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Palestine, Futurity, and the *Rithā'*: A Poetics of Speculation and Proleptic Mourning

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Abstract

This paper explores Fadwā Ṭūqān's and Maḥmūd Darwīsh's poetry written in the wake of the 1967 June War, the Israeli siege of Beirut in 1982, and the Second *Intifāḍah* (uprising) in 2002. Specifically, the article investigates how the poets mobilize the Arabic elegiac (*rithā'*) genre, as well as pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetic traditions, in order to contemplate the future and foster a mode of proleptic mourning. This paper asserts that these two Palestinian poets utilize the longstanding elegiac form in Arabic literary heritage to not only summon and lament past events and atrocities, but to conjecture about the insecurity that they anticipate in the years to come. The poems render both hopeful and pessimistic sentiments and premonitions, demonstrating how the ongoing Israeli occupation and the Palestinians' resultant losses over time have precipitated increasingly sobering and distressing speculations about the perpetuation of Palestinians' grief in the future.

Keywords

Fadwā Ṭūqān – Maḥmūd Darwīsh – elegy – prolepsis – Arabic poetry – Palestine – mourning

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Introduction

By utilizing conventions from pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry, Palestinian verse enables a lens through which the Arabic elegiac tradition (*rithā'*) can be theorized. This paper explores Maḥmūd Darwīsh's and Fadwā Ṭūqān's poetry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in order to investigate how the Arabic ode can be read as a medium for forward-facing rumination. That is, by spotlighting the abiding precarity of Palestinians' lives, the modern Palestinian *qaṣīdah* does not solely memorialize and evoke past tragedies, but it additionally allows us to imagine and conjecture—generating spaces and openings for speculation and proleptic grief.¹ Notably, with this poetic framing in mind, and by turning to Arabic conventions from the past to offer innovative explications of contemporary works, I posit that, ironically, it is through the classical elegiac utterance and means of remembrance, the *rithā'*, that Palestinian verse illuminates a mode of futurist thought.

By reading the modern *rithā'* as futuristic, I challenge established interpretations of Arabic poetry that primarily focus on the elegiac genre's nostalgic summoning of past losses. While I contend that the Palestinian works treated here offer more capacious representations than traditional Arabic forms and features, they nevertheless still characterize melancholic attributes, recalling the dead back to life and bestowing immortality.² In Darwīsh's and Ṭūqān's poems, it is not the life of a loved one being recollected and memorialized, but rather, the Palestinians' demolished dwellings, the destruction of places and spaces, as well as time, that serve as the subject of their laments. Their grief is poetically rendered to account for the ruins of Palestinian homes in the wake of the 1967 War, experiences of abandonment during the 1982 siege of Beirut, as well as feelings of instability in 2002 amid political stalemate after fifty years of exile. The poets' ritual act of conjuring what has been lost remains their principal tether to the *rithā'*, as well as the focal point of this paper. In essence, the Palestinian authors generate proleptic outlooks—or avenues and vistas for

- 1 I want to be careful not to conflate the lamentation in the opening lines of the *qaṣīdah* with the *rithā'* genre; while the subject matter of Darwīsh's and Ṭūqān's verses is mainly elegiac, the poets still utilize literary conventions from the classical Arabic tradition, more broadly, such as the *dhikr al-aṭlāl*, the memory of the abandoned encampment, and the *nasīb*, the elegiac prelude. For more on the connections between the *rithā'* and the *qaṣīdah* form in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods, and specifically, on how this genre relates to women's poetry, see Dana al-Sajdi, "Trespassing the Male Domain: The *Qaṣīdah* of Laylā al-akhyaaliyyah," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 31, no. 2 (2000): 121–125; and Marlé Hammond, *Beyond Elegy: Classical Arabic Women's Poetry in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- 2 Suzanne Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Cornell University Press, 1993), 171.

future-oriented contemplation—in order to assert political agency and sorrow in poetry.³

Darwīsh's and Ṭūqān's lyrical verses written between 1967 and 2002 maintain idealistic and pessimistic modes of meditation, typifying Palestinians' hopes and apprehensions for the future. The dueling images that their verses underscore can be contextualized with reference to James Montgomery's "Dichotomy in Jāhili Poetry," in which Montgomery delineates the competing sentiments of *murūwwah*,⁴ or honor, bravery, and virtue, as well as feelings of despair that emerge from the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah*.⁵ While Montgomery describes *murūwwah* as "a way of life ... being both a practical method of living and an ideali[zed] program of how an Arab should live ..."⁶ he suggests that the poet's mind can also be engrossed in "pessimism and sadness which sow the seeds of doubt concerning the validity and general relevance of living one's life according to the dictates of *murūwwah*."⁷

As demonstrated in their lyrical compositions, "Lan abkī" (I Will Not Cry) (1968), *Madīh al-ẓill al-ʿālī* (In Praise of High Shadow) (1983), and "Waḥshah mustalhamah min qānūn al-jādhbiyyah" ("Longing Inspired by the Law of Gravity") (2002), Darwīsh and Ṭūqān deploy Montgomery's dichotomous template, as well as features from classical Arabic poetry and, in particular, the *rithā'* (elegiac) genre. Although, markedly, the poems do not solely memorialize and enshrine past losses; they also enable us to envisage and anticipate, creating opportunities for thought and reflection on the Palestinians' ongoing tragedy. As scholar Sophia Azeb purports, the fact that the "forever-catastrophe," the *Nakbah*, the ethnic cleansing of over 700,000 Palestinians from present-day Israel in 1948, persists in the contemporary moment, has made enduring disaster and dispossession routine aspects of everyday life.⁸ While 1948 is undoubtedly the critical referent and point of rupture for the Palestinian people, I center upon how, in the post-1967 war period, their ongoing collective

3 While other studies have probed the ways in which loss is articulated in modern Arabic poetry, I show how the Palestinian elegy can also be read as proleptic, or with a forward-facing gaze. Other such works that explore expressions of loss in modern Arabic literature and poetry, more generally, and which I reference later in this paper, include Jeffrey Sacks, *Iterations of Loss: Mutilation and Aesthetic Form, Al-Shidyaq to Darwish* (Fordham University Press, 2015), and Nouri Gana, *Signifying Loss: Towards a Poetics of Narrative Mourning* (Bucknell University Press, 2011).

4 The term is colloquial; and classicists use *murūʿah* (broadly: humanism).

5 James Montgomery, "Dichotomy in Jāhili Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 17, no. 1 (1986): 2.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 9.

8 Sophia Azeb, "Who Will We Be When We Are Free? On Palestine and Futurity," *The Funambulist*, no. 24, ("Futurisms," 2019): 22.

defeat becomes poetically examined through speculation.⁹ More precisely, after the *Naksah* (setback) of 1967, or “*al-Nakbah al-thāniyyah*” (“the second catastrophe”), the Palestinian poets reflect upon their experiences of crisis and disaster as continuous, propelling them to not only summon the past and mourn the present, but to contemplate the years to come.¹⁰ Thinking with current scholarly trends that are exploring Palestinian and decolonial futures, this paper evaluates the post-1967 Palestinian *qaṣīdah* over time, and theorizes its use of *rithā*.¹¹ By approaching their poems as elegies, the article exhibits how Darwīsh and Ṭūqān employ literary attributes from the pre-Islamic and early Islamic eras to spotlight both liberatory and sorrowful ideas about the future.

During the pre-Islamic age, poetic verse, which was recited orally, existed as the prevailing pronouncement of artistic articulation and register, and it was through poetry that tribal identity was affirmed and valorized.¹² The *qaṣīdah*, a metered poem in monorhyme, comprising different thematic units, usually begins with the “lyric, nostalgic, or melancholic motif” of the poet conjuring a deserted campsite, the *aṭlāl*.¹³ After referencing “the relics and traces of habitation,” the poet then “weep[s] and addresse[s] the desolate encampment,” directing his companion to halt.¹⁴ The erotic prelude, or the *nasīb*, often follows, through which the poet bemoans the torment of separation from his love

9 Relatedly, influential Arabic literary history and criticism, which theorizes the Palestinians’ and Arabs’ ongoing defeat, emerges out of the post-1967 and post-1982 periods. See Ilyās Khūrī, *Zaman al-Iḥtilāl* (Beirut: Muwa’ssasat al-Abḥāth al-‘Arabiyyah, 1985); Ilyās Khūrī, “Al-hazīmah wa al-Nakbah al-mustamirrah,” *Majallat al-dirāsāt al-filasṭīniyyah*, (2017); and Fayṣal Darrāj, “Ḥarb ḥazīrān wa tā’sīs al-hazīmah al-mutawallidah,” (Muwa’ssasat al-darāsāt al-filasṭīniyyah, 2017).

10 Reference to the *Naksah* as “*al-Nakbah al-thāniyyah*” can be found here, Ibrāhīm ‘Abd al-Sattār, “Maḥmūd Darwīsh..qalb muḥammalun bil-qawāfi wa ālām al-waṭan,” *Maḥmūd Darwīsh: āna li’an a’ūd* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Awdah, Beirut, 2008): 15. During the 1967 War, or the *Naksah*, Israel took control of the West Bank from Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Israel still occupies the West Bank and the Golan Heights and maintains a blockade on the Gaza Strip; the Sinai was returned to Egypt as part of the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty.

11 For more on futurist thought in Palestinian studies and related fields, see Gil Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future* (Duke University Press, 2021). Marya Hannun, “Afro, Indigenous, and Palestinian Futurisms: Writing Across Space and Time,” *SyndiGate Media Inc.* (2020): 2. Hoda El Shakry, “Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible,” *Interventions* 23, no. 5 (2021): 669–690. Azeb, “Who Will We Be When We Are Free? On Palestine and Futurity.”

