

## The Palestinian City between the Real, the Imaginary, the Static and the Changing in Hanna Abu Hanna's Poetry

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### Abstract

The image of the Place and its aesthetics is considered to be one of the common images in Arabic classical and modern poetry. This study aims to highlight the element of Place in the poetry of the Palestinian poet, Hanna Abu Hanna, with a specific focus on the Palestinian city. The reason behind the choice of this poet is that Abu Hanna's poetry represents a true experience with the Place on which he has focused on his movement from one Palestinian city to the other. In the course of reading Abu Hanna's poetry, the reader can perceive that the place is dealt with as one of the fundamental pillars of the poem. Artistically, the Place functions as a threshold to the text, a title, or a note that comes at the end of the poem or a postscript that illuminates the poem and its contents. Sometimes, the Place plays the role of a character and this is what the study tries to discover.

**Keywords:** Place, poetry, Palestinian city, images, movement.

### 1. Introduction:

Who is Hanna Abu Hanna? Hanna Abu Hanna is a writer, a poet, a researcher and an educator, who belongs to the first generation of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel and one of the poets of resistance. He was born in 1928 in al-Rina village in Nazareth District and moved from one place to the other as result of his father's work at Palestine Ordnance Survey Board in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Jifna, Ashdod, Najd Village, Haifa, Nazareth and al-Riena. In his childhood, Hanna studied at al-Kuttab School in Asdod village, which was destroyed during the Nakba (1948 War) and was replaced by the city of Ashdod that was established after the establishment of the State of Israel. The family then returned to al-Rina where he enrolled in the Latin Community School for Boys in Haifa but his stay in Haifa was not long as he moved with his family to Nazareth, where he took continued his studies at the Government School in Nazareth. According to Irfan Abu Hamad, Hanna, despite his young age, was among the pupils who participated in the protest demonstrations that took place during the events of the 1936 revolution.<sup>2</sup> After he completed his high school studies, Hanna Abu Hanna was selected to continue his studies at the Arab College in Jerusalem, which received the excellent students from the Governmental Schools of Palestine. He spent four years there (1943-1947) and passed both the Palestine Matriculation and the Intermediate exams and obtained his teaching diploma. On his graduation, he began to compose poetry and publish his poetry and prose in the magazines of Jerusalem, Haifa and Beirut. After he graduated from the Arab College, he was awarded a scholarship to continue his studies in Britain beginning in 1947 but his family circumstances and the outbreak of the war and the Nakba events prevented him from continuing his studies in Britain. When Nazareth fell to the Zionist militias in 1948 and became part of Israel, his travel to Britain was no longer possible and instead, he continued to teach at the Nazareth Secondary School. In the same year, Hanna was among the founders of the Union of Democratic Youth in Nazareth, which soon joined with the Union of Communist Youth once the Arab communists in the National Liberation League in Palestine joined the Israel Communist Party in October 1948.

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Because of his intensive political activity, the Israeli authorities arbitrarily dismissed Hanna from teaching at Nazareth Secondary School. The cause was that the army "has surrounded the eastern quarter in Nazareth, got the people out of their homes, gathered them near the Jabieh and started counting the "infiltrators" the residents of the quarter who have returned home, in order to kick them out of the country."<sup>3</sup>Hanna and his colleagues went out on a demonstration to protest against the army's intentions. Hanna was then the deputy of the principal and he and other colleagues were invited to the military governor, who told them that the demonstrations would not pass unpunished. His punishment was that he was dismissed from teaching. As a result, Hanna decided to continue his political activities within the Communist Party.

In 1950, he returned to Haifa and lived in Kesaria Street (Qesāriā), where he worked as a member of al-Ittihad Editing Board with Tawfiq Toubi (Tawfiq Tūbī 1922-2011), Emile Habibi (Emil Habībī 1921-1996), Emile Touma (Emil Tūmā 1919-1985), Saliba Khamis (Salībā Khamīs 1920-1994), Mohammad Khass (Muḥammad Khāṣṣ), Ali Ashour (Alī Ashūr), Jabra Nicola (Jabrā Nqūlā 1906-1974). He took part in establishing al-Ghadd Magazine and al-Jadīd Magazine, which was published in 1951 as a Supplement to al-Ittihad Newspaper and then it got license and continued to be published after 1953 till today. In 1957, Abu Hanna participated in the World Festival of Youth held in Moscow and then attended the World Federation of Democratic Youth held in Kiev. In May 1958, Abu Hanna was administratively detained and put in prison. In 1959, he returned to teaching at the Orthodox Arab College in Haifa and taught Arabic language and literature. In 1974, Abu Hanna was appointed headmaster of the Orthodox Arab College in Haifa till he retired in 1987. He also worked as a lecturer at the University of Haifa (1973-1993) and at the Arab College for Teacher Training (1987-1995). Hanna also worked as a Counsellor for the Committee of Teaching Programs at the Ministry of Education that approved of the Teaching Program of the Arabic Language. It is worthwhile mentioning here that he and the other members of the Committee of the Teaching Programs managed to introduce the Palestinian Literature to the Curriculum. In 1990-1993, Abu Hanna was the manager of Galilee Center for Social Research and in 1993, he established the cultural magazine Mawāqif.

