

THE ENDING IN PALESTINIAN POETRY

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This study focuses on endings in Arabic poetry in Israel, especially the “poetry of resistance” which I limit to the 1950s and 1960s, except for Maḥmūd Darwīš’s Maṭār Aṭīnā (Athens Airport), which is used for comparison and for changes in form and content of this poetic genre in the works of four poets who left a lasting impression on the development of Arabic poetry in Israel: Ḥannā Abū Ḥannā, Tawfīq Zayyād, Samīḥ al-Qāsim and Maḥmūd Darwīš. The ending of a literary text is what remains in the reader’s mind. The endings, as an artistic form in the “poem of resistance”, which involve words such as “struggle”, “defiance” and “attachment to the soil”, are a fundamental element of their construction through their reflection of the objective context of the “poetry of resistance” which constitutes its extra-textual environment and which is expressed through a variety of styles, direct speech, invocations and more.

1.1 «All things have a beginning and an end» is a saying deeply ingrained in human culture. The end is a concept that refers to both time and place. At the end of human life, the question of “What comes afterwards?” takes on great importance.

Endings in literary texts have a special impact as the last stage in making the meaning of a discourse manifest; it is also the last thing that is seen and retained in the mind. It is the moment when the world of the text and the world of the reader go their separate ways. Early Arabic literary criticism was already aware of the vital importance of endings to a literary text. Ibn Rašīq says: «The closing words remain more than others in hearing, and adhere most to the mind, because they are most closely attended to, so that if they are good, [the work] is good and if they are ugly, so is [the work as a whole]. Works [are judged] by what seals them» (al-Qayrawānī 2006: 161)¹. Endings are thus one of the most important elements that give a literary text its cohesiveness. Both critics and rhetoricians have spoken of its importance: «As for the ending, it is the foundation of the poem, what remains last in hearing, and the path to its perfection: it cannot be added to and nothing better can follow it; if the beginning of a poem is its key, then its ending is the lock» (al-Qayrawānī 2006: 198). The ending, more than any other part, is what causes an impression of beauty or ugliness and is the final thing in the

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¹ See also ‘Azzām (s.d.: 151) and Ibn Manzūr (1992: *ḥ t m*).

text that can persuade the reader to agree with the position the poet intended to convey. An inferior ending can affect the entire text and extinguish the effect which preceding images may have aroused. al-‘Alawī stresses this fact: «Every eloquent person should end his words, whatever his object, with the best possible ending, because that is the last thing that remains in hearing. That is why he, may he rest in peace, said ‘works [are judged] by what seals them’, for the seal in all things is what shores up its good qualities and the purpose of its perfection» (al-‘Alawī 2002: v. 3, 104).

In modern Arabic literature a distinction has been made between “ending” and “closure”; the former refers to the point in the text where the act of reading comes to an end, while the latter marks where this act was switched off, even if it had not actually come to an end. The lexical relation between the two may be expressed with the phrase: «It has ended, but is not yet finished» (Taha 2002: 261)².

Closure depends on the reader, while the ending depends on the author: «Although the term ‘closure’ to a certain extent contains the term ‘ending’, we must not search for closure only at the literary text’s ‘official’ ending, because the discussion of closure means discussing every part of the work of literature, from beginning to end» (Taha 1998/1999: 2).

Torgovnick defines “ending” as «the last unit in a literary work, such as a stanza, scene, chapter, page or sentence» (Torgovnick 1981: 6). According to Forster, «what all readers have in common is a desire to know what happens next» (Forster 1962: 4). The definition of “ending” is associated with the terms “resolution” and “shutting off” all levels of the text from the succession of events, even in the case of “open endings”, which leave open different possibilities of resolution (Golzeman 1987: 62).

A story usually ends where the text does. However, this is only one possibility for a writer because the text is his, and he is not obliged to make the last event also the end of the plot. The ending can thus be located elsewhere on the axis of a continuous narrative (Golzeman 1987: 7-13).

Golzeman proposed the concept of “final cluster”, which consists of three main types of ending-frames: The “frame of events”, the “psychological frames” (of the figures), and the “thematic frames” interspersed in the narrative. The ending as a cluster of different frames is easier to characterize with greater precision³. At the end of the text the reader recalls all its basic components. The ending is thus central to the understanding of a literary work and the foundation on which its creative structure is built. A text can be read in reverse, from the ending to the beginning.

² See also Qasīs (2003: 5).

³ Golzeman proposes the following types of ending: 1. End of the plot appearing at the end of the text; 2. End of the plot appearing at the beginning of the text; 3. End of the plot appearing in the middle of the text; 4. Dispersed ending; and 5. Multiple endings (Golzeman 1987: 14).

Two terms associated with texts have a connection with closure: “closed” and “open” texts. Eco distinguishes between “closed texts”, which are inflexible and open to multiple meanings, and “open texts”, which are clear and direct: «By ‘open text’ he means a text which the writer addresses to a specific reader and which possesses a well-defined temporal meaning. However this is why, in his opinion, it can be given consecutive new interpretations; it is in this sense that it is ‘open’. But a closed text has no specific well-defined meaning, such as spy novels and cartoons, which in his view have only a single interpretation and are therefore ‘closed’» (‘Inānī 1966: 65). An open closure in this sense points to the writer’s desire to let the reader participate in constructing the general meaning of the literary work (Taha 1998/1999: 6).

