CARRYING PALESTINE: PRESERVING THE "POSTMEMORY" PALESTINIAN IDENTITY AND CONSOLIDATING COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY POETIC NARRATIVES

by

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The Israel-Palestine Conflict is referred to in modern dialogues as perhaps "the world's most intractable conflict," engendering for contemporary Israelis and Palestinians alike a self- and national-perception that is fettered by narratives of historical persecution and exile. This thesis evaluates the effect of a specific process of memory-transmission, termed by writer and psychologist Marianne Hirsch as "postmemory," in the case of Palestinians born after 1967 and, in large part, outside of Israel/Palestine. I argue that as a result of the postmemorical transmission of narratives from mid-century Palestinians to the generation of Palestinians born after the Naksa, this younger generation of Palestinians has adopted responsibility for consolidating otherwise disparate accounts in the Palestinian *diwan* of mutual strife and resilience, and reinvesting in the ancient Arabic literary tradition of the poetic forum as grounds for revolutionizing collective consciousness and reviving once vibrant tenets of what it means to 'be Palestinian,' more specifically. It is within poetry, then, that many of these younger generation Palestinians are allowed opportunities to experience a homeland beyond the Conflict which has so come to define the region of Israel/Palestine in contemporary discourse.

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> *The long Occupation that created Israeli generations born in Israel and not knowing another 'homeland' created at the same time generations of Palestinians strange to Palestine; born in exile and knowing nothing of the homeland except stories and news. Generations who possess an intimate knowledge of the streets of faraway exiles, but not of their own country. Generations that never planted or built or made their small human mistakes in their own country.... The Occupation has created generations of us that have to adore an unknown beloved: distant, difficult, surrounded by guards, by walls, by nuclear missiles, by sheer terror.* (Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah* 61-62)

Introduction

The War of 1948 in what is now modern-day Israel, with Israel claiming a victory that left approximately 70 percent of Palestinian citizens dispossessed from their homes, would be only the first in a string of schisms and displacements that came to define life for many Palestinians contemporary to that time as well as for generations to follow. Palestinians growing up as displaced persons were forced at the same time to reconcile their memories of a once vibrant homeland with the reality of increasing fragmentation in the face of military occupation and exile. For later generations of Palestinians, who in many instances were not born within the homeland but rather abroad as the children of exiles, Palestine would come to represent a sort of symbolic terrain to which Palestinian identity was undoubtedly tied, the haphazard assemblage of memories passed down and adopted as one's own in a phenomenon Marianne Hirsch has called "postmemory." The distance of this "postmemory-generation" from both the *times* of their parent-generation as well as from the homeland itself in many ways confounded the ability of this younger generation to fully reconcile their own *lived* experiences with those inherited experiences of generations prior. This phenomenon has had important implications for the fate of "Palestinian identity," which younger

generations have, in large part, been tasked with preserving and reviving as efforts to restore the homeland surge on in the modern era.

This thesis will consider the ways in which "postmemory" manifests in the contemporary poetic narratives of a younger generation of Palestinian writers, specifically in regards to the case of Mourid and Tamim Barghouti, a Palestinian father and son who for their own parts are very active in the literary communities of Palestine and the Middle East. Mourid Barghouti's *Ra'aytu Ramallah* (i.e. *I Saw Ramallah*) and Tamim Barghouti's "Fii Al-Quds" (i.e. "In Jerusalem") are among the works selected for the purpose of my analyses in this thesis, in addition to their collected works of poetry respectively. The former work offers a poetic-prose account of Mourid's return home to Deir Ghassanah and Ramallah for the first time since the start of the Israeli military occupation of Gaza and the West Bank in 1967, and the latter recounts in the style of epic-poetry Tamim's attempted journey to the city of Jerusalem after a long absence from the Palestinian homeland.

In addition to this set of father-son narratives, I have chosen to evaluate the poetics of Najwan Darwish--a writer of the postmemory-generation (like Tamim)--and the relationship this prolific Palestinian poet builds between contemporary encounters with the Nakba in Palestinian consciousness and memories of the Holocaust in the Jewish experience. In truth, the works of both postmemory-generation writers (Najwan Darwish and Tamim Barghouti) exhibit clear attempts to refocus the Palestinian narrative on the tangible processes of living under military occupation and/or in exile perpetual. Theirs is a language that initiates a critical discourse on their generation's tendency to conceive of the homeland in terms of "utopian symbols" as a result of its

infatuation with pre-occupation Palestine, or the version of Palestine that the postmemory-generation aims to reconstitute. A once "Paradise Lost" transforms in the works of these young writers into a "Homeland Found," and because Palestine becomes in their poetry a reality *less abstract*, it is therefore more attainable in actuality.

This thesis will also evaluate the varying endeavors and responsibilities of the Palestinian poet from the mid-century diasporic generation to the more recent generation of "postmemory," in an effort to demonstrate the importance of poetry in consolidating collective cultural and historical narratives and sustaining once resounding tenets of what it means to 'be Palestinian.' My goal herein is not to qualify what does or does not constitute Palestinian identity ideologically; "identity" itself is a concept so difficult to place on the individual-level that it hardly merits my attempt to define those components of "identity" on a national-scale. Rather, I intend to evaluate the *ways in which identity is preserved and in some ways reimagined* as a result of the "postmemory" phenomenon in younger generations of Palestinian writers and their renewed import for the livelihood of the homeland, and to what extent poetry matters in consolidating and reviving Palestinian narratives from the depths of deep-seated historical and cultural schisms.

Ultimately, I argue that the generation of "postmemory-Palestinians" has become responsible for preserving those keystones of the Palestinian identity as they manifested prior to Israel's military occupation of Palestine in the mid-1900s. But what is more, by relying upon one of the Arab world's most ancient and prized traditions (i.e. the poetic forum) to do so, these young Palestinians are rooting an otherwise divided Palestinian story in a common history and providing a means for cultural solidarity in

spite of the increasing fragmentation of their peoples and their once-homeland. And so in this sense, they carry Palestine.

PART I

Al-Nakba, Al-Naksa, and Palestinian Diaspora

> *In the disaster of 1948 the refugees found shelter in neighboring countries as a 'temporary' measure. They left their food cooking on stoves, thinking to return in a few hours. They scattered in tents and camps of zinc and tin 'temporarily.' The commandos took arms and fought from Amman 'temporarily,' then from Beirut 'temporarily,' then they moved to Tunis and Damascus 'temporarily.' We drew up interim programs for liberation 'temporarily' and they told us they had accepted the Oslo Agreements 'temporarily,' and so on, and so on. Each one said to himself and to others 'until things become clearer.'* (Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah* 26)

With Israel's military victory in the 1948 War, hailed by Israelis as the "War of Independence" but donned by Palestinians as "al-Nakba" ("The Catastrophe"), approximately 600,000-700,000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled from their homes and forthwith adopted the status of "refugees": Bickerton and Klausner estimate that as a result of the losses encountered by Palestinians in 1948, about 70 percent of the Arab population of Palestine was dispossessed and made to forgo all property rights on what had become Israeli land. "As part of the campaign to evacuate Arabs from the Jewish state," note Bickerton and Klausner, "the Haganah deliberately destroyed Arab houses and villages, broadcast false stories in Arabic of the spread of cholera and typhus epidemics, and urged the population to escape the bloodbath while there was still time" (100); Arab Palestinians within Israel/Palestine "fled in some cases of their own free will, in some cases through terror; and in other cases they were expelled" (Bickerton and Klausner 100). Palestinian refugees dispersed throughout surrounding Arab nations, from eastern Palestine and Transjordan to camps in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, with only some 150,000 remaining in the newly Jewish state after the

war: Despite their mass diffusion, however, the injury done to Palestinians was *collectively* felt, and a return to their homeland became a biting concern for Palestinians throughout the world.

In June of 1967, the fate of Palestine changed again, in what would come to be known as "al-Naksa" ("the Setback"), when the Israelis fought once more against their neighboring Arab counterparts and defeated their opponents in a remarkable *six days only*. Israeli planes effectively "destroyed most of Egypt's air force on the ground," with Israeli combatants going on to seize both the Gaza Strip and the entire Sinai Peninsula (Bickerton and Klausner 144). Although Israel had urged King Hussein to refrain from engaging in war, with the assurance that it would not attack him first, Hussein for his part was "badly misled by the Egyptians, who intimated that they were being successful against Israel on the southern front," leading Jordan to fire guns "from across the borders in Jerusalem while Jordanian troops seized the UN headquarters in no-man's land" (Bickerton and Klausner 145); it was all the prompting necessary for Israel to seize the Old City of Jerusalem and the entire West Bank, in addition to the Golan Heights in response to attacks from Syria on Israel's northern settlements. The war began on June 5th, 1967, and concluded on June 10th, 1967: Six days only and "a new map of the Middle East came into being, with Israel three times larger than it was in 1949" (Bickerton and Klausner 145).

Israeli territorial changes 1949 - 1967

Source: BBC News, "Key Maps"

The defeat was crushing for Arabs everywhere, particularly given that the Arabs were deemed superior in most every weapons category: Israel had again struck at their Arab opponents and had won by a landslide. Israel's new occupation of the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem lent itself to more contention and unrest than perhaps ever before, with an estimated 1.3 million Palestinians now under Israeli control in Gaza and the West Bank; "if Palestinian nationalism was nascent or held in check before 1967 when the Palestinians lived under Arab governments," contend Bickerton and Klausner, "it grew into an authentic manifestation of the desire of Palestinian Arabs for self-determination as the years passed" (145). Notes Mourid Barghouti, a prominent Palestinian poet who himself was denied entry back into Palestine as a result of the '67 War, "Since June 5, 1967[,] we have been left to sort out our lives in the lengthening shadow of the defeat, the defeat that has not yet ended. That is one definite milestone for what followed and is following until now. Yes, '67 has been stamped permanently on my mind since I lived it in my early youth" (*I Saw Ramallah* 176).

Encounters with Exile and the Descent into "Refugeeism"

In his essay "The Palestinian Exile as Writer," Palestinian poet Jabra I. Jabra explores his experience as a prominent member of the artistic community in the Palestinian diaspora, and his rejection of the 'refugee-status' as integral to the preservation of an increasingly disparate Palestinian identity. "The Wandering Palestinian replaced the Wandering Jew," notes Jabra, adding that it was perhaps "ironical that the new wanderers should be driven into the wilderness by the old wanderers themselves" (77). Though certainly displaced, living in spatial exile from the Palestinian homeland, Jabra refused to accept the label "refugee" as namesake for his changed status in the world, and many Palestinians at the time felt similarly: "I was not seeking refuge. None of my Palestinian co-wanderers were seeking refuge. We were offering whatever talent or knowledge we had, in return for a living, for survival. We were knowledge peddlers pausing at one more stop on our seemingly endless way" (Jabra 77). In truth, the homes of a once vibrant Palestinian peoples had been abandoned and left for Israeli settlement, foreclosing any hope of return for the now diasporic generation of Palestinians.

The sense of displacement encountered by Palestinian exiles was certainly not alleviated by their gradual integration into new countries and disparate cultural experiences across the globe; if anything, Palestinians abroad as a result of the Nakba and later the Naksa were made more aware of their outsider-status than perhaps ever before. The loss encountered by these now disoriented and aching Palestinian peoples ran so deep as to challenge the very notion of their identity and stake in the world: Contends Jabra, "The sense of loss in an exile is unlike any other sense of loss. It is a

sense of having lost a part of the inner self, a part of an inner essence.... [An exile] is obsessed by the thought that only a return home could do away with such a feeling, end the loss, reintegrate the inner self" (83).

At the same time that Palestinian peoples surely reflected on their *personal* narratives of loss (of family members, of friends, neighbors, homes, traditions, livelihoods), their collective experience of uprootedness and hardship had the effect of consolidating a larger Palestinian narrative and tying a peoples to a common story. Despite increasing fragmentation and the mass dispersal of Palestinians throughout the world, Jabra argues that Palestinian exiles began to lobby harder, as their "sense of belonging to Palestinian soil, rather than diminishing," intensified to a remarkable degree (Jabra 84). Palestinian intellects from all corners of the Middle East were joining together to solidify their collective narrative, "writing, teaching, doing things, influencing a whole Arab society in unexpected ways"; Palestinians were finding new ways of "coping with their sense of loss, turning their exile into a force, creating thereby a mystique of being Palestinian" (Jabra 84).

For Jabra and many of his Palestinian contemporaries, the return to a homeland became an almost obsessive reality, lodged in the hearts and souls of those who felt their loss of home paralleling their somehow loss of selves as a Palestinian people: Writes Jabra, "for me, until 1967, exile from Jerusalem was the central fact of my life.... I was grappling with the endless theme of a Palestinian exile in an Arab world which I loved and observed, worried about and wanted to change.... [In truth,] the Palestinian sailed away only to ache more deeply for his return, to ache more bitterly for his grass roots" (86). This ache, in many ways, manifested in the form of memories and stories

shared and passed on to successive generations of Palestinians, who for their part adopted this ache as their own. Exile became an almost second-hand reality, thusly eliciting a changed relationship to the vision of a "homeland" for young Palestinians in a new era of conflict.

PART II

Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma and the "Postmemory Generation"

Author and professor of contemporary fiction at Yale University Amy Hungerford posits the question, "How can the children of survivors be survivors themselves?" (qtd. in Kolar 227). Of course the traumas of exile and collective alienation, the shock and strife encountered in the experience of wartime, personal attacks, racial stigmas, displacements, are themselves harrowing for the survivors who live through such conflict and carry these memories into their lives after hardship. But what many academics have less readily considered, perhaps in some cases entirely overlooked, is the effect of passing down these memories from the generation of survivors to the generation of their children, who, although never having encountered many of these experiences first-hand, still manage to carry with them reminiscence of these experiences *as if they were their own*. A phenomenon coined by one Marianne Hirsch as "postmemory," this occurrence may be understood very basically as "the response of the second generation to the trauma of the first," resulting in a potentially destructive relationship between the children of "survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences they "remember" only as narratives of their parents...but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch 8-9).

