

"*Mawwāl fī layli 'ummi*" - Reading of Folkloric Modern Poetry

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Abstract

The present study examines a poem that was composed in one of the Palestinian dialects, hence in the colloquial Arabic language in general. The fact that it was written in this level of language is something that is still not agreeable for some literary scholars, since they consider such texts as non-canonical. The main purpose of this study is to highlight the importance of writing literature in the colloquial language, and to show how this process constitutes a successful technique in growing the awareness of people towards their own heritage. Thus, the study is based on modern literary theories, basically *intertextuality* and the *death of the author*, in order to show how modern literary techniques come in handy also when composing literary texts in the colloquial language.

Keywords: Arabic poetry, modernism, folk literature, Palestinian folklore, modern literary theory, *intertextuality*.

Introduction

Modernism, as a philosophy and an intellectual framework, became popular in the Arab cultures in general, especially in literature, during the 1950s. The study of style in modern poetry has focused on the text's artistry and aesthetics. Innovative poets have used a variety of styles and some modern devices in their texts, including some that properly belong to prose genres.

The use of elements of folklore in texts, in the form of imagery and stylistic devices, is one way for a writer to demonstrate his or her attachment to the homeland. Such revival of the heritage uses modernist literary techniques such as *transtextuality*, which consists basically of transferring old images into the present text. The same is true of numerous other modern devices which play an important role in the "game" of a text's construction and create numerous links that help connect content with style and enable the receiver or reader to "assimilate" the text.

The present study focuses on the style of the poem "*Manwāl fī layli 'ummi*" (= *Manwāl* in My Mother's Night) by the Palestinian poet Jiryis Na'im Khūrī (Jerjes Naim Khoury) (b. 1972). An analysis of the poem reveals its overall modernist nature, particularly in light of the fact that it is composed in the spoken language², challenging the norms of Arabic literature, in which the use of the colloquial dialect is considered non-canonical. The poet's use of the technique of *transtextuality* helps him create a "living" picture of folk heritage in the text through his evocation of folk imagery. He demonstrates his profound knowledge of his native popular culture through his use of folksongs, folk sayings, popular expressions, images of the local flora, and more.

Arabic poetry and the idea of *modernism*

Styles of writing everywhere change over time in every genre, whether in prose or poetry. Modernism in the Orient, and especially in the Arab world, took root when these cultures were opened and became exposed to Western civilization. The west is usually credited with initiating the cultural renewal that brought about the flowering of the modernist movement in the twentieth century, led by well-known figures such as T.S. Eliot (d. 1965) and Ezra Pound (d. 1972) in poetry; Henry James (d. 1916), James Joyce (d. 1941) and Virginia Woolf (d. 1941) in prose; as well as many others in various fields, including drama, politics and more.³

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² For information on Palestinian dialects, see: Shahin (no date): 526-538.

³ See: Wynne-Davies 1997: 449-452.

These Western writers and their writings greatly influenced the pioneers of Arabic poetry in the period in question, among whom we may mention Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb (d. 1964), Nāzik al-Malā'ika (d. 2007), Nizār Qabbānī (d. 1998), 'Adūnīs (b. 1930), 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī (d. 1999) and Ṣalāh 'Abd al-Sabbūrf (d. 1981).⁴ All of the above were innovative contributors to Arabic poetry, but the two most prominent among them were Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb and Nāzik al-Malā'ika, both of whom, according to Muḥammad 'Azzām, share the honor of having pioneered what has been called "free verse".⁵ Free verse, also called "foot-verse"⁶, is the modern genre of Arabic poetry that was first used in al-Sayyāb's "*Hal kāna ḥubban?*" (=was it love) and al-Malā'ika's "*Al-kolera*" (=cholera), both published in 1947.⁷

However, an examination of Arab writings reveals that modernism, in the sense of an innovative approach to literature, can be found much earlier, especially in the Abbasid period. Bashshār b. Burd (d. 784), Abū Nuwwās (d. 814) and Abū Tammām (d. 846) were among the earliest poets to modify poetry and introduce innovations.⁸ These poets were therefore called *muwallidūn* (=creative) or *muhdathūn* (=innovative) poets.⁹

Stylistic devices

The innovations that were introduced into modern Arabic poetry consisted of numerous elements. They were not limited to changes in the columnar form of the traditional *qaṣīda*, but encompassed its overall style. Poems no longer adhered to a single form or structure, they were no longer uniform in style, and their content changed. Numerous links were forged between a poem's external form, the stylistic devices it used, and its content.

One of the most important stylistic innovations in modern Arabic poetry is the "demolishing" of the structure of the canonical column and replacing it with new forms that are connected to the content.¹⁰ According to the semiotic theory of significance¹¹, a text's form (the signifier in this case) has a connection with its content (the signified).¹² The change in the form or structure of the traditional *qaṣīda* subsequently led to the modification of other prosodic elements.¹³

After the emergence of free verse, the evolution of Arabic poetry continued, with the appearance of *qaṣīdat al-nathr* or *al-qaṣīda al-nathriyya* (=the prose poem), which brought about a fundamental change in the concept of Arabic poetics. Prose poetry changed completely the traditional structure of the Arabic poem, leaving neither rhyme nor meter in it, and allowing Arab poets to ignore basic poetic measures altogether.¹⁴ However, some of the conventional stylistic devices remained in use, among them the use of different genres in the text, what has been called "hybrid genres", a technique that usually involves a combination of poetry and prose.¹⁵

Poetic discourse Poetic language

A perusal of Arabic poetry in general reveals that its discourse has been usually direct. A text of classical Arabic poetry is known to have a single meaning. However, the discourse in modern poetry is occasionally indirect, and it often conveys mystic or vague meanings. This is especially the case in modern and post-modern poetry.

⁴ See: 'Azzām 1995: 18-19, 44, 55.

⁵ See: *ibid.*: 52; Dāghir 1988: 38.

⁶ See: Shibi 2019: 588-589.

⁷ See: Dāghir 1988: 38, who speaks of the poem's "rhythmic form" and its modernist character of "breaking" *Al-'amūd al-shi'ri* or *'amūd al-shi'r* (=the poetic column). For more on *shi'r al-taf'ila*, see: al-Nuwayhī 1969: 2-3; al-Nuwayhī 1971: 87-88, 108-111; Sharīf 1984: 81-82; Dāghir 1988: 38, 41, 53; 'Aṭīyya 1990: 66-67; al-Lajmī 1995: 89-90; Shabāna 2002: 229; 'Abū al-Su'ūd 2003: 95-96; Shībī 2017: 42-45.

⁸ See: Dāghir 2012: 22; 'Azzām 1995: 9-10.

⁹ For more on the origins of the term *muhdath*, see: 'Adūnīs 2000: 79-81.

¹⁰ Classical poets adhered to the columnar form at the expense of the content. See: 'Abbās 1996: 161.

¹¹ See: Wynne-Davies 1997: 612; al-'Aḥmar 2010: 8-13, 40-58, 70-71; Kronenfeld & Decker 1979: 505-513; Malbon 1983: 208; Saussure 2011: 65-70; Scholes 1974: 13-19; Kāzīm 2017: 16-25; Qāsim & 'AbūZayd 1986 (eds.): 142.

¹² For more on the linear form of Arabic poetry, see: Dāghir 1988: 13-37; 'Abd al-Muṭallib 1995: 13-23.

¹³ See: Dāghir 1988: 41.

¹⁴ For more on the concept of "prose poem", see: al-'Allāq 2003: 117-121. Al-'Allāq claims that the birth of the prose poem represents a profound desire for liberation from the traditions of language, a rebellion against the frameworks of Arabic metrics, and a desire to end its despotic hold, that alone restricts the text's poesy. See: *ibid.*: 119.