12 Robert Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature* (Overlook Press: Peter Mayer Publishers, Inc., 2016), 2.

13 Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak*, 3, 76.

14 Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*, 4.

and the ardor of his desire.¹⁵ Arabic literary scholar Michael Sells elaborates specifically on the poet's recollections in his early verses:

Remembrance takes a variety of forms: torrent beds paradoxically more apparent the more they are worn down; the absent beloved's night apparition (*ṭayf*) before the sleepless poet; the recounting of her shifting moods and affections (*ahwāl*); remembrance of her departure with the women of her tribe in their richly embroidered camel litters or howdahs; the recounting of stations (*maqamāt*) of her journey away from the poet; the black wing of the crow or the sorrowful moaning of the dove; the hoariness of a poet who looks back upon a lost youth. These and other themes and subthemes recur from poem to poem, with a measured, almost ritual solemnity.¹⁶

Sells' elucidation provides a useful account of the *qaṣīdah*'s opening lines. While the abandoned encampment, the poet's lament for his beloved, and the evocation of tribal history are all indubitably a part of the early Arabic tradition, similar motifs have been adapted to epitomize moments of mourning and loss experienced in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As scholars Nouri Gana, Rebecca Dyer, and Yaseen Noorani convey, modern Arabic poets in Iraq, Palestine, and Egypt have mobilized and unsettled traditional elegiac forms to grieve death and catastrophe.¹⁷ Even though it is common for mid-century writers to activate features from their literary traditions to address contemporary concerns, in this paper, I show how Ṭūqān and Darwīsh compose their elegiac verses from the post-1967 war period to consider the future.¹⁸

More precisely, in her 1968 work, "Lan abkī" (I Will Not Cry), Ṭūqān limns parallels between the nostalgic summoning of the pre-Islamic poet's abode

15 Ibid.

16 Michael Sells, *Desert Tracings: Six Classical Arabian Odes by 'Alqama, Shānfara, Labīd, Antara, Al-A'sha, and Dhu al-Rūmma* (Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 4.

17 See Nouri Gana, "War, Poetry, Mourning: Darwish, Adonis, Iraq," *Public Culture* 22, no. 1 (2010): 484–85. Rebecca Dyer, "Poetry of Politics and Mourning: Mahmoud Darwish's Genre-Transforming Tribute to Edward W. Said," *PMLA* 122, no. 5 (2007): 1447–1462. Yaseen Noorani, "A Nation Born in Mourning: The Neoclassical Funeral Elegy in Egypt," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 28, no. 1 (March 1997): 38–67.

18 For more on how modern poets in Arabic and other literary traditions redeploy forms from the past to address present-day ruptures, more generally, see Robyn Creswell, *City of Beginnings: Poetic Modernism in Beirut* (Princeton University Press, 2019). Huda Fakhreddine, *Metapoesis in the Arabic Tradition: From Modernists to Muḥdathūn* (Brill, 2015).

and the material *ḥuṭām* (ruins) of the Palestinians' homes in Yafa.¹⁹ Despite the somber mood that her poem inspires, this work continues to instill hope and promote Palestinian agency in determining a collective future. Based on the uplifting tenor of "Lan abkī's" vision, Darwīsh's poem written after the Sabra and Shatila Massacre in Lebanon, as well as Ṭūqān's work from the Second *Intifāḍah* (uprising), can both be read in a contrasting light. The latter poems accent the fragility of Palestinians' lives that are devoid of sovereignty and state protection. In these more recent works, written in the years following the *Naksah* (setback) of the 1967 War and during the "*zaman al-iḥtilāl*" ("the time of occupation"), the poets illuminate how the condition of unabated calamity inflects and permeates Palestinian writing and conceptualizations about the future.²⁰

While Ṭūqān's earlier poem is animated by heartening sentiments and outlooks, the works chronicling the 1982 siege of Beirut and the violence in the West Bank in 2002 reveal the ways in which Palestinian experience is punctuated by perpetual devastation. These lyrical compositions exemplify how the poets' pessimism has become more strongly intonated in their poetry over time. In other words, while select verses from Darwīsh's *Madiḥ al-ẓill al-ālī* do assert an aspirational lens for an alternative reality, Ṭūqān's "*Waḥshah mustalhamah min qānūn al-jādhbiyyah*" remains mired in mournful premonitions about the Palestinians' existence outside of space and time.²¹ Through an exploration of their lasting lament and vulnerability in the post-1967 war moment, Darwīsh and Ṭūqān display intensifying expressions of bereavement, as well as their community's continued state of insecurity under Israeli occupation and siege. However, even despite their doleful sentiments and predictions, all three works are not resigned to a destiny of inevitable catastrophe and defeat. That is, the two poets deploy their verses proleptically to speculate and represent how, for Palestinians, there maintains an ineluctable link between everyday life, elegy, and longing for political change.

Fadwā Ṭūqān's "Lan abkī"

In "Lan abkī" (I Will Not Cry), Ṭūqān adopts the language and imagery from pre-Islamic poets to situate and contextualize the Palestinians' anguish within

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- 19 Fadwā Ṭūqān, "Lan abkī," *Al-ʿmāl al-shīʿrīyah al-kāmilah* (Amman: Al-Muʿassasah Al-ʿArabīyah Lil-Dirāsāt Wa-Al-Nashr, 1993), 394.
- 20 Khūrī, *Zaman al-Iḥtilāl*, 1985. Khūrī describes the sentiments of "absolute despair" ("*al-yāʿs al-muṭlaq*") in Arabic discourse and debate following the Israeli siege of Beirut and the Sabra and Shatila Massacre, 7.
- 21 Herein, I am considering Ṭūqān's focus on the Palestinians' spatial and temporal loss, which is also discussed in Elias Sanbar, "Out of Place, Out of Time," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16, no. 1 (2001): 87–94.

the Arabic literary canon.²² While Ṭūqān's works prior to 1967 center upon the death of her brother Ibrāhīm, and her expressions of romantic love, her poetry following the *Naksah* concentrates on political concerns.²³ In the wake of the June War and the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, she became an outspoken poet devoted to Palestinian resistance.²⁴ Along with Ṭūqān, Palestinian poets Maḥmūd Darwīsh, Samīḥ al-Qāsim, and Tawfīq Zayyād engaged in writing a poetry of resistance (*muqāwamah*), and remained dedicated to defying the occupation in their poetry. Palestinian resistance literature was first coined in 1966 by the Palestinian writer and critic Ghassān Kanafānī, who conceptualized literature "as an arena of *struggle*."²⁵ Thus, the call for continued commitment in Ṭūqān's "Lan abkī" can be discerned within this political and literary spirit of the late 1960s.

Notably, Ṭūqān's refrain in her title, "Lan abkī" (I Will Not Cry), is significant, as she employs the diction associated with weeping utilized in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic traditions. In particular, one characteristic feature of the *rithā'* is the "release and containment of grief" in the poem's opening lines.²⁶ Most famously, the early Islamic poetess al-Khansā' (d. 24/644) is known for composing emotive elegiac verses for her two brothers, Ṣakhr and Mu'āwiyah, who were killed in tribal battle.²⁷ Female poets from the early Islamic period, such as al-Khansā', are often associated with the act of dramatically weeping to represent their longing. However, as scholar Michelle Hartman discusses,

- 22 In addition to the pre-Islamic tradition, Ṭūqān also invokes the revered Arabic poet al-Mutanabbī's (d. 965) words in "Lan abkī." She writes, "غريب الوجه واليد واللسان" (stranger in face, hand (writing) and tongue), Ṭūqān, "Lan abkī," 395. While al-Mutanabbī is describing the Arab's experience as an outsider, or stranger, during his travels in the tenth century, Ṭūqān is conversely referencing her feelings of alienation and estrangement, as well as exile (غربة), during her visit to Yafa after the 1967 War. Abū al-Ṭayyib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī*, ed. al-Barūnawī, Yār 'Alī. (Calcutta: 1845–1846), 827.
- 23 Fadwa Tuqan, *A Mountainous Journey: An Autobiography*. Ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi. Tr. Olive Kenny. Poetry translated by Naomi Shihab Nye. The Women's Press, 1990, xi.
- 24 Ibid., xii. Also see Salma Khadra Jayyusi, *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature* (Columbia University Press, 1992), 20.
- 25 Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 2–3. Also see Ghassān Kanafānī, *Adab al-muqāwamah fī Filasṭīn al-muḥtallah, 1948–1966* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Adāb, 1966).
- 26 Al-Sajdi, "Trespassing the Male Domain," 129. While Ṭūqān's title suggests a containment of her tears, in the opening verses of her poem, she performs an expression of grief. Coincidentally, Ṭūqān's first lesson in Arabic poetry from her brother Ibrāhīm was on the *rithā'*. As Fedwa Malti-Douglas suggests, Ṭūqān's proclivity for elegiac verse was rooted in a fascination for high poetic culture. Tuqan. *A Mountainous Journey*, Fedwa Malti-Douglas, "Introduction: A Palestinian Female Voice Against Tradition," 7.
- 27 Jan Geert Van Gelder, *Classical Arabic Literature: A Library of Arabic Literature Anthology* (New York University Press, 2013), 12.

we can contextualize their literary performances by recognizing how the *rithā'* was the principal form available for women that would have ensured their poetry's circulation.²⁸ Therefore, Ṭūqān's title, which verbalizes the withholding of her tears, both calls upon and offers a break from the ways in which classical female poets have conventionally been read, understood, and allowed to speak.

