UNIVERSITETET
I OSLO

Master Thesis

The Music of Human Flesh

The Lived Time and Body of Exile in Ḏākira li-l-nisyān by Maḥmūd Darwīš

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Abstract

This thesis employs a phenomenological method in order to analyse how the lived experience of exile is expressed in the autobiographical prose work *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* (Memory for Forgetfulness) by the Palestinian author Maḥmūd Darwīš. In the book, Darwīš explores his memories of the Israeli siege of Beirut in 1982. After a decade of self-imposed exile in Lebanon, the siege resulted in a new forced displacement for Darwīš. The focus of this thesis is his personal experiences of time and his own body as they are expressed in this book. The result is a thick descriptive text that captures something of the essential structure of exile. In this state, time appears both linear and circular simultaneously, while the body is fragmented by displacement and estrangement. The unstable reality of exile ultimately leads to an opportunity to reform the world through language. This argument builds on the work of two scholars on Arabic literature, Anette Månsson and Stephan Milich. By uniting their views and adding original observations, this thesis provides a new entry point to the later works of Darwīš, while contributing to a broader understanding of the essential structure of exile.

Sammendrag

Denne oppgaven bruker en fenomenologisk metode for å analysere hvordan den palestinske forfatteren Maḥmūd Darwīš uttrykker sin levde erfaring med eksil i det autobiografiske prosaverket *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* (Minne for å glemme). I boka utforsker Darwīš sine minner fra den israelske beleiringen av Beirut i 1982. Etter et tiår i selvpålagt eksil i Libanon resulterte beleiringen i en ny påtvunget fordrivelse for Darwīš. Fokus i denne oppgaven er på hans personlige erfaringer med tid og hans egen kropp, slik som han beskriver dem i boka. Resultatet er en tykk deskriptiv tekst som fanger noe av eksilets essensielle struktur. I denne tilstanden virker tid til å være både lineær og sirkulær samtidig, mens kroppen er fragmentert gjennom forskyvning og fremmedgjøring. Eksilets ustabile virkelighet fører til sist til en mulighet til å omskape verden gjennom språk. Dette argumentet bygger på arbeidet til to tidligere forskere innenfor arabisk litteratur, Anette Månsson og Stephan Milich. Gjennom å kombinere deres synspunkter og legge til egne observasjoner tilbyr denne oppgaven et nytt inngangspunkt til de senere verkene til Darwīš, samtidig som den bidrar til en bredere forståelse av eksilets essensielle struktur.

Acknowledgements

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Mouafak Abokatmah and Clara Rasouli who were there when I needed them the most on this particular journey. Finally, to everyone that I have met in Norway, Sweden, Palestine and Jordan who have been ravaged by exile and chose to share their stories with me. Thank you for inviting me into your worlds. Despite the best efforts of some, no one can ever strip you of your humanity. My hope is that this work can be a small step in the direction of justice.

Transliteration and Translation

The transliteration of Arabic text into Latin characters follows the system developed by Hans Wehr, which is close to the standard of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (DMG). Significant parts of the secondary literature is in German and using Wehr's standard makes it easier to integrate this literature in the thesis. Additionally, this standard has an advantage over IJMES by containing no digraphs. Instead of *th*, *dh*, *kh*, *gh* and *sh*, Wehr uses *ṯ*, *ḏ*, *ẖ*, *ġ* and *š*. This means that there is one Latin sign for each Arabic character, rendering the script unambiguous.

Table of Transliteration

Arabic	ا / ء	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص
Latin	ʾ / ā	b	t	ṯ	ǧ	ḥ	ẖ	d	ḏ	r	z	s	š	ṣ
Arabic	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ه	و	ي
Latin	ḍ	ṭ	ẓ	ʿ	ġ	f	q	k	l	m	n	h	w / ū	y / ī

Short vowels are simply written as *a*, *u* and *i*. *Tāʾ marbūṭa* is only written as *-a*, unless the word is in construct state (adding *-t*) or after a long ā (adding *-h*). Word-initial *hamazāt* are not written. *Nisba* endings are rendered as *ī*. Sections of poetry are transcribed with full *iʿrāb*, while sections of prose are transliterated without case endings and elisions.

Names

The names of several Arabic authors, scholars and artists have an established spelling in English. This spelling will henceforth be used instead of transliteration for the following people: Sinan Antoon (Sinān Anṭūn), Mourid Barghouti (Murīd al-Barġūṯī), Mahmoud Darwish (Maḥmūd Darwīš), Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Salmā al-Ḫaḍrāʾ al-Ǧayyūsī), Ghassan Kanafani (Ġassān Kanafānī), Marcel Khalife (Marsīl Ḫalīfa), Ibrahim Muhawi (Ibrāhīm Muhawī), Tahia Abdel Nasser (Taḥya ʿabd al-Nāṣir) and Edward Said (Idwārd Saʿīd). This includes footnotes and bibliography. The aim is to keep the text more uniform, especially when referring to authors which were read both in English and Arabic for this thesis.

Translated Text

Much of the secondary literature is in German, French, Swedish and Arabic. When these texts are quoted and no English translation is readily available, I have translated the text myself with the original in footnotes. The analysis is based on the original Arabic texts by Darwish. English translations have been quoted when they are available, but occasionally I have decided to translate segments of the text on my own. This occurs when the translators have made adjustments to the original text in order to heighten the literary quality in English, or when there is ambiguity in meaning that cannot be conveyed in English. For a scholarly analysis, rather than a literary translation, as much as possible of the nuances present in the original Arabic should be preserved. With this said, I am continuously inspired by and indebted to the translation work of Sinan Antoon and Ibrahim Muhawi, who have been able to match the genius of Darwish in their English translations.

Primary Sources and Abbreviations

The Mahmoud Darwish Foundation has re-released the complete works of Darwish. His poetry is collected in the three volume *Al-Aʿmāl al-šiʿrīya al-kāmila*, while his prose works are reissued one by one. For consistency, all references to the writings of Darwish are to the first edition re-releases by the Mahmoud Darwish Foundation. *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* is mentioned so frequently in the footnotes that an abbreviation will be used, Ḏln. Additionally, all references to Ḏln will have a page reference to the English translation by Ibrahim Muhawi, abbreviated as MfF. The edition used is Memory for Forgetfulness: August, Beirut, 1982 with a new foreword by Sinan Antoon (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2013). In the secondary literature, Edmund Husserl's work *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie: eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie* will be referred to in a shortened form, as simply *Krisis*.

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1. Introduction

The research question of this thesis is as follows:

How does Mahmoud Darwish express the lived experience of exile in *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*?

The following literary analysis is written in the tradition of hermeneutical phenomenology. Phenomenological research tries to uncover the essential features and structures of experience, by studying how phenomena directly appear to human consciousness. As a form of literary analysis, the approach rests on the assumption that through thoughtful interpretation of writing, we can learn more than just the features of the text and the contents of its literary world. We can also glean some intersubjective truth, *what it is like* to go through a certain experience.

This thesis focuses on the experience of *exile*. Mahmoud Darwish wrote extensively about the exile experience throughout his career, with a creativity and insight rivalled by few in world literature. While much of his poetry approaches exile from a collective perspective, his prose work *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* was chosen as the object of study because of its autobiographical nature. The work describes one day during the siege of Beirut in 1982, which Darwish lived through. After the siege, he was forced to leave Beirut for renewed exile. Full of personal memories, *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* begins as an autobiography, but evolves into a tense mosaic of prose, poetry, essayistic reflections and long extracts from the work of other authors. The mix of lived personal experience and literary creativity delivered in a raw and unfiltered language makes this work especially ripe for phenomenological interpretation.

This thesis begins with a theory section, giving a short introduction to phenomenological and hermeneutical concepts as they are understood in this analysis. A background section follows, placing *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* within the context of Palestinian history, the life of Darwish and Arabic literature. The methodology chapter explains why the *human research* approach of Max van Manen was included to supplement the literary approach, followed by a thematic discussion on exile and why it is arguably the central feature of Darwish's writing.

The main analysis consists of two chapters, one that explores the lived experience of time in *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, while the second explores the effects of exile and war on the relationship to the own body. The end result is not an argument for a hypothesis or a set of hard data.

Phenomenological writing is an exploration, a meeting between text and interpreter, not a pursuit of objectivity. The goal is to produce a thick description, a rich text that brings both the researcher and reader closer to the essential structure of the experience studied.

2. Theory

The aim of this theory section is to give the reader a short introduction to *hermeneutical phenomenology*. Section 2.1 presents the core ideas of phenomenology as they were formulated by Edmund Husserl, section 2.2 explores its later developments by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and section 2.3 explains the hermeneutical aspects of the method as expressed by Paul Ricœur. The literary theory presented here will supply the background for section 5, in which the *human science* methodology of Max van Manen is explained. This methodology will supplement the literary theory of this section throughout the thesis.

2.1 Husserl and the Main Concepts of Phenomenology

Phenomenology originated with the philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859 - 1938) and was intended as a brand new approach to philosophy. Its core idea is to study phenomena as they present themselves directly to human consciousness. It is an urge for philosophers to return to "the things themselves",[1] to meet the world as it is directly constituted through conscious acts. This approach will be briefly introduced through an explanation of its key concepts.[2]

The Natural Attitude – According to Husserl, in our everyday life, we take for granted that we are surrounded by objects that exist independently from us. We assume that we are isolated subjects, each experiencing an objectively existing world in a relative way.[3]

[1] "Zurück zu den Sachen selbst" in an often quoted motto of Husserl. The German also carries a secondary meaning of returning to the *Sache*, the *subject* or *matter* of philosophy, its essential task: to study consciousness and the issues facing humanity. The latter became especially pressing in Husserl's later years, as Europe was moving towards a new world war and Husserl saw no answers to this crisis in the philosophy or science of his time. Many thanks to Petronella Foultier for emphasising this point.
[2] Since phenomenology is a broad field, within which different thinkers do not agree on definitions even of its core terms, this short overview will necessarily be limited to one particular understanding of phenomenology. Additionally, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty both changed their views during their career, and the complexity of how to reconcile their works is beyond the scope of this thesis. I will simply have to state that the ideas presented here are based primarily on my reading of the later Husserl, the later Merleau-Ponty and a limited selection of Ricœur.
[3] Fredlund, "När tanken tar kropp", 16.

Epoché – Husserl believed that to study human consciousness, we need to place this natural attitude towards the world to the side. This approach is called an *epoché*.[4] The early Husserl modelled his *epoché* after the meditations of Descartes, whom Husserl considered very close to discovering the phenomenological method.[5] However, instead of utilising systematic *doubt* towards the world like Descartes, the phenomenologist places the world into *brackets*.[6]

Subject and Object - The meditations led Descartes to a strict dualism. He found himself to be a purely thinking thing, a *cogito*, somehow connected to the outstretched substance of the world.[7] Husserl instead finds *acts* of consciousness at the core of his *epoché*. Phenomenology is a break with the Cartesian tradition that strictly separates subject and object. The self is merely a pole from which acts are directed towards *intentional* objects.

Intentionality - Within the *epoché*, consciousness is not static or isolated, it is *transitive*. Conscious acts are always *about* something, directed *towards* something. This is what Husserl means when he speaks of *intentionality*. There is some object, whether real or imagined, towards which we direct our consciousness.[8] With the preconceived notions of the natural attitude placed within brackets, we can study each of these objects as if they were given to us for the first time, revealing something of the fundamental structure of our conscious acts. The *epoché* opens the entirety of human experience to philosophical investigation, including dreams and imagination.

The *Lifeworld* - Husserl introduced the concept of the *lifeworld* (*Lebenswelt*) as the underlying "foundation"[9] of our being in the world, obscured by our natural attitude and dualist philosophy.[10] This *lifeworld* is a pre-given world of direct experience, a pre-epistemological horizon common to all intentionally acting subjects. It contains universal structures such as

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[4] Ibid., 15f.

[5] Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen* §1, 43.

[6] Husserl, *Krisis* §18, 81f. "die „Einklammerung" der g e s a m t e n Weltgeltung". This *bracketing* is not a sceptical attitude, the world is not removed or doubted. The phenomenologist temporarily disconnects from the world of the natural attitude in order to place *conscious acts* at the centre of analysis.

[7] Descartes, *Méditations métaphysiques*, 20. Husserl criticised this dualism, believing that parts of the *cogito* encountered by Descartes also belong to the world of the natural attitude. Descartes found the Soul, a thinking primary substance, because he was not radical enough. He did not place as much as possible of the *ego* into the *epoché* along with the world.

[8] In technical phenomenological terms, this is not simply an object but a *noema*, the intentionally held object of a conscious act or its meaning-content (*Sinngehalt*). The meaning and interpretation of these terms are contested and I wish to avoid excessive technical vocabulary in this thesis, but a note should be made that when I speak of 'objects', they are not the same as the composite objects of an empiricist or a transcendental idealist. They are the content of intentional acts of consciousness.

[9] Husserl, *Krisis*, §34. e), 134.

[10] Ibid. §9. h), 49f.

spatiotemporality and corporeality, as well as culture-specific structures which are formed by acting together with other subjects.[11] Within this shared foundation, we do not appear as isolated subjects, as we do within the natural attitude. The *lifeworld* is constituted *intersubjectively*.[12] At the most fundamental level, the human subject is intimately connected with others, sharing certain *essential* structures of meaning and consciousness.

Essences – The essences mentioned above are what a phenomenologist aims to find and elucidate. There is something *it is like* to be a child, a teacher or an exile, some universal structures of experience that unite our particular experiences. Husserl believed that the natural sciences could never truly describe these essences, since their *quantitative* research methodology only utilises mathematical idealisations established within the natural attitude, abstracted from the richness of the lifeworld which ultimately grounds human experience.[13] By contrast, phenomenology is a *qualitative* method, which investigates the nature of direct experience.

The Lived Body – Husserl made a distinction between two ways of looking at the human body, as either *Leib* or *Körper*.[14] Approaching the body through the natural sciences, as a piece of matter moving in space according to mechanical laws, is to view it as a mere thing, a *Körper*. *Leib* is our *lived body*, which acts, perceives and moves *intentionally* in the world. I follow van Manen in using the term *lived body* in English for this corporeal and animated being.[15] The past participle *lived* is used instead of *living*, since a *living body* could easily be confused with the organism from the point of view of biology. The *lived body* is the body from the phenomenological perspective, embedded and intentionally acting in the world.

2.2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) developed an existential approach towards phenomenology that was both a continuation and criticism of Husserl's ideas. While the main approach of this thesis is hermeneutical, two important ideas from Merleau-Ponty have influenced the upcoming analysis. The first is the relationship between creative expression and phenomenology, the second is his view of the lived body as an organic part of the world.

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[11] Thank you to Petronella Foultier for highlighting this aspect of the lifeworld.
[12] Husserl, *Krisis* §47, 166. The *lifeworld* contains structures of meaning and experience that only occurs when humans act together in the world.
[13] Husserl, *Krisis* (*Wiener Vortrag*), 314.
[14] Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen* §44, 128.
[15] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 103.

Husserl believed that by extending the *epoché* into a full *transcendental reduction*,[16] phenomenologists could start sketching the ontology of the *lifeworld*, which would enable us to see an outline of its essential structures. Merleau-Ponty thought that this idea led Husserl in the direction of excessive idealism. One of the reasons is that Husserl, writing before the linguistic turn in philosophy, underestimated the role that language plays in thought.[17] For Merleau-Ponty, the language of phenomenology is not merely descriptive, but rather one of creative expression.

The *epoché* of Merleau-Ponty is not a search for some pre-existing structures in the lifeworld. The task of phenomenology is to grasp the world in its state of coming into being, *à l'état naissant*.[18] He considers us embedded in a reality that is continuously directly given to us in perception, full of inconsistencies, gaps and shadows. For Merleau-Ponty, the *epoché* is an unending attitude of wonder towards this world.[19] His models for the arduous and unending task of phenomenology are the writing of Marcel Proust and the works of the artist Paul Cézanne.[20]

Cézanne is able to put aside our conventional, sedimented language in order to speak as "the first man spoke and paint as if no one had ever painted before."[21] To speak as the first man is not a return to some primal scream, but a continuous movement between ordinary language and the immediacy of experience. This results in an original form of expression, full of cracks and silences where meaning can be explored. Just like paintings have shadows and empty spaces, texts also have an inside and backside for Merleau-Ponty, a horizon of possibilities.[22] There are unthought thoughts in the spaces between signs, unwritten spaces in text that invite the reader.[23] A truly original work is full of possibilities and is never exhausted. This idea of returning to the speech of the "first man" resembles Darwish's view of poetry, as will be shown in section 6.2.