The phenomenon of "postmemory" has been studied with considerable breadth in the context of Holocaust survivors and their successive generations, but has been explored to a much lesser extent in other diasporic contexts and histories: Notes Eva Hoffman, daughter to a Holocaust survivor and one such child of Hirsch's "generation

of postmemory," "the guardianship of the Holocaust is being passed on to us. The second generation is the hinge generation in which received, transferred knowledge of events is being transmuted into history, or into myth" (qtd. in Hirsch and Spitzer 262). Despite the fact that these later generations lack tangible experience with the specific traumas encountered by their parent-generation (e.g. al-Nakba and al-Naksa), they are likely nevertheless to grow up with and effectively *inherit* the hardships of their ancestors via familial transmission; in Stanislav Kolar's "Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma in Spiegelman's *Maus*," Kolar notes that, "the transmission of the cataclysmic wartime experiences across generations has formed a significant part of the identity of the children of survivors, and has become one of the crucial constituents of their [sense of Self], regardless of the extent of their assimilation" (qtd. in Kolar 228).

We can here apply the concept of "postmemory" to the children of Palestinian parents affected by al-Nakba (the 1948 War) and later al-Naksa (the 1967 War), wherein the lived experiences of survivors would be passed on as memories to successive generations of Palestinians (who, particularly for those born and raised abroad, may never have visited the homeland itself, but nonetheless construct identities that are reliant upon inherited narratives, thereby preserving past tenets of Palestinian identity in a contemporary context). As has been studied more extensively in narratives emerging post-Holocaust, "postmemory reflects the level of the identification with the original recipients of trauma and is often characterized by the feeling of displacement, living in temporal and spatial exile, estrangement and the experience of a land and absence which frequently leads to an identity crisis" (qtd. in Kolar 228-229). In some ways, the experience of "postmemory" for the children of survivors actually conflates

the ability of this "postmemory-generation" to formulate unique and fully-realized identities distinct from the memories it protects and the narrative it is subconsciously tasked with preserving. In truth, it is quite impossible to host a discussion on Palestinian history without accounting for the events of the Nakba and later the Naksa, and so too is it impossible for Palestinians themselves, even those who did not encounter these events first-hand, to conceive of themselves comprehensively outside of these heartbreaks in Palestinian history.

Rootless Nostalgia and "Home" Imagined

"A past reconstructed through the animating vision of nostalgia can serve as a creative inspiration..., called upon to provide what the present lacks."
(qtd. in Hirsch and Spitzer 259)

In order to understand more fully the phenomenon of "postmemory" and its relation to the first-hand trauma from which it originates, it will be helpful to expand upon the nature of *nostalgia*, and the symptoms associated with its occurrence. Naturally, individuals who incur significant traumas (or in the case of the postmemory-generation, individuals who *inherit the memory* of significant traumas) are likely, as a result, to encounter a sense of longing for their lives, or aspects of their lives, as they existed before the experience of trauma (such that the 'pre-trauma' life becomes effectively an object of loss for its griever). After Swiss physician Johannes Hofer named and described the condition in 1688, "nostalgia" became an acknowledged medical affliction which by the mid- to late-nineteenth century broadened in meaning to include "'loss" of a more general and abstract type, including "the yearning for a 'lost childhood,' for 'irretrievable youth,' for a vanished 'world of yesterday'"; and because "no literal return in time [is] possible, nostalgia became an incurable state of mind, a

signifier of 'absence' and 'loss' that could never be made 'presence' and 'gain' except through memory and the creativity of reconstruction" (Hirsch and Spitzer 258). Much of the literature on nostalgia, writers Hirsch and Spitzer contend, is traditionally characterized by feelings which reflect "a bitter-sweet, affectionate, positive relationship to what has been lost," wherein the nostalgic writer "express[es] a contrast between 'there' and 'here,' 'then' and 'now,' in which the absent is valued as somehow better, simpler, less fragmented, and more comprehensible than its alternative in the present" (258). For Palestinian exiles and displaced persons coming out of 1948's al-Nakba and 1967's al-Naksa, recollections of an autonomous Palestinian homeland and childhoods lived therein (the object of their nostalgia) were based in tangible experience with this version of Palestine in a past-life, drawing on details and memories which, although morphed with time, certainly retained some essence of concreteness in a once sovereign Palestine.

For individuals of the postmemory-generation, however, images of the utopian "home" afflict the consciousness *without* any real foundation of lived-experience in the place and time they experience nostalgia for. They envisage a sort of Paradise entrenched in someone else's past, a Paradise which by nature cannot exist for them, confounding, as a result, their discovery of "home" and any semblance of identity tied to its unveiling. "Having inherited shards of memory," note Hirsch and Spitzer, "positive and negative, we could not hope to reunite the fragments. Instead, our journey remained a process of searching--a creative vehicle of contact and transmission enabling an encounter between nostalgic and negative memory. Its force derived precisely from its lack of resolution, the simultaneity of promise and disappointment"

(263). It seems clear that the same can be said for younger generations of Palestinian writers exploring and "remembering" the Palestinian state as a home worth protecting, worth returning to, both physically and psychologically. As the children of exiles, they experience a sort of "rootless nostalgia," having little or no tangible experience with the object of their nostalgia in which to ground their sense of longing. French-Polish writer Henry Raczymow (an individual of the postmemory-generation following the Holocaust) notes, "our roots are diasporic...They do not go underground.... Rather they creep up along the many roads of dispersion that the ['postmemory'] writer explores, or discovers, as he puts his lines down on the paper. Such roads are endless" (qtd. in Hirsch and Spitzer 263).

> *Some things you forget. Other things you never do.... Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place--the picture of it--stays, and not just in my rememory but out there, in the world.... If you go there--you who never was there-- if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you.* (Morrison 36)

Palestine in Memory, Palestine in Perpetuity: The Case of Mourid and Tamim Barghouti

In considering the phenomenon of *postmemory* as it relates to the case of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, I have chosen to evaluate firstly the model of one father-son relationship in particular, so as to illustrate the implications of transgenerational transmission of trauma on the preservation of pre-Naksa "Palestinian identity" and the memory of mid-century Palestine. Is the role of the Palestinian poet today the same as it was for Palestinian poets writing 60 years ago? How might postmemory influence the manner in which a younger-generation Palestinian poet relates to his or her "homeland," and how does this generation's poetry reflect "rootless nostalgia" for the time in which

what it meant to 'be Palestinian' did not necessarily require utterance and reminders? Famed Palestinian-American literary theorist and philosopher Edward Said notes that "every Palestinian today is...in an unusual position of knowing that there was once a Palestine and yet seeing that place with a new name, people, and identity that deny Palestine altogether" (qtd. in Barghouti viii). Postmemory-generation Palestinians, however, only "know" of a once politically sovereign and prosperous Palestinian state as a result of memories acquired second-hand.

Mourid Barghouti, a celebrated Palestinian poet who spent a great deal of his life in exile, was born in 1944 in the village of Deir Ghassanah, not far from the more metropolitan Ramallah. Barghouti was finishing his last year of studies at Cairo University in Cairo, Egypt, when the Six-Day War (al-Naksa, or the War of 1967) erupted on the Israeli-Egyptian border. Living abroad at the time, Barghouti found himself, like many other Palestinians, prevented from returning to his once homeland in the heart of the West Bank. Barghouti went on to work as an instructor at the Industrial College in Kuwait, exploring at the same time his passion for literature and poetry, and eventually going on to publish works in such prominent journals as *al-Adab* and *Mawaqif* in Beirut and *al-Ahram* in Cairo. Barghouti married Egyptian novelist and academic Radwa Ashour (who today translates many of Barghouti's works into English), and in 1977, they had their first and only son, Tamim. Unfortunately for Barghouti and his family, who were living in Egypt at the time, "that year, the Egyptian government had embarked on a peace process with Israel and [as a result] expelled most Palestinians of prominence," including one Mourid Barghouti (tamimbarghouti.net). Barghouti left behind five-month old Tamim and wife Radwa to spend 17 years in yet

another state of exile; it was not until 1996 that Barghouti was allowed to return to the West Bank, in conjunction with agreements stipulated in the Oslo Accords.

"Is that June defeat [of 1967] a particular psychological problem for me? For my generation? For contemporary Arabs?" posits Barghouti in his memoir, *I Saw Ramallah* (172). "Other events took place after it, other disappointments and setbacks no less dangerous. Wars raged, massacres were committed, political and intellectual discourses were altered, but '67' remains different. We are still paying bills until this day. There is nothing that has happened in our contemporary history that does not bear a relationship to '67" (Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah* 172). Mourid Barghouti published the award-winning *I Saw Ramallah* in 1997, reflecting on his long-awaited (albeit temporary) homecoming to Palestine and the places that so comprised his childhood and the first 20 years of his life before exile. Though primarily written in narrative prose, the lyrical and often *rhythmic* nature of Barghouti's language in this work lends to a more poetic reading of *Ramallah*.

Tamim Barghouti, son of Mourid Barghouti, is today a prominent political-scientist, columnist, and, in the tradition of his parents, impassioned poet. Notably, Tamim has been cited as "[perhaps] the most acclaimed Arab poet of his generation" (tamimbarghouti.net). Tamim served not only as the poetic voice of a generation, but also as visiting professor of political science at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. from 2008-2011, and today acts as a consultant to the United Nations Economic and Social Committee for West Asia. Though his father faced deportation only months after Tamim's birth, the two spent 17 years coming together during three-week long winter and summer vacations in Budapest, Hungary, reconnecting and swapping stories

in a manner not dissimilar from most fathers and sons. As a result, Tamim developed a proficiency for Hungarian language, in addition to his later acquired command of English, French, and Italian language, due to his comprehensive education in Cairo. Tamim went on to obtain a Bachelor of Arts at Cairo University, the alma mater of his father. "Since childhood, [Tamim] has been immersed in the political realities of the Arab world, the way they affect the most personal aspects of an individual's life, as well as the literary means to express them" (tamimbarghouti.net). Tamim published his first poem at the age of 18, and in 1999, at 22 years of age, he "returned" to Palestine for the first time in his young life, where he compiled and published a collection of poems entitled *Mijana*, written primarily in the Palestinian colloquial dialect. In 2007, Tamim would go on to recite his now acclaimed poem "Fii al-Quds" (or "In Jerusalem") on the popular televised Arab poetry competition, *Prince of Poets*, winning him renown throughout the Arab world. "In Jerusalem" became, in fact, something of a classic street poem for many Palestinians, garnering him the title "Poet of Jerusalem" in many Palestinian newspapers; the poem was so significant as to merit ring-tones composed after it for many a mobile phone across the Arab world, with young children memorizing and reciting the poem in displays of cultural resistance to Israeli military policies (tamimbarghouti.net).

Much like Mourid Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah*, "In Jerusalem" recounts Tamim's attempted journey to the city of Jerusalem after a long absence from his Palestinian 'homeland'; Tamim's experience in the poem differs, however, somewhat significantly from his father's in the fact that Tamim's entrance to the Old City is *denied*, thusly confounding a larger, more symbolic return to the "roots" of his inherited

memories. His nostalgia, in turn, is to some degree fated for the "rootlessness" earlier described, and his understanding of Palestinianness becomes tied, in this work and throughout his poetic anthology, to an underlying recurrence of exile and displacement. For Tamim and his contemporaries, in many ways, the Old City and the land on which it stands as capital persist more as "a cultural landscape, deterritorialized, diasporic-- an idea of a city and place less and less connected to its geographical location and ever more tenuously dependent on the vicissitudes of personal, familial, and cultural memory" (Hirsch and Spitzer 256).

By comparing the language of father-son narratives, I aim to analyze the ways in which postmemory influences the relationships that are forged between a younger generation of Palestinian writers and the homeland around which their understanding of Palestinian heritage hinges. As is evident in a comparative close-reading of both father and son poetic works respectively, Tamim's role as an influential contemporary Palestinian poet serves in some ways to preserve the memory of his father's "Palestine," and in other ways to redefine it. That is to say, Tamim's is a narrative that relies on the language of his father's poetics at the same time that it reconsiders the reality of contemporary encounters with Palestine by examining the homeland as *more than a memory* and engaging in what Bernice Johnson Reagon refers to as "cultural autobiography."

PART III

Poetic Histories and Poetry's Salience for Contemporary Consciousness

Poetry has a long and prominent history in the Arab world, functioning at times to record histories past and in others to actively create it. Notes Jacqueline Ismael, "Since the time when the Arabs carried their mobile culture on camels across vast desert expanses, poetry has been a principle mode of expression and communication" (55). Scholar Fatma Moussa-Mahmoud has gone so far as to say that in fact "no literary form is more indicative of the unity of Arabic literature than poetry," for it becomes quite impossible to evaluate a broader 'Arab history' without accounting for one of its oldest and most celebrated art forms (30): Poetry. Certainly poetry in the Arab world has long provided a venue appropriate for everything from religious sermons to cultural revolutions, wherein "the Arab poet has ever been the chronicler and mouthpiece of his people" (Moussa-Mahmoud 33). Made all the more pertinent at present with the Israel-Palestine Conflict, "Palestinians have utilized poetry to analyze, editorialize, propagandize, and immortalize their pathos," serving as a true testament to poetry's relevance in contemporary dialogues on culture and politics in the region (Ismael 55). Ismael contends, in fact, that Palestinians have "revitalized poetry as a practical tool of production--the production of revolutionary consciousness" (55).