¹⁵ See: 'Aṭīq 2008: 3.

Such meanings require profound analysis and the use of cultural knowledge, if we are to comprehend the poem's message correctly or clearly. In the literary context, the concepts of "text" and "discourse" are semantically identical, since both contain a message aimed at the receiver¹⁶, although the former is associated with writing and the latter with speech.¹⁷ The change in the discourse's directness fits in with modern literary theories, some of which will be mentioned further on.

Diglossia and colloquial poetry

The term *diglossia* refers to an situation in which two languages, or two linguistic levels, are intermixed, as is the case, for example, with Standard Arabic and colloquial Arabic.¹⁸ *Diglossia* among levels of the same language leads to novel linguistic usages that combine features of both components, to produce a new language that partakes of elements of both.¹⁹

Several causes may bring about a mixing of various levels of Arabic or of dialects of Arabic, including geographical location and social strata. Such intermingling usually engenders the emergence of novel features in literature, especially in the case of the use of the colloquial language. Poetry composed in the spoken language is one of the most common genres in the Arab world. In modern times, Arab writers first paid attention to colloquial dialects during *al-nahḍa* (=the "Arab renaissance" period) beginning in the late 18th century, when some authors began to use them in their literary works.²⁰ However, works composed in the colloquial language were denied the status of canonical literature, in order to deter writers from using the spoken language in their writings.²¹ However, this did not stop the modern poets from composing works in the colloquial language.²²

'Adūnīs considers poetry a living creature that renews itself, a view that has been expressed earlier by the Lebanese writer Jūrjī Zaydān (d. 1914), in his *Al-Lughā al-'arabiyya ka'in ḥayy*.²³ Based on this approach, 'Adūnīs describes his own view of poetry, and of the linguistic element in it. He claims that poetry is revolutionary by nature, as a creative occurrence. It is a revolution inside language, since it renews it; and a revolution in reality itself, since it views it in a novel way. It changes, through its renewal of language, the form of reality, that is, the existing relations between things and words, and between them and people. It is therefore a revolution in human consciousness. Within this framework, language is a collection of words, living creatures possessing their own life and history in imagination and thought. Some of these words grow old, die and fall out of use; while other words are renewed or born; and some other words are emptied of their old meanings, and are given new ones. Poetry is revolutionary not because it speaks about revolutionary themes, but because it is the bearer of a new vision through a new language.²⁴

¹⁶ See Jakobson's theory of communication in: Jakobson 1964: 350-377.

¹⁷ See: bin Yaḥyā 2011: 27.

¹⁸ See: Isṭiyyeh 2005: 664-668; Khoury 2006: 111-114.

¹⁹ For more on *diglossia* and the levels of language, see: Ferguson 1959: 325-340. Several studies on linguistic usages and the levels of language in modern Arabic literature can be found in Sasson Somekh's *Malamih 'ustubiyya jadidafī l-adab al-'arabi al-ḥadith* (=stylistic features in modern Arabic literature; 2012). See: Sūmikh 2012: 27-36 (on the different levels of the literary language of Najīb Maḥfūz [d. 2006]), 43-44 (on the proximity of Maḥfūz' standard Arabic to the language of everyday life), 53-63 (on the language of dialogue in the writings of Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm [d.1987]), 65-69 (on mixing the spoken language and standard Arabic in Yūsuf Idrīs' [d. 1991] short stories), 91-107 (on the language of dialogue in contemporary Arabic literature), 163-173 (on linguistic "blending" in *Yāsīn wa-babiyya* [1964/5]), 179-180 (on breaking the barriers between different levels of a language). On Yūsuf al-Sibā'ī's (d. 1978) literary language, which has been analyzed as consisting of three basic levels, see: Abdel-Malek 1972: 14-132.

²⁰ Mārūn 'Abbūd (d. 1962) speaks about Lebanese *zajal* in his *Al-shi'r al-'ammī* (1968). He claims that this is a venerable genre that has been documented for nearly 500 years [now: nearly 550 years]. According to 'Abbūd, it originated with the bishop Jibrā'īl b. Buṭrus al-Laḥfādī, who lived in the fifteenth century. See: 'Abbūd 1968: 77-79.

²¹ See: Khoury 2006: 117.

²² An example from prose: in *Yanmiyyat kalb* (=diary of a dog; 1987) by Yūsuf al-Khāl (d. 1987), the following statement is an "explanatory note": "Read this the same way you speak it, this is the slogan of writing in modern (spoken) Arabic as it has evolved by the tongues of the Arabs to this day" (see: al-Khāl 1987: 7). Another example is the same author's *Alā hamish kalila wa-dimna* (=on the margin of kalila and dimna; 1987?). As for poetry, al-Khāl also published a collection of poems entitled *Al-wilāda al-thāniya* (=the second birth; 1981), composed in the colloquial language. The following poets are also known for their colloquial compositions: Bayram al-Tūnsī (d. 1961), Ṣalāḥ Jāhīn (d. 1986), Aḥmad Fu'ād Najm (d. 2013), 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Unbūdī (d. 2015) and the two brothers Raḥbānī, 'Āṣī (d. 1986) and Maṅṣūr (d. 2009).

²³ First published in the sixties of the 20th century (1960?). See: Zaydān 2012. See in the same context: Philipp 1973: 15.

²⁴ See: 'Adūnīs 1985: 175.

Consequently, in the *modernism* of contemporary poets, renewing language is not the only element that expresses renewal in poetry; rather, it is poetry itself that brings about renewal, through its renewal of its language. The more a poet mixes levels of language, the more will new words and expressions be found in the language of poetry. The relationship between language and poetry is mutual, and brings about a continuous renewal of both.

Modernism and literary theorization

Arab scholars use modern Western theories of literature in their literary analysis. One of these is the theory of Roland Barthes (d. 1980) "the death of the author". Barthes, in his theory, analyzes the role of both the author and the reader in the activity of writing and reading a literary text. He maintains that the author's role ends when the text has been written; he is then "dead", theoretically speaking, for the reader or the researcher, who have no need for any further information about the writer, or the text itself, once it is read.²⁵ In this theory, the reader has an active role: the author writes his or her text for the addressee/reader/receiver, and not just for himself or herself. The receiver, hence, interacts with the text, creating an interpretation, leading himself or herself to the message that the author intended to convey in the text.²⁶ Therefore, the author, or the addresser in this case, includes linguistic elements in his discourse, which affect the receiver's process of reading.²⁷

Another theory that attracted literary scholars in the Arab world is *transtextuality*, as presented in Gerard Genette's (d. 2018) *Palimpsests* (1982). Genette, in his approach, treats the various components of a literary text in two ways. On the one hand, he treats them as belonging to a "single structure" (a structure that represents the text itself, and everything connected to it, directly or indirectly) and, on the other hand, he divides these components under various headings. He claims that poetics itself may be called *transtextuality*, a term which he divides into five classes, which he places under the heading of "*transtextual* relations".²⁸ The elements of this division and their meaning will be clarified when we encounter them in our analysis of the text of the study.

"Mawwāl fi layli 'ummi"²⁹ general summary

This poem is relatively new, for it was composed in the present century. It is a contemporary work with overall modern features. It consists of short lines that give it a quick, lively rhythm. The composition is written as a poem, with some prose features as well. It is an elegy for a fallen son, in the form of a dialogue between a mother and her son, with elements of movement and drama³⁰ that take it beyond the lyrical character of Arabic poetry. The text remains in a state of constant dynamism, reflecting the substantive and stylistic changes which the poet presents through his verses.

