States of Mourning:
Nationalism and Mourning in Palestinian and Israeli Literatures After 1948

by

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A Note on Transliteration

When referencing words in Arabic or Hebrew, as I often do throughout this dissertation, I have rendered them in transliteration. For Arabic words I have used the guidelines of the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES). For Hebrew words I have used the 2006 guidelines of the Academy of the Hebrew Language. The only exceptions are names and words whose common transliteration in English differs from these guidelines. For example, while I generally use the Latin characters "ts" to mark the Hebrew צ, words such as *kibbutz* and *eretz* and have long been accepted in this form and so I have maintained their common transliteration.

Abstract

This study explores representations of affective politics in Palestinian and Israeli literatures, using a comparative method to analyze the politics of mourning within and outside of a nation-state. The ongoing national dispute in Palestine/Israel has generated extensive loss, leading to a constant need for mourning in order to imbue death with meaning. In *States of Mourning: Nationalism and Mourning in Palestinian and Israeli Literatures After 1948*, I examine literary representations of dead bodies, the rhetoric of eulogies, and the trope of the mourning mother, to demonstrate the various ways that personal mourning is subsumed into affective investment in the abstract notion of the nation. Such collectivization of the personal does not occur organically, I argue; enlisting personal affect in service of the nation requires active ideological work. As my critical comparative methodology illustrates, the mechanisms of ideology operate differently in a nation-state and in conditions of statelessness, revealing the links between mourning and power. Moving between Palestinian and Israeli texts and holding them in productive tension with each other, I demonstrate the role of literature and rhetoric in this political work of mourning and the impact of statehood or lack thereof.

Each of my chapters explores a different aspect of mourning. I start with the representation of dead bodies and burial in a chapter titled "Putting the Unburiable to Rest: The Politics of the Dead Body." I analyze literary representations of corpses and the process of interring them (or not) in disputed ground, considering the place of death in politics and the political afterlife of the dead. In this first chapter, I examine the well-known Hebrew trope of the dead-living in "The Silver Platter" by Nathan Alterman and "Behold, Our Bodies Are Laid Out"

by Ḥaim Gouri, in which a dead body transcends death through national symbolism. I put this trope in conversation with a Palestinian figure I term the living-dead in Maḥmoud Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness* and Elias Khoury's *Gate of the Sun*, and I show that the precarity of war causes the living to experience death while still alive. My second chapter, "Eulogizing Nations," focuses on the genre of the eulogy and how it operates rhetorically and politically. The focus is on two eulogies – Moshe Dayan's for Roi Rotberg and Maḥmoud Darwīsh's for Ghassān Kanafāni – in which the elegiac genre is part of articulating claims for sovereignty over the same land. In the third chapter, "Anticipating Grief: Mothers in Mourning in Kanafāni and Grossman," I discuss the figure of the mourning mother in Ghassan Kanafāni's *Sa'ad's Mother* and David Grossman's *To the End of the Land*. The mothers in these novels begin mourning their sons even before the loss has occurred as a direct result of the ongoing violence wrought by nationalism. Finally, I conclude the project with a discussion of an alternative ceremony for Memorial Day in which Palestinians and Israelis mourn alongside each other, asking what challenges mourning together might pose for national narratives. Throughout the chapters I argue that the politics of mourning are part of the foundation and solidification of nationalism, but that they operate differently within a nation-state and outside of it. My analysis is critically informed by the power differential in the region, by the complex relations between politics and aesthetics and by theories of colonialism, nationalism, and gender.

Introduction: Lexicons of Mourning

The Day Yasser was shot his mother turned/ to stone; draped with the flag, his makeshift shroud/ she held her ground at the deserted town/ square. Each chilly dawn she clutched a torch/ of modest flowers – jasmine, daisies and roses/ from her garden – while bewildered soldiers/ driving by, returning from their night shift, wondered/ at the mist-clad apparition vaguely/ reminiscent of a statue somewhere.

– "Metamorphosis," Ḥanan Mikha'il 'Ashrawi

And I remembered how last time, I could see her from a distance in the corner of my eye, standing in front of the stone pillow, bending over and putting her lips to the rim of the stone where the forehead would be, and I looked closely and it was clear to me that that's what she was doing and it was clear to me that's where the forehead would be, and I asked myself whether she was kissing her living son or her dead son, and I said to myself, her dead son, of course her dead son, and he's forever living, her dead son.

– Mountain of Losses, Yehudit Hendel[1]

When someone dies, those who loved them are left to grapple with the aftermath of the loss, with the presence of absence, the pangs of longing, and the reality of life without them. What ensues after loss is mourning – the emotional response to death, and a reconfiguration of life altered by loss. Mourning is therefore tied not only to death, through the object of mourning, but to life, through the living subject, the one who mourns. In fact, the complex and fraught relationship between death and life, between the dead and the living, is at the heart of this project and at the

[1] "וזכרתי איך בפעם האחרונה, כשהתרחקנו, מזווית העין ראיתי אותה נעמדת לפני כרית האבן ומתכופפת ומצמידה שפתיה לשפת האבן באמצע המקום של המצח, והסתכלתי היטב והיה ברור לי שזה מה שעשתה והיה ברור לי שזה המקום של המצח, ושאלתי את עצמי אם היא מנשקת את בנה החי או בנה המת, ואמרתי לעצמי את בנה המת, ודאי, את בנה המת, והרי לעולם הוא חי, בנה המת (הר הטועים 69). My translation.

center of its conception of mourning. As the characters in Hendel's *Mountain of Losses* (*har ha-to'im*, הר הטועים, 1991) make clear, in mourning discerning between life and death becomes difficult, revealing how tenuous the line between the two is to begin with. And so, the mother kisses the grave of her dead son where the forehead would be, trying to cling to some sense of his life, and the dead son is "forever living," though clearly dead; to be living "forever" one must be outside of time, that is, dead. Or else, in 'Ashrawi's poem written in the aftermath of the first *intifāḍa* (1987), the mourning mother is herself metamorphosed by her grief into a still statue-like stone that resembles a dead figure, showing how death encroaches on the living. Is mourning, then, a type of temporary, metaphorical death? What is the relationship between mourning, death, and life? And how does one carry the hefty burden of loss and go on living?

The mothers in both Hendel's novel and 'Ashrawi's poem lost their sons in the context of the national conflict in Palestine/Israel, a context which necessarily informs their mourning. The context of loss, I argue, shapes the contours of the mourning that follows. More specifically, mourning a loss that occurs in a political context entails grappling with a complex set of circumstances – the death is untimely and traumatic, and the mourner must navigate their relationship to the collective and their notion of belonging to it. In his "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud writes that "mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal and so on" (243). While he acknowledges that one might mourn an abstract notion like a country or an ideal, Freud's thesis does not account for how mourning might be impacted by political circumstances. In this project, I focus on a specific political context – that of a national dispute. I maintain that mourning in the context of nationalism has specific and distinct features that require an analysis tied not only to frameworks of loss but to those of power

and politics. While Derrida, elaborating on Freud, articulates the work of mourning, this project modifies it as the political work of mourning, or what Eng and Kazanjian term "a politics of mourning." Specifically, my project is situated in Palestine/Israel and is therefore inherently comparative, a methodology necessarily informed by power relations. The distinction of political mourning highlights the complex relationship between mourning and power, as in the context of nationalism mourning becomes not only an emotional process but an ideological mechanism; it is tied to institutions and collective groups, to structures of power and political dynamics.

As I explain in this introduction, I use the adjective "national" specifically in relation to national movements and their culmination in a nation-state, whether one has been achieved or not.[2] Nationalism, I argue throughout this project, enlists personal mourning in its service, so that affective investment in the abstract notion of the nation substitutes for personal loss. I analyze this substitution, de-naturalizing it and showing it to be an ideological mechanism whose effectiveness derives from its transparency. In other words, the collectivization of the personal does not occur organically but rather requires active ideological work. Much of this work is done through rhetoric and literature, as I demonstrate in a series of close readings of Palestinian and Israeli texts. As a result of the ongoing national conflict in the region, mourning is commonplace in Palestine/Israel, as people continue to die in wars and military operations, at checkpoints and protests and in daily eruptions of violence. This violence comes in a variety of forms that are by no means equal: state violence executed by soldiers and police officers, suicide bombings and other attacks by terrorist organizations, imprisonment, kidnapping, and more. Both peoples

[2] In other words, my focus is the specific political meaning of nation as it has developed since the mid-19th century and not on the broader meaning of "national" as "collective," as in the national effort to vaccinate the population, for example. I prefer "national" and not "nationalistic" because I argue that the nation-state's mechanisms are not an extreme iteration – as implied by "nationalistic" – but rather a common feature.

experience loss and therefore develop forms of mourning, but as my comparative methodology shows, the power differential between Israel and Palestine defines and shapes these processes, which operate differently within a nation-state and outside of one. Grief is not, I argue, the great equalizer but rather a continuation and extension of the circumstances that caused it.

In the following introduction, I set up this project's framework by defining the terminology I use throughout and its cultural resonances: mourning, nationalism and names of places and identity groups in the region. These terms constitute the lexicon used throughout the project, and I therefore provide linguistic context in Arabic and Hebrew while also considering the English in which I write about them. My aim in doing so is to create a shared vocabulary among readers which is as multilingual as possible, thereby offering multiple perspectives at once. That is also why I provide both transliteration and phrases in the original languages throughout, and include the quotes in the original in footnotes, making the languages present and not solely mediated through English. Readers may be familiar with one or more of these languages, and for all types of audience I think it is important to encounter them all in some capacity. After establishing this vocabulary, I briefly explain each chapter's contribution to the project and then adumbrate several themes and ideas that run through the following chapters and inform my notion of the politics of mourning in a national context. Finally, I explain the methodology of this project, a critical comparative reading, examining its affordances and challenges alike.

Nationalism-לאומיות-وطنية

The conflict in Palestine/Israel has largely been shaped by national movements, though both Palestinian and Jewish nationalisms have complex links to religion, as the following chapters make clear. While the idea of nation and nationalism might seem ubiquitous and even

inevitable, it is of course historically contingent and culturally specific; nations and national movements are a fairly new phenomenon though they often build off of older social structures as part of legitimizing and justifying themselves. As I explain in Chapter Three on mourning mothers, "nation" derives from the Latin *natio*, to be born, and was used in reference to tribal and familial kinship as well as political groups. As national movements developed in the mid-19th century, they expanded the contours of familial affinity into a political unit.[3] This connection is evident in the terminology used in Arabic and Hebrew as well. Both languages use the same word for "nation" – *umma* in Arabic and *uma* in Hebrew (the emphasis is on the first syllable in Arabic and on the second in Hebrew), and both derive from the Semitic root for "mother" and have been used to designate a tribal group for centuries, long before modern nationalism. For the modern political meaning, though, the two languages diverge – Hebrew uses *le'om* and *le'umiyut* for "nation" and "nationalism" respectively; while Arabic uses the word *waṭan*, which means to settle or dwell in a place.[4] So, the Hebrew *le'umiyut* connotes a familial-ancestral claim whereas Arabic interprets a similar ancestral claim through a spatial connection to a territory.

As I use the English "nationalism" throughout this project, with all its culturally and historically specific connotations, it is important to remember the Arabic *waṭaniyya* (الوطنية) and the Hebrew *le'umiyut* (לאומיות) it represents. Nationalism has a specific history and resonances in the Middle East, with complex relations to the European models. Zionism, the modern Jewish national movement, largely developed in Europe in the last decades of the 19th century and was influenced by that continent's national movements. This trajectory is part of what has created an

[3] While "nationalism" was used in the mid-19th century, in different forms across languages, the phrase "nation-state" arrived later, as geo-politics changed in the aftermath of World War I and the world began rearranging itself into new structures.
[4] Despite the audial similarity between *uma* and *le'om*, the two likely derive from different origins; *le'om*, from ancient Akkadian, points to a collective coming together.

Ashkenazi hegemony among Jews, as European Jews assume leadership roles and claim cultural superiority over Arab Jews.[5] Arab nationalism has its own fraught history, refracted through colonialism and its lasting impacts. National movements in the Arab world often arose in opposition to European colonialism, meaning that both colonial structures and the resistance to them were imported from Europe, supplanting local political structures. In addition, the 1950s and 1960s saw a resurgence of the pan-Arab national movement, but its popularity declined with the dissolution of the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria) in 1961 and the defeat of 1967. Palestinian nationalism is part of the larger Arab world but also has particular characteristics stemming from foundational experiences like exile and dispossession.[6] Each chapter of this project grapples with a variety of implications of these distinct notions and history of nationalism.

The ultimate goal of modern national movements is the establishment of a nation-state, and so my project focuses on texts written in 1948 and thereafter. The establishment of the State of Israel is a realization of Zionism and cements the ongoing statelessness of Palestinians. There is one exception to this time frame in my corpus – a poem by the Palestinian poet ʻAbd al-Raḥīm Mahmoud written in 1936 that I analyze in Chapter One, explaining its relevance to the national project. I examine texts from a variety of historical moments, as early as Mahmoud's 1936 poem and as late as the alternative memorial ceremony of the last few years (2016-2020), explored in Chapter Four. My examination is not linear, partly because neither is mourning; it ebbs and flows, shifts in erratic ways, and so I contend that a non-linear approach captures a more accurate

[5] For more on the history of Zionism see, for example: Anita Shapira's *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force 1881-1948*. (1992); Neumann, Boaz. *Land and Desire in Early Zionism* (2011).
[6] For more on the history of Palestinian nationalism see, for example: Yadir Suleiman and Ibrahim Muhawi's *Literature and Nation in the Middle East* (2006); Rashid Khalidi's *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (1997).

image. This does not suggest that historical context is not important, quite the contrary; my project argues for a recontextualization of mourning which relies on history, but in a critical and complex fashion. And so, in each chapter I provide readers with historical and cultural background to illuminate and properly situate my textual readings. Rather than a chronology of mourning, I focus on the development of national narratives – a nation's foundational myths, the stories it tells to define itself – and the role mourning plays in them. This project therefore argues not for a history of mourning but rather a genealogy of it.

Focusing on nationalism runs the risk of reifying it, bolstering its impact just by discussing it. While I am aware of this potential pitfall, that critique of nationalism might end up reproducing some of its impact, I likewise recognize that its appeal has endured, that we are not living in a post-national era. The national myth is as strong as it has been and is perhaps even enjoying a resurgence. National movements and nation-states still hold great political power and will, in all likelihood, continue to be the dominant political structure for decades to come. That they are founded on mythology and imagination do not make them any less potent, perhaps more so. As Ryan Jobson writes about the nation-state, albeit in a different context: "nevertheless, the nostalgic appeal of a fictive coherence endures. The material scaffolding that supports this fiction – namely the ongoing violence of the state that underwrites its bureaucratic machinery – continues to enforce the constitutive limits of the political imagination" (265). Nationalism relies on presenting itself as natural and derives much of its effectiveness from this perceived transparency. Therefore, an effective analysis of the ideological mechanisms at its roots would de-naturalize them, revealing them as such, a process which requires recognizing the pervasive impact of national structures. In addition, whereas in some academic circles "imperial and anticolonial nationalisms are rendered indistinguishable," one of the tenets of this project is that

nationalism means different things in the context of a nation-state and outside of one, in my case in Israel and in Palestine (Bernard 8).[7] Establishing these distinctions requires a close and rigorous examination of the mechanisms at play.

Mourning-אבל-حداد

National movements are often engaged in struggle – against other nations, colonial forces or minority populations. Such struggles come at a high human price, especially as technologies of warfare continue to develop and increase the number of casualties. In other words, “nationalism itself is a formation produced in the space of ruins, of loss” (Eng and Kazanjian 12). Responding to these losses, and aiming to justify themselves despite these deaths, nations utilize mourning and incorporate them in their narratives: "Those concerned with the image and the continuing appeal of the nation worked at constructing a myth which would draw the sting from death in war and emphasize the meaningfulness of the fighting and sacrifice" (Mosse 6-7). Mechanisms of mourning are integrated into those national narratives, drawing on previous cultural and religious traditions and endowing the national claim with the solemnity of grief.

Mourning is a highly recognizable phenomenon, as everyone will be confronted with loss and the need to grapple with it at some point in their lives. The Kübler-Ross model, first published in *On Death and Dying* (1969), remains well-known, particularly in popular culture, though many agree it is “outdated and inaccurate” (O’Connor 732). The five stages of grief postulated in this model – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance – are presented as universal, but any such process is necessarily more complex, dynamic and culturally contingent. Cultures establish coping mechanisms, rituals and customs around mourning, that are grounded in their philosophical and theological understandings of life and death as well as in a

[7] For additional discussion of anticolonial nationalism as distinct see Shai Ginsburg (24-6), who follows and critiques anthropologist Partha Chatterjee.

need to ensure social order. The distinct cultural contexts and resonances of mourning in Israeli and Palestinian societies therefore require some elucidation. Israel defines itself as a Jewish state and its mourning customs and procedures – both institutional and cultural – derive from Jewish practices. That means that for the country's Jewish majority, rituals and events such as weddings and divorces, births and deaths are governed by Judaism, and specifically by Orthodox institutions. Non-Jewish minorities follow their own cultural-specific rituals. In Palestinian society, Islam is the prominent religion, mostly Sunni, and it dominates many aspects of cultural life as well, for example in the prominence of Muslim holidays and prayers in public spaces and the role of Islam in politics.[8] As I explore different aspects of mourning in each chapter, I provide relevant historical, religious and cultural context that therefore focuses on Judaism and Islam, but I do not mean to suggest they are the sole religious influence in the respective societies, just that they are central.

External expression and forms of prohibition and restriction are central features of Islamic customs of mourning. Classical Islam places limitations on the duration of mourning, and so for example in some sects grieving was permitted for only three days, unless it is a woman mourning her husband. However, these restrictions generally apply to external, social expressions of grief, not an internal emotional state, and their aim is to preserve societal functions. Some sects forbid crying while others allow it, at least for the period between death and burial. Grief is mostly expressed through clothing, appearance and food restrictions, and women have a leading role in such expressions and are seen as representing their families by doing so (Jonker 160).[9] Mourning in Islamic tradition is highly associated with women, an

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[8] Around 90% of Palestinians are Muslim, mostly Sunni. 6% or so are Christians and the rest are members of other religions, such as the Druze.
[9] In the Levant grieving women wear black, whereas in North Africa it is usually white.

inheritance from pre-Islamic Arabia as I explain in further detail in Chapter One regarding gendered customs of burial. On the third, seventh and fortieth days after burial, men go to the mosque and women prepare sweets and rolls to share with neighbors (ibid.). Muslim funerals include a procession, and in Palestine processions for those who die at the hands of Israeli authorities, especially in high profile cases, become politically charged occasions that are closely monitored by Israel.

Arabic has multiple words for the emotional aftermath of someone's death. The most common in modern Arabic is *ḥidād* (حداد), the root of which has at least two meanings – to delimit, and to mourn. From the first meaning Arabic derives the word for borders (*ḥudūd*, حدود) as well as for sharpness (*ḥidda*, حدة), as both relate to an edge or a line. The second meaning, mourning, is distinct from the first, but some dictionaries seek to establish a connection in a type of etiology, linking demarcation and the restrictions we have seen in Islamic tradition. *Ḥidād* is the most frequently used word to refer to mourning nowadays but the Quran tends to use another, *ḥuzn* (حزن). For example, *sūrat al-baqarah* assures believers that those who follow *Allah*, "have nothing to fear, nor shall they grieve," a formulation that recurs in other chapters as well (2.38). While it can still be used in this meaning in modern Arabic, *ḥuzn* also refers to sadness more generally, making it more mundane and less specific. Both meanings are evident in Mahmoud Darwish's 1973 *Journal of an Ordinary Grief* (يوميات الحزن العادي), in which he laments the loss of Palestine and whose title evokes sorrow both in its extreme state and its habitual nature.[10] Other Arabic words in this semantic field include *'azā'* (عزاء), used to express condolences; and *baka* (بكى) which generally means "to cry" but can also point to lamenting and mourning more specifically. Coincidentally, the same root refers to crying in Hebrew as well, *livkot/levakot*

[10] Darwish wrote several such journals over the years, including *Diary of a Palestinian Wound* (1969) and *Diary of a Citizen Without a Country* (1971).

(לבכות).[11] Still another root is used to describe someone who has lost a loved one, particularly in the context of war; a parent, especially a mother, or a family in such circumstances would be known as *thākil/a* (ثاكلة), bereaved. This root exists in Hebrew as well, usually designating parents and families of fallen soldiers, *shakul/a* (שכולה).[12] In both languages this root mostly appears in the adjectival form but can also be a verb or a noun. The Hebrew noun (*shkhol*, שכול) is often used as part of the phrase "Family of Bereavement," which gathers families who have lost loved ones in the context of the national dispute into one extended kinship unit, bound by grief. Such a family unit is necessarily defined by national lines, though those are only implied, unspoken and latent.

Judaism has its own traditions of mourning, with variations across communities and denominations (Levine 98-9). Broadly speaking, biblical rules and conventions about mourning express a worldview of setting boundaries, keeping the realms of life and death separate from each other as much as possible (Goldberg 199). Some mourning practices are biblical, while others developed from rabbinic traditions in the times of the *Mishna* and the *Talmud* (Goldberg 206). One Talmudic tractate in particular, *Evel Rabati* or in its euphemistic title *Semachot* (festivities), details procedures of grief in Judaism. Mourning is marked by a series of temporal milestones, starting with the period of *Aninut* between death and burial, followed by the *shiv'a* (seven days of mourning), the *sheloshim* (30-day period), and the eleventh-month memorial. Customs during these periods include refraining from certain activities and praying in memory of the deceased. Following these rituals varies depending on one's religiosity, but even most secular Israeli Jews usually maintain the custom of a funeral and *shiv'a* period. Funerals for Jews in

[11] *Livkot* denotes crying in general and does not have an implied object, whereas *levakot* – the same root in a different verb pattern – specifically points to mourning.
[12] The Arabic "th" sound and the Hebrew "sh" sound are sometimes interchangeable in words with similar meanings and etymology.

Israel are generally run by the Orthodox religious establishment; in recent years there has been some push to allow Conservative and Reform ceremonies as well as secular services, but these are still rare. Orthodox funerals follow specific protocols and include a series of prayers: the *Kaddish*, *Tsiduk Ha-din* (justification of the divine decree) and *El Maleh Raḥamim* (God full of mercy), which are said at the funeral, during the period of bereavement and at memorial ceremonies. These central prayers have both Ashkenazi and Mizrahi versions, and all pertain to finding solace through acknowledging that god is just even in times of grief.[13] A similar reaffirmation of faith in god is evident in a verse from the Book of Job recited at funerals, "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). After the funeral mourners enter seven days of mourning, the *shiv'a* (literally, seven) in which friends, family and acquaintances visit and offer consolation.[14]

The Hebrew word for grappling with loss is *evel* (אבל), whose etymology is unclear.[15] It is used in the Bible many times to describe mourning, for both personal losses and for collective ones. For example, when Joseph is sold by his brothers who then tell their father, Jacob, that he was eaten by a wild animal, Jacob is grief ridden: "and Jacob rent his clothes and put sackcloth upon his loins and mourned for his son many days" (Genesis 37:34). Some of Jacob's rituals of mourning persist in Jewish tradition, such as the rending of a garment. Years later, when Jacob himself dies and it is Joseph's turn to mourn his father, the son fulfils his father's wish to be buried in Canaan. Joseph is joined on his journey from Egypt to the burial in Hebron by many

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[13] Allen Ginsberg famously wrote his own private version of the *Kaddish*, dedicated to his mother on her death bed. The *El Maleh Raḥamīm* prayer received a poetic treatment from Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai, declaring, "God, full of mercy/ if God were not so full of mercy/ there would be mercy in the world and not just him." The rebuke in Amichai's poem seems to translate even without the powerful alliteration in the Hebrew.
[14] The seven-day period is modeled after the grief for Jacob in Genesis (Goldberg 197). To read about these rituals in more detail see: Goldberg; Lamm; Levine.
[15] Some link this word to the agricultural sphere and specifically to the land or plants drying out, as it appears in this sense in the Bible several times. This meaning existed in ancient Acadian (abālu), one of the sources of Hebrew, and has resonances in Arabic as well (abbana – to eulogize). See: Ḥaim Rabin, "Etymological Notes," (1964).

Egyptians, causing confusion among the Canaanites: “this is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians wherefore the name of it [the place] was called Avel Mitsraim” (Genesis 50:11). The English translation leaves the place name untranslated, but it literally means “Egypt mourns,” in a typical biblical etymology (*midrash shem*). This root is used throughout Hebrew and Jewish texts, for example in Maimonides’ 12th century *Mishneh Torah*, his explication of Jewish law, which includes a section on mourning called *hilkhot evel* (הלכות אבל).

Just like Arabic and Hebrew, English has its own connotations and traditions encompassed in the word “mourning.” The word originates in middle and old English, as well as Proto-Germanic in which *murnan* meant “to remember sorrowfully.” Since the 14th century it specifically describes lamenting death, and since the 16th century it is strongly linked to expressions of sorrow. That is also the distinction at least some see between mourning and grief – the former as an external expression of the latter, though they are often used interchangeably, nonetheless. Neither Arabic nor Hebrew have a similar formal distinction, though as we saw Arabic and Islam do emphasize the expressive aspect. Another word to consider in this context is “bereavement,” whose etymology points to something being taken away or robbed. There are some differences in usage between bereavement and the other words, most notably that it usually appears as a noun (bereavement) or an adjective (bereaved). While the verbal form “to bereave” does exist, it is rarely used in the context of loss of life but rather refers to a lost possession. “Bereavement” often describes a period of time after loss in formal contexts, for example when defining bereavement leave in an employment contract. When used as an adjective, including the truncated “the bereaved,” it is closest in meaning to the Hebrew *shakula* and the Arabic *thākila*. Interestingly, the verbs “to mourn” and “to grieve” point both to the subject, the one who mourns or grieves, and to an object of mourning or grief, something or someone whose loss has incited

this reaction. “Bereavement,” on the other hand, points only to the subject directly, with the lost object implied more obliquely.

Fraught Maps: Places, Identities

Since the end of the 19th century, the region in the Middle East between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River has been under the control of various regimes and known by several names, as maps were drawn and re-drawn by foreign powers and in the aftermath of wars. The land was part of the Ottoman Empire until its collapse in 1918, then under British Mandate between 1920-1948, as at the end of the First World War England and France divided up the region between them, creating many of the nation-states we know today with little regard for local politics and social groups. When the British left and Israel was established in 1948, parts of historical Palestine became its territory, and others were subsumed under Jordan and Egypt, and details of some of these changes recur throughout this project.[16] In 1967 the maps changed again as Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights, significantly broadening its hold and power in the region.[17] Various land negotiations throughout the years have modified the borders somewhat, though Israel maintains control over most of these territories.

As part of these frequent and usually violent changes, naming the places and social groups involved is a consequential and tense task. Assigning a name to an object or person is a powerful act of asserting ownership and dominion, and naming and renaming places is therefore a central practice of nationalism and colonialism, that demonstrates power and generates “cartographic hegemony” (Suleiman 8). In this reality, even basic geo-political terminology is

[16] For example, in Chapter Two I discuss borders at length, focusing on the Gaza region.
[17] These areas are all considered occupied by the international community, but not by Israel, in which each holds a particular legal status as the occupation is generally denied or glossed over.

fraught and requires clarification and active, constant probing. Naming the region itself is already a challenge – I use here the split Palestine/Israel, which often appears in scholarship and journalistic writing in the reverse Israel/Palestine. I choose the former precisely because it is less common and prioritizes the occupied territory over the state authority. The graphic marker between the two indicates the division and separation evident in the region as well as the ongoing tension and dispute; unlike the hyphen, for instance, the slash sign emphasizes separation over connection, as the two components remain fittingly distinct and unfused. But the term I choose is not without its problems, as Palestine is not a recognized state and using the split form to begin with might suggest a false equivalency or symmetry between the two entities. Moreover, how does the split form differ from mentioning Israel or Palestine separately? Do these labels point to different geographical locations or to diverging political approaches to the same place? For the sake of political and historical accuracy, as well as clarity, throughout the dissertation I use "Israel" when discussing the State of Israel, and "Palestine" when referring to the land from which Palestinians were expelled in 1948. These labels therefore point to roughly the same place geographically, though exact borders remain in dispute, and the name indicates a political view of it. I use "Palestine/Israel" when the emphasis is on the duality of competing claims as well as the power differential between them. In other words, I opt for a perspective-based approach and choose the word depending on the focus, while also not compromising my political stance. This approach does not solve every issue, however, especially when accounting for historical changes. Palestinians refer to the region as "Palestine" both before 1948 and thereafter, while Jewish-Israelis tend to use *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel) before statehood and Israel thereafter. But, during the British Mandate (1920-1948) the designation on many official documents named both

Palestina and *Eretz Yisrael*, an attempt at compromise at least on the nomenclature level.[18] This hyphenated term is now used exclusively in a historical context, and only in Hebrew; in a way it was outdated almost as soon as it was coined.

Much like place names, descriptors that derive from them are equally fraught. In the title of this dissertation, I refer to "Palestinian and Israeli literatures after 1948." I use "Palestinian" and "Israeli" because they point to national identity and my emphasis is on the nation, but these descriptors are anything but simple; they apply to people, whereas the literary corpus is labeled by the language in which it is written.[19] Arabic and Hebrew are both Semitic languages that share many similarities, as we have already started to see. But in the national context they have been made into irrevocable enemies, as part of a process of developing and insisting on distinction and distance; language, too, is subject to a process of nationalization, enlisting it for national purposes.[20] Although "Hebrew" and "Arabic" do not generally indicate national identity, we will see throughout this project that these categories become entangled and blurred, and that they have political implications. Both languages are spoken both within and outside of a national context – the development of modern Hebrew has strong ties with Zionism, but it was not always its exclusive language; Arabic is spoken across a wide range of countries, from

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[18] "*Eretz Yisrael*" was sometimes bracketed. For more on the history of these terms see, for example, Shapira ix.

[19] Think, for example, about the difference between "French literature" pertaining to literature written in France, and literature written anywhere in the world in French. Perhaps there was a time in world history in which national and lingual labels aligned completely, though I doubt it, but after centuries of imperialism, colonialism and global immigration, such alignment surely does not exist now.

[20] Ella Habiba Shoḥat writes about this process from the perspective of an Arab-Jew who had to suppress the Arab part of her identity. For example, she quotes Zionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky who, in 1930, advocated against any perceived affinity between Hebrew and Arabic for national reasons: "There are experts who think that we ought to bring our accent closer to the Arabic accent. But this is a mistake. Although Hebrew and Arabic are Semitic languages, it does not mean that our Fathers spoke in 'Arabic accent'.… We are Europeans and our musical taste is European, the taste of Rubinstein, Mendelsshon, and Bizet" (quoted in *Women and Conflict* 264). While Jabotinsky himself was sidelined by the labor wing of Zionism and died in 1940, he continues to be a central inspiration for the Israeli right wing and is often quoted by leaders such as Netanyahu.

Morocco in the west to Oman and Yemen in the east.[21] Palestinian literature is broadly situated under the umbrella of Arabic literature, but Palestinians might write in other languages as well, such as Hebrew, English or French. For example, the vast majority of Palestinian writers featured in this project write in Arabic, with two notable exceptions: Ḥanan ‘Ashrawi’s poem at the top of this chapter is originally in English; and Edward Said, whose eulogy for Ibrahim Abu-Lughod I analyze in Chapter Two and whose entire career was in English. The term “Israeli literature” is sometimes used but it is quite ambiguous. Literature was written in Hebrew long before statehood and can still be written by non-Israelis, though the state does consolidate much of the literary enterprise.[22] Some Hebrew writers are not Israeli, and vice versa, just like Arabic literature and Palestinian literature do not entirely overlap.

Terminology is even more complicated and tense when it comes to peoples’ identities, given the fraught history and interactions between religion, ethnicity and nationality. As we have seen, Israel defines itself as a Jewish state, and around 80% of its citizens are Jews. “Jewish” was a religious designation up until the last third of the 19th century, when the advent of Zionism redefined it as both a religion and a nationality. “Zionist” designates a proponent of the Jewish national movement and remains a potent political term in Israel today, but it never became a marker of citizenship. Citizens of the state are Israelis, whether they are Jews or not, but under the nationality clause of an Israeli identity card – which everyone is legally required to carry – what appears is, in fact, ethnic affiliation; one could be listed as “Jewish,” “Arab,” or have no

[21] For a more extensive critical explanation of the division of literature into national categories see Suleiman and Muhawi 4. There are, of course, many Arab dialects but the standard form, known as *fusḥa*, pervades them all. For more on the language struggles between Hebrew and Yiddish see: Naomi Seidman, *A Marriage Made in Heaven: The Sexual Politics of Hebrew and Yiddish*, (1997).
[22] In 2015 the rules of the Israeli Sapir Prize for Literature were changed so that the prize can only be awarded to a writer who is an Israeli citizen or permanent resident and who lives in Israel. The change came after Re’uven Namdar, who lives in the U.S., won in 2014, generating controversy.

nationality listed, but “Israeli” is not an option.[23] Roughly 20% of Israeli citizens are Arabic speakers who are ethnically Palestinian, a group which includes Muslims (including Bedouins), Christians, and Druze. These Israeli citizens use a variety of terms to describe themselves, depending on tradition and political persuasion, though the state generally refers to them by the uniform title “Arab-Israelis.” Because this term elides national identity, I opt instead for Palestinian citizens of Israel, though I recognize not all of them would identify with this designation.[24]

I use “Palestinians” to refer to anyone who is ethnically Palestinian, and I specify other elements of their identity when relevant, pertaining to religion, citizenship and dwelling place: Muslim, Christian, Druze, Bedouin; Israeli citizen, stateless resident of the West Bank or Gaza, or otherwise in exile. Of the Palestinian writers I discuss in the subsequent chapters, only Mahmoud Darwish was a citizen of Israel, though he relinquished his citizenship and left for the Arab world in the early 1970s. Moreover, his Israeli citizenship did not abate his exilic experience; if anything, it may have compounded it. Most of the writers and characters in the first three chapters are Palestinians living in various forms of exile, in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, in other countries in the Middle East or elsewhere. The two exceptions are Elias Khoury, the Lebanese author of *Gate of the Sun* which I analyze in Chapter One because it focuses on the Palestinian experience; and ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmoud, whose poem “The Martyr” I analyze in the same chapter, who lived in Palestine and died in the 1948 war, before Israeli

[23] The Ministry of the Interior, which issues the identity cards, has changed its policy several times in the last few decades. In 2002 they altered the nationality clause so that it includes a row of asterisks. This change was an attempt to prevent people who converted to Judaism under the reform process to be recognized as Jewish. The clause was reinstated in 2011, and since 2014 one can be listed as “Aramaic,” but still not as “Israeli.”

[24] My choice is in direct response to Israeli tendencies to delegitimize the Palestinian national movement, emblemized by Prime Minister Golda Meir’s habit of saying she was Palestinian, and anyone who lived in that territory before 1948 was too and there was no such thing as the Palestinian people. Meir, Israel’s fourth Prime Minister, was born in Kyiv and grew up in Milwaukee before immigrating to pre-1948 Palestine.

statehood. The fourth chapter, analyzing a joint memorial ceremony, includes a discussion of Palestinian citizens of Israel as one participant, Amal al-Sa'ad, is a Bedouin Palestinian citizen of Israel who explicitly discusses how her complex position impacts her mourning.

These distinctions show the complexity of defining identity in a region rife with loss and ongoing political strife; words, much like the land, remain very much in dispute, which impacts mourning these losses. The political weight and implications of naming identities and places are evident in naming the fallen themselves, and so texts I analyze use diverging terminology, depending on the era and tradition. In the Palestinian context, the word *shahīd* (شهيد), or martyr, appears in most chapters and I explain its history and development, as well as other words used at different times. In the 1950s and 1960s, for instance, the more common term was *fidā'ī* (فدائي, self-sacrifice), which like *shahīd* draws on both religion and nationalism. These words immediately indicate one's identity – a Jew would never be described as a *shahīd* – and have widely different connotations in the original Arabic and when they appear in Hebrew. In the Israeli context a fallen soldier is known as a *ḥalal* (חלל), whose origins are biblical, and which literally means "a void, lack." Here, too, the word necessarily implies identity, as it would not be applied to a non-Jew. Writing about nationalism and mourning in Palestine/Israel requires using these terms and grappling with their implications. As the cliché goes, one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter, and as clichés often are it is both simplistic and true. Generally speaking, I have opted here to refer to fallen Israelis as soldiers or civilians, depending on their status. I refer to fallen Palestinians as fighters or civilians, though that distinction is itself murky, a topic which I address in each chapter; I use "fighter" because a regular Palestinian army does not exist. Establishing and explicating terminology is necessary for my discussion of nationalism and mourning, but these terms ought not be read simply as entries in a dictionary. Rather, they

point to cultural frameworks defining how mourning and nationalism operate in a variety of contexts. They are open questions, molds whose content is refashioned through lived experiences and is therefore inherently in flux and unstable. Mourning and nationalism are remade and reshaped as they occur, as they are described and performed in poetry and prose, in eulogies and speeches, by family members and public figures, in private and in public. I do not presume or intend to resolve the complexity of these concepts but rather ask readers to keep these choices in mind as they read, when they agree with my choices as when they disagree. As I juxtapose the Arabic *ḥidād* and the Hebrew *evel*, interrogating the relationships between them in Palestine/Israel and how they shape nationalism and are shaped by it, I hope to offer a new perspective on the ways in which they are implicated in one another in fraught and uneven ways.

Chapters

I start my interrogation of the relationship between nationalism and mourning with the dead body and burial, perhaps the initial ritual of mourning. The first chapter, "Putting the Unburiable to Rest: The Politics of the Dead Body," analyzes the centrality of dead bodies in the national imagination in Palestine/Israel. The analysis focuses on literary representations of corpses and the process of interring them (or not) in the disputed ground. I juxtapose a well-known trope in Hebrew poetry – the dead-living (*Ha-met ha-ḥai*) – with a figure in Palestinian literature which I term the living-dead. In Hebrew poems by Nathan Alterman and Haim Gouri, the dead-living is a corpse that transcends death through national symbolism, whereas in the Palestinian novels of Mahmoud Darwish and Elias Khoury the precarity of war causes the living-dead to experience death while still alive.[25] While in both contexts the lines between life and

[25] I recognize that Khoury is not, as I said, Palestinian himself, but this novel is entirely focused on the Palestinian experience in the aftermath of the *Nakba*. Moreover, as I explain in some detail in chapters one and two, many Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon and become involved in that country's political life and ultimately embroiled in its bloody civil war.

death are blurred, the existence of the nation-state allows the dead-living to become a national symbol and allows the nation to mourn; in the Palestinian context, however, the living body sees its death as inevitable but cannot be mourned while living, especially as mourning is still necessary for the lost land.

After examining the corporeal politics of dead bodies and burial, I shift the focus to a verbal ritual of mourning. In the second chapter, "Eulogizing Nations," I analyze the eulogy as a genre that is simultaneously intimate and public, personal and political. At the heart of this chapter is a comparative reading of two eulogies: one given by Israeli general Moshe Dayan for soldier Roi Rotberg, killed by Palestinians in 1956, and another by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish for his fellow writer Ghassān Kanafāni, killed by Israel in 1972. Both eulogies shape mourning on a collective scale, creating a community through mourning and speaking for a collective "we." Darwish constructs an elaborate analogy between the deceased Kanafāni and Palestine, using the eulogy to mourn the lost land and attempt to reclaim it. In Dayan's text, Jews have already realized their claim to the same land, but he still expresses an urgency in defending it as if they have not, revealing a profound anxiety about a land always on the brink of loss. My analysis shows how eulogies are used to articulate competing claims for sovereignty over the same land, as loss is expanded beyond the individual. I trace how these trends persist in a few other eulogies to show their impact and prevalence.

If the first two chapters examine rituals of mourning, the third chapter turns to the figure of the mourning mother, whose centrality is evident already in the epigraphs from 'Ashrawi and Hendel in this introduction. In "Anticipating Grief: Mothers in Mourning in Kanafāni and Grossman" I analyze two novels: Ghassān Kanafāni's *Sa'ad's Mother* (1969) and David Grossman's *To the End of the Land* (2008). In both novels, mothers begin to mourn the loss of

their sons as part of the national dispute even though they have not yet died. My analysis therefore focuses on temporality as the novels redefine mourning not as something that follows loss but can precede it. And yet this loss is not presented only as a threat but as lived experience. Such a temporal reversal stems from the omnipresence of violence and changes the process and implications of mourning, and also complicates the relationship between the biological mother and the metaphor of the nation as maternal. The temporal aspect is complemented by a spatial one, as Kanafāni's Umm Sa'ad is confined to her home but constantly alludes to the distant Palestine, whereas Grossman's Ora travels freely through Israel as her family home is falling apart. For both mothers, grief is linked to possibilities of resistance, though in vastly different ways. I therefore ask whether grief can also be an act of resistance, or what resistance might mean in the context of loss – what is each of these mothers resisting through her premature yet inevitable grief?

Resistance and its potential role in mourning is likewise featured in my concluding fourth chapter. In the texts I examine in the first three chapters, Palestinians and Israelis' grief is clearly distinct, demonstrating what for Butler is central to mourning in the national context – solidifying definitions of "self" and "other." In the final chapter, however, I turn to a potentially different model – the joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day ceremony. I analyze the history and contents of this ceremony, in which Palestinians and Israelis mourn together, side by side, recognizing each other's pain. Such efforts are fraught and challenging, and also face political obstacles from the Israeli government and both societies. Nevertheless, the ceremony continues, and through it I ask what it might mean to mourn together, how the power differential still informs this attempt at solidarity, and whether this kind of mourning might be an act of resistance. This fourth and final chapter ties together topics broached in the previous chapters

and highlights ongoing and remaining questions and serves as a reminder of the real-life and urgent stakes of the entire project.

Throughout these chapters, I discuss mourning rather than other adjacent terms, such as memory, commemoration and trauma. Mourning, in my view, more specifically describes a distinct reaction to death and loss, whereas memory and trauma can be the results of other experiences as well. Since my focus is grappling with deaths that happen in the context of national violence, mourning is more productive and useful to me than more capacious, perhaps overdetermined concepts. Memory and trauma in particular have been the subject of copious scholarship in the humanities, social sciences and medical fields, and in literary studies their attachment to psychoanalysis still carries significant weight. I believe that mourning provides me with more analytic space for an interrogation of literature and politics. Importantly, memory and trauma are not banished from this dissertation, in a type of tiresome oedipal rejection of one term in favor of another that I try to avoid. Rather, my project is informed by these related terms and the literature behind them, while still maintaining the specificity of mourning. Chapter Four, on the joint memorial ceremony, for example, negotiates the relationship between memory, commemoration and mourning at some length, demonstrating both the role they play and the distinctions among them.

Through lines

The four chapters of this project examine the mechanisms through which nationalism utilizes mourning in a variety of genres and time periods. The first three chapters – on bodies and burial, eulogies and mourning mothers – focus on written texts. The chapters on bodies and mothers analyze literary texts, prose and poetry, while the chapter on eulogies puts forth a literary reading of the rhetoric of eulogies, discussing the textual devices employed in them as

well as their social and political contexts. Eulogies might not be considered literary objects by some, but the ones I analyze are highly formulated and carefully crafted, and have been reproduced as cultural artifacts, meriting the kind of literary analysis I offer. Chapter Four, however, focuses on addresses spoken in public, written not by professional writers or orators but rather members of the general public speaking about their own grief. These speeches have not been formally published and are available after the fact only as video recordings.

Additionally, the texts in the first three chapters are highly canonical. They are written by well-known writers and circulate widely in their respective cultural contexts, though the disparities between the institutional Hebrew-Israeli canon and the dispersed Palestinian canon bear repeating. Focusing on canonical works has implications, and so in the Israeli context, for example, it means that the writers I discuss are all part of the Ashkenazi hegemony, at the expense of writers who are Mizrahi Jews, or Arab-Jews. In the Palestinian context I discuss established authors rather than less famous and more current writers such as ‘Adania Shibli, Hala Alyan and Dareen Tatour, for example.[26] Focusing on the established canon also results in a corpus dominated by male writers – Darwish, Khoury, Alterman, Gouri, Dayan, Kanafāni and Grossman. The latter two, whose novels are the subject of the third chapter, write about women, and gender features prominently in my discussion of their texts. Nevertheless, they are men writing about women. In choosing canonical figures, if not always their most canonical texts, I am not challenging the existing canons. But, since my claims are about mourning and power, and the impact of institutions or lack thereof, the canon is instrumental. As Shai Ginsburg explains, literature has a significant role in nationalism, because “it is precisely through the exchange

[26] Perhaps the exception in my literary corpus is Taha Muhammad ‘Ali, whose poem “Revenge” I analyze in the fourth chapter. ‘Ali is not unknown but is certainly less canonical than some of his fellow writers and continued working in his Nazareth gift shop for most of his life.

between texts of different genres and of divergent rhetorical strategies that the political and ideological gist of the discourse of the nation as a whole is generated" (7). Following this approach, I contend that the canon plays a central role in this process as it circulates most widely. Put another way, the focus of this project is precisely on canonical mourning due to the canon's effects within national discourse. The notable exception is the last chapter of my project and the memorial ceremony which operates outside of the normative framework of naming, outside the national canon and its monolingual ways. It is no wonder, then, that one of the most memorable speakers at the ceremony is Amal al-Sa'ad, a Palestinian woman.

Put together, the four chapters share several features and themes that underline central aspects of mourning in a national context. One of the most prominent elements of the intersection of mourning and nationalism is the tension between personal and collective – between the intimate nature of grief for a loved one and the public reckoning when the circumstances are national. This tension pervades the four chapters in different ways. For example, the eulogies I examine in Chapter Two oscillate between the individuals eulogized and the national implications of their deaths, as the speakers enshrine the objects of their addresses in the national annals. Or consider another example – Ora and Umm Sa'ad, the mourning mothers in Chapter Three, teeter between their personal roles as parents and their enlistment in their respective national narratives. The predicted and inevitable loss of their sons puts the tension between these two aspects of motherhood into sharp relief. This fraught dynamic raises a fundamental and pivotal question – who mourns after loss, the individual or the nation? Can a nation, an abstraction, indeed mourn, or is that notion an ideological device? Grappling with these questions, in my view, complicates a concept like collective memory as part of the critique of nationalism, calling into question the mechanisms that create a national collective through

mourning. Highlighting this tension, I interrogate the central myth of the nation as “the many as one” specifically as it relates to mourning (Shai Ginsburg 22).

Alongside the emphasis on the relationship between the personal and collective, all four chapters grapple with temporality as it relates to grief. The most prominent example is in Chapter Three, on mothers prematurely yet inevitably mourning their sons, but it is by no means the only one. So, when discussing bodies and burial in Chapter One, temporality is part of the blurring of the line between the living and the dead. Perhaps the clearest example of this is Darwish’s *Memory for Forgetfulness*, whose narrative time is complexly disjointed as the narrator tries to survive constant bombardment in Beirut. In addition, as dead bodies become metaphorically living national symbols in a nation-state, a new possibility for a political afterlife emerges, underscoring an element of futurity inherent in mourning on the national scale. Temporal issues likewise appear in the chapter on eulogies, as these addresses construct national narratives that incorporate history and even enlist it for present purposes. In fact, as a genre the eulogy negotiates the relationship between the past and the present.

Complementing the temporal aspect, spaces are also a significant aspect of mourning, especially in the national context. Both Grossman and Kanafāni’s novels in Chapter Three trace a map of the same land from different vantage points. Dayan and Darwish’s eulogies forge competing claims of sovereignty based on diverging interpretations of attachment to the same land. The land is also where dead bodies are buried, or not buried, as explored in the first chapter. Finally, the alternative ceremony in the concluding chapter is an attempt to mourn together, while struggling to find space, physical and metaphorical, in the traditional national narrative. The recurrence of space throughout the chapters is an indication of the role it plays in both nationalism and mourning, which in the context of Palestine/Israel is deeply informed by

two different iterations of exile and a longing to return. Zionism was founded in response to Jews being dispersed across the globe for centuries and subject to violence and animosity, and a longstanding desire to return was translated into national terms. Palestinians had been living in the same land for centuries and were thrust into exile when Israel was established. One people's return to the land resulted in the expulsion of the other, one people's independence was another's disaster, *al-Nakba* (النكبة) as it is known in Arabic.[27] As the chapters ahead illustrate, the Palestinian exile is very much ongoing and most Palestinians have never been allowed to return, generating what Muhawi calls a "de-territorialised community" (7).[28] Since Israeli statehood in 1948 led to their exile, one of the leading political principles for Palestinians is the Right of Return (*ḥaq al- 'awda*, حق العودة), which appears throughout Palestinian literature including multiple examples in this project; Darwish draws on it in his eulogy for Kanafāni, in whose novel *Umm Sa'ad* return is an important theme. Israel has long sought to rebuff the Right of Return for Palestinians, viewing it as an existential threat, while simultaneously codifying Jews' historical claims in its Law of Return (חוק השבות, 1950). Under this law, any Jew is permitted to immigrate to the State of Israel and become a citizen, while Palestinians who have lived there are regularly denied not only citizenship but entry. Exile and return are, therefore, both historical and live issues in the region, in a kind of politics of return, like two sides of a pendulum between which the people of the land violently oscillate.

Methodology: Critical Comparison

Comparison is forbidden, *asur le-hashvot* (אסור להשוות), proclaims a common political slogan in Israel. The slogan does not specify what must not be compared, nor does it say why,

[27] As I explain in chapter 4, Israel has tried to minimize the use of the word "*Nakba*" through legislation and disputes many of the historical details of the expulsion.
[28] After Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 some movement was allowed but given the ongoing occupation that has not proven to be an actual reprieve.

but the implication is clear – the Holocaust cannot be compared to any other historical event; it stands alone as unique and thus outside of history. Any attempt to compare it to other atrocities or genocides is misguided and even morally wrong. Most urgently, the slogan is used to assert that one must not compare the Holocaust to what Israel is doing to Palestinians under occupation. Comparison is perceived as a threat because it is thought of as equating, saying two things are identical. Unlike this oversimplified view, my project argues for and promotes a nuanced and critical approach to comparison. In each chapter I read texts from the Palestinian and the Israeli contexts in conjunction. Importantly, I read each text in its original language and on its own terms first, situating it in its context before bringing the texts into conversation.[29] That is at the core of my comparative methodology – understanding the context and language before any conversation can take place. The role of comparison is not, in my view, to bridge differences but rather to examine, present and analyze them. A comparison that does not center power structures risks generating a false symmetry that would be both intellectually disingenuous and politically harmful. In my case, such an approach might conclude that mourning transcends national lines and unites us all as people, in a type of flat humanism that I wholly reject. Or else, such an approach might align with the consensus in Israeli discourse that mourning is above politics and therefore beyond reproach, a view which I consider entirely ideological. Rather, I opt for a comparison that maintains difference and analyzes mourning as part of the political schema; indeed, revealing the mechanisms by which nationalism enlists mourning is the crux of my argument. My comparative reading of mourning and nationalism is informed by the power

[29] I present the texts in English translation in the body of the text, with the original Arabic and Hebrew in footnotes. This way I hope to make the texts equally accessible to readers, as much as possible. I refer to the original languages often, explaining specific characteristics and contexts necessary for my analysis.

imbalance in the region, and my critique of nationalism is grounded in an analysis of power as constituted by and refracted through language and translation.

At the same time, I do insist on bringing the two contexts and languages into conversation with each other knowing it is a provocation, especially in relation to mourning. Hebrew and Arabic literatures are infrequently read together, and some of the texts I analyze have not been translated between the two languages, sometimes leading me to create my own translations so readers can view my corpus in its entirety. The rarity of such conjoined readings, I believe, is a continuation of the fortification of national narratives and literary canons, which I likewise hope to challenge. Few scholars work in both Arabic and Hebrew, and only in the last two decades or so has there been some increase in scholarly writing on their intersections.[30] However, even this writing tends to be limited in scope, often deals with a small range of texts and authors and has some conceptual and political problems. Two examples can illustrate these issues: first, much of the scholarship on Hebrew and Arabic together focuses on Arab-Jews and Palestinians writing in Hebrew. These topics are certainly important, and such writers have produced captivating literature, but focusing on them still privileges Hebrew and overlooks the literary output of Palestinians in Arabic, their first language. This leads me to the second issue – many of the scholars writing about such literature are Jewish, and often Israeli, and do not have equal proficiency in Hebrew and Arabic. Scholars' identity does not preclude them from writing, of course, but it necessarily informs their work and partakes in the existing power dynamics, a fact that ought to be acknowledged and reckoned with. I write this as a Jewish citizen of Israel

[30] Examples include: Ammiel Alcalay's *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (1993); Rachel Feldhay Brenner's *Inextricably Bonded: Israeli Arab and Jewish Writers Re-Visioning Culture* (2003); Gil Hochberg's *In Spite of Partition: Jews, Arabs and the Limits of Separatist Imagination* (2007); Lital Levy's *Poetic Trespass: Writing Between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine* (2014); Anna Bernard's *Rhetorics of Belonging: Nation, Narration and Israel/Palestine* (2013). Notably, these writers' proficiency in Arabic varies.

myself, who is aware of the challenges involved and knows that my positionality and privilege inform my writing; I cannot offset that, but I can acknowledge it. To borrow from Israeli poet Sami Shalom Chetrit, “I am the murderer/ And a thousand petitions against the occupation won’t/ help me.” As he continues, “it was me who shot the forsaken horse,” referring to a poem by Darwish (Chetrit 9). Like Chetrit, I acknowledge that it was me who shot the horse, whether I like it or not.[31]

My choice to read Palestinian and Israeli texts in Arabic and in Hebrew together is not without its faults and could be seen by some as an act of normalization, a fraught issue in Palestinian politics, especially since the Oslo Accords (1993-4).[32] My positionality compels my comparative reading, and I would not expect a Palestinian scholar to approach such a project in the same way. To be clear – my comparative methodology rejects a notion of symmetry between the conditions of Palestinians and Israelis, as well as between their suffering; such symmetry does not exist in reality, and I do not engage in the cynical act of measuring anyone’s pain. In reading Palestinian and Israeli texts alongside each other I do not suggest an affinity between them but rather an adjacency, recognizing that Palestinians and Israelis inhabit the same space, and that this fact is not likely to change. The mourning I examine in this project stems directly from the violent and ongoing national conflict over that same land. As such, Palestinian and Israeli mourning are adjacent to each other, interlocked and enmeshed in what has long seemed like an irrevocable clash which continues to add bloodshed and grief. As we will see in the

[31] Shoḥat articulates a similar position thusly: “critics belong to a community, and act in certain circles. But there is a moral difference between the critic who belongs to the oppressors and the critic from the oppressed society” (quoted in Lentin 2).
[32] Normalization, according to some of its opponents, is a type of “colonization of the mind”, but views on it in Palestinian society are diverse and complex. See, for example: Mai Albzour, “The Concept of Normalization Between the Duality of Rejection and Acceptance,” (2017); Mahmoud Mi’Ari, “Attitudes of Palestinians Toward Normalization with Israel,” (1999). In the last few years, Israel has attempted to achieve normalization with other Arab countries, such as Morocco, the UAE and Baḥrain, sidestepping the Palestinian conflict.

subsequent analyses of bodies and burial, eulogies, and mothers, part of what nationalized mourning requires is a fortification of the national group, a consolidation of the lines, done in different ways and for different purposes within a state and outside of one. My comparative methodology responds to these seemingly contradictory trends – Palestinian and Israeli mourning being at once interconnected and separated, not unlike the two peoples are in everyday life in Palestine/Israel. That is why my dissertation culminates in an analysis of the alternative Israeli-Palestinian memorial ceremony, which attempts to put both pains in conversation. This critical comparison in no way wishes to equate; rather, it observes the existing proximity and linkage and attempts to recast them, challenging the boundaries of academic disciplines and political power and the political uses of mourning.

Chapter 1 Putting the Unburiable to Rest: The Politics of the Dead Body

"There will be no act of public grieving (said Creon in Antigone)"
(Judith Butler, Precarious Life 36)

On a Wednesday night in January 2016, twelve days after opening fire at a Tel-Aviv bar and killing three people, and five days after being gunned down by Israeli security forces following a manhunt, Nash'at Milḥim (نشأت ملحم) was buried in his hometown of 'Ara'ara (عرعرة) in the North of Israel. Police limited the funeral to 80 people, and the body was transported to the town hours earlier after being held by Israeli authorities since Milḥim was shot. Even after death the body is considered a threat and its burial has to be negotiated and controlled.[33] Bodies of soldiers and fighters are exchanged as part of political dealings after they are killed and captured by the other side, and the dead body becomes a morbid currency in an economy of warfare.[34] These transactions thereby demonstrate the role bodies play on the political stage even after they are dead, in the political afterlife of the dead; corpses transferred under the cover of darkness, authorities hoping to avoid any unrest, and burial services held reluctantly.

Such occurrences are not uncommon in Palestine/Israel, both during times of official war and following daily occurrences of violence. Human remains are negotiated, their value

[33] Another instance took place just two months later and involved 'Abd al-Fatāḥ al-Sharīf, who stabbed a soldier in Hebron and was subsequently shot and killed even though he was already neutralized. Al-Shareef was buried some two months after he died, his body being held by Israeli authorities. Milḥim, in the 'Ar'ara case, was a Palestinian citizen of Israel whereas al-Sharīf was a stateless resident of the West Bank.
[34] This phenomenon indeed takes place on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides, and thus for example the bodies of two Israeli soldiers are still held by Ḥamās since the 2014 war in Gaza. Due to the power relations in the area, and Israel being the occupying force, many more Palestinians are captured than the other way around.

determined by what the other side is willing to exchange for them.[35] The cases that make it to newspapers and receive wide public discussion may be especially dramatic, but they point to a broader principle – dead bodies carry great political meaning with important consequences for the living as well. The human body has been recognized as a central political site by theorists and activists alike for some decades now. But corporeal politics are not limited to the living organism; the corpse, too, is part of the political sphere and informs the way it operates. Much of the emphasis by theorists like Foucault and Agamben has been on bodies being put to death, but I focus here on the politics of the corpse. Remains themselves, I argue, as well as the way with which they are dealt, play a complex political role – from the physical act of burial (or lack thereof) to the way loss is conceptualized and integrated into the narratives and mythology nations cultivate to define themselves.

In this chapter, I examine how Palestinian and Israeli literatures navigate and negotiate dead bodies, incorporating them into the national mythology. In both the Palestinian and Israeli contexts, the main method for dealing with remains is interment, as opposed to cremation, for example. In addition to questions of burial, the texts I analyze illustrate multiple other mechanisms of grappling with the dead. Dead bodies concretize the abstract notion of death, as a physical and material example, but are also often given symbolic meaning. As tangible objects, remains have enhanced symbolic efficacy – they can transcend time while also being undeniably present. As a result, bodies can ground and anchor political arguments, what Katherine Verdery calls "localizing a claim" (28). Sociologist Robert Hertz views this duality as the two "lives" of the dead – the natural or biological level focusing on the decaying flesh, and the cultural level, in

[35] Israel has a cemetery for enemy soldiers. Burial there is largely considered temporary, though some bodies have been there for decades.

which they are valued cultural artifacts endowed with meaning (Laqueur 11).[36] This chapter focuses, then, on two levels of dealing with remains – burying the bodies and endowing them with meaning as part of nation-building and maintaining nationalism. My argument determines that the biological level and the cultural level are deeply connected and shows how both the corporeal and the symbolic are utilized within the structures of nationalism.

My argument is centered on two poetic and political figures in Israeli and Palestinian literatures – the dead-living and the living-dead. I analyze two foundational Hebrew poems written during the 1948 war – "The Silver Platter" and "Behold, Our Bodies Are Laid Out" – in which dead bodies participate in the national effort, demonstrating through the figure of the dead-living the fraught relationship between the personal meaning of loss and the collective aspect attached to it. Palestinian literature, I show, depicts a different figure – a living body that sees its own death as inevitable and imminent. I locate this figure in a 1936 poem called "The Martyr" and demonstrate its development in conditions of continued dispossession in two later novels, *Memory for Forgetfulness* and *Gate of the Sun*. Juxtaposing these two figures demonstrates the central function of the dead body as a political locus in both contexts while also foregrounding the uneven conditions within a state and outside of one. They are two types of unburied bodies: the dead-living which becomes a symbol and therefore transcends its own corporeality, obviating burial; and the living-dead who is still living but feels already dead. It cannot be buried but does not fully live either. In both cases burial is complicated, if not impossible, altering our understanding of mourning as well as the lines between life and death.

In order to anchor this argument, I begin the chapter by examining a paradigmatic literary representation of the politics of a corpse and its burial – Sophocles' *Antigone*. The theoretical

[36] The role of metaphor when discussing the dead, and in particular using terms like "life" and "afterlife," will be significant, and problematic, throughout my analyses as well.

frameworks I draw on to explain the politics of dead bodies throughout this chapter are biopolitics and necropolitics, though my emphasis is less on being put to death and more on burial and what happens to bodies after death. To that end, I provide background and context regarding burial practices and rituals in both Israeli and Palestinian societies. The result is an argument about the fraught politics of dead bodies within national movements in Palestine/Israel, rooted in theory and cultural background and focused on a comparative literary analysis.

Transferring Bodies: Burial, Translation

> It's the burial. It's our brothers:
> Creon, honoring one and casting the other out.
> They say he has buried Eteocles
> with full and just and lawful honors due to the dead;
> but Polyneices, who died as pitiably –
> Creon has proclaimed that his body will stay unburied;
> no mourners, no tomb, no tears,
> a tasty meal for the vultures. (*Antigone*, 22)

Antigone stands before her dead brother's unburied body and feels compelled to act, to do something, not to let the situation go on. She insists on burying him despite King Creon's explicit prohibition, explaining that the king: "cannot keep me from my own" (22). In this she means her kin, of course, but she is also aligning herself with the dead: "I will bury him myself. /If I die for doing that, good:/ I will stay with him, my brother; /and my crime will be devotion. /The living are here, / But I must please those longer/ who are below; for with the dead/ I will stay forever" (23-4).[37] Burial, for Antigone, is a moral and political obligation – she refuses to let the unburied

[37] Antigone's affinity to the dead over family is underscored by the fact that Creon, too, is her kin – Jocasta's brother – and so in "my own" Antigone means a bond more significant to her than biological kinship. This affinity is also

body become unburiable, as this would normalize and legitimize its current state which she sees as an aberration. The justification she sees for this is divine, claiming that justice lives among "the gods of the dead" (39). Aligning justice with the dead, Antigone chooses to obey the law of the gods (and the dead) over that of men. As she explains to Creon: "I didn't suppose your decree had strength enough, /or you, who are human, /to violate the lawful traditions/ the gods have not written merely, but made infallible" (39).

The dead body lies, therefore, at the center of the tension between two sets of laws and allegiances – on the one hand the written law of the land, the human, the king and the living; and on the other the unwritten law of family, gods, morality and the dead. Antigone chooses, rather easily it seems, the latter, and insists on a proper burial of her brother's corpse, even at the price of her own life. Is hers, then, a politics centered on death, favoring death over the living? Sophocles' play complicates this possibility because despite the seemingly clear divisions between the two sets of laws and their respective principles, it is Creon's law – supposedly favoring the living – which in fact condemns Antigone to death and eventually results in the deaths of Haimon and Eurydice as well. No politics, one might argue, is not at least also a politics of death. The divisions between life and death are more porous and inconclusive, and the political permeating both realms. The dead body exemplifies this precarious state, perhaps is even itself the site of precarity and muddling of boundaries as it is liminal and destabilizing – dead but still affecting the living, absent in spirit but still physically present, eliciting response as it interdicts it.[38] This body does not fully belong neither to life nor to death; it destabilizes both,

related to spatial divisions – the dead on one side, the living on another, and Antigone as crossing a threshold. Lacan also famously explores Antigone's relation to death in his seminar on *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*.

[38] The body on the theatrical and political stage is thus reminiscent of Maurice Blanchot's alignment of the image and the corpse in his "Two Versions of the Imaginary," and dramatizes and politicizes Blanchot's notion. Precarity is a particularly instructive term here, and Butler's use of it will be central later in this chapter.

as it poses questions about the very definition of life and the human. Unburied, the corpse is a constant reminder of the violence of war which caused the death, in this case specifically a civil war; a war among citizens and a war about the idea of the civil institution. It is also a war between siblings, as a civil war is known in some languages, like Hebrew and Arabic.

In its constant presence, the unburied corpse disrupts the regular temporal order of things, haunting the theatrical and political stage. Temporality proves to be complex on multiple levels – Antigone wishes to bury Polyneices, but not in order to bury the past but rather to reckon with it. Conversely, Creon forbids the burial but wishes to move on from the violence and rule: "Now I rule, as next of kin./ They are dead; I am king" (28). Perhaps this is the crux – Creon says he wants to move on but insists on leaving the corpse unburied as a mark of past wars. Antigone, for her part, wishes to respect the link to the past by burying a remnant of it. Burial is, therefore, not tantamount to moving on but rather complicates the notion of mourning as working through in the Freudian sense or as a process of healing.[39] The temporal disruption here is profound, as the body defies coherence; no longer living but not yet buried, it is not only at the threshold but is a threshold.[40] This temporality has implications for the political realm as well, as Creon's attempt to solidify his rule through his interdiction of burial falls apart. The dead body seems to resist any attempt to pin it down, and settle it, which is ironic considering its permanent sedentary state.

Almost 2,500 years after Sophocles imagined this scene, the unburied corpse remains on the stage of political theater. Seamus Heaney makes this clear when he translates *Antigone* as

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[39] It is beyond the scope of this present paper to discuss the corpse – and not only the living body – as an object in the Freudian model presented, for example, in his "Mourning and Melancholia," though it is tempting to view Antigone as insisting on a melancholic attachment to her brother's corpse.

[40] The word "corpse," of course, derives from *corpus*, which denotes a body, whether living or dead, thus emphasizing the blurred distinctions.

reflecting on the political and religious tensions in Ireland in the mid-20th century. In an essay about his translation, he explains how Antigone "was finally sprung from her old place in the syllabus and took her place decisively in all future thinking about the developing political situation in Northern Ireland" (Heaney 417). Heaney emphasizes the play's universality and its specificity, demonstrating both how the Greek tragedy "has become an accumulation of issues" (415) and how it was concretely relevant to various scenarios: France in 1944, South Africa in 1973, Poland in 1984, and Ireland. Antigone is transferred to these modern locales via an act of translation and becomes part of their narrative.[41]

Heaney begins his essay by describing a burial scene in May 1981, "a gathering at once solemn and dangerous in the village of Tommebridge in Northern Ireland" (411). This is the site of the burial of Francis Hughes, a member of the IRA who died after a hunger strike protesting the unrelenting measures of the ruler of the land, British Prime Minister Thatcher. The hearse carrying Hughes' body is first supervised by state security forces, raising the question of ownership: "Who owned it? by what right did the steel ring of the defense forces close round the remains of one who was son, brother, comrade, neighbor, companion?" (Heaney 412-3). Questions of ownership extend not only to contested land but to the body as well, which is revealed to be a battlefield in life and in death. The same question, Heaney explains, drives the events of the Sophoclean tragedy, because: "by refusing Polyneices burial, Creon claims ownership of the body and in effect takes control of his spirit, because his spirit will not go to its right home with the dead until the body is buried with due ceremony" (422).