Certainly there exist several historical landmarks that have inspired many of the evolving poetic trends we can trace throughout the Palestinian literary *diwan*: "Shortly after the 1948 Israeli occupation of Palestine," notes author Khaled Furani in his essay "Rhythms of the Secular: The Politics of Modernizing Arab Poetic Forms," "the reign of the classical Arabic ode collapsed, and the modern forms of free verse and, later, the

prose poem became dominant" (290). As Furani notes, it is truly as a result of the Israeli defeat over Palestine in 1948 that we begin to see free-verse poetry gaining widespread popularity in the region, wherein many "modernist" Arab poets (within and outside of Palestine) began discrediting more traditional rhyme-schemes and forms by associating them "with an outdated traditional Arab life they found partly responsible for the loss of Palestine" (291). The initial fall of Palestine in 1948 paralleled for many Arab poets "the fall of many truths," resulting in the rejection of Romanticist poetics and "the ivory tower of symbolism," as many Palestinian writers and their audiences, in turn, began to favor a new variety of poetic commentary (Furani 293): Poetry festivals grew in fashion during the 1950s and 1960s, considered "political-populist-literary events" where poets and non-poets alike could gather to enjoy oral recitations of often politically-charged poetic verses. Notes Furani, festival-poets (many of whom were associated with the Israeli Communist Party) "played their traditional quintessential role of documenting their people's history, and they paid for it with imprisonment, loss of employment, or restrictions imposed under Israel's first military rule" (293). These poets, perhaps rightly so, considered their manipulation of the poetic-form to be revolutionary, "being 'free' to deregulate the rhyme and number of feet in each verse line" (Furani 291).

Popular poetic style turned again in conjunction with yet another landmark military defeat over the Arabs: The events that transpired as a result of June 1967, a crushing blow for Palestinians and Arabs everywhere, triggered a new vigor in Palestinian consciousness, which Jacqueline Ismael argues is "evident in the flood of poetry following the ['67] war" (53): "The singularly decisive defeat of the Arabs, the

sudden expansion of the domain of alienation, and the apparent legitimacy of force in human affairs unmasked the nature of the processes of alienation, the objective roles of the chief protagonists and the objective interrelationships among their diverse aims" (Ismael 53). The free-verse movement no longer seemed sufficient to propel Arab poetry into modernity in an increasingly unpredictable political and social climate. By the late 1960s, the future of poetry in Palestine had again altered course, with *prose-poetry* taking the fore in a new era of poetic expression: "If free-verse poets revolutionized the Arabic poetic form by deregulating rhymes and rhythms," argues Furani, "prose poets extended that revolution by dismissing metrical measurement altogether" (291). It is during this era that popular poets like Adonis captured cultural spotlights by championing the prose-poem, boldly declaring, "The prose poem is dangerous because it is free" (qtd. in Furani 290).

At this point in my discussion of poetic legacies in Palestine and throughout the Arab world, the question of *why poetry matters* becomes a pertinent one: To what extent does poetry play a role in consolidating collective consciousness and influencing popular sentiment? Jacqueline Ismael argues that "as a medium of expression, poetry bridges the gap between the individual psyche and objective reality.... In its deliberate search for meaning, poetry is an affirmation of human self-consciousness; and in its search for the meaning of the objective "fact" of Palestinian alienation, Palestinian poetry reflects the convergence of meaning in the essence of consciousness as human experience" (43). Despite what feels to many Palestinians like the slow and calculated erasure of personal and cultural histories on a land now denied to them, poetry for many Palestinian peoples provides an opportunity to reassert selfhood--individually and

collectively-- and the legitimacy of the Palestinian identity. Poet Hanna Ibrahim argues that "poetry continues to be a public event...[in which] the measuring of sound, rhythmical discipline, is agentive and generative. It constitutes [the] defiant mobilizing of a political constituency under military restrictions" (Furani 294). It is the empowering chant of an otherwise persecuted peoples, exploring in un-bound verses the experience of alienation in time and space that the novel's more regulated and even logical structure so fails to encapsulate. Poetry then, for much the same reason festival-goers five decades ago flocked to public readings and poetic forums, serves quite particularly in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict to fuse individual Palestinian narratives into a cohesive, durable account of Palestinian history, and to amplify this account in both the private and the public sphere. "While the poetic imagery [of Palestinian poetry] seemingly reflects the divergent experiences of the Palestinian in exile," contends Ismael, "in the refugee camp, or under military occupation, underlying the apparent differences is the common denominator of alienation. It is this common denominator that maintains the unity of Palestinian consciousness" (53). In light of its legacy for writers throughout Palestine, poetry operates in Palestinian culture (at home and abroad) as the vessel that *makes apparent* this common denominator among all Palestinians and uses it to assert authority over the telling of their own living, Palestinian history.

Poetic Identities and "Cultural Autobiography"

"Poetry...[is] a revelatory distillation of experience." (Audre Lorde)

Where does the intensely personal functionality of poetry in the Arab world (and quite particularly in Palestine) merge to acknowledge more collective narratives of

cultural strife and ideological crises? Can a narrative be at once private and cumulative, representative of larger, shared truths? In her article "Weaving Poetic Autobiographies: Individual and Communal Identities in the Poetry of Mohja Kahf and Suheir Hammad," Carol Fadda-Conrey contends that by "taking the power of words, of representation, into their own hands," the generation of 'postmemory-Palestinians' are allowed the opportunity to "project onto history an identity that is not purely individualistic. Nor is it purely collective. Instead, this new identity merges the shared and the unique" (qtd. in Fadda-Conrey 157). If we examine comprehensively the oeuvre of poetry that emerges from the poets of the postmemory generation of the Palestinian diaspora, we can understand "poetic articulations [themselves] as forms of autobiography," wherein those inherited and adopted memories consolidated from the first-hand diasporic narratives of parent-generations constitute a large part of these younger writers' personal histories and psychological experiences with contemporary Palestine (Fadda-Conrey 158). Paralleling our conceptions of *poetry* and *autobiography* in the case of Tamim Barghouti, for example, allows us to understand the speakers within his works as potential varieties of *himself* as a poet and a Palestinian, his language lending clues to a self-perception he may or may not be cognizant of in the process of writing. Although we should not and cannot assume outright that the speakers of these contemporary poetic works are inherently reconstituted versions of the poets themselves, it becomes good practice to consider the possibility of an autobiographical influence in the characters they craft. Additionally, however, we can go further to consider these Palestinian poetic narratives as not only personal accounts of loss and trauma inherited as one's own, but more broadly as what Bernice Johnson Reagon calls "cultural

autobiography," or accounts of some grander, shared experience: "Collective identity" becomes, therefore, "a source of strength and transformation," even when it is informed by significant traumas past (qtd. in Fadda-Conrey 162).

Poetry then, in the case of young Palestinian writers struggling to comprehend fully an identity dependent on the taxing memories of their parent-generation, becomes a means of protecting some semblance of *shared* Palestinianness among their contemporaries, while allowing the poet, on a more personal scale, to purge him- or herself of individual stressors in the process of writing (that is to say that writing *itself* can be therapeutic). The poetic "I" in Palestinian postmemory narratives is situated symbolically within a more collective "we": "The connotations of this '"we" may shift from one poem to another, thus widening the boundaries of collective identity" (Fadda-Conrey 164). As we see in the case of contemporary Palestinian writers like Tamim Barghouti, Fadda-Conrey argues that "such self-discovery and "self-making" extend beyond the self to emphasize through poetry a collectivity of... experience, [developing] into a complex act of creation and discovery since it involves the peeling back of historical and cultural layers through the writing process" (176). Though many of Tamim's and his contemporaries' poetics are written from a *singular* perspective (often first- or second-person), the larger narratives they project represent a more communal "cultural autobiography," standing for the stories of many Palestinians, and thusly purporting a new version of the Palestinian identity which is perhaps more keen than ever before to acknowledge a collective-dimension to the Palestinian experience. In the very first stanza of "In Jerusalem," Tamim situates the narrated experience in the perspective of "We," and the second-person "You" and later first-person "I" that persists

throughout the remainder of the poem stands in truth for Fadda-Conrey's "symbolic 'we'" (i.e. it is understood that his narrative is shared, rather than purely individualistic).

I have translated from its original Modern Standard Arabic (or Fus-ha) into English Tamim's poem "In Jerusalem," as well as several additional works from Tamim's poetry collection, *Mijana*, while in the case of Mourid Barghouti's memoir, *I Saw Ramallah*, and his collection, *Midnight and Other Poems*, I worked largely with the published English translations provided in consultation with the original Arabic, in order that I may evaluate more comprehensively the parallels in language from one narrative to the next and the nature of each man's reflections on a "return to the homeland." Where other works are concerned, as in the case of my later discussion on Najwan Darwish, I worked almost solely with the published English translations provided, attending to the original Arabic when I could find it.

PART IV

Postmemory and the Call to Preserve in Tamim Barghouti's "In Jerusalem"

"What is so special about [Palestine] except that we have lost it?" (Barghouti 6)

The wide appeal and seeming timelessness of Tamim Barghouti's poetics throughout the Arab world and quite notably in Palestine are due in large part to his unique linguistic style, which nods to traditions in both ancient Arabic literature as well as more contemporary trends (like free-verse) in Palestinian poetics, more specifically. Tamim relies on more classical *Fus-ha* diction throughout much of his poetry, but quite particularly in "In Jerusalem," though we do find the Palestinian dialect explored more prevalently in his published collection, *Mijana*; as a result, his diction throughout the poem "In Jerusalem" and others calls to mind more traditional Arabic narratives (and their lasting literary legacies) and holds allure for a wide variety of Arabic-speaking peoples (who share a general knowledge of Fus-ha, or Modern Standard Arabic). The use of Fus-ha in "In Jerusalem," as opposed to a regionally-distinct colloquial dialect, allows Tamim to speak to peoples throughout the Arab world and to make the Palestinian story, effectually, an Arab story, cohesive with other narratives in Arab history.

Also significant is Tamim's reference in the opening line of "In Jerusalem" to the classical suspended odes of the Mu'allaqat (a group of seven canonical Arabic poems from the period of the Jahiliyya, or pre-Islam (prior to 622 CE), which are considered representative of the best works of Arab poets during that time). Specifically, Tamim's first line ("We passed by the house of the beloved and were turned away") alludes to Imru al-Qais' well-known and widely revered poem within the

Mu'allaqat, which begins famously, "Stop and let us weep in remembrance of a Beloved and her house" (i.e. *Let us stop and weep in remembrance of the house of the Beloved*). Tamim's allusion is noteworthy in that it calls upon an ancient poetic tradition in Arab history and arouses for those familiar with the Mu'allaqat a sense of pride in the literary heritage of ancient Arab poets. For Tamim, as for many Palestinian writers of Tamim's generation, Palestine as a homeland represents, to some extent, a 'beloved' that exists more securely in imagination and "memory" than as a tangible reality; much like the tales of the beloved found in the Mu'allaqat, the Palestinian homeland is in many ways a thing of poetic story-telling for the postmemory-writer.

Tamim's "In Jerusalem" opens mid-journey, where its narrators (at first plural, but moving later to the singular "you") approach the city of Jerusalem and self-proclaimed Palestinian capitol, only to be "turned away... by the laws of the enemy and its walls." The poem proceeds to give a description of the she-city (feminine, as indicated by verbs in the original Arabic) from the perspective of someone on the inside, someone who knows the city intimately (ironic, of course, because the speaker is barred access to Jerusalem in the poem's opening lines). The poem moves effortlessly from illustrations of everyday lives within the city walls to reflections on social marginalization to the personification of Jerusalem *her*self. At poem's end, the narrative-"you" is again brought back to the scene provided in the poem's beginning, except instead of moving *towards* Jerusalem, the speaker turns its second-person "you" away from the ancient city, riding in a yellow cab and watching as images of the Old City settle in the distance. The last stanza transitions, oddly, from the second-person

"you" to the more inclusive "we," and finally, to the isolated "I," where the speaker is consoled by his beloved, who tells him she sees nothing "except you."

This poem is intriguing for a variety of reasons, in the first place because it effectively provides a narrative, at once emblematic and extremely perceptive, on a place to which the speaker admits he has limited (if any) access. It is therefore a highly typical example (if such a thing exists) of the postmemorical relationship of many younger-generation Palestinians born-abroad to their absent Palestinian homeland. To an arguably heightened degree in this second generation of Palestinian exiles and writers, issues of cultural and literary heritage materialize in the image of the homeland itself, rendering impossible any reflection on the Palestinian identity without the simultaneous pang of poetic-responsibility to the land and its peoples, past and present (an issue to which "In Jerusalem" is very astute):

> *You found inscribed on your palms the text of a poem or two,*
> *Oh Son of the nobleman.*

Perhaps unsurprisingly, we see throughout Tamim's poem, "In Jerusalem," references to the language of his father, Mourid Barghouti, in *I Saw Ramallah.* In some cases, Tamim draws on the very same idioms and turns-of-phrase that we see present in Mourid's work: Mourid notes in *Ramallah,* "Now I am here looking at it: at the west bank of the Jordan River. This then is the 'Occupied Territory'?... When the eye sees it, it has all the clarity of earth and pebbles and hills and rocks" (6). Accordingly, we see Tamim relying on the self-same language in his reflections on Jerusalem: "When you see the ancient Jerusalem once/ *the eye will always see it*" (italics added). The parallelism of language between father-son narratives, albeit regarding different cities, may be an indication of a "postmemory-influence" in Tamim's reminiscence on the

"homeland," which we know he was neither born in nor grew up in. Mourid ponders, "Who would dare make [Palestine] an abstraction now that it has declared itself to the senses? It is no longer 'the beloved' in the poetry of resistance, or an item on a political party program, it is not an argument or a metaphor. It stretches before me, as touchable as a scorpion, a bird, a well; visible as a field of chalk, as the prints of shoes" (*I Saw Ramallah* 6); Mourid, who experienced Palestine, Deir Ghassanah, Ramallah, in tangible encounters during childhood and early adult life, here reveals the manner in which his perception of the homeland differs from Tamim's. Whereas Mourid knows Palestine *materially* (having lived within it in a time before exile), Tamim knows Palestine, by nature, more *symbolically*, as a string of memories handed down and consolidated to constitute a more abstract relationship to the land of his roots. Tamim refers to Palestine (Jerusalem) as a "gazelle in the distance," a being that speaks and feels, "a beloved." Though Mourid rejects the idea of Palestine as the "beloved" (a symbol), Tamim acknowledges from the poem's foremost lines his generation's understanding of Palestine as a distant "beloved" (recall the opening allusion to the Mu'allaqat). Tamim, however, engages in conversation with the "beloved" at poem's end, indicating a more intimate, firsthand relationship with the homeland than the metaphor of the "beloved" might have us believe upon first-glance.

