeed exist between brothers in the 'word'. Close reading of Palestinian poetry can reveal that their mutual hopes, desires and fears, although manifested through different cultural codes, can at times, mirror the aspirations of some of their Israeli counterparts. In 2006 for example, Aharon Shabtai refused his invitation to a major Israeli poetry festival in protest at Israel's treatment of the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of east Jerusalem. Shabtai underscores the *realpolitik* of the Arab/Israeli experience as his poem 'Nostalgia' appears to imply:

And when it's all over,
My dear, dear reader,
On which benches will have to sit,
Those of us who shouted "death to the Arabs!"
And those who claimed they "didn't know".
(Shabtai 2002, 17)

Apart from the indigenous Arab Jewish population of Palestine, there were also many Arab Jewish immigrants to Israel, from North Africa for instance. For these Arab Jewish immigrants the speaking of Arabic was forbidden as were Arab customs and costumes. They were offered a second rate education (and indoctrination into Zionism) which was inadequate to enable their social mobility and progress, a factor, it could be argued, which underscores the inherent racist and colonial nature of certain aspects of the Israeli regime (see Pappé 2004, 180). This was a typical tactic

of colonial education, and one can take as an example the British educational system in Egypt (and elsewhere), which enabled the creation of an educated under-class capable of being junior civil servants but not one which was not necessarily capable of independent self-government.

The problematic associated with identity and naming is extrapolated in 'Getting to Know a Friendly American Jew: Conversation' (Chetrit cited in Clark 2006, 189). As we can be determined from the following extract, naming a Jew as 'Arab' could be problematic in some quarters:

Tell me, you're from Israel?
Yes, I'm from here ...
Do you speak Hebrew?
Yes, of course
I mean, that's your mother tongue?
My mother's tongue is Arabic, but now she speaks Hebrew fine.
(Clark in Muhawi 2006, 189)

The incongruity between words and their meaning above is one manner in which the ambiguity of identity manifests itself. Naming a Jew as 'Arab' is another:

Are you Jewish or Arab?
I'm an Arab Jew.
You're funny.
No, I'm quite serious
Arab Jew? I've never heard of that. (Clark in Muhawi 2006, 189)

The tenor of this conversation qualifies the notion of brotherhood between Jew and Arab, which is inherent in Turki's poem 'The Search for Yacove Eved' and the history of which

has been more or less lost in the narrative of Zionist (re)possession of the land of Palestine. The conversation further underscores the transformative power of language in terms of identity and how the use of language (Hebrew) obfuscates, indeed negates, the indigenous Israeli Jew's Arab (Semitic) ethnic origin and the socio-political context in which it becomes problematic, for example, when the American speaker of the poem later observes: 'Jew just doesn't go with Arab' (Clark in Muhawi 2006, 189).

In her poem 'To Etan' with the subtitle 'an Israeli child from the Kibbutz Ma'oz Hayim' (circa 1973), Fadwā T

□uq ā also nam

other. The child Etan, the speaker observes 'falls/under the star that branches/a wild tree in his hands' (Tuqan 1981, 156). The 'wild tree' indicated here could be the prickly pear cactus, the plant (*sabr*) which the Israeli *sabra* chooses as his symbol. If so, there an ironic twist, for although the plant itself is widespread, it is not necessarily a native plant; rather it was imported into Palestine, as the plant itself is originally thought to be from the Americas (see for example <http://net.bible.org/dictionary.php?word=botany>). In Arabic the word '*sābr*' has its own specific set of connotations, not least of which is 'patience' and endurance' or 'steadfastness' and the '*sābirūn*' as one who possessed these attributes (see for example Doniach 1982 and Esposito 2003).

The question arises also as to what is this 'star that branches'? We know that annexation of Palestinian lands and new Israeli settlements and towns were built after 1967 (see Pappé 2004). This is a process which is ongoing and constitutes a serious deterrent to peace in the area. Therefore the 'star that branches' may be an allusion to the Israeli flag, spreading across what remains of Palestine like the branches of a tree in an adumbration of the Jewish settlements united by a network of 'settler' only roads, a

network which in the present time, slices the Palestinian Territories into a system of disconnected cantons or Bantustans (see for example Hass 2002).

The child addressed in this poem, part of the new generation of Israelis, is perhaps representative of the *sabra*, the native born child of Zionist settlers, and the image and the ideal of the Israeli ‘sabra’ was still a popular one at this time. This *sabra* child is the inverse opposite of the generation of Palestinians born in exile of evicted native inhabitants, yet ironically, both of whom seek redemption from the humiliation and expulsion inflicted on their respective ancestors:

The labor Zionists taught their Sabra children that they were members of the chosen people—chosen not to bring God’s kingdom on earth but to establish an exemplary just society of labourers and farmers. The Sabras considered themselves superior to their Diaspora kin, a new breed of “gentile Jews” that rejected Diaspora servility and weakness.

(Almog 2008, <http://www.tikkun.org/magazine/tik0805/politics/webarticles/almog>)

The idea that he must watch over this land would indicate that he is a *sabra*, a child born into that ‘exemplary society of labourers and farmers’ but the speaker of T □uq ā’s poem reminds the child that this dream is a ‘web woven with threads of steel stretching walls of blood’ (Boullata 1981, 156). It is a dream which has been wrested from the indigenous Arab population. What on the surface appears to be a wholesome dream, and a noble endeavour (the Kibbutz), at least from the Jewish newcomers’ perspective, is a nightmare of exclusion for the indigenous population absented from the ‘sabra’ purview. The speaker suggests therefore that the child will himself be trapped by this web ‘he is caught’ from which he will be unable to extricate himself.

The speaker imagines this child, born of the Zionist dream, ‘opening his eyes’ and beginning to question the world that the dream has created. The child asks ‘how long do we have to watch over this land?’ and here the reader is reminded of the inverse relationship, while the newcomer lives in the relative comfort of the kibbutz, the native, like the speaker of Darwīsh’s poem, is reduced to life in a ‘watchman’s hut’. It is possible also that the speaker of the poem employs ‘watch over’ as a euphemism for ‘occupy’. The line continues ‘time deformed/dragged in khaki’, which suggests the typical *sabra* mode of dress ‘bypasses him’ and suggests that the *sabra* mentality somehow exists independently of ‘real’ time. The speaker suggests that the Zionist dream has exceeded its objective by creating a dispossessed people and that this excess/success will one day overwhelm them:

The bloated dream is a sinking load
I am afraid for you, my child
To have to grow up in this web of things
To be gradually stripped of your human heart and face
You could fall again my child
And fall
and fall
fading into a fathomless end. (Boullata 1981, 156)

This negation of time is dangerous the speaker points out; the child will grow into a man and perhaps he will become an oppressor in his turn, he will become one who must continually ‘watch’ this land for signs of ‘resistance’ and as a consequence the speaker warns that Etan will be: ‘stripped of your human heart and face’ (Boullata 1981, 156). The regretful tone of the closing lines suggest that not only will he lose his human

capacity for empathy and compassion but he may also lose, in the eyes of those who he must dispossess or oppress, the humanity that ‘naming’ affords to him. As a consequence, the military face of ‘occupation’ will supersede the humanity and the human vision of the occupier.

Pappe draws attention to what he calls the ‘immorality of the military regime’ in Israel through an historical episode which took place in the Sinai, the massacre of civilians at the Palestinian village of Kfar Qassam. In what he describes as the Israeli participation in the joint campaign of Britain and France to topple the Egyptian president Gamāl abd al-Nāssir in 1956, the Israeli army invaded the Sinai during which time they imposed a curfew on all Palestinian villages. The villagers of Kfar Qassam (unaware of the newly imposed curfew) returning home later than the curfew permitted were punished for this breach by the massacre of 48 civilians including women, children and young men (Pappe 2004, 159). Thus the village of Kafr Qassem, along with Deir Yassin a generation earlier, entered the *topoi* of Palestinian literature, particularly poetry. The poet Samih al-Qāsim recalls this episode in his poem ‘Kafr Qassem’ of which (according to Al-Messeri 1970) we have only the opening lines as the remaining section was deemed unsuitable for publication by the Israeli censor. The poem itself seems to be the only memorial to the victims of this massacre, who until now have:

No monument – no flower – no memorial,
No verses – no curtain,
No blood soaked rag

From the shirt of our innocent brothers,
No stones with their names carved on it,
Noting at all ... what a disgrace!

Their wandering ghosts

Cut our tombs out of Kafr Qassem's rubble. (Almessiri 1970, 57)

The commemorative capacity of poetry once again points the importance of poetry as a reservoir of allusion to the social and political context. Permission to narrate is denied on two levels, the denial of any inscription of the event (bearing the names of the victims) in an actual memorial which can be visited and also in the censorship of certain lines of the poem itself. Any archaeological vestiges of the massacre and the archaeology of the poem are therefore proscribed.

Al-Qāsim's poem, it could be argued, makes a subtle gesture towards Ibrāhīm

T ~~which was discussed in Chapter 1.~~ In T ~~al-Qāsim's poem~~

two of the condemned men requested henna in order to dye their hands and in the discussion of that poem it was argued that this was a symbol of their marriage to the Palestinian cause. Ibrāhīm Muhāwī points out an ironic aspect of Palestinian culture which is significant in this instance: 'traditionally when a young man died before he had a chance to marry and have children, a wedding celebration instead of a wake, was held for him' (Muhawi 2006, 38). In al-Qāsim's poem the idea that these 'innocent brothers' have symbolically married the Palestinian cause is advanced by the image of the 'blood-soaked rag', an allusion to the blood-stained cloth which was traditionally a testament to the bride's virginity on the wedding night. This image of the age old bridal tradition has a further allusive property: it acts as a symbolic testament to the fact that the victims of Kfar Qasem (the villagers) were essentially innocent civilians. Thus the poem as well as 'naming the victims' enacts a powerful set of cultural tropes and converts the absence of

a physical memorial into an active cultural memory and a form of resistance to the extinction of memory.

Samīh al-Qāsim's poem 'Resignation from the Death Insurance Company' (1969) is also a commemoration of the sacrifice (however small) of a 'little citizen'. Death insurance provides a financial safety net for a chosen benefactor if one should die, especially unexpectedly or prematurely. Should the death of the Palestinian question be brought about, Israel will no doubt be the beneficiary. This business of making money out of the dead, the speaker admits 'burdens the conscience' and having to think about death on a daily basis makes one melancholy: 'the profession of death insurance has become melancholy' (Boullata 1976, 117). The poem's title is tantamount to a refusal to be part of any mechanism which underwrites the cost of burying the Palestinian question. It is a statement of political commitment and the intent of a 'little citizen'. There may be an ironic subtext here as al-Qāsim is a major poet of the resistance therefore his voice will be big. The poem also has a further political, although quite obvious, subtext. Al-Qāsim was a member of the Communist Party 'Rakah' which spanned the Arab/Israeli divide. The poem is an open declaration of his orientation to the political 'Left' as a way forward, a unified field at a time of political indeterminacy 'on a crossroad'. This was at a time perhaps when the policy of the Soviet Union toward the Middle East had come in to question after the 1967 defeat. There are other paths the poet acknowledges, paths which lead to obscurity or outright confrontation: 'let the drowned be drowned if he wishes/and let him harness fire horses if he wishes' (Boullata 1976, 117). Finally he addresses the powers that be, the 'eloquent speakers' who have gained mastery over what Said has described as the 'enunciative techniques of power'. They may be the leaders of the Arab

countries as well as the Palestinian leadership; the poem is subtitled ‘to those who started thinking after June, 1967’:

O Ministry of Information
O Ambassadors of death
In the city of marble
O eloquent speakers for death
Who embellish words
I submit my resignation to you. (Boullata 1976, 118)

His address also crosses the gender divide, the phrase ‘Ladies and Gentlemen’ repeated at the beginning of each section of the poem, thus he accounts them as brothers and sisters in the wound. It is an address to all those who hold power, and who withhold that power from every ‘little citizen’. He offers hope to every little citizen’ in the ideology of the political ‘Left’, as a citizenry united against oppression of all subaltern classes, the poor, workers, the Palestinian Arabs, united by an ideology that transcends culture, religion and other social forces:

let the rains fall
let the trees
raise their heads
let the fruits ripen
in the sun and the Left. (Boullata 1976, 118)

In a society that values poetry as highly as Arab society does, the poet can give voice to the silent majority. Like the roots of the trees that bind the earth and prevent erosion, poetry can unite (albeit underground) the voices of the ‘little citizens’ the powerless, or those who may be too politically quiescent to voice opposition blatantly. In this way

poetry fulfils a social role, it voices what many ordinary citizens think but may be afraid to publicly express.

In his poem 'The Story of an Unknown Man' (1972), Samīh al-Qāsim draws analogies between power and powerlessness, between humiliation and self-respect. Initially the 'unknown' man in this instance bears a striking resemblance to Ibrāhīm T

of al-Qāsim's poem describes a mysterious man who stands at the end of the road: 'at the end of the road he stood', but here the resemblance ends. Death itself was deemed to be afraid of T

Qāsim's unknown fighter stands alike a scarecrow in a vineyard', he is capable of frightening only the birds. This can be taken in the literal sense that he (perhaps a fighter reduced by defeat) has no place else to go. The phrase 'end of the road' is repeated for emphasis; therefore it is not surprising he should turn to violence. What is the opposition here? Khalid Sulaiman (1984) interprets this poem in terms of the transformation of the unworthy man into the respected 'fighter' and in one sense this is probably correct but there is a wider connotation to be gleaned. A scarecrow is made up of unwanted, discarded clothing, but a scarecrow also watches over and protects the crops. As a symbol, this aspect of the scarecrow becomes significant in the light of Tūqān's poem 'I Shall Not Weep', wherein the speaker describes the strange flocks of phantom birds that now inhabit the rubble of Jaffa. Treated little better than a scarecrow (in his own fields) under the systemic violence of the occupation, and with no recourse to political redress, the 'unknown man', the nameless refugee or expelled person, in order to challenge his displacement and regain his land and his

dignity, must inevitably resort to either violent opposition or self-immolation as did the refuge/infiltrator in Fadwā Tuqān's poem. The speaker of al-Qāsim's poem observes:

The white houses
Slammed their doors on him,
Only jasmine plants
Loved his face with its shadows of love and hate.
(al-Udhari 1984, 73)

Sulaiman explains that, in this instance, 'white' signifies empty. But it might also be an indication that the houses are somehow alien, imposed structures 'settlements perhaps' that do not or cannot, acknowledge his presence, whereas the jasmine, a living organism, rooted as it is to the land, recognises him as a native son.

The poem also informs us as to why he had become an 'unknown man', because at this time, 'the country was under the weight of locusts and grief' (al-Udhari 1984, 73). From a postcolonial perspective, and taking the historical context into account, the poem presents no difficulty for the reader in drawing an analogy between the locusts and Israeli military forces that have devastated the land and plunged the land into grief. But a politically conscious people cannot live forever amidst obstruction and outworn rhetoric and ideologies which, like Darwish's 'false branches' and Kanafānī's language of 'lamentation', must eventually be discarded and burned like old clothes:

One day
His voice rang in the square of the white houses.
Men, women and children
Thronged to the square of white houses
And saw him burning his old coat. (al-Udhari 1984, 73)

If, as Sulaiman states, ‘white’ can be read as ‘empty’, then the idea of return can also be connoted, as his appearance negates absence, it functions as a rallying point for the next generation of dispossessed and exiled. Said has remarked that: ‘we [Palestinians] were the first Arabs who at a grass roots level, started a movement to repossess a land and a history that had been wrested from us’ (Said 1995, xv). This was a popular movement led by popular leaders from within the ranks of organisations such as *al-fatah*, the PFLP and The Democratic Front for Palestine.

The final section of this poem gestures toward the coming storm, the storm as a resurgence of political agitation, and also as the *fidā’īn* movement al-Asifa: ‘And on that day the sky flashed and thundered/the rain poured down’ (al-Udhari 1984, 73). As in Darwshī’s poem ‘The Storm’, it is a storm that will clear the trees of all dead branches and allow the ‘jasmine plants’ to flourish. Thus the burning of the old coat signifies a kind of purification which permits this new brand of Palestinian nationalism, a new phase in the resistance to emerge and this is symbolised by the smoke that arises in the colours of the Palestinian national flag:

sky swelled with a green cloud,
With a white cloud,
With a black could,
With a red cloud ... (al-Udhari 1984, 75)

In this instance it is the poet who metaphorically hoists the flag, an act which the people are physically forbidden to do, thus the poem performs a double function; it inscribes a narrative of resistance and enacts a tactic of national reconstruction, metaphorically

flying the flag as it were. Like the trope of the olive and orange tree which unites people and land, in this poem, the flag symbolically unites the sky above with the land of Palestine below and it fuses the nationalist aspirations (represented by the metamorphosis of flag into clouds) with the physical struggle which takes place on the land below it.

The Palestinian woman poet Hanan Mikhail (who writes in English) was, like Fadwā T [redacted] in Nablus in what is now the West Bank. Her poem ‘Guerrilla’ (circa 1973) also immediately resonates with the ‘unknown’ fighters of Ibrāhīm T [redacted] poem ‘Commando’, and Abd al-Rahīm Mah [redacted]’s poem ‘The Ma of which were discussed in chapter one. In Mikhail’s poem the figure of the *fidā’ī* made visible by the lights in the distance and thus emerges from the landscape he has been observing, the lights perhaps of Jaffa or Jerusalem. But his eyes are not fixed on the lights of city; rather they are fixed on the signifier of his exclusion from it, the ‘barbed wire’ in the distance, an image which suggests his situation as either a refugee or infiltrator:

Dark, motionless, he stood
 eyes fixed on barbed wire
 swimming in distant lights. (Boullata 1981, 141)

The idea that the barbed wire is swimming suggests that it is in fact moving or moveable, and movement implies the opportunity for reversal but it also gestures toward the possibility of further land appropriation by the Israeli authorities after 1967, and to the fluidity of borders, as Israel has no fixed borders (see Boyle 2003, 33). This awareness of the possibility of further land appropriation is also expressed by Darwīsh in his poem ‘Identity Card’, wherein the speaker asks ‘will they take the rocks too?’ The attitude of the ‘guerrilla’ is reminiscent of the quiet resolution of T [redacted]’s ‘Comma

stands at the door' and Abd al-Rahīm Mah

□m ūl's The Ma

of the former figures was couched in terms of defending the homeland against partition,

Mikhail's figure is closer to that of Fadwā T

□uq ā's refugee

'The Call of the Land. Mikhail's guerrilla represents the next generation of *fidā'ī* born in the refugee camps of dispossessed parents, and who observed his parents' humiliation as they watched helpless from a distance, their land usurped before their eyes. So too perhaps, do the refugee camp populations of the Ghāzā Strip in the present, gaze northward to Jaffa and Haifa from whence so many of them were expelled in 1948 and closer to its borders, to the surrounding lands which once was Arab land, for example the Jewish settlement of Sderot built on the lands surrounding the Arab village Najd from which the Arab villagers were also expelled in 1948 (see Khalidi 2007).

It is this very humiliation, that of his refugee status, which is encapsulated in Darwīsh' poem 'A Naïve Song on the Red Cross' in which a child reflects on his and his father's humiliation). The child ironically opines 'we are safe in the hands of the Red Cross' and as he contemplates the harsh economic conditions of the refugee camp he remarks: 'when the flour sacks are emptied/the moon becomes a loaf in my eyes/ Why did you, father, sell my song and religion/for crumbs and yellow cheese/in the stores of the Red Cross? (Darwish 1982, 46).

While Ibrāhīm T

□uq ā's poem w

Mikhail's poem we are made privy to the *fidā'ī*'s innermost thoughts:

Demanding, possessive, jealous,
Your love knows no mercy,
Your deserts, hot and barren,
Sear our flesh. Our feet

Sink in the Jordan's muddy trap. (Bollata 1981, 141)

The love of the land afflicts him like a wounded lover, a now familiar trope in Palestinian poetry, a lover banished to the harsh, inhospitable landscape of the refugee camp or under Jordanian rule in the West Bank. And here in the 'deserts of exile', he resembles the legendary figure of Qais, known as Majnūn (meaning mad), searching the geographical deserts for his lost love Laila, a story which populates Persian and Arabic literature. The reference to the Jordan is significant in terms of the forced expulsion from Jordan of the Palestinian *fidā'īn*, which took place in September 1970. This expulsion was effected by the intervention of the Jordanian army under the prevailing view that a section of the Palestinian *fidā'īn*, due to indiscipline among their ranks, constituted a threat to the Hashemite regime (see Khalidi 1997, 197-198). This expulsion, with significant loss of Palestinian life, came to be remembered as 'Black September' and gave rise to a Palestinian splinter group of the same name that were responsible for the kidnapping of the Israeli Olympians at Munich in 1972.

The impetus behind these destructive forces (the madness of love) is explored by the poet. The speaker contemplates how it is that the land continues to exert such a hold over him and why it exacts such a high price for his love. In the trope of the absent lover, the land makes obsessive demands and mocks 'the yearning of ancient trees'. Like the metaphorical complicity of the sea in Tawfiq S □ though the Number 6', a land itself was complicit in his exile it both taunts and entices him through the sharp contrast between the 'green land' of which he is deprived and the hot, barren political and psychological desert he must inhabit in his current circumstances:

Your fields, green and tender, drink
 Our blood...
 Faceless, changing, ageless
 You take your terrible toll. (Boullata 1981, 141)

In the closing section of the poem, the *fidā'ī* exits his contemplative mood and turns back to the here and now, to his companions in the field. In a gesture of obeisance he lays down his arms upon the earth, an act which is symbolic of his willingness to lay down his life. But his is not the passive self-sacrifice enacted by the *fellāh* who falls upon his land

in Fadwā T [It is a 'positive self-sacrifice of the Land', rather
 which could be seen as an offensive act of repossession, which links him more directly to those who fought to prevent that dispossession in 1948. The pronouns 'she' and 'her', further link the poem to the trope of the land as absent lover:

He turned, placed his
 Kalashnikov on moist earth,
 Nodded to fighters telling tales of
 Glory
 Hammad's eyes
 Sought his with a question
 "as legend I could never love her."
 He answered
 "she lives." (Mikha'il 1981, 141)

Apart from the gesture itself, the motif of the Soviet-made weapon (perhaps the freedom-fighters weapon of choice) links him to the world of international political hegemony and power brokering. The 'Kalashnikov' rifle links him to the 1973 war and the complex

network of political and military alignment and non-alignment which may have been complicit in the construction of the Middle East as a theatre of operations for the western super powers (see for example See Tariq Ali 2003). In ‘Cold War’, terms, the naming of his actual weapon is an open challenge to the superpowers ranged in support of Israel. In this sense, the ‘word’ which signifies the weapon becomes itself a weapon in the hands of the poet. It gestures toward the Soviet Union’s influence in the Middle East and the action of laying the weapon down perhaps hints at the eventual Soviet withdrawal from the Middle Eastern field and the development of Palestinian self-reliance (see for example Ali 2002).

It might also be considered as an example of the fetishisation of the gun which so often accompanies armed struggle. This is no less true of the Irish struggle for national independence as it is commemorated in poetry and song. The Irish ballad ‘The Old Fenian Gun’ (a conversation between father and son centred around an old gun which no doubt featured in the Fenian rebellion of 1867 and presumably calculated to inspire later generations of Irish ‘*fidā’īn*’) for example and poems such as ‘Native Swords’ written by the Irish nationalist poet and activist Thomas Davis almost a century before the struggle over Palestine began (see <http://www.irelandsown.net/sword.html>). Similarly, in a short story by Ghāssan Kanafānī for example ‘Guns in the Camp’ describes the sensations of pride experienced by an old man:

Abu Saad had been crushed, crushed by the victors, crushed by the ration card, under a tin roof ... the domination of the country. What could he do? ... He can’t see a gun on a young man’s shoulders without moving aside and caressing it, as if it were his own old gun that had been stolen and he had just now found it again. (Kanafani 2000, 132)

The trope of (re)possession here underscores the longing for re-possession of the homeland, but through the repetition in the passage of the word ‘crushed’, it also centres one of the many internal and external determinations which cause a young man to pick up a gun in the first place and an old man to feel his pride restored when the young man does so.

The *fidā’ī*’s companion is named in the poem ‘Hammad’ but he himself remains un-named, a ‘mysterious man’ an unknown man/soldier. Therefore he is not a Christian, a Muslim nor a Druze, neither is he explicitly described as peasant or intellectual but he is perhaps all of these, he is the symbol of all ‘unknown’ fighters, and the poem a commemoration of those freedom fighters that often exist only at the margins of world history, and their struggles (to paraphrase Darwīsh) which the bigger headlines so often keep hidden. In this way, he signifies a kind of unnameable force, the universal or archetypal freedom-fighter, ‘the little citizen’ who must inevitably arise from the ranks of the nameless faces and voices from the land and from oppressed peoples everywhere.

The de-familiarisation of the homeland caused by the imposition of an imported and alien culture, as experienced by the Palestinian citizens of Israel is explored (a citizen of Israel born in 1948) by the female Palestinian poet Laila ° Allūsh, in her poem ‘The Path of Affection’. This poem presents the reader with an individual personal experience of alienation, particularly in the context of the technological and infrastructural changes wrought on the Palestinian landscape, a newly created landscape through which the speaker travels: ‘On the startling road seized from the throat of new accounts/on the surprising road seized from old Jerusalem’(Al-Jayussi 1992, 106). Through its imagery and metaphor, the poem engages with the ‘primacy of the geographical’ which Said has

observed suffuses much postcolonial literature (Said 1990, 36). The road, itself a geophysical feature, functions like a neural pathway which facilitates a ‘startling’ and ‘surprising’ psychological (re)connection between the speaker/native daughter and her history in the land:

Despite the estrangement of signs, shops and graveyards,
I gather my fragmented self together
to meet my relatives in the New Haifa. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 106)

She acknowledges her companions on this journey to the ‘new’ Haifa, companions who remain oblivious to her history in the land, a history which has been negated in favour of theirs. Her fellow travellers she declares:

know nothing of my suffering
But I am an authentic face, well-rooted,
while their seven faces are alien. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 106)

Despite the surface de-familiarisation, the re-naming of villages, streets and rivers in Hebrew, and the newcomers’ ability to ‘make the desert bloom’, the land is personified, endowed with cognitive capabilities and therefore is capable of recognising the Arab features of its native daughter:

This land is still the old land
despite green clouds and fertilized plants
and water sprinklers spinning so efficiently ...
the trees were smiling at me with Arab affection.
(Al-Jayussi 1992, 107)

There is an inner and outer aspect to the image of the trees here. An outer shell of modernity has been superimposed on the landscape, but the roots of trees (like memories) go deep into the earth thus preventing its erosion. ^cAllūsh's poem resonates with that of Samih al-Qāsim's 'What', wherein the speaker observes that despite the 'man-made satellites' and 'beggars' in the streets, Palestinian roots are 'still alive'. Roots also create invisible pathways underground, pathways to memory which despite the geographical defamiliarisation, have resisted extinction and what is more, they trigger a renewal of the speaker's affection for the land:

In the land I felt and apology for my father's wounds
and on all the bridges,
the shape of my Arab face. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 107)

Despite the attempt to rid the land of its Arab identity, the speaker declares: 'everything is Arabic still, despite the change of language' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 107). This too reflects the Hebraisation of the land of Palestine enacted through the Israeli state's re-naming process discussed in Chapter 1. Irrespective of the façade of technological modernity, the Arab history and rootedness in the land is grounded, as in much Palestinian poetry, by the deceptively simple trope of the orange tree. The speaker declares: 'the orange grove of my ancestors laughed to me, my God, with Arab affection' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 107). It is deceptively simple as it is not a purely poetic trope of growth and renewal but of the deeply rooted Palestinian history in the land despite the obfuscations and machinations of the colonisers.

The mnemonic properties of poetry make a considerable contribution to the process of memory and remembering. This is particularly cogent in terms of cultural and

national identity and the assertion of that cultural identity, despite the obfuscation and confusion of a polyphonic world. The failure of modernity/colonialism in its endeavours to either extinguish or co-opt the native Palestinian culture into the dominant culture is offset by the unified field of 'Arabness' that the poet evokes to strengthen the Palestinian cultural position/opposition:

despite changes, dismissals and revisions,
despite the modern tunes
commercial slapping visitors' faces
despite the flooding seas of light, despite technology ...
and all the goings and comings of foreign peoples
the land continued to sing an Arab tune.

Even with propaganda wavering in the air
languages mingling, multiplying
around the strange outgrowth
of modern buildings
the land was gently defying it all. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 107)

The transformation of cultures through discourse such as propaganda, education and enculturation, for example, in the trope of 'languages mingling', is distinctly underscored here and suggests that the speaker is travelling through what may appear on the surface to be a multicultural society but which is not necessarily so, in the sense that power is not distributed among a variety of ethnic or religious groups, for while Israeli Arabs, as a minority group within this society, maintain cultural differences such as religion and dress, they do not necessarily share in the overall political and economic power that the state affords to its Jewish citizens, who the speaker declares 'know nothing of my suffering'. Neither does the state of Israel encourage participation in Arabic culture

(forbidding Arab Jewish immigrants from speaking Arabic as discussed earlier for example) but rather sees it as a debased culture, hence the ‘change of language’ and ‘propaganda’ wavering in the air’. If pluralism as a political philosophy implies active engagement with diversity, then this is not essentially a pluralist society. Although its history may be hidden under the modern infrastructure, the space which is the poem ‘the singing of an Arab tune’ permits the ‘gentle’ defiance of the land to be observed and more importantly, recorded in a popular and easily retrievable fashion, the poem.

The idea of Arab modesty is stressed here, it is a virtue which is associated with the Arab character of the land and this comparison points to the brashness of the imported culture with its ‘commercials slapping’ and ‘flooding’ of lights. It is an externally imposed technological modernity, a ‘strange outgrowth’ which it seems, has not evolved in harmony with the natural landscape. Nevertheless, the speaker is able to reassure her ancestors, and her poem, to comfort their descendents:

oh my grandparents, even in the stark light of noon
the red soil was shining
with Arab modesty
and singing, believe me,
affectionately. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 107)

‘Allūsh’s poetry’ says Al-Jayussi, ‘is illuminated by glimmering faith in the inevitability of resurgence and victory’ (Al-Jayussi 1992, 106). The above poem exudes an aesthetic freshness in terms of language: the tone is hopeful and the metaphor is one of renewal, re-emergence and hopefulness for the future. And hope itself is a form of resistance, for to eschew hope is counterproductive, not least in a psychological context. While her

attachment and history in the land may have been extruded, the anthropomorphic properties of the land will continue to ensure mutual recognition between native and homeland. The inevitable victory is that of the roots over the concrete, the idea that nature will re-assert itself and reclaim possession long after the modern concrete (and alien) structures have been reduced to rubble.

In contrast to the gentle hopefulness of the poem just discussed, ‘Allūsh’s poem ‘A New Creation’ is rather darker in tone, although it speaks of a newly inscribed ‘resistance’, indeed a revitalised resistance, after the defeat of the Arab armies in June 1967 and the subsequent occupation of the rest of Palestine: ‘I was born in June’ the speaker begins, ‘that’s why my brow is branded with thorns’ (Al-Jayussi 1992, 107). The iconic Christ-like imagery here is not unusual in Palestinian poetry (indeed Arabic poetry) of the period irrespective of the religion of the writer. It was used in a similar but less obtrusive way – ‘nails sprouting on trees’ – in Rāshid H □usain’s poem and the Hour’ discussed earlier, and as a motif, the crucifixion underscores the shared suffering and sociological amity of Muslim and Christian Palestinians. The use of this particular symbolism adverts to the shared belief (discussed in chapter II) among Muslims and Christians, that Jesus, a Jew and a prophet recognised by Islam, will return to establish justice and peace in the world. This implicit information can only work to undermine the idea that there is any innate hatred of the Jewish faith on the part of Muslim or Christian Arabs, a fact of which the poem’s Arab auditors will undoubtedly be well aware.

While the suffering of her people is seen in terms of crucifixion, there is also a sense of the poet as the chronicler of their ‘discursive’ redemption. As discussed

previously, naming (re-naming) constitutes a powerful trope of ownership, of controlling; and is an aspect of this sense of redemption. She reiterates her opening statement here:

I was born in June,
that's why the executioner keeps trying
to change my name
He trims his moustaches and fortifies
the cracks in my prison
leaving the open field free for the beasts
that crave my flesh ... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 107)

As a citizen of Israel, she is (re)named an 'Israeli Arab' rather than a Palestinian, 'change my name', and this change is tantamount to an attempt to obliterate her history in the land and by extension, the history of her people. The poem also exposes her people's history of opposition to the colonisation of their homeland when she accuses them of constructing scarecrows and 'impaling them on poisoned arrows in my land' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 108). She accuses them of obfuscating her ancestor's history of resistance 'hiding my grandfather's sword', and of 'selling his remains before my eyes', an allusion to the destruction of villages and cemeteries and the Israeli parks with which they are often covered (see Khalidi 2006, xxxix). It also constitutes a powerful indictment of those who 'sold' the land of Palestine, absentee landlords, the Mandate authorities for example, the selling of Mount Scopus near Jerusalem to the Jewish newcomers by Lord Grey-Hill for example who had himself 'settled' there in the mid-19th century (see Chapter 1). The metaphorical desecration of the graves of her ancestors also alludes to actual instances after 1948 (see Walid Khalidi 2007). However, despite such desecration, there is an underlying culture to be found if one knows how to look.

The poem also gestures toward the question of woman's participation in the struggle. But like al-Jayussi's poem 'In the Casbah', it also underscores the female role in terms of the fraught nature of motherhood under 'the tortuous night' of occupation:

In June I came alive again ...
And this is why I still beget children.
Guarding my loaf from the pouch of the beast
in the tortuous night (Al-Jayussi 1992, 108)

Thus the 'mother' under occupation suffers a double repression, in the context of suffering under the physical machinery of occupation itself, checkpoints, patrols etc. but also the often unseen economic consequences of the occupation. For example, it adverts to Darwīsh's poem 'Identity Card', in which the speaker must 'get bread from the rocks' to feed his family, the speaker of 'Allūsh's poem must be on her guard lest the 'beast' take not only her personal freedom but also the loaf of bread from her children.

In spite of the rather dark thematic content the final lines of the poem exude a gentle hopefulness that the re-assertion of the Arab identity of Palestine is inevitable, requiring only the patience and steadfastness of its people. It is as though the poet/speaker understands that nature itself (as in her poem 'The Path of Affection'), including the reproductive nature of humanity, has the power to re-dress all imbalances. The 'tremor of creation' she speaks of resonates with the image of the land heaving in the travail of birth, as in Fadwā T [The speaker of her personal poetic and political re-awakening after the events of 1967 'and this is why my ancient olive branch/was awakened after twenty years' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 108). This was the twenty year period between the *nakbah* of 1948 and the 1967 war, the period of stunned silence

in between. This silence had continued to be breached by the resistance poets inside of Israel and finally awakened a ‘the tremor of creation’ in the Palestinian Diaspora, the distillation of a new poetics of resistance which would become, the speaker declares ‘a whip of fire in my hand’, a fire that other poets would ‘borrow’ from, together with the re-creation of a new audience for the resistance poetry and new unity with fellow poets after 1967. This new-found sense of unity and inspiration formed a significant component of the discussion in the foregoing chapter. The poetry of this period also underscores a relatively new poetic theme, that of the Palestinians people as a ‘demographic issue’ and how this issue might affect Israeli policy toward Palestinians. This is an issue that continues to underlie both poetry and politics, demonstrating that once again, the poetry offers a cogent exposition of the conditions under which Palestinians continue to exist.

The poetry of Darwīsh, among others also exhibited the trope described by Said as ‘the primacy of the geographical’, an indication of the Palestinian’s historical, as opposed to biblical, sense of belonging to the land. It has also been shown that poetry can provide a neutral space in which antagonistic communities, as in many aspects Israel and Palestine are, can recognise the humanity and creative spirit of the ‘other’ and fostering ‘cross-periphery solidarity’ as discussed in the introduction. This was particularly notable in Fadwā T

‘The Search of Yacove Eved’. Both of these poems demonstrate a distinct sense of regret and loss, loss not only of the Palestinian homeland but of the social amity that might have flourished between the two communities, a notion which was also evoked by the allusions in T

Al-Andalūs. Thus we have seen that many Palestinian (and Israeli) poets remained not

only in the vanguard of resistance but in that of mutual recognition and bi-directional communication.

The poetry discussed in Chapter III also demonstrated a significant thematic development in respect of not just the unity of the Palestinian people across the land of Palestine, but that between men and women poets, and across the religious divide. It also underscored the protean aspect of culture, and the changes that occurred within the confluence of conflict and commitment, in terms of re-deployment of the social and political roles assigned to women for example, and documents the increasing strength of the female cultural voice in the context of poetry. In Chapter IV the poetry discussed will retrospectively demonstrate how the role of Palestinian women poets in the struggle was, consciously or unconsciously, preparing women in general for a new role in the first *intifādah* which forms the back-drop to the final chapter.

Chapter IV

Palestinian Poetry: The Arab-Israeli War of 1973 to the First Palestinian *Intifādah* in 1987

The Role of Culture Revisited

Before proceeding to the discussion proper, it will be useful to revisit the central methodological strategies employed in this thesis. Since the advent of postcolonial theory in the 1960s, the role of ‘culture’ in revolutionary struggles for national liberation, and in the process of decolonisation, has increasingly come under scrutiny. The role of culture has been central to the writings of many revolutionary and cultural theorists in terms of independence struggles and the development of a national culture, for example Tāhā

H

□usain in respec

struggle and Amilcar Cabral in respect of the liberation of Guinea Bissau for example. As a theoretical approach to comparative studies in the cultural arena, the ‘postcolonial’ approach to literature underscores the subaltern struggle which is generally seen as committed to reinstate the dignity and viability of the subaltern national culture, particularly as it is evidenced in literary production.

The ideological uses of culture also permeated the field of the political left in other areas of the developed (western) world. It was to be found in the work of Brecht in

Germany for example in the 1930s, and also in the politically-committed writings of English poets and critics such as Christopher Caudwell and Ralph Fox, both of whom fought and died as part of the 'International Brigade' in the Spanish Civil War. Palestinian poets and intellectuals however, do not have the luxury of such a definitive projection of what their culture should be, having neither a state nor a (post)colony to decolonise. Rather their concern is to resist the annihilation of Palestinians as a viable ethnic group, of which culture (such as religion for instance) is only one, albeit a profoundly substantial, aspect. As Mahmūd Darwīsh puts it in 'A State of Siege', 'we have one goal ... to be, after that one finds room to choose other goals' (Darwish 2007, 145).

Postcolonial theory explores the idea that the civil rights of subaltern societies are generally subjugated to the political and economic requirements of colonial centres. Once again, Ireland offers an early but striking example of this feature of colonialism, the Declaratory Act for example, which had previously been used to control the activities of the colonies (The Americas) and made Ireland's juridical system subservient to England in 1719 and the Wool Act (1699) which prevented exports of Irish wool to countries other than England (see Beckett 1972). Civil rights denote the duties and expectations of citizenship, the right to the economic and civil protection of a government, the right to freedom of movement, freedom to travel and to return, the right to partake of cultural practices and the right to resist the extinction of one's culture. In the modern sense, these are recognized as human rights, rights which extend to all members of the human race irrespective of race, creed, politics or gender and recognised by all 'civilised' nations

including the state Israel, which Sami Hadawi points out, is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see Hadawi 1991 274).

Representation and Resistance

As discussed in Chapter 1, representation and resistance are key concepts in postcolonial discourse. In the absence of civil rights, and particularly within the asymmetrical power structure which generally obtains in situations of colonial dominance, and indeed, of military occupation, the media and the arts and specifically poetry, a well established and esteemed aspect of Palestinian culture, can be a viable platform from which to represent and assert the said 'rights' of the subaltern group.