It may therefore be said that the ending is the antecedent stage of a literary work, while the closure is the subsequent stage: «Determining the ending is merely a means by which one can speak about the closure» (Taha 2002: 260), a point of departure for understanding the text. The ending may point to a direct, or adjacent or contrastive meaning; the latter one is the best type, because it allows the reader to construct the meaning of the work.

Endings can be open, closed or circular. According to Torgovnick, circularity in the ending may evoke a closed closure, «because of the circle’s closed nature. However, while this may be a fact of geometry, it is not always the case in the domain of literary texts» (Torgovnick 1981: 6).

The reader is entrusted with numerous tasks as part of the operation of interpretation: «Among the important proposals that have been made concerning the role of the reader and understanding the closure we find one which Ibrāhīm Ṭāhā formulated under the title of ‘post-ending activity’, a term which he uses to denote the creative activity of the reader as he begins to end the reading operation» (Qasīs 2003: 27). In this connection he defines four types of endings and closures:

1. *Open ending and open closure*, in which the reader plays a powerful role.
2. *Closed ending and open closure*, in which the ending is indeterminate and misleading. A profound analysis of the ending reveals that it is not as it seemed at first glance.
3. *Open ending and closed closure*, in which the reader receives a misleading impression and is led to believe that the ending is open but lacking some necessary information.
4. *Closed ending and closed closure*, in which the reader is relieved of most of the functions that he has in the previous types. Instead of defining and interpreting the ending, and instead of being an active interpreter, he is satisfied with his limited role of passive consumer (Taha 1998/1999: 7-21).

The reader’s position in the case of an open ending is thus more powerful than in the case of a closed ending (Taha 2002: 271). But the reader always

has room to interpret: «Any work of literature, however closed, bears within itself the concept of openness by the mere fact that it enables the reader, however slightly, to be active after the ending» (Qasīs 2003: 28). Such an opening is explained in Iser's Gap Theory (Iser 1990: 40), which is also connected to the horizon of expectations. That is to say, the system of expectations that accompanies the reader from the moment he begins reading the text is of great importance, although according to Jauss it does not in any way create the meaning of a work of literature (Selden & Widdowson 1993: 53).

As for poetry, Barbara Smith asks: «What is it that makes a poem end?» (Smith 1968: 4). The ending is a refined signal that a poem is finished. It possesses an expressive value that is manifested at the level where structure and meaning are joined.

The Iraqi poetess Nāzik al-Malā'ikah (1923-2007), a pioneer of free verse in Arabic poetry, has a different view of what an ending involves: «From my acquaintance with the styles that poets use to end their free-verse works I believe that they feel, perhaps without being aware of it, that in free verse it is difficult to stop the natural flow, and therefore they use unacceptable formal devices in order to overcome that difficulty» (al-Malā'ikah 1983: 43). She attributes the operation of ending as performed by these poets to causes that lie outside the poem's structure (al-Malā'ikah 1983: 46).

I do not agree with al-Malā'ikah's approach, because the reasons for which a poet ends a poem have to do with its overall structure; the ending can be judged based on its formal context and its overall content. In the present study we hypothesize that the ending of a "poem of resistance" is closed and has only one meaning: optimism. The reason for this is that such poems have an ideological rather than an artistic message, although this does not prevent the poet from using a variety of stylistic devices to attain his objective. To borrow Ibrāhīm Ṭāhā's model, we may say that the ending of "poems of resistance" are of the fourth type, *closed ending and closed closure* and that the closed ending has a clear message, namely optimism.

1.2 In the present study the poetry of resistance refers to Arabic poetry composed after 1948 in Israel with the focus mainly on the 1950s and 1960s, a period that affected the evolution of Arabic poetry in the country in both form and content. The shock of the Arab defeat and its consequences caused the writers who remained, mainly in the countryside, to shape a national cultural identity within the Communist Party which derived its legitimacy from its popular base and its rationalist approach to resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Ġālī Šukrī has called this type of poetry «the poetry of opposition» (*šī'r al-mu'āraḍah*) (Šukrī 1970: 371)⁴. Arabic poetry inside Israel reflects two basic ideologies, Palestinian nationalism and Communism

⁴ Shiloh (1974: 50).

(Qanāzi' 1989: 129). According to Shmuel Moreh, the evolution of this poetry reflects the political attitude of the poets towards the state (Moreh 1997: 138-143).

Apparently the earliest writer on this topic⁵ was Ġassān Kanafānī (1936-1972). In his *Adab al-muqāwamah fī Filasṭīn al-muḥtallah* (The Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine, 1966), he refers to circumstantial material factors that constricted the evolution of poetry after the *Nakbah* (Kanafānī 1966: 38-39)⁶:

After 1952 the Jewish newspapers, that were led to believe that three years of love poetry proved something, were surprised by the fundamental qualitative change that began to take place in the letters that they received after they announced that they were prepared to publish any poetic output of the Arabs of the occupied land. As a result, the Jewish newspapers decided not to publish any such nationalist works. So the Arabs began to organize poetry evenings in the villages. These were always enthusiastically welcomed, and would turn into nationalist demonstrations. After most of the Arab poets who participated in these evenings were summoned time and again to be interrogated by the military rulers of their towns, an order was issued that such evenings were to be forbidden (Kanafānī 1966: 50-51)⁷.