But translation, too, is an act of ownership, as Heaney himself explains, and it too concerns the transfer of dead bodies from one place to another. As a translator, Heaney functions

[41] To the renditions Heaney mentions we can add an iteration staged in the U.S. called *Antigone in Ferguson*.

as a poetic version of the mythological Charon, whose job is only made possible after the body has been laid to rest.[42] This is a very literal representation of what Benjamin famously describes as the afterlife translation grants a text, which exists in a blurred terrain between death and life.[43] Adapting, translating, relocating *Antigone* to various places around the world so many years after its first productions demonstrates that in many places dead bodies still occupy the political stage. The play, and Heaney's contemporary meditation about it, compel us to ask – what do we do with the dead, in our texts, in our physical spaces and in our national mythologies? What are the political and poetic implications of the corpse, when it is buried and when it is not?

Corporeal Remains: Theory and Practice

The dead body at the center of *Antigone*, and its afterlife in translation into myriad 20th century political contexts, compels us to interrogate the political function of corpses, the place of death in politics and the political afterlife of the dead. Biopolitics, first associated with Foucault and Agamben among others, positions the human body at the center of the political apparatus, rather than the more abstract notion of the subject. Importantly, though, this living body is defined by the threat of death. According to the framework of biopolitics, various modes of power are activated on the body, which becomes the site of power itself: "it is not the free man and his statutes and prerogatives, nor even simply *homo*, but rather *corpus* that is the new subject of politics" (Agamben 73).[44] For Agamben, modern democracy reduces individuals to what he calls "bare life" or *zoë* (in another act of translation from the ancient Greek), "the bare, anonymous life that is as such taken into the sovereign ban" (ibid). This bare life is then defined

[42] For this idea, I am indebted to Antoine Traisnel.
[43] I thank Anton Shammas for the connection to Benjamin's "afterlife," a notion found in his "Task of the Translator". Caroline Disler explains that the German equivalent of "afterlife" never actually appears in Benjamin's famous essay and is a case of a mistranslation. See: "Benjamin's 'Afterlife': A Productive (?) Mistranslation," (2011).
[44] Note Agamben's gendered language here referring to "man," especially significant in relation to the turn to the physical corpus.

as the sovereign subject, paradoxically consisting of both subjecthood and subjection. In Judith Butler's terms, “Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine” (26). The modern subject is founded on their body as it is stripped of power, exposing them to what Butler calls “vulnerability” (ibid). In other words, what constitutes this political body is the threat of becoming a corpse: “the absolute capacity of the subject's bodies to be killed forms the new political body of the West” (Agamben 74).[45]

While conceding that the biopolitical is pertinent to modernity at large, Agamben quickly moves to focus on one specific site he sees as exemplary: the Holocaust, and specifically the extermination camp. He defines the State of Exception as the "nomos" of the modern, the biopolitical sphere: “when life and politics – originally divided, and linked together by means of the no-man's-land of the state of exception that is inhabited by bare life – begin to become one, all life becomes sacred and all politics becomes the exception” (Agamben 86). The camp is thus both enabled by biopolitics and is its most extreme expression, manifested in the use of legalistic terms such as “no-man's-land” and “state of exception,” the latter being associated with the Nazi jurist Karl Schmitt. In biopolitics these apply not only to geopolitical spaces but to the body as an exception and a no-man's-land, because the body is politicized: “the novelty of modern biopolitics lies in the fact that the biological given is as such immediately political, and the political is as such immediately the biological given” (Agamben 85).

Though Agamben focuses on the example of the extermination camp, he and biopolitics more broadly make a sweeping, perhaps universal argument. But circumstances and contexts vary greatly, and the conditions of bodies – living and dead – are markedly different in different settings. That is precisely the criticism Achille Mbembe offers of biopolitics, arguing that it is an

[45] After reading *Antigone* one wonders, perhaps, if this is solely a modern project.

insufficient term, because it assumes that death is exceptional, suggesting instead that in some contexts the distinct term necropolitics is in fact a more apt notion. Evoking Foucault, Mbembe defines biopower thusly: “to exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power” (161). Mbembe's contention is that this definition stems from and relies on a normative notion of politics, one which assumes reason as its foundation and therefore views such realities as the extermination camp as a state of exception. However, Mbembe claims, this is not the only possible model of politics; it is only its privileged site. Concomitant with it are other models of sovereignty that are not founded on a two-folded subjectivity, as suggested by Agamben, but rather consist in “the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations” (Mbembe 163). In these systems, founded on racism as a force which “regulate[s] the distribution of death,” the more illuminated side of subjectivity disappears (Mbember 166). In such contexts, death is not the other side of autonomy but an independent agent, meaning that it is not a “rupture” but the *nomos* itself; not a politicization of death but “politics as the work of death” (Mbembe 165). The reason for this change is, significantly, historical context, as Mbembe asks “what is the relationship between politics and death in those systems that can function only in a state of emergency?”, whose whole existence is that of “aberration” (166). While both biopolitics and necropolitics pertain to death and dead bodies, the differences between them stem from power. So, when Agamben uses the term “thanatopolitcs” (72), he uses it interchangeably with biopolitics, explaining biopower's control over mortality.[46] In necropolitics, on the other hand, death is not a component of the political; rather it is a politics based on death – not the politicization of the body in life and death, but death personified in the dead body as political,

[46] In this inclusion of thanatos under bios Agamben is in fact reversing Freud's still revolutionary conclusions in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in which he subsumed the libidinal life impulse under the death drive.

"death that lives a human life" (Mbembe 164). In this case, both Antigone and her brother's corpse function as a kind of bare life or *zoë*, demonstrating once more how blurred the lines between life and death are, or how permeable life is in the face of death.[47]

Both biopolitics and necropolitics define the political through a relationship between bodies and death, albeit in different ways. Nevertheless, neither theoretical framework focuses on the inevitable outcome of this relationship – dead bodies. Corporeal remains pose significant challenges for political systems, as *Antigone* demonstrates, and disposing of them in a way deemed appropriate carries considerable weight. I therefore supplant these theories with an understanding of rituals and practices that pertain to remains. Respectful treatment of dead bodies is an important value in societies across time and place, even as the definition of such treatment varies. Thomas Laqueur explains that: "the willfully brutal disposal of the dead … is an act of extreme violence, an attack on the order and meaning we look to the dead to maintain for us" (4). Remains elicit a kind of reverence and so an unburied or mistreated corpse is considered an abhorrence and abomination across cultures.[48]

Dead bodies and the process of dealing with remains play a significant role in the national imagination specifically, as nation states are often established through war and require mechanisms for grappling with the fallen in a manner that justifies both their deaths and the life of the nation. It is no wonder, then, that Benedict Anderson opens his *Imagined Communities* stating that "no more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exists than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers" (9). These tombs are sometimes empty or contain

[47] Mbembe's necropolitics, anchored as it is in racialized systems, is evident in the U.S. context in the treatment of black bodies. A powerful example of this is Claudia Rankine's lament of the unburied black bodies of Emmet Till and Michael Brown, see: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/magazine/the-condition-of-black-life-is-one-of-mourning.html

[48] While Laqueur argues in his *The Work of the Dead* for a cross-cultural analysis, he admittedly focuses on western Europe and the U.S. only.

remains of people whose identities are unknown, highlighting an ongoing duality between corporeal remains and symbolic meaning, as well as between individuals and the collective. Describing what he calls "the myth of the experience of war," George Mosse explains how the dead are incorporated into the national narrative, referencing their burial sites: "the cult of the fallen provided the nation with martyrs and, in their last resting place, with a shrine of national worship" (35). Nations work to turn the devastation of loss into meaning that bolster national structures. As Idit Zertal explains, nation-making and mourning the dead become parallel moves: "the battlefields of ethnic and national conflicts, and the graves of those who died in them, are the building-blocks of the modern nation, and from them national feeling forms and develops" (25). Anderson, Mosse and Zertal all specifically mention burial sites – tombs and cenotaphs, final resting places, and graves, respectively – demonstrating the significance of the ways with which remains are dealt for national projects. Territory is often central in national conflicts, and the same land then becomes a resting place for those who die in battle. Burial sites and graves punctuate the land, demarcating and dividing plots not just between sparring nations but between the living and the dead.

The meaning given to dead bodies and the rituals and practices of dealing with remains change over time and depend on cultural traditional and histories. During the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century, for example, Europe shifted from churchyard burials to the establishment of cemeteries. Another significant change is the fact that in the past many people died at home, leaving much of the subsequent arrangements to their families, while since the advent of modern medicine more people die in hospitals and burials have become more institutionally organized and regulated. The treatment of dead bodies is shaped by definitions of hygiene and safety determined by science, medicine and public health, and also by cultural

frameworks. Religion, for instance, determines many rituals surrounding burial, that represent the theological understanding of death and the afterlife. Burial practices thus address two sets of issues – corporeal remains and the afterlife. These can be thought of through Laqueur's notion of necrogeographies, of which he identifies two kinds: abstract places or "shadow-worlds", like formulations of hell or an underworld, and earthly resting places like gravesites and cemeteries (109). The former might be likened to the afterlife, and the latter to physical sites of interment of dead bodies.

In Palestine/Israel, both Islam and Judaism demonstrate the fact that burial, and death-related rites in general, are a result of societal norms and shape them in return.[49] Halevi explains that early Islam viewed these rituals as socially significant for several reasons: death was considered an important moment of transition; funerals attracted large crowds and so rules for social order were necessary; and death rituals required the attention and collaboration of a range of social actors (5).[50] As a result, funerals and burials were understood as key moments for social structures. Jewish tradition shares the viewpoint that such rituals participate in social construction, as Goldberg explains: "burying places and practices, directly associated with the deaths of individuals, are forged anew into a vocabulary encoding a society's ideals and hopes for the future" (200). In other words, rituals surrounding dead bodies are part and parcel of societal norms and behaviors, both shaped by them and shaping them.

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[49] As explained in the introduction to this project, I mostly discuss Judaism and Islam. While Palestinian society is not exclusively Muslim, and has important Christian and other minorities, it is primarily informed by Islamic traditions. My attention to Islam in this context should not be interpreted as an unaware participation in the privileging of Islam in Palestinian society but rather as descriptive only. Likewise, when referring to "Israel" in relation to Judaism I do not mean to disregard the state's non-Jewish population. I am referring to Israel's hegemonic Jewish population and explaining the centrality of Judaism to the state's canonical practices.

[50] All of these observations can be seen at play in the burial of the Indian-Muslim leader Muhammad Ali Jauhar in Jerusalem in 1931. See: Azaryahu and Reiter, "The Geopolitics of Interment: An Inquiry into the Burial of Muhammad Ali in Jerusalem, 1931."

Islam and Judaism share certain customs relating to the treatment of dead bodies, perhaps most notably the fact that in both traditions, interment is preferred to cremation. As in all societies, the respectful treatment of remains is considered paramount, for a variety of reasons. So, for instance, in pre-Muslim Arabia – the period known as *al-jāhiliyya* – burial was considered important because without it the dead would continue to roam the earth.[51] Burial was, then, a way to both honor the dead and protect the living, pointing to a fear not only of the dead but of dying, of one's own mortality. With the advent of Islam, burial was framed as part of a notion of the sanctity and inviolability of the body, living and dead, meaning it must be treated with respect (*Encyclopedia, Funerary Practices*). In Judaism, too, proper burial is deemed significant, and so the worst biblical curses include a threat of lack of burial (*Jewish Passages* 198). To be denied burial was the greatest indignity, as one's deserted body would then be eaten by vultures. An example of this appears in Deuteronomy in a long speech in which Moses warns the people of Israel of possible sins before entering the land: "Your carcasses will be food for all the birds and the wild animals, and there will be no one to frighten them away" (28:26).[52] In fact, Judaism forbids a delay in burial. This interdiction, known as forbidding the delay of the dead (*isur halanat ha*-met, איסור הלנת המת), is based on a verse in Deuteronomy ordering: "thou shalt surely bury him the same day" (21:23). A similar injunction to bury the dead as quickly as possible exists in Islam as well (Jonker 164). In another similarity between the two cultures, nearing death is seen as an opportunity to profess sins and return to the religious and community fold. And so, in Judaism, when death approaches one is encouraged to confess one's sins, while in Islam the dying is urged to pledge loyalty to Islam.

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[51] *Al-jāhiliyya* is the Muslim name given to the period, and it literally means "the time of ignorance," referring to the time before Islam.

[52] והייתה נבלתך למאכל לכל עוף השמיים ולבהמת הארץ, דברים 28:26

While some customs and principles of dealing with remains are shared across cultures, including in Palestine/Israel, each tradition also has its unique set of practices, stemming from its specific history and beliefs. Moreover, burial practices are used to mark and demarcate communities, much like burial sites themselves tend to bear the signs of a particular community. Palestinian customs, informed by Islamic tradition, are no different, and so in the early days of Islam, "through idealized memories of Muhammad, Fatima and other early converts to Islam, priests sought to distinguish Islamic from non-Islamic [death-related] rituals" (Halevi 3). For example, in trying to explain Muhammad's reasoning for quick processions at Muslim funerals, some cite a need to distinguish them from Jewish processions (Halevi 159). Death rites were regulated in Islam starting from the 8th century, though some of the rituals performed immediately following a death were inherited from pre-Muslim Arab traditions. Muslim tradition dictates several steps to be taken after death. First, the corpse is washed, with the exception of martyrs' bodies which remain soaked in blood. The body is then shrouded in white and led to a funeral procession with six men carrying the bier. Prayers at funerals are unique in that they do not include the usual genuflection or prostration, only the raising of a hand (*Encyclopedia, Funerary Practices*). The deceased is then placed in the grave, facing the *qibla* (القبلة), the direction of the *Ka*'*aba* (الكعبة) in Mecca towards which Muslims pray (Jonker 158). Though women are associated with lamentation, they are largely excluded from the burial service and only women who are next of kin may be permitted to join. Sects within Islam have different approaches toward funerary practices, for example in relation to wailing; Sunni Islam forbids wailing whereas Shi'i Islam allows it.[53] Another difference, at least early on, was more philosophical in nature – Sunnis argued that the dead were never impure, whereas Shi'is

[53] This distinction has political roots in the 10th century, indicating once more how deeply embedded death-related customs are in social and political realities.

contended a dead body was always impure even after washing. While this had theological implications, the debate did not impact the practice of washing the dead body before burial (*Encyclopedia, Funerary Practices*).

If Palestinian rituals are mostly informed by Islam, Israeli ones derive from Jewish tradition, both in terms of practical arrangements that are largely governed by religious institutions and in terms of customs of mourning thereafter.[54] Once death is established the eyes and mouth are shut, the body is placed on the floor and covered in a sheet. Mirrors are covered and stored water is poured out.[55] The process of preparing the body for burial, purification (*Tahara*, טהרה), used to be performed by the family, and then the local community. Since the establishment of Burial Societies known as *Ḥevra Kadisha* (חברה קדישא) – the first of which was officially incorporated in Prague in 1654 – this duty largely falls to them (Gilad). As part of this preparation, the entire body is thoroughly washed in warm water, including the hair (*Encyclopedia*). This process is performed exclusively by people of the same gender as the deceased, a stipulation that also exists for ablution of corpses in Islam. Burial, the culmination of the funeral, is heavily influenced by the Genesis verse "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (כי מעפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב), which is interpreted as an injunction to bury the dead body in its entirety directly in the ground.[56] Any residual blood, including stains on clothing, must be buried with the body. Judaism therefore prohibits embalming or cremation unless they are necessary for health reasons. In Israel, bodies are generally buried without a coffin – corpses are

[54] Religious institutions are authorized by the State of Israel to handle major milestones such as marriage and death. The Jewish-Orthodox establishment does this for the hegemonic Jewish majority, and other religious entities are given authority over the respective minority groups. Marriage and burial outside of religious institutions does exist, but it is rare and often remains unrecognized by the state.
[55] Some Jewish Orthodox communities still preserve an old custom of laying the deceased on the floor and pouring water outside the house, notifying the surrounding environment that a death has occurred (Levine 104). This custom was adopted from non-Jewish cultures in the Middle Ages, most notably Arab and Muslim communities.
[56] Judaism, like other religions, has a complex relationship with organ transplants and autopsies, especially within the ultra-orthodox community.

wrapped in shrouds, carried to the grave on a bier and put directly in the ground. Burial of fallen soldiers is the exception to this rule and they are placed in a coffin, which is meant to prevent speculation around the state of the body.[57] To maintain the proximity to dust and the earth holes are punctured in the bottom of the coffin. However, in Jewish communities in some western countries coffins are more commonly used, possibly influenced by local Christian communities (Gilad). In addition, there is evidence that in the past coffins were more commonly used in the Jewish world (*Jewish Encyclopedia*). Such variance between customs of Jewish communities is a reminder that while many death-related customs remain consistent, they are certainly not identical. Moreover, practices relating to funerals and human remains are specific to a community but are nevertheless influenced by the broader context as well. For example, closing the eyes of the dead, which is borrowed from Greco-Roman traditions, and covering mirrors is a medieval addition detailed in burial books used by burial societies (Goldberg 207).

When a death occurs in the context of a national conflict, the circumstances activate the rituals' political level of performance or spectacle, as both private and collective events. Funerals become public affairs, honoring individual people whose death in political circumstances casts them as public figures, and sometimes collective heroes. Often, funerals of Palestinians who have died at the hand of Israeli authorities are broadcast in both Palestine and Israel, for starkly different purposes. Media presence at funerals of fallen soldiers and civilians is fairly common in Israel, and funerals are sometimes attended by the general public as a sign of respect. The presence and representation of corpses in the public and political sphere is highly complex and vexing, posing myriad political and ethical quandaries. A few examples might help illustrate this point even further. In May 2004, after an Israeli Armored Personnel Carrier was blown up by

[57] Some notable figures are also buried in a coffin, to allow for a public viewing during their funeral.

Palestinian rockets in the Gaza Strip, killing all five soldiers aboard the vehicle, their fellow soldiers were sent to comb through the debris looking for human remains. Images of the kneeling soldiers sifting through the soil proliferated in Israeli media, starkly highlighting the macabre state of the human body, both living and dead.[58] Or consider a different example – in September 2000, also in the bloody Gaza Strip, a Palestinian boy and his father were caught in crossfire during a protest and their entire ordeal was captured on video for the world to see. The boy, Muhammad al-Durah, died, but some in Israel still claim that the footage was doctored, the timeline is inconsistent and that the IDF is not to blame, even going so far as to claim the boy never really died.

Literary texts that depict dead bodies grapple with representing their corporeality and meaning through the written word, contending with a range of biopolitical and necropolitical questions: how active or passive is this body, is it an object or a subject? How physical is the body, and is it gendered? Is the body buried, or will it be later on? How does the text address the circumstances of death? Are they part of some concept of an afterlife? How does the body relate to a notion of spirit or soul? In the national context these choices also articulate a relationship between the dead, the living and the land, and situate the body within the national group, highlighting the relationship between individual and collective as well as between the living and the dead. The analysis that follows focuses on two literary figures that address these questions in different ways and under different, albeit related circumstances. The dead-living in Hebrew poetry obviates the need for burial by becoming a national symbol enshrined in language and the national imagination. On the other hand, the Palestinian living-dead is still alive and therefore

[58] Some in the public and in the media saw this salvage operation as heroic while others criticized it for putting the living soldiers at additional risk.

cannot be buried, remaining stuck between life and death, unable to quite live but impossible to mourn.

Dead-Living: The National Body and Transcendence in Hebrew Literature

Hebrew literature has grappled with dead bodies since long before the establishment of the State of Israel. However, the geo-political turning point of 1948 brings such questions to the fore, stressing their relevance and urgency in a moment of national foundation. A central way in which writers do this in the years leading up to statehood is through the well-known and common poetic trope of the dead-living (*ha-met ha-ḥai* המת-החי). This is a dead person, usually a man, that appears in literary texts as a figure, transcending death through national symbolism. As such, the dead-living highlights the tension between the individual and the collective and is meant to represent and solve the contradiction between a commitment to a personal existence and that to a collective national project (Hever 36). The dead soldier sacrificing his life for national independence comes to supplant the earlier, pre-state figure of the pioneer-defender embodied by Joseph Trumpeldor (Ben-Amos, Bet-El and Talmim 265-6). Perhaps no writer is more associated with this trope than Nathan Alterman (1910-1970), one of the most renowned modern Hebrew poets. His book *Stars Outside* (Kokhavim ba-ḥuts, כוכבים בחוץ) published in 1938 is still considered one of the greatest poetic achievements in modern Hebrew. In 1941 Alterman published his book *Joy of the Poor* which helped cement him as a leading national voice (Hever 34). It is one long poem in which a dead husband watches over his wife and child. The man stands between the world of the living and that of the dead on the backdrop of a collective struggle for life or death.

Alterman revisits this sitting again in a poem called “The Silver Platter” (*Magash ha-kesef*, מגש הכסף).[59] It was published in his well-known newspaper column “The Seventh Column” on December 19, 1947, about a month into the war that would lead to the establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948 and to the Palestinian loss and expulsion of the *Nakba*. It is hard to over-emphasize the notoriety of “The Silver Platter” in Israeli society, from its first publication in 1947 until today. The poem is taught in high schools, is a staple of Memorial Day services and the term “the silver platter” has become a commonly used idiom synonymous with heroic sacrifice, particularly in relation to the war of 1948 and the foundation of the state.[60] At the heart of the poem is an encounter between “A young girl and a boy” and a nation, against the epic background of a land “grow[ing] still” after a grand battle, with “Crimson skies dimming, misting/ Slowly paling again/ Over smoking frontiers.”[61] Indeed, the poem is situated on the brink of statehood, evident in its epigraph, a quote attributed to Zionist leader and the future first President of Israel, Ḥaim Weizmann: “A State is not handed to a people on a silver platter.”[62] This already sets the tone for the poem – at the threshold of statehood, musing about the price paid for it. Some claim that Alterman's poem belies Weizmann's stance, reading the poem as a reminder of the human price of war. However, the poem has clearly not been generally received as subversive but rather as adopting the narrative of sacrifice, given its prominence in rituals of national bereavement.

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[59] There are several English translations of this poem, and each has its shortcomings. Henceforth I refer to different translations as they best fit the Hebrew: one by Esther Raizen, another by Daniel Gordis and a third by David Stern. Alterman is a difficult poet to translate as he writes in rhyme and accurate meter and often uses alliteration. I quote from the Hebrew that appears in Raizen’s bi-lingual book of translations, *No Rattling of Sabers: An Anthology of Israeli War Poetry*.

[60] Memorial Day is a prominent fixture of Israeli culture dedicated to fallen soldiers, which occurs a day before Independence Day. I discuss the day and its ceremonies at length in chapter 4 of the dissertation.

[61] והארץ תשקוט. עין שמיים אודמת\ תעמעם לאיטה\ על גבולות עשנים...

[62] אין מדינה ניתנת לעם על מגש של כסף

The new state of quietude that opens the poem, following earlier upheaval and turmoil, is underscored by two devices: an ellipsis at the very beginning ("…and the land") hinting at what came before the first words; and a subsequent cesura after "and the land grows silent.", imposing and performing the silence it describes. An equally dramatic nation then appears: "As the nation stands up/ Torn at heart but existing/ To receive its first wonder/ In two thousand years" (Stern translation).[63] Standing up marks the nation's endurance in the face of the "smoky frontiers," but it is also "torn at heart," signaling sorrow and grief. Being torn is especially significant as in Judaism a prominent ritual of mourning is an act of tearing or rending of a garment (*keriah*, קריעה). The nation is portrayed as a human organism, a point made that much clearer in the Hebrew in which the nation is not only "existing" but specifically "breathing," emphasizing its anthropomorphized state. The moment at hand is clearly significant, an impending miracle of historic proportion. Receiving statehood – though not yet explicitly mentioned – is seen as miraculous, and so the epic background is preparing for a miracle. This moment is singular: "The only miracle," (Raizen translation) but is also linked to Jewish history as Stern's less accurate translation emphasizes: "its first wonder/ In two thousand years."

As the poem unfolds, the grandeur and awe of the moment intensify: "The nation made ready for the pomp. It rose to the crescent moon/ And stood there, at pre-dawn, garbed in festival and fear" (Gordis translation).[64] The anthropomorphism is clearer in the gendered Hebrew because the word used here for "nation," *uma*, is a feminine noun. A ceremony is being prepared, and the nation is both the celebrator and the celebrated, noting the tension inherent in its anthropomorphized and symbolic status. A similar duality is evident in the "festival and fear," a

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[63] ואומה תעמוד – קרועת לב אך נושמת - \ לקבל את הנס\ האחד אין שני...

[64] היא לטקס תיכון. היא תקום למול סהר\ ועמדה, טרם יום, עוטה חג ואימה
Gordis' translation is quite close to the Hebrew in meaning, at the expense of poetic value in English. This stanza proves to be the hardest for all three translations.

result of the awe and joy of the moment and the simultaneous concern given the implied battles on the "smoking frontiers." This is especially true as the poem was published in December 1947 when the war is still raging, and statehood is not yet an established reality. The conditions in which the poem was published are, in fact, more liminal than the scene in depicts. Perhaps it imagines a day when the existential tension of the war is resolved, explaining its use of the future tense throughout. This temporality underscores how the relationship between a moment of constitution and echoes of destruction informs the national narrative from its inception.

The promised miracle takes perhaps an unexpected shape: "– Then out they came/ A boy and a girl/ Pacing slowly toward the nation" (Gordis).[65] These youths have clearly come from the battlefield: "Dressed in battle gear, dirty/ Shoes heavy with grime" (Stern), and have not even changed their clothes, "nor yet laved-away with water/ The marks of the day of toil and the night in the line of fire" (Raizen 22).[66] Their relentless devotion inscribes them as mythical, and keeping with that trend very few details are known about the two, as specificity does not seem to be important. Oppenheimer notes that while they are a boy and a girl, the gender distinctions are unpronounced, and they are instead abstracted characters (43). The existence of both the boy and the girl could be read as a form of consolidation of the lines, because in facing national constitution everyone is enlisted, an act that supersedes individual characteristics like gender. Instead, the only clear identity trait the youth possess is a national one, as they are "Dripping with the dew of Hebrew youth" (Raizen).[67] They are, quite simply, their heroic sacrifice, as they become the body of the nation (Oppenheimer 44). At first, the youths seem to be common

[65] אז מנגד יצאו\נערה ונער\ ואט אט יצעדו הם אל מול האומה
[66] לובשי חול וחגור, וכבדי נעליים\ בנתיב יעלו הם\ הלוך והחרש\ לא החליפו בגדם, לא מחו עוד במים\ את עקבות יום-הפרך וליל קו האש
[67] ונוטפים טללי נעורים עבריים
As noted in the introduction to this project, the adjective "Hebrew" is complex as it explicitly denotes a language but implies a national identity. Such national identity is itself complex given the ways in which "Jewish" has become not only a religious category but a national-political one through Zionism.

soldiers, as they "[Advance] without speaking,"[68] but soon it becomes clear that something is, in fact, out of the ordinary. As they approach the nation, their silence is made more absolute and dramatic as they: "stand motionless/ And there is no sign whether they yet live or have been shot" (Raizen).[69] The heralds of nationhood, the miracle of birth, are themselves liminal; it is impossible to know whether they are alive or already dead. Coming from the battlefield, though, heavily implies what their fate might be, which is soon confirmed.

Riveted by this encounter the nation asks for the identity of the ghostly messengers, who then speak their only words in the poem: "We are the silver platter/ Upon which was served to you the Jews' state".[70] The two speak in one voice, emphasizing their function as one mythical and symbolic unit, and without hesitation reify themselves and accept their own consecration. In doing so, the two verify that they are, indeed, dead, though they are able to speak in the poem – they are dead-living. Their liminality is clear as they both approach the nation and stand motionless, emphasizing the duality of the poetic trope. Reading this poem as a reminder of the heavy price of independence is difficult, I think, because the two volunteer themselves as the reified platter on which the miracle of nationhood is passively given ("עליו לך ניתנה"), suggesting that the act of giving is detached from agency. Seeing this as critical of the heavy price would require an ironic reading which I do not think the poem supports.

The striking figure of the dead-living appears here for a reason and is specifically needed in a moment of both national foundation and national mourning. According to Hever, the liminal and ambivalent figures of the dead-living help bring collective meaning to personal sacrifice,

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[68] דום השניים יגשו
[69] ועמדו לבלי נוע\ ואין אות אם חיים הם או אם ירויים
[70] אנחנו מגש הכסף\ שעליו לך ניתנה מדינת היהודים
Notably, the Hebrew uses "the Jews' State" (*medinat ha-yehudim*) but Raizen and Gordis both translate this as "the Jewish state." The difference between the two terms has been the subject of many consequential political debates from the early days of Zionism. "The Jews' State" was in fact coined by Herzl in his 1896 German pamphlet, *Der Judenstaat*.

endowing it with transcendent and therefore redemptive significance (36). This figure is simultaneously dead and un-dead, perhaps combining the roles of Antigone and Polyneices, the dead and the mourner, in a national context. Hever emphasizes the interplay of personal and collective in the formation of a larger narrative, a meta-history: "the personal specific death marks collective national meaning giving the personal demise a meta-historical dimension, situating the dead-living as a marker of a larger national collective. The nation, too, is resurrected, agonizing but not vanishing, an entity of which death is a part but which prevails over it" (36). This dynamic between the dead-living and the national collective is made clear in the poem's conclusion: "Thus they say, and fall at her feet, shrouded with shadow/ And the rest shall be told in the history of Israel" (Raizen).[71] This moment simultaneously dramatizes the act of sacrifice, the moment of becoming fallen, and the consequent inclusion in the history books. Moreover, the acts of these youth are what enable the next chapter of the book; they are a part of the nation but also that which allows it to exist. As Oppenheimer rightly notes, this is an act of simultaneous and codependent death and birth – the death of the youth and the birth of a nation. As he explains this logic: "the land gives life to the stateless and they in return owe it their lives" (Oppenheimer 45), completely opposed to Butler's admonition that formation of self and nation are not the same and should not be conflated (45).

But the life the nation gives to the stateless is symbolic and political; in giving them a home, in the form of citizenship, the land endows them with political life. The paradox is, of course, that this requires their physical, biological death. Political and poetic life is therefore a kind of afterlife given to the dead-living in the poem and in the historic annals, an act of transformation or translation, as their death marks their rebirth as eternal heroes. This is a

[71] כך יאמרו, ונפלו לרגלה עוטפי צל\ והשאר יסופר בתולדות ישראל

trajectory of national transcendence, in which the dead human body is transfigured into a symbol, both national and poetic, giving it eternal life at the expense of physical life; an abstract national body in lieu of a corporeal personal one. Hever argues that this trend at the root of the figure of the dead-living was designed as a defense mechanism against the fear of death (and so not death itself), resulting in an internalizing of death which becomes a part of life in an act of sublimation (37). In Alterman's symbolism, death is a way to reach the transcendent and is therefore desirable and eroticized. It is intermingled with the historic-political circumstances of the Zionist national project and the recent history of the Holocaust, after which the redemptive quality of national independence was particularly powerful (Hever 32). Blending death and life, as well as the personal and the collective, is a central feature of this figure and imbues it with much of its power. Antigone's loss is personal and political, and confuses the distinction of living and dead, and the national context operates on both levels, perhaps hinting at a hierarchy between them. The personal is political, but as part of a comprehensive enlistment – it is sacrificed, quite literally, at the national altar. Moreover, if a corpse demands burial the mythological nationalized body no longer requires such rites, circumventing the tension posed by the unburied body and supplanting burial with transcendence. The foundational moment of nationhood resolves Antigone's dilemma as the corpse is physically ushered offstage in favor of the life of the nation. The youths in Alterman's poem do not require a burial rite because they are inscribed in the national narrative instead; their unburied state becomes a national trope, making them endlessly grieved but physically no longer present.

If the dead speak only briefly in Alterman's poem, they are front and center in a poem called "Behold, Our Bodies Are Laid Out," which is in its entirety a monologue by dead soldiers. The poem, by Ḥaim Gouri (1923-2018), was written around the same time as Alterman's, in

January 1948, during the war.[72] Gouri, who fought in the 1948 war and is highly associated with it, wrote the poem after learning of the deaths of 35 soldiers in the battle of the Convoy of 35 on January 16, 1948. Among the fatalities was Gouri's friend, Dani Mass, and so the poem is dedicated "to Dani and his friends." The convoy was sent to provide assistance to the besieged area of Gush Etzion south of Jerusalem but was discovered by Arabs and all 35 of its members were killed. This battle is considered one of the foundational myths of heroism of the 1948 war, though later historians challenge both the veracity of some details and the necessity of sending the convoy in the first place.[73]

One of the main reasons the myth of the Convoy of 35 is so prevalent in Israel is Gouri's poem, which was published on the front page of a journal a few days after the battle took place and is since often featured in Memorial Day ceremonies. The poetic speaker is a group of dead soldiers, speaking as a collective entirely in first person plural in an extended prosopopeia and asking the addressee to "Behold, our bodies are laid out – a long, long row."[74] Unlike the youth in Alterman's poem, whose status is ambiguous, these soldiers speak as dead bodies throughout and are labeled as such in the title. Gouri uses the word for "dead body," which in Hebrew is slightly different than a living body (*guf-gufa*, גוף-גופה). Their status is emphasized by the passive verb (are laid out, which is a single word in Hebrew) denoting a state of being left lying somewhere. Their lack of vitality informs their status as speakers: "Our faces are altered. Death looks out our eyes. We do not breathe."[75] The multiple caesuras create a fragmented rhythm, like short abrupt breaths putting emphasis on each blunt and curt statement. This effect is especially

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[72] Unlike Alterman – a native of Warsaw – Gouri was born in Tel-Aviv with Hebrew as his first language.

[73] One of the myth's most known details is that the convoy encountered an old Arab shepherd on their way, spared his life and he informed other Arabs of their presence and got them killed. Unsurprisingly, there is no way of knowing whether this in fact happened.

[74] ראה, הנה מוטלות גופותינו שורה ארוכה, ארוכה

[75] פנינו שונו. המוות נשקף מעינינו. איננו נושמים

In Hebrew the words for "eyes" and "we don't," that are sequential in this line, are homophones.

prominent in comparison to the rest of the poem, which is almost entirely made up of long, often unpunctuated lines.

While the speakers are clearly dead, they are nevertheless active and present in the poem, rendering the distinction between the living and the dead ambiguous through the rhetorical device of prosopopeia. So, for example, the soldiers note that "death looks out of our eyes," but at the same time they are aware of their surroundings in a way we might associate only with the living – they can see their "mothers are stooped and silent, and our comrades hold back from weeping," and are aware of "explosions" and "an impending storm."[76] Such ambiguity between life and death perhaps indicates the soldiers' desire to overturn their own death, which is nowhere more evident than in the recurring notion of resurrection in the poem. At first the soldiers evoke the prospect of their burial in disbelief, asking, "Will you indeed bury us now?"[77] This is the shortest line in the poem – just three words in the Hebrew – and so in its abrupt conclusion the rhythm recreates and performs the ending it describes. They wish to still contribute to the war efforts, promising to "rise, appearing once more, and we would come alive once more" in order to "[rush] to help."[78] The goal of this fantasy of resurrection is not to live again per se but rather to help those living, to continue fighting as an ultimate testament of devotion: "For all within us still lives and races in the arteries and swelters." Repeating the additive conjunction "and" creates a rhythm of sharp movement and the line almost vibrates, starkly opposed to the short line mentioning burial.[79] The vibrant image is also opposed to the subsequent opening of the next stanza, in which the speakers' tone becomes apologetic; "We did

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[76] אמותינו שחוחות ושותקות, ורעינו חונקים את בכים\ ומפץ רימונים מקרוב ודלקה ואותות מבשרים סערה!

[77] האמנם תטמינונו כעת?

[78] הן נקום, והגחנו שנית כמו אז, ושבנו שנית לתחייה... ואצים לעזרה
I have modified the translation here, Y.K.

[79] כי הכל בקרבנו עוד חי ושוצף בעורקים ולוהט
I have modified the translation here, Y.K.

not break faith," it opens with a short and blunt statement (literally in Hebrew: we did not betray). As proof they offer their weapons which are "held close with their cartridges empty," their "barrels still hot" and the soldiers' blood "splattered along the paths."[80] The brutality of this image of spilled blood is not cause for anger for the soldiers, but rather proof of devotion and wanting to make sure no one could accuse them, the dead, of not doing enough. "All we could, we did, until the very last one fell," they say, as if the instinct would be to fault them: "Will we indeed be blamed if we remain dead at evening time/ With our lips fixed to the hard stony ground?"[81]

The stony ground, and this stanza as a whole, are a reminder of the soldiers' current and irreversible status, as well as a reminder of the limits of prosopopeia; the poetic trope is a device and a fantasy, and when it is met with the hard ground, with the reality of their deaths, words are futile. Moreover, the rhetoric device is not able to animate the speakers; in fact, the need to use it underscores the fact of their death.[82] In a way, blurring the lines does less to enliven the dead and more to imbue the living with the shadows of death. Met with this harsh reality, the soldiers reluctantly accede to their new condition and rather than ask they now declare: "You will bury us now, with clods of dirt on our faces," alluding to the process of interment in the ground.[83] Additionally, the mention of dirt is a reminder that they are now buried in the same land for and on which they fought. It is from this location that they order the addressee: "New day, do not forget! Do not forget!", an injunction not to use the new day to forget about those who died the day before.[84] Phrasing this in the negative, rather than an imperative to remember, perhaps

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[80] לא בגדנו. ראה, נשקנו צמוד ומרוקן כדורים, אשפתנו ריקה.\ ...עוד קניו לוהטים\ ודמנו מותז בשבילים שעל-שעל
[81] עשינו ככל שנוכל, עד נפל האחרון ולא קם.\ האמנם נואשם אם נותרנו עם ערב מתים\ ושפתנו צמודות אל אדמת הסלעים הקשה?
[82] It goes beyond the scope of this current chapter to elaborate on the implications for the rhetorical figure of prosopopeia. However, discussions about its status as human or inhuman inform my analysis even now.
[83] תקברונו כעת, ורגבי העפר על פנינו
[84] יום חדש, אל תשכח! אל תשכח!

indicates the fear these soldiers have, their desperation. In order to prove their request is justified they remind the addressee of their devotion: “Because we carried your name until death closed our eyes.”[85] It is unclear whose name was carried exactly, or in fact who the addressee is; it is not the nation, who appeared as an anthropomorphized and feminine figure in Alterman's poem, because the possessive pronoun “your,” as well as the injunction to “behold,” are in the masculine. Interestingly, while the speakers are a collective speaking in the plural, the addressee is in the singular, perhaps making the appeal more personal. While the nation might not be the direct addressee, allegiance to the national cause is apparent and continues to persist. The poem therefore closes imagining and wishing for an end to the battles: “When the scream of the last shot shall have fallen to silence in the mountains.”[86]

Given the limits of prosopopeia, the speakers pursue alternative forms of life after death. The last stanza returns to the opening line, “Behold our bodies are laid out,” and offers an altered fantasy of resurrection. Nature offers a new horizon – while the soldiers “are not breathing,” the wind is “full of breath,” and the birth of a new morning allows for a kind of return: “We will still come back, we will meet,” but this time “like red flowers.”[87] In lieu of prosopopeia, the soldiers must settle for simile, a return only “like” flowers, leading to a metamorphosed existence: “Then we will blossom.”[88] Because a physical resurrection proved to be impossible, they choose a reincarnation in the form of symbols, poetic and national, similar to what Hever describes as an inscription in transcendence which compensates for the loss and justifies it. Such a transformation also mitigates the burial to which they had to accede – their bodies might be interred with clods of dirt on their faces, but something else, their essence, has now flourished.

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[85] כי נשאנו שמך, עד המוות עצם את עינינו
[86] עת תידום בהרים זעקת ירייה אחרונה
[87] הנה מוטלות גופותינו שורה ארוכה, ואיננו נושמים.\ אך הרוח עזה בהרים ונושמת [...] עוד נשוב, ניפגש, נחזור כפרחים אדומים
[88] אז נפרח

Such flowers evoke a central icon of Israel's Memorial Day, the Red Everlasting flower, known in Hebrew as the Blood of the Maccabees (*dam ha-makabim*, דם המכבים). Their appearance in the poem suggests that the ceremonial flowers represent the fallen soldiers directly. The youth in Alterman's poem become part of the history books, and in Gouri's poem they are flowers blossoming on the land.

As the fallen soldiers speak and are transformed into symbols, they are inscribed in the national annals, become a myth, and their deaths are reckoned with. Given the poem's use of the first person, it appears that the soldiers themselves are doing this, as if they accept their own deaths and find solace in their return "as red flowers," and herein lies the solace to the audience as well. But the use of the first person is even more significant, because it means that when the poem is recited aloud – as it often is in public ceremonies – the collective "we" of "our bodies" and "our eyes" is expanded to include the living reciter. This performs the act of resurrection, albeit for a limited time, but it also does the opposite; for a brief ritual moment it transforms those reciting it – and maybe readers at large – into those dead speaking bodies. This is a kind of reversed prosopopeia, in which the realm of the dead encroaches on the realm of the living, instead of the other way around. The collective national group is constituted by these deaths and speaks through the dead, in their voices. The national voice is imbued with this echo, a birth permanently and significantly tinged with death, with a ritualistic identification in present tense.

Living-Dead: The Precarious Body in Palestinian Literature

The central element that allows for the dead-living in Hebrew poetry to have a poetic and political afterlife is statehood, even when it is not yet guaranteed; the promise and hope for a state and all its powers already have tremendous impact. In such conditions, then, the dead body can become a national symbol, transcending death and obviating burial. But what happens when

statehood does not arrive and instead conditions of dispersal and precarity persist and deepen? Dead bodies continue to require political attention, forcing societies to grapple with the loss and with the material reality of the corpse, but the state mechanism of transcendence and meaning making is absent. How is the dead body understood in such a reality – how is it interred into the ground and integrated into the national narrative? Those are precisely the conditions on the other side of the 1948 war depicted in Alterman and Gouri's poems. For Palestinians, 1948 was not the War of Independence, as it is known in Hebrew, but rather the *Nakba*, the disaster, demonstrating once more that translation does not generate equivalence.

The ongoing dispossession means that Palestinian bodies, both living and dead, are in a constant state of precarity – during routine military operations, at demonstrations and checkpoints, and in their own homes. When critiquing the notion of biopolitics and supplanting it with necropolitics, one of Mbembe's central examples alongside colonialism and slavery is Palestinian suicide bombers. In this context, Mbembe argues, the logic of martyrdom and survival confront one another and coincide despite seeming contradictory. In the case of the suicide bomber, "the body is transformed into a weapon, not in a metaphorical sense but in the truly ballistic sense" (Mbembe 183). Therefore, Mbembe claims that through turning the body into both a corpse and a weapon, death is disrupted or even deferred: "the body duplicates itself and, in death, literally and metaphorically escapes the state of siege and occupation" (184). What is missing from this formulation is the Islamic framework, and specifically modern political interpretations of the Islamic notion of martyrdom. Those who die as martyrs, *shahīd* (شهيد) in the Arabic, are perceived as living despite dying, as Maram Masrawi explains (22). [89] This view is

[89] The two terms – *shahīd* and martyr – share a similar etymology, stemming from the act of witnessing in both Arabic and Latin. Palestinian discourse has a history of using various terms in this context, as Masrawi notes (88-93).

based on the Quranic formulation declaring: “never say that those martyred in the cause of Allah are dead – in fact they are alive! But you do not perceive it” (2:154).[90] Martyrdom of this kind operates under a logic similar to the fallen soldiers in Alterman and Gouri, originally in a religious context and later translated to national terms. Mbembe even uses terms such as “eternal life” (184), though he does not sufficiently acknowledge their Muslim resonances.[91] Creating such a reversal of positions – the same logic of national transcendence on the other side of the conflict – is, I contend, both insufficient and does not account for the differences between politics within and outside of a nation state. That is not to say that this idea of martyrdom does not exist, it surely does, but it is not the only one.

Another important distinction is necessary here to fully articulate the relationship between the living and the dead in the Palestinian context. Mbembe seems to discuss the suicide bomber as a representative of the Palestinian necropolitical condition under occupation, and while it is clearly relevant it is not the most common. Within Palestinian discourse, “martyr” describes anyone who dies as a result of contact with Israeli forces, not just suicide bombers. Therefore, the necropolitical proximity to death is not only the lot of those who exercise their agency, in Mbembe’s terms, in determining the circumstances of their death, but is rather a symptom of living under occupation. Living bodies considered as dead were an aberration for Foucault and Agamben’s biopolitical, but they are the norm in the necropolitical systems Mbembe suggests. In Palestine, not only is everyone a potential martyr, but the distinction between life and death, between the living and the dead, is unclear. If Hebrew poetry in the 1930s and 1940s generated the figure of the dead-living, then in Palestinian literature describing

[90] وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَن يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ
The verse does not actually used the word *shahīd*, but martyrdom is certainly its topic.
[91] Benjamin comes to mind here given his mystical inclinations, and in considering the term “survival,” which plays a significant role in generating a text’s afterlife in translation.

the same historical moment and its ongoing aftermath I identify the reversed trope; not the dead imbued with national life, but rather the living who is already dead.

Though the poem "The Martyr" (*al-shahīd*, الشهيد) was written by 'Abd al-Raḥīm Mahmoud (عبد الرحيم محمود) over a decade before the war that would result in the *Nakba*, it is nevertheless relevant to those events and their aftermath. In fact, the year in which the poem was written, 1936, is often considered a turning point in the Palestinian national struggle due to the national awakening and revolt that started then. As we will see, the poem's notion of the living and dead body continues to permeate Palestinian literature thereafter. Mahmoud holds a curious position in Palestinian literature and culture – on the one hand he and his poetry are widely recognized and beloved, even 70 years after his death. On the other hand, not much is known or written about him, not only in academic scholarship but in journalistic writing as well. Mahmoud was born in 'Anabta near Tulkarem in the West Bank in 1913, fought against the British in Iraq in 1936 and died in battle during the 1948 war.[92] Mahmoud died in July 1948 during the battle of al-Shagara, a Palestinian village west of Tiberias which was depopulated during the war, making its inhabitants refugees. The land is now under Israeli rule. Mahmoud is often referred to as a poet-martyr, and the fact that he himself died in the war only enhances his mythical status. The moniker "poet-martyr" is central to understanding Mahmoud's ongoing appeal, as he is noted for his devotion to the national cause in both his writing and as a fighter. In this Mahmoud is fully enlisted in the cause, and his writing is seen in the national vein almost exclusively. 'Iz al-dīn al-Munāsera, who complied the volume of Mahmoud's complete works, laments this fact and notes

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[92] The term "The West Bank," referring to the Jordan River, was not given to the region until 1948-50, when it was annexed by the Kingdom of Jordan. In 1967 it was conquered by Israel.
Maḥmoud's biography serves as a reminder that between 1918-1948 the Palestinian struggle was not only against Zionism but against the British and their colonial effort in the Middle East, including Palestine, Iraq and elsewhere. The British were perceived as supportive of Zionism, tying the two struggles together.

that an examination of his poetry reveals a deep investment in issues of class and not just nationalism (7). Given the strong ties between the Palestinian national movement and various forms of Marxist thought, perhaps the two axes are not distinct.[93] In any case, Mahmoud's work has clearly been read mostly in relation to the national movement.

In describing Mahmoud's far-reaching impact, many of his fellow writers have linked his poetic output and political-national importance. According to Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, a prominent writer of the same generation: " 'Abd al-Raḥīm Mahmoud is the first poet-knight in our modern poetry, whose words were followed by action" (*Complete Works* 31);[94] the poet Mu'in Bseiso says that Mahmoud "was a Palestinian peasant writing with a plough" (ibid.)[95]; and the poet Fadwa Tuqan casts him in clearly national terms as she states that: "the voice of Mahmoud's poems is the voice of the Palestinian people, in all its power, authenticity, flow and warmth. He carried within him the consciousness of the committed poet" (32).[96] Much like in Sartre's *littérature engagée*, the parallel Arabic term has complex ties to Marxist frameworks. Today, Mahmoud's poems are remembered and referenced by members of the popular Palestinian resistance. For example, the poet and activist Dareen Tatour alludes to Mahmoud in her poem "Resist, My People, Resist Them"; Tatour gained notoriety when Israeli authorities arrested and convicted her of incitement of violence directly based on this poem.

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[93] I discuss the interconnections between nationalism and various strands of Marxism at some length in chapters 2 and 3, in relation to Ghassān Kanafāni.

[94] عبد الرحيم محمود: هو الشاعر الفارس الأول في شعرنا المعاصر, الذي أتبع القول بالفعل

[95] كانت المرة الأولى, التي أرى فيها الشاعر عبد الرحيم محمود, في أول اجتماع جماهيري لعصبة التحرر الوطني في (سينما السامر) في غزة: وجهه يشبه التفاحة. كان فلاحاً فلسطينياً يكتب بالمحراث

[96] صوت قصائد عبد الرحيم محمود, هو صوت الشعب الفلسطيني, بكل ما فيه من قوة, وأصالة, وتدفق وحرارة. كان يحمل في داخله, ضمير الشاعر الملتزم

The three writers quoted all lived in various forms of exile from Palestine: Ibrahim in Iraq, Bseiso in Egypt and England and Tuqan in Nablus under Jordanian rule in 1948-1967, and under Israeli occupation after that. Their various states of exile exemplify much of the Palestinian predicament after 1948.

"The Martyr" is, undoubtedly, Mahmoud's most famous poem, and it articulates a fierce devotion to the national cause.[97] As the title suggests, the poem describes the speaker's impending death as a martyr, which he embraces given the conditions of strife in which he is living. The poem opens with a statement that is not only resigned to death but almost celebrates it: "I shall carry my soul on the palm of my hand,/ tossing it into the cavern of death!"[98] Using the future tense, the speaker imagines what it will be like when he inevitably dies, and seems to look forward to this fate. He distinguishes between two parts of himself – his physical self, represented by his hand, carries his spiritual or abstract self, here the soul, throwing it into death. The word used for soul in Arabic is *ruḥ* (روح), generating an audial affinity between it and the hand, *rāḥati* (راحتي), the two parts that were just separated. In addition to the soul, the spirit (*al-nafs*, النفس) appears soon after, as "An honorable man's spirit has two aims:/ to die fighting, or to achieve victory."[99] Death is presented as a heroic, worthy alternative to victory. The Arabic is gendered in a different way than the English translation – it does not include the word "man" but rather the term for "honorable" as an already gendered noun. Like this masculine gendering, the term for martyr is also largely (and grammatically) coded as masculine. However, the subject of this line is not the man but his spirit, which is a feminine noun in Arabic, lending some ambiguity to this gendering. This fluidity raises questions about the gendering of the national body – recall the boy and girl in "The Silver Platter" – as well as of a specifically dead body. In addition, the relationship between the soul and the spirit has a complex history in Islamic traditions of death, including extensive theological debates on which part leaves the body in

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[97] I will be quoting from the English translation of this poem, found in the *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature*, while also qualifying it and explaining the Arabic when needed.

[98] سأحمل روحي على راحتي\ وألقي بها في مهاوي الردى

This is the line Dareen Tatour references in her poem. Tatour's poem "Resist, My People, Resist Them," includes the line "And carried the soul in my palm" (وحملت الروح على كفي) which is likely a reference to Mahmoud's opening line.

[99] ونفس الشريف لها غايتان\ ورود المنايا, ونيل المنى

death and which part remains with it (Idelman Smith and Yazbeck Haddad 36). In including such terms, the poem alludes to these traditions and invokes them, employing the Islamic vocabulary of death. The importance of this vocabulary will become even more evident later on, as the poem calls on mythological language charged with layers of cultural history.

While both spirit and soul are referenced, it is the body which has the most prominent role, as it physically brings about the impending death. The speaker mentions several body parts as he notes that "My ears love the clashing of swords" and "my soul is proud of martyrs' blood," or more accurately, the soul is delighted by bloodshed, not specifying whose.[100] In this case, the soul is present in order to witness the physical sacrifice of the body, reminding us that though the theoretical debates emphasize the distinction between soul and spirit, both are tied to the body. Therefore, what follows is an extended image of the martyr's body, "sprawled on sands, attacked by vultures."[101] Implicitly this body is dead, its blood "tinting the earth crimson," and "his radiant brow covered with dust," evoking the ground in which it will soon be buried and perhaps also the Genesis verse "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."[102] However, the word Arabic uses for "body" is *jism* (جسم) denoting an organism, usually living, and not *jutha* (جثة), or corpse. The word *gism* may have been chosen to fit the meter, but given the poem's emphasis on death, this choice contributes to the conflation between living and dead. So, the soon-to-be martyr imagines himself as martyred, that is dead, using a word for a living body. His smile "mocks this earthly life," again implying this body is removed from the realm of the living despite still being attached to its living form. The smile might remind us of the lips in Gouri's

[100] يلذ لأذني سماع الصليل\ ويبهج نفسي مسيل الدما

[101] The Arabic presents the body but only implies the invitation, or injunction, to see it. The English word "behold" is, in a befitting coincidence, the same word chosen for the English translation of Gouri's poem.

[102] I have used the neutral "it" to refer to the body for grammatical reasons and to avoid gendering, but Arabic does not have such a pronoun, and the English translation, too, uses "his."

poem, which are there “fixed to the hard stony ground.” In Gouri’s poem they are affixed to the ground and underscore both devotion and an earthly, material aspect, whereas in Mahmoud’s poem the smile emphasizes the ethereal and transcendent. But in both poems the lips and smile are a reminder of the corporeal, which highlights both the dead bodies humanity and their current compromised state.

The difficulty in ascertaining whether the body is alive or dead is itself telling and important, as it demonstrates how miniscule and fragile the line between the two is. Moreover, even if the body is still biologically living here, it is clearly preparing for death, because of the geo-political conditions. The speaker explains: “I want no life/ if we’re not respected in our land,” which quickly translates to a willingness to die: “No greater wish than to die defending stolen rights/ and my country.” Life and death are both framed through the national apparatus, which provides a meaning-making mechanism through dying for it. Unlike the figure of the dead-living in Hebrew poetry, though, the martyr in Mahmoud’s poem describes this mechanism while still living. The dead-living is a way to endow a death that had already happened with meaning after the fact, whereas this speaker is wishing for death in order to obtain meaning, implying that he lacks that in life. He yearns for national transcendence but has not been able to realize it, and so this desired meaning is a goal and not an outcome. The result of this temporal difference – being before the sacrifice as opposed to after it – is that Mahmoud’s poem offers no deliverance, and death is depicted as desired not because it has already taken place but because life is insufficient. That the conditions of statelessness persist for Palestinians all these decades later perhaps explains why this poem continues to resonate today.

In addition, this national construct itself is not as straightforward as it might seem. As we have seen, Mahmoud wrote this poem in 1936, when Palestinians began rebelling against British

rule and Zionism. But while the national echoes were already apparent and relevant at this time, they had not yet taken the shape they would after the *Nakba* of 1948 which was a simultaneously destructive and formative event in Palestinian nationalism. "The Martyr" is often considered to be a prophetic poem for that reason, foreshadowing the crisis to come. The complexity of the historical moment and the nascent status of the national is evident in the way the poem refers to the land. Noticeably, the preferred word in the national lexicon, *waṭan* (وطن) or "homeland," is not mentioned. The poem does use both *bilādi* (بلادي) and *arḍ* (أرض) (country and land, respectively), both of which have political-national resonances in Palestine but are not exclusively national. Translating these terms is also complicated as terminological equivalencies are problematic; nationalism and its lexicon mean different things in different contexts, and each of these words carries with it a pre-national sense as well. In fact, yet another word for "land" appears at the poem's closing, and the multiplicity might already indicate a difficulty in pinning down a single, stable, and clear-cut meaning. As he vows to "stalk my land with the blade of this sword," the speaker uses the word *ḥiyāḍi* (حياضي), denoting a land that requires defending. This is a word in classical Arabic that precedes any national claim to the land and in fact has a very different meaning in modern Arabic even in the 1930s as Mahmoud is writing this.[103]

The complexity of national discourse is evident throughout in the poem's register and tone that are more classical than 20th century, though the translation de-emphasizes this, making the poem much more narratively coherent than the original.[104] A clear example of this classical register appears in what in English opens the second stanza.[105] "By your life, I see my own death,/ but I hasten my footsteps," the line states, employing the language of an oath. What is

[103] Curiously, in modern Arabic this root relates to menstruation, not the land.
[104] The translation likewise takes quite a few liberties when it comes to order of lines for the purpose of clarity.
[105] This is yet another example of liberty taken by the translation, as the original is not broken up into stanzas but appears as one unit.

rendered in English as “by your life” is the Arabic *la‘amruka* (لعمرك), which is a classical idiom for taking an oath, a rhetorical move. *La‘amruka* is used twice in the poem (the second time in the English third stanza it is translated as “I swear,”) and both times it appears in the same line as death.[106] Juxtaposing the oath and death shifts the expression from a rhetorical device back to its literal meaning, “for your life.” Ironically, being aligned with death revives this dead metaphor, relating it again to questions of life and death. Like the prosopopeia in the figure of the dead-living, here the rhetorical device of the oath maintains an ongoing tension between the living and the dead, not fully belonging to either. This oath and its classical register situate the poem in a curious position temporally, in between times much like it oscillates between life and death. It seems to stand outside of time, while also speaking to a particular historical moment, a national moment. Such a move ventures into a mythical framework, suggesting that Palestinian attachment to the land extends beyond modern constructions into a timeless realm, which itself is a political claim to that land.

The poem’s temporality, oscillating between history and myth or perhaps linking the two for political purposes, also raises the question of audience. Who is it directed at, who is meant to be interpellated by it and when? The implied addressee is perhaps the nation, Palestinians in general, creating a link between past and present which is a common nationalist move. But as we saw in Gouri as well, the question of audience is bound with the question of the speaker, which is equally ambiguous in this poem. The speaker oscillates between first and third person, referring to “my ears” and “my soul,” but also “his blood,” “the smile on his lips.” The introduction of the third person occurs in the middle of the poem, in what in the English translation is the second stanza. This entire third-person section refers to the dead body (which, as we recall, is described

[106] The Arabic uses two different words for death: in the first instance it is مصرعي, which is perhaps closer to “my killing,” denoting falling in battle. In the second it is the more general form, ممات.

as an organism, not a corpse), as it is "sprawled on sands."[107] Shifting the pronouns means that the speaker both is and is not the martyr in the poem, a muddling which could be read in a number of ways. This duality enhances the myth of the martyr, creating a collective national "we"; we are all martyrs in a sense. Another way to think of it is temporally, a kind of before and after – the speaker is still alive, and he is looking toward the near future in which he himself will become that martyr. Or else, the different pronouns "I" and "him" mark the separation between the living and the dead, while the fact that they are both actually one and the same person illuminates how unstable the distinction is. While still living, the martyr views himself as already dead, already martyred, because of the conditions of dispossession in which he lives. He is therefore a living-dead figure for whom the line or threshold between life and death is indiscernible, almost non-existent.

As conditions of precarity, exile and violence persist in the Palestinian experience after 1948, the figure I have identified as the living-dead in Mahmoud continues to resonate throughout Palestinian literature and literature about Palestine. Many Palestinian texts depict characters dwelling in in-between states, or who are still living but might as well be dead – they are either certain of their upcoming death or see their lives in current conditions as akin to death in life. The two following examples include iterations of this figure in prose writing, from the 1980s and 1990s, decades after "The Martyr" was written. I discuss *Memory for Forgetfulness* by Mahmoud Darwish, one of the poet's only works in prose, and Ilyās Khoury's *Gate of the Sun*. Both novels take place in Beirut but depict Palestinian characters in exile, creating an image

[107] The differences between first and third person are perhaps more grammatically noticeable in Arabic than they are in English.

of the Palestinian experience in the aftermath of the *Nakba* in which life and death are enmeshed and indistinguishable.[108]

Memory for forgetfulness (ذاكرة للنسيان, 1986) is a journal-like text in which Mahmoud Darwish recounts a day in Beirut during the 1982 Israeli invasion of the First Lebanon War and the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990).[109] Darwish (1941-2008) is often considered the national Palestinian poet, and himself had a complex relation to this role. He lived in exile for many years, a topic which features prominently in his writing, and was in Lebanon in the early 1980s. The narrator of *Memory for Forgetfulness* goes around Beirut, narrowly escaping death, dreaming of a normal life with coffee and friends but also imagining his own death and funeral. The book depicts the accounts of one day, which seems much longer due to the unrelenting airstrikes and the constant need to find new hiding places; for both the narrator and the narrative structure, time is out of sequence, out of joint.[110] Time and the difficulty in measuring it are a central feature of the book, a direct result of the surrounding war. It is therefore inextricably linked to an equally unstable space – the bombarded city of Beirut – as the book's subtitle deliberately conflates the two and declares: "The time: Beirut; the place: a day in August 1982."[111] Time becomes blurry and inconclusive, much like the distinction between life and death. Throughout the book these two elements are often linked, as my analysis demonstrates.

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[108] I discuss the Palestinian involvement in Lebanon at length in chapter 2. For more detail see: Rami Siklawi, "The Palestinian Resistance Movement in Lebanon 1967-82: Survival, Challenges, and Opportunities," (2017).

[109] Many Palestinians fled to Lebanon following the establishment of Israel, living mostly in refugee camps, and became embroiled in the grueling local civil war. *Memory for Forgetfulness* is written in prose form but is also highlight poetic, partly journalistic and sometimes reads like political critique.

[110] Darwish likewise reflects on the perplexing effects of time under conditions of violence in a later book, dedicated to a different but not dissimilar set of circumstances: *State of Siege* (حالة حصار, 2002). The book-long series of poems was written under the Israeli siege of Ramallah and in it Darwish notes that "In siege, life becomes the time/ between remembering life's beginning/ and forgetting its end", and later: "In siege, time becomes place/ fossilized in its eternity./ in siege, place becomes time/ that didn't make it".

[111] الزمان: بيروت. المكان: يوم من أيام آب 1982. This marking only appears in some of the Arabic versions of the book, and the English translation glosses over it and simply notes: "August, Beirut, 1982."

Early in the book, for example, the narrator says: “Two hours ago I went to sleep. I plugged my ears with cotton and went to sleep after hearing the last newscast. It didn’t say I was dead. That means I’m still alive” (Darwish 1995, 5).[112] The only indicator of life is the news on the radio, and more specifically what is not said in it – there is no affirmation of life, but rather a non-mention of death from which life is deduced. The entire book reads like the open question repeated in it, “are you alive?”, which remains unanswered “in a middle region between life and death,” in which the distinction becomes impossible, and ambiguity commonplace (181).[113]

One central way in which time is disordered in the book as a result of the surrounding violence is through the notion of the future and specifically what might happen in it. The narrator likens his fear of “what might happen” to phantom pains, underscoring the body and its precarity: “some of those hit in the leg continue to feel pain there for several years after amputation. They reach out to feel the pain in a place where there is no longer a limb […] I feel the pain of an injury that hasn’t happened” (24).[114] The deliberate inaccuracy of this analogy demonstrates the pervasiveness and inescapability of violence, the results of which are felt even before actual impact, reversing the temporality of pain. Thus, the amputee feels pain where an organ once was, but the narrator has not been injured; he feels pain, presumably in a still extant organ, from something that has not happened, but importantly may happen, is quite probable, almost inevitable. The integrity of the body is already compromised, and so the body already feels lacking. In addition to the corporeal impact, this description likewise affects our notion of future, as that which might happens becomes synonymous with what will happen. Moreover,

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[112] نمت قبل ساعتين. وضعت قطعتي قطن في أذني، ونمت بعدما استمعت إلى نشرة الأخبار الأخيرة. لم تقل إني ميت. معنى ذلك أنني حي (8) English references to Darwish in this chapter refer to his 1995 text.

[113] في منطقة وسطى بين الحياة والموت (227)

[114] بعض الذين يصابون بساقهم يواصلون الاحساس بالوجع في الساق حتى بعد بترها لسنين. إنهم يمدون أيديهم لتحسس موضع الوجع في ساق لم يعد لها وجود ... أما أنا، فأشعر بوجع شديد جراء إصابة لم تحدث (33)

what may happen is so certain and inevitable it might as well have already happened. The expansion of phantom pain makes the narrator skip some steps – yet another instance of the disruption of linear time or perhaps its inadequacy. Phantom pain is therefore akin to the living-dead who thinks of themselves as dead before death ever occurs.

This conflation of what has happened, is happening, may happen and will happen continues in a series of images in which the narrator imagines his own death. He views this as an inevitable painful future in which his body is harmed and maimed, and he conjures up these possibilities in great detail. He wonders: "Perhaps a wall will slowly, slowly fall on me, and my suffering will be endless […] Perhaps my flesh will become mingled in the cement and iron and dirt, and there will be nothing to indicate my existence. Perhaps splinters from my glasses will lodge in my eyes and blind me. My side may be pierced by a metal rod, or I may be forgotten in the crush of mangled flesh left behind in the rubble" (25).[115] This lengthy and graphic description almost makes one forget that it is only a hypothetical, even as it repeats the "perhaps" of hypothesis. The narrator dreads the annihilation of his body, losing its form and wholeness and becoming disintegrated, blended with other materials, impaled by foreign objects and no longer recognizably human. He is able to describe this horrific possible future in great detail, as similar events have likely taken place around him. A little later in this extended image the narrator amplifies this dread as he describes the disintegration of his corpse by worms: "arranging themselves in rigid order into rows according to color and type to consume a corpse, stripping flesh off bone in a few minutes" (27).[116] The agency of the worms "arranging themselves"

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[115] قد يختلط لحمي بالإسمنت والحديد والتراب فلا يدل شيء علي. وقد ينغرز زجاج نظارتي في عيني فأصاب بالعمى. وقد يتغلغل عمود من الحديد في خاصرتي. وقد أُنسى في زحام اللحم البشري الممعوس المفقود بين الأنقاض (33).
For some reason, the English translation omits the sentence about flesh mingling in cement. The verb I translate here as "indicate" derives from the same root as the Arabic for signifier and signified, دال ومدلول.

[116] دود يرتب صفوفه وأنواعه وألوانه, بنظام صارم, لالتهام الجثة كأنه يسلخ اللحم كله عن العظام في دقائق (36)

underscores the passivity of the narrator's body, from which he feels entirely alienated and accordingly describes it as "the corpse" and not even "my corpse." "Arranging themselves" is a reflexive verb form, which recurs when the worms' origin is explained, as they "come from nowhere, from the earth, from the corpse itself. The corpse consumes itself by means of a well-organized army rising from within it in moments."[117] A mysterious apparition, the vermin originate from three different places, emanating simultaneously from nothingness, from death and from nature. In this way they bring about total and methodical destruction which operates like a comprehensive reversal of the biblical creation story. Originating from within the body demonstrates the inevitability of death, but also the self-destructive nature of life. The emphasis on self-destruction is especially curious here – as is the mention of an army – as there is an actual army destroying much of the city.