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[16] Kern, "Die drei Wege", 323f. Husserl uses the term *transcendental* much in the same way that Kant does, not as 'going beyond' in a mystical or supernatural sense, but as 'going beyond' mere appearances to find the basic structures through which consciousness, knowledge and meaning are constituted.
[17] Fredlund, "När tanken tar kropp", 21.
[18] Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, xvi.
[19] Ibid., viii. "Le plus grand enseignement de la réduction est l'impossibilité d'une réduction complete."
[20] Ibid., xvi.
[21] Merleau-Ponty, *Sens et non-sens*, 32. "...il [Cézanne] parle comme le premier homme a parlé et peint comme si l'on n'avait jamais peint."
[22] This is a feature of the phenomenological *noema*. As mentioned in footnote 8, it is not a composite of sense impressions. The *noema* is given to us complete, with its inside and backside, a horizon of possible discovery. In this sense, a text or a painting that reflects immediate reality also contains certain shadows and spaces (or ontological silences as Heidegger might say), a horizon of possible meaning.
[23] Merleau-Ponty, *Signes*, 95.

The *lived body* appears in the thought of Merleau-Ponty as the *corps propre* (own body).[24] Making a complete break with Cartesian dualism, he argues that fundamentally, mind, body and world are all the same stuff. When we act, we are not *in* the world, we are *parts* of the world simultaneously inhabiting it. He writes that the own body "is in the world like the heart in the organism: it continually keeps alive the visible scenery, it animates it and nourishes it internally, it forms a system with it."[25] This idea will be fully explored in section 8.

2.3 Hermeneutics

This thesis operates with a concept of the *epoché* close to the one of Merleau-Ponty. There is no reduction that can be completed, rendering the *lifeworld* transparent, but creative expression exposes something of its essential structures. The phenomenologist Max van Manen writes:

> To this purpose the human scientist likes to make use of the works of poets, authors, artists, cinematographers - because it is in this material that the human being can be found as a situated person, and it is in this work that the variety and possibility of human experience may be found in condensed and transcended form.[26]

This investigation requires *interpretation*, which is traditionally the subject of *hermeneutics*. Combining phenomenology with hermeneutics allows the researcher to move beyond immediate experience in order to search for the essences and meaning of lived experience as they are preserved in literature and art. The understanding of interpretation in this thesis is based on the literary theory of Paul Ricœur (1913 – 2005).

Like many of his contemporaries, Ricœur developed his ideas as a continuation and criticism of structuralism. Ricœur uses the term *explanation* for a structuralist investigation into the logic of operations among related bundles of constitutive linguistic units in a text. He argues that this treatment of text "as a worldless and authorless object"[27] is only one step in the analytical process. The other is *interpretation*, where textual discourse is finalised through an act of appropriation - that of reading. Ricœur likens reading to executing a musical score, enacting the semantic possibilities within a text. The culmination of this appropriation is self-

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[24] Fredlund, "När tanken tar kropp", 13.

[25] Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, 235. "Le corps propre est dans le monde comme le cœur dans l'organisme : il maintient continuellement en vie le spectacle visible , il l'anime et le nourrit intérieurement, il forme avec lui un système."

[26] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 19.

[27] Ricœur, "What Is a Text? Explanation and Understanding", 114.

interpretation.[28] Crucially, Ricœur believes that explanation and interpretation are not opposed in this process, but rather two different stages situated along the *hermeneutical arc*, reconciled in the act of reading.[29]

When Ricœur speaks of *discourse*, he differs from those traditionally labelled *poststructuralists*, who question whether discourse can truly point to anything outside of itself. Ricœur preserves the core phenomenological idea of *intentionality*. He maintains that any discourse, whether text or speech, is *about* something, directed *towards* something outside of itself. The difference between speech and literary text is that the latter discourse is intercepted. Text is detached from its author, remaining suspended until the act of reading gives the discourse new referents.[30] Literary discourse is not a closed system for Ricœur. The referential movement towards a world remains, waiting to be realised within the reader. To *interpret* is to place oneself on the path that the text is oriented towards, which is enabled by *explaining* its internal structure.

This focus on text and the reader is reminiscent of the view of Roland Barthes, who wanted to break with the traditional view of textual interpretation as the recovery of the intention of the original author. To establish a capital-A Author as a final authority means to close the writing, to impose a safety catch (*cran d'arrêt*).[31] The *reader* is the point of unity for Barthes, where the text, with its multiple origins and internal dialogues, comes together. Ricœur also embraces a liberation from the notion of the Author as a final authority and considers reading to be the completion of writing, but he maintains that discourses have their origin in subjects embedded in lived reality. Texts retain some of their intentionality. This discussion forms a theoretical basis for the discussion in section 7.2 about the possibilities and limits of the author.

This thesis is built on the assumption that enough of the author's original lived experience remains in the text, that something of its essence can be glimpsed in the meeting between reader and text. Like the *epoché* of Merleau-Ponty, This interpretative process will never be completed. The essence of a lived experience can never be *fully* captured except in the moment it is lived. There is no safety catch that closes the writing, neither author nor reader are

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[28] Ricœur, "Qu'est-ce qu'un Texte? Expliquer et Comprendre", 195.
[29] Ibid., 200. The original terms in French are *explication* and *interprétation*, I follow Thompson's English translation of *explication* as *explanation*.
[30] Ibid., 184. This is where language (*langage* in semiotic terminology) "pours its signs back into the universe": "par la fonction référentielle, le langage „reverse à l'universe" (selon un mot de Gustave Guillaume) ces signes que la fonction symbolique, à sa naissance, a rendus absents aux choses."
[31] Barthes, "La mort de l'auteur," 65.

the final authority and the text is never exhausted. However, the text still has a direction towards the world, one that can give rise to new, intersubjective understanding and meaning. The results of this thesis are therefore not presented as objective, hard data. They are produced in an intersubjective process, retaining the subjective impressions of the researcher. The goal is to produce interpretation with enough care that they also carry some intersubjective insight.

The conceptual and methodological chapters that follow perform the *explanatory* part of Ricœur's hermeneutical arc. They describe the life of the author, the textual features of the work and the concepts that will be used. Afterwards, as much as possible of this background information will be bracketed during the *interpretative* part, the chapters on lived time and body, which leaves the structural explanation in order to meet the text directly.

3. Literature Review

Within the secondary literature on Darwish, two works from the early 2000s are particularly influential in this thesis. The first is the doctoral thesis of Anette Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d: Exile and Restoration in Mahmoud Darwish's Writings 1960-1995'. Månsson argues that the writings of Darwish transformed from poetry of resistance into an attempt to reconstruct reality through language, in order to find reintegration within the liminal space of exile. The second work is a monograph by Stephan Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit: Identität und Exil in der Dichtung von Mahmud Darwisch*, which explores how the poetry of Darwish expresses identity formation and the relationship with the Other in a Palestinian context. Both works make strong arguments for identifying exile as the defining feature in the works of Darwish, and solidified his place within scholarship on world literature.[32]

Among the more recent literature on Darwish, the article "Maḥmūd Darwīsh; A Plurality of Voices for Invoking the Other"[33] by Milich complements his earlier monograph on the subject of integrating the Other, which will be further explored in section 6.2. In the book *Literary Autobiography and Arab National Struggles*, Tahia Abdel Nasser investigates how Darwish reworked the autobiographical genre in Arabic together with another Palestinian poet, Mourid

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[32] Milich and Månsson both included and transcended his importance within Arabic literature, by integrating these aspects into their analysis of universal features, such as identity and exile. Angelika Neuwirth writes: "Milich hat sich dem Dichter in Augenhöhe gegenübergestellt, er präsentiert sein Werk, ohne jedes Interesse an orientalisierender Exotik. Das vorliegende Buch ist das erste Buch, das Darwisch als Exil-Dichter der Weltliteratur würdigt." Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 12.
[33] Part of *A Companion to World Literature* (Toronto: J. Wiley & Sons, 2019).

Barghouti.[34] Abdel Nasser shows that reading the autobiographical works of these authors together broadens our understanding of the relationship between home and autobiography in Arabic literature. Her reflections inspired the exploration of 'exile' as connected with the 'displacement' and 'estrangement' described in *Raʾaytu Rām Allāh* (*I Saw Ramallah*), an autobiographical prose work by Barghouti. This book by Barghouti forms an important part of the secondary literature and will be discussed in the thematic section 6.

Since the goal of the thesis is to investigate lived experience, Darwish's own reflections on life have formed a crucial background for understanding *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*. His other autobiographical prose works will be discussed in section 4.3. In addition to these, two extensive interviews with Darwish have been important. The first one is from 1995, entitled 'The One Who Imposes His Story Inherits the Earth of the Story'. It was conducted by the Lebanese writer ʿAbbās Bayḍūn, first published in the journal *Al-Wasat*[35] and released in an English translation by Amira El-Zein and Carolyn Forché in the interview collection *Palestine as Metaphor*. Darwish's reflections on estrangement, writing and identity during this mature phase of his career are of particular importance. The second extensive interview was held by ʿAbduh Wāzin ca. 2004[36] and was printed together with Wāzin's own essays on Darwish in the book *Maḥmūd Darwīš: Al-Ġarīb yaqaʿ ʿalā nafsihī*. The interview takes up almost 100 pages and covers Darwish's views on literature and his life in its latest stage. Additional biographical details are found in the works of Milich and Månsson as well as the introduction to the English translation *MfF* by Ibrahim Muhawi, based on discussions with Darwish himself. The following section weaves together these sources to provide the necessary background for the upcoming analysis.

4. Background: *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* within the Life and Work of Darwish and its Political and Literary Context

Ḏākira li-l-nisyān is set at a central point in Palestinian history and the life of its author. It also contains extensive discussions on writing and language. This section explains the literary

[34] Abdel Nasser, *Literary Autobiography and Arab National Struggles*, 61.
[35] London, no. 191-3, September - October 1995. I was unable to locate a copy of the original Arabic, so only the English translation has been used.
[36] The interview is not dated, but the first part of the book mentions that the collection of Darwish's works, *al-Aʿmāl al-ǧadīda* (2004) by Riyāḍ al-rayyes, were just about to be published at the time of the interview (p. 17), placing the interview between 2004 and its release in book form in 2006.

features of the work and its background by showing how three factors are interwoven: the personal life of Mahmoud Darwish, modern Palestinian history and the currents of 20th century Arabic literature.

4.1 Biography

Mahmoud Darwish was six years old[37] in 1948 when the British Mandate of Palestine ended, the independence of Israel was declared and surrounding Arab countries intervened. His family fled their home village of al-Birwa in the Galilee to Lebanon, where they waited for the Arab armies to win. The young Darwish thought that this was only a holiday and that they were tourists.[38] But as summer turned into winter, the vacation did not end. He began going to school with Lebanese children. It was there that Darwish claims to have heard his first cruel word: *refugee*.[39] For the first time in his life, he was made to understand that he was an Other.[40]

The Arab armies did not win. The Galilee had become part of Israel. The year after the war, Darwish's family smuggled themselves back into what was now Israel, only to learn that al-Birwa no longer existed. The village had been razed and replaced by two settlements.[41] Since Darwish had not been present for the first Israeli census, he did not have citizenship. The Isreali authorities labelled him, like other internally displaced Palestinians, a *present absentee*, a non-citizen Arab subject to military rule.[42] The paradoxical nature of this term would recur in his later writings, as a way to express the inherent contradictions in the exile experience, of being present in absence and absent in presence.

As a young man living in Haifa during the 1960s, he wrote poetry and worked as a journalist for *Al-Ittiḥād*, the journal of the communist *Rakah* party.[43] As a *present absentee*, he could not leave the city of Haifa without permission and had to report his presence to police

[37] Different sources give his year of birth as either 1941 or 1942. His tomb at the Mahmoud Darwish museum in Ramallah lists his date of birth as 13 March, 1941, which I take to be authoritative (personal observation during a visit to Ramallah). Darwish's exact age during the *nakba* is stated in his own writing, six years old when arriving in Lebanon (MfF, 86. Ḏln, 87), seven years old when returning to the Galilee the following year (*Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-'ādī*, 19). If the family, like many Palestinians, left in the early months of 1948, this fits with a birth year of 1941.
[38] Darwish, *Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-'ādī*, 15.
[39] Darwish, "The One Who Imposes His Story Inherits the Earth of the Story", 4.
[40] The full meaning of the term 'the Other' will be explored in section 6.2.
[41] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 24.
[42] Darwish, *Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-'ādī*, 18.
[43] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 25.

officers every evening. He was in house arrest for several years and the police would make random inspections at night to make sure that he complied.[44] Failure to do so led to prison sentences, as did his political and literary activities. He was imprisoned seven times between 1961 and 1967.[45] In what had been his homeland, he was also an Other. The authorities saw him as a threat to be kept under control through military law.

During the 1960s, Darwish belonged to a generation of politically committed Palestinian poets characterised as *resistance poets* (*šuʿarāʾ al-muqāwama*).[46] Fitting within the broader post-World War II current of Arabic literature that Stephan Guth calls "social(ist) realism",[47] these poets broke with centuries of established tradition to develop a new, direct and politically committed expression within Arabic poetry. The role of the author, whether in prose or poetry, was to practise social criticism and hold up a mirror to society, realistically depicting the lives of ordinary people. While the poetry of Darwish contained complex imagery and existential themes from the beginning, weaving together themes of love, resistance and identity, he claimed in these early years that aesthetics must be secondary to the cause.[48] His breakthrough poem was "Biṭāqat huwīya" from 1964, in which his daily ritual of reporting his presence to an officer became a cry of resistance: "Saǧǧil! Anā ʿarabī!"[49] ("Write it down/record it! I am an Arab!") The poem goes on to list the plight of Palestinians, toiling in the stone quarries of what was once their land, warning the hostile government about their growing hunger and anger. With this poem, the poetic identity of Darwish became that of a resistance poet.[50]

Life in Haifa became intolerable for Darwish and in 1970 he left on a *Rakah* scholarship to study in Moscow.[51] He would only stay for a year. After leaving Moscow for Cairo, he eventually settled in Beirut in 1972. Like many Palestinians, Beirut became a beloved new home for Darwish.[52] He joined the PLO, started his own journal and took part in a thriving literary scene. He found his self-imposed exile much easier to bear than his previous "exile in the

[44] Darwish, "Ḥiwār maʿa al-šāʿir Maḥmūd Darwīš", 118f.
[45] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 25.
[46] Ibid., 46.
[47] Guth, "Novel, Arabic."
[48] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 47.
[49] Darwish, *Al-aʿmāl al-šiʿrīya al-kāmila*, 1:74.
[50] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 17.
[51] Ibid., 25.
[52] Darwish, "Ḥiwār maʿa al-šāʿir Maḥmūd Darwīš", 141.

homeland",[53] where he had lived under a hostile government in Haifa. Salma Khadra Jayyusi describes the 1970s as a period of wild experimentation in Arabic poetry, a battleground where poets tried to outdo each other in audacity and inventiveness.[54] During this time, Darwish tried to break free from his previous image as a resistance poet, experimenting with new genres, forms and themes outside of the politically committed poetry he became known for in the 1960s.[55]

Beirut had become so central to Darwish that he stayed in the city throughout years of civil war. In 1982, Israel put Beirut under siege. From the 14th of June to the 21th of August, the city was relentlessly bombarded from air and sea, leading to wide scale destruction. The siege achieved Israel's short-term goal of dislodging the PLO from Lebanon, where the organisation had functioned as a state within the state since its expulsion from Jordan. Darwish stayed throughout the entire siege and even a few weeks afterwards, refusing to leave with the PLO fighters. To his surprise, Israeli soldiers appeared in the street after the siege and masked men would wait outside his door. He would occasionally sleep in a restaurant to avoid them, until the Sabra and Shatila massacre convinced him that to stay longer was futile and reckless.[56] Like other PLO affiliates, he left for Tunis, and eventually ended up in Paris where he would stay until the mid-1990s.