The poem opens with the mother's admonition to her son. She addresses him with the words *yā yammā*,³¹ a colloquial term which Palestinian mothers use to call their children with. The mother warns her son to beware the "sultan", a metaphor for the oppressive rule. She tells him that he must watch his tongue, lest he comes to harm. However, the son refuses to listen to her, not because he is disobedient, but because he cannot remain silent, as he clearly states in the following lines:

قَدْرِي أَحْكِي
قَدْرِكَ تَشْكِي³²

The mother continues to warn her son against what could happen to him, and she asks him to return. It is clear that she misses him, and his reply makes it clear that he is dead. The mother mourns over her son, who is buried under a stone. She continues her elegy, into which she inserts colloquial expressions, to express her grief at the loss of her son. After that, she addresses humanity as a whole, and her son does so as well, asking that the stone be lifted from his grave, because it is needed by his nation, to build the homeland and not to build graves.

²⁵ See: Barthes 1977: 142-148.

²⁶ See: bin Yahyā 2011: 32-22. For more on the relationship between the reader and the text, see: al-'Allāq 1997: 64-65.

²⁷ See: bin Yahyā 2011: 33.

²⁸ See: Genette 1997a: 1.

²⁹ A poem by Jiryis Na'im Khūrī, born in the village of Tur'an in the Galilee in 1972. Khūrī is a literary critic, poet and scholar, whose research focuses on Palestinian popular literature in general, and more specifically on Palestinian folk poetry. See: Khūrī 2001.

³⁰ Drama, literally, means movement. Dynamic or dramatic poetry is poetry that includes dialogue together with theatrical movement. See: Mandūr 2008: 61.

³¹ See: Khūrī 2001: 105.

³² Ibid.: 105.

The mother continues to declaim her sad poems, to which her son tries to reply and to convince her that he is not really dead, and that he will return to her in the spring. He continues in this vein until at the end of the poem he asks her to embrace him.

The evocation of folk literature and the use of the colloquial language- an introduction

"*Manwāl fī layli 'ummi*" is a modern poem, with stylistic and substantive innovations. The poet not only abandons the form of the traditional *qaṣīda*, but also introduces fundamental changes in structure, style and content. One of the most important of these innovations is his use of the various types of *transtextuality*, by which he employs folkloric elements, especially those of folk literature, into the poem. Another innovation is the use of the colloquial language in the text's overall construction, adding an element that reflects life as it really is, in addition to the folkloric atmosphere. Furthermore, the poet relies on the reader's ability to analyze the text, and provides some keys to its interpretation, ensuring that the reader will play an active role, as we shall further see.

Transtextuality

The title of the poem and of the book

The title of a poem, considered as part of the literary text, is a *paratextuality*.³³ Genette treats the title as a paratextual element which the reader encounters at the beginning of his or her perusal of the text. The title of the poem under discussion gives the text a popular character, especially in view of the fact that it contains the word *manwāl*, a popular kind of colloquial poem that is recited and sung throughout the Arab world. The title "*Manwāl fī layli 'ummi*" evokes images of popular culture, and prepares the reader for the encounter with a text that expresses the connection between a mother and her son. The title is thus connected to the contents of the poem. However, although the association in the title seems to presage a joyous picture, in fact it introduces tragic events, presented as an elegy. The poem may thus be called a *manwāl 'ahmar* (= a red *manwāl*), reflecting grief and pain.³⁴

The title is connected not only to the text's content, but also to its style. The poem is a hybrid text made up of multiple genres. In addition to the dramatic element which dominates the text, the poem uses frameworks of folk poetry in its construction, such as the *manwāl*, as will be explained further.

The book where this poem is taken from is also called *Manwāl fī layli 'ummi*.³⁵ As the title of the book, it invites one to analyze the components of the book's cover, in order to find the connection between the latter and the poem under discussion. Since the poet chooses an identical title for both, the two are clearly connected in his mind, and would seem to highlight the importance which he attaches to the message he wants to convey.

An examination of the cover reveals that its color is black, a color with negative associations, due to the darkness which it evokes. In our case, it may be interpreted as a reference to the death of the son in the poem. The front part of the cover shows a picture of a demolished house, probably a Palestinian house that was destroyed and its inhabitants were forced to flee. The back side of the cover contains some lines of the poem discussed here:

ما نرغب الاحجار تموت
 عن قبيري قيمو الاحجار
 خلو فوقى تراب وقل
 وسين وطنين ومجد وغاز
 أمي كل يومين تطل
 وتسقي قبيري دموع ونار
 بكره أحياء ويومي يهل
 وارجع العب مع الصغار
 ورساصة اللي بقلبي تفل
 وتركع للصدر الجبار³⁶

³³ This type of *transtextuality* includes titles, introductions, summaries, comments, linguistic expressions and illustrations, announcements, covers and any other secondary elements, written or printed; see Genette 1997a: 3-4. In his book *Paratexts* he divides this type into two parts: (1) *Peritexts* are all such elements that are part of the published product, such as the cover, the opening pages, the book's design, the paper used, etc., all of which are subject to the author's and the publisher's decision. See: Genette 1997b: 16. (2) *Epitexts* are material and social elements of the *paratext*, which are not physically a part of the volume, but lie outside of it. See: *ibid.*: 344.

³⁴ See: Khūrī 2013: 154.

³⁵ The book is a collection of ideas couched in poetic and story form.

³⁶ Khūrī 2001: 107-108.

The poet wishes to connect these lines with the picture on the book's front cover. The son does not want the stone (or the homeland) to "die". He rebels against death and refuses to have a stone on his grave, a stone which should serve to build a house, not a grave. He then asks that flowers be placed on his grave, because his mother will visit it. Throughout the poem, he tries to convince her that he is not dead, and that he will return: the bullet that killed him will waste away and "bow" before him when he will miraculously rise from the dead.

However, there is one fact which the son does not wish to divulge to his mother, the fact that he is dead. Despite his repeated assurances to her that he lives on through the book's "white, filled with hope" pages, he leaves her a letter written "in broad, red handwriting", somewhat faded on the book's black cover, beginning from the book's back, and through to its front: "your beloved one has died". Perhaps this tells us that he will rise from the dead (the book's back) and live again (its front). This phrase appears in the poem itself, where he says to his mother that the people "said to you: your beloved one has died",³⁷ a statement which he denies inside the "white space" of the poem, but confirms in the "black space" of the cover.

The poem's structure: a folkloric modern poem that is a(folk)tale

The overall structure of the poem is a kind of *architextuality*³⁸, because the text has a multi-generic character. Usually, a reader cannot tell what the genre of a text is before reading it, because some texts seem to belong to a specific genre. However, after reading such a text, it turns out to belong to another genre. One example for this type of situation is the confusion between *Al-qisṣa al-qaṣīra jiddan* (=the very short story) and the prose poem, two genres that are distinct, despite their many shared features, such as dense poetic language, a vague external structure, the numerous metaphors, and more. It is thus the reader himself who must make the distinction between the various genres. In our case, the reader of the poem must deconstruct the text in order to discover the genres used in it.

Poetic texts by their nature contain poetic elements. However, and thanks to the device of hybridization, the intermixture of various genres, our poet produced a "multi-generic" work. The title, "*Mawwāl fī layli 'ummi*", creates the impression of a lyrical poem, perhaps a lullaby. However, the text is much more than that. In addition to its poetic features, it also contains prominent prose elements reminiscent of a bedtime story. The poem is a narration presented by the mother with the help of her son. Artistically, the mother overshadows her son; it is she who gives the poem its lyrical character, and who evokes the elements of folksongs with which she crafts her words. The poem's framework is thus that of a song, in keeping with its title, but it is also enriched by narrative and dramatic elements.