The narrator's detailed descriptions of possible future suffering may be a form of macabre fantasy or a convoluted defense mechanism, and the first to wonder about this is the narrator himself: "but why am I so concerned with what will happen to my corpse and where it will end up? I don't know" (25).[118] This pattern of statements and immediate questioning and contradicting them occurs often in the book, and in a way they accurately depict the narrator's state – an existence within existential paradox. Sure enough, after imagining various possible circumstances of death, the narrator proceeds to envision what might happen to his remains after death. He imagines his own funeral, clad in national colors: "I want a well-organized funeral, in which they'll put my body whole, not mangled, in a wooden coffin wrapped in a flag with the four colors clearly visible" (25).[119] The four colors refer to the Palestinian flag, and so the

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[117] دود يأتي من المجهول...ومن التراب... لاومن الجثة نفسها. الجثة تأكل نفسها بجيش حسن التنظيم يطلع منها في لحظات (36)
[118] ولكن، لماذا أهتم بمصير جثتي وعنوانها إلى هذا الحد؟ لا أعرف (33)
[119] أريد جنازة حسنة التنظيم، يضعون فيها الجثمان السليم، لا المشوه، في تابوت خشبي ملفوف بعلم واضح الألوان الأربعة (33)

narrator hopes that national affiliation can offer some order in lieu of the mayhem around him. This desire is heavily ironized here, though, given its reliance on death. Additional colors appear as the narrator expounds on the funeral service he wants, including flowers, the tone of the announcer and speeches made in his memory, and a musing on the pleasantries during funerals and the benefits of not having a family in this context. He then imagines witnessing his own funeral: "I want a funeral with an elegant coffin, from which I can peep out over the mourners […] I want to sneak a look at how they stand, walk and sigh and how they convert their spittle into tears".[120] It is unclear whether the body peeping out literally from beyond the grave is living or dead, and so the distinction becomes almost moot. It is likewise unclear, I think, whether in this vision the narrator is succumbing to his inevitable demise and turning it into a fantasy, or whether he is actually challenging it and attempting to overturn the rule of death. Perhaps what is implied is that these two options are not so dissimilar, and that the distinction is inconsequential as it is not a matter of choice. Therefore, what might begin as a fantasy of cheating death after the fact and witnessing one's own funeral quickly becomes nightmarish: "I'll smile in my coffin and try to say 'Enough!' I'll try to come back to life, but I won't be able".[121] Where the English translation uses, "come back to life" the Arabic simply says, "I will attempt the return" (*al-`awda*, العودة), which is also the word used to describe Palestinians' desired return to the lost land. In other words, a return to life is likened to a return to the land, and the failure to do so, that is remaining dead, is akin to remaining in exile. Coincidentally, the Hebrew equivalent for "return" is similarly used in Gouri's poem to describe the soldiers' desired resurrection (*nashuv*, נשוב).

The national aspect of this statement, in a subsequent reference to the colors of the flag, is imbued with irony and doubt in the capabilities of national ideas and poetry, as the English translation notes.

[120] أريد جنازة وتابوتاً أنيق الصنع أطل منه، كما يريد توفيق الحكيم أن يطل على المشيعين.. أسترق النظر إلى طريقتهم في الوقوف وفي المشي وفي التأفف وفي تحويل اللعاب إلى دموع (34)

[121] سأبتسم في التابوت، وأبذل جهداً لأن أقول: كفى، سأحاول العودة فلا أستطيع (35). This description is in the future tense, as in Arabic this type of conditional clause (which is not an impossible condition) employs the future.

The fantasy fails to achieve life after death, as even in hypothetical scenarios the narrator is constrained by death and lacks access to a political afterlife. The next section of the book therefore opens with a return to death itself, indicating the limits of imagination, as the narrator proclaims: “but to die here – no! I don’t want to die under the rubble” (27).[122] He cannot say that he does not want to die at all, just that he is concerned with the circumstances and setting of his death. This is a result of the ubiquity and prevalence of death, as the narrator notes: “it isn’t the dead who dies by chance. Rather he who lives, lives by chance, because not one span of earth has been spared the rockets and not one spot where you can take a step has been saved from an explosion”.[123] Death is an inevitable feature of day-to-day reality. In temporal terms, death is no longer in a future tense but rather in a present tense, perhaps in present continuous.[124] In a situation of war and constant violence, the aberration becomes the norm, much like Mbembe notes, or perhaps the two become indistinguishable. Life is the accidental, and incidental, so precarious it becomes the uncommon, an oddity. In a necropolitical situation, death is the origin of politics. Consequently, the narrator later notes that he inhabits space in a way that is precarious, fleeting and temporary; the fact that he is alive only means he has not yet died: “here, I didn’t die; I haven’t died yet,” he repeats in the last sections of the book, as a kind of refrain with variations: “So what if I’m here? Here, I didn’t die; I haven’t yet died” (181).[125]

In an environment of ubiquitous violence, death is so common it becomes mundane, as the narrator notes early on regarding radio reports about the war: “eloquent voices beyond reproach, describing death as they would the weather” (23).[126] But as we have already seen, the

[122] أما أن أموت هنا، فلا. لا أريد الموت تحت الإنقاض (35)
[123] ليس من يموت هو من يموت بالمصادفة. الحي حي بالمصادفة، إذ لم يسلم شبر واحد من صاروخ, ولم يسلم موقع خطوة واحدة من انفجار (36). I have modified the English translation here.
[124] Though I should note present continuous does not exist in Arabic.
[125] هنا لم أمت. هنا لم أمت بعد... هنا لم أمت. هنا لم أمت حتى الآن... وماذا لو كنت هنا. هنا لم أمت. لم أمت بعد (216-7)
[126] أصوات فصيحة ونزيهة تصف الموت كما تصف الأحوال الجوية (32)

narrator listens to these eloquent voices himself and reads newspapers about the war of which he is in the midst, raising the question of what purpose these might serve for him. He concludes that his interest in external reports derives from a desire for a death that is not "solitary" but "collective," a shared experience, perhaps a shared mourning: "a shared silence or reciprocal talk. He is looking for some kind of participation in this death, for a witness who can give evidence, for a gravestone over a corpse, for a bearer of news about the fall of a horse, for a language about speech and silence" (24).[127] Much like he could not wish to avoid death altogether, just not to die under the rubble, here he only longs that death at least be marked and known through an announcement and a grave. He is asking that death be given some sort of meaning, perhaps through the collective and shared experience. Unlike national transcendence, though, it seems that this type of meaning would not include redemption but rather a much more local and personal sense of comfort.

The lack of clear distinction between the living and the dead is further emphasized when the narrator and his friends are visited by a real-life character, 'Izzaddine Qalaq (عز الدين قلق). Qalaq is a Palestinian representative who was killed by the Israeli Mossad in 1978, and so he appears here, in 1982 Beirut, after his death. The narrator and his friends proceed to ask the ghostly Qalaq questions about the afterworld, and while the deceased comrade is supposed to be completely distinct from them, the distinction soon disappears:

> 'Izzaddine,' I ask, 'what are you doing here? Weren't you assassinated? Didn't I write your obituary? And didn't we walk in your funeral in Damascus? Are you alive or dead?' 'like all of you.' 'Izzaddine,' I ask, 'suppose I tell you we're the living; does that mean

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[127] باحث عن... صمت مشترك، وعن كلام متبادل، باحث عن مشاركة ما في الموت, عن شاهد يشهد, عن شاهد على جثة, عن مبلغ عن سقوط حصان, عن لغة للصمت وللكلام (32)

> you're dead?' 'like all of you.' 'Izzaddine,' I ask, 'suppose I say to you we're the dead; does that mean you're alive?' 'like all of you.' (162).[128]

The narrator expects that he and Qalaq be on opposing sides – if he is living the friend must be dead, or the other way around – but Izzaddine reveals that in fact there is no real difference. Comparing this apparition to the dead-living in Alterman and Gouri is instructive, because unlike the Hebrew figure Qalaq is not heroic nor is he protecting the living even after his death. Instead, his presence mostly serves to destabilize the still living narrator, not to give him any sense of comfort. This is amplified by the fact that soon after Izzaddine leaves, the narrator realizes the others never saw him, and so the apparition itself – impossible to begin with – is questioned even within the narrative's logic; in lieu of national transcendence there is mostly confusion and doubt. Moreover, this doubt is existential and has implications for the notion of mourning as well as for the very definition of living. So, the narrator recalls writing a eulogy for Qalaq and attending his funeral, but these rituals of mourning no longer serve as clear markings; one funeral becomes indistinguishable from another given their ubiquity, but the narrator has also imagined his own funeral in great detail while still living. As the ghostly Qalaq says, he is in fact "like all of you." It is no longer clear who is living and who is not, what that distinction means or how it can be discerned, when even those who are still alive become living-dead. The apparition of Qalaq is perhaps the most explicit representation of the destabilizing proximity between life and death, but in fact it highlights the ghostliness of the book as a whole. As the narrator imagines his own death, his disintegrating body and his funeral, he dramatizes the pervasive notion that his life only means that he "[hasn't] died yet."

[128] قلت: يا عز الدين، ماذا تفعل هنا. ألم تقتل؟ ألم أكتب فيك رثاء. ألم نمش في جنازتك في دمشق. هل أنت حي أم ميت؟ قال: مثلكم! قلت: يا عزالدين، لنفترض أنني قلت لك اننا أحياء, فهل أنت ميت؟ قال: مثلكم. قلت: يا عز الدين، لنفترض أنني قلت لك إننا موتى, فهل أنت حي؟ قال: مثلكم (202).

Darwish's extensive preoccupation with the tenuous distinction between the living and the dead in *Memory for Forgetfulness* is hardly an outlier in literature written about the Palestinian experience. An iteration of these topics, and of the figure of the living-dead, is central to Elias Khoury's epic novel about the lost land of Palestine, *Gate of the Sun* (باب الشمس, 1998), published on the 50-year mark of the *Nakba*. The setting for Khoury's novel is a war-torn Beirut, not unlike Darwish's book. But whereas *Memory for Forgetfulness* takes place during one endless day, *Gate of the Sun* explores a decades-long period of time, jumping between 1948, 1967, the1980s and beyond. The result is a dizzying account that melds historical and mythical time and creates a chain of doubles. *Gate of the Sun* focuses on Khalil, the narrator, as he tells his friend Younes his own life story, and storytelling is the novel's central device and vehicle. Younes is a Palestinian war hero who now lies comatose in a Beirut hospital, and Khalil hopes that by reminding his friend of his life story he can wake him up. Narration is therefore supposed to be an anchor, but it is revealed to be confusing and unstable for the narrator and the readers. Simultaneously, however, the novel is highly concerned with historical facts and attempts to generate a clear map of the lost land of Palestine, tracing events leading up to the loss of 1948. As a result of these conditions, multiple characters inhabit liminal positions: people from the past haunt the text's present; the comatose Younes is neither quite living nor quite dead; and Khalil's life is constantly in danger in the city of Beirut. Taking place in the long aftermath of the *Nakba*, the novel is concerned with the question of what to do in the wake of loss – both of Palestine, and of specific people. It is thus a book about the fraught relationships between the dead and the living, memory and storytelling. The narrative is as precarious and unstable as the characters' lives and bodies, as it questions its own ability to narrate at the very time it does so.

The novel opens with a death, already setting the tone, followed by a description of the subsequent mourning: “Umm Hassan is dead. I saw everyone racing through the alleys of the camp and heard the sound of weeping” (5).[129] The setting is Shatila refugee camp in the southern outskirts of Beirut, a crowded camp set up for Palestinian refugees in 1949. Shatila is also known as the site of a gruesome massacre during the Lebanese Civil War in September 1982, enabled by Israel. Death is clearly present from the outset, and so the statement about Umm Hassan’s death is repeated in variations five times in the three pages that comprise the novel’s preamble. This repetition signals both the prevalence of death and the seemingly contradictory difficulty believing it, which is here amplified by the fact that Umm Hassan knew she was going to die and alerted everyone before it actually happened: “Umm Hassan had told everyone, and everyone believed her” (6).[130] Umm Hassan, who plays a significant role in the advent of both life and storytelling in the novel, dies right at the beginning. But her life, too, was marked by death, as she “had buried her four children one after the other,” and was also marked by exile (ibid). Now that she has died, much of the preamble to the book is devoted to describing her preparation for death, the subsequent finding of her body in her home and the neighbors’ reactions as they prepare her funeral. The beginning of the story, of the act of storytelling, is intertwined with an end, tinged with death and loss. Later in the novel, as Khalil attempts to find a starting point to the stories he is relating to Younes, he says to him: “You want the beginning! That’s the

[129] ماتت أم حسن. رأيت الناس يتراكضون في أزقة المخيم، وسمعت أصوات البكاء (9).
Umm means “mother,” and this form of naming people as their children’s parents is very common in the Arab world, as we will see in chapter 3.
[130] The reason everyone believes her is that Umm Ḥassan was “the only one to weep on the morning of June 5, 1967…she decided to wear mourning”. She foresaw the second Palestinian loss in 1967 when everyone else thought it would be a triumph, linking her character to the national cause.

beginning. The beginning, Father, is death" (323).[131] Given the way this novel commences with death, this comment is reflexive in both the extra-diegetic and the diegetic level.

Death inaugurates the story and continues alongside it, as birth and death are continuously interwoven in the novel, complexly linked to the characters' state of exile. "Umm Hassan came from al-Kweikat, her village in Galilee, to become the only midwife in Shatila," the narrator tells us, explaining why everyone called her "our mother": "because everyone born in the Shatila camp fell from their mother's guts into her hands" (5). Umm Hassan, who has just died, aided in the births of countless babies in the camp, including the narrator himself, and her death occasions the beginning of the story. In fact, she is directly responsible for the act of narration at the heart of the novel, as she implores Khalil to talk to the unconscious Younes: " 'Do what he tells you,' she answered. 'But he doesn't speak,' I said. 'Oh yes, he does,' she said, 'and it's up to you to hear his voice.' And I don't hear it, I swear I don't, but I'm stuck in this chair, and I talk and talk" (7-8). Khalil therefore embarks on the impossible task of narration, awaiting a response from Younes that never comes. It is at this point, at the closing of the novel's preamble, that Khalil switches to the second person narration directed at Younes that continues throughout the rest of the novel: "Tell me, I beg of you, what should I do?" (8).[132]

Recollection and storytelling are the main project of *Gate of the Sun*, with narrativization serving as an instrument or attempt of recovering a lost past. Khalil spends the bulk of the novel in a hospital room, telling stories to a comatose and bed ridden Younes, in an effort to bring him

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[131] "تريد الأول! هذا هو الأول، الأول يا سيدي هو الموت" (316). The tension between beginning and end is further emphasized in the Hebrew translation which uses the term *bereshit* (בראשית), "in the beginning." This term evokes the opening of the Book of Genesis and marks the primordial beginning with death. The phrasing here likewise brings to mind the equally relevant Christian reference "In the beginning was the word," given the significance of language and storytelling, though unlike both religious texts, God is notably absent from *Gate of the Sun*.

[132] Khoury writes about the links between storytelling, death and the national struggle following the loss of land in an essay in memory of the Palestinian writer, Ghassān Kanafāni, who was killed by the Israeli *Mossad* in 1972 in Lebanon. See: Khoury's "Remembering Ghassān Kanafāni, or How a Nation Was Born of Storytelling, " 2013. Kanafāni features prominently in my next two chapters.

back to life. Like Scheherazade, Khalil attempts to use storytelling to preserve life, but his endeavor differs from that in the *Thousand and One Nights*; he is not trying to save his own life but another's, and he does so by telling Younes stories about Younes' own life, whose sources are always dubious and unclear. Using storytelling as a life-saving mechanism is also deeply ironic in the novel because Khalil should be able to actually save lives; he is a doctor, albeit one whose skills and qualifications are constantly put into doubt. The conditions of war and siege make his medical work entirely futile, as he describes: "I stayed in the hospital for a month treating the dead, eating eggplant, and watching the Israeli planes launch bombing raids" (99). Death is as common as eating eggplant and trying to prevent it seems useless; he might as well be treating the dead, or perhaps the living-dead. Khalil describes these days of siege as "liv[ing] with death without taking it in," a sentence he repeats in variation in the following sentence: "I lived with death, but I couldn't absorb it."[133] This demonstrates a central feature of death's prevalence in life, specifically as it relates to storytelling – death is ever-present and inescapable, but at the same time it cannot be entirely processed or taken in. As a result, death needs to be told and retold, and so Khalil insists that he has told Younes this before: "I already told you about the siege, about the hospital, about death," creating an analogy among the three (99).

Younes is the audience and addressee of these stories, but it is entirely unclear whether he can receive them given his condition, which is described as a "protracted death" (212). [134] His fragile condition defines and propels the act of narration while also posing an existential challenge; in his vegetative state Younes is entirely passive and unresponsive, raising questions

[133] In the first instance the Arabic underscores the prevalence of death and its paradoxical presence in life even more as death is the direct object of life in the sentence, as Khalil states: "عشنا الموت," we lived death (97).
[134] The narrator of *Memory for Forgetfulness* has a childhood friend who has been rendered comatose in the violent conflict, and recalls hospital staff saying: " 'Pray for him to die, because death is his only release. He's in a coma. He has gone into death, alive' " (32).

about the definitions of life, death and the human. As Khalil ponders early on: “Is he dead or alive? I don’t know – am I helping him or tormenting him? Am I telling him stories or listening to him?” (7).[135] It is therefore unclear who is the narrator and who is the addressee, and these roles are analogous to the blurred lines between life and death, as Khalil says to Younes: “You’ve been stricken with a brainstorm [literally: stroke], and I’m stricken with a storm of memories. You’re dying, and I’m dying” (212). Moreover, the function of the addressee is called into question – on the one hand, Younes is the paradigmatic addressee, an entirely captive audience. On the other hand, this very condition might make him incapable of receiving the story. Formally and grammatically, he is the second-person addressee, known in Arabic as the *mukhāṭab (*مخاطب), but effectively he is absent, or *ghā’ib* (غائب), which in Arabic denotes the third person pronoun. In addition to the medical and narrative levels, Younes’ condition has political significance as it renders him the exemplary present absentee – a term designating some Palestinians under Israeli law. According to the 1950 Absentees’ Property Law, anyone who during the war resided in enemy territory (read: any Arab state), forfeited their home and land. Tens of thousands of Palestinians lost their properties under this law even if they returned after the war, and some never left but their villages were only annexed by Israel after the date stipulated by the law. These Palestinians became citizens of Israel but remain ineligible for their own property, effectively making them present-absentees, (נוכחים-נפקדים, الغائبون-الحاضرون).[136]

Younes’ liminal presence-absence is explicit and central to the novel, and he is often described as a corpse in life, but he is hardly the only character described in such terms. Past events recounted through the elaborate stories Khalil tells are engulfed in death and destruction,

[135] "أميت هو أم حي؟ لا أدري، أأساعده أم أعذبه؟ أأحبه أم أكرهه؟ أأروي له أم أستمع إليه؟" (11).
[136] The law stipulates that this state of affairs shall remain in effect until the end of the official State of Emergency declared by Israel in May 1948. The State of Emergency has never been ended, more than 70 years later.

from which there seems to be no deliverance. Many of the stories, about both Younes' family and Khalil's, depict characters dying – some a natural death like Khalil's grandmother, but many an unnatural death, stemming from the violence of a series of wars (starting with 1948 but including also inter-Arab wars) and from the consequent decades of exile and wandering. These descriptions include the deaths of characters like Younes and his wife Nahila's first son, Ibrahim, and Khalil's father, as well as the broader destruction surrounding all the novel's events, which take place in death's shadow. As we saw in Darwish's book, when violence and destruction become commonplace, the distinction between life and death is rendered unclear and incidental. Indeed, *Gate of the Sun* is rife with examples of characters precariously residing at the threshold in addition to Younes; as Khalil tells him, he is not "the only living martyr" (212).[137] Some examples include Khalil himself who was once thought to have died; Dunya, a resident of the camp; a poet mentioned by Khalil, and others.

One such example is worth quoting at some length, as it illustrates the destabilizing effect of this phenomenon. When Khalil's father was a child, he was shot in the leg by a Jewish man living on the land that used to be his, when he was trying to collect vegetables for his family to eat. When he returned injured, his mother performed all the rites reserved for a slain fighter, a *shahīd*:

> I didn't stop when I discovered the injury was trivial. I gave him a wedding, as they do for martyrs. I belted out *youyous* and wailed and waved above me his blood-stained trousers. I did what all the mothers of martyrs did, I thanked God […] I thought, this is

[137] (207) لا الشهيد-الحي الوحيد.

> my slice of martyrdom. I did what the mothers of martyrs do so I might spare myself later. I thought, my son has died. That means he'll never die again after today (338).[138]

Treating the funeral as a wedding is a common practice for parents of a *shahīd,* as Maram Masarwi notes (69).[139] It can be understood as mitigating the pain of loss by sublimating and substituting death for a ceremony of life, straddling the line between personal and national rituals; the national slain martyr is celebrated as living through a ceremony of personal life. At the same time, it also diverts attention from the dead body. In this example in Khoury's novel, however, Khalil's father did not actually die, but his mother nevertheless performed the ritual through semblance. Her practice in fact reverses the original ritual because instead of acting as though the dead were living, she acts as though the living were dead. Kahlil's grandmother does "what all the mothers did," a phrase repeated twice in this brief description, in the hopes that this semblance, her act of mimicking and poetic simile, will suffice and replace actual death.[140] If the son is already dead, has already been mourned for, this should protect him against actual death. However, it becomes clear that this is futile, as he is later killed at the entrance to their house in unclear circumstances. Much like in *Memory for Forgetfulness*, this ritual also suggests a temporal reversal, trying to prevent a future death with one that has already (not) occurred.

A different iteration of the blurred line between the living and the dead appears in both Darwish's and Khoury's books – posters dedicated to the dead, making their faces a common presence in the city. Posters were fixtures of the Lebanese civil war, playing a significant role in the creation of the war's iconography, as Zeina Maasri explains (3). A common type were

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[138] "ولما اكتشفت أن الإصابة طفيفة لم أتوقف. أقمت له عرساً مثل الشهداء، زغردت وولولت ولوحت ببنطلونه الملوث بالدم، وأقمت الدنيا وأقعدتها, وقلت الحمد لله فعلت كما تفعل أمهات الشهداء, حملت البنطلون فوق رأسي, وجاءت جارتنا أم كامل وبخرتني وبخرت البنطلون وبخرتك. قلت هذه حصتي من الشهداء، فعلت مثل أمهات الشهداء كي أجنب نفسي هذه الكأس. قلت إن ابني مات، لذلك فهو لن يموت بعد اليوم" (331).

[139] A similar scene of a wedding of a dead son is depicted in Darwish's *State of Siege* (حالة حصار, 2002).

[140] The language of simile is more evident in the Arabic, repeating the terms for likeness: مثل, كما

posters in memory of fallen fighters, like the ones described in both books, which operate as visual iterations of obituaries (Maasri 89). Darwish's narrator recalls the: "Faces on the walls – martyrs freshly emerging from life and the printing presses, a death which is a remake of itself".[141] The signifier, the image of the dead, replaces the dead himself, who seemingly exits life and the printing press at the same moment, the freshness of the printing ironically opposed to the end constituted by death. Printing and death become linked or intertwined, pointing to the manufactured nature of both; one becomes a "remake" or better yet a reproduction of the other, with a Marxist framework clearly at play. If Benjamin outlines the functions of the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, here art and death are both mechanically reproduced. These posters follow a particular pattern as part of a visual genre, as Maasri notes they are "laid out in a basic template design that gets reproduced for the different martyrs; a by-product of modern means of production, this system economizes on time and creates a standardized visual identity" (89). The regularity with which these images of the fallen appeared in the public space is necessitated by the war and enabled by modern production. Given the ubiquity of violence, they were produced with the chilling efficiency of a newspaper: "One martyr replacing the face of another, taking his place on the wall, until displaced by yet another, or by rain" (Darwish 53).[142] In this way the posters are a macabre indicator of temporality – the printed image replaces a living person and is soon replaced by yet another man-become-poster.

In *Gate of the Sun*, Khalil recalls seeing the same posters, but for him they blur the distinction between life and death even more explicitly. He asks Younes: "Do you remember how we used to tremble in front of those posters, how we were convinced that the martyrs were

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[141] وجوه على الجدران، شهداء طازجون خارجون للتو من الحياة ومن المطبعة، موت يعيد إنتاج موته (67).
In the Arabic, the verb used to describe the posters denotes an exit, not an emergence. In addition, death here does not reproduce itself, but rather its own death, amplifying its prevalence.
[142] شهيد يزيح وجه شهيد آخر عن الحائط ويجلس مكانه إلى أن يزيحه شهيد جديد أو مطر

about to burst through the colored paper and jump out at us?" (130). Khalil remembers the posters as uncannily lively as they "were an integral part of our life," marking the encroachment of death into life. At the same time, they are also eerily still, both because they are two-dimensional representations, and because they are of the dead. Posters for the dead become part of the city's landscape, "and we filled the walls of the camp and the city with them, dreaming that one day our own pictures would appear on similar ones. All of us dreamed of seeing our faces outlined in bright red and with the martyr's halo. There was a contradiction here to which we paid no attention: we wanted to have our faces on the posters but also wanted to see them – we wanted to become martyrs without dying!".[143] Much like the fantasy Darwish's narrator has of seeing his own funeral, this is a fantasy of defying death while dying, perhaps through the national narrative; this is not any death, but that of a martyr, for the national cause, which merits such a poster. The image is thus akin to the national transcendence of becoming the dead-living in Alterman or the flower in Gouri, but it is presented by those still living. If the dead-living has a life after death through national transcendence, the living-dead experiences death during life with no option of an afterlife.

"Trying to draw a line": A Comparative Reading

Through the dead-living and the living-dead, we have seen different ways in which the distinction between life and death, between the living and the dead, becomes blurry and porous, challenging the foundational and existential definition of both realms. For Palestinians this is a direct result of the *Nakba*, which began in 1948 but has never ended. In *Gate of the Sun*, Khalil tells the story of how Younes wandered among destroyed villages in 1948 trying to determine

[143] هل تذكر كيف كنا نرتجف أمام ملصقات الشهداء, ونشعر أن الشهيد سوف يمزق الورقة الملونة ويقفز منها إلينا. كان الملصق جزءاً أساسياً من حياتنا, نملأ به حياطان المخيم والمدينة, ونحلم أن تعلق صورنا عليه. كانا حلمنا برؤية صورتنا محوطة باللون الأحمر الفاقع, وبهالة الشهادء. وكان في الأمر مفارقة لم نعرها انتباهاً. نريد أن نغلق صورنا في الملصق ونريد أن نراها. أي نريد أن نستشهد دون أن نموت! (8-127)

people's fate: "You'll tell me you were lost, mistaking the living for the dead and the dead for the living. Everything got tangled up, and you spent years after this first great disaster, the *Nakba*, trying to draw a line between the dead and the living" (178).[144] Disoriented and flummoxed, Younes tries to comprehend the events of the war and the following expulsion, an attempt continued by Khalil's storytelling decades later in exile; neither man succeeds, it seems. Younes tries to draw a line between the dead and the living in lieu of the one that had existed there but was crossed out by the war and its aftermath. The Arabic verb used here for drawing the line is *rasm* (رسم), which also indicates tracing and making a record or putting things into words, and in many ways that is what the narrator and the novel as a whole are trying to do – trace and retrace that line, along with what was lost. Accordingly, in his preface to the Hebrew translation of *Gate of the Sun*, Anton Shammas describes the novel as "a treasure map of Palestine. The memory exiled outside the map in 48' now dictates the story on the erased scroll, and the story redraws the map of the lost land" (my translation). The line that Younes tries to draw is significant as an act of demarcation, as well as of containment; it is an attempt to prevent death from encroaching on life.

We might visualize this line as the hyphen in the term I have been using regarding both Khoury and Darwish's book, the living-dead. The hyphen separates the living from the dead while also making clear that the two are linked. That separating hyphen also exists, of course, in the Hebrew trope we saw in Alterman and Gouri, the dead-living – how do the hyphen and line operate in this context? To try and answer this question, I turn to another Hebrew poem written in 1948 – Yehudah Amichai's "Rain in the Battlefield" (גשם בשדה קרב). Strictly speaking, this poem does not employ the figure of the dead-living, but it does illustrate and perhaps even

[144] وستقول لي أنكم كنتم ضائعين, ترون الأحياء أمواتاً, وتعتقدون الأموات أحياءً. اختلطت الأمور عليكم, وقضيتم سنوات نكبتكم الأولى, وأنتم تحاولون رسم الخط الفاصل بين الموتى والأحياء (174)

theorize the demarcating line. Through this poem we can both see how the blurred distinction between life and death operates in Hebrew poetry and how it differs from the Palestinian phenomenon. Amichai is a canonical Hebrew-Israeli poet who is highly associated with war and elegiac poetry. “Rain in the Battlefield” is one of several poems he dedicates to his friend, Dicky, who died in combat in the 1948 war, in which Amicahi also fought.[145] At the center of this short poem, which resembles an epigram, is the fragile, incidental line between life and death: “Rain falls on the faces of my friends;/ on the faces of my living friends/ who cover their heads with a blanket – / and on the faces of my dead friends/ who cover no more” (10).[146] The poem’s main device is a macabre interplay between difference and sameness, between those who died in combat and those who have remained alive, perhaps only not yet dead. Rain is an equalizer, pouring down on the living and the dead alike so that they cannot be told apart. The only distinction is that some can still cover themselves against it while others no longer can, and so the blanket is a line that separates the living from the dead. But this distinction is minor, incidental and extremely tenuous, and it is also porous; the blanket might shield against the rain to some degree, but it is far from hermetic. The harrowing similarity manifested by the blanket is echoed in the poem’s structure, as both groups of friends are depicted in parallel sentences and first appear as one group in the opening line, “Rain falls on the faces of my friends;” only to be separated by a line break as incidental as the blanket.

The suggestion that the living friends are only not-yet dead stands as a foreboding warning in “Rain in the Battlefield” that in a state of war life becomes so precarious it is no

[145] Amichai is usually considered to be a member of the State Generation in Hebrew poetry, despite the fact that he is the same age as Gouri, who is usually counted as part of the earlier 1948 generation. Moreover, Amichai was born in Germany and learned Hebrew as a second language, distinguishing him from most other writers in the Statehood group, whereas Gouri was born in Israel and spoke Hebrew first, uncharacteristic of his group. This demonstrates, perhaps, that the national narrative is not linear.
[146] "גשם יורד על פני רעי;\ על פני רעי החיים, אשר\ מכסים ראשיהם בשמיכה - \ ועל פני רעי המתים, אשר\ אינם מכסים עוד" (24)

longer distinguishable from death. Amichai's poetic and political approach is certainly different than that of Alterman and Gouri's national transcendence of the dead-living, indicative of his broad humanism. But it is still distinct from the Palestinian context in significant ways, as shown in *Gate of the Sun* and *Memory for Forgetfulness*. As Darwish and Koury's novels demonstrate, the precarious line in the Palestinian experience is not unique to conditions of war, which might be universalized, but persists in continuous and specific dispossession. This is, in Mbembe's terms, politics as the work of death. Reading Amichai's poem with Khoury and Darwish in mind alters its outlines, as war has no clear end point and the battlefield lacks any boundaries; life itself is an ongoing rainstorm in which some can no longer cover their heads with a blanket and others still try to, but the rain pours through anyway, while still others may not have a blanket at all. And crucially, such a comparative reading forces us to wonder not only about friends in the battlefield but enemies as well. In other words, it is an injunction to translate, to recognize not only the Israeli War of Independence but also the resultant Palestinian *Nakba*.

Dead-living and Living-dead: Problems of Mourning

Throughout this chapter, we have seen the political import of dead bodies, the blurred line between life and death in situations of war and dispossession, and the challenges of burial in politically fraught contexts. In *Antigone*, burial or lack thereof destabilizes the political structure. In Alterman and Gouri's poems, the dead-living operates politically and poetically after death through national transcendence, collectivizing the dead body and turning it into a poetic symbol that lives on in national life, therefore obviating a burial. Mahmoud's "The Martyr" depicts a liminal figure anticipating death before it happens, which is further developed in Palestinian literature thereafter. This precarity is apparent in Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness* and Khoury's *Gate of the Sun*, as both narrators imagine a kind of national deliverance but are unable

to achieve it, leaving their bodies suspended between life and death. Theoretical frameworks like biopolitics and necropolitics help situate the body at the center of the political apparatus, rather than an abstract notion of the subject, especially regarding the possibility of dying; in biopolitics death is the aberration, in necropolitics it is the common state. As I have suggested, though, both theories stop short of addressing the question of remains, and what happens to the liminal and precarious body in these political systems. If the body is dead, is it buried? And if it is living but might as well be dead, what happens to it? Or, as Butler puts it, "after loss, then what?" The presence and existence of corporeal remains and liminal bodies on the political stage require action and elicit mourning. Consider the following distinction – Agamben, in relation to Nazism, discusses the biopolitics of "lives unworthy of being lived" and the horrifying industrialization of death that followed this legalistic definition (81). Butler, too, is concerned with "whose lives counts as lives?", but she complements it with an additional question: "what *makes for a grievable life?*" (20). What does it mean to mourn these irregular bodies, the dead-living and the living-dead? If the dead soldiers living on in poetry and through the nation obviate burial, are they still mourned as individuals? And if the living-dead see themselves as already dead but cannot, must not be buried, where do their bodies belong, and what happens if, or when, they do die? Finally, if the lines are indeed as porous and fragile as these figures suggest, what does that mean for our definition of life and death?

Grievability is a question of political power and so for Butler the "ungrievable" are the political "others" – those whose lives are considered insignificant and unreal and whose death therefore does not register as death at all. As such, mourning in a political context defines the human – if there was no life to begin with then surely no death – no killing – can occur, and no mourning is necessary: "If a life is not grievable, it is not quite a life; it does not qualify as a life

and is not worth a note. It is already the unburied, if not the unburiable," she writes, evoking *Antigone* (34).[147] As Butler demonstrates, these dead become spectral presences whose remains haunt the living precisely because they were denied burial: "If violence is done against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. But they have a strange way of remaining animated and so must be negated again (and again)" (33). Repetition is inherent in loss, which confounds time, challenging the distinction between living and dead, "and language occurs as the iteration of loss" (Sacks 6).[148] Such repetition is paradoxical – it indicates loss while also eliding it, necessitates mourning while simultaneously forbidding it. In addition to this paradox of logic and politics, which occurs already in *Antigone*, this precarious form of living and dying disrupts the temporality of mourning, making its starting point impossible to know. These lives elicit mourning pre-mortem, but are also impossible to mourn, making them premature and belated at once. This mechanism is especially prominent during the process of nation formation, as the nation is itself in need of constant reinforcement; much like the ungrievable, who cannot be killed and so has to be repeatedly killed, the nation has to be created again and again, perhaps with each occurrence of the other's non-killing. The nation, and particularly the nation-state, does this as a means of fortifying its borders and justifying its existence, which needs to occur repeatedly. Any offense is thus defined as self-defense and necessary security measures.

Butler's formulation is specifically rooted in the political setting of the nation-state, and more specifically American nationalism and imperialism. She wonders how the hegemonic

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[147] Butler often mentions Antigone in *Precarious Life*, and also devotes a book length project to the play and its later critics, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (2000).

[148] Sacks devotes an entire chapter to the tension between historical time on the one hand and an emphasis on an inescapable present on the other, referring to both Darwish and Khoury. In this chapter he notes, for example, that "when one begins one therefore already bears a relation to others, to death and time. And one therefore begins by repeating" (Sacks 160).

nation constructs its others and allows, or disallows, mourning for them. This ethical and political challenge is especially urgent as Butler writes in the wake of September 11 and the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, which remain ongoing almost two decades later. However, defining an “other” necessarily assumes a normative and central “self,” and such constructions align with pre-existing national definitions rather than challenging them. These categories likewise assert, at least implicitly, that both the hegemonic “I” and the “other” are monolithic, an assumption which is part of the state’s ideological project. Moreover, Butler’s point of view is clearly that of the hegemonic subject and lacks a consideration of the minoritarian or subjugated view. In other words, she is more interested in how Americans should mourn for their victims than in how their victims mourn themselves. “Othering” is meant to acknowledge structures of power, but in order for it not to replicate them comparison is required, otherwise the hegemonic lens is sustained as dominant. That is why I have juxtaposed here the dead-living and the living-dead, to show their various complex entanglements.

Situating the figures of the dead-living and the living-dead in comparison as I have done in this chapter does not suggest an equivalence or symmetry between them. I termed the figure in Palestinian literature the living-dead not to suggest that it mirrors the dead-living but rather because the term aptly represents the relationship I see between life and death in this figure. The two poetic and political figures are certainly related to one another, but in a way that is more intricate and nuanced than simple mirroring. Inscribing the dead-living as a national symbol makes it endlessly grievable; death becomes its defining feature, and the entire nation mourns it intently. The living-dead, on the other hand, cannot be grieved because it is still alive, and because in a state of exile mourning is still needed for the lost land of Palestine, raising the question: “is it possible to mourn something that you want back?” (Eng and Kazanjian 22). Not

belonging fully in either life or death, the living-dead lacks even the comfort of mourning, making it existentially ungrievable. As we have seen, the route of national transcendence, which constitutes the dead-living, is not available or possible for the living-dead. My contention is that these two figures and phenomena enable one another. The ungrievable cannot be killed and so needs to be killed again and again, a process which I have also linked to nation-formation. By contrast, endlessly grieving the dead-living is a different kind of iteration, that at least in part is enabled by the deferred or impossible mourning of the living-dead.

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In Sophocles' tragedy, Antigone insists on mourning the lost as similar, while Creon defines him as an irrevocable other. She treats him as her brother, not an enemy of the city, and so sees in him a grievable and buriable person. Such an approach is perhaps more challenging when it comes to national disputes, but it is no less urgent. Dead bodies like the one in Ar'ara at the opening of this chapter remain on the political stage like that of Polyneices, pointing to the inevitability of further loss, much like the fate of Antigone herself and almost every other character in the play. Viewing the politics of grievability through a comparative framework enables mourning through difference without emboldening the national structures which generated the loss in the first place. We might consider one example as an illustration of the challenges at hand – as we have seen, both Judaism and Islam require that dead bodies be buried in a timely manner. The Jewish injunction forbidding the delay of the dead (*isur halanat ha-met*, איסור הלנת המת) has been interpreted by some as applying to Israelites only, perhaps most notably the influential medieval rabbi Rashi. But in fact, the Deuteronomy verse that contains this injunction applies to someone who has committed a mortal sin and appears in a chapter detailing laws of warfare and treatment of various others. Reading this injunction – an edict of a different

order perhaps than the one in the Greek tragedy – through the comparative lens I have suggested does not imply ignoring differences between various communities, nor does it suggest that the dead should be extra-political. It does, however, serve as a reminder of what it means to perceive the other as unburiable and have them remain unburied; a reminder that Creon's injunction for "no mourners, no tomb, no tears" is itself a political act, and has grave implications for the dead and for the living.

The dead-living in Hebrew-Israeli literature and the figure in Palestinian literature I have termed the living-dead, as well as the complex relationship between them, illustrate the politics of remains which force us to contend with both their corporeal and symbolic implications. In the case of both figures we have seen how the line between life and death is blurred, but the impact and resonances of this blurring are vastly different in the context of a nation-state and without one. The material presence of the bodies we have seen in this chapter, teetering between life and death – some in despair and some in triumph – illustrates the complexity of defining the borders of the human and the political. These liminal bodies have a complex afterlife that is not an abstract notion, nor does it only affect theological and philosophical debates. It is, in fact, a political afterlife with significant implications for political life and death.

Chapter 2 Eulogizing Nations

When the Palestinian writer Emile Habiby died in 1996, many of those who eulogized him referenced his complex identity as a Palestinian who was also a citizen of Israel, and his time as a member of the Israeli parliament. Palestine/Israel featured prominently in the tributes to Habiby, even though his death was not related to the national conflict; his life was, nevertheless, defined by it. His friend, Jewish-Israeli writer Yoram Kanyuk, described him at a memorial ceremony highlighting his innate contradictions: “Emile Habiby was a realist, a dreamer, a believer and a skeptic,” alluding to Habiby’s most famous novel, *The Pessoptimist*. Kanyuk also mentioned Habiby’s beloved city of Haifa, where he was born and buried: “He came from Haifa, and he returned to Haifa. You were, Emile, a funny hero and a gentle soul. You were the shape of your native landscape” (*Ne’um* 161). In this, he ties Habiby to the land specifically by referring to a famous line by Zionist poet Shaul Tchernichovsky. Haifa was so strongly associated with Habiby that another of his friends, Mahmoud Darwish, nicknamed him “remaining in Haifa” (*bāqin fi Haifa*, باقٍ في حيفا), which was also the epitaph engraved on his tombstone, at his request. Unlike Kanyuk, Darwish needed special permission from Israel to enter the region and attend the funeral, having left in the 1970s.

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What does one say after loss? What words does one use to describe the dead and the pain of loss? How can the anguish of mourning be put into words, and for what purpose? A eulogy, like the one Kanyuk gave for Habiby, takes on the difficult task of trying to capture in words the

enormity of loss, to make some sense of the senseless, to pay tribute to the dead while also make meaning out of it for the living. Eulogies take a variety of shapes and forms depending on the culture and circumstances, still remaining a recognizable genre across the board. They have multiple purposes as they "serve as reminders of the contributions of their predecessors, provide continuity, and serve as a source of inspiration for succeeding generations" (Peterson 174). As such, a eulogy is a conduit between the past and the future, enacted in a present moment of loss and grief. Eulogies are typically given in ceremonial settings, in front of an audience that shares the speakers' admiration and affection for the subject of the tribute (Peterson 174). The laudatory nature of this type of address is reflected in the word's Greco-Latin etymology (*eu* = well, *logia* = speaking). A similar approbative and favorable tone is evident in the Arabic and Hebrew terms and etymology; Arabic words such as *madīḥ* (مديح), *rithā'* (رثاء) and *ta'bīn* (تأبين), all denote celebration and acclaim to the deceased, as does the Hebrew *hesped* (הספד).

In this chapter, I analyze the context, rhetoric and impact of eulogies as vehicles for mourning and national ideology. Two texts are the focus of my analysis: Israeli general Moshe Dayan's 1956 eulogy for fallen soldier Roi Rotberg, and Palestinian writer Mahmoud Darwish's eulogy for writer Ghassān Kanafāni in 1973. I read each text closely and at length, explaining the relevant geo-political context and rhetorical choices and showing how it constructs a relationship among death, land, and community informed by historical circumstances and the respective national discourse. Contextualizing these eulogies and analyzing their rhetoric, I argue that they articulate competing claims to sovereignty over the same land that hinge on the loss of the eulogized, activating a politics of mourning. After reading each eulogy on its own terms I turn to a comparative analysis, followed by shorter analyses of additional eulogies, Israeli and Palestinian alike, that illustrate the development and prevalence of these themes. In this section I

analyze Shmuel Gonen's (Gorodish) collective eulogy for fallen soldiers in the 1967 war, in which he famously proclaims "Unto death we directed our gaze – and it lowered its eyes"; Menachem Begin's speech for the Haran family in 1979 and its articulation of power given that "we are no longer on foreign land;" Khalil al-Sakākīnī's lecture in which he says "Farewell Our Home!" in 1953; and Edward Said eulogizing Ibrahim Abu-Lughod in 2001, focusing on "His Own Private Right of Return". In order to understand the resonances and implications of all these texts, I begin by situating them in the elegiac tradition of their respective societies.

Genres of Mourning – Eulogies in Hebrew and Arabic

Eulogies are a curious rhetorical artifact because they can take many different forms yet also follow set conventions and customs; specific conventions vary from one culture to the next, but the genre remains recognizable. A eulogy can be given by anyone, whether they are an experienced writer and orator or not, and at times deeply personal addresses made by private people can become publicly known and influential. When the circumstances of death are political, eulogies can become cultural cornerstones even if the eulogizer or eulogized are not public figures; the context makes their deaths national events. The eulogy then becomes a more public affair, and some of these texts capture and articulate a nation's grief and sorrow specifically because they are so personal.

In Jewish tradition, an oration given at a funeral is known by the Hebrew word *hesped* (הספד), whose root appears in the Bible and which describes a tribute to the deceased meant to honor them. Few stylistic conventions dictate the structure and content of the eulogy; instead, the focus seems to be on the desired effects, and perhaps affects as well. The question of the eulogy's purpose has been the subject of debate among Jewish interpreters for a long time. For example, Maimonides argued in the 12th century that the eulogy is meant to honor the dead, and

some earlier rabbis even claimed that shortly after death the deceased can hear the tribute and so eulogies should be rife with praise (Kasher 94). At the same time, Kasher claims that there is no Hebrew or Jewish tradition of addressing the dead in the second person (96). In practice, it seems that much of the eulogy is done for the sake of the audience, and so enumerating the virtues of the deceased has the added value of inducing crying which is thought of as psychologically helpful to the mourners. Thus, the Babylonian Talmud tractate *berakhot* notes that the eulogizer must raise their voice and speak in a manner which breaks the heart, because such emotional expression has a therapeutic effect (Schindler 326). The focus here is clearly on the audience, and the eulogy – like the rest of the funeral ceremony – is thought of as a helpful tool for the living to cope with loss. After the eulogy, the mourner recites the *kaddish* prayer, which is meant to heal psychological wounds (Schindler 326).

Certain eulogies and lamentations have become cornerstones of Jewish and Hebrew tradition, attesting to the prevalence and importance of the genre. A prominent example is the biblical lamentation of King David's for his friend Jonathan, King Saul's son, who dies in battle against the Philistines. In it, David laments the fallen and praises their bravery, as the famous conclusion states: "How have the valiant fallen in the tumult of battle! Jonathan lies slain on your high places. I am in distress for you, my brother Jonathan […] How the valiant have fallen! How the weapons of war are destroyed!" (II Samuel 1:25-7). David's oft quoted eulogy is even memorized by schoolchildren in Israel and recited in Memorial Day ceremonies, demonstrating the genre's social function for the living, as it circulates and bolsters the community.[149] That the

[149] The lamentation describes several rituals of mourning, as upon discovering his friend had died, "David took hold on his clothes and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him. And they wailed and wept and fasted until evening, for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword" (II Samuel 1:11-2).

address is commonly known by the name of the speaker, King David, not the eulogized, points once again to the relationship between the speaker, the subject and the audience.[150]

This famous lament is by no means the only one, even by David himself. When he was king, David eulogized his son, Absalom, who died during a rebellion against his father, lending a particularly tragic tone to the lament. Learning of his death David exclaims: “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!... O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!” (II Samuel 19 1, 5). Unlike the highly stylized lament for Jonathan, this expression of grief for Absalom is more visceral, repeating his name 5 times and “my son” 8 times in a few short sentences.[151] This emotional expression of sorrow seems almost anti-verbal, compared to the stylized and rehearsed nature of a eulogy. There are references to eulogies made by others throughout the Bible, though often the text only tells us of their existence without including their content. For example, when Sarah dies: “And Sarah died in Kiriath Arba--the same is Hebron--in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to eulogize [mourn for] Sarah, and to weep for her” (Genesis 23:2);[152] and when Jacob dies: “they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days” (Genesis 50:10).

[150] David’s tribute to Jonathan is known in Hebrew as *kinat David*. *Kina* is a poetic eulogy which is sometimes accompanied by music. Halbertal argues that a eulogy (*hesped*) is made for someone who has died of natural causes whereas a *kina* takes place after a tragic loss, as one of its central elements is bewilderment at the unexpected death (Halbertal). I am unsure that this distinction holds, especially in contemporary Hebrew in which *kina* is mostly seen as a lofty and historic word.

[151] In Grossman’s *Falling Out of Time*, the bereaved father calls his son’s name and realizes no one can respond to it now: "איך קרה, ילדי,\ שמכל המלים\כולן,\ יש אחת\ אשר לעולם,\ לעולם\ כבר לא תיענה לי?". (95). As Derrida writes in his eulogy for Roland Barthes: “since he himself is now inaccessible to this appellation…it is him in me that I name” (46).

[152] English translations of Genesis use the word “mourn” where the Hebrew specifically uses לספוד, to eulogize. The Hebrew word for mourning does appear elsewhere in the Bible. Incidentally, after Abraham eulogizes and cries for his dead wife, he sets out to buy her a gravesite, noting once more the importance of burial as we saw in the previous chapter. Per the story in Genesis, Abraham purchases Machpelah cave in Hebron, which remains the site of much violence and tension between Israelis and Palestinians.

David's lamentation has both personal and collective aspects, as he is mourning his friend and a fallen soldier, the king and his son, who die in battle. The Book of Lamentations, another famous biblical *kina* is collective in a different manner, as it addresses the loss not of a person but of a kingdom and city. This scroll, known in Hebrew by its opening word *eikha* (איכה, a rhetorical "how"), depicts the aftermath of the destruction of the first Temple in the 6th century BCE and the Babylonian Exile. It is a series of lengthy and intricate laments about the city of Jerusalem in ruins, expressing anger at God as well as detachment from reality which has failed the lamenter (Halbertal). Texts expressing collective grief in conditions of political turmoil are a common feature of Jewish life throughout the centuries, and examples include a series of lamentations written by Kalonymus Ben-Yehuda in the 11th century during the crusades and consequent killings of Jews; in the 20th century, in a pre-state Zionist iteration of mourning, the prominent Hebrew modernist writer Joseph Haim Brenner writes a eulogy for Joseph Trumpeldor who was killed in the battle of Tel-Hai in 1920.[153] Brenner himself was later killed during the eruption of violence between Arabs and Jews in 1921. Finally, collective grief is of course common in the aftermath of the Holocaust annihilating entire Jewish communities.

Eulogies in the Palestinian context are deeply informed by a rich tradition of elegiac writing in Arabic. This elegiac poetry follows a set of conventions and themes tied to its purpose as a genre. As a way of grappling with death, these poems aim to make a memorable tribute in order to attain immortality for the deceased; if the poem is memorable the person it describes will also be remembered, a point illustrated by the fact that in Arabic the words for "mention" and "remember" derive from the same root (al-Nowaihi 6-7). Several formal conventions attempt

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[153] Trumpeldor, and especially his death, become a foundational myth for Zionism, as Shai Ginsburg, Zertal and others explain. The Zionist leader Berl Katzanelson wrote a secular prayer for Trumpeldor and others who died in the Tel Hai battle, based on the Jewish prayer known as the *Yizkor* (remembrance). A version of Katzanelson's text is still read to this day in Israeli ceremonies for fallen soldiers, as I detail in Chapter Four.

to achieve such immortality, like the use of repetitions (al-Nowaihi 11), or generating an analogy between the deceased and nature, which is constant and renewing. But nature is also fleeting and fragile, highlighting a stark duality evident in these poems (al-Nowaihi 9). While some view these expressions as clichés (see Pellat), I argue that these formulas are not only part and parcel of the genre and form but of confronting death, making such works representative. Several poetic genres in Arabic relate to mourning and grief and more specifically to eulogies and recitations performed during funeral services. The 9th century, for instance, saw the rise of the *ta'ziyya* (تعزية) – a letter of condolence directed at the parents of the deceased. But perhaps no genre is more strongly associated with eulogies and acts of mourning than the *marthiyya* (مرثية), which likewise shares a root with the word for eulogy, *rithā'*. Scholars speculate that this genre developed from laments performed in rhyme and rhythm as part of funerals even before the advent of Islam. These lamentations were traditionally performed by women, who would compose texts to commemorate the deceased beloved, though scant specimen has survived over time (*Encyclopedia*).[154] During the *jāhiliyya* period women were associated with mourning, including in their roles as professional mourners (*nā'iḥa*). As Islam developed, it sought to constrain and alter the customs of the old world, focusing heavily on mourning and therefore on the women who were central to it. As a result, women were associated with the supposed uncivilized and emotional past while men represented the new Muslim institutions (El-Cheikh 56). Mourning practices, and especially women's lamentations, were a site of cultural and political struggle, and "the *jāhili* rituals that survived, notably female lamentation, were the

[154] While these earlier texts rarely survived, the genre persists to this day. For example, a compendium of Palestinian folklore tales published in Jerusalem in 1976 (in Arabic and Hebrew transliteration) includes several poems dubbed "lamenting women."

source and the field of a struggle for power between the religious creativity of the masses and the establishment's need for control" (El-Cheikh 56).

In the poetic form that may have developed from these rituals, the *marthiyya*, a woman expresses her anguish over the loss of a male beloved, namely a father, brother or son, often in battle, and calls on her tears to assist her (Hammond 152). Perhaps the most famous of these poets is al-Khansa' (الخنساء), a contemporary of the prophet Muhammad, whose writing in memory of her husband and brother is thought to have solidified the form (*Encyclopedia*). A poem dedicated to her brother opens with a conventional invocation: "Be generous, my eyes, with shedding copious tears /and weep a stream of tears for Ṣakhr!" (Al-Khansa' 12). In the same poem she mentions themes commonly associated with the genre, such as time, nature and revenge: "Thus I shall weep for you as long as ringdoves wail,/ as long as night stars shine for travelers. /I'll not make peace with people that you fought,/ until black pitch turns white" (Al-Khansa' 13).

The *marthiyya* is strongly associated with grief, but it is not the only genre that deals with these issues in the Arabic tradition. For example, the *qasida* is one of the leading genres of Arabic poetry, dating back to long before the spread of Islam, and it includes a section which laments the loss of a loved one. It is not always clear whether the beloved has died or just left the speaker, but the language of loss is evident, nonetheless, lending the poem a particularly sullen tone and underscoring the pain and anguish (Hammond 145). [155] Both the *marthiyya* and the *qasida* grapple with loss and grief, but there are distinctions between them that pertain to their form and content, and especially to the composers' identity, specifically their perceived gender. Such a distinction injects a particular kind of politics into these poetic genres but is also an

[155] For more on the structural conventions of the *qasida* see, for example, Hammond 145.

additional reminder of the gendered aspects of mourning. Women poets are typically associated with the *marthiyya*, the *qasida* is largely associated with men. But men also composed in the *marthiyya* genre, like the poet Ibn al-Rumi (9th century) who wrote famous elegies, and al-Jāḥiz (8th-9th century) who wrote a *marthiyya* in prose (*Encyclopedia*). The gender differences between the *marthiyya* and the *qasida* relate to conventions of theme, but perhaps most clearly to their reception. The *qasida* is considered more sophisticated and receives much scholarly attention, whereas the *marthiyya* is considered more sentimental, less complex and is the subject of fewer studies, and even these existing ones downplay its structural complexity (Hammond 143). Under such divisions, "men express; women emote" (Hammond 144). In terms of themes, the *qasida* "exhibits a form of masculine carnality" while the *marthiyya* "is symbolically driven by female sexuality" (Hammond 144). Attempting to explain why women composed mostly in the form of the *marthiyya* and less so in the form of the *qasida* or the *ghazal,* a conservative and sexist argument would be that women are naturally inclined towards sentimentality and weeping, which the genre allows them to express poetically. A more critical argument, like what Hammond offers, suggests that women tended to compose in the genre because it was deemed socially acceptable. In other words, these generic distinctions reveal the ways in which women were permitted and expected to write and to mourn, reminding us that mourning and poetry both operate under social norms and constrictions.

These poetic genres continue to develop over the centuries, but already the early iterations point to the politics of mourning in a variety of ways, from the gender dynamics relating to the poetic themes and reception to the role mourning played in the consolidation of Islam over much of the Arab world. One example that is particularly relevant to our context pertains to the circumstances of death lamented in the poems, which are often political. Al-

Khansa''s poems were dedicated to her brothers who died in battle, and many later poems were also written in memory of fallen soldiers, like texts written after the deaths of Nur al-Din and Salah al-Din in the 12th century. Eulogies in the 20th century, in both Palestinian and Israeli societies, draw on traditions and conventions dating back many centuries, adapting them to modern times as well as to the national context which attests to the capaciousness of the genre. These traditions and their vicissitudes are apparent in the following two eulogies I analyze at length – Moshe Dayan's eulogy for Roi Rotberg in 1956 and Mahmoud Darwish's for Ghassān Kanafāni in 1973. I show that not only are these texts part of their respective political contexts, but they articulate a political claim through the genre and conventions of the eulogy.

"Such is the lot of our generation": Dayan Defines Israeli Mourning

On April 29, 1956, Israeli army officer Roi Rotberg (1935-1956) was patrolling the fields of kibbutz Naḥal Oz, near the border between Israel and Gaza, then under Egyptian rule. Rotberg was originally from Tel-Aviv and moved to the south as part of Israel's mission to settle along the border. As a 13-year-old he passed along military missives during the 1948 war, and later volunteered to serve in the IDF even before the official conscription age of 18. That day in April 1956, Palestinian farmers had crossed the border, which Israel considered a violation of agreements with Egypt, and as a regional commander Rotberg went to chase them away. He was shot and killed, his body dragged beyond the border and abused, his eyes gouged out. His mangled body was returned to U.N. observers, who were in the area which had been demilitarized since the armistice between Israel and Egypt in 1949.[156] The gruesome killing shocked many in the Israeli public, including Moshe Dayan, then-head of the army. Dayan was a prominent and formative political leader in Israel, an almost mythical figure, since before the

[156] The armistice was increasingly unstable, as Bar-On explains (see: 141-167).

establishment of the state and until close to his death in 1981.[157] He had recently met Rotberg while visiting the region and returned to *Naḥal Oz* for Rotberg's funeral, giving a eulogy whose reverberations continue to resonate in Israel many decades later. The eulogy is often lauded for its style and themes, with the forceful ideological stance it promotes largely overlooked or seen as inevitable, perhaps evidence that it has prevailed. My analysis therefore focuses on several interconnected aspects of Dayan's eulogy: its usage of context, as it introduces some of the geopolitical circumstances leading up to Rotberg's death and occludes others; the notion of community advanced through a demarcation of "us" and "them"; and an appeal to the past through evoking both Jewish history and biblical references. Taken together, these themes articulate a claim to political sovereignty in the land through a eulogy for a fallen soldier.

The geo-political context in the region helps clarify the circumstances – historical, political and spatial – of Rotberg's killing, and perhaps also illuminate some of the reasons his death resonated as much as it did. The 1950s are often overlooked in the discourse about Palestine/Israel, overshadowed by the importance and impact of the two momentous wars that bookend the decade – 1948 and 1967. But, as Kemp argues specifically in relation to Israel, the decade was not only an in-between period but rather has an enduring impact on the construction of Israeli collective identity. This is particularly true in relation to borders and their role in shaping that identity, in a dual fashion; the border was seen as both a sacrosanct frontier that needed to be settled and an artificial scar; it was both a separating wall and a permeable threshold (Kemp 18-9).[158] Kemp analyzes the border as a general concept, but I focus on the

[157] While Dayan fell in esteem due to his part in the Israeli defeat in the 1973 war, he is still largely revered even now, as is evidenced by the admiring tone of most of the biographies written about him.
[158] Israel's borders with Lebanon, and to some degree Jordan, will be relevant to my analysis of Darwish's eulogy, highlighting how dispersed Palestinians and their political power are.

border between Israel and Egypt given its relevance to Rotberg's death. The particular conditions at this border likewise demonstrate Palestinians' precarity as they become stateless refugees in 1948. Palestinians would therefore cross the border attempting to return to the land from which they had been expelled. Actions across the border, like the one in which Rotberg was killed, were common in the 1950s and executed by Palestinian fighters known by the Arabic word *fidā'iyyūn* (فدائيون), or self-sacrificers.[159] Israel would respond to these actions by itself crossing the border, in military actions known as *pe'ulot ha-tagmul* (פעולות התגמול), or retaliations, by units such as Unit 101, established by Dayan.[160] Labeling these actions "retaliatory" is already an implicit political statement, because defining them as a response to a previous action is a form of justification. As we will see, Dayan makes a similar implicit move in his eulogy for Rotberg. In addition, while the border is pertinent to the context of Egypt in the 1950s, it likewise highlights the glaring lack of a border in the Palestinian context – the borders of the Israeli state, determined through a series of wars, continue to be indeterminate, and Palestinians have no sovereignty therefore no borders. That means that Israel simultaneously valorizes the border and avoids setting it.

The significance of the border is perhaps most evident in the 1956 Sinai war. While the armistice between Israel and the Arab countries officially ended the fighting in 1949, tensions were still high throughout the 1950s. Other geopolitical circumstances likewise affected Israeli-Arab relations, most notably the imperial involvement of Britain, France and the Soviet Union in the region, and Egypt's 1952 revolution which overthrew the monarchy and turned that country

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[159] Much like the more oft-used word nowadays, *shahīd*, the earlier word was imported into Hebrew and commonly used at the time, though not always in a grammatically correct way. Needless to say, Palestinians regarded them as national heroes, while Israelis saw them as infiltrators.
To clarify, *fidā'iyūn* and *fidā'iyyīn* denote the same word; the Arabic grammatical case is different, and I am choosing to replicate it in English.
[160] See more on the retaliatory actions and the 101 unit in: Kemp 23; Cohen 292.

toward a nationalist, at times pan-Arab ideology. By the middle of the decade, Egypt was purchasing weapons from Czechoslovakia, causing increasing alarm in Israel. Many in Israel viewed Egypt's actions as an existential threat, generating what Bar-On calls an atmosphere of national emergency (19). War seemed imminent (Bar-On 33);[161] a war defined by Israel as preemptive. And indeed, in October 1956 the Sinai operation commenced, lasting about a week and causing substantial losses and damage to the Egyptian forces. But, as Cohen argues, the Israeli explanation for the Sinai war as an inevitable escalation, or a response to infiltrations, is false, or better yet ideological (289-90).[162] At the heart of the Sinai war was, in fact, an attempt to establish and defend the border, on the other side of which resided refugees, whose link to the land Israel repeatedly denied (ibid.). [163] These competing views of the war go back to the dual perception of the border – the paradox, in Kemp's terminology, of crossing the border in order to seal it, against the return of Palestinian refugees (23).

Dayan is a central figure during this time period, embodying the principles of what Cohen calls the "border war" (285). Rotberg was killed at the border some six months before the 1956 war, during the tense period leading up to it, making this context significant for the eulogy. While it is a eulogy for Rotberg, given at his funeral, it is likewise a highly political speech, thus demonstrating or rather performing the imbrication of the personal and political in national

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[161] Bar-On also notes that Egyptian and other Arab media reports at the time suggested that Arab countries were preparing for a "second round" against Israel (34, 37). It is important to note that his sources are mediated by Israeli intelligence. Bar-On concedes briefly that Egypt may have also feared Israel's increasing power, but quickly glosses over this. Additionally, Kemp notes that Israel, too, was preparing for "round two" of the war (18).

[162] Dayan himself acknowledges this later when he writes in 1968 that "the Israeli army might be called 'Defense Forces,' but it is not a defensive army," and more specifically notes that "the Sinai war, the retaliatory actions and the border raids were clear offensive operations" (Dayan 1968 58).

[163] The Sinai War, also known in Israel as the Kadesh Operation, should be viewed in its larger colonial context, as Britain and France used the occasion for a failed attempt to gain control of the Suez Canal after Nasser nationalized it, and Egypt was establishing a political relationship with the Soviet Union. In fact, non-Israeli sources generally argue that Israel was used as a patsy in Britain and France's colonial war, dubbed in the Arab world as "The Tripartite Aggression" against Egypt (العدوان الثلاثي).

mourning. Dayan's eulogy has at least two political levels, one specific and one more general. On the specific level is Dayan's objection to negotiation plans between Israel and Egypt, sponsored by the U.N. Former prime-minister (1954-5) Moshe Sharet thought that Egypt should restrain Palestinian fighters crossing the border. Dayan considered this position to be dovish and overly compromising (Aluf Benn) as he preferred a preemptive strike against Egypt that, in his view, would deter Egypt from future attacks. These specific political calculations point to the second political level of the eulogy, conveying a broader ideological stance. According to this view, Israel is always in a position of self-defense, rather than attack, which determines the way Palestinians are depicted as perpetual assailants. Such issues go to the core of the way Israel thinks of itself to this day, highlighting why this eulogy quickly transcended its immediate political context and became foundational in Israeli culture.

Dayan's eulogy is brief and concise, forceful and pithy, as he was known to be an impactful rhetorician.[164] It opens with a simple and terse statement: "Yesterday morning Roi was murdered" (Dayan 289).[165] This matter-of-fact assertion sets the tone of the address, poetically and politically, as it determines the parameters of discussion. Eulogies shape and define the narrative around a death, to great political effect, and so for example, Dayan uses the word "murder" (and not "killing"), which has a much stronger moral undertone. In addition, opening this way situates Rotberg's death as the first event to take place, not a reaction to anything that might have come before it. In this Dayan decontextualizes the event, yanking it from the broader setting of the 1948 war, the subsequent state of exiled Palestinians and the ongoing violence

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[164] Dayan's chief of staff has stated the head of the army wrote the speech himself, sitting in his room alone for 45 minutes. See: Aluf Benn.

[165] אתמול עם בוקר נרצח רועי.

Dayan's eulogy appears in a collection of Israeli eulogies edited by Tamar Berosh, 2013.

around the border.[166] Dayan soon reintroduces this context on his own terms, as he dictates a powerful national narrative. He is able to do all of this in a brief sentence precisely because of its brevity and simplicity, as it is presented as fact, direct and indisputable. The eulogy as a whole is quite short – the version read at the funeral was only 285 words in the Hebrew and lasted about 3 minutes, and the version that circulated later and remains known today is 322 words.

This political narrative is created in a eulogy dedicated to a fallen soldier, illustrating a duality inherent in the genre as simultaneously intimate and public; as Brault and Naas note, such texts are deeply personal, "yet these are, after all, public texts, published texts" (3). For example, Dayan refers to Rotberg by his first name four times in the short text (and once more by his full name), personalizing him for the speaker and audience, as is common in the genre. While Dayan did meet Rotberg just before his death he did not know him well, and so using the first name makes the tone more personal. This appellation points to a broader interplay between the personal and the collective – describing Rotberg in personal terms but for a collective cause. Therefore, the eulogy is dedicated to Rotberg, but Dayan spends most of it speaking more broadly about Israel's need for defense and security, weaving in references to the slain soldier. Little of the eulogy is devoted to describing the deceased's character or qualities, a common feature in a text of this sort. Rather, Dayan writes and performs the eulogy in his capacity as head of the army and ties the personal loss to a larger political narrative. Dayan does not speak of himself here, as he is not the mourner for personal reasons. He does not use the first-person singular even once, opting instead for the first-person plural throughout. This choice of pronoun establishes the audience as part of a collective and community, and himself as part of this community and its emissary.

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[166] Similarly, Cohen notes that the retaliatory actions promoted by Dayan are by nature de-contextualizing (290).

One of the central components that construct this national community is historical circumstances in which Jews were the ultimate "others," resulting in centuries of persecution. Dayan evokes this history in his eulogy as part of a broader trend of linking the bloody history of pogroms and massacres, mostly though not only in Europe, to the situation in the Middle East, despite stark and significant differences. One example of this occurred when in 1929 some 133 Jews were killed by Arabs in a week-long and bloody uprising, and Jewish newspapers and leaders linked the events to earlier attacks in Europe. They called the uprising a "pogrom" – a Russian word originating in the late 19th century – and described it using terms from Bialik's famous poem "In the City of Slaughter" (בעיר ההריגה), written after the 1903 pogrom in Kishinev (now Moldova). The 1929 popular uprising of Palestinians is thus construed as related to anti-Semitic attacks in Europe and part of the same continuum, and therefore not as a reaction to Jewish settlement of Palestine – and British support of it – at the expense of the native residents.[167] Making this connection between past persecution in Europe and the present situation in the Middle East indicates the past's enduring impact but also has significant and complex effects. Bialik's poem famously describes the Jewish victims of Kishinev in all their wretchedness and misery and offers a scathing rebuke of the Jewish community for its helplessness and passivity. Unlike this unflattering depiction, and perhaps in response to it, Zionist leaders of the 1920s wished to enact an alternative political vision. After the violence of 1929, Ben Gurion argued that "our spilled blood calls not for pity and aid, but rather for increasing our force and labor in the land." In other words, Zionist political leadership sought to replace passivity with a notion of defense achieved through force. Eldar and Zertal see this as part of a Zionist trend of translating events of loss and failure into galvanizing myths of heroism

[167] Hillel Cohen argues that the events of 1929 are foundational to understanding the conflict in Palestine/Israel. See: *Year Zero of the Arab Israeli Conflict 1929* (2015).