4.2 The New Sensibility

The Arab defeat of 1967 was a shock that shifted the literary landscape just as it impacted ideology and politics. When the bubble of Arab nationalist propaganda burst, many writers found themselves in an entirely new, unfamiliar reality. Guth writes that the Lebanese civil war in 1975 was a further shock, and that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon during this civil war caused a total collapse of all hope.[57] This contributed to a "new sensibility" (*ḥassāsīya ǧadīda*) in Arabic literature, parallel to postmodern trends in world literature.[58] The political events "formed the background for parables of existential alienation, narratives of destroyed homes and exile … rejected coherence and ontological confusion"[59] throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

[53] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 51.
[54] Jayyusi, "Introduction: Palestinian Literature in Modern Times", 55.
[55] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 28.
[56] Darwish, "Ḥiwār maʿa al-šāʿir Maḥmūd Darwīš", 144.
[57] Guth, "Novel, Arabic."
[58] Guth, "Moderne arabisk prosa - en oversikt", 127.
[59] Guth, "Novel, Arabic."

Caught in the middle of these historic events, Darwish experienced them on a personal level. Månsson writes that the siege of Beirut was an apocalyptic event for Darwish, who described it as a "complete overthrow of all thoughts and understanding, and of the creation of man in flesh."[60] A "break in space and time,"[61] the siege was the total destruction of one world, of home, language, history and identity, leaving Darwish with the task of writing a new world into existence from a place of renewed exile. *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* is one of many works he wrote in Paris during the 1980s. It is a memory of the siege, including the breakdown of reality that it caused.

The post-1982 works of Darwish are markedly different from his earlier poetry. Together with a turn towards the lyric and epic, his writing became more personal, dealing increasingly with private life, memory, identity and mortality. Palestine always remained important, but he wrote less about the collective experience of Palestinians and more of his personal journey as a Palestinian individual.[62] He had always used mythological motifs in his poetry, drawing on all the faiths and overlapping histories present in his country of birth, but where mythology had previously symbolised the plight of modern day Palestinians, his later work uses mythology to express the poetic act of creation.[63] The poet does not *describe* reality; he or she *constructs* it. Monica Ruocco sums up this distinction when she describes the poetry of another Palestinian poet, Mourid Barghouti. She considers Barghouti's poetry *bināʾ*, 'construction', as opposed to *ġināʾ*, 'singing'.[64] Instead of singing for the memory of Palestine, Darwish's latter poetry is an attempt to transcend exile through rewriting what it means to be a Palestinian.

4.3 Features of *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*

While Darwish is most famous for his poetry, *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* is one of his three major works of prose.[65] The first is *Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-ʿādī* (*Journal of an Ordinary Grief*) from 1973. Using the journal form as a template, Darwish mixes poetic language, realist prose and dark humour in short vignettes in order to describe the absurdity of living as a *present absentee* in

[60] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 228.
[61] Ibid., 226.
[62] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 30.
[63] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 210.
[64] Ruocco, "L'écriture comme déplacement: Ra'aytu Rāmallāh de Murīd al-Barġūṯī", 1209.
[65] Muhawi, "Foreword", ix. Despite their different formats and features, Muhawi singles these three out as a trilogy, all of them being autobiographical prose tending in various degrees towards prose poetry.

Israel. His final important work of prose is *Fī ḥaḍrat al-ġiyāb* (*In the Presence of Absence*) from 2006, written as a self-eulogy. The title refers back to his status as a *present absentee*. The book is a preparation for his final absence: his approaching death. It is a complex meditation on how language forms the self, in which he attempts to find a home in language, to explore exile as a common human condition and to resolve opposites outside and within himself.

Ḏākira li-l-nisyān stands as a point of transition between the styles of the first and last major prose work. While *Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-ʿādī* is mostly realistic and uniform in style and *Fī ḥaḍrat al-ġiyāb* is a solemn and rich meditation, *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* is a jagged, fractured and chaotic work. Three years into his renewed exile from Beirut, Darwish isolated himself in a Paris apartment for around ninety days, where he wrote this book in a frenzy.[66] According to Darwish, the writing began as an attempt to write down a recurring dream, which opens and closes *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*. The memory of the dream triggered a longer writing process, in which he attempted to purge himself of the memory of Beirut.[67] The purpose was a form of exorcism, memories *for* forgetfulness, so that he could rid himself of the painful memories of Beirut. Darwish claimed that he never read the work once he had sent it to the publisher.[68] However, the work also stands as memory *of* or *against* forgetfulness, a possibility which the ambiguous preposition *li-* in the Arabic title leaves open. Forgetfulness (*nisyān*) takes many forms and meanings throughout the work. It does not merely refer to personal forgetfulness, but also the collective forgetfulness which erases Palestinian voices from history.[69] Forgetfulness is the Israeli denial of their existence which has forced Palestinians into exile,[70] but it is also the bombs that are raining down on them, erasing their actual physical bodies.[71] The act of writing becomes that of building, *bināʾ*, through memory and language, refusing this erasure. This memoir may have been written to forget, but it simultaneously preserved the Palestinian story of Beirut from forgetfulness. In the words of Muhawi, "Palestinians, present in their absence, are themselves a memory preserved against forgetfulness. Like Palestinian existence, the book itself may be described as an extended oxymoron."[72]

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[66] Muhawi, "Introduction", xxiv.
[67] Ibid., xxviii-xxix.
[68] Ibid., xxxi.
[69] MfF, 110. Ḏln, 110f.
[70] MfF, 15f. Ḏln, 17f.
[71] MfF, 146. Ḏln, 147.
[72] Muhawi, "Introduction", xxiv.

The quickly written and intense work jumps between prose and poetry, moves back and forth in narrative time and often shifts perspective with little explanation. Darwish inserts entire sections from other authors, copied verbatim, and mixes surreal sequences with essayistic reflections and mythology. This has led some[73] to describe the book as a series of prose poems rather than a cohesive work of prose. However, since there is an underlying linear plot and an overarching narrative structure that ties all the disparate parts together, this thesis is written under the assumption that the parts form a whole that can best be analysed as a complete work. Nevertheless, the work is clearly not a novel, and its language is far too complex and poetic for a conventional journalistic or autobiographical work. It has features of all of these genres. Therefore, the more neutral and encompassing terms 'book' or 'work' will be used when referring to *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*.

It is exactly these sharp breaks and omissions, which resist easy classification, that makes the book unusually rich for analysis. Muhawi calls it an "open work,"[74] one that directly engages readers in creation of meaning. Using Ricœur's terms, it is full of potential meaning to be enacted in the interpretative appropriation of reading. As Merleau-Ponty points out, the truly original expression can often be found within the gaps in language, in the negative spaces, in the unthought which invites the reader to think.[75] It is this quality of the text, in its tense and fragmentary form, that offers a glimpse into the lived reality Darwish. While as much as possible of this background information should be *bracketed* in direct encounters with the text, it will remain accessible as context, serving the explanatory part of Ricœur's hermeneutical arc.

5. Methodology

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the lived experiences and intentionality preserved in the text, as they are encountered in the interpretative process. In order to give structure to this exploration, the literary methods of close and comparative reading are supplemented by a framework adapted from the *human science* methodology of Max van Manen.[76] This

[73] The back cover of the English translation, MfF, calls it "a sequence of prose poems."
[74] Muhawi, "Introduction", xxviii.
[75] Merleau-Ponty, *Signes*, 95. See section 2.2.
[76] Max van Manen describes his approach as *human science*, which corresponds to *Geisteswissenschaften* as opposed to *Naturwissenschaften* in the traditional division of Dilthey. 'Human science' is the study of *Geist* in the German sense, encompassing art, literature, philosophy, linguistics; anything that relates to the human mind, consciousness or spirit. van Manen's own specialty is pedagogy,

hermeneutical phenomenological approach is presented in his book *Researching Lived Experience*. The methodology he presents is not a number of steps to be followed, but rather a series of activities that should be performed in a dynamic interplay.

To investigate human experience, van Manen writes that me must turn to a phenomenon "which seriously interests us and commits us to the world."[77] Unlike quantitative methods, phenomenology does not pursue detachment and objectivity as ideals. The phenomenologist should be committed to the world, allowing for care and thoughtfulness. In this thesis, the phenomenon of abiding concern is 'exile'.[78]

A phenomenological analysis should contain reflections on *essential themes* which characterise the phenomenon. Van Manen uses 'theme' as a technical term for the *structures of experience*.[79] In simple terms, a 'theme' is the form in which the researcher attempts to capture the phenomenon.[80] It will always be a simplification, since the fullness and richness of the lived experience cannot be reproduced. If the research is done well, however, the phenomenologist can capture something of its original essence, which gets us closer to understanding what *it is like* to experience something. While a full discussion of what a 'theme' is goes beyond the scope of this thesis, section 6 on 'exile' is an example of such a reflection.

The researcher needs to maintain a strong and oriented relation towards the phenomenon while also constantly moving between part and whole. In practice, this is done through writing, which van Manen considers the essential method of phenomenological research. Writing is both seeing and showing, writing is listening and speaking, writing distances us from the *lifeworld* but also draws us closer to it.[81] Phenomenological writing is dialectical, it moves back and forth between parts and whole as well as between abstraction and the concrete. In order to do justice to the fullness of the *lifeworld*, "writing may turn into a complex process of rewriting (re-thinking,

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but his method can be applied in any field which concerns the interpretation of human experience. In an English language context, this places van Manen in an interdisciplinary space between the social sciences and the humanities. See van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 3.

[77] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 30.

[78] My turn towards 'exile' as a theme of abiding concern preceded this thesis. It grew out of personal experiences, a decade of work with refugees and travels throughout Arabic speaking countries. Reading Barghouti and Darwish while living abroad sparked an interest that has only intensified over the last few years, and the quality and insight of their works convinced me that they represent something larger than themselves. I grew convinced that their insights into exile and estrangement transcends any one individual or culture, meaning that they are rich sources for phenomenological investigation.

[79] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 79.

[80] Ibid., 87-8.

[81] Ibid., 127-30.

re-flecting, re-cognizing)."[82] In short, writing is not merely a part of the method. Writing *is* research, and writing is *re*-writing. This kind of writing must be sensitive and subtle, it must be committed and caring. It should retain something of poetry.[83] Like Ricœur's *interpretation*, this kind of writing is also an act of self-reflection, but not in a narcissistic sense. The researcher needs to stay committed to the world and the collective being that connects us.[84]

One way to make reflection on essential themes manageable is to look at fundamental structures of experience, what van Manen calls *lifeworld existentials*.[85] He enumerates four such existentials, those of *lived space*, *lived body*, *lived time* and *lived human relation*. Any experience will be constituted within all of these structures, they form a fundamental unity.[86] *Lived human relation* builds on Husserl's insight that intersubjectivity is central to human experience. At a basic level, our world is constituted in exchange with other subjects. As discussed in section 2, it is assumed that our *lived body* (*Leib* or *corps propre*) is the nexus of our perception and intentional acts in the world. This is not a different body from the physical organism (*Körper*), but a shift in perspective. The body and subjectivity of the *natural attitude* remains within brackets, while the *lived body* is studied through its intentional acts.

These acts take place within the remaining two existentials, time and space. Being *lived* time and space means that the phenomenologist does not study the objective time and space of physics, but rather the dimensions as they are encountered in conscious acts. Time in a jail cell may be slow and tense, time in the arms of a lover may pass in an instant. Time for a child may feel like an endless horizon while an elderly person may feel their temporal horizon hastening toward its end. This is the *lived* element that the phenomenologist tries to capture.

Lived time and *lived body* will form the two chapters of the main analysis in this thesis. *Lived human relation* in the form of *meeting the Other* will recur throughout this thesis since it is a central topic in Darwish's writing, but there is not enough space in this thesis to give this topic and *space* their own chapters.[87]

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[82] Ibid., 131.
[83] Ibid., 114.
[84] Ibid., 132.
[85] Ibid., 101.
[86] Ibid., 105.
[87] The original plan for this thesis was to give each existential their own chapter, but two had to be cut for space. Other writers have treated these existentials in depth. Milich's work on the Other forms a red thread in the remaining two chapters. Månsson's treatment of mythological and liminal space is especially enlightening and has informed this work greatly. This is a running theme throughout her thesis 'Passage

These existentials should not be confused with essential themes. The former are the structures of experience. *Theme*, as mentioned above, is the form in which the researcher attempts to capture phenomena. What follows is an attempt to show why 'exile' became the central theme, what it means in the writings of Darwish and what intersubjective insights his writings may offer.

6. Thematic Discussion: 'Exile'

There are numerous recurring literary themes in the works of Mahmoud Darwish that have been used to define his legacy as a poet. In the popular Palestinian imagination, he is a symbol of resistance, with his poetry set to music by artists such as Marcel Khalife. Some scholars read his texts through a Marxist perspective, while others place his explorations of memory, identity or language first.[88] Others read his work as similar to ascension and unity in the Sufi tradition.[89] While these approaches all have validity, this thesis follows Månsson and Milich in identifying *exile* as the core theme of his writing, the foundation for both his earlier and later texts. This section argues for a wide and inclusive understanding of 'exile' beyond its conventional meaning of geographical dislocation. Rather, 'exile' is here understood as an existential state with far-reaching psychological and emotional consequences.

Since the essence of an experience is assumed to be intersubjective, it is not sufficient to look at the experiences and writings of one single individual during a thematic reflection. 'Exile' in the works of Darwish will be compared to its use by Edward Said and a conceptual link will be established with 'estrangement' and 'displacement' in the works of Mourid Barghouti. The relationship between the 'stranger' as both Other and Self in the writings of Darwish will be discussed. Finally, a connection is made with the idea of 'constant crisis' as defined by the anthropologist Henrik Vigh. The goal is to show that while they are using different concepts and terms, there is an overlap. They are all describing aspects of the same essential experience. The

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to a New Wor(l)d'. See also a paper by Yves-Gonzales-Quijano, "The Territory of Autobiography: Maḥmūd Darwīsh's *Memory for Forgetfulness*" in *Writing the Self: Autobiographical Writing in modern Arabic literature*. Edited by Robin Ostle, Ed de Moor and Stefan Wild. London: Saqi Books, 1998.

[88] Neuwirth, "Part One: Memory. Introduction", 47. In the volume *Arabic Literature: Postmodern Perspectives*, Neuwirth discusses the memory and forgetfulness of Darwish with great insight.

[89] Stagh, "Mahmoud Darwish", 7. This approach would be interesting to combine with the Neoplatonic observations in the chapter on *lived time*, but is beyond my level of knowledge and the scope of this thesis.

result is an open, inclusive and intersubjective understanding of 'exile', in which clues are already given regarding the temporal and corporeal structures of the exile experience.

6.1 *Manfan* and *ġurba*

Van Manen points out that etymological analysis gives us insight into the history of a concepts and some clues about the experiences behind them.[90] In English, 'exile' comes from the Latin *exsilium* ("banishment"), traditionally understood as the involuntary expulsion from one's native land, for punitive or political reasons. This sense of punitive expulsion corresponds to the Arabic word *manfan*[91] for 'exile'. *Manfan* is a noun of place, derived from the Arabic root *n-f-y*, which covers the related meanings of expulsion, removal, refusal, rejection, exclusion and negation. '*An* exile' is a *manfīy*, someone who has been rejected, negated or banished, while *manfan* is literally the *place* of exile, with the extended, more abstract meaning of the *state* of exile. This is the word most commonly used by Darwish for exile.