Folkloric song types in the poem

The text alludes to a variety of Palestinian folk songs, a situation that creates links between texts. According to Genette, *hypertextuality* is another type of *transtextuality*, which is about interconnected texts, and it refers to any relation that unites a certain text (which Genette calls "text B") with a chronologically preceding text (which Genette calls "text A").³⁹

Folksong "molds" create popular poetic images, as in the case of this text, where the poet uses them as a definition means to his nation. They are, therefore, a reflection of the folk heritage of the homeland. This is where the role of innovation comes in: the poet innovated the use of the *mawwāl* form in his poem; that is, he used the traditional *mawwāl* framework to create his own private *mawwāl*, thus producing a new text with his own particular language. The new *mawwāl* is connected to the old ones, and reminds the reader of this folkloric art.

³⁷ See: *ibid.*: 107.

³⁸ Genette argues that a text does not "declare" the genre to which it belongs; novels do not "announce themselves" as being novels, nor do poems. Genre is an aspect of *architextuality*, and as such the task of defining it does not fall within the purview of the text itself, but is left to the reader, critic or public. Lengthy prose poems, such as epic poems, can only with difficulty be placed today in the genre called "poetry", whose definition has changed in modern times and has come to be restricted to lyrical poetry. It is known that one's perception of the genre before one reads the text, can greatly affect one's expectations; it is therefore considered part of the act of a text's reception. See: Genette 1997a: 4-5.

³⁹ See: *ibid.*: 5-7. A "hypertext" is one in which the author constructs a connection between the text and an older text chronologically, uniting both into a single text. The connection may lie in the content, that is, the present text repeats and confirms an idea that appears in the older text. Other devices are also included under this concept, for example *imitation*. See: *ibid.*: 7-10. Wahba and al-Muhandis categorize imitation under "mimesis", a term which appears in Aristotle's *Poetics*, in which the latter argues that poetry, and other human arts, are different types of imitation. The two afore-mentioned scholars define imitation as taking the works of a previous writer as a model to be followed by a subsequent writer. In fact, both terms have the same basic meaning. In modern times, the concept has been associated with that of "innovation", which is what the poem discussed here demonstrates. See: Wahba & al-Muhandis 1984: 338-340.

At the beginning of the poem appears the word *mannāl*, a type of Arabic folk song that evolved most likely from the poetic art of *mawāliya*.⁴⁰ The poet chooses to put the word *mannāl* into the poem's title, preparing the reader for its content. He then uses the "mold" of the *mannāl* in order to compose some poetic stanzas in it, as appears in one below:

مات الولد يا بشر، ووصى قبيلاً ما غارُ:
لا تدفنونني بحجر، خوفاً ما يبقى حجارُ
الحجار ترجع وطن، الحجار تبني دارُ
خلوها ملح بجفن، يحرق عدو جازُ⁴¹

The above poetic lines are of the mother who composes words of grief following the loss of her son. As for the *mannāl* as a "mold", there is a variety of *mannāl* types, depending on the rhyme pattern. The one used in the last verse has the structure of a *mawāliya* of the type *rubā'ī muwāfiq*, whose lines end in similar sounding words. A scansion of this passage shows that the structure is that of *mannāl*, with a *basīṭ* meter in the *mashtūr* form:⁴²

Māt-il-walad / yā bashar /	nnaṣṣā qabil / mā ghār /
- - ʊ - / - ʊ - /	- - ʊ - / - - ʊ
Lā tidfinū / ni-b-ḥajar /	khūfī ma-yīb / qa ḥjār /
- - ʊ - / - ʊ - /	- - ʊ - / - - ʊ
Lī-ḥjārī tir / ja' waṭan /	lī-ḥjārī tib / nī dār
- - ʊ - / - ʊ - /	- - ʊ - / - - ʊ
Khallūba mil / ḥ ib-jafan /	yahriq 'aduw / wu njar
- - ʊ - / - ʊ - /	- - ʊ - / - - ʊ

A metric scansion of a colloquial text differs from that of a text composed in Standard Arabic. For example, some of the feet in the passage above begin with a quiescent (a non-moving/unvowelled consonant), hence we are determined to add this quiescent to the following moving consonant, eliminating it from the scansion prosodically. In other words, in the second hemistich of the first line, the poet says *n-waṣṣā*, with no vowel following the *w* of the conjunction, in accordance with the rules of colloquial pronunciation. This is a situation that is never encountered in Standard Arabic. In such a situation, we cannot apply al-Khalil's theory on "stopping at a quiescent"; therefore the quiescent is attached directly to the following vowelled consonant:

n-waṣ

unvowelled + vowelled + unvowelled = vowelled + unvowelled

Other popular types of folk poems used by the poet are *tanāwīḥ* (=mourning poems) and *tabālīl* (=lullabies), by which he imitates the mourning poems and the poems of putting babies to sleep. Both types are appropriate for the poem under discussion: The mother's mourning over her martyred son's death turns into a lullaby to her son's eternal sleep.⁴³ The following is an example of *tanāwīḥ* in our poem:

يا حادي العيس (يا خيا) قول لحابنا عودوا
جسمي ورق وحواح نشف على عودو⁴⁴

The expression *yāḥādīal-'is* (=o camel walker) is usually used in Palestinian mourning songs and lullabies.⁴⁵ Here, the poet borrows the traditional Palestinian mourning expression *yāḥādīal-'isīqul la-ḥbābnā*⁴⁶ (=o camel walker, tell our beloved ones), and adds to it some words of his own that are connected to the local folklore. He also adds the expression *yāḥbayyā* (=o brother) to this line, an expression indicating grief which is often used in such *tanāwīḥ*.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ *Mawāliya* is one of the seven arts listed by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. 1350) in his *Al-'āṭil al-ḥalī wal-murakkbkaṣ al-ghālī*. See: Khūrī 2013: 72-73. For more on the *mawāliya*, see: ibid.: 85-90, and for more on the *mannāl*, see: ibid.: 154-158.

⁴¹ Khūrī 2001: 107.

⁴² The feet of the *basīṭ* meter are as follows: *mustaf'ilun fā'ilun mustaf'ilun fā'ilun / mustaf'ilun fā'ilun mustaf'ilun fā'ilun*. For more on the prosodic structure of the *mannāl* in general, see: Khūrī 2013: 156-157.

⁴³ For more on the *tanāwīḥ* genre, see: ibid.: 287.

⁴⁴ Khūrī 2001: 109.

⁴⁵ For example: Khūrī 2013: 288; al-Ṣāliḥ 2004: 55-61.

⁴⁶ See: Khūrī 2013: 288.

⁴⁷ See: ibid.: 287.

A scansion of the above example reveals that here, too, the poet uses the *basīf* meter in the *mashtūr* form:

Yā ḥādiy al / 'isi qul /	la-ḥbābinā / 'ūdū /
- - ʊ - / - ʊ - /	- - ʊ - / - -
Jismi waraq / waḥwahī /	nashshaf 'alā / 'ūdū / ⁴⁸
- - ʊ - / - ʊ - /	- - ʊ - / - -

Here we must once again stress that a verse composed in the colloquial language must be analyzed prosodically in a different way than one composed in Standard Arabic. For example, if this text had been analyzed as Standard Arabic, the long vowel *ā* in the middle of the word *waḥwahī* (=asphodel) would have been retained, as the end of a syllable; however, in the colloquial the vowel is not pronounced long, giving rise to the scansion *waḥwahī* (rather than *waḥwāhī*). Thus we obtain a *fa'īlun* foot, rather than *mustaf'īl*.