We see in Mourid's work a feeling of estrangement within Ramallah society upon his return to Palestine, despite his otherwise legitimate "ties" to the land: "I am the person coming from the continent of others, from their languages and their borders. The person with spectacles on his eyes and a small bag on his shoulder.... Here I am walking toward the land of the poem. A visitor? A refugee? A citizen? A guest? I do

not know" (*I Saw Ramallah* 11). This, too, we see echoed in Tamim's narrative when he comments, "*They* are the body of the text and *you* are the footnote" (italics added); Tamim encounters a sort of literal marginalization from the place he calls "beloved," where 'strangers' with no connection to the land itself are the most prominent and powerful members of society, "re-writing," in some sense, the Palestinian story. What's more, we see that Mourid encounters a sense of nostalgia for *childhood* upon his return to Ramallah, a longing and reminiscence we find reflected in Tamim's work also. Notes Mourid, "Now I cross [the Allenby Bridge] for the first time since thirty summers. The summer of 1966, and immediately after, no slowing down, the summer of 1996... A distant childhood. The faces of friends and enemies" (*I Saw Ramallah* 11); accordingly, Tamim appears to encounter a less literal but nevertheless potent reminder of a childhood heavily influenced by the narratives of mid-century Palestine despite his literal separation from it: "In Jerusalem, despite the succession of disasters [al-Nakbaat], a wind of innocence is in the air, a wind of childhood." Not only does Tamim's narrative reflect nostalgia for more "innocent" times, as Hirsch and Spitzer discussed, but also his play on the word "al-Nakbaat," the plural of al-Nakba (meaning "disaster," and the name given by the Arabs to the 1948 War when Israel began its rise to power over the region) implies that Tamim believes he is reliving al-Nakba in the present era, "the succession of al-Nakbaat." He reencounters the experience of his father's early childhood in spite of his disconnect in time and space from the events of 1948, and in this sense al-Nakba likely constitutes a significant part of how Tamim understands himself more ideologically as a Palestinian, as a result of an intergenerational transmission of memories on that time and place in history.

The generational pressures placed upon younger Palestinians, in particular, becomes perhaps most manifest when we evaluate the ways in which Barghouti father and son, in their own works, conceive of the relationship that the *homeland* fosters with individuals of their generation, respectively. In Mourid's work, we note that his connection (and the connection of his generation of Palestinians, more generally) to the land of Palestine is one of reliance (that is, *Mourid's* reliance on the homeland): "I stand on the dust of this land. On the earth of this land. My country carries me" (*I Saw Ramallah* 23). In Tamim's work, however, we see this relationship to the homeland reversed, more one of *obligation* (that is, *Tamim's* obligation to the homeland), reflecting the generational burden of preserving a place and a feeling *out of time* (or the memory of it): "And in Jerusalem the sky dissolves into the people, she protects us and we protect her/ We carry her on our shoulders [dutifully]." At the same time that Tamim contends that Jerusalem "protects us," or "carries us," as Mourid also notes, so too does the weight of preserving Palestine (the land, and identity therein) fall more directly on Tamim in the postmemory-generation (i.e. "we carry her on our shoulders"). As a guardian of sorts for the memories of his father and the 'Palestine' of an older generation, Tamim (and other contemporary Palestinian writers of Tamim's era) "carry on their shoulders" the burden of protecting the very sacred bond of a peoples to their land, and Palestinian identity in turn. Curiously, Tamim and his poetic contemporaries protect an identity that they are at the same time forced to reinvent, in many ways, through the relationships they forge with the land in present day (a reality far different from pre-Naksa Palestine). The result in Tamim's work and others', then, is a revitalized cultural identity that is at once testament to experiences past and also

mindful of the tangible processes of exile and refugee-hood as they exist undeniably in contemporaneity: It is an identity that reminds Palestinians where they came from, and in turn provides a call to action, which in truth is the ultimate task of the Palestinian poet.

Notes Tamim in an interview with *Al-Arabiya*, "Today the political identity of the Palestinians is threatened as at no other time in history," adding that "poetry and other forms of cultural production consolidate this identity and therefore people cling to it" (Reuters). It is no coincidence that Tamim's narratives speak so intimately to a nation of peoples who feel increasingly responsible for upholding and protecting Palestinian identity despite the fragmenting reality of modern-day conflict. "By creating beauty," notes Tamim, "by creating art, good art, you emphasize your humanity, you emphasize your worth" (Reuters). Palestinians today, as Tamim himself notes, find themselves at once dependent upon and duty-bound to a land that shape-shifts and arrests more traditional definitions of Palestinianness. But by reinvesting in one of the oldest Arabic literary traditions to date (that being poetry), poets like Tamim in the modern era are giving shape to the seeming distant "beloved" and reminding the once isolated "I" of Palestinian history that together, the shared Palestinian narrative constitutes a present and unshakeable "We."

Examining Postmemory in the Collected Works of Barghouti Father and Son

"Happiness belongs only to memory...[It] can never be lived, only recalled."
(Barghouti, *Midnight and Other Poems* 150)

Mourid Barghouti's collected works of poetry provide an additional lens through which to consider the relationship between memory-transmission and the writings of his

own son and poet, Tamim. In one of Mourid's most acclaimed poems, "Midnight," published in a collection entitled *Midnight and Other Poems* some eight years after *I Saw Ramallah*, we encounter images of Palestine in a sometimes repetitive, rhythmic catalogue not dissimilar to the language in Tamim's "In Jerusalem." "From the window you see/ hills of the olive trees/ bereft of their/ peace of mind.... You see hills of stars and sacrificial rams,/ crosses and resurrections,/ and waves of the sea that no longer remember/ where the waves of people came from," writes the elder Barghouti (*Midnight and Other Poems* 38). Tamim, too, stages his poem from the perspective of a return visit to the homeland, cataloguing the images of Jerusalem and noting that, upon visiting Jerusalem, "you see everything you cannot stand." The parallels in rhythmic cadence between the two poems being obvious, Tamim's "In Jerusalem" becomes in many ways a response to his father's "Midnight" ("In Jerusalem" coming to the fore two years after "Midnight"), though reflecting a very different relationship with the Palestinian homeland. That said, both Tamim and Mourid encounter a certain inescapability of 'metaphorizing' their beloved homeland, despite Mourid's adamant rejection of making a symbol of Palestine. Tamim's reference to Jerusalem as a "gazelle in the distance" is not so dissimilar from the language we encounter in Mourid's "Midnight": "My love, when she pleases, is a doe,/ my love, when she pleases, is a tiger... I take her *from* my exile *to* my exile" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 64-66). Though he rejects the metaphor ideologically, Mourid, like his son, cannot avoid Palestine's inevitable symbolism, the only difference being that Tamim's "gazelle" exists "in the distance," rather than within his reach as first-hand experience in the homeland.

Nevertheless, the gauntlet of poetic responsibility (the duty of the Palestinian poet) is as clear in Mourid's poetry as it is in Tamim's, wherein both father and son demonstrate a perceived obligation to their generation, to their people, to carry on a legacy reaching far beyond their time. Writes Mourid in "Midnight," "Here they come,/ the betrayed ghost,/the witches/ and the Rogue Poets./ They touch your shoulder/ with hands illuminated by an anxious look./ They hang their orders like lanterns,/ on the walls of your night" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 50). Mourid anticipates the demands that the next generation of Palestinians will encounter (demands that commence with the birth of his son, who too becomes a poet), adding as an aside to himself and his people and generations of Palestinians to follow, "You, whose mother gave birth to you/ in the homestead of the Orient,/ surrounded by poems and age-old laws, you'll continue to see faces/ carved by ancient chisels,/ in the presence of which the beards of ages have gone grey" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 54). It is here where Marianne Hirsch's "postmemory" morphs, to some extent, with the functional demands of the Palestinian poet, and 'transmission of memory' may in some ways be better understood as 'transmission of *heritage*,' or the transmission of the Palestinian story: "You'll hear the discourse of your long-gone ancestors," writes Mourid, "pedants whose graves/ have long since been engulfed by desert mounds,/ announcing the weather forecast for tomorrow/ and tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 56). The inevitability of postmemory, to a heightened degree in the case of many Palestinian peoples, parallels a perceived inevitability of poetic responsibility, and the continuation of a legacy bigger than the poet him- or her-self.

"Who's Abdel Wahab, Grandpa?
Why, he's the village madman,
he did nothing but write poetry
and poetry is all he left."
(M. Barghouti, *Midnight and Other Poems* 70)

One poem, entitled "Whisper," stands out in Tamim's own collected works, *Mijana*, as revealing obvious tenets of "rootless nostalgia" and postmemorical guilt:

A whisper in the desert said repeatedly: "Come!"
I said to it: "Where are you, I don't see you, tell
me, who are you?"
It said: "Come!"
I said to it: "Why?"
It said: "Come!"
I said to it: "How?"
It said: "Come!"
I remained stopped in my place, perhaps I would
see it.
But in the desert, of course, you only find the
desert.
It returned my calls: "Oh young boy, why do you
stop? Come."
You confused my God, you only have this world.
You've had enough.
It said: "Come."
I waved my hand in the air, *your father and the*
one who follows you be cursed,
And I walked.
It said to me: "You came."

The speaker in this poem is called upon by an absent feminine being (as indicated by the gendered verbs in the original Arabic), whom the speaker neither sees nor feels but *hears* as a "whisper in the desert." The call is one of duty, commanding the isolated exile to return to her, the whisperer. This poem in particular highlights the generational pressure placed on younger Palestinians in the modern era, who today have adopted many of the responsibilities for homeland-revival that once fell upon an older

generation of Palestinians. What's more, it is clear in this poem that the "whisperer" is imperceptible (almost ethereal), though an observant reader would know, of course, that the whisper belongs to the Beloved, to Palestine. Whereas individuals of the *parent*-generation (e.g. Mourid Barghouti) to today's young Palestinians relate to their homeland more tangibly (as a place that they once could touch and see and experience), "Whisper" is proof that many younger Palestinians (particularly those born outside of Palestine) relate to their homeland more abstractly as a result of postmemory, unable to see exactly what needs protecting but struggling to do it anyways. The whispering she-figure remains unnamed, but persists in its calls to the speaker, who finds himself in a wholly isolating setting (i.e. in the middle of a shape-shifting desert). Though the poem effectively ends with the speaker still stranded in the desert, wandering in vain as he seeks the whisper's owner, the whisperer ends the poem by telling the young wanderer, "You came." It is as if the speaker (Tamim's generation of Palestinians, more generally) is fated for wandering, as if it is expected of him. No other poem in Tamim's *Mijana* quite captures the simultaneity of solitude and nameless burden that we find so unmistakably in "Whisper," which serves as an exceptionally pertinent example of the disquieting consequences of postmemory--or perhaps 'transmission of heritage'--for younger-generation Palestinians (a fate predicted quite intuitively in Mourid's "Midnight").

Mourid Barghouti's "Midnight" also bears resemblance to other poems in the younger Barghouti's collection, *Mijana*: Namely, Tamim Barghouti's "A Short Love Song," which makes use of the Palestinian colloquial dialect. Writes Mourid in "Midnight," "The victors congratulate themselves on having beaten you" (*Midnight and*

Other Poems 44), which Tamim echoes in "A Short Love Song" when he comments, "Your nobleman is proud if he believes he has diminished you." Father and son Barghouti express similar sentiments in regards to the victories of the "enemy" inciting personal satisfaction on the enemy's behalf. But what is more, Mourid goes on to add that "after every round,/ when losses send you to the wilderness of your bed,/ you sleep/ as a spark sleeps/ in a chunk of flint" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 44); Mourid here refers to the internal turmoil of the Palestinian (of The Defeated), a turmoil passed on to Tamim in the younger generation, as expressed in his own poetics. In fact, it seems that in addition to nostalgia, grief, responsibility, burden, Mourid and Tamim share a certain, possibly inherited sense of cynicism about the world, such that Mourid believes "it is possible for the newly-born/ to be in old age from birth," perhaps in reference to his son, Tamim (*Midnight and Other Poems* 90). Mourid adds that "it is possible/ to blot out all proof" and "to prove that what happened/ never happened" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 90), a sentiment shared by Tamim in "In Jerusalem," where the young poet writes, "In Jerusalem the contradiction is at ease, and wonders are denied by mankind."

As poets, and mouthpieces for their generation (for many Palestinian peoples), the Barghouti father and son recognize the dissipation of the Palestinian story and, via poetry, attempt to counter this phenomenon by reminding Palestinians of their literary heritage and re-investing in written records of history, past and present. Though cynicism by nature plagues much of this shared narrative, the very fact that both poets persist in recounting their varieties of "the Palestinian story" is proof of a faith inherent in a stronger Palestinian future, a future that values such records as testament to the will

and courage of Palestinian peoples throughout history. Despite the feeling of "erasure" from the history-books, from the telling and retelling of stories handed down, we see perhaps the best example of Palestinian self-assertion when Mourid contends, "There is only You now,/ no other face but Yours," (*Midnight and Other Poems* 106), a verse that Tamim re-purposes in the final line of "In Jerusalem," when Tamim's Jerusalem-she figure says to the "Forgotten [Palestinian]," "In Jerusalem, whoever is in Jerusalem/ I see nothing in Jerusalem except You."