(334-5). In light of this history, the self-image of the national community is one of being in constant need of defense, which becomes part of the way the community imagines itself, but also part of its image of Palestinians, as we will soon see.

In Dayan's speech, a central locus of Jewish history is the Holocaust, which in 1956 is still a fresh wound. He argues that: "The millions of Jews annihilated without having a land, are watching upon us from the ashes of Israeli history and directing us to settle and to realize a land for our people" (Dayan 290).[168] Much like the events of 1929 were linked to the 1903 pogrom, Dayan ties the destruction of the Holocaust to the current political reality, enlisting the victims of Nazism as Zionist oracles. He defines the task of settling the land as not only the lesson learned from the Holocaust but the wish of its victims.[169] The link to today is made explicit when Dayan notes that the slain Jews are watching from the ashes of "Israeli history," not Jewish history. The affinity and edict are thus clearly national, as is Dayan's argument and agenda throughout this speech. In Hebrew, the phrase used for "without having a land" (באין להם ארץ) suggests causality – meaning that the destruction was possible because Jews did not have a land – without exclaiming it outright, perhaps to avoid any seeming blame on their part. In addition, the implication seems to be that having a state is a way to avoid another annihilation now, aligning with the idea of a constant threat and bolstering the need for a powerful army. In his analysis of militarism in Israeli society, Kimmerling explains that in the 1950s and 1960s the army was seen as the people's savior and protector, unlike previous reliance on others who failed in this mission

[168] מיליוני היהודים, אשר הושמדו באין להם ארץ, צופים אלינו מאפר ההיסטוריה הישראלית ומצווים עלינו להתנחל ולקומם ארץ לעמנו.
Dayan here uses the word *eretz*, which I have translated as "land." This is primarily a geographical designation and is used to describe the land even before the establishment of the state, including in biblical times. It is clear from context, however, that Dayan means the geopolitical term "state" (which Hebrew has, *medina*, מדינה), and it is telling that he chooses the broader word and implicitly aligns it with the political.

[169] It should be noted that at least some of the Nazis' Jewish victims were expressly not Zionist.

(128). Referring back to the Holocaust is used to explain and justify one of the goals of Israel's doctrine and ethos of national security – preventing another Holocaust (Kimmerling 136).

Relying on this history, Dayan arrives at the conclusion that only a nation-state can prevent future catastrophe, and this state must be defended. Importantly, though, Dayan articulates the same Zionist logic from the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s in 1956, as if the sovereignty achieved through the establishment of the State of Israel has not altered conditions. He advocates for Jews' self-defense and power in the land of Israel, warning against any sign of weakness and arguing that "we must be armed and prepared at all times." This perpetual state of alert results in a conflation between military and civilian life, illustrated by a Zionist maxim from Israel's early years: "the entire land is a front, the entire people an army." Similarly, Dayan asserts that: "Ours is a generation of settlement, and without the steel hat and the muzzle of a canon we cannot plant a tree and build a home" (289).[170] According to this doctrine, two elements are inextricably bound – settlement (plant a tree, build a home) and security (steel hat, canon). Tying the two together can be seen as a response to Jews' previous condition in Europe in which they lacked both safety and sovereign land; connecting them is one of Zionism's innovations and tenets.[171]

The location where Rotberg was killed illustrates this point well. Naḥal Oz was first established as a *Naḥal* Settlement (היאחזות נח"ל; *Naḥal* is an army unit whose name is a Hebrew acronym for Pioneer Combat Youth), a form of settlement along the border started by soldiers as a foundation for future civilian life.[172] Settling along the border was defined as a security need,

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[170] חייבים אנו להיות, בוקר וערב, מזוינים וערוכים. דור התנחלות אנו, ובלי כובע הפלדה ולוע התותח לא נוכל לטעת עץ ולבנות בית.

[171] The central Zionist narrative presented here focuses, though implicitly, on Jews in Europe. Jews in Arab countries had a somewhat different trajectory, but it is largely subsumed under the dominant European history.

[172] An important note on terminology: while the English broadly uses the term "settlement," Hebrew distinguishes between several types. The word *hityashvut* (התיישבות) is used before 1948 and beyond and is generally considered relatively neutral. Settlements in Palestinian territories after 1967 are known in Hebrew as *hitnaḥalut* (התנחלות), which derives from the biblical act of settling the land which had been divided into plots (*naḥala*, נחלה). In the context of the *Naḥal* settlement Hebrew uses still another word, *he'aḥzut*, which literally means "holding on," like a stronghold.

as Ben-Gurion put it: “only a dense agricultural settlement along the borders…can act as a loyal shield for the country’s safety against external attacks. Not inanimate stone fortifications, but a living human wall, working and creating” (quoted in Bar-Yosef 136). Strategically using settlements to expand Jewish presence where it was sparse, purposefully blending civilian and military action, precedes the state – *Naḥal*’s actions were seen as a continuation of Zionism’s earlier settlement plans, like the *Ḥoma u-Migdal* operation in the 1930s and the *Palmaḥ* settlements in 1945-6 (Bar-Yosef 136). After 1948 it becomes a state mission, supported by multiple state apparatuses including the *Naḥal* military unit, tasked with fortifying the border as well as setting the stage for crossing it (Bar-Yosef 137), much like the duality described by Kemp.[173] Established in 1951, Naḥal Oz is considered one of the first *Naḥal* settlements. Its name derives from the military acronym, but it is written as a regular word meaning “stream,” though it is not located on a body of water.[174] This simple change normalizes military presence, making it seem organically tied to the land and exemplifying the conflation of military and civilian life, the duality of which is evident in Dayan’s use of the notion of border in his speech. The border is mentioned twice – once regarding the location of the incident in which Rotberg was killed and once referencing Palestinians in Gaza. In both cases Dayan uses unusual phrasing – first, he refers to it as the “furrow line” (קו התלם) and then as the “furrow border” (תלם הגבול). The agricultural context of “furrow” adjoined with “border” indicates the conflation between military and civilian concepts – this is simultaneously the armistice border and plowing lines.[175]

[173] Dayan himself was critical of the *Naḥal*, claiming that those joining it were more opportunistic than idealistic (Bar-Yosef 138). For more on the Zionist link between security and settlement see: Osnat Shiran’s *Nekudot Oz*; Anita Shapira *Land and Power*. For more on the Naḥal specifically see: Bar-Yosef chapter 3; Shiran’s *Nekudot Oz* 202-217.
[174] Early on, the settlement was referred to as “Naḥal soldiers facing Gaza,” which in Hebrew is rendered as Aza. I think it is clear that “oz,” meaning might, is a repurposing of the nearby Palestinian city of Aza (Ghaza, in Arabic).
[175] The reference to agriculture, a central focus of Zionism, is especially salient in comparison to the Arabs who ended up killing Rotberg, who had themselves entered the land to try and cultivate it.

The deliberate and strategic conflation of military and civilian causes appears in this section of the eulogy in full force. Dayan maintains that "Our children will not have a life if we do not dig shelters, and without barbed wire and a machine gun we cannot pave a way and drill for water" (Dayan 289-90).[176] War is not presented as a necessary and temporary evil but rather as that which allows life to persist. The description juxtaposes each image of life and development with a parallel need for defense ("without barbed wire we cannot pave a way"), dramatizing the point. This formulation generates an effective image, as the hopeful notion of children, homes and agriculture is displayed as under threat, a reality that could soon vanish. The conclusion drawn from this is not only that self-defense is paramount, but that any act designed to shield these images of life is self-defense. Dayan's is a doctrine which privileges force over anything else, claiming that without first establishing control and sovereignty through force no life can prevail. As Kimmerling explains, the eulogy for Rotberg exemplifies some of the central social norms and codes which make Israel a militaristic society (123-4). Moreover, the situation is presented as an inevitable fate: "such is the lot of our generation. Such is our life's choice – to be prepared and armed strong and stern or if our fist lets go of the sword – our life will end" (Dayan 290).[177] The false choice alleges that Israel is doing what it must, compelled by circumstances into which it was forced, a point reinforced by the notion of victimhood throughout the speech. Uri S. Cohen attributes this philosophy to Alterman, whose "Silver Platter" we saw in the previous chapter, and calls it a paradox of inevitable choice, which for him henceforth defines the Israeli war culture (235).[178] Furthermore, making this point as part of a eulogy, and one that has become so foundational, continues Rotberg's enlistment beyond the

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[176] לילדינו לא יהיו חיים אם לא נחפור מקלטים, ובלי גדר תיל ומקלע לא נוכל לסלול דרך ולקדוח מים.

[177] זו גזרת דורנו. זו ברירת חיינו – להיות נכונים וחמושים חזקים ונוקשים או כי תישמט מאגרופנו החרב – וייכרתו חיינו.

[178] Cohen notes that in this context, soldiers' death is accepted with "stoic serenity," but simultaneously instigates acts of revenge. See: Cohen 235-41.

grave as well. The eulogy lends a military strategy moral legitimacy, and the military strategy reinforces the impact of the eulogy. Using the collective "we" amplifies the need for security, along with the possessive "our;" Dayan is both describing and cultivating a sense of community that derives – jointly, it seems – from the need for security and the loss and mourning depicted in the genre of the eulogy.

A national "us" is often constructed in opposition to an "other," a national "them." Palestinians are mentioned several times throughout Dayan's eulogy for Rotberg, though he refers to them by the general and non-national term "Arab."[179] Their descriptions mostly clarify the self-image of Jews in Israel. In this Dayan partakes in what Khalidi notes is a prominent and common trend in the historiography of the region, even by Palestinian historians – viewing Palestinian identity as solely or mostly a response to Zionism and not a self-fashioned movement (7). Palestinian are described as the enemy, and nowhere is this clearer in the eulogy than after Dayan evokes the Holocaust and then immediately, almost offhandedly, turns to the "sea of hatred" across the border aligning the two contexts. Such a move elides two major points – first, that the destruction by the Nazis is unrelated to the current dispute with Arabs in the Middle East; and second, that the Arabs across the borders are not a mighty enemy but a stateless mostly civilian group. Similarly, early in the eulogy Dayan notes the "hundreds of thousands of eyes and hands" of Palestinians that "crowd" beyond the gates of Gaza, but can only see them as "praying for our weakness to come, so they can tear us to shreds."[180] The crowding is not viewed as part of the dire living conditions plaguing Palestinian refugees, a reason for empathy or

[179] Israelis using the moniker "Arabs" was a common trend, especially before the 1980s, meant to invalidate Palestinian nationalism. Consider, for example, Israeli prime minister Golda Meir who famously stated that "there is no such thing as Palestinian people, I'm Palestinian," referring to the land's pre-1948 name, as we saw in the introduction. On the Palestinian side, "Arab" in a national context was sometimes linked to the political movement of Pan-Arabism or Arab nationalism, mostly before 1967. One such example, as mentioned in the introduction, was the United Arab Republic, a political union of Egypt and Syria which lasted from 1958 to 1961.

[180] מאות אלפי עיניים וידיים המתפללות לחולשתנו כי תבוא, כדי שיוכלו לקרענו לגזרים

reconsideration, but rather a reason to be vigilant and “armed and prepared at all time,” as we have seen.

In noting the “sea of hatred,” Dayan not only acknowledges the animosity Palestinians feel towards Jews in the land of Israel but understands it, almost justifies it, as he says: “What can we argue against their fierce hatred of us? For eight years they reside in refugee camps in Gaza and before their eyes we turn into our own the land and villages in which they and their ancestors dwelled” (Dayan 289). [181] He recognizes the context of Palestinians’ enmity, including their generations-long presence on the land, and even acknowledges Israel’s responsibility for their condition as refugees, if obliquely. Many contemporary readers of this eulogy point out its elaborate reference to Palestinians, some construing it as empathetic and even suggesting that by today’s standards Dayan’s views would be considered post-Zionist (Benn). This likely stems from statements like: “Let us not hurl accusations at the killers today” and “not from the Arabs in Gaza but from ourselves should we avenge Roi’s death,” which seemingly go even beyond recognizing and understanding Palestinians, almost absolving them (289).[182]

However, I argue that Dayan’s image of Palestinians is, in fact, more strategic. What others read as understanding and empathy that is then disregarded, I read as an intentional rhetorical and political move. Understanding the origins and causes of Palestinians’ resentment and even violence does little to challenge Dayan’s position. He does not see the conditions under which Palestinians are living in Gaza as an occasion to alter course or question his, or indeed Israel’s policy. Understanding Palestinians’ dispossession does not amount to questioning

[181] אל נא נטיח היום האשמות על הרוצחים. מה לנו כי נטען על שנאתם העזה אלינו? שמונה שנים הינם יושבים במחנות הפליטים אשר בעזה, ולמול עיניהם אנו הופכים לנו לנחלה את האדמה והכפרים בהם ישבו הם ואבותיהם.
The short passage about not blaming the killers and understanding their hatred was not included in the original version of the eulogy, made at the funeral itself, but was added later. It is this version, that includes the added section, that has become culturally cemented.
[182] אל נא נטיח היום האשמות על הרוצחים...לא מהערבים אשר בעזה, כי אם מעצמנו נבקש את דמו של רועי.

whether it is justified, or whether changing it might be morally correct or even strategically advantageous. Dayan's perception pertains only to Israel and so the conclusion he draws from the enmity he sees and even understands in Palestinians is that the new state must defend itself. He views Palestinian resentment as a threat to quell, not the result of injustice, thus generating a foundational duality – Palestinians are a dispossessed mass huddled at the border, and that makes them a threat. Consequently, the way to alleviate this situation is to use more force, to quash the resistance, not to improve living conditions. Other conclusions would require Dayan to doubt the very foundations of the morality he attributes to the Jewish state.

Israel and its perception of itself in the face of loss of life is, indeed, the focus of this address. The image of the still-new state is complex, and the duality in it persists in Israeli discourse to this day – it is seen as both powerful and under threat. One of the main ways in which the image of Israel is constructed is through portraying Rotberg as innocent and tying him back to the communal "we." Dayan describes the circumstances in which Rotberg was killed, noting that "the silence of the spring morning blinded him, and he didn't see those lurking on the border" (289).[183] Rotberg is depicted as a bystander who wanted to enjoy the quiet of morning and was instead attacked. In reality, Rotberg was performing his military role when he was killed, which is still implicitly understood as not necessarily contradicting innocence. Not seeing as a metaphorical marker of innocence is amplified by the synesthetic description of Rotberg being blinded, or dazzled, not by a light source but by silence, a lack of sound. This theme is repeated later on and might be an oblique and softened reference to the state of Rotberg's body, whose eyes were gouged out. Dayan avoids directly mentioning the horrific condition of

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[183] השקט של בוקר האביב סִנוורוֹ, ולא ראה את האורבים לנפשו על קו התלם.
The page dedicated to Rotberg in the official memorial project run by the Israeli Ministry of Defense includes language about his ability to transcend hate and not be blinded by it, using precisely the verb used by Dayan and no doubt drawing on this eulogy.

Rotberg's dead body, perhaps because it would be too graphic for the audience and would not achieve the goal of the speech – to galvanize, but not to horrify. The only direct reference to the abuse appears in an appeal to the collective: "it is to us that Roi's blood calls from his mangled body"[184] (Dayan 290). This sentence evokes the biblical killing of Abel by his brother Cain ("the voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground," Genesis 4:10), enhancing the notion of innocence as Abel is the paradigmatic victim of humanity's first murder. Alluding to the biblical story is part of Dayan's political argument against those who call on Israel to lay down its weapons, citing the calling blood as an ethical injunction and a call to action. The force of the injunction is amplified by the form of emphasis used here, beginning the sentence irregularly with a preposition, "to us" (*eleynu*, אלינו) and not the grammatical subject, emphasizing the role and responsibility of the plural-collective addressee of the edict. In this manner, the death of the individual victim, Rotberg, is translated into the need for a collective response. In addition, in Genesis Abel's blood calls unto God, who is absent here and is implicitly supplanted by the state.[185] Assigning the state such a role underscores its importance and portrays it as the remedy for the pain of loss. Rotberg's innocence is further underscored at the closing of the eulogy with another biblical reference – Isaac, the ultimate sacrifice in Jewish tradition. Returning to the lack of sight, Dayan notes that Rotberg did not see the "shine of the slaughtering knife," a term uniquely derived from the story of the binding that immediately evokes it for any Hebrew speaker. Other senses are also affected as "the pining for peace deafened his ears, and he didn't hear the lurking murder" (Dayan 290).[186] Pining for peace does

[184] אלינו זועקים דמי רועי מגופו השסוע.
[185] Anderson, in his *Imagined Communities*, comments on the fraught relationship between nationalism and religion, both historically and philosophically. He ties this to the role of loss and death in nationalism, which has to offer its own explanation and justification of death, an alternative to religion (Anderson 10-2). See also Illuz's use of Durkheim, noting that a state is seen as a deity.
[186] רועי – האור בלבו עיוור את עיניו, ולא ראה את בְּרק המאכלת. הערגה לשלום החרישה את אוזניו, ולא שמע את קול הרצח האורב.

not seem to be at odds with him being a soldier in combat, and along with the inability to see and hear and therefore protect himself, clearly marks him as innocent.

The eulogy's ending provides the most detail about Rotberg himself, though mostly as part of relating him to the nation. Rotberg is described as a "slim blond boy," emphasizing his youth and innocence.[187] Youth is similarly mentioned earlier in the eulogy regarding soldiers from Rotberg's *Naḥal* unit, described as a "group of youths, residing in *Naḥal Oz*" (Dayan 289).[188] In addition to their young age, they are explicitly depicted as civilians passively dwelling at the kibbutz, a description which obfuscates the military function of their settlement and role. The innocence that marks Rotberg implicitly extends to Jews in general, and thus ties back to the reference of the Holocaust, in which Jews were the undeniable victims. This dynamic demonstrates the central linkage between the individual and the collective, as Rotberg "went from Tel-Aviv to build his home at the gates of Gaza, to act as a wall for us" (Dayan 290).[189] His act is presented as innocuous and personal, while simultaneously advancing a collective cause and selflessly protecting the whole, evidenced by the collective "for us." Rotberg building his home is a realization of the doctrine Dayan had just put forward, connecting settlement and security. Described in this way, the act of settling the land is unquestioned and removed from its colonial context. It is deliberately detached from the aforementioned Palestinians across the border and their hatred, as if one does not cause the other.

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[187] הנער הבלונדיני הצנום
Ofer Aderet notes that while the death of the blond boy from Tel-Aviv, alluding to Rotberg's European descent, received ample attention not only from Dayan but from the press at the time, other deaths were ignored. He recounts the story of five young men, all Jews of Arab descent, whose carriage hit a landmine placed by similar units of Arab fighters in November 1956. Their deaths received little to no attention, which Aderet links to both their Arab-Jewish identity and their class affiliation, not being members of a kibbutz like Rotberg but rather residents of the low-class town of Sderot.

[188] קבוצת נערים זו, היושבת בנחל עוז
The notion that they are passive is enhanced by the verb form, which could also simply mean "sitting," as opposed to the same root in a different verb pattern meaning "to settle" (*yoshevet – mityashevet*).

[189] רועי רוטברג, הנער הבלונדיני הצנום, אשר הלך מתל אביב לבנות ביתו בשערי עזה, להיות חומה לנו.

The collective aspect of Rotberg's actions highlights the other side in his dual image – not only a victim, but a hero who acted as a wall and sacrificed himself for the collective. His heroism is underscored through yet another biblical reference, the third in the complex mythical matrix put forward in just over 300 dense words.[190] Dayan closes the eulogy by saying that despite Rotberg's efforts, "the gates of Gaza were heavier than his shoulders and defeated him,"[191] (Dayan 290) a reference to the biblical hero Samson, who "laid hold of the doors of the gates" of Gaza (Judges 16:3). Samson, the great heroic figure of Jewish mythology, is referenced to conjure a notion of heroism, and no mention is made of his eyes being gouged out, like Rotberg's. The mention of Samson, and the omission of this particular detail, illustrate how heroic myths straddle victory and defeat; in fact, much like what Eldar and Zertal noted about Zionism's employment of tragic events in 1929 and elsewhere, myths of heroism are perhaps most necessary in cases of failure or loss. Rotberg, and by extension Israel as a whole, are associated here with the archetypical victim (Abel), sacrifice (Isaac), and finally a heroic military figure in Samson. There is seemingly no tension between these depictions, much like Israel's military and civilian endeavors are intermingled. As a result, a soldier in active duty is seen as pining for peace. This duality of strength and weakness is not accidental nor is it rare. Levi Eshkol, who would become prime minister in 1963 and would work alongside Dayan during the 1967 war, famously alluded to the same biblical figure when he coined the term "Samson the weakling." The phrase referred to a political strategy designed to project strength while also

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[190] Dayan often used biblical allusions, as this eulogy demonstrates, as part of his Zionist view of nationalizing the Bible. This can be seen, for example, in his 1978 book *Living with the Bible*, in which he chronicles his journeys through modern-day Israel alongside its biblical echoes. He was also an ardent fan of archeology, which he saw as part of the secular link to the land which many Zionist leaders promoted. Dayan used to collect artefacts and mostly kept them for himself, violating the law. Several complaints against him were lodged but he was never indicted. See: Ran Shapira, https://www.haaretz.co.il/1.1002741.

[191] כבדו שערי עזה מכתפיו ויכלו לו.

Bar-On's book on Israeli security and foreign policy during these years is titled *The Gates of Gaza*, referencing both the biblical text and Dayan's citation of it. Bar-On was Dayan's chief of staff at the time.

persuading Israel's allies that it needs aid and protection.[192] This trend, working in tandem with the notion that Israel is in a perennial defensive position, continues to proliferate to this day.[193] Duality is central to Dayan's characterization of both Jews and Palestinians – the Palestinian "others" are seen as refugees but also a threat, and the collective "we" is both a weak victim – through the specter of the Holocaust – and a strong, resilient defender.

His eulogy for Rotberg was not the only such text Dayan gave, and Amos Oz even maintains that cemeteries inspire Dayan's finest speeches, making his eulogies poetic (28). More important for our purposes are the ways in which Dayan's eulogies relate individuals' death to the national narrative. Just three months before Rotberg's death Dayan eulogized Uri Ilan, an Israeli soldier who had infiltrated Syria – crossing the border in the name of defending it – was captured and tortured and committed suicide in captivity in January 1955. On Ilan's body were found notes on which he had written "I didn't break faith. I killed myself," a guarantee that he did not give away any secrets which seems to echo Gouri's poem "Behold, Our Bodies Are Laid Out" in which, as we saw in the previous chapter, dead soldiers assure the audience that they "did not break faith." In his eulogy upon the repatriation of Ilan's body Dayan quotes the first part of the note, "I didn't break faith," though not the second, and notes that "the army cannot guarantee life to its soldiers. It is the soldiers' lives that guarantee the life of the people. The army cannot guarantee tranquility to its soldiers, even in peaceful days. The soldiers' actions are what bring peace to the people" (Quoted in Cohen, 332-3).[194] Dayan is reinforcing an implicit

[192] Eshkol coined this in Yiddish, referring to שמשון דער נעבעכדיקער, Samson the pathetic. Many versions of the expression's origins story exist, and it is unclear where it comes from exactly, but it was well known at the time.
[193] Consider, for example, how during the wave of violence in Gaza in May 2021, those in the international community advocating in favor of Israel's actions recited an oft-repeated refrain – "Israel has the right to defend itself."
[194] אין הצבא יכול להבטיח חיים לחייליו. חיי החיילים הם המבטיחים את חיי העם. אין הצבא יכול להבטיח שלווה לחייליו, אף בימי שלום. פעולות החיילים הן הנותנות את השלום לעם.
Cohen devotes much of the last chapter of his book to Uril Ilan and Moshe Dayan.

expectation – being a soldier means accepting the possibility of death, particularly significant given Israel's mandatory conscription. While he notes the significance of "soldiers' actions," it is clear that Dayan is not only referring to military operations guaranteeing victory. Rather, "It is the soldiers' lives that guarantee the life of the people," meaning that soldiers' sacrifice, their deaths, ensure the survival of the community.

More than a decade after the influential eulogies for Rotberg and Ilan, in 1968, Dayan was called on once more to eulogize, this time colonel Arik Regev who was killed during what is known as "The Chase Period" (תקופת המרדפים, 1967-1970), this time along the Jordanian border. In this speech, Dayan underscores many of the same themes: the personal and collective, appeals to Jewish history and biblical references, and viewing Regev's death as a justification for Israel's right to defend itself. Dayan notes that Regev – much like Rotberg – was not killed in a state of war, but that Israel exists in an ongoing condition of violence and threat not only during declared wars but between them. As a result, he notes, Israel "hasn't been able, for over twenty years, to return the sword to its sheath" (281).[195] This state of affairs has produced many losses, but Dayan emphasizes that "the hundreds and thousands we have lost in these battles have not erased or alleviated the grief of the individual" (281).[196] He then proclaims the purpose of his eulogy, of the funeral service as a whole, and perhaps of the entire enterprise of mourning in a national context: "because brave and strong as we may be, we don't have the strength to go down this arduous path on our own" (282).

The community Dayan is both pointing to and establishing, using the collective "we," is clearly national – it is not only comprised of comrades and friends, but also of the nation as a whole. Perhaps most significantly, though, this national community includes the living and the

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[195] מדינת ישראל, אשר קמה במלחמה, לא זכתה, זה למעלה מעשרים שנה, להשיב את חרבה לנדנה

[196] אולם המאות והאלפים ששכלנו במערכות אלו לא השכיחו ולא הקלו את אבל האחד

dead alike: “brave and strong as we may be, we don’t have the strength to persevere without sheltering each other – both the living and the dead” (282).[197] The dead are seen as still part of community, and specifically still play a role as protectors, perhaps bringing to mind once more Gouri’s dead soldiers in “Behold, Our Bodies Are Laid Out.” In the type of fraught muddling of life and death at the heart of the notion of the dead-living, Dayan enlists the dead in service of the living, and specifically of the state. But it is not only the dead in service of the nation, but the nation imbued with death, what Illuz calls “loyalty to the dead” (Illuz). Death and the dead become part of how the nation views itself, part of what makes it what it is. In this context Oz sees Dayan’s language as fascinated with death, rife with what he calls “joy of death,” (חדוות-מוות), which does not prevent him from praising his Hebrew and dubbing him a “splendid man” (28). This approach of enlisting and nationalizing death is evident in Dayan’s introduction to an edition of Alterman poems dedicated to bereaved families – yet another instance of the muddling between the military and civilian life.[198] Dayan writes that “death is not the end of fighting but its culmination, is not the cessation of life but its full expression” (quoted in Oz 29). Similar to the dead-living, death is here transcendent and glorified, made to appear as not only natural, necessary and inevitable but almost enviable. Dayan here talks about death as an abstract, muddling the difference between natural death and death in the context of war. Significantly, he does this while addressing families who have lost loved ones, so not at all in the abstract, employing the same logic shown in the eulogy for specific dead soldiers, such as Roi Rotberg.

“In the Presence of Death”: Darwish Eulogizing Kanafāni and Palestine

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[197] כי אמיצים וחזקים ככל שנהיה, אין בכוחנו ללכת כל אחד לבדו בדרך הקשה הזו. אמיצים וחזקים ככל שנהיה אין בכוחותינו להתמיד בה מבלי לסוכך האחד על רעהו – החיים והמתים גם יחד.

[198] Alterman had copious connections to Israel’s political elite, especially Dayan and Ben-Gurion. Cohen even views Dayan as a “violent realization of Alterman’s poetics” (289).

On July 8, 1972, Ghassān Kanafāni (1936-1972) was assassinated in Beirut when a bomb hidden in his car triggered an explosion, killing him and his 17-year-old niece, Lamīs. While Israel denied its involvement in the assassination for a long time, it is now clear that the *Mossad* was responsible. Kanafāni was one of the leading Palestinian writers and political figures of his generation. He was born in Akka under British rule in 1936 and became a refugee along with his family in 1948. Like many Palestinians he lived in exile for the rest of his life – his family fled to a refugee camp in Syria, and as an adult he also lived in Kuwait and Lebanon. He never returned to Palestine, which was the subject of much of his writing. His novels and short stories gained renown during the 1960s and early 1970s, including the collections *In the Land of Sad Oranges* (1963), *All That's Left to You* (1966), and the novellas *Sa'ad's Mother* (1969) and *Return to Haifa* (1970).[199] His most famous work, *Men in the Sun* (1963), is often cited by contemporary Arab writers as a foundational text. Kanafāni was also a prolific essayist, writing about *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine* (1966) as well as *On Zionist Literature* (1967). He worked in several newspapers and magazines of the Arab National Movement and in 1969 founded the magazine *Al-Hadaf* (The Goal), which remains in publication today in Beirut. Concomitant with his extensive writing in both fiction and non-fiction, he was an active member of the Palestinian resistance, serving as a spokesperson for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).[200] He considered his writing part and parcel of this political-national campaign, a view shared by others at the time and today.[201] Kanafāni was eulogized by, among

[199] *Sa'ad's Mother* is one of two novels I focus on in chapter 3.
[200] For more detail on Kanafāni's life and literary works see: *Man Is a Cause* (93-100); chapter in Harlow's *After Lives*; Ani Kanafāni's biography *Ghassān Kanafāni.*
[201] As Harlow explains, many Palestinian groups saw an important role for culture and the arts in a national struggle, and the PFLP even established an Arts Committee. Kanafāni himself wrote in 1968 about the relationship between the armed resistance and cultural production (Harlow 9-12). The linkage between the two elements stems, in many ways, from a Marxist turn in Palestinian nationalism which Siddiq identifies after the defeat of 1967 (13-4). I discuss Kanafāni's Marxism at some length in chapter 3.

others, his fellow Palestinian writer, Mahmoud Darwish. My analysis of this text focuses on elegiac devices such as repetition and questions that create a dense and fraught analogy between Kanafāni and Palestine; reflections on the Palestinian condition of exile and its relation to death; and to the image of pieces and a whole that is both personal and collective.

Once again, some geo-political context is needed to understand Kanafāni's role and the circumstances of his death, as well as the various reactions to and implications of it. During the late 1960s, and especially following the events of "Black September" and the expulsion of Palestinian resistance forces from Jordan in 1970-1, Beirut became the center of Palestinian operations against Israel. As various Palestinian factions were developing and solidifying their power in Lebanon, tensions grew in the already divided Lebanese society and Israel performed military incursions into Lebanon, further enhancing these tensions. One of the responses to this state of affairs was the attack on Israel's Lod Airport on May 30, 1972, orchestrated by the Japanese Red Army in coordination with the PFLP and killing 24 people (Siklawi 924-7).[202] In response, Israel assassinated Kanafāni even though he was not directly involved in the airport attack.[203] Such assassinations were a common occurrence in the early 1970s, as part of a broad and lengthy operation Israel named "The Wrath of God" (*za'am ha-el,* זעם האל). In these operations Israel would cross its borders and enter neighboring Lebanon and Jordan, as well as multiple European countries, and kill Palestinian operatives.[204] Jordan and then Lebanon were the centers of Palestinian resistance – followed by Tunisia after the 1982 Lebanon War – because

[202] The JRA, a communist anti-imperialist militant group, was linked to PFLP, which took responsibility for the attack. The attack on Israel's Olympic team in Munich is often cited in connection to the assassination, but in fact it took place later, in September 1972.
For more on the importance of Lebanon in the development of the Palestinian resistance, see Siklawi.
[203] Eitan Haber, an Israeli journalist and later political operative, claimed in 2005 that Kanafāni was sentenced to death by prime minister Golda Meir's tribunal even though he had no direct relation to terrorism.
[204] In addition to Kanafāni, Darwish eulogized several figures assassinated by Israel during these years, perhaps most notably Kamāl Nāṣer (see: Darwish, Mahmoud. *Yaksiru Iṭār Al-Ṣūrah Wa-Yadhhab: Al-Marāthī* [*He Broke the Frame of the Picture and Left: Eulogies*]. Edited by Zabin, Samīr. Dār Kan'ān, 2014.

Palestinians were, and continue to be, exiled; until the early 1990s, much of the struggle for the land takes place away from the land itself, and many prominent Palestinian figures, such as Kanafāni, are in various conditions of exile. [205]

About a year after Kanafāni's death, Mahmoud Darwish, another leading Palestinian writer and symbol who was also in exile in Beirut at the time, published a tribute text in his honor. The text, which Darwish himself dubs a eulogy even though it was not read at the funeral or at the time of death, has many of the characteristics of the genre: it describes Kanafāni's impact and legacy, addresses the circumstances of his death, muses on and grapples with the fact of his loss and generates a clear sense of community out of lament, as many political eulogies do. Written by a poet, Darwish's text is highly poetic and rife with references to the rich tradition of Arabic elegies, including repetition which al-Nowaihi notes is often used to confront time and finality (10).[206] More specifically, Darwish ties Kanafāni's death to the Palestinian national narrative and struggle, in a complex manner. Merging all of these notions together in one text, Darwish's eulogy oscillates between the personal and collective, between the intimate and public aspects of mourning. In addition, Darwish invokes a poetic genre while writing a prosaic text, and in underscoring the relevance of the Palestinian predicament he retools the elegiac genre.

Darwish's text is titled "An Attempt to Eulogize a Volcano," directly referencing the elegiac genre in Arabic, (*rithā'*, رثاء) which Darwish is here adapting.[207] At the same time, this title also acknowledges from the outset the text's limitations or difficulties, casting it as an

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[205] Palestinian leadership was removed from Palestine until the PLO's return following the Oslo Accord in 1993, but popular resistance was nevertheless active in the land even before then, most notably in the 1987 *Intifāḍa*. This also highlights a constant tension in Palestinian politics between leadership and popular resistance. See Sa'adi 235.
[206] Similarly, Brault and Naas explain the centrality of time in Derrida's eulogies, and more broadly his politics of mourning. As they put it, "for them to have been written, time was required – and not just the passing but the ravages of time" (4).
[207] While the elegiac genre in Arabic is, as we have seen, associated with woman, the eulogies I analyze in this chapter are all written by men, because of their canonicity. See the introduction for an explanation of this choice.

attempt, an approximation, perhaps an impossible task. This difficulty seems to stem from the nature of its subject, characterizing Kanafāni as a volcano – implying he is a force of nature, eruptive and powerful – but can likewise be extended to the genre of the eulogy in general. Because the subject of a eulogy is by definition absent, all a text in their honor can hope to do is to approach but never quite attain or capture them. That is the crux of the relationship between the speaker of a eulogy and its subject, which is at the heart of the genre – the eulogy seeks not only to describe this relationship but to perform it and shape it in retrospect. In the case at hand, Darwish's eulogy is replete with admiration for Kanafāni, who was a leading voice in both literature and politics of the time and whose mythical status only amplified after his death. In 1966 Kanafāni had enshrined Darwish along with a few other writers as leading voices of what he termed "literature of resistance," which became a pivotal concept in Palestinian and indeed Arabic literature of the era. [208] Darwish thus feels indebted to Kanafāni, while also feeling ambivalent about his own status and Kanafāni's literary and political commitments.

But Kanafāni is not only the subject of this text, spoken about as an object in third person; he is also addressed in the second person throughout the eulogy, which according to al-Nowaihi is quite common in elegiac poetry in an attempt to make the deceased seem closer by asking them questions, a feature used here by Darwish (1985, 12).[209] The use of the second person suggests an affinity and closeness rather than a functional use, as the address to him is rhetorical; Kanafāni cannot respond or be present.[210] In discussing Derrida's eulogies, but also the genre more broadly, Brault and Naas argue that addressing the dead derives from a difficulty

[208] See: Kanafāni, أدب المقاومة
[209] All references to Darwish in this chapter are to his 1985 text.
[210] This rhetorical device thus brings to mind once more the notion of the present absentee we saw in Chapter One, as the addressee is once again absent. Unlike the Younes in *Gate of the Sun*, though, Kanafāni is unequivocally dead.

in acknowledging loss: “we do not wish to admit that the dead can no longer respond to us” (7). But in this case the appeal to the dead does recognize his death, even relies on it, and helps introduce the text’s implied audience – the Palestinian people. The entire community is interpellated through the act of eulogy, as a community in mourning, as they grapple with the death of a leading literary and political voice. Therefore, in addition to the second-person address to the absent Kanafāni, Darwish likewise employs at certain moments a second-person plural, often in the imperative as an instruction. A complex notion of an addressee is advanced here – it can be implicit, not only direct, present and absent in multiple ways, and activated in different fashions. In this sense, the eulogy’s addressee is twofold – the direct addressee, who cannot hear it, and the wider audience, which is implicitly interpellated. Appealing to a collective as a means of advancing a sense of community is common in addresses that have a national context. This effect is accomplished here not only through the addressee but the speaker, as Darwish writes in the first-person plural (“we”). So, the eulogy is in a way both for Palestinians and by Palestinians.

Darwish writes about his fellow writer as an inciter of action, not only in life but in and through his death. He describes a sense of anticipation following Kanafāni’s death, which has spurred action and change: “you gave us the ability to get closer to ourselves, and the desire to reenter our own skin which we had left without realizing. Now we know – now that you’ve left us” (18).[211] The theme of movement (“get closer to ourselves”) is not only a form of praise as it continues to develop as a political principle throughout this text. Kanafāni’s impact is linked to his death, his departing from the communal “us,” and so his death has “given us the ability to be

[211] أعطيتنا القدرة على الاقتراب من أنفسنا، وعلى الرغبة في الدخول الى جلودنا التي خرجنا منها دون أن ندري. الآن ندري – حين خرجت منا
The Arabic uses the parallel “enter” and “exit” here, which I translated as “left” because it sounds more idiomatic in English.

sad, and to bear a grudge, and to boast a lineage" (17).[212] Darwish acknowledges the fact of Kanafāni's death from the outset (calling him "the dead," الميت), and negotiates a complex relation with death. He also maintains a complex relationship with mourning – on the one hand it is the purpose of the eulogy, but on the other Darwish expresses a resistance to it. So, for example, while he says that Kanafāni's (and implicitly his death) has made grief and sadness possible, just two lines earlier he declares in defiance: "will we mourn for you? no. Will we cry for you? no" (17).[213] This duality stems from the vicissitudes of mourning, acknowledging the loss but also protesting against it, knowing the collective resonance and impact of his death.

Indeed, the collective is at the heart of this eulogy. Darwish addresses Kanafāni directly, praises his actions and life, and maintains a personal tone throughout, but he ties the personal loss of Kanafāni to the loss of the homeland together, demonstrating how imbricated and intermingled the two are. The eulogy's central move is creating a robust and rich analogy between Kanafāni and Palestine, as Darwish notes in addressing his friend directly: "how much you resemble the homeland! How much the homeland resembles you!" (18).[214] The dual phrasing might seem redundant – especially because Arabic has a verb pattern denoting reciprocity which Darwish chooses not to use here – but it is meant to emphasize each on their own terms, and then the similarity, through repetition. Moreover, this dual phrasing clarifies that it is not that Kanafāni resembles the land, or the other way around, but that each resembles the other. An analogy between the two here suggests a profound relationship, a kind of interplay that demonstrates that Kanafāni is not just from Palestine, he is of the land and they reflected one another. Given his life circumstances, Kanafāni was fully submerged in Palestinian history,

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212 أعطيتنا القدرة على الحزن, وعلى الحقد, وعلى الانتساب
213 نحزن من أجلك؟ لا. نبكي من أجلك؟ لا
214 كم يشبهك الوطن! وكم تشبه الوطن!

which was then reflected in his fictional writing (Siddiq xii).[215] Or, as his wife Anni Kanafāni – who was herself Danish – wrote after his death: "in you I found Palestine – the land and its people" (33). Kanafāni embodies Palestine precisely because he is absent from it, underscoring the fact that analogy hinges on both similarity and difference.

What makes this analogy particularly powerful is that it is not rooted simply in the fact that Kanafāni was Palestinian but in the fact of his death. Darwish explains: "We carried you in a bag and put you in a funeral, to mediocre hymns, just like we carried the homeland in a bag, and put it in a funeral which is still ongoing" (18).[216] Darwish's choice of words here touches on the vexing and too often overlooked gendering of national discourse, though he does not elaborate.[217] The word he uses for "carried" has the same root as the one used for pregnancy, which curiously in Arabic can only be used in a masculine conjunction (*ḥāmil*, حامل). Perhaps in a similar vein, the Arabic word used here for "homeland," *waṭan* (الوطن), is masculine, though "Palestine" is feminine.[218] The slight allusion to pregnancy and the beginning of life is juxtaposed with the term for "put," which is also the verb used for placing a body in a coffin. Using both in the same sentence creates a duality between life and death, as the loss effectuates both despair and vigorous action.[219] But the focus of this statement is the analogy, enabled by loss; putting both Kanafāni and the homeland in a bag is made possible, and in fact necessary, because they have both been lost, because they are absent. Grounding the affinity between them in death prevents this description from being a simple nationalist formulation, as it colors the

[215] Siddiq analyzes Kanafāni's writing, as well as his life, focusing on a Marxist framework, and therefore historical circumstances and political commitment are central in his analysis.
[216] حملناك في كيس، ووضعناك في جنازة بمصاحبة الأناشيد الرديئة، تماماً كما حمانا الوطن في كيس، ووضعناه في جنازة لم تنته حتى الآن
[217] My next chapter, on mourning mothers, focuses on issues of gender and nationalism, including in Kanafāni's writing.
[218] The political term for state, *dawla* (الدولة) is likewise feminine, as is the Hebrew word for homeland, *moledet* (מולדת).
[219] Similarly, Siddiq argues that in Kanafāni's *Men in the Sun*, the water tanks in which the men die echo scenes of birth or rebirth but imbues them with death (12).

national urge with loss, which is particularly significant as Palestine remains lost, in 1973 and today. Kanafāni's death brings about the final correspondence between him and the land, what was earlier described as a resemblance and here develops even further.[220] This relationship is brought about by death, in which now they both partake.

Moreover, Darwish aligns Palestinian identity itself with death, stating: "A Palestinian isn't a Palestinian except in the presence of death" (18).[221] According to this, an affinity to death is what makes someone truly Palestinian, a claim Darwish further develops when he asks Kanafāni who he is. The deceased addressee cannot respond, prompting Darwish to reply to his own rhetorical question: "mysterious, and unable to answer, because you are a genuine Palestinian" (21).[222] Unlike components usually associated with identity, like shared history, culture and language, here identity is defined through death. In death Kanafāni comes to embody Palestinian identity and represent it. Therefore, the genre of the eulogy – in which Kanafāni is the absent addressee – is best suited to express this alignment, making the eulogy the ultimate Palestinian genre.[223] Aligning identity with death is not an assertion about essence or nature so much as about history or rather ongoing reality. In other words, it is a complex, sober and anti-essentialist view of national identity, one that does not view national identity as natural but rather as entirely historically contingent. This does not weaken the stance but rather resituates it, underscoring the importance and severity of the historical conditions of Palestinians.[224]

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[220] If in the previous description of resemblance Darwish refrained from using the reciprocal verb pattern, here he uses it noting that Kanafāni and the homeland "correspond to one another," all in one word.

[221] لا يكون الفلسطيني فلسطينياً إلا في حضرة الموت

[222] غامض، وعاجز عن الإجابة، لأنك فلسطيني حقيقي

[223] In his essay about "Remembering Ghassān Kanafāni," Elias Khoury includes a story Darwish once told him – another Palestinian writer, Kamāl Nāṣer, read Darwish's eulogy for Kanafāni and said "what is there left for you to say when my time comes?" Khoury adds that Nasir must have known that "elegy would become a permanent feature of Palestinian literature" (85). Nāṣer's time did indeed come when he too was assassinated by Israel a year after Kanafāni in 1973. As previously mentioned, Darwish eulogized him as well.

[224] Elsewhere Darwish expresses an instrumental view of nationalism, as he explains in a famous interview with Helit Yeshurun. Darwish is often dubbed the Palestinian national poet and was in fact an ardent supporter of the

Along with modifying the notion of national identity Darwish's eulogy likewise alters the concept of death. Kanafāni's death is seen as a form of completion: "[death] was completed in you, and you were completed in it," echoing the reciprocal form used earlier to describe the similarity between the slain writer and the land (18).[225] The notion of completion is not a euphemism for death, as Darwish acknowledges Kanafāni's death throughout, but rather a way to employ it and endow it with significance. Completion is partly abstract and lofty, but it also has specific contours, as it clarifies that death is not only the basis of the analogy between Kanafāni and Palestine but is also a part of it. The analogy thus brings together three components that are all analogous to each other: Kanafāni, the homeland and death. And so, repeating a now-familiar formula, Darwish places all three adjacent to each other: "And we carried you all – you and the homeland and death – we carried you in a bag and put you in a funeral to mediocre hymns" (18). Each component of this tripartite analogy is parallel to the other two, and those links are interlocked and inform each other. Kanafāni is not simply similar to Palestine because he is Palestinian – a kind of synecdoche – but rather is like it because of death, and he is dead as a result of being Palestinian. All three are in close contact, contiguous like a complex and intricate metonymy. Because of this linkage, "we didn't know which one of you we should eulogize. For you are all worthy of a eulogy" (18).[226] The tone of this statement is panegyric, with specific focus not only on praising Palestine but on doing so through a eulogy.

Death is central to the analogy Darwish constructs between Kanafāni and Palestine, but it is not a fixed or simple concept, nor does it necessarily imply defeatism on his part. Consider its

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national movement. However, Darwish had a major falling out with PLO leader Arafat because he opposed the 1993 Oslo Accords, and consequently he distanced himself from the movement. As his stance in this eulogy discloses, his approach to nationalism is nuanced and subtle.

[225] اكتمل الآن بك, واكتملت به

[226] ونحن حملناكم – أنت والوطن والموت – حملناكم في كيس ووضعناكم في جنازة رديئة الأناشيد. ولم نعرف من نرثي منكم. فالكل قابل للرثاء

association with beauty, evoking the classical idea of beautiful death: “death is always the companion of beauty. You’re so beautiful in death, Ghasān” (18).[227] Further developing this idea, Darwish offers a significant reversal: “your beauty reached its peak when death gave up on you and committed suicide… death exploded inside you because you carried it for more than twenty years and you didn’t allow it to be born”.[228] Once more using the same root for pregnancy, Darwish alludes to actual threats against Kanafāni, given his role in the resistance, which made him a kind of living-dead figure, as we saw in the previous chapter. Moreover, Kanafāni is portrayed not as a passive object but an active agent in his own death (“you didn’t allow it”), taking away power from death in an attempt to overcome it or at least endow it with meaning. A similar reversal can be seen in the elegy tradition – the Abbasid poet Abu Tammam writes that while in this world fate kills his loved ones, come the judgment day fate itself will die (al-Nowaihi 10). Here, however, death’s demise is not seen as a future occurrence, but rather as a re-interpretation of Kanafāni’s own death which has already happened.

In describing Kanafāni’s triumph over death – achieved through dying and thus altering the very meaning of death (“death exploded inside you”) – Darwish significantly uses the word “exploded” (the Arabic *infajara*, انفجر), evoking the circumstances in which Kanafāni died. Those circumstances, the car explosion, play a significant role in the eulogy and are repeated many times in variations, once again using elegiac repetition. For example, the text opens with the following statement: “your vision has been completed, but your body will not. Shards of it remain lost in the wind, and on the rooftops of the neighbors’ houses, and in the investigation files” (17).[229] While Darwish is here directly referring to Kanafāni’s death, the word used for

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[227] والموت دائماً رفيق الجمال. جميل أنت في الموت يا غسان

[228] والموت دائماً رفيق الجمال. جميل أنت في الموت يا غسان. بلغ جمالك الذروة حين يئس الموت منك وانتحر... انفجر الموت فيك لأنك تحمله منذ أكثر من عشرين سنة ولا تسمح له بالولادة

[229] اكتملت رؤياك, ولن يكتمل جسدك. تبقى شظايا منه ضائعة في الريح, وعلى سطوح منازل الجيران, وفي ملفات التحقيق

"body" is not the one for "corpse" but rather a more neutral one for organism (*jasad*, جسد), and this muddling of terms performs the reversal of death. The formula mentioning the wind, houses and files is repeated a few more times, as we will see, and is part of an important dynamic in the text between pieces and a whole, which has many layers of significance: poetic, political, spiritual and physical.

The image of the shards and the whole proves to be central to Darwish's eulogizing of both Kanafāni and Palestine. In fact, this image relates to three main components not only of this eulogy but of the Palestinian experience after 1948: exile, return and attachment to the land. All three component are interlinked, and together they create a complex and dense image, which can only be put forward in the genre of the eulogy. A clear example of this comes when Darwish writes: "Tell the men who dwell in the sun to disembark and return from their journey because Ghassān Kanafāni has scattered his body parts and become whole. He has achieved the final congruence between him and the homeland" (18-9).[230] These men are exiles, that is, the defining status of Palestinians after 1948 – whether living outside of Palestine or having remained within it but living under Israel's hostile political system. The moniker "men who dwell in the sun" emphasizes the itinerant nature of the exiles' abode, and is a clear allusion to Kanafāni's most famous novella, "Men in the Sun," which tells the story of Palestinian exiles in Iraq who die trapped in an empty water container in the back of a semitrailer while waiting to be smuggled across the border in the sweltering heat of summer.[231] Their condition is defined and determined by their exile and dislocation, whose impact can be seen throughout the Palestinian world and

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The Arabic word which I translate here as "completed" likewise connotes a sense of realization, conclusion and culmination. I translate it as "completed" here and throughout because of the importance of the link between parts and the whole.

[230] قولوا للرجال المقيمين في الشمس أن يترجلوا ويعودوا من رحلتهم, لأن غسان كنفاني يبعثر أشلاءه ويتكامل. لقد حقق التطابق النهائي بينه وبين الوطن

Note that the active agent of the action here is Kanafāni himself, who "scattered his parts."

[231] The allusion is further emphasized by the word "disembark" (يترجلوا) which in Arabic shares a root with "men."

culture. Such notions permeate the writing of influential poets like Rashid Hussein, Taha Muhammad Ali and Mahmoud Darwish, to name but a few. One of the scholars most associated with contemplations on exile, Edward Said, bases much of his ideas on his own experiences as a Palestinian living in Egypt, Lebanon and the U.S. Said famously writes that "exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience" (2000, 173) and explains that exiles are pushed into a "territory of not belonging" (2000, 177).[232] In many ways the exilic experience is the foundation of his theoretical framework, as he borrows the term "contrapuntal" from music to describe the plurality afforded by dislocation and itineracy (Said 2000, 186). Incidentally, on the occasion of Said's own death in 2003 Darwish eulogized him as well, in a poem called "Counterpoint" (*ṭibāq*, طباق). A significant difference, however, between the two exiles is that Said wrote in English whereas Darwish, including in his tribute to his friend, wrote in Arabic. As Dyer points out, in this poem Darwish reworks the elegiac genre of the Arabic *marthiyya* to specifically suit Said's exilic life (1448), similarly to the generic adaptations made in the eulogy for Kanafāni.

This confluence of exilic experience and eulogies demonstrates precisely the centrality of both death and exile in Palestine, as well as the relevance of the eulogy as a genre to the experience of exile. As many who have written about "Men in the Sun" have noted, the exiles' senseless death points to Palestinians' plight and to the inaction and even perniciousness of Arab countries purporting to advocate for them but not doing nearly enough in reality.[233] While Darwish's eulogy relies on the proximity of death and exile, he also tries to endow these losses with meaning. Darwish tries to redeem the characters' deaths, in which they were far removed

[232] For more on the central Palestinian theme of exile see, for example: Saʻdī's, "Representations of Exile and Return in Palestinian Literature" (2015); Saloul's *Catastrophe and Exile in the Modern Palestinian Imagination: Telling Memories* (2012).
[233] See for example: Siddiq 12-4; Harlow book 50.

from the homeland and unable to return; now, upon Kanafāni's death, their demise – along with their writer and Palestinians in general – can become a veritable, if tragic return. Given the prominence of exile, it is no surprise that return to the land becomes a central political and personal goal, that is inextricably bound with exile, as we saw briefly when the narrator of Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness* imagines his return to life. The Right of Return is a concept in international law, and specifically in relation to Palestinians it was recognized in U.N. resolution 194 in December 1948.[234] Palestinians often refer to it by the shorthand "return" (*al-'awda*, العودة), and as Lila Abu-Lughod poetically puts it: "for diasporic Palestinians, the charged term evokes nostalgia for the homeland they were forced to flee in 1948 and a reversal of the traumatic dispersion that sundered families" (77). Accordingly, return is prevalent in much of Palestinian discourse after 1948 as well as in artistic expressions, and it is likewise evident in each chapter of this project.[235] In fact, a genre of Palestinian writing about returns and visits started with a fictional return depicted in another famous Kanafāni novella, "Return to Haifa" (العائد الى حيفا, 1970) (Sa'adi 235). Various geo-political conditions allowed some Palestinians to return to parts of Palestine following the 1967 and later 1982 wars (Harlow 1986 3,7). These complex and multifarious conditions are also a reminder that while return is a prominent political goal it is not, in fact, one thing; depending on historical moments and citizenship status, the horizons, possibilities and reality of return might look quite different. In addition, as Harlow and Sa'adi maintain, these are not really returns but rather short-lived visits, and quite forlorn ones at that, with Palestinians accessing the land "as visitors: to look, to lament, to collect some memorabilia" (Sa'adi 238). The emphasis is on the past, and as Palestinians visiting their former

[234] See: https://undocs.org/A/RES/194%20(III)
[235] Consider, for example, Emile Habiby's collection of short stories, سداسية الأيام الستة, about the opening of the borders after 1967.

homes encounter a paradox of “defeated dreams and elegiac euphoria,” Palestine is revealed to be a chronotope of loss (Harlow 1986 7). It is therefore no wonder that the eulogy is an appropriate genre, steeped in lament and elegy.

Telling the men who dwell in the sun to return on the occasion of Kanafāni’s death demonstrates the richness and complexity of the notion of pieces and whole – Kanafāni has been scattered to pieces, referring to his gruesome death, but this scattering actually leads to his wholeness. This certainly has a mystical element, with death leading to a transcendent completeness unapproachable to the living. It also adds a collective layer to the image of pieces and a whole, while continuing the analogy between Kanafāni and Palestine; the pieces are likened to the exiles, and Kanafāni’s death inaugurates their return. But Darwish obviously does not mean here simply that Kanafāni’s death will actualize the right of return. Rather, this return might be akin to the approaching of the self which he mentions earlier, perhaps an awakening which will then, in turn, enable a return. Kanafāni’s death, then, sows the seed and generates the potential, which is one of the purposes of Darwish’s eulogy. Note that the reference to “Men in the Sun” starts with an injunction calling on the audience, on Palestinians, in the imperative to “tell the men” to return. They are asked to return to the homeland (*waṭan*, وطن), a word with clear national resonances from which the Arabic word for nationalism derives (*waṭaniyya*, الوطنية), but the emphasis is more on the place itself, as Kanafāni’s body now corresponds to the land in an intimate and personal manner.

The focus on the place does not suggest Darwish’s claim is not a national one, but rather that the national claim derives from an attachment to the land, much like the word for “nationalism” derives from the word for “homeland.” In other words, the land itself is at the crux of the Palestinian national claim as opposed, for example, to a focus on language and culture.

This is a nativist approach that establishes a link between Palestinians and the land of Palestine which operates as a claim to sovereignty. This claim likewise creates an implicit contrast with Zionist claims to the same land which relied on a historically more distant and perhaps mythological attachment.[236] As part of Palestinians' exile from the land the attachment is severed, and therefore imbued with loss, akin to death. Such a claim might seem abstract or metaphorical, but given the analogy created between Palestine and death it becomes much more concrete. Consequently, "being Palestinian means getting used to death, to dealing with death" (22).[237] It is the constant presence of death, stemming from the absence of the homeland, which generates the link between Palestinian identity and death, as we saw earlier.

The link between Palestine, Palestinians and death extends to the body as well, which partakes in the image of parts and the whole in relation to the land. As Darwish says to Kanafāni: "your body parts are not pieces of the scattered scorched flesh" (22). Instead of flesh, "It is Akka, and Haifa, and Jerusalem and Tiberias and Jaffa. Blessed be the body that is dispersed as cities" (22).[238] The pieces are in fact the cities of Palestine, maintaining the analogy between the land and Kanafāni, as both are lost. While Kanafāni is exemplary, as a leading literary and political voice, the situation is likewise familiar to all Palestinians, as "one cannot be considered a Palestinian if, in order to make the body parts whole again, he doesn't gather his flesh from the wind, the rooftops of neighbors' houses and the files of investigation," returning once more to this earlier formulation.[239] Darwish thus uses the image of parts and the whole to explain and dramatize the central Palestinian political principles of exile, return and attachment to the land.

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[236] I am heedful of Rashid Khalidi's argument against viewing Palestinian nationalism solely as a response to Zionism, which he advances throughout his *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (1997).

[237] أن تكون فلسطينياً معناه أن تعتاد الموت, أن تتعامل مع الموت

[238] ليست أشلاؤك قطعاً من اللحم المتطاير المحترق. هي عكا, وحيفا, والقدس, وطبريا, ويافا. طوبى للجسد الذي يتناثر مدناً

[239] ولن يكون فلسطينياً من لا يضم لحمه من أجل التئام الأشلاء من الريح، وسطوح منازل الجيران، وملفات التحقيق

Throughout the eulogy Kanafāni is described as both unique and as sharing the predicament of every other Palestinian, which goes to the heart of the analogy between the person and the homeland. Darwish also links this to the circumstances of Kanafāni's death, relying on the pertinence and potency of the image of pieces and the whole. So, he says Kanafāni's heart "was not stopped by a bullet. A bullet wasn't enough! They blew you up as if you were a frontline, a base, a mountain, a capital city. They fought you, as if you were an army…" (22).[240] In addition to alluding to the exaggerated or disproportionate nature of the killing, given that Kanafāni was not directly involved in violence, this statement is an attempt to recast or reclaim the circumstances of his death; rather than be demoralizing, Darwish wants them to serve as proof of Kanafāni's import, "because you're a symbol," he determines. He then asks another rhetorical question ("why you?"), a recurring move in this text, providing the answer himself: "because the homeland in you is an ongoing becoming and a permanent change. From the blackness of the camp tent to the blackness of napalm. And from homelessness to resistance" (23).[241] Darwish is here trying to counteract not the death, which he knows he cannot do, but at least its signification and implications, both symbolically and pragmatically. This is yet another attempt at reversal, as he notes: "because your absence would make the homeland more distant, so when they blew you up…they blew up the steps marching towards it – that's what they thought" (23).[242] Darwish suggests that in fact the opposite is true, claiming that Israel failed in its mission: "because of the long departure my sins have fallen. Because of the distance of the homeland I got closer to the truth. My form is hidden in you" (23).[243] Through the political reconfiguration of the meticulous analogy between Palestine and death, Darwish implies that in

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[240] لا توقفه رصاصة. لا تكفيه رصاصة! نسفوك، كما ينسفون جبهة، وقاعدة، وجبلاً، وعاصمة. وحاربوك، كما يحاربون جيشاً...
[241] لأن الوطن فيك صيرورة مستمرة وتحول دائم. من سواد الخيمة حتى سواد النابالم. ومن التشرد حتى المقاومة
[242] ولأن غيابك يجعل الوطن أبعد، فعندما ينسفونك...ينسفون خطى تتقدم – هكذا يحسبون
[243] ومن بعد الوطن اقتربت من الحقيقة

killing Kanafāni Israel in fact brought him closer to the homeland. This complex move of reclaiming is not only in contrast to Israel's attempts but to some interpretations of Kanafāni's own work. So, Siddiq argues that in some of Kanafāni's writing a character moving away from Palestine signals death, concrete or symbolic, whereas moving closer to it signals an awakening (7-8). Darwish's eulogy, however, suggests a far more intricate relationship than the somewhat simplistic dynamic in Siddiq's analysis. Nevertheless, a true return can only be metaphorical – Kanafāni never returned to the land, not even in death; his grave is in the Shatila camp in Beirut.

The attempt to reverse the meaning of death and view it as a way to come closer to the land is evident in Darwish's frequent use of terminology related to leaving and departure. Darwish uses variations of the word "departure" (in Arabic: *raḥīl*, رحيل), whose double meaning becomes clear towards the end of the eulogy: "they compete in eulogizing you, as if you were a passing matter. And they don't know that since your departure – you came to us. Coming…coming from the wind, from neighbors' houses and investigation files and from the silence and the savoring of defeat and its virtues" (24).[244] The double entendre is similar to the English "departed," signifying both a mundane departure and the ultimate one, death, and it underscores the affinity between exile and death, two kinds of departure. Death is thus analogous to both the homeland and the exile from it, which might make the analogy seem fuzzy at first. But this is deliberate, as Palestine is engulfed in death on all fronts, creating an image that is not neatly organized and symmetric but rather chaotic and thus more representative of the actual state of affairs. Another significant layer ties the word "departure" to the elegiac tradition in Arabic poetry and to the concept and act of eulogy in which Darwish is here participating. In the tradition of the *qasida*, the second part of the tripartite genre is called a "*raḥīl*," or departure, as it

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[244] ها هم يتبارون في رثائك، كأنك شيء ذاهب. ولم يعرفوا أنك منذ رحلت – أتيت. قادم..قادم من الريح, ومنازل الجيران وملفات التحقيق ومن الصمت واستمراء الهزيمة ومناقبها

depicts the speaker's voyage from the campsite from which his beloved left him and toward his people and leader (Hammond 145). In using this word Darwish harkens back to that poetic tradition but gives it a specific and political meaning and signification. Loss, a central element of the *qasida*, is here a geopolitical reality, but one which resonates with the more personal loss of the earlier poems as well.

At the eulogy's closing Darwish returns to the notion of consolation, often understood as a central function of the genre, and ties it to Palestine. He asks: "do we console your family? No. Do we console ourselves? No," repeating a formulation with which he opened the eulogy (24). He concludes that it is Palestine which requires consolation for the death of Kanafāni: "We go to Mount Carmel and console it. We go to the shores of Akka and console them. We go to Palestine and console her," as Palestine is gendered as feminine in Arabic. Much like the earlier image of Palestinian cities as the exploded body parts of the deceased Kanafāni, here they are places to be consoled, sites of mourning. This once again both relies on the analogy between the man and the land and complicates it, as the lines are not clear and distinct; Palestine is both the lost and the one mourning, the object and the agent of mourning. Listing names of places in need of solace almost draws a map of Palestine imbued with loss – tracing the lost land through the act of mourning. Alongside other such acts of reclamation throughout the eulogy, this spatial act of memorializing is almost an attempt to reclaim the erased places, evoking their names and putting them back on the map, counteracting their destruction. With official sovereignty thwarted, this is the option that remains. So, Palestine "is the one mourning. She is the bereaved," using a root usually reserved for parents who have lost a child (*thakla*, ثكلى). Darwish asks whether Palestine should be consoled or congratulated and responds – as no one else will – that he does not know. He explains the reason for this: "for she [Palestine] is the one who will put your bones together,

she is the one who will recreate you anew" (24).[245] In this he could be referring to Islamic ideas of the afterlife, evident in the use of the future tense here unlike the present tense in preceding sections, as well as to another function of the land as a final resting place, whose significance we saw in the previous chapter. Either way, while Darwish says Palestinians will go to Palestine to console her, most of them in fact cannot do so, as their return has been largely prohibited by the State of Israel. The act of consolation thus becomes either a wish or more actively an ethical edict, part of this eulogy's political force.

In this brief final paragraph Darwish grapples with all the major components of the eulogy: Palestine, Kanafāni, the collective "we" of Palestinians and he himself, who appears the least in the text in general. And so, after mentioning the role of the land as Kanafāni's burial site as well as his mourner, Darwish returns to the collective: "And we here, we will die a lot," in a formulation that is unidiomatic in Arabic as well; dying is not usually quantified, as it is absolute and immeasurable. But Darwish does quantify it in excess, and by doing so emphasizes the loss and demonstrates its impact on language; the immensity of the loss alters the very structures of language, which requires a form which had not existed heretofore. In addition, the excess of death ties back to the analogy he has crafted throughout the eulogy: "we will die a lot, so that we can turn into real Palestinians and real Arabs" (24).[246] However, while the bulk of the eulogy is devoted to the national-collective importance of Kanafāni and of his death, hoping to enlist it and mobilize Palestinians, the text ends with a return to the personal. This perhaps demonstrates that the lines between the personal and the collective are not so clear, especially in the context of statelessness. So, Darwish closes with a request from Kanafāni in the first person: "but I am

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[245] نعزي أهلك؟ لا. نعزي أنفسنا؟ لا. نذهب إلى جبل الكرمل ونعزيه. نذهب إلى شاطئ عكا ونعزيه. نذهب إلى فلسطين ونعزيها. هي المفجوعة. هي الثكلى. نعزيها أم نهنئها؟ لا أدري. فهي التي سترتب عظامك, هي التي ستعيد تكوينك من جديد

[246] فنحن هنا، سنموت كثيراً. كثيراً نموت، الى أن نصبح فلسطينيين حقيقيين وعرباً حقيقيين

asking you for permission now to cry a little. Do you allow me to cry after all? Do you forgive me?"[247] In this most personal and intimate appeal, Darwish acknowledges that along with the political statements and goals, he is plainly and genuinely sad, and he leaves room for that, if reluctantly. And, unlike the multiple rhetorical questions that appear throughout the text, now Darwish refrains from replying, and leaves the questions unanswered, open and pointing to the gaping absence of their addressee who can never be replaced.

Dayan and Darwish: In Comparison

Moshe Dayan's eulogy for Roi Rotberg in 1956 and Mahmoud Darwish's eulogy for Ghassān Kanafāni in 1973 are texts that originate from the pain of loss and mourning and seek to make political meaning of them, because the deaths themselves were political. Each of them is deeply rooted in its own context, history and tradition, but they are also necessarily linked to the same violent and ongoing national dispute, which is also a defining feature of their context. I read them, therefore, as examples of their respective elegiac traditions as well as their respective political-national narratives. Reading Dayan and Darwish's texts in conjunction demonstrates the ways in which the genre of eulogy is employed in acts of nationalized mourning in different national contexts. In both cases, a eulogy is used to put forward an implicit political thesis on issues of land, statehood, or lack thereof, and sovereignty. Both Rotberg and Kanafāni were killed as part of the national dispute in Palestine/Israel, but those circumstances carry different implications in each instance. While both belong to the genre of the eulogy, drawing on its respective cultural generic conventions, they take very different approaches stylistically and politically, demonstrating the capaciousness of the elegiac genre, but also the specific political impetuses at hand; each writer seeks to utilize the eulogy for the political purposes most urgent

[247] ولكني أستأذنك الآن في البكاء قليلاً. فهل تأذن لي بالبكاء؟ هل تغفر لي؟

for them. In considering these texts alongside each other I focus on several themes that stem both from the generic form and the geopolitical circumstances: the relationship between speaker and addressee and how the eulogy constructs and defines community; the representation of death and its function in the national narrative; and the relationship between land and sovereignty. The prominence of topics central to the very definition of nationalism and nation-states specifically in eulogies underscores the ways in which these texts employ loss to construct political narratives, which are, in turn, heavily shaped by loss.

