

## Palestinian Literature in Israel: A Vision on Coexistence and Shared Space

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*The present contribution focuses on Palestinian writers with Israeli citizenship. Through their cultural activity within the State of Israel, Palestinians help to shape the image of a multicultural society, emphasizing coexistence in a shared territorial, political and existential space. Referring to new stories and novels recently published by the writer 'Alā' Hlehel, I analyze the vision of space and refer to one of the existing perspective of Coexistence in the Middle East, the bi-national Israeli-Palestinian state that Edward Said suggested.*

Palestinians in Israel live in their homeland but, at the same time, Palestine does not exist anymore in the place where they live: the land is now Israel, «the State of the Jewish people»<sup>1</sup>. May 15<sup>th</sup> 1948, which for the Palestinians represents the *nakbah* and for the Jews represents the creation of the State of Israel, equally represents the date of transformation from a majority into an indigenous minority for Palestinians in Israel<sup>2</sup>.

Therefore, Palestinians in Israel writing in Arabic belong to Palestinian and Arabic literature, but the fact that their works are created inside Israel makes them different and defines a minority literature, according to various features and components such as language and style. Having crossed different stages and

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<sup>1</sup> U. Davis, *Apartheid Israel: Possibilities for the Struggle Within*, Zed Books, London-New York 2003, pp. 60 and 87.

<sup>2</sup> Before 1948, the Palestinians living in present-day Israel were approximately 1.000.000. When Britain withdrew and the war broke out, many were forced to escape. Only 160.000 remained and received Israeli citizenship, becoming 11% of the population. Nowadays they are 1.450.000 and represent 20% of the population in Israel. For more information and updating see *Yearly Statistical Abstract of Israel*, <http://www1.cbs.gov.il>.

having evolved from being the Literature of Resistance to the present “Minority Literature”, it reveals a plural vision on History, Identity and Coexistence<sup>3</sup>.

Summarizing these visions is not the main purpose of this contribution, where I have chosen to focus on some short stories that, in my opinion, indirectly deal with the perspective of the future asset of the State of Israel.

In its beginnings, Palestinian literature in Israel has expressed the desire to regain Palestinians’ homeland, get rid of the *occupier*, and to measure Palestinians’ relationship with the Jews. In the following periods, however, writers started agreeing on the Two-States Solution<sup>4</sup> and being concerned on how to protect Palestinians’ identity, memories and culture in the Jewish context<sup>5</sup>.

The younger generation represents a further trend. Unlike their parents, who have always been conscious of being foreigners in their own homes, these Palestinians were born in Israel and developed some degree of integration into the Jewish State. Since the second *intifāḍah*, they have experienced a hostile attitude by the Israeli government and suffered the internal dynamics and ratifications of laws that restrict their participation in the democratic life of the State<sup>6</sup>. In response, they animated activities of peaceful resistance, occasionally in cooperation with Israeli Jews, both individual and NGOs<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, through

<sup>3</sup> For an extensive presentation of the Palestinian Literature in Israel, which is not the purpose here, see Ibrāhīm Ṭāhā, *al-Bu’d al-āḥar. Qirā’āt fī ‘l-adab al-filasfīnī al-maḥallī, Rābiṭat al-Kuttāb al-Filasfīniyyīn fī Isrā’īl*, al-Nāṣirah 1990; Ibrahim Taha, *The Palestinians in Israel: Towards a Minority Literature*, in “Arabic and Middle Eastern Literature”, 3, 2, 2000, pp. 219-234; ID., *The Palestinian Novel. A Communication Study*, Curzon, London 2012; I. D’Aimmo, *Palestinesi in Israele. Tra identità e cultura*, Carocci, Roma 2009, pp. 111-292; Suheir Abu Oksa Daoud, *Finestre di Ghazalah*, Città del sole, Napoli 2011, edited and translated by I. D’Aimmo from the Arabic *Ṣābābīk al-Ġazālah*, Bayrūt 2002; I. D’Aimmo (a cura di), *Qui finisce la terra. Antologia di scrittori palestinesi con cittadinanza israeliana*, Il Sirente, Roma 2012.

<sup>4</sup> The Two-State Solution envisages an independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel in the territory of the former British Mandate of Palestine.