Hanna Abu Hanna won several awards and prizes including: al-Quds Medal for Poetic Creativity (1991), from the Palestine Liberation Movement (PLO); the Creativity Award from the Ministry of Sciences and Arts in 1995; Palestine Prize for Autobiography (1998) for his book *Dhill al-Ghayma* (The Shadow of the Cloud). In (1999), he won the Award for Creativity from the Municipality of Haifa for Autobiography writing. In 2005, a commemorative festschrift volume was published in his honor. The book *Olive Tree of Galilee*, edited by Butrus Abu Manneh and Johnny Mansour. The book consists of a number of studies and essays that are dedicated to Abu Hanna and written by well-known writers. The title of book is called 'Olive Tree of Galilee', a nickname that was given to Abu Hanna to indicate his attachment to the Galilee and Palestine.<sup>4</sup> Abu Hanna also won Mahmoud Darwish Prize for Freedom and Creativity (2013) and the Prize of Jerusalem, Permanent Capital of Arab Culture (2015).

From the literary perspective, Hanna Abu Hanna excelled in different genres of literature: poetry, prose, fiction, and autobiography. His works in poetry include: *Nidā' al-Jirāh* (1969); *Qaṣṣā' id min Ḥadīqat al-Ṣabr* (1988); *Tajarra 'tu Summaki Hatta al-Manā'a* (1990); *Arrāf al-Carmel* (2005). His prose works in literary and cultural studies include: *'Ālam al-Qiṣṣa al-Qaṣṣira* (1979); *Riwāyat Mifleḥ al-Ghassānī* (1984); *Rūḥī 'Ala Rāḥati: Diwān Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd* (1985); *Dār al-Mu'allimīn al-Rūsiyya fī al-Nāṣira* (1994); *Riḥlat al-Baḥth 'an al-Turāth* (1994); *al-'Adab al-Malḥamiyy* (1983); *Dīwān al-Shi'r al-Falastīniyy* (1991); *Thalāth al-Shu'arā': Ibrāhīm Tūqān, Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd, Abd al-Karīm al-Karmi – Abu Salma* (1995); *Mudhakkarāt Najāti Sidqī* (2001); *Talā'ī' al-Nahḍati Falastīn (Graduates of the Russian Schools) 1862-1914* (2005).

In the field of Translation, he has two works: *Alwān min al-Shi'r al-Rūmāniyy* (1955); *Layālī Ḥuzayrān* (1951). In the field of Children's Literature, he has several works that are written in poetry or in prose. In the field of autobiography, he wrote his own biography in three parts: *Dhill al-Ghayma* (1997), *Khamīrat al-Ramād* (2004), *Mahr al-Būma* (2004).

<sup>3</sup> For more information about Hanna's early engagement in politics in 1946 in Jerusalem and teaching in Nazareth in 1947-1948 and the demonstrations he and his colleagues started from the secondary school, which led to his dismissal from school, see his diaries, *Focus on 1948-1998: A Tale of Two Peoples* published in Palestine Israel Journal Online: Vol. 5, N0 2, 1998 p, 1-5.

<sup>4</sup> See: Abu Manneh, Butrus & Mansour, Johnny (eds.) (2005) *Olive Tree of Galilee: Essays and Researches Introduced to the Writer and Poet Hanna Abu Hanna*. Maktabat Kul Shai'. Haifa.

The critics and researchers who dealt with Abu Hanna's works are in agreement that he is one of the people who documented the Palestinian heritage and all his literary works can be considered significant sources for researchers and historians of the history of the Palestinian people and culture. It is impossible to observe the cultural and educational movement in Palestine without talking about the roots and originality that his creative career constitutes. Abu Hanna's accompaniment to the Palestinian people in their catastrophe and he "diligently followed documenting the details of the details of the cultural journey in its cracks and hardships...in extreme pointed accuracy that aspires to the horizons of freedom and pride in one's identity"<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. The Palestinian City in Hanna Abu Hanna's Poetry

Many poets have endeavored to show the social dimension of Place by focusing on social values, relations and traditions that prevail in their society rather than spaces and empty lots and treated the place they are living in as a regenerated living creature that constitutes a reflection of a dynamic living continuity. The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish paid Abu Hanna this tribute: "Hanna Abu Hanna taught us how a poem reflected its soil. The new thing that Hanna Abu Hanna gave us is what I can metaphorically call the earthliness and ordinary daily life of the poem...when Abu Hanna came and turned the daily events, daily concerns, and daily news into poems, he gave us awareness of the earthly nature and its earthliness"<sup>6</sup>.

No doubt that a first reading of Hanna Abu Hanna's poetry is likely to show the degree of the presence of Place in general and the Palestinian Place/ City in particular, which makes the reader follow the places of his residence, his movements between Haifa, Jerusalem and Nazareth, and the reflections of these cities on him and their position in his heart, thought, poetry and prose. A more attentive and intensive reading to Hanna Abu Hanna's poetry enables the reader to follow the levels of the presence of the City in his works and classify them in the following way:

### 2.1 The Inspiring City: Threshold, Title and Postscript



<sup>5</sup> Abu Jaber-Baransi, Rima (2011). Hanna Abu Hanna a Writer and a Poet: the Most Important Themes and Techniques – *Dhill al-Ghaymaswa Qaṣā'id min Ḥadīqat al-Ṣabr* as a Sample. In: *Mawsū'at Abbāthwa Dirāsāt fī al-Adab al-Falastīniyy al-Ḥadīth – al-Adab al-Maḥallīyy*, pp 119-147. For more information about Abu Hanna's life and career, see also: Abdul Hādī, Mahdī (ed.) (2006). *Palestinian Personalities: A Biographic Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition; Raḍwān, Amal (2009). Hanna Abu Hanna... Warda Nāmiya bi Ṣamṭin Majrūh. On: Website of Mu'assasat al-Nūr li al-Thaqāfawa al-'Ilam. Retrieved on: 06/01/2009. From: <http://www.alnoor.se/article.asp?id=38235>, p. 3. ; Lūbāni, Hussein 'Ali (2012). *Mu'jam A'lām Falastīn fī al-'Ulūmwa al-Funūnwa al-Adab*. Tamari, Salīm, Fakhr al-Dīn, Munīr & Abd al-Ḥamīd, Muhannad (2016). Hanna Abu Hanna: Riḥlat al-Adabwa al-Siyāsawa al-Muqāwama in: *Majallat al-Dirāsāt al-Falastīniyya*, Issue, 105, (Fall, 2016). Pp. 92-109; Hanna Abu Hanna: On: Palestinian Journeys Online: <https://www.paljourneys.org/en/biography/14214/hanna-abu-hanna>, which gives a detailed account about Abu Hanna's career.

<sup>6</sup> Sa'ādeh, Taghrīd (2016). Hanna Abu Hanna Mu'allema Ruwwād al-Shī'r al-Falastīniyy Maḥmūd Darwish: Minhu Ta'allamna Turābiyyat al-Qaṣṣīda. *Majallat Nizwa Online*, Retrieved on 17.08.2016: <http://www.nizwa.com>.; Ṭāha, Ibrāhīm (1995). *Al-Bu'd al-Akbar fī al-Adab al-Falastīniyy al-Maḥallīyy*, p. 45. Nazareth.

Generally speaking, Hanna Abu Hanna documents Place in his poems by mentioning it in the title, after the title, or at the end of the poem.

### 2.1.1. The Title of the Text:

Mentioning the name of the city in the title is relatively little in Abu Hanna's poems. For example, we find al-Ramleh in "Sijn al-Ramleh", and "al-Quds" in some poems in his collection of *Qaṣṣā'id min Ḥadīqat al-Ṣabr*; and "Wādī al-Ṣalīb" in his collection of 'Arrāf al-Carmel. Wādī al-Ṣalīb is a name of a Palestinian neighborhood in Haifa, whose residents were evacuated from in 1948, and all the landmarks of the Palestinian Arab life were obliterated and thus, it turned into the most neglected neighborhood in the city of Haifa.

### 2.1.2 The Threshold of the Text

Hanna Abu Hanna often resorts to the technique of the "threshold" which is reflected in adding a note after the title of the poem, where he mentions the place of reciting the poem, the cause of its writing or the place of its writing. It seems that by such notes, he wants to emphasize that the poem that he is about to read is mainly a place poem. For example, below the title of the poem: "Ṭifl min Sha'bi", he writes: "Dedicated to the child and his friend, who helped each other; one of them lifted the other in order to look at methrough the window of my room in the prison; he struggled with the darkness inside till he saw me and greeted me; then he threw these words into the room: "Don't be afraid of them...be brave".<sup>7</sup> By this additional information, Hanna Abu Hanna refers us to the place and thus, he takes us with him into his prison-room, without hiding the name of the city. For example, at the end of the poem "Sha'bunAnā", he adds the following postscript: "On April 29<sup>th</sup> – the first day of my arrest at the Police Station in Nazareth in an isolation room."<sup>8</sup> After the title of his poem "YāYuṣra" in his collection of poem *Tajarra'tuSummakiḤatta al-Manā'a*, Abu Hanna adds the following popular song:

طيري وهدي - يا ورة  
ع شطوط غزة - يا ورة  
قصوا جناحك - يا ورة  
على عرق التينة - يا ورة  
خلوك حزينة - يا ورة  
Fly and land - O goose  
On Gaza shores - O goose  
They cut your wing - O goose  
At the fig-tree root - O goose  
And made you sad - O goose!<sup>9</sup>

Though the poem does not mention the name of the city but the popular song, which is chosen to be a threshold for the text, it makes Gaza the scene of the events and pushes the reader to dig into his memory and look for Yuṣra, that little girl who was martyred in Gaza, and to whom that song was written. The popular song carries a message that is full of meanings of pain, sorrow and loss. Her eye was assassinated and the event added more grief to the daily repeated anguish that has become prosaic. Abu Hanna sings children's songs and poems. If the poet did not give us that song in which Gaza is mentioned, the reader would deal with Yuṣra as a "state" or an "event" rather than a human being. However, through this revelation, the reader is led to follow the attributes of the place as a part of the event that inspired the poet to write this poem.

### 2.1.3 The Postscripts (al-Tawāqī')

al-Tawāqī' is a term that refers to the postscript or addendum that the poet adds at the end of the poem. The information is related to the occasion or place of reading the poem or references that help the reader to understand the poem.