Intertextuality⁴⁹

Intertextuality appears in the poem in two forms, *allusion* and *quotation*. The poet uses this technique in order to enhance the folkloric character of his text. He uses expressions that evoke folklore, such as *mawwāl*, proverbs, myths and the folk flora. Thus enhancing the fact that the text's folkloric character appears both in its content and in its style.

First of all, the proverbs used in the poem can be deemed cases of *intertextuality* of the *quotation* type, because the poet takes them from his own surroundings and "welds" them into his poem.⁵⁰ One such proverb is *zattu ṭhīni b-shōk, yis'ab 'alayy lammū* (=they spill my flour on thorns, it is hard for me to collect it).⁵¹ In our case, the poet quotes the proverb within a poem that has the *mawwāl* form. He not only composes a new *mawwāl*, but also "welds" a proverb into it, turning it into a line of verse, thus enhancing the popular element in the text. The *mawwāl* comes to have a more popular character, thanks to the proverb that is introduced in it. In fact, this is not the only colloquial element we find at this point, since this *mawwāl* contains other folkloric expressions, such as: *jarḥi nashshaf dammū* (=the blood of my injury dried) and *yā min darā* (literally=O you who knew, figuratively= I wish).⁵²

This part of the poem is written from the mother's perspective. She expresses her grief at the loss of her son and describes her sad situation: Her flour, by which she means her son (flour and bread are symbols of life; in Egypt bread is called *'esh*, literally: "life"), was dispersed among the thorns, which may symbolize grief, pain and death. The mother is incapable of "gathering" her son. After someone dies, it is impossible to bring him or her back to life, just as when flour is cast among thorns, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to collect it.⁵³

Another type of *intertextuality*, *allusion*, appears in the poem, in the form of the word *mawwālik* (=your *mawwāl*), as it is used in the line *yā 'ummi mawwālik nār* (=O mother, your *mawwāl* is fire),⁵⁴ in response to her sad *mawwāil* (plural of *mawwāl*) and expressions of mourning. His mother's words hurt him; her expressions of *ābat* (=expressions of pain) are like fire in his heart.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ The scansion of this verse requires that each hemistich be divided into two identical parts prosodically. The scansion does not include the words *yā kbayyā*, which the poet puts between brackets, because it is an "intruder" expression that should be ignored during the scansion process; see: *ibid.*: 287.

⁴⁹ This is the first term in the theory of *transtextuality*, which was first used by Julia Kristeva as a literary term, referring to the presence of an element in two or more texts or, in other words, the presence of one text inside another. *Intertextuality* can come in three forms: 1) quotation; 2) plagiarism; 3) allusion, which is an utterance or a phrase whose full meaning includes an awareness of a link with another text, with which it is necessarily associated and without which it cannot be understood. See: Genette 1997a: 1-3.

⁵⁰ Occasionally, the form of a proverb may be modified in order to make it compatible with the poem's meter or form, or it may take slightly different form in different localities. At any rate, in most cases, the change is not conscious and the meaning of the proverb is not affected.

⁵¹ See: Khūrī 2001: 110.

⁵² See: *ibid.*: 110.

⁵³ This proverb is in common use among the older generation in the city of al-Ṭira in the Triangle region: *yā wel illi in'abb ṭhīno bin-natash yis'ab 'aleh lammō* (=woe unto him whose flour is overturned on brushwood; he will have a hard time gathering it". This proverb is said of someone who tends to get into trouble; its function is to caution such a person to take care. The proverb was heard from Maḥmūd Muḥammad 'Urūq, a resident of the city of al-Ṭira in the Triangle, who was born in the abandoned village of Qāqūn (1934-2020) (recorded on November 2, 2014). Brushwood (*Sarcopoterium spinosum*) is a local thorny bush in Palestine. See: 'Arrāf, 'Umar, and Makhkhūl 1999: 7.

⁵⁴ See: Khūrī 2001: 107.

⁵⁵ See: *ibid.*: 107.

Another example of *intertextuality* of *quoting* is used by the poet in the following lines, that is taken from *tanāwīh*. The mother says:

يا حسرتي (يا يمًا) حسروني ما جزاهم خير
قصو جناحي كما قصو جناح الطير⁵⁶

The mother is filled with grief following her son's death, and begs God not to give His blessings to those who committed the deed. She describes herself as having had her wings cut off, as if she was incomplete; she is just like a bird without wings, which cannot fly and so cannot fulfill the purpose for which it exists, to be free to fly.⁵⁷ The mother puts herself in this bird's place: like a wingless bird, her existence in the absence of her son is meaningless, for she lives for the purpose of seeing her children grow up. However, her son has died, thus depriving her of what makes her a mother. It is as if she considers herself unfit to live any more after her son's death. In addition, if the meaning of freedom is lost, the duty to live is lost with it. In this way, the image of the bread (*'ash*) becomes connected to that of the flour that fell on the thorns in the previous case of *intertextuality*. Yet another example of *allusion intertextuality* in this poem is the mention of folk flora, which also contributes to its popular character.⁵⁸ For example, the poet mentions *al-ghār* (=the laurel plant) in the following lines, where the son addresses the people:

حلي فوقني تراب وفل
وسين وطين ومجد وغار⁵⁹

He wants his mother to visit his grave, which is surrounded by aromatic plants that grow in the homeland and allow him to feel the folkloric spirit. The son mentions his mother's visit, and tells her that he is like a flower that blooms in the spring; the laurel tree blooms in the spring⁶⁰ and its fruit ripens in autumn. The image of the seasons in the poem is connected to the oft-repeated image of death. The son tells his mother again and again that he is not dead and that he will return to her, thus transforming the image of autumn into a new spring, in which the dead will become alive again. The fruit of the laurel tree is black, like an olive,⁶¹ which connects the son to the soil of his homeland Palestine (olive trees are a symbol of Palestine) and gives support to his "false hope" of returning, but on the other hand the black color of this tree's fruit can also have the opposite meaning. In fact, when he says of himself that he will return on "April first"⁶² he admits that his previous promise was a lie, since he claims to return April fools day. In other words, he will never return.⁶³

Another local plant is *al-wahwāh*, which appears in Palestinian proverbs.⁶⁴ The poem says through the mother: "My body is the leaves of the asphodel that withered on their stalk".⁶⁵ She compares her body to the withered leaves of the asphodel after her son's death. The stalk of the asphodelis connected to the fruit of the laurel tree through the fact that both appear in autumn, thus lending support to the son's false promise to return. The stalk of the asphodelis connected to the image presented by the mother. In nature, the stalk can reach a height of a meter and a half or more, and the flowers are white. The stalk is nearly as high as a person, so the mother uses it to describe her body, and the white flowers constitute a cover for her withered body, a cover white as a shroud, by which the mother announces that after her son's death she is dead too. It is a peculiarity of this plant that the flowers wilt before the rains fall, but the leaves do not appear yet, a phenomenon that constitutes a rebellion against what is habitual in the plant world. This "rebellion" is connected to the son's rebellion against death in the poem, and his constant attempts to convince his mother that he will become alive again.

⁵⁶ See: *ibid.*: 106. The poet adds the expression of grief *yā yammā* in brackets, in order to enhance the sense of loss. In a recording of the song, these lines appear as follows: *yā ḥsīrītī ḥassarūnī ma jazābum kbēr / qaṣṣū janāhī kamā qaṣṣū janāh al-ṭēr*. Khūrī 2013: 287. The first phrase in this version differs from the one used at the beginning of the quotation above, but the meter is the same (*basīf*), and their scansion is also quite similar.