There are certainly other examples in the elder Barghouti's poetic anthology that reveal parallels to the poetic verses crafted by his son later in life: Mourid Barghouti's "Old Age," for example, exhibits an obvious correlation to the younger Barghouti's "In Jerusalem." In much the same style as "In Jerusalem," "Old Age" is Mourid Barghouti's effort to transform the inanimate into the animate, and to imbue it with human livelihood (in the case of "In Jerusalem," it is *Jerusalem* that becomes a she-figure, and in "Old Age," Childhood is itself made to be a child, complete with "dimpled little fingers"). In content, both poems offer a reminiscence on the fleeting nature of adolescence, of naivety, expressing therein a desire to hold on to the impermanence of life at "the funfair." "Old Age" navigates its reader through a place (i.e. "Old Age") to which its poet contends he has never actually been, in the same way that "In Jerusalem" maneuvers, via poetic images, through a place to which the speaker of the poem is not allowed access (recall the poem's opening lines, wherein the speaker is barred entrance to the city of Jerusalem). Additionally, both poems are told from a perspective of "us" and "them," "*we* who have never had" the object of the poem and "*they* who revel in it."

The primary difference between the two poems, then, is that Mourid Barghouti's work reflects nostalgia for an encounter in *time*, whereas Tamim Barghouti's "In Jerusalem" conveys nostalgia for a place tangible in reality but imagined in experience; to some extent, Mourid conceives of a time as a place, while Tamim conceives of a place as a time. The speaker in "Old Age" expresses a sense of entrapment in "agelessness" given his inability to approach the alleged agedness his companions seem to venture effortlessly nearer to: "Old Age," Barghouti contends, is an "inven[tion] that [does] not exist," an experience in time the speaker believes he is moving neither closer to nor farther from, because he is perpetually "left behind" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 178). The speaker in Tamim's "In Jerusalem," however, who it seems safe to assume is reflective of the poet himself, appears to be effectively trapped in "placelessness" (i.e. Exile), and consequently, the poet is rendered "rootless" even before his time. As Hirsch and Spitzer noted, there is in this poem a clear distinction made between There and Here, such that There can only be imagined, never attained. Both father and son Barghouti express in their respective works a nostalgia incurable, wherein the lack of resolution to the loss experienced by each poet only deepens the force with which nostalgia operates. Poetry, then, functions as the "creative vehicle" by which the Barghoutis attempt to make "absence" "gain"; for these poets and the many readers touched by their works, poetry is an 'asymptote,' of sorts, which inches close to its goal without ever actually achieving it, but that nonetheless approaches nearer to the line of "wholeness" than any other avenue of expression accessible to the Palestinian exile.

The elder Barghouti, it should be noted, reflects within his own works some of the broader shifts in poetic style that so aligned with major historical events in

Palestinian history; most particularly we find evidence of an ideological shift in "Midnight" when Barghouti queries rhetorically, "You prefer to be romantic like an old poet?/ Time has changed while you've been asleep, lover!" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 128). Mourid Barghouti's generation represents perhaps one of the earliest generations to provide a literary response to the events of 1948, what Khaled Furani called "the fall of many truths" (Furani 293) . Rejecting the Romanticism of pre-1948 ideals in the Arab literary *diwan*, Mourid continues in the same stanza to refer to the sleeping "lover," contending that "on your snow-white pillow, between the two embroidered roses,/ you'll see a perfect picture of a nightmare" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 128); it is the same nightmare which "has made "good morning" and the lazy answer/ "good morning to you"/...the greatest of all miracles" (an interesting comment considering the cover of Tamim's collection of poetry, *Mijana*, pictures a young boy holding a flower to the sky, with the words "Good Morning Tamim" written above him) (*Midnight and Other Poems* 130).

What is truly curious, then, is how the young Tamim Barghouti, of a later generation, appears to have introduced a *return* to metered form and rhyme as perhaps one solution to the Palestinian search for answers in poetry, despite contrary trends in "modernizing" Arabic poetry. Though the younger Barghouti does write to a large extent in colloquial dialects (Egyptian and Palestinian, most prominently), much of his work relies also on the language of Modern Standard Arabic, or Fus-ha (predominantly in "In Jerusalem"), and incorporates often a close metered rhyme to its verses. This return to the (more) classical, with an emphasis on form and rhyme particularly in "In Jerusalem" and throughout several poems in Barghouti's published poetry collection,

Mijana, is really where we see the younger Barghouti straying from the trends in language and style of his father's poetry; Tamim begins, in some ways, to champion a new variety of Palestinian-hood, where heritage and literary roots provide the basis for more productive efforts to restore the homeland and collective identity therein. Though not all of his works adhere to strict meters and classical language, his incorporation of these elements in an otherwise contemporary poetic climate filled increasingly with prose-poetry and free-verse speaks volumes to the import Tamim places on the value of past traditions in Palestinian poetics and their continued relevance today.

On the cover of Tamim Barghouti's *Mijana* is the image of Handala, a well-known caricature of a young Palestinian refugee, by cartoonist Naji Al-Ali. Handala is said to represent "the struggle of Palestinian people for justice and self-determination," a symbol of exile perpetual and steadfast resilience in the face of enduring conflict (Handala.org). Al-Ali, Handala's creator, once said that "Handala was born ten years old, and he will always be ten years old. At that age, I left my homeland, and when he returns, Handala will still be ten...The laws of nature do not apply to him" (Handala.org): It is apt that the young Barghouti should choose Handala for his cover, as Handala's image stands for the experience of many postmemory-generation Palestinians, prisoners of history, slaves to an unwitting infatuation with more innocent times in the homeland's history and the simplicity of Youth. Tamim Barghouti's "In Jerusalem" decreed that "In Jerusalem, everyone is a young man," fathers and sons alike, because agelessness afflicts all who cling to Yesterday's Palestine, a memory not yet forgotten. Although Tamim, like his father, will age in physicality, his

consciousness, like Handala's, feels as if transfixed in the events of 1948 and 1967, never to outgrow fully these heartbreaks in Palestinian history.

Mahmoud Darwish: Calling on a Great to Reenvision the Present

> *"The act of defiance is the affirmation of Palestinian life itself."* (Ismael 54)

In Jerusalem

Written by Mahmoud Darwish
Translated by Fady Joudah

In Jerusalem, and I mean within the ancient walls,
I walk from one epoch to another without a memory
to guide me. The prophets over there are sharing
the history of the holy... ascending to heaven
and returning less discouraged and melancholy, because love
and peace are holy and are coming to town.
I was walking down a slope and thinking to myself: How
do the narrators disagree over what light said about a stone?
Is it from a dimly lit stone that wars flare up?
I walk in my sleep. I stare in my sleep. I see
no one behind me. I see no one ahead of me.
All this light is for me. I walk. I become lighter. I fly
then I become another. Transfigured. Words
sprout like grass from Isaiah's messenger
mouth: "If you don't believe you won't be safe."
I walk as if I were another. And my wound a white
biblical rose. And my hands like two doves
on the cross hovering and carrying the earth.
I don't walk, I fly, I become another,
transfigured. No place and no time. So who am I?
I am no I in ascension's presence. But I
think to myself: Alone, the prophet Muhammad
spoke classical Arabic. "And then what?"
Then what? A woman soldier shouted:
Is that you again? Didn't I kill you?
I said: You killed me ... and I forgot, like you, to die.

(from *The Butterfly's Burden*)

In addition to crafting allusions to ancient poetic verses (e.g. The Mu'allaqat), the younger Tamim Barghouti in his works draws also upon a more contemporary

Palestinian artist, renowned poet Mahmoud Darwish, referencing Darwish's own original poem (written some years before Barghouti's appearance on *Prince of Poets*) with the selfsame title, "In Jerusalem." The parallels in rhetoric from Darwish's poem to Barghouti's are undeniable, though Tamim Barghouti reconceptualizes Darwish's rhetoric, to some extent, to better speak to the experience of a younger generation of Palestinians. Quite significantly, both poets refer to the idea of being burdened with 'carrying their own worlds,' as opposed to 'their worlds carrying them': Writes Darwish, "And my hands like two doves/ on the cross hovering and carrying the earth." Both poets express the feeling of being orphaned, abandoned, in a place and time unknown to themselves, as Darwish contends that in his experience there is "no place and no time. So who am I?/ I am no I in ascension's presence." Additionally, Darwish and Barghouti alike address the idea of the narrator of history as something (someone) separate from themselves (implying a seeming lack of control over how stories are told and retold, and how people are remembered), though Barghouti's poem invokes the narrator more frankly by employing a literary apostrophe: "Oh writer of history, slow down." Moreover, both poets comment on (in Barghouti's case more indirectly) the deeply personal import of classical Arabic: "I think to myself: Alone, the prophet Muhammad/ spoke classical Arabic," Darwish writes, as if to imply that classical Arabic was the language of choice in the Prophet's most intimate, self-knowing moments. Finally, both poets end their poems in conversation with another external being, and in doing so speak to the struggle of living in a sort of ceaseless peripherality. In the case of Darwish, the dialogue at poem's end is initiated by a seeming hostile stranger, querying "Didn't I kill you?," while Barghouti ends his poem with a more hopeful exchange

between himself and an implied Jerusalem-she figure, who tells Barghouti not to cry, reminding him that she sees "only You."

Darwish contends that in his journey through Jerusalem, he is "without a memory to guide me," which is strange upon first-read because it alludes to a sentiment we imagine more likely to be purported by the younger Barghouti (born outside of Palestine, after 1967, quite literally "without a memory" of pre-conflict Palestine). By this I mean that whereas Darwish grew up in an era where memories of a sovereign Palestine (of Jerusalem) would have been rooted in the tangible (having had the opportunity to experience Palestine under Palestinian rule, like Mourid Barghouti), Tamim Barghouti belongs to a later, younger generation of Palestinians born outside of Israel/Palestine, and as a result his opportunities to formulate memories of a vibrant Palestinian homeland were in many ways limited, if not entirely prohibited, except in the very abstract and 'postmemorical' sense. We might then expect (the younger) Barghouti to be the poet lamenting his disorienting absence of memory, though in fact we find the inverse: Barghouti's poetic narratives read, more often than not, as if rooted in a concrete cognizance of a place and time that he knows, paradoxically, is surrounded by the insurmountable wall of the "enemy," a place he calls "beloved."

To this end, Darwish's poem differs significantly from Barghouti's in that Darwish opens his work with explicit mention that his narrative takes place from "within the ancient walls," while Barghouti's poetry, in its opening lines, laments the city's inaccessibility *because* of these selfsame walls. Where Darwish records an experience from the *inside*, so to speak, Barghouti must navigate the peripherals of his homeland and, in many ways, of his Palestinian history. This is perhaps why the poets'

respective manipulation of rhetoric and style within the two poems is so ironic: Where Darwish narrates his experience more abstractly, relying on repetitive and symbolic language (particularly religious symbols), similes and metaphors, Barghouti grounds his poem, in many instances, in the highly concrete, cataloguing brief but substantial snapshots of life in a city that exists materially and absolutely (i.e. life unabstracted by symbols), in spite of the fact that Barghouti conceives of Jerusalem and the homeland itself as the 'beloved.' In truth, Tamim Barghouti's accounts of Palestinian life run counter to the story we might expect of the young poet, whose experience with Palestine was probably lived more similarly to the narrative presented in Darwish's poem, in the language of symbols and stories handed down, but to a lesser extent grounded in first-hand knowledge of Palestine *beyond the wall*. The surprising materiality of Barghouti's "In Jerusalem," then, might very well be Barghouti's effort to preserve the Palestinian experience, Palestinian history, by grounding it in highly specific and tangible moments and details that forgo many of the more symbolic poetics employed by Darwish in his selfsame-titled poem.

Writer Jacqueline S. Ismael discusses just this trend in her article, "The Alienation of Palestine in Palestinian Poetry." Though published only a few short years after Tamim Barghouti's birth, the article's observations on the direction of Palestinian poetry at this time in history lend obvious pertinence to our understanding of Darwish's and Barghouti's perceptions of the homeland as expressed in their individual poetic narratives. "The expression of Palestinian alienation may be considered first in terms of the objectification of Palestine as a "Paradise Lost,"' notes Ismael (44). She adds that in fact, "the religious symbolism of Palestine as a lost paradise carries the implication of

the Palestinians as a people ejected from paradise," and importantly, "in the poetry of this genre, which is particularly prominent in poetry written in the decade following the 1948 disaster, the idea of return has a spiritual ontology. The present is a passage through purgatory. And return is ultimately the redemption of a spiritual state" (43-44). We encounter in abundance the religious symbolism Ismael speaks of in Darwish's work, from his explicit mention of "prophets... ascending to heaven" to quieter allusions like "my wound a white biblical rose" and "my hands like two doves on the cross"; his language invokes the image of Ismael's "Palestine as a lost Paradise," where life is lived in a sort of timeless, hollow vacuum not unlike what purgatory might entail for this prolific Palestinian poet. Darwish contends that "love and peace are holy and are coming to town," which we associate with an end to the conflict and the "redemption of a spiritual state," as Ismael so aptly notes. Darwish's writing particularly in this work avoids the tangible, relying instead on images highly symbolic and evocative in nature, not grounded in the concrete but in the *transcendental*, the spiritual. Notes Ismael, "The search for the meaning of Palestinian alienation...[recognizes] that the milieu of Palestinian life is an imposed hell," and the sense of eternity, of ceaselessness in Darwish's poetry offers testament to this sentiment (46). In fact, the elder Barghouti (Mourid) *also* relies a great deal on the sort of religious symbolism we encounter in Darwish's poetry: Writes Mourid Barghouti in the epic poem "Midnight," "The soul retains its passion, even on the cross" (*Midnight and Other Poems* 46). Collectively, these two older poets, born within years of each other, reflect poetic markers of their generation and a similar cognitive relationship to their shared Palestinian homeland.