In her poem 'The Deluge and the Tree' (discussed in Chapter III), Fadwā Tūqān expressed the opinion of the Arab world that the western media had 'gloated' over the defeat of the Arab armies in the June 1967 war. Similarly in 1973, many western countries seemed ranged against the Arabs and considered them the principle aggressors in the 1973 war, but there was also a certain amount of division on the issue, particularly in the European political Left (see for example Sus 1974). However, from the Arab viewpoint, as Salāh ad-Dīn al-Bitār observes, the Arabs began to question why so many western 'intellectuals, journalists and politicians should give Israel their unreserved and unconditional support' and why public opinion in the west did not seem to be 'merely pro-Israeli' but was 'actually anti-Arab' (al-Bitar 1974, 41). In the European press, Bitār continues, 'there was no mention of the causes of the [1973] crisis, and he suggests that analyses of the war completely missed the point as they made 'no suggestion that Israel has anything to do with the crisis' (al-Bitar 1974, 41). Some possible causes of this pro-

Israeli sentiment on the part of the west have been suggested in Chapter III, particularly in terms of European guilt after the Jewish Holocaust and the potential of Israel to become an outpost of western hegemony in the Middle East.

In an article titled 'Anti-Arab prejudice in Europe', which appeared in 1974, Mah

□m al Darwish

airport in the aftermath of the Maa'lot school massacre. This massacre of Jewish schoolchildren resulted when a splinter group of the PFLP took a group of Jewish teenagers as hostages and a number of these children were subsequently killed. In the aftermath of Maa'lot Darwish describes response of the European media in its representation of Arabs/Palestinians generally:

They described us with all the store of hatred buried in the depths of the conflict of the colonized peoples. Europe arose to avenge the disappearance of her colonialism from the African and Asian continents, covering this vengeance with gratuitous love for Zionism. (Darwish 1974, 166)

Israeli retaliation for the Maa'lot massacre invoked silence in the European press. Darwish claims, which published neither pictures nor descriptions of the savage Israeli raids on several Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. 'They did not say that the Israelis were bombing Arab children from phantom jets and sending them gifts of death disguised as toys' (Darwish 1974, 166). In terms of the taxonomy of violence, Darwish makes this further remark: that the real crime in Maa'lot was committed 26 years previously when 'its people were expelled and the settlement of Maa'lot was established on the ruins of Tarshia' (Darwish 1974, 166). And while the targeting of civilians is always inexcusable,

Darwīsh forces the reader to consider whether the condemnation of the deaths of civilians on all sides of the antagonistic divide, should not only be held equal, but be seen to be so.

Culture and Politics

Culture involves not just literary and artistic production, but also the values and mores held by a particular society and these too can come under attack, or at least be challenged from within, during times of conflict. Therefore it is not surprising that the role of Palestinian women in the liberation struggle should come under scrutiny, several hundred Palestinian women as Pappé points out, had been imprisoned for resistance activities in the 1970s (see Pappé 1999). That the role of women was indeed evolving during this period is indicated in the following statement by Dr. Fathī °Arafāt:

In the revolution we need women comrades who are intelligent and educated; we cannot reach victory flying on one wing. (Antonius 1979, 26)

The above statement by Dr. °Arafāt, founder of the ‘Palestine Red Crescent Society’, appeared in that society’s magazine in 1978. As previously discussed, by this time several Palestinian women poets had come to prominence as the legitimate voices, the ‘provocative force’, of their people, which thereby marked them as keepers of the culture, history and memories of their community. Since 1969, Antonius observes, Palestinian women have been represented by the General Union of Palestinian Women (*al-Ittihad al-'Am lil-Mara al-Filastiniya*), an official section of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, whose executive members represent the various political organizations that make up the PLO (see Antonius 1979, 27). Now, it appears that women began to be seriously viewed as an armed wing of the struggle (as the word comrade suggests)

marking them almost as co-equals with their male counterparts with the right to bear arms and attend training camps for fighters, a development which was undoubtedly in conflict with the traditional mores of conservative Palestinian society. This is suggested in Rashīd Ḥusain's poem 'Against', where the speaker expresses that idea he is: 'against my sister studying a rifle's components'. However, in the closing lines of this poem, he recognises the protean nature of culture, when a society is fighting for its continued existence for instance. The speaker states 'how can my poems not turn into guns' which in terms of 'Arafāt's statement above, which underscores the question: how can my sisters not become fighters?

On a more positive note, during the course of the 1973 war, Arab countries showed themselves to be capable of not only inflicting losses on the enemy but also to be capable of presenting a united effort, in respect of the oil export embargo for example. It dispelled the image in the west of the Arab soldier who 'ran away in 1967' and this undoubtedly helped to dissipate the sense of humiliation incurred by earlier defeats. Furthermore, as Bitār (1974) points out, in the aftermath of the 1973 war, a more balanced approach to the Arabs began to develop in the west, and also towards the Palestinian issue which was brought to world attention at this time.

The 1973 war was followed by the Camp David initiative (1978) and the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. After 1970, the PLO removed to Beirut in Lebanon and as Said (1995) observes, this resulted in some remarkable institutional achievements, not least in the sense of the international visibility of the PLO on the world stage and despite any internal ideological disputes as between *al-fateh* and Popular Democratic Front led by Naif Hawatmeh and the PFLP with George Habbash (Pappe, 1999, 194).

However, the relative success (until it became embroiled in the Lebanese civil war) of the PLO in Lebanon was, according to Said, seen by 1982 as a political threat to Israel, and this, to a certain extent, may have fuelled the Israeli decision to attack Lebanon: 'hence the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the siege of Beirut and the exodus of the PLO to Tunisia' (Said 1995, xvii).

The year 1974 can be seen in terms of the increasing political kudos which accrued to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and in the renewed hope expressed by many poets of the period. At a meeting of the Arab League in Rabat in 1974, the PLO, under the leadership of Yāsir ʿArafāt, was declared to be the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people (See Said 1995, xvii). Furthermore ʿArafāt as the PLO Chairman was in 1974, afforded 'permission to narrate' when he was provided with the opportunity to address the United Nations General Assembly, a decision tantamount to the recognition of the Palestinian people as a: 'principal party to the question of Palestine' as opposed to the Israeli view after 1967 (Hadawi 1991, 197).

Popular support for the PLO was also on the increase. The right of Israeli Palestinians to form independent political parties had also been circumscribed but, in 1972 and 1976, the Palestinian Arab population were allowed to vote in municipal elections. However, after a: 'sweeping victory for PLO candidates in 1976, the Likud government, coming to power in 1977, banned elections and with it deprived the local population of their remaining rights' (Pappe 2004, 199). As reported in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, two activist expelled from the West Bank were interviewed about Palestinian resistance after the 1973 war. They observed that a national resurgence took place after the 1973 war with the result that increasing numbers of the Palestinian masses

began to organise themselves both in the West Bank and in the Ghāzā Strip. This explains, they remarked: ‘the ferocious manner in which the occupiers have been attacking the Palestinian National Front’ and especially since it ‘established its own newspaper ‘Filistin’ or ‘Palestine’ (see Awwad and Qawwas 1974, 164).

Not only was mass political organising a form of resistance but the concept of ‘naming’, as discussed in respect of poetry, is also significant here, specifically the naming of the newspaper *Filistīn* ‘Palestine’. Writing in 1978, Hanan Ashrawi observes that the word Palestine was considered by the Israelis as threatening enough to be censored (Ashrawi 1978, 79). The political and poetic trope converges in the naming of the ‘Palestine’ as the aspirational homeland. As discussed in Chapter III, naming involves the use of words which indicate something or expresses something of the character of the thing indicated/named. The name ‘Palestine’ for example’ which for Palestinians indicates the inherent unity of the land which now comprises Israel and the Palestinian Territories, the land which was their indigenous homeland. Naming therefore can be considered a subversive act in the sense that it is an attempt to make the external reality conform to the linguistic and ideological aspiration. Naming can be viewed as mapping a representation of an alternative reality, or indeed, the remapping of a historically altered reality, a significant process where one culture’s definition of reality is obfuscated or negated by another. Perhaps the words of Darwīsh condense this idea succinctly when in his poem ‘On This Earth’ he states: ‘she was called Palestine, later her name became Palestine’ (Darwish 2003, 6).

That the Israeli/Palestinian conflict did indeed come to world attention after the 1973 war is attested to by a series of events which took place in the years immediately

after its end. In 1974, the General Conference of UNESCO noted that ‘the populations of the occupied [Palestinian] territories were not enjoying their inalienable and inviolable rights to national education and cultural life’ and called on the Director-General to exercise the supervision of the operations of cultural and educational institutions in the occupied territories and ‘appealed to Israel to refrain from any act that has the effect of hindering the exercise of rights to national education and cultural life’ (Hadawi 1991, 179).

The above UNESCO directive would indicate that the practice of one’s culture is a recognised basic human right and that the disestablishment or contravention of the rights of a people for whom the occupying power are responsible, is unconscionable. What might previously have been considered tantamount to a war on culture (the denial of Palestinian existence for instance), was by this time, obviously recognised as such. Another positive development during the 1970s was the beginning of the Palestinian solidarity movement. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly called for the annual observance of the 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (resolution 32/40 B). On that date in 1947, the Assembly had adopted resolution 181 (11), which was the UN resolution on the partition of Palestine in 1947 (see for example <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/palestinian/index.html> and see also <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/32/ares32.htm>).

While this ‘right’ of Palestinians to education and cultural participation was recognised by UNESCO in the 1970s, educational institutions in the occupied territories continue to be subjected to closures, roadblocks and other military obstacles (see for example Zafranī 2007 <http://www.labournet.net/world/0703/nablus1.html> and also

Corrigan). The use of collective punishment in terms of closure of educational facilities has been described by Zafranī as designed to affect the process of ‘ignorization’ of Palestinians. This is an age-old colonial practice which was perhaps first promulgated as the so-called ‘Penal Laws’ inflicted on Catholic Ireland in the 17th century, laws designed to separate, subjugate and impoverish the native Irish which included the denial of cultural and educational rights (see for example http://www.nde.state.ne.us/SS/irish/unit_1.html). In terms of Palestinian education, the occupation meant tighter Israeli control of schools and their curricula, from which Hussein (2005) suggests, references to Palestinian history and culture were either banned or often had material deleted and organisations such as Teacher’s unions were also often proscribed (see Yamilia Hussein 2005 <http://www.allbusiness.com/sector-61-educational-services/881398-1.html>).

Yet despite UNESCO directives such as that in respect of education and cultural practice in the occupied territories, and other positive developments, life under occupation continued (and continues) to be fraught with economic as well as political hardship. According to Pappé, the struggle for economic survival on the part of Palestinian West Bank workers in Israel consisted of a daily commute, through checkpoints where they might suffer ‘maltreatment and harassment’, from thence to the so-called ‘slave-markets’ where employers would choose the lucky ones on the day. Palestinian workers, says Pappé, could be seen cramped together in pens and then: ‘allowed to run wildly to jeeps and trucks that might take them to factories, restaurants, farms or anywhere they could be hired as unskilled workers’ (Pappé 2004, 205). In the aftermath of expulsion of the PLO from Jordan, and their departure to Beirut, many

Palestinians began to find work, ironically, on housing projects for settlers such as those at Nablus and Hebron (Pappe 2004, 205). After 1973 plans for further Jewish settlement were drawn up and land appropriation continued to take place in the Palestinian Territories (Chomsky 2003, 15). This further Israeli expropriation of Palestinian/Arab land was facilitated 'through the promulgation of new laws, circumvention of existing laws, harassment and duplicity' (Nakhleh 1978, 97).

At the present time, the denial of access to the labour market to one's own (or indeed collective) agricultural lands could be regarded as an invidious weapon of oppression used by the occupation forces in the West Bank. The existence of the so-called and widely condemned 'separation wall', the numerous checkpoints (fixed as well as mobile), agricultural gates and crossings controlled by the military and attacks on Arab farmers by settler communities etc. which continues to the present, are among many other flagrant breeches of civil rights which have been documented by human rights groups such as the Jewish organisations *B'tselem* and *Yesh Din*, Palestinian human rights groups such as *al Haq*, as well as international organisations such as the Irish aid agency *Trócaire* and the international Palestine Solidarity Campaign. The support of such external organisations underscores the Palestinian people's need to fight for their cultural, political and human rights. The recognition of their plight on the part of agencies and NGO's with a world-wide humanitarian agenda, underscores the absence of any real sense of justice in a situation of military occupation. As we shall see, the poetry of the period documents the subordinated status of Palestinians, both politically and economically. The imagery utilised in much of the poetry reflects their rejection of this status, and the concurrent evolution of a more organised and concerted effort to challenge

their subaltern status, an effort which arises from the rubble of a subordinated culture. But as previously stated, this evolution of rubble into ‘stones’ does not reflect innate hatred of Jews, nor does it appear blind the antagonists to the humanity of the other, as the introduction points out.

Palestinian poetry 1973 – 1987

Section 1: From Rubble to Stones

Christopher Caudwell once remarked that: ‘Poetry grasps a piece of external reality, colours it with affective tone, and makes it distil a new emotional attitude which is not permanent, but ends when the poem is over’ (Caudwell 1937, 267). However ephemeral this statement makes poetry appear, Caudwell also observes that poetry’s ‘effects on the psyche are enduring’. This, he argues, is because poetry is able to exist in the same language sphere with science. In psychological/biological parlance Caudwell describes poetry as the ‘genotype’ (the inner reality, the essential genetic constituents, including heritable factors), while science is the phenotype, the external manifestation of the essential nature of things that may be observed as external reality. Poetry has its own alchemical properties, it enacts a linguistic distillation of the essence of things, or a kind of philosopher’s stone that in the intellect of the reader, turns ‘base’ language into the emotional gold of empathy and intellectual pleasure, or rather into a semantic representation of a mood, tone or idea, in which the reader derives pleasure from his/her intellectual complicity. Therefore the cognitive process involved in the effort of reading poetry, Caudwell might argue, leaves a far more distinct and deep memory trace.

When in his poem ‘Easter 1916’ the Irish poet W. B. Yeats retrospectively wrote:

hearts with one purpose alone
through summer and winter seemed
enchanted to a stone
to trouble the living stream, (Yeats 1991, 120)

he captured the fervour and philosophy of Irish nationalism in a singular (if complex) metaphor: the ‘stone’ that disrupts and causes repercussions, the stone that resists the political status quo, that ignites the political consciousness of a nation and a ‘stone’ that symbolises the alchemical quality of poetry itself. In a great deal of the Palestinian poetry to be discussed in this chapter, the poetic trope of ‘rubble’ that permeated much of the poetry previously discussed, has evolved into that of ‘stones’. The trope of rubble, archaeological rubble for example, which provides the evidence of previous habitation, and words as the rubble of national consciousness, has in the period currently under discussion, been consolidated as both an ideological weapon of ‘commitment and steadfastness’, and a weapon that can inflict physical injury ‘stones’. Ironically, the ‘rubble’ created by Israeli destruction (of homes for instance) has become a weapon, in the literal as well as metaphorical sense. In this latter aspect, the poetry of the period often forms a specular relationship with the stones in the hands of Palestinian youth, the words of the poem (as the fragments of national consciousness) become stones in the hands of the poet such that at times there is little to distinguish them. But there is another connotation associated with the word ‘stone’ and again, Yeats, in the same poem, deftly condenses it: ‘too long a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart’ (Yeats 1991, 120). This is why the speaker of Laila ^ʿAllūsh’s poem ‘Lament’ remarks ‘I am no stone’ and suggests that Palestinians, despite the quotidian nature of the conflict, in order to continue

to exist, must cultivate patience in order to preserve their psychological and cultural integrity, they must: 'learn to perfection the art of waiting' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 417).

It could be argued that this transposition of poetic tropes (rubble to stones) marks a transition in the response to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a reflection of the new found dignity of Palestinian fighters (if conflict can ever be considered as dignified), and that of their community after events such as the so-called battle of Karamah (1968), the re-emergence of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation as the political representatives of the Palestinian people and also the successes associated with the 1973 war. And yet the 'stone' as a weapon also underscores the disproportionate force between Palestinian 'resistance' (with stones and home-made rockets) and Israeli oppression and the representation of the former 'as a threat to the existence of Israel', a state in possession of a highly trained army and a sophisticated technical war machine. And while it may be true to say that one man's freedom fighter is another's terrorist, the simple fact is that the Jewish newcomers had also used 'terror', the blowing up of the King David hotel by the Jewish organisation *Irgun* in 1946 for instance (in which over ninety persons were killed), in their struggle to wrest the state of Israel from the land which was inhabited and largely owned or cultivated by the Arabs of Palestine (see *Jerusalem Post* Jul 26, 2006). It should not be surprising, therefore, that the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment should continue to be the stone at the core of Palestinian poetry today, and that the indigenous population should engage in a struggle which mimics the tactics of the European Jewish colonisers in terms of literary mimesis (employing a rhetoric of possession, in respect of 're-naming' for example) as well as direct action in terms of paramilitary campaigns, in an attempt to make the rhetoric of possession and the

hoped for reality converge. Consequently Palestinian military factions have shown themselves to be capable of carrying out their own atrocities for example in 1985 what Said describes as the ‘moronically criminal hijacking of the ship Achille Lauro’ (Said 1989, 30).

As in previous chapters, the division of the discussion into separate sections reflects by and large, the central tenor of a particular set of poems around which a range of these literary *topoi* revolve. These *topoi* include: stones, earth, prison and containment, birth, marriage and death, and occasions for commemoration, as they intersect in various ways with other concerns such as economic and political survival and with the symbolic and connotative range of the poetry discussed in the foregoing chapters. Images of land itself also continue to permeate much of the poetry of this period, as does the concept of the prison and imprisonment, both metaphorical and actual. This is not surprising as many of the committed Palestinian poets had personally experienced prison or town arrest for example. Together with the sustained linking of commemoration (of people and events) within the political context of Palestinian resistance, other images and motifs include: the earth (as the substance of the land) and that of containment which are occasionally conflated. The earth too, when cultivated by man or shattered by artillery gives up its fragments in the form of stones. The concrete earth image provides a contrast to the more abstract concept of the land as absent lover; paradoxically however, that very image ‘earth’ in much of the poetry of Mahḡmūd Darwīsh to be examined in this chapter, contains its own abstract connotation, that of ‘paradise’. The poetry of this period is rife also with images of women and children as victims of the conflict and there

is a more marked link between political consciousness and the economic hardship that results from a life after dispossession and under military occupation.

The Palestinian poet Tawfiq Zayyād (like Mah □ was a Darwish and other
member of the Communist Party ‘Rakah’ and of the Israeli Knesset and was elected mayor of Nazareth in 1975. His poem ‘Here we will Stay’ marks economic survival of the Palestinians as an act of resistance: ‘here we will stay’ says the speaker of Zayyād’s poem ‘like a wall upon your chest/and in your throat like a shard of glass’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 486). It could be argued that the image here is a particularly vindictive one but it can equally be seen as a token of both Palestinian resilience and Israeli determination to ‘spirit them away’, the more vigorously one tries to cough up the shard, the more deeply embedded and damaging it becomes. The steadfastness of the ordinary people is a weapon of resistance in itself, but it is also a discursive weapon in the utterances of poets. When the words of the poem close the circle between actual resistance and the ideology that drives it, then ‘words’ are endowed with the power to offer an incisive rebuttal to political and cultural oppression. In this nexus words develop what Said described as ‘the enunciative techniques of power’ (Said 1994, 312). ‘We shall remain’ the speaker continues, in spite of the occupiers efforts to ‘spirit them away’.

The poem provides the reader with an image of the quotidian realities of Palestinian economic life since dispossession and later under occupation:

clean dishes in your restaurants
serve drinks in your bars
sweep the floors of kitchens
to snatch a bite for our children
from your blue fangs. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 486)

The animalistic images generated by the words ‘snatch a bite’, and ‘your blue fangs’, underlines the asymmetrical economic relationship between the Palestinian Arabs and their Israeli masters that still obtained during this period. As a trope, it recalls Laila ‘Allūsh’s poem ‘A New Creation’, when the speaker, in the voice of a Palestinian mother, states that she is: ‘guarding my loaf from the pouch of the beast’ (see Chapter III). It is an image which prompts the reader to draw an analogy to the hierarchical relationship that exists between pack animals, and it is therefore the antithesis of the humanising process associated with the trope of ‘naming’ discussed in Chapter III. This is a position which has been forced on the Palestinian peasants by their eviction from the lands upon which they had subsisted for centuries. It marks their transition from ownership of agricultural lands to eviction (which really began in 1948), followed by their migration to the cities and towns in search of often menial work, as was the case in respect of the exploitation of ‘oriental jews’ in the labour market: in ‘the lowest strata of the labour markets’ (Kovel 2007, 105). The alternative for Palestinians was their continued dependency on the UNRWA in refugee camps which in either case would ultimately lead to a relationship of unequal opportunity (in terms of gaining a livelihood) between them and the new owners/occupiers.

But it is not just Palestinian poets and intellectuals who have noted this unequal relationship. In his comparative study of the effects of partition in Palestine and in Ireland, Joe Cleary (2002) observes that Israeli-Palestinians enjoy a form of citizenship but only in a Jewish state which reduces them to the status of second or third class citizens and in material terms, most occupy the lower strata of the Israeli labour force. Yet despite the indignity of having to ‘snatch’ a livelihood from those who evicted them

from their source of sustenance, the land, dignity is an immanent feature of the Palestinian will 'to continue to be'. 'Here we shall stay', the speaker of Zayyād's poem declares, and 'sing our songs/take to the angry streets/fill prisons with dignity' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 486). Those who once cultivated their own land for a living are now sweeping the floors and waiting on the tables of their oppressors: 'in Lidda, Ramla and the Galilee'. The significance of the words in this instance lies in the allusion to the dispossession of the Palestinian population from these areas in 1948 (see Said 1995, xxxiii). Although they and their trees have been uprooted, or are now being cultivated by others, they will remain steadfast and guard what is left for themselves and for their descendents, the memory of what once was theirs 'here we shall remain/guard the shade of the fig and olive trees. Denied the right to cultivate their land they resolve instead to cultivate political consciousness and continue to nurture a 'culture' of remembrance 'shade of the fig tree' and resistance 'ferment rebellion in our children as yeast in the dough' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 486).

In a somewhat gentler, but no less political tone, the Palestinian poet Sherif el-Musa recalls the economic reality of life in a refugee camp in his poem 'A Little Piece of Sky'. Al-Musa himself grew up in a refugee camp near Jericho and later became an exile in the United States of America. The poem opens in retrospective mode:

Marvelling today at the Safeway's abundance
of tuna fish cans,
I thought of my friend Hussein. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 342)

The affluence of the poet's place of exile, and the 'safe ways' of economic existence it affords him, distances him in terms of time, location and experience from those

Palestinians who remained. His current comfortable existence is contrasted with the life in the refugee camp, and with the often wasted talent of Palestinian youth, a kind of 'lost generation' who had to grow up without adequate or equal opportunity or access to higher education. The figure of Hussein provides the poem with the synecdoche of such an existence, not just for Palestinians, but for all the children of underdeveloped under privileged communities:

He was the genius of the school.
He breathed in history, grammar, math
As easily as the dust of the camp.
He had a pyramid's core. Books
would have sprouted from his head,
but he had to live, and to live he
apprenticed to a carpenter ... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 342)

Hussein could even be regarded as one of the lucky camp inmates who eventually: 'flew his skills to an oil country' where he 'made good as a contractor' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 342). Thus he avoided the wretchedness and shame of a life dependent on UNRWA handouts or on labour in Israeli hotels, farms or on the building of settlements. But while this may seem like a fortunate escape for one camp dweller, the speaker reminds the reader that this way of life was not of Hussein's own choosing. Hussein was an orphan, his 'father had been killed', the speaker informs us, and his mother was incapable of providing for him:

In a familiar war that made us refugees
and tossed us on the moral map of the world
His mother was a woman of meagre means
Could look at a word for a year

And not recognise what it was.

And so it was:

poverty wagged him every day. (italics in Al-Jayussi 1992, 342)

Poverty here has a dual connotation, economic poverty and also the intellectual poverty of camp life, such as it affected his mother, unable to decipher her place on the 'moral map of the world'. Intellectual poverty also delimits the ability to fully comprehend (not to mention rectify) the nature of the conflict that made them refugees in the first place. This poverty of situation afflicted many Palestinian refugees, including poets, thus the character Hussein may represent a very real person, known to the speaker:

I met him walking home from the store
holding, with his thumb and forefinger,
the upright lid of a half-opened
tuna fish can, humming a tune
about holding a little piece of sky. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 342)

The poem thus adverts to the significance of education, and of how its denial has been used as a form of oppression. The intellectual freedom, 'a little piece of sky', and the development of political consciousness, 'the tune' which he hums, are often frustrated by the daily grind of economic hardship. This is a theme which the following poem by Hanan Mikail Ashrawi also recognises and deconstructs.

In her poem titled 'Economics', originally written in English, Ashrawi also explores the development of political consciousness under the material conditions associated with Palestinian life in refugee camps and under military occupation. Framed as a personal testament, the poem's conversational tone, together with the 'naming' of the

character Kamel, provides the reader with a strong sense of this individual's lived experience. Ashrawi's choice of diction is itself 'economical' in the sense that the language is not expressly emotive and utilises commonplace words such as 'begging' and 'hauling', but these are words which mark the economic realities of the speaker's life experience. This is a relatively short poem, but one which nevertheless contains several layers of meaning and significance. The poem's sardonic undertone both heightens the tension in the poem and underscores the sources of psychological conflict that exist in the poem's socio-political context:

My name is Kamel
Last week I bought a television set,
next week I'll buy
a fridge...
Maybe next month
I'll make enough to buy
a washing machine
(fully automatic).
There's no end to my ambition. (Boullata 1981, 143)

On the surface such material ambition appears normal, indeed laudable, but as the poem unfolds, it exposes the 'false consciousnesses' of the speaker's material reality, the ironic impact of which arises from the speaker's illusion of economic progress. This progress is illusory in the sense that for someone who has no home (land) to put them in, and no electricity to power them, such a culture of material acquisition is meaningless, except perhaps in the sense that the fetishisation of such objects (like that of the gun) is a substitution of material gain for a deeper sense of shame and psychological loss, that of the homeland and the meagre existence in refugee camps. In drawing a Marxist inference

then, the poem underscores the impact of material conditions on human consciousness and behaviour, adduced through the poem's exposure of the asymmetrical power-relationship between labour and capital. This relationship is paralleled by that which arises between the dominating Israeli regime and the subaltern Palestinian as both dispossessed native and oppressed worker, who, like workers generally, are commodities that acquire their value only in the labour marketplace and as Yeats observed: 'Too long a sacrifice [in terms of economic deprivation and shame] can make a stone of the heart' (Yeats 1990, 120).

Conflict in the poem also derives from the speaker's emotional confusion 'perhaps I should have signed'. In a moment of self-confrontation, the speaker contemplates his personal material ambition which partially isolates him from socio-political commitment and solidarity with his fellow camp dwellers:

Perhaps I should have signed
that petition the camp had sent
the military governor
for the hundredth time
begging for electricity. (Boullata 1981, 143)

There is no overt reference in this poem to the historical circumstances whereby the speaker has arrived at his present physical and economical circumstances, namely *al-nakbah*, the Palestinian disaster that resulted in displacement, exile and the loss of the Palestinian homeland, followed by the second displacement and occupation after the defeat 1967. Nevertheless, the adjective 'military' used in respect of the governor, is evocative of both conquest and occupation. Without this adjective, the 'camp' to which

the speaker alludes could simply be a workers camp and not necessarily a refugee camp.

Situational irony is evoked in the poem not because the speaker is politically unaware, but rather because he was 'too busy hauling gravel', and thus unable to contemplate any form of political resistance to the economic pressures exerted upon him (even a petition) not to mention the 'fomenting of rebellion':

Still I was too busy
hauling gravel for that
superhighway
connecting Jerusalem with Tel Aviv. (Boullata 1981, 143)

The image of 'gravel' here recounts the reduction of Palestinian resistance enacted 'with stones', to the condition of impotency wrought by grinding economic hardship. A further irony arises from the poem's oblique allusion to what may be deliberately suppressed information, that this gravel is probably for an 'Israeli only' road that the speaker will never be allowed to travel on, and therefore will connect him to nowhere and to no one. Thus the highway that he builds is the antithesis of the ideological one in 'Allush's poem, 'The Path of Affection', and the idea that the 'highway' in her poem functions like a neutral network connecting Palestinians to each other, whereas the highway for which Kamel 'hauls gravel' is one which will geographically disconnect Palestinians from each other. This will become clearer in light of the discussion of the division of the Palestinian West Bank into zones A, B, and C, post-Oslo. This contrast/conflict between the subjective mind of the poet/speaker, and the objective geographical space that the poem describes, reflects the cycle of hope, despair and hope that permeates the lifecycle of Palestinian resistance. The poem inadvertently alludes to the importance of trees and their

roots as a trope of (underground) unity for Palestinians and stands as an oblique metaphor for the underground roads (tunnels) in the West Bank upon which they must often travel in the present time.

From this image of the 'superhighway', it is not difficult to draw an analogy between Israel and western hegemony in the Middle East and the popular view in the west that the state of Israel is an outpost of Western democracy and its core values. In a further ironic twist, the image of the superhighway also adverts to another western icon of modernity the German autobahn, the superhighway designed to facilitate the German war machine and enable 'lebensraum' both before and during World War Two. That the ideology and systematic 'victimisation' (of Jews and others groups) that drove this form of modernity and rationality is now in operation in Palestine, is a conclusion which is left to the reader to draw. In a similar way, the Jewish Israeli poet Aharon Shabtai, in his poem 'Nostalgia', adverts to this same system of ideology and 'victimisation' when he asks a question addressed to the 'reader':

And when it's all over,
My dear, dear reader,
On which bench will have to sit,
Those of us who shouted 'death to the Arabs'
And those who claimed they 'didn't know'. (Shabtai 2002, 17)

The suppression of overt information is an important technical achievement in Ashrawi's poem, in the sense that the poem remains politically 'committed' but by placing the onus of interpretation on the reader, the poem is prevented from descending into mere propaganda and thereby preserves its aesthetic integrity and appeal. Thus what appear to

be obfuscations or omissions within the poem are actually spaces which permit the reader to question what the poem does not say in order to personally determine the import of what the poem either suppresses or refuses to say, whether deliberately or unconsciously. In this way the poem's silences become the sites of resistance to be discovered by the reader and thereby increasing the intellectual pleasure of the poem.

Jerusalem has long been a central trope in much Palestinian poetry and indeed Arabic poetry in general. A Middle Eastern city, Jerusalem is a spiritual centre for three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, but in the discursive space of this poem, it is being connected by a very western feature, the 'superhighway', to the centre of civil and military control in the state of Israel, the city of Tel Aviv, a centre of Zionist activity since its foundation in 1907. The historian Tom Segev (2001) argues that the founding of Tel Aviv was neither based on political or security reasons. The founders of Tel Aviv, he opines: 'were Jews who were tired of living among Arabs' and 'simply wanted a European quality of life' (Segev 2001, 184). It may also be true there was initially, a certain amount of opposition to Zionism on the part of the indigenous Jewish population of Palestine. But the image of the superhighway also unites the new capital city with the old one, Jerusalem, thus the superhighway constructs an image of unity between the secular and religious centres of Judaism in Israel. The poem on the other hand deconstructs the disputed nature of Jerusalem (as a holy place of three religions) and the desire of the Israeli authority to make Jerusalem the state capital, a proposition that the removal of the city's Arab inhabitants would make more amenable. Furthermore Ashrawi's metaphor of the superhighway deftly underscores attempts by the 'Israel lobby' to pressure the United States Government to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to

Jerusalem (see for example Boyle 2003, 22). The 'highway' image inadvertently perhaps, alludes to the information 'superhighway' which would become a significant source of discursive material on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as will be discussed later.

In a further moment of self-confrontation, the speaker makes the reader aware of the consequences of political commitment, not just in terms of economic deprivation, 'I would have been fired', but he also exposes the limits of his own and of his community's access to political agency, which in a vicious circle is partly enabled by the absence of communal solidarity on his part. What the poem does not say, of course, is that the economic situation of dispossessed Palestinian men will also impact on the women and children dependent on them and in this sense, it is also a poem that voices the wider communal consequences of 'economics' which compounds the psychological conflict experienced by the speaker, whether to remain politically 'committed' or be willing to 'snatch a bite' at any cost:

Besides, I would have been fired,
Ahmed signed – and he was
He never bought a television set. (Boullata 1981, 143)

The further ironic import of this poem arises from the realisation that a people without political consciousness are as ineffective as electric appliances without electricity and that the development of a culture of material acquisition (the illusion of progress) amounts to development of a false consciousness. The poem also exposes the concealed ideology of the occupation which in the speaker's view, delimits the camp dwellers' freedom to manifest a political conscience, as well as a political consciousness and thereby also his ability to 'resist'. Furthermore, the poem resonates with the continued economic, as well

as political, deprivation in the Palestinian territories (the Ghāza Strip for example is now considered to be among the poorest on earth) especially among Palestinian workers in Israel, who experience high unemployment, menial jobs and underemployment, all factors that are alluded to in some of the poetry already been discussed. In this way, the poem also seems to transcend historical time, which of course has progressed, while the conditions of Palestinian life and experience have not.

The Palestinian woman poet Mai S [Ghāza Strip was 1949 In the Gh
 1971, S [Leigh became president
 involved in feminist issues as well political resistance. Her poem ‘Lament’ (circa 1974) underscores the complexity of emotions which underlie the expression of grief when the locus of grief occurs at the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment. In terms of inherited literary culture, the opening lines of this poem resonate with the traditional *rithā* (the female poet’s commemoration of male relatives), and the more modern ‘populist’ culture of commemoration, the poster announcing the death of a martyr with which it is aesthetically fused:

On dark alley walls (unnaming)
 our comrades’ deaths are announced
 posters show their smiling faces
 the usual way we learn
 one has fallen on the long road. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 416)

The poem, like the poster, functions as a news bulletin. Both are the commemoration of a way of life which the speaker opines, is ‘deeply rooted in death’, which of course the ‘elegiac’ as a form is. But the lament which the poet formulates here is not mere artifice

or the desire to communicate a particular cultural form, or even the desire to achieve a sense of authenticity. Neither is there a sense of exultation in the loss of the fallen comrade, for the speaker declares ‘I am no stone/yearning is a burden’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 416). These comrades are her ‘brothers in the wound’ and their loss is deeply felt and therefore ‘yearning’ is an undesirable psychological state.

The speaker locates the occasion of the poem in physical space, initially in an unnamed ‘dark alley’ from whence the action moves to a named location. The descriptive transition in terms of space/place is a possible allusion to the narrow streets of the refugee camps, some with barely enough space between dwellings for one person to pass; in the densely populated geographical space which is the Ghāzā, this ‘dark alley’ might not be only a metaphor but a literal description of what constitutes the street. By ‘naming’ a particular street, possibly after the Libyan resistance leader Omar al-Mukhtār, S □ ayigh also locates the poem in terms of the ‘occupation’ by a foreign power even as it permeates the smallest of spaces, a street, which of course ‘naming’ in the space of the poem, reclaims and establishes the independence of that space:

On Omar al-Mukhtar Street
foreign helmets that sting like whips
block your funeral
pursuing your beloved name
wrapped in a coffin that rests on Ghaza’s wounds.
(Al-Jayussi 1987, 417)

The poet wraps the funeral image in words which challenge the occupation: ‘foreign’, ‘block’ and ‘pursuing’ for example, and she creates an atmosphere of restraint which is antithetical to the funereal atmosphere of heightened emotion that might otherwise be

expected. The funeral rite itself is a substantial component of cultural expression and a vital element in the psychological resolution of emotional loss. The poem therefore commemorates the dead and also permits the wider community to participate in the funeral.

As well as a source of communal support for those who are in grief the funeral can be key occasion for the public expression of political and social solidarity, and not just in terms of Palestinian resistance, as it is also a phenomenon of other cultures and of other historical junctures. In the period shortly before the Irish Rebellion of 1916, the nationalist leader and poet Patrick Pearse, in his oration at the graveside of the Fenian leader Jeremiah O Donovan Rossa, wrapped that occasion in the long history of 'blood sacrifice' associated with Ireland's nationalist aspiration and agitation for independence:

Life springs from death, and from the graves of patriot men and women spring live nations. The [British] defenders of this realm have worked well in secret and in the open. They think that they have pacified Ireland. They think that they have purchased half of us. They think that they have foreseen everything. They think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! they have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace. (<http://www.libraryireland.com/HullHistory/Appendix2b.php>)

This nexus of culture and conflict might be regarded as blatantly opportunistic but the burial of the dead is vital for a variety of reasons, moral as well as practical, and in times of conflict, is usually surrounded with a highly charged aura of emotion and tension and indeed with the possibility of a release of that tension. In terms of the respect and awe in which humans generally hold death/life, the funeral is one particular gathering which is usually allowed to take place. When all other means of protest are impossible or have

been seriously circumscribed, the burial of the dead assumes a central role in terms of the cultural coding of nationalistic expression and the funereal rite itself, like the flag-draped coffin of the soldier fallen in battle, assumes a high degree of political as well as cultural valence. But the speaker of this poem is no mere opportunist in respect of the death of her comrades: 'I am no stone' is a phrase which is reiterated several times throughout the poem. Thus the reader can ascertain that the speaker retains her/his emotional responsiveness to the pain of loss, a very human trait related to empathy, consequently the loss of homeland and comrades has not made 'a stone of the heart':

I am no stone
so I welcome your magic footsteps
when they come ...

I pledge you will be my eternal shadow. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 417)

The interrogative mode which follows marks a point of transition in the poem: 'did they kill you? the speaker asks'. Did 'they' manage to kill also his memory perhaps is the underlying question here, by restricting the funereal rite have they also succeeded in killing remembrance of the dead?:

Your wounds pierce every city ...
the scent of basil everywhere
in the alleys
although passers-by
do not even notice you

Don't they know that your name is hunted?
That you are under siege? (Al-Jayussi 1987, 417)

This interrogative mode evokes further questions in the reader's mind. Is Palestine the martyred name that is fragmented and dispersed among the 'cities' of the world and hunted and under siege in its own homeland? Such conditions of existence can only serve to deepen the sense of conflict and the resolve to remain, as the speaker observes: 'where the grass laughed at my childhood's shadow/and accompanied me to your resting place' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 417).

In his essay 'The Palestinian Estranged', Fawaz Turki remarked that to deny Palestinians a 'right to be heard' means that violence will become the only means left to them in order 'to insure a hearing for the voice of moderation'. Turki was referring to the protest by Zionists and others who, in New York, 1974 were: 'shouting racist slogans and venomous rhetoric', while at the United Nations a handful of Palestinians, granted 'permission to narrate', were: 'holding the pain of Palestine up to the world [and to the oblivious passers-by] where it might catch a glimpse of it' (Turki 1975-76, 89). The speaker of *S* essay on Palestine provides an aesthetic imaginary of that suffering but she also deftly underscores the point in relation to violence, made by Turki above. Her remarks are once again couched in the interrogative and prefaced with the repeated phrase 'I am no stone':

is it because blood's gleam
is all that's hopeful in the world that
we write our own histories
draw our faces' features in it
fix our seal on the brows of the motherland ...
building it anew? (Al-Jayussi 1987, 417)

Is the spilling of blood the only means to ensure a hearing for the voice of moderation? Is it the only foundation upon which nationalist aspirations can be built? 'I am no stone' the speaker declares: but 'in blood we appoint the time to sow' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 418). The changing of the seasons, like the measurement of time 'five wars ago' in Darwīsh's poem 'Day of the Land' (to be discussed in the next section) is marked by the sprinkling of blood and by Palestinian national aspiration which is fixed in that blood like a seal in wax. But the speaker questions (and the answer is to be found within that question) why it must be so:

is it because we refuse to multiply like weeds or seagrass
that lack identity or form
to define our origin. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 418)

The speaker expresses joy that Palestinian identity and identification refuses to be 'spirited away', and that resistance refuses to be overwhelmed. Joy stretches, she declares: 'to include the last arm hurtling death/at the aggressors patrol/that stalk our streets' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 418). 'I am no stone' the speaker opines, thus she is neither heartless nor a weapon but without this capacity to resist, without this burden of 'yearning' that continues to 'trouble the living stream' of history, the Palestinian cause might well disappear into a history written by the oppressors and their supporters.