<sup>5</sup> Even if this is not the main concern in the present article, it has to be noted that Muḥammad Naffā’, Muḥammad ‘Alī Ṭāhā, Suhayl Kīwān, and Riyāḍ Baydas are the major writers expressing these topics and innovating content, style and language, focusing the process of building the identity of the Palestinians in Israel. Muḥammad Naffā’ has contributed to the founding of the folkloric trend in Palestinian fiction by locating the village at the center of the whole society, as the symbol of Palestinian identity inside Israel. This has been analyzed well by Ibrāhīm Ṭāhā in his article *Muḥammad Naffā’, rā’id al-ḥasāsīyyah al-turāṭīyyah fī ‘l-sard al-filasfīnī*, in “al-Ġabḥah”, 13/02/2010, <http://www.aljabha.org/?i=48812>. Another important work showing the centrality of the village is Muḥammad ‘Alī Ṭāhā’s *Wardah li ‘aynay Ḥafīzah*, Maṭba‘at Abī Raḥmūn, ‘Akkā 1983, English translation *A Rose to Hafeeza’s Eyes*, in Jamal. Asadi, *Mohammad Ali Taha’s ‘A rose to Hafeeza’s Eyes’ and other Short Stories*, Peter Lang, New York 2008, Italian translation *Una rosa per i tuoi occhi, Hafiza*, in I. D’Aimmo (a cura di), *Qui finisce la terra. Antologia di scrittori palestinesi con cittadinanza israeliana*, cit., pp. 87-100. Suhayl Kīwān primarily records the life of the Palestinian people before the Foundation of the State of Israel (see Ibrahim Taha, *The Palestinian Novel. A Communication Study*, cit., pp. 165-182). Riyāḍ Baydas emphasizes the connection between Arabs and the surrounding Jews society, as extensively observed by A. Elad-Bouskila in his *Modern Palestinian Literature and Culture*, Frank Cass Publishers, London and Portland 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Nimer Sultany, *Citizens without Citizenship. First Annual Political Monitoring Report: Israel and the Palestinian Minority 2000-2002*, Wada’s Arab Centre for Applied Social Research, Haifa 2003, pp. 19-111; I. D’Aimmo, *Palestinesi in Israele*, cit., pp. 73-110.

<sup>7</sup> D. Bar-On, *In Pursuit of Peace: A History of the Israeli Peace Movement*, US Institute of Peace Press, Washington DC 1996; M. Feige, *One Space, Two Places*, in E. Gush, *Peace Now and the Construction of Israeli Space*, Magnes Press, Jerusalem 2002 (Hebrew); D. Hall-

their cultural activism within the State of Israel, they help shaping the image of a multicultural society, reflecting their identity and emphasizing coexistence in a shared territorial, political and existential space.

Their social dimension is still in a transitional phase and shows both positive and negative connotations mainly due to the exchange with the majority society. Summarizing and simplifying, it may be said that the Palestinian society in Israel tends to be culturally more conservative and self-protective since it is surrounded by an “alien” society. Notwithstanding, the young generation of Palestinians involved in the daily and dialogic relationship with the western modernity represented by the Israeli society are negotiating a proper version of modernity that, starting from the more authentic interpretation of the Palestinian identity, combines western and Arabic elements, tradition and hybridization. Literature properly reflects the whole transition. It is a vantage point for the observation of the dynamics working in the configuration of the Israeli State and of the transformation and development of the minority itself.

The writer here taken into account is ‘Alā’ Hlehel<sup>8</sup>. I will present ten of his works, chosen according to their representativeness of a variety of issues, and their vision of space will be analyzed. However, it is worth mentioning that the new generation is very active and there are many other young writers and poets that effectively contribute to shape the new features of this outstanding literature<sup>9</sup>.