In contrast, Tamim Barghouti's "In Jerusalem" is in large part (though not entirely) grounded in the *highly concrete*, in spite of his more postmemorical relationship to the land of his Palestinian heritage. Barghouti's language attends to a new variety of Palestinian poetry in which "the reality of Palestinian alienation belie[s] the spiritual theme" (Ismael 46). In Barghouti's poetry, we find that "the concrete processes of alienation" overwhelm otherwise more abstract symbols of exile-hood; as a result, the experience of exile is made palpable (real, rather than figurative) despite Tamim Barghouti's more inherited relationship to a once-sovereign Palestinian homeland (an experience well known to later generations of Palestinians born outside Israel/Palestine and after 1967) (Ismael 47). Barghouti's poem is considerably lengthier than Darwish's, probably due in part to its intended oral recitation for the *Prince of Poets* audience that Barghouti performed for, but the length lends well to the catalogue-ish nature of the second stanza as well as throughout the poem: Barghouti paints for his audience one-line snapshots, saturated in concrete, incisive images that reflect life *in reality* within Jerusalem's walls. "Unlike the ethereal themes of religious analogies," Ismael notes, "in poetry of this genre the sensuous themes of a tangible world placed beyond Palestinian reach--but still within the range of Palestinian consciousness--form the matrix of poetic imagery. Alienation is a sensuous experience of forced separation from the site, smell and touch of a physical context" (48).

We know that our narrator in Barghouti's poem (him as the poet, if we take the poem to be self-reflective) is barred entrance to the city of Jerusalem; he tells us so in the poem's foremost lines. This, then, presents an interesting paradox in Barghouti's poetics between *knowing* and *experiencing*, between hearing the stories of lived struggle

on the soils once called Palestine and feeling (living upon) that soil for oneself. Evoking images of the highly tangible, then, might very well be Barghouti's effort to bridge the gap between knowledge and experience, so to speak. From the "vendor of greenery" to the "settler who did not reach age twenty" to the "blond European tourists," Barghouti takes stock of the lives that fill a site in which his Palestinian identity so unquestionably maintains roots (i.e. Jerusalem). By rejecting the "mystified conceptions of alienation" that might otherwise typify his relationship to Palestine, young Barghouti uses poetry to transcend what Ismael believes might very well be "beyond the pale of Palestinian action" at this point in living history (51).

Memorial Poetics and the Poet's Burden in Najwan Darwish's Collected Poetry

Tamim Barghouti represents just one of a number of young Palestinian writers actively creating poetry in the face of exile, conflict, historical transition and cultural unrest. Like Barghouti, Najwan Darwish, a Palestinian poet born in 1978 Jerusalem, offers his readers poetry that nods to the legacy of ancient Arabic and (more specifically) Palestinian poetry at the same time that it explicates the demands of the Palestinian Poet and reminds readers of the implications of contemporary conflict for future generations of Palestinians. Not to be confused with the well-known *Mahmoud* Darwish, Najwan Darwish (born "exactly thirty years after his family was exiled from their home in the western part of [Jerusalem]") studied in Amman and went on to develop a political career not unlike Tamim, as a lawyer (*Nothing More to Lose*). The call to literature, however, was more powerful than the call to law for the young poet, and Darwish went on to serve as the editor of several cultural magazines in Palestine, an organizer of several Palestinian arts projects (including the Palestine Festival of

Literature), founder of a literary press in Jerusalem, and chief editor of arts and culture for an up-and-coming "pan-Arab newspaper" (*Nothing More to Lose*). Darwish's poetry takes cues from Western and Arabic poetic trends, expressing in both classical and colloquial dialogue the experience of a younger-generation Palestinian *within* the "homeland." Darwish's works have been translated into fifteen different languages, and like Barghouti, Darwish has earned renown throughout the Arab world for his impressive and perceptive poetic take on modern-day conflict.

In his collection of poetry, *Nothing More to Lose*, celebrated Palestinian poet Najwan Darwish crafts a series of poems that at times rely on outright metaphor and at others *defy* it, illustrating poetically the troubling dualism of symbols as vehicles for the young Palestinian's relationship to the homeland. Darwish's "In Paradise (I)" conceives of Yesterday's Palestine as a literal Paradise (akin to Ismael's discussion), only to discover by poem's end that the two (Palestine and Paradise) are mutually exclusive:

> We once woke in Paradise
> and the angels surprised us
> with their brooms and mops:
> "You smell like alcohol and earth
> Your pockets are full
> of poems and heresies..."
>
> Servants of God, we said, go easy on us
> We long for but a single morning in Haifa:
> Our dreams led us here
> by mistake
>
> (*Nothing More to Lose* 10)

The speaker of the poem has confused, subconsciously, a single morning in Haifa, a Return, a sovereign homeland, with the allegorical Paradise from which the poem takes its title. His is a longing for a place and time lost to history, wherein the present, by nature, prohibits contentment so long as it fails to embody the past. By conceiving of

Palestine as Paradise, the poet has effectively foreclosed his ability to reach it; the nature of the symbol is that it cannot be ascertained, and here Palestine is made to be a symbol of the exile's fantasy. Recalling Ismael's argument, this poem in some ways perceives of the Palestinian exile as having been ejected from something once very utopian (that is, Paradise Lost). Nevertheless, this poem also makes clear that Paradise is not an experience existing on earth: it is a place to dream on (i.e. "our dreams led us here"), but not to *live* on, not to make poetry on. And so Paradise in this poem represents simultaneously the desire for a utopian Palestine as well as the concession that Yesterday's Palestine, or a tomorrow resembling Yesterday's Palestine, is unattainable except by way of abstract memory.

Several of Najwan Darwish's poems draw quite explicit connections to the experience of Jews in World War II, under Nazi reign. Poems "The Gas Chambers" and "In Hell" make apparent the Palestinian poet's interactions with history, the transmission of trauma and of narrative, and the idea that the contemporary Palestinian experience is treated as a metaphor for vagrancy and perdition, though not tangible in its own right. "In Hell" provides an interesting counterpart to "In Paradise (I)," as *unlike* Paradise, the speaker believes not only that he can live and belong in Hell, but that he is "the *only one* who lives there" (italics added):

> I.
> In the 1930s
> it occurred to the Nazis
> to put their victims in gas chambers
> Today's executioners are more professional:
> They put the gas chambers
> in their victims

II.
To hell, 2010
To hell, you occupiers, you and all your progeny
And may all mankind go to hell if it looks like you
May the boats and the planes, the banks and the
billboards all go to hell
I scream, "To hell..."
knowing full well that I
am the only one
who lives there

III.
So let me lie down
and rest my head on the pillows of hell

(*Nothing More to Lose* 90)

The inverted image of the gas chambers repurposes the horrors of the Holocaust to recount the experience of contemporary Palestinians, an ironic transposition because historically, as Jabra I. Jabra notes, "the wandering Palestinian replaced the wandering Jew" (77). While Palestine as Paradise was perhaps the exile's fantasy, Palestine as Hell seems to this poet an undeniable reality, with tangible processes to reinforce its presence on earth. And though the speaker believes he found Paradise "by mistake," he seems in this poem to have accepted his place in Hell, allowing himself to become comfortable by resting his head on the pillows of purgatory. The complacence at the poem's end signals an acknowledgement of the futility of dreams on Paradise and the damning of the enemy, but also, upon first-read, a dissolution of collective experience: Darwish's reference to "the only one" prohibits this poem from representing a shared narrative because the speaker believes his experience to be distinct and isolated from the masses. Nevertheless, it seems that in the same way we can take the speaker (the "I") of Tamim Barghouti's "In Jerusalem" to stand for a composite "We," so too can we understand this poem as illustrative of an isolation that *feels* exceptionally personal, but

which is in fact common to many Palestinians. Barghouti's "In Jerusalem" ends with an affirmation from a Jerusalem-she figure that in Jerusalem she sees "only him," and in a similar way, Darwish's "the only one" acts as a symbol of sorts for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian exiles living on occupied territories and throughout the world, sharing a mutual sense of alienation and "only-ness."

In fact others of Najwan Darwish's works also allude to the poet's perceived identification with the events of the Holocaust, likening his own relationship with al-Nakba to perhaps the young Jew's relationship with the tragedies of World War II Europe. While we can identify evidence for postmemory by evaluating the poetic relationship of fathers and sons, as with Tamim and Mourid Barghouti, so too can we look upon the connection drawn by Najwan Darwish of the Nakba to the Holocaust to interpret the experience of postmemory in younger-generation Palestinian narratives. Though never having experienced the Nakba first-hand, Darwish writes on the terrors encountered in 1948 Israel/Palestine and the mass Palestinian exodus that occurred resultantly in a manner that suggests a resurfacing of the Nakba in his own, contemporary life. Darwish's "The Gas Chambers" is perhaps one of the more conspicuous examples of Holocaust-allusions in his collection. The poem recalls the history of the speaker's grandmothers (who themselves were transmitters of memory, of narratives) and uses the iconic symbol of the "gas chamber" to imbue the Palestinian story with tragedies widely recognizable in Jewish history:

> I don't have a grandmother who died in the gas
> chambers
>
> My grandmothers died like most do:
> The first did not have the patience

> to witness the first intifada;
> the lungs of the other failed her
> once the second subsided
>
> Grandmothers, you didn't suffer enough
> for us to be saved
> How horrific was the Nakba?
> How harrowing to be a refugee?
> These are but small pains
> for niggers like us
>
> I amuse myself by writing this down
> in the gas chamber
>
> (*Nothing More to Lose* 34)

There is an admission in this poem that as a Palestinian born in the late 1970s, the young poet who writes these words never had to experience the Nakba first-hand, never had to incur refugee-hood (as a Jerusalem born-and-raised Palestinian) in quite the same way that others in his ancestry surely did. Images of displacement, of the homeland lost and a nation of exiles created, are the sort of memories we imagine would have been passed down from the generation of Darwish's grandmothers to his own contemporaries. Reexperiencing the Nakba in the present by way of postmemory, though still harrowing, elicits, as Darwish contends wryly, only "small pains" in comparison to having seen the Nakba first-hand (or the Holocaust, for that matter). But there is also the confirmation of a new sort of pain in this poem, no less potent, yet quite typical of the contemporary Palestinian experience: It is a pain that comes naturally as a result of living "in the gas chamber." The synecdoche of the gas chamber in this work transforms, then, from a symbol for Jewish persecution to a symbol for Palestinian persecution, although certainly of a different variety in the latter case. Rather cynically, this poem provides an affirmation of "large pains" in the modern era, where horrors go undocumented and

the memories of past generations (of grandmothers and grandfathers) serve to root even contemporary narratives in visions of the past, in the language of the metaphor. This narrative, then, provides substantiation for a new kind of suffering in a less obvious modern context, saturated in sufferings of Palestinians past, resembling the experience encountered by post-World War II Jews whose relatives and ancestors incurred the horrors of the Holocaust.

In other instances, Darwish alludes more literally to his self-association with Jewish emigrants by likening his perceived sense of identity to their own, most particularly in his poem "Identity Card." The poem catalogues a variety of different nationalities and historical identities, and in every case the speaker claims the narrative as his own, concluding ultimately that "by anything less than this, one is not an Arab" (9). Darwish's speaker refers to himself as Kurdish, Armenian, "a Syrian from Bethlehem...and a Turk from Konya," Amazigh, Iraqi, Egyptian, Aramaean, Hijazi, and finally, at poem's end, "a Jew expelled from Andalusia" (which he notes his "scorn for Zionists will not prevent [him] from saying") (9). His admission to the fact that he identifies with exiled Jews is prefaced with the concession that "there is no place that resisted its invaders except that I was one of its people; there is no free man to whom I am not bound in kinship"; and despite his contempt for Zionists, he finds that he nevertheless "weave[s] meaning from the light of that setting sun," in reference to the persecution and expulsion of Jews in Spain in the late-1400s and their mass exodus from the region (9). It seems in this poem that Darwish's speaker is at once a product of a variety of histories and narratives (not unusual in the context of my earlier discussion on the nature of "rootlessness" and the non-distinct identification with any given home

that so accompanies the experience of postmemory) and yet still resoundingly a self-identified Arab.   But what is more striking than his inclusion of the many different "Arab" nationalities (all of which he claims to be his own) is his *exclusion* of the Palestinian identity (that is, he never refers to himself as Palestinian). From this exclusion I believe we can draw one of two conclusions: Either that Darwish does not consider the Palestinian story to be so substantial as the others he mentions as to merit inclusion, *or*, he does not believe the Palestinian story to be a cohesive extension of the 'Arab' identity more generally.