Grief is an intense emotional state associated with loss, of someone or something with whom or which one has had a deep emotional bond. Acknowledgement of grief on the speaker's part, grief at the bloodshed as well as loss, permits the poetic metaphor to transcend any taxonomy of violence that might otherwise inform it (see Chapter II).

Writing in the 1930s, Christopher Caudwell in his essay 'Pacifism and Violence' observes that:

No pacifist has yet explained the causal chain by which non-resistance ends violence. It is true that it does so in this obvious way, that if no resistance is made to violent commands, no violence is necessary to enforce them. Thus if A does everything B asks him, it will not be necessary for B to use violence. But a dominating relation of this kind is in essence violent, although violence is not overtly shown. Subjection is subjection, and rapacity rapacity, even if the weakness of the victim, or the fear inspired by the victor, makes the process non-forcible. (Caudwell 1938) <http://www.marxists.org/archive/caudwell/1935/pacifism-violence.htm>

Non-resistance may well be a both a laudable and desirable response to violence, but in Caudwell's opinion, it will not necessarily prevent violence from being enacted upon those who do not resist or who offer only passive resistance.

As already stated, non-violent forms (such as strikes and demonstrations) of Palestinian protest were (and continue to be) severely punished by the Israeli authorities. Caudwell's view, when transposed to the Palestinian situation (and the essentially violent nature of military occupation), holds that non-resistance to occupation will not put an end to occupation, or to land appropriation, it will not enable 'the right of return' nor will it enable the right of 'reparations' for Palestinians. Instead, quiescence on their part will only help to ensure that the Palestinian cause will 'disappear' from the Israeli purview and thence from the world stage, ultimately ceasing to 'exist'. And this is a view which qualifies Turki's point above, for it was precisely the policy of non-quiescence on the part of Palestinians, and the Arab world in 1973, which brought that cause to world attention in the first place. This is why the speaker of Sūfīyah's poem asks 'is it because blood's

gleam/is all that's hopeful in the world?' This is not because she advocates or is impervious to the effects of violence as the refrain 'I am no stone' would indicate, emphasising the speaker's awareness that violence entails loss (of humanity) to both the perpetrator and the victim alike, thus the speaker can astutely remark: 'no bullet' regardless of who fires it, 'will pass/ without changing faces in some new way' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 418).

The speaker/poet is a human being trying to assert the legitimacy of her culture's continued existence in what must appear to be a deaf and blind world, a world and a polity in which violence (wasteful and senseless as it may seem) appears nonetheless to make the greatest impact when the balance of power is skewed in favour of one group over another. The direct relational basis between confrontation with the state and legitimate grievance on the part of Palestinians was pointed out in the introduction, and once again, the poem exhibits no direct hatred as a result of that relationship. The speaker's final argument answers the questions posed in respect of the necessity for bloodshed, positing the idea that steadfastness and hope, the sheer will to 'continue to be', can also be seen as an act of direct resistance:

I learn to perfection the art of waiting
on the sidewalks of love and fire. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 418)

Hanān Ashrawi's poem 'Demonstration' (Ramallah 1976), is a poem which evokes similar scenes (of stone throwing youth) to those which took place during the civil rights demonstrations in Northern Ireland since 1969 and beyond. It is metaphorically reminiscent also of the biblical confrontation between David and Goliath, a representation of the asymmetrical power-relationship between them. It is an image that

ironically continues to exemplify the Palestinian/Israeli conflict in terms of this kind of 'relationship' and that of disproportionate force, in the image of a Palestinian youth armed only with stones confronting a tank or armoured vehicle or an army patrol.

The empty square signifies the absence of normal life in the streets; the town or village square is usually a gathering place for commercial and other forms of social interaction. Like the 'unknown man' watched by the empty houses in al-Qāsim's poem of the same name, an unknown youth, a child born into and growing up under occupation is watched by the empty square:

A tyre burns in an empty square.

One child, pockets filled with

Carefully collected stones.

Stares at the army patrol.

At his funeral we chanted

"mother of the martyr rejoice.

All youths are your children." (Boullata 1981, 144)

Although it is a short poem, it nonetheless contains several layers of meaning. The location supplies the reader with the first of these layers. As already stated, the town square is a focal point for activity of various kinds so the reader must consider why it is empty. Secondly, the boy's pockets contain his weapons 'stones', the reader must now consider the relative size of both pockets and stones and from thence draw an inference as to the relative degree of injury likely to be sustained by either party and whether such stone throwing should be met with lethal force. The specular relationship between the poet (who carefully selects his/her words) and the child with 'carefully collected stones',

reflects the unity of both in resistance and opposition to the occupation and is no doubt a carefully selected metaphor on the part of the poet/speaker.

There is a tropic development here in terms of the image of children (along with women) in the struggle, not simply as messengers/ministers to the wounded, but in terms of their involvement in 'direct action' against the occupation forces. It is a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy for the Israeli authorities as predicated in Rāshid H □usain's poem
'Jerusalem and the Hour'. The image of the Jerusalemite child made into a bomb has come full circle and the child is now a legitimate target in the type of modern conflict that creates 'collateral damage' and thus makes martyrs not just of fighters but of women, children and old men.

Section 2: The Earth Also Gives Up Its Stones

After the 1973 war, plans for further Jewish settlement were drawn up by the Israeli authorities and land appropriation continued to take place in the Palestinian Territories (Chomsky 2003, 15). This further Israeli expropriation of Palestinian/Arab land was facilitated: 'through the promulgation of new laws, circumvention of existing laws, harassment and duplicity' (Nakhleh 1978, 97). In response to new land expropriations in the Galilee, the so-called Judiaziation of the Galilee, a general strike was called for March 30th 1976, a day which has passed into the history of Palestinian resistance as the 'Day of the Land'. According to Khalīl Nāhkleh (1978), Israeli army units were dispatched to the most [dis]affected villages and violent clashes ensued in which six Arabs were killed and hundreds arrested. In terms of the 'cause and effect' relationship between violence/non-violence described by Caudwell, in the above situation non-violent

resistance, no more than non-violence itself, does not necessarily avert the violence of an oppressive regime. This essentially non-violent form of defiance (the strike) on the part of Palestinians is punishable it appears, by the same means and to the same degree of severity as armed revolt might have been punished.

In his poem 'Poem of the Land', Darwīsh celebrates the day of the land and in doing so commemorates the suffering of the Palestinian people encapsulated in the figure of five young girls who died when the Israeli army opened fire on a group of student demonstrators:

In the month of March
five girls at the door
of the primary school
came past the violet
came past the rifle
burst into flame ... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 145)

These five students, sisters in the wound, the speaker declares: 'opened the song of the soil and entered the earth' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 145). A commemoration of their deaths opens 'Poem of the Land' and their figurative interment re-opens to public view, the poet's personal diary of the Palestinian wound. The day of the land is a designated day of national commemoration and ironically, in the absence of a nation, the land itself is ever present, in the poem and in its absence from the celebration. This day is therefore a day of political resistance and it is also a day of cultural resistance.

The lines following are presented on the page in a sequence which mimics the girls' dance, but it is a kind of '*danse macabre*' which is re-enacted by the trope of ekphrasis which further works to reflect the fragmentation of the poet's vision:

out of the girls' dance
the violets leaned over a little
 so that the girls voices
 could cross over
the birds
 pointed their beaks
 at that song and at my heart.
(Al-Jayussi 1992, 146)

And in what might be considered the words of that song, a weapon of cultural resistance, the speaker sings: 'I name that soil I call it/an extension of my soul' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 146). And indeed it may be that this symbolic relationship between land/soul enacts a trope of 'rootedness' of possession, and is perhaps what incensed the soldiers, a song of Palestinian love for the land, the constancy of which is an ever-present threat to the 'possession' of the occupiers.

As in Ashrawi's poem 'Demonstration', Darwīsh also underscores the asymmetrical power relationship between the protestors and the military (as in much of the poetry discussed) utilising to poignant effect, the poetic metaphor of Palestinian 'rootedness: 'Gently I pull a branch from the fig tree of my breast/I throw it like a stone to blow up the conquerors tank' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 146). But the metaphor is far more complex than it might seem on first reading as it marks the confluence of land, body and soul in the Palestinian 'being', in an analogous reflection of the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment. If the branch is read as symbolic of the word which issues from the breast of the poet and then becomes a weapon, a 'stone' in the hands of a Palestinian youth, a stone which has issued from the earth of the homeland, then the metaphor closes the circle between ideology and action.

For Palestinian society existing under occupation, all life, even the passing of time is marked in the idiom of conflict. The speaker of Darwīsh's poem recounts his personal history in the land: 'In the month of March thirty years and five wars ago I was born/my father was a prisoner of the British' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 146). The speaker unites this specific day of commemoration, of land and of death, with historical documentation of the Palestinian people's existence and their national aspirations even under the British Mandate authorities. The importance of the 'Day of the Land' is an affirmation of their continued existence as a people with a legitimate claim to the 'land' of Palestine: 'In the month of March we stretch out in the land and the land spreads out in us' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 147). The image here obliquely gestures toward the dead girls 'stretched out in the land'. It resonates with the peasant/refugee in Fadwā T □uq ā's poem T land' (discussed in Chapter II), who risks death in order to embrace his land. In Darwīsh's poem, the land itself is somewhat anthropomorphised, 'the land spreads in us' the speaker observes, and the land responds to and embraces the gesture of martyrdom. The 'day' is also important in terms of memory. The poem acknowledges that memory can be tortuous, in a sense it too can be a kind of prison, but it is nevertheless a beloved one, a prison in which the people are happily interned/ interred:

In the month of March
 we enter the first prison and the first love
 memories shower down upon a fenced village.
 (Al-Jayussi 1992, 147)

The trope of belonging continues to permeate the poem in various ways but it does so with marked tenderness in the figures of the young girls: 'five girls conceal a wheatfield

under their braids/they read the first words of a song about the vines of Hebron' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 148). Like the traditional street singer and his popular ballads in pre-independence Ireland, which were often targeted by the authorities as they were deemed to be an 'expression of insurgency' (Gibbons in Ziff 1995, 58). Similarly, 'they write five letters: Long may my country live'. and these five letters undoubtedly form the 'word' Palestine, the metonymic 'country', thus giving it a metaphorical existence in the world, which it appears, is deemed by the army as an 'expression of insurgency' on the girls part, a song that only the use of lethal force can silence.

The folksong has long been a part of cultural affirmation, and a form which can be given a nationalist bent. Indeed, Darwīsh's poems have been transformed into songs and made widely popular across the Arab world by singers such as the Lebanese Marcel Khalīfe. The girls' song, like the poem, is a form of cultural avowal. The poet's song, like the song of the girls, is an enactment of cultural opposition to oppression and its melody may be deceptively simple. The speaker observes that the noise of oppression is a sound that can shatter the image (the mirror) of Palestinian identity: 'Five girls at the door of a primary school break like mirrors/they were the heart mirrors of the country' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 148). But the music of committed poetry is of a different timbre; its deeper resonance will eventually undermine the foundations upon which justification for the occupation rests, which, like the biblical walls of Jericho, must eventually crumble under the reverberations of the Palestinian song of patience, steadfastness and love. This is why the speaker of Mai S □ Leigh poem 'Lament' dec
 perfection the art of waiting' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 418).

There is a nightmare quality to the poet's vision, time slows down and its passage is obscured by a kind of inertia and the sense of detachment that the experience of this traumatic event elicits 'as if I walked in front of myself/I restore my harmony' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 148). The observer becomes the observed, as Kamal Abu Deeb has described it the: 'I' is exchanged for the 'eye' and 'the feeling [of] the oneness with oneself' was shattered. It is as though 'conflict, oppositions, and fragmentation have struck the eye of the poet as a human being and as a creative writer' (Abu Deeb in DeYoung 1997, 111). It is as though the poet/speaker as a 'seer' beholds a terrible vision and in order to recover his equilibrium, the poet/speaker must once again assume the poet's role in terms of the professional register (the *rawī*) of the Palestinian struggle:

I am the witness of the massacre
I am the victim of the map
I am the son of simple words. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 149)

Thus the poet becomes central, a prophet, the speaker declares: 'Khadija! I have seen my vision' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 150). Khadija was the first wife of the Prophet Mohammed and his first convert to Islam. Khadija (as the first convert) gives credence to the speaker's 'vision' of his own oneness with the land:

Khadija I am the land.
They did not come to know me
so that they might kill me. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 150)

Section V of Darwīsh's 'Poem of the Land' underscores the persecution of the poet/poetry as the voice of resistance. It misleads the reader into expectation of a poem

that is rather different, the setting is a 'small evening' in a 'neglected village' where a 'singer 'sings' with 'two sleeping eyes'. In the first section of the poem, the setting again is rather pastoral 'time hides for me an ear of wheat' even though the speaker measures the passing of time in terms of conflict 'I recall thirty years and five wars'. Although he sings of 'fire and some strangers', the whole scene works to offer the reader a kind of respite from the tone of previous sections. This is just another evening and the singer is just another singer.

In the next section, the poem switches to the interrogative mode. The speaker refers to unknown others as 'they', and we are immediately cognisant of the use by Palestinian poets of 'they', 'them' etc. when referring to Israeli soldiers for example, encountered in the discussion of earlier poetry. Thus the reader is alerted to the possibility of imminent disruption to this otherwise 'sleepy' location and tranquil scene:

And they asked him:
Why do you sing?
He answers them as they seize him
Because I sing. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 151)

He (the poet) sings because in times of conflict and distress humanity must assert itself, like the cellist on the rubble strewn streets of Sarajevo in the 1990s lamenting the dead who were queuing for bread, such an act serves to remind us that after all, as well as being antagonists we are human beings with the same emotions and experiences and with the same desire to create and experience art and intellectual pleasure, a capacity that distinguishes humanity from the animal world. It is an act of defiance also that asserts the

significance of culture in the form of human creativity that (in times of conflict) reaches beyond, in the words of Yeats, the ‘fury and the mire of human veins’ toward the sublime, whether through words, music or the visual arts.

But of course in Palestinian poetry, in the context of *Ādab al-Muqāwamah* (literature of resistance), there are always wider and deeper connotations to be discovered in the poet’s choice of language and imagery, for example, is the singer lovelorn, and of what kind of ‘fire’ does he sing? Is it the fire of passion or anger constrained in some way by a ‘tyrant’s fear of songs?’ (Darwish 2003, 6). Is it a song like that of the five young girls in ‘Poem of the Land’ for example, simple but seductive therefore seditious? The opening of this section, the sleepy scene, creates a false sense of passivity and indolence. Far from being passive however, the singing of the singer/poet is a recognizable act of defiance.

In the final lines we discover that the ‘fire’ he sings of is both internal and external, the fire of creativity which drives the singer to sing and the song itself which elicits the (gun) fire of the oppressors. It is a simple song composed of ‘simple words’ but a song ‘they’ wish to censure and silence. Therefore, like the Jerusalemite child ‘they’ in their fear, search his breast for a weapon:

And they have searched him
In his breast only his heart
In his heart only his people
In his voice only his sorrow
In his sorrow only his prison
And they searched his prison
To find only themselves in chains. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 151)

Their search for sedition is confounded and reveals only the justification of this song which derives from the poet's 'heart'. The words are simple and the repetition contributes to this tonal quality. 'They' however, search this simplicity for signs of recalcitrance, for a reason to silence the singer, even as the five young girls were silenced for singing of their love for the land. Ironically, the speaker observes, 'they' find only the chains of their own inhumanity and oppression which they have forged for themselves, chains that cause them to search the breast of the Jerusalemite child for a love that will make of her a bomb, chains that criminalise and arbitrarily punish a child for carrying bread and bandages to a fighter, while all the time claiming purity of arms. But there is no such thing as 'purity' of arms as the Jewish poet Dan Almogor's rhetorical question addressed to his own community as the title of his poem 'We Shoot Children Too, Don't We?' concedes (See Almogor <http://www.cactus48.com/weshoot.html>). This facet of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be explored more fully in the concluding chapter, which covers the period of the first Palestinian *intifādah*.

Fawaz Turki's poem 'Dusk in Galilee', which according to this anthology was written by the poet 'on request', exudes a tone that deeply resonates with the Egyptian Romantic poets such as the following poem by Alī Mah Tāhā

Let us stand along the Nile, where moonlight, lustrous as a
 Baby's skin
 Floods the green bank beyond its water and its shade
 Let us play as it plays, kissing the roses and the dew
 There on the hillside, grass will be our cradle
 Silence will enfold our souls, love's nightingale will trill. (Al-Jayyussi 1987, 74)

In the opening section of his poem Fawāz Turki describes the sunset of the Galilee in a similarly romantic fashion:

A feast of colours
is the sunset in Galilee
a silent orgy
in the horizon of our
West Bank. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 364)

The lonely reverie of the speaker continues in this subjectively romantic mode. This style of poetry often conveys the reverie of the lovers watching the sunset, either together or apart, as they await the cloak of darkness to hide the ‘exquisite delights’ of their (possibly illicit) love affair. This is often an imaginary telling of this kind of all-consuming love affair, and is not necessarily derived from the poet’s direct experience. As in much Romantic poetry, and particularly when it utilises the exilic mode, love and the feeling of desolation are conflated, and in Turki’s poem the lovers are described metaphorically, their passion disguised in the imagery of the natural world:

Silver grey stars
Quivering in the sky
Speeding to hug one another
Body and soul
Like erotic grapes of sorrow,
The wind
and the desolate music
of the *oud*
are a theatre of sounds
on the west bank
of our ancient river
and the evening will unfurl

exquisite delights
in Galilee. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 364)

The poem also acknowledges the idea of the land/Palestine as the absent lover. Whereas Romantic poetry was often a flight from historical temporality and personal constraint, particularly the constraint by social probity where love and sexual mores were concerned, the counterpoint in Turki's poem is provided by the poem's grounding in historical temporality which adroitly underscores the enforced Judiasation of the 'exquisite delights' that the Galilee has to offer. Like Laila 'Allūsh's poem 'The Path of Affection', until it reaches the counterpoint, a surprising tone of serenity pervades Turki's poem. And although the images used are somewhat discordant, 'orgy'; 'sorrow'; 'desolate'; alone these are not enough to alert the reader to the poem's political undertone. However, there are clues provided and the political context enters through the geo-political space of the 'West Bank', and the natural geophysical space in terms of the 'west' bank of the river Jordan, together with the contested space of the 'Galilee', in a very subtle way these tropes prepare the 'politically experienced' reader for the counterpoint to come:

The military governor
Tells his guests
All this has come to pass
Because he issued an edict
And his soldiers used their guns
To make it so. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 364)

When the counterpoint does come, it is quite bluntly stated and exhibits none of the bitterness associated with Turki's prose for example (see elMusa 1995). Rather it is a simple statement (as the speaker sees it) of things as they are, almost an anti-climax.

That as a poet, Turki might engage with the exilic, Romantic mode of the Egyptians is not an impossible suggestion. Like so many Palestinians, Turki was an exile, forced to flee to a refugee camp in Lebanon in 1948 he later left for Australia. However, the leisure of such Romantic engagement is not afforded to Palestinian poets who must remain politically committed. Nor is there any comparative reflection to be gleaned, except perhaps an ironic one, between the emotional atmosphere evoked by the Nile River and that evoked by the River Jordan; between the Romantic imaginary of lovelorn containment and constraint, and the actual constraint experienced by the Palestinians in what the speaker of Hanān Mikail's poem 'Gureilla' described as the Jordan's 'muddy trap'.

Samīh al-Qāsim's poem 'You Pretend to Die', is written in memory of Mu'īn Bseiso, a Palestinian poet from the Ghāzā Strip who died in 1984. But like other commemorative poems, it also exhibits a powerful sense of the confluence of forces informing this thesis. 'A kuffiyya flutters in the wind' is the opening line of this poem and immediately evokes a familiar cultural icon, the peasant head-covering adopted as a symbol of Palestinian resistance and worn worldwide as a symbol of solidarity with the Palestinian cause. It is also an organic icon of unity between culture (embodied in the poet), and the land from which it springs, as the kuffiyya is described as: 'a tuft of your pagan hair fluttering' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 258). This organic unity is justified by the ironic

relationship between ‘death’ and ‘marriage’ that exists between the Palestinian poet and the land and is recalled by a deeply ironic interrogative mode of address:

Groom of lemons and almonds,
how is your bride in bridal white
suspended in exile?
Who performs the marriage rites?
Do you still remember us?
Is there a fortune teller on your secret planet
to bring you the news? (Al-Jayussi 1992, 258)

The familial relationship utilised here is that of marriage and consequently al-Qāsim’s poem resonates with earlier poets such as Ibrāhīm T wherein the Tuesday’ trope of marriage to the Palestinian cause was enacted by the symbolic dyeing of hands with henna (see Chapter 1). The ironic tone reflects the kind of Palestinian irony described by Ibrahim Muhawi in terms of the congratulations (rather the condolence) offered to the family of the martyr, and the wedding celebration held for him instead of a wake. A further irony arises in al-Qāsim’s poem from the fact that the poet/bridegroom has, upon his death and burial, physically ‘entered’ his bride, thus cementing their union in both the metaphorical and actual sense. In this aspect, it resonates with Darwīsh’s poem above wherein the five young girls enter the land. This trope of marriage is an extension of the trope of belonging and possession that the act of ‘naming’ suggests.

The question ‘who performs the marriage rites’ also resonates with a deep irony if it is read as an inversion of the question, who was it that parted them in the first place?

The poet/chronicler reports the latest news to the absent addressee:

Here’s the latest:

A child's doll had its legs severed;
on the charred porch a lady
gathers burning clothes from a line;
a missile aims for an orchard... (Al-Jayussi 1992,258)

The image of the 'doll' here echoes a similar use of this image in the anti-colonial poem by Ah

□med Shawq ī T

that city by the French in 1925: 'What about the dolls of the chambers' the speaker of Shawqī's poem asks 'veils violated and screens torn' (Kadhim 2004, 45). What the speaker points here is that the sanctity of the women's quarters, and the home, has been violated by the indiscriminate bombs: 'they came out, flames in the thicket ... through whatever path they sought safety/paths of death came in its stead (Kadhim 2004, 45). The comparison between the uses of the 'doll' images in both these poems ironically underscores the idea that the 'smart' bombs of modern warfare are so accurate as to be capable of pinpointing a target such as a doll, and yet for all their sophistication, manage to target civilians.

The targets in al-Qāsim's poem are not combatants but rather are symbols of the quotidian trappings of a normal family existence. But again, irony abounds, for these latest victims amount to the killing and wounding of the last vestiges of innocence and, after the massacres of civilians and shelling of refugee camps during and after the invasion of Lebanon by Israeli forces in 1982, the implication is that the victims in this instance are just another addendum to defeat, terror and another exodus of Palestinians, one which deprives the most blameless of food, clothing and the comfort of a favourite toy. More than twenty years later, the scenes depicted by al-Qāsim are repeated in the Ghāzā Strip 2008/09, where the 'dolls of the chambers' are the blackened human remains

of the Ghāzā's children. The following line resonates with scenes of what appears to be 'phosphorus' reportedly used by the Israeli forces in Lebanon as well as latterly in the Ghāzā Strip, scenes which can still be deftly described by the bitter irony of al-Qāsim's words from the poem under discussion:

Can you not see God's rope being lowered
from a helicopter to the drowning land? (Al-Jayussi 1992,258)

Al-Qāsim commemorates Bseiso not only as a friend but for the power of the latter's poetic voice, 'a stone' of resistance, but a voice that can be dissipated, like words that sometimes are unequal to the event, or the 'terrifying ripples' they endeavour to describe:

you threw a stone in the well of madness
The stone split into fragments
in the terrifying ripples ...
you sang until you despaired.
Now I sing for you, my rascal friend...
Who am I to be continually burdened
by Ghaza's pains? (Al-Jayussi 1992,258)

The speaker remarks: 'Do you say you want your own tomb like everybody else's/Do we live, die, like the rest?' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 259). The fate of an exile such as Bseiso is not like that of other people who are interred in their own homeland; their own earth is their tomb. 'Yours is the trench of rebels' the speaker observes, and the question echoes the voice of the father in Darwish's poem titled 'My Father' who advises his son that: 'he who has no country has no grave on earth' (Almessiri 1970, 19). Similarly the speaker of

al-Qāsim's poem remarks: 'You've got no tomb my friend, no tomb' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 258).

Perhaps the opposite of exile from place is containment within a place and in pointing Bseiso's exile, the speaker conversely points his own sense of captivity, constrained not only by the forces of occupation, but by his identity as a Palestinian Arab, but also by the occupier's externally constructed power-politics:

I tried to reach you
when your heart burst in the bed
of that faraway hotel ...
How could I reach you when Cairo's gates
are sealed by the Star of David? (Al-Jayussi 1992,259)

In the aftermath of the Camp David Agreement in 1978, President Sadat of Egypt made peace with Israel so there may be a resonance of betrayal in this poem. There is a sense that not only their ability to support each other as Palestinians is circumscribed but also that they are cut off from the support of their fellow Arabs: 'Cairo's gates are sealed'. This peace therefore marks a loss (of Egyptian influence) in terms of the Palestinian cause, a factor which Darwīsh's elegy for Egyptian president Gamāl abd al-Nāsir 'The Man with the Green Shadow' underscores, when the speaker of that poem declares: 'and when you die, we try not to die with you' (de Young 1997, 79). With the death of Nāsir, an ardent supporter of the Palestinian cause, as well as an opponent of western imperialism was lost, and in the aftermath of Camp David, that loss has now been sealed by the closure of Cairo's gates, and as the speaker sees it, by a diktat of the Israeli government.

Al-Qāsim's speaker again resonates with Muhawi's point on the Palestinian's cultural use of irony. In this section of the poem for instance, in the lines wherein death and exile are conflated:

Your Palestinian black humour
You only pretend to die
Love flew you from one country
To a farther country ...

We have no time to die,
If we diminish, our enemies multiply. (Al-Jayussi 1992,260)

We still fill the daylight
We still prod history, and men. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 260)

In commemorating Bseiso's death, al-Qāsim points up the political context, Bseiso is a poet but he is also a Palestinian. Writing, as Darwīsh observed: 'is a small puppy biting void', it is a 'bloodless wound' (see Darwish 2002). It is a reminder too that poets cannot change history but they can alert readers to history's obfuscations and elisions not just in terms of historiography *per se* but in the potential dilution of Palestinian culture and history by an educational system which is under the control of the occupiers (see for example Jamilia Hussein 2005).

Commemoration is a special kind of remembering which, it has been noted, is often deftly utilised by nationalist struggles. Mu'īn Bseiso commemorates Jerusalem, a contested space in a simple intertextual allusion with the bible in his poem 'The God of Urushalim' by using the biblical allusion to Psalm 136 (137) 'The Exile's Remembrance

of Sion' and in particular Verse 11:5 'If I forget you Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten:

Let my right and forget me,
Let my beloved's eyes,
My brother and my only friend
All forget me.

If I remember not
That the god of Urushalim
Lies heavily on [the chest of]
Our land,
Squeezing honey and milk Out of the drops of our blood,
To live
And hatch out monsters.

(see Neisser <http://www.pij.org/details.php?>)

The metaphor of fecundity, 'milk and honey', which is associated with the land of Palestine, refers to the Old Testament of the Bible (see for example Exodus 3:8). In Chapter 1 the role of biblical topography and its convergence in the archaeology of Palestine was explored as a method of symbolic (re)possession of the 'Promised Land', as was the Zionist myth of 'making the desert bloom'. Bseiso deftly employs the intertextual allusion to subvert the biblical context of exile and return and expose it as the colonial ethos it has become, the Zionist dream that has become what Tawfīq Zayyād described as 'the monster of land robbery' (Zayyad 1976, 95).

The location of Samīh al-Qāsim's poem, 'Girl from Rafah', is the town of Rafah close to the Egyptian border, a town with a large refugee community. It is located in the Ghāzā Strip, to whence those forced into exodus from Haifa and Jaffa in 1948 re-located,

along with those villagers expelled from southern Palestine. The following lines of this poem will undoubtedly resonate with the current conditions of life in the Ghāzā Strip, under siege and blockade, with high rates of unemployment and poverty in a densely over-populated narrow strip of land. But the speaker informs us: ‘Rafah’s gates are sealed by wax and locked by curfew’. In the aftermath of the ‘Camp David’ accord, the seal of wax undoubtedly represents the political conditions and agreements, and the enforcement of these agreements by military edict ‘locked by curfew’.

The Ghāzā Strip has long been referred to as an “open prison” and the images of containment in al-Qāsim’s poem deftly underscore the meaning of life under siege, a life in which childhood is a luxury afforded to few children who are, as Darwīsh puts it ‘born under the sign of the siege’. ‘The girl’s job’ therefore, like that of the child in Rashīd Ḥūṣain’s poem ‘Jerusalem and the Hour’, who carried ‘bread and dreams to a fighter’, is to ‘carry bread and bandages/To a wounded fighter’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 380). It is fundamentally an act of mercy, perhaps toward a brother or father or neighbour:

She had to cross a street
watched by foreign eyes,
tracked by gunsights,
by the wayward wind. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 380)

The ethics of using children in this way could, of course, be argued, but the deaths of so many children in the recent conflict in the Ghāzā (2008), underscores the reality, indeed the inevitability of children and civilians as the principle victims of Israeli security (see for example Seamus Milne 2009). The door of a house in Rafah, the speaker opines:

Opens like a wound

She leaps into the courtyards lap ...
A second leap:
a palm tree embraces her
on terror's pavement. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 380)

A child is not generally viewed as a combatant in conflict, but the military occupation alters the socio-cultural status quo and dehumanises her, she is 'watched' and 'tracked' as she 'leaps' like an animal from point to point. There is perhaps a link here to the denigration of Palestinians as workers who must 'snatch a bite', and the kind of dehumanisation that permits a young girl to be perceived as quarry, to eventually be trapped like a rabbit in a car's headlights:

Another leap:
a patrol
Another leap:
a flashlight ...
Five guns
She stares wide eyed ...

In the morning
a court is held in session
for the criminal
For Fatimah
Child of eight! (Al-Jayussi 1987, 381)

The counterpoint here of course, is the fact that it is the child who is criminalised, a curfew breaker, rather than those who shot her. The loss of the child is a 'wound' in the Palestinian psyche, which is prefigured by the image of the opening door with the child becoming a synecdoche of the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment. The

streets are her cultural milieu, conflict between her community and the occupation forces is her daily companion, and her commitment is perhaps to family, neighbour, community and, like the fairytale child who brought food to her grandmother, she is endangered by the wolf that lies in wait. Unlike the fairytale ending however, the Palestinian child has no protector to kill this wolf, who can capture her from a distance in the crosshairs of a rifle sight, save (ironically) for the wounded fighter to whom she attends. This is the reality of military occupation that al-Qāsim's poem forces the reader to confront. Although watched by 'foreign eyes', these were her streets, streets she was able to negotiate under cover of darkness, streets whose 'palm tree' and 'courtyard' embraced her, streets which in normal times she would negotiate freely and safely. But to paraphrase Ḥusain's poem 'Jerusalem and the Hour' this girl is a legitimate target if all children born in the Ghāzā 'shall be made into bombs'.

The foregoing discussion focuses on life under occupation but in the following poem Darwīsh's poem of this period re-asserts the fact of Palestinian exile. 'We Travel like Other People' observes the narrator of Darwīsh's poem of the same title 'but we return to nowhere'. But of course the irony of this statement arises from the fact that Palestinians do not travel like other people as the observations of Rashid al-Khalidi (1997) confirm in respect of the acute anxiety experienced by Palestinians at the border crossing, the checkpoint and the airport (see Chapter II). Exiles and stateless people do not travel with the ease or the pleasure of ordinary travellers: 'if travelling is the way of the clouds', the speaker ironically opines then 'we buried our loved ones in the darkness of the clouds, between the roots of trees' (Darwish 1984, 31).

The speaker underscores the potential of the demographic weapon when he charges the women of Palestine with the task of bearing future generations of Palestinian 'travellers':

And we said to our wives: go on giving birth to people like us
For hundreds of years so we can complete the journey
To the hour of a country, to a metre of the impossible. (Darwish 1984, 31)

As Said (1995) points out the Palestinian journey towards statehood is being undertaken against overwhelming odds, thus the speaker observes they must travel any way they can: 'we travel in the carriages of psalms/sleep in the tent of the prophets and come out of the mouths of gypsies' (Darwish 1984, 31). The ability of words to cross borders is particularly notable in the form of poetry, carried in the mind thus like the words of Victor Jara that escaped from the stadium of death in the mind of a fellow prisoner, the poet's words travel intertextually and in secret, between the lines of other books 'psalms' and in the secret, coded language of 'gypsies' known only to the initiate or the one born into that condition. In this way, words thus transported can become a source of consolation, can offer comfort as in the words of Jara: 'we sing to wile away the distance' (Darwish 1984, 31).

There is also another more deeply cultural connotation in respect of motherhood to be gleaned from this poem:

Your path is long so dream of seven women to bear this long path
on your shoulders. Shake for them palm trees so as to know their
names and you'll be the mother of the boy of Galilee. (Darwish 1984, 31)

There is an allusion here to the birth of Isā, or Jesus, as it occurs in the *Qurān*, wherein Maryam (Mary) is sustained by dates from the palm tree under which she lay down to give birth. What will sustain the mothers of Palestine if all the trees are uprooted, if all her sons become exiles? It connects also with the return of Jesus, awaited by Muslims and Christians alike, to establish justice and peace, as the speaker sees it, born of Palestinian mother. Until this time, the desired peace and justice can be carried and birthed only in words: ‘we have a country of words. Speak speak so that I can put my road on the stone of a stone’ (Darwish 1984, 31). The dual connotation in terms of ‘stone’ here is an allusion to the carefully collected stones (words) of the poet and the stone as a weapon of resistance but it also works as a trope of double distancing, from place and from the ‘words’ that conjure place ‘stone of a stone’. Words are the foundation upon which a homeland can be built. But in respect of this ever deferred reality there is a warning also that: ‘too long a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart’ (Yeats 1991, 120).

Mah □ opens with the image The Earth is Cl

of a violent birth into death as the earth (tomb) is experienced as: ‘pushing us through the last passage/and we tear off our limbs to pass through’ (Darwish 1984, 13). It is as though the earth (land) itself is betraying them, birthing them only for exile. Not only is it a metaphor for the Palestinian exodus from Jordan in 1970 and from Beirut in 1982, but also for the shrinking homeland itself and its ‘earth’ appropriated by stealth, by settlers and by the Israeli legal system. It is a poem that also foresees the continued shrinkage of what was to be the Palestinian homeland, now reduced to a system of cantons in the West Bank designated as area A, B, and C, in accordance with the 1993 Oslo Accords. In this system, only area A is under the control of the Palestinian authorities, area B is joint

control and area C is under the control of the Israeli authorities such that contiguity of the West Bank territories is lost as area C actually works to isolate Palestinian areas from each other (see for example maps of the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem 2007 and see also Halper 2000).

That Darwīsh's poem was written almost ten years before the Oslo Accords demonstrates the vatic quality of poetry which no doubt contributes to the reputation of the poet as some kind of seer, in Darwīsh's case perhaps it is a special kind of (political) insight which has evolved: 'I have seen my vision' the speaker of 'Poem of the Land' declares. The vatic nature of poetry is of course made all the more obvious when viewed in retrospect, the speaker asks: 'where should we go after the last frontiers? Where should the birds fly after the last sky?' (Darwish 1984, 13). The answer of course is that for human beings death or for Palestinians political extinction is the final frontier. To choose confinement, to resolve to die resisting, is all that is left: 'we will die here, here in the last passage' (Darwish 1984, 13). And it resonates with the question asked by the speaker of Mai Sāghīgh's poem 'Lament' who asks: 'is it because blood's gleam is all that hopeful in the world'. It resonates too with Turki's observation that when the Palestinians are deprived of a voice (or a viable political alternative to violence), then violence becomes the only way to ensure a hearing for the voices of moderation, as the speaker of Darwīsh's poem states: 'we will write our names with scarlet stream' (Darwish 1984, 13).

Like other massacres before them, Deir Yassin and Qafr Qassem for example, the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Sabra and Shatilla, in 1982, entered the *topoi* of Palestinian poetry as potent symbols of cruelty and oppression. During the Lebanese civil war, these refugee camps were being controlled by the Israeli military who subsequently

failed to prevent their Lebanese Christian militia allies from slaughtering the Palestinian inhabitants, men, women and children, residents of these camps (see for example Robert Fisk 2001). Furthermore, as Ibrahim Muhawi observes, a cemetery for Palestinian martyrs in Beirut was repeatedly shelled by the Israelis during the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (Muhawi 2006, 38). The cult of the martyr can probably be regarded as an inevitable aspect of nationalist struggles. The power of this cult was acutely pointed by Patrick Pearse in respect of the Irish struggle for independence when he opined that ‘while Ireland holds these graves [of patriots] Ireland unfree shall never be at peace’. This is a lesson which it appears the Israeli military authorities have not failed to comprehend. Thus the necessity for symbolically killing the dead can be seen as another assault on the culture of memory and remembering.

In the aftermath of events such as the Sabra and Shatilla massacres, Samir al-Qāsim’s post-apocalyptic vision is that of the modernist who disdains the rationality of power, which in the modern world is often driven by technological determinism. In his poem ‘After the Apocalypse’, the speaker describes the fragmentation of the poet as a human being and that of his/her creative spirit under such conditions in an image which parallels the experience of the victims of modern warfare:

I feel my limbs
but I cannot find them.

I implore my sense of sight
but see nothing beyond a neutral grey. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 381)

The poet is forced to exchange the 'I' for the 'eye' in an attempt to make sense of his vision that the 'I' alone is unable to comprehend. Therefore the poet attempts to 'feel' with his eyes and thus make the reader feel with his/her eyes. The poet may have a very specific purpose for doing this. The human visual percept is a powerful one but in our image-saturated modernity, human vision is to a great extent compromised. A range of hidden meanings exist behind every scene of broadcast news that vision alone cannot fully apprehend and the scenes themselves cannot fully convey. Thus the distinction between image and reality is not always readily discernable and like the modernist artist, the 'extraordinary' and sometimes apocalyptic vision of the poet seeks to restore the perceptual balance of the viewer. Similarly, the speaker of Fadwā T □uq ā's poem] 'Shall not Weep', standing amidst the rubble of Jaffa, perceives with her eyes and her mind/heart, 'I stood and spoke to my own eyes', and recognises that vision alone is not an adequate percept with which to apprehend the full meaning of the scene.

The psychological fragmentation that al-Qāsim exhibits here reflects the age-old metaphysical dialectic of the soul (mind) and the body brought up to date by the reconciliation of both in the cold rationality of modern science and utilitarian expediency. 'My body sees me', the speaker observes:

Here I am, creating myself in my own image.
 Here I am, the first human on another planet called:
 Dayr Yasin, (Al-Jayussi 1987, 381)

and the first in a litany of the human capacity for inhumanity is named, in the light of which, the speaker, in a pseudo philosophical tone observes:

One could say that humanity

reconsiders itself,
reconsiders the laws, and the laws of the laws,
takes phenomena seriously ... (Al-Jayussi 1987, 381)

The irony of which is made painfully overt in the lines following:

In anticipation of surprises the future holds
in the galaxy's enchanted whirl,
orbited by earthly satellites
gushing from wombs of volcanoes
to be grabbed immediately
by space scientists
who bless them with the loveliest names:
Lidice
Kufr Qasim
Sabra, Shatila,
My Lai. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 382)

What the poetic vision acutely underscores here is the confluence of science and conflict and a culture of technological determinism that not only drives beneficial advances for mankind but also drives the darker side of globalisation and the arms race. The speaker observes the balance of world power shifting to become a balance of terror that leaves the less developed or otherwise weaker societies not just beyond the developmental pale, but also beyond the scope of empathic consideration and thus they are left to (re)enter history merely as 'collateral damage'. Some such victims are listed by the speaker as they have occurred in Poland, Palestine, Lebanon and Vietnam and the speaker observes: 'one cannot help being astonished/at the breakdown of norms and mores' and the failure of science 'the simultaneous fall of all equations' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 382). The speaker

understands the ‘global conventions’ which underlie such atrocities and lists them: ‘the Third World, European Common Market, Stock Market, Alignment and Nonalignment, Nuclear Weapons, Disarmament, and documents of death’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 382). It is an attack on the imperialist world view and the hegemonies that keep ‘poorer states in thrall’ (Walder 1999, 3).