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Cathala, *Peace Movement in Israel, 1967-87*, MacMillan, Basingstoke and London 1990; S. Helman, T. Rapaport, *Women in Black: Challenging Israel's Gender and Socio-Political Orders*, in “British Journal of Sociology” 48, 4, 1997, pp. 682-700; T. Hermann, *The Israeli Peace Movement: A Shattered Dream*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008; S. Herzog, A. Hai, *The Power of Possibility: The Role of People-to-People Programs in the Current Israeli-Palestinian Reality*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Herzlyia 2005; Y. Keshet, *Checkpoint Watch. Testimonies from Occupied Palestine*, Zed Books, London 2006; M. Simoni, *Sul confine. L'attivismo congiunto israelo-palestinese*, in A. Marzano e M. Simoni (a cura di), *Quaranta giorni dopo. Confini, barriere e limiti in Israele e Palestina (1967-2007)*, Il Ponte, Bologna 2007, pp. 72-88.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Alā’ Hlehel was born in Ġiš, northern Galilee, in 1974. Writer and editor in radio and print journalism, he is also committed to cinema and theatre. His latest book is *Kārġā Brūnī ‘ašqatī ‘l-sirriyyah* (My Secret Affair with Carla Bruni), a short story collection published in Arabic and Hebrew by Kutub Qadītā, ‘Akkā 2012. He also published: *al-Ab wa ‘l-ibn wa ‘l-rūḥ al-tā‘īhah. Riwāyah qašīrah wa ḥams qīṣaš* (The Father, the Son and the Lost Spirit. Short Novel and Five Short Stories), Dār al-‘Ayn li ‘l-Našr, al-Qāhirah 2008, *Qīṣaš li-awqāt al-ḥāḡah* (Stories in the Time of Need), Dār al-‘Ādāb, Bayrūt 2003, and *al-Sīrk* (The Circus), in ‘Alā’ Hlehel et al., *Masāfah lam tahtariq* (A Distance has not Burnt), Mu‘assasat ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Qaṭṭān, Rāmallāh 2001, pp. 139-328. He has received several awards for his works. The first awarded was *al-Sīrk*, that received the al-Qaṭṭān Literary Prize. In 2003, he took part in the Annual International Playwrights Residency at the Royal Court Theatre, London. He got the “Beirut 39” Prize and has been granted permission to visit Lebanon by the High Court of Justice. It came in an unprecedented ruling because Israel’s State policy bans its Arab citizens and residents from traveling to “enemy states”. Cf. Jack Khouri, *In unprecedented ruling, court lets Israeli Arab visit an enemy state*, in “Haaretz”, April 13, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/in-unprecedented-ruling-court-lets-israeli-arab-visit-an-enemy-state-1.284173>. For more references cf. I. D’Aimmo, *Palestinesi in Israele*, cit., pp. 233-267, and EAD. (a cura di), *Qui finisce la terra. Antologia di scrittori palestinesi con cittadinanza israeliana*, cit., pp. 3-18, 45-54, 101.

<sup>9</sup> Such as Raḡā‘ Bakriyyah, Hišām Naffā‘, Bašīr Šalāš, Suhayr Abū ‘Oqṣah Dā‘ūd, ‘Adaniyyah Šiblī, Aymān Kāmil Iḡbāriyyah, Abū Šālīḥ, Rāḡī Batšīs, Nawāl Naffā‘, Ḥūrī Nidā‘, Muḥammad Ḥamzah Ġanāyim, Ġamāl Dāhir, Māḡid Ḥamrā, Fū‘ād Sulaymān. These writers represent a new literary trend both from the stylistic point of view as well as the topics dealt with. Their style is affected by a higher competence of the Arabic language and by increasing opportunities of being in touch with new international cultural movements.

In 'Alā' Hlehel's short story *al-Saġġādah* (The Carpet)<sup>10</sup>, the main subjects are unemployment and the end of a relationship. Job loss and need push the narrator to sell the carpet that his ex-girlfriend left him, although it is the last memory of their past together. Among his neighbors, we may recognize both Arabs and Jews, but their nationality seems marginal and insignificant.

In *al-Hāfilah* (The Bus)<sup>11</sup>, the narrator gets on a very crowded bus after a long day at work. Having found a seat, he isolates himself from the nervous voices of people still trying to get on, while passengers are already crushed against each other. He curls up in his own small, petty thoughts, looking away from the elderly in order to avoid giving his seat to anybody in need. Finally, doors close and the bus slowly goes on, swaying over the hill in the city.

*Zawġī sā'iq bāṣ* (My Husband is a Bus Driver)<sup>12</sup> tells the story of a humble woman, who has been faithful and submissive to her husband and sons all her life. Despite having had to agree to marry according to the rules of an arranged marriage, she hopes to have a happy life with her husband. Nevertheless, her only role is to be his servant:

[...] Even so I wished he'd clean his teeth, especially in the morning, when he would want me sometimes as I was waking him up. He'd grab me by the hand and jump on top of me on the bed and not care about a thing. He did not wait for me to wake up properly or to wash my face. And no sooner had I woken up properly than he'd finished his quick pant with his terrible smelling breath and roll over on his side [...]<sup>13</sup>.