In contrast to al-Khansā', who memorializes her two brothers, Ṭūqān writes "Lan abkī" in honor of contemporaneous, living Palestinian poets, such as Maḥmūd Darwish and Samīḥ al-Qāsim, in order to recollect and acknowledge her community's collective loss. She beseeches her fellow intellectuals and her readers to maintain their *ṣumūd* (steadfastness) amidst their ongoing dispossessions. Although Ṭūqān may have wept in the past, she incorporates a proleptic viewpoint in her title, vowing that she will not cry again. Thus, as Ṭūqān contemplates the future, she upholds the sanctity of the Palestinians' lives, and as a female poet, she augments ideas of *murūwwah*, or the traditionally masculinist notions of tribal honor and virility that were prevalent in poems from the pre-Islamic age.²⁹ Namely, Ṭūqān reframes how the *rithā'* would have customarily been read and deciphered, as she formulates her poem for political and speculative aims, to not only claim a way of life for her community, but to protect and defend Palestinian life itself.

While Ṭūqān's title refers to and reconfigures the elegiac poems of al-Khansā', the title "Lan abkī," along with the poem's opening verses, invoke the first line, "*qifā nabki*," from celebrated pre-Islamic poet Imru' al-Qays' (d. 544) *Mu'allaqah*. Imru' al-Qays famously begins his poem by turning to his two companions and requesting that they stop and weep (قَفَا نَبِكِ مِنْ ذِكْرِي) (حَبِيبٍ وَمَنْزِلِ):

Halt, two friends, and we will weep
for the memory of one beloved
And an abode at Siqt al-Liwā
Between al-Dakhūl, then Ḥawmal,
Then Tūḍiḥ, then al-Miqrāt, whose trace
Was not effaced.³⁰

28 Michelle Hartman, "An Arab Woman Poet as a Crossover Artist? Reconsidering the Ambivalent Legacy of al-Khansa'," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 29.

29 Again, for more on women's Arabic poetry from the pre-Islamic and early Islamic traditions, see al-Sajdi, "Trespassing the Male Doman," and Hammond, *Beyond Elegy*.

30 Translation by Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak*, 249–250.

قَفَا نَبِكِ مِنْ ذِكْرِي حَبِيبٍ وَمَنْزِلِ
بِسْقَطِ اللَّوِيِّ بَيْنَ الدَّخُولِ حَوْمَلِ
فَتَوْضَحَ فَاَلْمَقْرَأَةَ لَمْ يَعْفُ رَسْمَهَا³¹

Imru' al-Qays' dramatic and oft-recited opening is overtly referenced and recast by Ṭūqān. As distinct from Imru' al-Qays' address to his fellow travelers, Ṭūqān dedicates her work to the Palestinian "poets of resistance in the occupied land for the past twenty years," and she bestows "Lan abkī" as a gift for their meeting in Haifa after the 1967 War.³² Her poem begins:

At the gates of Yafa, my beloveds
and in the chaos of the debris of the abodes
between the remains and the thorns
I stopped and said to the two eyes: Oh eyes
let us weep³³

على أبواب يافا يا أحبائي
وفي فوضى حطام الدور
بين الردم والشوك
وقفت وقلت للعينين: يا عينين
قفا نبك³⁴

In these verses, through Ṭūqān's use of Imru' al-Qays' language, we are invited to read her poem about the destruction and desolation in Palestine in the same manner as the pre-Islamic Arabian ode, as well as the *rithā'*.³⁵ In comparison to the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah*, Ṭūqān's poem about bereavement and mourning is produced with what Michael Sells recognizes as a "new realization of loss" recollected from "a common sensibility and a common cultural gestalt."³⁶ These constitutional themes and elements demarcate the Palestinians' collective and national identity and their remembrance of the Palestinians' first catastrophe, or the *Nakbah*. In her lament, Ṭūqān conjures the lost homeland and the

31 Imru' Al-Qays, *Sharḥ Mu'allaqat Imri' al-Qays*, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Kaysān; Naṣrat 'Abd al-Raḥmān (Amman: Dār al-Bashīr; Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1999), 8.

32 Ṭūqān, "Lan abkī," 394.

33 Ibid. All translations are my own, unless otherwise noted.

34 Ibid.

35 While Ṭūqān employs Imru' al-Qays' language, she does not use a consistent meter; Imru' al-Qays' poem uses the meter of *ṭawīl*.

36 Sells, *Desert Tracings*, 4.

Palestinians who departed.³⁷ Like the pre-Islamic poet's address to a couple of theoretical traveling companions, Ṭūqān invokes two eyes. Significantly, along with referencing Imru' al-Qays' *Mu'allaqah* in her poem, Ṭūqān also summons a *marthiyah* (elegy) by al-Khansā', which begins by similarly calling upon two plaintive eyes. As al-Khansā' grieves in her opening verse, "Be generous, my eyes, with shedding copious tears and weep a stream of tears for Ṣakhr!" (يا عين) (جوذي بدمع منك مغزار وابكي لصخر بدمع منك مدار) (جوذي بدمع منك مغزار وابكي لصخر بدمع منك مدار).³⁸ Accordingly, while Ṭūqān may gesture to containing her tears in "Lan abkī's" title, in an evident allusion to al-Khansā's elegy, the Palestinian poet soon implores her eyes to weep, thus invoking sentiments of mourning in her first stanza.

While "Lan abkī" activates and unearths doleful modes and moods, memorializing how the "heart is contrite" (*al-qalbu munsaḥiqan*) and is "suffocated with sadness" (*wa ghaṣṣa al-qalb bi-l-ahzān*), Ṭūqān nevertheless composes the poem with optimism about the power of perseverance and resilience.³⁹ Despite the Palestinians' deep sorrow and the "wound" (*al-jurḥ*) that they endure, in her final verses, she instructs her brothers, *yā ikhwatī*,⁴⁰ to

Gather up and wipe away yesterday's tears
like you, I plant my feet in my nation
in my land
like you, I plant my eyes
in the path of splendor and the sun⁴¹

ألمهها وأمسحها دموع الامس
وأزرع مثلكم قديمي في وطني
وفي أرضي
وأزرع مثلكم عيني
في درب السنى والشمس⁴²

As exemplified in these lines, Ṭūqān enjoins her Arabic readers and the *"shu'arā' al-muqāwamah"* ("the poets of resistance") that "yesterday's tears" (*dumū'a*

37 Ṭūqān, "Lan abkī," 394.

38 Van Gelder, *Classical Arabic Literature*, 12. According to Van Gelder, Arabic will often use a singular where a dual is intended, as with the word *aynu* (eye) in this verse.

39 Ṭūqān, "Lan abkī," 394–395.

40 *Ibid.*, 398.

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*

al-ams) be removed from their eyes.⁴³ Ṭūqān emphasizes how they will all stay grounded in the land and committed to the Palestinian cause—maintaining an auspicious vision for the future.⁴⁴ The poet writes with the supposition that the Palestinians' "*darb*" ("path") will be paved with promise and that the gloom and "darkness" ("*al-dujā*") that has overshadowed their everyday experiences will ultimately be brightened by the sun, brilliant and radiant.⁴⁵ In accordance with the zeitgeist of the post-1967 war period, and the mobilization of resistance poetry among Palestinian writers, Ṭūqān elicits hopeful sentiments to console her community's "despair" ("*al-yās*").⁴⁶

She invokes the past in order to remember the Palestinians' displacement from their land and uphold her people's national fervor. As she espouses with determination in an earlier stanza,

Over our foreheads, the hardship
We will not be satisfied, we will not be at rest
Until we expel the specters
The crows and the injustice⁴⁷

فوق جباهنا التعبُ
ولن نرتاح، لن نرتاح
حتى نطرد الأشباح
والغربان والظلمه⁴⁸

Herein, Ṭūqān aims to dispel "*al-ashbāḥ*," or the specters and apparitions from the Palestinians' previous calamities and wars. She employs an expression of futurist thought that is both sanguine and still able to confront the Palestinians' painful memories and bear witness to the traces of destroyed homes and villages. Through her references to Imru' al-Qays and al-Khansā', as well as the crows (*al-ghirbān*) and apparitions that serve as emblems of remembrance,⁴⁹ Ṭūqān invites her fellow Palestinian poets to contemplate the role of poetry, as well as the act of deploying the Arabic *qaṣīdah* and *rithā'* for resistance in Palestine. She uses a *mélange* of imagery, depicting the imbrication of darkness and light, alerting her fellow poets to how the Palestinians' grief from the past

43 Ibid., 394, 398.

44 Ibid., 398.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., 396.

47 Ibid., 397.

48 Ibid.

49 Sells, *Desert Tracings*, 4.

can be transformed for tomorrow.⁵⁰ Through these portrayals, she acknowledges the ways in which losses that are still felt and mourned in the present, can be called upon for encouraging *ṣumūd* (steadfastness) in the future. Unlike Hoda El Shakry's discussion in "Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible," in which she observes how contemporary Palestinian art can "challenge the very viability of Palestinian futurity,"⁵¹ Ṭūqān offers a mode of imagining that may enact political change.⁵² Thus, Ṭūqān remains hopeful and writes elegiacally in "Lan abkī," enjoining her readers to think about the layers of association and meaning embedded in the poem, as well as how poetry may advance political opposition in the immediate aftermath of the *Naksah*.

Maḥmūd Darwīsh's Madīḥ al-ẓill al-ʿālī

Like Ṭūqān, Darwīsh writes *Madīḥ al-ẓill al-ʿālī* (In Praise of High Shadow) in the post-1967 war period. He formulates his verses to preserve the 1982 War's memory and document the Palestinians' resultant insecurity. Composed during Lebanon's Civil War, after the Palestine Liberation Organization's expulsion from Beirut, and following the slaughter on Sabra Street and in Shatila camp, Darwīsh's poem somberly records the daily assaults waged by the Israeli army in Lebanon's besieged capital.⁵³ The poet's incisive imagery of the body (*jasad*) and the skin (*jild*), as well as references to *al-Andalus*, convey how 1982 operates as a metaphor for both personal and collective trauma, written on the body and on the land.