⁵⁷ The image of a broken-winged bird is a repeated image in Palestinian folk literature, as in the following line from a Palestinian *mu'annā* (a type of folk songs): "*bal-ṭēr ballī bil-ams jinḥu inkasar*" (=this bird whose wing was broken yesterday). See: Sirḥān 1989, vol. I: 78.

⁵⁸ According to Tawfīq Kan'ān (d. 1964), folk flora plays an important role in Palestinian popular beliefs. See: Kan'ān 1998: 81.

⁵⁹ Khūrī 2001: 108.

⁶⁰ See: As'ad, 'Umar & 'Arrāf (no date): ? (pages are not numbered).

⁶¹ See: *ibid.*

⁶² See: Khūrī 2001: 108.

⁶³ See: Yūnus 1983: 9.

⁶⁴ For example, the following proverb: "*lammā biṭla' el-wahwāh sallik 'ūdak yā fallāh*". 'Arrāf, 'Umar & Makhkhūl 1999: 6.

⁶⁵ See: Khūrī 2001: 109.

Yet the asphodel is still associated with death, since it grows often among graves, and is therefore also called *ḡabrat al-maqābir* and *baṣalabl al-qubūr*.⁶⁶

Another *allusion* appears when the poem reminds us of another component of popular culture, the folktale. It does so by means of the narrative techniques the poet uses in its construction, including elements that are typically found in folktales, such as the characters of the sultan and monsters,⁶⁷ which occur repeatedly in the poem. Their origin lies in folktales, such as the stories of *The Arabian Nights*.⁶⁸ The sultan symbolizes a man in a position of dominance over his subjects, and acts either justly or tyrannically. In the poem, it is the latter: The mother warns her son against him, as if whispering in her son's ear, so that neither the sultan himself nor his underlings will hear her. The mention of monsters next to the mention of the sultan perhaps has the aim of reinforcing the negative image of the sultan, since monsters that appear in stories usually scare the children.

The mother continues her narrative, using an ironic style in an attempt to create a new story about herself and her son. She gives an ironic imitation of folktales, and places her own story and that of her son within the framework of these tales, which she calls *qīṣṣat yāmākan*. She and her son become a legend whose praises are sung by the people after they die, as if time erased their memory and history and all that remained was a myth, treated as mere fiction. It is as if the land of Palestine became a story that is only mentioned in myths, a place whose existence no one believed in any more.⁶⁹

A further *allusion* lies in the description of April and the resurrection. The mention of April, as a spring month, may be deemed to express renewal and life. The name of the month can be associated with the myth of Osiris, the ancient Egyptian god who symbolizes fertility and resurrection. In our discussion of the plants in the poem, we mentioned April fools day, which symbolizes the son's death, the certainty that he will not return to his mother. However, the connection between April and Osiris is of a different nature; in this case the month symbolizes hope and renewal.

Spring usually has a connotation of life and fertility. The same is true of Osiris, a god of agriculture in Egypt, and lord of plants and fertility.⁷⁰ The basic connection between the image of Osiris and the son in the poem is resurrection: both are resurrected after their death. Osiris came back to life after having been killed by his jealous brother, who was angry that he had taught agriculture to humankind. He was dismembered and pieces of him were dispersed throughout different provinces. He was subsequently revived after his wife Isis collected his body parts.⁷¹ His standing as a fertility god was enhanced by the fact that Isis became pregnant from him during the time he was dead.⁷²

Osiris' resurrection supports the son's promise to his mother that he will return at the beginning of spring, on the first of April, a month whose Latin name comes from a word meaning "unfolding", since it is during this month that plants bud and sprout.⁷³ It is a month that is associated with various religious events among different nations, such as *nayrūz*, *shamm al-nasim*, and Easter.

The holiday of *nayrūz* is Persian; the word means "new day", a meaning that is directly connected to the son's resurrection after he died. According to a Persian tradition, God created light on this day, and light symbolizes life. Another tradition reports that on this day, rain fell from the heavens after seven years of drought;⁷⁴ the day is thus also associated with the image of fertility represented by Osiris.

⁶⁶ See: 'Arrāf, 'Umar & Makhkhūl 1999: 6. The repetition of the consonant *ḥ* in *wahwah* also reflects grief, since it is a sound which is difficult to pronounce, and is articulated in the throat; it thus gives the impression that the mother stops breathing for a moment as she mourns her martyred son.

⁶⁷ See: Khūrī 2001: 106.

⁶⁸ See: 'Abd al-Ḥakīm (no date): 21.

⁶⁹ Even the mother tries to be creative at this point. The poet makes the mother an intellectual with considerable knowledge. An analysis of the mother's linguistic role will be undertaken later on.

⁷⁰ See: Bādīnkī 1996: 52.

⁷¹ See: Yūnus 1983: 64-65; Al-Bīdīl 2008: 310-314.

⁷² Isis pushed the cover of the coffin aside, threw herself on her dead husband, and became pregnant. See: Campbell 1999: 254. There she threw herself unto her husband's motionless body, and breathed on it, beseeching some of the gods for help. She brought life back to the dead man. Then Osiris rose to heaven and he was enthroned in the other world. See: 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 1994: 540.

⁷³ See: Yūnus 1983: 10.

⁷⁴ See: 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 1994: 273, 275.

Shamm al-nasim is a similar holiday. It symbolizes the beginning of a new year and is celebrated at the beginning of spring, when flowers first bloom. It announces the renewal of nature and the revival of the plant world.⁷⁵

As for Easter, in Arabic it is also called *'id al-qiyāma*, literally, holiday of resurrection. This holiday, which celebrates Christ's resurrection three days after the crucifixion, also has a direct connection to the son's resurrection, and that of Osiris, providing the reader with yet another image of resurrection and enhancing its meaning.

All of these interpretations are connected to the son through his claim that he will be returning in the spring. Even his mother says: "Come back with the beginning of the holidays",⁷⁶ as if she knew for certain that he would return and bloom. He reinforces the image of his return when he says: "Wait for me. I will return with my new clothes",⁷⁷ that symbolize spring and renewal. He also says to her:

يا أمي ابنك ما مات
ابنك زهرة بهالستان
تذبل في آخر أيلول
تزهّر في أول نيسان⁷⁸
[... لا تنسي وعدي الأكيّد
راجع مهما وقتي جار
راجع مثل رجوع العيد
انتظري آخر آذار⁷⁹

Here the son makes it clear that he will return with the return of the holidays, that he will "open" like the flowers and be resurrected. In fact, he will revive whatever has wilted and died in the soil, so that in the end he is like Osiris, the god who was resurrected and made the land fertile again.⁸⁰

Another example of *allusion intertextuality* is the mother's comment: *yiblā 'adummi b-nār, yiblā balā Sdūm* (Sodom).⁸¹ The story of Sodom and its destruction by God for its inhabitants' evil ways⁸² is told in the Bible and the in the Qur'ān. The entire region was destroyed and to this day, it is considered by some to be an evil place, a place to be avoided, because of this story. The mother's use of this saying shows her contempt towards those who killed her son; she wishes the killer the same fate as the one that befell the people of Sodom.

Language

The main distinctive feature of the overall *language and discourse* in the poem is that the text is composed in the colloquial language. As a result, readers from the same geographical region as the poet will be affected by it and identify with it faster than others, since people tend to identify with the things they know and with which they are familiar. Texts of this kind are meant to be sung as well, not only to be read.⁸³ In addition to his use of the colloquial language, the poet also invents new poetic frameworks within familiar forms, such as the *manwāl*. Such a text can be said to "converse" directly with the receiver, in whom it arouses feelings associated with the homeland and folk heritage. This, in turn, can cause people to try to repeat the expressions used in the poem, or even to repeat the poem in its entirety. Its quick rhythm and compatible scansion make it easy to memorize, thus turning the receiver into an active reader.