However, Darwish goes much further in his use of 'exile' than the traditional meaning of geographical displacement. He states that there is "exile in friendship, exile in family, exile in love, exile within you. Every poem is an expression of exile or strangeness."[92] This more abstract use of 'exile' overlaps with the concept of *ġurba*. This Arabic verbal noun comes from the root *ġ-r-b*, which carries a wide range of connected meanings, including 'to go west, sunset, crow or raven, to leave, to be strange, to become a stranger.'[93] *Ġarīb* is the Arabic noun for 'stranger', while *ġurba*, like *manfan*, is more abstract; *ġurba* is the *state* of estrangement or alienation. It is the feeling of separation from one's native place, of life away from home or of being a stranger in a strange land.[94] Mourid Barghouti describes this state at length in his autobiographical novel *Raʾaytu Rām Allāh* (*I Saw Ramallah*). The English translator Ahdaf Soueif tends to render *ġurba*

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[90] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 59.
[91] Since the third root consonant is weak, the ending of this *ism makān* changes according to context. The definite form is *al-manfā* in all cases while the indefinite, lexical form is *manfan*. Both are spelled with a word-final *alif maqṣūra*. The final -n is the case ending of all indefinite singular forms, written as *tanwīn* together with the *alif maqṣūra* in fully vowelised script, but is skipped in written Modern Standard Arabic. Writing *manfā* would be closer to spoken Arabic while options like *manfá*(*n*) or *manf*^{an} can be used to highlight the nunation - here, *manfan* is preferred as the lexeme, in line with Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 1159.
[92] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 17. Translated from the Hebrew by Månsson, in which the word for exile is גלות, *galūt*.
[93] Guth, 'EtymArab: A 1000-Words Pilot Version of an Etymological Dictionary of Arabic'.
[94] Milich uses *die Fremde* to translate *ġurba*, a general term in German for a strange and foreign land. Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 95.

as ‘displacement’.[95] It could more accurately be translated as ‘estrangement’, but the word also contains the senses of ‘alienation’ and ‘displacement’.

In *Raʾaytu Rām Allāh*, Barghouti claims that it is enough for a person to have been uprooted once to become a stranger, a person living in *ġurba*. These estrangements and displacements are never singular, they multiply and collect around the stranger as a circle, “he runs while the circle surrounds him.”[96] The exiled person becomes a stranger *in* and *to* their places. Unable to plan for the future or to find safety in the present, the stranger lives in a fragmented time, one stripped of stability and regularity. The stranger has temporary homes in the homes of others, any plan is contingent on the will of others in a constantly shifting world, leading the stranger to a dual existence, drawing closer when far away, growing distant when they are near.[97] This is reminiscent of how Darwish describes exile, as presence in absence and absence in presence. *Ġurba*, like exile, is a state of constant paradox. Its fragmentary nature appears absurd to the subject, leading to descriptions of tense and contradictory states of being. The opposite of exile, being at *home*, can be understood in the simple but powerful way in which van Manen describes it; the place where we can *be* what we *are*.[98] As opposed to the tense and fragmented space of exile, home is harmonious, regular and safe. It is where we feel that we fit in, where we can find rest and comfort, where we experience community. Simply put, home is where we can be fully present.

It is this combination of dislocation and estrangement that Edward Said describes in his seminal essay “Reflections on Exile”. The text encompasses the concrete and abstract forms of exile, as the “unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted.”[99] Personally impacted by exile, Said pulls no punches in describing the severity of this “discontinuous state of being,”[100] “like death but without death's ultimate mercy.”[101] He reminds us that exile has taken a new form in the 20th century. Exile in the time of total war means millions displaced around the world, scattered in foreign cities and refugee camps. This exile is "irremediably secular and unbearably

[95] Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah*, 131.
[96] Barghouti, *Raʾaytu Rām Allāh*, 157. “Yarkuḍ wa-l-dāʾira tuṭawwiquhū”
[97] Ibid., 158. “ʾinnahū yadnū kullamā naʾā wa-yanʾā kullamā danā”
[98] van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 105.
[99] Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 173.
[100] Ibid., 177.
[101] Ibid., 174.

historical [...] it is produced by human beings for other human beings."[102] Despite this reminder that exile in our time is tied to mass deportations and forced displacement on an unprecedented scale, Said retains the abstract idea of exile as a separation from life as it *should be*. He proposes that the roots of nationalism lie in the urgent need to reconstitute broken lives.[103] In this sense, even those who feel estranged by the conditions in their own country could be considered exiles from the order which would make reality liveable.

In the latter sense, Darwish described his time in Israel, until his departure in 1970, as an "exile in the homeland."[104] In Haifa, he was no more than 30 km away from his home village. Despite this geographical proximity, the village that had once been home for Darwish no longer existed. Living under a hostile government that treated him as a stranger made it impossible to ever establish a feeling of belonging, of safety or home.

6.2 The Other, the Stranger and the History of Troy

Within the phenomenological method, identity is not considered stable and fixed. As Ricœur writes, the self is formed in a dialectic between permanence and constant change.[105] The phenomenological self is not a persistent substance. It is continuously reconstituted through acts of consciousness that share an intersubjective foundation. These acts do not occur in isolation from other subjects. The Other[106] (*al-ʾāḫir*) recurs in the writings of Darwish, but is never clearly defined. Like a phenomenological theme, it is left open in order to be freely explored.

In its simplest sense, the Other is any human outside of the self. This relationship can range from positive to negative. Darwish often spoke to a beloved "you" in his early poetry, a female counterpart to the male poetic "I".[107] This could be an actual woman or the homeland, Palestine as an anthropomorphised female character.[108] This beloved Other is co-extensive with the self of Darwish, an integrated part of his identity.

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 177.
[104] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 51ff.
[105] Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre*. 28.
[106] This term is capitalised in accordance with philosophical tradition to highlight its abstract use. Intersubjective constitution of the self is briefly explored in section 2.1. For a longer discusson on the Other in phenomenology, see Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen*, §30 - §62 and *Krisis*, §53 - §55.
[107] Darwish consistently presents a binary and complementary view of gender in his writings. This analysis attempts to enter the lived reality of Darwish from his perspective, so problematising this goes beyond the scope of this thesis.
[108] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 64.

More often, however, the relationship with the Other in the poetry of Darwish is one of opposition. During his youth, the identity of Darwish was formed, like other Palestinians within the borders of Israel, through a complex co-existence of both connection and estrangement with the Israeli Other.[109] As Darwish explains in a 1995 interview with Abbas Beydoun, the Other as Israeli Jew was never solely an enemy. From the beginning, the Other was fully human, multiple and varied. "The one who taught me was a Jew, and the one who persecuted me was also a Jew, the woman who loved me was a Jew, the woman who hated me, too."[110]

Milich outlines three "appearances"[111] of the Israeli Other in the early poetry of Darwish. The first one is the Enemy,[112] the Zionist coloniser whom Darwish addresses in his breakthrough poem "Saǧǧil! Anā ʿarabī!"[113] The second one is the Jewish Lover, who first appeared in 1967 under the pseudonym "Rita".[114] This recurring character appears both as a beloved Other and an Enemy in the poetry of Darwish. In the poem "Imraʾa ǧamīla fī Sudūm" ("A Beautiful Woman in Sodom"),[115] which is quoted extensively during *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, she appears with two faces.[116] Inside their room they are lovers, outside the window they would shoot each other. This tense relationship will be explored in section 7.3. The third version of the Israeli Other is the Friend,[117] or in Milich's later writing, the Guest.[118] The Other, the Stranger and these three 'appareances' all appear as a form of archetypes in the prose and poetry of Darwish. They will be capitalised throughout this thesis to highlight that they are not recurring characters in the ordinary sense. Instead, they are abstract figures that interact and overlap in complex ways.

In the interview with Beydoun, Darwish goes on to describe three ways in which he speaks about the Stranger. The first and second cases have been described in Section 4.1. As a young man, Darwish was treated as a stranger by the victorious majority in Israel, but he was also a stranger when living as an exile in surrounding Arab countries. His third notion of the Stranger is the most complex one, something he claims is inherent in the human condition:

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[109] Ibid., 14f.
[110] Darwish, "The One Who Imposes His Story Inherits the Earth of the Story", 5.
[111] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 67. "Der Auftritt der Fremden".
[112] Ibid., "Der Feind".
[113] See section 4.1.
[114] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 71. "Die Liebe".
[115] From his 1970 collection *Al-ʿaṣāfīr tamūtu fi-l-Ǧalīl* (*The Birds Die in Galilee*).
[116] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 71.
[117] Ibid., 79. "Der Freund".
[118] Milich, "Maḥmūd Darwīsh; A Plurality of Voices for Invoking the Other," 2680.

> We are all strangers on this Earth. Since his expulsion, Adam was a stranger on this Earth, wherein he elected to live in a transient way, waiting to be able to return to his first Eden. The mixture of peoples, their migrations, is only strangers' journeys. Peace does not accomplish itself except at certain moments of history, inasmuch as it is the recognition by strangers of other strangers - to the point that it becomes impossible to know who is the real stranger. I make the distinction in my poetry between the stranger and the enemy. The stranger is not solely the Other, he is in me, too. I don't speak of it to complain or to refuse the Other. He is in me.[119]

Living in exile has taught Darwish that the Stranger and Other are not only external. They exist within him, intertwined in complex ways, just as he exists within the victorious Other. However, the victor cannot accept this Other within them and reject their existence. These insights have led to Darwish's ambition to write "the history of Troy," the untold poetry of the defeated, the marginalised and the exiled.[120] He continues later on in the interview with Beydoun:

> I want to say that the language of despair is poetically stronger than the language of hope, for there is enough place in despair to contemplate the destiny of man, to gaze, as from a window, upon the shore of humanity, while the victor is deprived of it. Despair constitutes the poetical territory, psychologically and linguistically, which brings the poet closer to God, to the essence of things, to the first poetical saying. What I mean to say is that despair places the poet in a quasi-absolute solitude in the land of exile. As if the poet is returned to the genesis of the first poem.[121]

Despair, defeat and exile makes Darwish able to speak as if he is the first man speaking, to paraphrase Merleau-Ponty's description of how Cézanne paints,[122] returning to the "first poem". Månsson suggests that this 'land of exile' may be a prerequisite for writing.[123] This "window upon the shore of humanity" allows Darwish to explore something universal. The Israeli founding myth cannot allow for the existence of a Palestinian history.[124] For the Zionist, the Palestinian must be transient, an Arab Other visiting an essentially Jewish land. Writing from the outside, in exile, Darwish is paradoxically able to embrace all elements of his homeland, inviting the Stranger and the Other into himself:

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[119] Darwish, "The One Who Imposes His Story Inherits the Earth of the Story", 9.
[120] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 218f.
[121] Darwish, "The One Who Imposes His Story Inherits the Earth of the Story", 20f.
[122] See section 2.2.
[123] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 34f.
[124] Darwish, "The One Who Imposes His Story Inherits the Earth of the Story", 17f.

> This land is mine, with its multiple cultures - Canaanite, Hebraic, Greek, Roman, Persian, Egyptian, Arab, Ottoman, English and French. I want to live all of these cultures. It is my right to identify with all of these voices that have echoed on this land. For I am not an intruder, nor a passer-by.[125]

Barghouti also describes the potency of writing from a place of estrangement in *Raʾaytu Rām Allāh*. "Writing is *ġurba*",[126] he claims. In the translation of Ahdaf Soueif, where *ġurba* is rendered as 'displacement', Barghouti says:

> Writing is a displacement from the normal social contract. A displacement from the habitual, the pattern, and the ready form. A displacement from the common roads of love and the common roads of enmity. A displacement from the believing nature of the political party. A displacement from the idea of unconditional support. The poet strives to escape from the dominant used language, to a language that speaks itself for the first time. He strives to escape from the chains of the tribe, from its approvals and its taboos. If he succeeds in escaping and becomes free, he becomes a stranger at the same time. It is as though the poet is a stranger in the same degree as he is free. If a person is touched by poetry or art or literature in general, his soul throngs with these displacements and cannot be cured by anything, not even the homeland.[127]

Barghouti's language that speaks itself for the first time and Darwish's language that returns "to the genesis of the first poem" have the same prerequisites. They are writing from an existential space of exile, struggling for existence within the liminality of estrangement. While Månsson argues that this may be a prerequisite for writing, Said speaks out in the strongest possible terms against any attempt to present exile as humanistically beneficial. This would be to "banalize its mutilations."[128] For every poet of exile, there are millions of others who suffer the ravages of displacement in subaltern silence. The aim of this thesis is not to glorify or romanticise the ravages of exile, but rather to explore its inner logic, wherein the exiled person negotiates his or her agency. For Månsson, exile is ultimately a state of liminality, but liminality also entails the possibility of movement back towards the world. She considers the later poetry of Darwish to be a strategy towards reintegration. His return to a world and self, both fragmented by exile, means

[125] Ibid., 19.
[126] Barghouti, *Raʾaytu Rām Allāh*, 158.
[127] Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah*, 132f.
[128] Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 174.

reforming them through words.[129] This act of creation breaks the cycle of exile which Barghouti writes is constantly closing around him. A poet in exile, his lifelong search for a new language was also a long journey home. Rewriting himself, Darwish is simultaneously rewriting the Palestinian history of the 20th century, giving voice to a people threatened by forgetfulness within the narrative of the victor.

6.3 Exile as Permanent Crisis

Seeing exile as a space of agency is influenced not only by the phenomenological concept of human intentional acts being embedded in lived reality, but also by the concept of *permanent crisis* discussed by the anthropologist Henrik Vigh. He challenges the common idea that 'crisis' is a sudden rupture, a temporary interruption between two states of normalcy. Rather, crises resulting from e.g. war or poverty can become chronic. The state of social or existential disintegration does not resolve, instead it settles into a new state of "ordered disorder."[130] This paradoxical nature of permanent instability, of 'presence in absence' in the terms of Darwish, turns emergency into a new state where knowledge forms and societal norms can be reshaped and reproduced. This 'new normal' remains a state of crisis when it contains a sense of loss, a lack of agency and the feeling that life *should* be better.[131] The person caught in this persistent fragmentation loses the ability to plan for the future, because this presupposes stability. The passage of time becomes a directionless motion outside of our control, where the future is a shifting terrain of uncertainty.[132] The opposite, the life which a person envisions as regular, stable and good, is described by Vigh in the simple but powerful expression *life as it should be*. When Said speaks of a "native place" and van Manen describes the place where "we can *be* what we *are*", they appear to all be speaking about the same state, one where time moves calmly, spaces are reliable and a fundamental belonging allows the living subject to flourish. This is the opposite of the states of exile and estrangement that Barghouti and Darwish have been forced into by circumstances beyond their control.

When Barghouthi discusses *ġurba* in *Raʾaytu Rām Allāh*, he compares being uprooted from one's native land to slipping at the top of a staircase, or the steering wheel breaking in the

[129] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 240.
[130] Vigh, "Crisis and Chronicity," 12.
[131] Ibid., 15-6.
[132] Ibid., 17.

hands of someone driving a car.[133] The first displacement triggers a state wherein the subject is unable to find their bearings, rushing with no purchase towards a future out of their control. As Barghouti writes, there is no cure for this, not even the homeland. The struggle of the exile is not one of reclaiming the past homeland, but to construct a new future within the *ordered disorder* of displacement. The exile fights for reintegration, a return to world and self, and both are reconfigured in the process. Reintegration is not a return to a previous state, but a transformative act of creation, a restructuring of world and self.

Understood in this way, Darwish became an exile when he was first uprooted as a six year old boy. The homeland was lost even before his house was destroyed and a new state was superimposed above the ruins of his village. Home would only remain on the other side of an unhealable rift, in the memories of a boy who had not yet learned the word *refugee*. Returning to his native soil could not cure him of being a stranger, and the exile multiplied. He left Haifa to live in Moscow, Tunis, Beirut, Paris and Amman, sometimes leaving voluntarily, sometimes by force. Realising that he would never find a physical place that could restore what he lost as a child, Darwish turned to language to construct a new home.

In *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, the reader meets Darwish in the middle of war, at a transition point between exiles. He had managed to construct a home for himself under self-imposed exile in Beirut, but the siege, a force far beyond his control, would ultimately destroy the world he had built and plunge him into a new unknown, a state of prolonged crisis connecting his previous and future displacements. Recalling Månsson's and Barghouti's reflections on creativity from exile and Vigh's reminder that crises are also spaces for agency, this thesis will attempt to enter Darwish's state of disorder to discover something of *what it is like* to negotiate agency and language from the extreme point of chronic crisis and continual exile. Assuming a phenomenological framework where time and space have certain intersubjective structures that can be explored in literature, Barghouti's descriptions of the paradoxical nature of space and time in *ġurba* will help to guide the analysis. Vigh's conceptualisation of time in crisis as a shifting terrain of uncertainty as opposed to the regularity of *life as it should be*, forms an entry point to a discussion on multiple mutually exclusive perceptions of time occurring for the same subject, which will be the main topic for the next chapter.