In either case, he likens his experience in contemporary Palestine to the experience of Jews following their "Golden Age" in Spain (when they constituted a considerable component of the Spanish population and lived prosperously alongside their resident Muslim and Christian neighbors). The year 1492 marked the beginning of the end for Jews in the Spanish region, who were forced to convert to Catholicism, or else be killed or expelled entirely. It is estimated that some 200,000 people (mostly Jews) were expelled from Spain in 1492, with some tens of thousands perishing before ever reaching safety (Jewish Virtual Library). It is a story in Jewish history that claims obvious parallels to the mass exodus of Palestinians after 1948 and the Nakba that left nearly 700,000 Palestinians displaced and in many cases politically state-less, the association of which certainly does not escape Darwish. By relating his own story to a narrative well-engraved in the history books, Darwish helps to make something more of the Palestinian story, which he (like many Palestinians) believes has been silenced and ignored time and again in contemporary dialogues surrounding the Middle East. It is in fact ironic, then, and perhaps quite appropriate that the Palestinian story should get no

explicit mention in this poem, even though Palestine is effectively the homeland from which the writer spawns, and the place in which much of his life has been lived. Indeed, the Palestinian narrative is utterly silenced in this account of personal and cultural history, though a larger assertion of Arabism certainly rings clear by the poem's end in a manner not dissimilar from Mahmoud Darwish's self-same titled poem, "Identity Card," which repeats the refrain, "Record I am an Arab." The "setting sun" of Jews in Spain is for Najwan Darwish akin to the perceived "setting sun" of Palestinians in Israel/Palestine, with particular emphasis on the Palestinian diaspora of 1948. And although Darwish considers himself unquestioningly an Arab, he finds his Palestinian narrative unsubstantiated and in some ways entirely obliterated by history's re-telling of it, silent in its passing. And so it is that in this poem, he refrains from identifying himself as Palestinian, thereby alluding more subtly to the larger dissipation of a cohesive and durable Palestinian identity.

Of all his works, Darwish's "A Boy from Haifa Spins a Word" provides perhaps the most overt illustration of the objective of many Palestinian writers born of a later generation, coping with an entirely new kind of loss in contemporaneity:

I will bring it back
with the cypress and the beech
and the lights of the port at dawn
I will bring it back
one day outside time, one season
beyond all seasons
I will bring it back
I swear by these clouds
exiles like you
I will bring it back--
you who return like the clouds
after this darkness

And if I am not able
then one of you
will make this promise again
(*Nothing More to Lose* 76)

The call of the Poet is unmistakable in this work, though the poem's "it" (i.e. "I will bring *it* back") remains ambiguous, and thusly typifies the problematic nature of preserving and, in this case, resuscitating pieces of the Palestinian story lost to history and exclusory rhetoric; that is to say, it is unclear exactly *what* the poet intends to "bring back." Like the young Barghouti's works, Darwish appears fixated on a particular place in space and time, obsessed with a moment outside of the present that he believes is somehow better or less fragmented. Though born within Jerusalem, and having resided within the West Bank for large parts of his life, Darwish still lacks tangible experience with the version of Palestine he seems keen to resurrect, a Palestine that in his lifetime has likely never been reality. Like many young Palestinian poets, he understands his obligation as a writer and a spokesperson for the changing face of Palestine, and takes seriously his poetic responsibility to a nation of exiles, struggling to sustain the treasured tenets of their Palestinian identity. The tone shifts, however, in the poem's last stanza, where Darwish's nationalistic and poetic fervor (i.e. "I will...I will...I swear...I will") fails to revive in full the "it" that Darwish so hopes to preserve; and so the duty falls on the next generation of Palestinians ("one of you/ will make this promise again"). In this sense, it seems that postmemory does not end with the aging of the second-generation Palestinian "exile," but rather continues into perpetuity until *conflict* is no longer the central fact of Palestinian life. Not dissimilar from the works of Tamim Barghouti, Darwish attempts to remind his audience of a land unabstracted, of a

place with a history and a feeling and a people who themselves demand to have their stories told. This is the task of the Palestinian poet today: to consolidate disparate, fragmented stories and to awaken the memory of a land beyond analogy, a land we might feel with our fingers. The "promise," then, that Darwish writes of is a promise to a people, to a heritage, and this poem is perhaps testament to the fact that even if today's young poets fail to revitalize Yesterday's Palestine, tomorrow's young poets will keep trying.

It is clear that Tamim Barghouti is not the first poet to write with an enhanced cognizance of the influence of his generation on Palestinian history and its import for the conservation of a collective national identity. Not only do Palestinian poets born after 1967, like Darwish and Barghouti, appear particularly astute to their role as cultural heralds for an increasingly disparate people, but also they understand that their story is as much entrapped within poetry as it is liberated by it. Theirs is a generation that at once champions the literary legacy of Palestinians before them and recognizes, in some cases second-hand, that a cohesive cultural identity is dependent upon their renewed activism in the contemporary poetic community. With a new era comes a new variety of exile-hood, no less compelling than that experienced in their parents' generation but certainly experienced differently, rendering these younger Palestinians in some ways more distant from the object of their affection than ever before. Though the trends in contemporary poetics and among Palestine's young writers are by no means wholly consistent, in the works of the younger Barghouti and Darwish we find evidence for a tendency towards more palpable, even *visceral* story-telling, where spiritual themes take a back-burner to the physical reality of modern-day Palestinian persecution.

Where Palestine is made to represent an outright "Paradise," it becomes merely a product of exclusionary rhetoric, of superlatives and symbols (effectively reliant upon what it is *not* to substantiate what it *is*); we find this to only a very limited extent in the works of Barghouti and Darwish, due to the fact that both poets make clear attempts to avoid describing their shared homeland from the perspective of "what it could be." In truth, Najwan Darwish uses the symbol of "Palestine as Paradise" quite similarly to the manner in which Tamim Barghouti employs the symbol of the "beloved," drawing attention to the more enigmatic relationship of many younger-generation Palestinians to their absent homeland; both "Paradise" and the "beloved" are symbols used critically by their poets (respectively), reflecting a heightened appreciation for the distancing effect of postmemory on second-generation Palestinian exiles. Because both poets use these symbols in the context of larger discussions on national history and contemporary cultural identity, "Palestine" as a homeland in these works begins to transcend its otherwise entrapment in symbolic rhetoric and provides an opportunity for revolutionizing the Palestinian consciousness (as poetry in Palestine, historically, has time and again made possible). Of course the "homeland" itself represents for most all Palestinians, inevitably, the decades-long struggle and conflict which has so fragmented the Palestinian peoples and their once united narrative, and so its symbolism is to some extent not entirely avoidable, even in a generation that prizes so intensely the tangibility of its *own* encounters with alienation and exile in contemporaneity. But increasingly, "Palestine" transitions in the works of these young poets from a symbol for a utopia entrapped in memory to a mark of Palestinian resilience and faithfulness to the land of

their roots, and therefore it is a more *productive* symbol, if anything, which emerges in the poetic narratives of postmemory-poets.

Author and lecturer M. M. Badawi notes in his collection of essays entitled *A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry* that today's Palestinian poet "is no longer the passive sufferer, but [rather] the active saviour, the one who performs a heroic act of self-sacrifice to save his people," a sacrifice in many ways substantiated by the very act of writing poetry (260). "By creating his own language," Badawi contends, "his own imagery and metaphors[, today's] poet arrives at a new apprehension of reality," a reality which outside of Palestine often goes unuttered and under-realized (260). It is in poetry, then, that this reality materializes most potently, if not also quite bleakly in many cases. This "new apprehension of reality" is significant, additionally, because it begins to distinguish itself from a solely "postmemory apprehension of reality" (where second-hand memories constitute much of the lived experience of Palestinians born after the Naksa). Poetry in Palestine, for the young poet as much as for his or her reader, becomes a means of actualizing an experience that *exceeds* the recycled reality of memories inherited, and although not necessarily a more gratifying reality, it is quite possibly a more coherent one.

PART V

Why Postmemory Differs in the Case of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

"*Awda* means return," notes one postmemory-generation Palestinian Lila Abu-Lughod in her essay entitled "Return to Half-Ruins: Memory, Postmemory, and Living History in Palestine" (77); but what does it mean for a Palestinian born abroad, after the Naksa, to "return" to a place which in truth is still steeped in violence and adversity as a result of the perpetuation of the Israel-Palestine Conflict in the present era? The differences between Jewish persecution in the Holocaust and Palestinian persecution in contemporary conflict being obvious, it merits noting that in fact we cannot evaluate postmemory in the case of young Palestinians in quite the same way as has been done with Jews born after the Holocaust, because the Israel-Palestine Conflict has not yet been *made history* (that is to say, it remains unresolved in contemporaneity).

Contends Abu-Lughod, "My father's insertion of memory into the historical present made possible a different knowledge and identification for his children as well," a phenomenon I have referred to throughout this thesis as 'postmemory,' or "the experience of having one's everyday reality overshadowed by the memories of a much more significant past that one's parents lived through" (Abu-Lughod 78). The problem with this conception of postmemory, however, is that it describes the transmission of memories regarding events that have already come to pass, and which no longer remain active realities in the present: "What I, as the daughter of someone who lived through the Nakba learned from my father's return to Palestine," Abu-Lughod notes, "was that, for Palestinians, both memory and postmemory have special valence because the past has not yet passed" (79). It becomes critical, then, in *my* analyses and others' of

Palestinian postmemory and contemporary Palestinian experience to bear in mind the fact that today's Palestinians are *still living* in midst of conflict, politically, socially, and of course personally; for these Palestinians, conflict is not yet a thing of the past.

"My father did not worry, as do the academic analysts of collective or social memory today," Abu-Lughod contends, "about the fragmentary outlines of personal memory, the silences, and the bending of memory by the present or by the mingling of the lived and the heard. He saw individual memoirs such as his friends' as the stuff of a history of the Palestinian experience" (93). Though Abu-Lughod and her siblings held "various levels of familiarity with Palestinian society but almost no experience in Palestine," her father believed that her experience with Palestine was just as vital to the telling and recording of the Palestinian story as his own had been, having grown up within the homeland (94). When her father passed, acclaimed Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish said of Abu-Lughod's father, "He was born in Jaffa and to Jaffa he returned, to remain, there for eternity, close to the tree of Paradise"(qtd. in Abu-Lughod 99). But if anything, Abu-Lughod's father had not returned to Paradise (i.e. a pristine, post-conflict nation), but rather a fragmented social province still battling fallouts of the past. Unlike other traumatic cultural and political contexts in which postmemory has been evaluated in analyses prior (e.g. narratives emerging from the postmemory-generation of the Holocaust), the history of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict is still very much being written. There has been no collective resolve, no answers or closure with which to look upon the past and reinterpret the present, because the present in Palestine is in many ways locked in the past, the answers, as of yet, still uncertain. Therefore to truly understand postmemory for younger-generation Palestinians is to account for the

processes of cognitive reconciliation that Palestinians born after the Naksa must endure as a result of their *own* encounters with conflict in contemporary Palestine in conjunction with inherited perceptions of a Palestine suffused in stories from before their time.

This calls into question, naturally, the repercussions of *today's* postmemory on tomorrow's Palestinian youth, if (as seems likely at present) the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict remains "intractable." What will postmemory look like for Palestinians being born today? Twenty years from now? Concludes Abu-Lughod, "the Palestinian catastrophe is not just something of the past. It continues into the present in every house demolished by an Israeli bulldozer, with every firing from an Apache helicopter, with every stillbirth at a military checkpoint, with every village divided from its fields by the "separation" wall, and with every Palestinian who still longs to return to a home that is no more" (103). At the same time that Palestinians today carry with them traumas inherited from their parents' generation (e.g. those of the Nakba and later the Naksa), so too are they generating their own narratives and collecting memories of first-hand traumas in contemporary Palestine to be passed on to tomorrow's Palestinians, whom we can only hope will know a brighter future in Palestine.

Edward Said on the Modern Palestinian Identity Crisis

"The present identity crisis is not minimal, but a matter of profound moment." (Said 15)

In a collection of essays entitled "The Politics of Dispossession," acclaimed author and philosopher Edward Said addressed what he saw as a modern-day Palestinian identity crisis, contending that a shift of consciousness would be necessary to reassert the place of Palestinians in their own living history: A shift, effectively,

"from *being* in exile to *becoming* a Palestinian once again" (4). While once the tenets of Palestinian culture and language and art may have been exceptionally clear-cut, today the material processes of alienation and displacement (both physical and psychological) have obscured Palestinian identity among Palestinians themselves as this identity is increasingly absorbed into alternative national and cultural realities across the globe: "The Palestinian today," Said argues, "is being pragmatically forced to create his identity in accordance with real impingements upon it," impingements that have historically served to negate the legitimacy of a cohesive and vibrant Palestinian identity altogether (12).

For the now younger generation of Palestinians, born after the Naksa and in many cases outside of Israel/Palestine, this identity crisis is exacerbated: Notes author Erik Erikson, the major crisis of adolescence is *by nature* an identity crisis, as "it occurs in that period of the life cycle when each youth must forge for himself some central perspective and direction, some working unity, out of the effective remnants of his childhood and the hopes of his anticipated adulthood; he must detect some meaningful resemblance between what he has come to see in himself and what his sharpened awareness tells him others judge and expect him to be," which in the case of younger Palestinians is made all the more difficult to identify, much less to live up to, in light of their inherited "exile" status in the world (qtd. in Said 15). "In some young people," Erikson contends, "in some classes, in some periods in history, this [identity] crisis will be minimal; in other people, classes, and periods, the crisis will be clearly marked off as a critical period, a kind of "second birth," apt to be aggravated either by widespread neuroticisms or by pervasive ideological unrest" (qtd. in Said 15). Palestinians today

possess "unrest" in abundance; in fact it seems almost fated that Palestinians born after 1967 (a year so significant as to demarcate Palestinian history into "what came before it" and "what came after it") would go on to live much of their lives in a state of psychological "unrest," incurable, perhaps, without some larger solution to the Israel-Palestine Conflict.