She will find her fake salvation in the sad framework of the miseries of life. In this story, Hlehel expresses one of his dearest topics, dealing with Palestinians' social problems affecting the whole structure of the community, and leads us to consider how the young generation of Palestinians in Israel lives through the transition to modernization. To my knowledge, in their social attitudes and literature they distinguish between useful and damaging traditions: the latter have no place in modern life. They express a sharp judgment on the condition of women and on the increasing violence that has been observed in the latter statistics<sup>14</sup>.

In *Hawā' al-baḥr* (The Air of the Sea)<sup>15</sup>, a girl with the veil wants to swim in the sea. Here the writer focuses on the issue of Religion that is growing stronger among Palestinians in Israel, enlightening the value of individual freedom and the existence of several visions of the future and the cultural and social framework of the Palestinian minority.

In his short novel *al-Ab wa 'l-ibn wa 'l-rūḥ al-tā'ihah* (The Father, the Son and the Lost Spirit)<sup>16</sup>, 'Alā' Hlehel expresses trust that secular and democratic thought may spread across the Arab world and rejects fundamentalist currents in Islam. They contradict Islamic spirit and its tendency to pluralism and use this

<sup>10</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *al-Saġġādah*, in "Mašārif", 19, Winter, 2002, pp. 154-158.

<sup>11</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *al-Hāfilah*, in ID., *al-Ab wa 'l-ibn wa 'l-rūḥ al-tā'ihah*, cit., pp. 111-112.

<sup>12</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *Zawġī sā'iq bāṣ*, in ID., *al-Ab wa 'l-ibn wa 'l-rūḥ al-tā'ihah*, cit., pp. 113-123; English translation *My Husband is a Bus Driver*, in "Banipal", 23, Summer, 2005, pp. 3-9.

<sup>13</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *My Husband is a Bus Driver*, cit., p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the publications available at Mossawa Center, <http://www.mossawa.org/#>.

<sup>15</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *Hawā' al-baḥr*, in *Kārlā Brūnī 'ašīqatī 'l-sirriyyah*, cit., pp. 109-118.

<sup>16</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *al-Ab wa 'l-ibn wa 'l-rūḥ al-tā'ihah*, in ID., *al-Ab wa 'l-ibn wa 'l-rūḥ al-tā'ihah*, cit., pp. 5-85.

ancient and rooted religion to reach political and social objectives which are unacceptable through democratic channels. The analysis on political fundamentalism also involves Palestinians' daily life in Israel. Indeed, they are directly involved in actions like suicide bombings, a topic that clearly witnesses their paradoxical condition. As a matter of fact, they feel close to the Palestinian side in West Bank and well understand their situation under occupation. Nevertheless, at the same time, they reject terror and they are indirectly targets of the attacks, not as Palestinians but as people living inside Israel.

This topic is well represented in Hlehel's *Ta'āyush* (Coexistence)<sup>17</sup>. The narrator is a young Palestinian with Israeli citizenship who decides to contact the leader of *Hamās* in order to ask him to stop the "operations", at least in places where Palestinians live. After examining all the options in order to get in contact with him, he decides to write a letter that becomes a sort of never ending canvas. While engaged in his mental ruminations, he hears about an attack on the bus that takes his brother to College every day. He cannot reach him by phone and starts running madly after him. At last, he finds him at home. While exhausted, they lie on the couch. His brother tells him that the newspaper was looking for him to comment on the attack and its effects on coexistence between Arabs and Jews in Haifa.

In his story *Bāsīburt* (The Passport)<sup>18</sup>, Hlehel recalls the military hostilities between Israel and *Hizb Allāh* in 2006. The narrator needs to extend his passport to travel to the United Kingdom in order to present a book. The Ministry of Interior is closed «until the end of the war»<sup>19</sup>. He believes that his «cultural emergency»<sup>20</sup> is as important as the security emergency that has arisen in the country. So he does not surrender and tries to get the passport extension. It becomes a sort of adventure, passing through different problematic situations, due to both the lack of trust by the Israeli Institutions towards the Palestinian minority and to the rocket attacks from *Hizb Allāh* on the northern part of Israel. The light spirit of the writer makes this venture a funny and enjoyable story, where the interactions between Jews and Palestinians are highly human, unlike the attitude that the authority has towards them. Somehow, the story also deals with the linguistic issue, and reflects the bilingualism of Palestinian in Israel since the opening, when the phone call to the office of the Ministry of Interior opens with an informal «Ālō, šālōm»<sup>21</sup>.