In a similar vein as Ṭūqān, Darwīsh explicitly invokes a classical Arabic genre in his title, in this case the tradition of Arabic panegyric poetry, or eulogy (*madīḥ*), and also like Ṭūqān, he inverts the classical features of the genre. By

50 Ṭūqān, "Lan abkī," 398.

51 El Shakry, "Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible," 673.

52 See Gil Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine*, in which she writes, "Imagination must always precede political change," 15.

53 After months of Israeli bombardment, on August 21, 1982, Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] forces departed from Lebanon as part of the Habib plan. The primary purpose of this agreement "was the permanent evacuation of Palestinian fighters from Beirut, ostensibly carried out in the interests of their safety, under the supervision of the United States and other Western nations." The arrangement additionally promised "the protection of civilian residents or refugees in the camps." Instead, with the assistance of Israeli flares that illuminated the camps, between sunset on Thursday, September 16 and midday on Saturday, September 18, 1982, the Phalange militia brutally murdered women, children, and elderly Palestinian and Lebanese residents; approximately 1,400 people were massacred in Sabra and Shatila. Bayan Nuwayhed Al-Hout, *Sabra and Shatila: September 1982* (Pluto Press, 2004), 1, 13. For more on Beirut in 1982, see Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (Pluto Press, 2012). Seth Anziska, *Preventing Palestine: A Political History from Camp David to Oslo* (Princeton University Press, 2018). Rashid Khalidi, *Under Siege: PLO Decisionmaking During the 1982 War* (Columbia University Press, 1986).

offering his tribute to a shadow, rather than a king or notable figure, Darwīsh elegizes the Palestinians' abandonment in Beirut and the city's devastation. As James Montgomery suggests, "the topic of the disconsolate poet, common in the *dhikr al-aṭlāl*, the *naṣīb* and the *rithā'* is a manifestation of an important component of *muruwwah*—passionate feelings, whether of love or hate, grief or joy."⁵⁴ Darwīsh's mourning for Beirut can be read with reference to earlier iterations of poets expressing sorrow for the destruction of a city, or to *rithā' al-mudun* (city elegy), such as Abū al-Baqā' al-Rundī's 1267 "*Rithā' al-Andalus*" ("Lament for the Fall of Seville").⁵⁵ Hence, in a manner conforming with and modifying al-Rundī's melancholic poem, Darwīsh recalls catastrophes from the past and present, while also thinking about the future.

Madīh al-zill al-ʿālī is a book-length poem, which has been read as both a lyric-epic and a bombastic and dramatic piece about a lone hero who defiantly resists Israel's bombardment.⁵⁶ In the poem, Darwīsh transfigures Beirut into a "treacherous lover" who overtly betrays the poet and the Palestinian people.⁵⁷ While it is beyond the scope of this paper to address the work in its entirety, it is worth noting that the poem was quickly read as a panegyric ode to Yasser Arafāt, even though Darwīsh denied such claims.⁵⁸ Unsatisfied with his literary production, Darwīsh critiques *Madīh al-zill al-ʿālī* in his 1986 prose poem, *Dhākīrah lil-nisyān* (*Memory for Forgetfulness*), describing his text from 1983 as a preliminary one, given that, according to the poet, it was impossible to compose poetry in a warzone.⁵⁹ Considering these myriad readings of *Madīh al-zill al-ʿālī*, my interpretation will center upon the ways in which Darwīsh spotlights the Palestinians' vulnerability through the mobilization of language and allusions to different demarcations of time. In addition to elegizing death and desolation in his verses, like Ṭūqān, Darwīsh incorporates outpourings of sorrow, instancing "the heart that howls" (القلبُ أن يعوي) in his opening verses,

54 Montgomery, "Dichotomy in Jāhili Poetry," 5.

55 Abū al-Baqā' al-Rundī was an Andalusian poet from Ronda. While al-Rundī mourns the fall of Seville in his poem, the lament was written in 1267 after Nasrid ruler, Muḥammad ibn al-Aḥmar, surrendered several cities to Alfonso X. Thus, the elegy was composed in the hope of gaining military support from Muslims in North Africa to battle Christian armies. Al-Rundī, "Lament for the Fall of Seville," trans. James Monroe, Islamic Philosophy Online Project, updated May 21, 2007, <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/abubaqa.htm>. For other discussions of *rithā' al-mudun* in the modern period, see Linda Istanbuli, "Remembering Syria's Traumatic Past: Gender, Poetics, and Loss in Manḥal al-Sarrāj's *As a River Should*," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 52 (2021): 202–227.

56 Khaled Mattawa, *Mahmoud Darwish: The Poet's Art and His Nation* (Syracuse University Press, 2014), 86–88.

57 *Ibid.*, 87–89.

58 *Ibid.*, 89.

59 Maḥmūd Darwīsh, *Dhākīrah lil-nisyān* (Dār al-nāshir, Ramallah, 1997), 79–80.

for example.⁶⁰ Moreover, by representing atrocities as routine aspects of everyday life, the poet displays the precarity of Palestinians' lives which are devoid of sovereignty and state protection, and the limitations of national symbols and allegiances for a people living in exile.

In *Memory for Forgetfulness* (1986), which describes Israel's 1982 invasion, Darwīsh censures the apparent indifference of the Arab world, as he declares in frustration that, aside from his own, there were no Arabic poems written to "address the siege of Beirut and protest the massacre."⁶¹ Palestinian women writers in Lebanon, such as Laylā al-Sā'ih and Liyānah Badr, also published their literary accounts during Israel's air strikes in 1982.⁶² However, Darwīsh focuses on the dearth of Arabic literary production during this period and highlights the Palestinians' experiences of isolation and precarity. As Darwīsh forlornly expresses in *Madīh al-ẓill al-'ālī*,

Alone, I defend a wall that is not my own
 Alone, I defend air that is not my own
 Alone, I stand on the city's surface ...
 Job is dead, and the Phoenix is dead, and the Companions have gone⁶³

وحدي أدافع عن جدارٍ ليس لي
 وحدي أدافع عن هواءٍ ليس لي
 وحدي على سطح المدينة واقفٌ ...
 أيوبُ مات، وماتت العتقاء، وانصرف الصحابة⁶⁴

Darwīsh's verses serve as a medium for mourning and political critique. They wax elegiac, documenting the cumulative losses of homeland, security, and his fellow Palestinians. The poet accents feelings of abandonment in 1982

60 Maḥmūd Darwīsh, *Madīh al-ẓill al-'ālī* (Dār al-'awdah, 1984), 6.

61 Darwīsh, *Dhākīrah lil-nisyan*, 140. Mahmoud Darwish, *Memory for Forgetfulness: August, Beirut, 1982*, trans. Ibrahim Muhawi (University of California Press, 2013), 110. Interestingly, Darwīsh makes this declaration to point out that there were Israeli poets resisting Israel's invasion, and not Arab ones.

62 See Laylā al-Sā'ih, *Taktubu 'an al-judhūr allatī lā tarḥal* (Damascus: Dār al-Jalīl, 1984). Although not a poem, it is worth noting that Badr's novel was also written about the Israeli invasion in Lebanon during this period. Liyānah Badr, *Shurfah 'alā al-Fākihānī: qīṣaṣ* (Damascus: Munazzamat al-Taḥrīr al-Filasṭīniyah, Dāirat al-'Ilām wa-al-Thaqāfah, 1983).

63 Darwīsh, *Madīh al-ẓill al-'ālī*, 23.

64 Ibid.

through his allusions to Islamic scripture and myth. He specifically references the death of Job (patience) and the Phoenix (renewal), as well as the departure of his Companions (perhaps both the Companions of the Prophet and the poet's Arab brethren).⁶⁵ In these lines, Darwīsh articulates his despair amid the Palestinians' ongoing dispossessions in Beirut and signals "*al-Nakbah al-mustamirrah*" ("the continuous catastrophe").⁶⁶

In his opening verses, Darwīsh's words are replete with double meaning, invoking the prodigious legacies of the Arabic poetic tradition in order to account for a loss "that will already have taken place."⁶⁷ He utilizes a *naṣīb*, the ancient poetic practice of citing the poet's lost beloved or abode in the opening lines; Darwīsh writes in his first stanza, "We prepare for Beirut the entire *qaṣīdah*" (هَيَّاْنَا لِبَيْرُوتَ الْقَصِيدَةَ كُلَّهَا).⁶⁸ As Jeffrey Sacks elucidates in *Iterations of Loss*, the destruction that is summoned in both pre-Islamic and Darwīsh's poetry is one that spotlights "an event of repetition and citation in language."⁶⁹ The first five hemistiches begin with the repetition of the word *baḥr*, denoting both the expansive sea and a meter of poetry. Accordingly, the word simultaneously conjures the vastness of the sea as well as the potentiality of the poem through its cadence and rhythmic form.⁷⁰

In his *naṣīb*, Darwīsh states,

Meter of the new September. Our autumn approaches from the gates ...
Meter of the bitter hymn. We prepare for Beirut the entire *qaṣīdah*.