Folk gatherings, which became an alternative when Arabic books published in Israel could not be widely disseminated, constituted popular encounters that fulfilled a number of functions, and as a means of communication between people about the problems they faced. Military rule transformed Arab society in the country into isolated camps, with restrictions on the freedom of movement, a basic condition for human dignity. Adherence to the soil and to history therefore constituted the safeguard of the Arab national minority in Israel: «Resistance poetry is characterized by the two important foundations on which it stands: the soil and history. These are two external foundations that are fundamentally based on a personal understanding that can never clash with the spirit of the collective» (Ṭāhā 2004: 36)⁸.

⁵ Shiloh claims that the earliest discussion of Arabic poetry in Israel was by the Jordanian critic Ibrāhīm Abū Nāb at the end of 1965 (Shiloh 1974: 48).

⁶ On the effects of the *Nakbah* see also Snir (1990: 244).

⁷ He adds: «In 1959 the *al-Arḍ* organization began to print a publication, exploiting an Israeli law that permitted any citizen to produce one publication annually without the need for a permission from the 'department of publications'». *al-Arḍ* produced thirteen publications in 1959, printed under different names: *al-Arḍ* (The Land), *Šaḍā al-arḍ* (The Fragrance of the Land), *Šarḥat al-arḍ* (The Cry of the Land), *Dam al-arḍ* (The Blood of the Land), *Rūḥ al-arḍ* (The Spirit of the Land) (Kanafānī 1966: 55-56).

⁸ Ḥannā Abū Ḥannā described the resistance in the 1950s as follows: «Our masses, imprisoned by the fetters of military rule and threats of uprooting, had a need for a horizon it could see and for hope in the soul so that it could bear the cross with courage, patience and faith. I can summarize the position which supported this objective as follows: A. Confirmation that we are in the right, that our faith in our

al-Ġayyūsī points to the effect which the *Nakbah* had on local literature:

The evolution of Palestinian literature at the esthetic level reflects the overall evolution in the great literary centers of the Arab world. The massive emigration of residents of Palestine in 1948 exposed the poets and writers in the dispersion to new influences that eventually accelerated the development of their art more than it had for most of their co-nationals who remained on the soil of Palestine or what came to be known as Israel. But Palestinian writers, whether outside or inside Israel, went through a state of great confusion after the catastrophe of 1948. They needed time in order to return to themselves and renew their exhausting creative path. However, by the middle of the 1950s Palestinian writers, especially in the dispersion, appear to have overcome their primary shock and renewed their activity with vitality and determination. A number of poets and story writers even attained some notoriety and some of them in fact became pioneers in poetic creativity and narrative innovation (al-Ġayyūsī 1997: 47).

Such a rapid overview cannot depict more than the general features of Palestinian poetry in the 1950s and 1960s, while pointing out that the political environment played a very great role in the evolution of poetry. However, we should also not ignore the serious role that poetic criticism played through the journal “al-Ġadīd”⁹, which focused on the esthetics of form without re-

right gives us the strength to defend our threatened existence and being, and that through this faith we sharpen our determination and unify our force; B. Seeing the connection between our struggle here and the struggle of peoples everywhere for liberation, realization of rights and progress; every victory by the liberation movements around the world participates in the victory of our affair; C. Confirmation of our Arab identity; this decade has produced shining examples of summits of Arab struggle, beginning with the Free Officers’ Revolution in Egypt in 1952, the Algerian revolution of 1954 (until 1962), the nationalization of the Suez Canal, the Iraqi Revolution of 1958 and the unification of Egypt and Syria; D. Striving to find allies among the Jewish masses who sympathize with our struggle against attempts to expropriate and steal the land, against the oppression of military rule and against all manifestations of racism» (Abū Ḥannā 1994: 112-113).

⁹ Ġanā’im summarizes the evolution of the critical movement as follows: «The criticism movement that was activated through “al-Ġadīd” went through a number of phases and changes in the course of that journal’s fifty years of existence. The elements of this movement that deserve study are countless. Among the topics that stand out when looking at the indices of the various issues is the identity which colored the critics throughout “al-Ġadīd”’s life. Thus, for example, the critics who were active in the 1950s were characterized by the following: A. Most of them were local, such as Emile Tūmā, Emile Ḥabībī, Tawfiq Ṭūbī, Ġabrā Niqūlā and others; B. As the names show, these were critics who were also involved in politics and attempted to guide writers from a political perspective. Their contributions to the journal were therefore made with clearly political motives in mind; C. Jewish critics emerged as well, new immigrants, mainly from Iraq; D. The critics were interested in translations from Russian literature and critical theory» (Ġanā’im 2004: *Introduction*).

nouncing the national content of the poem as a compass that shaped the cultural identity of Palestinian Arabs in Israel. The themes of holding out, defending the geography of place and the culture of Palestinians as persons were important components of the poems of resistance. Below we shall inquire into the dialectical relationship between form and content in the endings of resistance poems, based on the preceding discussion on the concept of ending in a literary text.

1.3 The study will deal with a selection of poems composed by poets who left a clear imprint on the poetry of resistance in the 1950s and 1960s¹⁰: Ḥannā Abū Ḥannā (b. 1928), Tawfīq Zayyād (1929-1994), Samīḥ al-Qāsim (1939-2014) and Maḥmūd Darwīš (1941-2008). I shall attempt to clarify the substantive and stylistic characteristics of the endings of these poems. It should first be noted that many of the poems were originally written for reading aloud at poetry festivals. Since the ending is the last part of what is heard, it is only natural that it will contain rhetorical stylistic devices. We hypothesize that this was the case, based on our analysis of various poems composed in the period under discussion. The analysis will focus at times on the poem's ending and at others on the relationship between the ending and the beginning of the poem, its title, or even with the poem as a whole, thus providing us with a more comprehensive picture.