The first theme that stems from both the genre of the eulogy and the geopolitical context at hand is the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, and how it aims to construct a sense of community by redirecting the pain of loss to a form of nationalized mourning. In the context of each eulogy, I included some biographical background on both the speakers and the subjects of the speeches. This choice highlights an important feature of the genre of the eulogy – it is dedicated to the deceased but given that their absence is the cause for the address, the speaker's presence is reinforced by contrast. So, a speech about one person – and importantly someone who is dead –inevitably becomes at least partly about another, about the living. In his homage to Lyotard, Derrida calls this an act of "reappropriation," which he sees as "an indecent way of saying 'we,' or worse, 'me' " (225).[248] But such an act seems unavoidable, as the eulogy relies on a relationship between the person who has died and the person eulogizing them, while also constructing this relationship in the absence of one party. In the cases at hand, Dayan did not know Rotberg well, but in his role as the head of the army, and as an official and symbolic emissary of the national community, he establishes a link between the two in order to give meaning to the loss. Darwish did have a personal relationship with Kanafāni, but his address

[248] As Brault and Naas point out, this type of "narcissism" seems unavoidable, and Derrida himself repeats it in some of this his eulogies (7).

seems to draw more on the fact that both are Palestinian writers who represent Palestine in the poetic and political realms. These types of relationships point to a significant difference in the speakers' and subjects' roles – Dayan is a general, the head of the IDF at the time and a military figure of great renown, who is eulogizing a soldier who died in combat at the border, though not in time of declared war. Dayan is a very known figure in Israel, and heavily mythologized, while Rotberg was an anonymous foot soldier, best known publicly as the subject of Dayan's famous eulogy. Few details about him are included in the eulogy itself, as recounting his life is not the focus of this specific tribute. Darwish, on the other hand, is a writer writing about another writer, who was assassinated due to his participation in political resistance, but both writers also have a symbolic role in Palestinian society, as we have seen. Dayan is a military leader eulogizing a soldier in his official capacity, and his symbolic status is necessarily linked to his military role throughout Zionist and Israeli histories. Darwish is certainly also a political figure who played a role in constructing the Palestinian narrative, but he does so through his role as a writer, in a civilian capacity, and specifically as an exile. Both eulogies operate within the national symbolic realm – one in an official military capacity and the other in a cultural capacity. Kanafāni was, indeed, also a political figure and a participant in a resistance movement, but the fact that he held such roles outside of a state framework – that being non-existent – illustrates the point.

Dayan and Darwish both mostly utilize the first-person plural in their eulogies; Dayan never uses the singular and Darwish does so only briefly. The first-person plural is the dominant voice of the speaker, as the pronoun "we" establishes a clear national community and speaks on its behalf. Using the first-person plural indicates unity in mourning for the fallen, suggesting a form of strength of the community in the face of loss, but it also means that loss and mourning are a constitutive element of these communities. In Dayan's eulogy the national community

depicted as “we” is demarcated in contrast to the Palestinian “them.” In Darwish’s text, Israel is not explicitly mentioned, though it is implied in stating that “They blew you up” and “They fought you”.[249] Israel’s presence as a geopolitical fact is implied throughout, as the unspoken but known root cause of the loss of Palestine and of Kanafāni. Much like the speakers are part of the national community of mourners, the subjects of the eulogy are also participants in it, even in death. On the one hand, there is a distinct line between the deceased and the living who remain in their wake, but on the other hand, both Dayan and Darwish describe Rotberg and Kanafāni as part of their respective communities and in many ways their representatives; Rotberg’s innocence is extended to Israelis and to the State of Israel, pointing to a contiguous link between them, while Kanafāni is presented as the quintessential Palestinian, especially now that he is dead. In doing so they destabilize the lines between living and dead, the very ones the genre of the eulogy often relies on and maintains.

The blurring of the line between the living and the dead – similar to what we saw in the previous chapter regarding the poetic and political figures of the dead-living and the living-dead – informs the way in which both eulogies engage with death itself and represent it as part of a national narrative. Eulogizing is a form of contending with death and loss, a task clearly at the center of the elegiac genre, but there are multiple ways of doing so. Both Dayan and Darwish demonstrate an embrace of death, for different reasons. In his eulogies for Rotberg, Uri Ilan and Arik Regev, Dayan asserts that the army cannot guarantee life to its soldiers, but “it is the soldiers’ lives that guarantee the life of the people,” meaning that in fact the soldiers’ deaths guarantee life for the nation. This logic suggests that in order for the nation to live some soldiers will have to die, presenting this outcome as inevitable. Consequently, death is presented as a part

[249] In the Arabic the pronoun is included in the verb form, so it is not as stark as the English “they.”

of the life of a nation, the necessary sacrifice that therefore needs to be accepted rather than disputed; death in war is depicted as inevitable as death of natural causes, normalizing it. Thus, the community constructed includes the dead and projects what Illuz refers to as “loyalty to the dead” or what Oz calls “joy of death.” What may start as a means to deal with copious loss becomes a political principle in its own right.

Darwish’s eulogy for Kanafāni also embraces death, but in its own way. As we have seen, Darwish tries to reverse the implications and meaning of Kanafāni’s death, describing him as an agent in his own death rather than a powerless victim. This is a political move aimed at presenting Palestinians in general as having more control over their own destiny than might be apparent, combating despair caused by many decades of dispossession. Darwish does not only try to reclaim death and redefine agency within it but resituates it as a part of Palestinian identity. As he puts it, “a Palestinian isn’t a Palestinian except in the presence of death.” As such, Darwish tries to turn death into a source of political power, but this is done out of necessity; much of Palestinian life comes to be defined through loss and death, and so Darwish tries to endow this death with meaning. Both Darwish and Dayan contend with the fact that loss and death are prominent and ongoing features of their communities’ experience, though they remain on opposite sides of the power imbalance.

National narratives often center on questions of land and its ownership, which is also at the heart of the conflict in Palestine/Israel and is the third theme of the comparison between the two eulogies. The land plays a role in shaping rituals of mourning on several levels, for example as the site of burial, and it certainly features in these eulogies. In Dayan’s text the focus is on the border and settlement, two salient topics in the geopolitical reality of the 1950s and today as well. This land needs to be defended with a canon and a machine gun and cultivated through

planting a tree and paving a way. Within the Zionist doctrine, these military and civilian tasks are mutually contingent – one cannot happen without the other. That the border features so prominently in the eulogy is indicative of the circumstances in which Rotberg was killed as well as of a political ethos and narrative in which the state is seen as porous, liminal and under threat, which in the 1950s it often was.

Rotberg was killed at the border, whereas Kanafāni was killed well beyond it, while in forced exile in Beirut; in order to assassinate him, Israel was willing to cross its own border and violate the sovereignty of neighboring Lebanon. The same land is at the center of Darwish's text, but it is viewed from a significantly different vantage point by both the speaker and the subject; Darwish and Kanafāni, like most Palestinians, can only view the land from the outside looking in, kept out by the border reinforced and fortified in Dayan's text. Figuratively speaking, Darwish and Kanafāni represent the "hundreds of thousands of eyes and hands" that "crowd" beyond the gates of Gaza. The notion of a lost land, or a people being far removed from the land they claim and to which they long to return is, of course, not foreign to Jews; it was at the center of Jewish experience for many centuries, appeared in countless prayers and poems and was the basic impetus of Zionism. The biblical Book of Lamentations details the longing for the lost city of Jerusalem after a mass exile of Israelites from it. "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow!", it opens, setting up an extended metaphor personifying and gendering the city which here acts as both the mourned and the mourner (Lamentations 1:1). Like a widow, "she weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; she hath none to comfort her among all her lovers…the ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn assembly; all her gates are desolate, her priests sigh; her virgins are afflicted, and she herself is in bitterness (Lamentations 1:2-4). But since 1948 Jerusalem, and the

land as a whole, have been lost for Palestinians, who are now those who mourn for it, as Darwish does in his eulogy for Kanafāni; now it is *al-quds* and Palestine whose ways mourn and whose gates are desolate.[250] So, the disputed land between the Mediterranean and the Kingdom of Jordan has long been subject to competing irredentist claims – peoples seeking to re-establish their right to a specific territory which has been lost and occupied by others. That both national narratives and movements have such claims demonstrates not only the salience of the link between land and sovereignty in nationalism but also its volatility.[251]

Sovereignty, the final topic of comparison, requires some elucidation. A state's sovereignty – its authority to rule within a given territory – derives from an agreed upon source of legitimacy. Since the advent of nationalism and the nation-state in the middle of the 19th century, this concept is strongly tied to national claims to a territory, linking a national group to a specific territory. As we have seen, much of Dayan's eulogy is dedicated to claims about the land and borders, as he underscores the Israeli emphasis on settlement and security and the link between the two. This emphasis is evident when he states that "ours is a generation of settlement, and without the steel hat and the muzzle of a canon we cannot plant a tree and build a home" or that "our children will not have a life if we do not dig shelters, and without barbed wire and a machine gun we cannot pave a way and drill for water." Underscoring the land and the border in a eulogy for Rotberg does not stem solely from the circumstances of the soldier's killing; rather, I argue that it establishes a claim for territorial sovereignty, and doing so implicitly in an act of mourning, naturalizing the political claim and making it seem inevitable, apolitical, and

[250] City lamentations were in fact a common genre in ancient Mesopotamia. See for example a comparative reading of the biblical book and Sumerian city lamentations: Nili Samet, "Sumerian City Lamentations and Eikha Scroll" (2012).
[251] With the exception of the natural border of the Mediterranean, the borders in the region are circumscribed at least to some extent by colonial forces after the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the end of WWI.

righteous. Importantly, though, Rotberg's death, and consequently Dayan's eulogy, take place in 1956, eight years after the establishment of the State of Israel. In other words, Israel has already achieved its sovereignty, yet continues to perceive itself as lacking it or sees its own sovereignty as constantly under threat, unachieved or incomplete. Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi argues that Zionism was built on an unrealized desire and aspiration and therefore arriving in the longed-for land was in many ways an unrecognized challenge for the movement. In her terms, the actual return to Zion means that the symbolic crashes into reality and the foundational pinned up desire for it has no recourse left.[252] Dayan's eulogy demonstrates a refusal to acknowledge the change created by 1948 – an ideological decision to maintain Zionist claims of unrealized nationalism along with the privileges of a Jewish state.[253]

The tension between realized and unrealized national claims is especially salient because of the effect the establishment of Israel has had on Palestinians. Since 1948, Jews can no longer assert an irredentist claim to the land, yet they continue to do so, nonetheless. At the same time Palestinians become exiles, generating their own irredentist claim. The realization of a Jewish state through Zionism comes at the direct expense of Palestinians, who then either remain stateless refugees in Arab or other countries or begin living under various forms of Israeli rule as second-rate citizens or under occupation. In other words, Israel's sovereignty in the land translates to Palestinians' lack of sovereignty, hence the prominence of exile and the wish to return in Darwish's eulogy for Kanafāni as well as in Palestinian literature since the *Nakba*. Think, for example, of Darwish's following statements: "Tell the men who dwell in the sun to

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[252] Dekoven Ezrahi puts it this way: "distance is diminished to the point where it is nearly eradicated by an ecstatic, mystic vision of arrival. So, the danger of arrival is also the challenge to the symbolic universe, the materialization of desire, the move from symbolic to sacrament" (237).

[253] This approach is perhaps similar to the one we saw associated with Levi Eshkol, demonstrating military might while also claiming weakness to elicit support from other countries. Given this approach it is no surprise that Zionist institutions continue to operate alongside state institutions to this day, such as the land developing Jewish National Fund, The immigration and social Jewish Agency and the fundraising *Keren Ha-Yesod*.

disembark and return from their journey because Ghassān Kanafāni has scattered his body parts and become whole. He has achieved the final congruence between him and the homeland," or when he mentions "the body that is dispersed as cities." In conditions of dispossession, the genre of eulogy becomes aligned with a political agenda lamenting exile and wishing for return. As such, mourning becomes more focused on the land, at the expense of the individual, and so Palestine is both mourned and comforted in Darwish: "We go to Mount Carmel and console it. We go to the shores of Akka and console them. We go to Palestine and console her."

Israeli sovereignty is indeed complex and unstable, but not for everyone; for its Jewish-Israeli citizens it is largely uniform and consistent, but it varies for Palestinians. For those in exile it is the force that keeps them removed from their land; those who became Israeli citizens in 1948 lived under military rule for two decades and have since become second-rate citizens; after 1967, East Jerusalem was annexed making its Palestinian denizens residents but not citizens, while the West Bank was occupied making Palestinians stateless under occupation. Some legal and procedural details have changed over the years, but the contours of these statuses remain the same. For example, as part of the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s, Palestinian leaders were allowed to return to the region for the first time since 1948, establishing and recognizing the Palestinian Authority. As part of those same accords, the West Bank was divided into three parts (A, B, C) and in each part Israel and the Palestinian Authority have different roles. However, even in cases where the PA has official authority, it had to be granted by Israel, suggesting its control over the territory has morphed but not ended. That is, perhaps, the ultimate proof of Israeli sovereignty and the lack of Palestinian sovereignty. Most of the international community rejects Israel's claims to sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza, yet Israeli control persists in

different ways.[254] What, then, is the role of recognition in sovereignty, and who has authority and jurisdiction?[255] Even if sovereignty is, in many ways, performative, it does have grave and concrete consequences on people's lived realities.

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Dayan and Darwish's eulogies are indeed representative of trends and themes of eulogies in their respective contexts: in the Israeli context, an emphasis on defense against existential threats even long after the establishment of the state, as well as the evocation of Jewish history, texts, and traditions; and in the Palestinian context, the confluence of mourning the loss of individuals and the loss of Palestine and contending with exile and the thus far futile wish to return. But defining these eulogies as representative suggests, of course, that they are not unique, and so in the following section I briefly present two Israeli examples and two Palestinian ones, to illustrate the prevalence and development of many of the themes and political questions present in Dayan and Darwish. In the Israeli context, I introduce a eulogy for fallen soldiers in the 1967 war by a famous general, Gorodish, and a eulogy for the Haran family, killed in their home by operatives of the Palestinian Liberation Front in 1979, by Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin. In the Palestinian context, I analyze a journal entry by Khalil al-Sakākīnī lamenting the Jerusalem home he had to flee in 1948 and the liberty he had to leave behind, a text I read as a eulogy, and a eulogy for scholar Ibrahim Abu-Lughod by his friend Edward Said in 2001.

A few weeks after the resounding Israeli victory in June 1967, long before the implications and long-term reverberations of that war began to set in, Shmuel Gonen (Gorodish)

[254] Palestinians have political control over the Gaza Strip since 2005, with two crucial caveats: first, Hammas gained control following Israel's unilateral decision to withdraw; and second, Gaza is still under siege controlled by Israel on one side and Egypt on the other.
[255] The U.S. Trump administration reneged on decades of policy and recognized Israel's sovereignty or partial sovereignty in East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

gave a eulogy for Israeli soldiers of the armored corps. Gorodish was the commander of the 7th armored brigade of the IDF, eulogizing his subordinates who died in combat. The eulogy was delivered in Sinai at a ceremony dubbed a "victory roll call" for the brigade in July 1967. Throughout the speech Gorodish highlights the glory of the soldiers' military prowess, intensifying the already developing mythical impact of the victory. Unlike other eulogies I analyze in this chapter, this one is not dedicated to a specific person but rather to a group of soldiers, without naming any of them. It therefore includes no biographical details of any of the fallen and is inevitably impersonal and generalized. Think of this in relation to Dayan's eulogy – both speakers have a similar vantage point as commanders addressing their troops, but they do so in different ways. If Dayan's eulogy appeals to all Israelis on the occasion of one soldier's, Gorodish is eulogizing multiple soldiers while addressing a group of soldiers and the implicit audience of the same national community. Also, while Dayan's speech very clearly highlights the first-person plural to establish the sense of community and belonging, Gorodish, a little over a decade later, uses the same pronoun but adds to it a second-person plural address to the soldiers. This creates an ambiguous audience for his eulogy, which is the focus of my analysis.

As part of the genre's solemnity, eulogies sometimes include celebratory aspects, a duality quite evident in this instance. Gorodish's eulogy oscillates between the joy of victory and the losses endured. It opens with a sentiment familiar from Dayan – a notion that Israel is fighting an existential war, a pervasive feeling leading up to and during the 1967 war. So, Gorodish notes that "Our people, well-versed in fighting for its existence, has once again fought for its life" (*Ne'um Lekhol Et* 105). But Israel was victorious: "and this time iron has hit iron and the enemy armies were dealt a decisive blow" (105).[256] This sets the stage for descriptions of

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[256] עמנו למוד-המלחמה על קיומו שוב נלחם על חייו והפעם פגע הברזל בברזל וצבאות האויב הוכו מכה ניצחת

glory and heroism, akin to what we saw in Dayan, enhanced through describing the might of the defeated foe. So, Gorodish tells his troops: “You were the spearhead of the armored attack on the hard shell of the Egyptian army, the biggest and most arrogant of the enemy armies” (105).[257] Noting the strength of the enemy army augments the grandeur of the victory over them, bolstering a myth of heroism, perseverance and overcoming. This is part of a larger narrative according to which thanks to the people’s dedicated fighting the less likely party managed to prevail, implicitly evoking David and Goliath in I Samuel.

Israel is not only depicted as powerful and victorious, but as an invincible juggernaut, a mythical force. Consider, for instance, the most famous line in this eulogy: “Unto death we directed our gaze – and it lowered its eyes.”[258] The victory is thus not only over the mortal, if powerful, Egyptian foe, but over death itself, a point underscored because Hebrew does not have neuter nouns and so “death” is gendered and humanized as “he.” In this image, the troops seem like Orphean figures, staring death down and prevailing over it, and the battlefield is cast as epic, monumental and of historic proportion. In describing a specific image of heroism, Gorodish switches from first person plural to the first person singular, as he himself was on the battlefield. He recalls: “And when I saw the armored vehicles penetrated and ablaze, and the people – you – continuing to fight from within them, I knew that man was steel, and the armor – only metal” (106).[259] This is an image of the victory of man over machines, and indeed over matter, claiming

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[257] אתם הייתם חוד החנית של התקפת השריון על קליפתו הקשה של הצבא המצרי, הגדול והיהיר שבצבאות האויב

[258] אל המוות הישרנו מבט – והוא השפיל עיניו

This line became a turn of phrase in Israel and was quoted back to Gorodish at his own funeral decades later. This was particularly striking since by that time Gorodish was a controversial figure, deemed one of the figures most responsible for the bitter Israeli loss in the 1973 war. He spent most of his later years in Africa, trading in arms and diamonds. Dayan, too, was considered part of the 1973 defeat, though his reputation fared somewhat better.

[259] וכשראיתי את השריונים נחדרים ועולים באש, והאנשים – אתם – ממשיכים מתוכם במלחמה, ידעתי כי האיש הוא הפלדה, והשריון – מתכת בלבד.

that Israel won the war was not because of its artillery or technology but rather thanks to the human spirit.[260]

According to this narrative, the human spirit that enabled the victory is specifically a national spirit. In the face of an existential threat, Israel was able to prevail: "Because we fought as Jews. We fought for our lives. And we fought in rage" (105).[261] Naming "Jews", rather than Israelis, ties the war to a long Jewish history of victimhood and provides a counter-narrative of successful self-defense and victory. This sense of community, of a collective "we," is specifically fostered in the context of a eulogy and is therefore necessarily informed by loss. In promoting this community, the eulogy attempts to mitigate loss partly by providing justification for it. Gorodish reminds his audience that loss is always the price of war: "The fallen knew, as we all did, what the cost was, and what we were heading toward in battle" (106), echoing Dayan's sentiment in his eulogy of Uri Ilan that "the army cannot guarantee life to its soldiers." Gorodish keeps the fallen fully enlisted in the national effort here, noting they were aware that they may die. The use of the collective "we" is particularly effective here, as Gorodish is himself the commander: "We all went willingly, in devotion," he notes, as being part of the group gives him a higher moral stance. In this context the cause is crucial: "with the hope that we were all building a better world for our sons after us," and given the Israeli victory it seems to have succeeded, at least to some extent. [262] After emphasizing the importance of the soldiers' contribution and justifying their sacrifice, the eulogy closes with a final dedication: "In this war,

[260] Consider the stark contrast between this military logic and Brecht's famous anti-war poem, "General, your tank is a powerful vehicle," whose defect is that it "needs a driver."

[261] כי כיהודים נלחמנו. על חיינו נלחמנו. ובזעם נלחמנו.

[262] ידעו הנופלים וידענו כולנו מה המחיר, ולקראת מה אנו הולכים לקרב. הלכנו כולנו בנכונות, בהכרת שליחות, מתוך תקווה שכולנו בונים עולם יפה יותר לבנינו אחרינו.
The casual masculinity here ("our sons") is indicative of the masculine tone of nationalism. Nowadays, many Israeli politicians use gender inclusive terms, while still promoting a similar national message.

the victory is all yours. Be strong and courageous and may your hands be strengthened, my brothers the heroes of glory."[263]

Gorodish made this speech in front of soldiers, but while it seems clear at first that they are the eulogy's addressees, it is in fact more complex. This is because the descriptions of heroism and battle glory may apply both to the surviving soldiers to whom he is speaking directly and to the fallen soldiers to whom the eulogy is dedicated. For example, when Gorodish says, "you were the spearhead of the armored attack," he could be referring to both, and likewise when he declares the victory as theirs. Throughout the speech Gorodish conflates the soldiers who died and those who remain, that is, his rhetorical, absent addressees and his physical, present ones. So, he notes: "The fallen knew… what the cost was" quickly followed by "as we all did," and then concludes by saying "We all went willingly," in a group that includes the living and the dead. Furthermore, if the addressees are both the living and the fallen soldiers, then the famous line about death lowering its eyes becomes clearer – while some may have died, the group largely prevailed, and was thus able to stare death down. In this sense, staring down death means surviving the war, but also grappling with death and loss. The eulogy thus has a mixed audience of soldiers, in which the living and the dead sit next to each other, shoulder to shoulder, all part of the same myth of heroism. Such a reading is reinforced by the fact that this text is categorized as a eulogy in anthologies and other publications, but clearly centers the living soldiers. In this it dramatizes the dual function of the eulogy as a genre, as it appeals to both the dead and the living as part of a political myth. This is especially true if the audience is thought to be not only those present at the ceremony but Israelis in general, likewise incorporated under the same macabre collective "we."

[263] במלחמה זו, הניצחון כולו שלכם. חזקו ואמצו ותחזקנה ידיכם, אחי גיבורי התהילה

Gorodish and Dayan were both army generals eulogizing soldiers who died in battle, whether during an official war or performing routine duties. But one of the characteristics of the violent conflict in the region is its effect on civilian populations, in different ways. Many of the trends we have seen in army-related eulogies extend to civilian deaths and tributes in their honor as well, adapting them to the circumstances at hand. A prominent example of this can be seen in a eulogy given by Menachem Begin for the Haran family. On April 22, 1979, assailants from the Palestinian Liberation Front infiltrated the city of Nahariya in the north of Israel via the sea, kidnapped and ultimately brutally murdered members of the Haran family, in what remains one of the most infamous attacks of its kind.[264] The father, 31-year-old Danny, and his two young daughters, Einat and Yael, ages four and two, were killed in their home by a group led by the Lebanese Samir al-Quntar, who was 17 years old at the time.[265] Several factors amplified the already tragic nature of the attack. First, the mother, Smadar, who was the sole survivor, was hiding from the intruders in the attic with her younger daughter, Yael, and in an attempt to pacify her crying daughter so they would not be discovered, ended up suffocating the girl; and second, the attack took place on the eve of Israeli Remembrance Day for the Holocaust, and the events reminded many of that catastrophe.[266] In the aftermath of the killing spree, which also left a police officer named Eliyahu Shachar dead, then Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin attended the family's funeral and gave a eulogy which included multiple allusions to Jewish and

[264] The PLF splintered out of the PFLP, of which Kanafāni was a leader, as part of a series of internal disputes that often turned violent and merged into Lebanese and Syrian politics. The group engaged in violent attacks against Israel in the 1960s and 1970s and continued to plan attacks later on. Decades later its leader, Abu Abbas, denounced violence and recognized Israel's right to exist. He died in US custody in Iraq in 2004.

[265] Al-Quntar was captured following the attack in Nahariya and put in Israeli prison. He became a central figure in political discussions in Israel about potential prisoner releases and was widely hailed in Lebanese politics. Al-Quntar was released in a prisoner exchange deal in 2008 and killed in 2015 south of Damascus by Syrian rebels, though Hizballah claims Israel was also involved.

[266] Smadar Haran was herself the daughter of a Holocaust survivor.

Hebrew sources and is itself cemented in the Israeli collective imagination. His speech touches on three main themes, which inform each other: remorse, defense and revenge.

Begin opens his eulogy by addressing the slain father and two daughters by their first names, setting a personal tone. When referencing the young girls, Begin calls them "lovely and pleasant," and says that "in their lives and in their death [they] were not divided," evoking King David's famous lament in II Samuel, and in fact his eulogy is rife with biblical references, much like Dayan's 20 years earlier. He then states his eulogy's main purpose: "We came here today to ask you – on behalf of the nation – for forgiveness, absolution and atonement, that we were unable to save your lives" (Begin).[267] Speaking in the communal "we," Begin operates as a representative of the nation, fully activating the symbolism of his political role and employing the collective. Begin is a civilian elected official eulogizing civilians while Dayan was a general eulogizing a soldier, and yet both act as representatives in the same way, part of the conflation of the two realms. Begin here emphasizes the tone of contrition which Dayan used when stating that "Not from the Arabs in Gaza but from ourselves should we avenge Roi's death" (Dayan 289). Elaborating on the theme of remorse and penance, Begin explains that attempts at defense were made, but to no avail. "God is my witness," he uses the solemn language of an oath, "for we have set watchmen upon all of you in the sea and on land," likely a reference to the circumstances and setting of the attack in coastal Nahariya.[268] The plural speakers are joined by a plural addressee, as the object-pronoun "you," or better yet "all of you," seems to extend not only to the victims but to Israel as a whole, highlighting the collective message of his address.

[267] באנו היום כדי לבקש מכם בשם האומה כולה סליחה, מחילה וכפרה, על אשר לא הצלחנו להציל את חייכם.
[268] סהדי במרומים, כי על כולכם הפקדנו שומרים בים וביבשה.

The notion of setting up watchmen is also biblical, taken from the book of Isiah where it refers to the city of Jerusalem and its walls.[269]

After asking forgiveness and lamenting the inability to prevent the family members' deaths, Begin arrives at the emotional core of his eulogy, via an allusion to Jewish history and Hebrew literature. Responding to the horrific murder of the two young children, he says: "revenge for the blood of a small child Satan himself has not yet created."[270] This is a line taken from Bialik's famous poem "On the Slaughter," (*al ha-shḥitah*, על השחיטה), and in Hebrew it is made up of short words and an internal rhyme, creating a staccato and dramatic rhythm (*nik-mat dam ye-led ka-tan lo ba-ra ha-sa-tan*). The poem was written in 1903 after the pogrom of Kishinev, which left a profound impression on Bialik, inspiring both this poem and "In the City of Killing," which as we saw earlier was mentioned by Zionist leaders in 1929. In quoting Bialik's poem, Begin situates the murder of the Haran family on a historical sequence with the Kishinev pogrom, tying them together as linked by the fact that the victims were Jewish. Much like Dayan's references to the Holocaust, Begin glosses over historical differences in order to create a continuous narrative of Jewish victimhood which can then serve to justify and enhance the need for defense, which he conflates or perhaps merges with a call for vengeance. Within such a narrative, pogroms in Europe are presented as the relevant context for the attack in Nahariya rather than the geopolitics of the Middle East. In "On the Slaughter," Bialik famously laments the murder of Jews, including women and children, castigating both the perpetrators and God for not stopping the assault.[271] Begin uses the line to hint at revenge, even though in the

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[269] In Isiah 62 this is said as part of a prophecy and so God is the one who has set up watchmen, a role taken up here by the state.
[270] נקמת דם ילד קטן עוד לא ברא השטן.
[271] The title of the poem derives from the ritualistic prayer recited by the meat slaughterer before killing an animal according to kosher laws. In the prayer, God orders "[on] the slaughter" (in Hebrew: מצווה על השחיטה]

poem from which it originates revenge is dismissed, even disparaged. The speaker in Bialik's poem asserts "Damn he who says: avenge!" perhaps noting that deeds so odious are beyond mortal vengeance and must be left for God to address.

Begin's misreading is, I believe, deliberate, and is related to the conclusion he draws from the situation regarding the importance of protecting Jews within the sovereign state. This is, of course, the crucial difference between the attacks in Kishinev in 1903 and in Nahariya in 1979 – statehood and sovereignty. So, on the one hand, evoking Bialik overlooks the divergent contexts of the two events, but on the other hand it relies on it because of what having a state now allows. Right after quoting the line from Bialik Begin explains: "But we are no longer on foreign land. We are in our homeland."[272] This is a foundational Zionist argument, and one which pervades Dayan's claim for sovereignty in his eulogy. Begin draws the same conclusion from this historical argument – the need for force, and in this case implicitly revenge. He therefore closes the speech with a not so veiled threat: "For it is known that he who raises a hand on a Jewish child, his fate is one: his blood be on his own head."[273] The expression "his blood be on his own head" is biblical in origin and is widely used in modern-day Hebrew. Referencing blood, especially linked to a child, harkens back to the earlier mention of "revenge for the blood of a small child," tying the two together. The warning is meant both to deter any further attacks and to quell Israelis' fears. It is presented as fact ("for it is known"), demonstrating the power possessed by Jews now that they are no longer on foreign land but in the homeland, which according to this doctrine enables them to make such an admonition. It is specifically a "Jewish child" who is the object of protection here, not an Israeli child, highlighting the complexity of

[272] אך איננו על אדמת ניכר עוד. במולדתנו אנחנו.
"Homeland" is used rhetorically and politically; Begin himself was born in Belarus in 1913.
[273] להווי ידוע, כי מי שמרים ידו על ילד יהודי, אחד דתו: דמו בראשו.

religious and national identity, that are intertwined in a vexing manner. The final words of the eulogy demonstrate this conflation well: “We will defend the citizens of our country,” Begin promises, using words from the political realm. What follows, though, is of a different order: “So God will do as he has done and so he will continue to do,” opting for religious terminology and a biblical vocabulary.[274] Blending these types of terminology conflates political justice and mythological vengeance and retribution, fusing them together. Appealing to God is particularly interesting given that in Bialik’s poem God is vigorously challenged and even doubted. The closing of this speech illustrates one impact of this imbrication, as the nation-state is presented as an agent or continuation of God’s work, even of divine justice, or at least operating under his auspices. Put another way, the religious might of Judaism is enlisted in the national effort to defend citizens as God gives the national cause both its justification and its power.

The three Israeli eulogies I have discussed were given by officials, either military or civilian, whereas Darwish’s eulogy and the two I now analyze were given by private people in civilian capacities, given the lack of Palestinian statehood and state institutions.[275] The two following Palestinian texts do engage with the national cause and narrative familiar from Darwish’s eulogy, though, in significant ways – the first illustrates the circumstances of exile while the second enacts an unlikely return. My first is example a text written by Khalil al-Sakākīnī (1878-1953), a well-known teacher, scholar and writer in Jerusalem in the first half of the 20th century. He worked as an educator and a political commentator and was heavily involved in the education system in Jerusalem for decades, having a strong Palestinian-nationalist penchant. Sakākīnī had enough means to send his beloved son, Sari, to school in the

[274] אנו נגן על אזרחי ארצנו. כה ייתן אלוהים וכה יוסיף.

[275] I am not suggesting that Israelis who are not state officials do not also eulogize loved ones; prominent examples of such speeches include David Grossman eulogizing his son and Karnit Goldwaser eulogizing her husband, among many others. For Palestinians, though, no state institutions exist.

U.S., but he complained of debt and financial trouble. The family was prominent in pre-1948 Jerusalem and their house in the neighborhood of Katamon, built in the mid-1930s, became a cultural and social center for many of the city's elite. They were one of the last Palestinian families to remain in the city in 1948, but eventually had to flee to Cairo, where they remained thereafter. Sakākīnī suffered a series of personal losses, beginning when his wife, Sultana, died in 1939. When his son died at 39 in 1953, he was distraught, and died himself just months later. These biographical details inform his writing and define his experience of loss and mourning.

Sakākīnī is well known for the diaries he wrote throughout his life in which he describes living in Jerusalem and being an exile from it. One entry in his diary is a transcript of a lecture he gave in Cairo in Fall 1948, in which he describes being forced to run away from his home and leaving most of his belongings in his beloved city, to which he never returned. This speech is a eulogy for his home and especially his library, his previous life and the Palestinian Jerusalem before the war. Similar to the haunting absence of the lost Palestine in Darwish's eulogy, Sakākīnī laments the lost land via the home he had to leave behind. The library is especially described in great detail because of what it represents in his life, illustrating the home's cultural impact in the city. This indicates the symbolic importance of the lost artifacts, and likewise clarifies that they represent the larger loss of the land. The broad notion of the lost land is here localized to one concrete, specific and personal house, and the genre of the eulogy is expanded to focus on its effects regardless of its subject.

Sakākīnī begins the lecture by recounting the time of the war, still fresh in his mind just a few months later. He recalls what he labels the "highest peak" of turmoil, on April 29, 1948, when "the earth trembled under our feet and the house almost fell on our heads" (304).[276] In

[276] أما الأرض فقد كانت تميد تحت أقدامنا، وأما الدار فقد كادت تسقط على رؤوسنا

various parts of his speech, Sakākīnī describes the devastation of war, with "bombs falling around us, and bullets flying over our heads" (308). Given these conditions the Sakākīnī family was forced to flee Jerusalem, which he thought would be "for a short while" (304).[277] Sakākīnī describes his mindset before leaving his home: "we put some clothes we needed in our suitcases and left the rest of our things in the care of Mohammad, the boy who worked in our house, until we return" (306).[278] At the time of writing this speech, Sakākīnī does not yet know that he would never return, nor that Palestinians would continue to fight for the right of return for decades to come. The time that has elapsed since enhances the effect, as a return that seemed tangible and expected has since become a foundational political aspiration precisely because it is unrealized, as Darwish demonstrates in his eulogy for Kanafāni. The suitcase and the few artifacts the family was able to take with them become the only relic of their home, and their land, a kind of synecdoche highlighting the missing whole.[279]

Skakakini then starts detailing everything he left behind, in a sort of inventory list of his past and his loss: "I wished to take my notebooks and papers, in case I needed them, but I forgot them all. I wished to take my hookah" (306).[280] The belongings he lists are mundane and quotidian and leaving them behind disrupts aspects of daily life often taken for granted, an experience that would resonate with his audience, especially Palestinians who have suffered a similar loss. As Sakākīnī continues his list, the described details become increasingly granular: "we left the house, the clothes, the furniture, the library, the food and the grand piano that was unlike any other and the big electrical refrigerator that was at the disposal of the whole

[277] إلى أجل قريب
[278] أودعنا في حقائبنا بعض ما نحتاج إليه من الثياب، وتركنا سائر الأشياء في عهدة الفتى محمد الذي كان يشتغل في بيتنا إلى أن نرجع
[279] The suitcase is a symbol of exile in much of Mahmoud Darwish's poetry.
[280] حرصت أن آخذ دفاتري لعلى احتاج إليها, ولكن نسيت الجميع, حرصت أن آخذ نارجيلتي

neighborhood" (306).[281] The refrigerator becomes a focal point because the Sakākīnī family would store food for their neighbors, demonstrating their central social role in the region as well as their socio-economic standing (306-7). Elsewhere he explains that they had to leave behind "valuable trusts" they were holding on to for friends who thought their house would be "safe from hardship" (307).[282] The family and their home were prominent but not just for their relative financial stability but for their social function as a social hub. A once tight-knit community then becomes dispersed and dispossessed, scattered to the winds.

The room Sakākīnī focuses on most is his library, calling it a "house of wisdom, porch of philosophy, institute of knowledge, club of literature!" (308).[283] These parallel phrases glorify the library and inscribe it as a hallowed space, an institution, and so for example the phrase "house of wisdom" often refers to the Grand Library of Baghdad founded in the late 8th century. That acclaimed establishment was itself destroyed by invaders as part of a siege on the Abbasid capital in 1258 by the Mongols, and so Sakākīnī is here aligning the two libraries based on both their glory and their destruction.[284] His library is particularly close to his heart, and he reminisces about it addressing it in the second person, as we have seen eulogizers do: "how I spent long nights in you, reading and writing, the night was quiet and people were asleep," a description that borders on eroticism.[285] Books had filled the room "from the ground to the ceiling on every side, and the room isn't small." It operated as the center of the house: "and I made the whole house into a library: we cook in the library, we eat in the library, we receive guests in the library,

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281 تركنا الدار والثياب والأثاث والمكتبة والمؤونة والبيانو العظيم الذي لا نجد له مثيلاً والثلاجة الكهربائية الكبيرة التي كانت وقفاً على المحلة كلها
282 الأمانات الثمينة ...بيتنا ممتنع صعب
283 الوداع يا مكتبتي! يا دار الحكمة, يا رواق الفلسفة, يا معهد العلم, يا ندوة الأدب!
The word for "porch," *riwāq* (رواق) is a reference to Stoicism, known in Arabic as *al-riwāqiyyah*.
284 Scholars debate the physical existence of the library, but for our purposes its mythological status is equally important, if not more so. I should note that Sakākīnī uses a different word for home than the one used in the Baghdad context (دار and not بيت) but the meaning is the same. Additionally, the Baghdad library was also known as "The Cabinets of Wisdom" (خزائن الحكمة), using the same word Sakākīnī just used to describe his liquor cabinet.
285 كم أحييت فيك الليالي الطوال أقرأ وأكتب، والليل ساج والناس نيام

we sleep in the library."[286] All of these habits are described in the present tense, and not the past, as if they are still happening, indicating a difficulty – or refusal – to acknowledge the loss, a common feature of a eulogy. Lest readers mistake the joys of the library as purely intellectual, Sakākīnī emphasizes its importance by saying they even used it for sustenance and protection: "if we were nude we'd take from the books' pages and made clothes, and if we were attacked within our home, we'd make barricades and bombs and ammunition from the books"[287] (308). Such fanciful descriptions are clearly meant to underscore the library's multiple functions for the family and illustrate the anguish of its loss, but they are particularly curious since the house was indeed attacked and the books were no help.

Sakākīnī's descriptions of his library are framed as a way of grappling with its loss and saying goodbye to it, as he declares: "farewell my library!" as one would in a eulogy. Throughout the text the house is described in vivid detail, making it seem vibrant, within reach and familiar, especially when the present tense used. But at the same time the house and its contents are depicted as lost, and the text's tone – both elegiac and nostalgic – never lets the reader forget the loss; Sakākīnī is going through the rooms, taking a final look as he parts way with the house and possessions, lamenting each one. Similar to a eulogy Sakākīnī uses a public statement to navigate the meaning of his loss, which itself is both personal and collective. Saying goodbye to the house as a whole as well he says, "Farewell our home!", then adding several descriptive phrases noting what the house meant to different people: "repository for trusts, compound for friends, a destination for visitors and nightly companions in daytime and nighttime" (307). Such phrases animate the house, depicting it as a bustling location. It is

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286 من الأرض إلى السقف من كل جانب، والغرفة ليست صغيرة، وقد كان في بيتي أن أجعل الدار كلها مكتبة: نطبخ في المكتبة, ونأكل في المكتبة, ونستقبل الضيوف في المكتبة, وننام في المكتبة

287 إذا عرينا اتخذنا من ورق الكتب ثياباً، وإذا هوجمنا في عقر دارنا اتخذنا من الكتب متاريس وقنابل وقذائف

therefore no surprise that "there was no one who passed by you, even a passerby, and didn't enter and drink coffee, and if it was eating time, we shared what we could" (307).[288] Referencing hospitality traditions that are central in Arab culture encodes the house in a specific cultural setting, and points to the family's affluence and generosity. Sakākīnī does not only describe the house but addresses it directly ("passed *you* by"), anthropomorphizing it following the animated descriptions. "Farewell our home!", he repeats a recurring formula, as repetition is common in the elegiac genre. The goodbye dramatizes the separation from the house and illustrates its significance as an "encampment of commanders, an infirmary for the wounded, a sanctuary for refugees."[289] However, the residents of this former haven have now become refugees themselves, proving that no home is safe from the plunder of the *Nakba*. Referring to it once again in the second person, Sakākīnī explains the house acted as a signpost: "there's no one who doesn't know you, all other houses are located in relation to you, anyone who would ask where a certain house is, they'd point to the Sakākīnī house and say 'to the right of it, to the left of it, in front of it, behind it'. " Therefore, he adds, "anyone who visited Palestine and didn't visit you, it's as if they didn't visit Palestine."[290] His home therefore operates as a synecdoche for the land, exemplifying it, and so the loss of the home represents the loss of Palestine; when Sakākīnī depicts the home as "our house" he is directly referring to his family, but the implication is Palestinians' home, the land, making this elegiac text personally and collectively nostalgic, to the full extent of the word.

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[288] الوداع يا دارنا! يا مستودع الأمانات, يا مجمع الخلان, يا مقصد الزوار والسمار في الليل والنهار, لم يكن يمر بك أحد ولو ابن سبيل إلا دخل فشرب القهوة, وإذا كنا على الطعام أشركناه في ما تيسر

[289] الوداع يا دارنا! يا مستقر القيادة, يا مستوصف الجرحى, يا ملاذ اللاجئين

[290] لا يجهلك أحد, بل بك تعرف الدور, إذا سأل أحد: أين دار فلان؟ قالوا له: إلى يمين دار السكاكيني, إلى يسارها, أمامها, وراءها. من يزر فلسطين ولم يزرك فكأنه لم يزر فلسطين

Khalil al-Sakākīnī never returned to his home, or to Palestine, and neither have the vast majority of Palestinians; exile continues to be a dominant and defining Palestinian experience. But in some rare cases, a return is made possible, exceptions that prove the rule, and one such example was Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (1929-2001), as is recounted in a eulogy dedicated to him after his death by his friend and fellow Palestinian exile, Edward Said. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod was a Palestinian scholar and activist who lived for many years in exile in the U.S., teaching political science at Northwestern University. He was born in Jaffa in 1929 and was forced to flee during the 1948 war. Following a pattern similar to many Palestinians after 1948, he moved around, never quite resettling – first in Beirut, then in the U.S., Cairo and Paris. Working as an academic and a diplomat with the Palestinian National Council and later UNESCO, Abu-Lughod was deeply involved in Palestinian politics. After supporting Arafat's leadership for a while, he objected to the Oslo accords and was critical of the direction of Palestinian politics in the 1990s. Abu-Lughod famously spent the last decade of his life in Ramallah, serving as vice-president of Bir-Zeit University. He died of lung disease in May 2001, and was buried in Jaffa, in his family plot. In December 2001, his longtime friend and colleague Edward Said published a tribute to Abu-Lughod in the *London Review of Books*, dubbing him his "guru." In his eulogy, Said describes Abu-Lughod's life and views, as well as the relationship between the two over many decades. He explains how important his deceased friend is to the Palestinian cause, as exemplifying the Palestinian predicament. Palestine is thus central to Said's eulogy, even though Abu-Lughod's death was not related to the conflict. Unlike Darwish's eulogy for Kanafāni and Sakākīnī's diary lamenting the loss of his library, Said's tribute is written in English and published in a Western publication. These material conditions raise the question of the text's

intended audience and highlight the fact that both the writer and the subject of the eulogy spent much of their lives in exile and accordingly in English, rather than their first language, Arabic.

This tribute introduces Abu-Lughod to a wide Western audience who may not have heard of him, explaining his importance and tying him to the writer, Said, a widely known intellectual. Early in the text Said writes: "I learned of [Abu-Lughod's] death as I was walking out of Tel-Aviv airport on my way to see him," noting the connection between the two and marking the highly pertinent geopolitical setting. Said recounts that he "met Ibrahim at Princeton in 1954," leading to years of friendship, and refers to Abu-Lughod's intellect, wit and generosity, and paints him as an important influence on his own work. Their professional relationship produced some consequential work, as Said recalls an invitation from Abu-Lughod to write for a journal he was editing: "I used the occasion to look at the image of the Arabs in the media, popular literature, and cultural representations going back to the Middle Ages. This was the origin of my book *Orientalism*, which I dedicated to Janet and Ibrahim."

The two scholars' relationship was simultaneously deeply personal and also impacted by political circumstances. For instance, the journal for which Said wrote the essay that would become the basis for his foundational book was a special issue in response to "the thunderbolt of 1967." In fact, the interconnections between the personal and collective histories are at the heart of Said's argument about Abu-Lughod. Already their first encounter demonstrates the overlap in connection to the exilic experience, as Abu-Lughod asked Said where he was from: "I said something like I'm *from* Egypt now, but formerly I was from Palestine. His face lit up: I'm from Palestine, too." Their shared origins are part of their relationship, and they "became closer, drawn together by politics." Said explains that "Ibrahim introduced [him] to the subject and the experience, as it were, of Palestine," crediting him with much of the political engagement for

which Said would become known. Abu-Lughod was a vessel for Said's attachment to Palestine: "seven years older than me, and more embedded in the life of Mandatory Palestine, [Abu-Lughod] aroused in me and in many others the wish to recapture long-buried memories of our early days, before the *nakba* changed everything." Abu-Lughod acts as his conduit to a Palestinian past, to the land, making him what Abu-Lughod himself termed an "*aṣīl*", the Arabic word for authentic.

The imbrication of personal and political histories explains why Said talks about his friend's death in a national context, despite its natural causes. In Said's words: "Ibrahim's rich life and his death both reflected and clarified the turbulence and suffering that have been at the core of the Palestinian experience." Similar to Darwish's characterization of Kanafāni in his eulogy, Abu-Lughod is presented as exemplary, not because his life was unusual but rather because of how many Palestinians share his experiences of exile, instability and itineracy, the effects of which are long-lasting. As he explains, clearly noting his and Abu-Lughod's belonging: "like many of us, [Abu-Lughod] never fully recovered from the loss of Palestine, and his early days as a refugee marked him indelibly." Because the struggle remains ongoing, "Palestine was an interrogation that is never answered completely," rather than a simple clear-cut issue, and therefore: "[Abu-Lughod's life] was a version of Palestine, lived in all its complexity by one of the finest Palestinians of our times." Not unlike the profound analogy Darwish creates between Kanafāni and Palestine, in this image Abu-Lughod is both a metonymic version of the place, like a map, and a synecdoche, one Palestinian representing the whole. It is, however, important to recognize that Abu-Lughod was an academic and came from a family which enjoyed financial stability, even in conditions of exile, much like Said. Neither man is

necessarily representative of lower Palestinian classes, and socio-economic disparities are too often neglected in this discourse in favor of a unified and monolithic national discourse.

What does make Abu-Lughod's Palestinian experience unusual, perhaps even unique, is the fact that he returned to Palestine at the end of his life, effectuating what Said calls "his own private right of return," later using the Arabic word for return, *'awda*. However, given the geo-political circumstances, this return is only partial, restricted and qualified by Israel's control. He returned only to a "flawed substitute: not to a liberated Palestine but to Oslo Area A," the region under Palestinian civil and security control per the Oslo Accords, residing in Ramallah. Additionally, Abu-Lughod was only able to visit his hometown of Jaffa thanks to his American passport. And so, "he would have been the first to note that Palestinian return was subject to Israeli power," which colors his own return as well as the Palestinian project as a whole. This is part of Abu-Lughod's, and indeed Said's, critique of the Oslo accords, which troubled him given the "indignities [they] entailed for Palestinians." And so, while Said describes him as an optimistic man, he was not naïve, having a deep understanding of power dynamics "as they affect those who have it, and those who do not". In the same vein, he did not view his own move as a solution; it was only "his own private right of return," not a national movement.

Perhaps Abu-Lughod's final return was not his move to Ramallah but rather to his hometown, Jaffa. His funeral took place in Jaffa, and "he was buried next to his father in a hillside graveyard overlooking the cove where he used to take his visitors to swim – always refusing to visit the adjoining Israeli beach café, which looked very inviting just the same."[291] Only in death could Abu-Lughod stage a final return to Jaffa, as a resting place, the place of his birth and then his burial, echoing the role played by burial in the previous chapter. As his

[291] Abu-Lughod's daughter also recounts this anecdote (Lila Abu-Lughod 90).

daughter, Lila Abu-Lughod, recalls, he was "the first Palestinian refugee to be buried back in his hometown" (96). And as Darwish wrote a few days after Abu-Lughod's death, evoking biblical and Qur'anic language, "he was born in Jaffa and to Jaffa he returned, to remain, there for eternity, close to the tree of Paradise" (quoted in Lila Abu-Lughod 99). That "anonymous intelligence personnel threatened to cancel his funeral" is further proof that "Palestinian return was always subject to Israeli power" and therefore is not a veritable liberation (Said). Moreover, if even such a qualified return is only possible at burial, not in life, then Darwish's move in his eulogy for Kanafāni aligning Palestinians with death appears to not only be a metaphor.

Chapter 3 Mothers in Mourning: Kanafāni's Umm Sa'ad and Grossman's To the End of the Land

In March 2018, the Israeli Ministry of Education awarded the Israel Prize to Miriam Peretz, for lifetime achievements in contributing to "strengthening the Jewish-Israeli spirit". Peretz, an educator from the settlement of Giv'at Ze'ev adjacent to Jerusalem, rose to prominence after she lost two of her sons during the violent conflict in the area: her son Uriel was killed in southern Lebanon in 1998, and another son, Eliraz, was killed in the Gaza strip in 2010. She became a public figure, widely hailed for her sacrifice.[292] At the same time, in March 2018, the system that praised Peretz's maternal role reacted markedly differently to another mother. The Palestinian Nariman Tamimi was being held in Israeli prison for her role in anti-occupation protests in Nabi-Saleh, near Ramallah. The arrest garnered international attention because Tamimi was arrested along with her daughter, 'Ahed, 17, who slapped an Israeli soldier. Israeli media reports often referenced Tamimi's motherhood, as if to indicate that her role in the resistance to the Israeli occupation compromises her maternal role which she had thus performed poorly.

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The stories of Tamimi and Peretz demonstrate the political and symbolic power of motherhood in the national context in Palestine/Israel, as well as its distinct resonances among the occupied and the occupiers. Both women become public figures because of their maternal

[292] In May 2021 Peretz submitted her candidacy for the largely symbolic role of Israel's President, citing the "sounds of rockets" from the recent violence in the region.

roles, specifically in moments of some kind of loss. As national ideology blurs the lines between personal and collective, motherhood is enlisted, and mothers play a significant role in bolstering the national narrative. For example, the Palestinian Declaration of Independence (1988) includes women in the group of resisters, like martyrs and prisoners, lauding the "valiant Palestinian women, the guardians of our survival and our lives, the guardians of our perennial flame" (quoted in Massad 474). Defining women in terms of guardianship and survival evokes the maternal role, amplified by implicit analogies between resistance and pregnancy (Massad 476). Mothers are enlisted in the Jewish-Israeli national project as well, as a famous quote from David Ben-Gurion exemplifies. In his final speech as prime minister in 1963 he asserts that commanders must love their soldiers in order to encourage devotion in them and then "every Hebrew mother can know that she deposited her son's life in the hands of worthy commanders" (my translation).[293] As mothering is enlisted in the national project, women and mothers are also marginalized in patriarchal societies and the patriarchal structures of nationalism. Moreover, in the context of national violence they are expected to be willing to sacrifice their child, meaning that in order to be fully welcome into the national fold they risk losing their mothering role. Mothering in the national context is thus constructed by and through loss, making mourning a constitutive component of the maternal role.

The mothers I focus on in this chapter face precisely that predicament – the loss of a son as part of the national conflict in Palestine/Israel. I examine two novels: the Palestinian *Umm Sa'ad* (1969) by Ghassān Kanafāni, and the Israeli *To the End of the Land* (2008) by David Grossman. The two novels were written some 40 years apart in different languages and their

[293] תדע כל אם עברייה שמסרה גורל חיי בנה לידי מפקדים ראויים לכך.
Ben Gurion here uses the adjective "Hebrew" to signal national identity, similar to what we saw in Alterman's "The Silver Platter" in Chapter One.

styles are quite distinct. However, I put them in conversation with each other specifically because in both mourning begins even though the sons have not yet died, as their death seems entirely inevitable. I argue that nationalism, through the violence its employs, constructs mothering on the brink of loss, which thus becomes a defining feature of it. As a result, mourning does not only follow loss but precedes it as well, altering the contours of mothering and mourning alike. This trend manifests in different ways within a nation-state and outside of one and likewise depends on factors such as socio-economic status. In the novels examined in this chapter, privileges like statehood and citizenship, among others, enable one mother to protest the need to sacrifice her son for her state, while the other mother – a stateless refugee – resists her political condition of dispossession by accepting the personal sacrifice. I develop this claim about the temporal and ultimately ethical-political effect of nationalism on mothering through analysis of time and space in both novels – the implication of mourning before loss, and how home and land become spaces of mourning. Finally, after discussing the novels separately along the same thematic lines, I bring them into direct conversation, wondering what avenues of resistance or protest are available to mourning mothers.

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Mothering in the National Context

Nationalism is gendered in a variety of ways and is largely a masculine project intertwined with patriarchal structures and invested in traditional conceptions of power and domination.[294] National movements certainly include women but are geared towards men in what Anderson calls a "horizontal brotherhood," using gendered constructions for their own

[294] Throughout this chapter I refer primarily to men and women, as part of the traditional and heteronormative structures of nationalism. This should not be viewed as an endorsement of this binary system. For an analysis of the complex relationship between the state apparatus and non-normative sexualities see for example Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007).

ideological purposes (quoted in Abdo and Lentin 9).[295] As such, women's roles within these movements are constantly negotiated and one of the central ways in which they participate in nationalism is through their roles as mothers. Motherhood is culturally constructed and endowed with immense symbolic significance around the world, and Palestine/Israel is no exception. Alongside this veneration, though, mothers are also scrutinized, judged and instrumentalized. In addition, mothers and women are often purposefully conflated, denying both groups personhood and political power. Indeed, mothering is depicted as universal and natural, and therefore apolitical – a simple fact of life. This defines women as a whole as somehow outside of the body politic, even as they are controlled and constricted by it. To put it differently, mothering is romanticized as a "labor of love," in an attempt to make power seem irrelevant to it (*Mothering* 16).[296] But motherhood is, necessarily, a part of political life; whether it is in debates over reproductive rights, paid maternity leave and child tax breaks, women's participation in politics, family separation at the southern U.S. border, or the renting of bodies of non-western women of color for the gestation of babies for mostly western white parents. In other words, as Annelise Orleck reminds us, "it is impossible to speak about motherhood without speaking of social systems of power and domination" because it is "a social institution shaped by and tied to the ideology of the nuclear family" (*Politics of Motherhood* 5).

[295] For just some of the vast literature on the relationship between nationalism and gender, see: McClintock, Mufti and Shoḥat, *Dangerous Liaisons* (1997); Anumpama's *Gendered Citizenship* (2005); Kumari's *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (1992). In the specific context of Palestine/Israel, see: Kanaaneh's *Birthing the Nation* (2002); Abdo and Lentin's *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation* (2002); Massad's "Conceiving the Masculine" (1995); Rubenberg's *Palestinian Women* (2001); Gluzman, *Ha-Guf Ha-Tsiyoni* (2007). Some of these entries are more critical than others.

[296] Labor is a particularly potent term in this context, especially in languages like English in which it has a double meaning. Consider, for instance, social movements calling to recognize and adequately compensate the work of housewives (*Politics of Motherhood* 11), and the following statement by the Detroit-based labor leader and women's rights activist, Myra Wolfgang: "women were in labor before men were born."

In a variety of countries and on a range of issues, women have used their traditional roles as mothers to enter political discourse, some to challenge ideological structures and others to uphold them (*Politics* 5, 10). Women and mothers play a specific role in the context of nationalism: "women have served nationalist causes by raising and sacrificing soldier sons, by becoming combatants themselves, and by 'mothering' the nation" (*Politics* 14). Israeli and Palestinian societies – both patriarchal in their specific ways – grapple with these interactions and tensions, as do the novels at hand, *Umm Sa'ad* and *To the End of the Land*. Both novels center on women, Umm Sa'ad and Ora respectively, specifically in their capacities as mothers. Implicitly, then, women's centrality is contingent upon their maternal role, which nationalism is putting at risk in a violent conflict. The profound connection and friction between mothers and nations are even implied in the words themselves; in both Arabic and Hebrew the words for "mother" and "nation" are etymologically related – "umm" and "umma" in Arabic, "emm" and "uma" in Hebrew.

"Mother of Palestine": Mothering in Kanafāni's Umm Sa'ad

Umm Sa'ad (1969) is a short novel by Palestinian writer Ghassān Kanafāni (1936-1972), depicting the life of the titular mother of Sa'ad, a woman whose son joins the armed fight against Israel.[297] It is named for its protagonist, a Palestinian refugee from al-Ghabisiyya (الغابسية), a Palestinian village near Acre that was depopulated in 1948, making its dwellers stateless refugees in camps, mostly in Lebanon. The novel describes Umm Sa'ad's life in the camp following her son's enlistment in the armed struggle for Palestine, and while his fate remains unknown throughout, it is treated as a death foretold. *Umm Sa'ad* is comprised of a series of vignettes, almost like linked short stories written in a concise style, about Umm Sa'ad, her son,

[297] Only an excerpt from *Umm Sa'ad* has been translated into English, by Hilary Kilpatrick in the collection *Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories*. The translations I use here are my own.

their family, as well as various acts of resistance, starting in Palestine before 1948 and up to the present-day refugee camp. Kanafāni views his writing as participating in the Palestinian national struggle, and so his characters are devoted to the cause and function as symbols of it.[298] The dark shadow of loss in the novel is amplified by the real-life backdrop of the text, which not only portrays exile but was written in exile from the land of Palestine and echoes the 1967 war and the ongoing aftermath of the *Nakba* of 1948. These undertones are further enhanced by Kanafāni's assassination by Israel three years after this novel was published, as we saw in Chapter Two.

From the outset, it is clear that *Umm Sa'ad* is a novel about motherhood. Already the novel's title points to its profound focus on maternal attachment. It means "Sa'ad's mother," using a customary Arab designation, *al-kunya* (الكنية), by which parents are often known – "mother" and "father" of their first-born son (Hammami, in Orleck and Taylor 162).[299] Her own name is never divulged in the text, emphasizing the centrality of her maternal role and of the mother-son relationship in the novel. While her husband, Abu Sa'ad (father of Sa'ad) appears in the novel, his appearance is quite brief and limited to the final chapter, and it is clear that Umm Sa'ad is the heart of the novel. The novel's approach to women is therefore characterized by duality – a woman is its subject, but in her traditional capacity as a mother. Additionally, Umm Sa'ad does not narrate her own story; rather, the narrator is a man from her old village in Palestine, who mediates the stories she tells him as she arrives at his house in the city to clean it. The stories are hers, but the voice is his, and the narrative and political relationship between

[298] Kanafāni's view of literature is sometimes likened to Sartre's notion of *littérature engagée*.
[299] This can be seen in some Palestinian leaders, like the current Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, who often goes by the name Abu Mazen, after his first-born son. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was sometimes referred to as Abu-Ammar though this was a *nom de guerre* and not based on his paternity. He did not have a child named Ammar, and his only daughter, Zahwa, was born long after he adopted the name.

them is complex throughout the novel given their differences in gender and class. Additionally, the book was of course written by a man, a point to which we will return later on.

Much of what is depicted as maternal is couched in traditional concepts of motherhood and womanhood: birthing, sustenance and protection. The novel is replete with references to birth, both on the personal biological level and the national metaphorical one.[300] For example, after her son leaves the camp, with his fate unknown, Umm Sa'ad recalls his birth, in the context of the camp being bombarded: "and she started, for a moment, thinking about Sa'ad and she felt him in her body like he was on the day he was born, in a feeling whose nature she couldn't know that filled her with an astonishing kind of confidence in the future and a kind of hope for it" (45).[301] This physical attachment is particularly poignant because Umm Sa'ad is very distant from her son at this moment, so she is perhaps attempting to compensate for the distance. Sa'ad is away because he has enlisted in the armed struggle, and so this image is akin to rebirth – if once he was born as a baby, now he is reborn as a *fidā'i*, or fighter. Aligning the two births casts the national struggle as a familial one, defining the national group as an extension of the family and endowing it with all the cultural might of family affinity. As Anne McClintock reminds us, "nations are frequently figured through the iconography of familial and domestic space," and the word "nation" derives from the Latin *natio*, to be born (90).

The implicit alignment of Sa'ad's birth and rebirth is made explicit by the narrator, who says, "I saw how mothers are able to give birth to fighters" (Kanafāni 34).[302] In this, birth is both turned into a metaphor (birthing as in giving rise to) and at the same time remains concrete, as giving birth to a son in conditions of strife makes him, almost inevitably, a fighter. The narrator

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[300] I am not suggesting that motherhood is exclusively linked to birth, only that it is central in the novel.

[301] وأخذت، لبرهة، تفكر بسعد وأحسته في جسدها كما كان يوم أن ولد، بمشاعر لا تستطيع أن تعرف طبيعتها، تملؤها بنوع مذهل من الثقة بالمستقبل ومن الأمل فيه

[302] رأيت كيف يمكن للأمهات أن ينجبن المقاتلين

says this after noticing a wound Umm Sa'ad sustains, which not only stresses that birth is a trauma entailing blood and pain, but also alludes to the inevitable loss of the child just born in the image. This is only enhanced by the fact that the general term used here for combatant derives from the same root as "to kill" or "to be killed" (مقاتل). So, birth and death are intertwined, one hinting at the other, as can be seen in the novel's final chapter, when a proud Abu Sa'ad praises his wife when speaking to their neighbor, saying: "this woman gives birth to children and they become *fidā'iyyīn*. She gives birth and Palestine takes [them]" (73).[303] This aphoristic formulation establishes an analogy between Umm Sa'ad and Palestine, between the mother and the land. It should not be read simply as resignation; rather, it is descriptive – in such conditions, a child inevitably becomes a fighter. The formulation is akin to a verse in the Book of Job: "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away" (Job 1:21). Job, an important figure in Islam, is known for oscillating between obedience and rebellion in confronting tragic circumstances, raising questions of passivity and resistance relevant to Umm Sa'ad as well. Birth, the subject of Abu Sa'ad's statement, appears in the first part of the biblical verse as well, as Job exclaims: "naked I came out of my mother's womb and naked I shall return thither".[304] While this logic might seem like a paradox, or a paradoxical euphemism – images of birth describing a movement toward death – in a national framework it is part of a general enlistment of every aspect of life in the national cause.

Following birth, the novel describes mothering in terms of maternal care, especially in the form of sustenance. After telling the narrator that Sa'ad has joined the *fidā'iyyīn* and how proud she is, Umm Sa'ad notes: "Light of his mother's eyes! I wish he were close, so I could take him food of

[303] هذه المرأة تلد الأولاد فيصيروا فدائيين, هي تخلف وفلسطين تأخذ

[304] This verse, along with its conclusion, "blessed be the name of the lord," is recited at Jewish funerals, as we saw in the introduction.

my own making every day" (25).[305] She then wonders if Sa'ad would want her to go visit him, only to be rebuffed by the narrator, who says: "a man who joins the *fidā'iyyīn* no longer needs his mother's care" (ibid).[306] Umm Sa'ad is quite upset by this prospect, and at this moment she seemingly understands the inevitable loss inherent in any coming of age, amplified here by impending death: "she dried her palms in her apron, and deep in her eyes I saw something resembling disappointment: that terrible moment in which a mother feels she is no longer needed, that at some point she has become entirely used up" (ibid).[307] This description includes a very traditional notion of womanhood and motherhood – a woman wearing an apron, toiling away raising her children. But the image is brought here to demonstrate her maternal role ending, as she is no longer needed, using instrumentalist language ("used up"). Or, perhaps, it implies that her maternal role is now shifting to support the resistance, as the national framework utilizes personal and familial attachments.

Being situated between her personal desire to care for her son and her allegiance to the collective-national affiliation in many ways defines Umm Sa'ad's motherhood in the novel. This becomes quite clear in an early and pivotal scene in which she explains to the narrator, and effectively to the readers, how she understands her son's decision to become a fighter and risk his life. The narrator asks her: "and aren't you sad or angry?", and before reporting her response he observes her hands at length: "and she moved her folded palms in her lap, and I saw them beautiful and strong, always capable of creating something, and I wondered whether they were in fact wailing" (23-4). Umm Sa'ad's hands represent her throughout the novel, emphasizing her

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[305] يا نور عيني أمه! أود لو كان قريباً فأحمل له كل يوم طعامه من صنع يدي
[306] الرجل الذي يلتحق بالفدائيين لا يحتاج، بعد، إلى رعاية أمه
[307] ونشفت كفيها بمريولها، وعميقاً في عينيها رأيت شيئاً يشبه الخيبة: تلك اللحظة المروعة التي تشعر فيها أم ما أنه صار بالوسع الاستغناء عنها، أنها طرحت في جهة ما كشيء استهلكه الاستعمال

social status as a peasant but especially as linked to the land and to acts of making.[308] Here, the making alluded to is also maternal – she has made her son, and he has now gone to fight for his people. But, while Umm Sa'ad's national devotion is apparent, her hands are also described as wailing, indicating her sorrow and personal difficulty with her son's absence and the danger which surrounds him. The description of her hands informs Umm Sa'ad's response to the question: "no. I told my neighbor yesterday: I wish I had ten like him." While this statement may be jarring at first, it is important to read it in context, both given the political circumstances and given what she says next: "I'm tired, cousin. My life is worn out in this camp. Every evening I say: oh god! And every morning I say: oh god! And twenty years have passed, and if Sa'ad doesn't go, who will?".[309] She expresses her ongoing despair and agony, living in the refugee camp for two decades, pointing to the expulsion from the land in 1948 and the resultant ongoing exile of Palestinians. This experience necessarily informs her view of her son's choice, and in fact his choice to go and fight. In many ways, Umm Sa'ad does not even see it as a choice per se but as a necessity, evoking a common sentiment in civil societies – if he does not go who will? She therefore does not happily send him there, but rather realizes that his trajectory is dictated by their life circumstances, which also behoove her to accept Sa'ad's act. Her statement illustrates the complexity of her dual maternal roles – personal and national – revealing how she reconciles her impulse to protect him with her support for the cause.

We have already seen in Abu Sa'ad's statement the alignment between Umm Sa'ad and Palestine, and this is developed throughout and can be seen in the very first description of Umm

[308] As in many descriptions in the novel, the emphasis on materiality is evident, pointing to Kanafāni's Marxist inclinations, which I expound on later on.

[309] ولست حزينة أو غاضبة؟ وتحركت كفاها المطويتان في حضنها، ورأيتهما جميلتين قويتين قادرتين دائماً على أن تصنعا شيئاً، وشككت أن كانتا حقاً تنوحان، وقالت: لا. قلت لجارتي هذا الصباح: أود لو عندي مثله عشرة. أنا متعبة يا ابن عمي. أهترأ عمري في ذلك المخيم. كل مساء أقول يا رب! وكل صباح أقول يا رب! وها قد مرت عشرون سنة، وإذا لم يذهب سعد، فمن سيذهب؟

Sa'ad in the first chapter. After describing the scorching and debilitating sun, the narrator notes: "and suddenly I saw her coming from the top of the road surrounded by olive trees, and against this backdrop of emptiness and silence and sorrow she seemed like something emanating from the womb of the land" (9).[310] The land is anthropomorphized here, specifically assigned a female body, having a womb. This pervasive trope of land as feminine has been used destructively over the years, in descriptions and actions of land as penetrated and women as conquered.[311] More specifically for our purposes, the land here is ascribed with the female organ associated with motherhood, the womb. The result is an affinity between Umm Sa'ad and the land that is based on maternal attributes. In fact, throughout the novel, a strong affiliation and affinity between the mother and the land helps establish familial and political points. This affinity expands the scope of motherhood in the novel and creates a mythical mother figure, so that Umm Sa'ad is not only her son's mother but also the mother of all Palestinians, the mother of Palestine.