⁷⁵ The holiday of *shamm al-nasim* represents the new creation in nature. It is the holiday of resurrection, of the renewal of the plant world, a time when creatures are busy with procreation, the world becomes green and flowers bloom. The spirit of spring brings the message of nature's revival, the fragrance of buds and the aroma of opening flowers. See: *ibid.*: 482, 513.

⁷⁶ See: Khūrī 2001: 106.

⁷⁷ See: *ibid.*: 106.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: 108.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: 100.

⁸⁰ See: Yūnus 1983: 64.

⁸¹ See: Khūrī 2001: 108.

⁸² See: Lūhīshī 2011: 143.

⁸³ The present paper was written in 2014. The poem was in fact put to music at the beginning of 2017, at a celebration in honor of the poet on the occasion of his promotion to professor at Tel-Aviv University. The celebration took place in the poet's home village of Ṭur'ān in Galilee on March 25. The poem was sung by 'Abd al-Salām Daḥla, a local singer of the village.

As for *diglossia* in the text, it must be pointed out, first of all, that Standard Arabic is the basis of the spoken dialects, and that Arabic has undergone numerous changes under the influence of various neighboring languages. Some words in the poem are written in what seems to be the Standard Arabic spelling, although the form in which the poet uses them shows clearly that he means to have them pronounced according to the rules of the colloquial language, for example:

تحكي: colloquial pronunciation: *tihkī*

يصيح: colloquial pronunciation: *'iysih*

يشجّعنا: colloquial pronunciation: *'iyshajji' nā*⁸⁴

The poet thus does not recoil from writing in colloquial Arabic, using it in order to give his text a folkloric signature and provide it with a clear identity and clear features. The poem contains within itself the story of the Palestinian people, couched in the simple language used by simple people.⁸⁵ This use of language is one of the innovations of modern or contemporary poetry. Clearly our poet is in favor of the idea of innovation in poetry, including the composition of verses in the colloquial language, despite the fact that literary critics in the Arab world frown on this, since they view the spoken dialects as a threat to the standard language. Using this modernist approach, the poet remains close to his heritage, which he strives to propagate and to preserve in a variety of innovative ways.

A comparison of the *mother's language* with that of the *son's* in the text reveals that although both speak the same colloquial dialect, the levels differ. The mother's language is "warmer", and every time she addresses her son she used the endearment term *yā yammā*.⁸⁶ The poet puts this expression between brackets, to indicate just how emphatically the mother pronounces it and how it pains her to say it. The son, on the other hand, addresses his mother as *yā 'ummī*,⁸⁷ an expression that has less of an emotional effect than the one used by the mother. This difference in the levels points to a difference in linguistic maturity: the mother identifies with her language more strongly than the son with his language. This is due to the fact that she has had more experience in using her language, as proven by how she sings mourning songs and lullabies from her folklore. She is familiar with the various aspects of the popular heritage, and uses its various elements in her language, including folksongs, proverbs and folkloric expressions and the like. She also declaims songs that are similar to existing folksongs, using the framework of folksongs that she knows by heart.

Other technical devices

Motifs

The first motif to be mentioned here is *the image of the mother*, a motif that appears frequently in modern Arabic poetry, in the form of the mother of a martyr or a hero. Mothers are usually depicted as strongly adhering to the soil in folklore. In the poem discussed here the figure is that of the mother of a martyr, a mother who has lost her son and mourns him. The image of the mother in this poem may once again evoke the legend of Osiris, especially when the mother is seen as taking on the mask of the goddess Isis, Osiris' wife and the mother of Horus, whom she raised and whom she wanted to retrieve his father's stolen throne.⁸⁸ Osiris represents the father and the son at one-and-the-same time: If the son had continued to live, he would have had children of his own. The son is therefore not considered dead; he was resurrected after his death, in order to reclaim his own position, that of his father, and that of the entire nation.

Furthermore, the poet opens and closes the poem with the expressions *yā yammā* (literally=my mother; figuratively=my son) and *yā 'ummī* (=my mother). The mother's last words end with *-mmo*,⁸⁹ reflecting the mother's artistic image, and making it clear that her appearance in the text has to do with style and not only with content.

⁸⁴ See: Khūrī 2001: 105.

⁸⁵ It is as if the poem is addressed to the Palestinians, the local readers, in view of the fact that it uses the local dialect, one of many in the Arab world. Perhaps this is a message sent by the poet, expressing his disappointment with the Arab world, which ignored the Palestinian case for many years, so that now the only people who listen are the Palestinians themselves. Cf.: Sūmīkh 2014: 12: Sūmīkh claims that most local poetry was and is still composed in pure Standard Arabic, whether columnar poetry or free verse. Among professional poets such as Maḥmūd Darwīsh (d. 2008) and Samīḥ al-Qāsim (d. 2014) one can find glimmers of colloquial language usage. However, the general aim of the poetry of the locals is to reach Arab readers throughout the Arab world, which explains the avoidance of the local dialect.

⁸⁶ See: Khūrī 2001: 105, 106 (repeated three times).

⁸⁷ See: *ibid.*: 105, 107, 109, 110 (repeated seven times).

⁸⁸ See: Ḥawwar 2011: 16. 265.

⁸⁹ See: Khūrī 2001: 110 (لَمَو، يَمَو، هَمَو، كَمَو، دَمَو، يَمَو).

By this we mean that the image of the mother dominates one aspect of the poem's style, to wit its language, and not only its content, which also revolves around her, and her martyred son. The poet uses these devices in order to highlight the mother's image. He attempts to fix this image firmly in the poem by showing her personality from a number of aspects, so that she will continue to exist, as will the homeland.

Another motif that occurs repeatedly in the poem is *death*, expressed in a variety of ways using various expressions, first-and-foremost words derived from the root *m.w.t* (death). The mother states again and again, in different ways, that her son is dead, for example: *māt il-walad yā bashar* (=my child has died, o people). The son, too, uses the same root when he says to his mother: *maḥbūbik māt* (=your beloved one has died). The depictions of the grave, the shroud and the bier also evoke death. All these words describe the son's death. In addition, he indicates to his own death by some expressions, such as going away, absence, plants withering, travel and getting lost.⁹⁰

Stones make a frequent appearance in the poem, constituting yet another motif which focuses the reader on the image of the homeland. As already noted above, the son insists that the stone be used to build a house rather than to cover his grave: it is important to build the homeland for the benefit of the next generation, as the Palestinian proverb goes: *ḥajar 'alā ḥajar biṣīr sinsilih* (=ne stone on top of another will become a wall). This saying is used to express the fact that construction begins with a single stone, and it is also used as an expression to encourage building and urbanization.⁹¹

Dialogue

The *dialogue* makes a gradual appearance in the poem. At first, there is a dialogue between the mother and her son, which subsequently declines to a monologue on the son's part. The poem's first two parts are a dialogue between mother and son. In the third part, the dialogue disappears; the mother now weeps and cries out that her wings have been cut off, meaning that her son has died. She uses a line of *tanāwīḥ* for this purpose. Her son, then, attempts to convince her not to believe what has been said about him. He tells his mother that he is still alive, despite the fact that he is absent. In the fourth part, the mother speaks to the people in general, in the form of a *manwāl*,⁹² and the son, too, addresses the people in a monologue. In the fifth part, the mother once again addresses the people and expresses her grief, while her son tries to calm her with the words: *yā 'ummi 'ibnik mā māt*. In the sixth part, too, the mother speaks to the people, this time using the expression *yā kbayyā*,⁹³ while the son continues in his attempts to convince her that he will return. He tries to make her hear his voice, and repeatedly tells her *yā 'ummi 'ibnik mā māt*. In the seventh part, the mother declaims a *manwāl* that expresses her constant grief and her fear of losing her hold on life after having lost her son. Her son reminds her of his promise to return. He tells her that he will return in the spring. In the eighth and last part, the mother realizes that her attempts to recover her son have failed, and her son asks her only to hug him.