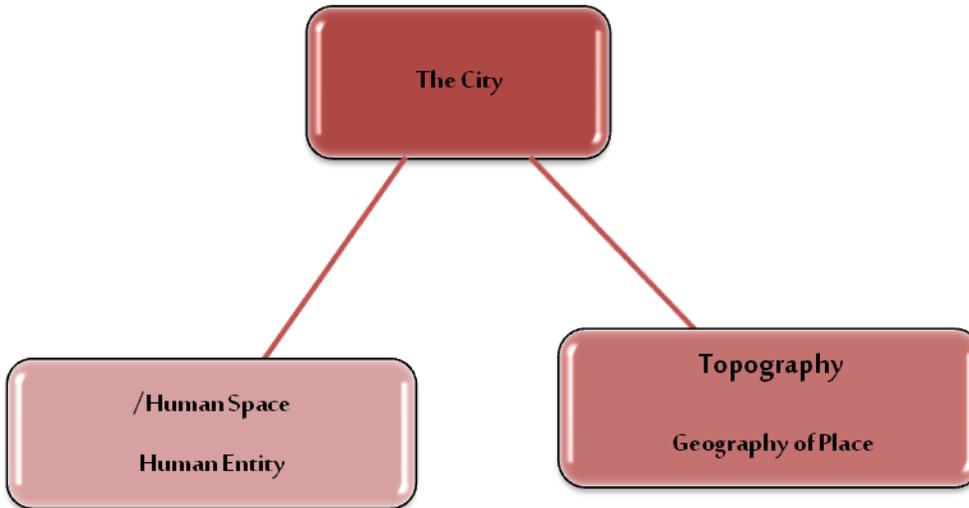
<sup>7</sup> Abu Hanna, Hanna (2008). *Al-A' māl al-Shi' riyya al-Kāmela*. Mu' assasat l-Mawākeeb, *MajallatMawāqif*, p. 391. Nazareth.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 402.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

For example, Abu Hanna mentions at the end of the poem “ḤikāyatQarya” in his collection Nidā’ al-Jirāḥ that it was read at the Third Poetry Festival that was held in KufrYāsifat the end of the 1960s<sup>10</sup>. There are many examples of such references in Ahu Hanna's poetry. Through them, the poet reveals to the reader some information about the city or what happened in it and inspired him to write the poem. If he gave up this information and allusions, his poetry would give up its historical role that is committed to the time and place of the subject matter of the poem. Besides, if the poet gave up these allusions, the poem would lose its locality and it would let the reader see events and characters that do not necessarily talk about Haifa, Nazareth or any other place, but about any man in any place in the world.

## 2.2The Geographyof the City between Topographic Stagnation and Human Entity



The City is present in many of Abu Hanna's poems through his topographic description of the city's visible landmarks that constitute a background for the event. For example, in the poem of “al-Khanjar al-Dhahabiyy” in his collection of poems ‘Arrāf al-Carmel, we read the following description:

"رجعتُ لبعض الجوارير أنفضُ عنها السنين  
فهاجت دبابير من هجعةٍ وأطلت رسالةً:  
على الطابع القبة الذهبية في القدس  
واسم البلاد قبيل الطلاق  
وتاريخها: نيسان 1946  
وخطك يحمل ما كان عنوان بيتي في طبريا هناك  
وأنت تُحدّث عن عاشق القدس كيف يودّعها  
وكيف يطوف يقبل هذا الجدار ويحضن ذاك الجدار  
وعن عطش الياسمين إلى النور عن بعثة لك خلف البحار  
وشوق إلى أمسياتٍ على "البنط"."

I returned to some drawers to brush the years from them  
The wasps were awakened from their slumber – a message appeared:  
On the stamp, there is the Golden Dome in Jerusalem  
And the name of the land before divorce  
And its date is: April, 1946  
And your handwriting bears what my home address was in Tiberias, there,  
And you are talking about al-Quds-Lover and how he is saying goodbye to it,  
And how he is roving kissing this wall and hugging that wall  
And about the thirst of the jasmine to the light, about a your delegation beyond the seas  
And about longing for evenings on the Bunt cornice<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 390.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

This section describes the geographical landmarks of the Place – al-Quds City and its walls, Tiberias, where the Sender was living, al-Bunt and the signs of life in it including the beautiful evenings and nights. All that used to be there before the people were divorced by force from their homes, neighborhood and life. The description here is done in a somewhat reporting style. The language is simple, the borders that divide between places and people are clear and noticeable, the address of the house is bold, the people say goodbye to al-Quds by kissing its walls; al-Bunt is full of life before the Nakba, and the Lake used to send tranquility in one's soul. There are many other examples in which the Palestinian cities appear in their general geographical topographical appearance as we see in the poem “Kaifa Yughsalu ‘an Shāri ‘in Thākilin Qamaru al-’Urjuwān?” In the collection of ‘Arrāf al-Carmel, where the poet Abu Hanna says:

"السلام عليكم  
يا أيها الشهداء الذين حُصدتم  
في كفر قاسم  
\*

السلام عليكم  
يا أيها الشهداء الذين ارتوى  
سهل سخنين من دمهم  
وتعانق مع مهرجان الشهادة  
في كفر كنا  
\*