The second part of this poem stands in sharp contrast to the scientific modernity undermined in the first section, indeed it borders on the pastoral. The opening line: ‘Come with me, Bedouin girl’ evokes the pristine clarity of the desert, a ‘natural’ space (a kind of Eden) where humanity might begin anew: ‘you who have not yet spoken/come, let us give names to new things/that they may give us back our own names in return’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 381). But this pastoral atmosphere is ironic because this is what earth should be, the ‘Edenic’ dwelling place of humanity, but which, because of man’s capacity for rapacity, it cannot ever be. The profound irony arises from the Edenic ideal of what Palestine was for its inhabitants, as Darwish adroitly frames it in the title of his 2003 collection ‘Unfortunately, it was Paradise’ (Darwish 2003).

The trope of naming here is rather different to the form which has previously been explored; here it has a mythic/messianic connotation: ‘In my name you rise from the dead/in your name I make death acceptable’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 382). Like a new Adam and Eve they (the speaker and his Bedouin girl addressee), explode the sanitised term ‘collateral damage’ and expose its apocalyptic meaning by ‘naming’ its effects in real world terms and on real people:

storms, bloodstained hands, children’s lips
still clutching their mother’s severed breasts ...
charred skeletons sitting cross-legged

cigarette in hand, watching the TV set
continue its broadcast (live under the rubble)
of the emergency session
of the United Nations ... etc. etc. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 382)

Thus the reader is forced to reconstruct the real meaning of the images beamed into living rooms, for while vision is indeed a powerful percept, the marriage of words and images creates a much deeper encoding to long-term memory. As discussed in Chapter II, poetry forces the reader into a process of mental re-construction of the particular situation or event the poem depicts. During the process of reading, this type of mental reconstruction in respect of imagery and metaphor requires a rather more extensive mental effort than simply viewing an image which to a certain extent is mediated by the 'eye' of the 'TV' camera. The very structure of a poem, metaphor and image, facilitates a much deeper processing of its meaning.

In this poem, Al-Qāsim also explores the taxonomy of violence associated with resistance (and its suppression) that the 'momentary' TV images cannot possibly convey. In the case of representation of Palestinian resistance, as Said points out, Palestinians are the unlucky inheritor's of the Hitlerian legacy and thus their acts of violence tend to be perceived as stemming from innate hatred of Jews or from a deformed sense of injustice. What the TV camera cannot convey, of course, is what in Caudwell's terms, and in Žižek's, constitutes the 'systemic' violence, the essentially violent nature of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship, the fact of military occupation the: 'sound mufflers on secret guns/ nickel handcuffs, police billy clubs' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 382). Neither do they see the beatings, detentions and extra judicial killings carried out under the aegis of 'security'. What they do see are the 'highly visible' violent Palestinian reactions:

Tear gas bombs, demonstrations, burning car tires,
and bullets fired into the air
apologizing to angels. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 383)

And what they do not necessarily see it that these bullets (as in Darwish's poem 'Poem of the Land') often make 'their way straight/to the school girls' breasts'. Because of the kind of representation of Palestinians in the world media, the speaker contends, the international world rushes to cover up such atrocities committed by the west's Israeli protégés, no doubt through the sublimation of western hatred and persecution of the Jews (and the resulting guilt) into some deformed (western) sense of the immanent justice of the Israeli cause and the 'purity of Israeli arms'. On the occasion of incidents such as the deaths of the schoolgirls, the speaker observes that:

International agencies would hurry
to quiet reactions and rumors
while the doleful, angry chorus
exercise its absolute freedom
in the biggest armed robbery
in history. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 383).

The speaker uncompromisingly points the fact that in the first instance the 'land' of Palestine was wrested from its Arab inhabitants by force of arms with the assistance of the same 'international community'. One of the principle lessons of history, reiterated by the speaker is, that in order to understand the present, we must re-visit the past 'the present is an innocent lie' the speaker ironically opines, and in order 'to see the future we must consult the past'. Similarly, one lesson of a postcolonial approach to literature is that the lessons of the historical past have not necessarily inoculated us against their

repetition. In this way poetry, and the poet's role as a 'provocative force', fulfils a valuable social role by voicing what many ordinary soldiers and civilians, from both sides of the confrontational divide as well as the 'international community' might privately think, but be afraid to publicly express, for fear of the accusation of anti-Semitism for example, in the socio-philosophical rather than the strictly racial sense of that term.

Although distanced from their own history, and distanced further by the history of the victors, Palestinians will continue to place 'stone next to stone' to build the world anew, and though they may falter and experience setbacks, the speaker declares: 'we won't be afraid to look behind' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 383). This is a powerfully simple expression of anti-colonial sentiment because Palestinian native history, although in recent times dominated by humiliation, is not dominated by the kind of barbarism such as the Holocaust that emerged from between the political vacuum, racism and hyper-rationalism of mid-twentieth century Europe.

The period after 1967 was one in which a new generation of Palestinians began to emerge, a generation who questioned the submission to the humiliation of expulsion on the part of their parents and this is reflected in the lines:

New children will be born
they'll ask their fathers sternly:
why? For whom? When and how? (Al-Jayussi 1987, 384).

In opposition to the pristine quality of the desert, the speaker paints a bleak picture of the inevitable march of modernity and technological determinism:

In the long run, motion asserts itself,
erects new rules over the pure sands

now subject to factories' oil,
fires, the vomit of the sick,
and the wretched human din. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 383).

'So let the storms subside a little', the speaker asks, 'for the sake of children going to school/after the Apocalypse' (Al-Jayussi 1987, 382). What the poet asks for here is respite from the daily grind in order that the next generation of Palestinian might be permitted to develop in some semblance of normality, which is not the normalcy of habitual conflict.

Mah

□m ul Darw sh's

which is constantly undermined by the speaker. It recalls the Edenic atmosphere of al-Qāsim's poem above when the speaker of Darwīsh's poem observes: 'We have on this earth what makes life worth living' (Darwish 2003, 6). The speaker proceeds to list what these are: the fecundity of the earth that sustains mankind 'April's hesitation; the aroma of bread'; the development of philosophical thought and social evolution; 'a woman's point of view about men'; the creativity of the human spirit 'the works of Aeschylus' and the capacity for emotional bonding 'the beginning of love', are all things that make life on earth worth living. But this reflective, almost celebratory, tone is undermined by the speaker who counts among these earthly delights 'the invader's fear of memory' (Darwish 2003, 6). While the invader may well fear the memory of the indigenous inhabitants, they may also come to fear their own history (or rather the judgement of history) of invasion and dispossession, implied in Shabtai's poem 'Nostalgia' and in al-Qāsim's poem: 'we [Palestinians] won't be afraid to look behind'.

The first line is repeated and followed by another set of what at first glance appear to be quotidian events of Palestinian existence. In the opening lines images of natural beauty and vivid imagination resonate with the often 'bittersweet' Romantic mode of twentieth century Arabic poetry as exemplified by the Egyptian Romantics for example:

The final days of September, a woman
Keeping her apricots ripe after forty, the hour of sunlight in prison, a cloud
Reflecting a swarm
Of creatures, the people's applause for those who face death with a smile,
A tyrant's fear of songs. (Darwish 2003, 6)

The woman who manages who retain her allure is a synecdoche for Palestine, a land keeping her memory 'ripe' in the minds of her lovers, forty years after they initially lost her. However, as the reader delves deeper into the work, he/she discovers that the poet's choice of words: 'hour' of sunlight, 'prison', 'applause' and 'death', work against the warm, almost romantic surface mood of the poem. The underlying metaphor of this poem is that of loss. As the title of Darwish's 2003 collection suggests, 'Unfortunately, It Was Paradise', Palestine was for its indigenous peoples a land of 'milk and honey' which is undoubtedly why it was caught in the colonial purview and was ultimately wrested from its indigenous inhabitants by force of arms. Thus the invader/tyrant assumes the role of the serpent that destroys this Eden. As previously mentioned, writing in 1978 Hanan Ashrawi observes that the use of the word Palestine was considered by the Israelis as threatening enough to be censored (Ashrawi 1978, 79) thus the poem 'On this Earth' and the 'naming' of Palestine can be viewed as an act of resistance to the extinction of the

name itself and its historical connotations of a people and their 'paradise' that existed there before the 'invaders' arrived.

Chapter IV underscored the increasing involvement of women and children in the struggle for Palestinian statehood and an end to Israeli occupation. It further underscores their potential as a demographic weapon, as well as their situation as casualties, in poems such as 'Demonstration' and 'Girl from 'Rafah'. As discussed in the introduction, their status as 'individuals' brings the reader uncomfortably close to the 'reality' of their lives as they struggle against political and cultural annihilation. As in previous chapters, close reading of the poetry enables the reader to 'discover resistance and subversive creativity', indeed the humanity, that continues to flourish even within the relationship of dominance and subjection, a concept central to this thesis. This chapter has demonstrated the valence of Palestinian poetry as a locus of discursive resistance and how that discourse provides the absent land with a metaphorical existence, however distant that land may be, politically or geographically. In the final chapter, the transition from 'rubble to stones' comes full circle when the rubble of Palestinian existence is transformed into the 'stone', the metaphorical and actual weapon of the first Palestinian *intifādah* in 1987.

Chapter V

Palestinian Poetry from 1987-1993

During the period 1987 to 1993, the Palestinian question was once again catapulted onto the world stage by the eruption of the first Palestinian *intifādah* in October 1987. This popular uprising, or ‘shaking off’ as the Arabic term connotes, began in the Ghāzā Strip and soon after spread to the West Bank. The Ghāza Strip, an area with a large refugee population, is one of the most densely populated and economically deprived areas in the ‘developed’ world. The word ‘developed’ is used somewhat ironically here for, while modernity and its benefits, educational, medical, industrial and cultural have indeed reached the Middle East, the Palestinian Territories at the time were (and continue to be) subjected to a range of privations, not least of which was/is the occupation itself. The territories remain either occupied or controlled by the Israeli military, despite UN Sanctions, the efforts of Solidarity Movements, Non-Government Organisations and other interested bodies and individuals from a variety of religious, ethnic, cultural and political backgrounds.

In respect of the conditions that obtain under the Israeli occupation, Paul Grubach cites the American Congressman George Crockett Jr. who made a fact-finding visit to the Middle East in 1985. Crockett remarked, observes Grubach that the Israeli military government in the occupied territories is a ‘finely honed instrument of oppression against

an entire subject people.’ Grubach further remarks that Father Edward Dillon, a frequent lecturer on Middle-East-related issues, summed up the situation perfectly when he wrote:

Palestinians have become resident aliens in their own land, without effective recourse for almost any infringement of basic human rights.

(Grubach 1988 <http://www.vho.org/GB/Journals/JHR/8/2/Grubach185-203.html>)

A series of significant political developments occurred immediately before and during the historical period under discussion which undoubtedly impacted on the themes and tropes of Palestinian poetry. As outlined in Chapter IV, by the late 1970s, the Palestinian cause had come to the attention of the wider world and the PLO began to gain a higher political profile. However, after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the expulsion of the PLO, who went into exile in Tunisia, their leadership-status in the Palestinian community declined. Rashid Khalidi observes that as a result of the ‘declining status of the PLO in the Arab world’, the Palestinian cause might also have continued to decline were it not the outbreak of the *intifādah* which ‘galvanised the Palestinian people’ inside the territories as opposed to politicians and intellectuals in exile (Khalidi 1997, 201). Localised organisation and direction began to spring up inside the territories themselves therefore the *intifādah* may have presented a challenge to PLO control inside occupied Palestine (see Tamari 1999). As Khalidi (1997) observes the *intifādah* took the PLO leadership entirely by surprise and established Palestine itself, rather than the Diaspora, as the centre of Palestinian politics.

One of the many significant political developments during the period was the meeting in Algiers in 1987 of the Palestine National Council, at which time they voted in favour of a settlement with Israel on the basis of UN Resolutions 242 and 338 (see Said

1995, 141). This became known as the 'Peace for Land' proposal. Said remarks that 'all the Middle Eastern Arab countries were long on record as desiring peace through negotiations', on the pretext that: 'an exchange of land occupied by Israel in 1967 would yield full peace' (Said 1994, xxviii). Said makes the further point that the Palestine National Council recognised Israel in 1988 'having implicitly done so in 1974' (Said 1995, xxvii). Thus in respect of the Algiers conference, Said observes that: 'we [Palestinians] stood by our principles of self-determination and self respect in a decent, morally defensible and politically acceptable way' (Said 1994, 369).

By 1988 King Hussein of Jordan had withdrawn his claims to the West Bank (Said 1989, 31). This undoubtedly removed any possible repetition of events such as the 1970 clashes between Palestinian militants and the Jordanian armed forces and further opened the way for a declaration of Palestinian independence. In 1988, the Palestinian National Council in Algiers issued the Palestinian Declaration of Independence (see Boyle 2003, 42). Interestingly, this document was written with the assistance of Palestinian poet Mah by this time, had become a member of the PLO's executive committee, once again underscoring the nexus of culture and political commitment in terms of the poet's role in respect of both aspects of national aspiration (Said 1995, xxiv). The declaration of statehood, Said remarks: 'spelled out principles of equality, mutuality, and social justice far in advance of anything in the region' and there was 'absolute clarity in speaking of a peaceful settlement to the conflict' (Said 1989, 35). Nevertheless, Said argues that the attacks and insults heaped on the Council's results: 'both by Israel and the usual array of U.S. "experts," signifies consternation; clearly, the more when Palestinians take responsible and realistic positions, the less acceptable they

become, not just because Palestinians want peace, but because official Israel does not know what to do when peace is offered it' (Said 1989, 35).

The first 'Gulf' War (1990) also took place during this period and the provisional government of Palestine refused to join the military 'coalition' against Iraq. However, as Francis Boyle points out 'they worked with Libya and Jordan to produce a peaceful resolution of this inter-Arab dispute' a project for which they were: 'vilified by the United States government and western media sources' (Boyle 2003, 20). In 1991, the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference was attended by a Palestinian delegation. Nevertheless as Khalidi (1997) observes, like the Algiers Conference, the Madrid conference changed little on the ground in Palestine but it did have symbolic importance in terms of asserting Palestinian national identity (Khalidi 1997:201). However, Khalidi (1997) remarks in spite of these achievements in terms of political profile and pretexts for peace: 'the Palestinian Authority have not got a national government, nor have independence or statehood for Palestine been conceded by Israel in any agreements it has signed' (Khalidi 1997, 202).

Colonialism and the *Intifādah*

In Said's estimation, the first Palestinian *intifādah* was: 'one of the great anti colonial insurrections of the modern period' (Said 1994, xxvii). In 1979 the Palestine National Council had rejected what they termed 'Zionist settler colonialism in our land' a remark that certainly supports Said's contention above (See Chapter IV). Many historians and critical thinkers agree that Zionism demonstrated the trappings of a colonial power. Zionism, as Shafir and Pelev (1999) argue, needed to 'seek out a territory for immigration

and colonization'. As a settlement movement therefore, Zionism bears important similarities to other European overseas colonial societies that were established through 'territorial struggle with native peoples' (Shafir and Pelev 1999, 93).

Pappe also observes that as a mass response to the occupation and its mechanics the *intifādah* had all the makings of an 'anti-colonialist movement' (Pappe 1999, 232). Pappe points out several antecedent factors in terms of the uprising. The Israeli government controlled and interfered in all aspects of Palestinian life under occupation, and the continued 'creeping annexation' of Palestinian lands and the expansion of Jewish settlements were undoubtedly alarming to Palestinians on the ground. So too was the 'absorption of the surplus Palestinian workforce into the Israeli economy' in what Pappe describes as a: 'power structure that enabled Israel to exploit to the full whatever the Occupied Territories had to offer' including the dumping of Israeli products into the territories and 'undercutting local factories and producers' (Pappe 1999, 233). Thus economic as well as political privations undoubtedly contributed to unrest among the occupied populations.

As discussed in Chapter IV, postcolonial theory engages with the idea that colonised societies are generally subjugated to the political and economic requirements of the colonial centre. In the present time, the Israeli human rights group Yesh Din accuses the Israeli powers that be, of exploitation of Palestinian resources in respect of mining in the West Bank, and has raised a petition against what that organisation terms:

The illegal practice of brutal economic exploitation of a conquered territory to serve the exclusive economic needs of the occupying power that bluntly and directly violates basic principles of customary international law. Israel is transferring natural resources from the West Bank for Israeli benefit, and this is absolutely prohibited not

only under international law but according to Israeli Supreme Court rulings," says Michael Sfar, lawyer for Yesh Din, which brought the case to Israel's high court. This is illegal transfer of land in the most literal of senses.

<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article10499.shtml>

The very fact that the above statement is to be found on the information 'superhighway' via the electronic intifadah website is rather ironic. Like the superhighway in Ashrawi's poem 'Economics', this superhighway is another western importation, but one which has been subverted by the Palestinian community for its own purposes. As a medium of mass communication this has at least the potential to become a world-wide 'weapon of mass instruction' in terms of the nature and trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for those who are disposed to learn.

The statement by Yesh Din above, underscores the interpretation of the *intifādah* as an anti-colonial movement. The action itself (mining) amounts to the literal removal of the land but it is also a metaphor for removal of the ammunition for Palestinians slings (stones) in their asymmetrical struggle against the Israeli military Goliath. The removal of these very potent symbols of the first Palestinian *intifādah* (and the second *intifādah* in the year 2000), is a metaphor that can be extrapolated to include the virtual annihilation of the Palestinian claim, even to the very ground beneath their feet.

Repression of the *intifādah* was widespread and brutal. In the first year of the intifada, Pappé opines, four hundred Palestinians were killed and tens of thousands wounded, including women and children: 'victims of live ammunition, rubber bullets and systematic beatings' (Pappé 1999, 236). Systematic beatings were an aspect of the Israeli policy of 'breaking their bones' in order to break their will (see for example Mattar 2000). The Palestinian (and Jewish) poetry of the period deals with many such instances.

The *intifādah* also thrust the role of women and mothers into the limelight once again. The profile of women in the *intifādah* was such that they frequently protected (or attempted to protect) the young men or prevent their arrest. These were ordinary women, not fighters trained in the camps (see for example Antonius 1979). The action itself is a very literal (re)enactment of Hanan Ashrawi's 1976 poem 'Demonstration', wherein the speaker calls on the mothers of the Palestinian dead to take heart: 'mother of the martyr rejoice/all youths are your children' (see Chapter III). This is a powerful metaphorical trope of the confluence of culture (in terms of motherhood) and commitment during a time of conflict.

On a more positive note, Said points out a further important aspect of the *intifādah*, the fact that: 'it brought the three major sectors of the Palestinian people together' in a unified effort of protest and resistance. This meant that for the first time: 'political action was coordinated between Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line' (Pappe 1999, 236). The Israeli Palestinians organised strikes and protests in solidarity with the people of the Ghāza Strip and West Bank. Together with the Palestinians of the Diaspora, and these three strands Said remarks 'constitute a nation in exile' and (Said 1995, 137).

Oslo and After

The period under discussion culminated in the Declaration of Principles in 1993 signed by Israel and the PLO under the auspices of the United States government and these 'interim arrangements' became known as the Oslo Accords (see Said 1994, xxxiv). In the aftermath of Oslo, Said (2001) documents the changing conditions of Palestinian political

life due to what he terms the ‘defanging, the terrible transformation of what was a secular, critical and hopeful movement for liberation and change into a miserably confined, sordidly run West Bank/Gaza entity as a result of this peace process’ (Said 2001a, xxxv). Consequently, Palestinians have no sense of certainty in respect of statehood and the nightmare for Palestinians, as Khalidi sees it, is that these ‘interim arrangements’ will become the basis for the final status of the West Bank and Ghāzā Strip’ and the Bantustan system now in place there. Khalidi describes this entity as a: ‘misshapen and grotesque creation’ which might be all that results in terms of Palestinian statehood, ‘one with a flag, postage stamps... ambassadors and Presidential motorcades, but nothing resembling exclusive jurisdiction over most the contiguous territory’ of these areas, nor have they anything ‘recognisable in the real world as sovereignty’ (Khalidi 1997, 202).

This post-Oslo image of Palestine is one with which Francis Boyle (2003) concurs: ‘the Oslo Agreement of 1993’, Boyle remarks, ‘called for the imposition of an apartheid-like Bantustan system upon the Palestinian people’ (Boyle 2003, 21). This system is reflected in the already-noted division of the West Bank into Areas A, B and C. The latter area works to separate the Palestinian controlled areas from each other in such a way that none are contiguous. In order to cross from one isolated island to another, it is necessary to pass through Israeli-controlled territory with its network of Jewish settlements, Israeli-only roads, roadblocks, agricultural gates, checkpoints, permanent and mobile, which in the present time, are concealed from view behind the now infamous ‘wall’ encircling the West Bank. In respect of the Jewish settlements, which the Israeli journalist David Grossman describes as ‘armed and alienated enclaves’, he makes this

further observation that: ‘the great majority of the settlements are located where they are in order to prevent any chance of a future peace treaty ... to frustrate the creation of a territorially contiguous Palestinian state’ (Grossman 2003, 92). In light of the ongoing Israeli occupation, and the existence and growth of Jewish ‘settler enclaves’ in the Palestinian Territories to the present, postcolonial theory, as stated in the introduction, is both ‘utilitarian and apposite’, it is a particularly cogent approach to the study of Palestinian poetry as a cultural form of anti-colonial resistance and as a vehicle for critique of the political.

A very brief examination of the poetry of Sādi Yūsuf and Tony Harrison in Chapter IV, demonstrated that poetry has the ability to condense and deftly express the human capacity to inflict suffering, but poetry, as in that of Chilean poet Victor Jara and Jewish poet Yehuda Amichai for example, also documents the human capacity to endure suffering. Nowhere is this endurance more obvious than in the Palestinian poetry of the first *intifādah* period. The poetry to be discussed in this chapter exhibits at times a refreshingly warm spirit of humanity far in excess of what a reader might expect at a time of such heightened tension and dramatic confrontation between unequal opposing forces. At such times, as Hughes remarked, we ‘give more serious weight to the words of a country’s poets than to the words of its politicians’ (Hughes in Weissbort 2005, 187). In the light of Hughes’ words, poetry can be regarded as a cultural expression of humanity, one that both engages with and also transcends the political, thus Palestinian poetry can be regarded as providing a cogent and insightful look at the real character and spirit of the Palestinian people.

Section 1: Too Long a Sacrifice

The ‘fear’ expressed by Anton Shammās in the following poem from the early 1980s, reflects the poet’s fear that his poetry may be in danger of losing its efficacy, of losing its position as the ‘provocative force’ of his people:

I fear my words will drop from me
Into the streets one day.
Children will pick them up ...
Then how will the poem come? (Al-Jayussi 1992, 301)

As the poet imagines his words falling to the street, his vatic insight appears to predict his own displacement. The words did indeed rise from the ground as stones in the hands of the Palestinian young men, but they did not do so by ‘prior agreement’, the mood of poet and people did not, on this occasion immediately ‘coincide’ (see Adūnis, Introduction). The fear that words have lost their currency, that they have been devalued somehow by the stone, or at least they failed to anticipate the revolt, is expressed by several poets during this period.

Fear is a key instrument in effective domination and control. As Michel Foucault (1977) observed, torture and public execution have long been used as a sign of the ruler’s authority and of his power to inscribe that authority on the body of the subject. Said (1989) reports that during the *intifādah* ‘fear was forbidden and the ‘stone was taken up’ in the belief that ‘the occupation had to end’ (Said 1989, 30). But it was perhaps rather the expression of that fear which was forbidden, for even trained soldiers must learn to forego fear, or at least sublimate fear for a more acceptable emotional response in the context of conflict i.e. courage. When the Irish balladeer Dominic Behan wrote in his

song *The Patriot Game* that: ‘the love of one’s country is a terrible thing/it banishes fear with speed of flame’, he underscored that sublimation process which surely underlies heroic behaviour or contributes to a culture of such behaviour in the context of conflict (See Behan <http://www.triskelle.eu/lyrics/patriotgame.php?index=080.010.060.030>). The love of the homeland, and all that connotes, is a powerful motivational force when that homeland appears threatened, a force that inspires professional and volunteer armies alike, as well as ordinary citizens who take to the streets, the barricades and the stone in defence of their way of life, or to change it when that way of life has become intolerable.

The idea that continuous frustration and deferral of goals eventually leads to anger and that this anger very often leads to violence has been extensively documented by the disciplines of sociology and psychology. Thus, it should not be surprising that for Palestinians ‘too long a sacrifice’ in respect of the continued frustration of their goals and aspirations should, to borrow the words of W.B. Yeats, make ‘a stone of the heart’ (Yeats 1991, 121). The stones in the hands of Palestinian youth are an apt metaphorical externalisation of this internal trauma. This is the stone that ‘troubles the living stream’, the stone that disturbs the order of things and takes the world, politicians and even poets, by surprise. As a trope the stone informs the Syrian poet Nizār Qabbānī’s ‘Children of the Stones’. In 1988 Qabbānī’ wrote:

The children of the stones
Have scattered our papers
Spilled ink on our clothes
Mocked the banality of old texts ... (Cited in Ali, 141)

Qabānī's poem expresses the concern that the stone in the hands of Palestinian *shabāb* (youth) makes rhetoric redundant, and challenges the outmoded political and indeed poetic rhetoric and in its place institutes 'direct action' a new phase of resistance with which language must hurry to catch up. Thus, the poetic journey from rubble to stones, documented in preceding chapters, can now be read as a metaphorical adumbration of the first *intifādah*. For poet and politician alike, it must have appeared that the *shabāb*, together with civilian committees and organisations, had indeed become the new 'provocative force' of their communities and that their symbol, the stone, had superseded the word as the new 'weapon of mass instruction' (see Chapter II). This new set of instructions for Palestinian independence, written in 'stones' by Palestinian youth, was recognised by Fadwā T

Fādā, a whole into the poem Martyrs of th

'falcons' of the uprising, she wrote:

They drew up the map of the road to life
 They paved it with precious stones ...
 They raised their hearts as stones on their palms ...
 They died standing.

(See Tuqan at <http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/mideastaffairs/intifada.htm>)

As Christopher Caudwell (1937) once remarked: 'we measure the power of the word by the degree of change [wrought by the words] words are the money of the ideological market of mankind' and the value of words 'exists only in the exchange' (Caudwell 1937, 161). The concern among poets that 'words' are inadequate in the face of the 'direct action' of the *intifādah* is also expressed by Palestinian poet Rāsīm al-Madhūn in his poem 'Peace be Upon'. It is in one sense, a reflection of the idea that

words must ultimately be supported by willingness to action (and vice versa) and the recognition that with the outbreak of the *intifādah* the exchange-value of ‘words’, the currency of politics and resistance, began to fluctuate. The speaker of al-Madhūn’s poem asks:

Is poetry of any value in the alleys of massacre?
Are words of use when the veins burst?
As long as the massacre masters the scene,
Our spiced and graceful words
Stand stuck on the sidewalks of time ...
Grasping at air. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 208)

The poem implicitly asks: have poets and politicians been made redundant by the *intifādah*? Have poets been sidelined on the ‘sidewalks of time’ and lost their position as the ‘provocative force’ of the people. If the *intifādah* (and its repression) has become the new communal narrative that ‘masters the scene’, do words then become merely a form of aesthetic ornamentation the intrinsic value of which is simply that of embellishment ‘spiced and graceful’? If so, do words have any real agency and must they now struggle against their deflation in the ideological marketplace ‘grasping at air’? The implication is that if the massacre masters the scene and inertia masters the poetic imagination.... ‘then how will the poem come?’

The ‘poetic imagination’, Mourid Barghouti remarks, is the construction of a personal perception of lived experience ‘a new version of reality’ and poetic language is an attempt to ‘restore to each word its specificity’ and to ‘establish new relations among words to create a fresh perception of things’ (Barghouti 2003 45). This, Barghouti

claims, is why the poetic imagination becomes: ‘an act of resistance par excellence’ (Barghouti 2003 45). In emulation of the *intifādah*, the poetic imagination must work to ‘shake off’ its inertia, a symptom of the poet’s astonishment at the outbreak he/she failed to foresee. The poetic imagination abets the intellectual (re)construction of the poet as the ‘provocative force’ and facilitates the reconciliation between words and actions, a reversal of roles that sees the *intifādah* become the provocative force of the poets. This is not to suggest that there had been definite a split between these two forms of resistance, but rather that the *intifādah* very likely lent new impetus and images to fuel not only the poetic, but also the political imagination. It could be argued for example that the *intifādah* fuelled the formulation of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence. As Said (1989) remarks:

The intifada's momentum and its ability to have created a clear civil alternative to the Israeli occupation regime, now necessitated a definitive statement by the PNC [Palestine National Council] of support for the intifada as an end-to-occupation and relatively non-violent movement. This required an unambiguous claim for Palestinian sovereignty on whatever Palestinian territories were to be vacated by the occupation. (Said 1989, 32)

If history is written by the victors, then it is likely that the narrative of the vanquished is often relegated to the historical margins. However, not only can it survive in the poetic imagination, but the poetic imagination can attempt to interpolate this marginalised narrative back into the historical metanarrative, or at very least, it is there to be discovered as an alternative and engaging cultural source of the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people. While history/time is often seen as cyclical, the poetic

imagination of the committed poet can interrupt the cycle and attempt to alter its course. This belief in the power of poetry is reflected in Darwīsh's poem 'A Rhyme for the Odes', when the speaker of that poem declares: 'so let me brandish my ode to break the cycle of time' (Darwish 2003, 93).

Within the confluence of forces exerting pressure on composition, maintaining the balance between form (aesthetic) and function (resistance) must always be a concern of the politically committed poet. In 'Poetic Regulations', Darwīsh explores the potential reification of poetry: 'the poem is "above" and can teach me whatever it wishes ... it can wed me to itself for a while' the speaker observes (Darwish 2003, 85). That a poem can escape its context and achieve wider aesthetic appeal is a given, but the speaker contrasts this reification with the importance of rootedness: 'my father is "below", carrying a thousand-year old olive tree' (Darwish 2003, 85). According to the principle of 'as above so below', subject and object; microcosm and macrocosm are each a reflection of the other and thus the poet/speaker has: 'a language in heaven and another language on earth', a language of purely aesthetic purpose and another language grounded in the socio-political context of the poem's production. At the outbreak of the *intifādah*, the challenge of the poetic imagination was to make these languages synchronous.

The synchronicity between languages, the purely aesthetic and the language of context is often to be found in the fine details of the poem. In the political context Said observes that details are what our struggle is all about. Why he asks: 'should a Palestinian farmer require a permit to plant a new olive tree on his land, whereas a Jewish settler can do what he wishes on land expropriated from the Palestinian?' (Said 1989, 39). An examination of the 'detail' in Darwīsh's poem mirrors this very example that Said tenders

here. It is in the fine ‘detail’ of this poem ‘*carrying* a thousand year old olive tree’ that metaphor and context, the languages of ‘above’ and ‘below’ converge, namely that the father must balance ‘carry’ his olive tree until a permit to plant it is granted and the poet must balance the degree of valence between aesthetics and context. Thus Darwīsh’s poem re-tells the political story told by Said, and although their language is different, it is none the less synchronous.

Murīd Barghūfī makes this apposite observation in respect of committed poetry and aesthetic valence when he states that: ‘the suffering of a nation should not be used as a pretext to justify the mediocre’ (Barghouti 2003, 43). This danger for poets pointed by Barghūfī is such that a poet at the centre of this confluence may be in danger of putting his ‘irreplaceable singularity in jeopardy and of having his gift itself deformed into a loudspeaker’ (Barghouti 2003, 43). The personal subjectivity of the poet may become tangential, thus Darwīsh in ‘Poetic regulations’ observes:

The poem is in my hands and can run stories through her hands,
But ever since I embraced the poem, I squandered my soul
And then asked who am I? who am I? (Darwish 2003, 86)

However, Barghūfī continues: ‘the majority of us are aware’ that [even in the act of resistance] we must resist military metre, simplistic imagery and khaki poems’ (Barghouti 2003, 43). The poet, apart from his/her role as ‘the provocative force’ of his/her community, also has a commitment to poetry which necessitates his/her adherence to the preservation of aesthetic valence. This is especially significant in times of conflict when poetry as cultural production can become permeated by the idea of commitment and then there arises a danger of slippage into ‘military metre and khaki poems’, with the

risk of turning poetry into mere propaganda. Furthermore, of what use are ‘khaki poems’ as the speaker of al-Madhūn’s poem above opines, when the ‘massacre masters the scene’, which in turn elicits the question, what good is art at all in such circumstances? Like Picasso’s painting ‘Guernica’ for example, which gives primacy to the visual imagination (of the viewer) in eliciting the horror of the massacre, the language of the poem must also master and exceed any completely realistic representation of the actual horror of the scene. On the other hand, the resistance poem itself can become a reified concept and the poet, in his/her personal aesthetic struggle, can be accused of abandonment of the ‘cause’ if he/she is seen as deviating in any way from political commitment. Perhaps this is what the title of Darwīsh’s 1995 collection titled ‘Why Have You Left the Horse Alone’ infers.

In this same collection Darwīsh takes a retrospective look at the conflict and his own history within it, therefore it thematically connects to Chapter 1, and in this aspect it is a fitting poem with which to begin analysis of the poetry of the period. The tone of the poem borders on the pastoral, in the sense that it depicts a time of natural and political innocence and emits none of the exuberance or stridency associated with much of the early resistance poetry, including Darwīsh’s own ‘Identity Card’ for instance (see Chapter II). The poem is also significant in that its tonal quality and thematic engagement is not what a reader might expect to find in the poetry of the *intifādah* period.

‘I did not yet know my mother’s way of life’ the speaker of ‘The Kind-Hearted Villagers’ remarks, ‘when the ships came in from the sea’ (Darwish 2003, 61). This undoubtedly links the arrival of the Jewish newcomers with the Darwīsh’s own flight with his family from their village of Barweh. While he was as yet too young to fully

appreciate his own culture's 'way of life', and yet too young to experience the 'stone' in the heart of Palestinian national aspirations, he instinctively responded, as an infant or domestic animal would, to familiar, native smells:

I knew the scent of tobacco in my grandfather's *aba*,
And ever since I was born here, all at once, like a domestic animal,
I knew the eternal smell of coffee. (Dawish 2003, 61)

Like any people who have been persecuted and dispossessed, the speaker of Darwish's poem makes this observation: 'We too, cry when we fall to the earth's rim'. When the ships arrived these 'kind-hearted villagers' had not built a myth around their ancient history: 'we don't make of our dust a kingdom' nor did they covet what did not belong to them 'our dreams do not gaze on other people's grapevines' (Darwish 2003, 61). The Palestinian natives had no need to create myths of possession, being already in possession of the land as villagers and farmers:

My name had no feathers
so I could not fly beyond midday
April's warmth was like the balalaikas of our passing visitors
It caused us to fly like doves. (Darwish 2003, 61)

The trope of naming employed by the speaker 'my name had no feathers', indicates that in the eyes of world they were merely 'unnamed' Arabs and therefore relatively unimportant in the historical scheme of things. Their 'names' had little or no kudos in world politics consequently the balalaikas, and the songs of possession that they accompanied during 'April's warmth' (the April 1948 war), had little trouble in consolidating the Zionist dream. This dream caused so many Palestinian villagers to 'fly

like doves' thus in the 'eternal saga of pain', the speaker observes, the pain of the nameless Palestinians has become 'the [silent] teardrop in the dove's cooing', in the resounding clamour of these balalaikas, Palestinian pain was rendered inaudible to the world.

Yet, like natives people everywhere, they have innate knowledge of the land they inhabit: 'we have things to tell the woman stranger/about the land she embroiders on her scarf' (Darwish 2003, 62). The pastoral tone of the following lines delivers the message of Palestinian possession with quiet and unobtrusive assurance, without the necessity for clamour:

When the ships came in from the sea,
This place was held together only by trees.
We were feeding our cows in their enclosures
And organising our days in closets made by our own hands. (Darwish 2003, 62)

Although the land of Palestine was not a nation state in the modern sense, as a part of Greater Syria it was physically held together by the 'roots' of Arabness and Arab Nationalism. It was held together psychically by native cultivation and animal husbandry in a society ordered and shaped by the native's 'own hands'. And as Khalidi (1997) opines, it was the peasants, villagers and farmers, in their close proximity to the land: 'who first understood the nature of the process of colonization affecting Palestine' (see Chapter 1) a process which would ultimately lead to their dispossession:

We too boarded the ships, entertained by
The radiance of the emerald in the olive at night,
And by dogs barking at a fleeting moon above the church tower. (Darwish 2003, 62)

The third line above is an allusion to the ‘moon’ card of the Tarot (long used for divination) which in terms of divination signifies disruption, especially in respect of the house or home. But this divination was seen as merely ‘entertainment’ and as nothing to be feared, and in their innocence they believed the disruption would be temporary and that they would soon return to their homes. But the Palestinian natives were the excess cargo, an Arab population that was excess to the burgeoning Jewish state and marked in advance for transfer (See Chapter 1 in respect of Hertzl’s diary). ‘Yet we were unafraid’ the speaker remarks in the closing lines of the poem:

For our childhood had not boarded with us...
Soon we’ll go back to our house
When the ships unload their excess cargo. (Darwish 2003, 62)

With this retrospective look, the speaker can now see clearly the situational irony in which Palestinians found themselves in 1948. That the ships unloaded their ‘excess cargo’ in either the Ghāzā Strip or Lebanon is implicit here, and is a significant antecedent factor in terms of the continuing struggle for Palestinian statehood and the ongoing conflict. The ‘children of the stones’ are the children and grandchildren of this ‘excess cargo’, unloaded to refugee camps, Jordanian rule in the West Bank, exile in various Arab countries and beyond or second-class citizenship if they remained in the new state of Israel. The overall tone of the poem is regretful and in a sense the absence of the stridency and vehemence associated with earlier poetry, Abū Salmā’s ‘We Will Return’, or Tawfīq Zayyād’s ‘Hear we shall Stay’, for example, is recognition of the naïveté of Palestinian hopes of return and the development of a more sophisticated

linguistic approach to poetic resistance, one that establishes with calm assurance the justice of the Palestinian cause.

In his poem 'Empty Words', the Palestinian poet Tāhā Muh □ ānmed Al īals expresses the sense of failure in respect of words to either anticipate or equal the commitment of the ordinary people to the *intifādah*. The vehicle he chooses to portray this failure is his (poetry) notebook and the absence of those vatic records that it should contain:

Ah, little notebook ...
I've protected you
From dampness and rodents
And entrusted you with
My sadness and fear,
And my dreams – ... (Ali 2007, 109)

The absence of these records demonstrates an instance of slippage in terms of the vatic nature of poetry. In 'exchange' for his care of this space for storing words, the speaker declares that he has received only 'disobedience and 'betrayal'. Because of this betrayal, the poet/speaker is unprepared to analyse the energy and fervour of the revolt now surrounding him, he wishes therefore to be a stone: 'if only I were a rock on hill/ unable to see or hear' (Ali 2007, 109). Perhaps he has lost the poetic vision and with it the ability of to be the 'provocative force' of his community, this ability is now in the stones in the hands of 'Jerusalem's children'. For otherwise the speaker states:

where is the passage
whose tenor is this:
I wish I could be

a rock on a hill
which the young men
from Hebron explode
and offer as a gift to Jerusalem's children,
ammunition for their palms and slings! (Ali 2007, 109)

As Issa Boullata (1999) observes in his discussion of the poetry of Darwīsh, the wish to be as unfeeling as a stone resonates with the Arab literary heritage and in particular with the pre-Islamic poet Tamīm ibn Muqbil: 'how good life would be if man were a stone/from whom events bounce while he remains collected' (Boullata 1999, 166, note 20). But this is not the kind of rock the speaker wishes to be. That the stone he wishes to be is located at Hebron is significant. Hebron is the location of the tombs of the patriarch Abraham and his family, sacred to the three main religions of the region, a space where Muslims and Jews worshipped adjacently. As a trope therefore, Hebron invokes the primacy of the geographical, for Hebron, like Jerusalem is also an increasingly contested space which has seen the influx of a Jewish settler population since 1967.