The opening description already establishes this myth, linking mother and land, as it depicts Umm Sa'ad as emanating from the land and surrounded by olive trees – a common symbol of Palestine. She emerges against a background associated with emptiness, silence and sorrow, creating a contrast with Umm Sa'ad who is caring and maternal unlike the harsh backdrop, and enhancing the sense that she is a larger-than-life figure. The mythical aspect is reinforced as the description develops: "she came like the strikes of the hour. This woman, she always comes, ascends from the heart of the earth, as if she were climbing an endless ladder" (9).[312] Umm Sa'ad is likened to time passing, as inevitable, natural and reliable as its passage. She not only arrives always but is always in a state of arrival, stretching arrival from a

[310] وفجأة رأيتها قادمة من رأس الطريق المحاط بأشجار الزيتون، وبدت أمام تلك الخلفية من الفراغ والصمت والأسى مثل شيء ينبثق من رحم الأرض

[311] See: Allen, 40.

[312] مثل دقات الساعة جاءت. هذه المرأة، تجيء دائماً، تصعد من قلب الأرض وكأنها ترتقي سلماً لا نهاية له

momentary occurrence to a state of being and thus removing it from historical time and into mythical time. In this, paradoxically, Umm Sa'ad is both like time and outside of it. If in the previous description she emanated from the womb of the land, here it is the more common idiom "heart of the land," but in both cases she rises, using elevated verbs such as "emanates" and "ascends," suggesting an additional meaning, perhaps spiritual.[313] The upward movement appears again in the simile of her climbing an endless ladder, again bolstering the sense that this woman is an icon as well as an individual mother.

The mythical aspect expanding the maternal role is further elaborated later in the fourth chapter when Sa'ad, during training, encounters a woman he mistakes for his mother. This episode takes place sometime after the events of the previous chapter when Sa'ad leaves, prompting the narrator to say: "he's been gone for a year," and she corrects him "no, no. Nine months and two weeks, he came last night" (33).[314] The timeframe, akin to the duration of a human pregnancy, evokes the notion of maternal care and indicates that Umm Sa'ad meticulously counts the days of his absence. While home due to an injury, Sa'ad tells his mother about meeting this other woman, which she then relates to the narrator. After Umm Sa'ad sets the scene, the narrative shifts to a third person narration without her mediation, in which the narrator's voice takes over even though he is not clearly present. This is a recurring pattern in the novel which points to the gender and class disparities between Umm Sa'ad and the narrator, and in this case also contributes to the confusion between the two women.

Sa'ad and his comrades are in a field, having stealthily entered Palestine, and they hide, train and prepare for combat. Their conditions are harsh, and they face hunger, exhaustion and fatigue. When an old woman approaches their hiding spot, the fatigued Sa'ad thinks she is his

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[313] This is true for the Arabic verbs used as well, namely ينبثق, تصعد.
[314] لقد غاب سنة. – كلا. تسعة شهور وأسبوعين، جاء أمس

mother and exclaims: "my mother has come!" (36).[315] While it is clear this woman is not actually Umm Sa'ad, who is in the refugee camp in Lebanon a long distance away, the narrative occludes that fact to some extent, emphasizing the similarities between the two women. For example, it notes that Sa'ad and his comrades "looked to the top of the narrow road…and there they saw a woman in her long, black village clothes coming down toward them. She carries on her head a bundle, and in her hands a bunch of green stalks" (ibid.)[316]. This description uses some of the language used earlier to describe Umm Sa'ad, like the "top of the road" from whence the narrator sees her enter the story, the village garb and the bundle. A different word is used (here it is رزمة or "package" while for Umm Sa'ad it is صرّة, "bundle") thus maintaining the difference while also alluding to an affinity. The same move – oscillating between similarity and difference and thus creating affinity while maintaining difference – is employed soon after, this time explicitly referencing Umm Sa'ad: "and she seemed to them to be old, about Umm Sa'ad's age and of her tall and solid stature" (ibid.).[317] Despite describing her via her similarities with Umm Sa'ad, one of his friends then says: "your mother? Your mother is in the camp, you wack […] hunger has struck you blind!" (ibid.)[318] Sa'ad protests this and says they do not know his mother and that she would "always catch up with [him]," using a root which in a different verb-pattern means "to join," often in a military sense of enlisting.[319] Sa'ad's notion of his mother is that of absolute devotion and allegiance, personally and nationally; Umm Sa'ad following her son is a personal act of care, as well as an act of patriotism and aiding the national cause. Seeing the woman as his mother he calls on her from his hiding place saying: "mama, mama" (37).[320]

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315 ها قد جاءت أمي!

316 ونظر الرجال إلى رأس الطريق الضيق المنحدر كالثعبان من التلة، وهناك رأوا امرأة في ثوبها الريفي الطويل الأسود تنزل قادمة صوبهم. تحمل على رأسها بقجة، وفي يدها رزمة من العروق الخضراء

317 وبدت لهم عجوزاً، في عمر أم سعد وفي قامتها العالية الصلبة

318 أمك؟ أمك في المخيم يا أخوت..ضربك الجوع بالعمى!

319 إنها تلحق بي دائماً

320 يما يما. The term used here is the colloquial, almost child-like appellation.

While this woman is not Sa'ad's biological mother, she does assume a maternal role. After coaxing Sa'ad out of his hiding place, the woman says: "my darling…my son…may god protect you" (38).[321] He tells her how hungry they are, and she expresses her concern for him and the other *fidā'iyyīn*: "Are the other children with you? I will feed them…may god protect you, my children" (39).[322] In extending her maternal care to young men to whom she is not related, the woman creates a model of kinship not based on blood relations, but which still views those needing care as children.[323] Sa'ad is about 20 years old, so not technically a child, but as is often the case with fighters and soldiers they are viewed as collective children; in this kinship model it is their contribution to the national struggle that renders them deserving of care. In caring for them, the woman likewise participates in the national project, expressing her gratitude for what they are doing. The mother figure acts as a grateful nation, repaying her sons for their efforts on her behalf, continuing the anthropomorphizing and feminizing of the nation.[324] Subscribing to the allegory of nation as family through her maternal role, the woman provides the fighters with sustenance, bringing them food and supplies every day they are there. Sa'ad greets her in the traditional manner: "blessed be your hands, mama," and she reciprocates: "may god protect you, my son" (Kanafāni 39). Her actions echo Umm Sa'ad's professed desire to follow her son in combat so she can keep taking care of him, and so this woman supplants his mother, as an extension of her. A network of mothers operates to help the nation's fighting sons, bolstering the myth of the national family and the literary analogy between the two women. The woman in the

[321] يا حبيبي...يا ابني...الله يحميك

[322] معك بقية الأولاد؟ أطعمهم ...ألله يحميكم يا أولادي

[323] This is part of a social construction of childhood, associated in Western discourse at least with the beginning of industrialization in the late 18th century (Glenn et al 14).

[324] Anne McClintock explains that men are metonymic with the nation, contiguous with one another, whereas women occupy a metaphoric and symbolic role (90).

field becomes Umm Sa'ad's double, like a doppelgänger in Palestine while Umm Sa'ad is confined outside of it.

In addition to providing them with supplies, the woman also takes part in the resistance, telling them when the army (presumably Israeli forces) have left (Kanafāni 40). Palestinian women increasingly used their maternal roles in the national struggle during the first *Intifāḍa* (starting in 1987), some two decades after the period described in the novel. Older women would confront Israeli soldiers and shield young Palestinian men often saying, "all the boys are my sons," similar to what the woman says in the novel (Allen 39).[325] The presence of the stand-in mother establishes mothering as an act, even more than a relation, and so it is not limited to biological mothers and children. And so, as the chapter concludes and returns to the scene of narration, Umm Sa'ad explains how her son thanked her for saving his life in the field: "Sa'ad told me that he saw me there, and that if I hadn't fed him he would have died of hunger" (40).[326] With this, she is fully enlisted as a member of the resistance, by proxy – maternal care has supported the national struggle, and implicitly so does mothering in general. The woman from the field and Umm Sa'ad are thus completely analogous, a point driven home when the blurring of narrative levels deepens as the narrator says: "I suddenly heard myself calling: mama" (40).[327] Analyzing this scene, Carol Bardenstein notes that "in the context of national struggle, all mothers become the mothers of all sons," as the personal-familial and the collective are merged (*The Politics of Motherhood* 178). The narrative metalepsis is also a part of this mechanism, as the collapse between diegetic levels enhances the muddling of personal and collective. As we

[325] This was particularly prevalent during the *Intifāḍa* because children often participated in the protests and often became its central icons, as Hammami notes (in Orleck and Taylor 164). Hammami explains that the women were often successful in their attempts, taking advantage of Israeli biases not viewing them as a threat, but also of the fact the Palestinians would not think of them as sexually vulnerable and therefore unfit for the job (167). The woman in Kanafāni's novel shows such care even beyond this scope.
[326] سعد يقول إنه رآني هناك، وإنه لولا أن أطعمته لمات جوعاً
[327] وفجأة سمعت نفسي أنادي: يا يما

have seen, Umm Sa'ad is likened to the land, and being a mother is part of her way of fighting for it, in multiple ways. The presence of the other woman, Umm Sa'ad's doppelganger, creates an intricate web of kinship in which mothering is not only an act, but a national act.

Mothering in Kanafāni's *Umm Sa'ad* is constructed as an act of care, and specifically an act of national care, which extends maternal care as part of the national cause. Or, perhaps more critically in the terms of Massad, the needs of women are here subordinated to the needs of the nation (476).[328] Therefore, mothering is subsumed under the national collective unit and the traditional patriarchic gender dynamic is maintained rather than challenged. Even as part of the resistance the gender gap is maintained, because "while men actively create glory, respect and dignity, women are merely the soil on which these attributes, along with manhood, grow" (Massad 474). Being included in the national fold might be desired, but it also comes at a cost, one example of which is that the other woman, as part of her duplication as an extension of motherhood, is not given a name or identity of her own; rather, she is a "mother type." Another cost of participating in the national cause is, of course, the looming loss of the son.

"I've made another soldier for the IDF": Mothering in *To the end of the Land*

Taking place some 40 years after Kanafāni's *Umm Sa'ad* and written from the Israeli perspective of the same violent national conflict, David Grossman's *To the End of the Land* (2008) also follows a mother grappling with the impending loss of her son. In this sprawling novel, Ora, the mother of an Israeli soldier enlisting in a military operation, goes on a trip through the north of Israel to circumvent the possible news of her son's death. Hoping to outrun the possible news of her son's death, she spends much of the novel's present-day recounting the events of her life to her friend Avram, who is also her son's absent father. Storytelling is a

[328] In anti-colonial, anti-racist and other struggles, women are too often required to sacrifice their gender-based liberation for the national cause. Such demands in fact replicate national and colonial patriarchal structures.

desperate attempt to protect Ofer and shield him from death, which nevertheless remains looming over the entire novel, haunting it and its characters at every step. Israel's history bleeds into Ora's personal narrative as memories, traumas and losses from past wars inform and compound mourning in the present, and future. Ora, her husband Ilan and Avram met as teenagers during the 1967 war. Avram, we gradually learn, was held captive and tortured by the Egyptians in the 1973 war, leaving him physically and emotionally scarred. In an additional layer, the novel's reception was heavily influenced by the fact that Grossman's son, to whom the book is dedicated, was killed as a soldier in the final hours of the Second Lebanon War (2006), as Grossman was finishing this novel. Grossman was already a prominent figure in both the literary and leftist-political spheres in Israel, and his public persona has since become intertwined with his loss and that war.

In many of the memories and stories throughout the novel, Ora negotiates her role as a mother and rethinks her familial relationships. Not unlike Kanafāni's novel, *To the end of the Land* depicts some basic, even primal functions of motherhood, that are often corporeal. In one instance Ora recounts her experience breastfeeding (344), but perhaps the most elaborate example is the images related to birth in the novel. Ora often says she feels Ofer physically, an affinity which is enhanced by the fact that he is away on the military operation and she fears for his life.[329] Early on during her trip, Ora feels faint and senses an unfamiliar ache. She soon realizes its source: "the pain and distress grew worse, her heartbeat pounded through her body, and then it occurred to her that her pain was Ofer […] she felt him in her stomach, beneath her heart, a dark and restless spot of emotion, increasingly filled with a sense of Ofer. He moved and

[329] I explain this and other common themes and threads in the comparative section of this chapter.

shifted and turned inside her" (165. Translation modified, Y.K.).[330] Ora feels her son in her stomach and heart, two bodily organs commonly associated with motherhood – the biological site of gestation, and a common metaphor for emotional attachment. Feeling her son inside her own body clearly evokes a pregnancy, amplified by the sense that he is moving around, but it is obviously misplaced here and points to the impending loss rather than a jovial birth.

But the sense of Ofer does not leave Ora, who then starts hearing her son's voice: "he started to simply say *Mom*, time after time, a hundred times, *Mom, Mom*, in different tones, at different ages, nagging at her, smiling at her, telling her secrets, tugging at her dress" (167).[331] Ora concludes that these manifestations are not simply signs that she misses her son, but rather that he is in grave danger. His liminal existence here, in the form of his voice and a nagging sense in her body, indicates something desperate and ominous: "because he needed her now in order to *exist* – she suddenly knew that this was what his biting meant. How could she not have realized before that he needed her now, in order not to die? She stood with one hand on her aching waist and let out an astonished breath. Was that it? just as he had once needed her to be born?" (168).[332] A profound and dark connection is thus made between Ofer's birth and his impending death, as the latter seems to loom over the former even as Ora tries to protect her son. She later likens her current "pains of Ofer" to "labor contractions," expanding the meaning of this maternal experience beyond the delivery alone (169).[333] The physical anguish does not

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[330] הכאב והתעוקה התעצמו, לבה פעם בחוזקה בכל גופה, ואז עלה בדעתה שזה עופר שכואב לה. היא הרגישה אותו בבטנה, תחת לבה, כתם-רגש כהה וחסר-שקט, שהלך והתמלא בתחושת עופר. הוא זע והתנועע והתהפך בתוכה (180)
In the Hebrew "Ofer" is the grammatical subject of the verb, replacing what would usually be a part of the body or an organ – "her Ofer hurts" instead of "her head hurts." In other words, her son is felt as a part of her own body.

[331] [הוא] התחיל לומר פשוט 'אמא', פעם אחר פעם, מאה פעם, אמא, אמא, בנימות קול שונות, ובגילים שונים, מנדנד לה, צוהל אליה, ממתיק סוד, מושך בשמלתה (181)

[332] כי הוא זקוק לה עכשיו פשוט כדי ***להיות***, ידעה פתאום, זה מה שהיה בנשיכות שלו, איך לא תפסה מיד, הוא צריך אותה כעת בשביל לא למות. והיא עמדה והניחה יד על מותנה הכאוב, ופלטה נשיפה נדהמת: מה, ככה? בדיוק כפי שפעם היה זקוק לה כדי להיוולד? (182)
Ofer's liminal state here is reminiscent of a ghost, as he appears to be haunting Ora though he is still alive. I discuss this dynamic further in the next section.

[333] כמו צירי לידה (183)

subside after birth and is not related only to the physical act of birthing, but rather remains part of the maternal experience, at least as it is faced with loss.[334]

Given this existential threat, the preliminary maternal act of creation becomes an urge to preserve and effectively recreate, when faced with dire circumstances threatening the son. In a later scene birth and death are once again irreparably intermingled, as Ora goes through Ofer's backpack, which Avram carries with him throughout their trip. Ora decides to go through her son's belongings, imagining that, "she can pull him out, deliver Ofer himself from the depths of the backpack, tiny and delightful and twitching his arms and legs. She settles for an army hat, a pair of sweatpants, and the *sharwals*, and these make her happy, with her arms entirely immersed, kneading her child out of the fabric like a village baker shoulder deep in a basin full of dough. But it's also like picking through his posthumous belongings" (312-3, translation modified).[335] Much like the pains of labor lasting beyond the act of childbirth, in this image of rebirth, too, the initial maternal act of biological birth is extended, as she now imagines not birthing him herself but delivering him.[336] Ora attempts to actualize or forge that which already exists, *ex materia*, to negate the impending loss, which nevertheless creeps in, as going through her son's clothes reminds her of going through his posthumous belongings.[337]

This image of rebirth from Ofer's belongings is the culmination of an extended internal meditation Ora has on her role as a mother and a woman in her family unit, informed by its recent collapse. She negotiates her maternal function and grapples with various social structures

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[334] Ora thus feels Ofer at other instances in the novel as well: see pp.230, 298, 305 (Hebrew).
[335] היא תוכל למשוך ולײלד ממעמקי התרמיל גם אותו-עצמו, את עופר, זעיר וענוג ומפרכס בידיו וברגליו, ובינתיים היא מסתפקת בכובע הצבאי, במכנסי טרנינג, בשרוואל, וטוב לה כך, בזרועותיה השקועות עד לכתפיים, אופה כפרית טובלת בערבת-בצק, לשה את ילדה מן הבדים; אבל זה גם כמו לחטט בעיזבונו (316)
[336] Here the English word adds a layer absent from the Hebrew, as the double meaning of "deliver" highlights her attempt to salvage him through this act.
[337] Ora's attempt to recreate can be viewed in theological terms and in opposition to the Judeo-Christian patrilineal sense of creation *ex nihilo* and through language.

and definitions, often in an acerbic and derisive tone. Reflecting on her relationships with her estranged husband and two sons – whom she lumps together as if she mothers all three of them – she bitingly refers to herself in her maternal capacity as a doormat, a “skilled sponge” which “mop[s] up everything that poured out of the three of them” (311). The traditional gender tropes related to cleaning are also used metaphorically to indicate the emotional labor she does on behalf of the men in her family. Ora describes her role within the family unit, explaining that she has been holding it together, that she was, as she puts it, “the family space” (ibid). The Hebrew word used here for “space” is *ḥalal* (חלל המשפחה), which also means a lack or a void, suggesting that the familial environment is inherently flawed or lacking. As we have seen, the word *ḥalal* is also used for a fallen soldier, evoking the ever-present specter of loss. [338] But Ora’s relationship with her mothering, including its traditional aspects, is not only negative. As she smells the clothes in Ofer’s bag they remind her of home: “she sobs into the shirts and socks that cling to her face like little consolation puppies – pleasant, it feels so pleasant, the smell of laundry is so pleasant, despite its gently mocking derision: two-bit feminist, an insult to women’s lib” (311, translation modified). She contrasts her feeling with the books one of her friends gives her which “use expressions like ‘the duality of the clitoris as signifier and signified,’ or ‘the vagina as male-encoded deterministic space’, ” a parody of feminist discourse. Ora is aware of feminist critique of traditional maternal roles, and even grants that it is correct to some degree, but she is uncomfortable with it, worrying that it is aloof and detached, or that it nullifies the aspects of mothering which she cherishes.[339] Despite her anger and pain, motherhood is immensely

[338] סמרטוטיות, זה מה שהייתה האימהות שלה, חוכמת הספוג, עשרים וחמש שנה היא ידעה בעיקר לספוג את כל מה שניתך מהם, משלושתם, כל אחד בדרכו, את כל מה שהם פלטו בשנים האלה בלי-הרף לחלל המשפחה, כלומר לתוכה, כי היא-עצמה, יותר מכל אחד מהם, וגם יותר משלושתם יחד, הייתה ***חלל המשפחה*** (314)

[339] Ora’s comments here illustrate both her and Grossman’s familiarity with a kind of cultural capital of western critical thought which is unavailable to Umm Sa’ad and would perhaps not appeal to her. This is a central tension for western feminism in relation to traditional, often non-western family structures. See for example Abu-Lughod’s *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (2013).

satisfying, “right down to the depths of her innards, down to the top of her womb” (312).[340] Satisfaction is felt in her body and specifically the womb, associated with motherhood.

Pregnancy and birth therefore appear in a variety of ways in the novel, tinged with the shadow of loss: Ora feels her grown son inside her stomach, delivers him from his backpack and recreates him, and locates her motherhood in the womb specifically. Birth is likewise re-enacted, in a way which involves both the land and death. The morning after she feels the pain of Ofer like labor pains, Ora begins to frantically dig a hole in the ground until it is deep enough for her to push her face in it. She yells out her pain and desperation into “the belly of the earth,” reanimating and connecting a few dead metaphors – the earth’s belly is connected to the maternal via the figure of “mother nature,” known in Hebrew as “mother earth,” אמא אדמה (178). In addition to a desperate need to express herself, there seems to be another, macabre motive to Ora’s movement toward the earth here: “she had to, she had to know what it was like. Just like when he was a baby and she used to taste everything she made for him first to make sure it wasn’t too hot for him or too salty” (179, translation modified).[341] If Ofer is about to be buried, then she must prepare it for him like she used to make his food, suggesting a sense of responsibility. The maternal care of childhood becomes a horrific duty, maternal on its own terms, to examine the ground before her son is interred in it.[342] The link between parental responsibility and loss is implied again when lying on the ground, her face buried in it, Ora’s

[340] היא טוענת ביבבה אל החולצות והגרביים המתרפקים כגורי נחמה קטנים אל פניה – נעים, נעים המגע הזה, נעים ריח הכביסה, למרות מה שהוא מטיח בה ברכות לעגנית, פמיניסטית דמיקולו, עלבון למאבק הנשי [...] משתמשות בטבעיות גמורה בביטויים כמו 'הדואליות של הדגדגן כמסמן וכמסומן', או 'הוואגינה כחלל דטרמיניסטי מקודד גברית' [...] עד תקרת הרחם המתקמרת (314-5)

[341] לבטן האדמה... שהיא חייבת, חייבת לדעת איך זה, הלוא גם כשהיה תינוק היא הייתה טועמת לפניו את מה שהכינה לו, לבדוק שלא חם לו מדי או מלוח (191)

[342] The scene of Ora digging in the ground, as well as the previous moments of trying to bring the child to life, are revisited and expanded in Grossman’s next novel, *Falling Out of Time* (2011) which continues the examination of loss and grief in a decidedly more minimalist style.

body is said to be “bound up” (*akud*, עקוד), a rare Hebrew verb singularly deriving from the biblical story of the Binding of Isaac.

This minor reference to the binding is not the novel’s only mention of the foundational biblical story. Yael Feldman explains that the binding is the primal scene of sacrifice in Israeli culture and literature, as well as in political discourse, and that it is not limited to religious communities but rather is prevalent in secular spaces as well (4). In fact, the binding is a central trope for Zionism in particular, above all other biblical stories (Feldman 20). Feldman sees a shift in the Israeli understanding of the binding, from seeing Isaac as a martyr, corresponding to a notion of “glory of sacrifice,” to seeing him as a victim, in what she terms “agony of sacrifice” (8). Sacrifice is, of course, a common theme in many civilizations and often appears in relation to moments of foundation and creation of communities.[343] In the modern national context sacrifice is channeled into a form of dedication to the national cause which endows loss with a hallowed meaning. The most elaborate reference to the binding of Isaac in *To the End of the Land* is made when Ora accompanies her son to the enlistment point near Mount Gilboa. She describes the scene in terms of a sacrificial procession, with resonances of ancient pagan sacrificial rituals: “Parents and brothers and girlfriends, even grandparents, bringing their loved ones to the seasonal sale, she thinks, the final sale, liquidating the inventory. In every car sits a young boy, the first fruits, a spring festival that ends with a human sacrifice. And you? she asks herself sharply. Look at you, how neatly and calmly you bring your son here, your almost-only-son, the boy you love dearly” (Grossman 68-9, translation modified).[344] This description of Ofer

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[343] See, for example, René Girard’s famous formulation of the scapegoat – based on a different biblical story – in his *Violence and the Sacred* (1977).

[344] הורים ואחים וחברות, ואפילו סבים וסבתות, מביאים את אהוביהם למבצע העונתי, היא חושבת, חיסול המלאי, ובכל מכונית יש נער צעיר, ביכורים, קרנבל אביב עם קורבן-אדם בסופו, ומה את, היא תוקעת לעצמה, תראי אותך, כמה יפה ומסודר את לוקחת פה את בנך, את כמעט-יחידך, את אשר אהבת נורא (98). The Hebrew words for “sale” and “military campaign” are homonyms. The end of the sentence refers to their Palestinian taxi driver, noting that “Ishmael [is] your private driver” (ibid.).

as “your almost-only-son, the boy you love dearly” is a clear allusion to God’s edict to Abraham in Genesis: “take now your son your only son whom you love Isaac and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (22:2).[345] Unlike the biblical story, the tone here is quite bitter and self-ironic, but perhaps a more significant change is the reversal of gender, as Ora is the mother and not the father sacrificing her son.[346] Gender is a significant component of the biblical account and its relation to other ancient formulations of sacrifice, as in most classical tales of sacrifice the daughter is the one sacrificed.[347] As either a cause or a result of this, sacrifice is often linked to feminine compliance and passivity (Feldman 27-8).[348]

Additionally, unlike the biblical story, here god is completely absent, and no angel will arrive to spare the child.[349] The absence of redemption is critical here for several reasons – first, it demonstrates that when removing the strictly religious aspect of sacrifice, god is not necessarily straightforwardly supplanted by the state, as the “religion of nationalism” might suggest (Mosse 7). Or perhaps, unlike god, the state does not offer deliverance but rather demands the sacrifice. Second, the lack of redemptive potential in this national iteration of the binding underscores the difficulty inherent in the national narrative, stemming from the gender and family dynamics that empower it to begin with. In Genesis, Abraham is the present and active parent while Sarah is absent and passive, and in any case responsibility for the almost-sacrifice is seen as a positive, given its theological context. In Grossman’s novel, the mother

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[345] The similarity between Ofer’s name and the notion of an offering does not exist in the Hebrew.
[346] Much has been written about the mother’s passivity in the biblical story of the binding.
[347] For more on the links between sacrifice, gender and family see: Nancy Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity* (1992).
[348] Much of Feldman’s argument here is that the story in Genesis does not align with later Freudian accounts of Oedipal family relations, causing tension between the psychoanalytic and national frameworks. That is not my focus, however.
[349] Ofra Amichai notes that the state replaces God in the iteration of the biblical account appearing in the novel (322).

consciously accepts responsibility, but rather than simply reversing gender roles this shifts responsibility to the family unit at large (Ofra Amichai 320). This version of the binding emphasizes the elements of family drama, in addition to its national themes, depicting the family as a sacrificing unit. But the sacrifice is problematized, and Ora finds it objectionable, as the novel's premise suggests – she continuously wishes to avoid the reality of her son's loss. Fulfilling her national role requires Ora to fail her maternal duties, and vice versa, suggesting a clash between obligations, as " 'national' motherhood often pits a woman's duty to her country against her personal obligations to her children" (Orleck and Taylor 141). Ora herself notes this tension, shortly after Ofer's enlistment, as she wonders: "and how is it that I'm loyal to *them*, to the ones sending him there…more than to my own motherhood?" (Grossman 91, emphasis in the original).[350]

Ora, and the novel, constantly negotiate the fraught relationship between motherhood and nationalism. For example, Ora recalls a conversation between her and her husband, Ilan, when they first brought the newborn Ofer home from the hospital. On the door to their older son, Adam's room, Ilan posted a sign which read "*the hotel management expects guests to leave when they reach the age of 18!*" (340, emphasis in original).[351] In the Israeli context, the acerbic comment necessarily evokes enlisting in the army at 18 as a symbol of adulthood, and so Ilan recalls here his own sleeping habits when he was a soldier. The rest of their conversation is instructive: "Ora remembers how she'd elbowed Ilan next to Ofer's crib as he slept with his fist clenched and said emphatically, 'here you are, my darling, I've made another soldier for the IDF.' Ilan had quickly given the requisite reply, that by the time Ofer grew up there would be

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[350] "ואיך זה אני נאמנה **להם**, לאלה ששולחים אותו...יותר משאני נאמנה לאימהות שלי?" (117)

[351] הנהלת המלון מצפה מהאורחים לעזוב בהגיעם לגיל שמונה-עשרה

peace. So, she thinks, which one of us was right?" (340).[352] Ilan's response is an oft used Israeli mantra, that skirts the line of political protest and acquiescence to the state of affairs in the area, depending on the tone in which it is made.[353] But Ora's own statement is striking and important on its own. While it is clearly pained and caustic, her comment is reminiscent of similar earnest sentiments in earlier generations. In the first two decades after Israel's establishment, birth notices were often accompanied by the phrase "another child for the IDF" (Olmert 2013, 341). Birth is, then, seen as a national contribution, or at least also as such, and is thus analogous to combat military service, a role reserved largely for men. In Simona Sharoni's words, "while Israeli men defended Israel on the battlefield, women were asked to secure Israel's survival on the homefront" (149). It is therefore not surprising that David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first and mythical prime minister, had a fund rewarding women with more than 10 children (ibid.).

Enlisting women's role as mothers in the national enterprise is meant to solve the contradiction between the personal and the collective, in favor of the nation. A good example of this is Rivkah Guber, who lost two sons in the 1948 war and became an exemplary figure of righteous sacrifice and a national icon. She was publicly praised by Ben-Gurion, who referred to her as the "mother of sons" (*em ha-banim*, אם הבנים), meaning not only her sons but all sons (Olmert 2013, 338). The death of Guber's sons marks her success as a good mother "in nation-building terms," recasting her loss and almost sublimating it (Olmert 2013, 340).[354] In her role, she is devoid of any tension between personal and national, which is made possible by the inclusion in the national framework. The role of the dutiful mother in mourning grants her entry

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[352] ואורה זוכרת איך מרפקה את אילן ליד המיטה של עופר התינוק, הישן באגרוף קפוץ, ואמרה לו בהדגשה, הנה יקירי, עשיתי עוד חייל לצה"ל, והוא ענה מיד, כמתבקש, עד שהוא יגדל יהיה שלום. נו, היא חושבת, ומי צדק? (343)

[353] A famous Israeli song, often sung in Memorial Day ceremonies, includes an example of this, as grandparents say after the birth of their grandchildren: "we wish these children don't go to the army". The song, called "Winter 1973," is about the 1973 war, in which Avram fought and was captured in *To the End of the Land*.

[354] Olmert's analysis draws on psychoanalytic discourse, but I use this term here in more of a sociological and political sense.

into the national fold, making clear that not every act of inclusion automatically leads to liberation. In other words, though feminism generally fights to include women in social spaces and institutions, including them in nationalism comes at a cost which might not align with feminist values.[355] Olmert articulates the national discourse in this regard as follows: "an Israeli mother who truly, in total perfection, loves her son will not undermine the development of his masculinity that culminates with his military service and starts with a militarist education back in earliest childhood" (2013, 337). In other words, the national discourse purports to solve the contradiction between the concern for the son's personal wellbeing and that of the nation, by claiming that his personal wellbeing is tied with the national, that his recruitment is part of his needs as a man (Olmert 2013, 338).

Ora's tone in *To the End of the* Land is clearly different than that of the foundational moment of statehood and the desire of the national project to have as many babies as possible who grow into soldiers and alter what contemporary Israeli politicians call the "demographic balance" (המאזן הדמוגרפי). But, while the historic moment is different, and while there have been some discursive changes at least in some circles, two things are important to note. First, Miriam Peretz, whom I mention at the beginning of this chapter, is often likened to Guber, and like her is hailed because of her sacrifice. And second, while Ora's tone and sentiments may be different, she, too, sends her son to the army, subscribing to the national ideology and seeing no other choice; she may speak differently but her actions are largely the same. Through images of birth and rebirth tinged by death, as well as notions of sacrifice and references to the biblical binding, Ora's mothering seems inextricably linked to the national narrative, even subsumed under it.

Before its Time: Temporalities of Mourning

[355] I write this very much in the vein of Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*.

The novels end without determining whether the sons die or not, and thus readers and characters alike remain in a state of limbo, waiting for the inevitable as the carving knife of sacrifice continues to hang over them. Nevertheless, Umm Sa'ad and Ora begin to mourn even before the loss has taken place, in preparation, as if they were already mourning mothers, *umm thākila, emm shakula* (אם שכולה, أم ثاكلة) as we saw in the introduction.[356] This reversed temporality, mourning before loss, has significant implications for the ways in which mourning operates that stem directly from the political conditions of violence. Mourning is defined temporally as following loss, explaining why Freud, as noted earlier, defines it as "the reaction to the loss of a loved person" (243). A reaction suggests an after-ness, it is determined by what preceded it; loss is the event or occurrence which initiates mourning and brings it into being. What happens, then, when this sequence is reversed? This is not only an interruption of temporality which is often associated with mourning, as a grieving Hamlet famously exclaims that "time is out of joint." Rather, in the case of national violence loss is always looming and so mourning is held in abeyance, until it is required.

Umm Sa'ad and *To the End of the Land* are so engulfed in mourning, that readers would be forgiven if they forgot the deaths have yet to occur. Not only the sons' would-be deaths are untimely – given their age and the unnatural cause of death – but mourning, too, is untimely. Mourning begins ahead of schedule, before its time, before death takes place. Anticipatory grief typically refers, in psychology and medicine, to a situation in which one knows they are dying of a terminal illness and can therefore be mourned ahead of time. In these novels, however, the cause of anticipation is political, making death foretold or a foregone conclusion. These deaths are not caused by an inevitable physical ailment but rather manmade social conditions.

[356] This term is not unique to women but it is more commonly used in the feminine in Arabic.

Reflecting the complex relationship between mourning and temporality, narrative time in both novels is appropriately intricate and can be perplexing – *Umm Sa'ad* is episodic, with each chapter almost seeming like a separate unit or story. One chapter includes an extended analepsis to 1948, and the time lapses between chapters are not always clear; *To the End of the Land* begins in 1967 and then jumps several decades forward to the novel's present-day, all the while flashing back to various earlier moments.

Premature Wails and Letters: Harbingers of Loss in Umm Sa'ad

The loss of Sa'ad is the premise of Kanafāni's novel, despite the fact that it does not occur in the narrative. It is anticipated before it happens, and treated as something that has already taken place, a fait accompli. Early in the text Umm Sa'ad first tells the narrator that her son has joined the *fidāiyīn*. This is the term used for Palestinian fighters against Israel until the 1980s, and its religious-Muslim background is evident as it derives from the root for redemption or sacrifice. It is also related to the story of the Binding, in Islam of Ishmael, which serves as an important foundation for Palestinian nationalism (Masarwi 89-90). Sa'ad becoming a fighter already implies the sacrifice, perhaps because the willingness to die inaugurates death, opens the door for it. Thus, the knowledge that Sa'ad is now a *fidā'ī* evokes thoughts of loss in the narrator as he looks at Umm Sa'ad: "And I was still looking at her hands, withdrawn there, struck with disappointment, shouting from their depths, chasing the one heading toward danger and the unknown…why, oh god, are mothers destined to lose their sons? For the first time I saw that which fractures the heart a word's throw away, as if we were in a Greek play, living through the mourning that has no cure" (27).[357] This description emphasizes Umm Sa'ad's hands, which

[357] وكنت ما أزال أنظر إلى كفيها, منكفئتين هناك كشيئين مصابين بالخيبة, تصيحان من أعماقهما, تطاردان المهاجر إلى الخطر والمجهول... لماذا, يا إلهي, يتعين على الأمهات أن تفقدن أبناءهن؟ لأول مرة أرى ذلك الشيء الذي يصدع القلب على مرمى كلمة واحدة مني, كأننا على مسرح اغريقي نعيش مشهداً من ذلك الحزن الذي لا يداوى

come to represent her throughout the novel as a kind of synecdoche, starting here with their suffering eliciting shouts. The narrator likens the reality of mothers losing their children to a Greek tragedy, a genre deeply engaged in discussions of fate and sacrifice. One can almost imagine a staging of Iphigenia, with a reversal of gender roles. The tragedy is playing out before his eyes, and the collective "we" living through it is both participating and viewing it unfold. The narrator describes "living through mourning" despite the fact that the loss which generates it has not yet taken place and is not strictly speaking a known fact. The novel does not disclose in any way that Sa'ad certainly dies in the form of narrative foreshadowing or prolepsis. Instead, his death is assumed because of the circumstances of his life, and the fact that he is planning to go to battle. Consequently, the foreshadowing is political, and perhaps also psychological, but not narrative, and mourning begins prematurely and is a part of life.

In fact, even before we learn that Sa'ad has joined the armed struggle, mourning is already present. After introducing Umm Sa'ad for the first time, the narrator describes the scenery around them, rife with echoes of the recent war of 1967, literally and metaphorically: "And behind our backs more and more destroyed military armors accumulated on top of the abandoned sand, and the lines of displaced persons generated new distances" (10).[358] The remnants of the war dissipate the distance between symbol and reality here, as what could be seen as symbolic representation of defeat (broken down armor on derelict sand) is in fact a harsh reality. The accumulation endows this image with a sense of mythical loss with multiple layers, a kind of archeological barrow of destruction whose layers are actually present-day. The image also creates a bleak analogy between the covered, sandy disused armor and the lines of refugees – the most painful result of the destruction of war – thus capturing the dehumanization inherent

[358] فوراء ظهرنا تراكمت دروع الجنود المحطمة فوق الرمل المهجور، وشقت طوابير النازحين مسافات جديدة.

in war. Loss thus refers here to both the personal and collective levels, again noting the strong links between the two.

The accumulation and layering continue, adding an intricate, even baffling element of sound: “I heard the war’s roar on the radio, and in it I heard the fighters’ silence as it leans on the table behind me and wails like a widow and colors in its defeated voice everything in the room in banality: the table, the chair, the wife, the children, the plates of food, the dreams of the future. And makes ink colorless” (10). [359] This rich and elaborate image begins with the roar of war, both a metaphor and actual sounds emanating from the radio, and then turns into another, even contradictory audial metaphor – the silence of fighters. Their silence likely represents their death, and the fact that this silence is heard emphasizes the weight and impact of loss, as if to note it is not in vain. Silence is then personified, reminding us of these fighters’ humanity, and it is specifically ascribed with a voice – a voiced silence – which resembles the mourning cries of a widow. These sounds are quite specific, evoking women’s wails at funerals which are common in Arab culture, as we have seen. This also creates an interesting gender tension between the silence – gendered in Arabic as masculine – and the female widow. The women’s wailing blends with the roar of war on the radio, perhaps indicating a kind of participation in the national war effort not unlike the woman who later feeds Sa’ad and his fellow fighters.

The audial accumulation conflates sound and silence, that are both associated with death – silence of death on the one hand, roars of war and wails of mourning on the other. This contributes to the sense that death and loss are all-consuming and pervasive. Personified silence, given a body which can lean and a wailing voice, then expands to the visual and creates a synesthesia, as its voice colors everything in the room. Silence, in this manifold image, has a

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[359] كنت أسمع هدير الحرب من الراديو، ومنه سمعت صمت المقاتلين، وهو يتكئ على الطاولة ورائي ينوح مثل أرملة, ويطلي بصوته المهزوم كل أشياء الغرفة بالتفاهة: المكتبة, والمقعد, والزوجة, والأطفال, وصحن الطعام, وأحلام المستقبل, ويجعل الحبر بلا لون

"defeated voice," referencing the recent loss in the war. What follows is a list of things in the room, staging a scene of mourning – family members, furniture and food, and dreams dashed by loss ("dreams of the future"). The list includes people and objects, concrete items alongside abstract notions, as if to indicate again that loss covers everything in its thick and desperate layer, like the sand at the beginning of the image. Silence, which had just colored the room through voice, now "makes ink colorless," draining it of its very essence. This description appears before we know anything about Sa'ad joining the struggle or the consequent threat to his life, but already poses mourning as a reality. Setting the scene for the novel in this way indicates that mourning has already begun, is always already at play, because it is part of a history of mourning and loss. If mourning is usually characterized by an "afterness," here it is "before-ness" which defines its temporality, because there is in fact no starting point for loss in the context of ongoing strife; there is always already a loss, and so the time sequence is blurred, and mourning is anticipated as a matter of course. The room is always ready for the next mourners.

Later in the novel, premature mourning appears again, though in a different medium and through a different emphasis on temporality. In a chapter dedicated to the story of an old family friend and to internal Palestinian disputes about forms of resistance and normalization with Israel, Umm Sa'ad receives a letter from her son. Sa'ad is in the field and writes his mother about one of his friends, asking her to go talk to the friend's mother. This request emphasizes mothers and their connection, highlighting their roles in the family as well as in the national framework. At the same time, they are already situated as future mothers in mourning. For my purposes, though, I focus less on the content of the letter and more on the descriptions surrounding it and its implications. When the narrator sees Umm Sa'ad handling the letter he describes it as follows: "from her chest she takes out a folded and frayed piece of paper and

pushes it towards me" (49).[360] The emphasis on the physical state and handling of the letter stems from the fact that Umm Sa'ad herself cannot read (she notes that "Hasan read it to me") and so her access to it is mostly tactile. The state of the letter is so frayed that it becomes difficult to read: "the handwriting seemed blurry and vanishing in the worn creases of the page" (49).[361] Being worn out and vanishing is not just material but also alludes to Sa'ad's removed and absent status in this scene and in most of the novel. The notion of absence becomes clearer and more specific in the next description of the letter in Umm Sa'ad's arms: "and she sat on the chair like something falling on its own, putting her palms over each other in that unique movement which resembles two birds embracing, and one could see the white corner of Sa'ad's letter peeking out from between her palms, its wailing sound coming from afar, unstoppable, impossible to hide" (50).[362] This, too, seems like a scene of mourning, as Umm Sa'ad sits in a chair – like the one mentioned earlier in the mournful room in the first chapter – almost reclining, as if she has fallen. She holds on to the letter like a prized possession of a fallen loved one, and its wailing evokes the two previous mentions of this audial expression of mourning: the wailing silence heard on the radio, and the description of Umm Sa'ad's hands as wailing when she explains her son's decision to join the struggle.[363] Wailing thus becomes a persisting soundtrack in the characters' lives, like part of the preparation for the loss that will require these sounds to materialize. The letter encapsulates Sa'ad's status in the story, and in his mother's life since his departure, as both present and absent. Sa'ad's words are present in the letter, but they also demonstrate that he is not there to say them himself, necessitating the writing that is described as

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[360] ومن صدرها أخرجت ورقة مطوية معلوكة ودفعتها نحوي
[361] الخط بدا مشوشاً وغائباً في ثنيات الورقة واهترائها
[362] وجلست على المقعد مثلما يسقط الشيء من تلقائه, واضعة راحتيها فوق بعضهما في تلك الحركة الفريدة التي تشبه عناق طيرين, وكان بالوسع رؤية رسالة سعد تطل بطرفها الأبيض ومن بين راحتيها, ذات صوت نائح قادم من بعيد وليس بالوسع رده أو طيه
[363] The Arabic uses the same root in each instance, *yanuḥ* (ينوح).

sound, the wails of mourning. while the letter announces the fact that Sa'ad is still alive, given his precarious state this sign of life might as well be a death notification, written by the son himself. Sa'ad's letter thus encapsulates or rather embodies Derrida's notion of the association between writing and death. The letter does not actually indicate Sa'ad's death, but its wailing sound and material state suggest that death and loss are not far behind. When death seems inevitable, just waiting to happen, mourning is known ahead of time and begins before loss, making it present before its time.

On the Threshold: The Temporality of Notification in *To the End of the Land*

Disruptions to the temporality of mourning are at the core of Grossman's novel, as Ora leaves her home in a desperate attempt to outrun the news of her son's death. The novel's original Hebrew title is A Woman Running Away from the News (אישה בורחת מבשורה), an opaque title which obfuscates specifics; we do not know which woman, or what news. And yet, in the Israeli context it is immediately clear that news refers to the notification of the son's death.[364] Her departure is a preemptive move, one she decides on as soon as her son leaves for the military operation, with no concrete knowledge of his fate, though one can easily forget that; the novel, and its protagonist, act as if the disaster has already happened. It is as if the existence of the threat is its realization, and so Ora begins to prepare for the loss even as she attempts to prevent it, because she knows her attempt will be in vain. What has happened, is happening and will happen are continuously conflated, which are likewise emulated in the novel's narrative structure as it jumps from one memory to the next.

[364] The Hebrew word *besorah* (בשורה) is equivalent to the Greek *evangelion*. It generally denotes good news, as in the Christian context of the birth of Jesus, but can also convey the opposite, as in the phrase Job's news (בשורת איוב) referring to bad and tragic news of loss.

Throughout the novel, Ora imagines military officers coming to notify her of her son's death. This scene, which has become a staple of the Israeli Culture of Bereavement and operates as a kind of cultural code, recurs many times in the novel in variations, like a haunting nightmare. The first mention of the notifying scene takes place after Ora drops Ofer off at the enlistment point, indicating that once the possibility of loss is introduced it becomes inevitable, as if it has already been realized. Faced with the danger of loss Ora decides to start cooking, in case Ofer is released that very evening. Standing in the kitchen, Ora starts thinking about the notifying officers, in what seems both unrelated and utterly logical: "And the people who come to make the announcement, she wonders, are they convening in some office now, at the local army center, undergoing training or a refresher course – but what is there to refresh? When would they have had time to forget their job? When have we had even one single day here without an announcement to a family? It's strange to think that the notifiers are enlisted at the same time as the soldiers who take part in the operation, all orchestrated together" (76-7, translation modified).[365] Ora wonders about the mechanics of the notification – how officers are trained – displacing her fear of the notification itself but also insisting that with people's lives on the line this is much more than bureaucracy. She bitterly notes how ubiquitous such notifications are in a country rife with conflict and war, one in which the image of the notifying squad requires no introduction or explanation. Wondering whether notifiers and soldiers are enlisted concurrently highlights the expectation that the notification take place only after the loss, that it has to follow it and therefore should not occur this early, before its time.

[365] ואלה שבאים להודיע, היא תוהה, האם הם נאספים כעת באיזה משרד, בקצין-העיר, עוברים תדרוך או רענון, מה יש להם להתרענן בעצם? מתי הספיקו לשכוח את התפקיד? מתי היה פה יום אחד בלי אף הודעה לאיזו משפחה? ומשונה לחשוב שמגייסים אותם באותו זמן שמגייסים את החיילים שיוצאים למבצע, הכל מתוזמר (105)

Starting with the novel's title referencing the vague "news," there is substantial focus on the notification. Ora focuses on these mechanics because they are tangible, understandable, unlike the immensity of loss; the notification functions as a concretization of loss.[366] If death is abstract and intractable, the notification of loss is concrete, a clear and specific moment, instead of the vast abyss of loss. It is verbal and can be analyzed, transmitted and therefore maybe also circumvented and thwarted, argued against, whereas death and loss are ineffable, wordless, outside of communication and comprehension. Additionally, focusing on the act of notifying highlights the distinction between death and mourning, closely related terms distinguished temporally. Mourning usually begins after death, but its starting point is not the death itself but rather knowledge of the death. A soldier is already dead before the notifiers appear, but a family is only bereaved once they have been told about it. The recurring scenes of notification in the novel keep Ora, and the readers, on the threshold – at the doorstep to her house and at the precipice of disaster.

The image of the notifying officers starts at a distance and in the abstract, and then moves increasingly closer, mimicking the movement of the officers approaching the house of a soon to be bereaved family. Ora thus soon imagines the notifying officers arriving at her doorstep: "Ora realizes that for several minutes she's been staring at the semitransparent lower half of the front door. There is a problem there that requires a solution, but she does not understand what it is" (77). The nature of this problem becomes clear a little later in this extended stream of consciousness contemplation, which is almost entirely in free indirect speech: "What now? Where was I? The door. The lower part of the door. Four short bars over thick frosted glass. She

[366] The notification is also cast as the enemy, what Ora refers to as the "adversary she faces" (Grossman 76). The use of military terms is significant, especially as it does not apply to the other side of the war. It thus points to the pervasiveness of militarism in civil life, as when Ora absent-mindedly sings an old Hebrew song about tankists while cooking.

takes three sheets of A4 paper from the printer and tapes them over the glass. That way she won't see their military boots" (78).[367] Ora is fighting against the announcement of death as fighting death itself is impossible. A similar attempt to thwart the danger appears a bit later, this time through language. When she is in Ofer's room, Ora looks around and notices "the history textbooks he keeps by his bed because he liked history – likes, of course she means likes, and will continue to like" (83).[368]

As it moves closer to Ora, to her house and her life, the notification's full force becomes clear, as it threatens to disrupt her domestic and maternal life much like it infiltrates her thought: "Tomorrow morning she'll go shopping and fill the house again. It occurs to her that they could arrive in the middle of all sorts of things. Like when she's unpacking the groceries and putting things in the fridge. Or when she sits down and watches television. Or when she sleeps, or when she's in the bathroom, or when she's chopping vegetables for soup" (78).[369] The imminence of the threat is underscored by the list of everyday moments in the middle of which it may strike, suggesting that notification and loss may occur at any given moment. At first, Ora's thoughts of what to cook and the possibility of notification seem unrelated, and the transition between the two topics appears abrupt, but it is precisely this disconnect which explains the logic of this image – the notification comes and disrupts life as it is ("in the middle of all sorts of things"), and so it always happens at the wrong moment, while one is busy doing something else, during another train of thought. At the same time, the two axes – cooking, and the notification – are in

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[367] ואורה תופסת שכבר כמה רגעים היא בוהה בחלקה התחתון, השקוף למחצה, של דלת הכניסה, יש שם איזו בעיה שדורשת פתרון, אך הבעיה עצמה אינה נהירה לה [...] מה עכשיו? איפה הייתי? הדלת. החלק התחתון שלה. ארבעה סורגים קצרים וזכוכית מט עבה, שקופה-למחצה. ממדפסת המחשב היא מוציאה שלושה גיליונות נייר איי-4 ומדביקה על הזכוכית. ככה לא תראה גם את הנעליים הצבאיות שלהם. (106)

[368] Ora makes such corrections throughout the novel, often in response to colloquialisms which include a reference to death: saying the phone is dead, saying Ofer loves something to death, and calling his belongings orphaned.

[369] ועכשיו מה? המקרר כמעט ריק. במזווה היא מוצאת כמה תפוחי-אדמה ובצלים. אולי מרק קטן, מהיר? מחר בבוקר היא תצא לקניות, תמלא את הבית שוב. הם יכולים להגיע באמצע המון דברים, היא חושבת, למשל בזמן שהיא תפרוק את הסלים ותכניס את המצרכים למקרר. או כשתשב ותסתכל בטלוויזיה, או כשתישן, או כשתהיה בשירותים, או כשתחתוך ירקות למרק (106)

fact bound together and not so unrelated. For example, Ora is thinking of getting groceries, and then realizes the officers may come as she unpacks them; likewise, she thinks about making soup and then notes they might arrive when one is making soup.

The disruption of normal life frames loss in temporal terms – it may arrive at any moment, and it sharply cuts time into "before" and "after." So, Ora wonders: "what if they come in the middle of the potato? Ora thinks and stares at the large spud lying semi-peeled in her hand. Or in the middle of the onion? It gradually dawns on her that every movement she makes may be the last before the knock on the door" (79). Ora focuses on what might be the last movement before the knock, as if preceding the knock also inaugurates it in some way. Knowing that Ofer is not even in combat yet does little to abate her concern: "She reminds herself again that Ofer is unquestionably still at the Gilboa, and there's no reason to panic yet, but the thoughts crawl up and wrap themselves around her hands as they clutch the peeler" (80). Loss seems inevitable, even as Ora is aware that it has not yet taken place: "She scans [the street] but there is no unfamiliar car, no car with military plates, no nervous barks from the neighbors' dogs, and no band of evil angels. Besides it's too early. Not for them, she replies. Those people come even at five in the morning, that's exactly when they come, they get you sleepy, dazed, defenseless, too weak to throw them down the steps before they can deliver their punch line" (83). The two meanings of "too early" here – early in the morning, and early in the operation – both point to a more abstract sense, the untimeliness of death in this context.

The perceived imminence of danger is translated into a notion of inevitability and even causality: "and for an instant the knock on the door becomes so inevitable, such an intolerable provocation of the capacity for disaster embodied in every human condition , that her mind confuses cause with effect and the dull, slow movements of her hands around the potato seem

like the essential prelude to the knock" (80).[370] In this instant, described as an "eternal moment," cause and effect are reversed, making the convoy of notifiers inevitable – as if Ora's movements in her kitchen in Jerusalem generate the loss of her son and therefore set the notifying officers into motion. What is at play here is a conflation between temporal conjunction and causality, akin to what David Hume contends in his *A Treatise on Human Nature*. This puts Ora in a desperate struggle against time, trying to fight that which she sees as impending, in every sense of the word, but also inevitable. Ora sees her own actions as responsible for the outcome of loss, but at the same time feels wholly powerless to stop them and lacks any control of the situation.

The recurring images of loss demonstrate how familiar it is given the violent geo-political reality, making death and loss common rather than an aberration. So, that same evening Ora watches television and notices footage of her and Ofer, taken that morning at the enlistment point: "and she pushes away a thought: when will they broadcast this picture of him again? She sees it clearly, right on the screen, the halo of a red circle around his head" (82).[371] The thought is quashed away but expressed in the narrative as it is cast aside and therefore made present even in the attempt to remove it. Ora recalls another iteration of this thought: "Ofer once told her that when they had their picture taken sometimes, before they set off on a military campaign, the guys made sure to keep their heads a certain distance from each other, so there'd be room for the red circle that would mark them later, in the newspaper" (70). [372] Ofer and his friends come to expect death and even prepare for it, and they know what such preparation entails. The macabre

[370] ואם הם יבואו באמצע התפוחי-אדמה? חושבת אורה ובוהה בתפוח-אדמה גדול שמונח קלוף-למחצה בכף ידה, או באמצע הבצל? מרגע לרגע מתחוור לה: כל תנועה שהיא עושה עלולה להיות האחרונה לפני הדפיקה בדלת. שוב היא מזכירה לעצמה שעופר בלי-ספק עדיין נמצא ליד הגלבוע, ואין סיבה להיכנס לפאניקה כבר עכשיו, אבל המחשבות זוחלות וכורכות את עצמן על תנועות ידיה המקלפות, ולמשך רגע אחד נעשית הדפיקה בדלת כה בלתי-נמנעת, גירוי בלתי-נסבל של יצר האסון הגלום בכל מצב אנושי, עד שמתחלפים לה סיבה ומסובב, והתנועות הקהות האיטיות של ידיה סביב תפוח-האדמה נדמות לה כהקדמה ההכרחית לדפיקה בדלת, ואף כפקודת ההפעלה שלה

[371] והיא הודפת מחשבה, מתי יקרינו שוב את התמונה הזו שלו, ורואה בעליל, ממש על המסך, הילת עיגול אדומה סביב ראשו (109)

[372] עופר סיפר לה שכשהם מצטלמים, לפעמים, לפני יציאה לפעולה, הם מקפידים להרחיק את הראשים זה מזה, שיהיה מקום לעיגול האדום שיקיף אותם אחר-כך, בעיתון (99).

impact of this preparation, demonstrating its pervasiveness in Israeli society, is only increased in the Hebrew which does not have a subjunctive mode and so this is simply written in future tense, as an inevitable eventuality.

Despite all her attempts to avoid it, the notification scene returns in full force during Ora's excursion in the Galilee, detailed over some two pages: "Ora saw the three of them straighten up and clear their throats, and the senior one raised his hand and hesitated for an instant. She watched his fist, transfixed, and it occurred to her that this was a moment that would last a lifetime, but then he knocked on the door, knocked firmly three times, and looked at the tips of his shoes, and as he waited for the door to open he silently rehearsed the notification: *at such-and-such time in such-and-such place, your son Ofer, who was on an operational mission –* " (162).[373] The scene is written in the past tense, as if it has already happened, already a determined, or perhaps predetermined fact. However, the notification also freezes time, as "this was a moment that would last a lifetime." The notification creates a starting point for endless mourning, but as it is imagined here even this point of departure is unclear, happening before its own time. Given the past tense, it is easy to forget it is an imagined scene, especially due to the vivid detail, like the number of knocks and the officer looking at his shoes. We also do not even hear the actual notification but rather the officer rehearsing it, and only its form. The phrase "such-and-such time" replaces the explicit announcement, which is never actually spoken.[374] Despite the excess of the repeated scene of notification, it is simultaneously almost hollow, because its center is not mentioned – the narrative circles around it, circumventing the actual

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[373] אורה ראתה את שלושתם מזדקפים ומכחכחים איש לעצמו, והבכיר מרים את ידו ומהסס רגע, ומהופנטת היא הביטה בידו הקפוצה, וחלפה בה מחשבה שזה רגע שיימשך חיים שלמים, ואז הוא נקש בדלת, נקש בחוזקה שלוש פעמים, והביט בקצות נעליו, ועד שהדלת תיפתח גלגל על לשונו את נוסח הבשורה לאמור, בשעה זו-וזו במקום זה-וזה, בנך עופר, שהיה בפעילות מבצעית –(177).

[374] The notifying scene, and specifically this bare-bones articulation of it, is also revisited in Grossman's subsequent novel, *Falling Out of Time*.

news, running away from it just like Ora is doing. The news itself is left unsaid, because it has not actually happened. But it is also so strongly alluded to and suggested it seems entirely inevitable, all that needs to happen for it to be actualized is for the sentence to reach its end, where the hyphen is now hanging, an unavoidable conclusion that has already been set into motion. Like a macabre version of Poe's purloined letter, this death notice has not yet been written but has already reached its addressee.

Ora's attempts to quell her fears become more difficult and reassuring herself is increasingly challenging. Even seemingly good news is infiltrated by dread. Toward the end of the novel, Ora listens to messages from her home phone and hears that Ofer, her son, is safe. But there is no real assurance in this, as she quickly notes, because: "as soon as he was finished leaving the message, an hourglass turned over somewhere, and the timer started from zero again, with no advantage to hope over fear" (630).[375] In temporal terms, this points to the fleeting and ephemeral nature of the present, the most precarious of times. Ora then imagines returning home only to find out about her son's death: "Ora shuts her eyes. She sees people standing on either side of the street that leads to her house. Some of them have already gone into the yard, others are standing on the steps to the door. They wait for her silently, eyes lowered. They wait for her to pass them and walk into her house. So that it can begin" (648).[376] It is as if loss is already waiting for her, "with the calm patience of an assassin," she notes earlier (324).[377] Ora seems almost resigned here, because of this inevitability, because at least now the long awaited "it" can

[375] "הלוא מיד אחרי שהשאיר את ההודעה שוב התהפך אי-שם שעון החול, והספירה החלה מחדש, מאפס, ושוב אין יתרון לתקווה על הפחד" (612).

[376] "אורה עוצמת עיניים. היא רואה אנשים עומדים משני צדי הרחוב שמוליך לביתה. חלקם כבר נכנסו לתוך החצר, חלקם עומדים במדרגות שעולות אל הדלת. הם ממתינים לה בשתיקה, בפנים מושפלות. מחכים שתעבור ביניהם ותיכנס הביתה. שיהיה אפשר להתחיל, עוברות בה המלים" (629)

[377] באורך-רוח של מתנקש (325)

begin, the irony being that what is starting is the end of a life, the end of life as it had been. What can begin is mourning, though the repetition of this scene suggests it has already started.

Recurring scenes of notification are the center of the novel's preoccupation with premature mourning, but they are not the only ones. In fact, the novel is rife with mentions of death and loss that seem to engulf it at every turn. Early on in the novel, even before the first image of the notifying squad appears, as Ora walks around with Ofer before taking him up to the enlistment point, the first thoughts of impending loss occur to her. As they go around town stocking up before his enlistment, she "devoured him with gaping wide looks, stocking up unabashedly for the endless years of hunger to come – of course they would come. From the moment he told her was going, she had no doubt" (54). Ora tries to prepare herself, stocking up on Ofer as much as she can, "engraving in her mind the sound of his laughter," already knowing she will need it when the "years of hunger" come (54).[378] When she is then reminded of her son's ex-girlfriend and contemplates how loyal he still is to her, this too is figured in terms of his loss: "and who knew how many years would pass before he got over Talia – if he even had any years left, she thought. She quickly erased the notion, scrubbing it furiously from her brain with both hands, but still a picture slipped through: Talia coming to visit them, to condole" (55).[379] Imagining Talia's visit in the setting of a Jewish *shiv'a*, while the living Ofer is still standing next to her, underscores how immediate his death seems to Ora, and how loss disrupts the linear sequence of time. The sense of impending loss is perhaps best articulated in a description of Ora and Avram as they walk through the Galilee: "disaster hovers over them" (315, translation modified). While the English translation renders this in the past tense ("hovered"), it is in fact,

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[378] וטרפה אותו במבטים פעורים, הצטיידה בלי בושה לקראת שנות הרעב האינסופי שיבואו, ודאי שיבואו. מרגע שאמר לה שהוא יוצא לא היה לה ספק [...] וחרתה את צחוקו (86)

[379] ומי יודע כמה שנים יחלפו עד שיתאושש מטליה, אם יהיו לו שנים, חשבה ומחקה בפראות, קרצפה ממוחה את המחשבה בשתי ידיים, ובכל-זאת חמקה בה תמונה, טליה שמגיעה לבקר אותה, לנחם (86)

importantly, in the present tense, almost in present progressive, as the threat is present and ongoing.[380] When loss seems so irreparably certain, mourning can begin ahead of time.

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The mothers in Kanafāni's *Umm Sa'ad* and Grossman's *To the End of the Land* engage in untimely mourning, anticipating loss in an attempt to prepare or brace for it, but these attempts are futile; in not revealing whether the sons die or survive the novels frustrate any attempt to determine an endpoint, focusing attention on the ongoing reality of loss. This also works against a notion that mourning itself has an endpoint or culmination, as in these texts not even a tragic catharsis of realization of loss is made possible. Instead, the texts stop short of resolution, almost freezing time and keeping it in abeyance. Loss and mourning thus become concomitant and both ongoing, paraphrasing what Butler calls, referring to Benjamin, "the collapse of sequence into simultaneity" (*Loss* 469). Premature mourning attempts to suspend death but paradoxically it ends up deferring and hastening it at once, holding it in abeyance while also making it inescapable and omnipresent.

Disrupted temporality comes to define every aspect of these novels. Referring to Grossman's *To the End of the Land*, Ruth Ginsburg frames this in psychoanalytic terms, specifically trauma because "traumas are always in the present, all, now" (294). Grossman's novel, she argues, is shrouded in an "inevitable future trauma," so that the present is in a state she calls "pre-trauma" (291). Future trauma is predicated on previous incidents, and therefore pre-trauma operates in a similar way to post-trauma (Ginsburg 296). This suggests a sequence of traumas and losses in which the next disaster is never too far away. But the term "trauma" tends

[380] אסון מרחף מעליהם. (317)
Hebrew does not have a present progressive tense, a fact which Grossman plays with in another novel, *The Book of Intimate Grammar*, in which the character of a child uses a form of present progressive mixing Hebrew verbs with the English gerund suffix -ing.

to be, in my view, broad and perhaps overdetermined. The psychoanalytic framework lacks sufficient tools for grappling with the political intricacies of nationalism and violence. Reading *To the End of the Land* alongside *Umm Sa'ad* illustrates the need for precise political tools that can be comparative without flattening out experience and equating one trauma with another. Untimely mourning here is likewise different than Derrida's philosophical notion that "mourning begins before death" because a person's death is embedded in them and informs all human relationships (12). Rather, political untimely mourning is specific and concrete and derives not from the human condition of mortality but the political condition of violence. Untimely mourning, and the state of anticipation throughout the novels, are a direct result of the political reality in the region which normalizes violence in different ways for Palestinians and Israelis. In this reality, loss and mourning are always about to happen. Umm Sa'ad and Ora are both on the precipice of loss, but their experiences are necessarily informed by their identities in the national conflict. One locus which illuminates this political reality and the need for complex comparison is the spatial attachments in both novels.

Between Home and Land: Spaces of Maternal Mourning

Time is a driving force in the novels, given their preoccupation with untimely mourning. Just as the temporal structures point to the political context at hand, so too do the spatial ones, and so it is no surprise that in both *Umm Sa'ad* and *To the End of the Land* two defining spaces are the home and the land.[381] Both texts oscillate between the familial home and the more expansive land and demonstrate how both spaces are simultaneously deeply personal and intensely collective and political. So, Ora and Avram travel across the Galilee, starting very close to the border with Lebanon, where Kanafāni's characters dwell as refugees; Grossman's

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[381] Using both a Bakhtinian and a psychoanalytic framework, Ginsburg argues that trauma is what links space and time in the novel, generating a veritable chronotope (290).

characters also walk not far from al-Ghābisiyya (الغابسية), the Palestinian village from which Kanafāni's characters were expelled and where Israel then established Netiv Ha-Shayara. Ora travels away from her family home, which has recently fallen apart, and confronts its emptiness without her estranged husband and her children, especially the enlisted Ofer. Umm Sa'ad, for her part, spends much of the novel in homes – her own, the narrator's, and other employers' – and her exile from the land means she can never truly be at home anywhere. Therefore, my analysis of spaces in Kanafāni's novel begins with home and expands to the land, whereas in Grossman the discussion starts with the land before reverting back to the home.

Personal and collective spaces alike have complex relationships with mothering and are gendered, in different ways, revealing the role gender plays in the construction of familial and national units. Women, and especially mothers, are traditionally associated with the home, which is considered a feminine space. This association has entailed rigid gender roles confining women to the house and its tasks: cooking, raising children, and so on. The national sphere, as we have seen, has been largely ceded to men, though it often utilizes terms and sentiment from the familial space of home: homeland, mother or fatherland, the nation as family. This is true in Palestine/Israel as well – the Arabic term roughly translated as "homeland" is *waṭan* (وطن), which has strong spatial connotations as the root denotes dwelling, residing and settling. In Zionist politics, particularly leading up to 1948, the term "national home" (*beit le'umi*, בית לאומי) is used as a gateway to cushion the transition to statehood.[382] In other words, national narratives often use notions of home and family to establish and justify political attachment to land. But what happens when these attachments are threatened by loss? *Umm Sa'ad* and *To the End of the*

[382] The British adopted the term in the 1917 Balfour Declaration, and it was later taken up in Israel's Declaration of Independence.

Land navigate, in different ways, the relationship between private and collective spaces, between home and land, as both become spaces of maternal mourning.

Precarious Homes, Ongoing Exiles: Spaces in *Umm Sa'ad*

There are two types of spaces in Kanafāni's novel: places of occurrence where events unfold, including the refugee camp, another house in the city where Umm Sa'ad works as a cleaning lady, and an undisclosed location where Sa'ad is training; and the place of narration, which is always the narrator's house. As we will see in this section, the descriptions of spaces in which the characters live and work highlight themes of social class, and specifically how characters in a lower socio-economic status contribute to the national project. But all of these spaces, of occurrence and narration, are informed by another locale that looms over the novel and define the characters' lives – the lost land of Palestine. Being exiled in Lebanon drives the novel's main plot as Sa'ad joins the national struggle in response to the expulsion from Palestine. Exile is a foundational Palestinian experience since 1948, one whose centrality we saw in Darwish's eulogy for Kanafāni, and which Salma Khadra Jayyusi defines as a prominent quality of modern Palestinian literature (4-5). Consequently, the lost land is constantly alluded to in the novel, is the focal point of the narrative and the political discourse but is de facto absent and unattainable. Narrating the various episodes in one place, in the narrator's home, creates a kind of anchor, a frame story with intricate ties to the narrated stories. This narrative structure operates as a kind of home, or at least a house, attempting to supplant a missing home for the characters. At the same time, the need for an anchor is a bitter reminder of the lack of an actual home, which cannot be remedied.