1.3.1 Ḥannā Abū Ḥannā's collection *Nidā' al-ḡirāḥ* (Call of the Wounds, 1969) contains an optimistic ending in resistance poetry. The title, which is connected with the ending, and that appears before the reading, remains in the mind during the reading, and does not attain its meaning before the ending is reached. This forces the reader to correct his calculations and give up his initial conjecture if it proves incorrect. The word «call» points to the sound or call for help associated with the wound. In fact, most of the endings of the poems in this collection are connected to sound as a structural motif.

The poem *Ḥikāyat ša' b* (Story of a People) ends with the lines:

For I love you, my people, I pledged my life to sacrifice
 What is the love of my people but the love of myself, how can I oblige it and
 what is my virtue?
 How many lovers has passion tormented, how many martyrs loved a pretty girl?
 How does freedom flow abundantly on the freedom lover's people?
 Whoever does not undergo the torment of love, his pretensions are fake, feeble.
 How many lovers claimed love but used it to conceal their cowardice in a
 corner? (Abū Ḥannā 2008: 374)

¹⁰ With the exception of Maḥmūd Darwīš; in his case I analyze a poem, *Maṭār Aṭīnā* (Athens Airport), written in the 1980s, as evidence for the evolution of the resistance poem.

The first two lines are the introduction, making the ending circular and giving it a definitive meaning. The word «story» in the title also points to sound as the means by which the poet conveys his realistic depiction of what happened to his people. Speech in the metaphorical sense becomes a continuation of existence or a confirmation of it. The poet uses confirmation and negation, question and condition in the stanza above. These devices emphasize his determination to cling onto the homeland. Furthermore the rhyme that ends in a consonant and the use of a “silent *h*” in some words (*ša biyyah*, *faḍliyyah*) may point to certainty in judgment. At the level of content the poet mingles sacrifice, love and passion. The use of the verb *naḍartu* (I pledged) with its religious connotations points to his willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of freedom. The poem ends with a conditional sentence which also indicates certainty, since the transfer of the love of spirit and body to the love of a people necessarily involves an admixture of the individual with the collective.

In the poem *al-Ard* the poet addresses his homeland directly, prompting it and depicting the desired objective:

My homeland... O fight of my father's people whom events have taught the meaning of heroism
My country... O flame from eyes watching for the dawn, wishing for its quick arrival (Abū Ḥannā 2008: 382).

Here the poet uses generalized and summary speech or what may be called external speech, based on the lexicon of the resistance which recurs in the words of all the poets: «my homeland», «fight», «heroism», «my country», «flame» and «dawn».

The poem *Ṭifl min ša 'bī* (A Child of My People) begins as follows:

Behind the bars, a forehead appears in the window
Like the crescent moon, a honeyed child
A boy shining brightly
Like fresh mint, like basil with a gentle fragrance (Abū Ḥannā 2008: 392).

Here the poet depicts a child as a model for imitation. The description includes most of the senses: sight («the crescent moon», «shining»), touch («like fresh mint», «gentle») and smell («like basil with a [...] fragrance»). He also draws descriptions from nature in his country. The poem ends with a voice:

A call: Never fear them
Be brave, do not be afraid of anyone
Remain steadfast, for to the steadfast is victory (Abū Ḥannā 2008: 398)¹¹.

¹¹ See also the poems *Ša 'b anā* (I am a People) in which he says: «I am a people, if they imprison an individual the entire people will rise up / If a poet is fettered the hymn will be shouted by every poet / A people whose masses extend a bridge over the river of massacres / and embraces the dawn burning with light and glad tidings»

The request in this poem is addressed by the younger person/a child to the older one/the poet, conveying the message that the fight is continuous through the use of repetition and negation, ending in a kind of maxim, «for to the steadfast is victory». In Abū Ḥannā's poems the closure is definite, certain and oratorical, mobilizing the senses and using styles in which exclamation, negation, affirmation, condition and other stylistic devices combine to produce a sense of optimism, based on the motif of the oral tale, pointing to voice as a symbol in resisting the occupation.

1.3.2 Tawfīq Zayyād¹² differs from Abū Ḥannā in that the poems of the former are more fiery in nature, perhaps because his political commitment dominated his esthetic project.

In his collection *Ašuddu 'alā ayādīkum* (I Press Your Hands), in the poem *Uḥibbu wa lākin* (I Love You but) he says:

Be defiant o people whom I love
 Wait patiently for your turn
 Put the sun between your eyes
 And steel in your nerves
 Your arms will fulfill the most beautiful dreams
 Will produce the most wonderful wonders (Zayyād n.d.: 101).