Hlehel's story *al-Maḍqūn* (The Bearded Man)<sup>22</sup> reflects on how the events that occurred in 2000 affected the new generation. It reproduces a climate of suspicion towards the Palestinians in Israel and well explains how it affects every gesture of their daily lives. Controlled and searched by police and private guards, regarded with awe by common people, travelling from one city to another may

<sup>17</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *Ta'āyush*, in "al-Safir", April, 2, 2004; also in ID., *al-Ab wa 'l-ibn wa 'l-rūh al-tā'ihah*, cit., pp. 89-95.

<sup>18</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *Bāsīburt*, in ID., *Kārālā Brūnī 'ašīqatī 'l-sirriyyah*, cit., pp. 87-108. See also Ala Hlehel, *The Passport*, in Joumana Haddad et al., *Madinah, City Stories from the Middle East*, Comma Press, Manchester 2008, pp. 47-70.

<sup>19</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *Bāsīburt*, cit., p. 87.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>22</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *al-Maḍqūn*, in ID., *al-Ab wa 'l-ibn wa 'l-rūh al-tā'ihah*, cit., pp. 97-104.

become an odyssey. The *bearded* is a young Palestinian with Israeli citizenship that decides to change his look and grow a beard. He has to travel from Haifa to Tel Aviv to meet a Jewish colleague for a film project about coexistence. His esthetic choice of growing his beard is unexpectedly full of political meaning because the *beard* has become a symbol of radical Islam and will affect his interaction with the “system”. The surrounding society starts hating the *bearded* ones and fearing them. The inner dialogues symbolize the inability to listen to the “other” and the lack in mutual comprehension. A recurring narrative element is the identity document, which alludes to a pervasive system of social control and to the question of citizenship.

[...] The guard at the station entrance was the first to dread my beard, tie gave me a fearful Jewish look, so I gave him a fearful Arab look that disguise an alarmed Arab look. He grew alarmed. I said to him deep in my heart, “You ass. It’s been a long time since a long beard has caused fear. Don’t you see the pictures of my blamed brothers in the papers? They shave, perfume themselves, and sometimes wear your fellow soldiers’ clothes to pull the wool over your eyes.” But he didn’t hear me. He asked for my ID [...]”<sup>23</sup>.

While exhibiting with pride his “blue” identity card, that makes him a citizen as the “others”, he feels the precariousness of this low-grade citizenship. Ḥleḥel seems to assert this point when the *bearded* meets the Jew. The Jew is often in a position of power, and the narrator has frequently to apologize for some little mistake. Moreover, the social condition of the Palestinian here is very precarious. Following the thread of memories, he recalls when he was a student trying to save money for the ticket, hiding in the train toilet not to be checked by the ticket collector, always afraid of being discovered. Now, years later, he is still socially precarious, but he has his ticket. He would like to show it proudly to the controller but he is Arab, and bearded, so he is checked by men of the national security instead of ticket controllers. Confused and humiliated, he finally arrives in Tel Aviv. The taxi driver is suspicious and asks about the contents of his bag. And when he gets to the meeting place, he is again checked at the entrance. He only feels at home when arriving to his colleague’s office. They are filmmakers and they share a common project: a movie on coexistence. Thus, he sits and relaxes, slowly drinks his coffee and finally enjoys the reverence and solemnity leaking from his beard. And he is still solemnly stroking his beard, awaiting for an epilogue that will arrive<sup>24</sup>.

Having summarized these stories and their content, I will now spend a few words on the issue of space, which is always a key story feature, but particularly so in the Palestinian literature.

In a few of ‘Alā’ Ḥleḥel’s works, space is not represented by the city. For example, in *al-Ab wa ’l-ibn wa ’l-rūḥ al-tā’ihah*, the place is a Palestinian enclave surrounded by Jewish environment. In *al-Ḥaymah* (The Tent)<sup>25</sup> the place is a refugee camp administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), where the young Ḥamādah and his family search for a way to adapt to the new daily life and the different social

<sup>23</sup> ‘Alā’ Ḥleḥel, *The Bearded Man*, in “World Literature Today”, Jan/Feb 2007, Vol. 81 Issue 1, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Alā’ Ḥleḥel, *al-Maḍqūn*, cit., p. 104.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Alā’ Ḥleḥel, *al-Ḥaymah*, in ID., *Kārā Brūnī ’aṣīqatī ’l-sirriyyah*, cit., pp. 9-22, English translation *The Tent*, in “Banipal” 45, Winter 2012, pp. 68-80.

relations in the camp. In *al-Ḥimār* (The Donkey)<sup>26</sup>, the narrator tells us about the sacrifice of the old donkey that died saving his grandfather life and the story is set in a vague space in the countryside.