We begin with the first prominent space – home. In each of the vignettes that make up the novel, the narrator encounters Umm Sa'ad in the confines of a house, often at the entrance, as

she arrives at her job cleaning his house. The novel's concern with liminal spaces is apparent from the outset, as the text opens with an introduction entitled *madkhal* (مدخل), literally meaning entrance or gateway.[383] Choosing this word, out of several options denoting "introduction," underscores the spatial element, as Kanafāni later uses the same word to describe the entrance to the narrator's house where much of the narration takes place. In the introduction, situated both at the beginning and at a threshold, Umm Sa'ad is described as simultaneously real and unreal: "Umm Sa'ad is a real woman, I know her well…and yet Umm Sa'ad is not a real woman" (7-8).[384] This statement pertains to her maternal role, which as we saw earlier is personal and mythical, and to fiction more broadly. It demonstrates the liminality that characterizes the text and especially its spaces, emblemized by the fact that the entire introduction, a kind of note from the author, is put in parenthesis. This introduction, this entry point, is thus doubly sequestered to the margins or defined as paratext, by dubbing it an introduction and making it parenthetical. And, while the various vignettes include some movement, in many ways they also remain at this threshold, at the beginning.[385]

Early in the novel the narrator situates Umm Sa'ad at the threshold as he explains his relation to her: "I've known her for years. She creates something indispensable in the journey of my days, when she knocks on my door and places her shabby bundle in the entrance the smell of the camps comes to my mind, in its wretchedness and noble steadfastness, and its misery and hope, and my tongue remembers the lump of bitterness I swallowed to dizziness, year after year" (21).[386] Umm Sa'ad is here awaiting entry to the narrator's home, and the narrative. In keeping

[383] This is similar to the Latin etymology of "introduction," to lead one inside, to present into a group or a place.
[384] أم سعد إمرأة حقيقية, أعرفها جيداً... ومع ذلك فأم سعد ليست امرأة حقيقية
[385] Think, for example, of Derrida's analysis of Kafka's spatial and temporal status in "Before the Law." Or else, the importance of the threshold in Greek tragedies.
[386] أعرفها منذ سنوات. تشكل في مسيرة أيامي شيئاً لا غنى عنه, حين تدق باب البيت وتضع أشياءها الفقيرة في المدخل تفوح في رأسي رائحة المخيمات بتعاستها وصمودها العريق, وببؤسها وآمالها, ترتد إلى لساني غصة المرارة التي علكتها حتى الدوار سنة وراء سنة

with her status as a Palestinian icon, she is characterized in a dual fashion – she is poor, but also noble, wretched but resisting. This duality not only enhances her larger-than-life status, but also gives hope to those living in similar conditions that their struggle, too, can be meaningful. Noting the "smell of the camps," the narrator's description romanticizes Umm Sa'ad's condition, specifically praising her "steadfastness," which here has specific political resonances. *Al-ṣumud* (الصمود), Arabic for steadfastness, becomes a central political principle and practice for Palestinians after the 1967 war, precisely the historical moment Kanafāni is depicting in the novel. It marks their attachment to the land and their insistence on holding on to it despite expulsion, which is especially interesting in a novel that takes place in exile. Palestinian mothers are considered prominent representatives of steadfastness, due to their roles as tenacious caregivers facing adversity (Hammami, in Orleck and Taylor 163). Importantly, Umm Sa'ad is described as steadfast not due to a grand act of resistance, but rather in her daily life, expanding the meaning of *sumud* both beyond the land and to everyday matters and even existence itself.[387]

The narrator's home thus serves as a vantage point, figuratively and physically, from which to observe the events of the story. In arriving there Umm Sa'ad allows for the story to begin, inaugurating it as a kind of harbinger of the narrative.[388] Having the narrator's house be the story's main locus of narration significantly means that the story is not narrated from Umm Sa'ad's own home, adding to the sense of nomadism related to her character. Umm Sa'ad lives in a house made of tinplate, fairly common in refugee camps at the time: "and the metal ceiling which started to blaze in the summer heat, and the pile of mud on the door" (65).[389] Other than

[387] Some have argued that *sumud* is too passive to be a tenet of resistance, while others see it as powerful precisely because of how expansive and available it is, noting the impact of foreign rule in every aspect of life.
[388] In Hebrew this would translate to *levaser* (לבשר), the word at the center of Ora's flight from the news in Grossman's novel.
[389] والسقف المعدني الذي بدأ يتوهج بحرارة الصيف, وكومة الوحل على الباب. The blazing heat brings to mind Kanafāni's most famous literary text, *Men in the Sun* (رجال في الشمس), in which the scorching sun plays a central and deadly role in the fate of Palestinians in exile.

these sparse details not much else is known about her house and she spends most of the novel at the narrator's house. This highlights her ongoing itinerant state, as she is not resettled but rather remains uprooted and unstable, like many Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Umm Sa'ad's home in the text mostly emphasizes her lack of home. The precarity of Umm Sa'ad's private home has political resonances linked to home as a physical and symbolic space and the maternal role. For Palestinians in years of particular upheaval such as 1936-39, 1948 and 1967, the home was the front, blurring gendered lines between home and front, between gendered spaces (Peteet 108). Kanafāni's novel clarifies that this is an ongoing condition, not a temporary crisis, resulting in the home being exposed to continuous threats.

In addition to her status as a refugee, Umm Sa'ad's home also highlights her socio-economic status, already alluded to in the narrator's description of her as "poor" and "wretched," and in the contrast between her home and the narrator's. While both are refugees expelled from al-Ghabsiya in 1948, due to their divergent socio-economic status they arrive in different places in Lebanon – the narrator in the city, and Umm Sa'ad in the adjacent and densely overpopulated refugee camp, Burg al-Barājneh (برج البراجنة). Such descriptions, along with Umm Sa'ad's job in manual labor, demonstrate the novel's profound investment in disparities within Palestinian society and the links between class and Palestinian nationalism, which had been strongly influenced by Marxist politics.[390] In addition to her dwelling, and her use of the colloquial dialect (Siddiq 71), her poverty is referenced through her small bundle, the contents of which are never specified. The parcel is mentioned several times (11, 21, 33, 57, 75) and it seems that Umm Sa'ad is always carrying it, as a metonymic extension of her. In Arabic it is referenced as a bundle (صرة) or simply "her things" (أشيائها), always qualified as either "small" (صغيرة) or, more

[390] Interestingly, the same can be said for much of Zionism, particularly in its early stages.

commonly, “meager” or literally “poor” (فقيرة). Her attachment to this meager bundle enhances the sense that this, and not her home, is what she has to hold on to – belongings rather than a sense of belonging. Moreover, when combined with the repeated reference to Umm Sa’ad’s hands – which we have seen operate as a synecdoche throughout the novel as the narrator mentions them in her lap, caressing a letter from Sa’ad and more – the parcel furthers the Marxist image of a poor and laboring woman.

Describing Umm Sa’ad through both metonymy and synecdoche is significant for multiple reasons. First, it creates a highly complex character who is on the one hand fractured as part of her body – her hands – represents the whole, and on the other hand she is extended through her metonymic attachment to her parcel. This multilayered or even overdetermined poetic characterization contributes to the sense that Umm Sa’ad is an iconic figure, much like her motherhood is portrayed throughout the novel. So, her social status operates alongside the mythical and national function of her maternal role. The narrator seems to be in awe of Umm Sa’ad, and he romanticizes her and her poverty, perhaps in keeping with Kanafāni’s Marxist views that the revolution will originate with the lower classes. Nancy Coffin argues that Umm Sa’ad is specifically a representation of Kanafāni’s Maoist views, as she teaches the narrator, who belongs to a higher social class, about the true value of revolution and resistance (98-9). An important example of social disparities between the two relates to education. While the narrator’s profession is never made explicit, he is clearly educated; three times in the text Umm Sa’ad notes that he, unlike her, is educated. At first, she tells him: “you know how to write things, I never went to school in my life, but we feel the same” (29).[391] This is accompanied by a story of how she dreamed the right words to describe her experience the previous night but forgot them in the

[391] أنت تعرف كيف تكتب الأشياء, أنا لم أذهب إلى مدرسة في عمري, ولكننا نحس مثل بعضنا

morning. While her illiteracy seemingly puts her at a disadvantage, it quickly becomes apparent that her contribution to the national struggle negates this. As she says to the narrator: "you write your opinion, I can't write, but I sent my son there…with that I said what you say. Isn't that right?" (ibid.).[392] Umm Sa'ad's act of sacrifice, sending her son to fight, is not only on a par with the narrator's ability to write – and implicitly his role as a narrator – but in fact surpasses it.[393] The significance of Umm Sa'ad's contribution becomes clear in the two other instances when Umm Sa'ad's lack of education and illiteracy comes up. Later in this same conversation, describing how she feels about her son joining the *fidā'iyyīn*, she notes: "I'm not worried about him. No, this isn't true. I am worried. Worried and not worried. Maybe you have – you who went to school – a name for this condition…" (31).[394] Echoing her own sense that she had the appropriate words in a dream but forgot them, Umm Sa'ad wonders if the narrator might be better equipped to find an accurate word for her ambivalence. Her feeling could be attributed to her dual role as mother and national mother – as a parent she is worried, but as a member of the national group she is not. But the narrator does not, in fact, provide her, or readers, with an accurate word, marking him as ultimately unhelpful and thus offering an acerbic critique of Palestinian intelligentsia and their role in the resistance. This critique is bolstered when Umm Sa'ad enlists the narrator's help in a convoluted affair pertaining to one of Sa'ad's friends and an old story from Palestine before 1948. She asks him to talk to the friend's family, specifically citing his skills: "why don't you say it [the message from Sa'ad to the friend, Y.K], you who learned from books and schools, why don't you say it to Leith's family?" (56).[395] The narrator's

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[392] أنت تكتب رأيك, أنا لا أعرف الكتابة, ولكنني أرسلت ابني إلى هناك...قلت بذلك ما تقوله أنت. أليس كذلك؟

[393] According to Kanafāni's Marxist framework, the intellectual's role is not to teach political consciousness but rather to communicate to the masses, using their language skills (Siddiq 69).

[394] اتعرف, يا ابن عمي؟ أنا لست قلقة عليه. لا. هذا ليس صحيحاً. قلقة. قلقة وغير قلقة. ربما كان لديك, أنت الذي ذهبت إلى المدرسة, اسم لهذه الحالة...

[395] فلماذا لا تقوله أنت ألآن, أنت الذي تعلمت من الكتب والمدارس, لماذا لا تقوله لأهل ليث؟

education is supposed to be a positive that gives him the ability to perform a task, but the chapter ends with this and the subject is never revisited, suggesting that the narrator did not do as he was asked. Once again, his status gives him the necessary skills, but does not propel him to action.

In addition to class disparities, the home space is likewise related to gender, as women and mothers are often associated with the home. Radwa Ashur argues that Umm Sa'ad, like other female characters in Kanafāni's work, is relegated to the more traditional roles of mother and sister of the fighter (quoted in Coffin 100-1). While the traditional aspect is present and significant, I think the situation is actually more complex, as Umm Sa'ad oscillates between the traditional and the subversive. Umm Sa'ad represents the national cause as a woman, and a poor woman at that. The intersection of gender, class and nationality thus creates an identity matrix which is more nuanced and multifarious than the sum of its parts. That is not to say that nationalism liberates Umm Sa'ad from traditional gender structures, but rather that each element of her identity complicates the others. The narrator's awe of Umm Sa'ad, read in a Marxist and a national vein, is significant on a narrative level as well. She is often an instrument for the narrator's story, and perhaps also for his politics, as he views her as a conduit to the old Palestine. Her gender and class allow for her to be made into a Palestinian icon, while also revealing a lack in the narrator. So, while as the narrator obviously wields great power in the novel, he also needs her to supplant what he does not have – a connection to both the land and the resistance movement.

While Umm Sa'ad and the narrator live in different kinds of homes and occupy different positions in the social order, they are both exiles and therefore lack a home in the broader sense. The collective home from which they have been exiled, the land of Palestine, is present throughout the novel specifically in its absence, as the past and present spaces blend into each

other. One example of the muddling between the present space and the absent one is multiple references to smells, for instance when the narrator notes that Umm Sa'ad evokes "the smell of the countryside," that is, the Palestinian countryside as opposed to the urban Beirut (10).[396] The two smells, and two places, blend into each other through the character of Umm Sa'ad. She is associated with smells and the olfactory element denotes sensual memory, indicating the narrator's yearning for an authentic relic of the old lost land. Such an image is, of course, romanticized, as part of the mythical aspect of Umm Sa'ad's character. The romanticized and idealized image of the land may be necessary for the ongoing national struggle, but is also sentimental and naïve, making it into a utopia. In another example early in the novel, Umm Sa'ad brings a twig for the narrator: "I cut it off from a vine I came across on the way, I will plant it in the door, and in a few years you'll be eating grapes" (11).[397] The vine – a symbol of Palestine despite being of Lebanese origin here – is in a nascent state, so much so that the narrator wonders if it is in fact just a dry twig. But Umm Sa'ad reassures him it will blossom and requires very little water. This is, of course, an allegory for Palestine and the resistance movement, portraying it as natural and needing little to bloom but soil and perseverance, or steadfastness. The vine reappears at the end of the novel, as we will see.

Not all images related to Palestine are quite as romanticized and hopeful, though. In one scene the narrator notices that Umm Sa'ad's hands, that have come to represent her, are injured: "She spread her palms before me, and I saw their grooves – frayed with fatigue and suffering – marked in red lines of wounds that won't ever heal completely" (41).[398] The lines on her hands are described as "grooves," a word usually used in agriculture, making Umm Sa'ad and the land

[396] رائحة الريف, 10

[397] قطعته من دالية صادفتني في الطريق, سأزرعه لك على الباب, وفي أعوام قليلة تأكل عنباً

[398] فرشت أم سعد راحتها أمامي, ورأيت بين شقوقهما التي اهترأت مع التعب والعذاب, آثاراً حمراء لخيوط من الجروح لم تلتئم تماماً بعد

analogous. The marks of exhaustion on her hands are a result of her manual labor, but likewise stem from long years of absence from Palestine; exile is represented by the wounds which cannot heal, certainly not without a return. Two other wounds mentioned in the novel bolster the effect of this scene. They appear earlier in the book, when Umm Sa'ad tells the narrator about Sa'ad's brief visit back to the camp, a result of him being injured "from the wrist to the elbow," noting "his brown strong forearm whose color resembles the color of the land" (34). At this point, the narrator notices that Umm Sa'ad herself is injured in a similar spot, but she explains this is an old wound, "from the days of Palestine" (ibid.). These wounds are reminiscent of Palestine in their appearance but also because they are related to the fight for the land, creating a matrix of links between body and land, injuries and scars, past and present.

The similar injury Sa'ad and his mother sustain underscores their participation in the Palestinian resistance movement, each in their own way. Just like his mother is likened to the land, Sa'ad is often likened to natural elements: "as if he were a tree, as if he were a big rock" (46).[399] Through such descriptions Sa'ad is connected to the land, even though he was likely born in exile and does not know the land for which he is fighting.[400] In an early scene, right after Umm Sa'ad first tells the narrator that her son has joined the *fidā'iyyīn*, the narrator poetically describes mother and son in terms relating to nature and the land. This dizzyingly dense image again starts with Umm Sa'ad's hands: "Her palms were folded across her lap, and I saw them there dry like two pieces of wood, cracked like an old tree trunk, and through the grooves dug into them by endless years of hard labor, I saw her miserable voyage with Sa'ad, from childhood to manhood, these two solid hands tended him like the earth tends a delicate blade of grass, and

[399] كأنه شجرة, كأنه صخرة

[400] Fighting for a land one does not know firsthand is a common theme for many Palestinians and early Zionists. The clear difference between the two is that Palestinians were expelled from the land only decades ago by the very same people they are now fighting, unlike the historic narrative of Zionism.

now the hands suddenly opened and the bird that had been there for twenty years flew off" (22).[401] Umm Sa'ad is described as a part of nature, a timeless and steadfast tree, whose suffering is endowed with value because of its end result – Sa'ad's ability to fly off, that is, join the struggle. Her hands are marked by both time and space, and she becomes a symbol while also remaining a specific woman – she is part and parcel of the place, her hands grooved like the land of which she appears to be a kind of map.[402] Umm Sa'ad's maternal care is likened to the earth's nurturing of a plant, turning her into a veritable mother nature. Moreover, her role is depicted as a natural and necessary part of the resistance movement – creating fighters.

At the end of the novel, the themes of mothering, nature and resistance come together to create an image of the lost land. In the final chapter there is a celebration in the camp when Sa'ad's younger brother, Sa'id, also joins the struggle, giving hope to their father and to the Palestinian cause. After telling the narrator all about it, Umm Sa'ad turns to leave when something familiar happens: "and the room was filled with the smell of the old village as Umm Sa'ad took her small bundle and faced the door" (75).[403] The memory of Palestine is once again evoked, and Umm Sa'ad then stops and notices something: "the vine has budded, cousin, it has budded!" (ibid.).[404] This is the vine Umm Sa'ad planted at the narrator's doorstep in the novel's first chapter, right after the first mention of the "smell of the village;" the narrator was skeptical about its ability to grow but she promised it would grow. Now that another son has joined the struggle, the metaphor for Palestine comes full circle and the earth itself seems replenished. The

[401] كانت كفاها مطويتين على حضنها, ورأيتهما هناك جافتين كقطعتي خطب, مشققتين كجذع هرم, وعبر الأخاديد التي حفرتها فيها سنون لا تحصى من العمل الصعب, رأيت رحلتها الشقية مع سعد, منذ كان طفلاً إلى أن شب رجلاً, تعهدته هاتان الكفان الصلبتان مثلما تتعهد الأرض ساق العشبة الطرية, والآن انفتحتا فجأة فطار من بينهما العصفور الذي كان هناك عشرين سنة

[402] As I noted in Chapter One, Anton Shammas describes *Gate of the Sun* in the following terms: "it is a treasure map of Palestine. The memory exiled outside the map in 48' now dictates the story on the erased scroll, and the story redraws the map of the lost land" (my translation).

[403] وفاحت الغرفة برائحة الريف العريق حين أخذت أم سعد صرتها الصغيرة وتوجهت إلى الباب

[404] برعمت الدالية يا ابن العم برعمت!

irony is, of course, that the ground in which Umm Sa’ad has planted the vine is not in Palestine, to which she has no access, and so she and the vine are both still in exile. While the narrative has returned to its starting point, the characters still cannot.

Spaces in the novel are liminal and precarious – the home is itinerant and unstable, and the land is absent and out of reach. The novel therefore fittingly ends, as it began, at the threshold, the *madkhal*, revisiting the vine. The narrator notes: “And I stepped toward the door where Umm Sa’ad was bending over the ground, where she had planted – in a time that seemed to me at this moment to be immemorial – this brown dry twig that she had carried over to me that morning, looking at a green bud pushing through the ground in an audible vigor” (75).[405] This final description blends time – fuzzy already as it is both immemorial and of this moment – and space, represented by the ground. The Arabic word for “twig” used here is *‘ūdah*, (عودة) whose root, in slightly different vocalization (*‘awdah*), would mean “return” and refers to the Palestinian right of return. On the eve of his own return to Palestine, Mahmoud Darwish notes: “exile is so powerful within me, maybe I’ll bring it back to the land with me” (198). Exile and return are powerful political vehicles as well as literary tropes, but they are likewise uncertain and problematic, as Darwish explains: “I’m not returning. I’m coming. No one can return to the imagined place or to the man he once was. Al-Birwe no longer exists, nor is the right of return guaranteed. I’m coming but not returning. I’m coming but not arriving” (1996, 172). At the end of *Umm Sa’ad* the land remains unattainable, and homes are temporary; exile continues, and a return is nowhere in sight. But Umm Sa’ad herself is nevertheless steadfast, even as she stands to lose her son. Thus, as she brings the twig over to the narrator, the verb used is “to carry” (حملت),

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[405] وخطوت نحو الباب حيث كانت أم سعد مكبة فوق التراب, حيث غرست – منذ زمن بدا لي تلك اللحظة سحيق البعد – تلك العودة البنية اليابسة التي حملتها إليّ ذات صباح, تنظر إلى رأس أخضر كان يشق التراب بعنفوان له صوت

which is also the root used for a pregnant woman (حامل, literally meaning "carrier"). Mothering is her resistance.[406]

Maps, Monuments and Relics: Mourning Spaces in *To the End of the Land*

If Kanafāni's *Umm Sa'ad* is set mostly in the confines of the narrator's home, Grossman's *To the End of the Land* is a travelogue, as Ora spends much of the novel walking along a sprawling set of paths and routes known as "The Israel Trail." My analysis of spaces in the novel therefore starts with the land before moving to the home. Ora's trip is, as we have seen, an attempt to avoid news of her son's death and so the land is an escape and refuge for her and becomes the space in which she tells her story. It is also a deeply political space, the site of endless wars and battles over control and sovereignty, with varying outcomes depending on one's vantage point. So, for example, Ora is driven to the Galilee early in the book by Sami, a Palestinian taxi driver who has driven her family around for some 20 years. She asks Sami to take her and Avram as far away as possible, "to where the country ends," the origin of the book's English title. Ora's request, while mostly rhetorical, elicits a response of a different order from Sami, given his position in the same land: "for me it ended a long time ago" (149).[407] His statement reveals that Ora thinks of the country's "end" geographically, spatially, whereas Sami is thinking about it not only historically – as the presence and especially sovereignty of Jews in the land marks an endpoint for him and Palestinians in general – but also mythically; for those who have been expelled from it, the land and the ability to live in it have indeed ended.

Ora's excursion through various parts of the Galilee serves multiple purposes: she leaves her house to avoid any news, and she tells Avram about his estranged son in a desperate attempt

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[406] Curiously, this Arabic adjective can only be conjugated in the masculine.
[407] "בשבילי היא נגמרה מזמן" (167).

to shield his life.[408] Ofra Amichai sees this excursion as part of the novel's preoccupation with the Binding of Isaac, as in the biblical story Abraham and his son must first "[rise] up and [go]" (Genesis 22:3). But even before any mythical significance, the land – especially the Galilee where they spend most of their time – is highly concrete and material, described in vivid detail: rocks, trees and brooks, on and around the winding pathways. The land seems both extremely expansive, in a bird's eye view, and unusually close, as if one could smell it. Ora and Avram have no clear destination; their orientation is away from home more than anything else. Therefore, they are not necessarily focused on knowing exactly where they are, though later they look at a map and retrace their trajectory. Surveying the map, they try to surmise where they started the hike, which proves to be difficult given how dazed they were during the first few days: "Maybe it was here?... How can anyone remember? What did we even see those first few days? Who could see anything at all?" (401).[409] Despite this, they do recognize some places through which they passed: Kfar Yuval, Tel Hai Forest, Ein Ro'im, Kedesh River, the Dishon Stream, ending up on Mount Meron. Their contact with the map is tactile, an extension of their actual walk as well as of their relationship: "two fingers dart around, run into and cross over each other […] she leads her finger down the winding path. Avram's finger is next to hers, just behind […] her fingers press into the map, leaving a brief indentation in the plastic" (401). Ora's finger leaves an impermanent mark on the plastic cover of the map, as a reminder of how malleable the map and the land are, how they respond to human presence and activity. Presence on the land leaves traces on it, this image reminds us, but only time will tell how long they last.

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[408] Much of what has been written about the novel focuses on this link between life and storytelling.

[409] אולי כאן, היא מציעה...איך אפשר לזכור. מה בכלל ראינו בימים הראשונים, היא אומרת, מי בכלל ראה משהו. והוא מגחך, זומבי גמור הייתי...אני לא ראיתי אז כלום (עמ' 398-9)

The map represents both natural features such as mountains, rivers and seas, and manmade features, most notably political borders.[410] While the map includes both types of features, the distinction between them is important, especially in a region in which these lines are vexed and fraught. Ora's hand tracing the map soon demonstrates the impact of manmade borders: "Her finger runs back along the path until it hits the border. 'Oops.' She stops and folds in her finger. 'Lebanon' " (401). This accidental crossing of the border, an inadvertent transgression, is a comment not only on the map but on the real world – in region so small one could encounter the border accidentally. Borders thus appear to be entirely passable on the one hand, as transparent or artificial as a line on a map, and dangerous and impassable on the other hand, highlighting the fragility of the land in its geopolitical state.[411]

Monuments, Sites of Mourning

To the End of the Land does not only depict a map as an artifact; it creates one as Ora and Avram traverse the land on their journey. Its details are the twists and turns of the paths, the nooks and crevices, as well as the tales and memories of their lives. This map is accompanied by the haunting purpose of this trip – to outrun the possible news of their son's death. As such, the path is laden with the possibility of death, lurking at every turn, in the past, present and future. And so, at one moment Ora reveals a macabre implication of her walk, as she divulges what Ofer said to her before he left for the military operation: "if something happens to him, he wants us to leave the country… 'promise me you'll leave the country' " (414-5).[412] She then notes that when her older son, Adam, was a soldier, he asked that if he died during his service a monument be

[410] Gloria Anzaldúa calls the U.S.-Mexico border an "open wound/[…] running down the length of my body/ staking fence rods in my flesh/ splits me splits me/ *me raja me raja.*" See: *Borderlands: La Frontera*, pp.24.
[411] Compare this physical map of the land to the much more abstract and poetic notion of a map of memories drawn in the grooves of Umm Sa'ad's hands.
[412] (410) "אם משהו יקרה לו, הוא רוצה שנעזוב את הארץ...'תבטיחי לי שתעזבו את הארץ' "

erected in his memory near his favorite club in Jerusalem. Given her sons' requests, Ora confesses that her walk is akin to an act of farewell: "And somehow, in all these days…what can I say…in the moments I cannot repress, I feel that the whole time I'm walking, I'm also saying goodbye" (415).[413] A bit later she notes that she often feels this way about the land: "every encounter I have with it is also a bit of a farewell" (419).[414] While the latter statement clearly marks the land as the object of farewell, the former does not, and so implicitly Ora is saying goodbye to the land and to her son at the same time – after all, she would leave the land if Ofer dies, necessitating the farewell. The land and the son are intertwined, and so walking throughout the book is an act of mourning both before their time.

Adam's idea about a monument is not surprising given how common they are on the Israel Trail and throughout the country.[415] In fact, the conversation about leaving the country in the event of Ofer's death is bookended by two such encounters. Right before Ora tells Avram about Ofer's request, they come across a monument, reading its plaque: "On the peak of Mount Meron they stand at a lookout point: 'Restored by the family and friends of First Lieutenant Uriel Peretz, of blessed memory, born in Ofira on the 2nd of Kislev, 5737 (1977), fell in Lebanon on the 7th of Kislev 5758 (1998). Scout, soldier, devoted to the Torah and to his country' " (413).[416]

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[413] ואיכשהו, היא אומרת, בכל הימים האלה, מה אני אגיד לך, ברגעים שאני לא מצליחה להדחיק, אני מרגישה שבכל ההליכה הזאת אני כל הזמן גם נפרדת. (411)
I have modified the translation here, because the English specifies "goodbye to the country" whereas the Hebrew maintains the ambiguity.

[414] שכל פגישה שלי איתה היא גם קצת פרידה ממנה (414)
Hebrew does not have a neuter, and so this statement is more intimate, human and gendered in Hebrew (with her, rather than with it). The term used here is *eretz*, which is vaguer and more geographical than the more political state or country, *medina*. Both terms are grammatically feminine.

[415] Much has been written about the role of monuments in Israel's Culture of Bereavement. For example, see: Michael Feige (who himself was killed in an attack in Tel-Aviv); Esther Levinger; Maoz Azaryahu. Some have also written about commemoration, or lack thereof, of Palestinian sites and people in Israel. See: Barbara Mann's "An Apartment to Remember"; Tamir Sorek's "Cautious Commemoration."

[416] על פסגת המירון הם עומדים במצפור – "שוקם ע"י משפחתו וחבריו של סגן אוריאל פרץ ז"ל, נולד באופירה ב-ב' כסלו תשל"ז, ונפל בקרב בלבנון בז' כסלו תשנ"ח, סייר, לוחם, בן תורה ואוהב הארץ (409).
Peretz is the son of Miriam Peretz, the recent recipient of the Israel Prize, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. David Grossman received the Israel Prize for Literature in the same year.

Immediately following their conversation about leaving in the event of loss, they see yet another monument, and others follow. The land is punctuated with monuments, often situated in nature and made to seem like part of the land, as natural as the trees and rocks, when in fact they are part of the national structuring of the trail, part of its organization and logic.

Passing by one more monument, on the slopes of Mount Meron, Ora is reminded of an instance from Ofer's childhood related to a different site of national commemoration.[417] When Ofer was six years old, he suddenly asked Ora " 'Mommy, who's against us?' " (420). Though wanting to keep his world "innocent and free of hatred," Ora relents and explains some of the geopolitical realities of Israel and its relations with the Arab world, in a simplified way. The young Ofer becomes existentially terrified, convinced that Israel is about to be annihilated given how small it is compared to the many Arab countries surrounding it.[418] Ofer discovers more and more of the vexing complexities of the Middle East, compounding his fears. Ora only manages to solve it by taking Ofer to Latrun, the site of numerous mythical and historic battles en route to Jerusalem, most recently during the 1948 War. Today, in addition to a 19th century monastery and an archeological site, Latrun is home to a large monument for fallen soldiers from the Armored Corps (*ḥeil ha-shiryon*), as well as a vast tank museum. Ora shows this to a six-year-old Ofer, quelling his fears: "She held his hand and walked him to one of the larger [tanks], a Soviet T-55. Ofer stood facing the tank, excited…She helped him climb up the turret, then clambered up after him. He stood there, swaying, looked fearfully around, and asked, 'Is this ours?' 'Yes.' 'You mean, all this?' 'Yes, and there's lots more, we have loads of these' "

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[417] The monument they pass by at this moment is for a Druze soldier, killed in Lebanon in 1992. Even though he is not Jewish, the dates on the monument are according to the Hebrew calendar and his name is followed by the honorific "May God avenge his death" (*ha-shem yikom damo*, abbreviated as HY"D, הי"ד). The Druze community is Arabic speaking, yet no Arabic appears on the monument. The community has a complex relationship with Islam and Arab identity, as well as with the State of Israel.

[418] Ofer's existential dread in many ways replicates that of Israel, seen throughout the novel.

(427).[419] Ora reassures Ofer, restoring his sense of safety by repeating a militaristic mantra that equates tanks and military might with safety. She herself acknowledges this: " 'Maybe it was a little primitive, my instant treatment, but it was definitely effective.' Then she adds drily, 'Besides, at the time I thought that what was good enough for a whole country was good enough for my child' " (ibid.).[420] The nation is thus an extension of her family, which in turn subscribes to the national narrative and participates in it.

"I can't deal with Arab village ruins now" – Erased Arab Places

One of the main factors missing from the map and the landscape is the land's Arab denizens, in the past and present. The mountains and rivers Ora and Avram pass through and then see on the map have Arab names as well, but those do not appear there; they were wiped out, along with the destroyed villages, as is the wont of colonial forces. For example, the Israeli Kfar Yuval was partly established on the ruins of the Palestinian Abel al-Qamh, and many other sites in the region were erected in a similar fashion.[421] Ora and Avram even recognize this reality as they look at the map: " 'and that must be the Arab village.' 'What's left of it'" (401).[422] On the one hand, this statement indicates acknowledgment, an understanding that the places they see now, which they are reclaiming through their excursion, cover over a host of places and names that came before them; these places are all there at the cost of other places, other people.

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[419] קני תותח ומקלעים היו מכוונים לעברו. היא אחזה בידו והוליכה אותו אל אחד הגדולים שבהם, טי-55 סובייטי. נרעש עמד עופר מול הטנק...היא עזרה לו לטפס על הצריח, וטיפסה אחריו. הוא עמד, מתנודד, והשקיף בחשש סביב ושאל: זה שלנו? כן. מה, כל זה? כן, ויש עוד הרבה, המון כאלה יש לנו (422).
Ofer's reaction to the tanks is worth quoting at length: "He asked to climb on another tank, and another, and another. He ran his fingers in awe over tracks, firing platforms, equipment chambers, and transmissions and rode like a cavalier on the barrels" (379).

[420] אולי זה קצת פרימיטיבי, האינסטנט-טיפול שעשיתי לו, אבל זה בהחלט היה יעיל. וחוץ מזה, היא מסננת ביובש, אני חשבתי אז שמה שטוב למדינה שלמה – טוב גם לילד שלי (422).
For more on the security discourse in contemporary nationalism, see, among others, Judith Butler's *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004), pages.42–45, and Jasbir K. Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007).

[421] Not all the places mentioned on the map were established on the ruins of Palestinian villages; Kfar Giladi, for example, was founded in the 1920s.

[422] וזה בטח הכפר הערבי. מה שנשאר ממנו (399)

Renaming was a common feature of Zionism, Lital Levy explains: “this policy of renaming obscured the recent Palestinian Arab presence and its Arabic-encoded history, manufacturing an unbroken continuity between biblical antiquity and the Israeli present,” a process she terms “a translational cartography” (50). On the other hand, Ora can choose not to see the former Arab village, as Avram explains: “ ‘I wanted to see it, but you ran on.’ ‘I’ve had enough ruins in my life’” (Grossman 401).[423] Ora’s choice to overlook the ruins stems from privilege and amounts to not fully recognizing them – she can move on from these ruins and not take in their full impact.[424] This choice reflects Khalidi’s analysis that: “this process of naming is an attempt to privilege one dimension of a complex reality at the expense of others, with the ultimate aim of blotting the others out, or decisively subordinating them to Israeli domination” (15). Earlier, atop Mount Naphtali, Ora and Avram stumble upon “chiseled stone ruins,” which could either be “remnants of an Arab village or perhaps an ancient temple” (Grossman 300). This confusion points to the omnipresence of ruins, as destruction render places, and histories, all too similar. Avram, having once read an article, determines that “the stone is from the Roman era,” and Ora welcomes his assessment with a sense of relief, saying: “ ‘I can’t deal with Arab village ruins now’ ” (300). [425] The Arab layer seems particularly haunting, as it is not relegated to the past but continue as a specter in the present as well – for Ora, for the land and for the novel.

Arab layers of the land, covered over and re-named, are evident not only during the trek through the Galilee but in Ora’s stories about her family space as well. Later in their trek, Ora

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[423] אני דווקא רציתי לראות ואת ברחת. מספיק חורבות יש לי בחיים (שם)
Ora uses the word *ḥurva*, which has religious connotations, as in the destruction of the Temple, and historical ones, especially referring to European Jewish communities after the Holocaust. The root is also used in Arabic, *khirbeh*.

[424] For more information on Palestinian villages destroyed in 1948, and the Jewish-Israeli settlements built in their stead, see the *Nakba* map on the *Zochrot* website: http://www.zochrot.org/he/site/nakbaMap.

[425] "מאחוריהם, גלי חורבות של אבן מסותתת, שרידים של כפר ערבי, אולי של מקדש עתיק; אברם – שהציץ לא-מזמן באיזה מאמר – סבור שהסיתות הוא מהתקופה הרומית, ואורה מקבלת בברכה את הסברה שלו. אין לי כוח עכשיו, היא אומרת, לשרידים של כפר ערבי" (304).
Khalidi likens the process of naming to Israel’s approach to archeology as well. See: 15-6.

tells Avram a story about her family life in their previous home in Tsur Hadassah, southwest of Jerusalem, recounting similar sentiments about places' Arab past:

> At first, when they still lived in Tsur Hadassah, they would walk the path to Ein Yoel. They passed by the plum and peach orchards of Mevo Beitar, and the remnants of quince, walnut, lemon, almond, and olive groves in the Arab villages that had ceased to exist – every so often Ora told herself she had to at least find out their names – and sometimes they walked to the Ma'ayanot River, down in a wadi full of gushing water and little gardens where the villagers of Ḥusān and Battir planted eggplants, peppers, beans and zucchini (403).[426]

This leisurely walk of the well-to-do suburban Jewish couple passes through relics, but the "remnants" are attributed to trees, glossing over the people expelled from the destroyed villages to the groves. The harmonic, Edenic-like image of plentiful growth stands in sharp contrast to the Palestinian experience of depopulation and destruction, which tellingly is not linked to a destructive agent but is rather referenced in the passive "ceased to exist," in the Hebrew literally "existed and no longer do." Ora's eternally postponed thought of finding out these places' names – code for accountability – is an afterthought, not an action. A search for this past would reveal that Mevo Beitar, for example, was established on the grounds of al-Kabu, a village of some 300 Palestinians which was destroyed in October 1948.[427]

Home

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[426] בתחילה, כשעוד גרו בצור-הדסה, היו הולכים בשביל לעין-יואל, על-פני מטעי השזיפים והאפרסקים של מבוא-ביתר, ובין השרידים של מטעי החבושים והאגוזים והלימונים והשקדים והזיתים של הכפרים הערבים שהיו ואינם – מדי פעם הייתה אומרת לעצמה שהיא חייבת לפחות לברר את שמותיהם – ולפעמים היו הולכים לנחל המעיינות, בתוך ואדי שכולו מים זורמים וגינות קטנות ובהן חצילים ופלפלים ושעועית וקישואים, ששתלו תושבי חוסאן ובתיר (449).
Note that the word "wadi", also used in the Hebrew, is an Arabic word.

[427] See *Zochrot*: http://www.zochrot.org/he/village/49455.

As Ora and Avram recount their lives, the trail they follow becomes a walk down memory lane in which personal and collective histories are intertwined and intermingled, making them often difficult to discern. Many of the memories narrated during travel across the land take place at home and depict the familial dynamics in a process of collapse, as in the present of the story Ora is separated from her husband and alienated from her older son. Home is very clearly a familial space, where Ora and Ilan have made a family for themselves despite the horrors in their lives. The scenes associated with home – the concept of home more than the physical place, as the family moved between houses – are extremely intimate, but even then, the geopolitical reality peeks through. For example, as her son is preparing to leave for the military operation, early in the book, Ora reminisces:

> She remembers when the kids were little and they lived in Tsur Hadassah, in the house they bought from Avram, how they liked to hang the laundry out to dry at night, together, one last domestic chore at the end of a long, exhausting day. Together they would carry the large tub out to the garden facing the dark fields and the valley [wadi], and the Arab village of Ḥusān […] Was there someone from Ḥusān who had gone out in the last light of day and was watching them now? Aiming a gun at them? Ora wondered sometimes, and a chill would flutter down her spine. Or was there a general, human immunity for people hanging laundry – especially this kind of laundry? (72-3) [428]

The family unit is characterized by its simple and everyday togetherness, in harmony with nature. This is opposed to the Palestinian village, which is perceived as a threat to the familial

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[428] "והיא נזכרת, הילדים היו קטנים, הם גרו אז בצור-הדסה, בבית שקנו מאברם, והם אהבו לתלות ביחד כביסה בלילות, משימה ביתית אחרונה בסופם של ימים ארוכים ומתישים. יחד היו נושאים את הגיגית הגדולה אל הגינה, מול השדות האפלים והוואדי, מול הכפר הערבי חוסאן. התאנה הגדולה והגרווילאה היו מרשרשות בשקט, היו להן חיים עשירים מסתוריים משלהן, וחבלי הכביסה הלכו והתמלאו עשרות פריטי לבוש זעירים [...] האם מישהו מחוסאן ירד מבעוד אור לוואדי והוא צופה בהם עכשיו? מכוון אליהם נשק? חשבה אורה מדי פעם, ומשהו רפרף במרכז גבה, והאם יש איזו חסינות כללית, אנושית, למי שתולה כביסה, וכביסה כזו בפרט? (101)

natural harmony, and is conceptualized, almost as a synecdoche, as a gun aimed at the family unit and unity. The imagined threat posed by the village is part of the general Israeli perception of Palestinians as exclusively dangerous, but it is also analogous to the current specific threat to the family posed by the military operation.[429] Family and its safe space of home, represented by laundry ("and this type of laundry in particular"), are universalized, as their humanness is argued to merit a kind of protection. This universal protection, however, does not seem to extend to the denizens of Ḥusān, reduced to a menacing gun and not thought of as having homes of their own, with children and laundry and a threatened family space.

Given the importance of home, it is unsurprising that when Ora imagines the dangers of the notifying officers, arriving to inform her of her son's death, they are perceived as threats to the familial space of home, standing at her doorstep as if they were invading it. Home is positioned as a sanctuary, a refuge from the assault of reality, relying on a clear distinction between inside and outside, which is becoming increasingly porous. Given the intermingling of personal and collective, home – even at its most intensely private moments – is always already a political structure as well. Spaces therefore play a significant and multifaceted role in Grossman's novel: the fraught land is, as we have seen, punctuated with both relics of Arab villages and monuments for fallen soldiers. Both types of artifacts or remnants point to something no longer extant but in vastly different ways; the monument is an intentional and institutional structure aimed at maintaining memory, while the ruin is a largely unintentional marker that points to disuse, neglect and forgetting. Home is the familial space, associated with safety and protection but also constantly threatened. Home and land both are personal and

[429] The question of who the threatening agent is in this case is complex and tellingly remains unaddressed in the novel.

political but also mean very different things for Palestinians and Israelis in Palestine/Israel, a space whose borders remain undecided and bleeding.

Resistance and Comparison: Reading Kanafāni and Grossman Together

As we have seen, *Umm Sa'ad* and *To the End of the Land* construct figures of mourning mothers on opposite sides of the same national conflict, but in both novels the loss has not yet happened. The disruption and reversal of the temporality of mourning as that which follows loss is rooted in the context of a national conflict, in which personal and collective spaces are under threat. So far, we have followed Umm Sa'ad and Ora separately, examining their role as mothers and the function of time and space in their stories. Throughout, the power differential between Palestinians and Israelis has been clear and evident, and perhaps nothing emphasizes this more than the ways in which the novels portray their protagonists as resisting, oscillating between acceptance and defiance. Both texts describe acts of resistance, and both are related to the women's maternal roles, but their acts are vastly and importantly different, leading me to a more explicit and direct comparison between the two novels, their style and politics.

Resistance is a central theme of Kanafāni's *Umm Sa'ad*, as Sa'ad joining the armed struggle against Israel sets the novel into motion. Resistance has multiple facets and meanings in the novel and in the Palestinian experience, for example in what we have seen in the politics of steadfastness operating in everyday life. Kanafāni himself was a leading figure in the resistance movement, specifically in connecting politics and literature. One of his most famous critical works is the 1966 manifesto "Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine 1948-1966" (أدب المقاومة في فلسطين المحتلة), in which he claims that literature must take part in the Palestinian resistance movement. Darwish's eulogy for Kanafāni, that we saw in the previous chapter, illustrates his importance as both a writer and a political activist. Kanafāni saw these two aspects

of his life as closely related, working towards the same end. Therefore, another obituary for him in one of Lebanon's newspapers in 1972 describes his literary production as a form of political and even military resistance: "He was a commando who never fired a gun, whose weapon was a ball-point pen, and his arena the newspaper pages" (quoted in Harlow 179). However, *Umm Sa'ad* complicates this political view as Umm Sa'ad is depicted as the prominent representative of the struggle, and not the narrator who is associated with words and language but fails to utilize them productively for the cause.

The novel presents a complex and nuanced notion and practice of resistance. Sa'ad joining the *fidā'iyyīn* is not the sole way to resist, nor even the privileged way, and so the text does not describe his training or even detail the ideology behind his choice. Instead, the focus is on those left behind whose daily life in the camp becomes a type of resistance, as part of the novel's focus on lower socio-economic classes as the true agents of the resistance. For example, when Israel bombards the path to the airport adjacent to the refugee camp, Umm Sa'ad and others from the camp clear the road of metal shards intended to damage passing vehicles.[430] They are described as spectral figures ("they dispersed quickly, like ghosts," 44), demonstrating the mortal danger they face as they engage in this action as well as their social status as transparent figures.[431] After recounting this event the narrator notes that: "a unique smell emanates from [Umm Sa'ad's hands], the smell of brave resistance which is a part of one's body and blood" (46).[432] This action by the airport inaugurates Umm Sa'ad, and other dwellers of the camp, as not only aids to the Palestinian cause but as veritable resistants, risking their lives even for the

[430] Israel indeed bombed the airport in Beirut in December 1968, in response to an attack by the PFLP on an El-Al plane in Athens.
[431] وبسرعة انتشروا, كالأشباح
[432] تفوح منهما رائحة فريدة, رائحة المقاومة الباسلة حين تكون جزءاً من جسد الانسان ودمائه.
The use of the Arabic verb I translate as "emanates," تفوح, evokes the previous instances of smell in the novel, relating this scene to the smell of Palestine.

property of wealthier urban dwellers. Their contribution is linked to their social status, and so it is no coincidence that the verb that describes their actions of clearing the road is "cleaning" (ينظفونه, 44), the same as Umm Sa'ad's manual labor cleaning houses.

Hailing the poor residents of the refugee camp as resistants draws a stark opposition between them and the wealthier urbanites. Umm Sa'ad tells the narrator that as she and the other camp dwellers were pushing vehicles left in the middle of the road to the side to protect them, they were worried the owners would accuse them of stealing. The narrator finds this implausible, but she berates his lack of understanding, likely the result of his social class: "You don't know anything…what can I do when a car owner points at me, and I'm in my shabby clothes and my disheveled hair is sent flying by the blast of the plane and my face is stained with sand and sweat…and he says: did you see her stealing my car?" (45).[433] Umm Sa'ad and the car owner are depicted in clearly opposing ways – she is a poor woman sacrificing herself, covered in sand and sweat, common symbols of the resistance movement making her a popular icon. The car owner, on the other hand, is only concerned about his car, and is therefore detached from the people and their struggle. Umm Sa'ad does not herself fight in the resistance, but she enables it in multiple ways. So, the wounds she sustains in the airport incident are revisited at the end of the chapter, as Umm Sa'ad makes perhaps her most extended speech in the text, contemplating the effects of time on the body and noting that wounds may be covered over and become scars, but they are still present: "the days of humiliation will create a thick crust over them [the wounds], and it will become impossible for anyone to see them, but I will know, I'm the one who'll know, that they will keep puncturing me under the crust. I'll know" (46).[434] The passage of time might change

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[433] أنت لا تعرف شيئاً..ما الذي أستطيع أن أفعله حين يؤشر صاحب سيارة علي، وأنا في ملابسي الرثة وشعري الذي طير ريح الطائرة غطاءه ووجهي الملطخ بالرمل والعرق...ويقول: رأيتها تسرق سيارتي؟

[434] ستضع الأيام الذليلة فوقها قشرة سميكة, وسيضحي من المستحيل على أي كان أن يراها, ولكنني أعرف, أنا التي أعرف, أنها ستظل تخزني تحت تلك القشرة. أعرف

the appearance of things, but Umm Sa'ad vows to remember what lies beneath – the origins of the wound, the pain of the past, the cause and the struggle. Her allegiance to the resistance movement is bolstered in reports that Kanafāni had intended to write additional episodes about her, confirming Sa'ad's death which is never verified in the novel: "We need another story about Umm Sa'ad, when her son was martyred." In this never written story, gender also plays a role, as this distinction between the mother and father clarifies: "Abu Sa'ad mounted a picture of Sa'ad on the wall and beneath it he proudly hung Sa'ad's Kalashnikov machine gun. Do you know what Umm Sa'ad did two days later? She took the Kalashnikov down and gave it to a fighter" (quoted in Coffin 105).

The premise of *To the End of the Land* is fueled by its own rendition of defiance, which given the political circumstances might be better described as protest – professing opposition but not necessarily acting to change the problem. The novel's main premise illustrates this point well, as Ora attempts to avoid the news of her son's death, knowing she cannot prevent it from happening. Avoidance becomes her tool – such news requires two sides, a messenger and an addressee, and so if she removes one of them, if she pulls out of the equation, it will be nullified. She defines this as her protest, and is aware of its futility: "It's a meager and pathetic sort of protest, she knows, and in an hour or two it will dissipate and leave an insipid taste, but what else can she do? Sit and wait for them to come and dig their notification into her? 'I'm not staying here…I'm not going to receive it from them'…That's it, it's decided, she'll refuse. She'll be the first notification-refusenik" (94).[435] In keeping with her sense that Ofer's death is inevitable, Ora can only conceive of two options: either waiting for the notification or trying to escape it. The

[435] "מחאה עלובה ופתטית, היא יודעת, ובעוד שעה-שעתיים היא כבר תתפוגג ותשאיר טעם של תפלות, אבל מה עוד היא יכולה לעשות? לשבת ולחכות בלי לזוז, שהם יבואו וינעצו בה את הבשורה שלהם? אני לא נשארת פה...אני לא מקבלת את זה מהם...זהו, הוחלט, היא תסרב, היא תהיה סרבנית-הבשורה הראשונה" (129)

question then becomes, whether in this context avoidance is tantamount to taking a stance or to not taking one. Or else, what horizon does Ora see for political action and for her agency in the situation? This political view aligns with much of the national corpus – while characters of soldiers abound in Israeli literature, most of them do not have mothers who play a significant role in the narrative. When mothers do appear, they are bereaved, and they do not question national ideology (Olmert 2013 334).[436] Ora constantly doubts her own politics and notes that she is not good at arguments, but her statement about the notification is clearly political, or at least has a political aspect. She uses the notion of refusal, which is the term used in Israel for acts of disobedience, in particular conscientious objection to military actions and conscription.[437] At the same time, Ofer refusing to participate in the military operation, refusing to kill and be killed, is never seen as a possibility.

In Umm Sa'ad's case, it is clear what she is resisting – Israeli presence in Palestine and the ongoing dispossession of Palestinians. The precise object of Ora's protest, however, is more difficult to discern. She does not seem to be protesting a particular government policy or even the operation in which her son has enlisted. Rather, Ora objects to the incursion of the collective history into her personal life – what Georges Perec calls "history with its capital axe" (17).[438] She resents that: "this country, with its iron boot, had once again landed a thundering foot in a

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[436] Olmert lists such texts as Shamir's *He Walked Through the Fields* and Yehoshua Bar-Yoseph's *The Mother*. She claims that since the 1990s, characters of mothers become more critical of the Israeli establishment, citing, for example, Orly Castle-Bloom's *Dolly City*. However, I think this argument neglects to discuss what constitutes critiquing the establishment, not to mention the fantastic nature of Castle-Bloom's novel. In fact, I would argue that some of the most critical writing is in poetry, and specifically by Raya Harnik.

[437] The English translation uses the term "refusenik" which might be familiar to English speaking audiences. It originates from an exit ban from the Soviet Union imposed on Jews, as well as other groups, in the 1960s and 1970s, though it is sometimes used more broadly today. Israeli Hebrew does use the term refusenik, said just like that, but that is not what Ora says here; she uses the Hebrew word for "refuser," *sarbanit*, which is the one used in the context of conscientious objectors.

[438] "L'Histoire avec sa grande hache." In his *W, ou le souvenir d'enfance*, Perec is playing with the double meaning of "hache" – an axe and the letter H, as well as with the two meanings of "histoire," as history and story.

place where the state should not be" (Grossman 605).[439] The temporal marker "once again" harkens back to the novel's layers of history, both personal and collective, as the past haunts present-day events. *To the End of the Land* commences with a prologue that takes place at a hospital during the 1967, decades before the present-day military operation. That is where we first meet the teenaged Ora, Avram and Ilan, hospitalized with various ailments while the war rages. Their intricate relationship is fashioned up against the national history of 1967. But Ora's ire is mostly directed at another instance in which the state and its history interfered with their lives – the 1973 war in which Avram, as a soldier, was captured and tortured by the Egyptians. Ora defines that time as the moment in which "they nationalized her life," (ibid.) a term she uses again in an impassioned monologue indicting a long line of politicians, Palestinian and Israeli, for their culpability in the ongoing violence: "All those people who razed her life, who keep nationalizing her every moment and every child" (600, translation modified, Y.K.).[440]

This is not the first time Ora refers to her son being nationalized. Earlier in the novel, in relation to Ofer's military service, she notes: "the boy he used to be had been lost to her forever the moment he was nationalized – lost to himself, too" (75).[441] Despite the efforts of national ideology to fuse the personal and the collective together, they are at odds here, as being initiated into the national fold amounts to a loss of childhood and self, for both mother and son. Furthering the tension between personal and national, specifically framing it in terms of motherhood, Ora wonders about her role in this process: "And how is it that I'm loyal to *them*, to the ones sending him there…more than to my motherhood?" (91). Motherhood is thus opposed

[439] הארץ הזאת, במגף ברזל, שוב הנחיתה מדרך רועם במקום שאסור לארץ להיות. (589)
[440] כל אלה שחירבו לה את החיים, שממשיכים להלאים לה כל רגע וכל ילד (585)
It is nevertheless interesting that Ora points to a vague "they" who nationalize her life, not directly implicating a specific agent.
[441] הילד שהוא היה אבד לה לעולמים מרגע שהולאם, ואבד גם לו (103)

to the institutions of the state, the ones sending her child to fight, and so it is her maternal role propelling her dissent: “And now it’s decided. She has to obey this thing that instructs her to get up and leave home, immediately, without waiting even one minute. She cannot stay here. And in some strange and confusing way, this thing seems to be her maternal instinct, which she thought had dulled, and upon which so many doubts had lately been cast” (92).[442] While Ora wonders why she allows her son to be sent to war, her question seems to remain rhetorical; it does not translate to outright political dissent against the war or the state.

Ora’s rallying call against the state’s overreach into its citizens’ lives relies on a distinction between the personal and the collective. This distinction, however, is not available to everyone and its politics and implication merit further scrutiny. For example, Ora insists on distinguishing between her child and the soldier he becomes, trying to “[save] her child from the barbarian opposite her” (604).[443] Separating her son from the soldier implies that Ofer has no choice in the matter, that he is not responsible for his actions as a soldier. It casts the soldier as a victim, someone who needs protection, disregarding his actual victims. Disentangling her son from the nation assumes conditions of normalcy wherein Ofer can exist outside of the national, in a way that is not available for those living under occupation. So, while Ora distinguishes between her maternal instinct and the national impulse, for Umm Sa’ad they are entirely intertwined; her maternal instinct cannot be wholly independent from her political position. For the marginalized Umm Sa’ad, precarity means the political is always present and no space is

[442] ואיך זה אני נאמנה **להם**, לאלה ששולחים אותו...יותר משאני נאמנה לאימהות שלי?...וכעת זה מוכרע. שהיא חייבת לציית לדבר הזה שמורה לה לקום ולעזוב את הבית מיד, בלי לחכות אפילו רגע, אסור לה להישאר כאן, ובאופן מוזר ומבלבל הדבר הזה הוא כנראה אינסטינקט האימהות שלה, שחשבה שכבר קהה בה, שכל-כך הרבה ספקות הוטלו בו באחרונה (117).

[443] הצלת הילד שלה מידי הקלגס שמולה (588).
The Hebrew uses the word *kalgas* (קלגס), which derives from the term for a simple solider in Latin but is very strongly negative in Hebrew.

devoid of it. Separating the two is a luxury she does not have living in a refugee camp – every aspect of her existence is marked by her identity.

The divergent objects of resistance in the two novels demonstrate and highlight the power dynamic in the region, as Ora protests against that which Umm Sa'ad lacks, and strives to have – a state. One can only protest against the state if one has it in the first place. This is true in the simplest, almost bureaucratic sense but also on a more complex level –statelessness cannot afford to have a more nuanced and critical approach to nationalism because there is still a need to fight for the state. In the words of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish – borrowing from Jean Genet and Juan Goytisolo – "a homeland is a stupid idea, except for those who do not have a homeland yet. And when they get one? They should throw it out the window" (Yeshurun 176).

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The novels' approaches to resistance and protest are indicative of the power differential between Israelis and Palestinians in the region, and also illustrate the importance of reading them alongside each other. *Umm Sa'ad* and *To the End of the Land* both situate mothers at the heart of the national project, but motherhood is constructed as it is being jeopardized, meaning that solidifying mothering in the national context entails loss. In other words, the role of national mother is ultimately fulfilled by way of loss, by mourning the son sacrificed at the national altar. Reading these novels alongside each other illuminates the ways in which mothering is subject to loss in the national context, within a nation-state in Grossman and outside of one in Kanafāni. The similar circumstances in which these mothers find themselves resonate differently in such conditions, highlighting the specific meaning and implications of mothering in each context. I therefore now bring some of the features and themes in both texts into direct conversation with each other, namely, the construction of mothering, the role of the father, time and space.

As they construct mothering as part of the national project, both novels depict basic and corporeal elements of mothering, linking it to nature and referencing birth. So, for example, both Umm Sa'ad and Ora recall the births of their sons, as they are about to die. Moreover, both mothers feel their sons in their bodies as they grapple with their impending loss. This could be seen as an attempt to reclaim the sons from the collective fold, returning them to the safety of the womb which is ultimately unsuccessful in both cases – in Kanafāni because Umm Sa'ad herself believes in the need for sacrifice given the condition of Palestinians, and in Grossman because the powers of the state are too powerful to overcome. As both mothers fully subscribe to their national roles for diverging reasons, they are designated as the "mother of the nation;" in Kanafāni's text this role is ascribed to the woman Sa'ad meets while training and by proxy to his own mother, while in Grossman's text Ora resents the kind of title given to Rivkah Guber but does little to avoid it.

The centrality of mothering as the driving force in both novels is underscored by the fact that fathers are mostly absent. Abu Sa'ad appears only briefly and is clearly a less prominent figure in both the familial narrative and the national one. In Grossman's novel, Avram is unable to be involved in Ofer's life and his fatherhood is a family secret. Ofer is instead raised by Ora's husband, Ilan, who is a strong presence in Ofer's life but is largely absent from the novel's present-day, as he and Ora are in the midst of separation. [444] Mothering is therefore situated at the center of the master-narrative of nationalism, more a triumph for the nation than for feminism, especially given the impending loss of the son. The novels' focus on women and mothers notwithstanding, they were written by men, and specifically men who are canonical writers in

444 For more on fathers in literature and politics see: Adia Mendelson Maoz, "The Bereaved Father and His Dead Son in the Works of A.B. Yehoshua" (2010); Nancy E. Berg's "The Politics of Paternity and Patrimony" (2006); Silke-Maria Weineck, *The Tragedy of Fatherhood: King Laius and the Politics of Paternity in the West* (2014).

their respective cultural milieus. While the writers' gender identity does not invalidate the novels' perspectives on women, it does situate them differently vis a vis the mothers in their texts, adding a layer of mediation and perhaps distance.

Both novels are situated at the precipice of loss, on the brink of disaster which has not yet occurred but is already mourned. This temporal framework is, perhaps, the most immediate justification for comparing the two, and defines the construction of mothering and nationalism through sacrifice. This connection is emblemized in the image of the Binding of Isaac and its function in the national imagination of sacrifice. As we have seen, the binding is referenced explicitly in *To the End of the Land*, and while it is not directly mentioned in Umm Sa'ad, I argue that it is implied or suggested through the prevalent term for Palestinian fighters at the time, *fidā'iyyīn*. This was the prominent term used for those taking arms against Israel until the 1980s, when it was replaced with *shahīd*. We have already encountered the background and religious implications of the term *fid'aī*, as well as its connection to the story of the binding. The biblical story is usually discussed in relation to questions of blind faith and sacrifice, but in our context the temporal aspect is crucial. As Feldman and Amichai both point out, the binding is not a case of human immolation but rather of near sacrifice; moments before the carving knife is flung, Isaac is replaced with a ram. It is a tale of an almost occurrence, an intervention that freezes time and allows for a change in course. *Umm Sa'ad* and *To the End of the Land* take place entirely within that frozen or stretched out moment – the son has not yet been sacrificed, but unlike the binding the mothers know all too well that no angel will arrive, and no ram will be provided. Isaac was spared, but these mothers know that their mourning is not preemptive but rather predictive.

The spatial axis, however, marks a significant difference between the novels. Home and land, as we have seen, are central in both, as is the relationship between these spaces. But the meaning of both home and land is strikingly different. Kanafāni's novel takes place mostly in the confines of a home, which proves to be precarious and is in exile to begin with, while Grossman's novel is mostly situated outdoors during an expansive excursion. Umm Sa'ad's home is unstable because she is in exile from the very land in which Ora travels so freely; Umm Sa'ad and the narrator, along with hundreds of thousands of other Palestinian refugees, were expelled from their homes to the actual end of the land. Ora, in comparison, can safely travel the land because she knows she has a home to return to, and because the land is her home. Walking through the land proclaims ownership, almost an act of conquest or at the very least a recognition of conquest, like many Zionist leaders envisioned.[445] Feeling the danger and threat of loss, Ora chooses to escape to the land, in what she describes as "hiking around the country together…our beautiful country" (174).[446] The land is a respite for Ora, which is a privilege Umm Sa'ad cannot enjoy; one woman escapes to the land by choice, while the other was forced to escape from it. Moreover, while the two women obviously are not related to each other their circumstances are, as Jewish-Israelis attachment to the land necessarily comes at the expense of Palestinians.

In addition to the diverging national identities, which is the focus of my analysis, socio-economic status plays a significant role. Social class is of course related to national identity but requires specific attention. Umm Sa'ad is, as we have seen, a poor woman who lives in an itinerary tin structure at a refugee camp and cleans houses for a living. Her political status as a

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[445] Hiking is a major component of Zionist culture, and so schoolchildren go on trip to various parts of the country and families and friends often travel on holidays and vacations. For examples of contemporaneous accounts of the importance of hiking in the development of Zionism and the State of Israel see: Zev Vilnay, *The Tiyul and Its Educational Value*, (1950); Moshe Dayan's *Living with the Bible* (1987). For critical work on the subject, see: Boaz Neumann, *Land and Desire* (2011); Rabineau and Toren (2014).
[446] אנחנו מטיילים בארץ...בארץ היפה שלנו (203)

refugee is linked to and compounded by her dire socio-economic status. Ora, on the other hand, is not only a citizen of a state but a member of the cultural elite of that state – an Ashkenazi Jew. She seems to have a steady income and no financial difficulties. This is evident in descriptions of her home, in the fact that she has a job and can easily switch jobs, and perhaps mostly in the fact that socio-economic issues are never mentioned in the book; that Ora never has to think about her next paycheck is indicative of her well-to-do status. Compared to Kanafāni's Marxist book, one could argue that Grossman's novel is quite bourgeois. An offshoot of the characters' socio-economic status is their access to education, or lack thereof, and consequent approach to language. Kanafāni's Umm Sa'ad has no formal education, and her illiteracy is featured on several occasions. Grossman's Ora notes that she does not feel in command of language compared to the men in her life, but this seems to be a complaint about a higher order of language; Ora is clearly educated. This divergence might also be noted in the novels' styles – Grossman's novel is dense, sprawling and verbose, especially in comparison to Kanafāni's much more lean and succinct style.

Neither *Umm Sa'ad* nor *To the End of the Land* offer a sense of resolution or finality as they come to a close. It remains unknown whether the sons die, and so the threat remains looming, an ongoing danger. These open endings leave little room for hope – the sons' deaths might not be confirmed but they are all but assured. In fact, remaining in a state of limbo and uncertainty is part of the books' effect and resonance, as they afford no closure, no room for relief. Not pointing to any resolution, the novels' endings are nevertheless telling. Both endings reference nature and the land, part of the novels' attention to space, nationalism and mothering. As we have seen, the end of Kanafāni's novel returns to the beginning with the budding of the twig: "And I stepped toward the door where Umm Sa'ad was bending over the ground, where

she had planted – in a time that seemed to me at this moment to be immemorial – this brown dry twig that she had carried over to me that morning, looking at a green bud pushing through the ground in an audible vigor" (75).[447] There are hopeful elements to this ending, envisioning a budding resistance, but at the same time such hope comes at a cost. The earth or soil (*al-turāb*, التراب) in which the vine begins to bud is also that in which Sa'ad will be buried. He is fighting for the soil, and will ultimately be interred in it, as the discussion of burial in Chapter One demonstrates. *To the End of the Land* similarly ends in close proximity to the material land, the earth, as Ora "lies down on her side on the rock edge." As the wind blows and scents of herbs fill the air, the narrative notes Ora's closeness to the earth as well as its fragility: "beneath her body are the cool stone and the whole mountain, enormous and solid and infinite. She thinks: how thin is the crust of the earth" (651).[448] Ora's son, too, will likely be buried in this ground for which he, too, is fighting. Both mothers, preparing to mourn by already mourning, are suspended in these moments, dubbed "immemorial" in Kanafāni and "infinite" in Grossman, awaiting the fate that has been lurking all along, from the very beginning.

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[447] وخطوت نحو الباب حيث كانت أم سعد مكبة فوق التراب, حيث غرست – منذ زمن بدا لي تلك اللحظة سحيق البعد – تلك العودة البنية اليابسة التي حملتها إليّ ذات صباح, تنظر إلى رأس أخضر كان يشق التراب بعنفوان له صوت

[448] ונשכבה על צידה על מדף הסלע [...] תחת גופה היו האבן הצוננת וההר כולו, עצום ודחוס ואינסופי. היא חשבה, כל-כך דקה קליפת כדור-הארץ (632)

Chapter 4 What Does it Mean to Mourn Together?

Every year at springtime, Israel marks its Memorial Day (*Yom ha-zikaron*) for fallen soldiers, a defining component of Israeli national identity. At the heart of the day are memorial ceremonies, held on the eve and in the morning of the day itself, at military cemeteries, in schools and in public buildings. These solemn events are dedicated to remembering the fallen together, in communities large and small, under headings such as "They died that we might live" (*be-motam tsivu lanu et ha-ḥayim*, במותם ציוו לנו את החיים).[449] Memorial Day is inaugurated by the central and official ceremony, held on the eve, beside the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem, a site conquered by Israel in the 1967 war. Another official ceremony is held the following morning at the military cemetery in Jerusalem, named for Theodor Herzl. The smaller and local ceremonies are organized by a variety of groups and organizers, but they all share certain characteristic components: they typically start with a reading of the *Yizkor* (remembrance), a Zionist adaptation of an ancient Jewish prayer said in Ashkenazi synagogues in memory of the deceased by a loved one;[450] ceremonies include recitations of poems and memorial texts – written by well-known poets, family members and sometimes the fallen themselves – and songs; some ceremonies also

[449] This oft-repeated phrase originates in an 1898 poem by Bialik called "If Your Soul Might Know" (*Im Yesh et Nafshekha Lada'at*, אם יש את נפשך לדעת). Although the poem was written long before statehood, the "they" in the phrase is now largely associated with Israeli soldiers.

[450] The adapted version was written by Berl Katzanelson in 1919, after the Battle of Tel-Hai mentioned in chapter 2. In the original prayer God is the addressee, but in this version, he is replaced with the nation, as Israel is implored to "remember its loyal and courageous sons and daughters" who died in wars and all events related to the national conflict. It is often referred to as a secular text, but its religious roots demonstrate how deeply interconnected nationalism and religion are in Israel. A still different version is recited on Holocaust Remembrance Day.

include speeches, by bereaved families or community leaders; finally, they always close with Israel's national anthem. In all shapes and forms, these are communal events, an occasion to gather together and share the anguish of loss as a community. Characterized by Jewish-Israeli symbols and traditions, the ceremonies clearly define the boundaries of the community that gathers to remember, and the identity of those who are remembered.