With respect to the external form of the *dialogue*, the words that the mother addresses to her son at the beginning of the poem are briefer than what she says at the end of the poem. In the first part of the poem, the mother says five lines to her son, and he answers in seven lines, a sign that the son is still filled with vitality and capable of speech. At the end of the poem, the situation is reversed: the mother speaks six lines while the son's reply is only three lines, which shows him to be obviously weakened, so much so that in the last line he can only say "O mother".⁹⁴

Another noteworthy point concerning the *dialogue* is that in the poem's first seven parts the mother's utterances are graphically attached to those of her son's, with no intervening empty spaces, whereas in the last part they are separated by gaps, symbolizing the growing distance between the mother and her son after the latter's death.

Quiescenting the consonants

The poet chooses to quiescent some consonants, especially at the end of the lines, in line with the poem's colloquial nature. The lack of a vowel is indicated in Arabic by the *sukūn* sign, a word which denotes silence, which here symbolizes death, since a dead person is silent.

⁹⁰ See: *ibid.*: 105-109.

⁹¹ See: Lūbānī 1999: 298. Other expressions in the poem that highlight the importance of the image of the stone in the lives of Palestinians are: "الصخر يصبح بَشَجَعْنَا" (105); "الحجار تبني دار"; "عن قبري قيمو الاحجار"; "تحت اكوام احجار الارض| تهبّ الأرض اكوام"; "لا تدفونني بحجر، خوفي ما يبقى حجار| الحجار ترجع وطن"; "احجار" (107).

⁹² See: Khūrī 2001: 107.

⁹³ See: *ibid.*: 109.

⁹⁴ See: *ibid.*: 110.

Support for this conjecture comes from the fact that the poet quiesscents consonants that indicate grief at the end of the lines, such as the letter *nūn* (n) and the letter *mīm* (m). This can be seen, for example, in the following passages:

الأرض بأخرها بركان
[...] وكلمة صغيرة من السلطان
[...] وتصيح قصة "يا ما كان"⁹⁵

The mother's *mawwāl*:

"كيف الجفن يا ناس، يغمض وأنا المظلوم
طول ما ضناني بغا، يحرم علي النوم
يسقوني مر الكاس، وادعي لرب القوم
بيلى عدوي بنا، بيلى بلا سدوم"⁹⁶

Repeated occurrences of *n* without a following vowel convey grief, while the same occurrences of *m* convey a sense of suffocation, in particular due to the fact that this is a sound whose articulation requires one to close one's mouth. Thus, the repetition of these sounds at the ends of the lines quoted above reflect both grief and suffocation.

Poetic Meter

The poem has a fast rhythm, and it is composed of long syllables in general⁹⁷, and consists mostly of continuing light cords with the same melodic structure, whose effect on the ear "calls for movement". Indeed, although the poem's content is a mother's elegy over her dead son, the poetic imagery makes it clear that after his death as a martyr, he will be resurrected, that life does not end when the individual dies, but remains alive through the continued existence of the nation and the homeland.

Since the poem is composed in the colloquial language, its scansion is more difficult than is the case with poems written in Standard Arabic. Arabic has numerous colloquial dialects, so that a word will be pronounced differently in different regions, depending on the speaker's environment and geographical location.

A scansion of this poem, excluding the *mawwāl* framework, reveals it to consist of lines that in general contain between seven and eight long syllables each, and that they often end with a quiesscent. This structure is typical of the popular *qurrādī* songs,⁹⁸ with their fast rhythm, fit for dancing. These songs, with their lively texts, arouse hope and joy in their listeners. However, despite the fact that throughout the poem we find this fast, dance-like rhythm, it slows down when the mother begins to mourn over her son and to express her grief at her loss through her *mawāwīl* and *tanāwīh*.

Below we present a scansion of a line from the text under discussion:

حَتَّ نَا لُو يُسْ قُطُّ هُصُّو
(7) - - - - -
تِصْ صَخْ رِي صِي جِي شَجْ جَعْ نَا
(8) - - - - -

As we can see, a hemistich of a *qurrādī* song consists of seven or eight long syllables, corresponding to the light cords in the prosodic theory acoustically. This is an example of a *qurrādī* song, in which the number of long syllables and their form are similar.

An important note on the scansion of these lines is as follows. When analyzing the poem prosodically, the words can be analyzed according to their pronunciation rather than according to their spelling. For example, the definite article can be ignored if it occurs before a "sun letter", because it is not pronounced. For example, a scansion of *wal-shams wal-qamar* would be **wash** sham suwal qamar. If we now examine the first hemistich in the previous example, we see that the last word (*ṣōl*) ends with a quiesscent, *t*. However, in our scansion we placed this letter at the beginning of the following hemistich. The poet here uses *enjambment*, in order to adhere to the meter.

⁹⁵ Ibid.: 105, 106.

⁹⁶ Ibid.: 108.

⁹⁷ Note that the Arabic prosody system is quantitative, rather than qualitative. Thus, it is not syllabic. However, the light cord in the Arabic system of prosody makes what is called a long syllable in Greek metrics. This is why we use the expression "long syllable" here. See in this regard: Weil 1960: 669; Shībī 2017: 24.

⁹⁸ For more on *qurrādī* songs, their origin, themes, structure and more, see: Khūrī 2013: 136-151.

Had he not done so, the first hemistich would have had a superfluous quiescent without a following vowel, in violation of the poem's meter. As for the poem's overall structure prosodically, the number of long syllables, seven or eight, is constant throughout.⁹⁹

Conclusion

Modern usage of literary techniques had affected the literary texts and their analysis. It has become a competition between authors, and they use as much techniques as they can in order to improve their modern compositions, and make a bigger system of such modern literature. More precisely, the employment of relatively old things in new texts is making a new road in front of the authors, this is to say those who go back to folklore and popular heritage, and who see it as a "good" literature as the canonical. The unique relationship that comes out of mixing this folkloric material and the new literary techniques supports the study of folk literature, which has been abandoned for a long time. As we saw in this study, the revival of folklore through *intertextuality* is a successful technique, not just to revive this abandoned literature, but also to awaken the "passive readers", and make them "active". The readers, hence, become an important literary tool themselves in the process of reading, because they start to analyze the text in relation to the folklore. This process makes them look for explanations in additional sources, something that makes their literary, historical, and cultural views broader and more open. Not only that, but it affects the local readers specifically, and make them more aware of their popular heritage in all its forms, be it on the level of language, proverbs, folk songs, folk flora, and more.

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⁹⁹ The hemistich of the *mutadarak* meter in which there are two feet instead of four appears in children's songs. There the *fa'ilun* foot is transformed into *fa'lun*, making the rhythm more dance-like, since it represents children at play. The son in the poem is like a child to whom his mother sings a lullaby. However, this possibility is rather far-fetched, since the hemistiches are so short, consisting of only four light cords, while in the poem discussed here the hemistiches consist of seven or eight long syllables. See: al-Barghūthī 1979: 67.

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