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- 65 These verses from *Madīh al-zill al-‘ālī* are also discussed and explicated in Jeries N. Khoury, "The Figure of Job ("Ayyūb") in Modern Arabic Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 38, no. 2 (2007): 186.
- 66 Khūrī, "Al-hazīmah wa al-Nakbah al-mustamirrah," 022.
- 67 Sacks, *Iterations of Loss*, 35.
- 68 Darwīsh, *Madīh al-zill al-‘ālī*, 5. As Stetkevych elucidates in *The Mute Immortals Speak*, the *qaṣīdah* comprises three thematic units: "the *naṣīb*, consisting of the description of the abandoned encampment ... the *raḥīl*, which describes the poet's journey through the desert and his mount, the she-camel ..." and lastly, *fakhr*, "the poet's praise or boast of himself and his tribe ..." or, as an alternative to *fakhr*—*madīh*, a court panegyric—in which the ruler is praised, 3–4.
- 69 Sacks, *Iterations of Loss*, 34.
- 70 Despite his repetition of *baḥr* (meter) in these opening lines, Darwīsh's poem can be read as an example of *qaṣīdat al-tafīlah* or free verse poetry. "The essential concept of this system entails a reliance on free repetition of the [*tafīlah*,] the basic unit of the conventional Arab prosody—i.e., the use of an irregular number of a single foot instead of a fixed number of feet as was dictated by the classical meters," Reuven Snir. "Other Barbarians will Come': Intertextuality, Meta-Poetry, and Meta-Myth in Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry," in *Mahmoud Darwish Exile's Poet: Critical Essays*. Ed. Hala Khamis Nassar and Najat Rahman. Olive Branch Press, 2008, 138.

Meter for the middle of the day.

Meter for the banner of the dove, our shelter, our individual weapon.

Meter, for borrowed (false) time.⁷¹

بحر لأيلولَ الجديدِ. خريفُنا يدنو من الأبوابِ ...
 بحرٌ للنشيدِ المرءِ. هيأنا لبيروتِ القصيدةَ كُلَّها.
 بحرٌ لمنتصفِ النهارِ.
 بحرٌ لراياتِ الحمامِ، لظُلنَّا، لسلاحنا الفرديِّ
 بحرٌ، للزمانِ المستعارِ⁷²

For the poet, it is lyric verse that serves as a means of preservation amidst daily devastation and spatial and temporal loss. Darwīsh is, however, likely referencing more than the ruin of Beirut in his verses. When he states the “new September” (“*aylūl al-jadīd*”) in the poem’s first line, Darwīsh alludes to a previous calamity in the month of *aylūl*. That is, the bloody conflict in 1970 that was waged in Jordan between King Hussein’s Jordanian Armed Forces and the PLO, also known as Black September (*aylūl al-aswad*), which precipitated the Palestinian fighters’ relocation to Beirut in the early 1970s. Therefore, despite his tribute to Beirut, the poet simultaneously summons an earlier loss in order to emphasize the protracted nature of the Palestinians’ vulnerability and dislocation.

Darwīsh’s reference to “borrowed [or false] time” (“*li-l-zamān al-musta‘ār*”) in the final verse quoted above is additionally noteworthy, given the poet’s focus on dispossession and temporality. Through this phrase, Darwīsh intimates that time cannot be fully inhabited or possessed. While the deaths that began in 1948 continue in 1982, the Palestinians’ bereavement extends into the present; their mourning endures. As Sacks predicates, given that “a singular event of loss is already its repetition in the poetic act that bears witness to it,” we are invited, especially in the context of Darwīsh’s writing, to recount other losses in relation to this present one, and consequently, to reflect upon the interminable nature of the Palestinians’ grief, and the injustices that animate the 1982 moment.⁷³ Thus, in addition to Darwīsh’s language, the very form and conventions of the poem help to impart the contingency of time in the Palestinians’ everyday experience, and the contours of their continued lament.

71 Darwīsh, *Madīḥ al-ẓill al-‘ālī*, 5.

72 Ibid.

73 Sacks, *Iterations of Loss*, 38.

As with *bahr's* double meaning, *al-musta'ār* denotes a metaphorical or figurative expression, as well as something borrowed, and so, the word serves as another instance of self-referential language. Herein, *Madīh al-zill al-'ālī* becomes a self-conscious rumination on both the act of poetic writing, and on the ways that memories are lyrically chronicled and recited. In exposing his people's sustained sense of time-and-placelessness, Darwīsh uses the poem to unveil how impermanence and uncertainty inform notions about the Palestinians' future. Time must be accounted for and recorded, but with breaches and disruptions that upset the Palestinians' lived reality.

The poet's conception of his people's lasting and evolving temporality is highlighted in the verse that begins, "Beirut/Yesterday/Now/After tomorrow" (بيروت\أمس\الآن\بعد غد) in which Darwīsh reveals his community's precariousness as abiding outsiders in Beirut, and as a people plagued by ceaseless exile.⁷⁴ The poet declares,

My country is a suitcase
And my suitcase is my country ...

There is no land under my feet, so I can die the way I wish ...
My country is a travel bag
Made of all my beloveds' skin
And the nearby Andalus
My country is on my shoulder
Remnants of the land in the body of Arabism.⁷⁵

وطني حقيقه
وحقيقتي وطني ...
لا أرض تحتي كي أموت كما أشاء ...
وطني حقيقه
من جلد أحبائي
وأندلس القريبه
وطني على كتفي
بقايا الأرض في جسد العروبه.⁷⁶

74 Darwīsh, *Madīh al-zill al-'ālī*, 90.

75 Ibid., 90–94.

76 Ibid.

With these lines, Darwīsh austere exhibits the itinerant nature of Palestinian experience. Exile has become an inherent aspect of the Palestinian story since 1948, and this fate of migration, homelessness, and the lack of a predetermined and sacred place for burial, or being able to “die the way [one] wish[es],” is only perpetuated in Beirut.⁷⁷ The “travel bag” (“*ḥaqība*”) that Darwīsh describes, and which is made of “my beloveds’ skin” (“*jildi aḥbābī*”), uncannily evokes both his people’s mobility and the embodiment of their collective loss, or the community’s continuous displacement. Darwīsh’s demarcation of time is significant, as he stresses the uniformity of experience for Palestinians in the past, present, and future, suggesting that the destruction of *al-Andalus* is related to the Arabs’ current instability in Beirut.⁷⁸ Though, in addition to “nostalgia for a glorious past,” as William Granara avers, writing *al-Andalus* in modern Arabic literature also “involves a dynamic of memory, sight, and expectation” for a better life in the future.⁷⁹

It is with reference to these previous losses—and to the longing for an alternative political and material reality—that the poem for Beirut is crafted. Yet, notably, despite the particularity of the Palestinians’ dispossession, and their continued exile in the wake of Zionism, Darwīsh, strikingly, does not underscore the pursuit of nationhood. The poet cites the body of “*urūbah*” (“Arabism”), illustrating how he is likely appealing to a larger Arab identity or way of being; and thus, given the failures of sovereign states to protect and provide a home for his people, Darwīsh identifies and embraces a transnational or postnational vision.⁸⁰ While one may simply read his verses as a means of working through the Palestinians’ political defeat, or the community’s inability to topple the Israeli state, Darwīsh draws on traces and memories

77 Ibid. A similar sentiment of insecurity with reference to burial is invoked in an earlier stanza, in which Darwīsh inquires, “Who will bury us, if we die?” (من سيدفننا إذا متنا؟), 60.

78 Sacks, *Iterations of Loss*, 32.

79 William Granara, “Nostalgia, Arab Nationalism, and The Andalusian Chronotope in the Evolution of the Modern Arabic Novel,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 36, no. 1 (2005): 57, 60. For more on medieval and modern utilizations of *al-Andalus* for expressing “nostalgia, mourning, and loss,” see Anna Celeste Cruz’s dissertation, “Modes of Loss: al-Andalus in the Arabic Poetic Imagination,” 1.

80 The sentiments of disenchantment that Darwīsh is advancing here were prevalent among Arab intellectuals and writers following the devastating defeat of the 1967 War (*Naksah*). Arab thinkers similarly reflected upon their disillusionment and the limitations of Arab leaders and states to liberate their people. For more along this literary vein, see Stefan Meyer, *The Experimental Arabic Novel: Postcolonial Modernism in the Levant* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001) 39–54; and Joseph Farag, *Politics and Palestinian Literature in Exile: Gender Aesthetics and Resistance in the Short Story* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 75–136.

to implement a clairvoyant outlook, recognizing the limitations of nations to adequately safeguard their people. In this poem, he hints at a forward-facing perspective, which relies upon his fellow Arabs rather than state actors and institutions for securing human life. It is the “body of Arabism” that will hold, carry, and therefore preserve remnants from the land in the years to come. Like Ṭūqān’s “Lan abkī,” Darwīsh’s poem emphasizes how *ṣumūd* will help ensure his people’s future.

In an earlier verse of *Madīḥ al-ẓill al-‘ālī*, Darwīsh details the ways in which death and calamity penetrate daily life in besieged Beirut. Denoting the passage of time, the poet enumerates, “Beirut/dawn” (بيروت \ فجرًا) “Beirut/afternoon” (بيروت \ ظهراً) and “Beirut/night” (بيروت \ ليلاً).⁸¹ In these lines, he fashions an exacting lens, exemplifying the ways in which moments of violence are chronicled during a single day in Beirut, as opposed to his previous, more nebulous demarcations of “Yesterday/Now/After tomorrow.” In his first stanza discussing dawn in the city, Darwīsh narrates the early morning ritual of presenting his “neighbor with the newspaper, so he can look for his relatives.”⁸² The precarity during Israel’s military air raids begins infiltrating everyday routines, and thus, Darwīsh expresses a conflation between commonplace and extraordinary events. As the poet elegiacally asserts,

Kill me, kill me!
 The flight enters my thoughts and bombards them
 nineteen children are murdered
 the bird stops singing ...
 Ordinary our hours—ordinary ...
 And death reaches us with every weapon by air, land, and sea.
 Oh slow dawn of Beirut
 quicken your pace a little
 quicken your pace so I may truly know
 if I am dead or alive.⁸³

واقْتَلِينِي واقْتَلِينِي!
 يدخل الطيران أفكارِي ويقصنها ...
 فيقتلُ تسعَ عشرةَ طفلةً.