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[133] Barghouti, *Raʾaytu Rām Allāh*, 157.

7. Chapter 1: Lived Time

> In this sunset words alone are qualified to restore what was broken in time and place and to name gods that paid no attention to you and waged their wars with primitive weapons. Words are the raw materials for building a house. Words are a homeland![134]

This chapter follows the text of *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* from beginning to end. While most of the text consists of original prose, the narrative is constantly interrupted by poetry, essayistic reflections and extracts of texts from other authors. Breaks between these sections are marked with *dinkuses*, typographical indications of minor divisions in text.[135] There are no other divisions of the text, such as chapters, to aid the reader. I have made my own division of the book into three parts, in order to aid this analysis and presentation.

1. The Morning: Pages 3 - 42 in *MfF*, 5 - 43 in *Ḏln*.[136]
2. The Intertextual Torrent: Pages 42 - 117 in *MfF*, 43 - 117 in *Ḏln*.
3. The Sunset: Pages 118 - 182 in *MfF*, 117 - 187 in *Ḏln*.

The Morning section begins with Darwish waking up from the dream discussed in section 4.3. Despite the heavy bombardment, he tries to follow his usual morning routine. He then leaves his house to walk the empty streets of Beirut, reflecting on topics such as the war, memory, language, love and poetry. The Sunset section describes his walk home, as Beirut without electricity quickly descends into darkness. It ends with Darwish going to sleep in the same bed, falling into the same recurring dream from which he had awoken in the morning. The overarching narrative structures of these two sections are simple and linear. They will be presented by way of a close reading, with a particular focus on his experience of time.

The Intertextual Torrent is far more complex. Darwish's description of his daytime movement through Beirut is constantly interrupted by memories, pieces of poetry and long texts from other authors. It is as if the reader were brought inside the mind of Darwish, where thoughts succeed each other through free association, without any regard to conventional narrative

[134] Darwish, *In the Presence of Absence*, 84f. In the original Arabic, "sunset" is *ġurūb*, from the same root as *ġurba*. See Darwish, *Fī ḥaḍrat al-ġiyāb*, 92.
[135] The English translation uses a series of vertical lines, while my Arabic edition has three empty squares. I have been unable to verify which symbols were used in the first print.
[136] Abbreviations for *Memory for Forgetfulness* and *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, see Primary Sources and Abbreviations in the preamble for more details.

structure. In this section, the format of close reading will be replaced by one of thematic analysis, which better fits the complex features of the text. This is where contradictory but overlapping experiences of time will be discussed, as well as the role of the poet in constructing time.

The methodological back and forth movement described in section 5 is performed by alternating between phenomenological bracketing and contextual discussion. The following close and thematic readings linger at certain passages where the descriptions of experienced phenomena can be met directly. After this direct investigation, the observed phenomena are placed in the context provided by the theory and thematic sections.[137]

The main argument of this chapter is that the *lived time* which Darwish experiences is full of paradoxes and contradictions as he attempts to navigate a horizon of continuous and multiple crises, those of ongoing war and renewed exile. History, as it immediately presents itself to the consciousness of Darwish, appears both circular and linear. On the one hand, the cycle of war and exile in Lebanon and Palestine appears to repeat itself endlessly. Personal and collective time collapse into each other, as Darwish is caught in the stream of history, within which he can do nothing but watch the cycle of violence turn. On the other hand, history appears linear, approaching its violent end. Reality seems to disintegrate, replacing causality and structure with contingency and fragmentation. Expulsion from Beirut would eventually open a new horizon for Darwish, the *ordered disorder* of renewed exile, but during the siege, Darwish could not know which shape this future would take. This uncertain future was too foreign and painful to conceptualise, to integrate as part of his *lived time*. Refusing to disappear into forgetfulness, the book shows how Darwish reconstructs reality through bursts of raw creativity. This creativity ultimately enables rebirth within renewed exile and commencement of the construction of a new reality. This new beginning, however, was *lived* as an apocalyptic end, resulting in an extremely tense *lived time*, described in the book as both closing and opening at the same time.

7.1 The Morning

> Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
> Every poem an epitath.
> - T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"[138]

[137] During the writing process of this thesis, the theory and thematic sections have also changed after repeated encounters with the text. The analysis has adapted to the features of the text. Rather than a strict application of a certain theory, both have formed each other in this back and forth movement.
[138] Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 38.

In the opening deam, a disembodied voice asks Darwish if he is well, if he is alive. He answers her[139] with a question: how did she know that he was laying his head on her knee to sleep? The voice answers, “you woke me up when you stirred in my belly. I knew then I was your coffin. Are you alive? Can you hear me?”[140] The sensation of sleeping on a woman’s knee and stirring in her belly, which brings to mind maternal affection, is juxtaposed with that of death, of this mother figure also being a coffin.[141] Muhawi points out that this is one of many reversals of the book, equating love and death.[142] As the dialogue continues, the voice pleads with Darwish not to die, and transforms into that of a lover who has managed to find Darwish’s number after 13 years. Darwish tells her, introducing the titular theme of the book, that he “went away and forgot you. A while ago I remembered. I remembered I’d forgotten you. I was dreaming.”[143]

In the contemporary world, dreams tend to be described as series or sequences of images or sensations, with the potential for a narrative structure.[144] This dream fits better with the ancient Greek conception of a dream as an apparition or a phantom, *phantasma*,[145] which visits the dreamer. This apparition transforms into various female figures from the life of Darwish, with no regard for narrative or temporal structure. “How the time flies! Thirteen years! No. It all happened last night. Good night!” she says as the dream ends.[146] Within the phenomenological *epoché*, just like in the dream state, the laws of time and space within the natural attitude no longer matter. Dreams are spaces of infinite possibility. Past and present may be interwoven, distances are no longer barriers, figures may appear shifting and intertwined, but there is still intentional content for the unconscious mind. In this case, the content is an amorphous

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[139] When speaking to the voice, Darwish addresses it in the feminine: “Kayfa ʿarafti annanī kuntu aḍaʿu…”, see Ḏln, 5. Additional vowel signs were added to make this clear. Conversely, the voice calls Darwish “anta” with a *fatḥa* making the masculine form clear, indicating who is speaking to whom in this surreal sequence.
[140] MfF, 3. Ḏln, 5.
[141] She can be considered an embodiment of both *Ἔρως* and *Θάνατος*, the life and death drives in post-Freudian psychology, as pointed out by Stephan Guth (personal communication). Psychological explanations are bracketed in the following phenomenological analysis but could form a new entry point to the work, reading it as a dialectic between life/sex/creativity and death/aggression/destruction.
[142] Muhawi, “Introduction”, xxxiv.
[143] MfF, 3-4. Ḏln, 6.
[144] See for example the OED definition, “A series of images, thoughts, and emotions, often with a story-like quality, generated by mental activity during sleep; the state in which this occurs. Also: a prophetic or supernatural vision experienced when either awake or asleep.”
OED Online, sv. "dream, n.2 and adj."
[145] Gallop, *Aristotle: On Sleep and Dreams*, 10. In the original Greek, *φάντασμα*.
[146] MfF, 4. Ḏln, 6.

phantasma, from which two female figures emerge: one maternal and the other a lover. Fragments of this dream will reappear at crucial points in the book, and the importance of these two figures will be discussed as they recur. At this point of the book, the dream appears as a private space of female warmth, offering Darwish's mind a short reprieve from the madness of war, an inner and shapeless *lived time* of humanity and connection which can be explored in private moments. The apparition also serves as a messenger or oracle, assuming some of the ancient *phantasma*'s role, repeatedly reminding him: "Don't forget to not die."[147]

Darwish is torn from this dream state at 3 AM, waking up to the sound of intense bombardment. "Daybreak riding on fire. A nightmare coming from the sea. Roosters made of metal."[148] The language of the book changes from vague descriptions of dream states to short sentences, bursts of harsh reality. Transported from the timeless state of dreaming, he awakes into a city where any second can be the difference between life and death. His only goal in life is to make a cup of coffee, the aroma of which can transform him from something that crawls into a human being.[149] In the middle of war, his plan for the day consists only of surviving the movement from the bed to the kitchen, past the living room window, without being hit by a sniper. His *lived time* between artillery shells is so brief that he wonders how he can even have time to light the gas of the stove before his building is hit.

> One second is not long enough to open the water bottle or pour the water into the coffee pot. One second is not long enough to light a match. But one second is long enough for me to burn.[150]

As discussed in section 6.3, Henrik Vigh contrasts 'crisis' with what we deem to be ordinary, things as they *should be*.[151] In ordinary life, days have familiar cycles. Darwish would perform his morning ritual, slowly heating the water, adding the coffee and stirring the pot. He would drink his coffee slowly while reading a newspaper. Coffee must never be drunk in a rush, he writes. "It is the sister of time, and should be sipped slowly, slowly."[152] The intimate ritual is one of comfort, one of being at home. This is not a luxury that the stranger can take for granted. As

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[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] MfF, 6. Ḏln, 8. The original Arabic says "li-ʾataḥawwal min zāḥif ʾilā kāʾin".
[150] MfF, 6. Ḏln, 9.
[151] Vigh, "Crisis and Chronicity," 11.
[152] MfF, 22. Ḏln, 24.

Barghouti reminds us, the displaced person is always moving, constantly trying to construct patterns in alien places. Any normalcy that the stranger manages to build is always at threat. Darwish had managed to build a new life in Beirut, with familiar habits and spaces. This comfort was fragmented during the civil war and finally collapsed under the siege. There is no morning meditation in the middle of war where coffee is permitted to be the sister of time. No one delivers the newspaper during heavy bombardment,[153] his coffee is made in the tense space between heartbeats, under the constant threat of incineration and sniper fire. Making coffee in time of war fits Vigh's description of "ordering of disorder,"[154] of crisis becoming normalised and continuous. Darwish may have a war-time routine, there may still be coffee and matches for the stove, there is no way to establish routines as Darwish believes that they *should be*.

After finishing his coffee and visiting the neighbours, Darwish heads out to walk the streets of Beirut. Before the siege, he would have gone to his study, but as we learn later in the book, it lies in ruins.[155] His new daily ritual consists of wandering the streets, lost in thought, occasionally meeting acquaintances who remain in the city. Darwish describes something he would later claim no one had dared to admit in Palestinian writing before him: fear.[156] His nightmare is being buried under rubble, slowly suffocating under a collapsed building. This fear drives him to walk the open streets despite the bombardment, since the idea of quickly burning up gives him more comfort than the risk of dying slowly under rubble.[157]

His fear is contrasted with the determination of the young Palestinians who are fighting throughout Lebanon. These reflections move the narrative from the inner, personal world of Darwish into the *lived time* of others, as he considers their experience of Lebanon. The temporal scope is also widened, as the perspective shifts from the brief moments of the morning to the last decades of Palestinian history. Political events far beyond their control had brought Palestinians to refugee camps throughout Lebanon. Especially in the camps of the south, young people were raised within a dizzying net of overlapping conflicts, involving numerous factions where allegiances often shifted. These "youths armed to the teeth"[158] were born:

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[153] Ibid.
[154] Vigh, "Crisis and Chronicity," 11.
[155] MfF, 66. Ḏln, 68.
[156] Muhawi, "Introduction", xxv.
[157] MfF, 27. Ḏln, 29. This collapse of *lived space* will be further explored in section 8.
[158] MfF, 11. Ḏln, 14. In the original Arabic, *al-fitya al-mudağğağūna*.

> without a cradle, in whichever way, on a mat or in a basket of reeds or on banana leaves, born haphazardly, without a birth certificate or a record of their names, without joy or a birthday celebration, they were burdens on their families and tent neighbours, in short: They were surplus births, they were without identity.[159]

With no education other than segregation, nationalist speeches and "the whips of the police,"[160] Darwish claims that these subalterns learn their history as similar to a "cosmic traffic accident or a natural catastrophe,"[161] something inevitable, far out of their control. Born without a reason, growing up without a reason, their only choice for the present and the future is to be torn apart between the numerous factions in the overlapping conflicts of southern Lebanon.

When Barghouti writes about the occupation of Palestine, he considers its ultimate crime to be that of turning his homeland into a symbol.[162] As a child, he never wanted Ramallah to remain what it was, he wanted it to become something new and exciting, like Cairo or Beirut. The occupation forced him to remain with the old, to miss what Palestine used to be instead of exploring the mystery of what it could invent. Darwish had also experienced the events of 1948 first-hand, but for him, they led to an opportunity for agency, fighting for Palestine back in Haifa through poetry and political activism. The Palestinian youth of the Lebanese camps never had this opportunity. They had never seen their homeland and had never been made welcome in their country of exile. So far removed from them, the events that led them to be born into war in Lebanon may have felt like a transcendent destiny, cosmic in scale and inevitability, as Darwish suggests. The Symbol of Palestine that these youth were taught to fight and die for became mythical, it merged into the language of history, a continuous line from the Crusades to modern western imperialism. Darwish asks of the youth:

> armed with a rage for release from the senility of the Idea - do they realize that with their wounds and inventive recklessness they are correcting the ink of a language that (from the siege of Acre in the Middle Ages to the present siege of Beirut whose aim is revenge for all medieval history) has driven the whole area east of the Mediterranean toward a West that has wanted nothing more from slavery than to make enslavement easier?[163]

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[159] My translation. Ḏln, 16.
[160] MfF, 14. Ḏln, 16.
[161] Ibid. In the original Arabic, *šadīdat al-šabah bi-ḥādiṯat sayr kawniyya wa-bi-wāqiʿa ṭabīʿiyya*.
[162] Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah*, 69.
[163] MfF, 11-2. Ḏln, 14.

7.2 The Intertextual Torrent

A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments.
- T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"[164]

Having moved beyond his personal time, first discussing the events of the last decades and then making a link to mediaeval history, Darwish goes on to suddenly plunge the reader into the furthest possible past. Wandering the street, hoping to find just one kitten in the chaos of war, Darwish wonders what his name is, who gave it to him, and who could call him Adam.[165] After this allusion to the Abrahamic creation myth, he inserts the first of many excerpts from other authors that fill the book. In this case, it is a discussion rendered verbatim from *Al-kāmil fī al-tārīḫ*, the world history of mediaeval writer ʿIzz al-Dīn Abu-l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Aṯīr (1160 - 1233 CE).[166] Beginning his world history at creation, Ibn al-Aṯīr establishes chains of transmission back to the companions of the Prophet, to discuss in which order God made the elements of creation; the Pen, the Throne, the Tablet, air, water, darkness, etc.[167] In the translation of Muhawi, with the Arabic terms inserted into the translation in square brackets:

> In my view, the statement - derived from one of Abu Ruzayn's traditions about the Prophet (God bless and grant him salvation!) - that the creation of water came before the creation of the Throne [*al-ʿarš*] is closer to the truth. Further, it has been related (by Sa'ad Ibn Jubayr,[168] who has it from Ibn Abbas) that water was riding on the wind when the Throne was created. If that is the case, then they were created before the Throne.
> Another has said that God created the Pen [*al-qalam*] a thousand years before he created anything else.[169]

The section by Ibn al-Aṯīr can be read as a meta-commentary on the act of world-building through writing. God creates the Pen and the Tablet (*al-lawḥ*)[170] on which the Pen writes the world into existence by his command. The discussion of how much time passed between the creation of the Pen and the world is essentially one of cosmic emplotment, the ordering of reality

[164] Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 38.
[165] MfF, 41-2. Ḏln, 42-3.
[166] Rosenthal, "Ibn al-Athīr".
[167] ibn al-Aṯīr, *Al-kāmil fī al-tārīḫ*, 16-8.
[168] [sic], should be Sa'id.
[169] MfF, 43. Ḏln, 44.
[170] ibn al-Aṯīr, *Al-kāmil fī al-tārīḫ*, 17.

through discourse. God, as the author of the world, who speaks it into being by telling the Pen to write, is free to choose the temporal structure of the narrative of existence.