Does this mean, then, that by nature the Palestinian identity crisis is perpetual, rather than sustained in the adolescence of today's youth only? Not necessarily: "The identity crisis solicits above all a recognition of disruption," notes Said, adding that "to have this recognition one needs a very clear idea that something has been left behind in order that a new development based on a stronger identity might become possible" (16). What must be "left behind" in this case is not the Palestinian homeland, and the histories and memories so associated with it; rather, it is the *mindset* in which Conflict becomes a suitable stand-in for the Palestinian Story more broadly, and wherein prosperity and well-being are disallowed if they have not in some way contributed to a final solution in the Israel-Palestine crisis. This, I believe, is where poetry has a role to play: A stronger identity, in many ways, hinges on today's young writers, who are reminding Palestinians of their ancient literary roots, and championing a new era of Palestinian consciousness, wherein the Palestinian Story is evolving and maturing in some ways because of Conflict, and in others *in spite of it*. Today's young poet, then, endeavors to tell a version of the Palestinian Story that allows the events of 1948 and 1967 to enliven contemporary sentiment but not to *dictate* it, an important distinction in the establishment of Said's "stronger Palestinian identity." Poetry, then, can become a means of engendering cultural solidarity among Palestinian peoples, by using history as

a foundation for more progressive and productive discussions on the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state in the future and a stronger identity therein.

Conclusions

"If it were not for struggle, all people would become rulers."
(Al-Mutanabbi, qtd. in Furani 295)

It merits noting in the first place that the process of translating poetry from its original Arabic language to the English tongue, which I have undertaken in this thesis, presents a set of challenges all its own: As Edward Said was quick to point out, a reliance on English transcription without concern for the poetry's Arabic roots only serves to dramatize "the real difficulties of peripherality, silence, and displacement that the Palestinian has suffered" (4). I have attempted, where possible, to pay mind to the intricacies of the original text (particularly in the case of Tamim Barghouti), whose rhymes and meters are most impossible to re-create in the English translations I have here presented. That said, it seems to me that by translating otherwise unfamiliar Palestinian poetry for an English-speaking readership, I and my fellow translators are helping to spread the story that Palestinians *themselves* want told, rather than telling it on their behalf, or worse, ignoring it altogether (as it seems has been the trend until very recently in contemporary discourse). As much as I struggled throughout this process with larger concerns for translation, and as much as I admit that much is lost where Arabic poetry is repurposed for English-speaking readers (particularly in light of Arabic's cultural reverence for poetic language, a reverence that is effectively lacking in the English tradition), I believe that effort to make these works accessible to a wide-ranging audience is important nonetheless. And so it is with this in mind that I have

provided my translations for the works of Tamim Barghouti, and relied upon the published English translations of fellow Arabists for the other literary works which I have here evaluated.

As noted in the introduction to my research, by exploring the experience of Palestinian diaspora and the possibilities for transmission of memory and cultural narratives from one generation of Palestinian exiles to the next, my goal is not to qualify one unilateral definition of what it means to 'be Palestinian' (or to specify, in turn, what constitutes 'Palestinian identity' outright); rather, my intention is to shed light on the ways in which a postmemory-influence manifests in the poetic narratives of a younger generation of Palestinian writers. Moreover, in the process of writing I have become intensely interested in the significant extent to which the poet today has adopted responsibility for reinvesting in the shared history and traditions of a genuinely vibrant Palestinian people, and continuing the work of poets past. Notes Jabra I. Jabra, "Everything had to change. And change had to begin at the base, with a change of vision" (82). Poets in Palestine (and perhaps everywhere in the world) are perpetually in search of "a new way of looking at things. A new way of saying things. A new way of approaching and portraying man and the world" (Jabra 82). The importance of poetry (specifically that which emerges from today's young Palestinian writers) in consolidating and celebrating cultural narratives, therefore, lends to a new way of understanding an otherwise diasporic peoples: "Palestinians...though exiles, though dispersed throughout the world, had gone through their baptism of fire and had been regenerated: however seemingly fragmented, they had become a nation. And, like any nation, they had to be reckoned with" (Jabra 87).

The case of Mourid and Tamim Barghouti has proven particularly applicable to my research, given both men's prominence in the larger Palestinian literary arts community, and especially in light of Tamim's increasing celebrity-standing since his notable performance on *Prince of Poets* (one of the most successful Arab television shows to date, with many critics referencing *American Idol* as its Western counterpart) in 2007. Both Mourid and Tamim have engaged considerably in literature and creative writing as a means of narrating their experiences with exile, self-perception, memory, and personal and communal identity. Najwan Darwish, too, an up-and-coming Palestinian poet like Tamim, provides an exceptionally pertinent body of work for the evaluation of postmemory in Palestinian experience as it relates to the Holocaust and other eras of mass persecution in *Jewish* history, specifically; unlike some of the subtleties we encounter in Tamim's work, which is written from the perspective of an Egyptian-born Palestinian, Najwan Darwish's poetry "confronts themes of equality and justice while offering a radical, more inclusive rewriting of what it means to be both Arab and Palestinian *living in Jerusalem*" (italics added, *Nothing More to Lose*). Collectively, theirs are cases which proved very appropriate for my research on postmemory and the role of poetry in unifying a seemingly fragmented Palestinian selfhood. I have come to the conclusion that younger writers like Tamim Barghouti and Najwan Darwish, respectively, have assumed the poetic burden of protecting the memory of pre-occupation Palestine and using it as a template for a future Palestinian state beyond the conflict which has so colored popular understanding of the region in contemporary discourse. In this sense, their responsibility may be considered in part a

consequence of postmemory, and in part an inevitable manifestation of the poetic legacy of Palestinian poets past.

Additionally, the poetry of these young writers in particular (and others of their generation, perhaps) serves to unite an otherwise divided Palestinian narrative, and to remind Palestinians both "at home" and abroad of their underlying common denominator, despite what appears to most as the continued breakup of the political and ideological agenda of the Palestinian peoples. "What remains to the exile except this kind of absentee love?" queries Mourid Barghouti; "What remains except clinging on to the song, however ridiculous or costly that might be? And what about entire generations, born in exile, not knowing even the little that my generation knows of Palestine?" (Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah* 61). *What about entire generations?* It is by unfolding narratives of modern exile and nostalgic interactions with space and time that I have attempted to explore these questions.

It goes without saying that the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict is far from reaching a satisfactory conclusion: One of today's most contentious disputes, the conflict is as much alive today as it was 60 years ago. For Israelis and Palestinians alike, particularly those born of a younger generation, War is the principal fact of life, with Persecution as a close second. On both sides there persists the almost paralyzing struggle to preserve an idea of "home" that is effectively unattainable and frustratingly elusive so long as the Other remains and the conflict endures. If anything, then, this thesis is one small attempt to explore seriously those non-violent avenues of expression that many contemporary exiles are using to cope with and in some ways overcome the otherwise anesthetizing reality of modern-day Israel/Palestine. It is no more my intention to

provide a comprehensive description of the Palestinian identity than it is to provide a viable solution to the conflict itself, though I do hope that by writing on the continued significance of poetry in the Arab world and analyzing the mechanisms of memory-transmission, the narratives of Palestinians past and present may be more thoughtfully considered, in academia and in personal consciousness. Historically, the Palestinian story has been frightfully under-told, and in many cases misreported. Here, then, is *my* contribution to the Palestinian story, with the hope that I have done it some small justice in my best attempt at its re-telling. Shukran lil-qira'a.

Appendix

Selected poems by Tamim Barghouti (translated from their original Arabic):

In Jerusalem (Performed originally in 2007 on *Prince of Poets*)

We passed by the house of the beloved and were turned away
from the house by the laws of the enemy and its walls
I said to myself 'perhaps it is a blessing'
What will you see in Jerusalem when you visit?
You see everything you cannot stand
If her homes appeared from the side of the trail
Not every soul when it meets its beloved will be happy
And not all absence will harm her
Even if she was happy before separation with a meeting
It is not sure that she will always be happy
When you see the ancient Jerusalem once
The eye will always see it

A vendor of vegetables from Georgia is weary of his wife
He thinks about taking a vacation or about painting the house
In Jerusalem, the Torah and a middle-aged man came from Upper Manhattan
To teach the Polish youth its statutes
In Jerusalem an Ethiopian policeman closes a street in the market,
A machine gun on a settler who did not reach twenty years of age,
A hat salutes the Wailing Wall
And blond European tourists don't see Jerusalem wholly
You see them take pictures of each other
With a woman who sells radishes in the squares throughout the day
In Jerusalem the army spreads, wearing shoes above the clouds
In Jerusalem we prayed on the asphalt
In Jerusalem there is no one (nothing) in Jerusalem except you

History turned to face me, smiling
You truly thought that your eye would not see them, that you would see something else
Here they are in front of you, they are the body of the text and you are the footnote
(the margin)
Did you think that the visit would remove from the face of the city, my Son,
The thick veil of reality for you to see in your passion?
In Jerusalem everyone is a young man except you
She is the gazelle in the distance
The time decreed our separation
You continue to run behind it since she bid you farewell with her eyes
And so treat yourself gently (at this hour) for I see you have become weak

In Jerusalem there is nothing in Jerusalem except you.

Oh writer of history, slow down
So the city has two fates
The fate of the foreigner is calm, it doesn't change its gait and it walks as if sleeping
And there is another fate, latent and veiled it walks without a voice, watching out for the
people

And Jerusalem knows itself
Ask everybody there, they will all tell you
For everything in the city
Has a tongue, which when you ask it, speaks eloquently

In Jerusalem the curve of the Crescent increases like the fetus
Hunchbacked in resemblance to the crescents above the domes
Having developed through the years, the relationship of a father with his sons

In Jerusalem buildings are stones acquired from the Bible and the Koran
In Jerusalem the definition of beauty is eight-sided and blue
Above it, May your glory last, is a golden dome,
It seems in my opinion, like a convex mirror in which you see the face of the sky
She pampers her and brings her close
She distributes it like sacks of aid during the siege to the deserving
If the nation after Friday's sermon extended its hands
And in Jerusalem the sky dissolves into the people, she protects us and we protect her
We carry her on our shoulders [dutifully]
If the times tyrannize her moons...

In Jerusalem the columns of marble are dark
As if the deep rooting of the marble is smoke
And windows that ascend above the mosques and churches
Seize the morning by the hand to show him how to sculpt with color
And he says: "It is not thusly"
So the windows say: "It is not thusly"
Even if the long-running conflict is shared
For the morning is free outside of the thresholds but
If he wants to enter her
He must be content with the rule of the windows of the Rahman
(The Merciful, God)

In Jerusalem there is a school built by a Mamluk who came from behind the river
[Transoxiana],
He was sold in the slave market in Isfahan to a trader from the people of Baghdad who
came to Aleppo
So its prince feared the blue in his left eye,
He gave him away to a caravan that came to Egypt

So after several years he became the defeater of the Mongols and the Sultan

In Jerusalem an odor summarizes Babylon and India in a perfume shop in Khan Az-zeit
And God, the odor is a language you will understand if you listen
And it tells me as they fire tear gas canisters on me: "Don't be concerned with them"
And it emanates after the disappearance of the gas, and it says to me: "See!"

In Jerusalem the contradiction is at ease, and wonders are denied by mankind,
As if pieces of cloth they turn over, both old and new
And there are miracles that can be touched with the hands

In Jerusalem you shook hands with a sheikh if you touched a building
You found inscribed on your palms the text of a poem or two
Oh Son of the nobleman

In Jerusalem, despite the succession of catastrophes, a wind of innocence is in the air, a
wind of childhood
So you see the pigeon fly, announcing a state between two shots in the wind

In Jerusalem, the tombs are organized in rows as if they are the history of the city and
the book of its soil
Everybody has passed through here
Jerusalem accepts the arrival of whoever comes to her, infidel or believer
I passed by and read her tombstones in every language of the people of the earth
In it are the Blacks and the Franks and the Caucasians and the Slavs and the Bosnians
And the Tatars and the Turks, the people of God and of perdition, the poor and the
proprietors (landholders), the immoral and the pious,
In it everyone treads on the soil
They are the margins in the book so they become the text of the city before us
Do you think the city oppressed only us?
Oh Writer of History, what happened for you to have excluded us?
Oh Sheikh, prepare the writing and reading another time, I see you speak
ungrammatically

You close your eyes, then you see, the driver of a yellow cab swerved to
the north, distancing us from her door
And Jerusalem fell behind us
The eye sees her through the right-hand mirror
Her colors change in the sun, from before the absence
A smile surprised me, I wasn't sure how it crept upon my face
She said to me as it persisted,
"Oh mourner behind the wall, are you a fool? Are you crazy?
Do not cry, Oh Forgotten One from the body of the text
Do not cry, Oh Arab, and know that
In Jerusalem, whoever is in Jerusalem,
I see nothing in Jerusalem except you."

Play/Frivolity (from *Mijana*)

An old lady carries boxes
Of oil cans and a basket of figs
And a few comforters and bed covers
Between Jordan and Palestine

From the year '67
The old lady every two days
Crossed the bridge of King Hussein
And the soldier looks at her I.D. card
And he looks at her a little
And she looks at him a little

And years passed like this
He didn't know who she was
And she didn't who he was!

Whisper (from *Mijana*)

A whisper in the desert said repeatedly: "Come!"
I said to it: "Where are you, I don't see you, tell me, who are you?"
It said: "Come!"
I said to it: "Why?"
It said: "Come!"
I said to it: "How?"
It said: "Come!"
I remained stopped in my place, perhaps I would see it.
But in the desert, of course, you only find the desert.
It returned my calls: "Oh young boy, why do you stop? Come."
You confused my God, and you only have this world.
You've had enough.
It said: "Come."
I waved my hand in the air, *may your father and the one who follows you be cursed,*
And I walked.
It said to me: "You came."

A Short Love Song (from *Mijana*)

What if what if, Oh this fate is work, what if?
Your nobleman is proud if he believes he has diminished you, what if?
Hussein says to the son of the victor: "Don't abandon the people"
He says to him: "What if the people abandon you?"
He says to him: "What if"

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