81 Darwīsh, *Madīḥ al-ẓill al-‘ālī*, 80.

82 Ibid., 54.

83 Ibid., 55–57. The translation is my own, aside from the last few verses, which can be found in al-Hout’s *Sabra and Shatila: September 1982*.

يتوقف العصفور عن إنشاده ...
 عادية ساعاتنا - عادية ...
 والموتُ يأْتينا بكل سلاحه الجويّ والبريّ والبحريّ ...
 يا فجر بيروت الطويلا
 تجلّ قليلا
 تجلّ لأعرفَ جيّداً:
 إن كنتُ حيّاً أم قتيلاً.⁸⁴

Darwīsh's poem conjures the nineteen children who are killed in order to document their loss and call upon their memory. In addition to summoning Beirut's victims, Darwīsh's own proximity to death is recorded. His portrayal parallels anthropologist Veena Das' elaboration in *Life and Words*, in which she explains the ways that fear and the anticipation of violence surrounding the partition of India in 1947, are ensconced in daily reality.⁸⁵ As death remains ever-present for Darwīsh, reaching his community "with every weapon by air, land, and sea" (بكل سلاحه الجويّ والبريّ والبحريّ), we note what Das calls "the ecology of fear in everyday life."⁸⁶ Given the inexhaustible reach of violence in Darwīsh's recollection, "potentiality here does not have the sense of something that is waiting at the door of reality ... but rather as that which is already present."⁸⁷ Thus, by virtue of living through constant assaults in Beirut, Darwīsh mobilizes his lyric poem to contemplate the continuous and expectant haunting of death.

In thinking through these quotidian, "ordinary" ("*ādīyyatun*") encounters, Darwīsh spotlights a reality of acute trepidation from which there is no respite. Like the planes hovering above Lebanon's capital figured in the stanza above, the poet depicts a form of loss that "remains steadfastly alive in the present."⁸⁸ He offers the dawn of Beirut as a reliable indicator of passing time, urging the day's break to move faster—in order to reveal whether he is still alive. "It is not only violence experienced on one's body," Das writes, "but also the sense that one's access to context is lost that constitutes a sense of being violated."⁸⁹ Darwīsh's loss of context is exemplified through his inclination to pause in the

84 Darwīsh, *Madīh al-zill al-ʿālī*, 55–57.

85 Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (University of California Press, 2007), 8–9.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, eds., *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* (University of California Press, 2002), 4.

89 Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, 9.

present through his poetic rendering—and gaze at the sunrise—interrogating whether he is among the living or the dead. The reader is thus able to affectively register how the poet's "situation of survival" and his grief become proleptic.⁹⁰ It is only in the future that Darwīsh will discover whether he is alive or dead.

Darwīsh bemoans the ways in which the presence of death for himself, and for his neighbor—who methodically searches for his missing relatives—has become assumed and diurnal, an aspect of his morning regimen. However, it is important to note that Darwīsh defiantly pictures this level of instability as commonplace in order to pose a challenge to it. He ironically declares, "ordinary our hours—ordinary" ("ādīyyatun sā'ātunā—'ādīyyatun"), precisely to refute the banality of these volatile conditions. Therefore, in addition to the everyday nature of the violence that Darwīsh underscores, his poem also incorporates an interruption through his sardonic phrase about what may be considered ordinary. The poet's active rethinking of his place in the world subverts the expectation, or the anticipated quality of the Palestinians' unrest. As Tobias Kelly purports, ordinary encounters with violence do not, in effect, normalize them, but these confrontations are also "an aspiration, a desire for a different kind of life."⁹¹ Given the "normality" of relentless violence that Darwīsh represents in these verses, his ability to bear this climate of upheaval is not only linked to surviving conditions in the current moment, and foreboding premonitions about the future, but like Ṭūqān's "Lan abkī," also uncovers Palestinians' political ambitions and prevailing hopes for a better tomorrow.

The poet's longing for change is particularly poignant when deciphering the verses of *Madīḥ al-zill al-'ālī*, which, with harrowing imagery and the "transmission of affect," epitomize the slaughter at Sabra and Shatila.⁹² Darwīsh personifies Sabra, identifying her as a "sleeping girl" ("fatātun nā'i'ma"), whom "the fascist's knife awakens" (وخنجرُ الفاشيِّ يصحو).⁹³ Thus, Darwīsh accents the innocence of those living in Beirut's Sabra camp, likening them to a young girl dreaming.

90 Lauren Berlant, "Thinking about Feeling Historical," *Emotion, Space and Society* 1, no. 1 (2008): 8.

91 Tobias Kelly, "The Attractions of Accountancy: Living an Ordinary Life During the Second Palestinian Intifada," *Ethnography* (2008): 365.

92 Herein, I'm referencing Teresa Brennan's book *The Transmission of Affect* (Cornell University Press, 2004), in which she discusses the ways in which "the emotions or affects of one person, and the enhancing or depressing energies these affects entail, can enter into another," 3.

93 Darwīsh, *Madīḥ al-zill al-'ālī*, 82, 87.

The fascist cuts her breasts—the night reduced—
 He then dances around his knife and licks it.
 Singing an ode to a victory of the cedars⁹⁴
 And erases
 Quietly ... Her flesh from her bones
 and spreads her organs over the table
 and the fascist continues dancing and laughs.
 and goes crazy for joy, Sabra is no longer a body:
 He molds her as his instincts suggest, and his will manifests.⁹⁵

يقطع الفاشي ثديها - يقلُّ الليلُ -
 يرقص حول خنجره ويلعقه. يغني لانتصار الأرز موالاً
 ويححو
 في هدوءٍ ... في هدوءٍ لجمها عن عظمها
 ويمدّد الأعضاء فوق الطاولة
 ويواصل الفاشي رقصته ويضحك للعيون المائله
 ويجنُّ من فرح، وصبراً لم تعد جسداً:
 يركبها كما شاءت غرائزه، وتصنعها مشيئته.⁹⁶

The poet's gruesome description of the fascist, or the Phalange fighter, surreptitiously violating and mutilating Sabra emphasizes the merciless violence of the massacre. Darwish's lines bring pathos to the women, children, and elderly who were murdered after they were left defenseless in the camps. Although Sabra was once a body, a sleeping girl, she is cut open, desecrated and disemboweled, her organs left on display.

As with Darwish's use of a *naṣīb* in the opening lines of his poem, the conjuring of a young woman's rape for portraying war's ruthlessness is a familiar trope in Arabic's literary heritage—as well as global literary culture.⁹⁷ The

94 In pronouncing a "victory of the cedars," Darwish alludes to the important national symbol of the Lebanese cedar tree, and thus, he suggests how this slaughter serves the Phalange party's mission of preserving the Lebanese nation, but with a Phoenician identity.

95 Darwish, *Madīḥ al-ẓill al-ʿālī*, 87–88. Translated by Saad El Kurdi at <http://www.kadaitcha.com/2012/09/19/sabra-and-shatila-by-mahmoud-Darwish/>.

96 Darwish, *Madīḥ al-ẓill al-ʿālī*, 87–88.

97 The ruin of a city, as represented through the rape of a woman, is also found in the *Book of Lamentations* in the Hebrew Bible, which is a collection of poetic laments for the destruction of Jerusalem. In Chapter 5, the text states, "They have ravished the women in Zion/Maidens in the towns of Judah." *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (The Jewish Publication Society, 1985), *Lamentations*, chap. 5:11, <https://www.sefaria.org/Lamentations.5.11?lang=bi>.

Abbasid-era Arab poet Abū Tammām wrote in the ninth century of a virgin being violently deflowered in order to praise, in 838 AD, the caliph's conquest of Amorium, a Byzantine town in central Anatolia.⁹⁸ Yet, unlike Abū Tammām, Darwīsh employs this motif in order to typify ruin rather than victory. His macabre recollection exhibits the desolation found in the camps immediately following the massacre, and the depiction of Palestinians who were murdered and then discarded—their bodies left mangled and deformed.⁹⁹ In addition to the butchery of the victims, Darwīsh characterizes the perpetrators as maniacal; the fascist breaks into a jovial dance, pronouncing this barbaric slaughter and rape as a celebratory ritual or occasion.¹⁰⁰

Darwīsh's portrait of the massacre as the rape of an innocent girl, vulnerable to her predators' assailment, may appear facile—a simplified and sexualized rendering of the slaughter in the camps, which affirms the conception of the Palestinian woman as a national symbol.¹⁰¹ However, his illustration does, nevertheless, attempt to capture the inconceivable brutality of this event, reflecting the "enduring impulse to make sense of war and to discern."¹⁰² In *Signifying Loss*, Nouri Gana offers a perceptive critique on how the experience of violence becomes the basis for literary expression through an "engagement with the cruelties of memory and traumatic loss."¹⁰³ In applying Gana's treatise on narratives of mourning, Darwīsh's poem, "by virtue of being the product of the conditions of which it speaks—bears witness to, protests against, and ultimately helps us gain empathic access to the devastating effects of war."¹⁰⁴

Receiving his early education in Israel, Darwīsh was well versed in Hebrew biblical scripture.

98 Irwin, *Night and Horses*, 132.

99 Jean Genet, "Four Hours in Shatila," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, no. 3 (1983).

100 Darwīsh's description of the fascist in his poem is comparable to French novelist and playwright Jean Genet's account in *Quatre heures à Chatila* ("Four Hours in Shatila"). In this work, Genet states, "The dead generally become very familiar, even friendly to me, but when I saw those in the camps I perceived only the hatred and joy of those who had killed them. A barbaric party had taken place there: rage, drunkenness, dances, songs, curses, laments, moans ..." 19.