السلام على أم الفحم التي اقتحموا  
حرمات المدارس فيها  
وربوا عصافيرها بالرصاص

"Peace be upon you,  
O Martyrs, who were harvested  
In Kufr Qassem  
\*

Peace be upon you,  
O Martyrs, from whose blood, Sakhnin's Plain drank its fill  
And embraced the festival of martyrdom  
In Kufr Kana  
\*

Peace upon Um al-Fahem,  
Whose school campuses they broke into  
And educated their birds with bullets.<sup>12</sup>

No doubt, mentioning of the cities here is a documentation of history and events that the Palestinian people lived including the fall of martyrs everywhere in the shadow of the Intifada. However, in other places, we read about the impact of Places on people. For example, in the poem “‘Arrāf al-Carmel”, we see that Nisān's (April's) rain in al-Carmel mountain area recreates one's sorrows and reminds people of their exile, adjusts its strings to make the performance perfect as if the rain made it live again, beating, new, and unwearied despite the passage of time. Abu Hanna says:

أمطر نيسان  
وشتوة نيسان على الكرمل  
تحبي الأحران  
وتدورن أوتار الغربة

April rained  
And April's shower of rain on al-Carmel  
Revivesthe pains And tunes the strings of Exile<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 116-117.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

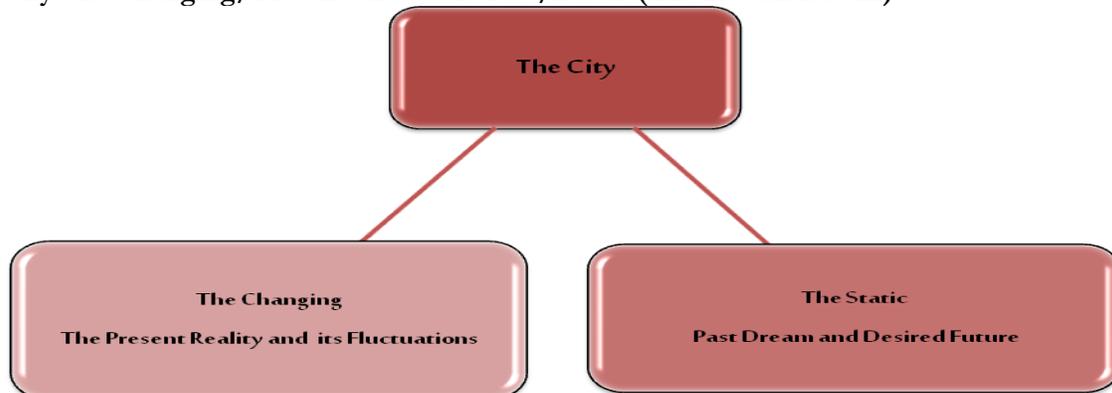
The City's presence is increased in other poems because it and its places are given figurative and metaphorical descriptions that turn the stones of the neighborhoods into living people who feel and live. For example, the Carmel Avenue in the poem of “Ḥadīqat al-Ṣabr” in the collection of poems Qaṣṣā'id min Ḥadīqat al-Ṣabr, the speaker says:

في جادة الكرمل  
حيث اغتيلت الأسماء  
تحت عيون قبة البهاء  
حيث يُفرضُ الجبلُ  
يمدُّ ساقيه إلى الميناءُ  
ويعتري عورته بحارةُ الأسطول  
السادس.. السابع..  
مهما شئت من أرقام  
وحيث "مار إلياس"  
يُطلُّ من مغارة الدهشة في عينيه:  
هل قمتُ لحيته؟  
كهنَةُ البعل يعيشون بها ويفتنون الناس<sup>14</sup>

In the Carmel Avenue  
Where the streets were assassinated  
Below the eyes of the Dome of al-Baha',  
Where the Mountain sitting cross-legged;  
Stretching his legs to the port  
His intimate parts are covered by the sailors  
Of the Sixth... the Seventh Navy..  
Any number that you like...  
And where St. Elijah  
Someone emerges from the Cave  
With a surprise in his eyes:  
Has his beard been filled with lice?  
The Baal priests are wreaking havoc  
And fascinating people!

As we see, the poet deals with the stones and the inanimate visible landmarks as if they were real people who are living in the place. The mountain sat cross-legged, and St. Elijah looks from his cave surprised...an anonymous person asks if his beard has become a place for lice as a sign of his long existence in that Place. The answer is given that the Priests of Baal are wreaking havoc and beguile people.

### 2.3. The City: the Changing/Present- the Static Past/Future(The Return Dream)



<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

The City in Abu Hanna's poetry has two faces: the first is a changing one, which is the face of the fluctuating reality, in which nothing has remained as it used to be, and this is what we read in the poem "Ḥadīqat al-Ṣabr" from his collection of poems *Qaṣṣā'id min Ḥadīqat al-Ṣabr*:

في "جادة الكرمل"  
حيثُ اغتيلت الأسماءُ  
تحت عيون "قبة البهاء"  
في جادة الكرمل قرب مكتب البريد  
حديقةً سجيناً صغيرة  
سياجها:  
من سرّة الجدار  
يلتفُّ حول سرورةٍ  
مُطوّقاً زيتوناً  
من ذلك الصير المُقيم لوعه  
عند بقايا قرية مغدورة

In the Carmel Avenue,  
Where the streets were assassinated,  
Below the eyes of the Dome of al-Baha',  
In the Carmel Avenue, near the Post Office,  
There is a small imprisoned garden.  
Its fence:  
From the navel of the wall,  
Surrounds a cypress tree,  
Besieges an olive tree  
Of that cactus  
That is still living in agony  
At the ruins of a betrayed village<sup>15</sup>.