Since 2006, a small group of Israelis choose to attend a different type of memorial – a joint Israeli-Palestinian ceremony. The joint service "takes place every year on the eve of Memorial Day for Israeli fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism," and seeks to "remind everyone that war is not a predetermined fate, but a human choice" (website). Planned by two organizations, *Combatants for Peace* and *Israeli-Palestinian Bereaved Families for Peace*, this alternative ceremony draws on the traditional one but offers a different approach to mourning in the national context. What are the effects of creating an alternative to a well-established national ceremony, especially a bi-national alternative? What can such an alternative accomplish, and what remains out of reach?

In this chapter I examine how the joint ceremony illuminates the national conventions of memorializing and how it cautiously offers a possible different route. The joint ceremony, I argue, recontextualizes the deaths of those remembered in it and by doing so engenders a framework that goes beyond national narratives, engaging not only in commemoration but in a politics of mourning. In explaining the significance and challenge of the joint ceremony I first situate it in the context of Israeli Memorial Day and the national calendar more broadly, in Israeli and Palestinian societies. I demonstrate how the structuring of the calendar, of communal time, partakes in the national project, and specifically in the context of remembrance. Then, I turn to an analysis of the contents of ceremonies from the past four years through video recordings,

highlighting how identity informs mourning and illustrating how the joint ceremony draws on the traditional one but opens entirely different avenues through its contested togetherness. Finally, I examine the spatial aspect of the ceremony, including the spaces in which it operates, how those spaces are different for Israelis and Palestinians, oppositions to the ceremony and whether it is possible to create an alternative space for mourning together. As in previous chapters, in the case of the joint ceremony temporality and spatiality play a significant role in shaping mourning. Focusing on the ceremony marks a departure from textual analysis in favor of the documentary, depicting personal life experiences of mourning in Palestine/Israel. This chapter is, thus, a reminder of the urgency of understanding mourning and of the possibility of creating new frameworks for it.

The National Calendar: Temporalities of Mourning

National narratives and mythologies typically comprise a variety of historically contingent and constructed components: language, history, territory, traditions, religion and many more. Among the myriad aspects of life structured by the nation is time, determining holidays, days of rest and other notable occasions. Think, for example, of various countries' Independence Days, or anniversaries of major events such as 9/11 in the U.S. Nations devote certain dates to events and people as a signal that they define the group in some way, pointing to shared values, or better yet establishing them. Often, such days will be dedicated to remembering tragedies and losses, relating to wars or deaths of leaders. Many countries have days on their calendars dedicated to fallen soldiers, some for specific wars like Remembrance Day marking the armistice that ended WWI in Europe on November 11th, while some use a broader concept like the U.S. Memorial Day at the end of May. In the Arab world national occasions – celebrations and days of grief alike – demonstrate a hybrid mode of traditional Arab customs and

colonial influences in the many countries controlled by European powers for many decades (Podeh 13). Podeh argues that marking occasions on the national calendar, as opposed to a religious one, is historically tied to the rise of the nation-state and was then imported into the Middle East once European countries began colonizing the region (Podeh 18-9). So, for example, during their Mandate of Lebanon the French instituted "Martyrs' Day" and affixed it to Independence Day. While "martyr" in the Lebanese context is, as we have seen, an Arab term with Muslim roots, the day was dedicated to both Lebanese and French fallen soldiers in WWI, not to mention the irony of a celebration of independence instituted by foreign rule. Given that these occasions were externally imposed, the Lebanese population mostly rejected them and chose a different day entirely to commemorate their losses (Podeh 213).[451]

Days and events marked on the national calendar operate as more than temporal reminders, and in fact the calendar "provides a reliable mirror of the core belief system of the nation" (Podeh 3). Moreover, I would argue that the national calendar is part of shaping a nation's belief system and its self-definition. In relation to memorial days specifically, the ways in which nations and states mark such occasions are indicative of their approaches to death, loss and mourning. Memorial days likewise demonstrate and bolster existing power dynamics, as the example of Lebanon and France illustrates – memorialization is used to justify and lend credence to a national narrative, and to the power of the state. Finally, designating certain days as dedicated to remembering also organizes the remainder of the calendar, serving a function of social ordering and delimiting.

Israeli Memorial Day is officially titled Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of the Wars of Israel and Victims of Actions of Terrorism (יום הזיכרון לחללי מערכות ישראל ונפגעי פעולות האיבה),

[451] In his book on national celebrations in the Arab world Podeh discusses Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, but not Palestine.

though it is generally known as Memorial Day (*Yom ha-zikaron*, יום הזיכרון). It takes place on the fourth day of the Hebrew month of *Iyar*, as one of two central secular days on the Israeli calendar dedicated to mourning and commemoration: Holocaust Remembrance Day and Memorial Day. [452] The two days take place within a week of each other – Holocaust Day occurs six days after the end of Passover, and a week later Memorial Day and Independence Day take place consecutively, creating a week of mourning, and then celebration, on a national scale. Memorial Day is a solemn tradition in Israel, as sacred as a non-religious day can get. It is distinctive and all-encompassing, filling the public space; flags are flown at half-staff, schools devote the day to related activities, media outlets alter their schedules, coffee shops and restaurants are closed, the streets are more quiet than usual, and a siren punctuates the silence, blaring through the air once on the eve and once on the day itself, stopping traffic and halting all activities. The day is undisputed and broadly observed, with media outlets reporting in outrage about the few people who do not stand quietly for the siren.[453]

While many Israelis see it as a permanent fixture of the calendar, the day has in fact changed and morphed throughout the years. The memorial ceremonies held since the establishment of the state build upon pre-state traditions dating back to the 1920s, started by the Jewish National Fund, a prominent pre-state organization that exists to this day (Ben-Amos, Bet-El and Tlamim 259). Perhaps the earliest organized mourning ritual for Jews killed as part of the Jewish-Arab conflict was a 1911 memorial book. The Battle of Tel Hai in 1920, a foundational

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[452] Holocaust Remembrance Day is officially dedicated to "the Holocaust and the Heroism," stemming from a fraught history of viewing the victims as passive, like sheep to the slaughter, and venerating those who resisted. The Israeli calendar likewise includes several Jewish-religious days of mourning that are observed to varying degrees: Fast of Gedalia, Tenth of Tevet, 17th of Tammuz and Ninth of Av. All four are considered days of lamentation and are related to the destruction of the Temple. While Memorial Day and Holocaust Day are indeed secular occasions, Jewish tradition clearly has an impact on their shaping. See Azaryahu 150-2.

[453] These are usually members of the Haredi group of *Neturei Karta* (Aramaic for "Guards of the City"), a tiny sect that opposes Zionism and the State of Israel because they argue a Jewish state must only be established by the Messiah.

event for Zionism, was central to the shaping of rituals of memorialization. For the first time, commemorations of this battle included not only written texts but temporal and spatial markings; the 11th of Adar, the date of the battle according to the Hebrew calendar, was marked as a day of remembrance and a monument was erected at the site of the battle, borrowing from traditions in sovereign European nations (Ben-Amos, Bet-El and Tlamim 262). Pre-state memorial rituals tended to be quite sporadic, lacking the official capacity and force afforded by state institutions.

Statehood, a watershed moment in many ways, transformed practices of memorialization as well, but changes did not occur overnight. In the first few years after 1948, a few different dates were dedicated to fallen soldiers and national independence, most notably the aforementioned 11th of Adar, which the IDF recognized as a "Day of Heroism" in 1949, and "State Day" on the birthday of Theodore Herzl, the harbinger of Zionism. Neither date lasted over the years.[454] Israel celebrated its first Independence Day in 1949 while the war was still raging, and so copious attention was given to fallen soldiers as part of the rhetoric of independence, not as an official and separate ceremony. Most ceremonies specifically dedicated to the fallen were organized by families, municipalities, and army units, and were therefore quite variegated and lacked a standard form (Azaryahu 137-8). This trend began to change with the establishment of *Yad Labanim* in 1949, an organization of bereaved parents for the commemoration of fallen soldiers (the name literally means "shrine/monument for the sons"), one of whose early goals was to create a separate day dedicated to memorial ceremonies and activities (Azaryahu 139). After extensive debate among government officials and public councils, the first Memorial Day was marked as a standalone occasion in 1951, but its contours

[454] For more on the history of this day, see Shai Ginsburg 244. Today Adar 11th is mostly marked by youth movements, those associated by both the right and the left, but are not official parts of the education curriculum. Israel also separately marks a Memorial Day for soldiers whose burial place is unknown, on Adar 7th which is associated with the death of the biblical Moses. This day is far less prominent in public life.

and traditions continued to change and shift. For example, at first the day was dedicated only to the fallen of 1948, but it was gradually expanded not only to include later wars as they took place but also deaths that occurred prior to statehood (Azaryahu 143). Although public figures often mention the link between independence and sacrifice, emblemized by the proximity of the two days, it was likely unintentional at first. In fact, throughout the 1950s discussions continued about whether adjoining grief and celebration should continue or be changed (Azaryahu 143-4). Nevertheless, linking the two has retained symbolic power and is generally considered to have been by design (Ben-Amos, Bet-El and Tlamim 267).

Memorial Day's status remains consistent even as it continues to change. In 1963 the Israeli parliament signed Memorial Day into law, determining the exact date of Memorial Day and stipulating its beginning and end time.[455] It also specifies a series of rituals and customs for the day including the two nationwide minutes of silence, lowering of the flags in public institutions, and memorial services and activities in army bases and schools. Changes in the day's contours and content continued over the decades, even after the law was put into place, and often reflect political developments and a changing national narrative: in 1969, shortly after the 1967 war, the centralized ceremony was declared at the newly conquered site of the Western Wall; in 1980 parliament amended the law to officially include not only the fallen of the 1948 war but all IDF fallen soldiers, as well as members of other security agencies; and in 1998 the law and day were expanded to include not only soldiers but civilians killed in terror attacks, who have a separate ceremony as well.[456] Changing the name of the day broadens the scope of who is

[455] The date would be modified if the fourth of *Iyar* falls on a Friday to prevent Independence Day from occurring on a Saturday.
[456] The formal term used in Hebrew is *nifga'ey pe'ulot ha-eyva* (נפגעי פעולות האיבה), literally victims of hateful actions. This term, not to be confused with the U.S. definition of a hate crime, establishes a legal category determining, for example, monetary compensation.

included in it, of who is recognized as a victim of the national conflict. So, the Hebrew name of the day refers not to Israel's wars but rather its military actions (*ma'arakhot*, מערכות), a broader term emphasizing the prevalence of death outside of official wartime. These changes and specificities demonstrate shifts in how Israel conceptualizes its mourning and considered together they illustrate the centrality of mourning in the national narrative as it becomes part of defining national identity.

Palestinian society does not have an official Memorial Day, but several days are dedicated annually to marking loss and mourning, though their scope and reach vary. Much of the culture and logistics of such occasions is enabled by state authorities, which Palestinians under various forms of occupation lack; if the national calendar is part of shaping the national narrative, that depends greatly on the existence of a nation-state and its resources. Several Arab and Muslim countries designate a Martyrs' Day (*yawm al-shuhada'*, يوم الشهداء), which in the Palestinian context takes place on January 7 and is tied to the specific local conditions of ongoing loss. A specifically Palestinian occasion is Land Day (*yawm al-arḍ*, يوم الأرض), marked yearly on March 30 since 1976 as a "national day of remembrance and struggle," highlighting the salience of land and its loss in the Palestinian experience (Touma 80).[457] Labeling this day as "national" is significant for a number of reasons – it is organized by the National Committee for the Defense of Arab Lands whose stated purpose is to prevent further confiscation of land within Israel. That means it applies to Palestinian citizens of Israel, those who remained in what became Israel in 1948; this does not include Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza or in other countries.[458] The first Land Day was declared as a strike and in the accompanying protests six

[457] Tellingly, in Hebrew the Palestinian occasion is known as *yom ha-adama* (יום האדמה), using a word for "land" that is far less political and more material and agricultural.
[458] As explained in the introduction, categories here are complicated and fraught. I acknowledge that not all Palestinian citizens of Israel would identify in this way.

Palestinian citizens were killed by Israeli police. Since then, Palestinians within Israel and outside of it mark this day, in an up until then rare show of solidarity among these dispersed communities (Darweish and Rigby 48-9).[459] Moreover, this history demonstrates how the political struggle for land is intertwined with loss and grief, as the day is since also dedicated to remembering those killed that first year. Even before the institution of Land Day, Palestinians began marking Prisoners' Day on April 17, starting in 1974. That day is also marked with rallies, mostly across the West Bank, but even its mere existence highlights central components of Palestinian nationalism in conditions of dispossession: land and prisoners.

Nakba Day is, as its name suggests, the most direct and explicit commemoration of the events of 1948 and their ongoing aftermath. It is marked on May 15th, the end of the British Mandate and one day following the declaration of the State of Israel.[460] That this central national occasion is determined by outside events and according to a non-Palestinian calendar is an apt indication of Palestinians' lack of legal ability to determine their own fate. While the events of 1948 and their aftermath were remembered in a variety of ways throughout the years, Nakba Day was only established somewhat officially by then PLO chairman Yasser Arafat in the 1990s, some five decades after the war (Rubin 187-8). The day is marked by demonstrations, processions and rallies in the Palestinian Territories, within Israel and in exiled communities around the world. Palestinian citizens of Israel also commemorate the Nakba on Israeli Independence Day, and often use it to travel to the villages from which they were expelled in 1948. This tradition is a remnant of the military rule (1948-1966) under which Palestinian citizens' movement was severely restricted except on Independence Day, which they

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[459] Israel continues to try to depoliticize its Palestinian population. For more on the political development of Palestinians in Israel see: Touma, "The Political Coming of Age of the National Minority" (1985); Darweish and Rigby's *Popular Protest in Palestine: The Uncertain Future of Unarmed Resistance* (2015).
[460] Because of differences between the Hebrew and Palestinian calendars the two days rarely coincide.

consequently used to travel to their old homes to try and maintain a severed connection with the land.[461] In response to the participation of Palestinian citizens of Israel in Nakba Day events, as well as their increasing political mobilization more broadly, in 2011 Israel passed legislation known as the "Nakba Law," stipulating that marking Israeli independence by mourning will result in revoking of public funds.[462] An earlier version of the law, demanding criminal penalty, was struck down amid public protest. All of these restrictions and responses to Nakba Day demonstrate not only the lack of recognition of the Palestinian narrative but indeed the extent and depth of Israeli control over Palestinians' life as so many aspects of it lack self-determination.

The Joint Ceremony – What Does it Mean to Mourn Together?

Israel's various Memorial Day ceremonies, held at schools, cemeteries, and national monuments, are the center of the events of Memorial Day. The Hebrew word used in this context is *tekes* (טקס), which derives from the Greek *taxis*, meaning order or organization. *Tekes* is similar to the Arabic *taqs* (طقس), which in contemporary usage mostly refers to religious rituals, usually Christian ones. Regarding the joint ceremony a different Arabic word is used, *marāsim* (مراسم), a root referring to drawing and marking. A ceremony is a form of organizing time, on several levels – it is itself structured time, with a conventional structure, and as it occurs at fixed intervals it organizes the time around it. Ceremonies organize not only time but space as well – they are not a spontaneous or haphazard gathering of people at random but rather a structured, institutional event, whose participants know where and when to find it and can trust it will recur each year. The multifarious ceremonies on Israeli Memorial Day coalesce to create a shared

[461] See the *Zochrot* website: https://zochrot.org/he/keyword/43886
[462] The legislation was passed as an amendment to the budget, making it not only symbolic but having materials ramifications.

experience on the national calendar. Against this backdrop, the organizers and attendees of the joint ceremony choose to participate in a different type of ritual, which builds off of the existing one but seeks to offer an alternative version.

The first joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day Ceremony took place in 2006, organized by Buma Inbar, an Israeli activist whose son, Yotam, died as a soldier in Lebanon in 1995. Two organizations take part in the ceremony - *Combatants for Peace* have been involved since the beginning, and over the last few years another organization joined the production – *Israeli-Palestinian Bereaved Families for Peace*. Established in 1995 by several Israeli bereaved families, this organization arranges encounters between Israelis and Palestinians in order to promote dialogue and "stop the cycle of bloodshed" (website).[463] The organization (henceforth, "The Forum," as it is generally known) specifically couches its joint activities and values in mourning; its more than 600 members have all lost a loved one and emphasize the importance of engaging with bereaved families on both sides of the national dispute. Both the Forum and *Combatants for Peace* are comprised of Israelis and Palestinians, coming together in an effort to prevent additional loss. In both cases Palestinian and Israelis lead operations, creating a bi-national and bi-lingual space.

The stage is set, draped in black, and as the audience filters in attendees find their seats, quietly awaiting the beginning of the event. At first glance, the joint Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day ceremony resembles the traditional ceremonies: speakers, speeches, songs, personal stories. But while the form is familiar the details and content are markedly different, creating a distinct approach to remembering in a national context. The very act of bringing together Israelis and

[463] Among the founders were Yitzhak Frankental, whose son Arik was a soldier kidnapped and killed by Ḥamās in 1994; and Roni Hirshenson, whose son Amir died as a soldier in a bombing in Beit Lid that same year. Another son of his, Elad, committed suicide five years later, also as a soldier, after his best friend died in another bombing. The organization was started by Israeli families and is lead today by both Israelis and Palestinians.

Palestinians and memorializing the dead on both sides of the national conflict is already a clear departure from the mainstream ceremonies. As a result, the joint ceremony is bilingual – speakers generally speak their own language, though there are a few brief interventions in the other language. The speakers are bereaved Israelis and Palestinians who talk about their loved ones, who died as part of the bloody national dispute. There are two hosts, one Palestinian and one Israeli, who mostly speak in their first language, sometimes repeating what the other said in the second language and sometimes not. Subtitles appear on a screen for the benefit of audience members who may not be fluent in both Arabic and Hebrew. This active choice of translation generates a sense of intentional duplication, though it operates differently for those who understand both languages and for those who do not. Either way, both languages are intentionally present in the space, side by side, as they rarely are elsewhere.

In addition to the bilingualism, unlike most ceremonies of its kind there is no military representation and indeed no national symbols: no flags are present, and therefore none lowered to half-staff. This choice is particularly impactful as a contrast to the traditional ceremony, in which the presence of such symbols is unquestioned. The alternative ceremony clearly works off of a well-established genre, while adjusting the conventions for its purposes. This is perhaps best illustrated at the closing; typically, ceremonies like this in Israel end with singing the national anthem, "*Ha-tikvah"* (התקווה). The song, whose title means "the hope," is based on a 19th century poem by Naftali Hertz Imber and marks the nation and its people as Jewish right from the start: "As long as deep within our hearts/ the spirit of the Jew yearns."[464] Featuring an anthem dedicated to the Jewish state and its Jewish citizens in a ceremony that includes both Israelis and

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[464] כל עוד בלבב פנימה\נפש יהודי הומיה.
Like other symbols in Israel the song is clearly linked to Jewish identity and Zionist history. Written in the 19th century as a long conditional phrase, it emphasizes the aspirational tenor of pre-state Zionism.

Palestinians and is focused on the violent national conflict between them would immediately take sides and alienate Palestinian participants.[465] However, organizers did not omit the musical moment altogether, nor did they add to the Israeli anthem a Palestinian song as a kind of false equivalency. Instead, a joint Israeli-Palestinian choir sings a song called "*Ḥad Gadiah*," by Israeli singer Chava Alberstein, which is based on a liturgical poem sung at the end of the Passover meal. The liturgical poem, known as a *piyyut*, features a series of escalating violent events: the cat eats the kid, the dog bites the cat, the stick hits the dog, and so on. Alberstein's contemporary modifications clarify the ancient text's political relevance, as she omits the original final stanza in which God kills the angel of death, replacing it with an open question: "how long will this cycle continue?/…/ I used to be a lamb and a peaceful kid/ now I'm a tiger and a carnivorous wolf."[466] When it was released in 1989, during the first Palestinian *intifāḍa*, the song caused a stir in Israel, even being banned from air at first.[467] Given its origins in liturgy, large parts of the song are in Aramaic, the ancient Semitic language from which both Hebrew and Arabic derive. The version sung at the ceremony is, in fact, tri-lingual, maintaining the Aramaic and Hebrew but adding Arabic sections, and the entire choir sings all the sections together in unison. While the song is certainly far removed from a national anthem, it is still originally Hebrew and based on a Jewish text, therefore still demonstrating Israeli dominance.

The bulk of the ceremony is dedicated to speeches by bereaved family members and friends whose loved ones died as a result of the national conflict. Throughout the ceremony an Israeli speaker is followed by a Palestinian speaker and so on, so that speakers do not respond to

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[465] While most of the Palestinians attending the alternative ceremony are from the West Bank and Gaza and are not Israeli citizens, the anthem poses a complex challenge for the 20% of Israeli citizens who are Palestinian. For additional reading on Palestinian citizens of Israel see: Darweish and Rigby chapter 3; Hillel Cohen's *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs, 1948-1967* (2010). See also See Habib, Bekerman and Bilu's article on marking Memorial Day and Nakba Day in bi-lingual schools.

[466] עד מתי יימשך מעגל האימה?\... הייתי פעם כבש וגדי שליו\ היום אני נמר וזאב טורף

[467] See: https://blog.nli.org.il/2chad_gadya/

each other directly but are nevertheless in proximity, much like the presence of both languages and peoples side by side in the ceremony as a whole.[468] Some speakers recount the lives, characteristics and deaths of their loved ones, while others focus on their own experience of grief and why they choose now to mourn alongside the national "other." These rhetorical, emotional and political choices resemble the ones made by the writers of eulogies explored in Chapter Two. As we have seen, Memorial Day has changed over the years to include an increasingly wider scope of people, altering the parameters of who is considered a victim of the national dispute on the Israeli side. Similar questions are evident in the joint ceremony, though here they apply to both Israelis and Palestinians. Yuval Raḥamim spoke in 2019 about his father, who died in the 1967 war,[469] and Ḥagai Yoel spoke in 2020 about his brother who died as a reserves soldier in the Palestinian city of Jenin in 2002. But many of the Israeli speakers over the years lost loved ones not as soldiers but as civilians in attacks within Israel, like the daughter of a peace activist who died in a restaurant bombing in Haifa in 2002 (2018 ceremony). The number of fallen soldiers is far greater than that of civilians, but the loss of civilians does indicate the pervasiveness of violence in the region. Similarly, many of the deceased remembered in the ceremony did not die during an official war, highlighting that just because it is not officially a time of war does not mean it is a peaceful time. Palestinian speakers in the ceremony demonstrate this reality clearly; there are no Palestinian soldiers, as there is no sovereign state and army, and so while everyone is civilian, all are also considered potential fighters by Israel, and the frontline is everywhere. Palestinian speakers therefore include a young boy whose best friend was killed by the IDF (2019), a man whose wife was killed when settlers threw stones at

[468] The forum does conduct such dialogic encounters, but they are separate from the ceremony itself.
[469] Raḥamim notes that in Hebrew this war is known as the Six Day War, "even though it's still ongoing. It's been 52 years, and both sides continue to die on its account, and still everyone is sure that we won" (2019, 10:05).

their car (2020) and a young woman who lost a friend when an IDF sniper shot her during the Freedom March in Gaza (2019). Her speech is pre-recorded while she is in Ramallah, and she lambasts the external siege by Israel as well as internal oppression by Ḥamās.

Perhaps no one embodies the matrix of complex identities and politics at hand more than Amal Abu-Sa'ad, a Bedouin Palestinian citizen of Israel whose husband was shot and killed by Israeli police in the southern village of Um el-Ḥīrān.[470] Ya'akoub Abu al-Qian was shot while protesting Israel's treatment of its Bedouin citizens, abandoned injured in the field and left to die, not unlike the status of unburied dead bodies explored in Chapter One. Two men died in the January 2017 incident: a Jewish police officer and al-Qian. The former was recognized as a victim of the conflict, a *ḥalal* (חלל); the latter was left for dead and then publicly deemed a terrorist and therefore not meriting mourning, simply because of his identity. Abu-Sa'ad starts her speech in Hebrew and later switches to Arabic, meaning that not only the ceremony is bilingual but she herself embodies this duality. She addresses her fraught reality between two cultures explicitly, asking: "where do I belong? Who do I represent? Israelis, Palestinians? And which language should I speak?" (2018, 32:58).[471] When she switches to Arabic halfway through her speech, she notes: "I will now switch to the other/second language, actually the first" (35:40).[472] Language choice, or better yet the need to strategically navigate between languages, points to questions of identity, and here specifically to questions of mourning. When Abu-Sa'ad

[470] Bedouins were made citizens of Israel in 1948 but have since suffered continuous dispossession and violence. They were forced to upend their nomadic lifestyle and were removed from their ancestral lands. Remaining villages are not recognized by the state, even though they existed before 1948, and therefore do not receive services like water, sewage, and electricity. Any construction is deemed illegal and is demolished, as it has been in Um el-ḥiran dozens of times, leading to protests in one of which Abu-Sa'ad's husband was killed by police. For more see: https://www.dukium.org/

[471] לאן אני שייכת? את מי אני מייצגת? את הישראלים? את הפלסטינים? באיזו שפה עליי לדבר?

[472] עכשיו ברשותכם אעבור לשפה השנייה, למעשה הראשונה

Consider the difference between Abu-Sa'ad's use of language and Grossman, who opens his speech with two sentences in Arabic, welcoming Palestinians to the ceremony. Unlike Abu-Sa'ad's conflicted mourning, Grossman's is a gesture towards the minority language from a position of strength.

asks, “which language should I speak?” she is also implicitly asking, “in which language should I mourn? In which language can I mourn?” For example, when she speaks in Hebrew, she refers to her deceased husband with the Hebrew honorific, “of blessed memory,” *zikhrono livrakha* (זיכרונו לברכה), which is used for Jews at least since the time of the Sages (33:20).[473] Using this term demonstrates one way in which language and language politics shape mourning – specific terms for the dead are loaded with history and act as cultural demarcations of belonging to certain communities.

Abu-Sa’ad’s situation is complicated on the Palestinian side as well, as she wonders: “what do Palestinians who see me here feel?” (33:08), pointing to the veritable and existential challenge of existing in the fraught space in between identities, belonging to both and therefore to neither fully.[474] Furthermore, Bedouins are generally marginalized within Palestinian politics, especially in relation to their experience of the *Nakba* and its memorialization.[475] What does it mean, then, for a woman who is Palestinian, Bedouin and an Israeli citizen to mourn in Hebrew, especially when she is mourning someone killed by Israeli police? Does her mourning operate differently in Arabic, does it reach a different audience? The joint ceremony does not provide answers to these questions, but it does place them front and center, leaving them open. In fact, not resolving open questions and allowing them to resonate seems to be a trend – the ceremony is far less resolute than traditional ceremonies that offer a conclusive narrative of national redemption as an answer to the pain of mourning. Instead, this ceremony is willing to dwell in the interstices, in the dualities, with question marks rather than exclamation points.

[473] The Jewish-Israeli host also refers to deceased Palestinians using this term in her introductions.
[474] מה מרגישים פלסטינים שרואים אותי כאן?
[475] One aspect of this is that Bedouins are, by definition, nomadic people, complicating the notion of exile and attachment to the land that are so central to Palestinian identity and politics since 1948.

Abu-Sa'ad's use of a Hebrew honorific term for her husband is not an isolated instance in the ceremony. Terminology to describe and honor the dead indicates the ways in which people and cultures understand death and loss, and when people from two cultures which share roots and similarities and have been in conflict for over a century choose to mourn together, such indicators are especially salient. So, for example, many Palestinian speakers in the ceremony refer to their deceased loved ones as a *shahīd/a*, or refer to their death with the verb form, *istashhada*, became a martyr (شهيد, استشهد). A Jewish-Israeli audience member might be struck by this term, which is used in Israeli media in the original Arabic and is portrayed as a sign of Muslim fundamentalism and aggression toward Israel. For Palestinians, however, this word is used regularly to describe anyone who dies at the hands of Israeli authorities occupying their lands. So, if Israeli authorities blur the lines between fighter and civilian by viewing everyone as a potential threat, Palestinians acknowledge that under occupation just existing as a Palestinian is a form of resistance, as we saw in Chapter Three.

Each year, in addition to the speakers who are bereaved family members active in the organizing Forum, the ceremony includes a keynote speaker, a public figure who supports the activity. Over the years they have included author Sami Shalom-Chetrit (2020), who introduced himself as a former soldier and said he "always writes about war as a soldier"); Leah Shakdiel, a social activist who stands out in anti-occupation activism as a religious woman; and perhaps most famously, author David Grossman who spoke at the ceremony in 2018, a day before he was awarded the Israel Prize by the Ministry of Education, some of whose award money he donated to the Forum. Unlike other keynote speakers, Grossman is both a notable public figure and a bereaved father himself, after his son died as a soldier in the Second Lebanon War as we saw in Chapter Three. In his speech at the joint ceremony, Grossman defines living with loss as an

ongoing wound. He talks briefly about his son, Uri, lamenting the pain of losing a loved one, which is "also the death of an entire private, personal, unique culture" (1:07:30).[476] But Grossman does not expand much on his personal loss, noting that it is still difficult for him to discuss publicly. Instead, he opts to talk about the violent conflict in which it occurred, or better yet, he subtly connects the two levels of his speech through the metaphor of the home, referring both to the personal family home and the collective national one. Grossman asks: "but what is a home? Home is a place whose walls – whose borders – are clear and agreed upon. Whose existence is stable and solid and comfortable […] whose relations with its neighbors are resolved […] And here, 70 years later, the strong Israel might be a fort, but it is not yet a home" (1:12:50).[477] Loss is often used as a justification for the establishment of solidification of the national home, as we saw in Moshe Dayan's eulogy for Roi Rotberg in Chapter Two as well as in Grossman's own novel, *To the End of the Land*, albeit in a different way. Grossman uses the same metaphor but arrives at a very different conclusion, creating a variation on a common theme, much like what the joint ceremony does as a whole. According to Grossman, the home needs clear borders and all nations should have a national home.

Reimagining the home in this way remains within the realm of nationalism, just extending it to everyone, as is customary in leftist Zionist politics in Israel. But in couching this image in mourning Grossman in fact challenges a basic national principle. He creates an alternative framework of mourning, stating that grief "doesn't only isolate, it can also connect and strengthen. Even old enemies, Israelis and Palestinians, can connect through mourning and

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[476] מותו של אדם אהוב הוא בעצם גם מותה של תרבות פרטית שלמה, אישית וחד-פעמית
In this section of his speech, Grossman refers to what "is" and "is not" and utilizes "no" as a noun, in addition to describing a private language that is lost. These are all themes in the book he wrote about the loss of his son, *Falling Out of Time* (2011).

[477] אבל מה זה בית? בית זה מקום שהקירות שלו, שהגבולות שלו ברורים, מוסכמים, שהקיום שלו יציב ומוצק, וגם נינוח [...] שיחסיו עם שכניו הוסדרו [...] והנה, כעבור 70 שנה, ישראל החזקה היא אולי מבצר, אבל עדיין לא בית.

because of it" (1:09:20).[478] This alternative framework is clearly political and so Grossman articulates it as an attempt to create social change. As he implores society to allow this joint ceremony to continue, he explains that it is "our way to give meaning to our loved ones' deaths and our own lives after their deaths. It's our way to act and do, instead of despairing and succumbing, so that someday, in the future, war will fade and maybe cease completely, and we can start living, living full lives and not just surviving from one war to the next, from one disaster to the next" (1:11:05).[479] In lieu of the national framework of endowing death with meaning through national transcendence, as we saw in Chapter One with the dead-living as a symbol, Grossman is describing a different type of meaning and a different approach to a notion of life after death.

National Narratives of Mourning

The losses grieved in the alternative ceremony all occurred in the context of the violent national dispute in Palestine/Israel, and the ceremony itself is a reaction to mourning in the national-collective framework. As a result, many of the speakers explicitly discuss their personal relation to the national narrative and how it shapes the way they mourn, which for some includes resisting anyone dictating that for them. Grossman makes this point in his speech and says that no one can be told how to mourn, and everyone must do so in their own way. In this instance too he asserts this on a personal-familial scale as well as the national one, using the common metaphor of nation as family and specifically as it relates to the Israeli "family of bereavement" (משפחת השכול) (1:10:30). Another speaker, Hagai Yoel, provides an instructive example when he says he had been a Zionist who believed in Israel's righteousness, but when he heard of violence

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[478] שהאבל לא רק מבודד אלא גם מחבר ומחזק. הנה, גם אויבים משכבר, ישראלים ופלסטינים, יכולים להתחבר זה אל זה מתוך האבל שלהם, ודווקא בגללו.

[479] היא הדרך שלנו לתת משמעות למותם של יקירנו ולחיינו שלנו אחרי מותם, והיא דרכנו לפעול ולעשות, לא להתייאש ולא לחדול כדי שפעם, בעתיד, תדעך המלחמה, ואולי תיפסק לגמרי, ונתחיל לחיות, חיים מלאים ולא רק לשרוד ממלחמה למלחמה, מאסון לאסון.

towards participants in the alternative ceremony, “something inside [him] revolted against the idea that the Minister of Defense believes he can decide for [him] how [he] chooses to remember Eyal,” his brother (2020, 17:17).[480] In effect, Yoel is resisting the co-opting of his personal mourning by national institutions. Several of the Israeli participants note feeling a lack of belonging to the officially sanctioned ways of mourning. Expressing his discomfort with the theatrics of politicians at the traditional ceremonies, Raḥamim notes that it made him feel like “an extra in a play I didn’t choose” (2019, 11:00).[481] He opts instead for a different kind of framework, through the alternative ceremony. Importantly, this is still a desire for belonging to a group, which is at the foundation of national projects, but one not determined by national lines but by loss.

As we saw in earlier chapters, the Palestinian experience is profoundly defined by exile and itinerancy, occupation and dispossession. Therefore, the national narrative introduced by Palestinian speakers at the ceremony revolves around this ongoing reality, but like the Israeli speakers they also tie the personal and collective together. Many speakers refer back not only to their specific loss but to their family’s history of losses – of their homes, their lands, and of people in their lives. In the 2020 ceremony, for example, Yusra Maḥfoud spoke about her 14-year-old son, ‘Alaa, who was shot and killed by the IDF when he was standing on the balcony of their house, an event she witnessed.[482] But she begins her speech by noting that her family is originally from Yazur, a village near Jaffa depopulated in 1948 on whose ruins Israel established a town called Azor. Her husband’s family originated from a village near Gaza named Iraq al-Manshiya, which was likewise depopulated and where Israel established a city, Kiryat Gat. She

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[480] משהו בתוכי התקומם אל מול המחשבה ששר הביטחון מאמין שמותר לו להחליט בשבילי איך אני בוחר לזכור את אייל
[481] הבנתי שאני ממלא תפקיד של ניצב בהצגה שלא בחרתי בה
[482] Maḥfoud could not attend the event in person because of the conditions of quarantine in Bethlehem and her speech was read by someone else. I discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the 2020 ceremony shortly.

and her family were still stateless when her oldest son, ‘Alaa, was born almost 40 years later, in 1986, “in al-‘Aroub camp for refugees near Hebron,” demonstrating the link between past and present, between the loss of 1948 and the ones that followed (21:45).[483] Maḥfoud then recounts how after shooting her son, IDF soldiers prevented the ambulance carrying him from getting to the hospital. Ultimately, he required care outside of the West Bank and was sent to Saudi Arabia where he died, returning to the refugee camp to be buried. Thereafter, his father was imprisoned for a year. Her story serves as a reminder of the scope and reach of loss in Palestinian society under Israeli rule on several levels – the loss of homeland in 1948; the death of a 14-year-old in their own home; the lack of access to medical services; and the subsequent arrest of a grieving father. Many of the themes and characteristics of this story will be familiar from previous chapters, demonstrating their salience: the mourning mother, here eulogizing her son and discussing the burial of his body.

Maha Salāḥ, a bereaved sister who spoke in the 2018 ceremony, also describes her family’s exile, introducing herself as a “Palestinian refugee” (17:04).[484] She begins her speech by discussing the condition of exile which continues to affect her, tying it to her brother’s death in 1997 at the hands of an IDF soldier during a protest marking Land Day. Her family was exiled from the village of Sar’a near Jerusalem in 1948, thereafter settling in Bethlehem. In describing this history, she uses the Arabic verb *hujirtu* (هُجِرْتُ), a passive form of “to emigrate, to dislocate,” indicating that no choice was involved; they were made to leave.[485] That was the beginning of her family’s wandering, “which continues until today” she says, noting that the Palestinian Nakba is not a onetime event but rather a continuous and ongoing experience

[483] في مخيم العروب للاجئين
[484] أنا لاجئة فلسطينية
[485] Sar’a was depopulated in 1948 and on its lands, Israel established Tarum. The formal Israeli view of Palestinians’ fate in 1948 is that they left or abandoned their villages, and so this choice of verb form is a significant counter.

(17:49).[486] The fact that the Palestinian disaster is continuous is significant in many realms, but here specifically it has implications on the process of mourning, as the ongoing loss of the land of Palestine amplifies and complicates any personal loss. Loss takes place in an environment already engulfed in loss, complicating the timeframe of mourning, as we saw in the previous chapter. Additionally, the geopolitical reality in the region means that there are constantly more losses, more causes for mourning that accumulate and exacerbate the original, remaining loss. The ongoing disaster pertains to an entire people, but is likewise a deeply personal experience, and so Salāḥ refers to her brother's death as "my own private Nakba" (20:05).[487]

Mourning the private and national losses underscores once more the temporal and spatial aspects of this grief – a loved one's death in 1997 is necessarily informed by the original loss of 1948, blending together the past and the present. Additionally, the foundational experience of exile is deeply spatial, defined by an ongoing and as yet irrevocable distance from a longed-for place. In many ways, this chapter and the alternative Memorial Day ceremony taking place in the 2010s bring us right back to 1948, demonstrating the inescapability of the ongoing aftermath of that war. In vastly different ways, both Palestinians and Israelis continue to grapple and contend with the outcomes of that war – exile and dispossession for the former, fractious statehood for the latter. But while 1948 was a crucial turning point it was not the beginning of the story, nor is the story linear. As my dissertation repeatedly suggests, contextualization and history are necessary to understanding mourning in Palestine/Israel, but they are not by any means clear cut. Rather, history jumps back and forward and back again, from 1936 to 1948, through the 1950s, and 1980s and 2000s, then right back to 1967, and 48', and 1920 and back again. Mourning is

[486] المستمرة حتى يوم

[487] نكبتي أنا

likewise linked to one place, to the same land, moving closer and farther away from it and yet remaining painfully fixed.

Limited Spaces of Mourning

Organizers of the joint ceremony point out that the number of attendees grows each year, but it is still a relatively marginal and small affair with participants numbering in the thousands; the vast majority of Israelis still opt for the traditional ceremonies and activities. Given the social import and emotional weight of Memorial Day and its ceremonies, the deviation from the traditional format offered by the joint ceremony receives considerable backlash in Israel from both the public and the government. In 2017, right-wing protestors gathered outside the ceremony and assaulted some attendees. The following year organizers struggled to find a venue for the event due to fears that violence would erupt again, and the 2018 ceremony was therefore held outdoors. Such protests are a regular occurrence and so Grossman, speaking at the outdoor ceremony, encouraged the audience to "ignore the noise" they create, both literally and metaphorically. Similar opposition to the ceremony comes from the Israeli government, which each year seeks to prevent Palestinians from attending. Despite these attempts, the Supreme Court has overturned the governmental policy and allowed Palestinians to join, though often the challenge delays their arrival or serves as a deterrent, a show of force, and a reminder that Palestinians in the West Bank cannot move freely and require authorization to enter Israel.[488] This reality serves as a reminder that mourning requires a space and a time, and that being deprived of basic rights like free movement necessarily also has an impact on the ability to

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[488] See reports in the media about the protests against the alternative ceremony in the last few years: https://www.haaretz.com/hblocked?returnTo=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.haaretz.com%2Fmiddle-east-news%2Fpalestinians%2F.premium-joint-israeli-palestinian-memorial-day-ceremony-to-be-streamed-live-in-gaza-1.7214050 and here: https://www.haaretz.com/hblocked?returnTo=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.haaretz.com%2Fisrael-news%2F.premium-israelis-palestinians-come-together-at-alternative-memorial-day-event-1.6011344 . I choose not to include any of the myriad attacks on the ceremony in some Israeli outlets so as not to give them added attention.

mourn and be mourned. As the joint ceremony shows, while the state holds the official power to define who is grievable, individuals can attempt to resist this definition, to grieve those deemed ungrievable.

Palestinians live under a broad range of restrictions, limiting their movement, work opportunities, and education. Given Israel's monitoring of funerals and attempts to prevent them from attending the joint ceremony, these restrictions extend to mourning as well. Already in Chapter One we saw political power being use in order to authorize and limit burial in the case of *Antigone*, which Butler translates into her notion of grievability. Israeli authority and sovereignty limit the places in which Palestinians can mourn and be mourned, as well as the spaces in which Palestinians and Israelis can mourn alongside each other. Restrictions are imposed and enforced by official government policies, such as controlling Palestinians' entry to Israel, but the difficulty in finding a space to host the event likewise demonstrates that in unofficial ways, too, Israeli society and public discourse do not leave room for joint mourning, physically and socially. To be sure, there is opposition to the existence of the joint ceremony in Palestinian society as well, viewing it as an act of normalization and therefore counter to Palestinian interests. Several speakers at the ceremony mention receiving such criticism and describe their defiance in choosing to attend, nonetheless. However, objections among Palestinians are different than those in Israeli society in at least two significant ways. First, Memorial Day and its ceremonies are an Israeli occasion, meaning that altering its traditional contours does not carry the same symbolic and political weight it does for Israelis. And second, Israel has the power to limit and circumscribe such events, meaning that the impact of the opposition to the ceremony on the Israeli side is institutional and more consequential.

A different and specific type of constriction and limitation affected the 2020 ceremony, taking place on April 27 of that year, as the entire world was in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the global crisis the ceremony, like myriad other largescale events, was moved online, as lockdown orders kept people at home and changed our perceptions of spaces indoors, outdoors, and online. This version of the ceremony featured prerecorded musical performances, speakers located in multiple locations and an audience watching from home, with names and faces appearing in little boxes on the screen. While organizers did have to substantially alter their format, this change obviated the need to find a physical venue to host the ceremony, making it potentially more easily available to a larger audience; no permits are needed to attend an online meeting. And indeed some 200,000 people around the world attended the online iteration of the ceremony, a number far greater than ever before. At the same time, most attendees were from outside the region and internet access is not readily available to some Palestinians, particularly in Gaza. Although the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 are not directly related to any national dispute – though the disease is constantly being politicized – its impact was nevertheless palpable. The questions at the heart of the alternative Memorial Day ceremony of how one grieves and how people grieve together were only enhanced in these times of worldwide precarity. Moreover, as Israel dealt with its outbreak of the virus the word used for lockdown was *seger* (סגר), which is usually reserved for the all-too-common lockdowns the IDF enforces in the West Bank during Israeli holidays and other occasions. The use of the same word, however, is deceptive, and the two lockdowns should not be conflated; the health lockdown, limiting as it is, is meant to protect the population being constricted, whereas the military lockdown hurts them in order to preserve a sense of safety for others. In addition, the conditions

of the Israeli lockdown makes Palestinians extremely vulnerable to the pandemic, whose damage to the region likely will not be known for a while.

Mourning Together

As we have seen, the joint ceremony clearly draws on its traditional counterpart but makes several substantial changes: the language choice, speakers, and ceremonial tropes such as the concluding song instead of the Israeli national anthem. The reason for all of these changes is the operative descriptor "joint," as the organizers themselves title the ceremony – *mushtarak* (مشترك) in Arabic, *meshutaf* (משותף) in Hebrew. Joining, or adjoining, two peoples' mourning is the ceremony's *raison d'être*, and it is also what elicits fierce and emotional opposition to it. A joint ceremony is seen as a provocation, an affront, and a transgression just by taking place. As we have seen throughout this project, encounters between Palestinians and Israelis are quite rare – while Palestinians and Israelis live in close proximity, their interactions are limited in a deeply segregated society.[489] Trite as it may be, it remains true that many Palestinians mostly encounter Israelis as soldiers at the checkpoint, and Israelis may see Palestinians working in construction or in the service industry. The two groups share public transportation in some places, and not even that in others, and even when they do meet such encounters tend to be brief and passing, not prolonged and personal. For many, the national other remains largely unknown, although Palestinians are generally more familiar with the majority culture and norms than the other way around, as is usually the case in colonial contexts.

[489] Some areas are more segregated than others, and in different ways. Haifa, for example, is one of the most combined Arab-Jewish cities, while Jaffa – which had been mixed before 1948 – is deeply segregated. These examples pertain to the State of Israel; outside the Green Line, in the West Bank and not to mention Gaza, the separation is deeply palpable. Hebron is a well-known example of extreme spatial segregation as some of its roads are separated, one part for Israeli settlers and another for Palestinians.

Up against the backdrop of this distance, maintained by structures of power and designed divisions, bringing Palestinians and Israelis together in the joint ceremony is already necessarily a political act. This event seems to strike a nerve more than other, albeit rare, joint activities, perhaps because in choosing to mourn side by side participants are highlighting and challenging an implicit component and function of Memorial Day – the maintaining of national lines. In creating an alternative space for mourning, one which grants entry to both Palestinians and Israelis, the joint ceremony de facto desegregates mourning, allowing the two groups to see the other in their grief, which no longer takes place only in isolation. Being joint does not mean the ceremony equates, confuses or conflates the two peoples' mourning, though; it does not require one group to mourn the other but rather allows them to share a space as each group mourns its own losses. The act of joining Israeli and Palestinian mourning does not imply a symmetry between them, much like I hope my comparative methodology throughout this project avoids a false equivalency and rather remains deeply informed by the power imbalance. Palestinians and Israelis mourn together, side by side, but they do not cede the right to their own pain, nor do they declare that their shared humanity overcomes their differences; rather, the joint ceremony is constantly informed by the violent conflict and the power imbalance, creating not an illusion of harmony but rather a sober space of contested togetherness. In such a space, the violent conflict is not glossed over but reflected upon, and the notion of being together remains in tension, as it is in reality. Moreover, the ceremony is still, in many ways, decidedly Israeli – it takes place on an Israeli ritualistic occasion, and in Israeli territory both geopolitically and culturally.[490] Israelis and Palestinians cannot be equal in this setting because they are not equal outside of it; Israelis

[490] One of the organizations behind this joint ceremony, *Combatants for Peace*, started a ceremony for Palestinian *Nakba* Day in 2020, though it is a much smaller affair. The second annual ceremony in 2021 had to be postponed because of the violence in May 2021.

do not require an entry permit for the event, nor do they have to cross a checkpoint or grapple with ongoing dispossession. Mourning, even in a joint setting, is not an equalizer. It cannot be a panacea for the ills of an ongoing occupation, itself the root cause of loss of life. The desegregated space of joint mourning exists within a larger space which remains highly segregated, and which still determines the circumstances of the ceremony and of those participating in it.

Both the traditional ceremonies and this joint event are defined as memorial ceremonies, under the heading of Memorial Day. Often in relation to such occasions, memorializing and commemorating are used interchangeably with mourning, but I maintain that there is a distinction beyond semantics, that is in fact at the heart of the ceremony's importance. I contend that the joint Israeli-Palestinian ceremony itself is not only a commemorative act but a ritual of mourning. While memorialization and mourning are certainly related and are by no means mutually exclusive, disambiguating them in a political, national context is instructive. Commemoration enshrines something into memory and its goal is to ensure the remembrance of an event or person, often relying on external artifacts to bring something into memory: a monument, a coin, a song. Memory is a broad term that can apply to many types of past events; one might remember a happy occasion, or even a neutral experience or moment. Mourning, on the other hand, is specifically linked to and predicated on loss. It is likewise a more amorphous process that does not necessarily rely on external artifacts. As part of mourning, one likely remembers joyful moments as well, but those are necessarily colored by the fact of loss; the same memory would resonate differently before someone's death and thereafter.

But perhaps the more crucial distinction is, in my view, political. The various chapters of this project have shown – in discussions of dead bodies, eulogies and mourning mothers – that

the national narrative collectivizes mourning, instrumentalizing it by making it into something which can be utilized for an ideological end. As such, the national narrative relies on external artifacts, opting for commemoration over mourning, which cannot be turned into a physical object in the same way. While the joint ceremony is itself an external artifact of sorts, and therefore indeed an act of memorialization, I argue that it also operates beyond the realm of memory. The joint ceremony attempts to counteract the national, or nationalizing, trend of one resolute and resounding (national) answer, as it puts two stories, two pains, two interconnected processes of mourning, next to each other. As we have seen, doing so leaves room for multiple narratives, for the personal and the collective(s), for contradictions and open questions, thereby engaging in the political work of mourning. The result is a different kind of community based on mourning, founded not on fortification of borders but rather on an openness to vulnerability, what Butler imagines as "the possibility of community on the basis of vulnerability and loss" (20). Her argument explicitly opposes the view that mourning is solitary and privatizing, but it also implies a different kind of role for community, or rather a different kind of community – one that is not based on national bonds and displays of strength and power but quite the contrary. She suggests a grieving that opens one to the actual loss without, or before, covering it up and incorporating it in a national narrative. This loss allows itself to remain unresolved, problematic and painful, acknowledging the unraveling entailed in loss: "Let's face it. We're undone by each other. One does not always stay intact" (23). Butler suggests we let loss and grief injure us, remain facing the open wound, and let that be the foundation of community, not of nation.

The joint ceremony opens up a space for mourning in addition to commemoration, for a shared community in which the other’s pain can be acknowledged. In doing so, the ceremony resituates the deaths and losses of soldiers and civilians within the political reality that caused

them. Although those remembered on the day died in the context of a national dispute, Israeli Memorial Day is largely considered apolitical, transcending politics and observed equally by the political right and left.[491] Memorial Day's prominence and effect is enabled by this notion of it transcending politics, being beyond reproach. Because Memorial Day is considered to be the heart of Israeli consensus, it is very difficult to challenge any part of it; anyone doing so is readily accused of disrespecting both the dead and the bereaved and summarily dubbed un-Israeli. Moreover, any attempt to recontextualize the deaths of the fallen by reintroducing the politics surrounding the circumstances of their deaths is deemed cynical political hackery. By reintroducing the context of national violence, and by including Palestinians as mourners and as grieveable, the joint ceremony sheds a light on the implicit ideology of Memorial Day as a fixture of the national narrative. In so doing, the ceremony goes against national ideology, and as such, it is a quiet act of resistance through mourning. It offers a form of mourning that goes beyond the national, opening a space to mourn outside of it, as much as possible within still nationally entrenched surroundings. While this resistance is mainly directed at the Israeli narrative, as explained, it also counters national entrenchments more broadly and generates a different route for Palestinians as well. In lieu of the ideological and national narratives, the joint ceremony creates a framework for political mourning.[492] The political, as articulated here, stems from context, or better yet, from an act of re-contextualization. The bi-national and bi-lingual space created by the joint ceremony brings the political context of loss back to the fore, redefining the boundaries of the mourning community so they are no longer national. Anyone who has suffered a loss as a result of the national conflict and is consequently in mourning is

[491] This is true among the Jewish majority but is obviously much more complicated for Palestinian citizens of Israel, as we have seen.
[492] Here I am drawing on the distinction Adi Ofir and Yehuda Shenhav make between the political and the ideological, relying on Foucault and others.

welcome to this venue, and even though this joint space cannot diminish the power structures within which it exists, it does point to their relevance for the act of mourning itself, insisting that mourning has context and is a political act.

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In navigating their personal mourning and its complex relations with national narratives, quite a few of the speakers at the joint ceremony over the years – both Palestinian and Israeli – evoke the notion of revenge. Some say they felt a desire for revenge soon after they experienced the loss of a loved one, but soon realized it would be futile. Grossman, for example, explains that "it's so easy in these conditions to give in to hatred, to rage, to a desire for revenge" (1:08:30). But whenever he would feel this desire, he would immediately sense that he was losing touch with his son, prompting him to abandon that route and turn another way. Others note that they never wanted revenge, but the fact that they mention it suggests that seeking vengeance is a pertinent and relevant phenomenon in the context of mourning loss in political circumstances; perhaps there is even an expectation that they would want revenge, leading them to explain they never did. The desire for revenge – inflicting injury in return for a previous injury – is an ancient, perhaps primordial phenomenon. Notions of vengeance and retribution, and the fraught distinction between the two, appear in pre-modern Islam and early Jewish traditions – think, for example of the biblical principle of "an eye for an eye," or the custom of so-called "honor" killing, still extant in some Bedouin communities. Modern legal systems purport to regulate and standardize the desire for revenge, but its presence is still apparent, albeit in a more refined way of disciplining and punishing.[493] Arabic and Hebrew use the same root for revenge: *intiqām* (انتقام) in Arabic, *nekama* (נקמה) in Hebrew. The word is not typically explicitly referenced in the

[493] Israel often employs a policy of destroying homes of families of those who kill Israelis, which it defines as a deterrent, not revenge.

traditional Memorial Day ceremonies. However, the prevalence of revenge, and of forgoing it, in the joint ceremony underscores how it nevertheless bubbles under the surface, an unspoken presence in the political reality. As the Forum's website itself states, one of the ceremony's goals is to be "a reminder that … revenge won't bring back our loved ones; it will only lead to more hatred and bloodshed" (website).[494]

Thinking through the mentions of revenge and its rejection in the joint ceremony I am reminded of a 2006 poem by the Palestinian poet Taha Muhammad Ali entitled "Revenge." In an intimate first-person account, the speaker admits to a desire for vengeance: "At times ... I wish/ I could meet in a duel/ the man who killed my father/ and razed our home,/ expelling me into a narrow country. /And if he killed me,/ I'd rest at last,/ and if I were ready—/ I would take my revenge!" (Ali 113).[495] The short, simple sentences and everyday register – characteristic of Ali's poetry – create a matter-of-fact tone which presents the initial wish to exact vengeance as very basic and even natural. But the poem quickly shifts, and the following three stanzas offer a series of exceptions to the desire for revenge, listing scenarios in which the speaker would avoid killing the man who wronged them: "if he had a mother/ waiting for him" or if "he had a brother or sisters/…/ or if he had a wife to greet him/ and children who/ couldn't bear his absence" (Ali 114). [496] Not only the existence of family would make the speaker refrain from vengeance but also the lack thereof, as the enemy would likewise be spared "if he turned/ out to be on his own - /…/ without a mother or father/ with neither a brother or a sister,/ wifeless, without a child."[497] In that case, he says, "I'd add not a thing to his pain/ …/ Instead I'd be content/ to ignore him when

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[494] The English page is phrased somewhat differently so the translation here is my own, but the Hebrew and Arabic use the respective words for revenge.

[495] أَحياناً\ أَتَمَنّى أَن أُبارِزَ\ الشَّخصَ الذي\ قَتَلَ والِدي\ وَهَدَمَ بَيْتَنا\ فَشَرَّدَني\ في بِلادِ الناسِ\ الضَيِّقَةِ\ فَإِذا قَتَلَني\ أَكونُ قَدْ ارْتَحْتُ\ وَإِنْ أَجْهَزْتُ عَلَيْهِ\ أَكونُ قَدِ انْتَقَمْتُ!

[496] أَنَّ لِغَريمي\ أُمّاً\ تَنْتَظِرُهُ (...) \ أَنَّ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ وَأَخَوات (...) \ أَو إِذا كانَ لَهُ\ زَوْجَةٌ تُرَحِّبُ بِهِ\ وَأَطْفالٌ\ لا يُطيقونَ غِيابَهُ

[497] أَمَّا إِذا كانَ وَحيداً\ مَقْطوعاً مِن شَجَرةٍ\ لا أَبٌ وَلا أُمٌ\ لا إِخْوَةٌ وَلا أَخَواتٌ\ لا زَوْجَةٌ وَلا أَطْفالٌ

I passed him by/ on the street—as I/ convinced myself that paying him no attention/ in itself was a kind of revenge."[498] In other words, if the speaker just found out the enemy were human, he would not add to the cycle of violence by enacting revenge, and instead satisfy the primordial desire for vengeance by pretending that doing nothing would hurt the enemy even more. Importantly, the speaker does not absolve his enemy of his deeds, still acknowledging that he killed his father and razed his home. Instead, he consciously chooses not to exact his righteous revenge but rather to walk by, continue living and perhaps write this poem instead, letting it be his "Revenge."

I thought of this poem often during the 2014 war in Gaza, named by Israel "Operation Protective Edge" (*tsuk eitan*, צוק איתן). With yet another round of violence, death and inevitable mourning, the various calls for vengeance were becoming deafening. I printed out some copies of the Hebrew translation of this poem, done by Anton Shammas, and began taping them on lampposts and billboards across Jerusalem. Every day they would be torn down, and I would replace them with a new copy. I had no illusions that I was in any way ending the cycle of violence. But I still desperately wanted that voice, Taha Muhammad Ali's words of grace, to be heard and read, just to be present. I wonder, as I did in the introduction to this project, whether that action, small as it may be, was an act of resistance, a performance of mourning; whether in taping those flimsy sheets of paper with those quiet, powerful words of resistance on them, I was mourning the lives lost, the suffering of those left behind, trying to resist additional bloodshed, and knowing I would not succeed. As that round of violence in Gaza was waning, in late August, I left Jerusalem and moved to the United States. Gaza is still under siege and the occupation at large persists. Violence continues, and mourning follows.

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[498] فَأَنا لَنْ أُضيفَ\ إِلى شَقاءِ وَحْدَتِهِ\ (...) بل سأكتفي\ بَأنْ أُغْمِضَ الطَّرْفَ عَنْهُ\ حينَ أَمُرُّ بِهِ في الطَّريقِ\ مُقْنِعاً نَفْسي\ بِأَنَّ الإهْمالَ\ بِحَدِّ ذاتِهِ هو أَيْضاً\ نَوْعٌ مِنْ أَنْواعِ الإنْتِقامِ!

Coda – Final Words

Throughout *States of Mourning: Nationalism and Mourning in Palestinian and Israeli Literatures After 1948*, several themes and topics recur in variations. In the introduction to the project, I mentioned a few of them, to alert readers to pay particular attention while reading: the relationship between personal and collective, temporality and spatiality. After presenting the analyses of a large range of texts in the preceding chapters, I believe a few additional topics have emerged that merit some reflection: the relationship between speaker and addressee or audience; the complex matrix of nationalism and religion; and the blurred lines between life and death. These topics illustrate the scope of this project and its investments, as they include literary, historic-societal and ethical concerns. At the same time, these topics introduce complex political questions. In addition to highlighting these themes, I close this dissertation by offering a few additional thoughts on the comparative methodology I have utilized and, perhaps most importantly, on the concept of mourning I have articulated throughout these chapters, its urgency and the stakes at hand.

Representing a broad range of genres and styles, many of the texts we have encountered present questions related to the dynamic between speaker and audience. Chapter One, on dead bodies and burial, focused on two types of speakers: a poetic speaker who is dead, speaking poetically from beyond the grave in the Hebrew trope of the dead-living; and a speaker who is both present and absent, teetering between life and dead in the Palestinian living-dead. Both the Israeli and Palestinian figures have implications for the audience as well – ceremonially reciting

poems spoken by the dead-living threatens to cross out the boundary between life and death, for example. In the case of *Gate of the Sun*, the very distinction between speaker and addressee becomes murky, as part of the all-encompassing upheaval of life in conditions of exile and war. Or else, the question of who the addressee of a text is remains open – is it meant for an entire people? What does it mean to address a collective through a text so intensely engulfed in death, what kind of audience does that create? The speaker-audience dynamic is at the heart of the genre of the eulogy, the subject of the second chapter. In articulating a relationship between speaker and addressees, via the deceased subject of the address, eulogies negotiate a complex dynamic between past and present, living and dead, individual and community. The role of the eulogizer is, in many ways, to help the audience make sense of the loss and endow it with meaning – for both an individual bereaved and a collective. Questions of speaker and audience recur in a different fashion in the closing chapter, as family members of slain Palestinians and Israelis gather to mourn together and discuss the political conclusions they choose to draw from the grief, in a kind of belated eulogy. Because of national entrenchment their message reaches only a small audience, but the resistance it faces underscores the substantial challenge the ceremony nevertheless poses to a singular and nationalized view of mourning.

If the speaker-addressee relationship is a literary theme, the complex relationship between nationalism and religion is historical-societal. Nationalism is the focus of my project, but religion is inextricably bound with it in a variety of ways, informing the Palestinian and Israeli national narratives as well as their respective mourning practices. Religion and nationalism have a long and convoluted history in this context – Zionism developed as the Jewish national movement, and though historically it largely defined itself as secular, Judaism is

nevertheless at its core;[499] Palestinian nationalism developed as a secular movement but has become increasingly influenced by Muslim leaders and Islamic politics, most notably since Ḥamās' takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2006. Due to these interactions and tensions between religion and nationalism, in each chapter I contextualize the examined materials with relevant cultural background, which is often tied to religion: burial customs and funerals, the development of eulogies as a genre, and practices of memorialization. Chapter Three, on motherhood, outlines the cultural significance of mothering, which is not necessarily a religious issue. However, the mothers in the novels discussed in this chapter grapple with notions of sacrifice, a concept rooted in religion in both Judaism and Islam, as I demonstrate in my analysis. As I assert time and again, I do not mean to suggest that Israel is exclusively Jewish, nor that Palestinian society is exclusively Islamic; both societies have significant minority groups. Nevertheless, these religions do have a substantial impact on the cultural contours of these communities, on the arts and on local politics.

In addition to the recurrence of the speaker-audience relationship and the complex relationship between religion and nationalism, multiple chapters reveal that the lines between life and death are blurry and precarious in ways that might be uncomfortable to acknowledge. The first chapter deals with this blurred line explicitly through the figures of the dead-living and the living-dead, illustrating that the dead and the living are not really separated but rather dwell in an unstable in-between space. In the chapter on mothers, the sons are liminal figures awaiting their inevitable looming deaths, living on borrowed time. Their presence in the novels is ghostly or spectral even while they are still alive; their mothers begin to mourn for them ahead of time

[499] Zionism has always had a religious branch, which has arguably only gained steam after the 1967 war and the settlement movement. In 2021, a party called "Religious Zionism" ran for the Israeli parliament with an extremist nationalist agenda, winning six seats, including several members I would not hesitate to call outright fascists.

because they know that loss is inevitable, and so as readers we encounter them alive but already marked by their own deaths. In the final chapter, the speakers at the joint ceremony talk about their deceased loved ones, animating them through words and memories despite their physical absence. The ceremony demonstrates that the dead substantially impact the living so that the line between the two is never entirely settled. This unstable demarcation between the living and the dead, seen throughout the project, is highly consequential; it challenges our definitions of political life, death and afterlife and reformulates the stakes of political discourse and actions.

One of my project's main contributions is its comparative methodology, whose complexity and fragility require further reflection at this juncture, after I have presented various types of comparison in my analyses. Comparison might seem suspect to some readers for a variety of reasons, but as I illustrate throughout this project, this methodology enables me to argue that Palestinian and Israeli mourning are linked and interconnected; they are tied together by the fundamental power imbalance, and thus they impact and exacerbate one another in uneven ways. Comparison, it bears repeating, does not imply symmetry, and so while the crux of my argument is political and literary, it likewise has implications for the definition and practice of comparison. I use a comparative methodology not to equate but rather to insist that there is no symmetry, that there cannot be symmetry between an occupying state force and a stateless occupied people. What my comparative methodology shows is precisely the asymmetry created by power imbalance, and the pitfalls of false equivalency. Ultimately, the argument that stems from my critical comparison in this project insists on difference and is rooted in the asymmetry of political power.

Throughout this dissertation, I have intimated that my concept of mourning differs from common definitions of it in multiple ways, including my objection to the idea that mourning is a

teleological process whose outcome is healing. I have maintained that mourning is not linear, nor does it have an ending point, and that it is historically and culturally contingent. At this juncture I can state more explicitly why I find healing to be problematic in a political context. As we have seen throughout, mourning is enlisted and used by national apparatuses that collectivize it and make meaning out of loss in order to justify the nation in whose name the loss took place. Such a process depends on a notion of mourning as a healing process with a resolution that embraces mourners within the national fold, so they continue to affirm it. If mourners became angry at the collective and resented the fact that they had to sacrifice a loved one to uphold it, the national narrative would collapse.

My suggestion, though provocative, is not to heal. Healing, in this context, is an ideological mechanism which allows the nation not only to justify itself and the loss it has caused but any future losses as well. This prevalent logic is epitomized in Israel by the phrase "shooting and crying" (*yorim u-vokhim*, יורים ובוכים), in which each action enables the other; shooting generates a need to cry, and in turn crying paves the way for more shooting.[500] Instead, I contend, we can opt to sever the implicit and transparent link between the two, to dwell in mourning so the tears are not just a precursor for more shooting. If we refuse to heal, if we do not focus on covering over pain in the name of recovery, maybe we will realize that we are no longer willing to make such sacrifices; that the ends do not justify the means, that unlike Dayan's pronouncement, this is not the lot of our generation but rather a choice; that human life is more important than land, than national symbols, than fortified borders and mighty guns. To be clear, I

[500] The phrase "shooting and crying" originates in response to the publication of *The Seventh Day: Soldiers Talk About the Six Day War* (originally titled in Hebrew *Fighters Talk* or *Siyaḥ Loḥamim*, שיח לוחמים). In this collection, published just months after the war, Israeli soldiers – all kibbutz members – discussed their pain and trauma, as well as remorse for participating in certain acts of violence. The volume stirred intense conversation and controversy, and the phrase "shooting and crying" was used to refer to a kind of self-flagellation it highlighted. It has been used on both the left and the right of the Israeli political map, for vastly different purposes.

am not suggesting we mourn indefinitely; in many ways that is the current mechanism, in which loss is valorized and glorified and mourning seems inevitable and noble. Moreover, one cannot live in perpetual grief. But, I maintain, one cannot live like this, either. What I am suggesting, therefore, is that instead of rushing to make national meaning of loss through nationalized mourning that is an ideological mechanism, we remain in the gaping chasm of pain without ascribing it with meaning, without making sense of the senseless. My suggestion applies differently to Israelis and Palestinians, to those who have a state and those who do not. But because their respective mourning is linked in vexatious and painful ways, such a change in Israeli mourning would have ripple effects for Palestinian mourning as well.

Mourning and healing are not theoretical concepts, nor are they abstract; a project on mourning in Palestine/Israel is always pertinent and urgent, given the continuous bloodshed in the region. This was proven yet again in the final days of writing this dissertation, in May 2021, when another wave of violence erupted, what is described locally as "another round." Israeli authorities attempted to expel Palestinian families from the Jerusalem village of Sheikh Jarrah, which is incidentally where I began my anti-occupation activism during a previous wave of such expulsions. Israel then further escalated tensions by increasing its presence in the volatile Damascus Gate and Al-Aqsa Mosque. Ḥamās began an extensive campaign of rocket launches at the south and center of Israel, whose army responded by heavily bombarding Gaza, already under blockade and accustomed to ruination. By the time a tenuous ceasefire was reached 12 Israelis and at least 220 Palestinians had died, though that last number is likely an undercount. This is the pattern these "rounds" usually follow, their iterative nature so predictable, like a tragedy foretold. I am completing my project as the echoes of war continue to ring in my ears, much as they did when I arrived in the U.S. for Graduate School days after the end of the

previous war, illustrating that it never really ended. The relevance and urgency of a project on mourning in Palestine/Israel is overwhelming, enraging and unrelenting. What I have tried to show here is that mourning is not only the inevitable outcome of this violence but that it is used by national structures to justify that violence and enable it to continue. Therefore, any solution to this seemingly intractable conflict would have to include a recognition of the ways in which mourning is used and of its role and function in the imbalance of power, as well as a radical shift in the way we mourn.

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