101 Darwīsh's metaphoric conception of the violated woman in these lines also speaks to the ways in which gender is understood in Palestinian nationalist discourse. The poet uses the trope of the desecrated woman to encapsulate the Palestinians' national tragedy. In scholar Joseph Massad's "Conceiving the Masculine: Gender and Palestinian Nationalism" (*Middle East Journal*, 1995), he describes how within the logic of Palestinian nation-building, women are perceived as "the soil on which [glory, respect, and dignity], along with manhood, grow. It is as soil that they are the 'guardians' of Palestinian lives and survival," 474.

102 Gana, *Signifying Loss*, 156.

103 *Ibid.*, 156.

104 *Ibid.*, 158.

Consequently, the poem unearths and performs sorrows associated with trauma in an effort to represent the unrepresentable barbarity of this murder.

In the final stanza of his meditation on Sabra and Shatila, Darwīsh utilizes repetition to indicate how slaughter has become commonplace in Palestinians' lives and a source of anticipatory lament in the future. As he writes,

And it is—Sea
 And it is—Land
 And it is—Clouds
 And it is—Blood
 And it is—Night
 And it is—Killing
 And it is—Saturday
 And she is—Sabra.

Sabra—the intersection of two streets on a body
 Sabra—the descent of a spirit down a stone
 And Sabra—is no one
 Sabra—is the identity of our time, forever.¹⁰⁵

ويكون—بحر
 ويكون—بر
 ويكون—غيم
 ويكون—دم
 ويكون—ليل
 ويكون—قتل
 ويكون—سبت
 وتكون—صبرا.

صبرا—تقاطع شارعين على جسد
 صبرا—نزول الروح في حجر
 وصبرا—لا احد
 صبرا—هوية عصرنا حتى الأبد.¹⁰⁶

105 Darwīsh, *Madīh al-zill al-'ālī*, 88–90.

106 Ibid. Interestingly, this line may also exhibit a play on the Arabic word for “patience” (صبر), and thus, in this verse, Darwīsh can additionally be suggesting that endurance of

By incorporating the repetition of the phrase “And it is” (“*wa yakūn*”), the poet focuses on what is, or what he may observe and take for granted as being a part of his natural environment, such as the “Sea” (“*bahru*”), “Land” (“*barru*”), and “Clouds” (“*ghaymu*”). However, along with the elements of his surroundings that would be expected, Darwīsh also lists “Blood” (“*damm*”) and “Killing” (“*qatlu*”), suggesting that among the everyday components that encompass Palestinian existence, death and mourning are other ordinary and predictable elements.

This point is driven home and acquires speculative resonances in Darwīsh's final line about Sabra being “the identity of our time, forever” (هوية عصرنا حتى) ... (الأبد).¹⁰⁷ His primordial statement illuminates the ways in which the Sabra and Shatila Massacre is part of an extant narrative and archive of Palestinian dispossession and loss. More precisely, Darwīsh enumerates the names of earlier massacres in his poem, along with the present one, to represent how they perpetuate “Ṣabrā/Kafir Qāsim/Dayr Yāsīn/Shātīlā!” (صبرا، كفر قاسم، دير ياسين، شاتيلا!).¹⁰⁸ Hence, the gravity of September 1982 is realized as part of a continuum. In Montgomery's terms, this “enumeration of erstwhile dwellings” alerts the reader to the poet's despair.¹⁰⁹ Though, in addition to summoning past losses and catastrophes within Palestinian history for elegiac lament, Darwīsh expounds that this reality is also projected into the future. He not only exposes how ethnic cleansing and massacres have become everlasting and routine aspects of Palestinian experience, but Darwīsh also unveils an essential component of trauma—that massacres, such as the one that took place in Beirut in 1982—have “known beginnings but no endings.”¹¹⁰ Related to this discussion on the abiding effects of atrocity, in Palestinian art, Gil Hochberg detects

hardship is also an aspect of the Palestinians' time, forever.

107 Darwīsh, *Madīh al-zill al-ālī*, 90.

108 Darwīsh, *Madīh al-zill al-ālī*, 66. Darwīsh conjures past tragedies in order to contextualize the severity of the Palestinians' current moment. Such invocations of the past are echoed in the Arabic press from September 1982. In *Al-Ittihād*, the oldest Arab media outlet in Israel, which is also owned by the Maki Communist Party, one of the headlines from the September 21, 1982 paper reads, “Min Deir Yāsīn ilā Bayrūt ātfāl dhabhū fī āhḍān ummahātihim” (“From Deir Yassin to Beirut, Children Slaughtered in their Mother's Arms”). Relatedly, the Arab daily newspaper, *Al-Liwa*, which is headquartered in Amman, Jordan, draws a similar comparison between the 1948 massacre and the one in 1982. In *Al-Liwa*'s September 22, 1982 issue, one headline reads: “Madhbāḥah Bayrūt āmtidād limadhbaḥah Deir Yāsīn” (“Slaughter of Beirut Extends Slaughter of Deir Yassin”). *Al-Ittihād*, September 21, 1982 (microfilm), National Library of Israel, Jerusalem, Israel; *Al-Liwa*, September 22, 1982, Jordan (Print Catalog), *Al-Liwa*, 1972–1995, Arabic Press Archives, The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

109 Montgomery, “Dichotomy in Jāhili Poetry,” 11.

110 Al-Hout, *Sabra and Shatila: September 1982*, 4.

the “return of the repressed, a projection of the past into the future mediated and weighed down by the impact of continual trauma.”¹¹¹ In becoming part of Palestinians’ consciousness, Darwīsh exhibits how the memory of Sabra and Shatila and “*shabaḥ al-iḥtilāl*” (“the ghost of the occupation”) in Lebanon will both live on through their haunting presence, and endure.¹¹²

Fadwā Ṭūqān’s “Waḥshah mustalhamah min qānūn al-jādhbiyyah”

As with Darwīsh’s final disquieting verses in *Madīḥ al-zill al-‘ālī*, which foreground the Palestinians’ speculative mourning after the massacre in 1982, Ṭūqān’s 2002 poem, “Waḥshah mustalhamah min qānūn al-jādhbiyyah” (“Longing Inspired by the Law of Gravity”), revisits similar themes of loss in a later period. If “Lan abkī” exemplifies the height of Ṭūqān’s oeuvre as a resistance poet, her 2002 poem epitomizes the culmination of her career. In comparing these three compositions from 1968, 1983, and 2002, one can recognize how iterations of grief become increasingly proleptic over time.

Following the failure of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the summit at Camp David in July 2000, Ṭūqān’s disenchantment is palpable in her later poem. That is, in “Waḥshah mustalhamah min qānūn al-jādhbiyyah,” which was written in Nablus during the ongoing violence and volatility of the Second *Intifāḍah*, Ṭūqān further elucidates an expression of lament that is anticipatory—and one that is specific to characterizing the Palestinians’ fragility in time and space. While other Palestinian poets, such as Darwīsh, poetically document experiences of insecurity during the Second *Intifāḍah*, Ṭūqān’s short lyrical poem notably unsettles and discomforts her readers, advancing elegiac sentiments of proleptic mourning amid destruction.¹¹³

Ṭūqān was galvanized as a resistance poet after the 1967 War, and she continued to compose verses memorializing the lost homeland, as well as detailing the heroism and sacrifices of fellow Palestinian women.¹¹⁴ However, in “Waḥshah mustalhamah min qānūn al-jādhbiyyah,” a work she completed before her death, Ṭūqān writes plaintively about the Palestinians’ loss of permanence and stability. While in “Lan abkī,” she summons the ruins of former abodes, and in *Madīḥ al-zill al-‘ālī*, Darwīsh grieves Beirut’s bombardment and the death of innocent Palestinian and Lebanese victims, in this poem, Ṭūqān

111 Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine*, 84.

112 Khūrī, *Zaman al-Iḥtilāl*, 1985.

113 See Darwīsh’s 2002 book-length poem, *Hālat ḥiṣār* (*State of Siege*).

114 See Fadwā Ṭūqān, *Al-Laḥn al-Akhīr* (Amman, al-Urdun: Dār al-Shurūq, 2000); Fadwā Ṭūqān, “Al-Nawras wa al-nafī al-nafī,” *Al-‘māl al-shi‘rīyah al-kāmilah* (Ammān: Al-Mu’assasah Al-‘Arabīyah Lil-Dirāsāt Wa-Al-Nashr, 1993), 495–496. (“Al-Nawras wa al-nafī al-nafī” was originally published in 1987).

mourns time itself. The vulnerability that Ṭūqān represents during the second Palestinian uprising is exemplified in her opening lines:

Time ran away and I am home alone with the shadow that I cast
 Gone is the law of the universe, scattered by frivolous fate
 Nothing to hold down my things
 Nothing to weigh them to the floor
 My possessions have flown, they belong to others
 My chair, my cupboard, the revolving stool¹¹⁵

ركض الوقت وخلفني وحدي مع ظلي في الدار
 القانون الكوني تلاشى، بدده عبثُ الأقدار
 لا جاذب يمسك امتعتي ويشد بها في أرض الدار
 طارت أمتعتي، صارت مُلكاً يملكه الأغيار
 طار المقعد، طار خواني، طار الكرسيُّ الدوّار¹¹⁶

In her first utterance, Ṭūqān proclaims, “*rakaḍa al-waqt*” (“time ran away”), showing how time is elusive, dictated and determined by the Palestinians’ daily unrest. There is nothing to fasten her belongings. Without the assurance of gravity, all is subject to being lost and suspended, “scattered by frivolous fate” (بدده عبثُ الأقدار). In these verses, Ṭūqān reflects upon the ways in which isolation and precarity animate banal, ordinary experience, and how the Palestinians have remained “out of place” and “out of time.”¹¹⁷

As historian Elias Sanbar recounts, after their ethnic cleansing in 1948, the Palestinians’

history and ... past were denied. Their aspirations and their future were forbidden ... [T]hey found themselves trapped in an ephemeral dimension, and for half a century they would live in limbo, achieving a very special relationship with the concept of duration.¹¹⁸

115 Ṭūqān, “Waḥshah mustalhamah min qānūn al-jādhbiyyah” (*al-Karmal*, 72–73, 2002): 19. I’ve offered minor revisions to Chris Millis’ and Tania Tamari Nasir’s English translation published in “Words Without Borders,” November 2006, <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/longing-inspired-by-the-law-of-gravity>.