The reality of the described places here is changing; the names of the streets that were assassinated and the Carmel Avenue became BenGurion Avenue; the conditions also changed and the Garden became a "captive" that is surrounded by walls, which also besiege the olive tree and the cactus fields and pains them at a village that was betrayed and destroyed, and nothing remained of it except some traces. Probably the following section from the poem "Mafātih" from the collection of 'Arrāf al-Carmelis the most expressive about the cruelty of change that substituted pleasure and happiness by sadness, and substituted life by death. The poet says:

هناك  
من "شارع الجبل" النشجاتُ  
ومن "جادة الكرمل" الحشراتُ  
تُسلخُ أسماءها  
ويمحو الزمان المكان

There are sighs  
From al-Jabal Street,  
And throat rattles from al-Carmel Avenue  
Whose names are torn  
And time erases the place.<sup>16</sup>

This change is quite clear; the names in the City are torn; its landmarks are substituted; the sobbing rises from al-Jabal Street; and death rattles rise from the throat of al-Carmel Avenue. The death rattle is a gargling on one's dying moments; the vibration of one's breath on his dying and the crying person all rattle without a loud mourning voice. Thus, the City has turned from a mere Place that has landmarks and signs into a dying human being; the City's parts are crying about a beautiful past that has turned into a hanging picture on the wall of one's memory.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, p. 237.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 90-91.

Against this changing situation in the City, we also read about the Static Place, which is represented in a past that settled in people's consciousness as a beautiful image that has turned into a future dream, a dream of Return to Homeland. The static homeland appears in expressions that indicate the beauty of homeland as a sweet mellowed image as we read in the poem "Aḥlamin al-Bad'i" in the collection of "Arrāf al-Carmel". Similarly, the waiter at the restaurant in Akka/ Akko asks the two lovers:

"قال: ماذا تريدان أن تشربيا؟  
سحرَ هذا الفضاء الذي يتلون بين أنامل تير الغروب  
وتنهيدة الشط يغسل بالحب أقدامه المتعبة"  
وفي مقطع آخر يقول:  
"هذا المعنق أحلى من البدء"  
هذه الخوابي  
نبيذ عجينة قانا الجليل".

"He said: what do you want to drink?

And charmed this coloring space between the fingers of the gold-ore of the sunset  
And the sigh of the shore that is washing with love his tired feet"

**In another passage, he says:**

This vintage is better than the beginning,  
These casks  
Are a wine dough of Cana of Galilee.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Akka, with its mellowed charm, takes him back to Cana, where the miracle of changing water into wine by Jesus Christ becomes a symbol for the triumph of pleasure and life. The poet Abu Hanna, like other people who lived the Nakba and witnessed all the bitter changes and fluctuations, did not forget the details of the charming Palestinian cities, from which he weaves the most beautiful wreaths to eulogize those who passed away. These details represent the cities that settled down in the poet's mind. Besides, he has never given up the dream of their return and continued to believe inside him that right and joy will certainly overcome. The poem "Ajniḥatan Taṣna'u 'Āṣṣifatan" in the collection Tajarra 'tuSummaki Ḥatta al-Manā'a. The poet says:

حنظلة وأخوته  
طلعوا من منذنة "الأقصى"  
من جرسيات "المهد"  
من حبر الخطوات  
من ذاكرة الزعتر  
من محراث النور  
ومن أعمدة النار  
طلعوا من حبة خردل  
قالوا للجبل تزلزل

Handhala and his brothers  
Came out of the minaret of al-Aqsa Mosque  
From the bell tower of the Nativity Church  
From the ink of steps  
From the memory of thyme  
From the plough of light  
From the columns of fire  
They came out of a grain of mustard  
And said to the mountain: Quake!<sup>18</sup>

Abu Hanna here emphasizes the internal belief that the course of things will change thanks to the revolution, refusal and unacceptance of the new unjust reality.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

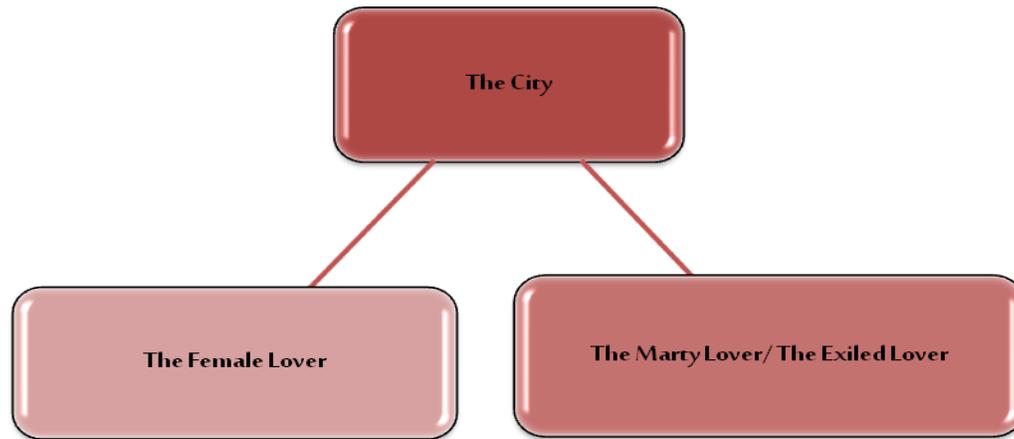
Handhala, the ten year old cartoon Palestinian character, who turned his back in refusal to any external solutions, is the son of al-Quds, son of al-Aqsa, son of the Holy Sepulcher, and son of the land and thyme (Za'tar). He and his brothers declared their revolutionary refusal and even refused to grow till they return to their homeland, a right that no one nor any event, such as evacuation and upheavals, should shake its position in their hearts. The immortal City remains in one's memory a dream that the poet waits for its return to be embodied again as a new beautiful reality. He says in his poem "Hadil al-Ḥamāma al-Muṭawwaqa" in his collection *Qaṣṣā'id min Ḥadīqat al-Ṣabr*:

عند مصبِّك البعيد النازح المنشود  
مدينةٌ سوف تُقام  
أسوارها عرائش الزهور  
وفجرها ملاعب الطيور  
تعانق الشطّين بالجسور..

At your remote emigrant desired estuary,  
A city will be established;  
Its walls are arbors of flowers;  
Its dawn is fields for birds  
That embrace the two shores by its bridges.<sup>19</sup>

The City in its static image is either a beautiful past that is settled in the heart or a future that is drawn on a real dream of return. It is the City that used to be a beautiful reality in which people lived in love, unity and feelings of belonging to it and to each other.

#### 2.4 The City as a Character: The Female Lover-the Martyr Lover



The City appears in several poems through reference to its personalities and it can be classified into two types: the first type represents it as a beautiful, exciting Female Lover but these types rare. The following section from the poem of 'Arrāf al-Carmel illustrates this aspect. The poet says:

"نيسان يفكّ عرى الأزرار  
يُعرّي صدرَ الكرمل  
تشتعل شقائقه المرجان  
وعقودُ القندول تحاور عنقَ النرجس  
والهدهد يرسم فوق الزعتر ظلّ اللحن  
سرح غرته لرموش الشمس".  
April untie its buttonholes;  
Denudes the chest of the Carmel;

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

The pearl anemones burn;  
 The clusters of the Calicotomedialogue with the neck of the narcissus;  
 The hoopoe, drawing the shadow of the melody above the thyme,  
 Tufted its crest for the lashes of the sun.<sup>20</sup>

The landmarks of Haifa in the following section boast of their femininity, especially in April, which covers nature with its most beautiful adornments. The loving April in this section reveals the Carmel's chest. The whole nature draws a Romantic scene that combines the loved ones in a holy wedding that the wind falls in love with, too. No doubt, this feminine description of the City in which the poet lived for many years, stems from its position in his heart. His feeling of belonging to it reaches the degree of passionate love. He is the Palestinian who fell in love with the Place and is committed to it in his poetry and depicted its history, its tragedies and people who were robbed of their right to live in it. The second aspect is the employment of the City as \*a character. The poet presents it through allusions to people who were martyred in defense of the City or when they were evacuated and were driven away from it. There are many other examples that illustrate this employment, especially in the poet's two collections of poetry: 'Tajarra'tu SummakiḤatta al-Manā'aand Qaṣṣā'id min Ḥaḍīqat al-Ṣabr. For example, 'Umar al-Qāsem in the poem FiḤashiyat al-'Awsaj from the collection of 'Tajarra'tu Summaki Ḥatta al-Manā'aembodies al-Quds City. He was born in it and was one of the cadre of the Democratic Front for its liberation. He was known of his leadership to the struggle for the captives and their movements. Besides, he spent 22 years in the Israeli prisons and was killed in them. Abu Hanna says about him:

يا عمر القاسم  
 لك أن تنزفَ عمرك مَهْرًا في حاشية العوسج  
 أن تقضم تقاحة صدرك ززانة  
 أن ترصد نمل ثواني القهر قوافل  
 ترحل في مشمشة الروح  
 O Omar al-Qassem,  
 You are entitled to bleed your life as a dowry in the entourage of the matrimony vine;  
 To bite the apple of your chest as a cell;  
 To observe the ants of the minutes of helplessness as caravans  
 Departing into the apricot of the soul.<sup>21</sup>

Shadi, in the poem of "YaHandhalata al-Khayr" in the collection of 'Tajarra'tuSummakiḤatta al-Manā'a, embodies the sadness of the City of Bethlehem. He is the child martyr, who represents "robbed childhood", and the children who are robbed of their right to live in the welcoming bosomof their grandmothers. The eleven years old Abd al-Rahman Shadi Khalildied under the effect of his injuries during the confrontations that broke out in Aida Camp north of Bethlehem. Abu Hanna addresses him saying:

يا شادي  
 حقك أن تتفياً ظلّ طفولتك الغضه  
 أن ترشفها قطرات عذبه  
 أن تتقلب على ظهرك كالقط البري  
 تنمرغ فيزيد النرجس  
 O Shadi  
 You are entitled to live in the shade of your tender childhood  
 To sip it sweet drops  
 To turn onto your back like a wild cat  
 To wallow, and the narcissus will foam.<sup>22</sup>

The title of the poem "Um 'Abdallah al-Hawwāsi" from the collection of Qaṣṣā'id min Ḥaḍīqat al-Ṣabris given after the name of the lady called 'Um 'Abdallah al-Ḥawwāsi, who embodies the story of a city whose people were evacuated from it. Um Abdallah was evacuated from al-Ramleh Cityto al-Quds like a leaf in the fall of the refugees and then from al-Quds to Shu'fatt Camp like pieces of wood in the hell of refugees.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 199-200

This mother was a refuge of protection for her son Abd Allah. This woman was a shelter of protection to her son, whom she brought up very hard till he became grown up. One day, after he went out to school in Qalandia, she prepared 'rolled vine leaves for lunch' after he comes back home, but she waited long and her son returned an item of news!