In 1994, a massacre of Muslim worshipers at the Ibrāhīmī Mosque was carried out by the American settler Baruch Goldstein, a hero of the Jewish settler community. It is thought that Goldstein's attack was in retaliation for the deaths of several of Hebron's Jewish inhabitants murdered during the 1929 riots. As a retaliatory act, it ignores the hundreds of Jews protected by their Arab neighbours during the riots, as well as the executions of the men accused (two of whom were from the Hebron area). This was commemorated by Ibrāhīm T anti-colonial poem 'Red Tuesday' (see Chapter 1). It is thought that the riots broke out when rumours reached Hebron that the Muslim holy site, the Harām al-Sharīf in Jerusalem was under attack by Jews. Events in

Jerusalem in the year 2000 namely, Ariel Sharon's march up to the Harām al-Sharīf, accompanied by armed police, would also provide the spark that ignited the second Palestinian *intifādah*.

Alī's poem highlights the asymmetrical power relationship between the resisters and the military, that of bare hands 'palms', and primitive weapons 'slings', against modern armaments. The speaker/poet has also failed to foresee the potential of the people to attempt to liberate themselves independently of the 'provocative' words of the poets or the language of partisan politics. Where, in the futile words of his notebook, the speaker asks, is the passage that should have predicted the uprising:

And where is the passage
In which I wanted
To a be rock on a hill
Gazing out from on high
Hundreds of years from now
Over hordes
Of masked liberators! (Ali 2007, 111)

As a trope, the 'rock' in the context of Alī's poem also resonates with the earlier poetry, for example 'his good luck has split the rock' (partitioned the land) remarked the speaker of Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā's poem, 'Diary of the Epidemic Year'. Although the rock itself is absent, he clings to it with his memory for which he receives only mocking irony, as the speaker of Samīh al-Qāsim's poem 'Embargo Against Death' observed 'nations who have had better luck/have mocked how I cling to my rock' (al-Qasim in De Young 1992, 191).

At the close of Ali's poem the speaker recalls where it all began; the roots of the present conflict, the 'split rock' are contained in the past lost to the speaker who dreams of being re-united with that absent rock 'on a hill along the Carmel':

to whom I bade farewell
at the harbour pier
in Haifa forty years ago
and still
I await her return ... (Ali 2007, 111)

It is here on Mount Carmel overlooking Haifa that the speaker remembers what he refers to as 'the source of all my sadness', the first exodus and the forced departure of 'her' (the people and the land) who was Palestine. It is here 'gazing out over the waves', that the speaker learns to perfect 'the art of waiting', for the return to the rock and for the inertia to the imagination (the notebook) to catch up with the hordes of masked liberators. If the power of the word is measured by the degree of change, then the speaker's words are futile, their exchange value is diminished. The concern among poets that 'words' are inadequate in the face of the 'direct action' of the *intifādah* is symbolised in the betrayal of the poet by his notebook (poetic imagination) is a challenge to return to commitment: 'is it fair' he asks:

That you conceal
what you cancel and erase,
simply because it consists
of empty words –
which frighten no enemy
and offer no hope to a friend? (Ali 2007, 113)

At the outbreak of the *intifādah* Said observed that: ‘a population of almost two million unarmed Palestinians were thrust in front of television audiences of the West, and with them the images of Israeli soldiers who were seen ‘beating and shooting’ them (Said 1995, xx). This enabled Palestinians to some extent, break free of the image of ‘skulking terrorists’ and they began to acquire (albeit forty years of their original dispossession) ‘the status of a people dispossessed’ (Said 1995, xx). Images of the *intifādah* might have similarly affected Jewish/Israelis viewers as well as Israeli poets in a new way also. For this reason it is constructive to look at some of their work here, not least for the purpose of corroborating the claims and critical interpretations of the Palestinian resistance poetry under discussion. The Jewish Israeli poet Dan Almagor’s anti-occupation poetry provides the ardent response that the reader might have expected from the Palestinian poetry of the period.

In a counterpoint to the representation of Palestinians as a nation of ‘skulking terrorists’, Almagor’s poem ‘In My Shoes’, sees his Palestinian counterpart not in political figures such as Yāsir ‘Arafāt and the dark figure of Abū Nidāl (the latter was expelled from al-Fatah in the mid-seventies and organised his own international guerrilla group) but a mirror image in terms of their victimhood. The narrator of Almagor’s poem constructs for the reader an image of the only Israeli Palestinian with whom he has ever conversed ‘in my language, of course’ the speaker ironically remarks. In terms of the subaltern subject, the importance of language as a point of entry into the dominant colonial discourse is here underscored by the speaker. This is all the more significant in terms of Walid’s status as an Israeli Arab, as it highlights the problematic of employing Hebrew as the chosen language of Israeli Arab writers, Anton Shammās and Imīl Habībī

for instance who both write in Hebrew. In respect of some Palestinian writers, this facet of ‘normalisation’ is sometimes seen as simply the internalisation of colonial values and mores, but it is nevertheless effective in terms of appealing to a wider (Israeli) audience and in the practice of challenging the colonial authority on its own terms. Nevertheless, it does highlight colonial enculturation of the native which often occludes the political, economic and representational violence by which this may have been brought about, namely, the forced accommodation of colonial mores, aesthetics and especially language in order to participate in that society.

As previously discussed, ‘naming’ as well as being a trope of possession is a fundamental aspect of cultural and social exchange (See Chapter III). The Palestinian character ‘Walid’ is named by the speaker and his humanity is immediately established and skilfully drawn through a series of incongruities and contrasts. Walid is described as an intelligent fellow who speaks ‘passable Hebrew’ and who has ‘a degree in accounting’ and also as a cultured individual who reads ‘classical Arab poetry, philosophy and religious works’ (Almagor 1989, 5). This dynamic mode of characterisation is also employed to demonstrate Walid’s inferior position *vis a vis* his Israeli citizenship. The speaker observes that Walid:

Uses his education in our local supermarket
Weighing vegetables and making home deliveries.
In his spare time he washes cars or cleans apartments. (Almagor 1989, 5)

The speaker of Almagor’s poem recognises the subaltern status of the Palestinian Arab in terms of the economic deprivation he experiences under Israeli rule. The political

subalternity of Palestinians living in Israel has also been confirmed by Shafir and Pelev (1999) for example, who have observed that the secondary status of Palestinians was formalised in 1985 (just two years before the outbreak of the *intifādah*) by an amendment to laws governing election to the Knesset (Shafir and Pelev 1999, 93). The speaker sees a humble Palestinian, grateful for any handouts, but this kind of habitual debasement, an existence that relies on the goodwill of the individual Israeli, must inevitably lead to frustration since the politics and the mechanics of occupation ensure that Walid's life (and the lives of ordinary Palestinians like him) continues to be governed by uncertainty:

He has a family to keep and might not be able to come
Tomorrow
There might be a curfew
Or he might find himself 'inside' like his brother
Six months administrative detention without trial
Trucks turned up suddenly with soldiers without uniforms
And loaded a few of his cousins – (our cousins). (Almagor 1989, 5)

These are 'minor incidents' the speaker ironically observes, 'not what you would call atrocities' (Almagor 1989, 5). Of course it is left to the reader to decide whether or not it is the quotidian nature of such incidents that make them atrocious. Not only does the speaker point to the shared humanity and reverse victimhood that obtains between them but also in respect of Arab Jews at least, he acknowledges their shared Semitic heritage as 'our cousins'. As the speaker contemplates the parcels of second-hand clothes he has given to Walid for his relatives, a donation which Walid 'accepts gratefully', he underscores the reversal of fortune that obtains between them as individuals which can then be extrapolated to their respective communities:

How strange to think that someone, somewhere
In Walid's village near Nablus
Is wearing my shoes now
Once, not so very long ago
I was in *his* shoes. (italics in original, Almagor 1989, 5)

Almagor, who is a renowned Israeli Jewish writer and academic, had little success in getting his anti-occupation poetry published in the Israeli media which according to the journal *Middle East Report* (in which they appear in this instance) would: 'normally compete for the opportunity to feature his compositions' (see Almagor <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3012843>). This reflects on certain features of the postcolonial context, the idea of 'permission to narrate' discussed in Chapter III. Poetry (including Israeli poetry) is apparently treated as suspect, or subversive. This underscores once again, the power of poetry as a vehicle for narrating the unnameable, in this instance, the propensity for victims of violence and oppression (Jews) to victimise and oppress in their turn, the naming of which often results (for critics of Israeli policy) in accusations of anti-Semitism (see for example Grubach 1988).

As discussed in Chapter II, poetry forces the reader to mentally conjure an event or experience, and in the process making it a product of the individual psychology of each new reader. Although poetic language is a highly constructed language, the meaning of that language is relatively unmediated. Once it has left the poet, is it out of his control. Darwish makes this observation through the speaker of his poem 'Poetic Regulations' who remarks: 'the poem leaves me and heads for port whose sailors love wine and never return twice to the same woman' (Darwish 2003, 86). If one continues to read the intrinsic meaning of Almagor's poem from that point at which it acknowledges the

reversal of roles 'in his shoes', then the reader can extrapolate to Said (1986) who in his observation of Palestinian life, remarked that despite inheriting the Hitlerian legacy, it is: 'Palestinians, and not Jews, who today are marked with special identity cards, license plates and pales of settlement' (Said 1994, 340).

The Palestinian poet, Hanan Ashrawi, has been a voice for her people in the political as well as the cultural arena. In her poem 'Death by Burial' (1988), Ashrawi registers an episode of brutal suppression during the first *intifādah*. The poem is based on an actual incident which occurred in the second year of the *intifādah* in which four Palestinian men were buried alive by Israeli soldiers, but were rescued by the nearby villagers after the soldiers had left. The poem opens with an image of the land/earth which stands in stark opposition to the fecund, fruitful earth of the idealised homeland, an image which was prevalent in much of the earlier poetry:

This plot is not one
Fit for planting
Here the earth is
Hard, dry, grating – (Al-Jayussi 1992, 339)

The poem enables the speaker/survivor to share the horror of this experience with the reader. This was undoubtedly an experience which would make a stone of the staunchest of hearts, or should it be considered as just another 'minor incident' as Almagor ironically suggested:

I close my eyes, dust
Chokes my throat
I never knew earth
could be so heavy. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 339)

‘I never knew earth could be so heavy’, the speaker says, nor indeed should anyone know the heaviness of their own grave while they are still alive. But what is even more disturbing is the idea that this may be exactly what Palestinians feel; particularly post Oslo, as though they and their cause have been buried alive. As Bill and Kathleen Christison observed as late as 2006, in a cruel and vicious circle, ‘the longer Palestinian national aspirations are ignored, the less their claim to any kind of national sovereignty is seen as legitimate’ (see Baroud 2006, ix). The *intifādah* then can be viewed as the arm of the Palestinian people desperately raised in resistance against this premature burial. It is the sustained claustrophobia of the occupation and premature burial of the Palestinian cause that the *intifādah* attempts to shake off:

perhaps were I
to raise one arm
someone would come across
my grave one day, and
as in late – night horror movies,
see a lifeless hand, an palm open
fingers half-curved,
and scream. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 339)

The image of the raised arm has a range of connotations: salutation, surrender, resistance or can be seen as an icon of gothic dimensions like the ghost of the murder victim who returns to accuse his/her killer, or like all buried atrocities which wait to be discovered as the anthropological remains of conflict. In the interim the poem constitutes the linguistic marker of the conflict’s archaeological ‘rubble’.

On a metaphorical level, the poem is a plea to the world to prevent the Palestinian cause from becoming a mere historical footnote. It challenges the attempted burial of that cause even before it is dead, a death which ironically is reserved for another day:

I did not die that day
Something else did
And it still lies in
That putrid grave
Fermenting its knowledge of darkness. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 339)

The men were rescued, they were dug up, a poignant inversion of the more usual poetic trope of uprootedness, that of trees. The gothic atmosphere could be almost amusing were it not for the fact that the implied interment is no mere macabre metaphor but rather is a cruel and unusual punishment meted out to Palestinian resistance-activists by the Israeli military. It is a punishment every bit as unbelievable as a piece of carefully orchestrated fictional horror, an act undoubtedly designed to inflict psychological trauma on the community.

It may also be read as an indication of the attempt by the Israeli military to re-ignite the 'fear' that had been 'forbidden' during the *intifādah*, an act calculated to both frighten and instruct the resisters. In view of the severity with which non-violent forms of Palestinian resistance had been met in previous decades (see Pappé 1999 for example), this kind of extreme response should not be entirely surprising. As an incident of particular cruelty, it can be read as an attempt to both literally and 'figuratively bury the widespread and populist nature of the *intifādah* itself.

But perhaps the speaker of Ashrawi's poem takes comfort from the idea that poetry can teach us to 'listen', even retrospectively. Hope remains that revisionist history will one day examine the occupation with an 'open mind' and find it indefensible, a hoped-for outcome that makes the repeated disappointment of deferred independence bearable. The symbolic open palm is also an indication of combat without weapons which underscores the relatively defenceless position of Palestinians and the asymmetrical nature of the conflict. If the speaker can 'raise one arm' ironically, an order to which Palestinians must undoubtedly have developed a conditioned response, this final gesture of the dying might be sufficient to keep the Palestinian existence alive.

In his short poem 'Strangers', Zakrīyya Muh □ armed depicts
psychological conditioning wrought by forty years of occupation. Although it is not explicitly obvious as to who the 'strangers' in the poem's title are, the poem thematically resonates with the punishment of Palestinian infiltrators, who have been made strangers in their own land and often killed while attempting to harvest their crops (See Chapter II). The strangers may also represent the Israeli newcomers who are now in control in either case the irony is obvious, Palestinians continue to be considered as infiltrators in their own land. These latter day infiltrators are depicted with a mixture of timidity and deviousness, a subjugated people who are further debased because of that very subjugation. The Israeli soldier described them in terms of their efforts to avoid detection by the occupying forces and in terms of the simplicity with which they are apprehended:

Fearful of light they cower in the shadows
slinking through the trees

But I know their sort
Like rabbits in car headlights

the lunge of my torch
knocks them to their knees

hands raised for the handcuffs
instant caged birds. (Mohammed 2002, 96)

The representation of ‘slinking’ strangers entering the land by stealth, recalls the thousands of so-called infiltrators who were ‘successfully shot at’ by the Israeli military after the 1948 war. There is no sense of the heroic in Muh as there is in poem
Fadwā T for example, in ‘Which infiltrator’
embraces death in order to be reunited with his land (see Chapter II).

Fear undoubtedly breeds inertia; extreme fear or fervour often banishes it. The language of Muh ānmed’s poem
interdependent relationship of dominance and submission. The poem challenges this relationship and the fear that underwrites it. Fear is not only a powerful psychological weapon of subjugation but what the Palestinians and their oppressors appear to have learned from the *intifādah* is that in the taxonomy of violence, fear induced aggression can become a powerful oppositional force. Nevertheless, the poetic space can demonstrate the ability and the willingness of antagonists to overcome fear and imagine the exchange of roles, and to allow a space for the development and expression of that invaluable human trait ‘empathy’. Almagor’s ‘In My Shoes’, and Fawāz Turki’s poem ‘In Search of Yacove Eved’, for example (discussed in Chapter III), points the significance of poetry as a cultural meeting place, a space outside of the actual conflict in

which a process can take place, namely, awareness of the ‘other’ as something other than the ‘antagonist’ can be articulated and examined.

This type of ‘space’ can also accommodate a specific type of female empathy, of the kind which occurs between mothers as articulated by the speaker of Ashrawi's poem ‘Women and Things’. This poem, written in the second year of the *intifādah*, expresses the potential of Palestinian mothers even while witnessing firsthand the ‘breaking of bones’, to register awareness of the existence of their Jewish counterparts. There is a distinct shift from the image of woman as revolutionary to the potential of women in terms of conflict-resolution. This is not necessarily a *volte-face* in respect of the role of women in the conflict but rather a shift in focus to the potential political role of women as arbiters of peace, a role undertaken by Ashrawi herself in the political, as well as the poetic, arena (see Said 1995, xxix). That powerful empathic quality of motherhood also drove the Peace Movement in Northern Ireland, a movement which transcended the mutually-exclusive ideologies of that particular politico-religious divide.

In contrast to the sterile opening tone of her poem ‘Buried Alive’, this poem opens with images of the fruitfulness and fecundity of the land in its similitude with womanhood:

Women make things grow
Sometimes like the crocus
surprised by rain, emerging fully
grown from the belly of the earth ... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 336)

The spontaneity and immediacy in terms of growth (like the *intifādah* itself perhaps), is contrasted with a different form of growth, one that matures steadily, steadfastly maintaining its aim despite the uncertain trajectory of the struggle:

others like the palm tree with
its promise postponed
rising in a slow
deliberate
spiral to the sky. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 336)

The overall tone is gentle, almost serene in comparison to the tensions at work in much of the earlier poetry, but as the poem unfolds, both utterance and image are employed in such a way as to work against this surface tonal quality. This is achieved by structuring the poem as a series of contrasts and comparisons that explore the various roles that women can and have played in the Palestinian struggle for statehood:

Women make things light...
like the breathless
flight of soap bubbles
shimmering in eyes of a lone
child in a *forbidden* schoolyard ... (Italics added, Al-Jayussi 1992, 336)

The woman's everyday task such as laundering has the potential to make things magical in the eyes of children, but the poem's undertone works against this tender image. By her daily labours, a woman can ease the tensions for her family even though the weight of the conflict encroaches on all aspects of normal life and consciousness. The term 'forbidden' in respect of the schoolyard elicits the curiosity of the reader who must come to his/her

own conclusion as to the meaning. In the context however, this encroachment takes the form of collective punishments and privations such as the Israeli policy of school closure ‘forbidden school yard’. Thus the poem inadvertently underscores the role of teachers and women’s committees in organising classes at such times, ‘in churches, mosques and under trees’ (See Hussein, 2005).

As an aspect of the colonial ethos, the assault on the educational system of the colonial subject is not new. This is in essence an assault on culture, and the role that the indigenous culture plays in delimiting colonial enculturation. As long ago as the late 17th century the so-called Penal Laws enacted against Irish Catholics by the English establishment, as previously discussed, were designed to keep the natives of that country in ignorance, subjection and poverty. During this period of Irish history J.C. Beckett points out that ‘Catholics were proscribed from conducting schools’ or acquiring an education abroad and thus the ‘hedge’ school (conducted in any available space such as a barn, a ditch or indeed, under a tree) arose in order to provide continuity of education for Catholics (Beckett 1966, 158). Temporal and geographic differences notwithstanding, this cultural assault, namely, the denial of education, continues to be employed in the process of ‘ignorization’ of the Palestinian community (See Hussein 2005). Hussein cites the following example of an announcement of school closure:

Greetings,
The Schools of this district will
close until further notice as of the
morning of Thursday, 4 February,
1988. (Hussein 2005, 5)

Such notices were usually signed ‘with respect’, Hussein adds, by the Israeli Director of Education, who she claims functioned under the Israeli ministry of defence. The absence of a normal educational structure underwrites the production of a different kind of ‘knowledge’, the politically consciousness ‘knowledge’ of what Hussein describes as the ‘policy of ignorization’ but also the discovery of the trajectories (of which stone throwing is one) along which occupation might be resisted. This is the summer-hardened, street-wise and secret knowledge of the kind observed by the soldier/speaker in Ashrawi's poem ‘Night Patrol’ to be discussed later in this section. Political oppression and educational deprivation, together with the curtailment of economic activity, ‘overripe fruit’, leads to frustration, which when prolonged ‘explodes’ into violence:

And *heavy* like the scent of
an *overripe* fruit
exploding at the
knowledge of summer-hardened
soil on days of *siege*. (Italics added, Al-Jayussi 1992, 336)

But ‘women make things smooth’ the speaker observes: ‘like the kneading of leavened bread at the dawn of hunger’ (Al-Jayussi 1992, 336). Women are not just passively waiting; kneading is a trope of activity and the quotidian action of baking bread is one that lightens the burden of hunger during times of economic travail. It resonates too with the child who perpetuates his/her mother’s vital nurturing role by bringing ‘bread and bandages to a fighter’ (see Chapter IV).

As in previous stanzas, tropic oppositions, between smooth/course for example, prepare the reader for the inevitable words that undermine the surface tone of the poem.

‘Women make things course’, the speaker observes, ‘like the brush of a homespun coat/ on careworn shoulders’ (Al-Jayussi 1992, 336). Spinning and weaving have long been recognised as traditional activities of women in the home, and in this aspect Ashrawi's poem resonates with that of Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā's poem ‘In the Deserts of Exile’ in which traditional female productivity and folk art (embroidery) is imbued with significant metaphorical importance beyond its quotidian meaning.

The homespun coat is described as ‘course’, which can imply rough to the touch, or homemade and unsophisticated, unlike a work of art which is regarded as psychologically edifying. Nevertheless, the homespun coat is a source of both warmth and comfort to ‘arms barely touching on the night of deportation’ (Al-Jayussi 1992, 336). As a traditional practice, it underscores the compass of female productivity and resonates with Fanon's (1961) notion that all of the efforts and works of the people and their various cultural activities and social roles, form a confluence of support that sustains them in the struggle. In this aspect, it also underscores the subtlety of Ashrawi's anti-colonial poetics. Deportation here refers not only to the initial deportation of 1948, but its use since 1967 as a means of political oppression and a form of punishment that separates the Palestinian community from its leadership, and indeed, family members from each other (see for example Said 1989). On another level, the ‘homespun coat’ is an almost invisible cultural trope which transcends geographical space, in the sense that the exile or deportee can take it with him. Thus it is a source of comfort and an invisible marker of the homestead he leaves behind. In a manner similar to Jabrā's poem, ‘In the Deserts of Exile’, discussed in Chapter II, Ashrawi's achieves an adequation of female productivity with resistance in which the ‘craft’ of both poet and weaver coincide.

Like the ‘summer-hardened soil’ under siege, women too can become siege-hardened and can sublimate fear with courage when their children face danger, as had happened during the *intifādah*. It may also be true to say that siege-hardened women lost their fear of social stigma in respect of going to prison for example, particularly in light of Fadwā T H e r S i s t e r a n d C o m r a d e i n R e s i s t a n c e ’, discussed in Chapter II) and Pappé’s observation that the numbers of women who had been imprisoned in 1980s had risen to thousands (see Chapter IV). Women make things:

sharp and hard
like a legal argument thrust
before the threat of search and detention. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 336)

The above lines, and those following, perhaps imply that women too can become hardened by ‘too long a sacrifice’ and can ‘forbid fear’ to surface such that women are capable of becoming the protectors of the Palestinian youth, by facing down the Israeli military and preventing their arrest. The lines demonstrate the fact that the role of women can be a political one, that they can face the military armed only with their feminine predisposition towards protecting the young, that their very femininity perhaps, can be thrust like a stone or brandished like a poem.

Women, as the ‘provocative force’ of their community also make poetry, and this particular poem by Ashrawi couches protest against the occupation in terms of the absence of those things a normal society takes for granted, for even under the harshest of regimes, people are generally free inside their own homes:

Or warm
and gentle like

justice in a poem ...
the image of freedom
as a warm bath and
a long soak, in an undemolished home. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 336)

The absence of this basic freedom, 'enough water to bathe', signifies the absence of a normal home life and indeed, a home. There is also an oblique allusion here to the Israeli control of water supplies, a contentious issue since the inception of the Israeli state (see Chapter 1). If the reader/hearer can infer the absence in Palestinian life of the quotidian comforts of a normal existence, then the reader can extrapolate to the absence of political freedom and construct a mental schema in which revolt or resistance might legitimately occur.

The poem maps a non-geographical space, a poetic space which, unlike the contested geophysical space, can in a sense be infinitely accommodating. The phrase 'women make things [happen]' therefore, implies a specific kind of female agency (which is not meant to suggest an essentialist view of womanhood), including the capacity for strong maternal empathy:

Women make things
And as we, in separate
worlds, braid
our daughters' hair
in the morning, you and
I, each
humming to herself, suddenly
stops
and hears the
tune of the other. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 337)

While this empathic relationship is a ‘speculative’ one in Turki’s poem, ‘In Search of Yacove Eved’, in the sense that it recalls a friendship that never was but could have been, Ashrawi’s poem it is a rather more specular. The actions of one mother are mirrored by those of the other, a recognition which is deftly delayed until the poem’s close. The final lines of this poem constructs the space wherein mutual recognition can take place in spite of the conflict between them, a space wherein they might relate to each other purely as mothers free of any political, cultural or religious ideology or ‘tune’ which may separate them. Not only does the poem map a non-geographical world, but it also maps a world of infinite possibility. Women/mothers, from both sides of the antagonistic divide, have the capacity to recognise their conjunction as a metaphorical ‘wound’ in the reified structure of their mutually-exclusive ideologies. More importantly perhaps, it underscores the legacy which is passed on, braided into the hair/psyche of each successive generation and the power of mothers to influence what this legacy might entail, or to recognise when the exchange value of their mutually exclusive ideologies has been exhausted and has become ‘too long a sacrifice’.

Section 2: Straight in the Eye

The power of the imagination and the Arab imagination in particular, was deftly pointed as an act of resistance through the voice of Imīl Habībī’s narrator Saeed the Pessoptimist:

They [Israeli authorities] know the oriental imagination is very penetrating and that we can see with it what they can’t. We see the flags of the state even when they are folded up inside people. And didn’t the late Prime Minister Eshkol try to transform the so-called military government into something that observes without being seen:

But we could still discern it, in the orders for house arrest and in the deep furrows of our cheeks. (Habibi 2002, 101)

The *intifādah* of 1987 looked the occupation ‘straight in the eye’ and challenged the oppressive ‘gaze’ of the occupier. But it also challenged the gaze of those on the sidelines, and those implicated in various ways, to turn their own eyes inward as was documented by Almagor in his poem ‘We Shoot Children Too, Don’t We?’:

The more we abase others and bring them low
The harder I find it to look the world straight in the eye
Not to mention myself. (Dan Almagor 1989, 5)

As a collective response to the occupation the *intifādah* initiated a new stage in ‘commitment’ which turned the ‘occupation’ itself into a subject of scrutiny. The predicament of the Palestinians, as Said observed, was suddenly thrust in front of television audiences all over the world, and inside Israel as Almagor’s poem suggests.

As previously stated, the tragedy of the individual will always have greater and more dramatic import than any generalised history or statistical enumeration. Ashrawi’s poem titled ‘From the Diary of an Almost Four Year Old’, documents the wounding of a little girl and provides the child with a voice to narrate the experience of losing an eye to a rubber bullet. At the physiological level, the loss of one eye impairs visual acuity, the ability to see fine detail. On a metaphorical level, such impairment points a monocular interpretation of the world, the acquired propensity to see through one ideological framework, the victim is reduced to relying on monocular cues in a largely binocular world.

In Chapter III, it was argued that the occupation creates the conditions that make a child a hero at ten and that it serves to expand the role of both women and children in terms of service to their community. In a situation of prolonged conflict, the culture of childhood is altered and children may be developmentally deprived as a result. As a consequence of this a child's vision of the 'other' (who is perceived as the cause of that deprivation) will undoubtedly be one-directional and the humanity of the other is therefore diminished in the child's eyes.

Ashrawi's poem is a testament to the human ability to endure suffering and reinstates poetry as a weapon of mass instruction in respect of the voiceless victims of conflict. Documenting the child's endurance celebrates her status as 'collateral damage' in the light of which her response is heroic. As demonstrated in the discussion of Jabrā's poem 'Diary of the Epidemic Year' (see Chapter II), the use of the diary as an armature for a work of art not only brings the reader close to the individual experience, but also lends to that work an increasing sense of veracity which enhances its didactic potential:

Tomorrow the bandages
will come off. I wonder
will I see half an orange,
half an apple, half my
mother's face
with my one remaining eye? (Al-Jayussi 1992, 340)

The child is about to prematurely learn the physiological mechanisms of vision, having already learned the mechanisms of conflict. There is no doubt that the *intifādah* scrutinised the mechanics of the occupation, and the child's scrutiny of the occupiers' 'gaze' is a kind of reversal of the psychological *status quo* of occupation. The poet

depicts a child who has become sentient and sensitive beyond her chronological or developmental age, a child who understands that we see with the mind as well as the eye.

Here she speaks of the soldier who shot her with a rubber bullet:

If I can see him so clearly
with my eyes closed,
it could be that inside our heads
we each have one spare set
of eyes
to make up for the ones we lose. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 340)

On a metaphorical level, the child's injury opens a route to an alternative way of seeing; just as poetry itself can provide an alternative world view. The terror of pain lingers in the memory just as the image of the soldier who shot her 'did not vanish' with the trauma of the blinding: 'I felt its pain/exploding in my head' the speaker observes but her mind continued to record 'a look in his eyes/I could not understand' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 340).

The child's birthday gift is a 'brand new glass eye', an indexical sign of her altered perception for which she must attempt to develop a concomitant linguistic expression:

maybe things will look round
and fat in the middle –
I've gazed through all my marbles,
they made the world look strange. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 340)

In her artificially advanced developmental stage, the child is capable of understanding the suffering of a nine month old that has lost an eye in similar circumstances. Her own

scrutiny of the occupation which resulted in her blinding creates an unnatural bond between the victim and the perpetrator:

I wonder if my soldier
shot her too – a soldier
looking for little girls who
look him in the eye – (Al-Jayussi 1992, 341)

The possessive case, 'my soldier', underscores this and gestures toward the deeper implications in terms of the child's cognitive processes, her conclusion is that all children who dare to look the occupation forces 'straight in the eye' will be rewarded with their personal soldier who will carry out the punishment of blinding. The 'heroic' and sentient child sees herself as mature enough to accept this punishment:

I'm old enough, almost four,
I've seen enough of life,

but she's just a baby
who didn't know any better. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 341)

However, the four year old child must now learn to re-interpret visual sign systems while the infant will likely develop a far more subjective sign system than that shared with her community. The imagistic focus of this poem privileges the power of the visual system. As a metaphor of the fluctuating exchange-value of words, this focus resonates deeply with al-Madhoun's poem in which the 'massacre masters the scene'.

As a physiological phenomenon, eye contact has a communicative function; gaze-avoidance for example often indicates fear or anxiety. The absence of gaze avoidance on

the other hand confirms the notion that ‘fear’ had indeed been forbidden, the object looks at the subject and the subject is gazing back. As a metaphor then, this bi-directional gaze suggests that the relative positions of subject and object begin to vacillate at this point. As a response to the returning gaze of the occupied population therefore, the bullet (in the eye) is the both a literal and figurative re-inscription of the power and range of the occupier’s scopic field. To paraphrase Abu Deeb (1997) it is the exchange of the ‘eye’ for the temerity of the ‘gaze’.

In his poem ‘We Shoot Children too, Don’t We?’, Almagor (1989) does not engage with any individual or specific incident but in this extract he does open a space wherein two sets of representations, one of Palestinians demonized as ‘skulking terrorists’ and the other, the concept of Israeli ‘purity of arms’ and the ideology of ‘no Jewish guilt’, is interrogated and challenged:

They are as human as we are, as we are
At least as human as we used to be
Only forty one years ago ...
They love their wives and children as we do, no less.
And our children now shoot theirs
With lead, plastic bullets, and gas.
(Almagor <http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/mideastaffairs/intifada.htm>)

In a poem which is almost the antithesis of Almagor’s above, Ashrawi takes a step beyond mere awareness of the ‘other’, and provides the reader with a sympathetic insight into the subjective experience of an Israeli soldier serving in the West Bank. In her poem ‘Night Patrol’ (subtitled ‘an Israeli soldier on the West Bank’), the soldier in question is depicted as being perplexed by his awareness of his Palestinian counterpart and it appears

that he is ill at ease with his own participation in the military occupation. It is not the confrontation itself which perplexes him but rather the apparently fearless determination that underwrites it:

It's not the sudden hail
of stones, nor the mocking
of their jeers, but this deliberate quiet
in their eyes ... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 337)

The poem resonates with unguarded sympathy for the soldier's predicament, constrained by his duty as he sees it, 'forced to listen', and the ideology within which he participates. The resisters scrutinise him, they look him 'straight in the eye' and his own watchful gaze is returned to him with the force of a hurled stone. In this situation their respective positions of domination and subjection are momentarily blurred:

Their stares bounce off stone,
walls and amateur barricades
and I am forced to listen
to the echo of my own
gun fire and tear gas
grenades ... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 337)

The stares of the resisters are threatening in the sense that the speaker/soldier is forced to see himself as they do, as a kind of non-being, a uniform, an agent of the occupation. The expression: 'I refuse to be made into a figment of my own imagination', is an attempt on the speaker's part to counteract this psychic assault. The tenor of the poem of course

works against the image of the soldier as a non-entity as it provides the soldier with an individual voice; he is given permission to narrate the complex psychology of his humanity. In a brief moment of respite afforded him by the poem the soldier 'glimpses' a mirror image of his own youth which comes uncomfortably close to that of identification:

I catch myself at times, glimpsing
glimpsing the child I
was in one of them. That
same old recklessness, a daredevil
stance, a secret wisdom only
youth can impart as it hurtles
towards adulthood ... (Al-Jayussi 1992, 338)

In this moment of 'identification' the soldier is forced into self-scrutiny: 'I begin to take substance before my very eyes' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 338). He confronts the sublimated aspect of his own psychological make-up, his capacity for 'empathy' with the enemy, which soldiers are trained to suppress in order to be able to fulfil a militarily aggressive function. For the soldier this is an aspect of fear, fear of death and injury which is sublimated by courage under fire. It is also perhaps fear of this capacity for empathy in a situation in which indifference to the suffering of the enemy may be the more desirable trait. The moment that he glimpses himself in the antagonists 'eyes' he declares 'I Shrink back in terror' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 338). The concept of terror implies fear of the unknown, fear of what is invisible, obscured, or 'elusive':

...If I should once, just
once, grasp the elusive
end of the thread which
ties my being here with
their being there, I
could unravel the beginning ...

This avoidance of terror is a defensive psychological shield which protects the soldier from what he might learn should he 'unravel the beginning'. He may come to recognise himself as an agent of oppression and in order to avoid facing the psychological consequences (acknowledgment of the horror he may be forced to perpetrate as a soldier), he chooses to avoid reaching that point at which internal imagination (terror) and external realisation (horror) coincide. As with any situation of extreme stress, avoidance is preferable:

Turning over in sleep clutching my
cocoon of army issue blankets,
and hope for a different posting
in the morning. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 339)

The poem recognises that the occupation also oppresses soldiers, who like people everywhere, hold varying degrees of empathy and political consciousness as well as varying degrees of cruelty and indifference to suffering. The speaker of the poem recognises the mutual victimhood imposed on both the agent of oppression and the oppressed. The soldier's character is an inadvertent acknowledgement of the *refusnik* movement of whom there are now several hundreds of Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories. The *refusnik* movement recommends ending the occupation,

‘one soldier at a time’, and it could be argued that Ashrawi’s poem mirrors this ethos and is tantamount to the magnanimous recommendation that the Israeli military be judged ‘one soldier at a time’ (see <http://www.refusersolidarity.net/>).

Almagor’s poem ‘We Shoot Children Too, Don’t We’ depicts the Israeli soldier who as an agent of occupation, abuses his position of power. Almagor’s soldier is the antithesis of the soldier who has the courage to refuse that power. The speaker is a witness and his deposition shows that the concept of ‘purity of arms’ cannot be universally claimed by the Israeli military. The speaker lists a variety of ‘minor incidents’ of physical and psychological humiliation, including these cruel interpretations of the order to ‘break their bones’:

old men forced to take down a flag
from an electric pole,
who were electrocuted, or fell
and broke their legs.
Of the old water carrier
whom soldiers ordered off his donkey
and rode on his back, just for fun.
We turned a deaf ear, we turned a deaf heart,
mean, arrogant, and dumb.
Who do we think we are?

(Almagor <http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/mideastaffairs/intifada.htm>)

The speaker as witness holds a mirror up to Israeli society’s blind acceptance of the occupation. It also undermines the arrogance born of the delusive concept of ‘purity of arms’ and the complicity of the civilian population in their refusal to critique it. What Almagor underscores here is that the publicity of the *intifādah*, and its brutal repression,

finally brought home to Israeli viewers what the occupation entailed and the price to be paid in terms of self-respect.

In her poem 'For the 500th Dead Palestinian Ibtisam Bozieh', Naomi Shihab Nye commemorates the death of a young Palestinian girl. The death of the victim Ibtisam strikes an emotional 'cord' and disrupts the normalcy of Diaspora life 'our sleep founders/tugs on the cord of your name'. The girl 'little sister Ibtisam' is 'dead at thirteen' and is very likely a victim of the occupation and suppression of the *intifādah*. Like the four year old the occupation saturates her visual field and brings her within the scopic range of occupier's rifle/gaze:

Staring through
the window into a gun barrel
which did not know you wanted to be
a doctor.

(Nye <http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/mideastaffairs/intifada.htm>)

The relative position of the speaker's 'gaze' is also accentuated, for example, there is a degree of distance acknowledged by speaker in terms of her and the addressee 'your land'. And of course it can never literally be the speaker's land until the law of return is rescinded in favour of the Palestinians, for now, she has no unconditional right of return:

Had I stayed in *your* land
I might have been dead too,
for something simple like staring
or shouting what was true ...

(Italics added, Nye <http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/mideastaffairs/intifada.htm>)

The term 'staring' is repeated, which indicates the danger involved in bearing witness in real terms, thus the poet/speaker assumes the mantle of witness: 'I am the witness of the massacre' as the speaker observed in Darwīsh's 'Poem of the Land' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 149). In so doing, it accentuates the indifference of the gun, which is after all only a tool; one must look deeper to discover the ideology behind it. The ability of the oppressed to return the gaze of the oppressors 'staring', bearing witness as it were, to that hidden ideology, constitutes an act of resistance punishable by shooting.

Poetry is the silent vigil (watching) that commemorates vocal 'shouting' as well as other forms of protest. In so doing the speaker becomes aware of her own impotence, her actual distance from the events as a Diaspora Palestinian and experiences the phenomenon of her personal survivor's guilt:

I wander the stony afternoons
owning all their vastness.
Now I would give them to you, guiltily ...
(Nye <http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/mideastaffairs/intifada.htm>)

With the outbreak of the *intifādah* the political focus shifted from the Diaspora to Palestine itself, leaving the Diaspora Palestinian doubly distanced from events, in terms of the experience of the conflict itself but also in terms of their own ability to respond in any meaningful way:

scissoring news stories free from the page,
but they live on my desk letters, not cries.
(Nye <http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/mideastaffairs/intifada.htm>)

This rift in respect of cultural attachment deftly pointed by Nye in her poem 'Blood' (discussed below), was also pointed by Salma al-Jayussi in her poem 'Without Roots' when the speaker remarked we 'rested from the pangs of conscience...And got absorbed in our own worlds' (see Chapter II):

How do we carry the endless surprise
of all our deaths? Becoming doctors
for one another, Arab, Jew,
instead of guarding tumors of pain
as if they hold us upright?

(Nye <http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/mideastaffairs/intifada.htm>)

The distance that separates the speaker from the conflict in which her community is embroiled allows her to recognise and explain the paradox of 'becoming doctors for each other'. Doctors, like poets, can operate without borders therefore instead of guarding the shibboleths of their mutually exclusive ideologies 'tumors of pain', this poem expresses the opinion that both can guard and foster this ability to heal each other, to cut out the tumours of pain and assert their own humanity and recognise that of others. Once again, as stated in the introduction, this is a poem which demonstrates the absence of any innate hostility or hatred for Jews on the part of Palestinians. Hostility rather is constructed by the confluence of forces acting on communities at any one time, a hostility which nevertheless remains amenable to linguistic deconstruction as this poem demonstrates. The power of the poem is such that, as a mental construct, it induces the reader to see with the mind. 'Some who never saw it', the speaker observes, 'will not forget your face'. We each have 'two sets of eyes', the four year old child remarks, similarly those who

have never experienced it can nevertheless identify with the humanity of the other, depending on the type of prism one either chooses, or is constrained to look through.