Månsson writes that Arabic literature has a particular focus on speech acts.[171] To speak is not to describe, but to *change* the world. In order to combat the forgetfulness of exile, with the Qur'an as a model, Darwish assumes the role of the narrator of the world, including the power of *naming*. Månsson continues: "A poet has a duty to be not only spectator, but also narrator. To narrate, write and name is to make the speaker a subject, an act that is of utmost importance to the migrant."[172] When Darwish asked who could call him Adam, he was also questioning who has the power to dictate reality. Throughout *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, Darwish goes back and forth between two extreme points when reflecting on the role of the author in war. Sometimes he feels powerless, a mute observer disconnected from his own language, helplessly watching the movement of history around him without the ability to speak, like the subaltern children of the southern camps. At other times, he assumes the role of the poet-prophet, a messianic figure that can fight steel with words.[173] The section by Ibn al-Aṯīr hints at the fundamental question behind these experiments. Does Darwish have the power to dictate a new reality, or is he merely being named by others who have more power to dictate the narrative of existence?

Another way to read the section by ibn al-Aṯīr is through the metaphysical significance of the terms he uses. The Pen (*al-qalam*) is mentioned in *sūra* 68:1 as well as 96:4 of the Quran. The latter *sūra* is considered the first to be revealed to the prophet Muḥammad in Islamic tradition, where God is introduced as the one who taught men by the Pen what they did not know.[174] The historian of philosophy Elvira Wakelnig has shown how, within mediaeval Islamic theology, the Quranic Pen was identified and synthesised with the Neoplatonic Intellect, an emanation of the One.[175] Within the Neoplatonist system of thought, it is possible to conceive of

171 Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 210.
172 Ibid., 211.
173 MfF, 52. Ḏln, 52.
174 Qur'an, 96:3-5.
175 Within Neoplatonic philosophy, all reality emanates from the One, a unity without multiplicity. From the absolute One, a multiplicity of self-subsistent entities called *hypostases* emanate, forming the fundamental levels of reality, the highest of which are the Intellect (*νοῦς*) and Soul. From Soul follows material reality. Within this system as it was absorbed into Islamic theology, the *qalam* or Intellect was put into motion by the command (*ʾamr*) of the One (God), while Soul is the Table (*lawḥ*) on which lower reality is written. The Throne (*ʿarš*) mentioned by Ibn al-Aṯīr is also a creation of the higher intellect, at the same level as the Table. Wakelnig traces the Neoplatonic ideas to the 10th century philosopher Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmirī, a successor of al-Kindī, with its ultimate source in the 5th century philosopher Proclus. The latter formalised centuries of Neoplatonic speculation into a dense hierarchical structure of metaphysical

time as eternal but circular.[176] The idea of eternal time was questioned by later monotheists who thought that creation necessitated a beginning in time.[177] The implied determinism of a universe that recurs in identical cycles called the possibility of free will into question, and was criticised by later monotheists as incompatible with God's freely given grace and spontaneous creation. These contrasting conceptualisations of time co-existed within the mediaeval theological debate, forming a background to Ibn al-Aṯīr's attempt to establish a chain of transmission.

While it is unlikely that this was Darwish's purpose when including this passage,[178] *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* contains all the above possibilities. The book maintains a tension between mutually exclusive forms of time, all occurring within the *epoché* of direct experience. A young Darwish of the sixties adopted a Marxist ideology and would likely have held a dialectical, materialist view of history. He certainly believed that human agency could change the course of history, and that a better world could be achieved through struggle.[179] While this materialist worldview differs from the belief in a preordained history within Abrahamic theology, the two views share a linear and utopian concept of time, where a final revolution or apocalyptic war would lead to an end-stage of history. The post-1967 shock and disillusionment presents a new possibility, explored within the postmodern *ḥassāsiyya ǧadīda*, described in section 4.2. This, the latest turn in literature, contains echoes from the oldest recorded conceptions of time. There may be no such thing as progress, no salvation, no end of history. It is possible that human time is merely an endless cycle, with its apparent truths discursively constructed by those currently in power on the *lawḥ* of history books and media.

Shortly after the extract from Ibn al-Aṯīr, there is another section that breaks the linear narrative with short and visually evocative paragraphs, reminiscent of a video installation.[180] Darwish describes how the "sects and dregs of the Crusaders"[181] are coming back to life in the

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principles, ultimately attempting to explain how multiplicity can arise from unity. See Wakelnig, *Feder, Tafel, Mensch*, 160f.

[176] This is the position of Proclus, who argued, similarly to the Stoics before him, that the finite souls of the universe repeat themselves in infinite time. Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, §206.

[177] This was also a criticism of the view of time inherited from Aristotle, who also considered time eternal, but without any circular element. See Aristotle, *Physics*, 251b11-251b28.

[178] As expressed in section 2.3, the methodology of this thesis allows for interpretation of the reader, beyond what may have been the original intent of the author. The argument is that these experiences of time can be found in the *text*, in the act of reading. I wish to make this explicit here.

[179] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 74-5.

[180] Many thanks to Samad Alavi for this comparison (personal communication).

[181] MfF, 46. Ḏln, 47.

darkness under the speeches of Arab nationalists like Nasser. When this pan-Arab nationalist thesis collapsed, the language that had grown in its shadow emerged, full of artefacts of the past. Each short paragraph that follows is introduced by the word 'Video' (*fīdyū*).[182] The phenomena of present and past appear to consciousness at a machine gun pace, as if they were spliced together into one short roll of film. The war of 1967. The Marquis of Sidon in correspondence with the pope while at odds with the English crusaders besieging Acre. The Camp David Accords. A division of the Holy Land between the Arabs and Franks. Forbidden words like *democracy* and *communism* in the broken rib of Arabia. Shatila Refugee Camp.

The circle of history appears to have deflated into a flat line, as if all of history were playing out simultaneously within the consciousness of Darwish. When the narrative of the book resumes after the video section, the language of myth is interwoven with this compressed history. Darwish discusses how Menachem Begin, then Prime Minister of Israel, had stripped Palestinians of their humanity to justify their killing.[183] This is followed by an extract from the Book of Joshua, 6:16-22, where the walls of Jericho fall to the blast of trumpets and its inhabitants are massacred according to God's Law.[184] This does not only conflate the ancient Israelites and the modern IDF, it also reinforces the apocalyptic undertones of 1982. Later in the book, Begin is likened to a Solomon without the wisdom and songs.[185] In yet another section, Darwish writes that Begin's personal conflict with the ancient Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar has flared up, with the bombs over Hiroshima as a backdrop.[186]

The absurd conflation of time places the experiences of Darwish within a wider narrative of divine destruction. Myth is able to convey the emotional scope of war where mere factual reports fail. Near the beginning of the book, Darwish is horrified by the BBC newscast on the radio, where the presenter calmly narrates the bombardment of Beirut in the same tone he would use to present the weather, as if it were "ordinary news about an ordinary day in an ordinary war".[187] The time that Darwish lives in these moments is not one of facts, figures and dispassionate political phrases, but one of destruction on a biblical scale, a historic moment with apocalyptic undertones, the displacement of an old world with one entirely new.

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[182] MfF, 47-9. Ḏln, 47-9.
[183] MfF, 77. Ḏln, 79.
[184] MfF, 79. Ḏln, 80-1.
[185] MfF, 144. Ḏln, 144.
[186] MfF, 84. Ḏln, 85.
[187] MfF, 23. Ḏln, 25.

Another function of this conflated time is the implication of recurrence. If the events in the Holy Land are truly cyclical, what can anyone do to halt the cycle of violence? Could anyone assume the role of narrator in a cyclical existence? The section on Begin and Nebuchadnezzar mentions a "Greek fate lying in wait for young heroes."[188] Muhawi writes in the introduction that sheer survival during the blitz assumes heroic proportions and that simply walking the streets becomes an Odyssey.[189] Like the heroes of epic Greek poetry, Darwish is confronted with the possibility of unchangeable destiny, being subject to the whims of Gods and prophecy, whether they are supernatural in nature, the unchanging movement of history or merely humans exercising power. His mission becomes that described in section 6.2, to write the history of Troy; to tell the history of the defeated.

The same section containing Begin, Nebuchadnezzar and Hiroshima ends with the words "Hiroshima tomorrow. Hiroshima is tomorrow."[190] In 1945, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August the 6th, a date which coincides with the most intense bombing of Beirut in 1982. It is possible that the story in *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* takes place the day before, or even on Hiroshima Day, but it is only made clear that the book takes place in August. In contrast to the biblical imagery, Hiroshima serves as an example of apocalyptic destruction that is wholly secular and historical. After the nuclear bomb, Darwish writes, the earth will cool down into the next Ice Age, and nothing except rats and certain insects will survive.[191] The battles of ancient Canaanites and Crusaders have entered a time of industrial warfare that can rival the divine destruction of myth, a time of systematic genocide and weapons of mass destruction. The threat of nuclear annihilation is, like exile according to Edward Said, "irremediably secular and unbearably historical [...] produced by human beings for other human beings."[192] All of history, the ancient and present, the material and the mythical, appear intertwined in the phenomena that Darwish encounters in his conscious acts.

The world that is disintegrating around him is not merely the physical buildings or the political hopes of the PLO. His entire personal reality is being called into question by the siege. His memories, his language, his beliefs and his identity all appear as alien before him. Darwish

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[188] MfF, 84. Ḏln, 85.
[189] Muhawi, "Introduction", xxv.
[190] MfF, 85. Ḏln, 86.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, 174.

frantically tries to write his way back into them, to be the *qalam* of his own *lawḥ* in a disintegrating reality, transforming all of these aspects of himself in the process. Utilising the language of myth and nuclear warfare to describe his personal apocalypse points to the future poetic voice of Darwish where the intermingling of the mythical, historical and personal becomes a way of writing oneself into being. Månsson argues that his ultimate goal is to resolve exile in language.

> Starting in the early passage as a tool to describe the separation experienced, poetry assumes an increasingly important role in creating an alternative reality. Mahmoud Darwish's later writings show a strong potential for survival and hope in a world where home, name and identity are constantly threatened by annihilation, and where every attempt to find roots and fixed points are in vain.[193]

This pursuit of a new language has only just begun in 1982 and was still developing when this book was written in 1985. Darwish flails wildly in his literary style, writing prose that is unstable and fragmentary, moving between extremes, or in the words of Darwish himself, a prose that is *mutawattir* (nervous/tense).[194] The tension intensifies after a sudden snippet of dream-like dialogue with an unknown person. Darwish says farewell and declares that he is moving into madness, because he is turning into words.[195]

If discourse as text is detached from its original referents and author, as Ricœur and Barthes suggest,[196] an author "turning into words" would appear to be dislocated from their own act of writing. In this section, Darwish appears as a function of his text, rather than the reverse. Unable to assume the creative power of naming, he can no longer remain a subject. Mid-point into the book, as the intertextual torrent intensifies, it is unclear whether Darwish is writing or being written. In this section with numerous overlapping authors, he is no longer be the Author of his own autobiography. He is unable to form a safety catch. Paraphrasing Barghouti,[197] he has fallen down the first steps of displacement and is hurling down the stairs towards a future out of his control. Powerless to form a new reality and his own identity, he watches himself being written by the dominant discourse, turning into words.

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[193] Månsson, 'Passage to a New Wor(l)d', 241f.
[194] Muhawi, "Introduction", xxx.
[195] MfF, 51. Ḏln, 51f.
[196] See section 2.3.
[197] See section 6.3.

This fragmentation and negation are followed, like a spasmodic attempt at survival, by a fit of patriotic fervour. The resistance poet comes back to life. Darwish wants to break into song, to find a “language that transforms language itself into steel for the spirit - a language to use against these sparkling silver insects, these jets.”[198] For a moment, he assumes the image of the messianic poet-prophet once more and claims the power to rewrite matter. But this fervent state of mind does not survive for long, as he soon goes to the other extreme of despondency. At the end of the patriotic mood, he inserts Matthew 13:1-8 and 14:21-28 between bursts of dialogue and poetry, where Jesus teaches the masses through parables and heals a possessed woman.[199] Directly undercutting the messianic image, the bible verses are followed by an interview with an American journalist. Asked what he writes in this war, Darwish answers:

> —I’m writing my silence.
> —Do you mean that now the guns should speak?
> —Yes. Their sound is louder than my voice.[200]

This section of the book ends with a conversation between Darwish and the Pakistani poet Fayiz Ahmad Fayiz, who wonders where the artists of Beirut are. Darwish asks with bitter sarcasm:

> “What do you want from them?”
> “To draw this war on the walls of the city.”
> “What’s come over you?” I exclaim. “Don’t you see the walls tumbling?”[201]

7.3 The Sunset

> We die with the dying:
> See, they depart, and we go with them.
> We are born with the dead:
> See, they return, and bring us with them.
> - T. S. Eliot, “Little Gidding”[202]

As the day turns into afternoon, the extreme moods of patriotic fervour and despondency ebb out into a slow, depressive movement towards acceptance of the future. Darwish returns from the

[198] MfF, 52. Ḏln, 52. This will be further explored in section 8 on *lived body*.
[199] MfF, 60-1. Ḏln, 62-3.
[200] MfF, 61. Ḏln, 63.
[201] MfF, 65. Ḏln, 67. Sic, the book switches between quotation marks and dashes for dialogue.
[202] Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 38.

time of politics, history books and myth to his own personal time. After a long section of Crusader history, discussing the meeting between Franks and Muslims,[203] Darwish remembers a fragment of the dream with which the book began. He hears the female voice of a lover that seems to rise from the Song of Songs, and Darwish remembers his first sexual awakening as a child.[204] The female figure crystallises into the Jewish Israeli Lover, the beloved Other described in section 6.2. He remembers intimate moments with her, hiding from the rain outside in front of a warm fire, but a recurring line from one of his old poems keeps entering the memory. The poem is "Imraʾa ǧamīla fī Sudūm" and the line is "wa-kilānā yaqtulu -l-ʾāẖira ẖalfa -l-nāfiḏa", ("both of us kill the other behind the window").[205] Their *lived time* is borrowed. The warmth and care cannot last, because outside of their window, they are cast as enemies in a larger conflict by forces outside of their control.

As Milich points out, the Jewish Lover in the poetry of Darwish is a way to render the Other as fully human, even an intimate Other.[206] Darwish's goal was never to reverse the power imbalance and violence between Israeli Jew and Palestinian, but to find a space where the cycle of oppression and exile could stop. The Jewish Lover assumes all the appearances mentioned in section 6.2, the Enemy, the Stranger, the Other - but also the Guest. By inviting her inside his window, Darwish is able to see himself fully. Milich writes:

> In this most refined form of *poiesis*, the text crafts images and enacts voices that allow one to discover one's own fe/male self in the "mirror" of the other as well as human existence's fundamental contingency. Humanizing the enemy serves not only to overcome a destructive logic of war, but aims at safeguarding one's own threatened humanity, a central concern to both postcolonial and world literature.[207]

Finally, in the binary gender division of Darwish, the Lover is Other as female, in contrast to Darwish's male self. This is the primary characteristic of the *phantasma* in his dream, a composite voice of multiple origins, but always female. Towards the end of the book, he remembers a meeting with his Lover, their conversation ending with the words:

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[203] These sections reinforce the conflated time described above and forms an entry point to the topic of meeting the Other, but a deeper analysis has been cut in this analysis due to space constraints.
[204] MfF, 119. Ḏln, 118-9.
[205] Darwish. *Al-aʿmāl al-šiʿrīya al-kāmila*, 1:305.
[206] Milich, "Maḥmūd Darwīsh; A Plurality of Voices for Invoking the Other," 2680.
[207] Ibid.

—Men don't understand women.
—Women don't understand men.[208]

These are also the final words exchanged with the dream figure as Darwish returns to the same bed and the same dream at the very end of the book.[209]

The Other as female is not only a Lover, she is also a maternal figure, both of whom are present and intertwined in the *phantasma* of his dream. Throughout the book, Darwish has recurring memories of his mother and her coffee. Its unique smell,[210] the time she brought it to his prison cell, but the guards poured it out,[211] an image of his mother opening his door with coffee on a tray made out of his heart.[212] As Darwish explained in the beginning of the book, coffee is a sister of time and the vitality of life, that which turns him from animal to human. Within the past *lived time* of his memories, his mother is the figure which brought him life, not only through birth, but throughout his life with her care, comfort and coffee.[213]

There is no way for Darwish to reach her in Beirut, with borders and a war separating him both from the homeland and his mother's arms. The only way to reach her warmth and to integrate her care into his own self is through memories, recalling the warmth of sleeping on her knee and the warmth of her coffee. Likewise, the idea of meeting the female Enemy as a lover appears just as remote. In a concrete sense, the lover he remembers is distant both in time and space. She is a memory now, merely an apparition in his dreams. In an abstract sense, the escalating destruction and sectarian division of war makes the notion of humanising the enemy, of seeing the Other as part of the self, seem ever more distant.