لم يعد عبد الله ظهراً للغذاء  
وانتظارُ الأم حقلٌ يحترقُ  
ودخانٌ في العيونِ  
وانتظارُ الأم في شعفاطِ  
في العروَبِ  
في الدهيشة، في الشاطي  
وفي كلِّ منافى اللاجئين  
مُهجةٌ في شركِ الذعرِ  
غرابٌ..  
وابتهال

Abdullah did not return at noon for lunch  
The mother's waiting is a burning field  
And smoke in the eyes  
The mother's waiting in Shu'fat,  
Al-A'rroub  
In Dehesha, al-Shati'  
And in all the exiles of the refugees  
A soul in the net of panic  
A raven  
And a supplication.<sup>23</sup>

Consequently, all the camps shake, all the exiles of the refugees denounce, they mourn the absence of Abdallah, who returned wrapped in a shirt of blood. Abdallah is not the only one who embodied the tragedies of the Palestinian cities and their usurpation of the souls of their sons. For example, Nimer al-Sādeq from al-Mjedel city was an oriental brown Arab, a skilled Dabka dancer and a racer who is attracted by melodies. He comes from al-Mjedel seeking education but never complained about the heaviness of his schoolbag. He passes by al-Tour Mountain following his shadow, and is accompanied by the voices of the frogs of 'EinJikla and a parade of schoolmates in a lively morning scene:

وضفادُ عينِ جِكْلَةَ تنقُ  
تُمَقِّلِتُ ملءَ الفجرِ وتسخرُ من نغمِ الحسونِ  
وحذلقةِ عروسِ التركُمِ  
ومعي سربٌ من زملاءِ الدرسِ  
من "الرينة" من طرعانِ  
من "قانا" ومن "المشهد"  
نمشي للناصرة  
نقاطعُ عيرِ الوادي والتلة<sup>24</sup>

The frogs of Ayn Jikla croak  
Gossiping the full morning and jeer at the tunes of the goldfinch  
And the pedantry of the Carduelis;  
With me, there was a group of colleagues  
From l-Rina, from Toura'an,  
From Cana, from Mashhad,  
Walking to Nazareth  
In the short-cut through the valley and the hill.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 243-244.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 249-250.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 249-250.

Nimer al-Sādeq was dreaming about the Zaffa (Shaving and Haircutting Celebration on one's Wedding Day), by the Saḥjadance (Men's Popular Dancing in circular rows) and women trilling, but the days betrayed him. They replaced his dreams and left no hope for him to cultivate and sow his land on the hill. The devastating storm spread his seeds and turned al-Mjedel into debris, erased its landmarks, and nothing remained except the Covent and the Church. This Mjedel turned into Migdal Haemek and nothing of the original Arab city remained safe. Actually, he became a stranger in a land where all the languages of the world are spoken. The following generations no more know about Nimer al-Sādeq who was a famous figure but his mention has become a source of wonder! Similar to Nimer al-Sādeq is Mas'ūd, who was born to be the son of the Earth, and grew up to be the stepson of the rocks. He lived his life in the fields like a butterfly in which seasons embrace. His rooting in the earth became stronger till the ravens came one day to crow over Aqraba, a village southeast of Nablus which was sprayed with poisons and Mas'ūd and other young men became strangers in their homeland:

"هذي البلادُ لنا وأنتَ هنا الغريب"

"مسعودُ... أنتَ هنا الغريب!"

"These lands are ours and you are the stranger

Mas'ūd... You are the stranger here!<sup>26</sup>

### 3 Summary

Hanna Abu Hanna has turned the Palestinian City into a lively place and fundamental essence in his poetry, and employed it in different and contradictory functions. Sometimes he makes them an inspiration for his writing and a main theme in his work. On other times, he writes about them making them the central element in the poem. In certain poems, he deals with them as a solid geographical topography while in others, he deals with them as human spaces. Occasionally, he treats them as a human entity that lives and moves in the Place. On the one hand, the City is a fixed face or a fixed image in one's heart, mind and insight, but on the other, it is a changing face, a bitter volatile and constantly changing reality. On another level, the City is the loving and loved female in some poems, and it is the lover who sacrifices himself for his sweetheart in other poems. Finally, the study argues that Hanna Abu Hanna is one of the documenters of the Palestinian heritage and maintains that it is impossible to observe and record the Palestinian cultural and educational movement in Palestine without talking about the roots and originality that his career constitutes, and as Mahmoud Darwish said, he is really the village son who taught the poets about the "earthliness of the poem".

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 270.

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