Section 3: Perfecting the Art of Waiting

As Said observed, at the outbreak of the *intifādah* all three branches of Palestinians constituted a ‘nation in waiting’. The ‘Jerusalemites’ website offers this insight into what exactly Palestinians are still waiting for in the wake of a series of conflicts and agreements, roadmaps and accords:

Palestinians are still waiting for Oslo to bring peace and prosperity. They were waiting to see how they could finally move freely within and outside the country. They were waiting for their prisoners to be freed. They were waiting for their own state where they could finally find peace and security. They were waiting for family reunions which would unite families who had not been together in 50 years. (<http://www.jerusalemites.org/Intifada/first.htm>)

Palestinians must ‘learn to perfection the art of waiting’ the speaker of Laila ‘Allush’s poem ‘Lament’ opines (see Chapter IV), and waiting is a trope (although not always the most obvious one) in many of the poems to be discussed in this final section. Despite the quotidian nature of the conflict, Palestinians must cultivate patience in order to preserve their psychological and cultural equilibrium. In the period after the Oslo Accords, it must have appeared to Palestinians that ‘waiting’ was the only weapon they had left. However, waiting does not necessarily imply passivity. As Umberto Eco once remarked, one can ‘sit and the banks of the river and wait for the corpse of your enemy to come by’ but as he points out, this is not enough, therefore in the meantime he suggests that one must do

something else, 'read Plato, write books', was Eco's advice (Eco 1995 http://www.themodernword.com/eco/eco_vogue95.html). In order for waiting to become an 'art' not in the reified sense of an object but rather on a pragmatic level, waiting like steadfastness, is a skill that can be cultivated and perfected. Upon consideration of Eco's counsel above, waiting is a time to philosophise but it is also a period in which to formulate a plan for afterword. For Palestinians, waiting implies holding out in the present for the best possible covenant for the benefit of future generations of Palestinians.

The Palestinian poet Naomi Shihab Nye grew up in the United States of America. Her poem 'Blood' engages with the re-discovery of her cultural heritage, her 'arabness' and this discovery re-forges the broken link in the chain of cultural transmission. On one level, the poem expresses a sense of cultural fixity, for example the speaker's recalls her father's remark: 'a true Arab knows how to catch a fly in his hands' but it also recognises the potential of cultural renewal 'in the spring our palms peeled like snakes' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 358). On another level, this poem points the protean aspect of culture, its mutable and adaptable qualities which can change to fit the confluence of changing conditions and forces acting upon it. 'True Arabs' the speaker continues 'believed watermelon could heal fifty ways/I changed these to fit the occasion' (Al-Jayussi 1992, 358).

The obfuscated cultural narrative is elicited by the 'girl' who wanted to see the Arab, cultural transmission in a non-native environment therefore appears albeit inadvertently, controlled or elicited by an external agency. It is as though the speaker had to wait for her 'Arabness' to come to her rather than actively registering it. The speaker's cultural heritage is something that she had not consciously thought about, and it

is (re)presented to her as somehow problematic, or a curiosity. ‘Years before’ the speaker recalls:

A girl knocked,
wanted to see the Arab.
I said we didn’t have one.
After that my father told me who he was (Al-Jayussi 1992, 358)

It is through the ‘girl’ who wanted to look the Arab ‘straight in the eye’, that the speaker comes to the realisation of who she is and the meaning of her ethnic origins. At this moment the speaker’s experiences a personal confluence of culture and commitment in the image of herself as ‘a true Arab’. The father reveals her cultural heritage to the speaker through the trope of ‘naming’ and she responds with the kind of innate understanding of one who has the ‘blood’ of the Arab in her veins:

“Shihab” – “shooting star” –
a good name, borrowed from the sky
once I said, “When we die we give it back?”
He said that’s what a true Arab would say. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 358)

Naming in this instance is the recognition of an identity which is both individual and communal. For the reader however, it elicits acknowledgement of the father’s individuality and personhood and not just as a member of a homogenous group, an ‘Arab’.

As a trope, ‘blood’ denotes a consanguineous (as distinct from cultural) relationship among peoples. It what could be a direct reference to the unfolding story of the *intifādah*, the speaker states ‘today the headlines clot in my blood’ and begins to

unfold the dilemma of the generation growing up in exile not knowing how to respond when the 'blood' warms with both love and anger at the plight of one's ethnic community. A clot in the blood disrupts, and indeed impairs, normal physiological functioning but it also functions to halt excessive bleeding and therefore the 'clot' is essential to the closing of a wound. The poem (like the 'clot') in this instance appears to serve a dual purpose, it opens a space for self re-construction in terms of the ties of 'blood', but it is also a kind of closed space, a space where the personal 'talking cure' can take place, a cure for the distance and for the fracture in cultural transmission experienced by the exile. As a metaphor for the cultural dissonance often experienced by Diasporic peoples, the 'clot in the blood' has therefore, both positive and negative dispositions.

The news of the *intifādah* like the clot, functions in two ways; it bridges the cultural lacuna but it also heightens the sense of powerlessness and brings the distance between the homeland of ethnicity and the homeland of exile more sharply into focus:

A little Palestinian boy dangles a truck on the front page.
Homeless fig, this tragedy with a terrible root
is too big for us. What flag can we wave? (Al-Jayussi 1992, 358)

The 'tragedy' to which she alludes is the terrible narrative of the Holocaust within which the narrative of the Palestinian *Nakbāh* has been obscured, a factor pointed by many Palestinian poets. But the speaker realises that, in the eyes of the world, the Palestinian tragedy cannot hope to equal that of the Jewish one, and perhaps she fears they must wait until it does. For now, in the words of Darwīsh, it is merely a 'teardrop in the dove's cooing', the inaudible and invisible pain of the Palestinian predicament. The dilemma of

commitment, how to express it effectively in an alien (and perhaps somewhat hostile) atmosphere where divided loyalties, to the country in which she was born and the country that runs in her 'blood':

I call my father, we talk around the news ...
neither of his two languages can reach it ...
What does a true Arab do now? (Al-Jayussi 1992, 358)

Thus Palestinian poets in exile are positioned between different cultural traditions which at the point of the *intifādah* must have evoked a crisis in terms of commitment and perhaps a sudden sense of unease in respect of their adopted exilic environment. At such a time, a kind of third language (poetic language) can perhaps explain and provide a 'talking cure' for the psychological and spiritual rift. It is as though until the moment of the *intifādah* her true 'arabness' was merely rhetoric, now she understands what it really means to be excluded from it?

Of course the depiction of this sense of being 'outside' is not unique to poets of exile but also reflects the existential outsideness depicted by many modernist writers in the West, that self-conscious (indeed self-inflicted) alienation in terms of culture, and particularly in terms of popular culture. But while the position of the modernist was a philosophical or aesthetic one, for the Palestinian poet, and doubly so for the Palestinian Diaspora poet, it was no mere aesthetic posture but a question of his/her cultural experience, his/her literal alienation and exclusion.

The oppositions between tension and lassitude that can set in during periods of interminable 'waiting' are depicted by Ibtisam Barakat in her short poem 'Curfew'. As a poetic vehicle, the 'curfew' deftly condenses the experience which is often arbitrarily

imposed by the military authorities with little or no warning. It resonates thematically with Samīh al-Qāsim's poem, commemorating the massacre at the village of Kafr Qassam, which in that instance was a punishment for the breaking of an arbitrarily imposed curfew:

Our city is a cell
Children's faces
Are replacing
Flower pots on
Window sills.
And we are waiting.

(<http://www.poetsforpalestine.com/webs/curfew.htm#1>)

Curfew, a quotidian feature of life under occupation, is one of the 'minor incidents' recorded by Dan Almagor in his poem 'In My Shoes'. The residual dangers of breaking curfew, simply by 'looking' even from the relative safety of the window, have already been discussed in respect of the poetry of Nye and Ashrawi, in the context of which the connotations of Barākat's poem can be greatly expanded. The city is seen as a 'cell' in the larger prison of the occupation, filled with prisoners who are waiting for their sentence to be complete. The irony however is that they do not know how long this sentence is for, or when the curfew will be lifted, or when the occupation will end. Eco's advice to intellectuals was to cultivate the imaginative faculties and this is instinctively matched in this poem by the ingenuity of childhood imagination in a paralinguistic trope which expresses the feelings that the children may be unable to articulate verbally:

From our bars
Of boredom

We enter
A spit race
The one whose spit
Reaches farther
Is freer.

<http://www.poetsforpalestine.com/webs/curfew.htm#1>

As a form of non-verbal communication, spitting has long been regarded as a gesture of anger or contempt across a range of cultures. As an aspect of affiliative behavior on the part of the children, the ‘game’ of spitting unites them in a paralinguistic gesture (conscious or otherwise) of contempt for their absent jailors. Thus, the one whose gesture ‘reaches farther’ might also be considered as the one whose resistance has the longest range. In terms of Palestinian resistance in the present, there is perhaps a parallel to be drawn here between the children’s action, and the rockets fired from the prison of the Ghāzā Strip, into Israel, the ubiquitous jailor.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Palestinians, like other Arab nationalists at the end of World War One, held profound aspirations to independence. For Palestinians, these aspirations were shattered by the creation of the Jewish state; consequently, independence became ‘a train that passed them by’. In his poem ‘The Train Passed By’, Darwish declares:

Quickly the train passed by.
I had been waiting
On the sidewalk
Travellers were rushing to their
Daily lives ... and I continued to wait.

<http://www.aljadid.com/poetry/TheTrainPassedbybyMahmoudDarwish.html>

In terms of Palestinians nationalist aspirations, the ‘train/station’ relationship is a deft metaphor for the speaker’s paradoxical perception of motion parallax: the perception of (political) movement where there is none in actuality, only the misperception of the cues in the moving visual field. The speaker condenses this psychological experience of the absent statehood into the following equation:

Distant and imminent
Forgetfulness does not push me away.
Memory does not bring me closer.
(<http://www.aljadid.com/poetry/TheTrainPassedbybyMahmoudDarwish.html>)

In the discussion of Ibrāhīm T □uq ā’s poem F
tropes ‘days and ‘hours’ serve to locate history in terms of an immediate experience of time (see Chapter 1). At the level of rhetoric at least, history becomes capable of impacting on the present. Darwīsh’s poem however negates this particular poetic value of the ‘hour’ as an active trope: ‘the hour is different’ the speaker opines:

... the train passed by
My time, on the sidewalk
Did not belong to me
The hour was different
What time is it now?
What day separated yesterday from (nothing has changed)
Tomorrow
When the gypsies migrated?
(<http://www.aljadid.com/poetry/TheTrainPassedbybyMahmoudDarwish.html>)

Unlike the 'hour' in T

□uq ā's poem, t

measurement of chronological time, since time no longer serves as a means of feeling in control. The speaker remains both inert, 'I am like the station', and uncertain, 'not knowing whether to bid farewell or greet the people' (Darwish <http://www.aljadid.com/poetry>).

What day, the speaker asks, 'separated [the hopes of] yesterday from the [uncertainty of] tomorrow'. Instead of fulfilling an eminent destiny, instead of giving birth to a Palestinian state 'the hour was sterile'. The symbol of the 'hour' connotes the dual concepts of time and fate; the hour that may have been lost at Oslo is the same hour that was lost in 1948 and again in 1967. As the speaker of Rāshid H □usein's poem remarked in respect of 1967 defeat, 'Jerusalem had no more need of clocks' (see Chapter II). Thus days and hours are blurred in a succession of defeats. In the interminable experience of waiting, time, like motion parallax, is a false cue. Waiting (without any prospect of real motion) has therefore become the norm. This paradoxical worldview has all the trappings of normality:

A coffee shop

Offices

Roses

Telephones

Newspapers

Sandwiches

Music and a

Rhyme for

Another poet who will come and wait.

(<http://www.aljadid.com/poetry/TheTrainPassedbybyMahmoudDarwish.html>)

As David Grossman pointed out, the armed enclaves of Jewish settlers in the Palestinian territories are located where they are in order ‘to frustrate the creation of a territorially contiguous Palestinian state’. Post Oslo then, Palestinians continue to wait for the settlements to be dismantled. One of the things Palestinians are waiting for is the ability to move freely ‘within’, as well as outside of, their country. The network of roadblocks, checkpoints and Israeli-only roads that facilitate the Jewish settlements work to prevent this freedom of movement. The settlement issue, and the concern with the continued land appropriation, constitutes an aspect of what Said (1990) defined as the ‘primacy of the geographical’ which permeates much postcolonial literature. Tāhā Mah

□m ūl Al 'is poem

poem opens with an address to the speaker’s grandfather. The tone is gentle and nostalgic, like the returning nomad reading the signs in the desert, the speaker ‘reads’ his grandfather’s face ‘old hunter/in your face I read only goodness’ (Ali 2007, 69). The speaker then underscores the ‘generation gap’ (or the gap in cultural transmission) that has arisen between them:

Though I, at your age
 Refrained
 From hunting the evening quail ...
 I’d turn away
 From the snake as it shed its faded sheath (in its vulnerable moment)
 And say:
 “Never mind.” (Ali 2007, 69)

The generational shift that sees grandchildren abandoning the traditions and practices (and also perhaps poetic themes) of their elders is not unusual in the cultural context. Yet even as he describes the process of moving away from such traditions, the speaker is also recalling them. Thus there is a sense of the *atlāl* tradition at work in the poem's opening. As discussed earlier, the traditional *atlāl* section of the classical *qas* ~~often~~ addressed the remaining traces of a campsite. It also engaged with the openness and expanse of the desert and with the trappings of a nomadic lifestyle, hunting for example.

There is a sense of reverence for the grandfather's traditional practices in the following lines, but it is in these lines also that the first discordant note disturbs the initial nostalgic tenor of the poem:

I won't alarm the gazelles
Or the wild doves
Or say a word to the local inspectors. (Italics added Ali 2007, 69)

As the Palestinian poet, Muṛīd Barghūṭī has observed: 'Israel took from us the land of the poem and left us the poem of the land', a statement which further underscores the 'primacy of the geographical' (Barghouti 2003 45). And indeed this primacy of the geographical as it relates to much Palestinian poetry often manifests itself in tropes such as migration, exile, borders and a sense of place and of displacement. Alī's poem structurally locates this primacy in the figure of the grandfather and in the historical and familial links that bind them to 'place' in a 'brotherhood of knives'. It binds them in the traditions from which they are both now alienated, the speaker by exile perhaps, and the

grandfather who is excluded from his own traditions by military edict or laws enforced by ‘inspectors’.

The lines ‘brotherhood of knives/hanging from belts’, allow a rather more sinister tone to develop and this is abetted by a subtle and equivocal shift in terms of who/what is hunted. This brotherhood, the speaker observes:

Binds us in our search
For fledgling partridges
In pockets and under hats. (Ali 2007, 69)

The poem dates from 1988, the second year of the *intifādah*, and thus the reader can relate the search for ‘fledgling partridges’ to searches at checkpoints and the search for stones in the pockets of young Palestinian resisters. The reader can further discern the generational shift in the examples of new pastimes and traditions. The grandfather who lost his hunting grounds has passed these new traditions to his grandsons. To the poet has been passed the task of hunting of new metaphors (of resistance), and to the boys who hunted snakes has been passed the new tradition of becoming themselves the hunted. This is why the speaker can now look at the ‘evening quail’ and the snake and say ‘never mind’. In a world where the hunter has become the quarry, the snake and quail are both innocent and native, and have a right to exist.

This reversal of status between man and beast was also utilised by the speaker of Salem Jubran’s poem ‘Refugee’, in which the dumb beasts could move freely both inside and outside the territory, ‘a stray donkey grazes across the firing line’, while the human inhabitants were constrained by the watchful guns of the soldiers ‘the sun crosses borders with any soldier shooting’ (see Chapter II). The generation ‘gap’ depicted by the speaker

of Alī's poem underscores how much has changed but also how much has remained the same. While Jubran's 'frontier wall' delineated the limits of freedom in respect of the 1967 borders of the Palestinian territories, Alī's poem charts the absence of freedom inside the territories themselves at the outbreak of the *intfādah*.

The speaker asks permission (of those who now possess the land) to visit the archaeology of this geographical space which thematically links this poem to the rubble that marks the previous Palestinian presence on the land:

My comrade in thirst ...
Who leave no creature
Pure of heart –
I implore you:
Let me stroll
Within range of your rifle,
Among these deserted gardens
And ruined stone walls;
Allow me
To greet this fig tree! (Ali 2006, 71)

The speaker addresses those who have appropriated these 'hunting grounds' and he pleades to be seen not as an enemy or interloper, but rather as a companion in the 'thirst'/search for a narrative of belonging in this land. In so doing, the speaker underscores the hostility of the Jewish settler communities encountered by Palestinian farmers and fruit growers on a daily basis. The blatant aggression emanating from these 'armed enclaves' dotted throughout the Palestinian Territories, in which the hunters of quail now find themselves the quarry, have long been documented by Human Rights organisations such as B'tselem and Yesh Din. Nevertheless, the poem 'Never mind' also

suggests that the speaker is predisposed to accommodate the existence of other inhabitants, and is willing to forego traditional practices (of hunting snakes) and ideologies which includes the habitual animosity that has arisen between the settlers and the natives.

In his plea, the speaker contrasts his own innate knowledge of the landscape with the tenuous links of the settlers. 'Let me draw near', the speaker implores, 'to that particular cactus', thereby proffering a token of his definitive sense of place in the details of the landscape, details such as a 'particular' plant and a well known tree 'old friend' 'this fig tree' (ali 2007, 71). The emotionally-charged and abrasive closing imagery resonates with the desperation of the 'infiltrator' to harvest his land. For this harvest, which will keep his people alive for another season, the speaker/infiltrator is willing to offer his life and his death:

And then, after the harvest,
Catch me
And slaughter me
With the fine threads
That dangle
From your pack and sleeves
Like the guts from a chicken's belly! (Ali 2007, 71)

In the views expressed by some critical thinkers, the nascent Palestinian state has already been slaughtered by the details, 'fine threads', of the Oslo agreement, just as it was by the 'fine threads' of the Zionist dream of a Jewish homeland, in the shape of the tenuous (biblical) links with Palestine proffered by the new colonisers. Palestinian aspirations

have latterly been ‘slaughtered’ by the fine threads of legal argument and annexation as the pretext for further colonisation and expropriation of Palestinian land.

The title of Darwīsh’s poem ‘Eleven Planets in the Last Andalusian Sky’ (circa 1992), a long poem in eleven sections, underscores the Bantustan system imposed on the Occupied Territories by the Oslo Accords. Similarly Samīh al Qāsim in his poem ‘What’, described the ‘barren man-made satellite’ of the West Bank. Ironically, after Oslo there are eleven such barren satellites, the areas of the West Bank designated as Area A, those non-contiguous areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Upon consulting a map of Palestine such as that issued by the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (2007), these eleven non-contiguous ‘planets’ can be clearly discerned. The metaphor of planets is a particularly apt one conveying as it does the idea of considerable spatial distance, of planets relative to each other in a constellation for example. However, these planets may appear to the untrained observer, to be deceptively contiguous, whether in the obfuscation of night sky, or in the ‘fine details’ of the Oslo agreement.

The poem’s ‘Andalusian’ sky alludes to what is often seen as the high period of Arab culture as it flourished in al-Andalūs in southern Spain. This golden age of Muslim Spain was considered to have been the high period of Arab Islamic culture when Muslims and Jews lived and flourished together under Muslim rule until their respective expulsion by the Christian re-conquest (see for example Hourani 1991). This was an era often recalled by Arab poets and intellectuals in a bid to reassert it as the paradigmatic high point of Arab/Islamic civilisation, and also as a time of all embracing (inter)cultural achievements. The analogy will appeal to, and be recognised by, the poet’s Arab auditors

and at least some of its Jewish ones. In his column for *Gush Shalom* Uri Avnery (2006) remarks on the condition of the Jews under Muslim rule in Spain:

Under Muslim rule the Jews of Spain enjoyed a bloom the like of which the Jews did not enjoy anywhere else until almost our time. Poets like Yehuda Halevy wrote in Arabic, as did the great Maimonides. In Muslim Spain, Jews were ministers, poets, scientists. In Muslim Toledo, Christian, Jewish and Muslim scholars worked together and translated the ancient Greek philosophical and scientific texts. That was, indeed, the Golden Age.

(Avnery 2006, <http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery/1159094813>)

The analogy between al-Andalūs and Palestine underscores the idea that Palestine had potential to become another al-Andalūs, thus it represents to the speaker an Edenic landscape, psychological and geographical, which has now been twice lost:

On our last evening in this land
We tear our days down from the trellises,
Tally the ribs we carry away with us
And the ribs we leave behind. (Darwish 2000, 149)

As discussed in Chapter 1, the concept ‘the days’ invokes the passing of time but in Arabic culture the concept may also allude to fate, or indeed to the ‘times’ in which the particular occasion takes place. For al-Andalūs, this era was that of the Christian reconquest of the area and expulsion of Jews and Muslims. For Palestine, it was the era of western colonialism and expansion in the Middle East which includes the Zionist conquest. To the speaker it appears that the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs and the

occupation of the Palestinian Territories have now been consolidated by Oslo, just as their expulsion was consolidated by the Christian monarchs in Spain.

A history of Muslim/Jewish relations is rooted in both spaces and therefore had to be torn from the trellises like vines. The speaker calculates the cost in terms of both the living 'ribs we carry', and the dead 'ribs we leave'. In the aftermath of Oslo, 'everything is left as it is'; what has been lost remains lost and no immediate gains are discernable. The 'currency of political words' has been devalued, and even the famed Palestinian irony no longer provides consolation: 'suddenly we can no longer be light-hearted' (Darwish 2000, 149). On this last evening, the speaker remarks:

We contemplate invasion and counter invasion,
The ancient era handing our door keys over
To a new age. (Darwish 2000, 149)

The confluence of the literal and figurative handing over of keys constitutes a powerful trope of Palestinian possession and dispossession. The key has long been symbol of Palestinian return, to the homes they were forced to leave in 1948 and since. It can also be regarded as symbolic of the handing over of the keys to the holy places of Jerusalem by the Christian Patriarch when that city capitulated to the Muslim Caliph Omar, and later, the handing over of Palestine itself to the European Jewish colonisers by the Mandate 'invasion and counter-invasions'. And while irony may be negated in these circumstances, still the speaker attempts it when he addresses the conquerors who are welcomed like guests. This should not be surprising for as Akash (2000) states, Darwish [like many other Palestinians] believed in the possibility of co-existence:

Enter O invaders, come, enter our houses,
 Drink the sweet wine of our Andalusian songs!
 Our tea is hot and green – so drink!
 Our pistachios are ripe and fresh – so eat!
 The beds are green with new cedarwood
 give in to your drowsiness!
 Fresh sheets, scents at the door and many mirrors. (Darwish 2000, 150)

Ibrāhīm T

Andalus (see chapter 1) gestured toward

employed the poetic form of the *muwashshah* associated with that period in Arab cultural history; Dawrīsh employs the image of al-Andalūs directly by ‘naming’ it as the ‘Andalusian sky’. The importance of this claim to a national culture in the past, particularly a flourishing one such as that of al-Andalūs, was critical in Fanon’s view as a testament that native history, in this instance Arab history, was not ‘dominated by barbarism’ as the colonial centres often suggested, rather it is remembered as a substantial and multicultural civilisation. This is particularly important in respect of the ‘people of the book’. With regard to the flight of the Jews from Spain after the Christian re-conquest, Uri Avnery asks this question:

To where did the hundreds of thousands of Jews, who refused to abandon their faith, escape? Almost all of them were received with open arms in the Muslim countries. The Sephardi ("Spanish") Jews settled all over the Muslim world, from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east, from Bulgaria (then part of the Ottoman Empire) in the north to Sudan in the south. Nowhere were they persecuted. They knew nothing like the tortures of the Inquisition, the flames of the auto-da-fe, the pogroms, the terrible mass-expulsions that took place in almost all Christian countries, up to the Holocaust.

(Avnery 2006, <http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery/1159094813>)

That very welcome they received in the Arab/Muslim world, it appears, has been turned against them. The respite from persecution granted by the Arab countries to the Jews fleeing European persecution is repaid by the theft of Palestinian land in what Samīh al-Qāsim describes as ‘the biggest armed robbery in history’(see Chapter IV).

Consequently, it is with profound irony that the speaker invites the invaders to ‘enter our mirrors so we can vacate the premises completely’, while Palestinians themselves, post-Oslo, are in danger of becoming a kind of postmodern simulacra, the image of an image of a people who ‘never existed’ existing in the image of an image of a state that cannot now come into existence. This is why the speaker asks:

*Was Andalusia
here or there? On earth?
Or only in poems? (Italics in original Darwish 2000, 150)*

In the meantime, Palestinians, as Darwish advised, must ‘continue to be’, and to paraphrase Eco, write poetry, read books in order to be ready for afterward, as the speaker remarks: ‘Later we’ll look up what was written in our history about yours in faraway lands’ (Darwish 2000, 150). Like the Genie waiting in his jug, all they can do is wait for the fisherman, for ‘the corpse of the enemy to come by’, for the new invaders to come or for the next *intifādah* and the changes that such developments might bring.

Postscript

As Issa Bullata observes, a ‘deep existentialist concern’ together with ‘confessional elements’ permeate much of Darwīsh’s later poetry (Boullata 1999, 163). This is also true of many later Palestinian poets discussed in this chapter. Little had changed contextually, tropically or thematically in respect of Palestinian poetry, in the sense that the occupation continues to be, the exiles dream of return continues to be a dream, freedom of movement within and without the occupied territories continues to be fraught with anxiety and as Darwīsh remarks ‘there is no hawk on the flag of my people’ (Darwish 2000, 164). Nevertheless the presentation of tropes, themes and context has undergone a significant aesthetic transformation while the poetry retains its deep commitment to Palestinian culture and the ethos of resistance. This chapter has demonstrated that the fire and stridency of the poetry that emerged in the decades before and immediately after 1948, for example, has by the 1990s been replaced by a subtlety and maturity of expression that deserves critical appraisal and deep appreciation.

The vatic quality of poetry might easily be explained as a kind of ‘Barnum’ effect, the psychological process whereby broad, general descriptions can be readily accepted by individuals as accurate descriptions; the kind of broad statement that underlies the acceptance of astrology or fortune-telling for example. Nevertheless, this quality has caused poetry to be revered in many cultures as a special kind of insight. The following extract from one of Fawdā T □uq ān early poer

sentiment on a Romantic level. However, as a nationalist poet, the vatic quality of her words will undoubtedly resonate with her people as they continue to wait in the present

time and gaze back dejectedly at the detritus of road-maps, agreements and accords and forward into the continued uncertainty of the future:

She looked with trepidation
At all the pits behind her...
Perhaps the terrible present
Might find consolation in the past
From the cruelty of the present
Yet she saw nothing but hope's wreckage...
She looks to the future ...
Untrammelled desert, bewildering paths
With landmarks confused and scattered
No signs of the road
And herself wandering tremulously. (Tuqan 1990, 209)

The prophetic tenor of Tūqān's poem above might be attributable to a Barnum effect but the irony is that it might just as easily have been written to record the uncertainty that continues to permeate all aspects of Palestinian life, even after Oslo. But of course it must be stated that the socio-political contextualisation of the poem and the analytical postcolonial perspective to reading will also impact on the interpretation. In a sense the vatic quality of the poetry is elicited by the reader therefore it is not surprising that

Tūqān's poem speaks to the current state of the Palestinian statehood, and particularly in the context of the present discussion. It resonates too with the speaker of Darwīsh's 'Eleven Planets', who, in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords, can see no future except uncertainty, who can see 'no horse galloping towards us ... to deliver the dawn' (Darwish 2000, 150).

Chapter V covered the period of the first *intifādah*, during which explicit tropes and themes of conflict might have been expected to supersede cultural and aesthetic considerations. In contrast however, as discussed in the introduction, the re-discovery of each other as individual human beings, as opposed to stereotypes that began with the naming of ‘Yacove, and ‘Etan’, takes a step further when the ‘other’ in the explicit form of oppressor, namely, an Israeli soldier, is given a sympathetic voice by poets such as Hanan Ashrawi in ‘Night Patrol’ for example. Thus as stated in the introduction, it can be argued that the Palestinian poetry of this period disabuses the notion of an innate hatred of Jews on the part of Palestinians; rather it provides the reader with a deft deconstruction of the occupation and its sometimes horrific mechanics. Furthermore, just as the image of Palestinians as ‘skulking terrorist’ dissolved in the television images of the asymmetrical power relationship between the antagonists of the *intifādah*, so too does this stereotype dissolve under the scrutiny of poetic analysis. This is corroborated by the poetry of the *intifādah* period, adduced through an examination of the Palestinian ‘stone’ as a poetic trope, and as an actual weapon of resistance against the sophisticated Israeli war machine. The poetry underscores the complex relational field, which comprises cycles of occupation and its violent opposition, passive confrontation and its violent suppression. The poetry examined in this chapter further underscores the concept outlined in the introduction, that Palestinian poetry, as cultural production deserves academic attention. The coherent, sophisticated and measured response of the later Palestinian poets, particularly from the 1980s and onward, to the predicament of their people, has shown that anti-colonial literature, or a literature of resistance, need not, and in the case of Palestinian poetry, does not, sacrifice poetics on the altar of polemics.

Conclusion

One of the principal aims of this thesis was to focus attention on modern Palestinian poetry from the postcolonial perspective, with a view to highlighting, in the Irish context, a lacuna in our knowledge of world literature. Thus it will contribute to the generation of awareness of the Arabic literary heritage within Irish academia, as comparative texts in translation, and as texts enjoyable for their intrinsic intellectual value, as well as being a point of entry into a deeper understanding of Arab culture. A further aim was to highlight the idea that the ideology of colonialism, together with its negative representations of subject peoples, might continue to underlie the stereotypical images of Arabic culture and polity prevalent in the west, and particularly in the post 9/11 world.

Awareness of the Palestinian/Arabic culture through creative literature is particularly relevant in the current climate of multiracialism and multiculturalism now burgeoning in Irish society. Furthermore, this thesis has discovered that there is a wide range of Palestinian/Arabic poetry and literature, together with a significant body of Arabic literary criticism, available in scholarly English translations. In the socio-historical context, Ireland and Palestine, in terms of comparative studies, share at least the following: colonization, partition, and a tradition of cultural commitment (in the Irish context, the Celtic Revival of the late 19th century for example), as a testament to the independent nature of our respective cultures. This consolidation of culture was vital as a form of resistance, and ultimately as a weapon in the reversal of colonial enculturation.

The perspective taken in this thesis, that of the postcolonial, worked towards reinstating the historical context of literature and it must also reinstate the historical context of criticism, for all readers are culturally positioned, and as Said remarked: ‘it may not be possible to interpret another culture unless prior circumstances have made that culture available...and these circumstances as far as European interest in alien cultures is concerned, have always been commercial, colonial or military expansion, conquest, empire’ (Said 1997, 139). In the light of Said’s remarks, it could be argued that Ireland may be uniquely placed to study Palestinian poetry in the postcolonial context, along a non-hierarchical comparative course, and one which exists between subaltern/subaltern groups, as opposed to a trajectory that re-inscribes a discourse of domination and subalternity.

The introduction offered the reader an overview of both the Irish and the Palestinian contexts of this project. A brief introduction to the Arabic literary heritage was provided, together with examples from some of the most significant poets of both the *jāhiliyyah* and post-Islamic periods. This enabled the reader to situate Palestinian poetry within the corpus of Arabic literature in its historical context, and thus placed the reader in a position to appreciate the Arab world’s wide-ranging and extensive tradition of literary production from which Palestinian poets were able to draw inspiration.

The introduction highlighted the revered place of poetry in the Arab way of life, and the importance of poetry as the register of the Arabs and its communal value as a source of their history. In the Arab Middle East, poetry has retained its function as a ‘provocative force’ of the people and as a register of their struggle. This cultural aspect of Arab life took on new meaning in the case of Palestinian poetry after the *nakbah* (see

chapter II), and in the second half of the 20th century commitment in Arabic literature increasingly encompassed commitment to the Palestinian struggle. It was established that this nexus of culture and conflict (as it manifests in poetry), under the pens of committed poets, contributed to the shaping of both the form and content of the poetry in question, and to the consolidation of its status as a discursive weapon of resistance.

In order to generate a wider appreciation of the cultural context of modern Palestinian poetry, rather than focus on a single author, this thesis examined a wide range of poets, both male and female. When writing for an audience that is relatively unfamiliar with a particular culture, a focus on the work of one poet alone could inadvertently create an impression that the poet in question is the singular exemplar of that culture. By focusing on a range of poets, it was possible to show that not only is there an inherent appreciation of poetry, and indeed an audience capable of reading the political from between the aesthetic lines, but also that the confluence of culture, conflict and commitment has elicited in Palestine, a distinctive style and an aesthetically pleasing corpus of resistance poetry, from a range of poets, male and female, across Palestinian society. This poetry demonstrates that creativity and national aspirations do not reside in one particular class, religion, or political affiliation, but rather that they exist across any gender, class, political or religious divide. Furthermore, it underscores the socio-religious and political amity of the Palestinian community that transcends religious divides, this is an amity that the Israeli occupation since 1967, has been unable to divide and conquer.

The significance of the period 1948-1993 was also outlined and a brief overview of the logic behind the chapter breakdowns was provided. This was followed by an overview of the salient features of postcolonial theory and the utility of employing this

theory in a study of Palestinian poetry. In the context of postcolonial studies, Arabic literature does not immediately spring to mind, but this thesis demonstrated that the study of Palestinian poetry from this perspective provides the reader with an interesting and insightful interpretation of a confluence of forces relevant to postcolonial literatures of resistance wherever they may be present.

The introduction also outlined what was to be understood by the metaphor of confluence, and by the terms culture, conflict and commitment as they relate to the Palestinian poetry of the period in question. In his book *The Idea of Culture*, Terry Eagleton remarks that culture begins to matter at particular times during a society's history: 'when it becomes the only alternative to a degraded society, when it provides the terms in which a group or a people seeks its political emancipation, and when the imperial power is forced to come to terms with the way of life of its subjugates' (Eagleton 2000, 25). Literature does not exist nor is it produced in a vacuum, but is influenced in various ways by the cultural environment and ideology wherein it is produced. Literature can be a useful mediator of our experience of cultural diversity and particularly of cultural identity formation. Culture, as described by Eagleton, is the 'concept of identity in which the individual's existence derives from his/her way of life' (Eagleton 2000, 25). When that 'way of life' is fraught with conflict and political indeterminacy, then the consolidation of culture may be given primacy, but the protean possibilities of culture also begin to emerge. As Said remarks: 'culture is made by humankind, not decreed once and for all by divine genesis' (Said 2000, 142). Culture as resistance therefore is deserving of attention as a source of resistance *per se* and also as part of a society's process of political, sociological and aesthetic development.

Chapter 1 looked at literary descriptions of Palestine in the 19th century, citing by way of example works such as that of the Reverend Michael Russell (1837). It was argued that writers such as Russell may have contributed to the development of a view of Palestinian culture as somehow degraded and uncivilised and thus as a legitimate target of the civilising mission of imperialist expansion. It was argued therefore, that the biblical topography of works such as Russell's may have inadvertently contributed to the Zionist rhetoric of possession in respect of Palestine, a position made all the more tenable, in western eyes, after World War Two and the terrible narratives of the Holocaust.

By situating the poetry of Palestine in the postcolonial context, it was possible to emphasize the capacity of that poetry to publicise and transmit its anti-colonial struggle within a textual framework, and to proffer a textual resistance to negative representation and political subjugation. This is also important in respect of the period before 1948. Locating Palestinian poetry of this period within the Arabic nationalist tradition, demonstrates that Palestinian nationalism was not simply born of an adverse response to Zionism. Thus it was possible to determine that Palestinian culture was not necessarily anti-Jewish in character, but rather, like any culture at the risk of having its independence, not to mention having its very homeland compromised by colonialism, it did become anti-colonial and anti-Zionist in its outlook.

Some examples of the work of the nationalist poets Ibrāhīm Tūqān, Abd al-Rahīm Mahāwī and Salīm al-Bustāni were examined in Chapter 1 as prime examples of anti-colonial poetry, capable of offering an incisive rebuttal to the idea of partition. These were poets who understood the threat to Palestine posed by the Balfour Declaration, and who were also, particularly in the case of Tūqān, (through poetry)

detrimental practices such as the sale of Palestinian land to Zionists by Absentee landlords and others. The poetic voices of this period were generally clear and ardent in terms of the rhetoric they employed, yet demonstrated as in Ibrāhīm T □uq ā, the potential for a far more subtle poetics of resistance.

Chapter II has shown that while specific cultural forms will emerge in relation to colonialism and the de-colonisation process, the modern poetry of Palestine exhibits many of the features by which a postcolonial literature is identified. These features include a sense of alienation and displacement, both physical and psychological, as depicted in the experience of the refugee for example, through poetic tropes of containment and exclusion, and an anxious concern with cultural and political identity. In this chapter, poetry such as Sālim Jubrān's 'Refugee' demonstrates that poetry can be an adjunct to, and an alternative source, of both story and information. Jubrān's poem underscores the meaning of exclusion and Palestinian attempts at 'infiltration' to harvest their lands, for example: 'The sun crosses borders without any soldier shooting at it ... but I your son, made refugee/oh my native land/between me and your horizons/the frontier wall stands'. This chapter has further demonstrated that poetry transcends mere statistics, 'refugees' or 'infiltrators' for example and combines the generation of news and of information, with the delivery of intellectual pleasure to the reader.

Chapter II focused on the poetry of period immediately after the 1948 war. 1948 was the year of *Al-Nakbah*, the Arabic term by which the partition of the land of Palestine, the expulsion of the Arab inhabitants, massacres and destruction of villages, is nominally remembered. Much of the poetry of this period encompasses the shock of displacement and alienation from their homeland, together with the culture shock of

refugee status which (as the poetry demonstrates), was tempered only by the hope of an early return. For those who managed to remain inside the new state of Israel under military rule, their identity as Palestinians took on new meaning. The tropes – refugees, return and identity – that mark the section divisions in this chapter are indicators of the immediate experience of the *nakbah*, but are also issues that continue to beset the Palestinian community to the present.

In Chapter II the idea of culture as a weapon of mass instruction was explored in the context of Palestinian poetry. The poetry was read as a cultural weapon aimed at educating the Palestinian population, a weapon aimed at the breakdown of stereotypes externally (a project which is still pertinent today) and a weapon aimed at outworn rhetoric internally. This chapter demonstrated how the range and depth of poetic metaphor and theme began to evolve and change in the confluence of culture and conflict. During this period, the poets ‘inside’ Israel had maintained a discursive resistance to military rule and by the mid 1950s, the concept of ‘commitment’ in a culture beset by conflict, became, under the pens of committed poets, both a repository and an expositor of that confluence. Loud cries for commitment, Salma Al-Jayussi observes, ‘rang in the fifties with a sonorous insistence’ and poets in particular, ‘felt the need to commit themselves, as for Arabs at the time, poetry was still the most effective verbal expression’ (Al-Jayussi 1987, 15-16). As Mahmūd Darwīsh observed:

My fellow poets! Today we live
In a new world ...
Our poems have no colour
No sound, no taste!
If they don't carry the light [of commitment]

If I sing the song of joy ...
It is because the Storm
has promised me wine... (Almessiri 1970, 27)

In Chapter III the poetry of Mah □m ul Darw sh (
idea of the land as locus of both a country's and an individual's history, and the role of
poetry in the reconstruction and re-presentation of that history, a tropic development in
postcolonial literature, described by Edward Said as 'the primacy of the geographical'
(Said 1990, 36). Deft use of this trope allowed the Palestinian nationalist poets to
challenge the terms of their subjugation by challenging the coloniser's lack of a
concomitant historical, as opposed to biblical, attachment to the land of Palestine. Poetic
tropes of this period (and throughout) centered on Palestinian rootedness, utilizing the
trope of the olive tree, for example, as a symbol of that rootedness and as confirmation of
their historical custodianship and husbandry of the land. During this period the trope of
land as female also began to emerge, in the work of Fadwā Tuqān for instance, who
wrote 'this land my sister, is a woman'. This was a period in which Palestinian women
poets and activists began to assert themselves alongside their male counterparts as
brothers and sisters in the 'wound' in the 'word'.