The poet addresses his words to all people, urging them to be patient and defiant. His language («Put the sun between your eyes / And steel in your nerves») is close to the colloquial, an important feature of Zayyād's poems, which are mobilized for his ideology. The speech is addressed to the collective and requires an audience; the request it expresses only exists if there are people present to hear the speech. The speech is thus yet another device for arousing the fervor of the receiver and for conveying the poet's message. The speech also holds a promise, and thus connects the painful present with the dream. His poem *Min warā' al-quḍbān* (From behind Bars) begins as follows:

Cast chains on chains
 For a chain is weaker than my arms
 I have the love of my people

(Abū Ḥannā 2008: 402); *Yā ihwatī* (O My Brethren): «O my brethren / O procession of the free towards the happy dawn / who were driven away / but did not imprison my hymn / but lit the fire of the poem» (Abū Ḥannā 2008: 408); *Nidā' al-ḡirāḥ* (written in 1958, two years after the Kafr Qāsim massacre): «The road to consolation / standing shoulder to shoulder in solidarity / the call of the victims' spirits / let him who cares not run away!» (Abū Ḥannā 2008: 414). All the translations in the text is my translation except what I have indicated to be from other sources.

¹² Zayyād was born in 1929 in Nazareth. He belonged to the Communist Party and served as the elected mayor of Nazareth between 1975. He was a member of Knesset for the Communist Party.

And love of the struggle, and my defiance
 Determination flared up from my blood (Zayyād n.d.: 102-103).

Here the poet under occupation is defiant. He does not reject the chains, which he accepts with the love, the struggle and the defiance of his people. With this constant parallelism in resistance poetry the poet gives preponderance to defiance. The concept of strength and weakness is not subject to the logic of reality so much as to absolute right, in the poet's view. This is why the chains are weaker than the poet's arms.

In his poems he does not merely depict a hero; he turns himself into a defiant hero. The poem's ending is the same as its beginning, but the ending is closed, in the sense that it is expected, clear and certain:

Cast chains on chains
 Black, of cold iron
 My people will return in the sun's light
 From beyond the borders
 It will return to the destroyed ruins
 And will build them anew
 It will return to the beloved land
 To the lilies and the roses
 It will return
 Despite the fire and shackles
 With waving banners (Zayyād n.d.: 112)¹³.

The repetition of the verb «return» is associated geographically with a place which the poet depicts as beloved and stolen at one-and-the-same time. The symbolism of revival is a basic message in resistance poetry.

In the poem *bi-Asnānī* (With My Teeth) the poet confirms the warm relation between himself and his homeland, which he is prepared to defend with his teeth, because survival is at the heart of the poet's struggle:

With my teeth I'll protect
 Every inch of my homeland
 With my teeth.
 Nothing can replace the homeland for me
 Even if they would hang me
 With my own veins.
 I stay
 A prisoner of my love
 For the fence that surrounds my house
 For the dew on the bowing lily.
 I stay
 Unvanquished by all my crosses.
 I stay

¹³ Translation adapted from: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/i-call-to-you-all>.

I'll protect every inch of my homeland
 With my teeth (Zayyād n.d.: 129-131)¹⁴.

The poetic devices of repetition and distribution stress the poet's desire to stay in his homeland. The cyclic structure of the ending in the phrase «with my teeth» evokes the idea of continuous resistance. The use of simple words to describe the homeland («the fence that surrounds my house», «the dew on the bowing lily») conveys this identification. The speaker/hero in this context is more than just a single Messiah («Unvanquished by all my crosses»). The ending expresses determination to continue what he dedicated his life for. What characterizes Zayyād's poetry is his depiction and confrontations of the struggle on its own terms, derived from everyday reality.

1.3.3 In Samīh al-Qāsim's collection *Mawākib al-šams* (Processions of the Sun, 1958) opens with the poem of the same name:

The dawn of peoples looked over the day with a smile / We shall wash oppression from our horizons
 The processions of the sun have passed, shattering / the darkness of night against their crouching days
 We walked by it, guided by truth / and the sun became a flag for us in our advance (al-Qāsim 1991: 9).

This opening defines the overall atmosphere of the collection's poems, in which the dualism of light and darkness, the true and the false are used in clear expressions of optimism.

In the poem *Iṣrār* (Persistence) the title is connected with the ending. The equation of light and darkness is present in other endings of al-Qāsim's poems as well:

I stride towards the highest elevation / and light the paths for the free!
 (al-Qāsim 1991: 10)

The "I" here announces that it will do its utmost for the sake of freedom and sacrifice, beginning with likening itself to a candle that burns in order to light the way for the free. Whether he uses the first person singular or the plural, al-Qāsim's voice reflects the unity of the self and the collective.

In the very short poem *Inād* (Resistance),

With my fight
 With my blood, flowing
 From my wounds
 I will unsheathe my morning from the teeth of darkness
 My determination is the arena and my chest is my weapon!! (al-Qāsim 1991: 11)¹⁵,

¹⁴ Translation adapted from: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/with-my-teeth/>.

the wounds and the blood are transformed into fertile soil. The poem describes the fight between the unsheathed light and the teeth of darkness. The expression «from my wounds» is placed on a separate line separating the poem into two parts: what precedes it derives from it and what follows it confirms what will happen in future. In both parts the poet declares his determination to overcome even the laws of nature («my chest is my weapon»), as if sacrifice by itself constitutes challenge and victory. The frequency of the Arabic letter *ḥ* in this short poem is unusual; perhaps its form is meant to convey an open chest. Another letter that appears with high frequency is *alif* used to mark the long vowel *ā*, perhaps meant to symbolize the continuation of the act of sacrifice, or perhaps to provide a musical repetition of the voice.

The poem *al-Šā'ir al-saġīn* (The Imprisoned Poet) begins with the reality against which the poet rebels:

They put you in prison. But did they put you in prison? Can the radiance of dawn be strangled? (al-Qāsim 1991: 12).