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[208] MfF, 178. Ḏln, 182.
[209] MfF, 182. Ḏln, 186.
[210] MfF, 19. Ḏln, 21.
[211] MfF, 22. Ḏln, 24.
[212] MfF, 176. Ḏln, 180.
[213] As an example of the cathartic union between himself and his mother, in *Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-ʻādī* Darwish describes an episode from his life as a *present absentee* in Haifa. He is unable to visit his mother on a feast day due to his communal arrest. She makes her way to Haifa to spend it with her son, refusing to eat the feast meal without him. When she leaves, he cannot follow her to the street, because the state of Israel does not allow him to leave the house after sunset. Alone, he starts crying: "For many years you have been carrying these tears that are pouring down now. Dear Mother, I'm still a child! I want to carry my sorrows and run with them to your bosom. I want to close the distance so you can hold me while I cry. All of a sudden your neighbour calls out to you, to let you know your mother is still standing at the door. You open it, and fulfill your wish of crying in her arms." Darwish, *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 72.

This may be the answer to the question Darwish asks once the voice assumes the shape of his Jewish Lover. Why does he remember her "in this hell, and at this hour of the afternoon? And in this air-raid shelter of a bar … is it because a dream brought her out of my dream at dawn? I don't know, exactly as I don't know why I remember my mother, the first lesson in reading, my first girl under the pine tree, and the riddle of the shepherd's pipe that has chased me for twenty-five years. The circle returns to its starting point."[214] The dream of his mother and the Lover who transcended exile and division is disturbed by the refrain of war, "both of us kill the other behind the window," which keeps intruding into his consciousness. The public time of history has already collapsed in front of him, now the private time of his past appears to play out as one mosaic of past and present in this air-raid shelter of a bar, the circle returning to its starting point.

The pursuit of a new language forces Darwish to reevaluate his personal past, just as he does with history. The encounter with the figure of the Other makes him see himself reflected, and the impossibility of union with the Other means fragmentation of his own self, an absence of integration. Towards the end of the book, when a Beirut without electricity descends quickly into darkness, he thinks of the same refrain, "both of us kill the other behind the window", as "forgetfulness leads to another pathway."[215] A jet above him triggers the memory of his breakthrough poem, "Saǧǧil! Anā ʿarabiyy!"[216] He exclaims "Oh what a living time! Oh, what a dead time!"[217] when remembering his own voice at the age of twenty-five. "Oh, for a living time rising from a dead time!" he continues. The years have piled up since the poem first appeared in 1964. He reasons that the pilot of the jet above him could well be the son of the government employee to whom Darwish said "Write it down: I am an Arab!" This shout became his poetic identity, but it now feels foreign to Darwish. Echoing Wordsworth's expression "The Child is Father of the Man",[218] Darwish calls this identity something that "has not been satisfied with pointing to my father but chases me even now."[219]

The younger Darwish is gone, but the persona he generated, his "Father", lives on as his public image, the 'resistance poet'. The middle-aged Darwish, despite all that he has done and learned since writing his breakthrough poem, is in one sense back where he started. After ten

[214] MfF, 121f. Ḏln, 120f.
[215] MfF, 173. Ḏln, 178.
[216] See Section 4.1.
[217] MfF, 174. Ḏln, 178.
[218] Wordsworth, *Poems*, 3.
[219] MfF, 174. Ḏln, 178.

years in Beirut, Darwish now has to say the same phrase to his fellow Arabs: “I am an Arab!” as Lebanon continues its descent into violence, Arabs killing Arabs in massacre after massacre, multiplying the othering where there ought to be unity, killing each other outside their windows. Even as he does not recognise his own younger voice, the circle of personal time has closed in on him. Almost twenty years after writing this first poem, he is standing at the edge of another exile. Estranged from his past, with no future in sight, poetry remains the only means to defend his existence.

The phrase “Oh what a dead time, oh, what a living time!” can be read in multiple ways. The time of youth is dead in the sense that it has passed, he will never be young again. The memory of this time is already distant. It was alive in the sense that it was filled with love and action, hope and agency; but this living time was also full of death, as he saw many friends being killed, and the dream of liberation disappeared into the *setback* of 1967. A living time rising out of a dead time. His previous autobiographical work, *Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-ʿādī*, also begins with a dream-like sequence. In this introduction, Darwish talks to a child, who is revealed to be himself before the *nakba*.[220] After a long discussion on memory, Palestine and grief, the child asks if the grown Darwish will kill him now. He answers the child:

> When a person kills his childhood he commits suicide. And I have need of you as witness to a generation. Don’t come back often, for ugliness fills the cities, and many of my friends are dying these days.[221]

In 1982, in the ugliness of Beirut in wartime, surrounded by death, the child is further away than ever. Darwish sees his Father, the child who will produce him, as a distant memory, a voice he no longer recognises. The book began with the lines from the female voice, “you woke me up when you stirred in my belly. I knew then I was your coffin. Are you alive? Can you hear me?”[222] The belly he once stirred in is on the other side of rigid borders and war. He has no mother in Beirut whom he can embrace. The distant memory of warmth is nothing but a coffin for the child. In this sense, having killed the child inside of him, Darwish has become a walking suicide, a paradox.

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[220] Darwish, *Yawmīyāt al-ḥuzn al-ʿādī*, 27.
[221] Darwish, *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 24.
[222] MfF, 3. Ḏln, 5.

In part, this death of youth is a normal passage into middle age.[223] Directly following the above description of his Father chasing him, Darwish describes how his friends ambushed him with a fortieth birthday party.[224] A friend of his who is approaching sixty laughs and tells Darwish that he is finally no longer a youth: "All ages are equal after forty. You've now caught up with me. For twenty years I've been waiting for you on the threshold of forty, and now you've arrived. Welcome!"[225]

The transition into middle age naturally affects temporal horizons and gives *lived time* a different quality. An exploration of memory and re-evaluation of identity is to be expected. But the circumstances of exile and war disrupt what could be a regular transformation into a radical break. There is no visible future for the middle aged Darwish to settle into, no stable ground to construct this new stage of life on. In his need to form a new reality, Darwish cannot simply leave youth behind, he is forced to deconstruct it. During the Intertextual Torrent, having repeatedly raised the question of what role the intellectual has in wartime, Darwish asked traditional poetry to know how to hold its humble silence in the presence of a newborn existence, a passage from one state of being to another. "And if it becomes necessary for intellectuals to turn into snipers, then let them snipe at their old concepts, their old questions, and their old ethics. We are not now to describe, as much as we are to be described. We're being born totally, or else dying totally."[226] He no longer needs the child to return as witness to a generation, but to remain in forgetfulness, the graveyard of his old beliefs and the persona of the 'resistance poet'.

The future is notably present in its absence throughout the book. Both the past and present are discussed from multiple perspectives, but the future is mostly only hinted at as something unthinkable, a dark shadow chasing Darwish. For Husserl, the present is never independent of the past and future. Our memories contain expectations, and the present is constituted through both *retentions* of the past and *protentions* of the future, forming the temporal structure of our consciousness.[227] With an unstable past and an inaccessible future, Darwish is left in a state where his estrangement extends into both the present and recollection. Memories appear distant and strange, the movement of time absurd and inconsistent.

[223] Thank you to Samad Alavi for highlighting this aspect.
[224] MfF, 174f. Ḏln, 178.
[225] MfF, 175. Ḏln, 179.
[226] MfF, 65. Ḏln, 66.
[227] Husserl, *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins* §24, 52f.

There are hints that Darwish already knows during the siege that his future of renewed exile is inevitable. These protentions are too painful to be integrated into the present, but they can't be completely denied. During the daytime, even as he and two of his friends are protesting loudly that they won't be leaving Beirut, Darwish writes that they all know the truth. They are already moving "into the domain of memories forming within sight of us,"[228] they are becoming memories of a distant world. Towards the end of the book, Darwish surrenders to the sea, the domain of wandering, longing and exile. He describes how they[229] soon shall be going "in Noah's modern arks, on a blue that reveals an unending whiteness that shows us no shore."[230] These are his final words before he returns to sleep in the same bed where the book started, falling into the same dream, completing the cycle of the day.

7.4 Conclusion: Reconstruction of Time

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will to be arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.
> - T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"[231]

Despite the overwhelming mood of depression and crisis, this estrangement from the past, both personal and historical, offers a chance for radical renewal. As Muhawi notes in the introduction, the "moments/spasms, instants of creation when time and space collapse into each other, are also moments for the maximum release of energy."[232] The personal apocalypse that Darwish experiences open the possibility for the rebirth and resolution in his later poetry. It appears that this reconstruction of self can only occur through a strategic act of forgetfulness applied to his own past. As Muhawi notes, Darwish had made it a task to kill his Father, to liberate himself from those who conflate him with his earlier poetic identity as a resistance poet.[233] Like the figure of Christ that recurs in his poetry, he must first die in order to be reborn. The estrangement

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[228] MfF, 60. Ḏln, 61.
[229] He uses the "we" form here, including himself with a fighter he just spoke to about their leaving. As explained in section 4.1, Darwish did not think that he would have to leave when the PLO fighters were evacuated in August. He stayed in Beirut until September, but eventually had to join them.
[230] MfF, 180-1. Ḏln, 185.
[231] Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 39.
[232] Muhawi, "Introduction", xxxiv.
[233] Ibid., xxxvii.

from his old identity and his old worldview is part of the total collapse of world and sense that make possible the formation of a new language and identity.

Liberated from the old, Darwish can enter middle age reborn. As he claimed in an interview, he is the kind of poet that was not born all at once, but one that was born in stages. While there may be tragedy in such a birth, these kinds of poets have a special genius: they do not fall silent.[234] Instead of spending the latter half of his life trapped in nostalgia for the old, longing for memories and symbols of the lost homeland, he is able to rewrite his world and identity. As the raw expulsion from Beirut stabilised into an *ordered disorder* in France, he emerged from renewed exile as a poet with a new voice, full of creativity and depth.

In time as it *should be*, in the words of Vigh, time has both linear and cyclical elements. Everyday routines give us comfort, granting structure and meaning to our everyday reality. These patterns form an underlying rhythm in our lives, a stable pattern that grants us safety and familiarity. On a larger scale, life is a linear movement from birth to death. If we are lucky, we are able to plan for our future and work towards long-term goals during our lifetime. Both the cyclical and the linear times are disrupted in exile. The everyday cycle requires reconstruction and renewal in alien places, long-term planning is subject to the whims of governments and geopolitical developments.

These disruptions find an extreme point in *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, where the absurdity of war forms an existential break between two states of exile. Darwish had fallen in love with the city of his self-imposed exile, Beirut. In this city, he had structured a *lived time* for himself. On a smaller, cyclical scale, he had an everyday routine that gave him a sense of belonging and safety. Long-term, he was writing books, editing his own journal and working with the PLO. This had all broken down under the new war, and nothing but renewed exile seemed to be waiting for him. When the reader meets him in *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, even making a cup of coffee is done on borrowed time, under the constant threat of immolation. As his perspective broadens from basic everyday acts, Darwish sees chaotic images of private and public past, both of which have lost their structure. Before him lies a horizon of total estrangement, even from his own identity. Ultimately, the destruction of his old reality enables the prospect of renewal and reintegration through a reconstruction of language. These are the extreme modalities of exile that find expression in the complex narrative of *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*.

[234] Darwish, “Ḥiwār maʿa al-šāʿir Maḥmūd Darwīš”, 64f.

8. Chapter 2: Lived body

> Ah, misery! I have no home among men or with the shades, no home with the living or with the dead.
> - Antigone to the chorus of Theban elders[235]

This chapter expands on the last section by comparing the experiences of the lived body in *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* to other works by Darwish. The borders between text, body and world have never been solid in his writing. In his 1966 poem "ʿĀšiq min Filasṭīn" ("A Lover from Palestine"),[236] Darwish addresses the homeland as the beloved but lost female Other.[237] Like the *phantasma* in *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, Palestine appears as both Lover and Mother in this poem. As Milich observes, by repeatedly *naming* her "Palestinian", Darwish is assuming the power discussed in section 7.2, that of creation through words.[238] This beloved Other is an extension of his own self, and by naming her he is simultaneously defending his own existence. In this union, the Other is inscribed on the body of the poet.[239] The eyes of the feminised Palestine are a thorn which Darwish sheathes in his flesh to protect it from agony.[240] She is not only a lost Garden of Eden, a Mother and a Lover, she is also "the other lung in my chest".[241] *Lived space* and *lived body* are intimately connected, estrangement in the former leaves wounds in the latter.

For Merleau-Ponty, our mind is not separate from our body; we are embodied subjects. As discussed in section 2.1, our *lived bodies* are not merely biological machines navigating a surrounding world. Our bodies are enveloped in the world, entangled in it, what Merleau-Ponty calls *l'entrelacs* (the interweaving).[242] Just like two organs in one body work together to form a

[235] Sophocles, *Antigone*, 850f. Translation by Sir Richard C. Jebb. Antigone calls herself a μέτοικος, a foreigner, to both mortal men and the deceased. The word μέτοικος also referred to the *Metics*, those of foreign heritage who lived in classical Athens without citizenship and thus without access to the political scene of the *polis*. They required a citizen sponsor to live there and did not have the same legal rights as citizens. In this sense, they were a form of *present absentees*.
[236] From the collection with the same name, reproduced in Darwish. *Al-aʿmāl al-šiʿrīya al-kāmila*, 1:81-8.
[237] The poem is modelled after the classical *qaṣīda*, moving from a passionate *nasīb* to a *raḥīl* describing the pain of disengagement and separation, finally resolved in a *faḫr* of praise.
[238] Milich, *Fremd meinem Namen und fremd meiner Zeit*, 61. See also section 6.2.
[239] Ibid., 57ff. "Palästina auf den Körper geschrieben."
[240] Darwish. *Al-aʿmāl al-šiʿrīya al-kāmila*, 1:81.
[241] Ibid., 1:84. "wa-anti -r-riʾatu -l-uḫrā bi-ṣadrī"
[242] Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l'invisible*, 176f.

unity,[243] organisms are interwoven with other organisms in the tissue of the world.[244] The self and the Other are reflected in each other, they cross over. The intersubjectivity of Husserl is replaced by an *intercorporeality* in Merleau-Ponty.[245]

This crossing over is, however, never complete. Two organs cannot occupy the same space, and two *lived bodies* can likewise never fully merge. There remains a gap (*écart*).[246] It keeps us from ever achieving a total unity with the surrounding world and its subjects, but it is also what enables meeting the Other. Just like the gaps and spaces in writing contain the potential for meaning, so does the gap between bodies allow us to meet and explore the Other as an extension of, but never identical to, our own selves.

In this sense, to be at home means to experience an organic unity with the surrounding world, although with a gap remaining that enables the self to be constituted and the Other to be explored. The *lived body* is interwoven with the *lived bodies* of others in a shared reality. The Other appears to consciousness not as a Stranger, but as necessary for the constitution of the own self. The surrounding world is the other lung in the chest, an integrated part of the body.

Exile is the opposite. The *lifeworld* of the stranger is jagged, tense and dangerous. The self in exile is continuously constituted in a *lived space* of shifting, unpredictable terrains, where the gap between self, world and others widens into dislocation. Estrangement makes connection to the Other difficult or impossible. This renders the lived body discontinuous, fragmented; mutilated.

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[243] Husserl often writes of a *Verflechtung* between different levels of lived reality, e.g. between *Leib* and *Geist*. It is this term that Merleau-Ponty develops into *l'entrelacs* in his latter works. He often returns to an observation by Husserl: We can look at our right hand and perceive it as a body in space (*Körper*), a mere piece of matter. But when our left hand touches the right hand, the latter becomes more than just an object. The right hand feels the left hand, the perceived object begins to perceive, the passive object becomes active. In Husserl's words: "es wird *Leib*, es empfindet" (Husserl, *Ideen II* §36, 145). Merleau-Ponty writes "je me touche touchant, mon corps accomplit « une sorte de réflexion »" (*Signes*, 210), here in the original Latin sense of *re-flexiō*, of turning back (towards itself). It is this crossing over/returning relationship that he generalises to the whole of the perceived world in his later works.