Although ruptures in terms of cultural transmission can also occur in times of
conflict, or other forms of discontinuity, culture can be a touchstone, a readily available
constant which is transposable across religious, political and geographical divides. This
was particularly important in respect of Diaspora poets, for whom poetry is often the
expression of that rupture but also of their sense of belonging to a particular cultural
milieu. But cultural transmission can also operate in a bi-directional manner; it can

provide a neutral space in which antagonistic communities can recognise the humanity and creative spirit of the 'other'. In her poetic address to 'Etan', Fadwā T □uq ā for example humanizes, while gently confronting a child from a kibbutz through the poetic act of naming, and Fawaz Turki's poem 'The Search of Yacove Eved', demonstrates a distinct sense of regret and loss, loss not only of the Palestinian homeland but of the social amity that might have, and in fact did, continue to exist between many Palestinian Arabs whether Christian, Muslim or Jew, and the stereotypical image of Palestinians begins to dissolve under the scrutiny of poetic analysis.

In Chapter IV the trope of 'rubble' and that of 'stones' reads retrospectively as an adumbration of the *intifādah* which would erupt in 1987. The poetic analysis in this chapter traced the metaphorical transformation of the rubble of the Palestinian *nakbah* into the stones of Palestinian resistance. Hanan Ashrawi's poem 'Demonstration', for example, depicts a child confronting the military with a stone and paying for that confrontation with his life. This period begins in 1973 which saw the emergence of the PLO onto the staging grounds of world history, namely, the United Nations Assembly, which in turn fostered renewed hopes for Palestinian statehood. However, the invasion of Lebanon by Israel in 1982 resulted in the expulsion of the PLO from that country. Darwīsh's poem 'The Earth is Closing on Us', expresses the pressure exerted on Palestinians and the profound concern with which this development was greeted in Palestinian society was explored in this chapter.

Chapter IV also traced the increasing involvement of women and children in the struggle and their concomitant status as casualties, a position which also underscores their potential as a demographic weapon in the struggle against their political and cultural

annihilation. Many of the poems in this section are commemorative in scope, for example Darwīsh's 'Poem of the Land', is a song of resistance but it also commemorates five schoolgirls who were victims of the struggle. Similarly Mai S □ ayigh's poem I
both a news bulletin and a commemorative piece:

On dark alley walls
Our comrades' deaths are announced
Posters show their smiling faces
The usual way we learn
One has fallen on the long road. (Al-Jayussi 1987, 416)

The culture and cult of the martyr probably worked as a form of expiation of the continued humiliation of occupation, but as a commemorative poem it also functions as an act of resistance and a celebration of the life of the Palestinian community, rather than its death by oblivion, a fate that often accompanies a posture of quietude and quiescence.

Chapter V covered the period of the first *intifādah*, a period during which explicit tropes and themes of conflict might have been expected to supersede cultural and aesthetic considerations, and an imitation of the stridency and fervour of the earlier poetry. In contrast however, what appears to have been the antagonists' re-discovery of each other as humans that began with the naming of 'Yacove', and 'Etan' and which also took a step further when the 'other' is given a sympathetic view in Ashrawi's, poem 'Night Patrol' for example.

It has also been demonstrated that Israeli poets such as Dan Almagor on the other hand, expressed a far more vitriolic deconstruction of the occupation and the brutal suppression of the *intifādah*. Poetry such as Almagor's blurs the distinction between

victim and aggressor, in the sense that Israel is generally seen as the victim of Arab aggression. Almagor's poetry therefore undermines the propensity of the Israeli polity to arrogate virtue to itself, as we saw for example in his poem 'We Shoot Children Too, Don't We?' Consequently the Palestinian poetry of this period disavows the existence of any innate hatred of Jews; rather it provides the reader with a deft deconstruction of the occupation and its sometimes horrific mechanics. Furthermore the image of Palestinians as 'skulking terrorist(s)' dissolved in the television images of the asymmetrical power relationship between the antagonists of the *intifādah*. This is corroborated by the poetry of the *intifādah* period, adduced through an examination of the Palestinian 'stone' as a poetic trope, and as an actual weapon of resistance against the sophisticated Israeli war machine. However, the poetry of the *intifādah* and afterwards, underscores the prospect that cessation of overt hostility will not necessarily be remedial while the conditions that provoked that hostility in the first instance, remain unresolved.

In respect of postcolonial theory, Chapter V revisited the idea that the civil rights of subaltern societies are generally subjugated to the political and economic requirements of the colonial centre. The focus on economic deprivation as a tropic component of poetry, and also in other forms of literature, is undoubtedly a factor in the generation of hostility to the perceived source of deprivation. Consequently, much of the poetry underscores the almost inevitable recourse to violence in a situation where pleading, such as 'begging for electricity' or demonstrating, in the form of stone throwing for example, only results in further humiliation or punitive measures, including shooting, see for example Darwīsh's 'Poem of the Land' discussed in Chapter IV.

The poetry discussed in this thesis can enlighten our understanding of the relationship between violence and passivism, as in the observations of Christopher Caudwell, and the complex relational field which involves the cycles of occupation and its violent opposition, passive confrontation and its violent suppression. The intimacy with the subject matter that poetry provides, has the potential to effect a change in the conscience and consciousness of individual readers. The poetry examined also demonstrates the potential for peaceful co-existence which qualifies the 'peace for land' proposals documented by various authors, most notably Edward Said and Sami Hadawi. Thus poetry can create a fresh viewpoint of a situation which in the west is often perceived as a hackneyed, stereotypical and indeed indissoluble confrontation between the Arabs of the Middle East and their Jewish neighbours, while the reality of the situation is, paradoxically, like poetry itself, both deceptively simple and politically complex.

Projects such as this thesis, like all texts and readers, are culturally and politically located in respect of their strategies for the production of knowledge. It highlights the fact that the production of knowledge is a vital component of power relationships, a factor of which writers and critical theorists must remain cognisant. Poetry is an aesthetic form but is also a discursive form which exists in the sphere of knowledge-production. As Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti both advised and demonstrated, an anti-colonialist or anti-occupation poetry need not, and indeed much Palestinian poetry does not, fall short of aesthetic principles, such that it becomes a form of knowledge which is merely propaganda. The coherent and measured response of the later Palestinian poets, particularly from the 1980s and onward, to the predicament of their people has shown

that anti-colonial literature, or a literature of resistance, need not sacrifice poetics on the altar of polemics.

This thesis has demonstrated that Palestinian poets and intellectuals were aware that knowledge formed the power base of the colonial successes in its asymmetrical relationship with Palestinians as colonial subject. Conversely, in the Irish context, a deficit of cultural knowledge can lead to the development of a monocular viewpoint, particularly in the light of advancing globalization, wherein local knowledge and culture, not to mention power relationships, are often obfuscated or elided. The production of comparative cultural knowledge however, and our engagement with it, as this thesis has demonstrated, can only augment, and not compete with, political and historical knowledge. The historical perspective of postcolonial literary theory, when applied to literature, can provide insight into the gaps in our knowledge, or indeed highlight the ways in which knowledge is often mediated for us. In the comparative context it can facilitate our recognition of literary creativity and shared experiences of colonialism whether as subjugator or subaltern, but as Said once observed: ‘until knowledge is understood in human and political terms as something to be won to the service of coexistence and community, not of particular races, nations, classes or religions, the future augurs badly’ (Said 1997, 161).

Finally, let us revisit the question: why study poetry? Poetry, as a component of human culture and consciousness, and particularly in societies in which it is held in some regard, can be used as a means of improving consciousness and sensibility, of subjecting social ills to critical analysis, as well as by offering resistance to enculturation and other forms of oppression. In the sphere of politics, particularly when other forms of

Conclusion

information are circumscribed, the mnemonic properties of poetry have been used in many societies to disseminate knowledge surreptitiously. Many writers and poets, particularly of the modernist tradition, exhibit the apparent desire to distance art from the service of ideology and thereby create a space wherein art for its own sake could contribute to a nation's consciousness of culture in the broader artistic sense. When this possibility is problematic, and the absence of statehood can certainly be considered so, then resistance itself must be elevated (but not necessarily reified), to the status of an art in the service of aesthetics as well as politics. The art of Palestinian resistance poetry is coterminous with the 'art of waiting' for statehood and the Palestinian poets examined in this thesis have demonstrated that commitment to resistance is indeed an art worth engaging with at a personal and at an academic level. In the Palestinian poetry of the period under scrutiny, the roots of conflict can be clearly seen as that of dispossession and exile resulting from the historical juncture that Samīh al-Qāsim described as 'the biggest armed robbery in history', and it is their commitment to sustaining their cultural identity and cohesion as a people, which has drawn Palestinians into conflict with the forces that would extinguish that culture. Their poetry therefore, is the alternative history of their struggle revealed through the confluence of forces that shapes it, as experienced and remembered by the traditional register of Arab life, culture and history, the poets.

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Appendix 1: The Poetry

Poets in alphabetical order:

Tāhā Muh □ ānmed Al ī

Empty Words

Ah, little notebook
yellow as a spike of wheat
and still as a face,
I've protected you
from dampness and rodents
and entrusted you with
my sadness and fear,
and my dreams – ... (Ali 2007, 109)
though in exchange I've gotten from you
only disobedience and betrayal ...
For otherwise where are the words
that would have ne saying:
If only I were a rock on hill
unable to see or hear,
be sad or suffer!
And where is the passage
whose tenor is this:
I wish I could be
a rock on a hill
which the young men
from Hebron explode
and offer as a gift to Jerusalem's children,

ammunition for their palms and slings!
And where is the passage
in which I wanted
to a be rock on a hill
gazing out from on high
hundreds of years from now
over hordes
of masked liberators!

And where is what belongs
To my dream of being
A rock on a hill
Along the Carmel –
where I call on the source of my sadness,
gazing out over the waves
and thinking of her
to whom I bade farewell
at the harbour pier
in Haifa forty years ago
and still
I await her return one evening
with the doves of the sea.
Is it fair, little notebook
yellow as a spike of wheat
that you conceal
what you cancel and erase,
simply because it consists
of empty words –
which frighten no enemy
and offer no hope to a friend?

Never Mind

Grandfather,
old hunter
in your face I read only goodness
though I, at your age
refrained
from hunting the evening quail ...
I'd turn away
from the snake as it shed its faded sheath
and say:
"Never mind."

I'll feed your mangy dog.
I'll bring you tobacco and water.
I won't alarm the gazelles
or the wild doves
or say a word to the local inspectors.

The brotherhood of knives
hanging from belts
binds us in our search
for fledgling partridges
in pockets and under hats.

My comrade in thirst
lamenting the rabbits
in their innocence,
who leave no creature
pure of heart –
I implore you:
let me stroll

Works Cited

within range of your rifle,
among these deserted gardens
and ruined stone walls;
allow me
to greet this fig tree!
Let me draw near
to that particular cactus
And then, after the harvest,
catch me
and slaughter me
with the fine threads
that dangle
from your pack and sleeves
like the guts from a chicken's belly!

Laila ° Allūsh

The Path of Affection

On the startling road seized from the throat of new accounts
On the startling road seized from this century's earrings
reaching the bloodied neck
On the surprising road seized from old Jerusalem
And despite the estrangement of signs, shops and graveyards,
I gather my fragmented self together
to meet my relatives in the New Haifa.

My companions on our smooth trip in the minibus
know nothing of my suffering
But I am an authentic face, well-rooted,
while their seven faces are alien.

This land is still the old land
despite green clouds and fertilized plants
and water sprinklers spinning so efficiently
On the startling road seized from the throat of new accounts
In the land I felt an apology for my father's wounds
and on all the bridges,
the shape of my Arab face
etched there in the tall poplar trees,
in the winding rings of smoke.

Everything is Arabic still, despite the change of language
despite the huge trucks, the foreign tractors.
Each poplar and orange grove of my ancestors
laughed to me, my God, with Arab affection.

Works Cited

despite changes, dismissals and revisions,
despite the modern tunes
commercials slapping visitors' faces
despite the flooding seas of light, despite technology
and many psalms, the many nails
and all the goings and comings of foreign peoples
the land continued to sing an Arab tune.

Even with propaganda wavering in the air
languages mingling, multiplying
around the strange outgrowths
of modern buildings
the land was gently defying it all.
Oh my grandparents, even in the stark light of noon
the red soil was shining
with Arab modesty
And singing, believe me,
affectionately.

A New Creation

I was born in June,
that's why my brow is branded with thorns,
why I await for dawn to clear
the painful night from my eyes.

I was born in June
that's why the executioner keeps trying
to change my name
He trims his moustaches and fortifies
the cracks in my prison
leaving the open field free for the beasts

Works Cited

that crave my flesh.

In June I was born
That's why they constructed a thousand
scarecrows which they clad
in my stolen clothes
 my shoes
 my coat
impaling them on poisoned arrows
 in my land
hiding my grandfather's sword
selling his remains
 before my eyes.

In June I was born
In June I came alive again
This is why I await the dawn
 with nerves
 and flesh
 and eyes
And this is why I still beget children.
Guarding my loaf from the pouch of the beast
 in the tortuous night
and this is why
my ancient olive branch
was awakened after twenty years
by the tremor of creation, becoming
a whip of fire in my hand.

Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi

Economics

My name is Kamel
Last week I bought a television set,
Next week I'll buy
A fridge –
and, who knows
Maybe next month
I'll make enough to buy
a washing machine
(fully automatic).
There's no end to my ambition.

Perhaps I should have signed
that petition the camp had sent
the military governor
for the hundredth time
begging for electricity.
Still I was too busy
hauling gravel for that
superhighway
connecting Jerusalem with Tel Aviv.
Besides, I would have been fired,
Ahmed signed –
and he was.
He never bought a television set.

Guerrilla

Dark, motionless, he stood
eyes fixed on barbed wire
swimming in distant lights.
Demanding, possessive, jealous,
Your love
knows no mercy,
Your deserts, hot and barren,
Sear our flesh. Our feet
Sink in the Jordan's muddy trap.
Your fields, green and tender, drink

Our blood. Your craggy mountains
Scoop the skies,
Stab innocent clouds, and mock
The yearning of ancient trees.
Valleys
Echo our footsteps, embrace lost bones.
Faceless, changing, ageless,
You take your terrible toll.

He turned, placed his
Kalashnikov on moist earth,
Nodded to fighters telling tales of
Glory
Hammad's eyes
sought his with a question
"as legend I could never love her."
He answered
"she lives."

Night Patrol

(an Israeli soldier on the West Bank)

It's not the sudden hail
of stones, nor the mocking
of their jeers, but this deliberate quiet
in their eyes that
threatens to wrap itself
around my well-armed uniformed
presence and drag me into
depths of confrontation I
never dared to probe.

Their stares bounce off stone,
walls and amateur barricades, and
I am forced to listen
to the echo of my own
gun fire and tear gas
grenades in the midst of
a deafening silence which
I could almost touch, almost
But not quite.

I refuse to be made into a figment of my
own imagination. I catch
myself at times, glimpsing
glimpsing the child I
was in one of them. That
same old recklessness, a daredevil
stance, a secret wisdom only
youth can impart as it hurtles
towards adulthood. Then I
begin to take substance before
my very eyes, and
shrink back in terror – as

Works Cited

an organism on its long
evolutionary trek recoils at the
touch of a human hand.

If I should once, just
Once, grasp the elusive
End of the thread which
Ties my being here with
Their being there, I
Could unravel the beginning ...no,
no, it was not an act
of will that brought me
here, and I shall wrap myself in
fabric woven by hands
other than mine, perhaps
lie down and take a nap.

Should I admit then into
my hapless dreams a thousand
eyes, a thousand hands, and allow
unknowingly the night's
silence to conceal me, I
would have done no
more or less than what
thousands have done before me, turning
over in sleep clutching my
cocoon of army issue blankets,
and hope for a different posting
in the morning.

Women and Things

Women make things grow:
Sometimes like the crocus,
surprised by rain, emerging fully
grown from the belly of the earth;
Others like the palm tree with
Its promise postponed
rising in a slow
deliberate
spiral to the sky.

Women make things light
afloat
like the breathless
flight of soap bubbles
shimmering in eyes of a lone
child in a forbidden schoolyard;
And heavy
like the scent of
an overripe fruit
exploding at the
knowledge of summer-hardened
soil on days of siege.

Women make things smooth
to the touch
like the kneading of
leavened bread at the dawn of hunger;
And course
like the brush of a
homespun coat on
careworn shoulders and bare
arms barely touching on the night of deportation.

Works Cited

Women make things cold
sharp and hard
like a legal argument thrust
before the threat of search and detention;
Or warm
and gentle like
justice in a poem
lie the suggestion of
the image of freedom
The image of freedom
as a warm bath and
a long soak, in an undemolished home.

Women make things
And as we, in separate
worlds, braid
our daughters' hair
in the morning, you and
I, each
humming to herself, suddenly
stops
and hears the
tune of the other.

From the Diary of an Almost Four Year Old

Tomorrow the bandages
will come off. I wonder
will I see half and orange,
half an apple, half my
mother's face
with my one remaining eye?
I did not see the bullet
but felt its pain
exploding in my head.
His image did not
Vanish, the soldier
With a big gun, unsteady
Hands, and a look in
His eyes
I could not understand.

If I can see him so clearly
with my eyes closed,
it could be that inside our heads
we each have one spare set
of eyes
to make up for the ones we lose.

Next month, on my birthday,
I'll have a brand new glass eye,
maybe things will look round
and fat in the middle –
I've gazed through all my marbles,
they made the world look strange.

I hear a nine-month-old
has lost an eye,

I wonder if my soldier
shot her too – a soldier
looking for little girls who
look him in the eye –
I'm old enough, almost four,
I've seen enough of life,
but she's just a baby
who didn't know any better.

Death by Burial

This plot is not one
Fit for planting
Here the earth is
Hard, dry, grating –
Needles of dead leaves
Scratch.
I close my eyes, dust
chokes my throat
I never knew earth
could be so heavy.
perhaps were I
to raise one arm
someone would come across
my grave one day, and,
as in late – night horror movies,
see a lifeless hand, an palm open
fingers half-curved ...
and scream.

I did not die that day –
Something else did
And it still lies in

that putrid grave
fermenting its knowledge of darkness.

Ibtisam Barakat

Curfew

Our city is a cell
Children's faces
Are replacing
Flower pots on
Window sills.
And we are waiting.

From our bars
Of boredom
We enter
A spit race
The one whose spit
Reaches farther
Is freer

Mah

□m ul Darw sh

On Poetry

Yesterday we sang to the stars
Nestled in clouds
And to moons that grinned at us
And then we drowned in tears.

Yesterday we violated the grapevine
And wore the moon like a mask
And drugged divine decree.
Still we remained wretched.

My fellow poets! Today we live
In a new world. A toad of world!
And he who writes a poem
Becomes a prophet.

Our poems have no colour
No sound, no taste!
If they don't carry the light
From house to house.

If people can't understand them
Then let's bequeath them to the wind
So that we may live eternally
In silence.

If only these poems were a chisel
In the hands of a labourer!

Or a plough
In the grip of a peasant!

Or a shirt
Or a roof
Or a loaf of bread.
If only they were!

Once I heard a poet say:
Since my poems please
My friends and spite my enemies
Then I must be a poet!

But I say, I say:
If only these poems were a chisel
Or a plough, or a roof!
If only they were.

Promises from the Storm

Be that as it may,
I must reject death
and dry the tears of sentimental songs
and rid the olive trees
of all false branches.
If I sing the song of joy
Behind the lids of frightened eyes,
It is because the Storm
has promised me wine, and new toasts,
and rainbows:
and because the Storm
Has swept the standing trees
Clean

Of all dull sparrows
And false branches.
Be that as it may,
I must be proud of you, wound of the city,
You are the light in our sad nights.
As the streets frown in my face,
And shield me from the shade and looks of hatred.
I will sing the song of joy,
Behind the lids of frightened eyes,
For my country and the Storm has blown,
Promising wine and rainbows.

Identity Card

Write down!

I am an Arab

And my identity card number is fifty thousand

I have eight children

And a ninth will come in the summer

Will you be angry?

Write down!

I am an Arab

Employed with fellow workers at the quarry

I have eight children

I get them bread

garments and books

from the rocks

I do not supplicate charity at your doors

Not do I belittle myself at the footsteps of your chamber

so will you be angry?

Write down!

I am an Arab

I have a name without a title

Works Cited

Patient in a country
Where my people are enraged
My roots
were entrenched before the birth of time
and before the opening of the eras
Before the pines, and the olive trees
And before the grass grew
My father descends from the family of the plough
Not from a privileged class
And my grandfather was a farmer
Neither well-bred nor well-born!
Teaches me the pride of the sun
Before teaching me how to read
And my house is like a watchman's hut
made of branches and cane.
Are you satisfied with my status?
I have a name without a title
Write down!
I am an Arab
You have stolen the orchards of my ancestors
And the land which I cultivated
Along with my children
And you left nothing for us
Except for these rocks
So will the state take them
As it has been said?
Therefore!
Write down on the top of the first page:
I do not hate people
Nor do I encroach
But if I become hungry
The usurper's flesh will be my food
Beware...
Beware...

Of my hunger
And my anger.

Diary of a Palestinian Wound

Quatrains for Fadwa Tuqan

1

We do not need to be reminded:
Mount Carmel is in us
and on your eyelashes the grass of Galilee.
Do not say: if we could run to her like a river
Do not say it:
we and our country are one flesh and bone.

2

Before June we were not fledgling doves
So our love did not wither in bondage.
Sister, these twenty years
our work was not to write poetry
but to be fighting.

3

The shadow that descends over your eyes
- demon of a God
who came out of the month of June
to wrap around our heads the sun –
his color is martyrdom
the taste of prayer.
How well he kills, how well he resurrects!

4

The night that began in your eyes
in my soul it was a long night's end:

Works Cited

Here and now we keep company
on the road of our return
from the age of drought.

7

And we came to know what makes the voice of the nightingale
a dagger shining in the face of the invaders.
We came to know what makes the silence of the graveyard
A festival ... orchards of life.

8

You sang your poems, I saw the balconies
desert their walls
the city square extending to the midriff of the mountain.
It was not music we heard.
it was not the colour of words we saw:
A million heroes were in the room.

11

This land absorbs the skins of martyrs.
This land promises wheat and stars.
Worship it!
We are its salt and its water.
We are its wound, but a wound that fights.

12

Sister, there are tears in my throat
and there is fire in my eyes:
I am free.
No more shall I protest at the Sultan's Gate.
All who have died, all who shall die at the Gate of Day
Have embraced me, have made of me a weapon.

14

Ah my intractable wound!
My country is not a suitcase
I am not a traveller
I am the loved and the land is the beloved.

22

The archaeologist is busy analysing stones.
In the rubble of legends he searches for his own eyes
to show
that I am a sightless vagrant on the road
with not one letter in civilisations alphabet.
Meanwhile I plant my trees.
I sing of my love.

24

It is time for me to exchange the word for the deed
Time to prove my love for the land and for the nightingale:
For in this age the weapon devours the guitar
And in the mirror I have been fading more and more
Since at my back a tree began to grow.

Poem of the Land

In the month of March
 in the year of the uprising
 earth told us her blood secrets
In the month of March
 five girls at the door
 of the primary school
Came past the violet
 came past the rifle
 burst into flame

Works Cited

with the roses
 and thyme
 they opened
the song of the soil
 and entered the earth
 the ultimate embrace
March comes to the land
 out of the earth's depth
 out of the girls' dance
The violets leaned over a little
 so that the girls voices
 could cross over
the birds
 pointed their beaks
 at that song and at my heart.

I
I name the soil I call it
 an extension of my soul
I name my hands I call them
 The pavements of wounds
I name the pebbles
 wings
I name the birds
 almonds and figs
Gently I pull a branch
 from the fig tree of my breast
 I throw it lie a stone
 To blow up the conqueror's tank

2

In the month of March thirty years and five wars ago I was born on a heap of luminous tombstone grass. My father was a prisoner of the British. My mother nurtured her braid and my space on the grass. I

Works Cited

loved the anemones and filled my pockets with them. At noon they
wilted. Bullets flew across my lilac moon and it did not break. But
time

passes over my lilac moon and inadvertently it drops into the heart

In the month of March we stretch out in the land and the
land spreads out in us

Mysterious dates

A simple celebration

We discover the sea beneath our windows

the lilac moon over the cypress trees

In the month of March

We enter the first prison and the first love

Memories shower down upon a fenced village

That is where we were born

Never to pass beyond the quince-tree shade

II

My country: distant as my heart from me

My country: close to me as my prison

Why sing of one place

While my face is in another?

Why sing

To a child asleep over saffron

A dagger in the margin of sleep

My mother giving me her breast

My mother dying in front of me

In a gust of ambergris

3

And the horses waken in the month of March

My lady earth!

What song after me will walk on the undulations?

Works Cited

of your belly?

What song is right for this dew and this incense –
As if temples asked now about the prophets of Palestine
And about her continuous beginning
This is the distance greening and the reddening of stones
This is my song
Exit of Christ from the wound and from the wind
Green like plants that cover his nails
and my chains

This is my song
This is the ascent of the Arab boy to his dream
And to Jerusalem

III

As if I returned
to what has been
As if I walked
in front of myself
I restore my harmony
between the trial and the verdict
I am the son
of simple words
I am the martyr of the map
the family apricot blossom
O you who grip the edge
of the impossible
From the beginning until Galilee
Return me to m hands
Return to me
My identity

And in the month of March come the silken shadows (and without
Shadows the invaders). The birds come mysterious as the confessions
of girls... Five girls conceal a wheatfield under their braids. The read

the first words of a song about the vines of Hebron. They write five
letters: Long may my country live ... Five girls at the door of a primary
school break like mirrors

they were the heart mirrors of the country
Earth in the month of March
set fire to her flowers

IV

I am the witness of the massacre
I am the victim of the map
I am the son of simple words.

V

A small evening
A neglected village
Two sleeping eyes
Thirty years
Five wars
I witness that time hides from me
An ear of wheat
The singer sings
Of fire and strangers
Evening was evening
The singer was singing
And they question him
Who do you sing?
He answers them as they seize him
Because I sing

And they have searched him:
In his breast only his heart
In his heart only his people
In his voice only his sorrow

In his sorrow only his prison
And they have searched his prison
To find themselves in chains.

We Travel like Other People

We Travel like other people, but we return to nowhere. As if travelling
Is the way of the clouds. We have buried our loved ones in the
darkness of the clouds, between the roots of trees.
And we said to our wives: go on giving birth to people like us
for hundreds of years so we can complete the journey
To the hour of a country, to a metre of the impossible.
We travel in the carriages of psalms, sleep in the tent of the
prophets and come out of the speech of gypsies.
We measure space with a hoopoe's beak or sing to while away the
Distance and cleanse the light of the moon.
Your path is long so dream of seven women to bear this long path
On your shoulders. Shake for them palm trees so as to know their
names and you'll be the mother of the boy of Galilee.
we have a country of words. Speak speak so we may know the end of
this travel.

On this Earth

We have on this earth what makes life worth living: April's hesitation, the
aroma of bread
at dawn, a woman's point of view about men, the works of Aeschylus, the
beginning
of love, grass on a stone, mothers living on a flute's sigh and the invaders' fear
of memories.
We have on this earth what makes life worth living: the final days
of September, a woman
keeping her apricots ripe after forty, the hour of sunlight in prison, a cloud

reflecting a swarm
of creatures, the people's applause for those who face death with a smile,
a tyrant's fear of songs.
We have on this earth what makes life worth living: on this earth, the Lady
of Earth,
mother of all beginnings and ends. She was called Palestine. Her name
later became
Palestine. My Lady, because you are my Lady, I deserve life.

Poetic Regulations

The stars had only one task: they taught me how to read.
They taught me I had a language in heaven
and another language on earth.
Who am I? who am I?
May a star fall into itself,
and may a forest of chestnut trees rise in the night
towards the Milky Way with me, and may it say:
Remain here?

The poem is "above" and can teach me whatever it wishes.
It can teach me to open a window
and to manage my household between legends.
It can wed me to itself for a while.

My father is "below", carrying a thousand-year old olive tree
that is neither from the East nor the West.
Let him rest from the conquerors for a while,
and be tender with me, and gather iris and lily for me.

The poem leaves me and heads for a port whose sailors love wine
and never return twice to the same woman.

They have neither regrets nor longing for anything!

I haven't died of love yet, but a mother sees in her son's eyes
the fear carnations harbour for the vase.
She cries to ward off something before it happens.
She cries for me to return alive from destiny's road
and live here.

The poem is neither here nor there, and with a girl's breast
it can illuminate the nights.
With the glow of an apple it fills two bodies with light
and with a gardenia's breath it can revive a homeland!

The poem is in my hands and can run stories through her hands.
But ever since I embraced the poem, I squandered my soul
And then asked: Who am I? Who am I?

The Kind-Hearted Villagers

I did not yet know my mother's way of life,
nor her family's, when the ships came in from the sea'
I knew the scent of tobacco in my grandfather's *aba*,
and ever since I was born here, all at once, like a domestic animal,
I knew the eternal smell of coffee.

We too, cry when we fall to the earth's rim'
Yet we don't preserve our voices in old jars.
We don't hang a mountain goat's horns of the wall,
and we don't make of our dust a kingdom.
Our dreams do not gaze on other people's grapevines.
They don't break the rule.

Works Cited

My name had no feather, so I could not fly beyond midday.
April's warmth was like the balalaikas of our passing visitors.
It caused us to fly like doves.
My first fright: the charm of a girl who seduced me into
smelling milk on her knees, but I fled that meal's sting!
We too have our mystery when the sun falls from white poplars.
We are overwhelmed by a desire to cry for one who has died for nothing,
and by an eagerness to visit Babylon or a mosque in Damascus.
In the eternal saga of pain, we are the teardrop in the dove's cooing.

We are kindhearted villagers and we don't regret our words.
Our names, like our days, are the same.
Our names don't reveal us. We infiltrate the talk of our guests.
We have things to tell the woman stranger
about the land she embroiders on her scarf
with the pinions of our returning sparrows!

When the ships came in from the sea,
this place was held together only by trees.
We were feeding our cows in their enclosures
and organising our days in closets made by our own hands
we were coaxing the horse, and beckoning to the wandering star.

We too boarded the ships, entertained by
The radiance of the emerald in the olive at night,
and by dogs barking at a fleeting moon above the church tower,
yet we were unafraid.
For our childhood had not boarded with us
We were satisfied with a song.
Soon we'll go back to our house
When the ships unload their excess cargo.

Eleven Planets in the Last Andalusian Sky

On our last evening in this land
we tear our days down from the trellises,
tally the ribs we carry away with us
and the ribs we leave behind.

On the last evening
we bid farewell to nothing
we've no time to finish
everything's left as it is,
places change dreams the way they
change casts of characters.

Suddenly we can no longer be light-hearted,
this place is about to play host to nothing.

On the last evening
we contemplate mountains surrounding the clouds,
invasion and counter invasion,
the ancient era handing our door keys over
to a new age.
Enter O invaders, come, enter our houses,
drink the sweet wine of our Andalusian songs!
We are night at midnight,
no horsemen galloping toward us
from the safety of the last call to prayer
to deliver the dawn
Our tea is hot and green – so drink!
Our pistachios are ripe and fresh – so eat!
The beds are green with new cedarwood
give in to your drowsiness!
After such a long siege, sleep on the
soft down of our dreams!

Fresh sheets, scents at the door and many mirrors.
Enter our mirrors so we can vacate the premises
Completely!
Later we'll look up what was recorded in our history
about yours in faraway lands.

Then we'll ask orselves,
*"Was Andalusia
here or there? On earth?
Or only in poems?"*

The Train Passed By

Quickly, the train passed by.
I had been waiting
On the sidewalk
Travelers were rushing to their
Daily lives.... and I
Continued to wait

From afar, violins cry,
So I am carried
By the edges of a cloud that
Breaks.

The yearning for things obscure
Becomes distant and imminent.
Forgetfulness does not push me away.
Memory does not bring me closer
To a woman
Who if caressed by the moon
Would scream: I am the moon.

Quickly, the train passed by
My time, on the sidewalk
Did not belong to me.
The hour was different
What time is it now?
What day separated yesterday from
tomorrow
When the gypsies migrated?

Here, I was born yet cannot give birth.
This train
Then, will complete my stubborn birth,
while the trees surround me

Here, I was found yet cannot find
anything.
In this train I will stumble
Upon my soul filled with
Two banks of a river that died
Like a young man dies.
“If only the boy was a rock”

Quickly the train passed by
Passed by me and I am
Like the station, not knowing whether
To bid farewell or greet the people:
Above my sidewalk,
A welcome
A coffee shop
Offices
Roses
Telephones
Newspapers
Sandwiches
Music and a

A child, a little girl,
Their eyes and their devices
Search in her breast, her womb, her mind
For weapons, for a bomb.
And when they discover nothing (O)
The insist: "This little girl was born here,
All those born in Jerusalem
Shall be made into bombs."
And they are right.
All born in the shadow of bombs
Shall become bombs.

Against

Against my country's rebels wounding a sapling
Against a child – any child – bearing a bomb
Against my sister studying a rifle's components
Against what you will –
But even a Prophet becomes powerless
When his visor takes in
the murderers' horses
Against a child becoming a hero at ten
Against a tree's heart sprouting mines
Against my orchard's branches becoming gallows
Against erecting scaffolds among the roses of my land
Against what you will
But after my country, my comrades, and my youth were burnt,
how can my poems not turn into guns?

Jaffa

An opiate cloud hangs over Jaffa,
And the lean roads are pregnant with flies and boredom.
In the streets of heaven, the moon's funeral.
Jaffa is then without a moon;
Jaffa is then blood on a stone.

Jaffa, who suckled me with milk of orange,
Thirsts! She, whose waves watered the rain.
Jaffa, who broke the days on these sands,
Is motionless, her back broken.
Jaffa, who once was a garden, its trees, men,
Is now an opium den dulling our senses.

I was in Jaffa, removing the rats' from her forehead
Raising the rubble, uncovering corpses without knees,
Burying the stars in the sands and fences.
I took the bullets from her bones and sipped anger.

And, when feeling tired, I got myself a dry bush,
Smoked it and rested. (almessiri 1970, 73)

Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā

In the Deserts of Exile

In the Deserts of Exile
Spring after spring,
In the deserts of exile,
What are we doing with our love,
When our eyes are full of frost and dust?

Our Palestine, green land of ours;
Its flowers as if embroidered of women's gowns;
March adorns its hills
With the jewel-like peony and narcissus;
April bursts open in its plains
With flowers and bride-like blossoms;
May is our rustic song
Which we sing at noon,
In the blue shadows,
Among the olive-trees of our valleys,
And in the ripeness of the fields
We wait for the promise of July
And the joyous dance amidst the harvest.

O land of ours where our childhood passed
Like dreams in the shade of the orange-grove,
Among the almond-trees in the valleys —
Remember us now wandering
Among the thorns of the desert,
Wandering in rocky mountains;
Remember us now
In the tumult of cities beyond deserts and seas;
Remember us
With our eyes full of dust

Works Cited

That never clears in our ceaseless wandering.
They crushed the flowers on the hills around us,
Destroyed the houses over our heads,
Scattered our torn remains,
Then unfolded the desert before us,
With valleys writhing in hunger
And blue shadows shattered into red thorns
Bent over corpses left as prey for falcon and crow.

Is it from your hills that the angels sang to the shepherds
Of peace on earth and goodwill among men?
Only death laughed when it saw
Among the entrails of beasts
The ribs of men,
And through the guffaw of bullets
It went dancing a joyous dance
On the heads of weeping women.
Our land is an emerald,
But in the deserts of exile,
Spring after spring,
Only the dust hisses in our face.
What then, what are we doing with our love?
When our eyes and our mouth are full of frost and dust?

The Diary of the Epidemic Year'

And thus the news spread.

On the sidewalk there are barefooted people laughing
and the backgammon in the café is biased
his good luck has split the rock
Panj chahar ...
while my pocket is emptily screaming to God.
Ten years of travel
my city lying on its back
spitting hate to its lovers
for love in it does not fall on the road
like seeds in a ploughed earth:
love in it is a passion of a hater
erotic in the moonlight

Its lovers are its mourners
while its naked people on the sidewalk hasten
exultingly,
its mourners mourn, while its naked
come to it like black birds with perfumed beaks –
ten years of travel
while my pocket is emptily screaming to God.

The city wires shook with the news
on the air between the moaning love songs
the whizzing of satellites and conferences
it was said, the one whose forehead you trod on died.

Ten years of travel.

Works Cited

In the crowd of that shout
at death seeking the death of life,
there is no beauty any more, no crimson lips, no large eyes.
No glory after today and no joy –
but stagnant mud and a dead letter to mankind.
Let the voice of the muezzin rise in the ruins
let the lute shed a dead tune
to a city whose walls and stone ooze of hatred.

But I was dreaming of green streets
and children running in them
and faces like laughing suns
like lovers' faces wet with rain.
Here I am who did not weep except for the beautiful
am weeping for the lost roads now
with no child running in them
deserted by the sun rays
lips do not speak in them
eyes are dark in them an hands
are a blind chip of rock.

But on the sidewalk there are barefooted people laughing
Panj chahar ...
while my pocket is emptily screaming to God.

Ten years of travel.

I am fed up by God I am fed up!
I am exasperated at my strength
exasperated at one day following another
in a blind and deaf band
around my head: where is my pickaxe
The pickaxe of my free forefathers who would walk barefooted
For a thousand miles with the pickaxe on their shoulders

Works Cited

singing to the begrudging sun and the howling wind
singing even to the rains showering their tatters
which the rocks under their feet lamented,
in order to get rid of a deaf band.
My forefathers did not fear hunger ever
Because they and hunger were companions,
nor estrangement in roofless abodes
whose people did not care if the stranger died of exhaustion in the
lanes.
"Give us this day our daily bread,"
Lord, what have we received but that, but –
but the great ecstasy,
the ecstasy of the naked horizons brimful
of weeping women and dancers under the branches of trees?
I shall carry my pickaxe
and raise my head up to the haughty heights
and hit the beloved rock
which fills the foot of the hill with palaces,
I shall make water and fruit burst
and shall say to my children:
“ there is no death from hunger.
Horrible death is only there
Wherever you find a deaf band.
Drink water free and do not breathe
except the air of haughty heights.”

Salma al-Khadra al-Jayussi

Without Roots

I

The ringing burst load and frightening
Then the voice persistent and sad:
“send your aid eastwards
All your uncles have become refugees.”
I heaved a deep sigh and grieved sorely over them
Then I sent my uncles clothes
Which I had piled up for beggars
Raisins which we had but would not eat
Sticky piasters with no bright sheen or ringing jingle
And tears and tears and tears and a groan.

Since that day I give my piasters to no beggar
For my cousins had become refugees.