The poem, typically for al-Qāsim and for resistance poetry in general, ends with a challenge and a look towards the future. In this case there is also a repetition of the pair light/darkness in different forms (dawn/prison):

I shall remain so that my dawn will rise. Your walls will never divert me from my path! (al-Qāsim 1991: 12)¹⁶.

In the poem *Li-yad mā zālat tuqāwim* (For a Hand That Continues to Resist), that describes the massacre of Kafr Qāsim, we read:

Arouse the world with a shout that will not be silenced:

Kafr Qāsim

Kafr Qāsim

Kafr Qāsim

Your spilled blood remains

And our resistance remains! (al-Qāsim 1991: 105)¹⁷.

The repetition functions as a voice and its echo, distributed over the lines; in addition, the poet ends the poem with expressions of determination that rise

¹⁵ Cf. the poem *Mā zāla* (Still), where he says: «The blood of my ancient forefathers still drips from me / the horses still neigh and the swords rejoice / I bear a sun in my right hand and float / on the covers of darkness, a singing wound!» (Zayyād n.d.: 29).

¹⁶ See his *al-Nafīr* (Call to Arms): «The land of the struggle is awesome: the honor of the struggle goes to him who wants» (al-Qāsim 1991: 24); and *Ġīl al-ma'sāh* (Generation of Tragedy): «On the horizon we raise a dawn of blood / and feed it our rising sun» (al-Qāsim 1991: 25).

¹⁷ See the poem *Waṭan* (Homeland): «Come o east winds / come o east winds / our roots are alive!» (al-Qāsim 1991: 156).

above the present: he looks at the present and the future, transmitting what he takes from the present and not only what the present reveals.

1.3.4 The poet Maḥmūd Darwīš¹⁸ in his *Biṭāqat huwiyyah* (Identity Card) that appeared in the collection *Awrāq al-zaytūn* (Leaves of Olives, 1964) manifests both individual and collective concerns¹⁹, while his poem *Maṭār Aṭīnā* in the collection *Ward aqall* (Fewer Roses, 1986) manifests collective concern and the experience of exile. Both works reflect the experience of steadfastness in the homeland, emigration and exile, as basic elements in Darwīš's poetry. Månsson's is one of the more profound studies that have dealt with Darwīš's poetry, in particular his use of the theme of exile (Månsson 2003: 31-42).

Darwīš's well-known poem *Biṭāqat huwiyyah* became an iconic work in the psyche of Arab readers in general. Its distinctive basic structural characteristic is its focus on response:

Write down!
I am an Arab
And my identity card number is fifty thousand
I have eight children
And the ninth will come after a summer
Will you be angry?

Write down!
I am an Arab
Employed with fellow workers at a quarry
I have eight children
I get them bread
Garments and books
From the rocks...
I do not supplicate charity at your doors
Nor 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
Patient in a country
Where 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

¹⁸ See Abū 'Īd (2013); Snir (2015: 17-20). For more details see Månsson (2003: 14-18).

¹⁹ According to Snir, this collection represents the transition of what he calls «the poetry of lamentation» to «the poetry of incitement» (Snir 2015: 75).

And before the grass grew

My father... descends from the family of the plow
 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
 My hair is the color of coal
 My eyes are brown
 My appearance:
 On my head is an *'iqāl* above a *kufiyyeh*
 My hand is hard as a rock
 Scratching whoever touches it
 My address:
 I am from an abandoned, forgotten village,
 Its streets without names
 All its men are in the field and the quarry
 Will you be angry?

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! (Darwīš 1964: 69-70)²⁰

This is no doubt one of Darwīš's first poetic attempts to address the issue of identity formation. The text revolves around the basic sentences: «Write down! I am an Arab» (al-Ġaḍāmī 1993: 63). The poem consists of five stanzas, each of which begins with this sentence, indicating that it is a response to a covert question or to a statement that disparages the “Arabness” of the poet’s “I”. The text is thus transformed into a defining document through which the poet confirms his identity on the basis of five substantive components, one in each stanza, which I shall proceed to analyze, due to their importance for determining the poet’s identity.

The first component: The demographic threat.

The threat is defined by two elements in the first stanza, the ID number as evidence of identity and the exaggerated number «fifty-thousand» as indicating a great number, in addition to the multitude of children; the number «nine» perhaps denotes not merely a numerical quantity but also symbolizes renewed birth. The endings of the first, second and fourth stanzas consist of a question implying disapproval and irony: «Will you be angry?», in an expression of direct confrontation with the other. The poet commences his poem with these two components as confirmation of the importance of demographic presence for the preservation of one’s identity.

The second component: Holding out.

The poet describes his troubles in making a living. He suffers greatly but neither debases himself nor begs. He works hard at the quarry, “pulls out” his living (in Arabic: *asullu*) with difficulty from the rocks, but earning his livelihood honorably. The poem itself is a response, in which the poet uses the style of documentary description to define his own self. He also uses negation of docility in order to strengthen his identity. The geometrical structure between sentences is also used. The affirmative sentence «[I am] Employed with fellow workers at a quarry» is paralleled by a negation in the same semantic field: «I do not supplicate charity at your doors». In the same vein, the affirmative sentence «I get them bread» is paralleled by the negative sentence «Nor do I belittle myself at the footsteps of your chamber». We may thus say that the duality of existence/affirmation *versus* non-existence/negation dominates the poem.

The third component: History.