116 Ṭūqān, “Waḥshah mustalhamah,” 19.

117 Sanbar, “Out of Place, Out of Time.”

118 *Ibid.*, 90

This sensation of spatial and temporal dispossession is directly explored in Ṭūqān's poem, in which she illustrates how with the disappearance of gravity and time—the very laws that the poet depends upon for physically and meta-physically situating herself in space—she is left in a condition of upheaval. Along with Israel's military incursions and occupation of the West Bank in 2002, after fifty years of exile, the devastation of numerous catastrophes, setbacks, and defeats saturate Ṭūqān's poem.

If in "Lan abkī," Ṭūqān can be reassured that her feet are planted in her nation (ارزع ... قديمي في وطني) and in her land (*fī arḍī*), along with her fellow poets and Palestinian people, her 2002 poem adopts an alternative schema.¹¹⁹ In this work, Ṭūqān does not merely commemorate the past, but she regards the Palestinians' trauma that continues. As she avers, her experience is "nothing but loneliness and affliction" (لا شيء سوى الوحشة والغم), "and the rubble of months, and years" (وركام الأشهر والأعوام).¹²⁰ In essence, the Palestinians' dislocation and statelessness do not only define their history and influence the present, but this condition of anguish, loneliness, and longing ("*waḥshah*") perseveres to inform the poet's conceptions about the future.¹²¹

This melancholic tone and mode of speculative mourning is perilously felt in Ṭūqān's culminating verses, in which she writes about her existential apprehensions,

I'm afraid of tomorrow
 I'm afraid of the unknowable resources of fate ...
 I wait to arrive where the land is silent, I'm waiting for death
 Long has been my journey O God
 Make the path short and the journey end¹²²

أخشى الغد، أخشى المجهول الآتي من غيب الأقدار ...
 انتظر بلوغي أرض الصمت | انتظر الموت
 طالت دربي يا ربي قصرها واختصر المشوار¹²³

119 Ṭūqān, "Lan abkī," 398.

120 Ṭūqān, "Waḥshah mustalhamah," 19.

121 For more on "*waḥshah*" as an expression of loneliness, see Tarek El-Ariss, "Return of the Beast: From Pre-Islamic Ode to Contemporary Novel," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 47, no. 1–2 (July 2016): 62–90.

122 Ibid., 20. The translation of these verses is found at "Words Without Borders," November 2006, <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/longing-inspired-by-the-law-of-gravity>.

123 Ṭūqān, "Waḥshah mustalhamah," 20.

Ṭūqān's despondent concluding lines portray her consternation. The insecurity of Palestinian experience since *al-Nakbah* in 1948 has left an indelible mark—preparing the community for ongoing disaster and grief. As is customary in the *rithā'* genre, the poet calls upon death in order to ritually perform the pathos of lament. While one can read Ṭūqān's anxieties as a manner of individual rumination in the final years of her life, they also exhibit how Palestinian experience, which has been defined by perpetual rupture, has led to an endless manifestation of loss, and sobering meditations about what is to come.

As Sophia Azeb articulates about Palestinian reality,

It is not only our bodies and communities thrust into placelessness. Our thoughts and opinions have also been scattered and forced to wander. We and our ways of knowing ourselves and the world after disaster wander still, an entire diaspora unmoored, as diaspora is always an unmooring.¹²⁴

Hence, by 2002, following the disillusionment of the Oslo Accords and as Ṭūqān is entrenched in the violence of the Second *Intifāḍah* in the occupied West Bank, she offers solemn premonitions about the Palestinians' future. In so doing, she accents another iteration of devastation that becomes conjectured. While “Lan abkī,” *Madīḥ al-zill al-‘ālī*, and “Waḥshah mustalhamah min qānūn al-jādhbiyyah” each allow for forward-facing contemplation, such a means of imagining in the later poems exposes the ways in which the Palestinians' catastrophe lives on. Ṭūqān and Darwīsh write elegies that depart from the more traditional pre-Islamic Arabic template. Particularly, in their works written on the 1982 War and the Second *Intifāḍah*, they do not only ache for the losses that have already taken place, and which persist in the present, but the poets also lament for those that await—for the shadow (*zill*) that is cast, that continues to lurk, and which they anticipate for tomorrow.

Conclusion

By incorporating features from the Arabic poetic tradition, and specifically, the *rithā'* genre from the pre-Islamic and early Islamic age, Fadwā Ṭūqān and Maḥmūd Darwīsh showcase innovative ways of lyrically chronicling Palestinian loss and thinking about the future. While writing and documenting their experiences between the 1967 June War and the Second *Intifāḍah*, they demonstrate how the Palestinian *qaṣīdah* becomes a medium for both proleptic *ṣumūd* and sorrow. Notwithstanding the destruction for her community,

124 Azeb, “Who Will We Be When We Are Free? On Palestine and Futurity,” 23.

Ṭūqān's "Lan abkī" affirms hopeful images and resonances, encouraging her fellow Palestinians to remain resilient. In comparison, Darwīsh's *Madiḥ al-zill al-ʿālī* is animated by feelings of abandonment in a besieged city in 1982, and "Waḥshah mustalhamah min qānūn al-jādhbiyyah" conveys a doleful tone about the loss of time and the experience of being unmoored in a post-Oslo Palestine. These more recent works from 1983 and 2002 demonstrate the ways in which the *qaṣīdah*, as well as literature of remembrance and mourning, may not only be deployed to commemorate the past, and reflect upon the present, but also to predict and perform distressing sentiments about the future.

Although published decades before contemporary studies on Palestinian futurity, Ṭūqān's and Darwīsh's poems can be read in conversation with recent developments in the field. Scholars such as Hoda El-Shakry, Gil Hochberg, and Sophia Azeb have explored both the possibilities and impossibilities associated with Palestinian literature and art that reenvisage "Palestine through speculative modes of ideational, narrative, and material world-building."¹²⁵ While this paper is exclusively focused on poetry and poetics, Ṭūqān's and Darwīsh's literary interventions of speculation and temporal disruption, as well as their calls for survival, relate to other futurist projects and decolonial struggles, such as Afrofuturism in Black studies.¹²⁶ As El Shakry observes, like Palestinian futurism, which responds to experiences of dispossession, Afrofuturist works "shed critical light on the historical legacies of enslavement, colonialism, and settler occupation, as well as their present-day rearticulations."¹²⁷

In addition to Montgomery's dichotomous paradigm of *muruwwah* and sadness, the Afrofuturism and Afropessimism binary in contemporary Black studies elucidates uplifting and despondent imaginaries about the future. This conceptual framing similarly conjures emotions of hope and despair, unveiling what religious scholar William David Hart describes as a "black mood" of "empowering joyful affects and disempowering sad affects."¹²⁸ In response to the oppressive legacies and "afterlives of slavery," as well as ongoing racial violence, Black authors have envisioned both heartening and devastating portents

125 El Shakry, "Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible," 681.

126 See Hannun, "Afro, Indigenous, and Palestinian Futurisms." Also see David William Hart, "Afterlives of Slavery: Afrofuturism and Afropessimism as Parallax Views," *Black Theology* 19, no. 3 (2021): 196–206.

127 El Shakry, "Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible," 688.

128 Hart, "Afterlives of Slavery: Afrofuturism and Afropessimism as Parallax Views," 196. For further discussion on Afropessimism, see Frank B. Wilderson III, *Afropessimism* (Liveright Publishing, 2020).

for the future.¹²⁹ As scholar Alex Lubin suggests, there is an “overlapping history of dispossession in the face of modern nationalism” that Palestinian and Black people share.¹³⁰ By identifying connections between proleptic mourning in Palestinian poetics, and forward-facing contemplation in the fields of Afrofuturism and Afropessimism, we may discern further avenues of inquiry for how these strains of literary production and scholarship may be thought productively together. Locating generative comparative openings between Palestinian and Black literature invites additional investigations and continued reflection on how these interdisciplinary comparisons may yield political and poetical imaginaries for both liberation and lament.

In our appraisal of Darwīsh's and Ṭūqān's verses, we can recognize how classical literary conventions are utilized in distinct contemporary moments for political means. Given the apprehensions that accompany the *Nakbah's* abiding nature, the poets consider the disquietude that awaits. Responding to the dire situation in Palestine, they look ahead with trepidation and spotlight their fragility. Death and dehumanization in the past and present inform projections for tomorrow. Darwīsh and Ṭūqān do not accept the trauma that their community endures as normal or expected, but they long for an alternative way of being and for a better world. Despite the pessimism permeating their verses, the poets mobilize the *rithā'*, and write elegiacally about the future, in order to call for political change. Poignantly, they reveal that even though much has already been lost for the Palestinian people—there remains much at stake—as there is still much to lose.

129 Hart, “Afterlives of Slavery: Afrofuturism and Afropessimism as Parallax Views,” 196.

130 Alex Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro-Arab Political Imaginary* (The University of North Carolina Press/Chapel Hill, 2014), 174.