Notwithstanding, what is relevant to the present analysis is that a distinguishing mark in most of his stories seems to be the topic of the city, wide and multicultural.

It is not a case that one of stories here presented, *Bāsbūrt*, was published in *Madīnah*, a collection of ten urban stories across Middle East, edited by Joumana Haddad. Generally it is openly said that the city is Haifa or 'Akkā, or it is completely recognizable through the details that refer to it. In these places, that are literary but real at the same time, the Palestinian and the Jewish dimension occasionally melt or overlap. This is a crucial development in Palestinian literature in Israel and even if not by rule, to my present knowledge the same occurs for many writers active in the last decade. Villages continue to speak to the heart and identity of every Palestinian in Israel, but they belong to their collective memory and not to the direct personal experience of the new generation. This leads writers to write urban literature in order to try to rebuild their public places and collective memory in a space to which the community can refer. Here surreal situations reveal hypocrisy and injustice, and citizenship rights are negotiated or claimed through the relation with the Jews, asserting that the space in Israel has to be shared between all the inhabitants, both Jewish and Palestinian, stressing the Palestinians' presence, and enlightening the impracticability of *separation*. Indeed, the Palestinian national movement, to which they contribute, is committed to the construction of the Palestinian homeland in another place, in the Occupied Territories, beyond the border. Thus, even if Palestine will be recognized as a State, they will mostly stay in their land, in the present Israel. Most of them have no interest at all in moving to a Palestinian state because they are in the place where they belong. They cannot "go back" to Palestine because they originated from the place they actually live in.

So, the current political situation, as it is and as literature reflects it, may indirectly remind us of the One-State Solution that some major intellectuals, like Edward Said, have suggested for the Middle East<sup>27</sup>. According to the proponents for the One-State Solution, whether one agrees or not, the real peace can come only with a shared space, a bi-national Israeli-Palestinian state, which would encompass the present Israel, West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, giving the Palestinians who are Israeli citizens the rights of citizens, and letting Israel become a state of its citizens and not of the whole Jewish people.

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<sup>26</sup> 'Alā' Hlehel, *al-Ḥimār*, in ID., *Qīṣaṣ li-awqāt al-ḥāḡah*, cit., pp. 13-16; Italian translation in I. D'Aimmo (a cura di), *Qui finisce la terra. Antologia di scrittori palestinesi con cittadinanza israeliana*, cit., pp. 15-18.

<sup>27</sup> According to E. Said, «[...] Palestinian self-determination in a separate state is unworkable, just as unworkable as the principle of separation between a demographically mixed, irreversibly connected Arab population without sovereignty and a Jewish population with it. The question, I believe, is [...] to see whether it is possible for them to live together as fairly and peacefully as possible. [...] The alternatives are unpleasantly simple: either the war continues [...] or a way out, based on peace and equality (as in South Africa after apartheid) is actively sought, despite the many obstacles. Once we grant that Palestinians and Israelis are there to stay, then the decent conclusion has to be the need for peaceful coexistence and genuine reconciliation». Cf. E. Said, *Truth and Reconciliation*, in "al-Ahram Weekly", 1-14, 1999, <http://weeklyahram.org.eg/1999/412/op2.htm>. For more reference about the One-State Solution also see: ID., *The One-State Solution*, "The New York Times", January 16, 1999, p. 39.

Palestinians are already experimenting this option inside of Israel, and literature reflects the number of issues that are still opened. Jews and Arabs are living next to each other, Palestinians constitute about twenty percent of the Israeli population and the two groups are deeply intertwined. The main point is what the Palestinians' socio-economic conditions are, how wide their political space is, and how complete their citizenship.

Thus, in my opinion, Palestinian writers' vision of space in Israel is part of their role in the practice of constructive transformation and confirms that *de facto* Palestinians in Israel are a dynamic actor in the institutional settings of Israel and in the dialogue between Israel and Palestine.