The poet uses affirmation and definition in order to narrate the history of his existence in his homeland. He speaks of the “I” as a basic unalloyed element: «I have a name without a title». He then goes back in time to his grandfather, a person who was active in time and space and who «Teaches me the pride of the sun». The poet thus confirms the existence of these three

²⁰ Translation adapted from: <http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/bitaaq.asp>.

elements: the “I”/grandfather, history and place prove the extent to which he belongs, to his self and his identity. The grandfather is the origin and the poet’s “I” is the connection that links the past and what the grandfather represents with the present and the future.

The fourth component: Features of the “I” and the collective identity.

In this stanza the poet combines his individual and collective features, which are thereby transformed into a characteristic of the collective and not just the self. While in the previous stanza he spoke of the characteristics of place («hut», «rock», «olive trees», «plow»), here he presents an overall look, as if this is the scene that he always sees present before his eyes. The semantic field of «black as coal», «brown», «village», «field» and «quarry» consists of the identifying features of Palestinian space.

The fifth component: Expected confrontation.

The poem appears to have been composed in the form of a disputation in which the “I” hides the other in response to the other’s hiding of it at the level of the experienced reality. The other thus has no existence in the text, except as a shadow addressed by the poet. This stanza is based on the sensory conflict centering on the stolen land, to which the poet responds most assertively, if measured by the standing phrase «Write down! I am an Arab» and the stanzas that end with the question «Will you be angry?». The response is now transformed, from defense of the self, as was the case in the previous four stanzas, to offense: the poet now tries to build a new kind of identity, different from the usual one. The path to this lies in the word, and this cannot be realized except through the reestablishment of the honor of language (al-Ġadāmī 1993: 42-43).

In the poem *Maṭār Aṭīmā* from the collection *Ward aqall* the poet expresses the concern of the collective and the experience of exile. Absence became a basic theme in Darwīš’s poetry especially after he left the country in 1970: «I became adept at opening with an image of a present absence and an absent presence» (Darwīš 2006: 99)²¹. For Darwīš absence takes on a basically material form: it is the absence of the body, exile and separation from one’s place. But it also has a metaphysical meaning; in this sense it is a synonym for death. In other words, there is a “minor” and a “major” absence, both of which cause the poet in his verses to search for the meaning of things, which he then reveals anew with impressive imagery in modern Arabic poetry.

The lack of freedom and humanity is reflected in this poem:

Athens Airport

Athens airport disperses us to other airports. Where can I fight? asks the fighter.

Where can I deliver your child? a pregnant woman shouts back.

²¹ According to Månsson: «The migrant is a lonely traveler in a dangerous situation» (Månsson 2003: 155).

Where can I invest my money? asks the officer.
 Is this any of my business?, the intellectual says.
 Where did you come from? asks the customs' official.
 And we answer: From the sea!
 Where are you going?
 To the sea, we answer.
 What is your address?
 A woman of our group says: My village is my bundle on my back.
 We have waited in the Athens airport for years.
 A young man marries a girl but they have no place for a quick wedding.
 He asks: Where can I make love to her?
 We laugh and say:
 This is not the right time for that question.
 The analyst says: In order to live, they die by mistake.
 The literary man says: Our camp will certainly fall.
 What do they want from us?
 Athens airport changes its residents every day.
 Yet, like the benches in the terminal, we remain, impatiently waiting for the sea.
 How many more years longer, O Athens airport? (Darwīš 1994: 333)²²

The poem ends with the question «How many more years longer, O Athens airport?», in an open ending that invites the reader to try to complete the meaning. However, I believe that this ending is misleading, that it re-emphasizes and summarizes all the questions throughout the poem. This repetition points to the Palestinian tragedy and confirms the meaning of loss and exile. It thus belongs to the third type of ending (*open ending and closed closure*) in Ibrāhīm Ṭāhā's model.

A closer look at the poem shows that the poet does not express his feelings directly but rather acts as a narrator or photographer who passes on what he hears or sees.

The ending is circular, in that it repeats what is found in the title and the poem's first line. This circularity, rather than closing the meaning in the geometrical sense opens it to futility and tragedy. Note that most of the lines connect semantically to the following line, thus enhancing its circularity.

The questions that are asked in the poem consist of requests for knowledge, but the answers are mostly fuzzy, for example: «Where did you come from? [...] From the sea». Some answers are also in the form of a question: «Where can I fight? [...] / Where can I deliver your child?». Questions of this kind indicate instability and uprootedness in the concept of mental and material absence. Darwīš thus uses the technique of questioning not in order to remove obscurity but to increase it. A reversal like the one at the end of the poem causes the reader to finish with more questions, either repetitions

²² Translation adapted from Darwish (2003: 12).

of the same questions, or additional ones. Note that the questions focus on three elements: place, existence and time.

The airport is a public space that is conceptually the very opposite of a homeland and stability. It deals with the Palestinians as objects («disperses us»), with no free will of their own. At the end of the poem there is a repetition of the airport definition, «Athens airport changes its residents every day»: the function of the airport does not change; what changes are the Palestinians, who are not considered residents but rather, as described by the poet in a statement-like sentence connoting paralysis and lack of change, «like the benches in the terminal, we remain, impatiently waiting for the sea». The poet takes himself out of the circle of humanity, as if the airport has “transmuted” them, thus intensifying the view of the Palestinians as objects. It also makes the reader face the accusation leveled at the Palestinians, at what they do. The poet uses this transmutation in order to point to the West’s wrongdoing, represented here by Athens airport, which symbolizes the marginalization of the Palestinians on the international scene. The poetic speech in this poem, using the first person plural (“we”, “us”), rather than promoting a sense of collective unity, points to their being considered a single “thing”, with no inner distinctions, a rescaling that erases the distinctions between the individual and the collective.