II

My uncle hungered and we lamented his hunger
Then fed him for a month as a guest
And rested from the pangs of conscience
Then we gave him up to the great wide world
And got absorbed in our own worlds.
'Many a dove calling in the forenoon' stirred our sadness
And we remembered him and plunged in tears
And rested from the pangs of conscience.
Who frightened away the white-legged horses from the hills?
Who toppled down their riders? Who feeds them in their nakedness?
Who knows the green summits?
A strong noble people was living there then... went astray

III

Then we met – my cousin and I
I shouted to him, "My cousin, 'the apple of my eye,' O noble man,
I am still loyal to the fond memories
How much we loved each other as youngsters and competed with
the near star.
And wandered up green summits, and in the fertile meadow
(we had no idea how fertile it was)
We were sad at the sun's escape behind the horizon
Before we finished all we had to say.
A fragrance still clings to my heart of the fig leaves that shaded us.
You were a world of bloom: the sun and heaps of wishes
Were your sweet hope, your faith, your yearning and I ...
Do tell me something new and you and I will tell you something
about my life
And my dream, my ambition, my thought and travels
Hey, what? Why are you turning away from me, distracted
Impatient? Are you not my cousin, O noble man?"
He said to me with indifference, " No a stranger" and he
disappeared.
Memories died at his heels ... and we vanished
Farewell, stranger.
In spite of death, he was my cousin
We had lived together on our land
My cousin was the prime
Of all the young men of our town
What made him freeze?
He was no dead man, I know him
For we set up our wishes together
And worshipped the birth of fire in us
We opened up our selves to a great desire
And we grew up knowing the bitter hatred as of custom
We held fingers together
we demonstrated with the large crowds

Works Cited

and shouted with the fullness of the heart's faith
with the fullness of the echoing expanse
"O Britain, do not overdo it
Do not say conquest is pleasant
Nights will come to you
Whose lights are shining spears." (Boullata 1976, 150)

"O Britain? Those who died are dead. Lie down, O Spears"

Olive trees did not bear oil and fire
The colour of their leaves faded
The morning breeze did not convey to us a desire, a stimulus
It embraced the strangers with its yearning

IV

I asked the land and the sea about them
The paleness of dawn, the sad night.
A star with an extinguished eye led me to them
And the traces of boxthorn carried from the valleys.
For they feared to die in their homeland
In order to live as refugees. (Boullata 1976, 151)

I came to the old man to quench my eagerness
He used to cherish me, babble to me, sing to me as a child
"My town is high ... on the top of a hill"
O my dear little girl ... O jasmine bud."
He taught me old poetry,
The principles of religion (ah for his despair) and the Qur'an.
He used to protect me from my angry father
From my own unruliness. Who can touch the jasmine while the old
man is around!
A little girl and her grandfather can never have enough of his love.
She leans her head against his gentle chest
And he gives her the warmth of his heart.

Works Cited

I said, "Grandfather, peace and guidance."
I said, "Grandfather, we seek your satisfaction."
I said, "Grandfather, don't you know my voice?
Has it not made an echo while remembering you?
My grandfather said, "Get up and leave us.
Our ears are heavy with deafness
the echo is a wound in the depths of the heart
I would have returned your bitter call
If I could speak. Get up and leave us
You do not understand the meaning of silence in a broken heart."
He used to cherish me, to babble to me, to sing to me as a child
My town is high ... on the top of a hill
My town is high ... on the top of a hill
My town is ... The echo is a wound in the depth of a heart
My town ... is high...on the top ... of a hill

The call to prayer rose high
But my grandfather's heart is distracted and cannot hear it
A baby cried and cried too much
Having lost her who kissed his tears dry.
My uncle shouted, "Silence that sick baby
Ask our neighbour to suckle him
His pregnant mother nursed him little and he is lean
I shall not burn my days for him."

O my sweet one, my dear ... O jasmine bud
Silence that sick baby!
O my sweet one, my dear ... O jasmine bud.

Pale lips do not approach prayer at dawn
Pale lips do not know the purity of kisses
They do not kiss today except their lust
And though their feverish passion bears fruit

Works Cited

Pale lips do not kiss naked children
Born without roots, without a morrow,
From a passion that has no love.

O sons of the dead, are you dead like them
Or are you orphans? Or the scar of the wound in a sad people?
We are all that
A word of a hoarse discordant tone united us
“refugees”. (Boullata 1976, 152)

Sālim Jubrān

Refugee

The sun crosses borders
without any soldier shooting at it
The nightingale sings in Tulkarem
of an evening
Eats and roosts peacefully
with kibbutzim birds.
A stray donkey grazes
 across the firing-line
in peace
and no one aims.
But I, your son made refugee
Oh my native land –
between me and your horizons
the frontier wall stands. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 190)

Abd al-Rahīm Mah □m ūl

The Martyr

I shall carry my soul on the palm of hand,
Tossing it into the cavern of death!
Either a life to gladden the hearts of friends
Or a death to torture the hearts of foes!
An honourable man's spirit has two aims:
to die fighting, or to achieve victory.
Otherwise, what is life? I want no life
If we're not respected in our land;
If our response is not feared,
If our words are not heard
Echoing in the world!
By your life, I see my own death,
But I hasten my footsteps.
No greater wish then to die defending stolen rights
And my country,
My ears love the clashing of swords,
My soul is proud of martyr's blood.
Behold the martyr's body
Sprawled on sands, attacked by vultures,
His blood tinting the earth crimson
Haunting northern breezes with its scent.
His radiant brow covered with dust
Only seems more luminous.
The smile on his lips
Mocks this earthly life,
And his dreams of eternity,
Shape blissful visions.

I swear this is how men should die
For how can I tolerate the harm of my enemy's malice?
How can I endure his aggression?

Would fear stop me if it is easy to sacrifice my life?
Am I humble? I simply can endure no scorn!
With my own heart I'll fight the enemy;
My heart of steel, my ravenous flames,
I will stalk my land with the blade of this sword
So my people know I am their defender.

Call of the Motherland

The slain motherland called for our struggle
And my heart leapt with joy.
I raced the winds, but did not boast.
Isn't it my simple duty to redeem my country?
I carried my soul in my hands asking
Any who feared death: do you hesitate
Before the enemy?
Would you sit still when your country begs for your help?
Would you back away from facing the enemy?
If so, then go hide in your mother's bedroom!
May your hesitation humiliate you!
The motherland needs mighty defenders
Who meet aggression
But never complain;
True lions on the battlefield.
People of my country, our days of sacrifice have arrived;
They shine, radiant, across the hills of this holy land.
Redeemed by our young men too proud
To endure oppression,
What can we do but fight bravely
When the fire's kindled?
March on, to the field! Pour fire
On the heads of the enemy everywhere.
Nothing's humbler than a people who shun the fight
When their country calls for it.

Neighbour, brethren, arise from your sleep!
How can you sleep through this oppression?
Never stop even if the sky should grow dark!
Never retreat even if the sandstorms flare up behind you!
Don't give up even if the world should face you
With weapons from every direction
unite, unite everywhere!
If Palestine should be lost while you live,
I'll say: our people have
abandoned the path.

The Aqsa Mosque

(a salute to the Prince Saud Ibn al-^c Aziz when he visited the poet's town, ^c
Anabta, on August 14, 1935)

Honourable Prince! Before you stands a poet
Whose heart harbours bitter complaint.
Have you come to visit the Aqsa Mosque
Or to bid it farewell before its loss?
This land, this holy land, is being sold to all intruders
And stabbed by its own people!
And tomorrow looms over us, nearer and nearer!
Nothing shall remain for us but our streaming tears
Our deep regrets!
Oh, Prince, shout, shout, Your voice
Might shake the world awake!
Ask the guards of the Aqsa: are they all agreed to struggle
As one body and mind?
Ask the guards of the Aqsa: can a covenant with God
Be offered to someone, then lost?
Forgive the complaint, but a grieving heart needs to complain
To the Prince, even if it makes him weep.

Sharif el Musa

A Little Piece of Sky

Marvelling today at the Safeway's abundance
of tuna fish cans,
I thought of my friend Hussein.
He was the genius of the school.
He breathed in history, grammar, math
As easily as the dust of the camp.
He had a pyramid's core. Books
would have sprouted from his head,
but he had to live, and to live he
apprenticed to a carpenter,
and later on flew his skills to an oil country
where he made good as a contractor.

His father was killed the spring he was born
in a familiar war that made us refugees
and tossed us on the moral map of the world.
His mother was a woman of meagre means
*Could look at a word for a year
And not recognise what it was.*
And so it was:
poverty wagged him every day.

One afternoon
I met him walking home from the store
holding, with his thumb and forefinger,
the upright lid of a half-opened
tuna fish can, humming a tune
about holding a little piece of sky.

Kamāl Nās □ir

The Story

I will tell you a story
A story that lived in the dreams of people
That comes out of the world of tents
Was made by hunger,
And decorated by the dark nights
In my country, and my country
Is a handful of refugees.
Every twenty of them have a pound of flour
And promises of relief gifts and parcels
It is the story of a suffering group
Who stood for ten years in hunger
In tears and agony
In hardship and yearning.

It is a story of a people who were misled
Who were thrown into the mazes of years
But they defied and stood
Disrobed and united
Went to light, from the tents,
The revolution of return in the world of darkness.

Naomi Shihab Nye

For the 500th Dead Palestinian Ibtisam Bozieh

Little sister Ibtisam
Our sleep flounders, our sleep tugs
On the cord of your name.
Dead at thirteen for staring through
The window into a gun barrel
which did not know you wanted to be
a doctor.
I would smooth your life in my hands,
Pull you back. Had I stayed in your land
I might have been dead too,
for something simple like staring
or shouting what was true
and getting kicked out of school.
I wander the stony afternoons
owning all their vastness.
Now I would give them to you,
guiltily, you not me.
Throwing this ragged grief into the street,
scissoring news stories free from the page,
but they live on my desk letters, not cries.
How do we carry the endless surprise
Of all our deaths? Becoming doctors
for one another, Arab, Jew,
instead of guarding tumors of pain
as if they hold us upright?
Little sister, once our supple fingers
curled around any twig.
Now even the orchards weep.
People in other countries speak easily
Of being early, being late.

Some will live to be eighty.
Some who never say it
Will not forget your face.

Blood

"A true Arab knows how to catch a fly in his hands,"
my father would say. And he'd prove it,
cupping the buzzer instantly
while the host with the swatter stared.

In the spring our palms peeled like snakes
True Arabs believed watermelon could heal fifty ways.
I changed these to fit the occasion.

Years before, a girl knocked,
wanted to see the Arab.
I said we didn't have one.
After that my father told me who he was,
"Shihab" – "shooting star" –
a good name, borrowed from the sky
Once I said, "When we die we give it back?"
He said that's what a true Arab would say.

Today the headlines clot in my blood.
A little Palestinian boy dangles a truck on the front page.
Homeless fig, this tragedy with a terrible root
is too big for us. What flag can we wave?
I wave the flag of stone and seed,
table mat stitched in blue.

I call my father, we talk around the news.
It is too much for him

Works Cited

neither of his two languages can reach it.
I drive into the country to find sheep, cows,
to plead with the air:
who calls anyone *civilied*?
Where can the crying heart graze?
What does a true Arab do now?

Samīh al Qāsim

A Motherland

What,
When in my country
Dies the swallow of starvation,
In exile and without a shroud,
While the earthworm is over-fed
On God's food?

What
When the yellow fields
Yield to their tillers
Nothing except their weary memories
While their rich harvest pours
Into the granaries of their usurpers?

What,
When cement has choked
The ancient springs
And caused them to forget
Their courses,
they cry in the face
of their creator, "who are you?"

What,
when the olive and almond
have become timber
decoration on the doorway of inns,
idols,
whose nudity charms halls and bars
and souvenirs for tourists
to carry to the far corners of the world,

while nothing meets my eyes
but dry tinder and yellow leaves?

What,
When my people's tragedy
Has become a farce for other people,
And my face, a worthless bargain
Which the slave-trader disdains?

What,
When the barren space is
A man-made satellite
And in the streets
There's nothing but a beggar, a hat,
And an autumnal song?

Blow Eastern Wind!
Blow Eastern Wind!
Our roots are still alive. (Al Messeri 1970, 43)

After the Apocalypse

I feel my limbs,
But I cannot find them.
I implore my sense of sight,
but see nothing beyond a neutral grey.
Suddenly, warm radiates through the sand
crowding my spirit
I discover my hands and legs,
There they are, familiar limbs,
Assembling themselves into a heap of sand!
My body sees me.
Here I am, creating myself in my own image.

Works Cited

Here I am, the first human on another planet called:
Dayr Yasin,

One could say that humanity
Reconsiders itself,
Reconsiders the laws, and the laws of the laws,
Takes phenomena seriously,
in anticipation of what surprises the future holds
in the galaxy's enchanted whirl,
orbited by earthly satellites
gushing from the wombs of volcanoes
to be grabbed immediately
by space scientists
who bless them with the loveliest names:

Lidice
Kufr Qasim
Sabra, Shatila,
My Lai.

One cannot help being astonished
At the breakdown of norms and mores,
At the simultaneous fall of all equations,
Let alone fig trees, bonds, travel tickets, house arrests,
School and marriage certificates,
Let alone global conventions: the Third World,
European Common Market, the Stock Market,
Alignment and Nonalignment, Nuclear Weapons, Disarmament,
And documents of death.

Come with me, bedouin girl,
You who have not yet spoken,
Come, let us give names to new things,
That they may give us back our own names in return.
I my name you rise from the dead.
In your name I make death acceptable,

Works Cited

a familiar morning greeting,
a bending over the neighbor's fence
to pluck a little rose for a tired lapel.
O virgin Bedouin girl, with lips open,
but silent, you see everything
through the transparent wall of Apocalypse,
you bear on your shoulders the burden of everything:
storms, bloodstained hands, children's lips
still clutching their mother's severed breasts,
everything: trees twisted in the mud,
tall blackened buildings, broken windows,
charred skeletons sitting cross-legged
cigarette in hand, watching the TV set
continue its broadcast (live under the rubble)
of the emergency session
of the United Nations ... etc. etc.

You see through the transparent wall
of Apocalypse, sound mufflers on secret guns,
nickel handcuffs, police billy clubs, tanks,
ear gas bombs, demonstrations, burning car tires,
and bullets fired into the air
apologizing to angels,
making their ways straight
to the schoolgirls' breasts.

At this, international agencies would hurry
To quiet reactions and rumors
while the doleful, angry chorus
exercise its absolute freedom
in the biggest armed robbery
in history.

Works Cited

The present is an innocent lie
To see the future we must consult the past –
a past ever-present before our eyes,
a mammoth octopus.

O virgin desert!
Here we are, sent by the heart and mind
on an official mission
to build the world anew.
To prepare it once again
for another Apocalypse!

Tree trunk against tree trunk,
stone next to stone,
thus the relationship takes form.
We begin from here
though doubts sometimes assail us.
Sometimes we'll miss one another,
but we wont be afraid to look behind.

Later,
new children will be born,
they'll ask their fathers sternly:
why? For whom? When and how?
There wont be anyone to answer

except the ground waters singing:
I am grief! I announce in innocence!
I am desire! I enforce my authority!
I am love! I spread my sails on land
and scatter my seeds in the furrows of the sea.
I am hate! Your fire, your sacred fire!

Works Cited

Nothing remains the same.
In the long run, motion asserts itself,
Erects new rules over the pure sands
now subject to factories' oil,
fires, the vomit of the sick,
and the wretched human din.

But after all this
there must be some recompense
for the children are about to go to school.
So let the storms subside a little
for the sake of children going to school
after the Apocalypse!

Resignation from the Death Insurance Company

Ladies and Gentlemen
I am a little citizen
I submit my resignation
To the manager.
Here is my card
At the bottom of which is his mean paltry signature.

Ladies and Gentlemen.
I submit my resignation
For the profession of death insurance has become melancholy
It burdens the conscience
Let my name be written after today
On the list of angry people
Who stopped dancing on graves
Who believed in the sun and in man
And chose the earth [of the homeland]

Works Cited

Ladies and Gentlemen.

We are here

On a crossroad

Let the drowned be drowned

If he wishes, and let him harness fire horses

If he wishes. But if I am

Asked, I choose

The Left in my march

The sun and the Left

Wheat and the Left

Tears and the Left

And death until the earth changes its orbit

To the Left.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

At this occasion I remember

The words of a song

That a wandering minstrel sang:

"I rise up in the morning and say: Lord, mend it

My sweetheart's homeland is under my eye

But I can't go to it

I went to a wise old man who knows the right ways

He left his book, turned to me and said;

Between morning and evening your people will mend it."

O Ministry of Information

O Ambassadors of death

In the city of marble

O eloquent speakers for death

Who embellish words

I submit my resignation to you.

To you I submit my resignation

From the Death Insurance Company

Works Cited

I join the legions of bright day
Let the rains fall
Let the trees
Raise their heads
Let the fruits ripen
In the sun and the Left.

let the rains fall
let the trees
raise their heads
let the fruits ripen
in the sun and the Left.

The Story of an Unknown Man

At the end of the road,
At the end of the road he stood
Like a scarecrow in a vineyard.
At the end of the road he stood
Like a man in the green traffic light.
At the end of the road he stood
Wearing an old coat:
His name was the "Unknown man",
The white houses
Slammed their doors on him,
Only jasmine plants
Loved his face with its shadows of love and hate.

His name was the "Unknown man".
The country was
Under the weight of locusts and grief.
One day
His voice rang in the square of white houses.

Works Cited

Men, women and children
Thronged to the square of white houses
And saw him burning his old coat.

The sky swelled with a green cloud,
With a white cloud,
With a black could,
With a red cloud,
With a strange colourless cloud.

And on that day
The sky flashed and thundered,
The rain poured down
The rain poured down.
His name was the "Unknown man",
Only jasmine plants
Loved his face with its shadows of love and hate
And white houses began to love him.

Kafr Qassem

No monument – no flower – no memorial
No verses – no curtain
No blood soaked rag
From the shirt of our innocent brothers,

No stones with their names carved on it,
Noting at all ... what a disgrace!
Their wandering ghosts
Cut our tombs out of Kafr Qassem's rubble.

Abū Salma

My Country on Partition Day

My country live in safety, an Arab country,
may the jewel of your tradition continue smiling
Though they've partitioned your radiant heart
our honor denies partition.
We've woven your wedding clothes with red thread
dyed from our own blood.
We've raised banners on the mountain of fire
marching toward our inevitable destiny!
History marches behind our footsteps,
honor sings around us.

Rise, friend, see how many people
Drag their chains of dented steel.
Behold the serpents slithering endlessly among them!
They've prohibited oppression among themselves
But for us they have legalized all prohibitions.
They proclaim, 'trading with slaves is unlawful'
But isn't the trading of free people more of a crime?
Justice screams loudly protecting Western lands
But grows silent when it visits us!
Maybe justice changes colors and shapes!
Live embers scorch or lips
So listen to our heart speaking,
Call on free men in every land
To raise the flag of justice where we stand.

We Shall Return

Beloved Palestine, how do I sleep
While the spectrum of torture is in my eyes
I purify the world with your name
And if your love did not tire me out,
I would have kept my feelings secret
The caravans of days pass and talk about
The conspiracy of enemies and friends
Beloved Palestine! How do I live
Away from your plains and mounds?
The feet of mountains that are dyed with blood
Are calling me and on the horizon appears the dye
The weeping shores are calling me
And my weeping echoes in the ears of time
The escaping streams are calling me
They are becoming foreign in their land
Your orphan cities are calling me
And your villages and domes.
My friends ask me, "will we meet again?"
"Will we return?" Yes! We will kiss the bedewed soil
And the red desires are on our lips
Tomorrow we will return
And generation will hear
The sound of our footsteps
We will return along with the storms
Along with the lightening and the meteors
Along with hope and songs
Along with the flying eagle
Along with the dawn that smiles to the deserts
Along with the morning on the waves of the sea
Along with the bleeding flags
And along with the shining swords and spears.

Mai S □ ayigh

Lament

Those we love die like birds
mourned by orange trees which never wither
tomorrow when birds return to Ghaza
to peck at your blue window
while narcissus perfume is everywhere
and jasmine fills the air
the henna tree will still stand
alone, a stranger to the world

On dark alley walls
our comrades' deaths are announced
posters show their smiling faces
The usual way we learn
one has fallen on the long road
We discovered in blood's path
 that death is life continuance
life deeply rooted in death
Yet when they drank to you in the pine woods
I asked why
 A tear hesitated in my cousin's eye
the tear in her green eye
that told me of your death
 what a great poster that'll make!

I burn with grief
I am no stone
yearning is a burden
for you my bridge my life and death.
On Omar al-Mukhtar Street
foreign helmets that sting like whips

Works Cited

I am no stone
is it because blood's gleam
is all that's hopeful in the world that
we write our own histories
draw our faces' features in it
fix our seal on the brows of the motherland
 we love so well
building it anew?

Is it because we refuse to multiply like weeds or seagrass
 that lack identity or form
 to define our origin
tears dance from me
my joy weeps
joy that stretches to include
the last arm hurling death
at the aggressor's patrol
that stalk our streets
 which God has forsaken?

Time never ends its moments
the pride of your grief purifies
all moments passing through
the mind of the stars
and the veins of the stones
No bullet will pass
 without changing faces in some new way

Time will never end
for you are a beginning that never ceases
all about you the strangeness of things vanishes
they enjoy again the innocence of their first beginnings
I learn to perfection the art of waiting
 on the sidewalks of love and fire.

Elegy for Imm Ali

Don't go away!

Across the distances you kindle our fires
deliver joy, ignite our dreams

Leaving was never your style; you were always
about to arrive.

Now the flower vendors close their shops
under the blitz, and
darkness prepares to depart.

This city you loved,
crowded with history, iron and anger,
braids her joy with fatigue

and threatens to fall into oblivion

She huddles over its newborn dawn
planting stars in that hopeful sphere,
and repressing her tears in the songs

How could you leave us
with no goodbyes?

You, who always repressed your tears
from you I learned how basil grows
how the sky descends

to rest in your arms

You wiped the sorrow away from

Its brow!

From you I learned how the heat can be
a live coal, a burning flower

Now the dignity of your great death
opens up wounds

That even trees bleed

and poems.

Tawfiq S □ āigh

Poem Number 6

Tomorrow if I find myself a giant genie in brass jug
which the waves kick sometimes
and which sometimes the waking fish try in vain to open
shall I lament the world I lost?
shall I curse destiny that summarized and disfigured the genie?
shall I smash the jug and set myself free?
or shall I sit in it satisfied as if I were in a palace?

Shall I cry out for help and pardon to Solomon?
or shall I shout, my God, send the fisherman?
will not my God say, "why do you want to be free?"

What shall I answer my God?

Shall I tell him, "boredom made me sick"?
while in the land of men boredom was
my wet nurse, my study mate, my youth companion,
and preceded me to bed on my wedding night.
Shall I tell him, "I am longing for company"?
for company whose hugging arm I bit,
who grated me what I asked and whom I denied thrice,
who embraced me but I was not of it though I was in it.
Shall I tell Him, "I want to proclaim my message"?
to whom do I want to proclaim my message,
while my concern was not to do but to speak
and not to speak but to mumble,
Why should I not mumble in my jug?

Tomorrow if I find myself a giant genie in a brass jug
I shall not kick my grave
and I shall not incline my cheek over it joyfully:
I changed my house but I did not change my town.
I shall sit in it, bored and dumb,
waves will kick me but I shall not be moved,
and fish will tickle me but I will pay no heed.
I shall remain in it, deprived even of withering,
until the net will sink
and the fisherman will rejoice then tremble –

Shall I tell him, “Choose the throne you like”?
or shall I say, “Choose the death you like”?

Poem Number 24

Approaching, but no entry
travelling, but no arrival:
without it there is no entry
and you don't carry it
therefore no entry.

The waters' chuckling in your ears
your stomach and mouth exchanged roles in you.
You have known the sea
Its tempers and colours,
more wearisome were
your temporary companions
who will sleep tomorrow while you turn in bed
they will feast on banquets while you vomit
they will tell stories and adventures
while you speak to the obscure fishes,
speak to them also from far.

Works Cited

You approach salvation
but salvation slips away between your fingers.

The heights sometimes smile to you
and girls wave their handkerchiefs to you,
shouts and songs move you
in the forenoon,
so you collect your two bundles but they are scattered,
you throw your wallet to the pocket of nearby sailors:

but in your face stands
in the evening
a handsome fearful giant
whom you have seen and at whose sight you have shivered
in a thousand ports of a thousand countries,

the mountains darken
the buttons and the stick shine
the exultation is choked
The book in his right hand he yells:

“Your passport? ”
without it there is no entry
and you don’t carry it
therefore no entry.

A group descends, a group ascends
the employees change
salaries and ranks progress
and the remaining coals glow white on your head.

The passports are stamped
even criminals hasten
traitors and spies
and those carrying a green pass in one hand
and a black one in a briefcase;
on the shaky stairs lean
some who ended their small trip
to begin the greater one,

Works Cited

some are carried
not yet knowing a meaning
for homeland and travel.

 You shout praying seeking help:
"My papers are correct
In every pocket I've a certificate
why did they not issue me a pass?
What did he inform on me? Who informed on me?
what is my charge
so that I may defend myself?
But there are no embassies on the sea".
- "And what is your embassy"?
" I used to know it
to frequent it at every occasion:
I forgot, I forgot what my embassy is."

 The sailors rejoice:
two days on land
to justify two weeks on the waters
to discount the two weeks from the records of years.

 The ship sails heavily with you
and the chuckles slap you again
you try to guess near what land she will dock
whether you will be met with shouts
or demonstrations or silence
you expect, you do not guess,
a handsome fearful giant standing
and those who greet singing of a law
stronger than you than the sea
then the wishes of those who greet;
 the warbling lips mutter:
hello hello
but law is law,

Works Cited

fire shines from the heights
and smoke draws above it:
our yearning is like yours but
law is law:
without it there is no entry
and you don't carry it
therefore no, no entry.

You thrust two fingers
hurt your ears:
you do not want to hear
but you hear
the mean twittering:

"Hospitable am I, a new guest is not unwelcome,
wealthy am I, I do not burden the visitor,
sweet am I, and you are longing for the sweet,
my two arms are in eternal separation.
I am generous
The giant at my gate
does not demand worthless scraps of paper,
he does not push away from me but towards me."

You remove your two fingers
to close your eyes with them
so that you don't see a dark she-whale with a golden posterior
a large jaw
and larger vulva.

Fadwa T □uq ān

I Shall not Weep

My loved ones, at the gate of Jaffa
in the chaos of rubble and thorns,
I stood and spoke to my own eyes

Let us cry for those who've abandoned
their demolished homes.

The houses call for their owners,
announcing their deaths.

The heart said:

What have the troubles done to you, homes
and where are your inhabitants –
have you received any news of them?
Here where they used to be, and dream,
and draw their plans for the morrow –
Where's the dream and the future now?
And where have they gone?

The rubble stayed silent
Nothing spoke but the absence,

I shall not weep

And the silence of silences...

strange flocks of phantom owls
hovered over the place,
becoming the new masters.

Oh, how the heart was wrung with grief

Dear ones!'

I wiped the grey cloud of tears off my eyelids
To meet you, eyes shining with love and faith
in you, in the land, in man

Works Cited

What shame it would be to meet you
 with trembling eyelids,
a dampened heart full of despair.
Now I am here to borrow fire from you,
to borrow from your lit lamps lighting
the blackness –
a drop of oil for my own.
I stretch my hand to yours
 and raise my brow to the sun beside you.
If you are strong as mountain stones
and fresh as the sweet flowers of our land,
how can a wound destroy me?
And how could I ever cry in front of you?
I make my pledge:
From this day forward I shall not cry!

Dear ones! Out nation's steed has transcended
 yesterday's fall!
Beyond the river, hear the confident neigh
of the risen stallion,
listen! Shaking off the siege of darkness,
galloping towards his anchor on the sun!
Processions of horsemen gather
 to bless him,
to bid him drink from their crimson blood,
to feed him from their limbs and sinews.
They address the free stallion:
Run towards the eye of the sun!
Run, oh stallion of our people,
visible symbol and banner
we are the army behind you,
the time of our anger will not recede.
We shall not rest till
 the shadows are dispelled.

Lamps of the dark night,
brothers in the wound,
sweet secret of yeast
that die in your giving...
on your road shall I walk.
In the light of your eyes
I collect yesterday's tears
 and wipe them away.
Like you, I plant my feet on the land,
 my country,
and fix my eyes, like yours,
 on the road of light and sun.

To Her Sister and Comrade in Resistance

At last, I conceded
as the beast wanted
under the savagery of the investigation
Sister, my beloved
forgive me.
I said "yes"
Not because I could not bear
 the gnawing pain
neither because one of the barbarians
 kept banging my bleeding head
 against the wall,
 then tossing me
 numb
 like a morsel between his jaws. (Tuqan 1981, 154)

Works Cited

If that were all
My determination, patience and pride
and unwavering faith
could have sustained me
I could have endured.
But one of them
wanted to –
Sister
Spare me the words
I am choking
every time that wracking scene
passes through my memory
I shudder.

Now ten years of my life
will be spent here
an atonement for the moment
of my surrender.

Gone are those we Love
To Kamal Naser, Yusef Najjar and Kamal Adwan

One eagle after another
vanished into darkness
one by one they were
slain
for having towered above the clouds.
Motherland
for your sake
their blood was spilled
like rosary beads of ruby slip.
Gone are those we love.

Works Cited

Sorrow had no voice, behold
Sorrow flowers silence to my lips.
And words
Fall
much the same as their bodies fell
 corpses
 distorted.
 what else could I say?
their blood was smearing
my vision.
Gone are those we love.

Before their vessel ever anchored
before their eyes ever caught sight of
the distant port.

Palestine
n the seasons of your irremediable mourning
you drank cups of absinthe we drank
your thirst was unquenched
ours eternal.
Waterless we shall remain
here at the mouth if this fountain
until the day of their return
with the ocean of dawns that they embraced:
a vision that knows no death.
A love that has no end.

Hamza

Like others in my hometown
the salt of the earth
who toil with their hands for their bread
Hamza was
a simple man.

When we met that day
this land had been a harvest of flames
in a windless hush it had sunk
in a cloak of barren grief. I had been
swept by the daze of defeat.

Hamza said:

"This land my sister, has a fertile heart
It throbs, doesn't wither, endures
for the secret of hills and wombs
is one
this earth that sprouts spikes and palms
is the same that gives birth to a warrior.
This land, my sister, is a woman,"
he said.

Days passed I did not see
Hamza
however, I could feel
that the belly of the land was heaving
in travail.

Hamza was sixty-five
a burden deaf like a rock
saddled on his back.
"Demolish his house"
a command was ordained

Works Cited

"and tie his son in a cell"
the military ruler of our town later explained
the need for law and order
in the name of love and peace.

Armed soldiers rounded the courtyard of his home
a serpent coiled in full circle
the banging at the door reverberated
the order "evacuate"
and generous they were with time
"in an hour or so."

Hamza opened the window
looking the sun in the eye
he howled
"this house, my children
and I
shall live and die
for Palestine."

The echo of Hamza propelled a tremor in the nerve of the town
A solemn silence fell.

In an hour the house burst apart
its rooms blew up to pieces in the sky
collapsed in a pile of stones burying
past dreams and a warmth that is no more
memories of a lifetime
of labor, tears, of some
happy day.

Yesterday I saw
Hamza
He was walking down a street in town
as ever simple he was and assured
as ever dignified.

To Etan

(an Israeli child from the kibbutz Ma'oz Hayim)

He falls
under the star that branches
a wild tree in his hands
a web woven with the threads of steel stretching
 walls of blood
around The Dream.
He is caught.
Opening his eyes
Etan, the child, asks
"How long do we have to watch over this land?"
And time deformed
dragged in khaki, bypasses him
through flames and smoke
sorrows and death.

If only the star could foretell the truth.

Etan, my child
Like the harbor that is drowning
I can see you drown
Through the lie
The bloated dream is a sinking load
I am afraid for you, my child
to have to grow up in this web of things
to be gradually stripped of
 your human heart and face
you could fall again my child
 and fall
 and fall
 fading into a fathomless end.

Ibrāhīm T □uq ā

From "Dead Hearts"

Those who sell the land have drenched it with their tears
but the plains and hills still curse them
The brokers who hawk my homeland
obviously don't fear God for selling it
wearing their gaudy clothes
stuffed with the lowest hypocrisy
tinted expression that blush
and breasts like dreary graves
for their dead and buried hearts.

From "Brokers"

My country's brokers are a band
Who shamefully survive
Even Satan went bankrupt
When he realized their temptation
They lead an easy, splendid life
But the bliss is the prize of the country's misery.
They pretend to be its saviours,
Whatever you say, they claim to be its leaders
And protectors! But they are its ruin
It is bought and sold through their hands
Even the newspapers
Shield them, though we know the truth. (Al-Jayussi 1992, 319)

From "In Beirut"

In Beirut they say: You live affluently
You sell them land, they give you gold.
Neighbour, relent: since when is it bliss

That thousands die to make one rich?
Those who give this gold know well that
One gives with the right hand, receives with the left.
But it is our country! What are their treasures
Or gold that can equal it? (Al-Jayussi 1992, 319)

Red Tuesday

When your ill-fated star rose
And heads swayed in the nooses,
Minaret calls and church bells lamented,
Night was grim and day was gloomy.
Storms and emotions began to rage
And death roamed about, snatching lives away,
And the eternal spade dug deep into the soil
To return them to its petrified heart.

It was a day that looked back upon past ages
And asked, "Has the world see a day like me?"
"Yes", answered another day. "I'll tell you
All about the iniquitous Inquisition courts.
I have indeed witnessed strange events.
But yours are misfortunes and catastrophes,
The like of which in injustice I've never seen.
Ask then other days, among which many are abominable."

Dragging its heavy fetters, a day responded,
History being one of its witnesses:
"Look at slaves, white and black,
Owned by anyone who had the money.
They were humans bought and sold, but are now free
Yet time has gone backwards, as far as I can see...
And those who forbade the purchase and sale of slaves
Are now hawking the free."

Works Cited

A day wrapped in a dark-coloured robe
Staggered under the delirium of suffering
And said, "No, yours is a much lesser pain than mine
For I lost my young men on the hills of Aley
And witnessed the butcher's deeds, inducing bloody tears.
Woe to him, how unjust! But ...
I've never met as terrible a day as you are.
Go, then. Perhaps you're the Day of Resurrection."

The day is considered abominable by all ages
And eyes will keep looking at it with dismay.
How unfair the decisions of the courts have been
The least of which are proverbial in injustice.
The homeland is going to perdition, without hope.
The disease has no medicine but dignified pride
That renders one immune, and whoever is marked by it
Will end up dying undefeated.

Everyone hoped for [the High Commissioner's] early pardon
And we prayed he would never be distressed.
If this was the extent of his tenderness and kindness,
Long live His Majesty and long live His Excellency!
The mail carried details of what had been put in a nutshell.
Please, stop supplicating and begging.
The give-and-take of entreaties is tantamount to death.
Therefore, take the shortest way to life.

The mail was overloaded with pleading, but nothing changed.

We humbled ourselves and wrote in various forms.
Our loss is both in souls and money,
And our dignity is – alas – in rags.
You see what's happening, and yet ask what's next?

Works Cited

Deception, like madness, is of many kinds.
A humiliated soul, even if created to be all eyes,
Will not be able to see – far from it.

How is it possible for the voice of complaint to heard,
And for the tears of mourning to be of any avail?
The rocks that felt our plea broke up in sympathy.
Yet, on reaching their hearts, our plea was denied.
No wonder, for some rocks burst with gushing fountains,
But their hearts are like graves, with no feeling.
Don't ever ask favors from someone
You tried and found to be heartless.

The Three Hours

The First Hour

I ma the hour of the dignified soul
And have the virtue of priority.
I am the firstborn of three Hours,
All of which symbolise ardent zeal.
I am the daughter of the [Palestinian] cause
And have a significant effect on it:
That of sharp swords
And light lances.
In the hearts of young men I've inspired
The spirit of steadfast faithfulness.
They will inevitably have a day
That will deal the enemy the cup of death.
I swear by Fu'ād's pure soul
As it leaves his ribs
On its way to the welcome of heaven
To abide in its lofty paradise:
No rank of eternity is reached
Without an acceptable sacrifice.

Works Cited

Long live the souls that die
In sacrifice for their homeland.

The Second Hour

I am the Hour of the ready man,
I am the Hour of extreme courage.
I am the Hour of death that honors
Everyone performing a glorious deed.
My hero has broken his fetters
As a symbol of seeking freedom.
I've vied with the Hour preceding me
To obtain the honor of eternity first.
In the young men's hearts I've kindled
The spark of strong determination
That can never be deceived by promises
Or numbed by pledges.
I swear by Muhammad's soul
As it meets with sweet death,
I swear by your mother
As she sings an anthem at your death
And finds consolation for bereavement
In her son's far – reaching good repute:
He who serves the homeland receives
No nobler reward than that of martyrdom.

The Third Hour

I am the Hour of the patient man,
I am the Hour of the big heart.
I am the symbol of resolve to the end
In all important matters.
My hero faces death with the firmness

Of solid rock.
He joyfully looks forward to dying.
Wonder, as you may, at dying with joy.
He meets God with dyed palms
On the Day of Resurrection.
He is the fortitude of youth in calamity.
He is my trust and fill all hearts.
I am warning the enemies of the homeland
Of a day of impending evil for them.
I swear by your soul, O 'Atā
And by the paradise of the Almighty King
And by your young cubs weeping
For their lion with abundant tears:
No one saves the dear homeland
But a brave, patient man.

The Three Heroes

Their bodies lie in the soil of the homeland,
Their souls rest in the Garden of Bliss
Where there is no complaint of oppression
But there is abundance of pardon.
Don't hope for forgiveness from anyone but God.
He it is whose hands possess all glory.
His power is above those deceived
By their own power on land and sea.

Commando

Do not consider his safety
He bears his life on the palms of his hands.
Worries have substituted
A pillow for his shroud
As he waits for the hour
That ushers in the terrible hour of his death.

Works Cited

His bowed head disturbs
All who glance his way.
Within his breast there is
A throbbing heart afire with its purpose.
Who has not seen nights charcoal blackness
Set on fire by his spark?
Hell itself has touched
His message with its fire.
There he stands at the door:
Death is afraid of him.
Subside, tempests!
Abashed by his boldness.

Silent he is, but should he speak
He would unite fire with blood.
Tell whoever faults with his silence
Resolution was born mute
And in the man of resolution
The hand is quicker than the word.
Rebuke him not for he has seen
The path of righteousness darkened
The foundations of a country
He loves demolished
And enemies at whose injustice
Heaven and earth cry out!
There was a time when despair
Almost killed him ... but

There he stands at the door
And death is afraid of him.
Subside, tempests!
Abashed by his boldness.

Fawaz Turki

In Search of Yacove Eved

Yacove Eved was an Israeli
In the summer
Yacove Eved always sat on the rocks
in the park at Mount Carmel.
Yacove Eved loved the harbour
and the boats and the colors of the sun
set in the horizon.
Whenever I saw Yacove Eved on the rocks
whenever I passed him in the park
I always said
Salaams Yacove
And Yacove Eved
always waved both his arms
and said *Shalom Shaaer*.
Yacove Eved is like me
He knows all the stabbed dreams
all the ones who died
and who now keep company
with their gods,
so Yacove Eved and I
we sits and talk about this
and we watch the harbour.
Sometimes Yacove Eved
Sees me at the port
Fishing for the sunken images
And Yacove Eved says *Salaam Shaaer*
And I say *Shalom Yacove*.
Yacove is like me
he knows all the lonely travellers
all the ones who never returned
whose ships are lost at sea.

Now I do not know where
Yacove Eved is
and I do not know where to find him.
I have never known anyone by that name
But these verses are for him.

Dusk in Galilee

A feast of colours
is the sunset in Galilee
a silent orgy
in the horizon of our
West Bank.
silver grey stars
quivering in the sky
speeding to hug one another
body and soul
like erotic grapes of sorrow,
the wind
and the desolate music
of the *oud*
are a theatre of sounds
on the west bank
of our ancient river
and the evening will unfurl
exquisite delights
in Galilee.
The military governor
Tells his guests
All this has come to pass
Because he issued an edict
And his soldiers used their guns
To make it so.

Tawfīq Zayyād

Here we will Stay

In Lidda, Ramla, in the Galilee
We shall remain
like a wall upon your chest,
and in your throat
like a shard of glass,
a cactus thorn,
and in your eyes
a sandstorm.

We shall remain
A wall upon your chest,
clean dishes in your restaurants
serve drinks in your bars
sweep the floors of kitchens
to snatch a bite for our children
from your blue fangs.

Here we shall stay,
sing our songs,
take to the angry streets,
fill prisons with dignity.

In Lidda, Ramla and the Galilee,
we shall remain,
guard the shade of the fig trees,
ferment rebellion in our children
as yeast in dough.

Zakariya Mohammed

Strangers

Fearful of light they cower in the shadows
slinking through the trees

But I know their sort
Like rabbits in car headlights

the lunge of my torch
knocks them to their knees

hands raised for the handcuffs
instant caged birds.

Appendix 2

A selection of works in Arabic

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