[244] Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l'invisible*, 188.

[245] The full argument is too long to be explored here, but an interesting detail is that Merleau-Ponty likens this "crossing-over" to the act of visual perception, where two eyes together form one unified experience of vision. The optic nerves cross each other in a *chiasm*. The rhetorical figure is compared to the crossing and reversal that occurs when two limbs are interwoven, two eyes form composite perception, just as the subject is embedded in the *chair* ("flesh") of the world. *L'entrelacs* is a *chiastic* form of being. An expansion of this understanding of *chiasm* could explore the chiastic structures of opposites (overlapping paradoxes) frequent in the works of Darwish.

[246] Fredlund, "När tanken tar kropp", 26.

The poem “Taḍīqu bi-nā al-arḍu” by Darwish was written in the same period as *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*.[247] The first word of the poem and its title, the verb *taḍīq* (*ḍāqa*), can mean to become too narrow, to cramp and confine; it can also mean to be anguished, depressed or weary.[248] The verbal root communicates tightening, of earth, flesh or mind. The characterisation of the feminised Earth in “ʿĀšiq min Filasṭīn” has been reversed. Rather than a nurturing mother or a lost lover, the Earth appears sinister and claustrophobic:

> The earth is closing in on us. She pushes us through the final passage, we tear off our limbs so that we may pass.
> The earth squeezes us. I wish we were her wheat so that we could die and then live. I wish she were our mother
> So that our mother could have mercy on us.[249]

A mother would give us life. The passage through her would be one of becoming, of childbirth. The Earth of exile, by contrast, pushes us out as less than we were. Mutilated, our *lived bodies* emerge from displacement with limbs torn off, unable to navigate the new, strange place within which we find ourselves. This Earth is not one that can easily be reclaimed and integrated into the self. This is the Earth of the exile in flight and wartime. Within this context, it is not surprising that the greatest fear of Darwish in *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, as discussed in section 7.1, is to die disfigured under rubble. This nightmare image keeps intruding into his consciousness, driving him out into the open streets. In this claustrophobic nightmare, *lived space* and *lived time* closes in on a dying man, mutilated and unable to move. Like a modern-day Antigone, he would be trapped alive in his grave, a foreigner to both the living and the dead, while the beloved deceased lie rotting in the world of the living. This extreme reversal of life and death as they *should be* is a state that Darwish, an exile in a time of war, can easily picture. The poem ends:

> We will write our names in steam
> coloured scarlet, we will cut off the hand of the song to finish it with our flesh.
> Here we shall die. Here in the final passage. Here or here its olive tree shall be planted…
> by our blood.[250]

[247] From his 1986 collection *Wardun aqall*, reproduced in *Al-Aʿmāl al-šiʿrīya al-kāmila*, 2:247f.
[248] Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 641.
[249] Darwish, *Al-Aʿmāl al-šiʿrīya al-kāmila*, 2:247. My translation, informed by the translation into Swedish by Marina Stagh in Darwish, *Färre rosor!*, 15. “taḍīqu bi-nā al-arḍu. taḥšurunā fī -l-mamarri -l-aḫīri, fa-naḫlaʿu aʿḍāʾanā kay namurra / wa-taʿṣurunā -l-arḍu. yā laytanā qamḥuhā kay namūta wa naḥyā. wa-yā laytahā ummunā / li-tarḥamanā ummunā”
[250] Darwish, *Al-Aʿmāl al-šiʿrīya al-kāmila*, 2:247f. My translation, informed by the translation into Swedish by Marina Stagh in Darwish, *Färre rosor!*, 15. “sa-naktubu asmāʾnā bi-l-buḫāri / al-mulawwini bi-l-

Rather than a thorn to be kept for safekeeping in the wound of the *lived body*, a song which rests on the lips of a lover, the Earth in this poem is one that dismembers the body so that its song may be completed. In *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān*, the theme of torn bodies appears when Darwish discusses the children of the Palestinian refugee camps, the youth born into exile, who fight and die for a homeland they have never seen:

> "You are not from here," they are told there.
> And "You are not from here," they are told here.
>
> And between 'here' and 'there' they stretched their bodies like a tightening bow until Death took this form of celebration in them.[251]

The imagery of a tightening bow (*qaws*) brings to mind an earlier poem by Darwish, "ʿĀzif al-ǧītār al-mutaǧawwil" ("The Wandering Guitar Player"). The reader is told of a former poet who slowly approaches, a guitar player who once was a soldier until shrapnel crushed his knee. Only at the end of the long, creeping poem are we told what kind of music he brings:

> The guitar player is coming.
> And I almost saw him.
> And I smell the blood on his strings.
> And I almost saw him.
> Walking on every street.
> I almost heard him.
> Shouting with the fullness of a storm:
> Look!
> That is a wooden leg
> And listen!
> That is the music of human flesh[252]

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qurmuzīyi sa-naqṭaʿu kaffa -l-našīdi li-yukmilahu laḥmunā / hunā sanamūtu. hunā fī -l-mamarri -l-aḫīri. hunā aw hunā sawfa yaġrisu zaytūnahu / damunā." The passive form 'be planted' is used here despite the active Arabic verb in order to preserve the word order, to give 'blood' its own line as in the original.

[251] Ḏln, 15. My translation. "lastum min hunā - qīl lahum hunāk / wa-lastum min hunā - qīl lahum hunā / wa bayn "hunā" wa "hunāk" šaddū aǧsādahum qawsan yatawattar, ḥaṭā ittaḫaḏ al-mawt fīhim hāḏihi al-ṣīġa al-iḥtifālīya." *Qaws* may mean a musical bow or a weapon and *watar*, form I of the root of *yatawattar*, means 'to string' as you would a bow. The derived form *yatawattar* carries the transferred meaning of being taut, stretched, strained, also emotionally. Darwish described his own writing in this book as *mutawattir*, tense, strained or nervous. The bow here could be translated as tightening, taut, nervous or even vibrating, as Muhawi translates it (MfF, 13). The multiple meanings are very difficult to capture in English. Muhawi also translates the final part as "until death celebrated itself through them" (ibid.), omitting the words for "taking form". I find his translation more elegant as English prose, but its divergence from the original Arabic obscures some of its ambiguity and imagery.

[252] Darwish, *Al-aʿmāl al-šiʿrīya al-kāmila*, 1:424f. My translation: "ʿāzifu -l-ǧītāri yaʾtī / wa-anā kidtu arāhu / wa-ašammu -l-dama fī awtārihi / wa-ana kidtu arāhu / sāʾiran fī kulli šāriʿin / kidtu an asmaʿahu / ṣāriḫan malʾa al-zawābiʿi / ḥaddaqū: / tilka riǧlun ḫašabīyatun / wa-smaʿū: / tilka mūsīqā -l-luḥūmi -l-bašrīyati"

These youth, walking on every street of Lebanon, their flesh stretched from the camps of the south to Sabra and Shatila and beyond, never had the option to live in a harmonious space and time. Their bodies had been objectified and instrumentalised into raw material for the machinery of war, their limbs performing the music of human flesh. As mentioned in section 7.1, Darwish claims that these youth learned the history of Palestine as a form of cosmic accident, but "they also read a great deal in the books of their bodies and their shacks. They read their segregation, and the Arab-nationalist speeches. They read the publications of UNRWA, and the whips of the police."[253]

In the meeting point between discourse, body and world, the language of whips writes scars across bodies, teaching lessons in alterity that words fail to express. A child of the camp is an Other to his Arab neighbours just as much as he is an Other to the Israeli forces. The Palestinian Other is treated as a disease that has penetrated its neighbouring country,[254] a foreign organism lodged in the body of Lebanon, but he is paradoxically also an uplifting symbol in the great speeches of Arab leaders. He must remain an outcast and applaud his own oppression to maintain his function as a symbol of the Arab nationalist cause:

> He has to catch tuberculosis not to forget he has lungs, and he must sleep in open country not to forget he has another sky. He has to work as a servant not to forget he has a national duty, and he must be denied the privilege of settling down so that he won't forget Palestine. In short, he must remain the Other to his Arab brothers because he is pledged to liberation.[255]

As the language of revolution gives way to the stark reality of war, the living human becomes a *qaḍīya*, to paraphrase Ghassan Kanafani.[256] Their lives and intentionality are subsumed into the cause. Their bodies are no longer *lived* - they are instruments for the struggle, mere *Körper*,[257]

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[253] MfF, 14. Ḏln, 16.
[254] MfF, 15f. Ḏln, 17.
[255] MfF, 16. Ḏln, 18.
[256] Kanafani, *ʿĀʾid ilā Ḥaifā*, 65. A *qaḍīya* can mean a problem, an issue or a legal case in Arabic, but also a *cause*. *Al-qaḍīya al-filasṭīnīya* is either the Palestinian problem or the Palestinian cause (Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 904). In this short story by Kanafani, a young Israeli man meets his biological parents for the first time after the 1967 war. It is revealed that they were Arabs who fled Haifa during the *nakba* and lost their child. In the ensuing identity crisis, the young who has just joined the Israeli army says that his biological heritage does not matter. Ultimately, a man is not his parents, but his *qaḍīya*. The ambiguity of the Arabic term is explored in the story, without reaching a conclusion.
[257] See section 2.1 for the discussion on *Leib* and *Körper*.

dead matter. A soldier in war is a component, a resource, a number. The body of a soldier needs to conform to the discourse of war, spoken in bullet wounds and shrapnel. The song of Palestine fades into the horrifying musicality of torn flesh. Since Palestine was a crucial symbol for the Arab nationalist leaders of surrounding countries, they required actual Palestinians to remain in their exile, for their conflict and suffering to never end. Were their scars to heal, their bodies would no longer be useful for Nasserists or Ba'athists as a source of legitimacy. "Fine, fine." Darwish writes. "He knows his duty: *my identity - my gun*."[258]

Refusing this bleak logic of war, Darwish moves between extremes in the relationship between body, text and world in a frantic search for a new identity and a liveable space, a way to be more than a weapon or a cause. He is fighting for his right to be human. Section 7.2 discussed a breaking point in the narrative where Darwish writes that he has turned into words. In the patriotic fervour that follows, he writes the following, worth quoting in full:

> Meanwhile, the occupied sky, sea and pine mountains keep on shelling original fears and the saga of Adam's exit from Paradise, repeated in endless sagas of exodus. I no longer have a country: I no longer have a body. The shelling continues to shatter the songs of praise and the dialogue of death, stirring in the blood like a light consuming inane questions.
>
> What am I searching for? A fullness of gunpowder and an indigestion of the soul's anger. The rockets penetrate my pores and come out safe. How powerful they are! As long as I'm breathing hell and sweating out an inferno, I no longer feel the Gehenna meted out by the air. Yet I want to break into song. Yes, I want to sing to this burning day. I do want to sing. I want to find a language that transforms language itself into steel for the spirit - a language to use against these sparkling silver insects, these jets. I want to sing. I want a language that I can lean on and that can lean on me, that asks me to bear witness and that I can ask to bear witness, to what power there is in us to overcome this cosmic isolation.
>
> And I walk on.[259]

Full of contradictions, this central passage sees the *lived body* searching in every direction for some way out of the madness of war, the cosmic isolation of total estrangement. It needs a song that can overcome the music of human flesh, a song that he can lean on. He denies having a body, claiming that he is only words, in order to escape the endless sagas of exodus. He then immediately assumes the form of a messianic figure breathing hell and sweating inferno, one that missiles pass straight through. Between these extremes, the actual body of the man walks on. As

[258] MfF, 16. Ḏln, 18.
[259] MfF, 51f. Ḏln, 52.

discussed in the last chapter, his singing will soon give way to silence, his patriotic fervour to an inner battle against his old language and ideas. But the body keeps moving. By the end of the afternoon, in the air-raid shelter of a bar, the *lived body* finally encounters a memory, born out of a dream, a small spark in the darkness of war. He remembers when he and his Lover wrestled a "truce of bodies"[260] from the narrative of division and fear in Haifa. This is the one space which contains a final hope for the tightening bow of the *lived body*, torn to shreds by exile and estrangement, with death waiting to celebrate through it. He can refuse the logic of war by inviting the Other in, by seeing the stranger in his own self, by letting them intertwine, an *entrelacs* in the tissue of the world. The one thing he needs to do to keep this hope alive is to obey the *phantasma* of his dream. He needs to keep breathing, even if his other lung is missing.

> And here, I didn't die. Here, I haven't died yet.[261]

This refrain is repeated towards the end of the book. This is all that his beloved Beirut has become, the place where he did not die; but he has met the challenge of his dream, he has managed to keep breathing. Time has collapsed into a mosaic of fragments in front of him, past and present, personal and public in a jumble. Space is a constricting passage between war-torn Beirut, already fading into forgetfulness, and the white nothingness in front of him. But the body, dislodged and isolated in this total estrangement, still breathes. The promise of rebirth, of constructing a new language where the Other can be met and integrated, is alive as long as the body is. From this existential 'ground zero', Darwish begins the work of building a new world. The refusal of forgetfulness is not memory in the passive sense of remembering the old, but rather active memory in the form of writing: the creation of memory, of writing the world and self into existence. His feverish urge to sing transforms into the determination to build. His new poetry is not *ġināʾ*, it is *bināʾ*.[262] The process begun in this novel enables the future writing of Darwish, in works such as *Ǧidārīya* where he chooses life over the exile of death and finds his way back into the body through language. It enables *Fī ḥaḍrat al-ġiyāb* where he prepares to leave the body for this final exile, by finding a negation of exile in writing.[263] By constructing a

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[260] Darwish, "The One Who Imposes His Story Inherits the Earth of the Story", 7. This exact phrase, from the interview discussed in section 6.2, does not appear in Ḏln, but refers to the same Lover.
[261] MfF, 179. Ḏln, 183.
[262] Ruocco, "L'écriture comme déplacement: Ra'aytu Rāmallāh de Murīd al-Barġūṯī", 1209.
[263] Darwish, *Fī ḥaḍrat al-ġiyāb*, 92f.

world where time and space are once again inhabitable, he gains surroundings into which the mutilated *lived body* of exile can be interwoven, a tissue into which the strange Other can be invited and integrated, a nourishing unity that can negate the fragmentation and estrangement of displacement.

The language of this world, like his identity, grows from the rubble of Beirut, the ruins of a world that has just ended. Within these cracks and craters in city, language and body, Darwish finds spaces where he can return to the first poem and speak as if no one has spoken before, in a language that speaks itself for the first time. This radical first language is only possible by refusing the logic of war and making a different choice than Antigone. It requires the difficult decision to keep breathing.

And he walks on.

9. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to enter *Ḏākira li-l-nisyān* in order to emerge with a thick description of the observed phenomena, to capture, through a committed interpretative process, some of the lived experience that formed the work. The book reveals a man navigating an unstable time, a war between two periods of exile. As reality disintegrates with the city around him, time appears both linear and circular simultaneously, a paradoxical state in which both the past and the future are fragmented and nearing collapse. While disorienting and painful, this unstable time ultimately offers rebirth, an opportunity to rewrite the world and his self. The own body during war is threatened not only by physical damage, but also by the existential wounds of dislocation and estrangement. The rift of exile extends from space into *lived* time and body. Within this tissue there is, however, still hope for reintegration, through meeting the Other and inviting them into the self.

The result of this exploration is a rich thematic text that offers new insights into both the exile experience and the writing of Mahmoud Darwish. Extending these insights opens new dimensions in his later works such as *Ǧidārīya*. It unites the conclusions of Månsson, that the later writing of Darwish is an attempt to exit the liminal state of exile through language, and Milich, who sees an opportunity to meet the Other as a central theme in the poetry of Darwish. Through this synthesis, this thesis serves as a small part of the larger conversation about Mahmoud Darwish as one of the most sophisticated authors on exile in world literature.

Ultimately, this exploration can help inform future research on exile, in the works of Darwish, in world literature or even in the social sciences.

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