In the poem there is reference to another place, namely the sea, when the group is asked where it came from. The reply does not provide the asked-for information but rather denotes being away: the sea in Palestinian poetry in general symbolizes exile and being nowhere, and in Darwīš’s poetry it stands for solitude, emigration, and unending circular absence. Furthermore, the sea as a geographical place is constantly changing due to the movements of the waves, thus adding the important elements of roaming and travel to the poem, especially in light of the question: «What is your address?».

The response is: «A woman of our group says: My village is my bundle on my back». The “bundle” symbolizes travel and wandering. It is no accident that it is the woman who answers the question about the address, thus highlighting the contradiction between woman as a symbol of stability and the lack of stability implied by the bundle. In fact, women’s voices in Palestinian novels are clear and sharp, because as women they are more capable of narrating the details of the tragedy than men. The bundle’s round form as well as the round form of the moving waves point to the Sisyphus-like nature of the Palestinians’ situation. The camp’s fall symbolizes absence on one hand and reception on the other, as a temporary place for Palestinian existence. The places in the poem («airport», «sea», «bundle» and «camp») contradict the ideas of homeland, continuance and permanence; Palestinian existence is thus transformed into something of a temporary nature.

This is what happens with the element of place in the poem. But the element of existence, too, is also deprived of its essence: a child does not exist

when the woman is pregnant, before it is born. It is in an unnatural state and the circumstances of its birth are also unnatural. The same is true for the young man who got married: «A young man marries a girl but they have no place for their wedding night. / He asks: Where can I make love to her? / We laugh and say: / This is not the right time for that question». The use of the word «quick» to describe the wedding points to a lack of permanence, while the inability to consummate the marriage implies a break in the reproductive chain, a break that is connected to the break in the Palestinians' identity and their detachment from their homeland. The ironic reply «This is not the right time for that question» serves to emphasize the break. The use of the absolute negation (*al-lā al-nāfiyah li 'l-ġins*) here should be taken in its real rather than its metaphorical sense: the Palestinian existence in its preceding state (marriage) and its succeeding state (the birth of the baby) is suspended in its original place and is now of a temporary nature.

The counterpart of birth is death, as also expressed by the poet: «The analyst says: In order to live, they die by mistake». Death is a means towards life, or a form of preserving the lives of those who survived.

As for the element of time, the poet in the ending determines the time period: «How many more years?». But he also generalizes time, using the indefinite form: «We have waited in the Athens airport for years». This contradiction between what the poet decided to write in the body of the poem in order to refer to his actual situation and what he desires and wishes for in the ending, leads to a conflict between generalization and specification. But the specification embodied in the question at the end does not announce a new reality and a new time, because it is in the end transmuted into waiting for the sea, that is, waiting for constant travel and lack of permanence.

The poet thus overturns the meaning and transforms the means into an objective. The airport as a means, a connection between countries, here becomes a place of permanence. The same is true of the sea, the bundle and the camp. The place envelops absolute indeterminate time, and so existence comes to be a movement towards death. Marriage and birth are not consummated; at the level of the text what does happen is death.

Conclusion

We examined endings of “poems of resistance” by four poets known for their considerable influence on the course of Palestinian poetry: Ḥannā Abū Ḥannā, Tawfīq Zayyād, Samīḥ al-Qāsim and Maḥmūd Darwīš. The message of the various poets was the same, but differed in the elements which each of them chose to highlight. The present study was mainly restricted to the “stage of beginnings”, the 1950s and 1960s, and the collections from which the poems were chosen thus belong to this period. Our purpose was not to provide a statistical analysis of endings but rather to determine the features

which they possessed in the different examples. The following features were found in the “poetry of resistance”:

1. Optimism at the level of content; this is a fundamental message of the poetry of resistance.
2. The narrative as a tool of resistance and confirmation of the Palestinian narrative.
3. Refusal to give in to, and rising above reality.
4. Visionary view of the future.
5. Transformation of the actual situation into a catalyst for continuing defiance.
6. Amalgamation of the individual with the collective.
7. The hero is both individual and collective.
8. Most of the poems deal with fundamental dualities: life/death, light/darkness, truth/falsity, etc.
9. Identification with manifestations of nature.
10. Endings that are closed and definitive, whose meanings are not open to doubt.

These features are bolstered by rhetorical devices associated with the content: negation, repetition, affirmation, use of the spoken language and maxims, and comparison. We noted that different poets emphasize different things. Thus Abū Ḥannā focuses in his poetry on depictions and catalytic discourse, based on narrative and voice, while Zayyād’s poetry is characterized linguistically by defiance and fighting reality face-to-face. In al-Qāsim’s poetry we find a perspective that looks at reality from above and contrasts between light and darkness, and in Darwīš’s verses direct confrontation and disputation. We also analyzed an additional poem from the later writings of Darwīš in order to show how the message of the “poetry of resistance” has changed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In addition, there are occasional poems that are merely responses to certain passing political events, such as Darwīš’s *‘Ābirūn fī kalām ‘ābir* (Bypassers in Bypassing Words), which he did not include in any of his poetry collections.

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